

# **Archaeological Investigations at the Catoma Creek Site (1MT209): A Cobbs Swamp Phase Site in East-Central Alabama**

Thomas M. Shelby, Karen L. Hawsey, and Sharon A. Freeman

The incipient Middle Woodland period of east-central Alabama is marked by a dramatic infusion of sand-tempered, check-stamped pottery analogous to the Cartersville and Booger Bottom pottery of the Georgia Piedmont. Both Cartersville and this local type, called Cobbs Swamp, are regional variations of the all-encompassing Deptford pottery of the Coastal Plain. Centered along the upper Alabama River valley and extending up the Coosa and Tallapoosa rivers, these Cobbs Swamp sites share a number of socioeconomic traits and material culture and are related to other Middle Woodland complexes defined elsewhere within the Coosa, Tallapoosa, Alabama, and Chattahoochee river valleys. All of these rivers served as major conduits for goods, ideas, and people between the Coastal Plain and the Piedmont Uplands of Alabama and Georgia.

To date, the most intensively studied Cobbs Swamp site is 1MT209, located along Catoma Creek, a major tributary of the Alabama River. Excavations have identified a variety of feature types, associations, and material culture, including structural remains. Although multiple components are present at this site, the most

significant occupation dates to the Cobbs Swamp and, to a lesser extent, Calloway phases of the Middle Woodland period. This chapter summarizes the results of several field seasons of work while incorporating and reevaluating what we know to date of this important Middle Woodland phase.

## **Previous Work on the Cobbs Swamp Phase**

The Cobbs Swamp phase was first defined by David Chase in the late 1960s, who noted that a number of sites he had studied or visited contained pottery belonging to the Deptford/Cartersville complex of western Georgia. Chase (1998:61) described one particularly large site, 1EE111, located on an alluvial terrace adjacent to an old river channel, now called Cobbs Swamp. This and a nearby site, 1EE112, both contained a number of eroded and exposed pits, then nothing more than piles of midden (Oakley and Watson 1977:293-298). According to Chase, based on his observations at these and other sites, “certain departures were noted in the styling of the pottery and associated artifacts, [and] a new name seemed

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Thomas M. Shelby, College of Architecture, Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA  
Karen L. Hawsey, Department of Anthropology, The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL  
Sharon A. Freeman, Tuscaloosa, AL

appropriate" (Chase 1998:61). Most of what we know about Cobbs Swamp is based on Chase's observations from his years of survey work and site testing and excavation in central Alabama and also by analogy with the Cartersville and Deptford cultures to the east in Georgia. Unfortunately, most of the sites that Chase worked on over the years have not been reported on, though he does nonetheless mention some of them in his published summaries and unpublished manuscripts.

Few sites have been excavated that possess significant Cobbs Swamp components, even though they are found at numerous sites throughout east-central Alabama; rather, they usually constitute one of many components found at multicomponent sites. The Deptford/Cobbs Swamp deposits found in the sub-mound midden and the north midden at the Durant Bend site illustrates this second point (Nance 1976). Prior to the 1MT209 investigations, three major Cobbs Swamp sites were excavated by the University of Alabama in the late 1960s before the impoundment of Jones Bluff Reservoir. The first was Site 1AU28, one of the most important sites excavated to date in the Alabama River valley. It contained a shell midden and stratified deposits spanning the Late Archaic through the Mississippian. At least 11 features, consisting of hearths and basin- and bell-shaped pits, contained Cobbs Swamp ceramics. In addition to Cobbs Swamp, ten of these features also contained Henderson ceramics as well. Six of the bell-shaped pits contained complicated-stamped pottery, and one of these also contained Dunlap Fabric Marked. Outside of the features, the upper portion of the site is a shell midden, but this appears to have been mixed by later occupants of the site (Dickens et al. 1968; Nielson 1970, 1976). The second site is

1AU32, also a shell midden, though here the deposits were much shallower and less stratified than at 1AU28. This is probably an early Cobbs Swamp site, as only one sherd of complicated-stamped pottery was recovered from the excavations. There were several features identified, consisting of eleven associated postholes, a pile of mussel shell with an intrusive cooking pit, a large, semi-ground greenstone hoe, and an artifact cluster of 52 sherds of a check-stamped, tetrapodal vessel, the upper two inches of the vessel being plain rather than stamped (Dickens et al. 1968). A third site is 1MT82 excavated by Chase in 1967 and later in 1971 as part of an I-65 highway salvage project. Seven of eleven non-post-hole features (midden-filled pits and rock hearths) at the site are affiliated with the Cobbs Swamp component, as are fifteen of thirty-three postholes identified. Although a large enough area was not excavated to delineate the post patterns, they nonetheless suggest that Cobbs Swamp structures were circular in nature with a central hearth. Simple-, checked-, and complicated-stamped and fabric-marked pottery was recovered, as were perforated potsherd disks, greenstone celt fragments, shell and animal bone, stone gorget fragments, and a variety of chipped and ground stone tools. Chase's interpretation of this well-stratified site is that of a Cobbs Swamp village stratigraphically overlain by a Calloway phase village (Chase n.d.).

Other sites with Cobbs Swamp components have been recorded, test pitted, and excavated to varying degrees, but more often than not this information is buried in the archaeological "gray" literature. These small testing or test-pitting programs have been important in terms of material culture studies, though without large scale excavation this data does not al-

low for intrasite research and their overall value is somewhat limited. Among these are projects at the Lower Antioch Branch site (1MT134) (Cottier 1979), the Catoma Creek sites of 1MT210 and 1MT214 (Price 1999; Shelby et al. 2007) and the Baggett Hill site (1MT211) (Hawsey and Shelby 2005), the Autauga Hill site (1AU247) (Betterton 1997; forthcoming Phase III report), and a number of sites investigated by Chase, including 1MT50, 1MT56/100, 1MT74, 1MT75/180, 1MT82/178/179, and 1MT99. The latter site is particularly interesting. Excavated in 1973, the site consisted of several shell dumps associated with Chase's Late Woodland Hope Hull phase and underlain by an undisturbed Early Archaic horizon. The burials and many of the items he recorded reflect Late Woodland ceremonialism, but one faintly outlined cache pit was distinctively different from the others. It contained the bases of three small tetrapodal vessels with the broken edges ground smooth and the vessel exteriors appearing "flaked." Accompanying these three "dishes" or "trays" were 28 water-smoothed chert and ferruginous siltstone pebbles, some of which had been perforated (both naturally and intentionally), a perfectly spherical cobble some 8 cm in diameter, two large nuggets of what Chase described as pure hematite ochre, and the bowl of a clay effigy pipe (Chase 1998:63).

Chase ascribes a Cobbs Swamp affiliation to this ceremonial cache, and it is continually noted in his writings as reflective of possible ceremonialism by Cobbs Swamp people. However, in his notes he does not mention a Cobbs Swamp component at this site, with the material culture, based on his analysis sheets, pointing to a Late Woodland occupation. Chase himself

admits that "since no other finds have been noted on this site for this period, the cache pit remains anomalous" (Chase n.d.). Although there is a lack of analogous caches in Cartersville contexts, it is entirely possible that the tetrapodal trays were picked up by later groups (Hope Hull) and reused. Discard and reuse is an important aspect of culture that is often overlooked when considering past human behavior. From our work at 1MT209, for instance, a large number of Dalton projectile points were found in Cobbs Swamp context, some of which had been modified and reused within the Woodland toolkit. Nonetheless, Chase appears to have been secure with his field interpretation of the cache, and to date it remains an important find.

Surveys that have been important for understanding site distribution in east-central Alabama include the Selma Area Archaeological Project of the early 1970s, directed by Roger Nance of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (Nance 1978; Jeter 1973, 1978), which included the identification of Cobbs Swamp components at the Durant Bend site (Nance 1976), the 1976 Jones Bluff Lake survey by the University of Alabama, Office of Archaeological Research (OAR) (Oakley and Watson 1977), and the surveys of the lower Coosa and Tallapoosa Rivers by Auburn University (Waselkov 1980, 1981) and the University of Alabama (Knight et al. 1984). During the latter project, Knight reported the presence of a type resembling Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped at the Sylacauga Water Works Site (1TA115). Smaller surveys have also contributed to the growing pool of data on overall Cobbs Swamp site distribution, though the quality of these reports, as well as the quality of artifact identification, varies greatly.

## Site Distribution

Based on current data, Cobbs Swamp sites range in size from small artifact scatters in the uplands, probably representing short forays and seasonal cycles of movement related to plant and animal resource procurement, to larger, semi-permanent villages or communities along the river and larger stream terraces. They are found along the upper Alabama River valley from Dallas County to the Tallapoosa and Coosa confluence above the city of Montgomery and up both of these river valleys into Elmore and Macon counties. Even though Cobbs Swamp shell middens and smaller artifact scatters are known along these rivers and adjacent oxbows, Chase (1998:61-63) suggests that the more extensive settlements are located up tributary streams like Catoma Creek. Based on the number of sites that dot the uplands and terraces along Catoma Creek, this seems to be a reasonable assertion, but the data is probably distorted due to the burial or destruction of sites by river meandering, deposition, and erosion. As a result of these processes, our understanding of site distribution is skewed.

In terms of size, one of the largest Cobbs Swamp sites is 1MT108 located on the south bank of the Alabama River and within a 180° horseshoe bend just east of I-65. It measures nearly 300 by 400 meters in size and consists of what the archaeologists who have revisited the site called a “massive” artifact scatter with shell midden and a reasonable degree of subsurface integrity (Alabama State Site Files). Chase recovered check- and complicated-stamped pottery, as well as greenstone, perforated and ground potsherd disks, and cord-marked and Calloway pottery from this site (Chase n.d.). Another large Cobbs Swamp site is 1EE323, measuring some

350 by 200 meters and located on an old channel meander of the Tallapoosa River. This site contains a deep midden and was considered by Sheldon (personal communication, March 2008) to be one of the most impressive Cobbs Swamp sites recorded, with very large check- and complicated-stamped potsherds littering the surface. The site also has Calloway phase and Historic Creek components.

Site 1MT209 is a medium-sized, semi-permanent settlement situated along a sandy secondary terrace within the floodplain of Catoma Creek. It overlooks a swampy relic channel meander or slough to the northeast. During the Middle Woodland, the water level would have been higher than it is now, and this channel meander would have been flooded. Although artifacts were noted along the length of the terrace and within the agricultural fields above the site, it was determined that the site itself was approximately 75 by 40 meters and centered at the northern and eastern edges of the terrace and near an ephemeral drainage.

## Excavations at 1MT209

The Catoma Creek investigations began in December 1975 with Chase's survey of a proposed sewer pipeline for the Montgomery Water Works (Chase 1975). In addition to 1MT209, he also considered two other sites, 1MT210 and 1MT214, to possess potentially high research value. The following January, Chase and Roger Nance of the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) began salvage excavations at these three sites.

Site 1MT209 was the largest of the three sites slated for salvage work. Here a total of 34 designated units, comprising full size excavation units, unit expansions, and

excavated balks, were excavated which resulted in the identification of 32 features and 18 postholes (Figures 1-2). These units were six feet square, separated by two-foot balks, and excavated in four- and six-inch arbitrary levels. Most of the UAB units were clustered together in a contiguous grid, except for eight outlying units (two of which were expansions of the same unit). In all, some 864 ft<sup>2</sup> (80 m<sup>2</sup>) were excavated by Nance. Almost all of the features identified from the UAB salvage excavations appeared to be associated with a Middle Woodland occupation of the site.

A total of 32 features were identified during the UAB salvage excavations. Only the largest features were labeled as such in the field and were simply designated as Pit A, Pit B, etc. Thus, the current feature numbers were assigned based on field notes and drawings by George Price, a graduate student at UAB, with additional feature numbers assigned by OAR during our excavations at the same site. The features identified during the UAB salvage excavations consists of five artifact scatters (UAB Features 12, 15, 16, 17, and 23), five pottery scatters or “pot busts” (UAB Features 5, 24, 26, 27, and 28), five hearths, fire basins, or other heat-related features (UAB Features 1, 4, 20, 22, and 29), seven rock clusters (UAB Features 7, 9, 18, 19, 21, 31, and 32), five pits (UAB Features 8, 11, 14, 25, and 30), a house midden (UAB Feature 3), and a locus of material that is interpreted to constitute a lithic workshop area (UAB Feature 6). Three of the numbered features appear to be natural (UAB Features 2, 10, and 13), and some features were not completely investigated or were simply not excavated. A loosely defined midden zone was noted throughout the site, and 18 postholes were identified, thirteen of which are related to a structure.

By far the most important discovery was of the remains of a Middle Woodland, Cobbs Swamp phase dwelling and its associated features (UAB Features 3, 4, 24, 26, 31, and 32 and Postholes 6-18) which represent the house's posts, floor, kitchen/house midden, central hearth, a circular area of small pebbles, and artifact concentrations of pottery and rock. The discovery of this structure was announced in a number of local newspapers, but otherwise the results of the UAB salvage excavations remained unpublished, though in 1999 UAB graduate student George D. Price (1999) analyzed some of the material from 1MT209 and 1MT210 for his master's thesis.

The Office of Archaeological Research at the University of Alabama became involved with the Catoma Creek work during a 2004 survey for a proposed new sewer pipeline, which was planned to largely parallel the course of the pipeline built in 1976 and surveyed by Chase. Three sites underwent archaeological testing (1MT209, 1MT211, and 1MT214), but only 1MT209 proved to retain significant archaeological deposits and intact features (Shelby 2005).

Between June and September of 2006, OAR conducted extensive excavations at 1MT209 in anticipation of the construction of the new sewer pipeline, and the 1976 UAB excavations were documented in an OAR report of investigations (Shelby et al. 2007). This project entailed the excavation of four blocks of contiguous 2 m<sup>2</sup> units (Blocks A, B, C, and D) and two outlying excavation units. In all, 153 m<sup>2</sup> were excavated by OAR. Blocks B and C were the largest and, consequently, the most productive in terms of artifact recovery and feature identification.

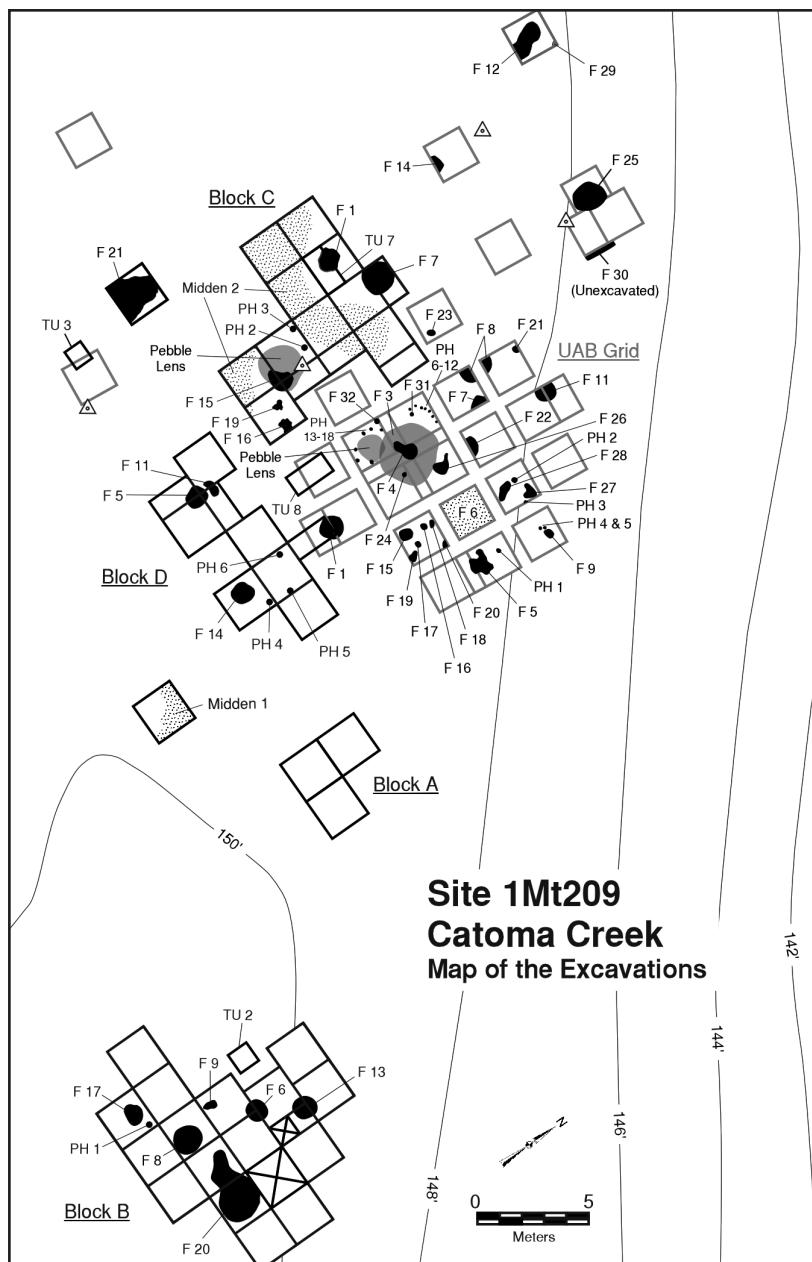


Figure 1. Map of the 1MT209 Catoma Creek excavations. Small test units excavated by OAR in 2005 are labeled with the TU prefix. Units excavated by OAR in 2006 are contiguous and labeled by block. The grid of non-contiguous units (separated by balks) excavated by UAB in 1976 are canted several degrees in relation to the OAR blocks. Note: for greater map clarity and simplicity, natural features and disturbed or unidentified features have been omitted.

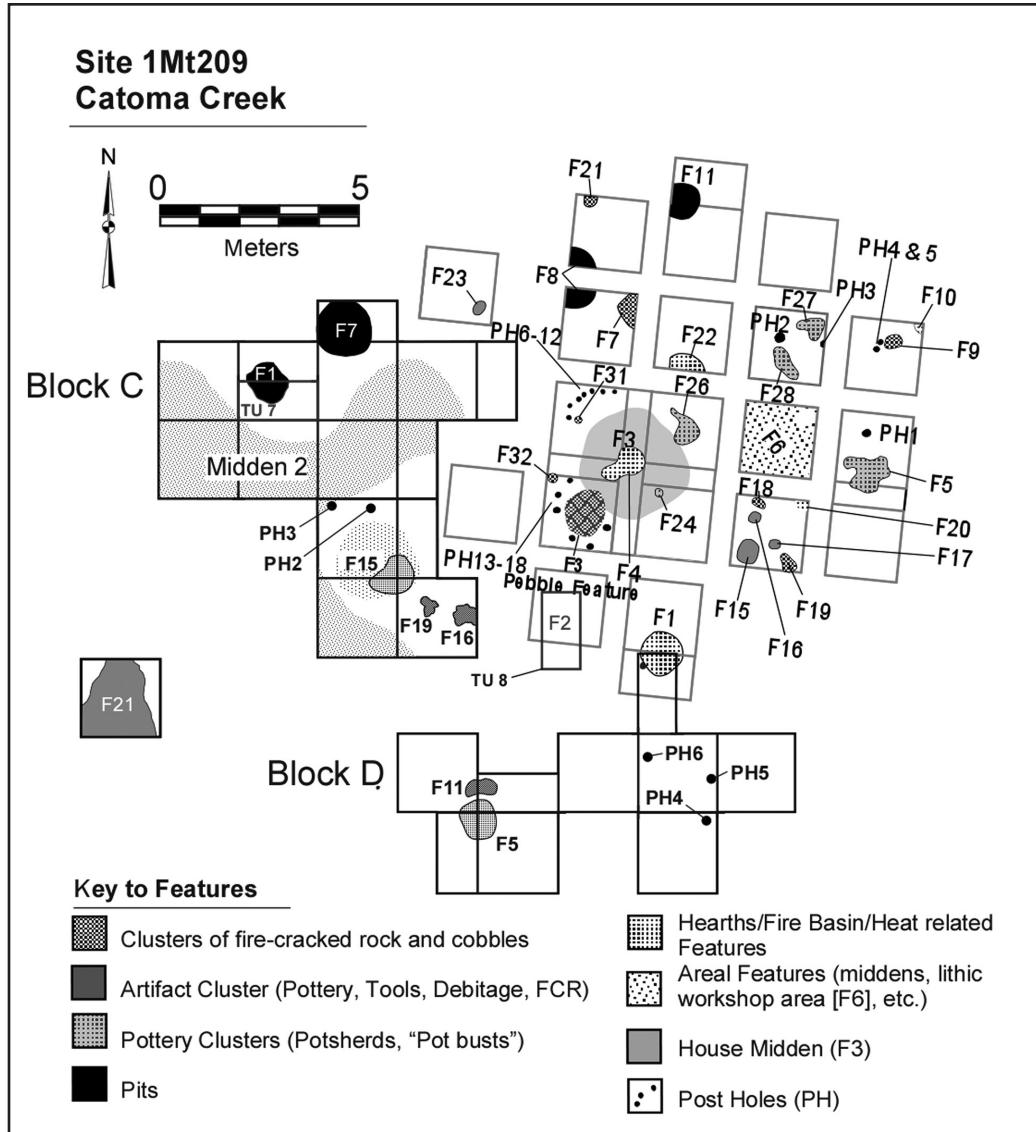


Figure 2. Map of the 1MT209 Catoma Creek excavations, detail of the central portion of the site.

In most places the plowzone (PZ or Stratum A) contained a high density of cultural material, along with a narrow zone of artifacts retrieved from the upper levels of the sub-plowzone (Stratum B) deposits, though artifacts were recovered from the deeper levels of Stratum B and outside of sealed contexts such as features. Few arti-

facts were recovered from the underlying Strata C or D. Overall the sub-plowzone deposits appear well stratified and, for the most part, have maintained a reasonable degree of integrity (Figure 3). A geoarchaeological study of the site indicates that this terrace has likely been stable since the mid-Holocene, and artifact burial

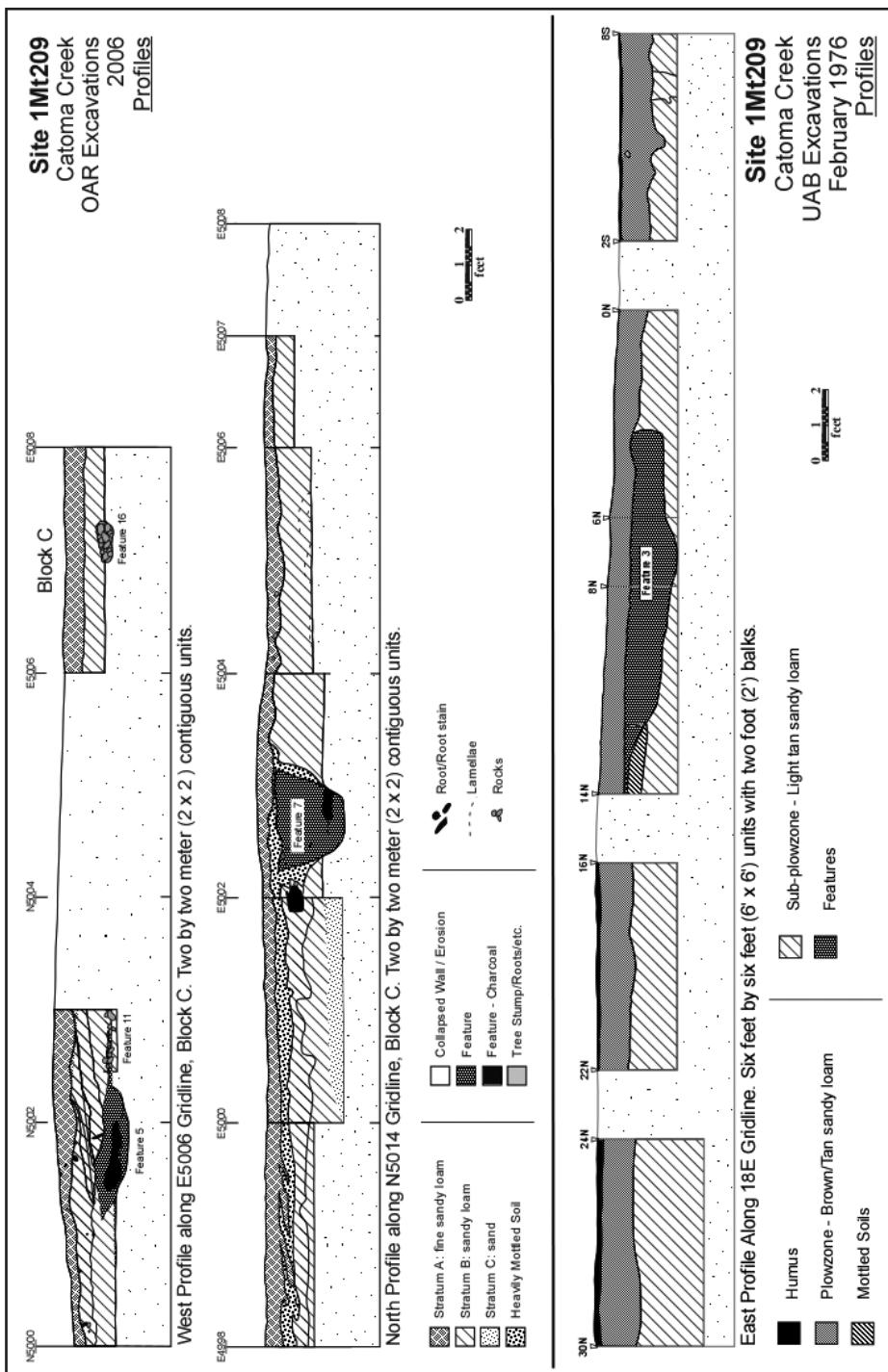


Figure 3. 1MT209 Catoma Creek, representative stratigraphy and profiles: west profile across Block C and Block D with Features 5, 11, and 16 (OAR 2006), north profile across Block C with Feature 7, and an east profile along the UAB (1976) grid with UAB Feature 3.

has largely been a consequence of the production and accumulation of the A Horizon and to a lesser extent alluvial and eolian deposition.

A total of twenty-one features were identified and investigated by the OAR field project (numbered 1 through 21). Features 20 and 21 are here considered artifact clusters. Four features (3, 10, 12, and 18) were later determined to be natural (i.e. stump, tap root, or root burns). The remaining features, save for one, are prehistoric. Four of these features (5, 6, 13, and 15) are interpreted as hearths. Three features appear to be trash pits (1, 7, and 8), seven were clusters of rock, cobbles, and fire-cracked rock (4, 9, 11, 13, 16, 17, and 19), and one feature (14) appears to have been a disturbed hearth or small pit. Feature 2 is a backfilled UAB unit—Unit 1, to be exact. Two “midden” deposits (Midden 1 and Midden 2), a term used loosely here, were noted, as were six possible postholes.

An integral part of the research design was the incorporation of the unpublished work undertaken by Nance in 1976. This material was reanalyzed and the two excavation grids were merged, greatly enhancing the research value of the site. Thus, this discussion of the features and feature associations identified at the site includes those found during the UAB work, with its features designated by the prefix UAB.

### Feature Types

In almost all cases features such as hearths and pits were identified at the interface between Stratums A and B (PZ and sub-PZ), suggesting that these features have been truncated from past plowing. The feature types present at 1MT209 and their associated artifacts suggests a range of activities reflective of semi-sedentary Middle Woodland peoples. The 53 features

at the site were categorized into seven different groups based upon their overall morphology, presumed function, and associated artifacts.

The first group consists of hearths, fire basins, earth ovens, clusters of rock, and other heating related features, and is comprised of Features 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, and 19, and UAB Features 1, 4, 7, 9, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 31, and 32. Although similar in morphology to pits, hearths were classified as such based upon their relatively shallow depth, loose, granular fill containing a moderate to high density of fire-cracked rock, fired clay or oxidized soil, some calcined bone, and a relatively low density of artifacts, such as debitage and pottery, in comparison to frequencies within refuse pits. Of the eight hearths identified, almost all were circular in plan and basin shaped in profile. However, subtle differences in morphology could be noted. UAB Feature 1 was lined with rocks along its bottom and may be the remains of an earth oven. Feature 15 was lined and filled almost entirely with small river-worn pebbles and contained a number of large pieces of a broken, heavily sooted Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped vessel. Feature 13 was the only prepared hearth noted, with distinct layers of charcoal, rock, and clay. Much of the rock from this feature was identified as weathered schist, considered a non-local material but one that could be procured in random locales within the Alabama River valley where it has been deposited with alluvium over the millenia. UAB Feature 4, located at the center of the house structure, appears to have been a fire basin based on its size and the fact that it was filled with cobbles, rocks, and a few artifacts. Two hearths containing lenses of charcoal each returned a <sup>14</sup>C date. Feature 5 was a shallow, ovoid, basin-shaped

hearth containing Cobbs Swamp check-and complicated-stamped types and Dunlap Fabric Marked sherds. An associated radiocarbon date had a calibration curve intercept of cal A.D. 240. Feature 6, similar in morphology to Feature 5 and only slightly deeper, contained little pottery, all of which was plain, and six projectile points—four of the Expanded Stemmed Cluster, one a Residual Stemmed-Woodland, and one a Late Archaic type. A carbon sample from Feature 6 returned a radiocarbon date with a calibration curve intercept of cal A.D. 540. It should also be noted here that Feature 6 was located in Block B, which on the whole did not yield much Cobbs Swamp pottery; rather, much of it was thin, plain, and grit tempered and not assignable to a particular type (e.g., Calloway). Rock cluster features consisted of clusters of heated quartzite cobbles and fire-cracked rock that probably represent a hearth cleaning episode and are believed to have been deposited in a single event. In some cases these clusters of rocks appear to be associated with nearby hearths; however, this is merely based on proximity and approximate stratigraphic position.

The second group consists of post-holes, which are defined here as circular or somewhat circular dark stains that were generally shallow but whose morphology did not suggest a natural stain from a root or rodent burrow.

The third group consists of seven pits including Features 1, 7, 8, and UAB Features 8, 11, 25, and 30. Three of these (Features 7, 8, and UAB 25) were quite large, and one appears to have been somewhat bell shaped (Feature 8). The other two may have been configured in a similar manner but have since been truncated by plowing. These pits would have begun as sealable storage pits for seeds or nuts, and after

several episodes of use or whenever they could no longer be effectively sealed, they would be reused for trash or smudge pits. Some of the other smaller pits were probably purposefully dug refuse pits, or like Feature 1, may have served in a secondary function as a fire basin or hearth. Many of the pits and hearths at 1MT209 appear similar in many respects, but pits are generally deeper and have lower densities of fire-cracked rock and fired clay and much higher densities of artifacts and midden refuse as compared to features categorized as hearths. Fire-cracked rock, charcoal, and occasionally fired clay are present in pits, and they are interpreted as being deposited, along with midden refuse, from hearth cleanings and rejuvenation. Three of the pits are associated with four <sup>14</sup>C dates. Feature 1 contained a large amount of debitage and lithics, including a greenstone celт fragment, steatite, and a Swan Lake projectile point that had been reworked into an awl or perforator, a complicated stamped centrally perforated and ground potsherd disk, fire-cracked rock and fired clay, a fair amount of animal bone (mostly deer), and a minimum of seven ceramic vessels represented Cobbs Swamp simple-, check-, and complicated-stamped types, Dunlap Fabric Marked, and a number of large pieces of a finely made, grit and mica-tempered, Calloway Plain jar. A carbon sample from Feature 1 returned a radiocarbon date with a calibration curve intercept of cal A.D. 430. Feature 7 was the largest feature excavated by OAR at 1MT209. It was a large trash pit containing a large volume of animal bone (fish, small-large mammal), mussel shell, debitage and other lithics, including Bakers Creek, Hamilton, Swan Lake, Coosa, and Coosa Notched projectile points, some daub, fire-cracked rock, steatite vessel sherds, and a minimum of eleven ce-

ramic vessels represented which included Calloway Plain, Cobbs Swamp check- and complicated-stamped types, Dunlap Fabric Marked, and Furrs Cord Marked, as well as sand- and grit-tempered plain types. Two <sup>14</sup>C assays from Feature 7 yielded multiple intercept dates, the first being cal A.D. 540, and the remainder cal A.D. 440, 490, and 520. Finally, Feature 8, which contained mostly grit-tempered plain pottery, one sherd each of Cobbs Swamp Simple Stamped and Furrs Cord Marked, a greenstone celt fragment, a large hammerstone/anvil, a bipolar core, and a Dalton, Pickwick, and two Swan Lake projectile points, was associated with multiple intercept dates of cal A.D. 450, 460, 480, and 530.

The fourth group encompasses discrete clusters of artifacts noted during the excavations that lacked any characteristics of a pit or hearth. There were twelve artifact clusters identified at 1MT209, including several “pot busts” which are defined as clusters where the majority of the material consists largely of pieces of a single broken pottery vessel. Features 20 and 21 were designated as artifact clusters after the close of excavations, and both consist of dense layers of fire-cracked rock, debitage, chipped stone tools, and some pottery though in much smaller frequencies. UAB Features 15, 16, and 17 are clusters of potsherds associated with some chipped stone tools and other artifacts, but unfortunately, this material could not be separated within the UAB collection. UAB Feature 23 consists of a mano and metate. The “pot busts” are found in UAB Features 5, 12, 24, 26, and 27. UAB Feature 5 contained a large portion of a Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped vessel. It was a jar, some 41 cm tall with a flared rim and podal supports, the upper portion of which was plain. Feature 12 contained portions of two ves-

sels—classified as Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped and Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped specimens. Both appear to have been jars. Feature 24 is comprised of portions of a Dunlap Fabric Marked vessel and a sand-tempered plain vessel, and Feature 26 contained the remains of two Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped vessels. Feature 27 contained portions of three vessels—two are Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped and one is a Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped vessel.

The fifth group encompasses midden deposits; these were numbered sequentially as M1, M2, and so forth. The term “midden” is used loosely in these contexts, and though not necessarily “black and greasy” it nonetheless refers to zones of extremely high artifact density of varying sizes and depths. Midden 1 perhaps best approaches the definition of a midden, yielding high frequencies of debitage, chipped and ground stone tools, and large fragments of pottery. It was noted in a single outlying unit which, due to time constraints, could not be expanded. Midden 2 refers to a distinct zone of refuse accumulated from repeated, long term occupation within the area of Block C that appears to surround Features 1 and 15. This midden corresponds with the midden zones observed by the UAB archaeologists throughout their excavation grid but especially evident in the vicinity of the house structure. UAB Feature 3 corresponds to the house midden, measuring some 8 feet in diameter and depressed towards the center. This midden is discussed in more detail under Feature Association 4.

### Feature Associations

At least four feature associations could be discerned in the 1MT209 data. Perhaps the most obvious of these is Feature 5 and

Feature 11 in Block D, a hearth and a cluster of cobbles and fire-cracked rock, respectively. The second feature association consists of Features 14 and Postholes 4, 5, and 6, though this association is somewhat tenuous.

Feature Association Three consists of Features 15, 16, and 19 and Postholes 2 and 3. Feature 15 is a shallow, basin-shaped hearth that was lined and filled with small, stream worn pebbles, many of which have been heated. The most significant artifacts recovered from this feature consist of fragments of a heavily sooted and worn Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped vessel. Other materials, such as debitage, charcoal, fire-cracked rock, bone, shell, fired clay, as well as other pottery types such as Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped and Dunlap Fabric Marked, were also recovered in Feature 15. The large volume of pebbles noted also extended from the feature to the west and north in a shallow zone partially suspended in the lower part of the plowzone and the upper part of Stratum B and may represent hearth sweepings and thus an activity floor. If this interpretation is correct, then Features 16 and 19, both clusters of heated quartzite cobbles, are probably associated with this hearth and represent either hearth cleanings or rocks that were used for stone boiling. Postholes 2 and 3 could possibly be the remnants of an associated house structure.

Feature Association Four consists of what UAB archaeologists referred to as a pit house and Pit A (Figures 4-5). It is comprised of thirteen postholes (Postholes 6-18), circular in plan and measuring some 2-2 ½ inches in diameter, that form a semi-circular pattern around a floor littered with household midden refuse (UAB Feature 3) and a pebble concentration. This latter feature, dubbed the “pebble patio” in the

UAB field notes, consists of a dense layer of small stream-worn pebbles located within the area of Postholes 13-18 and to the southwest of the house midden. Small pieces of daub were also recovered. This midden, containing dense quantities of charcoal, fire-cracked rock, bone (fish, small-large mammal), mussel shells, pottery, chipped and ground stone tools, and debitage, was circular in plan, some 8 feet in diameter, and depressed towards the central hearth or fire basin (UAB Feature 4) by approximately 13 inches (Figure 6). The midden was described as darker in color or towards the center and lighter along the periphery, and it contained pottery sherds representing a minimum of 25 ceramic vessels. In addition to grit- and sand-tempered plain types, the midden contained diagnostic ceramics including Adams Plain, Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped, Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped, Cobbs Swamp Simple Stamped, Dunlap Fabric Marked, Furrs Cord Marked, and some unidentified fabric- and cord-marked sherds. The chipped stone tools from the house midden comprise some five biface fragments, six bifaces, one core, one hafted drill, one microolith, one retouched flake, four preforms, two tested cobbles, and eleven projectile points. These points include a Candy Creek, a Coosa Notched, a Greeneville, a Hamilton, three Swan Lakes, two Flint Creeks, and two residual stemmed-Archaic types. The groundstone tools include two hammerstones, a metate fragment, a steatite sherd, and an abrader. A <sup>14</sup>C sample obtained from the midden and submitted for radiometric dating by George Price (1999) returned a calibration curve intercept of cal A.D. 540 (see Table 1).

The central hearth, containing nearly 30 lbs of cobbles and fire-cracked rock, had an approximate diameter of 2 ½ feet.



**Site 1Mt209**  
Catoma Creek  
UAB Excavations  
February 1976  
Feature 3 &  
Feature 4

Feature 3 (*Pit House Floor and Midden*) after excavation.  
Feature 4 (*central hearth*) at center.  
General view to the northwest.



Feature 4 (*central hearth*)  
during excavation.  
General view to the northeast.



Feature 3 (*Pit House Floor and Midden*) and Feature 4  
(*central hearth*) after  
excavation.  
General view to the northwest.

Figure 4. Photographs of successive excavation stages of UAB Feature 3 (pit house floor and midden) and UAB Feature 4 (central hearth) (UAB 1976).

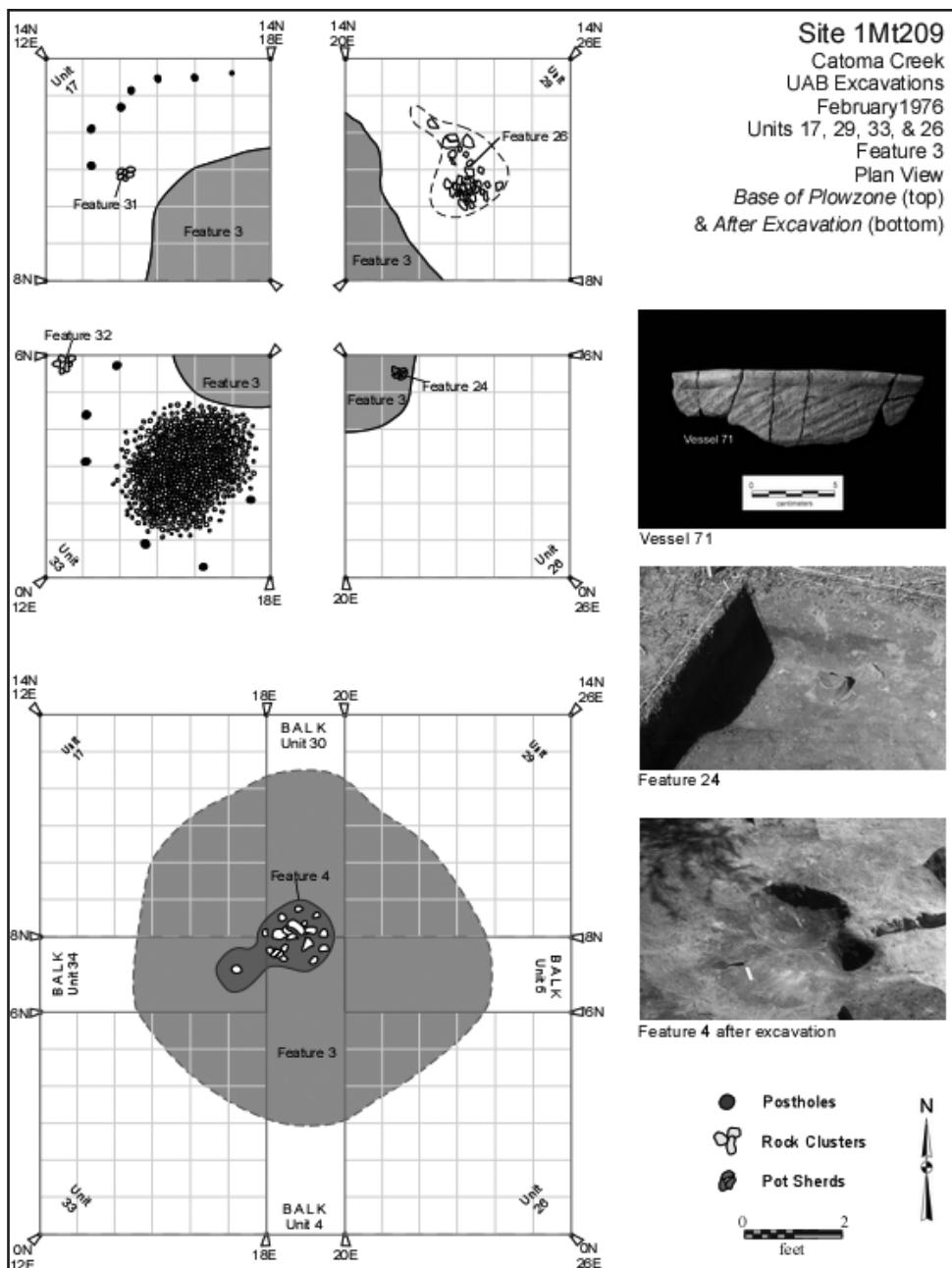


Figure 5. Plan views of UAB Feature 3 (pit house floor and midden) at the base of the plowzone prior to excavation, with UAB Features 24, 26, 31, and 32 and Post Holes 6 through 18, and following complete excavation (including balks) with UAB Feature 4 (central hearth); photographs of Feature 24, a “pot bust” of a Dunlap Fabric Marked vessel (Vessel 71) pedestalled and adjacent UAB Feature 3; and a photograph of UAB Feature 4 (central hearth) following complete excavation.

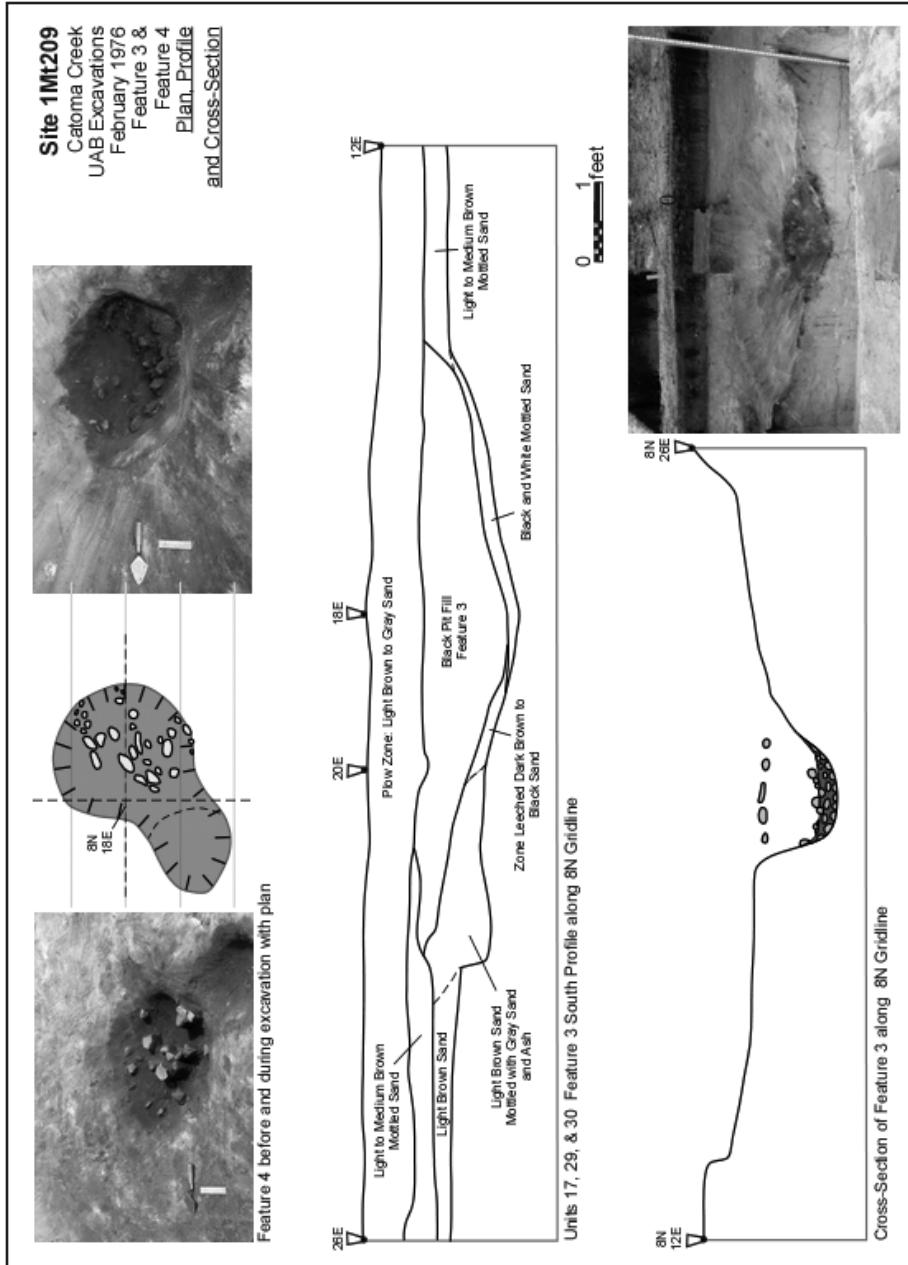


Figure 6. Plan view and photographs of UAB Feature 4 (central hearth) during and after excavation; stratigraphy of UAB Features 3 and 4 through a south profile; and cross-section of UAB Features 3 and 4 following excavation with photograph.

Table 1. Tabular Summary of UAB Feature 3 and UAB Feature 4 Artifacts.

<i>UAB FEATURE 3</i>		<i>Category or Cultural Type</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
Adams Plain		body		4	37.2
Cobbs Swamp	Check Stamped	body		77	592.8
		rim		7	96.6
		refitted body and rim		7	122.3
Cobbs Swamp	Complicated Stamped	body		17	91.8
		rim		3	24.5
Cobbs Swamp	Simple Stamped	body		3	16.9
Dunlap Fabric	Marked	body		2	24.8
Eroded Grit	Tempered	body		9	31.6
Furr's Cord	Marked	body		2	30.1
Grit Tempered	Plain	body		53	358.3
		rim		1	8.6
		rim, notched		2	10.1
Sand Tempered	Plain	body		86	403.2
		rim		5	18.4
UID eroded	Decorated	rim, flaring		1	14.6
Unidentified	Cord Marked	body, grit tempered		1	4.2
Unidentified	Fabric Marked	body		16	46.3
		body		1	3.3
		body		1	1.5
	Sherdlets				127.6

Table 1. Continued.

<i>Category or Cultural Type</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
<b>Debitage</b>	Coastal Plain Chert	1	0.7
	Knox Chert	15	4.5
	Quartzite	346	282.7
	Tallahatta Sandstone	4	0.6
	Biface Fragments	5	11.1
	Bifaces	6	38.5
	Core	1	58.3
	hafted Drill, recycled	1	3.8
	Microlith	1	1
	Preforms	4	59.8
<b>Chipped Stone Tools</b>	PPK, Candy Creek	1	3.4
	PPK, Coosa Notched	1	5.5
	PPK, Flint Creek	2	12.8
	PPK, Greenville	1	4
	PPK, Hamilton	1	2.6
	PPK, Swan Lake	3	15.1
	PPK, Residual Stemmed-Archaic	2	9.2
	Retouched Flake	1	4.9
	Tested Core	2	45
	Unidentified Chipped Stone Tools	9	69.9
<b>Groundstone</b>	Hammerstone	2	521.7
	Metate Fragment	1	34.9
	Abrader	1	100.7
	Steatite	1	20.1

Lithics

Table 1. Continued.

<i>Category or Cultural Type</i>	<i>Remarks</i>	<i>Count</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>
Bone		1843.7	
Shell		113.1	
Charcoal		79.1	
Daub		4.8	
Fire-Cracked Rock		906	
Fired Clay		19.3	
Discarded Rocks		153	
Rocks (Bulk)		200	
Unmodified Quartzite Cobble/Pebble		815.3	
Unmodified Rock		27.2	
<i>UAB FEATURE 4</i>			
Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped	body	7	27
Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped	body	1	27.3
Dunlap Fabric Marked	body	1	5.7
Grit Tempered Plain	body	4	14.4
Sand Tempered Plain	body	2	9.9
Sherdlets		4.4	
Lithic			
Debitage	Quartzite Tallahatta Sandstone	6 1	4.3 0.1
Bone			24.6
Shell			3.5
Other	Bulk Rock (includes fire-cracked rock, unmodified rock, and quartz cobbles/pebbles)		13.78 kg

The fill was described as black, greasy midden that was darker than the overlying house midden, and extended to a depth of one foot. A smaller pit adjacent to the hearth is interpreted as evidence of a central roof support. Two clusters of heated quartzite cobbles and fire-cracked rock (UAB Features 31 and 32) were in association. UAB Feature 31 was located to the west of the presumed house wall, and UAB Feature 32 was found within the post pattern to the northwest of the house midden. Two discrete clusters of pottery, or “pot busts,” were located within and adjacent to the house midden. UAB Feature 24 was comprised of portions of a Dunlap Fabric Marked vessel and a sand-tempered plain vessel, and UAB Feature 26 was comprised of portions of two Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped vessels.

In sum, this feature association is interpreted as the remains of a Middle Woodland, Cobbs Swamp dwelling. It was somewhat circular to slightly ovate, enclosing a sloped floor littered with house midden refuse that encircled a central hearth. No postholes were noted along the eastern side of the dwelling, though this may be that they were not recognized as such or did not survive, even though they would have been anticipated by the excavators. The relatively small posts, along with the larger central post support, would have supported a light wooden superstructure, possibly a cabana type structure and maybe even partially open, suggesting a warmer weather shelter. Interpreting the pebble concentration, however, is problematic, but it was likely connected to heat and/or cooking activities. The architectural signatures evidenced from Feature Associations 3 and 4, as well as the other postholes at the site that do not form a distinct pattern, suggest a Middle Woodland semi-permanent settlement, and

a range of activities can be discerned based on artifact patterning across the site, with specific areas attributed to particular tasks.

### Structural Remains

The house at 1MT209 is unique in that it is thought to be the first known recorded complete dwelling from east-central Alabama. At the time of its discovery, Nance was quoted in the newspapers as stating that it was the first Deptford house found in Alabama, and few dwellings have been documented for the Early and Middle Woodland periods in the Southeast. In northwestern Alabama, a circular post pattern approximately 12 feet in diameter and encircling a central hearth was found at the Copena settlement of Wright Village (1LU65) (Walhall 1980). In the northeastern part of Alabama, excavations at the Dry Creek site (1CA52) revealed four possible semicircular posthole alignments, ranging in size from 2.2 to 7.2 m across and in association with Cartersville Check Stamped pottery. They were interpreted as warm weather shelters (Little et al. 1997). Elsewhere in the Southeast, some of the earliest dwellings have been found along the Georgia coast and Piedmont. Along the coast on Cumberland Island, Milanich (1973a) excavated a large Deptford house at Table Point, and in the Piedmont, circular structures were documented at 9BR3 (Bowen 1980), the Two Run Creek site (Wauchope 1966), and the Kellogg site (Caldwell 1950), with dates ranging from 500 B.C. to A.D. 300. Sites with multiple dwellings, dating from late Early Woodland to Middle Woodland, are also documented in Georgia at the Pumpkin Pile site (9Po27) (Ledbetter 1992) and the Six Flags site (9Fu14) (Kelly 1973; Kelly and Meir 1969). Finally, two oval structures in association with triangular points and

check-stamped and fabric-marked pottery are reported from Cane Island (9PM209) located in far northeastern Georgia. Interestingly, traces of squash and maize were noted at this latter site (Wood and Bowen 1995).

Based on the 1MT209 data, coupled with Chase's (n.d.) observations on post-hole segments uncovered at 1MT82 and by analogy with similar groups in neighboring regions, Cobbs Swamp houses appear to be small and circular, often with a central hearth. Architectural signatures such as postholes are also in evidence at other reported Cobbs Swamp and Cartersville-Deptford sites in the region, but their associations and patterns are too incomplete to draw any meaningful conclusions.

### Chronology

Chase (n.d.), when he originally defined the Cobbs Swamp Phase, estimated a temporal range of 300 B.C. to A.D. 200, and Walthall (1980:175) suggested a similar range of 200 B.C. to A.D. 300. Jenkins and Sheldon (2014) suggest a date range of 100 B.C. to A.D. 650. However, until Price's (1999) thesis research and this work, no radiocarbon dates were available. Rather, the phase was only tentatively dated by associations with other artifacts, namely Alexander and Calloway pottery, and stratigraphic position beneath Calloway and Henderson deposits for which we do have radiocarbon dates. These relationships position Cobbs Swamp within the Early to Middle Woodland time frame (Table 2).

For his thesis, Price submitted one sample for radiometric dating from UAB Feature 3, the house midden, which returned a calibration curve intercept of cal A.D. 540. Six <sup>14</sup>C assays submitted by the OAR from sealed contexts at 1MT209

yielded dates tightly clustered within the Middle Woodland period, the earliest intercept being cal A.D. 240 for Feature 5; the latest cal A.D. 540 for Features 6 and 7. Six of these seven dates fall within a 100 year time span of cal A.D. 440 to 540.

### Ceramics

Cobbs Swamp pottery is considered by some to be the central Alabama expression of Deptford (i.e., Cartersville), though morphologically it is much closer to the Cartersville pottery of the upper Coosa River valley and northern Georgia than the classic Deptford wares of the Coastal Plain. Knight and Mistovich (1984:217-218) have noted that Deptford, which specifically refers to the Early to Middle Woodland culture that used sand-tempered, check-stamped pottery and developed along the Atlantic coast of Georgia and the Gulf Coast of northwest Florida, has come to be used as a generic term to describe Middle Woodland check-stamped pottery, which is found throughout the Piedmont and Valley and Ridge as well as the Coastal Plain. This emphasis on ceramic complexes has led to an oversimplified and misleading understanding of Middle Woodland cultures in the Southeast, as other cultural traits and material culture are just as important. Although some have posited that the similarities between Cartersville and Cobbs Swamp assemblages are likely due to their common origin among coastal Deptford groups and their subsequent and contemporaneous diffusion into the interior regions (Walthall 1980:175), Wauchope (1966), in his groundbreaking survey of northern Georgia, essentially equated Cartersville and Booger Bottom with Deptford, while Caldwell (1957, 1958), based on his work in the Allatoona Reservoir, viewed the differences between Cartersville and

Table 2. Table of Major Ceramic Types Within Selected Features and Associated Radiocarbon Dates.

Feature	C14 Date (BP)	Dunlap Fabric Marked	Cobbs Swamp Simple Stamped	Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped	Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped	Plain <sup>1</sup>	Calloway Plain
5	1780±40	1	-	13	2	12	-
1	1600±40	1	1	9	3	43	29
7	1580±40	2	-	26	11	79	3
8	1570±40	-	1	-	-	167	-
UAB 3 <sup>2</sup>	1550±60	10	3	171	21	157	-
6	1550±40	-	-	-	-	14	-
7A <sup>3</sup>	1540±40	-	-	6	1	8	-
15	-	1	-	9	30	28	-
UAB 25	-	-	-	31	5	114	5
UAB 11	-	1	-	38	7	70	1
UAB 8	-	1	-	1	11	3	-

<sup>1</sup> This category includes both sand, coarse sand, and crushed quartzite (grit) temper.<sup>2</sup> UAB Feature 3 (house midden) also includes UAB Feature 4 (central hearth) and UAB Features 24 and 26, both pottery clusters within the house midden.<sup>3</sup> Feature 7A was a distinct ashy deposit within Feature 7 (pit) that was later determined through vessel analysis (i.e. refits) to have been contemporaneous.

Deptford as significant. Nonetheless, the “splitting” of Deptford into region-specific complexes, such as Booger Bottom, Cobbs Swamp, McLeod, Wakulla, and Cleveland, reinforces the notion that these phases are “related to the classical core tradition but sufficiently removed in time and space or associated material culture to justify the need for separate identification in publications (Chase n.d.).” Given the morphological similarities of the pottery, other cultural traits, and the riverine connection between the Georgia Piedmont and the Alabama River, Cobbs Swamp is best considered a local example of Cartersville, rather than Deptford.

Cobbs Swamp pottery consists of sand- and sand/coarse sand/crushed quartzite (i.e., grit)-tempered, plain and simple-, check-, and complicated-stamped pottery. Vessel form is consistently a conoidal jar formed by the coiling method, usually with podal supports, though flat bases are known. Surface treatment can be either from rim to base or from shoulder to base. Vessel rims are straight to slightly flaring, and lips are usually flattened but are sometimes rounded or beveled (Caldwell and Waring 1939a:8). Combinations of simple, check, and complicated stamping on the same vessel are known from 1MT82 and 1MT108 (Chase n.d.) (Table 3).

A number of ceramic types were identified in the 1MT209 collection, ranging from the fiber-tempered Millbrook Plain, Late Gulf Formation/Early Woodland Alexander types such as Alexander Incised and Alexander Punctated, a few Weeden Island types such as Carabelle Punctated and Santa Rosa Punctated, to the Late Woodland Adams Plain. The vast majority of the types, though, date to the Middle Woodland period, and the Cobbs Swamp series predominates, with simple-, check-,

and complicated-stamped sherds; other types include Dunlap Fabric Marked, Furrs Cord Marked, Tensaw Stamped, and the grit and mica-tempered Calloway Plain. In addition to the identification of twelve formal and twelve informal types, a vessel analysis was undertaken for the cultural features at 1MT209.

Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped was the most common formal type identified at 1MT209, representing 23 percent of the total ceramic assemblage. This decoration/surface treatment consists of deeply impressed, small to medium checks, resembling a sloppily to carefully applied grid pattern. Linear check stamping occurs in much less frequency than general and bold check stamping, and very fine checks are also known. Unfortunately, sorting out these check-stamped categories has not proven to be analytically useful and research indicates the variations in stamping are of little chronological value (Milanich 1973b:112).

There is some debate as to whether check stamping is a surface texturing treatment or a decoration. Although check stamping applied by a carved paddle against an interior anvil did serve to strengthen the vessel, the application of the pattern on the podals and at contrived junctures and along rims indicates some degree of aesthetic awareness. Interestingly, few check-stamped sherds were recovered from Block B, with none from Block B features. Rather, check-stamped pottery was concentrated in Blocks A, C, and D and the UAB units, especially in and around the pit house (Figures 7-8). The check-stamped vessel forms from the 1MT209 generally took the form of large, medium-to-thick walled, flared rim, conoidal jars, most with tetrapodal supports, although some bowls were suggested by certain rims.

Table 3. Tabular Summary of Surface Treatment by Temper and Vessel Elements for 1MT209 Ceramics.

<i>Surface Treatment</i>	<i>Type</i>	<i>Body</i>	<i>Base</i>	<i>Podal</i>	<i>Perforated Discs</i>	<i>Rim</i>	<i>Total</i>
Plain	Adams Plain	4	--	--	--	1	5
	Calloway Plain	57	--	--	--	8	65
	Millbrook Plain	31	--	--	--	2	33
	Sand tempered	4256	20	18	7	202	4503
	Grit tempered	1684	13	--	--	86	1783
	<i>Subtotal</i>	6032	33	18	7	299	6389
Incised	Alexander Incised	8	--	--	--	1	9
	<i>Subtotal</i>	8	--	--	--	1	9
	Alexander Punctated	--	--	--	--	1	1
Punctated	Santa Rosa Punctated	2	--	--	--	1	3
	UID Sand tempered	9	--	--	--	--	9
	<i>Subtotal</i>	11	--	--	--	2	13
	Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped	2534	32	26	--	134	2726
Check Stamped	<i>Subtotal</i>	2534	32	26	--	134	2726
	Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped	715	--	--	1	35	751
	<i>Subtotal</i>	715	--	--	1	35	751
Complicated Stamped	Cobbs Swamp Simple Stamped	50	--	--	--	2	52
	<i>Subtotal</i>	50	--	--	--	2	52
	Rocker Stamped	1	--	--	--	--	1
Rocker Stamped	Tensaw Creek Stamped	1	--	--	--	--	1
	<i>Subtotal</i>	1	--	--	--	--	1
	Dunlap Fabric Marked	153	--	--	--	18	171
Fabric Marked	UID Sand tempered	9	--	--	--	--	9
	<i>Subtotal</i>	162	--	--	--	18	180

Table 3. Continued.

Surface Treatment	Type	Body	Base	Podal	Perforated Discs	Rim	Total
Cord Marked	Furrs Cord Marked	9	--	--	--	1	10
	UID Sand tempered	22	--	--	--	--	22
	<i>Subtotal</i>	31	--	--	--	1	32
Brushed	UID Grit tempered	1	--	--	--	--	1
	UID Sand tempered	4	--	--	--	--	4
	<i>Subtotal</i>	5	--	--	--	--	5
Unidentified Decorated	Grit tempered	9	--	--	--	--	9
	Sand tempered	720	--	--	--	19	739
	<i>Subtotal</i>	729	--	--	--	19	748
Eroded	Grit tempered	27	--	--	--	1	28
	Sand tempered	766	5	3	--	3	777
	Sand/mica tempered	2	--	--	--	--	2
<i>Subtotal</i>		795	5	3	--	4	807

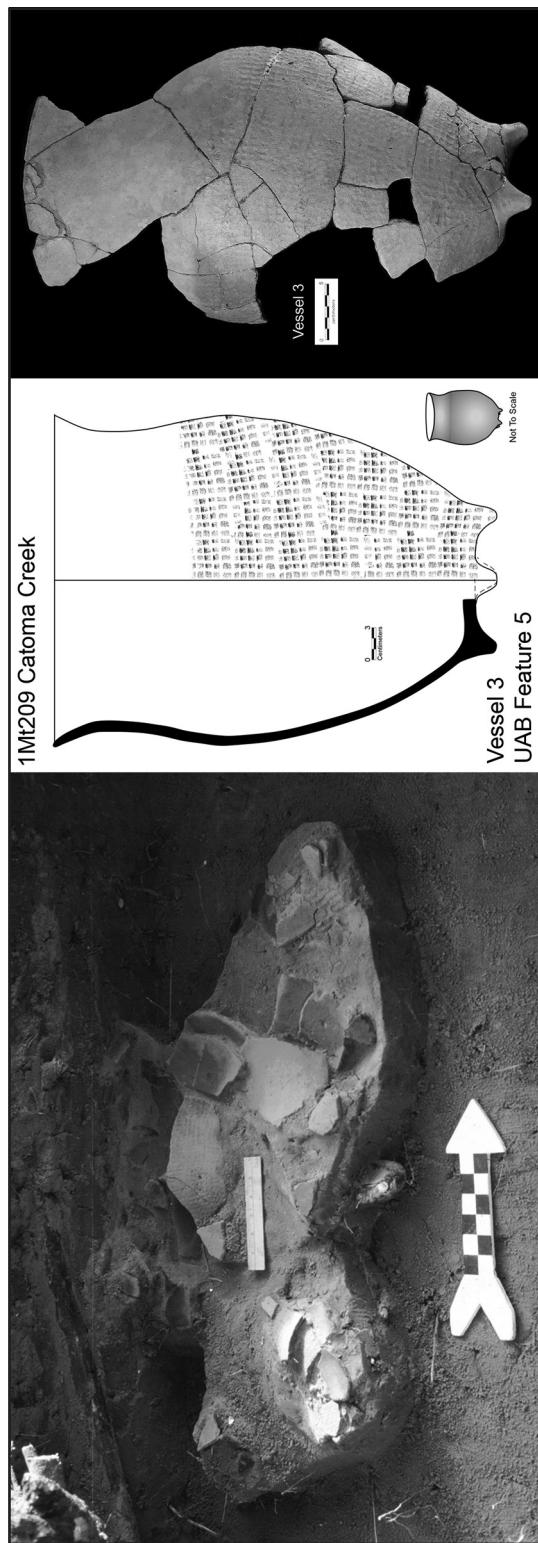


Figure 7. UAB Feature 5, a “potburst” of a Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped vessel (Vessel 3), with the feature pedestalled on left (UAB 1976) and a mended and refitted Vessel 3 on the right.

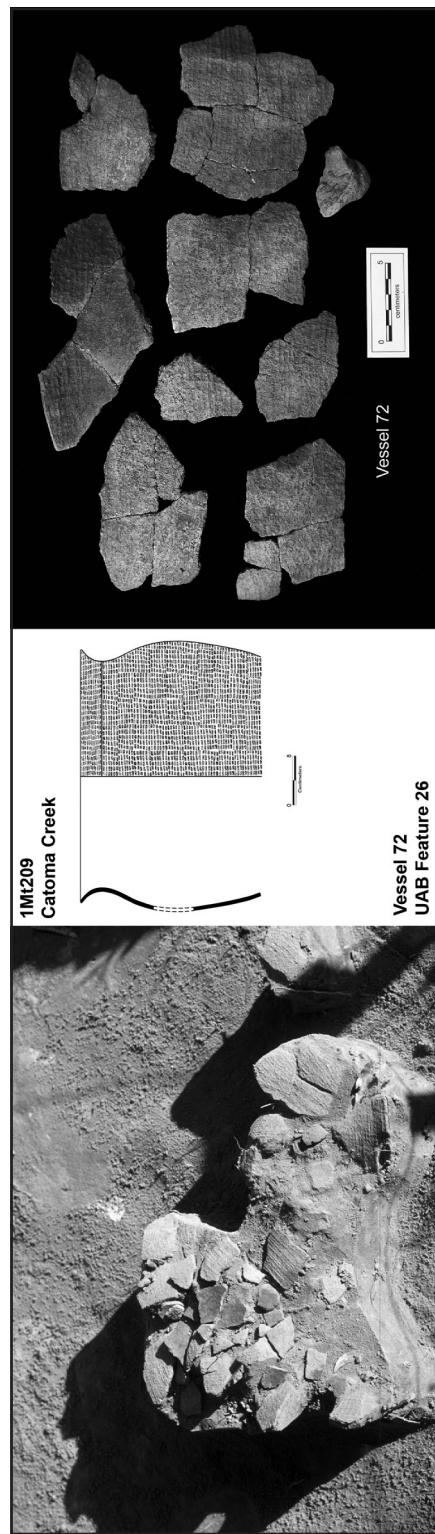


Figure 8. UAB Feature 26, a “pot bust” of a Cobbs Swamp Check Stamped vessel (Vessel 72) adjacent the pit house midden and floor (UAB Feature 3), with the feature pedestalled on left (UAB 1976) and a mended and refitted Vessel 72 on the right.

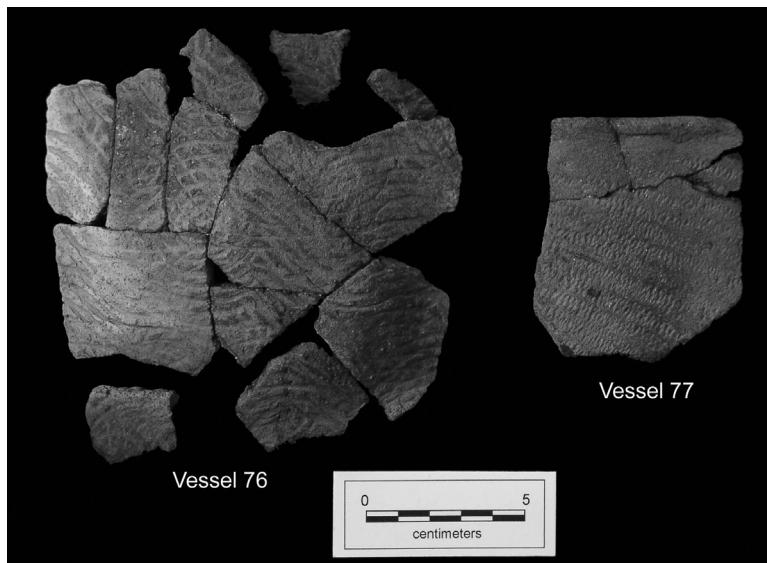


Figure 9. Vessel 76, Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped, and Vessel 77, Dunlap Fabric Marked.

Minority types such as Dunlap Fabric Marked and Cobbs Swamp Simple Stamped are present but together only comprise 2 percent of the total ceramic assemblage. Simple-stamped pottery was found in Features 1, 8, and UAB Feature 3, all three of which contained later pottery types such as Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped and Calloway Plain. Dunlap Fabric Marked, representing 1.5 percent of the assemblage, was the third most common formal type at 1MT209. Based on the original type descriptions, vessel forms are usually deep simple jars or cups with conoidal bases that are slightly flattened when podal supports, almost always pointed and elongated, are present (Caldwell and Waring 1939b:7; Haag 1940:7). Rims are generally slightly flaring or straight; vessel lips, which are rarely decorated, are rounded or flat, with some examples showing a slight extrusion. The Dunlap Fabric Marked sherds were concentrated in Blocks C and D and within the UAB units;

only one sherd was recovered in Block B and none from Block B features. Features in which a significant percentage of Dunlap Fabric Marked sherds were found are UAB Feature 24, a pottery cluster on the house floor; UAB Feature 28, a pottery cluster to the northeast of Feature 3; and UAB Feature 3 from which a few sherds were recovered (Figure 9).

Chase considered fabric-marked and simple-stamped pottery to be early, while Walthall (1980:175) posited that fabric-marked pottery is early and simple and complicated stamping are later in the Chattahoochee River valley. He extends this hypothesis to the Alabama River valley, though here neither appears to hold true. At 1MT209, Dunlap Fabric Marked sherds were recovered from later features and in association with complicated-stamped sherds and were clearly not from an earlier component. In light of the persistent, continued use of check stamping for over a millennia in this region (Jenkins and Shel-

don 2014), it seems reasonable to assume that this conservatism was pervasive and that perhaps fabric-marked pottery also enjoyed a long history of use in the area. In the Piedmont of Georgia, simple stamping occurs late in the sequence in Cartersville, while Dunlap Fabric Marked is a marker of the preceding Kellogg phase and early Cartersville. It would seem best to assume the absence of complicated stamping reflects the early part of the phase, and its presence indicates the late part of the phase, rather than basing it on the presence or absence of fabric-marked or simple-stamped minorities.

The primary occupation of 1MT209 seems to have occurred during the later part of the Middle Woodland Period, as 6.4 percent of the assemblage is Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped. This minority type is analogous to Early Swift Creek Complicated Stamped, but the vessel wall is thicker, and the stamping is generally cruder with extensive overstamping. However, the quality of the stamping application can range widely from sloppy to markedly less overstamping, though still not approaching the quality of Early Swift Creek. Designs consist of curvilinear parallel line motifs, usually concentric circles and parallel bars. At 1MT209, the most common designs are the scroll and “figure 8.” No rectilinear designs or zoned stamping were observed. The curvilinear stamping possibly represents a more aesthetic and symbolic emphasis on vessel decoration. Fifteen out of twenty-one ceramic producing features, both pits and hearths, contained this type. It was also found in and around Feature Association Four or the pit house. It is interesting to note again that few complicated-stamped sherds were recovered from Block B and none from Block B features; rather, they were concentrated in Blocks C

and D and the UAB units. The highest frequencies of this type occurred in Features 7 and 15 in Block C and UAB Features 8, 12 and 27. The Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped vessels with identifiable forms consisted of large, flared rim, conoidal jars with wall thicknesses comparable to those of the check-stamped vessels.

The presence of Calloway Plain, a grit-tempered plain ware containing liberal amounts of mica, within four of the features also suggests an occupation contemporaneous with the Maxwell subphase of the Calloway phase (see Jenkins and Sheldon 2014) and interactions between populations associated with the two phases. These vessels ranged from straight-sided bowls with conoidal bases to notched, flared rim jars, all thin walled (Figure 10).

### Lithics

Chase observed that Cobbs Swamp projectile points consistently were of the large triangular types, namely Greeneville and Camp Creek, but also Candy Creek and Copena, with the smaller Coosa Notched appearing late in the phase (Chase 1998:63; n.d.). Based on our work at 1MT209, these tend to fall within the Greeneville/Woodland Triangular Cluster, which includes such point types as Greeneville, Camp Creek, Candy Creek, Copena, Benjamin, and Nolichucky, all of which were recovered from Cobbs Swamp contexts at 1MT209 (Figure 11). Interestingly, several Hamilton points were found in Cobbs Swamp feature contexts, suggesting an earlier development of this type than previously thought. Indeed, the size of many of these projectile points suggests the bow-and-arrow was in use by at least the Middle Woodland period. Additional Middle Woodland types recovered include the Lanceolate Expanded Stemmed Cluster,

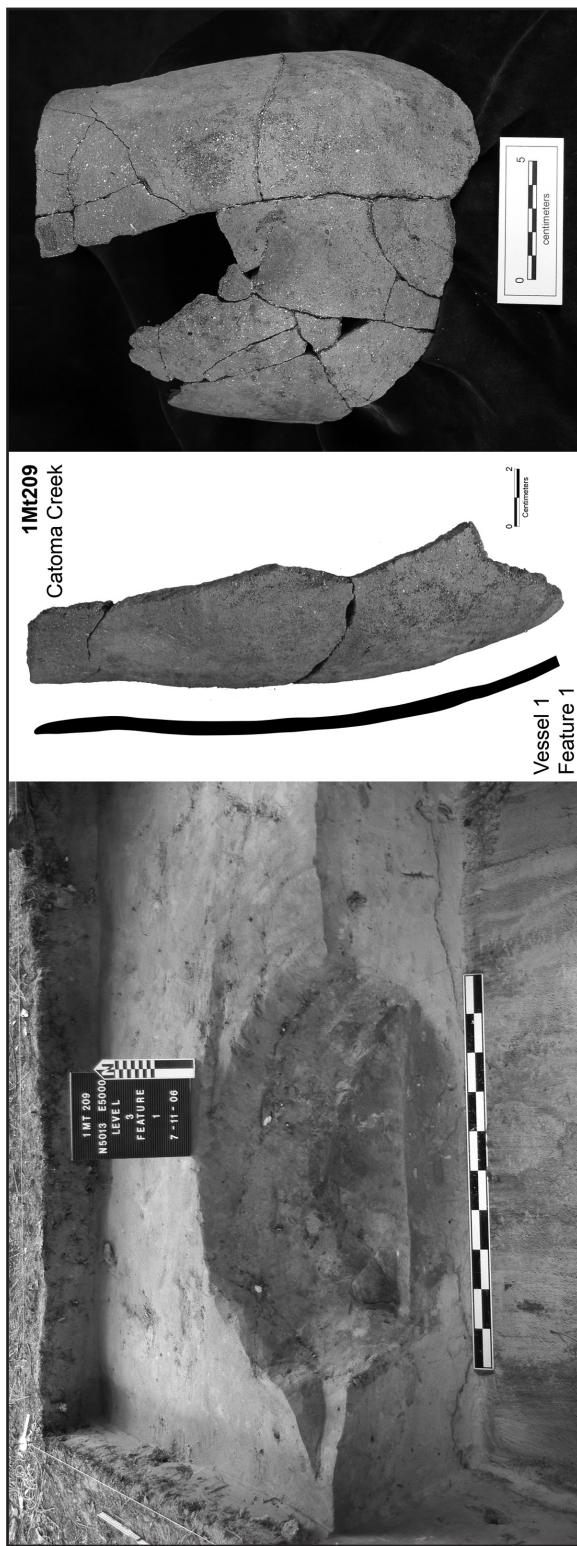


Figure 10. Feature 1 (refuse pit), with sherds of Vessel 1, a discarded Calloway Plain vessel, in situ.

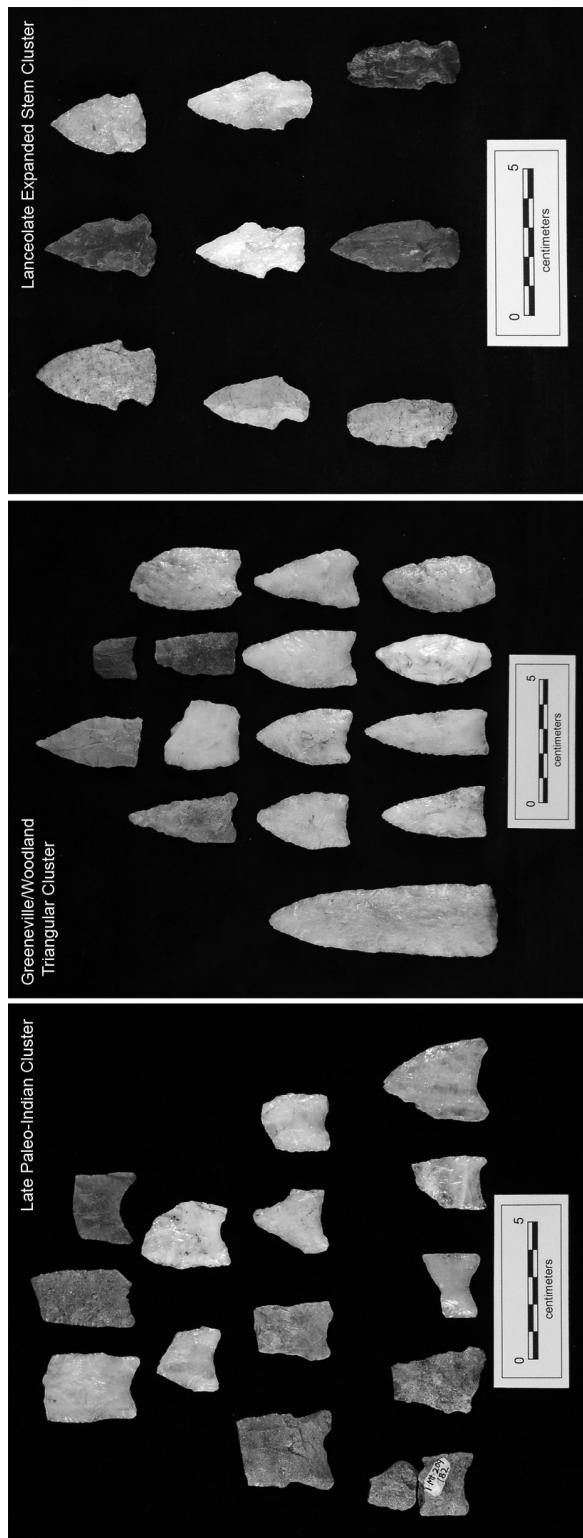


Figure 11. Selected lithics: Late Paleo-Indian stage cluster tools; Greeneville/Woodland Triangular cluster tools; and Lanceolate Expanded Stem cluster tools.

which consists of the Bakers Creek, Swan Lake, and Mud Creek types, the Bradley Spike of the Tapered Stemmed Cluster, and finally the ubiquitous Coosa and Coosa Notched types. Chase associates the Bradley Spike, Coosa, and Swan Lake types with the Calloway Phase (Chase n.d.). Late Paleoindian and Early Archaic tools from 1MT209 were recovered in contexts with later tools and were likely picked up and utilized by the later populations (see Figure 11) (Table 4).

An analysis of the chipped stone tool assemblage indicated a higher ratio of late stage and finished tools than early stage tools, suggesting that late stage biface production and maintenance was the primary focus of lithic activity. This observation is further strengthened based on the paucity of cores and non-bifacial tools and the low frequency of 1-inch or greater flakes. Most of the chipped stone tools were manufactured from locally available quartzite and Knox Group chert, often a lustrous black stone, though some were made of Tallahatta sandstone and Coastal Plain chert.

Several heavy lithic activity areas were noted, perhaps the most significant being UAB Feature 6 which Nance interpreted as a “lithic workshop” in 1976. This feature loosely includes UAB Unit 7 and probably extends into adjacent balks and units. The basis for this interpretation lies in the sheer volume and variety of debitage ( $n=1224$ ) from one unit, including greenstone and an unusually high frequency of black Knox chert, the presence of a number of complete and broken chert and quartzite cobbles, and chipped stone tools ranging from preforms to completed projectile points. This latter category includes Middle Woodland types as well as earlier ones, such as a Dalton, which were probably meant to be recycled.

Other items from this lithic workshop area include greenstone celt fragments, several cores, one of which is a bipolar core, a hammerstone, a retouched flake, and a possible gorget blank.

Certain tool types associated with specific tasks could also be discerned in the 1MT209 data. For instance, scrapers used for hide processing and other tools such as perforators, gravers, and drills were found across the site but tended to cluster in portions of Blocks B and C and the UAB units. Multiple hammerstones, choppers, and anvils were noted to be especially concentrated within the UAB units and the pithouse (Feature Association Four) and to a lesser extent within Block B. Other ground stone tools identified include sandstone abraders, a burnishing stone from Block B, two nutting stone fragments—both from features—and manos and metates (Table 5). Fragments of the latter two types, associated exclusively with food processing, were found across the site though with an obvious absence from Blocks A and D. UAB Feature 25, consisted of a nearly intact large sandstone metate and a mano found together just over two meters to the northwest of the pithouse. Finally, evidence of a bipolar core industry was identified with several hammerstones, anvils, and bipolar cores occurring in the same or adjacent units, namely in Block B. Based on the chipped stone data, 1MT209 may have been a significant late stage lithic reduction site during the Middle Woodland.

### Other Artifacts

Artifacts typically found at other Cobbs Swamp phase sites include partially ground greenstone celts, stone gorgets, and ceramic discs that are either plain or stamped and often have a central perforation. Perforated ceramic discs are known.

Table 4. Chronology Table Based on Chipped Stone Tool Clusters.

Stage	Cultural Type	Strat A	Strat A/B	Strat B	Feature	Total	Associated Clusters
LW/M (n=15)	Madison	1	0	1	0	2	
	Hamilton	4	0	5	4	13	Hamilton
Bradley Spike		0	0	2	0	2	Tapered Stemmed
Swan Lake		27	1	10	9	47	Lanceolate Expanded Stemmed
Bakers Creek		19	0	6	6	31	Lanceolate Expanded Stemmed
Mud Creek		2	0	1	2	5	Lanceolate Expanded Stemmed
Residual Stemmed-Woodland		3	0	0	1	4	Residual Stemmed Custer
Coosa Notched		14	0	8	5	27	
Coosa		14	1	2	2	19	
Copena		4	0	2	1	7	Greeneville/Woodland Triangular
Greenville		21	0	17	5	43	Greeneville/Woodland Triangular
Benjamin		0	0	2	0	2	Greeneville/Woodland Triangular
Candy Creek		1	1	1	1	4	Greeneville/Woodland Triangular
Camp Creek		4	0	0	0	4	Greeneville/Woodland Triangular
Nolichucky		3	1	0	0	4	Greeneville/Woodland Triangular

Table 4. Continued.

Stage	Cultural Type	Strat A	Strat A/B	Strat B	Feature	Total	Associated Clusters
LA (n=56)	Flint Creek	4	0	1	4	9	Flint Creek
	Little Bear Creek	1	0	2	0	3	Little Bear Creek
	Wade	0	0	1	0	1	Wade
	Cotaco Creek	3	0	0	1	4	Wade
	Limestone	1	0	1	0	2	Wade
	Elora	0	0	2	0	2	
	Ledbetter	0	0	7	1	8	Ledbetter
	Residual Stemmed-Archaic	20	1	2	4	27	Residual Stemmed-Archaic
	Benton Broad Stemmed	1	0	1	0	2	Benton
MAA (n=5)	Sykes	2	0	0	0	2	Sykes/White Springs
	Crawford Creek	0	1	0	0	1	Crawford Creek/Cypress Creek
	Pine Tree	0	0	1	0	1	
EA (n=7)	Palmer	4	1	1	0	6	Kirk Corner Notched
	Dalton	3	0	7	3	13	Dalton
LP (n=14)	Greenbriar	0	0	0	1	1	Dalton
	Total Per Stratum and Feature Context	156	7	83	0	0	Paleo-Indian (LP)

Table 5. Tabular Summary of Lithic Artifacts by Category/Subcategory.

<i>Category/Subcategory</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Count</i>
<i>Core/Core Tool</i>		
Bipolar Core		15
Core (amorphous & expended)		58
Utilized Core		12
Tested Cobble/Pebble		21
<i>Core/Core Tool Total</i>		<b>106</b>
<i>Biface</i>		
Preform		39
Biface I		32
Biface II		111
hafted Thinned Biface		296
Biface Graver		2
hafted Scraper		2
hafted Drill		2
Biface Scraper		3
Biface Fragment		65
<i>Biface Total</i>		<b>552</b>
<i>Pecked and Ground Stone</i>		
Anvil		3
Sandstone Abrader		3
Burnishing Stone		1
Celt Fragment		3
Chopper		7
Hammerstone		19
Mano		11
Metate		2
Modified Sandstone		2
Modified Schist/Abrader		1
Modified Slate		1
Nutting Stone fragment		2
<i>Ground Stone Total</i>		<b>55</b>

Table 5. Continued.

<i>Category/Subcategory</i>	<i>Weight (g)</i>	<i>Count</i>
<i>Flake and Microlith Tool</i>		
Retouched Flake		5
Utilized Flake		14
Possible Blade Flake		6
Perforator		5
Microlith Tool		4
<i>Flake and Microlith Tool Total</i>	<b>34</b>	
<i>Debitage Size Grade Category</i>		
<1/4" Cortical	8.2	121
<1/4" Noncortical	40.6	860
1/4" Cortical	1119.2	2136
1/4" Noncortical	1051.9	3239
1/2" Cortical	1652.3	615
1/2" Noncortical	518.8	317
1" Cortical	676.0	35
1" Noncortical	13.7	1
<i>Debitage Size Grade Total</i>	<b>5,080.70</b>	<b>7,324</b>

from Copena contexts, where they may have been used as a gaming piece, personal ornament, or they may have functioned as a readily made spindle whorl. The greenstone would have been procured upstream in the Coosa River drainage from the Hillabee Greenstone Formation. Cobbs Swamp celts were chipped with only the bit end being ground smooth (Chase 1998:63; Walthall 1980:175). Steatite also has been consistently recovered from Cobbs Swamp contexts. Like greenstone, it too would have been procured from upstream sources. Gorgets are generally of the two-hole type and are usually made from steatite, hematite, schist, or other stone, and many of them have rectilinear designs engraved on their surfaces (Chase n.d.). Other artifacts of note, but not widely found, include cut and ground sheets of mica recovered from 1MT82, hinting at Copena relationships, hematite concretions, the ochre re-

moved and ground into a small cup, noted at 1MT74, and naturally perforated beads as well as ground stone beads (Chase n.d.).

This pattern is repeated at 1MT209, with 13 greenstone celt fragments, as well as greenstonedebitage, 39 steatite vessel sherds, some quite large and most being grooved, and 10 modified potsherds recovered from both feature and general unit/level contexts. Eight potsherd disks were recovered at 1MT209, all from feature or midden contexts. Only one from Feature 1 was complete—a Cobbs Swamp Complicated Stamped sherd with a central, biconical perforation and ground edges. One check-stamped sherd had been ground and beveled along the edges to produce a squared form, and one rim sherd with a perforation is interpreted as a mended vessel sherd. In addition, one ground and drilled bead of ferruginous sandstone was recovered near UAB Feature 11. Two natu-

rally perforated, river-smoothed chert pebbles were also found. Chase (n.d.) noted that the recurrence of these naturally perforated pebbles in Cobbs Swamp middens suggest they were deliberately used for ornaments. Two stone gorget fragments were also recovered, both of which are from Midden 2. The largest is made of ferruginous siltstone and is ovoid with two drilled holes, ground edges, and polished faces with three roughly engraved, haphazardly placed parallel lines. Finally, some small fragments of sheet mica were recovered from general unit levels.

### Subsistence

Subsistence activities at 1MT209 involved the procurement and transport of cobbles for hearths, earth ovens, and stone boiling, the processing of plant foods as evidenced from the nutting stones, manos, and metates, and the processing of animal meats and hides based upon the scrapers and drills associated with such tasks. In addition, the presence of storage pits reflects the exploitation of predictable resources such as nut crops and seeds from annual plants. The hunting/gathering/collecting subsistence strategy reflected in the 1MT209 material remains is a pattern that generally typifies the Middle Woodland of the Southeast, and although it is likely that the cultivation of certain plants and the enhancement of wild crops (until the widespread adoption of maize in the Late Woodland) was used as a means of supplementing the diet, no evidence of this was noted at 1MT209.

An analysis of archaeobotanical samples from feature contexts at 1MT209 found that the samples were largely dominated by wood, with plant food remains being quite sparse and limited largely to

acorn (68 percent) and hickory (32 percent) nutshells. Both of these plant foods would have been available in the early and late fall, respectively, suggesting a fall to winter occupation of the site. The nutshells could also have served as fuel. A 1976 UAB archaeobotanical study identified acorn and walnut nutshells and pine wood.

The faunal remains consist of a large amount of deer, some turtle and fish, some medium-sized mammals such as raccoon and opossum, and very small amounts of medium to large bird bones such as ducks, turkey, or geese. Most of the deer remains consist of skull, vertebra, distal limb elements, carpals/tarsals, and phalanges, which suggests that whole deer were brought back to the site and processed there. Insofar as bone tools are concerned, there are a few awls, an antler tine, and a worked tooth, and butchering marks were observed on some of the bone. The shell remains represent aquatic snail and at least four different mollusk species. The presence of mollusk shell, turtle, and fish remains could suggest a summer, or warm weather, occupation of the site, but in light of the sub-tropical climate of central Alabama these resources could have been available throughout the year.

### Mortuary Patterns

No burials or human remains were encountered during the excavations at 1MT209. Insofar as Cobbs Swamp burial practices are concerned, little is known and no burial mounds have been located from this period in central Alabama (Walthall 1980:175). However, Chase reports on two burials he interprets as being Cobbs Swamp. The first is Burial 1 at 1AU28, consisting of a slightly flexed young adult, probably female, with no associated grave

goods. The other is Burial 5 at 1MT56/100 (Hickory Bend), which Chase describes as being a bundle burial, possibly male, containing long bones, skull fragments, and a mandible, located in a pit overlain with midden fill approximately one foot below a house floor. Associated with the bundle were two bear canines and the jaws of a carnivore—possibly a wolf—that had been ground on its ventral side and bore green stains, suggesting contact with a copper object. Fifteen marginella shell beads were found six inches to the north of the bundle (Chase 1998:63, n.d.).

### Concluding Remarks

The work at 1MT209 is the first excavation at a major Cobbs Swamp phase site in at least three decades. Prior to this work, the only other major excavations were at 1AU28 during the late 1960s and at 1MT209 in 1976. The results of the 1MT209 excavations, and building upon previous work, has widened our knowledge of the Middle Woodland period in central Alabama. The material culture of the Cobbs Swamp phase has largely been established—the most basic units being check-stamped pottery and Greeneville type projectile points. The Cobbs Swamp pottery assemblage, comprised of sand- and sand/grit-tempered vessels, usually with podal supports, is dominated by check-stamped surface treatment, with minorities of Dunlap Fabric Marked and simple-stamped pottery which appear to occur throughout the phase. A complicated-stamped type, analogous to Early Swift Creek, is another minority that occurs but appears during the later part of the phase. Cobbs Swamp projectile points types include Greeneville/Woodland Triangular Cluster, Coosa, Coosa Notched, and

Hamilton. Other artifacts include partially ground greenstone celts or hoes, perforated potsherd disks, stone beads and gorgets, steatite vessels or cooking surfaces, and mica.

Beyond the material culture that constitutes the Cobbs Swamp phase, several observations can be offered. These Cobbs Swamp communities would have consisted of autonomous, semi-sedentary, self-sufficient groups (bands or segmentary tribes) that practiced a hunting, gathering, and collecting economy and probably practiced limited horticulture towards the end of the phase. Small to medium size mammals, especially deer, figured prominently in their diet, as did fish, mollusks, and nut crops, especially acorn and hickory. Dwellings were small, the twelve foot in diameter structure seen at 1MT209 being the only known complete example, and circular in plan with a central support post and hearth. Jeter (1973, 1978) has suggested that Henderson culture, which is thought to have evolved out of Cobbs Swamp, utilized a settlement system whereby sites on the banks of the Alabama River were base camps or semi-permanent villages that were occupied from spring to fall by many individuals, and upland and tributary stream sites were occupied by small groups from later fall to early spring.

Finally, it should be noted that Cobbs Swamp groups did not exist in a cultural vacuum; rather, they participated in the exchange of knowledge, ideology, and exotic items, such as foreign pottery types and regional and exotic raw materials. This exchange of ideas, albeit tenuous, is perhaps evident in the perforated potsherd disks, usually associated with the Copena complex, which may have been used as ornamentation. Personal adornment in the form of gorgets, beads, and pendants was also

documented, and although no burials were found at 1MT209, evidence from other Cobbs Swamp sites, according to Chase's (1998) interpretation, indicates a minor degree of participation in the Hopewellian interaction sphere, albeit a very minor one. The relationship to Cartersville, though, is apparent in the use of check-stamped pottery.

Future work regarding the Cobbs Swamp phase could follow several potential avenues of inquiry. The first of these should be a critical reanalysis and reinterpretation of the work of David Chase, whose notes, files, and artifacts are housed at Auburn University in Montgomery. The vast majority of this material has never been analyzed or reported on to any degree, and would be a productive and beneficial mine of data. The second avenue should focus on settlement patterns and site distribution, as our current understanding is largely speculation. A third avenue, and one more site specific, should involve extensive horizontal excavations at one of the larger known Cobbs Swamp sites with well-preserved middens, which would hopefully answer additional questions on intrasite structure. Together, these suggested research avenues, along with the work that has gone before, will untangle the archaeology and provide a clearer understanding of central Alabama prehistory.

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