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A Cultural Resources Survey of Item R-729-R Riverside Slide Repair,
West Memphis, Crittenden County, Arkansas

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U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
Memphis District

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Jimmy D. McNeil
Staff Archeologist

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ABSTRACT

On 13 June 1985, an intensive cultural resources survey was conducted by the Environmental Analysis Branch of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District, over approximately 2.87 acres adjacent to the Mississippi River Mainline Levee, riverside. The entire area was overgrown with trees and bushes. The proposed work includes borrowing dirt to use as fill material. A pedestrian survey failed to locate any prehistoric, historic, or architectural sites within the project right-of-way.

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INTRODUCTION

An intensive survey for cultural resources was conducted by Memphis District Archeologists, Mr. Jimmy McNeil and Mr. Doug Prescott, on 13 June 1985, within the proposed borrow pit right-of-way, as directed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Memphis District. This study was performed as required by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (Public Law 91-190), Protection and Enhancement of Cultural Historic and Cultural Properties (36 CFR 800) and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 898-655).

Project Description

The West Memphis borrow area is located in Crittenden County, Arkansas, Township 6N, Range 9W, Section 17 SW1/4 of the SW1/4, of the Memphis, TN-ARK 15 minute quadrangle map. The project will affect only the proposed borrow area (Map 1 and 2). Equipment can be brought in over the existing levee road.

ENVIRONMENTAL

The West Memphis area is characterized by mild winters, hot summers, and an average annual precipitation of approximately 50 inches (126 centimeters).

The project area is situated within the recent meander belt of the Mississippi River. The landscape is basically level with gently undulating slopes.

The soils are of recent deposition. Alluvial deposits are more than 200 feet (60.96 meters) thick over unconsolidated material. The top soils are very recent flood deposits. Drainage is by bayous, sloughs, and manmade ditches.

The project area itself is in trees and some undergrowth. Willow, sycamore, cottonwood, hackberry, and locust predominate the area. Undergrowth is sparse except near the woods edge, here it consists of various grasses, cane, honeysuckle, blackberry, and wild grape.

Previous Research

Though research has been conducted within this general area since the late 1800's (i.e. Thomas: 1894; Moore: 1911; Phillips: 1970), very little intensive survey research has been conducted. Kern, of Gilbert/Commonwealth (1981), conducted a reconnaissance survey of the West Memphis area for the Memphis District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In 1894, New World Research, Inc. of Pollick, LA., mitigated a prehistoric site, 3CT50, along Big Creek, about 20 miles north of West Memphis.

Results of the Records Search

The National Register of Historic Places was consulted and no pre-historic, historic, or architectural sites were listed within the project area. Because of the small size of the project area the Arkansas State Site Files were not checked.

Survey Methodology and Results

The designated project area is approximately 2.87 acres in size. The survey limits are 250 feet (76.2 meters) North/South and 500 feet (152.4 meters) East/West and is riverside of the Main Line Levee. The proposed borrow area is overgrown with trees, has been extensively borrowed, and is partially under water. A few areas of original ground surface remains. In spite of the trees, the visibility was excellent. The entire surface was searched for artifacts, none were found. In areas where original ground surfaces and borrow areas met profiles were shaved. They showed only flood and swamp deposits. Shovel test units were placed in areas of original ground surface and in borrowed areas. No artifacts or features were found. Areas covered with water were not surveyed.

Shovel cuts, profiles, and a surface check revealed no artifacts, features, and soil discoloration that would indicate archeological sites within the direct impact zone of the borrow project area. It is recommended that borrowing within the right-of-way limits be allowed to proceed as planned.

The survey methodology used does not eliminate the possibility of encountering deeply buried sites. Therefore, it is recommended that any site encountered during construction be protected from further damage, by stopping construction, until its significance can be determined by the Environmental Analysis Branch, Memphis District Corps of Engineers in conjunction with the Arkansas Office of Arkansas Historic Preservation Program.

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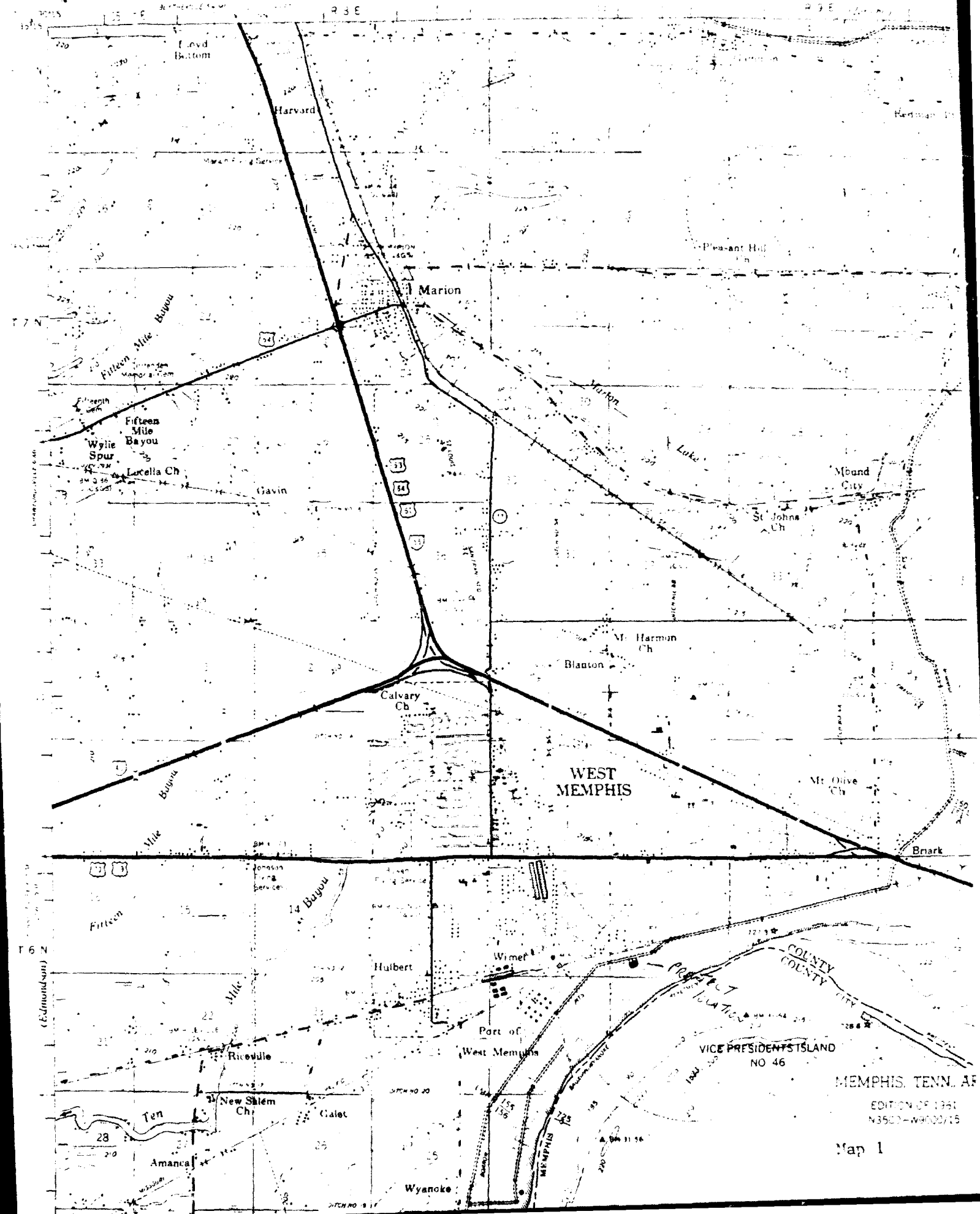
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CORPS OF ENGINEERS



MEMPHIS, TENN. AF
EDITION OF 1961
N3500-W4000/15
Map 1

ST FRANCIS LEVEE DISTRICT OF ARKANSAS

Map 2

5+00

8+07

57

 $15 + 27$ $36 + 92$

R.S. of Lloyd

78-13

76.24

45

CRAWFORD LEVEE

SLIDES

BORROW

R. S. Top of Lower

R/W Limits =
L.S. Crown of Levee

76.20

76° 42'

76042

$I = 30^{\circ} 56' 40''$

+ 57

477