THE GRAND GULF MOUND
SALVAGE EXCAVATION OF AN EARLY MARKSVILLE BURIAL MOUND IN CLAIBORNE COUNTY, MISSISSIPPI

by
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CONTENTS

List of Tables 3

1. Introduction 4

2. Artifacts from Disturbed Contexts at the Site 6

3. Construction of the Grand Gulf Mound 12

4. Artifacts Excavated from the Grand Gulf Mound 13

5. Summary and Conclusions 15

List of Illustrations 17

Figures 18

Plates 25

References Cited 34

TABLES

1. Sherds From Spoil Dirt 7
2. Copper Bead Measurements 7
3. Marksville Cross-hatched Rim Measurement 8
4. Marksville Stamped, *var. Troyville* Measurement 8
5. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Tubby Pot Measurements 9
6. Marksville Cross-hatched Rim Measurement 9
7. Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Irregular Vessel Measurements 9
8. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Measurements 10
9. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Measurements 10
10. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Measurements 10
11. Churupa Punctate, *var. Unspecified* Measurements 11
12. Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Measurements 13
13. Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* Measurements 13
14. Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Measurements 14
15. Indian Bay Stamped, *var. Indian Bay* Measurements 14

1

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological survey of Claiborne County, Mississippi, carried out from June through October 1972, was funded by the Mississippi Power and Light Company. Archaeologists Samuel O. Brookes and Byron W. Inmon from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History located several sites that might be affected by construction of a nuclear generating station to be built at Grand Gulf. They then attempted to locate as many sites as could be found in the remainder of the county. At the time the survey report was published, eighty-six sites had been recorded (Brookes and Inmon 1973), and since that time four new sites have been reported, bringing the total to ninety.

By checking reports of previous surveys in the area, the archaeologists located one mound on the property to be purchased for the plant site. In July 1971, this mound had been recorded as a burial mound by the Lower Mississippi Survey, Peabody Museum, Harvard University. No dimensions were given nor was any mention made of the site's having been mapped, but a collection was made and recorded as Harvard No. V-305 (Jeffrey P. Brain, personal communication).

Calvin S. Brown (1926:46) writes that Clarence B. Moore visited a mound near Grand Gulf in 1911. Moore states that he visited "a mound about twelve feet high near Rodney, Jefferson County, and another about the same height near Grand Gulf, Claiborne County. The first had been partly washed away, the second was dug into without results" (1911:368). Whether or not the second mound was the Grand Gulf Mound has not been proven, but it is possible that it was. Although Moore mentions only one mound, two other mounds, now destroyed, are known to have existed in the immediate vicinity of Grand Gulf. These two, which were in close proximity to each other, were located farther back on the bluff, so the Grand Gulf Mound that today lies just off the road would probably be the one recorded by Moore.

The Grand Gulf Mound is located in the NW 1/4 of Irregular Section 8 of Township 12N, Range 2E, Claiborne County, Mississippi. It is situated on a terrace approximately one thousand feet east of the loess bluff escarpment on the east side of the Mississippi River. The present-day course of the Mississippi lies one mile to the west, and two miles to the north, the Big Black River empties into the Mississippi. This location on loess bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River parallels that of the Helena Crossing site (Ford 1963). A similar physiographic placement is found at the Marksville site in Louisiana, although Marksville is on another stream.

Snowden and Priddy (1968), in their work on loess deposits in Mississippi, point out that most loess in the state is deposited on maturely dissected uplands on the east side of the Mississippi River. The topography of the area around the Grand Gulf Mound is just such a mature, dissected upland. From the floodplain, which has an approximate elevation of 75 feet above sea level, the loess bluffs rise to a height of more than 220 feet. The Grand Gulf Mound had a commanding view of the river and of Louisiana to the west; to the east it was flanked by even higher loess bluffs.

When the mound was visited by archaeologists Brookes and Inmon in July of 1972, it was found to be in poor condition. Two-thirds of it had been leveled by a bulldozer and the remaining portion was eroding rapidly and being vandalized by relic hunters. At the archaeologists' request, the Mississippi Power and Light Company installed a protective fence around the mound. Shortly thereafter, a request for funds to excavate the site was sent from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History to the Mississippi Power and Light Company. The request was honored and plans were initiated for undertaking excavation.

A word concerning the method of excavation is in order. A datum point, stake O-CL, was established atop the mound at an altitude of 169.54 feet above sea level. A base line was then laid out with a bearing of N 55° E and an angle of declination set at 6° W. After brush was cleared, the mound was staked off in a grid pattern of 5-foot squares and mapped in l-foot contour levels. Excavation proceeded using 10-foot squares and 0.2-foot levels. Balks 0.5 foot thick were left. This procedure resulted in profiles running approximately north-south and east-west. Excavated materials were sacked according to square, level, depth below O-CL, and elevation of the level.

Most of the ceramic typology used in this work follows Phillips (1970). In some instances the paste and/or decorative treatment may vary slightly from descriptions given by Phillips, and any such

variations are noted. Some ceramic descriptions are based on Toth (1974), whose work is an updated version of Phillips and contains more information about paste.

One classification which should be discussed is that of Marksville Stamped, *var. Troyville.* Here the typology is based on Toth (1974), who interprets *Troyville* as encompassing zoned non-dentate rocker stamped ware. *Troyville* can occur with early Marksville modes, such as cross-hatched rim, and in early Marksville contexts. In using Toth's classification the usefulness of *Troyville* as a temporal indicator is negated. This has been done because, as previously stated, zoned, plain rocker stamping can occur in early contexts applied to a soft chalky paste with diagnostic early modes.

2

ARTIFACTS FROM DISTURBED CONTEXTS AT THE SITE

Surface Finds

The area immediately north of the Grand Gulf Mound has yielded many flakes, pieces of fire cracked rock, fragments of worked stone, and a few projectile points. Whether this area is an Archaic site or a Marksville activity area is unknown. Four of the points collected are illustrated in Figure 1 A-D. Specimen 1 A has a distinct resemblance to the Snyders point, present on Illinois Hopewell sites. While it is true that the point is not of the Snyders type, it does resemble artifacts associated with Hopewellian culture, which existed during the Marksville Period in the Lower Mississippi Valley. All of the points illustrated have counterparts at the Crooks site (Ford and Willey 1940:93-104), an early Marksville site in Louisiana.

A collection of artifacts from the Grand Gulf site is listed in the report of the archaeological survey of Claiborne County, Mississippi (Brookes and Inmon 1973:10). No sherds or other diagnostic artifacts were recovered, with the exception of a large point thought to be of Archaic origin. Ceramics, which are the best indicators of Marksville, are totally lacking in the area north of the mound. In fact, only one site in the county yielded Marksville ceramics. One sherd of Marksville Stamped, *var. unspecified* was found at the Browns Airport site (22-Cb-559).* It is possible, then, that at Grand Gulf we are dealing with an activity area used for some specific purpose (or purposes) which did not involve ceramics. Excavations of Marksville villages and activity areas are rare in the southeast, however, and we must await the completion of more such work before we can reasonably state that there are activity areas in Marksville sites where ceramics should not be expected.

A local collector recovered several interesting artifacts from the Grand Gulf Mound after its partial destruction. A very fine platform pipe made from a highly polished brown stone was among the artifacts removed. This pipe is over 5 inches in length and resembles the stone pipe illustrated by Bohannon from the Pharr Mounds (Bohannon 1972:108).

Plate 1 shows four chert blades, a copper bead, and several fragments of copper taken from the disturbed portion of the mound. The blades are not the finely worked types often found on Marksville sites, but they do represent a blade-core industry. All four were made from a dark brown gravel chert, locally obtainable. The copper bead is oval and is identical to another taken from the site. This second bead will be discussed in a later section of this report. The large pieces of copper shown in Plate 1 F-M indicate that several thin sheets were hammered together to make the artifact represented by these fragments. Specimen 1 K has a hole, possibly for suspension. This feature, along with the relatively flat shape of the copper sheets, indicates that these pieces probably are not the remains of a panpipe, but rather of a gorget or breastplate.

From several sherds picked up by the local collector the archaeologists were able to piece together part of a small vessel (Plate 2 A-B). This Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* pot has a round base, a cambered, cross-hatched rim, and a design motif resembling a teardrop. A dentate rocker was used to stamp the vessel. The paste is chalky and the texture is bumpy, closely fitting Phillips's (1970) description of the type.

Another vessel base (Plate 2 C) found by the collector is flat and consists of a chalky paste with a lumpy texture. This vessel is classified as Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville,* since no decoration is present. Plate 2 D-O illustrates the remaining sherds found by the local collector. Most are Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville,* or Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville.* Note the Marksville cross-hatched rim on sherd D.

*The original survey report stated that this sherd was earlier than the ceramics from Grand Gulf (Brookes and Inmon 1973:9) because at that time the ceramics from Grand Gulf were thought to have some representatives of both early Marksville and Issaquena. Such is not the case, however; the material from Grand Gulf is all early.

On the northern slope of the mound the collector also found forty-two bifacial blades which were being exposed by erosion. Most of these are local chert with gray, blue, and red hues, and all have convex bases and straight-to-convex blade edges. They were obviously deposited in the final stages of mound construction.

Artifacts From The Spoil Dirt

A collection of sherds (Table 1) was gathered from the spoil dirt pushed up by the bulldozer which had leveled a large portion of the mound. Noteworthy are three Marksville cross-hatched rims, two of

TABLE 1

SHERDS FROM SPOIL DIRT

	Rim Sherds	Body Sherds	Total
Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* (chalky paste)	1	9	10
Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* (fine paste)	1	6	7
Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* (chalky paste)	0	4	4
Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* (fine paste)	0	6	6
Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* (chalky paste)	0	3	3
Marksville, Cross-hatched Rim (chalky paste)	1	0	1
Marksville, Cross-hatched Rim (fine paste)	2	0	2
Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* (close-spaced treatment, fine paste)	1	1	2
			35

which belong to the same vessel. Several unusual incised sherds (Plate 3 A-B) found on this spoil dirt are clay tempered and highly polished, even on the interior. At present these are classified as Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville,* close-spaced treatment. A reconstruction of this unusual vessel is shown in Figure 2. Its close-spaced geometric design is similar to the decoration on a vessel from Crooks (Ford and Willey 1940: Fig. 35f), but the specimen from Grand Gulf has parallel lines encircling the rim. This rim treatment, coupled with the Mazique-like body treatment, would seem to argue for a placement in the Coles Creek Period. The thinness of the ware and the similarity of its paste to that of other vessels at Grand Gulf, however, suggest that it is an early Marksville vessel.

A copper bead was also found in the spoil dirt. This bead, illustrated in Plate 3 C and identical to the bead shown in Plate 1, is flattened on the ends and round in cross section. It seems to have been flattened somewhat after the oval perforation was made. Its measurements are listed in Table 2.

TABLE 2

COPPER BEAD MEASUREMENTS

Diameter:	9.0 mm
Diameter of Perforation:	3.0 mm
Height:	7.0 mm

Copper artifacts (possibly from the Lake Superior region) are a diagnostic trait of the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. It is not known whether the beads were manufactured in another area and traded to peoples near Grand Gulf or whether the raw material was traded and local people were involved in the manufacture of the beads.

Pottery Finds

In the process of preparing the Grand Gulf Mound for excavation, large portions of fill were removed from the south side. These deposits had been either pushed up by the bulldozer, washed down from the face of the mound, or thrown out by relic hunters. In clearing this area, several groups of sherds were found, which are referred to here as "pottery finds." All had been disturbed by the bulldozer and later covered with spoil dirt.

Pottery Find No. 1

Pottery Find No. 1 consists of sherds from four vessels. All belong to the early Marksville Period and are classified as Marksville, cross-hatched rim, Marksville Stamped, *var. Troyville,* and Marksville Incised. *var. Marksville* (two examples). It is thought that these vessels were originally placed on or near the primary platform, but that at the time of the destruction of this portion of the mound, the vessels were crushed and the sherds redeposited.

The Marksville, cross-hatched rim (Plate 3 D, Table 3), does not fit any of the other vessels from Grand Gulf. The rim is well polished and seems to be a part of a cambered vessel.

TABLE 3

MARKSVILLE CROSS-HATCHED RIM MEASUREMENT

Thickness:	5.0 mm

A portion of a Marksville Stamped, *var. Troyville* vessel, present in this deposit, has a cambered, cross-hatched rim (alternately slanted), plain rocker stamping, and a flat base with a round outline. The surface is well polished and the paste is untempered. No hemiconical punctations appear. Sherds from this vessel are illustrated in Plate 3 E-H, and measurements are given in Table 4.

TABLE 4

MARKSVILLE STAMPED, *VAR. TROYVILLE* MEASUREMENTS

Thickness:	Rim	4.0 mm
	Body	4.5 mm
	Base	4.0 mm

One small Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* pot (Plate 4 A-A', Table 5) was reconstructed from this deposit. Its paste is smooth and, with the exception of a few small particles of clay, appears to be untempered. The highly polished surface of the vessel is a light yellow color, with incised lines which show up as a very dull tan. The cambered rim is itself an indicator of an early Marksville association, as is the diagnostic cross-hatched (alternately slanted) rim mode. These little incisions take off from a row of hemiconical punctations. No reptile or bird is readily apparent in the incised design, although certain contours suggest an abstraction of such a design. The base is slightly convex and rectangular in shape, with rounded corners.

TABLE 5

MARKSVILLE INCISED,
VAR. MARKSVILLE TUBBY POT MEASUREMENTS

Diameter:	Rim	96.5 mm
	Body (at widest point)	101.0 mm
	Base	82.0 mm
Height:		78.0 mm
Thickness:	Lip	3.0 mm
	Rim	4.0 mm
	Body	5.0 mm
	Base	5.5 mm

Alan Toth (personal communication 1975) is of the opinion that this vessel is considerably better made than most examples of the type. Its compact paste, thin walls, and high polish are unusual features. Only a few Marksville vessels of this quality have been found—some from Marksville Mound 4 and two from the Crooks site. Only three other early Marksville vessels have been found in the Yazoo Basin (Belmont 1961), and the location of the sites that yielded these early vessels is somewhat doubtful.

Several sherds of Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville,* when reconstructed, form the shape of a beaker (Fig. 3). Reconstructed design elements suggest an abstraction of a bird motif (Fig. 4), which is a diagnostic mode for early Marksville.

Pottery Find No. 2

Pottery Find No. 2, uncovered at the same depth and 4 feet west of Pottery Find No. 1 (Fig. 5), consists of many small sherds, most of which are Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville.* Several sherds comprised the rim of a cambered vessel. This specimen (Plate 4 B, Table 6) is a typical Marksville cross-hatched rim with hemiconical punctations below. Colored dark black, the rim is well polished and extremely hard.

TABLE 6

MARKSVILLE CROSS-HATCHED RIM MEASUREMENT

Thickness:	6.5 mm

A portion of a Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* vessel (Plate 5 A, Table 7) was also present in this deposit. The hard, well-polished shallow bowl is rectangular in shape and has a round base and rounded corners. A peak is present on at least one corner. This is another vessel which differs from the original description of the type, but its association, even though disturbed, suggests an early Marksville date.

TABLE 7

BAYTOWN PLAIN, *VAR. MARKSVILLE*
IRREGULARLY SHAPED VESSEL MEASUREMENTS

Height:		10.0 mm
Thickness:	Rim	5.0 mm
	Body	5.0 mm
	Base	7.0 mm

Forty-three sherds of the type Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* apparently belong to one vessel. The base of the vessel, which was reconstructed (Plate 5 B, Table 8), is slightly convex and is oval in shape.

TABLE 8

MARKSVILLE INCISED, *VAR. MARKSVILLE* MEASUREMENTS

Thickness:	Body	6.0 mm
	Base	7.0 mm
Diameter:	Base	100.0 mm (approximate)

Pottery Find No. 3

Pottery Find No. 3 consists of portions of two vessels. The first, illustrated in Plate 5 C, is a beaker with a flat, round base and a design of wide-spaced curvilinear lines. Its paste is clay tempered, very hard, and highly polished. This vessel has been assigned to the type Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville.* Measurements are given in Table 9.

TABLE 9

MARKSVILLE INCISED, *VAR. MARKSVILLE* MEASUREMENTS

Thickness:	Body	4.0 mm
	Base	7.0 mm
Diameter:	Base	102.0 mm

The second vessel in this deposit is an excellently fashioned little beaker of Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* (Plate 6 A, Table 10). Running vertically from the base to the lip are four plain bands which

TABLE 10

MARKSVILLE INCISED, *VAR. MARKSVILLE*
BEAKER MEASUREMENTS

Height:		124.0 mm
Thickness:	Rim	3.5 mm
	Body	4.0 mm
	Base	4.0 mm
Diameter:	Base	60.0 mm
	Rim	111.0 mm (approximate)

alternate with four decorated bands. Each of the decorated bands contains four nested rectangles of narrow, deeply incised, closely spaced lines. These concentric rectangles are comparable to those on a vessel from Crooks (Ford and Willey 1940:Fig. 35e), although the decorative rectangles on the Crooks vessel are not enclosed in bands. The paste is clay tempered and the vessel walls are thin. The surface is highly polished, lustrous, and very hard. Toth (personal communication 1975) says that the only comparable ware on this horizon is from Marksville Mounds 4 and 8 at the type site.

Pottery Find No. 4

The final pottery find, No. 4, was a crushed, though "articulated" Churupa Punctate, *var.*

unspecified beaker (Plate 6 B-B', Table 11), discovered 12 feet west and 3 feet north of Pottery Find

TABLE 11

CHURUPA PUNCTATE, *VAR. UNSPECIFIED*
BEAKER MEASUREMENTS

Height:		143.0 mm
Diameter:	Rim	141.0 mm
	Base	99.0 mm
Thickness:	Rim	5.0 mm
	Body	5.5 mm
	Base	9.0 mm

No. 1 (Fig. 5). Remains of a large mussel shell were inside the vessel. Two instances of mussel shells occurring in Marksville vessels are illustrated by Ford (1963: Figs. 17, 25). The shell specimen from Grand Gulf did not appear to be worked, though it was so badly crushed that it is impossible to be certain.

The vessel is decorated with two zoomorphic figures, composed of punctations bordered by incised lines. Each figure has two upturned arms, two legs, also turned up, and a head. The head is large and oval and has a triangular "face" formed by incised lines with no enclosed punctations. Whether or not these figures are meant to be human is difficult to determine; the position of the legs is somewhat unusual and the torso is barely present. Alan Toth (personal communication 1975) refers to this as a spider motif, but the Von Daniken school of thought might not agree. Opposite these two figures are asymmetrical alternating plain and punctate filled zones. The paste of this black, polished vessel is clay tempered and is very hard.

Toth (personal communication 1975) thinks the vessel is late because of the small punctations. Because there is no late component to which it may be assigned, however, it must be early. There is a similar vessel from Saline Point (Moore 1912: Fig. 7), but there are no known Mississippi Valley parallels.

Phillips (1970:67) discusses variations in decorative treatment on Churupa vessels. Early Churupa sherds at the Manny site have circular rather than hemiconical punctations, as does the vessel from Saline Point. Association at Saline Point seems to be with early varieties of Marksville, although the association is not as certain as would be desirable. Such is the case at Grand Gulf, where the Churupa, *var. unspecified* vessel was found in a disturbed context. Since most ceramics at Grand Gulf are known to be early, it is assumed that the Churupa is also early. This association of an early, circular-punctated Churupa with other early Marksville types merits further study.

3

CONSTRUCTION OF THE GRAND GULF MOUND

Since approximately two-thirds of the Grand Gulf Mound has been destroyed by bulldozing activity, it is impossible to reconstruct its original stratigraphy. No evidence of a subsurface tomb was found in the excavation, and since the construction of the remaining portion is similar to that of Mound "A" at the Crooks site (Ford and Willey 1940) and to that of the Womack Mound (Koehler 1966)—neither of which contains subsurface tombs—it is thought that this feature was not a part of the construction of the Grand Gulf Mound.

The first stage of construction was the laying out of a symmetrical primary platform, the construction of which seems to have received a considerable amount of care. The portion of the platform extant at the time of excavation consisted of a layer of black loess, 0.5 foot thick, 20 feet wide across the east-west axis, and 3.5 feet long across the north-south axis. It was rectangular with a sloping edge of 55°. The regularity of the platform is apparent in Plate 7 A. Nowhere did this feature vary more than 0.05 foot in thickness.

The dark color of the loess suggests that fire was connected with this platform, which may have been carefully prepared for the cremation of the remains of certain high ranking individuals in the society. Seeming to support this idea is a darkened area in the fill placed over the platform. This feature, on the northeast corner of the primary platform, has a conical shape and is interpreted to be a heat-produced stain in the fill (see Fig. 6).

After the platform was constructed and utilized, it was covered with a mantle of light brown loess, 5.5 feet high at its maximum elevation, and 26.5 feet wide on the east-west axis. That the mound remained in this condition for some time is indicated by a thin cap which covered it. The cap, averaging 0.2 foot in thickness, was dark brown in color and extremely hard (approaching the hardness of fired clay). It separated the light brown soil of the first mound from the mottled yellow and white soil of the second stage of construction. The cap shows clearly in Plate 7 B.

Mound construction stage two consisted of a westerly addition to the mound. Loading is evident in this stage, which comprises two layers of loess—a level of fine, powdery white loess covered by a second level of fine mottled yellow and white loess grading into the first layer. This westerly addition gave the mound a height of 7 feet. Since the western edge was destroyed, the width of the east-west axis of this stage cannot be definitely measured, but in all probability it was about 27 feet.

During the third stage of construction, a layer of dark brown loess was deposited over stages one and two on the west side, while the slope of stage one on the east was used as part of the mound contour (see Fig. 6). Loading was again evident. This layer of fill was approximately 32 feet in length on the east-west axis. Again, only an estimate is possible, since the western slope had been disturbed. With this third layer, the mound had reached a height of 10 feet, the maximum height of the mound at the time that it was found after its partial destruction.

An easterly addition comprised the fourth and final stage of mound construction (Fig. 6). This mantle consists of a deposit of light brown loess, 10 feet high and approximately 32 feet in length on the east-west axis. No loading is visible at this stage. Two north-south cross sections of the mound are shown in Figure 7 A-B.

4

ARTIFACTS EXCAVATED FROM THE GRAND GULF MOUND

No features, other than those described in the section on mound construction, were encountered in the excavation. As previously stated, no burials were found in the mound. When the site was first visited by the Mississippi Department of Archives and History survey, a few fragments of bone were found protruding from the mound, but by the time excavations had begun, these pieces had either been washed away or removed by relic hunters.

Four vessels were discovered in the mound itself. Soil from the interior of each vessel was flotated, but no material was found. Bone was not associated with any of these vessels, though it is possible that the burials or cremations had disintegrated. The first vessel, a Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* base (Plate 8 A, Table 12), was found sitting upright on stage two mound construction, where it had

TABLE 12

BAYTOWN PLAIN, *VAR. MARKSVILLE*
BASE MEASUREMENTS

Thickness:	Body	6.0 mm
	Base	5.0 mm
Diameter:	Base	122.0 mm

probably been placed in connection with the third stage of mound construction. This polished, dark brown vessel of clay tempered paste was found in square O-CL at a depth of 2.3 feet below stake O-5W. The upper portion of the vessel is missing, probably as a result of relic hunting. A large depression was noted in the earth just above it, and it appears that the upper portion of the vessel was protruding from the edge of the pothole. The vessel is generally finer than the usual ware of this type.

The second vessel (Plate 8 B, Table 13) was found lying on its side in square 0-10E at a depth of 6.63

TABLE 13

MARKSVILLE STAMPED, *VAR. MARKSVILLE*
STRAIGHT JAR MEASUREMENTS

Height:		165.2 mm
Diameter:	Base	69.0 mm
	Rim	137.0 mm
Thickness:	Base	8.0 mm
	Rim	4.0 mm
	Body	6.0 mm

feet below stake 0-5E, a situation which would place it in stage one of mound construction. The darkened area over the primary platform was just below this vessel. No bone or other material was associated with the pot, nor was a pit or any other feature evident. A straight jar of the type Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville,* it is constructed of chalky paste, and its texture is like that of Marksville Stamped as defined by Phillips (1970). Polishing, while present, is not of the quality exhibited on other vessels from the mound. The vessel walls are also thicker than those of some of the finer vessels at Grand Gulf.

Its design consists of two parallel incised lines encircling the rim just below the lip. Taking off from these incised lines, and spaced evenly around the vessel, are nine triangles, each consisting of a plain center triangle bordered by two incised lines separated by a space of approximately 0.5 inch filled with dentate rocker stamping. A similar vessel from Utica Mound 6, grave 1-central pit, in Illinois, is

illustrated by Henriksen (1965:Fig. 29a). The vessel from Utica was stamped with a cord-wrapped stick, whereas at Grand Gulf a dentate rocker was used.

Several sherds which appear to belong to one vessel were located in this portion of the mound. Apparently, they were unintentionally included along with the fill in this final stage of construction. The vessel, of the type Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville,* is well polished and has a slightly convex lower portion with a round base (Plate 8 C-D, Table 14). One deep, U-shaped incised line encircles the vessel

TABLE 14

BAYTOWN PLAIN, *VAR. MARKSVILLE* MEASUREMENTS

Diameter:	Base	89.0 mm (approximate)
Thickness:	Base	4.5 mm
	Body	4.0 mm
	Rim	4.5 mm

just below the lip. These sherds were found in levels above and below an Indian Bay beaker, discussed below.

The final vessel from the excavation is a small Indian Bay Stamped, *var. Indian Bay* beaker (Plate 9, Table 15), found resting in an upright position in square 55-20E at a depth of 3.47 feet below stake

TABLE 15

INDIAN BAY STAMPED, *VAR. INDIAN BAY*
SMALL BEAKER MEASUREMENTS

Height:		84.0 mm
Thickness:	Rim	4.0 mm
Diameter:	Base	56.0 mm
	Rim	97.0 mm

0-15E. No features were found in the vicinity of this vessel, which was placed in the mound during the final layer of mound construction. This vessel varies somewhat from the description of the type (Phillips 1970) in that its paste is more compact, its walls are thinner, and it has a good polish. Encircling the vessel are three parallel bands of rocker stamping, beginning at the lip and separated by three undecorated bands. The lower portion of the vessel is slightly convex and the base is circular.

5

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Materials recovered from the excavation show that the Grand Gulf Mound was constructed by people participating in what has come to be known as the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. The copper pieces, although possibly of local manufacture, are certainly not of local origin. Since copper is a diagnostic trait of Hopewellian mortuary practices, these pieces furnish us with our most important piece of evidence for interaction. Along with the copper, the platform pipe from this mound is considered a trade item. Artifacts such as these indicate that the Hopewellian mortuary system of the mound interment of high ranking individuals with status oriented artifacts (sociofacts) was in effect at Grand Gulf.

In making these assertions, the writer is in disagreement with Struever concerning his statement that "raw materials and stylistic concepts, not finished goods" (Struever 1964:88) were being transported in the interaction sphere. While this may be true in the case of the copper beads at Grand Gulf, it does not seem to be the case with the stone platform pipe at this site. A finished pipe would have a relatively high value as a trading piece, but a stone cobble would have little or no value unless it were of exotic material. Carrying this argument further, finished or semifinished goods would be easier to transport; thus, increased profits would be derived from such trade.

An ethnographic example of the trading of finished articles is to be found in Downs's (1966) work. The Washo in California traded with several other Indian tribes to obtain antelope and buffalo skin. Frequently the Washo made long trips to the Pacific coast to obtain shellfish. These were eaten on the spot, but the shells were transported back over the Sierra to the permanent camps to be made into jewelry, which was then transported to other areas for trading purposes. It is readily apparent that finished items played an important part in Washo trade. While this ethnographic account involves a people many centuries and thousands of miles removed from Grand Gulf, it is significant in this instance because most Marksville sites in the Yazoo Basin lack debitage and other by-products of the manufacture of items from imported materials. The usual find is a finished artifact, not a core or a waste fragment.

Struever indicates that participation in the interaction sphere was practiced by groups on different levels of complexity (1964:88-89). This author agrees that the concept of an interaction sphere embraces these regional differences or variations. Even these regional variations are included in the interaction sphere as ideas and are sometimes found out of their own region, as in the instance of typical Marksville burial platforms under Hopewell mounds at the Dickinson mound group in Illinois (Walker 1952) and at the Wright mound group in Ohio (Shetrone 1924).

Ceramics from the Grand Gulf Mound show a variance from the Marksville norm. Marksville ceramics are generally thought to have been derived from the preceding Tchefuncte Period. Vessel paste from other early Marksville sites shows this continuity quite clearly, but not so at Grand Gulf. Paste on most vessels from this site is harder, thinner, and more polished than average Marksville wares. Toth (personal communication 1975) has stated that parallels exist between this paste and that at both the Marksville and Crooks sites. Vessels of fine quality paste are in the minority at these two Louisiana sites, however, while improved paste ceramics are in the majority at Grand Gulf. The implication is that the majority of the vessels are not only sociofacts, but sociofacts of a special order, just as distinctive as the copper artifacts.

Concerning the mound's construction, it may be pointed out in summary that the mound was used over a period of time and that several stages of mound construction are present. The construction of the Grand Gulf Mound has parallels at Crooks and other early Marksville sites.

Placement of the mound on a terrace in the bluffs overlooking a river is viewed as a manifestation of Hopewellian influence. This situation is duplicated at Helena Crossing and is similar to the placement of the Marksville site in Louisiana. Utilizing Struever's (1968) model of Woodland subsistence-settlement systems, certain analogies are seen, even though his model is based upon Illinois Valley-Hopewell and the discussion here concerns Mississippi Valley-Marksville. Settlement patterns for the Woodland peoples in the lower Mississippi Valley have not been discussed at length in any publication, largely

because most excavations have been in burial mounds such as Grand Gulf. Another reason is that the few survey reports published which show site distributions have been mainly concerned with chronological sequencing.

The material north of the Grand Gulf Mound was entirely lithic. Because this area lacked any diagnostic markers for a Marksville occupation (Hopewell blades, sherds, copper, for example), the author was at first inclined to regard it as a small Archaic site. In an effort to refrain from making an indefensible statement, it was simply suggested that the site could be a Marksville occupation. This, it was thought, could be a temporary camp used for some specific activity, such as mound construction, away from the base settlement. Struever (1968) states that such sites do occur in the Illinois Valley, although, with the few artifacts we have from the area at Grand Gulf, it is impossible to say definitely that this is such a site. Nevertheless, with most Marksville sites in the alluvial plain of this area, the subsistence-settlement pattern is similar to that of Illinois Hopewell. If indeed the material from the area north of the Grand Gulf Mound represents the remains of a short-term occupancy by peoples associated with this mound, then we have one more bit of evidence to link Marksville and Hopewell settlement patterns.

Phillips (1970:Fig. 444) reports a number of Marksville sites directly across the river from Grand Gulf, to which he assigns the name Point Lake Phase. These sites seem to conform to Struever's model of Woodland subsistence-settlement patterns. Toth, however, does not think that Grand Gulf should be assigned to the Point Lake Phase of Marksville, because its ceramics do not conform to those of the Point Lake Phase sites. This difference in ceramics and the fact that only a single Marksville sherd has been found in the rest of Claiborne County (Browns Airport Site One, 22-Cb-559, Brookes and Inmon 1973:39-40) present a dilemma.

Grand Gulf, as far as the author knows, is the only example of a site within the Hopewell Interaction Sphere to be recorded in the Natchez Bluffs District. Since the mound was constructed in several separate stages, we know that its construction represents a series of events. Just where the activity of this period was centered we do not know, but some mortuary activities culminated at the Grand Gulf Mound. Future surveys in the Natchez Bluffs District may yield evidence of more sites which can be related to the Grand Gulf Mound.

At this point, one site in the northern Yazoo Basin should be mentioned. The Martin #1 site (22-Tu-533) in Tunica County is an early Marksville site with appropriate diagnostic ceramics. Lithic debris literally covers the surface of the site, and recent analysis of some of this material has shown that the lithic assemblage at Martin #1 nearly duplicates that at the Snyders site in Calhoun County, Illinois, described by White (1963). This duplication of a Hopewell lithic assemblage would indicate that certain technological systems were operative within both Hopewell and Marksville.

Thus, the Hopewell Interaction Sphere is in reality a much more complex phenomenon than a mere exchange of ideas and artifacts. The proximity of the Grand Gulf site to the Mississippi River would place it on the main axis of north-south interaction. Toth (personal communication 1974) feels that while vessels from the site were locally made, there were some individuals from the Illinois Valley present in the population that constructed the mound. He does not mean to imply a mass migration of peoples; but on the other hand, the evidence suggests more than simply a trade relationship. At present we have parallels between Illinois Valley-Hopewell and Mississippi Valley-Marksville not only in sociofacts and mortuary remains, with their implication of stratified society, but also in utilitarian artifacts (technofacts) and in indications of technology in the form of use-wear patterns. Already we have a suggestion of similarity in settlement patterns relating directly to subsistence activities.

In essence, we believe the Grand Gulf Mound to be an early Marksville burial mound dating from approximately A.D. 50 to A.D. 200. Artifacts found within the mound indicate that the builders of this mound had trade and/or contact with peoples to the north, probably in the Illinois Valley. The Hopewell Interaction Sphere must be explained by further work on sites in the Mississippi Valley or it will remain a nebulous term that obscures rather than elucidates prehistory.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figures

1. Projectile Points. 18
2. Marksville Incised Vessel, Close-spaced Treatment. 19
3. Marksville Incised Vessel, Wide-spaced Treatment. 20
4. Marksville Incised Vessel Design. 21
5. Location of Pottery Finds. 22
6. East-West Mound Profile. 23
7. North-South Mound Profiles. 24

Plates

1. Surface Finds. *A-D,* Chert Blades; *E,* Copper Bead; *F-M,* Copper Fragments. 25
2. Surface Finds. *A-B,* Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *C,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *D-O,* Marksville Sherds. 26
3. Artifacts from Disturbed Contexts. *A-B,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *C,* Copper Bead; *D,* Cross-hatched Rim; *E-H,* Marksville Stamped, *var. Troyville* Sherds. 27
4. Pottery Finds. *A-A',* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *B,* Cross-hatched Rim. 28
5. Pottery Finds. *A,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Irregular Vessel; *B,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *C,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Vessel. 29
6. Pottery Finds. *A,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *B-B',* Churupa Punctate, *var. Unspecified* Vessel. 30
7. Mound Construction. *A,* Mound Platform; *B,* Mound Cap. 31
8. Artifacts from Mound. *A,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *B,* Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* Vessel; *C-D,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* Vessel. 32
9. Indian Bay Stamped, *var. Indian Bay* Vessel. 33

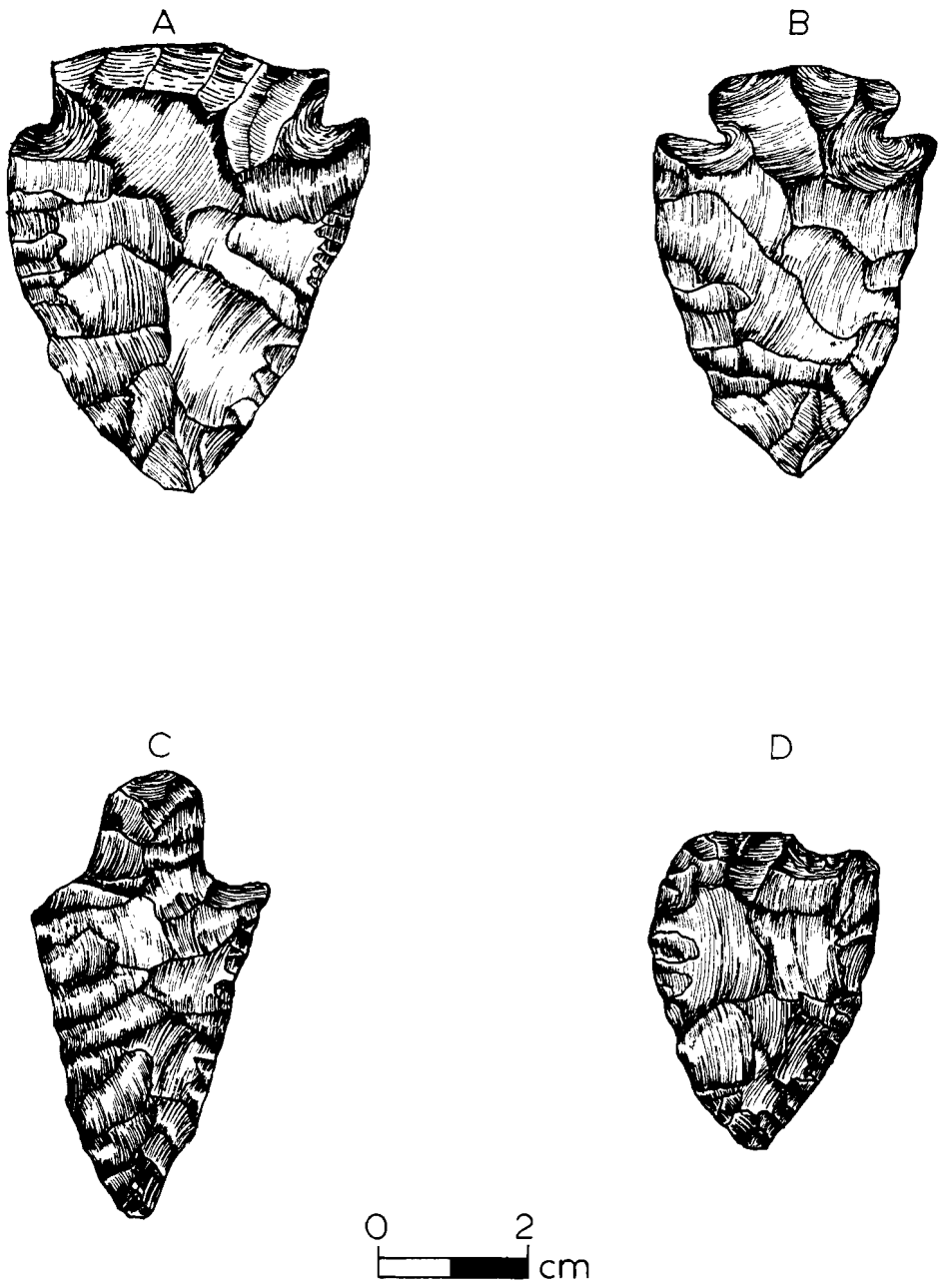


Fig. 1. *A-D,* Projectile points from area north of mound.

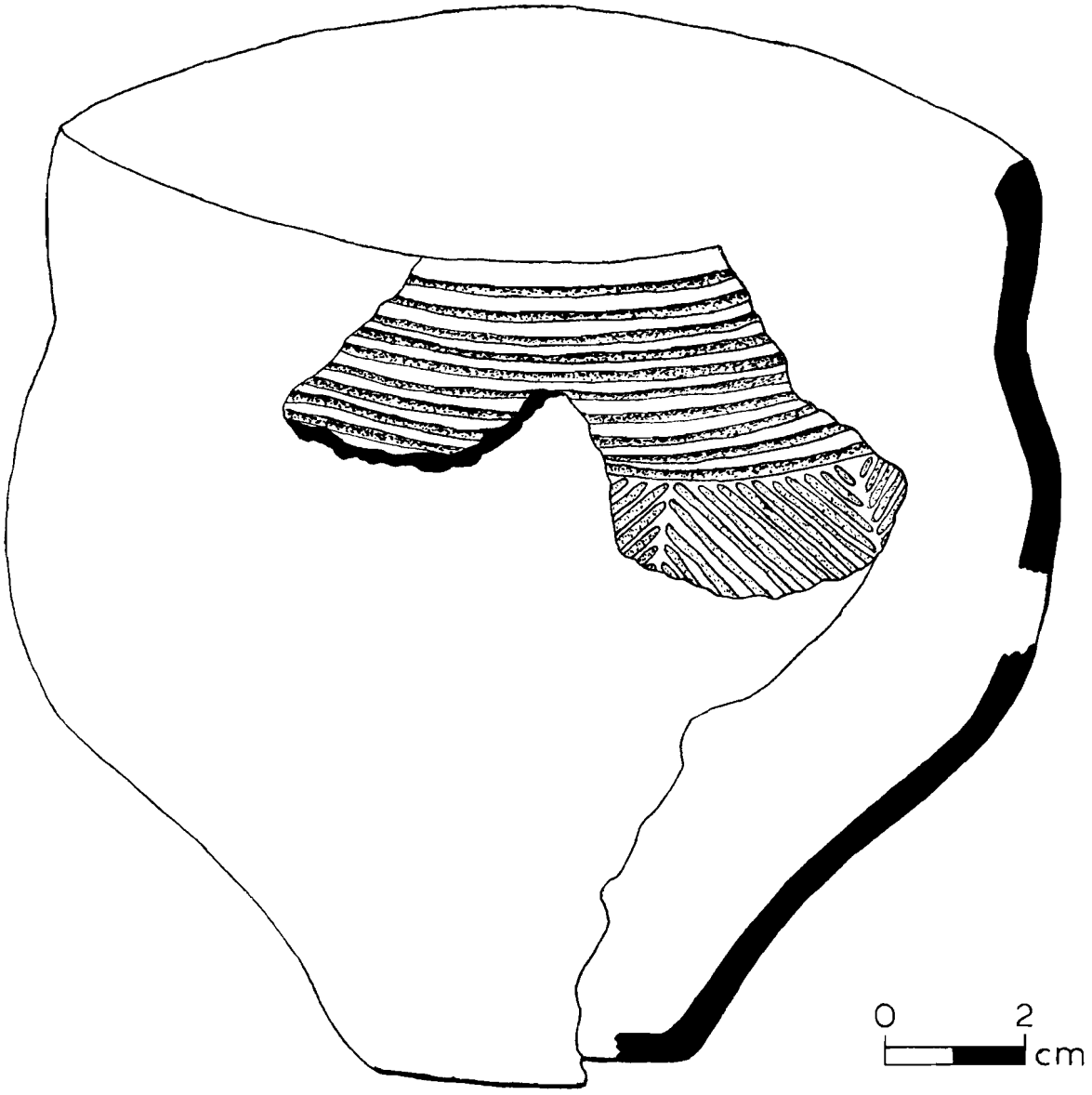


Fig. 2. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel reconstruction showing close-spaced treatment.

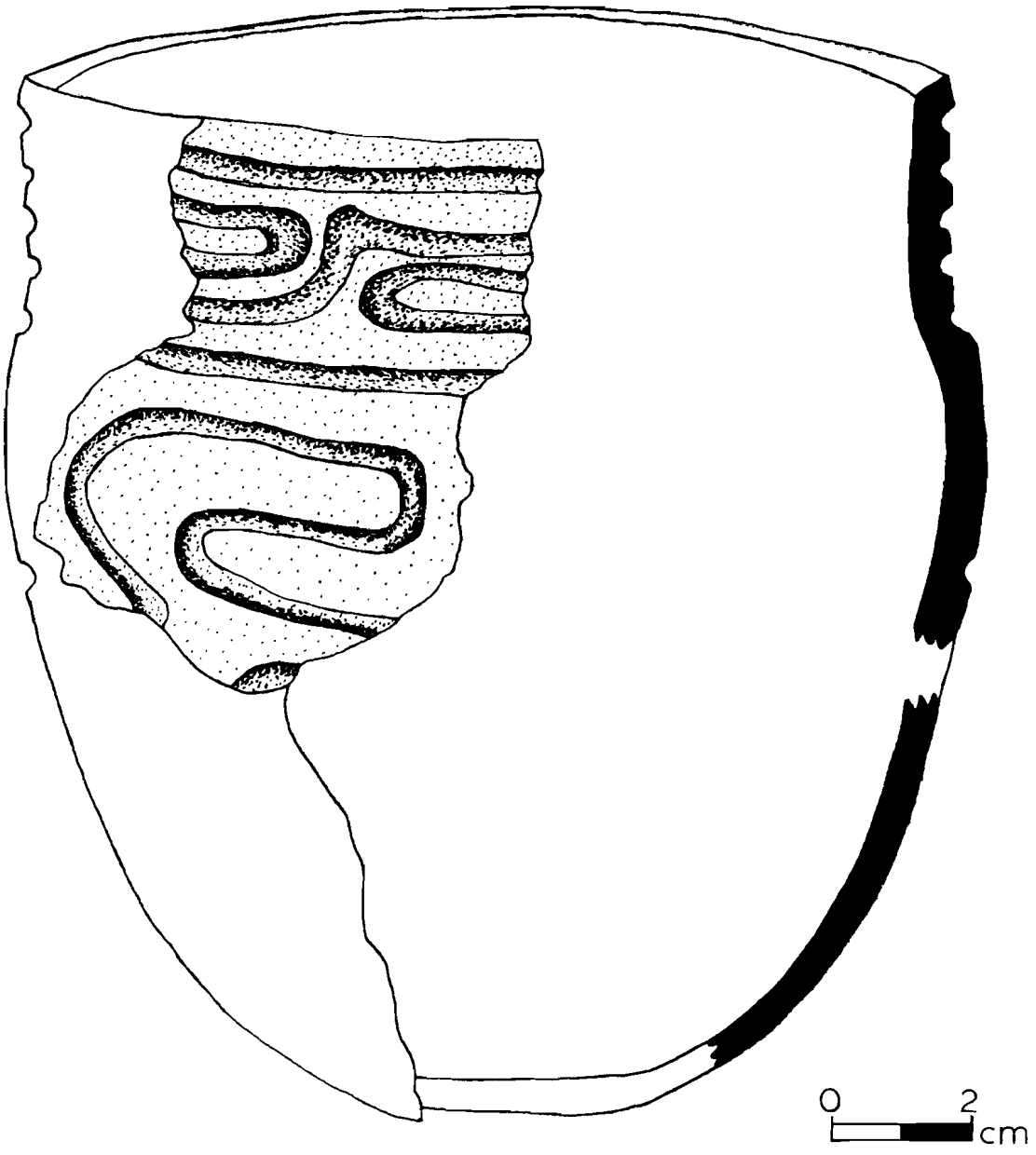


Fig. 3. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel reconstruction showing wide-spaced treatment.

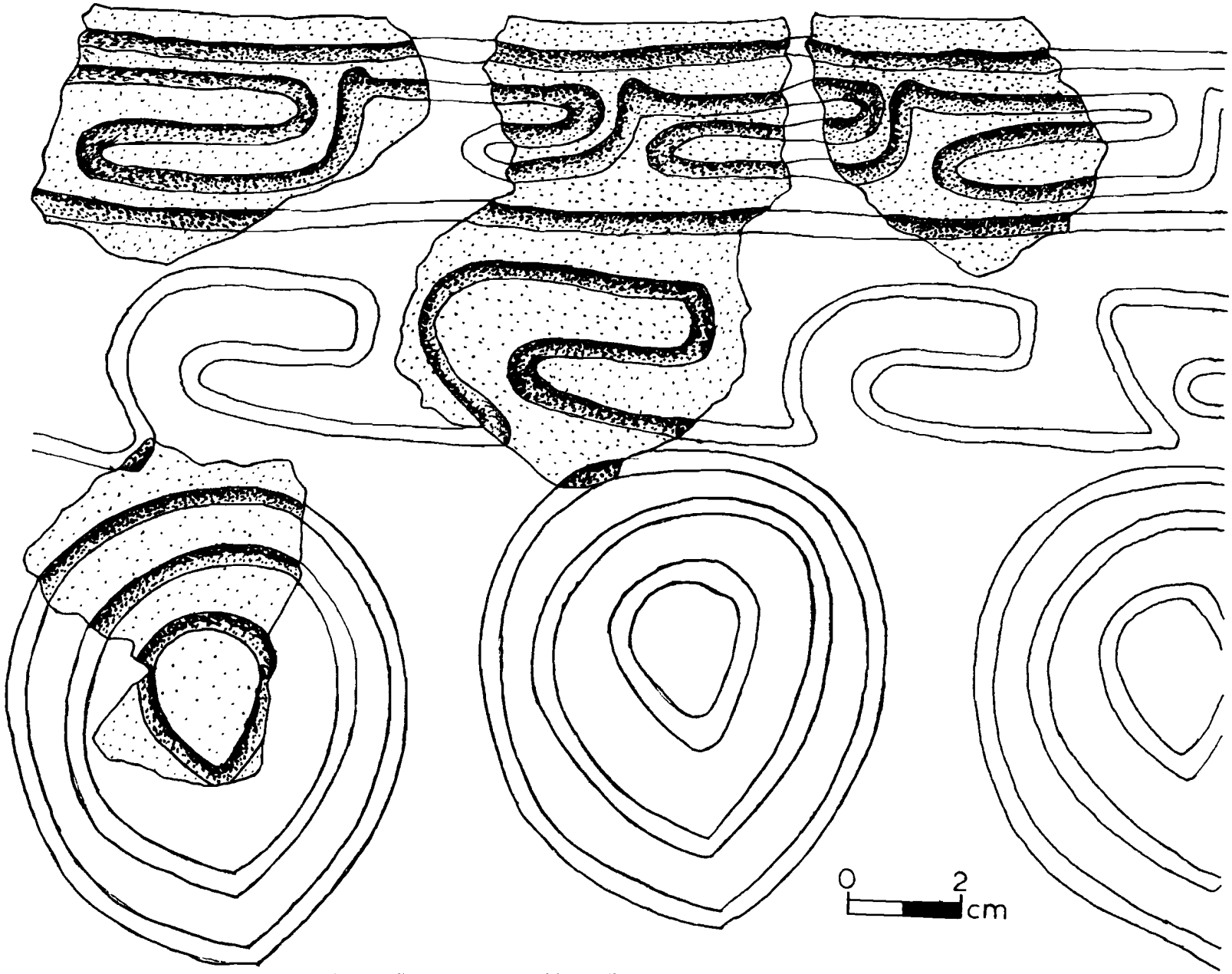


Fig. 4. Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel design reconstruction.

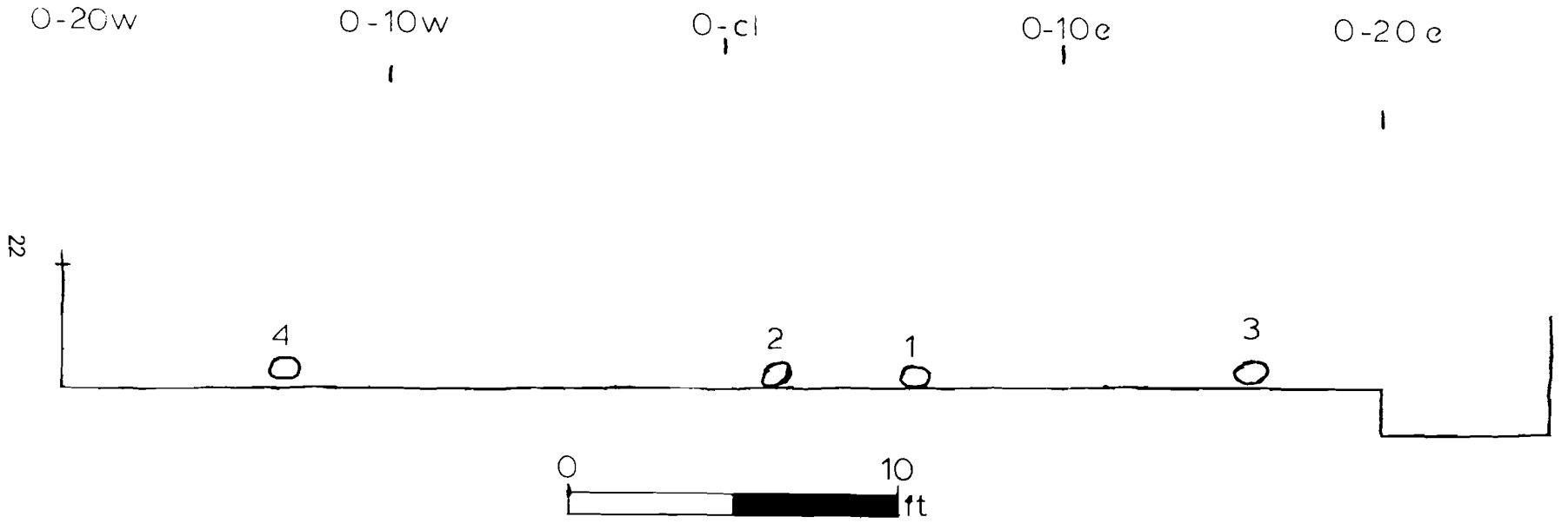


Fig. 5. Location of Pottery Finds No. 1 - 4.

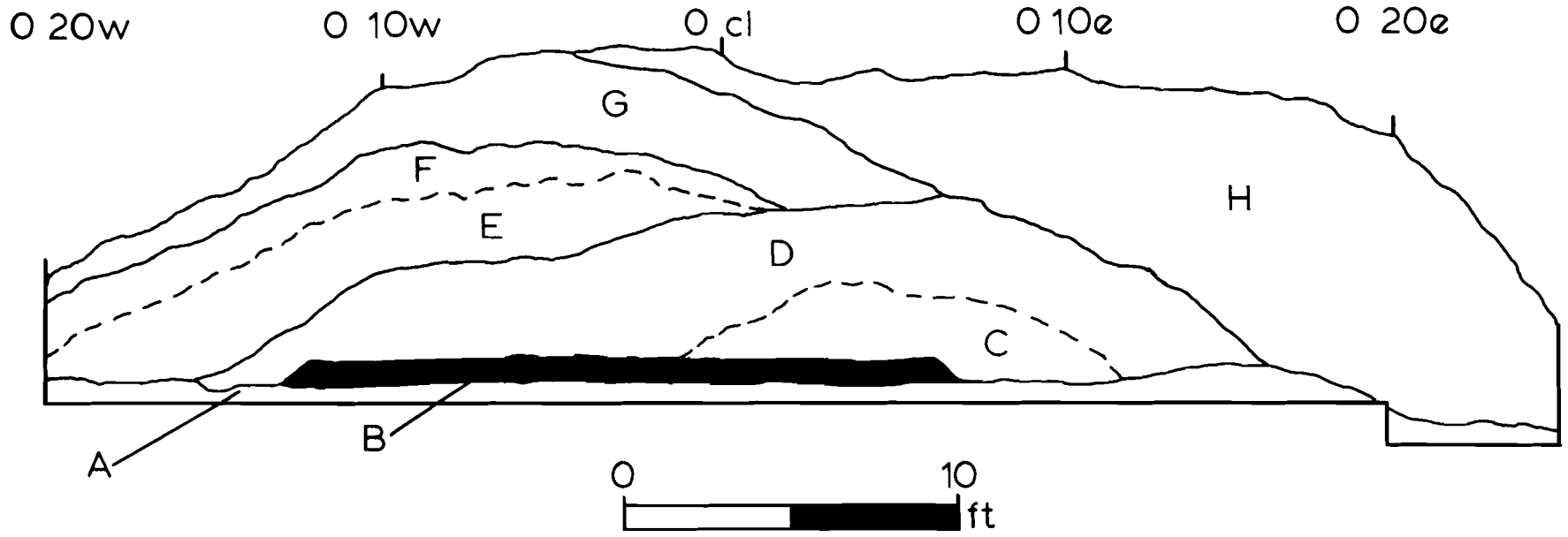


Fig. 6. East-west mound profile. *A,* original surface; *B,* primary platform - stage 1; *C,* black brown loess - stage 1;*D,* light brown loess - stage 1; *E,* white loess - stage 2; *F,* yellow white loess - stage 2; *G,* dark brown loess - stage 3; *H,* light brown loess - stage 4.

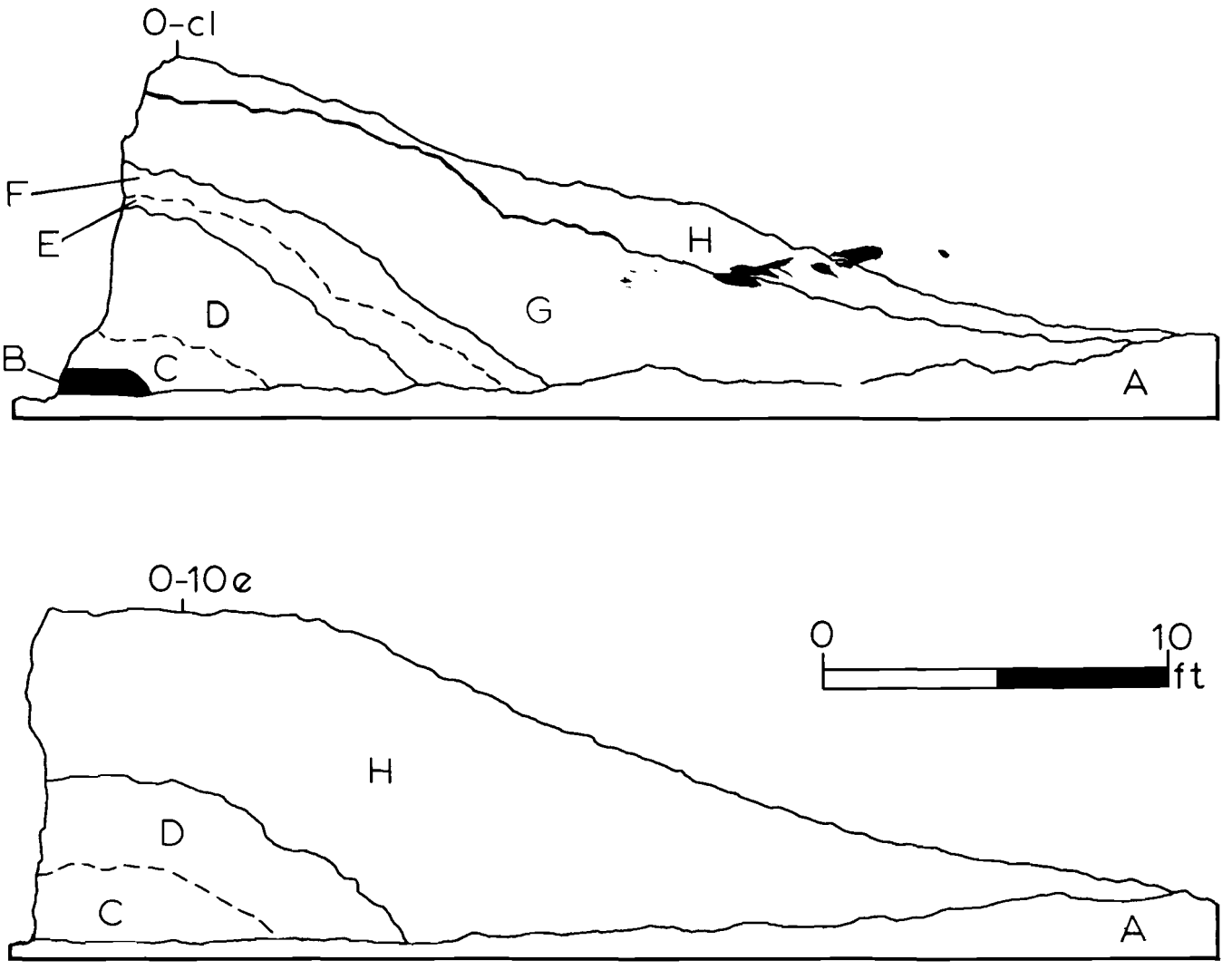


Fig. 7. North-south mound profiles. *A,* original surface; *B,* primary platform - stage 1; *C,* black brown loess - stage 1;*D,* light brown loess - stage 1; *E,* white loess - stage 2; *F,* yellow white loess - stage 2; *G,* dark brown loess - stage 3; *H,* light brown loess - stage 4.

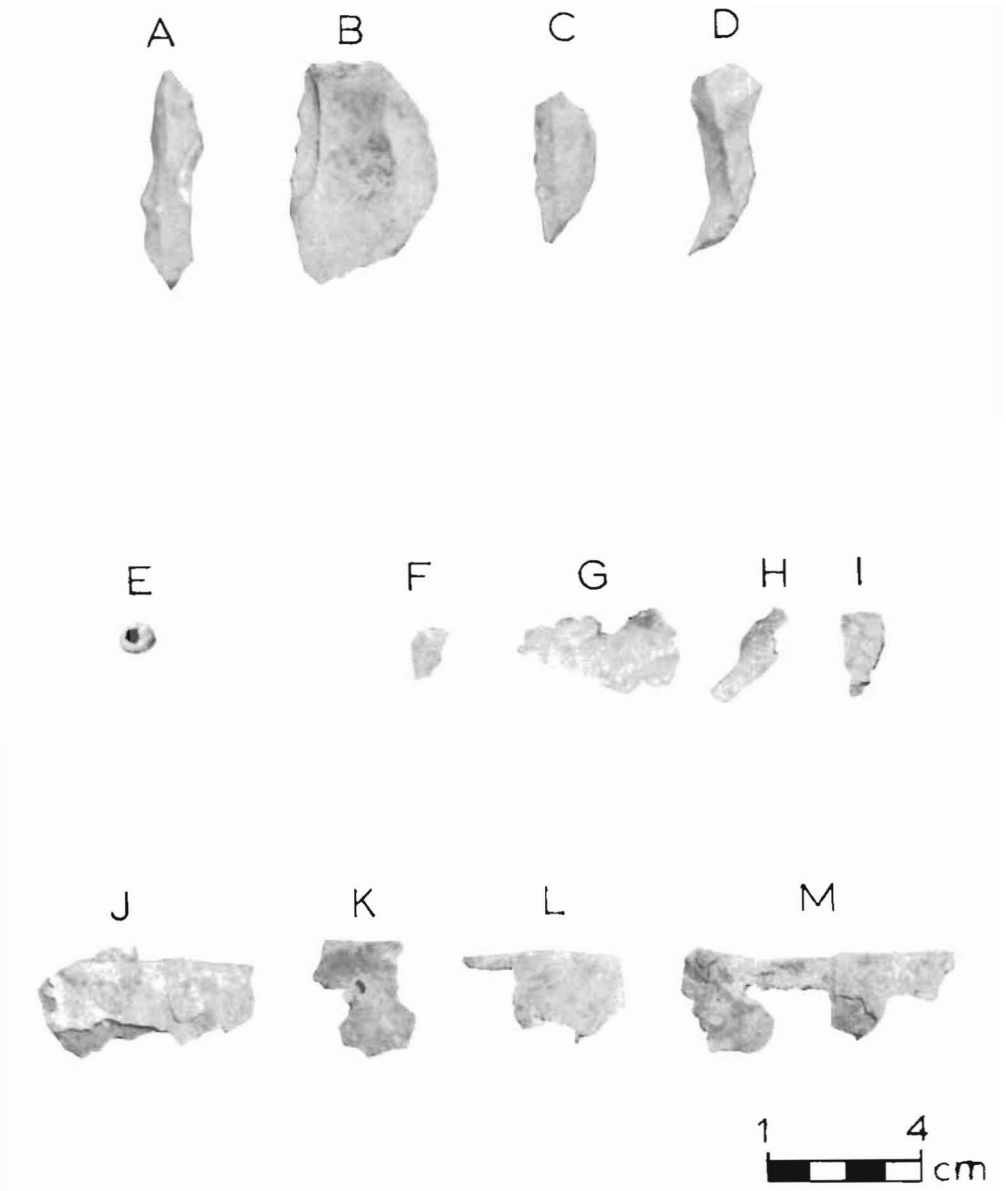


PLATE 1

SURFACE FINDS. *A-D,* chert blades; *E,* copper bead; *F-M,* copper fragments.

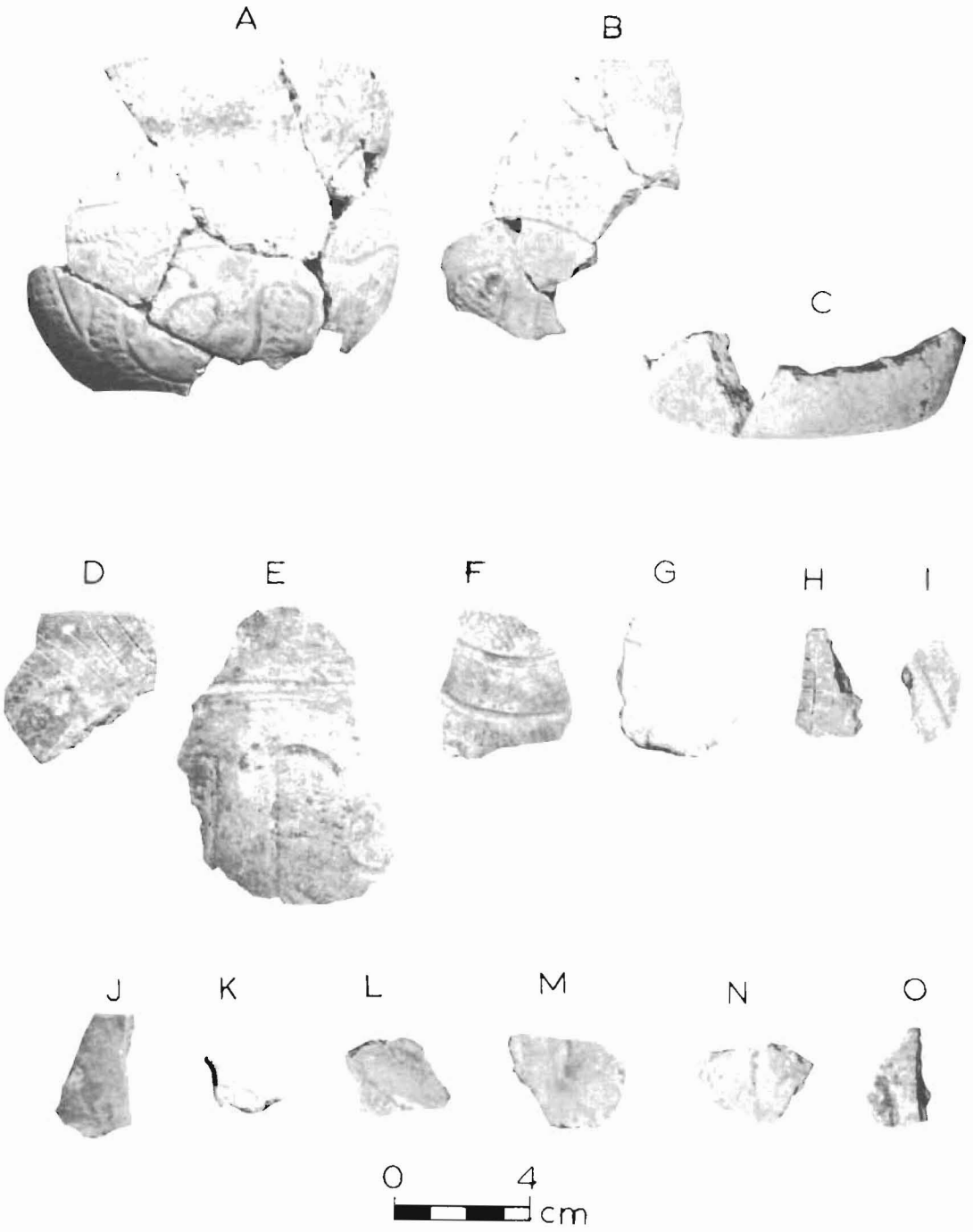


PLATE 2

SURFACE FINDS. *A-B,* Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* vessel; *C,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* vessel base; *D-O,* Marksville Period sherds.

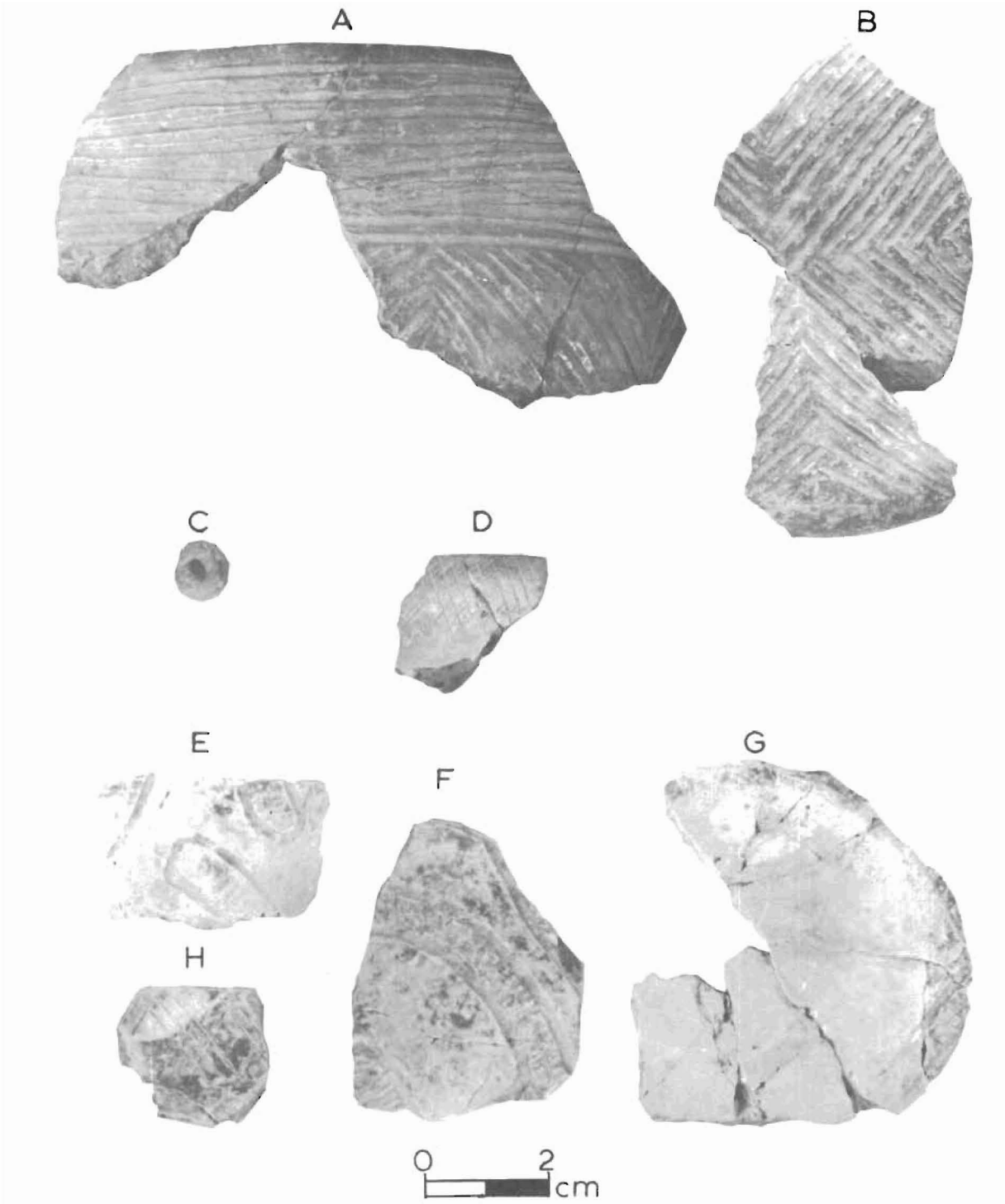
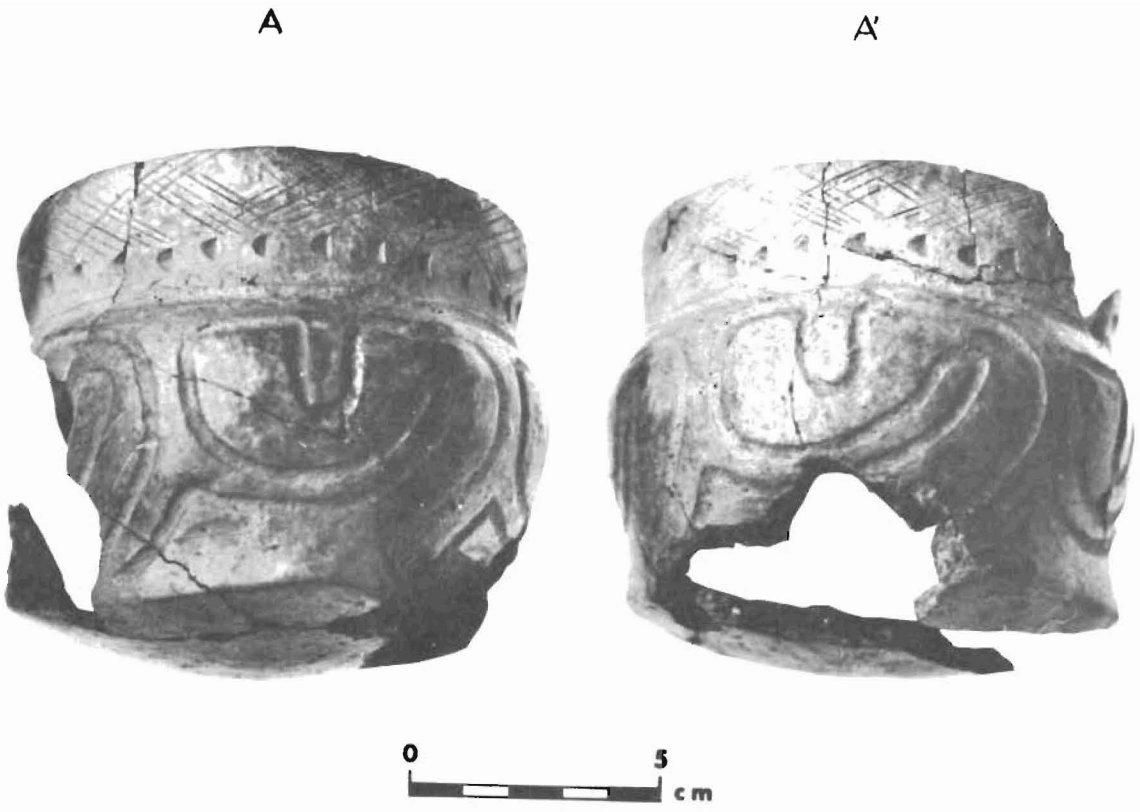


PLATE 3

ARTIFACTS FROM DISTURBED CONTEXTS. *A-B,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel, close-spaced treatment; *C,* copper bead; *D,* Marksville cross-hatched rim; *E-H,* Marksville Stamped, *var. Troyville* sherds.



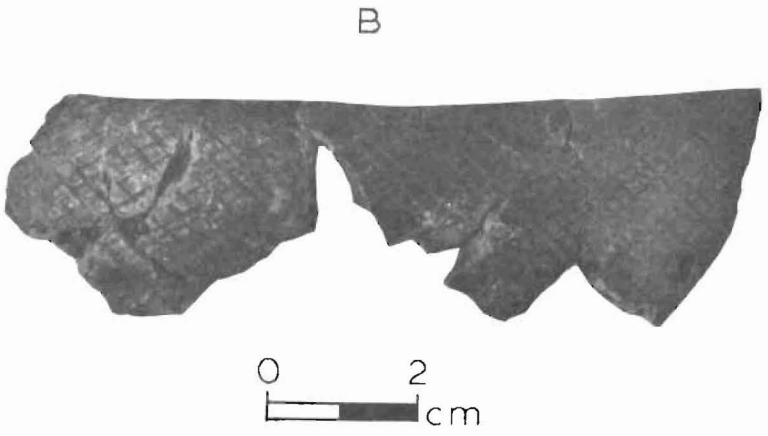


PLATE 4

POTTERY FINDS. *A-A',* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel; *B,* Marksville cross-hatched rim.

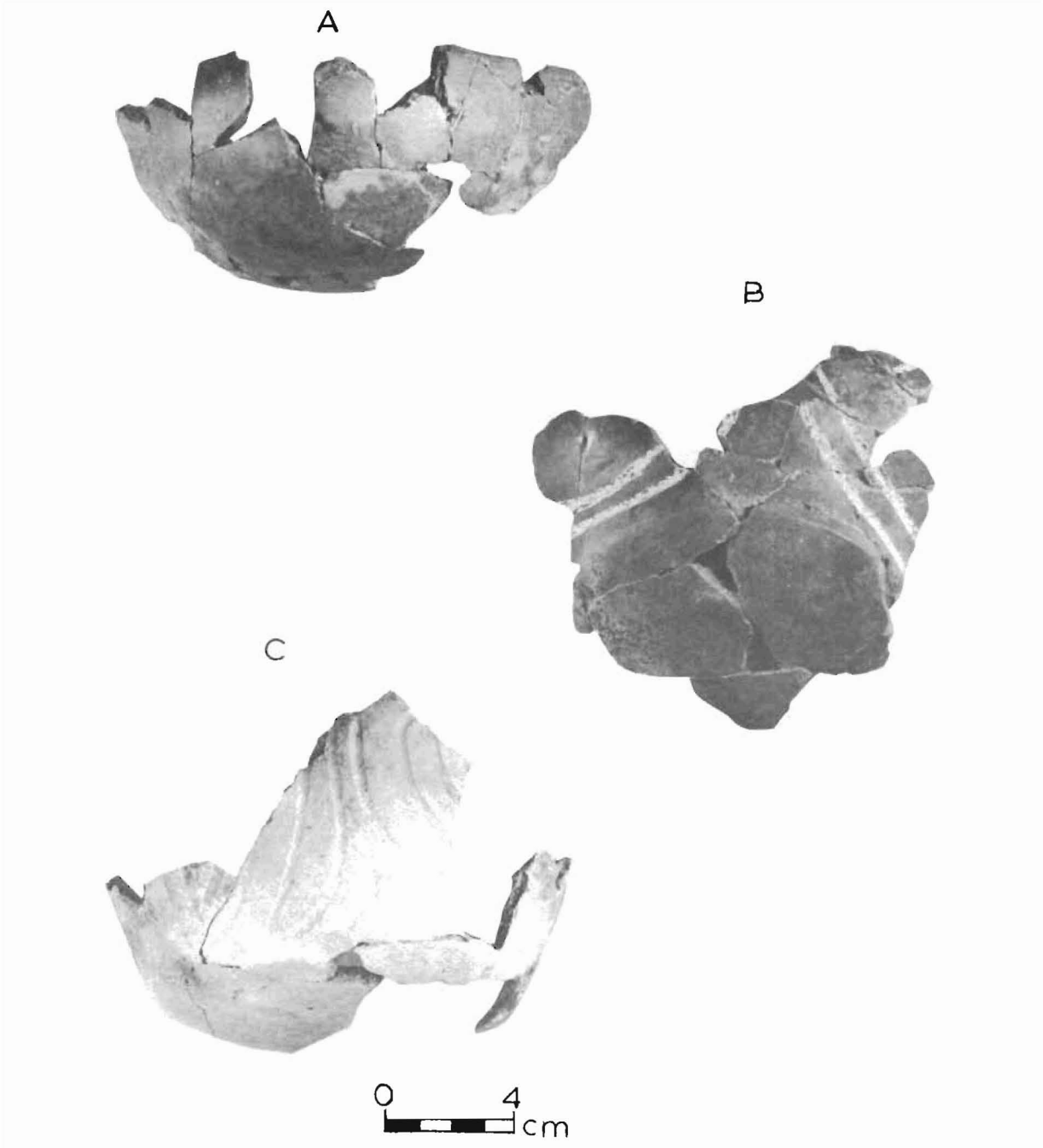


PLATE 5

POTTERY FINDS. *A,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* irregular vessel; *B,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel; *C,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* beaker.

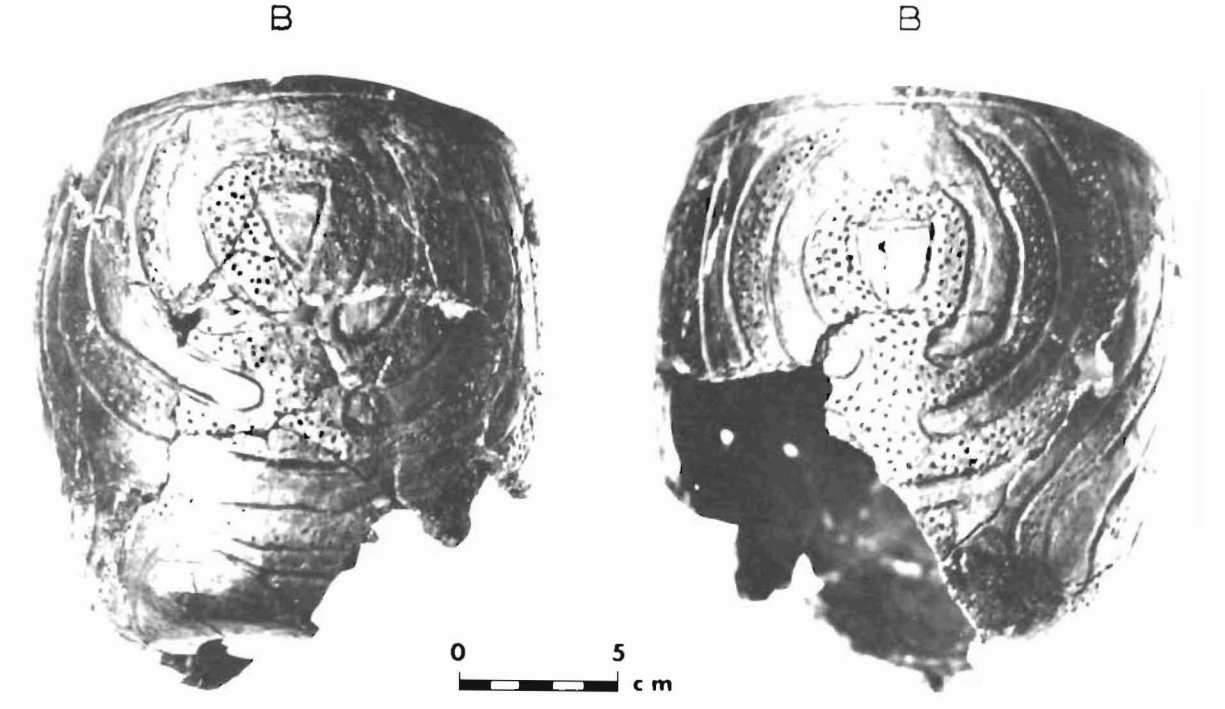


PLATE 6

POTTERY FINDS. *A,* Marksville Incised, *var. Marksville* vessel; *B-B',* Churupa Punctate, *var. unspecified* vessel.

A

B

PLATE 7

MOUND CONSTRUCTION. *A*, Platform - stage 1; *B*, cap over stage 1.

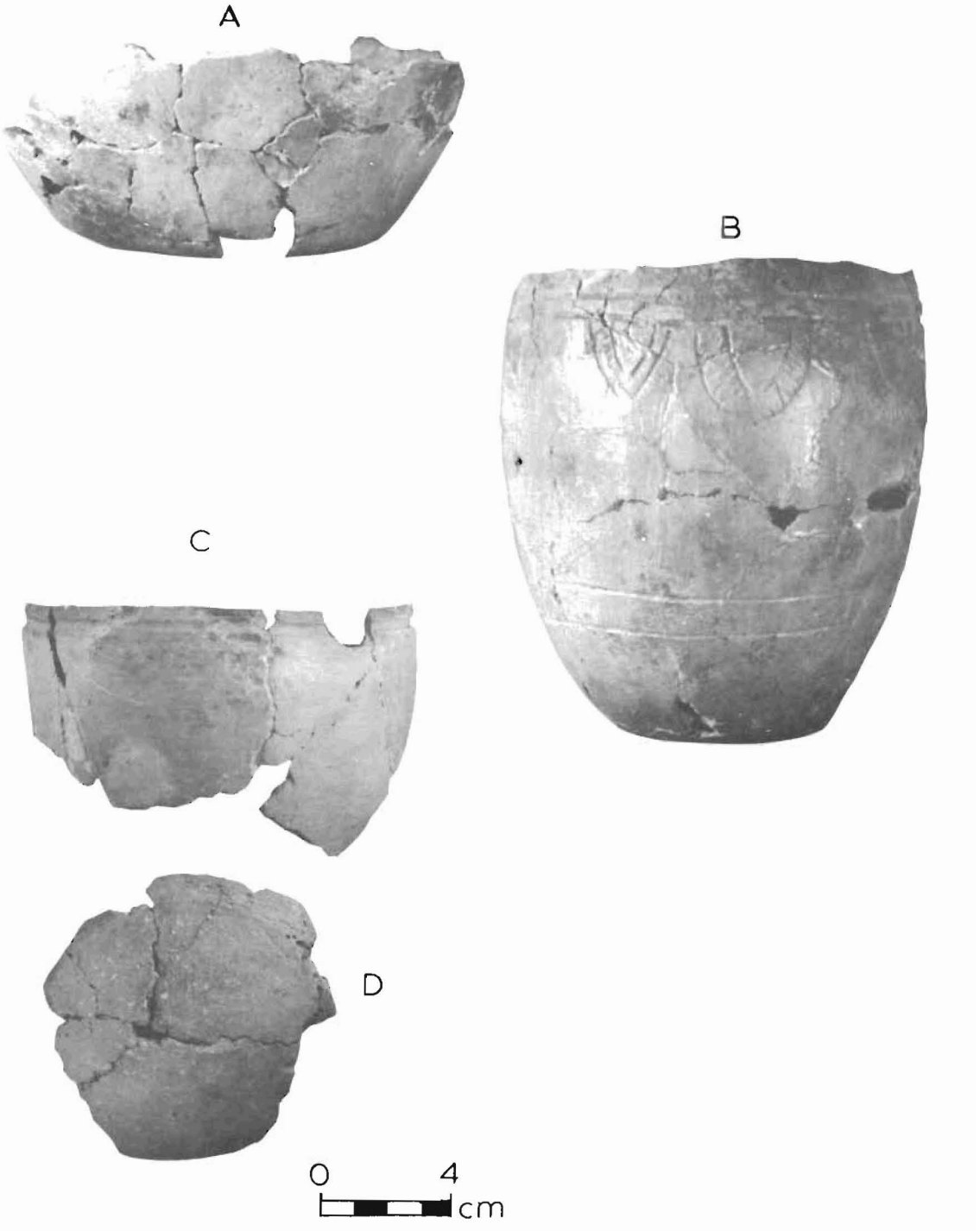


PLATE 8

ARTIFACTS FROM THE MOUND. *A,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* base; *B,* Marksville Stamped, *var. Marksville* vessel; *C-D,* Baytown Plain, *var. Marksville* vessel.

PLATE 9

INDIAN BAY STAMPED, *VAR. INDIAN BAY* BEAKER FROM MOUND.

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