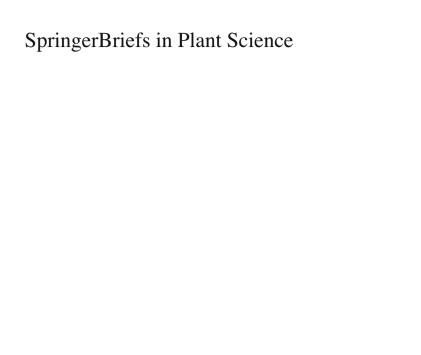
Natalie G. Mueller

Mound Centers and Seed Security A Comparative Analysis of Botanical Assemblages from Middle Woodland Sites in the Lower Illinois Valley





Mound Centers and Seed Security

A Comparative Analysis of Botanical Assemblages from Middle Woodland Sites in the Lower Illinois Valley



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The earthen mounds built by the Middle Woodland inhabitants of the Eastern Woodlands have been the focus of archaeological research for more than a century. Within these mounds, excavations have revealed naturalistic art worked on exotic materials from points as distant Wyoming, Ontario, and the Gulf Coast (Carr 2006b). At the turn of the twentieth century, the makers of this 2,000-year-old art and architecture were named the Hopewell culture and envisioned as a cohesive and highly sophisticated society inhabiting southern Ohio (Moorehead 1892). In the century since, Hopewell has been transformed into a descriptor of a complex network of exchange and interaction spanning the river valleys of the Eastern Woodlands.

Concurrent with this interpretive shift, paleoethnobotanical research has shown that Middle Woodland societies produced crops of native seeds (referred to as the Eastern Agricultural Complex) before the introduction of maize to eastern North America. This study examines the botanical remains recovered from the Mound House site in the Lower Illinois River Valley (LIV), one point of articulation in the network of Hopewellian interaction. I compare the patterning of plant remains at