



SCENIC
OHIO

2021 WINTER SOLSTICE

NEWS

SPECIAL ANCIENT OHIO EDITION

Scenic Ohio's mission is to serve as a leading advocate for the development and preservation of Ohio's scenic corridors and landscapes.

Scenic Ohio is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and is the only nonprofit in Ohio dedicated to protecting and enhancing the visual quality and scenic character of Ohio's towns and countryside.

Scenic Ohio is the longest standing nonprofit in America that advocates keeping our highway corridors beautiful and safe.

"The 160 mile walk began on the spring equinox, ended on the summer solstice, and continued past the autumnal equinox, to Flint Ridge and beyond..."

Ohio's cultural heritage is truly inspiring. Ancient American Indian tribes left an amazing imprint upon the landscape we now call Ohio. Fortunately, some of the most unique places remaining of this 2,000-plus-year-old cultural heritage are being preserved for generations to come by the Ohio History Connection and the National Park Service, with assistance from local organizations.

These Adena-Hopewell culture sites are wonderful expressions of scientific genius; connecting the Ancient Americans to sun, moon, stars and the land—Sacred Earth. The ceremonial uses of these places are not entirely known, but the work of archaeologists, cultural historians, biologists and anthropological researchers is slowly uncovering threads of these stories collaboratively with contemporary American Indian tribes. Soon, eight of these sacred landscapes in Ohio will be inscribed as World Heritage Sites; belatedly honoring these works of landscape architecture, but most importantly honoring the American Indian creators and their culture.

This issue of Scenic Ohio News tells some of the stories unfolding from a 160-mile walk along the Ancient Ohio Trail between Fort Ancient, Chillicothe and Newark as well as Flint Ridge. This walk took paths the Ancients may possibly have walked and navigated by rivers. Scenic Ohio has worked collaboratively with the Ohio History Connection, National Park Service, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, TourismOhio and many individuals to elevate Ohio's national heritage and open additional eyes to our genius of place.





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Photo by: J. Engberg, NPS

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The stories of ancient places around our planet inspire children, provide touchstones to cultures and spin the heads of researchers, historians and archaeologists. In Ohio we have some of the most inspirational examples of ancient cultures, ceremonial and spiritual places, and works of celestial-aligned landscape architecture in the world.

A contemporary walk linking the eight Adena-Hopewell cultural sites nominated for World Heritage Site designation was imagined by Hope Taft and Buck Niehoff. The intent was to immerse participants in the history and enrich the walkers in Ohio's cultural heritage as if they were taken back in geologic and cultural time. The walk began on the spring equinox and ended on the summer solstice. Enjoy the stories in this special issue beginning with this short poem.

Gary W. Meisner, FASLA Chairman, Scenic Ohio

ANCIENT DREAMS... UNSEEN

Earth awakens a winter's rest...
Sacred walls remain... enclose,
Protecting ancient timeless ground,
Stars commune with spirits below... Connect to souls unseen...

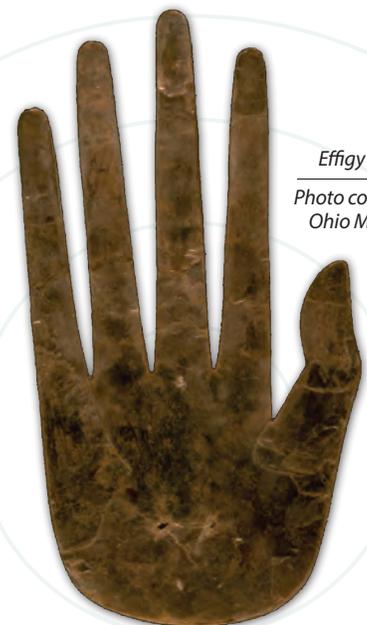
Spring's blush... icy equinox winds...
Ceremonial paths cross fresh plowed fields,
Soaring hawks eye country roads,
Branches rustle, buds swell renewed...

Fresh footprints on native lands...
Count centuries by steps through time,
Seeking lost tribes' memories,
Trace paths over Blackhand sands...

New nomads journey paths unknown...
Forgotten trails touch travel waters,
Walking translates to trancelike peace,
Imagining tales of mysterious cultures...

Earth's alive in summer green...
Summer solstice aligns Moon with Sun,
Echoing distant rhythms from earthen walls,
Connecting to timeless ceremonies...

Autumn's approaching, harvest begins...
Flint Ridge calls, time travelers return,
Chanting ghost voices, ancient stone chips ring,
Dreams commune, as we remember again... Connect to gods unseen...



Effigy Hand
Photo courtesy of
Ohio Memory

2021 gwm / gary meisner

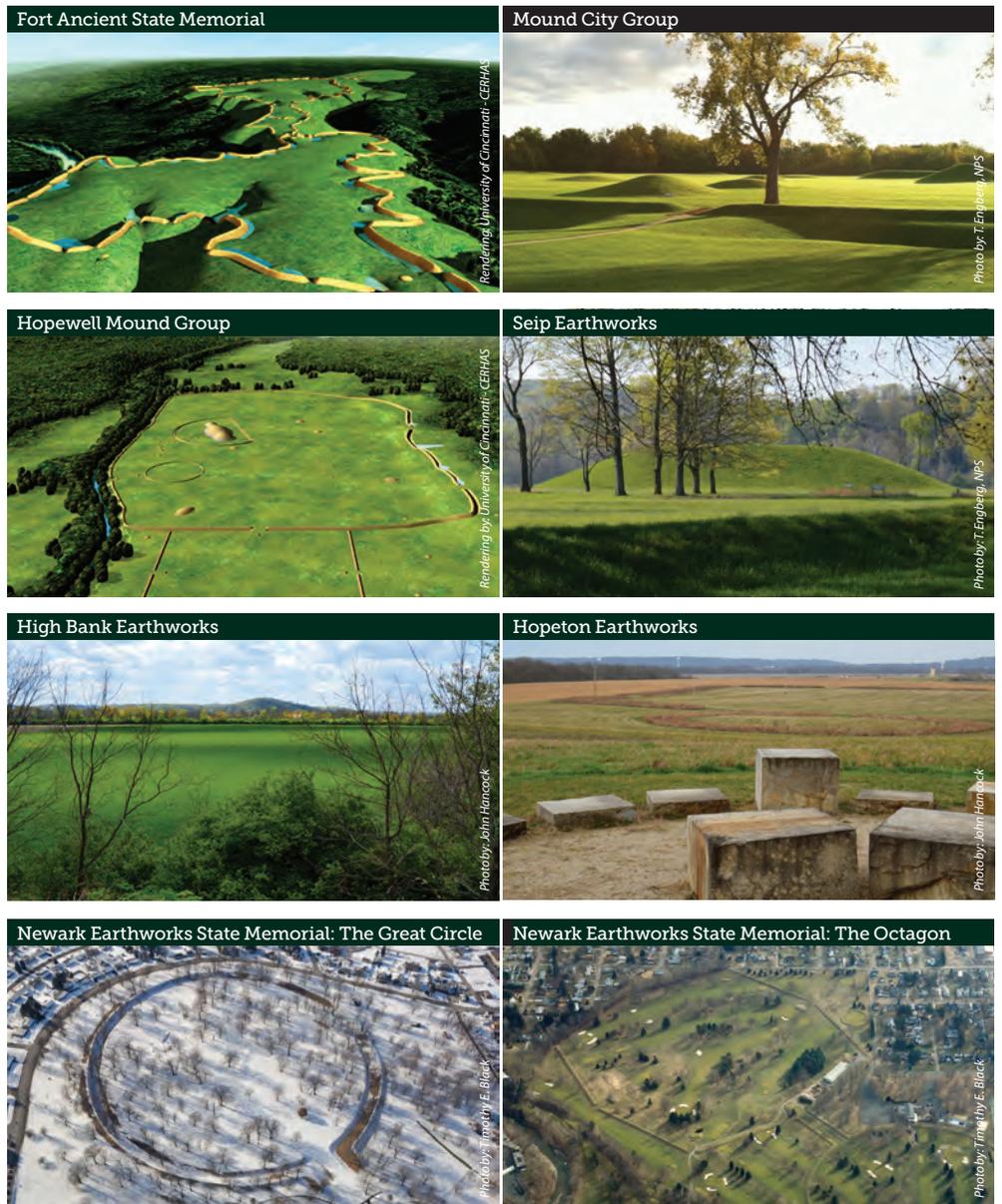
OHIO & UNESCO WORLD HERITAGE

In 1972 the **United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization** (UNESCO) established the World Heritage program to recognize cultural and natural treasures around the world that have “outstanding universal value” for all of humanity. Distinguished global properties already on the list include the Pyramids of Giza, the Great Wall of China, Australia’s Great Barrier Reef and Stonehenge.

Eight Ohio Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks are now poised to join the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List.

Ancient earthworks sites dating to the Hopewell era comprise the USA’s first Ohio-centric bid for UNESCO World Heritage Site status:

1. Fort Ancient State Memorial
2. Mound City Group
3. Hopewell Mound Group
4. Seip Earthworks
5. High Bank Earthworks
6. Hopeton Earthworks
7. Newark Earthworks State Memorial: The Great Circle
8. Newark Earthworks State Memorial: The Octagon



“We are still alive, we are still active. These are still spiritual places for us.”
 ~Chief Glenna Wallace, Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma





Falcon Effigy Pipe

Photo courtesy of Ohio Memory



Photo by John Hancock



Photo by Kenning Macatigiano



Discovering Ancient Ohio

by John E. Hancock, Professor Emeritus of Architecture, University of Cincinnati

While the Caesars were ruling Rome 2,000 years ago, a flourishing American Indian culture was building huge, intricate monuments of earth and stone across central and southern Ohio. They were pilgrimage centers for a religious movement dominating much of North America at the time. Many of these remarkable sites still stand today among the river valleys and hilltops of our region.

Archaeologists call this ancient culture "Hopewell" after a site near Chillicothe. It is one of eight being prepared for nomination to the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List next year. That's the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization, whose World Heritage program was inspired in the 1970s by the United States' National Park System and now features more than 1,000 natural and cultural sites in nearly every nation on earth.

World Heritage recognition will bring new travelers to the region, with new expectations and new tourism development opportunities. You don't need to wait, though. You can discover these ancient sacred places now.

This past spring, Ohio's former First Lady Hope Taft joined retired Cincinnati attorney and author Buck Niehoff and a small group of friends in walking back-roads across the state to visit these earthworks. Niehoff is an experienced long-distance walker who has published memoirs of his adventures in England. The group's Ohio goal was to find a scenic, interesting, off-the-beaten-track tourist route that could connect these ancient sacred places.

Beginning at the hilltop enclosure of Fort Ancient, in Warren County, the group followed back-roads into Ross County, where they toured the several major earthworks comprising Hopewell Culture National Historical Park. Then they headed north to Licking County, finishing at the two spectacular geometric earthworks in Newark and Heath.

The World Heritage nomination calls these sites the "Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks" and explains how they meet stringent criteria established by UNESCO. It would join Stonehenge, the Parthenon, the Pyramids and the Great Wall of China on the prestigious list. The genius of their makers is evident in their brilliant geometrical precision, with exact shapes and dimensions used across the whole region, and in their exact

alignments to solar and lunar cycles.

Archaeological records also reveal the builders' distinctive way of life, dazzling artistic skills and widespread influence and interaction across the continent.



Effigy Hawk Claw

Photo courtesy of Ohio Memory



Copper Falcon
Photo courtesy of
Ohio Memory

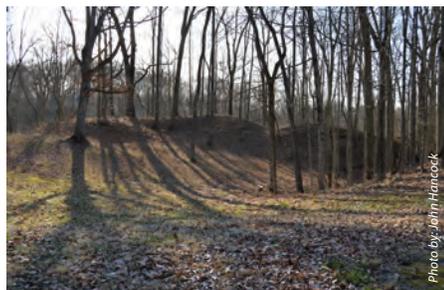


Photo by: John Hancock

At Fort Ancient, a series of 84 earthen walls and ponds enclose 100 acres, perched high above a narrow gorge of the Little Miami River. Three monumental gateways invited ancient pilgrims to enter for ceremonies of feasting, giant fires and observation of sunrises and moonrises.



Photo by: Brad Lepper

Newark's Octagon and Great Circle Earthworks are the most spectacular remnants of an ancient complex that once covered more than 4 square miles. Their evident size, beauty and precision may make them the most astonishing of all the Hopewell Earthworks. And the Octagon's geometric and astronomical properties are more precise and sophisticated than much more famous places like England's Stonehenge.

"World Heritage inscription will bring the global recognition that these remarkable sites and their ancient builders deserve. It will be good for Ohio in so many ways," said Taft at one of the events along their route. In fact, new World Heritage sites often attract more "cultural heritage" travelers — folks interested in spending more time and having a deeper and more authentic experience of places.

Taft, Niehoff and their group walked upwards of 160 miles, but most people coming to Ohio to see the earthworks and discover their makers will be driving. "We definitely discovered that rural Ohio is not set up for walkers, in the same way that England is, though it was still a very rewarding experience," said Niehoff.

The committee working on World Heritage also is planning new, regional approaches to the visitor experience, emphasizing scenic routes (like the Paint Valley), historic towns (like Granville and Chillicothe) and unique local accommodations.

To focus on the World Heritage candidates, follow a route (in either direction) between Fort Ancient (northeast from Cincinnati) and Newark (east of Columbus), by way of Greenfield or Hillsboro, Bainbridge, Chillicothe, Lancaster and Tarlton. Allow at least a half-day to appreciate each of the earthworks in the series. At any of the site visitor centers, pick up a copy of the new booklet, "Guide to the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks," for a well-balanced orientation, or follow the mobile version of the Ancient Ohio Trail, a curated web resource.

<http://www.ancientohiotrail.org>

Thanks to the achievements of a brilliant culture, Ohio was the "heartland of Ancient America." Their greatest monuments survive, right here in our backyard. You don't need to walk as Taft and Niehoff did; you can drive. And you don't need to wait for World Heritage; you can experience these astonishing, world-class monuments now.

This article was first published in the September 2021 issue of AAA Magazine. It is being reprinted here with permission from AAA Magazine.



Photo by: John Hancock

Mound City is a gathering of two dozen burial mounds beside the Scioto River at Chillicothe. A museum displays beautiful artifacts made from precious materials brought to Ohio 2,000 years ago, many of them from far away. This site also is the headquarters of the national park, where staff can advise you on how to visit several other earthwork complexes in the area — Hopeton Earthworks, High Banks Earthworks, Seip Earthworks and the Hopewell Mound Group.



Why Walk The Ancient Trail

by Buck Niehoff

On our 160-mile walk, Hope Taft and I came to appreciate the eight ceremonial Hopewell earthworks nominated for inscription on the World Heritage list. We learned that they are among the most complex and beautiful landscape architectural achievements ever built in Ohio. The ancient people who created them demonstrated remarkable engineering and construction skills and unbelievable scientific knowledge in aligning these structures with the cycles of the sun and moon.

But in walking to these great ceremonial landmarks, we found something else. Our path followed in the footsteps of the earthworks builders who, like us, made pilgrimages between these sacred locations.

Evidence of these spiritual journeys still remains after 2,000 years. The remnants of broad avenues, protected on both sides by earthen mounds, lead to the sites. Some archaeologists believe that these roads may have extended the entire distances between them. Grand entrances and spiritual cleansing areas welcomed pilgrims to the earthworks.

Walking was almost certainly part of the spiritual experience of these sacred places for ancient people. It was for us as well.

Perhaps like them, we found a sense of peace as we walked. The rhythmic movements of our legs created a form of meditation that calmed our minds in the same way that flowing postures in Yoga are soothing.

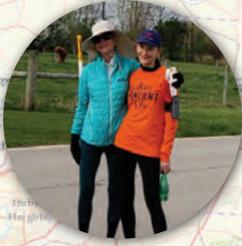
As we went along I would lose track of the time or the distance that we covered. I did not notice my surroundings. My mind emptied, like the feeling that may occur in meditation. Often, I was surprised when we reached our ending point and my reverie was interrupted.

I could imagine an ancient person feeling that same spiritual peace. Occasionally, I almost imagined one of the mound builders was walking next to me.

I also noticed something else which I has been part of all my walking trips. That is the sense of joy. Each of my companions was always in a good mood. Quite simply, walking makes you happy.

We realized that the spaces between the earthworks locations — where both ancient and modern pilgrims walked — may have been as important to the sacred experience as the earthworks themselves.





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Scenic Ohio, TourismOhio and the Ohio Department of Transportation are creating a driving trail that will connect Ohio's World Heritage Sites for Ohioians and tourists from afar.

Special route signs will be installed along roads once the inscription is announced.

AAA Ohio will also create a special "TripTik" for members.

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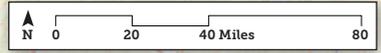
The Ancient Ohio Trail

DRIVE & WALK TOUR MAP

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LEGEND

- Drive
- Walk
- Canoe / Kayak



THE ANCIENT OHIO TRAIL WALKERS

- Hope Taft
- Buck Niehoff
- Melody Sawyer Richardson
- Gary Meisner
- Kristina Rastaturina
- Donna Hartman
- Jim Scott
- Doug Klocke
- Tom Freeman
- Teresa Hoelle
- Suhas Kakde
- Scott Provancher
- Jill Wilson
- Steve Wilson, Ohio State Senator
- Mary Mertz, ODN Director
- Matt Maclaren, TourismOhio Director

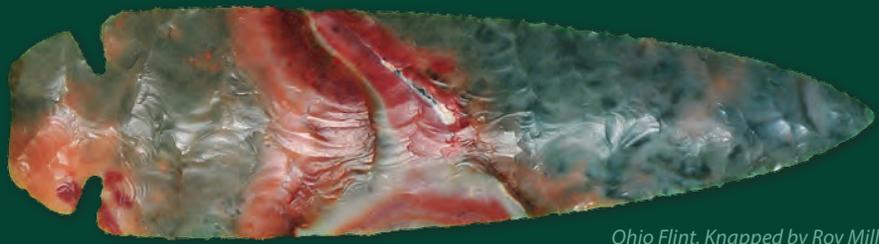
PAINT CREEK PADDLERS

- Rivers Unlimited: Aaron Rourke, Mike Miller, Bernie Moller, Lisa Link, Greg Bechtel, David Rutter, Carson Skidmore





Learn more about Ohio flint by visiting <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/rock-minerals-fossils/minerals/flint>



Ohio Flint, Knapped by Roy Miller

www.roymillerflintridge.com

FLINTKNAPPING is the making of flaked or chipped stone tools. The art and craft of knapping is a tangible connection to our Ohio history and to our universal and shared human heritage. We connect to the past through the eyes of ancient ancestors by shaping stone.

Flint: Ohio's Official Gemstone

By Hope Taft

In 1965, the Ohio legislature voted to make Ohio flint the official state gemstone.

Because of its color, hardness, and ability to take a high polish, Ohio's Flint Ridge flint is one of the most coveted materials among mineral collectors and lapidarists, who produce unique, often beautiful jewelry items from this rock.

Flint is a sedimentary rock consisting of microscopic crystals of marine quartz. It is believed that flint was made from sponges or phytoplankton with silica deposits in shallow inland seas during the Paleozoic Era.

Due to the physical changes the rock underwent before it appeared in the Upper Carboniferous geologic period, Ohio flint created its own special signature.

Not only is the Vanport limestone hard, but it is also brittle and breaks with glass-like fractures. When it is heated, it is even easier to shape or knap. Heat also brings out the dramatic colors, mainly from traces of iron minerals that Ohio flint has and flints from other places don't seem to have.

Flint mining may have been Ohio's first industry. Two thousand years before Ohio became a state, ancient peoples were mining this raw material for their projectile points and drills.

There was a great increase in mining operations, which are pits dug by hand, during the period known as the Hopewell culture. Archeological studies have found that when this way of life stopped, the mining of flint stopped too.

Small pieces of Ohio flint can be found in remote places from the Rocky Mountains to the Gulf of Mexico, the Atlantic coast and southern Canada. The trade network was extensive but there is still debate among archeologists if it was carried home as a souvenir by people who visited the great ceremonial earthworks built by the people during this time frame or carried by ancient people to far off places and used as barter or signs of respect.

Ohio flint's vivid colorations, unique mineral signature, ease of knapping, importance to early indigenous people for tools, and the belief that it was the first industry made flint the perfect choice to become Ohio's official gemstone.



Vanport Limestone

Photo: James St John, CC BY 2.0



Flint Ridge & Other Licking County Mounds

By Hope Taft

A few friends and I left Ft. Ancient in Warren County on the Spring Equinox and finished our walk through Chillicothe at the Great Circle and Octagon in Newark on the Summer Solstice.

We wanted to see if we could find a way to go between the ceremonial sites proposed for World Heritage Recognition without going on major roads. Our Walking Ancient Ohio experience did just that and will probably be the basis of new road signs marking the Ancient Ohio Trail.

After 160 miles of walking or boating, we still wanted to learn more about the ancient people archeologists call the Hopewell Culture. It also whetted our appetite to see Flint Ridge because we had learned that the colorful Ohio flint played a big role in the lives of these people. Small pieces of it can be found in many parts of the North American continent east of the Rocky Mountains.

We learned that people have been mining flint from this ridge for over 14,000 years, but most was mined during the 400 years of the building and use of what are now known as the Hopewell Ceremonial Sites. Most interesting was the fact that when this culture ceased to use the great earthworks they had built, the mining of flint ceased too.

We learned that in some ways it was the first industry in the area now called Ohio. Besides seeing the impressive Flint Ridge and wondering how those mining pits were dug so deep with stone tools, we also visited

other significant native ancestral sites in Licking County.

The Tippet Mound now being cared for by the Licking County Park District and the one on Dawes Arboretum property, impressive and important because they are still above ground, helped us realize that the structures were often built on naturally occurring hills and made us wonder if they served some lookout purpose.

Large deposits of flint chips are often found close by, again causing us to wonder if the early craftsmen liked the view, wanted the shade, or had another reason to work flint into points or blanks there. Probably the site that caused us to ponder the most was the juxtaposition of the 1833 Fairmont Church and graveyard with the mound it has so faithfully preserved.

The memories of loved ones with stone or earth markers signify that the two cultures can meet in a respectful way. People then as now laughed and cried the same way, had the same feelings and emotions, and watched the rising and setting of the sun and moon. Both cultures have lost loved ones and lifestyles and endured pain only tears can express.

Some day in the future, I hope that Licking County, with its remarkable concentration of monumental earthworks left by ancient peoples, will develop enhanced tours and encourage citizens of today to learn more about the very early residents of this land.





Great Hopewell Roads?

By Brad Lepper | Senior Archaeologist for the Ohio History Connection's World Heritage Program

Ceremonial avenues defined by parallel earthen walls were a part of the architecture of many Hopewell earthworks. Most often they extended from one earthwork to another or from an earthwork to the nearest stream, but at least one appears to have been something much grander.

The idea of the Great Hopewell Road was first put forward by Caleb Atwater in 1820. He proposed that the parallel-walled avenue that extended from the southeastern corner of Newark's octagon might extend as much as 30 miles to the south and connect the Newark Earthworks with other earthworks along the Hocking River.

Ephraim Squier and Edwin Davis, in their more authoritative summary of the Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley, published in 1848 as the first publication of the Smithsonian Institution, dismissed Atwater's claim, noting that the walls were only 2½ miles long.

In 1862, however, James and Charles Salisbury traced those walls for six miles, through "tangled swamps and across streams still keeping their undeviating course." Frustratingly, they did not follow the road to its end, but if it kept going on that straight course, it would lead directly to the center of Chillicothe. So Atwater had been on to something after all.

Based on a comparison of this Hopewell road with similar roads

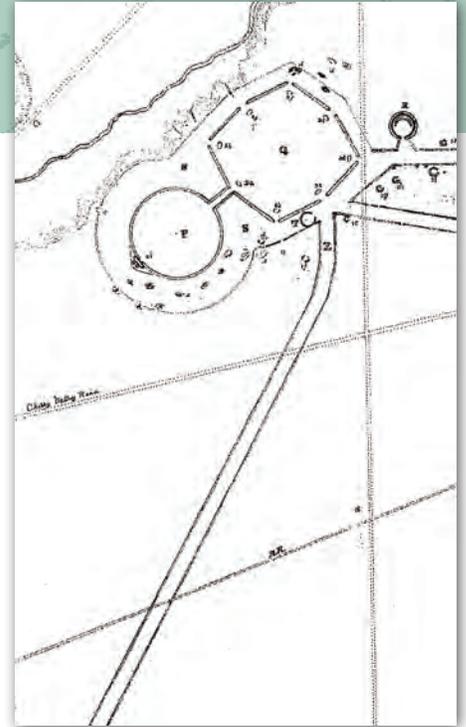
built by the Maya and the Ancestral Puebloans, the Great Hopewell Road may well have extended 60 miles, forging a ceremonial connection between ancient Newark and Chillicothe.

If there was one such "Great Hopewell Road" it is likely there were others. It is well known that the Fort Ancient Earthworks included a set of parallel walls that ran to the east from the North Fort, but it was only about a quarter-mile long ending in a small, irregularly shaped enclosure. But in 1894, Lindsey Brine, a retired admiral of the British Navy, recorded the claim of some local farmers that "there once existed other parallel banks connected with the fort which could be traced for several miles, but that these had been destroyed."

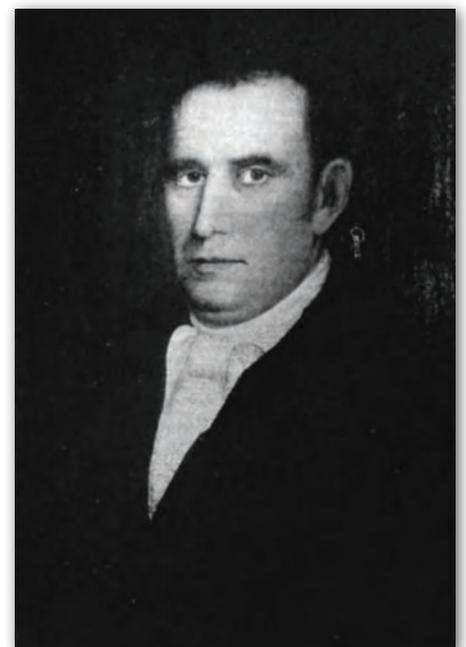
These and other potential Hopewell roads deserve further investigation.



Fort Ancient Map, James Marshall, 2000. Image courtesy of Ohio History Connection



1862 Salisbury Map, Newark Earthworks with Hopewell Road detail. Image courtesy of American Antiquarian Society



The idea of the Great Hopewell Road was first put forward by Caleb Atwater in 1820.



Geological Influences Along The Heritage Walk

By Mike Angle, Retired ODNR Geologist Supervisor

Ancient American Indians likely followed a trail similar to the path taken by the Ancient Ohio Trail Walkers. Such a pathway would link important transportation corridors like the Little Miami River, Paint Creek, Scioto River, and Licking/Muskingum Rivers. The pathway would likely have linked the various mound sites and Flint Ridge excavations. Landscape played an important role in determining pathways, and the landscape reflects the cumulation of both bedrock geology and overlying glacial geology.

The landscape needed to provide a good vantage for ancient travelers to observe approaching game or enemies. They needed to avoid overly steep areas, ridges, deep gullies or valleys that would make travel difficult for larger groups. The local geology provided building materials for the mounds and related earthworks.

The bedrock of southwestern Ohio includes units resistant to erosion such as dolomites and more easily erodible units including limestone and shale. In south central to southeastern Ohio, sandstone and conglomerate bedrock comprise the resistant units and shale, siltstone, coal and clay represent the more erodible. In regions where resistant rock types overlie the more erodible, the result can vary from gentle knobs to steeper ridges and cliffs. Streams may reflect such lithologic changes in the form of waterfalls, rapids and changes in stream gradients referred to as knickpoints. Ideally, paths followed the knobs and high areas and avoided some steeper cliffs and ravines.

The pathway across Warren, Clinton and Highland counties follows very close to the Wisconsinan Ice Margin advance, its southernmost end moraine. This moraine connects some gentle bedrock knobs, forming a consistent high ground. The slabby, fossiliferous Ordovician and Silurian-age limestone provided excellent building material for the mounds. Similarly, the end and ground moraines are comprised of glacial till, a combination of a silt, clay and sand matrix containing unsorted cobbles and boulders. The cobbles could be used as a base and the clayey to silty component was both cohesive and could be compacted, making it a good material for covering mounds.

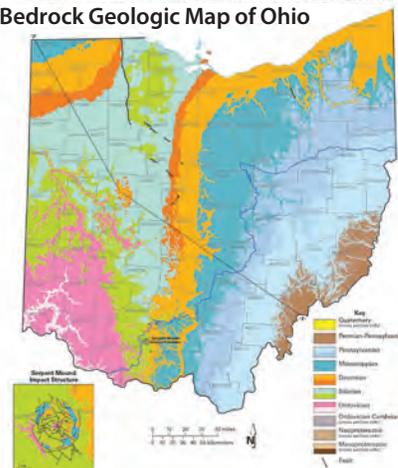
Near the boundary of Highland and Ross counties, the Heritage Path went waterborne into Paint Creek. Modern Paint Creek overlies an important glacial meltwater drainageway that led away from the melting ice margin and connected with the ancestral Scioto River.

In northeastern Ross County and into the eastern edge of Pickaway County and southern Fairfield County, the path continues to roughly follow the Wisconsinan Ice Margin. In this area, the ice advance was running into the Allegheny Plateau. The topography here is more controlled by the bedrock than by glacial features such as moraines. From Lancaster to roughly the area of modern Buckeye Lake, the path followed a series of bedrock knobs and lower lying end moraines, again following close to the Wisconsinan Ice Margin.

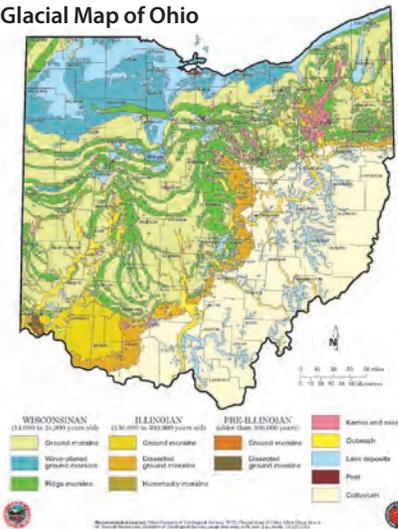
In Licking County, the pathway followed closer to the South Fork of the Licking River and ended near the Newark Mounds and pathways heading toward both Flint Ridge and the Black Hand Gorge.

Ohio's geology created a unique landscape foundation upon which the Ancient American Indians lived and utilized its resources.

Bedrock Geologic Map of Ohio



Glacial Map of Ohio





Octagon Curves | Photo by: Daniel Campbell

Earthworks are Places of Spirituality, Accomplishment and Power

By: Marti L. Chaatsmith (Comanche Nation Citizen/Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma Direct Descendant), Associate Director, Newark Earthworks Center, OSU

More than 2,000 years ago across Ohio, ancestors of present-day American Indian nations planned, designed, and built hundreds of earthen enclosures in enormous and precise geometric shapes: circles, squares with rounded corners, rectangles.

These were ingenious people who researched natural cycles vital to their existence and utilized aspects of science such as astronomy and mathematics to predict celestial cycles for future generations.

Over the past fifteen years, I have been privileged to host guests of the Newark Earthworks Center – teachers, artists, researchers, journalists, American Indian leaders – as they walked through the earthworks for the first time. As our guests moved along the grassy embankments to enter the elegant enclosures, I witnessed wonder and awe as they listened to our descriptions of the Hopewell Ceremonial Earthworks, in particular the only two remaining original earthworks: the beautiful and enigmatic Octagon Earthworks and the fascinating Great Circle.

These earthworks are places of accomplishment, spirituality and power, conveying a world-view we don't fully comprehend. They are spiritual places, revealing what we share with the people of the Hopewell culture: the urgency of bringing life into this world,



Deer on Mound, Octagon Earthworks | Photo by: Amanda Meredith (Cherokee)

embracing the challenges of living and loving with purpose, and the separation of those we love from this world in recognition of the finality of death.

The ancient people believed that everything in their world contained sparks of life – water and air, animals and plants, different kinds of earth and rocks, under the sky and stars. By taking this living material and shaping it precisely into gigantic shapes aligned to the recurring events around them, the people were gathering life force to create places of power.

“What do American Indian people think of the earthworks?” This is a frequently asked question as I lead tours of the Octagon and Great Circle. I am American Indian-- a citizen of the Comanche Nation of Oklahoma from my mother's family and direct descendant of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma from my father's family. While being Native does not necessarily





Procession into Octagon | Photo by: Timothy E. Black



Aerial View of the Octagon Earthworks | Photo by: Timothy E. Black

provide answers, it does provide an essential framework with which to “see” the earthworks from Indigenous perspectives.

When I arrived to work at the Newark Earthworks Center in 2004, I could only see golfing at the Octagon. For a long time, I kept returning to the Octagon, standing on the observation platform overlooking the walled path that links the octagon to the circle or walking along the sidewalk while hawks glided overhead. During the Open House days when the entire site opens to visitors, I spent time down at the creek where people might have disembarked from canoes, watching herons wading in the water.

Gradually, my personal understanding of the Octagon began to take shape; something about being in a space where so many of the original people of this continent gathered in the light of the moon every 18.6 years at a place engineered to focus our attention on the intersection of land and sky, humans and the natural world.

Many of our Native guests respond to their experiences at the earthworks by seeking a personal connection to being at an ancestral site. They veer off from the formal tours to walk beside the long walls, sit quietly at the entrance of the Great Circle or stand in the middle of the Octagon.

Native heritage stretches back thousands of years and forward to the present day. Tribal nations have histories and knowledge about living in the Ohio Valley woodlands that can inform our understanding of ancient, sacred places.

The stories we learn about Ohio’s earthworks begin with the brilliant people who built them and will be continued by honoring their accomplishments with respect and love.



Octagon Earthworks Observation Tower | Photo by: Kristina Rastaturina

This essay was previously published in the Newark Advocate in 2020.

It is now set to be included in a book of collected essays about the Newark Earthworks and World Heritage previously published in the Advocate.

The book, scheduled for publication in 2022, is titled:

The Fertile Earth and the Ordered Cosmos: Reflections on the Newark Earthworks and World Heritage.

The book is edited by Elizabeth Weiser, Timothy Jordan, and Richard Shiels and will be published by Ohio State University Press.



Obsidian



Copper



Knife River Flint

Hopewell Exotic Materials

From: Hopewell Culture National Historical Park Staff

The Hopewell culture traveled to many parts of the continent outside of what is now Ohio and collected rare and exotic materials from these faraway places.

The earthworks created by people of the Hopewell culture were places of gathering and ceremony. Within and around them, archeologists often find materials that likely held special meaning to the people who placed them there.

These materials were used to create beautiful ritual objects. We call these materials "exotic" because they do not come from what is now south-central Ohio where Hopewell Culture sites are located. But how did they get there?

The people who were a part of the Hopewell Culture were coming to and from what is now Ohio bringing these "exotic" materials with them 2000+ years ago.

They traveled by foot and by boat as far west as the Rocky Mountains, meeting people from other native cultures as far north as the upper peninsula of what is now the state of Michigan, and as far south as the Gulf of Mexico.

These were not ordinary trips; these travelers went to and from these locations especially for these materials and made sure to pick the very best.

These materials chosen with care were placed under earthworks and mounds, in the form of large spearpoints, geometric cutouts, and effigies. The craftsmanship of the people who created objects from these materials rivals that of highly trained professionals and artists today.

The brilliance of these objects and the presence of these "exotic" materials are evidence of the achievements and influence of the Hopewell Culture.





Image Credits: NPS/Tom Engberg

THE ABOVE MAP shows the “exotic” materials found at Hopewell Culture National Historical Park and roughly where they come from.



Photo: National Park Service

Shark Teeth



Photo: Public Domain, Wikimedia Commons

Mica



Photo: National Park Service

Seashells



Galena



EXPLORE the background and uses of these materials and objects, both during the precontact period and now, by visiting: <https://www.nps.gov/hocu/learn/historyculture/hopewell-exotic-materials.htm>





SCENIC OHIO

Scenic Ohio is an affiliate of Scenic America.

Created in 1933 as the Ohio Roadside Council, Scenic Ohio is the only nonprofit in Ohio dedicated to protecting and enhancing the visual quality and scenic character of Ohio's towns and countrysides.

Scenic Ohio seeks to educate the public and elected officials about their ability to enact stricter laws to enhance and protect the visual quality of the landscape.

Scenic Ohio is an entirely volunteer nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization.

JOIN US and help protect your scenery.

www.ScenicOH.org

Scenic Ohio
P.O. Box 09816
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Scenic Ohio's mission is to serve as a leading advocate for the development and preservation of Ohio's scenic corridors and landscapes.

OUR MISSION AND GOALS

Serve as a leading advocate for the development and preservation of Ohio's scenic corridors and landscapes.

Preserve and expand Scenic Byways. Conserve Ohio's scenic, historic, cultural and ecological resources.

Educate the importance of scenic values in relationship to cultural / historic tourism and the economic growth and well-being of small villages and cities.

Elevate the importance of scenic values in relationship to Ohio's gateways, portals and "views from the road" for millions of travelers in Ohio.

Advance context sensitive design. Work with local jurisdictions, villages, cities, counties and townships to knit transportation improvements with land use, gateways and other local needs.

Reduce proliferation of off-site signage and billboards that degrade property values and create unsafe distractions and public welfare issues along state and federal highway systems.

Advance "Green" solutions like vegetative sound walls and storm water bio-retention to modernize and make highway corridors more sustainable.

Educate ODOT Districts on how to better manage the "greensward" of our highway corridors.

Give back to local jurisdictions in our Home Rule State the ability to control their visual resources by providing amortization legislation.

Work with local jurisdictions and state agencies, including ODOT, Ohio History Connection, Ohio Humanities, TourismOhio, Ohio Department of Commerce, ODNR, garden clubs and historical societies, to preserve and conserve scenic resources.

CURRENT PROGRAMS

Working with ODOT to improve roadways, including promotion of living sound walls and improving vegetative management practices. Continue Scenic Ohio "Green Highways" educational workshops with each of the 12 ODOT District offices.

Working with the Ohio Humanities, Ohio History Connection, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, ODOT, and TourismOhio to advance a unified online Scenic Resource map and improved Ohio tourism website.

Meeting with Ohio Garden Clubs of America to coordinate advocacy of issues of mutual interest.

Recognizing agencies, organizations and individuals who have significantly contributed to preserving, conserving and enhancing the visual resources of Ohio with the annual Scenic Ohio Awards program. Conducting the awards program to maximize public education on the importance of scenic resources.

Continuing to advocate for safe and beautiful highway corridors that minimize distractions that reduce safety to the driving public. This includes distracting lighting, on-premise signs, off-premise signs, billboards and digital billboards.