

SOME IOWA MOUNDS  
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL SURVEY

INTRODUCTION

Human life is always interesting—if you are interested. You may be a banker, a trust-magnate, a railroad president, a king, a factory superintendent, a politician, a preacher, a teacher, a lover, or simply an anthropologist; yet the interest is concentrated and strong. And this is true, near or far, living or dead, known or would be known.

Under the influence of that spirit which we call "Science," all these varying attitudes have been greatly enhanced and improved. And *everything*—not only human life—has become an object of scientific inquiry. And wherever the method has been applied the results have justified the labor. It has come about that nothing is too minute or vast, too remote or far, but that it is still within the pale of scientific claim. And if this is true in the realm of space or extension, it is just as true in the sequences of time or duration. Time was when men thought time began with man, when so-called knowledge was limited to the supposed period of human existence or history. For somewhat more than a century this notion has been set aside, and in the Astronomy, Geology, and Biology of our day we have a previously unknown devotion to things long antedating man. This attitude is in love with the fire mist, the molten earth, the first amorphous protoplasmic life. Not more and not less is the



passion of interest in following the career of that life through the eons of its experience.

Latest in that scale of wondrous development came man. Latest in the order of his systematizing his supposed knowledge of the separate realms came Anthropology. Only in the yesterday of his existence, did his curiosity concerning the origin and evolution of his kind become aroused. And even in the to-day of his interest, this inquiring tendency has not reached the stage of reverence. A coarse and ruthless overhauling of the remains of his fellows of former ages is about as far as he has developed in the understanding of human progress. To the average man the remains of former times are a boodle-box into which he may thrust the spade of curiosity whenever his fancy may be filled with an exuberance of energy.

To make a little contribution toward the betterment of this condition (now so deplorable by its contrast with the magnificent progress of science in various other realms), the writer undertook the survey of the prehistoric earth-works of a small region up and down the Iowa River, in the hope of making more widely known the numerous sources of information concerning our prehistoric predecessors in this fair State. It is the object of this paper to give a simple account of some vacation observations, and to have the cumulative effect result in an appeal to the reader's earnestness in helping to forward science in its attempt to extend and advance knowledge of mankind. I wish to gratefully acknowledge the interest taken in this little labor by the State Historical Society of Iowa, and to most appreciatively refer to the great help resulting from their vote of confidence

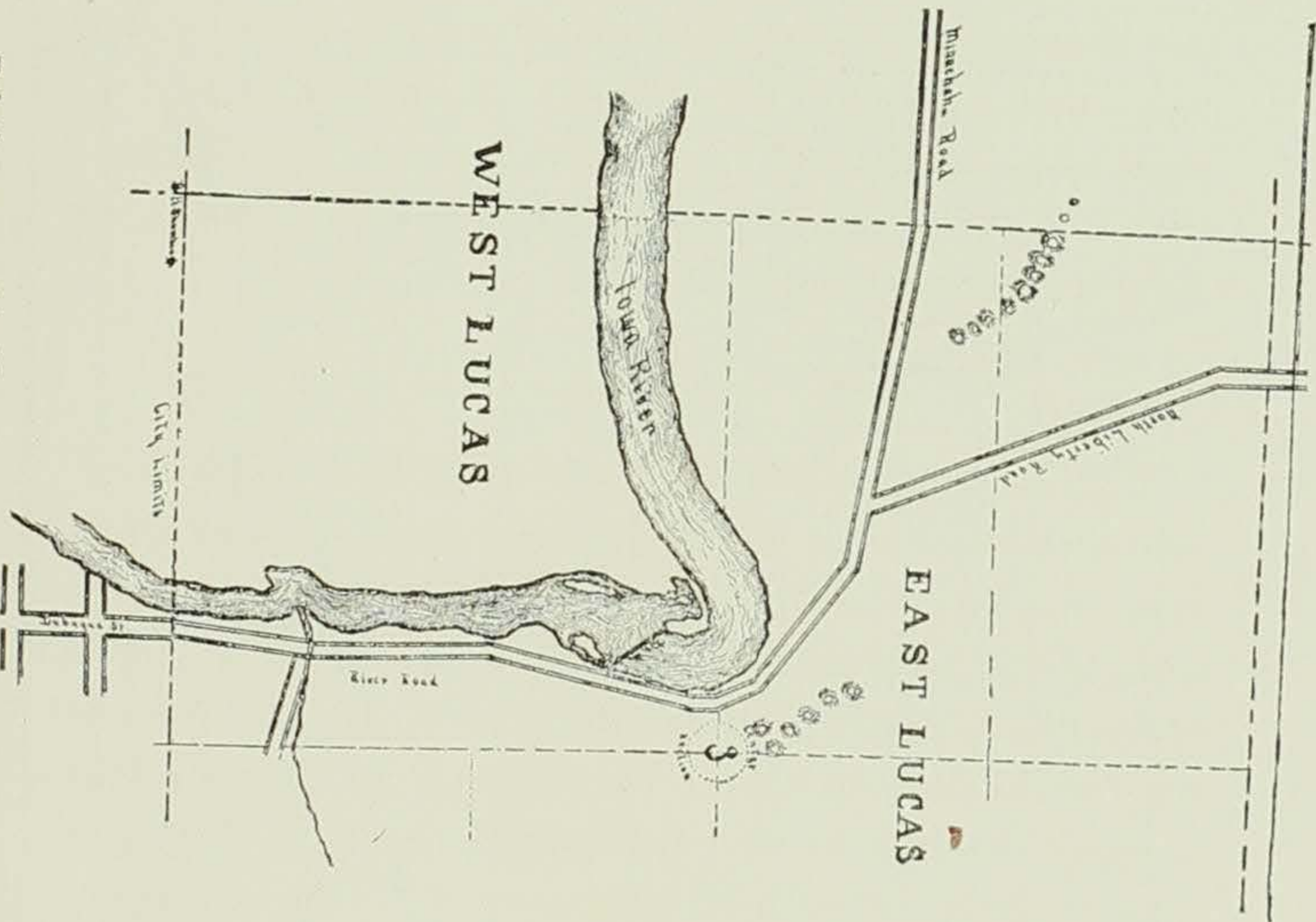


and their passport letter authorizing that the work be done under their auspices. The mention of this fact and of the name of its honorable President has been an "open-sesame" to me at every farmer's gate, wherever I have halted my horse or desired to make a survey.

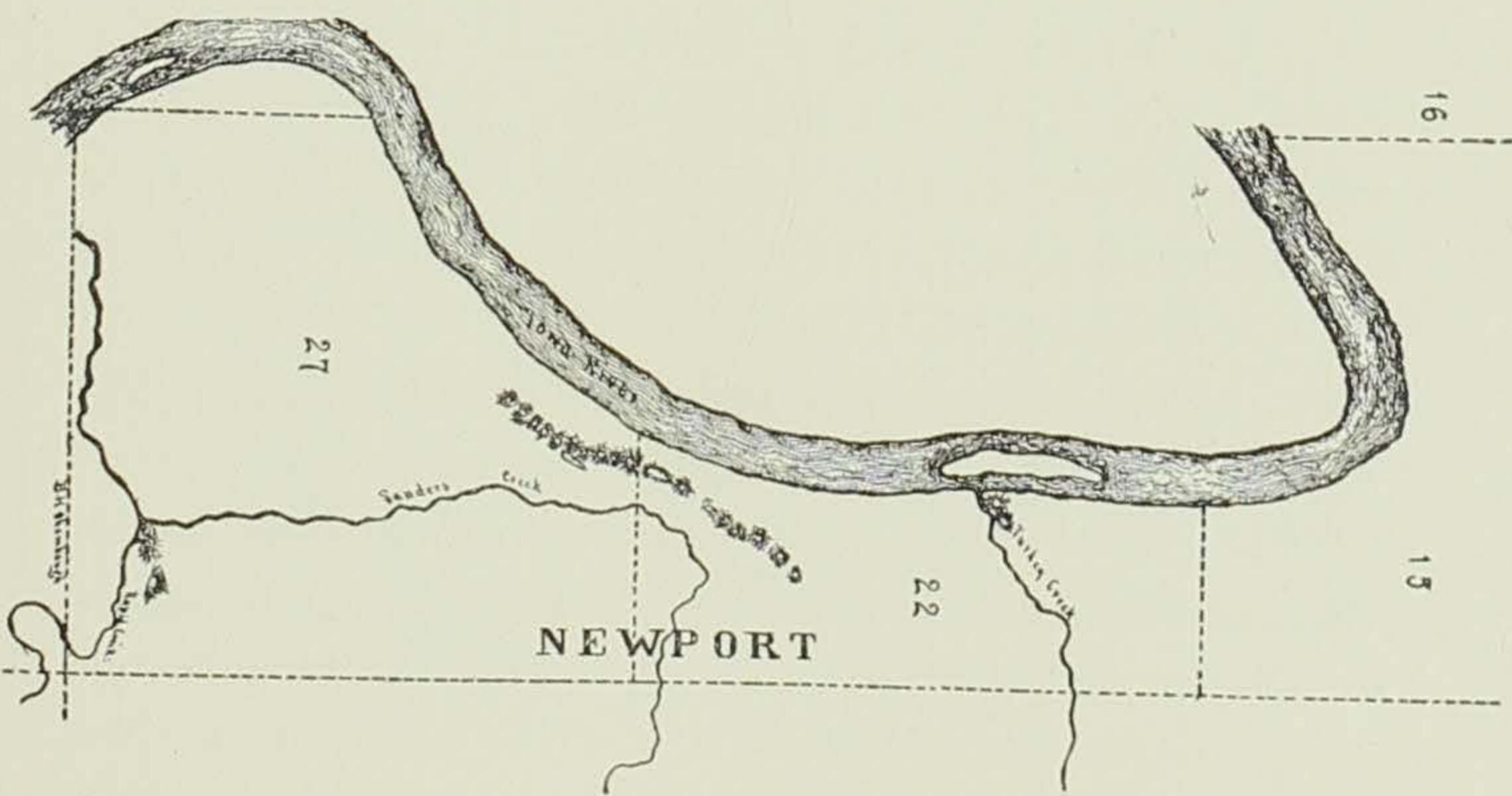
#### THE QUEST FOR MOUNDS

Who has not heard of the Mound Builders? Who knows who they were, when they lived, what their stage of evolution, where they went, what they made mounds for? To make a few accurate notes, to prepare for later inevitable comparisons, to help lay out the ground, and to assemble some of the data for a later Iowa Ethnology, I determined to spend the past summer in repeated picnics to that most interesting part of the Iowa River marked by the moraine of the Iowan Glacier. From the points of view of Landscape Artist, of Geologist, and of Botanist, a more satisfactory choice would have been hard to find. It soon developed that there were others. The evidence steadily multiplied that men had been there ages ago. To discover the point of view of their interest became the point of view of my interest. The Archæologist was hunting the hunter. The trail, after two hundred or two thousand years, was not "fresh." A blood hound would have been useless. On many an occasion did we ask the resident farmer to put us on the scent, but nearly always he knew nothing of our game. One man with only a hundred acres to care for said, by way of excusing himself for not knowing anything about what we insisted upon was probably in his woods:





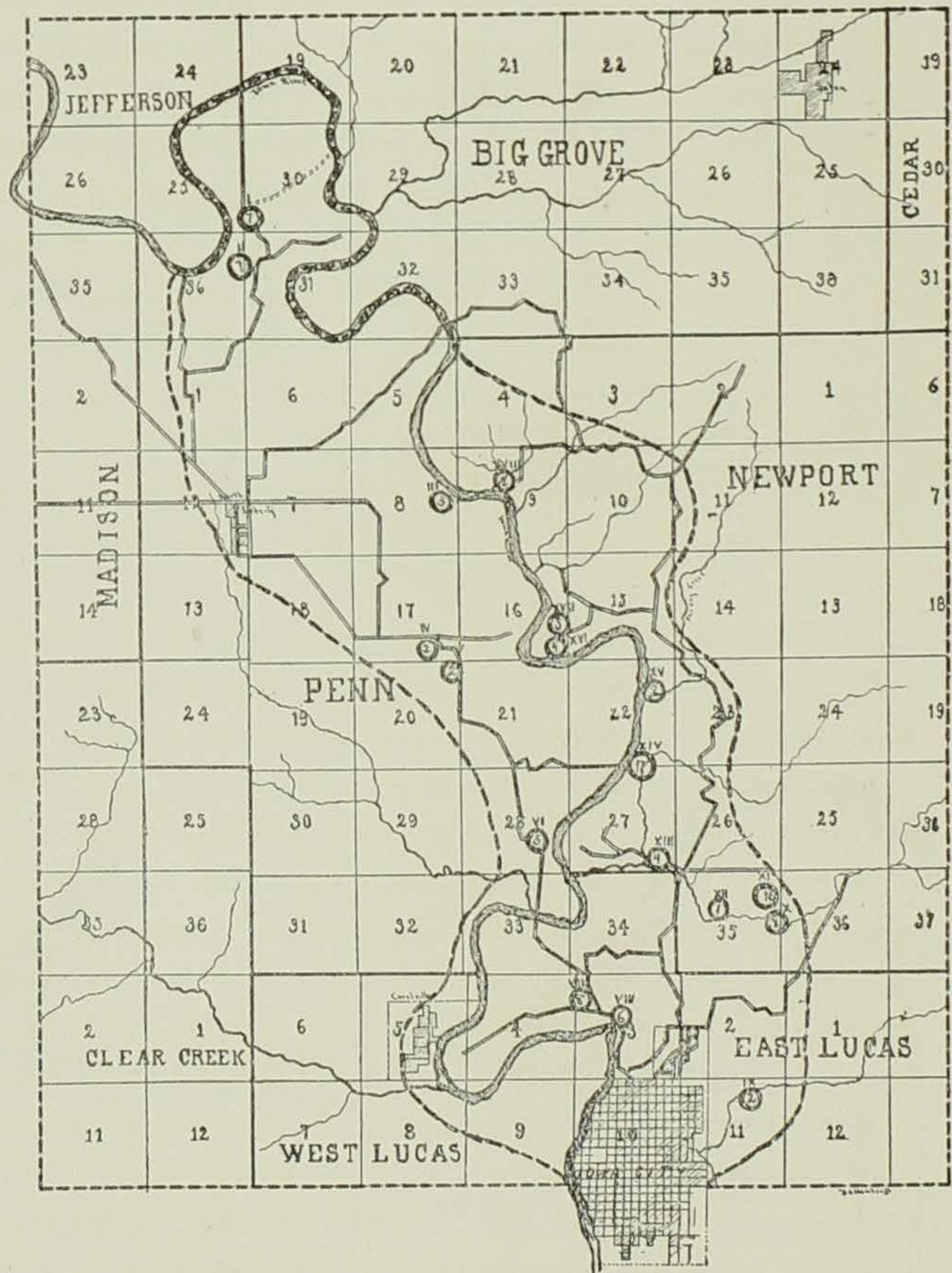
Relative geographical location of the Hinrichs-Burger and the Terrell Mill groups—See pp. 50, 53.



Relative geographical location of the Aicher group—See p. 61.

These two maps are intended to suggest the location of several groups of mounds with respect to, overlooking, and commanding a view of the Iowa River.





The region surveyed and the groups of mounds discovered therein are indicated on this map. The region is all within Johnson County, Iowa. It contains 18 groups and 91 mounds.



“Well, I don’t know; I’ve only been here three years; maybe; but I’m sure I never saw any mountains on my place.”

Sometimes, however, we did meet a man who knew that on his or his neighbor’s farm, on some far off hill or in the woods, there are now or had been some curious little hills or elevations. Nearly always followed the story that, “Some fellow;—let’s see, I forgot his name, came out here—yes, there were two of them, and they dug into them. I don’t know what they were after, and don’t know whether they got anything or not. Some say they think these places were heaped up by the Indians and some think it’s only the place where big trees fell and rotted. I don’t know. You can’t prove it by me.”

All this valuable information we received a score of times with monotonous likeness. In only two cases did we find a man able to tell even the number of mounds on his place.

The region we have traversed is that between Iowa City and the Big Bend (Scales’ Bend) of the Iowa River, on each bank to the distance of one to two miles. The whole territory NNW does not exceed eleven miles in direct line, or fourteen by roadway. It includes an account of eighteen groups of mounds, varying in numbers from one to seventeen in a group. (See map.) The work is but a small fraction of what should be done. It is at most but a quarter of the survey of one county. Former investigation of the literature of the subject shows that thirty-five counties in Iowa possess earthwork remains of prehistoric races.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>The result is one of coöperation. It has involved many trips on which the writer has been accompanied and aided by various interested persons—Mr. Leroy Elliott, Mr. D. W. Woods, Prof. T. J. Fitzpatrick, Prof. B. F. Shambaugh, Mrs. L. C. Ward, and Mrs. B. H. Shambaugh. Mrs. Shambaugh has drawn the maps to scale from data taken in the field.



## I. BIG BEND GROUP

In the north part of Penn Township, at the big bend of the Iowa River, in section 30, southwest quarter of the southwest quarter, there is still extant a group of 7 mounds, located mostly within the school house grounds. They have been but little tampered with and would make an excellent group for careful study. The preparation of their site for use as school yard has no doubt leveled them down to a third or a half of their former height. (See map of group and school yard.)

1. Number 1 measures 29 by 27 by 2 feet.<sup>1</sup> It remains unopened, and on it there once grew a white oak whose stump measures 10 inches and a red oak which has left a 12 inch stump behind.

2. WSW, 21 yards (from the outer edge), is another whose present measurements are 23 by 40 by 2. This has probably been slightly opened.

3. S, 3 yards, appears to have been a mound which may now measure 14 by 12 by 1. On it are two stumps, one red oak 11 inches through, and one hickory 9 inches.

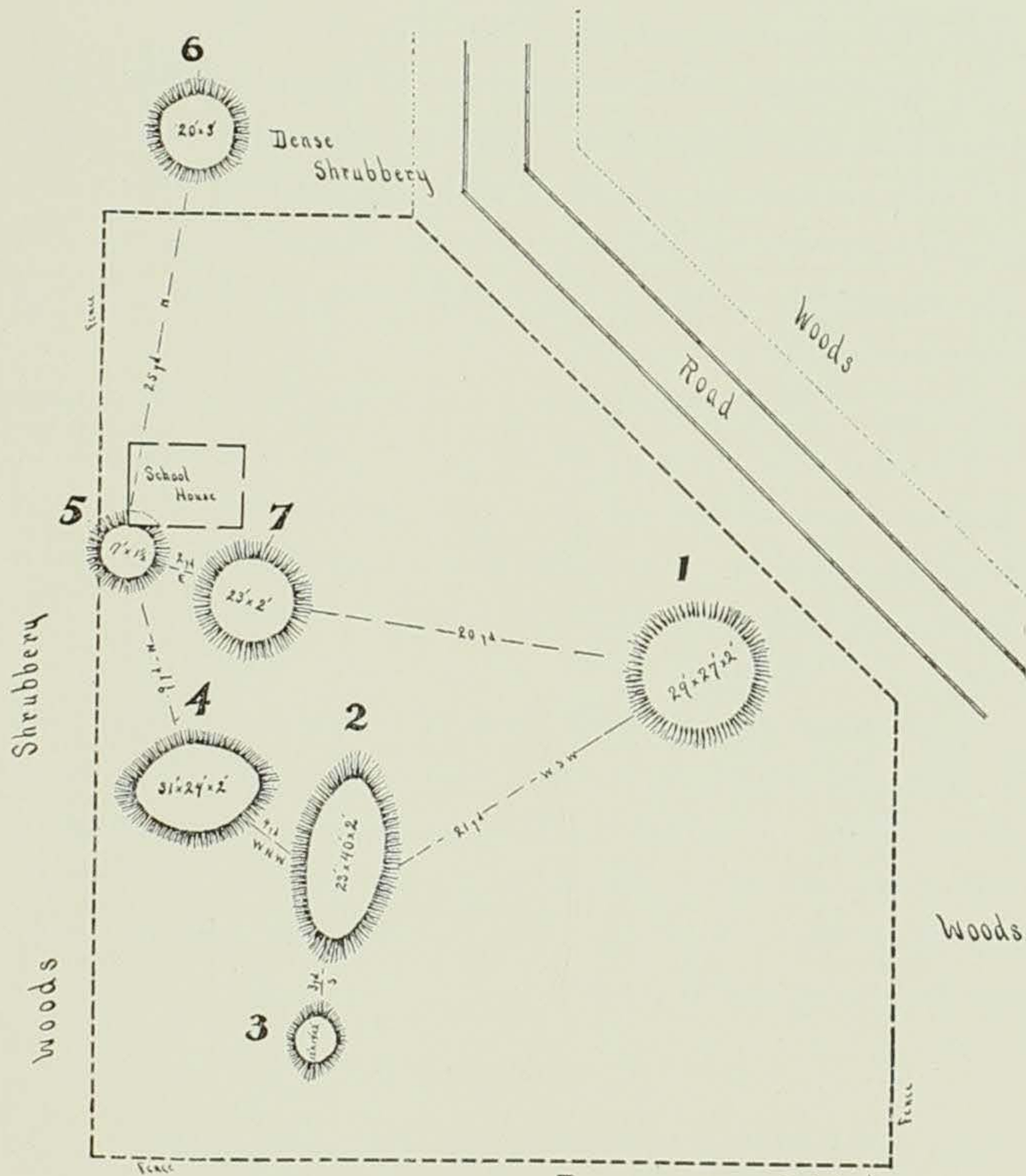
4. WNW, 4 yards, is a mound 24 by 31 by 2.

5. N, 9 yards, is a remnant of a mound which indicates 17 by 1½. The southwest corner of the school house occupies a portion of the former dimensions of this mound. On it is also an 11 inch red oak stump, which shows 45 rings, although cut some years ago. There also once grew a hickory

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<sup>1</sup>The first diameter is the one in the direction of the line of the group or toward the next mound. The next is the diameter at right angles to the first. The last number is the height. These are always given in feet. Other distances are given in yards or miles.





I  
**BIG BEND GROUP**  
**PENN TOWNSHIP**  
**SEC. 30**



tree 6 inches in diameter. This mound extends 2 feet beyond the school yard fence to the W.

6. N, 25 yards, with the west end of the school house between and also the cistern, fence, and ash house, is a mound 20 by 3. On it are stumps 6 and 8 inches in diameter and a dense growth of shrubs. Between the school house and this mound is a rounded ridge which may once have been a long mound.

7. E, 2 yards, from number 5 and 20 yards NW of number 1 is an indistinct mound 23 by 2. It has been opened, or at least more or less cut away in excavating for the site of the school house. The direct line between numbers 1 and 6 is parallel with the road running past the school yard. (See map.)

This group of mounds is remarkable for the peculiar plot or arrangement of the mounds with reference to each other. It is located on a rather less sightly position than most of the others described. Number 2 may possibly have been a tent-site (tepee bottom). The others were more probably made for sepulchral purposes.

## II. MYERS GROUP

In the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 31 in Penn Township, on property (one acre) now owned by James Beltz, formerly part of ten acres owned by J. W. Green, and further on, beyond the section line, in the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 36, on property (35.8 acres) owned by Samuel Myers, is a group of 7 mounds. (See map.)







1. Number 1 is partly on the road approaching Beltz' place, and near the southeast corner of his lot. It measures 52 by 17 by 1, extending nearly NW and SE. It may have been a large tepee bottom.

2. WNW, 7 yards, is a still larger one (possibly a tent site), 70 by 17 by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ , extending in the same direction. The ground occupied by these has recently been cleared, but the whole clearing at this place covers only an acre.

3. NW, 33 yards, begins the first of a series of five splendid mounds. The first is 25 by 24 by 3. It is located exactly a quarter of a mile S of the section corners (31, 30, 25, 36). The section line passes through it, and the line of round mounds of which this is the first, now runs SSW. This one was opened many years ago, and recently one-third of it has been dug away, the clay being used for the making of an outside milk-house. This cut made an excellent opportunity for observing its material. Aside from a thin humus soil at the top, it consists of yellow loess, well defined to the bottom. The wire fence running southward passes over it.

4. SSW, 8 yards, is a large distinct mound 24 by 4. It is partly overgrown with berry bushes and other shrubs. Like all the others of this fine group, it has been thoughtlessly spoiled by being opened.

5. SSW, 12 yards, is a mound 27 by 24 by 4. On it are two red oak stumps, 10 and 12 inches respectively, and a very rotten white oak stump 30 inches in diameter.

6. SSW, 23 yards, is a still larger mound, 27 by 29 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . On it is a hollow white oak stump 18 inches through, which has doubtless been dead a quarter of a century. 10 yards eastward is the stump of a recently cut white oak 23 inches in



diameter, which distinctly shows 185 rings. By the simple "rule of three" we can approximately find a date before which these mounds must have been constructed.  $23:18::185:x$ , and also  $23:30::185:x$ . Finishing the computation, adding a requisite number of years since the felling of the trees, and taking into consideration the difficulties under which oaks in this region must have labored to reach such growth, we arrive at a conclusion that the builders of some of these mounds quit work more than two and a half centuries ago. It may, indeed, have been much more. This evidence is negative. It only serves to indicate a time since which they have not been built. How long a time elapsed after their construction and before the acorns sprouted from which these great oaks grew, we have not as yet the data for an inference.

7. SSW, 3 yards, from this we reach the last of the group. It is 27 by 3. On it is a red oak stump 8 inches through and a white oak 7 inches.

All these mounds have been excavated with no advantage to history or science. Rumors in the neighborhood relate that human bones, implements, and ornaments have been taken from them. In one instance these bones were described as those of a giant.

The Geology of the region intimates that at no very remote time a lagoon occupied a considerable space at the Big Bend, and this, with the numerous timber regions in the valleys of the tributaries of the Iowa River, points to excellent hunting and fishing. Here came herds of animals for water and pasture. Here rested the flocks of wild geese and ducks, here collected the fish in great schools, and here apparently settled the "Mound Builders" to hunt them all.



## III. AULT GROUP

In Penn Township, in the northeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section 8, on the farm of Joseph A. Ault (239.40 acres), there was once a group of 3 mounds. Mr. Ault settled upon this place in 1849. He observed the mounds at that time, and says that the one still extant has been considerably worn down by the grazing cattle.

1. The first one is located 5 yards north of the east and west line on the north side of Arthur Ault's place. It is crossed by a north and south wire fence, and lies partly in the pasture on the east and partly in the cornfield on the west side. It measures 26 by 28 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet. It has been a fine specimen. Mr. Ault tried to preserve it, but was outwitted some two or three years ago. Some one came and opened it either at night or on a Sunday when he was away from home. He does not know who did it or what was found. If anything was found, it is lost to science; and whatever was left of an organic character hastens to decay, because of the water-catching depression made by the diggers.

2. WSW, 20 yards, in the cornfield, there once existed another of similar size. It still shows about a foot high, and the hard yellow clay betokens the spot.

3. WNW, 136 yards, in another adjoining cornfield is another spot which shows that another mound has met the same fate. Mr. Ault says that numbers 2 and 3 were once as large as number 1. He passed the remark, that if he had it to do over again, he would never have plowed them down, but would have preserved them with interest. He called our attention to the beautiful and wide-sweeping view from



this hill-top. For a little over half of his long life of eighty-six years, he has enjoyed the prospect, W, S and E, from this commanding position.

#### IV. BANE GROUP

In the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 17, Penn Township, 6 miles north of Iowa City, on land once owned by J. W. Bane, (now by Martin Koser) and  $1\frac{1}{4}$  miles west of the Iowa River, there once existed 2 mounds on the high moraine, in what is now an open cultivated field. They are completely plowed away. Mr. Bane estimates them to have been 12 to 15 feet in diameter and 3 feet high. If they were of the type usually found in this vicinity, they may have been this large at the top and from 25 to 30 feet at the base. Mr. Bane was born in 1838, and has lived south and north of Iowa City (within six miles) for sixty-two years. In 1852, when plowing here, he unearthed bones of human hands or feet from these mounds. There stood near them 3 sturdy oaks which had weathered the breezes for long periods. One of these oaks still stands, a solitary monument, in the open field, on this high oval hill. The circumstances of its position, coupled with its size would indicate great age.

Mr. Bane has distinct recollections of the Indians of the eighteen-forties and fifties. They were the Sacs, Foxes, and Musquakies. As a child he played with their children, and his father and they were neighbors. He speaks well of them. They numbered in those days a hundred to one White man. He knew their customs, and says that they were not the "Mound Builders." Their dead were buried



in shallow trenches, and were simply covered with elm and other barks. The relics of the "Mound Builders" were to them curiosities of former inhabitants. The first eight or ten years of his life in Iowa were spent south of Iowa City, some half dozen miles. He was here at the beginning of the Iowa City settlement, and has seen it through every stage of its growth.

#### V. KOSER GROUP

In the southeast corner of section 17, Penn Township, or possibly in the very northeast corner of section 20, are still to be seen the remnants of 2 mounds. They were some 20 feet in diameter and 35 yards apart. Their height cannot be made out. Mr. Bane reports another mound that was cut through and removed when the road was built at this point. They are at the curve, just where the road turns northwest at the northeast corner of section 20. The road from here angles toward the center of section 17, and then turns westward.

#### VI. PRYCE GROUP

In the center of the southeast quarter of section 28, on the road north of Butler's Bridge,  $\frac{1}{8}$  of a mile from the Iowa River, is a high ridge sloping E and W. In the road on the east side of the wagon track, there begins a row of mounds, in front of property owned by Pryce and Weber. There are 5 still visible, the last one being in the field where the road angles the second time westward. These mounds are somewhat indistinct, and accurate measurement is impossible. They were upwards of 20 feet in diameter and between 3 and 4 feet high. Numbers 1 and 2 are 7 yards



apart; from 2 to 3 is 17 yards; from 3 to 4, 10; from 4 to 5, 10. They had all been opened. The view from this point is one of the finest, N, E, or S. The ridge is composed of the same yellow loess. In this vicinity there are no woods. The stumps indicate that a growth of young trees had been cut from this ridge in comparatively recent years. The mounds are overgrown with shrubbery, and on one or more there are roots and stumps of the recently cut young forest.<sup>1</sup>

#### VII. HINRICHS-BURGER GROUP

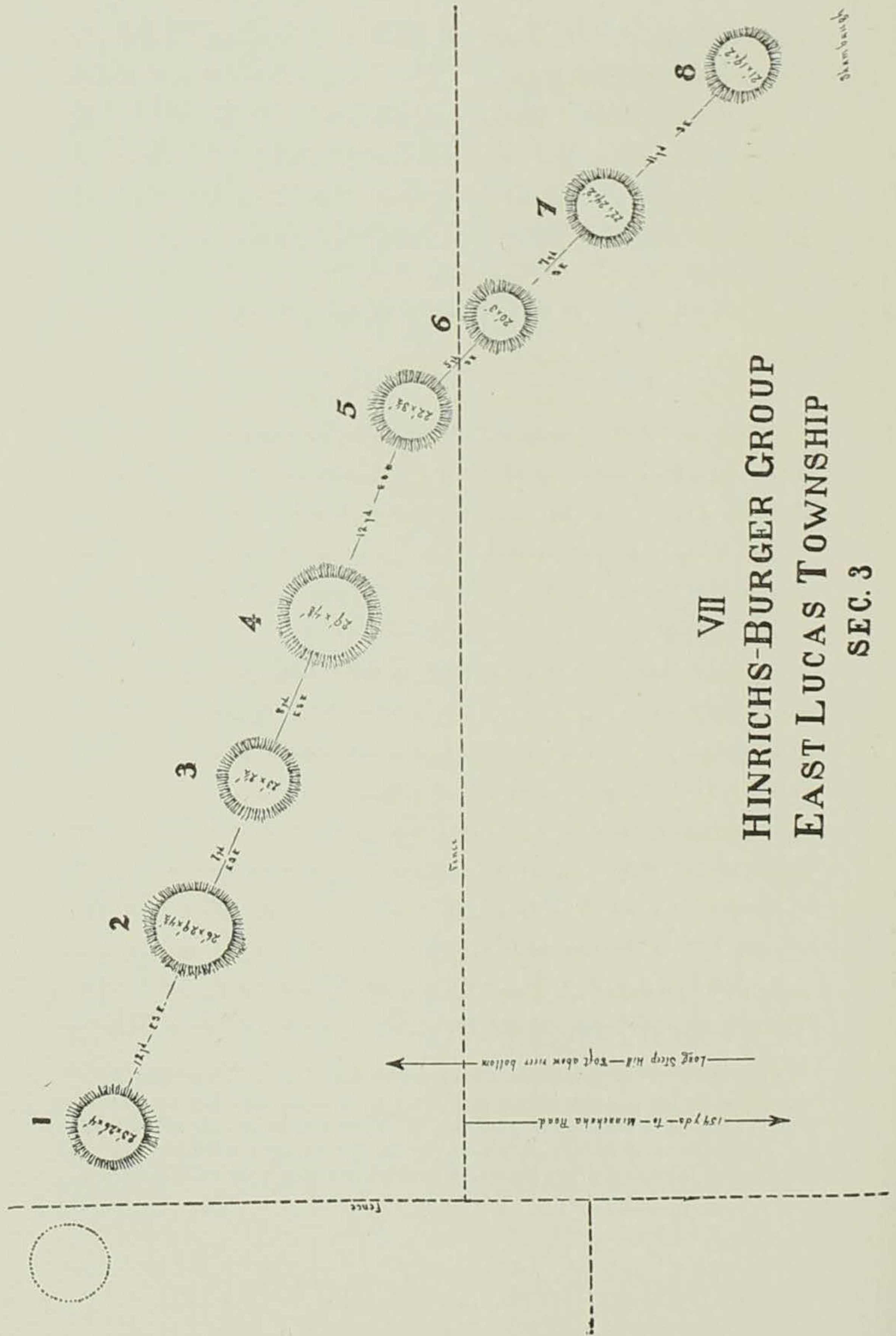
In the northwest quarter of section 3, East Lucas Township, on land now owned by Gus Hinrichs and William Burger, nearly on the line between sections 3 and 4, 154 yards N of the Minnehaha road, up a steep hill, 80 feet above the Iowa River bottoms, begins a row of 8 well-defined mounds. In the cultivated field W of the present wire fence there are intimations of two and perhaps several previously existing mounds. Those here described are in the sparsely wooded pastures on the summit of the loess ridge. (See map on page 50.)

1. Number 1, a few yards from the north and south wire fence, at the western end of the row, measures 23 by 26 feet in diameter and 4 feet high. It has been opened in the center, but is otherwise distinct in outline.

2. ESE, 12 yards, is a mound, 26 by 29 by 4½ feet. On it have grown various trees. There still stands a triplet

<sup>1</sup> Since the above measurements were taken on July 2, 1903, this group of interesting mounds has met the second fate which comes from the white man's occasional reversion to primitive indifference. Numbers 1, 2, and 3 have been plowed and scraped down by the township road-worker, and no one was present who had the slightest knowledge of the pages of human history that were being destroyed.





VII  
HINRICHS-BURGER GROUP  
EAST LUCAS TOWNSHIP  
SEC. 3



white oak which is 2 feet in diameter and 6 feet 8 inches in circumference at the base. The trees above the common trunk are 6, 5 and 4 inches respectively. Near this on the mound is a dead red oak stump, 16 inches in diameter. Considering the circumstances of growth, these trees indicate advanced age. This mound has also been opened.

3. ESE, 7 yards, is another very distinct mound, 23 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . On this is an elm stump 12 inches through, and a hickory tree 10 inches. Opened.

4. ESE, 8 yards, is the next, 29 by  $4\frac{1}{2}$ . This is perhaps the largest of the group, and a considerable age is indicated by a standing red oak tree 12 inches in diameter. Opened.

5. ESE, 12 yards, is a fine mound, 22 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . On it are 2 red oaks one of which has been dead some years, but measures 14 inches in diameter. This has apparently not been opened.

6. Here we pass the wire fence into Burger's land, and 5 yards SE we come to number 6. It is 20 by 3. On it grow 2 small hickories. It has not been opened.

7. SE, 7 yards, we reach another. This is 22 by 24 by 2. It has probably not been opened. Being considerably overgrown with weeds, it is not so distinct in outline.

8. SE, 11 yards, we reach the last of the group, 21 by 19 by 2. This has been opened, but not so thoroughly as some of the others. Like the last, it is not so distinct. Numbers 6, 7 and 8 are partially worn down by long pasturing and some cultivation. The position of the group had a commanding view before the present young timber grew up.



## VIII. TERRELL MILL GROUP

Perhaps to Iowa Cityans, the most interesting of all the groups herein mentioned is one located on the property of J. J. Englert, just above the Terrell dam, on the hill to the right (E), at the sharp bend of the Iowa River,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles N of Iowa Avenue. It is quite in the center of section 3, East Lucas. There are 6 mounds now to be seen. They are on the fine outlook, 170 yards NE from the river edge, just as it turns southward. The middle point of the group line is 120 yards NE of Englert's barn. Here the hill is very steep, and the summit is 80 feet above the low water level. The row begins 35 yards from the wire fence now marking Englert's north line. Their site is in the midst of a pasture field. It has probably never been plowed, although now very sparsely covered with timber. Within a space of about 4 acres, which includes these mounds, there are but 20 trees, all white oaks and hickories, ranging from 6 to 20 inches in diameter. The pasture is rich in white clover. (See maps on pages 53 and 37.)

1. The first mound is 30 by 28 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet. It has been partly opened, but is still well-rounded and distinct. 10 yards SES is number 2.

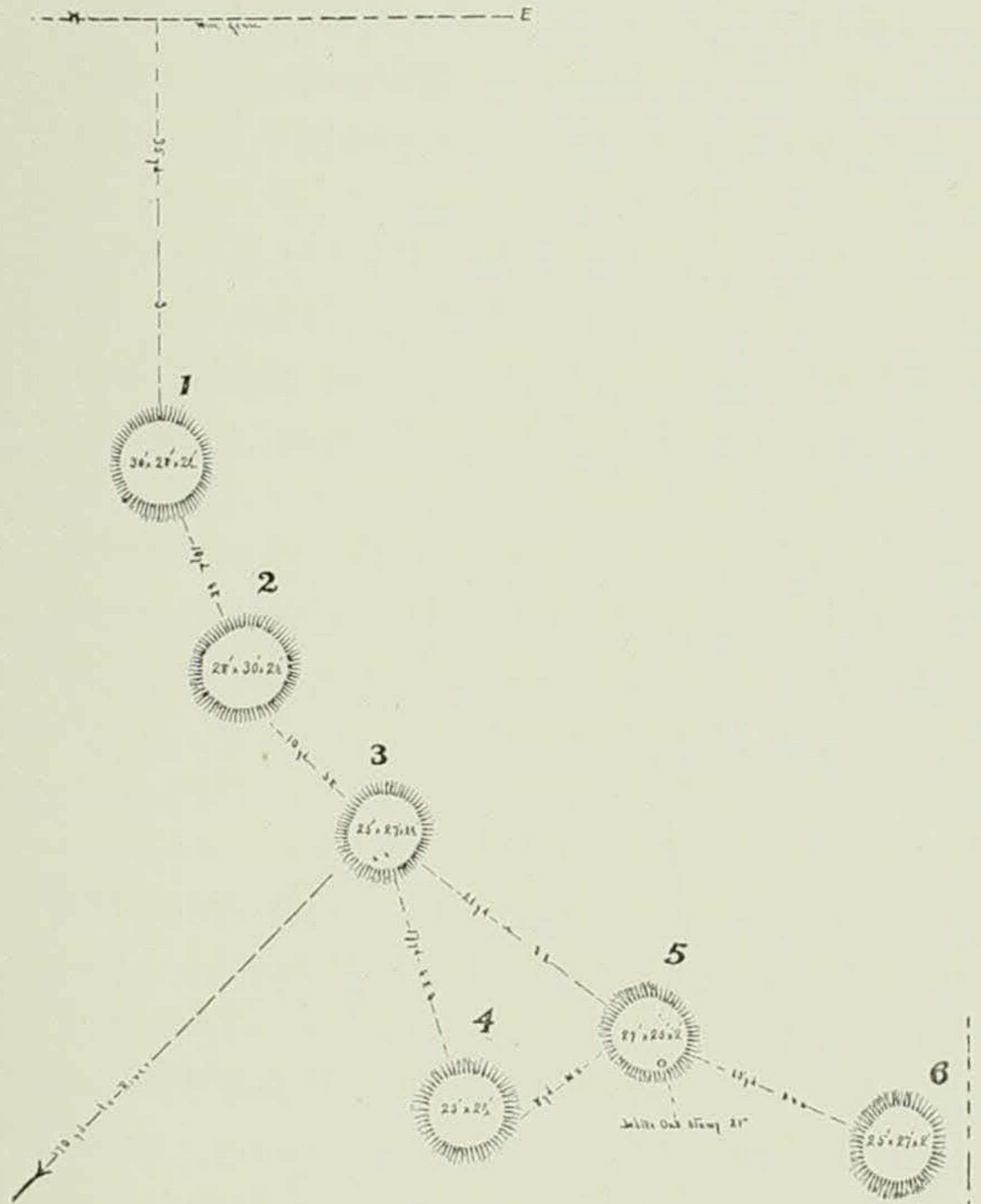
2. This one has the same dimensions—28 by 30 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ . It too has been molested. 10 yards SE is number 3.

3. This is a little smaller—25 by 27 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and has been opened only very slightly. 17 yards SES is number 4.

4. It measures 25 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , and for a wonder remains intact. Here the line of mounds is forked. 21 yards SE of number 3 and 8 yards ENE of number 4 is number 5.

5. This is 29 by 25 by 2, and contains a white oak stump,





VIII  
TERRELL MILL GROUP  
EAST LUCAS TOWNSHIP  
SEC. 3





22 inches in diameter, which was cut probably a score of years ago. This stump is evidence that the mound was not built since the year 1700 of our era. It has been dug completely through from E to W, and, like scores of other cases, the world knows not with what result. 15 yards ESE of number 5 is number 6.

6. It is 25 by 27 by 2, and has on it a dead hickory tree, 15 inches through, located on the SE edge. It has thus far escaped the terrible spade. This mound lies close beside the wire fence at the east side of Englert's land, adjoining Vincent Grissel's.

Beyond the wire fence, in the cornfield, the ground gradually rises ESE for a considerable distance. There is reason to believe that more mounds once existed here, but are now obliterated by the plow. (See map.)

#### IX. SLAVATA GROUP

Two miles E of Iowa City and half a mile N of the Rochester road, in the northwest quarter of the northeast quarter of section 11, East Lucas, on land formerly owned by Fairall, but now in the possession of Mr. Frank Slavata, there were two mounds. They have been recently plowed down and scarcely a vestige of their height is to be seen. The land in 1903 bore a crop of oats. We examined the location after the oats were cut and discovered from the character of the soil and the changed vegetation that the mounds were of the average size. The land is high, a loess-made hill, which is a bank to a tributary of Rapid Creek. Mr. Gil. Irish reports having opened these mounds. In them he found bits of pottery and some stones that had been in fire. These remains were not preserved.



## X. RILEY MOUND

On the Dubuque road, 3 miles NE from Iowa City, there is a farm owned by Mrs. C. M. Riley. The location is in the east half of section 35, Newport. The farm exists in the form of an L, with 40 acres jutting eastward from the northern end. Through this 40 acres, beginning at the southeast corner, Rapid Creek runs northward and westward. This 40 acres itself is in the southeast quarter of the northeast quarter of section 35, Newport. 85 yards W of the east line of said 40 acres and 34 yards N of the south line is located an unusually large and interesting mound. It is 52 feet in diameter and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. The land here is a bare pasture, and is said never to have been plowed. It is dotted with little holes made by the overturning of small timber and the rotting of stumps. The region of the mound is only 40 feet above the creek.

A mound of this character raises new questions and offers new difficulties. If a burial place, it is improbable that it holds the remains of but one chieftain or leader. It is too high for the assumption of a tepee foundation. On the other hand, it is located where such foundation might naturally be expected. It has not been explored.

## XI. GRIZEL GROUP

Two and a half miles, by direct line, N from Iowa City, on the farm of Alex. Grizel (formerly owned by Morrison—92 acres) there once existed a group of 15 (perhaps many more) mounds. They were on one of the most beautiful spur-shaped hills on the north bank of Rapid Creek,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  miles E of the Iowa River, overlooking timbered valleys



once prolific in game. The location is a little S of the middle of the northeast quarter of section 35, Newport. During the last three to five years, Grizel has cleared the hill of its growth of small oak and other wood, has plowed down the mounds, cultivated the field, and in this year it has borne hay in the lower two-thirds and oats above. He reports the mounds to have been "too high and large to drive over." The work of leveling is pretty nearly completed. They were doubtless the finest and handsomest row in the region by us investigated. Some of them had been opened—possibly all. The owner did not know the number, the former use, the scientific value, nor that any reverence was due. His object was to make ready for crops. These he will not get on these spots, in quantity worth the effort, during his life-time. The yellow clay which the mound builders used will not grow grain to the satisfaction of the European peasant. A fitting religious sentiment, a historical interest, an esthetic idealism or even a knowledge of agricultural science, would not have permitted the excavations, nor have thrust the plow-share through the finest, most sacred, most interesting, most picturesque, and ultimately most dollar-adding portions of these farms.

These mounds extend from NE to SW. Beginning well up on the hill, I observed the site of a former mound which I shall call number 1. Twelve yards to the S of this (from centre to centre) is number 2. Turning the angle now SW the group is as follows: 9 yards to number 3; 25 yards to 4; 20 yards to 5; 25 yards to 6; 16 yards to 7; 13 yards to 8; 15 yards to 9; 21 yards to 10; 29 yards to 11; 20 yards to 12; 15 yards to 13; 9 yards to 14; 14 yards to 15. On this



hill Grizel reports that he found many arrow points. Doubtless hundreds of fragments of bones and other sources of valuable information have escaped the untrained observer. This irretrievable ruin is the gravest warning to those interested in Anthropology and Archæology of the fate that will soon and inevitably overtake the splendid remains of a former race. The records of its material, social, religious, and other achievements will in a few years be wiped out, unless educators bring law and scientific zeal to forestop this shortsighted process.

#### XII. SUNIER MOUND

In the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of this same section 35, Newport, on the south side of the road running eastward to Grizel's farm, on the same north bank of Rapid Creek, but on relatively low land, was a lonely mound. The land is part of the old Chandler homestead and is now owned by Steven A. Sunier, whose house is on the Dubuque Road, S of the creek, nearly a mile from the mound. The site of the mound is still lower than that on the Riley farm. It was 700 yards S of the road to Grizel's, and 250 yards N of the creek. The measurements can no longer be made out, as it has been plowed over, mowed, and pastured for a generation. It is reported as having been large and conspicuous. Numerous arrow points and other flint and stone articles were found at and after the demolition.

#### XIII. F. X. AICHER GROUP

In the southeast quarter of the southeast quarter of section 27, Newport, on the north bank of Rapid Creek lives Mr. F. X. Aicher. Entering from the road, which at this point



runs NNE, we pass along the creek valley. Mr. Aicher's house and barn are on the summit of the distant north bank, perhaps 60 rods from the main road. Some 60 rods farther on, at a distance of 30 yards from the farmer's road and 80 yards NE from the nearest bend of the creek, there is what appears to be one-half of a mound. It is 40 feet above the creek. From the creek toward the mound there is first a flat bottom from 4 to 8 feet high, then the road bed 4 to 8 feet higher, then a first bank somewhat gradual in slope, and finally the more abrupt second and highest bank on which the mound rests.

The peculiarity about this mound is the fact that the south half of it is wanting. The bank here drops almost perpendicularly from 10 to 20 feet. The mound appears to have been eroded away with the bank by the side thrust of the creek stream when it ran at heights of from 15 to 30 feet above its present average water level.

The part of the mound remaining measures 28 by 17 by  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet. Near the east end of it is a rotten oak stump still 12 inches in diameter. The mound appears never to have been opened. Inquiry from the Aichers gave no information as to any former digging or excavations in that vicinity since the settlement of the Whites.

If this is a man-made mound and if its other half has been removed by erosion, it is certainly one of the most interesting of phenomena. At first sight, at least, this condition of things would seem to point to great antiquity.

Fifty-two yards W is an elevation measuring about 18 by 15 by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . It is on ground 5 feet lower than the first, and on the continuation of the same narrow spur of loess.



Six yards W of this is another rise 37 by 18 by 2.

Twelve yards W again is another, 33 by 16 by 2. This reaches almost to the end of the hill, at the place where the road turns a right angle northward.

These have not been numbered as so many indubitable mounds. To be fully sure of their character, they must be scientifically examined into. Our commission and present object do not include this. They do not appear to have been opened. More than any others here described this group involves geological problems.

#### XIV. HENRY AICHER GROUP

By direct line, 4 miles N of Iowa City, on the east bank of the Iowa River, there is still extant a row of 17 flat topped mounds. They are on the farm of Henry J. Aicher, running from the north middle part of section 27 into the southwest quarter of the southeast quarter of section 22, Newport. This farm was formerly owned by Zypress Aicher, father of Henry, who settled upon it as the first actual improver and farmer.

The region is very hilly. Here are two long narrow loess ridges running nearly N and S, with a small creek (Sanders) between, and the Iowa River to the west of the western ridge. The western ridge, on which the mounds are located, averages from 80 to 100 feet above river level. This ridge is covered with a thin dark soil. The mass of it consists largely of yellow clay (loess), surmounting impure (Devonian) limestone strata. It is now, and has been for more than half a century, partially covered with small oak, poplar, and other native woods. This timber has been twice cut and regrown since the Aichers settled there.



1. The first mound is at the apex of a hillock, just N of the north end of the now tilled land. It is on ground 10 feet higher than any of the others, and like the others, it is situated directly in the middle or highest back of the ridge. It measures 25 by 26 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet (possibly more originally).<sup>1</sup> Like all the rest of this group, it has been opened by individuals who have published no records. According to Mr. Aicher's testimony, this was 20 years or more ago. He has the recollection that these mounds produced skulls and other bones, charcoal, and rings. Whatever other objects he does not remember. 18 yards N of this is mound number 2. (See maps on pages 61 and 37.)

2. It measures 22 by 3. It had also been opened, but the opening was smaller and the excavation much less complete. 15 yards N comes number 3.

3. This was probably oval, 20 by 26 by 3. It had been opened earlier than the others and an old road, long unused, had been made across it. This road had considerably changed the form of the mound and had cut through to the bottom. 12 yards N of this is number 4.

4. It is 22 by 4. The openings in the mounds were nearly always made in the center, and only in two or three cases did they extend to either margin. 25 yards N of this is number 5.

5. This, too, is nearly circular, 25 by 24 by 4. The former explorers had thrown out many stones of a miscellaneous character, both as to form and kind. Some of them were river-washed, Devonian pieces. One was 14 by

<sup>1</sup> These measurements do not entirely correspond with Webster's in *Smithsonian Report*, 1887, p. 594; but we have surveyed the group twice (June 27 and Sept. 11, 1903), and believe our work nearly correct.







20 by 3 inches in size. A small incision showed a disturbed yellow clay to the depth of 4 feet. This mound occupies the nearest approach of the series to the river. In a horizontal line the distance would be 100 yards and then a nearly perpendicular, stratified-rock bank of 50 feet. The whole height at this point from low water to the top of the ridge is 80 feet. On the mound are 2 white oak stumps, 10 and 12 inches in diameter. 12 yards southwest of this mound there is still standing a much decayed oak stump, which is now  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet in diameter. Doubtless its tree was cut down in the early days of the White settlement. Being on such high land, subject to the strong Iowa winds in every direction, receiving relatively small amounts of water at its roots which struggle to pierce the hard yellow clay beneath, it is undoubtedly very old, and possibly lived for more than three centuries. Perhaps it shaded the builders of these mounds when they camped upon this admirable lookout! Perhaps again, they had finished their labors and were gone long, long before this oak was sprouted.

Eleven yards N of number 5 is a long, low, indistinct raise of ground which may have been a mound. It is 140 feet long, from 20 to 12 feet wide, and from 1 to  $1\frac{1}{4}$  feet high. The south end is broader than the north. 70 yards NNW of this is number 6.

6. It measures 24 by 3. Here begins the second subgroup. This mound had been opened and is not so distinct in outline. 5 yards only NNW of this is number 7.

7. This is 24 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . It offered nothing significant, except the persistence of the idea. 16 yards N is number 8.

8. Though more difficult to measure, it is apparently 30



by 26 by 3. This one was rather more interesting from the fact that it contained many limestones, varying in length from 3 inches to a foot or more. It had been much tramped upon by the White man's cattle, and there had grown up in it 2 oak trees 10 inches in diameter, also several smaller ones—oak, poplar, etc. 11 yards N is number 9.

9. The diameter is 22 and the height 3. In it are 2 poplar trees, 8 and 10 inches, 1 oak 8 inches through, and several smaller oaks. 25 yards N is number 10.

10. It is round, 2 by 3. The opening made in former years, was completely across. 10 yards N is number 11.

11. This is a large oval, 54 by 17 by  $1\frac{1}{4}$ . A wire fence running nearly E and W crosses this mound near the middle. The line between sections 27 and 22 is a few yards S. The opening at the north end of the mound was very slight. In this vicinity the woods show evidence of many piles of cordwood having lain for considerable periods, and possibly this mound has been torn down by the wood cutting and hauling of many years. 12 yards N is number 12.

12. From its position it is rather conspicuous, though its measures are only 24 by 20 by 3. It is trodden down very hard. 45 yards NNE there may have been a mound, but the evidence is not clear enough to so mark one. 74 yards NNE from mound number 12 is number 13.

13. The last of the three sub-groups begins with this—24 by 2. The woods here are quite open and signs of former wood-piles are indicated by the smartweed and other imported vegetation. This mound has been but slightly opened. 7 yards NNE is number 14.

14. Oval, low, but distinct—21 by 27 by 2. 9 yards N is number 15.



15. Round and defined, but not conspicuous—30 by 2. 62 yards NNE is number 16.

16. Here is one of the best in this fine group—27 by 30 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . It contains poplar and oak trees, 9 and 6 inches respectively. The yellow clay near the bottom (where it had been opened) gives evidence of having been subject to the decay of some organic substances. In occasional spots are whitish and slaty gray discolorations. It is certain to have been a burial place. 36 yards NNE is number 17.

17. The last of the series is 24 by 27 by 3. Being a very fine and promising mound, it had been widely opened in the center. On the margin are growing two oaks, 8 and 10 inches through, also other smaller trees. The woods are quite dense at this point. No mounds were found N of this.

#### XV. TURKEY CREEK GROUP

On the north bank of Turkey Creek, at the junction with the Iowa River, in the northeast quarter of section 22, Newport, there is a group of 7 mounds. They are 100 feet above low water and 35 yards from the edge of the nearly perpendicular bluff of the river. This bluff is composed of loess on gravel, and this on Devonian limestone.

1. The first is 30 by  $3\frac{1}{2}$ . It contains a white oak tree 7 inches, a large-toothed aspen 8 inches, and other smaller timber. Like the best mounds everywhere, it had been dug open, yet rather incompletely. The north half of the mound should be scientifically investigated under State auspices.

2. N of this 12 yards is another, measuring 33 by 25 and not more than 1 foot high. On it are 12 small trees, the



largest an aspen, 8 inches. Near by are decayed red oak stumps as large as 22 inches. This mound would come under the class which I assume may possibly have been tent-bottoms.

On the theory that the burial mounds may represent the last resting place of chiefs, a series of them would indicate a dynasty or the duration of a settlement. A group like this might indicate the burial of but one chief, and hence a relatively short tribal residence.

#### XVI. CROSCHEK GROUP

On land designated under the name of Barbara Croschek, on the north bank of the Iowa River where it runs 1 mile E, in the southeast quarter of section 16, Newport, in a field now used for pasture purposes and directly opposite "The Ford," there is a group of four thistle-covered, inconspicuous mounds.

1. In this rough pasture, 300 yards NNE of the river, a little E of where the river turns E, on the first ridge (or foot-ridge to the second bottom) and 40 feet above low water, is a mound 24 by 1. It had been opened, no one knows when or with what result.

2. W of this 10 yards is another 30 by 28 by 1. It had been opened, but with less diligence.

3. W again 5 yards is another, 24 by 26 by  $1\frac{1}{2}$ . It contained a much decayed white oak stump, 8 inches in diameter. For some unaccountable reason (perhaps because the strength of the diggers gave out) it has escaped the usual fate.

4. Only 2 yards to the W, we come to the next, 28 by 26



by 2. The indications of age are greater by the fact of 2 ancient white oak stumps, 15 and 14 inches respectively. The mound had been opened.

Here let it be observed that former investigators by their digging have left holes in the tops of the mounds which catch and retain the water as the years and decades roll on. Thus have they insured the destruction and decay, sooner or later, of everything organic (bones, clothing, wooden implements, etc.,) that was left unfound.

#### XVII. SWEENEY GROUP

In a woods adjoining the Croschek field, in the same section and quarter, 50 yards to the W of the fourth Croschek mound, and 200 yards N, beyond a wire fence, in an aspen grove, 100 yards E of the Iowa River, just before it turns eastward, 50 feet above low water, on land now owned by Alex. Sweeney, is a group of 3 mounds.

1. The first is 22 feet in diameter and about 2 feet high. On it are 2 aspen trees 9 and 6 inches. The shrubbery is plentiful and may have been so for generations. Perhaps as a consequence this mound has escaped excavation.

2. Directly N, at a distance of 9 yards, is a mound 25 by 30 by 3. It has on it a white oak tree of 10 inches, an aspen of 6, and a red oak of 8. Being higher and more conspicuous it has, naturally enough, been opened.

3. To the N again 29 yards are the indications of a tent-bottom (if this be the correct theory) 54 by 19 by 1. It has borne its share in the growing of this beautiful grove. 5 aspens of 10 inches and under, a red oak of 6, a hickory of 5, and twin white oaks of 11 and 9 (with a bowl 24 inches),



another white oak of 8, plunge their roots through it and into the loess-covered, oval-shaped hill.

#### XVIII. YERIS GROUP

A mile and a half from the north line of Newport, the Iowa River, after running due E for half a mile, turns S at almost a sharp right angle. In the southeast quarter of the northwest quarter of section 9, on the farm of B. Yeris (106.7 acres), on the east bank of a nameless run, flowing SW into the Iowa River, near the right angle just mentioned, at the very center of the section, there are 2 isolated mounds. The hill is very gradual and broad-topped. It is now, and has been during the White man's occupation, covered with woods.

The first mound is located 40 yards W from M. Champion's line. They are 50 yards apart, and the second one is about 150 yards N of the river. Number 1 is 27 by 2. Number 2 is 24 by 2. The direction between the mounds is SW and NE. The shrubbery and underbrush in this region is very dense. The woods have long been pastured and marked with the tracks of wood hauling. Both of the mounds have been explored.

#### THE LESSON AND ITS SUGGESTIONS

“Those clustered mounds of yellow clay—  
Are they but dirt-heaps, in the way,  
Piled by some savage, yesterday—  
Or something more?”

That depends.

In 35 counties in Iowa there exist the works of some far back race or races who have dwelt here before us. About them we have no other sources of information. These



sources, however, are sufficient if we once realize it. Their number, kind, contents, environment, condition, age, positions, etc., would tell volumes to him who can read history thus written.

Ours is an age assuming to treat things in the scientific spirit, which in other words means sincerely, honestly, systematically—simply being square with the facts. Here then are the facts. And this is but a little sample lesson of what like efforts would reveal in a hundred regions. It has only laid out the field of work in a small area.

We should then, as a State, look up, survey, preserve by law, and properly investigate these fast vanishing remains of former peoples. We should do this:—

1. To improve our own knowledge.
2. To forward the science of Anthropology and its cognate sciences—Ethnology, Archæology, and History.
3. To solve the many problems of which these earth-works are the keys.
4. To parallel, in our own rich field, the efforts now being made by our sister States—Wisconsin and Ohio especially, in producing the data for the most extended comparisons.
5. To save the monuments themselves (as we would have our tombs and monuments saved), that they may be a constant source of instruction and moral improvement to future generations.
6. To show the respect due to the dead—even though they were of other races—and thus to cultivate the highest virtues among ourselves.

DUREN J. H. WARD

IOWA CITY, IOWA