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Blanton, Dennis B

1992 Middle Woodland Settlement Systems in Virginia. In *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, edited by Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, pp. 65-96. Dietz Press, Richmond.

The author states that his goal for this article is “to review and evaluate patterns of human settlement during the Middle Woodland Period in Virginia” (p. 65). This is a “daunting” task, due to the “somewhat bewildering number of local cultural expressions” noted from excavated sites across the state (p. 65). He does concede that these various expressions could be due in part to inconsistent levels of data collection undertaken across the physiographic provinces.

Blanton affirms that “physiography, ecology, demography, and economy must all be considered in order to understand and not merely describe observable patterns” (p. 65). He achieves this goal by first outlining the common trends noted in Middle Woodland settlement systems (increasing sedentism, steady population growth, broad-based economies formed by more clearly defined group territories), and discusses two possible models for settlement-subsistence patterns: logistical or fusion-fission (pp. 68-72). The logistical model suggests the presence of a few moderate to large base camps surrounded by more numerous and widespread short-term occupation procurement camps. The fusion-fission model is highlighted by a number of “macro-social unit” base camps that were located near rich resources and were occupied annually by members of different groups.

Blanton goes on to discuss the different “culture areas” across the state throughout the entire Middle Woodland period, highlighted by an excellent summary of various base camps/procurement/specialized sites in the Coastal Plain (pp. 83-86). He concludes that abrupt changes do not occur during the period. Rather, this is a continuation of the trends begun in the Late Archaic. The Middle Woodland is notable for increased settlement in lower-lying areas near wetlands, broad relationships reflected in long-distance exchange, and the probable transformation from band to tribal level organization (pp. 88-89).