

Published in Adena: The Seeking of an Identity, a symposium held at the Kitzelman Conference Center March 5-7, 1970, edited by B. K. Swartz, Jr., pp. 122-30 (1971). I was junior co-author of this paper with James H. Kellar. The descriptive section, excluding Ball State University activities, was written by Kellar. I wrote the remainder including the conclusions. The Swartz (1973) reference has been inserted. It was not published when this article was written. Bracketed material are additions from later research published in Swartz (1973). The complete composition is included to provide a comprehensive presentation.

ADENA: THE WESTERN PERIPHERY

By B. K. Swartz, Jr. from [selected writings](#)

In analyzing pottery Buchman (n.d.) believes that the Adena distribution should be segmented longitudinally, the core area being the Scioto and Kanawha valleys. This would define a western Adena area that would embrace the Miami and Little Miami valleys in Ohio, the Kentucky and Licking valleys in Kentucky, and the Whitewater and upper White valleys in Indiana. Although the senior author has done field work in the Cincinnati area, the scope of this paper will be restricted to Indiana. Greenman (1932: 519) has claimed that Adena manifestations extend well into Illinois, but this view is no longer seriously considered.

The earliest reported "Adena mound" in Indiana is Kinsley (Gottlieb 1911). The earliest controlled excavation of a conventionally defined Adena site was Setzler's (1930: 466-500; 1931: 27-51) survey of the Whitewater valley of southeast Indiana. Sites excavated or sampled included Mound Camp, Stoops, Glidewell, Whitehead and Fudge. The Nowlin site was meticulously excavated by Black (1936) in 1935, C. L. Lewis in 1951-2 (Kellar 1960), White in 1967-68 (Lenhart 1968; Michael 1969; Buchman 1970; Swartz n.d., later published in 1973), Bertsch in 1966? (Heilman 1970), and Law in 1969 (Morris 1970). All sites are in southeastern to south-central Indiana (Figure 1).

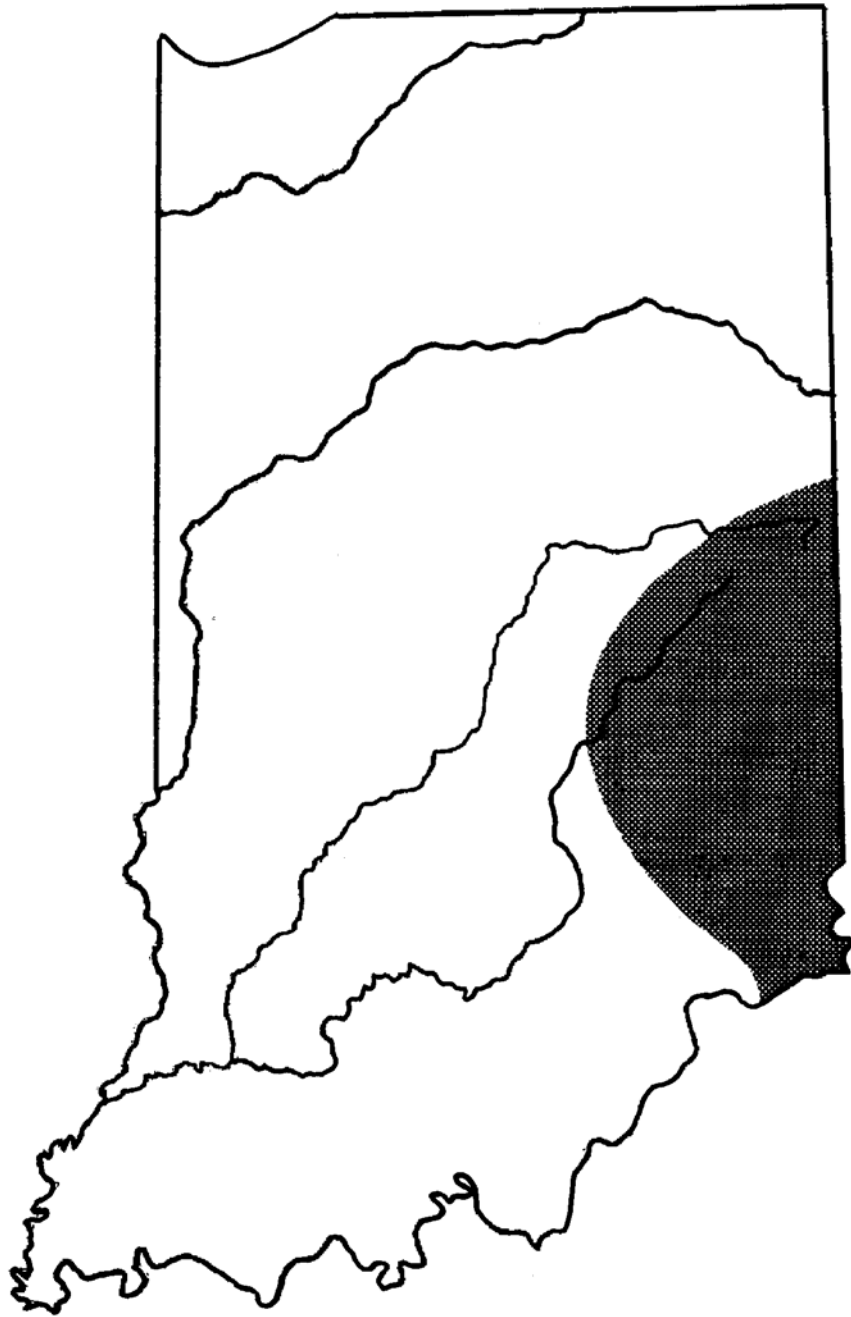


Figure 1. Distribution of Middle and Late Adena in Indiana

The original programmatic outline of the symposium suggested that papers might be most useful if trait distributions were indicated. However, to the senior author it seems more in keeping with the aim of the conference to make an evaluation of the Adena concept and to provide basic contextual data. Therefore brief summary statements will be provided for each of the above sites.

Whitewater River Drainage

Mound Camp

Mound Camp was located in Franklin County on a high upland ridge overlooking the Whitewater valley. The mound originally measured 83 feet by 12 feet when it was described 1884, but erosion and road construction had significantly diminished its size at the time of excavation in 1928 and only a fragment remained. There is some suggestion that the mound construction had taken place on a habitation level judging from the flint debitage reported at the mound base. The major remaining internal structure was a portion of an intensively burnt "floor"; some postmolds were associated with this feature. Two log molds were mapped, though these apparently lacked patterned associations. Two pits, one circular and the other rectangular, both fired, were present at the base of the tumulus. The former contained human teeth, deer bone, and several artifacts, the latter produced only a human vertebra. Disarticulated human burials were found scattered on and above the "burnt floor" along with a number of artifacts, some of the latter being intentionally broken. Included among the artifacts were *Marginella* and bone beads, bone awls, three expanded-center bar gorgets, two trapezoidal pendants, a clay tubular pipe, an incised tetrapodal vessel (*New Castle Incised*), additional plain sherds, and a broken celt. Red ocher and graphite were also noted.

Glidewell

The Glidewell Mound was located in Franklin County and was excavated in the 1880's. Artifacts recovered include two copper bracelets, two expanded-center bar gorgets, shell beads a portion of a stone celt, and a quantity of quartz tempered sherds.

Whitehead

Like the preceding, the Whitehead Mound was in Franklin County; unlike the preceding, it had been constructed on level ground in the valley of a small creek. It measured 80 feet by 6 feet and 7 inches when excavated, though it was reported at an earlier date to have been somewhat higher. The tumulus was a complex structure consisting of a small primary mound and a secondary mantle. The former partially covered a heavily burnt floor, around the periphery of which were several postmolds. Three circular "fireplaces" and four charred logs were associated with this floor. Two groups of burials were encountered. One group contained two extended burials and the second had three. Additionally, portions of three human skeletons were located in the remains of a pothunter's pit near the center of the mound. Two sherd caches, one the remains of a plain straight-sided, round-bottomed vessel, were encountered on the east side of the mound. Other artifacts include a broken slate gorget, apparently expanded-center, and a celt or ax bit.

Stoops

This was a low mound measuring about 60 feet by 5 feet and located on a high ridge in Franklin County, Indiana. The only reported structural evidence was a small burnt-clay area in the approximate center of the mound. Artifacts recovered were three expanded-center bar gorgets, a leaf-shaped blade, four stemmed projectile points, so-called "slate celts," and two pebbles exhibiting some degree of wear suggesting use as rubbingstones or manos.

Nowlin

The Nowlin Mound was located in Dearborn County, near the Whitewater River but adjacent to a small stream draining into the Ohio River. It was one of the large, if not the largest, burial mounds in the state. Elliptical in ground plan, it measured about 165 feet in its longest dimension and was 15 feet high. Structurally it shares many characteristics with larger reported mounds in Kentucky and southeastern Ohio, being a complex tumulus consisting of two adjacent mound complexes which were subsequently covered by a single mantle of earth. Seven well-defined log tombs were present. Human burial remains consisted of seven extended primary inhumations and four reburials. Artifacts were few and included the following in tight burial association: bead (conch columnella, shell disk, and *Marginella*), bone awls, bone handles, flake knives (?); corner-removed, corner-notched and side-notched points; and a plain sandstone tablet. A C-shaped copper bracelet, a portion of a concave-convex gorget, and seven plain limestone tempered sherds were found in the mound fill.

White River Area

Kingsley

Located in Shelby County, Indiana, and measuring about 150 feet by 7 feet, the Kingsley Mound was removed during limestone quarrying in the late nineteenth century. Little descriptive data are presently available, apart from the fact that three human burials associated with 16 copper bracelets were found in an "ash bed."

C. L. Lewis

This stone mound was located in Shelby County not too distant from the Kingsley Mound. The mound was a low dome-shaped structure measuring approximately 55 feet by 50 feet by 4 inches. Three major building phases were identified: (1) a primary circumvallation of earth, (2) a mantle of limestone slabs placed over the preceding, and (3) the addition of slabs to bring the mound to its final form. Thirty-six burials were directly associated with these several structural features: (1) a mass burial on the floor within the circumvallation, (2) a crematory fire ignited on the slabs directly over the former; and (3) scattered burials, one a mass deposit, associated with later phases of mound construction. Burials were generally fully extended primary inhumations, but other forms of disposal were encountered: disarticulated, slightly flexed, reburials, and individual human skulls. Artifacts in burial association were four copper bracelets, 26 copper beads, a copper ear ring, three bone combs, a large corner-notched blade, a corner

removed point, a flint hammerstone, a chisel, a broken bone handle, antler drift, and a beaver incisor.

Fudge

The Fudge Mound was located near Winchester in Randolph County, and is situated in the approximate center of a 31 acre enclosure defined by a low earthen wall. Openings in the enclosure were present on both the east and west sides. The centrally placed mound was somewhat elliptical in plan and measured about 80 feet by 9 feet. The major structural feature was a rectangular subfloor pit near mound center which contained a single extended inhumation. A detached human skull had been placed in the abdominal area of the burial. Post holes lined the base of the rectangular pit; a double row of post molds paralleled the pit at a distance of 5 feet and 7 feet from the edge. It seems reasonable to suppose that these represent a rectangular structure approximately 30 feet by 15 feet. The orientation of the structure aligned with the major axes of the earthen walls. A cache of artifacts included a plain sandstone tablet, a concave-convex slate gorget, and two large corner-notched blades, both of which had been broken; these had been covered with a layer of bark and red ocher. This cache was on the west side of the mound and within the assumed structure. A second artifact deposit to the south contained two well preserved woven bags in which were a number of heavy bar copper bracelets.

White

The White Site was located in the town of New Castle, Henry County. At one time the site consisted of at least three mounds. When reported to Ball State University only a quarter of one mound remained, the rest of the existing mounds having been destroyed by quarrying. Estimated measurement of this mound was 80 feet in diameter and 12 feet in height. A total of [3 log tombs containing] 14 burials in extended or semiflexed positions, were recovered. Internal variation and radiocarbon dates suggest four components were represented: [(1) Firepit Area (radiocarbon dates A.D. 40+/-140, M-2017 and A.D. 30+/-140, M-2018, (2) Primary Mound 2 (radiocarbon A.D. 90+/-200, M-2015, (3) Primary Mound 1 (radiocarbon date A.D. 210+/-140, M-2016, and (4) individual Log Tombs (radiocarbon date of Log Tomb 1 A.D. 550+/-130, M-2021). It appears the large firepit area was used by all groups. A total of 164 potsherds were recovered, the bulk coming from the firepit area. A total of 8 copper bracelets, 2 copper "pins," 85 rolled copper beads, 7 clamshell disk beads, 7 points (including 2 of Adena ovate-stemmed type)], a complete and an unfinished undrilled expanded-center bar gorget, a pendant and stone and slate celts were present.

Bertsch

Two earthwork circles, both formed by excavating a trench and casting the removed earth to the outside to form an embankment, make up the Bertsch group. It is located near the Ohio border in Wayne County. The diameter of the larger was about 300 feet and it had an opening to the east. The smaller measured about 290 feet with the opening into the central platform to the southwest. Excavation of the former produced little in the way of artifacts, however, a pit in the approximate center of the platform contained calcined human bone, charred log remains, and postmolds, suggesting the former presence of a charnel structure.

Law

The Law Site is located due south of Winchester, Randolph County. The mound measures 28 feet in diameter and four feet in height. It was dug into by a local collector, James Keesling, just prior to its being brought to the attention of Morris. “.....an unbroken charcoal lens, averaging three-quarters of an inch in thickness appeared between the 20 and 23 inch level.....The soils above the lens were very poorly defined, and with the exception of a few pieces of flint, totally free of cultural debris. Immediately below the lens.....217 potsherds were recovered. All were thin, plain, and grit-tempered with the exception of a single sherd with a brushed surface.....There were 12 rim fragments. At the same level.....a celt blank was recovered. The blank was manufactured from a poor quality slate material. Just below the lens.....an undrilled, expanded-center bar gorget was found.

“A firepit, measuring 18 inches in diameter, yielded eleven smoke-stained carefully made unengraved rectangular tablets.....Seven.....were made of sandstone and four were made from polished slate. The pit measured 13 inches in depth and in addition.....contained numerous fragments of small animal bones, ashes, and small pebbles.....The tip of a point.....was also found in the pit.

“Two post holes.....were located.....Just below the lens several crescent-shaped strips of muscovite mica.....each containing multiple ‘pin holes’ were matted together in a single cluster. Two feet from the mica.....was a piece of a human skull.....The borrow pit for the site is an area 35 yards south.....” (Morris 1970, pp. 9-10). Another mound, 35 feet in diameter and four feet in height is located nearby the Law Mound.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS

In the earlier versions of this article the New Castle, Anderson, Cato, and Burkham sites were included. Even at that time the authors had serious reservations about their inclusion. The recovery from the New Castle site of Hopewell pottery during the 1970 summer field season clearly indicates that New Castle, and also Anderson, are Middle Woodland manifestations. Cato (Black 1940, 1946) and Burkham (Black 1934) are established in the literature as “Adena” (Webb and Baby 1957, p. 2; Dragoo 1963, pp. 203-04), but present thinking of the field opposes Adena affiliation for these sites, especially Burkham.

On the bases of expanded-center bar gorgets (the key diagnostic trait for Adena), Robbins stemmed and leaf-shaped points Adena ovate-stemmed and leaf-shaped points, tubular pipes, rolled copper beads, C-shaped copper bracelets, log tombs, and extended burials, it would seem that Setzler’s Whitewater valley sites of Mound Camp, Stoops, Glidewell, and probably Whitehead, plus the White River Area sites of Lewis and White are clearly within the Adena Aspect. Nowlin, Fudge and Law seem to show some differences in comparison to the more “typical” adjoining sites. Like their neighbors, all but Nowlin possess expanded-center bar gorgets, all have log tombs, and Fudge contains copper

bracelets. The other Adena traits (listed above) are missing (Table 1). Unique features at Fudge are elliptical and bow-tie gorgets and, along with Law and Nowlin, tablets. Law resembles Fudge (Morris, personal communication), but differs from the other sites by having trimmed mica sheets.

All Indiana Adena appears to be Middle or Late, using Dragoo's definitions. Seven radiocarbon from the White Site (Swartz 1970, p. 26) range from A.D. 30-550. Adena may be a late intrusion on the western periphery, or Early Adena may not yet be recognized in Indiana.

Ceremonial Traits of Indiana Adena Sites

	Kinsley	Mound Camp	Stoops	Gildewell	Whitehead	Fudge	Nowlin	Cato	Lewis	White	Bertsch	Law
Robbins stemmed points		x	x	?		x		x	2			
Adena ovate-stemmed points										x		
Adena leaf-shaped points							x				x	
Robbins leaf-shaped points		x	x					x				
Irregular tablets			2?					1				
Shaped tablets						1	1					1
Quadriconeave gorgets		*										
Reel-shaped gorgets								3				
Expanded-center bar gorgets		3	x	x		1			1	2		1
Elliptical gorgets						11						
Bow tie gorget						1						
Rectangular pendant		1										
Bell-shaped, rounded-base pendant		1										
Trapezoidal pendant								1				
Constricted-mouthpiece tubular pipe		1										
Flared tubular pipe (rare)								1				
Rolled copper beads									x	x		
C-shaped copper bracelets	16	?		x		8	1		3	9		
Copper finger ring									1			
Trimmed mica sheets												x
Log tomb burials	?	x			x	x	x			x	x	x
Extended burials		x				x	x			x		
Cremation		x							x			

*undrilled

Table 1. Adena traits modified from Dragoo (1963:189).

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