



Shiloh Indian Mounds



Shiloh Indian Mounds Interpretive Trail

The Shiloh Indian Mounds trail is a 1.3 mile loop with thirteen wayside interpretive exhibits. The hike is easy to moderate, with slight elevation changes. The trail cuts through the Indian mound complex, which sits between two steep ravines enclosed by the remains of a palisade (a 20-foot defensive structure made of wood and mud), and the Tennessee River runs along the eastern boundary. Please use caution hiking along the eastern section of the trail, which has the steepest elevation change.

The Shiloh Indian Mounds are the remains of a

prehistoric town that was occupied about 800 years ago. The ancient society was believed to have been inhabited between 1050 and 1400 A.D. The mound complex contains three distinct mound types:

Ceremonial Mounds - These six mounds are large and rectangular in shape with flat tops.

Burial Mound - This mound is large and oval in shape. It is the southernmost mound.

House Mounds – These mounds are small and scattered outside the town plaza and center.

Who Lived Here?

The inhabitants of the Shiloh Indian Mound complex lived during a time known as the Mississippian Period. During this period (800 to 1500 A.D.), Native Americans structured their societies into classes, which included nobles, craftsmen, workers, warriors, and a chief. The chief would have been the most important political leader and religious figure. The lower class lived on the outer edge of the

town center, and the house mounds are all that remain of their dwellings. They built the ceremonial mounds as platforms for the town's most important buildings, which may have included a council house, religious buildings, and the houses of the chief and noblemen. The burial mound (would probably be reserved for the interment of the chief and town leaders.

The Life of the Shiloh Indian

During the Mississippian period, Native Americans became less nomadic and more dependent on farming for sustenance. They cultivated corn (or maize), beans, squash, and sunflowers, as well as less familiar crops such as goosefoot, marshelder, and maygrass. The residents of the Shiloh Indian Mounds also ate a wide variety of wild plants, nuts and fruits, which included hickory nuts, acorns, blackberries, and wild grapes. They also hunted wild game and fished for their meat.

Goldenrod roots provided relief from toothache pain. Mayapple root was used to get rid of warts. Willow bark contains a compound similar to

aspirin, and was taken for pain relief. There were hundreds of plants these people used for various ailments and illnesses.

During their leisure time, the inhabitants of the chiefdom played a variety of games. The most popular of these games used a disk-shaped piece known as a chunkee stone. This game is played between two (or more) players in a wide area on a flat surface. Using long poles with pointed ends, the object of the game was to hurl the poles at the stones and hit it as it was moving, or land your pole closest to where the stone stops. The rules of this game varied depending on the different tribal group.

The Shiloh Effigy Pipe



In 1899, the first archaeological dig was conducted in the Shiloh Indian Mound complex. It was during this excavation that the most famous, prehistoric artifact was discovered: the Shiloh Effigy pipe. The large, stone pipe is carved in the shape of a kneeling man and in the same artisan style as the Cahokia chiefdom, which is

located in Illinois.

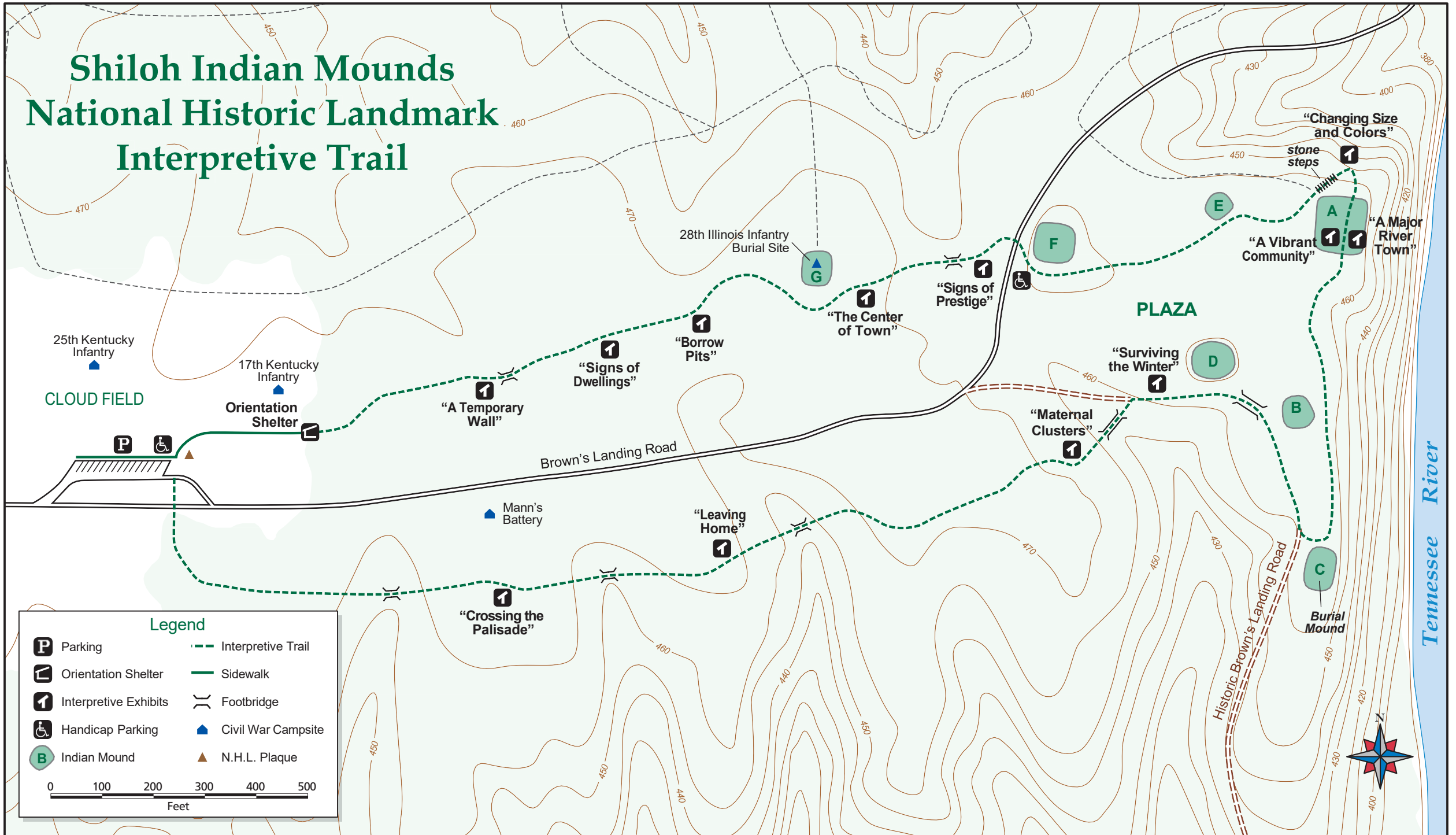
The discovery of this artifact is evidence that there were political ties between the Shiloh and Cahokia chiefdoms. The effigy pipe is now on display at the Tennessee River Museum in Savannah, Tennessee.

What Happened to the Shiloh Indians?

Around the end of 1400 AD, the inhabitants of the town deserted this area and the society collapsed. Since no written records exist, the reason for this desertion is unknown. There is no hard evidence, but these prehistoric people are

believed to have been the ancestors of the modern societies such as the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks.

Shiloh Indian Mounds National Historic Landmark Interpretive Trail



Legend

Parking	Interpretive Trail
Orientation Shelter	Sidewalk
Interpretive Exhibits	Footbridge
Handicap Parking	Civil War Campsite
Indian Mound	N.H.L. Plaque

0 100 200 300 400 500
Feet