

## IV. Interpretations

### Site Formation and Structure

While it is dangerous to completely characterize the archaeological deposit at the Hogjaw Valley site based on the limited amount of excavation conducted in the present study, several pertinent observations are clear. The site contains a long, narrow, thick strand of Tennessee River alluvium that contains within it a stratified deposit of cultural material that extends back well into the Archaic period and forward into the Middle Woodland period. Although we strongly suspect that later Mississippian occupation zones were formerly present, these have apparently been destroyed by the road use and by bank erosion. The age of the earliest occupation at this site was not determined by this work, although cultural remains were identified in the riverbank exposures several meters below the shell zone that was radiocarbon dated at about 5,000 years ago. The time required for the accumulation of levee overbank sediments in this portion of the Tennessee River channel is an unknown variable. The radiocarbon data from 1Ja643 is discussed below.

Large pieces (or even medium-sized pieces) of charcoal were uncommon in the excavation blocks, so freshwater mussel shell was used to date the site. Two freshwater mussel shell samples from Block A were submitted to Beta Analytic, Inc., Miami, Florida for radiocarbon dating. The first sample was collected from Test Unit 1, Level 7, which yielded a conventional radiocarbon age (or calibrated) estimate of 4990 +/-70 BP (uncorrected, 4580 +/-70 BP) (Beta 148782). The second sample, which was collected from Test Unit 5, Level 9 yielded a conventional radiocarbon age estimate of 4980 +/- BP (uncorrected, 4560 +/-70 BP) (Beta 148783). Both shell samples were taken from a thick shell zone that covered most of Block A. These two dates strongly suggest that this shell deposit was created slightly more than 5,000 years ago in the Middle-Late Archaic transitional period.

Although problems have been noted with using shellfish for radiometric assays, the techniques for processing these samples have improved in recent years. When problems were noted with shellfish dates, the dates obtained were consistently too early when compared with dates obtained from other media. Future studies of 1Ja643 should attempt to secure material other than shellfish for dating.

The establishment of the age of the thickest shell deposit in Block A provides a relative dating benchmark for artifact deposits above and below this zone. The stemmed PPK assemblage that was present in Block A clustered near this shell zone (from Levels 6 to Level 11). Stylistically these small to medium sized stemmed points are similar to those recovered from the Iddins site in the Little Tennessee River valley, which Chapman identified as the Ledbetter/Iddins/Otarre cluster (Chapman 1981:71-81, 143). Radiocarbon dates from the Iddins site and other sites where similar PPK assemblages have been reported date later than the dates reported here for 1Ja643. No large stemmed points, such as Stallings Island or Appalachian stemmed types, were recovered from 1Ja653. Neither were any Benton PPKs recovered from the site.

Nor were any Morrow Mountain PPK types recovered, although as Cridlebaugh notes, a variety of straight to expanded stemmed PPKs were recovered from the Morrow Mountain horizon at the Icehouse Bottom site (Cridlebaugh 1977:50-56). Two of Cridlebaugh's provision PPK types, Types 6 and 7, were clearly associated with the Morrow Mountain occupation. Her Type 6 PPKs were described as: "small to medium straight-stemmed points with a triangular to lanceolate blade; blade edges are straight to excurvate", whose bases were: "elongated to tapered shoulders slope into a straight stem with a straight base" (Cridlebaugh 1977:50-51). Her Type 7 PPKs were described as: "Corner removed, narrow expanding stemmed points with a triangular blade with excurvate edges", whose bases were: "broad corner notches slope into a narrow expanding stem with a slightly excurvate base. A common characteristic is an unfinished base or base with cortex remains" (Cridlebaugh 1977:52-53).

Cridlebaugh summarized the Morrow Mountain radiocarbon data for the region, which spanned the period from 5980 B.P. at Russell Cave to 7255 BP at Howard, Tennessee (Cridlebaugh 1977: 97, Table 8). The late dates from Layer F at Russell Cave are somewhat problematic. If a Morrow Mountain horizon is present at 1Ja643, it was not recognized in this excavation sample.

The most visible component at 1Ja643, reflected in diagnostic artifacts recovered, was during the Colbert phase of the Early Woodland period, as evidenced by Long Branch Fabric Marked and Mulberry Creek Plain ceramics (Walthall 1982:212-216). No evidence of Wheeler or Alexander series wares from the Terminal Archaic period was observed. Walthall places the Colbert phase from 300 B.C. to A.D. 100 in the middle Tennessee River valley. The next most frequent ceramic occupation was during the Candy Creek phase of the Middle Woodland period, as evidenced by Wright Check Stamped ceramics (Sullivan 1995:200-202). No evidence of Copena culture, which follows the Colbert phase in northern Alabama, was recognized in the assemblage at

1Ja643, which may indicate that this site is beyond the primary sphere of influence of Copena culture.

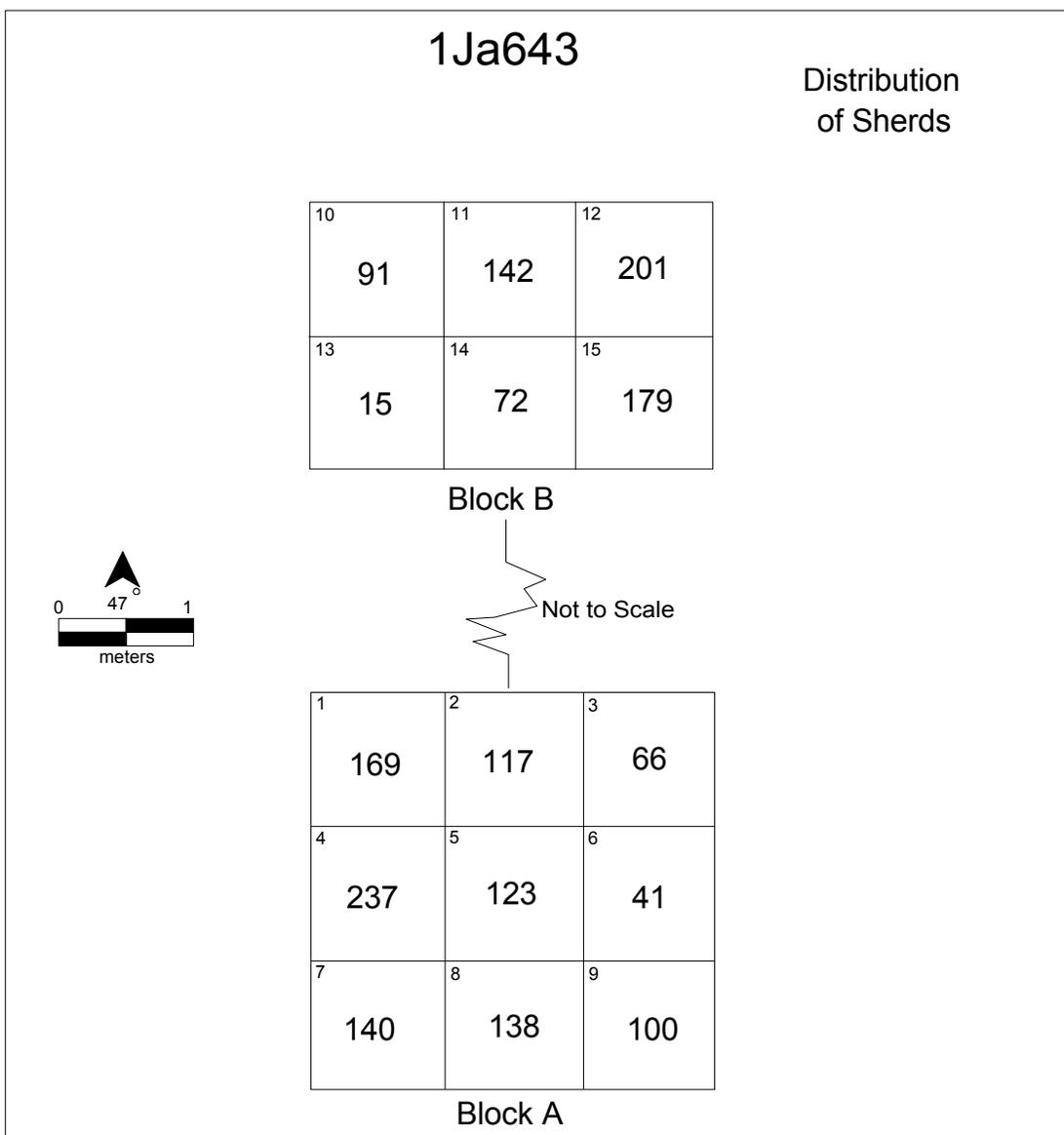
In central Georgia, Wood noted the co-presence of Dunlap Fabric Impressed and Cartersville Check Stamped and simple stamped wares in a Woodland component at the Cane Island site (Wood 1981). Wood concluded the pottery assemblage of the Woodland people at Cane Island contained all three types of wares, although the relative percentages of each type changed over time. Wood and his colleagues noted a similar correlation of Dunlap, Long Branch, and Cartersville wares at the Rush site in northwest Georgia (Wood and Ledbetter 1990:78-80).

### **Use of Space at 1Ja643**

Site 1Ja643 was used repeatedly for settlement by prehistoric peoples over thousands of years. Doubtless this site formerly contained evidence of numerous houses of a permanent or semipermanent nature but most of the site has been destroyed by erosion, thus erasing most of the evidence concerning how the site was used. What we are left with is a fragment of the whole on the back side and slope of the river levee. In the upper courses of the site, pit features were identified but in the lower sections the debris may be mostly the result of secondary discard off the slope as the primary living surfaces were cleaned up. Although most of the artifacts may represent secondary discard, this does not mean that they are without research value. Indeed, what the test excavations at 1Ja643 revealed was that the site contains a valuable stratified deposit of Archaic and Woodland period artifacts and these deposits could be used to address a variety of research topics, including chronology, technology, material culture, exchange systems, and subsistence.

Pottery was abundant in the northern section of 1Ja643, although it may be absent on the southern part. Pottery sherds were extremely common on the shoreline from Work Area 3 and northward. Nearly all of these sherds are associated with Early Middle to Middle Woodland components, although some sherds found on the shoreline and from previous collections by the University of Alabama indicate a later Mississippian component. This later component, however, was not recognized in Excavation Blocks A or B and we suspect that most of it may have already washed into Lake Gunterville.

The distribution of Woodland pottery sherds within the two excavation blocks demonstrates some interesting variation, as shown in Figure 33. Sherds in Block A decrease in frequency from west to east, whereas in Block B, they increase from west to east. Pottery frequencies range from a low of 15 sherds in Test Unit 13 to 237



**Figure 33.** Distribution of Pottery Sherds, All Excavation Levels, 1Ja643

sherds in Test Unit 4. Long Branch Fabric Marked and Mulberry Creek Plain sherds were widely distributed and represent the breakage of many dozens, if not hundreds of pottery vessels.

Wright Check Stamped sherds were distributed in both excavation blocks, although it was more abundant in Block B. This ware was recovered from excavation levels 1 through 5. It was present in Features 1, 2, and 3.

Simple stamped sherds occurred in low frequencies in both excavation blocks, and were confined to the upper excavation levels. Cord marked sherds, found only in Block A, were scattered across five test units. Complicated stamped sherds, however,

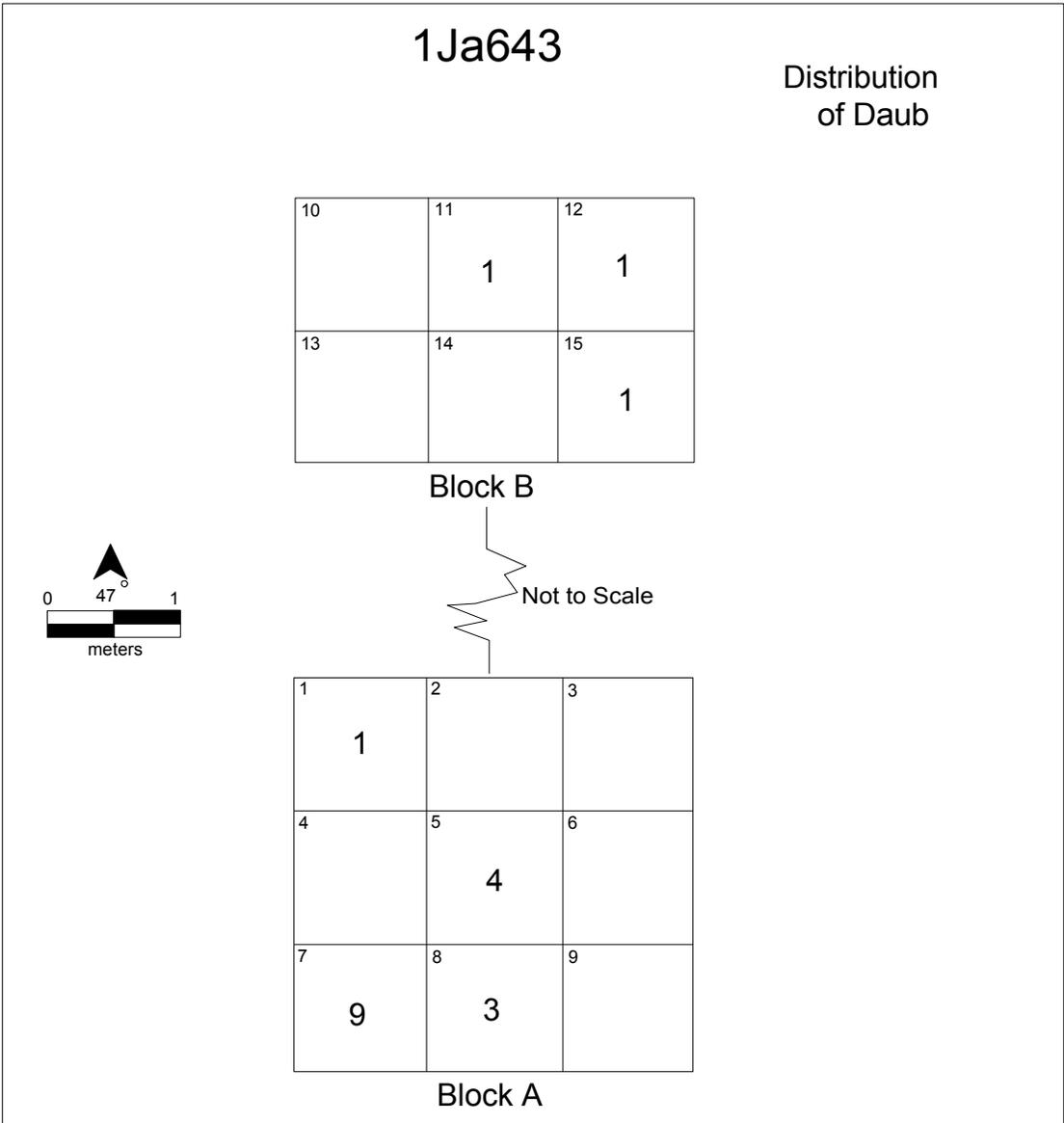
also only recovered from Block A, were confined to a single test unit. The two zoned punctate/incised sherds, or Gulf Coast trade ware, were recovered from one test unit in Block B. These may represent fragments of a single vessel. Corn cob marked were restricted to the upper levels of Block B.

The distribution of daub in the excavation blocks is depicted in Figure 34. These artifacts, which were generally small, may be faint indirect evidence of wattle and daub architecture at the site. The low frequency of daub may indicate a degree of distance between the shell midden dump in Blocks A and B and the residential areas. If the houses were located 10 or more meters west of the sampled blocks, then the feeble distribution of daub would not be unexpected.

The distribution of diagnostic PPKs in the excavation blocks is shown in Figure 35. Stemmed and large triangular PPKs were well represented in both excavation blocks, although stemmed PPKs were more common. In Block A, the distribution of these tools trended to the western two-thirds of the block, while in Block B, the opposite pattern was observed.

The distribution of chipped stone debitage in the excavation blocks is shown in Figure 36. Debitage was more abundant in Block A than in Block B. Its widespread distribution indicates that knapping was a major activity conducted at 1Ja643 and the debris associated with this activity was discarded throughout the site. While some areas of 1Ja643 may have been kept “clean” of chipping debris, these areas were not sampled in the present study. The frequency of chipped stone along the Tennessee River shoreline further attests to the ubiquitous distribution of this common artifact category.

The vertical distribution of bone in the excavation blocks is shown in Figure 37. A wider range of diversity is seen in the Archaic strata (Level 9 and below for Block A, Level 5 and below for Block B) as opposed to the Woodland strata (Levels 5 and 6 for Block A, Levels 1 through 3 for Block B). Excellent bone preservation on the site provides us with a rare opportunity to test seasonality models and subsistence strategies for both of these periods.



**Figure 34.** Distribution of Daub, All Excavation Levels, 1Ja643

# 1Ja643

## Distribution of Diagnostics

### PPKs

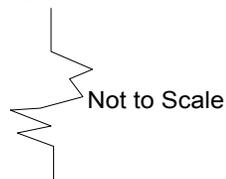
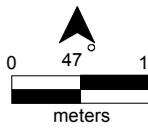
S = Stemmed  
T = Triangular  
O = Other

G = Gorgets

V = Stone  
Vessel Sherd

10	11 S G T	12 T G S
13	14	15 T O S S G S S

Block B



1 T V	2 T S T	3
4 T O S S	5 O S	6
7 O S S T V V	8 S S S V S	9

Block A

**Figure 35.** Distribution of Diagnostic PPKs and Selected Ground Stone Tools, All Excavation Levels, 1Ja643

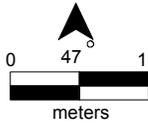
# 1Ja643

## Distribution of Debitage

10 378	11 520	12 712
13 188	14 205	15 551

Block B

Not to Scale



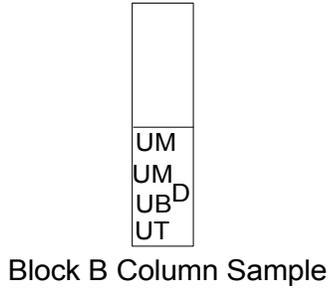
1 292	2 257	3 95
4 383	5 337	6 64
7 410	8 392	9 128

Block A

Figure 36. Distribution of Chipped Stone Debitage, All Excavation Levels, 1Ja643

# 1Ja643

## Distribution of Bone by MNI



Woodland Levels 1-3

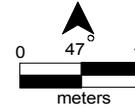
Archaic Levels 5-7

- BR = Beaver
- D = Whitetail Deer
- DW = Dog/Wolf/Fox
- EC = Eastern Cottontail
- O = Opossum
- R = Raccoon
- UM = Unidentified Mammal
- T = Turkey
- UB = Unidentified Bird
- B = Bass
- BC = Blue/Channel Catfish
- CF = Catfish
- FD = Freshwater Drum
- S = Sucker
- KS = King Snake
- BT = Box Turtle
- ST = Soft Shell Turtle
- UT = Unidentified Turtle

FD	FD	D	D	UT	DW
UM	D	D	D	UB	UT
O	S	BT	UB	BR	
FD	FD	KS	UB	UT	BC
GS	D	S	B	UT	CF
EC	R	S	T	ST	BT

Woodland Levels 5-6

Archaic Levels 9-13



Block A

**Figure 37.** Distribution of Bone, 1Ja643, by Minimum Number of Individuals

## V. Management Recommendations

This research project demonstrated that Site 1Ja643 is eligible for listing in the NRHP, under Criterion D. Buried cultural deposits are present across the entire site, although the later components are best evidenced in the vicinity of Work Areas 2 and 3 (and between these two areas). Approximately 10 to 15% of the archaeological resources at 1Ja643 remain intact. Intact shell midden lenses were encountered in excavations at both of these areas and none were manifest at the other work areas (either on the exposed bank or in posthole digger tests). A draft NRHP nomination form was completed for the site by Southern Research and a copy of this form is included in this report as Appendix III.

The proposed construction project will help to stabilize the erosion process at eight portions of the site. This work will involve damaging portions of the site with the use of heavy equipment. It should be noted, however, that these areas are already severely damaged by erosion and the erosion appears to be progressive. Consequently, erosion will continue to occur in these areas regardless of the proposed work plan.

No human burials were encountered during the excavation

The extensive erosion problem at 1Ja643 is not a site specific problem but probably applies to many other exposed midden sites in Guntersville Lake, and is probably due, in large part, to TVA's reservoir construction project and subsequent water regulation. Consequently, the primary burden for the control and management of this site is not Jackson County's problem. Indeed, it could be argued that Jackson County's Old County Road 91 is all that lies between 1Ja643 and total destruction and that the site remains only because it is capped and protected by the road. Even that

protection, however, is impermanent and if present conditions continue unchecked, the complete destruction of 1Ja643 is imminent. Considerable research and expense has been invested in developing methods to protect archaeological sites from stream bank erosion. See, for example, reports by: Allen and Klimas (1986); Henderson and Shields (1984); Keown and others (1977); Schiechl (1980); Thorne (1988, 1989, 1990, 1991a, 1991b); and Whitlow and Harris (1979). Total protection of 1Ja643 is impractical and probably would not be the most logical goal. The elevation and steep angle of the bluff would not allow sufficient sloping for the use of rip-rap without razing the remaining parts of the archaeological site. Techniques for controlling erosion when faced with a similar problem include planting protective vegetation, or covering the eroding surface with filter fabric, tires, or other man-made materials. Site 1Ja643 is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and, as such, should be protected from further erosion if possible. It is recommended that any erosion control project undertaken at this site be supervised by an archaeologist. Much more information about site usage and seasonal shifts in occupation can be gained through further research at this and other sites along the Tennessee River/Lake Guntersville waterway.