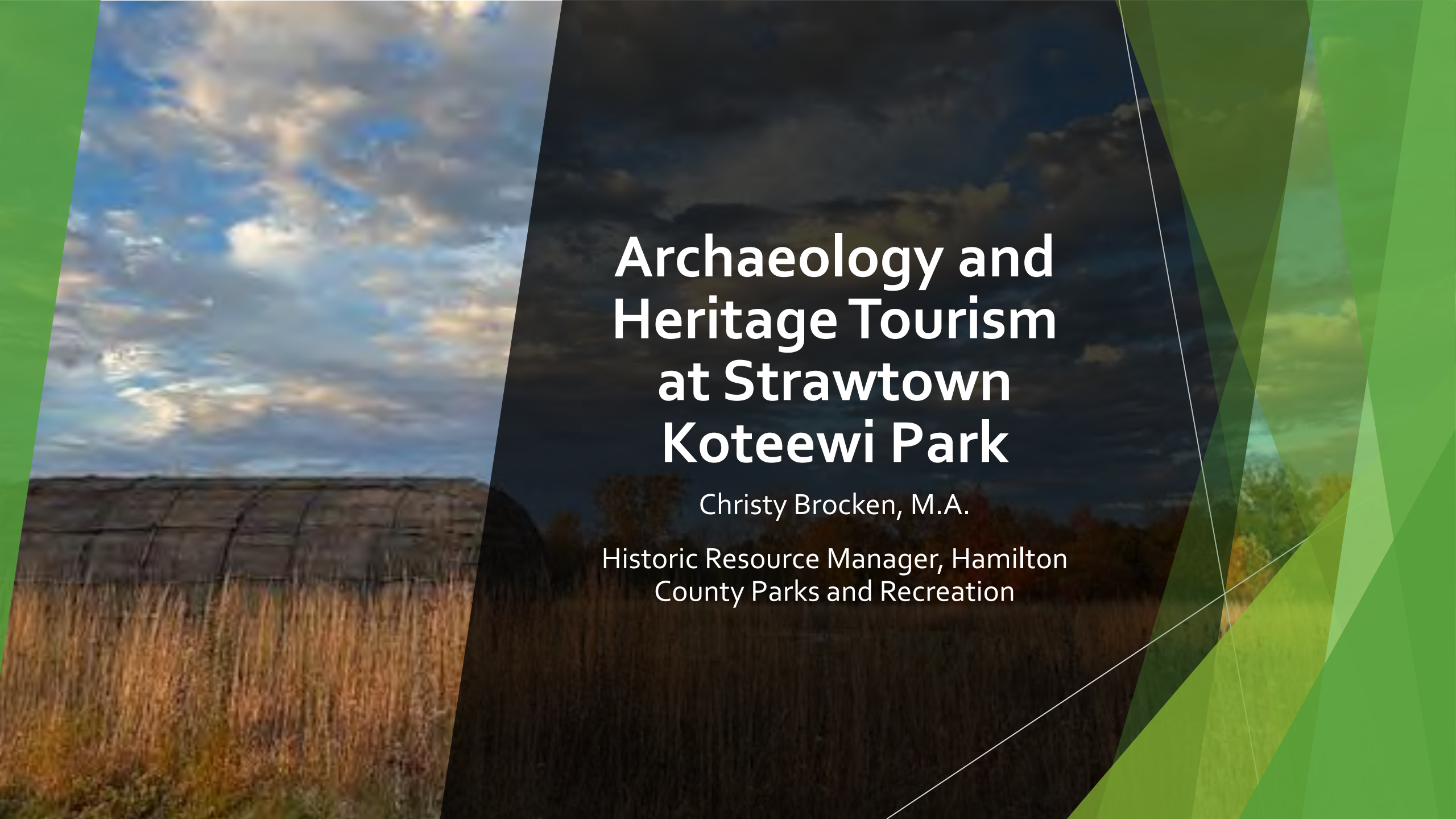


Archaeology and Heritage Tourism at Strawtown Koteewi Park

Christy Brocken, M.A.

Historic Resource Manager, Hamilton County Parks and Recreation



Hamilton County Parks and Recreation would like to acknowledge that lands currently managed and owned by Hamilton County Parks and Recreation are not only the ancestral homelands to people belonging to the Miami, Wea, Lenape, Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Shawnee, and other indigenous peoples and groups, but also continue to be important landscapes and spaces to indigenous peoples today. We acknowledge the forced removal of many indigenous peoples and celebrate their efforts to reclaim, strengthen, and build community. It is the hope of Hamilton County Parks and Recreation that we cultivate compassion and respect of contemporary and historical indigenous lifeways and that the lands currently in our care are spaces that feel welcome to all indigenous people. We are especially grateful for the continued interest and guidance from Tribal Nations such as the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma.

Why Do People Visit Archaeological Heritage Sites?



Cliff Palace, Mesa Verde photo taken 2026

Possible Reasons

- Deeper sense of their own place in time/history
- Learn about past cultures
- Understand the bigger picture
- Seeing the actual space/landscape allows for a multi sensory connection to the past and to an understanding of contemporary cultures
- Learning about the everyday lifeways of "ordinary" people – ones left out of the history books

And Also:

- Some people have no idea why they are there
- Some visit misguided reasons, i.e. looking other worldly connections

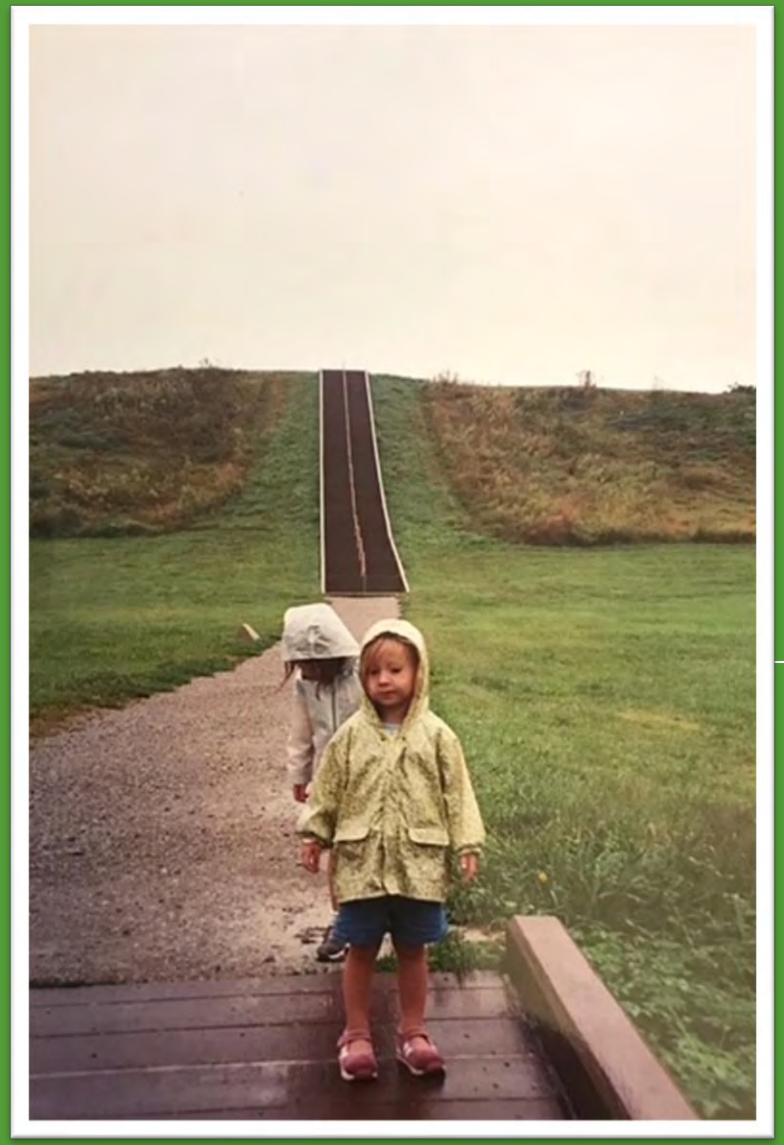


Canyons of the Ancients National Monument, photo taken 2026



Bandelier National Monument, photo take 2023

In addition to managing archaeological sites, I also travel to archaeological heritage sites. Throughout the years, I have shared this love with my family.



Monks Mound, Cahokia photo taken 2006

ARE WE GOING TO LOOK AT ANOTHER PILE OF DIRT?

Yes, yes, we are!

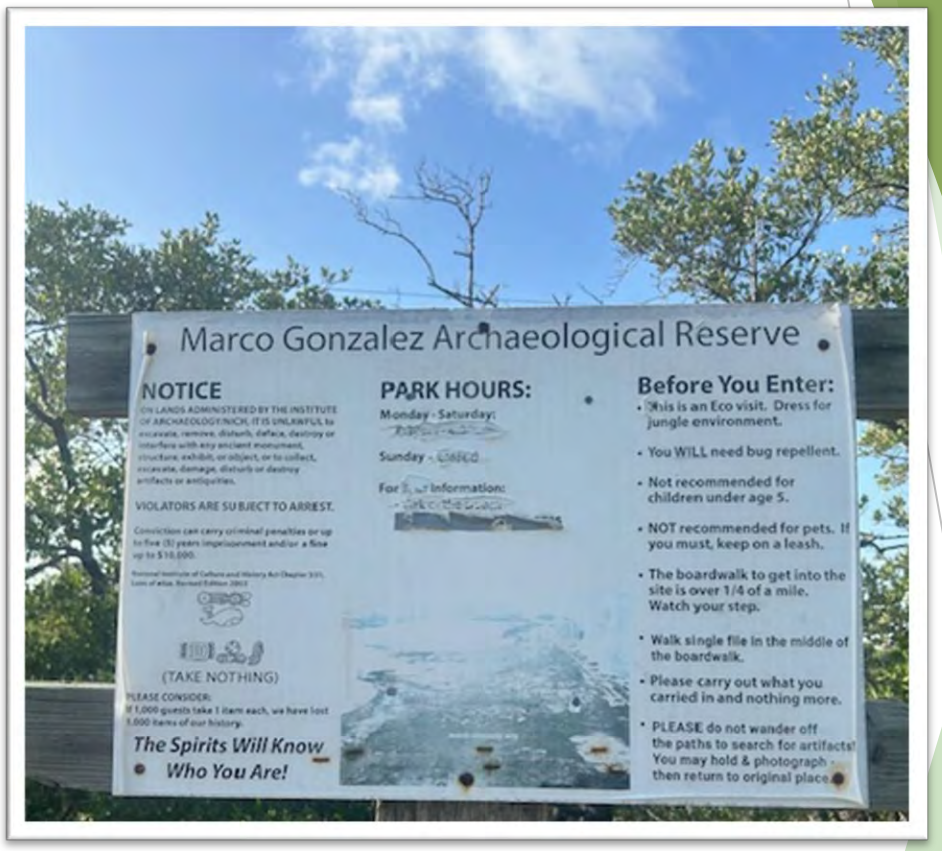
Some Archaeological Sites I Have Visited with Family



Bandelier National Monument, photo taken 2023

- Moundville
- Serpent Mound
- Grave Creek Mound
- Fort Ancient
- Hopewell
- Seip
- Octagon
- Great Circle
- Hopeton
- Cahokia
- Angel Mounds
- Mounds State Park
- Lamanai
- Mesa Verde
- Lowry Ruins
- Jamestown Rediscovery
- Monticello
- Bandelier
- Fort Walton Mound
- Colonial Michilimackinac
- Gills Rock
- Marco Gonzalez Maya Archaeological Reserve
- Ketapithacanuk
- And More!





Maro Gonzalez Archaeological Reserve, photos take 2025

Not all sites are easy to get to; in fact, most aren't. Often you must make effort to visit them

Some People are Just There for the Party!





Each year, millions of travelers visit America's historic places. The National Trust for Historic Preservation defines heritage tourism as "traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past and present."

https://www.achp.gov/heritage_tourism

- Archaeological site tourism is part of a broader context
- We all have the similar types of visitors
- They visit for similar although varied reasons
- We even have the partiers.



Lamanai Archaeological Park, photo taken 2025

STRAWTOWN KOTEEWI PARK

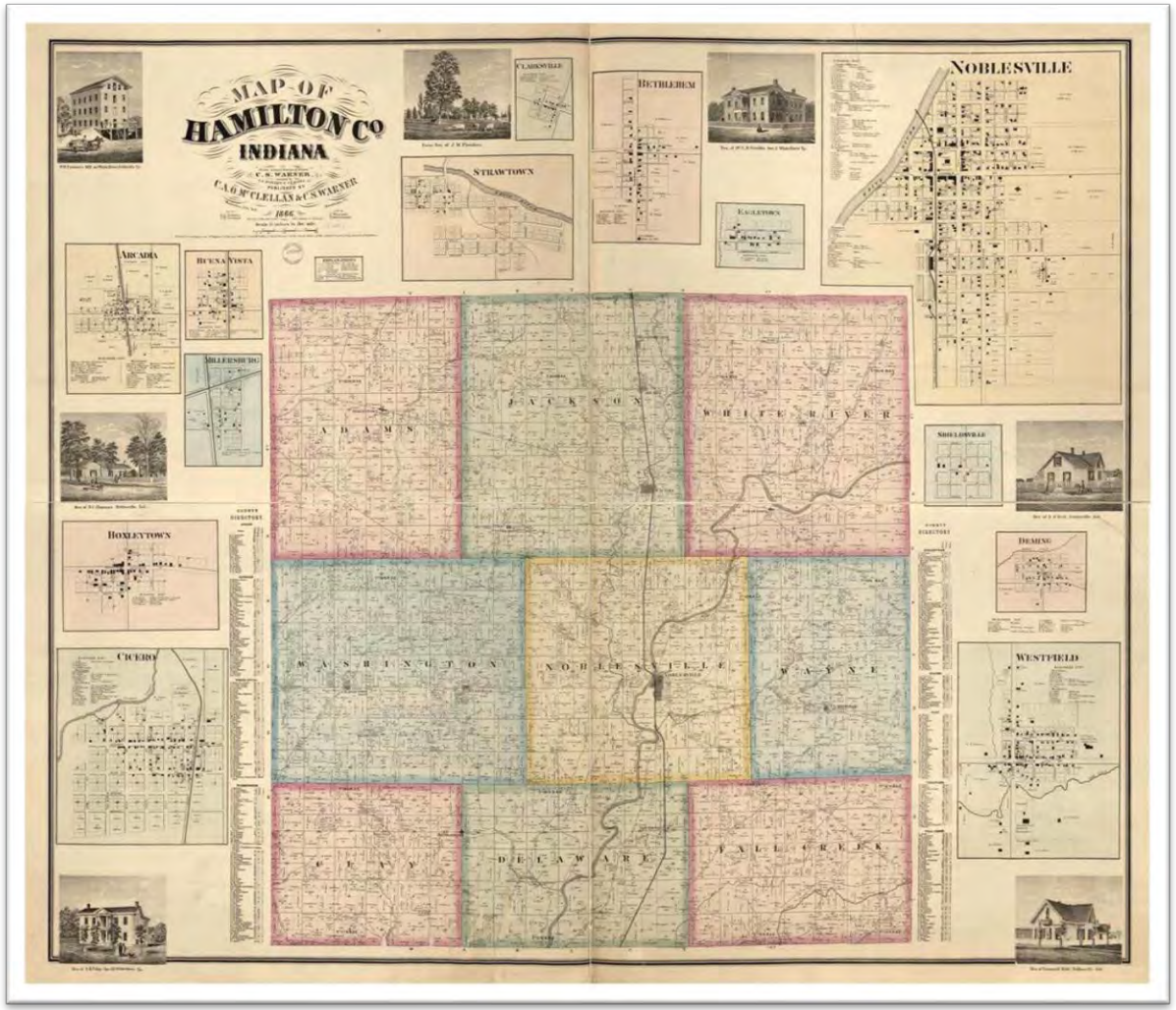
"Very interesting display of Native American housing. Expected a mound."
4 stars – Google review



- Park now totals 810 acres, making it the largest park in the county
- 400 acres of restored prairie
- Museum Center
  Taylor Center of Natural History
- 10 miles of multipurpose trails
- Adventure area, which includes archery, guided horseback trail rides, an ariel ropes course and a snow tubing hill
- Recreational lake
- Historic barn built in 1898
- White River Campground
- 3 historic steel truss bridges

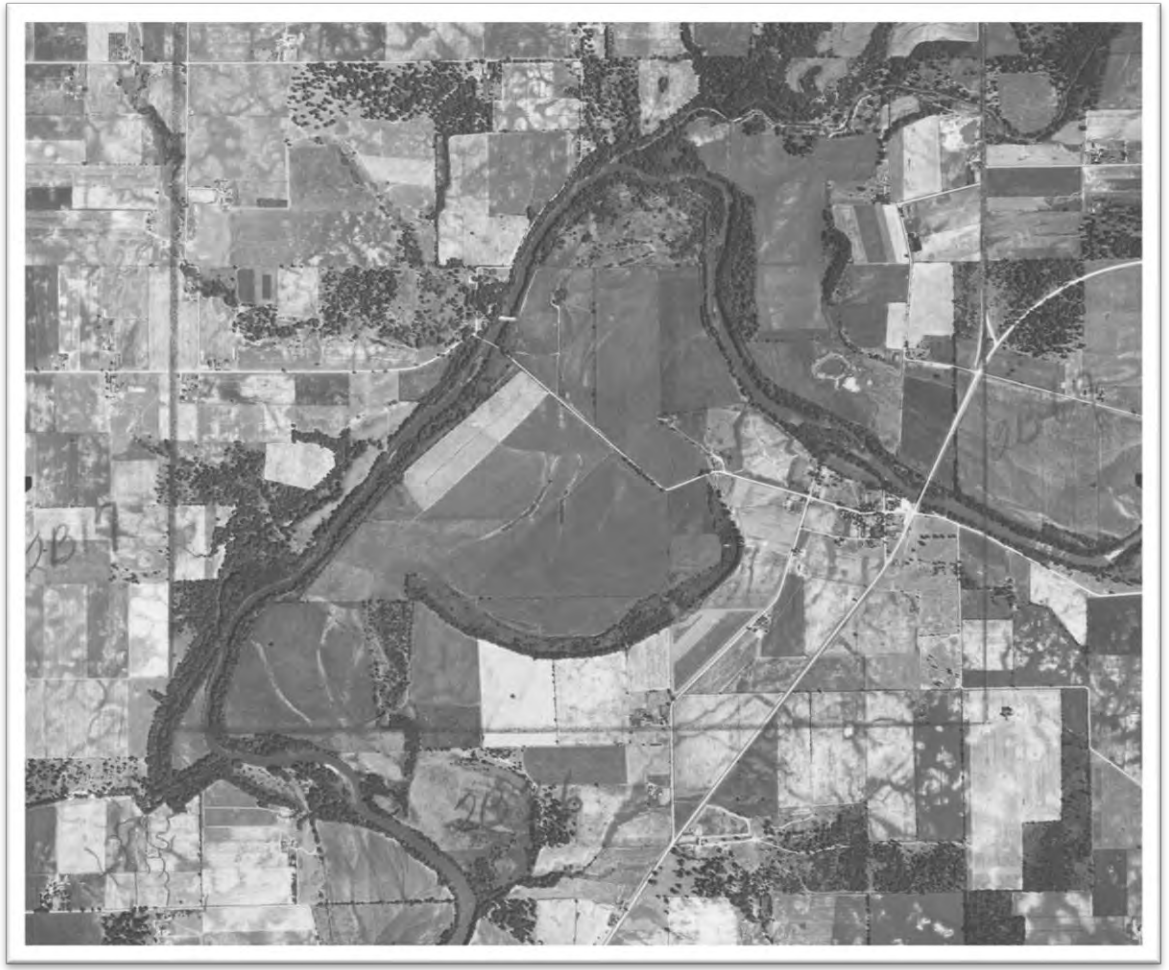


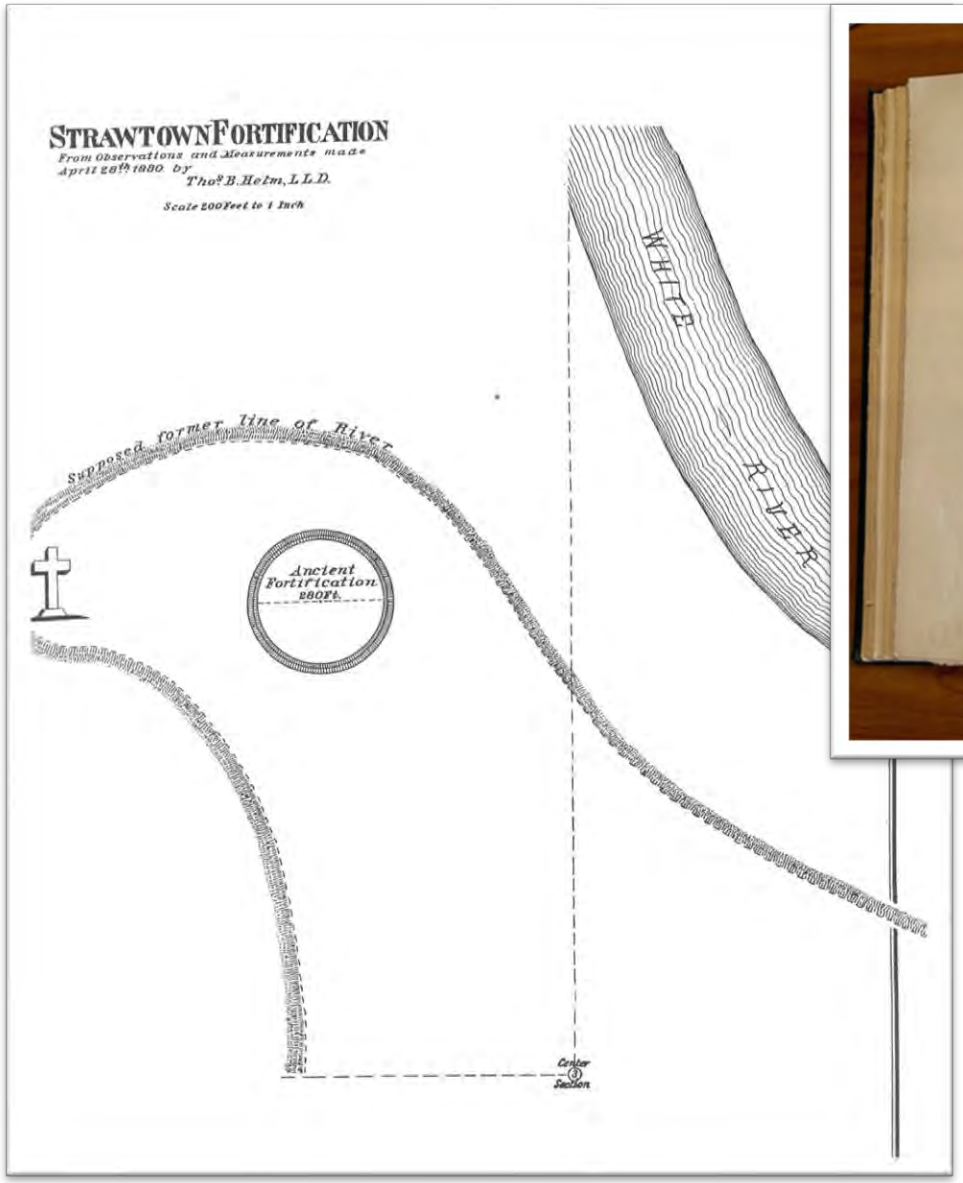
- 810 acres
- 136 archaeological sites
- 2 villages sites
- 4 Sites National Register


MAP OF
HAMILTON Co
INDIANA
C. S. WARNER
C.A. McCLELLAN & C.S. WARNER
1866
CLARKSVILLE
BETHLEHEM
STRAWTOWN
EAGLETOWN
NOBLESVILLE
ARCADIA
BUENA VISTA
ADAMS
JACKSON
WHITE RIVER
SHOALSVILLE
BOXLEYTOWN
DEMING
CICERO
WASHINGTON
NOBLESVILLE
WAYNE
WESTFIELD
DELAWARE
FALL CREEK

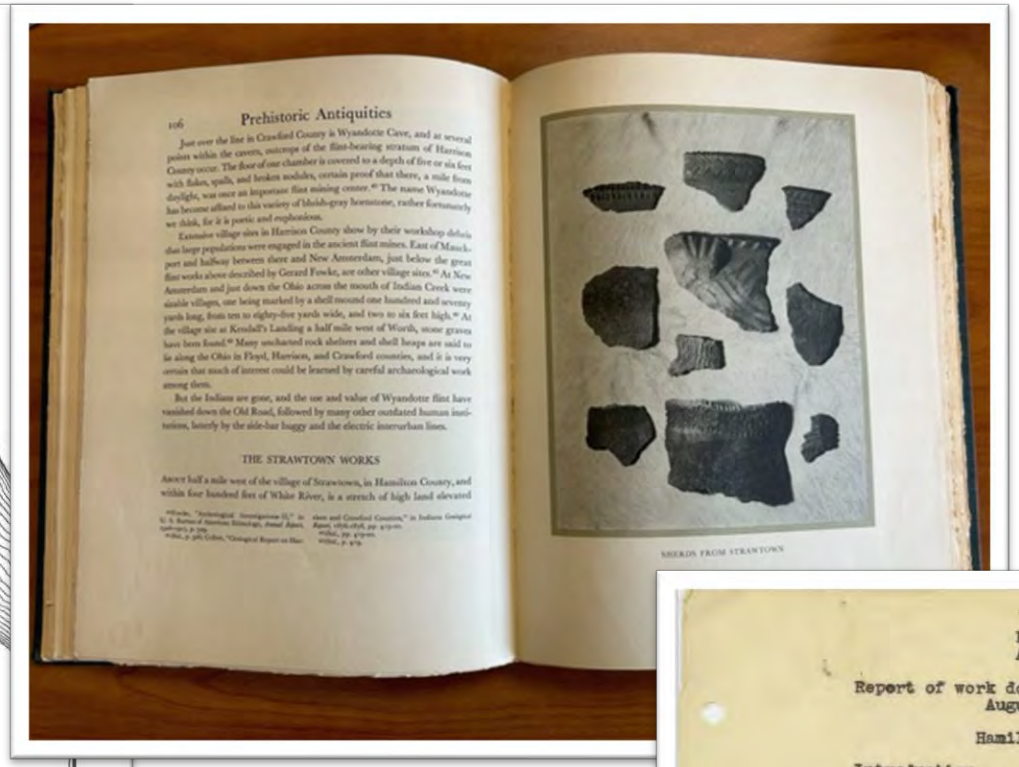
1866

1941

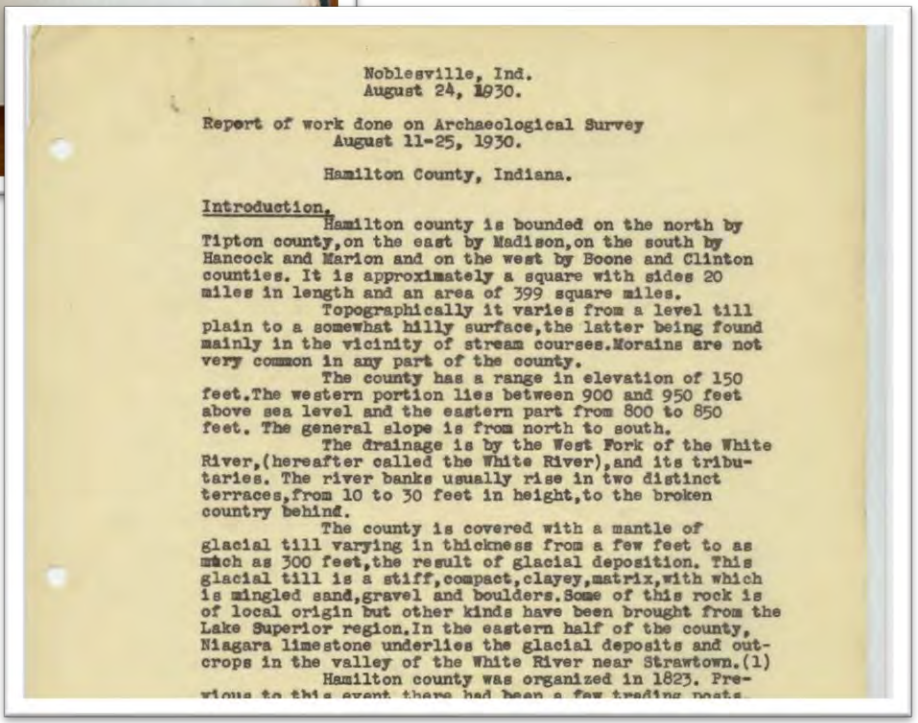




1880



1937



Noblesville, Ind.
August 24, 1930.

Report of work done on Archaeological Survey
August 11-25, 1930.

Hamilton County, Indiana.

Introduction.

Hamilton county is bounded on the north by Tipton county, on the east by Madison, on the south by Hancock and Marion and on the west by Boone and Clinton counties. It is approximately a square with sides 20 miles in length and an area of 399 square miles.

Topographically it varies from a level till plain to a somewhat hilly surface, the latter being found mainly in the vicinity of stream courses. Morains are not very common in any part of the county.

The county has a range in elevation of 150 feet. The western portion lies between 900 and 950 feet above sea level and the eastern part from 800 to 850 feet. The general slope is from north to south.

The drainage is by the West Fork of the White River, (hereafter called the White River), and its tributaries. The river banks usually rise in two distinct terraces, from 10 to 30 feet in height, to the broken country behind.

The county is covered with a mantle of glacial till varying in thickness from a few feet to as much as 300 feet, the result of glacial deposition. This glacial till is a stiff, compact, clayey, matrix, with which is mingled sand, gravel and boulders. Some of this rock is of local origin but other kinds have been brought from the Lake Superior region. In the eastern half of the county, Niagara limestone underlies the glacial deposits and outcrops in the valley of the White River near Strawtown. (1)

Hamilton county was organized in 1823. Pre-

1930

CONNECTING WITH VISITORS

It is So Much More Than a Pile of Dirt

INTERPRETING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES

With Archaeological Data



The Artifacts Help Share the Story





Plants and Plant Domestication





The Story of Things That Don't Preserve



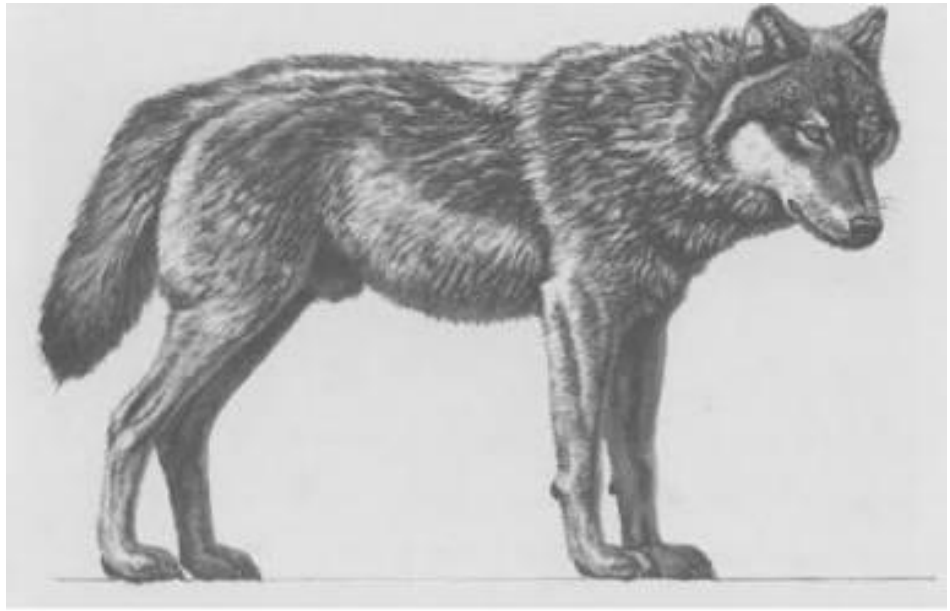
The Story of Migration and Change





Northern Harrier



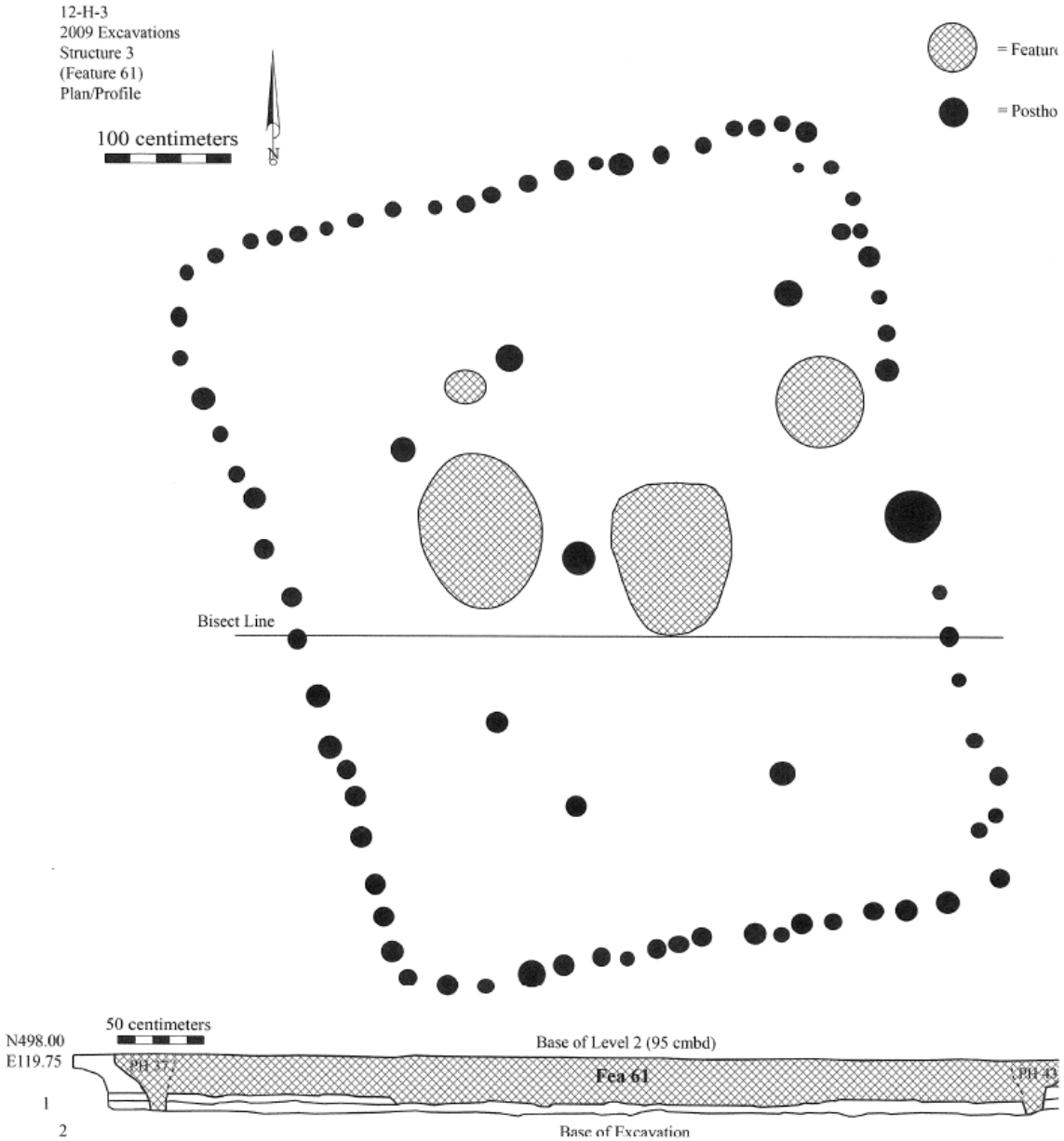


An ecosystem that has remained similar and of animals that once called this place.



KOTEEWI TRACE

Bringing the Archaeology Above Ground


12-H-3
2009 Excavations
Structure 3
(Feature 61)
Plan/Profile
100 centimeters
N
= Featur
= Postho
Bisect Line
50 centimeters
N498.00
E119.75
Base of Level 2 (95 cmbd)
PH 37
Fea 61
PH 43
1
2
Base of Excavation








83
2010 Block Excavations
iew
2 meters
N
= Soil Zone
= Confirmed Posthole
= Possible Posthole
= Bioturbation





Mock Archaeological Excavation
Learn about the science and methodology of archaeology

WHOSE HERITAGE ARE WE SHARING?

STRAWTOWN KOTEEWI PARK HAS MEANING FOR SO MANY PEOPLE

THESE SITES BECOME PART OF THE LOCAL FABRIC EVEN SPINNING INTO MYTHOLOGY

An Important Place for So Many

Local People - Early histories of Strawtown Cloe Morris

School Children

Hamilton County, In

Archaeologists

Park Depatment

Odd associations – giants, Vikings, "other worldly alignments," even bigfoot

Others who just enjoy the beautiful landscape – birders, hikers, horse back riders, river explorers, native plant people, nature lovers, etc. the list goes one

I would say the park has meaning for all of these groups, but it is not their heritage we are sharing

The Heritage we are Sharing Belongs to the Indigenous People Living Today



"Nothing About Us Without Us"



Program with Native American Partners

Reach out to local Federally Recognized tribal groups

Build Tribal Relationships

Be patient – they are busy! It is your project and your timeline. They are juggling a lot.

We might be the landowners, or the caretakers of the artifacts, but it's a partnership



This Takes Time



MULTIPLE WAYS TO ENGAGE THE PUBLIC

Multiple Ways to Learn

Visit the Actual Site

Monthly Tours
Every Field Trip



Monthly Tours

- Second Saturday of Each Month
- Fourth Sunday of Each Month



Field Trip Stations

Details in the Dirt	• The Science of Archaeology
River Resources	• How the White River was utilized by past residences
Atlatl	• Hands on spear with an atlatl
Pottery Puzzle	• Pottery uses, construction, and interpretation
Nature Hike	• Learn about plants of the prairie and how they were used
Turtle Talk	• Artifacts and stories relating to turtles

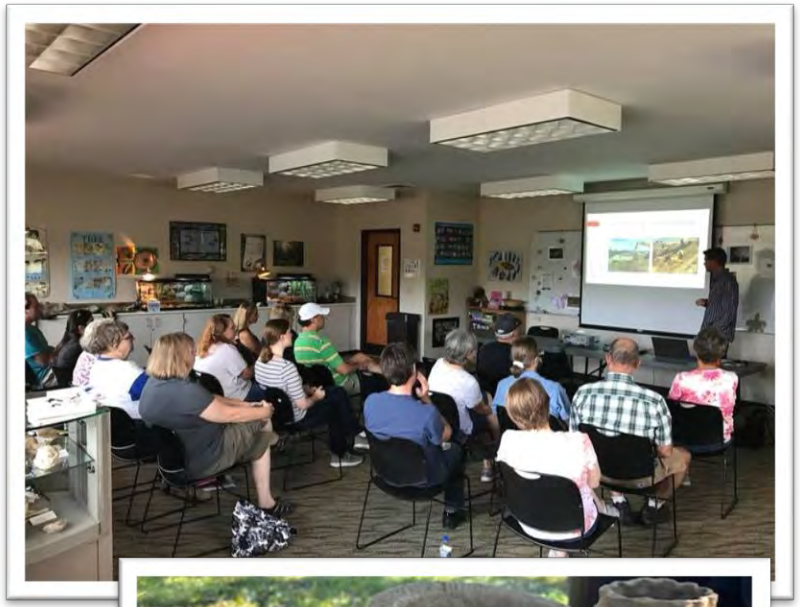




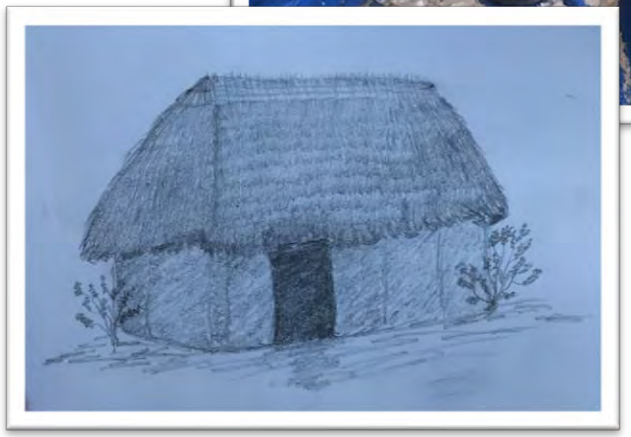
















Programs

Happy 10th Birthday, Koteewi Trace!



Thank You!

Christy Brocken

Historic Resource Manager

Hamilton County Parks and Recreation

Christy.brocken@hamiltoncounty.in.gov

317-922-6316








J.A.
Mar.11.1814
Feb.10.1892
MATILDA
His Wife
Aged 3-?yrs.
ANGEL

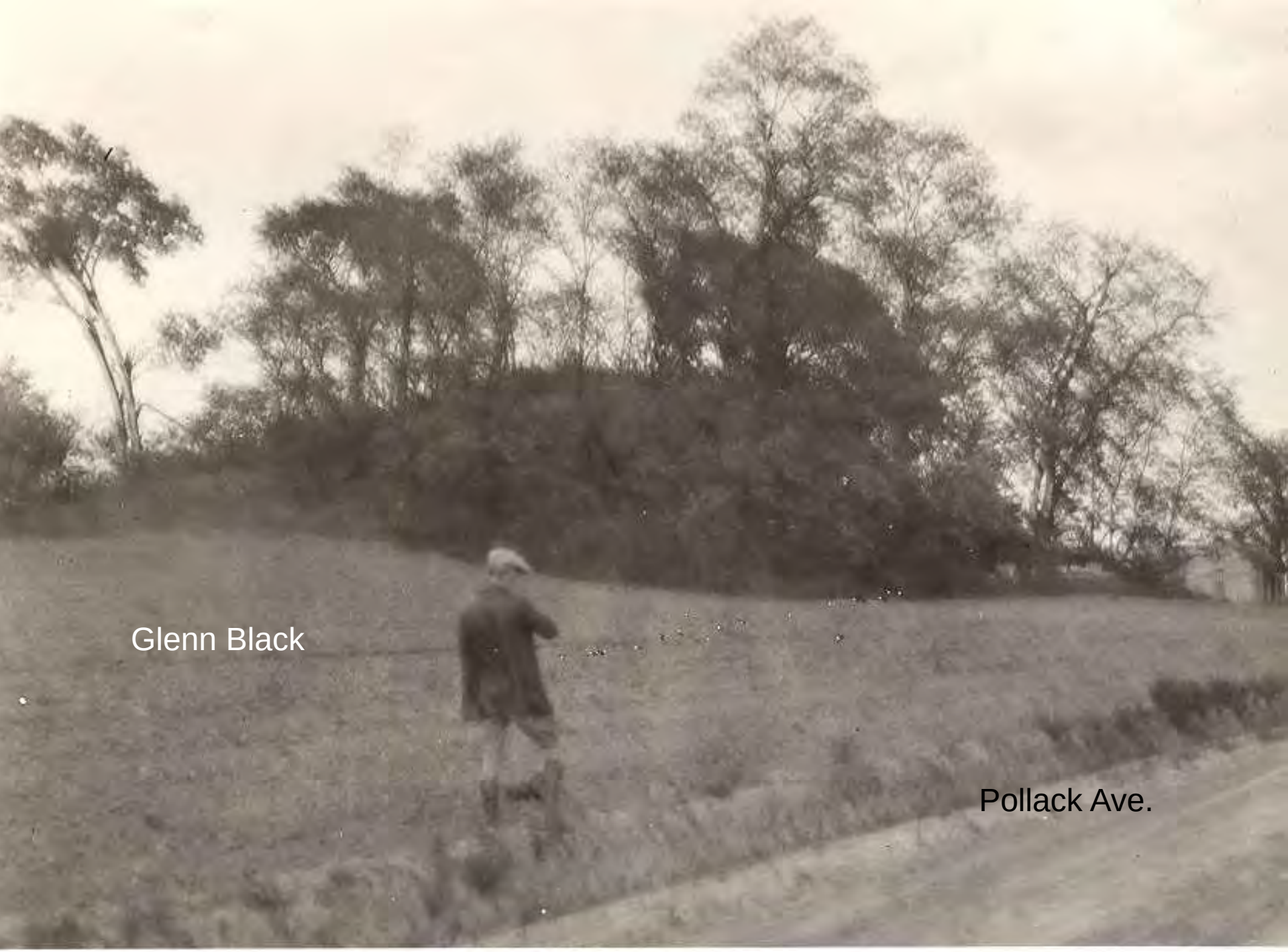


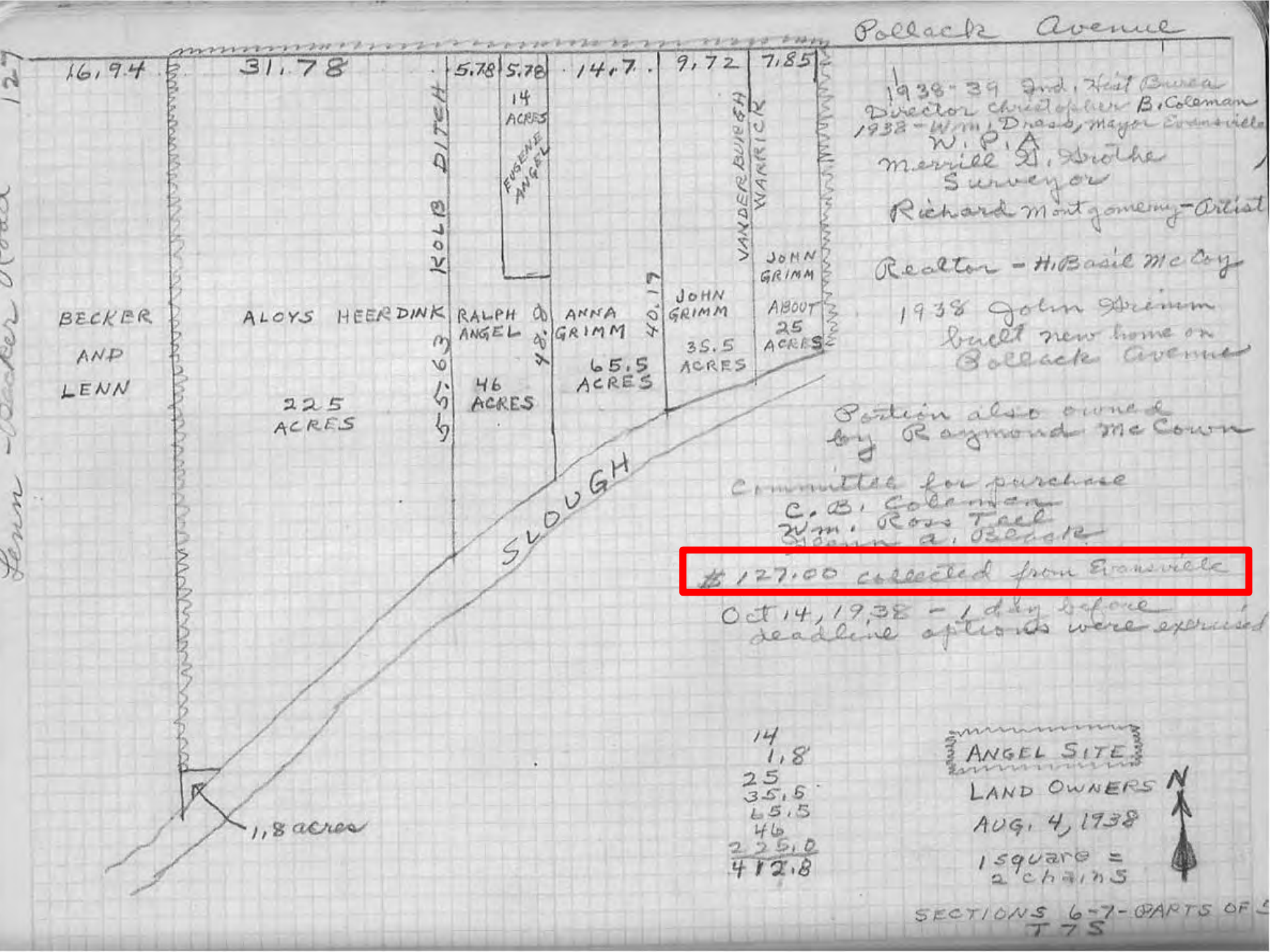
Glenn A. Black



Eli Lilly


William K. Moorehead
Glenn Black


Glenn Black
Pollack Ave.

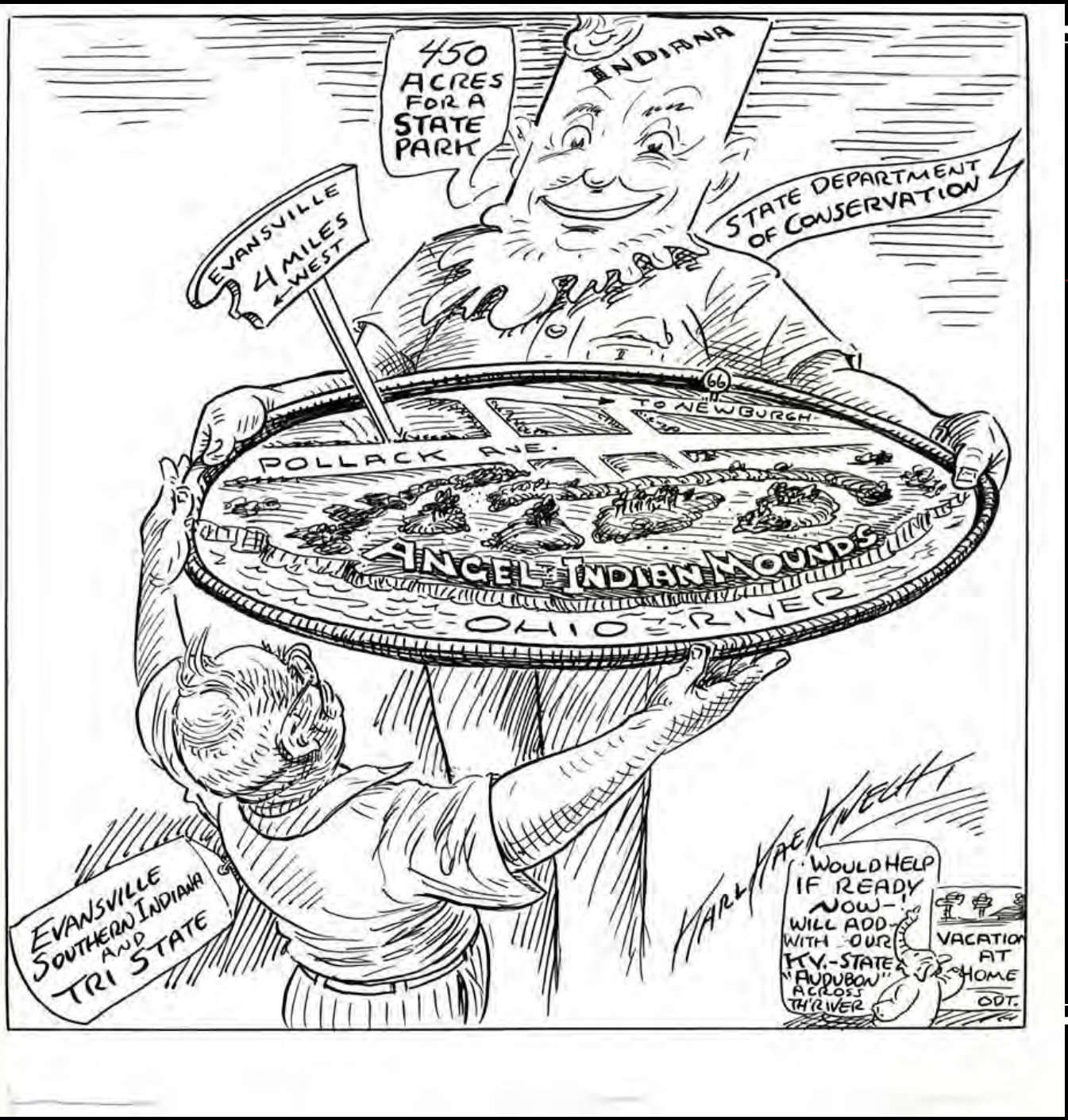

Pollack Avenue
16.94
31.78
5.78
5.78
14.7
9.72
7.85
KOLB DITCH
14 ACRES
EUGENE ANGEL
VANDERBURGH WARRICK
JOHN GRIMM
ABOUT 25 ACRES
BECKER AND LENN
225 ACRES
ALOYS HEERDINK
55.63
RALPH ANGEL
46 ACRES
49.8
ANNA GRIMM
65.5 ACRES
40.17
JOHN GRIMM
35.5 ACRES
SLOUGH
1,8 acres
1938-39 2nd Heat Bureau
Director chief oliver B. Coleman
1938 - Wm. Drake, Mayor Evansville
W. P. A.
Merrill A. Brothe
Surveyor
Richard Montgomery - Artist
Realtor - H. Basil McCoy
1938 John Grimm built new home on Pollack Avenue
Portion also owned by Raymond McCown
Committee for purchase
C. B. Coleman
Wm. Ross Teel
Sidney A. Bedsole
$127.00 corrected from Evansville
Oct 14, 1938 - 1 day before deadline options were expired
14
1,8
25
35,5
65,5
46
225,0
412,8
ANGEL SITE
LAND OWNERS
AUG. 4, 1938
1 square = 2 chains
N
SECTIONS 6-7- PARTS OF
T 7 S


★★USA★★
WORK
PROGRAM
WPA








450 ACRES FOR A STATE PARK
INDIANA
EVANSVILLE 4 MILES WEST
STATE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION
66
TO NEWBURGH
POLLACK AVE.
ANGEL INDIAN MOUNDS
OHIO RIVER
EVANSVILLE SOUTHERN INDIANA AND TRI STATE
WOULD HELP IF READY NOW- WILL ADD- WITH OUR K.Y.-STATE "AUDUBON" ACROSS TH'RIVER
VACATION AT HOME
ODT.



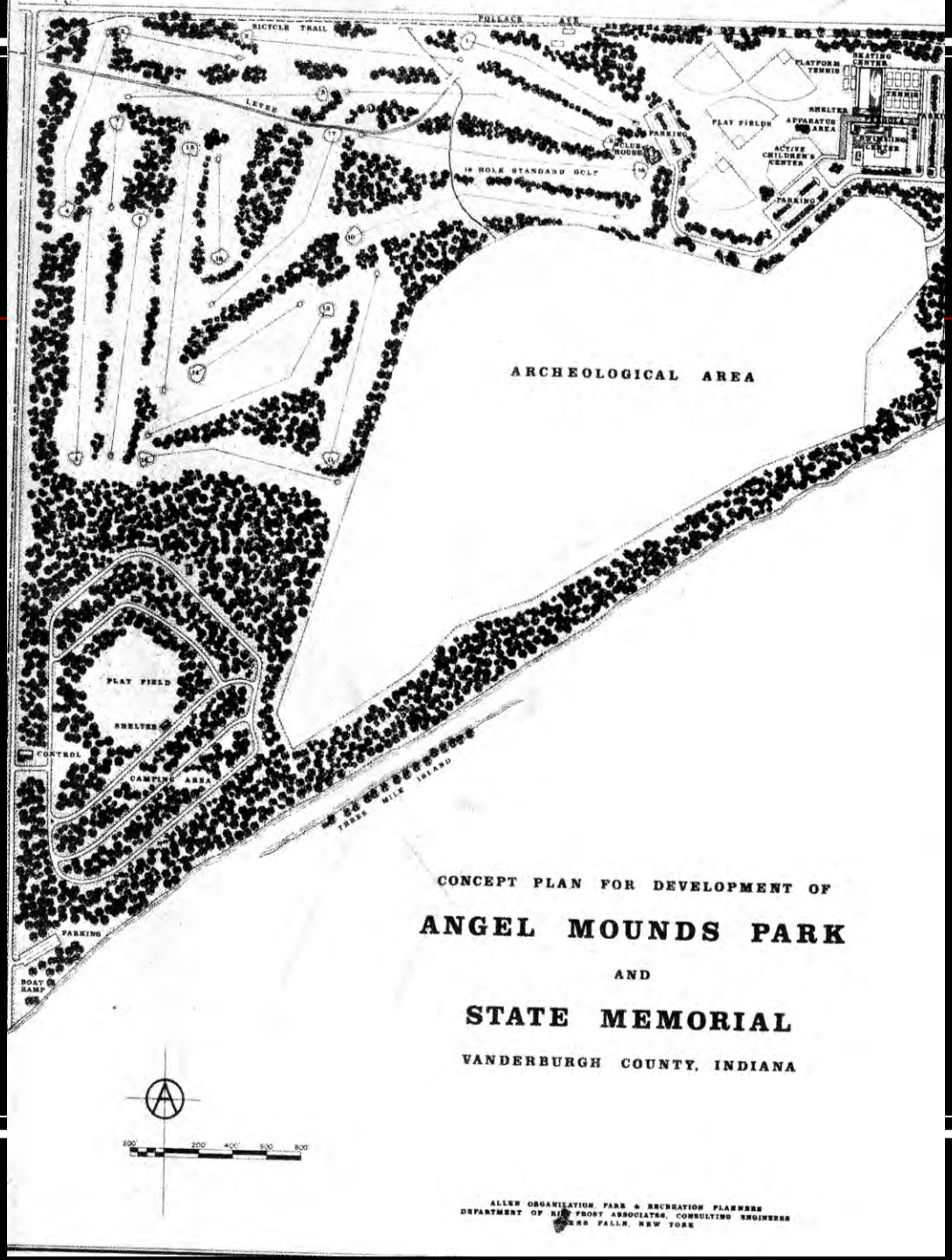
Exhibits in Barracks











CONCEPT PLAN FOR DEVELOPMENT OF

ANGEL MOUNDS PARK

AND

STATE MEMORIAL

VANDERBURGH COUNTY, INDIANA

ALLEN ORGANIZATION, PARK & RECREATION PLANNERS
DEPARTMENT OF [illegible] FROST ASSOCIATES, CONSULTING ENGINEERS
[illegible] FALLS, NEW YORK


ANGEL MOUNDS
HAS BEEN DESIGNATED A
REGISTERED NATIONAL
HISTORIC LANDMARK
UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE
HISTORIC SITES ACT OF AUGUST 21,1935
THIS SITE POSSESSES EXCEPTIONAL VALUE
IN COMMEMORATING AND ILLUSTRATING
THE HISTORY OF THE UNITED STATES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
1963


GLENN A. BLACK
1900 — 1964






CAT





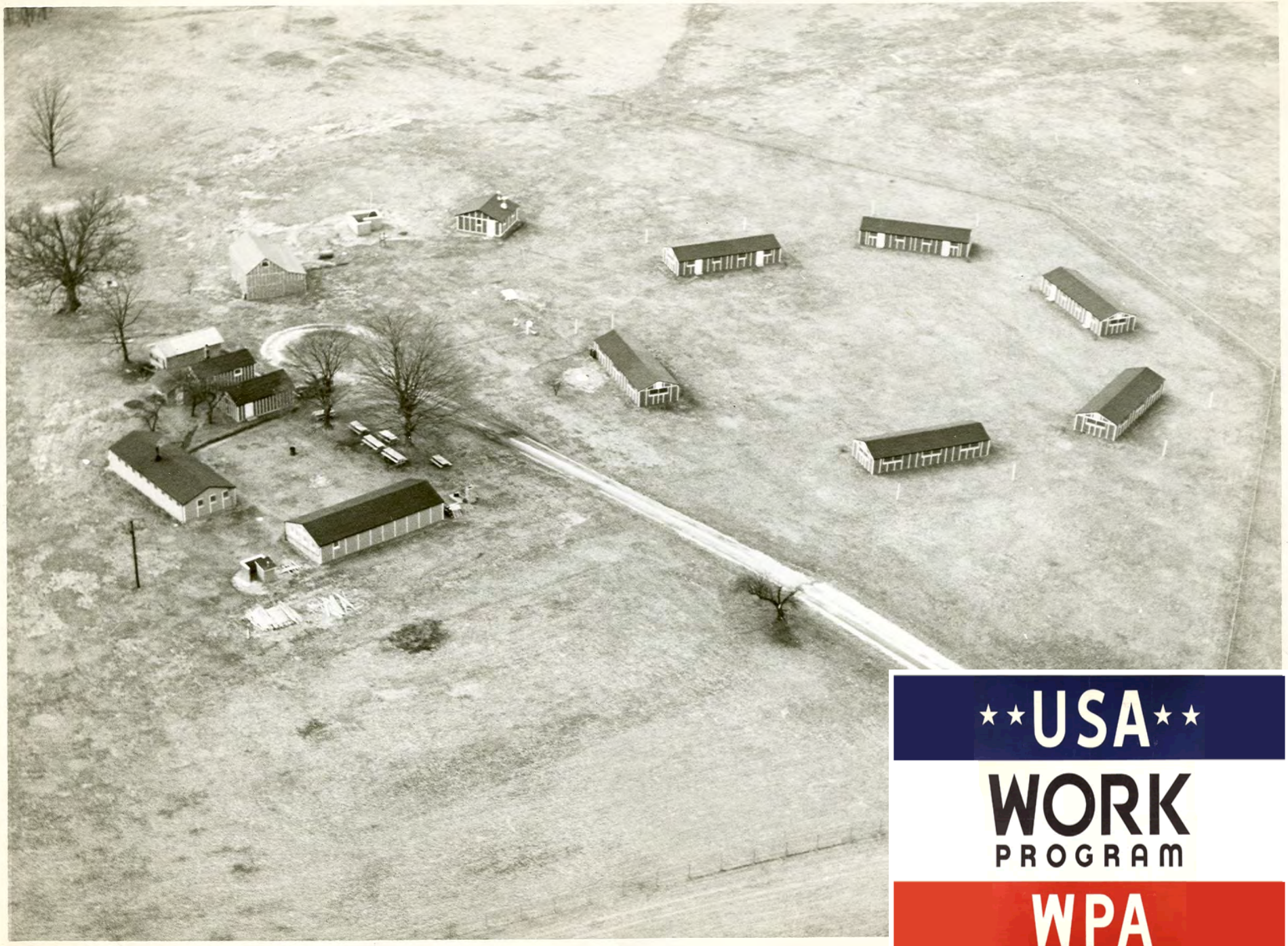






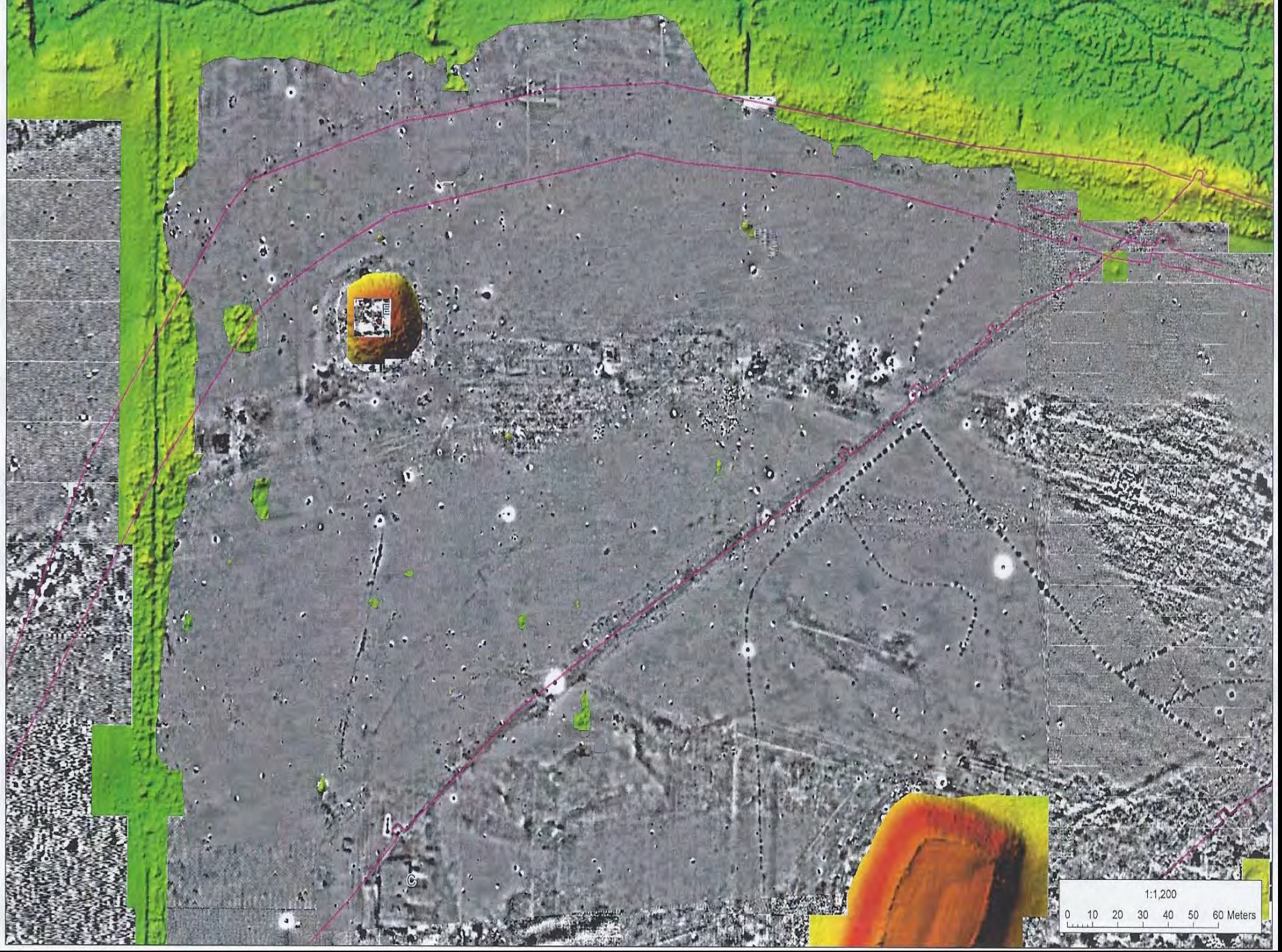


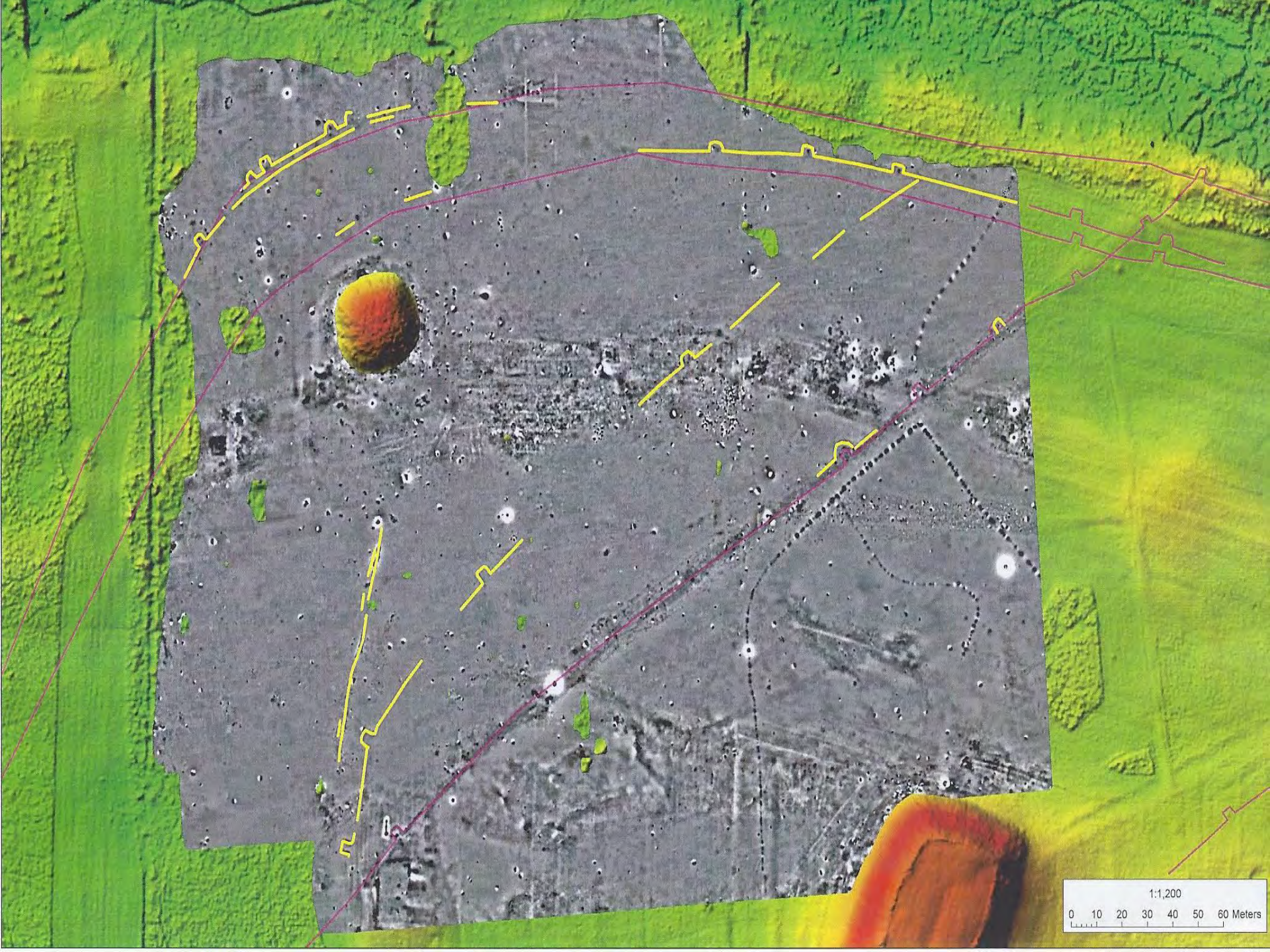


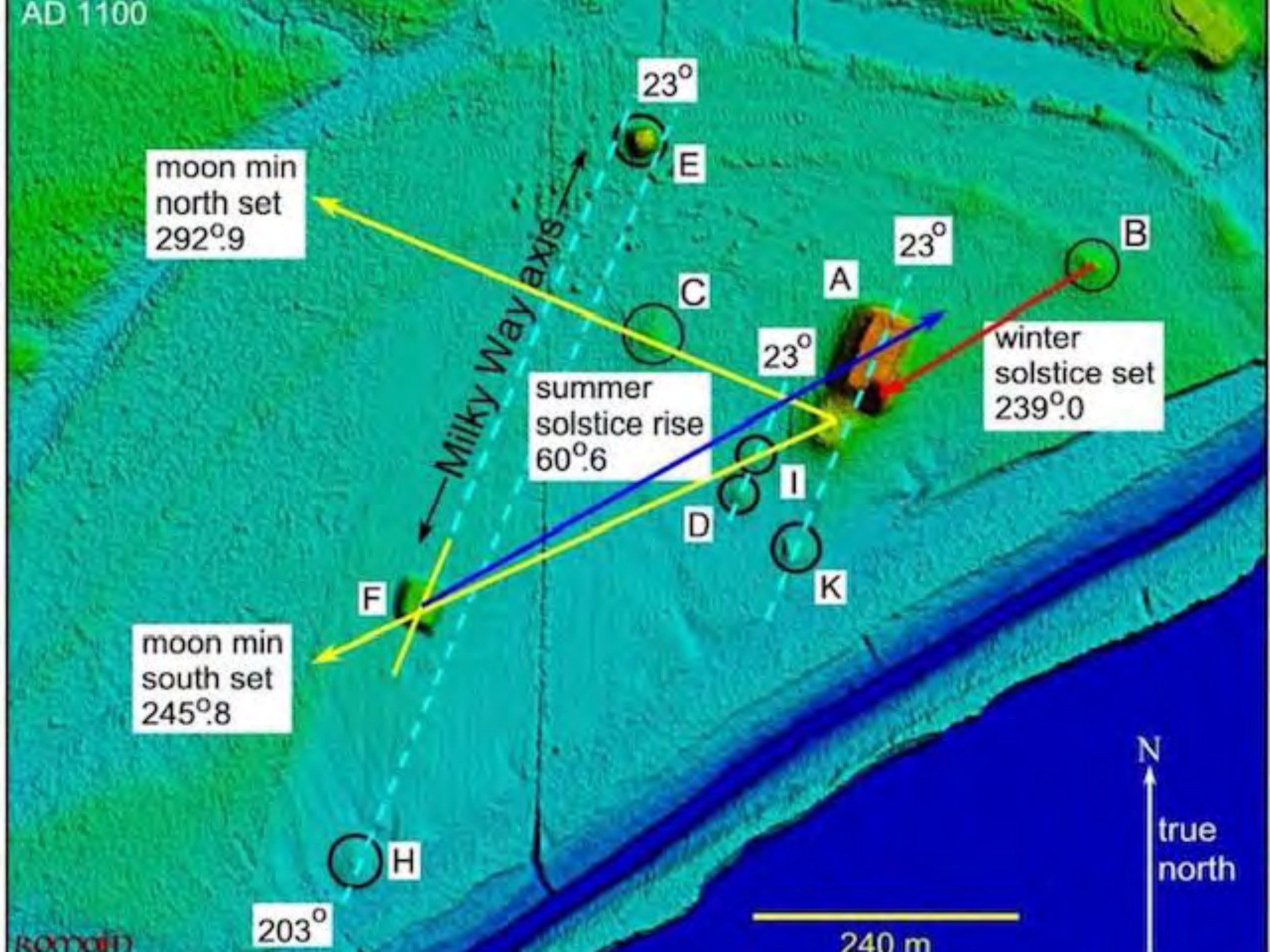

★★USA★★
WORK
PROGRAM
WPA






1:1,200
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 Meters


1:1,200
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 Meters


AD 1100
23°
E
moon min
north set
292°.9
Milky Way axis
23°
B
A
C
23°
winter
solstice set
239°.0
summer
solstice rise
60°.6
I
D
K
F
moon min
south set
245°.8
H
203°
N
true
north
240 m
















EXPLORE
ANGEL MOUNDS
By 1200 A.D., the people living at Angel embraced technology, science, art, and politics to build one of the largest cities in the region. The city was abandoned by around 1450 A.D. but remains a sacred site to this day. It is a place imbued with the stories of the people who lived here many centuries ago, and the descendant nations who continue to have strong connections to this place.
Enlarged ceramic pottery fragment from Angel Woodpecker Design
FOOD AND FIBER
Food Preparation
Food & Fiber
Tap to Start


CARRIE WILSON


THE GENIUS OF IT ALL
ARROWHEADS
FOOD AND FIBER


Betty Gaedtke
Talon Silverhorn
Mound E
Mound I
Mound C
Mound B
Mound A
Mound K
Mound D
Mound F
Mound H
Mound L
Mound J
Touch the pottery piece to learn more.
ARCHAEOLOGY
helps us understand this site and gain insight to how the people lived.
Touch the trowel to learn more.


KATRINA MITTEN
Miami Tribe of Oklahoma
"I went to see the Angel artifact collection. There were a lot of snake items there. There were snakes on pots. There were snakes represented with the rattlesnake rattle beads. I grew up with snakes. My father was a herpetologist and a biology professor. There was also a small bead that had a face on it and it looked like my father. That was my inspiration."
Black wool bandolier bag with deer-hide lining and copper, shell, and colored glass beadwork. Designs referencing the sun and water are on the bag while a rattlesnake is wrapped around the strap. This piece was inspired by beads, effigies, and designs made by Angel artists.
Made by Katrina Mitten, Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, 2024
Angel Beads
Beads made by Angel artists, like these made of bone, shell, and ceramic, were also sewn into textiles like clothing and bags. These two ceramic beads here were made to replicate a rattlesnake rattle.
ANCESTRAL ECHOES THROU
TODAY'S VOIC
PHOTO RICHARD ZANE SMITH
LISTEN: The artist's own words








2025-04-12 09:06:33
EWEMA
4-12-2025
47.70 ft.

