

ALLEGED SIOUIAN SITES OF SOUTHERN ILLINOIS

BY

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ABSTRACT

In all of the early accounts of the settlement of Southern Illinois little mention of Siouian settlement is to be found. Consequently, many of the modern historians have assumed that the Sioux did not inhabit and influence the settlement of Illinois. In brief, this paper mentions some of the evidence of the Siouian occupancy. These evidences are traditional, historical, and archaeological. Local tradition indicates that some Siouian group occupied villages near DeSoto, Elkville, Horse Shoe Lake, and McClure. Some of the older inhabitants tell of the return of the Osage or Omaha Indians to what they term their former homes. Some of the early records indicate that Marquette visited an Omaha village somewhere near Clear Creek. Another source indicates a Jesuit missionary found a Quapaw village near Olmstead on the Ohio River.

In the forty-first annual report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Mr. Myer traces a probable migration of the Siouian people through Tennessee and shows that a number of sites in Southern Illinois resemble very closely what he considers to be Siouian villages. His statements are strengthened by the close resemblance of his "Gordon people" to the Madisonville, Ohio, representatives of the Fort Ancient culture, which John R. Swanton has shown to be Siouian. From Thomas, Bushnell, and from Alvord's "Settlement History of Illinois", we learn that the Quapaw are known to have fortified their towns with earthworks and to have built mounds for various purposes, one type of mound peculiar to them has been found on the Ohio just east of the mouth of the Wabash and scattered through the southern part of Illinois are many graves and burial mounds similar to those used by the tribe in historic times. The peculiar feature of the mound architecture referred to seems to be the truncated, conical mound built in conjunction with a lower, more extensive, flat-topped mound, usually rectangular but frequently irregular and sometimes even pear-shaped or circular. At the Linn site, fifteen miles southwest of Anna in Union County, is found a fortified village enclosing several mounds including one of this description. A similar mound is found near Lake Milligan at the southernmost point of the state. At the Kincaid mounds, about twenty miles east of Metropolis, is a large village including several very large mounds, one of which has this same characteristic.

The main effort of this paper is to describe the Linn site and to show that many other remains in the form of earth-works, rock shelters, and rock-carvings may also be ascribed to the Siouian Indians, and to indicate that other sites may well be of Siouian origin. However, it is not the purpose of this article to claim that over half of the earlier remains may be definitely ascribed to the Sioux, as there is considerable evidence to show that the later Illinois Indians, the Shawnee, the Delaware, and the Cherokee, have all left evidences of their sojourns in this territory.