

© Martin Pate, 2007

# The Story of Poverty Point World Heritage Site

Centuries ago, when Stonehenge was being built and Queen Nefertiti ruled Egypt, American Indians were building earthen monuments in north Louisiana. Hand by hand and basketful by basketful, men and women moved tons of rich Delta soil. The result was a massive, 72-foot-tall mound, enormous concentric ridges and related earthworks that together formed a landscape unlike any other in the world.

Who were the people of Poverty Point? Why did they build here, in this remote stretch of the Mississippi River Valley? And what must have happened to make them leave a well-established settlement?

Visit Poverty Point to see if you can unravel these and other mysteries that have puzzled experts for decades.

## Hours of Operation

9 a.m. - 5 p.m., daily  
Closed: Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Day

## Activities

Guided tours/demonstrations/programs  
*(Groups call in advance)*  
2.6 mile hiking trail  
Museum/historic display  
Picnic area

## Entrance Fees

\$4 per person  
Free for seniors (62 and over)  
Free for children (12 and under)

## Location

6859 La. Hwy. 577, Pioneer, La. 71266



Poverty Point UNESCO World Heritage Site

## Points of Interest

- 1 - Black Bear Golf Club & Lodge**  
253 Black Bear Drive, Delhi, La. 71232 • 318.878.2162
- 2 - Chemin-a-Haut State Park**  
14656 State Park Road, Bastrop, La. 71220 • 318.283.0812
- 3 - Chennault Aviation & Military Museum**  
701 Kansas Lane, Monroe, La. 71203 • 318.362.5540
- 4 - Lake Bruin State Park**  
201 State Park Road, St. Joseph, La. 71366 • 318.766.3530
- 5 - Lake D'Arbonne State Park**  
3628 Evergreen Road, Farmerville, La. 71241 • 318.368.2086
- 6 - Louisiana State Cotton Museum**  
7162 U.S. Hwy. 65 N., Lake Providence, La. 71254 • 318.559.2041
- 7 - Poverty Point Reservoir State Park**  
1500 Poverty Point Parkway, Delhi, La. 71232 • 318.878.7536

## Driving Directions

From I-20, take Exit 153 toward Delhi. Drive north on La. Hwy. 17, turn right on La. Hwy. 134 and look for the signs to Poverty Point.

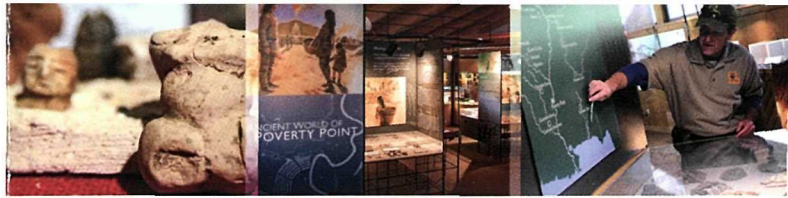


Funded by the Lower Mississippi Delta Region Initiatives of the National Park Service with assistance from Cane River Creole National Historical Park.

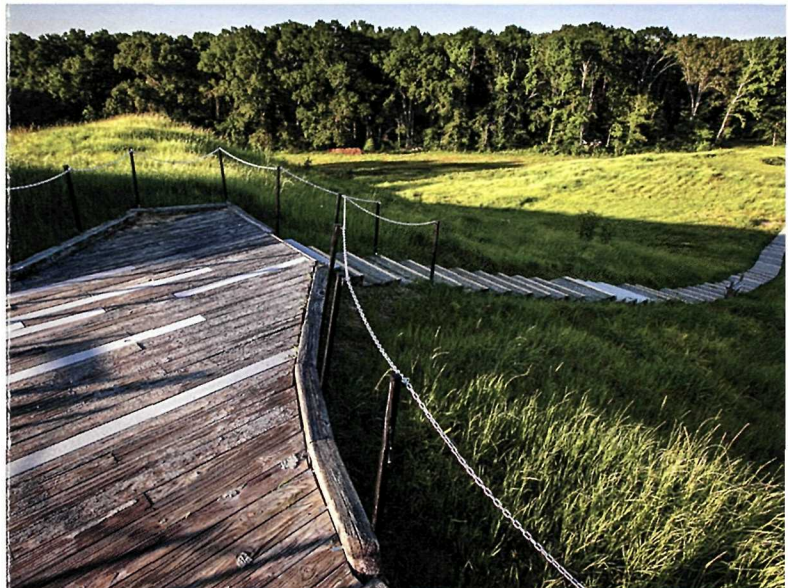


**POVERTY POINT**  
World Heritage Site

[www.PovertyPoint.us](http://www.PovertyPoint.us)  
6859 La. Hwy. 577, Pioneer, La. 71266  
318.926.5492 | 888.926.5492



Poverty Point World Heritage Site is a story 3,400 years in the making. A trading hub, an engineering marvel, a monument to ingenuity—there are many ways to describe Poverty Point. In 2014, a new label was added: **UNESCO World Heritage Site.** Embark with us on a journey of historic proportions to this ancient city.





Paintings © Martin Pate, 2007



## The People

Poverty Point was a ceremonial center that was once home to perhaps thousands of people, as well as a trading hub unmatched by any in North America at that time.

Those who lived at Poverty Point left no written records, but they did leave millions of artifacts behind. The artifacts provide clues about how people here lived their lives from day to day. These ancient American Indians built Poverty Point and made and traded goods, but details as to who they were or what they believed in are elusive.

Incredibly, Poverty Point's inhabitants were not farmers. Only the natural bounty of some of the richest land and water in North America could feed such a large settlement of people living solely off of wild game and native plants. This makes the fact that Poverty Point became such an important trading center all the more astounding.

## The Mounds

Poverty Point's centerpiece is its collection of earthworks built over the course of generations. Everything about Poverty Point's mounds suggests this was a massive, highly organized building effort. For example, Mound A, commonly known as the Bird Mound, is the second largest (by volume) in North America.

The mounds were not used for burials; they were for other special purposes. The long, curved earthen ridges hold the few remains of ancient homes.

One more enigma to consider: the plaza holds traces of giant rings of thick wooden posts that would have taken a small army to construct. Their purpose is still undetermined.

## The Artifacts

Much of what we know about Poverty Point comes from its millions of artifacts. Unfortunately, wood and other organic materials—which could have told us more about what these people used daily—decomposed long ago.

Thankfully, there are plenty of artifacts that help recreate the story. Think of stone tools found at Poverty Point as a kind of road map. Many materials discovered there came from far-flung parts of the Midwest and Southeast, which shows how vast their trade network was.

Think also of Poverty Point decorations and styles as a fingerprint. The intricate owl pendants made of red jasper stone and the ceramic human figurines are distinctive creations of this place. These and other artifacts give us a glimpse into the lives of these fascinating people.



## Day Trips Near Poverty Point

We've created sample itineraries to simplify the planning and get you straight to enjoying your trip to north Louisiana.

### Indian Mounds Day Trip

There are a number of other Indian mounds nearby to explore on a two-day trip to Poverty Point.



### Explore the Outdoors in Louisiana State Parks

Louisiana State Parks offer outdoor amenities the whole family will enjoy. Fire up the grill and kick back at Chemin-A-Haut State Park, cast a line at Lake D'Arbonne State Park or Poverty Point Reservoir State Park, or fuel your need for high-octane water sports at Lake Bruin State Park.



### Historic Places Near Poverty Point

With this itinerary, discover the rich history around Poverty Point including important Civil War sites, historic cotton gins and museums highlighting everything from the history of Coca-Cola to Louisiana cotton.



### Itinerary Ideas for the Arts and Culture Lover

Look for galleries showcasing the best of Southern artists and international masters, concerts ranging from rock to symphonic, a thriving theater scene and galleries galore within short drives from Poverty Point.



[www.PovertyPoint.us](http://www.PovertyPoint.us)

There is so much more to do around Poverty Point World Heritage Site! Visit [www.PovertyPoint.us](http://www.PovertyPoint.us) to get more information and detailed itinerary ideas.