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**Report of the Exploration
of the Hayes' Creek Mound
Rockbridge County, Va.**

Published by

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The Hayes' Creek Mound, "Indian Bottom Farm," Rockbridge Co., Virginia.

EXPLORED SEPT., 1901, by EDWARD P. VALENTINE, FOR THE VALENTINE MUSEUM, RICHMOND, VA.

At a distance of about three miles from the eastern entrance to the beautiful Goshen Pass stood this prehistoric burial mound, located upon the "Indian Bottom Farm" belonging to the estate of Wm. Horn, in the valley to the east of "Jump Mountain," and about one hundred yards directly south of the junction of Walker's with Hayes' Creek, being in a fertile bottom of about twenty-five acres.

The base was a slightly elongated circle, sixty feet in diameter N. W. and S. E., by sixty four feet N. E. and S. W., altitude four and one-half feet, top level and of thirty-eight to forty-two feet diameter, the whole covered with grass and surrounded by a field of corn. The structure was composed of alluvial soil, like that of the surrounding valley, and water worn fragments of limestone of ten to seventy five pounds weight, similar to those seen in the beds of the adjacent streams.

The centre, at the time of exploration, was assumed to be the true centre, to which the location of the objects found was referred. The first step in excavating was to encircle the mound by a trench eight feet broad, penetrating the subsoil to the depth of two feet and extending on the outer edge four feet beyond the circumference. In this trench human skeletons in an excellent state of preservation were found one and one-half to two feet below the surface of the sandy subsoil, on the outskirts of the structure to the south, and three feet beyond the circumference to the south of west of the centre.

Twelve bodies were found at a depth of one and one-half to two feet below the surface of the subsoil, and a systematic and continuous burial on the surface of the subsoil was exposed. This preliminary work finished, the bodies exposed were left in place while the mound was cautiously attacked from all sides. A burial level approximately one and one-half feet above the subsoil was soon discovered, and in close succession came the exposure of a fourth burial level approximately two and one-half feet above the subsoil. In a few days more than one hundred skeletons were uncovered and carefully cleaned by means of pocket knives and wisps of broom straw, and four burial levels were clearly in view. Accurate memoranda of the location, position, nature and essential details were made and photographs taken of the skeletons in situ. The bones allowed to bleach, and hardened by the rays of the sun, were carefully removed and spread upon cotton cloths to dry, after which they were packed in boxes cushioned by crumpled newspapers. After removing these exposed remains the work continued towards the assumed centre, keeping the excavations well down into the subsoil.

The skeletons of three hundred and seventy-six men, women and children, in a remarkably well-preserved condition, were found in the three upper burial levels before the stone pile covering the centre was reached. The bodies were lying on their sides, right or left, indiscriminately, with the arms folded upon their breasts, the hands being extended in front of their faces, the legs drawn up in front of the breasts in such close proximity to the bodies as to indicate that the bodies had been bound up in this compact

form before burial. Single burials were frequent, but many bodies were found two together, or in groups of three to twenty. Several had from one to three large stones upon their heads and breasts, as if to protect them from disinterment by wild beasts. A small number had shell beads upon their necks, but no other objects, organic or inorganic, were found with them. The earth had entirely displaced all other organic matter and was clinging compactly to the bones. Where the skulls had become tilted so as to admit of entrance, the earth had in many cases completely filled the cavities.

All of the skeletons showed evidence of having been carefully and systematically buried, and most of them were lying tangent to circles, with a common centre five and one half feet south of west of the assumed centre of the mound. In addition to the human remains, skeletons of eight dogs were found, some almost perfect, all sufficiently intact to show clearly their positions. They had been carefully buried near the human bodies, and were lying on their sides with their feet drawn together in front of their bodies.

Continuing the work, a layer of fine gravel and ashes was discovered, forming a floor on the surface of the subsoil, one to three inches thick and thirty-four feet in diameter, with its centre five and one-half feet south of west of the assumed centre of the mound. At the centre of this gravel and ash floor burnt human bones were found, and upon it rested a burial level, with the same centre, twenty-four feet in diameter, covered by stones, followed by two successive burials with intervening stones, the whole covered by stones and earth reaching an altitude of four and one-half feet to the top of the mound. The human remains in this stone pile had evidently been buried with the same care as those in the earth-work surrounding it, but had been to some extent dislocated by the settling of the heavy, irregular stones, making it difficult at times to trace clearly their positions.

Fifty or more skeletons were found in the stone pile, twenty-eight of which had shell beads and pendants on their necks, the majority of those having necklaces being women and girls. One had upon the neck the tooth of a shark, perforated at the root for use as a pendant.

Two pipes, one of soapstone, the other of clay, were found close to the skulls of two men located near the centre of the stone pile. No other objects were found buried with the bodies, and a close search failed to reveal evidence of any considerable amount of debris of a former settlement from which the earth might have been brought in the erection of the mound. The objects of accidental occurrence were limited to a polishing stone of slate, a bone awl, a spear-head, and a few fragments of pottery.

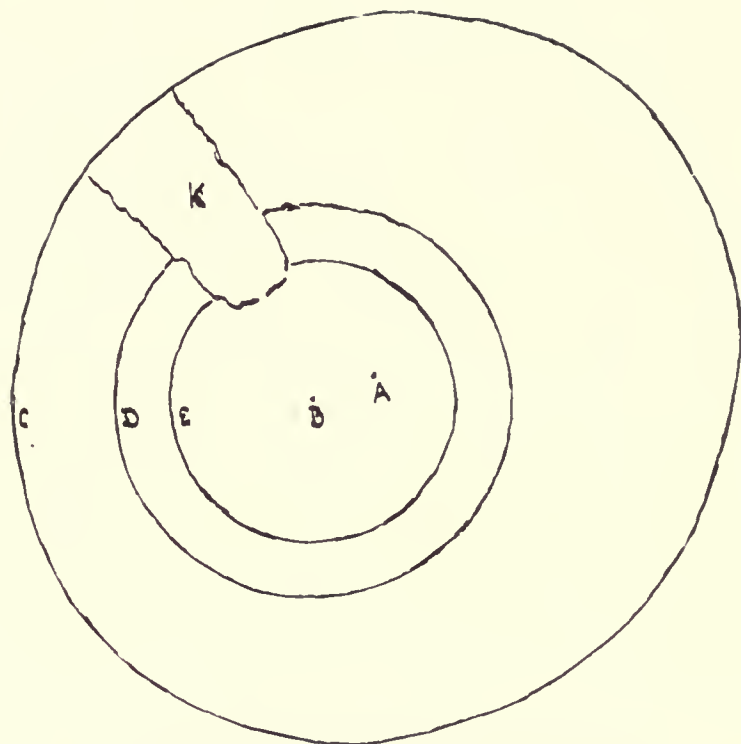
Eighty perfect skulls, a number of nearly-perfect skeletons, and the bulk of the bones of more than four hundred people, were exhumed and shipped to the Museum for scientific study.

Jefferson, in his "Notes on Virginia," states that the Massawomees occupied, to the exclusion of almost every other tribe, the entire region stretching from the Blue Ridge to the Ohio River. This burial was therefore in the territory of the Massawomees.

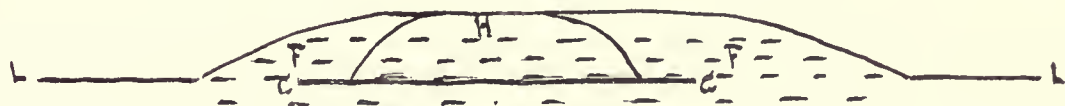
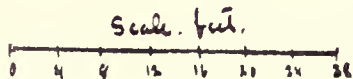
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Diagram of Mound.

- A Assumed center.
- B Actual center of original structure.
- C Circumference of base.
- D Circumference of gravel and ash floor.
- E Circumference of base of stone pile.
- F Scatterwork.
- G Gravel and ash floor.
- H Stone pile.
- L Level of surface of subsoil.
- - - Burial levels.
- K Area from which the skeletons had been previously removed by Col. Wm. Fisher Johnson, who several years prior to this exploration had driven a test trench into the mound.



Horizontal section through the base.



Vertical section. East to West.

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HAYES CREEK MOUND,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

REPRESENTATIVE SKULLS.
FRONT AND PROFILE VIEWS.



HAYES' CREEK MOUND,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

BODIES NEAR CIRCUMFERENCE OF MOUND.





HAYES' CREEK MOUND,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

VIEW SHOWING THREE BURIAL LEVELS.
FIGURE IN FOREGROUND IN SUBSOIL.

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HAYES CREEK MOUND,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

MAN AND DOG.





HAYES' CREEK MOUND,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

BODY OF A MAN IN TILTED POSITION.





HAYES' CREEK MOUND,
ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY, VA.

MAN AND WOMAN.
FEET OF MAN EXTENDED TO HIS HEAD.

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