

WINNAMEG MOUND

(This article appeared in a local newspaper of about 1893 - when DRESDEN W.H. HOWARD was about 76 years of age. No date or name of the newspaper that printed the story.)

"The work of excavating their mounds at Winnameg is now under way. Starting developments as to the Strange Manners and Customs of this once mighty race, conclusively showing them to have been co-exhistant with, if not antedating the Druids.

"Last fall, a TRIBUNE representative visited the beautiful farm of Hon. D.W.H. HOWARD, at Winameg and while there was told by the stalwart pioneer, who had himself been an eye witness of many of the vivid sceans enacted before the white people came to this county of the wonderful things that had happened in the neighborhood. Mr. HOWARD'S farm then of course, was still owned by the Indians, and had been the site of one of their numerous villages.

They had also used a portion of the ground as a burial place and many have been the skeletons of Indians which Mr. HOWARD has accidentally unearthed. Leading the scribe into his fine old orchard, Mr. HOWARD pointed to a number of small elevations which were distinct but had been smoothed and rounded over with age. To this question as to whether they were Indian graves or not, he replied, "No, I think they are much older than the Indians who ever lived here lately, This is the work of the MOUND BUILDERS". When Judge HANDY learned that there were mounds on Mr. HOWARD'S farm, he resolved to investigate it, as he is an able and devoted student of the subject. An opportunity presented itself last week and the Judge took advantage of it. In the following interesting artliel we are permitted to give the details of what he found.

-The"Editor"

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"In the past week one fact has been demonstrated. viz: that great lost race which for want of a better name is called the MOUND BUILDERS, once inhabited Fulton Co. Until now, the works in Ohio north of the Allen Co. north

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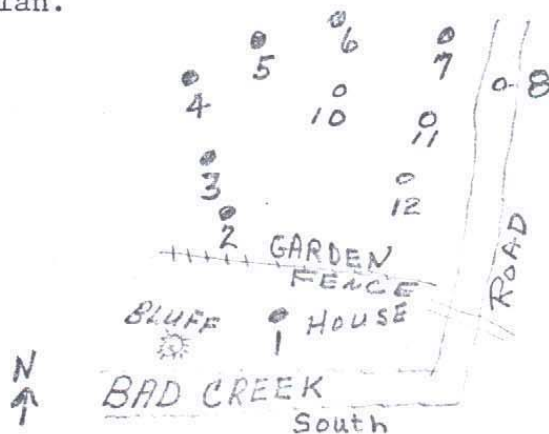
line, or west of the Lucas Co. line have never been certainly identified as the work of these people. On archeological maps and reports, Fulton County and her sisters west and south have been a blank. Today, on the banks of Bad Creek, overlooking the famous council grounds of the POTTAWATTOMIES, on which stands the Historic Council Oak tree of the red Indians, we have located and identified eleven mounds of the MOUND BUILDERS, and the site of a twelfth.

"Of the archeological value of these 'finds' too much cannot be said, at present, as the careful reader will observe further on. That we are able to identify and locate them at all is due entirely to the thoughtful and intelligent guardianship and care that has been for more than half a century, exercised over them by Hon. D.W.H. HOWARD, on whose farm and in whose orchard most of them are situated.

"During all of these years he has zealously guarded them from vandalism, permitting no one to in any manner interfere with them further than to cultivate the ground. The confidence he placed in me when he finally gave me permission to investigate them to the fullest extent desired, thereby expressing his belief in my integrity of purpose, is a compliment I fully and gratefully appreciate and wish in this manner to earnestly thank him.

"Through now 76 years of age, Mr. HOWARD is full of energy, as active and apparently as strong as a man of 40, while his wonderful memory and intellectual powers are unimpaired. Having associated from boyhood with the red Indians of Northwestern Ohio, and accompanied them to their reservation beyond the reservation; always as their friend; able to converse with them in their own language; to get into their inner lives, as it were; to appreciate the credit due them with their virtues and condemn their faults, he easily became their confidant, and possessed of their traditions. His memory is a mine of wealth of the traditional lore of these people. These people, who had no written language, are authentic history. I think it will be conceded that the story of our first parents and their descendants for the first few generations, at least, rests on tradition, and yet it is accepted by the whole Christian world as authentic.

"The mounds are located on the SE $\frac{1}{4}$ of the NW $\frac{1}{4}$ Sec. 9, T7S, of R3E, in Pike Twp., Fulton Co., O. They are built on a high ridge, containing 5 or 6 acres of land and following the highest outer elevation of the bluff, with three exceptions. The following diagram will afford some idea of the general location and the plan.



No. 1 is nearly covered by Mr. HOWARD'S wood house and is built on the southern edge of the bluff. A distinct and well defined terrace appears on the northern side of the bluff. No. 8 is located in the road to Winameg, and nearly obliterated. The balance, while their outlines are somewhat indistinct can be easily seen. The soil is a top dressing of light sand, mixed however to a depth of 6 or 7 inches with gravel. Long years after they were exposed to the winds and rains, and consequently have lost much more by erosion than

they have gained by decaying vegetation or otherwise. And, indeed, Mr. HOWARD tells me that within his memory they were much higher and more distinct in their outlines than now. Besides they have been cultivated more or less for many year. Col. HOWARD tells me that he heard old Chief WIN-NA-MEG, the father of the younger WIN-NA-MEG, after whom the post office was so named, and when the old chief then was about 95 years of age, say that their oldest man did not know who had made the mounds and that nobody knew; but he thought a great battle had been fought there and that the dead had been buried in the mounds. Indian tradition, the, has failed to account for them. If the red Indians had built them, tradition would have brought the facts down to old WIN-NA-MEG. But we need no argument to convince us that the manners and customs fo the red Indians did not build these mounds or otherworks of the MOUND BUILDERS.

THE EXCAVATIONS & THE RESULT

"We went into these mounds with the purpose of making some excavations thorough enough to disclose their identity, their purpose and whether they had ever been disturbed. When this had been accomplished, we quit working on each particualr mound.

"At this writing, we have examined 8 mounds, two of them very thoroughly. Of the balance, one has been located on which a large sugar maple tree is growing thereon, that a more thorough examination would destroy the tree, and the other five showing evidence of comparatively recent disturbance, which we have abanded, after discovering they are really the work of the MOUND BUILDERS.

MOUND NO. 5

"our first excavation was Mound No. 5, shown on the diagram. We began by diging a trench between 2 and 3 feet in width from the outer edge of the mound, digging down to the original surface of the ground and towards the center. This mound is about 35 feet in diameter. About 10 feet from the center we found small pieces of charcoal. The soil when we got to the altar, was composed of mould 6 inches; white sand of 18 inches; yellow sand miced wiht some gravel at the surface. At about the center we uncovered two altars, one a circle and the other parallelegram in shape - the circle lying directly south of the latter. The circle was 4 feet in diameter. The parallelegram, as near as we can make it, is 4 to 6 feet.

:The altars were constructed in about the same manner. First was the soil. Overlying this one foot of baked soil - and baked to a light brown color. Overlying this is 4 inches of sand baked until it had turned to a bright red. Overlying this was 5 inches of charcoal and above this another 6 inches of sand and mould.

"On the circular altar we found some remnants of human bones that had been partially burned and nothing else. On the other altar, we found some human bones partially burned and the bones of different kinds of wild animals. Among the human bones found on the circular altar was a jaw bone with 4 teeth in fairly good condition.

"Very near the surface, but with the baked clay covering him, immediately under the circular altar, we found the skull and a portion of the skeleton of a man, his head to the west and lying on his face. We have this skull and part of the skull above the nasal bones are well preserved. Compared with the skull of an Indian found intrusively buried in Mound No. 6, we find two distinct types of 'Man'. This is all that we found in this mound.

"The ground on which the altars were composed had never been disturbed since the great fires had burned out. This is demonstrated to a certainty.

No digging could ever have been done without disturbing the layers of soil on the altars. It was noticeable that the burned sand of the altars was as dry as the dust that blows in the street, while when we came to the original soil which had not been burned and was under the altars, we found was quite moist. The baked sand, the red burned ground, the charcoal were in each mound, as perfect as if placed there by the hands of a master mason. Remember, that this skull was lying under the red burned sand and charcoal and in the baked sand, and was surely placed there before the last fires went out, and so we have the skull of a MOUND BUILDER, or of the representative of some race of the age of the MOUND BUILDERS.

"Col. HOWARD, Miss AGGIE HOWARD, WILL McCLARREN, and Mr. SAM TOMS were present when this skull was taken out and are witnesses to these fact. They have aided me in all my work intelligently and faithfully and I thank them one and all.

"Mound No. 8 was in the road and is nearly obliterated. Col. HOWARD found it about 30 years ago, and in its center is a circle of stones about 4 feet in diameter, containing in its center about a bushel of charcoal and ashes. The stones are known as nigger-heads.

"In Mound No. 4, we found traces of fires, burned soil and charcoal, but at this moment, we have not disturbed further the under soil, except to satisfy ourselves that it had once contained an altar. We found the same in Mounds 10, 11, and 12.

"Mound No. 9, is located on the east side of the road. It is the one on which the fine sugar maple tree is growing. We dug down from the top center just deep enough to discover that the altar fire soil had not been disturbed; that it contained some human bones there also.

"Of mound No. 7, my notes show the following: Sand soil, light yellow sand, and about 18 inches from the surface, we found the longest thigh bones yet discovered. No traces of a fire here, and the bones crumpled when exposed to the air. And highest in this mound, a skeleton with his head to the north, lying on his back with his limbs extended, and lying near him, we found skeleton No. 3, his head to the east and he was lying on his face. Both these were of large men, whose bones crumpled and could not be preserved, and their teeth were perfect.

"We entered Mound No. 6 from the south. Soon after we commenced work here we discovered that the soil of this part of the mound had been disturbed. After digging about 10 feet to the north, and about 14 inches below the surface, we found an iron tomahawk of an English make. Close by we found a skull and part of the skeleton of an Indian, lying on his side, with his feet to the south. His arms were extended to the tomahawk. Going west of this spot, we came to land which had not been disturbed. Here we found an altar 8 ft. and 7 inches in diameter, and round. We cut the dirt away from this and cleared the mound from the top and save a portion that had been torn off by the digger early in the morning, we found the altar as it stood when the last fires went out many centuries ago. This altar had upon it the bones of partially burned animals and humans. We found amny pieces of human skulls both of grown people and of children; parts of the bones of the arm and lower lings; the hip-bone, ball and socket of a child, most of them charred; some of the bones having a bluish tint; and the charred bones of many animals, all in the red burned sand on the altar. This altar was almost level on the top. It was built up, commencing at the bottom as follows: yellow sand of about 18 inches but fire had burned the life out of this; then soil burned red about 4 inches; and sand and mould 6 inches.

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"This is the end of our investigations at this writing. Before this is published, I hope to go through with the work. According to the estimates of the most conservative, the works of the MOUND BUILDERS of the United States are at least 1,000 years old. Many put them at a much earlier date.

"When we uncovered the altar in Mound No. 6, and exposed it to view, we had before us the sacrificial altar of a great, lost, and powerful people. We saw it as they must have seen it some 10 centuries ago, when they covered their fires forever. It told us much, yet it tells us nothing. We know now they burned human beings, and they burned animals. Was it cremation? Hardly, because it was not complete. Was it sacrificial? Probably. But to what Deity? Alas, we may never know, Who were these people and where did they go? What caused the destruction of the Mound Builders and what race succeeded them? And a thousand years from now who will follow and succeed us? We know people occupied this land in Fulton County before the Mound Builders, and they are extinct. There have been many of the red Indians, and they, too are almost extinct. In a few years., many folks will doubt that they ever existed.

"In a day, nature can wipe out the races of today, from the face of the earth and we will be succeeded by another race and people. Who can tell. What a mystery is life.

"We now call this land 'MOUND RIDGE', and MR. HOWARD consents to this report.

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Signed, W.H. HANDY