



# NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 20

IOWA CITY, IOWA

MARCH, 1957

## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE IOWA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

The annual meeting will be held on Sunday, April 14, 1957, at the Continuation Center of the State University of Iowa. For the benefit of members who wish to attend from the other end of the state there will be comfortable quarters available for an overnight stay. Overnight rates at the Continuation Center are \$3.50 per person. Reservations should be in as soon as possible and should be sent to me at the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, State University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa. Programs will be mailed to members prior to the meeting.

There is a News Release on the back page of this Newsletter and we would appreciate the members giving it to their local newspapers. We have had considerable success in obtaining publicity through the use of this device.

## STATE ACTIVITIES

Mt. Pleasant. Mr. Pat Ross of Mt. Pleasant, Iowa, brought a box of elephant bones to the lab on his visit here in March. It will be sent to Mr. W. D. Frankforter of the Sanford Museum, Cherokee, for examination. The bones were found in August, 1956, at the Rome Gravel Co. pit by Mr. E. R. Jarvis, ~~owner~~. They were found approximately 20 feet below the surface. A mammoth tooth was also reported to have been found there at an earlier date.

Glenwood. Mr. D. D. Davis of Glenwood, using site-survey forms obtained from the laboratory here at Iowa City, is working on a list of sites in the Mills County area. Anyone interested in a similar project for other counties may obtain the survey sheets by writing to Dr. Ruppe, Dept. of Anthropology, State Univ. of Iowa, and specify approximately how many are desired. We still need your assistance in getting the location and descriptions regardless whether it is one site or a dozen sites.

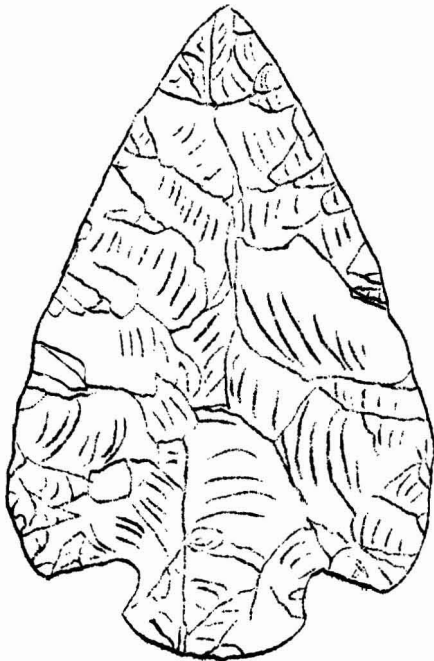


Fig. 1

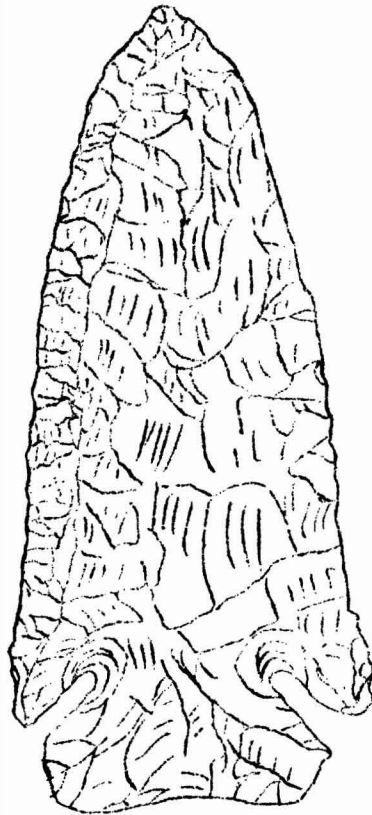


Fig. 2

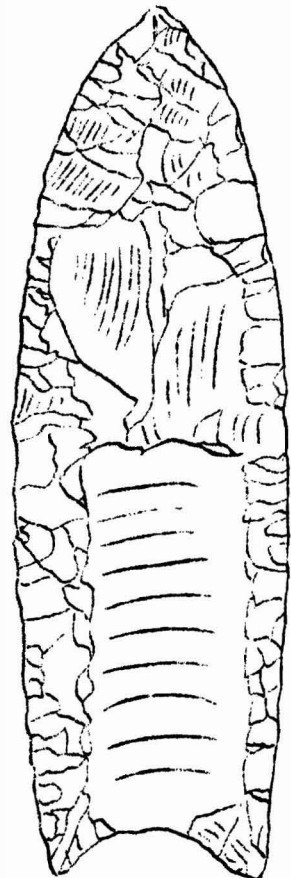


Fig. 3

The projectile points illustrated above were brought to the Archeology Laboratory at Iowa City by Mr. Warren Holland and Mr. Pat Ross from Mt. Pleasant. The above specimens are full size. Specimen 2 belongs to Mr. Ross and specimens 1 and 3 belong to Mr. Holland.

One specimen (Fig.1) is a typical Hopewell blade made of mottled gray and pink chert. This leaf shaped artifact with a lenticular cross-section possesses an expanding stem that measures 22mm. wide at its convex base. The maximum width is adjacent to the barbs. The specimen measures 84mm. long, 55mm. wide and 10mm. thick.

The tan chert specimen illustrated in Fig. 2 is a bevel edged projectile point or knife blade. It measures 104mm. long, 48mm. wide and 8mm. thick. The expanding stem, measuring 37mm. wide, possesses a concave base that has been thinned by pressure chipping and then ground smooth. The maximum width is at the barbs. The long edges are convex near the point and concave near the barbs. The notches measure 12mm. deep and 3mm. wide.

The folsom point illustrated in Fig. 3 is made of light gray chert. The specimen measures 113mm. long, 36mm. wide and 10mm. thick. The concave base possesses a depth of 7mm. and does not show evidence of basal grinding. The maximum width is near the mid-point of the blade. The flaking is nearly parallel to the short axis of the blade adjacent to the flutes. The average width of the two flutes is 22mm. One flute extends for a distance of 56mm, while the opposing flute only extends 42mm. The specimen measures 6mm. thick between the flutes.

## NOTES ON ARTIFACTS FROM BENTON COUNTY, IOWA

by Eugene Fugle

Public and private collections of artifacts, if well documented, are indicators of the varieties of archeological cultures that may be found in a particular area. The artifacts from Benton County to be discussed in this section of the newsletter are the property of Mrs. Ada McMillin. Benton County is a part of the Lower Iowa area which includes the valleys of the middle Cedar, Iowa and Des Moines rivers. Keyes, as early as 1920, realized that this area was one of the richest archeologically in the state with possibly few rival areas in the entire country. A total of approximately 6,000 artifacts was known to Keyes to comprise ten fairly large collections and forty-six smaller collections, mainly from the area along the Cedar River from Vinton to Moscow (Keyes, 1920). The artifacts in the McMillin Collection were once the property of Mr. Samuel Dorman of Brandon, Iowa, who, along with his father before him, had collected them at sites located mainly along the Cedar River. Mr. Dorman, a personal friend of the late Dr. Keyes, has volunteered to show the author a number of sites along the Cedar River this spring. The McMillin Collection is not large, numbering approximately 150 specimens, but these are the choice pieces of a once larger collection numbering several thousand specimens which belonged to Mr. Dorman. The collection was distributed to collectors from various parts of the country.

Mrs. Ada L. McMillin, who owns the Midway gas station, cabin court and restaurant at Junction 218 and U. S. Highway 30, Watkins, Iowa, has her collection on display in her restaurant. Mrs. McMillin was born on the Santee Reservation in Nebraska. Her father was Santee Sioux and French and her mother was primarily Brule Sioux and French. She is related to Chief Waubasha on her father's lineage and to Pierre Dorian, the first trader in the Dakotas, on her mother's lineage. She is also related to Sacajawea, the Shoshoni girl who guided Lewis and Clark, since Sacajawea was once married into the Dorian family. Mrs. McMillin lived on the Santee Reservation until she was seventeen years old. Shortly before leaving the reservation a ceremony was held and she was given an Indian name. She was given presents during the ceremony and, since she cherished them, she decided to collect more. At the present time her hobby is collecting primarily Plains Indian ethnographic material such as costumes, war-clubs and pipes. She also collects antique furniture, dishes, silver and cut glass. Nearly ninety percent of Mrs. McMillin's collection is comprised of the Plains Indian material, collected since 1907, which is probably the largest single collection of its kind in the state. Mrs. McMillin collected much of her material while employed as a graduate nurse at the Rosebud Reservation. Data was kept concerning how each specimen was made, who made it and who used or wore it. This ethnographic collection was displayed at the Con Foster Public Museum, Traverse City, Michigan, for a period of twenty years. Mrs. McMillin now has possession of the material and plans to write a book about it for her grandchildren and possibly for publication.

A large number of Woodland type blades and projectile points are represented in the archeological material. Especially noteworthy is the large number of Hopewell blades. Eccentric shaped flints are exceedingly rare archeologically but a large

sample is represented from Benton County. One pressure chipped chert fishhook and one problematical crescent shaped chert specimen are represented. The most fascinating artifacts are the pressure chipped, chert, animal effigies (Fig. 1). One lizard, one turtle, one thunderbird and one snake are readily recognized. These specimens are not unlike those chipped of agate from the Wilmington Valley, Oregon. Dr. Titterton of East St. Louis, Illinois, has several pressure chipped thunderbirds and a lizard that are nearly identical to the above specimens (Moorehead, 1910, Fig. 158). It would be interesting to know what other artifacts are associated with these little known specimens.

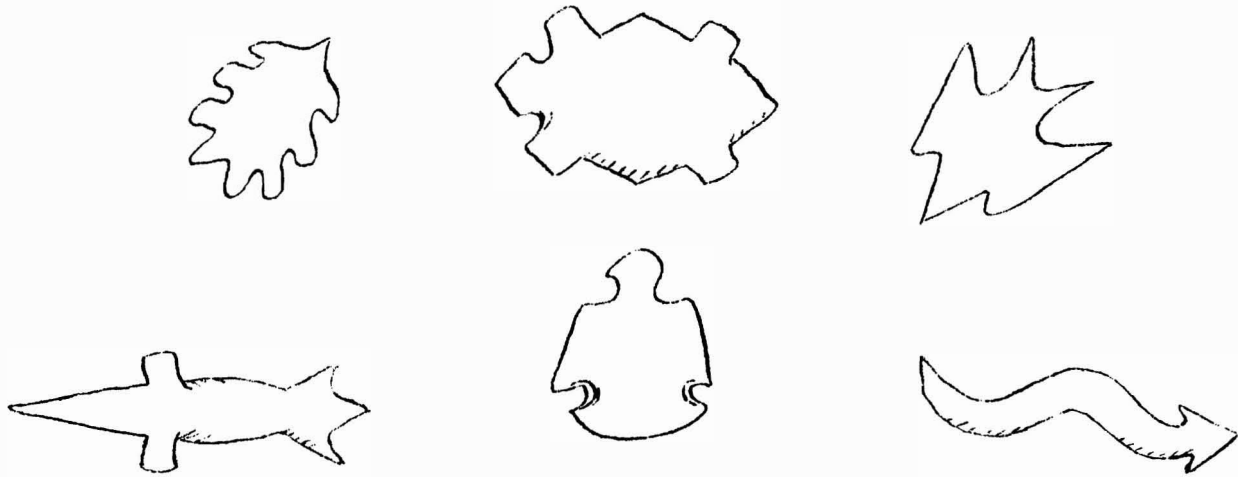


Fig. 1

Birdstones, generally made of ground slate, are exceedingly rare. Ringeisen, in 1932, made a study of the distribution of bird stones. He concluded that probably no more than 650 are in existence in public or private collections. The center of distribution is Ohio, Indiana and southern Michigan but they are also found in Wisconsin, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois and southeastern Canada. Not one single specimen has been reported in the literature from Iowa. Charles Brown, in 1908, failed to secure data regarding birdstones in Iowa from archeologists at the Davenport Academy of Science. It is significant that one birdstone is represented from Benton County in the McMillin Collection. Mr. Dorman found the specimen north of Shellsburg, Iowa. The specimen (Fig. 2) is made of greenstone and has a flat base. This eyeless specimen possesses a fanshaped tail. It measures 80mm. long, 30mm. high and 25mm. wide. (Ed. note: One millimeter equals .025 of an inch.) The hour-glass shaped perforations, each located ten millimeters from the end of the flat base, are drilled diagonally to join the posterior portion below the tail and the anterior portion below the head for suspension. The perforations are about 15mm. apart and measure 7mm. long and 6mm. wide. Many theories have been advocated regarding the function of birdstones.

Bannerstones have a wider distribution than birdstones and are found in the entire eastern half of the United States and southeastern Canada. The center of distribution is the same as that of the birdstones. Many bannerstones have

been reported from the state of Iowa. One relatively small greenstone specimen (Fig. 3) in the McMillin Collection measures 59mm. long, 32mm. wide and 22mm. thick. The maximum thickness is at the center where it is perforated. This specimen was also found by Mr. Dorman north of Shellsburg, Iowa. The specimen is slightly trapezoid shaped. The faces of the wings are flat and the edges are rounded. The relatively small perforation through the center measures 7mm. in diameter. Bannerstones probably functioned as atlatl, or spear-thrower weights. Birdstones may also have functioned as atlatl weights but less weight should be given to this latter inference.

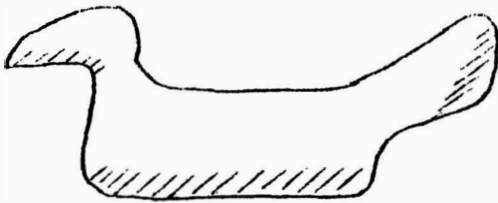


Fig. 2

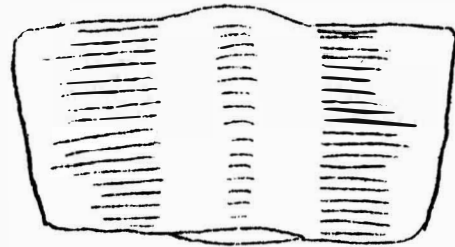


Fig. 3

One ovoid shaped, brown sandstone specimen has a flat bottom and rounded edges. It is reminiscent of a small mortar because a concavity 6mm. deep, 101mm. long and 81mm. wide is present on the dorsal face. However, this depression has a glossy appearance and a dark brown color reminiscent of metallic hematite. The surface has a smooth, almost greasy feeling when touched with the finger tips. Could this tool have functioned in polishing small hematite celts commonly found in central Iowa?

Two fired clay effigy pipes are purported to have been found in central Iowa but more information must be procured. The effigy pipe in Fig. 4 is of a woman kneeling. The breasts are present but the head and neck, which measure 37mm. long, are of a turtle. The bowl of the pipe protrudes from the back of the effigy directly below the neck and measures 20mm. x 19mm. A conical perforation for the pipe stem is situated in the lower back region of the effigy and measures 9mm. x 7mm. The specimen measures 112mm. high and 49mm. wide. The maximum width is at the base where the knees are located.

The remaining effigy pipe (Fig. 5), measuring 155mm. long, 48mm. wide and 36mm. thick, has a polished surface. The round stem measures 88mm. long and has a maximum thickness of 16mm. The perforation in the stem measures 3mm. in diameter. The round bowl of the pipe measures 25mm. in diameter at the crater and tapers to 7mm. in diameter where it joins the perforation in the stem. On the side of the bowl facing the smoker is the effigy of a man's face. The maximum thickness of the specimen is at the ears which project from opposite sides of the bowl. A thin, flat projection, convex in outline, extends beyond the center of the posterior portion of the bowl.

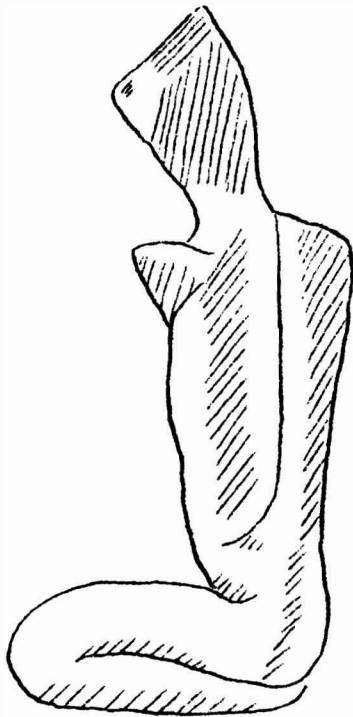


Fig. 4

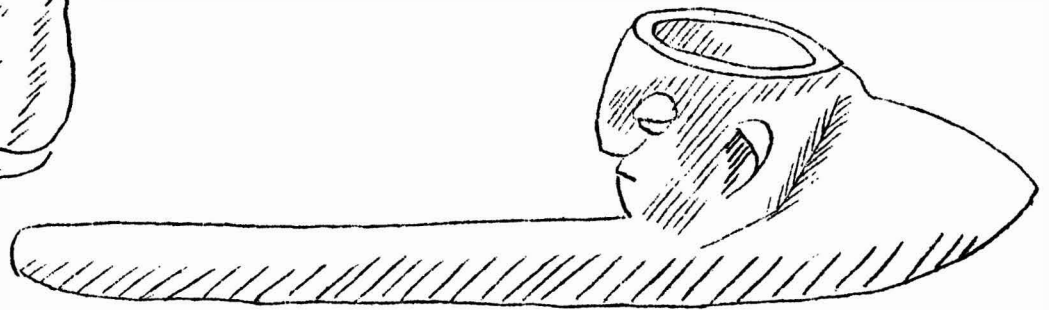


Fig. 5

KEOKUK TYPE AXES AND OTHER ARTIFACTS FROM THE SHEW SITE,

LOUISA COUNTY, IOWA

by Eugene Fugle

The Shew site, a Woodland site named after the owner of the farm land on which it is situated, is located in Grandview Township, Louisa County, Iowa. The site rests on the second terrace of the Iowa River north of Muskrat Lake and approximately five miles north of Wapello, Iowa. The late Mr. Shew had a large collection of chipped stone tools from this site which he had collected over a period of about thirty years. During the early thirties the collection was sold to the Chicago Natural History Museum for a modest sum. At the present time Don Parsons, a barber from Wapello, has a large collection of artifacts, part of which are from the Shew site. Mrs. Mabel Edwards, a daughter of the late Mr. Shew, has in her possession several stone axes and a hematite gorget from the Shew site. I wish to describe these artifacts in this section of the newsletter. Several axes are of the rare Keokuk type. Fowke, in "Stone Art" which was published in 1896 in the 13th Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology, first named the Keokuk type axe because five specimens in the Smithsonian Institution were found near

Keokuk, Iowa. In 1931 the late Dr. Keyes wrote "Grooved Axes of the Keokuk Type" (Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 10, No. 4). Keyes wrote further, "The Keokuk type axes are grooved across the two broad faces only, the front being flattened quite like the back and having no trace of a groove." This is a distinct type of axe that is quite rare. Keyes knew of only 107 specimens in collections, most of which were from Jefferson, Van Buren, Henry, Des Moines and Lee counties, all of which are adjacent counties in the southeastern corner of Iowa. Keyes regards Van Buren County as the center of distribution of this type axe. A few specimens were found in southern Illinois and northern Missouri. Louisa County is located along the Mississippi River north of Des Moines and Henry counties.

### Keokuk Type Axes

One granite specimen measures 123mm. long. The specimen is slightly trapezoid shaped because it tapers slightly from the poll to the blade. The width of the slightly convex poll is 67mm, and the width of the slightly convex blade is 56mm. The poll is battered and the blade is dulled through use. The straight inner edge and the slightly convex outer edge each has a shallow groove from the poll to the blade which measures 3mm. deep. The grooves on both faces are 30mm. wide and 8mm. deep. The slightly diagonal grooves are 10mm. nearer the blade on the inner edge than on the outer edge. The grooves are approximately 26mm. from the edge of the poll. The maximum thickness, 47mm., is adjacent to the grooves on both the poll and the blade.

One diorite specimen measures 125mm. long. The specimen is slightly trapezoid shaped because it tapers slightly from the poll to the blade. The width of the slightly convex poll is 62mm. and the width of the slightly convex blade is 55mm. The poll is flattened through use in hammering and the blade is slightly dulled through use. The straight inner edge is flat and the slightly convex outer edge, except for a shallow groove 1mm. deep adjacent to the grooves, is flat also. The grooves on both faces are 30mm. wide and 8mm. deep. The slightly diagonal grooves are 10mm. nearer the blade on the inner edge than on the outer edge. The grooves are approximately 24mm. from the edge of the poll. The maximum thickness, 47mm., is adjacent to the grooves on the poll. A portion of one face of the blade is broken adjacent to the groove. It is interesting how closely these two Keokuk type specimens conform in size.

### Three-Quarter Grooved Axes

Three small specimens are represented. Both the inner and outer edges are convex but the outer edge possesses the groove. The polls are flattened through use and the blades are dulled through use. Two specimens are of diorite and one specimen is of quartzite. The grooves are not diagonal. The maximum width and thickness at the blade is adjacent to the groove. One diorite specimen measures 118mm. long, 75mm. wide and 43mm. thick. The groove measures 23mm. wide, 3mm. deep and is located 67mm. from the edge of the blade which measures 54mm. wide. The remaining diorite specimen measures 115mm. long, 63mm. wide and 35mm. thick. The groove measures 20mm. wide, 2mm. deep and is located 63mm. from the edge of the blade which measures 41mm. wide. The quartzite specimen measures 105mm. long, 60mm. wide and 34mm. thick. The cross-section is nearly plano-convex. The maximum thickness is adjacent to the groove on both the poll and the blade. The groove measures 24mm. wide and 5mm. deep on the convex face and 20mm. wide and

3.5mm. deep on the more plain face. The groove is located 61mm. from the slightly convex edge of the blade which is 43mm. wide.

One large diorite specimen with grooved projections measures 226mm. long, 113mm. wide and 87mm. thick. The flat inner edge is slightly convex along the long axis. The outer edge is convex, especially at the poll. The groove measures 35mm. wide and 7mm. deep and is located 128mm. from the edge of the blade. The edge of the blade measures 90mm. wide. The maximum width is at the blade adjacent to the poll. The maximum thickness is adjacent to the groove at both the blade and the poll. The poll is flattened through use and the blade is relatively dull. The specimen weighs twelve pounds.

#### Maul

One ovoid shaped quartzite cobblestone has a full groove at the center. This relatively thin specimen has an ovoid cross-section and measures 121mm. long, 106mm. wide and 62mm. thick. The shallow groove at the center measures 25mm. wide and 3mm. deep. Both ends are slightly flattened through use in pounding.

#### Gorget

One ovoid shaped hematite specimen with a lenticular cross-section measures 131mm. long, 40mm. wide and 11mm. thick. The edges are slightly flat and shallow vertical notches several millimeters apart are present for a distance of approximately 65mm. along both long edges. Longitudinal striations are present on both faces. Two perforations are centered on the specimen. The perforations, drilled primarily from one face, measure 6mm. in diameter and are 37mm. apart.