

Plan for Scientific Excavations at the Collier Lodge Site (12 Pr 36)

2008 Season

Submitted to the  
Indiana Department of Natural Resources,  
Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology

by

Mark R. Schurr

Associate Professor

Department of Anthropology

University of Notre Dame

Notre Dame, IN 46556

(574) 631-7638

Email: [Mark.R.Schurr.1@nd.edu](mailto:Mark.R.Schurr.1@nd.edu)

May 21, 2008

## **Archaeological Background**

### ***Prior Field Work at the Collier Lodge Site***

The Collier Lodge site (12 Pr 36), 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. This location was first described as an archaeological site by McAllister (1932) as Porter County site number 36. At the time of McAllister's visit to the site, it was only one of two prehistoric sites in Porter County known to have produced pottery. From McAllister's description of sherds from the site, it is clear that they included grit-tempered Woodland period pottery (1,000 B.C. to A.D. 1100) and a few examples of shell-tempered sherds, an artifact type characteristic of the Upper Mississippian period (ca. A.D. 1100 to historic contact) in northwestern Indiana (Faulkner 1972; Schurr 2003).

The site was used throughout the historic period. Its original historic name was Potawattomie Ford. The first ferry across the marsh in Porter County was established near the site by Sherwood in the 1830s. By 1836, Eaton was operating the ferry. He later attempted to establish a toll bridge in 1849 but it soon burned down and he reverted back to the ferry. Sawyer bought the property in 1857 and also attempted to maintain a bridge, but it was quickly swept away by drift. In 1863, the site was purchased by Baum, who built the first successful bridge across the Kankakee at this location, and the site has since been best known as Baum's Bridge. In 1865, the bridge was taken over by the county. The first hunting club was established in the vicinity in 1878. In 1898, the Collier Lodge was built at the site, and that building, although very deteriorated, is still standing. After Jim Collier's death in 1952, the site passed through the hands of several owners until it was purchased by John Hodson in 2001.

Today the site consists of a grassy lawn containing the Collier Lodge building. Several small outbuildings that stood at the site up until 2006 have since been removed. The site is located on a sandy ridge adjacent to a short segment of the original Kankakee River. A short portion of the channel was isolated as a sort of bayou or slough when the marsh was drained and this segment was bypassed by a drainage ditch to the south. Today, the borders of the old channel segment look much like they must have when the lodge was in use.

### **Prior Archaeological Field Work at the Site**

The site has been the location of an on-going archaeological project by the University of Notre Dame and the Kankakee Valley Historical Society. The results to the 2003 and 2004 investigations were detailed in the permit application submitted in 2005 for the 2005 investigations that were supported in part by a Survey and Planning Grant from the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology. Prior investigations have

combined geophysical surveys with excavation. Results of all prior field investigations from 2003 through 2005 have been reported in a single volume (Schurr 2006).

Investigations in 2006 were briefly described in the permit application submitted for last year's work. Both the 2006 and 2007 investigations will be reported in full in a report that is now in preparation and will hopefully be submitted prior to this year's field season. As the 2006 investigations discovered features that were too complicated to complete during the typical KVHS project field season, the 2007 investigations largely completed what was begun in 2006. The 2007 results are summarized below.

### Results of the 2007 Season

The goals of the 2007 season were seen as relatively modest, but even so, the complexity of features encountered and a lack of unit leaders skilled enough to open additional units beyond those opened in 2006 meant that some of the goals of the 2007 season were not accomplished. Units where excavations occurred in 2007 are shown in Figure 1. The goals that were achieved are:

1. Continued the excavation of Feature 10, the Upper Mississippian pit. This feature, and a similar feature adjacent to it (Feature 18) were completed after three years of work.
2. Completed the unit located to the south of the cabin. It was hoped that it would be possible to extend it further to the south to search for additional post molds. However, it was found that the feature assumed to be a large post mold from the cabin in 2006 (Feature 26) was actually another Upper Mississippian pit similar to Feature 10. Excavation and documentation of this unit required almost the entire field season because of the complexity of the feature and the unit walls.
3. Continued excavation of the rock-lined roasting pit (Feature 23). When the feature was cross-sectioned, the unit was found to contain two more features that were also documented. One was an Upper Mississippian roasting pit and the other was a deep, stratified historic feature (Feature 25) with vertical walls and several deposition episodes.
4. Opened a new unit to the north of the unit where Feature 25 was defined in a preliminary attempt to determine the limits of this large feature. Five levels were excavated in this unit until a continuous layer of decayed brick was defined across the unit floor. The elevation of the top of the brick layer was the same as that of an upper layer of bricks in the deep, stratified Feature 25. The brick layer may be a continuation of the brick stratum in Feature 25. The unit floor was covered with plastic and was backfilled to preserve it for the future.

5. Searched for postmolds to the north of the brick hearth (Feature 1). A 1 x 2 m unit was opened to the north of the brick hearth to extend a unit that was largely completed in 2006. Unfortunately, portions of the new unit that were adjacent to the 2006 unit were very poorly consolidated. A slump in the unit floor and continued prospects for more slumping forced abandonment of the unit before the level of feature definition could be reached. However, a small area of sandy soil with brick fragments in the northwest corner of the unit that could mark the southeast corner of Feature 25 was documented. The soil was unusually dry in 2007 and that may have led to poor soil cohesion.
6. Completed the unit where Features 17 and 20 (thought to be early nineteenth century fur processing features) were defined in 2006. The unit contained relatively deep deposits similar to those in the adjacent unit that was finished in 2005. More experienced excavators worked in 2007 and were able to produce much better profile walls documenting the relatively simple stratigraphy in this portion of the site. A possible galena or red ochre processing area was found in Level 9. No other interpretable features were identified.

### **Unfinished Goals of the 2007 Season**

The unfinished goals included:

7. Repeat the GPR survey with the 250 MHz antenna to gain more experience in the application of GPR at the site and repeat the 500 MHz survey to produce well-referenced data. We hope to be able to complete these surveys prior to the 2008 season.
8. Determine the limits of the fur-processing feature (Features 17 and 20).
9. Place additional test units between the river bank and the core of the site to better define the stratigraphy in this portion of the site.
10. If any of these tasks were completed, additional units would be opened to search for postmolds associated with the cabin.

## **Goals of the 2008 Season**

The primary goal of the 2008 season will be to investigate the large historic feature (Feature 25) identified in 2007. Units (usually 1 x 2 m) will be placed to determine the feature's boundaries. This will be done by extending the north-south line of units that identified the southern edge of the feature and what is now thought to be the continuation of the upper brick stratum seen in the exposed profile. Once the northern limit of the feature is identified, units will be extended to the east and west to determine those boundaries. It is possible that the extent of the brick stratum will not coincide with the deep stratified feature (it could cover a larger or smaller area). However, the procedure will be to excavate only until the brick stratum is encountered, then to define the limits of the brick stratum, and after that, to see what correlation there is between the brick stratum and the feature by removing the brick layer from units on the edge of the brick scatter. If time permits, or if skilled labor is available, we will then consider tackling some of the unfinished goals from 2007. Determining the nature of Feature 25 is important because ceramics produced prior to 1850 were recovered from its lower levels. The feature appears to be capable of providing evidence about some of the earliest Euroamerican activities at the site and is the only sealed, buried feature dating to that time period yet to be identified at Collier Lodge. Figure 2 indicates the possible limits of what may be a very large feature. As most of these limits are conjectural, defining the real limits is a major priority.

## **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 (most will be 1 x 2m units). 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. Water screening was evaluated in 2006 and 2007. Based on those evaluations, its use will be expanded in 2008 to the extent that some contexts which might contain high densities of small bone fragments (such as fish bone) or important small artifacts (such as trade beads) will be completely processed by water screening. 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. Color slides and black and white photographs will be taken to document the excavations and a log book of all excavation photographs will be maintained. Standard film photographs will be supplemented with digital images. 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, catalogued, and will also be curated at the Archaeology Laboratory 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 10 m<sup>2</sup> will be excavated 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 July 7 and August 23, 2008. The bulk of the excavations will be conducted between July 7 to 24. However, we are requesting that the permit be extended to August 23 because the Kankakee Valley Historical Society (KVHS) will be sponsoring the Auikiki River Festival that weekend. The festival will include a variety of events, including a demonstration of archaeological field methods and informal lectures on archaeology and historic preservation to be conducted by the P.I. (who will finish the 2008 field season with one day of work during the festival on what is sure to be an uncompleted unit from earlier in the summer). Festival attendants who have not been able to visit the site during the normal season will be able to see an archaeological unit, observe hand excavation, and data recording. Information about historic preservation in Indiana will also be provided.

Personnel for the project will consist of volunteers from the KVHS. The excavations will be directed by Dr. Mark R. Schurr. He has extensive experience in Indiana archaeology and human osteology (vita attached). Experienced and qualified KVHS members will serve as unit leaders. Inexperienced KVHS members will be paired with more experienced people. They will begin by assisting with screening, flotation, water screening, and artifact processing, and will take on additional tasks as they are trained. All artifacts will be cleaned and receive an initial sorting in the field lab at the site.

A report of the results of the excavation along with an amended copy of the state archaeological inventory form for the site will be submitted to the Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology 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 completed.

### **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.

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.

### **References Cited**

Faulkner, C. H.

1972 *The Late Prehistoric Occupation of Northwestern Indiana: A Study of the Upper Mississippian Cultures of the Kankakee Valley*. Prehistory Research Series Vol. 5(1). Indiana Historical Society, Indianapolis, Indiana.

Hall, R. L.

1962 *The Archaeology of Carcajou Point: With an Interpretation of the Development of the Oneota Culture in Wisconsin*. University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, Wisconsin.

Brown, J. A. (ed.)

1990 The Oak Forest Site: Investigations into Oneota Subsistence-Settlement in the Cal-Sag Area of Cook County, Illinois. In *At the Edge of Prehistory: Huber Phase Archaeology in the Chicago Area*. Edited by J. A. Brown and P. J. O'Brien. pp. 123-308. Center for American Archaeology, Kampsville, Illinois.

McAllister, J. G.

1932 The Archaeology of Porter County. *Indiana History Bulletin* 10(1).

Schurr, Mark R.

2003 The Late Prehistory of Northwestern Indiana: New Perspectives on an Old Model. In *Facing the Final Millennium: Studies in the Late Prehistory of Indiana, A.D. 700 to 1700*. Edited by Brian G. Redmond and James R. Jones, III. pp. 4-31. Special issue of *Indiana Archaeology*, Division of Historic Preservation and Archaeology, Department of Natural Resources, Indianapolis.

2006 *Archaeological Investigations of the Collier Lodge Site (12 Pr 36)*. University of Notre Dame Archaeology Laboratory Report of Investigations 2006-1. Notre Dame, Indiana.

Secunda, W. B., M. R. Schurr and M. Pribbernow

2002 *Investigations of Historic Potawatomi Villages in Northern Indiana*. Archaeology Laboratory, Report of Investigations 2002-1. Department of Anthropology, University of Notre Dame, Notre Dame, Indiana.

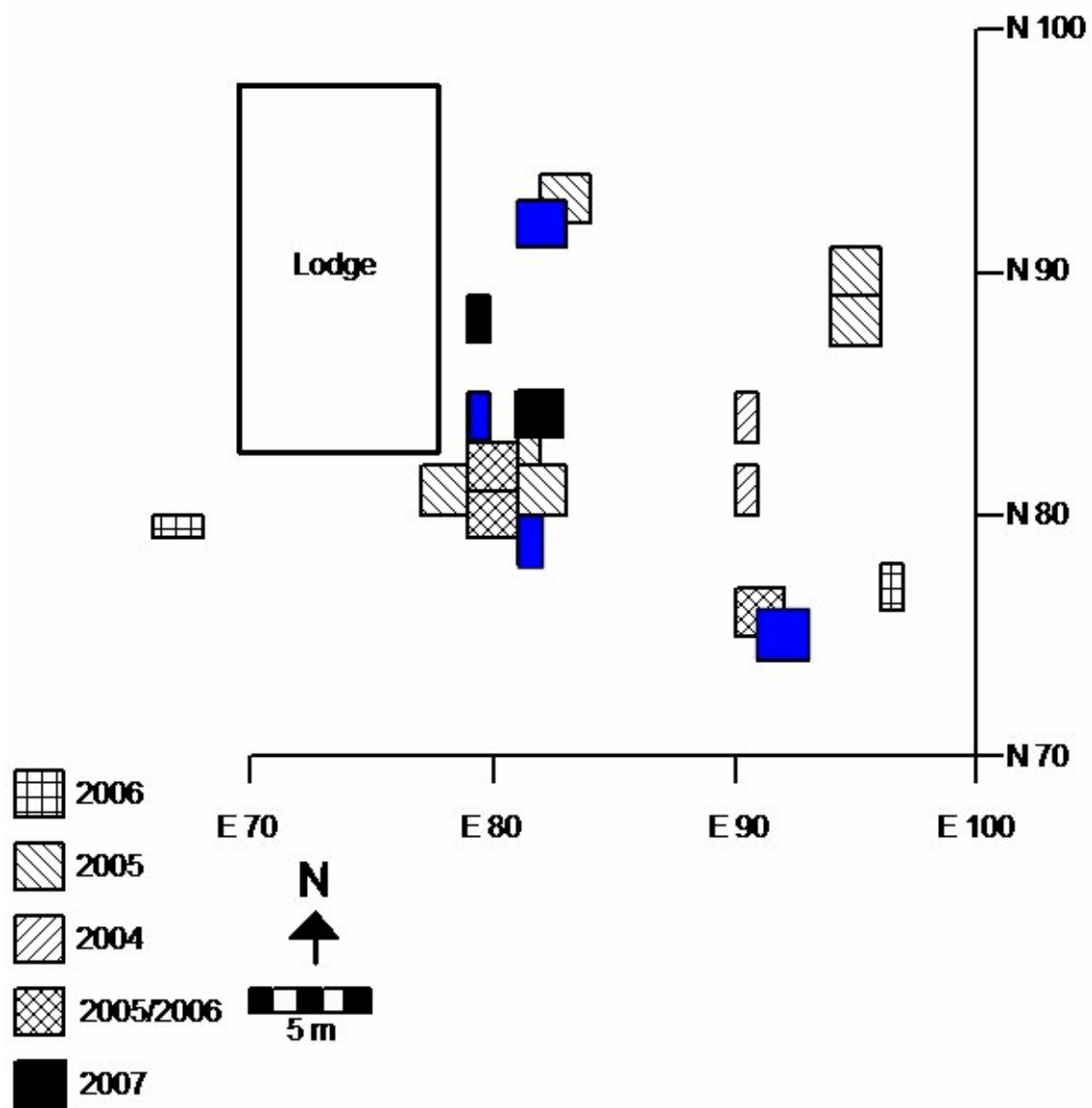


Figure 1: Units completed in 2007.

