

A Vanderburgh County Site with Southern Affinities

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A prehistoric Indian site, designated as Vg 44, is located in the southeastern section of Vanderburgh county, Indiana, on a low ridge in the flood plain of the Ohio river. Surface collections have been made from there for the Indiana Historical Society since April, 1950, and consist of 1,149 sherds, some daub and 372 worked stone specimens and lithic samples. In this assortment are indicators of occupation by Mississippi, Yankeetown, Middle Woodland and probably Early Woodland groups.

This site is important because its ceramic range includes some pottery types which are unusual for this area. Sherds were found there which have granular temper and complicated stamp designs typical of wares of the southeastern states with Georgia as the center of their distribution. Some other sherds collected at Vg 44 are clay tempered with incised lines enclosing rocker marking and dentate stamping identical to Marksville types of the lower Mississippi valley. In addition a bowl rim sherd was found with a distinctive wide flat lip which is a duplicate of a rim type found on lower Mississippi valley sites where Marksville sherds are present.

This marks the second finding in Vanderburgh county of complicated stamp sherds. A few were found previously at the Angel site, (1) which is two miles east of Vg 44. However, those sherds, regarded as trade items, were identified as Lamar ware and are chronologically later than the ones at Vg 44. The only other place in the area where complicated stamp sherds have been found is 22 miles southwest of Vg 44 in Posey county, Indiana, at the Mann site (2) and a continuation of it, designated as Po 14 (3). There the complicated stamp wares are said to resemble Swift Creek and Napier types most closely and the same statement can be made about the sherds found at Vg 44. Sherds with lower Mississippi valley affinities like those mentioned previously as being found on Vg 44 are also found at Mann. In addition the Mann site has Hopewell material which is not found on Vg 44. A discussion of the other exotic features of the Mann site are not pertinent to this paper.

The ever increasing number of sherds of Swift Creek, Napier and Marksville wares that have been found on the Mann site since Adam's report was written plus the finding of their duplicates on Vg 44 presents a new perspective from which we can view these complexities and raises the question as to whether we can regard pottery in such quantity as all having been brought in from the south. This is all conducive to the speculation that possibly the pottery types in question were not brought into Indiana as trade ware but were actually made in Indiana. In view of the known far reaching trade activities of the Hopewell people is it not conceivable that the Mann site was a trading center? Therefore, we might expect that men coming there from the south on trading expeditions would be accompanied by their women who in the course of their stay at the site might make some of their native pottery. Another possibility would be that of southern women going to Indiana with traders from the

Mann site to live there and continue the use of the ceramic techniques of their homeland. A third contingency is that people of Swift Creek and Marksville affinity actually lived at Mann and Vg 44 and other as yet unknown sites in this portion of the Ohio valley.

If we accept any of these three hypotheses, we might go even a step farther and concede that the supposedly alien sherds at Vg 44 might have been made there since alien people were present in the vicinity rather than arbitrarily deciding that they are trade ware from Mann.

In conclusion let me state that my arguments apply only to what might have taken place in southwestern Indiana. As far as the writer is concerned trade ware in most cases rather than tradeswomen is still a valid explanation for pottery seemingly out of place geographically.

Literature Cited

1. BLACK, GLENN A. Trait complexes at the Angel Site, Proceedings of the Indiana Academy of Science, Vol. 51, 1942, p. 43.
2. ADAMS, WILLIAM R. Archaeological notes on Posey County, Indiana. Indiana Historical Bureau, 1949, pp. 47-66.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 73-75.