Introduction
Microartifacts are defined as artifacts smaller than 2 mm. Due to the tedious nature of collecting and examining these small remains, they are often overlooked in favor of larger, macroartifact studies. This project focuses on the ongoing analysis and interpretation of a sample of microartifacts from a partial house interior at Wickliffe Mounds (approximately 900-1500 A.D.), located in Ballard County, KY.

Methodology
Background: In 1994, Sarah Sherwood collected flotation samples from a prehistoric house structure at Wickliffe Mounds. Using water flotation, lightweight and charred materials were separated from heavier materials which were then dried and separated according to grain size. The current project examined artifacts in the 1-2mm size grade. To make these sample sizes more manageable under time constraints, 12.5% of each collected sample was analyzed.

Processing Microartifacts: Using a binocular stereoscope, samples were sorted into categories (daub, lithics, charcoal, etc.), counted, weighed, and recorded. Resulting data was mapped to display the concentration of each category within the house floor. The following maps were generated using Surfer, a contouring and 3D mapping software that plots artifact densities to highlight areas of higher and lower concentrations.

RESULTS
Ceramics are concentrated around the hearth area, and at the northern periphery of the house.
Lithic materials concentrate just south of the central hearth, just as they do at the Loy site.
Daub is found throughout, with heavy concentrations at the center of the house around the hearth, as at Loy.
Maygrass is entirely focused at the hearth feature.
Charcoal is concentrated in the hearth area and northern corner of the house.
As at Loy, bone appears along the house periphery, though the highest concentrations are found around the central hearth.
Copper is primarily found in the northern corner of the house.
Shells are concentrated to the eastern and northern corners of the house.
Rock is concentrated at the eastern corner and northwest periphery of the house.

Discussion
Daub: The highest concentrations of daub focus around the central hearth feature, comparable to the Loy site (Sherwood 2001). This conclusion supports the hypothesis that daub coating the smoke opening of the house fell to the hearth below when the house collapsed (Sherwood 1995).
Lithics: Concentrated just south of the hearth, this area would have been dedicated to the production or sharpening of stone tools yet away from the more trafficked public space around the hearth.
Ceramics: Focused in the north corner, possibly indicating a storage or processing area for pottery vessels. Ceramic fragments were frequently identified as shell- or grit-tempered.
Shell & Rock: Although the rock fragments found in these samples are native to the area, their accumulation along with shell indicates a possible storage or processing area for pottery tempers in the eastern corner of the house.
Charcoal & Bone: Heavily associated with the hearth. Bone at the peripheries of the house may result from routine cleaning, where larger bone fragments would have been removed from public areas associated with the central hearth, and smaller artifacts may have been swept to the walls of the house.
Maygrass: That maygrass seed occurs only in the hearth (Feature 339) indicates strongly that it was included in the household diet.
Copper: The discovery of malachite, a copper ore, supports the idea that copper artifacts were present during 1920s excavations at Wickliffe Mounds. Additionally, malachite may have been ground in a green pigment. The concentration in the northern corner of the house may indicate a possible storage area.

Project results indicate that microartifacts are highly useful in distinguishing activity areas in Mississippian houses. At Wickliffe, we see evidence for distinct areas for cooking, flint knapping, and the storage and/or processing of ceramic vessels & other artifacts. Future excavations may provide additional data to support these conclusions.

Conclusion
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References: