

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Grave Creek Mound
other names/site number _____

2. Location

street & number Ninth Street and Tomlinson Avenue not for publication
city, town Moundville vicinity
state West Virginia code WV county Marshall code 051 zip code 26041

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input type="checkbox"/> district	_____	_____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> site	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	_____	_____ sites
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	_____	<u>5</u> structures
		<u>1</u>	_____ objects
			<u>7</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing: N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of certifying official _____

Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official _____

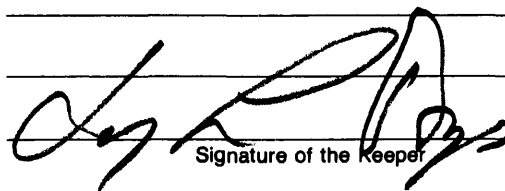
Date _____

State or Federal agency and bureau _____

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined eligible for the National Register. See continuation sheet.
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register.
- other, (explain:) NHL boundary study


Signature of the Keeper

11/4/92
Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Funerary/Cemetary

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Landscape/Park

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(enter categories from instructions)

N/A

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation N/A

walls N/A

roof N/A

other N/A

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

nationally statewide locally National Historic Landmark

Applicable National Register Criteria A B C D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) A B C D E F G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)
Archeology -- prehistoric

Period of Significance
ca. 300 BC - 200 BC

Significant Dates
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
Adena culture

Significant Person
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office
- Other State agency
- Federal agency Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
- Local government
- University
- Other

Specify repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property ca. 2.1 acres

UTM References

A

1	7	5	2	1	8	0	0	4	4	1	8	4	3	7
Zone		East	ing					North						ing

B

1	7	5	2	1	7	3	3	4	4	1	8	3	7	0
Zone		East	ing					North						ing

C

1	7	5	2	1	8	0	0	4	4	1	8	3	0	3
Zone		East	ing					North						ing

D

1	7	5	2	1	8	6	7	4	4	1	8	3	7	0
Zone		East	ing					North						ing

See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Denise L. Grantz (See continuation sheet)

organization NPW Consultants, Inc. date Oct. 15, 1985

street & number RD 6, Box 280 telephone (412) 438 0586

city or town Uniontown state PA zip code 15401

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National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

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Owner of Property

Mary Susan Burke
524 Ninth Street
Moundsville, West Virginia 26041

Chief Elected Municipal Officials

Dorothy Durig, Mayor
City Building
Sixth Street
Moundsville, West Virginia 26041

James Williams, City Manager
City Building
Sixth Street
Moundsville, West Virginia 26041

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 7 Page 1Description

Grave Greek Mound, located between Eighth and Tenth Streets in Moundsville, West Virginia, appears today much as it did when first viewed by Euro-americans approximately two hundred years ago. In numerous early accounts, the structure was described as a truncated cone marked by a shallow, central concavity. The observed dimensions of the mound ranged from 60-100 feet in height and 180-300 feet in diameter. Some, like Captain Meriwether Lewis in 1803,¹ mentioned the existence of a shallow ditch or moat around the base of the mound and a passageway or two across the ditch. Other observers of the period noted the absence of such a ditch.

Today, after minimal erosion, the mound stands approximately 62 feet high and 240 feet in diameter. A series of thirteen exploratory trenches excavated in 1975-76 by the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey (Figure 1) confirmed the existence of a roughly 40-foot wide by 4- to 5-foot deep moat probably circumscribing the base of the mound and the presence of at least one passageway across the moat on the south side.

The most authoritative known records of the mound complex were published between 1845-51 by scholar and anthropologist Henry R. Schoolcraft who visited the site in 1843. His map of the Grave Greek Mound area (Figure 2)² depicts the relative proximity of the large mound to smaller mounds and remnants of linear earthworks. All traces of these earthworks immediately surrounding Grave Greek Mound have disappeared.

Despite the considerable attention focused upon the mound throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, physical impact on the mound has been minimal over the years. In 1838 amateur archaeologists opened two horizontal shafts and one vertical shaft to the core of the mound revealing two large timbered burial vaults (Figure 3). In addition to the discovery of three individual skeletons within these tombs, an assortment of grave items was also found including thousands of shell beads, five copper bracelets, assorted mica objects, and two gorgets. With the exception of a cranial cap from one of the skeletons, all of the finds from the 1838 excavation have disappeared.

After 1838 no archeological work was conducted at the site until 1975 when the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey excavated the exploratory trenches at the base of the mound. At the same time thirteen core samples were extracted from the mound-fill to obtain further information regarding the

¹ Hemmings, E. Thomas, "Investigations at Grave Creek Mound 1975-76: A Sequence for Mound and Moat Construction," West Virginia Archaeologist 36 (Fall 1984):10.

² Schoolcraft, Henry R. Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Conditions, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company 1851.

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mound construction and the Adena culture, which is believed to be the culture of the mound builders. As a result of the core sampling, it was postulated that the mound, radiocarbon dated at 200 B.C., was not constructed in two distinct building phases as previously believed but rather was the product of continuous building over a century or more.

Aside from these archaeological incursions, the mound has sustained few other noticeable changes. Between 1838 and 1909 three structures were erected atop the mound: a three story "observatory" in ca. 1843 (Figure 4), a saloon in 1860, and later a dance platform. Each of these structures was subsequently removed. In 1909 the State of West Virginia purchased the mound. Soon after the state purchase, the depression in the mound apex was filled and leveled and grass and shrubbery were planted on the surface to minimize erosion. Later a retaining wall was constructed against the western edge of the mound to provide support where a small section was cut away during construction of Tomlinson Avenue.

Between 1945-52, under the leadership of Delf Norona (founder of West Virginia Archaeological Society), a small stone museum was constructed at the foot of the mound. Two other small buildings were similarly constructed near the base although one has recently been razed. The state has erected a stone parapet on the top of the mound as well as a stone spiral stairway from the base to the mound apex. Further, the mound has been enclosed by a metal picket fence to inhibit vandalism, and some trees surrounding the mound have been removed to enhance its visibility.

Since establishing the mound site as a state park in 1967, more of the surrounding lands have been acquired by the state and the existing dwellings removed to showcase the mound in a more natural setting. Within the park but immediately outside the proposed landmark boundaries is the recently constructed Delf Norona Museum which focuses on Grave Creek Mound and on the Adena presence in the Upper Ohio Valley.

At present, the non-contributing features associated with the mound and contained within the landmark boundaries are listed below (Refer to Map "A" and photographs). All represent 20th century alterations of minimal impact to the landmark.

1. Two small single story buildings are located at the toe of the mound on the south and south west sides. The larger structure, measuring approximately 49'x 28' represents the previous museum and gift shop. The smaller building is approximately one-half the size of the old museum. Both buildings are erected atop the moat area and may extend several feet into the moat fill.
2. A spiral stairway constructed of stone slabs, ca. two feet wide, extends from the foot of the mound to the summit.
3. A concrete sidewalk, approximately three feet wide and extending over a minute portion of the buried moat, leads from the present museum to the base of the spiral staircase.

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4. A low, stone parapet wall, approximately 2 1/2 high x 1 1/2 wide, circumscribes the flat area of the mound apex.
5. Bordering the eastern edge of Tomlinson Avenue is a section of metal picket fencing which traverses a small portion of the mound and moat. This protective fence encircles the entire mound but the majority of it is located outside the landmark boundary.
6. A stone retaining wall abuts the mounds along the eastern edge of Tomlinson Avenue where a small section of the mound was excised during construction of the roadway.
7. Tomlinson Avenue and Ninth Street appear to cover a small eastern section of the moat which may exist undisturbed beneath the asphalt road surface. Archaeological testing to establish the presence of the moat was, however, prohibited in this area.

United States Department of the Interior
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Continuation SheetSection number 8 Page 1Significance

The Grave Creek Mound ranks not only as the largest, most famous earthwork of the Adena culture in America but also as the largest conical earth mound in the New World and one of the largest mortuary mounds in the entire world.³ Within the context of Adena culture, it also represents one of the few surviving earthworks of the imposing Grave Creek ceremonial complex of the upper Ohio Valley. The partial excavation of the mound in 1838 was undoubtedly the most ambitious archaeological enterprise of its time in the United States. The notoriety of the excavation coupled with the immense size of the mound contributed heavily to the 19th century myth of a highly superior race of people which proceeded the known Native American tribes. The excavation also reportedly yielded an inscribed stone which sparked national as well as international controversy although it was later regarded as one of America's great hoaxes.

The prehistoric Adena culture, which flourished from about 1000 B.C.-A.D. ⁴, occupied a widely diffused area of the Ohio Valley embracing parts of Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Peripherally, its influence spread as far as the Delmarva Peninsula and even to New Brunswick, Canada. Although credited with the development of agriculture in one section of the United States, the Adena people are most known for their elaborate "cult of the dead." Within their core area of occupation - the Middle and Upper Ohio Valley - they established a variety of mortuary complexes characterized by numerous clustered mounds and geometric earthworks. One such major ceremonial center sprang up on the Grave Creek area of West Virginia (within present day Moundsville).

With the commencement of Euroamerican settlement in the region during the late 18th and early 19th centuries came the first written accounts of the spectacular array of earthen structures. But in view of the awesome size of Grave Creek Mound, little attention was focused on the lesser structures. Soon the destructive forces of settlement eliminated all but a few of the hundreds of earthworks which were spread across the roughly 2000 acre terrace known as Grave Creek Flats. At present, Grave Creek Mound stands alone on the Flats as testimony to the once great ceremonial complex which marked the climax of Adena culture in the Upper Ohio Valley.

Since the late 1700s Grave Creek Mound has been one of America's most popular antiquities having found its way into scores of American and European antiquarian literary contributions. As scholar E.G. Squier wrote in 1847, "...no chapter in American antiquities was complete in which it (Grave Creek

³ Hemmings, E. Thomas, "Investigations at Grave Creek Mound 1975-76: A Sequence for Mound and Moat Construction," West Virginia Archaeologist 36 (Fall 1984):3.

⁴ ibid.

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Mound) did not occupy a conspicuous place.⁵

The excavation of the mound in 1838, though employing questionable methods, was nonetheless a significant archaeological undertaking for it represented the first investigation of an earthwork which would later be ascribed to the Adena culture. It was likely the most extensive archaeological project in the history of the United States to that time.

The discovery of the two massive log tombs together with their contents was hailed as a remarkable discovery and had a profound impact on North American archaeology and anthropology. One of the skulls from the mound (the only extant item from the 1838 devastation and now housed in the Delf Norona Museum in Moundsville) was recreated by Samuel G. Morton in his Crania Americana in 1839.⁶ From his studies came the first serious attempt to write about the physical anthropology of Native Americans. The prevailing attitude at the time, however, was that the mound builders were too highly civilized (as evidenced by their great earthworks) to have been related to the Native Americans.

Such a myth was bolstered by the fact that an inscribed stone tablet depicting an alphabet-like script was supposedly recovered from the upper burial vault of the mound during the 1838 excavation. The discovery prompted many American and European scholars, as well as hundreds of other individuals, to provide an interpretation of the cryptic message which many believed was linked to ancient Old World civilizations. Ethnologist and scholar Henry R. Schoolcraft even classified the individual characters as corresponding with various ancient alphabets such as ancient Greek, Etruscan, Phoenician, Old British, etc.⁷ Over time the controversy subsided as archaeologists came to regard the stone as a hoax.

Undoubtedly, Grave Creek Mound played an integral role only in shaping America's prehistoric past but also in stimulating a national awareness and appreciation of its antiquities.

⁵ Squier, E. G. Observations on the Aboriginal Monuments of the Mississippi Valley. From the second volume of the transactions of the American Ethnological Society (New York: Bartlett and Welford, 1847), p. 75.

⁶ In Norona, Delf. Moundville's Mammoth Mound. Special Publication No. 6 of the West Virginia Archaeological Society (Moundsville, West Virginia, 1962), p. 38.

⁷ ibid., p. 40.

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Bibliographical References

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Norona, Delf. "Dimensions of Moundsville's Mammoth Mound." The West Virginia Archaeologist 10 (1958): 13-19

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_____. Historical and Statistical Information Respecting the History, Conditions, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States. Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, and Company, 1851.

Silverberg, Robert. Mound Builders of Ancient America: The Archaeology of a Myth. Greenwich, Connecticut, 1968.

Townsend, Thomas. "Grave Creek Mound Excavation." The West Virginia Archaeologist 14 (1962): 10-19.

Webb, William S. and Raymond S. Baby, The Adena People No. 2. Columbus: The Ohio Historical Society, 1957.

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Verbal Boundary Description and Justification

The boundary is defined from the center point of the mound as defined by the UTM coordinates E521800/N4418370 (from 7.5 minute topographic sheet, Moundsville, W.VA. - Ohio). The boundary is the circumference of a circle delineated by the radius of 170 feet (52 meters) to define the mound, plus an additional 50 feet (15 meters) to identify the associated burial moat. Thus the boundary of the property is 220 feet (67 meters) from the center point of the mound. From the four cardinal directions, the approximate UTM coordinates of the boundary edge can be defined as:

NORTH	E521800/N4418437
WEST	E521733/N4418370
SOUTH	E521800/N4418303
EAST	E521867/N4418370

These dimensions include the width of Tomlinson Avenue, a small amount of private property and part of Ninth Street. The majority of the Landmark is State of West Virginia property.

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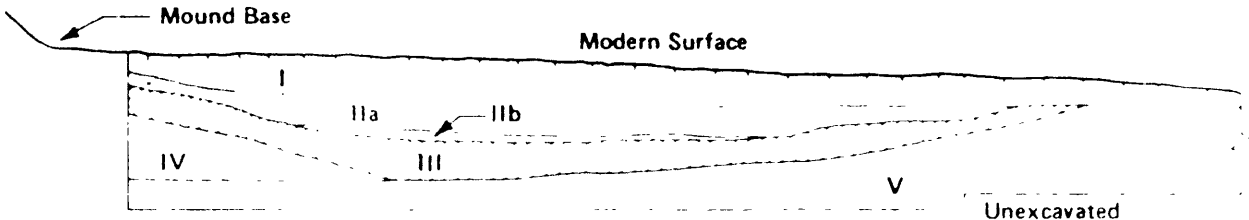
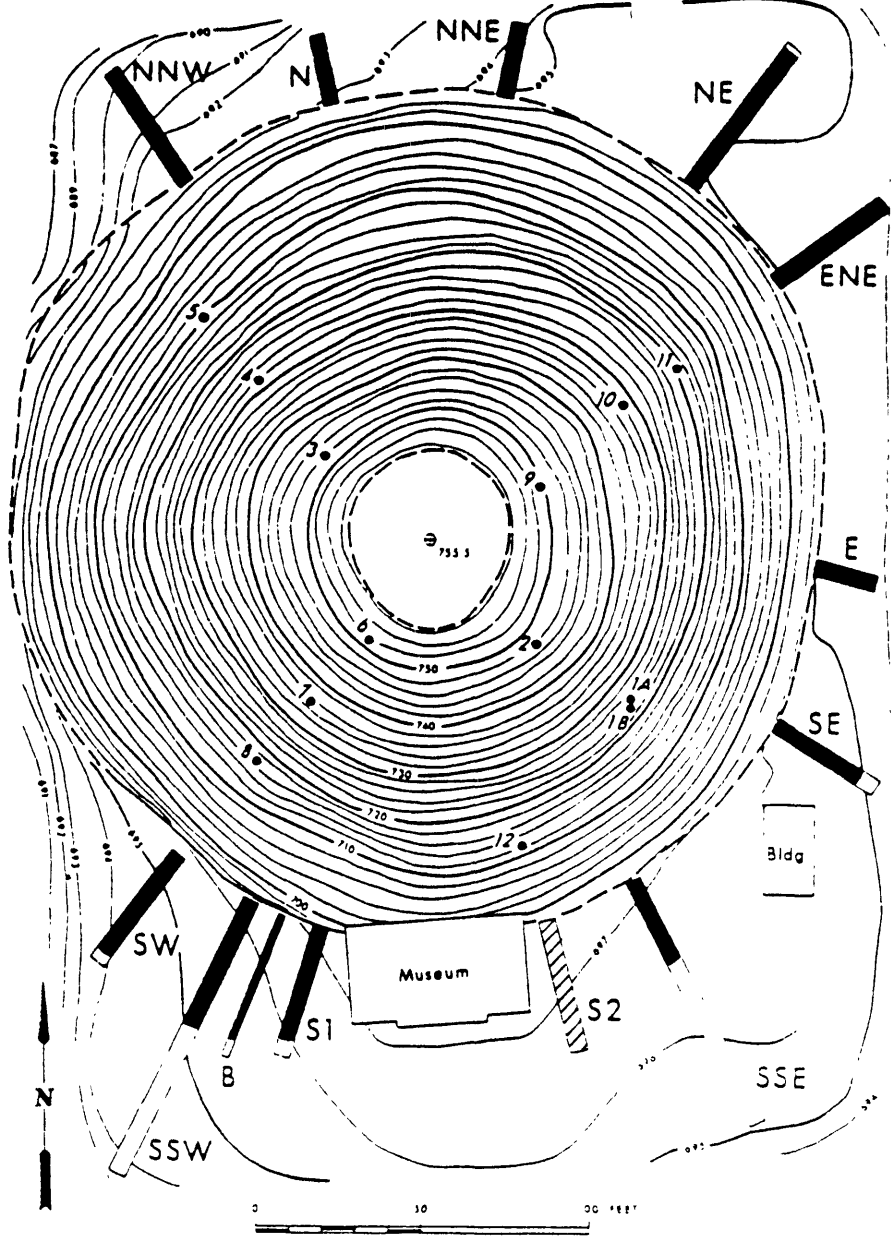
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Revised Boundary Prepared by:

Bertram Herbert/Archeologist
National Park Service
Mid-Atlantic Regional Office
U.S. Custom House, Room 251
2nd & Chestnut Streets
Philadelphia, PA 19106

March 12, 1990
(215) 597-1580

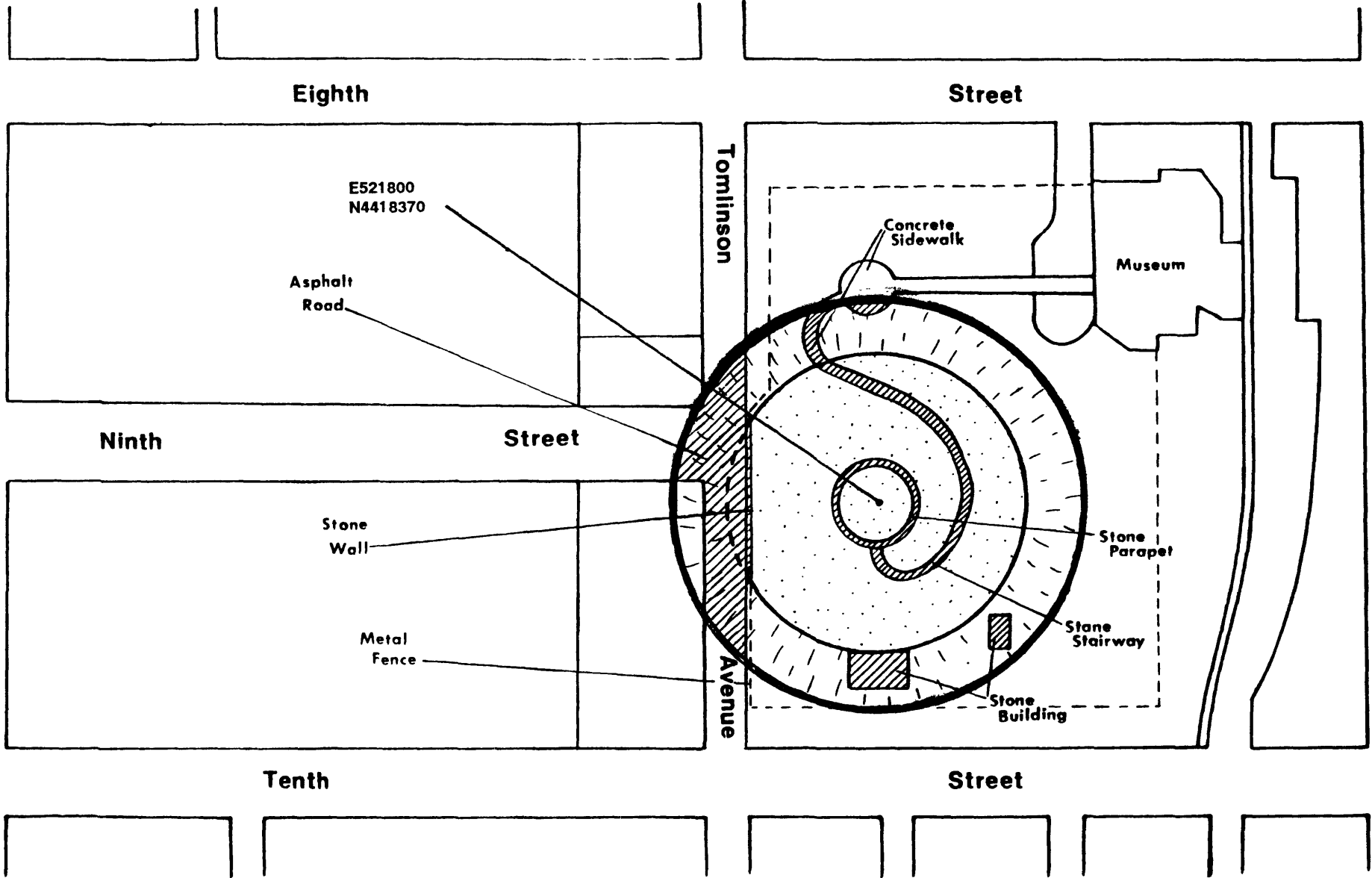
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- Unit I Recent Fill
- Unit IIa Historic Moat Fill
- Unit IIb Historic Moat Fill
- Unit III Prehistoric Moat Fill
- Unit IV Pre-Moat Construction Fill
- Unit V Subsoil

Figure 1. Top - contour map of Grave Creek Mound showing the locations of exploratory trenches and core sample. The moat is represented by the blackened areas; the hashed lines depict historically disturbed area. Bottom - profile view of trench SSW illustrating the moat. Adapted from Hemmings, 1984, pg. 13 and Fowler et al, 1976, pg. 114.

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Eighth

Street

E521800
N4418370

Asphalt
Road

Tomlinson

Concrete
Sidewalk

Museum

Ninth

Street

Stone
Wall

Stone
Parapet

Metal
Fence

Avenue

Stone
Stairway

Stone
Building





Tenth

Street

MAP "A"

GRAVE CREEK MOUND

LEGEND:

-  LANDMARK BOUNDARY
-  Mound
-  Site of Buried Moat
-  Noncontributing Feature

