

THE PLAQUEMINE AND MISSISSIPPIAN OCCUPATIONS
OF THE UPPER TENSAS BASIN, LOUISIANA

A thesis presented

by

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to

The Department of Anthropology
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
in the subject of
Anthropology

Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

May, 1972

PREFACE

The following study is concerned with the last five-hundred years of aboriginal occupation in the Upper Tensas Basin of Louisiana. Within this time span, from A.D. 1200 to 1700, three archaeological phases--Routh, Fitzhugh and Transylvania--have been distinguished. Definition of these phases is based primarily upon data gathered by the Lower Mississippi Survey (LMS) during summer field seasons in 1963 and 1964.

Under the direction of Stephen Williams, the Survey was able to locate and investigate a total of 161 sites in the Upper Tensas Basin. Site survey was carried on at two levels with two field crews. One crew searched for and located sites. When visited by this crew, sites were surface collected, mapped with compass and tape, and accurately located on United States Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps. A number of sites, twenty-three in all, received further investigation in the form of test pit excavations from a second crew. These sites were more accurately mapped with a transit and aerial photographs. Test pits were excavated in midden areas with the goal of obtaining large, single component--or even better, stratified, multiple component--artifact

collections. These "pure" collections were to serve as the basis for definition of archaeological phases.

A total of sixty sites in the Survey Area have components that are relevant to the present study. Of these, six were investigated with test excavations, while the remainder were only surface collected. The former are described in Chapter II; brief descriptions of the latter are contained in Appendix I.

Phase definition in the following report is based almost exclusively upon pottery. Chapters III-V contain descriptions of the ceramic complex of each phase. Settlement pattern for each phase is described in Chapter VI.

While data collected by the LMS during its two field seasons has been of prime importance to the following study, some use has also been made of museum artifact collections from sites in and around the Upper Tensas Basin. In some instances, museum collections from sites in the Survey Area were considerably larger than those collections obtained by the LMS; Swift and Ditto Lake sites are two cases in point. Museum collections were of greater value, however, in working out the relationship of Routh, Fitzhugh, and Transylvania phases to cultural manifestations lying beyond the Upper Tensas Basin. While published site reports have been useful in

detailing extra-area relationships, most observations on sites and phases lying beyond the Survey Area are based upon the author's own analysis of museum collections. Collections with which the author has worked are listed in Appendix III.

A large number of people have contributed in some way to the preparation of this thesis. To them I wish to express my deepest gratitude.

Dr. Stanley J. Olsen (Florida State University) identified a portion of the faunal remains from Transylvania site. Mollusks were identified by Dr. W. J. Clench (Harvard University). Site maps, stratigraphic profiles and some of the pottery illustrations were prepared by Miss Eliza McFadden and Miss Barbara Westman. Manuscript editing was done by my wife, Carolyn Reaves Hally.

Artifact collections were made available for comparative study at several institutions by the following individuals: Mr. Douglas S. Byers (formerly of the R. S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology), Dr. Junius B. Bird, (American Museum of Natural History), Dr. Frederick J. Dockstader (Museum of the American Indian), Mr. Pete Gregory (Northwestern State College, Natchitoches, Louisiana), Dr. John Griffin (Ocmulgee National Monument), Dr. William G. Haag (Louisiana State University), Mr. John H. MacPherson (East Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania),

Mr. W. Fred Kinsey (Franklin and Marshall College), Mr. Robert S. Neitzel (formerly of the Mississippi State Historical Museum), Dr. Phillip Phillips (Harvard University), Mr. Gregory Perino (Thomas Gilcrease Foundation), Clarence H. Webb (Shreveport, Louisiana), and Dr. Stephen Williams (Harvard University).

Dr. Phillip Phillips and John S. Belmont provided invaluable encouragement and criticism during the analysis and writing stages.

My advisor, Dr. Stephen Williams, made available the artifact collections and fieldnotes upon which this dissertation is based and financed a month long study of collections which the author and John Belmont undertook at institutions throughout the southeast. Dr. Williams' profound influence on the author's academic and professional development is witnessed throughout this thesis.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the patience, understanding, and encouragement with which my wife, Carolyn Reaves Hally, supported me during the long years of thesis preparation.

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