

Secrets of the Mound Builders

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or of a common origin of their cultures.

Other interesting objects found by the exploration party comprise a highly artistic specimen representing a wild duck, with the head resting on the shoulders and back; implements of meteoric iron and copper; beads fashioned from bear claws and teeth; pearl and shell beads; and a dagger-like object of copper with an antler handle.

But for the use of copper, the prehistoric Indian might never have gained credit for another one of his noteworthy accomplishments. Under the dazzling copper breastplates, turned green and blue in the grave, pieces of cloth have been kept from decay for centuries by the preservative action of chemicals formed by the decomposing metal. Ancient Ohio drygoods stores must have contained at least four varieties of cloth, judging from the samples thus saved.

There was a plain cloth almost exactly like the home-spun linen of early pioneer days, and another type woven in colored patterns, of which samples remained. So far as is known no other race at the stage of civilization attained by the Ohio Indians ever produced a woven material in colored designs, Mr. Shetron says.

A third type of goods was made from the bark of trees and shrubs, and a still coarser kind was woven from flat splints. All of these materials showed selvage edges like modern goods. The use of cotton and wool was unknown to the Indians and the fibers used came from grasses and weeds, it is believed. Botanists at the Ohio State University are now at work trying to identify the fibers used by the ancient weavers.

Small combs of precious marine tortoise shell, almost identical with the pocket comb in a modern girl's handbag, have been unearthed with one of the skeletons. Copper combs have been found.

The ancient Indians when dressed for "going out" or for ceremonial purposes were probably splendid creatures, judging from their ornaments and trappings. Teeth of the bear, wolf, elk, mountain lion and deer were perforated and used as beads, sometimes simply polished and at other times set with precious pearls, or carved in beautiful designs. Like the stone age dwellers of Eu-



PEARL NECKLACES taken from the Hopewell mounds and a skull showing the copper nose with which mound builders were equipped for their burial

rope, the American Indians also used tiny sea and fresh water shells for beads. One of the unique kinds of decorations used by the Indians, however, were designs of shimmering mica beautifully cut out. These are believed to have been used on their clothing, as breast plates or headdresses.

The art for which the mound builders are famous is best shown in many carved stone ceremonial pipes, amulets, charms and totems, found in the earthworks and buried along with the chiefs of the tribes. These stone objects carved in the round are probably the most perfect representations of animal and human figures ever found in primitive art, and the many flat designs from copper sheet and mica strips cut in conventionalized figures of familiar objects are the most sophisticated and symmetrical of their kind.

From a physical aspect alone, the most impressive structure of the Ohio valley mound builders is the famous serpent mound. If stretched out, the figure would be almost a quarter of a mile long.

The serpent figure was built to coil on the edge of a cliff which curves around the bend of a creek. The head, over forty-six feet long, is built in outline some three feet high, and rests upon a bare rock platform.

It is believed that an altar of some

kind was built in the center of the head, and was a place of worship for the mound builders.

Structures of the Ohio Indians in no way can compare with the pyramids of Egypt, but they are impressive, and a preacher who one time declared in a burst of rapture that this serpent mound proved that the Garden of Eden had been in the Ohio valley may therefore be pardoned.

In all, there are perhaps 10,000 of these mounds. Many of them are small and inconsequential, but many have never been explored. When it is considered that one of the burial mounds yielded searchers some two pecks of pearls—60,000 separate gems—it can be seen that exploration of these tombs is far from fruitless.

What the physical environments were that singled out one group of people on earth and fostered that unique talent is a question archaeologists would like to answer. The work on the Hopewell mounds is still far from complete. Although the excavations made to date have revealed unexpected riches and have enabled scientists to learn some of the secrets of Indian life before the dawn of history, the excavations planned for the coming year are expected to surpass those of the past. The story of a vanished civilization may thus be reconstructed.

Science News-Letter, November 19, 1927

ENTOMOLOGY

Anathema

There's something mean about a moth!

He poses as a butterfly,
And all his life's a horrid lie
Cut, if you get me, from whole cloth.

Mosquitoes play a forthright game;
They put you wise before they bite!
And many insects I might name
Do all their dark deeds in the light.
But oh, the moth! No other bug
Has his unholy appetite;
He lunches on your choicest rug
As soon as you are out of sight!

Assuredly it makes me wroth
To meet at every turn a-wing
My best golf knickers—new last
Spring!

There's something mean about a moth!

—Edward W. Bernard,
In the *New York Times*.

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Smoke columns were used for signaling by the ancient Chinese.