

Sieber et al. 1989). Because the growing season in the lower Midwest is more than sufficient for maize varieties grown prehistorically (King 1993:236-238), the restriction of agricultural regions that might have occurred with each 1.8 degree F drop in temperature—estimated to result in a decrease of the growing season by approximately ten days—would only take place in marginal, more northerly regions.

In sum, although the climate in the study area has varied not only in the last century but most likely in earlier centuries as well, the level of environmental risk in the study area can be considered relatively stable (King and Graham 1981) during the Late Prehistoric period. Even the most pronounced climate shifts of the early Neo-Boreal amounted to only a few degrees from normal and occurred over a long span of time. Like the climatic fluctuations recorded in the last century, the below-normal temperatures varied by fewer degrees than the difference in mean average temperatures between central and southern Indiana. While cooling temperatures probably did affect marginal areas of maize production after AD 1250 or 1300, the flora and fauna exploited for subsistence in the lower Midwest were comfortably within their distribution range, rather than marginal to it, and probably experienced minimal adverse effects.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Given such a diverse array of natural resources, it is not surprising that the park property contains an abundance of archaeological sites. Among the best known is the Strawtown enclosure (12H883), which has been recognized as a significant prehistoric earthwork since the late nineteenth century and is currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The site was first recorded by Government Land Office surveyors as Indian “mounds” in Section 3 of T19N, R5E, “adjacent to a large prairie” (Brown 1821), before the county was created in 1823. The next official mention was by E. T. Cox (1879:128-129), the state geologist, who reported in the 1879 Indiana Geological Survey report that:

The principal works in Tipton [*sic*] county are close to Strawtown and in a cultivated field. The largest is a circle, with an open gateway on one side. It has been so badly obliterated by the plow that I was unable to make a complete survey of it, especially as the field was covered with a heavy crop of corn at the time of my visit. Enough was left to show that it was several hundred feet in diameter, and had a ditch or fosse on the outside—being singular in this respect, as all other works in the State of which I have any knowledge have the ditch on the inside of the wall. Judge Overman, of Tipton, has made a large collection of Mound-builders’ relics, principally from his own and the surrounding counties [Cox 1879:128-129].

In 1880 Helm’s history of Hamilton County included a lengthy exposition on the race of “Mound-Builders” and their works, noting that

In this county . . . there are but one or two noteworthy examples. The principal of these are found on the south side of White River, a half-mile west of Strawtown, in White River Township, situate on the farm of S. B. Castor, in the southeast part of the northwest quarter of Section 3, Township 19 north, Range 5 east, near the center of the section [Helm 1880:28].

Helm furnished a more complete account of Cox’s visit “in the fall of 1875,” quoting from Cox:

I was taken by Gen. Moss and Mr. Locke to Strawtown, seven miles from Noblesville, to see some prehistoric earthworks. They are now in a cultivated field owned by J. R. Parker. The corn and weeds were so thick it was impossible to make an accurate or even satisfactory examination of the works. The main work is a circle; about three hundred feet in diameter, thrown up in the center, but apparently level, and surrounded by a ditch that Mr. Parker says was about six feet deep when he first saw it. Fifty yards to the south of the large circle there is a small circle, about fifty feet in diameter, and now almost obliterated. The site of these works is on the second bottom of the White River, about a quarter of a mile from the bank, and thirty feet above the overflow. Between the earth inclosures and the river there is a mound which commands an extensive view up and down White River. The large inclosure is one of the very few in the Mississippi Valley that have the ditch on the outside, and it is therefore worthy of more careful study [Helm 1880:28].

After quoting Cox's observations, Helm continued with additional information and included a map he had prepared (Helm 1880:29), which is the first known of the site, showing the location of the enclosure in relation to the river:

This principal inclosure is situated about seven hundred feet west of the river and about one thousand feet northwest of the center of Section 3, on an elevated point of land extending in a northwesterly direction into the bend of White River, surrounding the major part of the northwest quarter of the same section. This elevated point overlooks a strip of low bottom land, varying in width from four hundred feet on the east to two thousand feet on the north, and about three thousand feet on the west, widening to the southwest and south, White River now occupying the outer boundary, high bluff land bordering the opposite side. The low bottom land just described is composed of a light sand of loam or alluvium, indicating that when those works were erected the White River covered the entire area, with the fortification little more than one hundred feet from its margin. An accurate measurement of the works shows a diameter of two hundred and eighty feet from the middle of the embankment on one side to that on the opposite side. From this point the outer slope to the middle of the ditch surrounding is about twenty feet, the ditch having been about thirty feet wide and nine feet deep, the earth and gravel excavated therefrom forming the embankment. The material excavated appears to have been in large proportion composed of coarse gravel with a fair admixture of sand and loam. Inside the inclosure, the middle area was originally, no doubt, of equal elevation with the surface outside, since the embankment is still visible from the inside, and apparently two or two and a half feet high. The purpose of this construction, it can scarcely be doubted, was for defense, the ditch on the outside being designed to resist assault. Within the inclosure numerous specimens of ancient pottery have been found; flint arrow-heads, also, of various designs and degrees of skill in workmanship, are discovered, indicating with reasonable certainty the character of the works.

Almost directly to the westward, near the western extremity of the elevated peninsula before described, and about six hundred feet from the earthworks, is situated a sepulchral mound and general burial-place for the occupants of the fort. Its location commands a fine prospect to the northward, westward and southward, and was well adapted to the purposes of a look-out station, in case of expected invasion by enemies approaching along the river. On the site of this mound, skull and other human bones have been exhumed, or otherwise uncovered in the process of cultivating the grounds. Quite recently, many fine and comparatively well-preserved fragments of vessels, such as are supposed to have been used for sepulchral purposes, have been found here. It is highly probable, also, that a careful examination of these works, would bring to light many valuable mementoes of the ancient inhabitants of this locality, who were interested in the fabrication of these archaeological monuments [Helm 1880:128].

Later in his county history, Helm (1880:132) also described the town of Strawtown, characterizing it as "originally a Delaware town of some consequence, from the fact that it was located on one of the principal routes from the White River towns to the ancient capital of the Miami nation at Ke-ki-ong-a," as well as "occupying a position on the leading route of

travel from the older settlements in Wayne County and vicinity across the State to the Indian towns on the Wabash and Lower Tippecanoe.”

Not long after Helm’s history, there was another account of the Strawtown site in the annual report of the Indiana Department of Geology and Natural History for 1884:

The only point of interest to the antiquarian in Hamilton County is Strawtown and its vicinity. It is situated in section 3, township 19, N, range 5 E., and is in the concave of the great bend of White River. At, and above, this point that stream formed the line between the hunting ground of the Delaware Indians south of it, and the Miamis north. West of the great bend of White River the boundary was an undefined line extending west to the vicinity of Thorntown, thence running south to the territories of the Piankashaws, Wyandottes and Shawnees. Strawtown was for years the principal northern village of the Delawares, and home of their war chief. It is said to have been the most populous of the Delaware towns, in the first decade of the present century; this is confirmed by the large district of bottom land cultivated by the squaws when the whites first visited this locality, as well as by the extensive burying ground, on which the river is now encroaching, and exposing the bones of the red men at every freshet. The state of hostility which existed between the Delawares and the Miamis previous to the battle of Tippecanoe in 1811, elsewhere alluded to, growing out of the assumed right of Delawares to sell certain districts of their lands to the whites without the consent of the confederated tribes, rendered Strawtown an insecure abode on account of the frequent incursion of the more warlike Miamis, who were their immediate neighbors. On this account Governor Harrison garrisoned Strawtown in the fall and winter of 1811 by a squadron of mounted riflemen, and in the spring of 1812 assisted in removing the old men, the women and children to their old home in Delaware county, Ohio, he having enlisted the warriors as scouts and guides in his campaign on the Maumee.

But Strawtown has an antiquity evidently higher than the days of the Delaware Indians. The mound builders have left their foot-prints in this vicinity by the numerous relics of the Stone age that have been picked up by the present inhabitants. A little west of the present village there is a burial mound about six feet high; it has been plowed over for a number of years, so that not only its height has been reduced, but its base rendered so indistinct that its diameter can not be accurately measured; it is, however, between seventy and eighty feet. It was opened by Judge Overman, of Tipton, and four skeletons were found lying on the original surface of the ground, with their heads together and their feet directed to the cardinal points of the compass.

At a distance of 150 yards southeast of this mound is a circular embankment, now about three feet high, and twelve feet on the base. It has a ditch on the outside, which evidently furnished a portion of the earth for the embankment. The diameter of the circle, measured from the bottom of the ditch on each side, is 315 feet. There is a doubt as to what period this work should be referred. A tradition among the “old settlers” claims that the remains of palisades that once formed a stockade were standing on the embankment when the early immigrants settled here. This tradition is strengthened by the fact that in 1810 a stockade was built by the Delaware Indians somewhere near this spot, as a protection against their Miami neighbors north of White River. Moreover, it was not the custom of the mound builders to make a ditch on the outside of their embankments. On the other hand, the regularity of the work, and the perfect form of the circle, is hardly compatible with the idea that this is the work of modern savages. It is possible that the circle dates back to the period of the mound builders, and that the Delawares took advantage of it to build their stockade on, and made the ditch to strengthen, their palisades. The ditch has been filled, and the embankment reduced much by cultivation [Brown 1884:28-29].

After this flurry of attention by nineteenth-century investigators, the site dropped from scholarly notice for nearly 50 years. In the 1920s, local newspapers reported the discovery of skeletal remains in the vicinity of the enclosure, one with the headline “Unearthed Four Skeletons on the Roy Castor Farm:”

While plowing on the Roy Castor farm near Strawtown late Monday afternoon, Russell Unger, son of Charles Unger, tenant of the place, unearthed a complete skeleton with the exception of the lower leg from the knee down and the hip bone of another skeleton. They were found about two feet under the surface of the ground.

The teeth in the skull of the complete skeleton were almost perfect and the enamel was as bright and white as it had just been cleaned. The other bones were in a good state of preservation. It is the theory of those who examined them that they were the bones of a one-legged man.

In view of the fact that the skeletons were dug up on a slight knoll gives rise to the belief that they might have been those of mound builders who, it is known, were numerous around Strawtown before the days of the Indians. Positions of the skeletons indicated that the bodies had been buried with their heads in the direction of a circle which was a characteristic of that race of people. As a rule there were five or six people buried in positions of this kind and then another burying ground was located.

All of the bones were taken to the Unger home and some of them were given to the children of the Strawtown school for exhibition purposes.

Tuesday afternoon a party of Noblesville men concluded they would resume search for more skeletons and they drove up to the Castor farm and spent several hours in digging next the place where Unger found the first skeleton. They unearthed two more. . . . Like the two which were found Monday by young Unger the heads were in the direction of a circle and all of the bones were in a good state of preservation. One of the skeletons which was discovered Tuesday was left in the ground and the other one was brought to this city by the Noblesville searching party.

There was evidence that the mound in which they were found might have been ten or twelve feet high at one time but had been worn down gradually by cultivation from generation to generation until the bones, which were unearthed Tuesday, were only about eighteen inches below the surface of the ground.

The party which did the digging Tuesday afternoon also found evidence which convinces them that the bones were those of mound builders. Several small pieces of pottery were found near the bones. Some of this pottery showed signs of special workmanship and some of it looked as if it might have been intended for some kind of cooking utensils [*Noblesville Daily Ledger*, April 23, 1923, p. 1].

Only in 1930 did the site again attract professional scrutiny. Local newspapers reported the visit of Professor Frederick Eggan of the University of Chicago who was to survey Hamilton County's prehistoric sites. Eggan's report acknowledged that "a study of these earth-works and an analysis of the related culture is an important problem in Indiana Archaeology," adding that "there have been practically no excavations of a scientific order, or any other order, in Hamilton County. Most of the material that has been uncovered has been lost and no record remains" (Eggan 1930). Eggan's report, however, was brief and served mainly to advance his own theory that the enclosure was ceremonial rather than defensive:

White River Township

Mounds and Enclosures: A large earth enclosure, associated with a burial mound and village site, is located near Strawtown on the White River, south side. At present the enclosure is almost leveled, due to cultivation. . . . The accompanying map shows the group as surveyed in 1880 by T. B. Helm. I have made several additions and corrections in pencil. The smaller circle mentioned by Professor Cox is at present entirely obliterated. In my opinion both the enclosures had ceremonial significance that that [*sic*] being used as a means of defense. Their small size, their lack of projection [*sic*] and the absence of an adequate water supply all make them unsuitable for withstanding attack. In addition their village site is located about 600 feet to the west, rather than being in the enclosure.

The mound 500 feet to the north of the large enclosure, at present in the midst of a cornfield, is undoubtedly a burial mound. It is situated on the first terrace and is 90 feet in diameter and at present about 4 feet high. Skeletal material and pottery are reported as being found during excavation and cultivation. A survey of the mound disclosed several human vertebrae on the surface. The so-called "Sepulchral mound" to the west is probably a gravel ridge used as a burial place.

Village Site: On this elevated peninsula, representing the second terrace of the river, is the site of an extensive and long occupied village. At present a gravel pit is located at the end of this peninsula, and the exposed strata yield village site material and intrusive burial pits into the glacial gravels.

Excavation of these pits revealed portions of the skeleton of two child's burials, animal bones, mostly of deer, an implement made from the canine tooth, several potsherds, and a large amount of charcoal. The surrounding surface earth likewise contained charcoal to a depth of 6 to 8 inches. The fields to the east revealed potsherds, broken implements, and many flint chips.

The known material from this site is in the possession of Mr. O. A. Stage of Strawtown, Mr. P. A. Bray of Noblesville and the State Museum.

The trail from Strawtown to the Wabash River near Lafayette ran nearby. In the other direction the trail ran to Newcastle, Connersville and beyond to Ohio.(See map).

The location of the above sites is on the old R. B. Castor farm, now owned by Mr. C. L. Pierson, in the S E 1/4 of the N W 1/4 of S. 3, T.19 N, R.5 E, near the center of the section [Eggen 1930:1-3].

In an undated and unsigned "Review of the Hamilton County 1930 Survey" (Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology site files), the diameter of the enclosure is given as 293 feet, while "the ditch is 40 feet wide and at another point 50 feet wide" with "no entranceways crossing the ditch and leading to the interior" (pp. 1-2); the burial mound was described as "excavated by amateurs a number of times"; and the "village site" was described as extending

along a gravel ridge northwest from the circle and south of the mound. The surface is covered with the usual village site debris. At the west end of this ridge gravel is being removed and, of course, is constantly exposing a cross section of the village site surface. On a trip to this site during the summer of 1930, the writer noticed several pits dug into the gravel and upon examination found them to contain charcoal, ashes and a few bones. Repeated trips have always revealed new and interesting material.

On January 4th, the writer . . . made a trip to the gravel pit and found that a new pit had been exposed by the caving in of the gravel wall. This particular pit was 5 feet 5 inches wide and 6 feet 8 inches deep. The bottom of the pit was rounded and was filled to height of 9 inches with pure wood ashes, bones, several portions of the jawbone of the deer and shells. The next layer was composed of earth, charcoal and a few bones to a depth of 12 inches. Above this was an 8 inch layer of charcoal and bones. The remainder of the pit was filled with earth with a scattering of charcoal. Several sherds and a large fragment of a bowl rim were found in the bottom layers of the pit. The pottery is sand tempered and is decorated similar to the usual methods used by members of the Algonkian family. Many similar pits were found by the late Prof. Mills of the Ohio Archeological and Historical Society in exploring the Baum and Gartner Village Sites and also by Prof. Putnam in his work at Madisonville [p. 3].

The brief "Review" may be by Eli Lilly, who published an aerial view of the Strawtown enclosure and a photograph of sherds from the site (Lilly 1937), noting their similarity to Fort Ancient styles. Griffin (1943:265) concurred, adding the Strawtown site as an important central Indiana site showing a Fort Ancient influence, as well as evidence of a "Fisher Focus" (Griffin 1943:266). Jack C. Householder surveyed and collected both the Strawtown site and the Taylor village site from the 1930s through the 1960s. By mid-century, the two sites (Strawtown and Taylor Village), the materials recovered from them, and memories of a historic Indian occupation near Strawtown were becoming conflated. In a 1968 letter to Lilly concerning his activities on behalf of the Indiana Historical Society, Householder wrote:

12 Hv 3 STRAWTOWN SITE

This site is located on a high terrace on the left bank of White River. Aerial photographs were taken May 18, 1967 of the general area of the Strawtown site on the left bank. A defined area of a circle and

a trench were noted in the bottom land or flood plane [*sic*] a short distance north of the high terrace where the large circle is located in barn yard.

12 Hv 25 TAYLOR SITE

This site is located on the right bank of White River across the river and a little northeast of the large circle. There is some reference mentioned in Hamilton County History that an Iroquoian site was located on the north side of White River at Strawtown. Robert McClintock informed the writer about the pottery and artifacts found in this area. We have a combination of shell-tempered, and grit-tempered pottery sherd [*sic*] with cord-marking with some plain this would indicate that we have two occupations on the north side of the River [letter from Jack C. Householder to Eli Lilly, March 18, 1968, GBL site files].

Under the ownership of Dan Taylor, access to the Strawtown enclosure and related sites was denied to both amateurs and professional archaeologists for several decades. During those decades, Taylor constructed a grass airstrip in the bottomland and stored a large collection of antique machinery throughout his property. The area within and immediately adjacent to the enclosure was used as a dump for vehicles and other large historic debris (automobiles, boats, farm equipment, aircraft, concrete rubble, scrap metal, etc.). This debris was reportedly placed to protect the site from unauthorized excavation and vandalism. Only one limited contract survey (Stillwell 1996) was conducted on the property, in advance of the realignment of Strawtown Avenue; that survey recommended one of the sixteen identified sites (12H792) for further testing, though the site was probably destroyed by roadway improvement (McCord and Cochran 2003:63).

Despite the lack of access to the site, efforts to understand the relationship between Taylor Village and the Strawtown enclosure and their place in Indiana prehistory continued. Large-scale systematic database enhancement surveys (e.g., Brinker 1984; Cree 1991; Stephenson et al. 1984) of the upper west fork of the White River in Hamilton County and an overview by Hixon (1988) of the Strawtown vicinity were conducted. Recently, a survey (Carmany 2002) of HCPRD property along the White River east of Strawtown identified 14 sites in 124 acres; based on diagnostic lithic and ceramic artifacts, Carmany (2002:36) concluded that “the area was heavily utilized during the Late Archaic and Late Woodland/Mississippian eras of the region.”

Some past literature has linked the limited amount of pottery in curated collections to the earthwork (Lilly 1937:106; Griffin 1943:265) and related it to the Oliver phase (Dorwin 1971); in other cases, the materials recovered from the Taylor Village site have been confused with the earthwork at Strawtown (McCullough 1991:130, 1992:55). Closer examination of the Indiana State Museum collections (Cochran et al. 1993) demonstrated that the Huber materials came from the Taylor Village site. A reexamination by the Principal Investigator of the materials curated at the Glenn A. Black Laboratory of Archaeology also confirmed that the Huber occupation was located on the opposite, or north, side of the river. The limited amount of Late Prehistoric pottery recovered from the vicinity of the Strawtown enclosure in the earlier collections exhibits the same similarities to Springwells pottery as do the Great Lakes impressed sherds found with several other Oliver assemblages. Only one Anderson phase Fort Ancient sherd with a decorated handle and a guilloche design was present in the collection available for study (Griffin 1943:clvii, figures 1-8; Lilly 1937:106).

The outline of the main enclosure is clearly visible in an aerial photograph taken in the 1930s (Lilly 1937). The main enclosure becomes progressively more difficult to discern in

later aerial photographs, as the area was taken out of cultivation and was covered with increasingly denser vegetation. The smaller circle that was barely visible in 1875 was estimated to be 15 m in diameter and approximately 50 m south of the larger Strawtown earthwork. Although at least two mounds were also reported in the vicinity of the earthwork, one about 500 or 600 feet north on the valley terrace and the other on the extreme west end of the upland landform upon which the large enclosure rests, none of these structures is clearly visible in the aerials. The outlines of the second, smaller enclosure *may* be visible to the southwest of the main enclosure in the 1930s photograph, but the possible outlines of the smaller enclosure do not match the 1880s and 1930 accounts in terms of the size and relative location of the smaller enclosure.

The Taylor property was purchased by the HCPRD from the Dan Taylor estate in 2000. Since then, the park area has been professionally surveyed, discrete sites have been identified, and some tested and/or excavated (Arnold et al. 2007; Cantin et al. 2003; Graham and McCullough 2009; McCord 2006; McCord and Cochran 2003; McCullough 2005, 2008; McCullough et al. 2004; White et al. 2002; White, R. McCullough, and D. McCullough 2003; and White, D. McCullough and R. McCullough 2003). As important, the HCPRD has developed a master plan (Schmidt and Associates 2002) that will preserve and promote the project area's archaeological resources.

Areas of park property north of Strawtown Road were archaeologically investigated in 2001 through 2009 by the IPFW-AS, directed by Dr. Robert G. McCullough. These investigations have included both site-specific excavations and large-area surveys.

In 2001, the surface of the Strawtown enclosure (12H883) was mapped, and test excavations confirmed the presence of features within the enclosure, an exterior ditch at least five feet deeper than its current dimensions, and the presence of ceramic debris related to at least three distinct cultural traditions—Fort Ancient, Western Basin, and Oneota—dating to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Bone preservation, as well as preservation of the archaeological deposits in general, was excellent. Deposits associated with the construction and deterioration of the ditch and embankment structures were stratigraphically complex (White et al. 2002). Coupled with the complexity of these deposits, the intensive occupations suggested by the amounts and kinds of cultural debris presented numerous challenges to analysis, and it was clear that further investigations were warranted to clarify the nature of the remains within the enclosure.

During 2002, excavations were focused on opening larger, contiguous areas of 12H883 to expose and excavate features and search for evidence of a stockade wall (White, R. McCullough, and D. McCullough 2003). Excavations over and interior to the embankment revealed a profusion of well-preserved cultural features, including a series of postholes suggestive of a stockade, several large, deep storage/refuse pits (some extending as much as seven feet below the surface), and smaller pits. Slump deposits associated with the embankment had protected many of the features from agricultural disturbance, and in many cases it was possible to document where the features had been cut through the prehistoric A horizon. The large storage/refuse pits were diverse and stratigraphically complex: one contained a large deposit of carbonized maize at its base, while another contained an articulated dog burial and large deer skull fragments. A smaller block unit placed closer to the interior of the enclosure revealed much shallower deposits representing food processing pits. Despite these discoveries, no house or domestic structure was identified. Investigations

conducted during 2003 revealed additional food processing and storage pits and two burials (McCullough et al. 2004).

During 2004, excavations were located between Blocks 1 and 2 previously opened during the 2002 and 2003 seasons (McCullough 2005). Efforts were focused in this area to connect the two block areas into one contiguous excavation block area while attempting to locate a domestic structure. Several large storage pit features and postholes were identified, although no discernible evidence of a domestic structure was encountered. Site 12H1052, located south and west of the enclosure, had approximately 149 square meters excavated during the field season, including hand units and machine trenching. These efforts were an attempt to locate the second enclosure mentioned by Helm (1880:28). Two small features were recorded but no evidence of a second enclosure was encountered.

Fieldwork during Archaeology Month 2006 also was centered on excavations at the Strawtown enclosure (12H883) to identify a domestic structure, which had been detected in the resistivity and ground-penetrating radar data collected during the REU season (Arnold et al. 2007). Near the end of the eight-week REU season, two four-unit blocks were opened for ground-truthing. Several large features and burned, reddish-orange soil were identified in one of the blocks, which was positioned over the southwest portion of the rectilinear anomaly. That block was the focus for the 2006 Indiana Archaeology Month excavations; it was re-opened, and the first domestic structure within the enclosure was identified during the final days of the excavation. Additional work in 2007 during REU and Indiana Archaeology Month investigations exposed more of the structure, and a 4-unit block at the center of the enclosure also was investigated (McCullough 2008). The structure's location suggested that, to date, the Oliver phase habitation of the Strawtown enclosure seems to be most similar to the contemporaneous Anderson phase of Middle Fort Ancient (AD 1200-1400) in terms of radiocarbon dates, ceramic assemblages, and features. Further work, however, in the units opened to expose the structure and in the center of the enclosure, has also confirmed a significant Taylor Village component within the enclosure, primarily superpositioned on the Oliver features. Fieldwork during Archaeology Month 2008 focused on supplementing data recovered during previous investigations at the Strawtown enclosure (Graham and McCullough 2009). The goal of the work conducted in 2008 was to identify boundaries for the structure discovered during the 2006 excavations; the expansion revealed more of the structure basin, but did not identify northern or southern limits to the structure. The Strawtown enclosure was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places in 2008 and listed in 2009.

Investigations during Archaeology Month 2010 expanded on the work done in previous years and continued to expose the northern and southern limits of the structure identified in 2006. As a result, many additional post molds and features were identified, and at least three structures were superimposed within the large excavation block (McCullough 2011).

Site 12H3, in the bottoms below the enclosure, was subject to surface survey in 2001 and 2002. A controlled collection at 5-m and 20-m grids over a portion of the site in 2001 identified areas of high artifact density possibly related to feature/midden areas (White et al. 2002). Survey in 2002 focused on delimiting the site boundaries and collecting basic information about the kinds and densities of artifacts present on the surface (White, R. McCullough, and D. McCullough 2003). Unlike the enclosure site, the material remains of three distinct cultural traditions were not present. Very few Fort Ancient-related sherds and Taylor Village sherds have been recovered from 12H3, suggesting the site represents an

occupation that is qualitatively or chronologically distinct from the occupations of the enclosure.

During May to June 2003 (McCullough et al. 2004), a limited geophysical survey of the Castor Farm site (12H3) was conducted, and excavations to ground-truth the results confirmed the presence of an intense occupation evident through numerous postholes, hearths, pit features, burials and a potential house basin. Four 50 cm by 50 cm shovel volume survey units were opened, one of which revealed the presence of large posts indicating a stockade wall of substantial construction. During 2004, extensive geophysical survey, using multiple instruments, identified two large central structures, as well as numerous anomalies interpreted as features. One hundred and twenty-six square meters were opened in the central portion of the site over and around the easternmost structure. One quarter of the structure was excavated, and the presence and location of an outer stockade wall was confirmed (McCullough 2005). During 2005, subsequent excavations re-opened the partially excavated structure while removing the northeast quarter section.

In 2009, investigations at 12H3 by the IPFW-AS succeeded in exposing an entire semi-subterranean domestic basin structure located north of the paired communal structures. It appeared to be a single-episode construction, ringed with a single row of postholes on the interior of the basin, and had an earthen ramp entrance (McCullough and Graham 2010:II).

These investigations at 12H3 have resulted in the definition of the Castor phase, a newly recognized and distinctive adaptation of Western Basin-derived peoples to the social and environmental conditions of central Indiana, as well as the listing in 2009 of the Castor Farm site on the NRHP.

Large-area investigations north of Strawtown Avenue included a reconnaissance-level survey in 2002 of approximately 140.9 acres that resulted in the documentation of 42 previously unrecorded sites (12H1021 through 1059 and 12H1061 through 1063), ranging from the Early Archaic through the early historic periods (White, R. McCullough, and D. McCullough 2003). Further archaeological investigations north of Strawtown Avenue were conducted in 2003 (White, D. McCullough, and R. McCullough 2003): a Phase Ia survey of 5.3 acres identified one previously unrecorded site (12H1087); subsurface testing established the boundaries of 12H1052, 1053, and 1059; and Phase II testing of sites 12H1053 through 1059 in advance of park development resulted in recommendations for avoidance or mitigation of portions of 12H1057 (a Taylor Village-affiliated occupation), of 12H1058 (prehistoric and possibly historic occupations), and of 12H1059 (deposits relating to the historic occupation of the Taylor property).

On the park property south of Strawtown Avenue, archaeological investigations have been conducted by Ball State University under the direction of Donald Cochran and Beth McCord and by Indiana State University personnel with Mark Cantin and Dr. C. Russell Stafford as Principal Investigators. Phase Ia reconnaissance in 2001 of approximately 450 acres by Ball State University resulted in the identification of 89 previously unrecorded sites (12H935 through 965; 12H979 through 1020; and 12H1067 through 1082), ranging from the Late Paleoindian through the early historic periods (McCord and Cochran 2003). Like the Carmany (2002) survey farther upriver, the survey found that utilization of the area was heaviest during the Archaic and Late Woodland/Late Prehistoric periods, but the survey identified a Late Paleoindian presence and a “regionally unique presence of Middle Woodland peoples” (McCord and Cochran 2003:iii). In late 2002, Indiana State University personnel conducted geoarchaeological investigations on a 153.7-acre tract that will be

impacted by park development (Cantin et al. 2003). During these investigations, two pit features related to site 12H993 were excavated. Deposits returned an AD 1300+ radiocarbon date, and the ceramic assemblage was most like 12H3, with a predominance of cordmarked vessels and very few Fort Ancient-like, or guilloche, designs (Cantin et al. 2003:53-54). In 2006, a Phase Ic investigation was conducted south of Strawtown Avenue prior to the proposed construction of a lake on park property (McCord 2006). This investigation identified ten additional sites, 12H1175 through 1184, in the floodplain and recovered Castor phase pottery (McCord 2006:11, 13). In 2008, a Phase II investigation of portions of 12H987 was conducted (McCord 2009b). Five features were recovered during the excavations. One was a smudge pit and the other four appeared to have a secondary use as trash pits. Ceramics recovered were mostly cordmarked, with the exception of one feature which contained a large amount of fabric-roughened ceramics (McCord 2009b:83). Pottery within the features was consistent with Albee and Castor phase ceramics recovered from the region. A charcoal sample returned a date of approximately AD 1000 (McCord 2009b:72), placing the deposits at the early end of the Castor phase. Lastly, in 2011, a Phase II investigation of portions of a previous recorded site was conducted, but few artifacts were recovered (Jeff Plunkett, personal communication 2012).

Phase Ic and Phase II investigations of a portion of 12H993 were conducted by the IPFW-AS for placement of a pedestrian bridge over the White River (Arnold and McCullough 2008, Smith and Arnold 2009). A pit feature was recovered during the Phase Ic that contained a small undecorated sand-tempered ceramic bowl (Arnold and McCullough 2008). During the Phase II investigations an additional two features were identified. They appeared to be earth ovens, with bands of charcoal and fire-cracked rock (Smith and Arnold 2009). Aside from the fire-cracked rock, few artifacts were recovered during the investigations. The features were unable to be temporally placed beyond general Late Prehistoric.

In sum, recent professional archaeological investigations have identified 142 previously unrecorded sites on the park property, both north and south of Strawtown Avenue, in addition to the enclosure (12H883) and the occupation at 12H3. Although the majority of these new sites are indeterminate prehistoric, identified through surface scatters, sites with diagnostic artifacts indicate that the park property has been utilized “from at least 8,000 B.C. through the Historic period” (McCord and Cochran 2003:iii). The following section details the cultural periods of Indiana as they relate to central Indiana; specific knowledge about many aspects of the prehistory of central Indiana is quite thin, and the park property, with its abundance of sites, will be a valuable resource for better understanding this region’s prehistory.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The cultural history of central Indiana is long and complex, extending at least 12,000 years into the past and including a rich mosaic of prehistoric and historic societies, cultures, and lifeways. The record of these manifestations is equally complex. The following is a brief introduction to the periods commonly used to describe cultures and cultural changes in the Midwest in general and in central Indiana in particular. Further information is available from numerous sources. The Paleoindian Period of eastern North America has been addressed in