

ANGEL SITE

AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL, HISTORICAL, AND ETHNOLOGICAL STUDY

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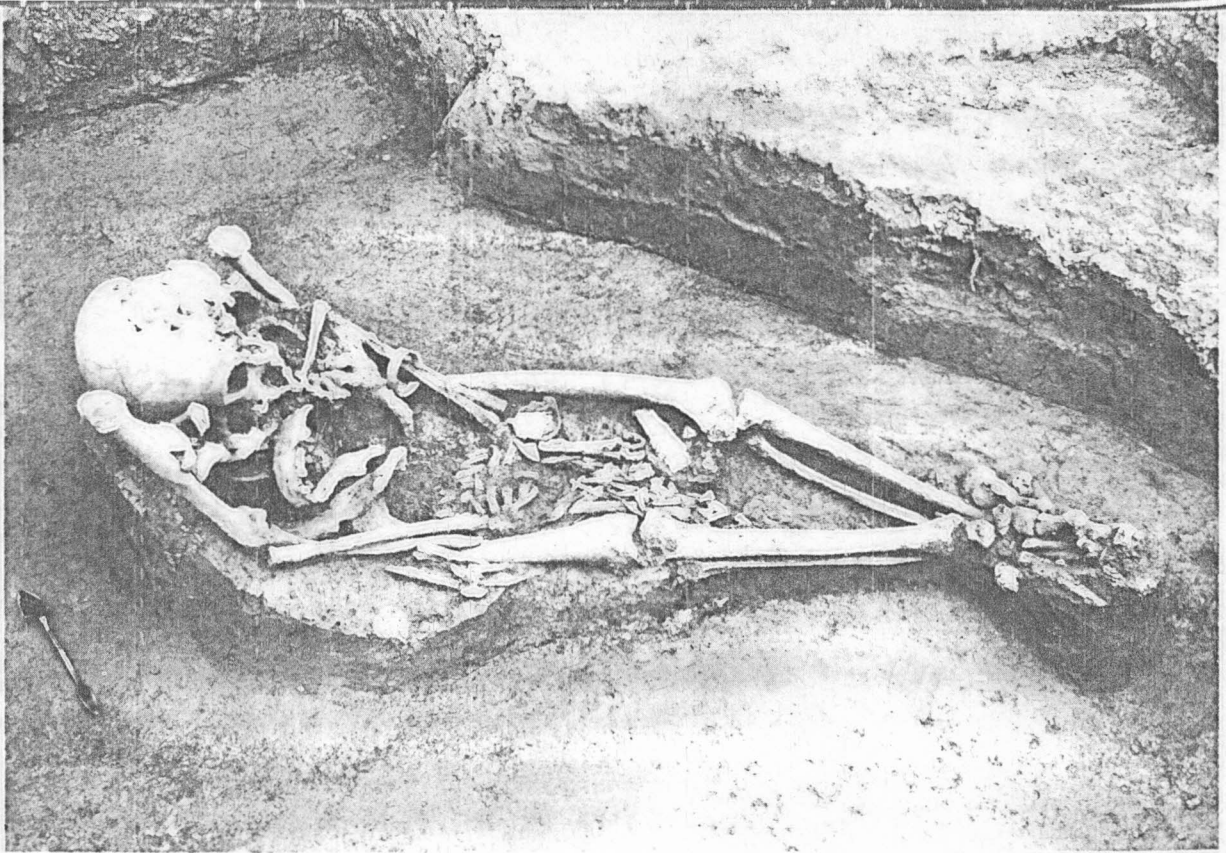
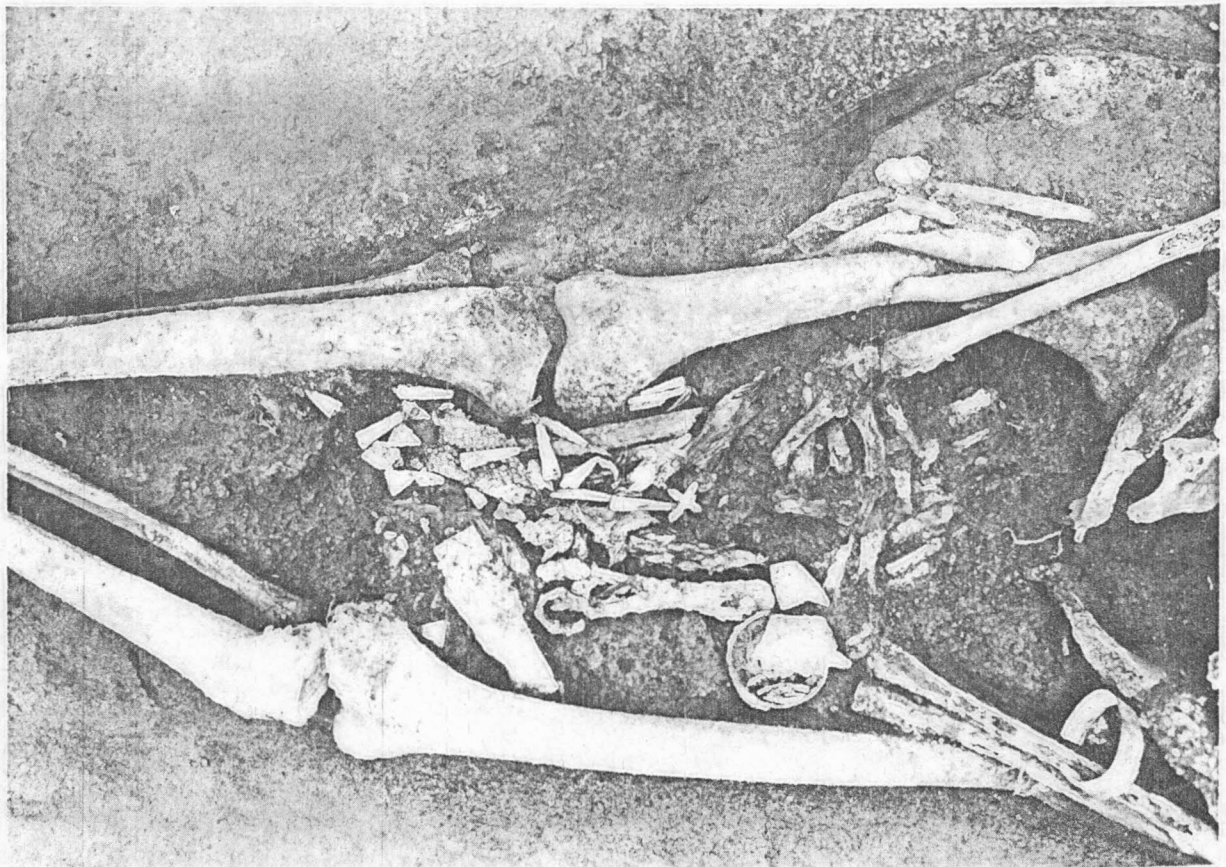


Fig. 233. Intrusive historical burial, Burial 1, Mound F, found in Blocks 6-R-2 and 6-R-3 on the 385.24-foot level

Fig. 234. Close-up of part of Burial 1, Mound F



MOUND F

well have been performed at the time the site was finally abandoned. No conclusive evidence of a pit was observed but this does not in itself prove that no pit was once present. The homogeneous nature of the soil down to 2.5 feet below the summit would have made detection of a shallow pit quite impossible. The only alternative to a pit placement would be for it to have been included within the soil of the secondary mantle during the process of building up the final mound. This would seem to be an unrealistic explanation.

Historic Indian Burial

The second discovery of considerable interest in the east half of the secondary mound was a burial first encountered on Thursday, December 5, 1940, in Blocks 6-R-2 and 6-R-3. This burial was an intrusive inhumation, placed in a grave which had been excavated into the southeast corner of the mound long after the original occupants of the site had abandoned it.

The burial was of an adult Indian belonging to one of the several tribes who roamed this part of Indiana in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The Indian and the objects found with him are out of context completely so far as the prehistory of Angel Site is concerned. They, therefore, will be described here in detail and no mention of this burial will again be made.

Fig. 233 is a view of this burial *in situ* and reference to it will make more understandable the description of body position which follows. The grave, as excavated, was too short to accommodate the body in an extended position and perhaps too narrow to allow flexing. This resulted in an inhumation in a reclining position. The burial had been placed in the grave with the legs extended horizontally to the southeast. The trunk reclined against the west wall of the grave in almost a vertical position. The skull had naturally settled until it rested between the proximal ends of the humeri and was inclined over on the right side. The mandible had dropped to a point about midway between the shoulders and the pelvic girdle. The burial was found during near-zero weather and the skull was inadvertently damaged at the time of discovery. The frozen ground and the nature of the objects associated with the burial made for

extreme difficulty in exposing the remains. (The author will never forget the four days spent with a dissecting needle, working without gloves, trying to make out any possible pattern that might have pertained to the 3,942 seed beads which obviously had been embroidered upon a garment.)

The point selected for the inhumation of this Indian was at the southeast corner of the mound just below the "break," or edge, of the truncate apex. The grade elevation at the west end of the grave was 388.6 feet above sea level. The bottom of the grave was on the 385.24-foot level.

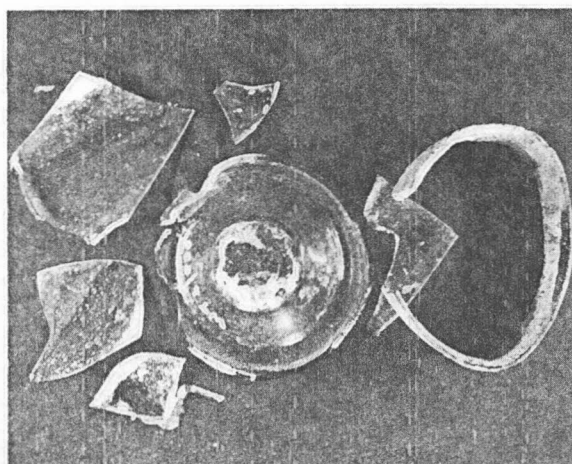
The first object found with the burial was a so-called "hairbead," shown in Fig. 242. This object has a length of $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches, is elliptical in outline, and plano-convex in cross section. It is made of copper, or brass, and is hollow. This object was found at the base of the skull, on the left side, and although no hair had been preserved, it probably had served as a hair ornament.

A brass bracelet was found at the left ulna with the opening in a position to imply that it probably had been upon the wrist of the Indian at the time of burial. See Fig. 234. The bracelet had a maximum diameter of $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches and had been made from a strip of rather heavy brass $1\frac{1}{32}$ inch in width and bent into C-shape (Fig. 235).

To the left of the left hand and wrist there were the base and several wall fragments of a small glass bottle (Fig. 235). The base is deeply concave and shows where the frontal was broken off in the fashion of old-style glassware.

Between the femurs there was an accumulation of material of considerable diversity. The items

Fig. 235. Left, glass bottle sherds (base $1\frac{1}{8}$ inches in diameter), and right, brass bracelet ($2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter), both found with Burial 1, Mound F



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Fig. 236. *Left, brass tinkler on cloth; above center, wooden comb; above right, two tinklers; below center, tinkler on felt; center right, tacks; lower right, brass coil*

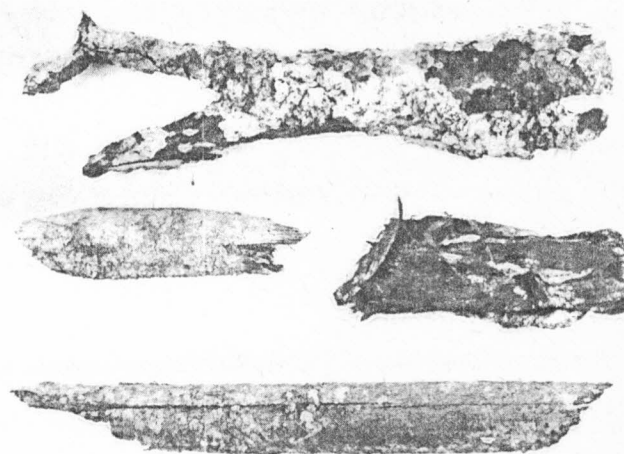
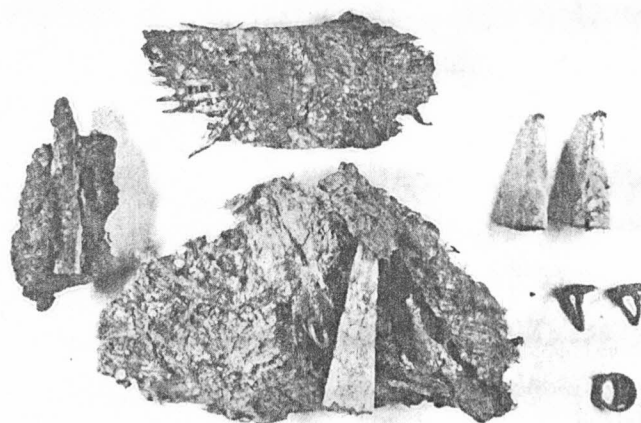


Fig. 238. *Above, steel shears or scissors; below, sticks and bark coated with vermillion, found with Burial 1, Mound F*

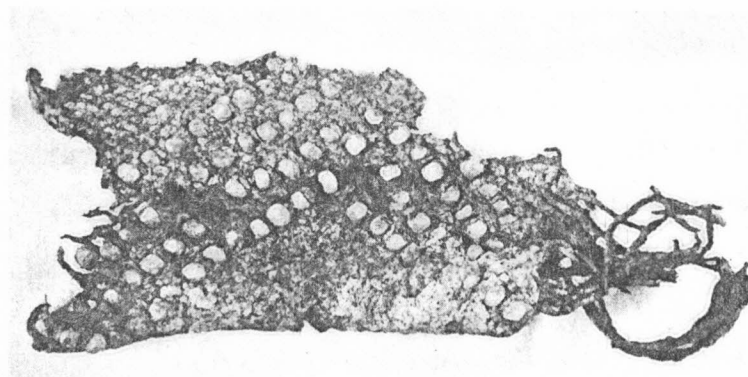


Fig. 237. Seed beads on cloth found with Burial 1, Mound F



Fig. 239. Black and white tubular beads and blue and white seed beads found with Burial 1, Mound F

MOUND F

ranged along the space within the femora and pelvis to the knees. At least a part of the material in this deposit had been attached to a garment which the person had worn to the grave. The balance of the objects either had been placed with the burial or were within a bag attached to the person.

Among the objects which did not form a part of the Indian's attire might be: a pair of steel shears or scissors and three pieces of iron. The scissors can be seen in Fig. 234, immediately to the right of the broken bottle parts and also in Fig. 238.

To the right of the shears may be seen a strip of brass cut from a larger sheet. This metal had been the means of preserving some fabric which adhered to it. Below the strip of brass there was a remnant of a wooden comb having coarse teeth on one edge and fine on the other (Fig. 236). This type of object is comparable to the "ridding comb" which appears frequently in inventories and invoices of the Indian trade of about A.D. 1800.

Along the inside edge of the right femur there was a conglomerate mass of fabric and feltlike material. Several sticks and pieces of bark which were heavily coated with vermillion were found in this same area (Fig. 238). Two brass tacks (Fig. 236) and other remnants of items which had been made of tin and thin sheet iron were here also. A yellow substance and a black organic material were, in all probability, the remains of some organic objects.

Many objects were found which suggested that they had been attached to a garment which the individual had worn in life or at least had been buried in. Noteworthy among the objects in this category were the 3,942 blue and white "seed" beads of glass (Fig. 239). These beads are "Venetian" in origin, in size about twice as large as 0 on a modern Venetian bead sample card. Those found with the burial were predominantly white, similar to color Number 4 on a modern card, while the blue beads are semitranslucent, similar to modern color Number 523. These beads had not been strung but had been sewn to, or embroidered upon, a garment. An attempt was made to determine if a pattern or motif was involved. The area wherein these beads occurred was exposed with dissecting needle and brush in order that they

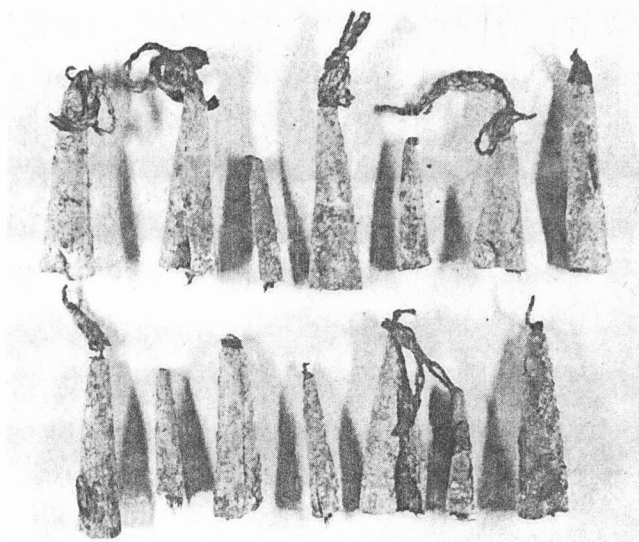


Fig. 240. Brass tinklers found between the knees of Burial 1, Mound F. The one at the lower left is $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches long.

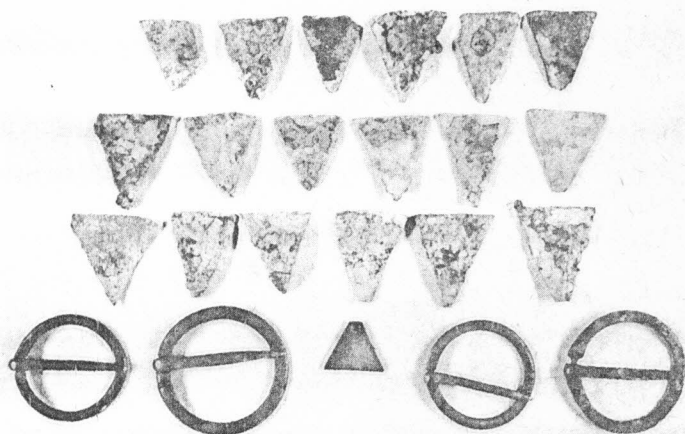


Fig. 241. Top three rows, brass triangles; bottom row, four silver buckles and one perforated silver triangle. The buckle second from the left is 1 inch in diameter.

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might be observed correctly *in situ*. They were found at random intervals over the entire area between the pelvic girdle and the ankles, above and below the leg bones. A clue to the manner in which at least a portion of the beads had been applied was provided by the preservation of a small fragment of fabric, about $2\frac{3}{4}$ inches wide, upon which some of the beads remained. As can be seen in Fig. 237, they had been sewn along the selvage edge of the fabric in four rows forming a chevron pattern. The textile itself was stroud-like in character and, like the beads and other Caucasian objects, had been acquired through trade channels. Another small piece of the same fabric was found at the inside edge of the right tibia, with beads attached. Adhering to it was a conical-shaped brass "tinkler."

Fourteen of these were found between the knees of the burial (Fig. 240). No two were of the same size but all of them were conical and in all probability were Indian-fabricated from sheet brass or strips cut from brass kettles. Their position indicated that they had been attached to fabric, many of them still retaining the attachment cords.

Another type of metallic object that could have been used for decorative purposes were eighteen small triangles cut from thin sheet brass and one,

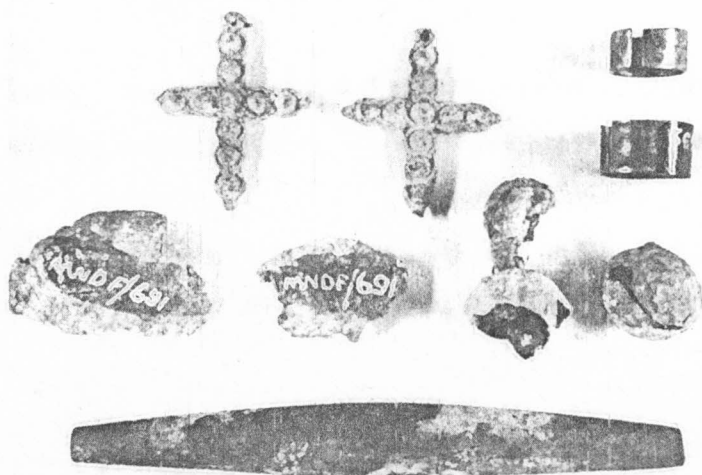
the smallest of the lot, cut out of sheet silver (Fig. 241). The latter is the only specimen which is perforated and might, therefore, have been sewn directly to a garment or bag, or could have been suspended in some manner. The other triangles could also have been attached by stitching diagonally across the three corners. Five similar triangles were made from thin sheet tin. Their preservation resulted from their being in contact with other objects of brass.

Within the pelvic girdle there were four silver buckles, probably of the type sometimes referred to in old trade records as "shirt buckles" (Fig. 241). But that they were not always so used is borne out by an example which was in the collection of D. C. Beerstecher of Three Rivers, Michigan, in 1937. A skull in this collection had portions of a cloth headband around it, crossing the forehead immediately above the orbital ridges. It had been covered with silver buckles of the type under consideration. There were, in addition, four parts of two or three hair braids which had, collectively, twenty-six of these buckles on the cues about as closely as they could have been placed. In the case of our burial it is probable that the four buckles were worn on a belt, sash, or girdle.

Between the knees there were two small brass bells (Fig. 242), one of which had a portion of leather thong still in the attachment ring. These were not of the cast variety but had been made by Caucasians from thin sheet brass.

A small cross can be seen *in situ* in Fig. 234 just above a brass tinkler and below the steel shears. This was one of two found in this deposit (Fig. 242). Both were identical in size and both were cast of pewter or lead in the same mold. Items such as these, we believe, were often made by the traders themselves, or at least by an artisan or smith residing at trade headquarters. This theory is supported by the finding of a stone mold used for casting crosses such as the subject ones at the site of Fort St. Joseph, north of South Bend, Indiana. It is in the collection of the Northern Indiana Historical Society Museum in South Bend. Cast crosses almost identical to those found with our burial were also found at Fort St. Joseph and are in the Beeson Collection in the Fort St. Joseph Historical Museum at Niles, Michigan.

Fig. 242. Pewter crosses, silver rings, two bullet or rifle-ball fragments, brass bells, and hair bead. The last is $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches in length.



MOUND F

At the base of the spine of the subject burial there were two small silver rings which had been formed of thin silver sheet strips bent to a C-shape. See Fig. 242. One was slightly larger than the other. It is possible that these had been worn on a hair braid or cue.

Ranging from the shoulders to the pelvis, in front and back, there were a total of 850 tubular glass beads which obviously had been strung as a necklace. Of the total number found, 778 were black and 72 were white (Fig. 239).

A brass, conical-shaped tinkler was found at each ankle and bits of leather adhering to them indicated that they had been attached to foot gear of some sort.

A scrutiny of Fig. 234 will reveal that the right femur is broken—almost shattered—about midway between the hip and knee. Due to the shattering of the bone and resultant displacement of the unbroken sections of the femur, the right leg, as it appeared *in situ*, was some four inches shorter than the left leg. Situations apparently similar to this had been common enough in the case of burials found in the village site excavations, and they could easily be accounted for through post-burial disturbances. But this burial was different. It had not been disturbed after it was placed in the grave. The femur was still in the original position. It therefore had been broken when this Indian was buried. Also, judging from worn spots on the ends of the two femur parts, the break had occurred some time prior to death and there would have to have been considerable movement to account for the wearing of the bone ends. This compound fracture raises an interesting point in connection with some of the material found adjacent to it.

It will be recalled that there was a mass of fabric and feltlike material concentrated along the inside edge of the right femur. There were also sticks, bark, and two brass tacks, as well as remnants of tin in the form of rust. The association of this unusual material with the area of fracture makes us wonder if an attempt had not been made to repair the damage with splints and padding. The vermilion, yellow, and black materials of unidentified nature could, conceivably, have been associated with an attempt to heal the breaks.

As a fitting finale to the notes on this burial it may be stated that the medium of death was a rifle ball which had penetrated the body and lodged between two vertebrae. The impact against the body and bone had flattened the ball to a degree where determination of original size was impossible. The two parts of this rifle ball are shown in Fig. 242. Judging from the position occupied by the ball it seemed evident that the shot entered the body from the front, in the left abdominal region and, ranging upward, penetrated to the spinal column. In view of the fact that this poor soul was already horribly, and certainly painfully incapacitated, by the fractured femur, we can't help but wonder by whom he was shot and why!

The glass beads, brass, pewter, tin, and iron are no help in dating this burial. Such beads and metal objects were materials of trade between whites and Indians from earliest contact up to and into the nineteenth century. There were few distinctive changes in style throughout that span of time. However, the presence of the silver buckles, rings or small bands, and the one triangle cut from sheet silver, definitely dates the burial as being post-A.D. 1750, for no evidence has been produced to date to indicate that silver objects were an item of trade previous to this. Consideration of the material found plus a knowledge of conditions in southwestern Indiana in the nineteenth century suggests that this burial had been made in Mound F some time around A.D. 1800.

The burial was that of a mature man thirty to thirty-five years old. In life he stood approximately five feet six inches tall and was not of especially robust build. The nature of the objects found with the burial, plus the more or less gracile appearance implied by the skeleton, might suggest that the burial was that of a woman and not a man. But one has only to examine a few of the plates in McKenney and Hall,⁹ or similar works, to appreciate what "dandies" some of the men of this period were.

This skeleton has been designated as "of Illinid physical type . . ."¹⁰ This means that he was

⁹ McKenney, Thomas L., and Hall, James, *History of the Indian Tribes of North America* (3 volumes. Philadelphia, 1836-44).

¹⁰ Johnston, Richard B., "The Physical Relationship of Certain