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### Ryan Hitt Collection

University Archives and Special Collections, Prescott Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University

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**FINDING AID TO**  
**RYAN HITT COLLECTION,**  
**800 C.E. - 1600 C.E.**

**Prescott Memorial Library**  
**University Archives and Special Collections**  
**W. Railroad Avenue**  
**Ruston, Louisiana 71272**

<http://www.latech.edu/library/scma/>

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Processed by: University Archives and Special Collections, Prescott Memorial Library,  
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Library, Louisiana Tech University

**Descriptive Summary**

<b>Creator Information</b>	Ryan Hitt
<b>Title</b>	Ryan Hitt
<b>Collection Identifier</b>	M-579
<b>Date Span</b>	800 C.E. - 1600 C.E.
<b>Abstract</b>	Pre-Columbian sherds, points, and plumbs from Franklin Parish and Plaquemines Parish.
<b>Extent</b>	2 boxes, 1 folder.
<b>Finding Aid Author</b>	Tanya Arant
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Repository</b>	University Archives and Special Collections, Prescott Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University

**Administrative Information**

- Location Information:** 4<sup>th</sup> floor SCMA
- Access Restrictions:** Collection is open for research
- Acquisition Information:** Donated by Ryan Hitt
- Accession Number:** M-579
- Preferred Citation:** Ryan Hitt Collection, M-579, folder number/box number,  
University Archives and Special Collections, Prescott  
Memorial Library, Louisiana Tech University, Ruston,  
Louisiana
- Copyright Notice:** Louisiana Tech University per deed of gift

## **Biography or History Note**

The Plaquemine culture was a Mississippian culture variant centered on the Mississippi River valley, stretching from the Gulf of Mexico to just south of its junction with the Arkansas River, encompassing the Yazoo River basin and Natchez Bluffs in western Mississippi, and the lower Ouachita and Red River valleys in southeastern Arkansas, and eastern Louisiana. They were primarily agriculturists who grew maize, pumpkins, squash, beans and tobacco but they also hunted, fished, and gathered wild plants.

The Medora Site in West Baton Rouge Parish, Louisiana is the type site for the period, defined by Dr. James A. Ford and George I. Quimby after excavations at the site in the late 1930s and early 1940s. The name for the culture is taken from the proximity of Medora to the nearby town of Plaquemine. It was inhabited from approximately 1300 to 1600 CE and it consisted of two platform mounds separated by a plaza. Pottery from the site was overwhelmingly grog-tempered with only a few bits of shell-tempered pottery being found. These cultural hallmarks along with the implementation of intensive maize agriculture have become Plaquemine culture designators.

Plaquemine was an outgrowth of the earlier Coles Creek culture (700 to 1200 CE). They experienced significant contact with Mississippian culture peoples to their north and east and the Terminal Coles Creek/early Plaquemine period was contemporaneous with the height of the Middle Mississippian culture at Cahokia in the American Bottom near St. Louis, Missouri. After Cahokia's collapse in the mid-14th century they coexisted with Late Mississippian groups centered on eastern Arkansas near Memphis. Archaeologists debate whether Plaquemine is a completely local development or if the changes in their society that led from Coles Creek to Plaquemine was a result of contact with their Mississippian neighbors. Many of these Coles Creek sites continued use by their Plaquemine descendants, and Plaquemine sites were still being used in the early 1700s during the early historic period.

The Plaquemine period saw the re-purposing and expansion of sites occupied during the Coles Creek period. Unlike Mississippian settlements which were often large nucleated villages, Plaquemine settlements were usually barely populated ceremonial civic centers whose only permanent residents were the elites and their families, priests, and their attendants and servants. Everyone else lived in small hamlets and farmsteads dispersed across the landscape. Coupled with the adoption of maize agriculture during this period was a population explosion and an increase in the number and size of the sites. The ethnographic record from the historic period

suggests some large sites such as Winterville or Emerald were the centers of paramount chiefdoms who exerted control over other smaller civic sites. These second tier rulers, part of a hereditary nobility, would have been related matrilineal to the ruling paramount chief. An inherently volatile system, sometimes factions in smaller centers attained supremacy and power would shift from one civic center to another, resulting in the partial or total abandonment of the former capital.

Sources:

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Neuman, Robert W.; Hawkins, Nancy W. (1993). "Louisiana Prehistory: Plaquemine-Mississippian". Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana Archaeological Survey and Antiquities Commission, Louisiana Dept. Culture, Recreation and Tourism.

"The Plaquemine Culture, A.D 1000" Louisiana Prehistory, second edition  
By Robert W. Neuman, Nancy W. Hawkins Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism  
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Second Printing: May 1993

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Brown, Ian W. (1985). "Plaquemine architectural patterns in the Natchez Bluffs and surrounding regions of the Lower Mississippi valley". *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology*. 10 (2): 251–305. JSTOR 20707952.

Downs, Lauren Elizabeth (2012). *The Glass Site (22Wr502): An investigation of Plaquemine culture architecture, occupation, and interaction in the northern portion of the Natchez Bluffs region, Mississippi (PDF)* (Doctoral thesis). via ProQuest.

"Louisiana Comprehensive Statewide Historic Preservation Plan". September 28, 2001.  
Retrieved 2009-05-30.

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## **Collection Description**

### **Scope**

The Ryan Hitt Collection (800 C.E. - 1600 C.E.; 2 linear feet) is a collection of pottery shards, points, and plumbs found by the donor hunting for artifacts in fields and woods. The collection consists of two cases of points and plumbs and one box of sherds. The case displays were created by the donor and creator of the collection. One case contains 30 points and 1 plumb, while the second case contains 34 points and 1 plumb. The 26 sherds are housed in archival envelopes which are housed in a collections box. These artifacts are thought to be remnants of the Plaquemines Mississippian Culture.

### **Processing Information**

Whenever possible, original order of the materials has been retained. Part of the collection is mounted in two display cases, and the pottery sherds are in archival envelopes in a collection box.

**DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION**

**Box 1**

**Series**

**Sherds**

1. Ceramic sherds

**Box 2**

**Series**

**Display Cases**

1. 2 display cases containing points and plumbs