

Of Caves and Shell Mounds



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Ancient human groups in the Eastern Woodlands of North America were long viewed as homogeneous and stable hunter-gatherers, changing little until the late prehistoric period when Mesoamerican influences were thought to have stimulated important economic and social developments. The authors in this volume offer new, contrary evidence to dispute this earlier assumption, and their studies demonstrate the vigor and complexity of prehistoric peoples in the North American Midwest and Midsouth. These peoples gathered at favored places along midcontinental streams to harvest mussels and other wild foods and to inter their dead in the shell mounds that had resulted from their riverside activities. They created a highly successful, premaize agricultural system beginning more than 4,000 years ago, established far-flung trade networks, and explored and mined the world's longest cave—the Mammoth Cave System in Kentucky.

Contributors include:

Kenneth C. Carstens, Cheryl Ann Munson, Guy Prentice, Kenneth B. Tankersley, Philip J. DiBlasi, Mary C. Kennedy, Jan Marie Hemberger, Gail E. Wagner, Christine K. Hensley, Valerie A. Haskins, Nicholas P. Herrmann, Mary Lucas Powell, Cheryl Claassen, David H. Dye, and Patty Jo Watson



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