

Recent Archæological Work in Southwestern Pennsylvania

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NORTHWESTERN Pennsylvania as considered in this article is confined to Somerset, Fayette, Westmoreland, Washington and Greene counties. The archæological material being found in this area promises to contribute a new and distinctive phase to early Indian history, one that we can call at present the Southwestern Pennsylvania Woodland Culture.

As all good Pennsylvanians doubtless know, a profile view of the southern Allegheny mountains in this state would look somewhat like the head of the cat that we all drew as children. The high ridges on the east and west, shooting up to approximately three thousand feet, would be the cat's ears, with the plateau land in between as the connecting line that formed the top of the cat's head. The eastern edges of Westmoreland and Fayette counties and the bulk of Somerset County lie on this plateau, which is from one to two thousand feet above sea level, and forms part of the Ohio watershed, since it is drained in the south by the Youghioghenny River and its tributaries, the Casselman River, Laurel Hill and Indian creeks, which belong to the Monongahela system, and in the north by Stony Creek and its tributaries, belonging to the Allegheny system.

From the Alleghenies west to the West Virginia border, the country has an average altitude of about a thousand feet, and is covered with conical foothills called "knobs." The bulk of Westmoreland and Fayette counties lies west of them, between the Monongahela and the West Virginia Panhandle, are Washington and Greene.

SOMERSET COUNTY

Although the western foothill country was known to be rich in Indian remains, it was taken for granted that no Indian settlements were to be found on the Allegheny plateau until Donald A. Cadzow, archæologist to the Pennsylvania Historical Commission, made a reconnaissance trip through Somerset County in the summer of 1934. His investigations proved that this was not the case, and led to excavations being undertaken during the following summer, 1935, on the Clouse site along the Youghioghenny, where the pottery, pipes, and houses found were like those on the Hanna site, described below. As a result of this work, a WPA project, headed by Edgar E. Augustine of Addison, Pa., began to dig last November at the Hanna site, on the Casselman River near Harnedsville, and kept in the field throughout the worst winter known to local history.

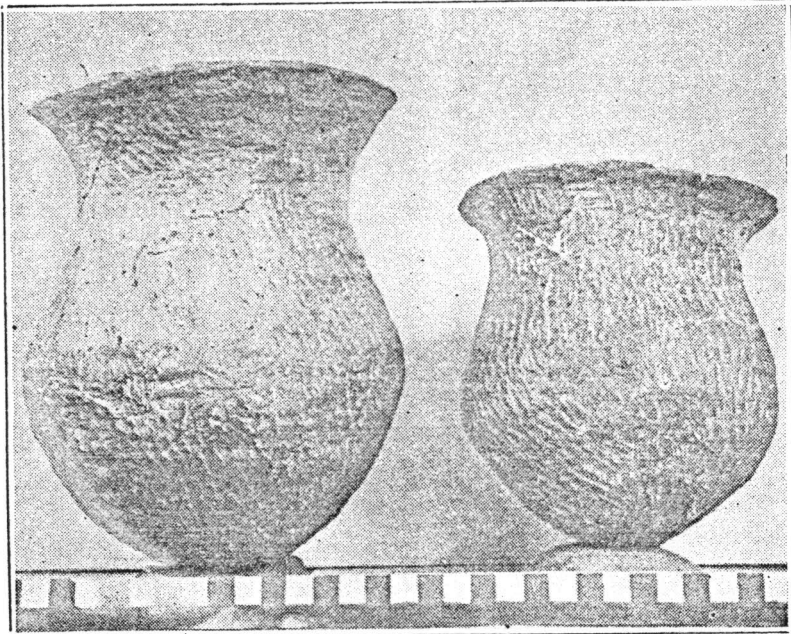
Hanna Site. This proved to be a village containing twenty-two bark houses arranged in a circle. No burials were found, but one hundred and two refuse, storage, and fire pits contributed potsherds, pipes, animal bones, mussel shells, and bone and stone tools and ornaments. The outstanding finds were a stone pipe of a distinctive modified-platform type, twenty-four fragments of small pottery obtuse-angle pipes with roulette decoration, two broken formalized bird effigy pipes, two gorget fragments, and a grooved ax. The pottery consisted almost entirely of gravel-tempered, cord-marked, wide-mouthed jars with straight or slightly flaring rims. The only vessel with supplementary decoration had a constricted neck and rim bearing an incised chevron design.

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MILTON, Pa.

Arrow points included notched and triangular forms. **Probable period:** early Late Woodland (Late Woodland is used as approximately equivalent to Third Period Algonkin. See Conclusion.)

Montague Site. From March until July, 1936, the Somerset County expedition excavated a third river-bottom site, on the Youghiogheny River one mile south of Somerfield. Twenty-four burials were found near or beneath twenty-nine rectangular and circular houses. The artifacts found in the one hundred and forty-two pits uncovered included the types recovered from the Hanna site, but showed far more variety and sophistication in pottery vessel



VESSELS FROM MONTAGUE SITE

shape and decoration, which included chevron designs and notched rudimentary collars; greater variety in pottery pipe shapes and decoration; and more, and more finely made, triangular arrowheads. The outstanding features of the material at this site were the appearance of a smooth-surfaced pottery, usually shell-tempered, and decorated with rectilinear designs incised with a broad, dull tool; of a bannerstone fragment; of fragments of gray stone tubes; of won-shaped stone pipes. Nineteen of the burials were those of children, extended, one burial being that of twins. The adult burials were flexed, and at a greater depth than the children's graves. **Probable period:** Late Woodland.

Reconnaissance work throughout the county in July and August resulted in the location of various other village sites, among them one of the same culture thirty miles east, and two hill-side sites, previously unknown on the plateau.

GREENE COUNTY

Since the middle of August, archæological work has been carried on in Greene County under a historical and archæological WPA project headed by Frank B. Jones, Curator of the Waynesburg Museum. This work has consisted chiefly of testing out known sites, with more extensive excavation at those two which produced adult burials.

White Site. A hill-top burial and village site five miles south of the city of Waynesburg has on three various occasions of digging produced over fifty flexed burials and several extended children's burials, about forty pits, and two small circular houses. Most of the burials were on the west slope of the hill, where one grave contained some tubular copper beads, strung on hide, two graves some small blue-green glass beads, and one pit a flat copper ornament. There was no evidence of white contact in the graves and pits on the east slope of the hill. The material found in graves and pits on the west, north, and east sides of the hill included small obtuse-angle pottery pipes with roulette decoration, pottery vessels with one of the distinctive types of decoration found on the Montague site, stone owl effigy, urn- and vase-shaped pipes, a stone claw pendant, bone tools, and crude notched arrowheads. **Probable period:** Late Woodland to very early Historic.

Flenniken Site. On a hill-top site east of the town of Carmichaels were found sixteen adult flexed burials and ten refuse pits. Almost every burial had shell or bone beads, often in great quantity. Two burials contained fine triangular arrowpoints so placed that one was probably imbedded in the thigh, the other in the back, of the skeleton with which it was found. The only pipe found was part of a small, undecorated pottery one; the pottery vessels were wide- or flaring-mouthed jars with a plain or cord-marked surface, with no supplementary decoration except occasional nicked or scalloped rim edges. Two burials were in very bad condition, three feet deep in almost solid clay, with no associated objects. These may have belonged to another occupation. **Probable period:** Early Woodland.

A number of sites are known where the material is similar to that on the White farm. Several others are characterized by child burials under stone slabs and trade copper in quantity.

CONCLUSIONS'

The term Woodland is used in this paper to refer to the pre-historic, agricultural, non-Iroquoian peoples of the northeastern United States, often called Algonkin. "Algonkin" is a linguistic term, applied in the first place because of a resemblance between the artifacts of these early people and those of historic eastern Algonkin-speaking tribes. But we do not know, and probably never shall know the languages spoken by the non-Iroquoian peoples who lived in this area before the white men came. We do, however, know the kind of life they led, and can feel safe in describing them at present by the term Woodland.

In New York state, two general periods in the life of these people have been established, the Vine Valley aspect (formerly Second Period Algonkin) and the Owasco aspect (Third Period Algonkin),¹ the distinction between the two being marked by traits in the Owasco aspect that seem due to the introduction and growth of Iroquois influence. This distinction has been followed in this report to the extent that the appearance at a southwestern Pennsylvania site of objects established as Iroquois in the New York classification has led to that site being called Late Woodland, while the lack of such traits characterizes it as Early Woodland. There is as yet no evidence in southwestern Pennsylvania of the Archaic nomadic population that preceded the farming Woodland peoples farther north.

Work done in Westmoreland and Fayette counties five years ago² established the fact that the Indians who lived there in pre-historic times had some pottery vessels with decoration that suggested early Iroquois influence, and others with rectilinear wide-line incised decoration on a smooth surface. They had small obtuse-angle pottery pipes with roulette decoration, grooved axes,

slate gorgets, bone and shell ornaments, bone and stone tools, notched and triangular arrowheads. Mr. George Fisher's collections from Washington County show many of the same types. The sites described in this article have shown that this particular culture complex extends in space from the Allegheny Plateau to the western edge of the state, and in time from the Early Woodland Period to early historic times. While showing Iroquois influence that varies in strength from site to site, the southwestern Pennsylvania complex is distinct from the Iroquoian as known at present to the east along the Susquehanna, and to the north in New York and northwestern Pennsylvania. It differs from any group of material as yet reported from the states to the south or Ohio to the west. It is important, not only for what it can tell us of the prehistory of southwestern Pennsylvania, but for what it can reflect of early migrations, such as that of the Iroquois. It is to be hoped that it will be possible to carry on the good work, and to trace the extent, within and beyond the borders of the state, of this striking phase of early Indian life that seems to have its center in southwestern Pennsylvania.

1 Wm. A. Ritchie, of the Rochester Museum of Arts and Sciences, in an address before the Taxonomic Conference in Indianapolis, December, 1935.

2 Robert M. Engberg, Reports on Archæological Work in Westmoreland-Fayette Counties in the Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine, Vol. 13, No. 2, April, 1930, Vol. 14, No. 3, July, 1931.

ARCHÆOLOGICAL ACTIVITIES AND ACCESSIONS UNREPORTED TO THE SOCIETY FOR THE YEARS 1935 AND 1936

Lock Haven, Pa., Sept. 25, 1936.

To the members of the Society for Pennsylvania Archæology:

Greetings:

I regret my inability to be with you on this occasion. Present are members of this Society, members of the Pennsylvania Historical Commission and members of the Lycoming Historical Society, with many who will be affiliated with the newly organized Muncy Valley Historical Society.

These organizations working together are delving into the pre-historic and early historic past of the Muncy region. Archæological work shows this locality to have been long occupied by pre-Algonkian and later Algonkian races. I trust that continued work may verify the historian's allegation that "The Old Fortification" was an Andaste stronghold.

Personal excavation in a rock shelter facing the Susquehanna River at Shawville, Clearfield County, Pa., resulted in finding a broken Algonkian clay pot with almost straight sides and "bosses" around rim. Was easily restored. 7½" high and 5½" diameter.

A damaged Algonkian pottery pipe from New Millport, Clearfield Co., Pa.

On the Stewart farm below Lock Haven, another Andaste fire pit with usual bone implements and deeply incised pottery.

On village site on main land east of Great Island, 3 circular stone hearths exposed by flood. Diameter 2', color a brick red. Photos taken. No artifacts.

A iron tomahawk 8" long with spike head longer than the blade.

A banner stone, 3½x3, weathered green slate.

A great many ungrooved axes, all types of flint implements of which a large number are red and yellow jasper.

In the possession of a farmer—a handsome Folsom point of yellow jasper, 3¼" long. This is the fourth from this locality.

Truly the West Branch Valley is assuming its position as an important archæological field.

I send you my compliments and my good wishes.

T. B. Stewart.