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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
LABORATORY OF ARCHAEOLOGY SERIES  
REPORT NUMBER 76

**EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI**  
**Season II - 1950**

WILLIAM H. SEARS



**EXCAVATIONS AT  
KOLOMOKI**

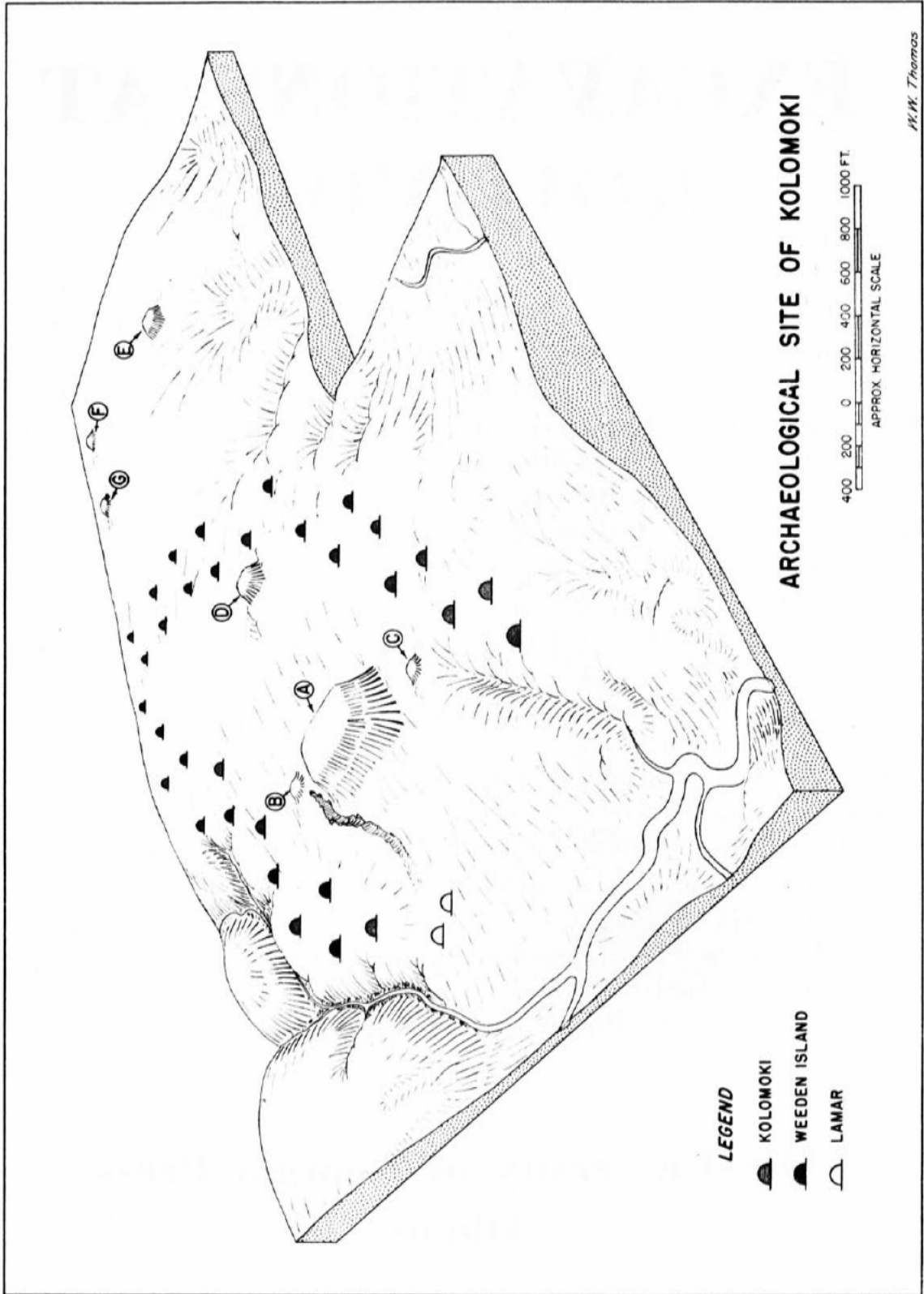
**Season II-1950**

by

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**EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI**





Block Diagram of Site

# **EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI**

**Season II-1950  
Mound E**

by  
**WILLIAM H. SEARS**

University of Georgia Series in  
Anthropology, No. 3

**The University of Georgia Press  
Athens**



Printed in the United States of America

# ***CONTENTS***

Foreward .....	vii
Preface .....	ix
I. Excavation .....	1
II. Ceramics .....	7
III. Conclusions .....	16
Bibliography .....	20



# **ILLUSTRATIONS**

Block Diagram of Site .....	Frontispiece
Fig. 1. Mercier Red on Buff vessels. Artists reconstruction of painted designs .....	22
Fig. 2. Scale Drawing, fifty foot profile, Mound E. ....	Facing 22
Fig. 3. Scale drawing floor plan of Mound E. ....	Facing Fig. 2
Plate I. Weeden Island Plain Bowls .....	23
Plate II. Weeden Island Plain Bowls .....	24
Plate III. Weeden Island Plain Bowls and Jars, Mercier Red on Buff Jars .....	25
Plate IV. Mercier Red on Buff Jars .....	26
Plate V. Mercier Red on Buff Jars and Bowls .....	27
Plate VI. Mercier Red on Buff and Weeden Island Incised vessels .....	28
Plate VII. Weeden Island Incised and Weeden Island Zoned Red vessels .....	29
Plate VIII. Miscellaneous .....	30
Plate IX. Kolomoki Complicated Stamp vessels .....	31
Plate X. Kolomoki Complicated Stamp and Unclassified vessels .....	32
Plate XI. Unclassified and "Mongrel" vessels .....	33
Plate XII. Weeden Island Incised, Unclassified, and "Mongrel" vessels .....	34
Plate XIII. Unclassified vessels .....	35
Plate XIV. Unclassified vessels. ....	35

# **FOREWORD**

Archaeological excavations at Kolomoki during the second field season, 1949, were concentrated entirely on Mound E, a burial mound of the Kolomoki complex. Work was initiated June 1st and completed, except for exhibit preparations, early in September.

Since the work was part of the developmental program for Kolomoki Mounds State Park, funds for excavation, for preparation and preservation of the materials as a permanent exhibit in place, and for this report were provided by the Georgia Department of State Parks. We are particularly grateful for the cooperation afforded us by the Director of the Department, Mr. A. N. Moye, and by the chief engineer, Mr. John Mann.

As in the 1948 season, excavation was supervised by the author under the overall direction of Dr. A. R. Kelly of the University of Georgia, acting in his capacity as archaeological consultant to the state.

Miss Molly Allee was in charge of laboratory work and pottery restoration. The latter turned out to be a particularly imposing task, one which she carried to a successful completion.

All photography, both field and laboratory, was done by Mr. Henry Brett. The excellency of that part of his work published herein speaks for itself.

Finally, we would like to express our thanks to the many visitors this season, particularly to those residents of Blakely who visited us so often and whose intelligent interest was a source of inspiration throughout the season.

# PREFACE

Mound E was selected for excavation this year because, due to its isolated position with respect to the village areas and the plaza fronting Mound A, it was the best possibility for a Weeden Island burial mound. This type of mound was desirable because a major park need was an "in place" exhibit.

Major features of the mound (See Figs. 2 and 3) were a central sub-floor pit, filled with rocks, on the bottom of which were the cremated remains of one individual. Associated with these remains were a large number of shell beads and two copper ear ornaments. Two extended burials and two single skulls were found in the upper levels of this pit and another extended burial was nearby. Under the east edge of the mound was a mass pottery deposit, the majority of the vessels being of the Weeden Island<sup>1</sup> or Kolomoki<sup>2</sup> series.

The presence of vessels of the type *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp*<sup>3</sup> in the mass pottery deposit demonstrates quite conclusively that Mound E is a burial mound of the Kolomoki culture. There are a number of features in both mortuary practices and ceramics which have not previously been reported for burial mounds in this part of the Southeast. This is partly true of course because the Kolomoki complex is a new one. However, quite possibly similar situations were encountered by C. B. Moore<sup>4</sup> but were reported in such a way as to make visualization of the actual situation nearly impossible.

This report is intended to be largely descriptive. It appears desirable, as always, to make the basic data available as soon as possible. A comparative report on the site as a whole will be prepared at a later date.

1. Willey, Gordon R., "Archaeology of the Florida Gulf Coast", *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, Vol. 113. Washington, 1949.
2. Sears, William H., *Excavations at Kolomoki—Season I*. Athens, 1951.
3. *Ibid*, pp. 9-10.
4. Moore, Clarence B., "Certain Aboriginal Mounds of the northwest Florida Coast" Part. I and II, *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*. Philadelphia, 1901-02.

# I

## **EXCAVATION**

Mound E was excavated by a modified vertical slicing technique, which seems to have served our purposes adequately. The entire mound, and some area to each side, was staked out in ten foot squares, this grid system being retained all the way through the work.

An initial trench, running north and south along the east edge of the mound with its base in undisturbed soil, was excavated first. Vertical slicing, with the profile straightened and recorded at frequent intervals, was carried forward from this trench.

The main pottery deposit, located just under the mound edge, (See Fig. 3) caused some immediate changes in technique, particularly since woodworking tools were necessary to excavate many of the vessels from the roots of a large hickory tree.

When the center of the pottery deposit had been reached, a clear distinction between the old humus on which the mound had been built and the mixed reddish soil of the fill became apparent. Since it was necessary to leave as many features as possible in place, both for study and for an exhibit of materials as aboriginally located, the base of the cut was stepped up to some eighteen inches above mound base (See Fig. 2) as soon as the pottery was cleared.

Cleaning this final section above the floor by stripping rather than slicing seemed particularly desirable since the reports of Clarence B. Moore on Florida Coast Weeden Island sites<sup>1</sup> indicated that burials, as well as the pottery deposit, would frequently be resting on the old ground surface.

As the face of the cut moved westward, the profile indicated that the top was being sliced off some sort of primary mound structure, roughly covered with rocks. (See Fig. 3) Between the thirty and forty foot profiles, large amounts of burned earth appeared in the fill of this primary structure. Behind the forty-foot line, this burned material appeared only on the outer edges of the primary mound while the fill was composed of local topsoils containing many small rocks. A small amount of humus may have developed in place between the

1. Moore, Clarence B., *loc. cit.*



## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

rocks composing the covering of this primary mound, although it was difficult to be certain.

Since it was believed that excavating only half of the mound would give us at least half of the burials as well as the major portion of the ceramics, and leave us half a mound with standing profiles for exhibit purposes, slicing was stopped at the fifty foot line. The technique was then changed to stripping, and the earth removed from around the basal portions of the core mound rock caps, from the burials, and from the remainder of the pottery deposit. (See Fig. 3)

This stripping was greatly complicated by the rocks which covered the core mound and which were scattered in its fill. In general, as many rocks as possible were cleaned, photographed in place, and then removed to allow the same procedure to be followed with the next layer. Rocks in the basal two to three feet of each cap were left in place as part of the permanent exhibit. Their relationship to standing profiles enables visitors to visualize mound construction.

Finally, the presence of the sub-mound pit was detected (See Figs. 2 and 3) and it became obvious that more than half of the mound would have to be removed. To allow working out this pit, another cut was taken back into the center of the mound. (See Fig. 3)

It would appear that construction of Mound E is more comprehensible from the aboriginal point of view than from that of the excavators. We will start then at the beginning of construction and follow through to the complete dome shaped mound.

The first step was the excavation of the pit which was finally under the center of the mound. In shape this pit most resembled a rectangular funnel with vertical walls in its lower half and outward sloping walls in its upper half. Dimensions of the lower portion (the rectangular outline on Fig. 3) were approximately six by nine feet. Total depth of the pit was seven feet.

On the pit floor were placed the partially cremated remains of one individual. The unconsumed bone fragments and ash plus a small amount of wood ash, charcoal, and burned clay, appear to have been spread more or less evenly over the floor. There was however a concentration of skull fragments, including teeth, at the east end of the pit. Included in the one inch thick layer of black earth which contained the crematory residue were a number of artifacts. Since none of them bore any indications of contact with fire, they must have been removed from the body during cremation and were later placed in the pit with the ashes. These artifacts were:

## EXCAVATION

- 52 large barrel shaped shell beads, one and a half to two inches in length. These occupied the east end of the pit floor with the skull fragments.
- 27 smaller barrel shaped shell beads, assorted sizes from one quarter inch to one inch in length.
- 228 very small shell beads, cylindrical in shape, one to two mm long and one to two mm thick. Half of these were associated with a small fragment of long bone at the west end of the pit. The others were grouped at the east end. The fact that they have adhered to one another in rows, and that occasionally two or more rows have adhered, probably indicates that they were sewn onto some sort of fabric.
- 2 circular or disc shaped copper ornaments. These are the same shape as the upper or lower plates of the Hopewellian ear spoons, but in this case they are separate ornaments without the central connecting cylinder. Like the Hopewellian type, they have raised rounded rims and depressed centers, generally cymbal shaped. In the center of the concavity, over a perforation, were single perforated pearls surrounded by traces of wood. Viewed from the top, the original ornaments would have shown copper rims around circles of wood with pearl centers. This type of ornament is commoner at Crystal River than elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> These ear ornaments were at the east end of the pit floor, associated with the skull fragments and most of the large beads.

Following the deposition of the remains and artifacts, the lower portion of this pit was filled in with sandstone rocks, probably obtained from a quarry a few hundred yards away. These varied in size from mere pebbles to one weighing an estimated one ton. Clean red sandy clay, probably derived from the excavation of the pit, was then replaced to cover the tops of the rocks.

A thin layer of dark earth lay on top of this red fill with lighter colored earth above it. (See Fig. 2) Presumably it represents some sort of organic material placed there before the next burials were deposited.

Burials two and three were then placed in the shallow pit which remained, one of them extended on each side with their heads to the east.

2. Moore, Clarence B., "Certain Aboriginal Mounds of the Florida Central West Coast," *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Vol. XII, Part 3, p. 408 and Fig. 54. Philadelphia, 1903.

## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

Burial three in particular was clearly placed on the sloping side of this pit since the right arm trails down at a forty-five degree angle, the remnants of the radius and ulna being eighteen inches lower than the base of the skull. Burial number four, a single skull, seems to have been placed in the center of the pit after the rocks had been covered. (See Fig. 3)

There is evidence that the extended bodies remained exposed for some time, the bones having separated considerably. The arm length of burial number three for example, even with the hand bones missing, is about five feet.

The remainder of the pit was then filled in with a dark humus soil, with a few rocks included. Another single skull, burial number one, must have been placed about this time. Burial number five, some distance from the pit edge, apparently dates here too, since it is resting on a sloping bed of bright red earth, the remnant of the earth excavated from the pit. This burial was also extended with the head at the east end.

All three of the extended burials had shell beads with them, apparently ornaments in place when the bodies were buried. In all cases, the beads were the barrel shaped variety, but not as large or fine as those deposited with the cremation. In burials two and three they were around the neck, with several near the right elbow of number three. Number five had a large string around the waist with two more on top of the skull, presumably remaining from a hair ornament.

The single skulls were almost certainly trophy skulls although the adherence of a copper and wood ornament to number 6 (see below) implies that the flesh still adhered to this one at least at the time of burial. Skull number one however had not only collapsed completely but had no lower jaw with it, so that it was probably a defleshed skull.

There seems to be little need for further discussion of these burials. Decay has been too complete to allow for any metric studies. They were all adult, and probably all male.

The process of filling this pit continued, and earth was piled until a primary mound had been constructed. This, as noted previously, was roughly covered with rocks and contained many scattered rocks in its fill. It was approximately twenty-five feet in diameter and five feet high, more or less of a flattened dome in shape. (See Fig. 3) As noted above (p. 1) there may have been some humus formation on the surface of this primary mound. If this was the case, a short period of time may have elapsed before the final mantle was added. A final single skull, burial number 6, was placed on the top of this primary

## EXCAVATION

mound. Adhering to the skull was a copper covered wooden ornament. In shape it was probably similar to the copper ornaments already described. The copper coating was very thin, however, having disappeared almost completely.

The first pottery deposit was placed a few feet east of this primary mound. (Fig. 3) It contained only fragmentary vessels plus one copper wood and pearl ornament of the type already described. A second mantle was then added to cover this deposit. This was the mantle which contained the burned earth noted in the section on "Excavation." This mantle added only to the horizontal dimension of the core mound, not extending over its top at all. Since the earth composing this mantle had not been burned in place, its most likely source is the crematory area, wherever on the site that may have been. The outside of this mantle was also covered loosely with rocks. Its relationship to the core mound is clearer on the floor plan (Fig. 3) than in the profile (Fig. 2). The "compartment" outside the core mound to the east is framed by the basal rocks of this mantle covering.

The major ceremonial deposit, once more with its center east of the center of the mound, was now placed on the ground surface. As the floor plan (Fig. 3) indicates, this deposit covers a considerable area. Fifty-four whole or reconstructable vessels were included plus a few partial pots and a great many sherds. Since these will be discussed more fully in the succeeding section, it suffices to state here that the majority of the vessels were of the Weeden Island<sup>3</sup> or Kolomoki<sup>4</sup> series, although of nearly equal importance numerically and of even greater importance in terms of cultural analysis are vessels of a new pottery type, *Mercier Red on Buff*. (See pp 9-10 for type description.)

The last stage of mound construction was the addition of a final mantle, covering everything else mentioned so far. It was composed largely of the red sandy clay which makes up the local sub-soil, again with large numbers of sandstone rocks used as part of the fill. In most cases these were single rocks, but in a few instances, small layers or sheets of contiguous rocks were formed, evidently the result of laying on rocks rather than basketloads of earth at stages in mound construction. Clearly however the addition of this mantle was a continuous process, not interrupted to any major extent until the final dome shaped mound, eighty feet in diameter and eleven feet in height, had been completed.

3. Willey, Gordon R., *loc. cit.*

4. Sears, William H., *op. cit.*



## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

One other feature which should be mentioned is the intrusive pit from the top of the mound. (See Fig. 2) Letters on file at the Bureau of American Ethnology indicate that this was dug by a Bureau field party under Palmer in 1881.<sup>5</sup> Except that it probably added to the disintegration of the burials through funneling in and retention of water, it did not particularly affect our excavations. Obviously Mr. Palmer thought he had reached mound base when he hit the rocks of the core mound cap.

5. Waring, A. J., Jr., Personal Communication.

## II

# CERAMICS

The main pottery deposit, outside of and east of the core mound, contained fifty-four vessels which had been deposited as whole pots. The location of each of these is indicated in Figure 3. In addition there were eighteen fragmentary vessels of which only large parts had ever been deposited. These include some half pots and some rims which form complete circles but which have no bodies.

It should be noted here that except for one *Weeden Island Plain*<sup>1</sup> bowl, all of the complete vessels had been "killed" by neat holes in their bases. The majority of these holes had been cut through before the vessel was fired. Others had been carefully cut after firing and a few others had been punched through, always from the inside, after firing.

The fragmentary vessels plus a great many sherds had been placed on the ground so as to fill in the spaces between the whole vessels. This produced an almost solid carpet of pottery. Since the sherds and partial vessels add nothing to the data provided by the complete vessels, none of them have been illustrated. A tabulation of the types represented with the number of partial vessels and sherds in each type will be found at the end of this section.

Of the fifty-four complete vessels, twenty-seven or fifty per cent are of types ascribable to the *Weeden Island* complex.<sup>2</sup> The remaining twenty-seven vessels include ten classified as *Mercier Red on Buff*, a new type; fifteen which have been decorated with complicated stamps, falling in two types, and two vessels which might be classified as "mongrels." All of the complete vessels are illustrated. The numbers in the following tabulation refer to those used in the plates.

WEEDEN ISLAND PLAIN		No.
Plain Bowls, open .....		1
		2
		3

1. Willey, Gordon R., "Archaeology of the Florida Gulf Coast," *Smithsonian Miscellaneous Collections*, Vol. 113. Washington, 1949.
2. *Ibid.*

## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

Plain bowls, open with effigy heads .....	4
	5
Compressed globular bowls with flattened lips .....	6
	7
Compressed globular bowls with tall vertical rims ....	8
	9
	10
Elongate Jar .....	11
<b>MERCIER RED ON BUFF</b> (Type description pp 9-10)	
Jars with short vertical necks .....	12
	13
	14
	15
	16
	17
	22
Open Bowls .....	18
	20
Compound Shapes .....	19
	21
<b>WEEDEN ISLAND INCISED</b>	
Open bowls .....	23
	24
	25
	26
	27
Effigy Forms .....	29
	30
<b>KOLOMOKI COMPLICATED STAMP</b>	
Compressed globular bowls .....	31
	32
	33
Jars .....	34
	35
	36
	37
	38
Globular pot with tall neck .....	39

## C E R A M I C S

Large globular bodied pot, rim form variant IIb <sup>3</sup> ....	42
Large globular bodied pot with rim form variant III. <sup>4</sup> .....	40
UNCLASSIFIED COMPLICATED STAMP	
Rim form III <sup>5</sup> on vessel with globular body, tall neck .....	43
Large globular bodied pot with unique wedge shaped rim .....	41
Unclassifiable, form III rim, generally late on basis zoning .....	44
Small bowl with stamping on tall flared rim .....	45
VESSELS NOT FALLING IN ANY OF THE ABOVE CATEGORIES	
Vessel form normal to <i>Kolomoki Complicated Stamp</i> , normal stamping in the shoulder area, incision and cut outs added to the rim in Weeden Island tradition .....	46
Compressed globular bowl, very large and heavy complicated stamp in the shoulder area, modelling and cut-outs in Weeden Island tradition added to the rim .....	47
Compressed globular bowl, incised appliques pendant from lip .....	48
<i>Weeden Island Incised?</i> Red Paint and puncta- tion in zones .....	49
<i>Weeden Island Zoned Red</i> , Jar. ....	28
Jar with vertical rim, red paint on lip, band of red paint under lip, band of red paint on shoulder. (Variant of <i>Mercier Red on Buff?</i> ) ....	52
Open bowl, red paint on lip, band beneath rim, solid coat of red paint on interior .....	51
Compressed globular bowl, solid red film exterior ....	50

*Mercier Red on Buff* is a new type, and an important one. The site was formerly part of the Mercier Plantation<sup>6</sup> and red on buff is descriptive of the decoration, designs in red paint on a buff background which is the unmodified vessel surface.

3. Sears, William H., 1951. *op. cit.*

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*

6. Jones, C. C., *Antiquities of the Southern Indians, Particularly of the Georgia Tribes.* New York, 1873.

## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

Although this pottery type is thus far restricted to these vessels from this one site, it has definite relationships in vessel form and decoration with other pottery types of the mature Middle Mississippi horizon throughout the southeast. In decoration the free hand designs are in distinct contrast to the use of red paint in zones, one of the zoning techniques which together are the hallmark of Middle Woodland or Hopewell period pottery. Ford and Willey pointed out this break, the use of free hand rather than zoned painting, between their Temple Mound I and Temple Mound II horizons. The painting which they discussed was red and white rather than simply red.<sup>7</sup> The development follows the same course however.

Even more indicative of relationship in this mature Middle Mississippi horizon are the vessel shapes. The major vessel form in *Mercier Red on Buff* is a globular bodied pot with a short vertical neck attached to the body at a sharp angle and a rim which may have either a flattened lip or may have a notched added rim strip. This vessel form is commonest in Middle Mississippi shell tempered vessels which usually have strap handles and are therefore late; it never occurs, to the best of my knowledge, with early Mississippi loop handled vessels. Also definitely mature Mississippian is the bowl with notched added rim strip, (Plate V, No. 19). The lug handles are not of course specifically late, but the notched added rim strip reproduces almost the exact rim features of late vessels found in the area from Arkansas to Tennessee, even to the detail of the small, thin vertical edge which protrudes upwards from the inner edge of the rim. Bowls of this type have been illustrated from the Dallas focus,<sup>8</sup> another from Moundville,<sup>9</sup> and Holmes pictures many others. The final detail of the thin vertical edge on the inner side of the lip precludes any possibility of accidental duplication to my mind and must indicate Kolomoki contact with late cultures elsewhere in the southeast. A similar thin vertical edge appears with an added rim strip, although not notched, on the *Mercier Red on Buff* vessel illustrated on Plate VI, No. 22, in this case with the jar form. The notched added rim strip alone, still a good mature Mississippi characteristic, is also a feature of the large jar appearing as No. 13 on Plate IV.

One final feature indicative of the cultural relationships of this

7. Ford, James A. and Willey, Gordon R., "An Interpretation of the Prehistory of the Eastern United States." *American Anthropologist*, XLIII, No. 3 Menasha, p. 354.
8. Lewis, T. M. N. and Kneberg, M., *Hiwassee Island*, Plate 62. Knoxville, 1946.
9. Moore, C. B., "Aboriginal Remains of the Black Warrior River." *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*. Vol. 13, Fig. 13.

## C E R A M I C S

pottery type is the thin flat lip, a lip flattened on top and extending out horizontally in such a fashion as to make the width of the lip twice the thickness of the vessel wall. Lips of this type are frequently associated with this jar form in Middle Mississippi pottery. Again, Ford and Willey have used the introduction of this lip shape as a characteristic distinguishing Temple Mound II from Temple Mound I. Vessels with this treatment are illustrated herein as No. 12, Plate III; No. 14, Plate IV; No. 17, Plate V; and on a different pottery type, but with the vessel shape under consideration, as No. 49, Plate 12.

To sum up this discussion of *Mercier Red on Buff*, we may say that it was very strongly influenced by other pottery types of the mature Middle Mississippian horizon, the period and horizon of the Southern Cult and major ceremonial and cultural development in the southeast.

### MERCIER RED ON BUFF

#### Type Description

##### Paste:

Method of Manufacture: Coiled

Texture: Compact, thoroughly amalgamated, no lamination or other distortion.

Temper: Fine sand, medium amount.

Hardness: 2-2.5

Color: Light buff to reddish buff. Smudging rare. Little color variation surface to core.

Surface Finish: Well smoothed, slight polish in some cases, particularly on bowl forms. Tool marks completely eradicated on interior and exterior.

Decoration: Red paint (water soluble iron oxide pigment) in stripes and small well defined solid areas.

Motifs: Generally curvilinear, solid areas such as circles or semi-circles centered in circles and arcs. See Fig. 1 for those reconstructable in this assemblage.

Distribution: Exterior rim and shoulder area of pots, upper one-half to two-thirds of bowls. Lips are frequently solid red.

Other decoration: Lip notching and incision, holes cut through vessel walls at rims, some modelling.

##### Vessel Form:

Two main categories:

1 - Large jars, ranging in height from five and one-half to nine



## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

and three-quarters inches. Bodies are globular, necks vertical. There is invariably a sharp angle at the juncture of neck and body. Lips may be thickened, have an added notched or plain rim strip, be rounded, or flattened. Flattened lips may extend out past the vessel wall, total lip width then being double the thickness of the vessel wall adjoining. Most lips are additionally modified by notching the thin edge and by incised lines on the flat surface. Bases are convex, semi-conoidal, or squared.

2 - Bowls, open. In one case, notched rim strip has been added.

### Appendages:

Small perforated triangular or rectangular lugs. Both open bowls have stubs which presumably represent effigy heads which have broken off.

The incised pottery from this deposit is classifiable as *Weeden Island Incised* in terms of extant type descriptions.<sup>10</sup> However, this may be the place to point out that there are actually two major variants included in this pottery type. One of these is zoned incision. In this variant the design area is filled in by, or outlined by, parallel incised lines, the alternate areas being left plain. Many of the finest vessels from northwest Florida Mounds are of this type.<sup>11</sup> Opposed to this we have a variant which may be called "free" incised. Here the incised lines themselves form designs, no zoned or alternate area concepts being used. And, of course, there are combinations of the two techniques. In the Weeden Island village at Kolomoki the *Weeden Island Incised* was of the zoned variety.<sup>12</sup> The incised ware from mound E is only of the free incised variant. The possibility is thus opened that this stylistic variation is of temporal significance. This is strengthened almost to a certainty by a number of facts. First, it is indisputable that zoned decoration is primarily a technique of the Middle Woodland time period. Thus while we might expect it to continue in early Weeden Island levels, it would be difficult to put the free incising here and then have zoned incising re-invented during a later period. Too, this type of incision is found on two vessels which are effigies executed in the round of the total of seven incised vessels at Kolomoki, all of them free incised. Most of these others are effigy vessels of a sort, as

10. Willey, Gordon R. *loc. cit.* p. 411-419

11. More, Clarence B. "Certain Aboriginal Mounds of the Northwest Florida Coast," *Journal of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia*, Vol. XII, 1902. Figs. 49, 86, 87, 89, 122, 127, 129, 288 are particularly good examples.

12. Sears, William H., *op. cit.*



## C E R A M I C S

bowls with effigy heads, even reduced and conventionalized *ab absurdam* as No. 25, Plate VII. A quick look through Moores reports on the Florida northwest coast, particularly the 1902 report will quickly demonstrate to the reader that the free incising technique in Florida sites is usually found on effigies, usually effigies in the round, and more often than not effigies of the owl, supported on pedestals of some sort or other. It is well known that effigies in the round are a mature Middle Mississippi characteristic, and equally well known that the owl as a ceramic decoration motif assumes importance in the mature Mississippi period, ducks and raptorial birds being the Middle Woodland fowl.

It appears then that the incised decoration of Mound E vessels, as opposed to the zoned incision of the village areas ascribable to Weeden Island, is later, and once more relates this Mound E ceramic assemblage to the widespread mature Mississippian horizon. Since the Kolomoki period to which Mound E belongs is also the period of the great temple mound, as has been pointed out in the 1948 study, such a temporal and cultural allocation is not surprising.

The plain ware is largely *Weeden Island Plain*. This is particularly evident in the case of the bowls with the thickened rims. This form was commonest in the Weeden Island village at this site. However, in that context, vessel interiors were always painted red, and the pottery was classified as *Weeden Island Red*.

In considering the allocation of this mound to one of the culture complexes extant in the park, the vessels of the type *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp* are of particular importance. It was believed on the basis of evidence from the village areas that the Kolomoki period was later than the Weeden Island period.<sup>13</sup> This hypothesis is supported by the associations in the mound, particularly by the temporal and cultural relationships of the incised and red painted wares discussed above. As the stamped ware does not occur in the Weeden Island village at this site, the mound must belong to the later Kolomoki period, since pottery cannot leak backwards in time into closed burial deposits. Once we are sure that the mound is a Kolomoki period mound because of the presence of *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp*, the associated types strengthen considerably the evidence for Weeden Island-Kolomoki sequence adduced from refuse accumulations in the village and the association of the Kolomoki deposits with the temple mound-plaza complex. Some consideration of the relationships of this ceramic assemblage to those

13. Sears, William H., *op. cit.*

## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

outside Kolomoki, particularly northwest Florida assemblages, will be found in the conclusions to this report. There is one point however which should be stressed here. That is, although there are Weeden Island pottery types in this assemblage, and although the use of a mass pottery deposit on the east side of the mound is a Weeden Island characteristic, this mound is not a Weeden Island burial mound. It is a burial mound of the Kolomoki culture which, although probably developing from Weeden Island, is a culture which used complicated stamping as the sole decorative technique on their everyday pottery. That the pottery in Mound E is specially made mortuary ware is obvious from the pre-firing kill holes and the general non-functional character of the vessels.

There are a number of stamped pots which do not fit our type description for *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp*. The zoning on these however classifies them as late in the development of complicated stamping. We are not prepared at the moment to say more about them.

The smaller pottery deposit, just outside the core mound, contained no complete vessels. Large portions of one *Mercier Red on Buff* jar were present, approximately one-half of an unusual incised bowl (No. 53, Plate 14), most of a *Weeden Island Plain* compressed spheroidal bowl, and many sherds. The latter included specimens of *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp*, *Weeden Island Incised*, and numerous plain sherds. There were also four squared bases for which no bodies were found.

There seems to be no need for more precise presentation of this material, as the assemblage for the most part duplicates that from the much larger main deposit. Exceptions are the incised specimens illustrated. (No.'s 53 and 54, Plate 14) Although these are unusual, no particular relationship for them has been found.

### SHERDS AND PARTIAL VESSELS, MAIN DEPOSIT

Partial Vessels:	No. Specimens
Mercier Red on Buff .....	5
Kolomoki Complicated Stamp .....	5
Weeden Island Incised .....	4
Untypable Complicated Stamp .....	4
Weeden Island Plain .....	2
 Sherds:	
Kolomoki Complicated Stamp .....	9
Unclassifiable Complicated Stamp .....	4
Weeden Island Plain (1 with bird effigy head on bowl rim) .....	26

## CERAMICS

Mercier Red on Buff .....	49
Weeden Island Incised .....	27
Weeden Island Incised, with red paint, one with bird effigy head on bowl rim .....	11
Unclassifiable .....	3

### III

## CONCLUSIONS

In the Season I report two culture complexes were demonstrated to exist at Kolomoki, separable thus far largely on the basis of their ceramic complexes. The presence of *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp* vessels in the Mound E deposit is conclusive evidence that mound E is a burial mound of the Kolomoki complex. Insofar as burial features are concerned, the use of a mass deposit of pottery on the east side of the mound allies Mound E with Weeden Island burial mounds of the Florida northwest coast. A new feature is introduced however by the use of a large central pit containing one burial and filled with rocks, other burials and features being oriented around or with respect to this central burial. It is suspected that this central burial is the remains of a particularly important personage, quite probably one of the priest-chiefs of the Kolomoki culture. The relationship of the two extended burials at the sides of the main pit, and of the trophy skulls, to this main burial, hints both of social stratification and of elaborate mortuary rites involving ceremonial immolation of retainers similar to that reported for the Natchez by Du Pratz. There is a distinct possibility that such sub-floor pits and accompanying burials did exist in northwest Florida mounds, and were missed by Moore, or were not reported in such a way that we can visualize the situation which he saw. However, there is nothing we can do about that at the moment.

Although Mound E is a burial mound of the Kolomoki complex, there are still Weeden Island pottery types present in the ceremonial cache, particularly incised and plain types. As noted above, the use of a mass pottery deposit on the east side of the mound is a Weeden Island characteristic. In the Season I report we documented the existence of two cultures at Kolomoki which are relevant to this discussion, the Kolomoki and the Weeden Island. The Weeden Island ceramic complex was composed of the several Weeden Island Incised and punctuated types plus a complicated stamp best unnamed at the moment but belonging in the Swift Creek II horizon,<sup>1</sup> and *Napier*

1. Terminology adopted at Southeastern Archaeological Conference, Knoxville, Tenn. October, 1950.

## CONCLUSIONS

*Complicated Stamp*.<sup>2</sup> The Kolomoki complex, placed later than the Weeden Island on the basis of evidence then admittedly rather inadequate, had for ceramic types only a plain ware allied to *Weeden Island Plain* and *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp*.

We are faced then with a situation in which the Weeden Island and Kolomoki complexes are quite distinct in the village, but apparently are blended in the burial mound. Our hypothesis to account for this is that the Kolomoki culture is descended from the Weeden Island culture, the evolution probably having taken place at Kolomoki, although some of the typological steps are missing in materials excavated thus far. In the burial mound, older ceramic types were still used, especially made for the purpose, and old mortuary practices would be nothing new, being strongly present even in our own culture.

To back up this hypothesis we indicated a number of facts, concerned mostly with two pottery types, *Mercier Red on Buff* and *Weeden Island Incised*. In the case of the incised type, it was pointed out that there are two major variants of *Weeden Island Incised*, free and zoned. The zoned type occurs in the Weeden Island village areas at Kolomoki whereas the free variant is characteristic of the burial mound. Further, the relationships of the free variant and of the effigy forms on which it usually appears are with mature Middle Mississippian culture in the southeast outside the Weeden Island area. The zoned type of incision on the other hand finds its closest counterparts in the Middle Woodland horizon.

*Mercier Red on Buff* verifies the cultural and chronological relationships of the complex indicated by the incised ware. Both the free style of painting and the vessel forms, including in the latter case such details as rim shapes, are allied with mature Middle Mississippian shell tempered types to the north and west.

These relationships of the Mound E complex then verify the relative chronological positions assigned to the Weeden Island and Kolomoki manifestations in the village areas at this site. The Weeden Island period as represented at Kolomoki, early in the total Weeden Island span, must fall then in the general early Mississippian period in terms of total southeastern chronology. It still carries on elements of the Middle Woodland ceramic tradition. The Kolomoki period on the other hand relates ceramically, through the Mound E complex, with fully developed or mature Middle Mississippian culture.

2. Jennings, Jesse D. and Fairbanks, Charles, "Type Description Napier Complicated Stamp." *Newsletter, Southeastern Archaeological Conference*. Vol. 2, No. 2, p. 8. Lexington, 1939.



## EXCAVATIONS AT KOLOMOKI

This latter period, admittedly insufficiently characterized in this report, is believed to be the peak period of cultural and ceremonial development in the aboriginal southeast, following the beginnings of the Mississippian culture type in the early Mississippian period, and giving way in turn to the ceremonial and artistic breakdown of the Lamar-Fort Walton horizon, this latter being considered truly representative of a late or proto-historic Mississippian period.

This interpretation of Weeden Island is in strong conflict with the interpretations made by Gordon R. Willey in the major sources on this culture complex.<sup>3</sup> There is nothing in Willey's work to indicate that any of the northwest Florida Weeden Island type burial mounds can be the products of groups using anything other than Weeden Island ceramics in the village. He also has used *Wakulla Check Stamp* as a time marker, its introduction as a type replacing *Late Swift Creek Complicated Stamp* marking the end of the Weeden Island I time period and the beginning of the Weeden Island II. This latter period is considered partially, if not fully, co-eval with the period and culture complex we have been calling mature Mississippi in this report.

Without going into detailed analysis of the Florida materials, a matter reserved for a final report on Kolomoki, it is only necessary to state here that we do have a complex with a late complicated stamp, which would formerly have been classified as *Late Swift Creek*, which is in the mature Middle Mississippian time period, and which does not have the check stamp. In fact to date not a single sherd of *Wakulla Check Stamp* or any other check stamp other than the Lamar period *Mercier Check Stamp*<sup>4</sup> has been found at Kolomoki.

This obviously affects the interpretation of the northwest Florida manifestations. As stated above, the detailed analysis of Florida Weeden Island sites and their relationship to Kolomoki is not possible in this report, although a preliminary attempt has been made elsewhere.<sup>5</sup> We may point out here however that while *Mercier Red on Buff* is restricted to Kolomoki, the combination of *Kolomoki Complicated Stamp* and free incised effigy vessels does occur at a number of Florida sites, most notably the large Hall, Tucker, and Mound Field sites.<sup>6</sup>

In general, the excavation of Mound E has produced materials of considerable value both for the interpretation in cultural and chronological terms of the situation at Kolomoki and in the interpretation of

3. Willey, Gordon R., *loc. cit.*

4. Sears, W. H., *op. cit.*, p. 32.

5. Sears, W. H., "The Cultural Position of Kolomoki in the Southeast." Ann Arbor, 1950.

6. Moore, Clarence B., *loc. cit.*



## CONCLUSIONS

the relationships and constitution of the Weeden Island complex. There are of course some new problems, such as the nature of the development of Weeden Island ceramics, the significance of *Wakulla Check Stamp* as a time marker, and the relationship of Weeden Island type burial mounds to less exotic village manifestations. Perhaps further excavation at Kolomoki will give us some of the answers, although undoubtedly much of the needed data still lies buried beneath the soil of adjacent portions of Florida, Alabama, and Georgia.

A certain amount of further work at Kolomoki is assured, in particular the excavation of Mound D in 1950. It is hoped in that and a few subsequent seasons to excavate the remainder of the smaller mounds at the site and to conduct further excavations in the village area. We hope to follow the precedent set with this and the 1943 report, and issue descriptive reports yearly. Finally, in the not too distant future, a final report synthesizing the total material is intended.

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FIGURES AND PLATES

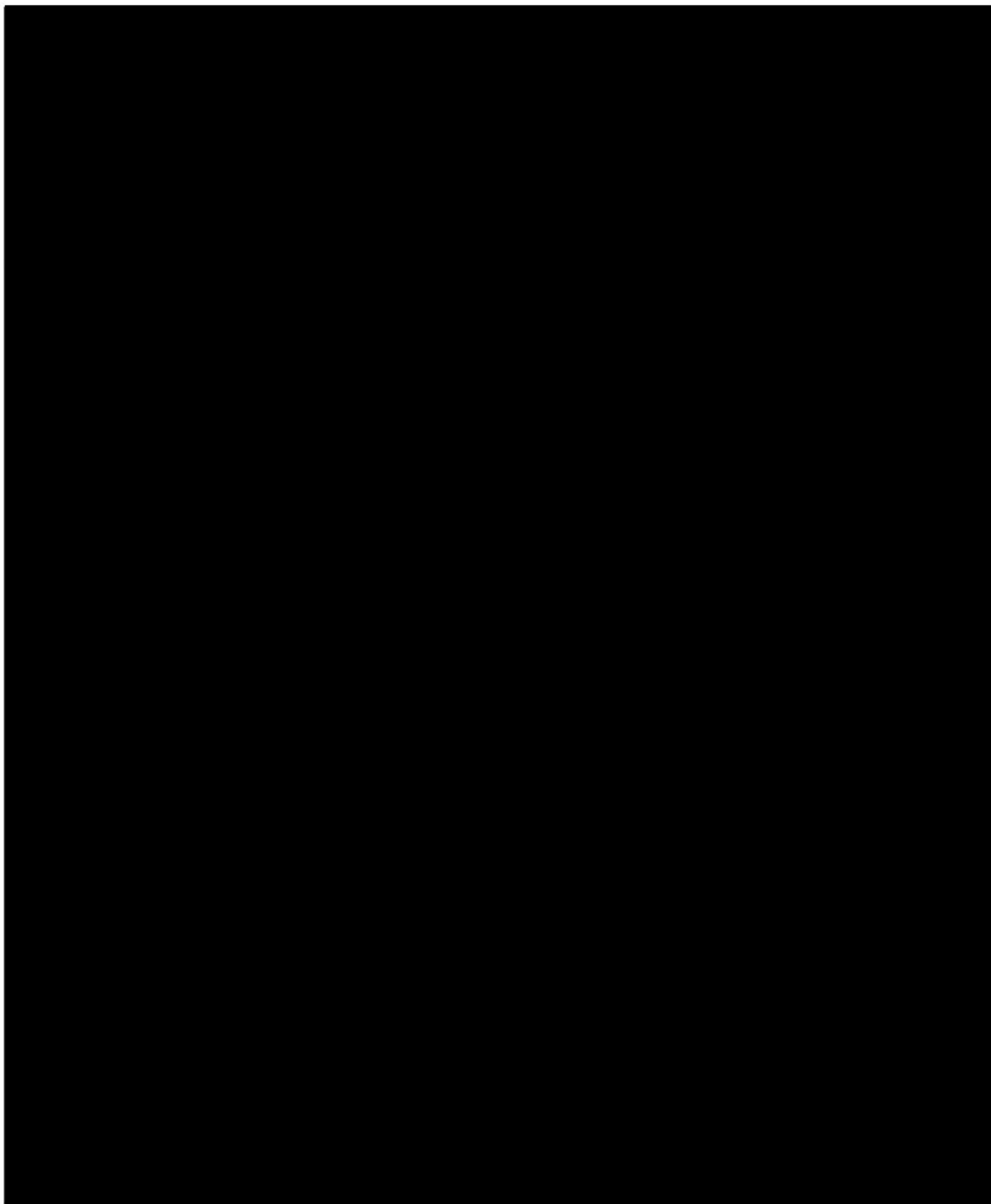
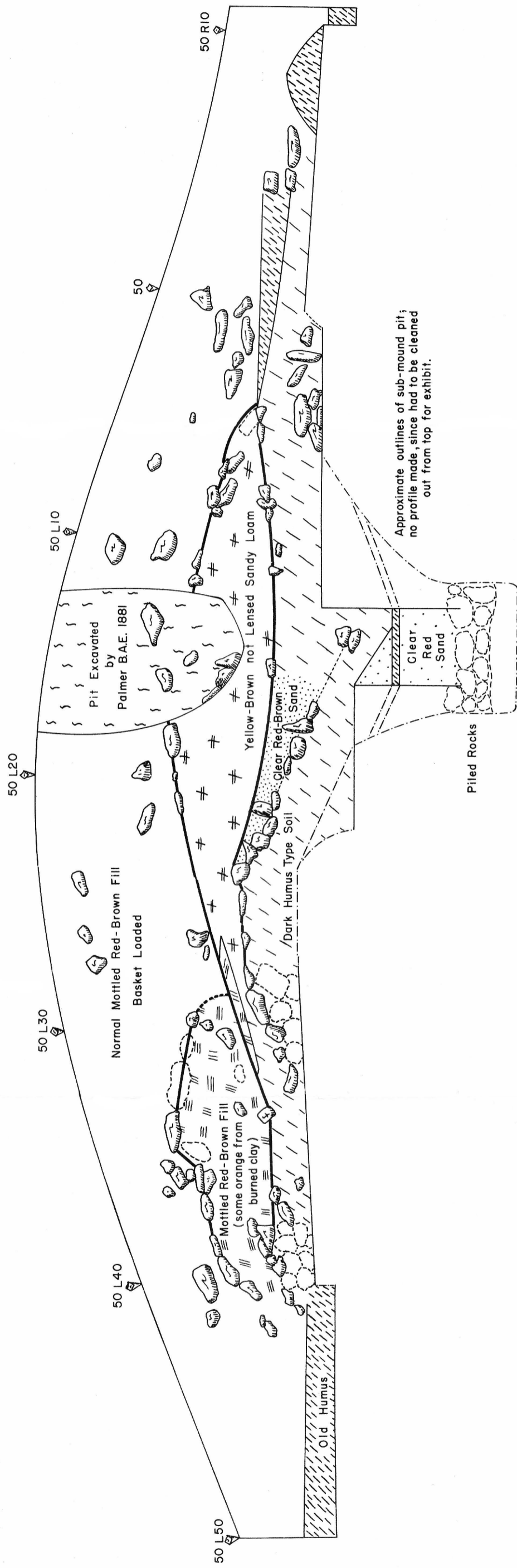


Fig. 1. Mercier Red on Buff vessels. Artist reconstruction of the painted designs. Numbers refer to those on plates at end of report.

# KOLOMOKI MOUND E

## 50 FT. PROFILE



m. s. o.

Fig. 2. Ten foot stakes serve as scale.

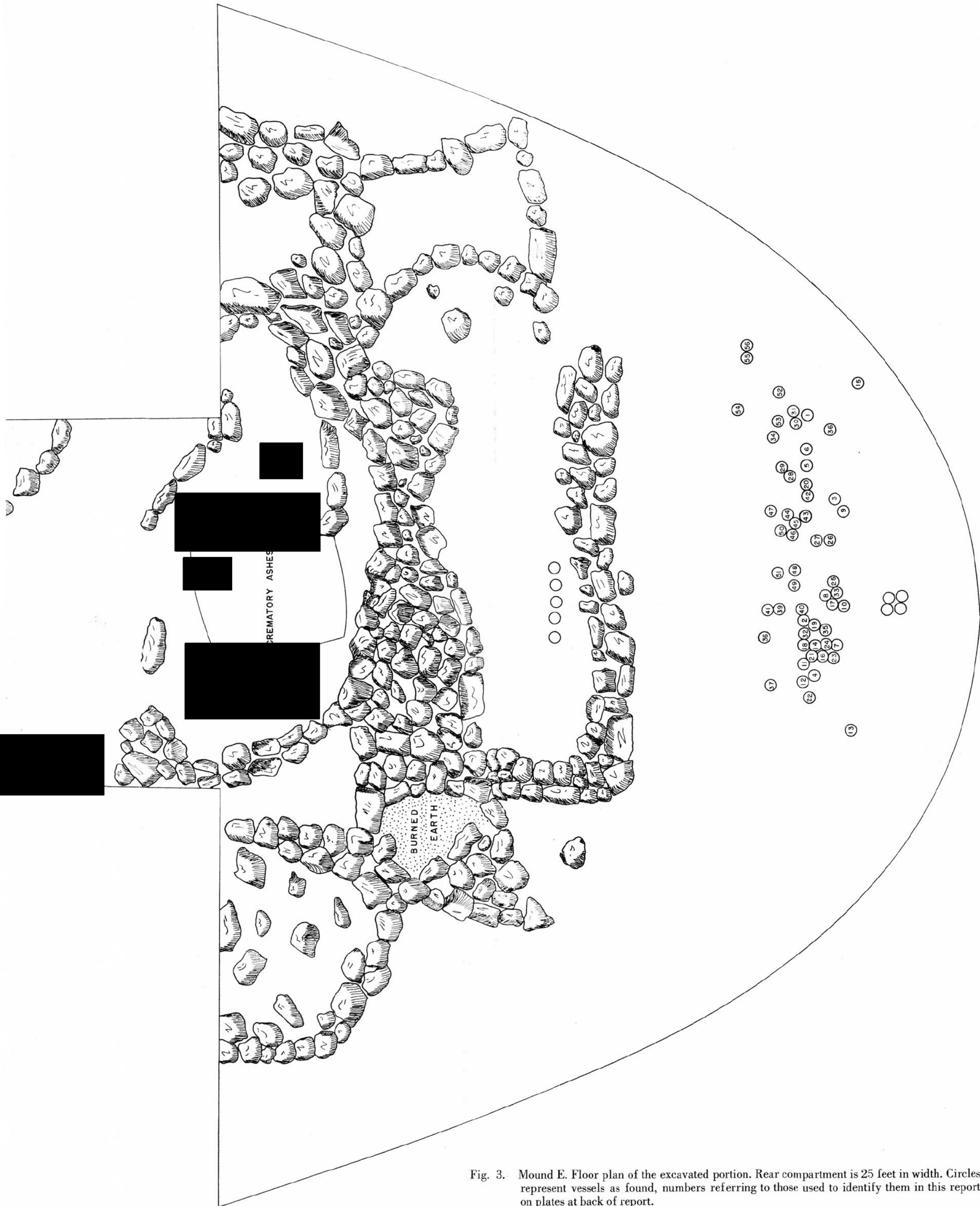


Fig. 3. Mound E. Floor plan of the excavated portion. Rear compartment is 25 feet in width. Circles represent vessels as found, numbers referring to those used to identify them in this report on plates at back of report.



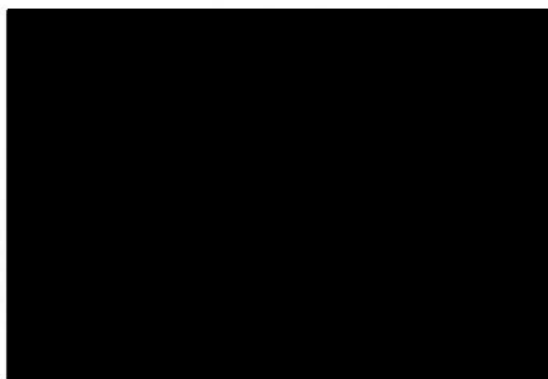
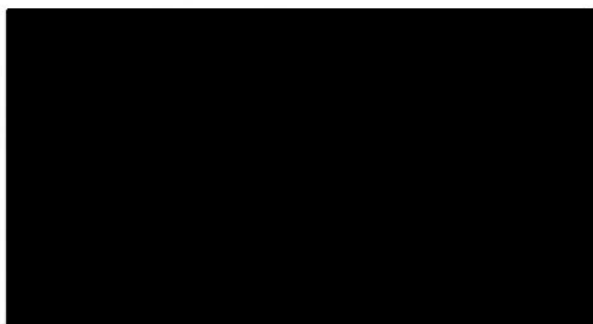
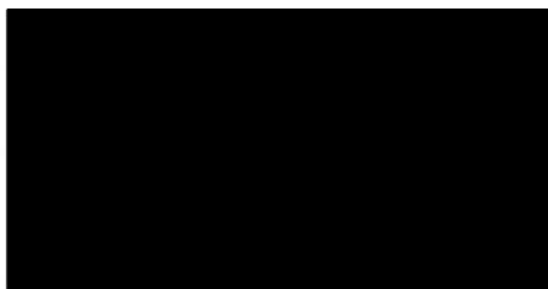
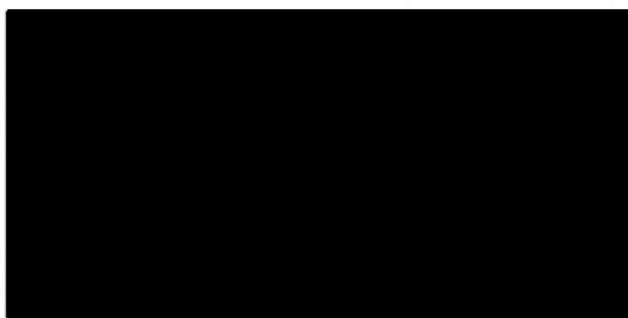


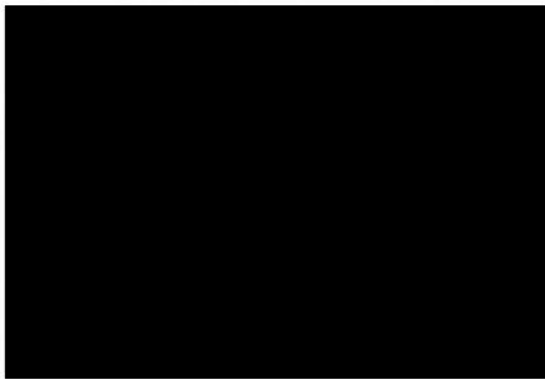
Plate I Weeden Island Plain open bowls. Bird effigy head on No. 4.



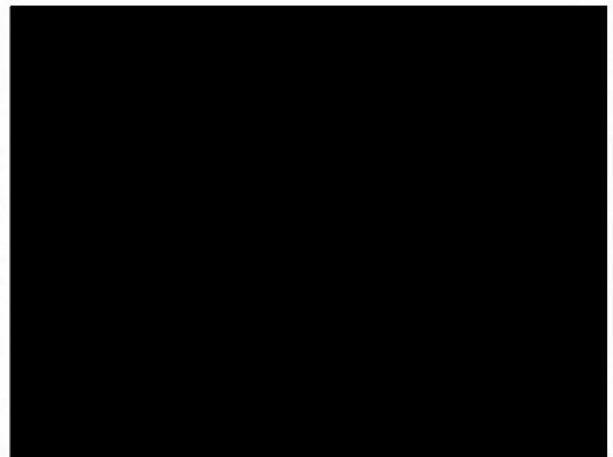
5. Weeden Island Plain bowls,  
open, with bird effigy head.



6. Weeden Island Plain bowl,  
compressed globular, with flat-  
tened lip.



7. Weeden Island Plain bowl,  
compressed globular, with flat-  
tened lip.

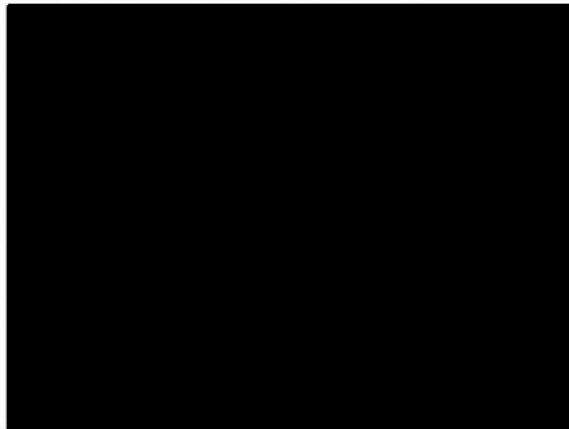


8. Weeden Island Plain com-  
pressed globular bowl with tall  
rim.

Plate II



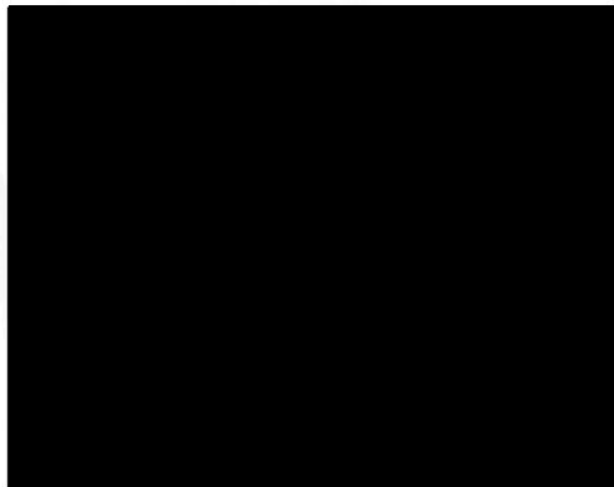
9. Weeden Island Plain compressed bowl with tall rim.



10. Weeden Island Plain compressed globular bowl with tall rim.



11. Weeden Island Plain elongate jar.



12. Mercier Red on Buff jar.

Plate III

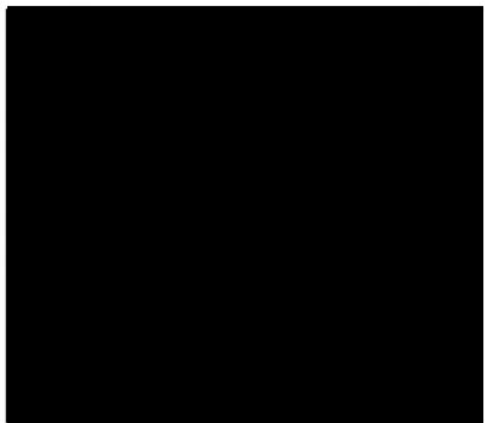
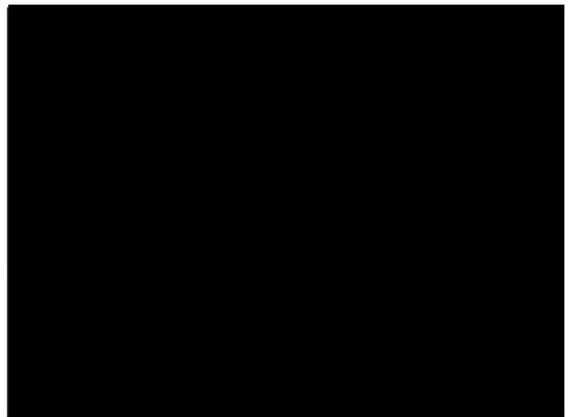


Plate IV Mercier Red on Buff jars.



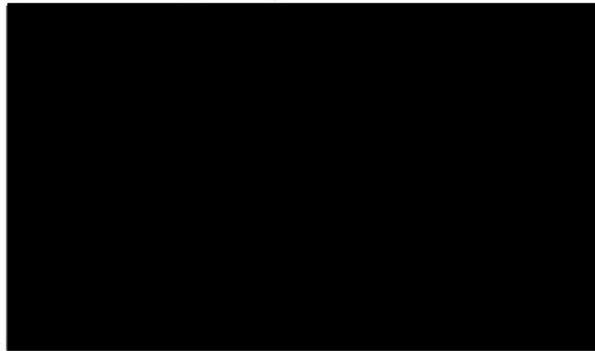
17. Mercier Red on Buff jar.



18. Mercier Red on Buff open bowl with notched rim.

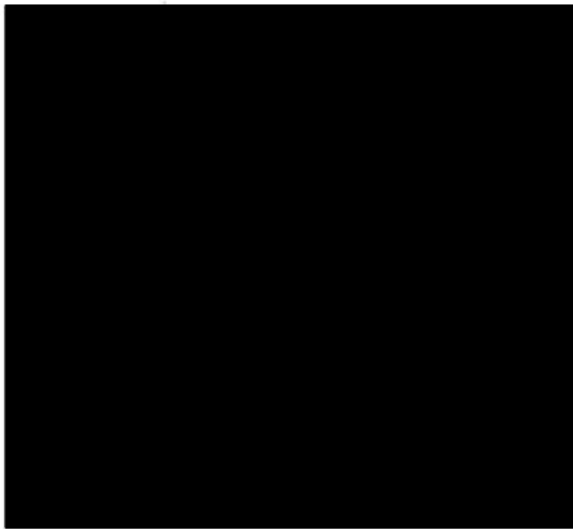


19. Mercier Red on Buff compound bowl, notched rim strip and flat horizontal lug handles, perforated.

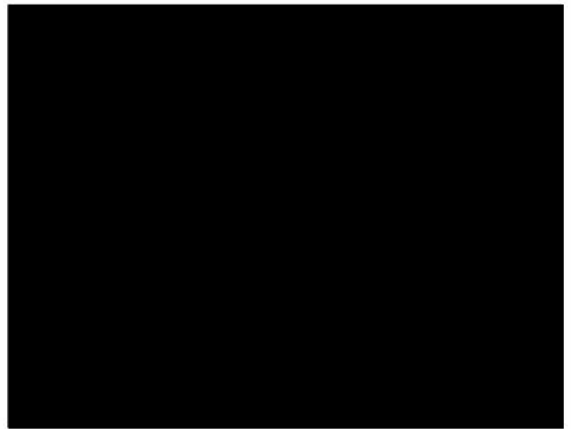


20. Mercier Red on Buff bowl, open. Stub remains from effigy head.

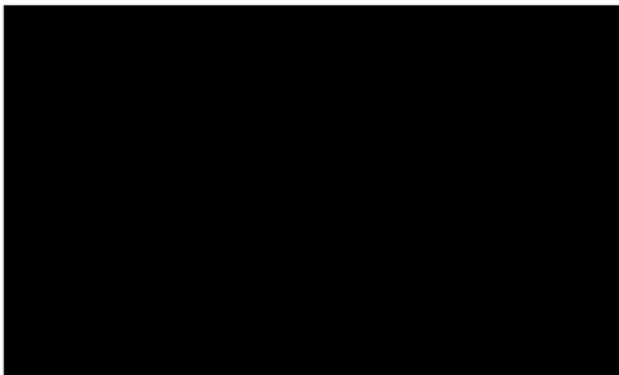
Plate V



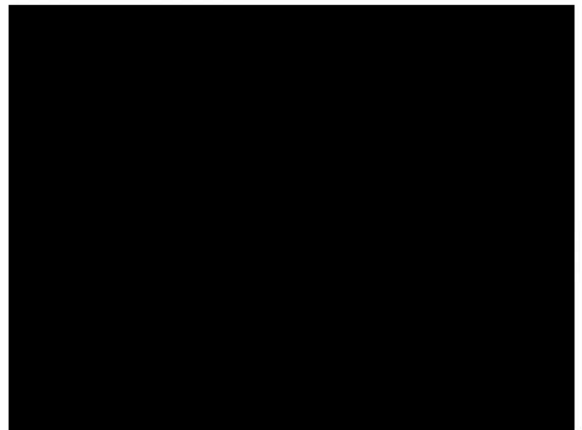
21. Mercier Red on Buff compound vessel form.



22. Mercier Red on Buff jar, incised design on neck.



23. Weeden Island Incised open bowl. Four flat horizontal handles, perforated.



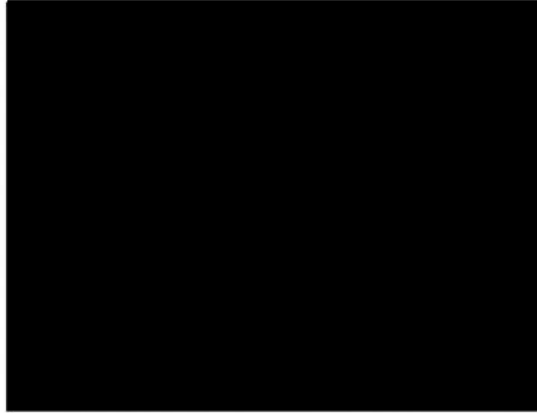
24. Weeden Island Incised squared deep bowl, notched rim strip.

Plate VI

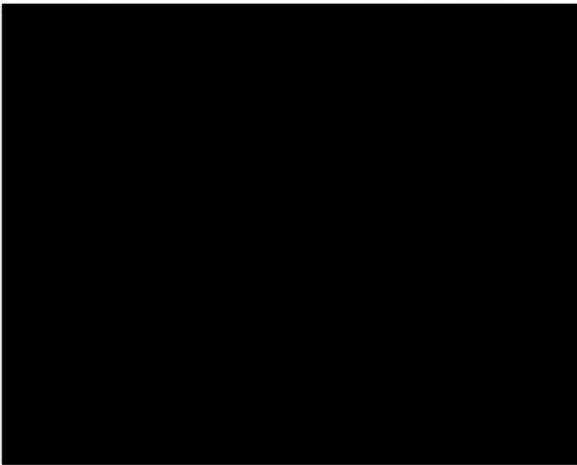




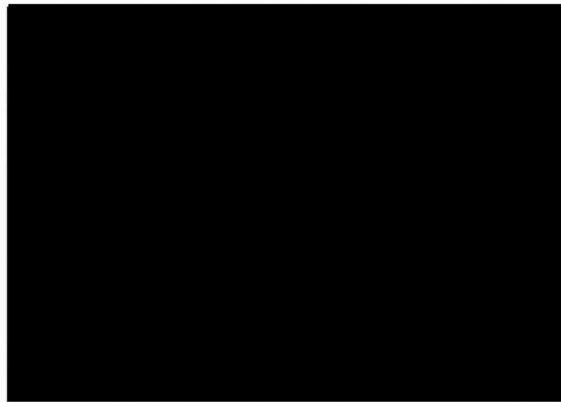
25. Weeden Island Incised open bowl. Triangles bearing design are raised, stylized effigy head.



26. Weeden Island Incised open bowl, oval, bird effigy head, stub tail, wings.



27. Weeden Island Incised open oval bowl, deer(?) effigy head.

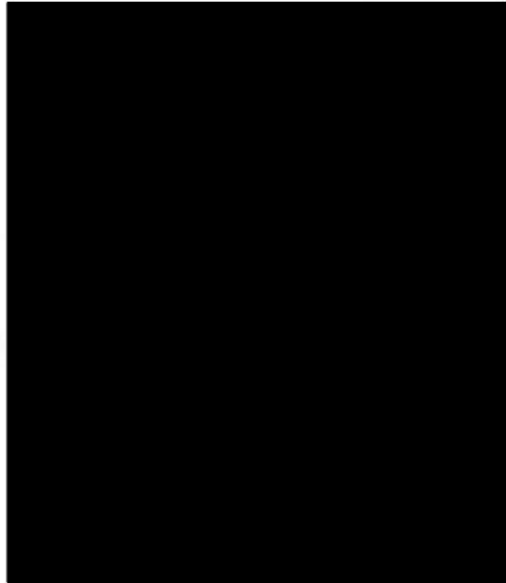


28. Weeden Island Zoned Red jar.

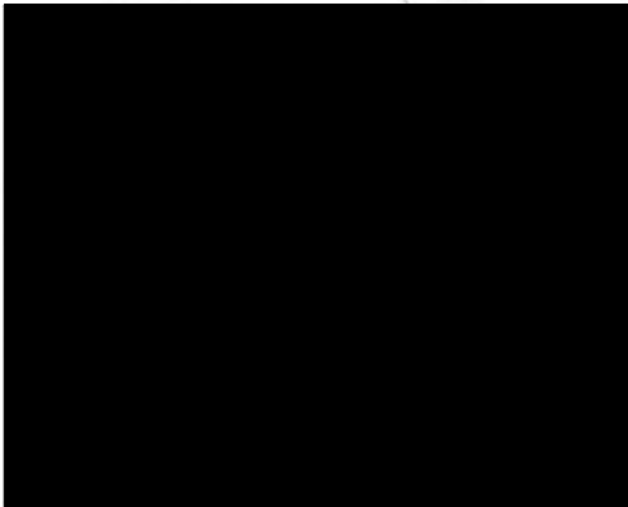
Plate VII



29. Incised Duck effigy, spread wings.



30. Pedestaled Duck effigy, incised, beak comes down flat on breast.



31. Kolomoki Complicated Stamp.



32. Kolomoki Complicated Stamp.

Plate VIII

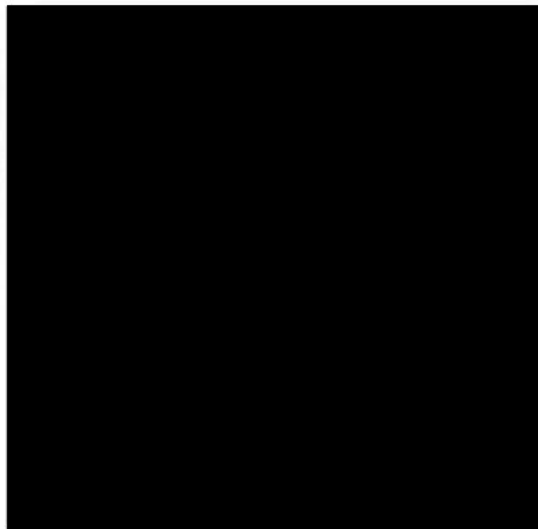
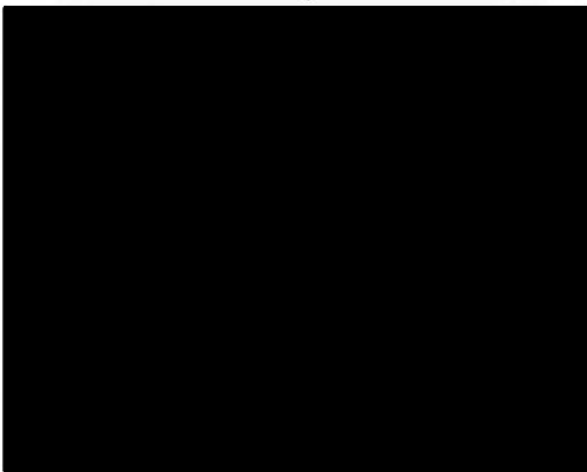
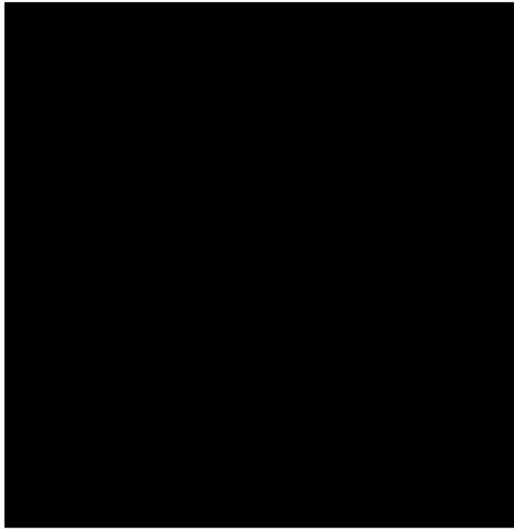


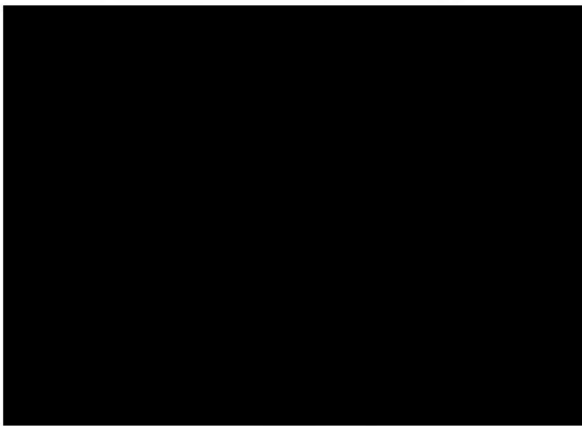
Plate IX Kolomoki Complicated Stamp.



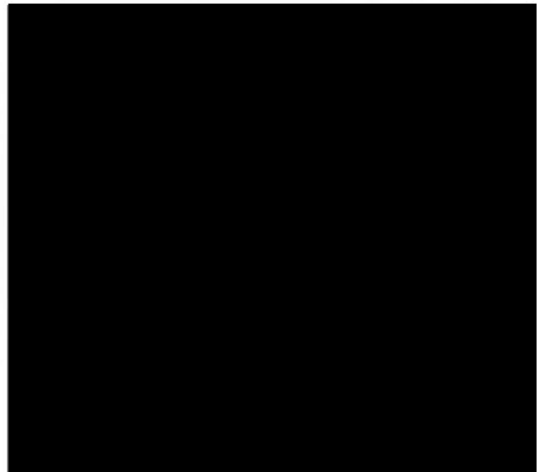
39. Kolomoki Complicated Stamp, globular pot with tall neck. (Bottle variant?)



40. Kolomoki Complicated Stamp globular pot, form III rim.



41. Unclassified. Vessel form and rim Mature Mississippian.

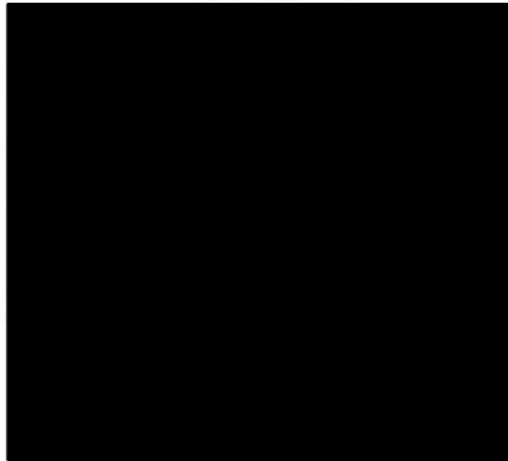


42. Extreme variant Kolomoki Complicated Stamp. Rim form IIb.

Plate X



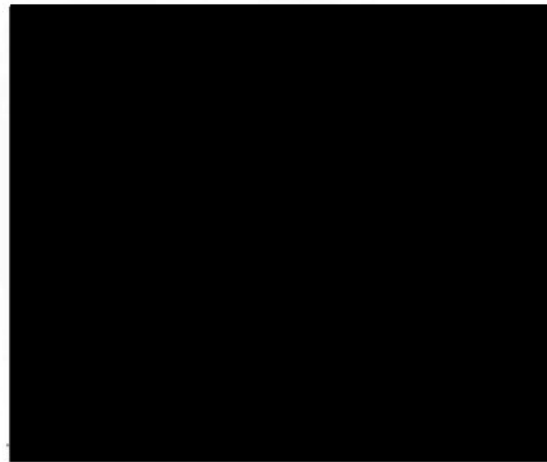
43. U n c l a s s i f i e d C o m p l i c a t e d  
Stamp, late on basis zoning.



44. U n c l a s s i f i e d C o m p l i c a t e d  
Stamp, late on basis zoning.

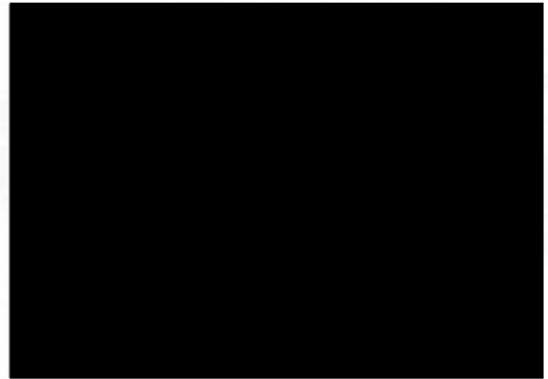


45. U n c l a s s i f i e d C o m p l i c a t e d  
Stamp.



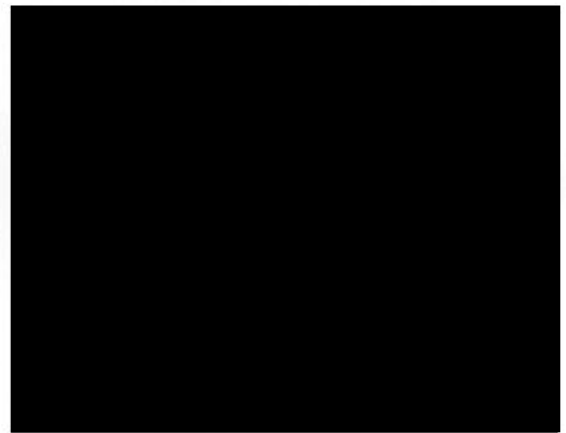
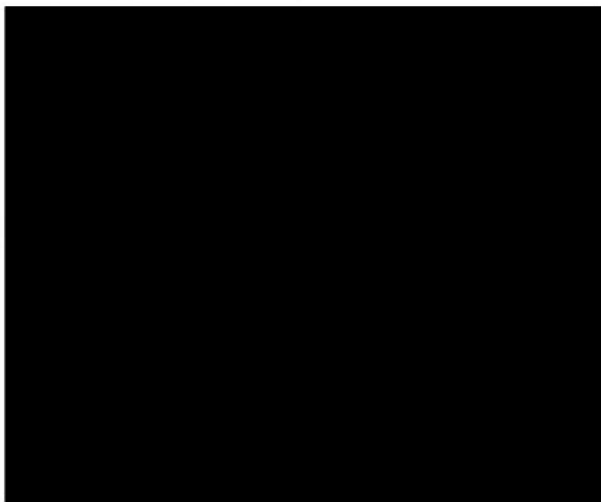
46. M o n g r e l . V e s s e l f o r m , r i m ,  
square base, and stamping  
normal for Kolomoki Com-  
plicated Stamp, incising and  
cut out portions not typical.

Plate XI



47. "Mongrel" Vessel form, squared base, and stamp (heavy) within range for Kolomoki Complicated Stamp. Heavy incised appliques at rim not typical.

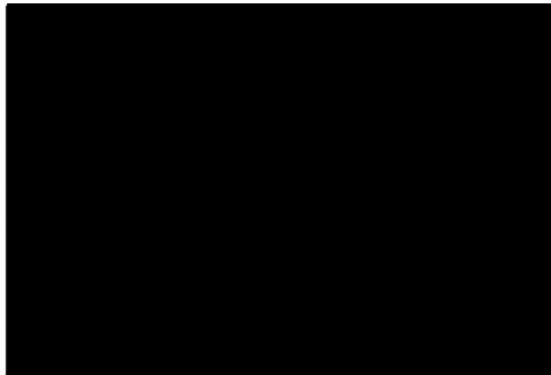
48. Unclassified. Incised appliques pendant from lip.



49. Weeden Island Incised.(?) Vessel shape and rim Mature Mississippi. Decoration Incised, punctated, and red painted

50. Solid red film on exterior of compressed globular bowl.

Plate XII



51. Open bowl, red paint in lip, band beneath rim, solid coat on interior.

52. Jar. Mature Mississippi shape and rim, notched added rim strip. Solid red film on exterior.

Plate XIII



53. Weeden Island Incised.(?) Unusual motif on open bowl.

54. Weeden Island Incised.(?) Some red paint, not confined in zones.

Plate XIV





