

GPS, Maps, and Relic Hunting

By Chuck Marcum

You have always heard that the key to finding relics is research, but all the time you invest in doing that research will be wasted if you can't find your site. You need to be 100% sure that you've reached your researched destination. Sometimes you can be a few hundred feet from a spot and miss it completely. If your site is next to a section line road you won't have any problems you can clock from the corner and step a distance out to it. If your site is out in the middle of a section with no roads or fences to go by, in the middle of a forest where you can't see a hundred feet in front of you, or maybe even out on the lake where the water level is always changing you're going to need help. Any tool you can use to give you an edge to finding that spot ought to be taken advantage of. Today's technology has provided us with these tools, they are a combination of digital maps and hand held GPS receivers.

If you can put your site on a 7.5 minute quadrangle map, get your latitude and longitude to the site, and learn to follow a Gps

receiver I can guarantee that you'll get within 100 ft. of that site no matter where it is.

There are a lot of different digital map sites available where you can download USGS 7.5 Minute Quads. I'm more familiar with Delorme's 3-D Topo Quads Software. Oklahoma comes on 6 CDs. To find a location you just type in the nearest town or landmark, any place you stop your cursor it'll give you the latitude, longitude, and elevation. I can also download my GPS into Delorme and all my waypoints will show up on the map or I can upload waypoints or routes into my Gps from Delorme. For more information on this software you can go to their site at www.delorme.com Before getting this software I had a plastic overlay I'd have to put over the paper map. Then I'd have to add or subtract latitude and longitude it was also in the old 1927 Datum. Delorme is very simple to use.

I'm going to use the ghost town Appalachia for an example. I hunt it every once in a while looking for a token for Jack with no luck so far. The first thing you need

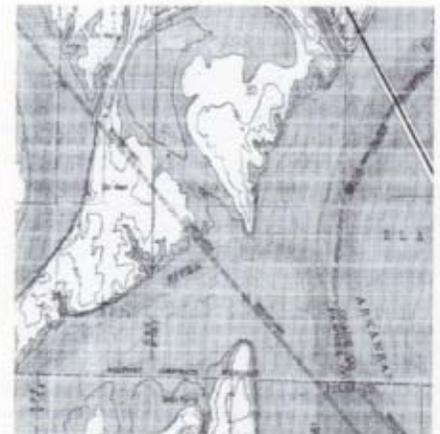
to do is to get all the old maps you can get pertaining to your site. Next you need to transfer the site from the old map onto the new map. You can do that in a number of different ways, by eyeballing it, by making an overlay, or by scaling it off of the section lines. After you have it on the new map you have to get coordinates to it. There are different coordinates you can use such as latitude and longitude, UTM, or military grid. I'm more familiar with latitude and longitude. With Delorme you can stop the cursor right on your site that you put on the new map and the latitude and longitude will show for that position. Next you need to enter the latitude and longitude into your GPS. Now your map work is done all you have to do is follow your GPS right to your site. One thing to remember is that your original source has to be accurate. The GPS will take you to the spot you put on the new map. We had an outing awhile back to a Mission we used one old map as a source. We plotted it on a new map followed the GPS to the position but the site wasn't



1915 30 Minute USGS Quadrangle Map



1958 7.5 Minute USGS Quadrangle Map



1981 7.5 Minute USGS Quadrangle Map

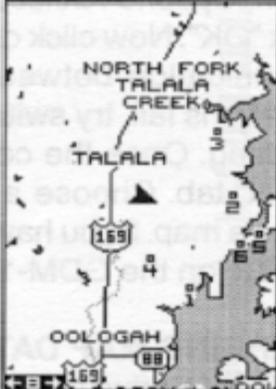
there. The map wasn't any good. It is best to get all the old maps you can and compare all of them. When you are Relic Hunting you will eliminate a whole lot more sites than you will find.

There are a lot of different brands and types of GPS receivers on the market today. There are units for cars, boats, and Surveying. The perfect one for relic hunting, hiking, fishing, and hunting is the compact handheld. The accuracy now for a good model is anywhere + - 1ft. to 80 ft. Close enough for swinging. I bought my receiver two and a half years ago. I decided on a Lowrance Global Map 100. I chose a Lowrance because the factory is located on Skelly Drive between 11th St. and I-44 in Tulsa. It's a good thing I did because recently I was downloading a software upgrade from their web site into my computer then I uploaded it into my GPS. The next day I noticed my maps had disappeared from my GPS screen. I uploaded a couple of more maps from my Map Select CD, still no maps on the screen. I called the support person at Lowrance and she couldn't figure out what it was. At lunch time I drove over to the factory and went into the service department. A technician looked at it for a while I was getting a

little discouraged, then he took it into the back probably conferring with other techs. He came out and showed me what it was. The navionics got turned on when I was upgrading. The moral of this story is to buy local. If I had another brand I would of had to send it to their factory, pay shipping, been out of a GPS for a couple of months, and maybe even a repair bill for their labor since it was out of warranty.

I decided on the Global Map 100 because I am a map freak. The unit comes with a background map and has three different map screens. I got the package which included Mapselect software on CD where I can upload more detailed maps than the background map has. I can also make custom maps to upload. It also came with a computer cord. I paid \$450 for the package. I think it's about \$100 less today. I haven't seen the package price. The unit itself is \$199 The Mapselect CD and cord is \$160 now. You can get by with just the unit but I would also recommend getting a download cable, you can use it with other software. You can also download GDM 16 from the Lowrance site . It'll let you download your waypoints along with some other features. Lowrance's address is www.lowrance.com

When you enter the coordinates you are creating a waypoint. You can name your waypoints. I have named the ones below Appalachia and intersection 3. My receiver will store 750 points. You can also set points with the map curser on the screen or set one at your current position. The place you park is a good spot to set one. It saved us more than once. You then want to navigate to your waypoint which is your site. The navigation screen will give you a compass bearing in degrees. North being 360 or 0, East being 90, and south being 180. You'll need a compass with the bearings on it. The distance is shown in miles and tenths. A tenth of a mile being 528 ft. When you get closer than a tenth it will be in ft. In the example below the direction or bearing is N 111 E a distance of 950 ft. Once you get used to it it's pretty simple and if the site isn't there you'll know your source was wrong because you went to the exact spot it said it was. Anyone interested in more info. give me a call maybe we can go hunt and I'll show you how good it works.



One of the 3 Map Screens



One of the Navigation Screens



New Map with the Waypoints & Coordinates downloaded to it.

I will be updating this article real soon. I now have the newest Lowrance Receiver the iFinder with 128mb capability. There is also new GPS and Map Software out now with map calibration and map overlaying programs.