

# Hopewell Mound Group: Data Collection in 2001

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 Saturday, 17 November 2001  
 Last Updated Monday, 06 March 2006

HOPEWELL MOUND GROUP: DATA COLLECTION IN 2001      Jennifer Pederson      Jarrod Burks      Hopewell  
 Culture National Historical Park  
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The mounds and embankments at Hopewell Mound Group have undergone significant archeological testing over the last 200 years, producing a large volume of data. However, the areas between these impressive features have rarely been the subject of study (exceptions include Seeman 1981a, 1981b; Burks and Pederson 1999, 2000; Pederson et al. 2001). In June of 2001 a research project designed to systematically sample cultural resources in non-mound areas at Hopewell Mound Group was begun. Park Service archeologists conducted this research in partnership with the 2001 Ohio State University archeological field school under the direction of William Dancey.

The project's research design centers on locating evidence of Hopewell activity inside the earthworks by systematically testing 10% of the non-mound area in a randomly selected sample of 18 40x40 m blocks. Six minimally invasive techniques were used: topographic and GPS mapping; magnetic and electrical resistivity survey; shovel testing; and small-scale test excavation. At the conclusion of the summer field season, approximately half of the sample units were finished (Figure 1). Work is ongoing and will continue throughout this year. However, our findings so far show that there is much left to learn about Hopewell Mound Group.

Shovel testing in most of the sample blocks found a very sparse scatter of FCR and lithic debitage across the site. In Block 10, the area of Moorehead's west "village site" (Moorehead 1922), shovel testing encountered a fairly dense cluster of Hopewell materials, including quartz crystal and obsidian debitage. Deciding whether or not these materials allow for the designation "village site" will require additional testing.

The geophysical surveys conducted this summer were extremely successful. The magnetic survey pinpointed small features and delineated earthworks while the electrical resistivity meter picked up subtle differences in soil types. One magnetic anomaly found in Block 124 was a large earth oven lined with fire-cracked rock (FCR) and containing a considerable amount of charcoal. Another significant anomaly was found in Block 10. This trash pit contained a variety of artifacts including FCR, pottery, animal bone, a quartz crystal bladelet, and fragments of a shell-tempered ceramic pipe. The pit's shape and some of its artifacts suggest a Late Prehistoric period date. Just north of Block 10 and in to Block 28 resistivity survey detected an area of distinctive soils that correspond to a large, low rise, approximately 80 meters in diameter. This subtle rise could represent a backdirt pile from Moorehead's or Shetrone's excavations of Mound 25 or it could be an undocumented large, low mound thousands of years old. More geophysical testing and small excavations will be used to determine the origin of this anomaly.

Additional geophysical testing in the central area of the large enclosure found another previously undetected feature. Magnetic and resistivity data show a large circular anomaly 30 meters in diameter with a 2-meter opening along its eastern side (Figure 2). A small excavation unit placed across the anomaly's southern edge located the remains of a two meter wide ditch. Aside from a few small fragments of FCR, no artifacts were recovered. Circular ditches of this size, usually accompanied by embankments, are common to both the Early and Middle Woodland periods in southern Ohio.

In summary, this past summer's work at Hopewell Mound Group identified one new earthwork, located a possible new mound, and found evidence of a Late Prehistoric period occupation. This summer's success, after studying only 5% of the non-mound area inside the embankments, suggests that more unknown architectural remains are present at Hopewell Mound Group. It also demonstrates the effectiveness of the suite of minimally invasive techniques employed in the survey.      References Cited

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