

NEWSLETTER

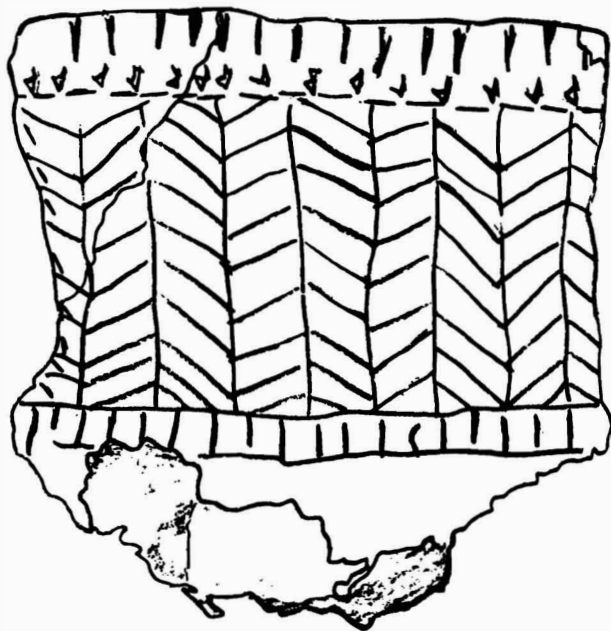
OCTOBER, 1965

NUMBER 37

EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

MCGREGOR, IOWA

University of South Dakota
SOUTH DAKOTA MUSEUM
Vermilion, South Dakota



Potsherd from Big Lake Site, Wisconsin
(Actual Size)

OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES FOR YEAR 1965-66

President	George L. Miller	2403 Carey Ave., Davenport
Vice Pres.	Romayne Pansegrau	RFD #1, Montour, Iowa
Sec.-Treas.	Mrs. Phil Thornton	326 Otsego St., Storm Lake
Trustees:		
'65-'66	John Vincent	Sanford Museum, Cherokee
	Dr. Wm. Larsen	335 N. Franklin, Ames
	Stanley Klein	405 S. Broadway, Toledo
'66-'67	Prof. R.W. Breckenridge	2236 Storm St., Ames
	Chas. H.D. Smith	814 W. Cedar, Cherokee
	Dr. Arnold Haugen	Wildlife Research Unit, Ames
'67-'68	Dr. H.P. Field	211 - 5th Ave., Decorah
	Dr. Marshall McKusick	Dept. of Anthro. & Sociology
		State Univ. of Iowa, Iowa City
	Garland J. Gordon	Effigy Mounds National Monument
		McGregor, Iowa

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor: Garland J. Gordon

Typist: Jacquelyn J. Lamb

Artist: Sue Gordon

Send all manuscripts, notes, comments and reports of finds to the Editor. Try to include illustrations whenever possible, whether tracings, drawings, sketches, photographs or maps. These will make the NEWSLETTER much more interesting and meaningful to everyone. The address is:

Garland J. Gordon, Editor
Effigy Mounds National Monument
McGregor, Iowa 52157

!!! DO IT NOW !!!

NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

There is still a great need for Society members to send items of interest to the Editor. Some have come in from several people and their interest and support is certainly appreciated. Thanks particularly to Dr. Robert Breckenridge, Dale Henning, John Vincent, Joe Beals and Gordon Peckham. Special thanks are in order to my wife Carolyn for encouragement and helping with record-keeping, addressing and mailing chores.

I am thinking of asking some of the Society members in various parts of the state to serve as correspondents or assistants in gathering material and writing up short items for the NEWSLETTER. How about some volunteers for this. Something has to be done because your Editor does not have time to beat the bushes for news items. Volunteers should indicate the towns or counties they can cover.

EXCAVATIONS AT EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

Park visitors at Effigy Mounds National Monument this summer were able to watch archeological excavations taking place along Fire Point Trail. The National Park Service was repairing mounds which had been dug into before the Monument was established in 1949. Unfortunately in most cases there is no record of when these early pits were dug, who dug them or what was found. The purpose of this years project was to determine the extent and depth of the old pits and to document how badly the mounds were damaged. The pits were then squared up and marked so that the undisturbed areas could be studied more easily at some future date. The excavations were backfilled and rounded off to provide drainage and grass was planted to prevent erosion. Altogether nine mounds were repaired in this manner. More work of a similar nature will be done again next summer.

Although the mounds were in most instances seriously damaged, each one still has some potential for additional research in the future. Each of the mounds also produced details of mound construction or some hints as to the cultural identity of the builders. Several of the mounds produced sufficient charcoal for dating purposes. Dates are not yet available however.

While the mounds were open, Mr. William Hurley, University of Wisconsin graduate student, collected soil monoliths and other soil samples from each one for future laboratory study. It is planned to have these soils analyzed in detail in an attempt to recover information on climate, vegetation and ecology when the mounds were built. They will also be useful to soils specialists in determining the rate of soil development. The buried soils beneath the mounds should contain pollen and if enough has been preserved, these will provide additional data on the environment of the past.

Unfortunately, some vandalism occurred while the mounds were open. In Mound 38, part of a burial was found undisturbed. Before it could be removed it was mostly destroyed by vandals who also stole part of it. Luckily, several good photographs had been taken of the area which was damaged so it was not a complete loss.

FORT MADISON EXCAVATIONS

Iowa experienced its first real historic site archeology this summer when foundations for Blockhouse No. 3 of the 1808 U. S. Army Fort were discovered. The W. A. Schaeffer Pen Company of Fort Madison was planning to construct an underground water storage reservoir adjacent to its main plant. An area thought by some historians to be the site of old Fort Madison. Recent events have proven their accuracy.

Old Fort Madison Inc., a non-profit organization interested in the community's history, asked State Archeologist Dr. Marshall McKusick to provide a trained observer to watch the excavations for the reservoir. Dr. McKusick sent his lab assistant Robert Alex, graduate student at the University of Iowa. John Vincent of the Sanford Museum in Cherokee was also there pitching in.

The old fort was occupied for only five years. Soldiers at the poorly located fort were besieged by Indians for much of this time. Finally in 1813 the fort was abandoned and before returning to St. Louis the Army set fire to the fort. Until this summer the exact location of the fort was unknown.

The cellar of the blockhouse had an exterior entrance. The fragments of iron, glass and china have a story to tell and we hope it will be told in print soon. The entire foundation has been removed and stored for use in a prospective reconstruction.

Also discovered were two other buildings, the officers quarters and a fireplace for one of the enlisted mens quarters. Dr. McKusick reports that the remains of the Officers Quarters is not endangered by the construction work. He plans to return to Fort Madison to stabilize what is left and preserve it in place.

WITTROCK SITE EXCAVATIONS

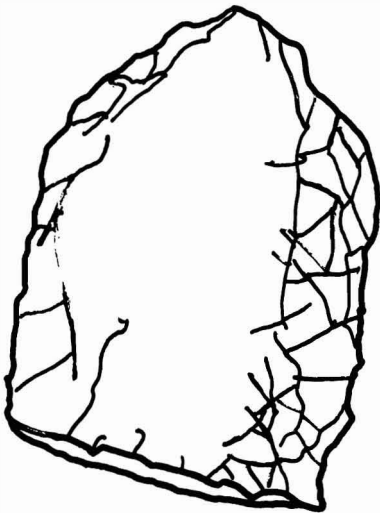
The State Archeologist, Dr. Marshall McKusick, was also in the field in Northwest Iowa at the Wittrock Site (130B4) searching for evidence of fortifications at Mill Creek culture sites. We understand that the stockade was located and also that the first Mill Creek houses have been excavated. As suspected they are rectangular. Dr. McKusick has promised a report for the NEWSLETTER which will give more details about these interesting and important excavations.

The Wittrock Site has been eligible to become a Registered National Historic Landmark for some time. On October 10 the Registration Certificate and bronze plaque was formally presented to Mr. Edward Weinheimer, Chairman of the State Conservation Commission. The presentation was made by Dr. Wilfred D. Logan, National Park Service, Resource Studies Advisor, Omaha, Nebraska. We are sure that many of you remember Dr. Logan as he was the moving force in organizing and establishing the Iowa Archeological Society and served as its first editor. Over 700 people attended the presentation ceremony at the Wittrock Site.

SIMONSEN SITE REVISITED

by Joe Beals

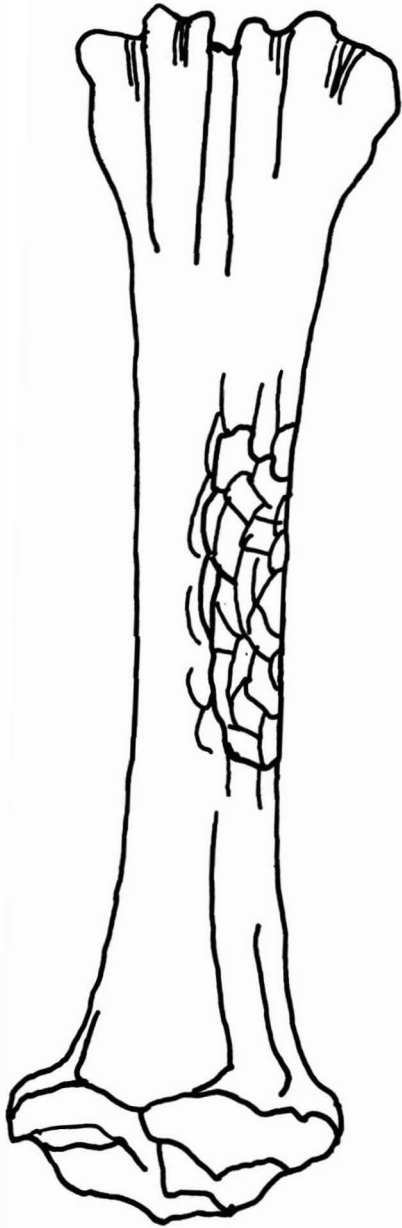
A find of considerable significance has been made at the Simonsen Bison kill site (13CK62). On Sunday, August 15, the Northwest Iowa Archaeological Society took advantage of the low water that occurs this time of year at the site and by wading and boating along the steep face of the bank collected about 3 bushels of bones. These were lying in the water and protruding from the cultural layer which is about 6" to 18" above the water. At this time a partial point, a chopper like tool and a bone which had been battered while still fresh was found. These were found in situ in level 7 of the site as designated by W. D. Frankforter and Dr. George Agogino in their dig in 1959. Illustrations of these artifacts are on the following pages. A partial skull with a measurement of 13" plus from the tips of the horn core to the central suture of the skull was found. In order to give some of the members experience in casting, it was decided to return Tuesday evening and work the skull out. After casting the skull the party again inspected the bank and Steve Mandeville noticed a stone axe head protruding from level 7 with a broken bone above it and a hearth area around it. With 18' of overburden and the temperamental Little Sioux only 6" away it was decided to measure, photograph and remove the axe. W. D. Frankforter was notified and came from Grand Rapids. With the help of Steve and Mrs. Mandeville, Mr. and Mrs. Beals and Chuck and Shirley Smith the original dig was relocated and the position of the axe measured with relation to this dig. The Merle Simonsens, owners of the site, were interested visitors and Mr. Simonsen helped locate the axe on the map using his transit. Another fire area was partially excavated and some of the section that flooded out during the original dig was sketched and the bones cast were removed. Work will be continued as the water level permits.



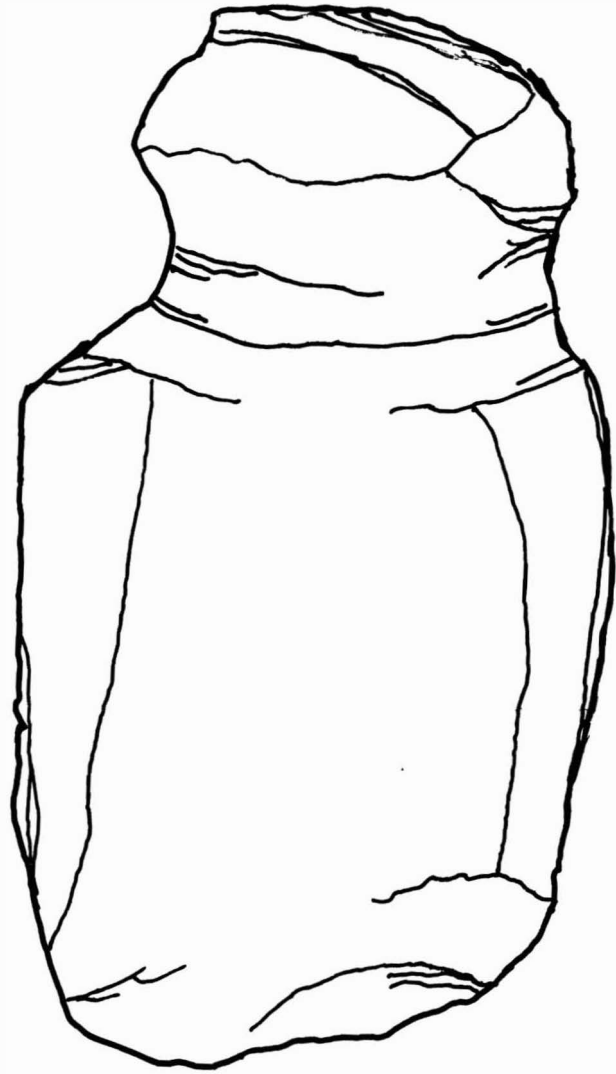
Flaked tool, 13CK62



Projectile point fragment,
13CK62



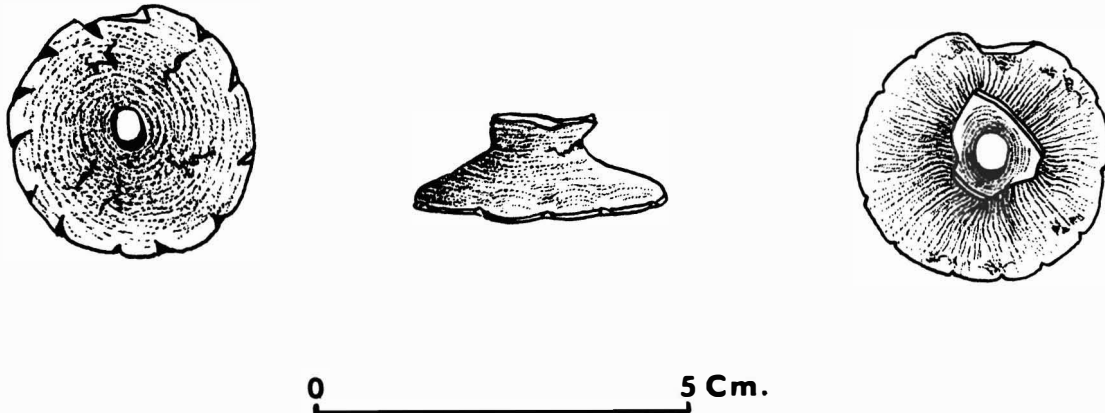
Battered bone, 13CK62



Full grooved ax, 13CK62
(actual size)

A UNIQUE MILL CREEK EARSPPOOL

Dale R. Henning



The artifact illustrated above was recovered from the Brewster site (13CK1), a Mill Creek culture village located along Mill Creek in Cherokee County, Iowa. It was found on the surface by Mr. Joe Beals, Cherokee, Iowa. The object, tentatively identified as an earspool, appears to have been made from a segment of large fish vertebra.

The vertebra has been extensively modified in the process of manufacture which involved reducing the size of one articulating surface, drilling out the centrum and removing the neural spine (assuming the vertebra used was from the trunk) and transverse processes. All surfaces are smoothed and slightly polished. The exterior surface of the larger disk is decorated with a series of incisions around the outer margin.

Earspools are not common to Mill Creek sites although one example in stone has been recovered from the Phipps site and is stored in the Sanford Museum, Cherokee, Iowa. The earspool was generally worn in the ear lobe; its use required that a rather large hole be made in the lobe in order that the smaller disk could be pushed through and 'buttoned' in. Earspools were fairly common to Caddoan peoples further to the south, suggesting that they were traded in to Mill Creek peoples rather than made locally. No earspools made of fish vertebra are known to have been reported in the literature.

15TH ANNUAL MEETING, 1965

The annual meeting of the Iowa Archeological Society was held May 23 in Ames, Iowa. Attendance at this years meeting was somewhat disappointing. It certainly was a good meeting and all of you "stay-at-homes" should have been there. You were missed. All of you!! Make up your mind now to attend the next annual meeting. It is possible that next years meeting will be held in the Davenport Public Museum's brand new building. This would be a real treat as the facilities and collections of this museum are excellent.

During a short business meeting officers were elected under the new constitution. There are now nine trustees, with three new ones elected each year. A list of the officers is found elsewhere in this NEWSLETTER.

After the business meeting Dr. David Gradwohl, Iowa State University, reported on his 1964 excavations in the Red Rock Reservoir, south of Des Moines. Much of the years work was concentrated at 13MA41, a Woodland occupation site used by Indians some 1,800 to 2,000 years ago. Pottery was cordmarked with some sherds showing incising and nodes. Stemmed projectile points are characteristic and grinding stones and some flake scrapers were also found. Roasting pits were also used at this site.

Last Spring at another site a large burial mound which will be destroyed by a railroad relocation, was excavated. It was clearly a Woodland mound but closer cultural affiliation was not possible with the limited amount of material recovered. He announced also that he would be excavating in England this summer. This will be historic archeology near Winchester and it really sounds exciting. We hope to hear all about it at next years annual meeting. Robert D. Gant, assistant Director of the South Dakota Museum will supervise the SUI field crew in the Red Rock Reservoir this summer.

Dr. William Larsen, State University of Iowa at Ames gave a talk on new analytical techniques in the physical sciences which have great potential for providing archeological data. One of those mentioned was neutron activation analysis which can be used to identify the composition of some artifacts without having to remove even a small piece or scratch a specimen which must be done in standard chemical analysis. Dr. Larsen pointed out that better communications between archeologists and physicists, chemists and other physical scientists is needed so that each may know what the other can do.

A panel discussion on the need to improve communications between the professional archeologist, the informed amateur and the lay public followed Dr. Larsen's talk. Many ideas were presented by the panel and most of them concerned the reporting and recording of sites. It was brought out very well that one of the really important things that Society members can do is the public relations work of informing the general public of the purposes and goals of the Society and where to report new finds or discoveries and where they can go for accurate information.

Dr. Gradwohl then asked what the Society members expected of the professional archeologist. This is a very good question and one which there was not sufficient time to thoroughly explore. It was apparent that many members would like to participate in excavations. Some of the problems associated with this such as the need of trained supervisors and the very short and uncertain periods of time that most members are available for work were discussed. Perhaps something can be done on this. Dr. Gradwohl agreed to study and summarize the items discussed by the panel and to explore ways of Society participation in the reporting of archeological information.

The Editor would like to ask that all members give some thought to what they expect and want from the Society and from the professional archeologist. Perhaps one or several of you would like to write a paper on this for the NEWSLETTER. If not a paper at least write a letter to either the Editor or the President of the Society and voice your desires.

After the meeting closed, the members were invited to watch a closed circuit television showing of the taped program "FROM AGES PAST" produced by a class in Telecommunicative Arts at SUI. Dr. Gradwohl served as advisor for the film. Despite his statements that some might not find it "professional" it was well done and accurate and we all enjoyed it very much.

IOWAN IN ENGLAND

From Dr. Robert W. Breckenridge, Ames, comes word that he visited with Dave Gradwohl in England this summer. He also visited Stonehenge and arranged to trade a Des Moines River potsherd for a piece of decorated tile from a Roman villa. Dr. Breckenridge also reports that Mr. Thomas Barton found a sizeable fragment of what is probably a Middle Woodland pot on a small creek near Ames. A collection of paleontological materials including mammoth, mastodon, giant bison, giant elk, and modern bison bones was turned over to him by Marion Martin and Grant Finley of Harlan, Iowa. To top it all off, he also visited the exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Joslyn Museum in Omaha. That certainly sounds like a busy but happy summer.

STONE EFFIGY

Charles DeBusk, former Director of the Sioux City Public Museum has sent us two items of interest. One we were pleased to receive and the other was received with mixed emotions. He is writing a short paper about a sculptured stone effigy found in Monona County, Iowa. It will soon appear in the PLAINS ANTHROPOLOGIST. Less welcome is the news that he is moving to Springfield, Illinois where he has accepted a position with the Illinois State Museum. We are sorry to lose him in Iowa but know he must be pleased with this new challenge.

NEW LAWS EFFECTING ARCHEOLOGY

During the last session of the State Legislature several new laws were passed which will have some effect on archeological activities and programs in Iowa. We are certainly pleased with all of them.

H.F. 371 An Act to Authorize the State Highway Commission to Enter into Agreements for Removal and Preservation of Historical, Archeological, and Paleontological Remains Disturbed or to be Disturbed by Highway Construction. Will provide for the preservation of historical sites that might otherwise be disturbed or destroyed by highway construction.

H.F. 633 An Act Granting the Board of Curators of the State Historical Society the Authority to Establish a Uniform Official Historical Marker System, and to Provide an Appropriation Therefor. Provides for the establishment of an historical marker commission which shall have as its purpose the establishment of a uniform identification and marking system of Iowa's historical sites.

S.F. 475 An Act to Establish a System of State Preserves and to Provide for the Control and Management of Same. Provides for establishment of a seven-member board whose purpose will be designation, control and management of areas which have unusual flora, fauna, geological, archeological, scenic or historical features of scientific or educational value.

Governor Hughes has named the members of this board and an organizational meeting was held on September 17 at which officers were elected as follows:

Chairman	Edward T. Cawley	Dubuque
Vice Chairman	Robert C. Russell	Iowa City
Secretary	Everett B. Speaker	Des Moines
Members	Marshall McKusick	Iowa City
	Margaret E. Black	Des Moines
	William J. Peterson	Iowa City
	George E. Knudson	Decorah

It is fortunate that the State Archeologist has been named to this board. Recent conversations with Dr. McKusick indicate that several important archeological sites will soon be recommended for establishment as State Preserves.

BIG LAKE SITE, WISCONSIN

Gordon L. Peckham and Garland J. Gordon

This site was first noted by Mr. Gordon L. Peckham, Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin in September 1955 when he found flint chips eroding from the shore of an island about two miles north of Prairie du Chien. Further visits to the site produced more chips, potsherds, a few stone implements and even a few historic items.

Some of the sherds are quite unusual in character. One is illustrated on the cover of this NEWSLETTER. The writers would very much like to hear from anyone who has similar sherds in their collections. The sherds are rather thick, averaging about 1.0 cm. The exterior is oxidized and colors range from a light tan to a dark brown. The interior is smudged black as is the core of the sherds. The paste is fine and contains abundant sand temper. The rim is flat and slightly thickened. The neck of the vessel flares slightly above rounded shoulders. The interior edge of the rim is decorated with a band of vertical closely spaced impressions similar to those on the outer edge of the rim. The decorations are formed by tool impressions and fine line incising. The surface of the vessel is smoothed with little evidence of cordmarking. There are eight of these sherds from the same vessel.

Most of the other sherds are cordmarked. Three rims have everted lips and a horizontal row of nodes punched from the inside of the vessel. One of these rims is also decorated with a band of horizontal rows of diagonal fingernail impressions. Four body sherds show this same feature and probably are all from the same vessel. Another of these rims has a similar band but the fingernail impressions are oriented horizontally also. The third one shows no other decoration than the nodes.

Two sherds have parallel incised lines but are different in every other respect. One sherd is covered with rocker stamping. One sherd is Mississippian but all of the shell tempering has leached out. The collection also contains about forty miscellaneous grit or sand tempered body sherds. The pottery indicates that the site was primarily occupied by Middle Woodland peoples with at least periodic use at later dates.

Stone tools include the broken point of a broad projectile point, a number of scrapers and flake knives and one chopper. There is also a translucent light tan gun flint. Other historic items include six lead musket balls and three fragments of clay pipes.

W. H. Over Museum
University of South Dakota
Vermillion, South Dakota