



DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

November 23, 2011

Julie Hinds
Executive Director of Operations / Tupelo Public School District
Post Office Box 557
Tupelo, MS 38802

**SUBJECT: NPS Grant to Study Ackia and Ogoula Tchetoka Battlefields
Pierce Street Elementary Property Request for Access**

Dear Ms. Hinds:

The University of South Carolina's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (USC-SCIAA) in partnership with the Chickasaw Nation Department of Homeland Affairs has received an American Battlefield Protection Program grant from the National Park Service (NPS) to research, identify, and develop preservation plans for the famous 1736 Chickasaw and French battle sites of Ackia and Ogoula Tchetoka at Tupelo, Mississippi. The American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) promotes the preservation of significant historic battlefields associated with wars on American soil. The goals of the program are to protect battlefields and sites associated with armed conflicts that influenced the course of our history, to encourage and assist all Americans in planning for the preservation, management, and interpretation of these sites, and to raise awareness of the importance of preserving battlefields and related sites for future generations. The ABPP focuses primarily on land use, cultural resource and site management planning, and public education. <http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/index.htm>

In the spring of 1736, two French armies led by Commandant Pierre D'Artaguet and Governor Jean-Baptiste LeMoynes, Sieur de Bienville were decisively defeated by the Chickasaws in two battles of major geopolitical significance at Chickasaw fortified towns around present-day Tupelo, Mississippi. This project will define boundaries and develop preservation and interpretive plans for the Ackia and Ogoula Tchetoka battlefields using archeological survey, documentary research, existing collections analysis, and outreach to the local community. The results will be used to increase public awareness about the significance of these battles and their impact on American history. This project, in conjunction with a follow-up ABPP grant, could result in federal matching funds of up to 50% to acquire land at the battle sites, including the Ackia area and the Ogoula Tchetoka battle site of Chokkilissa' Old Town. This work could also result in a Chickasaw Press book on the battles of Ackia and Ogoula Tchetoka and their importance in Chickasaw culture history.

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USC faculty and students assisted by Chickasaw Nation staff are scheduled to conduct the archaeological fieldwork for this project during December 11-18, 2011. This fieldwork will consist of minimally invasive shovel-testing and metal detecting. Small holes up to 2 ft in diameter and 1 ft deep will be dug by hand at intervals along a survey grid. These holes will be immediately backfilled and sod replaced atop, leaving no visible impact on the landscape. Utility authorities will be contacted prior to this work and any buried utilities will be marked to avoid disturbance. Since the core of the Ackia site is believed to consist of the northern portion of Lee Acres neighborhood and the Pierce Street School campus, permission to conduct this research on the identified school district property is critical to the success of this project and would be most appreciated. Please see the aerial photograph below with the red-shaded work areas owned by TPSD.

Any artifacts found legally belong to the landowner, in this case the school district. We ask to borrow anything found for a period of study. A display exhibit in the school would likely be the most appropriate permanent use for the artifacts found. Participation by students in the fieldwork portion of the research is welcome, as long as the numbers do not overwhelm our capacity to supervise. A presentation on the Chickasaw history and culture of the area as well as the Battle of Ackia will be developed for the student body and will be presented after the completion of the project, probably in 2012.

A liability waiver will be signed by all who enter school district property. Individuals participating in this fieldwork will consist of the following:

Charles Cobb, Ph.D., Chair, Department of Anthropology, USC, Project Principal Investigator
Chester DePratter, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor, SCIAA, USC
Steven D. Smith, Ph.D., Associate Research Professor, SCIAA, USC
James Legg, Archaeological Technician, SCIAA, USC
Kim Wescott, Graduate Student, USC
Keely Lewis, Archaeological Technician, SCIAA, USC
Brad Lieb, Ph.D., Cultural Resources Specialist (Chickasaw Nation)
Jessica Crawford, M.A. (The Archaeological Conservancy)
John Connaway, M.A. (Mississippi Dept. of Archives and History)
R. Bradley Prewitt, Esq. (Prewitt Group)
Thomas Pertierra (Garrett Field Representative)

In case of any questions please contact Dr. Charles Cobb, the Project Principal Investigator, by phone at 803-777-1532 or email (cobbcr@mailbox.sc.edu).

Cordially yours,



Charles R. Cobb
Professor and Chair



General areas of school property filled in red are requested for permission to conduct archaeological survey.

Cc: Dr. Brad Lieb, the Chickasaw Nation
Bradley Prewitt, Esq., Prewitt Group