

The Mound Builders

Prehistoric Indian mounds are plentiful in Ohio. At one time thousands existed. The Adena and Hopewell Indian cultures are responsible for building these mounds scattered throughout central and southwest Ohio.

The Adena and Hopewell cultures were the early Woodland people in Ohio. They appeared around 800BC and faded away prior to contact with Europeans.

The Adena built conical shaped burial mounds. If you were a commoner you were cremated and buried in a basin inside the mound. If you were of higher status you were first interred in a log tomb, usually with artifacts buried with you.

The Hopewell culture appears in Ohio later, around 100 BC. Theirs is a more complex and highly skilled culture. The artifacts found in the mounds are more sophisticated. The mounds they built were sometimes geometrically shaped and used for ceremonial purposes. Temples were sometimes built on top of the mounds suggesting a more highly developed culture with more elaborate burial rituals.

Around 900AD the Fort Ancient people moved into Ohio. Their settlements were large and permanent and they built stockades around there villages and mounds. They were farmers and corn was the main crop. Their culture does not appear to be as highly developed as the Hopewell.

At the same time, the Whittlesey culture lived in northern Ohio along Lake Erie. These people were probably related to the Erie or other Eastern Woodland tribes and were more than likely driven out of Ohio or absorbed by the Iroquois Nation.

From about 1650 to 1700 very few Native American people inhabited Ohio. Most had been killed off by diseases introduced from trading with Natives from the East who had contact with the Europeans. As more white settlers started to colonize the east, the dynamics changed and more tribes were forced to leave their territories and migrate into Ohio. These late Ohio tribes included the Shawnee, Miami, Delaware, Wyandot and Mingo. With the Indian Removal Act of 1830, most of Ohio's Indians were moved across the Mississippi into Kansas and Missouri.

Sources:

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