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## **EXCAVATIONS AT THE MANN SITE (12 Po 2): 1964-1977**

The Mann site (12 Po 2) is a large multicomponent complex of mounds, geometric earthworks and habitation debris located in Posey County, extreme southwestern Indiana. By far, the most extensive of the occupations dates to the late Middle Woodland Mann phase (ca. AD 150-400), however a significant late prehistoric Mississippian occupation is also present. James H. Kellar directed four seasons of excavation at the Mann site between 1964 and 1977 with the support of the Indiana Historical Society, Indiana University, and the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology. This paper summarizes the nature of the excavations and features encountered with a particular focus on the Middle Woodland occupation.

The Mann site complex occupies a high flat terrace bordered on the south by an adjoining apron of low terrace overlooking Cypress Slough and the Ohio River floodplain beyond.

The 1964 excavations were intended to identify stratified deposits having potential to provide chronological control over the site occupations. Accordingly, excavations were conducted at the southern terminus of the site complex on the sloping transition between the low terrace apron and Cypress Slough. Midden deposits extending up to three feet below surface were encountered and contained evidence of both Mann phase and Mississippian occupation debris. No evidence of stratification could be defined in the field. Preliminary analysis of ceramic type distributions indicates that the Woodland and Mississippian deposits are largely mixed, however selected portions of the midden may preserve intact stratified deposits. Several shallow and irregular basin-shaped pits of probable Middle Woodland origin were encountered below the midden deposit. These contained high densities of burned rock and are interpreted as cooking/heating facilities.

The 1966 excavations were targeted at the identification of Middle Woodland habitation structures and features. These excavations were conducted on the low terrace flats north of the transition to Cypress Slough. Block excavations encountered both Mann phase and Mississippian pit features. No house structures were identified. In general, the Mann phase features were shallow and irregular basins, although one large irregular feature extended from three to five feet below surface. High densities of burned rock and ash again suggest the use of cooking/heating facilities.

A test trench was placed to the south of the block units. Midden deposits within an apparently backfilled borrow pit feature were excavated to a depth of more than 10 feet below surface. These deposits contained both Mann phase and Mississippian habitation debris. Preliminary analysis of ceramic type distributions indicates that this feature may preserve intact stratified deposits.

The 1967 excavations again sought evidence of Mann phase habitation structures and features, this time farther north on the high terrace flats. Both Mann phase and late prehistoric features were encountered, including a complete Mississippian wall trench house. Again the Mann phase features tended to be shallow and irregular basins. At least one conical refuse-filled feature of probable Mann phase origin extended to almost 6 feet below surface, and may represent a large storage feature.

The 1977 excavations were conducted near the northern terminus of the site complex where surface debris distributions suggested pure Middle Woodland deposits. No Mississippian features or artifacts were recovered. One Middle Woodland feature was encountered in each of two test trenches. The first feature was a circular straight-sided and refuse-filled pit feature, at least three feet in diameter and extending nearly three feet below surface. This may have served as a storage facility. The second feature was a basin-shaped cooking/heating facility, nearly 10 feet wide along its major axis and containing alternating layers of burned limestone and habitation debris to a depth of nearly three feet below surface, suggesting a very large cooking/heating facility.

The Mann site excavations document a high density of Mann phase habitation debris, cooking/heating and storage facilities in all four areas sampled. This stands in sharp contrast to the paucity of midden accumulation and features which characterize other small Mann phase sites in the region, as well as comparably sized mound and earthwork complexes in south-central Ohio and the Midsouth. This review indicates that further analysis of the horizontal and vertical distribution of Mann phase artifacts recovered in the 1964-1977 excavations holds tremendous potential for coming to a better understanding of this unique pattern.

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