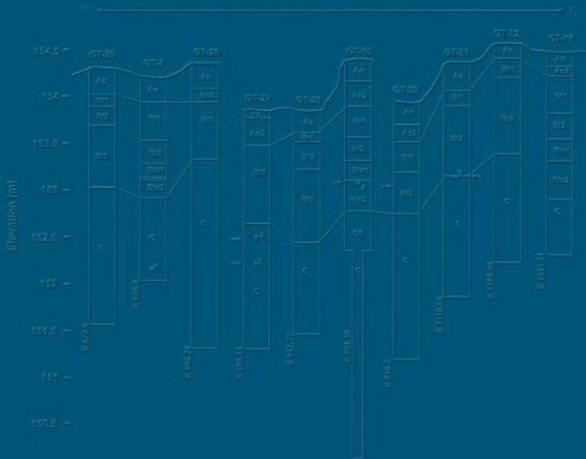


A

Persistent Place

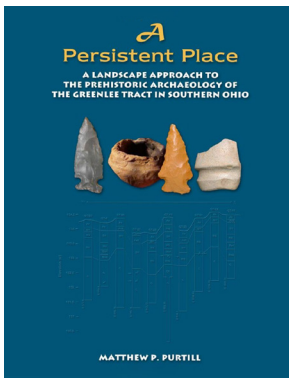
A LANDSCAPE APPROACH TO
THE PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF
THE GREENLEE TRACT IN SOUTHERN OHIO



MATTHEW P. PURTILL

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A Persistent Place: A Landscape Approach to The Prehistoric Archaeology of the Greenlee Tract in Southern Ohio

Matthew P. Purtil, editor, with contributions by Karen Leone and Emmanuel Breitburg. Forward by W. Kevin Pape. 2012. Gray & Pape, Inc., Cincinnati, OH. 243 pages. 27 photographs, 44 illustrations, 27 tables, references cited, appendix. \$28.00 (hardcover). \$20.00 (paper). \$8.99 (e-book). Available at [www.lulu.com].

Reviewed by A. Gwynn Henderson, Staff Archaeologist/Education Coordinator, Kentucky Archaeological Survey (jointly administered by the Kentucky Heritage Council and the University of Kentucky Department of Anthropology) (aghend2@uky.edu)

Purtil's compilation of Gray and Pape, Inc.'s long-term archaeological investigations at the Greenlee Tract along the Ohio River in Adams County, Ohio, is a welcome addition to the regional literature of the middle Ohio Valley and will be of interest to many archaeologists working in this region. He is to be commended for sifting through over 3500 pages of technical reports to distill and synthesize this research into one volume, and for making it accessible to not only the archaeological community but also to the general public.

Situated in a broad river bend, the Greenlee Tract extends from the Ohio River bank to the base of the bluffs across alluvial terraces of various ages and developmental histories. Investigations of archaeological resources within this tract took place intermittently for over 30 years.

The report begins (Chapter 1) and ends (Chapter 14) with a nod to concepts such as place, landscape approach, palimpsests, and *longue duree*. Chapter 2 reviews the archaeological research conducted previously in Adams County, and explains the parameters within which diverse field methodologies were used during multiple investigations. Radiocarbon dates are considered in a short chapter (Chapter 4), with more detailed data on each date presented in the volume's appendix. The next chapter, Chapter 5, considers landform development and its implications for archaeological interpretations of the use of this place. Climate is considered in Chapter 6.

In the next four chapters (Chapters 7–10), descriptions of lithic artifacts, fired clay artifacts (primarily ceramics), botanical remains (by Karen Leone), and faunal remains (by Emmanuel Breitburg) are presented. Cultural features are described in the next chapter, and the structures documented across the tract (they date to the Late Archaic, Early Woodland, Middle Woodland, and Middle-Late Woodland periods) are considered separately in Chapter 12.

Readers will find the meat of the report in Chapter 13. Here Purtil synthesizes the history of the tract's prehistoric occupation, which extends intermittently from the Paleoindian to Late Prehistoric periods. The tract, and not individual sites, is the organizing framework for this discussion, and this works well. Highlights of this chapter are the discussion of the Late Archaic domestic occupation; the Early Woodland Adena paired-post structure; the Middle Woodland hamlet; and the Middle-Late Woodland Newtown village.

Book Review

As with many floodplain and terrace localities along the Ohio River, investigations at the Greenlee Tract clearly show that prehistoric peoples used this place repeatedly throughout much of prehistory. So, what distinguishes the Greenlee Tract from neighboring localities?

After reading this report, I was struck by the fact that the most intensive use of the Greenlee Tract occurred as Late Archaic groups began to stay in one place for longer periods of time and became more dependent on native cultigens. This intensive use continued through the Woodland period. With the shift from a reliance on starchy-oily seeded plants to a dependence on maize and beans, intensive occupation of the place ended. So what was it about the Greenlee Tract that attracted Late Archaic and Woodland groups, but not earlier hunter-gatherers or later agriculturalists? This is a question I would have liked to have seen the author explore in more detail.

Since this report is available through Lulu (www.lulu.com), electronic and paper versions were offered for this review (and given this author's comfort zone, the paper version was gratefully accepted). For those who don't know (like me before I went looking), Lulu is an open publishing, print-on-demand platform. It's free to publish at Lulu, and authors keep full creative control and all the rights to their works.

Just like anything new, however, there is a learning curve to using Lulu effectively—both for the authors who are seeking to get the word out about their reports and the researchers who are seeking the reports. For those who deal easily with reading reports and papers electronically, this is the recommended format. Electronic figures, tables, and maps were crisp and clear—but not so much so in the hardcopy version. By considering in the future how graphics will reproduce in all formats, this problem can be corrected. Choice of keywords also hampered an intuitive Google search. “Greenlee” made sense, but the lack of “Newtown” or “Adena” did not. The manuscript could have used another read-through by an editor to catch the numerous editing glitches (e.g., missing words, subject-verb agreement, and the like). Also, given the digital format, a link to the technical reports for readers interested in accessing detailed site information would have been useful. Still, these are minor concerns. Purtil is to be commended for exploring a new way of getting information out to the archaeological community.