

CONCLUSIONS

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The sequence of events at this site which forms the basis upon which all general conclusions must rest may be stated as follows:

1. Occupation of this area is shown by the construction of a circular house.
2. Human remains of many individuals, cremated elsewhere, were deposited together in the center of the floor of this house, while the house was still standing.
3. A small primary earth mound was erected inside the standing house to cover the deposit of burned bone, charcoal and ashes.
4. The house was destroyed by fire, presumably by intention.
5. A secondary and larger mound was erected covering the primary mound and extending over the area covered by the house floor. This secondary mound was centered over the house floor.
6. Burials of bodies extended in the flesh, laid on bark and covered with bark, were included in this secondary mound.
7. Tomb 51 with Burial 84—a deposited cremation in this log tomb, was laid down at the foot of the slope of this secondary mound on the side, in the very early history of this site, and was covered with earth.
8. Then began a long series of burials in log tombs on the top and sides of this secondary mound. For each burial, additional earth was carried up to cover the bark burial or log tomb. The growth in size of the mound seems to have been reasonably continuous and uniform as no conspicuous humus line formed in any part of the mound during its extended construction by successive increments. There were more tombs built on the east side of this secondary mound than elsewhere, which caused the center of the growing mound to shift to the eastward as construction continued.

The reasons for accepting these individual events as successive steps in the history of this site have been presented in the body of the text. It remains only to draw such general conclusions as these facts warrant.

From the size of the mound and the considerable number of burials in it, it may be inferred that this high ridge in the vicinity of Big Bone Lick was once an important center of Adena occu-

pancy. This site seems to confirm the opinion previously expressed²² that Adena occupancy was probably spread thinly over the occupied area, causing relatively slight accumulation of village midden at any one point. The soil here, as well as the surface topography, is conducive to rapid erosion so that it is not surprising that test pits put down in the vicinity showed no evidence of any village which may once have existed on this ridge. The presence of the small mound Be 14 suggests that there may have been many other burial mounds and cremated burials in the village at the time of occupancy.

From the size of the house and its apparent substantial construction, it may be inferred that its purpose was perhaps communal rather than individual. It was probably erected to serve some public purpose or the needs of some public officer rather than as the living quarters for a single family. This building, while conforming to the Adena pattern of paired posts in a circle, is unique in some particulars. The typical pairing of the posts was accomplished, not in the usual way by the spacing of postholes, one for each post, but by excavating relatively large holes and placing in each hole two posts. Further, the only suggestion of a doorway was the placement of two posts—inside the circle of wall posts. While these features are new in Adena houses, they are clearly only individual variations in a general plan of architecture. How long this house served its community and for what purpose it was constructed it is impossible to say definitely. However, the time came when, on its floor there began to be deposited the remains of the cremated human bodies. The reasons for believing that cremation in Adena was a common and perhaps the usual practice of disposal of the dead of the common people, have been previously presented.²³ The reasons for believing that this mass of bones, ashes, charcoal and broken artifacts represent a "deposit" rather than an "accumulation of cremations in situ" have been presented in the body of this report. The argument there presented does not exclude, however, the possibility that both processes may have been in use on this house floor. The hard burned clay floor in the center of this house could have resulted from crematory fires, as well as fires of the usual kind used for heating or cooking. How-

²² Webb, Wm. S., 1942, p. 363.

²³ Webb, Wm. S., 1942, p. 359.

ever, it is plain that some cremated remains were deposited on this floor. The collecting, transportation and reburial of cremated remains is a well known trait of Adena, as illustrated by Burial 84, Tomb 51, at this site.

While parts of only eleven individual skeletons were definitely recognized in this pile of burned debris, its total mass would suggest that twice as many individuals may have contributed to this deposit. These facts definitely show that "communal deposit of cremated remains" is to be regarded as an Adena trait. Communal cremation has been shown previously at Site Jo 9,²⁴ and is believed to have been not infrequent in Adena villages.

When this house began to be thus used and how long it continued to receive burial increment cannot be known. It is conceivable that this house may have been erected for just this purpose or as a place where the cremation of an individual might be performed. Whether or not it was originally erected as a charnel house cannot be determined. However, there came a day when, for some unknown reason, deposit of cremation on the house floor ceased, for a small earth mound was erected over this considerable accumulation of ashes. This mound covered the deposit of ashes completely and also the basal portions of some of the interior posts of the standing house. How long these ashes remained covered by the mound on the house floor before the house was burned cannot be demonstrated, but there seems to be no reason to assume any considerable lapse of time. The destruction of the house by fire may have been immediate. When the house was burned or shortly thereafter, the secondary mound was built to cover the primary mound and the entire house floor to a depth of several feet.

Cremation did not cease in the village, however, for at least one cremation (Burial 84) was deposited on the side of this secondary mound and enclosed in a log tomb (No. 51). If cremation was used generally for the common people we may suppose that later deposits were made elsewhere, or left in situ in the village where burned, as was done at Site Jo 9. If such occurred they have been since destroyed by natural erosion and cultivation even as suggested by the almost complete obliteration of the small mound Be 14.

²⁴ Webb, Wm. S., 1942, p. 339.

In the secondary mound near the top a few simple extended burials were placed in bark lined graves, but later earth walled tombs, associated with logs or bark, and puddled clay, were extensively constructed on the top and sides of the mound as described in the body of this report. These tombs were covered with earth supported by wooden rafters, of logs or poles, and their superposition gives some evidence on the collapse of tomb roofs. While it is impossible to say how long it took from the placement of the first log tomb to the last one in the mound, the record of tomb collapse and construction shows that, often, enough time elapsed between the placement of two tombs, one superposed over the other to allow the roof logs of the first to decay before the second tomb was constructed. How long that would take in hard, dry, compact clay, such as made up the body of this mound, is difficult to estimate, but it could hardly be less than 10 years and it might possibly be as much as 50 years or more in the case of a single pair of tombs. The estimate of the length of time required to accumulate this burial portion, or tertiary mound is thus highly subjective, but it could well be between a minimum of 50 years and a maximum of 300 years.

Perhaps the most outstanding character of this mound is the relatively large number of burials and tombs included in it. What can this mean? If as it appears in the Adena complex generally, log tomb burial was reserved for only a selected group of people, how is this considerable number to be explained?

The facts are, that of the 88 individual burials other than cremations, only 40 were in log tombs. Of the remaining 48 individuals, 25 were buried without tombs of any kind, and 23 had earth wall tombs with bark or puddled clay. It seems impossible to draw any distinction among these different forms of extended burials as indicated by artifacts in association. Under the statistical analysis of occurrence of artifacts it is shown that these people placed artifacts with the dead very sparingly. Of the 13 burials with artifacts, one burial (68) had only a flint projectile point. This was in the lumbar region and may have been the cause of his death, hence it was in no sense, a "burial offering". Of the remaining 12 burials only 5 had artifacts which were not objects of personal adornment, such as beads, bracelets or pendants.

The finding of such artifacts in association would seem to indicate that they were only articles of wearing apparel and naturally were buried with the dead as worn. They would not indicate any intention to make "burial offerings" of artifacts at the time of burial. Of the remaining five burials one was a cremation which had a single stone gorget gathered up with the ashes, charcoal, and bone, and only three of the remaining four burials had more than a single artifact placed with them. This would seem to indicate that the intentional deposit of artifacts with the dead was quite out of the ordinary—at least artifacts of stone, metal or other materials which could be preserved.

In summary, this site has yielded:

- (1) Important additional information on house construction;
- (2) Additional evidence on cremation and communal deposit of cremated remains; and
- (3) A wealth of evidence on the diversity of types of tombs, using earth walls, logs, bark, clay, and earth covered roofs.

It has suggested the possibility that cremation at this site was an earlier practice than log tomb burial, and that burial in bark lined graves may have replaced to some extent cremation for persons not requiring log tombs.

Finally, it would be very satisfying if it might be shown that the apparently unique traits discovered at this site had actually been encountered previously by other explorers of Adena sites.

Circular post-mold patterns with the posts in pairs have but recently been recognized as an Adena trait. At this site the pairing was accomplished by *two posts set in the same hole*. It seems highly probable that this heretofore unreported trait must have been encountered previously. Here in Mound Be 3, it was found in a house, on the floor of which cremated remains had been deposited, the cremation having taken place elsewhere. In this connection there is quoted below the report of Moorehead²⁵ on his excavation of a mound near the village of St. Martins in Brown County, Ohio. It is interesting to note the rather exact parallel between this mound and Mound Be 3, and particularly the conviction of the author that details of construction constitute important

²⁵ Moorehead, Warren K., 1892, page 69.

scientific data, the basis of all classification. Of this mound Moorehead says:

“. . . It was originally much higher than at present, but the surface has been plowed over for so many years that the mound is now only about seven feet in altitude with a diameter of seventy feet, while a circular embankment of considerable elevation, by which it was formerly surrounded, has almost entirely disappeared.

“In this, as in many other mounds that it has been our privilege to examine, a hole had been dug at some former time, from the summit directly toward the base, but, in this case, the work had been abandoned before any damage ensued.

“It is a matter of regret that so many persons take it upon themselves to destroy these interesting remains merely for the sake of such relics as may be found. The construction and method of arrangement of the contents are what we must depend upon for scientific classification, and yet these are the very points to which relic-hunters pay no attention. Even intelligent men who have witnessed or assisted in the work of demolition can give only the most vague and unsatisfactory statements in regard to them. Such methods are objectionable, not only on account of the unworthy motives that impel the searchers, but because if prosecuted to any extent they completely ruin the mound for subsequent investigations.

“In order to make a thorough examination we began our work by opening from the south side a trench twenty feet in width. . . .

“Our first find was made at a point about eighteen feet distant from the center. Here we came upon a large pile of burned earth and charcoal . . . intermingled with fragmentary remains of human bones which had been burned until they were almost destroyed; but as there was about a bushel of small pieces, it was obvious that several bodies had been cremated. They had not, however, been burned on the spot, for not only did the surrounding earth show no evidence of the intense heat that would have been required to reduce them to the condition in which they were found, but the mass itself showed the curvature of the mound's surface, the end nearest the centre being about two feet higher than that first struck.

“Several similar, but smaller, masses were found on the original surface at various distances from the centre, but none of them were so large as the one first discovered.

“We can offer no explanation of these singular desposits; it is scarcely possible to suppose their presence accidental, or to consider them in any other way than as having a direct connection

with the funeral ceremonies held at the interment of the personage in whose honor the mound had been erected; and yet had this been the case, we would naturally expect the cremation to have taken place at the spot where the bodies were entombed.

"Forming a circle twenty-five feet in diameter around the centre of the mound was a series of pockets, placed about three feet apart. These were twenty inches across the top, fourteen to sixteen inches at the bottom, three feet deep, and filled with small, flat, slightly burned pieces of limestone, weighing from two to three pounds each. The spaces between the stones were tightly packed with earth which had also been burned. No relics or remains of any kind whatever were placed with them.

"While, as before mentioned, these pockets are of frequent occurrence, in all our experience of mound opening we have never met with another instance in which they were completely filled with burned stones; nor can we recall a similar example in the reports of other explorers.

"As we proceeded with the trench a heavy layer of earth was discovered, burned until the upper surface had become a bright red color; this lay about six or seven inches above the large pockets, and was separated from them by a mass of very fine black earth.

"The clay composing the burned layer had been placed in the mound when in its natural state, and a fire kept burning upon it for a considerable time. The earth above showed some evidences of the heat, as though it had been piled on while the clay was still very hot; but owing to the thickness of the latter the heat had not penetrated to the black loam below; at least not to a sufficient extent to produce any alteration in its appearance.

"When we reached the centre of the mound we made the most important find of the week. A rough altar of hard burned clay, . . . had been constructed six inches above the burned stratum, and resting upon a little mass of charcoal. It was oval in outline, measuring seven by nine feet, the longer axis being east and west, and was ten inches in height. The upper surface dipped slightly from the edge toward the centre; extended upon it at full length, with head to the east, lay a skeleton. Both the skeleton and the altar were unusually well preserved, but the latter was so thin and soft that it was impossible for us to remove it. . . .

". . . On the east side of the mound, lying underneath the burnt clay, with head toward the east, was the skeleton, tolerably well preserved, of an individual somewhat below the average size. . . . A small piece of galena, which showed some attempts at working, lay near the skull.

"There were some animal bones scattered throughout the mound, mostly those of the deer. About three and a half feet

above the bottom of the mound, a thin layer of bark and charcoal extended beyond these deposits on every side.

"This was all of importance that the structure contained; we spent a full week upon the excavation, and left nothing undone."

Correct interpretation of another's report is always difficult. It is recognized that extreme care should be used to avoid "writing into" the report facts which were not there. It does appear, however, to be scientifically legitimate, by interpretation, to write into a factual report, "ideas" which the author did not express.

In the light of the investigation of mound Be 3, the report of Moorehead seems to indicate that:

(1) On the center of the floor of a house (heavy layer of earth burned until the upper surface had become a bright red color) an extended burial had been made.

(2) This burial was laid on, and covered by, a layer of puddled clay (a rough altar of hard burned clay * * * so thin and soft it was impossible for us to remove it). Here Moorehead confused the effect of puddling clay with the effect of fire, but corrects his own language by stating the *hard burned altar* was thin and soft.

(3) On this same floor were several deposits of cremated remains. He correctly sees these remains as "deposits", and recognizes that they contain the remains of more than one body, i.e. they were communal deposits of cremated remains.

(4) The house was 25 feet in diameter. The "pits" which he reported are believed to have been postholes. They had exactly the corresponding diameter, depth, and spacing for a paired post-mold pattern where two posts, each 7 inches in diameter, were put in a single hole.

(5) The posts had been set in the holes by using burned stone "chinking" to fill the hole. In Mound Be 3, holes contained ashes, debris, and stone.

(6) A primary mound 3.5 feet high in the center covering burials and deposits of cremation had been made on the house floor.

(7) The house had been burned, as shown by "a thin layer of bark and charcoal extending beyond these deposits on every side". This layer was the residue of the burned house which fell on the primary mound which was 3.5 feet high at its center. It has been

long suspected that the roofs of Adena houses were made of bark supported by log rafters. Here is bark with charcoal (logs) just where one would expect the burned roof to have fallen.

(8) *After the small primary mound had been made, which covered the central burial, and several deposits of cremated remains on the house floor placed as he says, "on the original surface at various distances from the center", and before the house was burned, there was made on the surface of this primary mound, inside the house another deposit of cremated remains. This, says the author, was the largest deposit of the group.*

It is amazing that he should have stated the truth so clearly and yet have failed to understand what he himself stated. In speaking of this large deposit he says "but the mass itself showed the curvature of the mound surface, the end nearest the center being about two feet higher than that first struck". The important point is that *there was a mound surface* upon which this deposit was made. It was not just incorporated in a mound during construction. Yet Moorehead concluded "We can offer no explanation of these singular deposits". It appears certain that he saw the primary mound surface, and recognized it as a "surface" sloping upward, upon which the deposits of cremated remains was made, but did not attach any significance to it, so did not recognize the primary mound on the house floor.

(9) After the standing house was burned, the secondary mound (which contained nothing of archaeological significance) was erected over all.

Moorehead presents in this report a drawing of a profile through the center of the mound. It very clearly shows a thin layer of "bark and charcoal" the result of burning the house, as a domed-shape layer, clearly demarking the primary mound surface, on which the burning house fell, and centered exactly over the circular pattern bounded by what he called "pits" containing limestone rock. However, it is to be noted that, as he says, this layer extended beyond these deposits (i. e. beyond the cremated remains) on every side. That would be expected, but it *did not* extend beyond the "pits"; it could not have done so *since the house was still standing* when the primary mound was built. This must have been a very obvious feature, since he recorded it in the

drawing although he seems not to have known what it was and attached no significance to it. This very exact recording of what he saw, even when he did not understand the facts, is an indication of scientific fidelity to truth worthy of high commendation. Such records make it possible for investigators today, in the light of new developments and increased information, to profit much by the labors of others.

In reading this report of Moorehead no one can doubt that he had a clear understanding of the importance of observing and recording details, and that he was honestly seeking the truth by every means available to him.

As if to close his thesis with "Quod erat demonstrandum", he states "we spent a full week upon the excavation and left nothing undone". If he had had a crew of twenty men and could have spent "a full year" upon the excavation as was done at Mound Be 3, it doubtless would have occurred to him to have investigated the base of this mound, and perhaps to have made a longitudinal section of these "pits" or, as we believe postholes, arranged in a circle. Had this been done, it is believed he would have found two post-molds in each posthole with burned limestone rock between them.

This report of Moorehead, is accepted by the present authors as evidence that an earth mound erected over a structure, similar to Be 3 has been previously found in Ohio.

Another important lesson may be drawn from this investigation made (1892) just fifty years ago. The lesson may be stated as a question. If a man so obviously able, honest, careful and dedicated to the search for truth, as was Moorehead, could have missed so much of importance in this excavation, how can one be sure today that we are not destroying archaeological records as we excavate, without reading the complete story? The question cannot be answered now with certainty. We can only hope that fifty years hence, present-day errors and omissions which are probably being made, may at that time be regarded with reasonable charity. This lesson should certainly impress the excavator with his obligation, to see clearly, and record accurately all data, and to extract every possible bit of objective information, from every site he excavates.