



MOUNDS OF THE

# CHICKASAW

HOMELAND





## CHOKMA!

Thank you for your interest in the Chickasaw Nation and the historic Chickasaw Homeland.

For centuries, the Chickasaw people inhabited the waterways and woodlands of this area, as is evident in the Chickasaw names of many bodies of water, cities, towns and more. They used the traces for trade, transportation and hunting, and left behind homes, towns, mounds, and sacred sites upon removal to Indian Territory.

Today, the Homeland remains very important to Chickasaw people, history and culture. Take great pride in the preservation and sharing of our unique and vibrant past. We hope you enjoy the tour!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Anoatubby". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

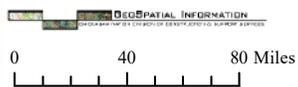
Bill Anoatubby, Governor  
The Chickasaw Nation

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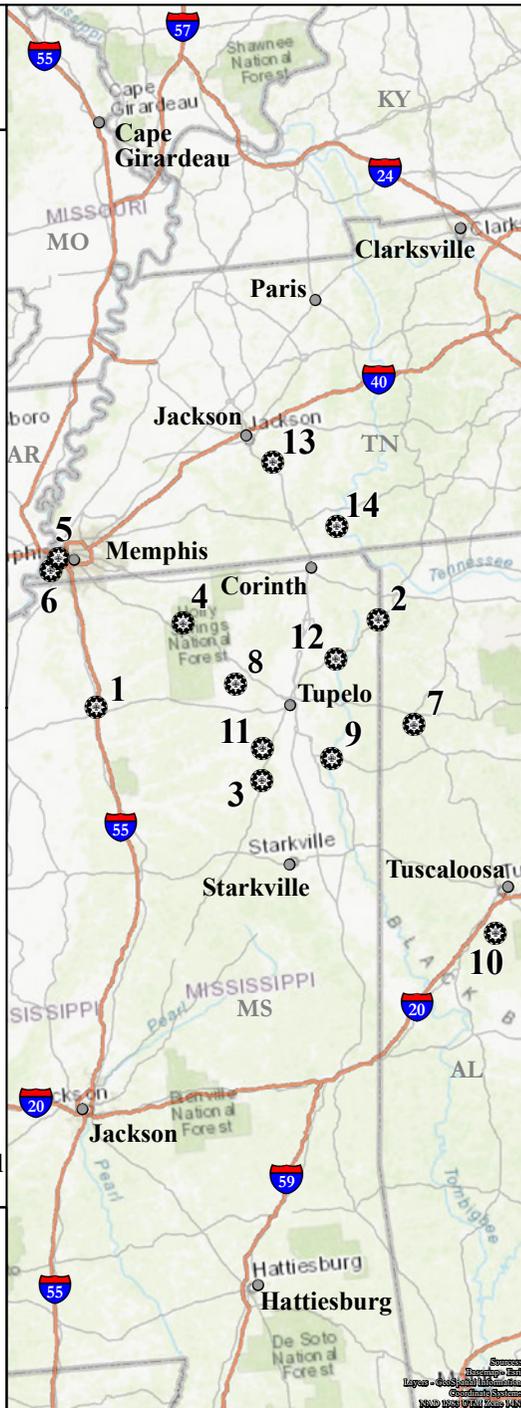
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## Mounds of the Chickasaw Homeland

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 Map Code: CNGIS\_7057 Date: 1/28/2020



## - INTRODUCTION -

Welcome to the historic *Chikasha* (Chickasaw) Homeland *Shintok* (Mound) Tour. During the *shintok* tour, you will visit and learn about *shintok* located in Mississippi, Alabama and Tennessee. *Shintok* serve as physical reminders of our ancestors' presence upon the landscape and are a springboard into learning about the past in our Homeland.

While visiting these sites, you will learn how our ancestors lived and why these pieces of Southeastern Indian architecture have remained prominent markers of our cultural heritage. These *shintok* tell our story of social organization, complex political organization, trade and lifeways in Southeastern Indian history and culture.

We hope this self-guided tour provides you with historical and cultural history of Southeastern Indian *shintok*.

The *Chikasha* are part of the Southeastern Indian culture. The *shintok* located in the southeast are believed to be shared among the tribes in the area. No one tribe can lay claim to one or more *shintok*. Because these sites are sacred, we do not condone excavations into the *shintok*. The reason *shintok* are sacred is that some contain burials and funerary objects. However, you will notice within the pages of this guide that excavations were completed on these *shintok* and that human remains, grave goods and trade good items have been excavated by archaeologists. These actions were taken prior to 1990 before any laws were passed to protect our sacred sites. We are committed to maintaining the preservation and protection of these hallowed man-made structures. These earthen monuments were created by our ancestors and should be respected.

The sites included in this tour are not owned, operated or maintained by the Chickasaw Nation.

Below are the early Southeastern Indian cultural time periods when the *shintok* featured in this booklet were constructed.

#### ARCHAIC CULTURAL PERIOD 8000 B.C. to 1000 B.C.

The Archaic cultural period revealed many cultural characteristics that would be familiar to today's modern Southeastern tribal people. At the end of the Paleo-Indian cultural period, ice receded and the last of the large ice age animals became extinct. Because of the decline of the ice age animals, a new cultural period was formed creating new technology and adjusting to a new way of hunting and gathering plants. This new cultural period was called the Archaic cultural period. More plants began to be used, particularly nuts; and fishing and hunting smaller animals became more widespread.

#### WOODLAND CULTURAL PERIOD 1000 B.C. to 1000 A.D.

The Woodland cultural period was the first era of widespread *shintok* construction. The form or function of individual *shintok* had deep meaning for the people who built them. *Shintok* were powerful territorial markers and monuments of social unity, reinforcing community identity. Woodland cultural period people lived in small communities or on farmsteads, focusing their subsistence economy on food resources in large river valleys. Many times it was a place for trade and gathering. Woodland people were primarily hunters and gatherers who occupied semi-permanent or permanent settlements. Some *shintok* during the Woodland cultural period were only a few feet high, while others were very large. These *shintok* were constructed one basket load of dirt at a time. Most of the *shintok* constructed during this time were *lokfi' to'wa'* (ceremonial grounds).

An extensive trade network materialized during the Woodland cultural period and evidence of the extensive use of copper for ceremonial items was transported from the Great Lakes area, mica from the Appalachian Mountains, as well as various species of sea shells and fossilized shark teeth from the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. Grizzly bear canine teeth and obsidian from the Rocky Mountains were found in some sites.

The use of pottery increased during the Woodland cultural period. Clay containers helped store food such as seeds and nuts for longer periods of time. To help make the pottery stronger and more resistant to heat, pottery was often tempered with natural fibers, sand or grog (crushed baked clay) and was finished with several unique surface decorations. A variety of designs were made including *foshi'* (bird) and *sinti'* (serpent) motifs.

Many of the earthworks built during the Woodland cultural period varied in both form and function. Throughout the Woodland most *shintok* were *lokfi' to'wa'* which were constructed over log tomb burials of *minko'* (priest/leader). Woodland cultural period platform *shintok* are different from the platform *shintok* of the following Mississippian cultural period (1000 A.D.–1600

A.D.). One interesting difference between platform *shintok* of the Woodland and Mississippian cultural periods is that Woodland *shintok* lack evidence of structures on the *shintok* summit. The lack of structures suggests the *shintok* did not have residences, temples or other religious or mortuary structures on their summits.

#### MISSISSIPPIAN CULTURAL PERIOD 1000 A.D. to 1600 A.D.

The Mississippian cultural period in the Southeast saw the development of some of the most complex societies that ever existed in North America. The Mississippian cultural period way of life was set in complex political and social structure. The *shintok* frequently faced a large open plaza that consisted of a playing field, a ceremonial area and a village. The village houses were generally constructed in regard to the seasons, either *hashtola'* (winter) or *tohmi pulli* (summer). The *tohmi pulli chokka'* (summer house) was rectangular and had a triangular roof to give shade from the sun. The walls were made of wood for protection from rain. The *hashtola' chokka'* (winter house) was circular with wooden walls and poles standing straight with vines interwoven between the poles and covered with wattle and daub, which is burned clay.

This Mississippian cultural period was based on several features, one of which was intensive agriculture, consisting of *tunchi'* (corn), *bala'* (beans) and *olbi'* (squash) known as the Three Sisters. These were companion plants which were planted together and supported each other like sisters. The *tunchupi* (corn stalk) provided the support for the *bala'* to run on which also helped to stabilize the stalk and provided nitrogen to the soil for the current and future year's crop. The *olbi'* provided a ground cover that helped sustain soil moisture and maintain a weed-free garden. The sisters helped each other produce a successful crop and provided a reasonably good vegetable diet.



1

Batesville *Shintok*

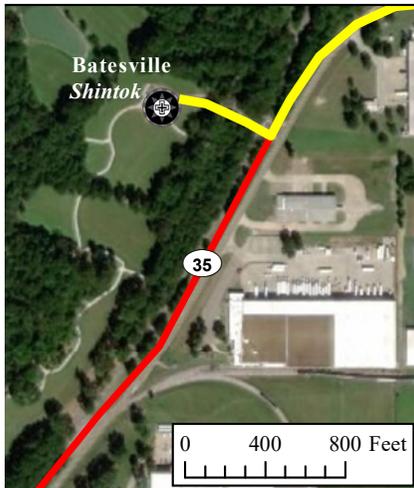
**Directions to Batesville Shintok :**

Batesville *Shintok* is located on US-278/Highway 6 west of Oxford, Mississippi.

From US-278/Highway 6, turn onto Terza Road and follow for 3.8 miles. Turn left onto MS 35/Highway 35 N and follow Highway 35 for 3.4 miles to access the park entrance for Batesville *Shintok*.

Continue on Highway 35 for 0.4 miles for the Mississippi Mounds trail marker.

GPS: 34.64436, -88.132666.

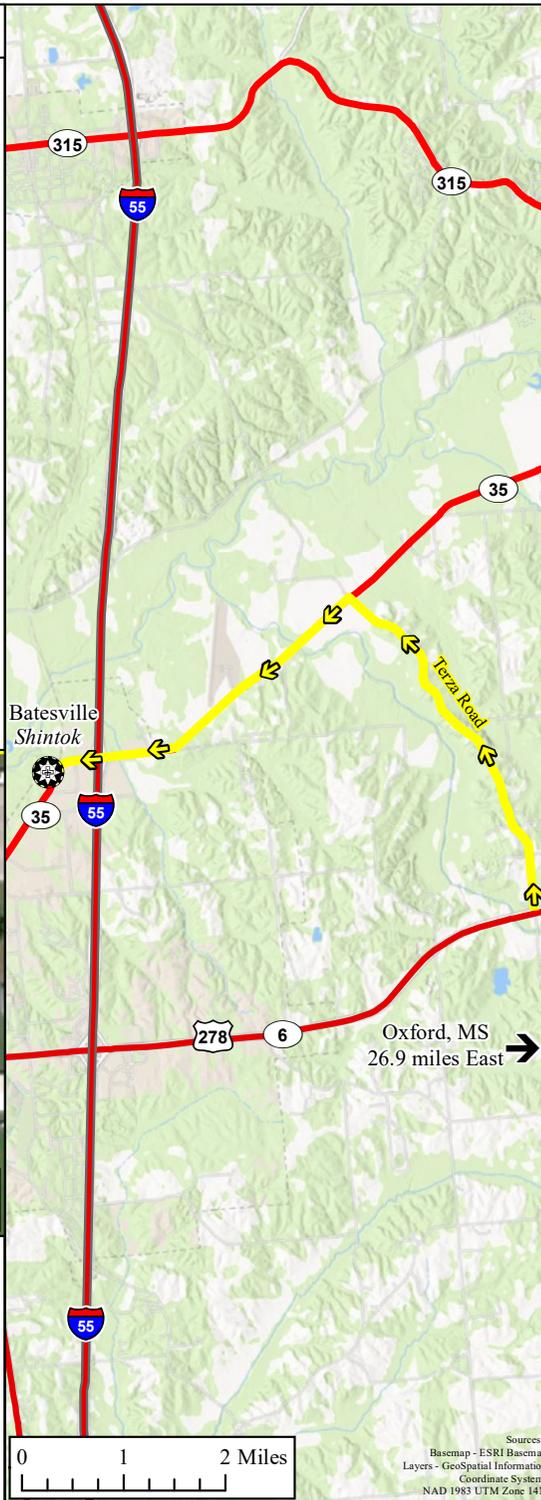


 Batesville *Shintok*  
 Route

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**SITE INFORMATION**

Located on a terrace on the south side of the *Tulli Abookoshi* (Tallahatchie River), Batesville *Shintok* originally consisted of six Woodland cultural period *shintok* and village areas. Of these, two remain intact and the others have been reduced by years of agriculture and erosion. Three are currently still visible. Mound B is a rectangular platform mound 9 feet high; mound C is conical and stands 20 feet high. Mounds A and D have been reduced by plowing, while others have been destroyed. Pottery and other artifacts suggest the site was occupied during the Early and Middle Woodland cultural periods (1000 B.C. to A.D. 500). Archaeological excavations conducted at the site suggest ceremonial and feasting activities took place 2,000 years ago. These activities are practiced by our people today and connect us through many generations of shared traditions.

The site contains an information kiosk, parking area and walking trails. The park is open sunrise to sunset.

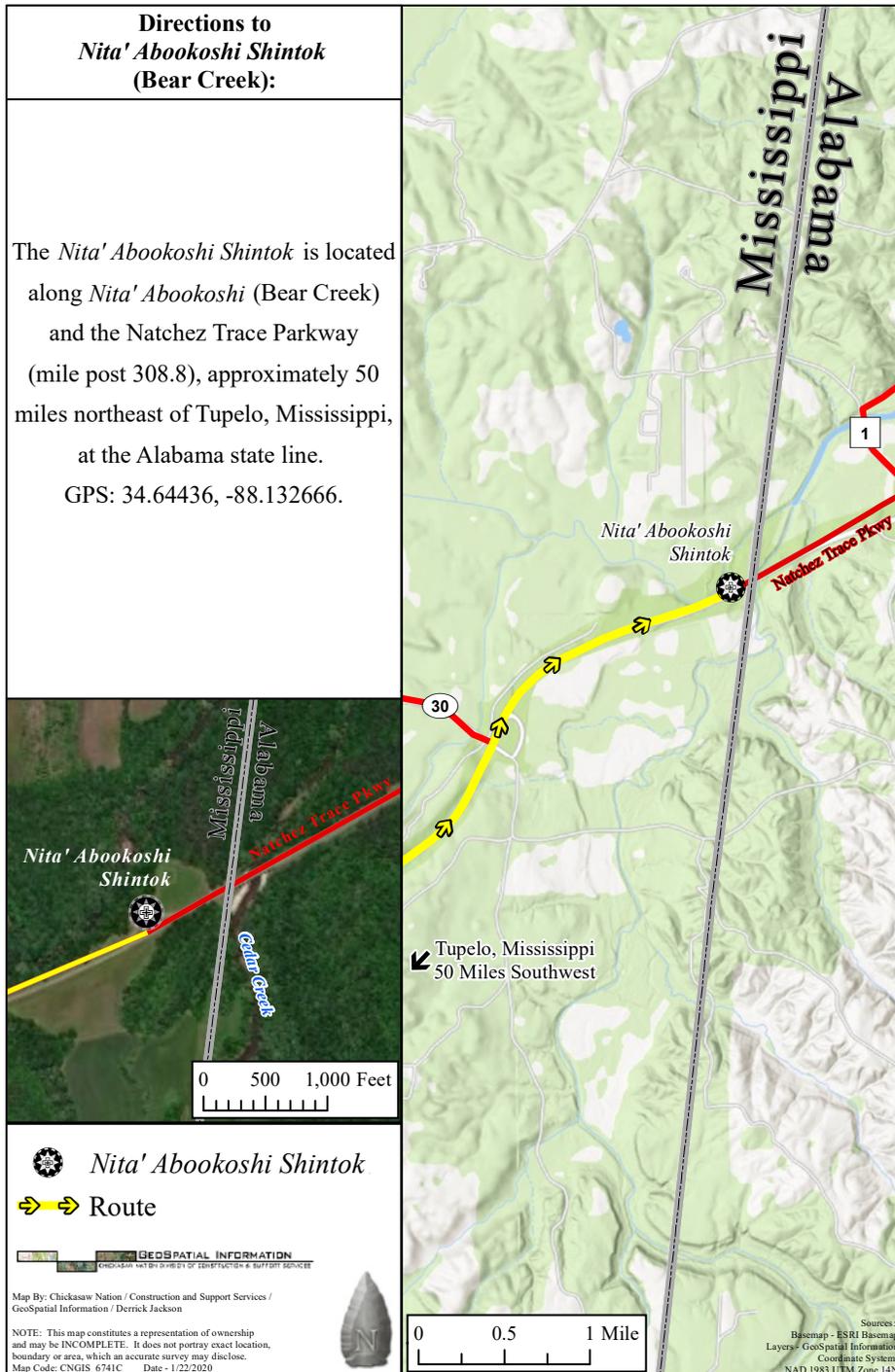


PHOTO BY BILL BREKEEN



2

*Nita' Abookoshi Shintok*



## SITE INFORMATION

Along an ancient waterway known as *Nita' Abookoshi*, a *shintok* and grassy, green area are visible, but to the ancestors of Southeastern Indian tribes it was *chokka'* (home). *Nita' Abookoshi Shintok* is comprised of one 8-foot-tall platform *shintok* and associated village area. This ancient community is known as a complex Mississippian cultural site and exhibits one of the most characteristic features of the Mississippian cultural tradition, the flat-topped, pyramidal earthen *shintok*. This type of *shintok* served as the foundation for *minko'* houses and other essential buildings. The *shintok* and village area date to the Mississippian cultural period, however, there is evidence of occupation at the site since the latter portion of the Paleo-Indian cultural period. The platform *shintok* faces a plaza which served as a playing field, a ceremonial area and village commons. The plaza area was used for social activities and the games were played all day with spectators watching from the village. The plaza was also be used for spiritual purposes such as dances.

In 1965, archaeological investigations by the National Park Service (NPS) recorded daub, or burned clay, on top of the platform *shintok* indicating a structure was present and either used for ceremonial purposes, or was the dwelling of a *minko'*. The excavation also provided evidence of a village area between the *shintok* and the current location of the Natchez Trace Parkway (NTP) (Bohannon, 1972). After years of agricultural damage, the *shintok* was greatly reduced in height, but was restored by the National Park Service following archaeological investigations. Today, these types of archaeological excavations are not allowed by federal laws that have been passed to preserve and protect these ancient works.

The site contains an information kiosk and parking area.

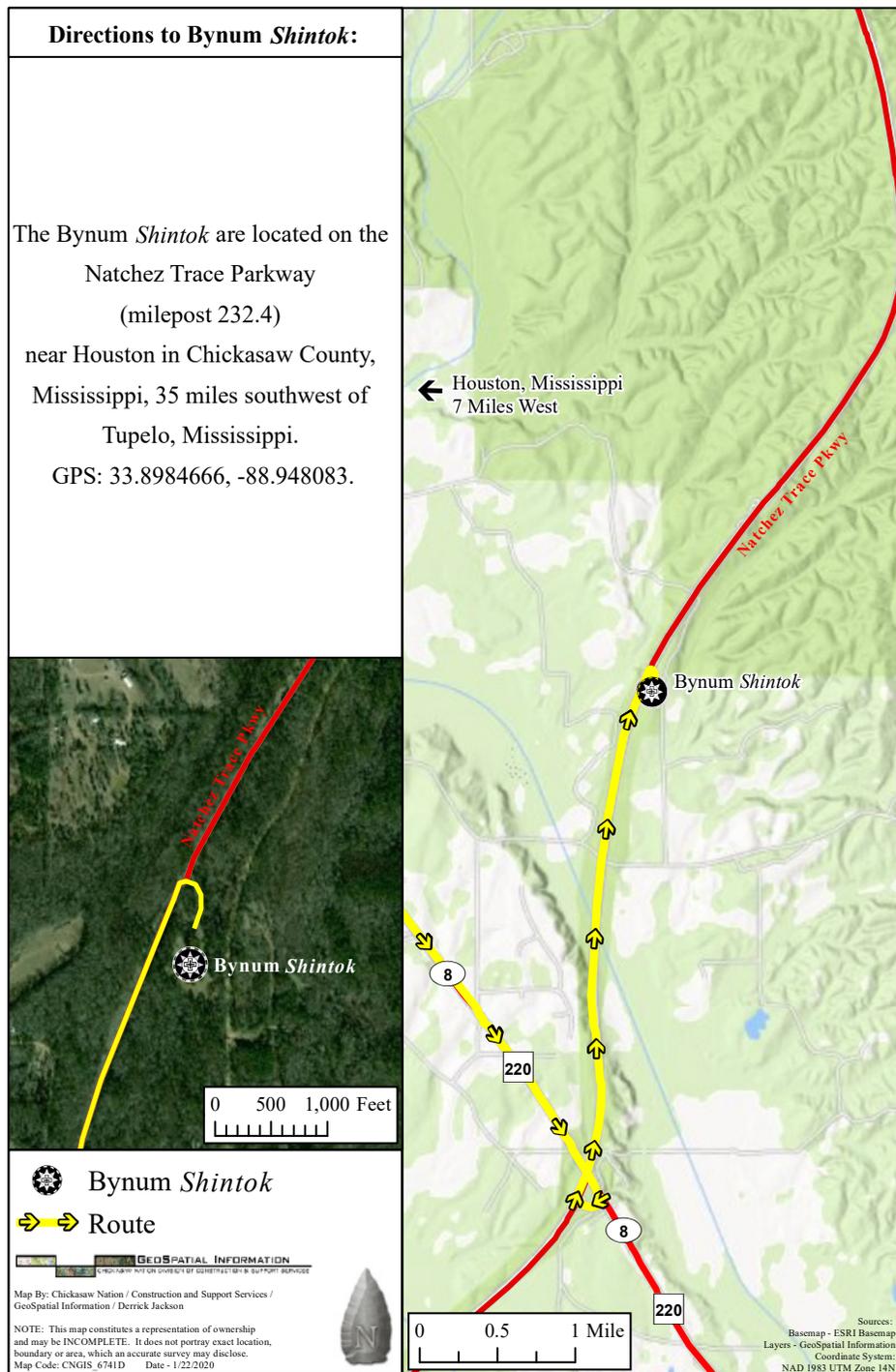


PHOTO BY BILL BREKEEN



3

*Bynum Shintok*



## SITE INFORMATION

Among the oldest of the *shintok* on the Natchez Trace Parkway, the site dates to the Middle Woodland cultural period (1000 B.C. to A.D. 1000). The twin *shintok* preserved by the National Park Service are part of a larger group of six *shintok* built over a 200-year span. They range in height from 5 to 14 feet. Bynum *Shintok* served as *lokfi' to'wa'* and fulfilled ceremonial purposes.

Some Woodland period *shintok* contained substantial log tombs, such as the largest *shintok* at the site. Proper burial preparation was significant to Southeastern Indian tribes. Our ancestors wanted to show great *ayukpachi* (respect) and *holitopichi* (honor) to our loved ones who were traveling to the afterlife.

In the 1940s, the Natchez Trace Parkway, a unit of the National Park Service, began construction on a portion of its famous highway. As surveys revealed the best places to position the road, major archaeological features appeared. The main concern was how to construct the highway close to these ancient sites. One of the oldest *shintok* sites containing occupations from various time frames was Bynum *Shintok*. The first occupation revealed a hunter/gatherer group who inhabited the area for a short time. The next occupation revealed a sedentary group who lived at the site and created pottery and basketry to carry and store food items.

Our historic tribe, known as the *Chikasha*, were living at this location in the time before our Removal, documented through archaeological research. Our *Chikasha* people buried loved ones in the *shintok* with associated funerary goods. These individual's information recorded from this occupational context provided insight and data concerning this family. The burial items that were unearthed and the human remains that were brought to the surface by the archaeologist from the Natchez Trace Parkway have been returned to the *Chikasha Iyakni* (Chickasaw Nation) and these burial objects and ancestors were reburied in a private location.

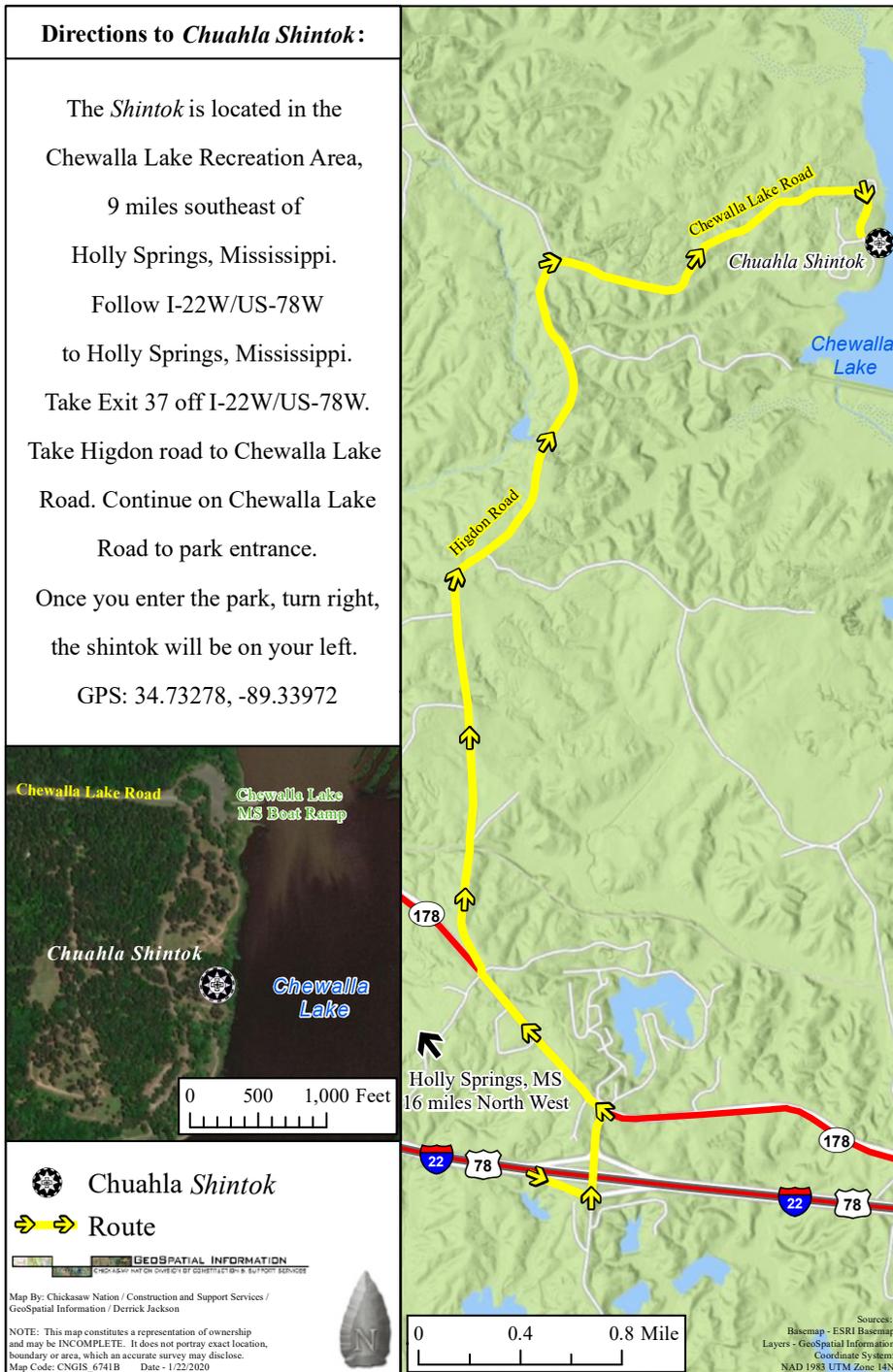
An interpretive kiosk at the site helps visitors understand the significance of Bynum *Shintok* and provides more insight on the people who lived there. A sidewalk leads from the kiosk to the *shintok*, then back to the parking lot.





4

*Chuahla Shintok*



## SITE INFORMATION

This Middle Woodland cultural period (100 B.C. to A.D. 500) *shintok* takes its name from the *Chikasha* word *chuahla*. A sacred site for Southeastern tribes, the *lokfi' to'wa'* commemorating this site has been reconstructed near an overlook of Chewalla Lake.

The word *chuahla* is reminiscent of the belief system that permeates Southeastern Indian culture. Many plants were utilized for their healing abilities. Our ancestors used many plants to repel bad spirits. Historically, *chuahla* was used as a cleanser from bad spirits. Today, it has the same use not only for Southeastern Indian tribes but for other people who may be battling bad spirits.

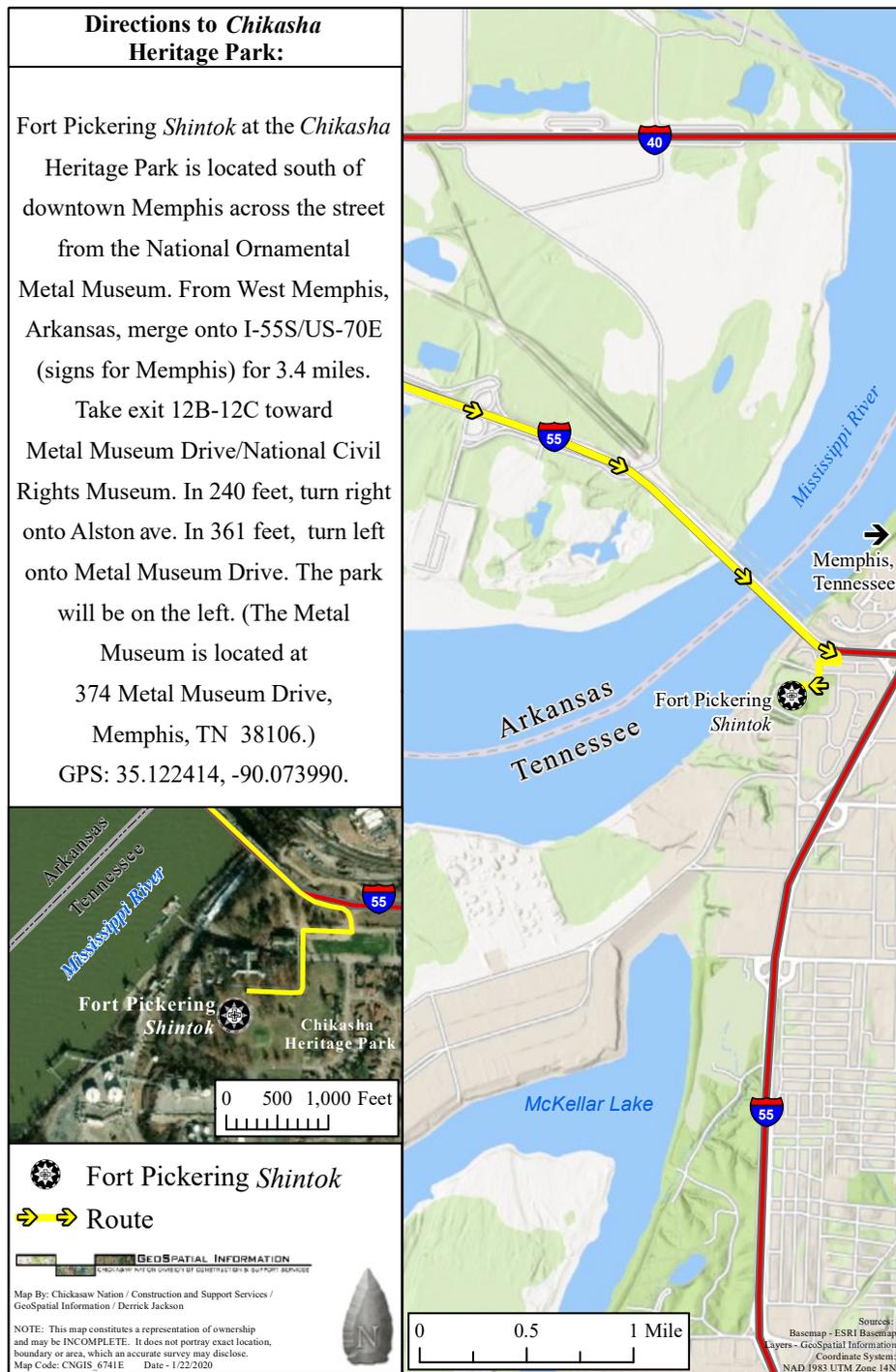
Chewalla Lake Recreation Area requires a cash only day-use fee to enter the park. This site features non-paved walking trails, restrooms, lake access and picnic areas. Recreational activities, such as canoeing, swimming, camping and kayaking are available. Park season is March to November. For more information, please visit [NPS.gov/nr/travel/mounds/builders.htm](https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/mounds/builders.htm).





5

*Chikasha Heritage Park*



## SITE INFORMATION

At *Chikasha* Heritage Park, the large platform *shintok* was the place where the *minko'* would place his house. The *shintok* being close to the bluff allowed the *minko'* to oversee the *abookoshi* and provided protection to the village. A total of seven *shintok* were known to be in this village. There could have been smaller platform *shintok* for other leaders.

Artifacts found at this site indicate Southeastern Indian occupation stretches back to the Archaic cultural period (10,000 to 1200 B.C.), however a substantial late Woodland cultural period (A.D. 500 to 1000) occupation is followed by significant *shintok* building during the Mississippian cultural period (A.D. 1000 to 1499). Some researchers claim the *shintok* were constructed during the Early Mississippian cultural period (A.D. 1000 to 1050) while others suggest the site saw its most dense occupation during the Late Mississip-



PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART

pian cultural or Proto-historic phase (A.D. 1450 to 1539), which would make it the largest Late Mississippian *shintok* center in the region. If this is the case, the *shintok* group located at *Chikasha* Heritage Park would have been an important late pre-contact ceremonial center surpassing the Chucalissa Mound Site in size and influence (Haun, 1997).

*Chikasha* Heritage Park is located on the fourth of a series of historic high *sukti* (bluffs) offering an exceptional view of the Mississippi River below. This series of *sukti* known as the *Chikasha Sukti*, were used for their strategic advantage throughout the pre-contact periods for the locations of villages and forts. This park has a rich Southeastern Indian and contemporary history being the location of a large Mississippian cultural *shintok* center, the potential location of the French Fort Assumption, Fort Pickering during the Civil War, a late 19th and early 20th century amusement park and finally a Memphis city park (Haun, 1997).

There are interpretive markers regarding the *shintok*. In addition, there is a bronze sculpture of a *Chikasha* woman at the front of the park, celebrating First American, Hispanic American and African American heritage in the Memphis area. Along with the *lokfi' to'wa'*, the park offers a basketball court, park benches and a picnic table.

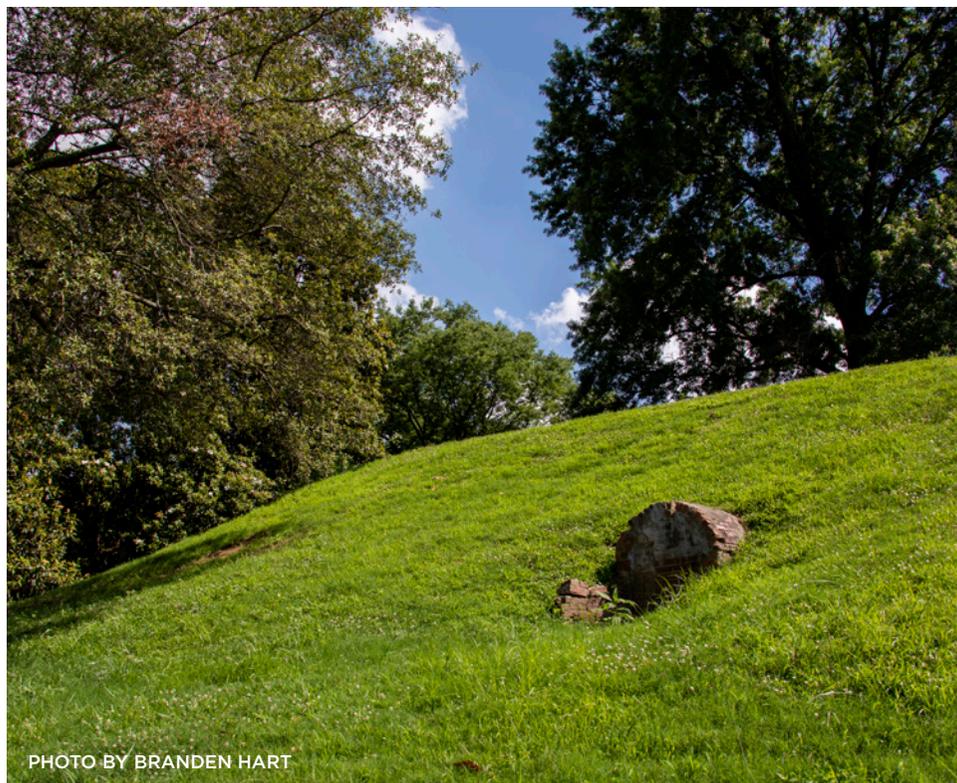


PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART

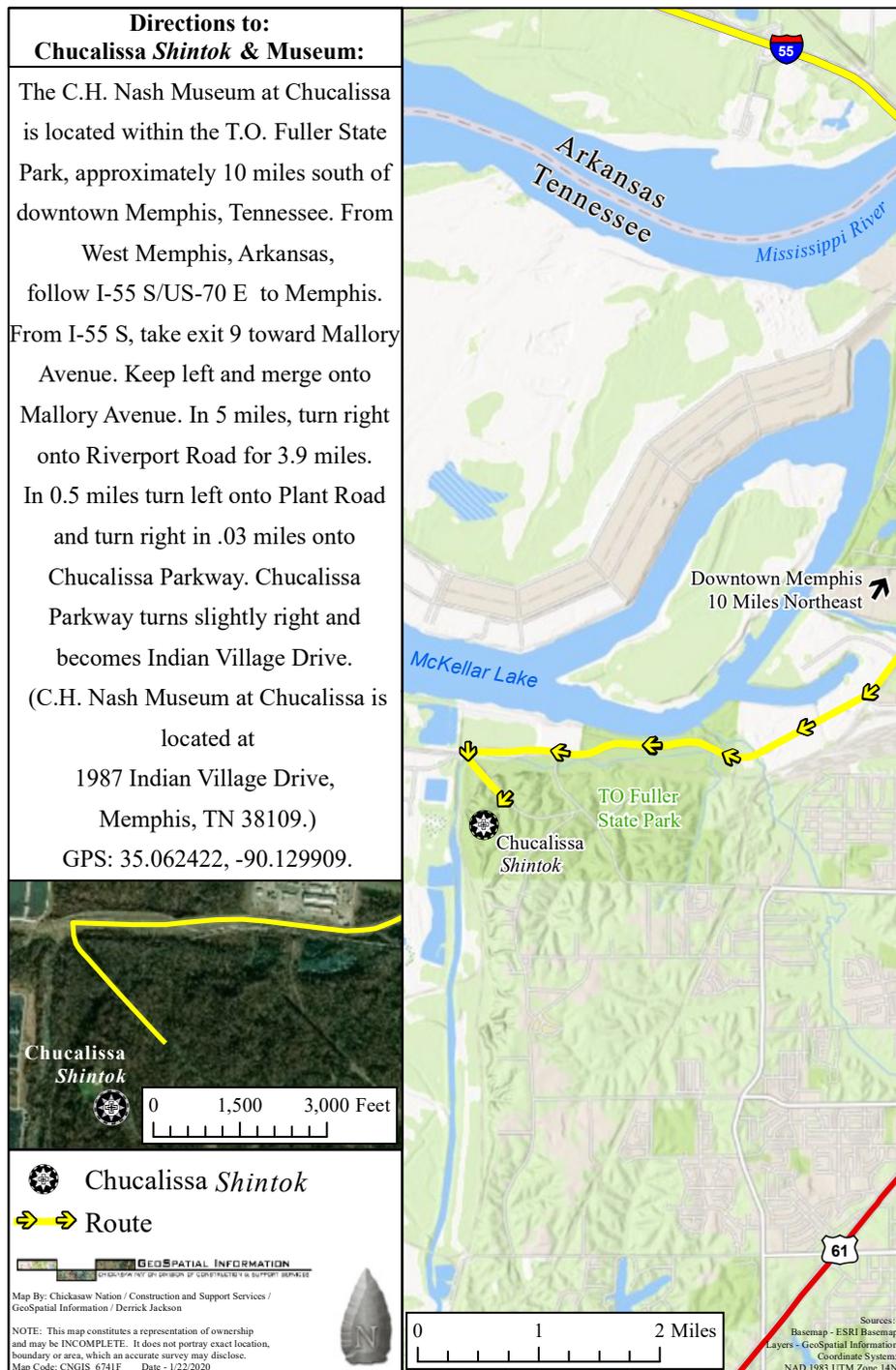


PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART



6

Chucalissa *Shintok* and Museum



## SITE INFORMATION

The Chucalissa *Shintok* site is considered the best preserved Late Mississippian culture (A.D. 1000 to 1500) *shintok* center in the central Mississippi *Abookoshi* Valley. The site includes a larger platform *shintok* and two smaller platform *shintok*, along with small rounded house *shintok* throughout the site. A large village area extends to the north, east and south of the *shintok* and plaza area. This site was home to approximately 1,000 people. The *shintok* indicates where occupants of this community lived. The site has seen continuous occupation since the Archaic cultural period, but most evidence of this has been destroyed by the extensive late prehistoric presence. Chucalissa was likely the capitol of a large paramount political-based community during the Late Mississippian cultural period (10,000 to 1200 B.C.), extending its influence over a large section of the Mississippi *Abookoshi* and various other smaller *shintok* sites and villages in the region (Smith, 1993).

The Chucalissa *Shintok* site was initially tested in 1938 by University of Tennessee archaeologists George Lidberg and Charles H. Nash. In 1938, artifacts were unearthed by workers preparing for the Jim Crow-era Shelby County Negro Park.

The C.H. Nash Museum was founded in 1956 to preserve the site and has been operated by the University of Memphis since 1962.

The C.H. Nash Museum at Chucalissa charges an admission fee. Operating hours are Tuesday – Saturday, 9 am to 5 pm and Sunday, 1 pm to 5 pm. For more information or to arrange a tour, please call (901) 785-3160.

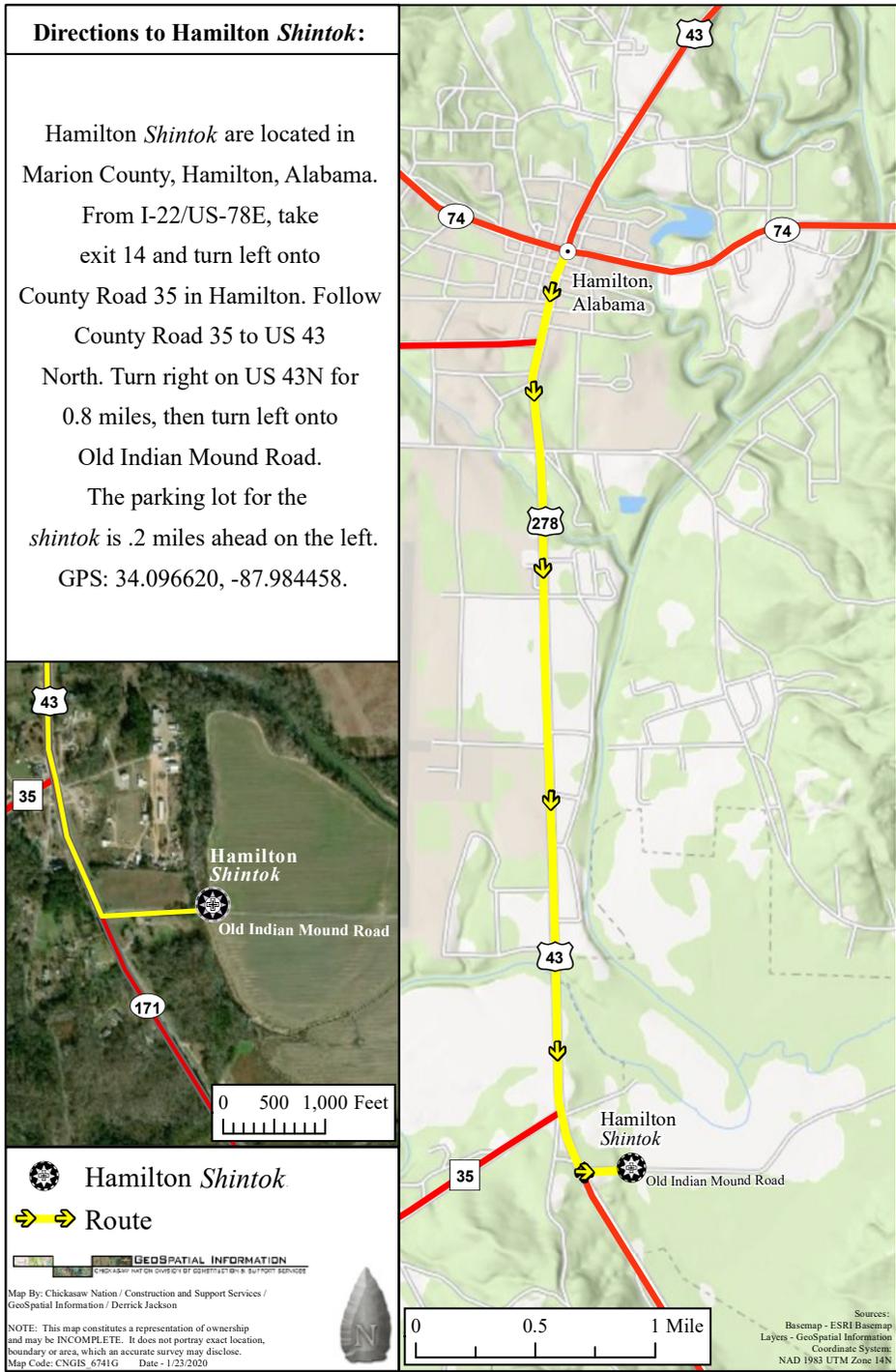


PHOTO BY BILL BREKEEN



7

Hamilton *Shintok*



**SITE INFORMATION**

Hamilton *Shintok* site consists of three Mississippian cultural period (1000 A.D. to 1600 A.D.) *shintok* and an associated village site situated on a *sukti* overlooking the *abookoshi*. The three *shintok* range between 8 and 12 feet in height. No known archaeological investigations have been performed at this site, however artifacts found suggest it dates to the Mississippian cultural period.

This Hamilton *Shintok* area in Marion County was located within *Chickasha* Homeland before the 1816 treaty land cessions across the Alabama region. Our community helped with the settlement of the pioneers to this area by providing *tunchi'* and trade goods. The earliest road, known as Gaines Trace, was built by Indian agents who designed this route to connect the Tennessee *Abookoshi* with the Tombigbee *Abookoshi* and the coastal Mobile area. This road served as a boundary between Marion County and our Homeland. The Gaines Trace road branched off to several places, one of which was the Cotton Gin Port settlement located on the Tombigbee *Abookoshi* near present-day Amory, Mississippi.

While this site does not have any formal interpretation, a walking trail exists. The trail is a half-mile path leading from the parking lot to the *shintok*.

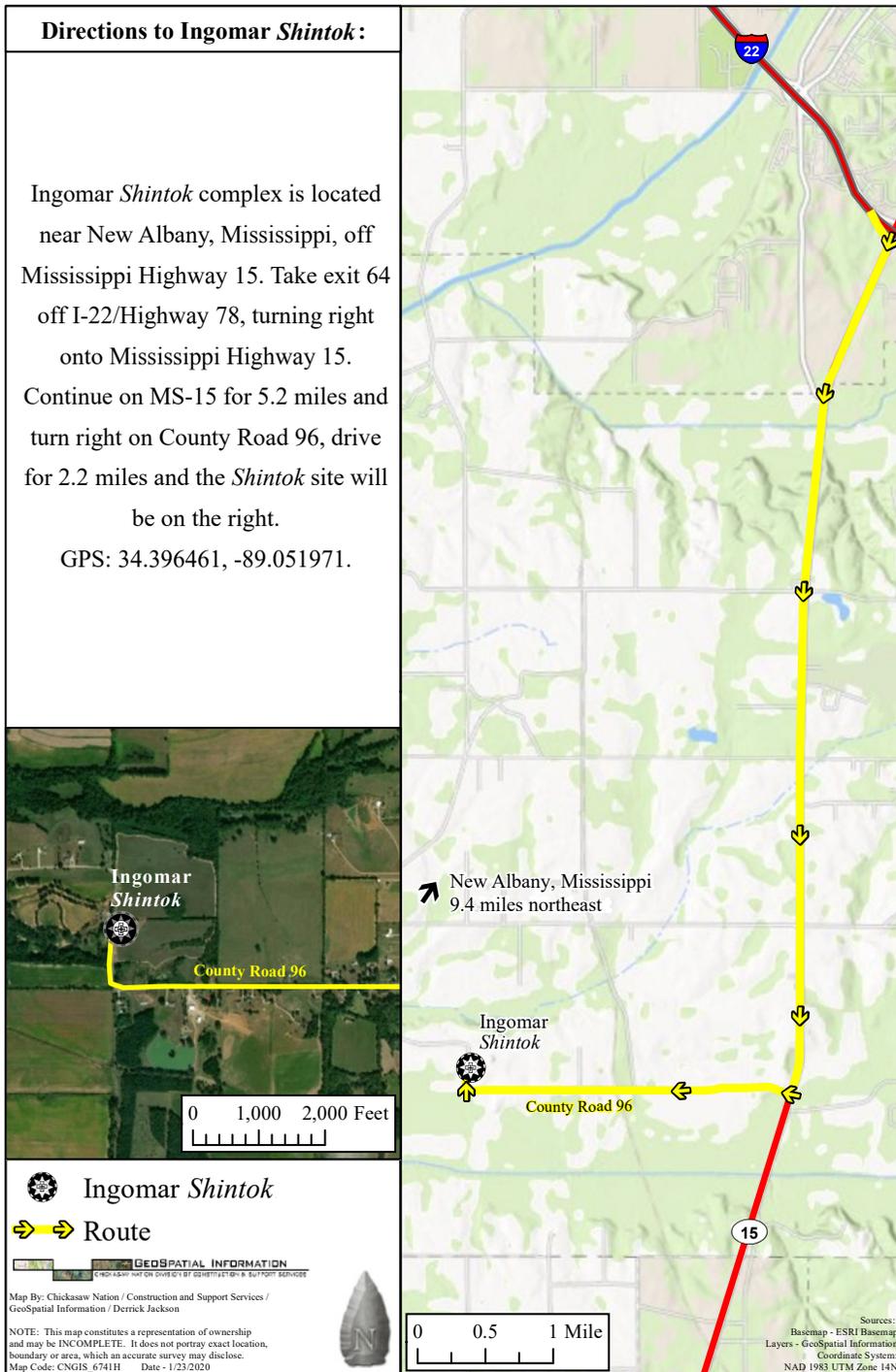


PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART



8

*Ingomar Shintok*



## SITE INFORMATION

Ingomar *Shintok* originally a large Middle Woodland cultural (100 B.C. to 500 A.D.) ceremonial complex, was reported to consist of 14 *shintok* when it was visited by Cyrus Thomas of the Smithsonian Institution's Bureau of American Ethnology in 1894, but today only the central platform *shintok* remains intact. While remnants of 11 smaller conical *shintok* remain, they are hard to see as the land was leveled during the early 1900s for agricultural purposes. While the Ingomar *Shintok* were constructed during the Middle Woodland cultural period, research suggests Southeastern Indian tribes occupied the site to a smaller degree throughout the Mississippian cultural period and the Early Historic period (1539 to 1700 A.D.) (Rafferty, 1987). The building of numerous monumental earthworks varied both in form and function during the Woodland period.

There was a historic *Chikasha* occupation here also. Fossil-shell tempered pottery sherds, iron tools such as knives and scissors, European bottle glass shards, gunflints and even a Hapsburg-period Spanish coat of arms plaque indicate a *Chikasha* hunting camp, house site or ceremonial site dating to the mid-1700s. Some *Chikasha* were known to have moved their homes from the Tupelo Blackland Prairie into this area in the early years of the 1800s.

*Ishtehotopa* (Big Hurt), the last hereditary *Chikasha minko'* (Chickasaw leader) during the removal period, lived just north of Ingomar *Shintok* and operated a ferry on the *Tulli Abookoshi*. In 1838, his extended family, approximately 129 people, left Pontotoc, Mississippi, for Indian Territory by way of Memphis, Tennessee, Little Rock, Arkansas and Fort Towson in the Choctaw Nation. During the trek west, many family members fell ill along the way and two died.



Many of the artifacts from Ingomar *Shintok* are held at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C., and a selection of artifacts are on permanent loan at the Union County Heritage Museum in New Albany, Mississippi.

Now owned and preserved by The Archaeological Conservancy, the site is open to the public. There are interpretive panels next to the parking lot, which provide information on the Middle Woodland cultural period, the building of *shintok* and the general history of the Ingomar site. In addition to the *shintok*, there is a mile-long nature trail that offers information on the lifestyles of Southeastern Middle Woodland people, as well as general facts about the flora and fauna in the area. The Union County Heritage Museum is associated with the site, offering tours and extended information about the *shintok* and hosts yearly activities for children to learn about archaeology and Southeastern Indian culture.

To access Ingomar *Shintok*, there is a small opening through the wire fence. Turn right and the *shintok* will be about 200 feet ahead.



PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART

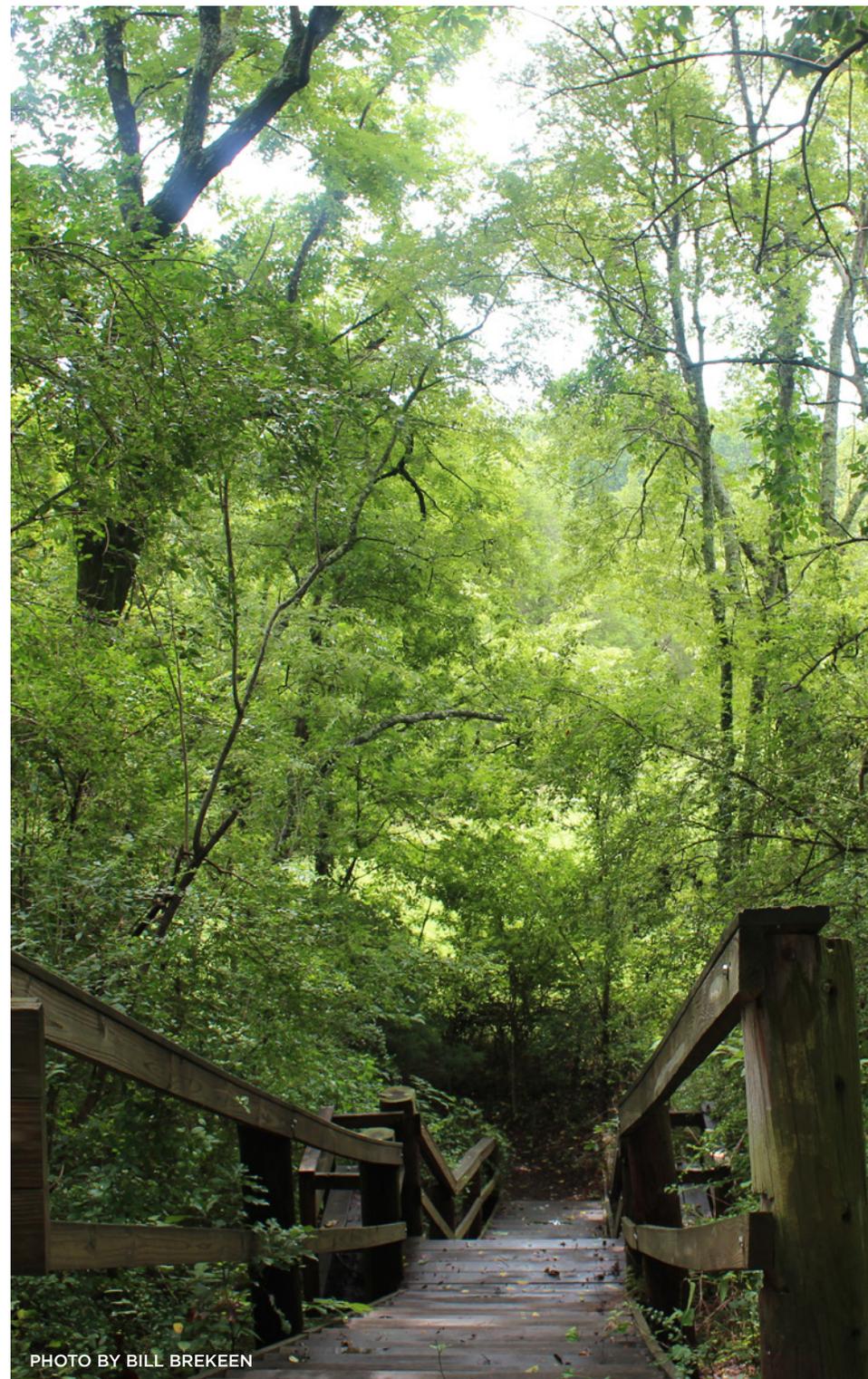
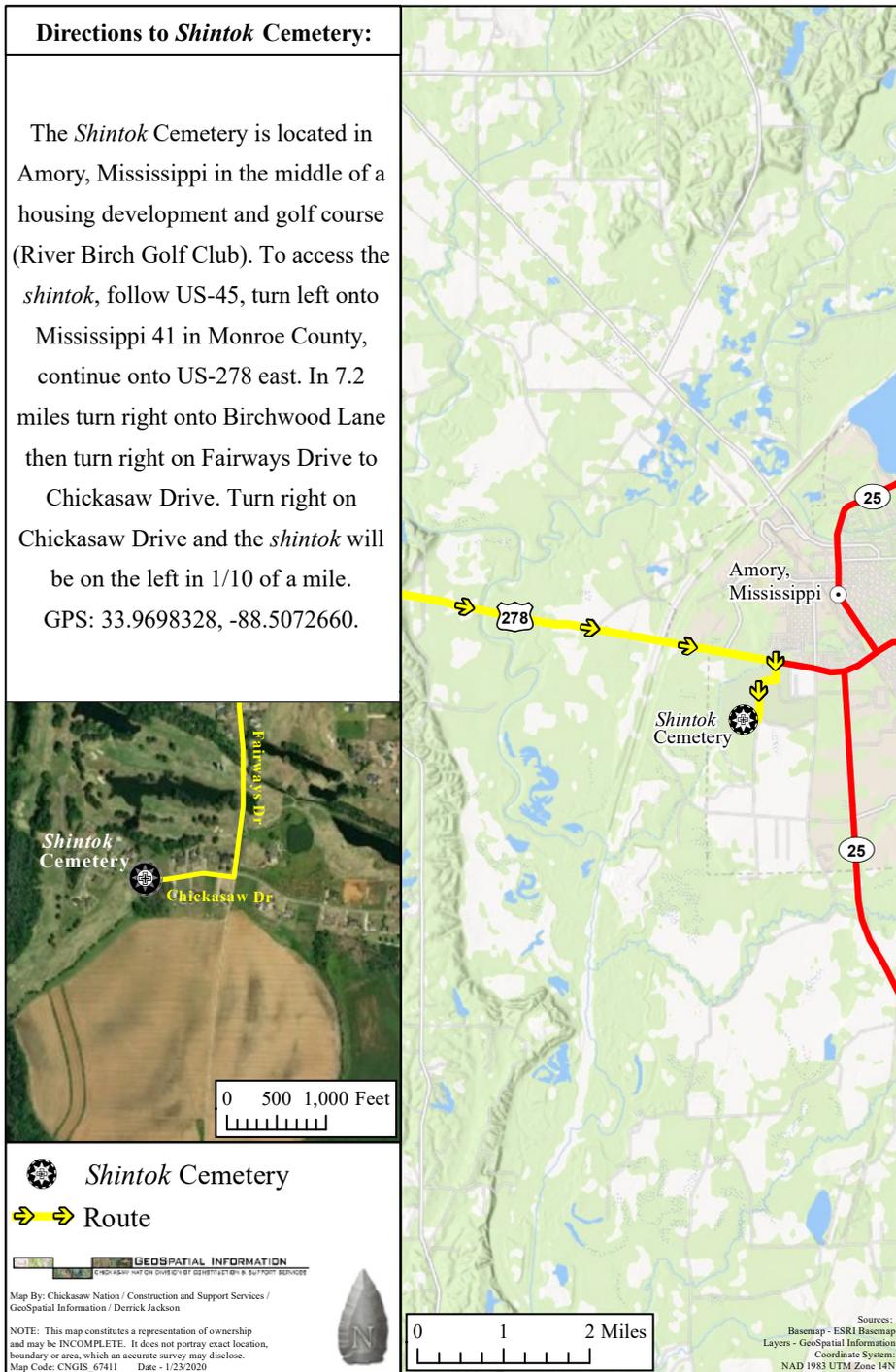


PHOTO BY BILL BREKEEN



9

*Shintok Cemetery*



## SITE INFORMATION

The conical *lokfi' to'wa'* was determined to have been constructed during the Middle Woodland cultural period (100 B.C. to 500 A.D.).

There have been no known archaeological investigations of this *shintok*. The site was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. The site is referred to as *Shintok* Cemetery due to the Nabers family, who settled in the area during the 1850s, using it as a cemetery (MDAH Archaeological Site Files).

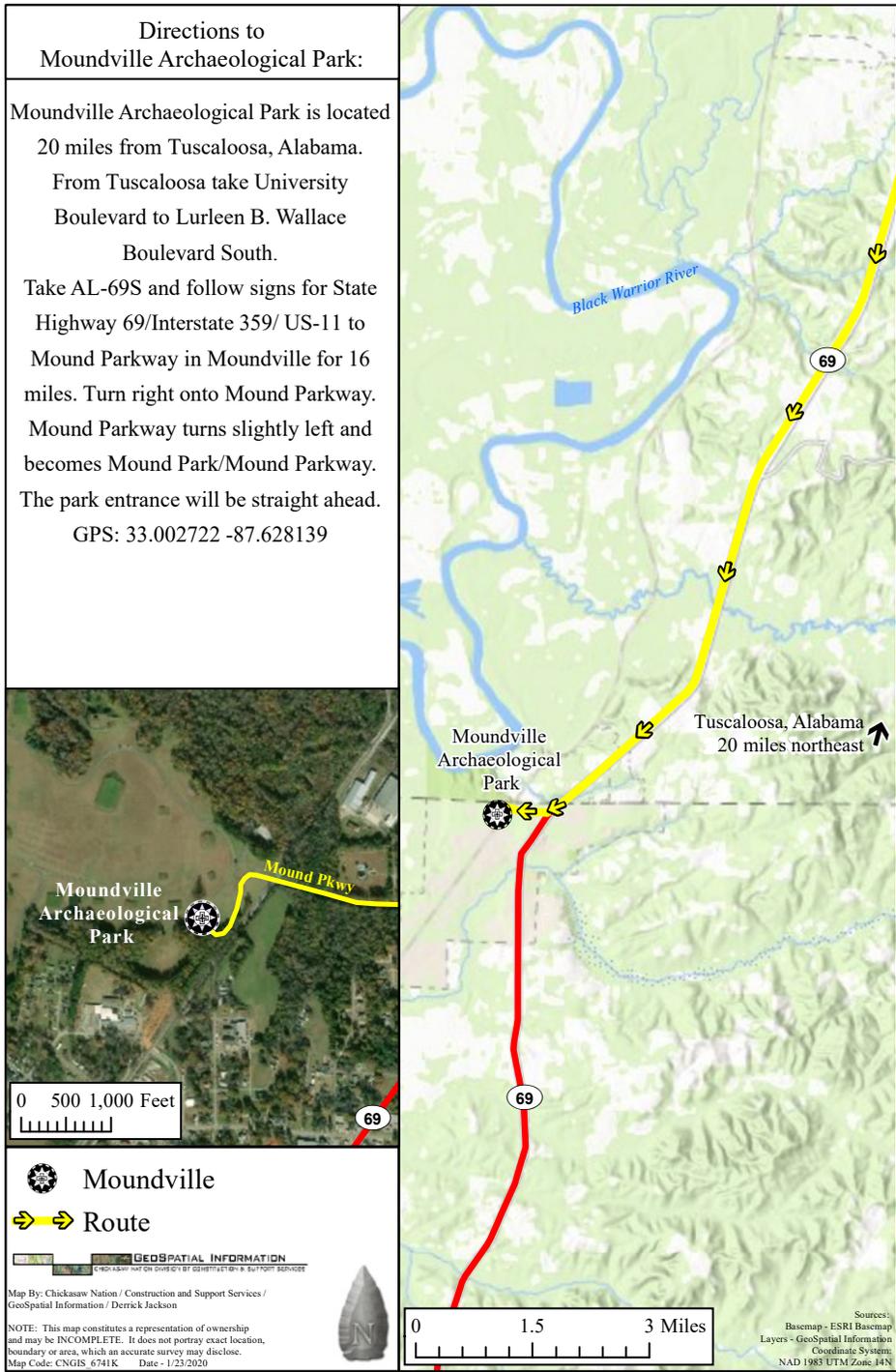
The site contains one two-sided interpretive sign. One side describes the *shintok* while the other describes the 19th century cemetery.





10

Moundville Archaeological Park



**SITE INFORMATION**

The Moundville site is a large Mississippian cultural period (A.D. 1000 to A.D. 1550) site on the *Tushka Losa Abookoshi* (Black Warrior River) in central Alabama. At the time of Moundville’s heaviest residential population, the community took the form of a 300-acre settlement built on a *sukti* overlooking the *abookoshi*. Moundville, in size and complexity second only to the Cahokia site in Illinois, was once a populous town, as well as a political center and a spiritual center.

This principal Mississippian cultural site is located near rich, easily tilled sandy soils in the flood plain of the *Tushka Losa Abookoshi*. The growth of Moundville was made possible by this major waterway, which allowed safe passage into the site by canoe and offered a quick route for trade with neighboring and distant settlements. Archaeologist speculate that Moundville was deliberately located on the banks of this major waterway, between two distinct environments, the Appalachian Mountain Chain and the Coastal Plain. The diversity of natural resources between these zones ensured survival.

The arrangement of the *shintok* and plaza gives the impression of symmetry and planning. In addition, archaeologists have found evidence of borrow pits, other public buildings and dozens of small houses constructed of pole and thatch.

This symmetry is comparable to the outline of a *Chikasha* meeting in a council house and the house is divided into four equal sections. A dividing line is placed in the middle, a fire is built in the intersection and people of descending importance sit in their places of honor around the house. (Knight, 1998:pp. Speck, 1907:pp.).



PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART



PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART

Neither the rise of Moundville nor its eventual decline is well understood by scholars. The creation of public architecture, such as the great plaza and erection of the palisade, occurred about 1200 A.D.. However, by about 1350 A.D., Moundville seems to have lost the appearance of a town but retained its ceremonial and spiritual/political functions. Moundville became spiritually significant to the people but eventually became depopulated. By the 1500s, most of the area was abandoned, leaving only a few portions of the site still occupied.

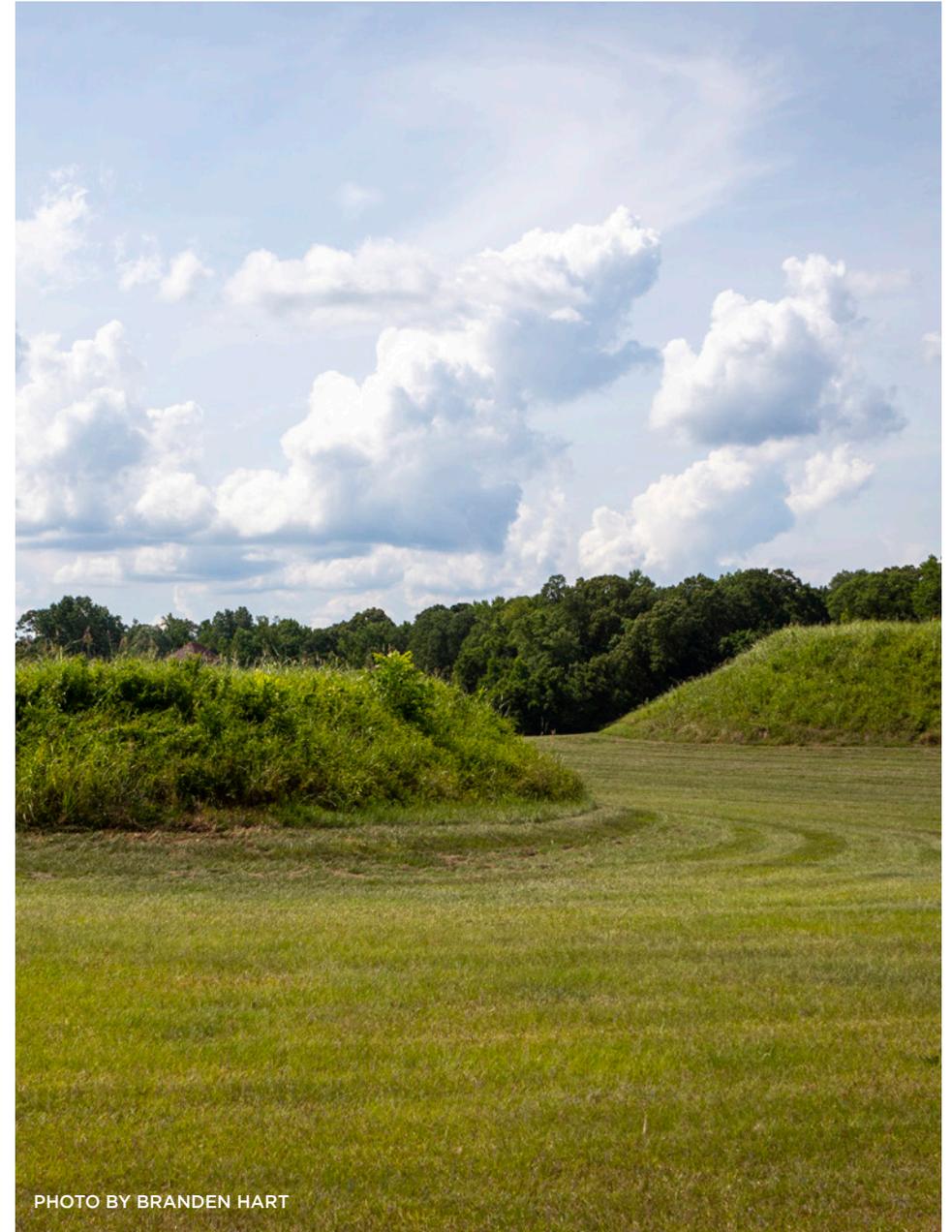


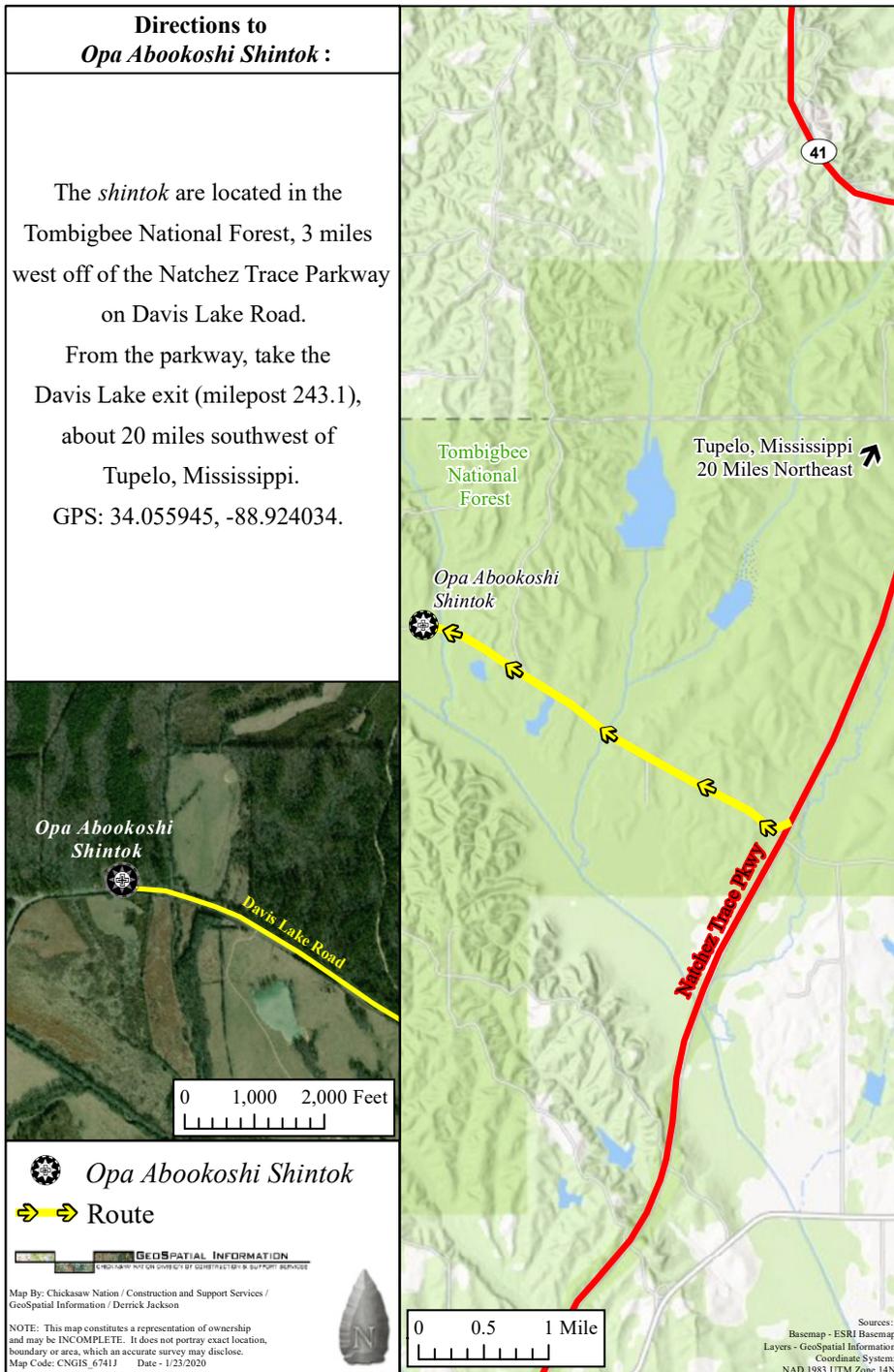
PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART

Visitors are greeted by symbols of the Southeastern Indian culture mounted on enormous wooden heraldic poles. Inside are life-size figures displaying the clothing and jewelry of Mississippian cultures, ceremonial feather decorations hand-sewn by Southeastern Indian artists, stunning pottery and other artworks.



11

*Opa Abookoshi Shintok*



## SITE INFORMATION

These Mississippian cultural period platform *shintok* were built approximately 800-900 years ago. The U.S. Forest Service oversees two of the *shintok*, including the largest 17-foot-high *Shintok* 1. They appear to have been used for about a 100-year span of time. This short life span is unique among major Mississippian ceremonial sites.

Archaeological excavations were conducted at the site in 1935 by Moreau Chambers of the Mississippi Department of Archives and History (MDAH), and in 1991- 92 by Mississippi State University. Janet Rafferty's (MSU) excavations revealed the foundation remains of a ceremonial temple or elite residence that once stood atop *Shintok* 1 (Rafferty, 1995).

The site features walkways, interpretive panels and a picnic area. Originally composed of five *shintok*, two are visible with public access and interpretation. A walking trail is present through the central plaza and possible village area.

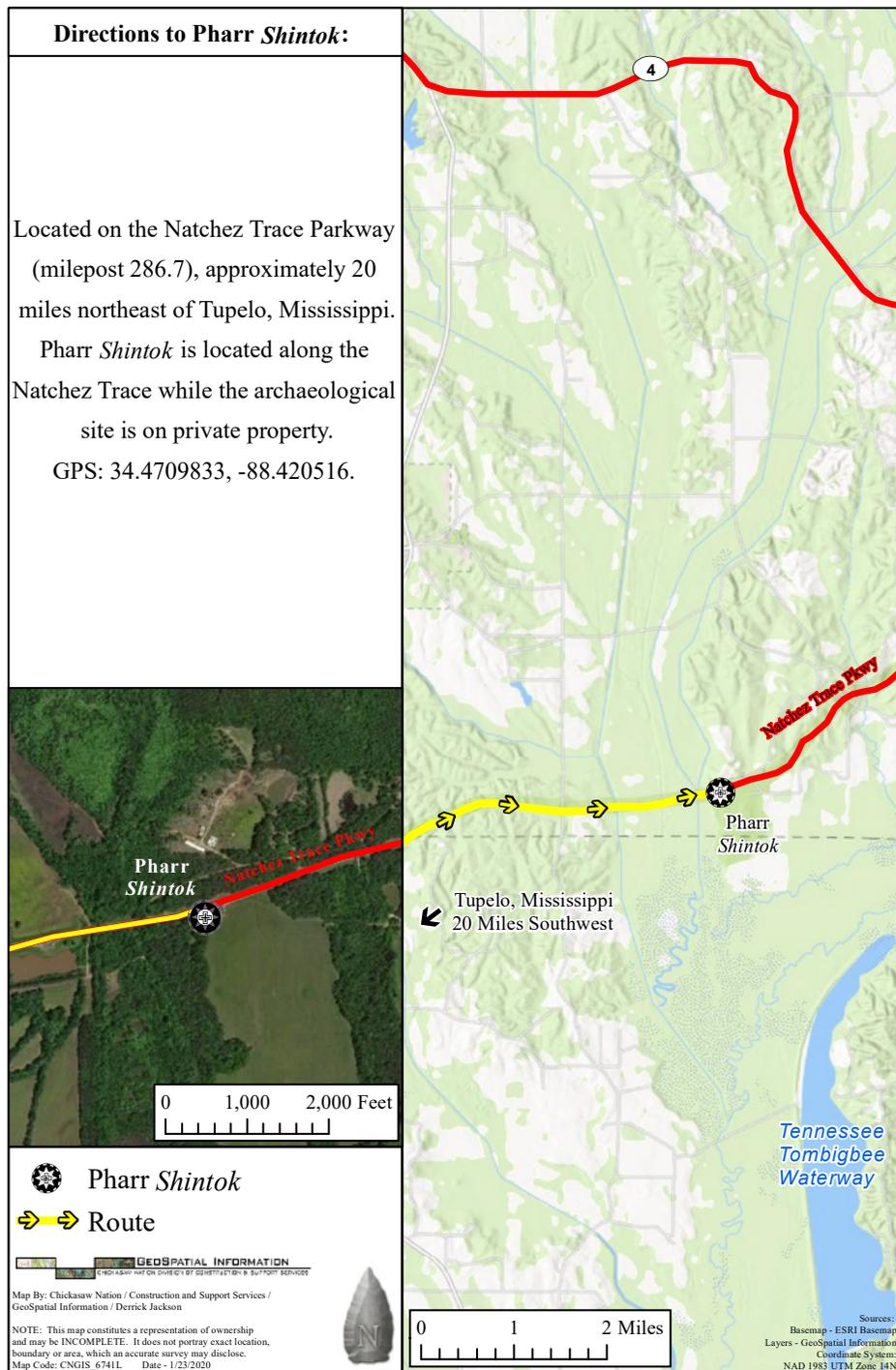


PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART



12

*Pharr Shintok*



## SITE INFORMATION

Pharr *Shintok* is the largest Middle Woodland (100 B.C. to A.D. 500) cultural site in north Mississippi and one of the largest in the southeast. It consists of eight conical *shintok* ranging from 2 to 18 feet high, the *shintok* are distributed over an area of about 85 acres. Pharr *Shintok* may not have been an actual village, but a special place where respected loved ones were mourned and buried.

Natural resources such as greenstone, mica, copper and galena did not originate in Mississippi but were imported long distances through extensive trade networks, ranging from the Great Lakes to the Florida Coast and east to the Atlantic ocean (Bohannon, 1972). Items imported through trade networks were used to make ceremonial pieces and jewelry.

Greenstone was used to make jewelry pieces and platform pipes. Pipes were used for smoking, carved from stone or made of pottery with stem holes drilled through the platforms. Mica was pounded or crushed into a powder and used to make designs on pottery. Galena (metallic lead ore) was also used to make silver jewelry pieces, such as pendants or armbands. Pottery was tempered with crushed rock or grit. In 1966, four of the *shintok* were excavated by the Natchez Trace Parkway, National Park Service. Artifacts found included copper spools and other copper objects, decorated ceramic vessels, a sheet of mica and a greenstone platform pipe.

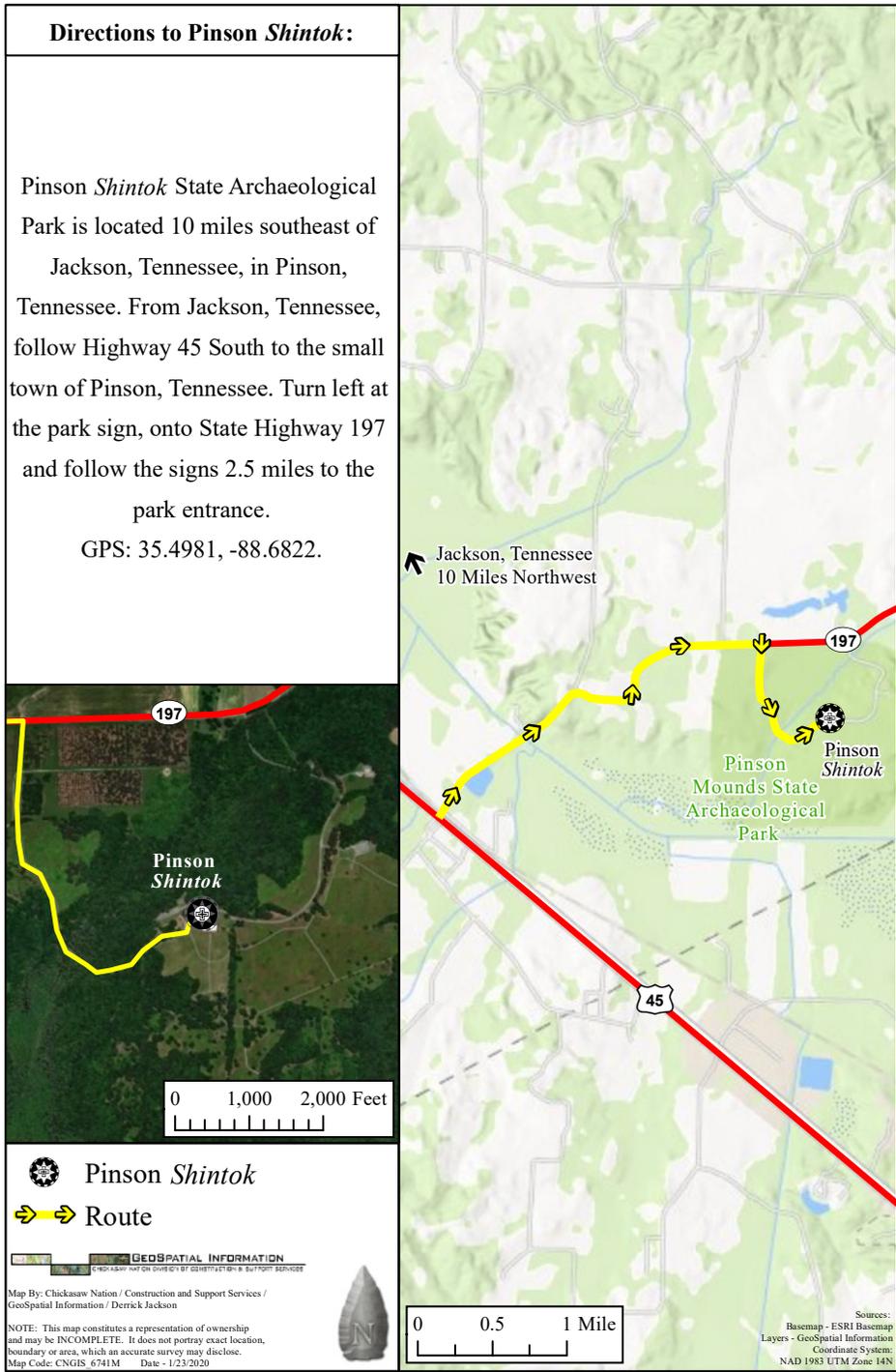
The National Park Service maintains a covered interpretative exhibit, picnic area, restrooms and a parking lot.





13

Pinson *Shintok* State Archaeological Park



**SITE INFORMATION**

Pinson *Shintok* is the largest Middle Woodland cultural period (100 B.C. to 500 A.D.) *shintok* center in the United States. The site consists of over 17 *shintok*, an earthen enclosure, habitation areas and a multitude of other earthworks on more than 400 acres. Saul's *Shintok* at 72 feet, is the second largest *shintok* by height in the United States. The site was densely occupied during the Early Woodland cultural period and Middle Woodland cultural period, and later became a mostly vacant ceremonial center that native peoples traveled to for important events (Mainfort, 1986).

These *shintok* were most likely built as a ceremonial center for significant cultural events, such as the Green Corn Ceremony. Since *tunchi'* was such a vital part of our food chain, it also played an important part in our religious and ceremonial life. One of the most important social traditions among Southeastern Indian tribes, the Green Corn Ceremony was an expression of gratitude for a successful *tunchi'* crop. These *shintok* were also determined to have been built as markers for the solar equinox and *tohmi pulli* solstice to mark the rising or setting of the *hushi* (sun).

Pinson *Shintok* was first documented in 1820 by a surveying crew and the site was named for one of the surveyors, Joel Pinson. In 1916 Smithsonian Institution archaeologist William Myer investigated and mapped the site, stating he believed Pinson *Shintok* was built according to a master plan. Evidence suggests that the placement of *Shintok* 5, 12, 28 and 29 may be markers for the solar equinox and solstice sunrise and the possibility of sunsets. Further investigations were conducted during the 1960s by Dan Morse and Richard Polhemus who determined there was a substantial Early Woodland occupation, but the *shintok* were mostly built during the Middle Woodland period. Citizens of Pinson, Tennessee and the National Park Service requested the state purchase and preserve the land in the late 1950s and 60s. The site was purchased in 1965 and added to the National Register of Historic Places the same year (Mainfort, 1986).

Site features paved and non-paved walkways and trails, interpretive panels and picnic shelters. The museum focuses on Tennessee's prehistory with exhibits on pre-contact tools, trade, ceremony, archaeological fieldwork and the history of the Pinson site.

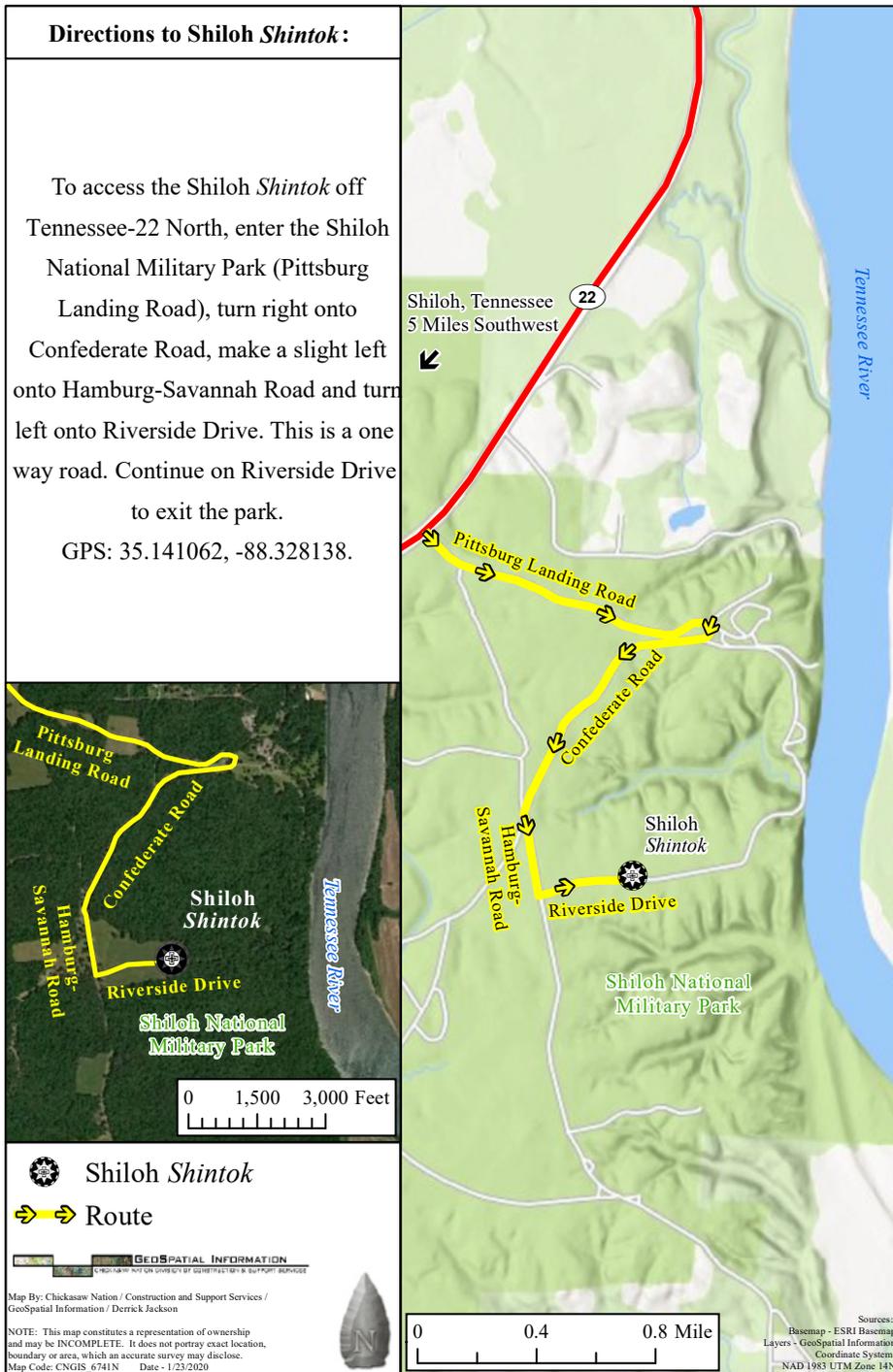


PHOTO BY BRANDEN HART



14

Shiloh *Shintok* at Shiloh National Military Park



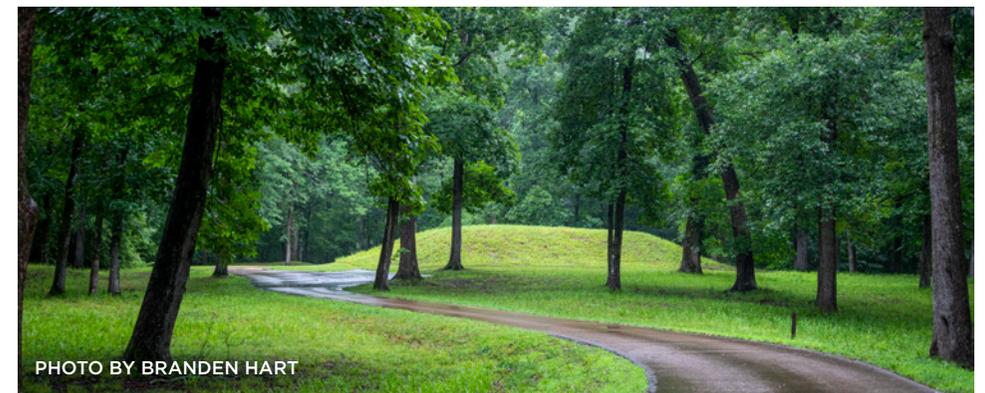
## SITE INFORMATION

The Mississippian cultural period (1000 to 1400 A.D.) *shintok* complex located within the Shiloh National Military Park, National Park Service, is a fortified ceremonial site situated on a large *sukti* overlooking the Tennessee *Abookoshi*. The site contains six large Mississippian cultural period platform and Late Woodland (550 to 1000 A.D.) conical *shintok*. Dozens of small circular rises or house *shintok* are present, along with a large central plaza and village area. The summit of *shintok* A offers a commanding view of the Tennessee *Abookoshi* Valley (Anderson et. al., 2013).

Structures at Shiloh *Shintok* included a council house for meetings, spiritual structures and residences for *minko'*. The government of these *shintok* centers exchanged prestige goods as a token of friendship or to strengthen relationships if they were “of the same fire.” Being of the same *lowak* determined who should receive invitations to ceremonies, feasts or gaming events usually held in the spring. Houses were made of wattle and daub and the remains of these structures can be found throughout the Shiloh *Shintok* site. The collapsed daub walls still stand as low rings or *shintok*. Villages along the Tennessee *Abookoshi* provided *nani'* (fish) as a food source. The most effective fishing technique was using traps and weirs. When the current was swift or the water was too shallow, traps were made with rocks. Other food sources were farming and hunting.

Shiloh *Shintok* is the largest Mississippian cultural *shintok* complex in the Tennessee *Abookoshi* Valley and likely functioned as the capitol of a paramount territory. The leadership of the site possibly controlled many smaller *shintok* sites and a large stretch of the Tennessee *Abookoshi* Valley during the middle (1050 to 1350 A.D.) and late (1350 to 1400 A.D.) Mississippian cultural periods. As warfare in the region increased throughout the period the site was encircled by a wooden palisade (Anderson et. al., 2013).

The site contains a parking area with information kiosks. The Shiloh *Shintok* Trail is a 1.3 mile loop with 13 wayside interpretive exhibits.



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- The Jones Archaeological Museum, • ([Moundville.ua.edu/moundville/](http://Moundville.ua.edu/moundville/)) *Dr. Vernon James Knight, Associate Professor of Anthropology at the University of Alabama, is the Museum's Curator of Southeastern Archaeology.*
- TN State Parks Website [TNStateParks.com/parks/about/pinson-mounds](http://TNStateParks.com/parks/about/pinson-mounds)





