

MOUNDS BUILT BY HISTORIC INDIANS.

On the subject of the actual construction and use of mounds by American Indians of early historic times the pages of history are not silent. A considerable amount of valuable information has been collected and is now available to the student in the publications of Lucien Carr, Fowke, Thomas, and of other archaeologists of distinction. Carr especially by his careful and "exhaustive examination of early literature" has proven "conclusively that the Indian, as known to the whites, cultivated the ground extensively, was a sun worshipper, and constructed earthen mounds and enclosures, often of great size and area." (Fowke, Ohio, 445-6.) Thomas offers this positive statement:

"History also bears us out in the assertion that at the time of the discovery nine tenths of the tribes in the mound district had fixed seats and local habitations, depending to a great extent for sustenance upon the cultivation of the soil. So far as the southern districts, now comprising the Gulf States, are concerned, it goes further and asserts over and over again that the tribes of that section were mound-builders when first encountered by the whites. To verify this assertion it is only necessary to read the chronicles of De Soto's expedition and the writings of the pioneer travelers and French missionaries of that section. This evidence proves not only that this had been a custom, but that it was continued into the eighteenth century."—Thomas, Problem, 9-10.

For the sake of brevity only a few of the available records are here quoted.

SOUTHERN RECORDS.

Thomas (Problem, 10), quoting the Spanish chroniclers, says that such statements as the following, "attested by various contemporaneous authors," leave no room for doubt of the prevalence of the custom of mound-building among the southern Indians in early historic times:

"The caciques of this country make a custom of raising near their dwellings very high hills, on which they sometimes build their houses.—Biedma, Hist. Coll. La., V. 2, 105.

"The Indians try to place their villages on elevated sites, but inasmuch as in Florida there are not many sites of this kind where they can conveniently build, they erect elevations themselves in the following manner, etc.—Garcilasso de la Vega Hist. Fla. ed. 1723, 69.