

An Archaeological Survey of Hancock County

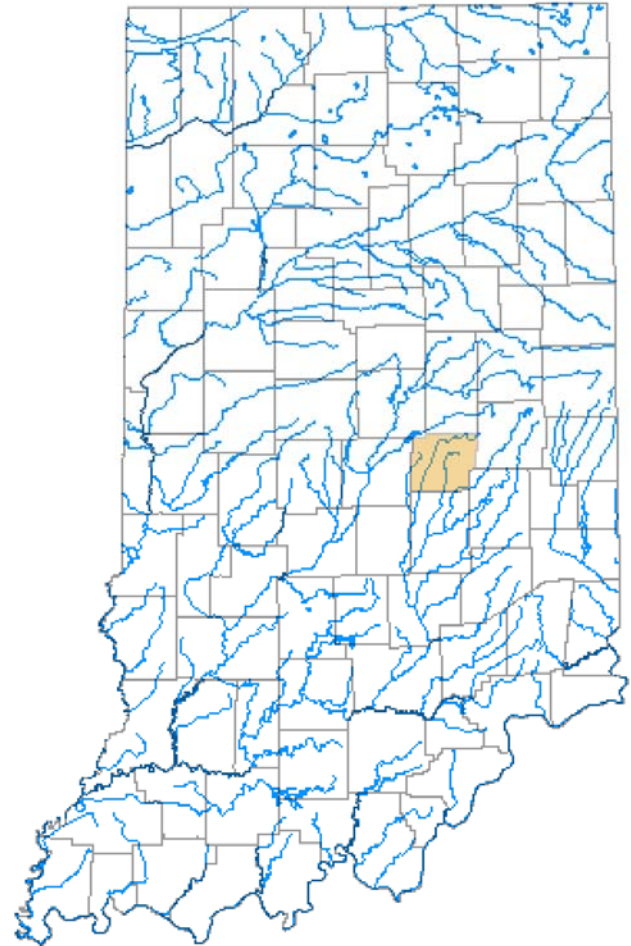
A Profile of Till Plain Archaeology

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

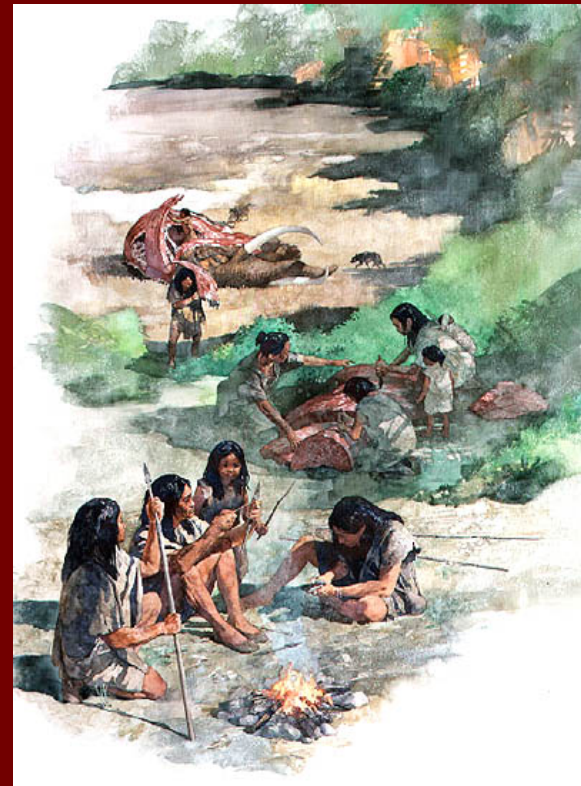


- Prairie
 - Maybe hundreds or several thousand years old
 - Rich organic soils



■ 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

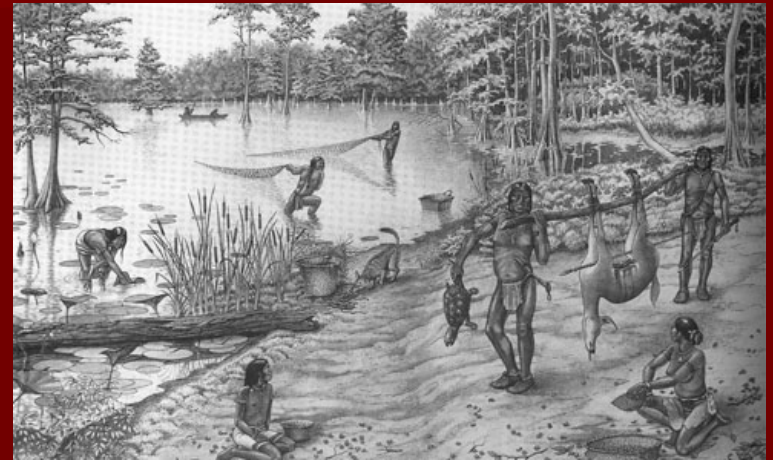


■ Early Archaic (10000 – 8000 B.P.)

- 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

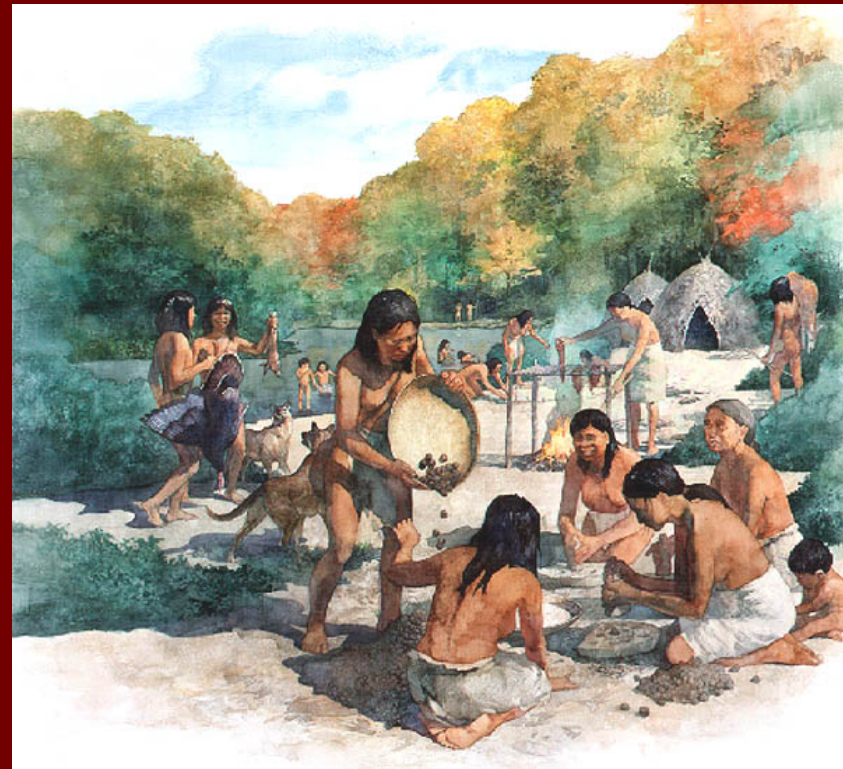


- Middle Archaic (8000 to 5000 B.P.)
 - Period is warmer and drier
 - Not well known in many areas of Indiana



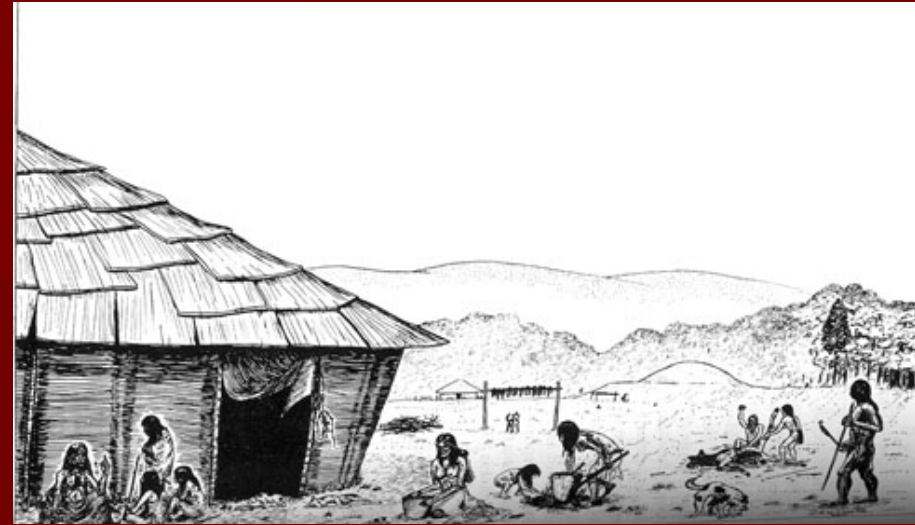
■ Late Archaic (5000 – 3000 B.P.)

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

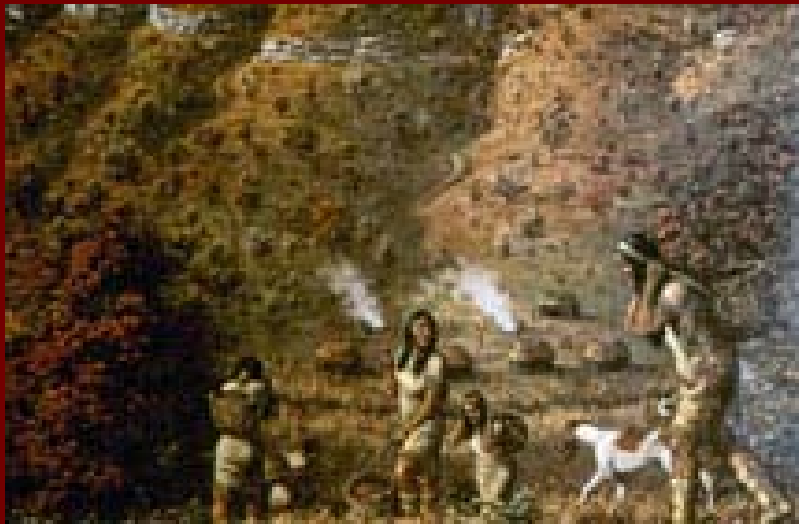
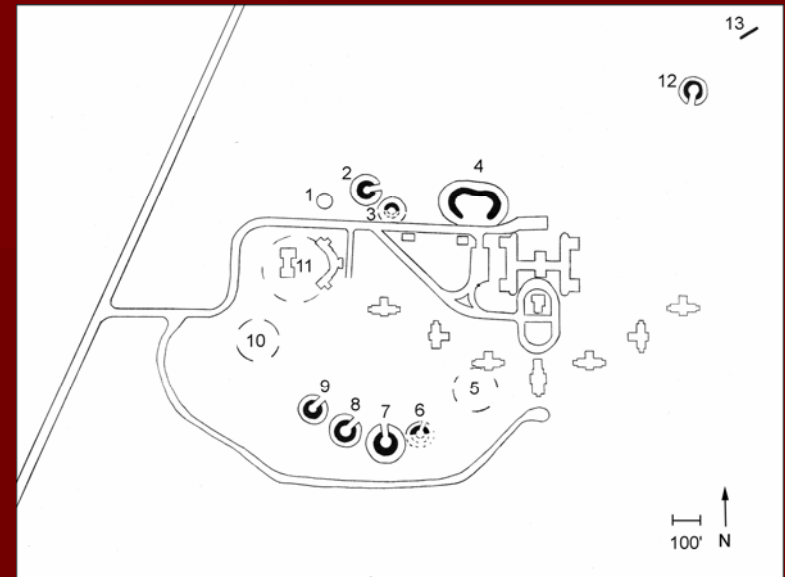


■ Early Woodland (3000-2000 B.P.)

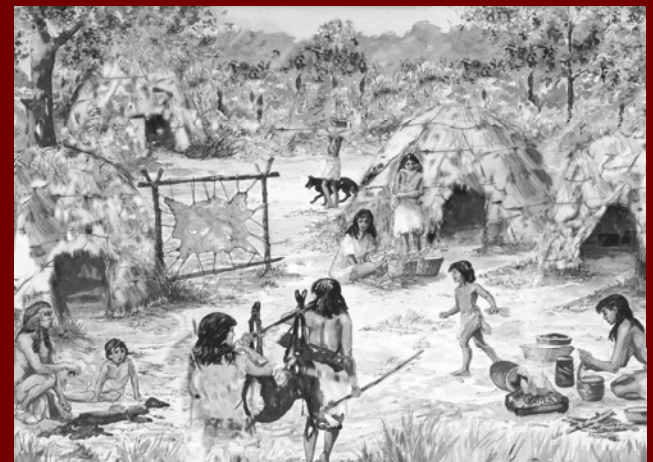
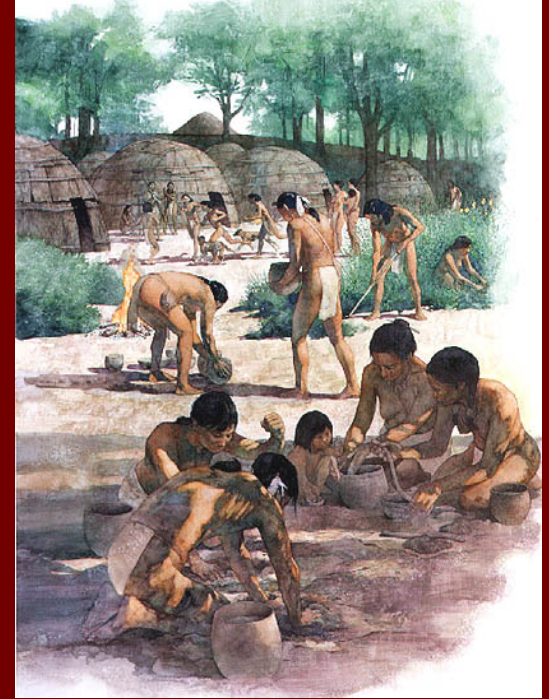
- Appearance of pottery (ceramic vessels)
- Elaboration of mortuary rituals – not known for Hancock County
- Beginnings of horticulture
- Living in hamlets



- 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



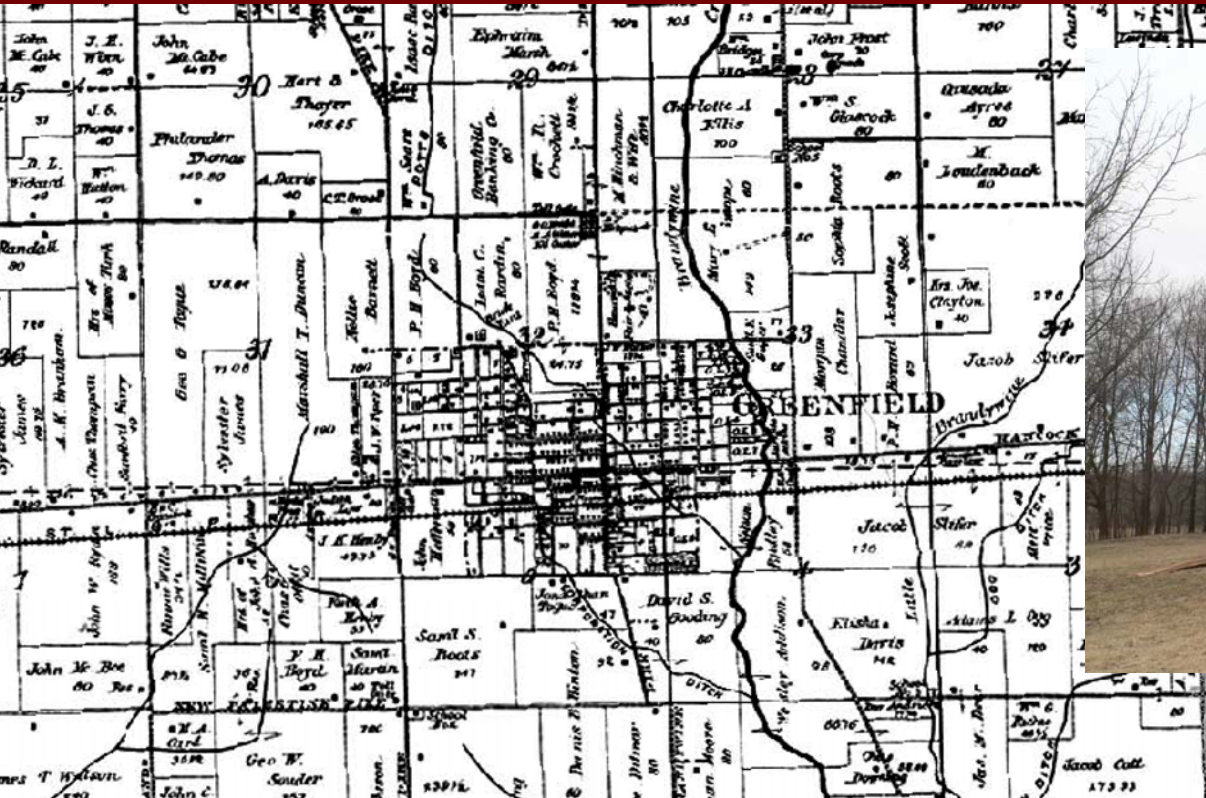
■ Historic Native Americans

- 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.
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Acknowledgements

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