

Various Types of Kingston Site Burials

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Of the five types of burials at Kingston Site some indicated carelessness while others showed great care in preparation to honor the dead.

Carelessness was clearly manifested by fragments of human bones, skulls and mandibles scattered about on the village floor and many old storage pits containing fragments of skeletons, also shallow pockets in the village floor holding parts of human remains.

Type Number One: This was a platform form burial. It consisted of a rectangular dirt platform, seven feet long, two feet four inches wide and fourteen inches high, encircled by a layer of three-inch stone slabs on which rested two rows of stone slabs set on edge, forming a continuous wall around the dirt platform flush with the floor. On this platform rested the skeleton of an adult with head to the west and body not flexed. A large spawl scraper lay near the pelvic bone. Nothing remained of the skeleton but a few fragments of bone, bone dust and the enamel caps of the teeth.

Type Number Two: A bark lined pit burial. The pit was seven feet by five feet and eight inches deep, lined with bark. On the bark rested three skeletons, side by side, with heads to the west and not flexed. The skulls of two were missing. The third was the skeleton of a youth about fourteen years old, whose skull appeared to have been scalped. Beneath the scapula of the youth were two small triangular chert points. Between the youth and the second skeleton, near the shoulder was a copper jacketed wooden ear ornament. A small pile of crappie scales (identified by Donald F. Hanson, Zoologist, Urbana, Illinois) was between the second and third skeletons. At the head of the grave in the right hand corner was a large discoidal and near the wall in the pit at the left side of the grave were three hammer stones. The burial goods and skeletons were covered with a heavy layer of bark. The moisture held by the bark floor had almost destroyed the bones.

Type Number Three: The grave had passed through the black loam and a lense of clay twelve inches thick to the gravel below, on which rested two skeletons, side by side, extended, and with heads to the south. The arms of one were flexed across the abdomen. The bones were very soft. This grave contained considerable burial goods. On the right arm of the first skeleton was a sleevelet made of 694 clamshell disk beads, against which rested a twelve inch flint blade with the point toward the shoulder. Near the elbow of the left arm was a one inch crystal bead. Just below the feet was a cache of twenty-four triangular, notched, chert points. At the head between the skeletons were four copper cups, one-half inch in diameter. Three of the cups were crushed. The cups were on what appeared to be the remains of a woven mat or perhaps a medicine bag. At the head of the second skeleton was an eight inch bowl and a grooved sandstone sharpener. At the feet were two more bowls. All the bowls were crushed but have now been restored.

Type Number Four: This grave was a shallow circular pit and contained a much flexed skeleton in a sitting posture with head turned to the left, facing the west. The bones were in poor condition. This burial contained no artifacts, but was, nevertheless, an intrusive burial.

Type Number Five: This burial, also intrusive, was in a shallow grave eighteen inches deep. The skeleton rested on the right side with the lower legs flexed back. The skull was missing. The bones were very soft. There were no artifacts. The grave was partly over a five foot, old storage pit and in the over burden of the village site. I might add also that five inches below this skeleton, on the village floor, were two sixteen inch, shell tempered crushed plates and in the storage pit were fragments of eighty-four pots and many broken tools of bone and shell.