Clarence Bloomfield Moore's Archaeological Expedition on Ossabaw Island, Georgia, 1896-1897

by

Charles E. Pearson

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Between the years 1891 and 1918, Clarence Bloomfield Moore (1852-1936) traveled along the coast and most of the major rivers of the southeastern United States visiting and digging prehistoric Indian burial mound sites (Figures 1 and 2). The results of most of his excavations were published in a series of well-illustrated volumes by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia. Moore's work represents the most extensive archaeological research conducted across the southeastern United States by a single individual and over the years his publications have proven invaluable to southeastern archaeologists. In 1896 and 1897, C.B. Moore worked along the Georgia coast and undertook excavations at over 50 prehistoric burial mounds on the coastal islands and adjacent mainland. The results of his work on the Georgia coast was published by the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia in 1897 (Moore 1897). One of the Georgia coastal islands visited by Moore was Ossabaw Island, where he dug at nine aboriginal burial mounds and several "shell middens" (i.e. heaps of food remains [mostly oyster shell], pottery, and other household trash).



Figure 1. Portrait of Clarence Bloomfield Moore by Philadelphia artist Trevor Thomas Fowler, 1873. Apparently painted on Moore's graduation from Harvard University. Portrait is in the possession of a descendant, Per Adalbert von Rosen, of Stockholm, Sweden, and used with his permission (Pearson and Weinstein 2014).



Figure 2. Clarence B. Moore (seated) observing excavations at an unknown site along the Ouachita River, Louisiana or Arkansas, 1908-1909. This is one of the very few photographs known that shows Moore working in the field. The man on the far side of Moore is Josiah S. Raybon, who was serving as captain of Moore's steamboat *Gopher* on this expedition and in the foreground is an unidentified member of Moore's African-American digging crew (Birchett et al. 2013).

Ossabaw Island is the third largest of the Georgia Sea Islands and lies just below the mouth of the Ogeechee River, about 20 miles southeast of the city of Savannah (Figure 3). Clarence Moore seems to have first visited Ossabaw Island on April 18, 1896, aboard his small, sternwheel steamboat *Gopher* (Figure 4; see Birchett et al. 2013, and Pearson et al. 2000 for thorough discussions of the *Gopher*). Previously, Moore had been excavating prehistoric mound sites in Florida and, on leaving Florida in March 1896, he traveled north along the Georgia coast, digging some sites and scouting out others for future work.



Figure 3. Ossabaw Island showing the principal locations visited by Clarence Moore during his 1896-1897 investigations along the Georgia coast.



Figure 4. Clarence Moore's sternwheel steamboat *Gopher*. This photograph was taken during Moore's expedition on the Ouachita River in Louisiana and Arkansas in 1908-1909. (Photograph is in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution as discussed in Birchett et al. 2013)

Clarence B. Moore's Notebooks

Clarence Moore kept notebooks of his field excavations and logs of the travels of his steamboat *Gopher*. There are extant 45 numbered notebooks containing his field notes and his travel logs spanning the years 1892-1918 (Davis1987). These notebooks are held by the Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library and are copied on six rolls of microfilm. Information on Clarence Moore's 1896-1897 excavations on Ossabaw Island is found in two of the notebooks, Notebooks 11 and 12, and these are copied on *Roll 2: Field notebooks 8-16 (1894-1899)*, one of the rolls of microfilm containing Moore's field notes at the Cornell University Library.

Pearson and Cook (2003) present a detailed discussion of Moore's notebooks in which he recorded information on his field work along the Georgia coast, and their comments are drawn on in the discussions presented here. Notebook 11, which covers the years 1896-1897, is one of Moore's "small notebooks" as defined by Mary Davis (1987). These small notebooks contain the hand-written field notes kept during excavations, which, for the Georgia coast, relate almost exclusively to burial mounds. It is presumed that for the most part Moore himself kept these field notes, as he appears to be doing in Figure 2. For Moore's work on Ossabaw Island, and the Georgia coast in general, these small notebooks generally contain basic

descriptive information on a mound, such as location, size and composition, plus information on finds made during excavations. The amount and quality of the information provided in the small notebooks varies considerably and the information that is presented is often cryptic. For many sites along the Georgia coast, Moore's notes contain specific information on the location of each burial discovered, its position and condition, its age and sex if determined, artifact associations, etc. Brief statements on mound composition and ceramics recovered are often presented, plus some sketches are included that convey information on particular burials, stratigraphy, and the like. In addition, Moore's Academy of Natural Sciences 1897 publication includes maps of many, but not all, of the mounds he dug. These maps depict the locations of burials, mound construction features and other finds. In other instances, however, Moore recorded little or no information on individual burials dug, but gives only summary data on all burials encountered, such as the number of various types of interments, sex, and the like and provides no maps of the findings. It is unknown why there was such disparity in Moore's note taking. Fortunately, in small Notebook 11, Moore did record the specific location, mode of burial, and artifact association for almost every burial encountered at the nine mounds he dug on Ossabaw Island, even though he did not provide maps of all of these mounds in his 1897 publication (Moore 1897). As discussed below; Moore's descriptions of individual burials in Notebook 11 have been used to reconstruct maps of the several burial mounds on Ossabaw for which no maps were provided in the 1897 publication.

Notebook 12, which covers the years 1896-1897, is one of Moore's "large notebooks," as described by Mary Davis (1987:16). These large notebooks contain polished site descriptions and discussions that are close to the text appearing in Moore's Academy of Natural Sciences publications. In addition, the large notebooks include a daily log of Moore's travels in the field, which, after 1895, represented travel on his small, sternwheel steamboat *Gopher*. This log can be used to track Moore's movement and work along the Georgia coast.

Clarence Moore Arrives at Ossabaw Island

The logbook entry in Notebook 12 for April 18, 1896, notes that Clarence Moore and his field crew left St. Catherines Island aboard the Gopher and traveled to the "S. [South] *extremity of Ossabaw Is. went short distance up small creek to deserted house. Left cr* [creek] and went to settlement on Kilkenney R." It is obvious that Moore's first visit to Ossabaw was up Newell Creek to what was known as the South End settlement (see Figure 3). South End was the site of "South End Plantation" in the nineteenth century, but, by the time Moore visited in 1896, the plantation had been abandoned and, apparently, just a single empty house stood there. The "Kilkenney River" (now Kilkenny Creek) mentioned in the logbook leads to the mainland west of Ossabaw Island and Moore probably went there to gather supplies and, possibly, to seek information on mound sites he could dig. He apparently was unsuccessful in the latter task because his 1897 volume makes no mention of mounds in the Kilkenny area. After leaving Kilkenny Creek, Moore steamed north to the Wilmington Island area just east of Savannah, but on April 23 he returned to Ossabaw, tying "up at 6:20 p.m. off creek leading to central part of Ossabaw Is., where night was spent." The creek off which the Gopher laid up was Buckhead Creek, the principal tidal stream leading to the center portion of the island (see Figure 3).

It is suspected that Moore had been told about the numerous prehistoric mounds on Ossabaw Island during or after his brief visit to South End five days earlier and had returned to check on them. The next day, April 24, 1896, he steamed up Buckhead Creek to the *"settlement at middle of Ossabaw Island"* where he spent about one hour. During this one-hour stopover, Moore may have quickly visited the several prehistoric burial mounds in the vicinity of Middle Place ("Middle Settlement" as he calls it in his later writings and the seat of what was known as "Middle Place Plantation" in the nineteenth century) and surely spoke about these and other mounds on the island with the small group of African-Americans then residing at Middle Place (see Figure 3). After his brief stop at "Middle Settlement," Moore steamed back to Savannah, staying there until April 27 when he left *"for the north,"* traveling by train to his home in Philadelphia. This departure from the field in April reflected the pattern that Moore followed for most of his career. He would conduct fieldwork from the fall through the spring, and then return to Philadelphia where he spent the summer analyzing his finds and writing and preparing for publication a report of his discoveries.

Seven months later, on November 20, 1896, Moore returned to Savannah where he had left his steamboat *Gopher* the previous spring, probably in the care of George Washington Rossignol (1852-1918), who was serving as captain of the *Gopher*. George Rossignol, a resident of Thunderbolt, a small community just east of Savannah, worked as a captain of steamboats and, also, served as a pilot for the port of Savannah (U.S. Census 1900, 1910). It was on this trip that Moore returned to conduct excavations at the various sites on the Georgia coast he had visited the previous spring. He seems, also, to have visited a few new sites on his return; apparently, ones he heard about while working in the area.

The first place Moore dug when he returned to Georgia was Ossabaw Island, suggestive of the rich findings he anticipated on the island. Moore's notebooks, and his 1897 publication, note that portions of Ossabaw were controlled by a Mr. Harper of Rome, Georgia. Apparently, over the summer Moore had obtained permission from Harper to conduct excavations on the island. The members of Moore's digging crew in Georgia are unknown, but he normally employed eight or ten African-American laborers for this work. These men probably met him in Savannah in late November 1896. Also accompanying Moore in Georgia, and on most of his other excursions through the Southeast, was Dr. Milo G. Miller who examined the skeletal material recovered and made determinations of age and sex and, also, seems to have kept some of the daily log of their travels (Figure 5). Moore, Miller, Captain Rossignol and the African-American diggers lived and ate aboard the *Gopher*, which was fully outfitted and manned to accommodate Clarence Moore's Southeastern expeditions (Pearson et al. 2000).

Moore and his crew arrived at "Middle Settlement" on Ossabaw aboard the *Gopher* on November 25, 1896, and began work the following day. He stayed on the island until November 29 digging at the several aboriginal burial mounds around Middle Settlement. On November 30, he left to visit Colonels and St. Catherines islands and Savannah, coming back to Ossabaw on December 4. It is possible that while he was gone his digging crew remained at work on Ossabaw, although he does not specifically state this in his notebooks or his 1897 publication. Moore and his crew stayed at "Middle Settlement" until December 18, although the *Gopher* made a couple of one-day trips to Savannah during this time, probably to pick up supplies. The logbook entry for December 18 notes: "*Finished Md D at Mid. Set.* [a reference to Mound D at Middle Settlement] & *left there at 12:45.*" On that day, he took the *Gopher* to

Savannah and left for the north by train on December 20, presumably to spend Christmas at home in Philadelphia.



Figure 5. Dr. Milo Miller, who traveled with Clarence Moore on most of his archaeological expeditions, was charged with identifying and analyzing the human skeletal material recovered. This photograph was taken in 1908 or 1909 during Moore's expedition on the Ouachita River in Louisiana and Arkansas. Photograph is in the collections of the Smithsonian Institution as discussed in Birchett et al. 2013.

Clarence Moore returned to Savannah a month later, on January 21, 1897. He had the Gopher pulled out of the water and "scraped and painted" in Savannah on January 22, and then steamed to Ossabaw Island on January 24, returning to work on the burial mounds at Middle Settlement the next day. He notes that he began digging on Mound B at Middle Settlement on January 28, but "gave it up" because it was too cold. One thing that becomes apparent in reading Moore's field notes is that he did not dig the six mounds at Middle Place in the order that he labeled them (i.e., Mounds A through F), nor did he conduct his excavations along the Georgia coast in the order that they appear in his 1897 publication. On January 29, he visited nearby Pine Island, one of several small islands or "hammocks" located in the marsh west of Ossabaw (see Figure 3), to look at a reported mound, but, he wrote this "turned out to be a shell heap" and not a burial mound. Moore finished his work at Middle Settlement on February 6, having dug at six burial mounds and several large shell middens. The following day, Moore traveled to the north end of Ossabaw to what he called "Duffield Creek" and up this creek to a landing known as Bluff Field (see Figure 3). "Duffield Creek" is a misnomer for what was then called "Bluff Field Creek" and today is known as Cabbage Garden Creek, a branch of Bradley River. Moore worked at the large prehistoric site at Bluff Field until February 11; digging three burial mounds (Mounds A through C). He left Ossabaw on the morning of February 12, 1897.

On leaving Ossabaw on February 12, Moore went south to St. Catherines Island, and then on to other sites along the Georgia coast. However, he did revisit Ossabaw a few times over the next couple of months. These visits may have been just to stop for the night, but he does note that he spent "a day and a night" on Ossabaw on March 14 where he undertook additional digging adjacent to Mound A at Middle Place.

In all, Moore spent either 31 days or 35 days digging the six mounds at Middle Place, depending on whether or not he left his crew working on Ossabaw between November 30 and December 3, when he left the island to visit other places. Given the time he spent digging when he revisited Middle Settlement on March 14, he may have spent a total of 36 days digging into these mounds and the several "shell heaps" he examined. It took him four days to dig the three mounds at Bluff Field. Apparently, during the entire period Moore was on Ossabaw, he and his crew lived on the *Gopher*. While working on Ossabaw, Moore made several one-day trips to Savannah and "Montgomery" (located just east of Savannah) presumably to get supplies. He, also, visited some prehistoric mound sites on these trips to and from Savannah, but he seems to have done no digging at any of them. Moore, also, noted the existence of a mound "at the north end of Ossabaw Island" that he could not get permission to excavate (Moore 1897:6). He shows the location of this mound in his 1897 publication and it is undoubtedly the large Archaic Period (circa 3000 B.C.) shell midden known as the Cane Patch site (Georgia state site number 9CH28), located at the north end of Cane Patch Island.

Moore finished his work on the Georgia coast on April 26, 1897, when he was back in Savannah noting that he would leave for the north "*about noon of the 28*." This ended Clarence B. Moore's major work on the Georgia coast.

Mounds Dug by C.B. Moore at Middle Settlement

The results of Moore's excavations on Ossabaw Island are found in his 1897 publication and in his field notes in Notebook 11. In Moore's 1897 publication, he often provides a map of the particular mound being discussed showing the distribution of discovered burials and artifacts, but not always. Also, if he did not think the findings in a mound were particularly interesting, he sometimes presents only a synthesis of his discoveries that did not include descriptions of every burial found. Despite their often ambiguous nature, his field notes typically provide information on each burial found, normally including where in the mound it was encountered, the type of burial, the sex and age if determined, and a description of any associated artifacts (Pearson and Cook 2003). Therefore, Moore's field notes are particularly useful in those several instances where he provides no or only cursory discussions in his 1897 publication. On Ossabaw Island, for example, in his 1897 publication Moore provides no maps for Mounds C and F at Middle Settlement and discusses only a few of the burials found in each. Similarly, he provides no maps of any of the three mounds he excavated at Bluff Field and, while he does discuss each of the burials found in Mounds B and C, he only briefly mentions those found in Mound A. Thus, Moore's field notes in Notebook 11 are the only source of information on the distributions of burials in the unmapped mounds and on the characteristics of burials not discussed in his 1897 publication. Relying on the field notes, maps of Mounds C and F at Middle Settlement and the three mounds at Bluff Field have been reconstructed and these are presented in the following discussions.

Occasionally in this document, I have used the term "excavation" to describe Moore's work. In relationship to modern archaeological techniques of excavation, Clarence Moore's work was seriously lacking and should probably be described as "digging" or even "looting," rather than "excavating." He certainly did not take the meticulous care nor make the observations now typically used in excavating or recording archaeological sites. Because of this, a considerable amount of valuable information was forever lost when Moore dug the prehistoric mounds on Ossabaw, and elsewhere in the Southeast. Moore worked at a time when modern archaeology was just developing as a discipline in America and when "antiquarians" were heavily involved in looting prehistoric archaeological sites, primarily to gather objects for display and sale. Some have noted that many of the mound sites dug and reported on by Moore would have ultimately been destroyed by looters, such that no information at all would be available on these sites if not for Moore. However, Moore's real saving grace is that he did publish the results of most of his mound digging, plus he turned over the bulk of his finds to institutions and repositories throughout the eastern United States where they have been preserved. This does not totally excuse Moore for his oftentimes destructive digging, but it does mean that archaeologists have had access to the results of his work through his publications as well as to many of the artifacts he recovered.

It has to be recognized that Moore, as well as many other archaeologists of his period, concentrated their work on the burials of indigenous Native American populations. This concentration on the examination of burials lasted in American archaeology into very recent times. However, since the 1970s, archaeologists have begun to question the ethics, as well as the need, to excavate Native American burials to obtain meaningful archaeological data. Additionally, the enactment of what is known as the North American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) in 1990 provided Native American populations a voice in the treatment of the burials of their ancestors, plus it enabled the repatriation to recognized tribal groups a considerable quantity of the artifacts that has been removed from Native American graves of their ancestor that are now held in public institutions. Through NAGPRA, tribal groups can now, in many instances, set parameters on the archaeological examination of Native American burials and on the disposition of artifacts associated with burials. Some archaeologists have argued that the requirements of NAGPRA are limiting the kinds of information that archaeologists can glean from prehistoric burials. However, as Ken Sassaman (2021) has recently written, the history of excavations of Native American burials by archaeologists has largely been expressive of a dominant society exerting its will and control over subjugated populations. He notes that Native American populations have been forcefully dispossessed of their lands over the past 500 years and that the excavation of the burials of their ancestors without their permission, in effect, has dispossessed them of control of their While it may be true, that NAGPRA has limited the collection of some patrimony. archaeological information, particularly in the area of bioarchaeology, Sassaman argues that the moral and ethical factors of placing control of Native American burials into the hands of the descendants of these peoples far outweighs these losses of information. Thus, Clarence Moore's almost total concentration on the excavation of burials, has to be viewed within the context of his times; it can be understood, but it must not be condoned without reservations.

Clarence Moore dug six burial mounds, designated Mounds A through F, at what he called Middle Settlement, the location now known as the Middle Place site (designated Georgia archaeological site 9CH158), the largest prehistoric site on Ossabaw Island. Situated near the center of the island, on the western side adjacent to Buckhead Creek, the Middle Place site covers an area that measures approximately 1300 meters north-south and 700 meters east-west. Chester DePratter (1974) examined the site in 1974, making surface collections and producing a sketch map that provides our best information on overall site configuration and layout (Figure 6). As seen in DePratter's sketch, he was unable to locate Moore's Mound F. Pearson (1979; 2014) mapped the northern portion of the site in 1974 and 1976 and conducted test excavations in several shell middens in the northeastern section of the site.

Much of the area of the Middle Place site has been under cultivation or maintained as pasture in the past and the prehistoric remains over much of it have been considerably disturbed. When the site was examined in the 1970s by DePratter and Pearson, the central portion was a cleared field in pasture, the extreme southern section was heavily wooded and the northern one-half or so of the site was in open woods, much of which had been agricultural fields in the nineteenth century. The following discussions on the mounds at Middle Place draw on information presented in Moore's 1897 publication and on Moore's field notes contained in Notebook 11.

Cultural Chronology of the Upper Georgia Coast

One of the objectives of the examination of Moore's work on Ossabaw Island presented here is to establish the ages and cultural affiliations of the mounds excavated by Moore relying on present-day archaeological knowledge. Table 1 provides information on the prehistoric and early historic period chronology of the upper Georgia coast (i.e., north of the Altamaha River) as it as currently understood. By and large, cultural periods and phases are identified on the basis of the types of ceramics produced during those times. In many, but not all instances, Clarence Moore in his 1897 publication and his field notes in Notebook 11 provides sufficient information on the types of ceramics found in individual mounds to assign the mound to recognized archaeological time periods. At the Middle Place site, ceramics recovered from surface collections and excavations reveal aboriginal occupations at the overall site dating from the late Woodland Period, Wilmington phase (circa A.D. 350-A.D. 800) through the end of the late prehistoric Mississippi Period, Irene phase (circa A.D. 1300-A.D. 1580). There is slight evidence that an earlier occupation may have occurred at the Middle Place site during the Woodland period, Deptford phase (350 B.C.-A.D. 350). Additional work at the site may reveal earlier Archaic Period occupations. In addition, this site was the location of Middle Place Plantation during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the remains of tabby structures associated with the plantation still exist. Presumably, then, the mounds dug by Moore will likely date between about A.D. 350 and A.D. 1580, with a slight possibility that some of the interments dug by Moore will date as early as 350 B.C.



Figure 6. Sketch map of the Middle Place site, 9CH158, produce by Chester DePratter in 1974. Five of the six mounds dug by C.B. Moore are shown.

| Table 1. Cultural Chronology of the Upper Georgia Coast. | | |
|--|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Culture Period | Dates | Archaeological Phases |
| Contact/Early Historic | A.D. 1580-A.D. 1700 | Altamaha |
| Mississippi/Early Contact | A.D. 1300-A.D. 1580 | Irene |
| | A.D. 1200-A.D. 1325 | Savannah ¹ |
| | A.D. 800-A.D. 1200 | St. Catherines |
| Woodland | A.D. 350-A.D. 800 | Wilmington |
| | 350 B.CA.D. 350 | Deptford |
| | 1000 B.C350 B.C. | Refuge |
| Late Archaic | 3000 B.C1000 B.C. | St. Simons |

Data for the Upper Georgia Coast are derived from calibrated ¹⁴C dates from St. Catherines Island, Georgia, as presented in Thomas 2008:Table 15.3. The dates for the Early Contact and Early Historic phases are based on historical documentation.

1. Thomas (2008) does not recognize a Savannah phase on St. Catherines Island and the dates for the Savannah phase are derived from DePratter (1991:Table 1).

Prehistoric Mortuary Practices on the Upper Georgia Coast

In addition to ceramics, during the prehistoric period burial forms and styles changed along the Georgia coast over time such that specific mortuary practices can be assigned to broad cultural periods with some degree of accuracy. Although no full synthesis of prehistoric interment practices has been produced for the entire Georgia coast, Pearson (2013) pulled together information on this topic sufficient to identify general trends in prehistoric mortuary practices and the changes that occurred over time on the northern Georgia coast. This summary has relied on published information from the many burial sites that have been excavated along the Georgia coast by Moore, as well as others (Caldwell and McCann 1941; DePratter 1991:29, 83, 87, 91, 119; Larsen and Thomas 1982; Thomas and Larsen 1979; Pearson and Cook 2003; Waring in Williams 1967:214). Particularly useful is Dave Thomas' synthesis of prehistoric mortuary practices on St. Catherines Island for the Deptford, Wilmington and St. Catherines phases (Thomas 2008:1071-1078).

Pearson (2013) noted that for the northern Georgia coast, that area between the Savannah and Altamaha rivers and including Ossabaw Island, the fully extended burial position is almost exclusively associated with Woodland and very Early Mississippi Period sites. As shown in Table 1, these include the Deptford (circa 350 B.C. to A.D. 350), Wilmington (circa A.D. 350 to A.D. 800) and St. Catherines phases (circa A.D. 800-A.D. 1200). These extended burials occur in both a "prone" (face down) position and a "supine" (face up) position. Extended burials often occur in pits beneath the fill of a mound, possibly indicating they were interred before mound construction began. On St. Catherines Island, bundle burials, composed of a cluster of bones buried after the body had decomposed, are also common during these early periods and cremations occur less frequently (Thomas 2008:Table

32.1). Bundle burials, which have been found at numerous burial mounds along the Georgia coast, were obviously made well after the death of the individual, as opposed to articulated skeletons (i.e. primary burials) that were interred soon after death, before decomposition occurred. The cremation of human remains appears to have occurred throughout the prehistoric period on the Georgia coast. Cremations never become the dominant burial form; although they seem to have been more common during post-Woodland times. Often, the cremated remains of several individuals occur in central shell-filled pits in mounds. Moore discovered a number of bundle burials and cremations in the mounds on Ossabaw Island. It is unknown why during the same time period certain individuals were interred as complete and articulated bodies, some were cremated, and others were allowed to decompose and their disarticulated skeletons were buried as a "bundle" of bones.

During the early Mississippi Period, apparently during the St Catherines phase or the early part of the following Savannah phase, primary burials began to be placed in a flexed rather than an extended position. This rather dramatic change in burial form indicates the powerful influence of Mississippian cultural ideals that expanded into the coastal area around A.D. 800. Flexed burials continued as the predominant burial style throughout the late prehistoric period and into the protohistoric period, as evidenced by flexed burials with sixteenth century Spanish artifacts at the Taylor Mound and Kent Mound on St. Simons Island (Cook 1978; Pearson 1977). In addition, other burial styles continued in use after the introduction of flexed burials, including cremations and bundle burials, although these burial practices seem to have been less common than primary interments in flexed positions. Urn burials, consisting of cremated remains or disarticulated bones placed within a ceramic vessel, also appear at about the time flexed burials become the dominant interment form, sometime in the Savannah phase, apparently during the early to middle part of the phase. However, urn burials are rare during the Savannah phase, but become more common through time, and are particularly prevalent during the middle and late Irene phase. Even after the introduction of urn burials, flexed primary burials seem to have always been the dominant burial form during the late prehistoric period. Often, the vessel containing the human remains was capped with another vessel, a practice particularly common during the late prehistoric Irene phase.

From as early as the Deptford phase, many mortuary mounds began as central pits or burial features (such as log-lined tombs) containing primary burials, cremations and/or disarticulated unburned human remains. These central features often contained deposits of marine shell that subsequently were covered and flanked with layers of sand, as well as shell. The use of similar central burial features in mounds and/or shell cores remained a common practice into the late prehistoric period. Very few artifacts are associated with Deptford and Wilmington phase burials and it is not until the St. Catherines phase, at the beginning of the Mississippi Period (circa A.D. 800), that artifacts in any number and variety begin to be included as grave goods. Thomas (2008:1031) noted that Deptford and Wilmington burials on St. Catherines Island were dominated by adults, with few subadults represented. This mortuary demographic pattern changes during the St. Catherines phase as adolescents, children, and infants begin to appear in burial mounds.

In most instances, Moore's descriptions of burial patterns and forms are sufficient to permit assignment of a mound to broad cultural periods, if not to specific archaeological phases. In a few cases; however, Moore's descriptions of his findings are so lacking or so general as to make it difficult or very speculative to associate a mound with a specific cultural period or periods.

Mound A

When visited by Clarence Moore, Mound A was located in a field at the southern edge of Middle Settlement, near Buckhead Creek (see Figure 6). Moore noted that the field had long been under cultivation, which had reduced the size of the mound some unknown amount, plus a considerable quantity of shell had been dug from the central part of the mound in the past. When examined by Moore, most of the mound surface was covered by oyster shell; possibly residue scattered over the mound when its center was dug to obtain shell for road fill or tabby construction. Moore found no aboriginal materials in this shell layer, but a local resident reported that he had found burials and vessels when the shell had been dug from the center of the mound (Moore 1897). The field in which Mound A lay was abandoned long ago and today the area of the mound is in second growth forest and underbrush.

Moore does provides two maps of his discoveries in Mound A in his 1897 publication. One of these maps depicts the main body of the mound and the other depicts finds in an area where he extended his diggings to the east and southeast of the main portion of the mound (Figures 7 and 8). Moore began his digging of the main body of Mound A on the afternoon of November 25, 1896, or the following day, November 26, which was Thanksgiving. He noted his arrival at Ossabaw on the 25th in the log of the *Gopher*, kept in large Notebook 12, and he recorded basic information on the condition and structure of the mound, as well as information on each of the burials and artifacts he found, in small Notebook 11. But, he makes no mention at all of his digging in the area adjacent to the main body of the mound anywhere at all in small Notebook 11, where he normally kept daily records of his excavations. However, he does mention his work in this adjacent area in large Notebook 12 (pages 137-142). These entries in Notebook 12 reveal that Moore did not dig into this adjacent area when he was digging the mounds at Middle Place beginning in November 1896. Rather he notes that he returned to Ossabaw specifically to examine this adjacent area on March 14, 1897, after he had visited and dug at a number of other sites along the Georgia coast. There is no mention of this revisit to reexamine Mound A in his 1897 publication, but it is mentioned in his large Notebook 12, which normally includes text very close to that found in his publications. However, in Notebook 12 (page 137) there is a paragraph where the revisit to Ossabaw to dig the area adjacent to Mound A is noted, but this paragraph has been marked out and, therefore, was not included in the 1897 publication. This paragraph is headed "Supplemental Investigations, Mound A, Ossabaw Island" and reads:

Mound A, Ossabaw Is, was investigated by us during a last visit to the island and prior to undertaking our regular winter's work. It thus happened that the same care was not taken as to outlying trenches and careful search in adjoining level territory as characterized our later work. Realizing this late in the season, we revisited Ossabaw Is. [Notebook 12:137]

The discussions of individual burials and other finds in this adjacent area in Notebook 12 includes locational information for each discovery as is typically found in the field notes recorded in small Notebook 11.



Figure 7. Moore's map of the main body of Mound A at Middle Place (Moore 1897). Vessels discovered are shown as open circles, crushed vessels and sherd concentrations are shown as filled circles while cremations and shell-filled pits are depicted in a dot pattern. Most of the vessels depicted are burial urns.



Figure 8. Moore's map of the area he dug adjacent to the main body of Mound A at Middle Place when he revisited Ossabaw in March 1897 (Moore 1897). Vessels discovered, most of which are burial urns, are shown as open circles.

Moore estimated Mound A to be about 45 feet in diameter and that it rose 18 inches above the surrounding land surface. His excavations, however, revealed that the base of the mound was about 10 inches below the surrounding land and the mound fill itself was 28 inches thick. The central shell deposit, which had been partially removed, averaged about 16 inches thick, although this was very irregular. Outside of the central shell core the mound fill consisted of "rich loamy sand" that was dark brown in color. Moore noted that this artificial fill was easy to distinguish from the undisturbed "bright yellow sand" lying beneath the mound. This distinction between organically enhanced mound fill and underlying sterile yellow sand was noted at other mounds dug by Moore along the Georgia coast and has been commonly observed during subsequent excavations of shell middens and burial mounds on the Sea Islands (Pearson 2014; Pearson and Cook 2010). A number of shell pockets and lenses (some burned) were found throughout the sand fill of Mound A. Some of these were associated with burials. Moore's excavations recovered a number of burials in the level area adjacent to the eastern and southeastern peripheries of the mound, as seen in Figure 8. Burials recovered here appear to have been as deeply buried as those found in the mound proper. Moore noted that burial pits in this peripheral area were very difficult to distinguish because of previous disturbances. He believed that this disturbance had occurred when the burials were made. While it seems reasonable that this peripheral area represents a fringe of the mound whose upper portion has been removed almost entirely by plowing, this does not explain why so many of the burials here are as deep, or deeper than those in the mound itself.

Moore implies, but does not specifically state, that he completely excavated the mound; however, his map shows no burials in the western one-half or so of the mound proper (Figure 7). There simply may have been no burials in this portion of the mound, but it is also possible that this area was never dug. Moore encountered at least 67 human interments in the mound and the adjacent area, plus one dog burial. Based on the sequence of numbered burials and lettered vessels, it looks as if Moore began his excavations of the mound proper at its southern edge and moved to the north. Similar data suggest that he dug from west to east in the area adjacent to the main mound.

Thirty-six of the interments discovered at Mound A consisted of primary burials of identifiable human skeletons. Several of the probable primary burials were near the surface and had been too badly disturbed by modern activities to determine the original position of the skeleton. All of the 13 relatively complete skeletons represented individuals laid in a "flexed" position, with the knees drawn up toward the chest. Every one of these individuals was lying on their right and, with three exceptions, with their heads in a generally southerly direction. The three exceptions were placed with their heads to the east. The "flexed" burial position is characteristic of the Mississippian Period, Savannah (A.D. 1200-A.D. 1325) and Irene (A.D. 1300-A.D. 1580) phases on the Georgia coast. In addition, there were 25 "urn burials," four of which Moore counted as a single burial, Burial 22. These "urns," consisting of aboriginal ceramic vessels, contained cremations as well as unburned human bone, most of the latter identified as coming from infants or children. Burials 13, 16 and 20 were large areas of calcined human bone. The largest of these cremation deposits, Burial 20, was 4.5 feet wide, 5.75 feet long and up to 5 inches thick.

More recovered at least 47 complete or partial ceramic vessels in Mound A, many of which had been used as funerary urns, plus he notes the discovery of other pottery fragments. He specifically reports that many of the vessels were fragmentary or extremely fragile such that some of the fragments he found may represent badly crushed or deteriorated vessels. In his 1897 publication, Moore identifies many of the vessels recovered in Mound A as the "ordinary" or "common" type, writing: "The ordinary form of mortuary ware encountered in this mound had the rounded base and almost cylindrical body contracted slightly at the neck

beneath a flaring rim, often with a beaded margin, to which we have often referred as the ordinary type" (Moore 1897:90). Elsewhere, Moore notes that vessels of the "ordinary type" were typically decorated with complicated stamping. The ceramic type that Moore identified as the "ordinary type," is now known as Irene Complicated Stamped a ceramic ware characteristic of the late prehistoric Mississippi Period, Irene phase (circa A.D. 1300-A.D. 1580) (Figure 9). Irene Complicated Stamped ceramics are found all along the Georgia coast north of the Altamaha River and throughout this area it most commonly occurs in a flared rim jar shape, as seen in Figures 9 and 10, and was often used as a mortuary urn. Moore (1897) illustrates several vessels from Mound A, all of which can be identified as recognized Irene phase types. These vessels include two, typical Irene Complicated Stamped jars or urns (vessels D and AA); two Irene Incised carinated (i.e., with sharply incurving rims) bowls (vessels Rb and LL), both with complicated stamping on their bottoms and one with a "spoutlike" feature at one end (vessel LL); one small Irene Incised, straight-sided bowl (vessel II); one small Irene Incised jar (vessel I); and one plain carinated bowl with nodes on the shoulder (vessel Sb). This last pot is very likely a pottery type now known as Irene Burnished Plain. During the Irene phase, complicated stamping most commonly occurs on jar-shaped vessels, while bowl-shaped vessels tend to be plain or decorated with incised decorations.

The two complicated stamped jars illustrated by Moore in his 1897 publication, vessels D and AA, were buried upright in the mound. The base of Vessel D had been intentionally perforated, a practice often seen on vessels interred in late prehistoric mounds on the Georgia coast and an occurrence often mentioned by Moore. Both vessels had apparently been used as funerary urns, however, only vessel AA contained evidence of this. This vessel was one of a group of four urns all filled with charred and calcined human bone with which were numerous, unburned shell beads. All four vessels were covered with fragments of pottery vessels and capped with a layer of oyster shell. Vessel Rb, an Irene Incised bowl, was found inverted over an upright complicated stamped jar (vessel Ra) which contained infant human remains. An Irene Plain bowl, vessel Sb, also, was found inverted over an upright complicated stamped jar that contained the badly deteriorated remains of a child. The manner in which these vessels were used in Mound A characterizes one of the typical burial practices of the Irene phase in which individuals (usually infants or children) or cremations are placed in a large, Irene Complicated Stamped jar that is covered with large pottery fragments or an inverted Irene Incised or Irene Plain bowl (Caldwell and McCann 1941; Pearson 2014). All of the other vessels discovered by Moore seem to have been placed as burial offerings.

Twenty-five of the vessels described by Moore from Mound A can be identified as Irene Complicated Stamped vessels, 24 of which were jars, all used as burial urns (Figure 10). One of the vessels identified by Moore as "stamped" is described as a bowl. Five of the vessels from the mound are identified as having incised decorations and all but one of these were bowls. The one exception was the jar-shaped pot, vessel I, mentioned above. Moore notes that two of the incised vessels had stamped decorations on their bottoms. The co-occurrence of complicated stamped and incised decoration does occur on vessels from Irene phase sites, but is not common. Pearson (2014) discovered a stamped and incised carinated bowl in a small Irene phase burial mound south of Middle Place, suggesting that the combination of the two decorative techniques may be more common on Ossabaw than elsewhere along the Georgia



Figure 9. Vessel A (Burial 3) containing human remains and numerous shell beads, from the Mound Near South End Settlement on St. Catherines Island, Georgia. Clarence Moore specifically identifies this vessel as the "ordinary type," and it is characteristic of what is now identified as an Irene Complicated Stamped burial urn. This figure served as the frontispiece for Moore's 1897 publication on his diggings along the Georgia coast.

coast. Nine vessels from Mound A appear to have been Irene Plain or Irene Burnished Plain. Five of these are described as bowls, one as a jar, one as "gourd" shaped, one as a small dish and no shape is given for one. Moore identifies at least eight other vessels from Mound A for which he provides no information on decoration. At least two of these were complete bowls, one used as a burial urn, the other as a covering for a burial urn. The other unidentified vessels were very fragmentary and several were in use as covers for upright burial vessels.



Figure 10. One of the many Irene Complicated Stamped jars recovered by C.B. Moore on Ossabaw Island. This vessel is now at the Smithsonian Institution and is believed to be one of the vessels dug from Mound A at Middle Place. Photograph by the author, 2016.

Relatively few non-ceramic artifacts were discovered in Mound A and it appears as if these were associated with only three burials. Burial 13, consisting of only fragments of human bone, had one shell bead and two shell ear pins, and in association with Burial 32, an adult female, were some small shell beads, one complete shell ear pin and one fragmentary one. The four upright complicated stamped vessels constituting Burial 22 were filled with burned human bones and, apparently, all contained shell beads. In addition, a small stone chisel, or "celt," was found in the mound fill, apparently unassociated with any burial. The shell ear pins mentioned by Moore are fairly common items found in Irene phase, and other late prehistoric, burial contexts (Caldwell and McCann 1941; Cook and Pearson 1973). These typically consist of a "nail-shaped" piece of shell, measuring 2 to 4 inches long with the "head" consisting of a knob of shell somewhat larger in diameter than the shaft. These items were normally manufactured from the central column (columella) of a whelk shell and are very often found at the side(s) of the head of burials, near the location of the ear. It is believed they were worn as ornaments through the earlobe, very much like modern earrings. The columella of whelks were, also, used to make large, barrel-shaped shell beads, although in Mound A Moore does not mention that any "large" beads were found. He does refer to "small" shell beads, which

were probably small, disc-shaped beads with central perforations. These disc beads were typically made from the thinner, whorl shell of whelks, although a few appear to have been made from clams (Pearson 2019).

Moore notes that one of the interesting points about Mound A was that all of the complete human skeletons belonged to females, adolescents, children and infants. It is assumed that Dr. Milo Miller made the skeletal analyses and identifications; however, there is no way to determine how accurate Miller's identifications were. The single dog burial found was located in the adjacent area to the southeast of the mound proper where Moore had extended his excavations. This dog is some distance from any burials and it is possible that it is not associated with prehistoric activities at Mound A at all.

The information provided by Moore leaves no doubt that Mound A dates to what is known as the Irene phase, or circa A.D. 1300 to A.D. 1580. His field notes and 1897 report indicate that he recovered no ceramics that can be dated to earlier periods. This is substantiated by DePratter (1974) who made pottery collections at Mound A and recovered only Irene phase ceramic types. Irene ceramic styles do continue in use on the coast for a short period of time after historic contact, but the lack of any identified historic artifacts in Mound A suggests it is entirely prehistoric in age; i.e. pre-A.D. 1550 or so. Elsewhere on Ossabaw Island, pottery types known as Savannah Fine Cord Marked and Savannah Check Stamped have been found in small quantities in context with Irene phase ceramics and they seem to have been in use during the early part of the phase (Pearson 2014). Moore's failure to mention either of these types suggests they were not present, so it is assumed that Mound A does not date to the very early part of the Irene phase. Also, it is generally accepted that incising does not appear until after the start of the Irene phase, although the date of its introduction has not been reliably determined. Generally, dates of around A.D. 1350 to A.D. 1400 are suggested for the appearance of incising on Irene ceramics (Saunders 2000:40-41). Incised vessels comprise 12.8 percent of the 39 pots that Moore identifies as to decoration. At the Irene phase Red Bird Creek site, on the mainland west of Ossabaw, Pearson (1986) found that Irene Incised comprised only 0.5 percent of the entire ceramic collection from the site. Partially on the basis of this, Red Bird Creek was identified as an early Irene phase site. However, Pearson's data came mostly from domestic contexts (trash middens) and he noted that incised wares are likely to occur in higher frequencies in burial contexts. This is because of the common practice of placing bowls over jars containing human remains. Because jars tend to be complicated stamped, while many bowls are incised or plain, this practice tends to increase the proportion of incised and plain wares in burial contexts relative to domestic settings. Thus, it can only be said that Mound A dates to after that time in the Irene phase when incising came into vogue, meaning that the mound probably post-dates A.D. 1350.

Also supportive of an Irene phase date is the occurrence of flexed, primary burials, a style that is typical of the Mississippi Period, in particular the Savannah and Irene phases. Also, available evidence suggests that the practice of making burials in urns increased in popularity during the Irene phase. In mounds that can be dated to the Savannah phase, urn burials occur, but are not common. However, by the middle and late Irene phase, urn burials comprise a substantial proportion of interments in mounds. The fact that well over half of the burials discovered in Mound A were urn burials supports a middle-to-late-Irene phase date for

the mound. Based on all of the available evidence it appears that the principal use of Mound A occurred during the Irene phase from about A.D. 1350, after incising as a ceramic decorative technique seems to have appeared, to about A.D. 1550, before any quantity of historic European materials appeared on the coast.

Mound B

Moore notes that Mound B was located in a cultivated field about one-half mile northeast of Middle Settlement (see Figure 6). In his Philadelphia Academy of Sciences volume, Moore reports that Mound B rose a "trifle over 7 feet" above the surrounding field and he estimated the diameter to be about 46 feet. In his field notes Moore states that the mound was 7 feet, 4 inches high. He noted that the flanks of the mound were covered with thick deposits of oyster shell, apparently domestic midden refuse, such that the mound's diameter was difficult to determine. Ultimately, he estimated the diameter using what he called the "base-line," or the highly organic, original living or natural surface preserved under the mound. The mound was covered with undergrowth and small live oaks. The main body of the mound showed no signs of disturbance, although the shell deposits covering the margins had been dug into in the past.

The cultivated field identified by Moore, commonly known as Long Field in recent years, is still extant, but the northern end of the field containing Mound B has reverted to second growth forest (as of 1976). Today the remnants of Mound B are quite visible and are covered with some light undergrowth and a few larger trees.

Moore implies that he excavated Mound B completely, except for some marginal portions. Moore's discussions and sketches suggest that the original mound structure consisted of an earthen mound measuring about 27.5 feet across and about three feet high (Figure 11). He describes a fairly complex stratigraphy for the mound and provides a cross section which helps define and explain the phases of mound construction (shown as "Section Line" in Figure 12). Essentially, the mound appears to have had two, and possibly three, construction stages. This mound was erected directly over a very obvious pre-mound ground surface consisting of crushed oyster shell, charcoal and organic matter (A-A in Figure 12). Moore called this surface the "base-line" and recognized it as a pre-mound living surface. The fill of the initial mound stage consisted of yellow sand closely resembling the sterile sand underlying the "base-line," but containing occasional oyster shells and charcoal fragments. Covering the initial earth mound was a mantle of oyster shell varying from a few inches to one foot thick. This mantle, depicted as B-C-D in Figure 12, was composed of whole, loosely packed shell and did not resemble the crushed, tightly packed shell fill found in typical household midden deposits. The shell layer sloped downward slightly toward the center of the mound, where it, and the underlying earth mound, apparently had been dug into.

The shell-covered first stage mound was covered with a mantle of dark brown soil measuring 2 to 3 feet thick. This raised the height of the mound to about 6 feet and increased its diameter to near the 46 feet recorded by Moore (Figure 12). A large central pit was dug into the center of this sand mantle that Moore states extended through the shell mantle covering



Figure 11. Moore's map of Mound B at Middle Place (Moore 1897).



Figure 12. Moore's cross section of Mound B at Middle Place depicting the complex stratigraphy (Moore 1897).

the initial mound stage all the way to the "base-line," or pre-mound ground surface. Covering the entire mound was a surface layer of shell that varied greatly in thickness; in places on the mound reaching 1 to 2 feet thick. This shell layer is designated E-E in Figure 12. On the peripheries of the mound, this capping shell deposit was as much as 4 feet thick. Moore notes that this capping shell deposit contained typical midden refuse (shellfish remains, animal bone, charcoal, pottery sherds, etc.) and argued that it represented refuse accumulated from using the mound as a "dwelling site." A large shell-filled pit, containing primary human burials, as well as cremations, extended down from this surface layer of shell into the center of the mound. This pit is designated F in Figure 12. Covering the entire mound was a deposit of "black surface loam" measuring several inches thick.

Moore suggests that the mound had been originally constructed as a circular ridge of sand with a slight depression in the center and then covered with a layer of loose oyster shell. Subsequently, the center of the mound had been dug out, removing a circa 8-foot-diameter section of the shell mantle and the underlying portion of the earth mound all the way to the original ground surface. Then this structure was covered with a 1-to-2 foot-thick mantle of brown sand. Moore's ideas about the construction events are reasonable; however, the exact sequence of events cannot be stated with certainty. For instance, it is unknown when the loose shell mantle was placed on the initial sand mound structure. It is possible that the first mound stage had been a rounded- or flat-topped earthen structure whose center had been dug out long after its initial construction. This might have occurred when the second stage of construction was initiated, which involved digging out the center, coating the first mound structure with a deposit of loose shell, and then covering everything with a thick layer of brown sand.

Moore reported finding fragments of pottery scattered throughout the mound, but principally in the capping midden deposit. He notes that all were "gritty ware" and were either "undecorated, cord-marked, basket-marked, or stamped with the well-known square impression." None appeared to contain complicated stamped decoration. Moore, also, describes several vessels recovered from the mound. Two were associated with Burial 16, an infant. As described in his 1897 work, these were a partial, undecorated vessel of about one pint capacity and a plain "cup" described as "elongated at one end and terminating in an extension for a handle, resembling in shape and size a type found in Florida." In his field notes, Moore describes the "cup" as a "bowl" stating that it was elongated "ending in a lip on one side" and that it measured 5-by-6 inches in diameter and 2.5 inches high. With Burial 23, Moore found a large portion of a cord-marked bowl within which was the bottom of a check-stamped vessel. He also found numerous pottery fragments with Burial 45, but does not describe them.

Moore's descriptions of the pottery recovered from this mound are difficult to precisely relate to types now identified. In decoration, the ceramics seem to most closely resemble those of the Savannah phase, equivalent to Savannah Check Stamped, Savannah Cord Marked and Savannah Plain. The "basket-marked" pottery is less easy to identify, but might represent some of the net-marked pottery of the earlier St. Catherines phase (circa A.D. 800-A.D. 1200). Cord marking was, in fact, the most common decorative treatment used in the St. Catherines phase and the earlier Woodland Period, Wilmington phase. However, ceramics from these two phases are primarily tempered with "grog," or pieces of fired or hardened clay, and it seems

unlikely they would have been characterized as "gritty ware" by Moore. Likewise, during most of the Savannah phase, pottery is tempered with fine sand or a combination of grog and sand; although during the latter part of the Savannah phase, large quartz grains begin to be used as temper. This late Savannah phase pottery could fit the description of "gritty." However, the late part of the Savannah phase (sometimes referred to as "Savannah III"), also, is characterized by the introduction of complicated stamped decoration, of which Moore reports finding none. Therefore, if the pottery in Mound B is Savannah in age, which seems most likely, it would probably date to the middle and latter part of the phase, after grit tempering begins to be used, but before complicated stamped decorations are.

Larson (1998) has suggested that Mound B most likely dates to the Woodland Period and that the "gritty" pottery mentioned by Moore could refer to Deptford phase pottery. This might be possible because plain, check-stamped, and linear check-stamped, (possibly the "basket marked" pottery mentioned by Moore) are characteristic of Deptford wares. In addition, Deptford tends to be tempered with medium to coarse sand, although whether this could be characterized as "gritty" is questionable. However, the identification of these wares as Deptford is discounted by the apparent presence of a considerable amount of cord-marked pottery in the mound. Cord marking is not characteristic of Deptford ceramics, but is typical of the following Wilmington, St. Catherines and Savannah phases. Further, DePratter (1974) recovered no Deptford phase ceramics in his surface collections at the Middle Place site.

Therefore, relying on ceramics alone it would appear that Mound B would date to the middle or later part of the Savannah phase (circa A.D. 1250-A.D. 1325), or, less likely, to the Deptford phase (350 B.C.-A.D. 350). For the present, this author leans toward a Savannah phase age for the pottery from the mound, supported by the fact that only Savannah phase ceramics have been identified in surface collections from the mound made in the 1970s (DePratter 1974; Pearson 2014).

Moore describes 44 human burials in Mound B that comprised, at least, 47 individuals. In addition, he recovered two dog burials. The human burial forms included cremations, bundle and flexed burials and adult males and females, as well as infants and children are represented. Most of the burials, 37 in number, appear to be primary burials and 29 of these were flexed, although some were on their sides, some on their back and some in a "sitting" position. There seems to be no pattern to the directional orientation of these primary burials. For eight of the primary burials, Moore provides no information on their position; however, it is likely that they, too, were in a flexed position. Moore, also, recorded four burials containing only small parts of human skeletons. These appear to have been disturbed by subsequent burial activities and it is probably that these four had, originally, been primary, flexed burials. Moore commented on how badly preserved the human bone in Mound B was, despite the presence of the thick shell deposit covering the mound.

Moore, also, found four "bunched" burials, his term for what would normally be described as a "bundle" burial, where the skeleton of an individual has been disarticulated prior to the burial of the loose bones. Also in the mound were two cremations. These cremations consisted of calcined human bone, one of which, Burial 37, was associated with the large shell deposits in the center of the mound, while the other, Burial 45, appears to have been beneath

this shell feature. It is impossible to determine how many individuals were associated with either cremation. Found with both cremations were numbers of shell beads, plus, with Burial 45 were many pottery fragments. The co-occurrence of cremations with shell bead burial offerings in central shell deposits or central shell-filled pits appears to be characteristic of, at least, Mississippi Period burial mounds on the Georgia coast. No urn burials or individuals laid in fully extended positions were found. The lack of extended burials argues against the mound dating to the Woodland Period, when this form was standard, as has been noted previously. Further, the lack of urn burials suggests the mound dates earlier than the very late Savannah phase or very early Irene phase when urn burials first appear. The burial forms observed at Mound B support the ceramic data indicating a mid- to, possibly, late-Savannah phase construction and use.

Few artifacts were recovered from Mound B. Other than the vessels mentioned earlier, Moore recovered one soapstone pipe, two pieces of chert, two marine shells filled with hematite, a core of chert, a large fossilized shark tooth, and perforated "Olivella" shells with the skeletons of three children. It is unknown exactly what Moore means when he identifies "Olivella" shells. It might mean the colorful Lettered Olive or the much smaller Marginella shell, both of which were perforated and used as ornaments during the prehistoric period along the coast (Pearson 2019). As noted, Moore also recovered a number of shell beads with both of the cremations and with one (Burial No. 37) he found the perforated teeth of a dog or wolf. He also reported a number of "pebbles" scattered throughout the fill of the mound and a few lens or pockets of shell and areas showing burning. As discussed previously, the presence of artifacts with burials, particularly the shell beads, supports a Mississippi Period date for Mound B, supporting the ceramic and burial style data.

One interesting feature that Moore describes in Mound B is a layer of calcined earth and lime measuring about 11 feet long and 6 feet wide and averaging about one foot thick. Designated "XXX" in Figure 11, this layer was about 6 feet from the surface of the mound and just west of the center. This layer showed no obvious sign of burning and pieces of deer bone and horn as well as oyster shell were scattered throughout it. His field notes indicate he recovered a stone celt and pebble hammer from this layer. This layer sounds very much like a living surface or floor for a structure. Moore's notes are not clear on the exact position of this feature, but it might be associated with what has been described above as the initial stage of mound construction, suggesting a structure of some sort on or associated with that feature.

All of the evidence provided by Moore in terms of ceramics recovered and burial styles recorded suggest that Mound B most likely dates to the Savannah phase, specifically to the middle to latter part of that phase, but before complicated stamping came into vogue. This suggests a date for the mound of circa A.D. 1250 to about A.D. 1300, correlating with what are identified as the latter part of Savannah II or early part of Savannah III subphases (DePratter 1984). As noted, a Savannah phase age is partially supported by the total lack of urn burials in the mound, a trait very characteristic of the Irene phase and, probably, the late portion of the Savannah phase. Interestingly, the two complete vessels found in the mound had perforated bottoms, a trait that is found with many urn burials of the Irene phase. Neither of these vessels appeared to contain human bones (although, if the interred were infants the bone may have completely deteriorated) and possibly the idea of perforating vessels used as burial offerings

began during the Savannah phase and by the Irene phase the vessels took on the added task of actually holding the burial. As noted, the mound appears to exhibit at least two stages of construction, but it is unknown how much time elapsed between the construction events.

Mound C

Moore states that Mound C was located at the edge of the large field at Middle Place (i.e., Long Field). In his 1897 publication, he notes that Mound C was about 300 yards north of Mound B. But in his field notes, he specifically states that Mound C was "*300 yards S. direction from Md B.*" In his large notebook description of the mound, he has crossed out "southerly" and replaced it with "northerly" in his description of the mound location. It does seem reasonable that Mound C was north of Mound B because the former is described as being at the "verge of the woods bordering the field," while the latter was in the field and it is known that Long Field extended south from the two mounds. Of course, it is always possible that the present identification of the two mounds is reversed.

Moore (1897) estimated that Mound C was about 8 feet high and had a diameter of 68 feet. However, he wrote that it was very difficult to determine an accurate diameter because so much shell midden had been deposited along the flanks of the mound. He, also, noted that the lower flanks of the mound had been cultivated at some time in the past, evident by deep plow furrows. At the time of his investigations, the mound was covered with thick undergrowth and small trees. Some previous digging had occurred at the mound and in his field notes he wrote that this had resulted in the discovery "of a skeleton and some bits of pots."

Moore wrote that he dug the northern half and center of the mound, leaving the rest undisturbed. He provides no map of his excavations of Mound C in his 1897 publication, but his field notes in Notebook 11 have been used to reconstruct a map of his findings (Figure 13). For Burial Number 1, presumably the first burial excavated in the mound, Moore's notes read: "1. W. 33 – 33 in down Male extended, face down, h s. cut throu on r side by No. 2." This entry follows the form typical of Moore's field notes. He normally notes the location of burials relative to the identified center of the mound, meaning that Burial 1 was located 33 feet due west ("W. 33") of the mound's center. Burial 1, also, was buried at a depth of 33 inches below the ground surface ("33 in down") and consisted of a male resting in an extended position with the face down (i.e. a prone position). Moore also notes that the skeleton lay with the head toward the south ("h s.") and that the burial (or possibly the burial pit) was cut through on the right side by the later placement of Burial 2. Although cryptic, the descriptions provided in Notebook 11 are sufficient to develop a map of the findings in Mound C. It is not known why Moore did not provide a map of Mound C in his 1897 publication. It certainly was not because of a lack in the number of interments or of what Moore would have considered interesting finds, because the mound certainly produced more of both than did many other mounds for which Moore did provide maps in his various publications.

As can be seen in Figure 13, all of the burials Moore describes lie in the northern half of the mound and it does appear as if the southern half was left undisturbed, as he stated in his 1897 publication. Moore wrote that Mound C was "much the same type as Mound B," apparently referring to the overall structure of the mound and the types of burials found in it.



Figure 13. Mound C at Middle Place, Ossabaw Island, reconstructed from C.B. Moore's field notes.

Mound C was principally an earthen construction with shell lenses and pockets and a large and deep central pit containing shell. It may be because of this similarity with Mound B that Moore did not provide a map of Mound C. In places under the mound, Moore found a very obvious "base-line," identified as a pre-mound ground surface. However, he noted that this base line existed as a dark, organically stained stratum only under the peripheries of the

mound. Toward the center of the mound, a shell layer containing large inclusions and deposits of yellow sand replaced the organic band. He noted that the maximum height of the mound from this base line was 10 feet and that the 8 feet that the mound rose above the adjacent land was because of the thick midden deposits surrounding the entire mound. At 10 feet tall, Mound C represents the highest mound on Ossabaw and one of the tallest prehistoric mounds known along the Georgia coast.

Moore noted that Mound C differed from Mound B in that it was not completely covered by thick midden deposits. Shell was exposed only at the "apex" of the mound and, as it turned out, this shell was the upper fill inside of the large central pit. This central pit was about 16 feet (given as 13 feet in his publication) across at the surface of the mound and extended to a depth of eight feet, where it was about 3 feet in diameter. At the bottom of the pit was a large mass of calcined human bone, designated Burial 82, and the pit was filled with brown sand containing abundant midden refuse and capped with a solid deposit of oyster shell about 2.5 feet thick. It was this shell fill that was exposed at the surface of the top of the mound.

As in Mound B, the bone preservation in Mound C was poor. In addition, a number of the burials found by Moore had been disturbed, apparently most by prehistoric burial activities, but some possibly by recent digging into the mound. Because of these conditions and disturbances, it is impossible to determine the exact number of individuals discovered by Moore. In his 1897 publication, he only described what he considered the most important burials in the mound, noting that "owing to the similarity of form to interments in Mound B, we deem it unnecessary to go into detail." He does, however, describe each burial discovered in his field notes in Notebook 11, although many of these descriptions are short and incomplete. Moore recorded 92 burials in Mound C which, relying on his field notes, contained at least 99 individuals. In addition, Moore notes that he discovered two pockets of calcined bone and several skeletons south of his cross section of the mound that he made no notes on. Burial types found in the mound include primary flexed and extended burials and cremations. Moore makes no statement in his publication or in his field notes that "bunched," or bundle burials occurred; however, some of the 26 disturbed or fragmented skeletons he found could be bundle burials. Adult females and males, children and infants are represented in the burials found. No urn burials were discovered.

Forty-seven of the primary burials were described as "flexed;" although the skeletons were lying in a variety of positions, including on the side, back, face or sitting (Figure 13). Nineteen fully extended burials were found lying on both the back and face. At least one of the extended, face-down burials was beneath the undisturbed "base-line," or pre-mound surface, suggesting it was made prior to the construction of the mound. No information on position is provided for four, apparently, complete skeletons. Twenty-six burials consisted of fragmented or disturbed bones for which Moore provided no information on position. Most of these appear to have been primary flexed or extended burials disturbed by the placement of other prehistoric burials. However, Moore does note that several of these burials were disturbed by his diggers or by cave-ins.

Moore included three areas or pockets of cremated human bone in his 92 numbered burials, but notes that he found two additional pockets of burned bone for which he took no notes. As seen in Figure 13, one of the pockets of calcined bone, designated Burial 82, was located in the center of the mound at the bottom of the large central, shell-filled pit. This deposit of calcined bone formed a layer at the base of the pit and was 7 feet in diameter and 5 inches thick. With the burned bone were a number of artifacts that appear to have been mortuary accompaniments. These objects included shell and pearl beads, bone pins (some identified as "piercing instruments"), several cut carnivore mandibles, a number of chert spalls and chips, and a cluster of "pea-sized" pebbles, possibly from a deteriorated rattle. Many of the shell beads showed no evidence of burning, indicating they had been placed with the bone after it was burned. One of these shell beads was almost three inches long; suggesting it was formed from the columella of a large whelk. Moore, also, wrote that "great nums of frags of pot" were found with the cremation, but he provides no description of any decoration. Also within the large central pit were several primary burials, apparently interred as, or after, the pit was filled. This large central pit with cremations and associated artifacts is almost identical to the situation of Burial 37 found in Mound B, and at numerous other mounds on the northern Georgia coast.

Unfortunately, Moore provides very little information on the pottery he found in Mound C. He does write that, except for a few sherds from the surface, all of the pottery fragments recovered from the mound were plain or cord-marked, with cord-marked wares predominating. He did find a few complete or partially complete vessels in the mound, all apparently placed as mortuary offerings. His field notes indicate that he found six vessels. These consisted of one plain vessel shaped like a "gravy bowl;" one plain globular vessel; one "flaring" pot of about 1 quart capacity with a "rough" check-stamped decoration; one "roughly stamped" bowl; and two cord-marked bowls, one badly crushed. The bottom of at least one of these vessels had been intentionally knocked out.

Some non-ceramic artifacts were recovered from the mound. These included shell and pearl beads, bone pins, etc. with the cremation noted above, shell and olivella beads with other burials, a perforated shell drinking cup with Burial 26; pebble hammers and hematite. With Burial 61, was a "nest of 10 fulgur" shells, all with holes near the spire. These, obviously, were a type of whelk (*Busycon carica*) artifact generally referred to as "hoes" that are commonly found at prehistoric sites in the region. Although generally called hoes, these implements could have been used for other purposes. With Burial 5 were found a rude shell pendant, a bone awl and some freshwater mussel shells, while the two individuals designated Burial 77 had been interred with some hematite, a bone pin and olivella shell beads.

Dating of Mound C relies on Moore's rather minimal descriptions of the pottery found in the mound and on the burial styles present. Two of the complete vessels found were checkstamped and two were cord-marked. The co-occurrence of check stamping and cord marking is most characteristic of the Savannah phase and these are types that today would be classified as Savannah Check Stamped and Savannah Fine Cordmarked. The lack of complicated stamped and incised pottery certainly argues for a pre-Irene phase date for the mound, as does the total lack of urn burials. It, also, suggests that the mound dates prior to the very late Savannah phase (Savannah III) when both urn burials and complicated stamping occur. In addition, Moore makes no mention of "gritty ware" which is believed to be his characterization of the heavy grit temper commonly found in Irene and very late Savannah phase pottery. Thus, the described ceramics seem to suggest a date for the mound in the early to middle part of the Savannah phase (often referred to as Savannah I and Savannah II subphases) dating to circa A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1300. It is possible that some mound construction and use may have occurred during the earlier Wilmington or St. Catherines phases since both are characterized by the common use of cord-marked pottery. However, check stamping is not an attribute of either phase.

Larson (1998) writes that Mound C probably dates to the early Woodland Period Deptford phase (circa 350 B.C to A.D. 350), primarily because of Moore's use of the term "rough" to describe the check stamping on the vessel found with Burial 64. However, ceramics recovered by DePratter (1974) from Mound C are all plain, cord-marked and check-stamped wares with sand or clay temper that appear to be types associated with the Wilmington, St. Catherines and Savannah phases. In his report on sites on Ossabaw Island, DePratter tended to be very specific when identifying what he thought were Deptford pottery types, applying the name "Deptford". It is likely that DePratter would have used the term "Deptford" if he thought any of the sherds from Mound C were Deptford types.

Most of the burial styles Moore describes for Mound C, also, appear to be those commonly found at other Savannah phase mounds. These include the numerous primary flexed burials and cremations discovered. The exceptions are the extended burials which seem to occur rarely, during the Mississippi period, but are common with Woodland period populations (Pearson 2013). For one of these fully extended, face down burials, Burial 79, Moore is emphatic that it was beneath an undisturbed portion of the pre-mound surface and had to have been interred prior to the construction of the mound. It is impossible to tell from his notes if the other extended burials pre-date the mound, but Moore does record that some of these were in the "yellow sand" beneath the mound. The presence of both extended and flexed burials does suggest the mound, or the location, was in use over a long period of time. It is suspected that the extended burials were made in the Wilmington/St. Catherines phases (or possibly earlier) prior to or during an initial stage of mound construction. Alternatively, the mound may have been constructed entirely during the early Savannah phase, but placed over an earlier Wilmington/St. Catherines phase burial area. This means the earliest burials at Mound C, those resting in an extended position, may date as early as circa A.D. 500 or so, although when initial mound construction began is unknown. The principal use of the mound seems to have occurred during the Savannah phase and, possibly, the latter portion of the St. Catherines phase or from about A.D. 1100 to A.D. 1250. The lack of any urn burials argues against use of the mound during the very late Savannah phase and the Irene phase, periods when urn burials were popular. The dates of the burial styles found within and beneath the mound support the minimal information available on the ceramics recovered from the mound.

Moore makes no mention that any artifacts were found with the extended burials; all artifacts found were in association with flexed burials, cremations or loose bones. As noted previously, the available information from mortuary contexts on the Georgia coast show that Woodland period burials (i.e. the extended burials in Mound C) rarely have artifacts in association. On the other hand, later Mississippi Period burials often contain burial offerings.

Thus, the pattern of burial-artifact association seen in Mound C supports the dating indicated by the interment patterns and the ceramics recovered from the mound. All of the available evidence suggest that Mound C was in use from the Woodland Period, possibly as early as about A.D. 350 to the mid-or-late Savannah phase, or about A.D. 1250 or 1300. However, the principal use of the mound seems to have occurred during the latter portion of this range.

Mound D

Moore (1897) reports that Mound D was situated in the same field as Mound B and located about 200 yards southwest of it (see Figure 6). He observed no evidence of previous investigations. At the time of his examination, the mound rose about 3 feet 9 inches above the surrounding field, but it was apparent that it had been considerably reduced in height by plowing. Moore estimated that the mound was 82 feet in diameter, but he notes that this was a very tenuous estimate. He had difficulty determining the diameter because the mound had been so disturbed by plowing and, also, because the mound demonstrated a fairly complex construction. Moore reported that he excavated the entire mound except for some peripheral areas, and his map showing the locations of finds in the mound indicates that he did excavate all or most of Mound D (Figure 14).

Mound D was principally an earthen construction, apparently consisting of multiple levels, plus it had a large, shell-filled central pit as well as numerous other shell concentrations, lenses and pockets. As noted, this configuration of prehistoric mound construction is very common along the northern Georgia coast. In his description of the mound stratigraphy, Moore notes that the underlying sterile soil was light yellow to almost white sand above which was darker yellow sand discolored by organic material. However, Moore did not observe the dark organic band, or "base-line" marking the old pre-mound ground surface as he had seen and described in so many other instances. In sketches, he clearly shows that the pre-mound ground surface under the mound had been dug down some distance such that the top of the vellow sand beneath the mound was as much as 3 feet lower than it was outside of the mound. Thus, in the center of the mound the distance from undisturbed yellow sand to the top of the mound was about 6.5 feet. It is unknown why the ground surface beneath the mound was removed to this considerable depth. Covering the organically stained dark yellow sand was a layer of dark brown sand that varied in thickness. In places, it was impossible to distinguish the contact between these two levels. The center of the mound was occupied by a large deposit of shell, thin at its margins and increasing to as much as 5 feet thick at the center (Figure 14). This shell deposit was roughly circular in shape with a slight lobe extending to the north. Where it was exposed at the surface of the mound, this shell deposit measured about 15 feet across, however, within the mound it was on the order of 30 feet across (Figure 15). This central shell feature appeared to have been deposited within a wide pit dug into the two sand strata identified It consisted principally of oyster shell, with lesser amounts of other by Moore. estuarine/marine species, such as whelk, clam and cockle. In addition to this large, central shell deposit or core, Moore recorded several other shell deposits or lenses in the mound, many of which were associated with burials. Moore notes that the mound was riddled with burial pits. Some pits obviously extended from at or near the surface of the mound, however, others appear to have started within the mound, suggesting that mound fill had been added after these burials were made.



Figure 14. Moore's map Mound D at Middle Place (Moore 1897).

In terms of its construction, Mound D resembles Mounds A, B and C, with its central, shell-filled pit, although the central shell core of Mound A had been largely removed before Moore's excavations. The central shell feature of Mound D, however, was certainly larger then those found in either Mound B or C (Figure 15). Also, Mound D did not have a shell-mantled interior structure as found in Mound B. Additionally, Mound D lacked evidence of a premound ground surface that was so obvious at the other three mounds. This was apparently because the ground surface beneath mound had had been dug down before mound construction started.



Figure 15. Moore's cross section of the central portion of Mound D at Middle Place (Moore 1897).

As noted, burials were numerous in Mound D. Burials were located within the central shell deposit, in the sand flanking the deposits, beneath the shell deposit and, also, in the sterile yellow sand beneath the mound. Moore specifically noted that the burials in this mound were generally well preserved. This was possibly because so many were placed within or beneath the large central shell deposit. The exact number of individuals discovered in the mound by Moore is difficult to state with accuracy because so many had been disturbed and consisted of fragmented or scattered bone, plus several existed as cremations. Moore numbered 82 burials and in this number he recovered at least 85 individuals, in addition to 11 dogs. A wide range of burial forms and styles occurred, and included extended and flexed primary burials, cremations and burials in urns. Adult males and females, children and infants are all included. The human burials described by Moore included 45 primary flexed skeletons, six fully extended skeletons, seven "pockets" or areas of cremated human bones and 13 burials in vessels. Cremated as well as non-cremated bones were found in these burial vessels. The noncremated interments in urns tended to be the skeletons of infants or children. Moore also recorded 12 burials that had been heavily disturbed and consisted of only partial skeletons of scattered bones. Most of these had apparently been disturbed by prehistoric burial activities. Moore provides no information on the manner in which two primary burials were lying, plus he numbered two "fireplace" areas as burials, even though he does not mention any human bone in association.

As in Mounds B and C, deposits of calcined human bone were found near the approximate center of the mound in association with the central shell core. The association of cremations with the central shell deposits in late prehistoric coastal mounds has been noted elsewhere (cf. the Irene Mound site, Caldwell and McCann 1941). In Mound D, the calcined bone consisted of two burials, number 50 and 52, both of which contained associated artifacts. In the case of burial 50, this included an incised bone pin or awl, two other bone implements and a chert "arrowhead or knife" while with Burial 52 were the molar of a bear, two small bowls, hematite, shell beads, three bone "piecing implements" and a mass of approximately 50 freshwater mussels (*Unio*). As Larson (1998) has noted, these mussels would have had to have

been brought to Ossabaw from a source on the mainland. The closest source would probably have been the Ogeechee River, which enters the coastal marshes due west of Ossabaw.

Moore commented on the large number of dog burials found in this mound which was very unusual. It would appear that the dogs were purposefully buried, possibly in some instances in association with human burials.

All but one of the extended burials was described as lying face down and Moore notes that all of them were very deep in the mound. His published descriptions and his field notes indicate that all of these extended burials were within or at the surface of the "clear yellow sand" underlying the mound. This "clear yellow sand" represents the undisturbed soil beneath the mound. In several instances he notes that no pit could be seen in the mound fill above the burials, suggesting they were made before the body of the mound was deposited over them. It is considered likely that all of the extended burials pre-date the construction of the mound itself, or are associated with the initial stage of mound construction.

Moore notes that he found a number of pottery fragments, as well as concentrations of pottery, throughout the fill of the mound, in addition to the complete or almost complete vessels he describes. As noted, he located several burials made in vessels, a form of burial typical of the late prehistoric and early historic contact period on the Georgia coast. Urn burials are specifically associated with the Irene phase and the later parts of the preceding Savannah phase. It does not occur in pre-Savannah phase times, and does not seem to be common during most of the Savannah phase. At the Irene site near Savannah, occupied during the Savannah and Irene phases, Caldwell and McCann (1941) found 25 urn burials; 24 of which were made in Irene phase vessels and only one in a Savannah phase vessel, identified as a Savannah Fine Cordmarked urn. On Ossabaw Island, and elsewhere on the Georgia coast, fine cord-marked ceramics have been found in context with typical Irene phase ceramics and it appears that fine cord-marking was in use during the very early part of the Irene phase (Pearson 2014). Thus, on the basis of urn burials alone, it would appear that the mound was in use during the very late Savannah and or Irene phases and, possibly, during the early historic contact period (e.g. Altamaha phase). Moore's descriptions of vessels found in the mound are most supportive of a late prehistoric age for the mound. For example, his field notes indicate that he found "*comp* & incised" pottery at the mound, although it is possible that this refers only to sherds from the surface of the mound. The co-occurrence of these types suggests a mid-to-late Irene phase or Altamaha phase date. However, Moore reports no incised pottery from his excavations into the mound, suggesting that the incised wares did come only from the mound's surface and, possibly, post-date the principal use of the mound for burials. Because incising does not seem to appear on the coast until the later half of the Irene phase, or about A.D. 1400, it can be argued that the lack of incised wares within the mound argues for an early Irene or late Savannah phase age for mound construction and use. The types of vessels Moore found in the mound support this assessment.

Moore describes five of the vessels used as burial urns as vessels of the "common" or "ordinary" type. As noted previously, Moore is referring to the typical Irene Complicated Stamped, flared rim, round bottomed jar or urn when he uses these terms. In his field notes for Mound D in Notebook 11 he notes "*refer to 'ord type' & Md A*," presumably meaning to

refer back to his notes for Mound A to understand what he means by his use of "ordinary type." In his notes on Mound A he describes exactly what he means by "ordinary type," writing that the "ordinary type of burial vase in this mound[:] cylindrical body with rounded base body contracted slightly toward the rim which is flaring & with beaded margin decora. [tion] of the complicated stamped variety." This is a perfect description of an Irene Complicated Stamped jar with typical incidental rim decoration around the rim, probably produced by stamping the rim with the end of a hollow cane (Pearson 1986). Moore wrote (1897) that the "ordinary" type vessel was "Just as staple a form for jars for infant interments as we have for coffins." Surprisingly, Lewis Larson (1998) in his editorial notes for the reissue of Moore's Georgia coast volume, several times mentions that it is impossible or difficult to tell what Moore is talking about when he uses the term "ordinary" to describe coastal ceramics. This is despite the fact that Moore specifically describes what he means by the "ordinary type" in his 1897 publication, as discussed previously. Further, Larson seems to have discounted entirely the presence of urn burials in Mound D, as well as the frequent occurrence of pottery of the "ordinary" type, and he suggests that mound D was "built during the Woodland Period on the coast; perhaps the Wilmington Phase is a reasonable candidate" (Larson 1998). As noted here, there is abundant evidence to support a late Savannah-to-early Irene phase date for most of the burial activity in the mound. This evidence includes the presence of numerous flexed burials and burials in urns. However, it is possible that the extended burials under Mound D are pre-Savannah phase in age and these individuals may have been interred during the Wilmington or St. Catherines phases. Thus, use of the Mound D location for burials may have begun as early as about A.D. 350, but the major burial activity in the mound occurred during the late Savannah and early Irene phases, beginning about A.D. 1250 and ending before about A.D. 1400, at which time incising seems to have come into use. Given that Moore's descriptions indicate that most, if not all, of the extended burials lie below or at the very base of the mound, it is possible that the mound was constructed during the later years of the Savannah phase over a cemetery or small mound already existing at this location.

Mound E

Mound E was located about 300 yards west of Mound D and in the same field (Long Field) (see Figure 6). The mound had been seriously degraded by agriculture and Moore estimated that it was 14 inches high and about 38 feet in diameter. The mound was principally an earthen structure with several inclusions of shell pockets and lenses. Moore (1897) notes that the mound was constructed over the typical undisturbed yellow sand and that a dark, organic band clearly separated the underlying sterile yellow soil from the mound fill proper. The mound fill was described as dark sand. Oyster shells covered the center of the mound to a depth of 1.5 feet.

Moore recovered nine complete and partial human burials from the mound (Figure 16). Six of these were primary flexed interments, two were collections of loose human bones, possibly disturbed by plowing, and one was a partial skeleton with the head and legs missing, but which may have been placed in a fully extended position. Three of the flexed burials were those of children, buried together in a pit beneath the center of the mound. This pit was 5.5 feet in diameter and Moore specifically notes that the "black basal layer" extended completely across this pit. The depth of the pit from the bottom of the black band was 3.5 feet. Since this

black band seems to represent the pre-mound ground surface, there seems to be no doubt that the burial of the three infants took place before the mound was constructed. With the infants were many fragments of vessels placed in layers and one complete vessel described as a "small undecorated cup with a curious knob on the outside at the bottom." Moore, also, found the crushed remains of a vessel with Burial 3, a cluster of loose bones, and he found an incised bone pin in shell midden deposits covering the mound.



Figure 16. Moore's map of Mound E at Middle Place (Moore 1897).

Moore gives almost no description of the ceramics from Mound E that might help in dating it. The primary flexed burials are most typical of the Savannah phase and later and the plain, "undecorated" vessel he mentions suggests a Savannah Plain or, possibly, an Irene Plain vessel. Moore makes no mention of complicated stamped ceramics nor did he find any urn

burials in the mound, which suggests the mound was in use prior to the late Savannah phase and the Irene phase when urn burials were common. The one "extended" burial mentioned by Moore could represent a Woodland Period burial; however, this burial had been disturbed and contained only a partial skeleton such that there is some question if it is, in fact, resting in an extended position. Based on the relatively slim evidence available, it would appear that Mound E most likely dates to the Mississippi Period, Savannah phase, probably the early-or-mid portion of that phase prior to the introduction of urn burials, or from about A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1300. There is some possibility that use of the mound began during the St Catherines phase, possibly as early as A.D. 1000 or so, but the lack of mention of distinctive St. Catherines phase ceramics argues against this. Additionally, the small number of burials in the mound may argue for a relatively short period of use.

Mound F

Moore (1897) wrote that Mound F was located in the same field and about 200 yards west of Mound B. However, as seen in Figure 6, DePratter was unable to find Mound F when he surveyed the Middle Place site. The mound rose about 20 inches above the surrounding field but had been so degraded by long years of cultivation that Moore found it difficult to determine its shape and diameter. He dug "numerous tentative trenches" into the center of the mound before he selected 76 feet as a best estimate of its diameter. Moore dug only the southern half of the mound and recorded 20 partial and complete human burials and one dog burial. All of the complete human burials recorded were lying in a flexed position and no cremations or urn burials were present.

Moore provided no map of Mound F in his 1897 publication and he discussed only a few of the burials discovered. His field notes in Notebook 11, however, do describe every burial encountered, although, as is common for Moore's notes, the information often provided was minimal and cryptic. The notes do, however, permit the development of a map showing the locations of the burials discovered. As seen in Figure 17, all of Moore's finds are in the southern half of the mound, supporting his statement that he excavated only this half. In fact, as seen in Figure 17, all but one of the burials, Burial 20, are located near the southern and southeastern periphery of the mound. Why no burials lie toward the interior of the mound is unknown.

Moore describes the mound as consisting of "black loam mixed with oyster shell," a rather different fill from the yellowish to brownish sand he mentions for most of the other mounds at Middle Place. The top of Mound F was covered with domestic midden refuse when Moore conducted his work. He also notes that no "dark band" or pre-mound ground surface was present under the mound. The grave pits in the mound were filled with "midden refuse" or dark sand. Although Moore wrote in his field notes that the "*structure of md not materially differing from other low mds in vicinity,*" Mound F apparently had no central pit or central shell deposit of the type so common in coastal mounds and which had been found in every other mound at Middle Place.

Moore remarked that the burials in the mound were well preserved and he attributed this to the shell in the mound and the midden refuse on top of it. In fact, in his field notes he wrote that the burials apparently had been made when the mound was occupied as a living site, which also accounted for the midden fill in many of the grave pits. Eighteen of the burials were primary interments with the skeletons laid in a flexed position. Two burials consisted of disturbed human bones for which Moore provided no information on position. His diggers disturbed one of these, the other apparently was disturbed by another prehistoric burial. Adult males and females, as well as children are represented. The single dog burial was located at the southeastern periphery of the mound



Figure 17. Mound F at Middle Place, Ossabaw Island, reconstructed from C.B. Moore's field notes.

Moore recovered only cord-marked and plain pottery from the mound including several pieces of a large, cord-marked vessel just beneath the midden refuse covering the mound. He specifically states that no complicated stamped pottery was discovered. The ceramics could suggest a Wilmington, St. Catherines or Savannah phase date, since cord-marked pottery was used during all three phases. However the lack of other Savannah phase types, particularly check-stamped wares, might be more supportive of a Wilmington or St. Catherines phase date or circa A.D. 350 to A.D. 1200. In general, fully extended burials are characteristic of the Woodland Period, while flexed burials appear and become dominant during the Mississippi Period (certainly the Savannah phase and later and, possibly as early as the St. Catherines phase). The lack of any extended burials in, or beneath the mound, argues for a post-Woodland Period age of construction of Mound F or use of the locality for burials. It appears that Mound F was used during the early Mississippi Period, St. Catherines phase, after the flexed burial form had been adopted, but before the typical Savannah phase ceramics styles were in use. This suggests a date for the mound of from about A.D. 800 to A.D. 1200. During his survey of Ossabaw Island, DePratter (1974) was unable to relocate Mound F, so we have no recent collections from the mound to compare against Moore's finds.

Mounds Excavated by C.B. Moore at Bluff Field

Clarence Moore excavated three mounds at what was called Bluff Field in the northeastern corner of Ossabaw Island (Moore 1897). The area around and just north of the site of old Bluff Field is today called the Cabbage Garden. In fact, in Moore's field notes he had originally used the name "Cabbage Garden," but marked it out and replaced it with "Bluff Field" (Notebook 11, page 93). At the time of Moore's work, this area was cleared and in cultivation, apparently planted in corn, but by the 1970s the field had long been abandoned and had partially grown up in second growth forest and palmetto scrub (DePratter 1974; Pearson 2014). The Bluff Field site (Georgia archaeological site 9CH160), as it is known today, is bounded on the south by salt marsh and Cabbage Garden Creek and on the west and north by Long Pond and low, wet areas. Figure 18 presents a sketch map developed by Pearson in 1977 that depicts surface features observed at the site (Pearson 2014). The site consists of a huge area of scattered shell and individual shell middens. Shell extends roughly east-west along the marsh and bluff of Cabbage Garden Creek for approximately 620 meters and inland for 250 meters. Individual, roughly circular middens are still extant along the marsh edge just west of the bluff of Cabbage Garden Creek and in the very northern part of the site. In the central section of the site, large scattered concentrations of shell representing plowed and dispersed shell middens can be seen, but over much of the rest of the site plowing has been so extensive that only a thin scatter of shell is visible at the surface. As shown in Figure 18, no burial mounds were identified when the site was examined in 1977.

Mound A

Moore (1897) reports that Mound A at Bluff Field was located about 75 yards from the river bluff and midway between the ends of the field, and was a low earth feature rising only 2 feet 3 inches above the level of the field. Apparently, Moore was unable to identify the limits



Figure 18. Sketch map of the Bluff Field site presented in Pearson 2014.

of the mound, so he selected a diameter of 56 feet (56 and 60 feet in his field notes) as sufficient to encompass an area greater than the mound. The mound had been considerably plowed down over the years, but showed no evidence of earlier digging. Moore reports that the mound was "*totally dem*.[olished]" in his digging, presumably meaning that he excavated it completely. The fill of the mound consisted of black loam with scattered oyster shells and some local shell lenses, plus it had a large central oyster shell deposit that averaged about 24 feet in diameter and measured 2 feet thick at its center. This central shell deposit contained very few artifacts and rested on top of a black loam stratum measuring 6-to-12-inches thick. This indicates there may have been as much as 3 feet of artificial fill near the center of the mound, meaning that the original ground surface was somewhat lower than the field surface surrounding the mound when Moore did his work. The undisturbed subsoil beneath the mound was grayish-white sand.

Moore recorded14 human burials and one dog burial in Mound A. In his field notes he reports that burial pits were filled with shell and loam. He provided no map of his findings for any of the Bluff Field mounds in his 1897 publication, but these have been reconstructed using

Moore's field notes. Figure 19 presents the positions of burials described by Moore for Mound A and also shows the estimated extent of the central shell core and the two mound diameters provided by Moore. As can be seen, none of the burials are located near the periphery of the mound using the diameters provided by Moore, suggesting that he was correct and the mound actually was smaller than the area he selected to dig. Based on the distribution of burials, it would appear that the mound might have been only 40 to 45 feet in diameter. Moore did write that he found "marginal pits" filled with midden refuse, but containing no burials. These presumably were located within the 56- or 60-foot diameter, but outside of the area of burials.



Figure 19. Mound A, Bluff Field. Reconstructed from C.B. Moore's Field Notes

Moore provides no details on the configuration of the central shell core, other than it had an average diameter of about 24 feet and was 2 feet thick at the center. He does, however, provide several measurements for the shell core in his field notes and these have been used to arrive at the shape shown in Figure 19.

Burial forms found in Mound A included primary flexed burials, "clusters" and "masses" of human bone, and one cremation. Moore provides a location for Burial 10, but gives no information on the position, age or sex of the skeleton, noting only that it was 1.5 feet beneath the surface, in the "*shell layer*," presumably meaning the shell core, and it appeared to be a "*late disturbance*." Burial 14 was the skeleton of a female located 10 feet from the mound center that was discovered in a cave-in. However, Moore provides no direction from the center, such that the location of this burial cannot be determined. Although not included in Figure 19, Burial 14 probably lay south of the mound center, as do all of the other high numbered burials.

Burials in Mound A included adult males and females, infants, children and adolescents. Many of the burials were made in pits that extended to the surface of or into the sterile subsoil underlying the mound. The two "masses" of human bones identified by Moore (Burials 11 and 15), are both located near the southwestern periphery of the shell core. These may have been "bundle" burials consisting of the bones of one or more individuals interred after disarticulation; however, Moore is not clear on this. The one pocket of calcined human bone (Burial 1) was found at the base of a 37-inch-deep pit that extended 18 inches into the pre-mound subsoil on the eastern side of the mound. Some charcoal rested on top of the calcined bone deposit and this was covered by a "layer of four thicknesses of large cord-marked sherds." A pot with an inverted rim and elongated cone-shaped bottom was found next to the skull of Burial 5, a child. In his field notes, Moore described this vessel as undecorated, although in his 1897 publication he calls it "practically undecorated." Moore notes that this vessel had a perforated bottom.

The dog burial from Mound A was located just beyond the western periphery of the shell core and was in a 28-inch-deep pit that extended into the underlying, undisturbed white sand. Moore specifically states that the dog was "not near any human remains," but his notes clearly indicate that the dog was less than two feet away from Burial 11, described as a "*mass of bones*."

Few other artifacts were recovered in the mound and Moore specifically noted that scattered sherds were rare in the mound fill. He did find two stone artifacts; a piece possibly used as a "smoothing" stone and a 4-inch-long, rudely made stone "hoe." Neither of these appeared to be associated with specific burials.

Moore reports finding only cord-marked and plain pottery in Mound A. The vessel associated with Burial 5 is illustrated in his 1897 publication and appears to be plain, despite his statement about it being "practically undecorated." In decoration and form, the vessel closely resembles Savannah Burnished Plain ware (Caldwell and Waring 1941; Williams 1967:270). This, in combination with the cord-marked sherds found with Burial 1, are supportive of a Savannah phase date for the mound. Additionally, the modes of interment in the mound, i.e., mainly flexed burials, but including cremations and, possibly, bundle burials

are very characteristic of the Savannah phase. The structure of the mound, a central shell core with flanking and covering sand, also, is characteristic of late prehistoric Savannah phase, as well as later, mounds on the coast. The evidence, then, supports a Savannah phase (circa A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1325) date for the mound. The lack of any complicated stamped wares in the mound might be indicative of a date in the early to middle Savannah phase.

The small amount of archaeological information collected from the Bluff Field area in more recent years does not discount a Savannah phase age for the mound. DePratter (1974) relocated what he though was the spoil pile from Moore's excavation of Mound A, but does not specifically report what ceramics were recovered from it. He did, however, recover Savannah phase pottery from the Bluff Field site area. Similarly, of the 122 sherds collected from the site by Pearson (2014), almost 50 percent were identified as Savannah Fine Cordmarked and Savannah Check Stamped.

Mound B

Mound B at Bluff Field was located in the extreme southwestern part of the field in a low area that Moore describes as "swampy ground." The mound was about 19 inches high, but had been considerably reduced and scattered by plowing. As was true for Mound A, Moore had difficulty in determining the diameter of Mound B so he arbitrarily selected a 40-foot diameter which he noted encompassed "considerably more than the mound." The mound fill was composed of black loamy sand and contained numerous scattered oyster shells. Unlike Mound A, Mound B did not have a central shell core, but Moore did note that shells became more numerous toward the center of the mound. The height of the mound at its center was 26 inches.

Six burials were recorded in Mound B that included at least eight individuals. These included six primary burials with skeletons lying in a flexed position and two cremations (Figure 20). One of the cremations, Burial 2, occupied the center of the mound. This burial consisted of a deposit of calcined bone at the bottom of a 29-inch-deep pit that extended 10 inches into the sterile sand underlying the mound. With the cremated bone were two whole pots, a clay tobacco pipe, a quartz pebble hammer and a small chisel of "greenstone." The larger of the two vessels is described as a plain bowl with an inverted rim. Resting inside of this vessel was a smaller, undecorated jar with an angular shoulder and a flared and notched rim. Moore illustrates this smaller vessel, which measured only 2.4 inches high and 3 inches in diameter. Both vessels had perforated bottoms. The other cremation, Burial 1, lay a few feet west of the mound's center. All of the primary burials lay to the north of the cremations and consisted of two pits each containing the skeletons of two children, a pit containing the remains of an infant, and a burial consisting of an adult female.

As seen in Figure 20, all of the burials in Mound B fall near the identified center and are contained in an area less than 15 feet across. It would appear that Moore's selection of 40 feet as the diameter of the mound was much too great and that he was correct in his field note comments that the mound was "likely small" and much spread out by plowing.



Figure 20. Mound B, Bluff Field. Reconstructed from C.B. Moore's Field Notes

Figure 21A depicts the clay pipe recovered by Moore with Burial 2 in Mound B and Figure 21B shows a pottery sherd also found with this burial. This sherd contains a fillet of applied clay in a roughly "Z" shape encompassing two appliqued nodes of clay (Figure 21B). Moore found a similar sherd containing a circular fillet of clay encompassing a clay node. Moore was particularly interested in the decorative treatment on these two pieces of pottery and he writes that he contacted William Holmes of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, and Frederic Putnam and Charles Willoughby at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, eliciting their comments on the meaning of the symbols (Moore 1897). As Larson (1998) has noted, both sherds closely resemble the types of decoration occasionally found on Irene phase ceramics and it appears as if the sherds come from the rims of incurving Irene Plain or Irene Burnished Plain cazuela (i.e. carinated with incurving rims) bowls. Vessels with similar fillet decorations do occur on slightly earlier Savannah Plain ceramics.



Figure 21. Two artifacts recovered from Mound B at Bluff field illustrated by Moore (1897). A is a clay pipe and B is design produced by appliqued clay on the side of a vessel which elicited considerable interest from Moore.

In his field notes, Moore mentions "*mass of frags of earthenware*" with Burial 3, but nowhere does he describe these, or any other loose sherds found in the mound. Dating of the mound has to rely on the two complete vessels he recovered and the forms of burials present. The two vessels from Mound B are "Mississippian" in appearance, as noted by Larson (1998), suggesting a St. Catherines phase date or later (i.e. post circa A.D. 800 or so). The lack of mention of complicated stamped wares and the absence of urn burials suggest the mound dates prior to the first appearance of these traits during the very late Savannah phase. On the other hand, the presence of primary burials in a flexed position argues for a post-Woodland Period age, meaning the mound may date to the St. Catherines phase, or more likely to the early or middle Savannah phase (circa A.D. 1200 to A.D. 1300, sometimes referred to as the Savannah I and II subphases). DePratter (1974) suggested a similar age for the mound.

Mound C

Mound C at Bluff Field was located 150 yards north ("*north east*" in Moore's field notes) of Mound B in a very low area that Moore reports was used for rice cultivation. In fact, Moore's men had to drain the area around the mound before they could do any digging and, even then, water hindered their work. The conditions were so difficult that Moore abandoned any attempt to record structural features in the mound, writing in his field notes that his investigations became "*a mere search for relics*." However, in his 1897 report he wrote that the mound "offered no structural features of interest." Based on Moore's description of the location of Mound C, it apparently was situated on the western side of what the Bluff Field site in the low area to the east of what was known as Long Pond (see Figure 18). In his examination of the Bluff Field site DePratter (1974) was unable to relocate Mound C, however, Pearson (2014) did find a very large mass of disturbed oyster shell in a low, wet area at the southern end of a small, unnamed pond in the northwestern corner of the site (see Figure 18). It was speculated that this might represent the remains of Mound C, but this could not be confirmed (Pearson 2014).

Moore (1897) reported that Mound C was about 30 inches high and he selected a diameter of 50 feet within which to excavate that he believed encompassed an area larger than the mound. Unlike the other two mounds at Bluff Field, Moore reported signs of previous excavations into Mound C, including a "former trench," which he did not excavate. Because Moore abandoned any efforts to record the mound structure, we have no information on the nature of the mound fill or, in fact, if a central shell deposit existed, as is so typical of the region's prehistoric mounds. He did, however, report that pottery sherds were fairly abundant in the mound and that most were "decorated with the complicated stamp," suggesting a late Mississippian, Irene phase date.

Moore reported only three burials in Mound C; two instances of cremated human bone in burial urns and one instance of cremated human bones in a pit. Burial 1 was an urn burial consisting of cremated human bone in the lower portion of a complicated stamped vessel. Moore does not provide a depth for this vessel, but it was obviously shallow because the upper portion had been plowed away. Associated with the calcined bone was a chert nodule, an oblong piece of worked chert, a part of a chert lance point and a fragment of unworked chert. As seen in Figure 22, Burial 1 lies near the eastern periphery of what Moore identified as Mound C. The other burials lay near the identified mound center. Burial 2 consisted of a deposit of burned human bone in a shallow, 1-foot-deep pit a few feet west of the estimated center of the mound. Several large fragments from at least two vessels rested above the bone. Burial 3 consisted of another burial urn containing cremated human bone. This urn was within six inches of the mound surface and the upper portion had been removed by past disturbances. Inside of the urn with the human bone were 26 "barrel-shaped" shell beads, the largest of which was three-quarters of an inch long. Both of the partial burial urns from Mound C had perforated bottoms.



Figure 22. Mound C, Bluff Field. Reconstructed from C.B. Moore's Field Notes

In his field notes, Moore makes mention of an additional burial in Mound C, Burial 4, although he does not designate this as a burial in his 1897 publication. This find actually consisted of some shell beads with no associated human bones. However, Moore thought that the burial that once had existed had been removed by previous digging and the beads had been left behind. He provides no information as to the location of these shell beads in the mound. In addition to these shell beads, Moore recovered a fragment of a clay pipe in "midden refuse," a sandstone hone, a grooved pebble hammer and a mass of coral "*3 times [the] size [of a] clenched fist.*" The pipe was described as having projecting knobs on the bowl. Presumably, the "midden refuse" mentioned by Moore was covering or flanking the mound.

The ceramics recovered from Mound C and the presence of burials in what can be identified as Irene Complicated Stamped urns indicates the mound dates to the Irene phase, i.e., after about A.D. 1300 and, given the lack of any European materials, before about A.D. 1580.

Moore searched the area around Bluff Field for additional mounds, but found none. However, he did report that he investigated a number of the shell "heaps" located in the neighboring Cabbage Garden and Long Field tracts, but found nothing of interest.

Summary and Conclusions

The nine mounds excavated by Clarence Moore on Ossabaw Island provide a considerable amount of information on prehistoric mortuary practices. This is despite the shortcomings in Moore's digging techniques and his record keeping. Relying on his findings it is possible to ascertain many characteristics of the mortuary programs practiced on the island during the prehistoric period. Further, by comparing his work with our present archaeological knowledge of the coastal region, it has been possible, in most instances, to assign reasonable dates and cultural affiliations to the mounds he dug.

One characteristic of most of the mounds excavated by Moore is their physical resemblance to one another and to other prehistoric mounds on the northern Sea Islands. One obvious feature shared by most of the mounds on Ossabaw is the presence of a large, shell-filled pit in the center of mounds, or an obvious shell core in a mound that has been flanked and covered by sand. Moore makes no mention of a central shell pit or feature for Mounds E and F at Middle Place and Mound B at Bluff Field. He does not specifically describe a central shell pit or core for Mound A at Middle Place, but the presence of such a feature is inferred by Moore' mention of shell having been dug from the center of the mound in the past. Both Mounds E at Middle Place and Mound B at Bluff Field did have central pits, one containing primary burials and one containing a cremation; however, Moore makes no mention that these pit were filled with shell. They may have been and he just did not mention it. Most of the central pits in the mounds on Ossabaw contained burials, commonly cremations but also primary burials. So, it is possible that just one of the mounds at Ossabaw, Mound F at Middle Place contained no central burial pit at all. The existence of central burial pits in mounds, often shell filled, or the presence of what can best be described as a central shell core, is a common

characteristic of burial mounds all along the northern Georgia coast. These features date from at least the late Woodland Period and may have been used earlier.

Moore recorded burials resting in an extended position at several of the mounds on Ossabaw. In some instances he specifically states that these extended burials lie below the mound structure itself; therefore must pre-date the construction of the mound. In other instances, he notes that the extended burials appear to lie at the base of the mound, suggesting interment during the very early phase of mound construction. As noted previously, an abundance of archaeological evidence has demonstrated that burials in an extended position is almost exclusively associated with the Woodland Period, and the early years of the Mississippi Period, St Catherines phase. Extended burials were discovered at only two of the mounds dug by Moore, Mounds C and D at Middle Place. Both of these mounds also contained flexed burials, which are almost exclusively related to the Mississippi Period, or after about A.D. 800 or 900. The presence of both extended and flexed burials at these two mounds does argue for some time depth in their construction and use. One of these mounds, Mound C, was the largest mound excavated by Moore on Ossabaw, possibly a reflection of its importance, or its long period of use.

Urn burials were discovered at three of the mounds dug by Moore. These were Mounds A and D at Middle Place, and Mound C at Bluff Field. As has been noted, the use of urns as receptacles for human remains first appeared during the Mississippi Period on the coast, probably during the latter portion of the Savannah phase (i.e. circa A.D. 900 to 1000), and the practice increased in popularity during the Irene phase. Most commonly, these urns contain cremated human remains, or the skeletal remains of children or infants. Less commonly, burial urns contain the disarticulated remains of adults, as shown above in Figure 9.

Burials of individuals in a flexed position is the most common form of interment seen in the Ossabaw Mounds. All six of the mounds at Middle Place contained flexed burials, while Mounds A and B at Bluff field had burials resting in a flexed position. Only Mound C at Bluff Field contained no flexed burials. In fact, this mound is somewhat unusual because no primary burials at all were recovered there. However, it must be noted that Moore's work on this mound was haphazard, even for his standards, as was his note taking so it is possible that primary burials were encountered, but not recorded. As discussed previously, burials made with the body in a flexed position appears to be exclusively a Mississippi Period trait; apparently beginning sometime during the St. Catherines phase after about A.D. 800.

Moore's descriptions of recovered ceramics are often sufficient to allow a correlation of his finds with currently identified ceramic types. In a few instances, however, his descriptions are insufficient to make such a comparison. Relying on the ceramics, the burial styles described and the physical characteristics of mound construction, it is argued that all of the mounds on Ossabaw dug by Moore date from the late Woodland Period to the late Mississippi Period, or from possibly as early as A.D. 350 to about A.D. 1500. The extension of this period of use back to A.D. 350 is based on relatively weak evidence, and it may be that none of the burials found by Moore date this early. All of the mounds, including the possible pre-mound burials, may date no earlier than the early Mississippi Period, St. Catherines phase or about A.D. 800. Larson (1998) suggested that some of the mounds dug by Moore date back to the early or middle Woodland Period (Deptford and Wilmington phases), but as noted previously, it is quite obvious that he misidentified some of the ceramics described by Moore.

Middle and late Woodland Period sites have been recorded on Ossabaw Island, but available ceramic collections from the Middle Place site indicate very little occupation during either period. Collections made at the Middle Place site in the 1970s by DePratter and Pearson yielded no identifiable Middle Woodland Period, Deptford phase ceramics, and only a very small number that might be Late Woodland Period, Wilmington phase pottery (Pearson 2014). The vast majority of ceramic collections from Middle Place, recovered in surface collections and test excavations in domestic trash middens, date to the Mississippi Period Savannah and Irene phases, and, possibly, the St. Catherines phase. The ages of these collections correspond closely with the estimated ages presented here for the mounds dug at Middle Place by C.B. Moore. The construction and use of most of the mounds at Middle Place during the very early Mississippi Period corresponds to arguments that the Middle Place site seems to have become the largest and, possibly, the most important prehistoric settlement on Ossabaw Island during the Mississippi Period (Pearson 2014).

At the Bluff Field site (9CH160), ceramic collections made by DePratter and Pearson in the 1970s consisted principally of late prehistoric Savannah phase and Irene phase types. A very small quantity of clay-tempered pottery was recovered, which may date to as early as the late Woodland Period, Wilmington phase (Pearson 2014). The predominance of middle to late Mississippi Period ceramics at the site, corresponds to the suggested dates of the three mounds that Moore dug at the site as discussed above.

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