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WHERE HAVE ALL THE ARTIFACTS GONE?
THE COBB COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY'S FINAL CHAPTER

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In 1995, the Cobb County Board of Commissioners hired archaeologists to examine a large collection of archaeological materials in their possession. The artifacts had been recovered by the Cobb County Archaeological Survey over a 25-year period. The County wanted a complete inventory, as well as recommendations for the disposition of the collection. A group of 10 lab technicians led by the author handled approximately 224,000 artifacts from 311 sites during the six-month project. The team sifted through hundreds of files of related documentation including field notes, photographs, and maps for each site, and prepared the documents and artifacts for curation. The group assessed all of the material that was not eligible for curation and made recommendations for the disposition of these items. The following is an abbreviated account of those activities.

This article provides a brief history of the Cobb County Archaeology Survey and Laboratory. The information presented in this history was compiled from annual reports, field notebooks, journals and miscellaneous correspondence housed in the Cobb County Archaeology Laboratory. It is hoped that many questions will be answered and that most of the myths that have arisen about the Survey will be laid to rest.

HISTORY OF THE COBB COUNTY ARCHAEOLOGY SURVEY

In 1968, the Great Southwest Atlanta Corporation, owner of Six Flags Over Georgia, hired archaeologists to survey 6,000 acres along the Chattahoochee River in Fulton County. University of
Georgia archaeologist A. R. Kelly, director of the project, relied on paid laborers and volunteers. Many archaeologists working in the Southeast today assisted and some (Ed Dittmar, Larry Meier and Marilyn Pennington, for example) went on to work for the Survey. The resulting publicity prompted citizens to report several other sites to these archaeologists and thus began the organization that would later become the Cobb County Archaeological Survey.

Beginning in 1970, increasingly rapid growth and development in Cobb County provided the archaeologists with ample work. Expansion of Pebblebrook School exposed extensive archaeological remains. Negotiations with the Board of Education led to excavation of this site and development of an educational program that allowed students to participate in the excavations.

Shortly afterward, a successful meeting between these same archaeologists and Ernest Barrett, Chairman of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners, resulted in an agreement for the group to perform surveys of all of the sewer line rights-of-way in the county. The initial sewer line survey led to the discovery of 54 previously unknown sites. The meeting marked the beginning of the Survey's long-term relationship with Cobb County.

In November of 1970 the Survey was requested to provide the Federal Bureau of Outdoor Recreation with archaeological and historical data on a 48 mile long by 1 mile wide stretch of land along the Chattahoochee River. No funds were made available but the Survey was dedicated to preserving and protecting archaeological sites, so they volunteered their services.

Shoestring budgets and reliance on volunteer labor are recurring themes in the history of the Survey. Funding barely covered per diem for the staff and occasionally provided gas money for volunteers. The local citizenry were often solicited for donations so that field work could continue. Money for analysis of the massive quantities of artifacts they were recovering seems to have been nonexistent. The Survey continued to struggle financially, with increasing numbers of sites requiring investigation every month. After two years of operation there were so many artifacts and related documentation that the Survey was forced to rent space to store the materials, estimated to weigh some 3,000 pounds:

So much data had been collected, it was beyond the Survey's capacity to publish the findings and more work was piling up every day. Since so few funds were available, it was decided to
pursue the work. This was deemed a necessity since the sites, once destroyed could yield no further data, whereas money might be found to publish at a future date. The spiraling rate of construction also meant an acceleration in the destruction rate for the sites. This remains the major problem of the Archeological Survey even today (Larry Meier document 1974).

This statement accurately sums up what became a predicament for the Survey throughout its existence: sites were in danger of being destroyed due to construction in ever increasing numbers and what few funds were available were spent excavating as much of the archaeological material as was possible. Few, if any, funds were spent on analysis and synthesis of all of the material. While the sites would disappear, the recovered artifacts, if stored, would always be available for analysis. In Meier's own words, the goals of the survey were, "to locate and identify as many sites as possible, to preserve those where destruction can be avoided, and to extract all available data from those sites where destruction cannot be avoided". This became the standard operating procedure for the Survey even after permanent salaried positions were created and funding for work was more readily available.

Another factor that contributed to the rapid accumulation of artifacts was directly attributable to the use of untrained help in excavations. These volunteers were well-trained in field techniques but most were not well-versed in artifact identification, particularly of prehistoric artifacts. Consequently, everything excavated was kept including large quantities of non-cultural stone. Additionally, it must be remembered that in the early 1970s, the rule of thumb of archaeology was to save all excavated materials in the hope that new scientific techniques would someday be discovered. Only now are we facing the backlash of this philosophy and being forced to perform house cleaning duties at most curation facilities.

Early in 1971, the Survey contracted with Cobb County, Fulton County and the Federal Water Pollution Control Administration to excavate 9CO1, Standing Peachtree. The Survey worked on the site for most of 1971 with a budget of just $15,000. By November, the Survey was again in dire financial straits. Hope of more funding had all but died when Robert Sutton, Cobb County Engineer, created three paid positions within the County government under provisions of the Emergency Unemployment Act. The salary for the three positions amounted to slightly more than $800 per month after taxes and was split among the five
Survey members. This $160 per month per person allowed the Survey to continue the sewer line survey and excavations at 9C01. Ties between Cobb County and the Survey continued to strengthen.

In May of 1972, Fulton County joined Cobb County in sponsoring archaeological research by budgeting $15,000 yearly. This provided funds to conduct excavations at several sites in both counties. In addition, the Fulton County School System offered high school students an opportunity to participate in this work by establishing an archaeology program as part of their Exploration Quarter Program. The County also donated a classroom at Rock Springs School to house the team. Furniture and equipment were borrowed to outfit the new facilities. Private collectors also made some of their artifacts available to the Survey for study. Few official documents exist concerning the ownership of any of the donated items and a clear idea of 'who owned which items' became blurred with time. This would lead to serious accusations later on.

By 1973, the Survey, now known as the Archaeological Survey of Cobb and Fulton Counties, was on firmer financial footing although the seven staff members still only drew per diem expenses. The new facilities and a steady source of income allowed for some of the backlog of artifacts to be cleared up. Cleaning and inventorying of artifacts was undertaken but this effort only scraped the surface of the accumulation. By this time, there were so many artifacts that they were stored at a variety of places including the University of Georgia, the Atlanta Water Works, the Rottenwood Sewer Treatment Plant and another lab/storage unit on Church Road in Smyrna. Meier estimated that the collections weighed more than five tons. The workload continued to increase as the Survey now covered an area of 1,200 square miles in the two counties.

The Survey continued to grow as the workload increased. In 1982, it relocated to new facilities at the Chattahoochee Treatment plant. The square footage was significantly less than the previously available space so plans for a small museum were scrapped. It also meant that most of the artifacts had to be stored in a mini-warehouse. It was still hoped that space would become available for a future museum and a conservation laboratory complete with special plumbing and ventilation. "As with all major equipment, the conservation lab structure will be donated or purchased by the County Archaeologist from private resources" (Larry Meier report to the Cobb County Commissioners, 1982). The Survey's workload continued to increase so that in addition to the sewer line
Cobb County Archaeological Survey

surveys along drainages in Cobb County, work now also included reconnaissance of properties being reviewed for rezoning and some road widenings. Larry Meier was now County Archaeologist.

By 1986, the Survey was involved in work related to the County Pollution Control projects in West Cobb, the Lower Allatoona and Powder Springs creek basins and had begun concentrating on the County Transportation program. There were five salaried staff members and three volunteers. Projected budgets amounted to approximately $243,000 per year including line items for furniture, computers and computer software. The average number of sites being discovered annually was on the order of 80 to 90. Road projects averaged 70 per year and acreage covered for planning, zoning and variances amounted to about 7,300 acres.

In 1987, Ransom Bennett replaced Meier as County Archaeologist and the Survey was made a part of Cobb Department of Transportation. Bennett had ambitious plans for organizing the laboratory and its collections. Computerization was a primary goal, as was compiling an inventory of all of the archaeological materials in the Survey’s possession. Official state site forms for all sites not previously registered were to be filed with the Georgia Archaeological Site Files after completion of the inventory. Once this was accomplished, the arduous task of analyzing all of the uncataloged artifacts would begin. There were also plans to develop a County Museum that would also become home to the Survey.

One of the first tasks undertaken by Bennett was to renumber all of the Cobb County sites already recorded by the Survey. Until this time, the Survey had maintained a numbered index card file of sites. These cards contained all of the pertinent information on sites, such as District and Land Lot number, site size, general descriptive information and artifact types. Each site was given a unique ‘County Site Number’ that was modeled after the state system (i.e., 9COxx, with each new site discovered being given the next number in the sequence). The new system employed by Bennett used this same format (9COxx) but the order in which the sites were numbered was based on district and landlot numbers. Standing Peachtree, identified as 9CO1 by both the Survey and the state, became 9CO205. Most sites now had two County Site Numbers and those registered with the Site Files had three. Some of the artifacts or boxes containing artifacts were renumbered but very little of the associated documentation was relabeled. In 1992, Bennett’s new system was abandoned in favor of one with the first
two digits representing the year and sequentially numbered sites (e.g., 92.27, or the 27th site located in 1992). Unfortunately, no cross-indexing or cross-referencing index of all sites and their various county and official state numbers was located during our project. It can only be assumed that these data were on a computer that was removed from the laboratory after it was shut down.

The Survey staff also began inventorying artifacts housed in the laboratory. In July of 1989, Bennett sent a memo to Mr. Dick Gensel of Cobb DOT reporting that some items, particularly artifacts, were missing. It was also reported in this memo that much of the collection was made up of non-cultural material and that "several hundred pounds of undiagnostic rock were thrown out..." Gensel, in a memo to Jim Morris, Chairman of the Cobb County Historic Preservation Commission (dated October 25, 1989), lamented the poor provenience information, commenting that most of the artifacts could be designated as having come from a particular site, but no further locational data could be found.

In late 1992, the headquarters of the Survey were moved once again, this time to an old KinderCare building in Marietta. Plans were in the works for public displays but were never completed. When the activities of the Cobb County Archaeological Survey were suspended in 1993, Bennett had managed to accomplish only a small amount of what he had planned to do: some of the artifact assemblages requiring analysis had been cataloged; some state site forms had been filed; and an inventory of sites had been compiled.

**COMPILING THE INVENTORY**

In 1995, the laboratory doors were opened for one last time. The goal was to evaluate the collection to decide which materials were eligible for curation, to prepare all of the eligible materials for curation, and make recommendations for the disposition of all other collections housed by the County. Furthermore, all of this had to be accomplished in just six months.

Before these goals could be met, a thorough cleaning of the laboratory was necessary. The facility was in a state of disarray looking as if the staff "had all gone off for lunch and never returned". In the first month of the project, a great deal of time was spent getting rid of trash, re-bagging artifacts that were strewn about (including a bag of artifacts found in the refrigerator freezer), collecting artifacts from the various rooms in the Lab and placing them in one room. A number of original historical documents and
other paperwork were rescued from trash piles. All reports, books, maps, and other documents that could be attributed to a specific site were added to the paperwork that had been previously collected by Garrow and Associates (1995). All other books, reports, maps, or journals were placed together on shelves to await further treatment. Staff evaluations, bank statements, proposals, and any materials relating to the Cobb County government were collected so that they could be returned to the County.

Once the facility had been thoroughly cleaned, two initial goals were set. The first was to collect all of the human remains, their associated artifacts, and any other culturally sensitive materials. These items were removed from the main collection and placed in a room that had restricted access. The human skeletal material was later transferred to Dr. George Armelagos, a physical anthropologist at Emory University for identification and detailed analysis prior to its repatriation. The associated artifacts were analyzed by the inventory team and returned to the storage area. The second goal turned out to be the most difficult part of the entire project: to gather together all of the materials (i.e., artifacts, notes, reports, maps, photographs, etc.) for each site.

The disparity in the quality and quantity of material collected by the Survey for each site was immense. The amount of paperwork could range from a complete set of field notes with photographs, maps and a county site form to a single entry in a Survey archaeologist’s notebook. The number of artifacts ranged from just a few to hundreds.

But it was not just this unevenness that made this stage of the process a major headache. As described above, three site numbering systems had been used over the years resulting in many sites being given more than one site number as well as many sites ending up with the same site number. To add to the confusion, some sites appear to have been given a new site number each time they were visited even if the numbering system was the same used for a previous visit. To complicate matters even further, at some of the very large sites, multiple site numbers were given to identify geographically restricted components within the site. In some instances, artifact bags and boxes were labeled with up to 10 different county numbers, even though accompanying paperwork showed them to actually be part of the same site. There were even a few sites that had only been assigned state site numbers. In addition, artifacts collected by amateurs and turned over to the lab
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were interspersed throughout the collections. These sites usually
had no site number but were instead labeled "Webb Atlanta #1",
"E.W.C. #5", etc. The files of paperwork were equally confusing.
In order to keep track of all of the ‘aliases’ assigned to the Survey
sites, a master computer list was compiled that included all site
numbers and names, along with the district and landlot numbers
and any other information uncovered for each and every site.

The construction of the master list began with the contents of a
file box that was located during cleaning. A site file system was
begun by Larry Meier and consisted of a 5” x 8” file card for each
site investigated by the Survey. Each card listed all of the pertinent
information for the site including county number, name (if it had
one), district and land lot numbers, as well as temporal affiliations,
etc. The cards were maintained for a while after Bennett took over
the Survey as is indicated by the presence of a second site number
representing the new system implemented by Bennett. It is not
known exactly when the system was abandoned. Another helpful
source used to compile the master list was a collection of
topographic maps that were rescued from the trash during the initial
clean up. Plotted on these maps were many of the Survey sites
along with a site number. The site numbers, along with the UTM
and district and land lot numbers were entered onto the computer.
The master list was frequently updated throughout the project as
team members were constantly discovering additional information
on the Cobb County sites.

Only after all of the materials from a single site were tracked
down could analysis of the artifacts proceed. The analysis process
began with the creation of a provenience list for all of the artifacts
from a single site. This was done using the provenience
information found on the artifact bags and boxes, as well as field
notes and bag lists when they were available. About 80 percent of
the artifacts had been washed, and of the remainder, most could be
cleaned using a dry brush. Only about 2 percent of the artifacts
required washing. Once clean, artifacts were labeled with accession
numbers, in accordance with West Georgia curation standards.

Due to time constraints only basic artifact analysis was
performed. Historic artifacts were analyzed using South’s (1977)
classes. Prehistoric artifacts were divided into lithics and ceramics.
Traits recorded for lithics were: lithic form (flake, projectile point,
etc.); raw material; condition (whole or broken); and amount of
cortex on the dorsal surface. Traits recorded for prehistoric
Cobb County Archaeological Survey

ceramics were: form (rim sherd, body sherd, etc.); temper; and surface treatment. Data, including counts of faunal remains, were entered directly into a computer database. A printout of the data and the proveniences was made for each site and placed in a curation box along with the other documentation. All artifacts in the collection including any eligible for repatriation and all unprovenienced objects were included in the analysis. Non-cultural material, specifically several hundred pounds of stone, was thrown away, but all reference collections of geological specimens were kept. The inventoring process took approximately four months.

Once the analysis phase was complete, the next task was to fill out state site forms and to file those forms with the Georgia Archaeological Site Files. The data entered into the master list proved very useful during this process. In order to avoid submitting forms for sites already in the state database, locations of sites on the master list were compared with the locations of all Cobb County sites registered at the state site files. Forms were completed for 112 'new' sites and information was updated for another 113 sites. Another 86 sites were not registered because they either contained too few artifacts to qualify as a site (i.e., fewer than 7 artifacts) or, while not completely without provenience, the information was too vague to calculate UTM's.

The Antonio J. Waring, Jr. Archaeological Laboratory agreed to take all of the provenienced archaeological materials and all documentation relating to the Archaeological Survey. The Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns was approached regarding their acceptance of prehistoric human remains and associated burial items from three sites.

All of the historic human remains and grave goods could be associated with extant cemeteries. In two cases, the names of the individuals were known and family members were contacted to determine their wishes. In both cases, it was decided to reinter items in the appropriate graves. The third set of grave goods came from an unmarked grave. The custodian of the cemetery was contacted to request permission for reinterment.

A presentation was made to the Cobb County Commissioners on October 24, 1995. At that time it was reported that nothing appeared to be missing from the collection except those items on loan to the Survey. Recommendations for disposing of the materials were also made. The Cobb County Board of Commissioners accepted the recommendations at that time and final preparations were made to distribute the collection. One week later,
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205 boxes of artifacts and related documentation were delivered to the Waring Archaeological Laboratory in Carrollton, Georgia.

All of the unprovenienced material, which primarily consisted of small fragments of non-diagnostic material, was separated into historic and prehistoric assemblages. None of it was considered eligible for curation at the Waring Laboratory so alternate repositories were sought. Fortunately, the Cobb County Youth Museum had expressed interest in the unprovenienced prehistoric artifacts for its Indians of Georgia display, and Hightower Trail Middle School requested the unprovenienced historic items which included an unfinished headstone for its teaching collection. A few historic items, including a plow harness, were requisitioned for displays at Kennesaw House while the bolts used to secure the clock in the old County Courthouse were recovered to be put on display in the new Courthouse.

The books and maps that had been collected over the years were sent to the main branch of the Cobb County Library. The only problem encountered in the disposition of these materials arose concerning the donation of historic documents to the Atlanta History Center. The historic documents encountered in the lab ranged from original land deeds, wills, and patents, to copies of diaries and journals. Many of the original documents pertained to the Glover Iron Works and the Glover family. It was not known how these items found their way into the lab collections. However, once the closing of the lab was made public, the Glover family contacted the County and requested the return of items relating to their family that they had loaned to the lab. With the removal of these documents from the collection, the Atlanta History Center was no longer interested in the remaining items, which were removed to the Georgia Room of the Cobb County Library.

In April of 1996, the prehistoric human remains and their associated artifacts were handed over to Dr. Karen Ramsey Burns, representative of the Georgia Council on American Indian Concerns. That same month, the historic human remains and related grave goods were reinterred. It seems fitting that the final duties undertaken for the Cobb County Archaeology Survey be in the form of excavations. The final 'dig' took place at the Pleasant Grove Cemetery appropriately located across the road from the last home of the Cobb County Archaeology Laboratory. There, a small number of human bones that had eroded from an unmarked grave were reinterred with little ceremony and no mourners.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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A KOLOMOKI CHRONICLE:
HISTORY OF A PLANTATION, A STATE PARK AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEARCH FOR KOLOMOKI’S PREHISTORY

C.T. Trowell
Douglas, GA

Kolomoki is situated on Little Kolomoki Creek about six miles north of Blakely, Georgia in Early County (Figure 1). Today the site is managed as a state park, with mowed grass, a museum, walkways, fences and roads. Across the artificial lake, Lake Kolomoki, lies a recreation area that includes a visitors' campground, group camps, swimming pool and other recreational facilities. The lands along the creek and ravines suggest that a more natural landscape included a mixed hardwood-pine forest with an understory of shrubs such as dogwood.

During the time of prehistoric settlement some of the area was probably maintained as a relatively open landscape by burning. Fire was frequently used as a tool by Indians to remove undesired undergrowth and enhance the growth of desired species such as berries. In addition, it is possible that climatic changes during the prehistoric era fostered vegetation significantly different from today's landscape.

Much of the land in Land Lots 177 and 184 in Land District Five, Early County, was cultivated by slaves during the 19th century. Fields of cotton, corn, oats, etc., dominated the landscape during the long period when the place was known as the “Mercier Plantation” between around 1840 and 1911.

During the period between 1911 and 1928 Mansfield's Mill was the distinguishing landmark at the place. The gristmill was situated on Little Kolomoki Creek a few hundred meters from the large Indian mound. The lands west of the mound continued to be used as cultivated fields. J.E. Mansfield lost the property in 1928. The Hilton estate purchased the mounds and adjacent lands in 1928. They were sold in 1936 to Dr. Charles C. Harrold of Macon,
President of the Society of Georgia Archaeology.

In 1938, the “Mercier Mount” or Kolomoki mounds property was purchased from Dr. Harrold by a group of interested citizens and organizations in Blakely. Along with additional lands, the property was deeded to the State of Georgia as the site for a state park in 1938. Small tracts of land were also acquired and granted to the state in 1939 and 1961 to foster park development.

Figure 1. Kolomoki in southwestern Georgia.
KOLOMOKI AS CREEK COUNTRY

Few records have been found suggesting that Indians during historic times lived at Kolomoki. The Kolomi town or tribe that lived along the lower Chattahoochee River during the late 1680s was believed to have lived in the area of Stewart County. The town of Kolomi was destroyed by a Spanish patrol in 1686, but the name of the Colomokee Creek suggests a tradition that the Kolomi lived in the Kolomoki area at some time. The Kolomi moved from the Chattahoochee to the Tallapoosa in Alabama where William Bartram visited a Kolomi town in 1777. In 1778 the Kolomi moved to Florida where they became one of many groups that were called Seminoles (Swanton 1946:146-147).

The lands around the Kolomoki Mounds were Lower Creek lands until the Treaty of Fort Jackson in 1814 when they were ceded to the State of Georgia. Apparently the lands held no special significance to the Creeks. The mounds are not mentioned in the Creek Indian Letters or by Benjamin Hawkins, the Indian agent during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. The Perrymans could have grazed their herds of cattle in the area. They were a large Creek family living along the lower Chattahoochee River south of Fort Gaines, but their principal plantation around the turn of the century was near Fairchild’s Landing, far to the south in Seminole County (Swanton 1946: 146-147).

GEORGIA’S LAND LOTTERY

Early County was created following the Creek cession of the southwest Georgia lands. The Yazoo Fraud in Mississippi and the Pine Barren Fraud in original Montgomery County in the late 18th century forced the Georgia Legislature to seek another method of disposing of lands acquired from the Indians. The State of Georgia used the land lottery system established in 1803 to distribute the lands of the new counties in South Georgia. Members of the Georgia Legislature believed that the “oak and hickory” lands in southwest Georgia were more productive than the swampy long-leaf pine barrens in southeast Georgia. As a result the lands in original Early County were surveyed into 250-acre lots instead of the large 490-acre lots in lands to the east in original Wayne, Appling, and Irwin Counties. The Kolomoki mounds were situated on Lots 177 and 184 in District Five of original Early County. Joe Walker surveyed the district, but he did not record the mounds,
either in his field notes or on the plat maps (Joe Walker, Map of Early County, Georgia, District Five Land Lottery, September 13, 1819, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta, Georgia [GDAH]; Field Notes of Joe Walker, Surveyor General Department, GDAH).

As the lottery progressed following 1820, the Kolomoki lots were drawn as "orphan lots." Lot 177 was granted to William Akers of Greene County, Georgia in 1824 and Lot 184 to Archibald Monroes of Montgomery County, Georgia in 1827 (GDAH, Land Lottery Grant Name Indices, 1805-1832, Early County, Georgia, District 5 [LLGNI]:Lots 138, 137, 177, 184).

During the early 1830s, Samuel Akers acquired the claims to Lot 177. Over the years the lot had been divided among several owners. He sold the 250 acres to George W. Mercier in 1834 for $500. In 1835 Malcolm and Effa Monroe sold Lot 184 to Archibald Smith for $400. Smith sold the lot to Ephaly Avirett in January 1838 who sold it to George W. Mercier in August 1838 (GDAH LLGNI:Lot 144; Superior Court of Early County, Georgia [SCEC] Deed Book [DB] D:236-237, 275; SCEC DB E:176).

THE MERCIER PLANTATION

According to the genealogical records of Barbara Batton Pierce, a descendant of George W. Mercier living in Karana Downs, Queensland, Australia, George W. Mercier was the son of Francis and Elizabeth Mercier, two pioneer settlers in Early County. Francis Mercier, a French doctor, was granted U.S. citizenship in Wilkes County, Georgia in 1798. George W., the third of eight children, was born around 1807 (Barbara Batton Pierce, personal communication 1993). According to J.W. Perry (1871), writing on people and events in Early County during the 1820s, George W. Mercier attended the Smithville Academy in 1828. The Academy’s doors were open no more than four years. It is not known when the Merciers moved to Early County, but Francis Mercier had died by 1831. Mercier’s mother Elizabeth, living in Early County in 1840, owned several slaves. Elizabeth Mercier apparently died in 1842, when her will was probated (Will of Elizabeth Mercier, 4 February 1840, Probate Court, Early County, Georgia [PCECG], Record of Wills [RW] Book B:6-7).

After some mortgaging and other financial maneuvering in 1849, George W. Mercier re-acquired the land lots, plus additional
lands, buildings, a years' crop and equipment from Abner A. Williams in 1849 for $7,750. He also bought 250 acres, Lot 185, from E.J. George, A.C. Trimble, and Louise A. Trimble for $400 the same year (SCEC DB D:237; SCEC: DB E:176; SCEC DB H:62-63, 198; George W. Mercier, Seventh U.S. Census of Population [USCP], Manuscript Census, Early County, Georgia [MCECG] 1850:292). By this time it appears that he owned a consolidated plantation of around 1,000 acres, but he claimed only around 600 acres, which he valued at $3,500 in the Agriculture Census in 1850. He also owned four horses, three mules and four oxen and produced 1,200 bushels of corn and 25 bushels of wheat in 1849. He listed 20 bales of cotton produced in 1849, plus wool, sweet potatoes, and livestock (U.S. Census [USC], Agriculture Schedules, Georgia, Early County [ASGEC] 1850:137).

Mercier appears to have prospered financially during the years before the Civil War. The productions of the plantation and his wealth seem to have peaked just prior to the war (USC ASGEC 1860:7; Eighth [USCP], MSECG 1860:609). As a respected member of the community, George W. Mercier was elected as a Justice of the Inferior Court of Early County in January 1841 (today, this position would be called county commissioner). He served two terms as Justice, stepping aside in 1849. This was a thankless job. One writer noted: "... they did not find much enjoyment in the honor conferred upon them." Many resigned before the end of their terms. Mercier served two terms.

Mercier was married three times. His first wife is unknown. He married his second wife, Sara A.D. Truluck, July 7, 1835, and Therisa R. Lee, his third wife, April 1, 1849. Mercier had two illegitimate children, Benjamin Franklin Hammon and Georgia Ann (or Georgiana) Hammon. He legitimated them and changed their names to Mercier on 22 February 1859 (Barbara Batton Pierce, personal communication 1993).

While the Mercier plantation prospered, the family also experienced wrenching heartbreak. Mercier's four-year-old twin boys died on the same day in 1845. His 43-year-old wife Sara died in 1848. Lucien, his 20-year-old son, died in 1860. They were buried in the family cemetery atop what archaeologists would later call "Mound G." The tombstone inscriptions are: L. W. and S. A. Mercier, b. Oct. 14, 1841, d. Dec. 3, 1845; Sarah A. Mercier, b. Nov. 15, 1805, d. Nov. 25, 1848, Sarah A., wife of G. W. Mercier; Lucien B. (?) Mercier, b. Nov. 2, 1839, d. May 30, 1860.
In 1860, Mercier was living with his two sons, James (Jaynes) L. and Augustus J., and a daughter, Georgiana. Curiously, Benj. H. King, the plantation overseer, was listed as head of household in the census. His real estate wealth was listed as $14,000; his personal wealth was $45,000. On the plantation in 1859, Mercier had 400 acres of improved land on the 1800 acre tract. The farm was valued at $14,000, including $700 in farming implements and machinery. He owned two horses, eight mules, and two oxen. He possessed 45 cattle, of which 15 were milch cows. He claimed ownership of 130 hogs. His livestock was valued at $2,500. Mercier slaughtered animals valued at $500 in 1859. The plantation produced 2,800 bushels of Indian corn and 96 bales of cotton in 1859. They produced 280 bushels of peas and beans, 10 bushels of Irish potatoes, and 300 bushels of sweet potatoes, 250 pounds of butter, 160 gallons of syrup and 400 hogsheads of cane sugar, 800 pounds of honey and 400 pounds of beeswax. The plantation produced 30 tons of fodder and shucks and 2880 bushels of cottonseed (USC MCECG 1860:609; USC ASGEC 1860:7).

George Mercier watched his two sons, James [Jaynes] and Augustus, march off to war with the Early Guards in 1861. They fought in Virginia as Company “G,” 13th Georgia Regiment. Gus was discharged “on account of chronic disease of the liver” at White Sulphur Springs, Virginia, November 27, 1861. James was wounded at Cold Harbor, Virginia on June 27, 1862. He returned home and died in 1864 (Early County News [ECN] 24 April 1890 [first printed 1866], SCEC). George W. Mercier died during the summer of 1868. He left most of the estate to his son Augustus (Will of George W. Mercier, 16 May 1868, PCECG, RW Book B:123-124).

In the 1870 Census Augustus Mercier claimed a plantation of 1,650 acres with 400 acres of improved land. He worked three horses, six mules and two oxen and ginned 32 bales of cotton. He estimated his wealth at $25,000 in real estate and $11,185 in personal property (USC ASGEC 1870:1-2). He married twice. The 1870 census shows his wife as Frances M. Mercier. Barbara Batton Pierce notes that he later married E.J. Bramlett. Apparently the Bramletts owned a nearby plantation (Eighth USCP MCECG 1870:10).

Augustus Mercier was able to hold on to most of the plantation lands, but the Reconstruction years were difficult. In 1880, he reported that he owned 1,475 acres, with 250 acres of improved
lands. He had ginned only 19 bales of cotton in 1879 (USC ASGEC 1880:3).

He permitted several archaeologists to examine the Indian mounds on his plantation during the 1870s and 1880s. His father had permitted Charles A. Woodruff to explore the mounds in 1847. A deep shaft was sunk in the big mound. His notes were published by Albert J. Pickett in his History of Alabama in 1851 and in the works of George White in 1849 and 1854 (Pickett 1962:150-151 [1851]; White 1849:218-222, 1854:424-425).

George White’s *Historical Collections of Georgia* (1854) includes the following description of Kolomoki, accompanied by a drawing (see front cover, this volume): “Six miles north of Blakely, on Little Colomokee Creek, at the plantation of Judge Mercier, are some ancient works. Annexed is a view of them.

Pickett’s *History of Alabama and Georgia* described the site:

No. 1. The large sacrificial mound, seventy feet in height, and six hundred feet in circumference. This mound is covered with large forest trees, from four to five hundred years old. A shaft has been sunk in the centre to the depth of sixty feet, and at its lower portion a bed of human bones, five feet in thickness, and in a perfectly decomposed state, was passed.

No. 2. Like the former, have earth stones on the summit, with charred wood around them, which would show they, too, were used for sacrifices. They are thirty feet high.

No. 3. A wall of earth inclosing these mounds.

No. 4. Mounds outside of the inclosure, twenty feet high, and probably used as watch-towers.

No. 5. Entrance to the inclosure.

In the rear of these mounds is a creek, No. 6, and from the large mound there has been constructed an arched passage, three hundred yards in length, leading to the creek, and probably to procure water for religious purposes (Pickett 1962).

William McKinley of Milledgeville reported another visit. He had a map prepared (Figure 2) and described the mounds and the remains of the village. He submitted a report on “Mounds in Georgia” to the Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution for 1872, including the following description:
The two groups of mounds which I have had surveyed by James N. Evans, at the expense of the Institution, are in Early County, Ga. One group is near Kolee Mokee Creek, and the other at Dry Creek.

The following is a representation from actual survey of the position and form of the mounds and earth walls on Kolee Mokee Creek, in Early County, Georgia. They are principally on a plantation now occupied by Mr. A.J. Mercier. I say principally, because the eastern portion of the walls extends over on to the plantation of Judge Joshua Harris.

In the investigation of these ancient remains we began by measuring the large pyramidal mound, which we found of the
following dimension: Circumference, 1,128 feet; length of base, 350 feet; width of base, 214 feet; length of plane of summit, 181 feet; width of plane of summit, 82 1/2 feet; sloping side, a little diagonal, 125 feet; estimated height of pyramid, 95 feet.

The plan of the base, and also that of the summit of this pyramid, may be said to be rectangular, their length and breadth being as stated above. The direction of the longer side of the mound is N. 10 degrees W., varying only 10 degrees from a due north and south line. At the south end of this pyramid there is a pit from which it is supposed the earth of which the mound is composed was originally excavated. A well has been at some time sunk in about the center of this mound to a considerable depth, probably in search of treasures, but apparently without success.

Starting from the middle of the western side of the base of the pyramid and running S. 81 degrees W. 14 chains, we arrive at a conical mound, which I have denominated No. 2. The circumference of this mound is 216 1/2 feet; the diameter 72 feet; the sloping side 43 1/2 feet; the height of axis of cone 24 feet. From the west side of mound No. 2, running S. 86 degrees W. 23 chains, we come to mound No. 3, which has a diameter and a height nearly the same as those of No. 2. At a distance of 17 chains from the western base of mound No. 2 we come to the inner wall, or breastwork. Commencing at the eastern terminus of the southern wing of the wall, the courses and distances along it to a bastion marked "Mercier's burial ground," are as follows: S. 84 degrees W. 15 chains; N. 84 degrees W. 5 chains; N. 51 degrees W. 4 chains; N. 40 degrees W. 4 chains. From this bastions to the other bastion there is no appearance of a wall.

From bastion No. 1 to bastion No. 2, the direction is N. 15 degrees W., distance 7 chains. From bastion No. 2, the courses and distances along the northern portion of the outer wall to Kolee Mokee Creek are as follows: N. 10 degrees E. 5 chains; N. 23 degrees E. 4 chains; N. 56 degrees E. 7 chains; N. 52 degrees E. 15 chains; N. 67 degrees E. 17 chains; E. 29 chains to the creek.

The southern portion of the outer wall has a starting point near the southern or No. 1 bastion, which is not parallel with the inner wall, but runs as follows: S. 11 1/2 degrees E. 10 chains; S. 10 degrees E. 10 chains; S. 17 degrees E. 5 chains; S 39 degrees E. 7 1/2 chains; S. 42 degrees E. 8 chains; E. 10 chains
to its terminus. The wall in the woods is little more than 1 1/2 feet high—that in the plantation not exceeding 15 inches, the former having been protected from the effects of cultivation. The base of these walls is at present about 30 feet wide, probably much greater than they formerly were. They very gradually slope from base to middle. One of the oldest citizens in the county tells me that he has seen these walls when they were at least double the height; they have gradually decreased in elevation and increased in breadth of base. I have also been informed that some of the facial bones of human skeletons have been taken from one of the mounds in the Mercier plantation, which are said to have been much larger than those of our own race, leaving the inference that the mound-builders were almost of a giant stature, but this tradition may be the result of the natural tendency to indulge in the marvelous.

While engaged in the field-work I noticed a large number of fragments of carved ware and arrow-heads along the line of the walls and about the mounds, both on Kolee Mokee and on Dry Creek (McKinley 1873:422-427).

C.C. Jones employed James A. Maxwell, a highly skilled and experienced civil engineer, to examine the site. Maxwell was building the railroad from Albany to Blakely at this time. Jones included his lengthy report in his *Antiquities of the Southern Indians* in 1873. Maxwell described the plantation thus: “In the vicinity of this tumulus [the big mound] and stretching away to the west, are seen the cultivated fields of Mr. Messier [Mercier], while on the east, north, and south, are the swamps of Colomokee and its tributaries, beautiful in the luxuriant and variegated foliage native to the semi-tropical region.” In his description of the big mound, Maxwell also observed that, “the top of the mound is a level plane, and was long since denuded of all vegetation for the purpose of cultivation” (Jones 1873:166-177; Myers 1972:Appendix).

Edward Palmer visited the site and excavated the small mounds and the big mound in March and April 1884 but he published no report. His visit was part of the Smithsonian’s national mound survey. A few comments were reported in the local newspaper. He prepared an article for the *Early County News* on the functions of Indian mounds (*ECN*, 13 March 1884, 20 March 1884, 27 March 1884, 3 April 1884, SCEC; Palmer 1884a, 1884b; *Savannah Morning News* [SMN], 31 March 1884).

The *Savannah Morning News* of March 31, 1884 reprinted a
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short comment from the *Early County News*. It read:

Dr. Edward Palmer, of the bureau of ethnology of the Smithsonian Institution, arrived here on Thursday night last for the purpose of exploring the Indian mounds on the Mercier plantation. On Friday evening he rode out to see them. After passing around the big one he concluded not to attack it without further instructions from headquarters. He had been instructed to cut a trench right through it in two directions. To do this, he thought, would cost more than the department had counted on, hence his decision not to undertake it without further orders. While waiting these orders he is engaged in exploring the smaller mounds. As yet we have to report from him of any discoveries made.

The *Early County News* published the following report on the results of Palmer's explorations on April 17, 1884:

Dr. Edward Palmer, who has been exploring the Mounds on the Mercier plantation, has completed his labors and left for other parts. His explorations developed very little, if anything that was interesting or at all valuable. He made a pretty thorough examination of the smaller mounds but found nothing in or about them but some broken pottery, which seemed to be ornamented with more skill that was usual in specimens of the same sort found in other mounds. No skeletons were found in any of them—nor any signs indicating that these mounds were used as burying places. On top of the big Mound he sunk two holes about 12 feet deep and 10 feet square, but made no new discoveries. On the side of the Mound, where Mr. Jas. P. Fleming has started to sink a shaft, Dr. Palmer continued the exploration and sunk the shaft down to the level of the ground below, to the depth of 32 feet, but made no interesting discoveries. He made a measurement of the large Mound, and made it to be 75 feet high, 323 long, 178 feet wide at one end and 190 wide at the other. In another column will be found an article on the subject of Mounds which will doubtless be perused with interest buy our readers.

E. Palmer worked in Alabama and Early County, Georgia for six months of 1884 for the Bureau of Ethnology. A handwritten
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report by Palmer was not published, but is on file at the National Anthropological Archives at the Smithsonian Institution. Palmer found eleven mounds. He excavated pits, or enlarged existing pits, on several mounds. He dug trenches through others. His report includes rough profile sketches of the mounds, but no map. He described "Mound 6" (Mound A, the large mound) as follows (spelling and grammar as in original, some punctuation added):

Mound 6 from No. 5 is 812 feet E. to this mound which is 178 feet long at north end, 190 feet a[t] South end. With a general length of 320 feet on the West side, on the East side 332 feet long. It is heighest at each end where it is 75 feet but in the center it is but 70 feet, this difference in height is owing to a depression in the center on the West side [side comment 'Slope 100 feet']. Hear boath sides slope towards the center as seen in the diagram of Mound 6.

On the East Side in the center there is no depression but instead there is an enlargement outward hear the top measures diameter 74 feet. The north end has a diameter on top of 58 feet the, South End 60 feet.

At one hundred feet from the South end but on East side there is a depression on the top with sloping sides to center extending from top to bottom like there is in center of mound on West side. At the North end there is a depression on top extending to base like that in the center of West sid and on East side. These three depressions up the mound would indicate they where the passes up its earthy structure. Facing thes assents is plainly seen the immense holes from which the earth was taken.

The length of mound on top is 179 feet. In the center of the mound sumit several years ago a circular pit was dug to the debth of 51 feet by Mr. Lisbon Everett who informed me he found nothing but soil untill at the debth mentioned when peices of rotten wood was found. Whites historical collections of Georgia speaking of this shaft says it was dug to 60 feet and at its lower portion a bed of human bones 5 feet thick and in a perfectly decomposed state was found.

The digger of this shaft Lisbon Everett and there has been no other dug, says this statement is entirely false for not a trace of bone was seen nor did he go below 57 feet.

The same authority says that charred wood was found on the sumit that the mound must have been used for sacrificial
purposes. When the father of the present owner [George Mercier] took up the land in its wild state 60 years ago there was no charred wood on the mound; then it was before Whites account was written that gentleman cut the timber on its sumit piled it up and burnt it. Thus the charred wood on the sumit several crops was raised on the top before and since Whites book was written. The sides are yet covered with timber. Of White oak one is 7 ft, one 6 1/4, another 7 and the largest 11 feet 5 inches circumference. Red oaks one 9 feet 7 1/2 inches, one 12 ft 2 inches and one 7 ft 5 inches circumference. Water oaks one 9 ft and two was 6 feet in circumference. All the large trees was hollow so it was useless to cut them down to obtain their age.

In order to examine the outer portion of the mound a cut was made near the base of South end of Large Mound No. 6. Immediately above this one Mr. Fleming had dug a trench into the end 5 feet wide and 11 feet 8 inches deep finding only soil deposited very similar to that found by me in cut immediately below it.

Which cut was dug 12 feet 8 inches deep and 8 feet wide. The accompanying Diagram shows the arrangement of its composition to base. While Mr. Flemings cut extended above giving a similar arrangement of colored soils. Thus giving in the two cuts 24 feet 4 inches of similar arranged soils but he found no ashes.

Palmer also described several house sites:

One hundred feet north from Mound No 7 is a broaken peice of land (D on plot) 150 feet long and 100 feet wide. Hear is to be seen abundant evidence that dwellings once stood hear but of late rains have cut up this spot so that only one undisturbed house sight remained. It was three feet deep and 5 to 6 feet square composed all most entirely of ashes with animal bones and much broken Pottery which is sent numbered 332. The pottery is very curious and had the rest of the house sights remained undisturbed much of value might have been found.

A short distance from the South end of the big Mound is a patch of woods much broaken up by rains cutting it into various small patches, with trees hear and there the roots of which have aided materially in saving what soil or irregular small patches that do remain. These are what is left of the once level spot upon
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which stood habitations, the spot naturally low gave the water advantages in its dis-truction. The great quantity of broken pottery and animal bones washed out indicate quiate a settlement of people once was hear. The house sights are told by the ashes found immediately under the soil in which the great number of fragments of animal bones and pottery was found.

Previous visitors to this locality dug out many of the best house sights carrying away the showey things as curiosities leaving the balance to distruction. So I found but few undisturbed house sights. These where thoroughly examined and the specimens found are sent under number 333-4-5 and 336.

Had not the locality been previously disturbed by man and water no doubt much fine pottery at least would have been found. It was a convenient place for residence being contiguous to water and in reach of the large mound in case of danger.

Principal sources from which the earth was taken to make the mounds

The canall or ditch seen on the East of Large Mound at E which is 27 feet wide in some places and varies at others. Its debth is variable its greatest debth is 17 feet running from the South end of the large mound Eastward but I do not think it is artificial all the way to the little Colomokee Creek as claimed, for at about 200 yards it is blocked up with earth to my mind by natural causes. As originally made. Some say filled by washing down of soil. The arrangement of its soil show natural origin. At twenty feet from this filled up space, below it is a ravein made by water that have drained to its slopeing sides to find a way to the creek. This is taken as artificial. That portion of the didtch of certain artificial origin is so variable in its width that it would have been difficult to have covered as claimed by writers to enable a passage to the creek for water unseen. That beaverage is attainable nearer from a branch diagonally from the South End of the mound and not far from the house sights. Those living whare is now found the house sights near the north and south ends of the mound would not be benefitted by the didtch. Its not near enough.

My opinion is this is one of the places from which earth was taken to build the mound. Having two outlets, from one they emerged, carried the earth up the depression on the East side near the Southern end. The other outlet was the beginning of the
can all from which the dirt was carried up the slope in the center of the mound on the West side. If the dirt had been taken out and not put on the mound there would be seen artifically made piles near the ditch which is not the case.

Depression near the South West end connecting with that outlet of the artificial ditch. From this depression no doubt much earth was taken and carried up the West side. In taking this out made the outlet of the ditch and passage up the mound easier for the amount of earth taken out lessened as the mound was reached. A great deal of earth yearly washes this way and is filling up this depression.

Immense artifically made hole near the East of big mound seen on diagram as F. From this hole a great portion of the earth to make the mound was no doubt taken, it being carried up the slope in the north end of mound. Water and briers prevented the measurement of this hole.

Palmer also described the topographic rise or “breastwork:’’

So called Breastwork marked B on diagram. It is a perceptable rise with a gradual slope on each side with a diameter of 20 to 32 feet and of a height varying from 1-2 to 3 feet. It runs from a strip of woods north to a small mound No 11 on the breast work 672 [feet] 10 inches South, thence 200 feet to another small Mound 11. Hear is a break in the breast work of 155 feet at the end of which is a Mound (C), on diagram is occupied as a grave yard. it is flat on top 59 feet 5 inches long and varying from two to three feet high. From the south end of this mound continues the before mentioned breastwork, which seem to average hear 27 feet 7 inches and two to three feet in height sloping on each side and running through woods in a S.E. direction for about a mile. Its composition is brownish clay with a little sand. Examined this but not a fragment found either on the surface or in the composition.

This breast work is again met (see diagram B) running from W. to E. 600 yards with a few breaks in it. It is 300 feet north of the Large mound. It look far more like a natural ridge for of what purpose could it serve as breast work with a gradual slope on each side with its limited height. Examination of soil revealed no ashes burnt clay or other signs of habitation. Cultivation over it may have reduced it some, but that portion seen in the woods
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that has not been cultivated over is as high. The parts in the
plowed field is strewn over with peices of pottery. It is good
width for small temporary hutts on its sumit. And may it not
have been made as a better adabted place for dwellings, being
drier than the leveler land and furthermore why should a breast
work be made to protect so large a space as 70 acres which is the
quantity of land inside the mound and breast work boundery as
originally claimed. It may be that the breast work as seen on
diagram to West once united with that on the north. It does not
now for the intervening space is cut up into very uneven ravein
as seen on diagram marked so (Palmer 1884a).

Local groups visited the mounds from time to time. At least
one group left a written account of the experience and a description
of the area. R.R. Blocker and friends from Fort Gaines, Georgia
attended a Sunday School picnic at Mount Pleasant in the
northwestern corner of Early County on July 11, 1879. Myrtle and
Della Wilder wrote up the trip for publication in the July 18th issue
of the Early County News. Another article entitled “The Indian
Mounds in Early County,” was prepared by J.P. Fleming, brother
of the owner of the Early County News. It was published in that
paper on June 27, 1882 and reprinted in The Brunswick
Advertiser on August 12, 1882. James P. Fleming, “a member of
the Historical Society of Pennsylvania” was reported to be visiting
in December 1883 and excavating some of the mounds (ECN, 13
December 1883, SCEC). No additional report has been found.

Augustus Mercier had two sons. George Mercier died of
congestion in August 1886. The News reported, “His death has
caused deep grief in the hearts of those near and dear to him.” In
1889, Willie B. Mercier, known as Bob, accidentally shot himself
in the thigh with a pistol when he was 15, but he recovered (ECN,
19 August 1886, 11 April 1889, SCEC).

The Merciers appear to have been a private family. They held
no public office. Augustus Mercier was not even called to serve on
the jury. Mercier was a Mason, but there is no record that they were
involved in the local social affairs in churches, or seasonal parties.
Mercier’s name appeared in the local newspaper only to report
some misfortune such has a buggy accident in which he broke his
leg in 1877 or the death of a family member. In 1884 a traveler
reported that the grand jury needed to open the road to the Mercier
plantation. Fallen trees had made the road impassable for several
months. The road from Blakely to the plantation was known as the
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“Gus Mercier Road” (ECN, 20 April 1877, 3 April 1884, SCEC).

Augustus Mercier died in 1892. The Early County News noted on March 31st: “Mr. A.J. Mercier died, unexpectedly, last Monday morning and was buried at the Mercier burying grounds near his residence.” Descendants recorded on his tombstone: “He died as he lived, a pure and upright man.”

The family was able to retain ownership of most of the plantation for almost 20 years (Deed transferring interest in property from children to Mrs. E.J. Mercier, December 12, 1907, SCEC DB 25:384; transfer of deed from Mrs. E.J. Mercier to L.W. Mercier, December 12, 1907, SCEC DB 25:384).

MANSFIELD MILL

In 1911 Mrs. E.J. Mercier finally sold the property known as “Mercier’s Mount,” the south half of Lot 177 and 15 acres of the south half of Lot 184, to J.E. Mansfield. Mansfield also acquired an additional 90 acres of Lot 177 from Junicus Gentry in 1917 and built a grist mill and a mill pond on Little Kolomoki Creek (deed transfer from Mrs. E.J. Mercier to J.E. Mansfield, October 6, 1911, SCEC DB 28:200; Deed transfer from Junicus C. Gentry to J.E. Mansfield, June 4, 1917, SCEC DB 30:216).

Mary Grist Whitehead (1971:64) states that the mill was earlier known as Averitt Mill. “It was a center of activity in the old days; not only was corn ground, cotton was ginned as well. The gin was a mule-powered press; that is, a mule turned the screw that pushed the press and packed the cotton. Years later, with a change of ownership, this mill became known as Mansfield Mill. Today, this site is Camp Hicita, the youth camp at Kolomoki State Park.”

Mansfield Mill survived only a little over a decade. Mansfield was forced to sell his property at the courthouse door in 1928 for $525 to pay a mortgage to the bank. In 1928, the property became part of the Hilton estate (U. S. Department of Agriculture 1921; deed transfer from J.E. Mansfield to J.S. Sherman & H.E. Hightower, executors of estate of E. Hilton, February 18, 1928, SCEC DB 39:186-187).

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK

Following the organization of the Society for Georgia Archaeology in 1933, Dr. C.C. Harrold, a prominent physician

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from Macon and President of the new society, developed a special interest in the Indian mound property near Blakely. Dr. W.M. Stirling of the Smithsonian Institution, meeting with the Society, encouraged efforts to preserve Ocmulgee Fields outside Macon and the mounds at Kolomoki. Dr. Harrold and other Society members played a major role in promoting the development of the Ocmulgee Mounds as a national monument. Several agencies of the federal government funded archaeological projects at Macon, Chatham County, Glynn County and statewide surveys. They included the National Park Service, the Civil Works Administration, the Civilian Conservation Corps, the Works Progress Administration and the National Youth Administration. By 1934 Harrold had already visited the Kolomoki site and collected a sample of artifacts. It is possible that he visited the mounds as a boy, for he had grown up in Americus during the 1880s and 1890s. Mrs. Wayne (Isabel Garrard) Patterson of Columbus, an active member of the archaeological society, also took a special interest in the site in Early County (A.R. Kelly to I.G. Patterson, letter, 11 September 1934, Columbus Museum [CM]; C.C. Harrold to I.G. Patterson, letter, 6 November 1934, CM).

John R. Swanton wrote to A.R. Kelly at Macon in August 1934:

The Colomokee site is one to inspire enthusiasm. Dr. Harrold sent me some sherds from there for examination and the paddle-marked pottery is wonderful, but we failed to see in the lot sent up, any but the most remote suggestion of Hopewell, if one could say as much. There was one cross-hatched piece and one as plainly northwest Florida as you could ask. It will be a star site for some future exploration project (J.R. Swanton to A.R. Kelly, letter, 23 August 1934, CM).

Dr. Harrold acquired the services of attorney A.H. Gray in 1936 to investigate the feasibility of purchasing the lands surrounding the mounds. In April 1936 Mr. Gray purchased 215 acres of the south side of Lot 177 and 65 acres of the south end of Lot 184 for Dr. Harrold from the Hilton estate for $1,375. The purchase was not publicized but some members of the society were informed. He hoped to persuade the National Park Service to acquire the site as another historical monument in the state but he
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was not successful (A.H. Gray to Dr. C.C. Harrold, letter, 18 April 1936, Southeastern Archaeological Center [SEAC]; C.C. Harrold to A.H. Gray, letter, 25 April 1936, SEAC; J.M. Mallory to C.C. Harrold, letter, 26 April 1936, SEAC; C.C. Harrold to I.G. Patterson, letter, 29 April 1936, CM; deed transfer from J.S. Sherman to Dr. C.C. Harrold, April 11, 1936, SCEC DB 45:319).

Over the next two years Dr. Harrold and Mrs. Patterson were able to create some interest in preserving the site among several prominent local officials and businessmen, including Sheriff Sid Howell, R.C. Howell, S.G. Maddox, R.C. Singletary, and members of local civic clubs, especially members of the Rotary Club (A.H. Gray to C.C. Harrold, letters, 8 March 1938, 28 September 1938, SEAC; R.F. Burch to Mrs. W. Patterson, letter, 5 February 1938, CM; S. Howell to I. Patterson, letter, 21 March 1938, CM; C. Boyett to I. Patterson, letter, 17 March 1938, CM; C.A. Grubbs to I. Patterson, letter, 18 March 1938, CM; ECN, 3 March 1938, 10 March 1938, 17 March 1938, SCEC).

Lt. J. L. Valliant, associated with the museum at the University of Pennsylvania, visited the site in October 1937. He surveyed the site, prepared a short report, and urged interested parties in Georgia to preserve the area (J. L. Valliant to Directors, Department of Archeology, University of Georgia, letter; G.W. Crickmay to A.R. Kelly, letter, 8 November 1937; A.R. Kelly to G.W. Crickmay, letter, 16 November 1937; all at SEAC). In a letter (at SEAC) dated October 28, 1937, to the Director, Department of Archeology, University of Georgia, he wrote:

I have just completed a trip down the Chattahoochee valley visiting some of our mounds of the Mound-Builders type. On Colomokee Creek on the old Mesier plantation I visited that group. In my opinion the published descriptions do not give the reader a true idea of the proportions and importance of this group.

After four days’ surface examination I am convinced that this was a large and important town and that it was occupied for a long period.

The striking things about it lie in its unique location on what is essentially a peninsula between Little Colomokee and a small tributary, spreading from there till it covered at least 150 acres of land. This peninsula is gashed by canyons or gullies about fifty feet deep.... in the bottoms of these (or five of these) are five strong springs all in easy reach, providing a water supply
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unusually easy of access for a large town. Both sides of the peninsula.

There are still easily recognizable ten or twelve mounds. The Great Mound is larger than the dimensions published. It is 186 feet greatest length (on top) and 80 ft. wide. It is 100 feet down the slope to the “Platform” at the South end. This slope is steep enough to cause me two falls descending... I estimated the average at 45 degrees. This would mean a height of 72 feet. The west face is somewhat lower but the East face is still higher.

Besides the Mounds there are remains of two and probably three “Walls” or “Long Houses” The most notable is the one the end of which is used as the Mesier family burying ground (or was used) [Mound G]. This Mound at the burial ground is about three feet high and fifty feet wide at the top. Extending from this in a South-Easterly direction is a circular mound 30 feet wide at the base and 1 1/2 feet to 2 feet high 650 feet long segment of a circle with 1000 foot radius. This very interesting item I have never found mentioned although it is easily recognizable at short distance through the tangle of bush and young trees. If an effigy it is a crude one. At 650 feet it breaks down to the surface for about fifteen feet and a road passes through. Beyond it continues but is less noticeable through the remainder of the wood (150 feet) and runs a straight line across a cultivated field in a direction a little north of East, for 1500 feet. There is another ridge apparent, parallel to this in the field and about a hundred feet distant... but much shorter. All the ground about these two lines is littered with potsherds. There is also indication of another Long House across a narrowed part of the peninsula toward the North end.

As to the sherds found: The only difference that I notice is that the lip or rim of vessels has no moulded beading or fluting as used in a variety of designs in the Macon-Sparta area.. but has a plain band nearly double the wall thickness. I found no sherd showing decoration by adding color. The exterior decoration was the usual scrolled incised pattern... whether repetitive or random I could not tell because of the failure to find large pieces. I found one scroll where a perfect figure 8 was made but on a line horizontal. I also found the bottom or [of] a pot with round hole broken through also the piece broken out lay near. It suggested the ceremonial “Killing” of a vessel as practiced in the South West. There is another feature of this pottery I did not see
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further North: Some vessels had a vertical walled rim or mouth of nearly full diameter. On the hard-pan (under the three to five inches of top soil) in the woods about the circular mound I found many small fragments of pots discolored with age and generally of coarse grain. In the deep gullies about the springs I found many fragments black, possible with age.

In one of the gullies south of the Great mound I came on a fallen tree now so rotted that no good notion of its size could be had but the stump or root remaining suggest it was a large one.... in the earth among the roots and directly below the standing body I found a cluster of sher [sherds]..... This would mean a very old burial. I did not do any digging there.

If your department is prepared to do anything toward the further survey or preservation of this site, I will be glad to send you a copy of the map I made during my stay there. My bearings and distances if not exact are close enough to make location any part easy.

Hoping that attention to our antiquities will soon be extended to this group I am

Yours sincerely
J.L. Valliant. Lieut. U.S.N.R.

P.S. There are two other nearby mounds across the road to the West. The smaller of these, in a depression 75 yds. west of the road if fourth mound in a direct line with the Great Mound this is by my triangulation... it may be only a coincidence... the line is about 4000 feet long and probably woods always intervened as now.

Valliant's description dates to a time just prior to the creation of the park and the work of the Civilian Conservation Corps. He observed features that had been reported during the 1850s, 1870s and 1880s, especially the “wall.”

The Georgia Legislature included a provision in the Natural Resources Act of March 5, 1937, to accept lands containing archaeological sites as state parks and to foster archaeological preservation and education in the state. The new Division of State Parks, Historic Sites and Monuments reflected this policy (Elliott 1939; Georgia Department of Natural Resources [GDNR] 1991).

Unable to establish a national park on the property, local
leaders, Dr. Harrold, Mrs. Patterson, and other members of the archaeological society were finally able to persuade the Georgia Department of Natural Resources to establish a state park at the site. Local leaders, especially members of the Rotary Club, purchased Dr. Harrold’s property and adjacent lands in March 1938 and deeded them to the Department of Natural Resources for use as a state park. Dr. Harrold sold the lands for the price he had paid and made a small contribution to the project (Deed transfer from Dr. C.C. Harrold to GDNR, March 9, 1938, SCEC DB 55:555; deed transfer from R.C. Howell to GDNR, 8 March 1938, SCEC DB 55:555; ECN, 3 March 1938, 10 March 1938, SCEC).

Dr. Harrold reported to the Society for Georgia Archaeology in their meeting at Savannah on May 6, 1938:

The members of the Society will all be interested to know that the Rotary Club in Blakely, Georgia, has purchased Kolomoki, along with surrounding acreage up to a total of one thousand acres, and has donated the same to the State of Georgia for a state park. Here, also, Mrs. Wayne Patterson was very active in enthusing the local group. I feel that it is only proper that the Society should know that, when your President released this property to the State, he did so without any pecuniary gain to himself (Harrold 1938:4).

James W. Bonner was employed to prepare a map of the Harrold property in 1938. His map of Lots 177 and 184 shows the boundaries and streams, some of the mounds, the roads, and a house situated south of Mound “D,” east of the cemetery on Mound “G” (Lands of Dr. C.C. Harrold, map, 28 May 1938, CM).

During March and April 1938 a host of state park officials, archaeologists, newspaper reporters, and others converged on Blakely to examine and pronounce the unlimited potential of the newly acquired park. They included Mrs. Isabel Patterson, Dr. D.V. Fewkes, Dr. A.J. Waring, Jr., Miss Annette McLean, Gordon Willey, Dr. A.R. Kelly, Jesse Jennings, and others (ECN, 31 March 1938, 21 April 1938, 7 April 1938, SCEC; C.A. Grubbs to I. Patterson, letter, 18 March 1938, CM; S. Howell to I. Patterson, letter, 21 March 1938, CM; H.D. Brantley to I.G. Patterson, letter, 27 April 1938, CM).

The Early County News published a long interview with Dr. V.J. Fewkes, director of the W.P.A. excavations at the Irene Mounds at Savannah. Dr. Fewkes “expressed his delight with the
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fine state of preservation of the site” and listed its possibilities as a national attraction. He urged the formation of a planning committee and a long-range excavation and development plan. The site, in combination with the park, offered “unusual opportunities for developing a reserve, the like of which does not exist in the world,” according to Fewkes. He urged that “a combination of archaeology, ethnology, anthropogeography, natural history, and general scenic beauty should be kept in mind.” Fewkes proposed that the plan should “preserve the features of the site in greatest of detail and restore the aboriginal appearance of the mounds and of the settlement and cemetery.” He suggested the creation of an ethnobotanical garden including Indian flora and the restoration of an area of old-growth forest like the primeval pre-Columbian forest. He felt that plans to restore ancient ecological conditions should include consideration of a herd of buffalo, deer, and other wild game, birds, etc. He also suggested the establishment of a cornfield, “designed on the order of Indian hill cultivation” and tended by descendents of Creek and other Indians still surviving in the state. He proposed a fishery in an artificially prepared lake and the construction of a replica of an Indian village. The details of Fewkes suggestions show how far restoration/recreation planners have come since 1938 (ECN, 7 April 1938, SCEC).

Charles N. Elliott, Director of State Parks, delivered a speech at the Society for Georgia Archaeology meeting in Athens on October 14, 1938, entitled “The Place of Archaeology in the State Parks of Georgia.” He listed projects of his division that reflected support of archaeology throughout the state. He also stated:

I congratulate the President and members of this Society and the citizens of Blakely, and Early County, for the addition of Kolomoki to the State Park system. Highly desirable as a Park, the recreational part of this area will be developed as early as possible. Care will be taken to prevent recreational developments from interfering with archaeological features. Recognizing the wisdom of the advice of Jesse D. Jennings, of the National Park Service, that archaeological investigation of Kolomoki should be postponed a number of years, until archaeological technique is improved and the pre-history of the southeast is better understood, we will be glad to protect the archaeological features of the area as an intriguing sort of “not to be opened ’til Christmas” package (Elliott 1939).
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But no funds were available from the state parks department. The property went undeveloped, even unprotected, for over a year. The site was inspected by an official of the Civilian Conservation Corps in August 1938 for consideration as a future C.C.C. project. The Georgia Highway Department prepared a topographic map of the park property (Figure 3) in October 1938 (ECN, 18 August 1938, 3 November 1938, SCEC).

Jesse D. Jennings completed a short paper entitled “The Archaeological Significance of Kolomoki” for inclusion as a side bar on the Masterplan Map, in October 1938 (E.L. Bothwell, map of Kolomoki Mounds Park, Early County, Georgia, General Development Outline, 29 June 1938, CM). He noted: “On the basis of surface collections, from which survey studies are made, Kolomoki would seem to be a relatively early manifestation. From our present knowledge, the Swift Creek pottery type, which at Kolomoki comprises 90 per cent of the surface wares, is one of the earlier cultures of the Southeast.” This paper was also included as part of a recreation study by Charles M. Graves (1938) “Report on Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Blakely, Georgia.” Jennings (1938) described the archaeological evidence that had been collected from the site, compared the artifacts with those found at Ocmulgee National Monument [ONM], and warned that the large site was so complex that archaeological investigations would not be fruitful for 40 years. He proposed holding Kolomoki as a “Reserve Monument” until much more was known about the regional archaeology.

Finally in 1939 local leaders and Mrs. Patterson were able to persuade the Federal government to transfer a C.C.C. camp from the state park at McRae to the park at Kolomoki to improve the roads and facilities (ECN, 18 August 1938, 21 September 1938, 12 October 1939, SCEC; S.M. Woodward, Jr. to I.G. Patterson, letter, 13 June 1939, CM; E.L. Bothwell to I.G. Patterson, letter, 15 June 1939, CM).

THE C.C.C. AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STATE PARK

A Civilian Conservation Corps camp was moved to Kolomoki State Park in July 1940 following a year of inspections, plans, correspondence, planning, and construction of camp facilities. Archaeologists, engineers, historians, and other officials of the
Figure 3. Kolomoki Mounds Park. Mounds and plaza area of the park in a topographic map prepared by the Georgia State Highway Department in 1938. Map in the Columbus Museum.
National Park Service, the C.C.C., the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, and other agencies were consulted. Preliminary archaeological surveys were conducted to determine the best routes for roads and other developments. In August 1939 additional property, including the 250 acre Land Lot 143 and a right-of-way, had to be acquired as a site for a camp and to gain access to the site from the Blakely-Fort Gaines road (I.G. Patterson to S. Howell, letter, 18 August 1939, CM; S. Howell to I.G. Patterson, letter, 20 August 1939, CM). An advance party of 18 C.C.C. workers and Lt. Harry W. Gormand arrived at Kolomoki in October 1939 to begin work on facilities for a camp. A camp of 200 men was expected to arrive by the first of January 1940 (ECN, 12 October 1939, SCEC).

Implementation of the development plan was well behind schedule by the new year. Problems with the topographic maps had to be worked out and the park service found it difficult to find an available archaeologist to make a survey of the site. Although Arthur R. Kelly and others made a small collection of artifacts, a systematic survey was needed of the proposed route of the road and the area that would be affected by the proposed dam and lake. There was some fear that the workers in the incoming C.C.C. camp might disturb the artifacts before the archaeologists could conduct their studies (W.S. Dennis to E.L. Bothwell, letter, 6 September 1939, CM). In February 1940, the National Park Service wanted to make a collection of potsherds before “allowing the camp to go in....” (C.H. Fairbanks to J.C. Ewers, letter, 26 February 1940, SEAC). A masterplan was prepared, but no archaeological survey was done until mid-summer. Finally the arrival of the C.C.C. camp required action by the archaeologists. Charles Fairbanks and Jesse Jennings at ONM in Macon prepared plans for a survey and Robert Wauchope was employed to conduct the field work in July 1940 (C.H. Fairbanks to J.C. Ewers, letter, 24 June 1940, SEAC; J.D. Jennings to R.E. Appleman, letter, 23 July 1940, SEAC). Workers at the C.C.C. camp arrived during the second week of July.

Celebrated with a banner headline in the Early County News on July 11, the arrival of the workers at the C.C.C. camp launched the development of the state park. A company of 150 officers and men arrived on the ninth of July and moved into their new barracks. Capt. J.F. Morrison was in charge and Lt. Henry A. Hunt was the junior officer. Howard E. Smith was the project superintendent under the direction of the National Park Service. Lt.
Charles M. Henish was the camp physician and C.D. Stovall was educational advisor for the company. Another 40 men were expected to join the company when they completed their work at Little Ocmulgee State Park near McRae. All the workers were World War I veterans. They had been constructing the state park at McRae since 1933. The new camp at Kolomoki was known officially as GA-SP-17 (*ECN*, 11 July 1940, SCEC).

The park development project called for construction of a dam and an 80-acre lake, which would include a swimming area, boat docks, a beach and picnic grounds. A playground for children was planned along with bath houses and picnic shelters near the beach. The lake would be re-stocked with fish. New access roads and trails were planned and a superintendent’s residence would be built (*ECN*, 11 July 1940, SCEC).

Robert Wauchope’s archaeological survey was abbreviated because he was moving to North Carolina. A preliminary report was submitted in August. Wauchope and Fairbanks suggested ways to avoid damage to the village area of the site, including remains of a house, and road-building work began. On August 21, 1940, Fairbanks (1940a) completed an analysis of the sherd collections made by Wauchope and prepared a short report that included a preliminary chronology or cultural history of the site.

While clearing the right-of-way of the road east of Mound “A” in October 1940 the C.C.C. workers discovered mounds near the site of the proposed dam and in the lake bed. Initial proposals to move the dam upstream were tabled until an archaeological excavation of the mounds was conducted (C.H. Fairbanks to Inspector Woodward, letter, 9 October 1940; S.M. Lattimore to Regional Director, Region One, letter, 7 October 1940; F.T. Johnston to Director, letter, 22 October 1940; A.E. Demaray to Regional Director, Region One, letter, 24 October 1940; C.H. Fairbanks to Superintendent, ONM, letter, 28 October 1940; C.H. Fairbanks to E.L. Bothwell, letter, 5 November 1940. All letters cited for 1940-1942 are at SEAC). Charles Fairbanks was assigned to investigate the mounds and he arrived on November 6, 1940. After excavation he reported at the end of the month that he had found “almost no material” (W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to G.R. Willey, letter, 25 November 1940). He completed a short preliminary report on his excavations on November 27, 1940 (W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to E.L. Bothwell, letter, 27 November 1940). He also recommended that salvage excavations...
be conducted to “obtain every possible shred of archaeological evidence” from the mounds prior to flooding of the lake. Fairbanks felt that such evidence may be important “to the interpretative story of the early Swift Creek period” (Fairbanks 1940b; S.M. Woodward, Jr. to Regional Director, Region One, letter, 30 December 1940). Housing facilities were not available and travel arrangements for Fairbanks required several weeks to complete. Then Fairbanks reported that he would be unable to supervise the salvage project since he was under orders from his local draft board that he might be conscripted and he was planning to get married in February. Plans to use another site foreman also failed. Fairbanks’ conscription was delayed and he reported to Kolomoki in mid-March to direct the salvage from March 12 to March 21 (C.H. Fairbanks to Regional Director, Region One, letter, 27 January 1941; W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to Inspector Woodward, letter, 25 February 1941; S.M. Woodward, Jr. to Regional Director, Region One, letter, 3 March 1941).

Arriving at Kolomoki, Fairbanks found that the remains of another Indian house, 35 feet in diameter with a clay floor and clay wattle, had been exposed in the grading of the access road across the village area. He wrote:

Reference is made to the entrance road at Kolomoki Mounds State Park. During August of 1940, Dr. Wauchope of the University of Georgia Department of Anthropology and the writer excavated a series of test pits along the alignment of the proposed road. At station 12+00, the remains of an Indian house were discovered. It was decided to raise the road on a fill at this point.

During the present excavations to salvage the materials in the two mounds at the proposed dam site, I examined the present road as laid out and cleared. At station 43+75, an additional house site is evident. It is south-east of the large mound and below the point where test pits were discontinued. The location of an aboriginal house is indicated by a marked discoloration of the soil, charcoal traces, fragments of grass-tempered burned clay wattle, and a marked difference in moisture content of the soil. A hasty investigation revealed the presence of a clay house floor at the base of the plow zone. The floor is apparently burned. There is a local concentration of flint artifacts and potsherds at this point. The house site is apparently about 35 feet in diameter.
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I would like to suggest that the road in this area be raised on an earth fill so that the house site will be preserved for future excavation and development (C.H. Fairbanks to R.F. Burch, letter, 14 March 1941; H.W. Oliver for R.F. Burch to J.H. Gadsby, letter, 20 March 1941).

His memorandum initiated a discussion about the development project at the state park. The National Park Service argued that the development policy should be primarily to preserve the archaeological data at the site as an "archaeological reserve" until "the stage of archaeological knowledge has been much more advanced" (H.E. Kahler to Supervisor, Land Planning & State Cooperation, letter, 26 March 1941; W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to J. Jennings, letter, 28 March 1941). In a memorandum written on March 31, 1941 Fairbanks reported that the C.C.C. project had destroyed two mounds (W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to Supervisor of Historic Sites, letter, 31 March 1941; W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to Mr. Evison, letter, 8 April 1941; W.W. Luckett and C.H. Fairbanks to Inspector Gadsby, letter, 14 April 1941; F.T. Johnston to Director, letter, 22 April 1941; C.H. Fairbanks to Superintendent, ONM, letter, 24 April 1941; C.H. Fairbanks to A.R. Kelly, letter, 20 April 1941; ONM Monthly Report for March 1941, SEAC). Other mounds had been cleared and erosion channels and pits filled to protect them, but their shape had been altered without any record of the original shape. A road had been constructed across a known archaeological area. Fairbanks wrote, "If this sort of protection continues, it is obvious that little or nothing of the site will remain in a few years." This memorandum triggered a bureaucratic firestorm in the ranks of the C.C.C., the N.P.S., and the state parks department. Work was delayed. Memos flew. Supervisors inspected. The crisis finally subsided. The landscape work continued. In April Fairbanks visited several nearby archaeological sites and assisted the project foreman in selecting native plants for the proposed planting plans for Mound A and Mound C parking areas. He also visited the site with A.R. Kelly and Karl Schmitt and assisted Joseph Caldwell in arranging the transfer of the archaeological materials recovered by the Chatham County Archaeological Survey to ONM (ONM Monthly Report for April 1941, SEAC).

The C.C.C. camp held an open house dinner and inspection trip of the park project on April 10, 1941. Pat Akins, the park
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foreman conducted a tour and explained the construction. A crew was “busy leveling the grounds and planting grass” near “the big mound, where the major part of the work is now being done.” The local newspaper reported that, “The smaller of the two larger mounds has been cleared of all trees and other vegetation which gives a bald appearance and makes it resemble the way the Indians built it, Mr. Akins explained.” Visitors examined a lake bed cleared of trees and stumps in the recreational area of the park. A flowing well had been struck near the site where a 40-foot dam was to be built. A dinner was served for the visitors. This was to be the last C.C.C. open house. The project would not be completed. Preparations for war changed the plans (ECN, 17 April 1941, SCEC).

The cultural history of the site continued to baffle archaeologists. Charles Fairbanks, Junior Archaeologist at Ocmulgee National Monument in Macon, wrote to James Griffin on February 5, 1942:

Kolomoki is a mess from the stratigraphic point. There is a large Swift Creek occupation. The village is extensive and there was a small sand mound that I dug and took to be Swift Creek in the creek bottom back of the site. There was little evidence of anything really but Swift Creek seemed the best bet. There is a large amount of Weeden Island that may be later than Swift Creek or combined with it as on the N.W. Florida Coast. Lamar is very thin and does not seem enough to account for the large mound. The smaller mounds are stone and dirt conicals and could be Swift Creek or Weeden Island. The large one I think should be Lamar. Waring and Holder say it could be Swift Creek but that is not very reasonable. Holder points to the Evelyn Mound near Darien but it was much smaller although a pyramidal. Late Weeden Island in its northern range could run to a good deal of Middle Mississippi traits (C.H. Fairbanks to J. Griffin, letter, 5 February 1942).

Fairbanks (1941) submitted his report on his salvage excavations at Kolomoki in May 1941 (see Figure 4). This report, along with his analysis of the Wauchope collection and Jesse Jennings report, provided the information for a short article in American Antiquity (Fairbanks 1946).
Figure 4. Kolomoki Mounds State Park, as described by Charles H. Fairbanks.
Local leaders learned on June 27, 1941 that the C.C.C. camp was to be closed. The workers were moved to Vicksburg, Mississippi (ECN, 3 July 1941, SCEC). Pre-World War II developments at Kolomoki came to a close. The dam and the lake would not be built until 1948. Archaeological excavations were also renewed in 1948.

William H. Sears arrived in June 1948 to prepare a map and conduct archaeological salvage when work began again on the dam and the lake. The deluge of rain and the clouds of archaeological confusion lasted all summer.

DEVELOPING THE STATE PARK

In 1943 the Department of Natural Resources was abolished. A new State agency, the Division of Conservation was created in its stead. One of its three divisions, State Parks, Historic Sites and Monuments, remained to administer state parks. In the same year, legislation was passed to authorize the Governor to appoint an advisory committee in each county in which a state park was situated. Although wartime priorities delayed park development, as soon as the war ended interest in improving the state park was rekindled (Georgia Department of Natural Resources 1991).

When the Early County Chamber of Commerce requested development funds for the park in 1945 they found little interest in the project. The Governor said that, “he would approve an improvement program ... to the extent of $3,000, and that additional improvements could not be made at the present time because of lack of funds in the state parks treasury” (ECN, 6 September 1945, SCEC).

In April 1946, “the first step toward the actual development of Kolomoki State Park got underway” when workmen began planting grass. R.C. Howell was granted a contract to seed Bermuda grass in the village area around the large mounds, about 60 or 70 acres. A contract was also awarded to L.F. Warrick to erect steel steps to the top of the large mound (ECN, 18 April 1946, SCEC).

The Director of State Parks, Charles Morgan, visited Blakely in August 1947. He announced plans to develop the park, including recommending to the budget committee that a dam and lake be constructed, a $50,000 project, and a full-time superintendent be employed. He announced that road signs were being prepared and
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placed near the park by a Blakely firm. He also brought a photographer and a motion picture cameraman to make color movies of the park for promotion (ECN, 28 August 1947, SCEC).

Mayor Mack Strickland, not satisfied with the announcement of plans, led an effort in 1947 devoted to improving the park facilities and access to them. Unsatisfied with promises, Strickland proposed that, “the Georgia Parks Department should return Kolomoki back to Early County or develop same and do it at once.” He also denounced the State’s plans to purchase Jekyll Island until they had developed Kolomoki (ECN, 28 August 1947, 4 September 1947, SCEC).

In October 1947, six tables with benches were placed near the big mound and four tables with benches were put at a grill by the Director of State Parks (ECN, 2 October 1947, SCEC).

When the State announced plans to build the dam that had been discontinued in 1941 (ECN, 20 November 1947, SCEC), Strickland wanted more. “Now its nine years past overdue for the Kolomoki two million dollar state park.” He also wanted “good access roads ... not stinking asphalt roads, good concrete roads.” Strickland reported in his weekly column in the newspaper that, “Surveying and bush cutting by the county is all that has been done.” He kept the community’s and state park department’s attention focused on the project (ECN, 20 November 1947, SCEC).

In February 1948 Dr. A.R. Kelly came to Blakely and spoke to the Rotary Club. He noted the necessity to conduct an archaeological survey of Kolomoki before beginning construction at the park (ECN, 26 February 1948, SCEC). The following week legal announcements were published announcing plans to build the dam and impound the lake. Two weeks later a contract was awarded to Oxford Construction Company of Albany for a low bid of $58,806 (ECN, 4 March 1948, 18 March 1948, SCEC). By summer the work was underway. Dr. Kelly visited the park in March and suggested that the state “employ a young archaeologist with a small crew of men to begin a survey and prepare a cultural map of the entire site occupied by the mounds and the village site” (ECN, 18 March 1948, SCEC). A week later the director of state parks announced that $3,500 would be spent to conduct archaeological explorations at the park. Director Morgan announced that the state planned to establish “one of the outstanding Indian museums in the Southeast” around the mounds. Morgan also noted
that the appropriation was “one of the first examples of direct state aid for such a project” (ECN, 25 March 1948, SCEC).

William H. Sears arrived at the park the last week of June 1948 with Dr. Kelly to begin the survey. Work on the dam was already getting underway (ECN, 1 July 1948, SCEC).

During the first week of construction, the archaeologist reported that the bulldozer had exposed the grave of an “ancient skeleton” believed to be associated with Lamar pottery. This pottery was believed to have been used hundreds of years later than the Swift Creek Complicated Stamped pottery that was scattered across the fields surrounding the mounds. It was believed that the Lamar pottery dated to a time when big mounds like the one at Kolomoki were constructed. The burial was excavated and the discovery was announced in the press. They also reported that the new archaeologist, William H. Sears, was a U.S. Marine veteran, a native of Long Island, New York, and a graduate student at the University of Michigan (SMN, 8 July 1948, 23 August 1948; ECN, 15 July 1948, SCEC).

By the second week of July, construction and excavation bogged down in torrents of rain. Between six and seven inches of rain fell in a day across the area. The monsoon continued for a week (ECN, 11 July 1948, SCEC; SMN, 15 July 1948).

In August 1948, J.L. Griffin was named caretaker of Kolomoki Mounds State Park. During the summer of 1948 much of the archaeologist’s time was devoted to locating a route for a road across the site from the Fort Gaines road to the dam behind, or east of, the big mound. The road constructed by the C.C.C. company had to be re-located because it had been routed “across the back of Mound G,” the Mercier family cemetery (see American Antiquity [AA] 1948).

Some excavations were conducted south of the big mound, called “Mound A” by the archaeologist. Much of the summer was devoted to collecting artifacts from the surface of the area west of the dam as far as the Fort Gaines road. The area encompassed the Indian mounds and what was believed to be the village. A midden (an Indian trash pit) exposed during road construction was also examined and a test pit excavated northwest of Mound A. From this information, Sears prepared a map of the archaeological site. The map included locations of the mounds and evidence of three distinct Indian villages that had occupied the area hundreds of years before.

Mr. Sears was invited to speak at civic clubs in Blakely during the summer. In late July, E.T. Crawford invited Mr. Sears to speak
to the Rotary Club. He talked on "archaeology in general" and how it related to the Kolomoki site. He stated that, in his opinion, the pottery suggested that, "there had been three separate and distinct tribes of people to camp at the park site, the first dating back perhaps to the year 1100, the last between 1400 and 1500." He called the park "one of the greatest potential tourist attractions in the entire southeast." The following week Sears spoke to members of the Lions Club in Blakely (ECN, 29 July 1948, 5 August 1948, SCEC).

In the fall, Dr. Kelly submitted a report on archaeological research in Georgia to the national journal on archaeology, American Antiquity. The report included this description:

During the summer, the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology collaborated with the Department of State Parks of Georgia in conducting a survey of Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Blakely, Georgia along a one-mile stretch where a proposed roadway will be constructed. William H. Sears, formerly of the University of Chicago and the University of Michigan, was archaeologist-in-charge. Test excavations yielded some 17,000 sherds and other artifacts indicating at least three major occupations of this huge metropolitan area with Late Swift Creek, Weeden Island, and an aberrant Lamar represented. Sears' report on the season's work will be completed within the coming year (AA 1949(3):250).

As one chapter in the history of the park was opening, another closed. Dr. Charles C. Harrold died in October 1948. This Macon physician and amateur archaeologist deserves more credit than anyone else for the creation of the park (obituaries in scrapbook, C.C. Harrold Collection, Washington Memorial Library, Macon, Georgia).

As early as 1938, A.R. Kelly, assisted by his wife, had published a chronology of prehistoric sites in the Macon area, including the chronological placement of the distinctive Swift Creek ceramics. Swift Creek studies at Savannah and Brunswick were in general agreement with Kelly's (1938) Swift Creek chronology at Macon.

Jesse Jennings and Charles Fairbanks published the pottery type descriptions for Swift Creek Complicated Stamped ceramics in 1939. Fairbanks also conducted several archaeological studies at Kolomoki and assisted Jesse Jennings and Robert Wauchope with their surveys. He wrote in August 1940 that he assumed that the Kolomoki chronology was comparable to that in Northwest Florida, although he had not found local stratigraphic evidence at Kolomoki. He published a research note in *American Antiquity* entitled "The Kolomoki Mound Group, Early County, Georgia" in 1946 (Jennings and Fairbanks 1939; Fairbanks 1946). All of these studies were published before the invention of radiocarbon dating technology, but they were in general agreement based on stratigraphic evidence.

When William H. Sears arrived at Kolomoki in the summer of 1948 he could draw on the experience of A.R. Kelly who had directed archaeological studies in Georgia since the early 1930s. Gordon Willey provided Sears with a pottery type collection. Willey and Woodbury had excavated the Mound Field Site in Wakulla County, Florida and published their findings in 1942 and 1949. They found stratigraphy placing Kolomoki phase Swift Creek Complicated Stamped ceramics beneath Weeden Island I ceramics. Sears had studied with Charles Fairbanks at the University of Chicago and could call on Fairbanks' knowledge of the site. The archaeologically-knowledgeable pediatrician, Antonio (Tono) Waring of Savannah was also available for assistance. Waring was very familiar with prehistoric archaeology of Georgia coastal sites. Although Sears faced a difficult archaeological problem, he was not alone in an archaeological wilderness.

**KOLOMOKI MOUNDS STATE PARK: RECREATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY**

William Sears remained at the new Department of Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Georgia when the summer excavations were completed. Dr. Kelly assigned him to
complete archaeological reports, set up an archaeological lab and photographic darkroom, and other projects essential to the startup of a new program. He also enrolled in the graduate program at the University of Michigan under James Griffin (W.H. Sears to J.B. Griffin, letter, 27 June 1948; J.B. Griffin to W.H. Sears, letter, 8 July 1948; W.H. Sears to J.B. Griffin, letter, 17 October 1948; J.B. Griffin to W.H. Sears, letter, 21 October 1948; all at Museum of Anthropology, University of Michigan [UMMA]).

In March 1949, Director of State Parks A.N. Moye announced and the local advisory committee recommended that $10,000 be allocated for an archaeological survey of the park from the park development fund of $50,000 (ECN, 31 March 1949, SCEC). According to Sears a grant of $5000 was provided by the Georgia Department of State Parks to conduct the archaeological exploration, prepare and preserve the materials as a permanent museum exhibit, and prepare a report. Some of the grant could have been used to construct the temporary museum over the mound and to publish the report (Griffin 1984).

The second field season at Kolomoki began on June 1, 1949. With a field crew being paid $0.85 and $0.50 per hour, Sears began the excavation of Mound E. The field laboratory, a rough shed made of corrugated tin, was constructed to house the equipment and store archaeological materials for analysis. The dig continued for three months (Griffin 1984).

Molly Allee served as laboratory assistant at the site. This included the difficult task of restoring the pottery found in the mound. Henry Brett from the University of Michigan assisted with the excavation and served as photographer. Dr. Kelly acted as consultant to the Director of State Parks, A.N. Moye, but Dr. Kelly was directing the excavation of several sites all over the State and had little time to spend at Kolomoki (W.H. Sears to J.B. Griffin, letter, 22 June 1949, UMMA).

Local interest in the archaeological work at the park increased when the elaborate burials were discovered in Mound E. In fact, Mr. Sears found it necessary to close the excavation to the public on the first of September 1949 because the crowds visiting the mounds were “destroying possible valuable data” (ECN, 1 September 1949, SCEC).

Dr. Kelly reported to American Antiquity in 1950 that:

This summer the field school of the University of Georgia, directed by A.R. Kelly, returned to southwest Georgia, with
headquarters at Bainbridge, to continue work of survey and salvage in the basin of the lower Flint and Chattahoochee. To date the students have worked on a historic late 18th century site on the Flint near Bainbridge, the paleo-Indian site of Lane Springs on the upper Spring Creek, and at Kolomoki Mounds State Park, where William H. Sears is directing explorations on a burial mound site and is supervising field exhibit and park museum installations at the park (AA 1950:184).

The excavation of Mound E, the preparation of exhibits, and the construction of a temporary museum continued through 1949-1950 in the archaeological area of the park (ECN, 9 June 1949, 27 July 1950, SCEC). The temporary museum opened in July 1950. Despite a heavy rain, a crowd attended the opening (ECN, 27 July 1950, 3 August 1950, SCEC; see AA 1951a).

Meanwhile, work to improve the facilities in the recreational area was underway. A caretaker's house was constructed. The undergrowth around the edge of the lake and in the picnic area was removed and the facilities at the picnic area were improved, including water and sewerage. Work on the dam and the basin enlarged the lake and raised the water level by two feet (ECN, 1 September 1949, SCEC).

Additional grants from the State permitted the continued development of the recreational facilities. With the completion and improvement of Lake Kolomoki, plans were made for another dam and lake upstream from Lake Kolomoki on the site of the old Mansfield's Mill pond. Some of the projects, such as the development of the youth camps, including beaches and boat docks, were not completed until 1953. By 1951 organized camping was popular at the park and Sunday afternoon speedboat races drew large crowds (ECN, 4 January 1951, 18 January 1951, 1 February 1951, 15 February 1951, 8 March 1951, SCEC).

By the summer of 1951 the archaeological site at Kolomoki was no longer the center of public attention. The lake was stocked with bream and shellcrackers. Fishing became popular. Plans were announced to build another lake in the park and improve other recreational facilities. Camping, picnics, and other recreational events were promoted with considerable success. But the big event was speedboat racing. Beginning in the spring speedboat races on Lake Kolomoki, sponsored by the American Legion, drew large and enthusiastic crowds to the park on Sunday afternoon through
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the summer and into the fall (ECN, 15 March 1951, 26 April 1951, 3 May 1951, 31 May 1951, 7 June 1951, 14 June 1951, 13 September 1951, SCEC).

The shift of emphasis to recreational activities in the park appears to have prompted some concern on the part of Dr. Sears. In a talk to the Blakely Lions Club at the end of the digging season in late August 1951, the *Early County News* reported that he said:

... the latest discoveries at the mound are the most important of any at any mound in the nation. He asked that the club members exert their influence to get more improvements from the viewpoint of archaeology than had been done to date. It is these exhibits which will play the greatest part in attracting tourists to the mounds, rather than the recreational facilities....(ECN, 30 August 1951, SCEC).

Recreational activities in the park intensified during 1952 (ECN, 10 April 1952, 10 July 1952, 17 July 1952, SCEC). The speedboat races drew large crowds on Sunday afternoons. Plans were made to expand the recreational facilities. By 1953 organized youth camps, providing swimming, fishing, and boating throughout the week were reported in the local press (ECN, 26 February 1953, SCEC).

The Campfire Girls were meeting at the park by February 1953. This organization spearheaded the drive to expand the youth camp facilities (ECN, 26 February 1953, 6 August 1953, 20 August 1953, 3 September 1953, 10 September 1953, SCEC).

In April 1953 a $70,000 improvement project was announced (ECN, 9 April 1953, SCEC). The new youth camp was dedicated in September 1953. Ben Fortson was the speaker at the dedication. Following a naming contest by the Campfire Girls the camp was named “Camp Hicita” and the new lake was named “Lake Yohola.” The camp buildings cost $100,000. Herman Collier, the park superintendent, managed recreational activities (ECN, 10 September 1953, SCEC). In 1953, high school football teams began pre-season training, practicing on the village plaza area between the Indian mounds. Cedartown High School was the first team to come to the park (ECN, 27 August 1953, SCEC).

While recreation, especially the football activities, had an erosive impact on the archaeology of the site, archaeology had little effect on recreational activities. Fishing, boating, and youth
activities continued to be popular (*ECN*, 1 July 1954, 5 August 1954, 2 September 1954, 30 December 1954, SCEC). Herman Collier managed activities until 1955, when Earl Chandler became superintendent (*ECN*, 12 July 1956, SCEC). While the summer daily activities were focused around Camp Hicita and Lake Yohola, other organizations and individuals met at the park for special events. Boy Scouts, 4-H, family reunions, and church groups held meetings at Kolomoki (*ECN*, 26 April 1955, 7 June 1955, 30 June 1955, 22 September 1955, SCEC). By 1956 fox hunter shows and fox hound field trials were held. Water skiing became popular (*ECN*, 6 December 1956, 13 December 1956, 7 July 1956, 12 July 1956, SCEC). The Jaycees held their first meeting at the park in April 1957 (*ECN*, 11 April 1957, SCEC).

The museum was closed in 1959 for reconstruction. Joe Mahan of the Columbus Museum supervised the work until it reopened in October 1960. A more elaborate interpretative area was included in the new museum (*ECN*, 16 June 1959, 15 September 1960, 13 October 1960, 20 October 1960, SCEC; *Atlanta Constitution [AC]*, 14 October 1960). Information on the museum, including a plan to re-do the exhibits written by Joe Mahan and Frank Schnell, Sr., with reference to carvings by Frank Schnell, Sr., is on file at the Department of Natural Resources (Mahan and Schnell 1960).

Two months before the museum opened, in August 1960, the Blakely Bobcats began using the park for pre-season football camp. This became a local tradition. Many other high school football teams also began using the park in the 1960s for pre-season camp. The plaza area became a practice field; Mound A became a fitness course to build leg muscles (*ECN*, 18 August 1960, SCEC).

An additional 9.7 acres was acquired by the county from S.G. Maddox and transferred to the Department of State Parks in July 1961. This area was part of Lake Yohola (SCEC DB 76:355: Minutes of Board of Commissioners, Early County, Georgia, June 6, 1961, Minute Book 15).

Youth camps became a local tradition at the park, including the Camp Fire Girls, Boy Scouts, and church youth groups. The Pilot Club began meeting at the park in 1963, also initiating a tradition of meeting at Kolomoki (*ECN*, 13 June 1963, 4 July 1963, 3 September 1963, SCEC). In 1963 the Kolomoki Society was organized in Columbus, Georgia. This is a group of hobbyists, Indian artifact collectors and rockhounds from Georgia, Florida, and Alabama. They began meeting in October 1965 at Kolomoki,
holding most of their meetings at the park for over two decades (ECN, 8 October 1964, 15 April 1965, 31 October 1965, SCEC).

The museum was dedicated and the park was designated as a National Historic Landmark. The program was attended by a number of dignitaries; ex-Governor Marvin Griffin spoke at the event held on July 21, 1966 (ECN, 9 June 1966, 23 June 1966, 14 July 1966, 21 July 1966, 28 July 1966, SCEC; Albany Herald, 25 July 1966; National Historic Landmark Dedication Program, July 21, 1966, Blakely-Early County Chamber of Commerce, Maddox Memorial Library, Blakely, Georgia).

During the 1960s recreational activities, especially camping, increased in popularity at Kolomoki. By 1965, Cecil Hall, park superintendent, managed a wide range of activities throughout the year. Camping, suppers, and swimming at the pool attracted more and more people. There were 70,000 visitors in 1967 (ECN, 24 June 1965, 8 September 1966, 20 October 1966, 3 November 1966, 18 May 1967, 8 June 1967, 15 June 1967, 3 August 1967, 21 October 1967, SCEC).

A $100,000 development plan was implemented in 1968, providing expanded group shelters, camping facilities, including water, power, and bathing facilities and restrooms, and a miniature golf course. Campers came from many states (ECN, 11 January 1968, 4 April 1968, 25 July 1968, SCEC; see Figure 5).

Little change occurred in the archaeological program at the park until 1974. In March 1974 thieves broke into the museum and stole dozens of the effigy vessels and other exotic pots that were found in the burial mounds during the excavations between 1948 and 1952. The priceless objects were included in many of the exhibits in the museum. Not only were they lost, but the museum had to replace these unusual art objects and re-work the museum displays. A dozen of the pots stolen in 1974 were recovered in South Florida in 1978, but most of the objects have not been found. The re-design and reconstruction of the museum began in 1977 (Columbus Ledger, 12 March 1974; ECN, 14 March 1974, SCEC; Columbus Enquirer, 1 December 1978; Albany Herald, 30 November 1978; L.C. Barrett to W.H. Sears, letters, 27 April 1977, 21 August 1977, GDNR).

The reconstructed museum exhibits focused on the Natchez-like funeral ceremony that Dr. Sears believed was suggested by the excavations of Mounds D and E. The diorama vividly depicts an event in a Natchez village that was observed and recorded by
Figure 5. The whole Kolomoki Mounds State Park, from the Georgia Department of Natural Resources brochure of 1992.
French explorers along the lower Mississippi River in the 18th century. The burial ceremony suggested by remains in Mounds D and E during careful archaeological excavation appears to be very similar to that observed in the Natchez village (Exhibit Design Plan, Museum, Kolomoki Mound State Park, on file at Department of Parks and Historic Sites, GDNR, Atlanta).

The chronology of the cultural periods at Kolomoki was not changed in the new interpretive center. Failure to interpret the site as a Swift Creek and Weeden Island village meant that the structure of everyday life at Kolomoki depicted in the museum reflects a way of life that existed centuries after the site was abandoned—a Mississippian, corn-centered society. No corn was found in any excavations. No corn has been found in Swift Creek sites.

Another consequence of the theft of artifacts was the preparation of an inventory of artifacts in the museum. Karl Steinen prepared the inventory during the summer of 1981. Kolomoki was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 1981. The nomination languished in the bureaucratic coffers for five years before approval (National Register nomination form for Kolomoki Mounds, Georgia, prepared by F. Weiss and C. McKithan, September 1981, GDNR).

THE KOLOMOKI PROBLEM: INTERPRETING A COMPLEX ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

The archaeological activities at the park in 1950 and 1951 concentrated primarily on preparing the exhibits for the museum at Mound E and the excavation of Mound D in the center of the village. The museum at Mound E was opened to the public on July 27, 1950. This Indian burial ground exhibit was designed to depict the way of life of the people who lived at Kolomoki centuries before. Sears focused much of his attention and efforts on this project for over a year. Some of the exotic ceramic vessels that had been interred with the burials were restored and placed in the exhibit. Museum-quality skeletons that had been excavated from the Irene Mound in Savannah were borrowed from Ocmulgee National Monument and placed in the exhibit in the locations of the principal burials (C.H. Fairbanks to Dean, letter, 7 February 1950, SEAC; M.D. Guy to C.H. Fairbanks, letter, 17 February 1950, SEAC; AA 1950). The exhibit focused on the burial of the “president or high priest of the whole Indian world.” Despite the rain-slick clay
roads, about 400 people attended the opening ceremony. The main speakers were Lt. Gov. Marvin Griffin, State Parks Director A.N. Moye and Dr. A.R. Kelly (AC, 30 July 1950). The Early County News reported: "The burial mound exhibit was opened following the program and a steady stream of visitors flowed through the new building, which is constructed right over the graves of the former Indian chief, until the closing time at night" (ECN, 3 August 1950, SCEC).

Sears began the excavation of Mound D and prepared reports in 1950 on the excavations conducted during the summer of 1948 and the summer of 1949 (Season II was 1949, not 1950 as indicated in the title of the monograph). The reports were published by the University of Georgia Press in 1951 (Sears 1951a, 1951b).

In these papers Sears described Kolomoki as a place that had been occupied by people of three distinctive cultures. He called these cultures Weeden Island I or Late Swift Creek, Kolomoki, and Lamar. He assigned no dates to the cultures. The Weeden Island, Swift Creek, and Lamar cultures and periods had been studied by several archaeologists during the 1930s and 1940s. Sears argued that some of the Swift Creek pottery and some special pots buried in Mound E represented a different culture. He created a special name for this Swift Creek Complicated Stamp pottery: Kolomoki Complicated Stamped. He hoped to show that what he called the "Kolomoki Complex" was associated with the "Temple Mound I time period" or around A.D. 1000-1200.

Charles Fairbanks reviewed Excavations at Kolomoki: Seasons I and II in American Antiquity in 1952 (Fairbanks 1952). He was oblique in his comments on Kolomoki chronology. The review would not have been very helpful to Sears. Sears' Excavations at Kolomoki: Seasons III & IV, Mound D was published in 1953 (Sears 1953a).

By the end of the year in 1950 Sears had also submitted his doctoral dissertation entitled "The Prehistoric Cultural Position in the Southeast of Kolomoki, Early County, Georgia" to the University of Michigan. In his thesis Sears (1950) employed special terms to label periods in the cultural prehistory of the Kolomoki site. He did not discuss any evidence of prehistoric occupation of the site prior to around A.D. 200. He found evidence of the existence of "four archaeological complexes." They included a "minor one," the Santa Rosa-Swift Creek complex, a "major one," an early Weeden Island or as he called it, the "Little
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Kolomoki Component,” another “major one” that developed out of the previous complex, the “Kolomoki Complex,” and finally another minor complex, the “Lamar Component” that he argued was a re-occupation of the site after a period of abandonment. He also believed that the Swift Creek Complicated Stamped pottery, by far the most common type found at the site, was unique and should be named “Kolomoki Complicated Stamped” pottery. James Griffin was Sears’ doctoral advisor at the University of Michigan. He agreed with his student that the Kolomoki Complex probably dated to the Mississippian period (A.D. 900-1500) (J.B. Griffin to W.H. Sears, letters, 21 October 1948, 22 September 1950, 5 October 1950, 15 December 1950; W.H. Sears to J.B. Griffin, letters, 29 August 1949, 18 August 1949, 13 September 1950, 21 November 1950, 13 November 1950, 8 December 1950; all at UMMA).

In site after site, Swift Creek Complicated Stamped pottery with Kolomoki-like designs was found to date stratigraphically with early Weeden Island pottery and before late Weeden Island pottery instead of after it as Sears believed. Carbon-14 date after carbon-14 date on material associated with Swift Creek pottery with Kolomoki-like designs in site after site gave determinations to around A.D. 500, not A.D. 1000 or later. Although “the problem” hung like a stone around the neck of Sears in the eyes of most archaeologists, James Griffin escaped any responsibility. Critics also awarded no blame to A.R. Kelly, the project supervisor.

In his thesis Sears wrote that he believed that the Kolomoki people, a Mississippian culture, were farmers and had a society divided into classes, or at least was dominated by a ruling elite similar to the Natchez Indians living along the Mississippi River in the early 18th century. He felt that people in the town were probably subsidized by people living in outlying villages.

*American Antiquity* reported progress of the work in 1951:

William Sears is working at Kolomoki State Park, assisted by Lewis Larson. The latter is excavating one of the smaller mounds, mound H. Sears has resumed work on mound D, which produced rather elaborate effigy pottery last year, including rattlesnake, adornos, bird and animal effigies in the round, and two human figures. Since stripping off the last mantle, there has been found all sorts of cremated and uncremated single skulls, large sheet mica ornaments, simple strips, and an iron cymbal shaped ear ornament, which presumably is of meteoric origin, are included (AA 1951b:181).
Two issues earlier, *American Antiquity* also reported: "Kolomoki State Park has recently installed the first set of exhibits in its new museum. When completed, the museum, in conjunction with the covered burial mound, will offer the visitor a rounded picture of the site's culture" (AA 1951b:364).

Sears returned to Kolomoki in the summer of 1951 and focused his efforts on the excavation of Mound D, located in the center of the village plaza. Lewis Larson joined him in 1951 and excavated Mound H near the museum (see Figure 6). *American Antiquity* announced the completion of the excavation of Mound D in a 1952 issue:

Dr. W.H. Sears, University of Georgia, has continued work at Kolomoki State Park, and reports that the excavation of Mound D at Kolomoki is now completed. The first construction stage of this mound was a small primary mound of village debris scraped over four extended bodies in log lined tombs. Scaffolding was then erected on the mound. Two burials, probably female, were placed in log tombs in front of the scaffolding, and a male in a log and rock slab tomb off the south side. All was then covered with a special yellow clay mantle, including a disc-shaped high point in the rectangular yellow clay mound over the male burial. A layer of brown earth with a mass pottery deposit was put in front of rectangular mound. Yellow earth was again piled up in a mound with a small flat top. A great many single skulls, bundles of long bones, more extended burials, and cremations were deposited as the yellow clay was added. A mass cremation on the flat top was the next stage, and then a final red clay cap (AA 1952a:288).

In an article in *Time Magazine* (November 12, 1951), Dr. Sears was quoted: "It has more dead people put in funnier ways than any mound in the Southeast." Sears and Waring believe it was similar to the Natchez-Teansa ceremony, with some elaborations not mentioned in the historical source.

The summer of 1952 was devoted to excavating small mounds near the large mound. *American Antiquity* reported:

William Sears, University of Georgia, is continuing work at Kolomoki State Park. During this season he excavated mound F and mound B. The former contained only a small platform
Figure 6. The archaeological area at Kolomoki, based on a map prepared for Sears by W.W. Thomas, with updated modern cultural features, park boundary, topography, and ground check, by C. T. Trowel.
mound, evidently used for only a brief period. Mound B contained only a collection of large postholes scattered in a rather random fashion. The mound seems to have resulted from earth piled around the base of these poles (AA 1952b:191).

The last season of excavation was reported in American Antiquity in 1953.

Field work during the summer and fall of 1952, by the University of Georgia, was concentrated at three sites: Kolomoki, Kinchafoonee and historic Tugalo. William H. Sears completed his fifth season of exploration at Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Blakely, Georgia, with excavations of two small mounds and additional work in the village area. The mound explorations uncovered evidences of structures but no additional elaborate mortuary features and burial pottery caches such as were found in previous work. Plans now call for an intensified program of museum extension and exhibit preparation, and the writing of a final report on Kolomoki which will occupy Sears during 1952 (AA 1953:300).

Sears (1953b) published his first article on Kolomoki in an archaeological journal in 1953. Entitled “Kolomoki Burial Mounds and the Weeden Island Mortuary Complex,” the article focused on the excavations of Mounds D and E. The paper included a map of the plans of the two villages. Based on the distribution of thousands of potsherds, he distinguished one area as a Kolomoki Period village and another as a Weeden Island Period village. A plate included photographs of nine pots. All but one were Weeden Island vessels or the new type that he described, Mercier Red on Buff. He believed the Mercier Red on Buff type to be “Mature Mississippian,” probably around A.D. 1000 or later. Only one Swift Creek, or Kolomoki Complicated Stamped, vessel was shown in the plate. This was unusual because the site was littered with Swift Creek Complicated Stamped potsherds. Dr. Sears named these potsherds Kolomoki Complicated Stamped, a Mississippian descendant of Swift Creek. They were decorated with what he believed to be a special variant of Swift Creek Complicated Stamped designs.

American Antiquity in October 1953 published a research note reporting that Charles Fairbanks, then with the National Park
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Service at Fort Frederica National Monument on St. Simons Island, Georgia, had re-examined the collections made by Preston Holder in the late 1930s at the Evelyn site in Glynn County and found that the material "looks more and more like Kolomoki with a late type of Swift Creek Complicated Stamp very similar to Kolomoki Complicated Stamp. There is also at least one turtle effigy suggesting the Weeden Island influence or element present at Kolomoki" (AA 1953:191). Fairbanks prepared the type description for Swift Creek Complicated Stamp during the 1930s. It appears in retrospect that he was obliquely expressing some doubt that Kolomoki Complicated Stamp was "Mature Mississippian" instead of "Middle Woodland." The Evelyn site was clearly a Deptford Period to Swift Creek Period site.

On the same page the journal reported that Carl Miller had excavated a site on the Flint River with a Santa Rosa-Swift Creek Period component (early Swift Creek) overlain by a deep deposit of Weeden Island I material. Miller felt that Weeden Island might need to be subdivided into new cultures or periods (AA 1953:191).

This report was followed by a note from Florida that the Hughes Island mound site had been excavated by the University of Florida. They found it to be a "Weeden Island I site with considerable Kolomoki material." They found that Kolomoki was earlier than Weeden Island "for this part of Florida," but it could not be "equated with the Kolomoki problem." The same report announced that Ripley Bullen had found a rich site with Kolomoki pottery on the west side of the Chattahoochee River near the Jim Woodruff Dam.

Joseph R. Caldwell (ca. 1953) prepared a short paper entitled "The Stratigraphic Position of Kolomoki Complicated Stamp" for "Facts and Comments" in American Antiquity in either 1953 or 1954. It was not published, maybe not submitted. The paper examined Sears' interpretation of the chronological position of Swift Creek Complicated Stamped (Kolomoki Phase) and Weeden Island I ceramics. He wrote: "The purpose of this note is to point out that physical stratigraphy bearing directly upon Sears' postulated [ceramic] sequence has been found in the northwest Florida-southwest Georgia area, and to state that the evidence indicates that the true ceramic succession at Kolomoki was probably exactly the reverse of that suggested by Sears." He presented the stratigraphic evidence found by Willey and Woodbury at Mound Field. He then reported the ceramic
chronology revealed in the stratigraphic zones that he found in excavations in middens at Fairchild’s Landing in Seminole County, Georgia, south of Kolomoki, in 1953. Unlike excavations at Kolomoki, the village middens at these sites were stratified and clearly placed Kolomoki Phase Swift Creek Complicated Stamped ceramics beneath Weeden Island I ceramics. Here Weeden Island I ceramics were also situated beneath Weeden Island II (Wakulla Checked) ceramics. Caldwell also believed that the ceramic evidence suggests that Mound D was built on top of a Kolomoki Phase Swift Creek midden, making Kolomoki Complicated Stamped pottery earlier instead of later than Weeden Island I ceramics.

Caldwell also prepared a research note entitled “The Stratigraphy of Georgia” in 1954 (Caldwell 1954). Prepared for American Antiquity, apparently it was never submitted for publication. Based on his excavations at Savannah, along the Chattahoochee River south of Kolomoki, and many other sites in Georgia, he outlined what he believed to be the prehistoric chronology of Georgia. He assigned what Sears called Kolomoki Complicated Stamped pottery to a chronological position between Santa Rosa-Swift Creek (Early Swift Creek) and Weeden Island. In Caldwell’s opinion, the Kolomoki Complex was not Mississippian.

The final report on the excavations at Kolomoki was not published until 1956 (Sears 1956). Stephen Williams reviewed Excavations at Kolomoki: Final Report in American Antiquity in 1958. He disagreed with the Sears chronology, particularly the date Sears assigned to the Kolomoki Complex (Williams 1958). In 1958, Joseph Caldwell published his Trend and Tradition in the Prehistory of the Eastern United States. In this synthesis, Caldwell agreed with Sears’ “admirable presentation” of the Gulf Coast cultural development; he felt they were “marred only by his adherence to a late dating of the Kolomoki period” (Caldwell 1958:61).

The process of dating by measurement of the decay of carbon-14 atoms was developed in 1949 and by 1956 a number of dates had been determined on materials associated with Swift Creek Complicated Stamped pottery, including the type Sears called “Kolomoki Complicated Stamped.” Most of the determinations indicated dates between around A.D. 100 to around A.D. 500. None were A.D. 1000 or later as Sears argued. Joseph Caldwell, Ripley Bullen, and others excavated stratified sites along the lower Chattahoochee River and in north Florida that exposed Swift Creek
Complicated Stamped pottery beneath Weeden Island I pottery. By the time the final report was published in 1956 the evidence from many sites demonstrated that Kolomoki Complicated Stamped pottery, and the Kolomoki Complex, were not Mature Mississippian (after A.D. 1200), but probably dated to around 300 to 500. The chronology at Kolomoki was not only incorrect, whole cultural periods were reversed. The Swift Creek (or Kolomoki) Period should precede the Weeden Island Period, not follow it. It was as if Roman civilization had been dated before Classical Greek civilization or the American Revolution after the Civil War. Among archaeologists, this reversal of periods of occupation, Dr. Sears inverted ceramic seriation, and what to do about it, was “The Kolomoki Problem.”

While some challenged the answer, a few others began to rework the problem. Some held fast to Sears’ interpretation. For example, Griffin included Kolomoki on a map of South Appalachian Mississippian sites in his synthesis article on eastern North American archaeology in *Science* in 1967, along with Ocmulgee, Irene, Mandeville, Roods Landing, Bull Creek, Lamar, and Etowah (Griffin 1967).

A few miles north of Kolomoki, A.R. Kelly, Richard Novas, Bettye Broyles, Clemens de Baillou, David W. Chase, and Frank Schnell surveyed archaeological sites in Clay County, publishing a report in 1962 (Kelly et al. 1962). In 1962 J.H. Kellar, A.R. Kelly, and E.V. McMichael published the results of their study of the Mandeville site, a few miles north of Kolomoki in Clay County. Mandeville was primarily a Deptford-Early Swift Creek site (Kellar et al. 1962a, 1962b). The same year Sears published the results of his studies of hopewellian influences along the Gulf Coast of Florida, spelling out his concept of Yent and Green Point Complexes as a way to explain social patterns in Deptford-Early Swift Creek sites (Sears 1962).

Bettye Broyles published her paper on reconstructed designs from Swift Creek Complicated Stamped potsherds in 1968. Most archaeologist who had examined Swift Creek Complicated Stamped sherds attempted to find motifs common to many sherds, such as “Figure-8’s,” “Bulls-eyes,” and “Snowshoes.” Instead of attempting to identify motifs, Broyles carefully examined sherd after sherd and reconstructed entire designs, the reverse of the design that would have been carved on the wooden paddle that was used to stamp the design on the pot (Broyles 1968). Broyles was
following in the steps of Mrs. Rowenna Kelly, who had undertaken this tedious effort in archaeological reconstruction in the 1930s. Frankie Snow would continue this tradition, beginning in the early 1970s. The uniqueness of the designs provides a rich archive of archaeological information for temporal and spatial analysis of Swift Creek culture (Snow 1977).

A number of studies were published in 1974 and 1975 that suggested clues to the solution of the Kolomoki problem. David S. Brose and George W. Percy presented papers on ceremonialism and human ecology of people of the Weeden Island culture, Jerald T. Milanich excavated a Weeden Island house at the Sycamore site on the upper Apalachicola River south of Kolomoki, John W. Walker studied the Weeden Island materials from the rich Andrews site on Big Indian Creek south of Warner Robins and the Shelly site north of Hawkinsville, and Timothy A. Kohler studied the Garden Patch site in north Florida, adding to the fund of information on the Weeden Island culture that occupied Kolomoki during or following the Swift Creek Period (Brose and Percy 1974; Kohler 1975; Milanich 1974; Percy and Brose 1974; Walker 1974). A.R. Kelly and Betty A. Smith completed a report on the Swift Creek site near Macon and Frankie Snow published an article in 1975 on his studies of Swift Creek Complicated Stamped designs and their use in reconstructing art, ideas, and contemporaneous Swift Creek settlements and their interaction in South Georgia (Kelly and Smith 1975; Snow 1975). Betty Smith completed her doctoral dissertation at the University of Georgia, A Re-analysis of the Mandeville Site, 9 Cla 1, Focusing on Its Internal History and External Relations in 1975. Focusing on Early Swift Creek and Hopewellian interaction, Smith did not mention Kolomoki or cite any research on Kolomoki Swift Creek (Smith 1975).

Karl T. Steinen and Timothy A. Kohler finished doctoral dissertations on Weeden Island studies in 1976. Steinen focused on the Kolomoki area and Kohler analyzed materials from the large McKeithan site near the Suwannee River in north Florida. Steinen (1976) followed the Sears chronology. Kohler (1976) reported that, although only seven Kolomoki Complicated Stamped potsherds were found at McKeithan, his study reinforced “Sears’ hypothesis that the Kolomoki period in southwest Georgia is the temporal equivalent of the late Weeden Island period in Florida.”

Although the chronology of Weeden Island remained unclear, a number of studies were published in 1978 that began to refine the
Swift Creek chronology. Betty Smith edited Joseph Caldwell's report (1978) on his excavations at Fairchild's Landing and Hare's Landing in Seminole County, Georgia, south of Kolomoki. Caldwell found that it was possible to distinguish several phases in the evolution of Swift Creek ceramics at these sites with well-preserved stratigraphy. These 1953 excavations revealed the chronological placement of designs Sears called Kolomoki Complicated Stamped to be in the middle of the Swift Creek period, after Santa Rosa-Swift Creek Phase and before Fairchild’s Landing Phase. Smith (personal communication 1994) noted that she omitted Caldwell’s comments pertaining to Sears’ interpretation of the ceramic sequence at the Kolomoki site because “it is generally accepted now that the sequence as described by Sears is actually reversed.” David W. Chase excavated at the Uchee Creek Site and the Quartermaster Site on the Chattahoochee River well north of Kolomoki. Several Swift Creek, Weeden Island I and some Lamar ceramics were separated in stratified sites, including Kolomoki Complicated Stamped (Caldwell 1978:I, 70-71, 94-96). Frankie Snow and Chris Trowell recovered Swift Creek Complicated Stamped and Weeden Island potsherds in undisturbed pits in the Ocmulgee Big Bend region and the Okefenokee Swamp and begin to build a bank of radiocarbon dates for sites in south Central Georgia (Snow and Trowell 1978, Trowell 1978). David W. Chase published a report on the Uchee Creek Site in the middle Chattahoochee valley. He addressed the association between Weeden Island and Swift Creek ceramics in this area well north of Kolomoki. It refuted the Sears chronology at Kolomoki (Chase 1978). Dennis Blanton, working as a seasonal naturalist at the state park, conducted surface surveys of the area around the state park during the summer of 1978. Blanton also found the remains of an aboriginal trash pit collapsing into a ravine adjacent to the park. The pit was excavated and the remains were salvaged. He also interviewed local residents and recorded information on the history of the park (Dennis Blanton, unpublished notes, 1978, 1993).

Ned J. Jenkins published a clearly stated summary of the chronology of the Lower Chattahoochee Valley in the Journal of Alabama Archaeology in 1978, placing the Kolomoki Swift Creek ceramics at around 500 A.D. On Kolomoki he wrote:

The Late Swift Creek-Weeden Island I complex is best demonstrated at the Kolomoki site investigated by Sears. Although Sears placed Kolomoki in an Early Mississippian
temporal position, many southeastern archaeologists, including this author, feel that Sears inverted his ceramic seriation at that site and incorrectly positioned Kolomoki. Sears' two primary points of argument for this position were what he considered to be Mississippian vessel shapes in Mound E and the temple mound plaza arrangement which he considered to be Kolomoki. However, the vessel shapes from Mound E are not strictly confined to the Mississippian Period, nor were enough excavations performed on the temple mound to determine is provenance. The temple mound is virtually identical to Mature to Late Mississippian Lamar and/or Roods Creek temple mounds which are also found in southern Georgia. In this report, Kolomoki is interpreted as a direct outgrowth from Early Swift Creek with strong influences from north Florida Weeden Island. Consequently, the Kolomoki Phase should be considered a regional phase of a broader Late Swift Creek-Weeden Island I Culture (Jenkins 1978).

Frank T. Schnell prepared a ceramic chronology form late prehistoric sites in the Lower Chattahoochee Valley for the SEAC Bulletin in 1981, including Swift Creek and Weeden Island ceramics. It was very similar to the chronology published by Jenkins, but extends Kolomoki ceramics a century or two later (Schnell 1981). Nancy White critically reviewed the chronology of Northwest Florida in the special issue on Northwest Florida Archaeology in the Florida Anthropologist in 1985 (White 1985).

In 1979 Frankie Snow, Fred Cook, and Dwight Kirkland continued their studies of Swift Creek sites in southeast Georgia, including recovery of ceramic designs and other traits for use in temporal and spatial analysis (Cook 1979; Kirkland 1979; Snow 1980; Snow et al. 1979). Although of limited use in solving the Kolomoki problem, studies by Judy Bense in West Florida refined the chronology of Santa Rosa-Swift Creek (Bense 1979).

Frankie Snow published a research note in The Profile in 1982 reporting indisputable interaction between Kolomoki and the Milamo site near Lumber City, Georgia. The identical design on the potsherds from the sites had been c-14 dated at Milamo (Snow 1982).

In 1984, two carbon-14 dates from materials associated with Kolomoki Complicated Stamped sherds at Kolomoki were reported in a monograph on the McKeithan site in north-central Florida, a
Weeden Island Period village. Karl Steinen had submitted the carbon for analysis. He reported that the determinations were A.D. 405 +/-25 years and A.D. 385 +/-75 years (Milanich 1984:13). Vernon J. Knight, Jr. and Tim S. Mistovich (1984) published a chronology of the lower Chattahoochee Valley with Kolomoki Swift Creek preceding Weeden Island.

Evidence that large "temple mounds" on the Kolomoki pattern were constructed at some sites during the Woodland period was also appearing in archaeological reports by the 1980s. For example, Vernon J. Knight, Jr. published a detailed report in 1990 on the Walling Site, a Middle Woodland site in the Tennessee Valley (Knight 1990). David Chase reported the results of excavations at the Miner's Creek site in DeKalb County in 1988. Located originally in 1976, the Miner's Creek site was a Swift Creek Period occupation. It was one of several Swift Creek sites that appears to date to the Middle Swift Creek or Kolomoki phase that Chase believes to date around 300-500 A.D. The excavation continued in 1989. Chase also began to employ Snow's design analysis at the site (Chase 1988, 1989a, 1989b).

Frankie Snow reported on excavations at the Hartford site near Hawkinsville in Pulaski County in 1989 and Snow and Keith Stephenson announced the preliminary analysis of the study in 1990 (Snow and Stephenson 1990). Snow's analysis of the materials continued for three years. Hartford is the first Swift Creek Period site that Swift Creek Complicated Stamped design analysis was employed with an array of other archaeological and archival methods following systematic excavation. Two Swift Creek Phases were found at the Hartford Site. One, in a midden beneath a mound, appeared to be transitional between the Mandeville Swift Creek Phase (Early or Santa Rosa-Swift Creek Phase) and the Milamo or Kolomoki Swift Creek Phase (Early Middle Swift Creek). In a village area, a number of freshwater mussel shell middens were found to be arranged in the typical horseshoe village pattern. The middens contained potsherds from the Kolomoki or Milamo Phase. It was possible to reconstruct the regional interaction patterns from both phases at Hartford, employing design analysis. James B. Stoltman complemented the design analysis with petrographic analysis. A deep pit filled with faunal remains revealed a relatively detailed record of diet during the pre-Kolomoki Phase, but the village middens were so thin and disturbed that the record was far less complete (Stoltman and Snow 1998).
The results of the Hartford excavations and analyses were discussed in working papers at the LAMAR Institute Swift Creek Conference at Macon in 1993, with papers by James B. Stoltman, David Chase, Keith Ashley, Judy Bense, Dan Elliott, Mark Williams, Rebecca Saunders, Karl Steinen and David G. Anderson (Williams and Elliott 1998). Keith Ashley (1992, 1995) extended Swift Creek investigations southeastward in 1992 in his studies of Swift Creek sites along the St. Johns River in northeast Florida.

Ken Johnson excavated in the area between Mound E and Mound F in March 1995. The site had been selected for a parking lot for the museum. He exposed several long, linear features, which he suggested might be explained as a palisade. He also suggested that the features might be interpreted as a ceremonial walkway between Mound E and Mound F, but he felt this to be less likely. Johnson was the first to excavate a large area in this part of the palisade or “breastworks” that had been described by many visitors between 1847 and 1941. Wauchope had excavated test pits along the route of the road (between Mound E and Mound F) in 1940. Palmer found a similar feature north of Mound A and possibly near the Mound F area (he identified the area as Mound 11 and Mound 11) in 1884. Unfortunately Johnson did not review this information, but his findings are similar to those reported by Palmer in 1884, Wauchope in 1940 and Fairbanks in 1941. While Johnson switched to a Woodland chronology, he continued to restrict his perspective to the Sears reports, and despite decades of research on Swift Creek and Weeden Island ceramics since 1951, Johnson continued to employ the older concepts of Swift Creek “motifs” and the “Kolomoki” type. On a positive note, Johnson’s use of color images of features and ceramics in his report is a marked improvement in site description (Johnson 1995).

In its chronological sense, “the Kolomoki problem”—that is, whether the main occupation of Kolomoki is Swift Creek Middle Woodland, before Weeden Island, or whether it post-dates the Late Woodland, by the weight of evidence and informed opinion has been resolved in favor of the former. There was, however, a lag in the acceptance of this early chronology, especially in public education. Karl T. Steinen and John R. (Chip) Morgan retained the Sears chronology in a paper read at the Georgia Academy of Science in 1985 entitled “Kolomoki Revisited” (Steinen and Morgan 1985). The narrative for the National Register for Historic Places nomination that was approved in 1986 also retained the Sears chronology. The Atlas of Georgia (Hodler and Schretter 67
1986:67, 245), which listed no archaeologists in its lengthy acknowledgments, shows Kolomoki on the map of major archaeological sites as a Woodland site, but in the list of "Select Historic Sites and Museums" it is described as a "Mississippian Indian village; museum built over excavated burial mound." The Georgia Department of Natural Resources produced a video-tape on state parks in Georgia, and its narrative on Kolomoki retains the Sears chronology.

Dr. Sears himself submitted a letter entitled "Mea Culpa" for publication in a 1992 issue of Southeastern Archaeology. He wrote that he had erred in interpreting Kolomoki Complicated Stamped pottery as "Mature Mississippian" and placing it chronologically after, instead of before, Weeden Island pottery.

Karl Steinen presented a paper entitled "Kolomoki and the Development of Socio-Political Organization on the Gulf Coastal Plain" at the LAMAR Swift Creek Conference in 1993 (Steinen 1998). He reviewed Sears' extensive reconsideration of the site, emphasizing the three principal chronological and cultural elements in the village middens, a Late Swift Creek (Kolomoki) assemblage (ca. A.D. 250-300), a Weeden Island I-Complicated stamped assemblage (ca. 350-600), and a Weeden Island I-Plain pottery assemblage. The belief that the Kolomoki Complex is Mature Mississippian is extinct. Steinen placed Kolomoki chronologically between the Early Swift Creek Mandeville Phase and the Mississippian Rood Landing Phase. In the light of research during the past twenty-five years, Steinen questioned the usefulness of Sears’ "Priest State" model for Kolomoki that he proposed in 1968, and suggested that a much smaller Kolomoki territorial socio-political catchment is probably more realistic. He also questioned the usefulness of the north Florida McKeithan Site model to explain Kolomoki. He suggested the Kolomoki civic center probably resembled a decentralized socio-economic system similar to that found on Moala Island, Fiji, in the south Pacific. He concluded his paper with a call to return to Kolomoki, conduct excavations of large areas of the village midden and extensive surface surveys of the Dougherty Plain and the Tallahassee Red Hills environments to refine Kolomoki’s chronological and geographical position in the Gulf Coastal Plain and test cultural models that might explain her socio-economic-political function in this time and place.

William Sears died on December 20, 1996. In his obituary for The Florida Anthropologist, Donna L. Ruhl wrote:
Bill often taught in his seminars that there was no such thing as “cook book archaeology.” To paraphrase him, “You must look, walk over your site, think and rethink, and then maybe you will get it right.” In 1992, many years after the publication of his Kolomoki monograph, Bill wrote an article which was published in *Southeastern Archaeology* entitled “Mea Culpa” [Sears 1992]. In it he revised his chronology for the Kolomoki site to complement contemporary findings and dates associated with Swift Creek and Weeden Island. The article was an expression of his belief that archaeologists need to think and rethink their data, and it demonstrated that he was still reading and thinking about archaeology from his place of retirement (Ruhl 1997).

Although the “Kolomoki Problem” in its broadest chronological sense has been resolved, it remains true and unfortunate that the cultural history and prehistory of the site have never been systematically investigated. Paleo-Indian and Archaic artifacts have been found on and near the site, but this period has not been studied. Sites around deep springs were used all across South Georgia and at Kolomoki by Paleo-Indian and Archaic peoples. This dimension of the Kolomoki story needs to be addressed.

Non-intrusive methods, including ground-penetrating radar and other electronic devices, need to be used to map the Middle Woodland archaeological features of the site. The “wall” and the well adjacent to Mound A seem to be especially important archaeological features. These should be the first steps in a detailed study of Swift Creek and Weeden Island sequential occupation of Kolomoki. This knowledge should assist in investigations of the form and function of the place during this period. Along with design analysis, carbon-14, especially accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) dates from carbon on diagnostic potsherds, should provide a major step toward refining the chronology.

The spatial interaction between Kolomoki and other sites in Southern Georgia, Northern Florida and Southern Alabama during the Early and Middle Swift Creek periods can be mapped using design analysis. Some steps in this process have already been taken. An understanding of the cultural geography of these periods should provide a useful model for investigating previous and succeeding periods in the region.
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As a major national archaeological site, refining the Kolomoki chronology and understanding the function of the site within the Swift Creek/Weeden Island realm should be a high priority in Georgia, southeastern and national archaeology. The forty-year wait recommended by Jesse Jennings in 1938 has long since passed. It is time to open the archaeological “Christmas package.”

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Most of the information for this paper was found in the local newspaper, the Early County News. The bound files of newspapers were housed in the Office of the Clerk of the Superior Court in Blakely (SCEC). Other regional newspapers contained occasional articles on Kolomoki, including the Albany, Columbus, Macon, Atlanta, Brunswick, and Savannah newspapers. Research reports in American Antiquity (AA) recorded the progress of excavations during the 1940s and 1950s. The journal generously permitted their use in this paper.

The U.S. Census, Population and Agriculture, provided the core of the section on the Mercier plantation. These were supplemented by articles in the local newspaper, court records of deeds and wills, and genealogical records and letters provided by Mrs. Barbara Patton Pierce, a Mercier descendent living in Karana Downs, Queensland, Australia.

The correspondence cited in the paper came from several sources. The archives of the Southeastern Archaeological Center in Tallahassee, Florida (SEAC) contained a wealth of data, especially on the period, 1938-1941. It is found mainly in Accession 255 and 255.3. Sara Reynolds at SEAC was especially helpful. Frank Schnell guided me through the archival materials at the Columbus (GA) Museum (CM). There, the Isabel G. Patterson Collection traced the first years of property acquisition and archaeology at Kolomoki Mounds State Park. The files on Kolomoki Mounds State Park and A.R. Kelly were especially useful. The maps of the C.C. Harrold property and the first topographic map of the park are housed at the Columbus Museum. Upon the advice of Dr. William Sears, I contacted John O’Shea at the Museum of Anthropology at the University of Michigan (UMMA) for information on his correspondence with James Griffin. Frank De Mita examined the correspondence files at the Museum of Anthropology and provided the correspondence between James Griffin and William Sears. Edward Palmer’s handwritten report is housed in the National
Anthropological Archives, National Museum of Natural History at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. A letter from Palmer to Cyrus Thomas, reporting on his arrival and initial reconnaissance of the site is also housed in these archives. A few newspaper articles and letters were found in the C.C. Harrold Collection at the Washington Memorial Library in Macon. Billy Townsend examined the files of Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, Georgia Department of Natural Resources in Atlanta (GDNR) and provided reports and correspondence. Most of this information was related to the exhibits and artifact collections housed at the museum at the park. The manuscript files of the Archaeology Lab, Department of Anthropology, University of Georgia contained a number of unpublished reports and theses. The unpublished notes of Joseph Caldwell were found there. Most of Frankie Snow’s Swift Creek papers, published in *The Profile*, were reprinted in *The Profile Papers: The Society for Georgia Archaeology Special Publication #1*, Compiled by Patrick H. Garrow & George S. Lewis, August 1992. Several articles and other documents relating to special events at the state park were found in the vertical file, Maddox Memorial Library, Blakely, Georgia. John Pritchett of Blakely was a constant and valuable source on information on the history of the park.

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WHERE HAVE ALL THE ARTIFACTS GONE?
The Cobb County Archaeological Survey’s Final Chapter

Deborah L. Wallsmith

A KOLOMOKI CHRONICLE: HISTORY OF A PLANTATION, A STATE PARK AND THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SEARCH FOR KOLOMOKI’S PREHISTORY

C. T. Trowell