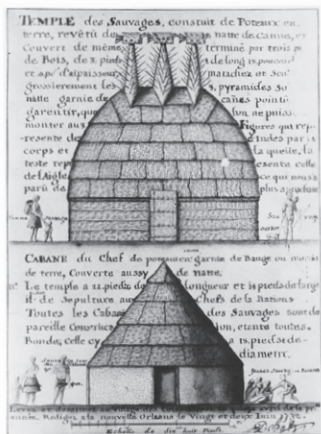


HOUSING TECHNOLOGY

6.1



DeBatz' drawing of the temple (top) and the wattle and daub Chief's house (bottom) at Natchez, dated A.D. 1732. © 2007 Harvard University, Peabody Museum, 41-72-10/16 T347.3.

TEMPLE, TRANSLATION OF FRENCH TEXT:

"Temple of the Savages, constructed of posts in the ground, covered with mats of cane, and roofed with same, ending in three [stakes] of Wood, 3 ½ feet long, 18 inches [wide] and 4 inches thick, crudely colored and [sculptured]. The 3 pyramids (elements attached to the roof) [are of] reedwork trimmed with pointed canes [to] prevent one climbing to the 3 figures, the body and tail of which represent turkeys and the head that of the eagle, which seemed to us the most like it."

"Surveyed and sketched at the Village of the Acolapissa the fifteenth of April of the present year. Redrawn at New Orleans the twenty-second of June 1732. DeBatz."

CABIN OF THE CHIEF, TRANSLATION OF FRENCH TEXT:

"Cabin of the Chief, of posts in the ground plastered with clay or earth mortar, also covered with mats. The temple is 22 feet long and 14 feet wide; it serves as the sepulcher for the chiefs of the nation. All the Cabins of the savages are of similar construction, all being round, this one is 18 feet in diameter."



Postmolds (small circular areas) defining two walls of a structure at the Mount Nebo site in Madison Parish. The large circular excavation in the upper right proved to be a modern disturbance.

6.2

PALMETTO HOUSE MODEL

"Palmetto (Sabal sp.), like river cane, was widely used by the Louisiana Indians. Among the Choctaw and Houma it served as a house covering, and palmetto-thatched houses still exist in the Houma country near Golden Meadow, Montague, and Dulac, Louisiana." Kniffen et al. The Historic Tribes of Louisiana: 1542 to the Present, 1987.

Swanton 1946: 401 quoting Bushnell 1909: 7: "The frames were formed of small saplings; the tops and sides were constructed of palmetto thatch. According to the present inhabitants [in 1908-9], many of the circular houses were large, affording shelter for many persons. Only one door was made, this in most cases facing the south. A fire was kindled on the ground within the lodge, the smoke passing out through an opening made for the purpose at the top near the center."



Choctaw of Bayou Lacombe, Palmetto Structure, 1881
This image comes from a series of images of Louisiana's Native-American cultures originally taken and presented in postcard form.

6.3

HOUSING, GENERAL INFORMATION-REFERENCING WATTLE AND DAUB (WINTER) HOUSE

WATTLE AND DAUB

Around the posts, the natives "plait pliant withes arranged horizontally at vertical distances of about a foot which they attach with cords from pole to pole. Afterward, kneading well with their feet some clay which they mix with that kind of moss of which I have spoken, commonly called "Spanish beard," they make a mud and with it they plaster their cabins, which, when this work is finished, appear as if built entirely of earth." Dumont 1753 (Swanton 1946: 417).



Applying daub (clay with Spanish moss) to wattle to create a wall.

Contemporaneous Spanish (cujes y barro) and French (bousillage) peasantry had similar traditions for constructing walls:

WINTER HOUSE

"This simple but substantial structure had neither windows nor smoke holes; it had only a small entrance facing east, which was the sacred, or "good luck" direction. During winter, a fire in the middle of the house kept it very warm...Raised platforms around the walls served as benches and beds. They were made of pole frames resting on forked sticks and covered with mats. According to the Choctaw and Caddo, such shelves and beds should be built "higher than a flea can hop." Stored under them was a hodgepodge of articles ranging from harvested crops to baskets, pots, spare moccasins, and clothing." (Kniffen et al. 1987:110-111).

6.4