The background is a detailed historical map of Newark, Ohio, titled 'ANCIENT WORKS NEAR NEWARK LICKING COUNTY O. Drawn by D. Wyrieh. 1860'. The map shows various fortifications, including circular enclosures and rectangular structures, with labels such as 'Franklin Co. on N. on Licking R.', 'Columbus Road', and 'Pond now dry by drainage'. A legend in the top right corner identifies symbols for 'Small Enclosure', 'Deposition', 'Limit of Fortification', 'Road', 'River', 'Inlet', 'Low Water', and 'Well'. A scale at the bottom left indicates 'Scale. 80 rods to the inch'.

# Myths and misconceptions about Ohio's ancient American Indian heritage – hopeless malarkey or teachable moments?

**Jennifer Bush**  
Director  
Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum

**Brad Lepper**  
Senior Curator of Archaeology  
Ohio History Connection

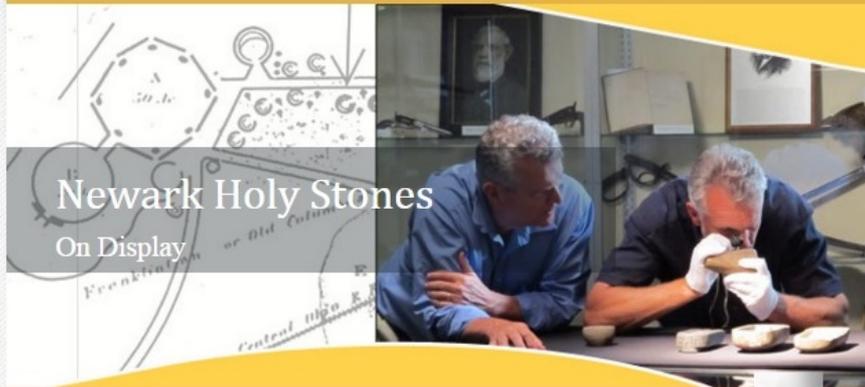


# Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum

Summer Hours: (May-Oct):  
Noon - 5:00 Daily

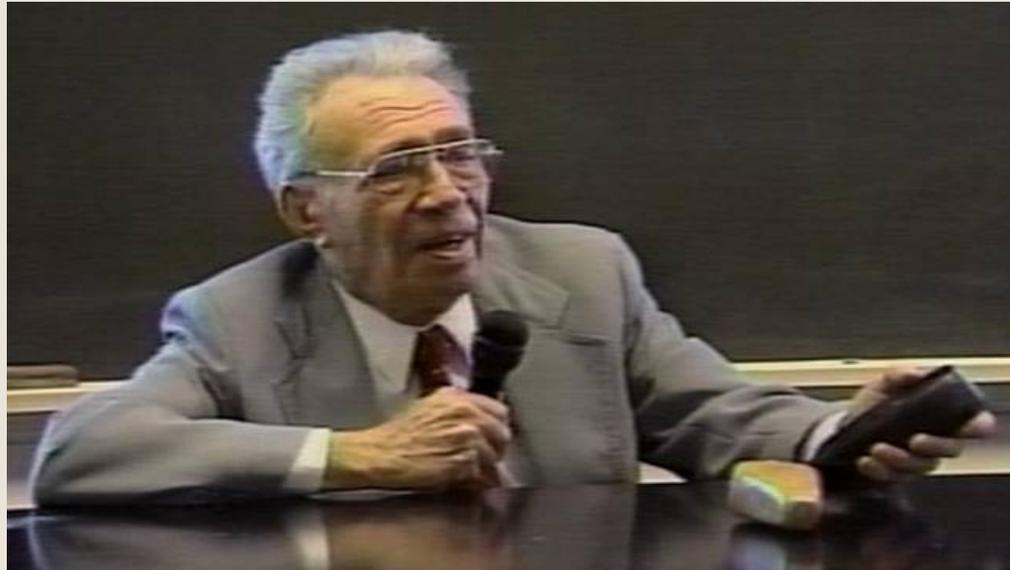
Winter Hours: (Nov-Apr):  
1:00 - 4:30 Daily  
*Closed Mondays during Winter*

Home Visit On View Learn Get Involved Gift Shop



The Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum was established in 1931 with a bequest of 15,000 multi-cultural artifacts by Coshocton Ohio native sons, John & David Johnson.





**THE NEWARK HOLY STONES  
THE HISTORY OF AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL TRAGEDY**

**ROBERT W. ALRUTZ**  
*Denison University*

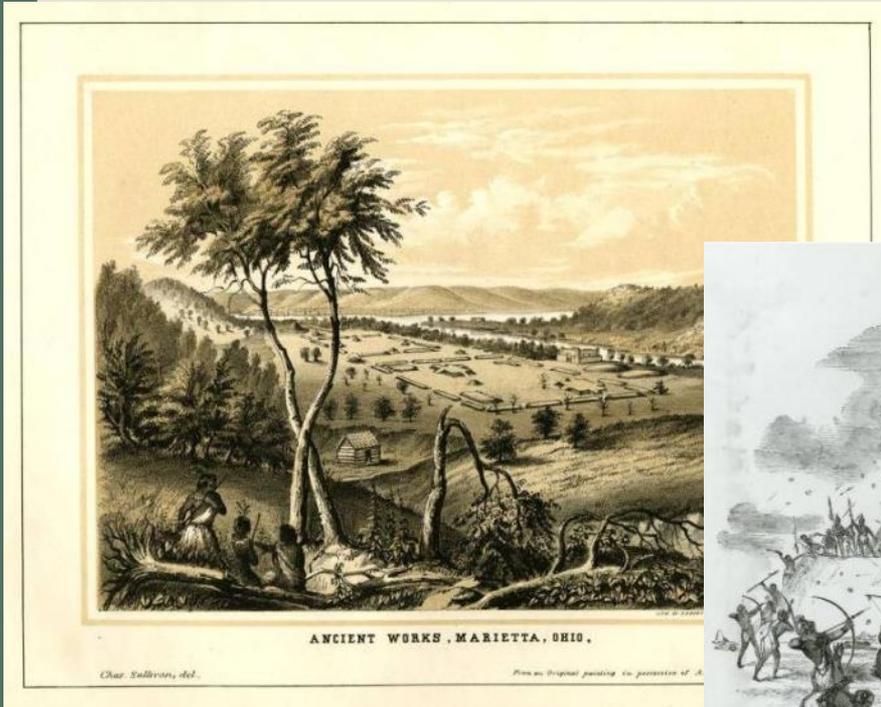
The Newark Holy Stones were a series of five inscribed artifacts found during the period 1860 to 1867. Each was discovered during excavations of earthworks associated with the Moundbuilders in the vicinity of Newark, Ohio. These stones were declared to be frauds by one contemporary antiquarian and all subsequent treatments of them were based upon this opinion. Only two of the stones are extant and only these have received much study. It is agreed that they bear Hebrew characters, one having a rendition of the Ten Commandments.

This study is an attempt to bring together all significant material written about the Newark Holy Stones and the events associated with their discovery. Emphasis has been placed upon available manuscript sources and articles published as first-hand accounts. Illustrations of all the stones are included. Various evidences and opinions regarding the authenticity of these artifacts are compared and evaluated.

**Prof. Robert W. Alrutz  
(1921-1997)**

**Department of Biology,  
Denison University**

# Context for the Holy Stones



Myth of the  
Moundbuilders

These are all circular enclosures of from 75 to 130 feet diameter, and all have a ditch within.



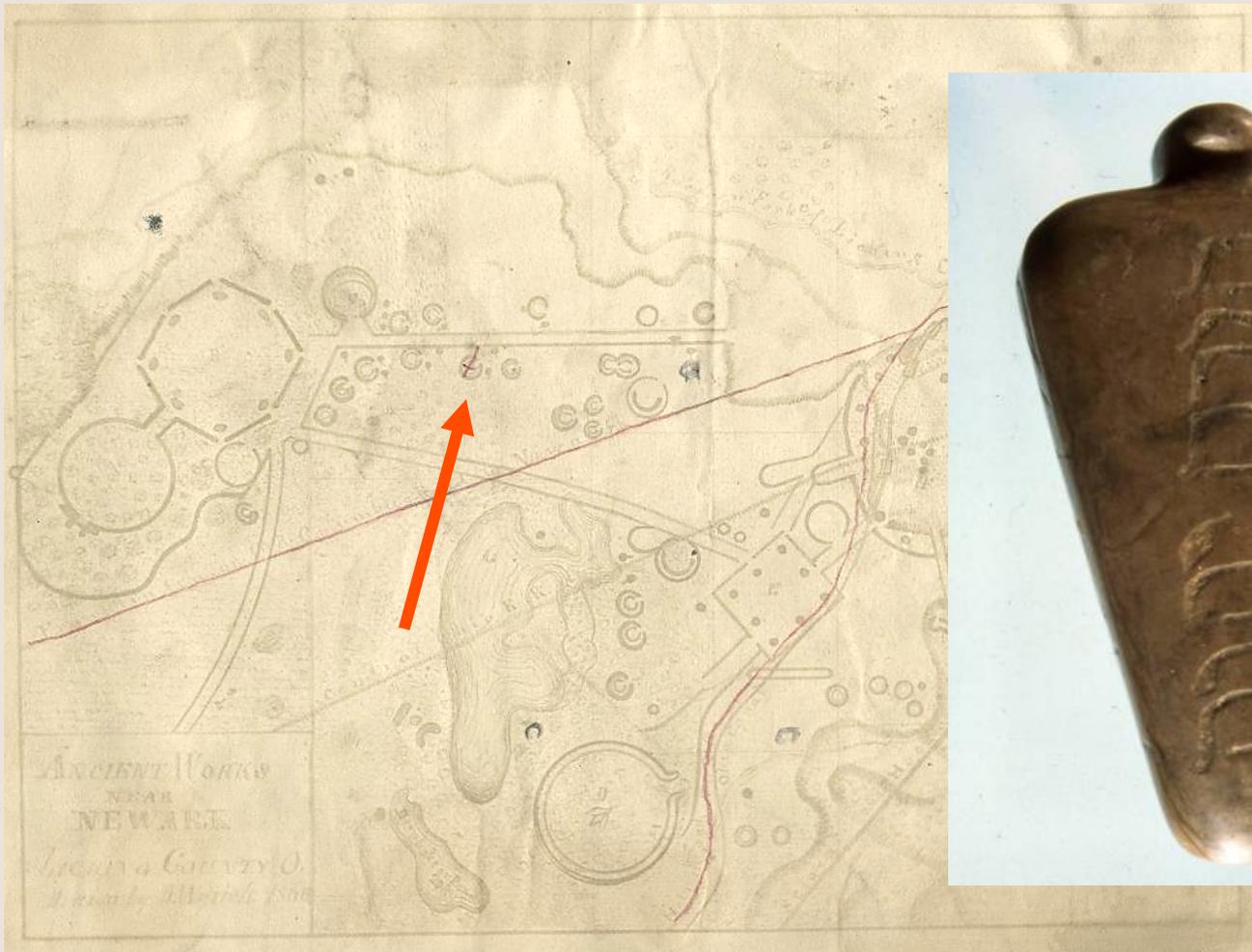
# The Keystone

## June 29, 1860

ANCIENT WORKS  
NEAR  
NEWARK  
LICKING COUNTY O.  
DRAWN BY D. WYRIE, 1860  
Scale, 80 rods to the inch

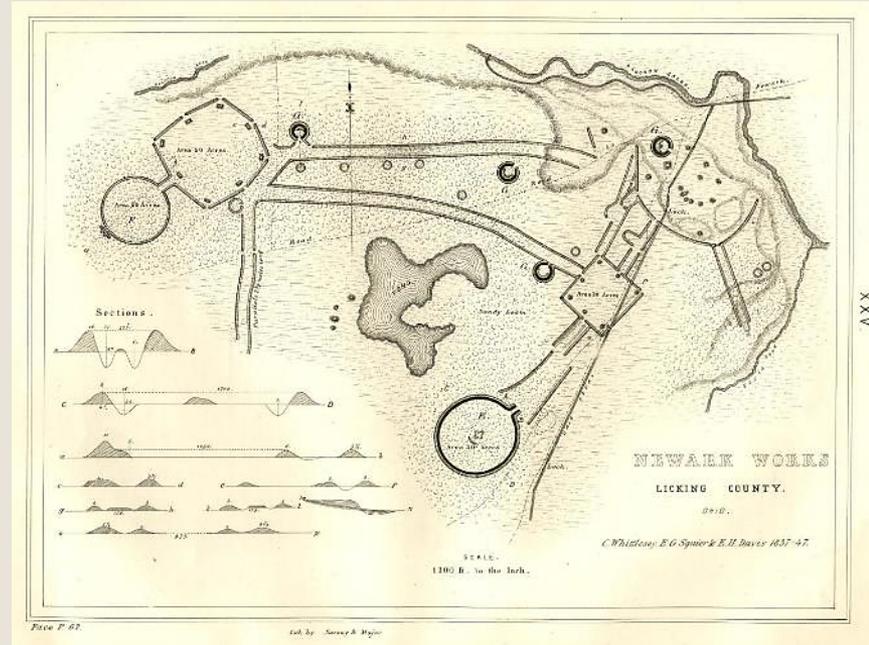
David Wyrick makes a discovery that seems to prove the “Jewish theory”

29 June 1860



Courtesy Western Reserve Historical Society





Charles Whittlesey, the foremost authority on Newark's Earthworks, is in Newark when Wyrick makes his discovery – a “nearly unbelievable coincidence” – according to Alrutz.

## Whittlesey's conclusion:

The Keystone is an historic artifact.

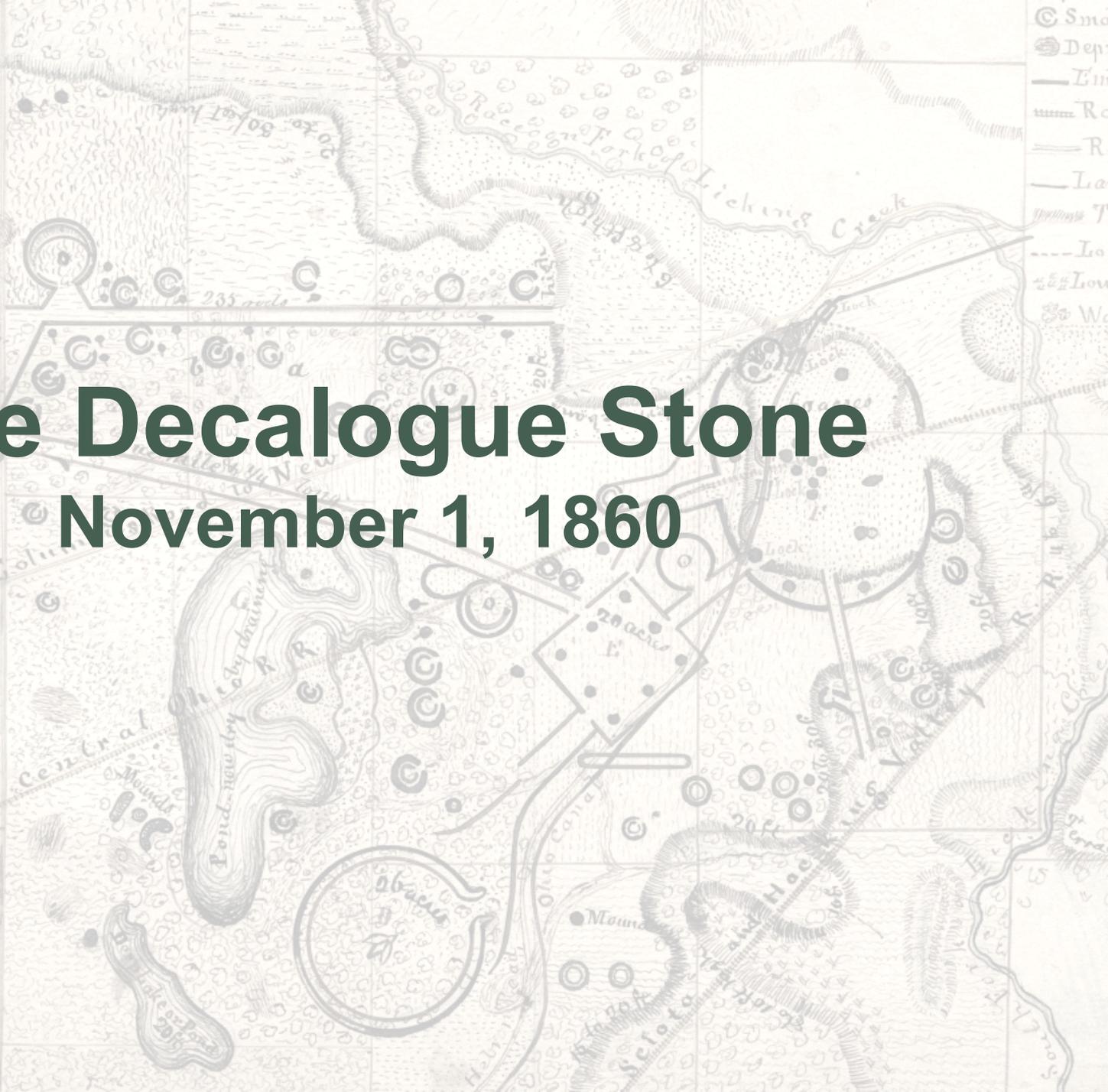
- It wasn't deeply buried.
- The letters are modern Hebrew.
- The object resembles a Masonic "Keystone."

These are all circular enclosures of from 75 to 130 feet diameter, and all have a ditch within.

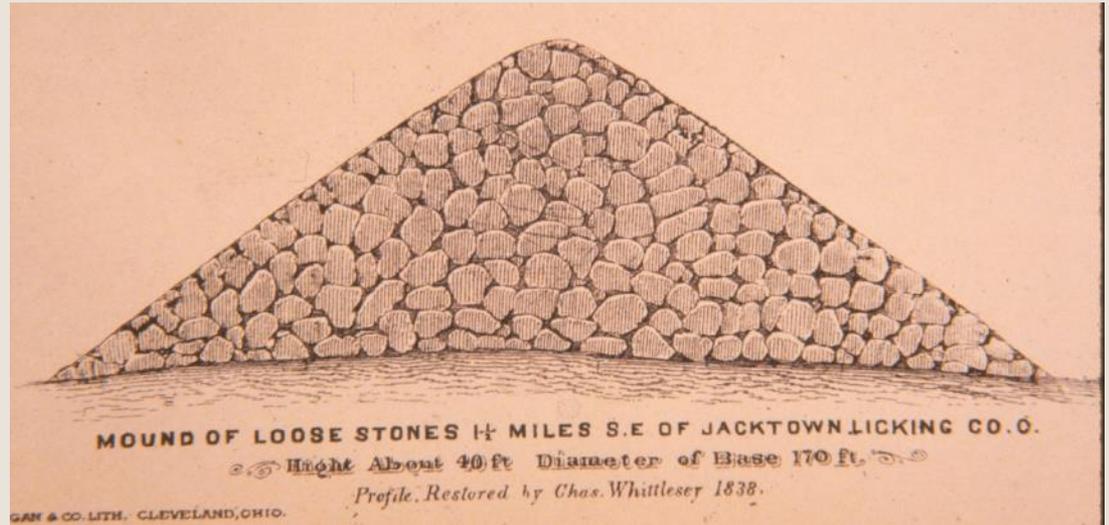
# The Decalogue Stone

## November 1, 1860

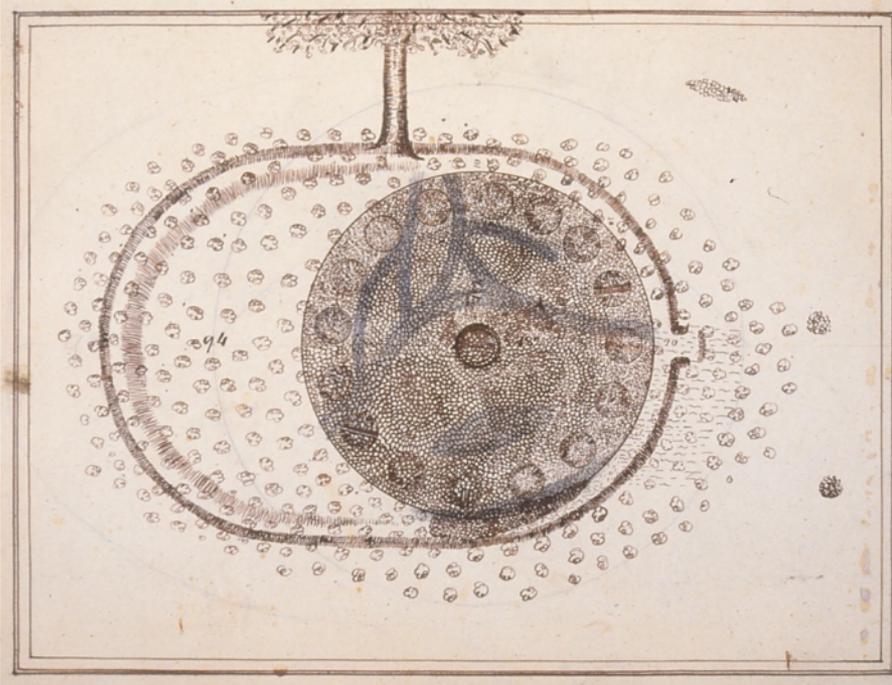
ANCIENT WORKS  
NEAR  
NEWARK  
LICKING COUNTY O.  
Drawn by D. Wyrick. 1860  
Scale 80 rods to the inch

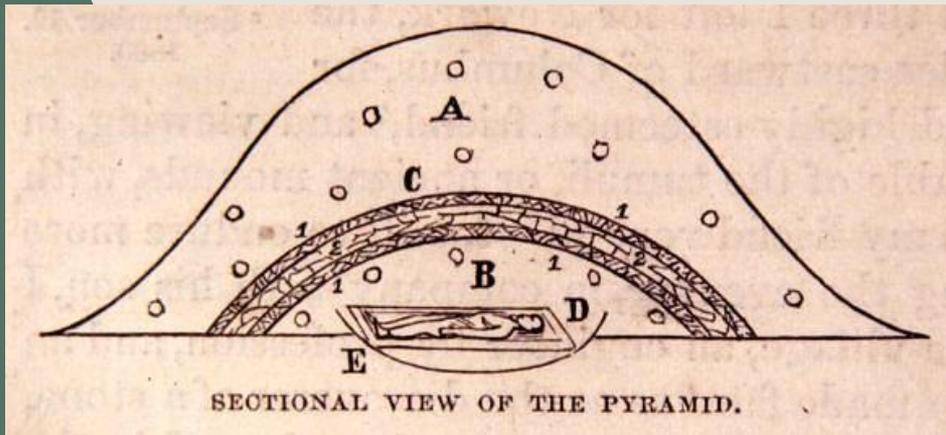


A new discovery  
answers all of  
Whittlesey's  
concerns...

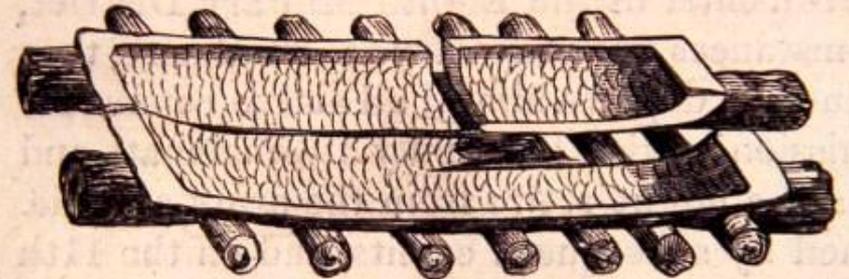


## Reservoir Stone Mound





Ancient Mounds and Relics at Newark, Ohio.



“A skeleton was found in a wooden coffin, beneath a mound of stones, which they claim to be the body of Moses; and the *savans* there are now in search of the ‘two tablets of stone’ on which the law was engraved!”

Charles Moore, *Masonic Review*, September 1860

# Decalogue Stone

I November 1860



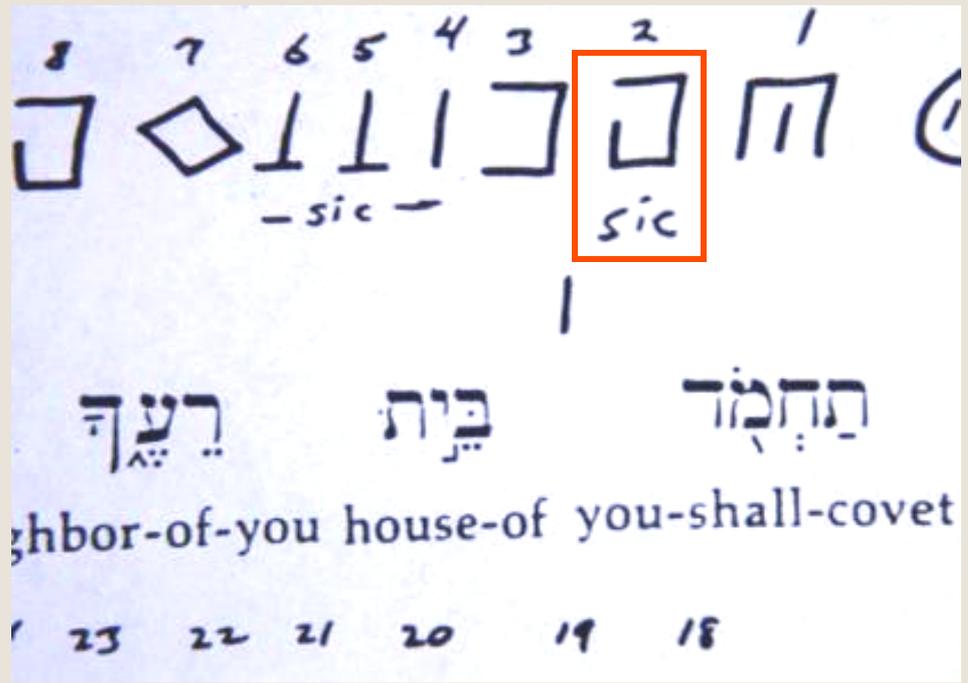
- Found beneath a giant stone mound
- Not obviously related to Masonry
- Ancient-looking Hebrew letters

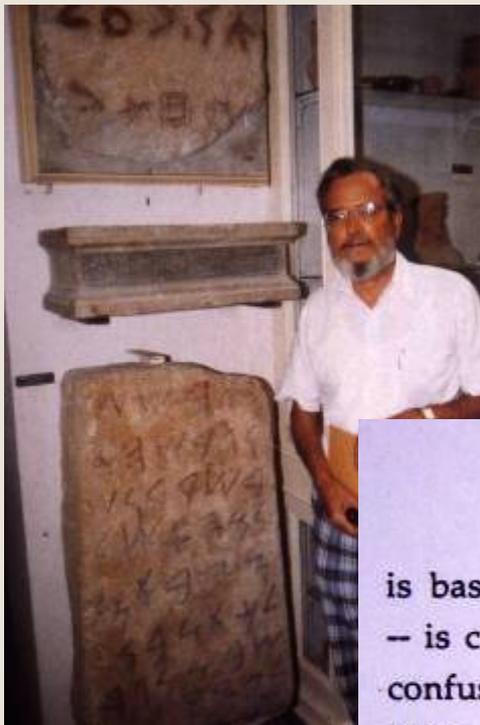


## THE DECALOGUE ALPHABET

letter	name	Standard Hebrew	Decalogue Alphabet
·	aleph	א	א, א
B	beth	ב	ב
G	gimel	ג	ג
D	daleth	ד	ד
H	he	ה	ה
W	waw	ו	ו
Z	zayin	ז	ז
Ḥ	heth	ח	ח
Ṭ	teth	ט	(not used)
Y	yod	י	י
K	kaph	כ, כ	כ
L	lamed	ל	ל
M	mem	מ, מ	מ

## J. Huston McCulloch's transcription of the Decalogue inscription





# Frank Moore Cross

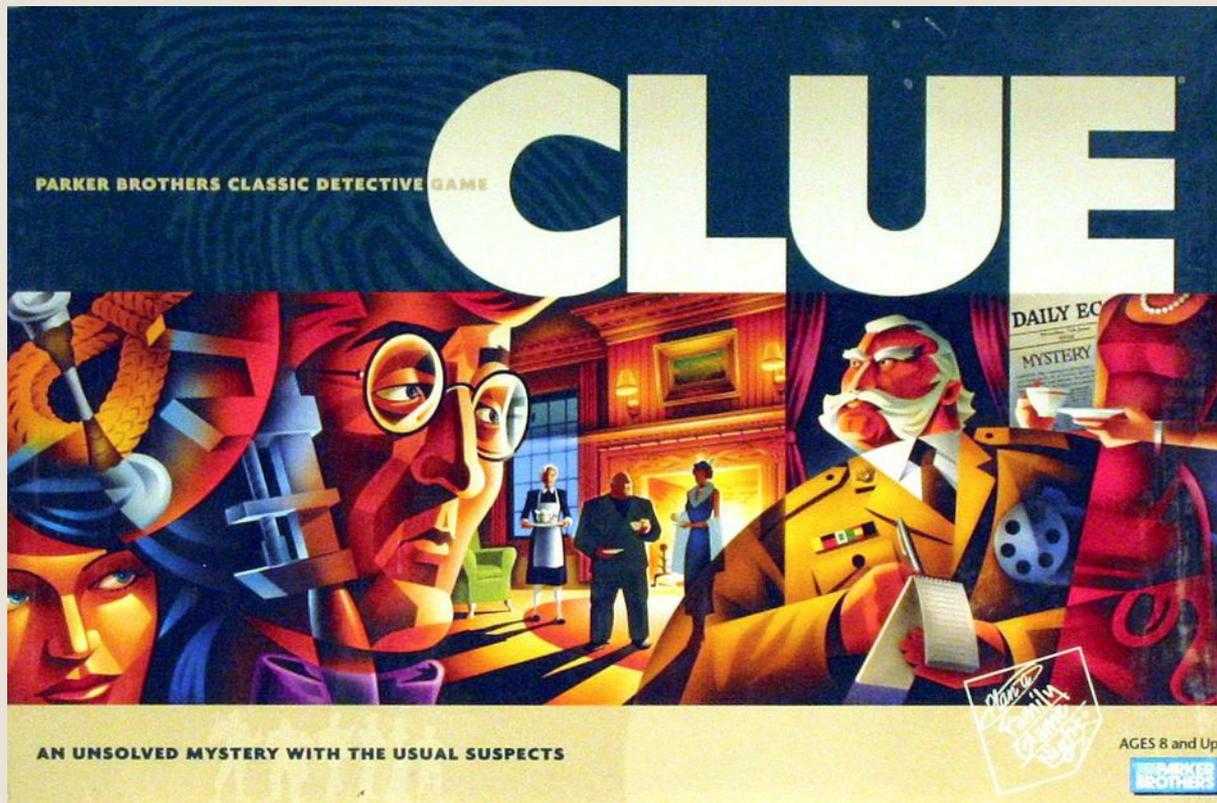
Harvard University Professor of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations

To turn to your query. Jeffrey Gill's observation -- that the blunder:

חחמך for חחמד

is based on the likeness of final *kap* and *dalet* in the standard biblical bookhand -- is certainly correct. There is no other plausible explanation. Similarly, the confusion of *reš* and *waw* (l. 2, l. 12), and the haplography of *waw* before *reš* (l. 13) is based on the similarity of the two letters in the modern Hebrew biblical hand..

There is evidence in the stone of errors which point (1) to blunders in transcribing the Massoretic Text into the invented alphabet, presumably on a piece of paper as the basis for engraving the stone. This accounts for the above errors. (2) Other errors are clearly based on the engraver (forger) copying the transcription from his notes onto the stone. This accounts for errors based on the bogus alphabet. Examples are in l.10, the haplography of *yod-mem* following *mem*: *ym[ym]*, and the confusion of the sequence *waw-waw* for *taw*, and the interchange of *lamed/nun*. (3) Several confusions, *he/ħet*, *ħet/taw*, could happen



So, who dunnit?



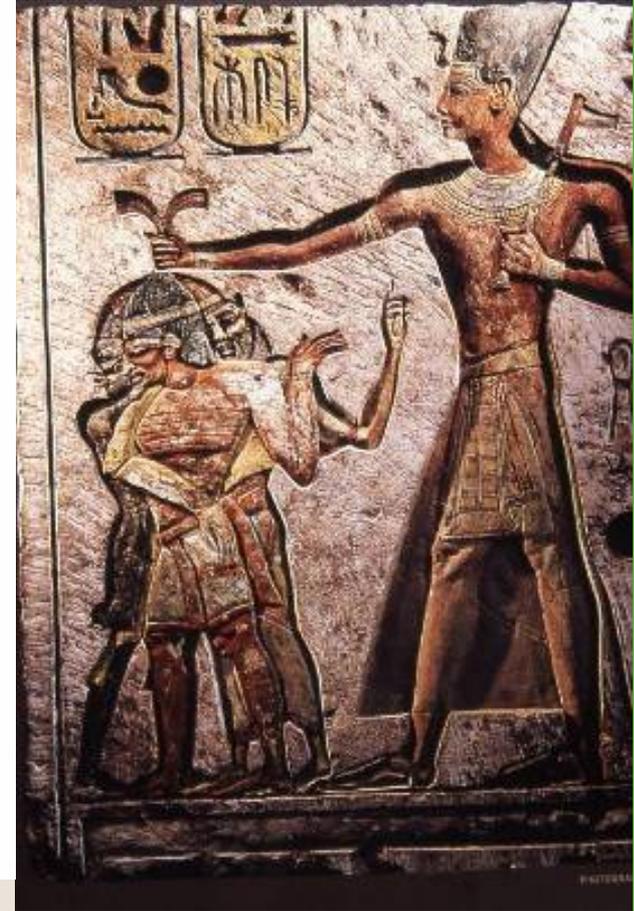
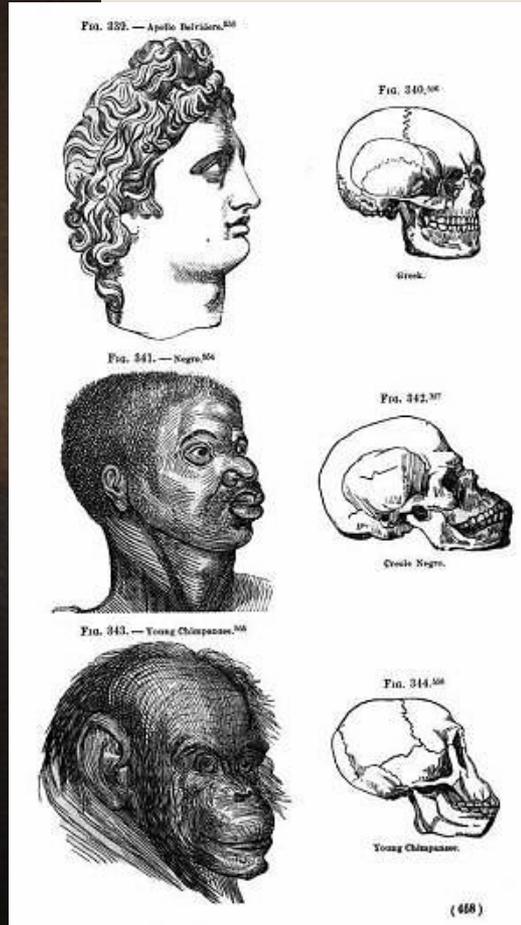
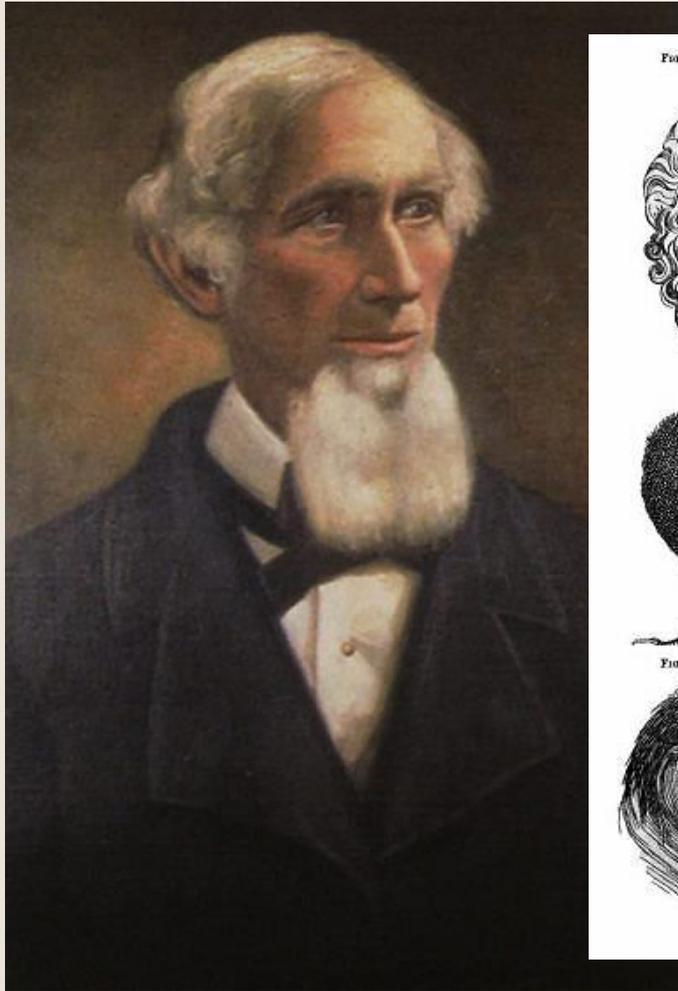
“...such forgeries will always in some way represent the ideas of the time of the forgery.”

Matthew C. Read (1888)  
*Archaeology of Ohio*

## Monogenesis – The Unity of Man



# Polygenesis – The “American School” of Physical Anthropology



# JOSIAH NOTT'S ARGUMENT FOR POLYGENESIS AND SLAVERY

The Hebrew Bible is unreliable – and so monogenesis is a fairy tale.

- America's mounds are older than Adam – so the Biblical chronology is wrong.
- Hebrews had no “intercourse with other nations” and were “limited in their knowledge of geography.”
- Hebrew temples and monuments are insignificant “in comparison to those of Nineveh, Babylon, Egypt, Rome...”
- Hebrews had no alphabet in the time of Moses

From: “Two lectures on the connection between the Biblical and Physical History of Man” (1848)

The Newark “Holy Stones,” if they are authentic, answer all of Nott’s criticisms!

Antiquity?

Geography?

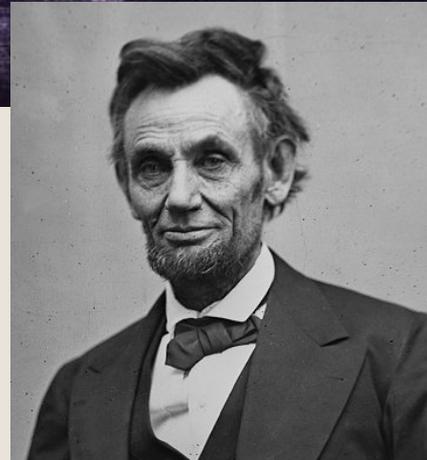
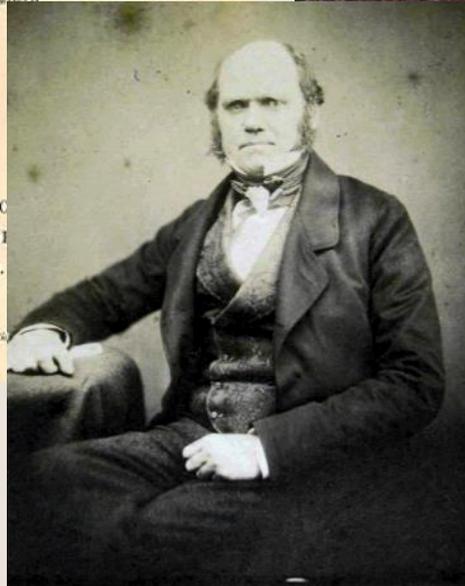
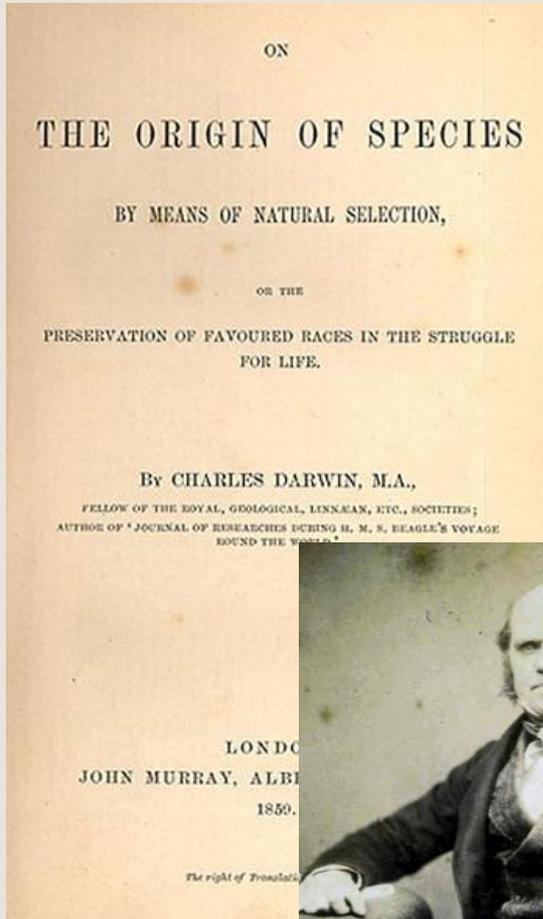
Architecture?

Written language?

The “Holy Stones” were tailor-made to undermine the scientific justification for human slavery.



# The “Holy Stones” become irrelevant almost immediately



© These are all circular enclosures of from 75 to 130 feet diameter, and all have a ditch within.

# The Newark Holy Stones at the Johnson-Humrickhouse Museum



# JHM HISTORY & ACQUISITION

- Purchased by David Johnson (unclear on the date)
  - Alrutz says that D. Johnson has the Holy Stones in 1861 BUT then cites an 1863 article saying that Dille is the owner of the Stones (pg. 38-39).
    - 1861 letter from T. Dwight asking Johnson if he owns the Stones.
    - 1862 letter from T. Dwight assuring Johnson Stones are real.
  - Likely that Dille bought the Stones from Wyrick and then sold them to Johnson

David Johnson



# JHM HISTORY & PAST DIRECTORS

- Alrutz comes to JHM in 1974 to do research → Revitalizes interest
  - Current director, Mary Shaw, pulls the Stones out of a drawer
    - All previous directors from 1931-1991 kept them in storage
- Past directors did not put the Stones on display until July 21, 1991
  - Brad Lepper said “Hey Director Derby, these should be on display”
- Patti Malenke created current display & organized symposium
  - Believes the Stones belong in the public sphere as an important piece of Ohio history but wanted to stay neutral
  - Encouraged scholarly research
  - Accommodated film crews
  - Current display: Stones with a short description in one case; copies of original documents in adjacent case. Very neutral.
  - Hosted Lectures and Symposia
    - 2017: Fake News, 2009: Old Questions, New Science; 1999: Context for Controversy

# TYPES OF VISITORS

- Latter Day Saints
- Apocalyptic Christians
- History Channel & Scott Wolters Followers
- Glenn Beck Followers
- Conspiracy Theorists & L.A. Marzulli Followers
- Scholars
- People Who Don't Know What The Stones Are

# Glenn Beck Show- August 18, 2010

## *Divine Providence vs. Manifest Destiny*

*Tonight: The Great Pyramids of Giza in Ohio? One of the greatest, most advanced civilizations from thousands of years ago lived in St. Louis? Has Glenn finally gone crazy - or is there something to this? Tonight, you will learn history that has been completely lost and erased. Americans are being pitted against each other, but we can come together as long as we search for the truth and are willing to accept what we find. Just remember: No Pain, No Gain.*



# America Unearthed – November 30, 2013



## America Unearthed: Ark Of The Covenant (44 min) TV-PG

Scott's quest leads him to a sacred site in Ireland, the Hill of Tara. Then he heads to a mysterious petroglyph in Arizona that depicts what could be the Ark of the Covenant, suggesting that its final resting place is right here in America.

# Legacy Tours with Rod Meldrum

## The Book of Mormon Evidence Tour



[https://www.legacytoursandtravel.com/book\\_of\\_mormon\\_evidence\\_tour.htm](https://www.legacytoursandtravel.com/book_of_mormon_evidence_tour.htm)

# VISITOR RESPONSES & INTERACTIONS

- Mostly positive
- Some people talk at you (expecting no response)
- Some people ask questions
  - Why is it controversial?
  - What evidence do we have?
- Some people just want to argue
  - In person, if staff member's POV differs from theirs
    - Or if they are coughing, more on that later
  - Emails (A fun one to follow 😊)
  - Voicemails (Sadly, deleted 😞 )

# VISITOR RESPONSES & INTERACTIONS

Young lady,

I trust this is you opening and reading the JH Museum correspondence, since you told me you write for the museum.

I suggest you should also read, and I will attach what exactly, at the end of my email.

Since the Museum is updating your displays, I suggest the following:

Put both the Decalogue stone, and the key stone, as well as the cup, all on rotating dias, so people can view them properly, since you sell copies for 85\$ it is the least you can do.

Second, put this attached article below, from a very reputable higher education university, beside the articles saying these magnificent items are fake, to give it a fair viewing.

The fact that all you have are the 1860 lies printed about it is a shame of ignorance, in an institution that children probably attend for knowledge.

Third: include the reasons why the only American Religion ever created, the Mormons, respect these items as the Holy Stones, and tell the reasons why this is so.

Fourth: mention state that the Decalogue stone is the Ten Commandments, and the figure in the middle is Moses.

And finally, as I tried to explain before you were incredibly rude to me, and I am at least twice your age so no reason for the condescending glare away from me, I waited 40 years plus to come and see those items, it was a pilgrimage for me, I brought my best friend who was clueless about the stones, and he recognized their massive significance almost immediately, Do NOT use the -Native Canadian Indians pluck their hair follicles- nonsense ever again, as a way to explain who the bearded figure is on the Decalogue stone.

As I explained before your indignant attitude- virtue signalling- episode, Natives I know personally, over ten different tribes in southern Ontario alone, I have been on Six nations Reserve in Hagersville 100 times and have great friends who are native Canadian, my son plays lacrosse, I was on my way to his game vs OSU, and natives do NOT have beards!!! I would guess you have never, ever met a Native Canadian, I respect them so much my son played their sport, which is our Canadian national summer sport, to the point where he received a full ride scholarship doing so!

OSU link as follows:

<https://www.asc.ohio-state.edu/mcculloch.2/arch/decalog.html>

Read this and learn something, if your museum does not want to give this incredible discovery a fair display of balanced, researched opinion, donate it to OSU!!

I expect a return email from your Museum, I studied this discovery since I was 12 years old, and this should be linked to the Mounds in Newark as well, you cannot place discoveries in second floor unlit rooms without context !!

Thank You

[redacted]

PS I was going to explain why the cup or bowl was as significant as the key stone and the D stone, but you young lady were not worthy after your sad face episode!!!

# VISITOR RESPONSES & INTERACTIONS

\*Based on an  
actual  
voicemail we  
received\*



YA'LL ARE GOING TO  
HELL! YOU DO NOT GET  
TO HANDLE THOSE  
STONES BECAUSE YOU  
DO NOT HAVE O+  
BLOOD BECAUSE YOU  
ARE NOT NATIVE  
AMERICAN & ANOTHER  
THING THE KEY STONE  
IS FACING THE WRONG  
DIRECTION AND YOU  
WILL PERISH FOR THAT

# STAFF INTERACTION WITH VISITORS

- Everyone is polite and, when necessary, tries to defuse situations before they escalate.
- Vicki and Karen stay neutral by dodging the “What do you believe?” question.
  - “Well... I am not sure, but it COULD be...”
  - “Yeah... I just need to do more research”
- Jenn and Reba truthfully answer the “What do you believe?” question
  - Both rely on scientific and linguistic evidence by Brad Lepper & Friends

# AAM TRUTH, TRUST AND FAKE NEWS

- Confirmation bias- the tendency to believe that you are right and disregard information that conflicts with your ideas- which makes people less likely to trust sources of conflicting evidence
- Illusory truth effect- repeated exposure to false information tends to influence what people believe.
- 70% of respondents from a Trust Barometer survey worry that fake news is being used to manipulate public opinion- and there is growing evidence that they are correct.

# SO NOW WHAT

## Museums **NEED** to...

- Educate the public on museum standards for research.
- Foster critical thinking.
- Teach people to value evidence-based decision making.
- Acknowledge the role museums have played in perpetuating untruths.
- Carefully consider when and how to take a stand on important issues.

\*From the AAM Truth, Trust & Fake News article\*

# NEWARK HOLY STONES DISPLAY



# SO NOW WHAT

- Plans to update Holy Stone display to show the hard evidence
  - iPad Kiosk with original documents, video clips from experts, maps, relevant historic and archeology data and multi view, high resolution images of the stones.
- Focus on the Facts
  - Need to be aware of other viewpoints
  - Want to keep the numbers up, but still support the evidence
  - Must provide people with the tools to make an educated opinion.
  - Continue to offer symposia and programming about Stones.



Prototype of future interactive Holy Stone display

“Rebuilding Trust may turn out to be a multigenerational effort, beginning with significant changes to how we teach children. The Voice-of-God narration in traditional textbooks is often used to bury unpleasant issues and avoid controversy. It is more important than ever that we prioritize critical thinking, rather than memorization across all subject areas.”

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the late Dr. Robert Alrutz, former professor of Biology at Denison University, for drawing our attention to these fascinating objects and the window they open onto the rollicking history of science, politics, and religion in the 19th century.

Special thanks to Jeff Gill – Lepper’s colleague and co-conspirator in the Holy Stones research.

Special thanks to Reba Kocher – Bush’s colleague and presentation co-conspirator at JHM.

Thanks to all the institutions who have allowed us access to their archives.

# SOURCES

TrendWatch 2019, Truth, Trust and Fake News

The Newark Holy Stones; The History of an Archaeological Tragedy, Dr. Robert W. Alrutz, 1980