

# Hopewell Culture

National Historical Park  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



Sketch of Miamisburg Mound by Henry Howe, 1846

## Archeology Sites in Ohio

For thousands of years the Ohio River Valley was the focal point for the prehistoric residents of this land. The Adena (800 B.C. - A.D. 100), the Hopewell (200 B.C. - A.D. 500), and the Fort Ancient Culture (A.D. 900 - 1550) represent a few of the groups that have occupied this portion of the state. The visual evidence of this occupation comes from quarry sites, petroglyphs, mounds, and earthworks. The Adena Culture is symbolized by the construction of large individual conical mounds reaching a height of 60 to 70 feet. The Hopewell culture is characterized by the construction of large geometric earthworks and the establishment of a wide ranging trade network covering the eastern half of North America. The Fort Ancient Culture was influenced by the Mississippian Culture to the west and is known for the construction of stockaded villages across the southern half of Ohio.

Of the thousands of mounds and earthworks that once dotted Ohio, few have survived the pressure of agriculture and urban expansion. Several of the once numerous mounds and archeological sites across the southern half of the state have been preserved in parks and memorials administered by various agencies. We invite you to visit and learn about these fascinating places that are our only link with the past.

## Adena and Hopewell Culture Sites (800 B.C. - A.D. 500)

### Fort Ancient State Memorial

Established as Ohio's first state park in 1891, this hilltop earthwork complex includes several mounds within a 100 acre enclosure. The site is surrounded by more than 3 1/2 miles of earth and rock walls standing up to 23 feet high. While the Hopewell people built the site, the Fort Ancient Culture later occupied and modified it. With village sites along the Little Miami River the Fort Ancient Culture disappeared just before the first Europeans entered Ohio. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. Entrance fee charged.

### Fort Hill State Memorial

Fort Hill is a hilltop enclosure constructed by the Hopewell surrounding 48 acres. A steep trail leads from the museum to the hilltop where you can see the 1 5/8-mile-long enclosure. The earthworks were constructed just below the top of the hilltop and stand between 6 and 15 feet high with 33 gateways or entrances through the walls. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. No entrance fee.

### Miamisburg Mound

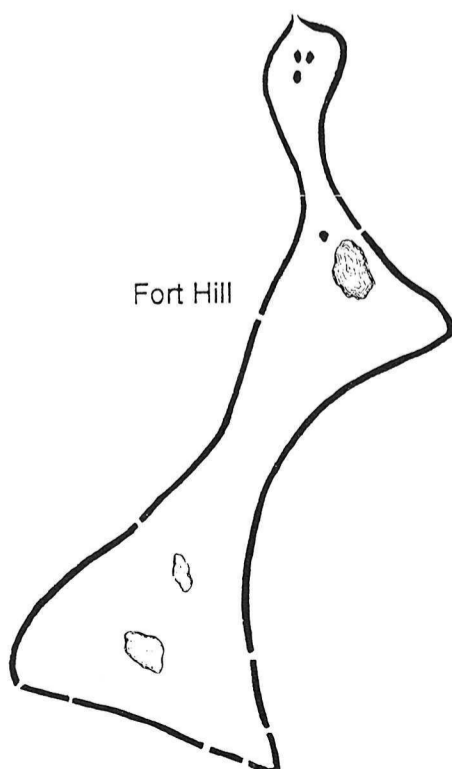
Miamisburg Mound is the largest single conical mound in Ohio. The structure, built by the Adena, is 65 feet high and 877 feet in circumference. Overlooking the Miami River Valley the mound has a base of 1 1/2 acres. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. No entrance fee.

### Moundbuilders State Memorial

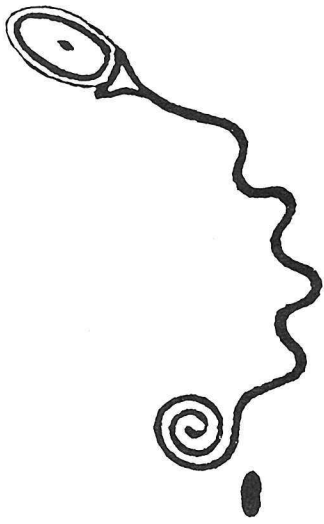
Located in Newark, this circular enclosure is part of an elaborate Hopewell earthwork complex that also includes the Octagon and the Wright Earthworks. Together the Newark earthworks covered some 4 square miles. The earthwork at Moundbuilders encloses 26 acres of land while the nearby Octagon works enclose 50 acres of land. Associated with Moundbuilders State Memorial is the Ohio Indian Art Museum. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. Entrance fee charged.

### Seip Mound State Memorial

The large Seip burial mound is the central structure within an extensive earthwork complex, parts of which are still visible to the east and south. Almost two miles of earth walls standing ten feet high once surrounded the 121 acres of the site. Excavations have yielded a great cache of freshwater pearls along with objects made from obsidian, silver, copper, tortoise shell, and mica. Specialized workshops have also been found within the enclosure walls. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. No entrance fee.



## Fort Ancient Culture Sites (A.D. 900 - 1550)



### Serpent Mound State Memorial

Serpent Mound is a 1,348 foot long embankment of rock, soil, and clay representing a gigantic snake uncoiling is seven curves across the top of the bluff. Once thought to be the work of the Adena Culture, recent evidence indicated that the mound was constructed around A.D. 1070 by the Fort Ancient Culture. The Serpent Mound is one of the largest effigy mounds in the United States. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. Entrance fee charged.

### SunWatch

On-going archeological excavations mix with reconstructed buildings to bring this 12th century Fort Ancient Culture village to life. The stockaded village incorporates a system for measuring time based on observations of the sun. Influenced by the Mississippian Culture to the west, gardens, hints of daily activities, and reconstructed buildings all help to portray life prior to European arrival in Ohio. Operated by the Dayton Museum of Natural History. Entrance fee charged.

## Other Cultural Sites

### Flint Ridge State Memorial

Flint Ridge is the site of one of America's earliest and most widely used flint quarries. The high quality of this flint has drawn people to this ridge top for at least 10,000 years. Flint has been used to create projectile points and the other tools of daily life. Included in the extensive trade network established by the Hopewell, flint from this site has been found as far west as Illinois and Missouri. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. Entrance Fee charged.

### Leo Petroglyphs

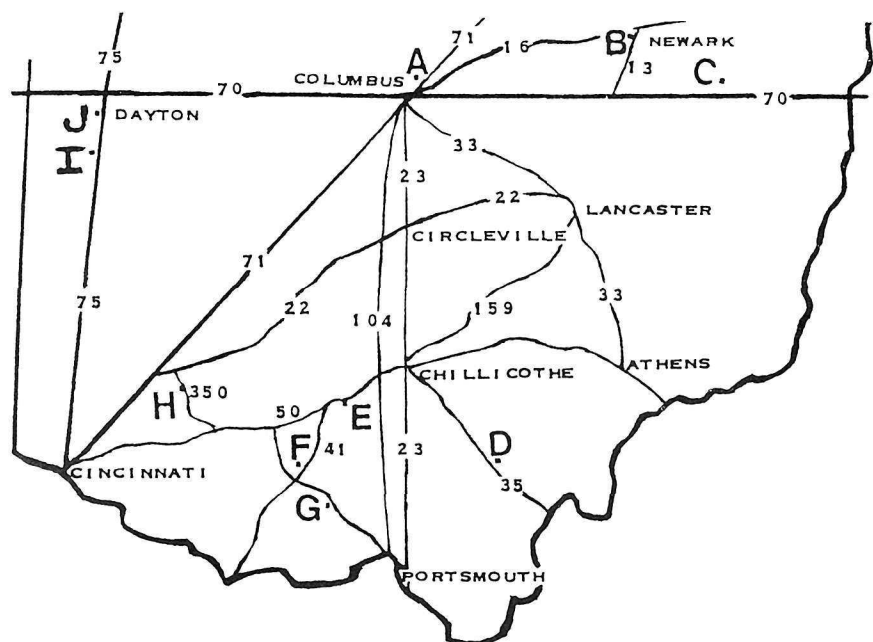
Carved into the sandstone of the site are 37 images of human beings, footprints, animals and other figures. The meaning of the carvings is not known. While they have been attributed to the Fort Ancient Culture, the specific date when they were carved can not be determined. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. No entrance fee.

### Ohio Historical Center

The Historical Center in Columbus features exhibits devoted to the Native Americans who settled this region beginning 12,000 years ago. Museum exhibits detail the geographic formation of the state and the natural environment. The exhibits trace the lifestyles of the first residents of Ohio, through the Adena and Hopewell cultures and culminating with the coming of the Europeans to the region. Other exhibits trace the history of those who live here now. Operated by the Ohio Historical Society. Entrance fee charged.

## How to Get There

- A. Ohio Historical Center
- B. Moundbuilders State Memorial
- C. Flint Ridge State Memorial
- D. Leo Petroglyphs State Memorial
- E. Seip Mound State Memorial
- F. Fort Hill State Memorial
- G. Serpent Mound State Memorial
- H. Fort Ancient State Memorial
- I. Miamisburg Mound
- J. SunWatch



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