



The Keeshin Farm Site and the Rock River Langford Tradition in Northern Illinois (Transportation Archaeological Research Reports)

Thomas E. Emerson

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This study of the Upper Mississippian Keeshin Farm site is the second of two ISAS reports of investigations at late prehistoric sites endangered by proposed expansion of the Greater Rockford Airport in Winnebago County (see Research Report Vol. #4). Excavations at Keeshin Farm in the Middle Rock River valley uncovered multiple prehistoric pit features containing ceramic and lithic artifacts and botanical and zoological remains. The excavations revealed a living area clustered around a central communal work space. The site's inhabitants appeared to be dedicated corn agriculturalists who also exploited riverine fauna and elk. This is one of the few modern excavation/analysis projects at a Langford habitation site, and the only such scientific excavation to occur outside northeastern Illinois. The project results suggest that Langford society was more sedentary and more complex than previously thought. "While the Langford occupation of the middle Rock River emphasized floodplain habitats, the focus was on rich habitats [like] the Kishwaukee-Rock River confluence. The settlement-subsistence is characterized by 'long-term villages [and] smaller secondary sites' (p. 188), with maize cultivation becoming an important staple as tribal social-political relationships became more complex." "For researchers concerned with the Langford tradition of northern Illinois, Keeshin Farm is a must read. And for those whose interests extend beyond the Upper Midwest, this volume is a welcome contribution to the archaeology of late prehistoric small-scale societies." [Roland L. Rodell, *Illinois Archaeology* 13:142-144, 2001]

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