

## CULTURAL AFFINITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN ILLINOIS ARCHAEOLOGY

WARREN KING MOOREHEAD

*Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.*

Director of Archeological Explorations for the University of Illinois.

That portion of the earth's surface which we now designate as the State of Illinois played an exceedingly important part in prehistoric times. One may safely assume that the region lying between the Ohio and Lake Michigan, the Mississippi and the Wabash, offered special attractions to Neolithic man. Not only was there an inexhaustible supply of game, but the Illinois country was in a strategic position. To the west lay the great buffalo country. There was direct contact by water with many distant tribes. No region—not even Ohio, famous in Indian times—could be traversed by canoe more easily. The streams were not obstructed by falls, and there were no mountain ranges. To the west lay two great rivers, the Mississippi and Missouri; toward the south the Ohio and Tennessee-Cumberland—all penetrating thickly populated Indian communities. This favorable setting can not be exceeded elsewhere in North America.

About 1660 the French in Quebec heard of the great village of the Illinois tribe at the site of the present Utica, and a few years later LaSalle, Hennepin, Tonti and others visited it. In 1680 a war party of eight hundred Onondagas marched from their village, now Syracuse, N. Y., and destroyed the Illinois town. While the history of your state begins about 1660, it is quite likely the French *Courier de Bois* entered the region long before that date.

But we are primarily interested in the prehistory of Illinois. Your mounds and monuments were referred to more than one hundred years ago in several publications. Up to the Civil War interest centered in Cahokia, at East St. Louis, and on Monks Mound in particular. The past nine years there has been increasing activity in thorough archaeological studies by two institutions, the University of Illinois and the University of Chicago. This does not mean that there were no men in the State of Illinois who did not appreciate the importance of its archaeology, or who had

not done good scientific work. Here I wish to pay tribute to two pioneers: Mr. George E. Sellars of your state experimented in flint chipping for many years and published a paper in the Smithsonian Institution report, 1885. Notwithstanding all the experimentation on the part of certain individuals in both Wisconsin and Ohio, I have seen no paper equal to that of Mr. Sellars of long ago. Dr. J. F. Snyder of Virginia, was a physician of high standing, who for more than forty years endeavored to arouse some interest on the part of Illinois institutions in their own antiquities. He had at his disposal very slender means; yet Snyder's papers, which were published by your Historical Society, Academy of Science and one or two other organizations, indicate a grasp of the essentials of Illinois archaeology far beyond his times. There is a tendency now to rather minimize or overlook the pioneers in American archaeology. I have always resented this, and I think it is very unfair to the men who labored under great disadvantages. They are entitled to their full meed of praise. Dr. Snyder and one or two others who did not lay claim to any scientific training, and yet were men of intelligence, always maintained that there was a difference between the artifacts found in southern Illinois, those of Cahokia, and along the Illinois River itself. They did not use the word *culture*. Snyder's explorations were accurately done, as is evinced in his papers.

Many years ago a movement was inaugurated to save the Cahokia Mounds, and particularly the dominant central figure, Monks Mound. The first effort failed. Then Dr. David Kinley, President of the University of Illinois, became interested in the subject, and thanks to his recommendations the Trustees appropriated money for a number of field seasons, with the result that a great deal of technical exploration was put into effect in the Cahokia region. Following that, a survey was made of the Illinois Valley from Peoria down as far as Kampsville. The report on this work up to December, 1927, has been published as a bulletin of the University of Illinois. A second report will be issued shortly.

A few years ago Dr. Fay-Cooper Cole, of the University of Chicago, began intensive work in central and northern Illinois, obtaining important results. It is now proposed that both the universities coöperate with reference to their field plans, and that the remains of the entire state be carefully located and mapped, and that a general scheme of coöperation as to archaeological studies be entered upon.

Because of rather extensive field operations, we are able to indicate that our facts tend toward certain conclusions. Yet at present we cannot solve all our problems. Flanking the Ohio River, southern Illinois, is an extension of the stone grave culture of the Tennessee-Cumberland regions. There is no question about this. Also near Cairo are the great flint quarries from which came most of those remarkable spades and hoes of brown chert so common in southern Illinois, southern Indiana, and eastern Missouri. In the southern part of your state have been found engraved shells and pottery forms characteristic of Missouri and Arkansas tumuli. The culture is distinctly southern, as stated, but yet rather different from Cahokia.

Proceeding northward we come to the great Cahokia group opposite East St. Louis. Go back fifty years. That was before a wonderful plain, the American Bottoms, became what Kipling would call "man-handled." Today it is wrecked, so far as beauty is concerned; gone are many of the evidences of prehistoric occupation. It is right and proper, and not unfair to anyone, for me to state plainly and bluntly that the people of southern Illinois made a tremendous mistake when they confined their state park to one-hundred and forty-three acres. True, they have preserved Monks and a few other tumuli. The old surveys, as well as our own survey, urged at Springfield, East St. Louis, and elsewhere, the preservation of the entire tract as a great asset to both the state and the country at large. Instead of that the politicians had their own way, with the result that today the state park is flanked by all kinds of buildings, concessions, race tracks, amusement pavilions, and the real spirit of Cahokia—if one may use the term—is gone forever. This should be qualified with the statement that it would be possible to restore the place to its original interest and beauty, but that would involve enormous expense in buying out the concessionaires.

Four seasons work at Cahokia enables one to make the positive statement that it is the farthest northward push of a distinctly Southern culture, and yet that cultural status is different, as I have said, from what I term the Tennessee-Cumberland, or Etowah, developments.

The Cahokians must have made use of one of these larger mounds as a mortuary for their distinguished dead. Up to the present time this burial place has not been discovered, yet all archaeologists believe it exists. It is necessary to locate it, because



there we will have for our study the art of the people. Obviously, one can not study art unless one possesses art objects.

The immensity of Cahokia dominates. The village site extends for six miles—from east of Monks Mound through East St. Louis to the mouth of Cahokia Creek. There is no village of that extent north of central Mexico.

We now proceed to the Illinois River valley, where we find two more cultures, and north of that, along the shore of Lake Michigan, in the Chicago section, is a typical St. Lawrence Basin culture, making five for the State of Illinois.

In the Illinois Valley, between Joliet and Kampsville, lived a very populous tribe. Inspection of the artifacts in stone and the ceramic art at Dr. Don Dickson's famous site and those found by Mr. George Langford at Joliet, together with the results of our own survey, leads one to the inevitable conclusion that these people were of that Illinois tribe whose last and large village was found by LaSalle and Hennepin, as stated. The Illinois reached from the historic period back into unknown prehistoric times. Within this culture and surrounded by it is a small and more compact tribe of totally different cultural status. I refer to the log-tomb people concerning which so much has been said in the newspapers.

The discoveries were made by ignorant men, and although they were carefully questioned by me personally, their accounts did not agree. Mr. Taylor, in charge of our work, spent more than two months in the Liverpool district watching the tunnel operations conducted by Mr. Ernest Dickson and Mr. Ogden, owner of a large mound. We were refused permission to explore mounds in the region; neither could we obtain consent to trench the Ogden mound, the spirit of commercialism being widespread in that part of the valley.

Details are too lengthy to be presented in this paper, but I shall be glad to explain further to those who are interested. It would appear that crude log tombs, or cists, were built. A layer of white sand was laid down, interments made on this, and the mound erected over all. The objects accompanying these burials are almost Hopewell in character—copper hatchets, human maxillaries cut into ornaments, bear tusks, imitation bear tusks in copper, pearl beads, monitor pipes, but no pottery. There were traces of fabrics here and there, which could have been saved by the use of preservatives.



There appears to be no relationship between the general Illinois culture and the log-tomb people, and the difference is quite as marked as between the Fort Ancient and Hopewell tribes of Ohio.

In his open-air museum at Lewistown, Dr. Don Dickson presents the most important exhibit *in situ* in this country. I make this statement intentionally. Here we have, in their original positions and setting, over two hundred remains, accompanied by mortuary offerings. The term "Fort Ancient" is rather unfortunate when applied to tribes of similar advancement throughout the Mississippi Valley, yet we have none other available. Put crudely, it may be said to represent neither a low culture (such as the rock shelters), nor yet a high culture (such as Etowah), but rather the average. The term middle-class, by which we designate the bulk of our white population, might with equal propriety be applied to the Fort Ancient culture. Thus, in the Illinois Valley, the greater body of middle-class Indians predominated.

Assuming nineteen type units in measuring cultural status of mound-building tribes, we would assign the Illinois Indians (Lewistown and Joliet sites) six units; the log-tomb people eight. By way of comparison one might state that Hopewell is assigned thirteen and Etowah eleven of these units. There are six units present at Hopewell that are absent at Etowah, and four found at Etowah that are absent at Hopewell. Another observer might make use of twenty or twenty-one type units in his scale of measurement. Mine is not final, but merely for my own convenience.

As I said before, while lower Illinois up to and including Cahokia is distinctly Southern, in the Illinois Valley Northern influence is the rule. True, you have certain forms in ceramic art found by both Mr. Langford and Dr. Dickson which parallel forms from Arkansas or Tennessee. Conversely, there are forms developed locally. It appears to me that sometimes we have unduly emphasized the presence of certain artifacts or utensils in one site which are duplicates of those found in a place hundreds of miles distant. We should base our observations upon the preponderance of the evidence. There is a tendency manifest in some of the recent papers in our technical journals to extend the borders of Caddoan, or Hopewell, or Iroquoian, or Siouan influence entirely too far. The finding of a few Hopewell types in Wisconsin does not necessarily prove that there was a well-established and extensive Hopewell center in that state, and this observation applies to other

sections. We must take into account the widespread aboriginal trade—how the specialized workmanship of certain families or clans penetrated to remote tribes. This is a very important subject, and has a direct bearing on our conclusions. I might mention a certain form of highly specialized flint spearhead found in southern and central Ohio. It is always of Flint Ridge pink and white, or bluish flint. These look as if they were made by workmen who followed an identical pattern. There are also the long ceremonial blades of the Etowah culture, all chipped in the same manner, and of practically unified forms. This observation applies to the engraved unio shells which portray the human figure crowned by antlers, and clad in feather robes. Without further detail, if the student observes carefully the character of the workmanship in these three types I have mentioned, he will see at once that they were produced in the same manner, or portray the same technique. A few of these clearly indicate ancient commerce. A majority of these or other designs indicate a culture.

To what origin shall we assign the truncated pyramids of the Cahokia group? There are none—or at least no clearly defined ones—in the entire Illinois Valley, a short distance to the north. Do they indicate a knowledge of Mexican civilization? We should not go that far. Yet how can we explain the presence of truncated pyramids? It is stated that there are two pyramids at Aztalan in Wisconsin, but they are not very large. Certainly, the truncated pyramid is distinctly Southern, and we have no preponderance of evidence in favor of Southern influence in Wisconsin. As our various institutions and individuals extend intensive field operations, I have become more and more convinced that while most of the tribes of the entire Mississippi Valley and the South were addicted to mound building, and thus in the broad sense followed a general custom, yet there were great differences in local cultural development. It seems to me that many of us have failed to recognize the importance of this factor in American archaeology. It applies to Illinois as well as to many other states. The great group at Cahokia was the result of occupation for a considerable period of time. Indians do not work hastily; certainly their development is rather slow.

In the report just recently published we have presented all available evidence to date concerning Cahokia. Time does not permit of repeating that here. One might say, however, that it was more than the northern outpost of a Southern tribe, it was a

veritable citadel of Indian strength. Imagine a village six miles in extent—we have proved that by our test pits. Was so populous a settlement inhabited at one time? I do not think so. The great village at Utica, according to French estimates, contained nearly ten thousand Indians, yet the field evidence—village site debris—at Utica is a mere fraction of that which appears on the surface at Cahokia. Moreover, the site at Utica has not been visited by thousands of tourists and collectors the past forty years as has Cahokia. With the exception of marine shells and galena, so far we have discovered no evidence at Cahokia of extensive aboriginal trade with distant Indians. The much more restricted log-tomb culture, on the contrary, presents exactly the reverse. Until some institution of your state thoroughly explores in the Liverpool district, we can not solve the log-tomb people problem.

Reverting to Cahokia, and of course basing my conclusions on field evidence to date, the people of that great site seem to have lived within themselves. They do not appear to have been much influenced by other tribes. This can not be said of most of the Illinois Valley.

Why were the elongated mounds at Cahokia placed so that their major axes were exactly east and west? Several of the early writers on Cahokia, observing the monuments before they had been changed through farming operations, were impressed by this fact. It was urged by some that these people had a crude knowledge of astronomy. Engineer Taylor, himself an amateur astronomer, has presented in our report three pages of astronomical observations and measurements. He does not believe in the theories of our predecessors; yet he finds it difficult to explain the placing of all the elongated mounds exactly east and west.

Our learned friends, the physical anthropologists, are in a position to shed much light on Illinois archaeology. There is accessible a great deal of skeletal material, particularly from the Illinois Valley and northern Illinois where Dr. Cole's assistants have done such good work. Very few crania from Cahokia are available, scarcely a dozen, yet we discovered over three hundred bodies, few of which could have been preserved even by the distinguished Dr. Hrdlicka himself. Physical anthropologists have an important duty to perform. Let them measure and tabulate the crania obtained in these log tombs, comparing them with those found by Dr. Don Dickson and Mr. Langford. This should be done soon, and we shall then be possessed of very important facts.



Paralleling this, there should be a study of the ceramic art of aboriginal people of every river valley in Illinois. Certainly, there are marked differences between the pottery of tribes along the Ohio River, Cahokia, Illinois Valley, and the lake district. One does not need to be an expert in ceramic studies to note variations between the pottery found in Cook County and that from Lewis-town, scarcely one hundred and fifty miles away.

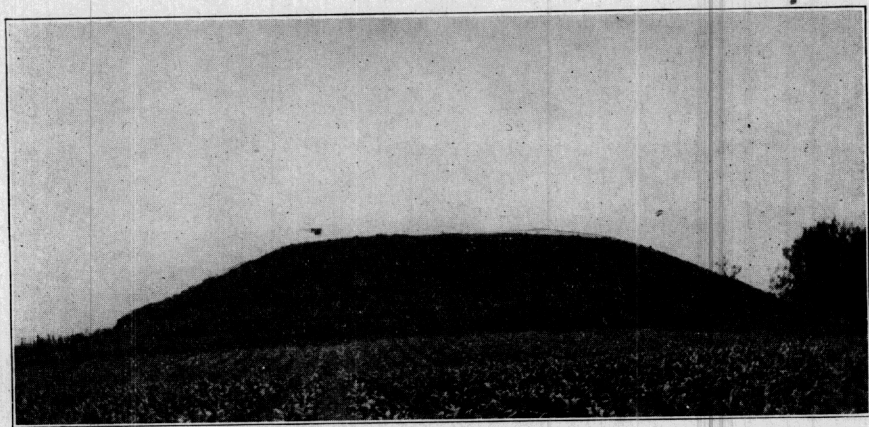
That the objects themselves, both from surface and burials, should be tabulated, goes without saying.

Most important is the mapping of all remains in the state before more of them are destroyed.

As to explorations or excavations, we know a great deal concerning the people of the Illinois Valley itself; also of southern Illinois. There should be, however, a concentrated effort through prominent citizens and organizations to secure several of the large and unexplored tumuli of the Liverpool district for thorough explorations. Undoubtedly, in these are more of the log tombs. The Illinois State Academy of Science has a duty to perform. It should use its great influence in coöperating with both universities named, also Northwestern University, the State Teachers' College, the State Historical Society, and all other organizations to arouse public opinion to this effect. In the Liverpool district are certain mounds as yet unexplored which properly excavated will solve that most interesting problem, the identity of the log-tomb people. The commercial spirit in that particular sector is widespread. It is a waste of time to argue with mound owners. We have tried that. Through careful preparation and coöperation of all the institutions named, as well as local societies, it is quite likely that you could persuade landowners to permit scientific examination of some of these tumuli. You will pardon the wearisome detail, but unless we take immediate steps, the pot hunters will cause further damage. I have advocated state legislation, but most of the gentlemen are against this, and say it would aggravate rather than cure the evil. I bow to the majority, of course, but personally I still believe drastic measures are necessary.

Finally, notwithstanding damage in certain sections of your great state, much remains. You possess a remarkable and interesting field. I trust that no one will consider me presumptuous or forward in offering the recommendations mentioned above. I believe that your major propositions are: first, the preservation of the remainder of the central Cahokia group; second, the thorough

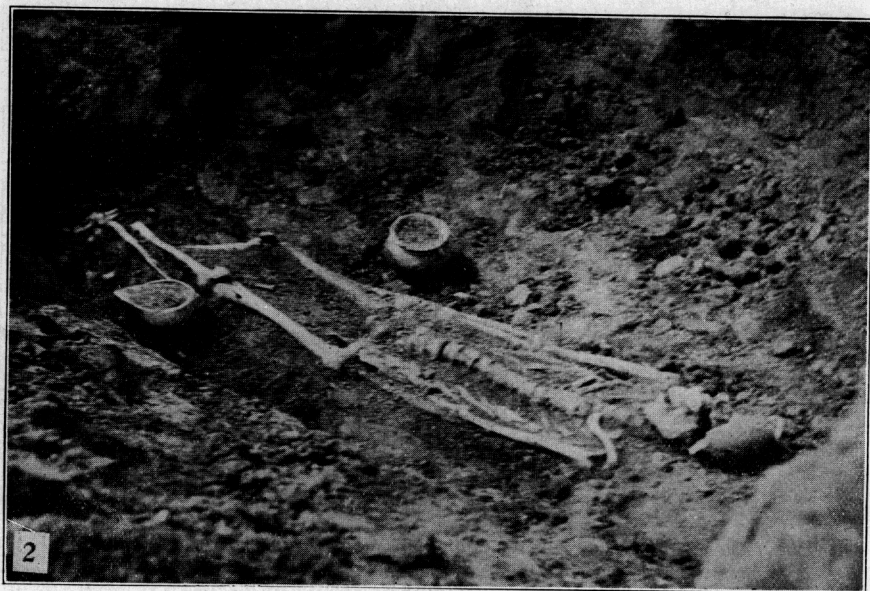
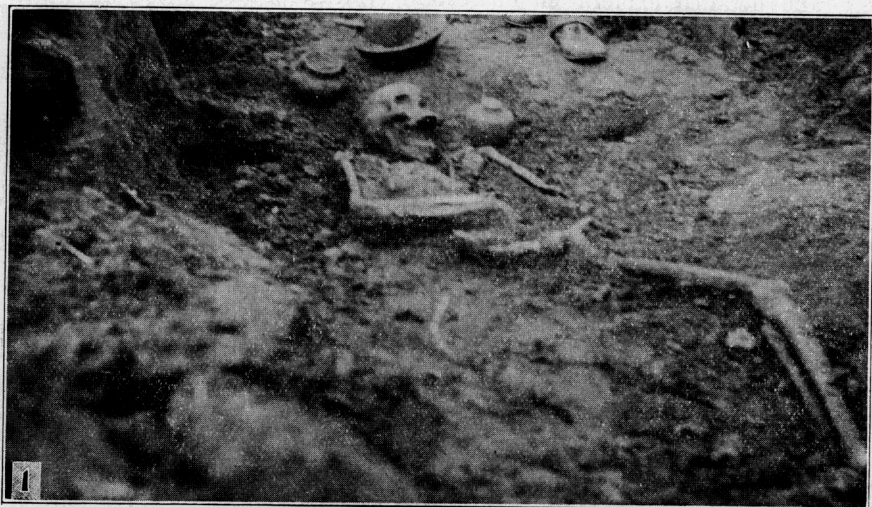
and detailed exploration of certain strategic centers; third, the study of the crania and ceramic art; and, fourth, the mapping of all aboriginal remains.



(Above) East view of Monks Mound. (Photograph by Gordon Severant.)  
(Below) The Powell Mound. (Photograph by J. L. B. Taylor.)

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

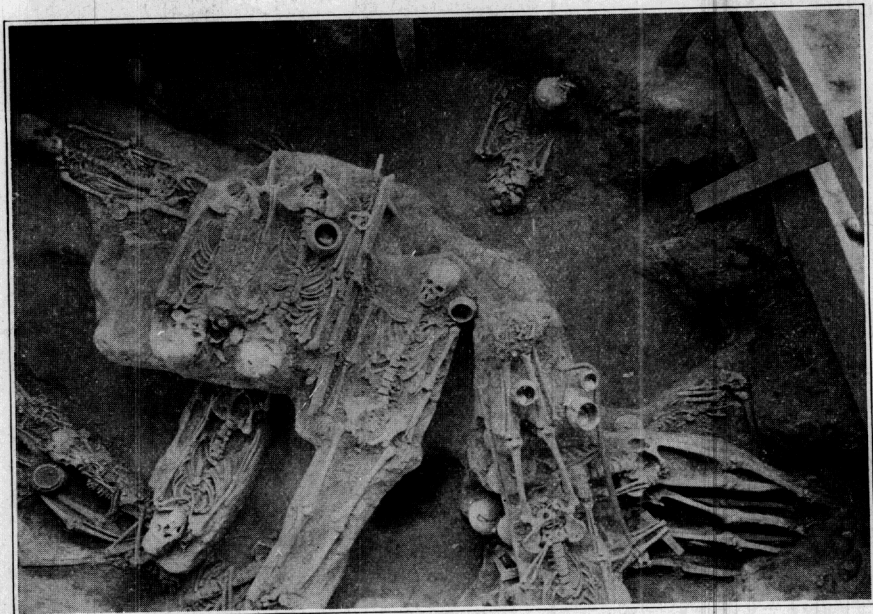
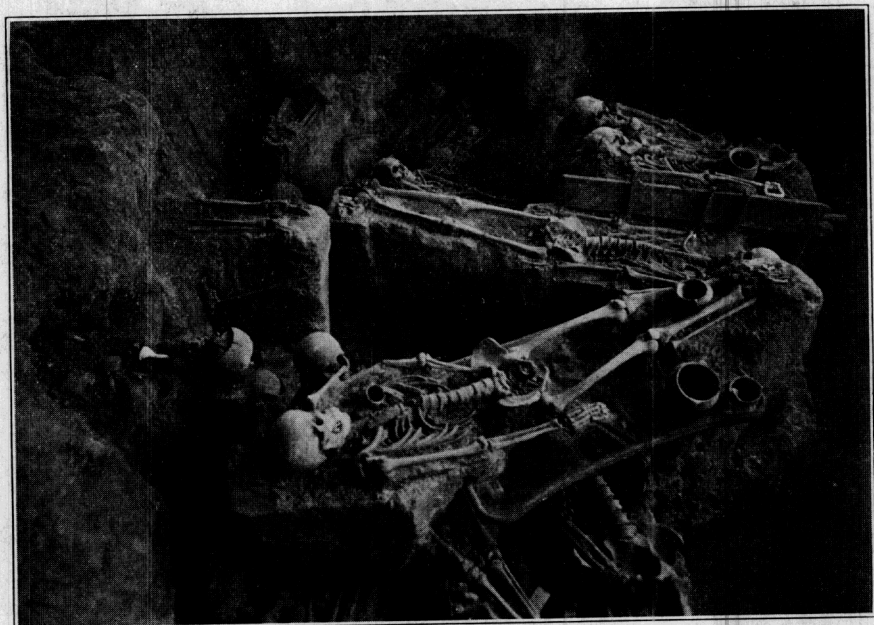
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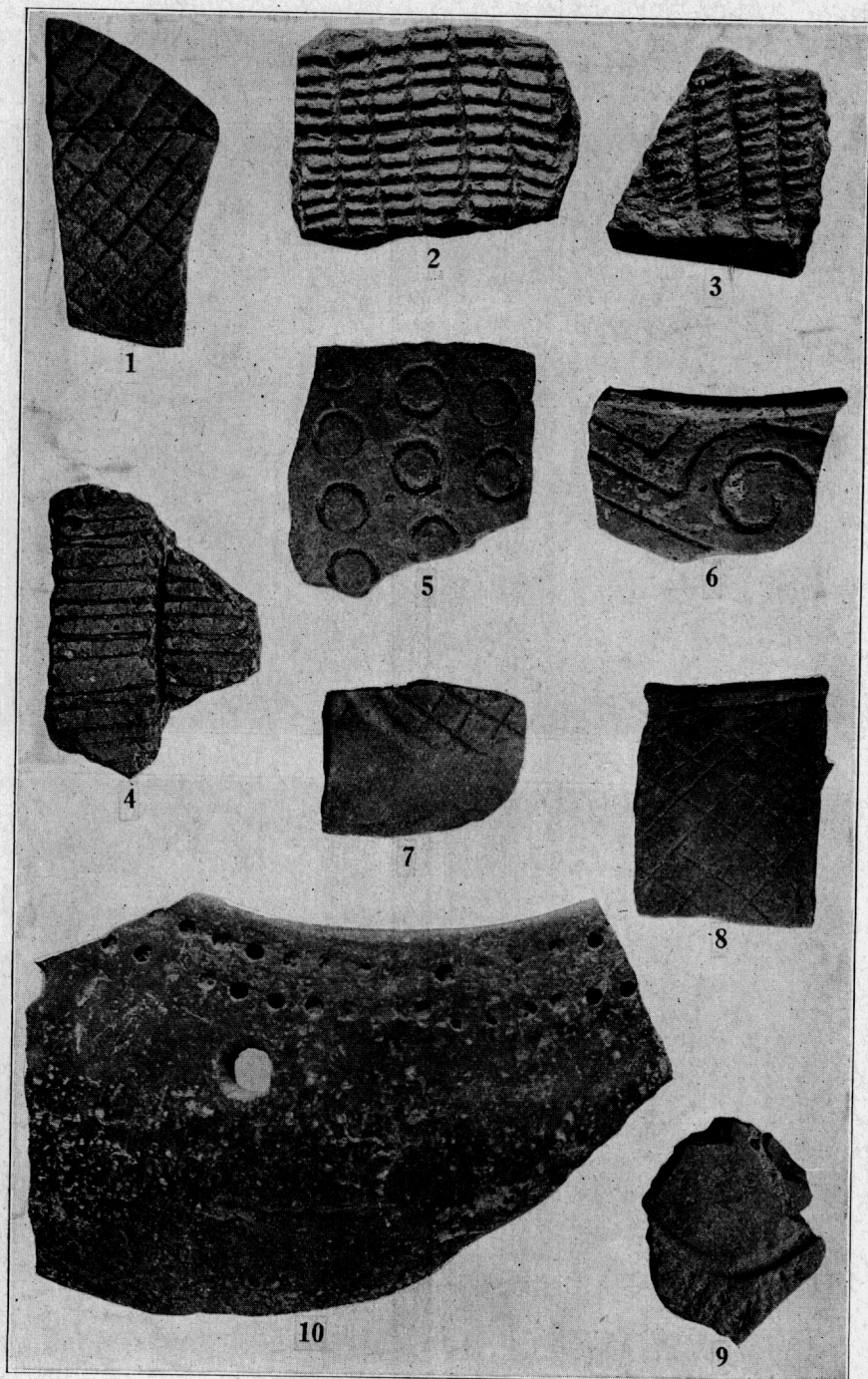
(Above) Skeleton No. 12, from Mound No. 20.

(Below) Skeleton No. 11, from Sawmill Mound.





Views of some skeletons and accompanying objects *in situ* in the mound owned by Dr. Don F. Dickson, Lewistown, Illinois.

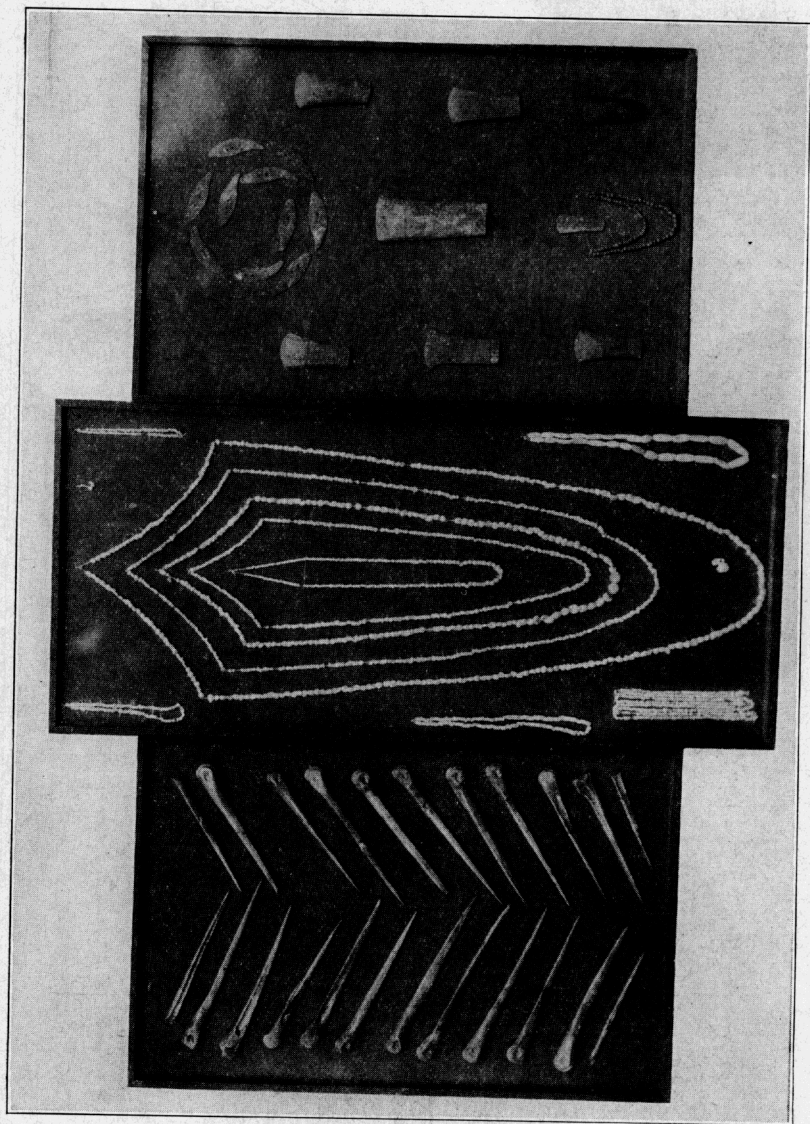


FIGS. 1-9. Fragments of pottery from the Wells-Tippetts Village Site.  
 FIG. 10. Peculiarly decorated pottery fragment, from the Ramey Village Site.

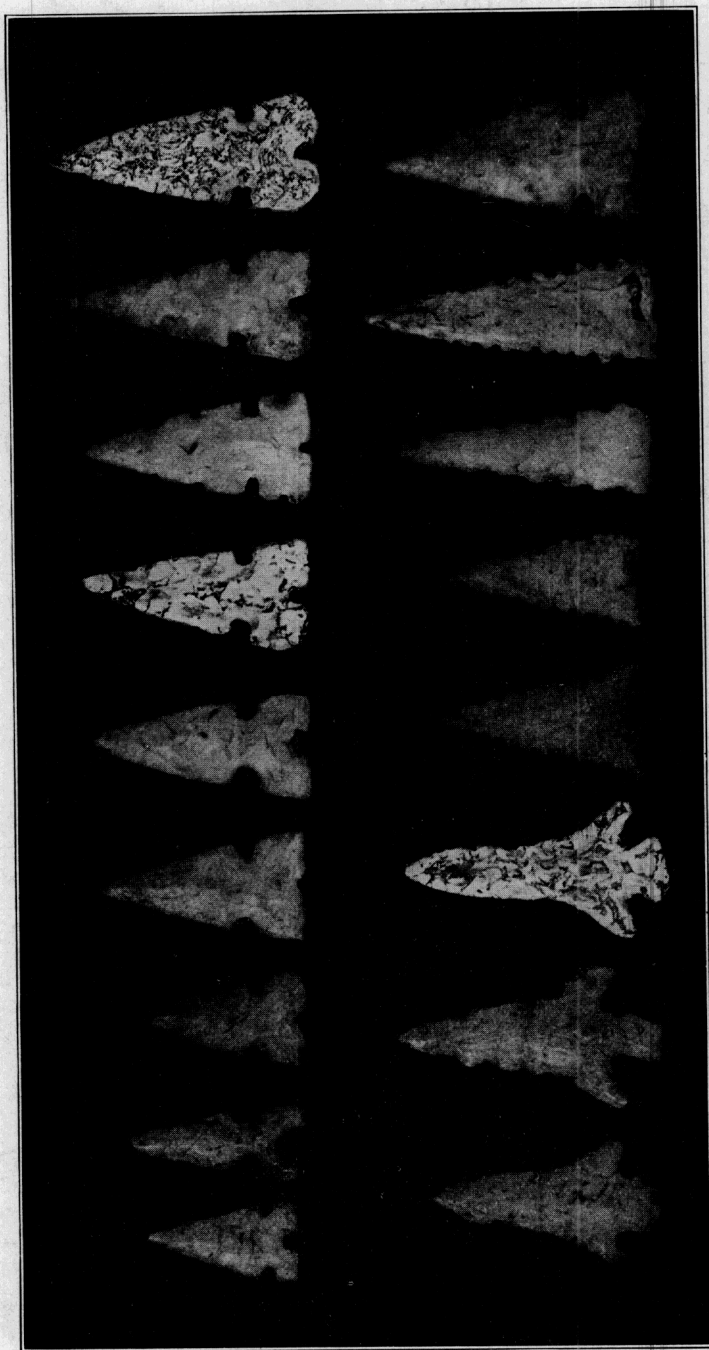


FIGS. 1-5. Five pipes, several of them effigies, from the Monticello Seminary collection. FIGS. 6, 7. Stone effigies, from the Monticello Seminary collection. FIG. 8. Large effigy pipe, from the W. J. Seever collection.

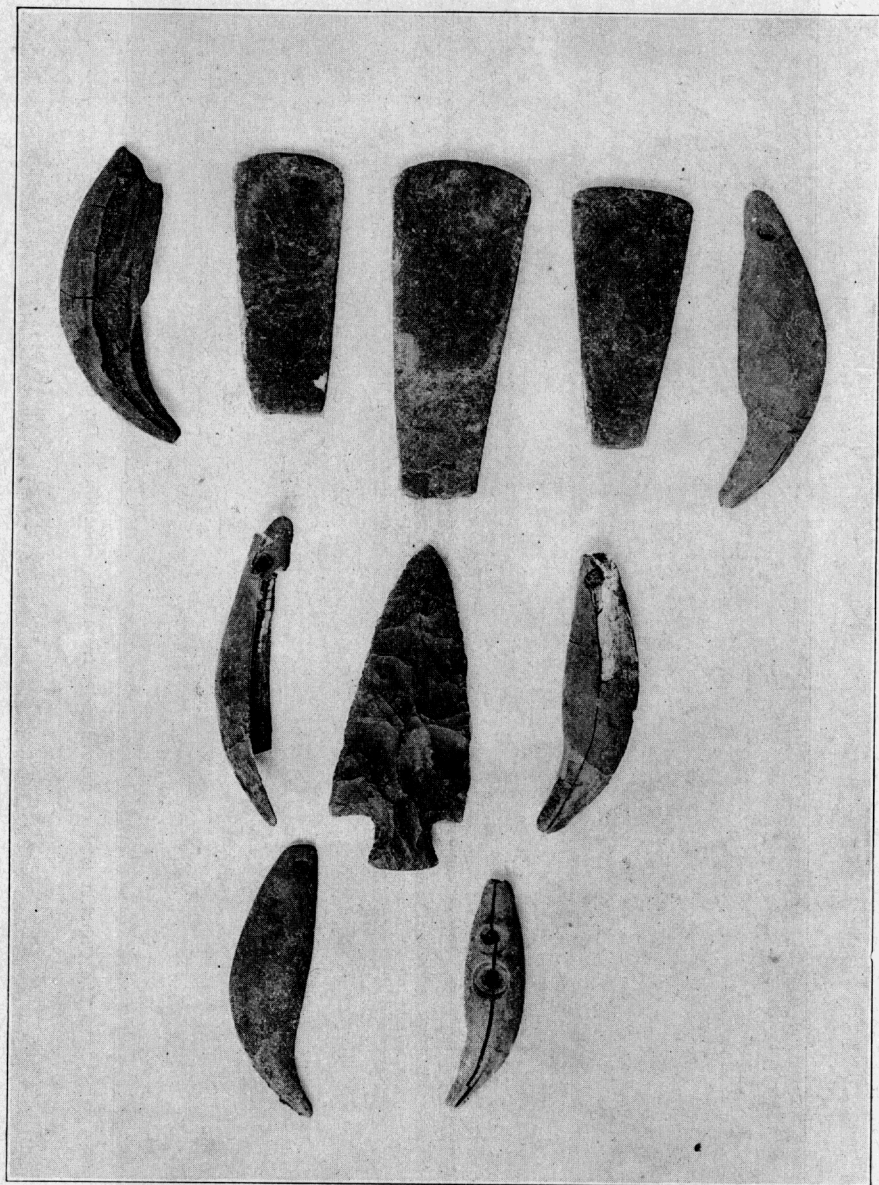




Objects from the log tombs near Liverpool: (*left*) bone daggers, 12 to 16 inches long; (*center*) pearl beads; (*right*) imitation bear teeth in copper, copper axes, and copper beads. From Dr. Don F. Dickson's Collection.



The Cahokia type of arrowheads, from the collection of Dr. George Higgins.



Six bear tusks, two of which are split; three small copper hatchets; and a spearhead of agate-like flint—from the Neteler Mound.



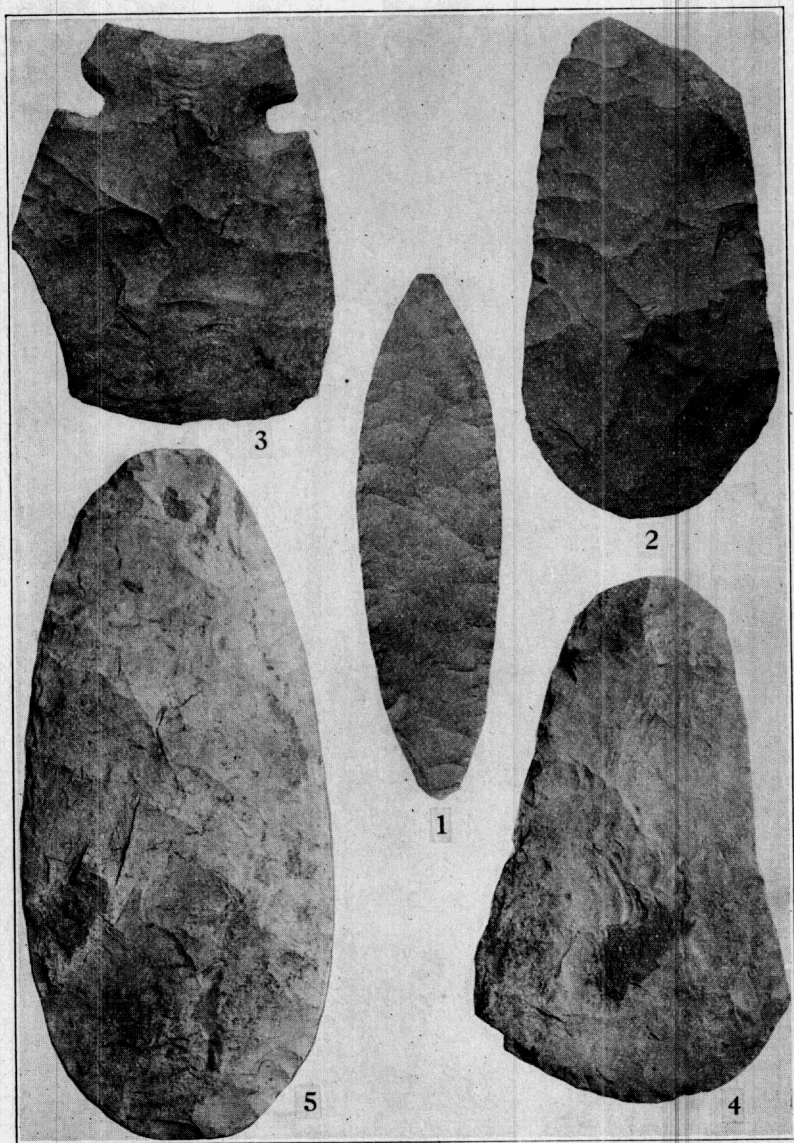


FIG. 1. Flint or chert knife of fine workmanship, from James Ramey Mound. FIGS. 2 and 4. Spades, of flint or chert, from field southwest of Monks Mound. FIG. 5. Spade from James Ramey Mound. (About  $\frac{1}{3}$  natural size.)

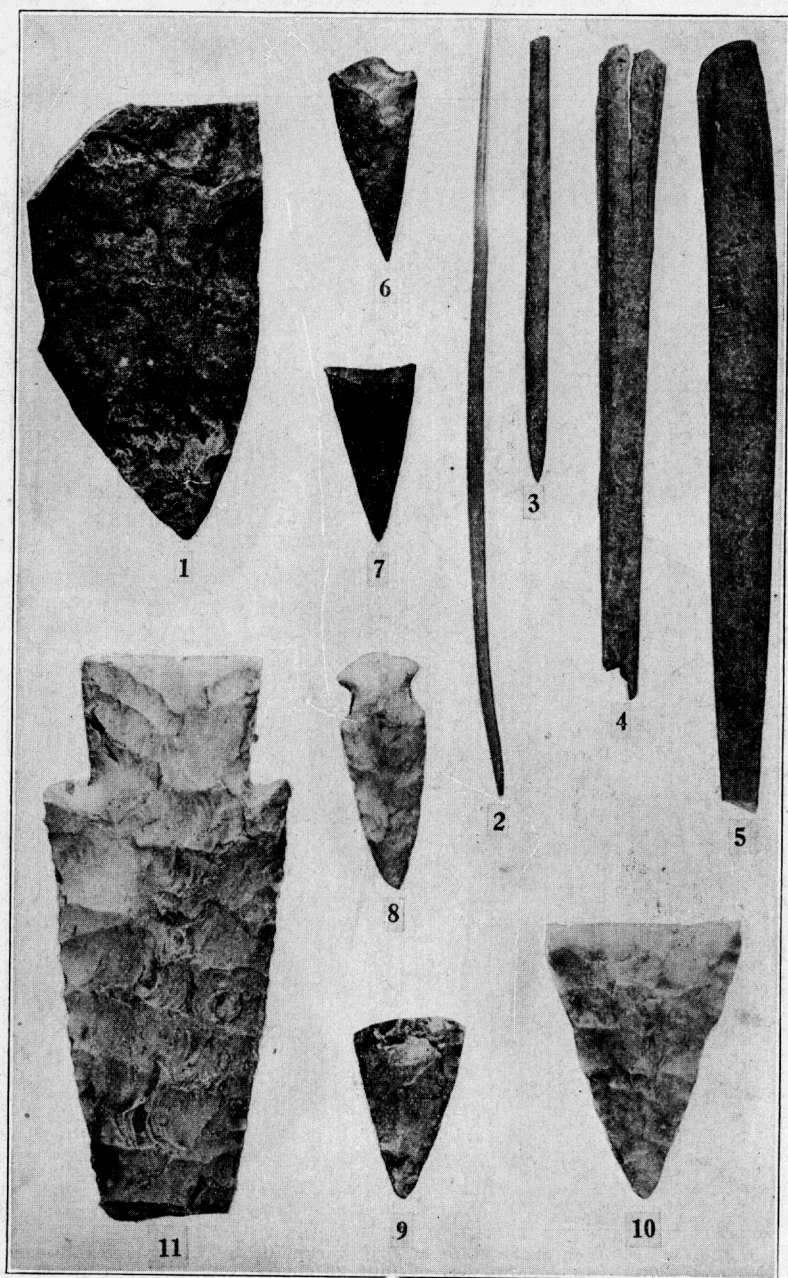


FIG. 1. Flint knife, broken. FIG. 2. Fine-pointed needle of bone. FIGS. 3-5. Bone awls. FIGS. 6-8. Flint arrow points. FIGS. 9, 10. Flint war arrow points. FIG. 11. Flint spear head. (FIGS. 2-5,  $\frac{3}{4}$  natural size; 1, 6-11, about natural size. FIGS. 1, 6-8, and 11 from James Ramey Mound; FIGS. 3-5, 9, and 10 from Wells-Tippetts Village Site.)