

THE MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

Located in the City of St. Paul, was incorporated in 1849, "for the collection and preservation of a LIBRARY,
MINERALOGICAL and GEOLOGICAL SPECIMENS, &c."

As it is in its infancy, and far removed from the large and prosperous Institutions of the East, Contributions to aid
in carrying out its objects are respectfully solicited." *J. F. Williams* *H. H. Sibley*.
CHARLES E. MAYO, Secretary. *EDWARD M. NICHES*, President.

St. Paul. Feb 8/68.

O. C. Marsh Esq.

New Haven, Conn.

Sir,

I was very much gratified in reading in the October number of the Historical Magazine an article by you descriptive of the opening of a certain mound near Newark, Ohio, and take the liberty of dropping you a note in reference to the subject in general. The enclosed circular will show you that we are endeavoring to collect information on this head, and we certainly are beginning to amass many facts as to locality and general description of simple mounds, for earthworks of the kind ~~exist~~ in Ohio, i.e. of geometrical form are not found here. We opened one of a group of mounds on the shores of Lake Minnetonka

last fall, and found a somewhat similar state of things to that you desire - the remains of four persons at the bottom, and above them burned bones and wood ashes. The skulls we got have been restored very well and photographed, and if you could help us to a scientific description of them, - I mean an ethnological expression of opinion - I will send you a copy of the photographs.

If you have an extra number of the Historical Mag. in which your article is I would much like to have you send it me.

Yours respectfully,

Alfred J. Hill.

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John F. Williams, Secretary.

W. R. Marshall, President.

St. Paul. Minn.

April 7. 1868.

Professor O. C. Marsh
Yale College,

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 2^d ult
was duly received. Many thanks for the pam-
phlets you sent at the same time - they were handed
to the Secy of the Society. Any thing else of the
kind you may like to send us will be duly
appreciated.

I inclose you a stereoscopic view of the
skulls found at Lake Minnetonka. I will also
send you a memorandum of their dimensions if you
will give me directions as to how you would like
measurements to be made or refer me to some
good authority for methods - in the Smithsonian or
elsewhere. If it would be worth while we can
have the skulls, or the two perfect ones, photographed.

again with a view to inspection by scientific men,
but I would first of all like to have some hints
as to placing them in the most favorable positions.

I see by the catalogue of your college that
you have ten of the various geological reports published
by your State Legislature - the others are not to be had
now readily but if we get a few extra copies by some
means the Survey and myself intend to lay aside
one of each kind for your library.

I forward you, with this mail, two
copies of a map of Vermilion Lake published by
me, one for yourself and one for the geological
department of your college library.

With regard to articles of antiquity of
this region in our possession we are as yet
but poorly off - we are only but just beginning
to awaken public attention in the subject of
local archaeology and have but such specimens
of pottery as have been discovered ~~and~~ in our
recent explorations together with a few other articles
from the first year of the Survey without labels
to tell us as to their origin. We trust to do

better however in future. The only thing I own
myself is a common flint arrow head which
I saw ploughed up by a breaky plough in the
NE part of Belle Chasse Is (Groothuis Is) in this
State some years since (1859) which will do
service in your museum as a genuine speci-
men from Southern Minnesota, and I herewith
send it you.

Yours respectfully,

Alfred J. Hill.

C I R C U L A R.

Rooms of the Minnesota Historical Society,)
St. Paul, Minnesota, August 1, 1867. }

SIR:

The ancient artificial earthworks existing within the limits of Minnesota, and which probably have an uninterrupted connection with those of Wisconsin, Iowa and the Mississippi Valley, are proper subjects of investigation by the State Historical Society, and are of the greatest importance to the antiquary. In consequence of the progress of settlement, the liability to destruction of these interesting monuments indicates the importance of their prompt and thorough exploration.

The fact that, according to the reports of competent travelers and explorers, antiquities of this character cease to be found at a comparatively short distance west of Minnesota, makes this region especially worthy of examination and research. It is believed to be the *frontier* country of the Mound Builders in the direction of the North-West. An accurate and comprehensive collection of facts will alone enable the archaeologist to ascertain the points of settlement of this mysterious race; and from the discoveries thus made, he may also indicate their customs and proficiency in the arts, and perhaps, even their routes of migration.

To collect information of the localities and formation of these earthworks, of the implements, pottery, and other articles manufactured by their builders, whether found in the mounds themselves or elsewhere, is the purpose of the present circular, and your aid is most earnestly and respectfully solicited in the accomplishment of this object. If you are in possession of any of the facts indicated, please state them in the following order, viz:

1st. The precise locality, if possible—Section, Township and Range, when surveyed—of the earthworks described, and whether on an elevated site, commanding an extensive prospect, or on one naturally adapted to defensive purposes.

2d. The precise locality in which relics (pottery, &c.,) have been found.

3d. If the works are "mounds"—tumuli—their number, form, (circular or elliptical,) and size, and whether they occur in groups or separately. In the former case, whether arranged with regularity or apparent design.

4th. If embankments, or trenches, that appear to be of equal age with the mounds, their height or depth, shape and dimensions; and whether or not in connection with or in the immediate neighborhood of tumuli.

5th. If trees are growing on the earthworks, describe whether or not they are of the same character and age as those of the vicinity in general.

6th. Whether or not any openings or excavations have been made, before or after receiving this circular, into any of the works described, and if so, to what depth, and whether or not any implements or relics, such as metal or stone hammers or hatchets, flint arrow-heads, pottery, (broken or perfect,) human remains, burned wood or ashes, &c., have been found therein. Also the general nature of the earth, and if any difference in its compactness and characteristics, note and describe the same.

7th. By whom the information sent was obtained, and when; whether by actual personal inspection, measurement, and survey, or from hearsay. In the former case, a sketch or diagram of the relative positions of the mounds and adjacent topography, with drawings of the articles found, will be highly appreciated.

In addition to earthworks, *stone heaps* of ancient origin, and evidently of artificial formation, are occasionally found. Such objects should be described with the same care as the earth tumuli.

It may be that you are familiar enough with a certain tract of country to state positively that there are no such works or relics discoverable in it. If so, a statement to that effect, describing the district in question, is requested.

Our researches are not closely bounded by the lines of the State, but include the "ancient monuments" of the portions of Wisconsin, Iowa, Dakota, and the British Possessions, in the vicinity of Minnesota, and this circular is intended to apply to them.

It is hoped that, by making the collection of facts indicated, the materials for a complete description of the remains of the Mound Builders in Minnesota and the adjacent regions referred to, may be obtained, for the purpose of publication under the auspices of the Society.

Any relics of this ancient race in your possession, or that you may be able to procure from others, which you will be willing to give to the Historical Society, will be gratefully received, and carefully preserved in its cabinets, for future reference and inspection. We also solicit, for the Library of the Society, copies of books or pamphlets on the subject of American antiquities in general, or of magazines and newspapers, containing articles on the same topic.

In conclusion, we desire to call the attention of explorers to the fact, that the remains of the Mound Builders found in their tumuli, are generally beneath the centre and on a level with the adjacent *natural surface* of the earth; and that by excavating a shaft from any point of the circumference of the mound at its base, to the centre, any objects of interest deposited therein by its makers will, if still existing, be most probably revealed.

Address all communications to ALFRED J. HILL, St. Paul, Minn.

Respectfully,

Your obedient servants,

D. A. ROBERTSON,
C. DEMONTREVILLE,
ALFRED J. HILL.

Committee on Archaeology, Minn. Hist. Soc'y.