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Mr. Earl Ingmansen, Archeologist  
Effigy Mounds National Monument  
McGregor, Iowa

## IOWA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

### *Newsletter*

Number 33  
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By Earl Ingmansen

#### Letter From the President

Dear Members of the Iowa Archeological Society:

The recent progress of the IAS makes this report a pleasure to write. Through great efforts by Dr. Ruppe, all back issues of the journal were received by the membership. Lack of finances and material greatly hampered his work but it was accomplished and this important gap in the IAS program was filled.

Dr. McKusick was appointed to fill the post vacated by Dr. Ruppe. He instituted a method of financing the publication of the journal that should result in its regular distribution as soon as the present period of transition is over. As the progress of our Society can only be measured by the amount and excellence of the material reported in our journal; Dr. McKusick's efforts in this direction constitute another step forward.

The next point to consider is the work being done by the membership in Iowa. Among new sites of importance are some that will no doubt be in the Archaic Period. Surface collecting has been good but the formal reporting of sites has been neglected. All of the members should make an effort to report on their activities to Dr. Ingmansen at Effigy Mounds for inclusion in the newsletter.

We can make 1962 a big year in Iowa archeology so let's get in those reports.

Joe Beals

#### Notice on Dues

Dues for the year 1961-62 should be sent to Mrs. Phil Thornton, 326 Otsego Street, Storm Lake, Iowa. Dues are two dollars.

Journal Issues in Press

A number of members have written in asking about their copies of the Journal. The editor, Marshall McKusick, explained to me that he had to delay all of the issues because of lack of time. In order to finish his book on Iowa Archeology while teaching courses this fall it was necessary to delay ignore a daily accumulation of correspondence, subscription renewals and editing. The book has now been finished and the manuscript is in the hands of the director of the University Press at Ames. The current status of the Journals is as follows.

Volume 10, Number 4 is now being printed and will be distributed in early December to all members regardless of whether they have paid their dues for this year. It contains a series of brief articles and a complete index of everything published in the Journal over the past ten years. For example if you wish to know what has been published about your county or about Mill Creek culture you can easily look up this information.

Volume 11, Number 1 will also be sent out in December to all members regardless of whether they have paid their dues for this year. This contains a brief study on a burial mound excavated in Webster County. The cover is being redrawn and beginning with this volume better quality publishing will begin. This is made possible by the increased membership.

Volume 11, Number 2 is a detailed study of Iowa Oneota pottery by Dale Henning who is now the Director of the Anthropology Museum at the University of Missouri. This will be quite a long study of about 60 pages. The printer is now working on it, but because of the Christmas rush does not expect to have it ready until January.

Volume 11, Number 3 is a detailed study of all of the tools and implements used by the Mill Creek Indians of Iowa. Written by Eugene Fugle, it will run to over 100 pages and contains 38 full page illustrations. This will be turned over to the press in December and will be distributed in February, 1962.

The Journal editor is sorry for the delay in journals, but he has been extremely busy.

Effigy Mounds Develops South Area for Visitors

While the South Area of Effigy Mounds National Monument is not expected to be opened for visitation until a road into the area has been completed, work has been started to landscape the area for public use.

This summer the Marching Bear Group was restored to a careful approximation of the scene as the Woodland Indians had left it. Pot-holes were filled in and stumps removed. As a finishing touch the entire area was fertilized and sowed with grass to insure permanent protection.

Several test pits were dug during the course of the summer's work. One in an untested mound showed the remains of a highly disintegrated bundle burial and evidence of ceremonial fires having burned during interment rites. A sample of carbon was secured from the undisturbed Bear Mound and will be tested for a Carbon-14 date this winter.

One unusual discovery was a large area of burned earth and fire-cracked rock about 100 yards north of the Marching Bear Group. This area was come upon while digging fill for the mounds from a borrow-pit. The burning seems to have been quite intense, and the unusual number of rocks suggests that it was purposeful. There was, however, no shred of cultural material associated. Thus, dating is pure speculation. Perhaps this was the scene of cooking or ceremonial fires made by ancient Indians. On the other hand the fires could have warmed the soldiers from Fort Crawford, across the Mississippi, 120 years ago as they cut timber and supervised garden plots in the area. It even could have been the remains of fires which heated the hidden stills of moonshiners not too many years ago. Another season's excavation should provide the answer.

#### Perforated Human Jaw-Bones

On a visit to Decorah in August I called on Gavin Sampson and was fascinated by one of his recent discoveries. It was a human jaw-bone neatly cut into two equal parts at the chin. The interesting feature was a neat perforation near the gonial angle (the point where the jaw-bone turns upward to attach to the skull) of each half. Apparently this jaw-bone was suspended as a trophy -- perhaps from the neck of a brave warrior or medicine man.

Incidentally Gavin has in his collection several large fragments of Folsom Points which give a very respectable antiquity to prehistoric man in Northeast Iowa. Are there other reports of Folsom Man in Iowa?

#### "Poor" Relic Hunting in Southeast Iowa

I had a very nice letter from Gary Van Dyke in Ainsworth describing the summer's relic hunting in Southeast Iowa. He describes the hunting as poor due to a lack of rain but reports the following results: "144 arrows, 3 nice axes, a grooved hammer, a few drills, over 100 thumb-type scrapers, 2 hematite celts, 1 slate celt, several flint celts, knives, etc." I'll just bet that this is the kind of "poor hunting" we'd all like to have.

One of the most interesting things in the letter though is the time span of the materials found: Archaic, Middle Woodland, Oneota. I find myself wondering whether there is a Late Woodland Aspect comparable to the Effigy Mound Culture which could be found in Southeast Iowa.

#### Salvage of a Mound Burial in Louisa County

A pat on the back is due for Paul Kline of Vinton. Some bones were uncovered on the farm of H. F. Wiederecht of rural Wapello during bull-dozing operations. Mr. Wiederecht notified some nearby Iowa Conservation Commission employees who in turn got in touch with Paul. Paul responded promptly and did an emergency excavation of the remains of a bundle burial in a pit. His report includes the precise location of the site and the report that more burial material may be present. Paul's report makes a fine addition to the files of the State Archeologist and is as a guide for others to follow.

#### SALVAGE OF A MOUND BURIAL IN LOUISA COUNTY

Paul D. Kline  
Iowa Conservation Commission  
August 18, 1961

Mounds of prehistoric construction although common in Iowa are not as abundant as they once were. Vandalism is partially responsible as the occasional interesting objects interred within some, particularly the Hopewell mounds of eastern Iowa, have provided attractive incentive for relic hunters and curiosity seekers to "excavate." Cultivation, also, is responsible for the destruction of hundreds of Indian mounds within the borders of Iowa. Not all of the mounds obliterated by cultivation are entirely destroyed. They remain; although so flattened and scattered by the passage of farm machinery season after season, generation after generation, that they are no longer recognizable.

I had the opportunity to partially examine one of these obliterated mounds recently. One of my fellow workers called from Lake Odessa in Louisa County and informed me that some "Indian bones" had been exposed by bull-dozing operations on property near his headquarters. The property owner, H. F. Wiederecht, rural Wapello, was interested in salvage of the discovery. As part of my work was in the vicinity during the immediate future, I had an opportunity to visit the site on May 31, 1961.

A tractor manure-loader had been employed to fill some low spots in a pasture which adjoined the bluff edge overlooking Lake Odessa and the Mississippi River bottoms of Louisa County. The source of fill was to be one or more elevated spots in the pasture. The tractor had partially leveled one of these elevated spots when it struck the bones. The operator ceased operations immediately after the discovery.

My inspection of the site revealed the rise which was being used as fill probably represented an Indian mound practically obliterated through years of cultivation. It was located in the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the SE  $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 18, Township 74 N., Range 2 W. Size of the mound was impossible to estimate from surface observation alone. At least one other rise nearby also could have been a mound. Excavation would be needed to identify it with certainty. The bones exposed represented a human burial, without doubt. Portions of long bones and the cranium were visible at a spot less than 18 inches across, 46 feet from the bluff edge. They did not appear to be at the center of the rise, but this is not necessarily a valid observation.

The bones were badly decomposed, chalky, and fragile. They were broken; and obviously the dirt removal operations had destroyed part of the burial. Because of this my first act was to inspect the fill which was scattered some distance away. A few small bone fragments were picked up in the fill and near the burial. They had been scattered by the tractor from the burial. I retrieved all these bone fragments.

With a trowel, borrowed from the local Conservation Commission headquarters, I proceeded to excavate the burial. It was a tedious task. With a hot dry wind blowing, and the soil already powder dry the bones crumbled into fragments at the slightest touch. I found very little which had not been previously exposed. A very few small fragments of "camp rock" appeared in the grave. No artifacts, charcoal, evidence of cremation, or anything else could be found.

The bone fragments represented long bones of arms and legs plus portions of a skull. Three teeth were recovered which indicate from wear that the individual buried there was an adult. Just how much of the skull or of the long bones the grave contained could not be determined because of the disturbance and scattering by the tractor. Apparently this represented a bundle burial in a shallow pit, the boundaries of which were clearly defined during excavation.

The basin-shaped pit measured 29 by 23 inches in length and width. Its depth was impossible to measure. However, from the uppermost bone fragment remaining at the time I started excavation to the bottom of the pit measured eight inches.

Whether or not these bones represented a primary burial or were merely intrusive within the mound is difficult to say. Other minute bone fragments exposed in a different portion of the mound indicate other burials may be found therein. The landowner has determined, fortunately, to preserve the mound until it can be excavated by qualified archeologists.

My intent at the time was, of course, merely to salvage the partially destroyed burial and learn everything about it that I could. The bone fragments and few rock fragments recovered will be given to the Iowa Archeological Society collection at Iowa City. Photographs and notes, which I took at the site, will be preserved with the bones.