

# Charting the Course of the State Archaeology Survey in Indiana

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When I drive between Bloomington and Indianapolis, I am reminded of my earliest archaeology field training as an undergraduate at Indiana University.

Armed with compasses, notebooks, and other supplies we headed out to recently plowed farm fields to survey portions of northern Monroe County recording pottery sherds, flaking debris, and other indestructible artifacts. We paid particularly close attention to diagnostic artifact types, or "index fossils," that can be used to distinguish between earlier or later occupations. Once located, sites were mapped and recorded in the state site file.

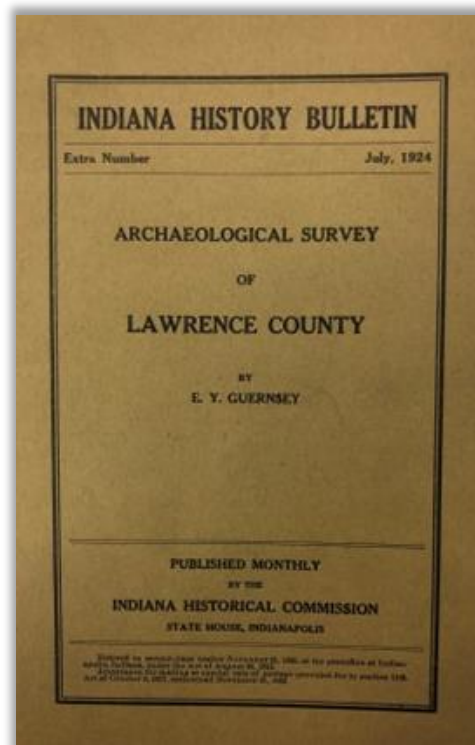
This early survey training impressed upon me that while lost to sight, blanketed by wind and water-borne sediments, past Indigenous landscapes and settlements, even the smallest camps, could be revealed. Other more conspicuous and topographically distinctive elements of past Indigenous landscapes, such as mounds and earthworks, are easy to recognize and hence were the target of much interest and speculation by 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century antiquarians and early archaeologists. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century teams of surveyors had mapped and documented many of these impressive structures throughout the major interior river valleys of the Midwest and Southeast.

Unfortunately, the conspicuous nature of mounds also caused problems for the new discipline of Americanist archaeology since many were targeted for excavation by amateur archaeological societies or dealers in antiquities in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition to amateur excavations and looting, mining, road building, urban development and mechanized agriculture were becoming an increasing threat to Indigenous and Euroamerican heritage sites, those above and below the ground.

In view of the increasing frequency with which archaeological sites in the eastern United States were being destroyed and lacking a



Article from the Indiana Star, 6-15-25. Archaeological Sites and Surveys, 1978001, Box 2, Policy Files-Appointing Authorities. Image Courtesy of the Indiana State Archives, Indiana Archives and Records Administration.



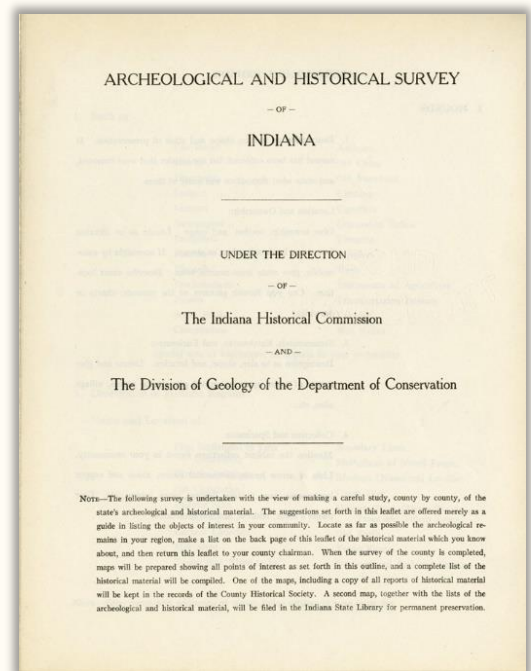
Archaeological Survey of Lawrence County by E.Y. Guernsey. Archaeology sites and surveys; 1978001, Box 1, Lawrence County 1922-1929. Image Courtesy of the Indiana State Archives, Indiana Archives and Records Administration.

way to gauge the number of sites lost, a national Committee on State Archaeological Surveys (CSAS) was formed in 1920.

Recognizing the important role state archaeology surveys play in preservation and research, Archaeology Month 2024 commemorates Indiana's early State Archaeological Survey and celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first published survey reports for Lawrence and Washington counties in 1924.

The administrative and survey records for the Indiana archaeology survey are housed today at the Indiana State Archives, Indiana Archives and Records Administration in Indianapolis. The archive includes original correspondence between the CSAS and its Indiana partners, accounting records, images, field notes, and other materials. In what follows, I provide a brief institutional history of the survey and a glimpse into the archive revealing some of the routine costs and challenges faced as the course of Indiana's state-wide archaeology survey was charted in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Created within the Division of Anthropology and Psychology of the National Research Council (NRC), the CSAS was in existence between 1920 and 1937 (Guthe 1930; O'Brien and Lyman 2001). Initially, the CSAS focused its attention on Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and Missouri, states that had support for science and history and active historical and scientific societies (Guthe 1930:52; O'Brien and Lyman 2001:6). The Indiana representative on the committee was Amos W. Butler. Through the arm of the CSAS, various state agencies were called upon to coordinate archaeological surveys. In Indiana, the State Historical Commission and the State Department of Conservation (now the Department of Natural Resources), through the office of the State Geologist partnered with the CSAS to coordinate the survey in Indiana. In 1965 the management of the Indiana archaeological survey and site file was transferred from the Indiana Historical Society to Indiana University. The Monroe County survey I participated in, supported in part by the Indiana Historical Society, was a continuation of the state survey program envisioned by the CSAS.

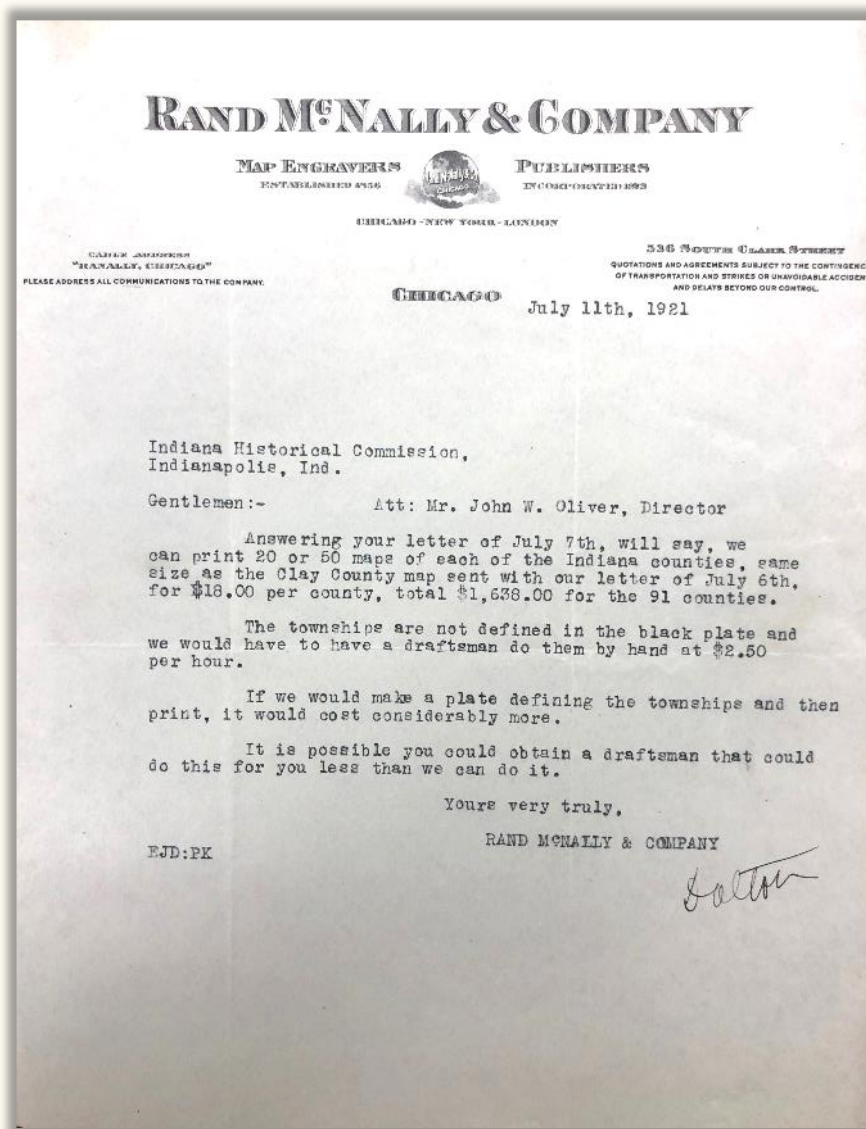


*Archeological and Historical Survey of Indiana Leaflet. Policy files-appointing authorities, 1978001, Box 3, 1922-1926, pamphlet cover page. Image Courtesy of the Indiana State Archives, Indiana Archives and Records Administration.*

From its inception, the goal of the survey was to provide support for systematizing and unifying methods of investigation in each state. Utilizing field survey, questionnaires, and archival research, the survey sought to make a careful study, county by county, of the state's archaeological and historical material (Guthe 1930). One of the biggest challenges faced by the CSAS was the dearth of trained professional archaeologists. In the early years of the survey, amateurs and local volunteers were indispensable partners. Pamphlets were circulated to guide both professionals and amateurs. The CSAS also organized three conferences, one of which was held in Indianapolis in 1935, targeting both professional and nonprofessional audiences. In November of 1923 CSAS chairman Clark Wissler wrote to Professor Harlow Lindley at the Indiana State House, inviting him to speak on the relation of historical societies to archaeological surveys at the first CSAS conference held in Cincinnati.

In 1927 the Indiana Historical Society organized an archaeological section under the chairmanship of William R. Teel of Indianapolis. Between the 1920s and 1960s several historians, geologists, amateurs, and trained archaeologists including E.Y. Guernsey, Frank Setzler, Frances Martin, Fred Eggan, Glenn A. Black, William R. Adams, Don Dragoo, Charles Faulkner, Hilda J. Curry, and James Kellar participated in the Indiana archaeology survey. Over the span of half a century, several counties were surveyed, with reports published in a timely fashion by the Indiana Historical Bureau. Harlow Lindley, then Director of the Indiana Historical Commission, described E.Y. Guernsey, author of the Archaeological Survey of Lawrence County, as an "enthusiast in the field of archaeology and has had much practical experience in this phase of scientific work" (Guernsey 1924:5).

While archaeologists in the 21<sup>st</sup> century routinely use LiDAR, GIS, laser transits, and GPS to locate and record sites (Cook et al. 2015), those working in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century used plat books, topographic quad maps, compasses and transits. The task of creating state survey maps before GIS and personal computers was no small task. In 1921, Rand McNally & Company provided a quote to the Indiana Historical Commission for \$1,638 to create maps for Indiana's then 91 counties at \$18 per county



Letter dated July 11, 1921, from Rand McNally & Company to the Indiana Historical Commission, Miscellaneous Correspondence 1921-1925, 1996059, Box 2. Indiana State Archives, Indiana Archives and Records Administration. Image provided by the author.

Traversing the back roads in the 1920s and 1930s took a toll on the Studebakers and Fords used by the survey, which routinely needed new tires and tubes, wheel adjustments and bearings, brake and clutch repairs and grease. In 1930, gas was 0.17-0.20 cents per gallon and oil was 0.25-0.30 cents per quart. In just over a month, between August 11 and September 14 oil and gas for the Studebaker used in the survey cost \$25.38. In addition to salaries, room and board, routine expenses included stationery and typewriter ribbons, plat books, postage, film, developing and printing, cameras and tripods and incidentals.

A cornerstone of Midwest archaeology, early state archaeological survey programs were at the intersection of preservation and research on the one hand and professionalization of archaeology on the other. In several states including Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Indiana, state archaeological surveys led to statewide preservation efforts that included building and maintaining master inventories of archaeological sites, historic structures, and cemeteries. Today, the DNR Division of Historic Preservation & Archaeology (DHPA) maintains Indiana's master inventory of archaeological sites and continues to lead statewide efforts for recording, protecting and preserving Indiana's Native American and Euroamerican heritage (Feldhues 1997; Draeger-Williams 2005; Sharkey 2014). As of this writing the Indiana state site file includes over 74,000 sites.

While most sites are recorded by professional archaeologists, in keeping with the mandate of the CSAS many are reported by avocational archaeologists, other non-professionals, and landowners. The DNR DHPA continues the original mission of the CSAS through the Historic Preservation Fund, a grant program that awards survey grants to qualified professionals who conduct county archaeology surveys. Through 2024, the DHPA HPF grant program has funded surveys totaling over 20,000 acres adding nearly 4,000 new sites to the state site file. To learn more about Indiana's early archaeology survey theme for Archaeology Month 2024, visit the DNR DHPA website and stay tuned for upcoming events.

THE STATE OF INDIANA

On Account of Indiana Historical Bureau

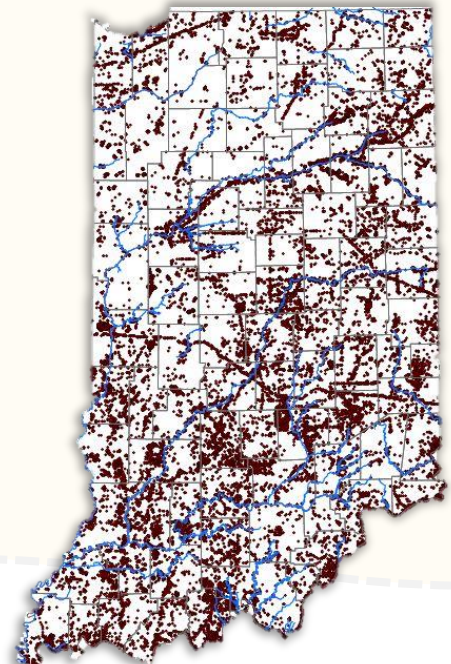
To Fred S. Eggen, Chicago, Illinois. Dr.

Attention is called to the provision of the Act passed on the back of this number. Detailed list of account number.

| Expenses in connection with archaeological survey of summer of 1930 in White River Valley |   |         |          |
|---|---|---------|----------|
| Date  | Description   | Amount  | Total    |
| Aug. 11, '30  | Studebaker - 2 tires and tubes . . . . .            | \$22.82 |          |
| " "   | Front fenders adjusted . . . . .                    | 1.35    |          |
| " "   | Gas and Oil . . . . .                               | 1.45    |          |
| " 13  | Equipment - Plat Book Hamilton Co.                  | 1.00    |          |
| " "   | Studebaker, gas . . . . .                           | 1.84    |          |
| " 13  | Equipment, Stationary supplies . . . . .            | .37     |          |
| " "   | Development and Printing . . . . .                  | 1.32    |          |
| " 14  | Studebaker - gas and oil . . . . .                  | 1.32    |          |
| " 14  | Equipment - Carburetor cleaned, etc. . . . .        | .50     |          |
| " 15  | Gas - stationary supplies . . . . .                 | .30     |          |
| " 15  | 3 Agfa Film Packs . . . . .                         | 2.82    |          |
| " 16  | Gas . . . . .                                       | 1.02    |          |
| " 16  | Developing and printing . . . . .                   | 1.14    |          |
| 8/11-17   | Incidental expenses (No receipts)                   | 2.05    | \$39.82  |
| Aug. 17   | Gas . . . . .                                       | 1.01    |          |
| " 19  | " . . . . .   | 1.37    |          |
| " 20  | " . . . . .   | 1.02    |          |
| " 21  | Car greased and oil changed . . . . .               | 3.20    |          |
| " 22  | Gas . . . . .                                       | 1.02    |          |
| " 22  | Developing and printing . . . . .                   | 3.14    |          |
| " 17  | Incidentals (No receipts)                           | 1.75    | \$11.41  |
| Aug. 25   | Studebaker - gasoline . . . . .                     | 1.01    |          |
| " 26  | Equipment - map . . . . .                           | .50     |          |
| " 26  | Gas - Agfa films . . . . .                          | 1.50    |          |
| " 27  | Gas . . . . .                                       | 1.01    |          |
| " 28  | Gas . . . . .                                       | 2.02    |          |
| " 24  | Incidentals (No receipts)                           | 1.85    | \$ 8.19  |
| Sept. 1, '30  | gas and oil . . . . .                               | 1.31    |          |
| " 2   | " . . . . .   | 1.05    |          |
| " 3   | " . . . . .   | .90     |          |
| " 4   | gas and oil . . . . .                               | 1.25    |          |
| " 5   | Greasing car . . . . .                              | 1.25    |          |
| " 5   | Gas . . . . .                                       | .50     |          |
| " 5   | Clutch on car . . . . .                             | .75     |          |
| " 6   | New front wheel bearings installed in car . . . . . | 15.40   |          |
| " 6   | 3 Agfa films . . . . .                              | 1.50    |          |
| " 7   | Gas . . . . .                                       | .90     |          |
| 1-7   | Incidentals (No receipts)                           | 1.85    | \$ 22.10 |
| Sept. 8   | Gas . . . . .                                       | .90     |          |
| " 9   | Gas . . . . .                                       | .90     |          |
| " 9   | Development of films . . . . .                      | 2.25    |          |
| " 9   | Tripod, etc. . . . .                                | 5.40    |          |
| " 11  | Gas and oil . . . . .                               | 1.85    |          |
| " 12  | Gas . . . . .                                       | 1.02    |          |
| " 12  | Developing . . . . .                                | 1.38    |          |
| 8-14  | Incidentals (No receipts)                           | 1.85    | 15.82    |

Continued

State of Indiana expenses in connection with the archaeological survey in the White River Valley, August 11, 1930. Policy files-appointing authorities; 1978001, Box 3, Expenses and Contributions, 1926-1932; ledger document. Image Courtesy of the Indiana State Archives, Indiana Archives and Records Administration.



Indiana State Site File Map, 2024. Image courtesy of the DHPA.

## Acknowledgments

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