

Archeological Surveys

During the historic period the mounds on the bluff-tops and in the valley at the Yellow River mouth went unnoticed as far as the printed record shows. In 1881, however, two men began an ambitious survey of the mound groups of the Mississippi River Valley. This project, now referred to as the Lewis-Hill Survey, was begun by Theodore H. Lewis and Alfred J. Hill. Lewis, born in Richmond, Virginia, in 1856, moved during his early life to the locality of Chillicothe, Ohio, where he came in contact with Squier and Davis' work on the great Ohio mound groups. While still a young man, he went to St. Paul, Minnesota, where he met Hill. Born in London in 1823, Hill had served in the Corps of Topographical Engineers of the Union Army during the Civil War. After he went to Minnesota, Hill became interested in the numerous Indian mounds near St. Paul and Minneapolis. He seems to have had an early interest in archeology through contact with British antiquities. He was disturbed by the destruction of Minnesota mound groups, and mapped several in the vicinity of St. Paul. Hill had the professional ability and the financial means to support an archeological survey, and when he met Lewis in

1880 a partnership was formed which lasted until Hill's death in 1895.

The Lewis-Hill surveys produced excellent maps of mound groups through the Mississippi Valley and the southern United States. As many of these groups are now obliterated or destroyed, the maps are an invaluable record. Among the mound groups they platted are some now within Effigy Mounds National Monument, including the Marching Bear Mound Group, the Fire Point Mound Group, and the group of mounds which once existed to the west of the present Visitor Center. Knowledge of the latter mound group would have been lost forever had it not been for the work of the Lewis-Hill Survey.

Another early archeological study which mentions, but does not illustrate, the mounds within Effigy Mounds National Monument is by Cyrus Thomas in the *Twelfth Annual Report* of the Bureau of American Ethnology for the years 1890-1891. Local interest in mound groups appears to have been slight. However, Ellison Orr of Waukon was interested, and gathered archeological data on local sites throughout the late Nineteenth Century and the early decades of the Twentieth Century.

Meanwhile, the idea of an Iowa Archaeological Survey was conceived by Dr. Charles R. Keyes, Professor of German at Cornell College at Mount Vernon. Professor Keyes had become interested in

prehistoric man during his student days in Germany. In July, 1920, his first article on prehistoric man in Iowa was published in the *Iowa Journal of History and Politics*, the quarterly publication of the State Historical Society of Iowa, a magazine that had carried similar articles by Duren J. H. Ward between 1903 and 1905.

In 1922, having collected all the available material on Iowa archeology, Dr. Keyes met with the Superintendent and Board of Curators of the State Historical Society of Iowa to present the problem of the rapidly disappearing mounds. As a result Dr. Keyes was employed on a part-time basis "to make a preliminary archeological survey of Iowa and the adjacent territory" during the summer months when not teaching at Cornell. His salary for the three months was \$500. As an added aid, the State Historical Society subsidized postage, envelopes and letterheads, and travel expense for Dr. Keyes. The return address on the envelope read:

STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Iowa Archaeological Survey

Charles R. Keyes, Mt. Vernon, Iowa

During the summer months Dr. Keyes visited various localities in the state, gathering data on site locations, and studying the collections of amateur archeologists in the areas he visited. He stimulated some of these amateurs to donate their

collections to the State Historical Society. Among the collections which came to the Society as a result of his efforts was the huge Ellison Orr Collection from sites located chiefly in Allamakee County.

In 1934, through an arrangement for F.E.R.A. labor, Dr. Keyes was enabled to make excavations on the Upper Iowa River, the report of which was printed in the October, 1934, issue of THE PALIMPSEST. Beginning with 1934, Ellison Orr became Field Supervisor of the Survey, and directed much of the actual fieldwork. His work was summarized in the January, 1940, *Iowa Journal of History and Politics* by Dr. Keyes as follows:

After Mr. Orr came in from his work in the field [April 11 - December 6, 1938] he began work on a detailed report of the season's activities and results, an effort that took most of his time until he again went into the field early in June, 1939. The result is a typewritten report of two hundred and twelve pages, in addition to maps, drawings, plats, and profiles covering all phases of the excavations made. This was a matter-of-course contribution on his part in 1934, 1935, and 1936, as well as in 1938, for he has not expected financial remuneration, and no W. P. A. supervisor receives any salary except when working with his men. The matter is mentioned only with the thought that it may be possible some time to give Mr. Orr some kind of recognition.

It is hoped this issue of THE PALIMPSEST will give Ellison Orr a modicum of richly deserved recognition.