1. NAME OF PROPERTY

Historic Name: EAKER SITE

Other Name/Site Number: 3MS105

2. LOCATION

Street & Number: Eaker Air Force Base Not for publication: X

City/Town: Blytheville Vicinity: X

State: Arkansas County: Mississippi Code: 093 Zip Code: 72317

3. CLASSIFICATION

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

Number of Resources within Property

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

Number of Contributing Resources Previously Listed in the National Register: N/A

Name of Related Multiple Property Listing: N/A

Designated a
NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK on

JUN 19 1996

by the Secretary of the Interior

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 _____
___ Other (explain): _____

_____ _____
Signature of Keeper Date of Action

6. FUNCTION OR USE

Historic:	DOMESTIC	Sub:	Village Site
	DEFENSE		Fortification
	FUNERARY		Graves/Burials
	RELIGION		Religious Facility
Current:	DEFENSE	Sub:	Air Facility
	VACANT		Not in Use

7. DESCRIPTION

ARCHITECTURAL CLASSIFICATION: N/A

MATERIALS:
Foundation:
Walls:
Roof:
Other:

Describe Present and Historic Physical Appearance.

SITE TYPE

The Eaker Site (3MS105) is a multicomponent prehistoric village site located within Eaker Air Force Base, Mississippi County, Arkansas (see Figure 1). Archeological investigations have demonstrated a Late Woodland (Baytown Period) (ca. A.D. 600) and late Middle Mississippian period (ca. A.D. 1250) occupation, with the major occupation occurring during the Late Mississippian Nodena phase (A.D. 1350-1450). It was during this last period that a large palisaded village, with a defensive ditch and temple mound was constructed (see Photo 1).

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Eaker Site is situated on a [redacted] soils would have been attractive to prehistoric agricultural peoples because of their fertility and relatively good drainage.

[redacted]

By the early 1900s the [redacted] and the Eaker Site area were cleared of trees and the nearby swamps were drained for cultivation. In 1942, the Eaker Site area was acquired by the U.S. Army Air Corps., and the site area has since been left as an open agricultural field area (see Photo 2).

PREVIOUS ARCHEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Eaker Site was first recorded by Mr. Jerry Wright, an avocational archeologist, in December 1973. Wright did not visit the site at that time and no site description was provided. The legal description given for the site placed it in [redacted] although it is actually [redacted]

In 1974, the site was visited by Mr. Timothy Klinger and Mr. Mark Milar during a survey of Nodena sites conducted by the Arkansas Archeological Survey (AAS) in conjunction with the University of Arkansas Field School. A revised site form for the Eaker Site was filed by Mr. Marion Haynes, an avocational archeologist, of Yarbro, Arkansas, in March 1978, which corrected the site location. Haynes briefly described 3MS105 as a Nodena phase (Late Mississippian Period) site occupying a large knoll within the boundaries of Eaker Air Force Base. At that time Haynes reported diagnostic Madison and Nodena projectile points and Mississippian pottery from the site. Mr. Haynes later donated a collection of lithic and ceramic artifacts from the site to Arkansas State University. Ceramics dated from the Late Woodland (Baytown Period), Middle Mississippian, and Nodena phase.

In January 1980, the site was visited by Mr. Roy Cochran Jr. and Mr. Dan Starling of the AAS. Cochran noted the presence of Baytown (Late Woodland period), and Mississippian period artifacts indicating two distinct prehistoric occupation components within the site. Prehistoric archeological phases represented included Dunklin (Late Woodland), Pemiscot Bayou (Middle Mississippian), and Nodena (Late Mississippian).

A visit to the site was made in 1982 by Dr. Dan Morse of the AAS, and Mr. Doug Prescott and Mr. Jim McNeil of the Memphis District Corps of Engineers (COE) during ditching operations conducted by the COE along [redacted]. Prehistoric lithics, ceramics and faunal material were collected during this visit but not reported in their report. McNeil recommended in this report that the site be nominated to the National Register of Historic Places and the site be removed from cultivation (McNeil 1982).

Between January and May 1988 a series of archeological surveys and test excavations were conducted at the Eaker Site, as a result of the proposed Peacekeeper Rail Garrison missile program. Work was carried out by Mid-Continental Research Associates (MCRA) of Lowell, Arkansas, and Western Wyoming College. The present site limits, encompassing 80 acres, were identified by MCRA through an intensive surface survey, and permanent grid corners were established on a site map. A controlled surface collection was made of the site from 65 quadrants (representing 0.6 percent of the site) distributed probablistically and judgementally across the site. This work yielded more than 100 projectile points and 2,355 pottery sherds (Lafferty and Cande 1989).

Some 5.5 percent of the Eaker Site area was surveyed by Western Wyoming College using a proton magnetometer. This equipment measures residual magnetism in the soil, making it possible to identify anomalies caused by cultural features, such as buried prehistoric houses. Archeologists can identify and map buried features without disturbing them using this method.

Magnetic mapping of a portion of the Eaker Site identified some 80 anomalies as probable cultural features. This magnetic survey and later testing identified the buried clay floors of houses, palisade trenches, and edges of the Nodena phase mound on the site. Other smaller anomalies found by the magnetic survey, but not tested, could not be determined as being cultural features, such as burials or looters pits. MCRA conducted small-scale test excavations to verify the location and identity of the features producing magnetic anomalies. Three hand excavations were dug, totalling 24 square meters (see Photo 2), and 14 three inch soil cores were taken on and near the site. These excavations demonstrated the presence of buried prehistoric houses, wall trenches, palisade trenches, and trash deposits. Based on the magnetometer results, it has been estimated that as many as 400 or more prehistoric houses may remain buried at the Eaker Site (Wadleigh and Thompson 1989).

SITE ANALYSIS

The Eaker Site was occupied repeatedly during the period of about A.D. 600 to 1500+. Late Woodland period occupation is indicated by the presence of Barnes Cordmarked, Baytown Incised, and Baytown Plain ceramics. The Mississippian period is represented by a variety of shell tempered ceramics, including types with Bell Plain and Neeley's Ferry paste. A small quantity of Manley Punctate sherds may reflect a late Middle Mississippian

component, as supported by the presence of Scallorn and Schugtown projectile points diagnostic to this period of time. The ceramic assemblage is very similar to that reported at the Nodena Site (designated an NHL in 1964), and the most extensive occupation of the Eaker Site was during the Nodena phase of the Late Mississippian period (A.D. 1350-1450).

The midden deposits exposed at the surface contain high densities of prehistoric ceramics, lithics, groundstone tools, and daub from house structures. Relatively large numbers of ceramic effigies (see Photo 3), groundstone celts and chisels, and projectile points occur at the site. Human remains were recorded in 25 percent of the surface collection units. Subsurface features include houses, palisade trenches, pits, hearths, burials, and localized middens. Subsurface features were initially identified by magnetometer remote sensing and aerial photo interpretation. Selected features were tested and verified by hand excavations and soil coring. Testing was designed to verify the presence of intact cultural features; units were not excavated to sterile levels, so the depths of cultural deposits are minimum estimates (Lafferty and Cande 1989; Wadleigh and Thompson 1989).

The Eaker Site is covered by an artifact rich plow zone about 16-20 cm deep, with intact prehistoric midden occurring beneath the plow zone as demonstrated by test excavations and soil corings. Midden deposits are indicated by disturbed, mottled soils containing artifacts, charcoal, and burned clay. In contrast, soil cores taken outside the site boundaries exhibited natural soil profiles, undisturbed beneath the plow zone. The midden occurs to a depth of 0.9-1.0 meter in several areas. One test pit yielded evidence for two superimposed house floors associated with a wall trench extending to a depth of 1.3 meters. Palisade trenches appear to reach depths of 1.3-1.9 meters below the surface (Lafferty and Cande 1989).

The archeological structure of the Eaker Site is quite complex and extensive. Aerial photographs indicate that the northern two-thirds of the site (ca. 50 acres) was enclosed by a ditch and palisade system. The Late Mississippian Nodena phase occupation was probably a fortified site with formal village organization. A mound remnant, measuring 70 meters on a side, is located in the northeast corner of the ditch and palisade system (see Photo 1). Nearby house clusters, identified by the magnetometer survey are laid out alongside the palisade trenches. Surface artifact distributions suggest the house clusters were situated around a plaza in the north-central part of the site. The magnetometer maps suggest there are at least four palisade walls within the ditches, perhaps representing different periods of occupation (Lafferty and Cande 1989; Wadleigh and Thompson 1989).

The southern third of the site (ca. 30 acres) contains mainly Woodland materials, and there are two concentrations of ceramics and daub that probably represent houses. The occurrence of Woodland ceramics throughout the site suggests that the Woodland component may underlie the Mississippian occupation throughout much of the site.

SITE INTEGRITY

The Eaker Site was disturbed during the construction of the Eaker (formerly Blytheville) Air Force Base in 1942, but the extent of disturbance, while not precisely known does not appear to have been substantial. According to Mr. Marion Haynes of nearby Yarbro, Arkansas, topsoil from the site was used to fill in the Pemiscot Bayou channel beneath the runway. The depth of soil removal is unknown, but Mr. Haynes reports that the mound at the site was

partially removed for fill. The **Nodena or Late Mississippi** mound remnant in the northeast corner of the site is believed to represent that feature.

A historic structure was also removed from the northwest corner of the site during construction. There is no evidence of the structure, but a sparse scatter of historic artifacts occurs in that area. This historic component is not considered significant.

Substantial ground disturbance occurred in several areas adjacent to, but not within, the site as a result of military construction between 1958 and 1966. Borrow pits were excavated to the east, northeast, and west of the site. Those to the east were backfilled with construction refuse and are no longer evident at the surface. Those to the west were partially backfilled and allowed to fill with water to form ponds. A landfill was excavated along the southeastern edge of the site, and it may have disturbed a small portion of the Late Mississippian (Nodena phase) component of the site. There are some reports of sporadic vandalism, but the extent of damage to the site as a whole appears to be minor from these activities. The amount of looting on the site has not been assessed. Likewise, there has been no assessment of the amount of material removed from the Nodena or Late Mississippian mound. The "buried mound remnant" shown on the enclosed sketch map is the outline of the buried edges of the mound found through the soil resistivity survey.

The single noncontributing structure on the Eaker Site is part of an ordnance disposal area in the southwest corner of the site (see Figure 2). The ordnance disposal structure consists of a small disposal pit within the site boundary.

In addition to the above, the site area has been under cultivation from the 1930s to 1988, when farming was discontinued. Archeological investigations have revealed extensive midden deposits on the surface, and the remnant of a large temple mound, while testing has verified the occurrence of well-preserved buried features throughout the 80 acre site. Subsurface features include fortification trenches, house remains, and burials.

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: 6

NHL Theme [1987]:

I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
- B. Post-Archaic and Pre-Contact Developments
  - 12. Post-Archaic Adaptations of the Mississippi Valley
- C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets
  - 3. Prehistoric Social and Political Organizations
  - 21. Major Contributions to the Development of Culture Histories
  - 25. Prehistoric Subsistence
- D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
  - 1. Native Cultural Adaptations at Contact
    - j. Native Adaptations to Southeastern Environments

NHL Theme [1994]:

Areas of Significance: Archeology—Prehistoric

Period(s) of Significance: AD 600-1450

Significant Dates: N/A

Significant Person(s): N/A

Cultural Affiliation: Late Woodland
Middle Mississippian
Nodena Phase

Architect/Builder: N/A

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

SUMMARY

The Eaker Site is the largest and most intact Late Mississippian Nodena phase village site within the Central Mississippi Valley. The intact nature of the site is considered of national significance for its research value in providing information on cultural history, social organization, and subsistence, and the relation between the Late Mississippian Nodena phase and the historic Quapaw tribe.

I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
- B. Post-Archaic and Pre-Contact Developments
  - 12. Post-Archaic Adaptations of the Mississippi Valley
- C. Prehistoric Archeology: Topical Facets
  - 3. Prehistoric Social and Political Organizations
  - 21. Major Contributions to the Development of Culture Histories
  - 25. Prehistoric Subsistence

THE EAKER SITE IN THE CENTRAL MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

The Nodean occupation of the Eaker Site is large (50 acres) in extent compared to other Nodena phase sites. The site has only been moderately farmed and was protected by federal ownership against looting; therefore, it has the potential to test new theories and research questions about the Nodena phase. The Nodena Site (designated an NHL in 1964) as the type site for defining and dating the Nodena phase, is only 15 acres in size; in addition, large scale excavations, conducted in the first half of the twentieth century, and a hundred years of farming activities have seriously impacted the integrity of the Nodena Site and other Nodena phase sites.

The size of the Eaker Site is comparable to Etowah, Georgia; Angel Mounds, Indiana; and Shiloh Mounds, Tennessee (designated NHLs in 1964, 1964, and 1989, respectively). The Eaker Site, with its integrity of archeological deposits, as demonstrated by recent excavations, has the potential to address significant research questions on cultural history, social organization, and subsistence.

CULTURAL HISTORY

The Central Mississippi River Valley, was an area of intense occupation during the Archaic and Woodland Periods. Prehistoric occupation occurred throughout numerous ecological zones in this area. However, some time before or just within the fifteenth century A.D. (ca. A.D. 1350-1400), there occurred in the Central Mississippi River Valley a major change in settlement patterns (Morse 1990:95). Instead of generalized occupation of numerous ecological zones there emerged in the Late Mississippian Period a specialized environmental adaptation, singular to the Southeastern United States.

Maize floodplain agriculture, the use of bow and arrow, shell-tempered pottery, and a complex tribal organization generally referred to as a chiefdom developed throughout the Southeast. In northeast Arkansas, a cultural phase—Nodena phase—distinguished by particular styles of lithic and ceramic artifacts emerged.

According to Dan F. Morse, the Nodena "population was mostly nucleated into fortified towns with pyramidal mounds and central plazas. The economic base was domesticated cereal grain, corn or maize" [1990:86].

The reliance of the Nodena culture on this economic base meant they were required to place their towns in close proximity to sufficient expanses of the appropriate types of floodplain fine sandy loam soils with the fertility to support large town populations on a permanent basis from the production of corn, beans, and squash. The Nodena phase is roughly dated as lasting from A.D. 1400-1650, and is often cited by anthropologists as including the province of Pacaha visited by the DeSoto expedition in 1541 (Morse 1990).

Regardless of whether the Nodena culture may be equated with the people of the province of Pacaha, European diseases appear to have reduced the population anywhere from between 80 to 95 percent. It is generally believed that the Quapaw tribe the French met in their explorations of the Central Mississippi River Valley of the late seventeenth century were the descendants of the Nodena culture (Morse 1990).

Uncertainty regarding the succession of cultures from prehistory to history in the Central Mississippi River Valley means the improvement of chronological control and phase/assemblage definition is a high priority research activity. The Eaker Site contains materials that will provide numerous samples for radiometric dating (e.g., charcoal, bone, shell, and burned clay floors), as well as large assemblages of diagnostic ceramics and lithic artifacts. The juxtaposition of Woodland and Mississippian materials will permit the evaluation of regional cultural systematics. Because both Barnes and Baytown (Woodland Period) materials are represented, it should be possible to address the question of whether the latter expanded at the expense of the former. It will also be possible to determine what sort of settlement (village versus households) is represented by each. Similarly, a detailed examination of the relationship between the Middle and Late Mississippian occupations would bear on the issue of whether the latter was intrusive to the region.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

Several basic issues related to Social Organization could be studied at the Eaker Site. The preservation of many buried features over a wide area provides the potential for studying internal site structure through extensive horizontal excavation. The resulting data on activity patterning and household organization would bear directly on the question of whether Mississippian villages represent large communities of contemporaneous houses, repeated occupations of several house clusters, or ceremonial sites with a small resident elite population.

Certain portions of the Central Mississippi Valley appear to have been abandoned during the Late Mississippian period. It has been suggested that much of the regional population shifted into large Nodena phase settlements in the meander belt areas of the St. Francis, Little River-Pemiscot Bayou, and White River drainages. In addition to the large size and preservation, the Eaker Site contains much subsistence, skeletal, and internal spatial data relevant to the issue of nucleation. The Eaker Site appears to have been the focal site within the Blytheville cluster of Late Mississippian sites, one of three distinct clusters of Nodena phase occupation in the Central Mississippi Valley. As such it will be important for the definition of subgroups within the Nodena phase.

Sites in the Blytheville cluster are characterized by a relative paucity of temple mounds and the presence of large quantities of end scrapers and Nodena projectile points. An analysis of the artifact assemblage and subsistence remains could address the issue of whether Nodena points were designed for warfare and whether there was a local emphasis on hunting and hide processing. It has also been suggested Nodena phase sites controlled the use and trade of basalt in northeast Arkansas. Excavations at the Eaker Site produced large quantities of basalt celts, chisels, hammerstones, and debitage; therefore, the site could be expected to provide information on the nature of regional control and trade networks for basalt.

The size and complexity of the Eaker site suggests it is near the top of the apparent hierarchy among Mississippian villages within the Central Mississippi Valley. It is likely that funerary remains at the site will contain evidence of differential social status. The spatial arrangement of residential cluster, religious structures, and burials within the site would provide information on social organization. Both types of data would contribute to an analysis of whether chiefdoms are reflected in the Mississippian period villages of this area.

SUBSISTENCE

Data from the Eaker Site may provide information on the question of the relationship between changing subsistence patterns and the organization of prehistoric societies. Many questions relevant to maize horticulture, for example, may serve to challenge current theories of its presence in relation to certain levels of development in societies. Investigation of agricultural pursuits at the Eaker Site may address questions regarding the interrelationship of these activities with ceramic technologies, and storage and processing techniques practiced by the site's inhabitants. Lastly, due to the long occupation at the Eaker Site, the intensity of the agricultural production may be measured over time, and co-relationships between food production and other social and economic aspects of prehistoric cultures may be explored.

The Eaker Site is expected to contain a large number of human burials. The analysis of human skeletal remains would be relevant to a variety of issues, such as estimating population numbers of each component, defining physical characteristics and phyletic relationships of the population, determining the percentage of maize in the diet, and identifying dietary stress in the region. The phyletic relationship of the skeletal population may also identify the ethnic heritage of the prehistoric and historic Nodena phase of the Late Mississippian period.

I. CULTURAL DEVELOPMENTS: INDIGENOUS AMERICAN POPULATIONS
D. Ethnohistory of Indigenous American Populations
1. Native Cultural Adaptations at Contact
j. Native Adaptations to Southeastern Environments

THE QUAPAW PARADOX

The Quapaw are one of the few tribal entities of the Central Mississippi Valley that survived historic contact with European cultures. One hypothesis identifies the historic Quapaw as the descendants of prehistoric Nodena populations. This view is widely accepted among the Quapaw [redacted]

The first inquiry on the origins of the Quapaw occurred in 1827, when the then Governor of Arkansas Territory, George Izard, interviewed a Quapaw named Paheka. According to this informant, the Quapaw migrated from the Lower Ohio River Valley into the St. Francis River Valley of northeastern Arkansas, where they established numerous settlements after forcibly removing the local Native American populations they encountered. At a later date the Quapaw moved further south to the mouth of the Arkansas River, in southeastern Arkansas, with their principle residence at the Menard-Hodges Site (designated an NHL in 1989), where they were first encountered by the French in the 1680s (Hoffman 1990:208).

The Quapaw linguistically are part of the Dhegiha language group, which include the Osage, Omaha, Ponca, and Kansa tribes. All of these groups share a common belief, passed on through oral tradition, that they were at one time a single people in the area of the Lower Ohio River Valley. After migration westward across the Mississippi River, only the Quapaw remained in the Central Mississippi River Valley, with all the other Dhegiha speaking peoples having moved further west (Hoffman 1990).

However, as noted in a recent article by Michael P. Hoffman on the origins of the Quapaws, most archeologists believe the Quapaw were descended from the Native Mississippian Period cultures of eastern Arkansas, and not recent migrants from east of the Mississippi River, as ethnographers and linguists propose (Davis 1982; Hoffman 1990:219). Hoffman proposes the Quapaw moved from their Lower Ohio River Valley homeland first to northeastern Arkansas between A.D. 1350-1400 during the beginning of the Nodena occupation of the Eaker Site. By the time they were encountered by the DeSoto expedition in 1541, they had expanded southward to the Arkansas River Valley (1990:221). Following the drastic population loss of these groups to European diseases, they congregated along the Arkansas River during the seventeenth century, abandoning their settlements in the St. Francis River Valley (Hoffman 1990:221).

Hoffman proposes to settle the question of the origin of the Quapaw through the excavation of an ancestral Quapaw village site, looking for such distinctive Quapaw cultural features, such as dome-shaped, bark-covered long houses. Recent archeological investigations at the Eaker Site indicate the existence of some 400 intact house structures that could be used to verify or modify the origin of the Quapaw tribe. According to Hoffman:

If Quapaw identification is solidified by such excavations, then the other questions... can be addressed, such as the issue of continuity between the Quapaw phase and the earlier and neighboring Mississippi period manifestations and Quapaw migration traditions [1990:225].

9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___ Preliminary Determination of Individual Listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ Previously Listed in the National Register.
_X_ Previously Determined Eligible by the National Register: March 8, 1989
___ Designated a National Historic Landmark.
___ Recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey: #
___ Recorded by Historic American Engineering Record: #

Primary Location of Additional Data:

_X_ State Historic Preservation Office: Arkansas

___ Other State Agency

_X_ Federal Agency: United States Air Force
Air Force Center for Environmental Excellence
Environmental Planning Division
AFCEE/ESE
Brooks Air Force Base, Texas 78235-5000

___ Local Government

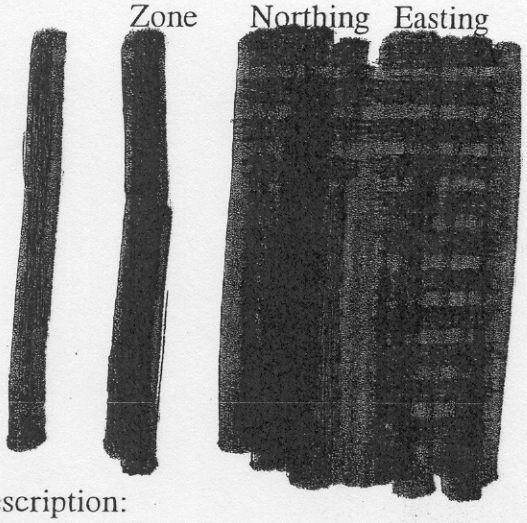
_X_ University: Dr. Dan F. Morse
Arkansas Archeological Survey
Drawer 820, ASU
State University, Arkansas 72467

_X_ Other (Specify): Arkansas Archeological Survey
P.O. Box 1249
Fayetteville, Arkansas 72702

10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

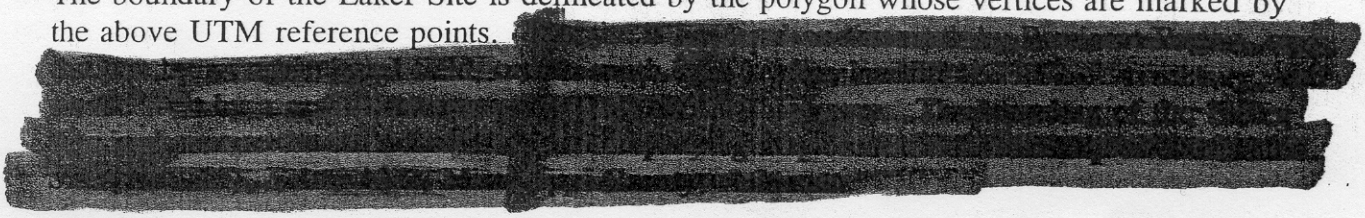
Acreage of Property: 80 acres

UTM References: Zone Northing Easting



Verbal Boundary Description:

The boundary of the Eaker Site is delineated by the polygon whose vertices are marked by the above UTM reference points.



Boundary Justification:

The general outline of the site is established by the maximum extent of the surface distribution of artifacts, taking into account the horizontal displacement due to historic cultivation. The southeastern boundary was defined by the historic limits of an [redacted] as identified through magnetometer survey and aerial photography interpretation. The northeastern and northwestern boundaries are adjusted beyond the limit of the artifact scatter to include the prehistoric fortification trenches identified through aerial photography. The northeast boundary was verified by core sampling.

11. FORM PREPARED BY

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