

Archaeological Patterns

A few words of explanation may help the reader understand the general features of the archaeology of the Mississippi Valley. It should not be forgotten that the American Indians were found by white men as members of a large number of linguistic and cultural groups. It follows, therefore, that the student will very soon find himself confronted, even within the boundaries of a single state, not by one uniform archaeology, but by a number of different archaeologies.

Four specialized terms must now be used, indicated on first use by quotation marks. According to general agreement, most of the archaeologies of the Mississippi Valley belong to two great "patterns," the Woodland and the Mississippi. The Woodland presents a still undetermined number of "phases"; the Mississippi appears fairly satisfactorily in three phases, the Upper, Middle, and Lower Mississippi. The phases resolve themselves into smaller groupings known as "aspects," and these into still smaller, called "foci." With the focus one reaches, generally speaking, the various tribal units.

So far as known historically, the Woodland archaeology is largely traceable to peoples of Algon-

kian stock, though a very few tribes not Algonkian are believed, on historical evidence, to have taken over at least a material culture of an Algonkian type. Thus Woodland is an archaeological term with broader content than Algonkian, which is linguistic. Most of the Woodland manifestations the country over are not historically documented and so are assigned to the Woodland pattern on archaeological evidence only. They give the impression of a very early occupation of Canada and the United States east of the Rockies. Where stratification of cultures occurs, the Woodland is quite regularly the lowermost element. In Iowa all of the many known Woodland sites (the Peoria villages visited by Marquette never having been identified) are beyond the reach of history.

The Mississippi pattern includes the archaeologies of various Indian stocks, often with historical connections: Siouan, Caddoan, Muskogean, Iroquoian, and others. Just as the Woodland manifestations thin out as the Gulf of Mexico is approached, but few of the Mississippi extend as far north as the Canadian boundary. The two archaeologies have little in common. This fact and the facts of their geographic distribution suggest strongly that the Woodland and the Mississippi were remote from each other in origin. A working hypothesis, supported by a considerable amount of evidence, contemplates a northern origin for the Woodland, directly from Asia by way of Bering

Strait and the interior route, and a southern origin for the Mississippi, indirectly from the more advanced populations of Central America or Mexico, either by migration of peoples or diffusion of culture from these regions by smaller numbers of hardy travelers. A brief comparison of the two patterns may be stated.

The differences begin with the nature of the sites chosen for their homes. The Woodland, as the name indicates, hid their villages away in the forest and developed a forest economy. The sites are small, often covering less than an acre in the valley of a creek or larger stream, on a lake margin, along some sandy ridge, or in the shelter of a cavern or cliff overhang. The Mississippi sites are comparatively large, often covering from ten to a hundred acres or more, and placed in the open on terraces or broad bluffs of a prairie type. The Woodland houses were generally round and of temporary construction; the Mississippi were generally square or rectangular and of semipermanent construction.

The early Woodland sites show no evidence that the inhabitants cultivated the soil; they were quite clearly hunters and food gatherers only. The latest Woodland apparently had a few garden beds where horticulture was practiced on a small scale, the beginning of an industry probably learned from the Mississippians who came into the Great Valley at a later time. The Mississippi peo-

ples possessed a quite well developed agriculture, the considerable variety of corn, beans, pumpkins, and other products of which made possible a more stable economy.

The Woodland built a very large number of burial mounds, not very large, containing burials of flexed-primary or the secondary type. In Iowa the latter is more generally found, and these much more often than not without grave goods. The Mississippi built comparatively few mounds, mostly large in size and often in the shape of truncated pyramids which were intended as substructures of buildings of temporary construction. Their burials were usually in cemeteries, primary, extended on the back, and rather well supplied with grave goods.

In their industries, the Woodland developed stone work of an almost endless variety in the way of notched, shouldered, and barbed projectile points, grooved axes, and art objects of problematical uses. The Mississippi stone work is comparatively simple: small triangular projectile points, great numbers of flint scrapers, ungrooved axes or celts, and few art forms. The Woodland used bone implements sparingly either for tools or ornaments; the Mississippi used bone, shell, and antler for a great variety of tools and art forms: fish hooks, knives, digging tools, fleshers, pendants, arm bands, game counters, and the like.

The Woodland pottery is crushed rock or sand

tempered, the body generally elongated and the base rather pointed, the decorations most elaborate on the outside rim, the vessel walls rather thick, the colors dull red or brown, and the vessels without handles. The Mississippi pottery is most often crushed-shell tempered, globular or flattened-globular in shape, with added varieties of bowls, basins, and beakers, thin walled, with decorations generally on lip, collar, or shoulder of the jar forms, colors light gray or tan. The vessels are frequently supplied with handles or lugs, these often in effigy forms.

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