



NEWSLETTER

Number 12

Iowa City, Iowa

July 25, 1954

Hello. In line with our new policy of more publication we are going to attempt to issue a Newsletter every two months. As soon as we can get more items from the membership we will institute a monthly issue of the Newsletter. At the present time an issue a month would entail more work writing articles than your editor can afford. It is up to the members to supply this office with news and articles so that we can make our Society an organization which is truly representative of Iowa archaeology.

Perhaps I am stimulated to write this Newsletter by the magnificent dose of poison ivy, poison oak and chigger bites which now plagues me. These seem to be occupational hazards of archaeology. They say that misery loves company - so I invited Dr. Alton K. Fisher to visit some sites with me. He did - and now has chigger bites too!

My itches would be easier to bear if I could report that the digging I was involved in when I got the various plagues had produced a lot of artifacts, but I must admit that we drew blanks on our first site. We excavated three mounds on the northern edge of Iowa City but they were nearly devoid of cultural material. One mound had a burial that consisted of part of a human skull - nothing more. Not a single potsherd and not a single stone tool was encountered, and this despite the fact that every bit of earth moved was sifted. However, when one is scientifically excavating a site he can derive a great amount of information from the remains even if no artifacts are encountered. A report of the work will be forthcoming in the Journal in the near future.

I might add that since the mounds were finished we have found a very nice Middle to Late Woodland camp site with a trash deposit over three feet thick.

We haven't progressed far enough to say any more but this too will be reported to you soon.

TRUSTEES MEETING

A meeting of the Trustees of the Iowa Archaeological Society was held Friday, July 9, 1954 in Iowa City. A considerable amount of business was conducted and several important decisions were made. Members present were Dr. Alton K. Fisher, Mr. W. D. Frankforter, Mr. Lowell Miller and your editor, Dr. Reynold J. Ruppc. Mr. Wilfred Logan was unable to attend but gave me his proxy so that we would have a quorum. After considerable discussion the following decisions were made:

1. Regional chapters.

The subject of regional chapters has come up in the past so it was thought that the subject should be decided for once and for all. The Trustees

unanimously approved that the Articles of Incorporation should be changed to make regional chapters possible. The decision was made that members are free to form regional chapters and use the name of the Society provided that all the members of the local group are members of the Iowa Archaeological Society. This provision is necessary because an organization using the Society's name must be a legal part of the state society and responsible to the parent group.

2. Additional members of the Board of Trustees.

It was unanimously voted to make the President and Secretary-Treasurer ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees. It was thought that this would increase the ability of the board to conduct business and allow more opinions to be expressed.

3. Methods to increase membership.

The problem of increasing the Society membership faces us all. If we are to survive as an active organization and continue to publish our Journal and Newsletter we need to attract more members. All members are urged to attract new members so that we can continue our publications and also broaden our coverage of the state and so attract articles for the publications from more people. A more active society would attract more people but the society can only be as active as its members so you are all urged to do your bit.

It was the feeling of the group that the publication policy has a strong bearing on the membership. To that end, ways of making the Journal and Newsletter more attractive were discussed at considerable length. No decisions were reached but several suggestions (all of which entail more work on the part of the editor) were made. Speaking for myself, I can only say I will try, but it must be emphasized that articles have to be submitted by the members for publication if I am to have any success as an editor.

The question of what the members wanted and expected from the Society was raised. We decided that we really did not know but we made several guesses and it is up to you folks to tell us whether we were right or wrong. One suggestion was made that you would like some articles which described the function of tools and implements that you have in collections.

Another suggestion concerned a guide to Iowa archaeology. We are now planning to prepare a manual that would describe and illustrate representative types of stone tools, pottery, houses, etc. Included also would be the range of sizes and the geographical extent of the various items. A manual of this type would allow everyone to identify and date his artifacts. The manual will be a tremendous task and cannot be done all at once. So we plan to issue it piecemeal and get the various sections into the Journal or Newsletter as they are finished. When all the sections have been prepared it will be a simple matter to combine them in one volume.

It was also suggested that municipal libraries throughout the state be induced to become members of the Society. This is an excellent suggestion and would serve to acquaint many people with the work and aims of our organization. The best way to start would be for individual members to approach their local and neighboring libraries and acquaint them with the society and ask that they become members. We are able to supply back issues of both the Journal and the Newsletter; an item of importance to librarians who like to have complete sets of publications.

REMEMBER! IF EACH MEMBER COULD CONTACT AND SIGN UP ONE ADDITIONAL MEMBER WE WOULD SOON HAVE AN IMPOSING MEMBERSHIP LIST.

The Board of Trustees would greatly appreciate your sending us ideas and suggestions on how the Society can better serve you. Send any ideas (and criticisms) that you have to the editor. We would also like to have you send suggestions about the kind of articles you would like to see in the Journal and Newsletter.

4. Journal publication.

This proved to be the biggest problem of all. As you know, the Journal is five issues in arrears (the next issue will be out in a few days). Almost every scientific journal in the country has had this experience in its history so we are not alone. We plan to have the Journal back on schedule by this time next year. That means eight issues in one year. The cost of printing eight issues is in the neighborhood of \$1,000.00 and that is more money than we can hope to have in our treasury in that time. We have, therefore, decided to produce the next four issues of the Journal by mimeographing instead of printing. The size and layout will be the same, and so will the cover, but the style of type and paper will be different. We thought this was a more satisfactory way out of the dilemma than to continue to have the journal fall further behind schedule. The mimeographed issues will cost very little because Mr. Lowell Miller has volunteered to do the work. We certainly owe him a vote of thanks for his generosity and kindness. The only real drawback to the plan is that we will not be able to use pictures. We do plan on using line drawings, however, as these can be accomplished by mimeographing.

5. Fall meeting

The fall meeting has been scheduled for Sunday, October 10, 1954 at McGregor, Iowa. The plans are to have a picnic lunch at Effigy Mounds National Monument. One of the considerations for the date was the desire to hold the meeting when the fall colors would be at their height. The program has been tentatively worked out but cannot be publicized until acceptance is secured from the speakers. We will send out the program as soon as it is completed.

We are looking forward to a visit from some of our good friends in the Wisconsin Archaeological Society and all of them are invited to attend. Those of you who are original members will remember that the members of the Wisconsin Archaeological Society were extremely helpful in starting our own Society.

The meeting will be an all-day affair so that we can have both formal talks and a field trip to some of the nearby sites. The officers will meet on Saturday afternoon to discuss business and reach decisions which will be presented to the vote of the members on Sunday. We are looking forward to a successful and well attended meeting.

6. Publicity for our meetings.

The problem of securing adequate publicity for our meetings has plagued us for some time. I suppose that we could say that general publicity for the society has also been meagre and difficult to obtain. In an effort to secure more publicity it was decided that a news release would occupy the last page of the newsletter that appeared before each meeting. We strongly urge each member to take this news release to his local newspaper editor in person and ask that it be printed. In this way we could secure a fairly adequate coverage of the state and might be able to attract some new members in this way.

The question of general news and publicity for the Society is a bit more difficult. We need to do something, or to have a program of interest, before we can be considered a newsworthy item by the state press. It is apparent to me from the kinds of letters I have received as a result of the publicity given

the University dig that many people are not even aware of the existence of an archaeological society in Iowa. If any member has an idea of how we could attract more publicity the Board of Trustees would be eternally grateful. Send them to either Mr. Weldon Frankforter, Sanford Museum, Cherokee, Iowa or to me, Dr. Reynold J. Ruppe, Dept. of Sociology and Anthropology, State University of Iowa, Iowa City.

Suggestions from Members

Dr. Jarren Hayes (Waukon) has suggested a bus tour of archaeological sites in Iowa. He thinks enough members would be interested to make such a trip possible. The idea would be to hire a bus and visit the best known sites in the state. He goes on to suggest that from the experience gained it might be possible to muster enough members to take a bus tour of the Southwest. These are intriguing ideas and they are very practical if enough people could take the trip.

Publication for Members

Through the courtesy of Mr. Lowell Miller and the Davenport Public Museum the members of the Society will receive a reprint of a famous article that appeared in the Proceedings of the Davenport Academy of Sciences entitled "Summary of the Archaeology of Iowa". The article was written by Professor Frederick Starr in 1895. Dr. Starr was a native of Iowa who taught what was probably the second course in Anthropology in the United States at Cornell College in 1886 or 1887. We believe you folks are fortunate to be able to receive this article.

Mr. Miller also made a second reprint available to us but unfortunately there are not enough copies to distribute to all of the members so we must send them out on a first-come-first-served basis. Please write to me at the State University for this second article.

The Mesquakie Indians

The editor received several letters asking for articles on the Mesquakie Indians of Tama. We are pleased to accede to this expression of interest in our own first Americans. We can be justly proud of the Mesquakies because they wanted to live in Iowa so much that they sold their horses and relinquished their annuities in Kansas and purchased land in Tama County so that they could come back. The Mesquakies are proud of the fact that they bought their land and that it is not a reservation. It is a little known fact in the state that the Mesquakies pay all the taxes that any other citizen pays except the school tax. They pay no school tax because the federal government supplies their schooling under an old treaty.

Some of you may be surprised to learn that not all of the Mesquakies went to Kansas after their eastern Iowa lands were taken from them in 1844. A number of the members of Poweshieck's band who lived around Iowa City remained behind and lived on small farms much like those of our first settlers in Iowa.

This little piece seems to be turning into a "do you know" session. In this same vein did you know that the Mesquakies were in Iowa before 1804, the date usually given for their arrival? They were in Iowa about 1750 and probably even earlier. They definitely had villages on the Wapsipinicon River about 1750 and prior to that time were traveling in Iowa from their villages at Green Bay, Wisconsin where they were located in 1636.

The Mesquakies traveled mainly by canoe and followed the major eastern rivers of Iowa. They had to take to the land on their winter hunting trips but never traveled very far away from their villages. They maintained two villages, a summer village where they lived while the corn that they planted was maturing and a winter village to which they traveled in the fall and which served as a base for the hunting parties. When they left the summer village they carried some of the corn they had just harvested and stored the rest in deep underground pits. These pits are probably similar to those found in archaeological village sites in the western part of Iowa and in Nebraska.

There is good evidence that when ancient Mesquakie village sites are found they will contain two rows of house facing each other along a single main street. We are not yet sure where the storage pits were placed; they may have been in the floors of the houses or they may have been dug in adjoining fields.

The above short account of some of the historical features of the Mesquakies will be continued in future issues of the Newsletter. Some aspects of their modern life will also be discussed. Those interested in learning more about the Mesquakies can obtain a booklet recently published by The Federated Women's Clubs of Iowa for fifty cents. Direct your requests for the booklet to Mrs. Raymond Siros, Tama, Iowa.

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