

MARKSVILLE MOUNDS

GPS Coordinates: Latitude: 31.1251417 Longitude: -92.0500333

Driving Directions:

— From La 1 in Marksville, head north on La 452 (Preston Street). Go 0.7 mile to Martin Luther King Drive; turn right. Go 0.8 mile to Marksville State Historic Site entrance. Marker is on left.

Number of Mounds: 7, 2 embankments

Number of Visible Mounds: 6, 1 embankment

Summer Viewing: Excellent

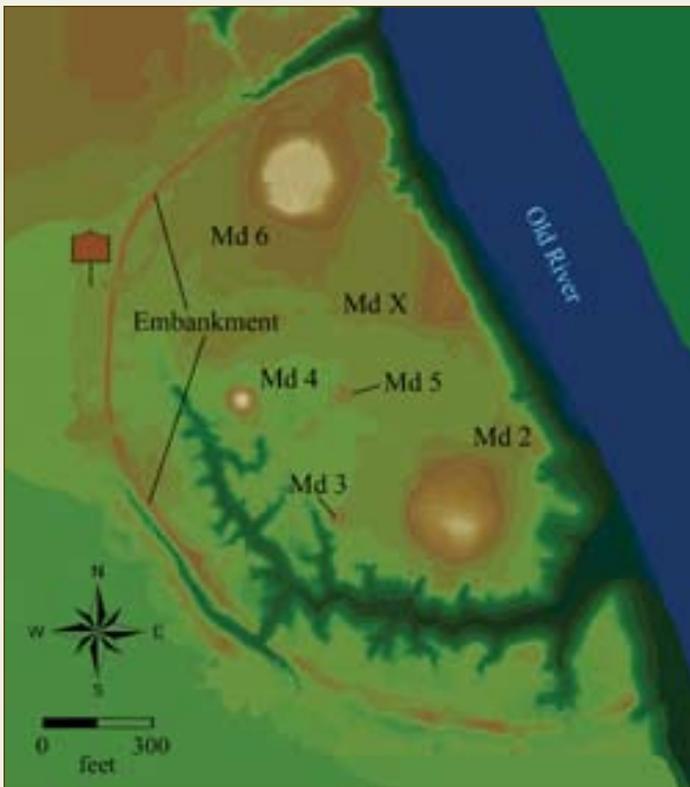
Winter Viewing: Excellent



36 men, women, and children were buried. These individuals may represent the families or clans who designed the site and conducted the ceremonies here. The three small mounds, 3, 5, and X, have an unknown purpose. Mounds 3 and 5 are 50 feet in diameter and 3 feet high; each was built of white earth that probably had a symbolic significance to the builders. Mound X has been severely altered by modern activities, and its original shape and size are unknown.

The Marksville site is an example of the Hopewell culture that arose in the Midwestern U.S. beginning about 50 BC. Although the site was built and used by people whose ancestors had lived in Louisiana for thousands of years, they chose to participate in this new culture, along with communities from Florida to Wisconsin, New York to Kansas. The Hopewell culture can be identified from the types of earthworks built, decorations on pottery vessels, and way of burying the dead.

Marksville was a ceremonial center where people from nearby villages gathered for important social and religious events. The movements of the sun, moon, and stars determined the timing of these ceremonies. From Mound 5, lines of sight to other mounds marked the rise and set on the horizon of the sun, moon, and important stars in the Milky Way. One important ceremony was the burial of honored members of the community. The painting above by Martin Pate illustrates a burial ceremony at Mound 4. □



The Marksville site originally consisted of at least two earthen embankments enclosing seven earthen mounds. Much of the site has been obscured by agriculture and the development of the town of Marksville, but the Marksville State Historic Site includes the largest embankment and six mounds. The park is open year-round with a museum and walking trail.

Construction of these earthworks began around the year 0 AD and the site was used for nearly 400 years. At the park, the C-shaped embankment is 3,300 feet long, up to 10 feet high, and encloses 40 acres. Mound 6 at the north end of the plaza is 300 feet in diameter and 12 feet high. Built in a single act of construction, it may have served as a stage for events that everyone in the plaza could watch. Mound 2 at the southern end of the plaza is 310 by 280 feet in size and 12 feet high; its function is unknown. Mound 4 was a cemetery 100 feet in diameter and 30 feet high, where at least