

**THE PRE-HISTORIC REMAINS
WHICH WERE FOUND ON THE
SITE OF THE CITY OF CINCINNATI,
OHIO, WITH A VINDICATION OF
THE "CINCINNATI TABLET"**

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The pre-historic remains which were found on the site of the city of Cincinnati, Ohio, with a vindication of the "Cincinnati tablet" by Robert Clarke

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ROBERT CLARKE

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PRE-HISTORIC REMAINS

CINCINNATI, OHIO



*The Waverly Tablet
Found in a mound at Waverly, Ohio*

THE
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WHICH WERE FOUND

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WITH A

VINDICATION

OF THE

“CINCINNATI TABLET”

By ROBERT CLARKE

CINCINNATI
1876

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PRE-HISTORIC REMAINS

AT CINCINNATI, OHIO.

THE first notice we have of the existence of ancient works on the site of the city of Cincinnati is in a letter addressed to Dr. Benjamin S. Barton, of Philadelphia, by Colonel Winthrop Sargent, Secretary and Governor *pro tem* of the Northwest Territory, dated Cincinnati, September 8, 1794, and published in the *Transactions* of the Society, vol. 4, p. 177. With this letter, he sent drawings of a number of articles found in a grave near the mound which stood on the northeast corner of Third and Main streets. These articles were afterward presented to the Society, and are figured on two plates, which follow the letter in the volume, with explanations of their character, etc. He had, however, little knowledge of mineral substances, and made some mistakes as to the materials of which some of the articles were composed, which were corrected by Judge George Turner, in a communication to the Society dated November 25, 1799, which is published in the 5th volume of the *Transactions*, p. 74.

These relics are also the subject of a long letter from Dr. Barton to Rev. Joseph Priestley, which occupies pp. 181 to 215 of vol. 4 of the *Transactions*.

Colonel Sargent describes the location in which these relics were found, as follows:

"The body with which this collection was interred, was found lying in nearly a horizontal position, about five feet from the sur-

face of the earth, with the head toward the setting sun, and at the southwest side of, or about fifteen feet from, an extensive mound of earth, raised probably for the purpose of a burial-ground, upon the margin of the second bank of the Ohio river (suddenly rising fifty feet above the first), and now elevated, in the extreme, eight feet from the general level of the same, with a gradual slope in the various directions, and a base of about one hundred and twenty feet by sixty. One of the main streets of the town passes through the western part of this grave, and in the frequent repairs of the acclivity, human bones have often been found. . . . I should not omit to mention to you, that upon this mound are stumps of oak trees seven feet in diameter."

This mound was, however, merely an appendage to the general works on the upper plain, mentioned by Colonel Sargent, but not described. The first description of them is given by Dr. Daniel Drake in his *Picture of Cincinnati*, published in 1815. This I will use freely in endeavoring to give an idea of the character of the works.

Cincinnati is built on two levels or benches of an alluvial plain, surrounded on the east, north, and west by hills of the lower silurian limestone—on the south is the Ohio river. On the lower level, or "bottom," no works of the mound-builders existed. Of this, however, we have only negative evidence; if any works existed on it, they may have gradually been obliterated by the overflow of the Ohio river, to which the bottom is subject. The "hill," as it was called in early days, rose from fifty to seventy feet above the bottom, and in its natural state was quite abrupt, but is now, of course, graded down to suit the exigencies of a city. It commenced near Deer Creek, in the eastern part of the city, about two hundred feet distant from the Ohio. Thence

westward, following about the course of Congress and Third streets, it receded from the river till the bottom attained a width of from eight hundred to twelve hundred feet, when it gradually merged into Mill Creek bottom on the west, facing which the bank became more irregular and more gradual in its slope.

The central work, a large, broad ellipse, was located about three hundred and fifty feet from this bank, and extended from the west side of Race street nearly to Walnut, and from a little above Fifth street to a little below Fourth street. It was about eight hundred feet from east to west, and six hundred and sixty feet from north to south. It consisted of an embankment three feet high, with a base of thirty feet, and was composed of loam, evidently taken from the neighborhood. There was no ditch on either side, and, within the wall, the ground had its natural uneven or waving surface, with nothing to indicate manual labor expended in leveling or grading. On the east end, there was an opening or gateway of about ninety feet, and on each side of this, exterior and contiguous to the embankment, was a broad elevation or parapet of an indeterminate figure. From the southern one, a low embankment one foot high with a base of nine feet extended southward to within a short distance from the top of the bank, which it then followed eastward until it connected with the mound, mentioned by Colonel Sargent, on the corner of Third and Main streets, over five hundred feet distant.

From the parapet on the opposite side of the gateway, no bank of this kind could be traced; but immediately north of it, at a short distance, were two shapeless and insulated elevations more than six feet high.

as if in a turning-lathe." These are supposed to have been used in weaving, or as sinkers in fishing. It is asserted by some observers that they are never found except near deep rivers. Judge Turner gives the materials of which they are composed as follows: Fig. 1, greenish-gray porphyry; Fig. 2, jasper; Fig. 3, pure, transparent crystal; Fig. 4, granite; Fig. 5, a ferruginous stone, perhaps of volcanic origin (hematite?). Fig. 7 is a circular ring figure, made from cannel coal, with a wide and deep groove in the outer edge; Fig. 8, similar to the last, but smaller, made from a fat, argillaceous stone, capable of a fine polish; Fig. 6 represents a finely carved head and beak of an "eagle, or other rapacious bird, the upper mandible having a cultrated point, the distinguishing mark of birds belonging to this class;" this figure shows considerable skill in the art of carving; Fig. 9, a small piece of thin copper, with two perforations; Fig. 10, a sheet of copper, bent into a tube, corrugated on one side, evincing some proficiency in the manipulation of the metal; Figs. 11 and 12, the two sides of a bone, with "hieroglyphics" on each; this is but a fragment—the design is so curious that it is a matter of regret that it was not found more perfect.

Besides the above, Dr. Drake mentions, as having been found in the mound, a mass of lead ore (*galena*), lumps of which have been found in other tumuli; a quantity of mica; a number of beads, or sections of small hollow cylinders, apparently of bone or shell; the teeth of a carnivorous animal, probably those of a bear; several large marine shells, belonging to the genus *buc-*