

Mounds Lost and Found: New Research at the Kincaid Site

In 2003 SIUC archaeologists conducted test excavations at the southeast corner of the main plaza at Kincaid to evaluate the area for possible construction of a small interpretive platform and parking area. This article describes the 2003 work with particular reference to the Mississippian occupation and a “missing” platform mound in that area. The much earlier Baumer occupation also encountered in these excavations is described in two other articles (Butler 2006; Lapham 2010) also available on this web site.

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Mounds Lost and Found: New Research at the Kincaid Site

Brian M. Butler and Paul D. Welch

The Mississippian mound center of Kincaid has been understood largely on the basis of the University of Chicago investigations that took place 60 years ago. New research is now underway, aimed at clarifying the organization and extent of the site as well as investigating some smaller possible mound features. This paper presents the results of the 2003 investigations of Mx², a putative mound situated at the southeast corner of the main plaza. The Chicago researchers were uncertain as to the existence of an intentionally constructed mound feature, but the new work clearly demonstrates that a low platform mound was built there, probably early in the Kincaid site sequence. This low mound was later capped with a thick layer of midden-like deposits. The precise nature of this Middle or Late Kincaid “cap” is unclear but we believe that it was an intentional construction rather than an accretional deposit. In the 20th century the mound has been largely leveled by cultivation and earthmoving.

The Mississippian mound center of Kincaid in Pope and Massac counties is largely known to archaeologists from the work that University of Chicago researchers conducted at the site from 1934 to 1944. This research program was summarized in a major publication (Cole et al. 1951) which, until very recently, stood as the primary authority on the site. The central feature of the site is a large plaza flanked by five major platform mounds. Mound Mx⁷ marks the southwest corner of the plaza near the bank of Avery Lake; Mx⁸ and Mx⁹ form the west side of the plaza; and the long narrow mound Mx¹⁰ forms the northern side of the plaza with two small mounds (Mx⁵ and Mx⁶) flanking its east end. Mx⁴ stands part-way down the east side of the plaza. Today there is no discernable mound at the southeast corner of the plaza opposite Mx⁷.

In their initial survey of the site, the Chicago researchers designated a larger number of earthen bumps and rises on the landscape as mounds, also indicated by the superscript “o” in the site number.¹ These are shown in one of the frontispiece maps of the published volume (Cole et al. 1951; see Figure 1). Many of these small “mounds” were not subsequently investigated and receive little or no subsequent mention in the published volume. One of those putative mounds, Mx², is located at the southeast corner of the main plaza. Chicago investigators excavated in the immediate vicinity of this mound, but, in the end, were uncertain as to the existence of a mound construction in this location. This paper re-examines the case of mound Mx² based on new fieldwork conducted in 2003.

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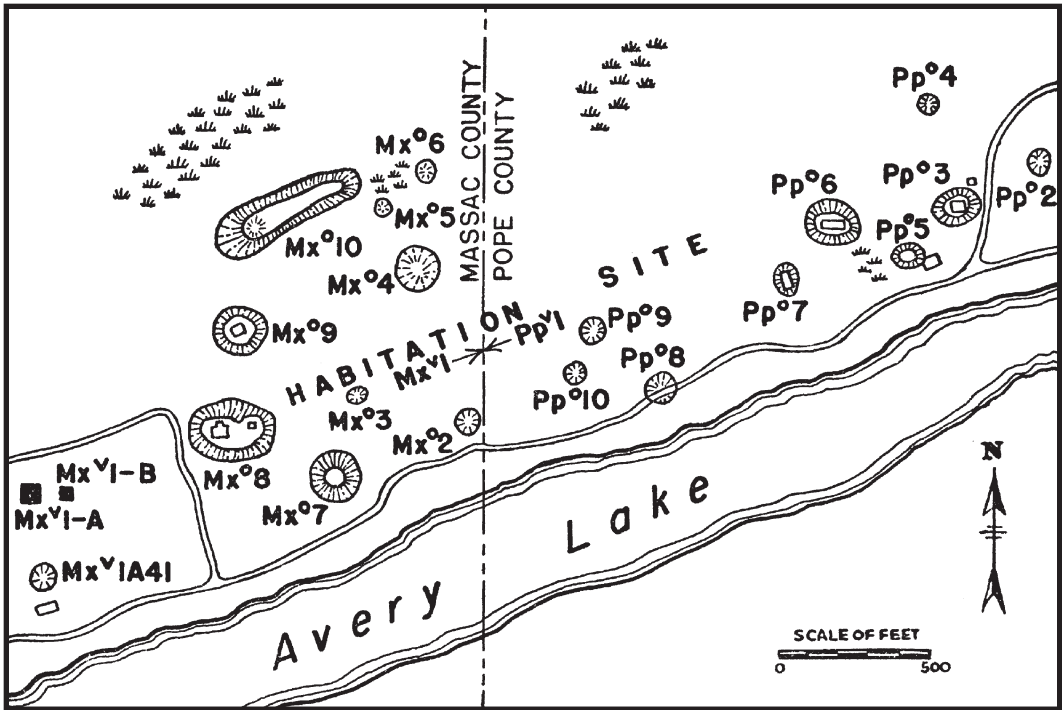


Figure 1. The Kincaid site (Cole et al. 1951:Frontispiece).

Chicago Investigations in the Mx⁰2 area

Topographically, the area of concern for Mx⁰2 is the western terminus of a low ridge that parallels the bank of Avery Lake. This location represents the southeast corner of the main plaza of the site and is bisected by the north-south boundary between Massac and Pope counties, which is now a wooded fenceline. Between the putative mound location and Mx⁰4 to the north lies the end of a broad swale, such that the north side of the ridge terminus is strongly sloped and no mound construction was feasible in the lowlying space between Mx⁰2 and Mx⁰4. The University of Chicago conducted substantial excavations on the north slope of this ridge (Figure 2; see Cole et al. 1951:38–41). This work was an outgrowth of the “Mx^v1D Test Pit Project” that was initially intended as an effort to examine the extent of habitation within the plaza. A large number of test units were excavated along grid axes that intersected on a low rise within the plaza northeast of Mx⁰7. This rise had previously been designated Mx⁰3. The rise eventually became the focus of an extensive excavation labeled as Mx^v1D Section 1. Test units near the east end of the long east-west axis intersected the north slope of the Mx⁰2 area on an oblique angle and several units encountered deep, complex deposits. These eastern units were expanded into three irregular excavation blocks

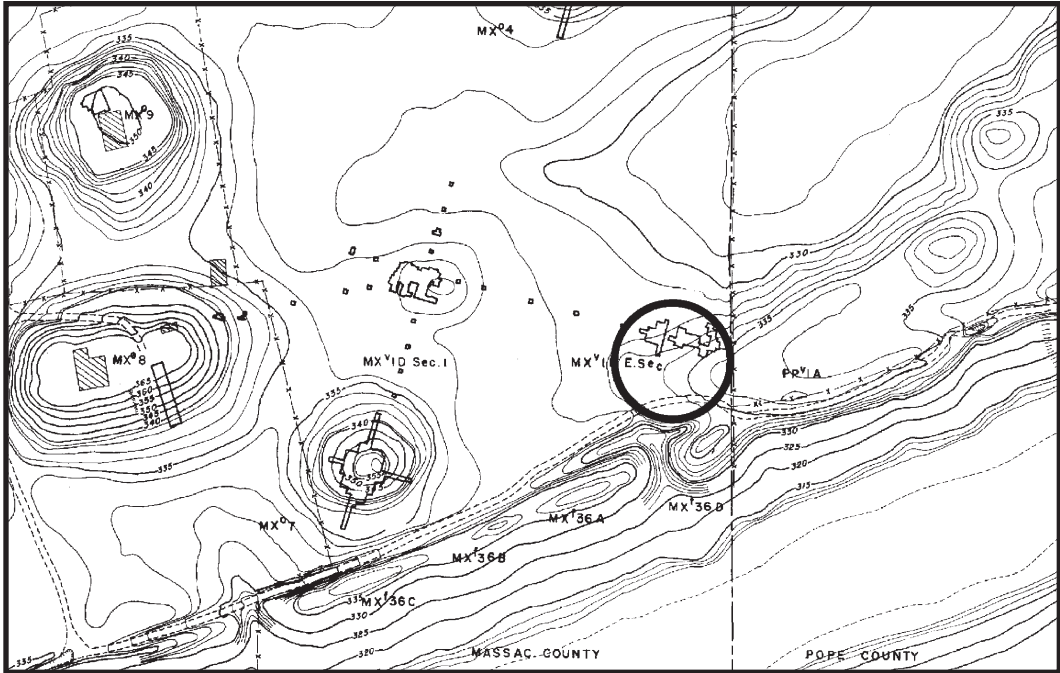


Figure 2. University of Chicago topographic map with the Mx² area circled (from Cole et al. 1951: Fig. 69).

collectively known as Mx¹D East Section (Figure 3a). John Bennett directed this work in 1939 and 1940.

The brief published description of these excavations reports a Baumer (Early-Middle Woodland) midden layer found on an old ground surface at the base of the deposits. In some places the Baumer midden had been dug away prehistorically, such that sterile subsoil was directly overlain by Mississippian deposits. On the lower and mid-slopes of the ridge, excavation encountered a series of superimposed and burned Mississippian structures embedded within thick refuse-bearing deposits. In the mid-slope area Bennett also identified what he thought was the downslope terminus of a low, basket-loaded mound structure (Figure 3b). The size and shape of that first construction, as seen in profile, are initially puzzling until one remembers that the Chicago trenches encountered the slope on an oblique angle and that the profile shows a cut across the northeast corner of the feature. Bennett thought all these deposits, whether visibly basket-loaded or not, had been intentionally dumped to elevate the area rather than being slow accumulations of refuse. His interpretation was not fully accepted by senior project staff, and the discussion in the published volume mentions basket-loading but avoids calling the deposit a mound. We reviewed the field records of this work, which are contained in the Center for Archaeological Investigations (CAI) collections, and on the basis of Bennett's notes and stratigraphic profile drawings concluded that it was very likely that the remains of a low platform mound were located on the ridge crest.

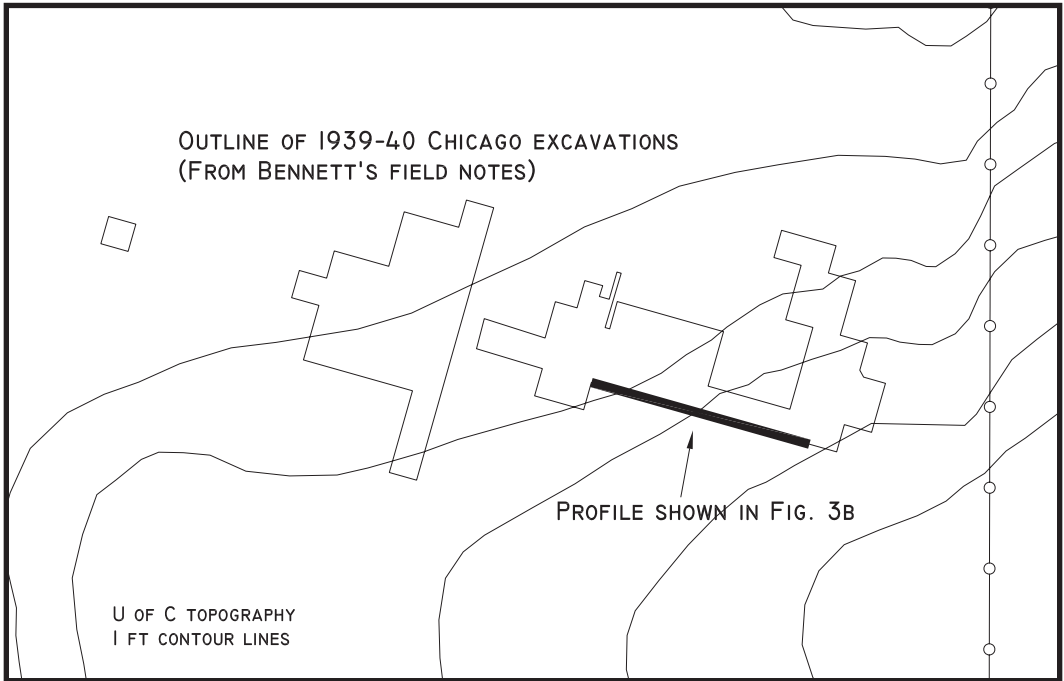


Figure 3a. University of Chicago Mx^v1D East Section excavations and location of the stratigraphic profile shown in Figure 3b.

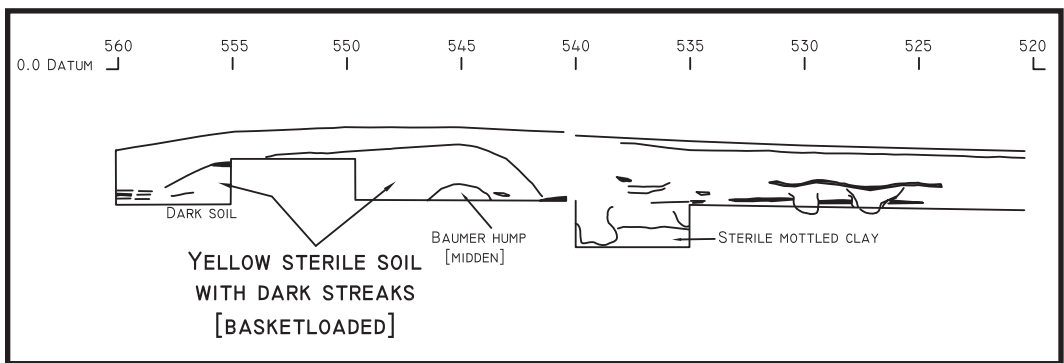


Figure 3b. Bennett's Mx^v1D East Section profile drawing; view is to the south.

2003 Investigations

Our fieldwork was undertaken to assess an area where the local support group, the Kincaid Mounds Support Organization (KMSO), had proposed to construct a small parking lot with a visitor platform overlooking the plaza. The suggested location was the ridge terminus adjacent to and immediately north of the Avery Lake frontage road, right at the Massac-Pope county line—in other words, immediately south of Bennett's excavations. The fieldwork was undertaken by CAI on a largely volunteer basis using Southern Illinois University Carbondale students and contributed labor from the KMSO. Preliminary work commenced in late July, with the actual excavations taking place between August 1–17, 2003. At the time of the investigation, the project area was in mature corn.

We began by clearing a 40 x 40 m area in the corner of the cornfield (see Figure 4). The projected impact of the proposed construction would be largely limited to the southeastern 20 x 20 m block, but the requirements of useful geophysical work dictated a larger spatial frame so that the 40 m block was used. The geophysical survey, using both field gradient magnetometry and soil resistivity, was conducted by R. Berle Clay. Although the geophysical surveys were useful in identifying other kinds of features, they did not provide any clear indications of a mound construction. Next, we removed 27 3-inch bucket auger cores at 5 m intervals. Most of these came from the southeast 20 x 20 m block, with two additional cores to the north to provide a longer profile of the ridge cross-section. The coring results amplified and extended the results of our test excavations.

We also recorded topographic data from the entire 40 x 40 m area. The topographic data suggest that the end of the ridge crest has lost considerable soil since the time of the Chicago excavations. Elevations of the ridge crest within the cultivated field on the Massac county side are now around 50 cm lower than the level ground surface in the wooded fence line about 10 m away. The detailed Chicago topographic map shows no such abrupt elevation differential. The soil loss likely results in part from a combination of cultivation and sheet erosion, but we also know that some parts of the ridge were altered in 1953.

In that year the county realigned the unpaved road that runs along the lakefront. In the project area, the road had originally looped to the north around a deep drainage feature at the west end of the ridge (see Cole et al. 1951:Figure 69). The roadwork straightened the road and mostly filled the old drainage feature, which today is a shallower feature passing through a culvert under the road. The process required a considerable volume of fill. Comparisons of the modern surface with the Chicago map suggests that, at a minimum, areas on both sides of the road were scraped down to generate the fill. The 2003 excavations clearly showed that the south slope of the ridge terminus was truncated, with the degree of truncation increasing toward the road. We are uncertain if the 1953 work was responsible for some of the missing 50 cm of sediment on the ridge crest. That is possible, but given the effects of cultivation in the intervening 50 years it is impossible to determine.

The final stage of the fieldwork was the excavation of five 1 x 2 m test units at selected locations within the southeastern 20 m block. Only one of those units was placed at the ridge crest. The following discussion focuses on the results of the investigation that are pertinent to the issue of the putative mound feature.

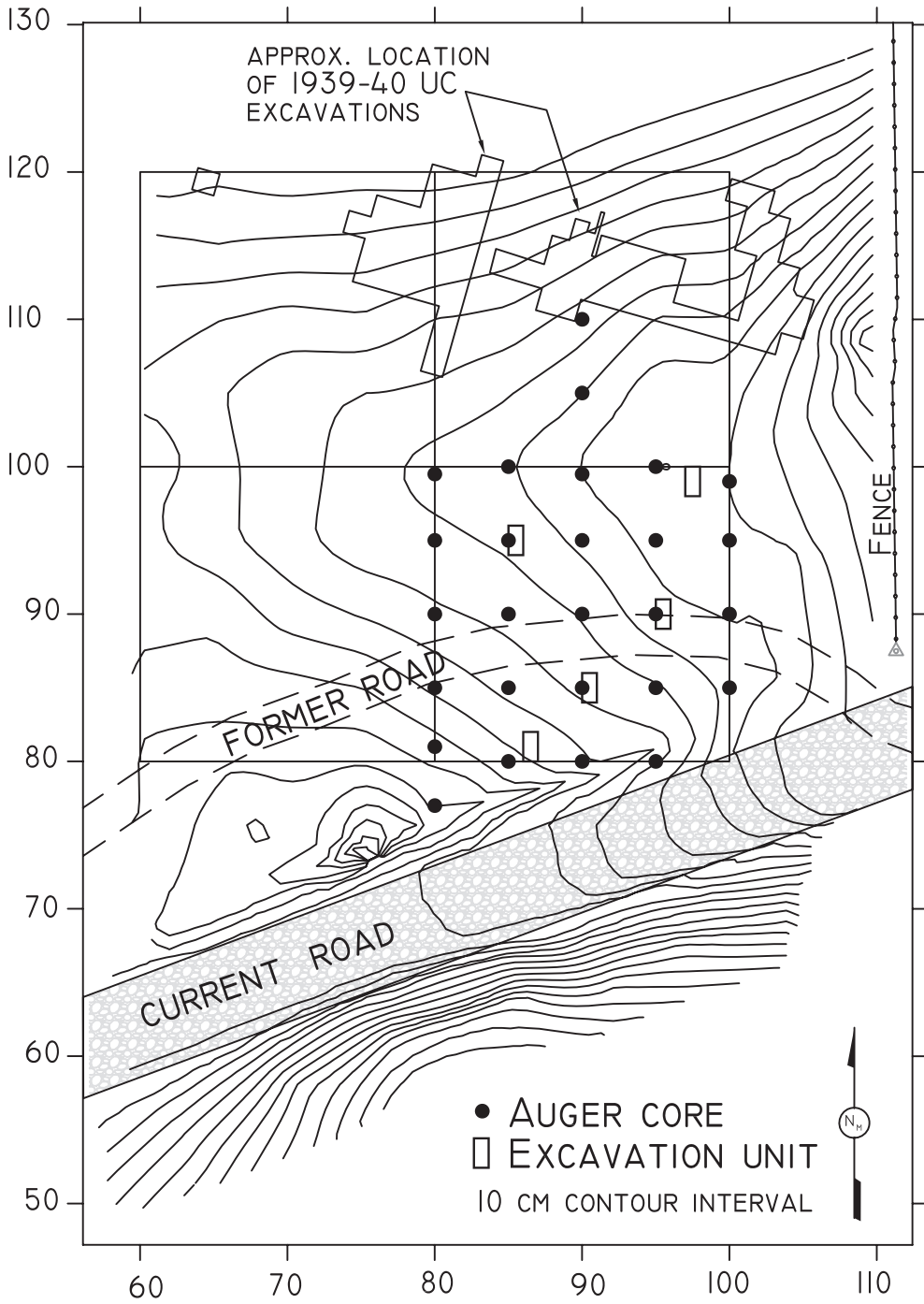


Figure 4. Area of 2003 fieldwork, showing auger cores and excavation units.

Results

The 2003 investigations do confirm that a low platform mound existed on the ridge terminus at the southeast corner of the plaza. It is difficult to specify where the southern margin of this mound was, both because of the loss of surface soil through erosion and because of the scraping-away of deposits during the 1953 road realignment. It seems likely, however, that the mound primarily extended northward from the ridge crest. The mound had been built in at least two stages, atop a land surface that has Baumer phase midden and numerous pit features. Surprisingly, the Late Woodland Lewis occupation is poorly represented in this area of the site. Only small numbers of Late Woodland sherds were recovered from the excavations and no Late Woodland features were identified. And, as Bennett had noted in 1939, prior to constructing the mound, the Mississippian residents had dug away part of the thin, rich Baumer midden, exposing sterile subsoil. This is evident from the auger cores and from the one test unit (97E 98N) excavated through the mound deposits.

Test Unit 97E 98N

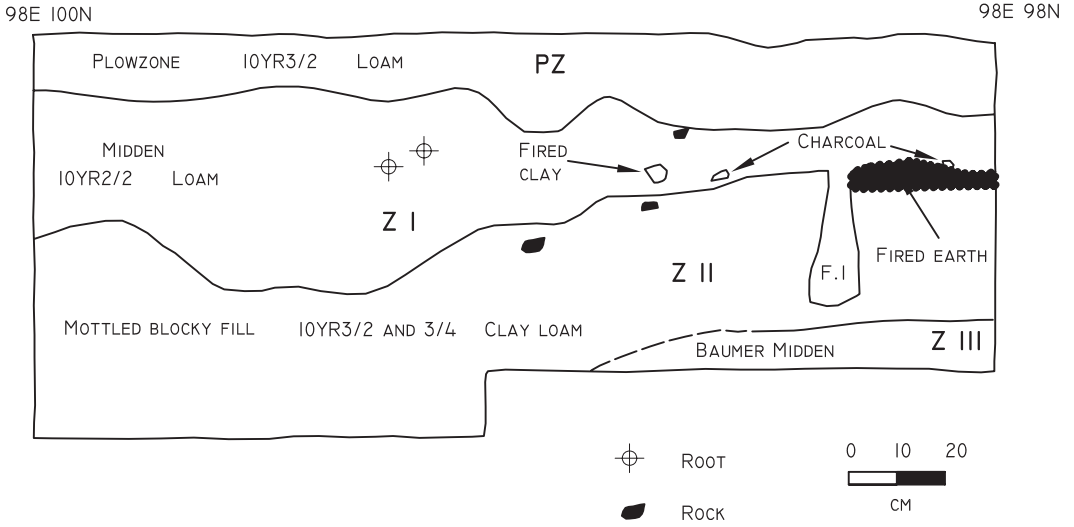
This unit was placed on the crest of the low ridge near the northeast corner of the 20 m block under investigation. This unit was specifically intended to resolve the question of whether a mound feature existed on the ridge crest, and it proved to have the most complex stratification of the five units (Figure 5). The entire unit was excavated to a depth of 70 cmbs in six arbitrary levels, with the northern half excavated an additional 15 cm (70–85 cmbs, Level 7) to get some additional depth to ensure that excavation got below the base of the mound fill. Stratification was very difficult to read in this unit and proved especially difficult to see in the east and west walls.

The plowzone averaged 20 cm in thickness, but east-west plow scars were evident in the 20 cm floor. Below the plowzone is Zone I, a dark midden-like deposit rich in Mississippian refuse. Ceramics were plentiful, but lithic items less so. Animal bone was present in some quantity, sometimes in relatively good condition. The thickness of this deposit proved to be highly variable across the unit, anywhere from 12 to almost 40 cm, but that was discovered only later during profiling. Figure 5a shows the east wall profile and illustrates the irregular boundary between Zone I and the underlying Zone II.

In the southeast corner of the unit, a short segment of wall trench (Feature 1) was identified coming out of the east wall at the 30 cm level. In the southeast corner of the unit there is a layer of burned earth and charcoal. Though the burned earth and charcoal lie at the level where the wall trench was first seen, examination of the profile suggests that the two are probably unrelated. The wall trench extends only 17 cm below the burned earth and charcoal, suggesting that the structure it derives from was at a higher level, essentially up in the plowzone. In addition to the wall trench, six postholes were identified at the 30 cm level.

In the south end of the unit, at a depth of around 42 cmbs, a distinctly different deposit (Zone II) was encountered: a tough mottled sediment that was a mixture of subsoil silts and clays with some midden soil and cultural material. There were fewer artifacts than in the overlying deposit. Zone II is the first (i.e., lowest) mound construction stage; we believe it equates to the basket-loaded mound construction described in the University of Chicago excavations 10–15 m to the northwest. In the south profile, where this construction stage

a



b

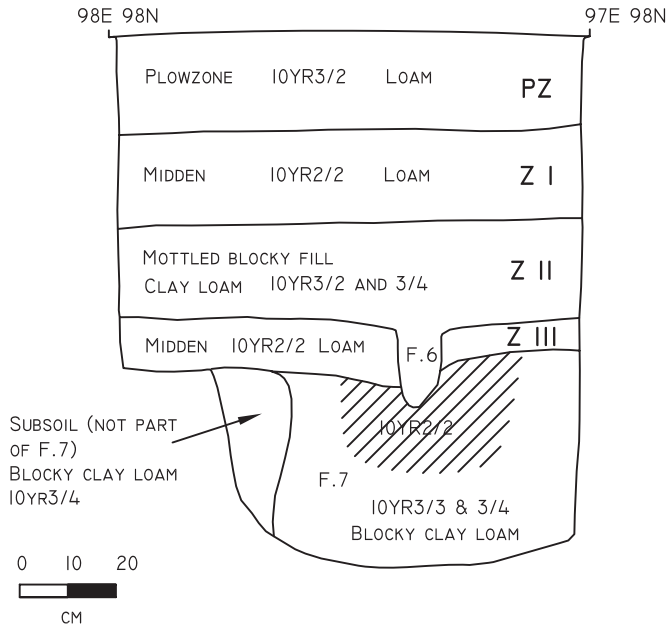


Figure 5. Profiles of Unit 97E 98N: (a) east wall; (b) south wall.

could be seen most clearly, this zone is approximately 20 cm thick. Further north the thickness of Zone II is uncertain because we could not see a clear transition between the lower part of this fill (which contained very few artifacts) and the underlying sterile subsoil. The upper surface of the Zone II construction stage is very uneven because of intrusive digging that originated in the midden-like zone above it.

In the southern half of the unit the Zone II mound fill lies atop Zone III, a ca. 10 cm thick remnant of a Baumer (Middle Woodland) A-horizon and midden, encountered at 60 cmbs. This layer exists only in the southern-most 30 to 40 cm of the unit. Further north the layer was scraped away as part of the process of erecting the first low mound stage. As noted above, we could not see a clear distinction between the underlying sterile subsoil and the Zone II mound fill. Zone III contained broken rock, some bone, and Baumer ceramics.

As excavation of the remnant Baumer layer proceeded, it became evident that a large Baumer pit (Feature 7; see Figure 5b) extended out of the south profile. Intrusive into the top of this Baumer pit was a short segment of a north-south oriented Mississippian wall trench (Feature 6) coming out of the unit's south wall. The wall trench, which had a light-colored fill, was clearly visible as an intrusion in the dark Baumer pit, but was not visible higher in the Mississippian deposit. However, the very shallow depth (ca. 14 cm) of the visible portion of the wall trench makes it likely that the trench originated at the top of Zone II, and it likely represents a structure associated with the first mound stage.

Auger Cores

The 27 auger cores provided a systematic look at subsurface deposits and depths within the area of concern. The cores ranged in depth from a minimum of 54 cmbs at 80E 81N at the southwest corner of the grid to 133 cm at 100E 85N, the latter penetrating into a large Baumer pit feature. Seven of the augers were dug to depths of 110 cm or greater. Because they do not yield continuous cores, bucket augers are not good for discriminating fine stratigraphic distinctions, but they do suffice for gross characterization and identification of major soil distinctions.

Cores on or near the crest showed the presence of deep cultural deposits whose lower portions were clearly not midden and contained few artifacts. Figure 6 shows the north-south transect of auger cores on the 95 East line, which includes the two cores placed north of the 20 x 20 m block. What is immediately apparent, exaggerated by the diagram's compressed horizontal scale, is the asymmetrical nature of cultural deposits on the old ridge feature. The deposits are thicker on the north slope than on the south, and this represents mound construction from the ridge center out over the north slope. Note that the 95E 105 N core encountered what seemed to be two different burned floors at depth, just as Bennett had seen a few meters away in 1939 (Cole et al. 1951:39-40). The magnetometry survey also indicated large burned features in this area. The cores thus augment the picture obtained from the test unit and provide some additional information on the potential size of the initial construction.

Chronology

The age of the first mound stage cannot be accurately determined, though we suspect it may have been built early in the Kincaid sequence. In part, this suspicion derives from

the absence of Mississippian artifacts in the submound (Baumer) midden. Also, Cole et al. (1951:39) report that pottery associated with a house whose floor cuts into the Baumer midden was of the Early Kincaid period. Unfortunately, we recovered relatively few artifacts from the Zone II deposits in our test unit, and none of these are of great use in dating the mound construction within the Kincaid sequence. Levels 5 and 6 represent the cleanest sample of mound fill; portions of Level 4 are from Zone II deposits but because of the irregular boundary between Zones I and II, much of the pottery from Level 4 appears to be from Zone I. Levels 5 and 6 contained some recycled Baumer pottery along with Mississippian pottery that exhibits both shell and mixed shell and grog tempers. There is one very small incised sherd that may be a fragment of Matthews Incised, *var. Beckwith*, but the identification is not definite.

Evidence for dating the upper deposits—Zone I and the plowzone—is better, because the pottery sample is much larger albeit highly fragmented. The overall impression is that the ceramics belong largely to the middle part of the sequence with only a few items that could be early or late. Two Angel Negative Painted plate rims are present; there are narrow intermediate handles (*sensu* Hilgeman 2000) but no wide strap handles, and there are no plain pans. There is also one example of Matthews Incised, *var. Beckwith*, but no O'Byam Incised. This assessment agrees with that of the Chicago investigators who concluded that the bulk of the midden-like deposits on the north slope, with the various interbedded house features, belonged to the Middle Kincaid period based on the ceramics (Cole et al. 1951:40).

Work in Test Unit 85E 94N, 12 m west and slightly downslope of the crest unit, yielded a somewhat different picture. This unit was positioned to intersect the south end of a large magnetic anomaly that appeared to be about 3 x 3 meters. An auger core that penetrated this anomaly had encountered charcoal and burned clay, and we anticipated that this feature was likely to be a burned structure. Below the plowzone, a dark rich Mississippian midden-like deposit appeared, similar to Zone I on the mound, but in Level 3 (30 to 40 cmbs) charcoal began to appear in quantity. Level 4 (40 to 50 cm) exposed much more charcoal (designated Feature 10) adjacent to and above a fired clay surface that extended across the northern half of the unit. Excavation was ultimately halted at 50 cm simply because there was no more time to deal with such a complex feature. No wall trenches were identified.

The ceramics from the unit appear to be a mixture of both middle and late periods at the site. Unlike the mound unit, this one yielded a late plate form, plain salt pans, strap handles (but not the very wide ones), and examples of Matthews Incised, *var. Manly*. A small seed jar was lying upside-down on the fired clay surface, and an owl-head rim adorno was recovered from the mass of charcoal. The latter piece is unusual because of its large size and because the head was hollow, presumably to function as a rattle. A similar owl-head rim adorno is shown in the published report as a Late Kincaid style (Cole et al. 1951: Plate 24A, item d). At the time, we concluded that Feature 10 was the remains of a burned structure from the Late Kincaid period and that what we had found was debris lying just above the floor in a basin.

Our interpretation of this context was severely tasked when the large radiocarbon sample extracted from the charred wood debris of Feature 10 yielded a very early date of ca. A.D. 1000 (see Beta 191044 first run in Table 1). We were so surprised by the date that we arranged for a second determination to be made from remaining portions of the same sample. It yielded a younger but still early result (Beta 191044 second run). Because we have two independent determinations from a single sample, we combined them prior to

Table 1. Radiocarbon Assessments.

Lab Reference	Measured ¹⁴ C Age (RCYBP)	¹³ C/ ¹² C Ratio (0/00)	Conventional ¹⁴ C Age (RCYBP)	Calibrated Age (cal A.D.)
Beta 191044 first run	1060±50	-25.1	1050±50	1σ: 890– 920 (p=12.3%) 950–1030 (p=55.9%) 2σ: 880–1050 (p=89.4%) 1080–1160 (p= 6.0%)
Beta 191044 second run	910±40	-26.1	920±40	1σ: 1030–1170 2σ: 1020–1220
Beta 191044 combined			970±30	1σ: 1010–1050 (p=26.0%) 1090–1160 (p=42.2%) 2σ: 1000–1160

Note: Tree-ring calibrations obtained from OxCal v.3.9 (Bronk Ramsay 2003).

calibration using the OxCal calibration program, version 3.9 (Bronk Ramsey 2003). The weighted average of the two sample runs (Beta 191044 combined) yields a date of 970 ± 30 RCYBP with a 2σ calibrated age range of cal A.D. 1000 to 1160. The 2σ range is inordinately extended because of a “mini-plateau” in the calibration curve that falls between A.D. 1040 and 1150. Notwithstanding the wide calibrated age range, it is clear that either the posts of this building were made of centuries-old wood or this burned debris was displaced and mixed with later materials.

Old wood does not appear to be an issue. In their matrix the materials appeared to be segments of small diameter poles, an observation supported by the tight ring spacing of the pieces examined for wood identification. The charred segments used for dating were not subject to wood identification, but ten other pieces from the same mass were identified by Katheryn Parker. Nine are tulip poplar and one is hickory. Tulip or yellow poplar (*Liriodendron tulipifera*) is rare in archaeological wood assemblages in the region, especially as architectural members. Still, the species does produce fast-growing straight saplings that would be readily usable as building material, although not as strong or as durable as the usual oak and hickory.

The most likely explanation is that the burned debris is material from an earlier construction elsewhere that was displaced and accidentally juxtaposed with the fired floor. This unit lies just west of the projected western edge of the first mound stage. We do not have any stratigraphic connection between that stage and the burned debris, but it is possible that the burned debris might have originated from a structure on that stage whose debris was pushed off the side of the mound before the next fill episode occurred. As we explained above, we suspect that the first mound stage may have been of early Kincaid

date. Thus, we cannot rule out the possibility that the burned debris stems from an early structure either on the mound's first stage or perhaps nearby, which came to be deposited on the fired clay floor.

Summary and Conclusions

A low platform mound of some kind definitely was built on the ridge terminus; thus, Mx² was a real mound, although the size and ultimate height of the construction are uncertain. It has been partly leveled by deflation and erosion under long-term farming, being reduced in height by perhaps as much as 50 cm. It is also conceivable that it was intentionally cut down in the 1800s, as was Mx⁴, though we have no evidence to that effect. The deflation has impacted the upper dark midden-like fill but not the underlying original construction. The sequence of deposits found in the ridge crest unit, 97E 98N, matches that encountered by John Bennett several meters farther north in 1939 and 1940. As would be expected from topographic considerations, the deposits at the crest are much thinner than those Bennett encountered to the north. Prior to the construction of the first mound stage, the old Baumer surface was largely scraped-up or pushed aside. Then a basket loaded fill consisting of a mixture of subsoil silts and clays with some topsoil was laid down to erect a low platform.

The size of this first construction is not known precisely, but it does appear to have been asymmetric to the ridge crest, with most of the platform having been built northward from the crest out over the steeply dropping north slope. To the south, mound fill is not evident in Unit 95E 89N, nine meters down-slope from the crest unit. There are indications in auger cores that this first mound fill is still present 10 m west at 90E 100N, but the 85E 100N core is much shallower and may be hitting wash deposits off the edge of the actual platform. The available information suggests a north-south dimension of between 15 and 20 m with the east-west dimension being at least 20 m and perhaps somewhat greater (see Cole et al. 1951:40–41).

The subsequent use of the mound is not clear. What both the Chicago investigators and we found overlying this first mound construction was a mantle of refuse-rich, midden-like deposits containing artifacts that suggest a Middle Kincaid age. Bennett felt that these deposits did not represent gradual accretion but, rather, were intentionally dumped material, that is, mound fill. This fill, if it be that, had house floors at various levels, as evidenced in Bennett's excavations, our auger cores, and our ridge-crest excavation. The broad platform of mound Mx² may have had multiple buildings on its surface during this stage.

Our small excavations cannot resolve whether the upper deposits are fill or midden, but we can point out that refuse-rich fills were used in mound building at Kincaid on a number of occasions, especially as final mound "stages." A similar midden-like deposit capped the top of mound Mx⁷ (Cole et al. 1951:75). It was thin on the upper surface of the mound but became quite thick as an erosional deposit low on the mound slopes, and the investigators concluded that the uppermost deposit, which included some burials, had been extensively eroded. The Chicago investigation of the "small knoll" designated Mx^{1A} encountered a two-foot-thick upper layer of refuse-rich fill that they characterized as Late Kincaid (Cole et al. 1951: 43–48). The Chicago investigators labeled the area as a part of the village rather than a mound, but their subsequent excavations, which did not reach sterile

soil until 7 feet below the surface, show that this knoll was actually some kind of a low mound and that the thick upper refuse layer was really a cap placed over a large, burned, mound-top structure.

In our excavation unit there is evidence of floors and houses that originate in the dark refuse mantle above the first stage. The contact surface between the early mound fill and the upper mantle in our unit (Figure 6) shows evidence of considerable digging into the early mound surface from above. Whether this results from general habitation activity over the area after the early mound was abandoned, or disturbance intruding down from subsequent mound levels, is not known. We suspect that Bennett was largely correct and that the second stage of mound construction used scraped-up topsoil and refuse as fill. We cannot say whether this later construction represented the same kind of mound in functional terms as did its first stage. Given the apparent loss of 50 cm of sediment from the ridge crest, it is likely that we will never have a definite answer to the nature of the later "mound phase." The artifact contents of this fill suggest a Middle Kincaid date, although their deposition could be later.

The validation of a low platform mound at the southeast corner of the plaza does restore a certain symmetry to the plaza organization, but it is still curious why a larger mound was not built in this key location. From the Chicago work, we have information on the size of the initial mound constructions from two of the major mounds. At Mx⁰7 we know that the first mound construction was a meter-high platform, whose one measurable lateral dimension was around 12 m (Cole et al. 1951:Figure 17). At Mx⁰4, the first definite platform mound construction (Zone D) was a low platform, about 0.7 m high, that had one lateral dimension of roughly 15 m. The initial Mx⁰2 construction is of the same general size, albeit with a different topographic position, perched on the edge of a ridge crest.

If the initial mound construction at Mx⁰2 dates to the early part of the site sequence, then it was one of several comparably-sized mounds built around the future plaza in the

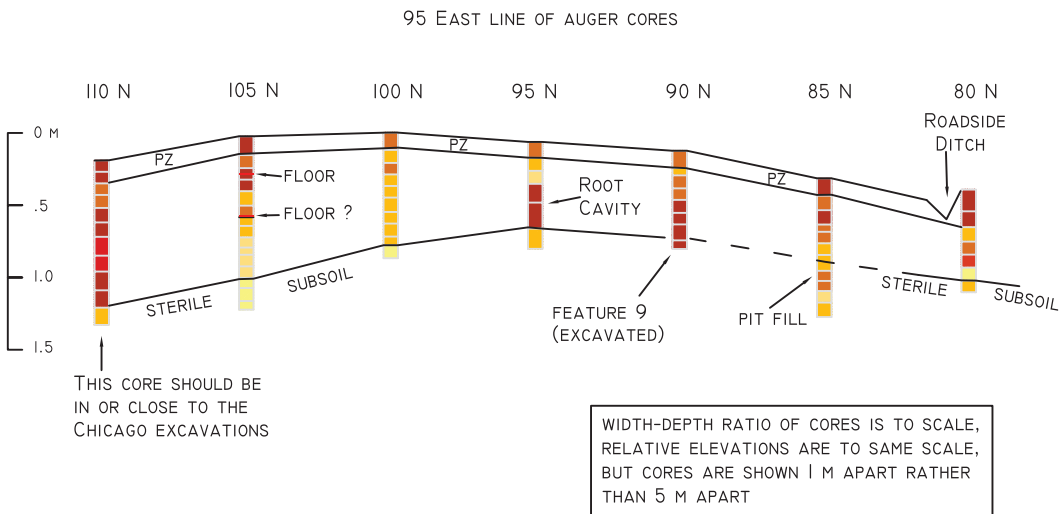


Figure 6. Auger core transect.

initial phase of the mound center. For some reason, however, mound construction was discontinued here after this initial mound phase. Even though additional deposits accumulated or were placed on the mound during Middle Kincaid times, this mound did not attain nearly the size of the other mounds around the plaza's edge. Many archaeologists believe Mississippian centers were laid out as sociograms, models of the structure of society and of the universe (e.g., Howard 1968; Kelly 2006; Knight 1998; Lewis and Stout 1998; Welch 2006). If this applies to Kincaid, clearly something changed regarding the social segment that was responsible for the Mx^o2 mound. At this point we can only conjecture what happened to this segment of society, just as we can speculate about the relationships between the mounds around the main plaza and those strung along the lake front to the east. Any such conjectures, however, will have to take into account a site layout that has more elements than had previously been thought.

The verification of Mx^o2 is not the only recent change to our understanding of the layout of Kincaid (see Figure 7). The Chicago maps and field records as well as recent surface inspections and geophysical surveys (Welch et al. 2004), indicate that, in addition to the two main mound groups, there are (or were) numerous small mounds at the site whose character and age have yet to be established. Current work is directed at what is now called the West Mound, a large gently sloping rise situated about 300 m west of the site's western palisade. Geophysical survey of this feature and its surrounding area in 2004 and test excavations in 2005 show that it is a partially leveled platform mound adjacent to a densely packed cluster of houses, constituting a previously unrecognized mound and residential area of the site.

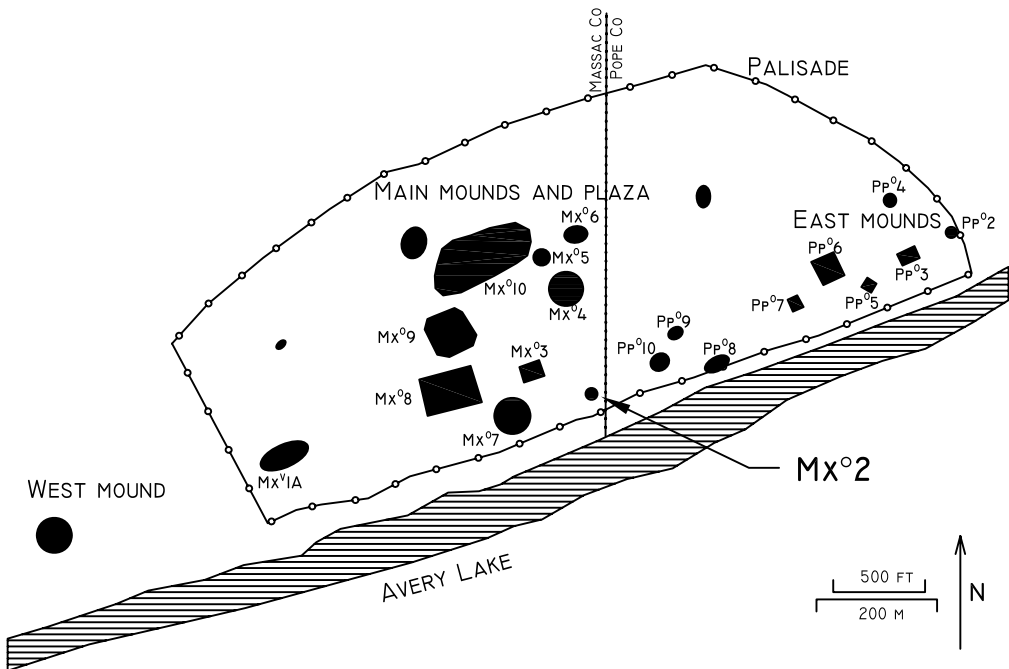


Figure 7. The Kincaid site as currently understood.

Such a complex creates a larger symmetry within the site, complementing the previously recognized East Mound group. With the addition of Mx^o2, the West Mound, and other small mounds to our picture of the site, it is evident that we are only beginning to appreciate the true complexity of Kincaid.

EndNote

¹ The site numbering at Kincaid requires explanation. The Kincaid site was not given a single site number; instead, multiple numbers were used to designate individual areas and features within the complex. The University of Chicago site numbering system used superscripts to denote the type of site: "o" indicates a mound (Mx^o7), "v" a village area (Mx^v1), and "f" denotes a fortification (Mx^f31, used for the palisade excavations). This practice created some number conflicts when the Chicago site data were later incorporated into the Illinois Archaeological Survey site files. The current state site files use Mx-1 and Pp-9 to identify the Massac- and Pope-county portions of the site complex.

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