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BOOK REVIEW

Exploring Ancient Native America: An Archaeological Guide, by David Hurst Thomas, 1994. Macmillan, New York, xxii + 314 pp., maps, photographs.

Reviewed by Timothy K. Perttula

This book on the sites, museums, and archaeological programs across the United States and Canada by David Hurst Thomas should be of great interest to the avocational and professional archaeological community. In the volume, he takes the reader on a guided tour of North American archaeology, focusing on places that "encourage visitation, provide interpretation, and can ensure adequate protection for both the visitor and for the surviving archaeological record" (p. xxi). In return, his only request is for the help of the public in "protecting that past for others to enjoy as well" (p. xxii). Throughout the text, he balances his views of archaeology from a scientific perspective with that of Native American colleagues, who not too surprisingly, see the archaeological world in a very different light.

Thomas' tour begins with "The First Americans," the Paleoindian colonizers of North America, with the Lubbock Lake State and National Landmark outside of Lubbock, Texas, receiving well-deserved attention. Then he moves on to examine the non-agricultural Archaic archaeological record in "Spreading Out Across America," with a particular emphasis on the Native American adaptations of Desert Archaic groups, as well as Archaic groups in California, the Northwest Coast, Northern Plains bison hunters, and Southeastern U.S. Archaic foragers.

In the next three chapters ("Agricultural Imperatives in the American Southwest," "Harvesting the Eastern Woodlands," and "Mississippian Transformations"), we travel to the sites and regions of the horticultural and agricultural Native American peoples that lived in the Southwest, the Southeast, and the Eastern U.S. The text is accompanied by many wonderful color photographs of sites and artifacts, though they emphasize the archaeology of the American Southwest. Inexplicably, in what is otherwise a very informative presentation on the Woodland period in the Southeast U.S., Thomas (p. 149) includes the Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site outside of Alto, Texas, among his list of Woodland-style archaeological sites and museums.

Based on exemplary archaeological investigations in the 1940s and 1960s-1980s at Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site (the George C. Davis site), it is well-known that the Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site was occupied by prehistoric Caddo peoples between ca. A.D. 900 and A.D. 1300. They were contemporaries of the Mississippian groups living throughout the Tennessee, Cumberland, and Mississippi river valleys, and many archaeologists consider the Caddo to have been a Mississippian society. It would have made much more sense to discuss (or at least mention) the Caddoan Mounds State Historic Site in the "Mississippian Transformations" chapter of the book.

In Thomas' chapter on Mississippian archaeology, he devotes several pages and figures to the famous Spiro site. At one point, he suggests (p. 170) the possibility that the Caddo and/or Wichita tribes may be the modern descendants of the people who lived at the Spiro site--this idea has been hotly debated in recent years--but nowhere does he actually discuss Caddo archaeology in his book!

For this reviewer, the most interesting chapter in *Exploring Ancient Native America* is "Colliding Worlds: Old and New?" In it, Thomas reviews the archaeological and ethnohistorical evidence from sites such as L'Anse aux Meadows (Newfoundland), Red Bay (Labrador), Plimoth Plantation (Massachusetts), Spanish missions in Florida, Georgia, and California, and the Battle of the Little Bighorn (Montana) to characterize the diverse and evolving nature of contacts between Europeans and Native Americans in North America. He also provides an informative sidebar on the effects of European infectious diseases on Native Americans, noting that "introduced European diseases directly

contributed to the downfall of many Mississippian societies" (p. 195). Thomas concludes the main part of the book by reminding the reader that there is an enduring encounter between Native Americans in North America and non-Indians. Native Americans are still here, and Native American history is alive and well, though "many continue to overlook and belittle the achievements so evident throughout ancient Native America" (p. 231).

The last 50 pages or so of Thomas' book is a state by state compendium of major sites, museums, and programs that feature Native North American history and archaeology. It is a reasonably comprehensive list, but there are some places missing from his list that feature that archaeology and history of the Caddo peoples in and adjacent to Northeast Texas: Los Adaes State Commemorative Area in Robeline, Louisiana, the Museum of the Red River in Idabel, Oklahoma, the Texas Memorial Museum, Austin, Texas, and the Texas Archeological Research Laboratory at The University of Texas at Austin. Hopefully, these facilities can be added to a future edition of *Exploring Ancient Native America*.