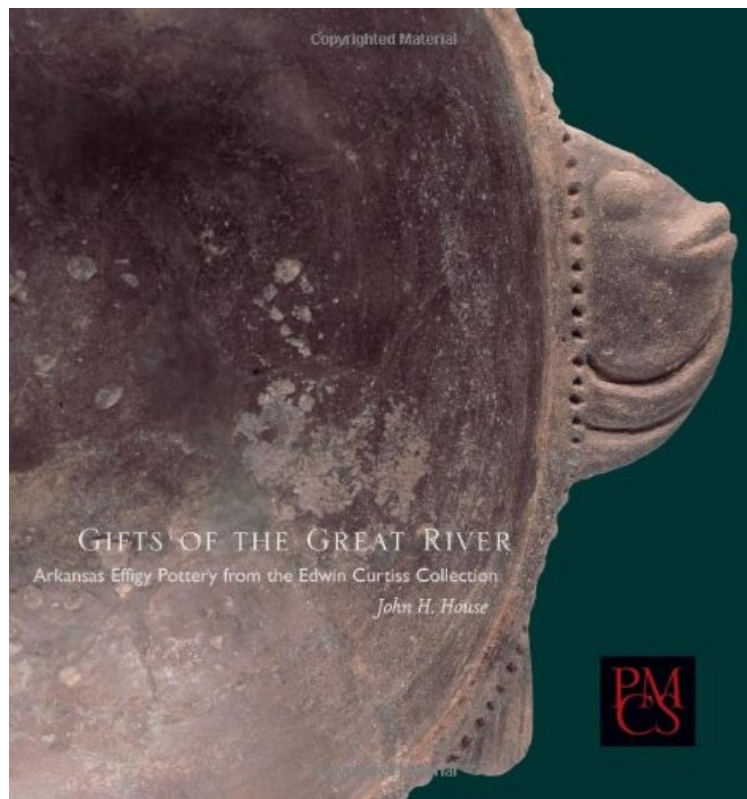


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John H. House

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In 1879 Edwin Curtiss set out for the wild St. Francis River region of northeastern Arkansas to collect archaeological

specimens for the Peabody Museum. By the time Curtiss completed his fifty-six days of Arkansas fieldwork, he had sent nearly 1,000 pottery vessels to Cambridge and had put the Peabody on the map as the repository of one of the world's finest collections of Mississippian artifacts. John House brings us a lively account of the work of this nineteenth-century fieldworker, the Native culture he explored, and the rich legacies left by both. The result is a vivid re-creation of the world of Indian peoples in the Mississippi River lowlands in the last centuries before European contact. The volume's focus is Curtiss's collection of charming and expressive effigy vessels: earthenware bowls and bottles that incorporate forms of fish, birds, mammals, amphibians, and humans, including the Peabody's famous red-and-white head vase.

This fascinating volume introduces readers to the little-known fieldwork of Edwin Curtiss and provides a fresh view of the exciting prehistoric ceramic art of northeastern Arkansas. (Stephen Williams, Peabody Professor of North American Archaeology Emeritus, Harvard University)The Peabody Museum is to be congratulated for its new Collections Series, which makes available to the general public and anthropologists alike some of its vast archaeological and ethnological collections from around the world. (Hester Davis, Arkansas State Archaeologist Emerita)John House, an archaeologist with the Arkansas Archaeological Survey and noted Mississippi scholar, has produced this splendid little book that describes the Curtiss expedition and the collections it produced. It is richly illustrated with 45 color photos of Curtiss's pottery collection, some of his sketch maps, and photos of the sites. Sadly, many of the sites in the region have been destroyed by modern agriculture and looting, but *Gifts of the Great River* preserves the story of the first expedition to one of America's richest archaeological districts. (American Archaeology)House selected works for twenty-five color plates and produced clear, informative paragraphs to accompany each photograph. The photographs themselves are spectacularly good...It is a stunning presentation, making the volume at one level an excellent coffee-table book...But it is much more than that, of course, as the excellent introduction demonstrates. In forty-one pages, House takes the reader through an introduction to the Parkin Phase, the basics of what is known or inferred about the cultural life of those prehistoric people, and a tour of the sites as they were dug by Edwin Curtiss, with many glimpses into the life of an 1880 archaeologist in the Arkansas delta. (George E. Lankford *Arkansas Historical Quarterly*)About the AuthorJohn H. House is Station Archaeologist, Pine Bluff Research Station, and Associate Professor of Anthropology, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.