

Some Relic Hunting Etiquette

by Chuck Marcum

Manners are good practice, not just at the dinner table but also in relic hunting. They will help you keep in good standings with your hunting buds, land owners, club members, and the general public which in turn will enable you to make lots of good finds. All of us know and mostly abide by the "Treasure Hunter's Code of Ethics" which are just common sense rules. They are listed on lots of club's websites and following them are a requirement for membership in most clubs. Besides those golden rules there are some relic hunting social behavior that I have been taught by older hunting buddies and that I have learned through my experiences.

Each one of us are representatives of our hobby. The public is naturally curious and always watching us. Don't dig holes in parks, yards, or school yards with shovels because you can damage the landscape, it looks bad, and it can get yourself and everybody else banned from hunting a really good park. A lady that lives near a park where we hunt has been calling the police every time she sees us digging telling them that we are "tearing up the park". When the police arrives to check out the complaint they see the holes we dig with our hand diggers and just remind us to fill them in. Good thing we were not out there with shovels, that may have had a different conclusion.

Walking out of a cemetery with a metal detector just plain looks bad which in turn gives us a bad rep and more fuel for some of the archeologists and politicians. I hunted a ranch for many years. I heard of two people that asked the landowner for permission to detect on it. One of them I took there before. When they were turned down for permission they hunted one of the cemeteries. There are plenty other places to hunt. Relic hunters are territorial, secretive, and pretty possessive about their spots. Mostly for good reasons. One of them is because they do not want to be run off of their sites which they have researched, got permission, and spent a lot of time swinging that detector to find the spots in a particular pasture or patch of woods. They do not like other hunters to go back to sites they have shown, taken them to, or heard about with or without the landowners permission. Always wait or ask to be invited to someone's hunting sites and when you find good spots of your own invite them or they may not take you again. You are also responsible for anybody you bring along to someone's spot. Sometimes they will go back, bring others, leave holes open, and just don't care about the property. I revisited one of my old sites the other day and took a friend. We saw some open holes and some filled in holes with large pieces of iron laying next to them out there. Landowners do not like seeing that and I am not sure what he will say to me next time I see him. He may run me off and tell his neighbors.

Inviting new hunters to the hobby along with you is always good. You can teach and learn from them which is a lot of fun. They should also come up with spots to hunt eventually. Some will and some never do. If you find spots together don't go back by yourself and especially with other hunters without your buddy's knowledge. I hunted with someone years ago that let me find the old house sites then he would take everybody and hunt them while I was at work.

Hunting public places like parks or schools can be a little different than private land. If someone takes you to one of their hot spots such as a productive school most hunters feel you shouldn't go back for a year or two to give them plenty of opportunity to hunt it themselves. Never go without permission back to places where the club has had an outing . You can ruin the possibility of other club outings in the area.

Teamwork is a great way to find good relics quicker. If you are out hunting with someone, searching for a spot in a plowed field or pasture, find one, and dig something good call him over to hunt it with you. Don't be afraid to bump coils because he may find that next good spot and he will remember if you let him know about yours.

A little courtesy, respect, and manners go a long way. You will be invited more places by more people, get to hunt more variety of spots, find lots more relics, and have a whole lot more fun.