

Plan for Limited Excavations to Better Define the Eastern Limit of the Distribution
of Archaeological Features at the Collier Lodge Site (12PR36)

Submitted to the

Indiana Department of Natural Resources,
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

by

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Archaeological Background

The Collier Lodge site (12PR36), also known as Baum's Bridge, is located on the southern border of Porter County, Indiana on the northern edge of the former Kankakee Marsh. The site is listed on the National and State Registers (Schurr and Rotman 2009). Previous investigations at the site (Schurr 2006; Schurr 2011a; Schurr 2011b; Schurr 2012) have recovered artifacts dating from the Early Archaic period (circa 11,000 B.C.) up until the recent past. Artifacts from most of the prehistoric and historic time periods of northwest Indiana are found at the site. However, most are found in mixed or non-feature contexts. Features at the site date to the Upper Mississippian period (around A.D. 1400 – 1500) and throughout the historic nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The most abundant historic features date to the early nineteenth century when Euroamericans were first entering the region and to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although these later periods are not technically consider “archaeological” according to Indiana State law and regulations, features from these relatively recent time periods can provide important information about human activities at the site during the time period just before and after the Kankakee Marsh was drained.

Because of the significance of the site, it is essential that it be managed to maintain and interpret historic contexts. Accurately knowing the limits and distributions of archaeological deposits at the site is especially important for site management. Archaeological features are especially important because of their high information content. They often provide information about structures that were present, day to day activities, or relatively short term events that occurred at the site that are not documented in historic records.

Prior Archaeological Field Work at the Site

Prior excavations of the site (Figure 1) have largely focused on testing deposits at various places in the site and defining features immediately adjacent to the standing Lodge building. Based on work at the site prior to 2011, the E 90 line on the site grid was considered to mark the eastern-most extent of features at the site (Schurr 2011b). However, one test unit from the 2011 season (Unit E 90 – 92 N 91-93, labelled A in the figure) contained a historic feature on the eastern end of the unit (Schurr 2012). The feature was not completely excavated but appeared to be some kind of late nineteenth or early twentieth century trash pit partially lined with a zinc-covered counter top (Figure 2). The appearance in the feature was surprising because it did not show up in magnetic or soil resistivity surveys (perhaps because other historic features with stronger signals obscured its weaker signal). A 2 x 2 m square unit excavated 2 meters to the east in 2005 (Unit E 94-96 N 89-91, labelled B in the figure) did not contain any features (Moye 2007) so the presumed trash pit must not extend that far to the east. The report on the 2011 excavations (Schurr 2012:40) recommends additional excavation to better define this feature.

One unit excavated in 2008 (Unit E 86-88 N 82-83, labelled C in Figure 1) contained a buried prehistoric midden at about 42 cm B.S. covered with lenses of historic material. The dark band of midden is shown in the north wall of the unit in Figure 3 (Schurr 2011a:97). However, the midden was absent from Units E 90-91 N 83-85 and E 90-91 N 80-82 (labelled D and E in Figure 1) located just 2 m to the east of Unit E 86-88 N 82-83. It seems as though the buried midden has a surprisingly abrupt eastern edge somewhere E 88 and E 90. It is also possible that the buried midden may actually be some kind of a pit feature, perhaps even a house basin. If the later, it would be the only prehistoric house basin known from northwestern Indiana. Further investigations in this portion of the site to better define the eastern limits of the midden and its nature would clearly be worthwhile.

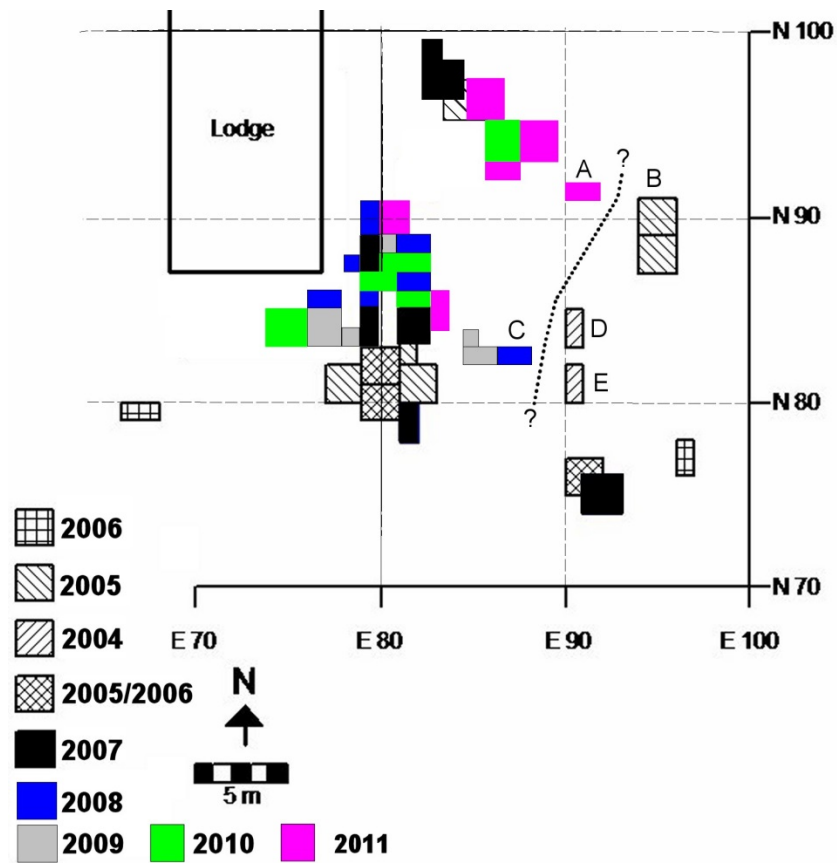


Figure 1. Prior Unit Locations with Inferred Eastern Limit of Features (dotted line).



Figure 2. Possible Historic Trash Pit in Unit E 90-92 N 91-92 (Note: photoboard north coordinates mislabeled, and the North arrow is pointing downward so east is to the left).



Figure 3. Buried Midden Shown in the North Wall of E 86-88 N 82-83.

Goals of the 2014 Season

The 2014 investigations will consist of four or five 2 x 1 m units placed along the current inferred eastern boundary of features at the site. The purpose of the proposed excavations is to obtain better information about the eastern distribution of archaeological features at the site by placing additional excavation units along the area of the dotted line shown in Figure 1 (in the vicinity of the E 90 grid line between N 80 and N 95). In most parts of the site, the first 25 cm of soil consists of topsoil that does not contain visible features. Archaeological features are generally visible in plan view after removal of two to three 10 cm levels. For this project, the topsoil will be removed and any features will be mapped. If necessary, one or two additional levels may be excavated to further define or identify exposed features. If features are found, the test units will not be excavated to sterile subsoil. Instead, the documented features will be preserved *in situ* and reburied because the goal of the proposed investigation is to obtain a census of the deposits in this portion of the site. Prior experience shows that excavation floors can be preserved very effectively by covering the floor with a fitted layer of 6 mil polyethylene sheeting and backfilling. The covered floor is very visible for via ground penetrating radar if it has to be relocated without access to the grid system.

The information recovered by the excavations can be used for planning further preservation efforts at the site and to guide future research. Accurate locations for features will make it easier to preserve them, or if impacts are expected and cannot be avoided, the information could be used to create an appropriate mitigation plan. An inventory of features can also help us better understand how the site was used and would be useful if specific types of data must be recovered in the future.

Excavation Procedures

Investigation at the site will begin with the re-establishment of a metric site grid defined in 2003 by reference to several local benchmarks. Horizontal and vertical control of the excavations will be maintained by reference to the grid coordinate system.

Units will be placed as necessary to accomplish the season's goals. All excavation will be done by hand, using either shovels or trowels. The maximum size of any single excavation unit will be 2 meters square. The units will be excavated in either arbitrary levels with a maximum thickness of 10 cm, or in archaeological levels defined by changes in soil color, texture, or artifactual content. Archaeological levels with a thickness greater than 10 cm will be subdivided into arbitrary 10 cm levels to maintain additional stratigraphic control. Soil colors will be described using the Munsell system (1990 edition). All excavated soil will be screened through 1/4 inch hardware cloth, except for soils which appear to contain high concentrations of microbotanical or microfaunal remains. Soils from these contexts will be processed using flotation recovery techniques. Additional soil samples will also be water screened to test whether very small artifacts (such as seed beads or gunshot) are present. A water screening station will be established in the field so that samples can be processed simultaneously with the excavations and a special tagging system will be employed to track water screen samples. Soil samples will also be collected from each archaeological stratum.

Each archaeological level and feature will be documented using the appropriate form and by scaled maps with a resolution of 0.5 cm. Artifacts with significant spatial relations to each other or to other features will be piece-plotted. All artifacts collected will be recorded in a field specimen log to maintain associations between specimens and their archaeological contexts. A Brick Record log will be used to record the locations and attributes if large brick fragments are encountered. Digital images (≥ 8 megapixels) will document the excavations and a record of all excavation photographs will be maintained. The completed field records and the photographs will be curated at the Archaeology Laboratory, University of Notre Dame. All artifacts collected during the excavation will be processed, and curated at the Archaeology Laboratory, University of Notre Dame along with their associated documentation where they will be used for research and teaching.

It is now estimated that a maximum total area of approximately 8 to 10 m² will be opened over the course of the project. At the conclusion of the excavation, all units will be backfilled and the site contours will be stabilized to prevent erosion. The methods used in the field investigation will meet or exceed the standards described in Department of Natural Resources 312 IAC 22.

The scientific investigation will be conducted between June 30 and July 11, 2014. The excavations will be conducted by students from the Summer Scholars program at the University of Notre Dame under the direction of Professor Mark R. Schurr. The Summer Scholar program brings highly talented high school juniors and seniors to the Notre Dame campus for a two-week college experience. The excavations proposed here are well-suited to the abilities of the participants. Schurr has extensive experience in Indiana archaeology and in human osteology (vitae attached). Judith Judge, an avocational archaeologist who has worked at the Collier Lodge site for every season since 2003 and for the National Park Service, will help teach students artifact identification and assist with other tasks as needed. Unlike past projects at Collier Lodge, participation in the excavations will be restricted to the Summer Scholars, although the site will be open to the public and visitors will be welcome to observe and learn about Indiana archaeology.

A report of the results of the excavation along with an updated SHAARD record will be submitted to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology within one year after the excavations are completed. Further reports describing laboratory analysis of cultural and biological materials from the site will be submitted as these analyses are conducted.

Statement on Human Burials

McAllister (1932) reported that several burials were found in the “immediate vicinity” of the site prior to 1931. Their cultural affiliation is unknown but it is assumed they were prehistoric. Local oral history holds that burials were found under the area of a porch on the Lodge. Based on a picture of the Lodge dating to the early twentieth century, the burials may have come from the river bank along the western edge of the Lodge. This area is now heavily overgrown with vegetation and will not be investigated during the project. No human burials have been found at the site during the excavations conducted between 2003 and 2011.

The collection of human bone is not a goal of the project and all reasonable attempts will be made to avoid disturbing human burials. If human bone is accidentally encountered during excavation, all work in the excavation unit containing the bone will be immediately halted, and the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology will be notified within two working days. Any human remains encountered will be treated in accordance with IC 14-21-1 and 312 IAC 22. We would then prefer to conduct the minimum amount of excavation necessary to determine the age and cultural affiliation of the burial (i.e., does it represent a prehistoric burial or a recent forensic case?), to document these findings, and to then cover the burial with soil and preserve it *in situ*. The landowners of each site have also requested that any burials that are accidentally encountered be preserved.

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