

Radiocarbon Dates from the Manakaway Site, Connecticut

Author(s): Robert C. Suggs

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FIG. 2 [Kehoe]. Structure 3, looking southwest.

on flat ground rather than on a hill slope, was capped by a large, thick slab.

In spite of the differences noted, the 3 structures appear to have been similar in purpose. They are too small for domiciliary use, and the total lack of evidence of burial, fire, or other occupation of the interiors poses the problem of what this purpose was. While storage seems the most probable use for so small a structure, the extensive labor involved and the masonry skill evidenced would seem to indicate either a necessity for caching valuable material, or construction by people well accustomed to building in stone—perhaps both. Although the masonry skill suggests that the builders may have been white men, for example, trappers wishing to store pelts, the large tree overgrowing Structure 1 indicates the possibility of some antiquity.

Huscher and Huscher (1942: 80) call attention to "circular or subrectangular stone structures, often with dry-laid masonry walls and characteristically built in prominent locations, . . . reported from sites ranging from the Plains across New Mexico and Arizona as far as California. West of the Rocky Mountains they have been reported from the Paradox Valley east of the La Sal Mountains, . . . in northeastern Utah, sometimes standing alone and sometimes in supposed association with Puebloid remains . . . [and] in the Rockies from the San Luis Valley on the south . . . across the Gunnison and Colorado drainages as far north as the headwaters of the White River." The Huschers regard these structures as

evidence of Athapaskan migrations from the north. It should be noted that the structures analyzed by the Huschers were large enough to be considered houses, but they do not mention the full size range.

The above reference suggests that these dry-laid masonry structures may be of greater significance than might at first be supposed. This description is presented in the hope that it may revive interest in the subject among those working in the Rockies and adjoining areas, and lead to a clarification of the meaning of this trait in the region.

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THOMAS F. KEHOE
Museum of the Plains Indian
Browning, Mont.
March, 1957

RADIOCARBON DATES FROM THE MANAKAWAY SITE, CONNECTICUT

The Manakaway site, situated at the tip of Greenwich Point in Greenwich, Connecticut, is a shell midden about 40 by 120 feet in extent, with a depth of about 20 inches. It was excavated by the author during a 3-month period in the summer of 1956 (Suggs 1956a, 1956b).

This is a single occupation site, no breaks in the physical strata or depth differences in artifact distribution being discernible, and it has been assigned to the Bowmans Brook focus of the East River aspect. Some unusual features make the dating of this site of interest, aside from the fact that until this excavation southwestern Connecticut was archaeologically almost unknown.

First, there is the appearance at the site of Vinette I interior cord-marked sherds *above the midden layer*. Other sherds, from within the midden, display partially obliterated cord marking on the interior surfaces, but are not separable in their distribution from the East River sherds.

An additional factor of special interest is the presence of sherds from a vessel decorated with circular motifs in dentate stamping. These consist of several concentric circles arranged below a horizontal neck band of dentate stamping. Other occurrences of circular motifs have occasioned premature inferences of Hopewellian contact (Lopez 1956: 15).

The radiocarbon dates were determined by the Lamont Geochronological Observatory from 2 carefully selected samples. This dating was financed by a grant from the Society of Sigma Xi, for which grateful acknowledgment is made here. The results are as follows:

L-339A. Charcoal from Hearth 1, beneath the midden in the subsoil. Age: 650 ± 100 years (= A.D. 1307 \pm 100).

L-339B. Oyster shells from middle of the midden, at N30 E55. Age: 610 ± 100 years (= A.D. 1347 \pm 100).

These dates tie in suitably with other recent dates (Crane 1956) for the related early Owasco of upper New York, allowing a time gap between early Owasco and East River:

M-176, early Owasco from Chenango County, 1050 \pm 250 (= A.D. 906 \pm 250).

M-177, very early Owasco from Herkimer County, 1000 \pm 250 (= A.D. 956 \pm 250).

The Manakaway dates show that the conclusion that the site represents a single occupation is fairly well justified, and that its assignment to an early Bowmans Brook time level is not unreasonable.

The occurrence of Vinette I sherds and of sherds with partially obliterated cord marking at this late date confirms Smith's suspicion of the continuation of Vinette I and similar material for a much longer period on the coast than inland (Smith 1950: 181). Recently, McKusick has also voiced a belief in the continuance of Vinette I, in his analysis of ceramic materials from the Nas II site (McKusick 1956: 14). Bullen's work in the Shawsheen Valley (1949: 76-7) showed continuance of cognate wares, and Cross (1957: 176) states definitely that interior cord-marked material continues until the Late Woodland period in New Jersey.

There is needed, therefore, a great deal of reinterpretation in coastal sites where dating has been done on the

basis of association with Vinette I sherds. Although these sherds are a valuable time marker for upper New York, their value on the coast is slight.

The circular motif, for pottery decoration, is also shown to be too late for a direct Hopewellian contact. The application of circular or curvilinear design motifs to pottery may be an example of the transfer of decorative elements from nonceramic to ceramic media, since from contact times onward we know that curvilinear designs on skins and bark were common. Occurrences of curvilinear elements are both earlier and later than this — Matinecock Point Stamped (Smith 1950: 196) and Van Cortlandt Stamped (Skinner 1909: 118) — but such decoration is too sparsely represented at the Manakaway site to permit us to infer relationships at the present time.

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ROBERT C. SUGGS
Columbia University
New York, N.Y.
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