

ABSTRACT

THESIS: Disclosing Dietary Differences: Implications of Social Stratification and Feasting at the Curry Site (22OK578)

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ABSTRACT: The Curry Site is a small Mississippian Single Mound site located in Okitebbeh County, Mississippi. A previous survey at the site yielded information that the mound had multiple functions. The researcher interpreted a change in function from a domestic living area to a social gathering area and suggested the possibility of a feast representative of the material culture and faunal remains. I aim to analyze the faunal assemblage located on the mound and discern, using dimensions previously utilized by researchers, whether the social gathering area was occupied by commoners, elites, or possibly used as a feasting location. Currently, the focus of dietary patterns of Mississippians lies mainly within large societies, such as Moundville, that held thousands of individuals. This leaves small sites such as the Curry Site, to be ignored and nonexistent in the Mississippian Period literature. Another issue in faunal research in this time period is the implementation of a dichotomous framework that ignores variation in assemblages. Thus, I implemented a new paradigm to allow the variability to exist. I used various measures to look at butchery patterns, bone fragmentation, presence of rare/exotic species, seasonality, and the deer element utility index to measure the continua of status and feasting. I found that the faunal assemblage indicated a change from feasting to domestic eating, which is the opposite of what was previously presented.