

THE UTLAUT SITE (23SA162W): AN ONEOTA-HISTORIC MISSOURI BURIAL SITE

by

Patricia J. O'Brien and Kevin Hart

The Utlaut site (23SA162W) is located on the floodplain of the Missouri River about one mile west of Malta Bend, Saline County, Missouri and approximately two miles northwest of the junction of Highway 65 and 127.

The site is situated on land owned by Oscar John of Sweet Springs, Missouri and was farmed by Ryland Utlaut of Grand Pass. Both kindly allowed us to excavate there. We were directed to the site by J. M. "Buster" Crick of Corder, Missouri, a local collector who had been finding ceramics which looked "Mississippian." His aid was invaluable, for without it this work could not have been done.

Scattered occupational debris was found covering an area *ca.* 100 feet in diameter around our test, but the major materials recovered, in six burials, seem not to be related to the surface debris. Those materials will be reported in a later paper dealing with site 23SA162, the Cole Lake Sand Ridge site.

As mentioned, the Utlaut site is situated on the floodplain of the river. The area, though, is in reality an old beach of the Missouri, formed when the river swung south of its present course and came near Grand Pass. Because the soil was almost pure sand, all of it was screened.

The initial test was an east-west trench comprising five alternating squares (Fig. 2). Burial materials were found between stakes 35W and 55W north and south of the 0 line (Fig. 2). Remains of five burials were recovered. While a few bones were treated as a separate burial in the field (Burial 5), they were found to be related to Burial 2 on completion of the analysis. The bones in burials 1 through 5 were in very poor condition, and because of cultivation many are missing.

BURIAL DESCRIPTIONS

The osteological analysis of the skeletal remains found in Appendix I is by the junior author and Clark Larsen. The descriptions to follow will focus on the cultural nature of the burials.

Burial 1. This is an adult male. The body was extended and oriented on a northeast-southwest axis with the head northeast. Although a vessel was found in the same square as the burial, it is thought that it belongs to Burial 4. One projectile point was found just east of the neck. Due north by about one foot was a biface chopper/scrapper. These artifacts may be associated with this burial (Figs. 2 and 3).

the former location of the missing head and torso, this burial seems to be associated with the isolated pot from square 0-40W. As figures 2 and 8 show, the vessel would have been placed beside the left shoulder.

This oval-shaped vessel has 14 rows of punctations running around the whole surface. There are two strap handles each with two incised lines placed vertical to the rim (Fig. 6c-d). The rim has been damaged by the plow. Orifice size is 8.21 cm. at the handles and 7.7 cm. between them. It is 12.36 by 13.2 cm. at the shoulder and 8.15 cm. high (incomplete).

Vessels with similar extensive all-over punctation are reported from the Lower Mississippi River Valley and called Parkin Punctated (Phillips, Ford and Griffin 1951:Fig. 94). But a vessel with extensive punctation over the upper two-thirds of it, with some zoned punctates in parallel lines below the handles, has been reported from Gumbo Point (23SA4), an historic Missouri site about a mile and a quarter to the northeast (Chapman 1959:Fig. 36).

Henning (1970) does not report such a design from the Utz site nor other nearby Oneota sites. This tempts one to suggest the vessel has stronger affinities to the historic Missouri than to the Oneota component nearby.

Burial 5. These highly fragmentary remains probably belong with the child in Burial 2. They were found in the northeast corner of square 5N-50W which is just north of the area of the child's skull in Burial 2.

Burial 6. This individual was interred in a different pattern from the others. It was semi-flexed with the head and shoulders slumped forward and down as if the burial pit was not large enough to hold him (Figs. 2 and 9). Rodents had run through the chest area and gnawed some of the bone.

Grave goods consisted of a whole vessel and glass trade beads. The vessel, which was at his knee, was a globular jar having two strap handles with four incised lines running vertically from the rim, and double nested chevrons below them. The chevron was filled with narrow-line, incised punctates (Fig. 10a-b). The rim was damaged. The vessel is 10.5 by 11.7 cm. at the orifice, 16.3 by 18.0 cm. at the shoulder and 12.8 cm. high, making it slightly oval in shape.

Two kinds of beads were found. One was a "seed" bead *ca.* 0.18 cm. in diameter with a 0.05 cm. hole. There were 202 of these found in the sand around the head and shoulders. They may have been in the hair. All were turquoise in color. The second kind included three larger specimens—two turquoise blue and one black. The blue were 0.66 x 0.84 cm., 0.8 x 0.75 cm. and 0.82 x 0.63 cm. in diameter and length. The first had a 0.2 cm. hole and the others 0.18 cm. The black was 0.58 x 0.58 cm. with a 0.12 cm. hole. These beads were found in the area of the left wrist.

These materials are historic trade goods, and are not significantly different from those at Gumbo Point (Chapman 1959) or at the Utz site (Robert T. Bray, personal communication). Although these materials could be the result of English or even American trading activities, it is thought they are French, for the