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Hometown History

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The Fudge Mound

Between 200 B.C. to 600 A.D., a mound made of mud, sizing 33 by 41 meters in diameter was built by local Native Americans.¹ A mud wall enclosing an impressive 31.4 acres of land was used for many events throughout its lifetime that was also enclosed by a dirt wall and called Fudge Mound.²

There are no specific names for the people who originally built the mound. However, they are commonly referred to as either The Mound Builders, or archaeologists have even called them the Adena and Hopewell.³ They were an ancient Indian tribe that settled across the Whitewater Valley area who were responsible for building many of the earthworks around the area akin to the Fudge Mound. According to The Richmond Item, Frank M. Seltzer conducted a survey in 1929 of Wayne County, which revealed 30 known Earthworks, and that the settlement of the upper Whitewater area began in 1805. The Mound Builders also occupied areas towards Greenville, Ohio in Darke County. A battle was held on the banks of the Maumee River in 1794, in which there was a treaty of peace put in place resulting in the Fort Recovery Line in 1895, after General Mad Anthony defeated the Native Americans in the Battle of Fallen Timbers.⁴

¹ Pre Contact Notebook, Randolph County Historical Society, 9/29/2015

² Beth K. McCord, Donald R. Cochran, The Fudge Site: A new look at an ancient monument Randolph County, Indiana, June 2006

³ Ball State University, ARMS staff Ball State, The Fudge Mound an Ancient Monument in Randolph County, IN, 2005,

<https://www.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/AAL/FudgeEducation.pdf>

⁴ The Richmond Item (Richmond, IN) June 26, 1938

Earthworks have been found in Winchester, New Castle, Richmond, Anderson, Greenville, Portland, and many other places around Indiana.

This particular earth work was not a simple mound. The wall enclosure and the mound would have been one of, if not, the largest earthworks in the country still standing had it not been excavated. The wall stood at 12 feet at one time, but before destruction only stood 8 feet, and was 1,320 by 1,080 feet in size. It also offers so much intriguing information about these people's connection to astronomy and geometric usage. With two openings, one of the east and one on the west side of the wall, the eastern gateway featured a semicircular part of the wall along with a ditch measured at 28 meters north south by 42 meters east west. Each corner where the walls connected were at the exact point of the season's solstices, which also lines up perfectly with the pythagorean ratio.⁵

Fudge Mound was excavated by Frank M. Selter in the late 1920's, and it was revealed that a burial was located in the middle of the mound. It is predicted that the male buried was 40 to 45 years old and the burial was performed in an offering style. The inclination of this idea came from holes dug for possible posts in specific places surrounding the body, which is shown to be used for a certain ceremonial burying method.⁶ Along with the body, multiple artifacts like jewelry and tree bark, which were used for burial, were discovered.

The Fudge Mound legacy did not cease when its original builders passed away. The Randolph County Union Agricultural Society purchased most of the land in 1871, where it was used for the county fairground in 1913. Horse races were held around the mound, and people would sit on top to view the jockey's performances. There were even carnival rides hosted inside

⁵ Ball State University, ARMS staff Ball State, The Fudge Mound an Ancient Monument in Randolph County, IN, 2005,

<https://www.bsu.edu/-/media/WWW/DepartmentalContent/AAL/FudgeEducation.pdf>

⁶ Randolph County, IN, Randolph County Historical Society, 1990

the walls. Between the years of 1865 and 1904, parts of the wall were taken out to construct the present day Stockyard Road and Martin Street. Beyond that, the eastern corner of the wall was a brickyard, and the soil was used from the wall. This helped to produce a multitude of bricks that were utilized to build Winchester's historical buildings. Most of the wall and mound are gone today and it is now used for farming purposes.