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EDITOR'S NOTE: TWO EDITORS ARE BETTER THAN ONE

If we owe the first definition of the term "Historic Archaeology" to Setzler, then we are no less in debt to Stanley A. South for the first annual conferences devoted solely to that subject. From the beginning in 1959 (?) it was Stan's idea that there was enough interest and work being done in this field to justify such a specialized meeting. On Stan's initiative two such conferences have been held in conjunction with the regular Southeastern Archaeological Conferences: the First at Gainesville, Florida, on November 3, 1960, and the Second at Macon, Georgia, on November 30, 1961. The full programs of these meetings will be found on page v.

It is also through Stan's efforts that this volume is available in such a relatively brief span of time; he compiled the proceedings from tapes and manuscripts, pursued the authors to make such changes as they felt necessary, and turned the completed typescript over to me. I have merely seen to the final typing of the stencils, the making of the plates, and routine assembly.

Special thanks are due the numerous participants in the Conference, listed herein, who made a special donation toward the cost of this publication; and especial thanks to Florida State University and the good offices and generosity of Charles H. Fairbanks, a harried editor himself, for a substantial contribution toward the cost of the illustrations.

The very appropriate cover design incorporating the Conference emblem and wine bottle seals is the work of Patricia A. Jones.

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HISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI VALLEY

by

Stephen Williams

Introduction

If the field of historic archaeology can be said to be less than thirty years old, going back to Setzler's 1943 definition of the term, then the definitive work in the Lower Mississippi Valley can be said to be typical of the discipline. The published results range from a single integrated site report, that of Quimby (1957) on the Bayou Goula site, to the pioneering work in the early part of this century by Clarence B. Moore (1908, 1911), where he recognized evidence of white contact with Indian burials. So far, almost all the published references concern contact sites where European trade items are but a small part of the total archaeological data. In this introductory section I should also mention Ford's pioneering work with regard to historic complexes in this area published in his 1936 report.

To my knowledge, no colonial sites such as the French forts, Fort Rosalie at Natchez, or St. Peter near Vicksburg, have been archaeologically explored, though not for lack of trying, with the exception of Arkansas Post to be discussed later. For example, one can point to Phillips' (1951) work in an attempt to identify various Spanish and French sites in the Lower Mississippi Survey volume. However, I know of no literature concerning early Spanish or reliably identified De Soto sites in this area (Nash, 1961).

Even aboriginal sites with abundant trade goods are rare, with the single exception of the Fatherland site, the Grand Village of the Natchez (Ford, 1936:59-68). At this site, only briefly reported by Ford, but excavated extensively by Moreau Chambers in 1932 and 1933, a large amount of trade goods were found. Usually, however, the only items that have been found in the area under consideration are a few glass beads and some bits of brass. This situation is somewhat paralleled by that in the neighboring Caddoan area, as Webb (1962) has mentioned, and as I have pointed out with regard to the historic Caddo (Williams, 1961), there are very few known historic sites before the American period beginning in 1803. In juxtaposition to these data there is quite a bit of documentary evidence for trade goods coming in during the late French and Spanish periods. Almost the only sites, as the Colfax Ferry site

(Webb, 1962) has shown, that really have lots of trade goods are apparently very late, that is early nineteenth century. Krieger (1961) has remarked on this situation for sites further west.

The Lower Mississippi Valley does not lack for ethnohistorical data (Swanton, 1911), but little of it has been directly tied up with archaeology. The Fatherland site and the Natchez Fort, the refuge of the Natchez after the 1730 massacre are very rare exceptions. Even the identity of the Bayou Goula site (Quimby, 1957) has been questioned by Phillips (1957). Nonetheless, some very useful comparative studies have been made on Lower Mississippi Valley material, and here we must look to Quimby's (1942) work, rather obscurely published in the Michigan Academy of Sciences, in which he has compared French colonial material from Michigan with contact sites in this area. Quimby (1958) again has an interesting paper, also obscurely published, on silver, which is very useful for comparative purposes.

Contact Sites

Turning then to the archaeological sites in detail, I have been able to locate seventeen Indian sites with trade material on them. (See map and list.) Running from north to south and beginning just below the mouth of the Ohio in Southeast Missouri, there is first the Campbell site (Chapman and Anderson, 1955). At the time of that report no historic material had been found, but since then one burial with glass and iron beads has been found. The beads are the ubiquitous blue glass, and Anderson tells me that he has a second burial with some small pieces of iron. This is a late Mississippian site with some hundred burials, but only two show any trade materials. Passing a little further south into northeast Arkansas, we have the Bradley site (Moore, 1911), where rather abundant trade goods were found, although these items are not quantified by Moore. They include glass beads, copper bracelets, and fragments of china and glass. Nearby is the Rhodes site where Moore found one blue glass tubular bead with Burial no. 42. Finally, in this same general area, there is the Kent site, again excavated by Moore, in which he found a single burial (no. 22) with glass beads mixed with shell beads. All three are sites of the Late Mississippi Period, and certainly cannot be considered primarily Historic except for this rather minor evidence of extending into this general time period.

Crossing the river, and coming down into northern Mississippi, one encounters the Oliver site, excavated by Charles Peabody around the turn of the century. This site, next to Fatherland, has the most trade goods in the published record. Goggin has dated the material as Seventeenth century, including glass beads, iron, copper, and brass hawk bell; unfortunately no chinaware, at least in our collection.

The next sites are in the region near the mouth of the Arkansas River. Here Phillips (1951:392-424) attempted to locate the four Quapaw villages but without success. More recent work by Holder (n.d.) indicates that the Dupree site is in fact Quapaw (Griffin, 1960:851-852), and Griffin has suggested the term Wallace focus (phase) for the late protohistoric manifestations in this region including the Menard, Wallace and Dupree sites.

Ford (1961) who has done the most recent work in the region is convinced that the Menard site is the Quapaw village of Osotouy. Previous work at the site (Thomas, 1894; Moore, 1908) produced glass beads with four burials, brass beads with five burials, and some iron. Ford's fairly extensive work at the site produced a meager handful of historic specimens (Ford, 1961:158-159) including five glass beads and a charred boar's tusk. The identification of the site therefore rests primarily on physiographic and documentary evidence.

Coming down the river and back into Mississippi, the next site is Mabin, due west of Yazoo City, at which some very large wirewound glass beads were found. These items are now in the Butler Collection, Department of Archives and History, Jackson, Mississippi. There is also a rather elaborate "portrait" clay pipe from this site. We have always been interested in this site because it has some of the very earliest Hopewellian pottery that we have found in the Lower Yazoo; it also has Poverty Point materials, and some later materials. To go to Jackson as I did and find glass beads of what I think are possibly nineteenth century Chickasaw or Choctaw origin, just filled out the total time span for this important site. I say possibly Chickasaw origin because these beads do look something like some of those that Jennings (1941) got from northern Mississippi, and they are quite different from those which were found at Fatherland and other sites of a similar and earlier time period.

The next site is Haynes Bluff. Moore (1908) found a single shallow burial with small glass beads. Ford (1936) thought it might possibly be a village of the Yazoo (circa 1700), but as far as I know no further historic materials have been found at this site since no extensive excavations have been carried out there. Haynes Bluff is a few miles north of Vicksburg. Nearby is the Russell site, which has not been reported on before. The material is in the Russell family collection and the Butler Collection, Jackson, Mississippi. There is a fairly large amount of material, including some rather impressive strings of medium sized blue glass beads, iron axes, copper bracelets, and a little soapstone bullet mold. The general run of materials

is virtually identical to that at the Fatherland site. I would think it fairly safe to identify it as Tunica or Yazoo of approximately 1690 to 1730.

The Natchez Fort site was reported by Ford (1936) and by Green (1936). There is little question that it is the Natchez refuge site of 1730. There are blue glass beads, lead bullets, and iron shells. This site was shelled by the French after the massacre, and is one of the well-established and identified historic sites in the Lower Valley.

Proceeding down the river, the Oak Bend Landing site also excavated by Moore (1911) had two burials with historic materials. One had fragments of sheet brass or copper and glass beads, and and the other (no. 13) had a badly corroded piece of iron; not a very impressive assemblage. In contrast, the Fatherland site at Natchez is, as I mentioned, the most prolific yet excavated. There are several European ceramic vessels from this site in the collection now extant at Jackson, but no potsherds of chinaware or glass. This lack is interesting as a commentary on the changes in archaeology. It is hard to overestimate the importance of Fatherland, because its historic occupation covers a rather short period of time, probably between 1690 and 1730, and there is little question as to its cultural identification. Neitzel's current excavations there should make significant additions to the field of historic archaeology.

Turning from the vast quantities at Fatherland we have the Neitzel site at Stu's home near Marksville, Louisiana. He was out digging a garden, and ran into an historic Tunica burial of the eighteenth century accompanied by a rifle. Stu tells me they have been doing historic archaeology with a vengeance in Marksville lately. One of the surviving members of the Tunica tribe has excavated a Tunica cemetery, and is charging admission to see the burials. Unfortunately they are not in the literature yet.

The next site, that of Angola Farm, is a rather rich site; a cemetery with a lot of glass beads, bottles, clay pipes with the "T D" markings, brass objects, iron knives, and flintlock guns. This is believed to be Tunica, post 1706, and unfortunately has not been adequately described. The best trait list for Angola Farm is to be found in Quimby's (1942) study, the one in which he compares material from Michigan and Louisiana. The comparisons are good, so there seems to be little question as to the date of Angola Farm. The question of whether this is Tunica or not is one that is not settled at the present.

Going further south in Mississippi there is a site by the name of Trudeau which Moore (1911) also worked. Here he found a brass kettle,

a catlinite pipe, and some iron and steel objects. He was given this material that had been eroding from the site.

Finally there is the Bayou Goula site reported by Quimby (1957). It is a multi-component site with historic material apparently covering the period 1682 to 1750. Quite a variety of trade items have come from this site, including glass beads, bottles, iron axes and knives, flintlock guns and chinaware.

Colonial Sites

I have been able to list about a dozen colonial sites in the Lower Mississippi Valley (see list and map) some of which should be available for historic site archaeology. As I pointed out earlier, very little of this kind of work has been done, just touching on a few, Charles Nash (1961) has recently written on the area around Memphis, and mentions that Fort Nogales and Fort Prudhomme have been destroyed by river action, and therefore there is little we can do with that. The Arkansas Post locality has been worked on by Ford (1961) at the site of its first location, and by Holder (n.d.) at the site of a later location. Only a few traces were found by Ford as was detailed above. In contrast, the site which Holder dug, the later French fort, did have a very rich deposit of trade material. Holder found quantities of ceramics and glass from the period of 1730 - 1760. He found faience ware made at Rouen and Lille, which French experts dated with fair ease. This site, when published, will make an important addition to colonial sites within the Valley.

Fort St. Pierre just north of Vicksburg was an important mission site; Father Davion was there for a while. It has been located (Ford, 1936) on the basis of some tiles found there, but I am not convinced of that location. Fort Rosalie should be in downtown Natchez. Traces of it were seen in 1893, but as far as I know nothing else has been done with the site. Point Coupée on the Mississippi is lacking in evidence except for the fact that Quimby (1942) mentions some short-stemmed dark clay pipes from Marseille have been found near there. South from Baton Rouge the story is about the same. There are colonial sites, but no archaeology has been done on them, as far as I know.

Conclusion

I would like to conclude with some problems raised by this brief survey. It is no surprise that we know so little about the colonial sites because not much work has been done in this field so far. There was evidently destruction of many of these early sites by the river. This is shown by what has happened to the sites at Memphis and also the problems

of the French Posts near the mouth of the Arkansas. The white settlers were not accustomed to the high waters and the meandering of the rivers, very often placed their sites very badly. Arkansas Post was moved about half a dozen times.

Another problem is why do we have so many Indian sites with so little trade goods. Possibly this situation is caused by two things: first, the lack of excavation of major sites. It is certainly true that we have not excavated very many of them. If we look for historic evidence, we must keep in mind the Campbell site in Southeast Missouri where a hundred burials have been excavated, but only five beads have been found. Therefore you may have to go a long way to find anything. Certainly surface collections, which at present form the major bulk of our data on this area, are not too good for picking up this kind of information. An exception is found in Russell site where evidently a number of the burials were quite shallow, and beads were being plowed up with regularity. You could go there and pick them up after a rain quite easily. The second reason for this situation may be a real lack of trade goods coming in. Ford (1961:159) stresses this point. However, as I mentioned in the case of the Caddo, there is good documentary evidence in the eighteenth century for that region showing quantities of hard goods coming in and being given to the Indians, and yet we still find very little.

Another problem for historic archaeology in this area is that what we have to say about the ethnohistory of the Mississippi Valley is at present still pretty sketchy, despite the fact that we know a lot about the Natchez, in definitive terms with regard to location. There is a lack of early maps that makes exact identification of seventeenth and eighteenth century sites very difficult. There is also a tremendous amount of movement here, as in other parts of the Southeast. We know that there were a number of splinter groups moving about. For instance, we see what happened after the Natchez massacre with the Natchez moving off in several directions. Other groups were coming together as at the Bayou Goula site, so it is going to be rather difficult in this period to be able to identify with any great certainty the actual occupants of a particular site. Clarence Webb (1962) has detailed what happened around the beginning of the nineteenth century when you had this tremendous flood of people from the east moving in here, and Delaware going into the Mississippi Valley further north, even before the turn of the nineteenth century. However, I still feel that this is a very worthwhile project, and not hopeless. That we have not made too much progress since the late thirties is the fault of the archaeologists and not the fault of archaeology itself.



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