

MEMOIRS OF THE
SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN
ARCHAEOLOGY

Number Two

DOUGLAS S. BYERS, *Editor*

Memoirs of the
Society for American Archaeology

THE TCHEFUNCTE CULTURE,
AN EARLY OCCUPATION OF
THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI
VALLEY

By
JAMES A. FORD
and
GEORGE I. QUIMBY, JR.

WITH AN APPENDIX ON
THE SKELETAL REMAINS
by
CHARLES E. SNOW

Number 2

1945

PUBLISHED JOINTLY BY THE SOCIETY FOR AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY
and
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY PRESS
MENASHA, WISCONSIN, U.S.A.

KRAUS REPRINT CO.
Millwood, New York

1974

*Reprinted with the permission of
The Society for American Archaeology*
KRAUS REPRINT CO.

A U.S. Division of Kraus-Thomson Organization Limited

Printed in U.S.A.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|-----|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENT | v |
| LIST OF FIGURES | xi |
| LIST OF PLATES | xi |
| LIST OF TABLES | xii |
| | |
| I INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | |
| II THE TCHEFUNCTE PERIOD SITES | 3 |
| Re-excavation of the Little Woods Middens | 4 |
| Summary of Tchefuncte Period Component at the Little Woods Middens | 4 |
| Summary of Marksville Period Component at the Little Woods Middens | 5 |
| Summary of Coles Creek Period Component at the Little Woods Middens | 5 |
| The Big Oak Island Site | 7 |
| Summary of Tchefuncte Period Component at Big Oak Island Midden | 7 |
| Summary of Marksville Period Component at Big Oak Island Midden | 8 |
| Geology of Middens in the Little Woods Area | 8 |
| The Tchefuncte Site | 11 |
| Summary of Tchefuncte Period Component at Tche- functe Midden B | 13 |
| Summary of Marksville Period Component at Tche- functe Midden B | 14 |
| Summary of Coles Creek Period Component at Tche- functe Midden B | 14 |
| Summary of Tchefuncte Period Component at Tche- functe Midden A | 15 |
| Summary of Marksville Period Component at Tche- functe Midden A | 16 |
| Summary of Coles Creek Period Component at Tche- functe Midden A | 16 |
| The Copell Site on Pecan Island | 16 |
| Summary of Tchefuncte Period Component at the Copell Site | 17 |
| The Tchefuncte Culture and the Subdeltas of the Missis- sippi River | 18 |
| The Lake Louis Site | 20 |
| Summary of the Tchefuncte Period Component at the Lake Louis Site | 20 |

| | |
|---|----|
| The Lafayette Mounds..... | 21 |
| Summary of Tchefuncte Period Component at the Lafayette Site..... | 23 |
| Summary of Marksville Component at the Lafayette Site..... | 23 |
| Summary of the Plaquemine Component at the Lafayette Site..... | 23 |
| The Booth Landing Site..... | 24 |
| The Bayou Rouge Site..... | 24 |
| III TCHEFUNCTE PERIOD BURIALS..... | 25 |
| Burials in the Little Woods Area..... | 25 |
| Burials in the Tchefuncte Site..... | 26 |
| Burials in the Lake Louis Mound..... | 26 |
| Burials in the Lafayette Mound 1..... | 26 |
| The Tchefuncte Physical Type..... | 27 |
| IV THE TCHEFUNCTE ARTIFACTS..... | 29 |
| Objects of Clay..... | 29 |
| Clay Tubular Pipes..... | 29 |
| Problematical Fired-Clay Objects..... | 31 |
| Chipped Implements..... | 32 |
| Flint Projectile Points..... | 32 |
| Sandstone Projectile Points..... | 36 |
| Chipped Stone Blades..... | 36 |
| Drills..... | 36 |
| Scrapers..... | 37 |
| Celtlike Blades..... | 37 |
| Objects of Ground Stone..... | 37 |
| Boatstones..... | 37 |
| Bar Weights..... | 39 |
| Plummets and Pendants..... | 40 |
| Shaft Smoother and Awl Sharpeners..... | 40 |
| Grinding-stones or Mortars..... | 40 |
| Pitted Stones..... | 41 |
| Soapstone Vessels..... | 41 |
| Hammerstones..... | 41 |
| Flat Pebble Saws..... | 41 |
| Celts..... | 43 |
| Quartz Crystals..... | 43 |
| Objects of Bone and Antler..... | 43 |
| Socketed Antler Points..... | 44 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Harpoon Heads | 44 |
| Small Socketed Bone Projectile Points | 44 |
| Large Socketed Bone Points | 44 |
| Polished Bone Splinter Points | 45 |
| Antler Atlatl Hooks | 45 |
| Bone Perforators | 46 |
| Ulna Perforating Tools | 46 |
| Ulna Flakers | 46 |
| Antler Flakers | 47 |
| Antler Handles | 47 |
| Bone Chisels or Scrapers | 47 |
| Fishhooks | 47 |
| Worked Animal Jaws | 47 |
| Perforated Canine Teeth | 49 |
| Worked Penis Bones | 49 |
| Worked Turtle Shell | 49 |
| Miscellaneous Bone Objects | 49 |
| Objects of Shell | 49 |
| Shell Gouges | 49 |
| Shell Chisel | 50 |
| Conch Shell Containers and Ornaments | 50 |
| Miscellaneous Worked Shell | 51 |
| V POTTERY | 52 |
| Tchefuncte Plain | 52 |
| Tchefuncte Red Filmed | 54 |
| Fiber-Tempered Ware | 56 |
| Tchefuncte Stamped | 56 |
| Tchefuncte Incised | 58 |
| Tammany Pinched | 58 |
| Lake Borgne Incised | 61 |
| Mandeville Plain | 62 |
| Orleans Punctated | 62 |
| Mandeville Stamped | 63 |
| Chinchuba Brushed | 64 |
| Alexander Incised | 64 |
| Alexander Pinched | 64 |
| O'Neal Plain | 65 |
| Crooks Stamped | 65 |
| Marksville Incised | 65 |
| Marksville Stamped | 67 |

| | | |
|----------|---|-----|
| | Tchefuncte Pottery Types and their Possible Relationships with Other Areas | 67 |
| | Tchefuncte Period Bases | 72 |
| VI | CERAMIC STRATIGRAPHY | 74 |
| VII | INTERPRETATIONS AND CONJECTURES | 87 |
| | Groups within the Tchefuncte Culture | 87 |
| | Summary of Tchefuncte Culture | 88 |
| | Chronological Position of the Tchefuncte Culture in the Lower Mississippi Valley | 89 |
| | The Temporal Position of the Tchefuncte Culture in the Southeast | 90 |
| | Tchefuncte and Adena | 92 |
| | Tchefuncte and Marksville | 93 |
| | Speculations | 95 |
| | Summary | 95 |
| APPENDIX | | |
| | THE SKELETAL REMAINS, By CHARLES E. SNOW | 99 |
| | Morphology, Measurements and Cranial Indexes | 100 |
| | Postcranial Skeleton | 104 |
| | Pathology | 107 |
| | Conclusions | 108 |
| | Summary | 109 |
| | BIBLIOGRAPHY | 110 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Southern Louisiana, showing location of sites of the Tchefuncte period. | 2 |
| 2. Map of the Little Woods area | 6 |
| 3. Profile of middens Or-1 and Or-2 in the Little Woods area . . . | 9 |
| 4. Profile of the Big Oak Island midden | 10 |
| 5. Profile of the Tchefuncte midden | 12 |
| 6. Idealized diagram of Lafayette Mound | 21 |
| 7. Clay tubular pipes | 28 |
| 8. Chipped flint projectile points | 34 |
| 9. Chipped flint drills, scrapers and knives | 38 |
| 10. Boatstones, bar weights, and plummets | 38 |
| 11. Artifacts of ground stone | 42 |
| 12. Antler and bone points and atlatl hooks | 42 |
| 13. Antler and bone artifacts | 48 |
| 14. Bone problematical objects and ornaments | 48 |
| 15. Artifacts of shell | 50 |
| 16. Sherds of Tchefuncte Plain | 53 |
| 17. Tchefuncte vessel forms | 54 |
| 18. Types of vessel bases | 55 |
| 19. Rim profiles | 59 |
| 20. Sherds of Tammany Pinched and fiber-tempered ware | 60 |
| 21. Sherds of the types, Crooks Stamped, Marksville Incised, and Marksville Stamped | 66 |
| 22. Graph of relative type percentages in Tchefuncte midden A . . | 80 |
| 23. Graph of relative pottery percentages in Tchefuncte midden B | 83 |

LIST OF PLATES

| | <i>Facing Page</i> |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Poverty Point clay objects | 36 |
| 2. Sherds of Tchefuncte Stamped | 52 |
| 3. Sherds of Tchefuncte Incised | 53 |
| 4. Sherds of Lake Borgne Incised | 60 |
| 5. Sherds of Mandeville Plain and O'Neal Plain | 61 |
| 6. Sherds of Orleans Punctated | 64 |
| 7. Sherds of the types, Alexander Incised, Alexander Pinched, Mandeville Stamped and Chinchuba Brushed | 65 |
| 8. Tchefuncte male skulls | 100 |
| 9. Tchefuncte male skulls from the Copell place | 100 |
| 10. Tchefuncte female skulls | 100 |
| 11. Tchefuncte skull forms | 100 |
| 12. Typical male Shell Mound skulls | 101 |

LIST OF TABLES

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| I. Frequencies of Tchefuncte Period pottery types by sites. | 71 |
| II. Distribution of types of bases of the Tchefuncte period. | 73 |
| III. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 1 at Tchefuncte midden A. | 75 |
| IV. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 2 at Tchefuncte midden A. | 76 |
| V. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 3 at Tchefuncte midden A. | 77 |
| VI. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 4 at Tchefuncte midden A. | 78 |
| VII. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 5 at Tchefuncte midden A. | 79 |
| VIII. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 6 at Tchefuncte midden A. | 81 |
| IX. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 1 at Tchefuncte midden B. | 82 |
| X. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 2 at Tchefuncte midden B. | 82 |
| XI. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types by level in analysis unit 3 at Tchefuncte midden B. | 83 |
| XII. Frequencies and percentages of pottery types at Big Oak Island midden. | 85 |
| XIII. Distribution of pottery types at Lafayette Mound 1. | 85 |
| XIV. Tchefuncte Cranial Morphology. | 101 |
| XV. Combined Tchefuncte Crania: means of measurements and indexes. | 103 |
| XVI. Individual measurements, indexes, and averages for crania: Little Woods, Tchefuncte, and Lafayette sites | <i>(facing page 104)</i> |
| XVII. Individual cranial measurements, indexes, and averages for crania from the Copell site. | <i>(facing page 106)</i> |
| XVIII. Comparative Series: means of cranial measurements and indexes. | <i>(facing page 108)</i> |
| XIX. Postcranial measurements and indexes. | 105 |
| XX. Estimates of stature of Tchefuncte people. | 106 |