

# NEWSLETTER

OCTOBER, 1967

NUMBER 45

EFFIGY MOUNDS NATIONAL MONUMENT

MCGREGOR, IOWA 52157



Left Lateral View



Dorsal View

WEBSTER COUNTY (See Page 3)

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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  
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McGregor, Iowa 52157

!!!! DO IT NOW !!!!

SOUTHEAST CHAPTER

The SE Chapter meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 2nd Friday of each month at the Iowa Illinois Gas and Electric Company Auditorium, 225 E. Main Street, Ottumwa.

NORTHWEST CHAPTER

The NW Chapter meets on the 3rd Sunday of each month, usually at the Sanford Museum, Cherokee, although some of the meetings are field trips.

SPECIAL FALL MEETING

IAS President Adrian Anderson has been able to schedule the Fall Meeting first mentioned in NEWSLETTER No. 43. Sanford Museum Director Duane Anderson and members of the Northwest Chapter will act as hosts for the meeting which will be held at 1:00 p.m. Sunday, October 29, in the Sanford Museum at Cherokee. The purpose of the meeting is to discuss archeological projects for IAS members either as individuals or for Chapter projects. If you are one of those who would like to take a more active part in Iowa Archeology, this is a very important meeting for you.

As Assistant State Archeologist Adrian Anderson is well qualified to know what needs to be done and how to do it. He will surely have many ideas on worthwhile projects that will not only contribute to our knowledge of Iowa Archeology but help train you for more complicated efforts. It can be fun as well as a challenge to your ability.

This meeting is just the first of a series of special meetings that will begin the program outlined by President Anderson in his "Letter from the President" last June. The next meeting is scheduled to be in a different part of the State as yet undetermined. Tentative plans are for a January date and notices will be sent out as soon as it becomes definite. Plan to attend each of these informal meetings which have been designed especially for the "amateur" as defined by Adrian Anderson.

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, 1967 FIELD SEASON

By Adrian Anderson

Archeological field parties from the University of Iowa, Iowa City, ranged far-afield this summer, with excavations at the Eagle Point Park site (13CN9) at Clinton, the Walters site (13JH42) on the Coralville Reservoir outside Iowa City, the Rock Run Shelter (13CD10) north of Rochester, the West Broken Kettle site (13PM5) near Westfield, Fort Cherokee, (13CK76) at Cherokee, and excavations just south of Iowa City in an attempt to locate an historic trading post.

Dr. Marshall McKusick spent part of the summer conducting tests with a resistivity surveying device for locating archeological features prior to excavation. The last part of his summer was spent excavating Fort Cherokee, where he located the builder's trench for the Stockade line, the well, and other features.

The Sanford Museum generously allowed the field party to make use of their laboratory facilities so that all the artifacts could be washed, cataloged and accessioned.

With the completion of his work at Cherokee, the crew was moved to Iowa City and test excavations were carried out several miles south of town in an attempt to locate an historic trading post. Material dating

from the last century was recovered, but the trading post location could not be ascertained.

Adrian Anderson directed the work at the Eagle Point Park site, with graduate student Robert Vis as assistant director. Earlier test excavations by Don Johanson in 1965 had documented the presence of Woodland ceramics and stone tools. Anderson had re-examined one of the Johanson test pits in 1966 and was convinced that there was a good chance of locating one or more houses. A crew varying from ten to twenty members in size worked for three weeks, but no features were found. Although all earth was sifted, the rim sherd sample consisted of less than thirty specimens, most of which were undecorated or too small to be identified. Identifiable specimens corroborate Johanson's assessment of an occupation ranging through most of the Woodland period.

The site remains something of an enigma. Ceramic and lithic artifacts were certainly present, if in small quantities. Flecks of charcoal attest the presence of fires. There was a surprising lack of faunal remains, however. No bone was found which could be definitely ascribed to the Indian occupation of the site. Neither was there any mussel shell of other than modern origin. There were no hearths, ash lenses, or cache pits.

A portion of the crew, under the direction of Vis excavated one of a number of mounds on a nearby bluff. No burials were recovered. Only the stem of a projectile point and a single small sherd were found.

Work was then shifted to the Walters site, which is slowly being destroyed by the erosion of the shoreline of the Coralville reservoir.

Mrs. Wayne Walters, Solon, Iowa, had brought the site to our attention with the donation of a collection of pottery, fired clay daub and stone that she had found washing from the site.

Ten days were spent at this site, excavating an occupation area that may have been the remnant of a house location. It was a D-shaped area 12 feet by 16 feet in size. No post pattern was found, but fifteen pounds of fired clay daub was recovered.

Fragments of at least twenty vessels were found, with some of the decorated rims bearing the cord impressed designs common to Madison and Land Farm Cord Impressed types. Almost half of the rim and shoulder of a large square-mouthed vessel was recovered, the rim decorated with cord impressed triangles.

Since this site is on Federal land we were able to obtain some financial assistance from the National Park Service for the work to be conducted.

At the same time, Robert Alex, a graduate student at the University of Iowa, was directing the excavation of 13CD10, the Rock Run Shelter, to obtain data for his M.A. thesis. He is preparing a description of his work for the NEWSLETTER.

Drexel Peterson, a graduate student at Harvard University, directed the excavation of 13PM5, the West Broken Kettle site, and discovered the first Great Oasis house we have seen in Iowa. Publication of his work on the Great Oasis material in Iowa will be a fine contribution to the study of Iowa Archeology.

#### RATTLESNAKE EFFIGY, WEBSTER COUNTY

By Paul D. Kline

Probably the greatest thrill experienced in 20 years of searching for artifacts came over me when I recognized the artifact I had picked up a few minutes before late one Sunday evening in April 1965. Our family, out for an afternoon drive, had stopped for a brief search of the fall plowing. The site, well known by local collectors, is located in the SW $\frac{1}{4}$  of the NE $\frac{1}{4}$  of Sec. 16, Twsp. 86 N., Range 27W., Webster County Iowa. It lies on a rise, above the flood plain, on the west bank of the Des Moines River and on the south edge of a small creek which flows into the river close by. It would be an obvious and logical place for prehistoric people to live.

The site has produced woodland potsherds with punctate and cord-marked rim decorations, a variety of notched and stemmed points, at least one three-quarter grooved axe, and the usual variety of knives and scrapers associated with woodland sites in the area. To my knowledge, it has not produced artifacts which could be attributed with certainty to archaic or Mississippi cultures.

The artifact, depicted in dorsal and lateral view here, seems to be fashioned from schist. It is six inches long, blueish-grey in color, except for about  $\frac{1}{2}$ " of the posterior end, which is reddish. It is carved to represent a rattlesnake. The rattle is distinguishable by a bulb or swelling marked dorsally and laterally with grooves. The head has a slight notch for a mouth and two bulbs to indicate eyes. Small notches on the dorsal-lateral edges probably are intended to represent skin markings (banding). The ventral surface is flat and smooth.

When I found this artifact a piece about 1 inch in length had been split off the anterior end and was missing. I found the missing piece the next day. This unusual artifact certainly creates speculation as to its possible use. It may have been a strap type atlatl weight. Otherwise, I can think of no possible utilitarian value for which it might have been shaped. I would welcome comments from other members of the IAS on this subject.

Also, it is interesting to note that rattlesnakes do not occur anywhere near where this artifact was found. Perhaps they did at one time. At present we have three species of rattlesnakes in Iowa. The timber rattler occurs locally in various parts of eastern and southern Iowa, usually around limestone outcrops. The prairie rattler is rarely found in a few counties in western Iowa. And the massasauga can be found in a few marshy areas in the state. Which one the artifact is carved to represent would be pure speculation.

IOWA ARCHEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
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