Indian Pottery at Fort Rosalie in Natchez, a French Colonial Outpost in the Lower Mississippi Valley, 1716-1763

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Introduction

Fort Rosalie is present-day Natchez, Mississippi, was a key stop on Marquette’s River of St. Louis Expedition of 1764. Marquette and Juchereau de St. Denis camped here for several weeks, and probably held council with the Natchez and Tunica nations. The Natchez demonstrated their hospitality, providing horses and guides to the French explorers. When Marquette returned to Fort St. Louis in 1766, the Natchez had been decimated by smallpox, and they were too war-weary to resist the French. The Natchez nation was under French control by 1769. The French, in turn, were under Spanish control by 1779. The presidio at Natchez was vacated by Spanish forces in 1789.

Native Ceramic Assemblage

The ceramic assemblage from Fort Rosalie has been thoroughly analyzed in the past. Specifically, the Assemblage of Earthenware and Faience from Fort Rosalie was published in 1941 (Pratz 1941). Analysis of the assemblage has shown that it is dominated by Colonoware (early 18th-century plate earthenware), much of which is a French red. Colonoware is a distinctive form of earthenware used in 18th-century France and the colonies. It is characterized by red slip and Hispano-American decoration. It was produced in France and transported to the colonies, where it was copied by colonial potters.

References Cited


