



Camp Sherman and the Mound City Earthworks

A Unique Story of Preservation

By Paul LaRue

Objective: Introduce students to Camp Sherman, the Mound City Earthworks, and the challenges of preservation.

Compelling or Essential Question: Did Camp Sherman do more to destroy or preserve the Mound City Earthworks?

Grade Levels: High school and fourth grade (gifted) **Content Area:** Social Studies

Connections to Ohio Model Curriculum Social Studies: High school American History Content Statements: 1, 4, 18; Fourth grade Social Studies Content Statements: 2, 3

Skills: Cause and effect of historical events, close reading, analyze artifacts (photographs)

Vocabulary: Camp Sherman, Cantonment, Mound City Earthworks, Pre-contact American Indians, President Warren G. Harding

Teacher Tip: This lesson fits nicely into fourth grade social studies, and could be used in a gifted class or as a guided lesson. This lesson may also be used as a blizzard bag lesson plan for World War I.

Field Trip or to Visit:

- 1.) **Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, Chillicothe, Ohio**
The Hopewell Culture National Historical Park is one of the nation's most important ancient American Indian sites, and covers more than 1,750 acres, much of which was occupied by Camp Sherman.

For visitor information, visit: www.nps.gov/hocu/index.htm

Steps in Lesson Plan

- 1.) Warm-up Activity: Show the photo of the mound (p. 4) and ask the question.
 - a.) Encourage students to speculate; they could write or discuss their answers.
 - b.) Introduce the compelling/essential question to students.
- 2.) Have students complete Reading #1 & #2. This could be assigned overnight or completed in class. Also have students study the photos #1 & #2 and the overlay map.
- 3.) Have students complete the short reading quiz.
- 4.) Revisit the warm-up activity and compelling/essential question. This could be a short writing prompt or class discussion.
- 5.) Extension Activity: Have students complete independent research on one of the topics below.

Evaluation: Student Questions and Answers

- 1.) Who was Camp Sherman named for?
Answer: William Tecumseh Sherman (Civil War General from Central Ohio)
- 2.) What are the Mound City Earthworks? Who constructed the Earthworks?
Answer: A series of mounds encircled by an earthen wall constructed by pre-contact American Indians
- 3.) How did Camp Sherman impact the Mound City Earthworks?
Answer: Some mounds and parts of the earthen wall were destroyed.
- 4.) What President declared the Mound City Earthworks a National Monument??
Answer: Warren G. Harding
- 5.) What is a cantonment?
Answer: A camp, usually of large size, where men train for military service.



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Research topics for student(s), or entire class:

- 1.) Research Ohio's laws relative to preservation of pre-contact American Indian Mounds. What are the laws relative to private and public lands?
- 2.) The Ohio World War I Centennial has created a lesson plan on Camp Sherman and technology. Use this to further research/discussion:
 - a. https://ohiomemory.ohiohistory.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/TechnologyWWI_NEHLessonPlan.pdf
- 3.) The Influenza epidemic of 1918
- 4.) Identify a local historic structure that needs preservation. What challenges face the structure's preservation?

Compelling or Essential Question:

Did Camp Sherman do more to destroy or preserve the Mound City Earthworks?

Note to teachers for discussing essential question:

The obvious answer is Camp Sherman partially destroyed the pre-contact American Indian Earthworks. Remind students: The government control of the land that housed the Earthworks led to its preservation. Had Camp Sherman never been constructed, would the land had been preserved?



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Warm-Up Activity

What impact could a World War I training camp have on this pre-contact American Indian Mound?



Image: Hopewell Mound Group Mound # 13

Source: Photograph by Paul LaRue



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Reading #1

Camp Sherman

Congress declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917. The nation began the process of getting troops ready for service overseas. Training camps were created to prepare men for military service. Camp Sherman, near Chillicothe, Ohio, was an example of such a facility. The land was leased by the United States on June 2, 1917, for the purpose of constructing a training camp. Construction of the camp began June 28, 1917. The camp was named Camp Sherman after Civil War General William Tecumseh Sherman.* Camp Sherman was a cantonment.

Camp Sherman would cover 9,700 acres divided among maneuver grounds, a main campsite, a rifle range, and an artillery range. The camp had over 2,000 buildings and nearly twenty miles of streets. Men from Western Pennsylvania, West Virginia, and Ohio trained at Camp Sherman. Nearly 40,000 men could be at the main camp at one time. The camp not only housed men; 10,000 horses and mules were on the camp. Camp Sherman was the third-largest such training center in the United States.

* Interestingly, Ohio was also home to an earlier “Camp Sherman.” During the Civil War, Newark’s Great Circle Earthworks was a training camp for the Union Army and was called Camp Sherman. It was not named for William Tecumseh, but for John, William’s brother, who served as a State Senator at the time.



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Reading #2

Camp Sherman and the Mound City Earthworks

Camp Sherman was located partially on top, and adjacent to, the Mound City Group Earthworks. The Mound City Group is a rare example of Hopewell Earthworks. Pre-contact American Indians built this complex over many centuries between A.D. 1 - 400. The 13-acre Mound City Earthworks contains approximately 23 mounds surrounded by an earthen wall. Ephraim Squier and Edwin Davis explored the Mound City Earthworks as early as 1846. When Camp Sherman was being constructed, William Mills of the Ohio Historical Society (now the Ohio History Connection) worked with the Army to try to prevent destruction of the pre-contact mounds. The Army built one barracks perpendicular in order to help preserve large Mound #7. Still, the Mound City Earthworks suffered from the construction at Camp Sherman. Mounds #13 and #23 were leveled to three feet high and barracks were built over the mounds. Care was taken in constructing the barracks not to intrude into the mounds. A large portion of the earthen wall surrounding the earthworks was destroyed.

World War I ended on November 11, 1918, and Camp Sherman began the slow process of closing. Over the next several years the Ohio Historical Society, as well as local preservation activists, worked with the United States Government to ensure the Mound City Earthworks would be preserved. President Warren G. Harding declared the Mound City Earthworks a National Monument in 1923.

Today, the Mound City Earthworks are preserved as a part of the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, maintained by the National Park Service. In an ironic twist, Camp Sherman, which at one time threatened the existence of the Mound City Earthworks, is almost entirely gone. Only one of the over 2,000 structures built for Camp Sherman still



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stands. The 9,700 acres that once contained Camp Sherman now house a Veterans Administration Medical facility, two Ohio Correctional facilities, the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park, and farmland. The fifteen hundred-year-old pre-contact American Indian Earthworks outlasted the hundred-year-old World War I cantonment.



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Image #1



Image: Showing cuts made by street grading, Mound City Mound #23. A Camp Sherman barracks is pictured sitting atop Mound #23, part of the Mound City Earthworks.

Source: Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection (Archaeology Photograph Collection AV 17). Via Ohio Memory at <https://ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p267401coll32/id/17169>.

Note: A Camp Sherman barracks is pictured sitting atop Mound #23, part of the Mound City Earthworks.



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Image #2



Image: Company A, 325th Field Signal Battalion photograph, March 18, 1918.

Source: Courtesy of the Ohio History Connection (State Archives Series 2728 AV). Via Ohio Memory at www.ohiomemory.org/digital/collection/p16007coll51/id/5553.

Note: The soldiers in the photograph are standing on Mound # 7 of the Mound City Earthworks. The 325th Field Signal Battalion was an elite group of African American soldiers. The Battalion was organized at Camp Sherman.



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Image #3

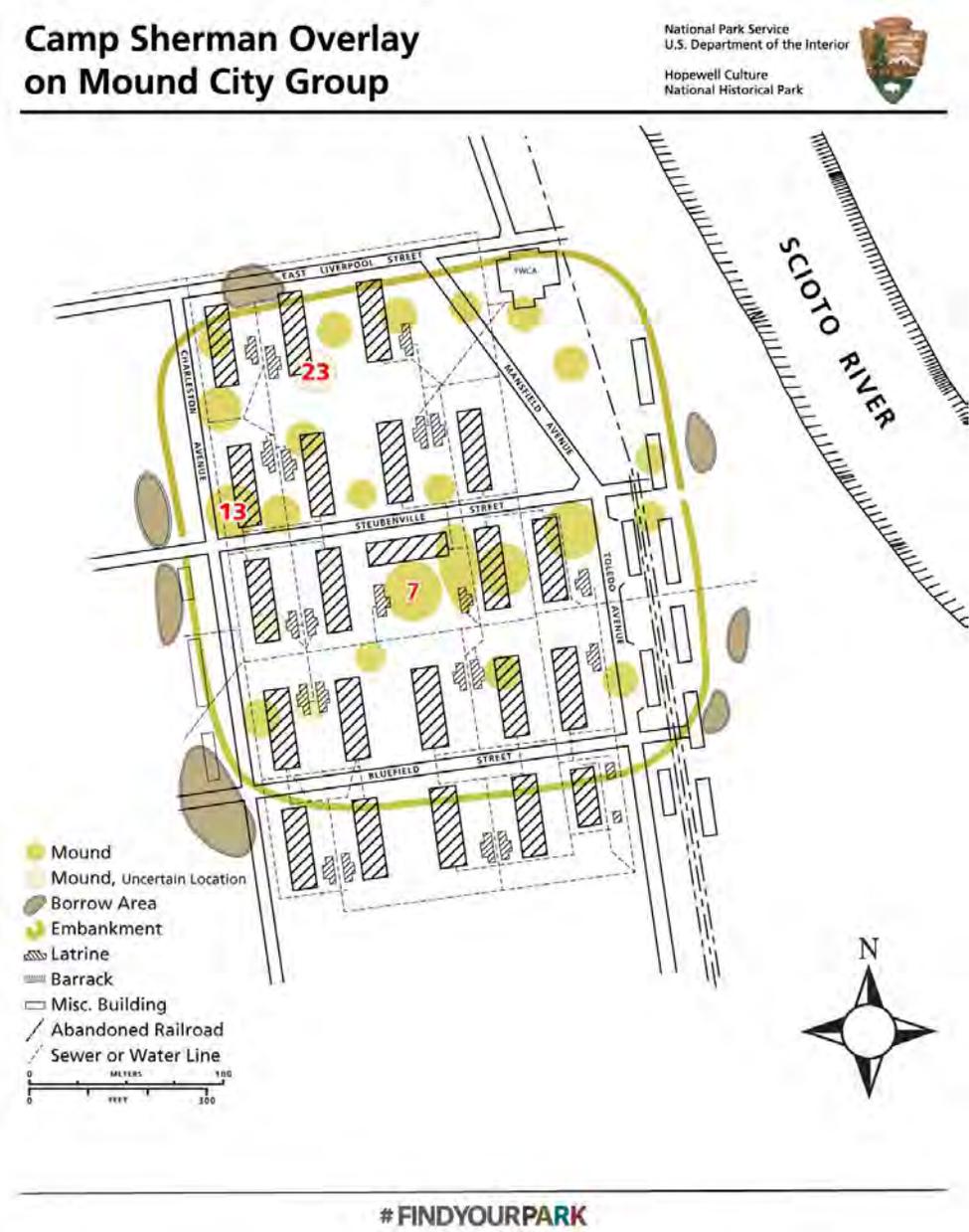


Image: Map of Camp Sherman and the Mound City Group

Source: National Park Service

Note: Mounds #7, #13 and #23 marked on the map above

Sources

Books:

Amidst Ancient Monuments: The Administrative History of Mound City Group National Monument/Hopewell Cultural Historical Park Ohio, by Ron Cockrell, National Park Service, 1999.

Camp Sherman: Hold 'Em Boys! We'll be there! Edited by Frank H. Ward, Lambertson Publishing Co.

Camp Sherman: Ohio's WWI Soldier Factory. G. Richard Peck, 2014.

Newspapers:

The Camp Sherman News, May 15, 1918-July 31, 1919. Published by The Columbus Evening Dispatch.

Brochures:

Hopewell Culture: Mound City Group (National Park Service)

Hopewell Culture: The Hopewell World (National Park Service)

Websites:

National Park Service

www.nps.gov/hocu/learn/historyculture/camp-sherman.htm
www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/hocu/adhi/adhiad.htm
www.nps.gov/parkhistory/online_books/hocu/adhi/adhi2a.htm

Veterans Administration

www.chillicothe.va.gov/about/history.asp

National Park Service Interpretative Signage

"Mica Splendor."



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Additional Resources

United States World War One Centennial Commission: www.worldwar1centennial.org

Ohio World War I Centennial Committee: www.worldwar1centennial.org/index.php/ohio-in-ww1-home-page.html

World War I in Ohio Collection on Ohio Memory: www.ohiomemory.org/cdm/wwi

World War I teacher resources on Ohio Memory:
www.ohiohistoryhost.org/ohiomemory/resources/for-teachers

Hopewell Culture National Historical Park: www.nps.gov/hocu/index.htm

Chillicothe VA Medical Center: www.chillicothe.va.gov/about/history.asp

The American Legion: www.legion.org

Veterans of Foreign Wars: www.vfm.org

Acknowledgements

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This lesson plan was written by Paul LaRue, a retired thirty-year high school social studies teacher. Paul has received numerous state and national teaching awards. Paul serves as a member of the Ohio World War I Centennial Committee.



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