1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: **PARKIN INDIAN MOUND**

Other Name/Site Number: **Stanley Mound Group (3CS29)**

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: **60 Highway 184 North** Not for publication: **N/A**

City/Town: **Parkin** Vicinity: X

State: **Arkansas** County: **Cross** Code: **037** Zip Code: **72373**

3. CLASSIFICATION

Ownership of Property		Category of Property	
Private:		Building(s):	
Public-local:		District:	
Public-State:	X	Site:	X
Public-Federal:		Structure:	
		Object:	

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
	1	buildings
1		sites
2		structures
		objects
3	1	Total

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: 0

Name of related multiple property listing: **N/A**

4. STATE/FEDERAL AGENCY CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this ____ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Certifying Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria.

_____ _____
Signature of Commenting or Other Official Date

_____
State or Federal Agency and Bureau

5. NATIONAL PARK SERVICE CERTIFICATION

I, hereby certify that this property is:

____ Entered in the National Register
____ Determined eligible for the National Register
____ Determined not eligible for the National Register
____ Removed from the National Register
__X__ Other (explain): **National Historic Landmark Boundary Study**

Carol D. Shull 7-11-00
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	**Religion**	Sub:	**Religious Structure - Temple Mound**
	Domestic		**Village Site**
	Funerary		**Graves and Burials**
Current:	**Recreation & Culture**	Sub:	**State Park**

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: **N/A**

MATERIALS:	**N/A**
Foundation:	**N/A**
Walls:	**N/A**
Roof:	**N/A**
Other:	**N/A**

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

Site Type: The Parkin Indian Mound Site, (hereafter referred to as the Parkin Site) located within the city limits of Parkin, in Cross County, Arkansas, (See Figure 1) is a Mississippian to Protohistoric (A.D. 1000-1650) pyramidal mound and village site that is surrounded on three sides by a man-made ditch. On the west side is the St. Francis River. The Parkin Site is the largest of the twenty-one known Parkin phase sites in the St. Francis River basin of northeast Arkansas, and the type site for the Parkin phase. Numerous smaller mounds were noted in late nineteenth and early twentieth-century accounts; however, agricultural activities and recent dwellings have leveled these earthworks, leaving only the large mound and ditch which encloses the village area and mound.

Environmental Setting: The Parkin Site (3CS29) is located within an old (20,000 years before the present) Mississippi River Meander Belt to the west of the present day Mississippi River (See Figure 2). When the Mississippi River flowed through this area it was constantly changing its course cutting off old river channels, creating oxbow lakes, and depositing new layers of alluvial soil during periodic floods to create natural levees. As the Mississippi River gradually moved eastward, a new river system, the St. Francis, was formed and it became the dominant physiographic feature in the area of the Parkin Site (Morse 1981:5-7).

The Parkin Site, being located on a natural levee of the St. Francis River system, would have been in a favorable area for prehistoric hoe agriculture, for the raising of corn, beans, and squash, due to the presence of arable, easily worked, loamy soils. The majority of the Parkin phase sites in the St. Francis River basin are located on or within one kilometer of such soils (Morse 1981:73-82). This environment also would have been favorable for gathering wild foods, hunting large and small mammals, and collecting fish and shellfish, during the late prehistoric and early historic period of occupation at Parkin (Morse 1981:8-9).

Previous Archeological Investigations: The first archeological investigations to be conducted at the Parkin Site are believed to be those undertaken by Mr. Edwin Curtis of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, in 1879. Curtis investigated a number of mound sites along the St. Francis River, in Cross County, Arkansas, including a site called Stanley Mounds. Although the exact location of Stanley Mounds was not recorded, a check of tax records for 1879, shows that a John Stanley owned the Parkin Site at that time. The Stanley Mounds Site that Curtis described in his 1881 publication was apparently Parkin (Morse 1981:20).

> The largest of the mounds in the Stanley group, of about twenty, was forty feet high by about the same in

> diameter at top. The other mounds in this group were five or six feet in height and about fifty feet in diameter, but like most of the lower mounds they had been reduced in size by cultivation [Putnam 1881:19].

The large mound noted by Curtis would have been the extant flat topped pyramidal mound, and the smaller mounds would have been residential mounds for the Mississippian elite, or collapsed house mounds of the populace, clustered around the enclosure. This arrangement was a typical Late Mississippian site plan for the St. Francis River basin. Curtis' excavations at Stanley Mounds, and in the St. Francis River basin, uncovered over "800 pottery vessels . . . including 106 effigies and 81 painted specimens" (Morse 1981:20).

Phyllis Morse, in her study of the Parkin Site, notes that Curtis was followed by Captain C. W. Riggs who explored northeastern Arkansas mound sites for marketable items during the 1880s, and probably dug at Parkin (1981:21). Throughout the early twentieth century, Parkin was well known for its quantity of pottery vessels. Clarence Bloomfield Moore visited the site for one day during the winter of 1909 and 1910, and

> . . . discovered 19 burials during this time. Twenty-five pottery vessels were included with these burials. Eleven plain bowls and six plain bottles were found, as well as four vessels with notched rims. Of particular interest was a bottle with four modeled human faces in relief on the body. Two fish effigy bowls and another bottle with decorative knobs completed the collection made by Moore [Morse 1981:21].

In addition to the above documented collecting, during the early twentieth century, when the Parkin Site was owned by the Northern Ohio Cooperage and Lumber Company, the employees were allowed to dig and sell pots when the mill was not operating (Morse 1981:21; Moore 1910:303).

In 1939, Drs. James B. Griffin, James A. Ford, and Philip Phillips began an archeological survey and study of the prehistory of the Lower Mississippi Alluvial Valley. Their goal was to develop a cultural and chronological sequence of prehistoric cultures in the middle Mississippi area (that includes the St. Francis River basin) where they believed the Mississippian culture originated.

To this end, they investigated hundreds of sites, conducted stratigraphic tests on some, made survey maps, correlated site location with changes in the Mississippi River stream bed, and set up a pottery typology and regional cultural sequence which is still utilized by archeologists today (Morse 1981:22).

From the work conducted at Parkin and in the St. Francis River basin, these archeologists defined the Late Mississippian "St. Francis-type" of site. This consisted of a planned village, with ceremonial and house mounds enclosed within a three sided

protective ditch. These sites were dominated by a central flat-topped pyramidal shaped mound fronting on one or two open spaces which were surrounded by residential houses of the populace. These sites produced deep (as much as 3 meters) archeological deposits, containing remains of structures, numerous burials, and artifacts, indicative of long-term intensive occupation within the enclosure.

Phillips's map of the Parkin Site, made in 1939 (See Figure 3), shows a large earthen mound on the western central portion of the site, about 7 meters high. A 1.5 meter high apron or lower platform was on the southern edge of the major mound. Six other mounds were from 0.5 to 1.25 meters in height, all within the enclosure (Morse 1981:22). From the work conducted by Phillips, Ford, and Griffin, 21 sites in northeastern Arkansas were identified as "St. Francis" or similar to the Parkin Site based on similar ceramic assemblages and site plans of mound centers enclosed within a protective enclosure. Parkin was designated as the type site for the "Parkin phase" or Late Mississippian period of occupation of the Middle Mississippian area (Morse 1981:46).

The Parkin phase was defined by Phillips, based mainly on a ceramic assemblage of Neeley's Ferry Plain and Barton Incised sherds, with smaller percentages of Fortune Noded, Vernon Paul Applique, and Nodena Red and White sherds. Vessel forms tended to be mostly cooking and storage pots and water bottles, although effigy pots, including several of human heads, have been found at Parkin. Decoration tends to be by incising and punctuating with occasional painting.

Diagnostic nonceramic artifacts consist of Nodena projectile points and lithic scrapers, made of chert from Crowley's Ridge gravel deposits. Also found at Parkin were bone and antler needles, fishhooks, beads, flint knapping tools, scrapers, and fleshers. Two historic sixteenth-century Spanish artifacts, a brass hawk's (or Clarksdale) bell and a glass Chevron bead, were recovered from the Parkin Site in the 1960s (Morse 1981:25-28).

The Clarksdale bell was found around the neck of an aboriginal child burial at Parkin by a collector named Bruce Peters. It is in the Museum of the Red River, in Idabel, Oklahoma. The glass Chevron bead was picked up off the surface of the Parkin Site in 1966, during the University of Arkansas Museum field school (Mitchem 1996a:88).

In the summer of 1965, a nine-day training program was conducted by the University of Arkansas for members of the Arkansas Archeological Society. Four areas were tested: the southern edge of the site near the ditch, 50 meters east of the ceremonial mound in the presumed plaza area, a small mound, and the apron of the ceremonial mound (See Figure 4). The results of this work are described by Morse,

> Evidence of house construction was found near the southern edge, with many specimens of daub or baked clay present. House remains may be present in the area

at least as deep as 50 cm. The excavation went down to 70 cm and there was still cultural material below this. Five large postholes were found, which may have been part of the palisade. Four burials with grave goods were found in this area, all of which were in the plowzone.

The area 50 m east of the ceremonial mound was assumed to be a plaza where ceremonies took place instead of everyday living. This assumption was supported by the excavation, as relatively little cultural material was found here. In the plaza excavation, a pit 150 cm deep was dug. The sparse cultural material stopped at 110 cm. The excavation of the smaller mound showed a definite midden deposit at 40 cm. It was not proved whether this was a house mound or not.

The mound apron showed a complex series of soil lenses which were interpreted as different building stages. Lenses of sterile clay separated layers of living debris. Excavation went down 160 cm, and the base of the mound was not reached. A larger percentage of decorated sherds came from this area of the site. A burial was found in this location.

Other artifacts recovered, besides pottery, at Parkin include Nodena points, small thumb nail scrapers, and worked bone awls, needles, and fishhooks [Morse 1981:22-23].

This work was followed up in the summer of 1966 with a University of Arkansas field school, under the direction of Dr. Charles R. McGimsey III, that excavated a series of 1 x 2 meter pits, mainly in the mound apron area. According to Morse,

The base of the cultural deposits was reached at this time, nearly 250 cm below datum in the mound apron area. Seven postholes were found in the mound apron, forming a wall line about 9 m in length. Again, a complicated series of as many as 15 building stages were encountered, with sterile lenses separating levels of occupation. Several potholes on the top of the mound itself were squared off and cleaned out to observe whether there was any discernible stratigraphy. A probable activity area was found, with one large charred post and two postholes.

On the southern edge of the site 10 burials were located. Seven of these had been disturbed, probably by pothunting. Pottery vessels were associated with three of the burials. One infant burial was beneath a house floor and the others were in midden areas of the village or in the mound apron.

In the southwest part of the site, a series of 53 postholes formed an oval structure 5 m long and 2.5 m

> wide. One fire hearth and a child burial were associated with this structure. This oval structure presumably was ceremonial in nature since round and oval structures were rarely found at Mississippian sites. It could also possibly be a granary [Morse 1981:23-24].

The charred posts located on the top of the main mound at Parkin were believed at that point to possibly be the base of a large wooden cross erected by Hernando de Soto in 1541, when he visited Casqui. This incident was described by Luys Hernández de Biedma, the King of Spain's representative on the expedition.

> Having arrived at the town [of Casqui], we found that the caciques [or chiefs] there were accustomed to have, next to the houses where they live, some very high mounds, made by hand, and that others have their houses on the mounds themselves. On the summit of that mound we drove in the cross, and we all went with much devotion, kneeling to kiss the foot of the cross. The Indians did as they saw us do, neither more nor less [1993:239].

In 1992, the charred wooden post remains were studied by Dr. Jeffrey Mitchem. Radiocarbon dating placed the age of the wooden post between A.D. 1515 and 1663, a relative date well within the period of the De Soto expedition. The wooden post was identified as bald cypress (*Taxodium distichum*), a species of tree native to the area of northwest Arkansas. No dendrochronology, or absolute, date for the wooden post could be determined from the sample recovered. As the bottom of the wooden post was not removed in the 1966 excavations, it may be possible to obtain better dendrochronological samples from the top of the main mound at Parkin in the future (Mitchem 1996a:92).

During the spring of 1979, Arkansas Archeological Survey archeologists undertook an intensive surface survey and collection of all archeological resources for a kilometer around the Parkin Site in an effort to determine the extent of the site and its relationship to the immediate natural environment. Within the survey area 129 locations (mainly single artifact finds) and sites were located, of which only 55 cultural components could be identified. The Parkin Site was the only Parkin phase resource identified in the survey area, indicating that while ". . . the Parkin Site itself was densely occupied . . . the entire 1 km wide area around it, on both banks of both rivers, shows no evidence of habitation by members of the (Parkin) phase in separate farmsteads" (Morse 1981:41).

The apparent lack of any Parkin phase occupation outside the rectangular ditched and palisaded enclosure at the Parkin Site may indicate that during the late prehistoric and protohistoric periods the settlement pattern of the Parkin phase stressed protection from attack by neighboring groups (Morse 1981:42-43).

In 1990, the Arkansas Archeological Survey hired Dr. Jeffrey M.

Mitchem as the site archeologist for the Parkin Site. Between 1991 and 1994, Mitchem undertook three Arkansas Archeological Survey field seasons within the Parkin enclosure. Excavations have been concentrated in two areas; the mid-point of the east palisade and ditch and a part of the village just northeast of the main mound where buried structures were encountered, referred to as Locus 4 (Mitchem 1994:1, 6).

In 1991, Mitchem's field crew "dug a trench across the moat" at the mid-point of the eastern edge of the village (1994:1). This work found the moat was well preserved and filled with sawdust from the early twentieth century saw mill that once operated at the Parkin Site area. In 1993, "the trench was extended toward the village to search for a palisade wall" believed to be west of the village moat (Mitchem 1994:1) and four large postholes were uncovered. In 1994, four 2 x 2 m units were laid out to uncover more postholes of the palisade line. According to Mitchem,

> The data so far suggest that if there was a palisade, the posts may have been spaced as far apart as two meters, presumably having wattle-and-daub or some other type of framework in between them. Palisades constructed in this fashion are known from other sites in the Southeast [1994:3].

Just outside the presumed palisade line, the 1994 field school uncovered a structure 2 x 2 meters square. Mitchem believes this structure

> . . . is a guardhouse or bastion attached to the palisade. It was constructed by piling up midden-rich soil to make a flat platform, around which upright posts were set, using the clay cap to stabilize the posts. It may have been rebuilt or repaired at least once. There was probably a platform inside this enclosure to allow someone to easily see over the wall while acting as a sentry or repelling attackers . . . The configuration of postholes in adjacent units suggests that there may have been an entrance through the palisade here. The yellowish clay would have been on the ground around the entrance and adjacent area, and the guardhouse may have been specifically placed for guarding the entrance [1994:4-5].

In the other area of investigation (termed Locus 4), the field school concentrated on the partial excavation of the house floor of a large wattle-and-daub structure, first identified in 1991 and partially excavated in 1993 and 1994 (Mitchem 1994:5).

> Radiocarbon dates and the presence of a Clarksdale bell from a nearby unit revealed that this house probably dates from the 1500s or later, around the time the de Soto expedition passed through the region [Mitchem 1994:5].

Partial excavation of the house floor showed the structure was

square, measuring about 4 meters (13 feet) on a side. Several smudge pits filled with charred corn cobs were found in one corner of the structure, with the door located along the southeast corner. A concentration of animal bone and broken pottery was found just outside the doorway of the structure (Mitchem 1994:6).

During excavations outside the structure two mid-sixteenth century Spanish artifacts were encountered.

> In a small trash-filled pit, a lead shot was recovered. About .60 caliber in size, this was probably ammunition for one of the matchlock arquebuses carried by the de Soto expedition . . . In an ash deposit on the west side of the structure, a metal fragment was found that has a pronounced crimped edge. Close examination revealed that this is part of the top half of a Clarksdale bell. When combined with radiocarbon dates from cane and wood indicating a probably sixteenth-century age of the structure, we can make a pretty strong argument that this house was occupied at the time de Soto passed through this part of Arkansas or shortly afterwards [Mitchem 1994:7].

The first three field seasons (1991, 1993 and 1994) at Parkin had partially excavated a structure, now referred to as Structure 11 within the Parkin enclosure at Locus 4, that could be assigned to the period of Spanish contact. It had also been determined that Structure 11 was destroyed by fire, leaving most of the prepared clay floor of the structure, "baked hard when the house burned down, allowing us to excavate the trash and building rubble that collapsed onto it" (Mitchem 1995:1).

Between 1995 and 1997, the next three field seasons would concentrate on the complete excavation of Structure 11 to gather information on aboriginal architecture and hopefully to find further evidence of Spanish contact from the de Soto expedition of 1541.

The 1995 field season, consisting of volunteers under the supervision of Dr. Mitchem and the Parkin Station Research Assistant Tim Mulvihill lasted from early July through the end of October (Mitchem 1995:1). Excavations within Structure 11 indicate the walls of the building consisted of cane mats or frames attached to upright posts, indicative of a possible summer residence (Mitchem 1995:1). The roof appeared to be thatch, although it was not clear how it was supported (Mitchem 1995:2). Further investigations of the floor area uncovered three aboriginal smudge pits, filled with charred corn cobs, which the Indians used to keep mosquitos away; and a hearth (Mitchem 1995:2-3).

Outside Structure 11, the excavators encountered a large trash pit feature filled with bison bones, charred hickory nuts, corn cobs, and persimmon seeds. In 1991, the fragment of a Spanish bell had been recovered from the top of this trash pit, but no

other European artifacts were encountered. In addition, this work uncovered the remains of possibly six human burials, which had been previously disturbed by looting activity (Mitchem 1995:4-6).

The 1996 field season began in late May with students from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock field school, under the direction of Dr. Mark Hartmann. The students opened two 2 x 2 m squares west of Structure 11, where "previous work along the western edge of our excavation area had revealed a possible floor buried under some complicated features, including human remains and lots of postholes" and looter's holes (Mitchem 1996b:2). The students removed a little over 10 cm in the two new units and discovered a marine shell gorget, with a spider motif. The shell gorget is similar to a spider design on a copper gorget found at Parkin many years ago. According to Dr. Mitchem, "spiders are a widespread motif in Mississippian art in the Mississippi Valley and the Southeast, and southeastern Native American mythology identifies the spider as the animal that brought fire to humankind from the Upper World" (1996b:3).

The regular 1996 field season began in July and continued until late October using volunteers under the direction of Dr. Mitchem and Mr. Mulvihill. The volunteers continued working in the two squares begun by the University of Arkansas students and opened up three additional 2 x 2 m squares. Two trash pits containing the remains of daub concentrations and a looted burial were uncovered. Later work uncovered three additional partially looted burials (Mitchem 1996b:3-4).

Although no intact remains of any aboriginal structures were located, the 1996 field season did uncover numerous postholes, and a hearth feature with two associated newborn burials (Mitchem 1996b:5-6). Due to the large numbers of burials encountered in investigations at Parkin, in 1991, the Arkansas Archeological Survey, Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, and the Quapaw Tribe signed a Memorandum of Agreement detailing how burials would be excavated, studied by physical anthropologists, and eventually reburied at Parkin. In 1996, the Quapaw, who may be descendants of the original Parkin residents, visited Parkin State Park and selected a reburial site for the skeletal remains, which they consecrated with a cedar smoke and tobacco ceremony (Mitchem 1996b:7). According to Dr. Mitchem,

> Reburial does not include accompanying artifacts, which are curated and displayed in the Visitor Information Center at Parkin Archeological State Park. The Quapaws requested that artifacts not be reburied, so that they can show the young tribal members and succeeding generations the types of artistic and ritual artifacts made by their ancestors [1996b:7].

The 1997 field season began in May with the assistance of Patrice Teltser and students from Lehigh University. They finished the excavation of Structure 11, finding some possible interior roof supports and a second hearth. The Lehigh students left in July

to be replaced by 15 students from the University of Arkansas under Dr. Mitchem's direction (Mitchem 1997:1-2).

During the following six weeks, three burials were uncovered, and work began on the excavation of Structure 13, a feature approximately 4 meters on a side. The 1998 University of Arkansas field school will continue its investigation of this structure (Mitchem 1997:3-5).

Site Integrity: Prior to the scientific study of the Parkin Site in the middle part of the twentieth century, it had been the subject of numerous amateur and professional collecting activities, because burials at the site produced large numbers of intact pottery vessels that had been interred with the dead as grave offerings. The low, probably residential mounds around the open space fronting on the main mound, noted by Curtis and Phillips, have largely disappeared due to farming and modern habitation on the site in the late nineteenth century and until recently (See Figure 5).

During the twentieth century, several small houses were built within the enclosure area. Agricultural activities continued throughout the plaza area, as did pothunting by the residents and others at the Parkin Site. The houses had shallow or raised foundations that did little damage to the site.

Through the efforts of the Archaeological Conservancy, a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of significant archeological sites, and the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism, all of the enclosure area and the main mound have been acquired and turned over to Arkansas State Parks which opened the site to the public as an interpreted historic site in October of 1994. All of the buildings, with the exception of a 1950s brick church, now used for storage and housing for field school students, have been removed and the open space and ditch that enclosed the village and mound are once again revealed (See Photos 1 to 3). The location of the church building is shown on a site map provided by the Archeological Conservancy (See Figure 6). The dirt road that once ran through the site has been closed off and the area reseeded in grass. The State of Arkansas has developed the Parkin Site as a State Park and built an interpretive museum just off the area of the site.

8. STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties: Nationally: X Statewide: ___ Locally: ___

Applicable National Register Criteria: A___ B___ C___ D_X_

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions): A___ B___ C___ D___ E___ F___ G___

NHL Criteria: **Criterion 6**

NHL Theme(s):

1987 NHL Thematic Framework

I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets
12. Prehistoric Settlements and Settlement Patterns
21. Major Contributions to the Development of Culture Histories
D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
3. Varieties of Early Conflict, Conquest, or Accommodation

1994 NHL Thematic Framework

I. Peopling Places
6. encounters, conflicts, and colonization

Areas of Significance: **Archeology (Prehistoric, Historic-Aboriginal), Exploration and Settlement**

Period(s) of Significance: **A.D. 1350-1650**

Significant Dates: **N/A**

Significant Person(s): **N/A**

Cultural Affiliation: **Parkin Phase (Late Mississippian and Protohistoric)**

Architect/Builder: **N/A**

State Significance of Property, and Justify Criteria, Criteria Considerations, and Areas and Periods of Significance Noted Above.

Summary Statement of Significance: The Parkin Indian Mound Site was designated as a National Historic Landmark in 1964, because it was recognized as the type site for defining the Parkin phase of the Late Mississippian and early protohistoric period (A.D. 1350-1650) in northeastern Arkansas, based on work conducted by Phillips, Ford, and Griffin (1951). The Parkin Site was the largest fortified ceremonial mound and population center in the St. Francis River basin during the Parkin phase. Archeological investigations conducted since 1964 have indicated that the Parkin Site was probably the primary town of a Mississippian chiefdom that controlled the other twenty-one Parkin phase sites in the St. Francis River basin, many of which were also fortified mound sites (Morse 1981). There is also speculation that Parkin may have been the capital of the province of Casqui, visited by the Hernando de Soto expedition in 1541, based on certain interpretations of the expedition's route, and the finding of 16th century Spanish artifacts at the site (Morse 1981).

The Parkin Site is considered nationally significant under National Historic Landmark Criterion 6 for its contribution in defining the Late Mississippian and early protohistoric period chronology for the Middle Mississippi River Valley. Work conducted at the Parkin Site and in the St. Francis River basin since designation has contributed to a better understanding of late prehistoric and early historic chiefdoms in northeast Arkansas, and has indicated possible affiliation with the de Soto expedition, which has enhanced the research potential of the site.

1987 NHL Thematic Framework

I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
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1994 NHL Thematic Framework

I. Peopling Places
6. encounters, conflicts, and colonization

Mississippian Period Chronology

The Parkin Site was originally designated, on July 19, 1964, as a National Historic Landmark for its contribution in establishing a

chronological sequence utilizing diagnostic ceramic artifacts for the Late Mississippian and early protohistoric period in the area of the Central Mississippi River Valley. In 1939, Philip Phillips, James Ford, and James Griffin undertook an extensive survey, mapping, and stratigraphic testing of some 400 archeological sites throughout the Lower Mississippi Valley, in order to set up a pottery typology and a regional cultural sequence for this area. One of the major information gaps was in the Central Mississippi area, where they believed Mississippian culture originated (Morse 1981:22).

From their work in the St. Francis River basin, which included investigations at the Parkin Site, Phillips, Ford, and Griffin, first defined the pottery types of Mississippi Plain (Neeley's Ferry Variety), Barton Incised, Fortune Noded, Vernon Paul Applique, and Nodena Red on White, that were used to identify Parkin phase sites within a temporal and geographical distribution (See Figure 7). The authors identified the Parkin Site as the type site for the Parkin phase, a Late Mississippian and early protohistoric culture, which dates from A.D. 1350 to 1650 (Morse 1981:24).

Since the early 1950s, when the Parkin Site contribution to archeological chronology in the Mississippi Alluvial Valley was recognized, the sequence of late prehistoric and early protohistoric Mississippian cultures has been further refined to include information about Parkin phase demographics, settlement patterns, and trade with other Mississippian culture areas. According to Phyllis Morse, although the St. Francis River basin was continuously occupied from the Paleo-Indian to Middle Mississippian Period,

> Around A.D. 1350-1400, a general demographic collapse occurred in the northern Mississippi Valley. All but a small portion of southeast Missouri became uninhabited. All of the Western Lowlands except for White River Valley in the Ozarks also were uninhabited. The Upper St. Francis River, Crowley's Ridge, and the middle Tyronza River areas were also largely abandoned as far as large sites were concerned [Morse 1981:14].

During the Late Mississippian Period, as population again began to increase in the St. Francis Basin, four geographical areas became inhabited that "contained sites with specific spatial, temporal, and cultural characteristics that can be grouped into phases" (Morse 1981:14), among these was the Parkin phase (See Figure 7).

According to Morse,

> . . . the Parkin phase is the name given to late Mississippian sites from south of Parkin to north of Marked Tree along the St. Francis and Tyronza Rivers. It is best represented by the large site at Parkin. These sites were fortified with most or all of the population inside the walls. Dependence on the

northern subregion of the Nodena phase for heavy basalt tools, by Parkin, Greenbrier, and Kent may indicate the relative dominance of that phase over the others. These late Mississippian cultures existed into and probably through the protohistoric period of A.D. 1500-1680 [Morse 1981:14].

Parkin Settlement Pattern

From historic accounts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the archeological investigations at Parkin, it would appear that by ca. A.D. 1500, the Parkin Site consisted of a large flat topped pyramidal mound with a raised platform on its southern side. This platform and the main mound were both surmounted with structures, and were constructed in stages.

The houses of the ordinary populace were densely packed within the protective enclosure of the palisade and wide ditch. The Parkin Site would have been built up on the remains of household trash, rebuilt structures, and burials, to form a deep cultural deposit.

Beginning in 1979, the sites in the St. Francis basin associated with the Parkin phase were relocated and surveyed to gather information on the settlement pattern of these sites. From this survey, it was determined that Parkin, being the largest of the Parkin phase sites, and strategically located below the conjunction of the St. Francis and Tyronza Rivers, would have been able to control all river traffic in the St. Francis Basin (See Figure 8).

The other Parkin phase villages in the basin were found to be "located about 4 km apart along the major streams" (Morse 1981:58), and located on the most fertile soil types for agriculture (Morse 1981:73-83). At least fifteen of the Parkin phase sites contained mounds and were fortified, like Parkin, but on a much smaller scale.

The Parkin Site, based on this new information, would appear to be the center of a Late Mississippian chiefdom. That chiefdom would have been able to exert control over perhaps several thousands of individuals by directing their economic, political, and religious activities, probably through an elite of lower ranking chiefs, that controlled outlying towns and districts, making up the Parkin phase culture area. Throughout the southeast early explorers noted a tribute system of lesser chiefs providing food and services to a major chief, who stored surplus food to protect people against food shortages, and maintained warriors to protect the villages against attack from other chiefdoms. Future investigations at the Parkin Site and at the surrounding Parkin phase sites in the St. Francis River basin may help to clarify the organization of Late Mississippian chiefdoms.

Early Historic Contact

The Parkin Site is a major archeological site that was occupied continuously from the Early Mississippian period into the early protohistoric period of the Middle Mississippi area. Sites of this type are important for what they might tell us regarding the effect of encounters between Old and New World cultures. Should the Parkin Site be conclusively demonstrated to have been visited by the de Soto expedition, future archeological investigations may be able to show whether such an encounter was responsible for the early protohistoric decline in population noted for ceremonial mound centers in the southeastern United States, and the demise of the Native American religious and political elite that controlled these centers.

Based upon certain reconstructions of the de Soto expedition route, and the finding of the historic sixteenth-century Spanish artifacts at Parkin, it is possible that the expedition visited this site in the summer of 1541, when it was traveling through northeastern Arkansas. Or at the very least the historic artifacts indicate that there must have been indirect trade with people who had met the Spanish.

It is possible that the Parkin protohistoric culture area represents the province of Casqui, with the Parkin Site serving as "the town where the Cacique Casquin resided" (Varner and Varner 1951:430). The description of the capital of the Province of Casqui does have similarity to the Parkin Site.

> Then they continued for two more days to the town where the Cacique [Chief] Casquin resided, a place situated on the same [river] bank but seven leagues up the river. All of the land was very fertile and inhabited, though the villages were small and contained no more than fifteen, twenty, thirty, and forty houses. The Cacique came out in the company of many noble people to receive the Governor [de Soto], and he offered him his friendship and service as well as his own house in which to lodge. This dwelling was situated to one side of the town on a high mound, where there were in addition ten or twelve large structures that housed the chieftain's entire family of wives and his numerous servants [Varner and Varner 1951:430-431].

Although no mention is made of the palisade and wide defensive ditch at the Parkin Site, such fortifications were common among the protohistoric Native Americans encountered by de Soto in northeastern Arkansas (Varner and Varner 1951:436). As a large protohistoric site Parkin could be a likely candidate for the capital of the province of Casqui, although an alternative theory has Parkin identified as Quiguate, another protohistoric site visited by de Soto, also in northeastern Arkansas (Phillips et al. 1951:390).

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_X_ Previously Listed in the National Register. **1966** (administratively listed)
___ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register.
_X_ Designated a National Historic Landmark. **July 19, 1964**
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #_____
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #_____

Primary Location of Additional Data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office **Arkansas**
_X_ Other State Agency **Arkansas State Parks**
___ Federal Agency
___ Local Government
___ University
_X_ Other(Specify Repository): **The main collections of archeological material recovered from the Parkin Site are located at the Arkansas Archeological Survey, Parkin Research Station; University of Arkansas Museum, Fayetteville; and the Peabody Museum, Harvard University.**

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

Acreage of Property: **27 acres**

UTM References:

	Zone	Northing	Easting		Zone	Northing	Easting
A	15	722020	3906580	**B**	15	722310	3906520
C	15	722370	3906520	**D**	15	722040	3906230

Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Parkin Site is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the following UTM reference points: A 15 722020 3906580, B 15 722310 3906520, C 15 722370 3906520, and D 15 722040 3906230.

Boundary Justification:

During the spring of 1979, the Arkansas Archeological Survey, undertook an intensive surface survey and collection of all archeological resources for one kilometer around the Parkin Site in an effort to determine the extent of the site and its relationship to the immediate natural environment. Within the survey area 129 locations (usually single artifact concentrations) and sites were located, of which only 55 cultural components could be identified. The Parkin Site was the only Parkin phase resource, identified in the survey area, indicating that while ". . . the Parkin Site itself was densely occupied . . . the entire 1 km wide area around it, on both banks of both rivers, shows no evidence of habitation by members of the (Parkin) phase in separate farmsteads" (Morse 1981:41). The apparent lack of any Parkin phase occupation outside the rectangular ditched and palisaded enclosure at the Parkin Site may indicate that during the late prehistoric and protohistoric periods the settlement pattern of the Parkin phase stressed protection from attack by neighboring groups (Morse 1981:42-43). In any event, no Parkin phase resources have been located outside the enclosure area of the Parkin Site. The boundary of the Parkin Site, therefore, is drawn to fit the enclosure area.

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