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ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK IN THE WHITE RIVER VALLEY WITH A CONSIDERATION OF LATE PREHISTORIC OCCUPATIONS

During the past year the writer has conducted fieldwork in the White River Valley of southwestern Indiana as part of his continuing archaeological research program in that area. Most of the work was done in the lower valley of the West Fork from Morgan County downriver to Knox and Daviess counties. In addition, some time was devoted to the lower valley of the East Fork and to White River below the forks.

Most of the 1985-1986 research pertains to the Greene-Knox-Daviess county area. That area is heavily affected by coal mining, and the research conducted there was funded by a grant from the Indiana Academy of Science to do archaeology in the coal mining area of Indiana. The fieldwork consisted of test excavating an Early Archaic Jerger Phase site in Daviess County; testing a heavily occupied Early Archaic to Late Woodland site, 12 Gr 374, in Greene County; surveying sites; and interviewing collectors. Much time was spent and remains to be spent with collectors recording sites and materials, fieldchecking sites, and photographing collections.

Some of the data obtained during the past year pertains to the late prehistory of the White River Valley, and the present discussion focuses upon the late prehistoric occupations found in the lower valley of the West Fork. Occupations discussed are Albee, Oliver, and Mississippian. It is proposed that Albee and Oliver be regarded as traditions and that each of them can be divided into more than one phase.

Albee extends from the Owen-Morgan county area down the West Fork into Knox County below the Junction of the West Fork with the East Fork. There does not appear to be any substantial occupation of the lower valley of the East Fork by the Albee Tradition.

The Oliver Tradition extends from the Marion-Hamilton county area, being represented there by the Oliver Phase, down the west Fork into Greene County where it is represented by the Heaton Phase. The Oliver Tradition also extends from the Indianapolis area down the East Fork into Martin County. The southernmost extension of the Oliver Tradition down the West Fork appears to basically coincide with the northern limit of Mississippian up the valley of the West Fork. A similar situation evidently exists along the East Fork.

Mississippian is not well represented in the lower valley of the west Fork, and there is little evidence of Mississippian occupation of the lower valley of the East Fork. Mississippian occupation appears to have been by the Caborn-Welborn Phase and possibly by the Vincennes Culture.
