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# National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form

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This form is for use in documenting multiple property groups relating to one or several historic contexts. 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. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900-a). Type all entries.

**A. Name of Multiple Property Listing**

Prehistoric Mounds of the Quad-State Region of the Upper Mississippi River Valley

**B. Associated Historic Contexts**

The Prehistoric Occupation of the Upper Mississippi River Basin, ca. 4000 - 250 B.P.

**C. Geographical Data**

See continuation sheet

**D. Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Planning and Evaluation.

David L. ...

3/29/90

Signature of certifying official  
Bureau of Historic Preservation  
State or Federal agency and bureau

Date

I, hereby, certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved by the National Register as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.

John J. Karstedt

5/29/90

Signature of the Keeper of the National Register

Date

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Northeast Iowa, southeast Minnesota, northwest Illinois and southwest Wisconsin comprise the geographical region defined as the Quad-State Region of the Upper Mississippi River Valley (Figure 1). The term region is used in the manner described by Willey and Phillips (1959).

The Quad-State Region consists of a portion of the Upper Mississippi River basin between approximately 60 miles above and 80 miles below the confluence of the Wisconsin and the Mississippi Rivers. This region includes the general area between the Black River in Wisconsin and the Rock River in Illinois, and the Zumbro River in Minnesota and the Maquoketa River in Iowa. This area generally corresponds with the physiographic region described as the Driftless Area or Paleozoic Plateau (Figure 2) (cf. Prior 1976; Martin 1965).

This area was initially referred to as the Tri-State Region by Struever (1964:86) while discussing the Hopewell Interaction Sphere. Benn, who outlines the entire Woodland sequence (1979), expands the region into the interior areas away from the Mississippi trench. Stoltman also uses the term Quad-State Region while outlining the Early Woodland in southwestern Wisconsin (1986).

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The prehistoric occupation sequence of the Upper Mississippi River Basin, ca. 4000-250 B.P. is briefly outlined (Table 1). Towards the end of the Late Archaic Period, and continuing through the Woodland and Oneota Periods, an intensification of ritual becomes evident in the prehistoric archeological record of the Upper Mississippi River Valley. This intensification of ritual appears to correspond with an increase in regional interaction and territoriality, more sedentary settlement patterns, a reduction in mobility, a greater reliance on redundant resources, and the eventual emergence of a dual subsistence mode of production which focused on hunting, gathering, and limited horticulture.

Intensification of ritual can be reflected archeologically in a number of ways, including exotic specialized artifacts such as figurines, tablets, and pipes. Petroglyphs, or prehistoric rock carvings, are thought to be physical manifestations of a prehistoric ideology. Earthworks and deposition of the dead, however, tend to be the most distinctive of ideological reflections because of their size, content, structural complexity, and close relationship with the natural environment.

Individual petroglyphs and artifacts may represent the product of a single artisan, but deposition of the dead (at least in some cases) and earthwork construction require the mobilization and coordination of a great deal of social labor, possibly the entire economic or domestic unit, or a combination of separate units (e.g., bands or lineages), at specific times and places. As a result these structures may represent integrating mechanisms or symbolic activities which substantiate and reaffirm the relationships between man, his environment, his ideology, and his means of production (Benn et al. 1978).

It is not known when the earliest earthworks were constructed in northeast Iowa. Many mounds were investigated prior to the refinement of techniques associated with stratigraphic excavations; others were excavated, but the data has never been analyzed or published. It is known, from investigations in Illinois (Charles and Buikstra 1983), that ritual intensification as reflected by interment of human remains in cemeteries and earthen mounds becomes evident as early as the Late Archaic Period. It is quite possible similar evidence exists in the Quad-State Region, but no mounds have been positively assigned to the

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Late Archaic in northeast Iowa. Information on the Archaic traditions in northeast Iowa is sparse. Yet it is clear that a large number of sites associated with this period exist since many Archaic style projectile points appear in private collections.

In northeast Iowa the Early Woodland manifestation is termed the Ryan Complex (Benn 1979; Logan 1976). It is recognized from finds of Spring Hollow Incised pottery and Marion Thick pottery. One cultural phenomenon generally associated with the Early Woodland is the construction of earthen mounds. There are several mounds which have been excavated in northeast Iowa that revealed Early Woodland traits, primarily the presence of red ocher. However, there are also artifacts in these mounds associated with later cultural periods (cf. Benn 1979).

There is more information pertaining to the Middle Woodland Period than to the Early Woodland in northeast Iowa; but this time frame is also poorly understood. The Middle Woodland Period in northeast Iowa is known as the McGregor Phase and is characterized by Havana-like ceramics and a localized version of the mortuary cult similar to that which developed in Illinois and Ohio (Benn 1979; Logan 1976). The Middle Woodland Period is distinguished by its relationship to the Hopewell Interaction Sphere, a stratified social system which is characterized by labor intensive burial mounds, exotic grave goods, population coalescence, and an extensive exchange network (Struever 1964).

The Middle Woodland period is thought to date from 150 B.C. to 350 A.D. (cf. Mallam 1984), but recent research in Wisconsin indicates that if this is the case, then there is considerable overlapping of the Early and Middle Woodland periods (Stoltman 1986).

Benn suggests that the similarities between Illinois Valley Middle Woodland and Upper Mississippi Valley Middle Woodland are more in the behavioral realm and less of a material nature (1979:56). He further states that this region may have been a frontier zone where a diluted version of the Hopewell Interaction Sphere was adopted by local cultures. But even as the McGregor Phase culture was being established, Benn notes, it appears to have been undergoing transformation.

In northeast Iowa the Late Woodland Period has been divided into two sub-periods, the Allamakee and Keyes Phases (Logan 1976; Mallam 1976). The latter represents a variant of the Effigy Mound tradition. The Allamakee Phase has been viewed as a transition from the McGregor to

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Keyes Phase. This transition is readily apparent by different mound construction techniques and artifact types.

These phases reflect variants of the kin-based mode of production where people who are related by descent and marriage produce all they need to live and reproduce. Kinship relations, however, may function not only as a means of biologically reproducing but also as relations between producers. In other words kinship functions in both ideological and economic relations. The reality of consanguinity and affinity may become symbolized to the extent that coresidency is dominant over genealogy. In some populations kinship and affiliation may be used to expand the scope of social and ideological links into the jural and political aspects of a mode of production. As a result kinship relations may function beyond the domestic unit and extend into the realm of politics (cf. Wolf 1982).

The Allamakee Phase has been viewed as the connecting link between the dissolution or transformation of the McGregor Phase (Middle Woodland Havana tradition) and the establishment of the Keyes Phase (Late Woodland Effigy Mound tradition) in the Quad-State Region (Benn 1979; Benn et al 1978).

The McGregor Phase people participated in the Hopewell Interaction Sphere (cf. Logan 1976). The Hopewell Interaction Sphere is associated with a mortuary cult characterized by the construction of large burial mounds and charnel houses (Brown 1979). Elaborate ritualistic preparation of certain deceased members of society suggest distinct social status for certain individuals. This intensification of ritual indicates a complex social organization with distinctive social stratification.

McGregor Phase archeological sites appear confined to the Mississippi trench and the mouths of its tributaries. While never attaining the complex characteristics that illustrate the Hopewell Interaction Sphere in the lower Illinois River and the Ohio River areas, evidence of Hopewell does exist in the Quad-State Region. This evidence includes Hopewellian artifacts, social rank in the relations of production, sumptuary status symbols, and a relatively complex ideology (cf. Benn et al. 1978; Logan 1976; Mallam 1984; Stoltman 1979).

The demise of the McGregor Phase is illustrated by changing artifact styles, population dispersal, occupation of the interior areas away from

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the Mississippi trench, less labor intensive mound construction, emphasis on an egalitarian social system, and the lack of exotic artifacts (Benn 1979). The transition from the McGregor Phase to the Allamakee Phase appears to have occurred quite rapidly and may have begun as early as 200 A.D. (Benn 1979). Allamakee Phase people continued constructing mounds, however.

The Allamakee Phase has been described as a period of transition which reflects a change from the political variant of the kin-based mode of production evident during the Middle Woodland Period, to the domestic or family based kin-ordered mode of production of the Late Woodland period (cf. Benn 1979; Mallam 1984). This may be a shift in ideology, not necessarily in subsistence. The labor processes and subsistence base that supported the McGregor Phase is still evident during the Allamakee Phase (e.g. hunting, gathering, and possibly limited horticulture). The major ideological difference between the McGregor and Allamakee Phases is described (Benn et al. 1978:86) as a shift from a socio-political system of ranked relationships and lineages (a political kin-ordered mode of production) to one with an egalitarian ethos (a domestic kin-ordered mode of production).

Mallam has suggested that the demise of the Hopewell Interaction Sphere is a result of many factors, but emphasizes this point:

...hunting and gathering as a mode of production seems to require an egalitarian social framework in order to be consistently successful, a type of interaction between humans and the environment that cannot be maintained by socially stratified forms. It seems likely, therefore, that the network, originally formed to promote peace and maintain access to resources through the principles of egalitarianism, eventually reached a point where emphasis shifted from collective goals to private lineage interests. When this occurred, Hopewell ideology was discarded because its founding principal and symbols were no longer functional. The evolution of a stratified society constituted an abrogation of the moral philosophy of balance which emerged as a consequence of multifocus exploitation (1984:18).

The McGregor and Allamakee Phases appear to represent a time of change for the Woodland groups in northeast Iowa as they attempt to come to grips with growing population pressures and external influences. Subsistence patterns seem to focus on a narrower range of resources,

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those which are most productive. Furthermore, settlements appear to become semi-permanent, at least along the Mississippi River, during the McGregor Phase. Unfortunately there is little information concerning events in the interior areas of northeast Iowa during the McGregor Phase. It is possible that the interior was abandoned during this period, but it may also be that an Archaic pattern persisted, making it nearly indistinguishable archeologically from the earlier Archaic period.

The Keyes Phase, a variant of the Effigy Mound tradition, seems to represent a cultural florescence in northeast Iowa. Subsistence and settlement patterns have been described as small, territorially-based family bands, which coalesced and dispersed on a seasonal basis (Mallam 1976; Benn 1980). The Keyes Phase is characterized by the construction of effigy mounds as well as linear, conical, and compound mounds.

Mallam, who devoted nearly two decades to the study of Effigy Mound culture, states that the arrangement and location of the mounds:

...usually near zones of predictable and annual recurring resources, indicate a complex set of ideological, social, political, and economic relationships. It may be suggested that this pattern of mound construction reflected a particular belief, one based on thousands of years of participation in natural production: humans must assume responsibility for the quality of life by respecting the environment which enhances it. If this assessment is correct, the mounds, then, are not so much burial sites as they are metaphorical expressions about the idealized state that should exist between nature and culture---balance and harmony.

If one looks across the rugged landscape of the Driftless Area and the many mounds which accent its surface, the impression cannot be ignored that in this region groups of people expressed their cosmological conviction by "sacralizing" the earth. In other words, they consecrated the mosaic environment with its varied resources and ecological relationships by defining it as sacred space. If the rhythm--balance and order--of this region could be maintained the resources on which humans depended would continue. In this sense, mound building may be perceived as an ongoing world renewal ritual, a sacred activity humans entered into in order to

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insure regular and consistent production of natural resources  
(1984:19).

The Oneota period is generally referred to as the Orr Phase (Wedel 1959) in northeast Iowa. It was once thought that the Oneota people did not build mounds, although obviously intrusive Oneota burials have been found in Woodland mounds (Wedel 1959). This is no longer thought to be the case, but very little is known about Oneota mound construction.

Early excavations conducted by Ellison Orr revealed Oneota burials intruding into Woodland mounds. Mallam suggests that this practice may have signified Oneota respect for the preceding lifeway, or, alternately, served to symbolize their aggregate strength through appropriation of the sacred ground of others (1984:20). Evidence of cannibalism at an Oneota site in Minnesota (Gibbon 1973:19) and the prevailing hawkman motif (Benn 1984), a warrior symbol evident throughout Oneota society, suggest that Oneota groups may not have coexisted peacefully with neighboring cultures.

The only known Oneota mound which has been excavated in northeast Iowa is the John Henry Mound (Benn and Bettis 1977). This mound has many of the attributes associated with Late Woodland mounds except for two Oneota body sherds, one cupped within the other. These sherds were not interpreted as intrusions but as deposits directly associated with the mound construction process.

Historic trade goods have been found in association with a number of Oneota sites (Wedel 1959), and it is widely assumed that the Oneota in northeast Iowa emerged historically as the Ioway, Oto and Missouri (Mott 1938; Wedel 1959). No early historic mound groups have been identified in northeast Iowa.

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Paleo-Indian.....	12,000(?) - 9,000 B.P.
	10,050(?) - 7,050 B.C.
Early Archaic.....	9,000 - 6,500 B.P.
	7,050 - 4,050 B.C.
Middle Archaic.....	6,500 - 4,000 B.P.
	4,050 - 2,050 B.C.
Late Archaic.....	4,000 - 2,400 B.P.
	2,050 - 450 B.C.
Early Woodland.....	2,400 - 2,100 B.P.
	450 - 150 B.C.
Middle Woodland.....	2,100 - 1,600 B.P.
	150 B.C. - 350 A.D.
Late Woodland.....	1,600 - 700 B.P.
	350 - 1,250 A.D.
Oneota/Ioway.....	1,000 B.P. - contact
	950 A.D. - contact

Table 1. Approximate dates for the prehistoric and protohistoric cultural periods in northeast Iowa.

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II. Description : Mounds take on a variety of shapes and sizes, including but not limited to conical, linear, and effigy mounds. Very little is known about Late Archaic and Early Woodland Period mounds.

Earthen structures associated with the Middle Woodland Period McGregor Phase generally include large conical mounds with exotic grave goods and entombed burials that suggest a ranked social system and a relationship with the Hopewell Interaction Sphere.

Logan (1976:146) has defined three types of burial construction for the McGregor Phase: 1) central rectangular subfloor pits; 2) rock alignments or enclosures over or around the burials and no central pit; 3) cremations encased within mucky clay deposits with both central pits and rock enclosures absent. Although many of the traits associated with these mounds resemble the Middle Woodland cultures in the heartland of Havana-Hopewell, there are also many traits which are lacking. For example, there is an absence of Hopewell Ware pottery, little evidence of log tombs with associated mat or bark layers, almost no evidence of status differences among burials within a given mound, and a general paucity of Hopewell style artifacts (cf. Benn 1979).

Mounds constructed during the early Late Woodland Allamakee Phase are conical and usually haphazardly constructed, lacking the exotic items generally associated with the McGregor Phase. Although Allamakee Phase mounds are often the same diameter as McGregor Phase mounds, they are usually much lower.

Three classes of mounds associated with the Allamakee Phase have been described by Logan (1976:157): 1) mounds with subfloor pits or floors from which the humus had been removed and containing extended or bundle burials, pots with burials, or rock alignments with burials; 2) mounds with subfloor burial pits, evidence of fire, bundle burials, rock alignments, and Linn Ware pottery; and 3) mounds which were single crematory units.

The late Late Woodland Keyes Phase, a local variant of the Effigy Mound tradition, resulted in the construction of unique effigys in a wide variety of shapes and sizes, including but not limited to, bears,

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birds, lizards, panthers, and compound mounds, as well as linear and conical mounds. The contents of these mounds tend to be limited when viewed in relation to the preceding phases. Although conical mounds continued to be constructed, it would seem that the general shape of the structure itself takes on more significance than the content.

Only one Oneota mound has been recognized in northeast Iowa, and it is a small, low conical feature similar to Late Woodland conical mounds.

**III. Significance:** The significance of mound groups is illustrated not only by their long history, but by also because of the mobilization of labor for an activity that can only be explained or interpreted within a cultural context. Earthen structures are one of the few physical representations of prehistoric ideology.

These structures are not constructed specifically for deposition of the dead. Although human remains are often interred in mounds, there are many mounds which do not contain human remains. In many cases only portions of human skeletons are present, taking the form of bundle or broadcast burials.

It is the construction of the earthen structure itself, not the content, which takes on significance for prehistoric societies. This act represents the reaffirmation and renewal of relationships between man, his environment, his ideology, and his means of production (Benn 1979).

The construction of earthworks represent three categories of human behavior (Benn et al. 1978:64):

- 1) simple acts associated with making offerings or carrying out ceremonies;
- 2) activities necessary to insure the proper disposition and propitiation of human souls;
- 3) ritual symbolizing beliefs in traditional ideology.

The contents of mounds are significant for research purposes. They often contain whole or partial ceramic vessels, effigies, exotic lithic implements, human remains, log or limestone tombs, burned earth,

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charcoal and other artifact types. Artifact types and features within the mound provide the data necessary to reconstruct prehistoric rituals.

Mound groups may be associated with habitation sites, and it has been suggested that they represent territorial markers (Mallam 1976). Since mound groups reflect social labor that is not directly related to subsistence (e.g., procurement sites tend to be located where the resource is), their placement is a cultural decision related to tradition and territorial relationships. The location of mounds may be associated with territorial core areas and could aid in the delineation of contemporary cultural groups across a landscape.

IV. Registration Requirements: The qualities of the mounds include integrity, content, and association. The integrity of individual mounds is difficult to evaluate because of the numerous types of impacts that have occurred.

Mounds are one of the most visual of archeological site types, and as a result they have almost all been looted by pothunters or excavated by archeologists. However, probably the most serious impact has been associated with agriculture. Mounds which are subjected to plowing rapidly disappear. This is a problem in states dominated by agriculture, as is Iowa. The Luther College Archeological Research Center, during the early to mid-1970's, surveyed all of the mounds in northeast Iowa originally recorded in the late 1800s by Theodore Lewis and Cyrus Thomas, as well as those documented by more recent investigations. The evidence from this survey indicated over 80% of the known mounds have been completely destroyed (Mallam 1982). Since this survey was conducted over 10 years ago, one can assume that even fewer mounds exist today. These features are a finite resource, and the time will come when only those which have been protected by government restrictions or efforts by the private sector will remain.

The vast majority of mounds in northeast Iowa have been plundered, excavated, plowed, pastured or impacted by development. Undisturbed mounds are very rare. However, because of the intrinsic nature of these features, even a small portion of one can generate significant data if properly documented and analyzed. Intact soil profiles, however limited, can reveal a great deal of information about construction stages and techniques. In many cases plowed down or pastured mounds may still contain sub-mound floor deposits. Looters tend to focus on the

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center of mounds. As a result, sub-mound floor features and those located along the perimeters of the mound may be overlooked. Professional mound investigations also vary in extent; some are limited to a single trench, others excavate the entire mound.

As with all archeological investigations the methods and techniques as well as the expertise of the investigators examining a mound determine the results and interpretations. Individuals who are unfamiliar with pedogenesis or lack a background in pedology may have difficulty interpreting the structural sequence associated with mound construction.

The benefits of utilizing the expertise of a soil scientist is evident from the data revealed at the Keller Mound Group (Benn et al. 1978) and the Fish Farm Mounds (Scholtes 1970). Intact soil profiles, however limited, can reveal a great deal about construction stages and techniques. Even mound remnants have potential for significant data.

**G. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods**

Discuss the methods used in developing the multiple property listing.

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See continuation sheet

**H. Major Bibliographical References**

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Primary location of additional documentation:

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> State historic preservation office | <input type="checkbox"/> Local government |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other State agency                 | <input type="checkbox"/> University       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal agency          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other            |

Specify repository: Effigy Mounds National Monument

**I. Form Prepared By**

name/title David and Lori Stanley  
 organization Highland Cultural Research Center date June 1988  
 street & number P.O. Box 27 telephone (319) 546-7740  
 city or town Highlandville state Iowa zip code 52149

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For the most part the archeological record of northeast Iowa is of uneven quality. Historically there has been a bias toward the investigation of large village sites and mounds resulting in distinct gaps in the data base. Nonetheless, the archeology in northeast Iowa is unique. It has benefited from a long history of professional and amateur inquiries resulting in extensive documentation and large, spectacular artifact collections. The surveys and maps of Theodore Lewis and Cyrus Thomas in the late 1800s preserve the knowledge of numerous mounds that were subsequently destroyed. The extensive investigations conducted by the Iowa Archeological Survey in northeast Iowa, although lacking many of today's sophisticated excavation techniques, nonetheless recovered a vast amount of data that serves as the basis for what we presently know about the prehistory of northeast Iowa.

In developing this nomination extensive use was made of the archeological overview and research guide to Allamakee County, Iowa (Stanley and Stanley 1986). This document, funded by the Allamakee County Historic Preservation Commission, reviewed and consolidated the widely scattered and often contradictory information available on the prehistoric archeological resources of Allamakee County. As a result of this study, recommendations for future archeological research were developed. These recommendations included: 1) a comprehensive reconnaissance survey; 2) thematic surveys; and 3) an assessment of the existing data base. As part of the third recommendation, it was suggested that sites potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places be investigated by limited testing to determine eligibility. Mound groups were among the sites recommended for nomination.

Because of the present Iowa State Burial code, mounds which are not located on federal property can not be examined by subsurface testing (including the use of a small diameter handprobe) without the approval of the Office of the State Archeologist and the Indian Advisory Council. Not being able to use handprobes limits mound identification to surface observations only. This, of course, is not a problem when dealing with effigy mounds that have not been plowed down, but conical and linear mounds often resemble natural features such as prairie blisters or recent tumuli such as fencerows. Mound recognition requires an assessment of the natural terrain, especially on landforms with high

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mound potential (i.e., hogbacks and outwash terraces). Plowed or pastured mounds may not even be visible on the surface. Recognition of mounds requires a knowledge of natural soil horizons as well as anthrosols and mound construction techniques.

Surface sites from all prehistoric periods are disappearing at an alarming rate due to the encroachment of agriculture, highway and bridge construction, housing and industrial development, and continuous and widespread looting by relic hunters. This problem is graphically illustrated by the disappearance of mounds. As a result existing mounds and mound groups in Allamakee County should each be evaluated to determine eligibility for nomination to the NRHP. Individual sites that fit within the context of this multiple property nomination can then be nominated by routine amendment of this document.

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