

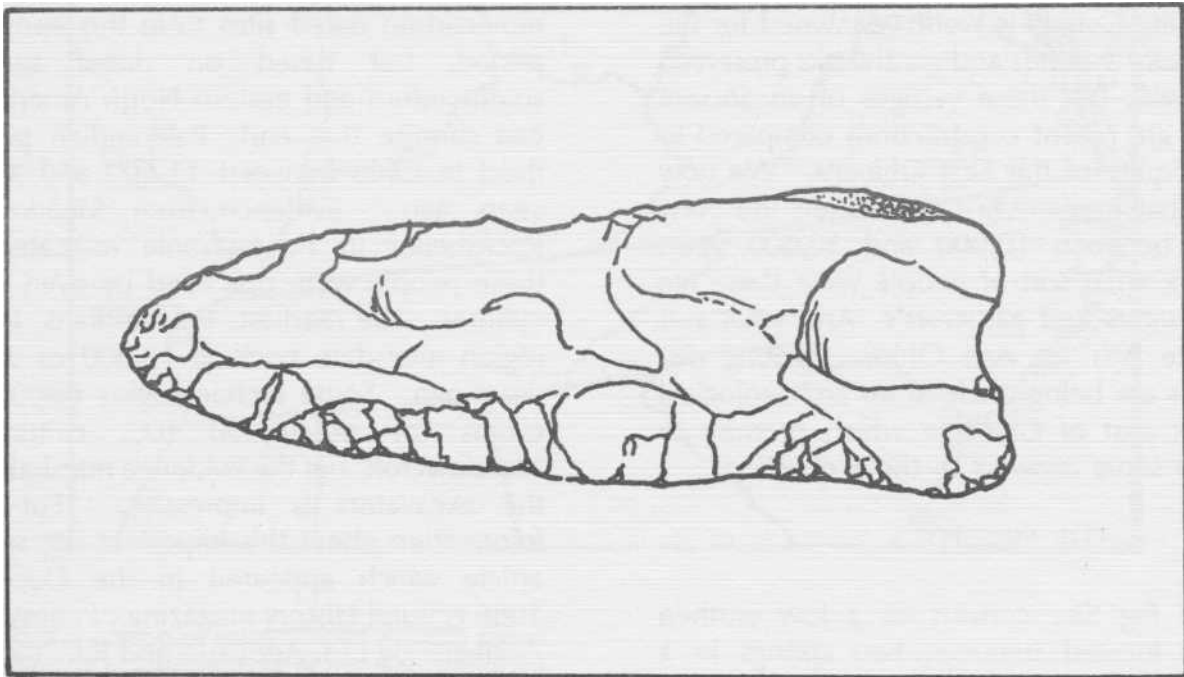
THE HISTORICAL TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE GRANVILLE, OHIO, HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume IV Number 1

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The First Ohioans: Licking County's Paleoindian Pioneers



THIS IS A SKETCH OF THE FLUTED SPEAR POINT FOUND AT THE PIG SITE NEAR GRANVILLE. IT WAS MADE AND USED BY THE FIRST OHIOANS. NOTE THE GROOVE, OR FLUTE, RUNNING UP FROM THE BASE OF THE POINT. NEWARK'S MOUNDBUILDERS WOULD HAVE REGARDED THIS AS AN ANTIQUE WEAPON.

It should come as no surprise to learn that the "First Ohioans" were not the buckskin clad Natty Bumppos who carried Western Civilization (and firearms) further west into the Northwest Territory. Everyone knows that the Indians were here first. But, too often, Native Americans are regarded merely as a part of the landscape our Euro-American ancestors inhabited. Popular mythology has portrayed them as generic savages, fearsome and terrible bogey-men with no humanity and no history. This is all wrong. The Native American peoples encountered by Leif Ericsson, Christopher Columbus, and the tidal wave of European, African, and Asian immigrants who followed, are the inheritors of a rich prehistoric legacy. Only recently have archaeologists begun to appreciate the depth and richness of that legacy.

Licking County is world-renowned for the spectacular mounds and earthworks preserved at Newark, but these vestiges of an ancient culture are recent constructions compared to the antiquity of the First Ohioans. We now know that humans first discovered the New World between 10,000 and 30,000 years ago. But what sort of people were these Ice Age "hunters and gatherers"? And what sort of place was Ice Age Ohio? Exciting discoveries are being made at an archaeological site just east of Granville which promise to provide some answers to these questions.

THE PIG SITE

The Pig Site consists of a low earthen mound located between two springs in a south-facing sheltered hollow. A team of archaeologists, geologists, and soil scientists from Denison University, Ohio State University, the Ohio Historical Society, and Bloomsburg University in Pennsylvania, along with the staff and volunteers from the local Licking County Archaeology and Landmarks Society, together are exploring Ohio's Ice Age world.

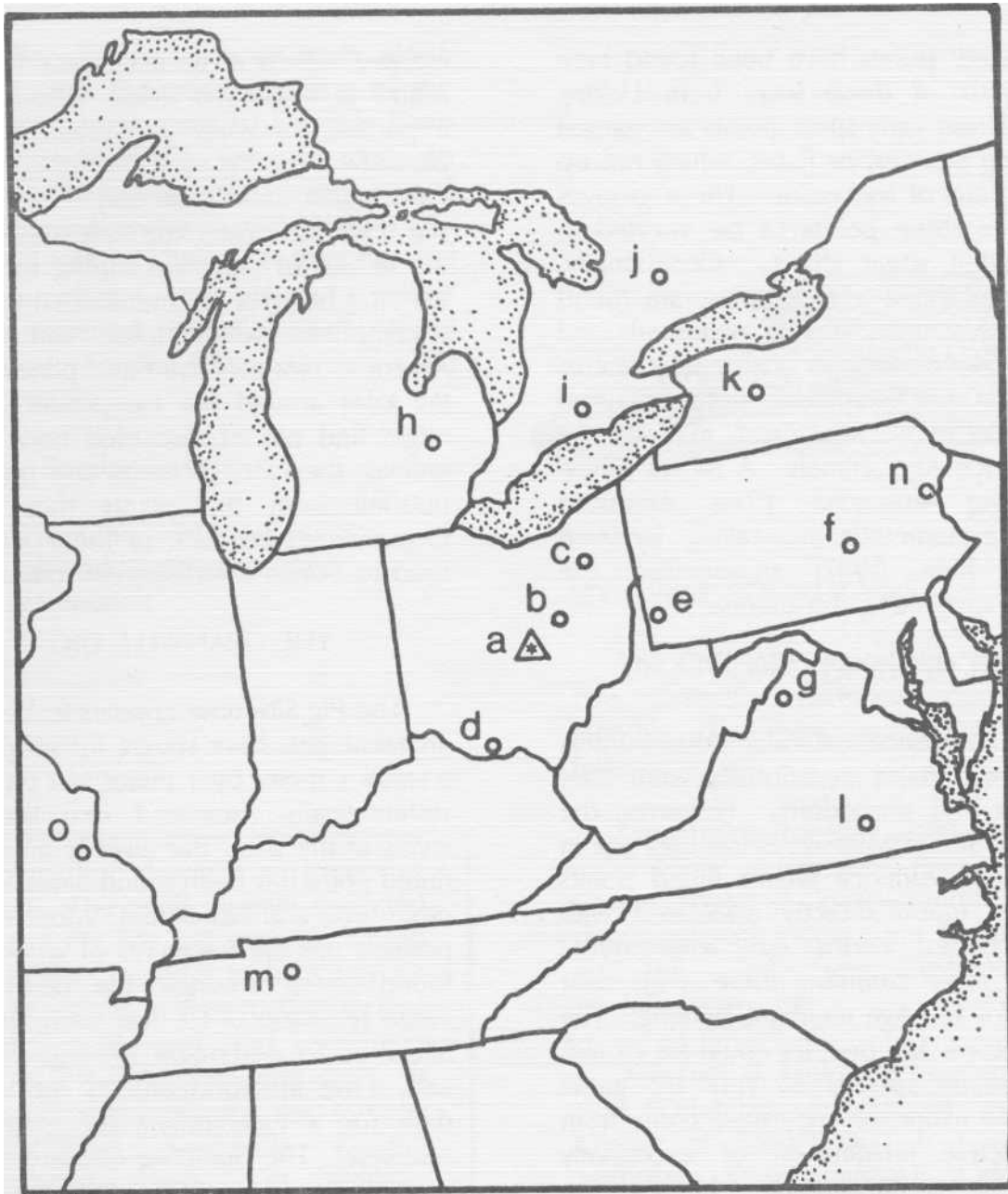
The discoveries at the Pig Site might appear, at first glance, unimpressive. They consist of two flint tools, a knife and a scraper, a few small flint chips, and several tiny chunks of charcoal. What makes this scant handful of material so important is that it was found buried several feet beneath the ground surface. This means that these artifacts have lain undisturbed since they were dropped by the people who made and used them. Moreover, the tools are characteristic of the first people we know to have lived in the New World: the prehistoric culture which archaeologists have termed "Paleoindians."

TEN THOUSAND YEARS AGO

We know very little about the Paleoindians. In Ohio we have no radiocarbon dated sites from this early time period, but based on dated sites in southwestern and eastern North America we can surmise that early Paleoindian peoples lived in Ohio between 11,500 and 10,500 years ago. Evidence from Meadowcroft Rockshelter in Pennsylvania indicates that these people were preceded by even earlier cultures. The earliest Paleoindians in this region may date back to 15,000 or 20,000 years ago. Some archaeologists dispute the claims for pre-10,000 B.C. cultures at Meadowcroft, but the evidence marshalled by the excavators is impressive. For more information about this important site see the article which appeared in the December 1986 Natural History magazine ("Pennsylvania Pioneers" by J.M. Adovasio and R.C. Carlisle).

"FLUTED" POINTS

Amateur archaeologists and relic collectors have found large numbers of Paleoindian spear points in Ohio. In fact, Ohio has more documented finds of Paleoindian artifacts than any other area of comparable size in America. More than one thousand of the



This map of a portion of eastern North America shows the Pig Site (a) in relation to 14 of the most significant Paleoindian sites in the midcontinent. The other sites are:

- b. Welling, OH
- c. Nobles Pond, OH
- d. Sandy Springs, OH
- e. Meadowcroft Rockshelter, PA
- f. Shoop, PA

- g. Thunderbird, VA
- h. Gainey, MI
- i. Crowfield, Ontario
- j. Udora, Ontario
- k. Lamb, NY
- l. Williamson, VA
- m. Wells Creek Crater, TN
- n. Shawnee-Minisink, PA
- o. Kimmswick, MO

typical "fluted" points have been found here and thirty-six of these were from Licking County. These early spear points are named for the long grooves, or flutes, which run up from the base of the point. These grooves allowed the stone points to be inserted in stout wooden spear shafts. Occasionally, these elegant stone age weapons are found lodged between the ribs of mammoth and mastodon skeletons and some investigators have argued that Paleoindian hunters caused the extinction of these and many other species of Ice Age animals. A recent article in Discover magazine ("The American Blitzkrieg: a mammoth undertaking" by Jared Diamond, June 1987) summarized the arguments supporting this theory.

RICH HUNTING LAND

There is evidence that Paleoindian hunters on the Great Plains occasionally went after mammoths and mastodons. However, the Kimmswick Site in Missouri is the only site in eastern North America where fluted points have been found directly associated with mastodon bones. Further east, where fluted points are more common, there is no clear evidence for Ice Age elephant hunting. The idea that Stone Age peoples could (or would) hunt so many species of very big game animals into extinction may have come from the overactive imagination of excessively macho male archaeologists. Indeed, the capacity (and appalling proclivity) for driving animals to extinction on such a vast scale seems peculiar to modern humans.

Because Licking County has produced such a large number of fluted points, archaeologists have concluded that Paleoindians must have found this to be a rich land. But the evidence is scattered and scanty. With few exceptions, all we have are

isolated reports of an occasional fluted point found in a plowed field. These finds are important, for when a number of them are plotted on a map of the county, patterns of Paleoindian land use may be discovered. But if we are ever going to learn more about the details of daily life during the Ice Age, we must uncover an undisturbed Paleoindian encampment where these earliest of the American pioneers lived and played and told tall tales around the camp fire. Here we might find bits of discarded bone from the animals they ate, or seeds and fragments of nutshell from the plants they gathered. Organic remains such as these also can be used to obtain a radiocarbon date.

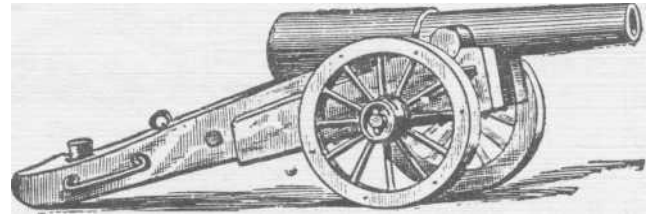
THE GRANVILLE DIG

The Pig Site now appears to be just what archaeologists have sought for so long. Only a small 1 meter by 1 meter test pit has been systematically excavated into the deepest levels of the site. But already an unfinished fluted point has been found along with a few other tools and bits of flint. Most importantly perhaps are the fragments of wood charcoal found laying amongst the flint chippage. These remnants of Ice Age camp fires should allow us to determine the age of the site and, if we are successful, to report the first date for a Paleoindian site in all of the Midwest. The Shawnee-Minisink site in far eastern Pennsylvania is the closest fluted point site which has been radiocarbon dated. It is approximately 10,600 years old. Other Paleoindian sites in Ohio, such as Welling, Coshocton County and Sandy Springs in Adams County, are important, but the archaeologists working at these sites have not, so far, turned up charcoal from Paleoindian campfires. This is why the samples uncovered at the Pig Site are so very important.

If you would like to read more about archaeology and the early peopling of the New World a good place to begin is Brian Fagan's recent book The Great Journey. In addition, Elizabeth Marshall Thomas' novel Reindeer Moon provides dazzling insights into the way of life of Ice Age hunting and gathering peoples. Her previous writings include an excellent nonfiction work on the Bushmen of South Africa entitled The Harmless People.

- Bradley T. Lepper

The Ohio Historical Society
Newark Earthworks State
Memorials



CIVIL WAR ROUNDTABLE

The Civil War Roundtable sponsored by The Granville Historical Society meets monthly. The next few meetings are as follows:

January 16, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., meeting at "D Room" of Denison's Physical Education Center. Topic: a) Continuation of Gettysburg discussion with video (Don Bonar); b) Show and Tell -- bring your Civil War artifacts, medals, letters, etc.

February 8, Thursday, combined meeting with Columbus Roundtable in Lancaster. Dinner at Shaw's and tour of Sherman birthplace. Kevin Bennett is in charge.

March's meeting date has not yet been determined. Topic: Civil War music.

April 17, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m., Lamson Lodge. Possible topic: Harper's Ferry.

If you are interested in receiving more information or participating in the roundtable discussion, call Tony Lisska at 587-6426.

Radiocarbon dating is an expensive process. The small samples collected from the Pig Site will cost \$535 each to process. In order to help pay for this important research the Licking County Archaeology and Landmarks Society (L.C.A.L.S.) currently is accepting donations for the Murphy Archaeology Research Project Radiocarbon Fund. In addition, L.C.A.L.S. is always looking for volunteers to help in the excavation of prehistoric sites and in the many other tasks associated with archaeological research. If you are interested in donating your time or making a monetary contribution, please contact Paul Hooge at 366-1070 or Brad Lepper at 344-1920.



HORACE KING'S BOOK

Long time member of the Society, Horace King, recently published his book, Granville: Massachusetts to Ohio. This book with its original drawings of Granville buildings is available at the Sentinel publishing office on East Elm Street.

CHRISTMAS WALKING TOUR

The Society participated in the annual Christmas walking tour of the village. The Old Academy Building served as the point of departure for the tour. Several hundred persons visited the museum and many received a complimentary copy of **The Historical Times**.

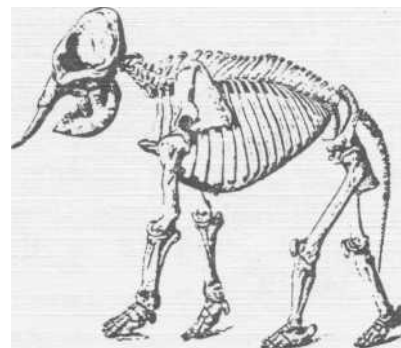
MASTODON SITE

The Editors had the opportunity to visit the site of the mastodon discovered at the Burning Tree golf course. When we arrived, the head and tusks had just been placed in a truck and the vertebrae were assembled on the ground. Needless to say, we were very excited about being there at that time.

The Historical Times is included with membership and is sent to all members of the Society. Questions or comments may be sent to:

Editors
The Historical Times
P. O. Box 129
Granville, Ohio 43023

Editorial Board: Florence Hoffman,
Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit



NEW MEMBERS WELCOME

One benefit of membership in The Granville Historical Society is the receipt of this publication. Any reader knowing of an individual who might wish to become a member and receive **The Historical Times** is invited to contact any board member or the membership chairman, Dan Freytag (349-9122 or 587-2556). A membership application and explanatory letter will be promptly forwarded. Gift memberships are also available. Membership dues, including the receipt of **The Historical Times**, are \$5.00 per year.

**GRANVILLE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
BOARD OF MANAGEMENT**

President: Eric Jones
Vice President: Richard Shiels
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Treasurer: Carl Frazier

Curtis Abbott, Daniel Freytag,
Thomas Gallant, Florence Hoffman,
Anthony Lisska, Mary Ann Malcuit,
David Neel, John Rugg,
Harold Sargent

NEW MEMBER OF THE BOARD

Andrew Sterrett submitted his resignation to the Board at the November meeting because he will be living and working in Washington, D.C. during the next year. The Board accepted his resignation with regret, and thanked him for his service to the Society. At the December meeting the Board elected Thomas F. Gallant to fill the unexpired term. Tom, well known as the recent Mayor of Granville, is Professor of Education at Denison University. He is the author of **Early Public Schools of Granville and Granville Township**, published by the Society in 1981.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEES

For the information of members, the following committees have been established and the chairpersons are listed below:

Properties	Harold Sargent
Museum	Fanchion Lewis
Publications	Anthony Lisska
Finance	Carl Frazier
Membership	Daniel Freytag
Archives	Florence Hoffman
Program	Richard Shiels

REMINDER:
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP NOW

1990 dues are now payable. Dues for the calendar year are \$5.00 per person. To maintain your membership in the Society and to continue receiving **The Historical Times**, payment must be received by April 1, 1990.





From the Archives--

"Early Morning Old Colony Burying Ground" in June, 1989, by P. Hartroft, M. Greider and N. Kohser. First prize, Black and White, in the Granville Historical Society Photography Contest.



The Granville Ohio Historical Society
Post office Box 129
Granville, Ohio 43023