

# Archaeology, History, and Predictive Modeling

Research at Fort Polk, 1972–2002

David G. Anderson and Steven D. Smith



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1972–2002**



**David G. Anderson  
and  
Steven D. Smith**

**with contributions by  
J. W. Joseph and Mary Beth Reed**

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# **Archaeology, History, and Predictive Modeling**

*For Gator, Charles, Harry, and Jim  
And archaeologists too numerous to mention here  
Thanks for bringing the past back to life on Fort Polk*



# Preface

**I**n compliance with federal mandates, cultural resource investigations have been undertaken on Fort Polk in western Louisiana since the early 1970s. An extensive program of archaeological survey, testing, and large-scale data-recovery excavations has occurred, as well as extensive historic and archival research. More than 125,000 acres of accessible terrain on the installation have been intensively surveyed, and almost 5,000 sites and isolated finds have been recorded. More than 600 of these sites have been intensively tested to evaluate their significance for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. Large-scale archaeological data-recovery excavations have also been undertaken at five sites on the installation: 16VN18, 16VN24 (Big Brushy), 16SA50 (Eagle Hill II), 16VN791, and 16VN794. This research is documented in more than 100 cultural resource management (CRM) reports, which are available for inspection and use at the installation and in a number of libraries.

This volume provides a synthesis of this primary material and includes summaries of local environmental conditions, previous cultural resource investigations, base military history and architecture, pre-1940 history of the area, the prehistoric and historic cultural sequence, predictive models of prehistoric and historic site location, and patterns of historic and prehistoric settlement. The research undertaken at Fort Polk is among the most extensive undertaken in any part of the Southeast, and it shows how archaeologists working in a CRM environment explore the past and offer directions for future research.



# Acknowledgments

Syntheses like these require the help and assistance of a great many people to produce, and a major challenge is acknowledging the work of the many fine scholars whose research is being summarized. Over the past 30 years, hundreds of archaeologists have worked at Fort Polk, as crew members or as project directors, making it one of the training grounds of modern southeastern archaeology. Their contributions are summarized and acknowledged in the pages that follow, and to all who have worked on Fort Polk, we owe a debt of thanks.

None of this work would have occurred, however, without the support of a few key individuals responsible for environmental compliance on Fort Polk. In particular, Charles Stagg, Director of the Environmental and Natural Resources Management Division, and Jackie Smith, Chief, Conservation Branch, deserve special thanks for their strong and continuing commitment to cultural resource management (CRM). The primary inspiration, support, and guidance for much of the specific work that has occurred over the past two decades, however, comes from Jim (“Gator”) Grafton, Fort Polk’s CRM Coordinator. Gator and his assistants, Bob Hayes and Ellen Ibert, have been the heart and soul of the installation’s CRM program, and they provided great support in the preparation of this synthesis. Money for CRM work does not fall from the sky but must be programmed and then fought for and, when obtained, used as wisely as possible. James (“Jim”) E. Cobb, Headquarters Forces Command Archaeologist, Fort McPherson, Georgia, and the environmental team at Fort Polk named above have all fought the good fight for many years to ensure that a high level of funding has been available for CRM work on Fort Polk. Above and beyond that, their advice and support throughout the preparation of this overview have also been crucial to its completion.

Many others have helped as well. The Ranger Districts of the Kisatchie National Forest surround Fort Polk, and some of its lands are used by the Army. Forest Archeologist Alan Dorian and his staff, particularly Archeologist Geoff Lehmann and Forest Geographic Information System (GIS) Coordinator Lynn Schoelerman, provided advice and tangible help in the form of reports, site data, and GIS-generated information on cultural resources occurring on Forest Service lands. Louisiana’s State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the state’s Division of Archaeology staff also had a great deal of input into the creation of this overview, as well as in the review of earlier drafts. Those providing assistance included Tom Eubanks (State Archaeologist, 1995–present), Kathleen M. Byrd (State Archaeologist prior to

1995), Staff Archaeologists Philip G. (“Duke”) Rivet and Nancy Hawkins in Baton Rouge, Jeff Girard (Northwest Louisiana Regional Archaeologist), and Charles R. (“Chip”) McGimsey, Southwest Louisiana Regional Archaeologist. Their advice and assistance, particularly in relaying details about western Louisiana archaeology, are deeply appreciated. The staff of the Western Office of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) in Denver, Colorado, also provided guidance by meeting with Fort Polk and National Park Service (NPS) staff, reviewing numerous drafts of the present study, and answering a great many questions. Claudia Nissely, director of the western ACHP, and particularly staff historic preservation consultants Lee Keatinge and Alan Stanfill provided extensive assistance and support.

An earlier technical synthesis of cultural resource investigations on Fort Polk, the foundation for the present effort, was completed in 1988 while three contributors to the present volume (Anderson, Joseph, and Reed) were working for Garrow and Associates, Inc., of Atlanta, Georgia. This earlier effort was overseen by Wilfred (“Wil”) Husted of the Interagency Archeological Services Division (IASD) of the NPS, which administered the project and provided advice and assistance throughout the course of the work. Mark Barnes, John E. Ehrenhard, and Harry G. Scheele, all with IASD at the time, and Jim Cobb and Constance Ramirez of the Department of the Army also provided advice and assistance to that study.

An updated technical synthesis for Fort Polk was produced in 1999 by the staff of the Technical Assistance and Partnerships division (TAPS) of the Southeast Archeological Center (SEAC). The text for that volume was produced by Anderson, Joseph, Reed, and Smith, the authors of the present study. The final product was guided and greatly shaped by Harry G. Scheele, TAPS staff archaeologist, who has handled all cultural resource contracting for Fort Polk since 1988. Tiffanie Bourassa and Dennis Finch of SEAC provided appreciable help and support in this research by coding site and assemblage data and helping in their analysis and in the assembly of the text and bibliography for the final manuscript.

The current University of Alabama Press volume is an extensively revised and updated version of the 1999 technical synthesis and was largely written by David G. Anderson and Steven D. Smith, who focused on the prehistoric and historic research, respectively. J. W. Joseph and Mary Beth Reed contributed to the historic overviews and research summaries presented in Chapters 7 and 8. Ann Powell and Emily Yates generated the index. The camera-ready manuscript was produced by Virginia Horak. The appearance of the manuscript is in large measure due to her concern with quality control. Finally, John E. Ehrenhard, SEAC’s director, deserves special thanks for his support during the preparation of this manuscript.



Other individuals who have helped in the development of this document include Michael Russo, former Louisiana SHPO staff archaeologist and now an NPS archaeologist at SEAC; Greg Heide, also a SEAC archaeologist, who has handled contracts on Fort Polk with Mike Russo and Harry Scheele in recent years; Mary Cleveland, Director, Museum of West Louisiana; Jon L. Gibson, formerly of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Southwestern Louisiana and now in enjoyable retirement; Patrick H. Garrow of Garrow and Associates, Inc., who provided advice and guidance throughout the 1988 Historic Preservation Plan project and reviewed the various drafts of that product; Charles E. Cantley, formerly with Commonwealth Associates, Inc., and now with New South Associates, who has directed a number of large-scale projects on Fort Polk; and, above all, the staff of Prentice Thomas and Associates, Inc. (formerly New World Research, Inc.), who have conducted more work at Fort Polk and made more attempts to synthesize the vast amount of data collected there than anyone else down through the years. L. Janice Campbell, Prentice Thomas, James Matthews, and Jim Morehead in particular have provided extensive advice and help over the course of this and the earlier 1988 overview effort. Julie Barnes Smith and Vince Macek prepared some of the graphics that appear in this volume, while Chris Rewerts of the U.S. Army's Construction Engineering Research Laboratory prepared the GIS-based maps.

The staff at the University of Alabama Press deserves our thanks for seeing this volume through to final production. Portions of the environmental descriptions presented in Chapter 6 appeared in somewhat different form in *Archaeology of Eastern North America* and are used here with permission. Art Spiess, the editor of *AENA*, is to be thanked for his assistance. Wayne Boyko and Jeff Irwin of the Fort Bragg Cultural Resource Management Program are to be thanked for allowing us to use Martin Pate's painting of life in the pinelands. Kathy Cummins did a remarkable job of copyediting the manuscript. Finally, Jeff Girard and Chip McGimsey did an excellent job of peer-reviewing the manuscript.

The large numbers of people who have collected cultural resource information on Fort Polk over the past 30 years—that is, the archaeologists and scholars “too numerous to mention” indicated on the dedication page—deserve our particular thanks for compiling a site and assemblage database that is one of the largest and best documented in the southeastern United States. The contributions of these individuals are discussed in the pages that follow. To all of them, this overview is our acknowledgment and tribute to their fine work.

# Contents

List of Figures ..... viii

List of Tables ..... xiii

Preface ..... xv

Acknowledgments ..... xvi

Introduction ..... 1

1. Environmental Setting ..... 11

2. Previous Cultural Resource Investigations in the Vicinity of  
Fort Polk ..... 24

3. Prehistoric Settlement Analyses and Predictive Modeling in  
West-Central Louisiana ..... 114

4. The 1988 and 1995 Fort Polk Predictive Models ..... 170

5. Prehistoric Assemblages in the Vicinity of Fort Polk ..... 241

6. The Prehistoric Cultural Sequence on Fort Polk ..... 330

7. Fort Polk’s Historic Development ..... 400

8. A Historic Period Context for Fort Polk ..... 484

Conclusions ..... 576

References Cited ..... 583

Contributors ..... 643

Index ..... 645

# List of Figures

Cover: *The Marble Game*, painting by Martin Pate, Newnan, Georgia. (Courtesy of the artist; the Southeast Archeological Center, National Park Service; and the Fort Bragg Cultural Resource Management Program)

|      |   |    |
|------|---|----|
| 1.1  | The Fort Polk area, west-central Louisiana .....  | 3  |
| 1.1  | Chert gravel deposits on the Main Fort at Fort Polk at 16VN403 and 16VN1472 .....   | 16 |
| 1.2  | Chert sources in the Trans-Mississippi Gulf Coastal Plain .....   | 17 |
| 1.3  | Petrified wood chopper and hematite pitted stone from 16VN258; mano and metate from 16VN573; mano and metate from 16VN1136 .....                        | 19 |
| 2.1  | Quarter section random sample survey units on Peason Ridge, FPAS, 1977 .....  | 28 |
| 2.2  | Probable Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene tools, Eagle Hill I site (16SA8), Peason Ridge/Eagle Hill locality .....                                       | 30 |
| 2.3  | Site 16VN18 contours and excavation units, University of Southwestern Louisiana FPAS excavations .....  | 31 |
| 2.4  | Site 16VN18 local vegetation and drainage conditions .....  | 32 |
| 2.5  | Site 16VN18 total artifact density and site areas A, B, and C .....   | 33 |
| 2.6  | Flake size by depth below surface, 16VN18 .....   | 34 |
| 2.7  | Debitage distributions in the Archaic levels in the block unit opened in Area C, 16VN18 .....   | 37 |
| 2.8  | Big Brushy (16VN24) site contours and excavation units, University of Southwestern Louisiana FPAS excavations .....                                     | 38 |
| 2.9  | Projectile point and ceramic distributions by level at the Big Brushy site, 16VN24 .....  | 40 |
| 2.10 | Late Pleistocene/Early Holocene tools at the Eagle Hill II site, 16SA50, Peason Ridge/Eagle Hill locality .....   | 43 |
| 2.11 | Cultural stratigraphy at the Eagle Hill II site, 16SA50 .....   | 44 |
| 2.12 | Quarter section survey units, New World Research, Inc., 1981 sample survey .....  | 48 |
| 2.13 | Site 16SA111 test units, 1982/1983 Eagle Hill locality site-testing program, University of Texas, San Antonio, Center for Archaeological Research ..... | 50 |
| 2.14 | Site 16VN334 test units, 1983/1984 intensive testing program, Commonwealth Associates, Inc. ....  | 52 |

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 2.15 | Prehistoric sites and isolated finds, as well as sites tested by number, in the 1985/1986 MPRC New World Research, Inc., survey and testing projects ..... | 55  |
| 2.16 | Typical projectile point types found on Fort Polk .....  | 57  |
| 2.17 | Blanks and preforms from Fort Polk .....   | 58  |
| 2.18 | Site 16VN791 map, 1986 New World Research, Inc., intensive testing program, MPRC project area .....  | 60  |
| 2.19 | Transect and shovel test location map produced during an intensive survey project by R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc. ....                      | 71  |
| 2.20 | Site 16VN1234 map produced as part of an intensive survey project by R. Christopher Goodwin and Associates, Inc. ....                                      | 72  |
| 2.21 | Site 16VN791 map, showing all excavation units .....   | 74  |
| 2.22 | Site 16VN794 map, showing all excavation units .....   | 78  |
| 2.23 | Site 16VN794 Locus A excavation block and Feature 6 in Locus B .....   | 79  |
| 2.24 | Radiocarbon dates by depth in the excavation blocks at 16VN794 .....   | 80  |
| 2.25 | Projectile point sequence at 16VN794 .....   | 82  |
| 2.26 | Site 16VN1277 map produced as part of the intensive testing project by Prentice Thomas and Associates, Inc. ....   | 88  |
| 2.27 | Maps for sites 16VN1507 and 16VN1508 .....   | 90  |
| 2.28 | Site 16VN1690 map produced as part of an intensive survey project by Gulf South Research Corporation .....   | 93  |
| 2.29 | Isolated find shovel test map produced as part of an intensive survey project by Gulf South Research Corporation .....                                     | 94  |
| 2.30 | Biface trajectory flow model for the Fort Polk area .....  | 96  |
| 2.31 | Maps for sites 16VN2342 and 16VN2343 .....   | 98  |
| 2.32 | Site 16VN2534 density plot from the 1998 TRC Garrow Associates, Inc., survey .....   | 99  |
| 2.33 | Kisatchie National Forest base map, showing late nineteenth-century forest conditions .....  | 108 |
| 3.1  | Shovel test artifact-density rank-size curve from the Commonwealth Associates, Inc., 1983/1984 site-testing project .....                                  | 127 |
| 3.2  | Artifact concentrations from site 16VN1816 .....   | 134 |
| 3.3  | Artifact concentrations from site 16VN1820 .....   | 135 |
| 3.4  | Lithic reduction trajectories involving the use of pebble cherts observed at sites on Fort Polk .....  | 142 |
| 3.5  | Sandstone mano and metate at 16VN573 and sandstone rock cluster at 140 cm at site 16VN1064 .....   | 148 |

|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 3.6  | Crude sandstone metate (?) from 16VN1060; sandstone double-basin metate and mano from 16VN398 .....  | 149 |
| 3.7  | Cumulative debitage curves as a means of documenting site function ...   | 155 |
| 3.8  | Scatter diagrams of selected sites from the 1996–1997 SCIAA survey by percent of flakes larger than 2 cm vs. percent of cortical flakes and percent of thinning/retouch flakes vs. percent cortical flakes ..... | 158 |
| 3.9  | Assemblage clusters by level and physiographic setting in the Eagle Hill locality .....  | 161 |
| 4.1  | Drainage patterns on the Main Fort at Fort Polk .....  | 175 |
| 4.2  | Drainage patterns on Peason Ridge at Fort Polk .....   | 176 |
| 4.3  | The 20-m pixel grid used to portray environmental data and calculate distances in the Fort Polk GIS .....  | 184 |
| 4.4  | Geological formations in the Fort Polk area .....  | 186 |
| 4.5  | Distance to permanent and intermittent water for sites and isolated finds, as well as for random sample locations, on the Main Fort, 1995 analysis sample .....  | 202 |
| 4.6  | Distance to permanent and intermittent water for sites and isolated finds, as well as for random sample locations, on Peason Ridge, 1995 analysis sample .....   | 203 |
| 4.7  | The 1988 Fort Polk HPP predictive model .....  | 226 |
| 4.8  | The current Fort Polk HPP predictive model .....   | 235 |
| 5.1  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Albany scraper, Big Sandy/Early Side-Notched, Birds Creek .....   | 249 |
| 5.2  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Bulverde, Calcasieu, Carrollton, Castroville, Delhi, Dooley Branch .....  | 251 |
| 5.3  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Pelican, Plainview, Dickson, Pont-chartrain, preforms .....   | 256 |
| 5.4  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Edgewood, Elam, Ellis, Ensor, Epps, Evans .....   | 258 |
| 5.5  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Figeroa, Form X, Gary .....   | 263 |
| 5.6  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Gary, Godley .....  | 265 |
| 5.7  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Godley, Kent .....  | 267 |
| 5.8  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Kirk Corner-Notched, Lange, Lone Oak, Macon, Marcos, Marshall .....   | 269 |
| 5.9  | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Midland, Motley, Palmer Corner-Notched, Palmillas .....   | 273 |
| 5.10 | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: San Patrice .....   | 280 |
| 5.11 | Dart point forms from Fort Polk: San Patrice, Shumla, Sinner .....   | 281 |

5.12 Dart point forms from Fort Polk: Summerfield, Trinity, Williams, Woden, Yarbrough ..... 285

5.13 Arrow point forms from Fort Polk: Alba, Bassett, Bayougoula, Bonham, Catahoula, Clifton, Colbert, Cuney, Fresno, Friley, Perdiz, Scallorn ..... 290

5.14 Incidence on Fort Polk of projectile points and components by major period and per 1,000 years ..... 299

5.15 Fort Polk ceramics: Baytown Plain, baked clay objects ..... 304

5.16 Fort Polk ceramics: Belcher Ridged, Bossier Brushed, Chevalier Stamped, *var. Chevalier*, Churupa Punctate ..... 305

5.17 Fort Polk ceramics: Coles Creek Incised, Davis Incised ..... 306

5.18 Fort Polk ceramics: Dunkin Incised, Evansville Punctated, French Fork Incised, *var. French Fork*, Harrison Bayou Incised, Hickory Fine Engraved ..... 307

5.19 Fort Polk ceramics: Kiam Incised, L'Eau Noir Incised, *var. Australia*, Marksville Incised, Marksville Stamped, Mazique Incised, Pennington Punctate-Incised ..... 308

5.20 Fort Polk ceramics: pitted plain, Sanson Incised, Tchefuncte Plain, unidentified brushed, unidentified incised, unidentified incised-punctate ..... 309

5.21 Fort Polk ceramics: unidentified incised (Medora?), Pease Brushed Incised, Wilkinson (Evansville) Fingernail Punctate ..... 310

5.22 Fort Polk ceramics: number by period ..... 314

5.23 Assemblage size by volume of fill excavated on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge in the intensive site-testing assemblages, with assemblages denoted by NRHP eligibility status ..... 320

5.24 Assemblage size and diversity relationships on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge in the intensive site-testing assemblages, with assemblages denoted by NRHP eligibility status ..... 321

5.25 Relationships between cores and debitage in the intensive site-testing assemblages on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge ..... 323

5.26 Relationships between cortical and noncortical flakes in the intensive site-testing assemblages on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge ..... 325

5.27 Relationships between curated and expedient tools in the intensive site-testing assemblages on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge ..... 326

5.28 Hierarchical cluster analysis dendrogram, 77-site sample, from Peason Ridge at Fort Polk, 10 assemblage variables, count data, chi-square distance measure solution ..... 327

6.1 The cultural sequence employed in the State of Louisiana's Comprehensive Archaeological Plan ..... 336

|      |   |     |
|------|---|-----|
| 6.2  | The cultural sequence for Fort Polk from the FPAS project .....   | 337 |
| 6.3  | The preliminary cultural sequence for the Fort Polk area, west-central Louisiana, 1987, based on the New World Research MPRC research program .....   | 339 |
| 7.1  | Io. Bapt. Homanno's map of Mississippi and province of Louisiana, 1687 .....  | 403 |
| 7.2  | Detail of Lockett's 1876 (revised 1891) map showing the Fort Polk area as a "Hog Wallow" land .....   | 431 |
| 7.3  | Sketch compilation of Main Fort area plat maps, 1880–1883 .....   | 433 |
| 7.4  | Vernon Parish map, 1930 .....   | 458 |
| 8.1  | Surface artifact scatter at the Henry Jeter house site, 16VN1070 .....  | 486 |
| 8.2  | Base map of the Four L Still site, 16VN1221 .....   | 494 |
| 8.3  | Detail of the area of the turpentine still at the Four L Still site, 16VN1221 .....   | 496 |
| 8.4  | Detail of the area of the cooperage shed at the Four L Still site, 16VN1221 .....   | 497 |
| 8.5  | Detail of the area of the company store and the turpentine cup sheet midden at the Four L Still site, 16VN1221 .....  | 498 |
| 8.6  | Historic artifacts from the Four L Still site, 16VN1221: Raleigh's medicine bottles, wood stove door lids, turpentine cups .....  | 499 |
| 8.7  | Historic artifacts from the William Perkins house site, 16VN65: door hinges, porcelain vessel fragment, ironstone, stenciled porcelain, can lid, pewter decanter neck, shoe leather, bottle top ..... | 505 |
| 8.8  | Map of the Boxed Spring site, 16VN1265 .....  | 506 |
| 8.9  | Plan drawing and photograph of the spring box at 16VN1265 .....   | 507 |
| 8.10 | Sketch compilation of Peason Ridge area plat maps, 1880–1883 .....  | 519 |
| 8.11 | Distribution of 1880s sites from the MPRC survey, area T1N R7W .....  | 525 |
| 8.12 | Charlie and Martha Swain house located on Six Mile Creek .....  | 548 |
| 8.13 | Agricultural continuum, Vernon Parish .....   | 550 |



# List of Tables

|     |  |     |
|-----|--|-----|
| 2.1 | Cultural resource investigations undertaken on Fort Polk, Louisiana, 1972–2002 .....   | 25  |
| 2.2 | Intensive survey projects conducted by Earth Search, Inc., on Fort Polk, Louisiana, 1989–1992 .....  | 67  |
| 2.3 | Intensive survey projects conducted by R. Christopher Goodwin, Inc., on Fort Polk, Louisiana, 1992–1995 .....  | 69  |
| 2.4 | Intensive testing projects conducted by Prentice Thomas and Associates, Inc., on Fort Polk, Louisiana, 1991–2002 .....   | 85  |
| 2.5 | Intensive survey projects conducted by Gulf South Research Institute, Inc., on Fort Polk, Louisiana, 1994–1996 .....   | 92  |
| 2.6 | Intensive survey projects conducted by Kisatchie National Forest personnel on Fort Polk, Louisiana, 1983–1995 .....  | 110 |
| 3.1 | Site and isolated find incidence by landform and drainage basin in the FPAS sample survey tracts from Peason Ridge .....   | 116 |
| 3.2 | Site and isolated find incidence by slope element in the NWR Peason Ridge and Main Fort quadrat random sample .....  | 119 |
| 3.3 | Incidence of lithic raw materials, by type, on a sample of sites from the Catahoula, Evangeline, Kisatchie, and Vernon Ranger Districts, Kisatchie National Forest, Louisiana .....                      | 151 |
| 4.1 | The 1988 and 1995 Fort Polk predictive models site and isolated find analysis samples .....  | 171 |
| 4.2 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by type of nearest water, stream rank of nearest water, and distance to nearest water, in meters (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....                        | 190 |
| 4.3 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: distance to nearest water, by 50-m intervals (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....   | 192 |
| 4.4 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: elevation above nearest water, in 10-foot intervals (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....  | 194 |
| 4.5 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by type of nearest water and distance to nearest permanent water, in meters (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....   | 196 |
| 4.6 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by distance to nearest confluence, stream rank of drainage below nearest confluence, and type of water below confluence (1988 HPP analysis sample) ..... | 200 |
| 4.7 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by landform type (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....  | 204 |



|      |  |     |
|------|--|-----|
| 4.8  | Slope categories for sites and isolated finds, and for random sample locations, on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge at Fort Polk (1995 analysis sample) .....                      | 206 |
| 4.9  | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by landform aspect (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....  | 208 |
| 4.10 | Aspects for sites, isolated finds, and random sample locations on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge at Fort Polk (1995 analysis sample) .....                                       | 211 |
| 4.11 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by engineering soil association categories (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....  | 212 |
| 4.12 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by engineering geology categories (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....   | 213 |
| 4.13 | Surficial geological formations for sites and isolated finds on the Main Fort at Fort Polk (1995 analysis sample) .....  | 214 |
| 4.14 | Major soil series for prehistoric components on Fort Polk (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....   | 216 |
| 4.15 | Soil types for sites, isolated finds, and random sample locations on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge at Fort Polk (1995 analysis sample) .....                                    | 218 |
| 4.16 | Prehistoric components on Fort Polk: occurrence by major soil slope categories (1988 HPP analysis sample) .....  | 221 |
| 4.17 | Potential depth of archaeological deposits for sites and isolated finds, by NRHP eligibility status, on the Main Fort and Peason Ridge at Fort Polk (1995 analysis sample) ..... | 223 |
| 4.18 | Comparison of the 1988 and 1995 Fort Polk predictive models, using data from the Main Fort .....   | 230 |
| 4.19 | Comparison of the 1988 and 1995 Fort Polk predictive models, using data from Peason Ridge .....  | 232 |
| 4.20 | Comparison of the 1988 and 1995 Fort Polk and U.S. Forest Service predictive models .....  | 236 |
| 5.1  | Fort Polk projectile points: total by type and period .....  | 243 |
| 5.2  | Prehistoric ceramics on Fort Polk: total by type, temper group, period, and surface finish .....   | 301 |
| 5.3  | Intensive site-testing assemblages used in the comparative analyses between the Main Fort and Peason Ridge: summary data .....   | 316 |
| 6.1  | The Fort Polk cultural sequence in calendrical and radiocarbon time .....  | 332 |
| 6.2  | Radiocarbon, thermoluminescence, and OCR dates from Fort Polk sites ...  | 340 |
| 6.3  | The cultural sequence for the Fort Polk area of western Louisiana as of 2002 .....   | 347 |
| 8.1  | Historic site typology for Fort Polk: class, type, and criteria .....  | 515 |
| 8.2  | Classes and types of archaeological sites .....  | 558 |
| 8.3  | Historic themes for the Upland South .....   | 568 |