

# An Archaeological Survey of Hancock County

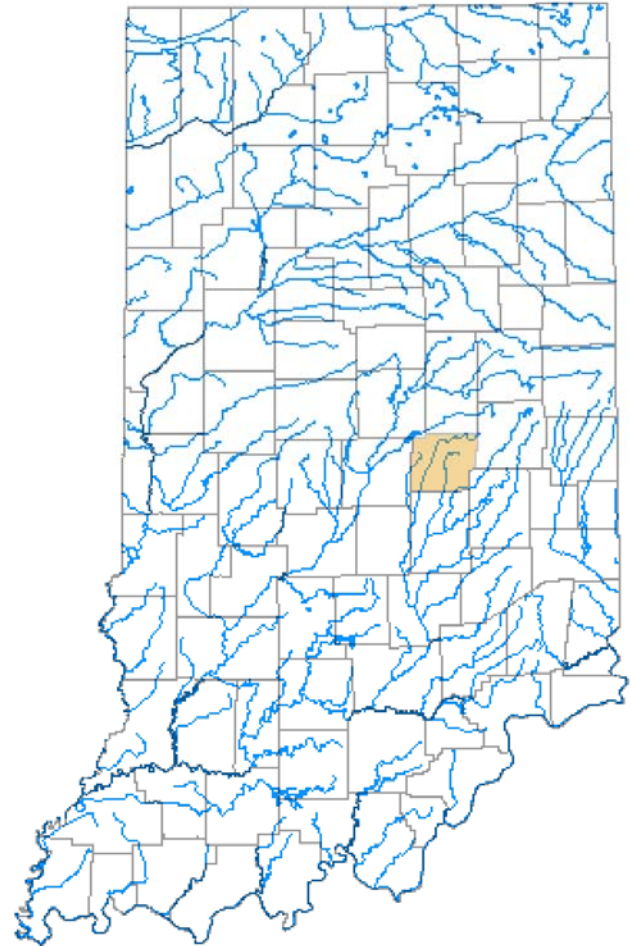
A Profile of Till Plain Archaeology

# Archaeological Survey

- Modern archaeology is defined as the study of humans through the systematic recovery and analysis of material remains (artifacts and features).
- Ball State received a Federal Historic Preservation Fund grant administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology to investigate the archaeological resources of Hancock County.

# Hancock County

- Hancock County is in the till plain region of Indiana.
- Geography is somewhat different than the surrounding counties.
  - No large rivers and valleys
  - People visit or live in areas where they can find food or resources they need.



# Reasons for the Project

- Lack of archaeological information.

Less than 200 sites on record for Hancock County. Far fewer than surrounding counties.

(An archaeological site is a location where man-made or man altered materials are found).



# Reasons for the Project

- The rapid growth in the county.
  - Mostly western townships
  - Housing developments
  - Gravel operations
- Undocumented cultural resources are being destroyed.



# 2006-2007 Project

- Systematically surveyed nearly 800 acres of agricultural land.
- The survey recorded 161 new archaeological sites, recovered 702 prehistoric artifacts and 950 historic artifacts from 14 locations across the county.
- Over 100 historically documented sites were visited and 13 new archaeological sites were recorded.
- German Settlement in Sugar Creek Township was investigated.
- Several local collections were reviewed.

# What we found

- Pre-contact Native American occupation from 10,000 to 500 years ago. Sites dispersed across the landscape.
- Historic Native American occupations reported.
- Early Euro-American settlement.



# 2006-2007 Project

- Survey of nearly 800 of agricultural land.
  - A small sample of the county
  - Looking at different environments – flat uplands, stream valleys, old glacial valleys, and wetlands
  - Found both precontact and historic site locations



## People used many types of environments

### – Forested uplands and valley edge

- Deer
- Turkey
- Raccoon
- Nuts
- Berries

### – River

- Fish
- Mussels
- Water



- Wetlands
  - Waterfowl
  - Turtles
  - Cattails



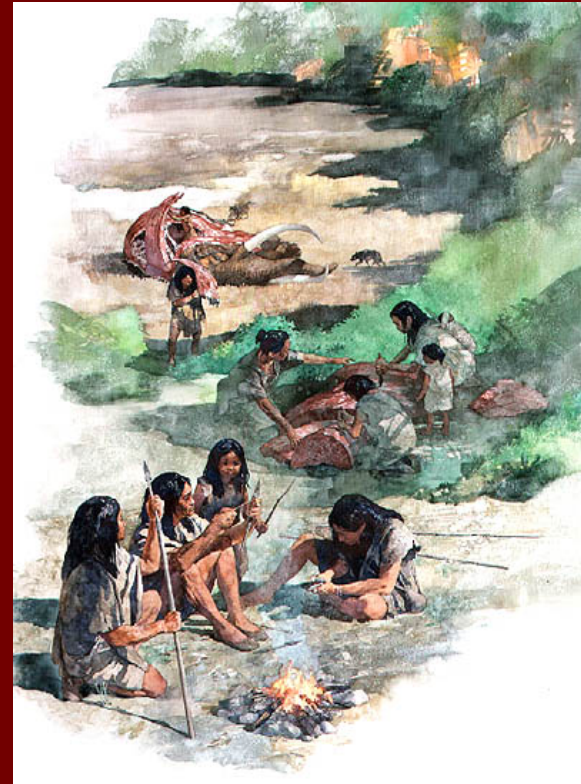
- Prairie

- Maybe hundreds or several thousand years old
- Rich organic soils



## ■ Paleoindian (12,000 – 10,000 B.P.)

- Rare sites to encounter, but do occur
- People portrayed as nomadic, big game hunters
- Christensen Bog north of Greenfield (13,000 to 12,000 B.P.) contained 2 mastodons and caribou

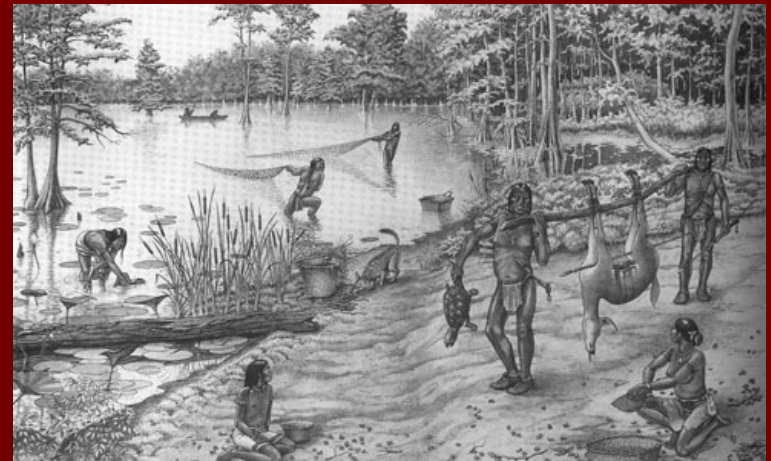


## ■ Early Archaic (10000 – 8000 B.P.)

- Sites become more numerous and found on a variety of landforms
- Still mobile, but sites with repeated occupation occur
- Hunting and gathering a wide range of goods

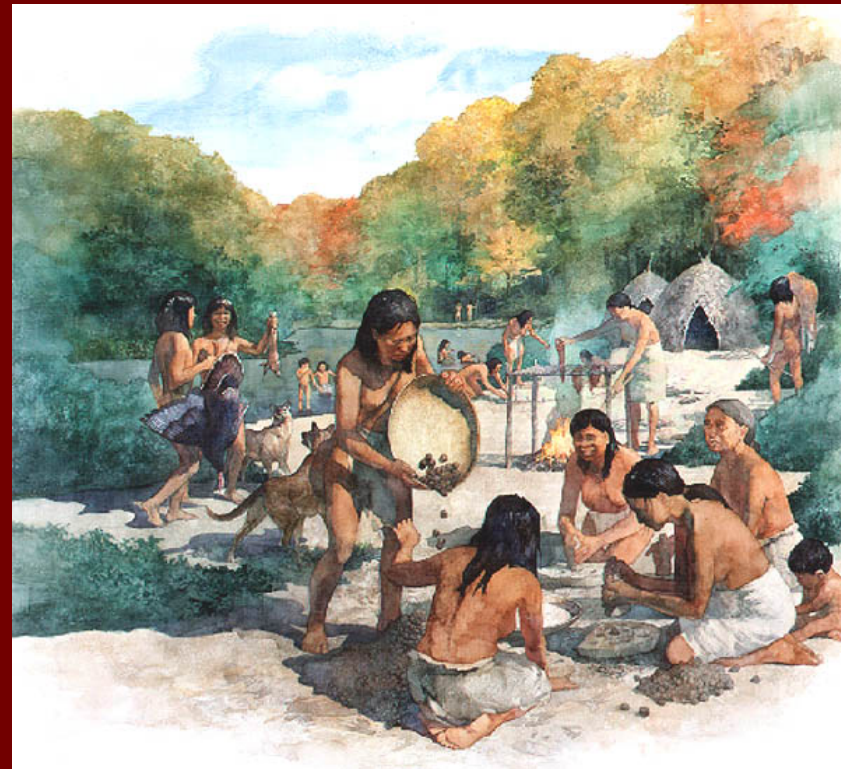


- Middle Archaic (8000 to 5000 B.P.)
  - Period is warmer and drier
  - Not well known in many areas of Indiana



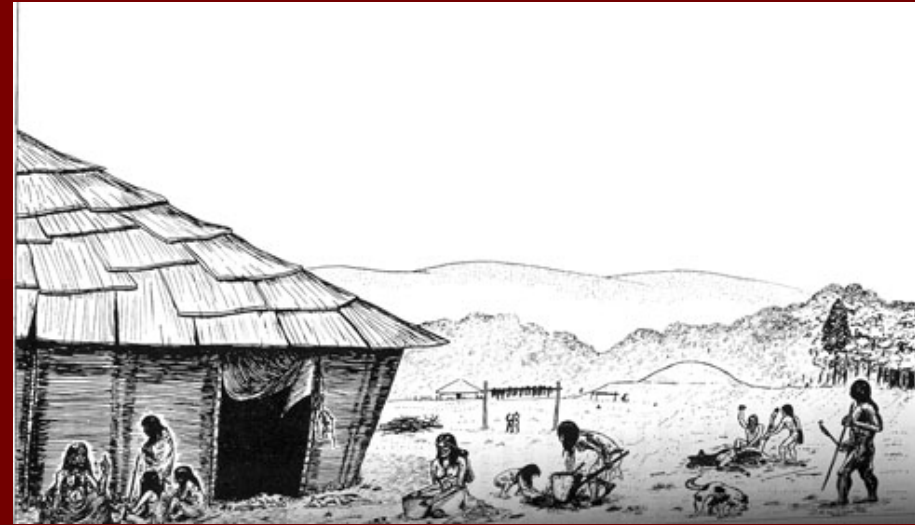
## ■ Late Archaic (5000 – 3000 B.P.)

- Subsistence is broadly based
- Occupy many landforms, but more settled
- Trade networks well established
- Glacial Kame burials

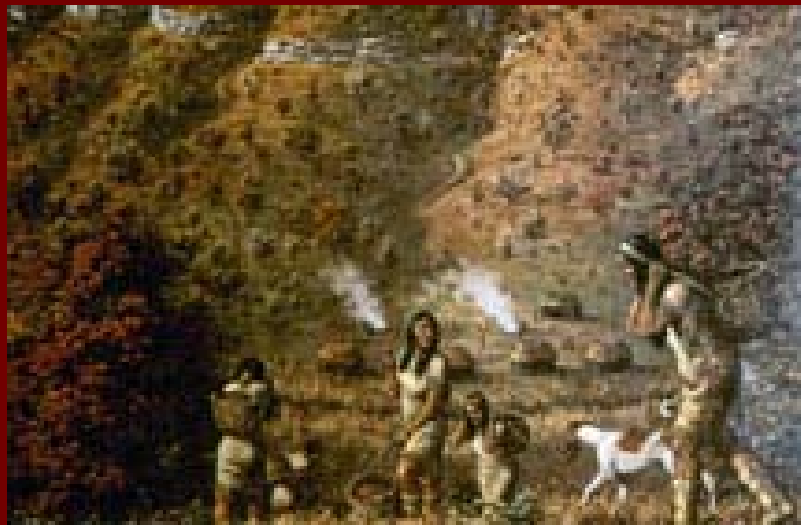
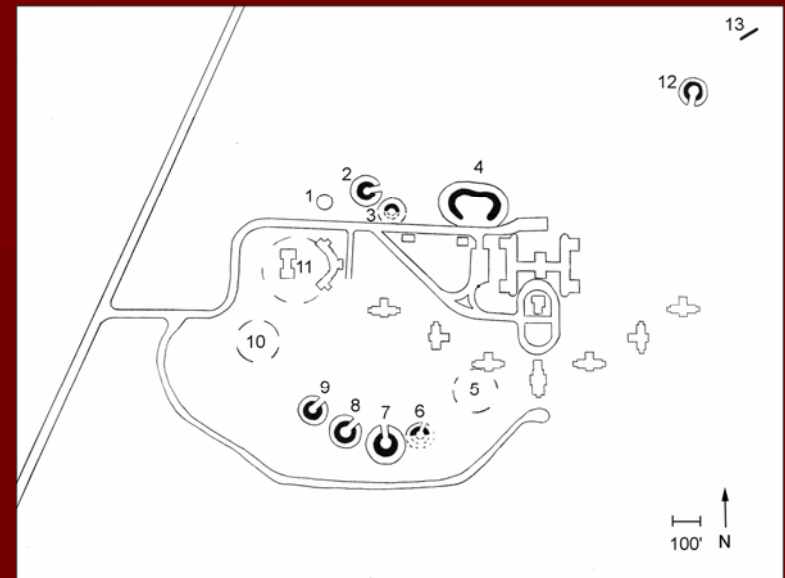


## ■ Early Woodland (3000-2000 B.P.)

- Appearance of pottery (ceramic vessels)
- Elaboration of mortuary rituals – not known for Hancock County
- Beginnings of horticulture
- Living in hamlets

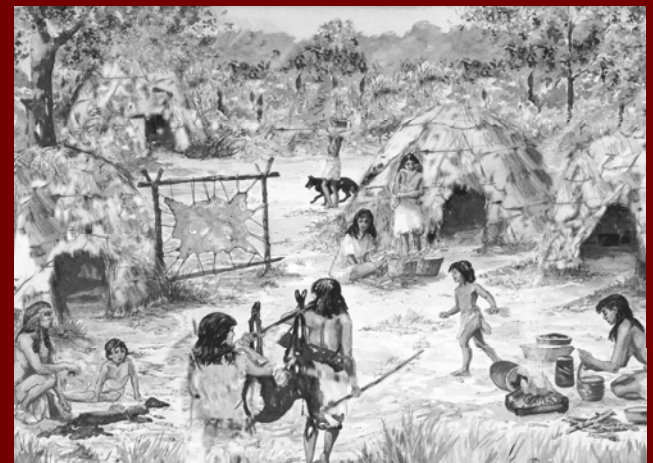
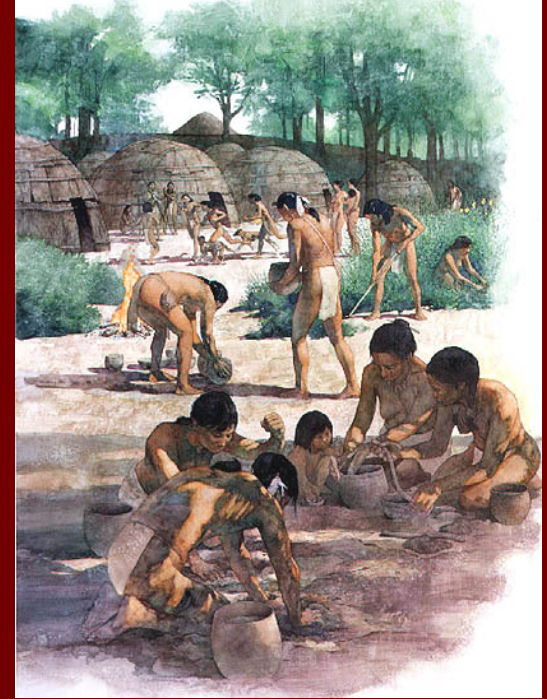


- Middle Woodland (2000 – 1500 B.P.)
  - Flourishing trade networks
  - Geometric earthworks
    - Only reported earthwork is south of Brandywine Creek in Green Township



- Late Woodland/Late Prehistoric (1500 B.P. to contact with Europeans)

- Introduction of the bow and arrow
- Beginning to have a heavier reliance on cultivating crops
  - Intensive use of the flood plains in surrounding counties
- See the first villages arise during this time in surrounding counties



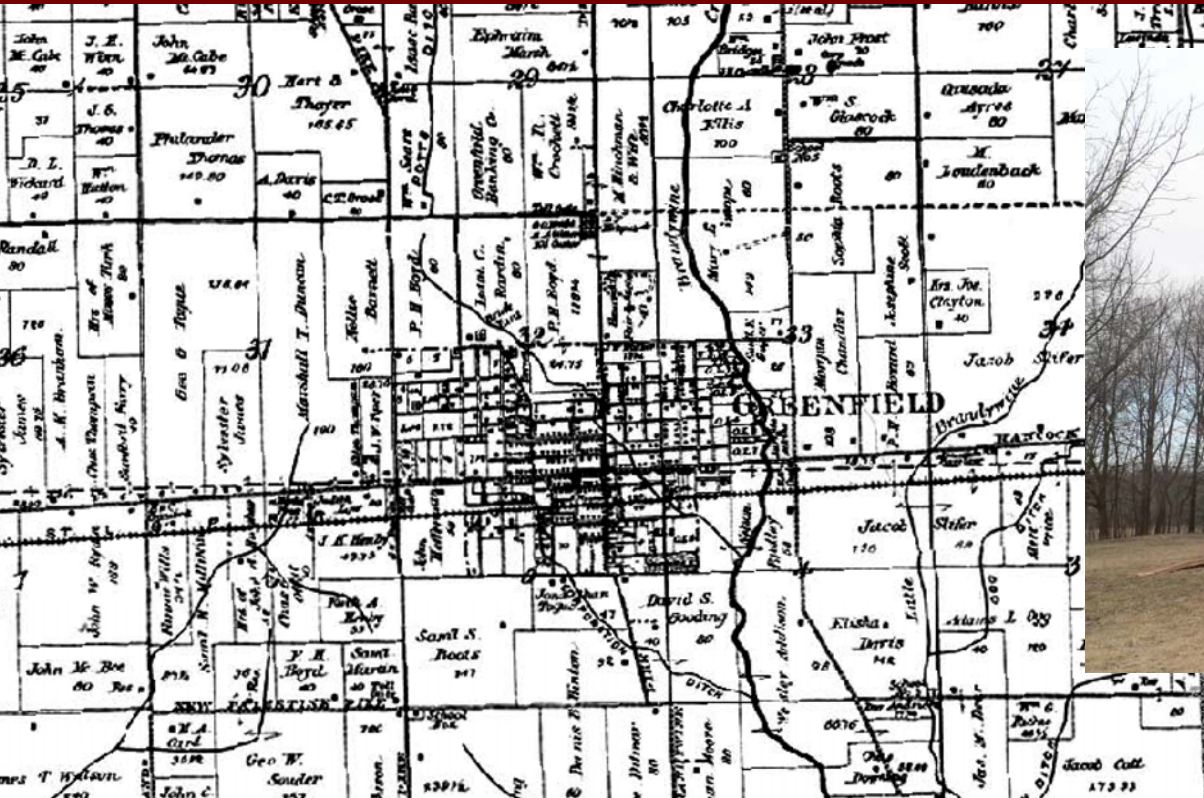
## ■ Historic Native Americans

- Miami and Delaware reported in the county
- Site locations have not been found



## ■ Historic era

- Settlement by American and European people
- Blue River Township first settled in 1818
- County formed in 1828



- German community in Sugar Creek Township
  - First wave of immigration began in 1828
  - Established farms, churches, cemeteries and businesses that reflected their ethnicity



# Thanks

- Mr. Tom Van Duyn
- The families that graciously allowed us to survey their property.
- The Hancock County Historical Society

# Acknowledgements

- This project has received federal financial assistance for the identification, protection and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the State of Indiana. However, the contents and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the view or policies of the Department of the Interior. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further information, please write to: Office for Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of the Interior, 1849 C Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20240.
- Images are courtesy of the Archaeological Resources Management Service at Ball State