

VIII. THE PROBLEM OF A LOWER MISSISSIPPI "PHASE"

The shift from Middle to Lower Mississippi: Arkansas River:

Immediately south of what I have come to regard as the central area of Mississippi culture, "Middle" Mississippi in every sense of the term, we come upon the question of the existence of a "Lower" Mississippi phase. I have referred to that amiable postulation before. It goes back of course to Holmes's monumental treatise on the (1) pottery of the Eastern United States, and has, as I pointed out in the introductory section of this work, been tentatively restated by the Middle Western taxonomists without further examination. There is no question that, taking pottery alone, there is a decided shift about the latitude of the mouth of the Arkansas river, which can be oversimplified by saying that incision takes the place of modeling and painting as the dominant decorative device. Whether there is an equal shift in all branches of culture is difficult to say on the present information which is 99-44/100 per cent ceramic. It is, however, a question that must be examined, if only to understand why, at the Indianapolis meeting of 1935, the question of a Lower Mississippi phase "was not discussed". For information on this portion of the Mississippi Valley we are obliged to rely almost (2) entirely on C. B. Moore. The sites mentioned may be located by reference to the map, fig. 116.

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(1) Holmes, 1903a.
 (2) Moore, 1908.

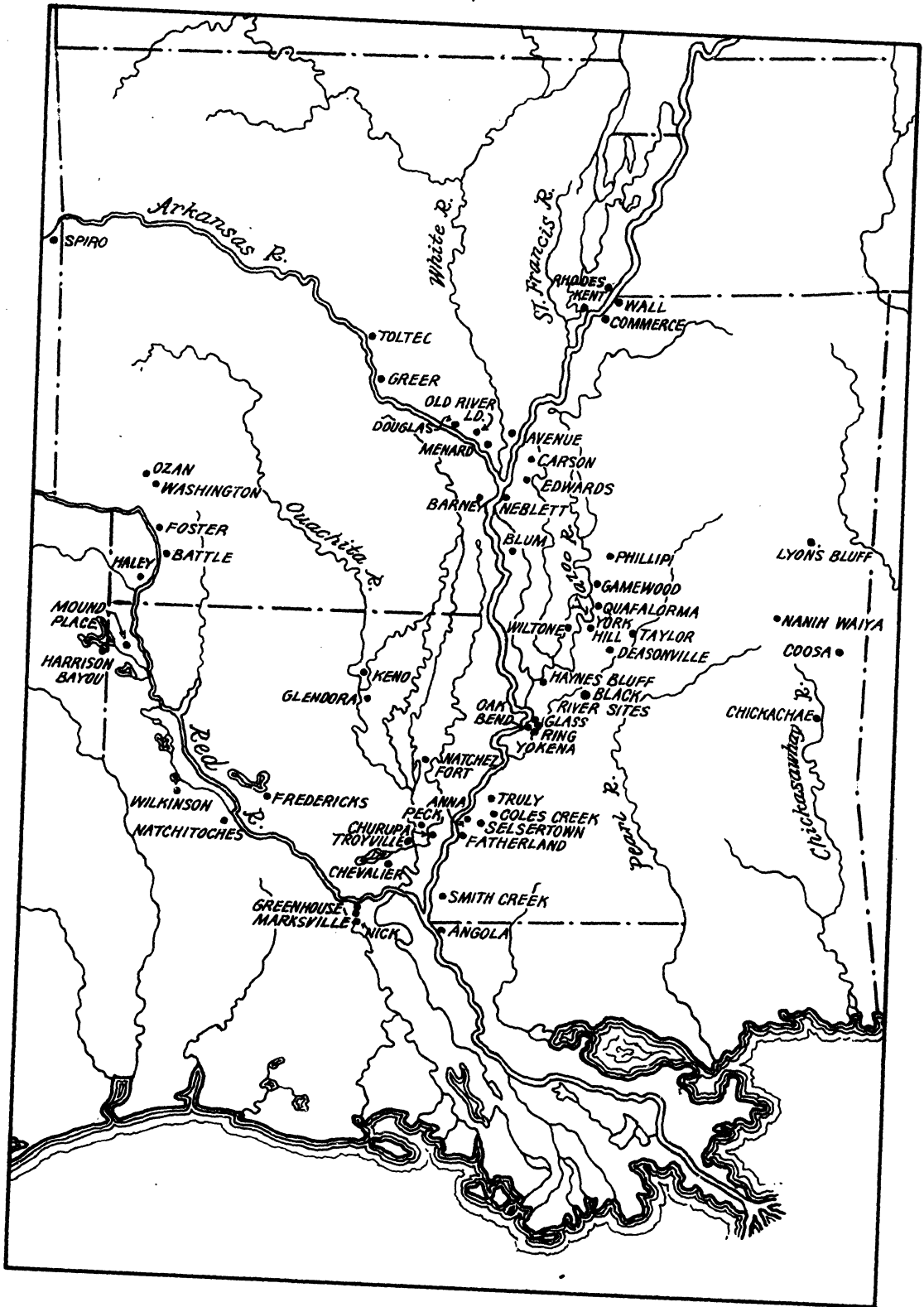


Fig. 116. Sites in the Lower Mississippi Valley.

Going down the river from the "central" area, the first signs of change in culture appear about the 35th parallel which forms the southern boundary of Tennessee. The Rhodes site on the right bank and Walls on the left are typical Eastern Arkansas sites. Kent, a few miles further down on the Arkansas side, shows a blend of Eastern Arkansas culture with something else. The "teapot" makes its first appearance here and the "bunched burial". Furthermore, Kent is a contact site with European trade materials present but in small quantity. Commerce, across the river, shows an actual preponderance of "bunched" burials, indicating a fairly definite shift in culture. Unfortunately Moore does not illustrate any pottery from this site.

From Commerce down to Avenue, not far above the mouth of the Arkansas river we have no information. It is evident that at this place we definitely encounter a type of culture, still Mississippian no doubt, to which the definition of Eastern Arkansas no longer applies, a culture which requires some elucidation on its own account. We may provisionally designate this culture as "Arkansas River" since it clearly centers about the lower reaches of the Arkansas river in Arkansas and contiguous portions of Tennessee. It is clear I hope,

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- (1) Moore, 1911, p. 413 et seq.
- (2) Brown, 1926.
- (3) Moore, 1911, p. 406 et seq.
- (4) Ibid., p. 411.
- (5) Ibid., p. 401 et seq.

by this time, that in applying a name to a group of sites, as I have just done, no classificatory implications are involved. We have, in making our way down the Mississippi River, long since lost contact with the McKern classification. "Arkansas River" is accordingly nothing more than a convenient designation for a group of sites that seem to hang together in presenting sufficient differences from the Middle Mississippi as defined to require separate treatment. It is not even suggested here that it will ultimately prove to be another aspect of the Middle Mississippi. It seems rather to be a sort of transitional zone in which Middle and "Lower" Mississippi factors meet and mingle.

Our information, unsatisfactory enough, centers about the following sites: (1) Edwards, (2) Carson and (3) Neblett in Mississippi; and (4) Menard, Old River Landing and Douglas on the lower Arkansas river. The principal difficulty is the lack of information concerning mounds, house-types and such general features. So far as the limited data go they indicate that in the respects just named the culture might fall within our definition of Middle Mississippi culture. Burial practices, however, are markedly different, with secondary bundle ("bunched") burials predominating. Artifacts with burials,

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- (1) Peabody, 1904.
- (2) Thomas, 1894, p. 253.
- (3) Moore, 1911.
- (4) Ibid.

other than pottery, are very rare indeed, and among them are sufficient quantities of European trade materials to mark all these sites as definitely belonging to the contact period.

Arkansas River pottery seems to show a blend of Eastern Arkansas and Natchez factors, with a not inconsiderable infusion of what (1) Ford has defined as "Caddo". The Eastern Arkansas component is seen particularly in the red and painted wares, which seem to be numerically stronger here than in any other portion of the entire Southeast. The implications of this fact (if it be a fact) for the general lateness of red and painted wares are sufficiently obvious. On the other hand this is the region par excellence of the "teapot", a Natchez feature, which occurs but rarely in Eastern Arkansas. It has been adapted to red and painted wares in typical Eastern Arkansas fashion. Other Natchez shapes, however, occur in native purity with the famous trailed meander decoration that is now definitely (2) associated with the historic Natchez culture. Caddo types, both (3) Ouachita and Red River, also occur in these lower Arkansas river sites and, further up the river, in a site like Greer, for example, (4) become the dominant factors. This, however, takes us out of the range of what I have chosen provisionally to regard as the Arkansas River culture.

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(1) Ford, 1936, p. 72 et seq.

(2) Ibid., p. 50 et seq.

(3) Moore, 1909, 1912.

(4) Moore, 1908, p. 532 et seq.

Chronological implications back up our tentative findings in the Eastern Arkansas in grateful fashion. Besides the cross finds of pottery of Natchez and Caddo types -- both very late as we shall see -- the extent of trade materials in Arkansas river sites makes it seem very unlikely that the contacts in question dated from DeSoto times. The relationships with Eastern Arkansas are such as to indicate a very close contemporaneity. Therefore it seems that our assumption in the previous section (p. 674, 681) that the Eastern Arkansas culture falls mainly into the interval from 1541-1700 is correct.

It seems then, even from the foregoing brief and wholly inadequate sketch, that the Arkansas River is an extremely important intermediate region in which the answer to the difficult question of the relationship of Middle Mississippi with the presumed Lower Mississippi is likely to be found. Connections with the Natchez and with the Caddo have already forced themselves on our attention. How many other linkages with the south might appear with more information is a matter for conjecture. One feels that the postulation of a Lower Mississippi phase would not be benefited by such additional knowledge. Since the Arkansas River culture contains already a fair amount of non-Mississippi factors, it seems probable that it is the scene not merely of a shift from one phase to another of the Mississippi

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(1) The force of this observation can only be judged in relation to information that appears further on in the course of this study. The Caddo, which can now be clearly shown to have developed out of Marksville via Coles Creek, is certainly a non-Mississippi element in the Arkansas River culture. I believe that Natchez will ultimately prove to be the same.

pattern, but a shift into something that is not Mississippi at all.

Louisiana and Mississippi: With the foregoing indication of a cultural discontinuity foreshadowed in the Arkansas River section we are prepared to enter the Lower Mississippi area itself. Here we come at once into contact with the work of James A. Ford who has wrought heroically to bring order into this enormously rich archaeological field. In this effort he has been remarkably successful. I shall therefore not apologize for relying almost entirely on him in the pages that follow.

(1)

Through intensive sampling on a large number of sites in Louisiana and Mississippi, Ford and his co-workers have built up a pottery classification, and, by resolute pursuance of stratigraphic methods in the field, wherever such methods were possible, eked out by judicious use of triangulation, have succeeded in producing a tentative chronological sequence for that area. Contrary to general belief, this is more than a mere sequence of pottery types, though pottery was, to be sure, the chief reliance in the initial stages. Recent excavations, not yet published, have brought together the cultural associations of the various pottery complexes, so that gradually a full length picture of the culture at the various chronological stages is being attained. It is hardly necessary to add that this method is entirely at variance with the McKern system of classification, upon which the present study was initially -- though somewhat half-heartedly -- based. It would be difficult if not impossible to

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(1) Ford, 1936.

harmonize the two points of view. I shall not attempt to do so, but shall merely bring Ford's material to bear, as well as I can, upon the question of the existence, or non-existence, of a Lower phase of the Mississippi pattern.

Ford, in 1936, recognized seven pottery "complexes", whose presumed time relationships are shown in fig. 117. Since the publication of this diagram there have been some changes in detail, that may be mentioned here. A new stage, Tchefuncte, underlying Marksville, has been recognized; and between Marksville and Coles Creek, Ford has interpolated a Troyville stage. Also, Caddo is now believed to have evolved out of Troyville, instead of Deasonville as shown in fig. 117. The new arrangement may be set down roughly as follows:

<u>Northeast Louisiana and Northwest Mississippi</u>	<u>Ouachita and Red rivers</u>	<u>Southeastern and East Central Louisiana (plus adjacent Mississippi)</u>
Tunica	Caddo	Natchez, Choctaw
Deasonville	Troyville	Coles Creek
	Marksville	Troyville
		Marksville
		Tchefuncte

The chronology postulated for the Middle Mississippi makes it evident that it is among the four most recent complexes, Tunica, Caddo, Natchez and Choctaw, that relationships with an assumed Mississippi pattern are most likely to lie. Of the four we have already seen considerable evidence pointing to the Natchez. Consideration of

that complex first is therefore indicated.

Natchez: Unfortunately the excellent material on Natchez ethnography is not matched by the archaeological information. The

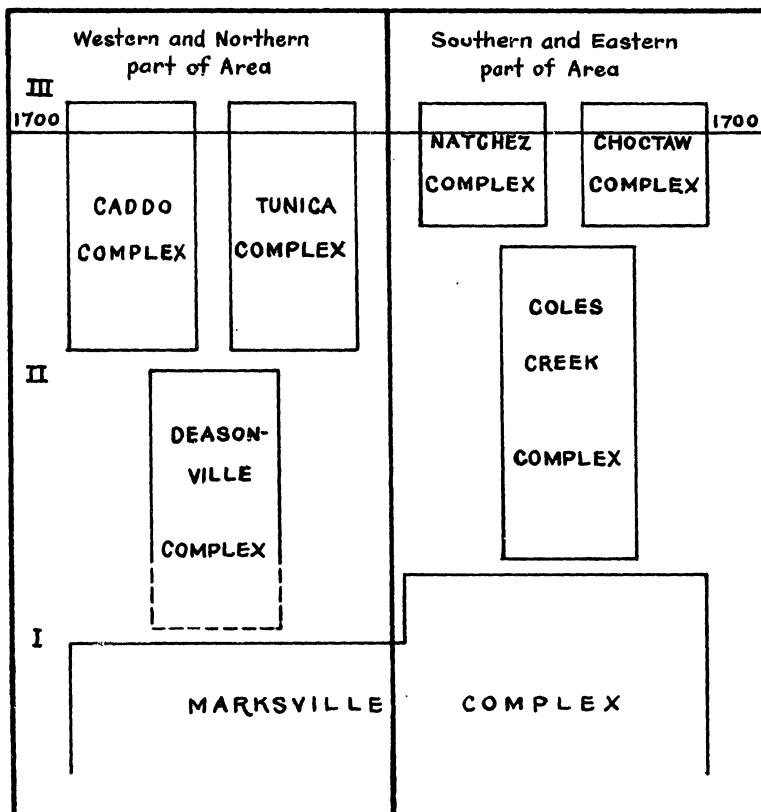


Fig. 117. Time relationships of pottery complexes, Lower Mississippi. (Ford, 1936, fig. 50)

difficulty of locating historic sites in the lower Mississippi valley is not generally appreciated. It appears that only four or five sites of this interesting people have been reported. Of these the most

(1)
important are: Fatherland, Glass and Ring (see map fig. 116). The Natchez fort on the Taensas river is of more historic than archaeological interest.

The archaeology of these sites is bitterly disappointing. Enough information has been recovered to establish the principal Natchez pottery types and that is about all. At the Fatherland site, the type station, there were two small pyramidal mounds and one low burial mound containing a large number of burials. Artifacts besides pottery consisted chiefly of European trade materials. One very interesting limestone head was recovered (fig. 118) the similarity of which in headdress and general treatment to effigies from the Cumberland and Cairo Lowland is very striking. A number of skulls from this mound showed evidences of frontal deformation, which is, of course, not a Middle Mississippi trait.

At Glass, the site excavated by Moore, there were four mounds, two badly mutilated, the others of truncated pyramidal shape. Moore's excavations were confined to the summit platform of one of these, in which he found burials and pottery of Natchez types. The indications were that the mounds antedated the burials, were consequently not necessarily Natchez.

(2)
The Ring site, excavated by Ford, was merely a cemetery with no mounds in association.

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(1) Moore, 1911, pp. 381-388.
Ford, 1936, pp. 59-71.

(2) Ford, op. cit., p. 71.

(3) Ibid., p. 69.

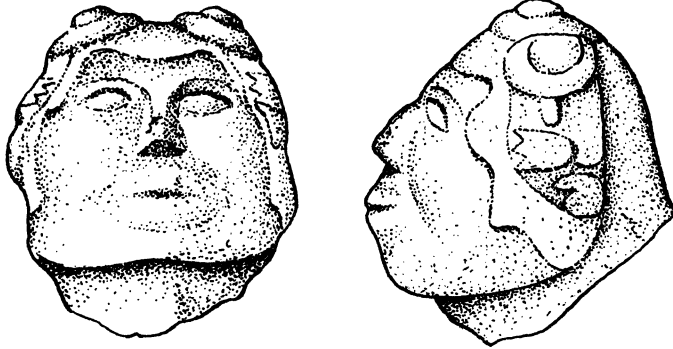


Fig. 118. Limestone head, Fatherland site, Natchez, Mississippi. (Ford, 1936, fig. 11)

Natchez mortuary pottery, with its beautiful trailed decoration of spiral meander motives, is too well known to require description. Associated with it are a number of highly

characteristic shapes. Commoner utility ware with rude herring-bone and brush-marked decoration runs to jar forms with the height greater than the diameter, without handles or other appendages, in all respects different from the standard jar form of the Middle Mississippi. Red ware is present, but evidently very rare -- the red slipped tea-pot figured by Ford may have been an importation, though the teapot is evidently a Natchez shape -- and painted ware is mentioned once by Moore (but not described).

Such conclusions as are permissible on the present information are very unfavorable to any effort to link the Natchez and Middle Mississippi cultures. Of course there is the possibility of a slight time differential, the Natchez sites being definitely late, i. e. around 1700 A. D. whereas even the Eastern Arkansas sub-division of Middle Mississippi is probably not quite that late. This is entirely

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(1) Ford, 1936, fig. 9m.

(2) Moore, 1911, p. 383.

insufficient to explain the differences, however, which are of a more fundamental order. So far as pottery is concerned, they arise, I believe, from the fact that Natchez evolved out of Marksville via Troyville and Coles Creek. The antecedents of Middle Mississippi pottery are still obscure. Though it may have originated in something like Marksville, it undoubtedly passed through entirely different transitional stages.

It is most unfortunate that we have not as yet any older Natchez sites. All early commentators concur in giving credence to their native informants' tales of the former greatness of the Natchez. Except for the fact that Natchez pottery occurs on some of the lower Arkansas river sites, these traditions lack archaeological corroboration.

Choctaw: The Choctaw may be dismissed with a few remarks. On general principles we should not expect from them a Mississippi type of culture. In contrast to the riverine flavor of Mississippi cultures, in which agriculture played an important, but not necessarily dominant role, the Choctaw were essentially inland farmers, so well adjusted to an agricultural economy that they actually produced (1) crop surpluses for trade.

The four known historic Choctaw sites, Nanih Waiya, Coosa, Chickachee in eastern Mississippi and the late Nick site near Marksville, Louisiana have nothing in common with the Mississippi cultures

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(1) Swanton, Cultural Province of the Southeast, 1935.

dealt with in the foregoing pages. Only the first, Nanih Waiya, is a mound site, and though regarded by the Choctaws as the place where they "came out of the ground", the big mound probably belongs to a pre-Choctaw occupation of the site. (1)

In addition to the pottery, which need not be described except by saying that it resembles Middle Mississippi not at all, the Choctaw form of burial is entirely non-Mississippian -- neat piles of disarticulate bones (those celebrated Choctaw bone pickers!) in layers, covered by small conical mounds. (2) It seems quite evident, even on this very superficial showing, that the Choctaw culture lies outside the scope of the present inquiry.

Tunica: The case of the Tunica culture is rather different. The chief difficulty here is that identification of the complex with the historic Tunica rests on one site, and a rather dubious one at that. (3) Whether rightly called Tunica or not, the complex is important for us since it exhibits clearly a relationship to Middle Mississippi, particularly the Eastern Arkansas sub-division. (4)

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(1) Ford, 1936, p. 45.

(2) Ibid., p. 44.

(3) The questionable nature of the identification is freely admitted by Ford, op. cit., pp. 101-2.

(4) Swanton has pointed out on several occasions his belief that many of the place names in the DeSoto accounts of Eastern Arkansas were in the Tunican language (Birmingham Conference, 1932, p. 62).

Sites of the Tunica complex are: Haynes Bluff on the lower Yazoo river, the site on which the identification with the historic Tunica rests; Anna, on the Mississippi ten miles above Natchez; and a group of sites in the valley of the Big Black river. These are mound sites, some of them with typical Middle Mississippi features. The Haynes Bluff site had a large pyramidal mound and several smaller mounds of indefinite shape. Anna consisted of four pyramidal mounds -- (1) the largest approached by a ramp -- in a plaza arrangement. Only one of the Black river sites, however, had platform mounds, the principal feature in the other four being in each case a large conical burial mound with numerous burials in various positions, extended, flexed and bundle. Not particularly promising from the point of view of Mississippi connections

Tunica pottery, however, shows a large number of features closely recalling the Middle Mississippi: shell tempering, association of plain drab, polished drab, red and painted ware, "standard jar form" with loop handles, bottles, rim effigy bowls, rectangular bowls, indented rims, nail marking, nodal decoration. A rectangular "ter- (2) raced" vessel similar to Moore's examples from Moundville had painted decoration in red on buff. Further (roundabout) connections with Moundville may be seen in a human effigy pipe in pottery from one of (3) the Black River sites, crude but precisely similar to the famous

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(1) Brown, 1926, fig. 9, p. 40.

(2) Cf. Ford, 1936, fig. 23h and Moore, 1907, figs. 22-23.

(3) Ford, 1936, fig. 24, p. 124.

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Selsertown pipes, which in turn resemble closely certain stone pipes from Moundville. If Anna is a Tunica site, it seems quite likely that nearby Selsertown is one also -- another tenuous connection with Middle Mississippi, since Selsertown is a great "acropolis" mound similar to several sites on the St. Francis in Eastern Arkansas.

This is getting admittedly tenuous, but it shows sufficiently that there is some connection between Tunica and Middle Mississippi, a good deal more than we were able to show in the case of Natchez and Choctaw. The difficulty of identification with historic Tunica is apparently due to the fact that, with one doubtful exception the sites of this culture are pre-contact. A chronological position very similar to that of Eastern Arkansas is thereby indicated, that is to say very late, but not quite as late at the lower Arkansas River and Natchez. This being the case it seems altogether possible that we have here a southern, and slightly eastern, extension of Middle Mississippi, which, if it could be extended still further eastward, might give us the sought-for connection with Moundville. Perhaps this is the "Lower Mississippi" we are seeking. It may be possible to say more about these interesting possibilities after investigating the Deasonville complex which underlies the Tunica in this area. There remains, however, a fourth historic complex to be dealt with first, the Caddo.

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(1) Brown, 1926, figs. 218-222.

Caddo: Anything but the most cursory consideration of the Caddo complex and the Red River generally is impossible owing to the really prodigious amount of material and the customary publication lag that makes so little of it available. Practically everything in the Red River valley has at one time or another been attributed to the Caddo, so that the term "Red River" has become more or less synonymous with "Caddo". Ford has lessened the confusion somewhat by giving a strict definition of Caddo pottery based on collections from documented (1) Caddo sites, but by failing to consider the work of his predecessors (2) has left it to the reader to judge to what extent their material is also Caddo. What it comes down to is this. In his chronological scheme (fig. 117) about one-eighth of the total duration given to the Caddo lies above the contact line of 1700 A. D., the remaining seven-eighths below it. He has defined the culture in terms of this one-eighth, leaving us completely in the dark with respect to the remaining seven-eighths below it.

So far as the present inquiry is concerned, Ford's definition contains nothing that can be tied in with what we conceive to be the Mississippi "pattern." Only one site out of thirteen boasted mounds of any sort. Stone work included such conspicuously non-Mississippi elements as the grooved ax, cylindrical stone beads, tubes (that are possibly banner-stone) boatstones and gorgets. Pottery types, both

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(1) Ford, 1936, p. 72 et seq.

(2) Moore, 1912.
Harrington, 1920.
Pearce, 1932.

common utility and the fine engraved mortuary wares, are fundamentally different from the corresponding wares in Middle Mississippi.

In so many words the culture defined by Ford as Caddo seems to have little if any relationship to the Middle Mississippi as defined in the preceding chapter. It bears every indication of being grounded in a culture more Woodland, or Hopewell perhaps, than Mississippi. This is extremely important, for one surmises that the postulation of a lower Mississippi phase, our present subject of inquiry, depends mainly on the abundant remains of the Red River. When people use the expression "Lower Mississippi" this is what they usually have in mind. The importance of this point is so great, it seems to me, that we cannot pass over the remaining seven-eighths of Caddo in silence. The possibility of a late shift away from Mississippi, though improbable, must not be overlooked.

Since, in working back from Ford's limited definition there is danger of getting into something that is not Caddo at all, it seems best to forget the term Caddo for the moment and simply examine a number of outstanding pre-contact Red River sites as described by other workers in the field. If we find nothing that conflicts with the generalizations above, the postulation of a Lower Mississippi phase, so far as it depends on the Red River will have received a serious check.

Red River sites: The sites chosen for consideration are Haley,
(1) Battle and Foster on the river, Ozen and Washington a short distance
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(1) Moore, 1912.

(2) Harrington, 1920.

inland north of the Big Bend. (See map, fig. 116.) These sites have all yielded pottery of the same general character as that described by Ford, so we are reasonably safe in regarding them as earlier sites of the same culture, whether "Caddo" or not is immaterial.

The Haley Place was a mound site with at least one truncated pyramidal mound and several others of doubtful shape. Among the latter a flat-topped mound about eleven feet high contained very remarkable burials. In addition to a central rectangular pit dug from the original surface were a number of deep shaft graves dug from the summit, the deepest being about twelve feet, also rectangular, and containing extended burials richly furnished with artifacts. Outstanding among the latter were a number of fine long pottery pipes of modified monitor type, long thin spatulate or flare-bitted celts, ear plugs of shell with copper bosses, small stemmed arrow points, considerable shell, in form of cups and beads, pearls and a prodigious amount of pottery. Except for one vessel the pottery is of characteristic Red River types some of which are included in Ford's definition of Caddo. The exception is a vessel in lost color similar in shape and identical in decoration with examples we have already encountered from Georgia to Oklahoma (fig. 107). Its presence here in complete isolation, along with the spatulate celts mentioned above, was perhaps due to an incursion of the Eagle-warrior complex which made such a striking

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(1) Moore, 1912, Plate XXXVII.

(2) It was on the strength of this one vessel that Uhle first called attention to the presence of the lost color technique in the Southeast (Uhle, 1925).

display at Spiro. Skulls from the Haley Place, as well as other sites on the Red River excavated by Moore showed pronounced frontal deformation.

The Battle Place, further up the river offers little but ceramic evidence. Pottery, somewhat different from that of the Haley site, is very similar to that from late sites on the lower Ouachita river (1) (Glendora and Keno), thereby more certainly Caddo.

(2)

At the Foster site were several mounds, not well described. One of them, of low irregular conical shape, disclosed deep rectangular pit burials similar to those at the Haley Place. Artifacts were similarly abundant -- with eleven burials upwards of 246 vessels! A number of these bore a coating of green pigment over the original engraved decoration, a practice that recalls the secondary over-painting of Maya funerary ware. There was a considerable amount of shell in the form of spoons, cups, and engraved gorgets of debased Cumberland types. Spatulate celts and long chipped blades also recall the Cumberland and suggest, again, the activity of the Eagle-warrior complex. Large double-disk ear spools of stone and a very interesting lizard effigy of clay-stone bore traces of copper overlay. Pottery was similar to that of the Haley Place with the addition of several types already met with on the lower Arkansas river. A general contemporaneity with Eastern Arkansas is thereby indicated, but of actual relationship there is very little evidence.

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(1) Ford, 1936, p. 77.

(2) Moore, 1912, p. 591 et seq.

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Ozan is in reality a group of thirteen closely related sites. In general they yielded pottery and other artifacts similar to those already described, with some additional information concerning mound and house construction. Rectangular platform mounds disclosed rectangular post hole patterns of a pit-house type. Rather curious -- they seem to have first erected a platform mound, then dug a pit-house into it. Access was by means of a long entrance passage. Construction was of wattle-and-daub on a rigid frame with four interior supporting posts. Roofs seem to have been of thatch. Interior plaster bore traces of green pigment.

(2)

Other mounds, less well defined, were apparently conical and contained deep rectangular pit burials, dug from the surface, as in Moore's sites described above, and such burials were richly furnished with artifacts, especially pottery. There is an additional complication on some of these Ozan sites, in that mounds formed by collapse (or deliberate destruction?) of earth lodges were subsequently used for burial by means of pits dug from their surfaces.

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The Washington site, a few miles southeast of the Ozan group, comprised eleven mounds, only one of which was of platform type. Upon excavation the smaller mounds proved to be remains of large circular earth-covered structures, the platform mound disclosed a large

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(1) Harrington, 1920, p. 21 et seq.

(2) Analogies with house types of the San Francisco phase of the Mogollon are rather striking. cf. Haury, 1936b.

(3) Harrington, 1920, pp. 24-25.

(4) Ibid., p. 60 et seq.

rectangular post hole pattern, and there was one burial mound. The latter, teeming with burials at all levels, seems to have been not unlike the "unintentional" burial mounds of the Upper and Middle Mississippi phases. Earth lodges were insufficient to account for the extent of occupation, and, from the large quantity of burnt clay daub lying about, Harrington concluded that there must have been houses of other types, not earth-covered. He suggests that the earth-lodges may have been ceremonial (analogous to the Southwestern kivas). It is unfortunate that excavation did not elucidate this interesting point. In any case the round earth-lodge is a radical departure from Mississippi norms. Pottery and other artifacts were of types already described.

Harrington dug a number of other sites in the region, but the foregoing, added to the data from Moore, give a sufficient sample for our purpose. Going back to the definition of Caddo culture given by Ford, it is evident that, by taking in these earlier Red River sites, the picture has been enlarged and altered considerably, but not by any means clarified. Whereas one could say that the Caddo described by Ford showed little if any relationship to Middle Mississippi, the enlarged picture shows many points of similarity and as many if not more of difference. Some of the more important of both may be mentioned briefly.

Mounds are primarily domiciliary as in Middle Mississippi and often contain burials, but these are in deep rectangular pits extending down below the original ground surface, a radical departure from Middle Mississippi practice. In some cases there is no indication of

house construction to preclude the inference that the mounds were built solely for burial purposes. If so, they were apparently built first, the burial pits being subsequently dug into them, a curious reversal of the usual process followed by mound-building peoples. (1)

There is generally a single large dominant platform mound supporting a large rectangular structure as in Middle Mississippi sites. Orientation of mounds about a plaza is apparently absent, and there are no circumvallations. In general characteristics, therefore, the Red River sites evidently do not reproduce the typical Middle Mississippi features.

The evidence concerning house types is ambiguous. Rectangular houses with wattle-and-daub walls and thatch roofs conform to the general Middle Mississippi rule. On the other hand large earth-covered structures with long entrance passages, some of which at least appear to have been circular, suggest the Plains, the Southwest, even California, but have no place in the Mississippi pattern.

Burials are predominantly extended as in Mississippi cultures, and there are some helter-skelter accumulations recalling the "accidental" burial mounds of the Upper and Middle Mississippi. "Abundance of artifacts, especially pottery" has a familiar sound, but there is nothing in the Mississippi to compare with the richly furnished group burials in large pits. Frontal deformation, which seems to have been fairly general is a pronounced non-Mississippi trait. The coating

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(1) And one that goes back to the Marksville apparently according to information from Gordon Willey (1939).

of funerary pottery with green pigment has no parallel in the Mississippi cultures.

There are the same general types of artifacts, and the same emphasis on pottery, but with numerous differences in detail. Small beautifully chipped points are notched and stemmed in a non-Mississippi manner. Larger blades, however, are not unlike Mississippi forms. Very large ceremonial blades and spatulate celts are tied up perhaps with the Eagle-warrior complex, which may account also for a certain amount of engraved shell and copper overlay. The general situation with respect to this complex looks marginal and perhaps late. Certain definitely non-Mississippian forms appear as minority factors: the grooved ax, boat-stone, banner-stone, gorget and plummet. Large double-disk ear spools seem to be very characteristic.

It is in pottery, however, that the really striking differences are revealed. There are to be sure a number of correspondences in detail, sufficient to indicate a general contemporaneity and a certain amount of actual contact with the Middle Mississippi, but the fundamental aspects of Red River pottery are entirely different. Utility types (about which our information is a good deal less complete) show a number of totally distinct styles of decoration on deep flat bottomed jar forms, reminiscent of Hopewell, but having nothing whatever in common with the standard Mississippi jar form. The fine engraved and paint-filled mortuary types with their emphasis on pear-shaped bottles and carinated ("cazuela") bowls are equally distinct from any

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analogous Middle Mississippi types. A list of specific factors not shared by the two cultures would be several times as long as the list of correspondences, but it seems unnecessary to labor the point.

It must be apparent, even from this hasty and superficial examination that inclusion of pre-contact sites on the Red River has not changed the picture essentially, so that the term Caddo may be allowed to stand, but with enlarged connotation. The evidence leaves no room for doubt that the differences between Caddo and Middle Mississippi far outweigh the resemblances. The latter, one feels, can be explained

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by convergence or actual contact rather than by the possession of a common background. Red River appears definitely as an outgrowth of a non-Mississippi type of culture, Marksville, via Troyville and Coles Creek, as we shall see, hence the radically different and generally speaking more Woodland or Hopewell character of the pottery and the retention of such traits as the grooved ax, banner-stone, boat-stone, gorget, plummet, etc.

Middle American influences on the Caddo culture: The question of Middle American relationships in the Red River region is important on geographical grounds alone. This region, it seems, would have been the first to receive influences from that quarter. Evidences of such infection are not wanting: frontal deformation, large stone

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(1) Comparison with the polished drab incised ware of Eastern Arkansas is suggested, but aside from the fact that both are incised after firing, there is nothing either in shape or decoration to indicate a relationship.

(2) That the main direction of influence was from Middle Mississippi and not toward it is fairly certain. The most characteristic Red River traits do not appear in Middle Mississippi, whereas the most characteristic Middle Mississippi traits do appear in Red River but generally speaking in attenuated form.

ear-spools, engraved paint-filled decoration, secondary coating of mortuary vessels, the cazuela, high annular base, tripod, etc. The interesting thing from the point of view of the present study is that, except the tripod, none of these traits are characteristically Middle Mississippian. That culture has its own, and longer, list of Middle American factors, as we have seen. To account for these by bringing them in via the Red River (Vaillant's hypothetical migratory route) is plainly impossible. The two questions are quite separate and distinct. Both cultures have evidently received influences from below the Gulf, but they are not the same influences.

Red River and the Southwest: The equally important question of possible interrelations, Caddo and Southwest, particularly the newly established Mogollon of southwestern New Mexico, can be dismissed (1) in a similar manner. Connection of some sort is possible but it is not by this route evidently that Southwestern influences came to the Middle Mississippi. Again there seem to be two separate problems each with its own combination of traits. Consideration of the question here in the Red River would therefore contribute little to an understanding of the Middle Mississippi side of the problem.

The older complexes: Coles Creek: On the whole our search for Middle Mississippi connections in Ford's "historic" complexes has been without conspicuous results. To the south and southwest the Natchez and Caddo showed signs of contact with Middle Mississippi

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(1) Gladwin, 1934, 1936.
Haury, 1936b.

but gave no indications of deep-seated relationship. Only the Tunica (the Choctaw can be disregarded entirely) to the southeast in the valley of the Yazoo and Big Black river in west central Mississippi gave any promise of significant relationship. In the older complexes (see fig. 117) we find a parallel situation. Coles Creek, which centers in southwestern Mississippi and east central Louisiana is, like Natchez and Caddo, almost barren of Middle Mississippi features, whereas Deasonville, centering in the same general area as Tunica, shows definite Middle Mississippi connections.

Coles Creek, however, cannot be passed over without comment. For, although the pottery is almost as different from Middle Mississippi as is Marksville itself, the sites, judging from superficial descriptions, present features that have been confidently regarded (up to now) as Middle Mississippi characteristics, notably the imposing truncated pyramidal mounds oriented about a plaza. There is evidence now that this pyramid mound-plaza complex entered at a still earlier stage, the Troyville, which takes it back very close to Marksville itself. This is extremely interesting. In the Middle Mississippi such formal arrangement was seen only in the various Cahokia groups, which were tentatively assigned to the earlier Aztlan-Cahokia I facies of the Monks Mound aspect. Evidently we have here a confirmation of the chronological position, but -- and this is far more important -- a very strong hint that formal arrangement of platform mounds is not an exclusive Middle Mississippi characteristic, but one inherited from an earlier type of culture.

Deasonville: This complex, occupying a chronological position analogous to Coles Creek (see fig. 117) cannot be dismissed so easily. The complex takes its name from a site in Yazoo county, Mississippi, (1) excavated by Collins for the Smithsonian Institution. Subsequently collections were made by Ford and Chambers from a great many other sites in the lower Yazoo valley and in the valleys of the Pearl and Chickasawhay rivers further north and east. The limits of distribution in this direction are not known, as sites of the complex were found as far as the surveys extended. Ford's definition of the complex is based on material from the following sites: Deasonville, Lyon's Bluff, Gamewood, Quafalorma, York Hill, Taylor, Wilzone and Phillipi (fig. 116). Of these only the last-named showed any mounds of Middle Mississippi type. Otherwise mounds are small and conical in shape. In respect to house types, both circular and rectangular post-mold patterns were found at Deasonville, the former so large (38', 45' and 60' diameter) as to preclude the possibility, it would seem, of their being ordinary dwelling houses. Rectangular house floors, about 10' x 15', were found at Phillipi and "briquettes" indicative of wattle-and-daub construction. Regarding other non-ceramic aspects of the culture, information is equally fragmentary.

Pottery is interesting and devastating to preconceived notions, particularly those having to do with Woodland and Mississippi. We discover at once that the two chief "marker" types are a red slipped, sometimes red and white, ware and a cord-marked ware. The redware,

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(1) Collins, 1932.

of course, is Mississippi par excellence, whereas cord-marking is essentially a Woodland trait. The same anomaly already encountered at Cahokia was explained by assuming a late Woodland influence on a straight Middle Mississippi culture, itself none too early. That facile explanation fails to satisfy here, and it may be that the association of cord-marking with Mississippi pottery is more fundamental than I had been disposed to believe. For there can be no question that Deasonville pottery is in some way allied with that of the various Middle Mississippi cultures described above. Besides red and red and white ware, there is a drab type with incised scroll decoration on a globular vessel with short vertical neck and lugs or strap handles, not unlike the standard Mississippi jar form. Notched rims and nodal decoration are also symptomatic of the same connection. Perhaps no less significant than the similarity of pottery types is the presence of various small pottery objects such as "anvils" and pottery disks. Neither of these modest but highly diagnostic objects have been mentioned in the various Lower Mississippi complexes so far examined. Deasonville pipes, moreover, are precisely similar to the common Middle Mississippi equal arm type.

From the foregoing it is evident that the relationship of Deasonville to Tunica is an important question. Unfortunately, Ford has little to say on this point, and that little, unfavorable to this connection. In his concluding chapter he says, "None of the historic complexes show any direct relation to Deasonville. Although at one time it was contemporary with Coles Creek, it seems to have disappeared before the advent of either of the two earlier historic

complexes, Caddo and Tunica. Tunica took over part of the area that
 (1)
 Deasonville had occupied". By "direct relation" he means of course
 (2)
 that Deasonville sherds were not found on Tunica sites and vice versa.
 Some sort of relation, indirect if you like, from the point of view
 of general pottery affiliations, there must be, for both revealed simi-
 larities to Middle Mississippi, Tunica to a considerably greater de-
 (3)
 gree than Deasonville. The last is an important point. If Middle
 Mississippi, or let us say Eastern Arkansas to make the statement
 more precise, is closer to Tunica than to Deasonville, it is perforce
 less old than Deasonville. In that case redware and painted ware
 (red and white) which seem to be late in Middle Mississippi were
 probably preceded by the corresponding wares in Deasonville. If this
 reasoning is sound, and again let me call attention to the undemon-
 strated nature of the premise (that Tunica is more Middle Mississippi
 than is Deasonville), we have an important indication that the deri-
 vation of pigmented wares in Eastern Arkansas is not from the west
 (Southwest) but from the east. Thus another cherished illusion is
 thrown open to question.

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(1) Ford, 1936, p. 254.

(2) In other words by "relation" he means contact, not cultural re-
 lation in a genetic sense. Thus there were "relations" between
 Tunica and Coles Creek, but I do not think that Ford means to suggest
 that Tunica grew out of Coles Creek.

(3) A crude statement of impression not backed up by detailed com-
 parison. The presence in Tunica of bottles, rim effigy bowls and
 full effigy forms, all absent from Deasonville, and the greater
 predominance of shell tempering, would weigh heavily in such a
 comparison.

In view of the fact that Deasonville shows certain definite Middle Mississippi proclivities the question of the relationship between Deasonville and the earlier Marksville becomes important. Unfortunately it is a point on which Ford is somewhat unsatisfactory. In his 1936 report there is a tendency to regard the various complexes as separate entities; one "comes in" and "supplants" another. "There is a hint that possibly the Deasonville complex entered its region and replaced the Marksville complex before the Coles Creek did the same thing in the southern part of the area." (1) So far as Marksville and Coles Creek are concerned I understand Ford now believes there was a clear evolution from Marksville, through Troyville to Coles Creek and, later, Caddo. Whether he envisages the same sort of thing in the northern and eastern portions of the area, i. e. an evolution from Marksville, through Deasonville to Tunica, I cannot say. This is a most important point. If Deasonville and Tunica evolved out of Marksville, we have a Mississippi type of culture evolving out of a Hopewell type of culture. The consequences to the concept of a Mississippi "pattern" would be damaging to say the least. Unfortunately we cannot say definitely that such an evolution did take place. I shall return to this point later.

From the foregoing hasty and altogether inadequate survey of Ford's late and middle horizons, it appears that our search for a hypothetical Lower Mississippi is not going to be crowned with success. At the same time a rent in the conception of Middle Mississippi

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(1) Ford, 1936, p. 257.

adopted here is becoming embarrassingly evident. It is becoming increasingly plain that rectangular truncated platform mounds and plaza assemblage do not form a standard association with the various traits, chiefly ceramic, that I have defined as Middle Mississippi. On the one hand (Caddo, Coles Creek) the mound features carry on without the pottery; on the other (Tunica, Deasonville) the pottery without the mounds. This is a terrific over-simplification, of course, but it emphasizes the main point, to wit, that in the Lower Mississippi the two groups of features are not coextensive either geographically or chronologically.

This is about as far as we need go, so far as a possible Lower Mississippi "phase" is concerned. The earlier Marksville and Troyville cultures are not likely to yield anything of that sort. On the other hand the failure of a Lower Mississippi to materialize can only be explained in relation to these underlying cultures. In fact the general classificatory position in the lower Valley and the difficulties attendant thereon cannot be examined except with the fundamental Marksville as a starting point.

The basic Lower Mississippi culture: Marksville: The Marksville (1) site on the lower Red River was excavated about 1927 by Gerard Fowke, but it was not until a number of years later that it was discovered by F. M. Setzler of the United States National Museum that pottery (2) obtained at Marksville was of definite Hopewell type. Subsequent

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- (1) Fowke, 1927, 1928.
- (2) Setzler, 1933a, 1933b, 1934.

excavations by Setzler and Ford (unpublished) have demonstrated that there is nothing anomalous in the pottery, for the culture is perfectly good Hopewell in a number of other respects. It is still too early to give an account of Marksville culture; for our purposes here a few outstanding features must suffice.

Marksville is a mound culture with a number of distinct types of mounds all associated with burial: small rectangular flat-topped mounds on which burials are placed and covered with a conical mound; small rectangular flat-topped mounds, into which graves have been dug, covered with logs and layers of cane, the whole covered with a conical mound; large, flat-topped mounds possibly rectangular with conical mounds on top of them. A few burials in tombs are extended. The majority of those placed on mound platforms are bundled, flexed and single skull burials, in that order. There is some evidence of cremation, but no actual crematory pits. Mortuary mound sites are said to occur with no village sites in association -- a strong Hopewell characteristic.

A single house site discovered to date shows an entirely new type, about 10' x 15' with rectangular depressed floor, post-holes down the long sides, a rectangular pit in center of floor, 4' x 6' and 3½' to 4' deep with a large post-hole in each corner. This one

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(1) Question apparently whether these larger mounds were actually rectangular in the Marksville period. In the succeeding Troyville stage according to information from Ford there is no question about it. The great Troyville mound itself was of this type. (Walker, 1936)

(2) These come later, in Coles Creek.

(3) Information from Gordon Willey, 1939.

house bears the remarkable distinction of being the only Hopewellian house in existence.

Marksville pottery types show unmistakable Hopewellian features. Prominent are conventionalized bird designs outlined by broad "trailed" lines, the background emphasized by zig-zag rocker stamping ("rouletting") and the very characteristic Hopewell cambered rim, cross-hatched and underscored by a line of hemi-conical punctations. Shapes are equally Hopewellian, the commonest being a deep jar form with slight constriction at the neck, with flat square bottoms, whose corners are sometimes drawn out into small teat-like legs. Platform pipes of effigy form in clay are precisely similar to the famous Hopewell pipes from Ohio.

Further evidence could be submitted, but I think this is enough to demonstrate the basically Hopewellian character of Marksville culture. The resemblances are too detailed and specific to be fortuitous. However, there are also in Marksville elements which have entered into our definition of Middle Mississippi: rectangular mounds (though devoted to burial purposes), rectangular house types (one example), defensive earthworks, human effigies of clay and stone (clay are hollow) and painted pottery (extreme minority factor). To a certain extent therefore Middle Mississippi could be conceived as an outgrowth of the Marksville.

In the succeeding Troyville period, which evolved directly out of Marksville, Middle Mississippi features are somewhat more in evidence. The typical rectangular platform mound with ramps makes its appearance with plaza arrangement. Houses are still rectangular but

larger and without the central pit. Burials are no longer associated with mounds. New forms in pottery come in, among them solid figurines (cf. Cumberland). Clay ear ornaments supplant those of copper. The wildcat or jaguar figure is used in stone pipes (cf. Moundville).

Troyville is still a long way from Middle Mississippi, is not even near enough to be considered as a candidate for the still vacant post of Lower Mississippi "phase". It is too clearly an outgrowth of the Hopewellian Marksville. It does show, however, how by addition of new elements, presumably from Middle America (platform mounds, plaza assemblage, jaguar pipes, figurines) the Marksville culture can be modified in the direction of Middle Mississippi. It is not difficult to imagine the same sort of thing taking place further north, in fact it is difficult to imagine the Middle Mississippi culture coming about except as the result of some such development. The only indications we have as yet of such a progression is the fact repeatedly emphasized in the foregoing pages that the earlier manifestations of Middle Mississippi (Aztlan-Cahokia I and the Cumberland) show certain vague but unmistakable Hopewell tendencies. One may confidently expect that when the problem is finally attacked with the spade something analogous to the Lower Mississippi situation will be found, with a Hopewellian culture at the base and some sort of transitional stage analogous to Troyville and Coles Creek (perhaps Deasonville) as a direct antecedent to the Middle Mississippi on the top. The effect on the concept of a Mississippi pattern as distinct from a Woodland or Hopewell pattern is not difficult to imagine. It would be, as a matter of fact, a repetition of what has already happened in the

Lower Valley, where the term "Mississippi pattern" has ceased to have any referent in archaeological reality.

Summary of Lower Mississippi: The difficulty of summarizing the Lower Mississippi situation is greatly augmented by the fact that in place of the "recurrent culture complex" or taxonomic approach the significant work in the area has had a strictly chronological basis. In spite of my own growing feeling that the latter is the method most likely to achieve results, I must continue to follow the former to the bitter end. The problem, then, is to determine whether there is anything in the data just presented to indicate the presence of a Lower phase of the alleged Mississippi pattern.

In the western portion of the area there is a clear evolution from an early Hopewellian culture (Marksville) through successive stages (Troyville and Coles Creek) to Caddo. Certain features, notably rectangular pyramidal mounds, plaza arrangement and painted pottery, which we have been regarding as Middle Mississippian but which may be more fundamental, appear as early as the Troyville and Coles Creek, and the Caddo shows even more outright Middle Mississippi features. But none of these complexes could conceivably be classified as Mississippi according to our accepted notions of the term. The non-Mississippi features are deep-seated and fundamental. It amounts to this, that west of the River and about the latitude of the Arkansas river, the Mississippi pattern gives place to cultures that show similarities by convergence and cross-influence but which are rooted in an altogether different non-Mississippi past. East of the lower river, the situation is somewhat different. Marksville is

"supplanted by" Deasonville, a complex, which in spite of its cord-marked pottery, shows a very decided Mississippi flavor, and which evolves (I assume, though Ford does not expressly say so) into Tunica which is practically, so it seems, a Middle Mississippi culture. Tunica, furthermore, appears to be connected with Moundville. Thus it would seem that any extension of the Mississippi pattern must take place east of the river, and if there is any such thing as a Lower Mississippi phase, it is to such manifestations as the Tunica and possibly Moundville that we must look for its definition. But so far as one can tell from the limited information available these cultures can be included in the Middle Mississippi phase without undue stretching of its definition. Therefore it would seem that, on the present showing, there is no such thing as a Lower Mississippi phase.

On the other hand, in Marksville and to a greater extent in Troyville there are sufficient Middle Mississippi elements to indicate the possibility of a Middle Mississippi developing out of a similar background, and although very little actual evidence can be produced at the moment to support such a development, it presents itself to the writer as the only acceptable hypothesis for the origin of the Middle Mississippi culture. Should it ultimately be borne out by excavation, it would seem that the concept of a Mississippi pattern would lose whatever validity, or even utility, it now seems to possess.