

HOPEWELLIAN ISOLATES FROM ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, MARYLAND

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Abstract

This paper describes a number of Hopewellian-style artifacts, particularly projectile points, which have been recorded from Anne Arundel County and adjacent areas. Made of exotic Midwestern lithic materials, these artifacts occur mainly as isolates. They seem to indicate that some form of low-level contact was occurring between this area and the Ohio Valley cultures during the first half millennium A.D.

Projectile Points

During the first field season at Pig Point (18AN50) in 2009, a single Hopewell-style projectile point (Figure 1) was recovered from the Lower Block of excavations. It

was made from chalcedony that had been quarried from Flint Ridge, in eastern Ohio. At the time it was also noticed that the site was producing a number of other rarely encountered artifacts like drilled canine teeth, fossil shark's teeth, marginella beads, and a single copper bead (Luckenbach et al. 2010). Since Lowery (2012) had suggested that a trade corridor existed during this time period, with Hopewellian cultures from the Ohio Valley seeking fossil teeth from the Chesapeake and marginella and whelk shells from the Atlantic, it was assumed that the Pig Point finds were somehow indicative of this network.

Although a great number of "Adena-related" artifacts made of Flint Ridge flint and other Midwestern materials would subsequently be recovered from the Pig Point site (see Luckenbach 2013), no other Hopewell points were encountered among the nearly 800 projectile points found over four field seasons.

The Hopewellian time period in the Ohio Valley (roughly 0-500 A.D.) is mainly associated with two types of projectile point styles. Snyders points (Scully 1951) are broad bladed corner notched points which appear with the rise of Hopewell ceremonialism (Justice 1987:201) around two thousand years ago (Figure 2). Justice (1987:203, 208) believes they are replaced about 400 A.D. by points relating to his "Lowe Cluster" which includes such named types as Steuben Expanded Stemmed, Bakers Creek, and Chesser. This group of related styles is more often simply known as "Hopewell points" and includes both side- and corner-notching. Hopewell points seem to be more con-



FIGURE 1. Hopewell-style point from Pig Point, 18AN50, Lost Towns Project collections. (Length = 1.8")

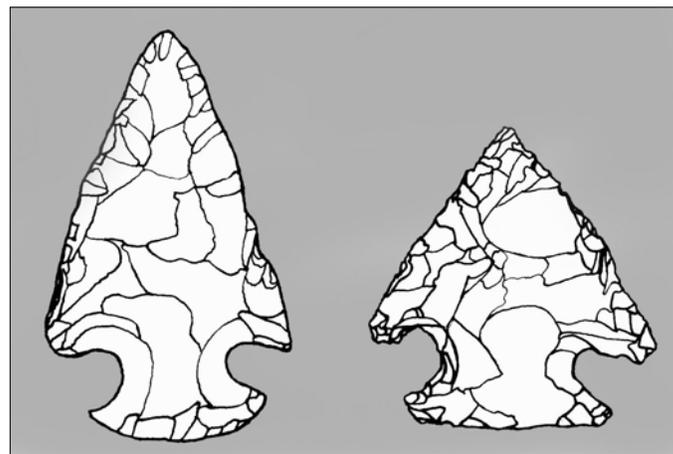


FIGURE 2. Snyders points (after Justice 1987).

sistently utilitarian than the Snyders style which can appear as large, ceremonial blades. Converse (2003:248-253) depicts numerous examples of basic Hopewell points in his *The Archaeology of Ohio* where it can be seen that side-notched versions are far more prevalent than corner-notched at actual Hopewellian habitation sites (Figure 3).

Although no further examples of Hopewell style points have been recovered from the Pig Point site, it was not the last appearance of these fairly distinctive objects in the Anne Arundel County archeological lab. Through the kindness of Bob Ogle and Dick Johnson, two large, lifetime surface collections of local artifacts were donated to the county facility. Among the collections it was noticed that Dick Johnson had recovered a classic Hopewell point, made of Flint Ridge flint, from the Virgil Howard site (18AN345) on Tracy's Creek (Figure 4). This locality is about eight miles due east from Pig Point along what is still a logical transportation corridor between the Patuxent River and the Chesapeake Bay.

The Ogle collection proved to contain two locally recovered examples of Hopewell style points. One had been found along Weems Creek in Anne Arundel County (18AN211) and was made of a highly exotic but unidentified chert (Figure 5). The second, made of Flint Ridge flint and closer to the Snyders style (Figure 6), was found in Charles County along Allens Fresh near the Potomac River (18CH55). Numerous Ogle artifacts from sites in

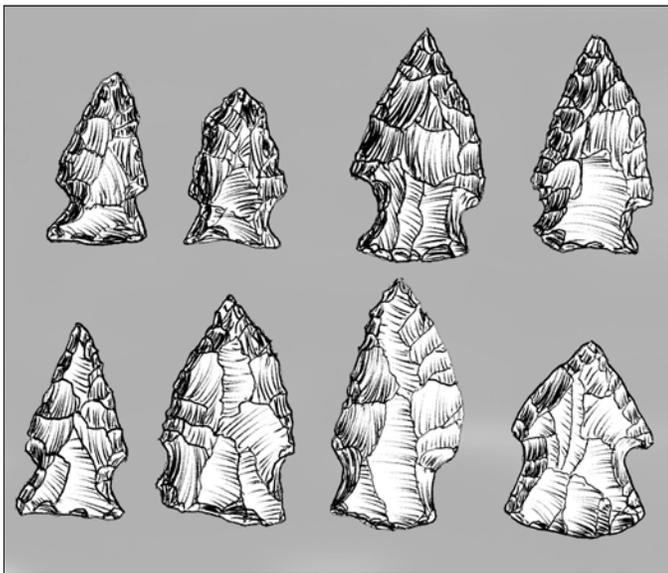
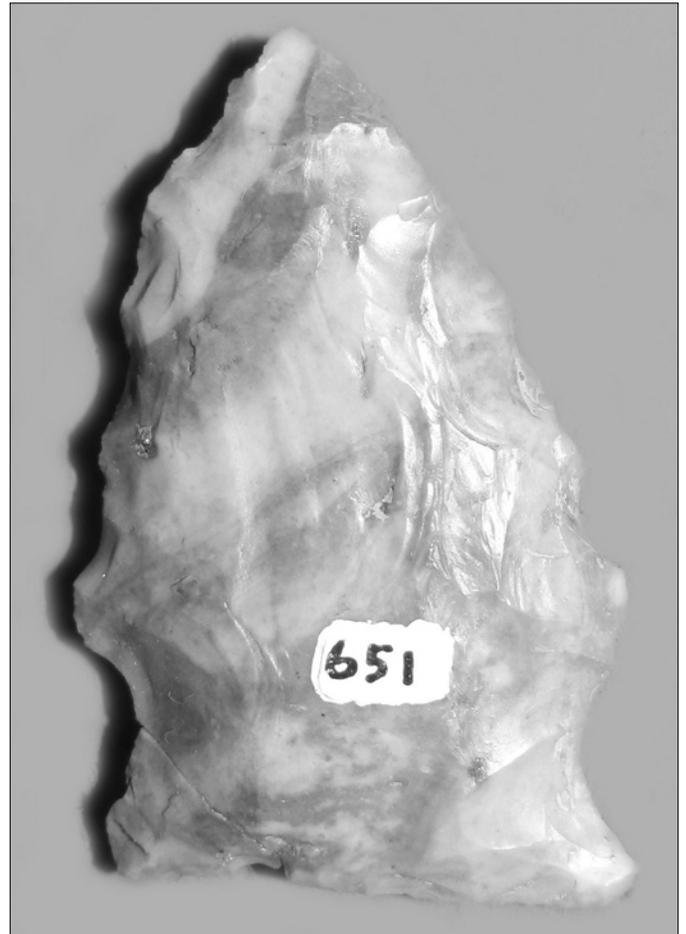


FIGURE 3 (above). Hopewell points (courtesy of Robert Converse).

FIGURE 4 (top, right). Hopewell point from Tracy's Creek, 18AN345, Johnson collection. (Length = 1.3")

FIGURE 5 (bottom, right). Hopewell point from Huntington, 18AN211, Ogle collection. (Length = 2.2")



FIGURE 6. Snyder's point from Allens Fresh, 18CH35, Ogle collection. (Length = 1.9")



FIGURE 7. Snyder's-like point from the Stott Farm, 18AN1468, private collection. (Length = 1.9")

Calvert and Prince Georges Counties did not appear to contain any further examples of such projectile points.

The Anne Arundel County archeological lab is often afforded the opportunity to photographically record artifacts still held in private collections. Two other exotic Hopewell points from the county were discovered in this fashion. One had been found on the Stott Farm (18AN1468) along Tracy's Creek (Figure 7). It is notable that this specimen, a Snyder's-like point made of Upper Mercer chert from Ohio, was recovered less than a mile from the 18AN345 example from Tracy's Creek described previously. Materials aside, the stylistic similarities between the Stott Farm point and the one recovered from Allens Fresh are also striking. Another Hopewell-style side-notched point made of a banded pink chert was reported from a collection made near Kinder Farm Park (Figure 8).

Finally, during a grant project funded by the Maryland Historical Trust, a collection excavated in the 1960s at Governor's Bridge (18AN1142) on the Patuxent River was photographed at the Maryland Archaeological Conservation Lab. Although not noticed at the time of discovery (Evans and Meggers 1953), a single isolated Flint Ridge flint Hopewell point was recognized in the collection along with a Flint Ridge flint point tip of unknown style (Figure 9; Sperling et al. 2010).



FIGURE 8. Hopewell point from Kinder Farm Park, 18AN?, private collection. (Length = 1.8")

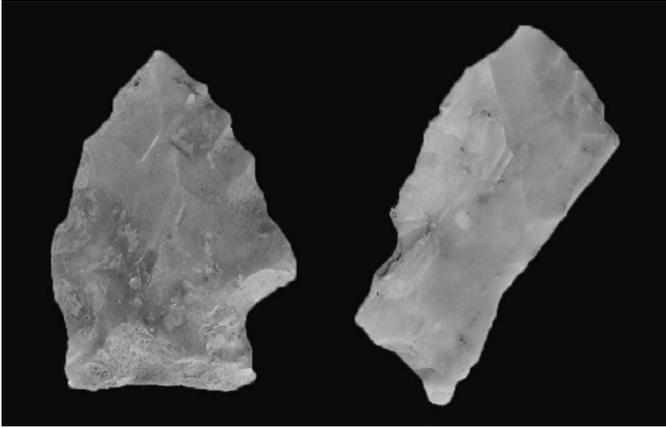


FIGURE 9. Hopewell point and point tip from the Governor's Bridge site, 18AN142 (courtesy of the MAC Lab, JPPM). (Point length = 1.3")

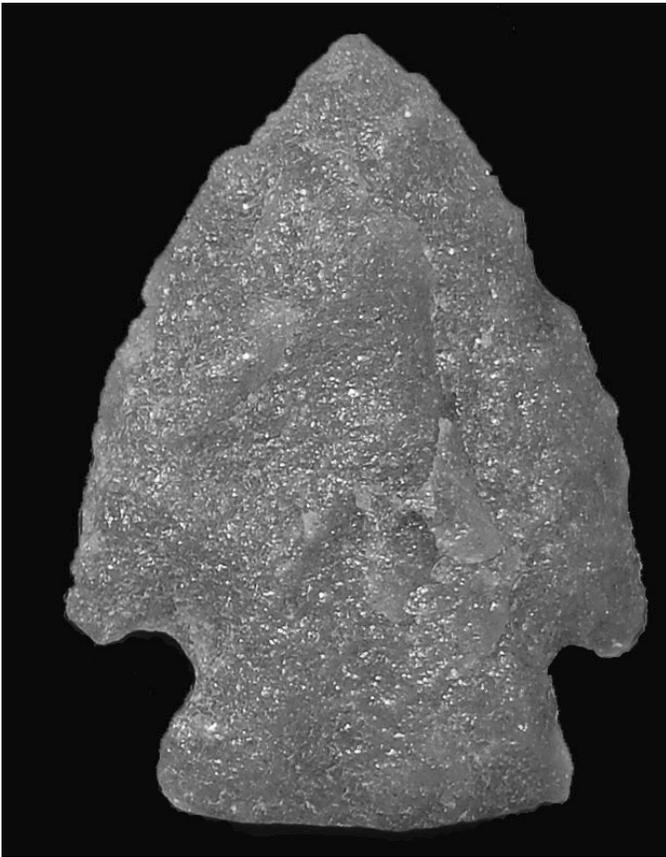


FIGURE 10. Possible Snyders point from the Beilor Farm, 18PR?, Ogle collection. (Length = 1.8")

Given the notorious subjectivity inherent in assigning projectile points to specific "types," a legitimate question arises at this point as to the accuracy of these identifications. The Snyders style points from the Stott Farm and from Allens Fresh are relatively easy to recognize given their distinctive silhouettes, but the basic Hopewell style

points stand out mainly due to the exotic nature of the materials from which they were made. Since they are otherwise fairly non-distinct and somewhat variable side-notched points, it is difficult to assert that they would be assigned similar identifications if they were made of local lithic materials instead of Ohio Valley cherts. It may, in fact, be the case that quartz, quartzite, or rhyolite examples are present in collections but are simply not recognized. An Ogle collection quartzite point from the Beilor Farm in Prince Georges County provides a possible example (Figure 10), as a Snyders attribution is certainly a possibility.

Blades

Two other related lithic artifacts should be briefly mentioned in this compilation. Both are cache blades made of Flint Ridge flint. One was recovered by Bob Ogle at Pointers Ridge in Prince Georges County (Figure 11), while a second, larger example is in a private collection made

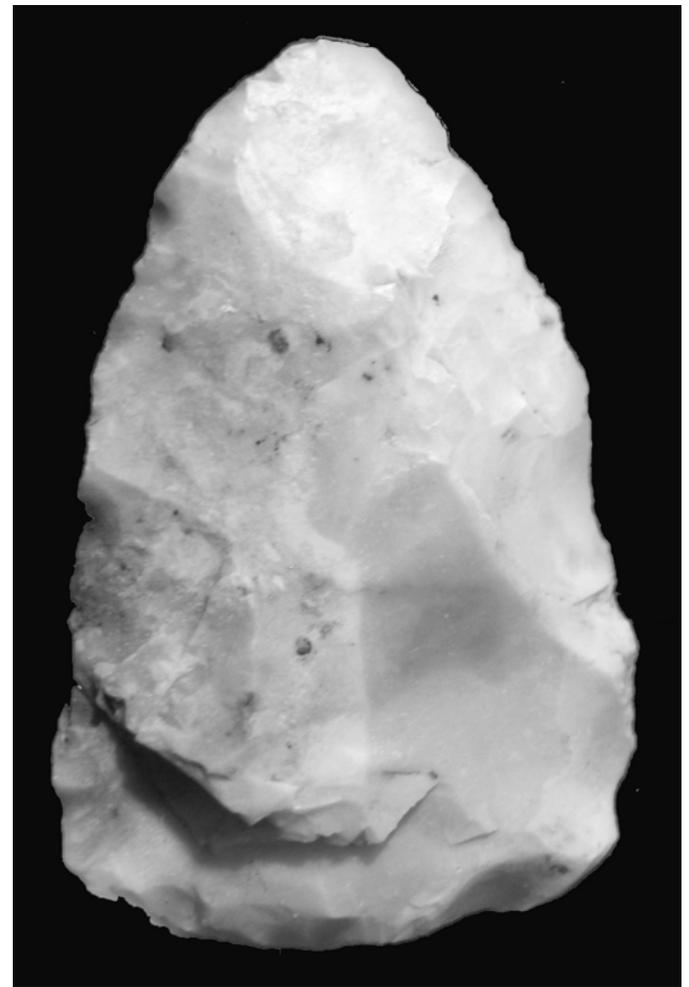


FIGURE 11. Flint Ridge flint cache blade from Pointers Ridge, 18PR?, Ogle collection. (Length = 1.8")

near Cedar Park in Anne Arundel County (Figure 12). It is notable that the latter example was found less than a mile and a half from the famous West River Adena site.

While both of these artifacts display a generally squared-off base (rather than ovate) considered to be indicative of Hopewellian blades, this shape attribution is not an inviolate rule, and the possibility that they are associated with the earlier Adena complex cannot be excluded.

Ceramics

In 2010 a local artifact collector approached the author with a small bag of artifacts she had found on her uncle's farm on Tracey's Creek in southern Anne Arundel County—now the Stott Farm. Unfortunately neither she nor her husband remembered the exact find location, al-

though both remembered the discovery of the Upper Mercer chert point shown in Figure 7. Multiple small bags of artifacts from the Stott Farm in their collection apparently represented different trips as opposed to different localities.

The bag in question proved to contain ten sherds of pottery and two chert flakes. Both flakes appear to be made of Flint Ridge chert from Ohio, while the ceramics included eight sherds of plain grog-tempered pottery (Adena Plain?) and two sherds tempered with limestone grit. The latter sherds had classic Hopewellian curvilinear zone stamped designs on their surfaces (Figures 13 and 14).



FIGURE 12. Flint Ridge flint cache blade from Cedar Park, 18AN838, private collection. (Length = 4.5")



FIGURE 13. Limestone grit-tempered sherd with stamped design from the Stott Farm, 18AN?, private collection. (Width = 2.3")

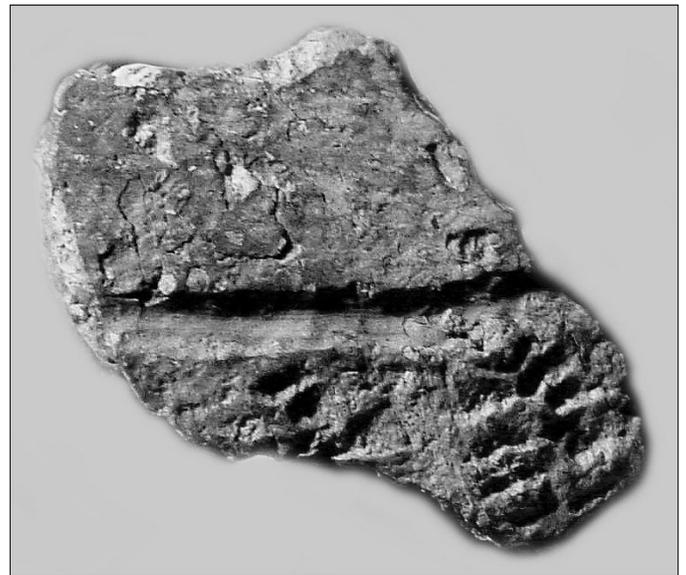


FIGURE 14. Limestone grit-tempered sherd with stamped design from the Stott Farm, 18AN?, private collection. (Width = 1.4")

Despite general doubts about the discovery, the potential significance of such an artifact assemblage led the Anne Arundel County archeological team to conduct a shovel test pit survey of the Stott Farm conducted at 50-foot intervals. No further Hopewellian ceramics were discovered during this admittedly cursory survey.

Curvilinear zone stamped pottery is virtually unknown in the Chesapeake region. It would be tempting to contemplate whether this was simply a false report—were it not for two vessel fragments documented by Darrin Lowery from Tuckahoe Creek on the Delmarva Peninsula (personal communication, 2012). Both represent the tetrapodal bases of classic Hopewellian style ceramics

found at different sites less than two miles apart. The recovery of these two fragments, less than 35 miles due east from the Stott Farm, might be seen as representing an argument in favor of the reality of the Anne Arundel County finds.

Conclusions

The main thrust of this paper has been to describe seven Hopewellian style projectile points from the Western Shore of the Chesapeake, six from Anne Arundel County alone (see Figure 15), all made of exotic Midwestern lithic materials. Two things are immediately noticeable. The

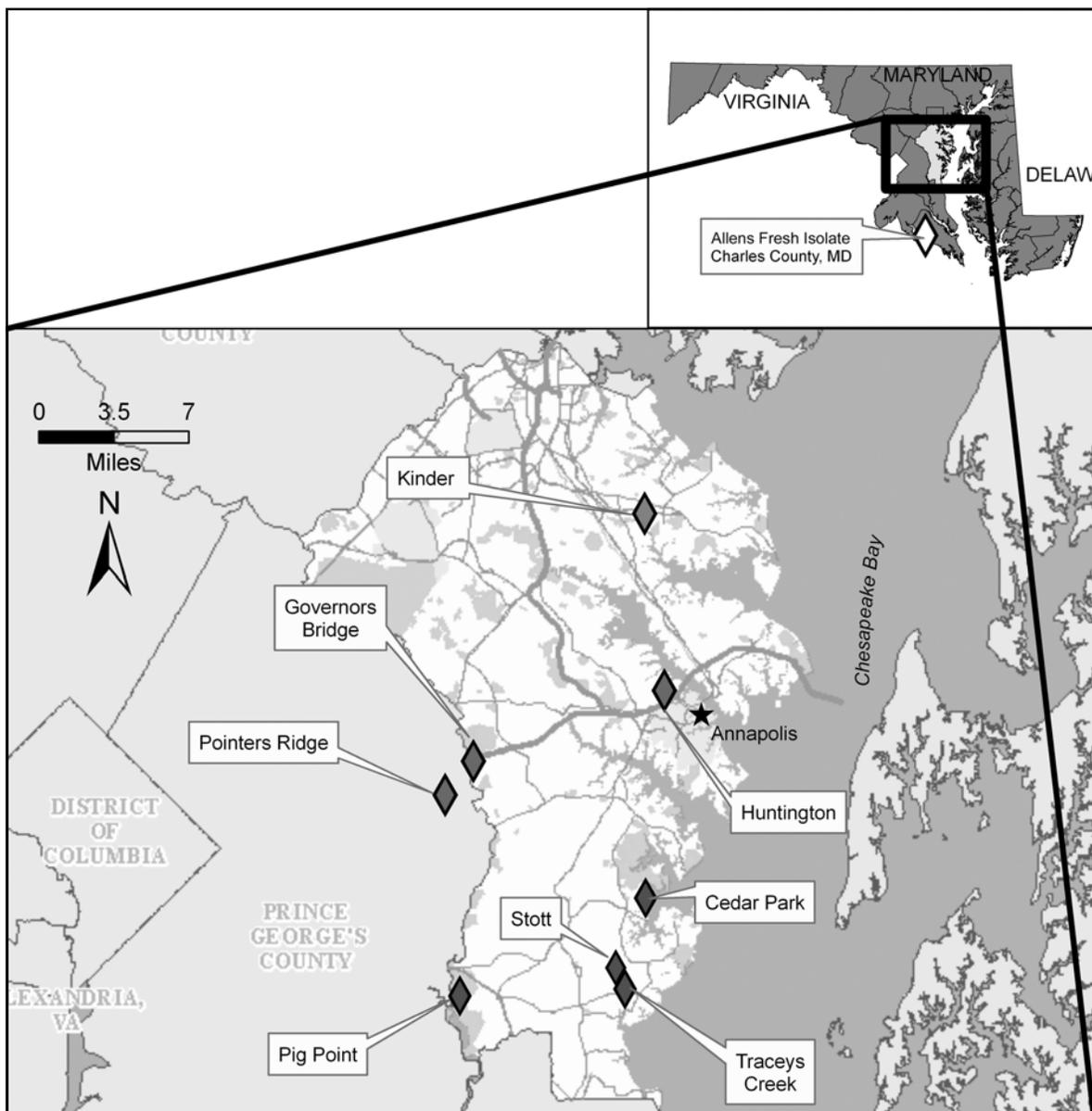


FIGURE 15. Isolates found in and near Anne Arundel County, Maryland.

first is that they only occur in extremely low frequencies. For the most part, it is only when very large collections are available for examination that they are found to be present. The second is that so far only single examples are recorded from any given site. The two cache blades described also fit this pattern. One never gets the sense that a Hopewellian component is ever a major factor in these sites' occupations. Pig Point provides an excellent example of these observations given that only a single Hopewell point has been noted among the nearly 800 projectile points recovered during four years of excavations.

A more logical conclusion would be that these isolated artifacts are simply the outcome of intermittent contact with cultures west of the Appalachian Mountains. Presumably this would involve a simple mechanism like trade mentioned earlier, although other cultural explanations like direct resource acquisition, vision quests, or even raids cannot be ruled out.

On the Delmarva Peninsula, Darrin Lowery has recorded a number of similar isolated Hopewell points, but he has also noted sites with multiple occurrences. The largest cluster appears to be from sites near the confluence of Tuckahoe Creek and the Choptank River (Lowery, personal communication, 2013). The most intriguing Delmarva site he has recorded is 44NH440 on the Atlantic coast, where numerous Snyders and Hopewell-style points were recovered along with Ohio flint cache blades at what appears to be a marine shell processing site (Lowery 2003).

If the Delmarva distribution supports the theory that the area is the terminus for a trade corridor, the Western Shore distribution indicates something less intensive. Perhaps only intermittent movement across this region is indicated. What is clear is that archeological researchers need to be more attuned to the rare presence of these important exotics.

Finally, Dr. Joe Dent from American University likes to quote his conversations with the late Dr. James Griffin lamenting fact that the Hopewell "never made it over the mountains." As Joe has recently noted, it appears Griffin may have been wrong...

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