

MOUND CITY GROUP

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

The monument is on the west bank of the Scioto River, 3 miles north of Chillicothe on Ohio 104. All highways passing through Chillicothe junction with this route.

The monument is open every day except Christmas. Organized groups may receive special services; advance arrangements should be made with the superintendent.

From Labor Day until June 1 the visitor center is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.; from June 1 to Labor Day, from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. There are no facilities for overnight stays at the monument. Lodging and camping facilities are available in Chillicothe and in nearby State parks. Pets must be on a leash while in the monument and are not permitted inside the visitor center. Fires are not permitted in the monument.

Before touring the mound group, be sure to stop at the visitor center where exhibits will help you understand Mound City and the people who built it. From the building, a walk leads to the embankment surrounding the mounds. Just before entering this enclosure, you will pass between two "borrow pits." The Indians removed thousands of basketloads of earth from these and other pits to build the mounds. Inside the enclosure you will see the mounds which covered the evidence of elaborate burial rites. Beyond the opposite embankment, the walk leads to the Scioto River.

ADMINISTRATION

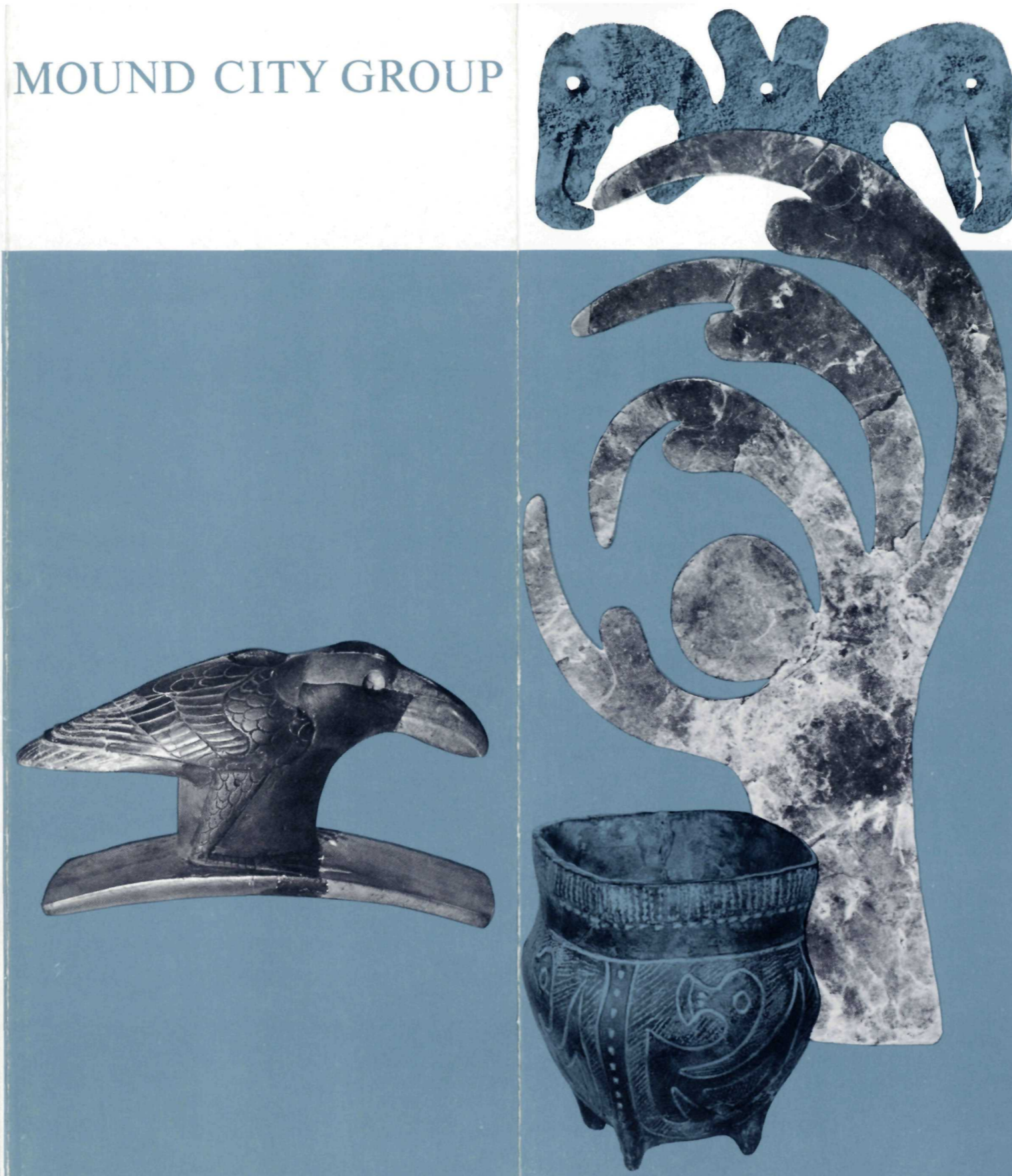
Mound City Group National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is P.O. Box 327, Chillicothe, OH 45601, is in immediate charge of the monument.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources." The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR
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THE HOPEWELL PEOPLE

By about 300 B.C. the prehistoric Indians we now call Hopewell had developed a distinctive culture in the Middle West. For perhaps 900 years these people flourished, their cultural zenith being here in the Scioto Valley of southern Ohio. But by about A.D. 600 the Hopewell culture had faded. Hundreds of years later European settlers found only deserted villages, burial mounds and ceremonial earthworks to hint at this vanished culture.

AN OUTSTANDING PREHISTORIC INDIAN CULTURE

The Hopewell are best known for their high artistic achievements and for their practice of erecting earth mounds over the remains of their dead. From the extraordinary wealth of burial offerings found in the mounds, archeologists have learned a great deal about these prehistoric people. They were excellent artists and craftsmen and worked with a great variety of material foreign to what is now Ohio.

Copper from the Lake Superior region was used for earspools, headdresses, breastplates, ornaments, ceremonial objects, and tools. Stone tobacco pipes were beautifully carved to represent the bird and animal life around them. From obsidian they made delicately chipped blades. Fresh-water pearls from local streams, quartz and mica from the Blue Ridge Mountains, shells from the Gulf of Mexico, grizzly-bear teeth from the Rockies—all were used in making the beautiful and elaborate offerings buried with the dead. Pottery of excellent workmanship was made; and even woven fabric of bark and other wild vegetable fibers has been found preserved through contact with copper objects. Animal bone was used extensively, and wood must have been important in the manufacture of implements and utensils.

The Hopewell Indians lived in small villages near rivers and streams. Some of their villages may have been some distance from their mounds; sites such as Mound City served chiefly as ceremonial centers. They knew how to raise corn and probably had simple gardens. Their diet was augmented by hunting animals and gathering wild fruits and vegetables. Though their culture was widespread, and they made use of materials obtained by trade and travel in distant parts of North America, the evidence of their remains suggests that they were a peaceful and more or less sedentary people.

LEFT: Stone platform pipe. RIGHT: Copper breastplate (top), mica eagle claw (center), footed ceremonial pottery jar (bottom). These objects are on exhibit at the Ohio State Museum in Columbus.

Possibly this peaceful and sedentary existence was one of the reasons for the disappearance of their culture. Perhaps they were harassed by more warlike tribes. It is possible their cultural pattern changed in emphasis, allowing them to abandon these religious centers. But whether the end of this colorful way of life was due to conquest, disintegration from within, or a combination of factors, the Hopewell culture endured and flowered for many years before passing from the scene.

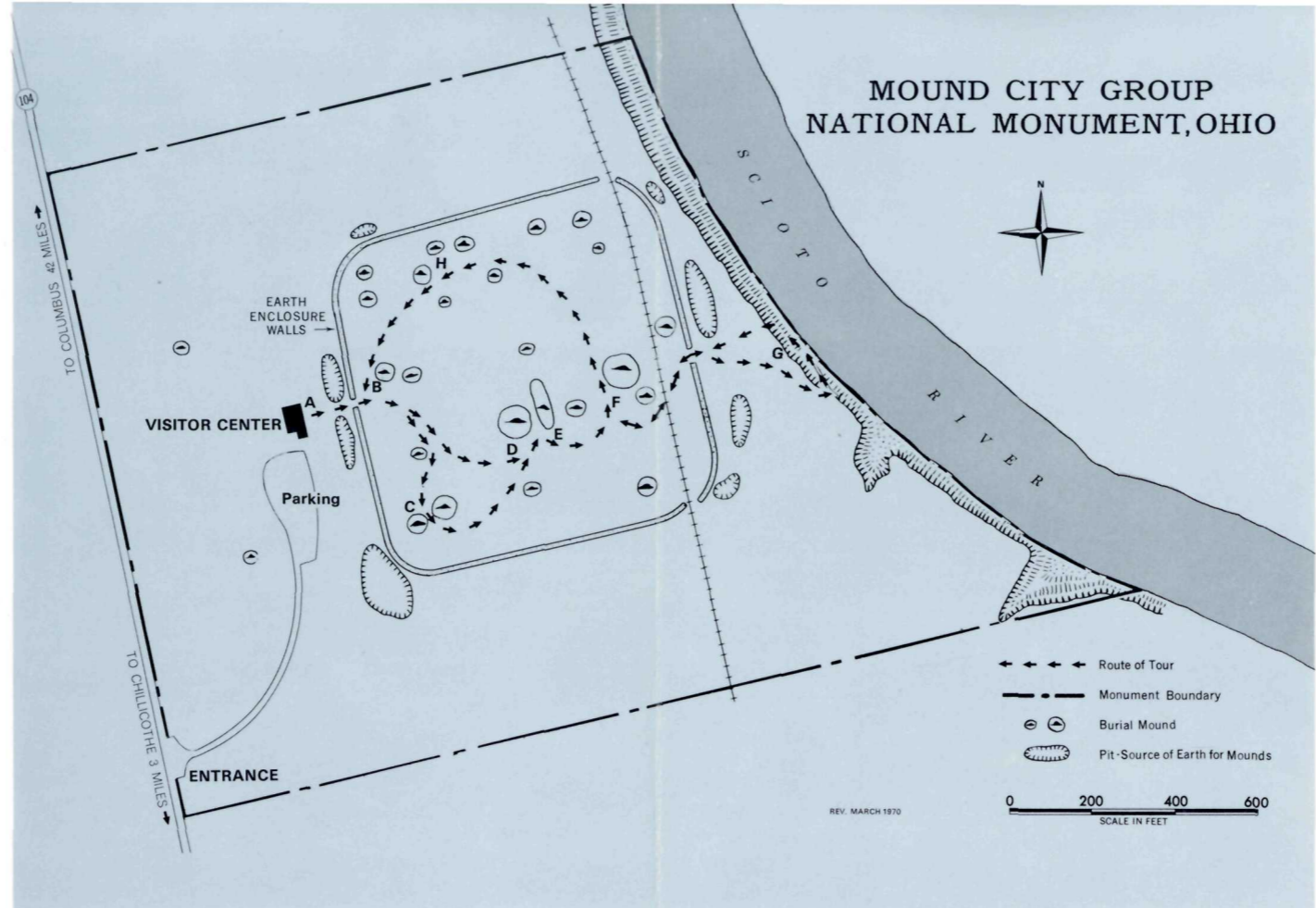
EXPLORATION AND EXCAVATION OF MOUND CITY

The Mound City Group lies within a rectangular earth enclosure of approximately 13 acres, within which are located 24 burial mounds. The earth walls of the enclosure vary in height from 3 to 4 feet, with an entrance or gateway on both the east and west sides. The largest mound of the group was described by early explorers as 17½ feet high and 90 feet in diameter. All the mounds are dome-shaped with the exception of one which is elliptical. Just outside the enclosure are two additional mounds and several depressions from which the Indians removed material for the construction of the wall and mounds.

The site was mapped and partially excavated in 1846 by two pioneer archeologists, E. G. Squier and E. H. Davis. The results of their survey of prehistoric earthworks, *Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley*, appeared in 1848 in the first publication of the newly founded Smithsonian Institution. Though early explorers had noticed many of the mounds, Squier and Davis' work was the first detailed study of prehistoric structures in the Mississippi Valley and is an archeological milestone.

The excavations at Mound City by Squier and Davis produced a great many spectacular objects, most interesting of which were a large number of stone pipes. Many were realistically carved in the images of birds, animals, and human heads. These objects, first acquired by the Blackmore Museum in England, were later transferred to the British Museum, London, where they remain today.

During World War I the area comprising Mound City was incorporated into Camp Sherman, a large training center. In 1920–21, after Camp Sherman had been razed, the Ohio Historical Society conducted extensive excavations at the site. These supplemented the information secured by Squier and Davis. A few years later the society restored the earthworks according to the best information available and developed the tract into a State memorial. The 1920–21 excavation brought to light many interesting



SELF-GUIDING TOUR

A. Observation Platform. From the roof of the visitor center you can see the prehistoric Indian burial area with its 24 mounds and square enclosure wall. Depressions outside the wall are "borrow pits" from which the Indians obtained material for building the earthworks.

B. Mica Grave. In this mound was a square clay platform covered with sheets of mica on which were placed the cremated remains of four individuals accompanied by a copper headdress and a mica mirror.

C. Mound of the Pipes. Here in 1846, E. G. Squier and E. H. Davis found "not far from two hundred" stone pipes which they described as follows: "The bowls of most of the pipes are carved in miniature figures of animals, birds, reptiles, etc. All of them are executed with exquisite skill." Casts of some of these pipes can be seen in the visitor center.

D. Death Mask Mound. This was described by early explorers as being 17½ feet high and 90 feet in diameter. W. C. Mills and H. C. Shetrone here discovered an unusual feature—a sunken room containing a crematory basin with 13 burials. Many years later, R. S. Baby of the Ohio State Museum put together the fragments of one of the skulls and found that they were the upper part of a mask

possibly worn by a shaman (priest) to personify Death. The mound may be ascended on the east side by a stairway.

E. Elliptical Mound. It is not known why this mound was built in this shape rather than circular as were the other mounds. Possibly it was built over two charnel houses located side by side.

F. Mound of the Pottery. From this mound came decorated vessels exemplifying the highly developed ceramic art of the Hopewell culture.

G. Scioto River. The location of Mound City and other earlier ceremonial earth structures of the Hopewell culture on river banks was no accident. The Scioto and other large rivers provided easy access to many villages and were a dependable source of food in the form of fish and clams. The Hopeton Site, now largely destroyed by plowing, is across the river from Mound City. Later Hopewell sites occur on hilltops and inaccessible promontories along the river.

H. Mound of the Fossils. Mills and Shetrone uncovered a large crematory basin and six cremation burials in this mound, which was partly demolished in the construction of Camp Sherman. Among the burial offerings were fragments of mastodon or mammoth tusks.

details of the construction and purpose of the mounds and yielded many fine artifacts typical of the Hopewell culture.

Recent excavations have revealed further information about the mounds and their ancient builders. A more accurate restoration of many parts of the site has been made possible under a program of archeological research. The work proves that Mound City is still a great storehouse of information about the Hopewell people.

MOUND CITY—1800 YEARS AGO

Since Mound City was primarily a ceremonial center for the dead, much of the information obtained from it concerns the burial customs of the people. The site of each mound was originally occupied by a wooden structure which was the scene of the last rites. After a period of use, this structure, a mortuary temple, was burned. Perhaps this burning was an attempt at purification, or perhaps it was to allow the spirit of the dead to escape to the spirit world. Afterward, a mound was erected over the separately cremated bones, and "killed" (broken) offerings of precious objects were left with the dead. The building of the mound was quite a task, considering their simple tools and equipment. Using only digging sticks or hoes of shell or animal shoulder blades, the Indians scraped up the earth, carried it in baskets or skins, and dumped it, load by load, on the slowly growing mound. Only a small percentage of the Hopewell dead were buried in mounds, an honor possibly accorded only to priests or other persons of high rank.

Archeologists discovered, in excavating Mound City, that they were not the first to disturb these ancient remains. In many of the mounds, intrusive burials of a later people were found, accompanied by artifacts distinct from those of the Hopewellians. This group of Indians had found the mounds a convenient and suitable place for the burial of their dead. Again, no connection between these Indians and tribes living in historic times can yet be made.

NEARBY POINTS OF INTEREST

Southern Ohio is very rich in prehistoric Indian sites. Among those set aside as State memorials under the custody of the Ohio Historical Society are Fort Ancient, Fort Hill, Miamisburg Mound, Newark Earthworks, Seip Mound, and Serpent Mound.

You can see historical and archeological exhibits in the Ross County Historical Society Museum in Chillicothe. Many objects excavated at Mound City are at the Ohio State Museum in Columbus.