



OHIO HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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New Radiocarbon Dates Prove Ohio's Adena Mound was Built in A.D. 40

(Columbus, OH) – Ohio Historical Society archaeologists, in partnership with researchers from the private Cultural Resource Management firm Gray & Pape Inc. and the Ohio State University, has obtained radiocarbon dates for the Adena Mound indicating it was built in the first century of the Common Era. The new dates will be reported in an article in the February 2014 issue of *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology*.

Radiocarbon dating requires organic material and the Ohio Historical Society's archaeology collections from the Adena Mound excavation include pieces of bark that had been a part of the lining of the Central Grave as well as small fragments of textiles woven from plants.

Dates were obtained on two samples of bark and one fragment of textile. The bark produced dates of around A.D. 40, whereas the textile gave a date of 140 B.C. The explanation for why the textile appears to be so much older may be that the Adena people used an heirloom garment or shroud in the burial.

"It's hugely important to be able to give a more exact date for this mound and the amazing Adena Effigy Pipe," said Brad Lepper, an archaeologist at the Ohio Historical Society and the principal author of the paper. "These dates allow us to place this key mound and artifact more precisely within the sequence of Ohio's American Indian history."

Ohio's official State Artifact, the famous Adena Effigy Pipe, was found at Adena Mound. Notably, it was not recovered from the Central Grave, but was found at the base of the mound, so the new radiocarbon dates also provide the age of this magnificent example of ancient American Indian sculpture. The Adena Pipe is currently on loan to the Nelson-Atkins Museum in Kansas City where it is being prepared for a major exhibition at the Musee du quai Branly in Paris. The Paris exhibit is scheduled to open on April 8th.

Funding for the radiocarbon dating included donations from the Columbus School for Girls and Richard Sisson, a former President of the Board of Trustees of the Ohio Historical Society. Charlotte Stiverson and Tracy Kessler, teachers at the Columbus School for Girls, worked with their students to have the Adena Effigy Pipe designated as Ohio's State Artifact.

About the Adena Mound

The Adena Mound was located on the estate of former Ohio Governor and U.S. Senator Thomas Worthington. He named his Chillicothe estate "Adena," supposedly a Hebrew word meaning "delightful place," and the mound was named for the estate. The Adena Mound was excavated by the Ohio Historical Society's Curator of Archaeology William C. Mills in 1901. Radiocarbon dating was not invented until 1950, so Mills had no way to establish the age of the mound.

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About the Ohio Historical Society: Founded in 1885, the non-profit Ohio Historical Society (ohiohistory.org) provides a wide array of statewide services and programs related to collecting, preserving and interpreting Ohio's history, archaeology and natural history through its 58 sites and museums across Ohio, including its flagship museum, the Ohio History Center in Columbus. For information regarding OHS, contact Shannon Thomas, Communications Dept., Ohio Historical Society: 614.297.2317, stthomas@ohiohistory.org.