

# Top Site FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

## Q1. What American Indian tribe(s) built Marksville?

Archaeologists do not know what tribe lived at the Marksville site 2,000 years ago. However, the Avoyel Indians, who met the first European explorers in the area, may have descended from the people who built the site. In the late 1700s, the Avoyel joined with the Ofo, Tunica, and Biloxi tribes, as they moved to the area. Today, the Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana lives in Marksville.

## Q2. What religion did the people of Marksville practice?

Archaeologists are still learning about the religious beliefs of the Hopewell tradition. The fact that only certain animals show up in Hopewell art may mean those creatures were sacred. The Hopewell practice of enclosing mounds within embankments forming geometric patterns may also speak to religious beliefs. The people who built Marksville could have shared these beliefs or adapted them to fit with their existing views.

## Q3. Why did American Indians build the mounds at Marksville in geometric patterns?

Archaeologists do not know why people built the mounds and embankments in geometric patterns. These patterns may have simply been attractive to the people who built the site. However, the fact that many Hopewell-era sites have similar designs may mean that there was a powerful idea guiding the choice of these patterns. Religious or other symbolic reasons cannot be ruled out.

## Q4. How did the people of Marksville dress?

Archaeologists have found only one figurine at Marksville, and it is unknown if it is an image of a real person. Figurines from the same time period found at other sites offer clues about how people looked. Some of these figures show men wearing deer skin breechclouts and perhaps a deer skin shirt. Their hair was worn long and tied in a bun. Women wore knee-length skirts of deer skin or woven cloth. They wore their hair long down their back or tied in several buns. Some figurines show females carrying infants. Archaeologists can only guess that people from Marksville dressed the same way.

## Q5. Why were birds the only animals depicted on Marksville pottery?

Archaeologists do not know why people at Marksville chose only to depict birds on their pottery. It is very likely that these birds had some symbolic value.

### **Q6. Why did American Indians build the site at this specific location?**

Archaeologists do not have a clear answer to that question. It may be that the site was simply a good place to camp. Perhaps there were great shade trees around the site at A.D. 1. Fishing on the Old River would have probably been good, too. Alternatively, there may have been few trees around the site allowing a clear view of the horizon in all directions. This may have made observing the stars, sun and moon easier. Given the ceremonial purpose of the site, people may have chosen this spot for religious reasons. Finding evidence for those religious reasons would be difficult, however.

### **Q7. Did American Indians live at the site permanently?**

There is not really any evidence for a village at or anywhere near the site to suggest people lived nearby. It seems likely that a small group of people would have resided at or near the site in order to take care of it. Most people probably came to Marksville only to take part in ceremonies, staying just a short while.

### **Q8. How did American Indians at Marksville prepare and serve their food?**

People probably cooked their food over fire pits or inside of earth ovens dug into the ground. They also likely used pottery for making and serving some of this food. Interestingly, archaeologists have found some large but poorly preserved deer bones in trash deposits along the edge of the bluff upon which Marksville sits. These kinds of bones are usually associated with the meatier parts of deer. This is what archaeologists would expect to find if the people of Marksville held big feasts at the site. Without more evidence, though, it is not clear that this was the case.

### **Q9. Were the dogs at Marksville pets?**

Dogs have lived with people as companions, pets and co-workers for thousands of years. There were quite likely dogs living with the Marksville people. Two dogs were buried in Mound 4. One was buried in a pit on the platform and the other was buried in the overlying earth. The presence of these two dogs in their own pits within the burial mound suggests each was particularly important to the Marksville people. Perhaps these dogs were more than pets or companions and had a sacred or religious meaning to the people.

### **Q10. What kind of events took place at the Marksville site?**

In addition to funerals and mound building, many other special activities may have happened at the Marksville site. These include feasts, weddings, trading, competitions and celebrations of celestial events.