

Preliminary Examination of the Scammyhorn Collection from the Oberting-Glenn Site (12D25), Dearborn County, Indiana

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Introduction

As part of a Federal Fiscal Year 2013 Historic Preservation Fund (HPF) grant, administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, to explore the archaeology of Dearborn County, Indiana, I examined a collection from private investigations of the Oberting-Glenn site (12D25) that had recently been acquired by the Cincinnati Museum Center (CMC). I spent a single day examining the collection and reported my findings and summary in the technical report prepared as part of our grant obligations. Below is a slightly modified version of the summary included in that technical report (Swihart and Nolan 2014:156-176).

The primary purpose of this summary is to bring this collection and its research potential to a broader audience of researchers. Given the short time available for this investigation, substantive conclusions, or even a comprehensive summary of Scammyhorn's results is precluded. There are several very intriguing avenues of investigation apparent from this cursory summary of this important collection from this unique site. The site is currently partially preserved by The Archaeological Conservancy. Future research into the Oberting-Glenn site should include the Scammyhorn collection and Mr. Scammyhorn's extensive notes and maps of the site and his collections.

This report does not include a literature review of related sites or previous surveys. For more details on the Oberting-Glenn site and a guide to relevant literature context see Black (1934), Coon (2008), and Swihart and Nolan (2014).

Context

During the grant period the unexpected opportunity to examine a previously unknown collection from the Oberting-Glenn (12D25) site arose. In December of 2013, the Ohio Archaeological Council (OAC) became aware of an auction of archaeological materials, including human remains. The provenience of these materials was not known initially, because the auction had taken place prior to the OAC becoming officially aware. Fortunately, Robert Genheimer, George Rieveschl Curator of Archaeology, Cincinnati Museum Center, had become aware of the auction prior to the date of sale. Human remains were present in the collection as revealed by photographs on the auctioneer's website. Genheimer and the CMC contacted the auctioneer to have the human remains removed from auction; the human remains were subsequently donated to the CMC by the Scammyhorn family. The rest of the collection was

purchased in lots by the CMC at the auction. All archaeological material was successfully procured by the CMC as was a portion of the Scammyhorn library. Genheimer and the CMC staff and volunteers are in the process of cataloguing the collections for curation.

Scammyhorn Investigations of Oberting-Glenn

Richard “Dick” Scammyhorn was an amateur archaeologist who worked for dozens of years with the CMC (formerly known as the Cincinnati Museum of Natural History [CMNH]) as a volunteer on many archaeological projects with Charles Oehler in the 1970s and 1980s. Mr. Scammyhorn was “unofficial photographer and mapper” for the CMNH investigations at the State Line site (33Ha58/12D18) (Genheimer personal communication, June 2014). Over the years Mr. Scammyhorn accumulated a diverse collection of archaeological literature and artifacts, some apparently in concert with CMNH investigations he participated in (Turpin, State Line, Clough Creek, and Martin Mound of the Turner Earthworks); whether he borrowed some of the CMNH material or accumulated his own independent collection from these sites is not completely clear. Mr. Scammyhorn was a firefighter with training as a surveyor. He was well respected by his professional colleagues and a capable field archaeologist. Most of Mr. Scammyhorn’s collections were from surface work. There were apparently other investigations, however, that he conducted independent of the CMC staff that included excavation (Robert A. Genheimer, personal communication, December 10, 2013). Mr. Scammyhorn’s investigations at the Oberting-Glenn site apparently overlapped in time with his involvement in the CMNH investigations at State Line (Genheimer personal communication, June 2014).

The Scammyhorn Collection consists of materials from several southwestern Ohio sites, including a rather extensive collection from the Oberting-Glenn Site (12D25). The Oberting-Glenn site collection was apparently amassed without the cooperation or knowledge of the CMC staff (Genheimer, personal communication, December 2013). However, at least one other CMNH volunteer (Arlene Basham) participated in Scammyhorn’s investigations at Oberting-Glenn. Ms. Basham is currently assisting in sorting through the documentation and materials from the site (Genheimer personal communication, June 2014). Scammyhorn’s investigations were at least partially undertaken as a salvage project while the landowner was clearing the hilltop. However, not all the investigations appear linked to salvage, but the reason and purpose for individual bouts of investigation have not been determined from the notes yet.

The Collection

I visited the CMC on January 14, 2014 to perform a cursory examination of the Scammyhorn Collection as part of a larger HPF-supported project (Swihart and Nolan 2014). There are 29 containers of material. Not all are the same size, but most are packed full of material. Most boxes and bags are labeled by provenience, which often includes unit designations and depths. Such labeling implies organization and recording on par with professional investigations. There are two plastic crates full of records. One contains folders of

general background maps, historic and prehistoric background material, auditor's maps, copies of topos, and (most importantly) field notes and maps. Scammyhorn's maps are detailed and included front sites, back sites, station locations, orientations, relationships (degrees and distance) among landmarks, datum stakes, etc.

The earliest notes seem to indicate that investigations started in the late 1970s and continued into the mid-1980s, with some later work, in 1993, at least reestablishing damaged datums. Notes on one of the maps dated September 25, 1981 indicate that the land had been "farmed into the early 1900s and fauna both wild and domestic inhabited the entire hilltop. The site has been disturbed extensively during the past 10 years by the owner clearing the hill top of trees and grape vines and other wild flora..." (Scammyhorn n.d.). Another note indicates that Scammyhorn visited the Glens to photograph their private collection in 1976 with Charles Oehler (then Curator of Archaeology, CMNH). The location and condition of the Glenn collection is unknown, and only Scammyhorn's notes and photographs of the collection are in the possession of the CMC. Genheimer (personal communication, December 2013) believes that Scammyhorn's initial investigations were a sort of salvage required by damage caused by land clearance activities. Indeed some of the photographs show heavy equipment being used to clear brush from the surface (Figure 1). This event appears to be Scammyhorn's earliest direct involvement with the site.



Figure 1: Clearing of the West Wall Area in 1980(?). (Original photograph by R. Scammyhorn.)

Land clearance and surface disturbance was fairly widespread, but covered an unknown extent (Figure 2). I was unable to find a map that illustrated the disturbed area. There is a record

of a surface collection by sectors referenced in the notes and on photographs of the artifacts. While I was not able to decipher the locations of the sectors, this stage of investigation may have begun concurrently with the observation of land clearance described in the previously mentioned 1981 note. Photographs of Mr. Scammyhorn on and around the heavy equipment (Figure 2) document his presence and possible help with the clearance (see Swihart and Nolan 2014: Appendix K). The presence of pin flags in the disturbed area (Figure 2) hints at a grid being established or some recording of the provenience of finds. Some of the maps have surface finds recorded, but I have not teased out what is mapped and what is not. The case for the surface collection being the initial stage associated with the landowner's clearing the hilltop of vegetation is bolstered by the photographs of what is apparently the owner's collection from the hilltop being grouped in the same binder with the artifacts from the surface sectors (Figures 3 - 9).

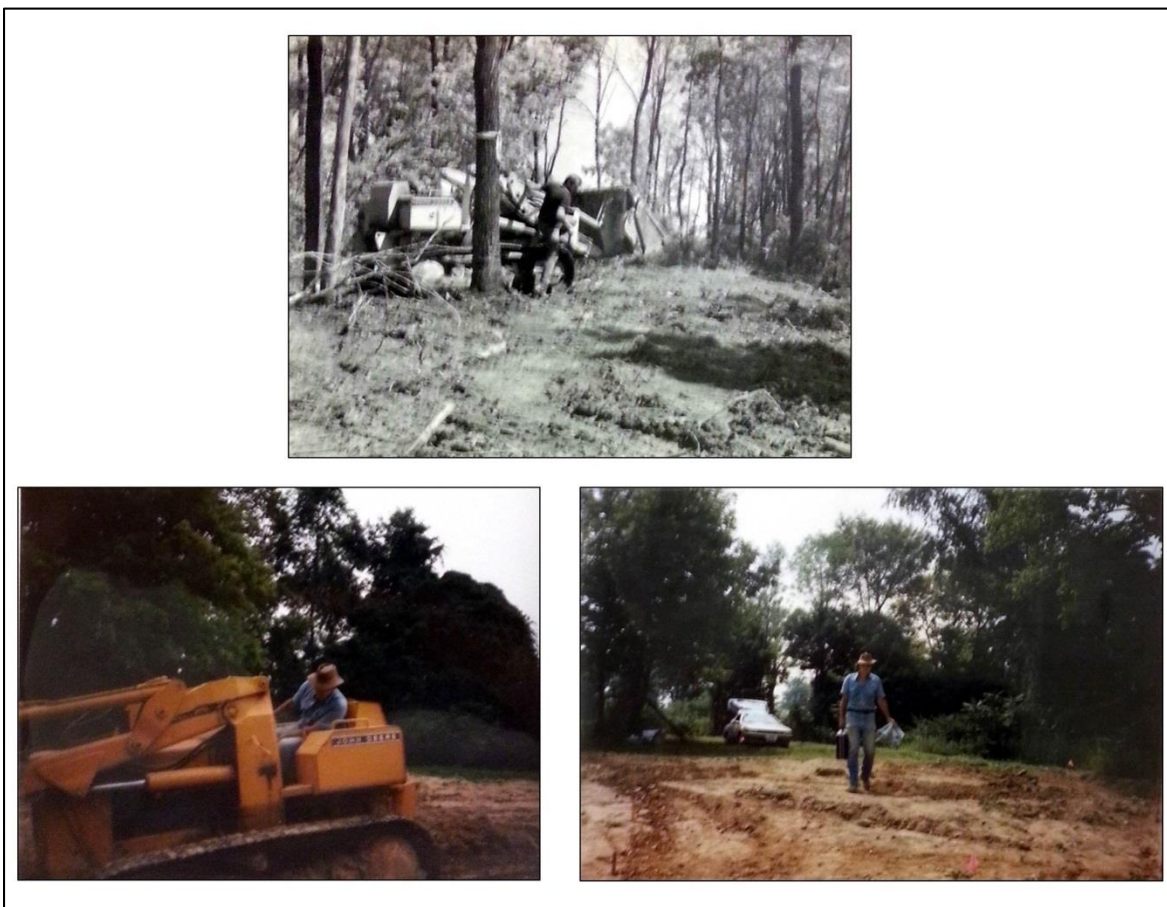


Figure 2: Clearing of the Western Enclosure Area and possible establishment of surface survey grid. (Note pin flags in the lower right photograph. The individual pictured in all three photos is R. Scammyhorn.)

Examination of the diagnostics from the landowner collection (Figure 3) and the surface collection (Figures 4-9) reveal a very diverse history of use of the site. Artifact affiliations range from Early Archaic through Late Prehistoric periods. A relatively large proportion of the pictured artifacts are Late Archaic or Early Woodland, with many Middle Woodland bladelets, and a surprisingly large quantity of Late Woodland/Late Prehistoric triangular points. The preponderance of terminal Archaic and initial Woodland is similar to the Nowlin Mound (Black 1936) and the Moore (12D480; Parrish and McCord 1995; Swihart and Nolan 2014) sites, among others. Groundstone tools also comprise a surprising proportion of the collection and include grooved axes, gorgets, and celts.

The next series of investigations I will discuss are two sets of excavations, one of the “Point Mound” in 1982 and one of the “Spring Trench” in 1985 and 1986. There are multiple other apparent investigations, but the details of these are not clear at the present time. The Point Mound location and dimensions are relatively well documented, though details of the complete excavation have not been disentangled yet. Likewise the Spring Trench excavations feature prominently in photos and maps and there are obvious artifact assemblages associated with this investigation in the current state of the collection. Other investigative activities that will still need to be deciphered are the 1981 Circle and Road Survey (possibly just the mapping survey), the nineteenth century Historic House Site excavations (1983), Southwest Wall Excavation (possible pavement discovered, 1980-81), Mound A and Charnel House (1984), and a variety of survey and mapping bouts.

The mound labeled “Point Mound” is a small mound on the southeastern prominence of the site. Scammyhorn made a variety of maps (from sketch to survey quality) of this mound and its dimensions were recorded. Excavation apparently commenced in 1982, and the major discovery was an Adena burial with pottery included. The ceramics are a typically-thick Early Woodland variety (Figure 10-14). One sherd is particularly interesting (Figure 14). The sherd exhibits coarse, smoothed over cordmarking on the *interior* surface. The exterior surface exhibits a thin, red layer, apparently devoid of temper. I am not familiar with any other examples, though (much thinner) slips are known on Early Woodland sherds in the Lake Erie Basin (Brian Redmond, personal communication January 15, 2014).

Another “Adena” feature was discovered approximately 180 ft (55 m) north of the Point Mound. This feature included FCR, burnt limestone, and several post molds. It is not yet clear why Scammyhorn identified this as an “Adena” feature, but it is possible that some of the diagnostic pottery was recovered from this area as well. There is a partially refit pot in the collection that does not have a labeled provenience (Figure 15-18). This vessel also has a portion coated with a thin red layer similar to the sherd from the Point Mound. Whether this is from the Point Mound burial feature, the “Adena” feature, or another location is not known at this time.



Figure 3: Examples of artifacts from the Oberting-Glenn Site in the Glenn Collection.
(Original photos by R. Scammyhorn.)

The “Spring Trench” is Scammyhorn’s investigation of the source of an apparent spring near the center of the southern portion of the enclosure. This investigation employed a backhoe and extended down to ~11 ft (~3.4 m) (Figure 19). Woodland artifacts were recovered from this feature at considerable depth (Figure 20).

Outside the enclosure to the northeast Scammyhorn investigated two mound-like areas where Samuel Morrison’s 1816 map of the site (MacPherson 1879:125; see also Black 1934; Figure 21) showed four mounds on a spur extending away from the main enclosure. The mound closest to the enclosure was labeled “Mound A” and was associated with a possible charnel house as described in the notes. While I have not scrutinized all the notes, it is possible that this is where several of the additional burials came from. There are at least five burials in the collection. At least one burial exhibits cut marks on the long bones near the articular ends and around the scalp. None of the burials were examined in detail, and which remains originated from which provenience has not been determined. However, it is clear that there are burials in multiple places and possibly associated with multiple periods of use.



Figure 4: Sample of artifacts collected from the surface of the Oberting-Glenn Site by R. Scammyhorn. (Original photographs by R. Scammyhorn)

Conclusion

The above summary is only the most cursory and tentative statement that can be made about Richard Scammyhorn's investigations at the Oberting-Glenn site (12D25). It is clear that the site was intensively and extensively used for most of the period of human occupation of the region. All of the photographs taken (~370) during my visit to the CMC are included in Swihart and Nolan's (2014) Appendix K. I have not had time to fully examine all of the notes or maps documented therein and did not even have opportunity to document the whole of the site records. The Scammyhorn investigation of Oberting-Glenn was a substantial undertaking and promises much useful information. I hope that, with the help of the CMC and volunteers who were present during the investigations, the full detail of these investigations can be incorporated into our collective knowledge of this significant site.



Figure 5: Sample of artifacts collected from the surface of the Oberling-Glenn Site by R. Scammyhorn. (Original photographs by R. Scammyhorn.)



Figure 6: Sample of artifacts collected from the surface of the Oberling-Glenn Site by R. Scammyhorn. (Original photographs by R. Scammyhorn.)



Figure 7: Sample of artifacts collected from the Surface of the Oberting-Glenn Site by R. Scammyhorn. (Original photographs by R. Scammyhorn.)



Figure 8: Sample of artifacts collected from the surface of the Oberting-Glenn Site by R. Scammyhorn. (Original photographs by R. Scammyhorn.)



Figure 9: Sample of artifacts collected from the surface of the Oberting-Glenn Site by R. Scammyhorn. (Original photographs by R. Scammyhorn.)



Figure 10: Rimsherd from the Point Mound burial feature showing lip surface.



Figure 11: Rimsherd from the Point Mound burial feature showing the lip surface.



Figure 12: Bodysherd from the Point Mound burial feature.



Figure 13: Bodysherd from the Point Mound burial feature.



Figure 14: Interior cordmarked bodysherds with red exterior layer from Point Mound burial feature.



Figure 15: Rimsherd from refit Adena vessel.



Figure 16: Profile of refit section of Adena vessel.



Figure 17: Exterior of the refit Adena vessel section.

(Note reddish orange color on the bottom left. See Figure 18 for close up.)



Figure 18: Close-up of reddish coloration on refit Adena vessel. (See Figure 17 for context.)



Figure 19: Spring Trench excavations.
(Original photographs from R. Scammyhorn Collection.)



Figure 20: Artifacts recovered from Spring Trench excavation. Left are three views of a single rimsherd recovered from the west wall of the trench on November 24, 1985 at a depth of 4.5 ft (~1.4 m). Right is a biface recovered May 17, 1986 at a depth of 7.84 ft. (~2.4m), possibly made of Wyandotte chert.

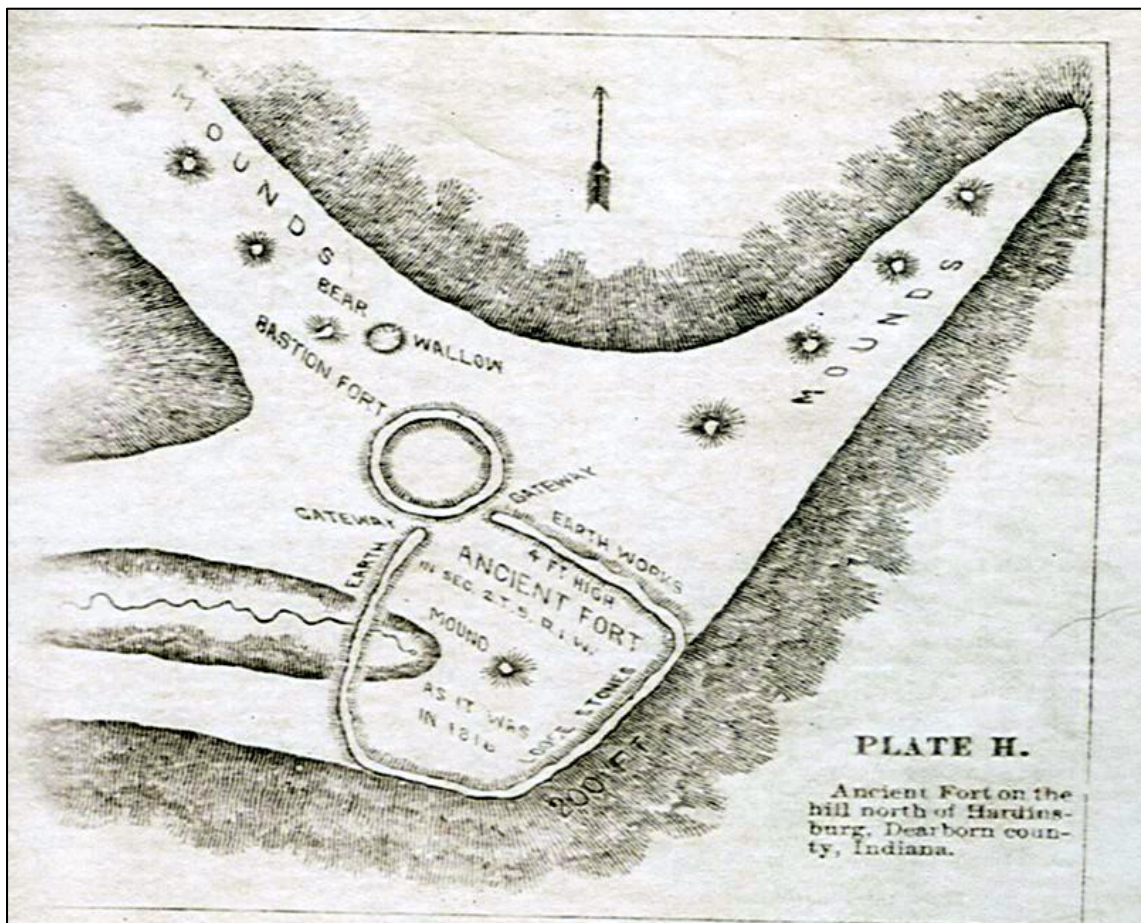


Figure 21: Samuel Morrison's Map of the Oberting-Glenn Site. (from MacPherson 1879:125)

Acknowledgements

This project has been funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service's Historic Preservation Fund administered by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. The project received federal financial assistance for the identification, protection, and/or rehabilitation of historic properties and cultural resources in the State of Indiana. However, the contents and opinions contained in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of the Interior, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by the U.S. Department of the Interior. Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, or disability in its federally assisted programs. If you believe that you have been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility as described above, or if you desire further

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Thanks is also due to Bob Genheimer and the Cincinnati Museum Center, Anthropology Department. The efforts of Bob and the CMC are responsible for saving this collection and several others intact for preservation and future research. Bob also graciously opened his lab space to me to allow the examination of the Scammyhorn collection reported here, taking time out from his exhibit preparation to get me oriented and answer my questions.

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