

# INDIAN MOUNDS *of* WISCONSIN



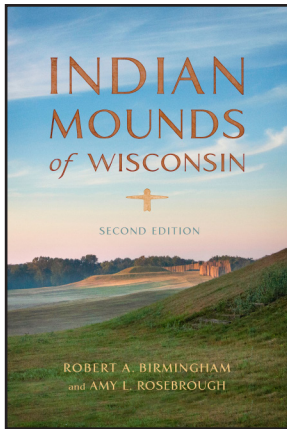
SECOND EDITION

ROBERT A. BIRMINGHAM  
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## Indian Mounds of Wisconsin, Second Edition

Robert A. Birmingham and Amy L. Rosebrough. 2017. [University of Wisconsin Press](https://www.wisconsin.edu/press/). 304 pages, 97 B&W figures, \$24.95 (paper)

*Reviewed by Albert M. LeBeau III, Cultural Resource Program Manager, Effigy Mounds National Monument*

*The Indian Mounds of Wisconsin* has been a standard for young archaeologists, mound enthusiasts, and anyone else with an interest in those fascinating mounds of different shapes that dot the Midwest. Robert Birmingham and Amy

Rosebrough have updated this time-honored book with new thinking and the use of new technologies. *The Indian Mounds of Wisconsin*, Second Edition has expanded the ideas established in the first edition and added fresh ideas to be contemplated by researchers. The field of archaeology is always evolving. Birmingham and Rosebrough's second edition has expanded the discussion initiated by the first, introducing new research and new technologies. Although the questions remain the same—who built the mounds and why—this edition begins to whittle down the more generalized answers from the first edition.

Some of the new technologies incorporated into the new edition include light detection and ranging (LiDAR) mapping of the mounds. The use of remote sensing makes it easier for the reader to understand how the mounds look and how they relate to the natural landscape, which gives the reader insight into the surrounding environments. No longer is archaeology focused only on single features, but rather by using this newer technology, readers can see how the features relate to one another and to the environment on a larger scale.

An even broader worldview is exemplified by Rosebrough's research. Rosebrough's Chapter discusses how she uses modern theories and technologies to pose new questions about mound composition, layout, and distribution. The addition of this chapter introduces to audiences that through new technologies and by revisiting previously collected data, archaeologist no longer have to "dig" into the mound to find answers. As stated in the book, many Indian Tribes consider digging into the mounds disrespectful and in some cases taboo, but Rosebrough's research has shown that information can still be teased from the past excavations.

This worldview is important for the discipline of archaeology to move forward: the use of advanced technologies are being developed to ensure proper respect and preservation of these irreplaceable resources. The steep disconnect between the people who built the mounds and their descendants is beginning to disappear. The thoughtful and forward-thinking discussion on descendants of the mound builders brings a fresh human element to the discussion. Relating the subject of this book back to a modern group of people allows readers to make a personal, modern day connection. This is important when archaeologists talk about the Mound-building epoch, as they tend to use terms foreign to most non-archaeologists. The concepts of "Archaic" and "Woodland" tribes lead one to

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believe that these populations have faded away. In reality, although some of their cultural traits have evolved over 2,500 years, decedents are still present and continue to maintain and use the mounds.

The book *Indian Mounds of Wisconsin*, Second Edition is a reboot of a time-honored book that archaeologist, mound enthusiasts, and the general public have long established as the canon of mound building and the mound builders. New graphics and new research have expanded the original book's theme, and have added to the discussion of the mound building periods. New data have shown that there is still a lot of information that can be gathered by older investigations, and the continued development of remote sensing has and will continue to add to our understanding of the mounds without the implicit destruction of the resource.