

Newark Earthworks Day

“Newark, Ohio among the Wonders of the Ancient World”

* The Newark Earthworks * Stonehenge * Teotihuacán *

May 3rd, 2008

Ohio State University at Newark

The Newark Earthworks are the largest complex of geometric earthworks ever built.

Consisting of a ***circle*** connected to an ***octagon*** by a ceremonial road made of two 6’ tall parallel walls, the entire earthworks complex extends over thousands of acres of land. Careful observers of the heavens, indigenous people of this land built a huge earthen octagon aligned to the sky.

2,000 years ago the People built the earthworks to predict every significant transition during the complex 18.6-year lunar cycle using astronomical, engineering, and mathematical knowledge.

9:00 am Welcome

Exhibits and American Indian arts and crafts throughout the day.

10:00am Origins of Stonehenge, Teotihuacán and Newark Earthworks

Moderator: Jeff Gill

Susan Evans:	Teotihuacán
Bradley Lepper:	Newark Earthworks
Lionel Sims:	Stonehenge

11:15am Cosmology of the Builders: Solar and Lunar Alignments

Moderator: Lindsay Jones

Davíd Carrasco:	Teotihuacán
John Hancock:	Octagon Earthworks
Lionel Sims:	Stonehenge

1:30pm Contemporary Issues at Ancient Places

Moderator: Sandra Garner

Christine Ballengee-Morris:	Newark Earthworks
Mary Borgia:	Stonehenge
Davíd Carrasco:	Teotihuacán
Margarita Garcia:	Teotihuacán
Lionel Sims:	Stonehenge
Carol Welsh:	Newark Earthworks

3:00pm Questions and Answers

Moderator: Sonya Atalay

All presenters from the previous sessions will be present.

5:00pm Travel to the Great Circle

6:00 – 8:00pm Ceremony at the Great Circle with Aztec Dancers

About Newark Earthworks Day

The Newark Earthworks Complex is a world class archaeological site *and* an indigenous sacred site; a legacy from the ancestors of today's Native American Indians. This year's sessions compare the Newark Earthworks to two World Heritage sites: Stonehenge in England and Teotihuacán's Pyramid of the Sun and Pyramid of the Moon in Mexico. The three ancient places share three characteristics: astronomical alignments, they are each 2,000 years old, and were built for ceremonial and social purposes. The evening program at the Great Circle will feature a ceremony by the Aztec dance group, *Palabra del Nino Dios Teopi-Itzinetechuhltl* (Word of the Holy Child Teopiltzintecuhtli). Newark Earthworks Day brings scholars, students, organizations, and communities to one of the premier meetings featuring interdisciplinary research and public education about the earthworks landscape.

Consider:

- The Department of Interior nominated the Newark Earthworks, Fort Ancient, and the Hopewell Culture National Historical Park for inclusion on the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) World Heritage site list. In February 2008, UNESCO added the Ohio earthworks to the World Heritage list for consideration in February 2008. <http://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5243/>
- An international team of archaeologists identified the Newark Earthworks as one of the Seventy Wonders of the Ancient World in a book by that title published in England in 1999. Only two other places in the United States were included on the list: Cahokia in Illinois and Chaco Canyon in New Mexico. The other two have already achieved World Heritage status.
- Two previous Newark Earthworks Days have been at the heart of growing public interest in the Newark Earthworks. The first two Newark Earthworks Days drew visitors from California, Indiana, Michigan, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, West Virginia and elsewhere. We have found there is a large group of people with an intense interest in ancient Ohio.

Participants

Sonya Atalay, Assistant Professor, Anthropology, Indiana University. Dr. Atalay has active fieldwork projects in the Middle East and in Michigan, where she does collaborative research with the Anishinaabe community. She identifies as the primary aspects of her work, "indigenous archaeology – particularly the use of community-based participatory research designs, indigenous forms of heritage management and stewardship, and the ethics of community and public collaboration." <http://www.indiana.edu/~anthro/people/faculty/atalay.html>

Christine Ballengee-Morris, Associate Professor, Art Education, Ohio State University. Dr. Ballengee-Morris has research interests in multicultural art education, Appalachian culture, critical theory and education and colonialism and self-determination. She is a member of the editorial board for the United States Society for Teaching through Art. Dr. Ballengee-Morris' teaching experiences include artist-in-residencies in public schools, undergraduate and graduate level courses, and international teaching at the University of Sao Paulo, University of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and the University of Tasmania, Australia.

http://arts.osu.edu/2faculty/a_faculty_profiles/arted_fac_profiles/ballengemorris_christine.html

David Carrasco, Neil Rudenstien Professor of the Study of Latin America, Harvard Divinity School. Dr. Carrasco is a historian of religion with over 20 years of research in the excavations and archives associated with the sites of Teotihuacán and Tenochtitlan. The editor of the [Oxford Encyclopedia of Mesoamerican Cultures](#), Dr. Carrasco has received the Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle, the highest honor the Mexican government gives to a foreign national. <http://www.hds.harvard.edu/faculty/carrasco.html>

Susan Tobey Evans, Professor, Archaeological Anthropology, Pennsylvania State University. Dr. Evans specializes in the archaeology and ethnohistory of the Aztecs of Central Mexico, as well as the prehistory of the Basin of Mexico and the Teotihuacán Valley. She is the author of [Ancient Mexico and Central America: Archaeology and Culture](#)

History, winner of the 2005 Society for American Archaeology Book Award.

http://www.anthro.psu.edu/faculty_staff/evans.shtml

Sandra Garner, Doctoral student, Comparative Studies, The Ohio State University and Graduate Research Associate, Newark Earthworks Center. She has research interests in dance rituals and ceremonies of the indigenous people of the Americas; her dissertation research focuses on the religious practice of Sun Dance since the 1880s as it has been taken up in particular by Aztec dancers in Mexico.

Jeff Gill, Volunteer Services Co-coordinator at the Newark Earthworks State Memorial. He has written materials and designed exhibits for the Ohio Historical Society, including articles for *Timeline*. An ordained minister, Jeff also writes two weekly columns in local newspapers and is facilitator for a number of school districts in creating their local history curricula for 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes.

John Hancock, Professor, Architectural History, University of Cincinnati and Director, Center for the Electronic Reconstruction of Historical and Archaeological Sites (CERHAS). Dr. Hancock and his team have revolutionized public education about Ohio Valley earthworks by digitally re-creating the relationship between the earthworks and the landscape. The CERHAS CD "Ancient Newark, Ohio" draws upon both archaeological scholarship and interviews with Native Americans and others. It is especially effective in explaining the complex lunar alignments at Newark.

Lindsay Jones, Professor, Comparative Studies, Ohio State University. Dr. Jones has a broad interest in all aspects of the cross-cultural study of religion, with special concerns for sacred architecture and for the cultures and religions of Mesoamerica. He is also author of [Twin City Tales: A Hermeneutical Reassessment of Tula and Chichén Itzá](#) (University Press of Colorado, 1995) and [The Hermeneutics of Sacred Architecture: Experience, Interpretation, Comparison](#) (Harvard University Press, 2000) two volumes; and co-editor with David Carrasco and Scott Sessions of [Mesoamerica's Classic Heritage: From Teotihuacán to the Aztecs](#) (University Press of Colorado, 1999).

Bradley Lepper, Curator of Archaeology, Ohio Historical Society. Dr. Lepper earned his B.A. degree from the University of New Mexico and his M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the Ohio State University. His primary areas of interest include the Ice Age peoples of North America, Ohio's magnificent mounds and earthworks, and the history of North American archaeology. Dr. Lepper has written extensively on these subjects for both technical journals and magazines intended for a general audience. He is the author of the book, [Ohio Archaeology: an Illustrated Chronicle of Ohio's Ancient American Indian Cultures](#) (Orange Frazer Press, 2005). He also writes a bi-weekly column on archaeology for the *Columbus Dispatch*.

Lionel Sims, Principal Lecturer in Anthropology, University of East London. Dr. Sims is an anthropologist at the University of East London, a member of the European Society for Astronomy in Culture (SEAC) and the Stonehenge Round Table Group. His research is in the origins of inequality and was the subject of the film 'Stonehenge Rediscovered' commissioned for National Geographic. He is currently studying lunar alignments in ancient European megaliths. He is the author of a study documenting the lunar alignment at Stonehenge.

Carol Welsh, Director, Native American Indian Center of Central Ohio. Ms. Welsh's leadership has resulted in increased understanding and education about American Indian people and their issues in central Ohio. She actively promotes Native cultural preservation and maintenance through public education programs about American Indian culture and the Newark Earthworks. Integrally connected to the often invisible American Indian populations in central Ohio, the Native American Indian Center has long been an exemplary advocate for Native issues in Ohio.

A Note on Aztec dancers at Newark Earthworks Day: Pilgrimage, Dance, and Ceremony

Consider the Newark Earthworks complex as places of ceremony and pilgrimage as well as the centrality of dance and music within indigenous cultures. Many Native oral traditions and scholars suggest that the earthworks in Newark were special places that attracted large numbers of people who travelled great distances to participate in ceremony. Materials have been found at the earthworks that originate from distant places, such as obsidian (Wyoming), galena (Oklahoma), copper (Wisconsin) and shells from the Gulf of Mexico, but local materials such as Flint Ridge flint have not been found in quantity elsewhere; this indicates that these exotic materials were probably a form of tribute that could have affirmed alliances and not trade items. Further, contemporary Native practices include the offering of similar kinds of gifts when visiting sacred sites.

In 1534, French explorer Jacques Carter described how he was approached at the mouth of the St. Lawrence River by a group of Indians who were singing and dancing. Artist George Catlin, noted for his paintings of indigenous life, observed a wide variety of dances such as the medicine dance, bear dance, and eagle dance. In contemporary central Mexico, Aztec dance is a common and publicly visible activity. Dancers in full attire with headdresses of long pheasant and peacock feathers swirl to the rhythmic beat of the drum with the rigorous turns, dips, and steps of the dance. These ritual dances occur at ancient Aztec sites throughout the valley of Mexico and tens of thousands of people participate. Each step, each dance, and each song tells a story that has been transmitted through this cultural practice for millennia as this tradition traces its dance lineage to pre-contact times. A central practice of this tradition is the pilgrimage. Since pre-Columbian times, dancers have taken pilgrimages to sacred sites in order to dance at these sites. For the participants, these dances are not performances or exhibitions; they are ceremonial activities that pay tribute to the spiritual forces and ancestors believed to reside at sacred sites. For this reason, no explanation of the activities will be given during the dance at the Great Circle.

We have invited Captain Margarita Xochiyaocihuatl Zarate Garcia and the Aztec group *Palabra del nino Dios Teopiltzintecuhtli* (Word of the Holy Child Teopiltzintecuhtli) to participate in Newark Earthworks Day. Captain Garcia has been a dancer for over twenty years and is well known in Mexico. She is one of the first women dancers to achieve the rank of Captain in the dance ranks within two major dance troupes, which allows her to teach the dance and form her own troupes. She travels extensively and has been intimately involved with the dance ceremonies at Teotihuacan. The group is comprised of young adults, many of whom are university students. They represent what Captain Garcia describes as some of the best young people who have chosen to live the way of life an Aztec dancer, which takes tremendous dedication. For these dancers, the dance is more than a performance; it is a spiritual practice.

For more information:

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