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HISTORICAL ARCHAEOLOGY RESEARCH BY IUPUI, 1986

In 1986 the Anthropology Department of Indiana University at Indianapolis (on the campus of Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis; IUPUI) undertook its first fieldwork of a long range research program designed to investigate cultural interaction and change in central Indiana between A.D. 1400-1850, particularly the effects of Euroamerican and Native American contact in the Lafayette area of Tippetanoe County, Indiana. The Wabash River was the settlement center for several different tribes in the eighteenth century, which attracted the French, who established Fort Ouiatenon among the Indian villages. The 1986 field research undertook floodplain reconnaissance on the north and south sides of the river, recording 18 new sites (six of which had historic components), revisited two previously known historic sites, and began testing the largest known Wea village, site 12T6. This work, designed to provide data for a National Register of Historic Places eligibility determination, included intensive surface collection transects, a proton magnetometer survey, and excavation units one meter square in size. This work produced encouraging evidence of features surviving below the plowzone in cultivated portions of the site, cultural debris buried over 80 cm below flood deposits in the overgrown portion of the site, and a wide range of artifacts of both native and imported manufacture. These remains were found both on the surface and buried in association with abundant well preserved faunal remains. Several prehistoric components spanning the Late Archaic through Late Woodland periods were also identified within the site. Future research will return to the 12T6 Wea site, continue reconnaissance between the mouth of the Tippeoanoe River downstream to Big Pine Creek, and if conditions permit will eventually move on to excavations on nearby villages of the Wea, Kickapoo, Mascouten, etc., and the ethnically diverse communities of Kethtippecanuck and Prophetstown. The Ouiatenon-Kethtippecanuck Study Group has been created and opened to any interested persons to promote site preservation and coordination of interdisciplinary research in the region.
