

Indians Built Mound After White Men

Archaeology

The last traces of the old idea that the mound-builders were a mysterious ancient race who vanished before the coming of the Indians have been very effectually destroyed by the discovery at Joliet, Ill., of a mound filled from bottom to top with the skeletons of buried Indians, each skeleton provided with funeral gifts of European manufacture as well as the more usual stone, bone and shell objects of native workmanship. Prof. Fay-Cooper Cole of the University of Chicago states that so far as he is aware this is the first wholly post-European mound discovered in this country.

The mound is one of the so-called Fisher group, which have been subjected to excavation during the past few years by George Langford, a factory executive of Joliet. The other mounds have yielded Indian relics of pre-European date, one of the cultures represented being very primitive and possibly very ancient. A few articles of white man's manufacture were found near the top of

one of these larger mounds, linking the history of the Indians of this region with that of French Colonial trading in the Mississippi valley.

The mound which Mr. Langford has just finished exploring had been given a somewhat superficial going over by an earlier group of amateur diggers, who found a considerable number of silver objects, including a crucifix, several spoons, bangles, and other ornaments. It was thought that everything had been removed, but when Mr. Langford dug into the mound again he discovered that the previous excavations had done little more than remove the surface. He found burials with European and Colonial funeral gifts throughout the mound and down into the ground to a depth of five feet beneath its base.

The finds include a couple of brass pots in excellent condition, one of them with a close-fitting lid, a pair of scissors, a large number of knives bearing a French trademark, several silver spoons, and quantities of beads, buttons, pins and other

trinkets. Brass seems to have been a favorite metal; every skeleton had some brass object with it. These modern mound-builders unquestionably did a lot of business with the French traders.

One of the most remarkably well-preserved specimens is a combination pocket compass and sun dial in a brass case. The "floating" compass card swings freely on its pivot, the glass cover is unbroken, and the gnomon of the sundial can still be turned on its hinge.

A change in the type of burial may possibly be due to European influence. All the adult skeletons in this post-European mound lay flat on their backs, heads west, feet east. This resembles the white man's method of burial. All the other deep burials at the Fisher site, whose funeral gifts do not include European objects, were turned over on one side and drawn up into a crouching position, as primitive peoples are wont to sleep in cold weather.

Science News-Letter, June 23, 1928

Library Gets Rare Book

Bibliography

One of the rarest books on science—the first edition of Sir Isaac Newton's "Principia," has now been secured by the Library of Congress, after years of search. Though only an inch and a half thick and ten inches high by seven and a half inches wide, with 510 pages, it has been termed "the most important printed work on exact science ever published." It was published in 1687 in London, and in it Newton first gave to the world the results of his fundamental study of the laws of gravitation.

Two issues of the first edition were made in the year of its publication, one being intended for sale in England, and the other on the continent. The Library of Congress copy is of the first issue. However, the entire edition was small and it is related by contemporary writers that as soon as 1691 it was very difficult to obtain.

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In This Issue—

Columbus came first, p. 386—Their *glories* are past, p. 387—Light without *heat*, p. 389—Epidermal graph, p. 390—Where *stars* are speeded, p. 391—Scientific *arson*, p. 391—Not cuttable, p. 393—*Ancient* swords, p. 395—Why *irrigation?* p. 396—Whence *Gypsies?* p. 397—*Animals* and plants, p. 399.



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