

PLEISTOCENE FORESTS OF CENTRAL ILLINOIS

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ABSTRACT

The character of the plant life which prevailed during the interglacial stages is a field which as yet is scarcely at all developed. In some counties of central Illinois, buried peat beds belonging to third or Sangamon interglacial stage have been exposed by streams. All the peat beds examined rest directly upon Illinoian till and were covered with soil consisting of Peorian loess and Wisconsin gravel and till, the cover sometimes being eighty feet thick. In an exposure near East Peoria, Illinois, the peat is ten feet thick and contains many leaves and trunks of trees in a good state of preservation. A pollen analysis and a study of the macroscopic plant remains was made of peat from three widely separated exposures with the hope of determining the type of climate which existed during the Sangamon stage. A study was also made of the macroscopic plant remains from near the upper surface of the Peorian loess.

From this study it is evident that the climate of central Illinois during the Sangamon and Peorian stages was favorable for the growth of a more boreal vegetation than at present.