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"Pusilla res mundus est nisi in illo  
quod quaerat omnis mundus habeat."

— SENECA, *Naturales Quaestiones*

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# INDIAN TRADE OBJECTS IN MICHIGAN AND LOUISIANA \*

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## INTRODUCTION

VARIOUS trade articles manufactured in Europe and European colonies were acquired by historic North American Indians from traders, explorers, and missionaries in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Their presence in an Indian site provides some evidence for the date of occupation because their chronology indicates the chronology of the associated native artifacts. The dating of these articles is based upon the evidence of makers' marks and styles or their presence in a documented historic site. It is possible, therefore, to obtain from the trade objects of a given site the date of the site as well as those of the objects themselves. When a site is documented and also contains suitable trade materials the two factors complement each other and provide an ideal means for dating the native artifacts.

In a previous paper I described the trade artifacts which were representative of the early and late historic periods in the upper Great Lakes region.<sup>1</sup> The early historic period was from 1700 to 1760; the late one, from 1760 to 1825. It must be emphasized, however, that these dates represent a working hypothesis which may have to be modified.

My present purpose is to compare the trade materials indicative of the early historic period in the upper Great Lakes region with those of the same period in the lower Mississippi Valley and to show the similarities between them, despite the considerable geographical separation of their proveniences. There are data from four different

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<sup>1</sup> Quimby, George I., Jr., "European Trade Articles as Chronological Indicators for the Archaeology of the Historic Period in Michigan," *Pap. Mich. Acad. Sci., Arts, and Letters*, 24, Part IV (1938): 25-31. 1939.

Indian sites of the early historic period, one in Michigan and three in Louisiana, and all four sites were occupied when French influence was dominant.

#### THE SITES

The upper Great Lakes material was collected from the site of Fort St. Joseph near the city of Niles, in Berrien County, Michigan. The fort was established and maintained by the French from shortly after 1700 until 1760. Near it were two Indian villages, one Miami, the other Potawatomi. Therefore the trade artifacts from the environs of the fort should constitute a part of the material culture of the Miami and Potawatomi tribes as they existed in the early historic period.<sup>2</sup>

The trade artifacts from the lower Mississippi Valley came from two historic Indian villages in Louisiana and one in Mississippi. The first of these is the Angola farm site in West Feliciana Parish. In the early historic period it was probably occupied for the most part by Tunicas.<sup>3</sup> Archeological investigations of the site by James A. Ford produced many trade objects accompanied by numerous artifacts of native manufacture which were diagnostic of the Natchezan culture type.<sup>4</sup>

The second Louisiana site is a former Bayougoula, Mugulasha, and Taensa village in Iberville Parish. The known period of occupation was from 1699 to 1706, although there were probably intermittent occupations by remnants of these tribes and others until 1758.<sup>5</sup> Investigations of this site also produced trade objects along with native artifacts which were of the Natchezan culture type.

Excavations at the Fatherland plantation near Natchez in Adams County, Mississippi, have been described by Ford. European trade objects were found in association with Natchez artifacts. This site is probably the Grand Village of the Natchez, which was occupied from at least 1699 to 1730.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Quimby, *op. cit.*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>3</sup> Ford, James A., *Analysis of Indian Village Site Collections from Louisiana and Mississippi*, pp. 129-140. Anthropological Study No. 2, Department of Conservation, Louisiana Geological Survey, New Orleans, 1936.

<sup>4</sup> Ford, *op. cit.*, p. 140, and Quimby, G. I., Jr., "The Natchezan Culture Type," *American Antiquity*, 7 (1942): 255-275.

<sup>5</sup> Swanton, John R., *Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico*, pp. 274-279. Bureau of American Ethnology. Bulletin 43, Washington, 1911.

<sup>6</sup> Ford, *op. cit.*, pp. 59-65.

## THE TRADE OBJECTS

*Glass Beads*

The sites in both Michigan and the lower Mississippi Valley contained identical types of Venetian glass beads. The glass or porcelain beads traded to the Natchez have been described by Le Page du Pratz, a French writer<sup>7</sup> who lived among these Indians in the first quarter of the eighteenth century. His account is not very specific, but among the beads he mentions were some like those found in these early sites. The various types and their distribution are recorded in Table I.

*Glass Containers*

The introduction of glass bottles into the lower Mississippi Valley must have occurred prior to 1700, for a "double glass bottle" was seen in a Bayougoula temple by Iberville in 1699.<sup>8</sup> Fragments of Dutch gin bottles (Pl. I, Fig. 20) were found only at the Bayou Goula and the Angola farm sites. Large rum bottle fragments (Pl. I, Fig. 19) have been recorded, however, from all the sites discussed in this paper, but fragments of blown glass tumblers were discovered only at the Bayou Goula site.

*Earthenware*

Fragments of glazed and unglazed crockery jugs and bowls (Pl. I, Fig. 21) are represented in all the sites considered. French polychrome earthenware (Pl. I, Fig. 22) and earthenware with appliqué design have been obtained at the Fatherland plantation, the Angola farm, and Fort St. Joseph. Slightly different polychrome earthenware has been recorded for the Fatherland plantation, Bayou Goula, and Fort St. Joseph sites. And a Staffordshire-like earthenware (Pl. I, Fig. 23) has been found at all the sites. Perhaps this style of pottery represents a later introduction of British origin. It is not inconceivable, however, that English pottery was distributed by the French.

*Pipes*

White-clay molded trade pipes, with round, flat-bottomed spurs, were discovered at all four sites. Examples with "TD" or

<sup>7</sup> Swanton, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>8</sup> Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

TABLE I

TYPES OF BEADS AND THEIR DISTRIBUTION

Styles of beads*	Fort St. Joseph	Angola farm	Bayou Goula	Father- land plantation
<b>Seed</b>				
Colorless .....	..	+	..	+
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 1) .....	+	+	+	+
"Cornaline d'Allepo" .....	..	+	..	+
<b>Elongate-spheroidal</b>				
Colorless (Pl. I, Fig. 2) .....	+	+	+	+
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 3) .....	+	+	+	+
Polychrome (Pl. I, Figs. 4-5) ..	+	+	+	+
<b>Oblate-spheroidal</b>				
Colorless (Pl. I, Fig. 6) .....	+	+	..	+
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 7) .....	+	+	+	+
Polychrome (Pl. I, Fig. 8) .....	+	+	+	+
"Gooseberry" (Pl. I, Fig. 9) ....	+	+	..	..
"Cornaline d'Allepo" (Pl. I, Fig. 10) .....	+	+	..	+
<b>Oblate-spheroidal-joined</b>				
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 12) ....	..	+	+	+
Polychrome (Pl. I, Fig. 13) .....	+	+	..	..
<b>Oblate-spheroidal-fluted</b>				
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 11) ....	+	+	..	+
<b>Decahedral</b>				
Colorless (Pl. I, Fig. 14) .....	+	+	..	..
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 15) ....	+	+	..	..
<b>Raspberry-shaped</b>				
Colorless (Pl. I, Fig. 16) .....	+	+	..	+
Monochrome (Pl. I, Fig. 17) ....	+	+	..	..
<b>Tubular</b>				
Monochrome .....	+	..	+	..
Polychrome (Pl. I, Fig. 18) .....	..	+	..	+

\* Cf. Orchard, Wm. C., "Beads and Beadwork of the American Indians, a Study Based on Specimens in the Museum of the American Indian," *Contributions from the Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation*, Vol. XL

"RT" stamped on the bowl are in the collections from the Angola farm and Fort St. Joseph. A few of the pipes at Fort St. Joseph have pointed spurs, mushroom-shaped spurs, and appliqué stamped designs, variants which do not occur in the lower Mississippi Valley sites. Iron-tooled stone Micmac pipes, on the other hand, are



## Indian trade objects of the early historic period

Figs. 1-18, glass beads; Figs. 19-20, glass bottles; Figs. 21-23, earthenware; Figs. 24, 26, 28, trade pipes; Figs. 25, 27, 29-31, aboriginal pipes; Fig. 32, small dinner bell; Fig. 33, jew's-harp; Fig. 34, small hawk bell; Fig. 35, lead fabric seal

diagnostic of material culture at Fort St. Joseph as well as catlinite and pewter "peace pipes." A style of pipe with a glazed pottery bowl (Pl. I, Fig. 24) was found only at the Bayou Goula site. Short-stemmed dark-clay trade pipes manufactured in Marseille (Pl. I, Figs. 26, 28) have been collected from the surface of a historic site in Point Coupee Parish, Louisiana, and although these are not from one of the historic sites in question, they are presented here because of their typological relationship with native pipes that come from Bayou Goula (Pl. I, Figs. 25, 27, 29-31).

### *Objects of Brass or Copper*

Brass or copper kettles were present at these early historic sites in both Michigan and the lower Mississippi Valley. More common artifacts, however, were cut and hammered fragments of brass kettles. All four sites yielded objects of brass, such as disk buttons with rings for attachment, hollow spheroidal buttons with rings for attachment, thimbles, and coiled-spring ornaments. Du Pratz described these ornaments and the way they were worn.<sup>9</sup> A circular copper gorget with two perforations accompanied a burial at the Fatherland plantation. Brass or copper tinkling cones and hawk or Morris bells (Pl. I, Fig. 34) are reported from all four sites and, according to the journal of the frigate *Le Marin*, the Bayougoula and Mugulasha had tinkling cones as early as 1699.<sup>10</sup> Hawk bells worn by the Natchez are mentioned by Du Pratz.<sup>11</sup> Brass dinner bells (Pl. I, Fig. 32) have come from the Bayou Goula site and the Angola farm. Sheet-brass C-shaped bracelets occurred only at the Angola farm, although brass-wire bracelets of similar shape are listed for all four sites. Triangular sheet-brass projectile points were common in the Fort St. Joseph collections, but have not been recorded for any of the lower valley sites discussed in this paper.

### *Iron Objects*

Jew's-harps (Pl. I, Fig. 33) were found at the Angola farm in Louisiana and at Fort St. Joseph in Michigan. These musical instruments, however, are also representative of the late historic period, at least in the upper Great Lakes region.<sup>12</sup> Iron clasp knives<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Swanton, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

<sup>12</sup> Quimby, p. 30 of article cited in note 1.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27, and Plate II.



the Bayou Goula site was too badly eroded to enable me to determine a date or an inscription, but its association with other trade objects and the documentary evidence for the existence of cloth in the area suggest that the seal belongs to the early historic period. Similarly shaped lead seals from the Fort St. Joseph collections are dated from 1734 to 1746.<sup>23</sup>

### *Miscellaneous Trade Objects*

Powdered vermilion has come from all four sites. Its presence among Indians of the lower Mississippi Valley in the early historic period is confirmed by Dumont.<sup>24</sup> Only in the Fort St. Joseph collections, however, are there shell runtees, although ornaments of catlinite are found at the Angola farm, the Fatherland plantation, and Fort St. Joseph.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Despite the distance between the Fort. St. Joseph site in Michigan and the sites in the Lower Mississippi Valley the same types of trade objects occur in both areas. The reasons for this phenomenon are two: (1) Both sites belong to the early historic period; and (2) both areas were under French domination during this period.

Probably a number of these trade objects indicate only the historic period in general. There are, however, other artifacts which seem to be characteristic of the early historic period. Some of them are the various bead types, with the exception of seed beads, which persist throughout the historic period; coins, fabric seals, types of glass bottles, types of earthenware, types of knives, and certain styles of flintlock guns. Of course, it is possible for any or all of these objects to occur in a late historic site, but they would probably be associated with other trade objects known to be diagnostic of the late period. In addition, there are certain early historic trade objects which may be indicative of the area as well as of the period. For instance, the shell runtees, iron-tooled Micmac pipes, metal triangular projectile points, and other things were found only in the Fort St. Joseph collection and, therefore, are representative of the early historic period at that place. On the other hand, such objects

<sup>23</sup> Quimby, p. 27 and Plate I of article cited in note 1.

<sup>24</sup> Swanton, *op. cit.*, pp. 54, 90.



as iron halberds and French elbow pipes are perhaps diagnostic of the same period in the lower valley.

There is the additional probability that early historic sites in areas dominated by the British or the Spanish will have an entirely different complex of trade objects indicative of periods and areas. For this reason the dating of historic sites by means of trade articles should be undertaken cautiously and with a knowledge of the area, the dominant European nationality, the archeology of the historic sites, the documentation of the sites, and the chronology of the trade objects.

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