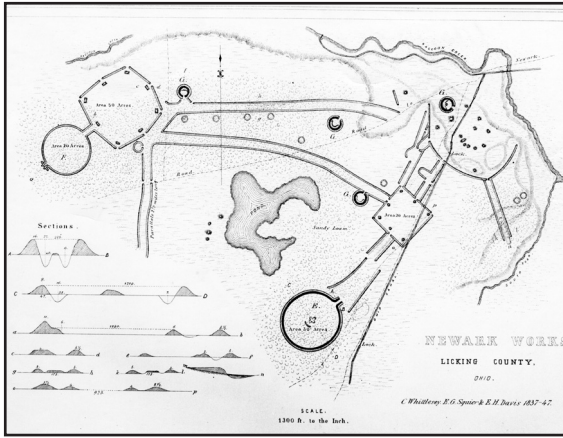


The Newark Earthworks

The Hopewell people lived in Ohio from 100 B.C to 500 A.D. They are best known for building mounds shaped like squares, parallel lines, circles and rectangles. The purpose of the mounds is unknown, but they could have been used for religious and burial ceremonies or as gathering places.



Map of the Newark Earthworks
Courtesy of the Ohio Historical Society

When the Hopewell people built these mounds they carried the dirt basket by basket to the spot where they were constructing the earthen walls. Some walls were eight- to 14-feet in height. The Great Circle Earthworks and the Octagon Earthworks located in Newark, Ohio. It is believed that the mounds were built sometime between 100 B.C. and 300 A.D.

At one time, the Newark Earthworks covered an area of four miles. As the city grew, parts of the walls and many of the mounds were destroyed. The Octagon mound is now a part of the Moundbuilders County Club golf course. Archaeologists found pipes, ceremonial objects, necklaces, bracelets, ornaments and small figurines in the areas where the mounds were destroyed. The Ohio Historical Society protects the two miles of mounds that remain today.

In the mid-1980s, two professors from Earlham University in Richmond, Indiana discovered that the Newark Earthworks could possibly be related to tracking the moon's orbit. In the fall of 2006, there will be a series of moonrises that are aligned with the Octagon. There were moonrises in 2005, but because Moundbuilders Country Club leases the property from the Ohio Historical Society, only members of the country club were allowed to view them. It is the hope of the Friends of the Mounds organization that the public will be allowed to enjoy the Earthworks during the 2006 moonrises.

In 2005, a fourth-grade class at Newark's Miller Elementary wrote letters to their state senator, asking that he work on a bill that would make the Newark Earthworks Ohio's official prehistoric monument. Governor Bob Taft signed the bill into law on June 7, 2006.

