

## Archaeological Survey of Peoria County

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One objective of the Ethnology Section of the Peoria Academy of Science, the past season, was the mapping of prehistoric habitation sites in Peoria County. Sixteen sites and 24 mounds have been located, photographed, and artifacts on each site tabulated. The location of the sites and the camp refuse found on the surface and subsurface give evidence of two basic cultures in this county.

The *Woodland* people, so far as surface material indicates, chose their village sites on high bluffs that approach the river, on narrows between, and on bluffs of spring-fed streams of the Illinois River.

A *Woodland* culture site is located on a narrow terrace between the Illinois River and the bluff on the Gauwitz farm. It is about five acres in extent and shows some signs, on the subsurface level, of a different culture below. Much camp refuse consisting of flint chips, large celts, stemmed points, burned rock, chert blades and grit-tempered sherds which show rouletting, stamping and cord markings, were found. A cache of 100 flint blades was found here. All other bluff sites produced about the same surface finds except one, in which there were many small triangular points of the Mississippian type.

From the bluffs to the Illinois River bottoms, the scene changes. Here we find the *Mississippi* culture predominates in four sites along the thirty miles of river front. The *Kingston* site, the most extensive, covers about ten acres. It has included four mounds which have been destroyed. The artifacts found on this site were taken mostly from the sub-floor and storage pits. Fire pits produced but few. Storage pits were from 5 to 6 feet deep and half as wide. Over 3,000 specimens were collected from them, representing 45 varieties of artifacts. The pits contained, besides the camp refuse, layers of black earth, gravel, ash and shell. The shell was intentionally placed in many pits. As to other fillings, whether placed for seasonal reasons, for sanitary purpose or to be from high water, has not been determined.

### DESCRIPTION OF A FEW FINDS

Awls made mostly from deer bones. A few made from the bones of turkey, bird, dog and fish. One fashioned from the lower jaw of a long nosed gar. In most cases the bones were split, one end sharpened and the shaft left in the rough. Many were made from the calcaneous bone of the deer.

*Paint Stones* made of sandstone, circular in form, from 5 to 8 inches in diameter and from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 inch in thickness. Only one face was used for grinding of paint.

*Bone Fish Hook* from  $1\frac{3}{8}$  to 2 inches in length, shaft rounded with a knob or groove cut near the end of the shaft. None were barbed. All were made from deer bones.

*Game Bones* fashioned from the small bones of deer feet. The larger joint was cut off and the smaller was perforated either by drilling or by making a diagonal cut through the joint.

*Clay Disks* made from potsherds and shale. Some were perforated, many were left blank.

The contents of one pit, two feet deep and fourteen inches in diameter, included the shells of nine large river clams, resting on a hard clay floor and covered with four inches of clay burnt to a brick red. Black dirt long since had taken the place of the clams. No doubt a forgotten "clam bake" of decades ago.

#### ARTIFACTS TAKEN FROM PITS AT THE KINGSTON VILLAGE SITE

Small triangular projectiles	Woven fabric
Knives	Corn carbonized
Celts	Nuts
Pitted stones	Paw Paw seed
Sandstone sharpeners	Squash seed
Discoidals	Mushroom clay trowel
Anchors	Cooper beads
Sinkers	Bone awls
Anvils	Bone needles
Paint stones	Bone fish hooks
Scrapers	Bone ornaments
Slate disks	Beamers
Hammerstones	Bone beads
Stone pipes	Bone arrow points
Stone balls	Game bones
Shell spoons	Deer jaw hoes
Shell hoes	Bone chippers
Shell ornaments	Beaver-tooth chippers
Shell beads	Bone plaques (turtle plastron)
Ear ornaments	Elkhorn chisels
Clay disks	Skull trophies
Clay bowls	Bone of mammals, birds, fish, and shell
Shell-tempered clay (not fired)	
	And several undetermined objects

#### CONCLUSIONS

- (1) Site location in one determinant of culture.
- (2) No indication of European contact.
- (3) No storage pits were found in *Woodland* culture sites.
- (4) Mississippi sites produced a majority of bone and shell tools while *Woodland* produced a majority of stone tools.
- (5) It was not determined whether storage pits were inside or outside of huts.
- (6) The plant *Gonolobus laevis* (Angle Pod) was found growing on Indian sites but has not been located elsewhere in the county. (Noted by Virginia Chase, Peoria.)