



Plaquemine Archaeology

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First major work to deal solely with the Plaquemine societies.

Plaquemine, Louisiana, about 10 miles south of Baton Rouge on the banks of the Mississippi River, seems an unassuming southern community for which to designate an entire culture. Archaeological research conducted in the region between 1938 and 1941, however, revealed distinctive cultural materials that provided the basis for distinguishing a unique cultural manifestation in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Plaquemine was first cited in the archaeological literature by James Ford and Gordon Willey in their 1941 synthesis of eastern U.S. prehistory.

Lower Valley researchers have subsequently grappled with where to place this culture in the local chronology based on its ceramics, earthen mounds, and habitations. Plaquemine cultural materials share some characteristics with other local cultures but differ significantly from Coles Creek and Mississippian cultures of the Southeast. Plaquemine has consequently received the dubious distinction of being defined by the characteristics it lacks, rather than by those it possesses.

The current volume brings together eleven leading scholars devoted to shedding new light on Plaquemine and providing a clearer understanding of its relationship to other Native American cultures. The authors provide a thorough yet focused review of previous research, recent revelations, and directions for future research. They present pertinent new data on cultural variability and connections in the Lower Mississippi Valley and interpret the implications for similar cultures and cultural relationships. This volume finally places Plaquemine on the map, incontrovertibly demonstrating the accomplishments and importance of Plaquemine peoples in the long history of native North America.

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