

### Museum Notes

One of Iowa's oldest human burials was excavated late last year by the museum, and portions of it are now on display in the Indian room. Miller Cavin of Lewis, Iowa, came upon a group of bones last October while digging the foundation for a residence in that town. Fortunately, he and his sons quickly identified the remains as human, and suspecting that they might be Indian, notified the museum of the discovery.

Examination of teeth that were found indicated that they were indeed Indian, and museum personnel, aided by interested amateur archaeologists Otto Knauth, Paul Doggett, and John Phipps, all of Des Moines, uncovered the remainder of the burial. The bones were found at a depth of about 2½ feet and are believed to be the remains of five individuals. Because the bones were disarticulated and placed more or less randomly in the burial pit, and because many of the small bones were missing, it can be assumed that it was a bundle burial containing the remains of individuals who had died quite some time previous to interment.

The bones as they were uncovered were found to be in very poor condition, but a group of three skulls was removed nearly intact and taken to the museum. Only one artifact was found, a dark flinty chert projectile point which had been placed on top of one of the skulls in a position that implied that it had not been hafted. Two flakes of the same type of chert were found in association with the burial and it is assumed that the point was made at the time and place of burial and put into position before the pit was filled. A small portion of beaver tooth also lay upon the skull less than an inch from the artifact.

Due to the type of the point found and to the manner of burial, these Indians have been tentatively dated at 2500 B.C. and probably belonged to the Keg Creek complex of the Archaic Culture. It is believed that they were members of nomadic groups that roamed across Iowa and lived by hunting and by gathering wild roots, nuts, and berries. There is no evidence that they made pottery, practiced agriculture, or knew the use of the bow and arrow.

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