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AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SWAN'S LANDING SITE (12 HR 504), HARRISON COUNTY, INDIANA

The Swan's Landing site (12 Hr 304) is a deeply buried, stratified series of Early Archaic period components on the caving bank of the Ohio River in southwestern Harrison County, Indiana. The site has been severely damaged by river erosion and vandalism. Archaeological investigations were conducted to assess the site's eligibility for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places. The investigations were conducted during July and August 1986 by the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology, Indiana University. Funds were provided by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, from Survey and Planning funds.

Testing employed machine assisted hand excavation and the mechanical extraction of a series of solid earth cores to determine the vertical and horizontal extent of the Early Archaic deposits and the geological structure of the site. Approximately 15 cubic meters of the cultural deposits were excavated during the 1986 field season. These investigations revealed three distinct occupation zones contained within one meter of sediments. These zones are buried beneath 5 to 5 meters of sterile Holocene overbank alluvium. A penecontemporary living surface was encountered on adjoining site, 12 Hr 91.

The projectile points recovered from stratified context are exclusively variants of Kirk Corner Notched (Small Variety). Other tool classes present at the site include preforms, blades, drills, endscrapers, sidescrapers, hammerstones, and various expedient tools. The artifacts are almost exclusively manufactured from Wyandotte chert derived from nearby exposures. Debris from artifact manufacture is abundant at the locale.

Features are composed of shallow hearths or pits exhibiting little evidence of extensive preparation; evidence of surface fires is common at the site. Three radiocarbon samples were submitted which returned dates that are either too old or too young to accurately date an early Kirk period assemblage: some form of sample contamination is suspected.

The deeply buried deposits at Swan's Landing have close stratigraphic and typological affinities with zones that produced small Kirk points at a number of other stratified sites in eastern North America.

The Swan's Landing Archaeological site is one of the most significant Early Archaic sites in eastern North America. It contains in deep deposits sealed by alluvium virtually the entire lithic assemblage of the early Kirk period; several episodes of industrial activities are represented. Unlike other major Early Archaic sites in the East, Swan's Landing appears to be a functionally specific site type rather than a base camp. On the basis of these investigations, a National Register nomination form has been prepared and submitted.
