

Jan. 2021 Volume 3 Issue 1

DIRT DIGEST

*The Journal of Modern
Treasure Hunting.*



MAGAZINE



Field hunting edition!

Tips, Research, finds & more!



*Interview with
Greg Shipley!*



The Journal of Modern Treasure Hunting.

From the Editor

This month we wanted to discuss field hunting. With the holidays just wrapping up and the starting to set in across much of the country metal detecting might be the furthest thing from your mind right now.

We wanted to do this issue now because it's a great time of year to start researching. The more you put into research the better your success will be. It is a great time to start tracking down landowners, securing permissions and overlaying maps gearing up for the weather to break and hit those fields with a plan.

Whether you've never considered field hunting or a seasoned pro I think you will find this issue offers something for everyone. If field hunting is a new concept to you I think there is a wealth of information this month in the magazine and even if you're an old pro I think you might find a few tips that might help.

We hope you enjoy this months issue of Dirt Digest Magazine!

Happy New Year!

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The Journal of Modern Treasure Hunting.

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Please submit articles, along with pictures to: mhaer@dirtdigestmagazine.com

Monthly deadline is the 15th

Finds submissions

Every month we publish pictures of finds along with a brief explanation of the find.

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Thank you!!!

We would like to express our appreciation to all who make this magazine possible and for everyone's continued support, without you Dirt Digest wouldn't be possible!



Interview with Greg Shipley

With over twenty years in this hobby I have met some fascinating and wonderful detectorists along the way. There are so many people at all levels of knowledge of the hobby that I have a great respect for but the list of ones I look up to is small. I feel my knowledge of metal detecting is up there with most. Not much I haven't metal detected for nor is there much on my list I haven't found. I can research with the best of them and I'm good at getting permission like so many of you out there.

Greg Shipley stands out amongst us though and someone I look up to. His knowledge of artifacts is absolutely incredible. While many of us are researching sites that are easily found with a little research, he's going to extreme lengths to find sites that have little to no information written down about them in the history books.

Below is an interview with Greg Shipley. If you want to see more of Greg's finds and learn more follow him on Facebook.

You obviously have a love for history. When and how did it start?

As far back as I can remember in my childhood memories, I've always been interested in history and finding "long lost things". In the very late 1950s, I can remember seeing a black and white movie "Boy on a Dolphin" that my parents took me with them to see. The basis of that movie was that a girl diving off her father's boat in the Mediterranean found this huge bronze statue on the seabed and that had a lasting effect on me in two ways... (A) I was obsessed with Sofia Loren, as a youth, and (B) I became captivated by the thought of discovering lost treasures.

LOL I couldn't have been more than 4 or 5 years old but from then on, I was always watching or looking at anything that had to do with ancient Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, or Vikings.

In the Spring of 1961, when I was 6 years old, I found a broken arrowhead in a field on my family's farm in Champaign Co, Ohio. That first prehistoric relic find was what triggered everything that has occurred for me since that time. I knew there weren't any of those ancient European cultures in Ohio, but those prehistoric people, and what they'd left behind for me to recover, became MY Romans, Greeks, Egyptians, & Vikings! So, my first broken arrowhead is why anyone has even heard of Greg Shipley.

How many years have you been searching for artifacts and metal detecting?

As far as metal detecting, I didn't become serious about that until the beginning of the 1990s, after I'd been surface hunting and excavating prehistoric sites for 30 years. Somewhere around the late 1960s, my parents bought me a Treasure Hawk detector for a Christmas present but, other than detecting around the 1834 house I grew up in, I let it sit in my closet - which is one place a metal detector will never find you any artifacts! I still have that detector up on a display shelf. As no-till farming of the early '90s began to take over, my friend WB and I decided to see about locating the cluster of three late 1700s Shawnee Indian villages that were mentioned in Allan Eckert's fantastic "The Frontiersman" book. Those villages (Moluntha's Town, Wapatomica and McKee's Town) were right around where I grew up. Coming from a farm family and my mom being the Jr-high history teacher for all the children of those property owner families, we obtained easy access to those suspected sites. As soon as we started detecting the farm field we suspected part of McKee's Town site would be located in, we started finding musket balls and one of our first signals we dug was the blade of a broken brass pipe-tomahawk... I was hooked!

Can you tell us about some of the metal detectors and equipment you have used and your favorites.

I had a White's D6000 but immediately purchased a White's Spectrum XLT, in 1994, and that was what I used on our historic Indian and early cabin sites, with great success. We purchased a White's 808 (we call it our Deep Seeker) and that has located some really amazing larger sized objects that have been in deep features, which were several feet below the surface. What I like about the 808 is that you can have all sorts of small metal items in the plow zone and the 808 will ignore them, as it only locks onto large objects or masses of objects that are deep below the debris scatter that is above those big items. In the past decade, I've been using a White's V3i, which I love how it can get small items that are 10" and 12" down at the bottom of the plow zone + my XP Deus WS5, which is the berries, when it comes to sorting out good targets in dense nail concentration areas on early cabin and house sites. One thing I'll always say is that there are plenty of great machines made by all the detector manufacturers. The key to having them find you great relics is to learn everything about your detector, experiment with what settings work best for your soil conditions and become keen at understanding what it is telling you - the longer you use your detector, the more proficient you become with what it can do.

You've had the opportunity to metal detect some amazing places. Can you give the readers any tips for gaining permission.

Gaining permissions is an adventure "unto itself", for certain. I do try to read the individual's type and mood when I make my first contacts with folks I know nothing about other than they are the owner of a piece of property I'm interested in investigating. Prior to stopping in, I do have a sense for what are they like? If a property is extremely well kept and the family is known for their businesslike manner, I'll go to see them "cleaned up" (nice casual dress). If the property is a little less cared for, in appearance, and the owners are more of a "hard working" type, I make my pitch wearing jeans, sweatshirt, and a farm logo ball cap. I make sure to greet them by their name (you gotta research and know their name before you go there) - "Hello Mr Westfall? Mrs Humes?" If you greet them by name, in a courteous fashion, you are in a position to provide who you are and they may pay more attention to you and your request. Once they are speaking with you, if willing to, I

explain what I think might be on their property and what my interest is. You can gauge if they have interests in history, if they hunt their own lands for relics, etc, and make your pitch. Sometimes, the answers to my requests are "no". If that's the case, I thank them for their time and go search out another permission opportunity. Also, I keep tabs on those "no" properties, whenever they end up selling to new owners, so I can make another attempt with the new owners. (this has resulted in my getting onto some sites, years later) I know this won't be for many detectorists, but I do return large portions of recovered artifacts back to the owners on several important sites I've obtained hunting rights for. I've found lots of great things for nearly 60 years now, and if I can get on Anthony Wayne period fort sites and 18th century Indian villages to detect, excavate and recover amazing quantities of rare artifacts... I'm willing to give more than a fair share to the owners. Otherwise, I'd not be having all the amazing fun that their permissions afford me. That's where it boils down to do you want access to great spots others can't get a toehold on or do you want to drive past those spots and never know what's there?

Can you tell us about a few of your favorite artifacts you've found over the years?

Favorite finds of mine start with prehistoric hardstone bannerstones (6 total) that I've dug, whole Mississippian pots and flint spades, from outings without a detector in tow. Detecting wise, 18th century Indian trade silver, brass kettles, flintlock gun parts, Venetian glass trade beads (from trash pits and hut floors my detecting has located) are always favorite recovery items. I've recovered British regimental buttons from the American Revolution, Wayne's Legion frog-legged eagle buttons, Varieties of War of 1812 insignia buttons and associated military materials. As for coins, my earliest coin is a 1656 Spanish gold cob Escudo, that I recovered on a central Ohio Indian site. I recovered all the normal LCs, Indian Heads, Half Dimes, Trimes, Bust Dimes, etc, but dug a cache of 11 silver coins from the McKee's Town village site, with 1769~1786 dates, also (1/2, 1, 2, 4, 8 Spanish Reales coins & one British 2 Pence). I've still never found an American minted gold coin or a US silver dollar. Ha! The rarest non coin object I've recovered is a 5" length 4,000 year old

copper adze of the Old Copper Culture, which had been traded down from the Wisconsin/Upper Michigan region during prehistoric times. I found that copper artifact, in 2017, on a Mad River valley site where I'd hunted arrowheads and stone tools since I was 10 years old.

Would you share with us your favorite story related to the hobby?

I guess my favorite story is the day, in 2014, when I was detecting a mid-1700s Indian village site in central Ohio for the first time. I was using my V3i and it gave me a decent, though not strong, signal that bounced from 20~80vdi readings - I dug down 19" below the surface and discovered an intact mid-18th century English flintlock "screw barrel" pistol was what my detector had locked onto. Talk about something you never expected to find. It took a couple hours to excavate and several days to preserve, as all the brass gun parts had allowed a good 85% of the English walnut stock to survive and that took much work to get treated and preserved, once I got it back home. Amazingly, after making this once in my lifetime recovery, I found my 1656 gold cob coin less than two hours later, on the same site. That was one good outing!

What advice would you give someone new to the hobby?

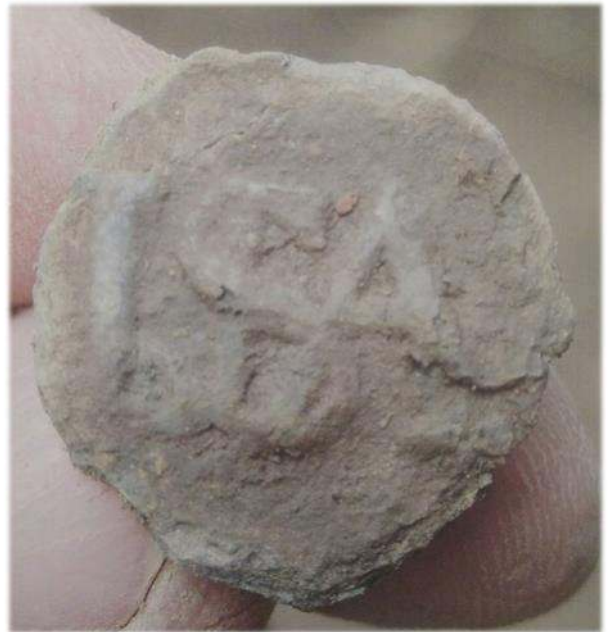
As for advice or suggestions to new detectorists, who are just getting started in this hobby, just be aware that you won't likely go out and dig a tin box of silver dollars, or a \$20 double eagle gold coin, right off the bat. Do your research on what type of detecting you are interested in and identify where spots that fit your area of interest are located. Next, Get Permissions, for where you want to look, and be certain to understand any rules or ordinances for hunting local parks, school grounds, etc. Also, be aware that you can't detect on federal or state properties - you could go to jail! Get involved with any local detectorist clubs or amateur archaeological organizations, as you'll have opportunities to learn from seasoned detectorists and get some pointers on your new hobby. Next, don't be discouraged by not finding great treasures the first times you go out, as it will take time and effort to learn what

your machine is telling you. Your detector won't be of any value to you if you don't take it out and go hunting either, so stay at it. When you are out, dig, dig, dig your signals - learn by recovering what your detector says is there. Last thing... fill in all of the holes you dig and take the junk items out of the field when you leave and find a trash can to dispose of them in (gas stops are great places to deposit unwanted junk in readily available customer trash cans)

The next 5 pages are dedicated to some of Greg's amazing finds throughout the years.











Images of my late stages of excavation, after recognizing I'd found an 18th century flintlock pistol



My recovered 18th century English "screw-barrel pistol" w/ portions of the surviving wood stock

Pickaway Plains historic Indian village site
Pickaway Co, Ohio - 2014

Engraved "Serpent" side-plate (from backside of pistol stock)

(After application of a preservative/hardener onto the remaining English walnut wood stock)

Image of side-plate on stock





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FIELD HUNTING

HOW IT BECAME MY FIRST LOVE

Article by: Mike Haer



Relic hunting the farm fields has been the most rewarding form of metal detecting I've ever had the opportunity to pursue.

Before finding the joy of relic hunting, I guess I would have been called a coin hunter. Although I got into metal detecting many years back because of my love of history I didn't know how to go about finding it.

Like many others in our hobby I started at the obvious places. Schools, parks and old houses is where I spent most of my time. As my skills increased, I found it fairly easy to find old, silver coins, Indian head pennies, Buffalo nickels and other fairly common, old coins.

Although I found it enjoyable, I got to the point where it was almost boring for me. Finding the same coins over and over just wasn't cutting it anymore. Although I was still having fun, the excitement had worn off.



Once I discovered relic hunting there was no looking back. That was many years ago now and the excitement hasn't worn off. Every chance I get to relic hunt and every artifact I pull out of the ground, even a plain flat button or a musket ball still gets me excited! Although coins were an important part of daily life, they don't

have that personal connection with the past that relics hold.

You find an old coin and rarely is there any kind of story that goes with it. You find a fired bullet near a known battlefield and it sends chills down your spine, it's an important part of history even if you don't fully know it's story.

Variety

Before I discovered relic hunting, I rarely found much in the way of relics. It was rare to come across a musket ball or even a plain flat button. Once I started field hunting my coin count went down, especially silver coins but the relics increased immensely. Buttons, buckles, musket balls, all common finds in the fields. These are just the common relics, almost every field site gives up something unique. Pewter eating utensils, early gun parts including barrels, old horse tack, military buttons, trade goods like copper kettles, silver trinkets and so much more. Although my silver coin count went down the quality went up considerably. All of my Spanish coins, all but two large cents, my capped bust coins all came out of fields. The quality of finds overall went up considerably and after years of finding common silver coins It was no big deal my count went down especially since the quality of coins went up considerably.

TIP

If you're going to door knock at a house still standing, especially in town I would recommend dressing nice.

If you're going to try and get permission from a farmer I would recommend showing up dressed in your digging clothes. These are blue collar people who are likely to run you off if you're dressed to nice

Easy to obtain permission

Before field hunting, I often found myself metal detecting houses that were still standing. I found it much harder to gain permission when trying to hunt house sites. Many people don't want to be bothered, they don't want to look out their window and see someone outside digging in their grass. Whatever the reason it can sometimes be hard to get permission.

I have always found getting permission for fields and woods is a much easier task and rarely have I been turned down. Although it is getting harder to do, I will try to call the landowner if I can find a number for them. I say something along the lines of “hello my name is Mike Haer and my passion is metal detecting. The reason I am calling is through research I came across where a site was in your field. I like to call first because I hate bothering people, but I would be more than happy to come out and meet you and discuss getting permission to metal detect your property.”

This has worked very well for me and I usually gained permission right then. Matter of fact never once to date has a property owner ask to meet me except one time. So, I gave my spiel and at the end of it the gentleman said he would like to meet me first and if I could come out to his house the following Sunday. I agreed and went out to visit him first. I must admit I was a little nervous, never had anyone taken me up on actually meeting but I was more than happy to do it. I knocked on the door and the nice gentleman invited me into his house, and we talked a few minutes before grabbing his coat and boots. We then went out to the barn where he showed me how to get into it, showed me the refrigerator and told me I could help myself to soda, water or beer and I was more than welcome to come out anytime I wished! Although the site I overlaid didn't produce much I was able to find a site much earlier, but I will get into that in a later chapter.

I just had someone the other day who couldn't believe that I call when possible instead of going to gain permission face to face. My method works great although with a lot less people using land lines it is getting much harder to call landowners for permission. The reasons I call first are simple

TIP

Farmers/Landowners are often some of the nicest people you will meet but you don't want to get on their bad side. Follow any instructions they have. Stay out of the fields when crops are planted, don't drive your vehicle in a field unless you have permission and fill in your holes.

If you upset one farmer there is a good chance you he will tell other local farmers and you will find yourself having a hard time detecting any fields in the area!

1. · *It is far less time consuming. I decided to give it a try many years back after I had spent the better part of a week driving around, wasting time and gas to try and gain permission but not able to find anyone at home.*
2. · *I am a BIG guy! Whether I like it or not I can be intimidating, and I don't want to catch anyone off guard. When I make my call, I get it out as early as I can in the conversation that I would like to come out and discuss it with them.*
3. · *There are some crazy people out there!*

Just recently this discussion has come up several times in my circle of friends about some of the strange encounters we've had while trying to gain permission. The other day I called a guy who screamed and yelled at me cussing me like crazy. I can't imagine how that could have gone if I would have been face to face with him on his large, secluded farm!

A good friend and I were talking about a farm where the locals know to stay away. He's been known to meet people in his driveway with a gun! Then there's another story that was told to me about knocking on the door of a farmhouse that was believed to be a meth cooking house! I know of a guy who had a dog turned on him

TIP

You will find while field hunting you will lose a target out of the hole more often than when recovering a target from a plug. If you lose the target step on the dirt pile and often times you will pick the target up again.

at a house, believe me when I say, always be cautious and I recommend to never go door knocking alone whether it be a house in town or a farmhouse in the country.

I don't want to discourage you from door knocking, I have done it many times over the years, and I have yet to have a bad incident face to face. Matter of fact I've had some fantastic experiences! Just the other

night I knocked on the door of an 80-year-old couple who were some of the nicest people you could ever meet. They showed me around their house, pulling out Indian artifacts they had found around the farm over the years and before I left, I had permission to come anytime I wanted and hunt their property. Even if you get that one person who is an absolute jerk, I assure you the people you will meet will more than make up for it.

One of the things I came to appreciate quickly was how easy it was digging in fields. Rarely will you come across a spot that isn't nice and soft. You might have to deal with some crop roots, but they are easy to get through especially with a good shovel. Doing mostly manicured yards for years and having to be so careful to not kill or mess up their grass it was a nice change to not have to worry about that while field detecting. Not having to worry about the size of the hole (within reason) or how deep it is you can really recover your targets in a very quick fashion once you get used to it and have a technique down.



All found in the same field, the coins are a 1795 Spanish half Reale and an 1803 large cent fairly early for Ohio.

helps save a lot of time and I rarely end up going to my knees. Even if the target isn't uncovered by spreading the dirt around, I can at least quickly pinpoint where it is and pick up that pile of dirt and find it.

Pastures can be a little tougher and obviously a little more work. I don't care if you're in the middle of nowhere it's still important to take the trash and restore your holes. Don't leave any signs you were ever there.

Another thing that helps speed up recovery is I spend very little time on my knees when I'm field hunting. In a yard I'm digging with a small hand digger, laying out a towel to sift through the removed dirt but in a field I simply removed the dirt, check the whole until the signal goes away and then I quickly spread the dirt around with my foot, often times uncovering the artifact. This

TIP

When you recover a good target in a field leave the hole open until you are ready to leave. Not only will it help guide you as you detect and it will be more clear to you what ground you have covered you will often times find a pattern emerge.

The oldest finds

As previously stated, I spent year's metal detecting old houses that were still standing. The older the better and I've had the privilege to hunt some very old houses. For reasons I can't explain my oldest finds have always come out of the field sites. Are the older targets at these old houses too deep? Are they masked by a few hundred years of debris? I truthfully don't have the answer. What I can tell you is that I'm not alone. I have talked to several fellow detectorists like myself who have experienced the same thing. I am not one who relies on one metal detector and I've used just about all the top models out there so if the targets are just too deep or masked, I feel confident they will stay there unless new technology comes out or the dirt is moved.



An insulator found in a field while metal detecting. Although most are common some can go for several thousand dollars.

My oldest coins and relics have all come from the relic hunting. I have found too many large cents to count, but I can tell you that every one of them came from fields besides two. I have found buckets of old buttons and I bet all but a handful or two came out of the fields and woods. The age of artifacts I've found at places like houses still standing rarely come close to even the average age of relics I've found in the fields and woods.

Unrelated treasures

Not only has my best relics come from the fields, I have stumbled onto some other great artifacts that don't relate to the site. Probably the most common is arrow

heads and other Native American artifacts. While field hunting these will be pretty common finds and besides watching your relic collection grow you will soon find you have a Native American collection as well. Early settlers were looking for the same promising signs of good land as Native Americans were hundreds and even thousands of years earlier. You will often find early homesteads built over top of Native American Indian villages.

Other things that I've found or at least know of being found is old telegraph insulators. Not something I have ever personally had an interest in, but I know some can go for thousands of dollars! These are usually found in fields that have or had a Railroad line running through it.



This map represents roughly 2 square miles. Each push pin represents a house (except where church is marked). These all came from an 1874 map.

Rarely will glass survive years of the plow but I have seen it on a few rare occasions. What I would suggest though if you are interested in glass artifacts is if the site is near a creek, ravine, ditch or tree line is to check those out. Often times I have found bottles that have been discarded in these areas and are worth a little bit of your time. If you are lucky you can even run across a bottle dump with hundreds or even thousands of bottles!

While detecting a field site you will come across pottery at every site. Not whole pieces or at least I've never come across any, but I have come across a lot of shards with some beautiful designs on it. Every site I hunt, the display case all the finds go in will get a shard or two that I found interesting.

An (almost) untapped resource



Donnie's recent finds from the field site that has been detected numerous times over the years.

When I first started overlaying maps, I was amazed at how many potential sites there were to be hunted in a single township! Here's how the county I grew up in breaks down. There are 12 Townships in the county. When I overlaid the county from an 1874 map, I found on the low side 100 while other townships had as many

as 200 sites that were gone from each township that were on the 1874 map. Let's just take the low side of 100 x 12 is 1,200 potential sites! It gets ways better though just hold on! There is also an 1858 map for that county, and I was blown away at how many sites were on that map that were already gone by the time the 1874 map

came along. Ohio was founded in 1803, many counties in Ohio had settlers even before that. How many houses and other sites disappeared before that 1858 map? I can tell you from experience it's significant and the deeper you dive in your research the more you will uncover.

If you want to go after old silver coins at parks, schools, even houses you need to know they have been pounded over the years by many detectorists. I couldn't tell you how many times over the years I've gotten permission for an old house and been told it had been detected. In the heat of the summer I like to water hunt, again I couldn't tell you how many times I've ran into other detectorists on the beach or how many times I've come home virtually empty handed.

It is the one niche of the hobby that I know of that isn't over saturated. If I thought there wasn't enough for my lifetime I wouldn't be sharing my passion for field hunting the way I do! It is the easiest and best chances you have on coming across a virgin site.



It's not to say there isn't competition but there is less competition in relic hunting than most other forms of hunting I've done. I can tell you I know I've never been at a virgin park or school, but most field and wood sites were and it's amazing to know you're the first one to detect it!

Often replenished

Another great aspect of field hunting is it is constantly being replenished... sort of. The finds are already there but often times masked or too deep. I have absolutely hunted out a spot,

Tesoro Compadre is about the simplest detector you could possibly find. I've witnessed these detectors work incredibly in heavy iron infested sites and they sold for \$160 dollars new! Unfortunately Tesoro is out of business but you can still find them used.

waited a few years until it has been plowed and go back and it's like I was never there. It's absolutely amazing!

I once got permission for a field site and was telling a guy about it. He told me I was wasting my time, he hunted it out back in the 1990's. Of course, I didn't let this deter me as I knew the field had been plowed many times since he last hunted it. My hunch paid off and it rewarded me big time with handfuls of relics, large cents, a King George III copper and even a few old silvers. You would have never known it had ever been detected.

A good friend of mine recently spent most of his time in field sites we hunted 4-5 years ago and again, his finds were plentiful. He probably found as much as we did when we hunted it a few years back.

I think you can see it's really one of the true untapped opportunities for us detectorists left. In most cases you can take just a few townships in your county and stick to those and probably get permission for enough of them to spend the rest of your life there.

Of course, this is a little different in pastures and woods. They can be picked pretty clean because the ground isn't getting turned over. In these instances, metal detector knowledge and choices play a much bigger part in your success.

Affordable

Personally, I think as far as hobbies go metal detecting is a very affordable hobby. I grew up hunting and fishing and those can get awfully expensive very quick and sometimes they don't pay off in any way. Metal detecting pays off and although I have never sold my finds nor am I interested, it does have a value to it. For those on a budget or getting started in the hobby though it can be expensive. Not only can you get into relic hunting on a tight budget it has personally been more rewarding to me.

When I was mostly looking for old coins, I learned pretty quick you had to spend some money to be able to accomplish that on a regular basis. The old silver coins are usually deep and often surrounded by trash or iron and sometimes both.

I know people who have put thousands of dollars into detectors for water hunting, heck I have a sand scoop with a carbon fiber shaft that was almost 400 dollars! As you can see it can get expensive pretty quick.

Gold hunting is probably the most expensive aspect of the hobby. If you want to get serious about it, you're going to spend thousands of dollars in most cases just on the detector. Of course, you have to be in an area with gold.

There are several advantages to relic hunting if you're on a budget and you don't need a complicated detector which is a big advantage if you're starting out new in the hobby. In most cases it doesn't matter if it has a depth gauge or a digital display. In a lot of instances, you don't need a detector that goes deep, even though most farmers only plow every few years they are moving the ground around bring deeper targets up from the depths to be found.

Enjoying Nature

For myself it is much more enjoyable to be out in nature. Away from the busy cities and away from all the noise that comes with it. I have to really be on a roll finding some great stuff to completely drown out the busy city life. I've been detecting places where I have to look over my shoulder, where the traffic is so loud I have to stop swinging to wait for traffic to go by so I can hear the signals in my headphones again. I don't miss it and if you see me at a site like that it's probably got something going on making it worth it!

I have had so many great moments hunting in the fields and woods. I've watched as deer cross in front of me, I've seen fox, a small buck and a squirrel playing around a tree and so many other cool things including plants, trees, rocks and everything in between. It's good for us to get out to places like this and unwind.

Many years back, while metal detecting, I came across the biggest tree I've ever seen in my life. It was close to the river and for several feet out around it the ground was sunk in. To this day I've never seen a tree even half as big as this one.

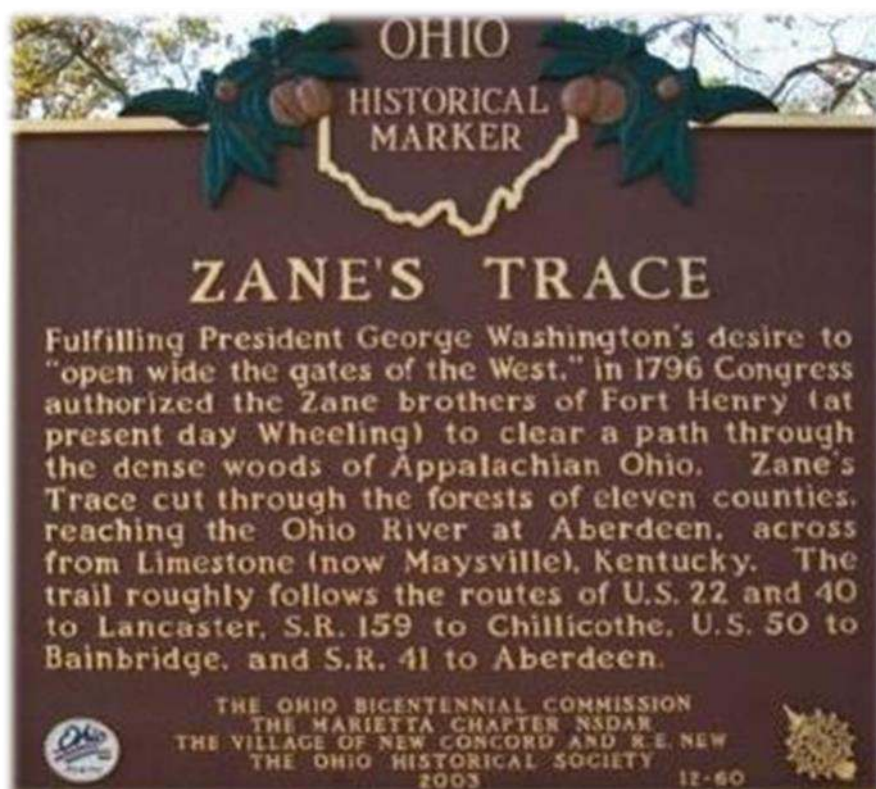
I stopped what I was doing and spent some time under its massive limbs, wondering what stories it must have to share if only it could.

Although I will never forget that tree, I have to say that up till now my most memorable moment was walking on Zane's trace.

Zane's trace was an early frontier road cut through the forests of Ohio that went from Kentucky to West Virginia (then just Virginia). Ebenezer Zane made the road using old Indian paths.

I had to walk a long way through a field to get to the woods that part of the old roadbed was. I knew it was in those woods, but I really didn't know what to expect. I walked to the woods and started following the outside edge around until I saw a small opening into the woods. To my surprise you could still clearly see the old roadbed! As I stepped out of the field and into the woods it felt like I was transported back in time!

Even if it doesn't interest you or you've never given field hunting much thought, I'm sure you can at least see now why I enjoy it so much. If you live near the fields, I would highly recommend doing a little research and giving it a try. You never know, you might become addicted like me!



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PACKAGE CONTENTS



Scuba Coil Cover



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USB Charging Cable



Rubber Wristband

Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions



Finds made along the Mississippi coast
Found with : Tesoro Tejon, and Makro Racer 2
Found by: Greg Weems

Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions



While out testing the Nokta/Makro Midi Hoard at a local baseball field here in North Carolina I came across this big, chunky silver ring. It was a high tone on the third base line. Shocked the heck out of me!

Found with: Nokta Makro Midi Hoard

Found by: Siren Kimmie

Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions



While metal detecting an old campground I found the 1853 seated half dime and what turned out to be a civil war dog tag!

Found using: Minelab E-trac

Found by: Tim Jeandrevin

Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions



While attending the Bone 27 event in October in New Hampshire I found this sterling ring. It was a natural hunt

Found using: Whites MX7

Found by: Amanda "Digger" Degaz

Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions



Capped bust half dollar I found while field hunting in Southeast Ohio where a house had once been.



Found using: Garrett AT MAX

Found by: Scott Smith

Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions

All found in the same field in early October at a medieval site in Northeast England. Silver 6 Pence coins, medieval spindle whorl, 1700's lead stamp, 1800's snake buckle and livery button pictured.

Found with: Nokta Makro Simplex

Found by: Andre Figueiredo



[Link to Andre's YouTube channel](#)



Treasure's From The Dirt

Reader's Submissions

Buckle found at a colonial plantation on the coast of Virginia

Found with: XP Deus

Found by: Brian Harvey



How to submit a find

Would you like to see one of your finds in Dirt Digest Magazine?! We would love to put it in! Please include a description of the find, what state, what kind of site you were hunting and any other detail that is relevant. Please include your full name and what metal detector or equipment you were using. Email your find to mhaer@dirtdigestmagazine.com

20

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COILS

Does Size Matter?

Article by: Gypsy Jewels

Coils for your metal detector come in many sizes. You may have wondered why and does the size of the coil you use really matter. Or, does the terrain you are hunting play a role in the choice of the coil you use? I'd like to share with you an example of how and when it really does make a difference in my experience.

I recently went on a metal detecting trip to Arkansas and I found myself detecting on stretches of fields that were recently harvested and plowed. You may know from watching my YouTube detecting adventures that I reside in Texas in an urban area where there are minimal rural areas within a quick driving radius. When close to home, I typically detect yards, parks, and wooded areas. It is only when I adventure away from home that I get to detect farmland.

The farm fields in Arkansas that we were invited to metal detect once bustled with soldiers from the time of the Civil War. They had made camp there and along the Mississippi River in the region. Some of the fields originally cradled



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houses and other buildings such as postal service and shops. These lands that now produced crops could be imagined exactly as they were in the time that they were then. With so much activity, it seemed we were detecting in land that would likely expose history by way of Civil War items, similarly dated coins from commerce, and relics from the homesteads that were once there.

With this knowledge, most experienced detectorists will have learned to expect a high iron content, and here's why: iron was used more prevalently then than it is now. If there was a structure like a house or an old motel on the property, you will usually notice old bricks and glass on top of the ground first, and then the iron targets below. Unless you choose to set your iron discrimination level on high, then you will notice ALL of the iron targets. When you encounter these iron patches, consider changing out the coil on your detector. Or, consider what size of coil are you using and which size coil should you use for your particular detecting scenario.

When detecting in large fields I like to swing a large coil to cover more ground faster and to pick up targets much deeper than smaller coils can reach. The size of the coil can really make a big difference when hunting for relics in areas where it's easier to swing a large coil and cover a larger surface area, however; when detecting amongst a higher concentration of iron, I have found that by switching to a smaller coil (such as my 5" x 8" or 4.5" Super Sniper coil for the Garrett AT series or

the newly released 5" x 8" Ripper coil for the Ace Apex,) it can make an extremely positive impact to my hunt - distinguishing preferred targets from the iron.

Now, I've been told by other detectorists that they only use a large coil and they never change it out because they get great "iron separation," but folks...here's the truth of the matter: with repeated testing of a smaller coil instead of simply adjusting discrimination settings alone, there is MUCH more to be discovered. After detecting the areas with my large coil where there was a lot of iron, and then going back over the same areas with smaller coils, I have found many more coins and relics that were missed by the larger coils. Some of you will be skeptical or prefer not to change your



routine, but I sincerely hope you that you will test it for yourself the next time you're in an iron field and your coil is throwing sounds like R2D2 arguing with C3PO about how it should be done.

'Wishing you all the luck on your next metal detecting adventure!

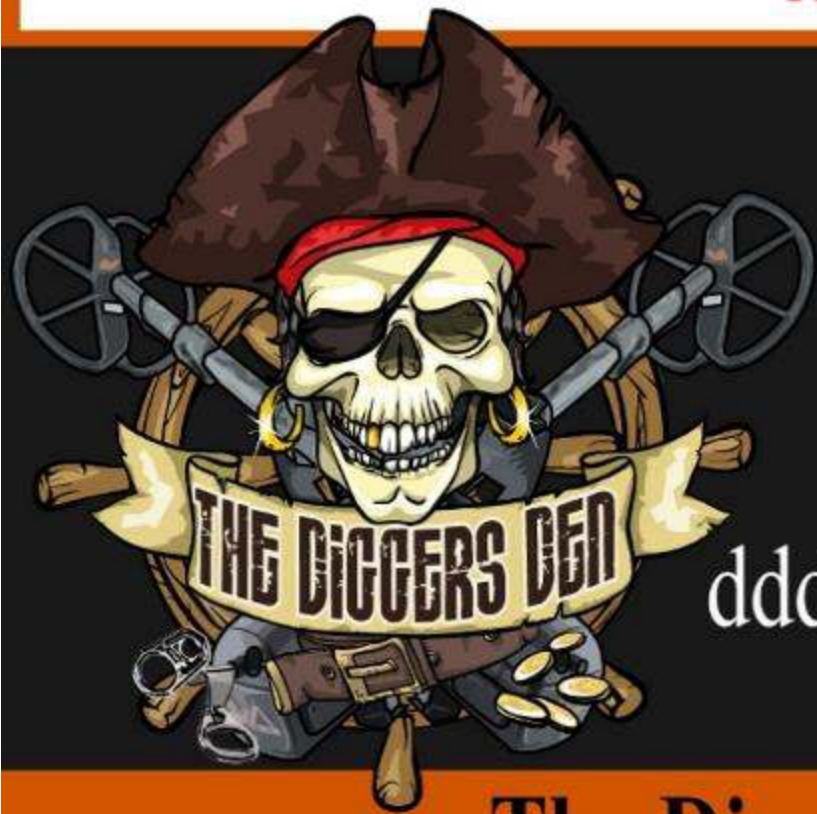
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Sometimes the treasure is the hunt.

How to Find Field Sites to Metal Detect

Article By: Mike Haer

So, you're interested in trying out field hunting how do you get started? First, you need to find places to metal detect! Again, I would advise against just randomly walking farm fields, you want to find where houses and activity was going on.

One of the easiest, if available in your area is map overlaying. There are many Youtube videos and you can check out my article here on [All Metal Mode](#) I wrote a few years ago. I also did a video on Youtube a few years ago that you can find at the end of this article. With practice you can get extremely accurate at doing overlays the way I do them. Although there are other ways to overlay and even



easier ways I have stuck with my method as I find it to be the most accurate for me

There is also an app you can use that is easier than overlaying called Maprika. It's actually a skiing app but works great for finding sites. One of the great things about

this app is while you're driving down the road it will actually show you where the house or site you're looking for was. The problem I've found is sometimes, especially when working with a bigger overlay is it can be off in some areas but still a great tool to have in your toolbox.



Now that you know where some sites are next you will need to find out who owns them to ask for permission. I'm fortunate that in the majority of the areas I metal detect I can go to the auditor's website page and look at their map to find out who owns the land. In some

states it's called something different so you might have to do a little research in your

area to see what county office has that in your area. Some counties don't even have an online interactive map and you will have to go into their office.

Before the internet was popular, I used to have to go visit the counties auditor office and get landowners names. Having visited several they were never busy and

always eager to help me.

There is another great app you can use that will save you a lot of time if you don't want to spend hours tracking down landowners.

Although I've never used it or at least not yet it is called

onX. It is an app designed for game hunters that

shows you land boundaries and gives you information on the owner. It is however

an app that you have to pay for.

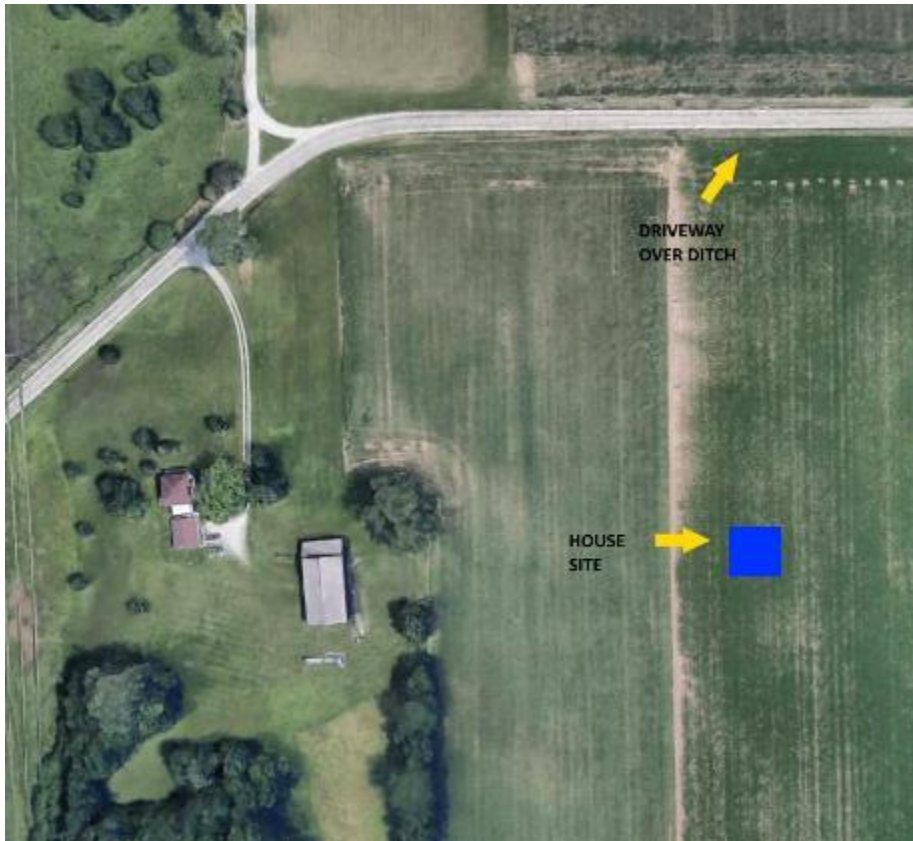


Figure 1 (photo courtesy of Google Earth Pro)

Have you read everything so far and it sounds like to much work? What if I told you I find a lot of my sites and many of the best sites by keeping an eye out while driving. With a little bit of knowledge of what to look for it is easy to do!

One of the easiest ways to find house sites is finding the driveways over ditches. If you look at figure 1 you will see the farmhouse on the left of the picture. Now if you look at the arrow I added pointing to a driveway now ask yourself why that driveway over the ditch exists? One big possibility is it could be so the farmer can get his tractor and equipment into the field but upon a little research I found out that the farmhouse in the picture owns this land and the fields are accessible from his house and barn. I asked permission to search around and after walking straight back from that driveway over the ditch I found where a house had once existed. If you keep



Figure 2 (photo courtesy of Google Earth Pro)

your eyes open while driving you will start to notice these often and if the field is accessible from other locations more often than not it will lead you to a site.

Let's take a look at figure 2. When I first started metal detecting this property, I only knew of house site #1. Actually, when I first started metal detecting it there was a



Figure 3 (photo courtesy of Google Earth Pro)

barn still standing. Whenever you have permission for farmland I always recommend checking out the rest of the property because often times, much like this example you will find other sites to metal detect. After metal detecting site 1 several times I was ready to move on and explore the field before I was

completely done with the property. I first decided to explore the area where site 2 is and I believe it to have been a school or church site and not a house site from the

relics I pulled off of it. Again, after several hunts and ready to explore more of the field I stumbled upon site 3 which was an early site where many great artifacts were recovered. Once I was satisfied I had hunted it out I started exploring more of the field and after hours I came across site 4. Yet again another great producing site!

Every time I visited the property, I parked at site 1 and walked. After a day of metal detecting site 4 I took the road that site 2 and 3 come off of. I had never taken



A recent new site I discovered simply by following the water and looking at high spots on topographic maps. This site is much earlier than any detailed maps of the area and will lead to some great relics.

that road before but I was going to another site that I wanted to get permission for. I noticed something peculiar. There was a driveway over the ditch leading to site 3 (figure3) and suddenly a light bulb went off. After I left the new site I was exploring I drove back by this property and found that there were driveways over the ditches for site 2,3 and 4! This was when I realized I needed to start looking for these driveways. All the fields are accessible from where site 1 was and the most recent farm house to be torn down. If I would have known to look for driveways over ditches I would have found those other sites much quicker and I wouldn't have had to spend hours walking the fields looking for more sites!

Another way I have used to find sites to metal detect is following water. Creeks, rivers and water sources such as springs and ponds were very important to early

settlers. While driving I am always on the look out for high spots along creeks and rivers and I will also explore topographic maps and seek out the highest land along the creeks and rivers. Even if I do not find a house site that once existed around a spring, rarely do I come away empty handed. Springs were often used and important sites for travelers and early settlers.

Farmers and landowners are often quite easy to work with and rarely do get turned down. Respect their land, don't drive in it, pick up trash and stay out of the fields when the crops are planted.

If you decide to give field hunting a try, I believe you will find some of your best and oldest artifacts. I will leave you with another article I just recently added to All Metal Mode, how to hunt field sites.

[Video Here](#) (For PDF download)

Above is how I overlay maps. Although far from the easiest method it is the most accurate I have come across. I can constantly adjust and manipulate the maps to fit and line up my points of interest.

[More field hunting articles can be found on our partner site, All Metal Mode](#)

[Tips for metal detecting farm fields](#)
[How to find sites without maps](#)



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Article by:
Dennis Wynne

Field of Dreams

How to increase accuracy overlaying maps

In Texas, where I live, most folks I know hunt city parks, sports fields, tot lots, a yard in front of a house, or scraped lots where a house once stood. I have been there, done that many times in the 47 years I have done this hobby.

But also, through those many years, I discovered that hunting and fishing walks hand in hand with the passion I have for metal detecting off the beaten path.

I am going to share with you why I hunt in the fields in and around old homesites, how I do it, and, what I have learned through the years.

Dorian Cook, a good friend of mine from many years ago, says you gotta be a History Detective to find some metal detecting places....and I agree. Dorian is elsewhere in the issue of Dirt Digest Magazine. He and I also do a Podcast every Tuesday on All Metal Mode, through Spreaker. Ya'll look us up sometime.

So, WHY do I hunt mainly in the country and in fields. You see, I have lived in a large metropolitan area, Dallas/Fort Worth, and both of those cities have a strong presence of metal detecting enthusiasts and large clubs. I would rather hunt a whole day in the country, without finding a thing, than hunt in the city for maybe a Rosie or a Merc, and every once in a while...a barber coin or two.

Searching for old homesites in the country will sure make you both a better History Detective and it will also take you into other parts of our hobby besides searching only with a coil. Your knowledge about the area, the hobby, and older relics will just keep on increasing, and that is amazing.

When I started detecting in 1974, I had no idea what it would be like some 47 years later in 2021!

Now for the HOW I find the old home sites.

Do you like maps? If you don't you can learn. Maps are a big part of locating the

kind of place that will likely produce really old coins, relics, and even treasures. One of my favorite is the USGS Historical Topographic Map Explorer, at <https://livingatlas.arcgis.com/topoexplorer/index.html> . There are other platforms out there, like Historicaerials.com, Topozone, nationalmap.gov, and topoquest. And don't forget Maprika....Love that one. They all are great tool to narrow down your search. You can even move back in time with these sites and find topo maps from the first efforts. This brings me to a point to offer for your consideration.

Google Earth is a WONDERFUL platform. You can look at a site, and put it in your gps machine in your car, or on your phone and it will take you right to that spot. Or at least where it thinks that spot is. For just a few moments here, I want to get sidetracked on Google Earth, mainly to illustrate a point. About points. Decimal Points to be precise.

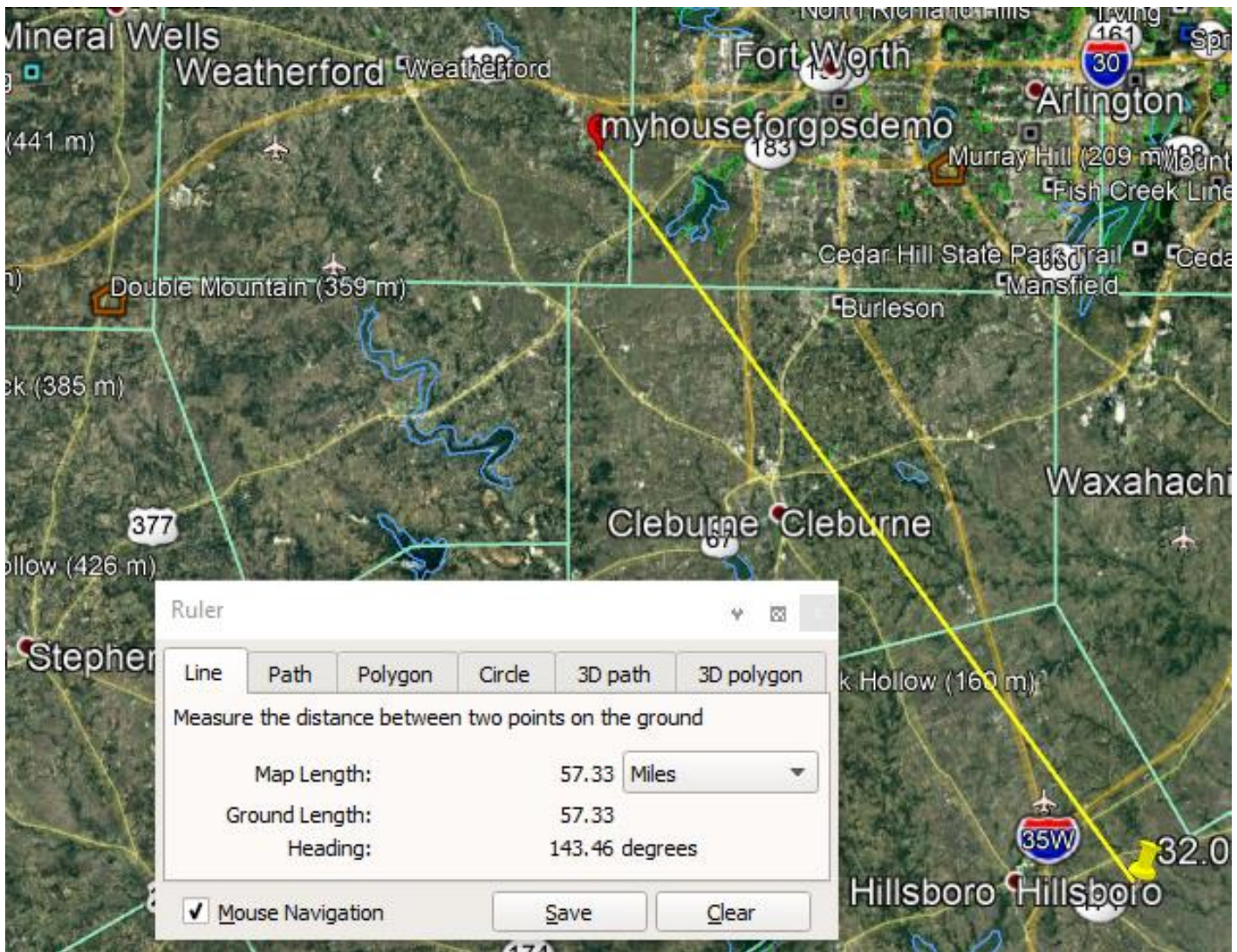
I am a huge proponent of decimal gps for lat/lon positions. Just cleaner to me. You ever notice all those numbers to the right of the decimal point? Well, the more numbers you get, the closer you can come to a precise point on a map.

Let's say I want to find an old homesite in Gosh, Texas. In fact, I will illustrate this part with my homesite up until we downsized last year. So follow along for this sidetrack, and it will give you an idea of the difference between an old Lat/Lon coordinate vs real life examples truly is.



I thought I would share something I learned a long time ago with GPS coordinates.

Especially when it comes to researching places to detect. For this sample, I will use my own home, sitting on 5-1/2 acres of land, which is outlined in Red.



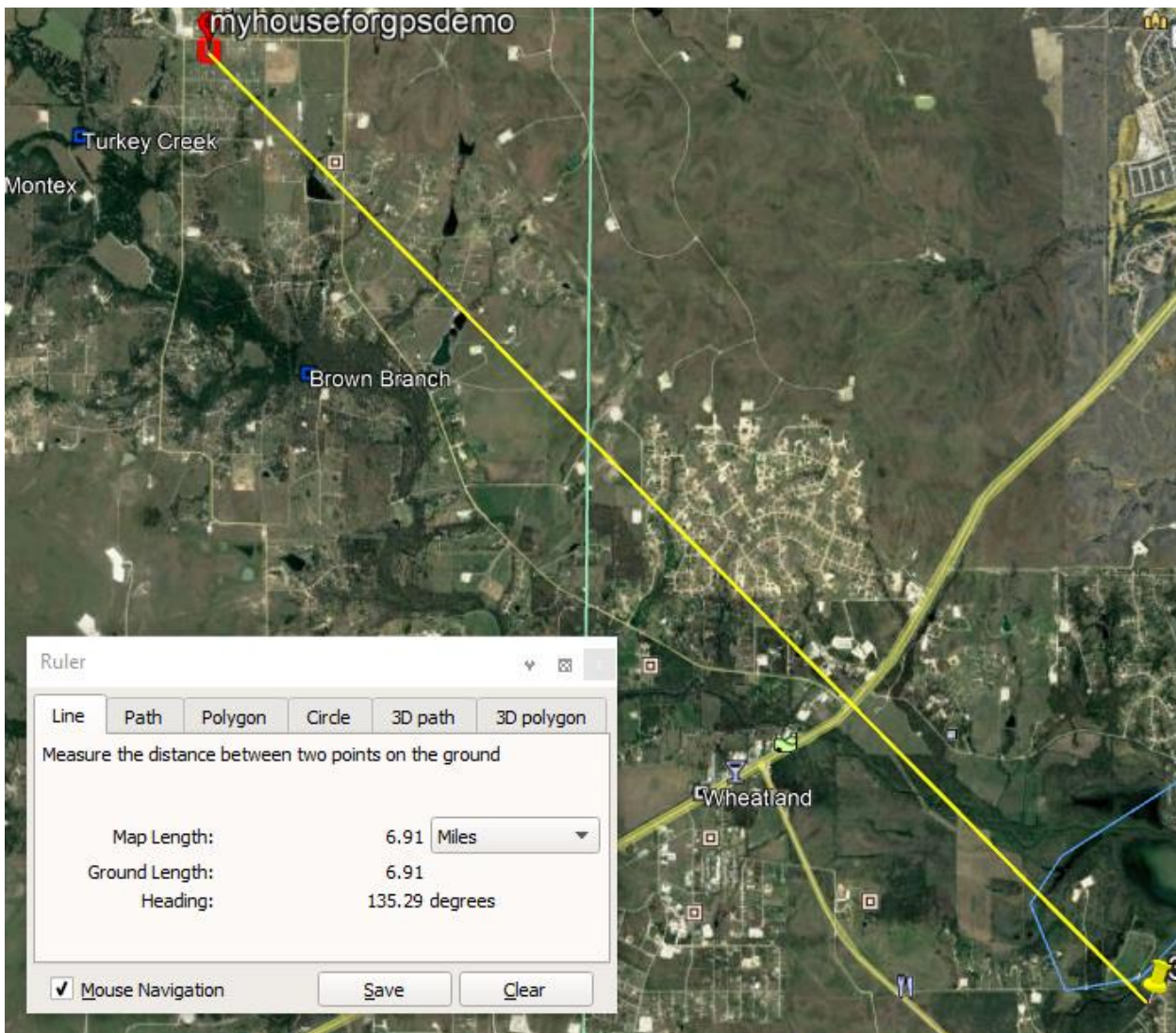
Here is where I live:

So, Let's say you are trying to find a place from a map, or research or whatever source you have. I will start with Latitude (Lat) and Longitude (Lon) without using decimal places (i.e. just the whole numbers) That is what they did back in the 1800's, when it wasn't critical to know the EXACT point of space. People used Trees along rivers, odd looking rocks, blazes on trees, Mountain passes, Springs, etc.....

So, using 32 Latitude and -97 Longitude, here is where it takes me:

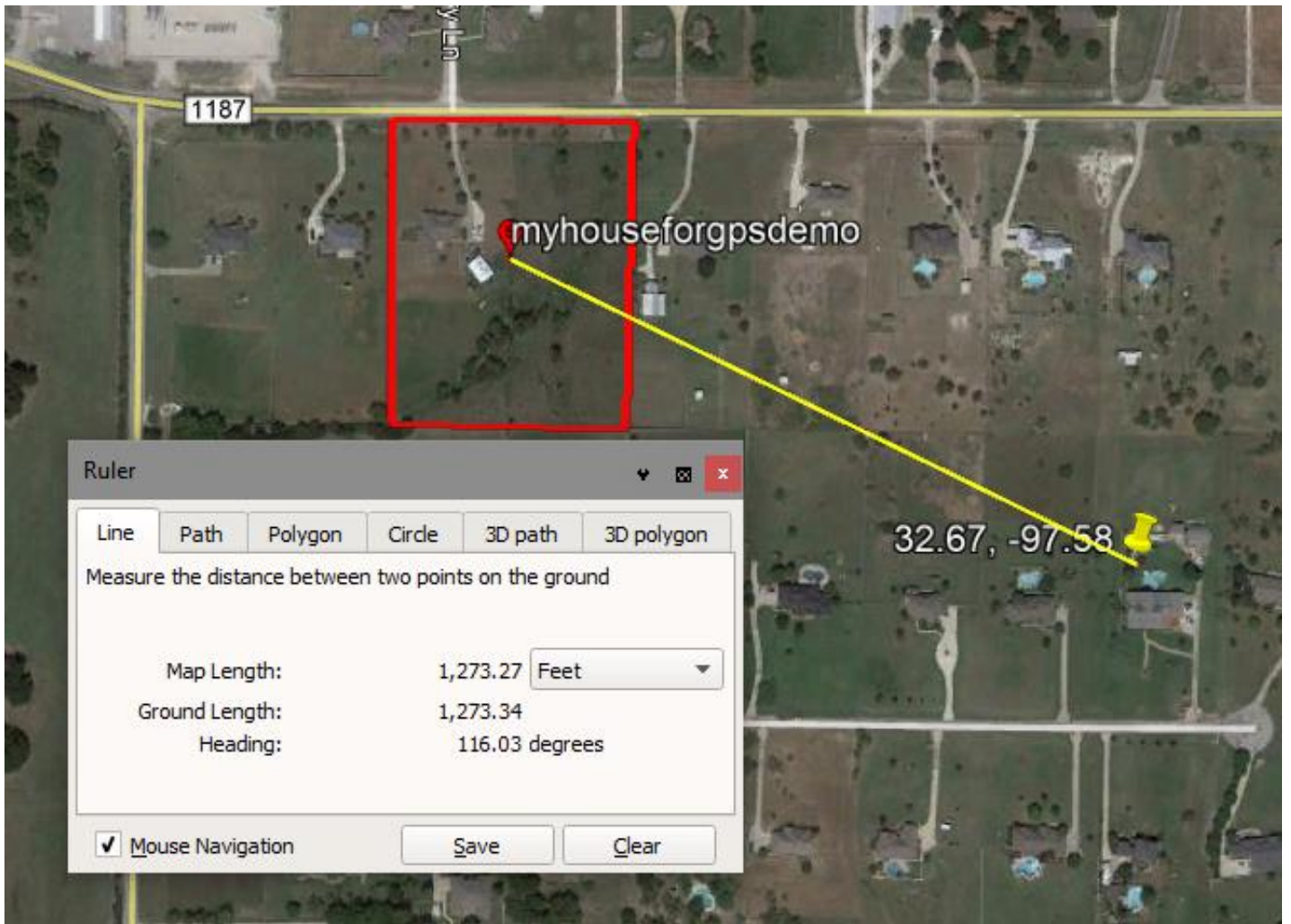
57.33 Miles away. That is a LONG way. Especially if you are hunting for an old homesite, or even treasure!

Now, let's add just one decimal place. We will try 32.6, and -97.5:

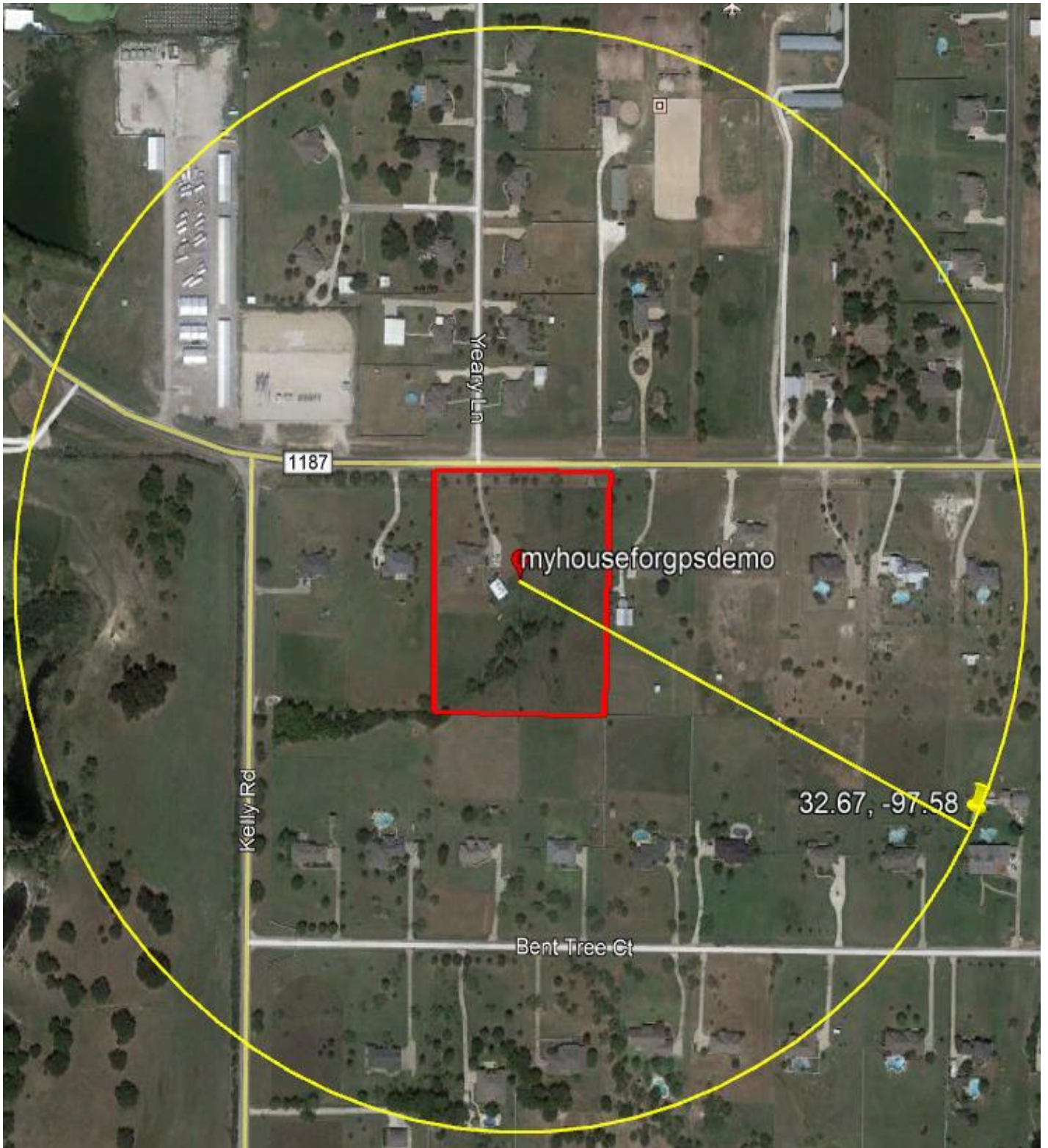


We are now just under 7 miles distant. That is a HUGE jump in accuracy, but can you imagine looking for a smallish 15ft x 15 ft cabin in such an area?

Now, let's try two decimal places: 32.67, and -97.58

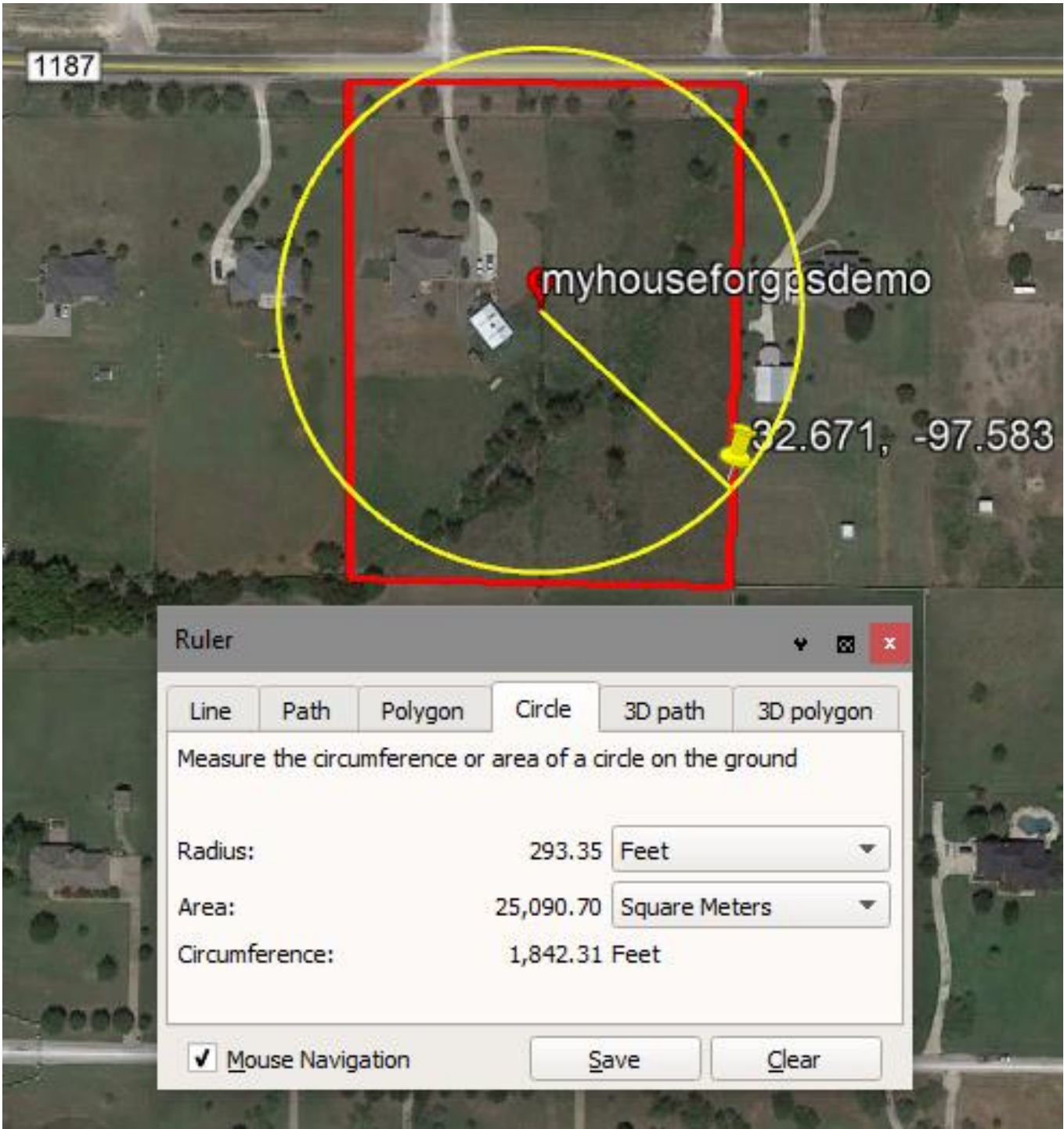


Man o Man....ONLY 1,273.27 Feet away now. But, in treasure hunting that would be a radius, would it not? So, Let's see how that looks:



Now you can see what you would have to search to find my house. And Oh, by the way, see the Red Rectangle? That is my 5.30 acre property. So, how long do you think you can cover that whole radius?

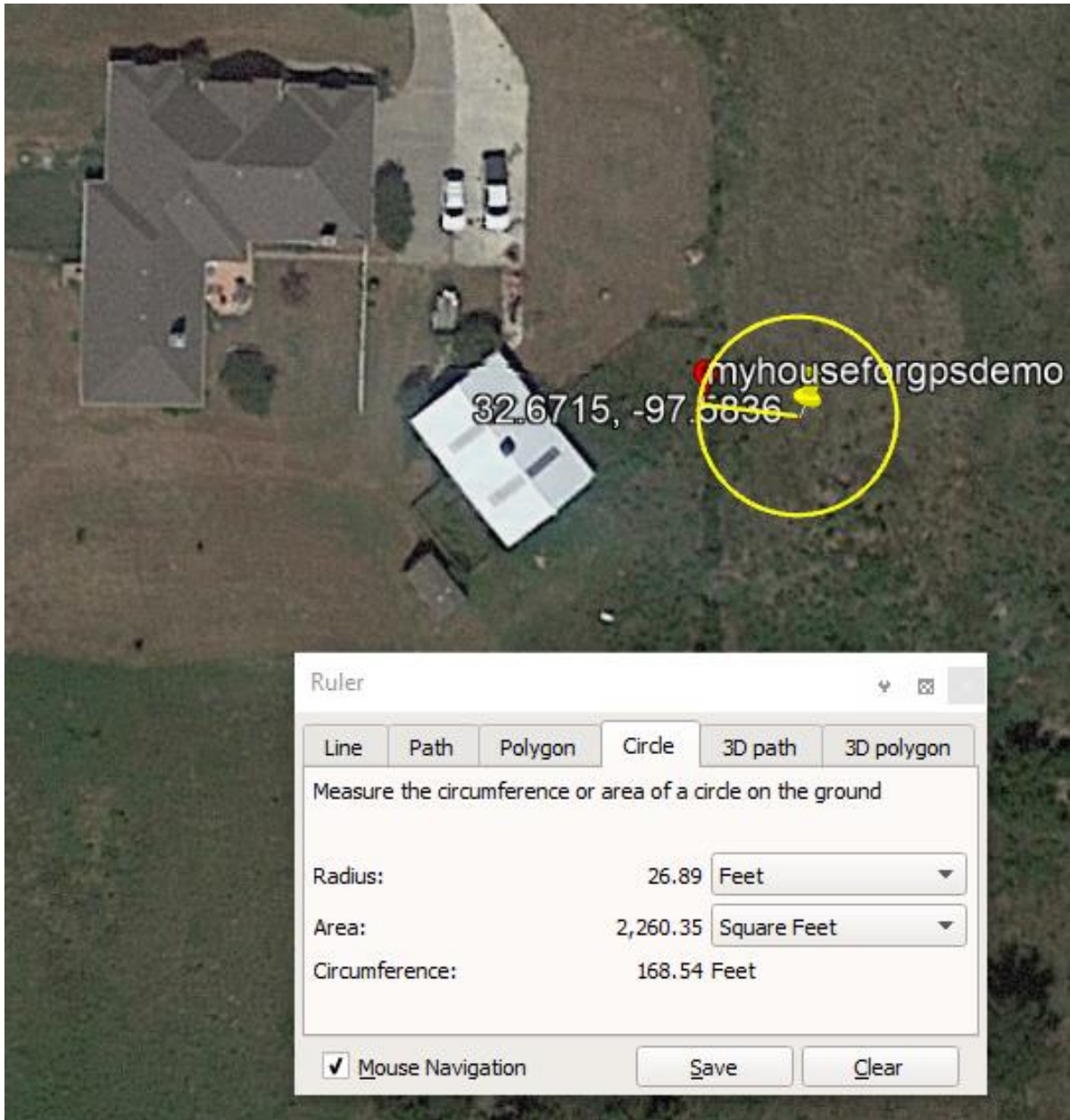
Let's grab another decimal point of accuracy: 32.671 and -97.583



Man, now we are just under 300 feet radius. Not bad, but we are still having to cover 5 acres to find my home (think cache, fallen down homesite, ghost town, etc)

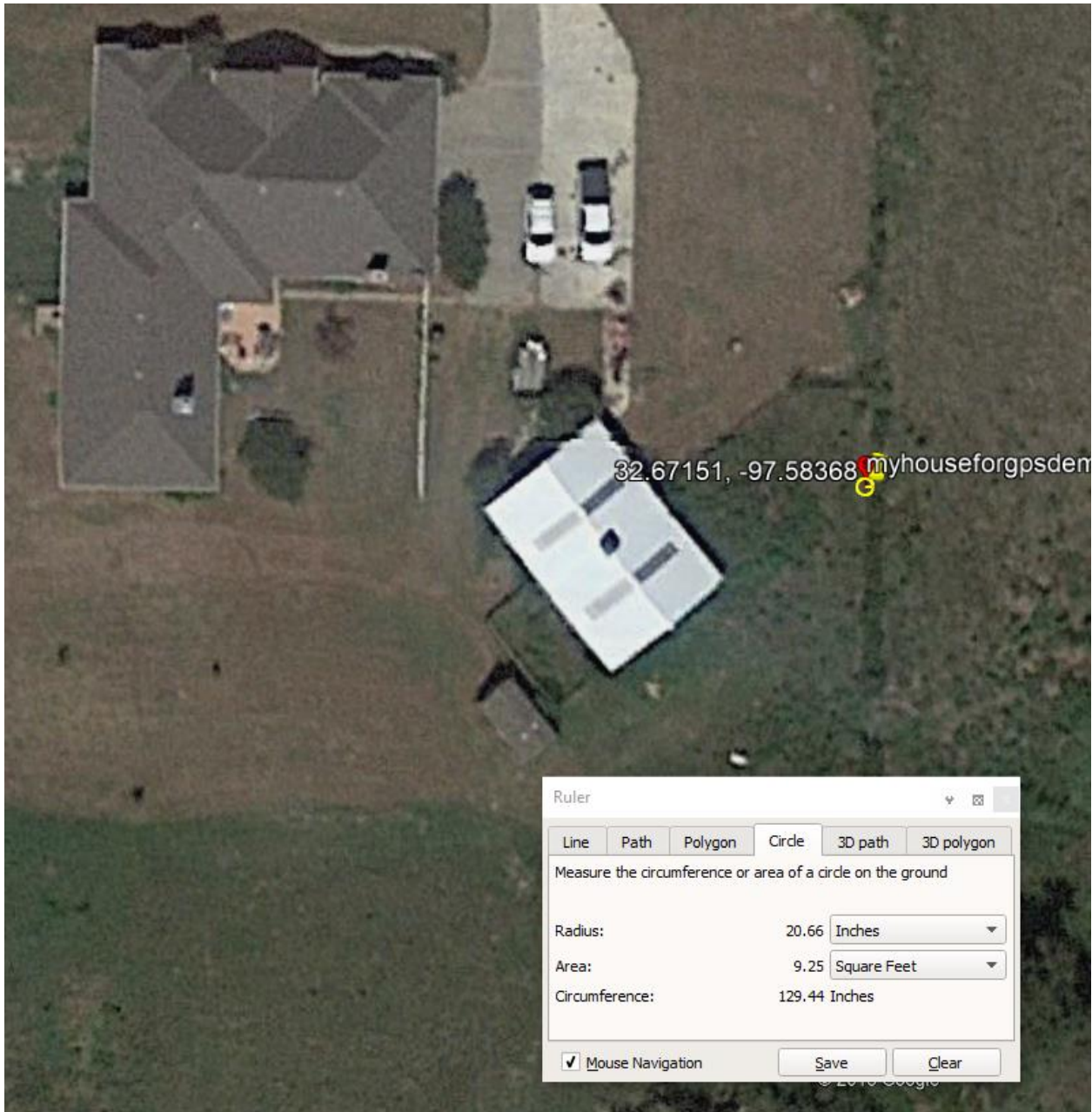
OK.....now one more digit, which takes us to 4 digit accuracy on Google Earth....

32.6715 and -97.5836



Wow, Just a 27 ft radius to look!!! But, it is STILL 2,260 Square Ft of area to run a coil over

OK, ONE more digit...that'll make 5 decimal places for accuracy. So, let's try 32.67151, and -97.58368



Folks, with 5 Decimal places, were are within 20 inch radius of my marker. In fact, I think one of those dots is me, smiling for the camera...

I hope that those of us that are new to our hobby will appreciate the differences shown. When we are researching, or trying to determine the location of a house, or swimming hole, or playground, or even a ghost town, the more decimals, the better. Now to turn away from my illustration....

So you find an old homesite on a topo map, now what.....

You import it to Google earth, or overlay it on Google Earth of another topo or Maprika, etc., and it gets you within 5-10 acres, or perhaps you know it is somewhere along a creek, or an old dirt road.....Now what?

Having Permission, and that is the right thing to do, you go onto the land, with the intent to locate where that 1800's homesite was.....here is where the "History Detective" shines...once you have learned the things you need to do.

The first thing I always think of is water supply. People can go without food, and they can go without shelter, but you cannot live without water, and a steady supply of it. When a pioneer first moved somewhere, or a pioneer family, they did not immediately dig a well. In fact, if you think about it, one of the reasons that rivers and streams were so large in the migration of peoples is because they are a source of life and livelihood. Abundant water was and is the source of life. Let's take it down a little more definitively.

When I am looking for an old farmstead, an old home, the first place I look is near the water source, because that is where people would tend to build. Close to a steady supply of water. How far?

That depends on a number of factors. Indians back in the day tended to follow close to waterways, so that could influence decisions on where to have a semi or permanent shelter.

A factor we might not think about as well, is water is heavy. 8.33 pounds per gallon. So, a yoke, with a bucket on each end is a pretty good weight for going a long distance. 50 feet is much easier to carry water than 300 feet.

Generally, the really old homesites will be within a hundred to two hundred feet or so from a creek. So, one can surmise that you should look around that distance from a small body of water. Being close to a water source generally would mean that the water table would be shallow as opposed to deep.

After a pioneer or family had been at a homesite for a while, they would dig a well.

So, we can figure that we should look near a water source. What else can you think

of that would indicate presence of an old homesite.

Rocks. Yep, Settlers would gather rocks up as they cleared a field for planting. Many times those rocks removed from a planting field would be used to make rock fences, rock corrals, rock fireplaces, or even rock houses.

Flat rocks were often used just outside the front door of a cabin, as a stepping stone. To support the frame of a log cabin, rocks were often used under the corners and along the middle and edges to spread the footprint of the logs off the dirt a bit and help stabilize the structure.

Rocks were also used to make a chimney, or even a circle of rocks for an outside campfire. Rock walls would even be used for protection against the night, or the weather. An easy resource to come by, they are a resource that had to be dealt with every day, especially for someone trying to grow enough food for their family to survive.

In looking for old homesites and even campgrounds, one of the primary things I look for is rocks placed in a pattern such as a square (for a cabin), in a circle (think campfires) or in a straight line at the edge of or even down the middle of a field or meadow.

Out of place vegetation is something else I look for....doesn't everyone? Well, just what does that mean, and how do I know what is out of place? Onions, Garlic, Lillies, Tulips, hedges, rose bushes, and lots of other plants that do not normally grow where you are looking. See them present, start looking around for other signs of habitation. It is likely there, if you know what to look for.

Trees are particularly informative. It could be out of place trees, trees in a line, or trees with limbs cut off even. You know what the limbs that are cut off tell you? The people of the old days with a cabin had the same issues we do over years of a tree close to a house. The limbs eventually may protrude and damage the roof. If you see a tree limb scar, which is a flat face with the bark of the tree curling over the end and encompassing the cut limb face, you should stop and look at the other trees in that immediate vicinity. The cut off limbs likely point to a home, and the limb was removed to keep the branches from destroying a roof.

Speaking of trees.....you ever heard of pillows and troughs? When a high wind comes through an area, especially in piney woods, it blows trees over, including the root ball. The area where the roots were comes up with dirt inside the tangle of roots. A tap rooted tree such as an oak, will not fall like that, but they can certainly fall over and take a root ball with them.

Anyway, the depression in the ground is called a trough. As the roots decay, the dirt falls down, and over the course of decades form a rise in the earth, or a pillow.

The same concept occurred back in the day, when farmers would move trees out of the way by clearing the land. If a root ball did not come up, and say the farmer burned the stump, and it later decayed, a depression, or trough, would form where the tree once stood. Another sign if you come across a meadow in the middle of the woods with larger trees around it. And especially if there are old rock walls there too.

Do be smart and follow those rock walls. They will often lead to a homesite. And when you are close, those out of place plants and trees, the troughs and pillows, the unnatural stacked rocks, those should all give you an idea of where you should be hunting.

Cellar holes.....another depression, but a bigger size normally. You will find those around an old home site just about anywhere. Some of the best hunting will be around those cellar holes. Tickle the edge with a small coil, and you might be surprised what treasures come out of the ground.

I invite you to imagine being in a farm field. After all, I titled this Fields of Dreams. LOL I have written so far, to get your mind kind of elevated in terms of thinking about what you might not consider. There are so many nuances in the searching that it has taken me a lifetime to learn, and I will fall short of sharing all of it in this article.

So, in this field, surrounded by a rock wall.....where do you search? Where do you start? And how do you find where that old log cabin sat?

Go back and think....water. People had to have it. It also would create havoc if it

poured rain. So, though close to water, a cabin, dugout, or even a long term lean to would not be placed on lower ground close to the water.

In our field of dreams, I would look for a spot just slightly higher than any low spots. Put a 8 -15 foot depression are next to it where a root cellar might sit, and maybe even throw in a rose bush, or onions, or perhaps an out of place tree, especially a fruit tree...and you might just have located a very old home site.

When I get into an area, and my keen detecting senses have indicated a possible site, what do I do? I hunt in All metal mode, as I want to hear every target that I pass over, even if it is only one every 100 feet. I will walk about and not be in a hurry, not focus on coil overlap, or speed of detecting swing. Instead, I will move in different directions, just kind of meandering until I find a signal of some kind. A solid signal, and then I will stop and dig it up.

Experience and many thousands of holes have adapted my mind to figure what type of farm artifact I might dig up. Once I find a signal, I will focus around that one area, making a spiral path of detecting, ever increasing the diameter of the spot, at least until I get a 30 foot diameter search area, and then if nothing else, I will study my landscape and figure why the object was there.

If it was a tool, you can just about bet it was where work stopped one day, and just never got started back up. I have heard people speculate why they would find an axe in the middle of nowhere. The reason most likely is, that is where the farmer had to use that axe the last time he used it. From Can see to Can't see was a farmer's life. Work started up the next day right where it left off. A bolt or nut...likely fell off of a wagon. Now if I find an eating utensil, look out, I am hunting much more carefully. If it is a bullet, he was hunting.

When field hunting, I usually deploy the biggest coil I have, but I also carry the smallest coil I own for that machine as well. I do that, because you can cover far more ground in scanning an area while you attempt to locate a small footprint where a house once stood. I cover a lot of ground, faster and further than when I am searching hard.

Once I get to an area that is producing signals, I will slow down and hunt more

methodically, digging every solid repeatable signal I hear, narrowing down my focus and determining what the site is. When the signals begin to sound like a machine gun, I switch to my smallest coil and work in and around the iron signals.

I could go so much further on this subject, but that will have to wait for another time. The fields of dreams are out there, you just have to know how to find them.



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FINDS... FROM THE



"FIELDS OF GLORY!"

By: Dorian Cook

Traditionally, the term "*Fields of Glory*" has been applied to battlefields where brave men have struggled to wrest victory from the ever-present threat of defeat. The more I pondered on that, however, the more I found it an appropriate term to describe the metal detecting sites scattered across countless square miles of fields and pastures in many states that surrendered amazing treasures to the persistent swing of my metal detector. Why don't you join me for this tour?



Within five minutes of arriving at this field with his hunt buddy, the author had found an early 1800's brass flat button... the first of several.

These “battles for supremacy” have comprised a “war” for me that has lasted well over 40 years and there have been battles lost as well as the battles won that I want to discuss in this article

The “enemy” has thrown at me every weapon of nature that it could bring on to these fields whenever I was present on them. These took the form of... sudden rain that drenches you to the skin before you can retreat to your vehicle, wind that dries

you out and wears your energy down

resisting it, cold that chills you to the bone and numbs your feet and fingers, mud that clings to your boots by the pounds and makes traversing the ground take 3 times as much effort as walking in them when dry and sun that sizzles on days that there is no gentle breeze to cool your sweaty brow and forces you to need more water than you are carrying with you.

Add to these obstacles to detecting success in these fields, the constant threat of “enemy snipers” that take the form of unscrupulous detec-torists that see you on a good site and come back without permission when you are gone, to “plunder” it without you or the landowner catching them and also the difficulties presented when upon discovering a very old and promising building site with the structures long gone, you find that the whole area it occupied is “mined,,,” with thousands of iron



The author points to a once silver-plated flat button found at this early 1800's house site.



The buttons just kept coming from this never-hunted site!

signals ranging from square nails of different sizes, old axeheads, pieces of cast iron from broken up stoves and pots and skillets and a plethora of other strange-shaped iron pieces from who-knows-what to hinder and/or prevent you from picking up the signals of the treasures hidden close to them in the form of coins, jewelry, old brass and pewter buttons, etc. To be fair, I should mention that even on sites like that, not all the iron signals will be junk... included among them will be things like antique tractor tools and other historical artifacts both collectible and valuable.



This pewter button came out of the ground looking like new... good enough to go back on a garment!

If I were to stop right here after describing the above, it would probably discourage many reading this article to want go in to the fields



All these very old buttons were found within an hour at the "Button Field."

to hunt... but... I am NOT going to stop here... I am going to show you some of the treasures found for the effort put forth to hunt them. These make it all so VERY worthwhile to fight the enemies already described for possession of what these fields are hiding beneath their bare surface.

Keep in mind as we take this tour that this is not meant to be a “HOW to hunt fields”



Found by the author in soybean fields in Lewis County, Ky.

treatise... that subject is being covered most adequately by Mike Haer in his articles. My intention in writing this is to make you EAGER to take his information and get into field hunting with a vengeance! I want to prove to you that the fields are “ripe to harvest,” any time of the year when they are empty of crops and the weather is good... or at least doable.

Where I live in North Central Kentucky, within a...say... 50-mile circle, I have literally thousands of potentially productive soybean and corn fields to target for finding long-gone log cabin and old house... and, yes... even TOWN sites. These sites commonly date back to the mid-1850's and some go back as far as the 1760's and... most have never heard the beep of a detector on them! And if they have been hunted, it was most often done sloppily by unskilled detectorists with inferior detectors that left up to 90% of the treasures they contained still in the ground when those hunters concluded they had found it all.

As Mike Haer has pointed out... permissions for field hunting are MUCH easier to get than permissions to hunt standing house yards. Most of the time the farmers are willing to let you hunt their fields as long as you abide by four “iron-clad” rules... 1. Don't go into the fields once the crops are planted in the spring, 2. Always fill your holes, even if it is a field that is going to be plowed or disked. And 3. Stay out of the

fields when they are so muddy wet that you leave holes and plainly visible tracks if you try to walk across them. 4. Always leave farm gates as you find them. If open, leave open, if closed BE SURE to leave them closed. If you leave a gate open and his stock gets out... you have lost your permission and the farmer will tell his neighbors about it and you will NOT be hunting their fields, either! If you are going to hunt with a buddy, be sure to get the farmer's permission to do so and make sure that he sees your vehicle so if parked on his property he knows its you automatically.



The author holds a just recovered Shield Nickel from the Obadiah Stout house site. Also many nice Indian artifacts found in this field.

The "Button Field" at which all the pics you have viewed so far were taken was found while we were on our way to hunt an old standing log cabin site in the woods near Perryville, KY. We followed an old sunken road down a wooded hill and came out in the field which had a nice creek flowing all around its borders. I suggested to my hunt

buddy that we stop and take a few minutes to hunt the high side of the field in case a military camp might have been there during the battle of Perryville. Well, I had a brass flat button from about 1810 in my hand within five minutes and the buttons just kept coming... I ended up with seven and my partner had 8 more. Strangely, considering the site had never been detected, we found no coins which was pretty unusual but that is the way field hunting goes sometimes... you find

what you DON'T expect and then, DON'T find what you expect to in the



Found in one day in a soybean field by the author.

“Fields of Glory.” While it did not prove to be a Civil War camp site, it did prove to be a very old house site worth detecting.

If you keep hunting the old house and cabin sites in the fields, however, you are bound to find some real treasures. The picture at the top of the previous page is what I took out of the fields near where I live, over a two-month period in about 5 hunts. Sometimes the area of the fields you have to search is very large... I have one permission along the Ohio River that has 3500 acres in it. So far, in eight years of hunting these fields I have located two ghost town sites... one from the mid 1700's the other from the mid-1800's and several dozen single dwelling sites on this permission as well. One house site belonged to a Colonel of militia named Obadiah Stout and he had established a militia training camp adjacent to his house and barn. We took over 450 uniform buttons from this camp site in the fields... right above the banks of the Ohio River! Some were rare and almost all were in excellent condition. Stout's house site has produced a variety of coins including cut Spanish silver coins, Large Cents, 3-cent silver pieces, Seated dimes and half dimes and shield nickels.

In almost all of the fields where you find old house sites, you also find Indian Artifacts on the surface. The Native Americans camped in these fields, had villages in them and they are to be found on the highest ground in the field where the closest water source is.

While metal detecting the fields in the last 8 years I have found over 500 Indian artifacts with my eyes while listening to my detector!

And... I will tell you without hesitation that the miles you walk in the fields and the times that you do NOT find are MORE than worth it because of the great finds like



More great Indian artifacts found by the author while metal detecting the fields. Sometimes you zero out, but not often.

these you will make if you persist!

I will mention that research is a key to success because often there is not a single visible clue that the fields you are driving by once had VERY old structures, military camps, picnic grounds, churches or school sites, etc.

Let me give you a prime real-life example of what I mean with the pictures on this page.



A nice arrow point in a soy bean just as found while detecting that field.

There was a time, a few years back, if you had driven up the dirt road leading back



Before the log cabin was moved... any detectorist would have stopped to hunt it if they could... no doubt about it.

into this remote hollow near my home, you would have seen this log cabin built in 1862 during the Civil War standing in all its vintage glory at the base of the hill behind it with a pasture in front of it in what was once its front yard.

A couple of years ago, some guy from Tennessee bought the historic log cabin and took it and the outbuildings with it down log by log and hauled it all back to

Tennessee to rebuild on his property. If you did not know that cabin had been there, you would very likely never consider the site now as holding any detecting potential. The lesson here is do not judge by your eyes alone... do your due diligence to research field and pasture properties in historic areas and you WILL find unworked sites that you



But what about now...??? Would you stop to hunt it now that it looks like this? Hardly anybody would!



can dig treasures from!

Sometimes you find them on a site beyond your wildest imaginations. This next picture is what I recovered in one day from a former church site that was no longer there. It proved my best day ever for silver and old coins

dug from a single site in one day... I can't wait for my next bonanza from a "field of glory!"

If you happen to live in an area that had military activity during any period of our history... French and Indian War, pioneer militia vs. the hostile Indians, Revolutionary War, Civil War or even training camps/facilities for WW 1 and WW 2 soldiers, sooner or later in your field hunting you are going to discover where soldiers camped or fought. If you prove to be the first on such a site or sites, you are almost sure to recover MANY treasures in the form of both artifacts and coins.

If the campsite turns out to be a large one where thousands of soldiers lived and drilled, it could provide you with 2 years or more of great detecting... THAT would truly be a "Field of Glory" for you! Pay special attention when searching fields with a creek or river nearby that could have provided water for large numbers of soldiers and horses and mules. Here is an example of what I have found in the camps I discovered. These Civil War



artifacts and coins were found in camps once occupied by Union troops defending Cincinnati, Ohio from invasion.

When you do find your “Field of Glory” military campsite, be careful NOT to let anyone driving by on the road see you out there detecting and digging! I have learned from painful experience that the “claim jumping” outlaw detectorists will steal such sites from you in a heartbeat once your presence alerts them to the fact that you are finding something out in that field and often they will bring a bunch of their no-good buddies with them to clean it out quickly!

Sometimes pieces of visible rock lying on the surface of a spot in a “field of glory” will alert you to the fact that a structure that had rock in foundation pillars or chimneys once existed there and that is a good place to start detecting if you find such. Often, though the farmers who worked that field over the years removed the larger pieces of rock from their fields leaving only smaller pieces that you have to get pretty close to see. Walking a field will allow you to spot small pieces of broken old bricks in the dirt that nail down the former location of a house as do visible pieces of old glass bottles, crocks and/or cups and plates.

Not too infrequently, when a field is used only for cow pasture the farmer might leave any old chimneys belonging to houses that once stood there. These, of course, make it easy to know where to hunt in a pasture/field. Problem is... a standing chimney is like a flag that tells anyone else where to detect so you do not find too many that have



any old chimneys belonging to houses that once stood there. These, of course, make it easy to know where to hunt in a pasture/field. Problem is... a standing chimney is like a flag that tells anyone else where to detect so you do not find too many that have not already been detected. The one in the following picture had been detected, but not very well, as you can see from the finds..

Lastly, I want to tell you about my most recent trip to one of my “fields of glory” with an old log cabin site on it that dates back to the 1780’s and was gone by the mid-1850’s. How do I know it was gone by then? There have been no metal objects come off this site that were newer than that date... no modern metal trash in the soil there at all. When first found I invited a buddy to work it with me. It was located about 500’ from a county road on the end of a low ridge in the back of the field. The field was bordered by a good-sized creek... too deep to wade.

We found a number of old flat buttons of various sizes the first two times we worked this site and I managed to pull out one 1822 Large Cent in fair condtion. We were hoping/expecting to find at least a few seriously old silver coins as well. But that did not happen. After that my buddy lost interest in the site and the next two times I hunted it, I was by myself. On both of those hunts I zeroed out with my AT Pro detector, finding no non-ferrous targets.

Recently I bought a Nokta Macro Simplex detector and decided about a week ago to take it out to this site and see if it could find anything the AT Pro had missed. Boy, was I ever in for a surprise! I got to the field about 1:30 in the afternoon, walked across the field to the cabin site and started to swing my new detector. In about 10 minutes, I got a high-value signal in the copper coin range and dug up a flattened copper thimble. It was not exactly a treasure but it did show what to

expect from coin sized copper objects in terms of the pitch of the audio and the number readout on the display. After having zeroed out twice before it felt pretty good to dig that thimble. Soon I got a very similar signal and dug a nice



gold-plated flat button that had been made in England around 1810. Impressed with this great start, I soon found another really small old brass button and... it was only about 10' from the first one. I was liking my new detector more and more as I methodically worked back and forth in 8' wide rows. About a half hour after my last button find, I got a big iron signal and a bit of a high-value chirp and number readout with it. I swung back and forth over the double-signal and wondered if a big piece of iron was hiding a piece of treasure.

Putting my shovel to work, I popped out a great big single-bitted old axe head with a crack in one side of it. Once that was dug, I rechecked the hole and got a crystal-clear high-pitched tone and a steady reading of 91 on the digital display. The reading was so high I was sure that it must be an aluminum can in the hole tossed out of a tractor by some farmer while disking or planting. It was too big to be a small coin so I thought if it was NOT a crushed soft drink can it might be a silver dollar due to the high reading. Well... that was not to be... it was not silver, but it was a keeper indeed... a beautiful 1845 Large Cent in excellent condition! The Simplex had done a great job of separating the coin from the really big piece of iron!



My next find proved to be a modern zinc penny that was badly eaten up. I suppose I lost it on a previous hunt on the site. It does not take long for the strong chemical fertilizers in the field soil to seriously attack our newest coins made of zinc.

I now had five keepers and it was a great day in this “Field of Glory” that had given up nothing on my last trip there... but as it turned out, I wasn’t done yet! The field had one more treasure to give up to me that day. The first silver coin off this site was destined to elude me once again but I was going to go home with my first silver from it. My last good signal I proved to be a very old SILVER-plated snuff spoon! What a great find!

You just never know... WHAT you will find in the "Fields of Glory," but... you have to hunt them to find it! So get out in those fields and start swinging your detector... treasures await you!



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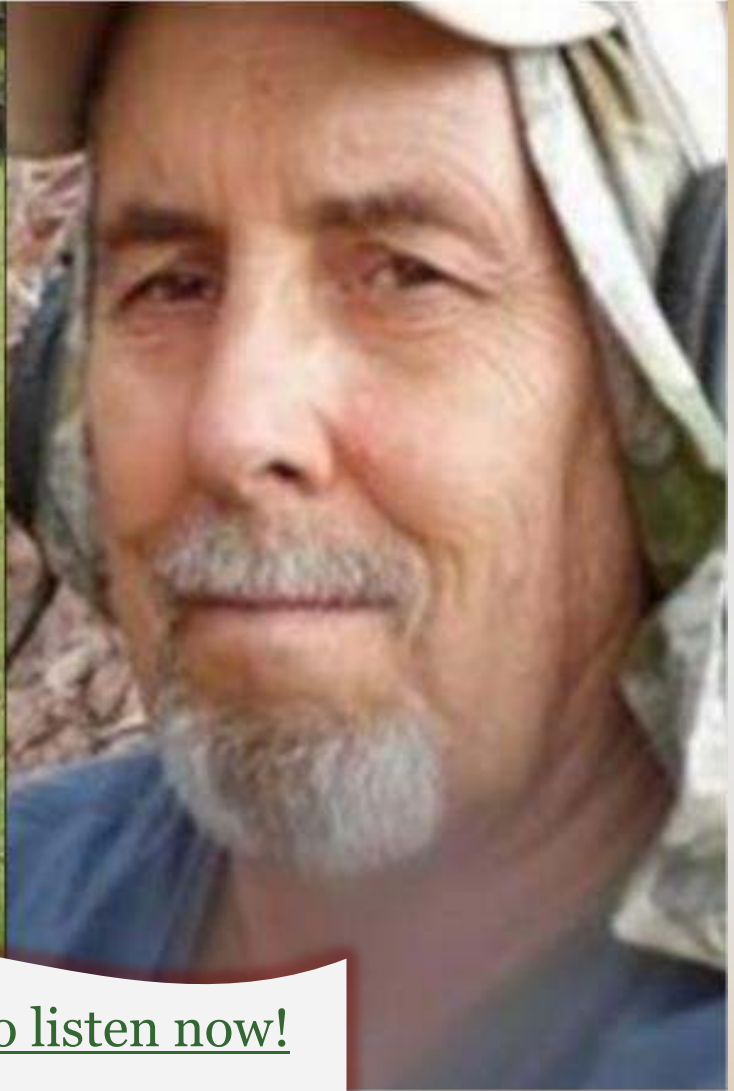
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