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SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM HISTORIC SITES: PHASE I
INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION. (U) COMMONWEALTH
ASSOCIATES INC JACKSON MI J R KERN ET AL. JAN 82

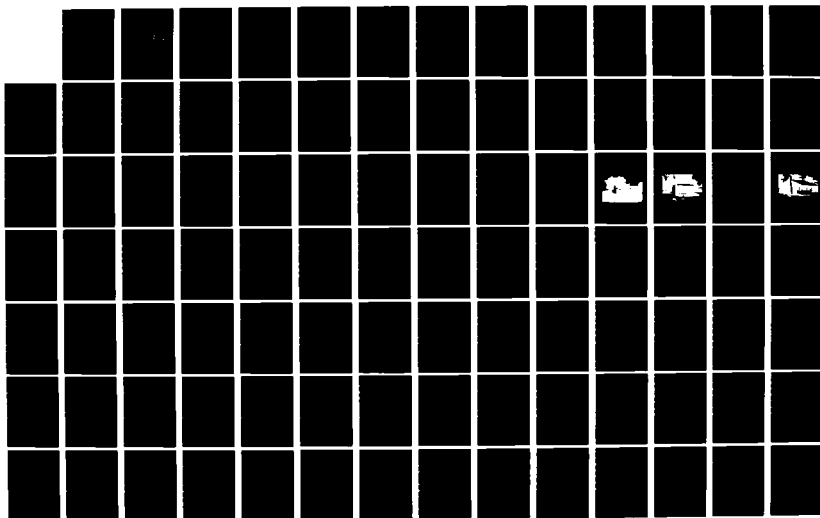
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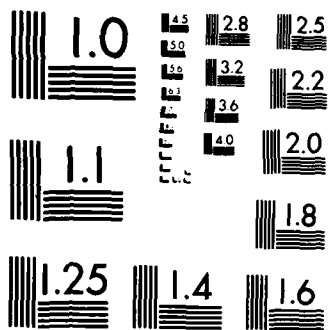
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Sharples's Bottom Historic Sites

PHASE I • INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATIONS

TOMBIGBEE RIVER
MULTI-RESOURCE DISTRICT
ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI

Submitted to:
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service
Funds Provided by:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District

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PHASE I
INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATIONS
AT
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM HISTORIC SITES
TOMBIGBEE RIVER MULTIRESOURCE DISTRICT
ALABAMA AND MISSISSIPPI

INTERIM REPORT

SUBMITTED TO
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, SOUTHWEST REGION

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US ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
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CONTRACT NUMBER: C-54039(80)

PREPARED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF

JOHN R. KERN, PH.D.
PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATES INC.
209 EAST WASHINGTON AVE
JACKSON, MICHIGAN 49201

JANUARY 1982

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PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

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16. Abstract (Limit: 200 words) This report discusses 1980-1981 Phase I interdisciplinary investigations of the Sharpley's Bottom historic sites on the Tombigbee Waterway in Monroe County, Mississippi. Sharpley's Bottom is so named because of its occupation from the 1860s to the 1880s by W. B. Sharpley, a white slave holder who cohabited with one of his slaves and later willed his Bottom Land to his mixed race children. The study has been distinguished by the wealth of historical material available on the Bottom, by the use of black and white oral historians respectively to interview black and white informants, and by the use of specialists in history, folk housing and oral history to assist in the archeological survey and interpretation of the historic sites. The methods and training of history, folk culture and historical archeology have been combined to analyze how an isolated and predominantly black community of tenant farmers evolved after the abolition of slavery and how that community endured until the demise of cotton tenancy. The report concludes with recommendations for Phase II historical and oral history research and for intensive investigation of 14 of the 22 located historic sites.				
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I. INTRODUCTION

In May 1980, Commonwealth Associates Inc., received authorization from Interagency Archeological Services-Atlanta (IAS-Atlanta) to proceed with interdisciplinary investigations of Sharpley's Bottom in Monroe County, Mississippi (Figures 1 and 2). The site is so named because of its occupation from the 1860s to 1880s by W. B. Sharpley, a white slave holder who cohabited with one of his slaves, who married another woman of black ancestry after the slave's death in the 1870s, and who willed his Bottom land to the mixed race children born to these two women.

Because the site will be impacted by the Mobile District Corps of Engineers' (COE) Columbus Lock and Dam project on the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the contracted scope of work called for a cultural resource study in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act, Executive Order 11593, and the Archeological and Historic Preservation Act. Preliminary research conducted by the Mobile COE and IAS-Atlanta had located Monroe County Probate Record Depositions in which white relatives had contested Sharpley's bequeathal of the Bottom land to his "natural" children; also located had been post-Civil War Trust Deeds executed between Sharpley and his tenants, some of whom were his own children. Informant reports had indicated the existence of more than twenty tenant houses and other structures on the Bottom. Archeological survey and remote sensing had produced additional artifact and locational information. These preliminary findings suggested to IAS-Atlanta and the Corps of Engineers that the Sharpley's Bottom "project offers an unparalleled opportunity to address the transition from slave to tenant farmer and the evolution of tenant farming." Accordingly, the scope of work called for extensive historical research, a folk housing study, an oral history program and archeological survey and preliminary testing--all designed to investigate "research problems relating to the social and economic changes, settlement patterns and the internal social status systems of tenant farmers."

In compliance with these objectives, Commonwealth assembled an interdisciplinary project team under the direction of Principal Investigator John R. Kern. Historical research was undertaken with consultants Ira Berlin, Joseph P. Reidy and Leslie B. Rowland from the University of Maryland's Freedmen and Southern Society Project. Kern, Commonwealth historical archeologist C. Stephan Demeter, and Berlin's graduate student Steven F. Miller began research in June 1980 in Monroe County Chancery Court land records, depositions pertaining to litigation over Sharpley's estate, and Deeds of Trust recorded between occupants and owners of the Bottom. Also located in the Aberdeen Library was an early twentieth-century Account Book for Sharpley's Place. These records were used to prepare maps of land ownership, a list of Sharpley's descendants, and a card file of Bottom residents whose names have been cross referenced with the soundex index to post bellum census returns. John F. Moe of Case Western Reserve University carried out a field survey of folk housing in Monroe County and recorded the few extant structures in the Bottom for the project's archeologically recovered

types. Oral historians E. Suzanne Carter from Commonwealth and C. Jason Dotson from Indiana University Folklore Institute, respectively white and black, conducted interviews of white and black informants. Carried out during June and July 1980, the interviews focused on economic practices and land use patterns in the Bottom and on the location and anticipated artifactual remains of specific sites. The information thus obtained has been used to prepare separate perspectives of Sharpley's Bottom from the vantage point of the white and black informants. During July and August 1980, an archeological survey of the bottom was headed by Judy D. Tordoff, a Commonwealth historical archeologist with prior Tombigbee field experience who is completing a doctorate in historical archeology at Michigan State University. This survey verified reported site locations and identified additional historic sites in the study area. The recommendations for additional research and testable hypotheses presented in this Interim Report at the conclusion of the sections on archival research, oral history and archeological survey and testing have provided the focus for a series of proposals for Phase II Investigations at Sharpley's Bottom. Negotiations for Phase II research were concluded in April 1981, a contract change order was executed the following month, and Commonwealth conducted Phase II field Investigations at Sharpley's Bottom during the months of June and July 1981.

The study to date has been distinguished by close cooperation with National Park Service archeologist Stephanie H. Rodeffer and Mobile COE archeologists Jerry Nielsen and Charles Moorehead, by the wealth of historical information available on the Bottom, by the use of black and white oral historians respectively to interview black and white informants, by the use of specialists in the fields of history, folk housing, oral history, and historical archeology who have directed their skills and training to the examination of the historic sites, and by the sequential organization of the research so that the history, folk housing, and oral history findings have been made available to the historical archeologists prior to their field investigations. Together project members are using historical documents, oral history, and the record of material culture to investigate Sharpley's Bottom in terms of the transition from slavery, the development of the economic patterns of tenancy, the concurrent emergence of an internal social status system, and its apparent manifestation in changing attitudes towards race.

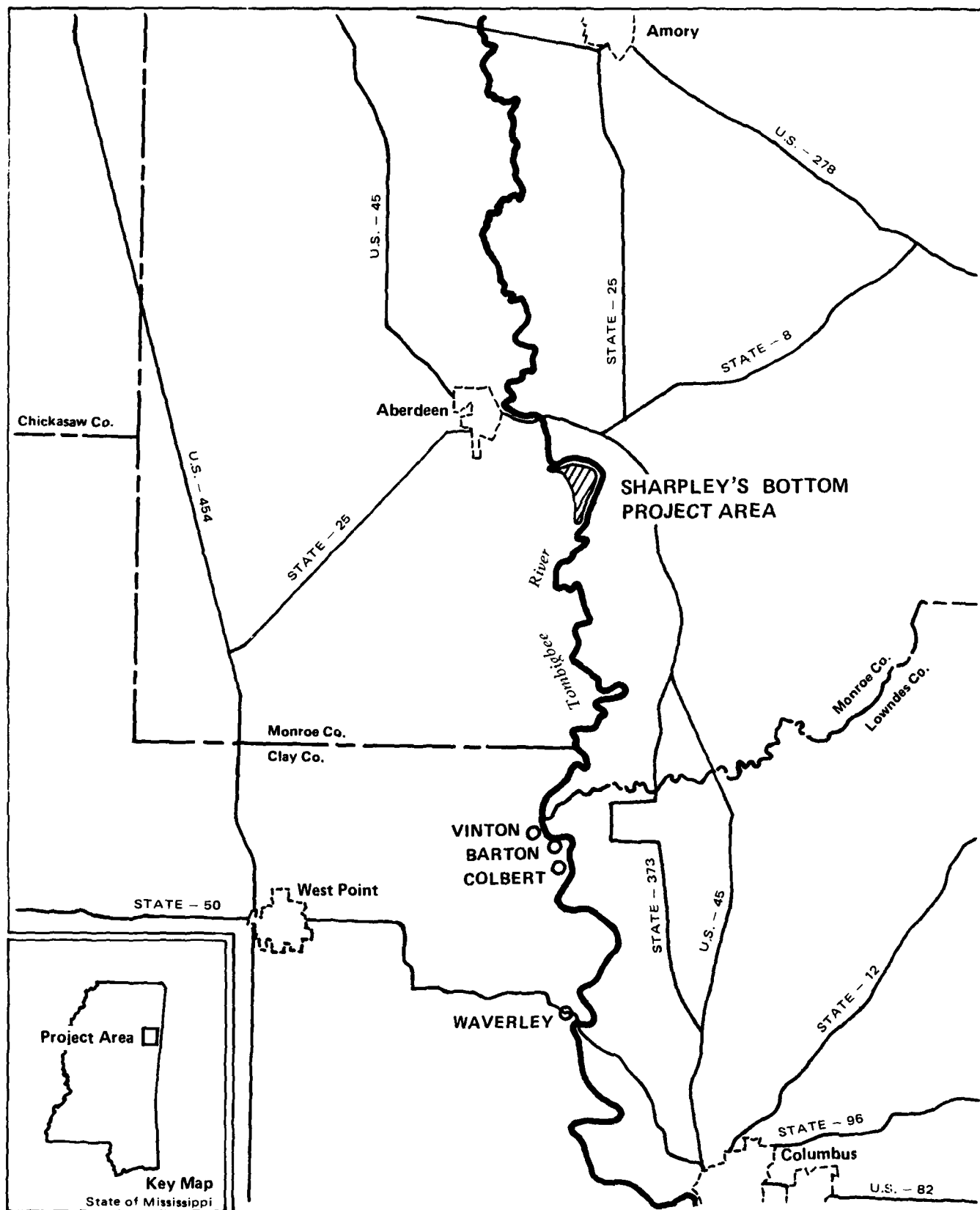


FIGURE 1

REGIONAL LOCATION
WITHIN STATE OF MISSISSIPPI



II. ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

CHRONOLOGY

- 1540 DeSoto expedition crosses upper Tombigbee Valley.
 - c. 1680 Beginnings of French trade with the Chickasaw.
 - 1763 British gain suzerainty over the Chickasaw following the Peace of Paris ending the Seven Years' War with French.
 - 1783 Treaty of Paris ends the American War for Independence.
 - 1798 U.S. Congress creates Mississippi Territory out of lands ceded by Spain in 1795.
 - 1816 Chickasaw Cession Treaty yields to the federal government tribal lands in the eastern portion of the upper Tombigbee Valley.
 - 1817 Mississippi granted statehood.
 - 1819 Mississippi legislature passes series of laws placing the Chickasaw under state jurisdiction and abolishing tribal government.
 - 1821 Mississippi legislature incorporates Monroe County.
 - 1829 Boundary of Monroe County extended west of the Tombigbee River through Chickasaw lands.
 - 1834 Final version of Treaty of Pontotoc (original in 1832) provides for land allotments to the Chickasaw, public sale of allotments and other tribal lands, and removal of the tribe west of the Mississippi when a suitable homeland could be found.
 - 1836 Allotment and public sale of Chickasaw lands. Robinson James, Davis James, Un-ho-ha, and Ta-hubby hold original allotments in Sharpley Bottom tract. Un-ho-ha and Ta-hubby sell allotments to speculators in May.
- Needham Whitfield moves from Lenoir County, North Carolina, to Monroe County, makes numerous land purchases including lots in the newly-founded town of Aberdeen and 1,438 acres in the Sharpley Bottom tract (Figure 3).

- 1837 Public sales of Chickasaw lands continue; Whitfield buys 246.5 additional acres in Sharpley's Bottom tract.
- 1838 William B. Sharpley, approximately age 17, residing in Morgan County, Alabama. His father dies, mother remarries two months later. His mother and stepfather agree to place William in the custody of John H. Bibb, a Morgan County planter.
- c. 1838-1842 Whitfield renting out land on Sharpley's Bottom tract.
- c. 1842-1860 Whitfield living in Aberdeen and operating his "River Plantation" (on the Sharpley's Bottom tract) with a large slave labor force (Figure 4).
- 1860 Sharpley living in Aberdeen, probably working as a millwright. Owns 15 slaves, including Silvie, with whom he has maintained a long-standing sexual relationship, and their five mulatto children: Patsy, Edna, Fannie, Josephine, and Sylvester.
- November 18: Sharpley marries Louisa Aberdeen Evans, 17-year-old daughter of an Aberdeen bookkeeper.
- 1861 Civil War begins.
- 1863 Lincoln issues final Emancipation Proclamation, January 1.
- 1865 Civil War ends. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands established.
- Louisa Aberdeen Evans Sharpley files for divorce, citing Sharpley's continuing liaison with Silvie and his unwillingness to "reform." Sharpley, temporarily out of the county, does not contest. Divorce granted November 18.
- Mississippi legislature repeals ordinance of secession and ratifies 13th amendment to U.S. Constitution, thereby affirming the abolition of slavery. Legislature also adopts discriminatory Black Code, which forbids ownership of firearms by blacks, prohibits rental of land by blacks, and requires blacks to have evidence of employment by the second Monday of January each year, on pain of arrest and forced hire to an employer who pays the "vagrant's" fine.
- Needham Whitfield begins to work his plantation with free black laborers, many of whom were his former slaves.

- 1866 Sharpley operating a shop in Aberdeen, selling and repairing mills and threshing machines.
- January 19: Sharpley makes his first land purchase in Monroe County, buys 320 acres adjacent to Needham Whitfield's "River Plantation " (Figure 5).
- 1867 U.S. Congress passes Reconstruction Acts, inaugurating "Radical Reconstruction." Under these acts, Mississippi holds elections for delegates to a constitutional convention, with black men voting for the first time. Mississippi under military government.
- 1868 Sharpley purchases 115 acres of Needham Whitfield's plantation land, 24 acres of which he already has in cultivation as a renter.
- 1870 Having ratified the 14th and 15th amendments to the U.S. Constitution and formed a new state government under Republican control, Mississippi readmitted to the Union.
- 1872 Sharpley purchases the remaining 1,186 acres of Needham Whitfield's plantation, thereby assuming complete control over it. Continues to work the land with black tenants, many of whom had labored on Whitfield's plantation as tenants and, before emancipation, as slaves (Figure 6).
- 1873 Needham Whitfield dies July 31, having liquidated or transferred most of his land holdings in the several years before his death.
- 1875 Mississippi "redeemed": Democrats win control of state government, thanks in good part to a successful statewide movement to prevent blacks from voting. Monroe County, the scene of widespread racial violence.
- c. 1876 Silvie dies.
- 1879-1886 Sharpley marries Eva Tatum, a woman of mixed white, black and Indian ancestry, at her father's home in Moro Bay, Arkansas. Tatum, who had attended classes at Oberlin College, had lived in Sharpley's house while teaching in a black school in the Bottom. She has three children by Sharpley, of whom apparently only two, Maggie and Letha, survive.
- 1886 Eva Tatum Sharpley dies in June. Sharpley himself in failing health, prone to epileptic fits and kidney trouble.
- October 19: Sharpley deeds tracts of his land to three of his daughters:

1. Fannie, married to William McMillan, a black farmer.
2. Josephine, married to Andrew McBeth, Sharpley's white land agent and resident manager.
3. Sylvester, married to Joseph Tatum, a mulatto farmer and Eva Tatum Sharpley's brother.

Sharpley executes will, in which he places his remaining lands in trust to provide for the welfare of minor daughters Maggie and Letha.

- 1888 August 5: Sharpley takes out \$4000 mortgage with Stern Brothers, Aberdeen jewelers and moneylenders. Mortgage secured by the land willed to Maggie and Letha.
- October 8: Sharpley dies; estate goes into probate (Figure 7).
- 1889 January 23: Sharpley's siblings, along with their spouses and children, initiate a series of four lawsuits contesting Sharpley's 1886 deeds and will. They allege that Sharpley was mentally incompetent, the victim of a conspiracy plotted by his mixed-race daughters and their husbands to deprive his "rightful" heirs of their claims to his estate. Settled via compromise: complainants agree not to press charges further, each defendant pays them \$125 for doing so. Charges dismissed, deeds and will upheld as genuine in final decrees, December 1-10.
- 1890 Sharpley estate still in probate; B. C. Sims controls estate, having arranged to have 1888 and 1889 crops collected and having sold Sharpley's personal property to pay debts.
- December 24: Sims sells 578 acres of estate land to Daniel Tatum, a wealthy white Monroe County landholder (no relation to Eva and Joseph Tatum), ostensibly to pay debts of the estate.
- 1892 Daniel Tatum dies, wills his land (including his Sharpley's Bottom tract) to his nephew, John F. Plant. Plant works land with black tenants and day laborers until 1900.
- 1894 January 27: George C. Paine, Aberdeen agent for Stern Brothers (since moved to New York), forecloses on unpaid mortgage, collects remaining acres of estate land. Paine sells tract to his brother-in-law, John H. Scruggs. Scruggs sells tract to Plant via quit claim deed, thereby giving Plant sole ownership of Maggie and Letha Sharpley's patrimony.

- 1897 Maggie and Letha Sharpley, living in Arkansas with their grandfather, Thomas J. Tatum, bring suit against Plant. They claim land willed to them was sold contrary to the provisions of Sharpley's will and at unfair prices. Case and appeals continue until 1903.
- 1899 April 12: Monroe County Chancery Court upholds Plant's title to the land, but orders him to pay Sharpley daughters \$1373 restitution. Case taken to Mississippi Supreme Court on appeal.
- 1900 May 28: Supreme Court overturns Chancery Court decision, ruling that land sales did indeed violate express provisions of Sharpley's will. Court orders Plant's titles reverted to Sharpley estate, forces Plant to pay Maggie and Letha money received for rent and timber sold (Figure 8).
- Plant protests provisions of Supreme Court decree, case reopened.
- 1903 February 28: Chancery Court renders final decree: Maggie and Letha retain possession of land; amount of Plant's restitution reduced.
- 1906 Maggie Sharpley Daley and Letha Sharpley, now residing in the Cherokee Nation, Oklahoma, sell their tract to Houston S. Gilleylen and George Leftwich, Aberdeen attorneys and land investors. Gilleylen controls land until 1923, continuing to farm it with tenants, croppers, and day laborers. (Leftwich sells out his half share 31 March 1910.)
- 1911 Gilleylen sells to C. C. Day the timber rights to eastern portion of Sharpley's Bottom tract. Day erects saw mill on property soon thereafter.
- 1912 October 29: Gilleylen transfers Sharpley tract, along with several other tracts of land in his possession, to the newly-formed Prairie Plantation Company, of which Gilleylen is president (Figure 9).
- 1923 February 1: John R. Booth obtains Sharpley tract from Prairie Plantation Company on assumption of the Company's debt to Prudential Insurance Company. Black tenants continue to farm the land; Booth also reportedly introduces white tenants in the southern portion of the tract.

- 1927 Tombigbee flooding devastates Sharpley's Bottom; Booth defaults on loan; Sharpley tract seized by Guaranty Bank and Trust Company, sold to Prudential (April 27).
- 1928 February 18: Joe T. Morgan purchases Sharpley tract from Prudential. Morgan works land with tenants, croppers, and day laborers at least up to World War II (Figure 10).
- c. 1938 Farm Security Administration (FSA) begins to authorize low interest loans repayable in small installments to farm tenants and sharecroppers in the Bottom.
- 1959 Abrupt drop in farm tenants coincides with beginning of transition from cotton to soybean cultivation.
- 1965 Charles P. Wilson of Kennett, Missouri purchases Sharpley tract from Joe T. Morgan.
- 1969 Agricultural revolution, from tenant produced cotton to machine grown soybeans, is essentially complete: Monroe County reports twice as many acres in soybeans as in cotton; the number of tenants has dropped (from a high of 4000 in 1930) to 100.
- 1980 Monroe County acres in soybeans: 95,000; in cotton: 9,000.

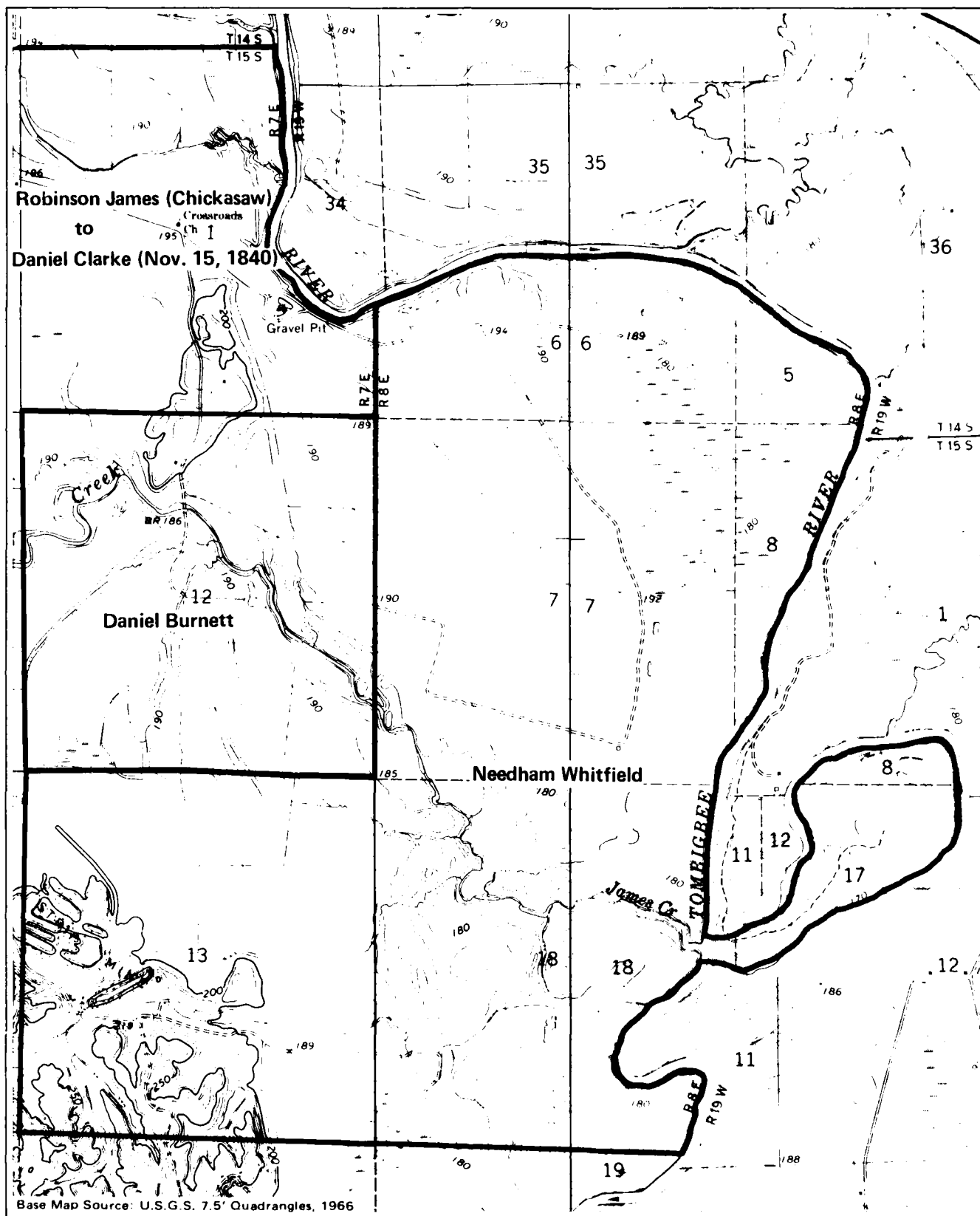
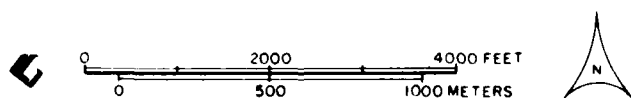


FIGURE 3

SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP - 1840



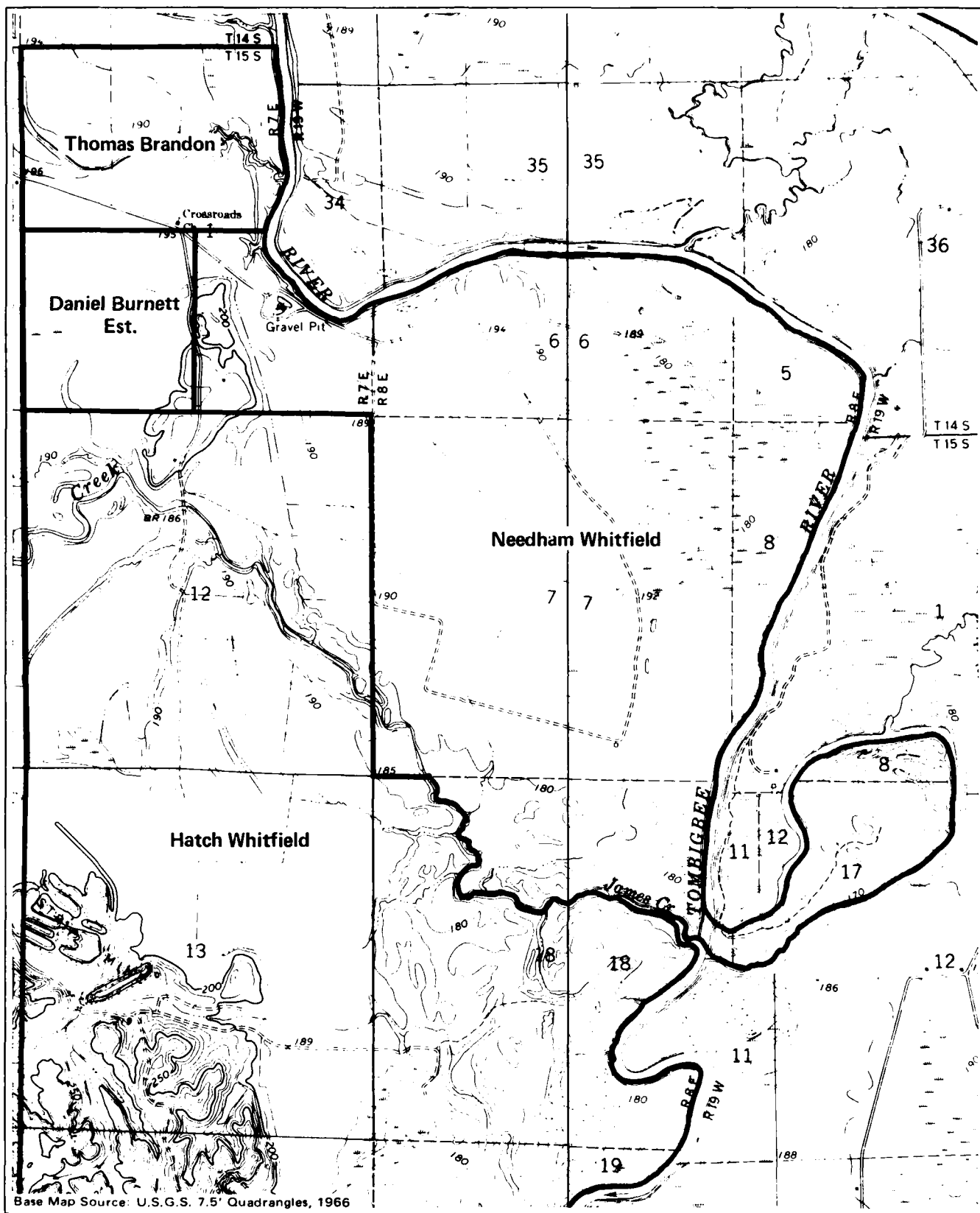


FIGURE 4
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP - 1850

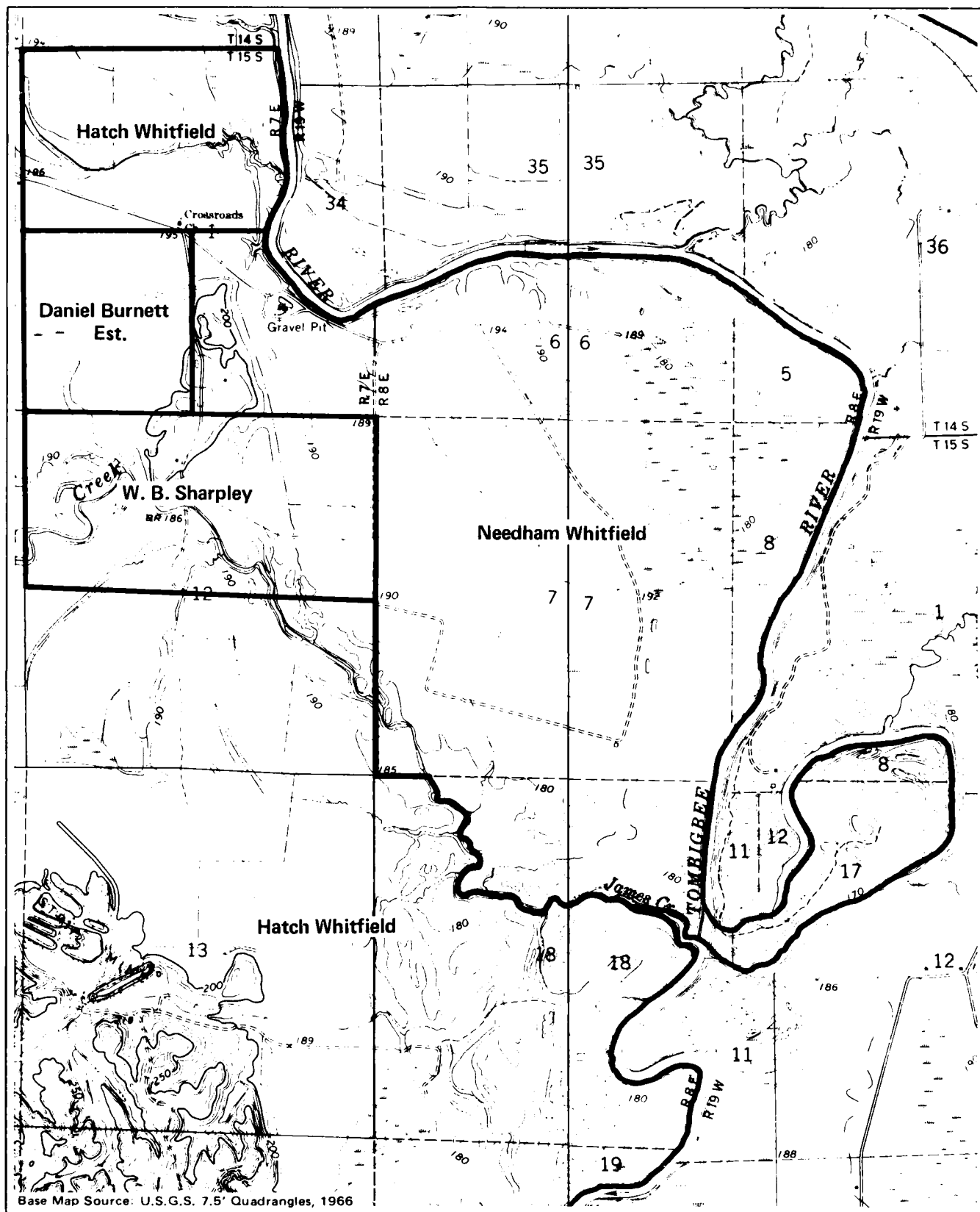


FIGURE 5
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP - 1866

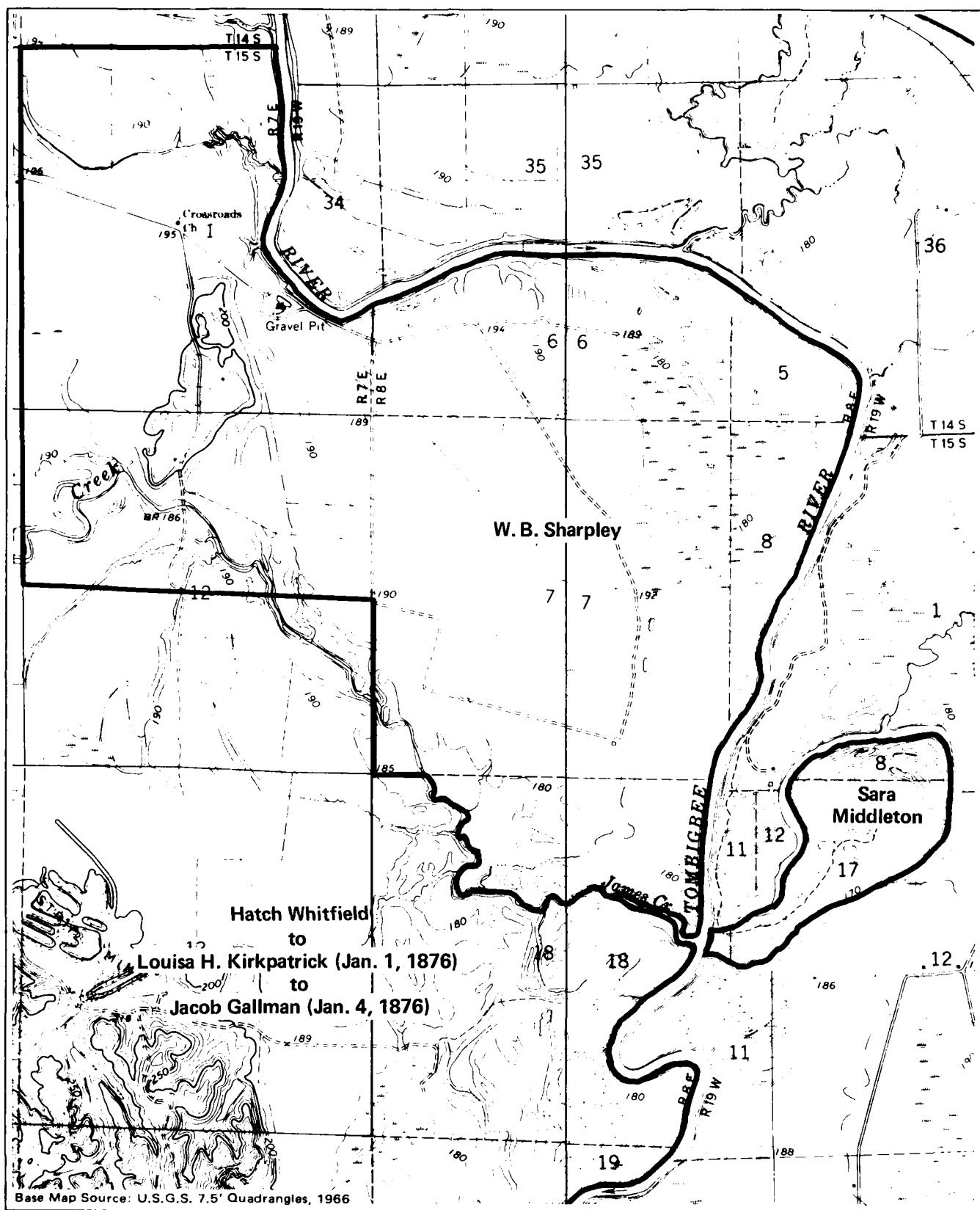
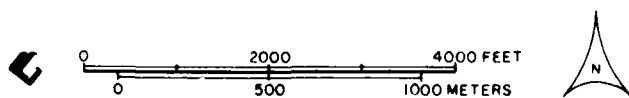


FIGURE 6

SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM LAND OWNERSHIP - 1876



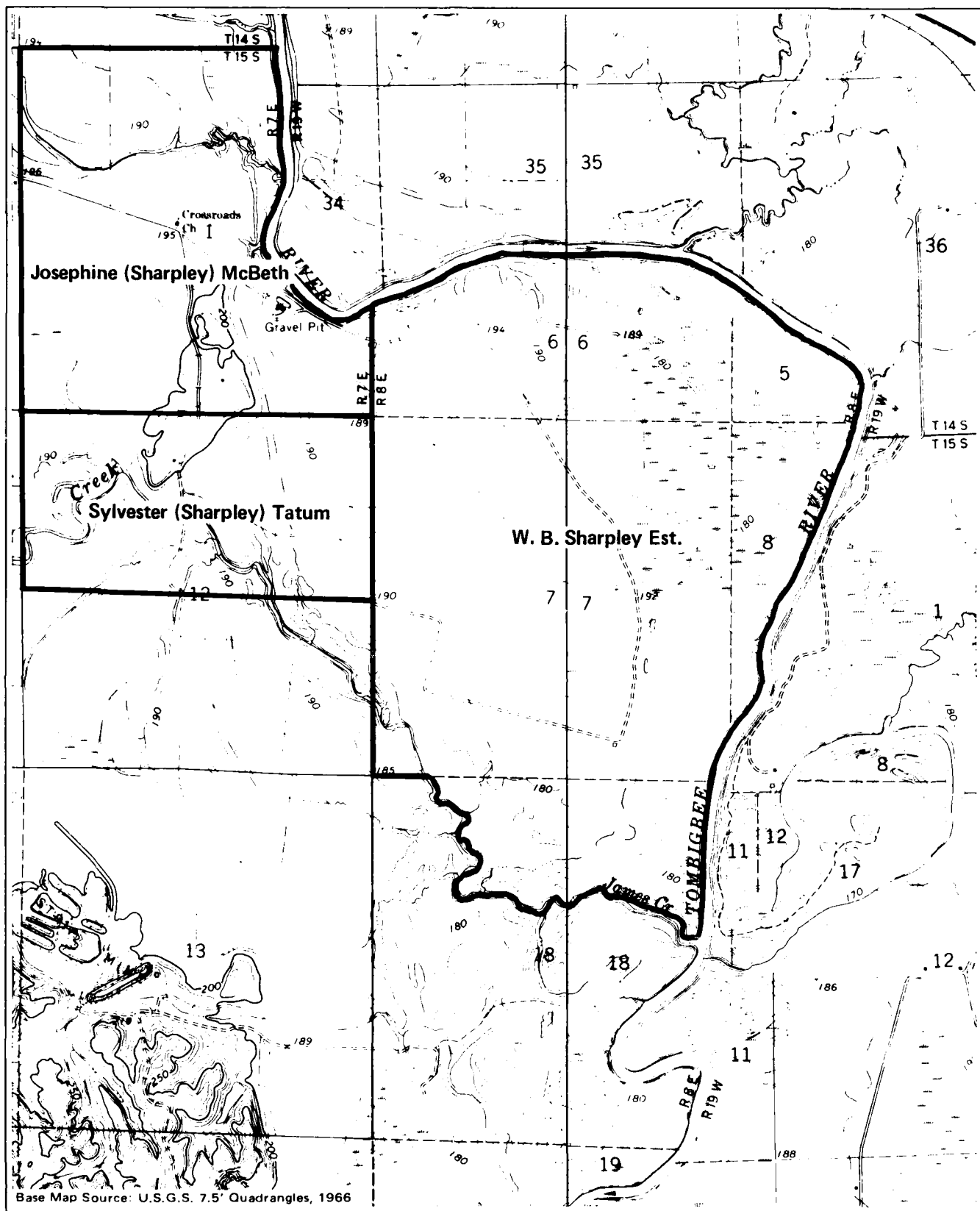
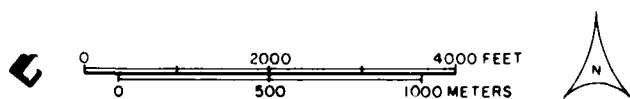


FIGURE 7
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP - 1888



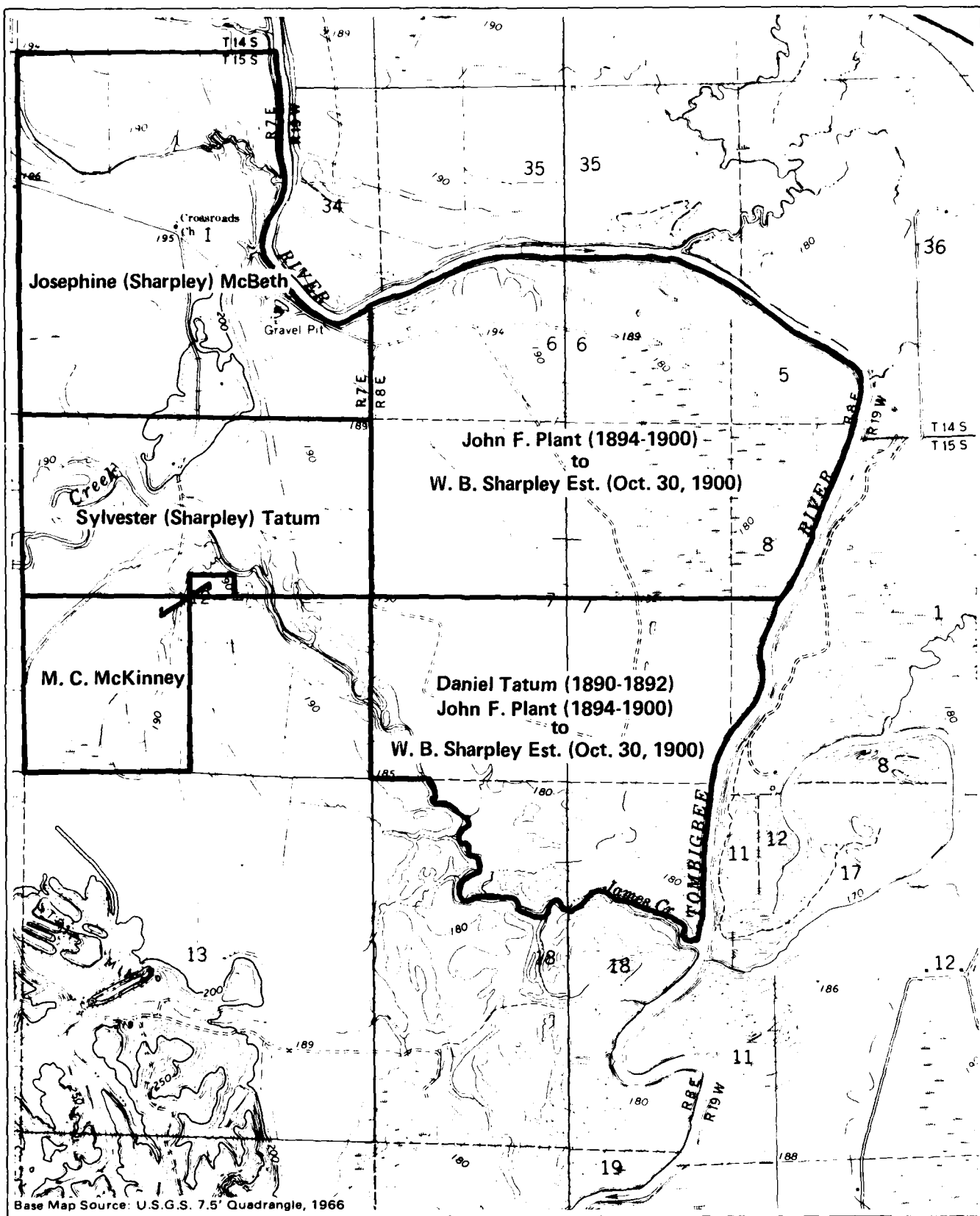


FIGURE 8

SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP,
1890-1900

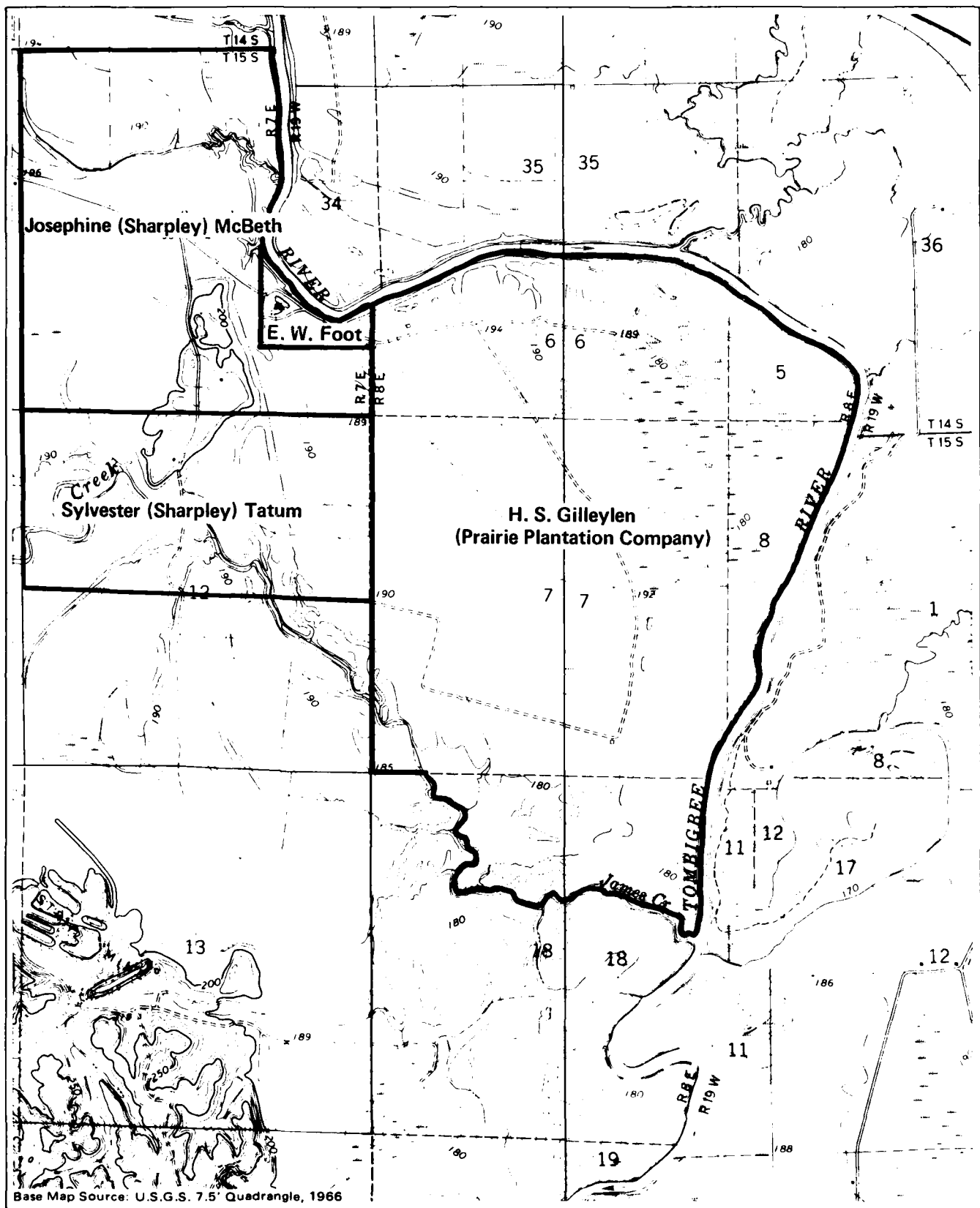


FIGURE 9
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP - 1912

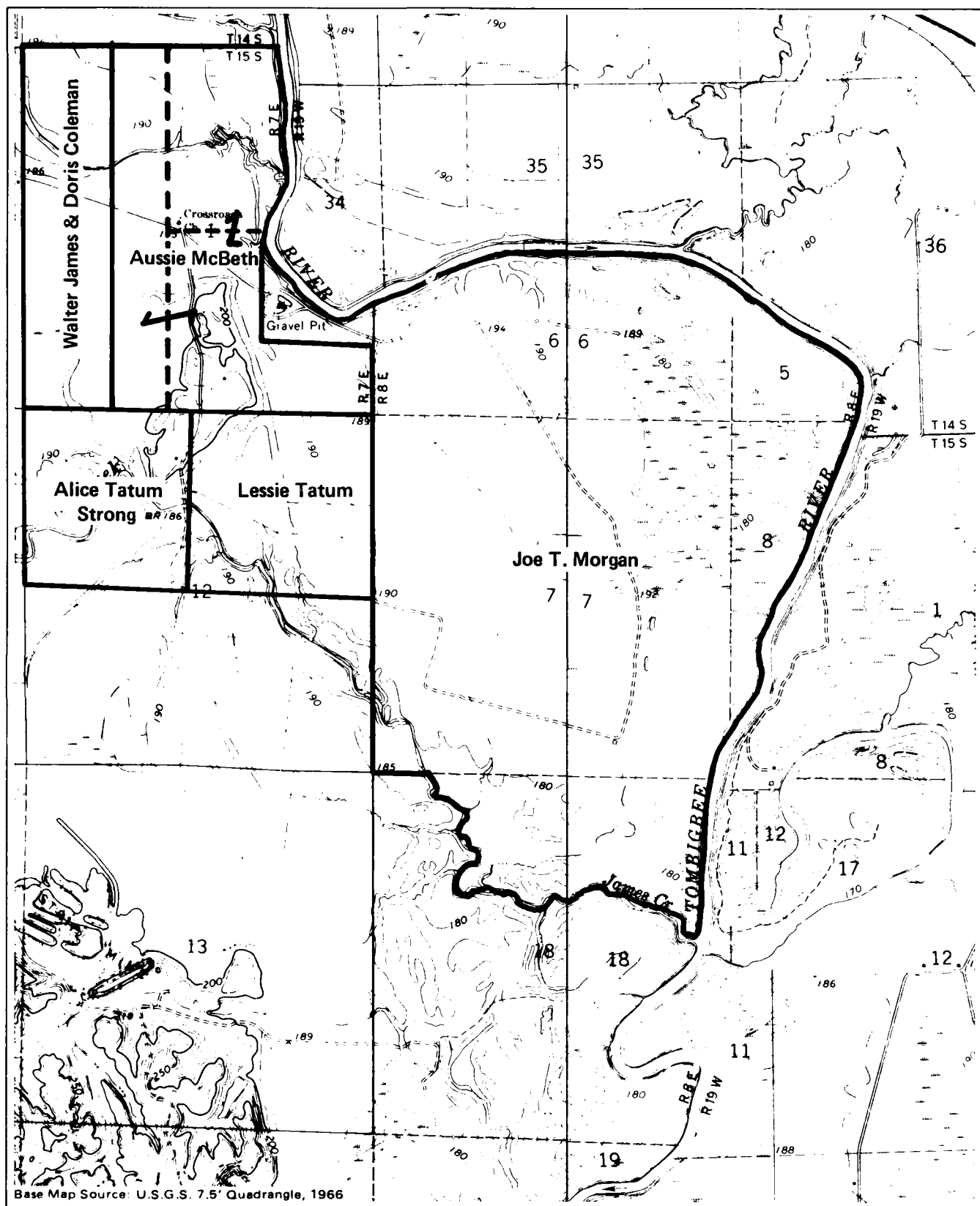


FIGURE 10
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
LAND OWNERSHIP - 1931

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Chickasaw Indians first inhabited the land later known as Sharpley's Bottom in Monroe County, Mississippi. Although French and British traders had regular contact with the Chickasaw beginning in the late seventeenth century, sustained settlement by white Europeans in the upper Tombigbee Valley did not occur until the nineteenth century. European settlement increased following the conclusion of the 1816 land cession treaties with the Chickasaw and Choctaw. As demand for Indian lands accelerated, and as territorial and federal authority exerted ever greater pressure on the Chickasaw, the Indians had little choice but to vacate their homeland. In the Treaty of Pontotoc, concluded between 1832 and 1834, they relinquished their homeland in exchange for land west of the Mississippi (Jennings 1941; Gibson 1971:3-183; Young 1961:41-46).

The treaty launched a tidal wave of new settlement. Planters from the older seaboard South coveted the rich soils of the Tombigbee River bottoms and the fertile prairie lands west of the river. But speculators moved more quickly than the planters and engrossed the choicest tracts even before public sales began in January 1836 (Young 1961:117-132; Silver 1944). Thereafter, land changed hands rapidly as newcomers found speculation even more lucrative than cotton growing.

The career of Needham Whitfield, the first planter to work the tract later known as Sharpley's Bottom, illustrates this early settlement pattern. Born in 1791 in eastern North Carolina, Whitfield descended from a prominent planter family (Whitfield 1948:3-74). After gaining control of the family estate at his father's death, Whitfield found opportunities in North Carolina too narrow for his broad ambitions. Whitfield's younger half-brother Gaius (already a thriving Alabama planter) urged him to move west. "All kinds of business very good," Gaius wrote, "I have as much business in the land way as I want and am kept constantly drained of all my funds" (Whitfield-Wooten Papers 1829-1858:GW to NW, 30 July 1835). By 1836, Needham Whitfield had taken his brother's advice and moved his family and most of his slaves to Monroe County, Mississippi. Once there, he snapped up several thousand acres of farmland and numerous lots in the town of Aberdeen. Before 1840, he had acquired the Sharpley's Bottom tract, some portions at auction but most from speculators (Rollins 1971:26, 38; Monroe County Deed Book 17:407), (Figure 3).

Family and business tied the cotton frontier with the seaboard plantation culture, and Needham Whitfield thus became the westernmost link in a chain of kin stretching from Mississippi to North Carolina. Persons and property moved back and forth along the chain: by 1840, one of Needham's brothers and two cousins had transplanted their families to Monroe County. The western Whitfields acted as agents for their eastern kin; in return, capital and slaves went westward from North Carolina (Whitfield-Wooten Papers 1829-1858: NB Whitfield to NW, 30 Sept. 1837, GW to Allen

Wooten, 22 Aug. 1843, GW to JBW, 15 Feb. 1836; Cobb and Whitfield Papers 1836-1840:Nathan B. Whitfield to JBW). These familial ties served Whitfield well between 1840 and 1860, while Monroe County developed from an outpost of white settlement into a booming plantation county with a sizable black majority.

Most settlers had migrated with the intention of growing cotton, and they did so promptly. Cotton cultivation took varied forms according to the fertility of the land and the resources of the farmer. Small farmers worked plots with the labor of their own families and perhaps a few slaves. Large planters either used their slaves to clear and cultivate the land, or rented out all or part of their holdings to have them improved. Whitfield adopted the latter course in developing the Sharples's Bottom tract, which he dubbed the "River Plantation" to distinguish it from his place on the prairie (Whitfield-Wooten Papers 1829-1858: NW to Allen W. Wooten, 5 March 1850).

Cotton and slaves defined the plantation system that flourished on the bottom lands and fertile prairies of Monroe County. One newly arrived resident noted that "the whole object of the planters seems to be to rear vast crops of cotton," to the neglect of subsistence crops (Dysart 1847). Like other great planters, Whitfield increasingly concentrated on producing cotton and corn, giving other food crops and livestock short shrift (Gallman 1970; Hilliard 1972). Nevertheless, both his plantations remained largely self-sufficient in foodstuffs throughout the antebellum years (U.S. Census Manuscripts, Agriculture 1850 and 1860).

The heavy labor requirements of cotton demanded increasing numbers of slaves. Consequently, Monroe County's black population soared, growing three times as fast as the white population between 1830 and 1860 (calculated from data in U.S. Bureau of the Census 1872:41-42, Table II). Slaves brought west with migrating masters or purchased from the seaboard slave states accounted for most of this rapid growth. Mississippi slaves, like their masters and the plantation system, had roots in the eastern seaboard states, a reality which any investigation of history, material culture, or folk life must recognize.

The experience of Needham Whitfield and his slaves indicates some of the ways in which slavery and Afro-American culture moved across the continent. Whitfield brought many of his family's slaves with him from North Carolina, but when he assumed operation of his own plantations in the early 1840s, he greatly enlarged his bound labor force. True to his speculative bent, he sold some slaves and bought many others. Although he purchased some of his new acquisitions from local slave traders (Monroe County Deed Book 14:618), most came into his possession through trade with family members (Whitfield-Wooten Papers 1829-1858:NW to Allen Wooten, 10 Oct.1850). Through such transactions, Whitfield steadily increased the number of working-age slaves on his plantations. In 1840, he owned 47 slaves between the ages of 11 and 55; in 1850, 56, in 1860, 65 (U.S. Census Manuscripts, Population 1840a; U.S. Census Manuscripts, Slave Population 1850a, 1860a).

By about 1850 (Figure 4), Whitfield's River Plantation had assumed a physical shape that apparently changed little until after the Civil War. A road connecting Whitfield's town residence with a ferry across the Tombigbee ran through the northern end of the tract. The slave quarters stood between the road and the river. The plantation also contained a gin house and other buildings, probably including a corn mill, the exact location of which remains unclear. South of the road lay cultivated fields, bounded by timber and scrub growth in the marshy areas along the river and James Creek (Sunny South 17 April 1856; Monroe County Deed Book 27:402-403).

In 1856 the River Plantation had 300 of its approximately 1600 acres in cultivation, suggesting that between 40 and 50 slaves lived on the plantation in the mid-1850s (Moore 1958:112; Sydnor 1959: 14-16). Whitfield's slaves almost certainly worked under the gang system, the typical plantation labor regimen in the cotton South. The presence of centralized quarters on the plantation and of two overseers residing with Whitfield's family in 1850 and 1860, presumably one for each of his two plantations, lends credence to this assumption (U.S. Census Manuscripts, Population 1850, 1860a).

The Civil War brought freedom to the slaves but left the precise content of that freedom unresolved. While freedpeople worked to maximize their independence from the old regime, former owners sought to reimpose their old domination. The battle was fought on many grounds, but the decisive struggle came over land and labor.

As free labor replaced slavery as the organizing principle of plantation agriculture, both sides revealed much about their expectations of the new regime in the negotiation of contracts. The struggle was hardly an equal one. Employers held the balance of coercive power, but the freedpeople's ability to withhold their labor allowed them some leverage. A plethora of contract terms offered different types of labor arrangements and consequently various advantages and disadvantages for landlords and freedpeople. But except for a handful who managed to purchase land, virtually all ex-slaves worked in one of three labor relationships: wage labor, sharecropping, or renting.

Wage labor, which organizationally approximated the antebellum gang system, smacked too much of slavery for most newly liberated blacks. They objected to close white supervision and preferred to farm independently. Planters resisted this but were willing to allow each black family to work its own tract with a house situated on it, in exchange for a large share of the crop (Ransom and Sutch 1977:87-88; Wiener 1978:69-70). Sharecropping thus emerged as a compromise between planters and freedpeople. While sharecropping offered advantages over wage labor, former slaves prized rental tenure most of all: it posed greater risk than sharecropping but allowed tenants a larger control over crop mixture and cultivation methods, as well as greater chance of gaining in good years and enlarging their personal autonomy (Ransom and Sutch 1977:94-95).

On Whitfield's River Plantation, standing rent, in which the tenant paid a specified amount of cotton in lieu of cash, became the dominant form of land tenure by 1868. In the spring of that year Whitfield made six contracts with ten tenants, all but one of them freedmen and women. The contracts assigned parcels of land ranging in size from 30 to 50 acres, for which Whitfield was to receive 32 and a half pounds of cotton per acre and 10 percent interest on all cash advanced to the tenants. A lien on the tenant's stock, personal property, and crop secured the agreement (Monroe County Deed Book 24:719; 25:57-70). Whitfield and his tenants made and recorded such contracts annually between 1868 and 1871.

Over time, subtle alterations in the terms of the contracts indicate profound changes in physical and social relations that accompanied the post-emancipation transformation of River Plantation. For one thing, the agreements reflected the tenants' dissatisfaction with the physical trappings of the old system. In 1868, the contracts described the rental tracts in relation to fields dating from the antebellum days: the "potato patch," "Needham Field," "pea ridge." The freedpeople still lived in the central quarters, a vestige of slavery. By 1870, however, the contracts made no mention of old fields or of the quarters; single household tenant cabins had replaced the slave quarter's (Monroe County Deed Book 24:719; 25:57-70; 28:53-55).

Contracts also reveal something of the composition of the tenant community and the renters' relations with Whitfield. In all likelihood, many of the black tenants were descended from Whitfield's North Carolina slaves. Many bore Whitfield's surname. Of the fourteen tenants named Whitfield who contracted with Needham Whitfield in one or more years between 1868 and 1872 and who also appeared in the 1870 census, all had been born in North Carolina or Mississippi, suggesting that they had formerly numbered among Whitfield's slaves and had perhaps labored on the River Plantation before emancipation (U.S. Census Manuscripts, Population 1870a).

Whitfield's former slaves composed the nucleus of a black community which persisted despite the comings and goings of individual tenants. Familiar with the land and with the landlord, they possessed knowledge which sustained the community in the crucial years following emancipation. Such knowledge almost surely helped them win contract concessions from Whitfield, as in 1869, when the landlord lowered his tenants' rent and agreed not to raise it again if they repaired run-down fences and buildings (Monroe County Deed Book 28:46-60).

The tenant community forged on Needham Whitfield's River Plantation in the early postbellum period changed considerably over the next 60 years. Behind a mask of outward stability, it moved to its own internal dynamic, influenced by land tenure arrangements, the particulars of the landlord-tenant relationship, and the influence of community institutions such as families, schools, and churches.

Between 1868 and 1872, the tenant community entered a new phase when the aging Whitfield sold his River Plantation to William B. Sharpley, a well-traveled North Carolinian who had arrived in Monroe County around 1860 (Monroe County Deed Book 32:438-439). By that date he had learned the millwright's trade and acquired 15 slaves, one of whom, Silvie, had borne him five mulatto daughters. Sharpley's relationship with Silvie caused his wife of five years, Louisa Aberdeen Evans, to divorce him in 1865 (U.S. Census Manuscripts, Population 1820, 1830a, 1860a; Slave Population 1860a; Sharpley, L. A., v. W. B. Sharpley 1865: Sharpley, W., et al. v. B. C. Sims et al. 1889-1890).

One year after the divorce, Sharpley purchased a tract of land adjacent to Whitfield's River Plantation (Figure 5). Shortly thereafter he began renting part of Whitfield's land and working it with black tenants, some of whom had previously been his slaves and others of whom had previously been slaves and tenants of Whitfield. In 1868, Sharpley bought the piece of Whitfield's plantation he had been renting, and in 1872 purchased the rest (Monroe County Deed Book 27:57-58; 32:438-439), (Figure 6).

Between 1871 and 1875, Sharpley annually made tenant contracts similar to Whitfield's earlier agreements (Monroe County Deed Book 29: 588-616; 33:415-422; 34:24-27, 96-97; Monroe County Deeds of Trust A: 614, 636; B:165-180). Taken together, the contracts of the two landlords constitute an unequalled source for the study of tenancy at Sharpley's Bottom. They demonstrate, first, that the tenants there were a highly mobile group. A new landlord (or a falling-out with an old one), a better tenure arrangement elsewhere, the desire to unite with family or friends, and a host of other reasons could induce migration. The contracts also indicate that the majority of Sharpley's tenants remained renters with little or no property, victims of chronic debt, overworked soil, and periodic flooding of bottom lands. Although two of Sharpley's tenants managed by 1900 to climb the tenancy ladder to eventual land ownership, they were exceptions (Depositions of Nat Whitfield and Jerry Harris, Sharpley, M., and L. Sharpley v. J. F. Plant 1897-1901).

Unlike Whitfield before him, Sharpley lived at the Bottom, and his singular domestic life gave the community much of its distinctiveness. After Silvie's death in the early 1870s, Sharpley met Eva Tatum, a woman of mixed racial ancestry who had taught at the black school in the Bottom. Following their marriage in 1879, conducted at her family's home in Arkansas, away from the scrutiny of Monroe County whites, she bore him three children before her death in 1886 (Sharpley, W., et al. v. B. C. Sims et al. 1889-1890).

Such flouting of long-established racial convention placed Sharpley and his family in a kind of nether world, set apart both from the Bottom's black tenants and from nearby whites. The physical shape of the Bottom embodied this social distance: Sharpley and his family resided on a hill west of the tenant fields in the sandy lowlands, away from the black tenants and isolated from whites by the natural cul-de-sac of the Bottom.

Sharpley's death in 1888 wrought fundamental change in the tenant community. Two years earlier Sharpley had deeded part of his land to his three oldest daughters by Silvie and executed a will which placed the remainder in trust for his two surviving daughters by Eva (Monroe County Deed Book 48:357-359), (Figure 7). The land willed to the oldest daughters continued to be farmed by rental tenants, much as it had been under Sharpley. The land held in trust was another story. In 1894, after numerous dealings of questionable legality, the land fell into the hands of John F. Plant, one of the wealthiest landlords in the county (Monroe County Deed Book 52:520; 56:182; 57:51-52), (Figure 8). After a protracted lawsuit Sharpley's daughters recovered the land in 1902 (Sharpley, M., and L. Sharpley v. J. F. Plant 1897-1901), but plant's tenure altered both the physical landscape and the nature of the black community.

Disregarding future consequences, Plant squeezed every conceivable profit from the Bottom. He hired workers to cut timber from heavily forested river banks and carve fields out of canebrakes previously used to feed the tenants' livestock. An absentee landlord who visited his places only once a week, Plant treated his tenants as ruthlessly as he exploited the land. Some tenants departed when Plant began utilizing sharecroppers and migratory wage laborers extensively (Sharpley, M., and L. Sharpley v. J. E. Plant 1897-1901:Depositions of J. F. Plant, T. A. Weed, and Gus Nichols). In part because of such tactics, Plant generally experienced, according to one neighbor, "a right smart difficulty getting tenants." In contrast, one of Sharpley's sons-in-law, who continued to offer rental tenures, reported no difficulty at all attracting tenants (Sharpley, M., and L. Sharpley v. J. F. Plant 1897-1901: Depositions of T. W. McKinney and Joe W. Tatum).

The pattern of tenancy at Sharpley's Bottom established during the Plant years continued well into the twentieth century (Figures 9 and 10). Until the 1930s, absentee landlords held the large eastern section of the Bottom and worked it with any kind of labor they could secure: rental tenants, sharecroppers, or wage workers. Sharpley's descendants continued to occupy their family tracts and rent them to tenants. Disastrous flooding in the 1920s prefigured the collapse of cotton tenancy in the 1930s and thereafter when new sources of credit, rock-bottom cotton prices, mounting farm mechanization, and the introduction of new crops such as soybeans destroyed the tenant system that had characterized Sharpley's Bottom and the entire cotton South from the time of emancipation.

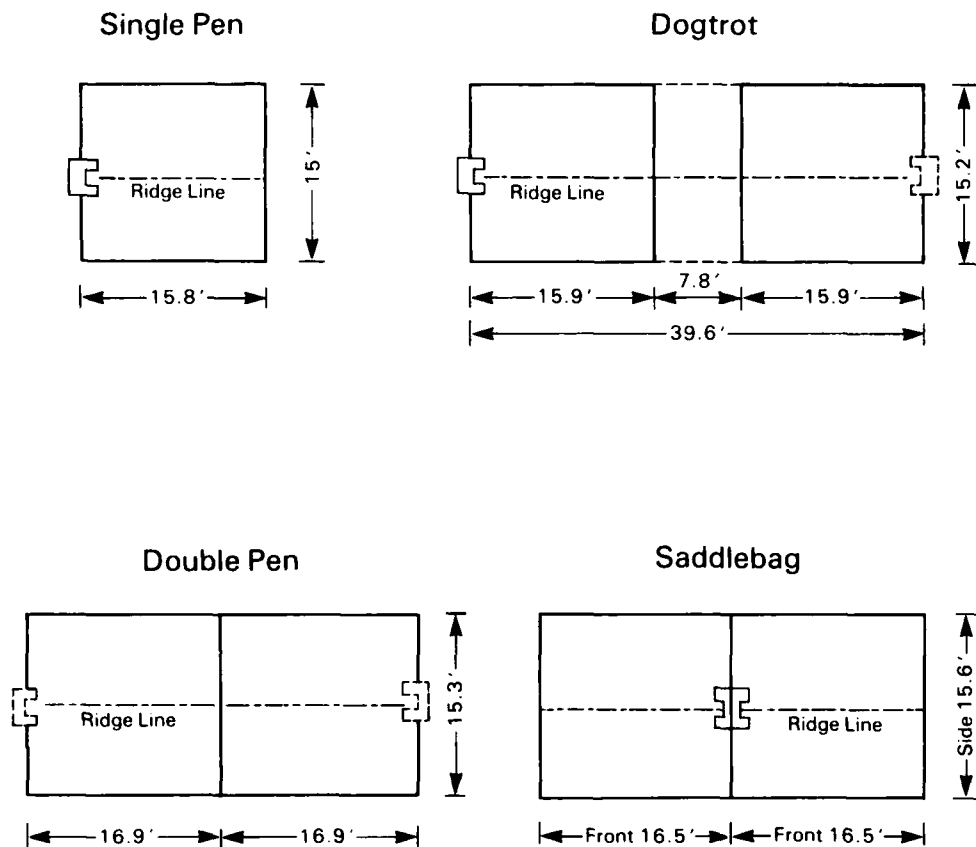
FOLK HOUSING IN MONROE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

Eugene M. Wilson's studies of folk housing in Alabama and his recent analysis of rural buildings in the Upper Tombigbee River Valley identify four basic folk house types along the waterway: 1) Single Pen - a one bay rectangular structure with a gable end chimney; 2) Dogtrot - two pens with at least one gable end chimney and the pens aligned, clear gable to clear gable, but separated by a roofed-over passageway; 3) Double Pen - two pens with at least one gable end chimney and the pens abutted clear gable to clear gable; 4) Saddlebag - two pens abutting gable to gable with a common central chimney (Wilson 1975, 1981), (Figure 11).

Wilson described the Single Pen log house as the earliest folk house type in the region. Built prior to 1840, first generation Single Pens used stone or wood foundation piers. On them were placed squared sill logs which were 12 or more inches on a side in cross section. The sills extended the length of the longer front and rear walls. Sleepers of log, hewn flat on the top and flat notched on the ends, were placed at right angles between the sills to support the floor. The wall logs were hewn on their two vertical planes to a thickness of 6 to 8 inches and were joined, usually with half dovetail or square corners. A Single Pen was constructed with seven or eight sleepers and about 40 wall logs, or 10 on a side. Loft joists were placed between the logs of the front and rear walls 7 to 9 feet above the floor. The loft joints were usually mortised into the wall logs and the walls commonly extended two or more feet above the joists to provide more loft space; access to the loft was usually by a small corner stairway. Progressively shorter gable end logs supported roof ribs which reached a peak at the ridge pole. Roofing was provided by clapboards held in place with weight poles. Chimneys were usually fieldstone or ashlar, centered at the outside of a gable end wall, and partly enclosed by the gable eave. Doors were centered in the longer front and rear walls and one or two windows were placed on one or both sides of the gable end chimneys. Wilson found that the first generation Single Pen log houses built before 1840 averaged almost 21 feet across the long front facade and slightly over 17 feet across the gable end (Wilson 1975:26).

Second generation log Single Pens built between 1840 and 1880 continued to use foundation piers, square hewn sills, log floor sleepers, and continued to feature a gable roof with the roof ridge parallel to the sills, a gable end chimney centered against the outside wall, and front and rear doors centered above the sills in the long walls. Second generation Single Pen log houses, however, used brick for piers and chimneys and employed thinner logs to construct a somewhat smaller log core whose space was frequently supplemented by the addition of frame shed appendages. Gable end logs and roof ribs were replaced in second generation pens by vertical poles, horizontal gable side boards and rafters which were nailed to form a gable roof frame.

Third Generation (Frame) Diagnostic Dimensions, Floor Plan, and Chimney Placement



Source: Wilson 1981, Single Pen p. 71, Table 1.D.; Dogtrot p. 73, Table 3.B.; Double Pen p. 76, Table 4.A.; Saddlebag p. 78, Table 5.C.

FIGURE 11
UPPER TOMBIGBEE
FOLK HOUSE TYPES

Third generation Single Pen houses built after 1875 were of frame and weather boarding construction. Frame Single Pens were usually ceiled and had no loft access. Typically smaller and more nearly square, frame Single Pens on the Upper Tombigbee averaged less than 16 feet on a side, but rear and side sheds were often added to the core cell (Wilson 1981:71).

The basic pattern of evolution for the Single Pen, from first generation log to second generation log and frame to third generation frame construction, applies also to changes in Dogtrot construction. Wilson found that first generation Dogtrot houses built in Alabama before 1840 averaged about 19 and a half feet across the front of each of their two pens (often one pen was longer than the other) and 17 feet across their gable ends; the dogtrot between the two pens averaged over 9 feet in width. The two pens were entered by doors centered in the front and rear walls. The only windows were usually placed at the chimney gable ends (Wilson 1975:30,32).

Second generation Dogtrot houses built between 1840 and 1880 were constructed of smaller and more nearly square log pens which averaged slightly more than 17 feet on a side; the average width of the dogtrot passageway was very close to 9 feet. Often one of the pens was entered by a door centered on the dogtrot gable end, and a window then replaced the front facade centered door (Wilson 1975:30,34).

Third generation Dogtrot houses on the Upper Tombigbee built between 1875 and 1920 were of frame construction. Frame Dogtrot pens on the Upper Tombigbee averaged less than 16 feet on a side and the dogtrot passageway between the pens averaged less than 8 feet in width. Both pens were usually entered through gable end doors centered in the passageway and large centered windows replaced the front facade entrances. As with third generation Single Pens, frame Dogtrot houses frequently featured additional appendages (Wilson 1981:73).

Wilson did not find sufficient data to record an evolution by generation for Double Pen house construction. He measured six nineteenth-century log or log and frame Double Pens in Alabama which averaged over 18 feet on their gable ends and 34 and a half feet across their front facades, or approximately 17 and a quarter feet across the front of each pen. The average front facade pen dimension is deceptive, however, because in each of the six structures, one pen was longer than the other, with dominant and subordinate pen average front lengths of approximately 19 feet and 15 feet. Five of the six measured structures were comprised of one log and one frame pen; the log pens also averaged slightly more than 19 feet across their front facades, while the frame pen fronts averaged 15 and a third feet (Wilson 1975:78). Because the log pens were presumably constructed prior to the frame pens, an assumption supported by Wilson, it may be concluded that nineteenth-century Double Pens in Alabama generally featured cells of unequal front facade length and that the larger pen was usually of original construction.

Five frame Double Pen houses on the Upper Tombigbee averaged slightly less than 17 feet across the front facade of each cell and somewhat more than 15 feet across their gable ends. Three of the Double Pens had core rooms of equal size and two had side or gable end measurements longer than the front of either pen (Wilson 1981:76).

Wilson obtained information on only three log Saddlebag houses in Alabama. They averaged slightly less than 18 feet on their gable ends and almost 19 and a half feet across the front facade of each of the pens. Two of them possessed single pen cells of approximately equal dimension; the third structure had a right front facade 6 feet larger than the left front facade. Two of the three log Saddlebags had a "blind hall" central entrance into an alcove which ended at the chimney (Wilson 1975:44, 79).

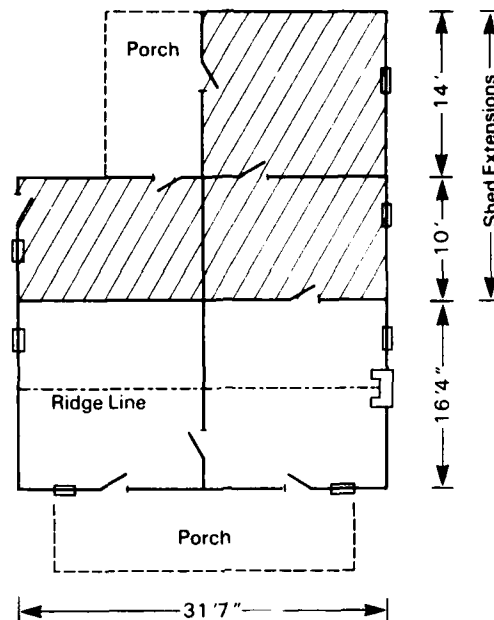
Frame or third generation Saddlebag houses on the Upper Tombigbee averaged slightly more than 15 and a half feet across the gable ends and almost 16 and a half feet across the front facades of each pen. Doors were centered in the front facade of each pen as none of these Tombigbee frame Saddlebags had a "blind hall" which opened onto the central chimney (Wilson 1981:78).

John F. Moe's preliminary inventory of folk housing in Monroe County, Mississippi located a number of frame residences (Figure 12) which Wilson would identify as third generation folk house types. The Oren Haney house, eight miles north of Aberdeen on U.S. Highway 45, is a good example of a third generation Double Pen with a single gable end chimney and shed extensions (Photograph 1). Built around 1920, its front facade of 31 feet 7 inches is approximately 2 feet narrower and its gable side of 16 feet 4 inches is approximately 1 foot wider than the comparable mean dimensions for five Upper Tombigbee frame Double Pens measured by Wilson (Wilson 1981:76).

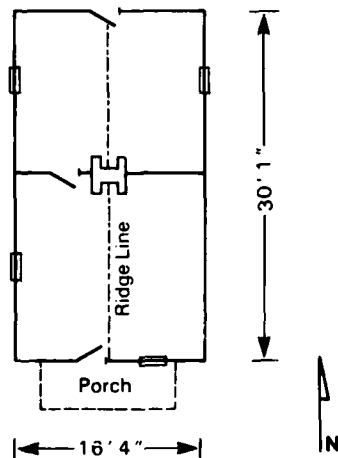
The Russell Jackson house on Gillespi Street in Aberdeen (Photograph 2) is representative of the Shotgun type which Wilson found to be introduced into Alabama around 1910 as a primarily urban residence (Wilson 1975:50)- though one of Moe's informants spoke of building Shotguns on a plantation near Hamilton, Mississippi. Measuring 16 feet 4 inches across its front gable end facade, and 30 feet 1 inch deep, the Jackson house is two feet wider and one foot shorter than the average front and side dimensions for four Upper Tombigbee Shotguns measured by Wilson (Wilson 1981:79).

Moe also recorded a folk house type not discussed in Wilson's written work. Hereafter it will be called a Two Room Deep house. This is a structure like a Single or Double Pen with the main entrance facade on the side which parallels the roof ridge line, as opposed to the gable end entrance facade of the Shotgun house. But unlike the Single or Double Pen, in the Two Room Deep house, the gable roof encloses two rooms separated by a wall which parallels the roof ridge line. The Two Room Deep structure can be identified by two features: the gable roof is

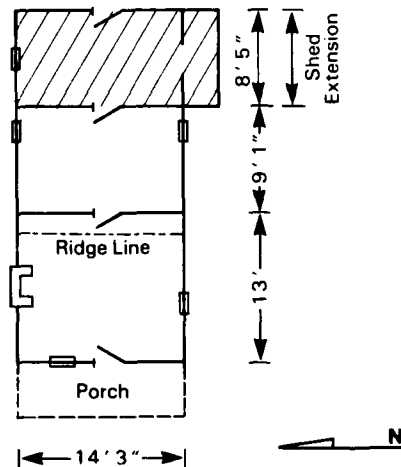
OREN HANEY HOUSE
Frame Double Pen



RUSSELL JACKSON HOUSE
Shotgun



FRANK RIDDLE HOUSE
Two Room Deep



Source: John F. Moe, Monroe County, Mississippi Folk Housing Survey, 1980.

FIGURE 12
MONROE COUNTY
FOLK HOUSE TYPES



PHOTOGRAPH 1
THE OREN HANEY HOUSE (1920's)

Photo Credit: John F. Moe, Monroe County, Mississippi FolkHousing Survey, 1980.



PHOTOGRAPH 2
THE RUSSELL JACKSON HOUSE

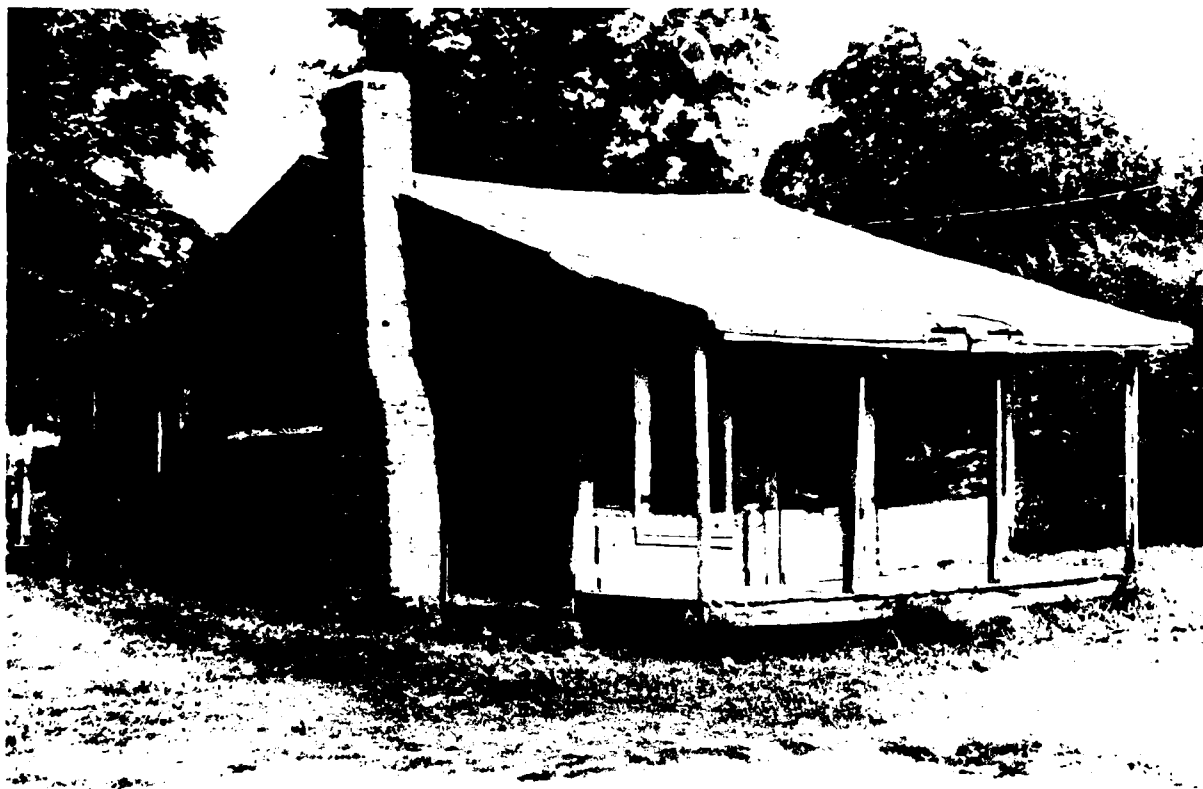
Photo Credit: John F. Moe, Monroe County, Mississippi FolkHousing Survey, 1980.

less steep in pitch; and the gable end chimney is not centered so that it bisects the roof ridge line. The lower pitched roof can cover both rooms with less gable elevation; and the chimney rises in front of the ridge line because it is centered on the front or deeper of the two rooms.

Only 14 feet 3 inches across its front facade, the Frank Riddle house in Aberdeen (Photograph 3) is representative of a simple Two Room Deep house, the gable roof encloses a front room 13 feet deep with a chimney centered on its side wall and a rear room 9 feet deep. A shed room extends 8 feet 5 inches beyond the gable portion of the structure. In verbal communication, Wilson has indicated that he is aware of the Two Room Deep house; it has no accepted name, but is a folk type which appeared along the Upper Tombigbee in the 1920s.

Three folk houses (Figure 13) were recorded in the immediate vicinity of the Sharpley's Bottom project area. The Wyatt Harris Dogtrot house is located in the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of Section 7, land acquired by John F. Plant in the 1890s. The structure consists of a square notched log pen 17 feet 7 inches along the front facade and 15 feet 9 inches across the gable end. The dogtrot is 6 feet 4 inches wide and the frame pen is 15 feet 9 inches on each side. Now missing, chimneys had been centered on the external gable ends of each pen. Centered gable end doors in the dogtrot passageway opened into both pens. A centered front facade door also opened into the log pen. The external dimensions of this log and frame Dogtrot almost exactly conform to mean dimensions of Upper Tombigbee frame Dogtrots recorded by Wilson (Wilson 1981:73). The 1901 Sharpley v. Plant depositions refer to the frame portion of this structure as a new house. It was constructed with wire nails. Concrete corner piers support the log pen.

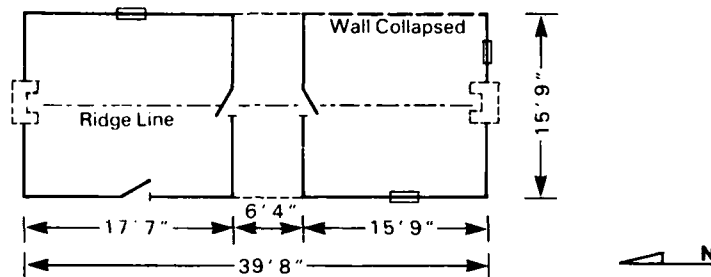
A frame Saddlebag house was recorded in the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of Section 1, land purchased by Sharpley in 1868. Measuring 34 feet 7 inches across the long double facade and 16 feet 2 inches across the gable ends, the structure is supported on hand hewn sill beams which rest on molded concrete piers. One wooden pier was noted in the middle of the front facade. The central brick double hearth chimney is 3 feet 1 inch deep and 3 feet 10 inches wide with 2 feet 4 inch wide hearths. Each pen is entered by a centered door on the long facade, and windows are centered on the gable ends. One wall at the north edge of the chimney divides the two rooms so that the south room is the chimney's depth or 3 feet 1 inch wider than the north room. The east wall has collapsed and it cannot be seen if stairs led to a loft. Wire nails predominate, although some square nails are also evident, especially on the vertical exterior corner boards. The overall measurements of this Sharpley's Bottom Saddlebag are 1 foot 7 inches longer and 7 inches wider than the comparable mean dimensions for seven Upper Tombigbee frame Saddlebags recorded by Wilson (Wilson 1981:78).



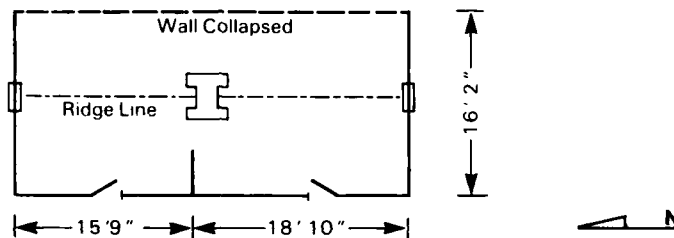
PHOTOGRAPH 3
THE FRANK RIDDLE HOUSE

Photo Credit: John F. Moe, Monroe County, Mississippi Folk Housing Survey, 1980.

WYATT HARRIS HOUSE
Dogtrot



Saddlebag



PET FRANKS HOUSE
Single Pen

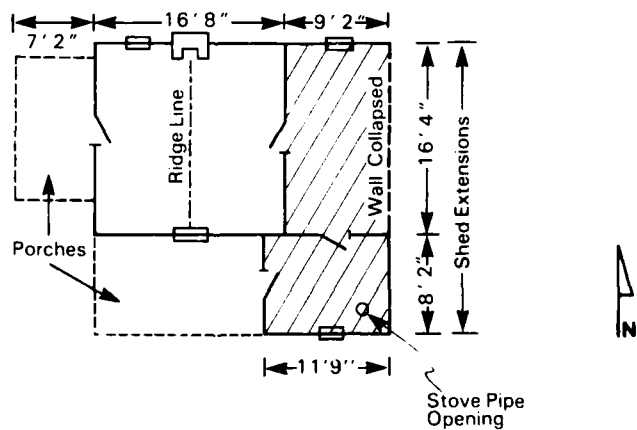


FIGURE 13
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
FOLK HOUSES

Pet Franks' Single Pen house, Site 22M0986, is located on the western edge of Section 6 approximately 300 feet south of the river. The frame structure consists of a Single Pen cell 16 feet 8 inches across its gable end and 16 feet 4 inches from gable to gable. Appended to the central cell are shed extensions; a bedroom shed 9 feet 2 inches deep extends the full length of the 16 foot 4 inch facade; a kitchen shed 8 feet 2 inches deep and 11 feet 9 inches long is built next to the south end of the 9 foot 2 inch shed and the clear gable end of the single cell. Porches shelter the main entrance facade and the clear gable end beyond the kitchen shed. A brick chimney is centered on the north gable end of the central cell. Unlike the Sharpley's Bottom Saddlebag and Dogtrot structures discussed above, Pen Franks' Single Pen showed no evidence of electric light fixtures. Only a few bricks were noted as corner supports, although the main entrance facade porch posts rested on concrete piers. The Single Pen cell of Pet Franks' house is slightly larger than three Upper Tombigbee frame Single Pens measured by Wilson, but the 7 foot porch and 8 to 9 foot shed depths precisely conform to his observations on a comparable sample from north Alabama (Wilson 1981:69,71).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

The Phase I Preliminary Report History contains a great deal of information on the introduction and practice of slavery and the transition to tenancy in Sharpley's Bottom. The story of Chickasaw land sales, of Whitfield's development of the River Plantation, of Sharpley's arrival in Aberdeen, of his purchase of the Bottom, of his disputed bequeathal of the land to his mixed race children, and of the varieties of tenant farming practiced there provide a strong basis for understanding the historical context of Sharpley's Bottom. The following recommendations for additional research and testable hypotheses are presented to gain as much information as possible on the lives of the people in the Bottom, and to use this information to analyze and interpret the material culture data recovered from the Bottom.

1. Transition From Plantation Slavery to Tenant Farming

The rapid change from slavery to tenant farming may have been based in part on the antebellum practice of tenancy. This hypothesis can be tested by examining Whitfield's legal transactions in the Monroe County Chancery Court to see if he recorded any antebellum tenant agreements for the River Plantation.

2. Patterns of Postbellum Tenancy

It may be possible to delineate a household by household and year by year reconstruction of tenant farming in Sharpley's Bottom. This reconstruction can be attempted by using Monroe County marriage and birth records, manuscript census schedules, Monroe County Deeds of Trust, depositions regarding Sharpley's contested estate, and Sharpley's Bottom account books in an effort to identify distinct tenant farming parcels and distinct parcel occupants from year to year.

3. Demise of Tenancy

Tenant farming may have declined because of increased agricultural mechanization, and the introduction of external sources of credit and income. Hypotheses for the demise of tenancy in the Bottom can be tested by investigation of New Deal Farm Security Administration documents if they can be located for Sharpley's Bottom, and by examination of Monroe County Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service records.

4. Folk Housing Hypotheses

a. Upper Tombigbee research by Wilson, Moe's Monroe County, Mississippi survey, and measurements of standing structures in the vicinity of Sharpley's Bottom all indicate that twentieth-century tenant houses in the study area were primarily frame single and double cell residences which measured roughly 16 feet on a side. Shed rooms were frequently added to the core unit. Piers were concrete, brick or wood, and chimneys were of brick.

b. The Sharpley v. Plant depositions suggest that during the 1890s, rooms and sheds were added to original cells, that structures were torn down and moved, and that, log, log and frame, and frame structures existed in approximately equal numbers.

c. Because materials from older structures may have been used for new buildings, and because simple piers were placed on the ground and more permanent foundations were not dug into the ground, it may be difficult to locate and identify former tenant house sites in the Bottom with archeological certainty.

III. ORAL HISTORY

This study of the oral history of Sharpley's Bottom was devised to complement the archeological study. The dimensions of the research problem involved settlement pattern, economic structure and, within and crosscutting both of these, a concern for variability based on racial status. To accommodate these interests several field strategies were adopted. Two interviewers, one black and one white, were sent to ask questions of local people expected to be knowledgeable about area history. Interview questions focused on identifying specific human activities, technological processes or social realities which might be expressed in the archeological remains of Sharpley's Bottom. The goal was to develop categories of information that would provide a starting place to work up archeological hypotheses with testable implications.

METHODOLOGY

If the archeological phase of the work is to deal intelligently with the problems of settlement pattern and economic processes, it is necessary for the oral historical phase of the project to demonstrate the existence of a separate social entity called Sharpley's Bottom and to make a preliminary definition of its economic system. To accomplish this, questions were asked about specific activities, about scheduling both in terms of daily and seasonal rounds, about kin relations and about the conceptual boundary of Sharpley's Bottom. Further, the work was divided between the two interviewers with E. Suzanne Carter interviewing white informants and C. Jason Dotson interviewing black informants.

As the project began there was strong evidence to suggest that Sharpley's Bottom was in fact a separate social entity, so oral history questions were designed to expand this information and determine additional detail about the internal and external settlement pattern. A mapping exercise was organized to provide data based on remembered experiences, which would help isolate structures, activities and social processes in Sharpley's Bottom. In as much as the entire economy of the area was based on cotton, it became necessary to understand the economic processes which centered around the production and sale of that crop. Inquiries about cotton production and distribution led to discussions of household economies and farm economies which in turn led to data on farming techniques, household activities and home/farm production of goods.

Starting with questions derived from these general categories, the interviewers made field modifications in response to the subjects people actually talked about. For example, while initially no references were made to whisk making, it became very clear after a few interviews that the manufacture of home-brewed liquor was a major activity. Therefore, as the oral historians worked in the first stage of this research, they altered their questions to capture the essence of the main themes which developed in the interviews. In an agricultural community such as

Aberdeen it is impossible to divorce social reality from the concerns of farmers: soil productivity, rainfall, flood and drought, and crop disease. Politics is, of course, always a theme of major interest, and because Aberdeen is in the Cotton South, the theme of political repression was ever present. The Civil War and especially the Reconstruction period played a large role in the historical background of today's people. They spoke too, of the antiliqor laws which resulted in the vast bootleg whiskey trade that permeated the farming communities in Alabama and Mississippi during and after the Depression.

Although it played a small role in most of the interviews with white respondents, the theme of social relations between rich and poor, and black and white, was highlighted among black respondents. The notion that everyone was poor and never expected to be rich went hand in hand with the expressions of proper social behavior for social interactions. And as all of these forces, as well as natural disasters, political disasters and social changes, impinged on economic matters, the questions of economic hardships and processes were discussed and often enlarged upon. Rain and crops, North and South, black and white, rich and poor, were the themes which most often came up in a discourse about the local history.

The method for collecting oral history was very simple. It involved making contact with informants, conducting interviews and compiling the results. A questionnaire was developed before going into the field for the purpose of guiding the content of the interviews.

The scope-of-work called for an initial two-day period for pretesting the questionnaire to eliminate awkward questions. This was accomplished June 19 and 20, 1980. As a result, some of the questions were dropped and others were rearranged. It was discovered that many of the questions were irrelevant for most of the people who were interviewed. In addition to the questionnaire, a series of self-carbon forms were prepared as a means of recording data of specific importance to the historical and archeological research. The forms recorded the following types of information:

1. Kinship - Ascending
2. Kinship - Descending
3. Food
4. Residents
5. Farm Business, Specific Information

6. Houses
7. Map
8. Farm - How it was worked
9. Photographic Record
10. Additional Information

These forms were intended to have three uses. One copy was to accompany the taped record of each successful interview, one copy was to work with during the compilation of data and hypothesis development stage and one copy was to be left with the informant. Most of the self-carbon forms were too unwieldy for an interview situation and only one informant wanted to keep a copy. The kinship and the map forms were the only ones which proved to be a practical means for recording written information during an interview. However, the remaining forms proved to be an excellent means of categorizing data after the fact while reviewing the tapes of the interviews.

Upon arriving in Aberdeen, the first order of business was locating informants. Some initial leads were provided by the field historian who had a list of local historians as well as people with some connection to Sharpley's Bottom. Almost everyone who agreed to be interviewed suggested others who had some knowledge of area history. In this way a list of respondents was quickly developed.

Potential informants were contacted by phone and an interview date was arranged. After arriving at the appointed time, and after introductions, the researcher asked permission to record the interview on tape. As specified in the proposal, a 3M AVC-60 Tenzar Positrak backed tape was used. If permission to use the tape recorder was denied, handwritten notes of the interview were made. Immediately following such an interview, the researcher, working with the notes, made a tape recorded account of the interview. At the end of a taped interview, the copyright laws covering the use of tape recordings was explained and the release form was presented. No one refused to sign or to allow their testimony to be used, although some people wrote in additional stipulations covering the use of the material.

WHITE INFORMANTS

Introduction

I can't tell you very much about these people other than that there was a man by the name of Sharpley that was one of the early settlers down there...anyway Sharpley I believe is the one who had a, well I don't think he married her, but anyway he's supposed to have had a, lived with a black woman and started a whole bunch of mulattos in here. So it was integration long before the civil rights deal (Turner 1980).

Any oral historical account of a place will be necessarily vague concerning details of the distant past. Stories about times beyond living memory become shortened with repetition and lose some detail as they are passed from generation to generation. With time, stories of the past become standardized and one finds that many informants are in agreement on the essential details of a particular account. When this happens, a story or class of stories begins to take on the characteristics of a folk tale, a traditional story that is told over and over again in a similar if not identical format.

It was expected that we would find a body of folklore about the Whitfields and about Sharpley which would represent the remnant oral history from a time preceding the oldest living informants in Aberdeen. This did not prove to be the case. Among white informants there was a surprisingly general lack of knowledge about both the Whitfields and Sharpley. Other than a story about Alice Whitfield's burial there are no folktales concerning that family. Also, very little is known about Sharpley; his disregard for social mores of the time is the central fact which is remembered and this is mentioned only infrequently. The strong codes of social propriety generally prohibit open discussion of such matters. As one informant stated, "I don't talk about Mr. _____'s family and he doesn't talk about mine." This informant was reluctant to be taped or quoted. Another informant, Mrs. Jo Miller, explained that while people may live unconventional lives in terms of the locally accepted value system, they certainly are not included in social occasions and people simply do not talk about such a family; it's not polite.

However, the search for oral history regarding specific life ways, farming practices, social occasions and family histories was more successful. Many older citizens of Aberdeen, who were born before the turn of the century, carry much of this information in their memory as part of their life experience. Of course each person cannot experience all facets of community life. Therefore, the memories of many people are needed to prepare a composite picture. Whereas folk traditions may be similar when recounted by many people, living memory often provides divergent answers to the same questions. It is from the sketchy oral tradition and the richer living memory that the history of Aberdeen and Sharpley's Bottom is drawn.

We expected to discover that Sharpley's Bottom had indeed been identified and had functioned as a viable, cohesive society. This expectation was borne out through a variety of indices which nicely complement the documentary research. One of the more subtle, yet convincing, pieces of evidence is the ability and willingness of informants to name and set boundaries to a place on the river. In the process of naming and describing the place they also elaborated on material and social aspects of the internal structure of the community as well as its ties to external communities.

As a place, the bend in the Tombigbee River south of Aberdeen has been known by many names. Sharpley's or Sharkey's Bottom and sometimes, Morgan's Bottom, are the names given the geographical location. Specifically named places within the Bottom are a boat landing, a road and a lake. Although the lake (now a marsh) has had only one identification, Goose Lake, the road has been known as Sharpley or Sharkey Road and Doaks Road and the boat landing has been called Lacky's Ferry, Morgan's Ferry and Morgan's Landing. These changing place names which attend the features of the Bottom are indications of historical changes in ownership and use of the land and the river.

Physiographically the river bottom is said to extend to the Darracott Road. However, since the property lines have not been drawn in accordance with the local physiography, there is some variation among the accounts of just where Sharpley's Bottom is located. It is often identified as extending to the Darracott Road while those more familiar with it identify specific spots, the landing, a railroad track, or a low spot in the road, as the actual entry points (Morgan; Crawford; Frank; Booth). All the informants who had knowledge of Sharpley's Bottom indicated that it was an isolated place, a place which seemed like an "island" cut off from the rest of the world (Booth).

Early History

In the oral tradition, Sharpley's Bottom began as a social reality with the James Indian family and ceased at the end of the sharecropping era. It is widely known that the James family owned much of the land around Aberdeen and that Robert Gordon, Aberdeen's founder, had gone out of his way to qualify as a settler and land owner (Turner; Miller; Crawford; Hamilton). Bill Turner believed that Sharpley's Bottom had been part of the Choctaw Nation and that there was an Indian trail across the river somewhere on the Bottom. He speculated that this trail was the origin of the Sharpley Road which leads into town, and suggested that this trail was the origin of Chestnut Street in Aberdeen.

The pioneer period in Monroe County is said to have begun with small, one family farms on the east side of the Tombigbee River (Crawford, Helen). Although there were some plantations there, they were not so big as the ones which were later established to the west of the river. This difference is explained in terms of both the timing of settlement and

the character of the soil. To the east of the river the soil was not so productive as that of the prairie on the west side. Therefore, when the pioneer families arrived around the time of statehood to settle those lands which were available on the east bank, they generally established small farms. Later, around 1832, when the west bank was open to settlement, the rich character of the prairie soils attracted large planters from North Carolina. The variation in soils, time of settlement and size of the farms and plantations is further cited as resulting in sharp social division in the early social life of the county. Rich planters are said to have lived in Aberdeen, while farmers with medium to small operations lived in the country (Crawford, Helen).

Although there was a period of 30 years between the time the west side of the river was settled and the onset of the Civil War, the oral accounts of county history make little mention of that period. Many voices speak of the hardships that were suffered during the war and of the changes that followed it. But people speak only in generalities of the years prior to the war. For example, it was mentioned that, inasmuch as slaves were considered valuable property, they were protected and taken care of. One informant notes that estate settlements of the period contain records showing the purchase of clothing and shoes for slaves and goes on to suggest that if a landowner mistreated his slaves he probably did not take care of anything else (Crawford, Helen). An older informant says that none of the ex-slaves whom she knew as a child ever spoke of being mistreated (Howell). However, many people referred to the practice of white male slave owners cohabitating with their female slaves (Crawford, Helen; Morgan; Turner; Miller).

Civil War

Most of the remembrances of the Civil War are from stories which have been passed down as family history. Some of the stories are about soldiers and their wartime experiences and, remarkably, many of them are about the women and the ways in which they coped with ordinary living. Nina Elizabeth Jones Howell says, "when we were children... we still felt very heavily the influence of the Civil War." She explains that it was remembered as being so hard because when the North blockaded the southern ports, people couldn't get sugar, baking powder, soda, medicines and a lot of things that were necessary for life. Salt was especially missed because salt curing was the primary method for preserving meat.

The Yankees came through and burned houses and crops, especially the corn and cotton which was stacked along the railroad. "They burned thousands and thousands of bushels of corn and cotton out on the prairie" (Crawford, Helen). Mrs. Howell tells that an old man, an ex-slave, used to recount a story of the war to her. He said that he was a child on a local plantation and when the Yankees were known to be near, his mistress told him to take all the livestock down to a cane break along the river and hide. He did this quite successfully. Those who did not have time to take similar precautions found their livestock run off and had their stores

of meat and food taken from the smokehouse. Mrs. Crawford had an ancestress who watched as some Yankee soldiers mixed lye into her only barrel of molasses because they could not take the molasses with them.

That times were hard for women is universally agreed upon. The folklore that has passed from older white women to the younger ones concerning the practice of white men cohabitating with slaves is that this intercourse provided a form of birth control for the white women (Crawford). It was not a practice which the women endorsed. The lives of women, white and black, were intimately tied in many other ways. During the war, with the lack of doctors and medicines, it is told that the "old fashioned ways of treating diseases from Africa" were adopted (Howell). Parched corn was used as a coffee substitute; sage was used for tea, and catnip tea was adopted as a means of treating baby colic. Mrs. Helen Crawford recounts the story of one of her remarkable ancestors, a woman who took over doctoring for her community during the war. One of the black women had reached the time to deliver her baby and the baby was breeched. The labor was long and hard and, finally, impossible. Fashioning a pair of forceps from a barrel stave, the "doctor" delivered the baby and saved the woman's life. It was not to be expected that the child could survive and it did not.

While these stories and memories passed on in the oral tradition do not specifically concern Sharpley's Bottom, they do provide a background to the social context in which that river bottom community developed. Regardless of its isolation and independent social expression, the Bottom was tied resolutely to the town of Aberdeen and the larger society of the county. And, it is this society which set the limits and possibilities for internal/social development as surely as geography set the limits and possibilities for some of its material development.

The Whitfields

Remembrances about the Whitfields are virtually nonexistent. Very little has passed into the oral history regarding the family. Mrs. Betty Jo White, who currently resides with her husband in the old Whitfield Plantation house, has a letter from one of the descendants which provides scant information. A man named William Mansfield Shaw is said to have built the house in 1844. During the years the Whitfields lived in it there were cedar trees growing all the way from the house to the cemetery. Thus it is called Cedar Grove. For many years Needham Whitfield refused to allow the city of Aberdeen to cut Chestnut Street across his land; the result was that the street ended at his property line. It was also during this time that Whitfield Street was used as the main road down to his plantation at the Bottom.

The one genuine folktale about the Whitfields which was heard during this research concerns the cemetery. Alice Whitfield was interred in a mausoleum at the cemetery in a location which could be seen from the front porch of the house. It is said that Needham buried his wife sitting

in her rocker because she loved to sit and rock and knit. Although the story is told, it is not believed to be true and is repeated as a humorous piece of local lore.

The Sharpleys

Although very few people know anything about William Sharpley, and many do not even know where Sharpley's Bottom is, those who do know of him agree that he was something of a mystery. He is remembered as a man who broke the social codes by living with his black slave and leaving his property to the children of that union. Little beyond these basic facts has found its way into the local oral history. Congruent with local custom it is to be expected that he was probably accepted as a local business man but was not a part of the social circle of other plantation owners.

The family remembrances are almost as vague. He was and is referred to as "Grandpa Sharpley" (Hogan), and it is said that he had a glass walking cane. Family history had it that he had met his second wife, Eva Tatum, in Ohio. On a hunch Beverly Shaw* called Oberlin College and discovered that two of his daughters born of Silvie, Josephine and Sylvester, had attended public school in Oberlin. Even more revealing was the discovery that Eva and her sister Maggie were also students in these schools at the same time.

The girls attended the following schools during the years from 1874 to 1878:

Sylvester Sharpley, 13 - 14 years old, attended public school in 1875 and 1876;

Josephine Sharpley, 15 - 16 years old, attended public school in 1875 and 1876;

Eva Tatum, 15 - 19 years old, attended public school in 1874 and 1875, attended Oberlin College in 1877 and 1878 where she was enrolled in the Ladies Literary Course

Maggie Tatum, 15 - 19 years old, attended public school in 1874 and 1875, attended Oberlin College in 1877 and 1878 where she was enrolled in the English course of the Preparatory Department and the Conservatory of Music.

* Beverly Shaw is the daughter-in-law of Myrtle Ruth Hogan who was a great granddaughter of Silvie and William B. Sharpley. Myrtle Ruth lives with Beverly in Omaha, Nebraska. They were both interviewed by telephone and were the only blacks interviewed by E. S. Carter, the white oral historian.

Eva and her sister Maggie came from Wilmington, Arkansas. The town is now extinct but it was a steamboat landing on the Ouachita River in Union County, Arkansas (Santeford 1980). It had a factory which built and distributed cotton gins and one of its early settlers was E. P. Tatum (Santeford 1980). The Tatums were supposed to be part Indian, part black and part white; the Sharpley girls were part white and part black, and family history says that Josephine had blond hair and blue eyes.

Although the facts are not known, there is speculation that William Sharpley met Eva Tatum in the summer of 1875, possibly while escorting his daughters to school. At any rate, she returned to Sharpley's Bottom to teach and subsequently married Sharpley. Eva died in 1886, at about the age of 27; it is thought she was insane. Sharpley died two years later and is said to have been buried in a family plot on the property. For years, so the family story goes, his ghost could be seen on certain dark nights by those sitting on the porches of the houses on the hill. He was said to carry a lantern and walk the double ditches, checking them over and keeping a lookout on his land.

Sylvester Sharpley who was named for her mother Silvie, married one of Eva's brothers, Joseph Tatum, on November 10, 1881. They had two daughters, Alice and Mary Lou (Lessie); Alice grew up and married James (Sonny) Strong and continued to farm until she was very old. Lessie married and moved to town, only returning to the farm much later. Alice was said to be a "very strong woman who carried status like a white woman: she could go wherever she wanted to go and say whatever she wanted to say. Neither she nor Lessie were afraid and they did not bite their tongue about anything" (Shaw). When they were growing up, their mother, Sylvester would go down to the quarters* and get one or two little children to come up and play with the girls while she went down to look over the fields and the hands (Hogan). Joseph Tatum mostly took care of the books and made sure everything was in proper order. He is remembered as a stern man, who didn't take anything off anyone, but who was always good to his grandchildren (Hogan). About once a year Joseph and Sylvester took the girls on the train to Arkansas to visit the Tatum relatives (Shaw).

Myrtle Ruth Hogan, Lessie's daughter, remembers Aberdeen and the farm down in the Bottom as the places where she grew up. She was born in a house on Chestnut Street in Aberdeen. It was across from a pasture where a garment factory was to be built in later years. The Aberdeen of her childhood was a small country town with dirt streets and overflowing wells in the intersections of three of the downtown streets. By the time Myrtle was born, there were electric lights downtown, horses and buggies were still very much in evidence although automobiles had come to town as early as 1904 (Cooper; Howell; Hogan).

* Quarters is a term used by several informants to mean different things. Here it means, "living quarters which were located in the Bottom as opposed to the hilltop".

Saturday night was a special time when people would come to Aberdeen from the country to do their weekly shopping and visit. It was a time for socializing; people walked up and down the sidewalks laughing and having a good time. The ice cream parlor was especially busy; Myrtle and friends would sit outside on the cars eating ice cream and watching the people go by. Inside, the parlor had those iron chairs and tables with the openwork scroll backs which are so much a symbol of the times.

During the week it was necessary to tend to the chickens and the hog they kept on their place, as well as the vegetable garden. Although they often bought butter and milk from a neighbor, Myrtle, at times, had to churn butter, "Something I hate to do" (Hogan). The milk would splash all over her and in the summertime the flies would swarm around. It was not until 1920 that screens were generally available. Prior to that, they would cut up rags and put them on sticks to shoo the flies away with. Sometimes they had to make their soap too, but living in town relieved them of many of the more onerous chores still performed by country folks. In approximately 1940, Lessie put cows and hogs back on the farm and started going down there every morning to tend to them; she returned in the afternoon. She had a flat-bed wagon with iron wheels that served as her transportation. Like her mother, Sylvester, Lessie began to oversee her farm herself and she also worked in the field from time to time. Cotton and corn were raised on the farm while watermelon was raised in town.

Over the years, Myrtle Ruth had come to learn about Sharpley's Bottom. She heard that the original plantation house had burned down and had been rebuilt. She also learned the location of the slave quarters and gin lot. The old home place, Sharpley's house, had also burned. But her mother's home, a two room house on the east side of the road, is still thought to be standing. She remembers that Alice's house burned too, and that there was a blacksmith shop. She also recalls the Crossroads Church as a place she visited a time or two.

The Economy

The city of Aberdeen had served as the commercial center for the cotton industry over many years but it had not grown as an industrial center and many people charge that this contributed to the area's poor economic standing. At one time the city had been a major cotton exporting center and for this reason was rich, but by the turn of the century it was more of a sleepy agricultural town. As Charles Hamilton said, "Nobody was in a hurry, nobody expected to get rich, you expected to stay in debt." People stood along the sidewalks during the day talking to their neighbors. They had time to read the papers at the store in the morning and you weren't interrupting business. You knew everyone who came in the store, or if you didn't know them immediately it turned out they were a cousin of someone you knew, "why you almost knew the dogs that came to town."

Meridian Street had several cafes for black people and on Saturday the country people would come in and the streets would be so full you sometimes couldn't get through. Stores would extend credit to the black people because they knew they would get paid by the white landowner. The economy was dominated by the tenant farming system and by garment manufacturing. As one man said, "I grew up in this town and if you didn't pick cotton or sew britches there wasn't anything else to do" (Lee). There had been a sawmill, Burg's Mill, in town about 1904 and a garment factory was operating early in the century. Another factory produced buttons from mussel shells taken from the Tombigbee River. In spite of the limited clothing industry which people remember, the economic mainstay was cotton. Aberdeen was tied to the cotton farms and they in turn were tied to Aberdeen.

The entire economy of cotton farming was based on credit; cash was a scarce commodity for most people. For example, Mrs. Nina Howell and her sister spent two days chopping a log into firewood when she was a girl (ca. 1903) and it was sold for one dollar. She and her sister each realized a quarter from their work. When she was 11 years old she had spent Christmas week working at the garment factory for fifty cents a day. The black woman who helped with the family wash was paid one dollar plus her dinner for the day's work; "Big money" as Mrs. Howell says.

Each year the cotton farmer took out a loan from the bank to get started, a loan which he had to pay back with interest. From this money he supported his tenants and his farming operation. Tenants were given housing, food, the equipment they needed to work with and medical care. In return a landowner gave everyone who worked for him credit on his account for each day's work. If a farm had a commissary there was one day set aside to distribute the goods sold out of the store. It was called Issue Day, and generally staples such as flour, sugar, salt, soda, tobacco, etc., were available. For the most part tenants were not paid with cash although there were times when they needed cash and were paid that way (Howell). If they bought their goods in town the charge was simply put on their account. The two main factors in the economy which people remember as causing hardship were the interest rates necessary to pay the bank and the freight rates charged by the railroads. Interest rates were discussed in passing, but freight rates were mentioned by several informants and are remembered to have been highly discriminatory against the South. It is said that the North used uneven freight rates as a means of keeping the South down.

The weather, of course, is always a major consideration for farmers, and flood and drought have taken their toll. However, the single event which is remembered for causing the greatest hardship was the boll weevil infestation in 1916. It is said to have devastated the county and broken up the economic structure. Farmers were at the mercy of the boll weevil and they did not understand it nor did they have insecticides to fight it. The only way to get rid of the weevils was to burn the crop or to pick them off by hand. As one man said, it wasn't good but "it beat nothing" (Crawford, Frank). In addition to the boll weevil, there was

a flood that year in July and "the boll weevil just ate everything up" (Crawford). Everyone was broke, they couldn't get credit and many had to leave. Everyone was scared.

The cycle of credit was hard to break. Landowners were in debt to banks and depended on their tenants to make a good crop. Goods and services were provided on credit to tenants with the understanding that accounts would be paid after the crop was sold. Cash was scarce. In fact, money was available only after harvest and it was then that bills were paid. A little was put aside to get you through the coming year and by Christmas it was gone. Even preachers only got paid once a year. "Stores billed you once a year because you weren't supposed to have money but once a year" (Hamilton).

Around the turn of the century, country people lived on subsistence farms; everything was made on the place. Wool was carded and woven, clothing sewed, bedding sewed and blankets quilted. Livestock, mostly hogs, was raised, butchered, cured and stored, chickens were raised for meat and eggs. Cows were kept for milk and butter, kitchen gardens were grown for daily fruit and vegetables. Whisky was among the commodities made on the farm.

"If a man raised his own corn, why shouldn't he make his own whisky? A lot of people felt that way about it; why should he have to pay a tax on it?" (Hamilton). In an economy based primarily on credit, making and selling whisky was a means of procuring ready cash. "It was common for tenants to be in the moonshine business and it was not uncommon for landowners to be in it too...Landowners looked the other way because it was a way for tenants to make money" (Pace).

There are many conflicting stories about bootleg whisky making in Sharpley's Bottom. Some believe that the sandy river-bottom soil was too unreliable for successful year-in, year-out, cotton growing, whereas farming did provide a perfect front for whisky making. Others say the Bottom had a worse reputation than it deserved and there was not really much going on down there. It was believed that whisky was moved on the river, but two men, knowledgeable in the ways of bootleggers, agree that the river was too risky because an agent could watch someone on the river and wait at the landing place to catch the bootlegger (Bruff; Pace). Also the Bottom has only one entrance, making it very easy to apprehend a shipment leaving on that road. On the other hand, it has been suggested that there was a "backdoor", another road out of the Bottom (Bruff and Baldwin).

In spite of the minor disagreements in the oral history of moonshine and Sharpley's Bottom, there is widespread acknowledgment of Sonny Strong's prowess as a distiller of whisky. It is said he made the very best that could be had: chartered whisky. Some believe that the water from the artesian wells was the ingredient that made the whisky superior, while others contend it was the oak barrel which gave it its flavor. Sonny

is said to have operated freely because everybody liked his whisky and no one was willing to turn him in (Bruff and Baldwin). "A lot of times there was a sort of unwritten agreement that as long as no one made an affidavit against you, they would leave you alone" (Lee). Generally, informants agree that there was one large operation, someplace near the Crossroads Church, as well as several smaller ones. Sonny's was the main still and the others were "fly by night" outfits (Bruff).

Everyone was making whisky and no one thought anything of it. The law was not going to arrest a man for drinking whisky as long as he behaved like a gentleman (Turner). It was a way of obtaining cash in an economy where credit predominated, and it was not until the price of sugar went too high to allow home-brewed whisky to be sold for a reasonable price that bootlegging died out. Many people place this at about 1970, a time which coincided with the demise of the tenant farming system.

Farm Life

The farm was a unit, you raised most everything...It was a hard life but I honestly believe that we were happier then than people are now. (Howell)

Using these words, Mrs. Nina Elizabeth Jones Howell described life on a farm from around the turn of the century until after World War II. Mrs. Howell is an 89-year-old woman who grew up on a farm in Monroe County just outside of Aberdeen. Her testimony is invaluable in providing details of daily farm activities and includes information on scheduling, activity patterns, participation of adults and children in household activities, details on processes and materials, rationales for specific actions and the naming of tools and behaviors. The detail which she gives to her account provides a means of comparing the white and black experience in the tenant farming system and may offer some insight into status differences in materials and activities. In truth, it may be that her life as a girl growing up on a cotton farm was not so very different in its daily round from that of the tenants who lived on her father's farm. The transcript of the interview with Mrs. Howell will be included with the final report so only the highlights are paraphrased below. She says,

I was born in a log cabin in 1891...it had three rooms and a cellar. In 1902 the Tombigbee flooded and while the house was on the top of the hill, the cribs and barns were in the bottom; the water went over the barn and ruined all the fodder, hay, corn, cotton seed, everything. Our cows were turned loose in the river bottom and in the winter they ate the green leaves from the cane so we didn't have to feed them too much, a little cottonseed and hay. Hogs were also turned loose and would come when they were called to be fed corn and slop.

In the winter the hogs were butchered and the meat packed in salt. At the time it was killed we had fresh meat but of course we didn't have refrigerators and most of the meat was used to make sausages and lard. We had a smokehouse and we'd salt the ham and the shoulders and middlings down and smoke them. The sausage was stuffed into the intestines...we had a sausage machine, a thing which had a trick on it that you could use to fill the intestine after it was cleaned. We hung them in the top of the smokehouse and made a fire with hickory chips. This was the only way of preserving meat, the smokehouse was our store, it had all our supplies in it.

We raised our own cows and chickens but we didn't eat beef very often. Every summer someone would kill a beef and sell it or divide it among the neighbors. Butter was churned every day and the milk and butter were put in the well to keep cool. We had what was called a milk cooler, a box which would hold a gallon or two, we'd tie a rope to it and let it down in the well until dinner.

Aberdeen had three artesian wells but you couldn't use the water for washing because it made the clothes so brown from the iron in the water. Wells were dug and a boxing was put around them, over the center there was a hole about 18 inches square; most wells had a cover too. A pulley was suspended from the center of the cover and a rope brought through the pulley and attached to a wooden bucket. A windlass, ours was a piece of a gum log, had a handle and a crank at the end. When you turned the crank it wound the rope and pulled the bucket up. The bucket usually held a gallon and not over two gallons because the children did a lot of the water drawing.

My grandmother always said that a garment was half worn out when you started patching it; we wore our dresses four days in a row and then changed them. It was not unusual, some of the richest people in Aberdeen wore the same dress four days in a row. We bathed on Saturday and changed clothes. The clothes went into the laundry for Monday wash. Washday was hard on everybody, if it was wet you just had to wait for a dry day and sometimes the clothes line would break and you'd have to do it all over again. Of course wash water had to be drawn from the well and put into the various pots and tubs. There was a black pot for starting with, clothes were boiled in it; this was called boiled water. Then there was the first rinse in a wooden tub, (years later we had a zinc tub) and the second rinse was in a second tub, the final rinse with bluing was in yet a third tub. Children played around or helped out depending on their age; most people washed in the backyard. We had a wash board, a chunking stick, lye soap, brown soap and bluing.

We made our own lye soap by saving ashes from the fireplace and putting them in an ash hopper. The hopper was made from boards and had a little trough in the shape of a "V" at the bottom. You had to keep it covered so it wouldn't get ruined by the rain before you were ready to use it. Then you'd pour water over the ashes and catch it as it came out the bottom and put it in the big black washpot, after that you'd add any scraps of meat and old grease and fats that had been saved. In this way we made our own soap. We made everything for ourselves. Every house had a shoe last, shoe tacks and a shoe hammer, and we each had two pair of shoes, an everyday pair and a Sunday pair. When your shoe got a hole in the bottom (we walked a lot in those days) you'd buy a half-sole for .25 or .50. These were soaked in water and then someone would put the new sole on your shoe and you wore it to school the next day.

Cotton and wool were prepared and woven on looms to make homespun cloth for clothing and quilts. Most of the sewing was done at home. There was a material called hickory cloth that was very sturdy and had blue and white or brown and white stripes; it was used to make work shirts for the men. Yellow domestic was used to make sheets, this was done by piecing two strips together which resulted in a seam down the center of the sheet.

Flies and mosquitos presented one of the most onerous problems to people living on a farm. The flies swarmed all the time and it was particularly difficult to churn and keep them out of the butter. They swarmed around sick people and around the dinner table. Before screens were available, the country people made a device to wave in the air and keep the flies off. This was a piece of cane or a stick with either newspaper, colored paper or rags attached to it to make a sort of fan. Two foot strips of newspaper were sewed close to the cane and then cut into smaller strips about one inch wide. About three feet of the cane was covered in this way and the fan was used by someone standing at the table to shoo the flies away. The mosquitos caused a great deal of malaria although it was not the same kind of malaria known in other parts of the world. Nevertheless, many people suffered from the chills and fever and it sometimes affected their hearing (Howell, 1980).

Dick Booth, whose father owned and farmed the Bottom for a while in the 1920s, also remembers the malaria. He says that when he was a child he used to ride his mule down to the Bottom after school with two bottles of Gay's Kill Chill, a patent medicine which was taken for malaria. Even after people got screens it did not really help keep mosquitos out.

Sharpley's Bottom

Sharpley's Bottom is remembered as untravelled country, lovers' lane and whisky making country. When you went out Sharpley Road you felt you were on an island, the Tombigbee River on one side and James Creek on the other made you feel like you were going through a bottle neck (Booth). Alice Strong had a house on top of the hill, which she is reported to have said belonged to Sharpley, and it looked out over the Bottom. In those days the land was cleared and did not have the stands of trees that are there today. Alice was a sort of matriarch for the community. It was a happy, simple life; they were good days (Booth).

The Booth farming operation was overseen by Marion Givens, a black man who lived at a place called the "quarters," an abbreviation for headquarters (Booth). His house was the largest on the farm and was near the barns and the commissary. Although the structure of a C. C. Day sawmill remained on the property, it was no longer in operation by the time John Booth had the farm. However, a large house (Honky Tonk House) thought to have been the boarding place for laborers at the mill was still sitting in a pasture across from the mill. A small two room house near Morgan's Landing was kept up by Uncle Pet Franks for Mr. Booth's use; Uncle Pet was his cook.

Cotton was the chief crop and the tenants worked on shares. During cotton picking season the hands picked cotton, putting it in sacks which were emptied into cotton baskets at the end of the row. At the end of the day a wagon came by and the baskets were thrown into the back to be taken to the cotton house and weighed. When it was time to take the cotton to the gin, any of the hands would drive it in. Dick Booth remembers riding on the cotton into town and waiting for the gin to take the load. It was a social occasion during which people from other farms sat around and ate and visited with one another.

Although many of the families at the Bottom lived near the "quarters" there were other clusters of houses in the lower (southern) section. Each family had its garden where they raised watermelon, cantelope and sweet potatoes. Chickens, cows and hogs were owned in addition to the mules and horses which were supplied by the landowner. Squirrels, quail, rabbit raccoon and opossum were hunted in the woods and catfish were caught in Goose Lake. Mr. Booth ran a commissary where the staple foods were available and he particularly remembers slabs of pork called "streak-of-lean-streak-of-fat". Baseball equipment was available for social occasions and people were free to come and go as they wished.

The single most important aspect of the community which everyone remembers is the artesian well or the wells. They were called free-flowing wells because they did not have to be pumped; this has left a strong imprint in the remembrance of the place. There were three such wells, one by the blacksmith shop, one near the sawmill and one at the southern end of the road nearest the river. Sam Crawford described such a well in the following manner:

You could dig down about 200 feet and get an overflowing well that would last until the casing rotted and if the ground was hard it would last for years and years. It wouldn't be a stream of water after that but it would supply a family. You could put a cypress trough under it and catch you some water, it wouldn't be fresh but you could still drink from it. There was a big well down there and with no place to drain, it caused a big wet spot that grew lillies, like a marsh (Crawford).

Ike Morgan described the process of making a well as follows: a five foot piece of pipe with a strainer on the bottom was hammered into the ground, when the top was nearly level with the ground a second length of five foot pipe would be attached and it would be hammered into the ground as well. This process was continued until there was a total of 20 feet of pipe in the ground; at that point a pump would be attached and the water drawn up.

Other places such as the gravel pit and the boat landing are also remembered. Armon Lee recalls that as a child he and some of the other boys in Aberdeen used to dive in the river and come up under the wall of a boathouse that was built for W. B. Harrison's speedboat. Since almost everyone had homemade boats and just tied them up at the river, the speedboat stirred quite a bit of interest among the boys. These same boys used to have an argument every year over who was the first to swim in the river. One New Year's Day, Armon and some friends had made a raft and put it on the river; it sank and stopped the argument. After that, jumping in the river on New Year's Day became a ritual which was sometimes carried out at Morgan's Landing. Before it became a gravel pit, there was a sand pit, a low spot where the river washed in. A dam was built across the river side of the pit and it was closed off so it could be mined for gravel.

Joe T. Morgan, who owned Sharpley's Bottom after John Booth, is remembered as a popular man and a politician. It is said that he didn't want to work with his hands so he went to Birmingham and took a business course. When he returned he possessed a rare skill, he could use a typewriter. He got a job in the Chancery Court and later he successfully ran for the office of Chancery Clerk. During the next few years he served as Supervisor of the 4th District and was elected to the Sheriff's Office. Joe was a businessman with a good reputation; he owned the farm and a mule barn downtown where he sold mules shipped to Mississippi from Tennessee.

During the years Joe had the farm at Sharpley's Bottom, his nephew, Ike Morgan, was an occasional visitor and resident in Aberdeen. Ike worked with his uncle down at the Bottom over a period of years and was rather familiar with the place. He remembers that some of the tenant family names were Paine, Turnipseed, Cucklebur, Berry and Morgan; he thinks the Morgans may have been descended from Morgan family slaves. There was also a man named Hosea Gohlson.

Joe Morgan had the Bottom from the late 1920s until after World War II. He grew cotton and corn and had a few cattle and was always a mule dealer. As sheriff he was involved in checking out whisky stills, but did not go to extremes; if there were complaints he would follow them up but he did not pursue moonshiners on his own initiative. In fact there was quite a bit of whisky making down in the Bottom, with the largest operation belonging to Sonny Strong, although people believed that Sonny was making it for a white man.

The central place on the farm was at a big barn as you went in the gate, most of the big operations were handled out of that barn. So many houses were congregated around the barn that it was a kind of "quarters"*; people there used the overflowing well at the barn. Each family had their own hogs and a few goats for barbecues. Also each family had chickens, a smokehouse and a pen and shed for the hogs. At the houses on the lower end, there were also pens and a shed for the mules since they were too far away to use the main barn. Hog pens would be 12 feet by 16 or 18 feet with a small shed for them to get under during bad weather. A barn for two mules would be 12 feet by 12 feet with a bin and crib built onto the side for the feed. Each family had a wagon to carry things to and from the field, to take to Aberdeen and to get feed from the main barn. Everyone had a small garden for their own vegetables and they hunted squirrel, rabbit, coon, quail, deer and bobcat. Catfish, bass, crappie and brim could be caught in Goose Lake.

Summary

Oral historical accounts indicate that over the years a number of changes were made in the landscape of Sharpley's Bottom. Before Whitfield got the place, it was probably a sandy river bottom with a heavily dissected area near what came to be called the gravel pit and possibly a sand or gravel bar at the mouth of James Creek. Whitfield planted cotton in the Bottom, made a road (possibly following an Indian Trail), and constructed slave quarters. In Sharpley family history the term quarters is still used, but the nature of this residential establishment is unknown. A levee was built along the northern and eastern bend in the river and ditches were excavated through the "lower swags". A ferry was apparently operating near the present day Morgan's Landing and a road may have been cut down to the mouth of James Creek.

Two residential areas seem to have been on the hill overlooking the bottom and east of the Ferry Landing area, just south of the levee. Through time, houses were built farther and farther out in the bottom and outbuildings may also have been constructed. At various times there was a sawmill, a baseball diamond, a mule barn, a blacksmith shop, a gin lot, the Crossroads Church, stills, a whisky joint, and a railroad. At some point in recent history the dissected area near the ferry was dammed up and a gravel pit dug out and, after Joe Morgan sold the land, a man named Wilson tried to cut down the levee with a bulldozer.

* Meaning living quarters.

Among the informants there were opposing thoughts on the virtues of the levee. It was pointed out that during really bad floods the levee produced a sort of water fall effect, with water pouring over the top and churning up the ground below. Others say that since the levee has been cut back the "old dead river sand" can wash in and this is very bad for any agricultural use of the land.

In the next phase of the oral history it will be critical to pin down with more precision the exact uses of the land and the sequence of changes that were made. This can be accomplished by referring to all aspects of the present research, documents study, oral history and archeology and developing a set of specific questions to ask informants. With these questions in mind, the key informants, Dick Booth, Ike Morgan and Sam Crawford will be requested to make a visit to the Bottom and identify the places they have already talked about and to elaborate on their previous testimony. Ike Morgan is the only one of the three who has been down to Sharpley's Bottom with one of the research team, and unfortunately the day he was able to do this his time was severely limited. In addition there are several people who do not live in the area and whose testimony is extremely valuable. These people are the Sharpley descendents, Mrs. Myrtle Ruth Hogan and her daughter-in-law, Beverly Shaw. Mrs. Hogan grew up on the Bottom and Mrs. Shaw has already done a good bit of research on the family history. As noted above, these women both live in Omaha, Nebraska and would need to be brought down to Aberdeen as part of the project or a researcher will need to go to Omaha to obtain an in-depth interview. In the next phase of research it is expected that we will be able to develop a more detailed picture of the life of sharecroppers and the material changes which took place at Sharpley's Bottom.

BLACK INFORMANTS

The McBeths, they were related to the Tatums.
First cousins, two sisters had the two white men, somethin' like that; that the way it was! But who were they? That's 'fore my time...

Recalling the remote past is a tenuous business at best because, except in extremely rare cases, most of us remember selectively. Time is collapsed and temporal and spatial frames either blend or blur. That is to say, it is not uncommon for an informant to remember an event in time but to confuse the place where the event occurred; or, the informant may remember that a specific event occurred at a particular place and confuse the year as well as the persons. Because the average age of Sharpley's Bottom informants is 70, and because they were asked to recall events which occurred 50 years ago, their recall was not perfect.

Most of them were aware of the dubious reliability of their remembered sequence of events and requested that either the interviewer return for another session or that he collect a corroborative statement from someone else. Memory jarring, then, is essential to the collection of oral history; this means that in almost every instance a follow-up interview is required. More than that, the time between interviews allows informants to contact each other and to discuss between and among themselves their common past. The project has gathered much invaluable data, but it has hardly scratched the surface of potentially available information. Much remains to be done regarding Sharpley's Bottom, and it is urgent as there are but a few persons still living who resided in Sharpley's Bottom in the 1920s and 1930s.

The hypothesis that there were several levels of status differentiation between master and slave, overseer and slave, black slave and mulatto slave, as well as between master and overseer has been borne out, in part, by a number of studies. And one may suppose that the differentiation system remained fairly intact in Sharpley's Bottom during the nineteenth century when there were presumably a number of mulatto children inhabiting the area and at least one interracial couple occupying the same dwelling. Several questions we re-pursued relative to masters and slaves with negligible positive responses. Almost all informants responded in a manner similar to Mr. Willie Paine when queried about slavery in any of its particulars: "...but now, that's 'fore my time!" Although it was not possible to get significant information regarding nineteenth-century slaves or slavery, it was possible to get much data regarding twentieth-century peonage and plantation life in Monroe County, Mississippi, especially in Sharpley's Bottom.

Three families who had lived in Sharpley's Bottom were located during the fieldwork phase. All of them were either born there, arrived there at an early age, or were young adults living there in the 1920s.

The Belles: Father - William Belle, mother deceased, son - Cecil, daughter - Janice, and Aunt - Myrtle Ruth (Hogan) and William Belle married Josephine Tatum, a Sharpley descendent.

The Paines: Willie, his wife Mary Lee and daughter, lived in Sharpley's Bottom from the mid-1920s until the 1950s. Mr. Paine arrived in the area between 1925 and 1927 from Darracott, Mrs. Paine came with her family when she was about eight years old, and their daughter was born there.

The Gholsons: Father deceased, mother - Charity - arrived in Sharpley's Bottom around 1928, remained until 1957 or 1958. All of her children, Snapper, W.C., and Joyce were born there.

Many persons were interviewed who knew of the Bottom or had been to a picnic there, or had hunted, fished, or played there. However, the above named families were the only ones who had actually lived and worked there. Others may yet be found. The Paines, Belles, Gholsons and other knowledgeable informants kindly provided leads - names and possible addresses of friends and neighbors who had lived in the Bottom. One such person (family) is James Ely, who ran a popular business in Sharpley's Bottom - the Greasy P. (pig). Youngsters liked to go there to listen to the juke box, dance, and drink soda water, and older folk went to listen to a guitar picker, drink white whisky, gamble, and have fun; they fought some too.

Sharecropping

Almost any black person who lived in Aberdeen, Mississippi prior to the 1960s knew of Sharpley's Bottom. Situated in South Aberdeen, its twelve hundred plus acres are composed of a sandy soil, which was not considered very good by comparison to the rich black soil in the prairie area west of Aberdeen. And yet, by all accounts, an abundance of cotton and corn were produced in the Bottom. From the 1920s to the 1960s, Sharpley's Bottom was populated by blacks who "worked on shares" ...either "halves" or "fourths"...and occasionally by a "tenant farmer." The sharecropper system was operative wherever the slave plantation system had been dismantled and while it is possible that a sharecropper somewhere, at some point in time, made a profit and shared in the "sellin' and settlement," it did not happen in Sharpley's Bottom. Not a single sharecropping informant claimed to have made a profit, no matter the abundance of production nor the years of producing. When the Paines were asked, for example, what they did with their share of the profits, they were obviously astounded at the question:

Mr. P: With what? He (the landowner, Joe Morgan in this instance) did the sellin' and did the settlement; he give you what he want you to have!

Mrs. P: Didn't care how much you make...if you just hadda made another bale, just had planted that other acre over there, you'da come out clear. That's what he would always tell you; and you'd have enough paper to fill up a card-board box...

Ms. Joyce Gholson: Out of all that time (about 29 years) I don't think we cleared no money.

Folks became accustomed to their deprivation and to their relative isolation in the Bottom, which was a kind of insulation against the harshness of the outside world. During the early days, before the Farm Security Administration, Mr. Willie Paine believes that:

It was just the same, I imagine, now get what I'm sayin', as it was in slavery times only, you know, they (we) just wasn't driven like the people drove'm in slavery time... other words, they got up and work from sun to sun.

Mr. Paine elaborated:

Ain't no different from the way they were treated and a mule. The man feed'em outta the store, had to go to 'em to get the groceries and stuff...

Mrs. Paine:

...when we'd just moved from down there, the white man he was just takin' care of us. We didn't have no responsibility (Mr. Paine: That's just like a mule); he seed to us eatin' and we just lived in a house.

Mr. Paine:

Asked him for what we wanted just like we'd ask our mother.

Mrs. Paine:

And if he seed where you needed it, he'd let you have it ...In other words, wasn't no grown men and grown women, all us were children...

Not every member of a given family experienced life in Sharpley's Bottom in the same way, nor expressed it in similar words even when the experience was similar. The Paines, for example, suggested a desire to return. In spite of hard times they were obviously nostalgic:

...we made our own living, that's the way we lived...we lived better'n we livin' now, had more to eat and fittin' to eat, yeah! We did, we really did, man! Wasn't usin' no fertilizer on sweet potatoes or nothin'; everything was pure ...we were happy as a cricket...shower ev'ry evenin' when you come outta the field, get under a runnin' well (artesian well),

they was happy days with us...whelps would come on my children, the water was so cold, but they'd go get in it every evenin'. Happy days, we was happy, we was really happy...

Is it possible that the Paines are an anachronism? Ms. Joyce Gholson sheds light on this when she states that no one ever said anything about moving or leaving and that:

...to them, it seemed that this was just their lot and they did the best they could with what they had. And you really didn't never hear'em express any real dissatisfaction, and I think, maybe, they were pretty much satisfied...

But Ms. Gholson did not personally share those sentiments:

And the last time we moved (into town because the Tombigbee River flooded), my mama said she wasn't going back. And I was 'bout the proudest child you ever seen 'cause I was tired of pickin' cotton and choppin' cotton in that sun...it was good to get away from there.

There were few complaints regarding the system which were voiced directly. But such statements as "we were as happy as a cricket" or "it wasn't that bad" are full of subtle meaning. In spite of working from sun to sun over an extended period of time, some individuals, some families did feel they "had it made," did live well, relatively speaking.

Housing

The standard dwelling on the plantation had two rooms and a kitchen; status was measured according to room size and external structure, log, frame, brick. Almost all of them were located near the road, except for the house of Ms. Alice (Alice Tatum) which was built on top of a hill. The finer houses had two fireplaces, one in each room; and everyone in Sharpley's Bottom used oil lamps, because as Ms. Joyce Gholson states:

We didn't have electricity down there. Matter of fact, I think, in my memory, we moved to town before we had a television. We had an old radio that run on battery, the big square battery, and it would run, maybe a couple of months before you'd have to buy another one.

Ms. Gholson moved out of the Bottom in 1957 or 1958. Basically, then, the tenant house consisted of two rooms and a kitchen, whereas the "big house," the "house on the hill" had many rooms. Alice Tatum's house had between seven and nine. All had outdoor plumbing or outhouses, as outdoor toilets were called.

Subsistence

Most families raised much of their own food, for, in addition to the cash crops, i.e., cotton and corn, each family had a plot of land for a garden. Nonetheless, flour, sugar, rice and meat, if they didn't raise their own hogs and beef, were purchase items. Almost everyone raised chickens; none mentioned beef as a staple although they had milk cows. In the early days, flour was considered a luxury item, food to grace white folk's table. Corn - corn meal - was the staple bread for blacks. Wheat for white folk, corn for blacks and livestock, which may have been a contributing reason for the owner taking "all the cotton" and only "half the corn." The flour - corn division led one informant, Mr. Ernest Westbrook, to state that years ago:

...the white man would cut off what meat he think you oughta do ya, measure out the meal he think oughta do ya (corn meal), and flour for one day, that's for Sunday. You'd eat corn bread the rest of the week. I've been with my wife 53 years and never asked for a piece of corn bread 'cause I was against corn bread from a little boy coming up. I said if I ever get to be a man, no corn bread will ever go on my table.

Fish was also a staple for Sharpley's Bottom inhabitants. "Snapper" Gholson fished with nets. His sister, Ms. Joyce Gholson states that he would go out in a boat, cast his net and catch buffalo and carp; and, that on Sunday morning

...my mama would fix the hot biscuits and rice, fry that fish...and when you got a chicken, you got it on Sunday morning and it was like eating...it was a treat; it wasn't something that you just picked up and cooked ahead.

Normally, food was prepared well in advance of eating, except bread, because one went to the fields at sun-up, quit for an hour at noon, and didn't come in until sun-down. Inasmuch as men, women and children worked in the fields, it was simply practical to prepare meals well in advance of eating. Although peas, peanuts, corn, greens, melons, and cane for molasses were the usual garden crops, it is generally believed

by outsiders that beans, greens, fatback (salt pork) and corn bread were the main food staples, and, of course, milk. According to Mrs. Charity Gholson, however, few beans were consumed; peas - crowder, black, speckled - were more likely to be eaten. It appears that material goods, such as household items and clothes, were seasonal purchases, namely the Christmas season. And one cannot be too certain of quality. That is, we may suppose that most of the Bottom's inhabitants purchased similar quality goods, but we must allow for gifts of better quality items from well-to-do whites as well as for the possible diversity of taste among the inhabitants. We may suspect that there were some who purchased more expensive items and suffered some deprivation later on. What is more, theft was not uncommon. The Paines spell it out:

But if you didn't clear nothin' whatever you wanted, you know, we'd have to write out a list of (things) you know, when Christmas time came around...And he'd look on it and if anything on there you didn't need, he'd mark it off...But you see, he'd mark it off, but he'd write his name on there and we'd gon and git twice as much. We used to do that old man so bad (laughing). We'd put twice as much on there. And the funny thing about it, he'd write out an order and every year he'd send it to a different store, you know. And when they'd go in the store, they'd just rob the man; they'd put all they wanted on the order, then they'd take the rest of it...And he was doin' us right, never did say nothin' 'bout it...but, now, wait a minute, wasn't all white folks like that; out there in the prairies you just wouldn't of did it...

An index for determining what was purchased must be balanced against what was affordable as well as potential for receiving gifts from whites. One may suppose, however, that they, the inhabitants of Sharpley's Bottom, neither purchased nor pilfered much beyond what they could actually afford. The landowners would hardly have signed a voucher to an over priced store. Moreover, the "ten cents" store supplied much of their kitchen wares, as well as other household items. Informants reiterated, however, that in "those days" people did not have much; a radio was a luxury item, not every family had an "ice box" or a sewing machine, or even a rocking chair; such articles as tables and benches were homemade, not store bought, as a rule.

Land Ownership

No one seems to know how many black folk acquired the funds to purchase land. In Sharpley's Bottom, after the Depression, and with the coming of the FSA (Farm Security Administration) many blacks became tenant farmers; but only a precious few owned land on Sharpley's Bottom. As Mrs. Myrtle Ruth (Tatum) Hogan states, sometimes land was given as a gift:

...back in my grandfather's days I imagine they gave land or cows or something like that...as a wedding gift.

And, of course, land was acquired via bequeathing. It appears that with the exception of the Tatums and the McBeths, little or no bequeathing was done. It is nearly impossible, therefore, to discover a pattern of behavior in terms of whether the black or the mulatto was bequeathed the better tract of land. The issue is problematic because we only have documented data on mulattos although some of them married "black" men.

Status

"Black women all over this town got white babies for white men," said one informant, who was himself fathered by a white man. And one informant, who did not want to be taped, stated that at one time, it was customary for white men to pay a fee at the courthouse which would permit them to live with black women as man and wife, although miscegenation was unlawful. Given what we know about the sexual practices and preferences of some slave masters (Berlin 1974) and the statement by another informant that there were "a lot of half white babies runnin' around down there...", it was surprising to hear Mrs. Charity Gholson state that there was not a single baby in Sharpley's Bottom, during all of her years there, who was fathered by a white man. Although a mulatto person probably had higher status beyond the boundaries of the Bottom, in Sharpley's Bottom itself, color does not appear to have been a significant attribute of distinction among the inhabitants, who numbered about 22 families at one time. But the color factor has yet to be tested, for it is unlikely that color had much less significance in Sharpley's Bottom than it did among blacks in other areas and at other times (Berlin 1974).

This preliminary foray into the field has possibly raised more questions than it has answered. We know, for example, that the Tatums were mulatto and that the Tatum women married black men, but we have little or no data on mulatto men nor on mulatto babies by black men, presuming that there were some. There was once an organization of mulattos called the Blue Vein Club, which was reputedly a high status club. Were there any members from Sharpley's Bottom? And what was the club's function? Internal status differentiation at Sharpley's Bottom appears to have been based on factors not different from those that influenced other communities, i.e., material acquisition, "natural ability," how well one could manipulate the powerful, and so on. There was some status conferred on those who had "good" jobs in town, but even that was not a consensus conferral.

Based on interviews to date, we may conclude that Sharpley's Bottom was a uniquely semiautonomous community - there was no white overseer, a black served in that capacity. As Berlin states, "These

black villages...allowed free Negroes a degree of autonomy and a chance to escape the pressures of the white dominated world" (Berlin 1974:251). Although Berlin is addressing a mulatto issue, the concept applies at Sharpley's Bottom. Except for one family, no whites lived in the Bottom; few visited. Sharpley's Bottom blacks produced most of their food, all of their whiskey, and, at one time, made most of their own clothing. They worked long hours in the fields. No one demanded that they get up and go, there were no bells, as in the Prairie, to signal them to the fields and back; they knew that had to be done and did it. They considered themselves free even as they considered the Prairie blacks slaves! Many informants stated that, Saturday was by usage and general consent "Negro Day in Aberdeen." And yet, according to Mr. Willie Paine and others, Prairie blacks were not allowed to go to town on Saturday. What is more, Mr. Ernest Westbrook states that:

He (Whittaker) had a big plantation out in the country, 25 to 30 houses for sharecroppers. And at that time, when they'd come up for settlement, he'd tell ya, ya lack so much for paying out "how much you want to borrow for Christmas?" He'd tell 'em and ' he'd just write 'em a check for it. You never hardly clear no money; you always owed him. You had to be in the field 'fore sun up...you had to be there when it rise, let it rise on you in the field, go down on ya in the field...

Mr. Henry Cunningham spoke very eloquently about the Prairie:

From 1917 up through the 30s and the early 40s, the black man here, he was just a slave; now, that may not be what you want but now that's true...I was born here in Monroe County and done lived here in Monroe County 69 years. Well I know about it. We lived on the white man's plantation 'cause my father he have worked on shares, but he got able to rent. But now those was his won shares under that rider, he was just like in penitentiary, uh huh! It ain't never been too early here...You take a white man would come in here and rent a place, he'd get 2 or 3 blacks on it and in 4 or 5 years he'd be up in the world 'cause he's gon take all they make...boy, it's been a pain here...

Sharecroppers and tenant farmers in Sharpley's Bottom could leave and search for work in Aberdeen if they chose to, whereas in Prairie plantations, the disgruntled had to run off. If the fugitive was caught, he was likely to be jailed or whipped or both. Sharpley's Bottom blacks believed that there was a qualitative and, indeed, a quantitative difference between themselves and other black plantation dwellers. Mr. Paine states that Sharpley's Bottom folk were not allowed to visit Prairie plantations

because whites feared that the contrast would cause trouble. However, one informant, a former school teacher, saw no distinction between the two groups and expressed some displeasure regarding her neighbors - formerly of Sharpley's Bottom. She wistfully hoped that they would return one day to their old habitats in the Bottom because they were a blight on her once middle class, relatively quiet street.

It is something of a paradox that many of the Sharpley's Bottom folk rank themselves in the same class and assume for themselves the same status as the school teacher. It is probable too, that during the Depression, people in Sharpley's Bottom were better off than many town folk, either black or white, because they were farmers and raised their own food. Mr. Paine never hesitates to state that, "As I told you, my best life was right down (there)." Mr. W. C. Gholson, on the other hand, considers himself fortunate to have escaped the hard life of a share-cropper, which his sister claims their father loved. But, then, the Gholsons were not in the same class or status with the Paines, for Mr. Paine functioned as an overseer; he saw to it that the work was done and he also paid the "day workers" off in cash; day workers are basically farm folk who had moved into town.

Sharpley's Bottom folk may have escaped the demeaning, human contact crunch which most blacks encountered outside the Bottom, for their contact with whites was absolutely minimal - shopping and Joe Morgan. The fact, then, that older men were reluctant to leave Sharpley's Bottom suggests that not only had they become comfortable with their lot, but they were not mentally prepared to fight their age-old battles over again. In the Bottom, they were pretty much their own boss; they had a community; and, within the boundaries of that community they could walk as men, be respected as men. There was at least one instance when the father remained even after his wife and three children left and refused to return. They had lived in Sharpley's Bottom for 29 years. His daughter said that he loved the place.

Expressive Culture

Apparently no one who lived among the folk of the Bottom was "called" to preach. We know that the Church was and remains a valuable and an important institution in the black community but few, very few, of those interviewed mentioned church. The world famous blues singer, Howling Wolf, came from the Prairie by contrast. There is but scant evidence of music in Sharpley's Bottom. We were told that:

...as far as that stuff that you see on television where they was singin' in the fields an goin' on, I don't know nothin' 'bout it. Workin' and singin'...naw! Far as I know, you was too busy workin', didn't have time to sang...

So the question arises as to whether there were any work songs, shouts, hollers, or blues coming out of Sharpley's Bottom. Ms. Joyce Gholson states:

Not as I know of. Now they would have, like on Sunday morning or Saturday night when they had those fish frys, there was a blind boy down there named Joe Eddie...and there was another one 'bout half blind named Bootsy...he had a guitar and he would play that on Friday nights at the fish frys and on Saturday morning after they'd got up and started back to drinkin'...

It appears that fish was not merely a staple food. An informant stated: "It takes time to fish, make bait...not everybody fished." Fish did function as a festive food, as a mechanism for bringing kinfolk and friends together to socialize.

...but I guess they were good days 'cause you had your family and everybody worked hard. And on Friday night... they would have fish frys, and the fellows playing their guitars and drinkin' their white lightin'. I think that must have been the highlight of the grown folks week-end after they got off work...

Summary

Former inhabitants were not especially enthusiastic about the project, with one or two exceptions. They were suspicious of our motives and of our team composition. Mr. Cecil Belle, a principal informant and direct descendant of Sharpley, did not consent to an interview until Dotson had left the field and returned home in July. After having made several phone calls to his home, Mr. Belle finally agreed to help "in any way I can." Although his property and his family site is beyond the boundaries of the Waterway's impact, Mr. Belle does have in his possession significant documents relative to our research: items such as letters, certificates of marriage and Mrs. Alice Tatum's Bible. Dotson has acquired from him the names and addresses of his father, his sister, aunt and family friends who lived in Sharpley's Bottom, including Mr. James Ely and his brother. One significance of the Tatum house, which was owned by Mr. Belle's grandmother, Alice, is that it was much larger, seven to nine rooms, and that its site is on a hilltop. I was informed that when the Tombigbee River overflowed, everyone in the Bottom had to leave, secure boats and the like. But not the Tatums; they were safe on the hill. Those who knew Alice Tatum described her as looking like "an old white woman." Given that many "light complexioned" blacks "passed over", one wonders why "Ms. Alice" did not? Mr. Belle may also reveal what the status difference was, if any, between the Tatum's lifestyle and that of the rest of the folk in Sharpley's Bottom.

SYNTHESIS OF FINDINGS

Goals and Assumptions

The oral history study accomplished to date has been exploratory in nature. Its purpose was to discover whether or not oral historical data are available for Sharpley's Bottom and, if available, their quality. More than a simple search for stories about the Bottom and the people who lived there, our goal was to find information concerning the material culture and the social and behavioral patterns which may have influenced the distribution of cultural remains over time and space. We were seeking to enlarge our data base, and our understanding of the settlement, economic and status systems which were operational in the bottom.

Several key assumptions gave structure to the fieldwork effort:

1. We expected to find a difference in the remembrances and interpretations of history among the black and white respondents. And, in spite of the differences, we expected to find correspondences which would strengthen the bases for archeological inferences.
2. We expected to find a body of folklore or oral history which would illuminate the experiences of the slave era among both the white and black population.
3. We expected to discover information regarding specific activities and materials in the Bottom.
4. We expected to discover Sharpley descendants and to recover family history. One of the questions pertinent to the family history was the social status of Sharpley's mulatto children.

Results of the oral history interviews varied. Expectation No. 1 was borne out and the details are discussed below. We did not obtain a significant body of lore for the Civil War or the Pre-Civil War period as expected in assumption No. 2. People did have information on specific activities and materials in the Bottom, but its recovery is a slow process requiring great patience and the time to visit informants on a number of occasions. Such a process allows them to remember and to discuss their memories with relatives and friends. However, because it was necessary to survey as many people as possible during the initial fieldwork in order to be able to judge the quality and extent of oral history information, the memory jarring, in-depth interview process was not fully implemented. Moreover, it is a process inappropriate to an initial field survey stage. Nonetheless some

information was obtained on materials and processes in the Bottom. Finally, while we were able to find family descendants, and they did recount family history to us, they provided minimal information on status questions.

Plantation Period

One of the most disappointing features of the oral historical research was the absence of a substantial body of lore concerning the slave era. Neither the black nor the white informants reported in-depth stories, although the white participants did make minor references to the period. The information which was collected had to do with the well known history of settlement, i.e., small farmers tended to settle on the east side of the Tombigbee while large planters took up lands on the west side. Mrs. Jones also remembered hearing that during the war whites and blacks alike used home remedies for illness. There were no site specific remembrances dating to the Whitfield period; it was a relatively short span of time, 1840s to 1860s, in the remote past.

Tenant Period

Because the tenant period lasted so long, from the 1860s to the 1950s, and because it is more recent history, many people, black and white, recalled details of the life style. Structures and subsistence patterns were remembered, as well as details of relations between white land owners and black tenants. Memories were rather hazy on details of intra-site status based on mulatto identity and on specific details of site activities. For example, whites remembered that black tenants took truckloads of cotton to town to the gin while black informants remember that whites always performed this task. Information on artifacts which might be found at the site was obtained from incidental comments but specific artifacts or materials were seldom mentioned.

Although the tenant period began during Whitfield's management, the size of operations grew under Sharpley and it was hoped that memories of Sharpley and his family would shed light on the transition period. Unfortunately Sharpley is little remembered. Among whites he is considered something of a mystery; his descendants remember him as Grandpa Sharpley but can add no details, and among blacks he is not mentioned at all. One of his granddaughters, Alice, is remembered as a matriarch by whites, is said by her family to have carried "status" like a white woman, while other blacks remember that she had a big house. These findings indicate that memories of the Sharpley family would only be recorded by persistent and patient interviews.

Fragments of information such as the naming of families who occupied the Bottom also require careful follow-up interviews. Such names are: Paine, Turnipseed, Cucklebur, Berry, Morgan, Gholson, Ely and Belle. In addition, other fragments help build a coherent picture of

the overall appearance of the fields and structures. The land is said to have been more open, and less overgrown; the houses on the hill had a clear view to the barns. There was a gate on the road near the location of the present day gate, and a big barn and "headquarters area" was just inside this gate. Not far from the gate was a blacksmith shop and a cleared area used as a baseball field. There were "clusters of houses" in the lower (southern) section of the Bottom. From bits and pieces of information such as this the following list of structures and features was compiled.

Structures:

1. a Negro church - Crossroads Church
2. a whiskey joint - the Greasy P.
3. gin, gin lot, cotton house
4. plantation house (Whitfield's house)
5. Sharpley's house - (said to have burned)
6. slave quarters (mentioned as folklore)
7. Lessie's house (a two room house on the east side of the road on the hill)
8. Alice's house (said to have burned, located on top of hill, said to have had seven to nine rooms)
9. blacksmith shop (said to be near the gate)
10. sawmill (railroad tracks ran from mill to town)
11. Marion Givens house (largest house on farm, near barns and commissary; said to be a sort of "head-quarters".
12. big barn (located near gate, said to have a sort of "quarters" surrounding it)
13. Uncle Pet Franks' house (small two room house near Morgan's landing)
14. boathouse (located at Morgan's landing)
15. outhouses

16. cluster of houses in lower section (each residence is said to be accompanied by a smokehouse, a chicken coop, a shed area for hogs, 12' x 16' or 18', and a shed area for mules, 12' x 12' for two mules)
17. Dogtrot house
18. Honky Tonk House (two story structure in the field across from the sawmill)
19. mule barn (Jack Barn)

Non-structural Features

1. free flowing wells (three)
2. ditches (to drain the lower swags)
3. levee (to keep out the "ol dead" river sand)
4. roads
5. boat landing ("there wasn't nothing there, it was just a good place to tie your boat up")
6. Goose Lake
7. baseball field
8. gathering place (where they had fish suppers)
9. shade trees for mules

While the wells may have some form of archeological material associated with them, the other items on the list probably will not. What they represent are named places and engineered features which have cultural meaning. The ditches, road and levee are land alterations which enhance the physical environment and provide a cultural/physical framework for the community. They delineate and give meaning to the space in the Bottom. Items 5 to 9 are places which have specific cultural meanings and uses but which do not have any structural or engineered dimensions. They are activity centers without walls.

Informant Field Maps

Data regarding the location of structures and non-structural features was obtained in part through the maps produced by informants.

7.1

MAP

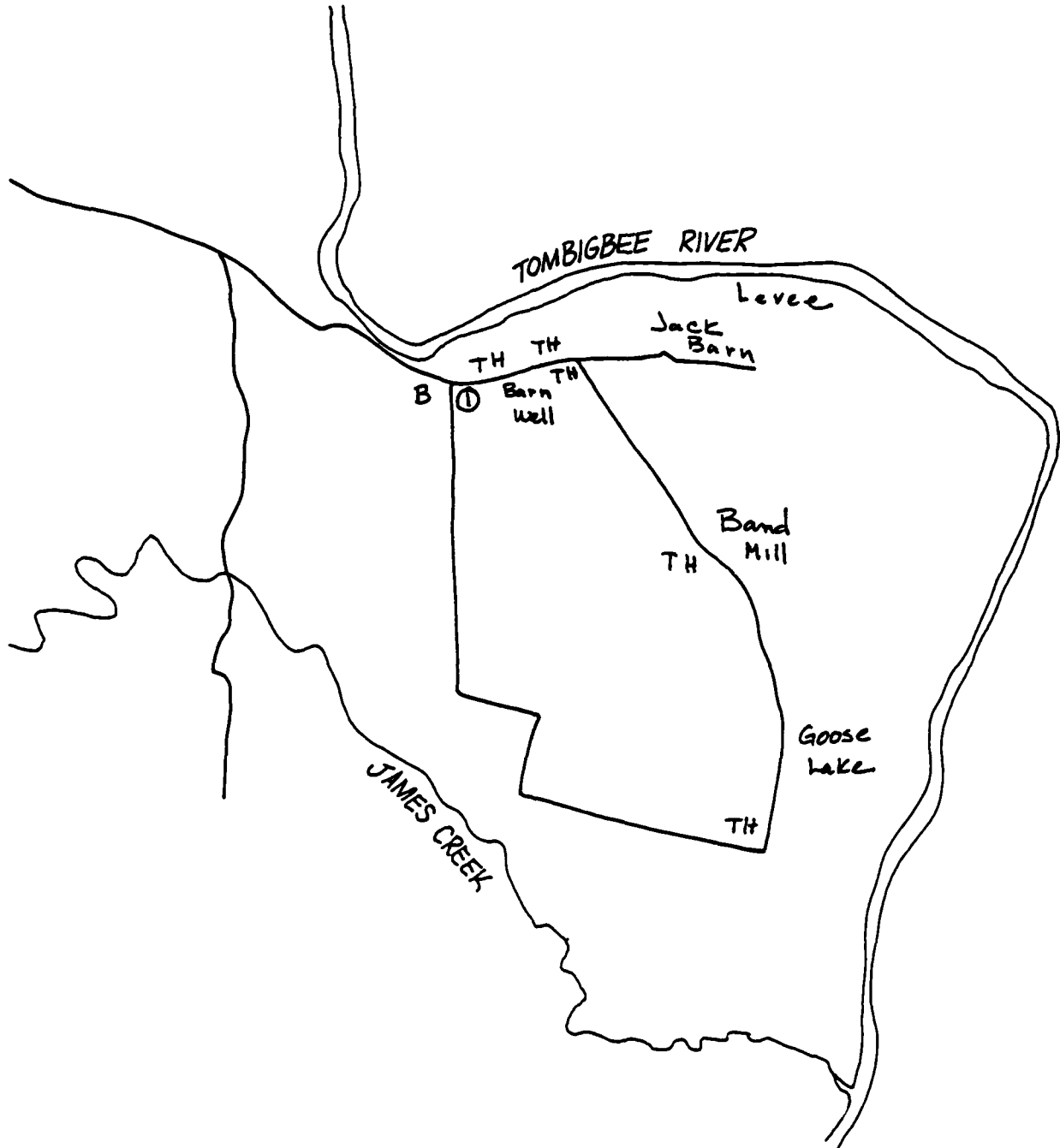
NAME Orlando Morgan DATE 6-27-80 INTERVIEWER ESC

EXHIBIT 1

ORAL HISTORY FIELD MAP

Phase I Investigations. - June 1980. Sharpley's Bottom Historic Sites
 Oral History Program Monroe County, Mississippi Tombigbee River Multiple
 Resource District Alabama and Mississippi

ADDITIONAL NOTES

10 1Name Ike Morgan Date 6-27-80 Interviewer ESC

Form No. 7 - Map

Notes:

1 Hosea Gholson house

B Blacksmith shop

TH Tenant Houses

Jack Barn - a place for the mules

There were three (3) artesian or overflowing wells. Two or three different settlements on the place; people cut their own wood; there were wild hogs - dogs would chase the hogs; one time he was down there hunting and found 55 gal. barrels hidden in the ground by boot-leggers; they found them because the hogs had gotten into the mash and were lying around drunk. There were 18 to 20 families on the Bottom. Some of the family names were: Paine, Turnipseed, Cucklebur, Gholson, Hosea, Berry and Morgan. Ike feels the black Morgans were descendents from Morgan slaves.

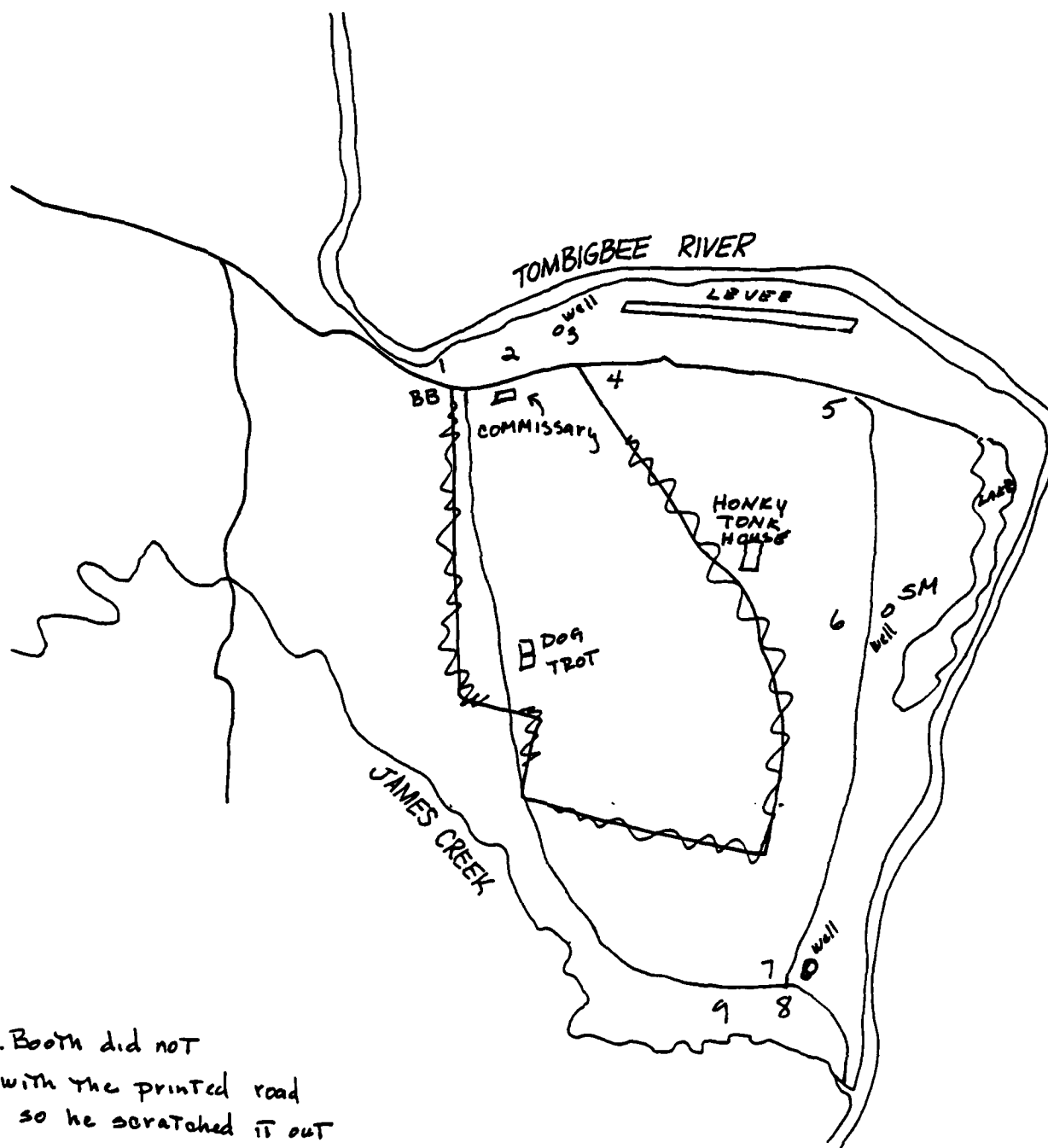
Wells: Wells were made by hammering a 5 foot piece of pipe with a strainer on the bottom in the ground - when it reached ground level another 5 foot length of pipe would be attached and so on. Then a pump was attached to draw the water up.

There are ditches through the center to drain the "lower swags".

Phase I Investigations - June 1980. Sharpley's Bottom Historic Sites Oral History Program, Monroe County, Mississippi, Tombigbee River Multiple Resource District, Alabama and Mississippi.

7.1

MAP

NAME Richard BoothDATE 7-1-80INTERVIEWER ESC

NOTE: R. Booth did not
 agree with the printed road
 system so he scratched it out
 & put in his own. ESC.

EXHIBIT 2

ORAL HISTORY FIELD MAP

Phase I Investigations. - June 1980. Sharples's Bottom Historic Sites
 Oral History Program Monroe County, Mississippi Tombigbee River Multiple
 Resource District Alabama and Mississippi

ADDITIONAL NOTES

10 1Name Richard Booth Date 7-1-80 Interviewer ESC

Form No. 7 - Map

Notes:

1. Uncle Pet (Franks) the cook
 2. Marion Givens - largest house, black in charge of farm
 3. Tenant House
 4. Tenant House
 5. Tenant House
 6. CC Day Sawmill - CC Day built a railroad track from the mill to Aberdeen
 7. Third Artesian Well
 8. Tenant House
 9. Tenant House
- BB Baseball field

Honky Tonk House - a two story frame building for people to stay in possibly a place for people who worked at the mill. The mill was abandoned by Booth's time.

The small circles are "overflowing" wells.

Artesian well in front of the Givens' house. There was a commissary across from the Givens house. It was a large two room house.

There was another well near the mill (there were three wells altogether).

Phase I Investigations - June 1980. Sharpley's Bottom Historic Sites Oral History Program, Monroe County, Mississippi, Tombigbee River Multiple Resource District, Alabama and Mississippi.

7.2

MAP

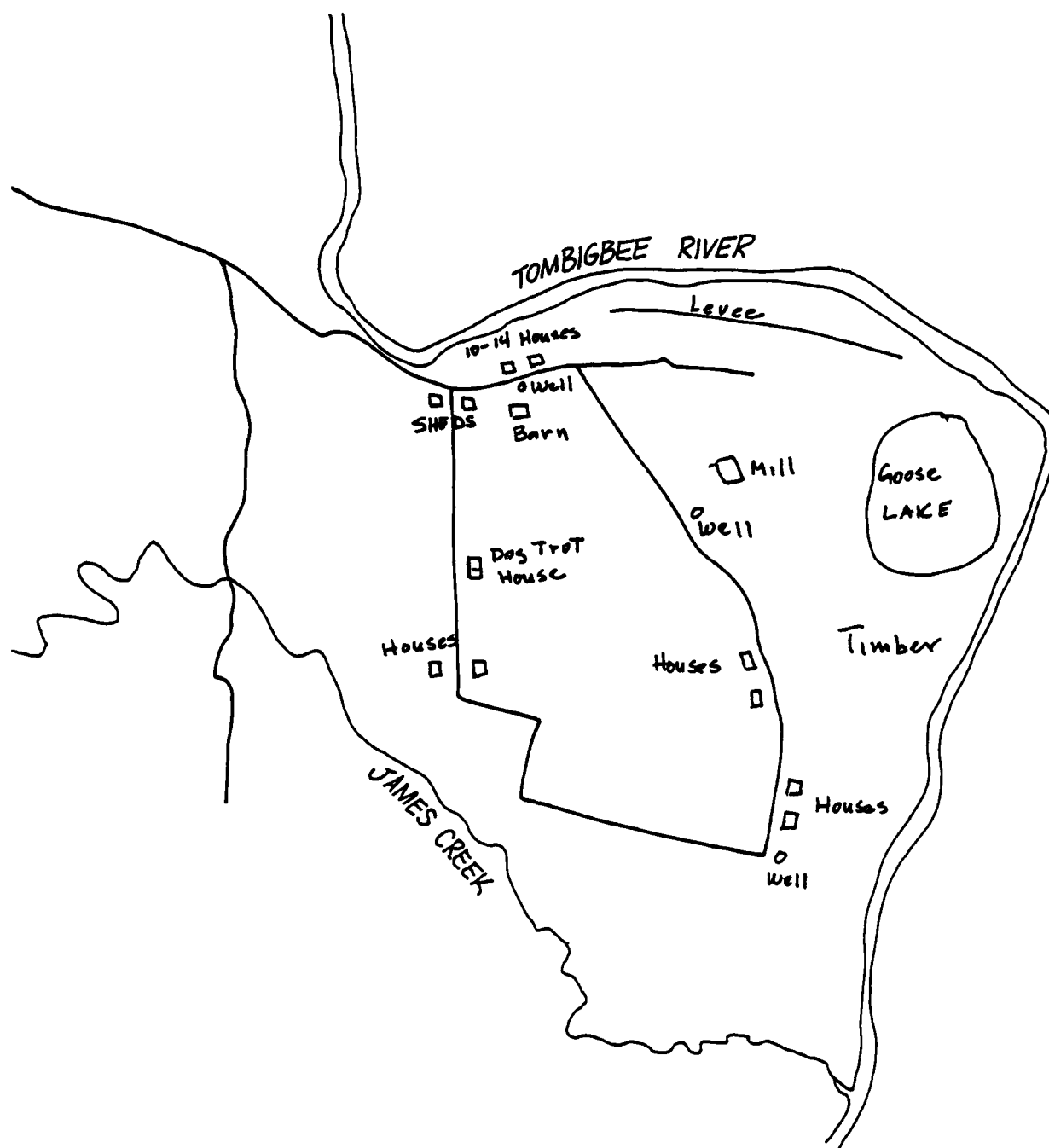
NAME Dr. Morgan DATE 7-11-80 INTERVIEWER ESC

EXHIBIT 3

ORAL HISTORY FIELD MAP

Phase I Investigations. - June 1980. Sharples' Bottom Historic Sites
 Oral History Program Monroe County, Mississippi Tombigbee River Multiple
 Resource District Alabama and Mississippi

ADDITIONAL NOTES

10 2Name Ike Morgan Date 7-11-80 Interviewer ESC

Form No. 7- Map

Notes:

Tenants took mules to the barn at night unless they lived too far away, then they had a small stall for the mules. Each farm had:

1. House
2. Smokehouse
3. Well
4. Small barn or stalls for mules if needed 12' x 12' each - this is a barn or a crib for the mules, two stalls in each barn
5. Pen and shed for hogs 12' x 16' or 18'
6. Chicken house 10' x 12'
7. A wagon

Phase I Investigations - June 1980. Sharples's Bottom Historic Sites Oral History Program, Monroe County, Mississippi, Tombigbee River Multiple Resource District, Alabama and Mississippi.

The map information was sketched on a field form designed for this purpose and reproduced here (Exhibits 1-3).

Status of Occupants

Both black and white informants confirmed that people were poor and expected to be poor; it seemed that this was their lot. Also confirmed by both groups was the credit system which kept farmers in debt and under which they only had money once a year - at Christmas. The quality of goods which they could afford was limited by their poverty, the distribution system in which white land owners had a great deal of control over purchases, and the fact that much of what they bought was obtained at a five and ten cents store.

Whites did not have significant information concerning mulatto children and blacks did not indicate that there was an economic difference between mulattos and blacks. Status at Sharpley's Bottom was in part based on land ownership; for example, Sharpley's children, mulattos, inherited his land. Other land owners in the Bottom appear to have been whites. Within the community, status may have been influenced by a particular job. It appears for instance, that a larger house went to the overseer. Thus the material correlates of status which are remembered are the sizes of rooms in houses, the exterior finish of houses (log, frame, brick) and the locations of houses (on the Hill). People with other high status occupations (preacher, teacher) lived in town and not in the Bottom.

Artifacts, Activities and Events

Materials were not mentioned frequently or in detail except by Mrs. Nina Howell and she was not speaking of life at the Bottom. However, she was a child in a farmer's household and supposedly the items which her family used were commonly found in the homes of other poor farmers. The following list was culled from the oral history testimony.

1. sticks (for shooing flies for chunking laundry)
2. screening (after the 1920s)
3. wooden utensils (churns, sausage making machine, soap making equipment, milk cooler box, washtubs)
4. glass (bluing bottles, Gay's Kill Chill bottles, oil lamp chimneys)
5. material (wool, yellow domestic, hickory cloth)

6. radio batteries
7. homemade tables and benches

This is not an exhaustive list. It simply represents those items which were mentioned in the interviews with both blacks and whites.

Both black and white informants mentioned garden crops, livestock, wildlife and household activities. There was a great deal of overlap between the testimony of blacks and whites suggesting that there was a common knowledge of basic diet. It was known that wheat flour was "white man's" food and "corn meal" was for blacks, but beyond that no other food distinctions were made. The list below is extracted from the oral testimony of all informants.

Subsistence Activities

Tending kitchen gardens and domestic livestock
 Churning butter
 Milking
 Butchering
 Curing pork (salt curing)
 Making sausage and lard
 Brewing whisky
 Fishing
 Hunting

Home Grown Foods

Watermelon	Peanuts
Cantaloupe	Greens
Sweet potatoes	Corn
Peas (crowder, black, speckled)	
Cane for molasses	

Livestock

Chickens
 Hogs
 Mules
 Horses
 Goats

Wildlife

Squirrels	Opossum
Quail	Deer
Rabbit	Bobcat
Raccoon	

Fish

Catfish
 Bass
 Crappie
 Brim
 Buffalo
 Carp

Purchased Food

Wheat flour
 Sugar
 Salt
 Soda
 Tobacco
 Rice
 Corn meal
 Meat (if they didn't raise their own)

There were several events which were remembered and which might have an impact on the archeological record. These were the floods, particularly the 1902 flood, the fire at the plantation house (presumably this was Sharpley's house) and the boll weevil infestation around World War I. One informant explained that the only way to get rid of the boll weevil was to burn it. For this reason one might expect to find lenses of burned debris in undisturbed areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH AND TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

Additional oral history research of the variety suggested in both of the preceding synopses will provide as much spoken information on Sharpley's Bottom after World War I as was obtained from archival evidence during the period between the Civil War and World War I. By reconstructing the Bottom community and the individual lives of its members, the project can focus upon some social distinctions which cannot be addressed by documentary research.

1. Informal Concessions Within the System of Tenancy

Other occupants of the Bottom may have been able to benefit from the types of concessions which enabled the Paines to get more goods than were on Morgan's approved supply order. If such information can be gained from additional oral interviews, it will provide insights into the workings of tenancy which cannot be obtained from archival sources. Such information is equally important because of its potential for explaining some nuances of status differentiation among Sharpley's Bottom tenants.

2. Racial Differentiation

Additional oral history interviews can be conducted to determine whether racial makeup played an important role in the generation of discernible distinctions in tenant status.

3. Demise of Tenancy

Interviews with former occupants of Sharpley's Bottom can record perceived reasons for the decline and end of tenant farming there. Oral history for the Bottom can best test the relative significance of out-migration and new local opportunities for wage labor, external sources of credit such as those provided by the Farm Security Administration, mechanization of cotton production, and the shift from cotton to soybean cultivation.

IV. ARCHEOLOGICAL SURVEY AND TESTING

PHASE I INVESTIGATIONS

Phase I archeological investigations at Sharpley's Bottom began on July 7, 1980. As stated in the Scope of Work for this project, our task was to "verify reported site locations and identify any additional historic sites in the area" (p. 10). Several archeological surveys and programs of limited testing had been conducted previously at Sharpley's Bottom. These include Blakeman (1975), Bense (1980), and Wynn and Atkinson (1976). An additional survey was conducted by Mississippi State University (Miller 1979). This survey studied the applications of remote sensing to archeology and resulted in the identification of a number of possible site locations within the Bottom.

After an initial tour of the Corps' property, the survey and testing program was started in the northwestern corner of the area, the location of Miller's Sites 1, 2, and 3. A quadrant₂ system was laid out, each quadrant 20 m on a side, covering 6400 m² around Miller's Site 3. An intensive surface collection and two to four shovel tests were made in each quadrant.

To the east of the quadrant block, the survey team started walking transects north from the main east-west road. A total of 17 transects was completed, spaced approximately 10 m apart, with shovel tests along the transect lines at intervals of 10 m. The length of each transect line varied in relation to the Tombigbee River which flows along the northern edge of the site area.

Three problems precluded continuing the survey in this manner. First, during the early weeks of July temperatures were over 100°F daily and no rain fell. This not only made fieldwork difficult, but it dried the soil to the extent that probing was impossible and shovel testing was not particularly effective. Depths of over 20 to 30 cm were difficult to obtain with a shovel. Finally, surface visibility in many grassy and overgrown areas was very low, making site identification by this method unreliable.

The second interdisciplinary meeting took place on July 15, 1980 and was attended by Dr. Stephanie Rodeffer of IAS and Dr. Charles Moorehead of the Mobile District Corps of Engineers. During this meeting a change in field strategy for the survey and testing program was agreed upon. In order to enhance surface visibility, a 22-foot wide disc harrow strip was plowed along roads, drainage channels and tree lines. Mr. Felix Coggins, lessee of much of the non-government owned land at the Bottom, kindly rented us the equipment and provided a driver to accomplish the task. We were able to cover all main road lines in this way (Figure 14).

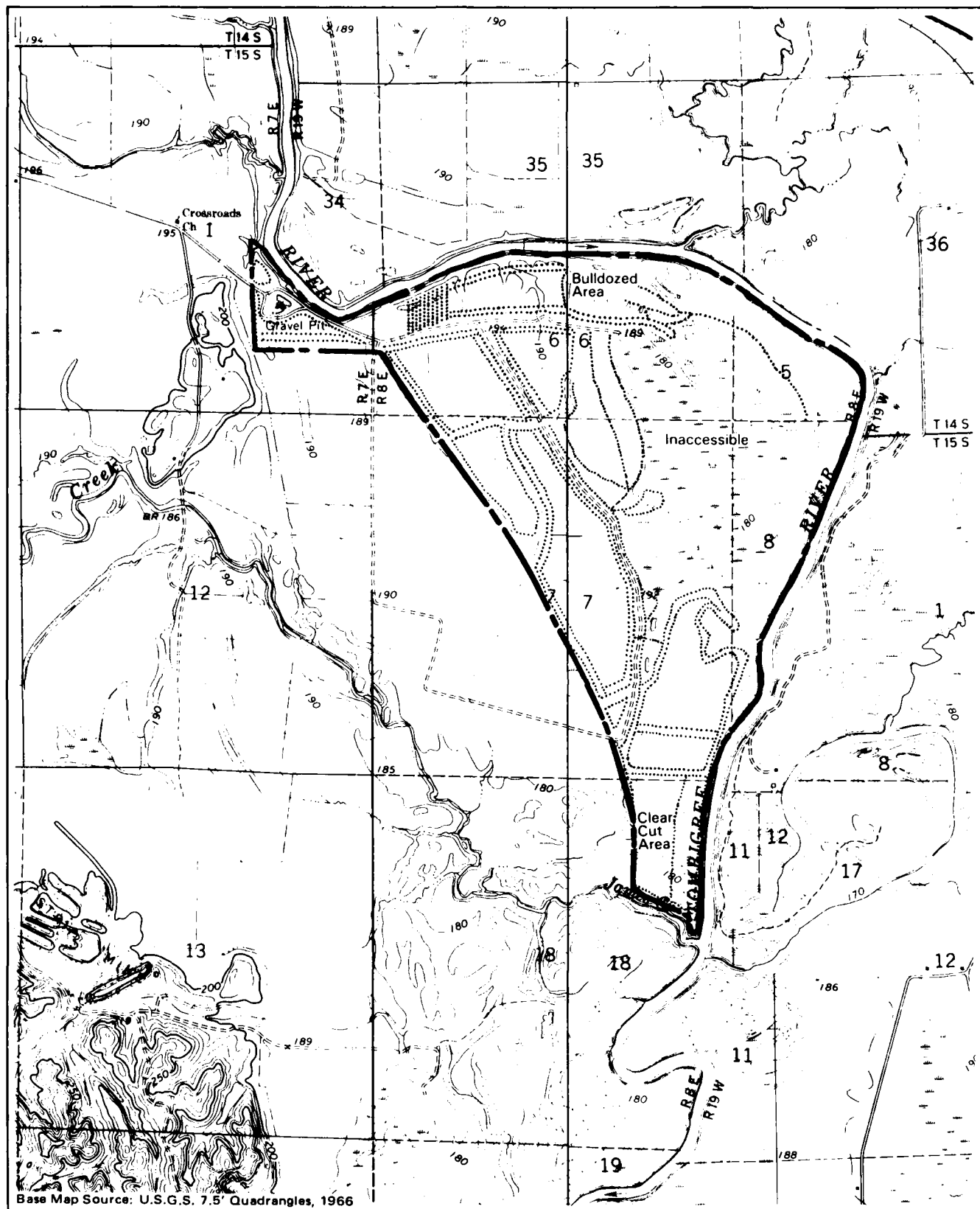


FIGURE 14
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM
AREAS TRAVERSED-
1980 SURVEY

Since most previously located sites were found along the existing roads, survey transects were conducted parallel to the roads rather than perpendicularly. As stated in the proposal, transect intervals were to be 250 m. This allowed us to walk an area 50 m wide along the roadsides, and another 50 m path 150 m away. The northern and western site area is dissected by roads, drainage ditches and swamplands in such a manner as to break it up into smaller land units, the perimeters of which were surveyed by this method. The transect interval was usually somewhat less than 250 m but our coverage was better and faster with the disked strip. When we walked through wooded area, shovel tests were placed at 50 m intervals. These areas were encountered primarily along the river and bordering the swamp.

The large swamp in the north-central portion of the site was inaccessible, as was the northeastern and eastern portion between the swamp and the river. This area was heavily overgrown with weeds, bamboo and grasses, making it impassable.

The sequence of activities performed combined the survey techniques as outlined in Phases I and II of the proposal. Our first step was a survey along the previously described transects. In addition, we watched for suspicious landforms and evidence of Miller's sites as well as site locations mentioned by oral history informants. When surface scatter or other remains were encountered they were flagged and noted on the project map. When the entire project area had been covered we returned to the flagged locations and conducted testing.

First, the limits of the artifact scatter were flagged and a Commonwealth site designation was assigned. (After returning from the field, we obtained Mississippi state site numbers from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History.) Once the scatter was flagged, a datum point was established and a baseline was laid out through the approximate center of the scatter. Where possible, collection circles of varying radii were used for a 20 percent surface collection. However, in some areas the percentage of visible surface area was too small to allow us to implement this strategy. The primary impediment to surface visibility was the thick mat of Bermuda grass found over much of the site area. Shovel tests were originally dug 3 m apart in a cross through the site area and beyond the scatter limits in search of midden and/or further indicators of site perimeters. However, after testing three sites in this manner, it became apparent that this strategy was far too time consuming and redundant to be efficient. In a telephone conversation with S. Rodeffer on August 4, it was decided to increase the distance between shovel tests to 10 m and to dig fewer perimeter shovel tests if no midden was present.

An additional result of this conference was an agreement to reduce the individual site areas to be tested. Eighteen of the 21 sites tested were in plowed areas. This repeated disturbance undoubtedly resulted in artifact scatters covering greater areas than the sites from which they originated. Initially we began our testing by covering the entire artifact scatter area. Testing sites in this manner was not only very time consuming, but often necessitated extraneous shovel testing since so much of the scatter was the result of plowing disturbance. We decided to test only the area of primary artifact concentration where such definition was possible by observing the density of surface scatter. In most cases, concentration areas were clearly marked by the presence of large quantities of brick, ceramics and glass. The disked strip was especially helpful in this regard. Beyond the concentration area, artifacts were farther than 1 m apart.

The final sequence of testing, then, consisted of seven steps: flagging scatter boundaries and concentration areas, assigning a Commonwealth site designation, photographing the site area, laying a baseline, shovel testing, making a surface collection where possible and mapping the site with compass and tape. All baseline flags, datum points, shovel tests and collection circles were included on site maps. Wooden stakes at datum points were left at the Bottom for future use. The survey was completed on August 15, 1980.

Upon our return to Michigan, artifacts were washed and prepared for analysis. C. S. Demeter identified the artifacts, made counts of the material by collection unit, and assigned a general date range for each site. Date ranges reflect the content of each assemblage taken as a whole even though most sites contain some material that appeared on the market before the early date in the assigned range. In these cases, however, the general makeup of the assemblage indicates a time period somewhat later than the earliest assignable date for an artifact or artifacts.

A total of 22 sites was located by the program of surface survey and shovel testing (Figure 15). All but two of these have been disturbed by cultivation and flooding. Though little evidence of midden deposits was found beneath the plow zone, evidence of features undisturbed by cultivation was located through shovel testing. Dates for sites range between 1840 and the present. On the basis of existing artifactual evidence, only two sites may have pre-Civil War components; the rest appear to date between 1870 and 1940.

Table 1 lists all sites located during the 1980 field season and includes information on site age, size, location, artifact frequencies, and the presence of subplow zone midden and/or feature material. The sites can be divided into three age range clusters: pre-1910 sites; transitional or long-range occupation sites; and post 1910 sites.

Table I.

Sharpley's Bottom Sites - 1980 Field Season

	Date Range	Concentration Area	Artifact Frequency	Section Location	Sub-PZ Midden/Feature	Miller No.	Phase I Collection Strategy
<u>Pre-1910:</u>							
22M0999	1890-1910	7490 m ² total	258	6	weak	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M01007	1880-1900	1380 m ²	68	7	present	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M0990	1870-1900	680 m ²	6	6	present	--	Shovel tests, general surface collection
22M0991	1880-1900	1440 m ²	19	7	absent	--	Shovel tests, general surface collection
22M0996	Uncertain	--	-	5, 6	--	--	No collection made
<u>Transition/Long Span:</u>							
22M01000	1880-1940	1530 m ²	38	6	present	10?	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M01002	1900-1940	1520 m ²	238	6	present	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M0985	1900-1920	1288 m ²	71	7	present	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M0986	1840-present	--	488	1, 6	present	1, 2, 3	Shovel tests, collection quadrants
<u>Post-1910:</u>							
22M0998	1920?	880 m ²	74	6	present	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M01003	1920-1960	--	70	6	absent	6	Shovel tests

Table I. (Cont.)

Sharpley's Bottom Sites - 1980 Field Season

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	Date Range	Concentration Area	Artifact Frequency	Section Location	Sub-PZ Midden/Feature	Miller No.	Phase I Collection Strategy
Post-1910: (Cont.)							
22M01004	1910-1930	2592 m ²	312	6	present	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M01006	1910-1940	--	36	6	present	7	Shovel tests, general surface collection
22M0989	post 1900/1910	804 m ²	56	6	absent	--	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M0992	post 1900	--	0	7	absent	--	Shovel tests
22M0997	1910-1940	1720 m ²	112	1	present	--	Shovel tests, general surface collection
22M0993	post 1900	--	6	7	present	19	Shovel tests, general surface collection
Sites Not To Be Impacted:							
22M01005	post 1900	3248 m ²	4	7	present	25	Shovel tests
22M0988	1920?	1568 m ²	7	7	present	24	Shovel tests
22M0987	1910-1940	1360 m ²	118	7	present	24	Shovel tests, collection circles
22M0994	1870-1930	1440 m ²	49	7	absent	21	Shovel tests, general surface collection
22M0995	1840-1850*	--	7	6	--	5	General surface collection

*(This date is based on a small random surface collection of seven artifacts.)

Tables 2 and 3 list general artifact classes, frequencies, and within site percentage frequencies for sites with collection circles. Glass and ceramics dominate the collections, ranging from 65.2 percent to 96.7 percent of the assemblages from individual sites. When ceramics and glass alone are considered, glass outnumbered ceramics at all but one site (Table 3). Brick fragments comprise the third major artifact class found at surveyed sites; however, brick fragment frequencies and weights were not recorded in the field. With the exception of the C. C. Day Sawmill (22M01005) all sites appear to represent domestic occupations.

A number of sites identified by Miller were not found by surface inspection and shovel testing. These include Miller's site numbers 8, 9, 20, 27, 28, 29, 30 and 31 (Miller 1979). Sites 8 and 9 were north of the east-west extension of Sharpley's Bottom Road. According to oral history informants, this area was bulldozed extensively in the sixties when the current owner had portions of the manmade levee flattened. The disturbance is visible in several areas of the northern portion of the site area and apparently destroyed all traces of the cabins or outbuildings identified by Miller. Sites 27, 28 and 31 were all suspected cabin sites near old roads, while Site 29 was the probable location of some trees in the same area. No traces of occupation were found around these sites with the exception of a small pile of concrete rubble just inside the tree line near Site 27. Site 30 was a cabin site at which some evidence of previous occupation was found. However, forest clearing crews had been bulldozing and burning in this vicinity and it was unclear whether the charcoal found was from an earlier structure or from recent burning. The only other artifacts observed were brick fragments. No evidence of midden or feature deposits was discovered through shovel testing.

TABLE 2

Within-site Percentage Frequencies:
General Artifact Classes From Collection Circle Data

		Site								
		22M0998	22M0999	22M01000	22M01002	22M01004	22M01007	22M0985	22M0987	22M0989
Ceramics	N	6	42	9	31	72	23	22	50	10
	%	17.1	18.0	28.1	23.0	26.4	37.7	40.7	50.5	23.3
Bottle/ Vessel Glass	N	20	131	18	69	161	36	24	38	18
	%	57.1	56.2	56.3	51.1	59.0	59.0	44.4	38.4	41.9
Nails	N	0	19	0	7	19	0	1	0	3
	%		8.2		5.2	7.0		1.9		7.0
Window Glass	N	5	16	1	13	8	0	1	3	7
	%	14.3	6.9	3.1	9.6	2.9		1.9	3.0	16.3
Metal (Scrap, tools, etc)	N	4	24	4	11	11	2	3	7	5
	%	11.4	10.3	12.5	8.1	4.0	3.3	5.6	7.1	11.6
Personal	N	0	1	0	4	2	0	3	1	0
	%		.4		3.0	.7		5.6	1.0	
Total	N	35	233	32	135	273	61	54	99	43
	%	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1	100.1	100.1

*Numbers in parentheses represent true collection circle artifact totals.
Artifacts such as coal, bone, shell and aluminum cans have been
excluded from these calculations.

TABLE 3

Within-site Percentage Frequencies From Collection Circle Data:
Ceramics and Glass

		Site								
		22M0998	22M0999	22M01000	22M01002	22M01004	22M01007	22M0985	22M0987	22M0989
Ceramics	N	6	42	9	31	72	23	22	50	10
	%	23.1	24.3	33.3	31.0	30.9	39.0	47.8	56.8	35.7
Bottle/ Vessel Glass	N	20	131	18	69	161	36	24	38	18
	%	76.9	75.7	66.6	69.0	69.1	61.0	52.2	43.2	64.3
Total	N	26	173	27	100	233	59	46	88	28
	%	100.0	100.0	99.9	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

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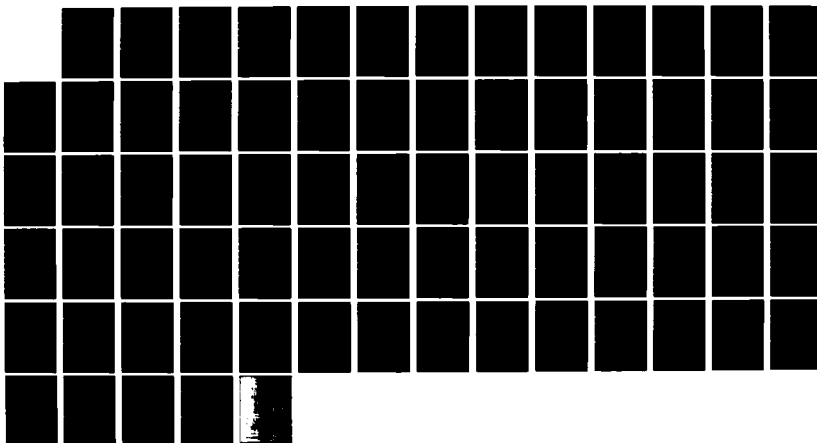
SHARPLEY'S BOTTOM HISTORIC SITES: PHASE I
INTERDISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATION. (U) COMMONWEALTH
ASSOCIATES INC JACKSON MI J R KERN ET AL. JAN 82
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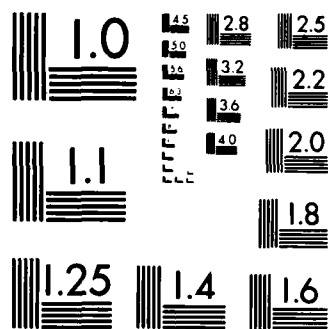
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MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART
NATIONAL BUREAU OF STANDARDS-1963-A

SITE DESCRIPTIONS

Site: 22M0997

Topography: Slight rise running north-south, bounded on the east by a shallow, wide depression which also runs north-south.

Vegetation: Scrub and brambles with areas of thick grasses; some tall grasses in the central site area. To the immediate north is the tree line between the site area and Sharpley's Bottom Road. To the south of the field is a woodlot.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No: None

Scatter Range: Occurs over a rectangular area of 1720 m^2 ; concentration not plotted (see Figure 29).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 112 plus brick, concrete, mortar

Surface - 31

Shovel Tests - 81	1)	0	9)	2	17)	0	25)	5
	2)	0	10)	1	18)	0	26)	2
	3)	8	11)	3	19)	0	27)	2
	4)	2	12)	12	20)	1	28)	3
	5)	2	13)	9	21)	0	29)	0
	6)	6	14)	5	22)	1	30)	2
	7)	1	15)	1	23)	0	31)	0
	8)	1	16)	0	24)	10	32)	2

Ceramics: N - 9

white soft paste	7
stoneware	1
terra cotta (redware)	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

plate

Glass: N - 54

clear	29
window*	7
milk glass	4
green (Coca Cola)	4
amber	2
blue-green	2
aqua	2
emerald green	1
blue	1
opaque green	1
safety	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
bowl
pop bottle
preserve jar
medicine bottle (Phillips)
tumbler
vase (?)

*Window glass is here defined as flat, usually clear glass.
Some of this glass may be from flat sided bottles.

Nails: N - 23

wire nail/spike	22
square	1

Metal: N - 15

band metal	3
misc. iron*	3
sheet metal*	5
scale face	1
wire	3

*Miscellaneous metal categories include scrap metal and unidentifiable machine and tool parts. In general, ferrous and non-ferrous metals are listed separately and identified, as in misc. iron or sheet copper. The categories misc. and sheet metal refer to various forms of white metal, usually tin or enamelled tin.

Other: N - 11

tin can fragment	10
coal	1

Building Materials:

brick
mortar
concrete

Stratigraphy: Depression - Surface - 5/10 cm bs plow zone, brown sandy loam over brown and gray sandy clay.
20 cm + clay with some gravel.
Rise - Surface - 15/30 cm bs plow zone light to dark brown sandy loam; some mottling, charcoal and iron oxide stains.
30 cm + light brown sand, some with charcoal flecks.
One shovel test, 9 m west of datum consisted of brown sandy loam and layers of burned material between 22 and 38 cm bs, where light brown sand appeared. Artifacts were present all through this test.

Comments: Collection circles were not used since so many shovel tests were dug. A general surface collection was made to aid in dating the site. Probing was conducted as the soil in this site was soft enough to allow penetration up to 20 cm bs. Nevertheless, probing was not considered an effective strategy since the plow zone was usually at least 20 cm deep and bricks encountered were loose and broken, often with plow scars. Since sites tested were either in plowed land and/or very hard soil, the practice of probing was eventually discontinued. 22MO997 is located in the general area mentioned by oral history informant Ike Morgan as containing a blacksmith shop. Richard Booth indicated a baseball field in this area.

Date Range: 1910-1940

Site: 22MO998

Topography: Very slight rise next to road; otherwise, essentially flat.

Vegetation: Scrub with small areas of thick grass; tall grass on the rise.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: 880 m²; no concentration plotted (see Figure 29).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 74 plus brick, mortar

General Surface - 29

Shovel Tests - 10

Collection Circles - 35	1)	32
(Figure 16)	2)	3

Ceramics: N - 14

white soft paste	8
(one with transfer print decoration)	
stoneware	6

Glass: N - 48

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

purple*	16	bottle
window	12	snuff bottle
amber	9	decanter stopper
blue-green	5	panelled bottle
clear	4	
olive green	1	
aqua	1	

*Purple glass is glass with an amethyst color; most of these sherds were clear originally, but became purple under exposure to the sun, due to the presence of manganese as a decolorizing agent.

Nails: N - 2

wire	1
square	1

Metal: N - 8

exhaust pipe	1
sheet metal	7

Other: N - 2

tooth (pig?)	1
gun cartridge	1

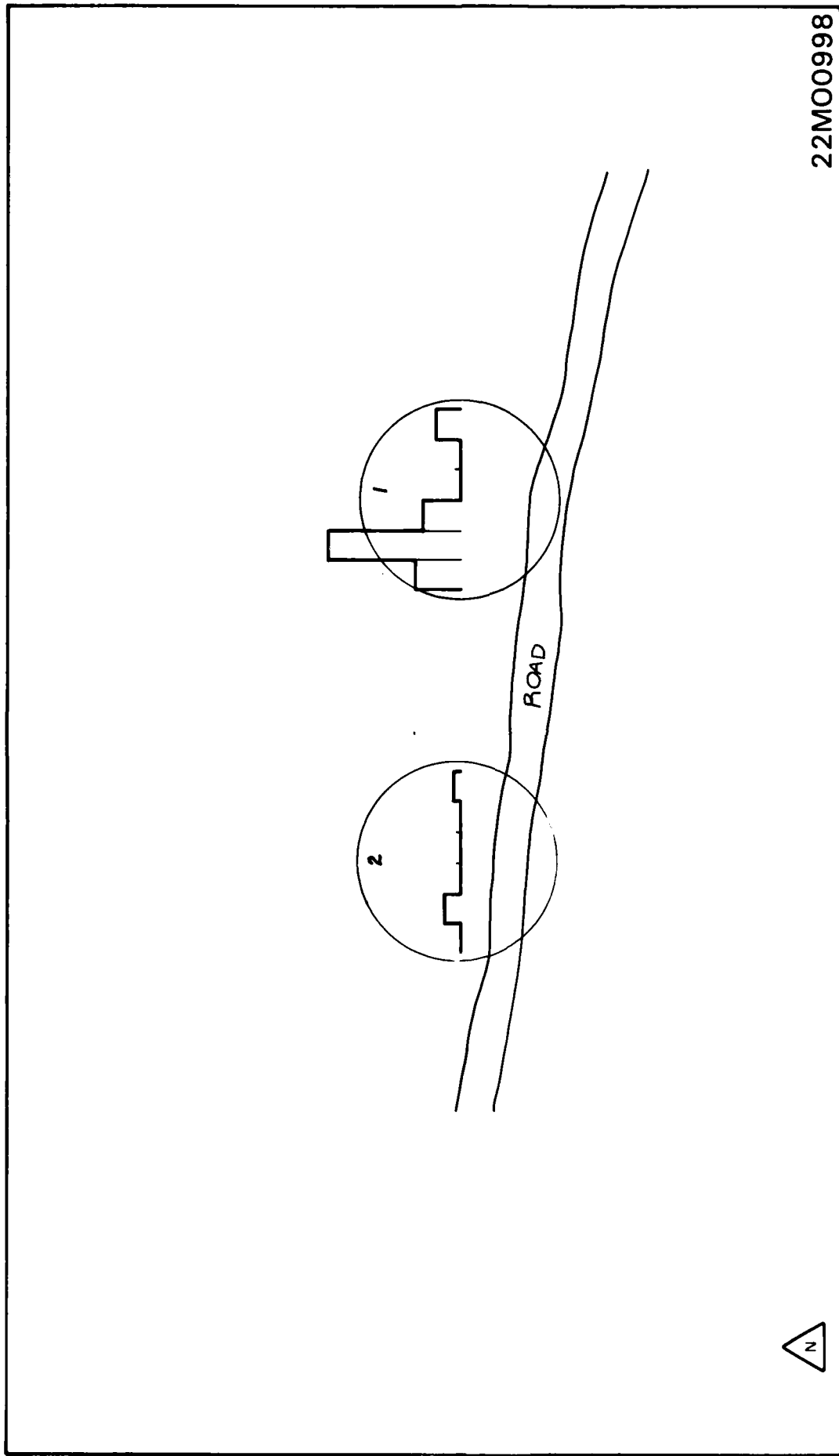
Building Materials:

brick, mortar

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, mottled brown sandy loam; some darker brown soil with charcoal flecks.
20 - 30/50 cm bs gray, gold, tan, or red-gold mottled sand.
Shovel test 25 m east and 25 m north of datum, north of site area, had a buried A horizon between 20 and 40 cm bs surrounded by tan sand above, and below to 45 cm bs; contained charcoal flecks and iron oxide stains; no artifacts.

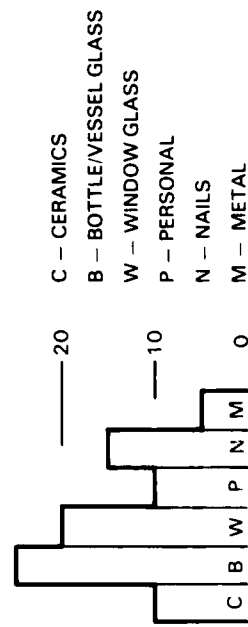
Comments: None

Date Range: c. 1920?



22M00998

FIGURE 16
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE



Site: 22M0999

Topography: Slight rise at the southwest corner of road intersection;
rest of site area is flat.

Vegetation: Scrub, brambles, grass; tall grass on the rise.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None (See comments below)

Scatter Range: Scatter covers 7490 m², with one concentration area at
the road intersection and a secondary concentration 110 m
to the west; concentration limits not plotted (see Figure 29).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 258 plus brick, mortar

General Surface - 17

Shovel Tests - 2

Collection Circles - 239
(Figures 17-20)

1) 6	5) 0	9) 13	13) 2	17) 1
2) 1	6) 19	10) 19	14) 0	18) 0
3) 9	7) 63	11) 10	15) 0	19) 1
4) 40	8) 50	12) 3	16) 2	

Ceramics: N - 49

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	27	plate
(one with makers mark)		bowl
stoneware	17	jug
semi-vitreous white	5	
paste*(one with makers mark)		

*Porcelain

Glass: N - 158

purple	67
clear	27
window	17
amber	13
burned	10
aqua	9
blue-green	7
milk glass	2
blue	2
carnival*	1
olive green	1
light blue opaque	1
emerald green	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

preserve jar
bottle
pop bottle
jar
snuff bottle
stemware

*Carnival glass is iridescent, rainbow colored glass.

Nails: N - 19

wire	13
square	6

Metal: N - 24

sheet copper	1
misc. iron	11
bridle buckle	2
sheet metal	4
bolt	2
wire	1
chain link	1
copper can	1
metal ring	1

Personal: N - 2

eyeglass lens	1
porcelain figurine	1

Other: N - 6

coal	1
bottle cap	1
gun cartridge	3
aluminum can	1

Building Materials:

brick
mortar

Stratigraphy: Two general profiles were encountered.

- 1) Surface - up to 27 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown silty sand with water action and some iron oxide stains.
To 44 cm bs mottled gold-brown, reddish gold, or tan-gold sand with some manganese flecks.
- 2) Surface - 25 cm bs orange sand; plow zone.
25 - 60 cm bs tan sand.
60 - 70 cm bs light clayey sand.

Comments: Two base lines were laid out to accommodate the extent of the observed scatter and in hopes of defining possible concentration areas. It seems possible that the scatter farthest west could represent activity around Miller's Site No. 10, the gathering place. It might also be associated with site 22M01000 across the road to the northwest.

Date Range: 1890-1910

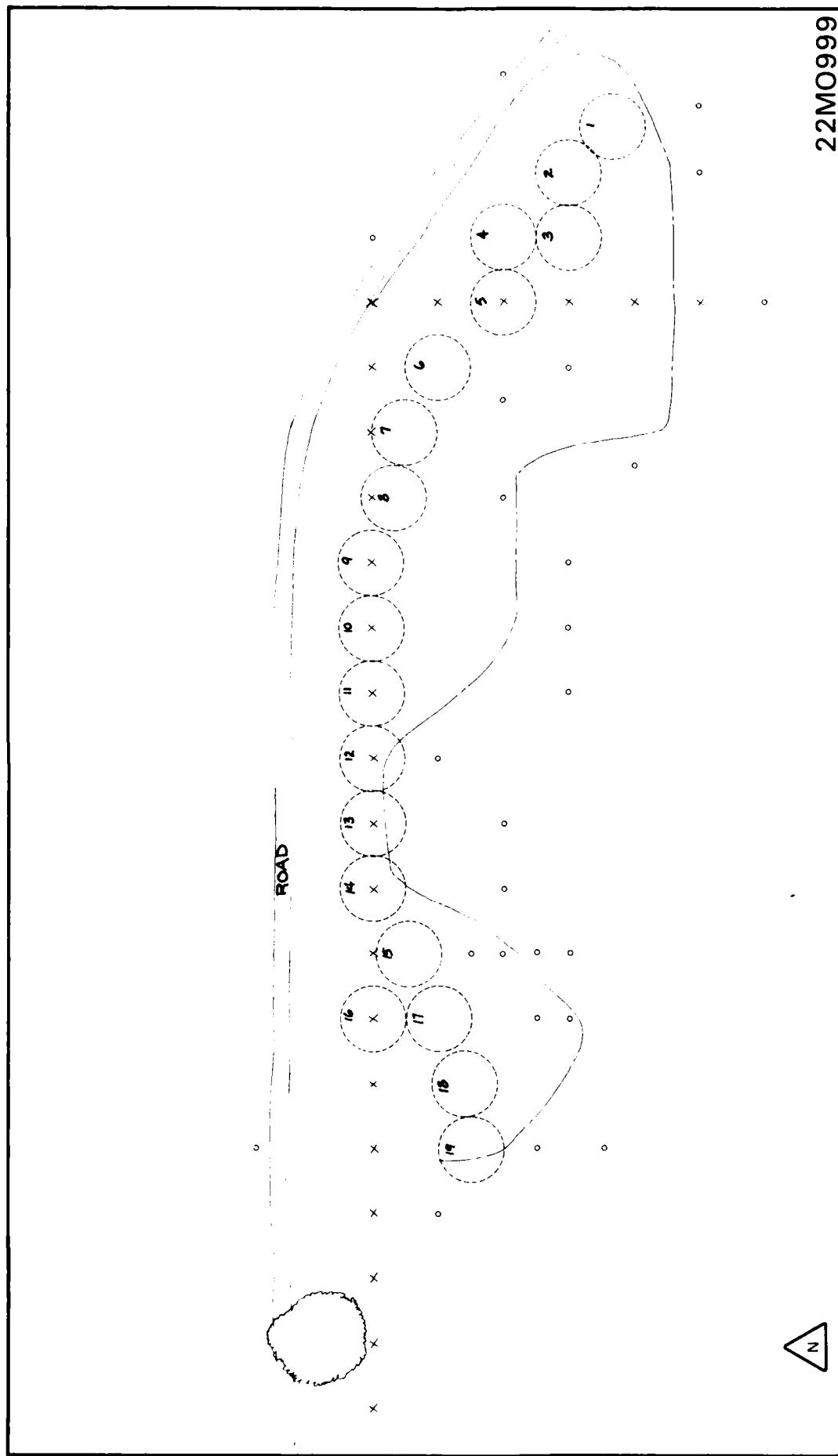


FIGURE 17
SITE LOCATION
MAP

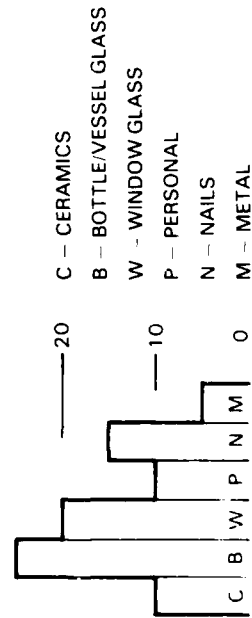
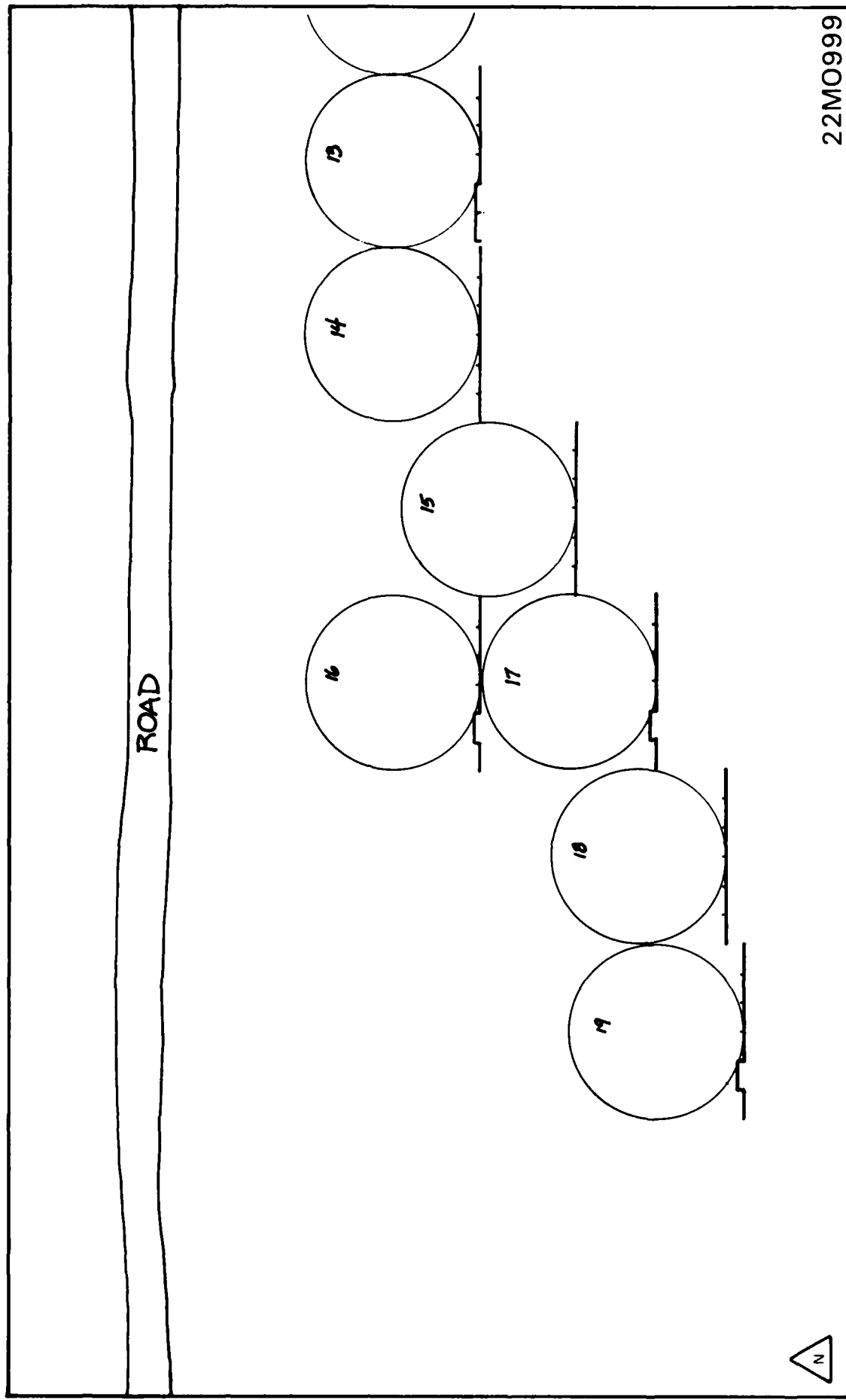


FIGURE 18

WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

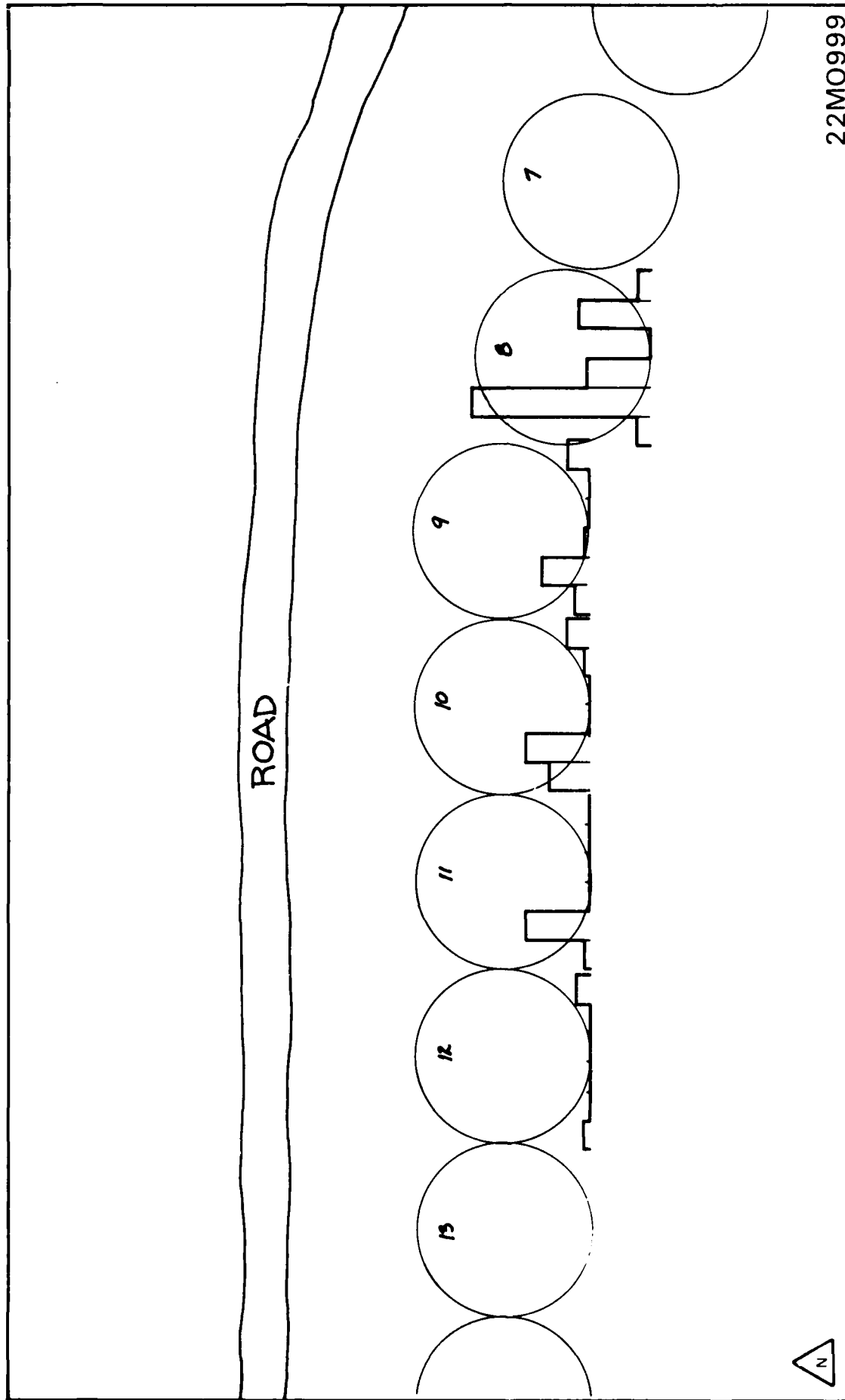
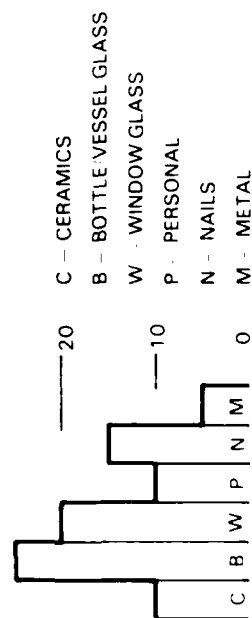


FIGURE 19
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE



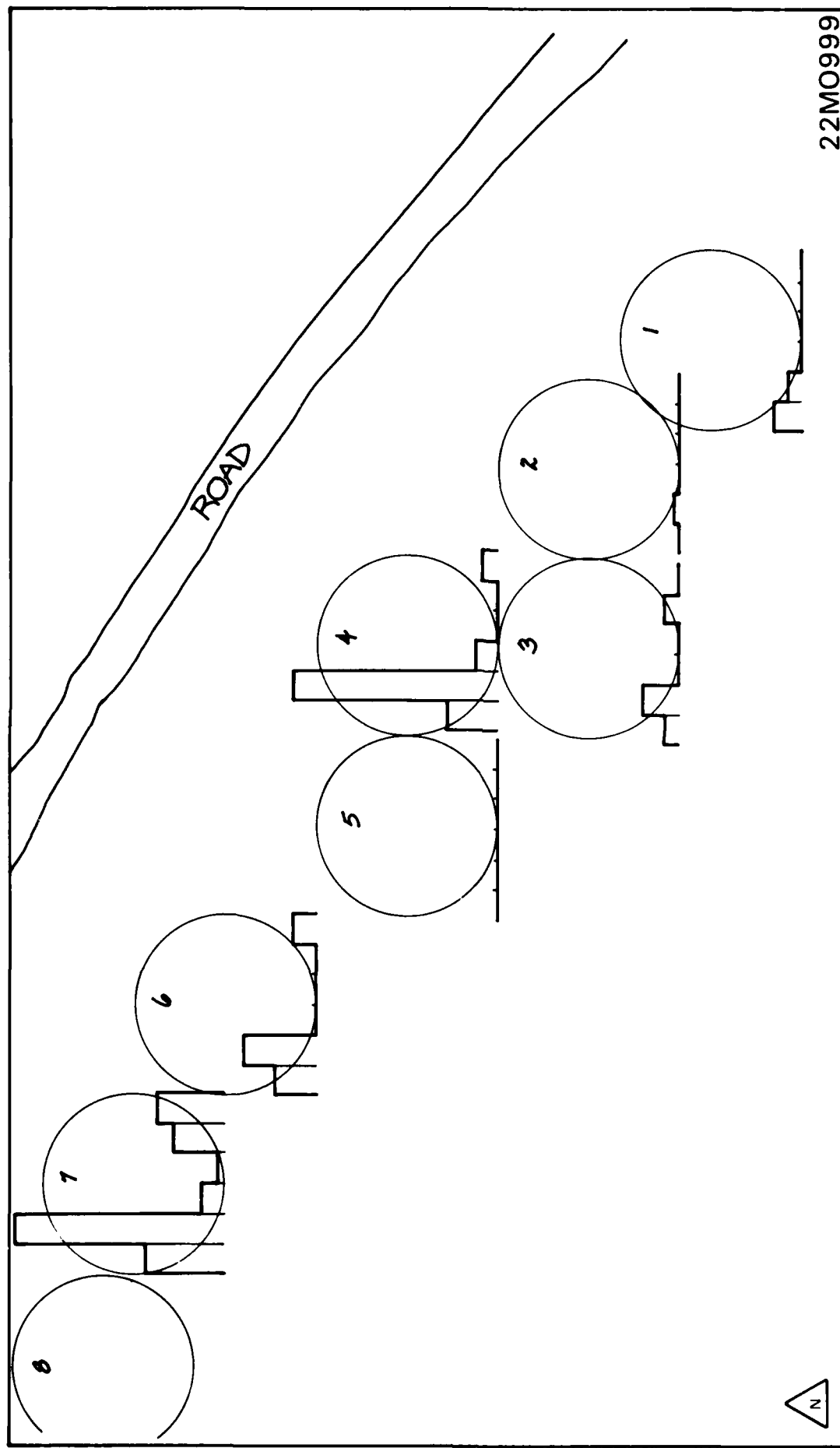


FIGURE 20

WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M01000

Topography: Small, gentle rise just next to road; rest of site area flat.

Vegetation: Scrub, brambles, grass; tall grass just north of road in central portion of rise.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: Possibly No. 10.

Scatter Range: Concentration 1530 m²; scatter extends approximately 50 m to the north, east and west, becoming very thin beyond the concentration area; across the road to the south and east is a scatter included with 22M0999 but possibly associated with 22M01000 (see Figure 29).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 38 plus brick

General Surface - 4

Shovel Tests - 1

Collection Circles - 33
(Figure 21)

1)	0	4)	14
2)	0	5)	13
3)	6		

Ceramics: N - 12

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste
(one with makers mark)
stoneware

8
4

plate
jug

Glass: N - 21

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

purple 7
clear 6
amber 3
blue-green 2
aqua 2
window 1

bottle
snuff bottle

Metal: N - 4

misc. metal	2
sheet metal	2

Other: N - 1

coal	1
------	---

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Three general profiles were encountered.

- 1) Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, mottled brown silty sand with water action.
20 cm + mottled gold-brown sand.
Ten shovel tests.
- 2) Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, mottled brown silty sand with water action.
20 - 25 cm bs dark brown sand with charcoal flecks;
25 - 35 cm bs mottled gold-brown sand.
Two shovel tests.
- 3) Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, mottled brown sand with water action.
20 - 50 cm bs and 20 - 80 cm bs mottled brown, gold-brown, and light sand with charcoal flecks and some small charcoal chunks; appears to be a feature.
Two shovel tests.

Comments: As previously mentioned, this site may be associated with Miller Site No. 10. Ike Morgan said his "jack barn" or mule barn was in this vicinity.

Date Range: 1880-1940

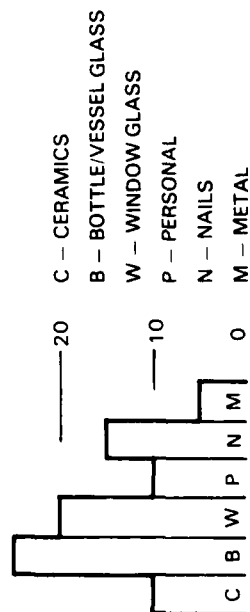
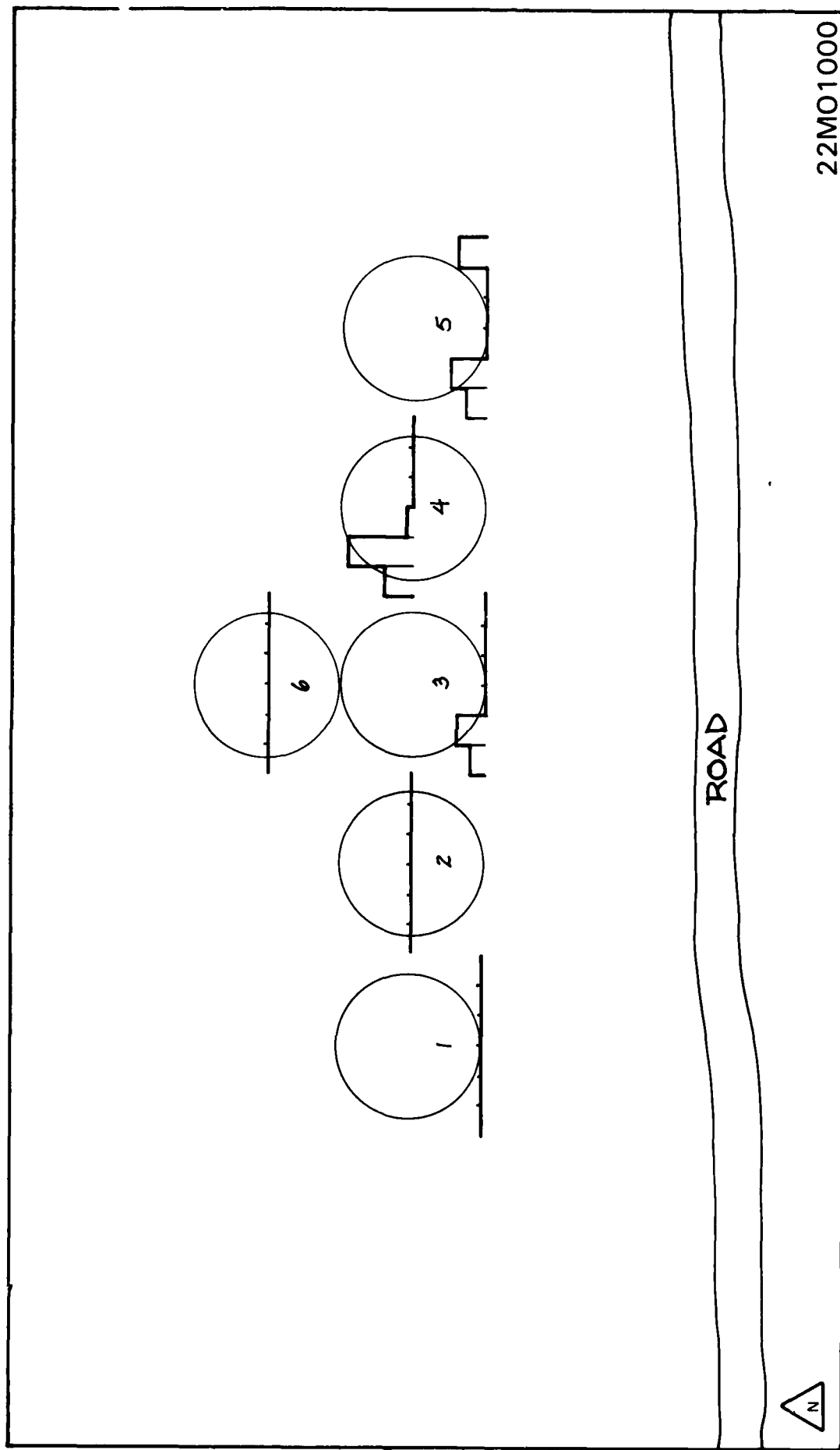


FIGURE 21

WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M01002

Topography: Slight rise covering the entire intersection where this site is located; it slopes very gently away from the concentration area in all directions.

Vegetation: Scrub, brambles, grass, some areas of tall grass near the southwest corner of the intersection.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: Concentration area 1520 m^2 ; very dense brick, ceramics, and glass concentration; scatter extends nearly 200 m along the road and is 56 m wide. This scatter decreases considerably, outside the concentration area (see Figure 30).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 238 plus brick, mortar

General Surface - 77

Shovel Tests - 19

Collection Circles - 142

(Figures 22 and 23)

1)	27	6)	5
2)	20	7)	18
3)	24	8)	3
4)	2	9)	8
5)	3	10)	32

Ceramics: N - 64

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	44	plate
(eight decorated - flowed blue, stamped, decal, transfer print makers mark)		bowl
		crook
stoneware	15	
(one with molded floral design on exterior surface)		
semi-vitreous		
white paste	3	
other earthenware	2	
(1-red/brown with lustre glaze; 1-molded with blue slip)		

Glass: N - 122

clear	39
purple	22
amber	17
window	14
blue-green	11
milk glass	8
aqua	6
burned	3
blue	1
olive-green	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
jar
lamp shade (?)
snuff bottle
bowl (?)
catsup
beer
medicine (?)
preserve jar

Nails: N - 15

wire	8
square	7

Metal: N - 20

misc. iron	3
sheet metal	8
misc. brass	1
barbed wire	1
tin can	1
wire	1
sheet copper	1
misc. steel	1
harrow blade	1
chain link	2

Personal: N - 6

porcelain doll fragment	3
shell button	1
metal spoon	1
lamp chimney	1

Other: N - 11

bone	1
shell	5
porcelain insulator	1
coal	1
drain tile	1
gun cartridge	1
carbon rod	1

Building Materials:

brick
mortar

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown silty sand with charcoal flecks and water action.
20 - 40 cm bs mottled gold-brown sand with water action.
One shovel test, 30 m west of datum, had an area of mottled gray-brown and light sand with charcoal flecks between 14 and 44 cm bs.

Comments: Both Ike Morgan and Richard Booth point to this area as the location of a tenant house or houses.

Date Range: 1900-1940

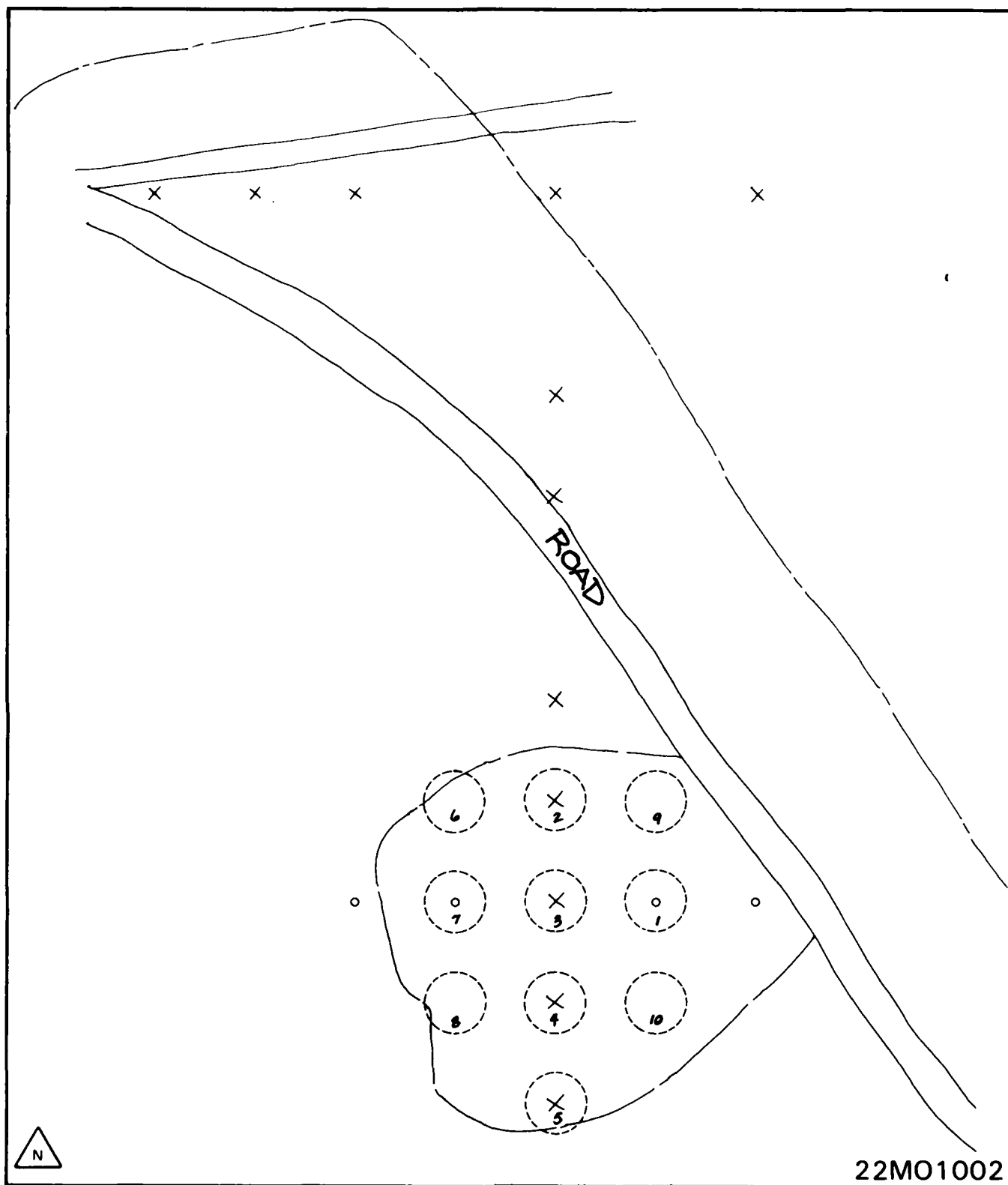


FIGURE 22
SITE LOCATION
MAP

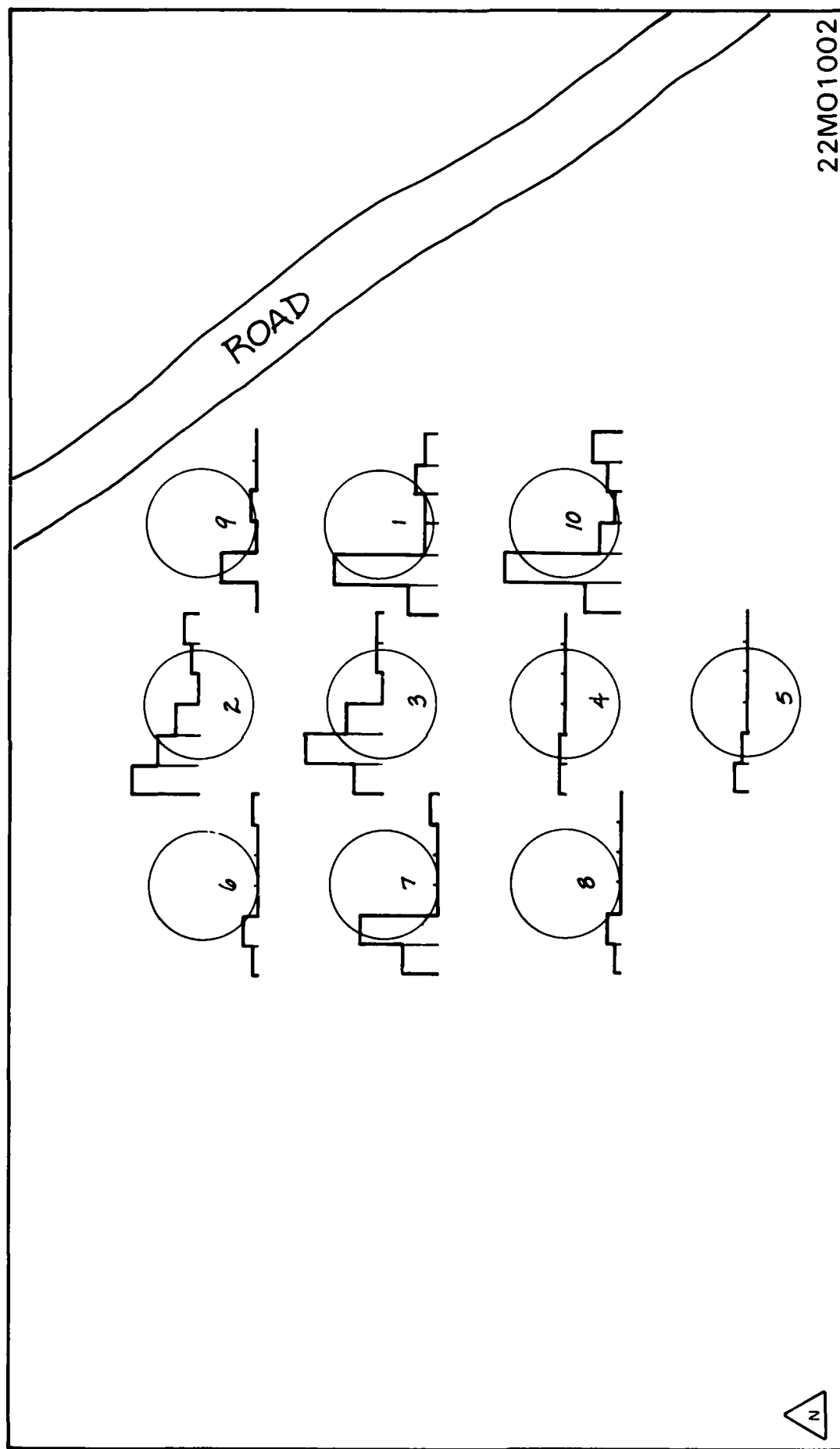


FIGURE 23
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION

by COLLECTION CIRCLE

by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M01003

Topography: Flat field

Vegetation: Grasses, tall weeds, scrub, brambles.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: No. 6

Scatter Range: Little surface scatter observed; poor visibility due to dense vegetation; the scatter seems to keep close to the structural remains (see Figure 30).

Structural Remains: Boards and a tin roof that has collapsed into the burned structure.

Artifacts: N - 70 plus brick

Shovel Tests - 70

Glass: N - 58

clear 58

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
pop bottle

Nails: N - 10

wire 10

Metal: N - 2

wire 2

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, tan-gray silty sand with varying amounts of clay and iron oxide staining.
20 + cm bs very hard gold-brown clayey sand.
Inside the structure is 5 to 10 cm of burned debris over gold-brown sand.

Comments: The foundation measurements for this structure were determined on the basis of low ridges running around the apparent edges of the building. The area would have to be cleared of overgrowth to get more accurate measurements. This building was still standing in 1972. Ike Morgan located a number of tenant houses in the vicinity of 22M01003. Richard Booth indicated an overseer's house was in this area.

Date Range: 1920-1960

Site: 22M01004

Topography: Slight rise next to road and north of drainage channel.

Vegetation: Scrub, grass, some brambles.

Disturbance: Plowing, some water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: Concentration area of 2592 m² in the form of an L; the scatter, however, extends at least 40 m beyond the concentration away from the road (south-west) and 20-30 m along the road from either end of the concentration (see Figure 30).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 312 plus brick

General Surface - 17

Shovel Tests - 15

Collection Circles - 280
(Figure 24)

1)	14	6)	35
2)	8	7)	31
3)	71	8)	18
4)	42	9)	2
5)	49	10)	10

Ceramics: N - 85

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	62	cup
(five decorated with		plate
decal or stamped design)		jug
stoneware	19	chamber pot
semi-vitreous		
white paste	4	

Glass : N - 181

clear	86
aqua	26
amber	24
blue-green	15
purple	13
window	8
milk glass	4
yellow	2
carnival	1
emerald green	1
blue	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
stemware
preserve jar
bowl
tumbler
jar

Nails: N - 21

wire	19
square	2

Metal: N - 14

band steel	1
harness buckle	1
iron kettle fragment	1
misc. iron	6
sheet metal	3
staple	1
tin can	1

Personal: N - 4

porcelain doll fragment	2
boot buckle	1
porcelain door knob	1

Other: N - 7

gun cartridge	1
bottle cap	2
aluminum can	1
shell	3

Building Material:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, dark brown, brown, or hard gray-brown silty sand with charcoal stains and flecks. 20 - 40 cm bs gray, red or gold-brown sand or sandy clay. Four shovel tests had profiles, indicating the possible presence of a midden: Surface - 17 cm bs mottled brown sand; 17 - 25 cm bs solid brown sand with charcoal flecks; 25 - 40 cm bs gold-brown sand. Three shovel tests were into features, though few artifacts were found: Surface - 20 cm bs brown silty sand; 20 - 25 cm bs gray brown sand bounded by thin lenses of dark brown/black soil; 25 - 60 cm bs mottled dark brown sand with charcoal chunks; 55 - 60 cm bs gold-brown sand.

Comments: Two structures may be represented at this site, one in each arm of the L-shaped concentration.

Date Range: 1910-1930

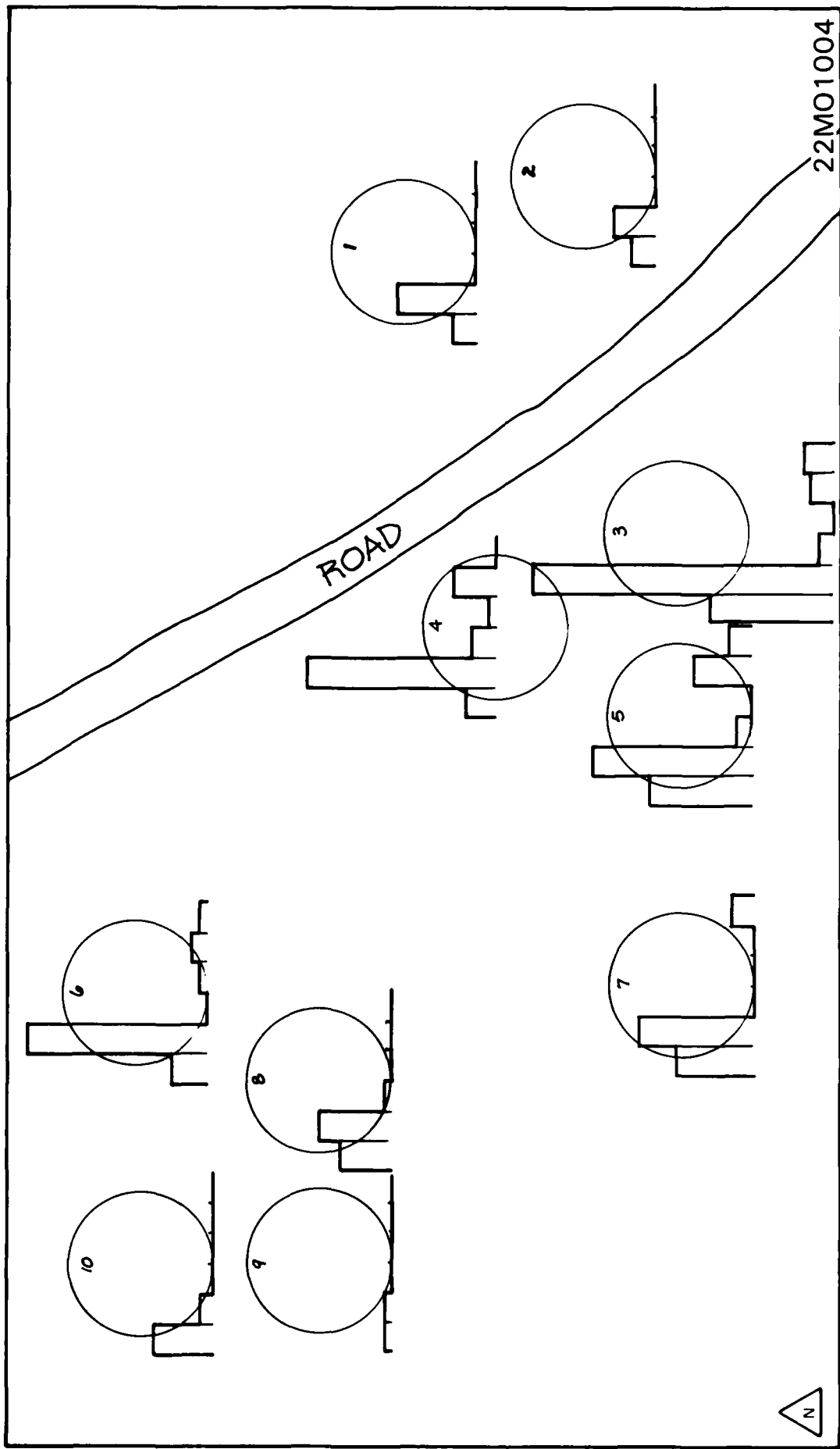


FIGURE 24
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M01005

Topography: Fairly flat area next to a drainage ditch; site is dissected by another, possibly natural, drainage channel.

Vegetation: Regrowth in old clearing on all sides; land may have been under cultivation at one time.

Disturbance: None observed.

Miller Site No.: No. 25

Scatter Range: Little visible surface scatter (see structural remains section) (Figure 30).

Structural Remains: Concrete walls and foundation blocks, probably for steam boiler and saw; several piles of concrete rubble; small log and board bridge over slough.

Artifacts: N - 4 plus brick, mortar

Shovel Tests - 4

Nails: N - 4

wire 4

Building Materials:

brick
mortar
concrete

Stratigraphy: Surface - 5/6 cm bs organic layer - humus, leaves, roots.
5 - 15/20 cm bs mixed clay, sand, ash, charcoal, organic soil and some iron oxide staining.
Close to the slough the soil becomes more moist and clayey.
Below 15/20 cm bs red-brown, yellow-brown clay or sandy clay; some gravel.

Comments: 22M01005 is in a wooded area of young trees, relatively free of underbrush, measuring approximately 2048 m². Between this area and the open fields to the south and west, dense brush and several tree falls prevented access and shovel testing; cultural remains may therefore cover a somewhat larger area than that indicated. The sawmill was erected in 1911 by C. C. Day, who also built a railroad from the mill to Aberdeen. No evidence of this railroad has been found.

Date Range: Post 1900

Site: 22M01006

Topography: Flat field

Vegetation: Scrub and grass; tall weeds and grasses around structure where the area was not plowed.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: No. 7

Scatter Range: Sparse visible surface scatter for about 30 m outside the structure; scatter slightly more dense on the north and east sides, though material was found around the large oak tree 50 m to the southwest (see Figure 30).

Structural Remains: Collapsed building with concrete foundation pad. A fenced pen is behind the building.

Artifacts: N - 36 plus brick

General Surface - 15

Shovel Tests - 21

Ceramics: N - 5

white soft paste	5
(one decorated with	
decal)	

Glass: N - 20

clear	14
blue-green	2
milik glass	2
aqua	1
window	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
jar
plate
pop bottle

Nails: N - 3

wire	3
------	---

Metal: N - 5

misc. iron	1
wire	1
fence staple	1
sheet metal	1
white metal fragment	1

Other: N - 3

aluminum can	1
sardine can	1
rubber shoe	1

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 10/20 cm bs plow zone, hard gray-brown silty sand.
10/20 - 40 cm bs gold-brown sand, often with water action visible; increasing clay content to 40 cm bs. One shovel test 30 m east of the 70 m stake encountered a feature of dark brown organic sandy soil between 20 and 36 cm bs.

Comments: Building dimensions were again determined on the basis of low ridges running around the edges of the structure. Ike Morgan stated that a barn was located in this area.

Date Range: 1910-1940

Site: 22M01007

Topography: Slight rise with very gentle slopes.

Vegetation: Scrub, grass, brambles; no tall grasses.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: No real concentration; the sparse scatter covers 1380 m²
(see Figure 31).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 68 plus brick

General Surface - 5

Shovel Tests - 2

Collection Circles - 61
(Figure 25)

1)	1	6)	0
2)	9	7)	7
3)	15	8)	1
4)	10	9)	7
5)	7	10)	4

Ceramics: N - 25

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	16
stoneware	9

jug
plate

Glass: N - 40

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

clear	26
amber	5
blue-green	2
burned	2
enamelled	
(pink through clear)	1
aqua	1
brown	1
emerald green	1
milk glass	1

bottle
jar
snuff bottle

Metal: N - 2

misc. iron 2

Other: N - 1

plastic 1

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 10/20 cm bs plow zone, brown sandy loam alternately dry and compact, loose and powdery, or soft and moist.
10/20 - 30/35 cm bs mottled brown sandy loam with light sand patches; some clay.
Two tests, 20 and 30 m east of datum, encountered a layer 7-10 cm thick beneath the plow zone, consisting of uniform moist brown sandy loam grading into a dark stain.

Date Range: 1880-1900

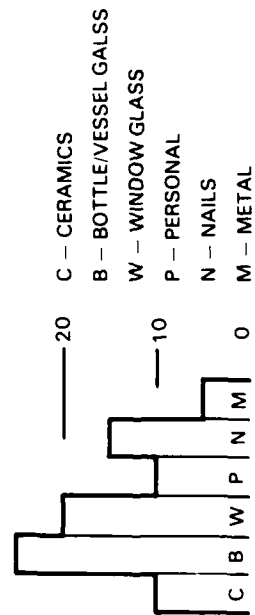
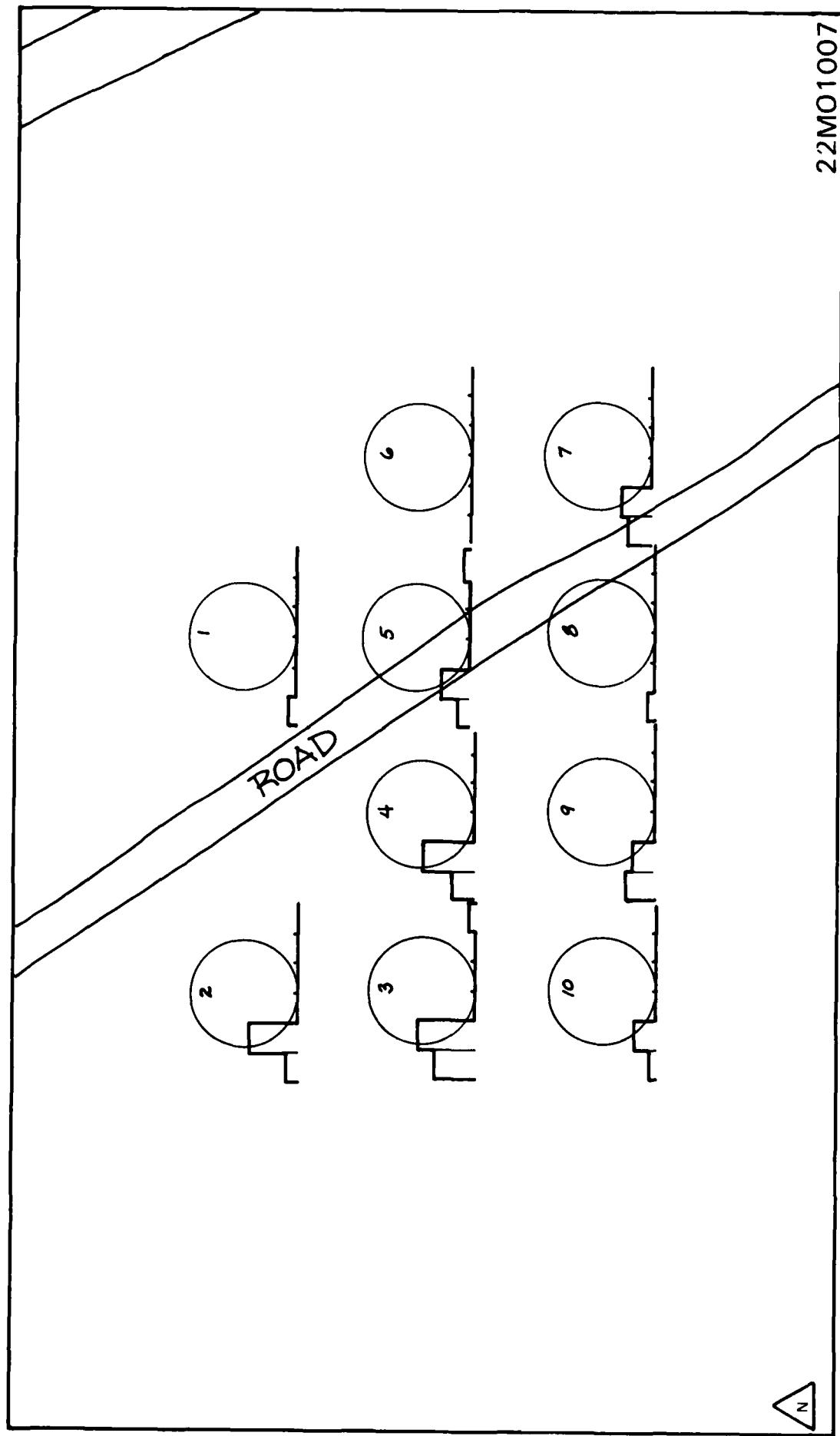


FIGURE 25
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M0985

Topography: Very slight rise dropping off on the east side of the road toward the drainage ditch.

Vegetation: Scrub, grass, brambles.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: The artifact scatter within the concentration area of 1288 m² is sparse but uniform. A definite break exists between the concentration and the scatter limits, where artifacts are little more than incidental (see Figure 31).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 71 plus brick

General Surface - 12

Shovel Tests - 5

Collection Circles - 54

(Figure 26)

1)	8	4)	14
2)	8	5)	9
3)	15		

Ceramics: N - 30

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	17
stoneware	6
semi-vitreous	
white paste	7
(two with overglaze rim band)	

plate
saucer

Glass: N - 32

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

clear	18
aqua	5
amber	4
blue-green	4
window	1

bottle
handle
snuff bottle
bowl (pressed glass)
preserve jar

Nails: N - 2

wire	1
square	1

Metal: N - 4

sheet metal	3
misc. metal	1

Personal: N - 3

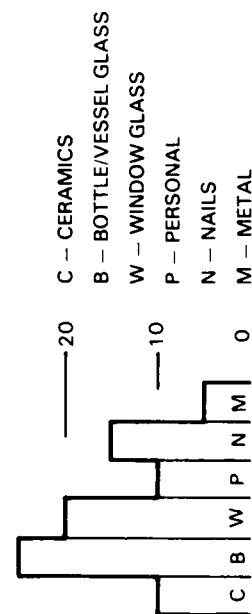
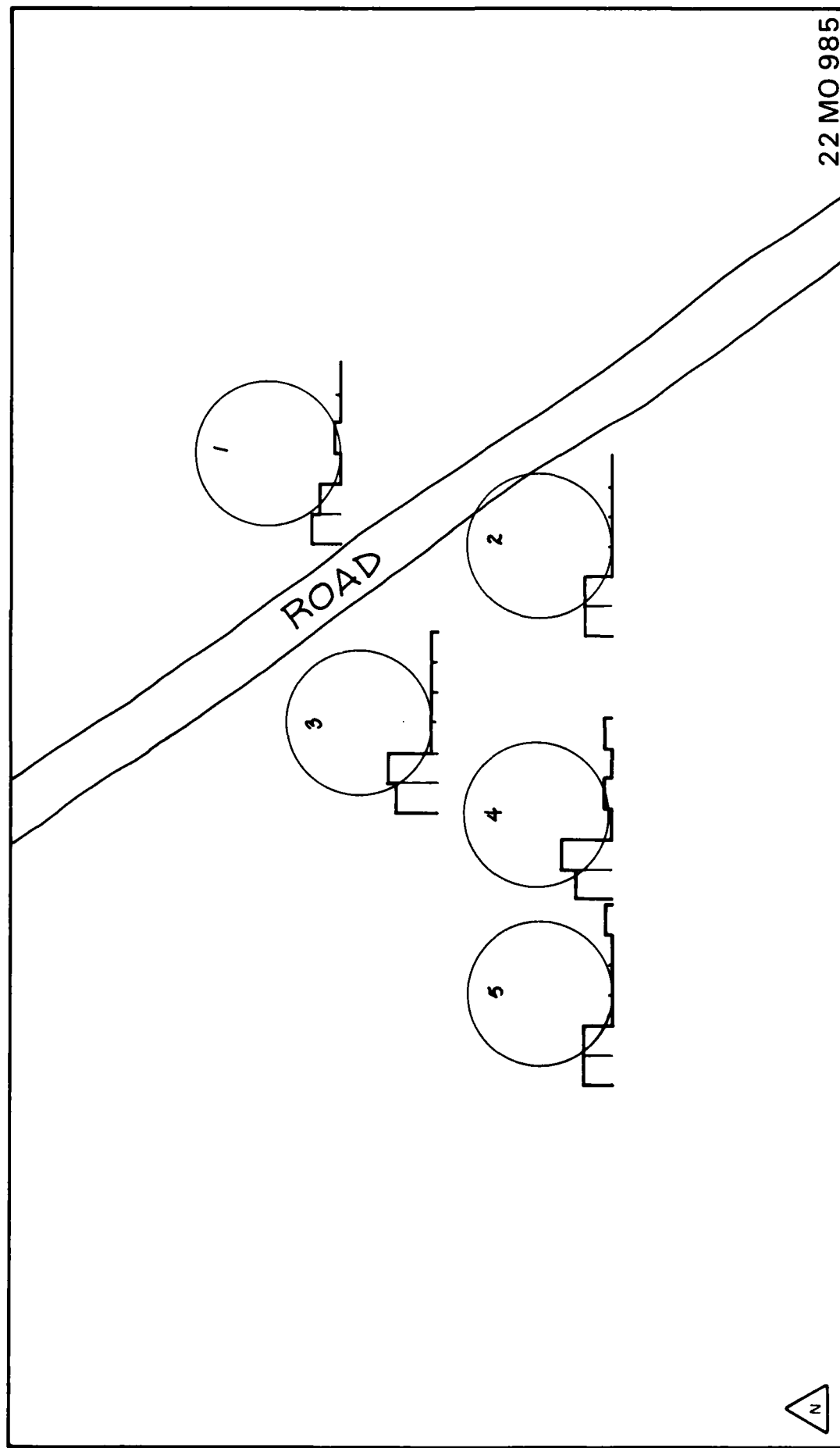
porcelain button	2
milk glass button	1

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 15/20 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown silty sand.
15/20 - 40 cm bs gold-brown sand, red-brown sand, or sandy clay.
Three tests, 10, 20 and 30 m west of datum, encountered features between 16 and 32 cm bs. Feature fill consisted of brown or gold-brown sand with charcoal flecks.

Date Range: 1900-1920



C - CERAMICS
 B - BOTTLE/VESSEL GLASS
 W - WINDOW GLASS
 P - PERSONAL
 N - NAILS
 M - METAL

FIGURE 26
 WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
 by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M0986

Topography: Flat land dissected in the west and southwest by small drainage ditches. In the west and north are woods and the steep drop to the river in the north.

Vegetation: Scrub, grasses, woods.

Disturbance: Plowing in non-wooded areas, water action.

Miller Site No.: Nos. 1,2,3

Scatter Range: Little scatter around Miller Site No. 1 and No. 2; dense scatter around Miller Site No. 3 for about 20 m on each side (see Figure 31).

Structural Remains: Miller Site No. 1 is a standing structure; Miller Site No. 2 is a log house with a collapsed roof; Miller Site No. 3 is now just a concrete pad. Several fence lines, a gate, and a small covered structure are present within the woods and to the west of the standing buildings.

Artifacts: N - 488 plus brick, mortar, concrete

General Shovel Tests - 8

Quadrant Shovel Tests - 55

Quadrant Surface - 425

1)	26	5)	0	9)	6	13)	1
2)	116	6)	152	10)	70	14)	8
3)	16	7)	0	11)	21	15)	0
4)	4	8)	4	12)	0	16)	1

Ceramics N - 144

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	116
(eighteen decorated;	
decal, stamp, blue	
sponge, blue edge,	
transfer print, molded	
rim)	
stoneware	13
semi-vitreous	
white paste	13
other earthenware	1
burned	1

cup
plate
bowl
jug
saucer
platter

Glass: N - 248

clear	152
amber	27
blue-green	15
aqua	15
purple	12
milk glass	9
olive green	6
window	4
opaque green	2
green	2
light blue	2
yellow	1
light green	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
pop bottle
snuff bottle
beer
stemware
preserve jar
jar
plate
medicine (?)
handle

Nails: N - 19

wire	15
square	2
unidentified	1
horseshoe	1

Metal: N - 42

sheet metal	1
staple	3
spring	2
chain link	1
lock bolt	1
lag bolt	2
misc. steel	1
misc. iron	4
pipe clamp	1
misc. metal	4
tin can	1
metal lid	2
wire	8
iron ring	1
cotter pin	2
bolt	3
nut	2
machine chain	1
strap iron	2

Personal: N - 8

harmonica reed plate	1
pants button	1
shoe sole (rubber/ plastic)	3
snap	1
pants rivet	2

Other: N - 27

aluminum scrap	2
aluminum can	1
porcelain insulator	1
slate	2
pull top	2
zinc	1
plastic	10
gun cartridge	2
rubber	4
bone	1
drain tile	1

Stratigraphy: Surface - 15 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown to tan-yellow silty sand, very dry and compact.
 15 - 20/37 cm bs gold-brown clayey sand with some manganese. Several tests appear to have deposits beneath the plow zone; the soil is more uniform and has charcoal flecks in it. The ground was too hard and dry to be able to see the dividing line between the plow zone and the lower levels.

Comments: This site area contains a complex of buildings and other cultural remains spanning a wide temporal and functional range. Structures were grouped under one site designation because of their proximity to one another, though each should be considered a site by itself. Oral history sources, in addition to mid-nineteenth century dates on some of the artifactual remains, indicate that other structures were likely present in the past. At the time a surface collection was made at 22MO986 our field strategy had not been finalized. Since shovel testing was found not to be effective in the hard, compact soil, an intensive surface collection was made in each of 16 quadrants, 20 m on a side, surrounding Miller Site No. 3. When we came back to the site later in the season we shovel tested to the west of Miller Site No. 3 in order to finish our testing program at this site. Miller Site No. 1 was identified by Richard Booth as the house of Pet Franks, Booth's cook between 1920 and 1926.

Date Range: 1840 - present

Site: 22M0987

Topography: Very slight but broad rise.

Vegetation: Scrub, grass, brambles, some tall grass.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: No. 24

Scatter Range: Fairly dense concentration of 1280 m² with the scatter extending 20-30 m to the north, west and south. To the south it blends into the scatter for 22M0988 and the two large trees at the bend in the road (see Figures 15 and 31).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 118 plus brick

General Surface - 2

Shovel Tests - 17

Collection Circles - 99	1)	55	4)	9
(Figure 27)	2)	13	5)	15
	3)	7		

Ceramics: N - 54

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	44	plate
(three decorated: decal, blue slip, blue flow)		
stoneware	5	
semi-vitreous		
white paste	5	

Glass: N - 51

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

clear	15	bottle
purple	9	pop bottle
aqua	7	tumbler
amber	6	medicine
window	5	jar
milk glass	5	snuff bottle
blue-green	4	

Nails: N - 4

wire	1
square	3

Metal: N - 8

misc. iron	6
sheet metal	1
sheet brass	1

Personal: N - 1

lamp chimney	1
--------------	---

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 12/24 cm bs plow zone, brown sandy loam.
12/24 - 40 cm bs compact tan-yellow sand.

Comments: Both 22M0987 and 22M0988 appear to be in the general vicinity of a tenant house described by Ike Morgan.

Date Range: 1910-1940

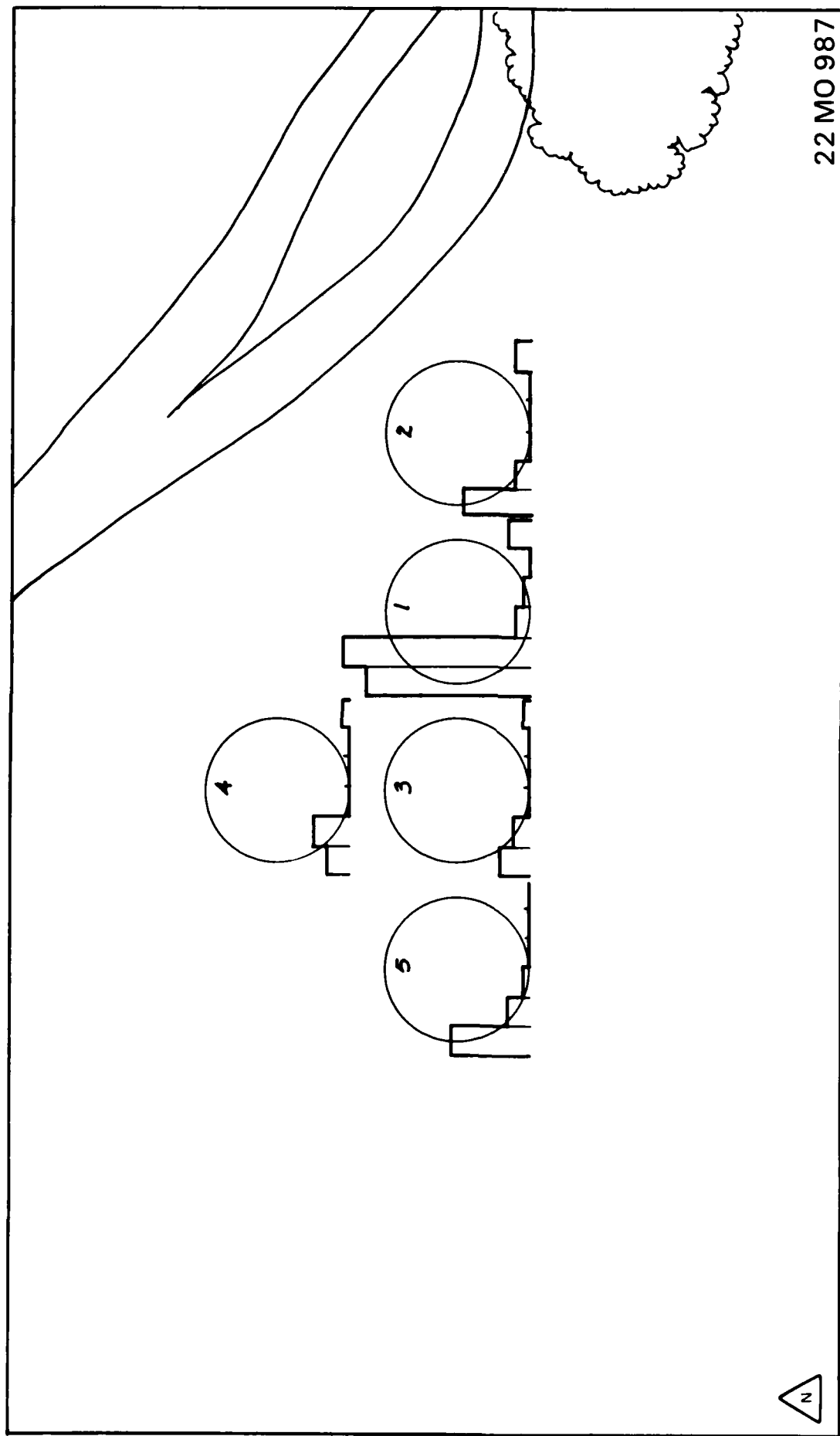


FIGURE 27
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M0988

Topography: Flat field.

Vegetation: Scrub and grass; tall grasses next to road.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: Probably No. 24.

Scatter Range: Sparse₂ surface scatter visible; entire scatter measures 1568 m² (see Figure 31).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 7 plus brick

Surface - 2

Shovel Tests - 5

Ceramics: N - 3

white soft paste 3

Glass N - 4

purple	1
aqua	1
amber	1
blue-green	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
stemware

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 15/20 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown silty sand, some with charcoal and/or brick flecks.
15/20 - 25 cm bs mottled gray-brown, gold-brown silty sand, some with charcoal; varying clay content.
25 - 30/35 cm bs gold-brown clayey sand.
One shovel test, 20 m west and 10 m north of datum, had a layer of dark gray-brown clayey sand with charcoal flecks and iron oxide staining between 15 and 35 cm bs.
Two ceramic sherds were found near the bottom of this pit.
One test, 20 m west and 20 m north of datum, contained a layer of dark brown silty sand with charcoal and brick flecks between 15 and 22 cm bs.

Comments: This site was too overgrown with grasses for collection circles to be completed.

Date Range: c. 1920?

Site: 22M0989

Topography: Slight, broad rise.

Vegetation: Scrub and grass.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: Medium concentration of 804 m² with a scatter range of up to 30 m to the east and west. The scatter extends farther to the north but is very sparse (see Figure 32).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 66 plus brick, mortar

General Surface - 20

Shovel Tests - 3

Collection Circles - 43
(Figure 28)

1)	15	4)	5
2)	1	5)	17
3)	0	6)	5

Ceramics: N - 21

white soft paste	15
stoneware	4
burned	2

Glass: N - 33

clear	10
window	7
aqua	5
purple	4
blue-green	3
amber	2
blue	2

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

bottle
glass stopper
tumbler
preserve jar

Nails: N - 5

wire	4
square	1

Metal: N - 7

sheet copper	1
sheet metal	1
misc. iron	5

Building Materials:

brick
mortar

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, brown sandy loam.
20 - 40 cm bs mottled tan-yellow sand.

Comments: This site is toward the eastern edge of an area described
by Ike Morgan as having a high number of tenant houses.

Date Range: post 1900/1910

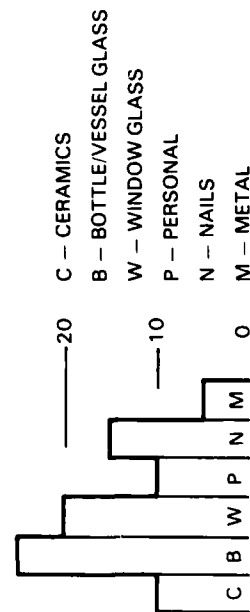
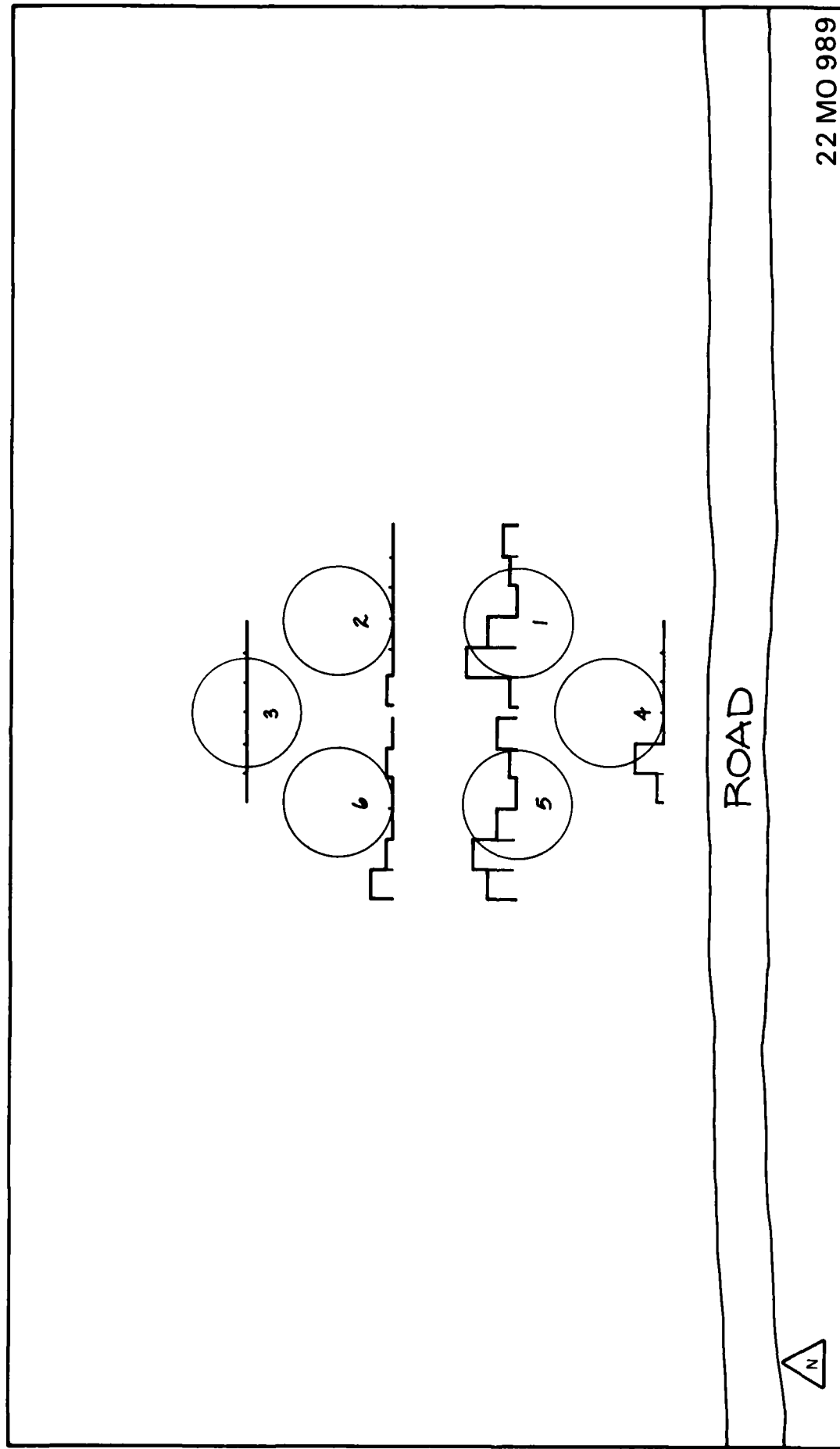


FIGURE 28
WITHIN SITE ARTIFACT DISTRIBUTION
by COLLECTION CIRCLE

Site: 22M0990

Topography: Low rise.

Vegetation: Scrub and short grasses.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: Sparse surface scatter of slightly less than 600 m².
Beyond the concentration area artifacts were very
infrequent. All visible artifacts recovered (see Figure 32).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 6 plus brick

Surface - 5

Shovel Tests - 1

Ceramics: N - 4

white soft paste 4
(one decorated:
blue sponge)

Glass: N - 1

purple 1

Personal: N - 1

black glass button 1

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 15 cm bs plow zone, loose powdery gray-brown silty sand.
15 - 25 cm bs mottled brown and light brown sand with some charcoal flecks and water action.
25 - 40 cm bs gold-brown sand.
Two tests, at 10 and 20 m south of datum, had a layer of brown sand with some light sand mottling and charcoal flecks; considerable water action. This layer was between 20 and 40 cm bs.

Comments: Very small and sparse surface scatter which drops off to practically nothing outside the central concentration area. Rather than establish a base line, we set a datum stake and measured the scatter boundaries and shovel test locations from that point.

Date Range: 1870-1900

Site: 22M0991

Topography: Rise south of drainage ditch and west of swamp and field road.

Vegetation: Almost entirely thick grasses.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: Little visible surface scatter beyond the disked strip; most of site area covered by grasses (see Figure 32).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 19 plus brick

Surface - 16

Shovel Tests - 3

Ceramics: N - 11

white soft paste	8
stoneware	2
semi-vitreous	
white paste	1

Glass: N - 6

purple	3
milk glass	1
(decorated with green paint)	
aqua	1
clear	1

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

preserve jar

Metal: N - 2

misc. iron	2
------------	---

Building Materials:

brick

Stratigraphy: Surface - 15/20 cm bs plow zone, yellow-gray-brown clayey sand; water action.
15/20 - 35 cm bs very hard cinnamon colored sandy clay.

Comments: Site area too overgrown for collection circles so a surface collection was made in the disked strip. As at site 22M0990 a datum stake was set and general site size and shovel test locations were measured from that point.

Date Range: 1880-1900

Site: 22MO992

Topography: High spot at the northwest corner of the intersection of two roads.

Vegetation: Thick grass.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: None

Scatter Range: No visible surface scatter (see Figure 32).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: None

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20/25 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown silty sand.
20/25 - 35 cm bs cinnamon sandy clay.
One shovel test, 10 m south of datum, contains gray-brown clayey sand with charcoal flecks and chunks between 20 and 49 cm bs and light tan-gray clayey sand with charcoal flecks between 40 and 45 + cm bs.

Comments: This area was tested in search of Miller's Site No. 19, which appears to be farther to the east. If the subplow zone material described above is the result of cultural activity, it could be associated with Miller Site No. 18 or 19.

Date Range: No basis for assignment of date range for this site.

Site: 22M0993

Topography: Low area in wooded row sloping to a drainage ditch and swamp area to the north; on the eastern side of this wooded row is a flat field with another drainage ditch between it and the woods. A large depression measuring about 2 x 4 x 2 meters may be an artesian well.

Vegetation: Woods - trees, rotted trees, beaver chewed logs.
Field - scrub, brambles, some thick grass and tall weeds.

Disturbance: Woods - water action
Field - plowing, water action, bulldozer ruts.

Miller Site No.: No. 19

Scatter Range: Very sparse scatter₂ of about 30 m in diameter in the woods and 600 m² in the field immediately to the east. The entire scatter area in the field is approximately 3600 m². There is also material in and along the field road which runs to the south of the woods and to the west of the field (see Figure 32).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 6 plus brick, mortar, concrete

Surface - 3

Shovel Tests - 3

Ceramics: N - 4

white soft paste	2
semi-vitreous	
white paste	2

Metal: N - 2

plow disc	1
barbed wire	1

Building Materials:

brick
mortar
concrete

Stratigraphy: Woods - Five shovel tests were made: one in each corner of the wooded area, and one in the center of this area.

Surface - 15/20 cm bs brown and yellowish organic clayey soil with many roots; some charcoal and iron oxide staining.

15/20 - 30 cm bs gray to rust-brown clay.

Field - Soil extremely hard and compact.

Surface - 20 cm bs hard, dry brown sandy loam.

Comments: Site 22M0993 is probably Miller's Site No. 19. It should be noted that Commonwealth designated sites CW19X and CW20X probably represent one site and have been combined under the Mississippi state site designation 22M0993. Richard Booth said that there was an artesian well in this location. Both he and Ike Morgan place a tenant house here.

Date Range: Post 1900

Site: 22M0994

Topography: Long broad rise.

Vegetation: Scrub, brambles, grasses.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: Possibly No. 21.

Scatter Range: Medium scatter with concentration of 760 m² and scatter range of 1440 m² (see Figure 32).

Structural Remains: None

Artifacts: N - 49 plus brick

Surface - 49

Ceramics: N - 19

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	13
(one with maker's mark)	
stoneware	5
semi-vitreous	
white paste	1

plate

Glass: N - 29

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

clear	8
purple	6
blue-green	4
aqua	3
milk glass	3
amber	2
pressed with pinkish	
tint	2
green	1

bottle
preserve jar
jar

Metal: N - 1

zinc cap 1

Stratigraphy: Surface - 20 cm bs plow zone, gray-brown silty sand.
20 - 40 cm bs red-gold-brown sand.

Comments: This site may in fact be north of Miller's Site No. 21. Miller Sites No. 21, 22 and 23, and 22M0656 are all in the same general area, a long rise measuring about 250 m from north to south, and bounded on the east by swampland. All maps at our disposal were of different scales and cited different landmarks. Furthermore, the NASA infra-red aerial photograph was taken in 1972 and it is apparent that vegetation and the location of the field road have changed since that time. It appears that Bense tested at least part of Miller Site No. 22 and possibly No. 23 (Bense 1980). 22M0994 is to the south of Bense's backhoe trenches, which we were able to locate on the ground. This site could therefore be associated with 22M0656 and/or Miller Site No. 22 and Miller Site No. 21, or it could be a new site. Ike Morgan located several tenant houses in the vicinity of all of these sites.

Date Range: 1870-1930

Site: 22M0995 (No Site Map)

Topography: Slight rise.

Vegetation: Scrub, tall weeds, grasses.

Disturbance: Plowing, water action.

Miller Site No.: No. 5.

Scatter Range: Not measured.

Structural Remains: Collapsed barn.

Artifacts: N - 7

Surface - 7

Ceramics: N - 7

Identifiable Vessel Forms:

white soft paste	6	plate
(five decorated: flowed		bowl/cup
blue, transfer print,		
blue edge)		
semi-vitreous		
white paste	1	

Stratigraphy: No shovel testing done; this site is not within the project area.

Comments: We did not systematically survey the area around Miller Sites No. 4 and No. 5. However, upon walking in the area a number of early nineteenth century ceramic sherds were noticed. Seven sherds were collected in the immediate vicinity south and southeast of the structure at this site.

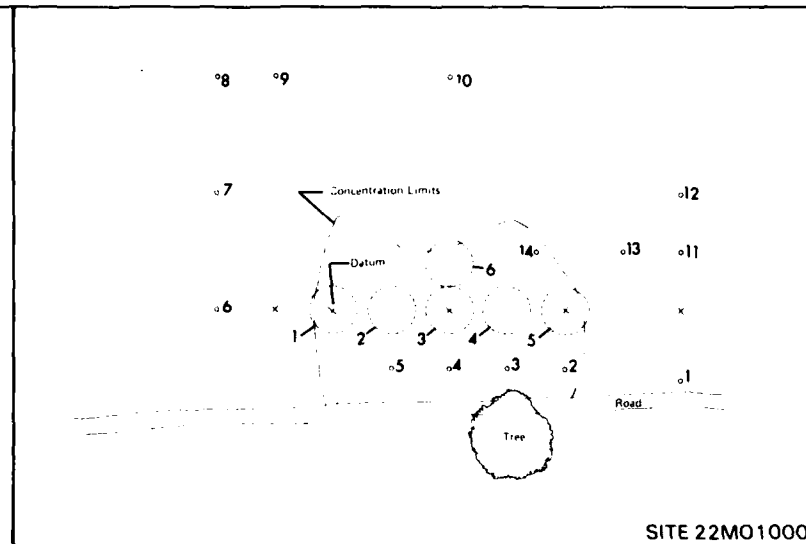
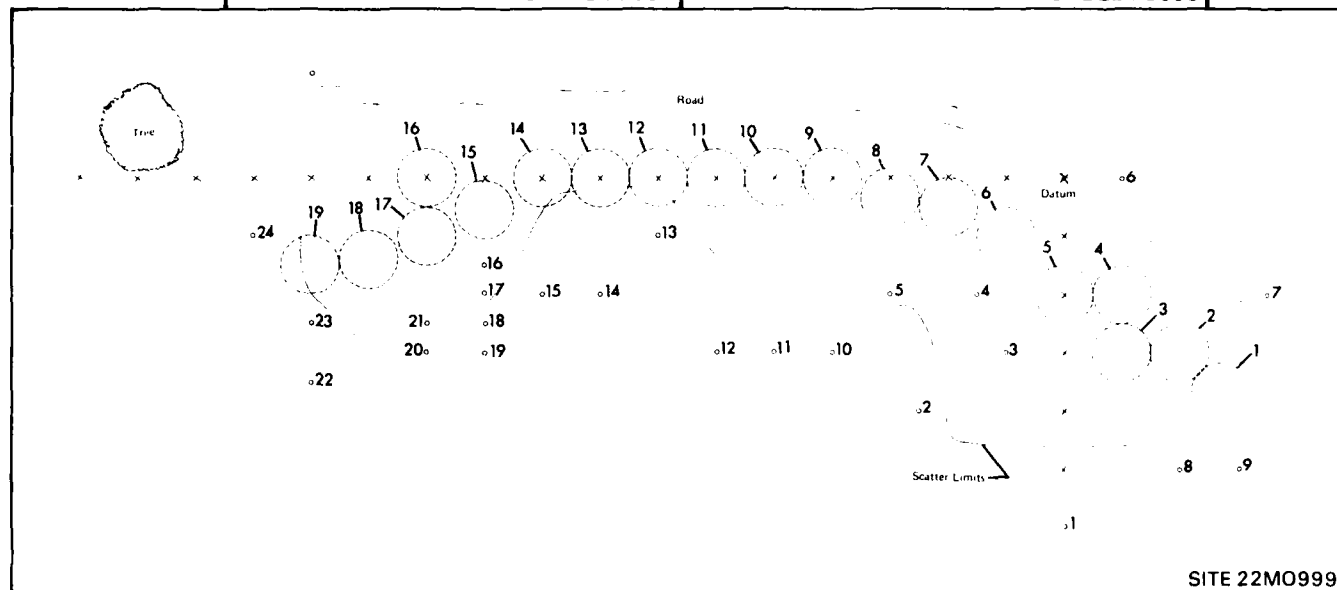
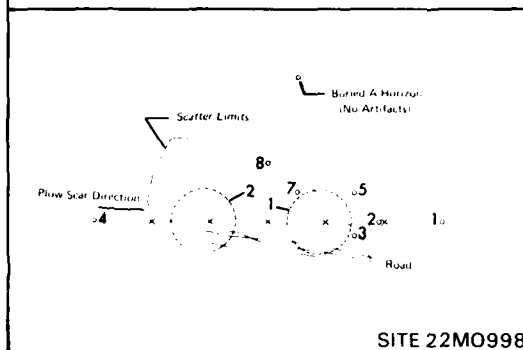
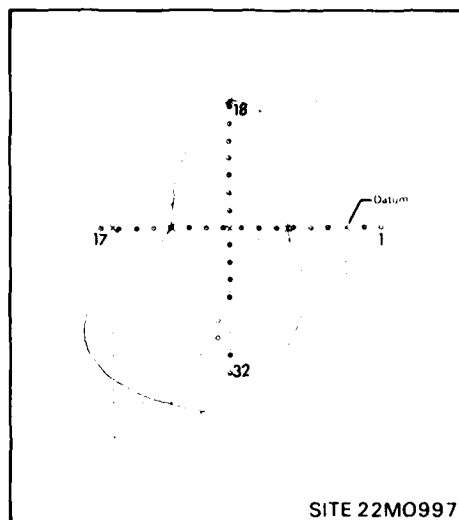
Date Range: 1840-1850

Site: 22M0996 (Figure 15)

Site 22M0996 is the manmade levee running across the northern portion of the project area. It is first visible just east of 22M0986, where it runs east, then turns to the southeast north of Site 22M0998. It was observed to range between 1 and 4 m in height, though it may be taller in spots. It is currently covered by grasses and trees.

The levee, according to oral history informant Ike Morgan, was built by Needham Whitfield slaves, though no documentary evidence to this effect has been found. Richard Booth, another oral history informant, stated that portions of the levee were bulldozed in the 1960s by the current landowner. Evidence of this activity can be seen to the northeast of Site 22M0998.

No shovel testing was conducted on the levee.

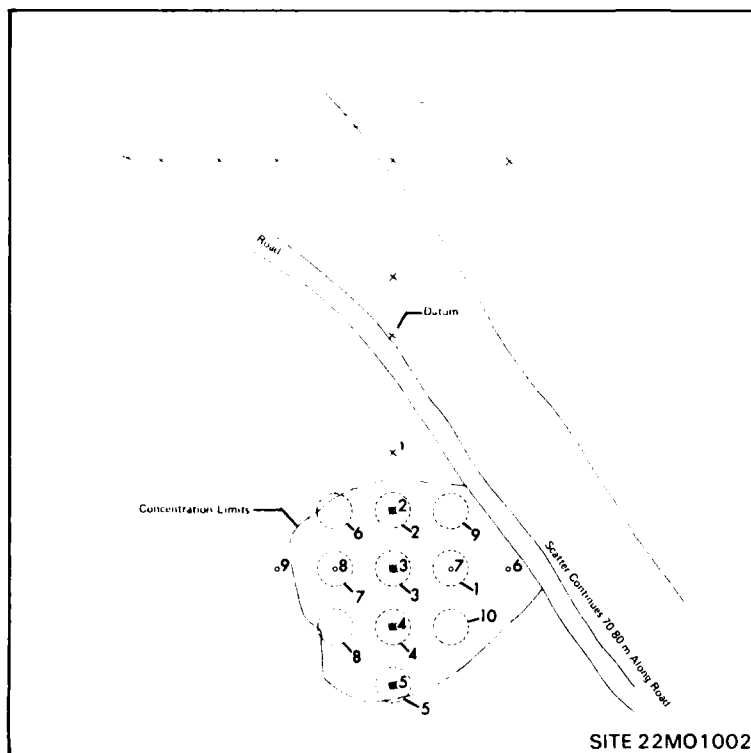


0 20 METERS

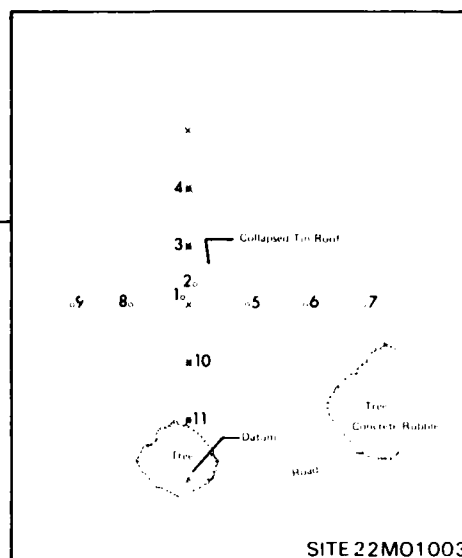


Legend:
 x Base Line Marker
 o Shovel Test
 o Collection Circle
 . Probe
 * Shovel Test at Base Line Marker

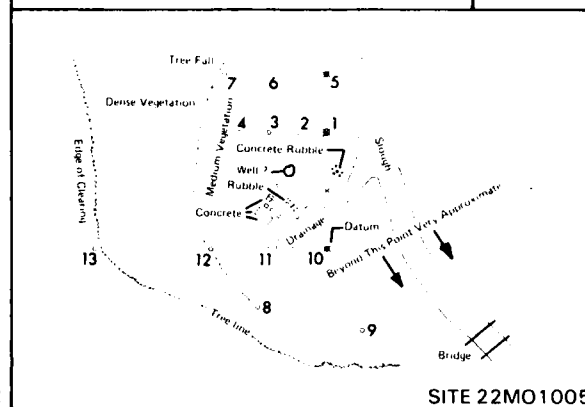
FIGURE 29
SITE MAPS



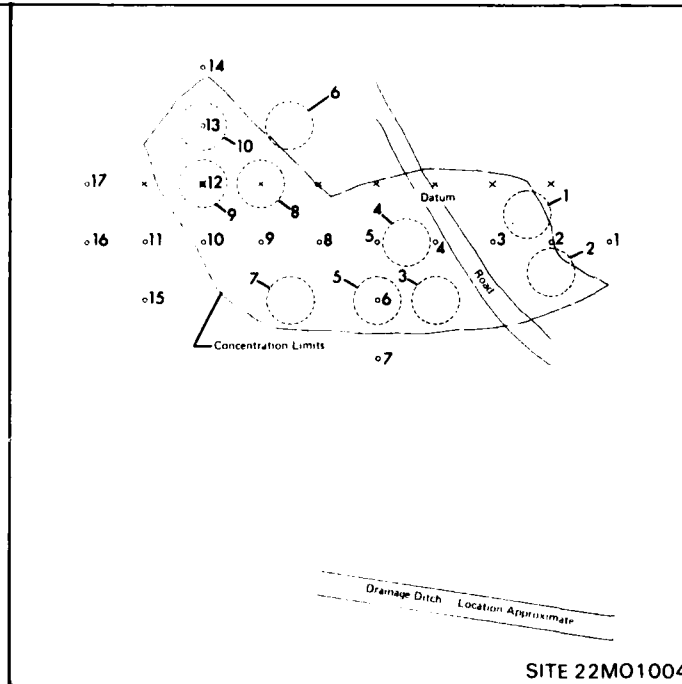
SITE 22MO1002



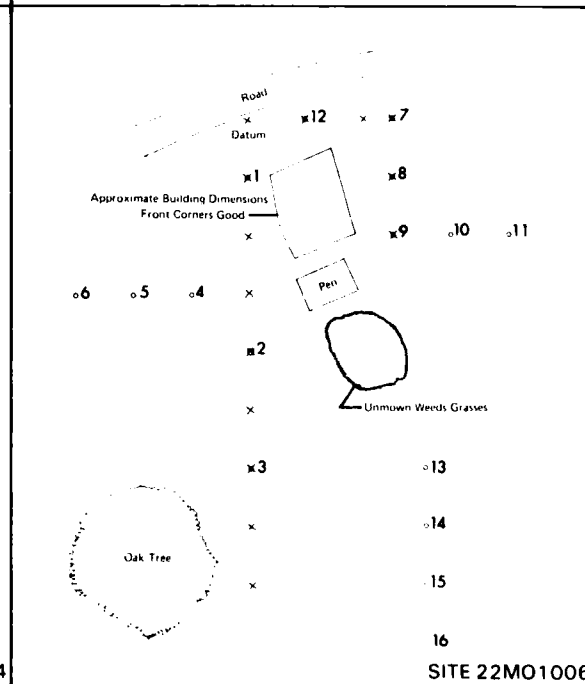
SITE 22MO1003



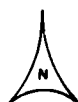
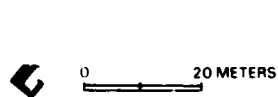
SITE 22MO1005



SITE 22MO1004

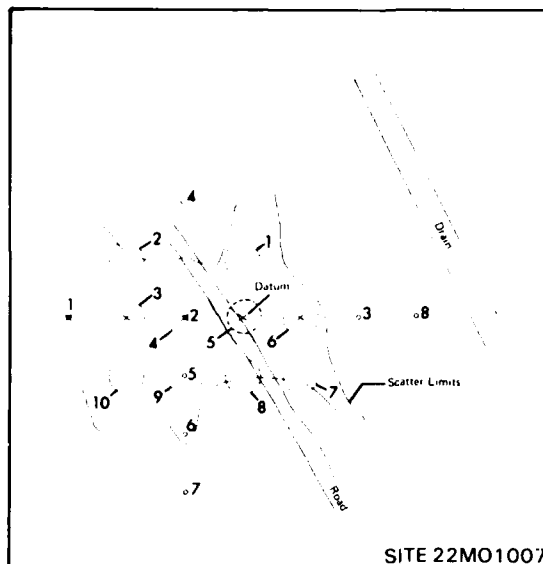


SITE 22MO1006

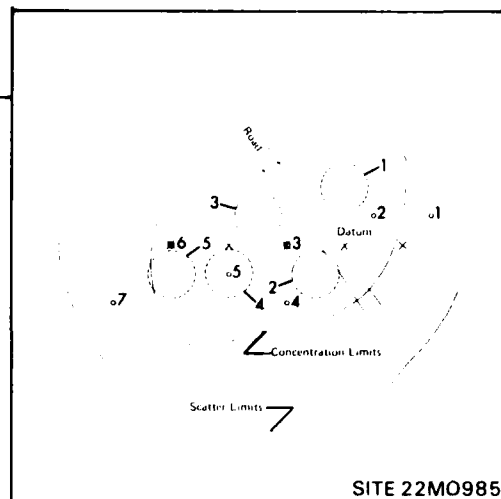


- Legend:
- x Base Line Marker
 - o Shovel Test
 - o Collection Circle
 - x Shovel Test at Base Line Marker

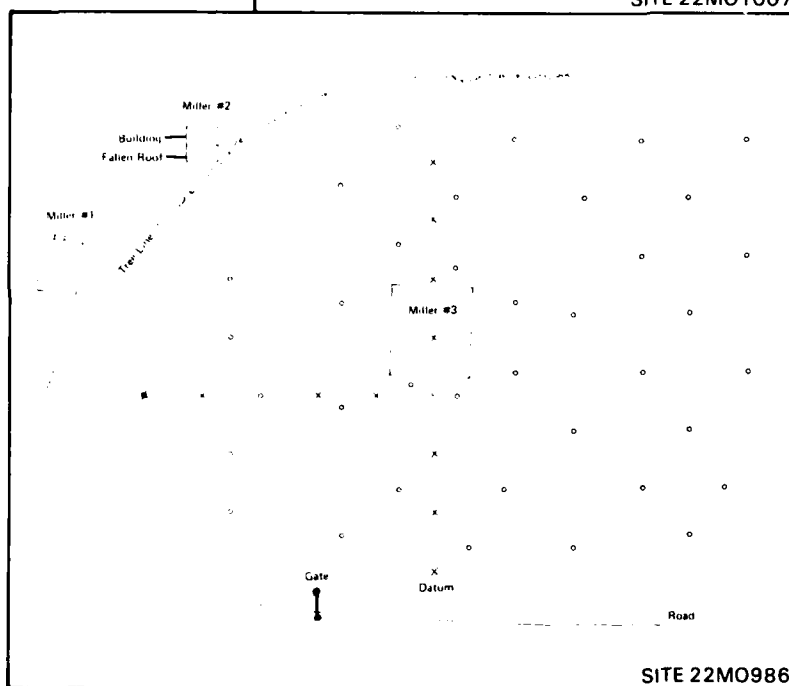
FIGURE 30
SITE MAPS



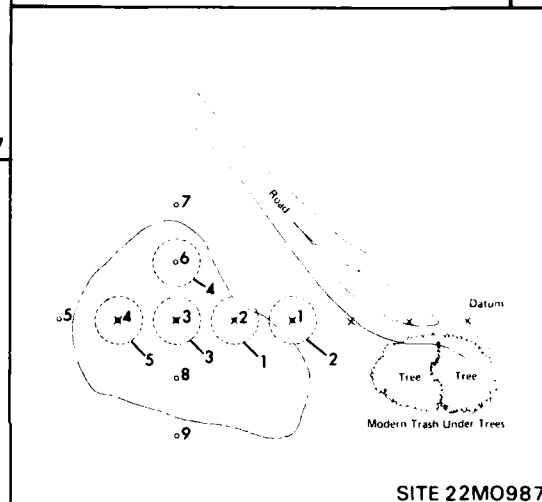
SITE 22MO1007



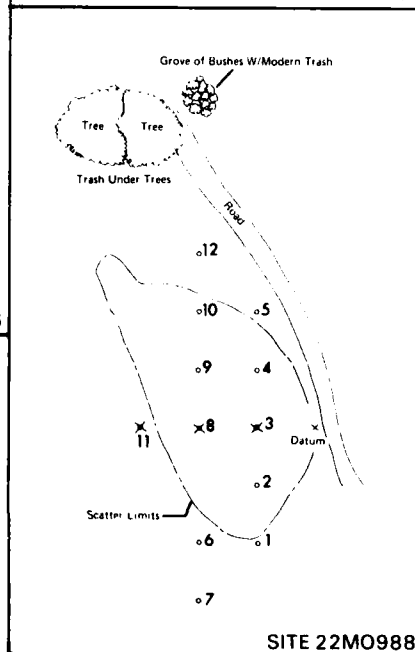
SITE 22MO985



SITE 22MO986



SITE 22MO987



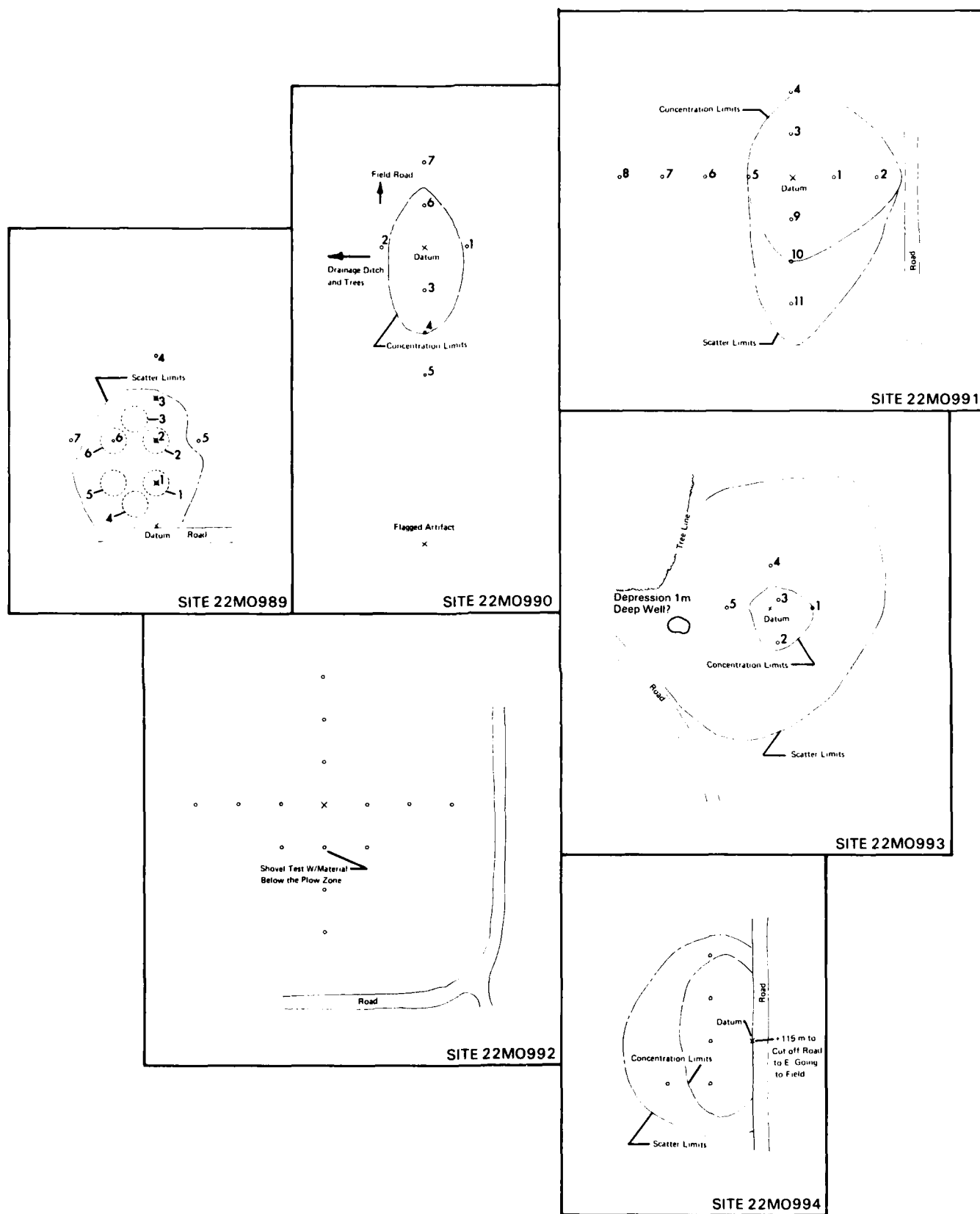
SITE 22MO988

0 20 METERS



Legend:
 x Base Line Marker
 o Shovel Test
 o Collection Circle

FIGURE 31
 SITE MAPS



0 20 METERS



Legend:
 X Base Line Marker
 o Shovel Test
 () Collection Circle

FIGURE 32
SITE MAPS

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL WORK AND TESTABLE HYPOTHESES

Five of the 22 sites located in the 1980 Phase I investigations are not scheduled to be impacted adversely by waterway construction according to the Mobile District COE archeologists, and will not require further testing at this time. These sites, are as follows: 22MO1005, 22MO987, 22MO988, 22MO994 and 22MO995. At this time sufficient data have not been gathered to determine site integrity or significance. Should changes in waterway construction plans alter the non-impacted status of these sites, further testing of the nature described below would be necessary. It has been mentioned, however, that 22MO994 was difficult to locate on our field maps. Our estimated location places it in or very near the waterway channel. This site should be relocated on the ground in order to verify its status as a non-impacted site.

We recommend no further testing at 22MO992, 22MO993 and 22MO998. A site number should not have been assigned to 22MO992, as this area appears not to be a site at all. Our survey yielded no artifacts and no evidence of subplow zone cultural remains. It was shovel tested specifically because the 1972 NASA infra-red aerial photograph shows Miller's site No. 19 in this location. However, in Miller's 1979 report site No. 19 is placed in a different location, that of 22MO993, discussed below.

Site 22MO993 yielded very few artifacts (see Table 1) and weak evidence of subplow zone cultural remains. Furthermore, the site area has been extensively disturbed by the passage of trucks and bulldozers, presumably during recent clearing operations to the south. It appears that site integrity has been sufficiently disturbed to preclude the necessity for further testing.

Site 22MO998 showed no subplow zone cultural remains. And, while more artifacts (74) were recovered from this site than from some others, many appear to be on the surface as a result of recent refuse disposal. The combination of 1) lack of subplow zone feature evidence, and 2) mixed and/or disturbed surface material has lowered the potential of this site for providing further information.

It is recommended that intensive testing be undertaken at 14 of the remaining 17 sites. This testing should consist of a combination of field techniques designed to assess more fully the resources present, the integrity of those resources, and their potential research value in order to make determinations of significance. Testing is necessary at all of these sites, as parts of the Sharpley's Bottom plantation or tenant farming community. Sites recommended for Phase II testing are as follows: 22MO999, 22MO1007, 22MO990, 22MO991, 22MO996, 22MO1000, 22MO1002, 22MO985, 22MO986, 22MO1003, 22MO1004, 22MO1006, 22MO989 and 22MO997.

Phase I archeological investigations yielded evidence of subplow zone midden or feature deposits at 11 of the 17 sites. While the subplow zone deposits were not identifiable as to form or function, they generally consisted of areas of organically discolored soil below the plow zone, containing artifacts and sometimes charcoal. These deposits do not appear to be the result of actual midden formation, but rather features such as fire pits or refuse pits. From this information we may infer the possibility that significant in situ remains are present and that some subplow zone site integrity exists. Since Phase I testing involved shovel testing only as a means of locating subplow zone cultural material, we cannot assume that no intact remains are present where evidence of features was not found. Instead, a consideration of both surface and subsurface data collected at all sites entered into recommendations as to which sites should be tested in Phase II. Sites with a large amount of surface material but weak or missing evidence of subplow zone remains were therefore not automatically excluded from recommendation for Phase II testing.

Subplow zone excavations at 22M0651 and 22M0656 (Bense 1980; Wynn and Atkinson 1976) revealed the presence of several intact features. By stripping a portion of the plow zone from sites to be tested in Phase II we should be able to evaluate whether or not data recovery is warranted.

Limited backhoe trenching in the northwest portion of the study area should allow us to test for the presence of slavery period remains and for possible buried remains. From data collected during Phase I archival and archeological research, we feel this area is likely to be the location of Whitfield's slave quarters.

Surface collections will be important since the probability of finding extensive intact features beneath the plow zone appears to be rather low. By making controlled surface collections we may be able to make inferences about the spatial arrangements of buildings and other features at a site. Furthermore, we should be able to test the correspondence between surface artifact concentrations and subplow zone features. Finally, an extensive surface collection will provide data not only for our own research but for others' investigations of tenant farming. We recommend extensive surface collections on at least three sites in Phase II. This will allow us to evaluate the effectiveness of this strategy for contributing meaningful information.

Test excavations should be undertaken around the standing structure (Miller Site No. 1) at 22M0986. We also recommend digging a backhoe trench through and below the levee (22M0996) in order to establish an undisturbed stratigraphic sequence.

Several hypotheses have been developed from the information compiled in Phase I Archival, Oral History and Archeological programs, and will be tested in Phase II Archeological Investigations.

1. Settlement

- a. Needham Whitfield's slave quarters were located in the northwest portion of the study area, section 6.

Implications: Evidence of several small structures will be found in the northwest portion of the study area, specifically in section 6.

Pre-Civil War domestic artifacts will be located in the northwest corner of the study area. Since Whitfield and his overseers lived away from the plantation, these artifacts may be assumed to be associated with the slave occupation.

- b. Assuming that the first occupation of the bottom was in the northwest corner of the study area, settlement in Sharpley's Bottom expanded to the south and east under tenancy.

Implications: Houses in the southern portion of Sharpley's Bottom, sections 7 and 18, will date to no earlier than 1890, when John Plant began to clear new land and build new tenant houses.

2. Economics

- a. Although the legal status of individuals who worked the bottom changed between slavery and freedom, there was little absolute gain in economic status from slavery to tenancy.

Implications: If pre-Civil War slave and post-Civil War tenant sites are identified, then the artifacts from slave dwellings and tenant farmer houses will be of similar low quality, or economic value.

If slave and tenant farmer houses are identified, artifacts will show a similar lack of formal variability.

If slave houses cannot be identified, and there are only tenant farmer dwellings to compare, the same situation will occur among tenant farmers: artifacts of low economic value and with little formal variability.

V. CONCLUSIONS

Proposals submitted between October 1980 and April 1981 have presented recommendations for additional interdisciplinary investigations of the Sharpley's Bottom historic sites.

Phase II historical research was proposed to provide detailed information which is essential to strengthen the introductory Phase I discussions of a significant case study in the transition from slave to tenant farming along the Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway. Phase I history has recorded an imposing sweep of chronology for Sharpley's Bottom; successive patterns of land ownership have been portrayed; and much has been learned about the varieties of economic land use which prevailed in the bottom after the abolition of slavery. Phase II historical research has been proposed to gain specific information on life and land use in the bottom from the vantage point of successive occupants instead of owners. The Phase II history from the inside out has been recommended to learn as much as possible about the historical context of Sharpley's Bottom, about the lives of the people who lived there, about who lived when and where and how. Specifically the Phase II history has proposed the following: additional Monroe County Chancery Court research to determine if Whitfield recorded antebellum tenant agreements; additional examination of Monroe County marriage and birth records to reconstruct patterns of tenant family organization; additional work with the Monroe County Deeds of Trust and with the depositions over Sharpley's disputed estate to document changes in tenancy from the 1870s to around 1900; and additional investigation of Sharpley's tract Account Books in Evans Memorial Library to learn more about the purchases and possessions of tenants living in the bottom.

Phase II oral history was proposed as a site specific follow up to the general information collected in Phase I. The Phase I oral history identified valuable informants and recorded their general recollections of life in Sharpley's Bottom. Phase II oral history was proposed to formulate a list of site specific questions concerning tenancy and its material culture manifestations. Historical questions were to concentrate on kinds of tenant farming, arrangements between owners and tenants, duration of occupancy, intergenerational persistence, and eventual out-migration. Archeological questions were to focus on the location of features and their spatial interrelationships on subsistence activities, and on the source of goods - whether purchased, borrowed, or salvaged and reused. The Phase II proposal recognized that this direct oral history evidence provided by people who lived in the bottom from the 1920s through the 1950s was especially important because no documentary sources have been discovered which record the final stages and demise of tenancy: manuscript census schedules are not available after 1900; the Monroe County Chancery Court depositions on Sharpley's estate end in 1901; and no Sharpley's tract Account Books have been located for the period after World War I.

Recommendations for Phase II archeological testing were based on the need to evaluate site integrity and the kinds of archeological information present in Sharpley's Bottom and on the need to determine whether additional data recovery would be required. The Phase II archeological investigations also have been proposed to test the hypotheses which were developed at the conclusion of Phase I. Phase II archeology has been designed to confirm the location of Whitfield's slave quarters and to verify spatial changes in tenant occupancy which followed Plant's acquisition of land control in the bottom. Additional archeology has also been recommended to delineate changes in economic status over time for the Sharpley's Bottom tenant community, and to examine variations of economic status among contemporary occupants bound by different tenancy arrangements.

The interdisciplinary investigations at Sharpley's Bottom have presented a unique opportunity to apply the methods and training of history, oral history, and archeology to an analysis of how a relatively isolated black community of tenant farmers evolved after the abolition of slavery and how that community endured until cotton was no longer king. The possibility of establishing the chronology of that community, of hearing its spoken memory, and of learning from its material culture has compelled the project historians, oral historians, and archeologists to work together on a collective reconstruction of life in the bottom. The Phase I investigations and proposal for Phase II investigations have been dedicated to a further understanding of the lives of the people in Sharpley's Bottom.

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