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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 Setzlér, 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.

Stephen Williams
Peabody Museum
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EARLY 19TH CENTURY TRADE MATERIAL FROM
THE COLFAX FERRY SITE
NATCHITOCHE PARISH, LOUISIANA

by

Clarence H. Webb

The Colfax Ferry Site from which I am presenting material is located twenty-five to thirty miles south of the historic Natchitoches Post site in northwestern Louisiana. The chief reason for presenting this is the comparative infrequency of trade materials found and described from Louisiana and the lower Mississippi Valley, and a hope that our findings may be of value for comparison with contact materials from the eastern portion of the southeastern area.

The first European contact with this part of Louisiana was by Bienville and St. Denis in the year 1700 and, as you know, the Natchitoches Post was established by the French under St. Denis in 1714. This area continued under French rule until the transfer to the Spanish in 1769, but even when this occurred the French influence continued to be dominant. In fact, the governor for the first ten years under the Spanish regime was De Mézières, a French officer who had previously been in this area. The Spanish period terminated with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and our information shortly thereafter comes largely from Dr. John Sibley, who was the first United States agent at Natchitoches.

The aboriginal settlement in this area was largely dominated by the Natchitoches Indians, the lower Natchitoches village of the Caddoan confederation or grouping along Red River. These Indians were found in this vicinity by all of the early French explorers. There were several associated groups, including the Doustioni and Adai. In the late period, at the time when we believe the Colfax Ferry site was occupied, there were many Indian groups moving westward who entered the area. There are descriptions from the early 1800's, for example, of the advent of Choctaw, Chickasaw, Alibamu, Koasati, Kichai, and even Shawnee and Delaware Indian groups. Almost all of these had left by 1840. It is also possible that some of the Indian groups from central and southern Louisiana may have moved into this area. We know for instance that in the early 1700's the Natchitoches left their village, moved to Lake Pontchartrain and lived for some years with the Acolapissa. It is entirely possible, after their return, that Houma or Acolapissa from southern Louisiana, the Opelousas or, even more likely, the Avoyelles from central Louisiana may have moved near the Natchitoches. The Natchez invaded this area but were driven out after a bloody battle with the French and their Indian allies. I mention these groups because the

native pottery found at the Colfax Ferry site gives no certain indication of the Indian group involved.*

The first description of contact or European trade material excavated in the Natchitoches vicinity was by Winslow Walker, who in 1935 described materials found at the Natchitoches Fish Hatchery site. Trade beads, guns, and quite a few similar articles were found. Later, two friends and I found two additional sites, the Lawton Plantation and the Southern Compress sites, which had similar French trade materials, apparently early. All of these sites, which were within ten miles of Natchitoches, also had typical Natchitoches Indian pottery. The characteristic pottery type, Natchitoches Engraved, found in each instance, established these as settlements of Natchitoches Indians. The native pottery was quite similar to types found at Keno and Glendora sites near Monroe, Louisiana, and also similar to pottery found on the lower Arkansas River.

The site at Colfax Ferry was found by a friend of Stu Neitzel, a man from Marksville whose name is Mitchell Smith, a veteran of World War II. During service in the South Pacific Mitchell had learned to use a mine detector, and he has been using a similar instrument to locate sites in Louisiana during the past several years. After discovering evidence of metal objects at this site Smith worked out some ten or twelve burials which contained contact as well as native materials. He contacted Stu, who was then in Mississippi, and was advised to get in touch with us. On three or four subsequent week-ends in the first part of 1960, a group of us worked with Smith at the site and were able to complete ten additional burials. We also made a small survey, attempting to establish some of the stratigraphy, but this was not too successful in the short time available. Shortly thereafter the owners of the land, who were not too interested in preventing depredation, themselves began to dig in the site. Others from nearby towns came on week-end excursions and as a result the site is thoroughly torn up.

The site is located on the first of a chain of hills which reaches the river, terminating the flat overflow valley which extends some thirty miles south of Natchitoches, fertile land which was cultivated by the Natchitoches. It is immediately adjacent to a very old ferry which connects the town of Colfax on the east side of Red River with the western hills in which the site lies. About one mile south of the site there is a white cemetery with tombstone datings back to the mid-1800's. About half of the names are French, half English.

*"Subsequent information from Hiram Gregory, a faculty member of Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, Louisiana, places the Pascagoula Indians living on these hills, attested by official documents from 1795 to 1811, with a small village of Biloxi possibly with them in 1805."

The native pottery vessels from the burials are plain, without the characteristics of Cadoan Pottery. The temper is shell or finely ground clay. We feel almost certain that the trade material dates between 1803, the beginning of the American period, and 1840, when most of the Indians had moved out. It is further identified by the finding of an 1820 dime about 10 inches beneath the topsoil. A creamware plate is stamped "Castleford Pottery" on the undersurface. Only two of the crockery vessels have the manufacturer's stamp; the other, a bowl, has "Phillips-Longport." Almost every burial had one or more wine bottles, more often hand blown greenish glass bottles which were prevalent throughout the earlier French period; others are dark brown and squattier in shape. One small bottle has stamped on the sides "By the King's Patent Essence of Peppermint (sic)."

Iron tripod pots, bullet molds and many other objects of iron or steel were found. There were many spoons and knives, but no forks. A claw hammer, numerous scissors, gouges, a file, clasp knives, strike-a-light, musket parts were found. Interestingly, we did not find a whole gun or gun barrel with the burials, nor was the total assemblage of firing mechanism in a single burial. Most of the gun parts were of iron, but one decorated trigger guard was of brass. The gunflints were generally rectangular with a ridge down the center. Musket balls were 11 mm. in diameter.

A folding comb, a small cup containing bright vermilion pigment, and many beads and silver ornaments were present. The beads and silver ornaments were found in profusion, some with the majority of burials. Silver ear assemblages each included a ring, a droplet and four to five triangular pendants. Circular silver ornaments were perforated and had pins for attachments to cloth bands. Some of these had markings which showed that they were made from hammered-out Spanish mill dollars and other Spanish coins of the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Rouletting was a frequent decoration on the thin silver ornaments. Two finger rings were silver, another brass. Small pendants in the form of the cross suggested a religious motif, as did a small oval medal which is fragmentary. Larger medallions were of thin silver and one of enamel or porcelain, beautifully decorated. The silver ornaments were probably made in this country or Mexico. Many brass C-shaped bracelets were found.

The beads were nearly all small, 1 to 3 mm. in diameter and were either in clusters or scattered profusely with the burials. When strung, those from several burials were 20 to 35 feet in length, and a half dozen burials yielded four to six thousand beads each. There was a total of approximately 30,000 trade beads from the twenty burials. Colors were white, black, dark brown, red, blue and a few clear transparent. Some were faceted, the smaller 1 to 3 mm. in diameter, the larger 4 to 6 mm. Groups of pipestem beads were found in two burials; only two clay pipes,

both with broken stems, were present. * Most of the glass beads were round or short barrel-shaped, a few oval, and a few small red tubular.

About half of the burials had evidence of coffins (wood or regularly placed hand-wrought nails). Some of the objects, as for example bracelets, were in small wood boxes. Only traces of skeletal materials or teeth remained.

* Average diameter of pipe stem perforations was $4/64$ inch, consistent with post-1780 dating (Binford, South).