

Abstracts

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Late Prehistoric Cultural Dynamics in the Lower Kansas River Basin

Brad Logan and Lauren W. Ritterbush

At least three distinct archaeological cultures, Steed-Kisker, Pomona, and Smoky Hill, occupied parts of the Lower Kansas River basin by the tenth century A.D., persisting until the fifteenth century. There is some evidence of contact among these cultures, though the nature of interaction is as yet poorly understood. Following a review of formal and geographical data pertaining to each of the cultures, radiocarbon dates from their sites are examined, calibrated, and interpreted in order to determine temporal relationships. Interaction is discussed in the context of the development of hunter-gatherer-farmer cultures from a Woodland adaptation in the region. Past interpretations of connections between some of these cultures are critically evaluated, and new research goals that will aid our understanding of Late Prehistoric relationships in the Lower Kansas River basin are presented.

Riley Cord Roughened Ceramic Variation from Ten Smoky Hill Variant Sites in North-Central Kansas

John G. Hedden

An analysis of Riley Cord Roughened rim sections from ten Smoky Hill variant sites provides statistical information concerning specific characteristics of this ware. A great deal of variability in specific attributes is recognized, even within individual assemblages. An attempt is made to develop a typological system to further analyze assemblages containing this ware. Seriation of sites using this typology indicates that a geographical ceramic sequence is present. This seriation provides useful information concerning the potential relationships between Central Plains Tradition populations.

Sympatry-Mapping Studies of Small Mammal Remains Recovered from Six Prehistoric Central Plains Sites

Paul Souders

Noncultural faunal remains recovered at or near an archaeological site provide clues to the climate and microclimate of the site at the time of its human habitation. Sympatry-mapping techniques plot the modern ranges of animals whose remains are recovered at a site; the areas containing the greatest overlap of modern ranges represent a fair estimate of local paleoclimate. By mapping the areas of maximum sympatry for animal species recovered at several contemporaneous or nearly contemporaneous sites, a larger view of the paleoclimate of a region emerges. Small mammals, by virtue of their sensitivity to microclimatic change, are excellent barometers of paleoclimate. Through the application of sympatry-mapping techniques to pooled

faunal data from three Woodland Tradition and three Central Plains Tradition sites. the author has discovered that climatic change during the transition from Atlantic to Pacific climatic episodes may not have been as dramatic as is often assumed. Rather, broad social changes among human groups at that time reveal both the fragility and plasticity of cultural systems in the face of climatic changes that leave climatically-sensitive small mammal species largely unaffected.

The Material Culture of 25SD21, A Lower Loup Hunting Camp in the Platte River Valley Donna C. Roper

Site 25DS21 lies on the floodplain of the Platte River and within the right-of-way of I-80. An extensive excavation was conducted in 1963 but, except for a very brief description in a paper defining the "Birdwood culture," was never comprehensively reported. The excavation and collection are here described. The site is assigned to the Lower Loup phase, i.e., to the protohistoric phase of Pawnee culture, and is functionally identified as a hunting camp. More precisely dating the occupation is difficult. Grange's ceramic formula for dating Lower Loup/Pawnee sites is applied with spurious results. A detailed comparison of the typological composition of village sites and hunting camps suggests several notable ceramic differences between the two classes of sites. The meaning of these differences is discussed. A consideration of lithic raw material utilization shows a high degree of consistency with existing models of Lower Loup lithic procurement. Evaluation of bison utilization suggests the site was established at some distance from a kill. It is concluded that 25DS21 can be attributed to occupation by a Skiri band hunting party as a hunting base camp.