

Q and A about JAKETOWN

Q: What is the Jaketown Site?

A: The Jaketown Site is a site of human inhabitation located on Highway 7 North of Belzoni, Mississippi.

Q: Why it is called Jaketown?

A: As with most discoveries of ancient times it was named for the stop on the Itta Bena–Belzoni Railroad Line by the name of Jaketown.

Q: What is important about this site?

A: From artifacts found on this site it is determined that early humans lived here from about 1750 BC to 1500 AD making it one of the longest and earliest inhabited sites discovered in North America.

Q: What happened in the central valley of North America?

A: It is believed that with the ending of the Ice Age and with the volume of water and masses of soil, rocks, and other matter that moved down the center valley of North America a leveled area was developed up and down the valley. The Jaketown site is some 50 feet above the original floor of this area before the end of the Ice Age. This fertile area we have today was created by the meltdown and our ever changing rivers.

Q: What about the rivers in the valley?

A: It is believed that the Mississippi River originally branched below where Natchez is today into the East channel and the West channel. The East channel flowed to Vicksburg and then followed what is today the Yazoo River going up through the Delta past Memphis and up through the Ohio Valley. This East channel is thought to be the Ohio River.

The West channel made its way on up through Louisiana and Arkansas. Over the years the channels changed their course moving together to form the river we have today. The abandoned channel of the Ohio River through the delta is called today the Yazoo River.

Q: Why was this site selected by the people of Jaketown?

A: It appears that it was selected primarily because of the river for transportation and possibly its relation to Poverty Point.

Q: What is Poverty Point?

A: Poverty Point is an extensive ancient site located in Northeast Louisiana and named for the Poverty Point Plantation where it is located. The people were part of the Poverty Point culture in the Late Archaic Period (approximately 2000 – 500 BC) and among the first known inhabitants of the Lower Mississippi River Valley to leave behind evidence of an elaborate culture.

Q: What is a Poverty Point Object?

A: A Poverty Point Object is a clay ball, made in numerous shapes, that was used by

the people of Poverty Point to cook with and heat up liquid.

Q: What is the connection to Jaketown?

A: Many Poverty Point Objects were found at Jaketown and indicate they existed at the same time.

Q: Are there other connections between Poverty Point and Jaketown?

A: Because of the numerous projectile points of various materials and numerous raw materials, it is believed that Jaketown could have been a microlith industry for both sites, and others also.

Q: What is significant about the projectile points found at Jaketown?

A: Most of these points were made from material not locally found and had to be transported either by canoe or carried by foot from places far away: the Quachita Mountains of Arkansas, Appalachian Mountains of North Georgia and North Alabama, the Gulf of Mexico. Water transportation seems to have been very important.

Q: What are other significant finds at Jaketown?

A: From archeological digs made at Jaketown, there was evidence that circular design huts were built using local material like willow or other small trees connected to form an oval hut and covered with local grasses. These houses were similar to those found in other parts of the world from early

civilizations. These houses at Jaketown were not permanent like stone houses but were made from the materials that were available to the inhabitants.

Q: What periods of time were people living at Jaketown?

A: Archaic Period – 1750BC – 500BC
Woodland Period – 500BC – 1000AD
Mississippi Period – 1000AD – 1500AD

Q: How do we know people lived there over this extended period of time?

A: Artifacts have been found at the Jaketown Site that are dated from all these periods of time. Pottery from the Woodland Period and projectile points from all three periods of time have been found at Jaketown indicating there people there over the entire time, 1750 BC to 1500 AD.

Q: How did the early people of Jaketown hunt for food?

A: The weapon of choice in the Archaic Period was the ATLATL. This was a device used to throw a dart or light-weight spear. This weapon was the first used by man in hunting and has been found around the world in many countries. It predates the bow and arrow. Throwing the dart in this manner gave it more force and distance for hitting their target. In the later periods the bow and arrow was used.

JAKETOWN MUSEUM



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Located at 116 West Jackson Street,
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MUSEUM hours are Monday through
Friday, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm.