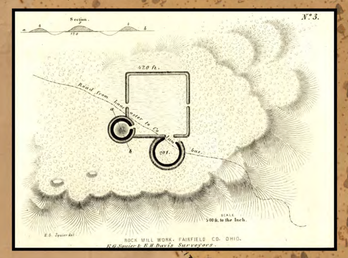
ANCIENT EARTHWORKS OF FAIRFIELD COUNTY

Rock Mill Work





Rock Mill Work, Bloom Township

This work is remarkable as being the only one, entirely regular in its plan, which has yet been discovered occupying the summit of a hill. It is situated on the road from Lancaster, Fairfield County, Ohio, to Columbus, the capital of the State, seven miles distant from the former place, near a point known as the "Hocking River Upper Falls", or "Rock Mill". It consists of a small square measuring four hundred and twenty feet on each side, in combination with two small circles, one hundred and twenty-five and two hundred and ten feet in diameter respectively. The hill is nearly two hundred feet in height, with a slightly undulating plain of small extent at its summit. The works are so arranged that the small circle, enclosing the mound, overlooks every part and commands a wide prospect on every hand. Towards the brow of the hill, at prominent points, are two elliptical terraces or elevations of small size. The sides of the square enclosure correspond to the cardinal points. The walls, excepting those of the circular structures, are very slight, and unaccompanied by a ditch. The work is clearly not of a defensive origin, and must be classed with those of similar outline occupying the river terraces.
At a short distance above this point, the champaign country commences, and no other remains are found. The erections of the mound-builders are almost exclusively confined to the borders of the watercourses.

There are very few enclosures, so far as known, in the Hocking River valley; there are, however, numerous mounds upon the narrow terraces and on the hills bordering them. In the vicinity of Athens are a number of the largest size, and also several enclosures. Mounds are found upon the high bluffs in the neighborhood of Lancaster, at points commanding the widest range. An examination of the valley with a view of bringing to light its ancient monuments would, without doubt, be attended with very interesting results.

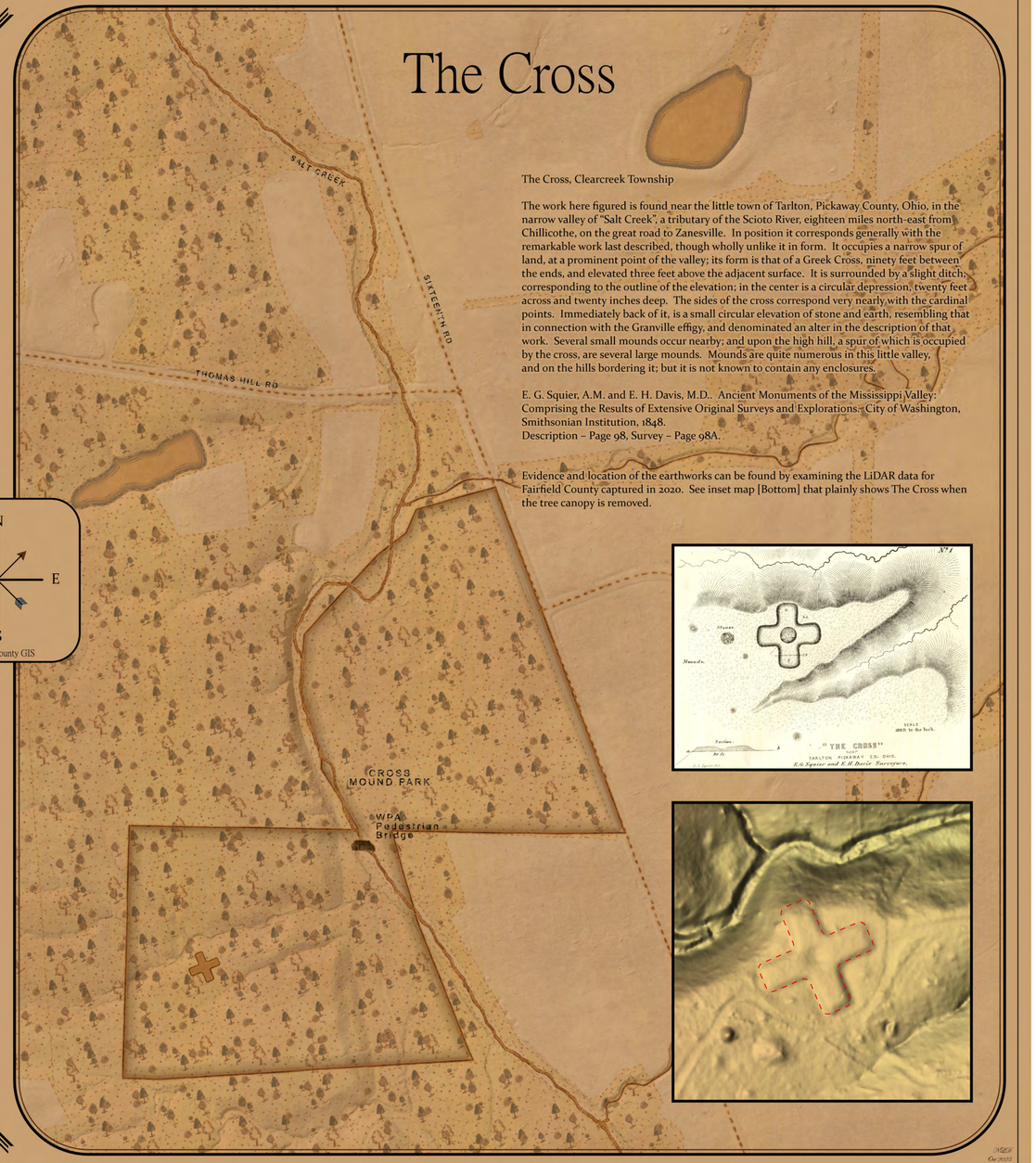
E. G. Squier, A.M. and E. H. Davis, M.D.. Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley: Comprising the Results of Extensive Original Surveys and Explorations. City of Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1848.
Description – Page 100, Survey – Page 98A.

Evidence and location of the earthworks can be found by examining the aerial photography for Fairfield County captured in 1938. See inset map [Left] that clearly shows the remains of the southwest circle and indications of the southeast circle.





The Cross



The Cross, Clearcreek Township

The work here figured is found near the little town of Tarlton, Pickaway County, Ohio, in the narrow valley of "Salt Creek", a tributary of the Scioto River, eighteen miles north-east from Chillicothe, on the great road to Zanesville. In position it corresponds generally with the remarkable work last described, though wholly unlike it in form. It occupies a narrow spur of land, at a prominent point of the valley; its form is that of a Greek Cross, ninety feet between the ends, and elevated three feet above the adjacent surface. It is surrounded by a slight ditch, corresponding to the outline of the elevation; in the center is a circular depression, twenty feet across and twenty inches deep. The sides of the cross correspond very nearly with the cardinal points. Immediately back of it, is a small circular elevation of stone and earth, resembling that in connection with the Granville effigy, and denominated an alter in the description of that work. Several small mounds occur nearby; and upon the high hill, a spur of which is occupied by the cross, are several large mounds. Mounds are quite numerous in this little valley, and on the hills bordering it; but it is not known to contain any enclosures.

E. G. Squier, A.M. and E. H. Davis, M.D.. Ancient Monuments of the Mississippi Valley: Comprising the Results of Extensive Original Surveys and Explorations. City of Washington, Smithsonian Institution, 1848.
Description – Page 98, Survey – Page 98A.

Evidence and location of the earthworks can be found by examining the LiDAR data for Fairfield County captured in 2020. See inset map [Bottom] that plainly shows The Cross when the tree canopy is removed.