

The Blackhawk Hickory

Madison

An enormous shagbark hickory guarded the number six green on the Blackhawk Country Club Golf Course in Madison until the late 1990s, when it was removed because it had died. The location is still marked by a handsome brass marker set into a granite boulder taken from the terminal moraine at Cross Plains. Credit is given to Walter E. Scott, who discovered and recorded the tree's size. Several Indian effigy and burial mounds are also marked on this historic site bordering Lake Mendota in the village of Shorewood Hills, which has been recognized for its importance as a place frequented by Indians in the early days.

A prehistoric Indian group called the Effigy Mound Builders constructed the mounds in the period from 500 to 1500 A.D. Wisconsin once had a treasury of these mounds, but the early settlers, not being very interested in the odd ridges or knolls, destroyed most of them by plowing or excavation. Increase

Lapham, scientist and archeologist, was the first to identify the mounds and recognize their importance. He reported on them in an article titled, "The Antiquities of Wisconsin," published in *Smithsonian Contributions to Knowledge* in 1855. The *Wisconsin Archeologist* for 1910 also discussed the mounds.

Because of these well-preserved Indian relics, the Blackhawk Country Club was named to the National Register of Historic Places and was declared a National Historic Site by the National Park Service in 1979.

For many years the shagbark hickory stood in distinguished company. Its large, twin-forked trunk, 11 feet 5 inches in circumference at breast height, made it a majestic young companion to its ancient neighbors: the flying goose, the three bears, the panther, and the hawk. Today, a bike path passes through where the Blackhawk hickory once stood.



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B-Wolfgang Hoffmann (1979)