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## BRIEF NOTE

RETURN OF THE BEAVER, *CASTOR CANADENSIS*, TO THE CINCINNATI REGION<sup>1</sup>

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The beaver has been described as the most important fact in American history (Henderson and Craig 1932). Its fur was the basis for the chief commercial enterprise in the interior of the continent for over two centuries. Heavy trapping extirpated the beaver in Ohio by 1830 (Bole and Moulthrop 1942). The species had already disappeared by 1805 from the vicinity of Cincinnati, where it had been formerly abundant (Langdon 1880).

In his 1755 map that was based largely on field reports (Brown 1959), John Mitchell sited beaver ponds at the location of present-day Cincinnati (fig. 1). Further documentation of the beaver's former occurrence in southwestern Ohio are the skeletal remains found at sites of mounds and villages constructed by prehistoric Indians (Low 1880, Goodpaster 1941, Oehler 1973). Among the earliest evidence of beaver in the Cincinnati region is a tooth



FIGURE 1. Cincinnati is at the location of the Beaver Ponds on John Mitchell's 1755 *Map of the British and French Dominions in North America* (courtesy of the Cincinnati Historical Society).

taken from a stone mound built between 600 and 1000 A.D. (Starr 1960).

In 1984, at a location near the site of the stone mound, the beaver reappeared in the Cincinnati region of Hamilton Co., Ohio. The species may have returned undetected prior to 1984, but it was in that year that

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a visible lodge was constructed in a river backwater within four km of Cincinnati. The exact locality is being withheld to protect the population. The species had returned to Ohio by 1936, apparently spreading from Pennsylvania (Chapman 1949). Since then, the beaver has moved westward and southward across Ohio (Bednarik 1965, Gottschang 1981). The individuals that occupied Hamilton Co. in 1984 are presumed to be pioneers of the expanding Ohio population.

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