Finding Aid to the Warren King Moorehead Papers MS.716

Finding aid prepared by Holly Rose Larson
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Title: Warren King Moorehead Papers
Identifier/Call Number: MS.716
Contributing Institution: Autry National Center, Braun Research Library
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 0.1 linear feet (1 folder)
Date: 1933
Abstract: This collection contains an annotated map and explanation of map showing distribution of mound cultures written by Warren King Moorehead in 1933. This collection includes another manuscript by Moorehead entitled "The Mound-Building Problem: A Brief Review."
creator: Moorehead, Warren King, 1866-1939
Scope and Contents
This collection contains an annotated map and explanation of map showing distribution of mound cultures written by Warren King Moorehead in 1933. This collection includes another manuscript by Moorehead entitled "The Mound-Building Problem: A Brief Review."
Biographical note
Warren King Moorehead was known in his time as the 'Dean of American archaeology.' He was born in Siena, Italy to missionary parents on March 10, 1866, he died on January 5, 1939 at the age of 72, and is buried in his hometown of Xenia, Ohio.
He began excavations and collections as a schoolboy, and later self-financed work that led to a display at the 1888 Cincinnati Centennial Exposition, and contact with Dr. Thomas Wilson of the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Wilson encouraged and possibly helped Moorehead to enter the University of Pennsylvania for study under the famous Dr. Edward Drinker Cope, but opportunities to lecture and write for publication led Warren away from class work. His publication of the novel "Wanneta, The Sioux," in 1890 led to a lecture tour and opportunities to write for a larger audience than just his professors.
A contract to write for a national magazine about the "Ghost Dance" phenomenon on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation put Moorehead on the scene for the critical weeks leading up to what is now known as the Wounded Knee Massacre of Dec. 29, 1890. Moorehead was not present, though his camera was apparently used by journalists who were still on the scene to record the horrific aftermath; Gen. John Rutter Brooke ordered Moorehead off the reservation under armed military escort on Dec. 28, according to Moorehead's journal because he was the only reporter present who spoke some of the language and was permitted to stay overnight with the Sioux in their encampments.
After a frustrating period trying to influence legislators to give justice to the Sioux and publish his account of events leading up to the massacre, Moorehead returned to Ohio and found a position developing the state display for the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition (Chicago World's Fair), which led him to work with Frederic Ward Putnam, the Harvard professor who began the academic field of archaeology in the United States. Some of the field work Moorehead did for Putnam resulted in the Hopewell culture "type site" near Chillicothe, Ohio, setting the parameters for the study of American Indian moundbuilders of the Ohio River valley around 2000 years ago. Moorehead launched into an ambitious plan to create an atlas of Ohio mounds and earthworks, which he saw eroding and destroyed wherever he went across the Midwest, and even in forays into the American Southwest, becoming one of the first surveyors of Chaco Canyon and Mesa Verde.
He was Curator of the Museum of The Ohio State University (1894-1897), worked at archaeological sites along the Ohio River, and at Chaco Canyon and up into Mesa Verde. As head of the Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology in Andover, Massachusetts from 1902 to 1920, Moorehead launched into a program of research and publication that went on to include the Red Paint People of the Atlantic coast, Cahokia Mounds in Illinois from 1921, and Etowah Indian Mounds in Georgia from 1925. Moorehead began excavation at the Etowah site during the winter of 1925. His work lasted four winter seasons, conducting excavations on Mound C and the surrounding village area. Moorehead's work on Mound C led to the discovery of a rich array of Mississippian culture goods.
He was named by President Theodore Roosevelt a member of the board of commissioners for the Bureau of Indian Affairs with the Department of Interior in 1909, and his work on behalf of Indian Land Claims, exposing fraudulent Indian agents, and seeking better health care on reservations. After many attempts to remove him and silence the commission, especially after his leadership of the White Earth Indian Reservation hearings on injustices following the Dawes Act and Moorehead's book "The American Indian in the United States, Period 1850-1914," the Depression was used as pretext to dissolve the commission in 1933, after almost 25 years of service by Moorehead.
Preferred citation
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Processing history
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Acquisition
Donated by Warren King Moorehead, 1934 February.

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Subjects and Indexing Terms
Etowah Indian Mound State Historic Site (Ga.)
Hopewell Culture
Map Showing Distribution of Mound Cultures in the United States
Maps
Mound-Builder Problem: A Brief Review
Mound-builders
Mounds
Muskogean Indians