

Helmkamp, R. Criss and Peregrine, Peter N. (Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Purdue University)

LATE PREHISTORIC OCCUPATION OF THE NORTH CENTRAL INDIANA PRAIRIEWOODLAND INTERFACE: A RESEARCH PROSPECTUS.

Boundaries are universal properties of cultural and natural systems, and the interplay of human and biophysical environments remains a dominant theme in anthropological research of non-hierarchical and simple hierarchical societies. The currently limited sample of archaeological materials from prehistoric western north central Indiana, which prior to conversion to a modern agricultural landscape was the interface between the Prairie Peninsula and the Eastern Woodlands, suggests mixed and shifting patterns of regional stylistic affiliations that may have cultural geographic correlates. This seems to be particularly true of the Late Prehistoric period (ca. A.D. 700-700). The earlier Late Prehistoric styles follow those of both the lower central Wabash Valley (Albee phase) and central Indiana (Oliver phase), while the latest Late Prehistoric styles follow patterns typical of both the southern Great Lakes (Fisher and Huber phases of the Oneota tradition) and the middle Ohio Valley (Madisonville phase of the Fort Ancient tradition). However, since these affiliations are based on the presently limited sample, it is impossible to go beyond these coarse generalizations. Generating a larger sample in order to be able to study the interplay of cultural and natural systems, the transfer of stylistic information under boundary conditions, and reconstructing the culture history of the north central Indiana prairie-woodland interface will be among the primary goals of the Tippecanoe Archaeological Survey. The survey is designed to efficiently provide a representative sample of the interface region by covering the Wildcat Creek Valley in Tippecanoe, Carroll, and Clinton Counties to provide a sample of the woodland landscape to the south and east, and the Tippecanoe River Valley in Tippecanoe, Carroll, and White Counties as a sample of the prairie landscape to the north and west. Through this effort, we hope not only to better realize the scientific potential of these cultural resources, but also to foster an atmosphere of conservation, research, and stewardship in a region where archaeological resources have largely gone unrecorded, unstudied, and unprotected.
