

Baby Point: The Place Where We Live

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Pamela M. Slaughter and Robert D. Galway

Post Beringia and the Thunderbird Mound

The migration of native peoples across the land bridge in the Sub-Arctic region, now occupied by the Bering Sea between Siberia and Alaska, is one of the major historical events in the history of mankind. To put it in perspective, the distance from Anchorage, Alaska to Santiago, Chile is 7,864 miles or 12,657 kilometres. Whether by coastal sea route or by land, the achievement is a remarkable feat of perseverance and courage, even if driven by the necessity of finding new food supplies.

Descriptions of the secondary and tertiary migration patterns that evolved from this primary intercontinental migration of a nomadic hunter gatherer group are often overlooked in the telling of this story. It is these further migrations that brought the American First Nations to the central plains of America and onwards to the Atlantic coastal areas of the North American continent. The recounting of the details of this continental transmigration can be found in the historical/ archeological literature, but what is known is that some 3,000 years ago, First Nations people came through the Humber River and the High Park area of Toronto following the migration patterns of animals.

The Tāiäiäkö'n Historical Preservation Society, dedicated to preserving several burial mounds and sites of significance in High Park as well as the Thunderbird Mound near Magwood Park in west end Toronto, are adamant that these sites were created by *Iroquoian*-speaking ancestral people of the present day Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy.

However, a spokesperson for the *Huron-Wendat* Nation, disputes the the notion othese were Iroquoian burial sites. "Firstly, Iroquoian people did not bury their dead in mounds." he said. "Second, Iroquoian people did not exist in southern Ontario 3,000 years ago; thirdly, if you were to find a mass burial in the GTA, it could only be Huron-Wendat."

Who these people were remains unresolved, but what matters are that they were here and archaeological evidence exists that informs this answer. Lonny Bomberry, Director of the Six Nations lands and resources department, said history gets "pretty murky" when you go beyond 1,000 years. Bomberry said First Nations people clearly inhabited the GTA 3,000 years ago, but "we can't say definitely which linguistic group was in possession of what part of North America."

"The Thunderbird Burial Mound and the Bear Mound in the Toronto area are the creations of the ancestors of the Haudensaunee. The top soil at the Thunderbird Mound contains red ochre, a telltale material that is used in Haudenosaunee burials. There is evidence that the age of the Thunderbird Mound in Toronto, Ontario, is more than 8,000 years old. 'Thunderbird' Mounds were aligned to the solstices reflecting that the early Native Americans had a detailed understanding of cosmology/astronomy."

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Thunderbird Mound

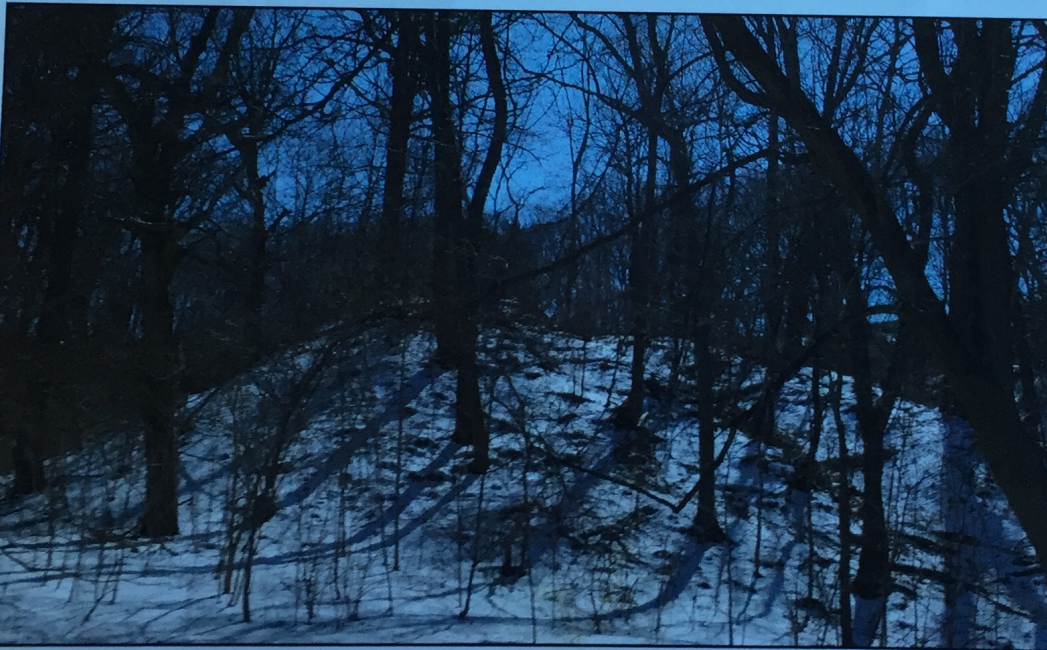
Middle Archaic 6000 BC-3000 BC

The Thunderbird Mound in Toronto on the Humber River was first established by the start of the Middle Archaic period. These types of mounds are constructed layer by layer by various groups over time. The next people to add their layer were the Adena and then by a later group, the Hopewell, ancestors to the Haudenosaunee.

Erie-Neutral peoples refer to the “Thunder Being” as Hinoh or “Henoh”. Hinoh is one of the supernatural beings most venerated by the Erie-Neutrals; he taught the Erie-Neutrals the secret of rainmaking.

He is embodied in the Thunderbird, a huge mythical bird of prey common to all Indigenous nations north of Mexico. His task in the great plan, apart from being a bringer of rain and the source of life and regeneration, is to burn and destroy the negative supernatural forces deployed against humans.

Within the Six Nations Iroquois Confederacy and other Iroquoian-speaking peoples, the Thunderbird clans are the spiritual leaders of the group, consisting of shamans and chiefs.



Haudenosuanees, which means “People of the Longhouse”, is the name used to include all those members of the Erie-Neutral Confederacy, the Wendat Confederacy and the Six Nations.

The Erie-Neutrals were known in ancient times as the Alligwi, and were Iroquoian-speaking.

Katie Daubs, Toronto Star, May 17, 2011

Thunderbird Mound in Magwood Park & Baby Point Area, West Toronto