

MIDDLE WOODLAND CULTURES

RICHARD S. MACNEISH
University of Chicago

The term Middle Woodland, as used here, represents a stage of development of Woodland culture as well as a time period in Illinois prehistory. This period is delimited by the earlier Hopewell peoples and the later Mississippian group. As a stage of development within the Middle Woodland pattern it manifests certain characteristic traits that relate it to both early and later Woodland groups and other traits that represent this particular stage. As the sites indicating this stage are not numerous and as the development of culture is continuous, I qualify the above mentioned hypothesis by stating that some of the sites chosen as representing the Middle Woodland stage may have extended after the Middle Woodland time period.

This stage of development is represented at a number of sites throughout the southern two-thirds of the state of Illinois (and possibly at sites in Green County, Indiana, and at sites along the Missouri River in Missouri). These sites make up the components of the following foci: the Lewis focus of Pope and Massac counties¹, the Raymond focus of Johnson County², the Parker Heights focus of Adams County³, the Maple Mills focus of Fulton County⁴, and

the Pere Marquette⁵, and Isringhausen foci⁶ of Jersey County. In all but the first two of these foci, there is no stratigraphy indicated and their chronological position must be established on the basis of trait complexes.

The traits that are common to most of these foci and are characteristic of the Middle Woodland stage of development are presented in the tabulated summary. Occurrence of these traits are indicated by an x.

It has been postulated that peoples having a common complex of traits are culturally related. To this I add a second postulate that people having a common complex of traits are temporally related. Having defined my terms and stated the postulates basic to this study, I shall now attempt to solve the major problem. Specifically, the problem is to show that the foci mentioned previously did exist during certain parts of the time period between the Hopewell and Mississippi occupations, and moreover, to place the Middle Woodland cultures in their correct sequential position in the various regions where they occur.

The method employs the use of stratigraphic evidence and the comparative analysis of traits. Since

¹ Richard S. MacNeish, *The Establishment of the Lewis Focus*, Master's thesis, Univ. Chicago, 1944.

² Moreau Maxwell, *Designation of the Crab Orchard, the Raymond, and the Dillinger Foci of the Woodland Pattern*, MS, Univ. Chicago, 1940.

³ James B. Griffin, *Archaeological Remains in Adams County*, Trans. Ill. State Acad. Sci., Vol. 25, No. 4, 1933.

⁴ F. C. Cole and T. Deuel, *Rediscovering Illinois*, Univ. Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1937.

⁵ J. B. Rinaldo, *The Pere Marquette Park Sites*, Master's thesis, Univ. Chicago, 1937.

⁶ P. F. Titterton, *Certain Bluff Mounds of Western Jersey County*, American Antiquity, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1935.

TABLE SHOWING RELATION OF MIDDLE WOODLAND TO OTHER HORIZONS IN ILLINOIS

ARCHAEOLOGICAL HORIZONS IN ILLINOIS	Fulton County	Adams County	Jersey County		Southern Ill.	
			Bluffs in Northwestern Jersey Co.	Pere Marquette State Park	Carbondale Region	Pope and Massac Counties
HISTORIC LATE WOODLAND and MISSISSIPPI PERIODS	Upper and Middle Mississippi	Mississippi materials	Middle Mississippi	Upper Mississippi	Middle Mississippi and Dillinger	Middle Mississippi
	Maple Mills			Pere Marquette Sites		
MIDDLE WOODLAND PERIOD		Parker Heights	Bluffs sites		Raymond	Lewis II Lewis I
HOPWELL PERIOD	Hopewell	Hopewell	Surface sherds of Hopewell		Intrusive Hopewell Materials	
EARLY WOODLAND PERIOD	Red Ochre				Crab Orchard	Baumer
PRE-POTTERY PERIOD						Faulkner

	Lewis	Raymond	Maple Mills	Pere Marquette	Parker Heights	Isringhausen
I. Burial Customs.....						
a) Burials under stone slabs....	x	x	.....	.....	x	x
b) Multiple burials.....	x	.....	x	.....	x	x
c) Burials in pits.....	x	.....	x	x	x	.....
d) Grave goods lacking or rare....	x	.....	x	x	x	.....
II. Industries and Art Forms.....						
a) Knives, triangular in shape....	x	x	x	x	x	x
b) Projectile points, type I						
side-notched.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
straight-stemmed.....	x	x	x	x	.....	x
c) Projectile points, type III						
side-notched.....	x	x	x	.....	x	.....
III. Pottery Complex.....						
a) Temper-grit.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
b) Surface finish,						
predominantly cord-marked	x	x	x	x	x	x
c) Decoration,						
notching on the lip.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
incising on the rim.....	x	.....	x	x	x	x
d) Shape,						
subconoidal base.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
lack of well defined						
shoulder.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
vertical rims.....	x	.....	x	x	x	x
IV. General Traits.....						
a) Sites on bluffs.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
b) Hunting economy.....	x	x	x	x	x	x
c) Small sites.....	x	x	x	x	x	x

stratigraphy is a more reliable type of data, I shall start with the examination of an area having it and then examine regions where sequences must be established on the basis of traits.

In Pope and Massac counties the sequence of cultures has been established by the University of Chicago at the Kincaid and adjacent sites. The sequence is Baumer, Lewis, and the Middle Mississippi foci. The Lewis focus, having the diagnostic traits of the Middle Woodland stage of development, is thought to be of that time period. This sequence of culture can be checked with the sequences of cultures found in the Carbondale area, which is: Crab Orchard, a small period of Hopewell

intrusion, the Raymond focus, and the Dillinger focus. A comparison of the Raymond and Lewis traits shows these two foci to be culturally affiliated and contemporary. Since the Raymond focus is superimposed on Hopewell remains and the Lewis materials are below a Middle Mississippi component, it may be surmised that both the Raymond and the Lewis foci are of the Middle Woodland period. The inclusion in Lewis of such Middle Mississippi traits as plates, square houses, olla shaped vessels, slipped and painted pottery vessels tends to place it a little later in the Middle Woodland period than the Raymond focus.

The next region under consideration is that of southwestern Jersey

County, specifically the sites at Pere Marquette state park. Here stratigraphy is indicated at the adjacent sites, 710a and 710b. At 710a Upper Mississippi sherds are found in large amounts at the surface and decrease in amount at each underlying six-inch layer. At 710b there are no Upper Mississippi sherds. Thus it seems likely that 710b represents a late stage of the Middle Woodland period whereas 710a seems to have been occupied in the later Mississippi period.

In northwestern Jersey County, the Isringhausen site is of the Middle Woodland stage of development. No stratigraphy exists at this site. However, the occurrence of cremations, stone slab burial mounds, burial pavements, oblong flint knives, pottery grave goods, and plummet stones—Hopewell traits—place this manifestation early in our Middle Woodland period. Contemporaneity tends to be negated by the absence of any trade pottery from Hopewell groups who occupied the adjacent area.

The Parker Height focus of Adams County is also lacking in stratigraphy. Stone slab burial mounds, cremations, and fireplaces in the burial mounds—Hopewell traits—and the inclusion of the Mississippi of shell temper and elbow pipes place it in the middle part of the Middle Woodland period. The Spencer

component of this focus may be later in time as it has expanded base drills, a Mississippi trait.

The components of the Maple Mills focus seem in the main to be later than the Middle Woodland Period. However, the fact that at the Clear Lake site the majority of the pottery of the Maple Mills focus was found under the twelve Mississippi sherds plus the fact that identical cord-marked pottery vessels are found in both the underlying Hopewell materials and the Maple Mills materials⁷ indicate that it is of the Middle Woodland period. That it extended into the Mississippian period is indicated by the Mississippi traits such as triangular projectile points, raised points on the lips, and shell spoons.⁸

On the basis of the above mentioned evidence it seems plausible that the sequences of cultures presented in the accompanying table illustrates the chronological position of the various Middle Woodland foci. In conclusion a general statement may be made concerning part of the history of the Woodland groups: that they were a group of related Woodland peoples having a common trait complex who had developed from an early Woodland base and who occupied portions of Illinois between the Hopewell and the Mississippi occupations.

⁷ E. Schoenbeck personal communication.

⁸ O. Wray, University of Chicago, informs me that he has excavated Maples Mills burials under a Middle Mississippi village.