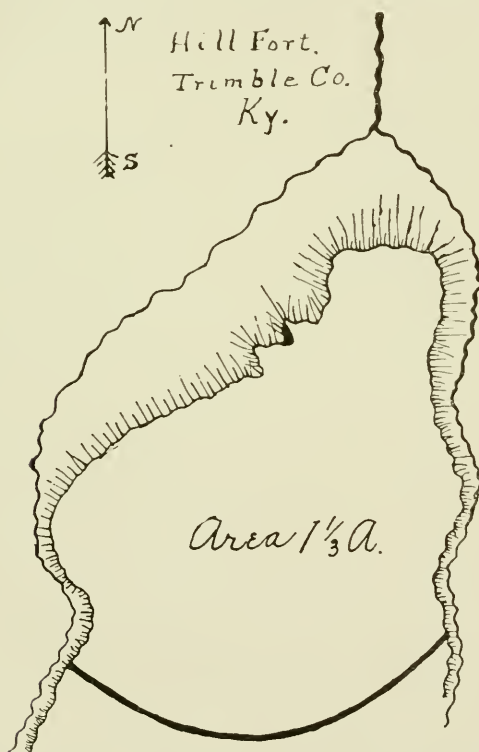


A PREHISTORIC FORTIFICATION NEAR MADISON, INDIANA.

BY GLENN CULBERTSON.

On the farm of Mrs. James Snyder in Trimble county, Ky., and at the head of Broadway Hollow, so-called because it is directly across the Ohio river from Broadway in Madison, Ind., is located a prehistoric fortification. To a few people in the immediate vicinity this fortification is



known as the Indian fort, but to my knowledge it has never been described, although it is one of the most interesting remains of prehistoric people in all that region.

The hills in the vicinity of Madison are approximately four hundred feet above low water level of the Ohio river. They are capped by the

resistant Niagara and Clinton limestones, underlaid by the soft Hudson shales. Hence bluffs and precipitous slopes are not at all infrequent. The fortification, mentioned, is situated about a half mile back from the bluffs and steep slopes facing the Ohio, and between the two principal tributaries of the stream which occupies Broadway Hollow. These streams have eroded deep but narrow valleys which in the upper portions are enclosed in part by perpendicular cliffs.

The fortification, as may be seen from the map, is roughly triangular in shape and is bounded by cliffs some 75 feet high near the apex at the north end. These cliffs become lower gradually as the south side of the fortification is approached. At the southwest angle the height is still some thirty feet, while at the southeast angle the height of the cliff is at present not more than eight or ten feet.

The neck of land between the two streams at the south was fortified by means of a stone and earth wall, with a ditch or moat on the outside. The remains of the wall, except on the steeper slopes near the ends, form a mass of earth and stones some ten feet wide at base and three or four feet high. The ditch outside is still six or eight feet wide and has a maximum depth of two or three feet below the original surface. The wall was about one hundred and twenty yards long and strongly curved outwards. The area of the fortification proper is about one and one-third acres, and as the site of the fort has never been cleared of its forest growth, it is still covered with thick underbrush and small trees.

The fortification is admirably located for the purpose of defense. On two sides of the triangle it would be almost impossible for an enemy to enter the fort even if undefended, except, perhaps, at the southeast angle, where in all probability a supplementary wall was built. The stone and earth wall across the neck may have been, and probably was, surmounted by a stockade, as was done in case of many of the prehistoric fortifications in Ohio. There are, at present, however, no evidences of a stockade visible.

Of the different kinds of prehistoric fortifications now known and recognized, viz., signal and observatory stations, stockade forts, hill forts and stone forts, this one should probably be classified as a hill fort, and was intended as a place of retreat on the approach of an enemy. The tribe or clan using the fort probably cultivated the fertile bottom lands near, and fled to the fort as occasion demanded. This fortification may have

been used as an observatory and signal station, also, but was not one of a series known to extend along either side of the Ohio River, since from this point it is impossible to see or be seen from the Ohio at any distance either up or down. The site is an admirable one, however, for signaling across to the headwaters of Indian Kentucky creek, in Indiana, along which are found many evidences of prehistoric inhabitants. There are no visible ash or charcoal remains in the vicinity of the fort, so the signal theory remains unproven.

