

The Arthur Riggs Altick Collection

Clark County Historical Society Museum and Archives

Processed by:  
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## Introduction

The papers of Arthur Riggs Altick were donated to the Clark County Historical Society some time during the late 1930's or early 1940's when Altick was secretary (curator) of the society.

The papers date from ca. 1920 to the year of his death and its investigation in 1947. The collection fills three Hollinger boxes and one oversize file and 106 file folders. The collection is arranged into 8 series as follows:

Series 1: Biographical Information

Series 2: Site explorations and reports

Series 3: Investigation of pottery styles

Series 4: Assorted writings and speeches

Series 5: Correspondence with the Ohio Indian Relic Collectors' Society

Series 6: Assorted additional correspondence and miscellanea

Series 7: Photographs

Series 8: Oversize drawings, maps, and photographs

## Biographical Sketch

According to a autobiographical sketch contained in this collection, Arthur Riggs Altick was born June 22, 1891 in Dayton, Ohio, the son of Arthur and Shirley Blanche (Riggs) Altick. It is not clear when the Altick family moved to Springfield, but Arthur received his education through the Springfield city schools. He attended Wittenberg College and was graduated from the Williss Business College. On April 20, 1921 he married Ethel Rose of Cleveland, Ohio. They had two sons, Richard Denton Altick and Arthur E. Altick.

Altick was employed for a time at the Kelly Springfield Motor Truck Company in the engineering department until he was called to Washington D. C. during World War I to serve in the Quartermaster Corps in the Motors and Vehicles Division. Later he assisted in the establishment of the Cleveland Department, Motors and Vehicles Division, the War Department. It is likely he met his wife during his stay in Cleveland.

By 1919 he was back in Springfield and had been elected secretary of the Springfield Chamber of Commerce, a position he held until 1922. He served as executive secretary of the Springfield Real Estate Board from 1919 to 1922; secretary of the Clark County Good Roads Council from 1919 to 1923; executive secretary, District No. 7 of The Ohio Good Roads Federation, 1920 to 1924. He was assistant manager of the Magnetic Springs Hotel and store manager of The Office Outfitters, the later from 1927 to 1933. Altick was a member of the Northminster Presbyterian Church, the church's Mans' Club and was affiliated with St. Andrew's Lodge No. 619, Free and Accepted Masons.

In 1933 Altick became secretary and curator of the Clark County Historical Society. Even before his appointment as curator, Altick was known as a more than competent, albeit amateur, archaeologist. According to the records in this collection, Altick investigated and excavated 44 Native American sites in Clark County alone as well as numerous sites in other counties and states. He was active in the Ohio Indian Relic Collectors' Society, serving as its vice-president. He is credited with the discovery of the Campbell Group, a hitherto unknown prehistoric earthwork. His notes on the Manring Mound are the only known detailed sources of that mound, destroyed during the construction of U. S. 40. In all, Altick added two prehistoric earthworks and eleven prehistoric mounds to Clark County's Archaeological Atlas.

Altick wrote and spoke widely on his archaeological discoveries as well as various other topics. His site reports were published in the local newspaper, Hobbies Magazine, and a local publication called Escalade. Although he often submitted his reports and site analyses to the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society (now the Ohio Historical Society) hoping they would be published in a scholarly journal, there are none listed in the Cumulative Table of Contents for the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Quarterly Volumes 1 - 62, compiled by the

Junior Members Section of the Ohio Library Association in 1954. However, his findings were included in Dr. James Bennett Griffin's The Fort Ancient Aspect, and he wrote two chapters for inclusion in Raymond C. Vietzen's The Ancient Ohioans and Their Neighbors. There is some indication in his correspondence that he may have contributed to other authors' works as well. At the time of his death, he was working on a book about Indian relics.

All of Altick's activities on behalf of the historical society and in the community abruptly ended July 11, 1947 when he died of an apparent *brain* hemorrhage while in the Logan County jail. The circumstances surrounding his death were curious and remain unresolved. According to the initial newspaper report, Altick was arrested for drunk driving, and while in his cell fell off of a bench or cot several times causing disorientation and death. This report caused a fury, and historical society trustees demanded an immediate and detailed investigation into the circumstances surrounding the death. Copies of their demand were sent to the Ohio Attorney General, the Logan County prosecutor, and the State Highway Patrol. Eventually the Logan County coroner changed his verdict to death due to a blow caused before being jailed, but no one was satisfied. His friends long suspected, but could not prove, that Altick's death was due to misadventure by person or persons unknown. His widow remarried soon after Altick's death.

## Scope and Content Note

The span *years* for this collection are 1924 to 1947. The bulk of the collection concerns Altick's archaeological activities while secretary t curator for the Clark County Historical Society. Although it is occasionally difficult to discern from his writings when Altick was operating independently, most of the internal evidence seems to indicate that his excavations were on behalf of the historical society and were a normal function of his curatorial position. Any other reports he may have filed or compiled for the historical society may be found in the society's archival collection. The other major portion of the collection includes his assorted writings and speeches and correspondence with other archaeologists and Indian collectors. Both center around archaeological finds, his as well as others.

Series 1 contains an autobiographical sketch about Altick. The other 3 file folders detail the investigation surrounding Altick's untimely death. It includes depositions by cell mates, Altick's wife, and the arresting authorities and the original petition from the historical society requesting the investigation.

Series 2, Site Explorations and Reports, is arranged alphabetically rather than chronologically because some of the sites Altick investigated had been known since the first decades of the nineteenth century or were initially explored by other archaeologists or organizations. Even the sites Altick discovered he often did not immediately explore. However, if he made several explorations of a site, as in the case of the Stokes Township **Glacial** Dame, those reports are filed chronologically. The only exception is File 10 titled Boblett and Campbell Mounds Compared. It is the final file on the Campbell Mounds and is placed there because Altick felt there was a strong cultural affinity between the two mounds which he extensively compared in an article published in Escalade. Most of the reports seem to be polished essays and several have indications of their publication in local popular magazines. There are actual site notes and rough drawings for less than half of the sites. Altick probably explored as many as 44 sites in Clark County, but the collection does not contain reports on all those sites. The location of any other site reports is speculative. Like the manuscript copy of the book he was writing at the time of his death, his notes may have remained with his widow. There may also be additional site information at the Ohio Historical Society (previously the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society). (See Series 5)

By the time this collection was processed by the curator, it had already undergone various other file configurations. The impetus for the last (and hopefully final) reorganization occurred in 1995 when the *curator* had to compile and submit the final inventory mandated by the terms of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act. In order to compile the inventory, the curator had to consult Altick's site notes and reports. Unfortunately, it soon became obvious that the collection needed to be reorganized. One question which arose during this process was what to do with the files on pottery styles comprising Series 3. Altick consulted other archaeologists' writings concerning pottery styles and appears to have made transcripts which he then annotated. In fact, his annotations may vary widely from the findings reported in the original articles and may actually be his own speculations and observations. What is unclear is whether Altick kept all his pottery notes together or with individual site reports. Most of the articles he consulted came from the Ohio Historical Society Quarterly. The only indication of the possible use that Altick intended to make of this material is a small note in the Preface to the *January* 1938

issue of Escalade. In that issue it states that "Altick . . . at present is writing and illustrating a book on the Prehistoric Potters of Ohio." It is unclear whether Altick ever completed this work.

There are only 3 files of information on pottery styles which can be directly attributed to Altick. These begin Series 4. Series 4 also contains his writings on trails (files 4 - 6), Indians (files 7 - 9), local history (files 10 - 12), writings which were meant for publication (files 13 - 21), and finally transcripts of speeches (files 22 - 27). As stated in the biographical sketch, Altick usually published his findings in the local newspaper, a popular magazine called Hobbies, and a locally produced magazine called Escalade. Copies of Escalade are located in the historical society archives.

Series 5 is a small, 3 file series of correspondence with members of the Ohio Indian Relic Collectors' Society concerning archaeological finds and membership. One file contains by-laws and constitution. Of special note is the file of correspondence with H. Holmes Ellis. The letters indicate that there was an informal cooperative relationship between the Clark County Historical Society and the Ohio State Archaeological and Historical Society (now O. H. S.).

Series 6 comprises Altick's correspondence. The topic is usually Indian artifacts, but there are a number of files of general Springfield history. In the files to Byron Knoblock and B. W. Stephens is indication that Altick may have collaborated in the writing of these authors' books. The series is organized chronologically. The last file contains a small notebook with no cover. Its attribution to Altick is questionable.

Series 7 is photographs, black and white ranging in size from 2"x 3" to 8" x 10", most of which were taken by Altick during his excavations. There *are* not photographs for every site report, and there are some photographs for which there is no site report, notably the old Fort Pickawillany site. The last two files contain photographs of artifacts attributed to Altick located at the Ohio Historical Society and a group photograph of the Ohio Indian Relic Collectors' Society respectively. The series is organized alphabetically by site.

Series B contains oversize drawings, maps, and photographic panels. The drawings were done by Altick. Most of them show stratifications and the distribution of artifacts. The photographic panels were probably part of a display.

EN. B. The Clark County Historical Society has some of the artifacts from Altick's various excavations. It is obvious from the historical society's Record Book that Altick donated or more properly loaned some items which he later reclaimed. All the artifacts are available for research upon request. Please contact the Curator of the historical society at 513-324-0657.7

Box and Folder

Series	File	Description
1	1	Biographical sketch of Arthur Riggs Altick April 3, 1936
	2	Newspaper articles concerning Altick's death
	3	Investigation of the death of Altick
	4	Investigation on Altick's death
	1	Archaeological map of Clark County
	2	Baum Prehistorical Village Site
	3	Bull Hill Site - Harmony Twp. Article and correspondence for <u>Hobbies</u> magazine; Irving Brain discovery of skull
	4	Bush Place - 1936 (Cedar Swamp, etc.) Clipping, report, <u>Escalade</u> article
	5	Boblett (Lowry) Mounds 1935 & 1939 Report, revisions <i>for Escalade</i> , letter to <u>News-Sun</u> , field notes
	6	Boblett Mound - Letter : K. M. Boblett to Altick concerning exploration of mound
	7	Archaeological survey of the Campbell Group of Prehistoric Earthworks - 1935
	8	Field notes and drawings on the Campbell Mounds
	9	List of findings from Campbell Mounds *1 & 2
	10	Boblett and Campbell Mounds Compared
	11	Flint Ridge - 1941 Article and revisions
	12	Discoveries at George Rogers Clark <i>Park</i> "Red Paint" Grave - 1934
	13	Indian Lake - 1938 Report and clippings
	14	Jackson County - Ohio; Rock Station, Indian, Echo, Yerian, Rock Run, etc.
	15	Jackson Co. Rock Stations; Echo & Indian Stations
	16	Jackson Co. Rock Stations; Report & 3 letters
17	Jackson Co. Rock Stations; Altick's report about stops along the way	
18	Jackson Co. - Ohio Welston Lake Alma State Park	
19	Jackson Co. - Ohio The Leo Petroglyphs c Turkey Tracks	
20	Manring Mounds (National Road) - 1941; 2 reports and letter	

- 21 Manring Mounds The Ohio Journal of Science Vol. 82 No. 4 1982
- 22 Shuey Mound - 2 reports, 1 letter
- 23 Stokes Twp. Glacial Kame - 1934 Madison Co.; Clippings and notes
- 24 Stokes Twp. Glacial Kame - Madison Co. October 15, 1934 1st exploration, reports and letters
- 25 Stokes Twp. Glacial Kame - Madison Co. November 24, 1934 2nd exploration
- 26 Stokes Twp. **Glacial** Kame - Madison Co. Correspondence concerning find and subsequent exhibits and loans
- 27 Indian Relics near Terre Haute
- 28 Tremont City - German Twp. 1932 - 33 Report parts # 1 & 2
- 29 Tremont City - German Twp. 1932 - 33 Clippings and pottery report
- 30 "Exploring old Indian Hunting Grounds . . Union and Delaware Cos." Altick 1926
- 31 West Middletown Site - Butler Co. 1931
- 3 1 Assorted articles on pottery - most dated from mid-1930's
- 2 "Pottery from the Turner Group of Earthworks" by Dr. Charles C. Willoughby
- 3 Pottery from the Seip, Shuey, & Tremper Mounds & the Jackson Co. Rock Stations
- 4 Pottery from the Excavation of the Reeve Village Site
- 5 Pottery from Pickaway and Logan Counties
- 6 Pottery of the Northwest, Family Distinctions.. By W. H. Holmes
- 7 "Pottery from Sites in Northern Ohio." By Emerson T. Greenman (?)
- 8 "Pottery from the Campbell Village Site." By Dr. H. C. Shetrone (possibly Altick)
- 9 "Ohio Valley Pottery, Cultural Groups." By W. H. Holmes
- 10 "Ancient Monuments" Squier & Davis. Section on pottery
- 4 1 "General Distribution" By Arthur R. Altick
- 2 "The Art of Prehistoric Potters on Certain Sites in Ohio" By Arthur Altick
- 3 "Restoring Pottery Vessels" By Arthur Altick
- 4 "The Scioto Trail" (& others) By A. Altick Original and revisions



- 5 "The Scioto, Miami, Shawnee and Wabash  
Trails." By Altick
- 6 "Indian Trails of Western Ohio." Revisions & letter to  
Altick
- 7 "Figures of Earth" By Altick March 8, 1941
- 8 "Youths History of Ohio Mound Builders."  
Acknowledgement for book
- 9 Miscellaneous writings contained in other articles
- 10 "The Daniel Hertzler House." By Altick
- 11 "It Is A Fact." By Altick
- 12 "Thanksgiving 100 Years Ago in *Clark County*."
- 13 "Tools Left By Savages Show Their Advance" Springfield  
Daily News – August 7, 1924
- 14 "Mounds in County Reveal Histories of Primitive Man."  
Springfield Daily News Aug. 7, 1924
- 15 "First Ordinances Passed In Springfield ..." Sunday Edition Nov.  
5, 1933
- 16 "Evolution of Firearms Shown by Exhibit of Historical  
Society." Springfield Daily News May 25, 1934
- 17 "The Lipstick of a Mound Builder Princess.;" "Hats of the  
Moundbuilders." Escalade
- 18 "Springfield's First Baby Show." Springfield  
newspapers Aug. 19. 1937
- 19 "Prehistoric Potter of Ohio." Springfield Daily News May  
13, 1938
- 20 "Mystery of the Cup in the Indian Stone Pestle Solved."  
Hobbies magazine June 25, 1938
- 21 "Indian Relic Collector Sees Benefit ..."  
Hobbies magazine Jan. 22, 1940
- 22 "Some Archaeological Facts Concerning the Moundbuilders."  
Speech delivered before the Lions Club of Middletown, Ohio  
1929
- 23 "The Moundbuilders and the American Indian." Address delivered  
before the Young Peoples Society - Terre Haute Methodist  
Church 7/27/33
- 24 "Field Work Relating to Archaeology, the Moundbuilders ..."  
Delivered to Terre Haute M. E. Church 10/18/4(2)2
- 25 "Agricultural Methods and Implements of the Mound Builder  
and Indian." Delivered to Clark County Horticultural Society  
1/3/1934
- 26 "The Original Americans." Delivered before Young Mens Class  
Northminster Presbyterian May 19, 1935
- 27 "Historical Data of Springfield and Clark County." Radio  
address 9/17/1942

- 5      1      Ohio Indian Relic Collectors' Society Bulletins and By-laws, clippings  
        2      Correspondence primarily with LeDow Johnston President of O. I. R. C. S.  
        3      Correspondence with H. Holmes Ellis  
        4      Ohio Archaeological Inventories – 1975 – Altick Sites
- 6      1      Correspondence with Ripley's Believe It Or Not on Iroquois Indians 1931-32  
        2      Correspondence concerning Springfield's Post Office 1935  
        3      Letter to Altick from Ralph W. Stroebel - Feb. 25, 1936 concerning Saginaw,  
            Mich. Indian sites  
        4      Correspondence with Byron Knoblock concerning bannerstones 1935 – 1939  
        5      Correspondence with A. J. Domer concerning *Clark Co.*'s first Court  
            House 1940  
        6      Correspondence with B. W. Stephens on gorgets 1941  
        7      Correspondence with Dr. James Griffin Rough draft of review of  
            Griffin's book on Ft. Ancient culture 1944  
        8      Correspondence with Hobbies about article, "Indian Trails" (multiple  
            copies)  
        9      Untitled article (2) edited by Reber Ross using Altick's findings on  
            local Indian sites n.d.  
        10     Notebook with notes on travel, expenses, and Indian relics (may not be  
            Altick's)
- 7                    1            Baum Village Site 1900  
                          2            Boblett Group n.d.  
                          3            Campbell Mound n.d.  
                          4            Explorations at Feurt Village Site 12/31/39  
                          5            Site of Old Fort Pickawillany - Miami Co.  
                          6            Flint Ridge - Oct. G, 1940  
                          7            Manring Mound (National Road) 1919; 1940  
                          8            Mound City Group - Chillicothe  
                          9            Rock Stations - Jackson Co. OH and Leo  
                                    Petroglyphs - 1937  
                          10          Old Indian Mill - Terre Haute 1934  
                          11          Indian relics - bannerstones ='  
                          12          Artifacts at O. H. S. (Possibly from Altick's digs)  
                          13          Ohio Indian Relic Collectors' Society 1942; 1945
- 8                    1            Map of Lewistown Reservoir, Indian Lake n.d.  
                          2            Archaeological Survey of the Boblett Group 1935.  
                                    2 maps  
                          3            Floor plans, contents, and cross - section Boblett  
                                    Mound #2 1940  
                          4            Campbell Group of Prehistoric Earthworks  
                                    Stratification Cross-section Mound 1 1935

- 5 Campbell Group of Prehistorica Earthworks  
Stratification Cross-section Mound 2 1935
- 6 Campbell Group of Prehistorica Earthworks]  
Floor Plan and Contents Mound 2
- 7 Photograph Display of Campbell Group  
Excavations 2 panels
- 8 Archaeological map of Saginaw Co. Mich.