

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE NATIVE AMERICAN VILLAGE

Two common questions asked in archaeological investigations are: Where did a particular culture come from and which living cultures is it related to? In this book, Cook brings a theoretically and methodologically holistic perspective to his study on the origins and continuity of Native American villages in the North American midcontinent. He shows that to affiliate archaeological remains with descendant communities, we may often need to unaffiliate some of our well-established archaeological constructs. Cook demonstrates how and why Native American villages formed and responded to events such as migration, environmental change, and subsistence shifts. He focuses on the big picture of cultural relatedness over broad regions and the amount of social detail that can be gleaned from combining archaeological, biological, cultural, and historical data sets.

Robert A. Cook is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at The Ohio State University. He has been actively engaged in archaeological research for twenty-five years and is the author of *SunWatch: Fort Ancient Development in the Mississippian World* along with dozens of journal articles and book chapters. The Ohio State University Newark has honored him with two Scholarly Accomplishment Awards and a Mentoring of Undergraduate Research Award. Many of his research findings have also been featured in various newspaper and magazine articles.

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN THE
NATIVE AMERICAN VILLAGE

*Multicultural Origins and Descendants of the Fort
Ancient Culture*

ROBERT A. COOK

The Ohio State University



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For Penny, Pat, and Jay

The typical village between Lake Erie and the Ohio was multiethnic and without clear territorial claims. – Richard White 1991: 188

When it comes to archaeology, it's not what you find, it's what you find out. – David Hurst Thomas, personal communication 2017

CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	xv
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xvii
PROLOGUE: UNAFFILIATING THE PAST TO AFFILIATE WITH THE PRESENT	1
1 INTRODUCTION: THE FORT ANCIENT “SAVAGE SLOT” AND ITS DESCENDANTS	8
The “Savage Slot” and Cultural Connections	10
Introducing the Mississippian–Fort Ancient Cultural Continuum	12
Potential Descendants of the Fort Ancient Culture	15
Beyond the “Savage Slot”	22
2 THE FORT ANCIENT CULTURE: RECONSTRUCTING AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRADITION	24
The Type Site and Boundary Issues	24
What Is Fort Ancient Culture?	27
Typological and Temporal Troubles	33
My Approach	36
3 THE GENERAL AND THE SPECIFIC: COMBINING THEORIES OF CULTURE PROCESS AND HISTORY	40
Macroevolution and the Analogy/Homology Dilemma	41
Cultural Constructions	45
Outsiding, Migration, and Mixing It Up	50
The Baby and the Bathwater	57
4 THE STUDY REGION: “A MOST DELIGHTFULL COUNTRY”	58
The Natural and Cultural Environment	60
Introducing the Study Villages	68
Variations on a Circular Theme	91
Coming Full Circle	100

5	WORLDS COLLIDING: MISSISSIPPIAN PUNCTUATIONS AND WOODLAND CONTINUITIES	102
	The “Big Bang” and a Mississippian Niche	103
	Monumental Connections and Long-Distance Relationships	107
	Maize and Village Origins	124
	The Diffusion of Mississippian Traditions	130
	Origins Revisited	141
6	HYBRID VILLAGERS: BECOMING PEOPLE OF THE EARTH AND SKY	146
	Village Patterns of Potential Descendant Cultures	147
	Fort Ancient Village Growth and Residence Patterning	157
	The Place of Honor	167
	Moieties and the Arrival of the Dogs	187
	Houses of Creation, Death, Healing, and War	194
	Cultural Connections, Hybridity, and the Organization of Leadership	201
7	COALESCENCE AND DESCENDANCE: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE VILLAGE FORM	207
	Big Changes during the Little Ice Age	207
	Of Pits, Points, and Pots	214
	Pushed and Pulled, but the Circles Remained the Same	219
	Middle Grounds, <i>Terra Nullius</i> , and the “Wave Set in Motion”	226
8	CONCLUSION: MULTICULTURAL PROCESSES AND HISTORIES	234
	Two Related Questions	234
	General and Specific Findings	235
	Transforming the Past	237
	EPILOGUE: CHANGING OUR CULTURAL LANDSCAPE	239
	<i>Bibliography</i>	245
	<i>Index</i>	277

FIGURES

P.1	Photograph of SunWatch burial vault	<i>page 6</i>
1.1	Historically documented tribal locations and currently recognized Fort Ancient culture area with study region indicated	9
1.2	Map of the Fort Ancient and Middle Mississippian culture areas with arrows indicating suspected migration pathways.	13
1.3	A common depiction of the location of Ohio's native peoples in the early nineteenth century	16
2.1	Map of the Fort Ancient site.	26
2.2	The study region in relation to the type site and various demarcations of the Fort Ancient culture area	27
2.3	Photographs of typical Fort Ancient pottery in the study region and some typical Early and Middle Period artifacts from the SunWatch site	28
2.4	Most commonly used model of Fort Ancient development	33
4.1	Location of the study region in relation to select features and the concentration of guilloche-style pottery with inset comparing a common Fort Ancient guilloche design with a variant of Mississippian Ramey pottery.	59
4.2	Line graph of generalized temperature changes associated with the Medieval Warm Period and the Little Ice Age.	63
4.3	Photographs of Fort Ancient earthen mound and Late Woodland stone mound at the Turpin site.	65
4.4	Map of all recorded Late Woodland sites and stone mounds in the study region	66
4.5	Map of all recorded Fort Ancient sites in the study region	67
4.6	LiDAR images showing the topographic settings of the South Fort and Taylor villages	73
4.7	Magnetic susceptibility maps of the Taylor site showing the demarcation of the plaza and site boundary.	75
4.8	Original published map of the Madisonville site	77

4.9	Magnetic gradiometry map and select auger results for the Turpin site showing how artifacts are concentrated in a similar pattern as the house groupings	80
4.10	Hahn site magnetic gradiometry map	83
4.11	State Line site aerial photographs comparing 1962 and 2004	85
4.12	Guard site magnetic gradiometry map	88
4.13	SunWatch site aerial photograph during excavation and reconstruction	89
4.14	Horseshoe Johnson site map	91
4.15	Illustrations of large and small village forms in the study region	92
4.16	Summary distribution of all calibrated radiocarbon dates for the study sites	94
4.17	Bar graph showing site forms by chronological period	96
4.18	Maps of site location by general time period as determined from radiocarbon dates	97
4.19	Photographs of plain Mississippian-style pottery from the Turpin site.	100
5.1	Map showing proposed Mississippianization of neighboring regions after Cahokia's "big bang" circa AD 1050	104
5.2	Aerial photographs taken after spring flooding in 2005 of the Great Miami River near the Guard, State Line, and Haag sites at the confluence with the Ohio River and the Little Miami River near the Turpin site.	105
5.3	Chronological and spatial relationship between select Mississippian and Fort Ancient sites in the context of changing drought conditions in the study area and adjacent regions	108
5.4	Select examples of eleventh- to fourteenth-century Mississippian-style objects from the study sites.	112
5.5	Maps of select artifacts with a wide geographic distribution in the Early to Middle Fort Ancient Period.	115
5.6	Scatterplot of strontium isotope data for burials from the study sites with strontium isotope ranges showing possible geographic locales to account for the outliers.	117
5.7	Multidimensional scaling map for Mahalanobis biodistance results from a comparison of key Early, Middle, and Late Fort Ancient sites with neighboring Mississippian sites and a map showing geographic locations of sites used in the biodistance study.	119
5.8	Solstice alignments between features within and adjacent to the Fort Ancient site.	125
5.9	Scatterplot of carbon isotope data showing the marked onset of increased maize consumption in the Middle Ohio Valley	126
5.10	Bar graph of two-sigma calibrated ranges for dated maize in the study region.	127
5.11	Scatterplot of absolute differences between carbon isotope values from all paired first and third molars in the study.	128

List of Figures

* xi

- 5.12 Artistic reconstructions of a Fort Ancient village and a Mississippian village and basic plan maps of small Fort Ancient and Mississippian mound centers. 131
- 5.13 Comparison of a Fort Ancient village with a Middle Woodland post circle and circular earthwork 133
- 5.14 Selection of Late Woodland and Fort Ancient house styles, projectile points, and pottery. 134
- 5.15 Bar graphs showing the shift to shell temper for pottery production in the lower Little Miami Valley and within the Turpin site comparing contexts inside an intrusive wall trench house and just outside of the house in a Late Woodland midden 138
- 5.16 Comparison of stone box graves from Middle Woodland, Mississippian, and Fort Ancient sites 140
- 5.17 Map showing relationship between wall trench houses, maize, shell-tempered pottery, and likely non-local individuals in the study area based on the strontium isotope analysis 142
- 6.1 Map of SunWatch village showing the interpretation of its overall structure 147
- 6.2 Winnebago, Omaha, and Osage village layouts 149
- 6.3 Native drawing of the Omaha *He'dewachi* ceremonial pole 153
- 6.4 Proposed village fission pattern in the study region and formation of the SunWatch site from dispersed local populations. . . 158
- 6.5 Growth pattern of SunWatch village. 159
- 6.6 Reconstruction of a Fort Ancient house and typical archaeological footprints. 161
- 6.7 Example of corporate household development at the SunWatch site 164
- 6.8 Biodistance clusters and maps for burials analyzed from the SunWatch site 167
- 6.9 Locations of male and female burials at SunWatch highlighting those closest to the village center 168
- 6.10 Reconstruction of the Mississippian Lower, Middle, and Upper Worlds in relation to the world axis tree/pole and the structure of the Osage cosmos 170
- 6.11 Location of the western ritual-political area at SunWatch village. 172
- 6.12 Map showing distribution of woodpecker remains at SunWatch. . . 173
- 6.13 Drawings of two styles of Mississippian gorgets showing connection between crested birds, ritual posts, and the sun, and a painting of a male Ivory-billed woodpecker 174
- 6.14 Maps showing locations of male and female burials, leg position, and seasonality indicators in pit features within SunWatch village's west side 175
- 6.15 Bar graph showing relative proportions of key food birds for cold and warm portions of SunWatch's west side. 178

- 6.16 Photograph of juvenile Red-shouldered Hawk and drawings of incised line-filled triangle designs on pottery necks at SunWatch village 179
- 6.17 Bar graph showing relative proportions of select incised line-filled triangle motifs within the cold and warm areas in SunWatch’s west side. 180
- 6.18 Bar graph showing relative proportions of incised line-filled triangle and guilloche designs on pottery necks at a selection of villages in the study region 181
- 6.19 Biodistance dendrograms showing relationship of the SunWatch site burial with a whelk shell to the rest of the male burials analyzed at the site and the Taylor site burial with a large knife to the rest of the male burials analyzed at that site 182
- 6.20 Key artifacts associated with SunWatch site mortuary clusters highlighting the village authority as the sole member of Cluster 5 and a bar graph showing how the village authority figure at the SunWatch site was taller than other males at the site. 183
- 6.21 Drawing of a Mississippian gorget from the Hixon site, located a few miles from the Hiwassee Island site in Tennessee, showing depictions of items similar to those found in key mortuary contexts in Fort Ancient villages, such as the shell pendant and ear ornaments from the SunWatch site and a chert blade from the Guard site. 185
- 6.22 Location of all burials at the SunWatch site considered to represent possible positions of village authority. 186
- 6.23 Map showing the occurrence of shell-tempered pottery at the SunWatch site and unique petrographic characteristics of a sample of shell-tempered pottery from SunWatch. 187
- 6.24 Maps showing distribution of select artifacts that are concentrated in the southern and western parts of SunWatch village generally consistent with a moiety division focused in part on economic differences. 189
- 6.25 Photographs of the wolf/human pipe and wolf tooth pendants from the SunWatch site 190
- 6.26 Maps showing distribution of winter pits at the SunWatch site, wolf and dog remains, and humans with conflict-related trauma at the SunWatch site, and types of artifacts that occur in human burials spatially related to the wall trench house at the SunWatch site 191
- 6.27 Maps showing distribution of individuals with varying levels of maize consumption at the SunWatch site based on carbon and isotope ratios from human bone collagen and enamel 194
- 6.28 Map of SunWatch village showing location of “mystery” house along a solstice alignment/major moiety division in the village and various images related to possible functions of this structure 195

List of Figures

* xiii

6.29	The SunWatch site “mystery” house and associated remains	200
6.30	Overlay of the SunWatch village model with Omaha, Osage, and Winnebago village forms	203
6.31	Overlay of long distance pottery refits at SunWatch village with Omaha, Osage, and Winnebago village forms.	204
6.32	Venn diagram showing the key aspects of Mississippian and Late Woodland cultures that were blended together in the formation of the Fort Ancient culture in the study region.	206
7.1	Distribution of archaeologically defined regions at about AD 1400 and AD 1600	209
7.2	Bar graph showing reduction in mean carbon isotope levels over time and space in the study region, based on tooth enamel data.	211
7.3	Map showing hypothetical division at the Madisonville site based on the SunWatch line with differences in diet based on carbon isotopes from human tooth enamel	212
7.4	Types of settlements over time in the study region, based on the present study	214
7.5	Triangular point drawings illustrating general change through time in the Fort Ancient region that has been shown to be applicable to the study region	216
7.6	Floating bar graph and seriation of OSL date ranges from Anderson and Madisonville pottery styles at the Hahn site	218
7.7	Relative position of the Madisonville site biodistance clusters within the village.	220
7.8	Map of all well-known Fort Ancient site locations highlighting those with wall trench houses and/or stockades.	223
7.9	Maps of select artifacts with wide geographic distributions in the Late Fort Ancient Period	225
7.10	Comparison of a depiction of a Mississippian figure wearing a shell pendant and an eighteenth- to early nineteenth-century Miami “alliance chief” (Little Turtle) wearing a European medal	228
7.11	Map of Ohio and adjacent lands showing the location of the Indian Boundary Line/Indian Lands and various early Euroamerican landholders in the region	232
E.1	Photograph of a contemporary powwow that takes place just outside of SunWatch village	241
E.2	Photograph of a former flag of the city of Reading, Ohio	242

TABLES

4.1 Site Excavation Histories and Preservation Statuses	<i>page</i> 70
4.2 Site Settings, Forms, and Chronological Indicators.	93
5.1 Occurrence of Mississippian-Style Artifacts in the Study Region	113
5.2. Fisher Distances and Significance Testing Results for the Biodistance Study.	120
5.3 Radiocarbon Dates for Non-Local Individuals, People Buried with Mississippian Artifacts, and Wall Trench Houses.	122
5.4 Basic Data on Key Features and Artifacts.	135
6.1 Occurrence of Bird Remains at SunWatch Village in Ritual and Residential Portions of the Site	177

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If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

– Isaac Newton 1676: 1

I dedicate this study to Penelope Drooker, Patricia Essenpreis, and James Heilman, as my thoughts and investigations would simply not have been possible without the work of these giants of Fort Ancient archaeology. But first a few words about the founding father of Fort Ancient research, James B. Griffin. Without Griffin, professional research on Fort Ancient likely would not have gotten very far off the ground, and before his time there was really no Fort Ancient culture in the way we have come to think about it. While the culture had been discovered in the late nineteenth century and several sites had been excavated, no one had made sense of it in the context of the broader region. Griffin's magnum opus, *The Fort Ancient Aspect* (1943), accomplished this and remains surprisingly current in some respects, particularly in its conclusion that Fort Ancient is intimately connected with the larger Mississippian cultural phenomenon.

Griffin has been amply applauded for his pioneering work. For example, Penelope Drooker dedicated her major work to him and stated in the acknowledgments that whenever she thought she learned something new about Fort Ancient, she later discovered that Griffin had been there before her (Drooker 1997: xvii). I know what she meant, but I also know that this is not entirely true, for Penny's work not only brought some of Griffin's broad brushstrokes into much clearer focus but in her comprehensive analysis of Fort Ancient culture that focused on my region of interest here she developed many crucial insights of her own which made my present investigation possible. Similar to how Penny felt about Griffin, I often find myself discovering things in her footsteps. However comprehensive Griffin was, and indeed there are few that are his equal, I would put Penny right there. I fully acknowledge that these are not my strengths, and I am simply in awe of the comprehension these two giants have brought to our

understanding of Fort Ancient culture. Moreover, in contrast to Griffin who passed on the year before I began my Fort Ancient research, I have the good fortune of having Penny as a constant source of constructive criticism, including for the present study, which has greatly benefited from her input.

Patricia Essenpreis's ideas regarding the development of Fort Ancient have also been a huge influence on my work. Key aspects of Pat's Fort Ancient research was focused on further teasing out Mississippian influences on the development of small-scale Fort Ancient settlement hierarchies and the differential adoption of Mississippian characteristics by local peoples. I have continued to pursue these threads of inquiry in the present study but, sadly, I never had the chance to benefit directly from her insights due to our early loss of this exceptional scholar. Like with Griffin, I am sure we would have had much to talk about and, undoubtedly, my research would have benefitted greatly as a result.

Last but not least in my dedication trilogy is James Heilman. Jay has accomplished what no one else has in the Fort Ancient region, undertaking the monumental task of dedicating nearly his entire professional career to saving, excavating, reconstructing, and interpreting for the public one archaeological site, SunWatch. And what a site it is, for it is not only a well-preserved and clearly patterned large Fort Ancient village, but it is also one that was carefully and extensively excavated. The SunWatch site has obviously loomed large in my approach to Fort Ancient, and I cannot see how it could be otherwise. Jay's myriad insights about SunWatch have greatly influenced me, and I had the good fortune of working closely with him for several years in my formative period between my MA and PhD degrees when I was searching for a new research direction. The Fort Ancient culture that Jay introduced me to became the focus of my doctoral research, and has fueled an interest I have sustained into the present. But Jay not only sparked my long-term research in further understanding the Fort Ancient culture, he also instilled in me a deep passion for contemporary Native Americans and relaying archaeological research to the general public. These gifts have been life changing and enduring. The joint interest in combining archaeological and Native American interests is the reason I have chosen to donate all of my royalties from this book to the Society for American Archaeology Native American Scholarship Fund, which provides funding for Native American students to pursue archaeological training.

It is a truism generally attributed to Oscar Wilde that books are not finished but abandoned. The abandonment of this book would not have been possible without support from a number of institutions and individuals. A wide variety of field and lab-based research efforts I have directed over the past ten years provides the foundation for this study. In those efforts, I have been the beneficiary of input from numerous institutions and colleagues. Institutions that provided access to collections include the Cincinnati Museum Center, the Dayton Society of Natural History, the Field Museum of Natural

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Books are often the outgrowth of previous studies, and this one is no exception. Small portions of what follows have appeared elsewhere, including sections of text and several figures from other publications (Cook 2008, 2012; Cook and Aubry 2014; Cook and Genheimer 2015; Cook and Price 2015; Cook et al. in press). Permission has been granted for use of these sections from *American Antiquity*, *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*, *Journal of Archaeological Science*, University of Alabama Press, and University Press of Florida. A chapter where I am the sole author is currently in press in an edited volume to be published by University Press of Florida, portions of which appear in the present book as well.

Most important, as always, is the continued support of Andrea, my wife, closest friend, and infinite source of balance, encouragement, and inspiration.