

## Appendix D

### Consultation with American Indians and Other Members of Traditionally Associated Groups

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Although the scope of work for this study did not specifically require consultation with American Indians, such consultation was considered to be an important part of the project. That a body of oral tradition exists about Effigy Mounds has been apparent since Radin (1911, 1923:50) reported that the living Winnebagos stated that mounds represent clan and spirit figures. Present day Winnebago tribal historian David Smith (2000:96) states unequivocally that:

Effigy Mounds are one of the most sacred religious sites for the Winnebago or Ho-Chunk Tribe. These effigies representing the bear, the birds and the Snake were constructed by the Winnebago over 1,500 years ago. These mounds are a story and prophecy told in dirt. Winnebago oral tradition tells us of our migration out of the southeast with other Siouan tribes a long time ago. To preserve this history, holy people began the construction of the Walking Bear Mounds and other related mounds.

Others have questioned Radin's conclusion and the source of his informants' beliefs, suggesting that the mutability of oral tradition, among other reasons, makes the connection suspect (Lurie 1960:790; Mason 1985:100; Mason 2000:261–262; see Chapter 8, this report). In particular, following Mason (1985:100), "Radin's collection of 20<sup>th</sup>-century memories may or may not represent earlier Winnebago culture at all." Richard Dieterle, a scholar of Winnebago stories, suggests that a "feedback" mechanism might be operating (2000). The essential argument of many historians and other scholars is that a feedback loop begins in which carriers of oral tradition incorporate new information into their current oral tradition because it proves useful for any number of reasons or purposes. The new traditions or beliefs often derive from sources in the dominant society. In many cases, new information is absorbed "in subtle enough ways that it quickly [becomes] indistinguishable from true oral tradition" (Henige 1982a:81). Through "feedback," the augmented tradition then is reinforced as being accurate or true every time it is repeated. Of course, feedback by definition flows both ways: literate discourse is just as susceptible to adopt "truths" from oral tradition and folklore, but the sources of such information are usually easier to identify (Henige 1982b). By its very nature oral tradition evolves, adapting to changing conditions, and adopting and discarding elements as needed in order to serve present purposes.

Our goal in attempting to consult with American Indians on this project was not to assess the validity or truth of any oral tradition regarding effigy mounds and their construction. Rather, our goal was to assess what level of traditional knowledge about the mounds might be available to outside investigators and to consider how it might have an impact on future management of Effigy Mounds National Monument.

As part of the process, we also interviewed a range of other individuals with experience and interest in effigy mounds. Some of these interviews indicate that some non-Indian groups may also have an interest in the mounds, considering them and their builders to be a part of each group's sacred realm.

#### INTERVIEWING METHODOLOGY AND CONTACT WITH TRIBES

The Scope of Work for this study specifically states: "If members of Federally recognized American Indian tribes are consulted or interviewed for this research, the contractor must obtain prior permission, in writing if possible, from the appropriate tribal governments" (see Appendix A). The initial Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) in the post-award meeting reiterated this statement, emphasizing that nation-to-nation relations were to be operational and that all Federal regulations regarding human subjects research and anthropological ethical codes should be followed. To begin the process, the COR sent letters to the affected tribal governments. A letter from one co-Principal Investigator followed up the COR letter, further explaining the project and requesting permission. One tribe responded within two months with permission, but no others responded. A second letter again drew no response, nor did phone calls or contacts through other sources.

The only effective mechanism was to use personal contacts and visits, but even most of these failed to bring permission, spoken or written. One additional tribe eventually granted written permission through this process, but following it through the system proved to be instructive. This instance and the associated problems were relayed through one of our project team who tracked the request for permission through the system.

As we discovered, although the tribal chair has titular authority for business dealings with the federal government, actual consideration of business is often taken care of by business councils or legislative branches. If the tribal chair gets a letter like the ones sent by both the COR advising of the study or the co-Principal Investigator seeking permission, it may or may not be handed off to the right person, or anyone for that matter. In the case of the letter to a second tribal council, it was never handed off at all. The second letter was sent in a way that a team member was able to track it. On that advice, it went to directly to the Vice President of the tribal council who oversaw the Legislative Branch. There it went through the hands of several legal aides, and after persistent questions from the team member to the Vice President, it was tracked to an attorney's desk where it had sat for several weeks.

After asking what had caused the delay, the team member was told that it was less important than other concerns, and in addition, no one knew what to do with it. As it turns out, no one could recall that anyone had ever bothered to ask permission to do such research before! The tribal officials' reaction to the permission requests and confusion was thus understandable. The Vice President asked if the tribe needed to develop research protocols. The team member replied that it would be helpful and was given the task of designing them. They include a range of reviews of materials including possible submission to the tribe's traditional court.

The only way we were successful with the tribes directly was to seek the advice and intercession of known individuals, and even that did not work all that well. In short, though we were finally able to get some interview material, we were also limited in what we could do. Even as this draft is being written, we await the possibility of interviewing another group.

As well, in following Human Subjects protocols, we developed informed consent documents and an interview schedule (see Appendix C). In each case where a formal interview was granted, these documents were offered and explained. In many cases, especially with elders, they were very willing to be interviewed and even taped, but would not sign the informed consent document because they were suspicious of it. Some even agreed that we could directly quote them, but

would not sign the form allowing us to do so. In other words, there was deep suspicion of the entire approach and the written documents. There may well be good historical reasons for such suspicions; a person's oral word is usually enough. Suffice it to say that the approach was very limiting.

What this may mean for future studies involving interviews, especially when there is such a wide range of groups involved as in this project, is that some other protocol should be developed and used. This does not, however, mean that we are without useful information that gives an indication of some level of assessment of cultural affiliation.

#### INTERVIEWS AND OTHER APPROACHES USED

Two public events at Effigy Mounds National Monument during the summer of 1999 (Effigy Mounds Indian Heritage Festival and the Monument's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration) offered the possibility to speak with and listen to several Indian people. Larry Zimmerman taped several public presentations and talked with numerous Indian and non-Indian people about effigy mounds. These opportunities indicate a broad-ranging consideration by Siouan speaking people that they consider themselves to be directly affiliated with the Effigy Mounds.

As permission from tribes was granted, the team conducted interviews with appointed representatives. Other persons, knowing of the project, offered as individuals, not as tribal representatives, to provide information.

In October, 1999, we interviewed Effigy Mounds National Monument staff members who were identified by the Superintendent as in most contact with the public, particularly in giving tours and having the opportunity to interact directly with Indian people and other visitors. All employees signed informed consent agreements for both taping and quotations.

To supplement the interviews and public presentations, published documents or statements also were assessed.

#### TRADITIONAL HISTORY REGARDING EFFIGY MOUNDS

Traditional history denotes "the history that members of an ethnic or other community tell about themselves in their own terms" (Downer et al. 1994:42). In essence, it is group historical memory and narrative related through a wide range of filters, some of which might not be visible or accessible in any way to outsiders. Of course, one of the greatest of these filters is time itself, but social constraints also play a role. Should outsiders know about sacred information, for example? In one case, with one of the tribes we consider in this document, another archaeologist working on an entirely different project told us that he had been working with a group of elders who refused to grant permission for his work because they were concerned about knowledge that one clan keeps secret from another. In short, oral tradition and traditional history are difficult both to access and to assess in terms of validity. (See the references to "feedback," above, as well as von Gernet 1996; for recent assessments of the use of oral tradition in archaeology see, e.g., Layton 1999 and other discussions in Gazin-Schwartz and Holtorf 1999; for contrasting viewpoints see Echo-Hawk 2000 and Mason 2000, but note that both authors advise care and caution in accord with the guidance offered in Vansina 1985.)

##### *Winnebago and Ho-Chunk*

Winnebago historian David Smith has been the most forthcoming about the links between Siouan people, especially Winnebago, and the construction of the effigy mounds. At the Monument events he gave public lectures regarding the cultural affiliation of the mounds, and he has written in several works that the Winnebago constructed the mounds (Smith 1996, 2000). He was also officially appointed by the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska to speak with us about the

project, granting an interview on March 18, 2000. In his examination of his tribe's connections to effigy mounds, as well as to connections of the other Siouan speaking peoples, he made several consistent points. The key points of his observations are summarized below:

- Effigy Mounds are sacred to all Siouan speakers, known as both burial sites and ritual areas.
- As the Siouan peoples moved on their great circle migration that took them to the distant south and east, then back west, they came into contact with many people including some in Mesoamerica.
- Smith says that he has seen Mesoamerican sacred objects similar to effigy mounds, evidence that there was contact.
- Certain mound groups and mound shapes are related to certain clan groups.
- Non-Indians, some of whom have claimed that the shapes are not likely tied to clans, misinterpret certain shapes. They incorrectly say that because the shapes don't represent all the clans that the mounds aren't clan related.

In his lengthy interview, he detailed several of the links to the mounds and provided a rough time sequence for Siouan migrations and mound construction, some of which mirrors historical documents and traditional history of the other Siouan groups. He has also added terminology and dates from archaeological knowledge of the area.

Other Winnebagos also gave presentations at Effigy Mounds National Monument. Truman Lowe, a noted Ho-Chunk artist, also alluded to the mounds as being clan related.

Another individual interviewed among the Ho-Chunk suggested that the area was sacred not only for the mounds but also for certain plants. One mentioned as a possibility was nightshade (mandrake was said, but the North American version is nightshade, *Solanum ptycanthum*, formerly *S. americanum*), a plant used widely for shamanic purposes which does grow in the area.

Other Ho-Chunk, speaking as individuals, were less certain about the connections to the mounds and about the validity of the knowledge. One individual said that the anthropologists who worked with the Ho-Chunk would never be given the whole story, and that even Dr. Lurie was not told the whole story. Another said directly that:

I think there is some truth to what Lurie says, but yet I do believe that that knowledge was part of the many things we lost, most likely because it had no real bearing on maintaining the key elements of our beliefs. Do you understand that odd way of putting it? But I can't find anything better right now. [The] current perspective of the mounds refers to their sacred value, but like I said before, all the land is sacred. We can't and don't have the dualistic view, you know that — well let me try this — like so many other “religious” aspects of our culture many people took it for granted. Then when the elders started passing on and taking much of their knowledge with them, the younger people realized too late and had to piece together what they had learned growing up.

This individual went on to give an example of a particular man whose father was a clan leader who was raised to know about such things but never paid attention. Even though he came home for feasts and medicine dances, he didn't think about the cultural aspects of things until his father passed on. He and his brothers and an uncle had to piece together all they knew in order to prepare for clan bundle feasts. He went on to say:

People take it for granted that it will always be there. Now does that make the lack of knowledge [of] our relationship to the mounds easier to explain? I think so. It is one thing to strive to keep the stories and songs related to war bundles, clan bundles, medicine dances, scalp dances alive and going, because those are all related to the overall health and welfare of the people. It is considered essential to keep up on it and maintain it, for it will benefit even the “non believers” whereas the mounds, maybe as long as we remembered enough to respect them, and not molest the spirits related to them well then that was good enough. Then came Radin and the rest asking questions and we had to recall why we were told about the mounds, where they are, etc., and to talk about them was easier because you really did not have to face the consequences associated with revealing the stuff related to the bundles or lodges.

I have tried to figure all this out, because there are half who insist on a direct connection to the mounds, stories about the clans, songs, stories and burials within, they are not the people I see at a feast, medicine dance or anything — they go to powwows, maybe Native American Church, often go to church or nothing at all — why do they have this knowledge? Is it because it was more “Secular”? And the others who say little and often ask the same questions, like “why has this issue been brought up so often recently, I never heard this when I was little” etc. are the ones who go to the traditional things and who have some much else to share about our history & culture, yet so little to say about the mounds? I can’t explain it, and others I have talked to can’t either. Our clan leader ... can’t explain it.

Another individual mentioned the possibility that at one time each mound had a song, and possibly a story, but that many of these are either lost or specific to clans. This at least superficially fits a statement by an Iowa elder (see below).

Dawn Makes Strong Move provides her own assessment of her interviews:

It is generally known among Ho-Chunk people that our ancestors built the mounds. Although, the knowledge of how or why the mounds were built, for other than the burial of humans, is not known. It is probable that the majority of the Ho-Chunk knowledge related to mound building has been lost over generations due to assimilation, a decreased dependence on the transmission of oral history and traditions, and cultural genocide (both direct and indirect policies).

All Ho-Chunks agree that Mounds, whether containing evidence of human burials or not, ought to be protected, respected, and treated as burial sites. However, many Ho-Chunks expressed their concern about providing people with tours of burial mounds, stating that to do so was like taking people on tours of cemeteries. Many Ho-Chunks believe that if all non-Indian people are properly educated about the historical and cultural significance of all types of mounds, whether they contain burials or not, it will inspire more people to respect them and regard them as sacred rather than as relics from the past. Furthermore, many Ho-Chunks agree that to educate more people about mounds will stimulate more interest and curiosity, and possibly promote desecration, but felt that most people are willing to help save mounds and protect them if they know more about them. Also, if people do not know how to distinguish a mound from the normal landscape how can they protect it from destruction?

Most of the Ho-Chunks I interviewed regarded all mounds as monuments (for lack of a better word) to spirits, therefore even though there may be no evidence of a burial within a mound, to disturb a mound in any fashion will disturb its resident spirit. As one individual said: “Don’t monkey around with things you don’t understand, or bad things will happen!” She went on to point out “that bad things don’t always happen to bad people; they can occur to

whole groups of innocent people.” This attitude offers an explanation for much of the bad luck of the Ho-Chunk People; too many people have disturbed the spirits of our past and disrupted the continuity of our culture.

Dawn Sly-Terpstra exchanged e-mails with Richard L. Dieterle (2000) who has published extensively on Ho-Chunk traditions (Dieterle 1999). Dieterle observes that:

The problem with asking the Hotcank elders about anything is that there have been some scientific feedback loops. The Nebraska Hotcangara seems to believe the linguistically inspired model of Hotcank origins; however, in Wisconsin, if we can believe the archeologist who runs one of the local petroglyph digs, they have become enamored of his theory that the Hotcangara are indigenes dating back several millennia in Wisconsin. They liked the idea, suggested around the turn of the century and earlier, that they had made the effigy mounds. However, there are no stories about them, nor did the old people then (as far as I know), who could remember back to times when they were independent, recall any ceremonies in which such mounds might function.

### *Iowa*

In lengthy conversations with an elder member of the Iowa of Oklahoma and her husband visiting during the Indian Heritage Festival, the topic of the mounds came up. They noted that she had been told a story since childhood about how her clan was directly related to the great bear mound, but that she could not say more. A Ranger who gave this couple a private tour of the mounds verified that she had told him the same story.

At the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration, Pete Fee of New Albin, Iowa, a elder member of the Iowa Tribe of Kansas, gave the invocation at the event. He preceded this with a discussion of how the mounds were sacred and how they were clan specific. He concluded that certain shapes represented certain clans. Likewise, in a published statement in the *Des Moines Register* (Norman 2000) Fee is quoted as saying that the mounds represent an important link to the evolution of his people:

“The spirit of the old people is still there,” he said. “It’s a special place.” Fee said tribe members would like to initiate more activities at the monument, such as sweat lodge ceremonies. “We believe the mounds go way back, and connect up to the creation story for our tribe,” he said.

### *Eastern Sioux*

A lengthy discussion was held with an Inhanktonwan (Yankton Sioux) tribal member on the problems in getting information about the mounds and possible Yankton Sioux connections. The individual stated that there was indeed tradition about the mounds and noted that the information was not for casual discussion and that it was given only in the right context of gift exchange and ritual. One reference was briefly made to a certain kind of tree that grew in the area that was heavily used, but little more was discussed.

### *Omaha*

A very knowledgeable Omaha, speaking as an individual to an interview seeking permission, commented that he had “heard things” about the mounds, but that the Omaha had “lost” most of

their knowledge about the mounds in the last century. He said that it wasn't worth our time for gathering information.

### *Meskwaki*

A Meskwaki cultural preservation specialist to whom we were referred to seek permission told us that because the Sauk and Fox were late arrivers in the area they made no claim to building the mounds. Nor did they know their purpose except that they were sacred and some were used for burials. They simply understood that they were made by "ancient ones." He did state, however, that because the Fox lived in the area for some time and because their own dead might be buried in the area, that the Meskwaki should have some role in issues regarding cultural affiliation.

### RANGER INTERVIEWS

In October of 1999, team members interviewed four permanent and seasonal Rangers at Effigy Mounds National Monument. Collectively the Rangers had more than 45 years of experience at the Monument. Our hope was that in day-to-day contact with visitors, they might be able to add an important dimension to the study. The Ranger interviews tended to either corroborate or suggest additional connections to the Ho-Chunk and other groups. Some comments are relatively specific and attributed to named individuals while others are more vague. Some contain interesting comments about the use of certain plants for pipestems, maidenhair fern, and trees. Only the key elements of their interviews are related here, with identities of the Rangers and names of others removed. Summarizing these comments makes for a somewhat choppy narrative, but the purpose here is to relate core content related to the Rangers.

The Rangers generally classified visitors who talked about their own views of the mounds into those who had either traditional or non-traditional views of the function of the mounds and who built them. In the traditional groups, both Indians and non-Indians tended to think of them primarily as burial places. For the non-traditional groups, explanations ranged from the idea that they were "power points" to aliens having built them.

### *Comments by Rangers on experiences with American Indians and Effigy Mounds*

Many of the Native Americans who have visited in the past have seemed as interested in basic educational information about the mounds as other new or first-time visitors. Two Rangers agreed that, "just because someone is Native American doesn't mean that they know anything about the mounds or understand them." This statement and others reflect a general homogenization of Indian people and little attempt to identify individuals with tribal affiliations.

One expressed an opinion about the nature of Native Americans who visit the monument, that if they know anything about a tribal affiliation or family connection to the mounds, that they probably won't say anything to the parks people about it. The others agreed. Each Ranger had stories about Indian people who have requested permission or asked about leaving offerings of tobacco and/or cloth at the monument. Many offerings of cloth are found tied to tree branches in the southern portion of the monument. Quiet offerings of tobacco are sometimes sprinkled at the end of a mound(s) by Indian people. Within the past year, the Monument did issue a special use permit to an Indian man who wanted to build a sweat lodge and use it over the course of a few days. No tribal affiliations of these individuals were mentioned by any of the Rangers.

Shortly after the passage of NAGPRA, two Ho-Chunks talked with a Ranger about the park's collection of artifacts and their presentation of and interpretation of these artifacts. They made "very strong claims" to the collection material and about the association of Effigy Mounds and

the Winnebago/Ho-Chunk. One of them later visited the park and had good comments about the park interpretation and presentation.

One Ranger had met with many people including Ho-Chunk from Wisconsin, Winnebago from Nebraska, Iowa from Kansas, and some from Sac & Fox and Dakota; each of these are groups or individuals who have visited the park. In the 1980s he asked people who worked at the park what happened to people who built the mounds, and the attitude at that time was that scientists and anthropologists had never made the connection between prehistoric and contemporary peoples. In many cases, some native people who visit the area are seeking information because they have been disassociated with the area for so long. Others, however, come to seek a religious connection with their own people. He has heard stories about the mounds, but some are so privileged that if they are told, they are not re-told by the Ranger without permission of the teller.

This Ranger would speak of these stories in a somewhat general sense. He related that he had heard many stories from a Winnebago from Nebraska, stories he prefers to keep confidential. In the early 1990s a Winnebago from Nebraska or Wisconsin wanted funerary objects and other objects that belonged to the tribe. She came on one of his guided hikes. They went to Little Bear Mound and Fire Point, compound mounds, and she didn't identify herself until they reached the compound mounds. She then shared with the group about power her people were able to gain in warfare because of the mounds. In the 16<sup>th</sup>–17<sup>th</sup> century, Winnebago were able to overcome disadvantage in battles over enemies that outnumbered them because of the mounds. It is in their oral tradition, the Ranger commented, that mounds served a warfare function. (What function was not identified.) At that point she said that they were interested in what was being said about the mounds (a reference to Ghost Eagle Mound is mentioned here; [this is a large plowed-down bird effigy in southwestern Wisconsin]). His interpretation of her claim that the mounds “belonged to them” was a connection the Ho-Chunk as a people had constructed between themselves and the mounds.

About this same time, a group of elders from Winnebago (actually Wisconsin it turns out) came and they talked about the connection between Ho-Chunk and moundbuilding. One of the elders said that NPS listens too much to archaeologists — that Little Bear Mound was not built by people, but by spirits. The only people actually buried in the effigy-shaped mounds are the medicine people, according to the elder. He has since heard this from several other people. The Thunderbird image would guide the medicine people up to the sky. Several people have told him that medicine people would hold ceremonies and that each clan had medicine people. Another said that these effigies do not represent clans, but, for example, the bear's spirit walking through the woods.

He discussed the notion of sacred space in areas with concentration of mounds such as the Marching Bear group. He takes people up there and they perform ceremonies; however, he never participates (unless they are good friends) and lets people know he will be waiting with the truck. They tell stories as they walk. Marching Bear Point seems quite important to all of them. The once-discussed proposal to build a Visitor's Center at the end of the Marching Bear group was viewed as potentially devastating by native people who visit this area. The guardians have been watching over this site and trying to keep it sacred, according to his reports from native people.

The interviewer also asked Rangers for information about plant stories they had heard. A Nakota woman mentioned that (aspen?) trees and their roots take in the minerals from the people buried near them, and thereby, animals such as elk and deer that consume leaves from the trees become part of the spiritual world, and the leaves in the treetops that blow in the wind which provide spiritual messages. The columbine plant's seeds were used as love medicine, and cottonwood trees hit by lightning were used to start sacred fires. Cedar was also used as ceremonial material as a type of incense. A Lakota pipemaker who used to work at Pipestone

National Monument would use sumac stems gathered in the area by a friend of his from this area for his pipes.

There was a final story about clay. Clay was used to pack people into burials; an analysis made of one of the burial mounds showed that the clay was charred, and that the soil was loess soil from the mouth of the Yellow River. The ranger speculates that individuals were cremated in another site, and that the clay and ashes, when burned together, turned red. This clay was then scattered on the top of this particular mound. One story he heard (which he received second or third-hand from a Native American source) said that they believed this mound represented creation or the beaver clan (lodge) since the mound resembled a beaver lodge piled with clay.

#### *Non-traditional groups and the effigy mounds*

In the Ranger interviews, at least two other groups were noted to consider their group to have some level of affiliation to the mounds. Several members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints consider themselves to be affiliated. Mormons have long believed connections of the Lost Tribes of Israel to the origin of Indians and mound building. As well, practitioners of New Age religion apparently have asked about the Effigy Mounds as “power points” or as a “vortex.”

The Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (the Mormons) have particular views on the origins of Indians, the mounds, and the pyramids of Mexico and South America (Silverberg 1968). However, as Wauchope (1962:59) notes, the church:

denies that their *Book of Mormon* is concerned with the Lost Tribes [of Israel], but it has been the most active and persistent organization seeking to prove that Hebrews came to America and founded here the Indian civilizations of pre-Columbian times, as recorded in their sacred book.

Wauchope goes on to discuss his comment at length. In order to explore contemporary Mormon beliefs about mound building, Zimmerman, on a trip to Nauvoo, Illinois, asked a local merchant about the beliefs. The merchant flatly said that the Indians didn't build the mounds, but that they were built by a lost race on their way to Mexico and South America. The mounds were essentially “practice” for pyramid building. In essence, the Mormons at least at some level see a connection of their group to the effigy mounds.

The other group is more diffuse, essentially dubbed by the Rangers as “wannabe” Indians or New Agers. New Age belief systems are as diffuse as their practitioners, but in general there is a personal or group spiritual quest. To the chagrin of many Indian people, it often involves cultural “borrowing” of American Indian practices, usually out of any Native cultural context. Many see the world as underlain by connected lines of power, and where they intersect, there may be a power point or vortex (see Molyneaux 1995 for numerous examples). Many American Indian sacred sites have been usurped by New Agers as sacred sites in their own belief systems. The Rangers noted that many New Agers come to the Monument, asking where the vortex or power points are. Some also wish to leave offerings, and to the dismay of the Rangers, often walk on top of the mounds. In a follow-up interview with a Ranger in June, 2000, he commented that he had asked several to leave who had put stakes into some mounds and were measuring it from many angles. When asked what they were doing, they said they were determining its astronomical alignments. A few days later, he happened to be talking with a private landowner who protects a group of mounds on his property. That same group had come to his mounds and done the same.

Inspection of the archives and correspondence at the Monument revealed a number of other non-traditional views of the mounds. One that stands out is in a multi-page letter a man in

Arizona sent to the Superintendent explaining his interpretations of the mounds as Native American sign language. He had not visited the mounds, only looked at photographs and published maps of them. He states that the spatial arrangement of the mounds is a special language from which various messages can be translated. He sent a number of sketch maps of several mound groups, and concludes:

All linguistic interpretations should here be considered tentative but there appears to be a plentitude of indications that these mounds are related to specific constellations. Many of the actual signs used in the mounds can be documented but some have been learned through context when translating a variety of materials.

#### CULTURE CHANGE AND THE PROBLEMS OF SEEKING AFFILIATION OF THE EFFIGY MOUNDS

Dieterle's comments about scientific feedback loops and the concerns of Mason (2000) about the use of oral tradition discussed above raise interesting issues, ones that plague affiliation questions in many ways. NAGPRA approaches the affiliation of sacred objects and sites, as well as human remains, by looking at cultures as if they are static or locked in time, specifically looking at Native cultures as they were at the time of Contact. As most anthropologists know, and many Indian people continually point out, cultures and traditions change. As Eldon Yellowhand commented at the Chacmool Conference on Indigenous People and Archaeology at the University of Calgary in November, 1999, traditional knowledge is plastic, allowing each generation to apply it to its own purposes, making it relevant to modern life. The updated Winnebago stories in Smith (1997) reinforce this idea.

Indeed, this updating of belief systems shows even in the non-Indian visitation at Effigy Mounds National Monument. As discussed above in the ranger interviews, at least two other groups consider some level of affiliation to the mounds. Several members of the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints consider themselves to be affiliated. As well, practitioners of New Age religion apparently have asked about the Effigy Mounds as "power points" or as a "vortex."

What these problems raise is a real question of how one can even begin to assess traditional history in questions of affiliation. However, there are those who are making an effort to find levels of concordance between traditional history, oral history, and archaeological evidence. Roger Echo-Hawk's analysis of Caddoan cultures on the Plains provides such an example. He concludes that scholars should see "North American social settings as the product of traceable processes rather than as an expression of a timelessly rigid 'ethnographic present'" (Echo-Hawk 2000:288). Scholars should also stand their ground "when they are urged to accept origin stories as literal history" (Echo-Hawk 2000:287). Constructions of the past, whatever their source, are subject to adaptation to a wide range of contemporary forces, part of an individual or group's processing of the past.

In the end, the past is obviously mutable under circumstances of the present. Thus, assessing validity or truth about the past may be a virtually unattainable goal in our assessment of cultural affiliation. Rather, it may be that issues of management or administration demand at least an equal attention to how people are processing their pasts now.

## TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS BASED ON ETHNOGRAPHY AND TRADITIONAL HISTORY

In all the interviews with American Indians, it is apparent that the mounds are considered to be sacred space. All spoke about how the mounds have spiritual power, and some spoke of their spiritual danger. The common theme is that the mounds must be respected.

With the cautions of both Echo-Hawk (2000) and Mason (2000) as background to questions about the cultural affiliation of Effigy Mounds, we are led to a range of cautious and very tentative conclusions based on the information discussed in this chapter. These conclusions have been considered in Chapter 9 of this report within the context of other evidence gathered during the course of this study.

*There is an abundance of traditional information to support some form of affiliation of Siouan-speakers to the effigy mounds.*

Whether or not one accepts the detailed construction of David Smith or more vague mentions of linkages to the effigy mounds, there is a consistent theme among members of several of the groups, notably the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago and Iowa, that their ancestors were the builders of effigy mounds. Apparently there are still specific stories or songs specific to some mounds. Indeed, there may be a substantial amount of misinformation as well.

*Whether the traditional information is from “deep time,” taking the affiliation back to pre-Contact, or whether it is recent will be difficult to ascertain under any circumstances.*

Construction of the past is an ongoing process, and any assessment of truth or validity is problematic at best. In the case of the mounds, so many events and circumstances are in play to prevent it. Groups have undergone such dramatic culture change and adaptation since European Contact that many traditions have been lost. Groups may or may not feel that it is appropriate for some others within their own culture (other clans, for example) to have access to certain sacred knowledge. Groups may feel that it is inappropriate for outsiders to have access to the knowledge. Individuals or groups may manipulate whatever knowledge exists for contemporary reasons. These factors in mind, there can and will be no archaeological “proof” in the traditional sense of scientific proof.

*The evidence suggests that if traditional history is considered as important in questions of cultural affiliation of effigy mounds, we would urge that all the Siouan speaking tribes be given consideration and they might wish to work jointly on any NAGPRA-related claims.*

Although the evidence related here suggests that the Ho-Chunk/Winnebago and Iowa have the most directly linked traditional history about the effigy mounds, too many processes of change and relocation have taken place to reasonably exclude the other Siouan speakers, especially the other Chiwere peoples and the Dakota peoples. The Sauk and Meskwaki make no claim to building the mounds, but given their substantial historical presence in the area, they should be involved in any consideration of claims, especially regarding unidentified and more recent historical materials from the Effigy Mounds region.

*Many contemporary publics, some of them non-Indian, consider themselves to be affiliated to the Effigy Mounds, beliefs with which the NPS will have to deal in some way.*

Given that other groups have processed their pasts in ways that now incorporate effigy mounds into their definitions of the sacred or their own traditional history, the National Park Service will need to pay attention to these views in their dealings with the non-Indian public. This may be the case for both NAGPRA-related issues and interpretation. Certainly, although there is no

reasonable scientific or documentary evidence to support any NAGPRA claims of these groups, such matters may surface as they did in the case of the Kennewick skeleton in the state of Washington with the Asatru Folk Assembly (Thomas 2000:118).

#### PARK USAGE ISSUES BASED ON INTERVIEWS

A final theme appears from the issues, one that involves contemporary Monument usage. Again, whatever the case with assessment of truth or validity regarding traditional history of any groups, Monument usage is of concern to the tribes that claim descendency from the mound builders. As noted in the interviews with the Rangers, the concerns are legitimate. As in the case of some New Age practitioners, they use the Monument in ways that are disrespectful in the eyes of Indian communities and may be damaging to the mounds. Certainly, as is now the case, no groups should be allowed to disturb the mounds by any invasive action, whether pounding in stakes for measurement of astronomical alignments or even walking onto the mounds. This is obviously now a matter of NPS policy, but it may need bolstering. As well, New Agers leaving offerings on or near the mounds may be inappropriate, being offensive to Indian communities. The NPS may wish to develop an interpretive theme stressing this point.

Another issue that appeared in several interviews is that American Indians are using the area already for ceremonies or rituals, large and small, from making offerings to wishing to conduct sweats on or near the properties. Some ceremonies should not be publicly visible, and thus the NPS should consider in consultation with the tribes developing policies for park usage that will both protect the resource while allowing reasonable public access, but allowing for certain areas of the Monument to be closed off for ceremonies.