

NORTHERN KENTUCKY VIEWS PRESENTS:

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# Gallatin County



W. D. Funkhouser and W.S. Webb



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## GALLATIN COUNTY

Gallatin County is situated on the extreme northwestern boundary of the Outer Bluegrass Region of Kentucky on the Ohio River adjacent to the state of Indiana. It is a very small county with an area of only 109 square miles and an average elevation of about 500 feet above sea level.

Physiographically the county is a maturely dissected plateau with a winding upland extending east and west through the center to form a watershed between the Ohio River and Eagle Creek. A broad flood plain follows the Ohio River and provides the flat lands of the county. The upland region is undulating to hilly. The northern area of the county is drained by the Ohio River and its local tributaries while the waters on the south side of the divide flow into Eagle Creek.

Geologically the hard rocks are limited to outcrops of Ordovician limestones and shales. The Ohio River bottom land is formed largely of Recent and Pleistocene alluviums, while some evidences of the last glaciation have been found in scattered localities. Structurally the region is a monocline on the western side of the Cincinnati Arch with the dip to the northwest. The mineral resources of the county consist of excellent limestones and an inexhaustible supply of sand and gravel from the Ohio River. Occasional mineral springs produce the same type of waters as are so abundant and so well known in the neighboring county of Boone.

As would be expected from its situation on the Ohio River, the county shows much evidence of prehistoric occupation, not so much from definite sites, of which there are none of great importance, as from the enormous amount of surface and other material which has been found in all parts of the county. The actual sites to be recorded may be described as follows:

1. By far the best known and the largest of the so-called "Indian Mounds" of the region, located on the farm of Mrs. Nora Montgomery about a mile west of Warsaw, are probably not mounds at all but entirely natural formations. That they may have been used and occupied by aborigines is not at all improbable but that they were built by such peoples is very unlikely indeed. Their formation seems to be the same as that of the other ridges of the region, although they show an unusual symmetry. These mounds were de-

scribed and figured<sup>1</sup> by Young as types of the pyramidal mounds of northern Kentucky and have been described in newspaper stories and shown in rotogravure sections as examples of prehistoric workmanship but the evidence does not seem to bear out these assumptions. There are two enormous elevations on the site, one fully two hundred and fifty feet in diameter and fifty feet high and the other somewhat smaller. If they are artificial, they are among the largest of the built mounds in the Mississippi Valley.

2. A large symmetrical knob, locally known as an "Indian Mound," on the farm of Mrs. Louise Beall two miles east of Warsaw. Like the foregoing, this seems to be a natural formation although as in the case of Number 1, it may have been used by prehistoric peoples for purposes of signaling or defense. It is about three hundred feet in diameter and one hundred feet high, proportions which are hardly likely to represent artificial deposits of earth. This mound is also figured<sup>2</sup> by Young and was apparently considered by him as the work of aborigines.
3. Two small mounds on the bank of the Ohio River on the farm of Lee Hance, six and one-half miles east of Warsaw. When visited by the authors these mounds appeared to have been much reduced in size by erosion and cultivation but showed no signs of having been excavated. Many artifacts are known to have been found in the immediate vicinity of these mounds. The mounds are constructed entirely of made earth and are undoubtedly genuine.
4. A village site and burial field about one hundred yards from Number 3 and probably associated with that site. Abundant kitchen midden and other surface material mark the village site while the remains of stone graves identify the cemetery. Some of these graves have been opened and found to contain fragmentary human bones.
5. A stone grave cemetery covering a considerable area and locally known as the "Old Indian Graveyard" on the farm of Charles Smith, one mile south of Warsaw. Charles Furnish, while digging in this burial field in 1930, discovered a very good stone pipe. The pipe is only about two inches long but is in excellent condition and shows carvings on the bowl which are evidently intended to represent a human face.
6. A burial field on the farm of Thomas Craig, six miles southeast of Warsaw. The graves are constructed of stones in the usual fashion and those that have been opened are said to have contained skeletons in a fair state of preservation.
7. A mound on the farm of James A. Stahl, six miles due west of Napoleon. This mound is fifty feet in diameter and seems to be curbed about the edge with rocks placed on edge. Reported by James A. Sleet.

Mrs. Sallie B. Chambers, of Warsaw, has a large and very interesting collection of artifacts all of which were found in Gallatin County. This collection was exhibited at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago where it attracted much comment and was awarded a prize.

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<sup>1</sup> Young, Bennett, *Prehistoric Men of Kentucky*, p. 33. 1910.

<sup>2</sup> Young, Bennett, *Ibid.*, p. 33. 1910.