

Excavation Of The Bob Evans Mound, Gallia County, Ohio

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The Bob Evans mound was a small earthen burial mound lying on the hilltop behind Bob Evans' Farm Restaurant at Rio Grande, Gallia County, Ohio. The site overlooks the valley of Raccoon Creek and lies almost directly across the creek from "Daniel Boone's Cave," a multi-component rock shelter that has yielded distinct Archaic, Late Woodland, Late Prehistoric, and historic components (Murphy 1974).

Excavation of the Bob Evans mound proceeded through the summer of 1974, with volunteers from nearby Rio Grande College and hired hands from Bob Evans Farms, Inc. providing the labor force. The mound was approximately 50 feet in diameter at the time of excavation, but had been badly plowed down through years of heavy farming to a height of only 21 inches. At the time of construction, the mound was probably no more than 20-25 feet in diameter (Fig. 1). Although no signs of intrusion were visible before excavation, it became clear that much of the central portion of the mound had been previously "pot-holed."

In the accompanying photograph (Fig. 2) the dark midden of the mound "core" is clearly shown in the bulkhead. Except for stray flint chippage, little was found in the mound outside this central midden area. Analysis of the bone and shell refuse and the artifact material is still in progress, but sufficient material was noted during the course of excavation to leave little doubt about the cultural affinities of the mound. Several typical ovate-based Adena Stemmed flint points were found in the mound fill (Fig. 3A). The Early Woodland age of the mound has been confirmed by a radiocarbon date run at Dicar Radioisotopes Laboratory, Case Western Reserve University. According to Mrs. Irene Stehli, director, the charcoal sample (DIC-256) yielded an age of 430 B.C., which accords well with an Adena component.

The only unusual artifact recovered was a diamond-shaped sandstone gorget which apparently split longitudinally during manufac-

ture (Fig. 3C, D). Both parts of the gorget were recovered at the base of the mound within a few feet of one another. Drilling had been started on one side of the gorget before it was discarded, either prior to its splitting or in an attempt to salvage one of the halves.

Pottery sherds were extremely rare, unusually thin, plain surfaced ware tempered with crushed igneous rock. The few sherds available contrast remarkably with the more typical Adena Plain sherds recovered from the nearby Daniel Boone's Cave rock shelter, where the Adena component has been radio-carbon-dated at 530 B.C. (DIC-97).

Except for isolated fragments of human skull and a few other bone fragments, no human remains were discovered. Considering the small size of the mound, there probably was a single, centrally-located burial which was destroyed by the original investigators of the site.

The general impression gained during the course of excavation is that the Adena occupants of the site relied heavily upon local chert from Cambridge Limestone outcrops and pebble chert from the gravels of Raccoon Creek. Deer seemed to be almost the only animal species represented in the bone refuse, though several beaver molars were noted and shellfish seemed particularly common. A more precise picture may be drawn following analysis of the lithic and faunal material found in the mound fill.

Acknowledgement should be made to Robert ("Bob") Evans for permission to excavate the mound, as well as providing food and laborers, and for paying for the radio-carbon date. Lee Durieux provided unflagging enthusiasm for the project as well as immeasurable aid in the less exciting, logistical aspects of the excavation. Equally enthusiastic and diligent was Bette Peters, Rio Grande College, both in excavating and in recruiting other volunteer workers.

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1974 *Daniel Boone's button. The Explorer*,
16(2):12-17.



Fig. 1 (Murphy) General view of the Bob Evans mound.



Fig. 2 (Murphy) Profile in Bob Evans mound showing distinct midden.



Fig. 3 (Murphy) Artifacts from Evans mound.

A. Adena stemmed point of gray banded Zaleski flint.

B. Small Archaic bifurcate base point, gray Zaleski flint, from mound fill.

C, and D. Diamond shaped gorget (unfinished) from mound floor, made of micaceous sandstone.