

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS IN ADAMS COUNTY, ILLINOIS

BY

JAMES B. GRIFFIN

University of Chicago, Chicago

ABSTRACT

This discussion of Adams county is limited almost entirely to the investigations conducted by the Department of Anthropology of the University of Chicago during the summers of 1928 and 1929. The University's survey of the county included the mapping of aboriginal sites, a study of the collections made by local amateurs, and excavations of three mounds.

The survey revealed about 300 mounds, the most common type being the conical or dome shaped, although rectangular pyramidal, and flat-topped conical types are also represented. At Indian Mound Park, three mounds had been constructed on a terrace or platform. Generally the mounds occur in groups on or near the edge of bluffs overlooking the river, flood-plain or stream bed, or on high ground between creeks. The group of seven dome-shaped mounds, mentioned by Thomas as "Indian Grave Prairie", is located in the American Bottoms in close proximity to a particularly valuable village site. The type of pottery from this village site seems to be Illinois variant of Hopewell.

The local collections include material belonging to several cultures. Three-quarter grooved axes, discoidal stones, leaf-shaped blades, stemmed, notched, and triangular points, celts, bell-shaped and cylindrical pestles, stone spheroides, and plummet stones are all common. Hematite celts, stone pendants, catlinite pipes, stone adzes, elbow pipes and bone beads are less common. Not enough excavation has been done to allow these cultures to be accurately separated and identified.

The three mounds excavated were the Lemmon mound, located 16 miles north of Quincy; the Dick mound on the south side of Quincy; and the Parker Heights mound on the north side of Quincy.

The Lemmon mound yielded twenty-two burials, the majority of which were flexed. Twelve burials were associated with stone slabs. The artifacts found were a flint scraper, a flint ball or core, and a number of broken

pots. These pottery vessels resemble in their grit tempering, shape, and decoration those found at the Dick mound, described below, and those vessels found at the Tampico mound in Fulton County. They also bear a distinct resemblance to those described by Fowke as occurring in south-eastern and central Missouri. The burials in the Dick mound were also flexed and in some cases associated with stone slabs. Most of the pottery found in this mound was associated with the burials.

The Parker Heights mound, the largest of a group of thirteen, was constructed from the loess deposits which overlay the limestone rock of the eastern Mississippi bluffs. The mound was 80 feet in diameter and 11 feet high. The skeletal material which was uncovered varied greatly in the state of preservation, which was apparently unrelated to position in the mound or to the age of the individual. In all, 69 skeletons were uncovered. Of those whose age and sex could be identified, six were infants, 16 were children, and 36 were adults; there were 10 males and 4 females. It was not possible to determine the position in all of the burials but in those so identified practically all were flexed. The orientation of the bodies was not uniform but varied throughout the mound. The position of the body had no correlation with age, sex, or height above the floor. Only one body had been buried below the original ground surface. Sixteen of the burials were less than one foot above the floor, four were one to two feet, eight were from two to three feet, twelve from three to four feet and twelve from four to five feet. There were no burials higher than six feet above the floor. All of them were inclusive in the mound.

Limestone slabs were found associated with one-third of the burials. There were a few definite sepulchres, some burials had slabs laid over the top to form a series of arches, while others presented a hit-and-miss arrangement of the stones. There was no connection between the use of stone with the presence of artifacts, or with the sex, age, position of the body, or height above the floor.

One of the most interesting features of the mound was the great central fireplace which was first noticed at the 30-foot line and extended 20 feet east and west and 15 feet north and south. The fired area was 17 to 21 inches thick. Limestone slabs had been placed on the original ground surface and covered with a layer of earth. This was then lined with slabs and an enormous fire built in the center. The various soils used in the construction of the fireplace and to smother the fire resulted in various colors appearing in the baked earth. There were no evidences of cremation. The burials had been grouped around the fireplace and none were found in the earth immediately over it.

Artifacts in the mound were few. The few sherds consisted, except in one case, of shell-tempered material. Other artifacts were eight small notched arrow-points, two larger projectile points and one flint knife, two small pierced shell beads and a shell necklace of nine pieces, and two elbow pipes with round bowls, one having two thin incised lines around the top of the bowl. There were few animal remains in the mound but two dog skeletons were found not associated with human burials.

It is difficult to say at present what the eventual cultural connections will prove to be, but there seems to be sufficient indications in the type of pottery, type of burials, and the physical type to link these excavated mounds in Adams County with the finds made in Missouri by Fowke and with one of the cultures identified by Webb in Kentucky which he also believes to be related to Fowkes' Missouri culture.