EFFIGY MOUNDS

NATIONAL MONUMENT • IOWA

PREHISTORY

Toward the end of the last glaciation, about 12,000 years ago, Paleo-Indians—hunters similar to other early people east of the Rocky Mountains—came into northeast Iowa.

The way of life of these early hunters was comparatively simple. Small groups pursued and killed huge elephantine mammals and now extinct forms of the bison. Their weapons were darts, tipped with leaf-shaped stonepoints, and hurled with spear throwers. They probably lived and hunted in groups of closely allied units. If they built houses, archeologists speculate they used a very rudimentary shelter of brush or skin.

Remains of these earlier Indians have not been found in the monument, but scattered evidence of their presence appears in the vicinity in the form of dart points of types known to have been made by early peoples elsewhere. Their part in the prehistory of the area is noteworthy, for it represents the beginning of the human story of which we are a part.

The early hunter tradition can be traced through several thousand years. Eventually changes in and additions to the living habits of the Indians caused them to produce tools suited for woodworking. Archeologists have found the ax, adz, and gouge—all attesting to changes in the adaptation of the Indians' way of life from the plains to the forest.

Wild rice, nuts, fruits, berries, and fresh-water mussels, laboriously gathered, made up a large part of their food supply; and fishing also may have been important. The animals they hunted included the deer, bear, and bison. Implements and weapons attributed to these people have been found along the Mississippi River; some have come from the riverbanks along the monument's eastern boundary. The discovery of numerous tools and weapons suggests a large population and a relatively prosperous life.

Religious practices, magical in character, were important to these people. Shamans, who aimed at bending the forces of nature to man's will, greatly influenced their actions and activities. These men conducted ceremonies which they hoped would bring success in hunting and increase the number of game animals. They also worked to prevent natural disasters and drive away sickness.

Bone and copper awls were used for sewing. Possibly they wove baskets and matting, for earlier groups knew a form of weaving. It is thought the women wore clothing of tanned hides, moccasins, and jewelry of bone, shell, or copper. Men wore similar jewelry, and breechclouts and moccasins, and painted their bodies for additional adornment.

The oldest mounds in the Mississippi Valley belong to the Red Ocher Culture. One mound excavated in the monument produced evidence linking it with this culture, and was dated, by the radio-carbon technique, as being about 2,500 years old. Bundle burials had been placed on a floor covered with red ocher, and burial offerings included large chipped blades, straight-stemmed and corner-notched spear or dart points, and spherical copper beads.

The spear thrower was still the chief weapon, and projectile points continued in the same styles as their antecedents. Among the innovations, pottery was an important item. Their first pottery was crude, thick, and heavily tempered with coarse pieces of crushed rock. Toward the end of the period, pottery became thinner and was decorated with wide, indifferently applied, incised lines. Pottery of this type has been found in the monument.

The next major cultural division is noted in pottery and the use of many materials obtained from distant sources. The Indians seem to have elaborated their material possessions and intellectual life gradually, following a trend apparent through the Midwest. The remains from this period are called Hopewell, a culture dating from 100 B.C. to A.D. 600. Pottery and projectile points collected in the monument show a relationship to certain Hopewellian types. Indians of this period used mica from the Appalachians, obsidian from the Rocky Mountains, seashells from the Gulf of Mexico, and copper from the Lake Superior region.

Several mounds excavated in the monument are of the Hopewellian period. While certain ones contained traits identified with the Hopewell, the evidence was not as abundant as is usually found in similar centers of Illinois and Ohio. Three of these Hopewellian mounds are adjacent to the visitor center.

The Effigy Mounds people occupied the land now within the monument from a time overlapping the Hopewellian period until almost historic times. Their cultural remains indicate they differed from the Hopewellians chiefly in constructing mounds in effigy forms, using copper for tools rather than ornaments and burying their dead with few if any intentional offerings of a lasting nature.

Whatever their burial customs, these people probably differed little from their predecessors in terms of economic and everyday life. Archeological excavations indicate the Effigy Mounds people were probably supplanted about 1300 or 1400 by Indians of the Oneota Culture. These people placed a strong emphasis on agriculture and on life in larger villages.

The pottery, economic orientation, and certain facets of the religious life of the Oneota indicate a more southerly cultural ancestry. Some of their villages have been identified with a historic tribe—the Ioway, from whom the State takes its name. For the most part, the Ioway villages were north and west of the present monument boundaries, but scattered finds, consisting of pottery fragments, indicate they made at least temporary use of lands in what is now the monument. They probably hunted in the area, and they may have had transient camps in some of the rock shelters.

With the advent of the fur-trade era, Indian occupation of the land now within the monument came to an end.

HISTORY

Louis Joliet and Father Marquette were the first white men to reach the northeast Iowa region while exploring the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers in 1673. Others followed—exploring, building forts, and developing Indian trade.

The first known mention of the Effigy Mounds area appears in Jonathan Carver's *Travels Through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, 1768.* He tells of leaving his traders at the mouth of the Yellow River while he himself ascended the Mississippi. The next mention of the area implies that a few habitation sites had appeared at the mouth of the Yellow River.

During the historic period the mounds on the bluff tops and in the valley went unnoticed. In 1881, however, two men—Theodore H. Lewis and Alfred J. Hill—began an ambitious survey of the mound groups of the Mississippi River Valley. The Lewis-Hill surveys produced excellent maps of the mounds found throughout the valley and the southern United States. Among the groups they mapped in 1892 are some now within the monument, including the Marching Bear Group and a number of mounds which were destroyed before the monument was established.

On August 10, 1949, the first 1,000 acres to be included in Effigy Mounds National Monument passed into Federal ownership. Another 204.39 acres were conveyed to the United States by the Iowa General Assembly on April 14, 1951. An Act of Congress on May 27, 1961, added about 263 acres and 99 mounds to the monument.

Besides its unusual archeological attraction, the area contains interesting historical and scenic values and a varied vegetation and wildlife. The monument is located across the Mississippi River from historic Prairie du Chien, Wis., an important point in the exploration and settlement of the Upper Mississippi valley. The military road from old Fort Crawford at Praire du Chien to Fort Atkinson near Fort Atkinson, Iowa, passes through the monument. For over a century, sightseers have enjoyed the superb panoramas of the Mississippi River country along the monument's cliff-bordered eastern boundary.

The forests, the wildflowers, ferns, and other plants, and the varied bird and other animal populations at Effigy Mounds represent a biological community not found elsewhere in the National Park System.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The monument is 3 miles north of Marquette on Iowa 76. Upon arrival, you should stop first at the visitor center where museum exhibits and an audiovisual presentation explain the prehistory, history, and natural history of Effigy Mounds. The visitor center is open daily, except Christmas Day, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (7 p.m. in summer).

A 1-hour walk on the self-guiding Fire Point Trail leads to representative examples of major features within the monument, including the Little Bear Mound, Hopewellian mounds, and scenic viewpoints along the 300-foot-high bluff tops. Trailside exhibits and markers tell the story of the mounds, or explain the natural features. Guided walks along the trail by park rangers are given on a scheduled basis from Memorial Day to Labor Day. A longer walk is possible by following the Hanging Rock Trail to other points of interest.

Those who plan to visit in a group should make advance arrangements with the superintendent for guided walks.

There are no camping or picnicking facilities within the monument. You can obtain accommodations in nearby towns.

HELP PROTECT YOUR MONUMENT

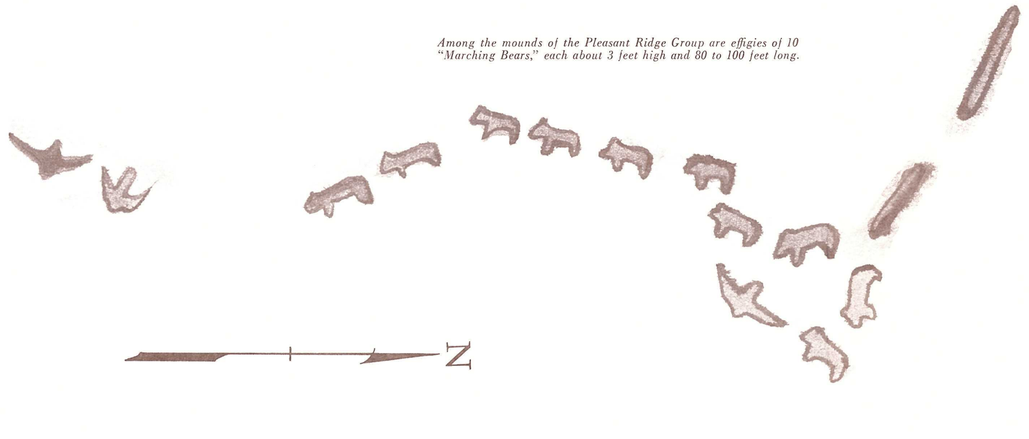
Regulations have been designed for the protection of the natural features and for your safety and convenience.

Please do not disturb or harm the mounds. They are protected by law.

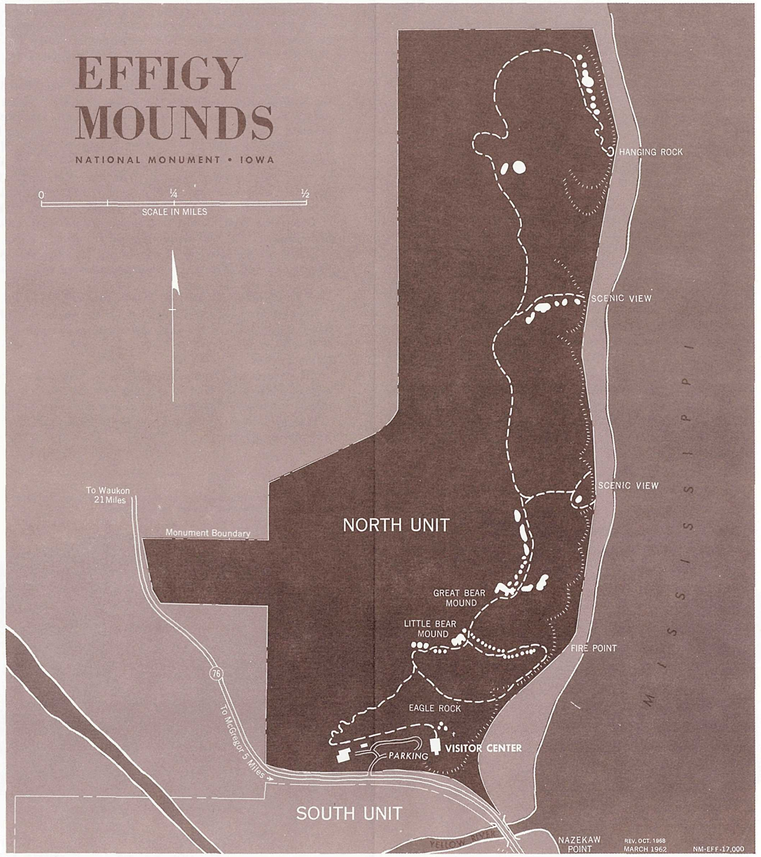
All objects in the monument—rocks, wildflowers, trees, and animals—must be left in place and undisturbed so that others, too, may enjoy them. Use of firearms is not permitted.

Pets are allowed provided you keep them under physical restraint at all times.

Among the mounds of the Pleasant Ridge Group are effigies of 10 "Marching Bears," each about 3 feet high and 80 to 100 feet long.



Scientific excavations revealed these stone projectile points and tools that Indians had buried in a mound.



ADMINISTRATION

Effigy Mounds National Monument, established by Presidential proclamation on October 25, 1949, and containing about 2 square miles, is administered by the National Park Service, U. S. Department of the Interior. For information contact: Superintendent, RR1, Box 25A, Harpers Ferry, IA 52146.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, park and recreation areas, and for the wise use of all those resources. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

A WORD OF CAUTION

When hiking, stay on trails and do not venture too close to cliff edges. Be alert for poisonous plants.

COVER: *Ancient arts and crafts of the area are reflected in effigy forms, decorated pottery, bear-tooth ornaments, and copper beads.*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

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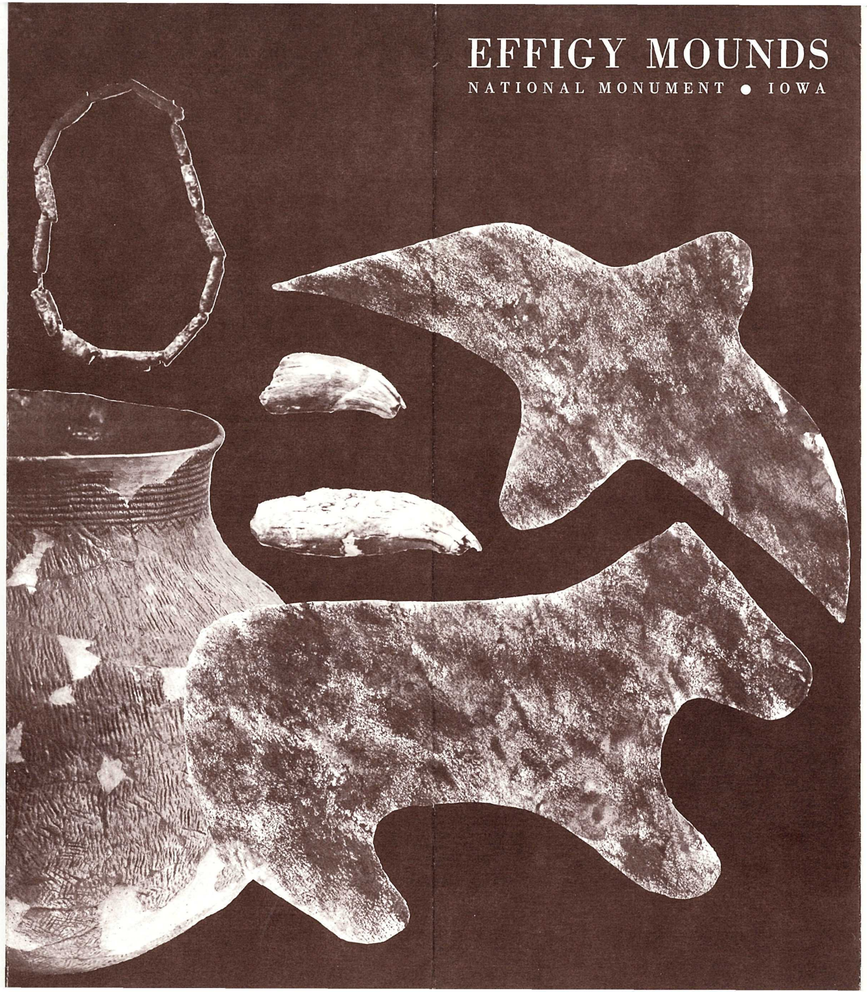

EFFIGY MOUNDS

NATIONAL MONUMENT • IOWA

Mounds are among the earliest and most widely distributed memorials of the dead . . . a heap of earth will remain unchanged through vicissitudes that reduce to ruins any other product of human industry.

—Gerard Fowke.

Along the high bluffs and lowlands in the Upper Mississippi River Valley are numerous prehistoric Indian burial mounds of a type unique in North America. Though different groups of prehistoric Americans built burial mounds at various times and places, only in southern Wisconsin and adjacent areas in Illinois, Minnesota, and Iowa were they built in the shapes of birds and other animals.

Effigy Mounds National Monument was established to preserve the earth mounds found in northeastern Iowa. Within the monument's borders are 191 known prehistoric mounds, 29 in the form of bear and bird effigies and the remainder conical or linear shaped.

At Effigy Mounds the visitor can visualize prehistoric man carefully forming each earth effigy to receive the body of the departed, selecting by ritual the most fitting bird or animal form for this solemn purpose. Some mounds are monumental; one, the Great Bear Mound, is 70 feet across the shoulders and forelegs, 137 feet long, and 3½ feet high.