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House of Rock: An Analysis of a Lithic Assemblage from a Middle Mississippian House

The Mississippian Period is well-known for its paramount chiefdoms, intricate ceramic/lithic/metal artistry, and large earthen works. Premier sites such as the Etowah Indian Mounds in north Georgia and Cahokia in western Illinois are often the primary focus and interest within the period. However, there is a lack of attention by archaeologists on the life and culture of sites in the periphery of these large centers. Located three miles from Etowah is a site known as Cummings where a Middle Mississippian (AD 1260-1300, Wilbanks Phase) house has been uncovered. This house had burned down with all of its contents still laying on the floor. Excavation of the house floor by KSU students has revealed a plethora of artifacts, including both worked and unworked material. My research focuses on identifying the different types of raw material recovered as well as the types of tools and weapons left on the house floor. Due to the lack of modern Wilbanks Phase house excavations, very little is known about what Middle Mississippian peoples were producing at the domestic level. This presentation aims to analyze the range of activities and functions of these artifacts and compare results from Cummings to other coeval sites in the region.