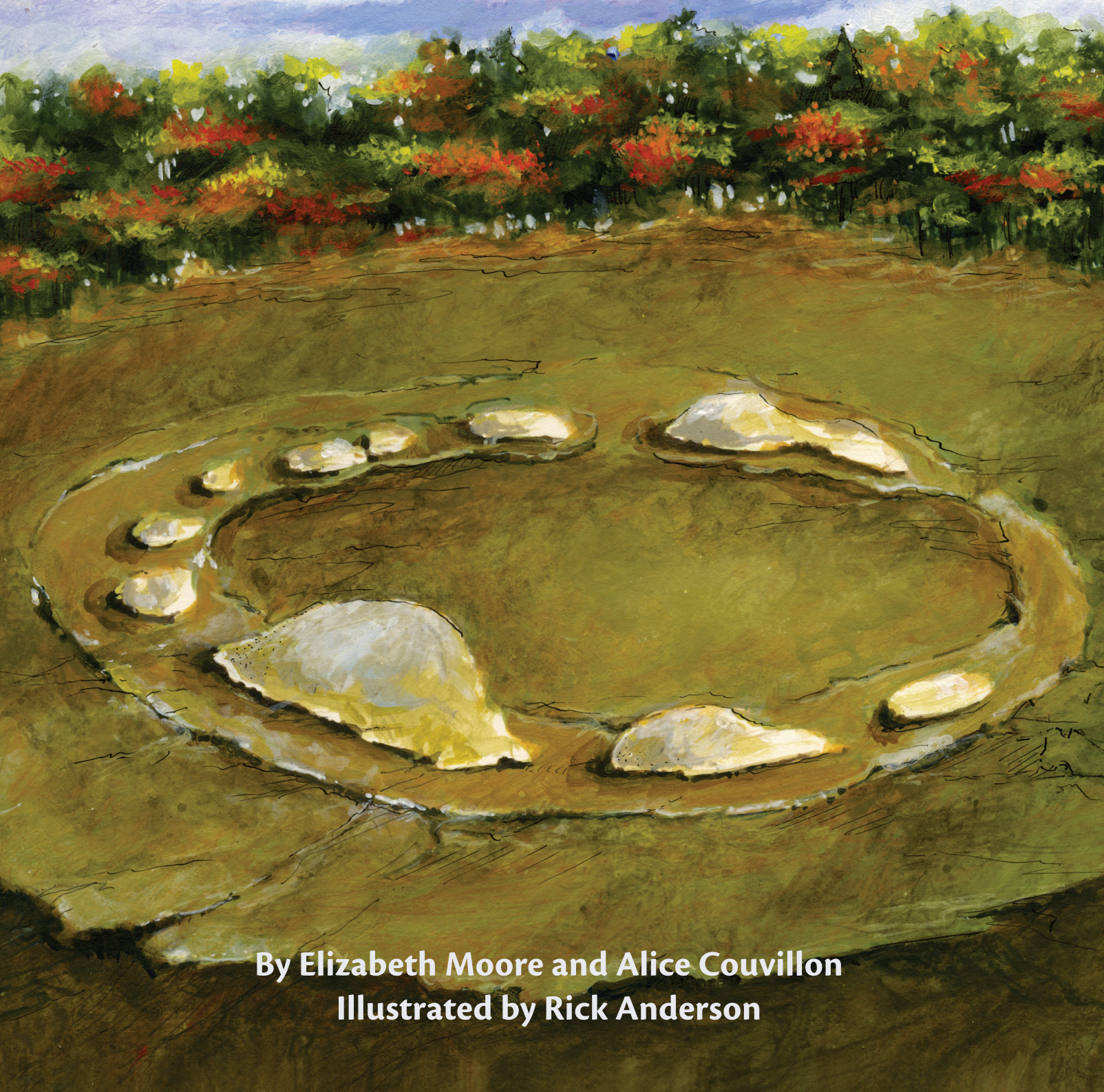


Ancient Mounds of WATSON BRAKE

Oldest Earthworks in North America



By Elizabeth Moore and Alice Couvillon
Illustrated by Rick Anderson

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“Watson Brake is a special place in Louisiana history. . . . The efforts of Reca Jones to document and understand the mounds make an exciting story.”

—Dr. Charles “Chip” McGimsey,
Louisiana state archaeologist

“This is a story that every child wishes their grandmother had taught them about the past.”

—Joe Saunders, regional archaeologist of northeast Louisiana

Older than the pyramids of Egypt and enclosing an area the size of three football fields, the ancient mounds of Watson Brake evoke a sense of mystery and wonder. The origins of these earthworks, located near West Monroe, Louisiana, remain buried in secrecy, but amateur archaeologist Reca Jones digs for the truth.

In this children’s book, Reca recalls her discovery of Watson Brake. Educating her grandchildren about the archaeological site, she teaches them about artifacts found at the mounds, such as spear points, fishhooks, and animal bones. Each relic, she explains, is a piece of the unsolved puzzle as to how the people of the land lived. After a visit to the mounds, Reca encourages her grandchildren to one day help solve the mystery.

Although scientists continue to speculate about the origins of the earthworks, *Ancient Mounds of Watson Brake* presents clues that may allow children to draw their own conclusions. A brief biography of Reca Jones and her work is included in this educational picture book.

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*For our grandchildren—
Elizabeth, R.J., Mary Katherine, Ryan, Isabelle,
Constance,
Anneliese, Sam, Mary Grace, Caroline, and Mia*

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shows her grandchildren the mounds at Watson Brake and some of
the artifacts found there.

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Ancient Mounds of Watson Brake

Nicholas had just tossed the dice for his next move when he and his sister caught a whiff of something delicious.

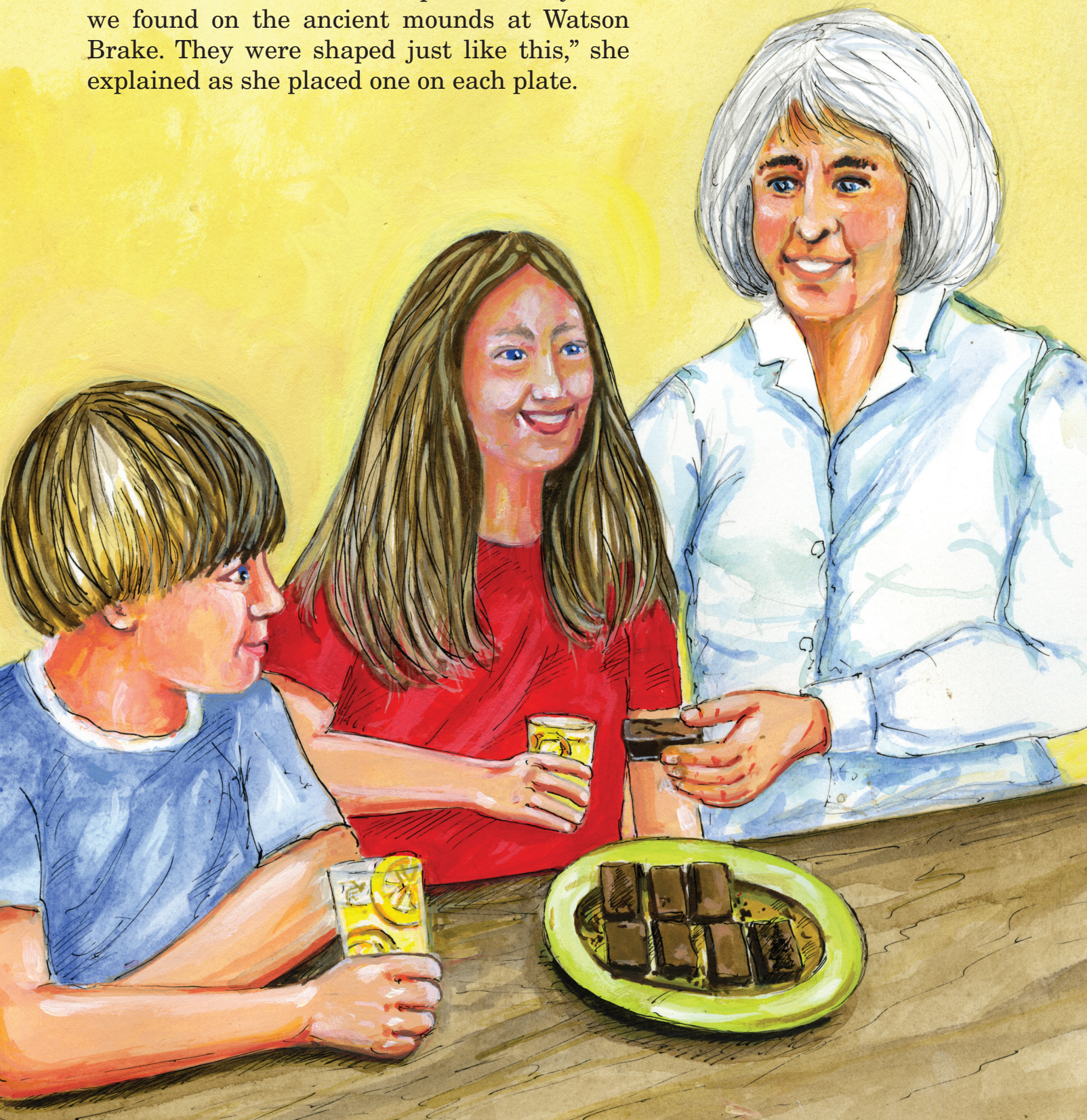
“Reca, what are you cooking?” asked Hilary as they raced into the kitchen.

Reca stirred a pot of hot peanut butter fudge on the stove and then spooned the fudge into a pan.



“Let’s make some lemonade while this cools,” she suggested. “By the time we squeeze the lemons and add sugar and water, the fudge will be ready.” The children sipped their lemonade and watched intently as their grandmother took out a sharp knife and cut the fudge into little pieces.

“These remind me of the squares of clay that we found on the ancient mounds at Watson Brake. They were shaped just like this,” she explained as she placed one on each plate.



“What did those people do with them?” asked Nicholas as he bit into the delicious candy.

“We don’t know—it was so long ago,” answered Reca. “Do you have any ideas?”

“I think that babies played with them like blocks. I bet Bella would like that,” said Nicholas, thinking of his baby sister.

“I know, I know!” shouted Hilary. “They used them for dice.”

“Good for both of you,” said Reca. “You may be right. It’s fun to imagine what you would do if you were living on that mound.”



“Reca, would you show us the mounds?” asked Nicholas.

“I’d love to. We’ll stop at the archaeology lab first, and I’ll show you those little blocks the fudge reminded me of.”

Hilary and Nicholas piled into Reca’s dusty pickup. The truck had been sitting in the midday sun, and when Hilary rolled down the window, a blast of hot air ruffled her hair. Nicholas wriggled in the heat, and Reca told him, “It will be cool in the lab, and it will be late afternoon by the time we get to the mounds.”

