3 Wisconsin's First People

This chapter deals with the first inhabitants of Wisconsin, the peoples who came to the area thousands of years before the first Europeans arrived in the 1600s. In addition to studying the history, cultures, and oral traditions of these people, students will learn how to analyze Paleo-Indian spear points and decipher the possible meanings of ancient effigy mound sites.

Activity 3.1 Paleo-Indian Spear Points

Overview

This activity helps students understand that Paleo-Indians traveled widely and developed extensive trade alliances with other groups. It also gives students practice with map and measurement skills.

Management

Materials

- Student Activity 3.1 (Teacher Pages 1–2; Student Pages 1–3)
- Map of United States
- Centimeter ruler (optional)

Grouping

- Pairs
- Individual, supervised or independent

Activity 3.2 Effigy Mounds

Overview

This activity gives students a chance to explore the relationship between effigy mounds and their specific locations in southern Wisconsin, where the majority of the mounds in the state are found. Students will investigate site maps, identify mound types in one of two counties, graph the various kinds of shapes that occur in selected locations, and discover how the types of effigy mounds vary from east to west across the state. Students will learn that certain types of mounds appear more frequently in one area than in another.

Management

Materials

- Student Activity 3.2 (Teacher Pages 1–4; Student Pages 1–7)
- Ruler (optional)

Grouping

- Group students as follows: Whole class, then small groups, then individual students, then student pairs, and finally whole-group discussion

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Wisconsin's First People

Activity 3.1: Paleo-Indian Spear Points

Teacher Materials

Preparation/Organization Students will work with Student Pages 1–3 for this activity. You will also want to have handy both a map of the United States and several centimeter rulers. (Alternatively, you can supervise students in making their own centimeter rulers made from strips of paper.) Students can work in pairs or as either supervised or unsupervised individuals.

Procedure

1. Provide each student or student pair with a set of the activity sheets.
2. Using transparencies of the worksheets, model completing the information needed for Spear Point A. Begin by showing students how to use a centimeter ruler to measure Spear Point A on Student Page 1. When you have determined the length of the spear point, direct students as you and they fill in its length (9.7 cm) on the Spear Point Description Worksheet (Student Page 2).
3. Next help students identify the composition of Spear Point A, calling attention to the key at the bottom of Student Page 1 as well as the names of the various materials (found at the bottom of Student Page 3). When students have finished, direct them as you and they fill in the name of the material (Indiana Hornstone) on Student Page 2.
4. Finally direct students to the paragraphs at the top of Student Page 1, having volunteers take turns reading the information aloud. When they have finished, guide students to recognize that this particular spear point is fluted.
5. Help students use this information to decide whether Spear Point A is Early or Late Paleo-Indian. Make sure they understand that fluted points are from the early, rather than late, period.
6. Next direct students to the map on Student Page 3 and help them determine that Spear Point A is most likely from a quarry in what is now southern Indiana and Illinois. Direct students as they fill in this information on Student Page 2.
7. When students have finished working through this example with you, have them complete the work with the remaining spear points on their own. (**Note:** Depending upon how quickly students grasp the concepts involved, you might want to break this activity into three parts: spear length, stone type, and location.)
8. After students have finished their work, have them submit their finished pages for assessment. You may choose to assess student work yourself, or you might wish to have students exchange papers and do the assessment as a group.

9. After assessing student work and returning it to the students, discuss student findings. Focus the discussion on what students can infer from these findings about the lifeways of the particular Paleo-Indians. For example, students might infer:
   - Because these Paleo-Indians needed spear points, they were probably hunters.
   - The spear points the Paleo-Indians made were not all alike.
   - Because their spear points came from quarries that were quite distant from the areas in which they lived, these Paleo-Indians either traveled widely or were able to trade with other Paleo-Indians who lived far away.

Answers

Point A: Early Paleo-Indian; 9.7 cm; Indiana Hornstone; Indiana, Illinois.

Point B: Late Paleo-Indian; 7.9 cm; Taconite; Minnesota.

Point C: Early Paleo-Indian; 2.3 cm; Hixton Quartzite; Wisconsin.

Point D: Early Paleo-Indian; 4.2 cm; Knife River Chalcedony; North Dakota.

Point E: Late Paleo-Indian; 5.6 cm; Burlington Chert; Iowa, Illinois, Missouri.

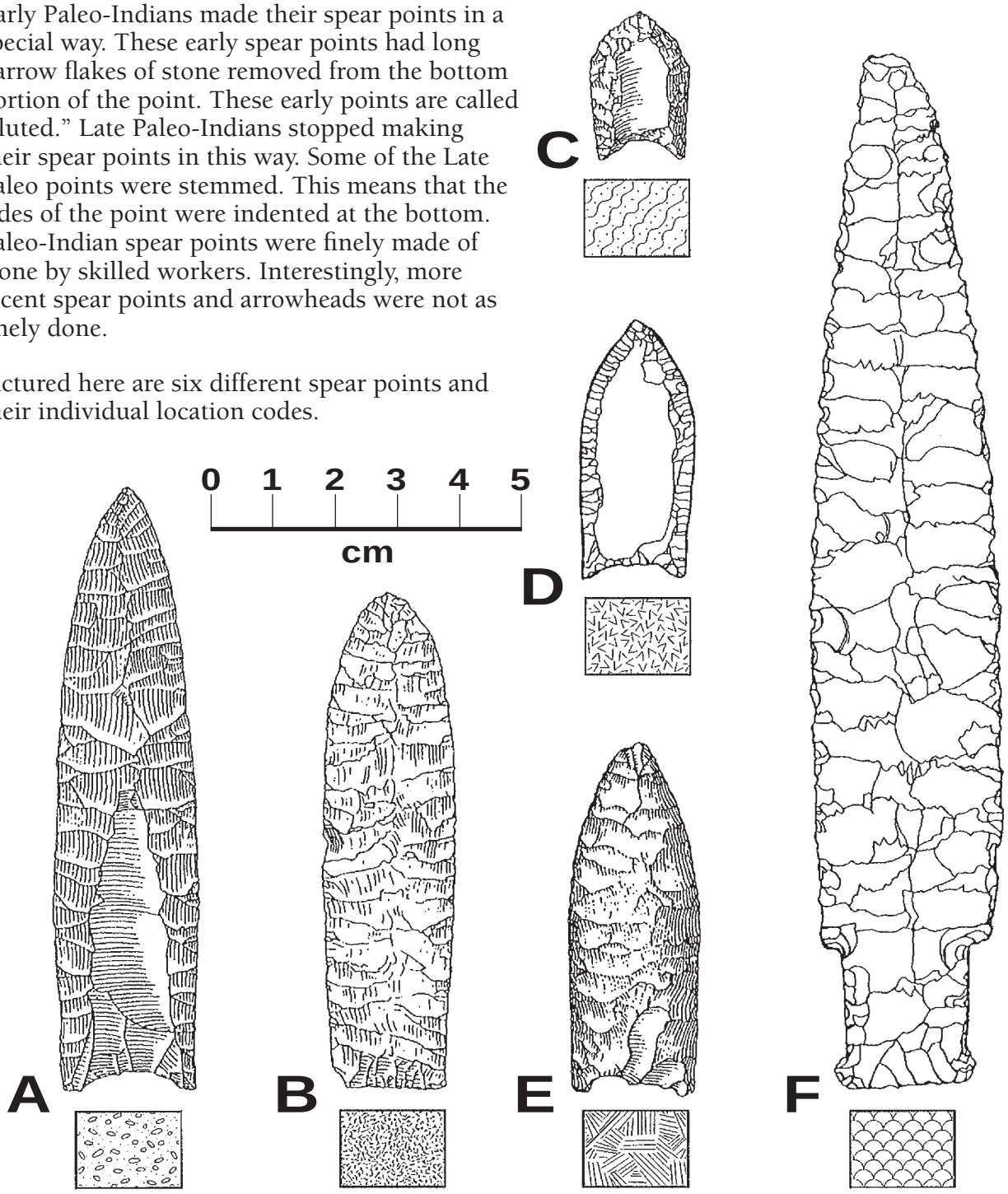
Point F: Late Paleo-Indian; 16.6 cm; Moline Chert; Illinois.

Name _____ Date _____

Activity 3.1 Paleo-Indian Spear Points

Early Paleo-Indians made their spear points in a special way. These early spear points had long narrow flakes of stone removed from the bottom portion of the point. These early points are called "fluted." Late Paleo-Indians stopped making their spear points in this way. Some of the Late Paleo points were stemmed. This means that the sides of the point were indented at the bottom. Paleo-Indian spear points were finely made of stone by skilled workers. Interestingly, more recent spear points and arrowheads were not as finely done.

Pictured here are six different spear points and their individual location codes.



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Name _____ Date _____

Spear Point Description

Point A

Early Paleo-Indian or Late Paleo-Indian *(circle one)*

Length _____ centimeters Type of stone _____

In what state or states can you find this type of stone? _____

Point B

Early Paleo-Indian or Late Paleo-Indian *(circle one)*

Length _____ centimeters Type of stone _____

In what state or states can you find this type of stone? _____

Point C

Early Paleo-Indian or Late Paleo-Indian *(circle one)*

Length _____ centimeters Type of stone _____

In what state or states can you find this type of stone? _____

Point D

Early Paleo-Indian or Late Paleo-Indian *(circle one)*

Length _____ centimeters Type of stone _____

In what state or states can you find this type of stone? _____

Point E

Early Paleo-Indian or Late Paleo-Indian *(circle one)*

Length _____ centimeters Type of stone _____

In what state or states can you find this type of stone? _____

Point F

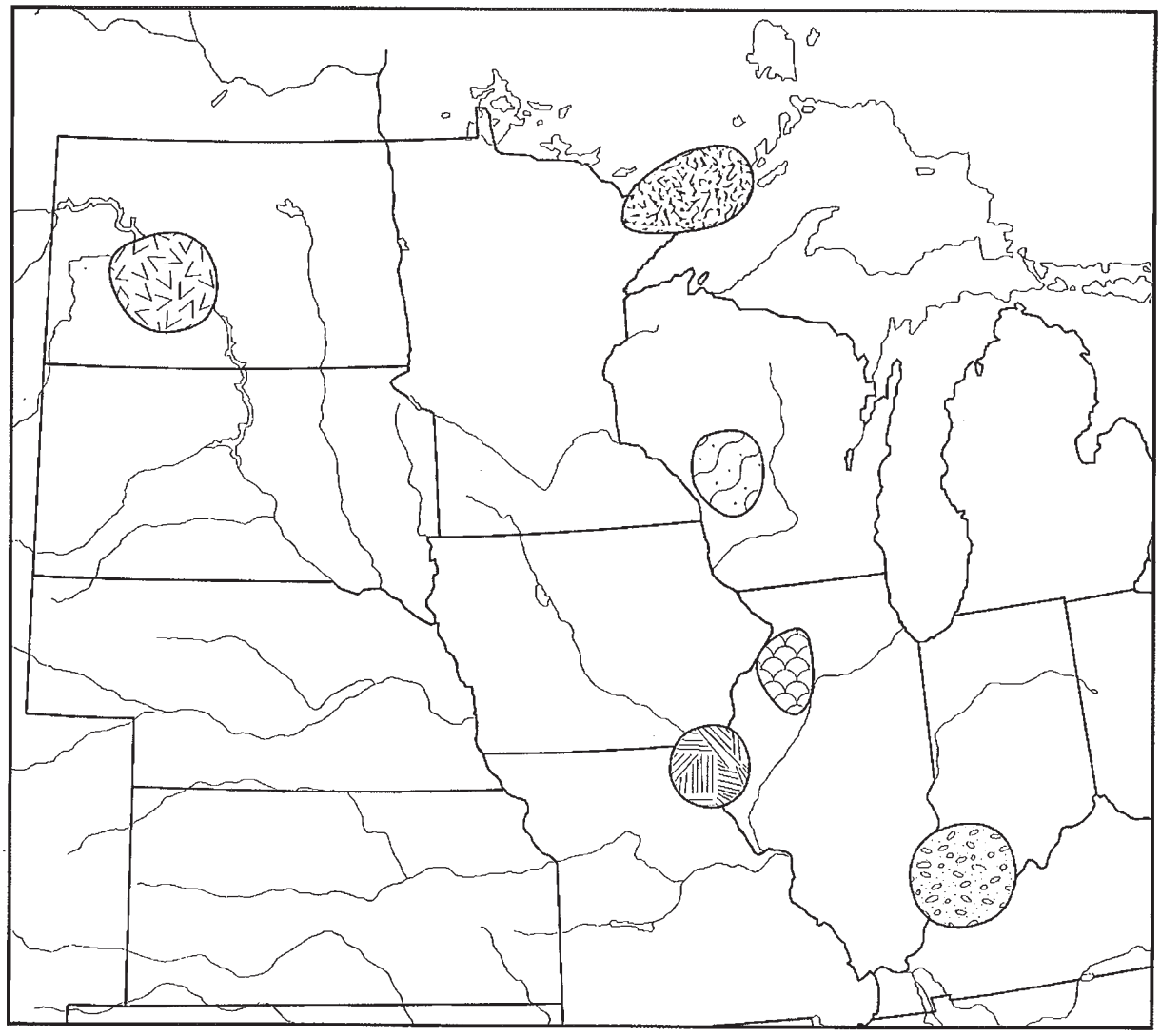
Early Paleo-Indian or Late Paleo-Indian *(circle one)*

Length _____ centimeters Type of stone _____

In what state or states can you find this type of stone? _____

Name _____ Date _____

Some Quarry Sites in the Upper Midwest



Often times Early and Late Paleo-Indian spear points were made from types of rock whose sources were located far away from where the points were eventually found. This map shows six sources of rocks used by Paleo-Indians in Wisconsin. Match the codes on the key below with the codes noted on Points A, B, C, D, E, and F on the "Paleo-Indian Spear Points" worksheet.

Write your answers on the "Spear Point Description" worksheet.

Taconite

Hixton Quartzite

Burlington Chert

Knife River Chalcedony

Moline Chert

Indiana Hornstone

3

Wisconsin's First People

Activity 3.2: Effigy Mounds

Teacher Materials

Background Information to Share Most effigy mound sites are found in Wisconsin, and most are within the southern half of the state. A few sites are found in Iowa, Minnesota, and Illinois. Mound sites tend to be clustered together near large rivers, lakes, or springs. There seem to be more mound sites in western and south central Wisconsin than in southeastern Wisconsin. Because there are no lakes in the Driftless Area of western Wisconsin, most mound sites in the region cluster near large rivers. In southeastern Wisconsin, where the melting and retreating glaciers created many lakes, mound groups are spread out across the landscape.

Most mounds were probably used to bury the dead, and current archaeological theories seem to agree that the shapes of the mounds represent totems, or animals symbolizing specific lineages or clans. The mounds were probably built in the warmer months, by groups of people who spent winters dispersed into small groups. Each summer they would gather together to visit and cooperatively collect the resources they needed in order to survive the next winter. Mound-building was probably one way that the stress of the gathering was reduced. People would work together not only to bury the dead, but to create a tangible symbol of their identity.

Later Native people living in Wisconsin continued to use effigy mound sites as cemeteries, as places to store food or special tools, and as places to grow food. Some effigy mound sites contain the remains of what might be houses or places where people held dances and ceremonies.

Preparation/Organization Materials for this activity include a map transparency ("Effigy Mound Sites in Wisconsin," Teacher Page 4) and seven student pages. Each student will need a copy of Student Page 1 and the "Mound Group Graph Sheet" (Student Page 7). Each student group will need a copy of the "Mound Group Tally Sheet" (Student Page 2). Half the groups will need copies of the mound maps for Grant County (Student Pages 3–4), and the other half will need copies of the mound maps for Milwaukee County (Student Pages 5–6).

Procedure

1. Have student volunteers take turns reading aloud Student Page 1. Share as much of the "Background Information to Share" (Teacher Page 1) as you wish. Then place a transparency of the "Effigy Mound Sites in Wisconsin" (Teacher Page 4). Explain that each dot on the map represents one place where mounds are found. Ask:
   - What are some Wisconsin counties that have a lot of effigy mounds?
   - Are the mounds evenly distributed over the landscape, or do they clump together in certain places?
   - Which places contain the most mounds?

2. Help students understand that effigy mounds are more prevalent in the southern part of Wisconsin. Then explain that students will be conducting an archaeological survey to find information about effigy mounds that have been mapped in Grant County (in southwestern Wisconsin) and Milwaukee County (in the southeastern Wisconsin).
3. Tell students that they will be working in small groups of two to four students to determine the frequency of animal types (and other forms) of mounds in one of the two counties. Half the groups will be analyzing mound maps in Grant County; the other half will be working with mound maps of Milwaukee County. Afterwards, the groups will compare and contrast their results and analyze the data they obtained.
4. Divide students into groups and pass out copies of the tally sheets (Student Page 2) to each group.
5. Distribute the mound group maps for either Grant or Milwaukee County (Student Pages 3–4 and 5–6) to each group. Examine the maps with students and ask the following:
   - Can you identify which animals are represented? (Some are easy to identify, but others might be seen in different ways by different people.)

   Students should be able to identify a number of animals by looking at the site maps and matching up types with those on the tally sheets. Most of the species that are identified will be native to the Upper Midwest, but some mounds might look like elephants, horses, or other non-native animals. Mound identification is subjective, but if it comes up you might want to discuss why it is unlikely that Wisconsin effigy mound builders would make mounds that resemble elephants, camels, or kangaroos—even if the mounds might resemble those animals to us today.
6. Direct students back to the tally sheets and point out that the columns on the tally sheet correspond to the mound types. Tell students that they will be tallying the data by site and then totaling the numbers. Then each individual student will graph the findings. Monitor students as they work.
7. Pass out a copy of the "Mound Group Graph Sheet" (Student Page 7) to each student. Have the student make a bar graph using the data from his or her tally table. Some students may wish to use rulers to make the bars as accurate as possible. Then form student pairs with one student from a Milwaukee County group and one from a Grant County group. Point to the space at the bottom of the graphs and ask each student to write at least one sentence describing the differences between their graphs.
8. When students have finished writing their sentences, reconvene the whole group and discuss the student findings. Help students understand the following:
   - There are more bear mounds in Grant County, while Milwaukee County contains more turtle and panther mounds.
   - Both areas have a lot of bird mounds, although more bird mounds are found in the west than in the east.
   - As you go from west to east, the frequency of bear mounds drops and the frequency of turtles and panthers rises.
   - Archaeologists are still trying to answer questions about the mounds, and some things still remain mysteries.

Enhancement You might wish to use one or more of the following enhancement activities.

- In the Teacher's Guide to *Learning from the Land: Wisconsin Land Use*, the effigy mounds activity on pages 20–26 gives students the experience of constructing a salt-dough topographical map model of the Arboretum effigy mound group in Madison.
- In *Mapping Wisconsin History*, pages 17–19 and 25–27, the effigy mounds activities provide in-depth interactive exploration of the effigy mound group found on the northeastern shore of Lake Mendota near Madison.
- *Water Panthers, Bears, and Thunderbirds* is a new publication that elaborates on this activity, extending it to five counties and adding more integrated elements.

Answers

Grant County Tally Sheet

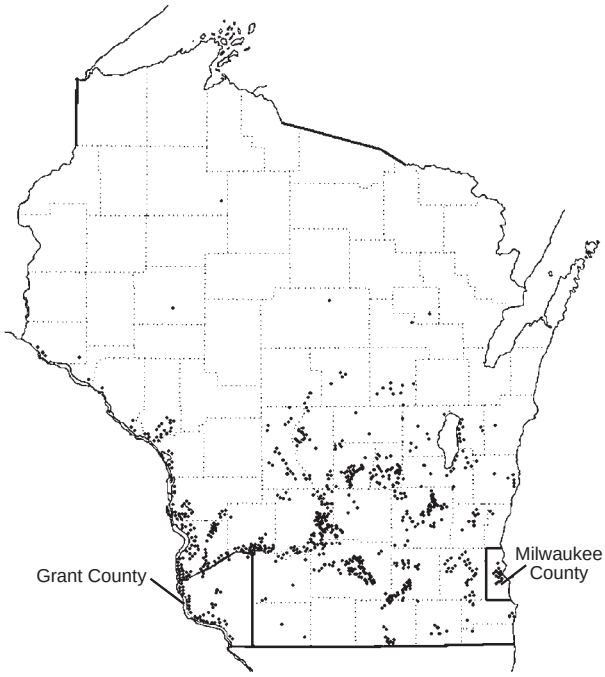
Sites	Bird	Goose	Panther	Turtle	Animal	Bear	Mink	Conical	Linear	Other
GT-387	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0
GT-148	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0
South Point	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	0
Fenley	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1
Riverside Park	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
GT-385	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Jack Oak Slough	2	0	0	1	1	1	0	20	6	0
Ballfield	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0
Spook Hill	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	2
Sanders Creek	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Grant County Totals	**6**	**0**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**10**	**0**	**24**	**16**	**3**

Milwaukee County Tally Sheet

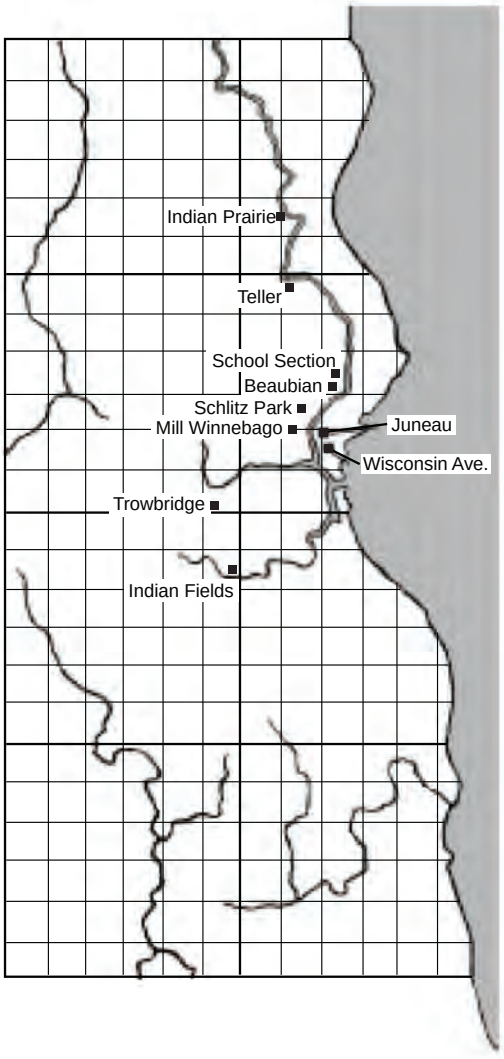
Sites	Bird	Goose	Panther	Turtle	Animal	Bear	Mink	Conical	Linear	Other
Beaubian	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Indian Fields	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	7	3	0
Indian Prairie	0	2	4	0	0	1	0	21	2	1
Juneau	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Mill Winnebago	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wisconsin Avenue	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teller	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Trowbridge	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	5	1	0
School Section	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	4	0
Schlitz Park	1	1	5	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
Milwaukee Totals	**3**	**3**	**24**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**34**	**16**	**2**

Check students' bar graphs. Bar heights should match the totals found in the tally sheets above.

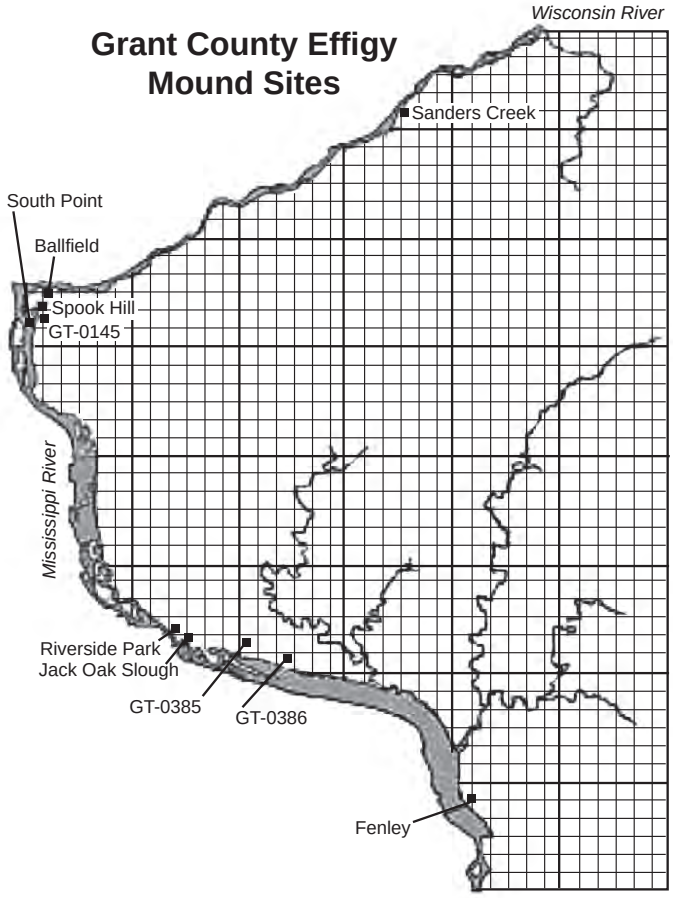
Effigy Mound Sites in Wisconsin



Milwaukee County Effigy Mound Sites



Grant County Effigy Mound Sites



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Name _____ Date _____

Activity 3.2 Effigy Mounds

For many hundreds of years, the Native peoples of Wisconsin built mounds out of rock and dirt. Some were shaped like cones or domes, and some were long and lean, like bratwurst or a fat pencil. Just over one thousand years ago, people began to make effigy mounds shaped like animals and even people.

In the past, archaeologists dug into the mounds to find what was inside them. This is not done anymore, in order to respect the wishes of the American Indians who are descended from the effigy mound builders. We know from past excavations that most mounds contain human bones, and that some contain special deposits of charcoal, ashes, animal bone, shell, or rock. Some people buried in the mounds were buried with arrows, pottery, pipes, stone tools, or shell jewelry.

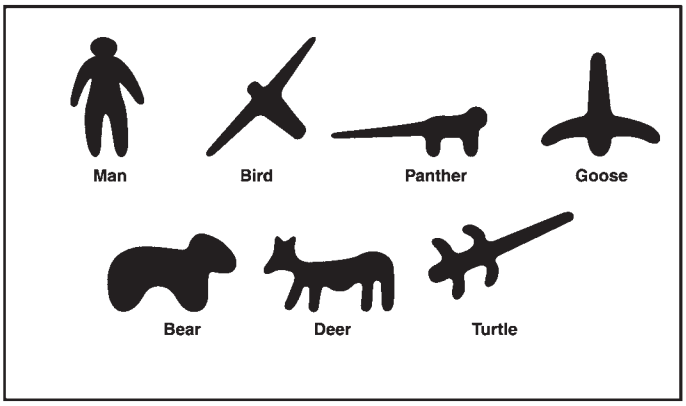
Most effigy mounds are gone now, because they were destroyed to make room for roads, for cornfields, or for houses. Luckily, people made maps of places where effigy mounds were once located. Using these maps, we can learn about the people who built the mounds.

American Indians have many stories about the animals that the effigy mounds represent. The most common mound types are those that show birds, bears, and long-tailed creatures that some people identify as panthers. Most animal mounds are shown from the side. When they are shown from the top, with all four legs sticking out, people call them "turtles" (even though they don't look very much like turtles at all).

Birds and animals symbolized by effigy mounds most likely refer to spirits as well as actual animals. Native Americans divided the universe into Upper and Lower Worlds. Birds inhabited the Upper World, while animals and Underwater Panthers inhabited the Lower World. Clans with bird names and animal names in Native societies were divided the same way, and sometimes lived in separate parts of the same village. Ho-Chunk people have identified some mounds as Thunderbirds and Water Panthers.

Some groups of American Indians tell stories about creatures called "Thunderbirds"—huge birds that live in the sky, make thunder with their wings, and shoot lightning out of their eyes. The groups also tell stories about strange creatures that live below the ground and in deep lakes, rivers, and springs. Some call such creatures "Water Panthers," and describe them as having sharp claws, very long tails, and horns on their heads. Water Panthers and Thunderbirds do not like each other at all and fight constantly, but both must exist to keep the Earth in harmony and balance.

Bird mounds are usually found in higher areas than animal mounds. Sites that contain more than one effigy mound usually contain one bird mound and one animal mound. Even if a site contains many bird mounds or animal mounds, it usually contains one or two mounds of the opposite class. This tells us that the effigy builders were concerned with upper and lower levels at their sites, and that they felt that both kinds were needed in order to balance the groups.



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Name _____ Date _____

Mound Group Tally Sheet: County _____

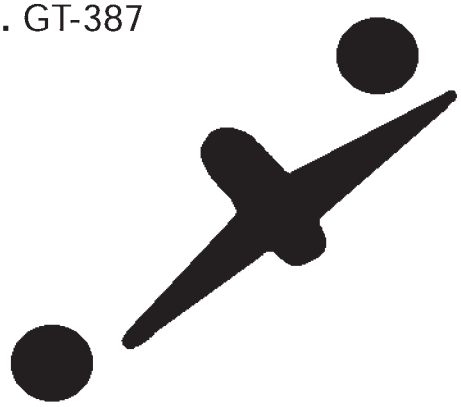
1. Write the name of the site on your tally sheet next to the number for that site.
2. Place tally marks in the appropriate column for each effigy mound type at that site. Not all effigy mound types will be represented.
3. Place totals for each column at the bottom of the page.

Site Name	 Bird	 Goose	 Panther	 Turtle	 Animal	 Bear	 Mink	 Conical	Linear	 Other
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										
9.										
10.										
TOTALS										

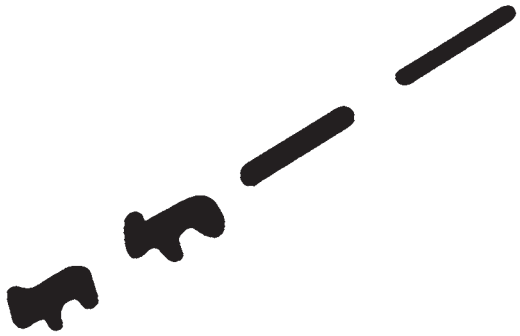
Name _____ Date _____

Grant County Mound Group Maps

1. GT-387



2. GT-148

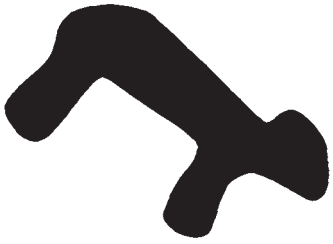


3. South Point

4. Fenley

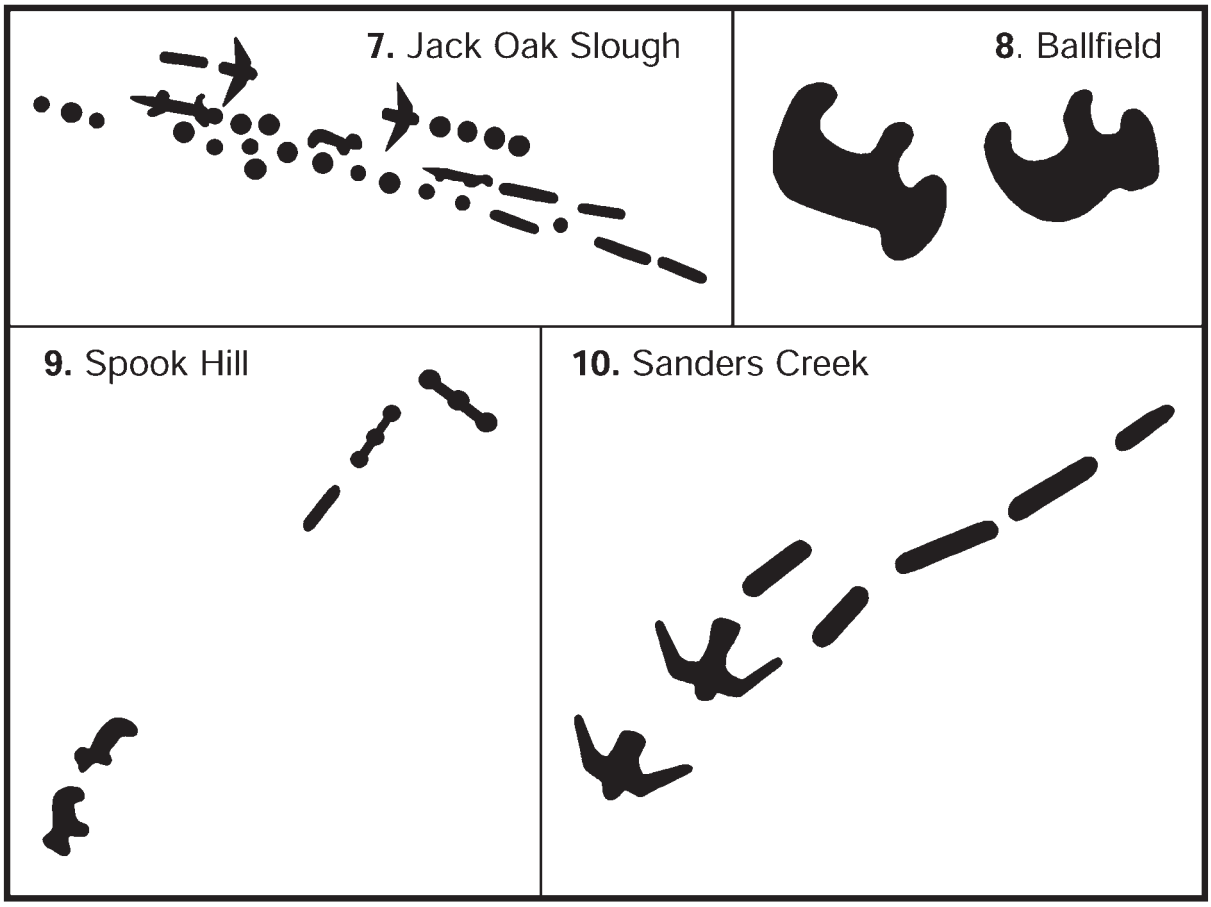
5. Riverside Park

6. GT-385



Name _____ Date _____

Grant County Mound Group Maps



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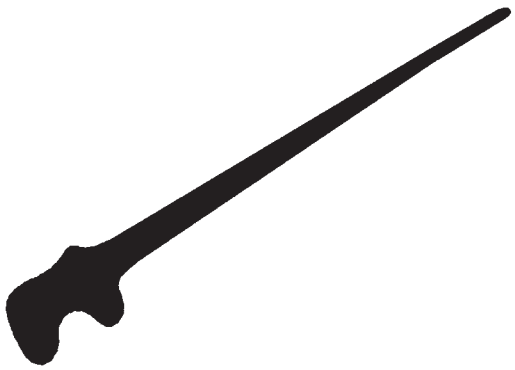
Name _____ Date _____

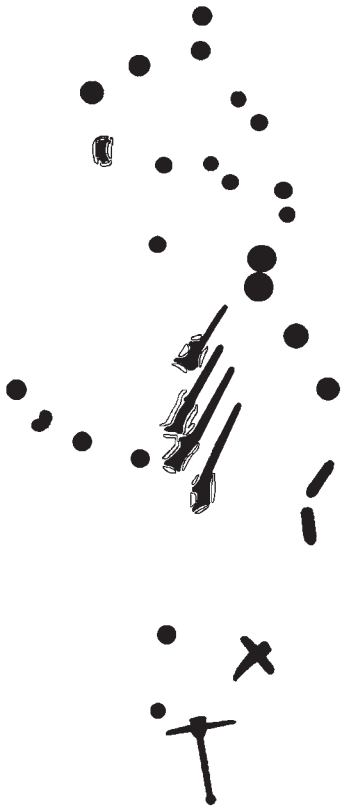
Milwaukee County Mound Group Maps

1. Beaubian



2. Indian Fields

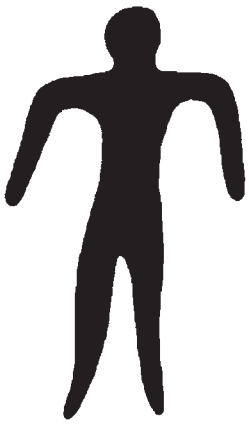
3. Indian Prairie



4. Juneau

5. Mill Winnebago

6. Wisconsin Avenue



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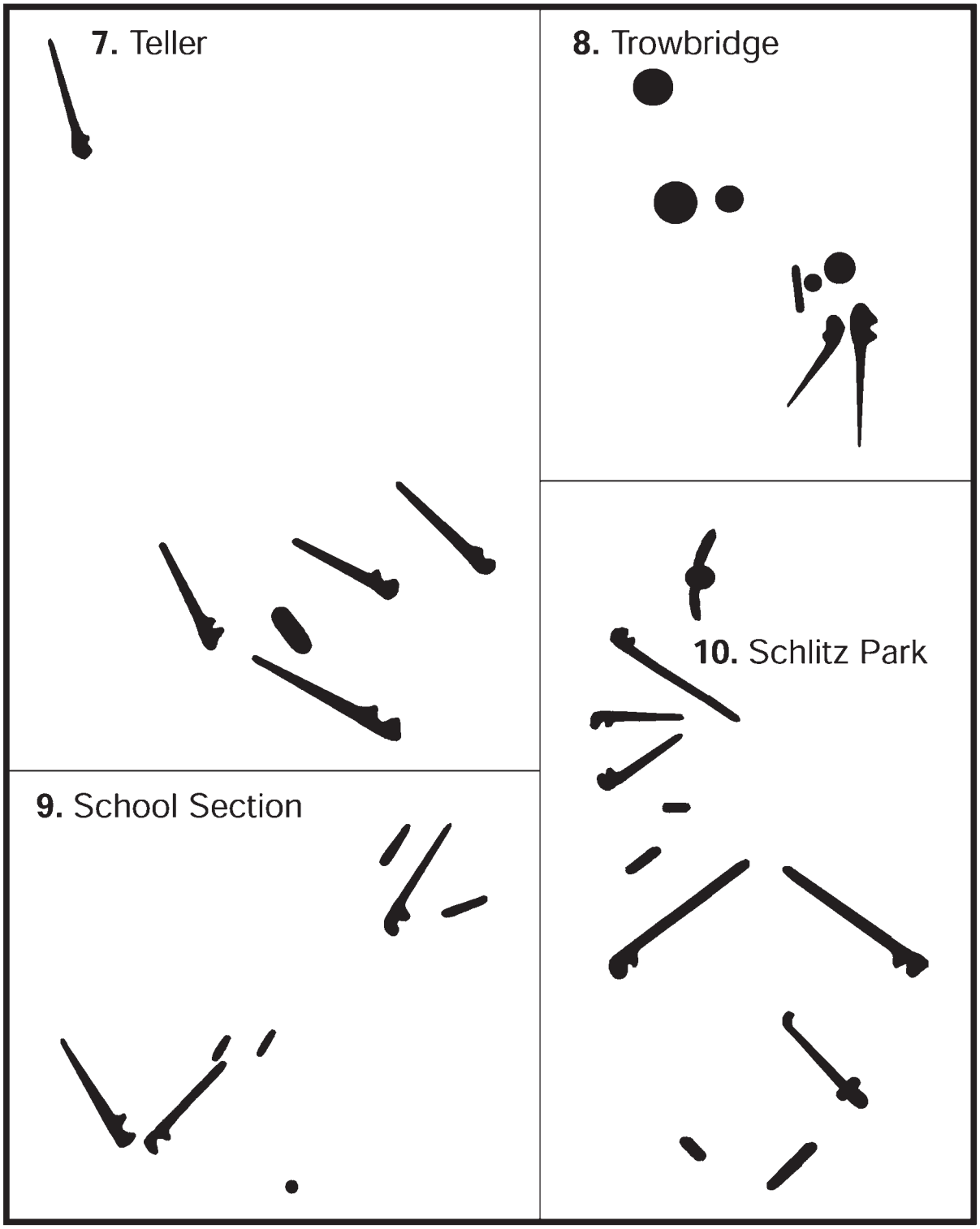
Name _____ Date _____

Milwaukee County Mound Group Maps



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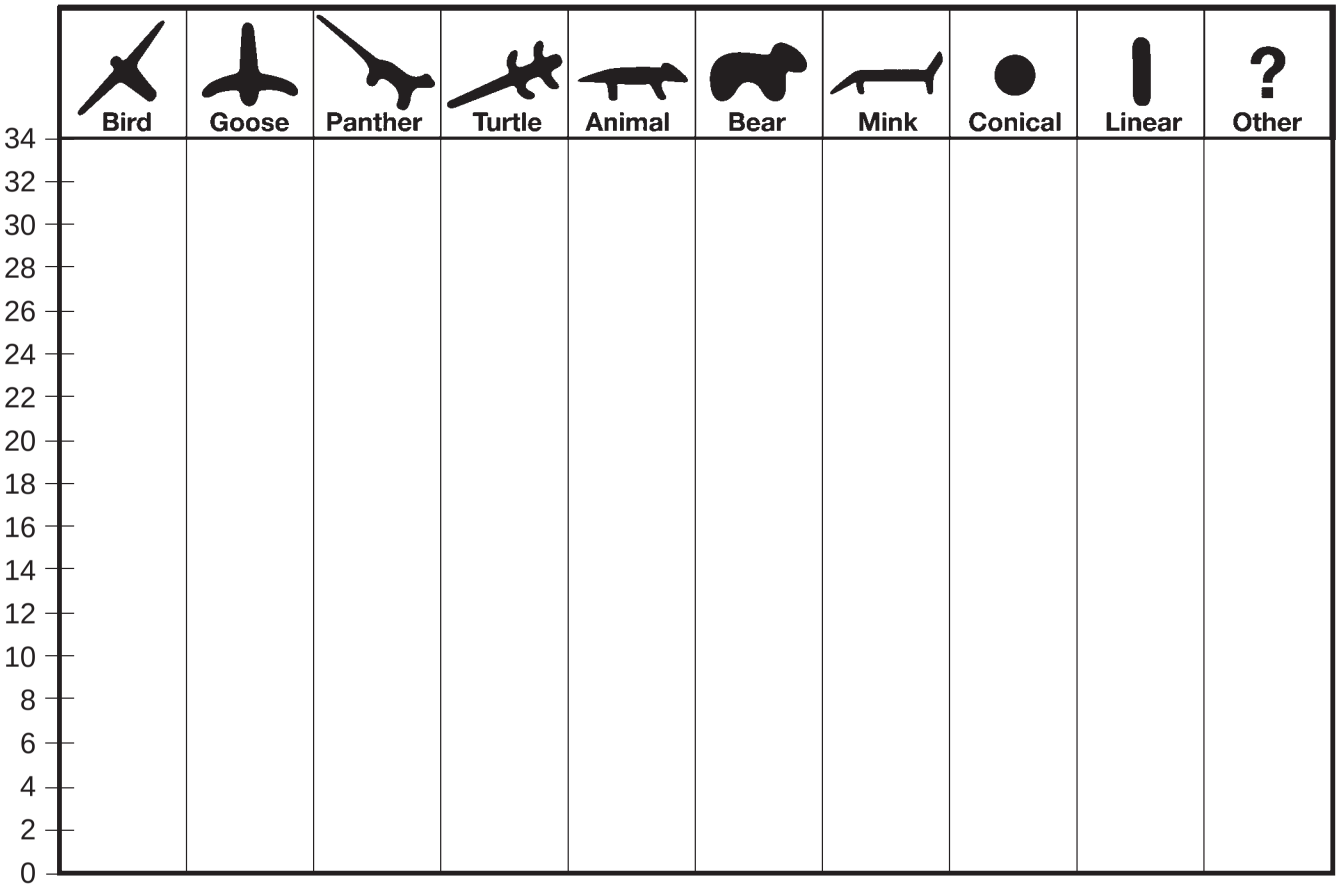
Name _____ Date _____

Mound Group Graph Sheet: County _____

1. For each kind of mound, draw a bar that corresponds to your tally sheet.
2. Fill in your conclusion after you have completed the bar graph.



I found that _____

_____