# The Origin of the Shawnee Indians

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The Middle Ohio Valley has known the presence of man from prehistoric times to the present day. Until the coming of the White settlers, the aboriginal inhabitants of the valley directed most of their energies toward obtaining food in sufficient quantities to permit survival and perpetuation of their social group. Some subsistence patterns, such as agriculture, involved greater cultural elaboration of material items, whereas less diversity in the material traits generally are associated with earlier hunting and gathering populations. In other words, the earlier inhabitants of the Middle Ohio Valley concentrated on practicing their culture and left some of its products in passing. Although the more recent immigrants to the region, the White settlers, were also interested in populating the area and gaining a living from it, they brought a new interest with them. They were inquisitive about the earlier occupants whose cultural items were frequently found on the surface of the ground or when the soil was cultivated. As a result, considerable attention was, and continues to be, devoted to the location, description, and identification of the cultures of the prehistoric inhabitants. Nor is interest in extinct cultures confined to the professionally trained investigator, as a perusal of early historic journals will illustrate. More frequently, it has been the amateur investigator who finds evidence of aboriginal occupations and who calls it to the attention of the trained specialist. Within the last one hundred years, many prehistoric sites have been found and subsequently given particular names in terms of location, of temporal placement, and of the material remains found on the site. Often times items of the material culture are found in association with physical remains of the population, and it then becomes possible to study not only the life ways of the people but to study the people themselves.

An attempt is made here to reconstruct the history of the people who produced the Fort Ancient archaeological cultural assemblage by using a multidisciplinary approach toward the solution of a historic problem. Specifically, a test is made to ascertain to what extent the physical data of the Fort Ancient Aspect population support the conclusions that have been drawn on the basis of archaeological evidence.

During the 1930's, Griffin (2) conducted a comprehensive investigation of the Fort Ancient archaeological manifestation, and his data form the foundation for the descriptive and comparative analyses of this preliminary study. He establishes four foci in the Aspect—Baum, Feurt, Anderson, and Madisonville—on the grounds of artifactual similarities and differences; the same foci are accepted here as archaeological subgroupings. The skeletal remains associated with these subgroupings are

compared with each other, and with non-Fort Ancient groups, to denote the various degrees of physical homogeneity among the groups within the Aspect and to determine phyletic relationships with other groupings on a varietal level.

The ethnohistorical identification of the earliest tribes found in the region is evaluated against the archaeological distribution in concordance with the temporal position of the Fort Ancient Aspect. While there is the possibility that the earliest historic tribes of the Middle Ohio Valley may have been derived from Siouan-, Muskogean-, or Algonquian-speaking stocks, it is most probable that the Fort Ancient people were Algonquian and therefore the ancestors of the historic Shawnee tribal group. Working with the assumption that the people in the area were affiliated with the Central Algonquian linguistic group, the cultural and physical correlations with other members of this division are explored to investigate the precise temporal and spacial placement of the population.

When the identification of an archaeological population is being attempted, the investigator utilizes the morphological and metrical data of the skeletal remains that are available to him. The morphological characteristics serve as basic units since they more readily express the features that are typical of the group. The metrical dimensions primarily yield data on size rather than form, and the indicial units pertain exclusively to proportions, eliminating the size factor. If the morphological, metrical, and indicial traits are used together and their significant correlations noted, as is done in the present study, the population may be accurately described and identified in terms of trait combinations unique to it.

The cranial material of the Fort Ancient population was collected by Georg K. Neumann of Indiana University during the time that Griffin was gathering the archaeological data for his report. The physical remains were so numerous that a comprehensive study of them was not feasible until computerized programming and facilities were available. A total of 732 individuals compose the Aspect sample, i.e., Baum Focus 40, Feurt Focus 71, Anderson Focus 118, and Madisonville Focus 503. Some components within each focus were excavated more completely than others, but the sample is considered to be more than adequate in providing a representation of the physical characteristics of the Fort Ancient people.

In this preliminary study only the male crania of approximately 300 individuals are examined. Since occipital cranial deformation is displayed among a number of the crania, it is necessary to establish an undeformed and deformed category for the population of each component, with the exception of the components of the Anderson focus. The comparisons of each category are made by using Student's "t" test (1), a statistical means of determining significant differences between small populations and an important step in evaluating which traits would provide the most definitive information in a more comprehensive multivariate analysis. The assessment of population distance and inferentially, the problem of local differentiation versus hybridization, is

expressed in terms of t-ratios and t-probabilities. An estimate of population distance is obtained from the ratio of significant differences found in the total number of variables for each measurement and index, being expressed as a coefficient of relatedness. Although the coefficients are based on a continuum, they are distributed proportionally in index classes to indicate near identity, close relationship, moderate relationship, and unrelatedness. This scale serves as a guide in determining whether crania from different components display homogeneous or heterogeneous physical characteristics, i.e., whether the crania represent similar or dissimilar physical populations (3).

The cranial comparisons are made on three different levels—the intra-focus level, the inter-focus level, and the varietal level. On the intra-focus level, it is found that the components of the Baum Focus do not represent a single in-breeding population, but the series—the undeformed and deformed crania—display a high degree of similarity in many dimensions and indices relating to traits that are commonly used to delineate populations. The crania from the various components of the Feurt Focus exhibit little physical variability, having a coefficient of relatedness of near identity. The series from the Anderson Focus display only a slight amount of physical dissimilarity and appear to be closely related. The crania of the components in the Madisonville Focus display less physical homogeneity in both undeformed and deformed groups than is found in the other foci. The degree of heterogeneity strongly suggests the presence of more than one physical variety in the focus.

When the crania of each focus are pooled into a single "focus" population (maintaining undeformed and deformed categories when necessary), it is found that the undeformed crania of Baum, Feurt, and Anderson Foci appear to be closely related, displaying few significant differences in dimensions or indices. The deformed crania, however, exhibit a number of significantly differing values which may be influenced by the type and degree of deformation or by the presence of more than a single physical variety. The Madisonville crania appear to be only moderately related to the other foci, making it evident that more than one physical type was involved in the t-score comparisons. Hence, the crania of the Fort Ancient Aspect cannot be pooled to represent a single homogeneous population.

An examination of all crania suggested that the undeformed individuals could be sorted into an Ilinid or a Muskogid (Walcolid) category in accordance with the predominating physical characteristics of each skull in order to investigate the presence of different physical types in the Aspect. Smail (4) has previously shown that the Anderson population is closely related to the Oakwood Mound people, the "type" Ilinid physical variety; hence, there is strong evidence for building the Fort Ancient Ilinid population around the series from the Anderson Focus. Undeformed crania from the Baum Focus and some components of the Madisonville Focus also fit into the Fort Ancient Ilinid series. The Fort Ancient Muskogid series is composed of undeformed crania from the Madisonville Focus since there is little evidence of this physical variety in the other foci.

When the Fort Ancient "derived varieties" are compared, they are found to be unrelated in dimensional values and only moderately related in indicial values. However the Fort Ancient Muskogid series display less of a population distance to the Fort Ancient Ilinid series than to any other varietal series to which it is compared. On the other hand, there is conclusive evidence that the Fort Ancient Ilinid series is nearly identical to the Ilinid physical variety and moderately related to the Muskogid variety.

According to various radiocarbon dates, the Fort Ancient culture covered a temporal span from about A.D. 1100 until historic times with the Baum Focus, and its Ilinid-like population, exhibiting greater antiquity than the other foci. The Madisonville Focus appears to be nearly as old as Baum and exhibits a temporal depth beyond the radiocarbon dates recorded for the Anderson-like components of Pleasant Hill and Erp. Such a time depth for Madisonville would account for the numerous Ilinid-like individuals in that focus and would suggest that the Fort Ancient Muskogid physical type was a late arrival in the Aspect, coming from the south. Therefore, it is proposed that the Fort Ancient Ilinid peoples represent the original inhabitants of the Fort Ancient cultural area which evolved from a Woodland base.

The small sample of known Shawnee may not typify the entire tribe, but the coefficients of relatedness for the comparisons of the Shawnee and the Fort Ancient "type" series imply that the former represent an admixture of the predominant physical types in the area. Since some of the late prehistoric crania display similar kinds of admixture, it is believed that the historic Shawnee peoples are the descendants of the Fort Ancient archaeological population and are not recent comers to the Middle Ohio Valley. The fact that the Shawnee crania exhibit some Muskogid characteristics is considered to be merely an indication of the degree of admixture that is present in early historic times, but it is believed that the prehistoric Shawnee were more like the Fort Ancient Ilinid variety. The Ilinid affiliation of the Fort Ancient population, the early Shawnee, is substantiated by a recent study of a Fort Ancient series from Central Indiana that was made by Neumann. He found that the crania appear to be closely related to the Anderson population, or the Fort Ancient Ilinid variety. Thus, it appears that the Fort Ancient archaeological manifestation and the prehistoric Shawnee are coterminous.

## Literature Cited

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