

NORTHERN KENTUCKY VIEWS PRESENTS:

Mason County



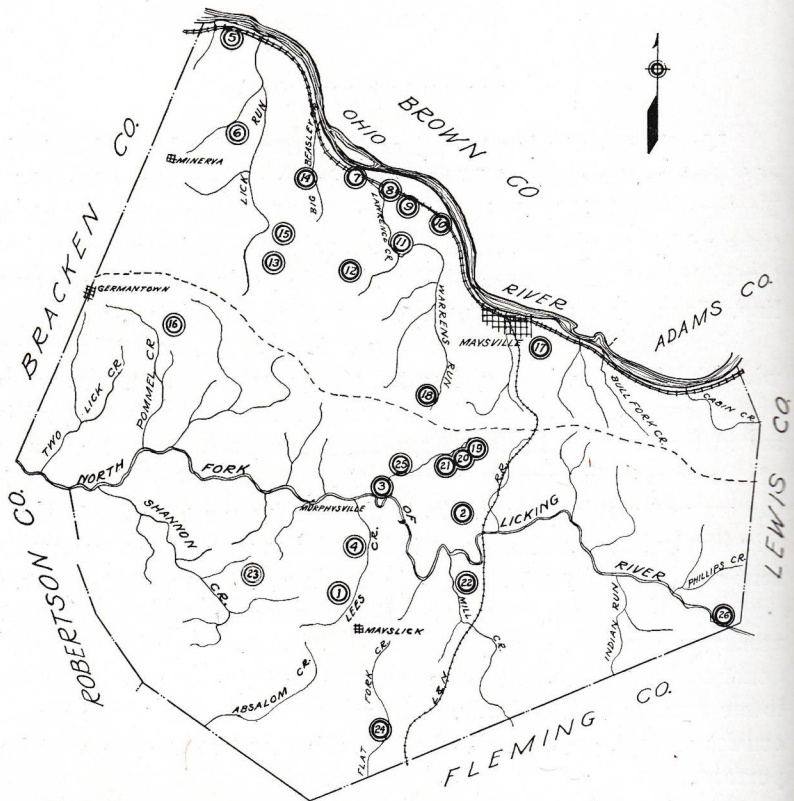
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LEGEND

- FOX FIELDS
- 2-16, 18, 21-24, 26 MOUNDS
- 3 STONE GRAVES
- 4 FORT
- 17, 25 GROUPS OF FOUR MOUNDS
- 19 GROUP OF SIX MOUNDS
- 20 GROUP OF THREE MOUND

MASON CO.
 AREA 239 Sq. Mi.
 SCALE OF MILES
 0 1 2 3

MASON COUNTY

Mason County is a part of the Outer Bluegrass, situated on the Ohio River in the northern part of the state. It has an area of 239 square miles and an average elevation of about 700 feet.

Mason County shows a very diversified topography. The upland region of the central and southern portions is a practically undissected Tertiary plain with a level or gently undulating terrain while the sharply eroded Pleistocene region in the north along the Ohio River offers bold and rugged ridges with elevations of over 900 feet and a relief in some localities of over 300 feet. The drainage of the southern and central portions of the county is into the Licking River while the streams of the north flow into the Ohio.

Geologically the outcrops represent Ordovician and Silurian limestones, sandstones and shales, with Pleistocene and Recent sediments along the Ohio River Valley and an occasional evidence of glaciation. Excellent clays are also found in the Ohio River bottoms.

So far as the investigations of the authors would indicate, Mason County is the richest county in the state in evidence of prehistoric occupation. The entire region is thickly covered with mounds, cemeteries and village sites and some of these localities have yielded the largest numbers and the finest artifacts which have ever been found in the Mississippi Valley. Many of these sites have had a prominent place in archaeological literature so that in this report they need only be listed with references to more detailed descriptions. The following list includes those which should certainly not be omitted from any catalogue of North American stations:

1. "Fox Fields," about ten miles southwest of Maysville, is one of the best known prehistoric sites in the Mississippi Valley. It apparently represents a village site with mounds and burial fields covering many acres and for many years has yielded a constant and unailing supply of exceptionally fine artifacts and skeletons. It was investigated in 1895 by Harlan I. Smith for the American Museum but this investigation was most superficial for since that date hundreds of skeletons and thousands of artifacts have been taken from the site. Mr. Smith assigned the Fox Field material¹ to the Fort Ancient

¹ Smith, Harlan I., *The Prehistoric Ethnology of a Kentucky Site*. Anthropological Papers, American Museum VI: Part 2. 1910.

Culture and certainly it agrees to a remarkable extent with the findings at such sites as Fort Ancient, Madisonville and Adena. This field is regularly plowed over and at each plowing yields more skeletons and more artifacts. It is locally known as "Bony Field" because of the large number of human bones which literally cover the area. Not only does the site yield an abundance of archaeological material but this material is often of exceptional interest. Some recent discoveries were described by one of the present authors in 1927² and the general aspects of the field were discussed in some detail in a report in 1928.³ We consider this one of the most remarkable of the prehistoric sites in Kentucky.

2. The Perraut Mound on the Maysville-Flemingsburg Pike, five miles south of Maysville, was excavated by the authors in 1926 and described in a previous report.⁴ It is a large mound and proved to be of unusual interest because of the position of the skeletons which represented burials in pairs from the bottom to the top of the mound.
3. A cemetery of stone graves on the farm of H. M. Pyles, two and one-half miles northwest of Lewisburg. The graves were on a crest of a ridge and remains of a village site was located in the valley of the North Fork of Licking River below the ridge. Many hundred artifacts were taken from this site which has been previously reported by the authors.⁵
4. A fortification of rough stone work on Lee's Creek, two miles north of Mays Lick. This is one of the oldest known sites in the state and was reported by Collins⁶ in 1874.
5. A large mound one mile from Dover on the Dover-Augusta Pike. This mound has not been excavated and its type is unknown.
6. Mound two and one-half miles south of Dover, one and one-half miles from Minerva and one-half mile from the road. This mound was reported by J. B. Hoeing many years ago.
7. Mound on Lawrence Creek, one mile from the Ohio River and five miles from Dover, not far from the Dover-Maysville Pike. This mound is well known locally and has been often reported.
8. Another mound on Lawrence Creek about a half mile from Number 7 and the same distance from the Dover-Maysville Pike. This mound was also reported by J. B. Hoeing and is shown on early geological maps.
9. A mound a quarter of a mile southeast of Number 8 and overlooking the river. It was apparently originally of considerable height and may have been an observation mound.
10. A similar mound about a mile southeast of Number 9. These four mounds, located at regular intervals on the ridge above the river, may have had an association for some reason or other if one may judge by their position and similar contours.
11. Mound on Lawrence Creek, one and one-half miles south of Number 10. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.

² Webb, W. S., *American Anthropologist* XXIX: 62-68. 1927.

³ Funkhouser, W. D. and Webb, W. S., *Ancient Life in Kentucky*, pp. 101-106. 1928.

⁴ Funkhouser, W. D. and Webb, W. S., *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93. 1928.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁶ Collins, Lewis, *History of Kentucky*. Second Edition. 1874.

12. Mound on Beasley's Creek, two and one-half miles north of Slack Post Office on the Dover Pike. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.
13. Mound on the Dover Pike, five-eighths of a mile from Slack Post Office. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.
14. Mound at Slack Post Office, five-eighths of a mile south of Number 13. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.
15. Mound six miles west of Maysville and one mile north of the Maysville-Germantown Pike. Reported by W. J. Curtis.
16. Mound five-eighths of a mile south of Fernleaf and two and three-fourths miles from Germantown. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.
17. Several mounds in the city of Maysville have been destroyed in erecting buildings. Most of these mounds yielded skeletons and artifacts.
18. Mound a half mile from Washington and a few yards from the Washington-Dimmitt's Station Road. This mound is now almost obliterated.
19. Six mounds one mile from Dimmitt's Station on the Washington-Dimmitt's Station Road, three on each side of the road which branches off to Lewisburg. These mounds are of considerable size and have apparently never been disturbed.
20. A group of three mounds about one hundred yards from the Lewisburg Road and one-half mile from Number 19. These have been almost entirely destroyed by cultivation. In the neighborhood have been found many artifacts.
21. A series of mounds, of which at least three are still recognizable, about a half mile east of Number 20. One of these is in the fork of the Lewisburg-Washington Road.
22. Two mounds within a quarter of a mile of each other about a half mile from Lewisburg and the same distance from the Licking River. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.
23. Two mounds on the Shannon-Plugtown Road, two and one-half miles northeast of Sardis and five-eighths of a mile southwest of Shannon. Recorded by J. B. Hoeing.
24. Mound two and three-quarters miles up Flat Fork from where it crosses the county line and one and a quarter miles directly north of the county line. Reported by J. B. Hoeing.
25. A group of four small mounds on Wells Creek, three miles northwest of Lewisburg. Reported by W. J. Curtis.
26. A large mound in the southeastern corner of the county within a half mile of the Fleming County and Lewis County lines. Reported by W. J. Curtis.