

## The Oliver Farm Site

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The Oliver Farm Site is a large Indian village on White River in Marion County, Washington Twp., Indiana. It lies within a large U-shaped bend of the river, being surrounded by water on the east, south and west. Across the river is the Bosson Site. Much of the site's value to the present day archeologist has been destroyed by the unknown number of floods which for many, many years have swept across its floor from east to west; but even yet over a number of recent years the site has yielded a vast amount of archeological material: pottery, flint objects, a relatively small amount of stone artifacts, a very little worked bone, a few slate problematical pieces, no worked shell, no copper, and only a very few articles of the White man's provenience which are obviously of a very late period and show no relationship whatsoever with the archeological material. The Oliver Farm Site is typical of a number of other sites found in Marion County along White River and its tributaries; and the same type of sites have been found upstream along White River into Hamilton County and down the same river into Morgan County.

The most striking feature observable at the Oliver Farm Site and others of this group is co-mingling of Fort Ancient and Woodland types of pottery sherds found in great profusion on and beneath the surface of the ground. However, this does not hold for all the sites examined by this writer along White River and its confluent streams, notably Fall Creek, in Marion County, and up and down stream from the Oliver Site into adjacent counties. In all something between fifty and sixty sites, including villages, camp sites, and burial places, have been found in this area. Considering the relatively large twelve sites upstream from the Oliver Site in Marion County and on into Hamilton County, five of these sites have produced this combination of Fort Ancient and Woodland types of sherds, while seven of them are strictly Woodland insofar as surface evidence has shown. Of the larger sites downstream from the Oliver Farm and on through Marion County into Morgan County, out of a total of twenty-seven such sites, fourteen exhibit this combination of Fort Ancient and Woodland types of sherds. Thus, out of thirty-nine sites we find that practically one half of them (19) have been discovered to have this observable feature.

Concerning this feature on sites farther up and downstream beyond the limits mentioned above and outside the territories worked by this survey, we have endeavored to gather information by correspondence, but without success.

In Morgan County the Duckworth Farm Site is a large village whose assembly of material shows no Fort Ancient sherds, and in this characteristic as well as in the other archeological material found here, is typical of this group of sites in this area.

**Listing of Material from the Duckworth Farm Site:**

No copper  
 No worked shell  
 Cord-marked, grit tempered sherds  
 Scrapers, "thumb-nail" type  
 Broken flint drills  
 Stone celt (1)  
 Stone axes—none found by this writer  
 Rough stone pestle, center-pitted in base (1)  
 Cupstone, cupped on both surfaces (1)  
 Unfinished slate butterfly bannerstone (1)  
 Small pieces of worked slate—broken problematical objects (2)  
 Flint blades (2)  
 Triangular points (2)  
 Many stemmed and notched projectile points, including 3 with serrated edges  
 Many flint chips  
 Flint blanks and turtle backs

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As the listing of the material culture found at the Oliver Farm Site will indicate, it was inhabited by people who had some contact with other groups. In addition to Fort Ancient pottery decorations, the presence of a small but interesting variety of bone work, and the predominance of triangular points are significant.

**Listing of Material from the Oliver Farm Site:**

No copper  
 No worked shell  
 Pottery: Woodland decorated rims and cord-marked body sherds, grit tempered; Fort Ancient rims with decorations on cord-marked or on smoothed shoulders running into cord-marked bodies, usually grit tempered; some shell tempered sherds, same thickness as the grit tempered sherds; a few shell tempered and about the same number of grit tempered broken handles only. An interesting feature is observed in the form of the vessels from this site we have been able to reconstruct. Of the two pots wholly or partially reassembled, one has a flat globular body, the other a semi-flat rounded body. Both of these vessels have smooth undecorated rims, and cord-marked shoulders and bodies; and both are grit tempered.  
 Scrapers: various types including "thumb nail" and bunts  
 Small flint drills, with expanding base  
 A very few stone celts  
 Stone axes (2)—1 is a very crude double grooved axe  
 No pestles  
 No cupstones  
 Banded slate gorget (1)—center perforation, straight base, concave sides and pointed end: representing the Turkey Foot-totemic

emblem of the Unilachtigo (Turkey) tribe of the Lenape, (Delawares).

Flint blades

Triangular points: predominant

Stemmed and notched projectile points

(Some serrated forms in both triangular and stemmed)

Slate discs

Slate rubbing stones

Bone awl, double pointed (1)—with 7 notches on 1 edge

(A very few other bone awls)

Bone beamers

"Green corn" scrapers

Polished small animal tooth, unperforated

Antler tips

(A small amount of bone work in proportion to other material)

A skeleton was found on the floor level of the site. It was lying on its back, the knees drawn up to the pelvis. Georg K. Neumann has examined the skeleton, and reports it to be of the Sylvid type, typical of the skeleton material found in the northern foci of the Fort Ancient Aspect, and representative of the physical type of the Indians found in northeastern United States, and represented by such tribes as the Delawares, Miamis, Seneca, and the Siouan tribes of the east. (Georg K. Neumann: Letter, October 13, 1944.) The skeleton of a typical Indian dog, the same breed as that found with prehistoric remains all through the Middle West was found on the site. (Georg K. Neumann: Letter listed above.)

We have been working with material found during surface surveys plus a limited amount of excavating on these sites in Marion and adjacent counties in central Indiana. As to whether or not future excavations of some of the more important units will show stratigraphic or other evidence accounting for the discovery of the two pottery types (Fort Ancient and Woodland) we would not venture to say. The writer has long pondered this question: Where is the evidence to suggest that Fort Ancient and Woodland culture bearing groups lived on these sites contemporaneously? Certainly Woodland culture material predominates throughout the area. It is possible that Woodland potters acquired from neighbors the distinctive Fort Ancient rim and shoulder decorations found on these sites, and here made the combinations in such quantities as to make this feature so notable. With the exception of a very small percentage of shell tempering and an equally small percentage of smooth finished thin sherds, the overwhelming majority of the pottery material is of the well known so-called Woodland type, cord-marked, grit tempered, medium as to thickness, and of a hardness ranging from 2 to 2.5.

Or, does this pottery complex, plus an increased proportion of triangular points, and the addition of some bone work suggest a Fort Ancient component here at the Oliver Farm Site and at other similar sites in the area? And yet, furthermore, note that the shape of the restored pottery vessels suggest Middle Mississippi influence. Actual

handling of the material over a long period of study suggests the probability that the actual difference is more apparent than real, and that cultural borrowings have raised a typical northern Woodland semi-sedentary culture to the status of a sedentary culture predominately of the same pattern.

All of our work on the Oliver Farm Site has been made possible through the very enthusiastic cooperation of Mrs. Hugh (Olive Oliver) Carpenter and Mrs. J. B. (Martha Oliver) Dougherty, and the kind assistance of Mr. Frank Dawson.

Since this paper was prepared for publication, we have received a letter from Mr. E. Y. Gurnsey, Bedford, Indiana concerning the Sites downstream outside the territories mentioned above. From this letter dated November 1, 1944, we quote:

"It is true that the same combination of Fort Ancient and Woodland types of pottery sherds is characteristic on many of the Lawrence County Sites. The Brown Site, at the mouth of Guthrie's Creek, covers an area of thirty acres, and is very definitely Fort Ancient in as much as Fort Ancient and Woodland types of pottery are found in great perfusion on the surface. The same is true of the Williams Site, near the village of Williams. These are the two largest Sites I have so far encountered. There are dozens of other Sites on the terraces of the east fork of White River in Lawrence County with the same combination of Fort Ancient and Woodland types of pottery sherds.

The so called "quilloche" motif does not appear in this area. There is a decided "Southern" influence in the ornamentation in general."

Here we find the same combination of Fort Ancient and Woodland types of pottery. But Mr. Gurnsey does not mention other archeological materials. It is reasonable to believe that these Sites are typical of the Oliver Farm Site. A comparative analysis of all the archeological material from the large Lawrence County Sites with that found at the Oliver Farm Site will be of much value, in the hope of being able to extend southward the area range in which is found the material complex discovered at the Oliver Farm Site and similar Sites examined by this survey.