

African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter

Volume 9
Issue 4 December 2006

Article 23

12-1-2006

The Dynamics of Industry as Seen from Van Winkle's Mill, Arkansas

Alicia B. Valentino
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan>

Recommended Citation

Valentino, Alicia B. (2006) "The Dynamics of Industry as Seen from Van Winkle's Mill, Arkansas," *African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter*: Vol. 9 : Iss. 4 , Article 23.
Available at: <https://scholarworks.umass.edu/adan/vol9/iss4/23>

This Dissertation Abstract is brought to you for free and open access by ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. It has been accepted for inclusion in African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks@UMass Amherst. For more information, please contact scholarworks@library.umass.edu.

Dissertation Abstract:
The Dynamics of Industry as Seen from Van Winkle's Mill, Arkansas

By Alicia B. Valentino

Ph.D. Dissertation, Department of Anthropology, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville. 2006.



Van Winkle's mill in Benton County, Arkansas, was home to the most productive and powerful 19th-century mill in the Arkansas Ozarks. Today only machinery platforms and a flywheel trench remain. Archaeological investigation in Van Hollow, the locale of this mill, has taken place since 1997, yet the nature of industrial technology and the layout of the saw- and gristmill remain neglected. This study examines the industrial archaeology of this mill complex within the context of its social and cultural framework. The result illustrates that despite being on the frontier, daily operations were integrated with local, regional, and national institutions.

The nature of this interpretation is apparent in terms of the labor force, where enslaved African-Americans and free whites worked side-by-side in the mill facility. Archaeology of the blacksmith shop demonstrated the partial adoption of new technologies (indicating knowledge of new methods yet the inability to fully implement them) and the layout of the shop. Excavation of the mill complex yielded a determination of the layout of that facility and a comparison of the technology there within national trends.

Of particular importance was the determination that Van Winkle's mill could be supported by solely local demand, yet Van Winkle developed his business to serve the region. Using comparative archaeological studies, least cost models, and friction surface analyses, it became apparent that Van Winkle had little interest in the local population and manipulated the development of transportation networks and his satellite mills to distribute his products in the four-county area and to neighboring states. Finally, using census records, a context was developed for the Arkansas Ozarks to gauge the level of technological development in the Hollow. This analysis demonstrated how the regional impact of Van Winkle's mill was a combination of high rates of production, power, and value of products. The result is an archaeological and historical study that is anthropologically oriented in its attention to the human element of industry. It is a unified view of the industrial operations in Van Hollow and the Arkansas Ozarks with a dynamic and balanced interpretation of industrialization and development.

This dissertation can be downloaded in its entirety, or by chapter, at the *Van Winkle's Mill* web site, <http://www.projectpast.org/vanwinkle/index.html>.