Arkansas Archeological Survey

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Our Latest Title

Ouachita Mountains Archeology: Researching the Past with Two Projects in Arkansas

Mary Beth Trubitt

Ouachita Mountains Archeology is a concise overview of the past 10,000 years of American Indian history in the Ouachita Mountains region. Intended for a general audience, this book shows how archeologists ask and answer questions about past ways of life. Examples are drawn from two recent Arkansas Archeological Survey excavation projects. What plants and animals did people collect, grow, and prepare into food in the past? How can archeologists use stone tools or pottery to track community movements and social interactions across the region? Why is it important to preserve archeological sites? This Popular Series book communicates research results and highlights new archeological techniques for learning about Arkansas’s past.

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The Battle Mound Landscape: Exploring Space, Place, and History of a Red River Caddo Community in Southwest Arkansas

Duncan McKinnon

This research is a synthesis of archeogeophysical and archeohistorical data collected from the Battle Mound site (3LA1). Using these data, McKinnon seeks to understand how the site is organized in terms of architectural variability, and how differential use areas, such as domestic or community space, can be compared to ethnographic and archeological data concerning Caddo community structure and landscape use. The research is formulated around three questions related to spatial organization and settlement patterning, intrasite behavioral practices, and Caddo culture history. Results show that an examination at multiple scales of resolution can inform about the spatial organization and settlement patterning of Caddo communities and how these underlying principles that define space have endured or been modified over time.

The Mazique Site: A Balmoral Phase Coles Creek Mound and Plaza Center in the Natchez Bluffs Region of Mississippi

Daniel A. LaDu

The Mazique site (22Ad502) is a late prehistoric mound and plaza center in Adams County, Mississippi. The goal of the research was to determine which model of Plaquemine origins best fits the data: External Stimulus or Internal Development. Results indicated that neither model by itself offers a unifying explanation of Plaquemine origins. Instead, the author believes that External Stimulus and Internal Development represent complementary forces at work within a broader network of contact and communication, and that the Coles Creek/Plaquemine transition is more aptly modeled as the convergence of Coles Creek and Mississippian interaction spheres.
This monograph presents the results of archeological excavations at the Howe Pottery (3SA340) in Benton, Arkansas during 2010, with summaries of previous investigations at the site and of other known kiln sites in Arkansas. The Howe Pottery is National Register of Historic Places eligible, significant for its unique state of preservation, coupled with the general lack of archeological data for the late nineteenth-century pottery industry, which was important in the Benton area. Archival records suggest the pottery was established before 1886 and operated until 1898–1899. The archeological investigations reported here uncovered a trove of new information, especially about kiln construction and changes in use of the pottery over time. Local and national trends in traditional stoneware pottery production are tracked via study of the Howe Pottery’s archeological record.
Toltec Mounds was the most significant place for Plum Bayou culture from AD700 to 1050. The plaza and surrounding mounds have received the most study at the site over more than three decades. The concept of a formal arrangement of multiple mounds around a rectangular plaza is rare for terminal Woodland cultures. The full plaza was apparently conceptualized early in the occupation with mounds or earthen platforms constructed throughout the period of occupation. The biggest gap in knowledge concerns the two big mounds; without details about these, our understanding of the mound-and-plaza complex is limited. Deposits beneath the mounds resulted from diverse activities, some of which were sacred. Later activities at Toltec were coeval with early Mississippian communities and the architectural design was absorbed into Mississippian culture of the Central Mississippi Valley. Various aspects of the site—architecture, artifacts, and foodways—indicate that Toltec Mounds occupied a significant position in the Mississippi River valley, both geographically and culturally.
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