To the Point

White River

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The White River point is a side-notched type similar in both form and age to the Raddatz type (see Lopinot 2008:8). Although Chapman (1948) referred generally to a White River Archaic, it was apparently little more than a reference to the entire Archaic period in the Table Rock Reservoir area. The first definition of a White River Archaic point was made a decade later by Marshall (1958:114–115). The fact that Chapman (1975:242) later subsumed Marshall’s type under Big Sandy illustrates the problems in typing various side-notched forms dating to Archaic times. Certainly, the Early Archaic side-notched Cache River and Graham Cave types can be distinguished in most instances from later Middle Archaic side-notched forms. However, the spatial and temporal variability in Middle Archaic side-notched points has not been adequately studied. Thus, the White River point is discussed here, but its true relevance as a separate type (e.g., from Raddatz) will require a much larger systematic study of side-notched Middle Archaic points from the midcontinent.

Description

White River points can vary greatly in overall length, although most are medium in size (see Figure 2). They were manufactured from ovate, square-based preforms (Figure 3). The blades are typically biconvex in cross-section; they were biaxially sharpened and resharpened. The blades are also typically excurvate, unless extensively resharpened. Examples of serrated blades do occur, but they are uncommon to rare. The side notches are semi-circular or broadly u-shaped. The bases are straight to moderately concave and often ground. The chert used to manufacture White River points was commonly heat treated (Ray and Lopinot 2003; Sandstrom and Ray 2004).

Age

Marshall (1958:46) noted that White River points were found in lower levels of Rice Shelter, Standlee Shelter I, and Jackie Hollow Shelter. Unfortunately, they occurred in mixed deposits at these sheltered sites. Hence, they were only thought to date to Early and Middle Archaic times (Marshall 1958:115). As for the Raddatz type, White River side-notched points can be confidently assigned to the Middle Archaic period. For example, three pieces of hickory nut shell from the Hogan Creek site on the upper end of Bull Shoals Reservoir in Taney County, Missouri produced uncorrected ages of 6190 ± 50 b.p. (radiocarbon years Before Present), 6180 ± 55 b.p., and 6100 ± 50 b.p. (Lopinot and Ray 1996). The age range for this side-notched type is almost assuredly much broader than is indicated by these three ages, which are at the older end of the age range for

Figure 2. White River points from the Hogan Creek site (23TA601). Note range of variation.
Middle Archaic side-notched points found elsewhere in midcontinental North America.

**Distribution**

As the name implies, this side-notched form is distributed throughout at least the upper and middle White River drainage basin, as well as adjacent portions of southwest Missouri, northwest Arkansas, and nearby parts of other states. A drill and a projectile point classified as White River side-notched also were found associated with a Middle Archaic burial in eastcentral Kansas on a tributary of the Wakarusa River, which flows into the Kansas River (Hoard et al. 2004). A radiocarbon sample associated with this burial produced an uncorrected age of 6160 ± 35 B.P. (Hoard et al. 2004:722), or contemporary with the occupation of the Hogan Creek site.

**Comments**

The names White River, Raddatz, Big Sandy, Godar, etc. have been given to Middle Archaic side-notched points in Missouri and surrounding states. The relevance of these different names requires more study. For example, whereas O’Brien and Wood (1998:139–144) attempted to “clear up” some of the confusion regarding the relevance of the name Big Sandy for Middle Archaic specimens from Missouri, they also considered White River points to be the same as Graham Cave points. Based on the Hogan Creek work and findings at Big Eddy, it seems that this is clearly not the case. In any regard, as discussed with respect to the Raddatz type (Lopinot 2008:8), our ability to distinguish Middle Archaic side-notched types with temporal and spatial relevance requires study of a larger number of sites characterized by relatively unmixed, well-dated samples of side-notched points.

**References Cited**

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