

Talk by James P. Scherz, Nov., 2014

Washington, Indiana

What We Should See but Don't

Introduction:

Since about 1980, we have been surveying effigy mound groups and related ancient ceremonial sites in Wisconsin and neighboring states. At some of the very isolated sites, very early on, we saw ribbons and small offerings, a clear indication that someone from the native communities was still visiting the ancient sites. Three state archaeologists were asked which tribe had been responsible for the building of these ancient mound groups. As if from a indoctrination script, all three said that the mound builders were some ancient lost people with no connection to any living Indians. It was clear that there was something wrong with this orthodox view and I began talking with some of the Native American students on campus. They said that I had to talk to the "Man Above," which I later learned was a title for the head of the Native American lodges in the area. This was similar to the title of "Worshipful Master", used in the semi-secret White Man's Masonic lodges.

I finally located the local "Man Above" in his trailer house in an isolated woods near the Wisconsin Dells. Jones seemed to know that I was coming, and we hit it off excellently. Knowing the nature of secret lodges, since my father's grandfather had been a Templar in Germany, I knew there were certain things (because of initiation oaths) that could not be shared with the common person. I said I understood that, and if I asked something that he could not share with me to say so, and not to lie about the matter. "*Fine*," was the reply.

After about 5 years, we thought we understood the geometry used in the layout of the effigy mounds, and chose Lizard Mound Park for the last group to test the pattern. When we pulled up to begin surveying, there was Pamita, who I never had met before. He said that he was the "Keeper of the Site" and could tell us about how it was built and used, provided that we did not intend to dig in the mounds. We only wanted to survey and study the geometry of the group. That was what he wanted to hear, and over many days and nights in his old and small limestone house, I learned more from Pamita than I really wanted to know. He told me about small clues (which he called Toths) left by the priests who laid out the mound groups. These were inconspicuous rocks atop the mounds, meant to be overlooked by the common person, even at the time that the mounds were constructed. He said that after all the effort constructing a mound, if a rock was left on top of it, it was for a purpose. He said that the priests could read these Toths and that the geometry of the layout would be open to them, but overlooked by the non-initiated commoners. He further stated that the area where the Lizard Mound Group had been constructed had once been a beach with no rocks. He said that if I found any rocks in the area, they would have had to be brought in and were important to the encoded language of the group. Although I had obtained a masters degree in civil engineering and minored in geology, I had overlooked this important fact about the old sand beach, until Pamita pointed it out.

I assumed that our surveys at Lizard Mound Park would be our last before I devoted my efforts to some other surveying and mapping research. But I was wrong. Once I understood Pamita's Toths, and learned how to read some of them, I became engrossed in an effort which has lasted to this day (some 30 years later).

In upper Michigan, I saw indicators along the roads which led me to ceremonial areas and native graveyards along the Au Train River. Later, I learned from natives in the area that this route had once been used to move copper from Lake Superior to Lake Michigan in ancient times when the water was much higher. Although not written down, such memories are still intact.

One Reason to Come to Indiana:

While trying to find facts about my mother's 3rd great grandmother Lucretia, who some family traditions say was an Indian from Virginia and who is buried in Indiana, I came across similar Indian signposts which caused me to become infatuated with this part of the country. Some family members found that Lucretia had been married to a French soldier (a deserter from the army after the Battle of Yorktown, and who had changed his name). They had been married at **the** Tuscarora Church in the outback of what was then Virginia. Other sources say that the Tuscaroras (and the Daog Indians who they absorbed) were originally Welsh-speaking Indians of the American northeast. Thomas Jefferson, and the Spanish pushing north, were interested in the location of the so-called Welsh Indians of the New World. But after the Revolutionary War, and especially during the War of 1812, any presence of Welsh Indians in the New World would have supported the British claim to the land. Such data would have been unwelcome to certain people who wanted to take all the land. The doctrine was developed that all the Indians of the New World had walked over the Bering Straits in about 13,000 BC, and that no boats had been involved. Therefore, the inhabitants of the New World were unrelated savages. They deserved to have their land taken and to be looked after by "The Great White Father", according to another dogma, then preached from the lecterns and pulpits, called "Manifest Destiny".

But the fact remains that we speak English in this land, and that the English claimed New England despite the Papal Bull after Columbus's discovery which had divided the New World between the Spanish and the Portuguese. The Spanish reportedly burned Jamestown, but the English were persistent. Behind this persistence was John Dee of England who claimed that there are written records of Welsh from England coming to America long before Columbus, and that even Prince Madoc in about 1170 took a complete colony with many ships across the seas to escape family wars in the Old World.

This happened about the time that the holy Crusades left from Germany, England, etc., to conquer and kill Jews, Muslims, and other inhabitants in what was called the Holy Land. The English scholars have not forgotten about the accounts of the Welsh colonies to a new world. Because of political factors, etc., we in the United States have largely done so. But in Native American communities, there are still stories about the Welsh-speaking white Indians, and even about their Welsh dances held within the last generation at special Pow-Wows.

In any case, learning that mother's 3rd great grandmother was likely a Tuscorara Indian (apparently also a Welsh Indian) has caused me to take a special interest in the area of Indiana, where she is buried. Her son, John Sippy, led a wagon train from Indiana to Richland Center, Wisconsin near the Mississippi River. I like to think that part of this move was because they had seen their Indian relatives forcibly moved over the Trail of Tears to west of the Mississippi. If new edicts came out that half-breeds also were to be forced west, it would have been little effort to move from Richland Center, Wisconsin to the west side of the Mississippi River.

In Richland Center, John Sippy became a prominent citizen. He was also a medical doctor, collecting his medicine from the woods, as he had been trained to do so by his grandmother. There, he and some of his relatives, tried to hide their Indian heritage. But the faces of my grandfather, his sister, and my cousin betray the fact that they also have some Indian blood. On his death bed, Grandfather called me to his side and said that I was part Indian and to check the family records when I got older. He said nothing of this to any other family member.

This engrossing search for over 30 years into the family background has revealed that some of the truth we might be interested in has been purposely covered up. But if it is there, we can see glimpses of it, and with diligent searching, might find many treasures which are not gold.

A Second Reason for Coming to Indiana:

A second reason for focusing attention on Indiana is because Susan English from Wausau, Wisc., said that Rick Osmon from Washington, Indiana was conducting tours of some stone forts he had been working with. Stones are part of the Indian mound groups of Wisconsin, but are there used to decorate mounds and to apparently imply information. Here, the prime construction is with earthen mounds.

If the prime construction of ancient sites in southern Indiana and the surrounding states was with rock walls, etc., then this was apparently a different group of people, well worth looking closely at. The location of these stone forts and related apparent stone signal towers created a very important pattern.¹ Having been a regular army officer in my first career, I recognized the location of these structures similar to the location of forts in the Old World (associated with rivers). A similar pattern of stone forts has been reported in southern Illinois, also in a meaningful pattern with the river systems.

For insight into this type of site location, we can study how the Normans, after William the Conqueror, located their castles and forts along river systems of England. There, their stone structures were not completely for defense, but also to impress the local population with their presence, and were strategically placed. William the Conqueror was in about 1066. Prince Madoc, reportedly left Wales with his fleet of ships in about 1170. Naturally, their ideas about locating and building stone forts would have been similar.

When Rick led me to his so-called East Fork Site, north of Washington, Indiana, along the East Fork of the White River, I was impressed by the laid rocks and the high rock wall across an indentation into the side of the hill. But the setting did not seem ideal for just defense.

¹ See Rick's book: "The Graves of the Golden Bear", 2011.

The wall is about 25 feet long and about 12 feet high at the highest. And on top is a cement-lined stone weir. A short distance to the east (at what appears to be about the same elevation as the weir) is a sizable stream of water coming from a cave. See Figure 2.

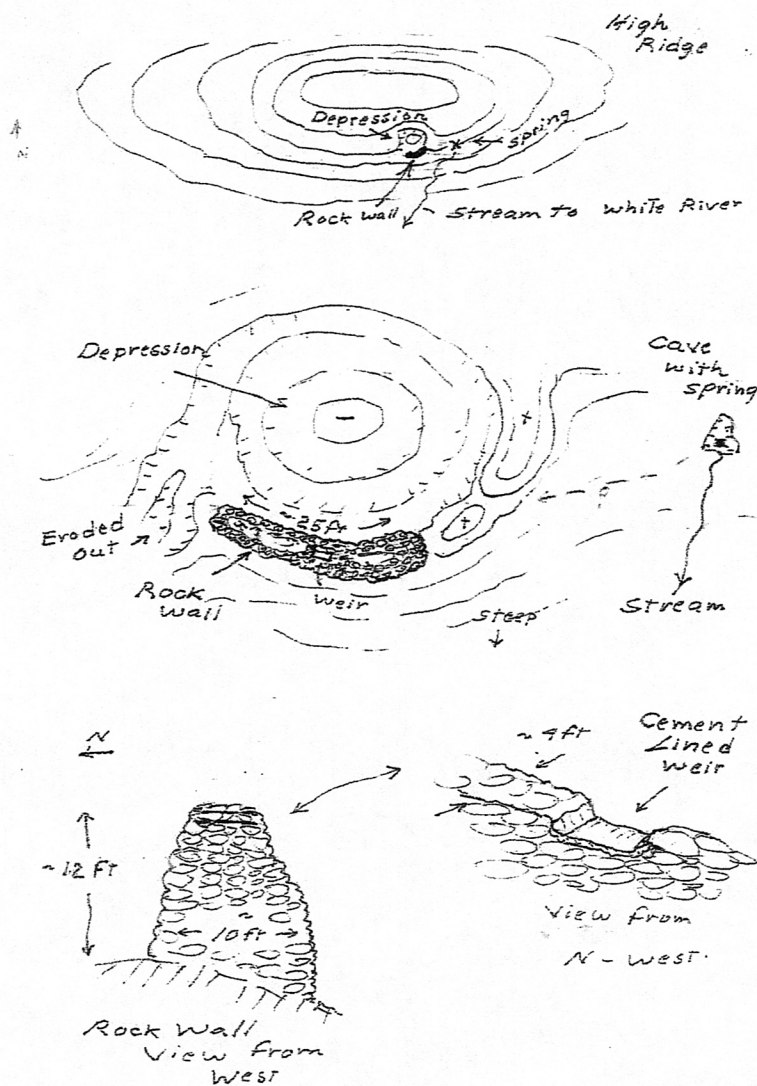


Figure 2. Preliminary Recon Sketch of Rick's East Fork Site

A precise field survey of the site is needed. But at the present time, it appears that a small aqueduct (now gone) could have channeled the water from the cave into the depression behind the wall (which has the weir). The area behind the wall might have been a holding pond for water, about the size of a swimming pool. The water could have spilled over the finely constructed and still intact rock weir. A water-operated mill is one possibility. But the problem here is that the site is near the top of a tall hill, not a place for people to come to a popular mill powered by a waterwheel. Much better locations for a water-operated mill would have been further down the small creek near the shores of the White River.

Another possible explanation for this unusual structure is an ancient bath or spa. There are nearby mineral springs in the area which make this possibility quite attractive to pursue.

Sacred springs were found all across the country. Pamita told about how sacred springs, now under the water of Rock Lake at Lake Mills, were once considered to yield healing water in ancient times, and that people came from all over the continent here for the healing water. He said it was like Lourdes is today in France. But a dam was put in at Lake Mills in the 1840s and doubled the size of the lake. The spring, and some Indian mounds (once on the shores of this lake) are now under water.

The features which divers have reported on the bottom of Rock Lake for decades have been declared by officials of the Wisconsin Historical Society as obviously natural or made by the glacier, since the Indians do not built structures under water. The name of the city on the edge of Rock Lake (Lake Mills) should be a clue to the alert researcher that a dam for a water-operated sawmill might have been built there in earlier times, and likely raising the water level for the water wheel. A search in the archives in the Historical Society, by one of my students, revealed that in the 1840s, a dam, indeed, had been constructed at the outlet of this lake. Since then, the water level has risen by about 16 feet, thereby doubling the size of the lake. Since Indian mounds would have been around the edge of this lake, as they were around other lakes in the area, we should expect to find underwater manmade features on the bottom of this lake. Yet our state archaeologist who was paid to keep track of such things, just could not make the connection, and argued that there can be no man-make features on the bottom of the lake because Indians do not build things under water. They must have been made by the glacier.

The rock structures at the East Fork Site in Indiana, on the other hand, are high on a hill side. No one I talked to who has seen them has argued that they were made by the glacier. Some sophisticated activity by man is apparent, especially with the cement-coated weir. Yet the pattern does not fit that of sacred springs further north in Wisconsin, where it appears attempts were made to preserve them as nature made them. Are we looking at a completely different culture in Indiana. And if so, then who were they?

This is where the Welsh Indians might come in. Wales is part of England in an area once dominated by the Romans. And where Romans went, one of the important things they built were public Roman Baths. There is one at the mineral springs in a city called Bath, England. The pre-Roman ancient mineral springs there were modified with stone structures by the Romans and used for centuries. The Romans left the area in about AD 300 to AD 400, as the western part of the Roman Empire began to fall in civil wars when the Christians began to dominate the Pagans (who had previously persecuted the Christians). The old Roman baths fell to disrepair.

But a few centuries ago (long after Columbus) a queen of England went to the area for purposes of bathing in the ancient healing mineral waters. She got pregnant, something she had been trying to do for years. After that, the ancient springs again became popular as an area of healing waters. The Roman Baths there are now restored, and you can visit the area and partake of the so-called healing waters of the mineral springs of Bath, England.

There are dozens of Roman coins found in the New World along the tributaries of the Mississippi River (Wisconsin River, Ohio River, etc.). Most date from the period when the Roman army in England was no longer paid, and this area (and the Roman territory along the Rhine River) was overrun by invading Germanic tribes. The dates of the coins I have studied are from about AD 260 to AD 310. If these coins were brought by Royal Pagans fleeing the Christian mobs which took over at about that time, then they were brought here by boats.

And someone in the Old World would have known where they took the refugees. Since the Roman Legion in England were the equivalent to modern combat engineers, and had built the famous Limes or stone wall separating the Roman region from Scotland, they would have been expert stone masons. And if some came to the New World, some of them would likely have continued their craft. They likely would have built rock walls, fortified hills, stone towers, and of course Roman-style baths at areas where there were mineral springs.

If some of the former soldiers from England had fled to the main waterways of the Ohio, Wabash, and Illinois Rivers of the New World, then the Welsh in the days of Prince Madoc (about AD 1170) would have made contact with them. It is in this area of the land where we have stories that the Welsh Indians were driven out by the Cherokees. If what Pamita said was true that the people of the New World were not isolated, but knew about people of the Old World and what was going on there, then we should also attempt to picture the political climate at the time. The period of the 1100s was when the Crusades left Germany and England and went to the Holy Land to conquer for Christendom. I was taught in grade school to sing "Onward Christian Soldiers". But in later life, I realized this was an unholy war which killed innocent Jews, Muslims, and other people living in what we call the Holy Land. If I had been living in the Holy Land, or had relatives living in the Holy Land in those days, I would not have looked kindly at people from the north who spawned these bloody wars (the effects of which are with us still).

There have been recent data from DNA analysis (some promoted by the Ancient American Magazine) which seemingly links the Cherokee Indians with a group of people near the Holy Land. This is also consistent with verbal traditions of the Cherokees. Various stories in our rare history books tell of the Cherokees driving the Welsh down river from the area of southern Indiana and Kentucky. At first, it seems unlikely that one group of Old World immigrants would make war on another group of Old World immigrants.

It would seem to make more sense that some of the older native tribes would have driven the Welsh west to the Missouri River, where Catlin reports finding them in the 1800s (his reports on the Mandans). Lewis and Clark may have also found them, as well. But unfortunately Lewis, on his way back from St. Louis to Washington D.C., reportedly became depressed. Our history books say he committed suicide. But if he did, he shot himself twice, one through the head and once through the heart. The landlady in the boarding house said she heard arguing in the night, and then the two shots. Next morning, they found him dead with some of the pages of his notebooks from their trip torn out.

There is no doubt that certain people of the day did not want Lewis to find any Welsh Indians (lest the British claim of land be more of a problem). Shortly thereafter, some traders introduced smallpox- infected blankets to the Mandans, which nearly exterminated the tribe.

It might have been seen that the political problem of the Welsh Indians was over. But some still live, and I know they tell stories we do not find in our history books.²

A Third Reason for Coming to Southern Indiana:

There is yet another reason for my intense interest in the area near Washington, Indiana. In earlier trips to Indiana, I found what appeared to me to be a burial site and ceremonial area with mounds and decorating rocks corresponding to what are found at known Ho-Chunk and Potawatomi ancestral sites in Wisconsin. I had found this site in Indiana using the Toths and other signs learned from Pamita and from our decades of surveying ancient burial grounds and ceremonial sites in the Upper Midwest. I related this to some of my HoChunk friends, including Preston, who then headed a lodge of the Eagle Clan.

One day Preston called and suggested we go for a meal under the trees at a nearby outdoor cafe in Wisconsin Dells. It was a warm and pleasant summer day, a good day to talk and tell stories. I began by saying that it had become clear to me from stories preserved by other tribes that the Puons (the name for the ancient HoChunk before the 1600s) had been in charge of the movement of copper from the ancient mines at Lake Superior to the Mississippi and further south to the Gulf of Mexico. I said that the key here was the name Puon. The other tribes never mentioned the name Ho-Chunk. But from early French records before the Puons were all but exterminated by eastern tribes with guns, the Puons and Winnebago or HoChunk were once the same people. I told him that I had learned that in the early French records, Lake Superior was once shown on maps from about 1610 as the Lake of the Puons or Pounts.

And some of the northern tribes said that the Puons once had their capital city at St. Louis, across from the mounds at Cahokia.³ These other tribes said that the Puons were once in political control of the entire Mississippi watershed, including the waters of the Ohio, Illinois, etc. I also told him that I had found what I thought was a Ho-Chunk or Potawatomi ceremonial center and burial grounds in southern Indiana. I waited for Preston's reactions.

Some of the Mayans from Guatemala had celebrated the end of their Mayan Great Cycle, which ended on 21 Dec., 2012, not in the Mayan temples in Guatemala, but at a small traditional structure that Preston had constructed in his front yard. It was clear that even the Maya honored the HoChunk "King Eagle", which was Preston's lodge name.

² One day in Texas I was at the office of the Dell Foster Company, then a famous firm for making equipment used in map making. We were in a room with Dell and I told him about our surveys of the Indian mounds. To my surprise, Dell sat down cross legged in the center of the floor and asked the rest of us in the room to do the same. He half closed his eyes and began to tell stories. He said he was Mandan and grew up on a reservation in North Dakota. He said that when he was a child, an old man by the name of John Big Leggings told about battles in the south between the White Indians and the Red Indians, and that the White Indians lost and fled north.

³ Although some of the later mounds at Cahokia still remain, those across the river where all destroyed as the city of St. Louis was developed.

There was a belief that after the end of Mayan Great Cycle (of 5200 years) that a new age would begin and that then it would be time to tell ancient lodge secrets which had heretofore been strictly kept in secret.

With a twinkle in his eye, Preston turned to me and said. "*That is all true.*" He said that the Ho-Chunk language (which was his born-with tongue) was the root language for many tribes all along the waterways of the Mississippi River. He mentioned the Sioux, Mandan, Iowa, Osage, Missouri, some extinct tribe once out east, and a tribe at the mouth of the Mississippi. He said that the ancestors of the Ho-Chunk (also known as Winnebago, Puon, Puont, etc.) were indeed in political control of the entire Mississippi water network at one time.

Becoming a bit serious, Preston said that when Columbus landed in the south, they heard of atrocities that the Spanish were committing on the natives. It was their political duty to raise an army of war canoes to go south to confront the threat.

As conquistadors such as Cortez, etc., went south to Mexico to conquer and steal gold, another contemporary of Columbus, Ponce de Leon, went north of Florida, not to seek gold, but to seek the fabled "fountain of youth", which he obviously had heard about from the natives.

Preston continued with his story. "*Our war canoes went south to intercept Ponce de Leon. We caught him where the Waba-sha River turns north*" (evidently as they paddled up stream). I asked if that was the same river which we call the Wabash. He said it was the same water system. As shown in Figure 3, there is no real place where what we call the Wabash River turns true north in a manner that could have been recognized from descriptions in Preston's verbal traditions. But as in Wisconsin, the White Man has given names for rivers that the natives originally knew as forks of the main river. For example, the Red Cedar River, near where I was born, is a branch of the Menominee River. In earlier times, it was simply known as the Menominee (or Wild Rice) River.

If this same pattern would apply to rivers in Indiana, then what we call the White River is just a major branch of the Wabash River. And near Petersburg, Indiana, about 10 miles south of Washington, the North Fork of the White River comes in from almost due north. This does fit the description in Preston's story, and very well. What we call the East Fork of the White River goes past what Rick calls the "East Fork Site."

Preston said "*We caught Ponce de Leon and took the shackles he had for some Indians and put them on him and brought him back to Wisconsin for trial.*"⁴

⁴ In these sort of stories, one must be careful about whether it was the leader or one of his lieutenants who was sacrificed to be killed or captured. In the story of the Shawnee leader Tecumshe in the War of 1812, in our history books, we say that he was shot on the battlefield and that the Yankee troops skinned him, and made his skin into razor straps. The Native American version is that it was not Tecumshe, but one of his lieutenants who was skinned. They say that after the battle, the body of Tecumshe was taken to a far-away place for special burial. When surveying the clearly highly decorated graves at Powers Bluff, for the HoChunk, I found photos that a native by the name of Techumshe was living at the site in about 1929.

A similar scenario could account for the HoChunk story of Ponce de Leon being executed and his body thrown into Green Lake, Wisconsin, while the white version is that after the battle, he died from a wound and his body is presently in a shrine in the Caribbean..

Figure 3. The Wabash River and Washington, Indiana



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Scale 1 : 300.000

$$1'' = 12.63 \text{ mi}$$

Data Zoom 8-0

Preston said they took Ponce de Leon to Green Lake for trial. There, they found him guilty of war crimes and executed him.⁵ They threw his body into the lake where his remains are yet today.

Preston looked me in the eye and said, "*I know you have your own stories about what happened to Ponce de Leon. But that's our story, and we have the shackles in our Medicine Lodge to go with it.*"

I never talked to Preston about the matter again. He was suffering from a long bout with cancer and died a few months later.

We later learned that Preston told this story to at least three other white friends before he died. It was obvious to us that he felt that it was time to share this precious story. That is the main reason I came to this conference in Washington, Indiana. I want to share Preston's story with you. I am sure Preston would have wanted me to do so.

Possible Significance of Preston's Story:

Preston's story might shed light on the mysterious "Fountain of Youth", which Ponce de Leon was searching for. Was it a sacred Roman-style bath or spa, similar to what was in England when Rome ruled that area of Europe?

And how about the near destruction of the Puons between 1634 when Nicolet found them to be about 24,000 in number, and 1654 when Radisson found only about 250 refugees living at Green Bay, Wisconsin, on the shores of Lake Michigan. This period of time was during the Thirty Years War between Catholics and Protestants, which ravaged all of Europe and left about 2/3 of the people dead in southern Germany where my father's grandfather came from (as both sides fought in the name of God). Holy wars are the worst kind, and no atrocity is too great for the zealot if it is to serve his version of God. The Protestant English and the Catholic French and Spanish in the New World during this period of time were not isolated from this great conflict, as we might want to believe. What were the real motives for the near extermination of the Puons during this period of time?

Some stories in our history books say that this near extermination of the Puons was by the Iroquois (with British guns) trying to take over the trade routes of the New World. But it was another tribe, the Sauk, who controlled the famous portage in Wisconsin between the waters of the Atlantic and the Mississippi. Some stories in our books say that the Illinois tribe, with French guns, nearly annihilated the Puons because they killed a peace party bringing them aid. But what might be the deeper truths behind these stories?

⁵ There was a very impressive group of Indian mounds at Green Lake, one of which is clearly in the shape of a rhinoceros (suggesting knowledge from across the sea). The area is special and exclusive yet today.

And how about the stories of the Cherokees driving out the Welsh Indians from the Ohio River Valley centuries before? And how about the so-called Vikings and their version of religion? We would be naive, indeed, to think that conflicts over religion were not part of the overlooked history in this land before and after Columbus.

And what would have been the reaction amongst European religious and political officials in the days of Columbus, if they learned that some Indians in the north had executed one of their heroes for war crimes (Ponce de Leon, friend of Columbus)?

In any case, the reported population of the Puons (Winnebagos or HoChunk) went from about 25,000 in 1632 to about 250 in 1654. The Hochunk are no longer in control of the waterways of the Mississippi River. But some still survive, and they tell ancient stories of all kinds. Some are from when the ice walked on the land and when long-nosed animals forded across the Mississippi River near Lansing, Iowa, to feast on the lush vegetation at the foot of the melting ice in Wisconsin each summer. (The surveyor T. H. Lewis mapped what he called "Elephant Mounds" near Lansing in the 1800s.)

There were devoted missionary people and officials in the Indian Bureau who tried to exterminate the old traditional lodges and so-called pagan religions of the natives, saying it was all the work of the Devil. But I find the HoChunk as sensitive, admirable people, like many Buddhists I have known. Any of their stories to me should be preserved as national treasures. Preston's story of Ponce de Leon is certainly one of their more important stories which should not be lost in the mists of time as the elders who verbally keep them, pass from this earth.

Biography:

James P. Scherz was born in Rice Lake, Wisconsin in 1937, near the ancient Pipestone Quarries of Wisconsin. (These were closed during wars between the resident Sioux and the Chippewa from the east, who had French guns. Another Pipestone Quarry in Minnesota, then became famous.) He attended the University of Wisconsin, earning a masters degree in Civil Engineering, and then entered the US Army as a career officer. He resigned his commission after serving 5 years in Germany, and began to teach surveying at the university in Madison.

He had his students survey some of the effigy mounds on campus, using what was then the most accurate field methods possible (for the experience). Surprisingly, the maps revealed a very sophisticated layout geometry in the mounds, common to what had been used in the Old World. Such information was not well received by authorities of archaeology in the academic world, who seemed to see it as their duty to defend this country from pre-Columbian invaders from across the seas. Consequently, the Ancient Earthworks Society was formed, where students and volunteers could continue surveying the ancient sites and share the information with others, including interested Native Americans. After retirement, the work has continued, and hundreds of sites have been investigated.

Selected References:

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