TRANSACTIONS, ILL. STATE ACAD. SCI.
Vol. 68, No. 4 (1975)

# CAHOKIA AND THE MISSISSIPPIAN EMERGENCE IN THE SPOON RIVER AREA OF ILLINOIS*

Alan D. Harn
Dickson Mounds Museum
Lewistown, Illinois 61542

## ABSTRACT

The relevance of Cahokia to the emergence of Mississippian in the Spoon River area of Illinois is assayed. Examples of local artifact complexes and social aspects are briefly described and comparisons are drawn in an effort to isolate those regions which figured most prominently in the formation of the Spoon River variant. Social, evolutionary and ecological implications are employed in attempting to define the processes of local Mississippian development. It is argued that the Spoon River lifeway was bimodal, combining a Plains/Prairie-oriented secular existence with a sociopolitical character reflective of Cahokia. A proposal is made that, although minor migration may have been involved, the Spoon River variant emerged from a basic Woodland population whose development became integrated with the Mississippian movement.

Excavations in the American Bottoms area over parts of the last half century have established that Cahokia was a main northern center participating in a lifeway closely linking it to what has come to be known as the Middle Mississippian Culture. It has also been well established that Cahokia and the sites in the main area of its influence, although sharing such core characteristics as temple mounds, plazas and formal town arrangements, are distinquishable from similar core areas spread throughout the southeastern United States (cf. Griffin 1952). Yet, within the Central and Upper Mississippi Valley archaeological subareas, little progress in delineation has been made concerning what is Cahokia-*descended* and what is Cahokia-*influenced*. The Cahokia presence was probably felt over much of the

*Combination of two revised papers, "Cahokia and the Mississippian Emergence in the Spoon River Area of Illinois," presented at the 52nd annual meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society in St. Louis, Missouri, March 29-31, 1973; and "Some Comments on the Late Woodland Occupations in the Spoon River Area of Illinois," presented at the Workshop on Late Woodland Societies and Complexes held in conjunction with the 20th Annual Midwest Archaeological Conference in Ann Arbor, Michigan, October 10-12, 1975.

Midwest for the better part of five centuries, beginning perhaps as early as A.D. 900 at a time when Cahokia was not yet fully garbed in its shiny new "Mississippian" cloak. Strong cultural ties with the hinterlands do not seem to have developed at Cahokia until sometime in the Stirling Phase (Fowler and Hall 1972); but by A.D. 1100, the Cahokia presence was evident in one form or another in areas as far north as southern Wisconsin and Minnesota, northwestern Iowa, and western Missouri. How these traditions were dispersed has been the subject of much previous comment by a number of persons. Some, such as Joseph R. Caldwell (1967:139) and Robert L. Hall (1967), see the spread of the Cahokia-type Mississippian movement as involving varying combinations of acculturation and limited migration of Cahokians onto a predisposed Late Woodland host. Others, most notably James B. Griffin (1946:89; 1960:856, 861) have viewed this pattern as being more closely linked to direct migrations from Cahokia up the Mississippi, Missouri and Illinois rivers. While there is some disagreement about its spread, I believe all would be in agreement that the blanket term "Mississippian," used to describe the majority of cultural complexes inhabiting the Midwest after about A.D. 1150, cannot and does not imply a fundamentally homogeneous culture with localized traditions. In essence, our flourishing Mississippian tree with its intricate complex of traditional branches may have been anchored by incompletely shared Late Woodland cultural roots.

During the past 49 years, much information has been accumulated on the cultural materials called Mississippian in the Spoon River area of the Central Illinois River Valley. Until recently most of the resulting interpretations of the distribution of these elements have been based primarily upon pottery form and decoration. In this respect, the "Cahokia presence" is evident even today. Its tantalizing florescence invites a tendency to prejudge relationships between Cahokia and the Spoon River area by the assumption that events transpiring at the latter must somehow be regarded as reflexes of the former. General conclusions have favored a co-relationship between the Cahokia and Illinois valley complexes, but the degree of interaction has not been adequately quantified and the resulting syntheses have been speculative and varied. The basis for these explanations has been somewhat complicated by the lack of sufficient evidence. Although much more information is needed to clarify the complex Late Woodland prehistory of the Spoon River vicinity, enough data are available to gain an insight into the role Cahokia played in the emergence of the Spoon River variant.

A major problem in the analysis of local Late Woodland complexes has been the lack of excavations in habitation areas and the isolation of related features. Even in the lone instance where a large section of a village was exposed (the Myer/Dickson Site), no structures were located—even though well over 300 Late Woodland pit features were recorded. A second major problem has been to isolate an artifact inventory which could be considered representative of the "pure" indigenous groups inhabiting the area prior to the "Cahokia presence." Available

information suggests that at least two contemporaneous Late Woodland complexes were locally present prior to the arrival of identifiable Cahokian influences. One, the Maples Mills Focus as defined by Cole and Deuel (1937:14-15), seems to have been a fairly recent intrusion, perhaps coming out of northern Illinois and arriving no earlier than late in the 10th century A.D. The other, a hypothetical Sepo manifestation, had close ancestral ties with Weaver, an established local Late Woodland complex. It is difficult to see Sepo as having developed much earlier than the Maples Mills intrusion, or for that matter much before the arrival of Mississippian, for no cemeteries of these people have been located which do not also contain Mississippian burials or show evidence of Mississippian influence. Myer/Dickson is the only "pure" habitation site known, but there are undoubtedly others. Sepo was first recognized by Caldwell (1967:139-142); although his description of the tradition was somewhat cursory. A recently completed manuscript by the writer enlarges upon this earlier work as well as revises the proposed Sepo ceramic series (Harn n.d., a).

Sepo seems to have been either more permanently entrenched or more populous than Maples Mills. Aside from some previous testing of the Clear Lake Site ($T^V1$) in Tazewell County by the University of Chicago and the Illinois State Museum (Cole and Deuel 1937:181-191 and Fowler 1952), excavations in the Spoon River area have failed to produce evidence of a Maples Mills habitation area. Some minor sites are known to exist, however (Munson and Harn 1966). On the other hand, evidence of Sepo habitation has been noted at all excavated sites where an Eveland Phase component (which is the Spoon River equivalent of the Stirling Phase at Cahokia) is present.

Pottery representative of both Sepo and Maples Mills groups was present in the recent excavation of Dickson Mounds where the contemporaneity of both wares with those of the classic Mississippian types Powell Plain and Ramey Incised was established (Harn n.d.,a). Only six Maples Mills or Maples Mills-like jars were recovered, although at least four other fragmentary jars were found (Figure 1,j). These jars have many of the salient characteristics of a pottery type which has been called "Maples Mills," "Tampico," and "Gooden" after Cole and Deuel's original description (1937:14-15) and more recently redefined as Canton Ware by Fowler (1955:219). Both cord-decorated and undecorated versions of this type are present in the Dickson sample, the cord-decorated jars represented by only triangular motifs. Orifice shapes vary from fairly round to slightly square and four lugs are usually attached to the exterior rim surface. Cordmarked, smoothed-over cordmarked, and fabric-marked surface finishes are present. The same general vessel shapes are represented but the rims tend to be higher and less expanded than with Sepo ceramics. While some light-colored grit is evident, the temper varies more toward a dark gray to black crystalline rock.

The pre-Mississippian Sepo Tradition pottery is, for the most part, very uniform (Figure 1, a-c). The ware is comprised almost entirely of smoothed-over cordmarked jars with semiconoidal to slightly rounded bases, fairly pronounced shoulders, and medium-high, slightly expanding rims. These vessels are tempered with finely crushed light-colored granite, often supplemented with sand which sometimes contains oversize, smooth quartzitic pebbles. Particles of hematite are occasionally included. With post-Mississippian contact Sepo vessels, small quantities of crushed mussel shell are occasionally added and sometimes the tempering is entirely of shell. Although the rims are frequently plain, notching or stamped decoration of the forward lip border is present in about 41 percent of the sample. This occurs in both vertical and diagonal forms. Plain dowel stamping is probably most common, but cord-wrapped dowel, individual diagonal cord impressions and punctates made with the corner of a cord-wrapped paddle are sometimes employed. Interior stamping on the lip edge is present in a small percentage of the samples from habitation areas but has not occurred in mortuary contexts. The size of the individual stamped forms is small, rarely exceeding 7 mm. Handles are never present. Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked probably represents the final local form of Weaver ware.

Caldwell (1967:139-142) has also proposed the types *Sepo Cordmarked* and *Sepo Plain* to be included in the Sepo ceramic series. He viewed these types as approximating Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked in vessel form and decoration, differing only in surface treatment. However, these proposed types were largely based on individual sherds, the only source of information available at that time. Subsequent excavations in the Dickson Mounds and associated Myer/Dickson village produced a very large sample pertaining to the Sepo series which tends to negate Caldwell's proposals. While heavy and relatively unsmoothed cordmarking is associated with many Sepo vessels, it is usually restricted to the area from the shoulder to the rim and occasionally to the lower body, with the remainder of the exterior surface being smoothed-over cordmarked. Vessel exteriors of some other Sepo jars have been so completely smoothed that only occasional traces of cord-roughening are faintly discernible, giving the initial impression of plain ware. However, I would consider both of the above surface treatments to be extremes within the range of smoothed-over cordmarking. I believe that the term *Sepo Cordmarked* should be abandoned and the term *Sepo Plain* be reapplied to a jar type described below.

Six Late Woodland vessels from Dickson comprise what is probably a separate category from either Sepo or Canton Ware but exhibits characteristics of both (Figure 1, d-f). The vessel shapes are essentially similar to Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked jars and paste characteristics are identical, but the rims are either somewhat castellated, have four lugs, or have a cord-impressed triangle design.

Two other vessels are probably local versions of foreign ware (Figure 1, k-l). One is a typical Sepo jar with a clay fillet decorated with three horizontal bands of cordmarking applied to the neck. The shape of the other is unknown elsewhere in the area, as is the diagonally applied cordmarking, the smooth neck and the collared rim. These are but two of a number of Plains-like influences which were inherent to the indigenous population before Mississippian influence was strongly felt. Other early influences included Chamberlain Incised ware found at the Eveland Site by Joseph R. Caldwell (Illinois State Museum collections) and a single sherd possibly of that ware from Dickson Mounds (Harn 1971:75).

Due to the lack of extensive excavations at Maples Mills habitation sites, few comparisons of nonceramic Late Woodland artifacts can be drawn. In fact only two nonpottery, Sepo Tradition artifacts having an ancestry probably predating major Mississippian influence have been isolated for the Spoon River area. These are a slightly convex-sided, square-based knife and a small corner-notched flake arrowpoint (Figure 2, i-k). Shell spoons with modification limited to a simple squaring of the anterior margin may also be diagnostic early artifacts, but none have yet been found in good domestic context. Similar arrowpoints are seen in Maples Mills contexts but the only known Maples Mills spoons have handles which are more Mississippian-like, although retaining a certain distinctiveness (Cole and Deuel 1937; Figure 37). Other diagnostic items such as end scrapers were in use before the Mississippian arrival, but there are presently no criteria for segregating these tool types from later varieties. Since Cahokia apparently had no historical background for the widespread use of end scrapers, we assume that their presence is more closely linked with the Plains.

Little of the preceding has much to do with our subject topic. I mention it only to provide a basis for evaluating the complex local history of Late Woodland before it was further complicated by the Cahokia presence.

The most easily recognizable of the Cahokia influences into the Spoon River area were shell-tempered ceramic types, Ramey Incised and Powell Plain (Figure 2, f-g). These would be considered Stirling Phase by Cahokia standards, arriving in a thin-walled, angular-shouldered and rolled-rim jar form. As we will discuss shortly, this jar form was to be the progenitor of a variety of later ceramic styles.

New innovations in local Woodland ceramic technology seem to coincide with the arrival of the first Mississippian influences and are probably directly related. While the Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked jar was still the most popular ceramic form, some Sepo potters apparently began production of a new vessel form which was unquestionably influenced by Powell Plain (Figure 1, g-i). The paste of these vessels, which we propose to call Sepo Plain, is essentially the same as that of Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked. The form is reminiscent of Powell Plain and the exterior surfaces are usually heavily smoothed so that traces of the cord-wrapped paddle are only faintly discernible. Some Sepo Plain vessels retain

the characteristic smoothed-over cordmarked surface finish. Handles appear for the first time on Late Woodland ceramics and are present in minor percentages. Rim styles include direct, externally thickened, and moderately rolled (and often externally flattened) varieties, plus some expanding rims which are similar to those associated with Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked. Shoulder angles are almost never as sharp as those which characterize Powell Plain; the vessel base is usually deeper and more conoidal and the surfaces are never slipped or polished. Yet there is a strong undercurrent of Powell Plain Tradition expressed in the vessels of this category.

While the occurrence of this ceramic type is perhaps most common in the Dickson Mounds area from the Spoon River north to Rice Lake, John Claflin (personal communication) recently found a classic Sepo Plain rim at the Shire Site, an isolated habitation site on the Grand Prairie 50 miles southeast of Dickson Mounds. What appears to have been a Sepo Plain jar was recovered with a flexed burial under Rose Mound 13 some 12 miles down the Illinois River (Baker et al. 1941:23-28 and Plate 31, 4) and Sepo Plain rims occur in the Illinois State Museum collections of the Hildemeyer Site located 40 miles up the Illinois. Contemporaneity between the Sepo-Eveland Phase occupation of the Eveland Site and the Sepo occupation of the nearby Myer/Dickson Site has long been speculated. Joseph R. Caldwell (1967:139), the earliest spokesman on record, has stated that:

> "...the discovery of the little village [Myer/Dickson] on the bluff tells us that there was a Late Woodland population in the area of the present [Dickson Mounds] park with a pottery-making tradition that continued throughout the occupation of the newer village [Eveland] down below."

The question which we have still failed to answer since Caldwell's original work at Eveland is whether the stimulus which resulted in the hybridized pottery just described was filtered into the region from the direction of Cahokia or whether it came as a more direct mandate, possibly from as near as the other side of the bed. It is just as conceivable that the Mississippian occupation of Eveland represented an intrusive exogamous population as it is to view the situation solely in terms of acculturation. This will be discussed later.

Along with the hybridization of pottery, changes had taken place in other classes of Late Woodland artifacts. Almost every aspect of their various industries shifted toward Mississippianization. Arrowpoints became at first triangular in form (although initially were easily recognizable because of their larger and bulkier appearance) and then multinotched in a manner indistinguishable from early Mississippian types. Ramey knives of Mill Creek chert made their appearance with Sepo burials as did discoidals, copper-covered stone and copper-covered wood ear spools, shell spoons with stub handles, the use of limonite in mortuary activities, and

beaker froms which were occasionally smoother-over cordmarked. Late Woodland ceramic forms notably absent were plates, bottles, and bowls.

Another jar form, which I believe grew out of the Mississippian-influenced Sepo pottery tradition, evolved at this time. It is basically an angular-shouldered Sepo Plain jar with a medium-high, slightly expanding rim and a rounded basal contour (Figure 2, e). These jars are often shell-tempered, and slightly keeled loop handles are frequently present. Plain loop handles and jars without handles are sometimes seen. Although never present in large percentages, the popularity of this jar continued long after the other Sepo and early Mississippian wares were no longer being produced (cf. Harn 1971:Figure 19, D23).

Late Woodland ceremonialism was also undergoing change, although we are just beginning to understand some of the implications. Sepo series jars, usually associated with flexed or semiflexed human burials, began to make their appearances with some extended bodies. Expressions of wealth and social stature, represented by profuse funerary offerings of copper ear spools, beads, pendants and other ornaments of marine shell, tools, weapons, and possibly human sacrifice, became increasingly common but varied considerably in quantity among the graves. These fossil indicators of a nonegalitarian society are the strongest such expressions yet associated with any local Late Woodland manifestation. I believe that this situation was also largely influenced by contacts with Cahokia, where a similar society had been functioning for the greater part of two centuries.

As we have stated earlier, Powell Plain and Ramey Incised pottery arrived in the Spoon River area sometime during the eleventh century A.D. The earliest of these vessels would be considered "classic" by Cahokia standards, appearing in a somewhat flattened jar form which was round-based, sharply angular-shouldered, and usually rolled-rimmed. Loop handles were infrequently present. The exterior surfaces of most were coated with a hematite-based paint which was blackened presumably by firing under oxidizing conditions. Considerable attention was paid to the application of this black-polished surface finish and to the careful execution of the incised designs, in the case of Ramey Incised. I might hasten to add that this meticulousness was short-lived, for stratigraphically later Powell Plain and Ramey Incised jars from both Eveland and Dickson Mounds were considerably less aesthetic.

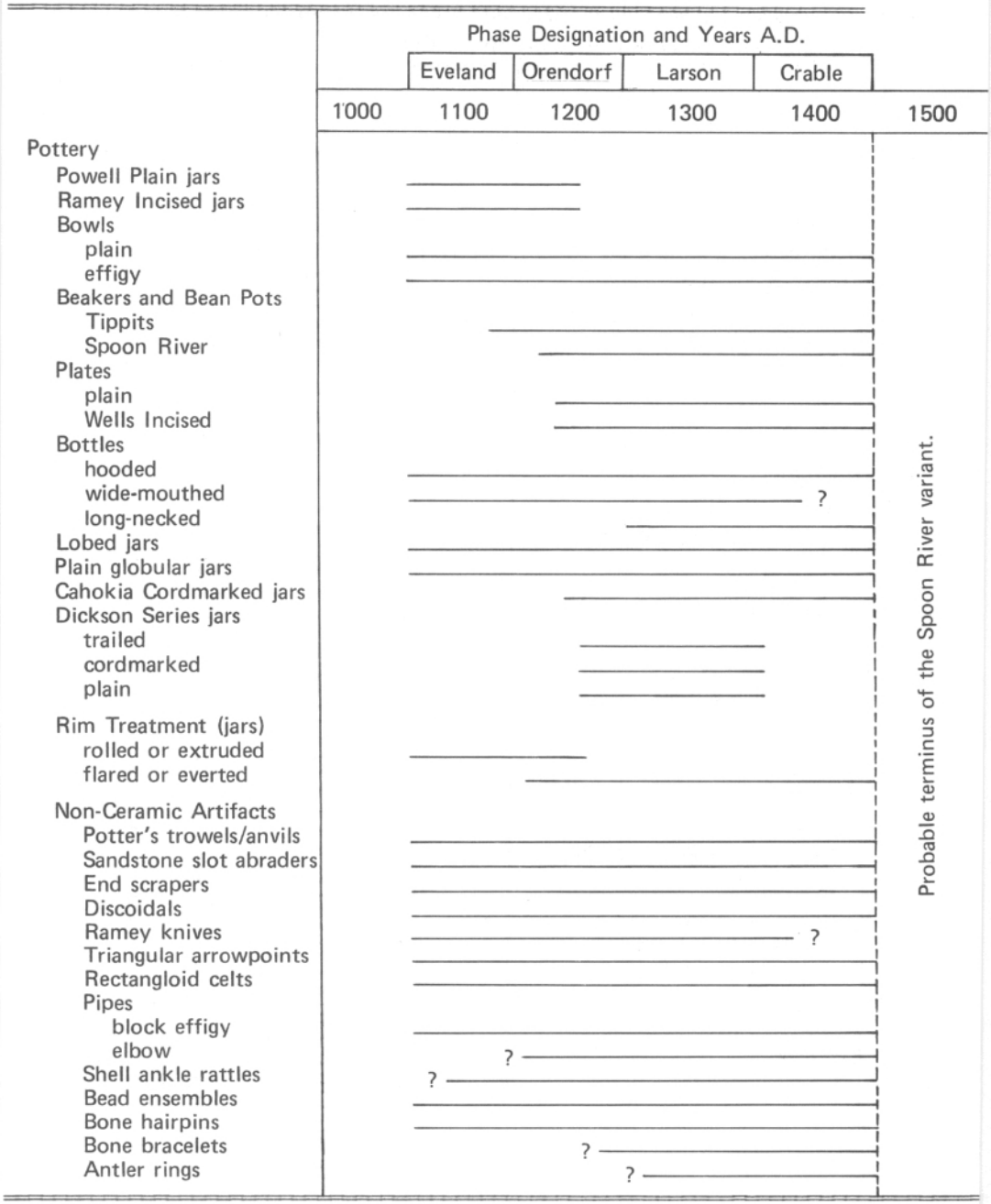
Common forms of decoration on Ramey Incised jars include single or nested arcs or chevrons, nested straight lines semicurled on one end, "feathered" simple scrolls, diamonds, circles with punctates and, rarely, forked eyes. These elements are arranged around the vessel shoulder and are often connected by single horizontal trails or occasionally separated by single diagonal trails. Elaborate scroll motifs are seldom seen, the decorative elements showing a trend toward rectilinear patterns characteristic of well-developed Ramey.

TABLE 1. Selected Diagnostic Artifacts and Traits and Estimated Time Ranges for Late Woodland Manifestations in the Spoon River Area of Illinois.

| | Years A.D. | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1000 | 1100 | 1200 |
| **Maples Mills Complex** | | | |
| Pottery | | | |
| Canton Ware jars | | | |
| Sepo-Canton Ware jars | | | |
| Non-Ceramic Artifacts | | | |
| Corner-notched flake arrowpoints | | ? | |
| Triangular arrowpoints | | | |
| Burial Position | | | |
| Flexed | | | |
| Extended | | | |
| **Sepo Tradition** | | | |
| Pottery | | | |
| Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked jars | | | |
| Sepo Plain jars | | | |
| Sepo-Canton Ware jars | | | |
| Beakers | | | |
| Non-Ceramic Artifacts | | | |
| Corner-notched flake arrowpoints | | | |
| Triangular arrowpoints | | | |
| End scrapers | | | |
| Discoidals | | | |
| Ramey knives | | | |
| Ornaments | | | |
| copper (or copper-covered) | | | |
| marine shell | | | |
| Limonite | | | |
| Shell spoon, squared end | ? | | |
| Shell spoon, stub handle | | | |
| Profuse funerary offerings | | | |
| Burial Position | | | |
| Flexed | | | |
| Extended | | | |

Probable point of Late Woodland - Early Mississippian amalgamation.

TABLE 2. Selected Diagnostic Artifacts and Traits and Estimated Time Ranges for Mississippian Manifestations in the Spoon River Area of Illinois.



In contrast to the situation at Cahokia, when Ramey Incised in the Spoon River area disappears as a type, its symbolism continues for some time. The major changes are in the vessel shape, which usually becomes progressively more weak-shouldered and in the surface finish which is no longer black-polished. The only important design elements which survive are the nested arc and chevron. The latter soon appears in a second version, the trailed meander, and all three seem to have been gradually replaced in popularity by the line-filled-triangle motif. Decorations on this pottery type, which we have defined as Dickson Trailed (Harn 1971:20), are interestingly similar to decorations on vessels from Orr and Silvernale foci sites of the Northern Mississippi Valley and may reflect interaction with that region. The disappearance of Dickson Trailed by the early 14th century marked the end of Ramey-derived design elements in the Spoon River area. Later jars are predominantly globular without noticeable shoulders and are either plain or cordmarked. Incised or trailed designs on jars did not reappear until Oneota-derived motifs were introduced sometime during the late 14th century.

In contrast to this, the water symbolism proposed by Hall (1973) was introduced with Powell Plain and Ramey Incised and survived well into the period of Spoon River and Oneota interaction. Its predominant form, the duck head, was usually not as highly stylized as similar forms from the Cahokia region. Panther symbolism somewhat akin to the water spirit of the Mississippi Valley tribes may have been present in the Spoon River area. Ours was perhaps more terrestrial than aquatic, however, but the meaning may have been the same. Puma-canine ear pendants have been associated with two burials in Dickson Mounds A and H (Harn n.d., a and Conrad 1972); copper-covered wood imitations of puma teeth were reported from Dickson Mound G (Conrad 1972) and from the Betts Mound F°228 (Wray n.d.); and imitation puma-canine ear pendants of marine shell were found by Cole and Deuel (1937:83) at Morton F°14 (although those authors' familiarity with the bear canine necklaces of the local Middle Woodland mortuary contexts prompted a like identification for the Morton specimens). Other recognizable water symbols have not been reported from the Spoon River area.

It is interesting to note that, if the panther symbolism did arrive with the early Mississippian influence, it was quickly adopted by at least some of the indigenous group — for the Mound A occurrence at Dickson was with a typical, semiflexed Late Woodland burial which had a Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked jar in association. Why Ramey symbolism was not as quickly accepted is not known; for, aside from a few sherds with roughly incised lines, no trailed designs are present on jars of the Sepo ceramic series. This is interesting in light of the rapidity in which the early Mississippian jar form was adopted by these people. However, there is no direct local antecedent for the Sepo series vessels, at least nothing that would be easily classifiable as Late Woodland. One apparent reason is that almost every aspect of the introduced Mississippian culture, including ceramic technology, was rapidly assimilated by the indigenous population. Their

cultural identity must have been rapidly transformed, leaving few good clues in passing. Since no other recognizable items of material culture seem to have been retained beyond the mid-12th century by the local Woodland population, the switch in the complexion of their ceramic industry toward something that would be considered Mississippian marked the demise of the Sepo tradition.

It seems probable that the trailed jars of the following Mississippian Larson Phase period, which are shell-tempered and "Mississippian-shaped" but which are often cordmarked from shoulder to base in a more traditional Woodland manner, represent a hybridization of both early Mississippian and Late Woodland ceramics. Thus Ramey symbolism may not have been perpetuated in recognizable Woodland ceramics form, but its transition from Ramey Incised through Dickson Trailed may have been consummated by a host of Late Woodland people.

The apparent lack of participation by Maples Mills in the local Mississippian movement is noteworthy. Unfortunately, ceramics is the only medium by which comparisons can now be drawn; but if pottery in any way reflects the attitude of its makers, Maples Mills was at least outwardly unaffected by its association with Mississippian. This apparent isolation may be interpreted in a number of ways.

If Maples Mills did coexist with the Sepo and Mississippian populations much after A.D. 1150 (which I believe is unlikely), their ties with the region must have been very tenuous. Possibly the local Maples Mills lifestyle was not developing along the same avenues as that of the Sepo group, and acceptance of agriculture and sedentary village life was neither particularly attractive nor an economically sound venture at that time. This may have led to the group's abandoning the area before acculturation mechanisms with Mississippian had become firmly established. Another possibility is that Maples Mills people were only seasonal migrants into the region. Their association with Sepo and Eveland Phase Mississippian groups could thus have resulted from trade instead of through some more complex social relationship, although the Sepo/Maples Mills pottery hybridization might argue against this position. Another alternative is that Mississippian arrived at a time when the last of the Maples Mills group was being absorbed into the Sepo lifeway. If this is the case, their traditions may have been sufficiently diluted to the point of being unrecognizable. For whatever reasons, it is apparent that not everyone inhabiting the Spoon River area during the late 11th century was marching to the same drummer.

It is perhaps unfortunate for ease of interpretation that Cahokia exerted so strong an influence in the Central Illinois River Valley at this particular time, for it injected an additional factor to further complicate local cultural development. Just as we are only beginning to understand the relationship existing between the local Woodland groups, and of these to Mississippian, we are equally uncertain of

the degree of interaction between all three groups and coeval groups of the western Prairie and eastern Plains. Not enough is known on a regional level about the period immediately following the disappearance of Sepo, Canton Ware, and Ramey Incised as types to determine either the nature of these relationships or the degree of their intensity.

The post-Ramey ceramic assemblage of the Spoon River Tradition is very similar to and suggests close affiliations with Cahokia. Included in this are plain and cordmarked globular jars with everted rims, lobed jars, plain and Wells Incised plates, long- and short-necked water bottles, plain bowls, effigy bowls and beakers. However, it is not definite that all of this is Cahokia-influenced. In addition to the Dickson Trailed designs, lineate-chevron incised designs similar to those associated with some Cambria ceramics from southern Minnesota are locally present (cf. Harn 1971; Figure 22, D94), as is the influence of the Over Focus of northwestern Iowa, represented by Foreman Incised-like jars (Figure 2, h). Other items of material culture have been recovered which are held in common by both the Spoon River variant and their neighbors of the western Prairie-eastern Plains region. Among these are bison rib bracelets and their decorations, some bison scapula hoes, bird-wing fans, tridactyle handles on jars, the use of catlinite, and the manufacture and use of large numbers of end scrapers (Conrad and Harn n.d.). Interaction between these two regions was probably begun prior to the arrival of any direct Cahokia influences.

Additional stimulation probably originating in the Caddoan area was also being received at this time. Its most recognizable form was in the elements of the Southeastern Ceremonial Complex, of which copper-covered stone and wood ear spools or plugs, long, thin blades of Mill Creek chert, spatulates and at least one mace of Kaolin chert, marine shell gorgets with cross and circle motifs, a Short-Nosed God effigy rattle, probably falcon plaques of copper, and bead ensembles which included beaded forelocks and garters are present (Conrad and Harn n.d.). Many Complex items apparently moved into the Spoon River area with the baggage of the first Mississippians.

It is not known how these elements were diffused or what role Cahokia played in their dispersal. That the post-A.D. 1200 Spoon River variant had connections with both Cahokia and the Plains is evident, as is the fact that stimulation from the Caddoan area was also being received. The latter is perhaps the more complex situation. Interestingly enough, more Southeastern Ceremonial Complex elements have probably been found in the Spoon River area than in the American Bottoms region, making it outwardly difficult to accept these southern Mississippian influences as being re-radiated from Cahokia. Possibly Hall's (1966:7) "end run factor" acculturation process, which bypassed Cahokia along other lines of communication, was responsible. However, a major factor involved in the paucity of "Cult" items at Cahokia may lie in the projected error

of sampling the cemeteries of a site of that magnitude. A far higher percentage of the total burial population has been excavated in the Spoon River area than has been in the American Bottoms, thereby increasing the probability of recovering more Complex items locally (Harn 1975:7).

In addition to the classic shell-tempered Mississippian pottery types, wall trench houses, and notched triangular arrowpoints, a new concept of settlement nucleation appeared with the Cahokia influence. Construction of a series of large temple towns was begun at regular intervals along a 100-mile section of the Illinois River between the present-day towns of Meredosia and Peoria, Illinois. Town sites are usually characterized by a truncated pyramidal mound(s) and plaza situation surrounded by a concentrated 10- to 15-acre village area. Most were probably fortified. These towns apparently served as nuclear centers for related hamlets, farmsteads, and hunting and gathering camps clustered within walking distance—the town and related cluster of sites functioning as a somewhat self-contained community (Harn n.d., b). The physical composition of the major sites (cf. Harn and Weedman 1975) and the general settlement pattern seem to have been based on a preconceived plan which is identical to that in evidence in the Cahokia region (cf. Porter 1974).

No town had an important early Mississippian component. Most were apparently constructed during the 250-year period between A.D. 1150 and A.D. 1400, according to $C^{14}$ assays for Orendorf, the earliest of the town sites, and Crable, the latest (Bender, Bryson, and Baerreis 1975:123-125). Early Mississippian habitation sites with associated Powell Plain and Ramey Incised ceramics are widely dispersed in the central Illinois valley. Fewer than twenty such sites are known, most of which are quite small and subsidiary in nature. Even given this small number, it is improbable that a majority were ever occupied simultaneously. If a population intrusion from the direction of Cahokia is actually indicated, the paucity and small size of the sites suggest the presence of only a small number of people. Thus the rapid displacement of Woodland culture by Mississippian culture probably could not have resulted from submersion of the indigenous population by a superior number of Cahokians. Hall's (1967:180-181) earlier proposal is perhaps a more reasonable explanation, for local indications are that at least some of the Late Woodland occupants of the region were already beginning to develop toward a Mississippian lifeway through external contacts with both Cahokia and the Woodland people in the western Prairie-eastern Plains region. The phenomenon we may view as a dynamic cultural transformation may have been no more complicated than Late Woodland adoption of a more advanced version of a lifestyle in which they had already begun to participate.

It is entirely possible that some Cahokians were present in the Central Illinois Valley during the period of major transformation. Among other things, the physical composition of the paste of the earliest Mississippian pottery and

the particular variation in Ramey decorative technique argue against trade for its source, while the craftsmanship and design complexity of these ceramics suggest that they were being produced by potters who had considerable background in their manufacture. I would contrast this with the previously described Sepo tradition versions of Powell Plain jars (Sepo Plain) and also reiterate that stratigraphically later examples of Powell Plain and Ramey Incised jars often have poorly executed vessel shapes and surface finishes, carelessly drawn Ramey motifs, and everted rims. While the existence of classic Powell Plain and Ramey Incised pottery appears to have been relatively short, it was the most purely expressed of the tangible Cahokia influences which reached the Spoon River area. I think this was directly attributable to its "first handedness." Although the later pottery types represented by the Spoon River tradition have a chronology somewhat paralleling that of Cahokia, they argue for a more independent evolution. There is nothing in the Spoon River area which would suggest more than a short period of Cahokia immigration, suggesting that the Spoon River variant was largely composed of a Woodland population whose development became integrated with the Cahokia-Mississippian movement.

Certain aspects of social organization are surprisingly similar when a comparison of ceremonialism for elite classes is made between early Cahokia and the initial period of Cahokia influence in the Spoon River area. Perhaps most striking is human sacrifice, if this is the correct interpretation of the data. Fowler (1969: 19-23; 1974:20-22; 1975:98) has provided brief comments on evidence of human sacrifice from Mound 72 at Cahokia involving what he proposes are both status and retainer burials. Continued work on that mound by the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has demonstrated much about the high level of social organization at the Cahokia Site.

A similar situation was also recorded in Mound B at the Dickson Mounds and possibly in an associated premound cemetery (Harn n.d., a). Mound B contained both semiflexed and extended Sepo tradition and Eveland Phase burials and probably dated to the late eleventh century. The burial under discussion may have preceded the actual construction of the mound proper, but exact determination of the mortuary sequence was impossible because of the intensity of later burial activity. Immolation of a large number of people and their subsequent interment in a common grave was inferred. The burial process was begun by lining the grave bottom with a woven mat, followed by the addition of a wide band of powdered limonite which was laid across the head end of the grave. Four male burials were then extended side by side on the mat with their right elbows overlapping the left elbow of their immediate neighbor. All had been beheaded. These burials were identical to those from Mound 72 at Cahokia except that the hands of the latter were also removed (Fowler 1974:22 and Figure 6). Shattered and whole arrowpoints were found in the chest areas of the two central figures,

and four pottery vessels were placed in the area of the missing heads. The bodies were covered with additional matting; wood fuel had been added and the burials were partially cremated.

The vessels are interesting in that they represent four of the five pottery categories known to have existed at that time. Included were an undecorated Canton Ware-like jar, a Sepo Smoothed-over Cordmarked jar, an owl-effigy hooded water bottle with a Ramey Incised scroll motif, and a smoothed-over cordmarked Sepo Plain jar (Figure 2, a-d). Had a Powell Plain jar been included, this burial would have encompassed the complete range of basic Late Woodland and early Mississippian ceramics as presently known. We cannot conclusively demonstrate that the significance of this typology was important to those persons involved in preparation of the dead, but I think it is very important in terms of united expression if these vessels were indeed representative of diverse social factors within the local community.

A minimum of 10 other burials were subsequently added to the burial pit, but the events which transpired during the course of this operation are not completely understood. At least four or five layers of burials were superimposed over the primary figures during what appears to have been a lengthy span of time. Periodic aboriginal excavations into parts of the pit throughout the span of burial destroyed all or portions of many skeletons and thoroughly confused our understanding of the burial situation. We were not able to determine the purpose of the multiple reexcavations beyond the supposition that the Indians may have been collecting bones for ritualistic purposes.

In contrast to the primary burials, a wide age range of males, females and children were included in the upper levels of the grave. With the exception of two infants, all of these burials were semiflexed. The final inclusion into the grave consisted of the bundled and somewhat fractured long bones of two individuals. This area was then capped by a grave containing the bundled long bones of eight individuals of late adolescent and young adult age. All appear to have been males.

This particular formal variation in burial activity implies ritualistic involvement at a far higher level than may be superficially inferred. While retainer immolation is suggested, it is also possible that the headless burials represent scarificed captives or enemy casualities. However, the fact that the bodies were interred, the inclusion of in-group burial furniture, and the possibility that the arrowpoints were shattered by the extreme temperature fluctuation at cremation rather than by impact do not lend support to either of these positions. The similarity between these particular mortuary expressions in evidence at Cahokia and at Dickson Mounds and various authors' descriptions (quoted by Swanton: 1911, 1922) of the preparation of retainers for the burials of Natchez, Taensa, and Calusa nobility have been noted but

will not be further pursued at this time. The data lean strongly toward support of human sacrifice for the situation in Dickson Mound B and possibly for the previously mentioned grave in the premound cemetery. Wray (n.d.) also found headless burials in a common grave at the nearby Kingston Lake Site as well as other interments with elite burial furnishings which were in a deep, rectangular pit similar to those at Dickson.

It is doubtful that the impetus behind these particular expressions of so highly an organized and ranked society originated in the Central Illinois Valley. It would be difficult attributing their development to a region so sparsely populated with what was basically a hunting and gathering society. Any practice of human sacrifice in the Spoon River area probably resulted from very direct contacts with Cahokia. This presents an interesting set of problems. If the burials in question are an implication that an individual with the power over life and death was resident to the Dickson Mounds area, how was such absolute authority originally attained? Was the level of Late Woodland sociopolitical organization such that existing ruling lineages might easily have been incorporated into the advanced state-level organization which characterized the Mississippian movement? Nothing in the region would support this position. Nor does it seem probable that the existing Woodland hierarchy was established as the principal prophet of local Mississippianization; for extending the ruling lineage of the vast Mississippian movement so simply surely would have insured the loss of much of its distinctiveness. The advanced level of sociopolitical organization in evidence in early Spoon River sites would seemingly have to have been initiated by members of a society with considerable background in its operation. Furthermore, if the basic motivation behind Mississippian expansion into the hinterlands was exploitive and associated with economic networks focused on Cahokia (as opposed to a more symbiotic extractive-exchange relationship), it is doubtful that retention of indigenous rulers would have been compatible with the aims of the movement.

Contemporary accounts of early historic groups such as the Natchez, which had a ranked society perhaps not too incomparable to that of prehistoric Cahokia, suggest that extension of the ruling lineage was determined by descent. Only certain descendants of the original culture-bearers who were thought to have descended from the sun had absolute power over life and death (Swanton 1911: 100-106). Human sacrifice was condoned because individuals were legally powerless to protect themselves against the state.

Parallels drawn between social organization in the American Southeast and in the Cahokia archaeological subarea suggest that only if state-like conditions existed in the latter region could there have been successful massive retainer immolation of in-group members (Conrad and Harn n.d.). The Cahokia presence that we are dealing with in the Central Illinois River Valley may not have been

so much a latent influence as an extension of an individual person's power. If this situation were one of an extension of Cahokia governing boundaries and if ruling lineage was determined by descent, it might suggest that at least one Cahokian was present in the Spoon River area. I would guess that there were probably others.

I see the Spoon River variant as having a bimodal existence; its mundane lifestyle more closely aligned with that of cultures of the western Prairie and eastern Plains, while its sociopolitical character was turned southward toward Cahokia. These differences need not have been conflicting. I do not view the former as a political confederation of cultures so much as I see it as an expedient and generalized adaptation to a similar environment. The type of interaction between the Prairie-Plains region and the Illinois Valley might then be categorized as secular, and this is fossilized in the almost exclusive exchange of material goods and innovations reflective of daily living. On the other hand, contacts between Cahokia and the Spoon River area seem to have been on an entirely different level, which is reflected by the somewhat uneven exchange of social and political expressions.

Its position at the crossroads linking the Cahokia-Mississippian and Plains-Woodland lifeways underscores the importance of the Spoon River area in understanding the development of Mississippian as it moved into the northern frontier. The role Cahokia played in the formation of the Spoon River variant is only beginning to be understood. It is undeniable that its presence left a lasting impression of the indigenous population; but it is equally obvious that the latter did not exactly enter into the exchange with culturally empty pockets.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to express his gratitude to members of the Illinois State Museum who contributed substantially to the preparation of this manuscript. Mr. Marlin Roos were responsible for the photography; Ms. Orvetta Robinson for the critical final editing. Typing was done by Diane M. Lenger.

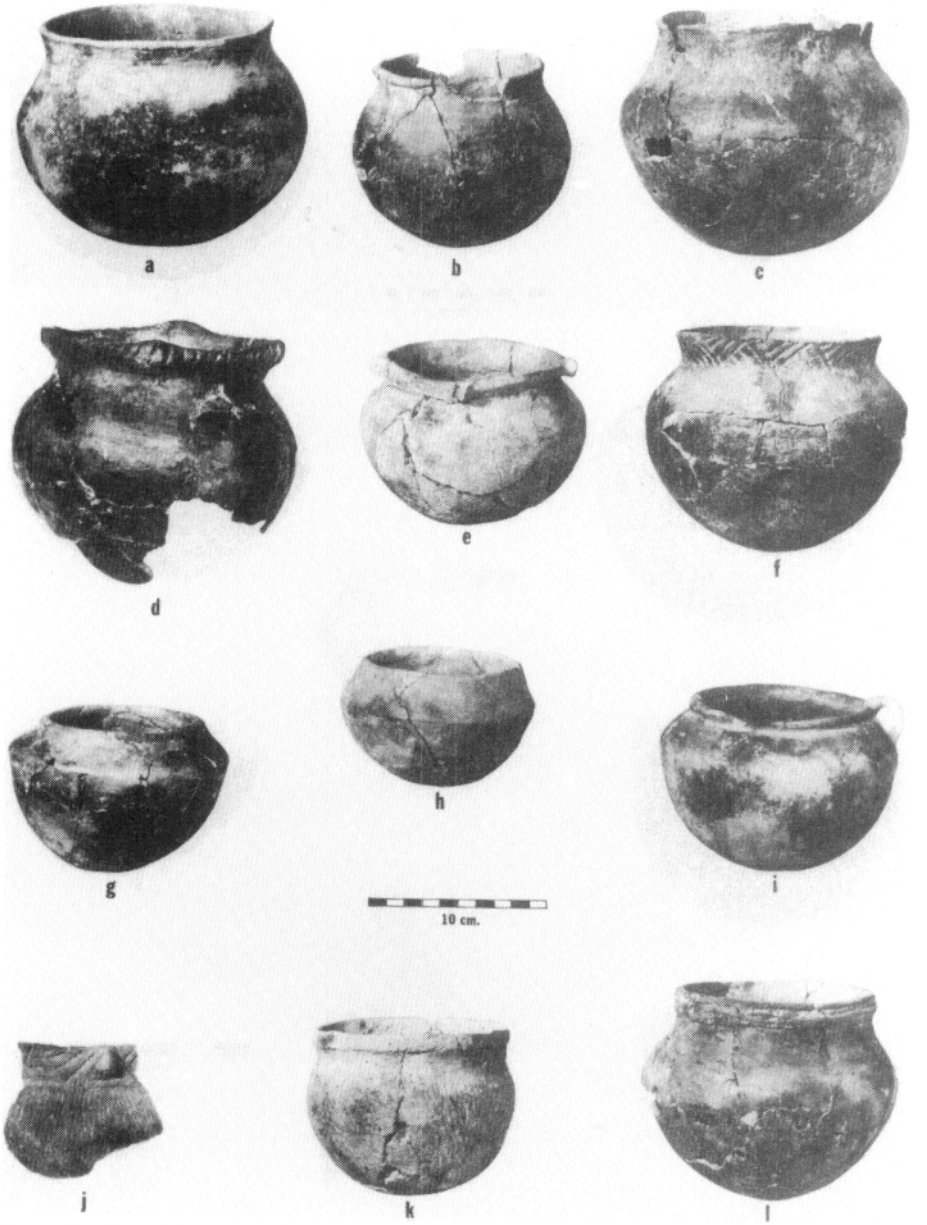



Figure 1. Late Woodland jars from the period of Late Woodland-Early Mississippian amalgamation.

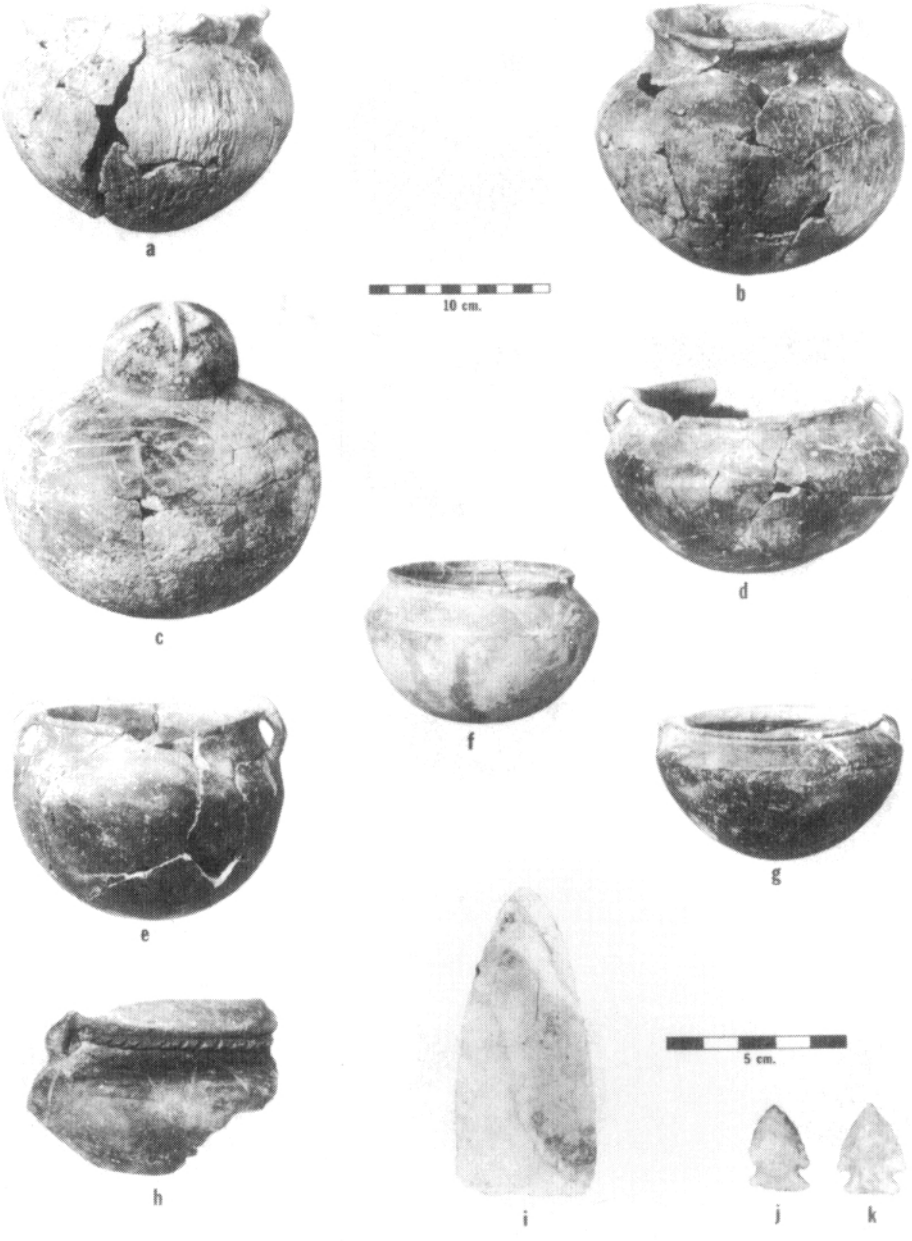



Figure 2. Miscellaneous Late Woodland and Mississippian artifacts.

## LITERATURE CITED


BAKER, Frank C., James B. Griffin, Richard G. Morgan, Georg K. Neumann, and Jay L. B. Taylor. 1941. Contributions to the Archaeology of the Illinois River Valley. Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Vol. 32, Pt. 1, pp. 22-28. Philadelphia, PA.

BENDER, Margaret M., Reid A. Bryson, and David A. Baerreis. 1975. University of Wisconsin Radiocarbon Dates XII. Radiocarbon, Vol. 17, No. 1.

CALDWELL, Joseph R. 1967. New Discoveries at Dickson Mounds. The Living Museum, Vol. XXIX, No. 6, October.

COLE, Fay-Cooper, and Thorne Deuel. Rediscovering Illinois. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

CONRAD, Lawrence A. 1972. 1966 Excavation at the Dickson Mounds: A Sepo-Spoon River Burial Mound in the Central Illinois Valley. Unpublished Master's thesis on file at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

CONRAD, Lawrence A., and Alan D. Harn. n.d. The Spoon River Culture in the Central Illinois River Valley. Unpublished manuscript on file at Dickson Mounds Museum, Lewistown, IL.

FOWLER, Melvin L. 1952. The Clear Lake Site: Hopewellian Occupation. In Hopewellian Communities in Illinois, edited by Thorne Deuel. Illinois State Museum Scientific Papers, Vol. 5.

FOWLER, Melvin L. 1955. Ware Groupings and Decorations of Woodland Ceramics in Illinois, American Antiquity, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 213-225.

FOWLER, Melvin L. 1969. The Cahokia Site. In Explorations into Cahokia Archaeology, edited by Melvin L. Fowler. Illinois Archaeological Survey Bulletin, No. 7. Urbana, IL.

FOWLER, Melvin L. 1974. Cahokia: Ancient Capital of the Midwest. An Addison-Wesley Module in Anthropology, No. 48, pp. 1-38.

FOWLER, Melvin L. 1975. A Pre-Columbian Urban Center on the Mississippi. Scientific American, Vol. 233, No. 2, pp. 92-101.

FOWLER, Melvin L., and Robert L. Hall. 1972. Archaeological Phases at Cahokia. Illinois State Museum Research Series, No. 1. Springfield, IL.

GRIFFIN, James B. 1946. Cultural Change and Continuity in Eastern United States Archaeology. In Man in Northeastern North America, edited by Frederick Johnson. Papers of the Robert S. Peabody Foundation for Archaeology, Vol. 3. Andover, MA.

GRIFFIN, James B. (Editor). 1952. Archaeology of the Eastern United States. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, IL.

GRIFFIN, James B. 1960. A Hypothesis for the Prehistory of the Winebago. In Culture in History: Essays in Honor of Paul Radin, edited by Stanley Diamond. Columbia University Press, pp. 809-65. New York, NY.

HALL, Robert L. 1966. Cahokia Chronology. Paper prepared for presentation at the annual meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society in St. Louis, Missouri, April 28-30, 1966.

HALL, Robert L. 1967. The Mississippian Heartland and Its Plains Relationship. Plains Anthropologist, Vol. 12, No. 36. Lincoln, NB.

HALL, Robert L. 1973. The Cahokia Presence Outside the American Bottoms. Topical suggestions to potential participants in a symposium proposed for the annual meeting of the Central States Anthropological Society, St. Louis, Missouri, March 29-31, 1973. (Mimeographed).

HARN, Alan D. 1971. The Prehistory of Dickson Mounds: A Preliminary Report. Dickson Mounds Museum Anthropological Studies, No. 1. Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL.

HARN, Alan D. 1975. Another Long-Nosed God Mask from Fulton County, Illinois. The Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 56, No. 1, pp. 2-8.

HARN, Alan D. (Editor). n.d., a. Dickson Mounds: Cultural Change and Demographic Variation in the Life of a Late Woodland-Middle Mississippian Cemetery. Manuscript on file at the Dickson Mounds State Museum, Lewistown, IL.

HARN, Alan D. n.d., b. Variation in Mississippian Settlement Pattern: The Larson Community in the Central Illinois River Valley. Manuscript submitted to the Mid-Continental Journal of Archaeology for publication 1976.

HARN, Alan D. and William Weedman. 1975. Archaeology, Aircraft and Answers. The Living Museum, Vol. XXVII, No. 6, pp. 348-352.

MUNSON, Patrick J. and Alan D. Harn. 1966. Surface Collections from Three Sites in the Central Illinois River Valley. The Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 47, No. 3, pp. 150-168.

PORTER, James Warren. 1974. Cahokia Archaeology as Viewed from the Mitchell Site: A Satellite Community at A.D. 1150-1200. Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, Madison.

SWANTON, John R. 1911. Indian Tribes of the Lower Mississippi Valley and Adjacent Coast of the Gulf of Mexico. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, No. 43. Washington, D.C.

SWANTON, John R. 1922. Early History of the Creek Indians and their Neighbors. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin, No. 73. Washington, D.C.

WRAY, Donald E. n.d. The Kingston Lake Sequence. Unpublished manuscript on file at the Illinois State Museum, Springfield, IL.