

boldest of us walked the pole nonchalantly before taking off. The pommeys pile, yielding deliciously to the impact of our bodies, charmed every sense. Besides the exciting sense of smell and touch, there was the sight of greenish-white cane stalks shimmering under a harvest moon, and the sound of the pommeys sighing and rustling as we tossed them about, our laughing mouths finding their sweetness.

When at length we tired of our play—and this was only temporary for tomorrow night we would be back—we went again to the shed, where work was going on at an increased tempo. Somebody was taking skimmings from the rapidly boiling syrup; the boss himself was testing and tasting. Already in our imaginations we were sitting down to winter breakfasts of griddle cakes with cries of "Pass the 'lasses, please!" or "Mo', mo' lasses!" (a favorite witticism) which would enliven the table talk as the syrup gurgled from the pitcher.

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## MUSEUM NOTES

BY JOHN PHIPPS  
MUSEUM DIRECTOR, HISTORICAL BUILDING

A report of discovery of human remains was made to the Department of History and Archives on Sunday, February 27, 1966, at approximately 7:30 p.m. by Mr. Lester Van Buskirk of Des Moines. The location of the find was reported to be on public property in Jester Park near Granger in Polk County, Iowa.

The site was investigated the next morning. The tract of land on which the site was located is adjacent to park property adjoining the park at the northwest corner (Jefferson Township, Section 29, Range 13000 north—12400 west in Polk County, Iowa). The land is owned by Peters Construction Company of Des Moines and has been used as a source of gravel

for construction purposes. Geologically the site appears to be a glacial morain overlooking the Des Moines River which is approximately one-half mile to the north. The gravel exposed in the edge of the pit is somewhat limonitic in nature and ranges in size from sand to numerous water worn pebbles four to six inches in diameter.

The remains were apparently exposed in the edge of the pit by a natural slumping of the perimeter. Due to weathering, however, the possibility exists that portions of the burial had been disturbed by machinery during removal of gravel. The workmen present were questioned and denied any knowledge of the burial prior to its discovery by Mr. Van Buskirk.



*Tribune Photo*

BURIAL AS IT APPEARED BEFORE EXCAVATION

In cross section the original outline of the gravel pit was well defined. The pit was straight sided, 32 inches across, circular to ovate in shape and the remains were approximately 36 inches below the existing surface of the ground. Inquiry was made concerning the amount of overburden removed

which was determined to be less than twelve inches. From these facts it can be assumed that the pit had an initial depth of not less than 36 inches nor more than 48 inches.

The bulk of the skeletal material was found to be protruding from the vertical portion of the gravel bank about five feet above the lower level of the excavation. Fragments of the skull, ribs and pelvis were recovered from the loose gravel at the base of the vertical wall. The undisturbed bones were photographed in place and the fill material carefully removed. Extraneous material in the fill consisted of shell fragments and one complete valve of a clam shell and two fragments of charred bone. No other evidence of charring was noted either in the fill or in association with the contents of the burial. Some of the shell fragments were partially coated with a calcareous crust with pebbles cemented to the surface.

The position of the long bones and vertical column indicated a typical flexed burial of the same type encountered both at Redfield and West Des Moines. The remains were oriented with the head to the north. Displacement of the cervical vertebrae upward from the horizontal plane of the thoracic vertebrae seems to indicate that at the time of interment the neck was flexed with the head in a nearly upright position.

The skeletal material was carefully removed to the laboratory for study and it was determined from the dentition, skull suture closure, super orbital ridge and long bones that the subject was a male not more than thirty years of age.

The complete lack of cultural material associated with the burial would make any further evaluation impossible at this time. However, the bones are preserved and labeled with pertinent data and are available for study at a later date if need be. The surrounding area was searched for guidance of other burials but none were found, except two small bone fragments recovered from loose gravel about fifteen feet away. The disassociation of these fragments would seem to indicate that they were from another burial that had been destroyed by the machinery at some previous time.

This burial was somewhat unique due to the fact that the entire excavation was in glacial gravel. The presence of large pebbles distributed throughout the fill would make it apparent that the grave was opened with considerable difficulty.

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