



# Nanih Waiya

## Heart of the Choctaw People

Nanih Waiya: Chahta Alheha Itchokash



Several small burial mounds, now nearly leveled by plowing, are located several hundred yards away to the north/north east. A long, raised embankment and moat once enclosed the site. Most of this earthen enclosure has been destroyed by cultivation; however, a short segment remains along the edge of a swamp to the northwest of the large mound.

It is believed that Nanih Waiya Mound itself has received only minimal damage as compared to the rest of the site. Unfortunately part of the mound's ramp has been destroyed, but its overall size stands at 25 feet high, 218 feet long, and 140 feet wide, which roughly matches the earliest recorded descriptions of the site.

Built by the prehistoric ancestors of the Choctaw, the site plays a central role in the tribe's origin stories and is considered the heart of the Choctaw People. By the eighteenth century Nanih Waiya had come to be venerated by the Choctaw as their Mother Mound.

*Nanih Waiya Mound, 1940.*



Nanih Waiya Mound ca. 1940 (adapted from *Indian Mounds of Mississippi: A Visitor's Guide*).