

NEWSLETTER

JULY 1977

NUMBER 85

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Apologies to those who missed the events highlighted in Newsletter #84 solely because of the unusual delay in the receipt of this issue. This unfortunate time lapse was the result of a combination of events and not the responsibility of any one person or group. Such a combination of unforeseen delays should not reoccur.



The Sacred Circles exhibit at Kansas City was a unique display of North American Indian Art and was well worth the trip. However, after spending a couple of hours viewing the North American Indian exhibit at the Field Museum, Chicago, I was equally impressed. This latter collection is permanent and I would urge anyone not to miss it if near Chicago. For those familiar with the Nebo Hill point and J. Mett Shippee of Kansas City who first described it, I am happy to report Mett is well and active at 81 years young.

I talked to Don Spears about the July field trip to Monroe. It appears that there was a good turn out of members (well over 30) for the two days of excavations. Flakes, a point base and a few sherds were found. In addition a burned earth area which could have been a base of a crematorial mound was located, but not disturbed. All in all the dig was a success. IAS members are looking forward to another call this summer for assistance on an excavation project. Especially those of us who had prior commitments for the July 4th weekend.

This is a good time to remind all members to send in site sheets on any sites they may have located in the past or will locate this summer. Remember you don't have to find a large Oneota village or a multi-mound complex to call it a site. The OSA definition

of a site is essentially any spot where there are found debris left by early historic or prehistoric man. Of course any ground surface artificially altered by the same source is also a site. The former may be as little as a handful of flakes found in a field. This is a site and should be reported. Simply put, man was there for however brief a time. Industry was conducted as evidenced by the flakes. Were they large flakes from a quarry blank or minute finishing flakes? Collect them, wash them. You will be surprised how many of the larger flakes show secondary chipping or wear when held under a magnifying glass. If you have no topographic maps, use county maps procurable at any county courthouse. These county maps are second best to the USGS topographic sheets. They show the townships, range, and sections. When reporting, locate the site within the smallest corner of the section. Blank site survey sheets may be obtained by simply writing the Office of State Archaeologist, Eastlawn Bldg., Iowa City, Iowa 52242. Completed sheets should be sent to the same address where they are recorded on a record kept in strict confidence. A copy will be sent back to you.

An update on progress on the Cherokee Sewer Site at this writing finds all the principal authors working hard on their draft manuscripts to have ready early this fall. This will culminate in a major archaeological report for the state of Iowa.

Plan ahead: October 1, 1977 is the one day fall meeting to be held at the Paul Rowe addition to the Mills County Historical Society Building, Glenwood, Iowa. The program is shaping up and promises to be an eventful day for all. By September 1 detail notices regarding motels, etc. will reach all members. A call for papers will encourage amateurs to participate. The contact for this meeting is Dennis R. Miller, Silver City, Iowa.

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REMINDER: If you have not paid your 1977-78 dues, today is an excellent time to send them to Ruth Thornton, 326 Otsego Street, Storm Lake, Iowa 50588. The Society is unable to send out individual notices concerning dues, so this reminder may be the only one you will get. Dues are collected July 1 of each year.

I.A.S. TO THE RESCUE ----30 MEMBERS RESPOND TO STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S CALL FOR HELP ON JULY 2-3.



Excavations on 13JP7. I.A.S. members dig 3x6 test pits at 50 foot intervals along a ridge overlooking the Skunk River. The upper few inches were disturbed and little material was found. No subsurface features such as fire hearths or storage pits were located.



Tea Break!
Landowners, Mr. & Mrs. H.D. Machin, brought tea, cookies and ice water to the crew two different times. The temperatures were over 100 and no one needed any encouragement to knock off for a few minutes.

I.A.S. to the rescue. On July 2 & 3 over 30 I.A.S. members answered the State Archaeologist's call for help at the proposed site of the Sutton Coal mine near Monroe, Iowa. Four sites were tested and four others were briefly investigated. Another assault is planned on the area in late summer or early fall. We expect that similar situations will develop from time to time. If you are interested, it is a good time to work on certification!

CURT YOUNKER

The ten sites I have found and wish to write about are 13MT24 through 13MT33. All of these sites, with the exception of 13MT27, lie on terraces in the valley of the Cedar River. 13MT27 lies in the northern part of the county about one and one-half miles east of the Cedar known as Otter Creek.

All of the sites appear to be prehistoric. To date I have found no evidence of European or early American articles or construction materials on any of the sites. None of the old-timers I have talked to have any knowledge of any historic era Indians living on any of the sites I am concerned with here. There are two sites of historic Indian occupation in Mitchell County that I have learned of, stories of both of these sites were related to me by elderly persons who did not see the Indians first-hand but were told of them by their parents.

What maps I have used have been county highway maps obtained from the County Engineers Office. These maps do not show any topographical information, but do seem to be adequate for site location and reporting. The scale of the maps varies according to the size of map used.

I would have to describe all ten of the sites as being multi-component, and judging from lithics found by surface hunting, the sites all appear to have had Woodland occupations. Woodland type projectile points seem to be found in greater numbers than any other. A sprinkling of Oneota and Archaic points also occur. About two miles downstream from 13MT25, I found the basal portion of a very fine point that I feel is probably of Paleo-Indian origin. On the ten sites I have also found many nondescript projectile points that I could not even begin to classify with any degree of confidence. Sherds are found in small numbers on most of these sites, and all of the ones found to date appear to be granite or sand tempered and of general Woodland types. Fire cracked rocks, ground stone implements, scrapers and knives of various types are found with fair regularity as are bits of bone and shell.

I have neglected mentioning flakes until now for a very good reason. There is a quaint local custom practiced by some collectors that I refer to as "salting". A few, a very few, collectors will collect all the flakes they can from one or two sites and scatter these flakes about in another area where they know no site exists in hopes that other collectors will spend their time hunting the salted ground and leave the productive sites to the person who scattered the flakes.

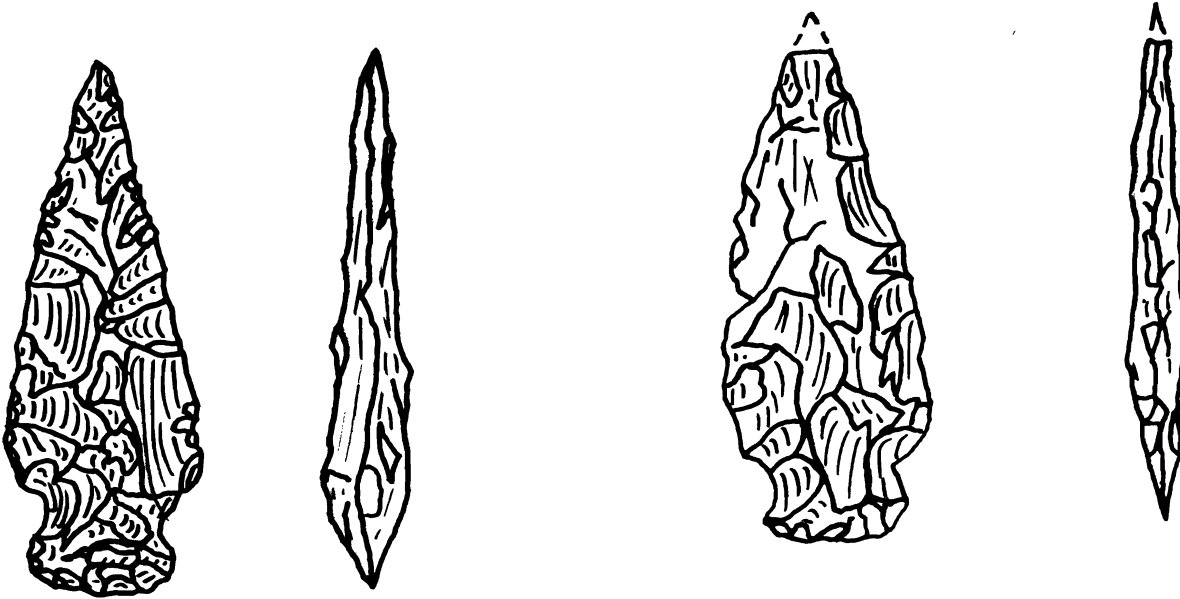
Because of this practice of salting, I refuse to report a site as being a site on the evidence of flakes alone. My sole exception to this rule is 13MT27 where flakes, and flakes alone, appear in such numbers and over such a wide area that I feel this is not salted ground, although I am at a loss to explain the absence of other artifacts. There are a few fragments of rock on this site that appear to be fire cracked, however. These rocks are of dubious character and are not very convincing.

Dating sites from surface find alone I think is a very chancy proposition. Generally I would say that these sites had their greatest amount of occupation and activity during Woodland times with some occupation during Archaic and dwindling activity when the Oneota culture was in flower. It would take a person with far greater ability than myself to narrow it down any more than that.

Attempting to interpret these ten sites with just the evidence found on the surface is enough to give a person nightmares. One has to realize that these sites have been subject to cultivation and collecting for at least 100 years; any visible evidence of fortifications or mounds is long gone. At least two very impressive private collections were amassed in this area during the first part of this century. In these two collections are many birdstones, ceramic vessels, pipes plus a few copper artifacts. In addition to this is the material removed by small collectors like myself. Also it seems like any farmer you care to meet can show you the "Indian hammer" he uses for a doorstep or the box of "arrowheads" in the bureau drawer. Because of this attrition of artifacts, and the possibility that some sites now have no visible surface evidence of their existence, leads me to believe that making any attempt

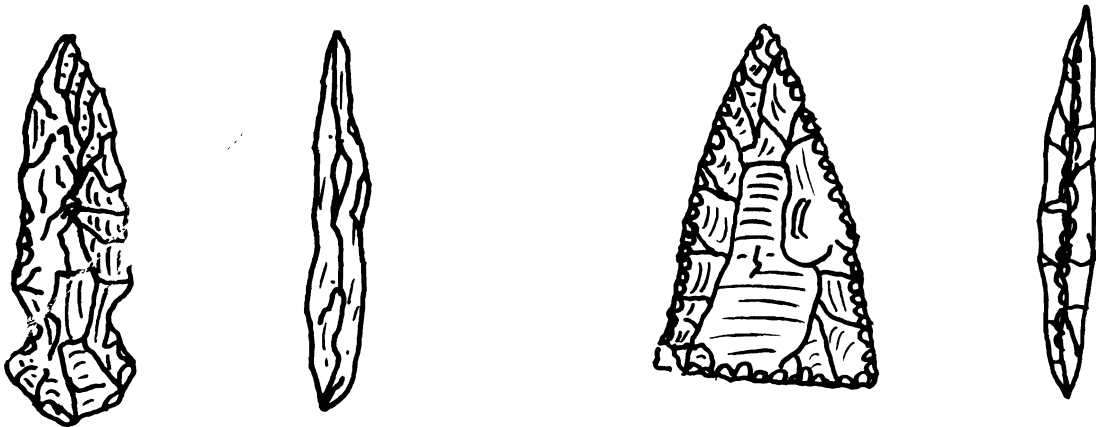
at a meaningful interpretation would border on lunacy. However, it might be possible to say that at least a thousand years ago there was a fair-sized population of people who made their homes here on the upper reaches of the Cedar River and its tributaries; these people probably would have been hunter-gatherers and farmers who lived in small villages on terraces along the Cedar. I cannot say if these villages were occupied year-round or not but it is possible they were. The streams and forests along with the gently rolling plains in this area probably held an abundance of game which could be hunted. Also the rich soil in the river valleys would have been conducive to successful farming, making year-round occupation not only possible but probable.

This spring I intend to help make a survey of the proposed Dome Pipeline route through Mitchell County. This will take considerable time and effort, but perhaps some previously unknown sites will be found. Because of other demands on my time, such as keeping myself fed, I may have to forego site reporting and collecting along the Cedar this year.



13MT31

13MT24

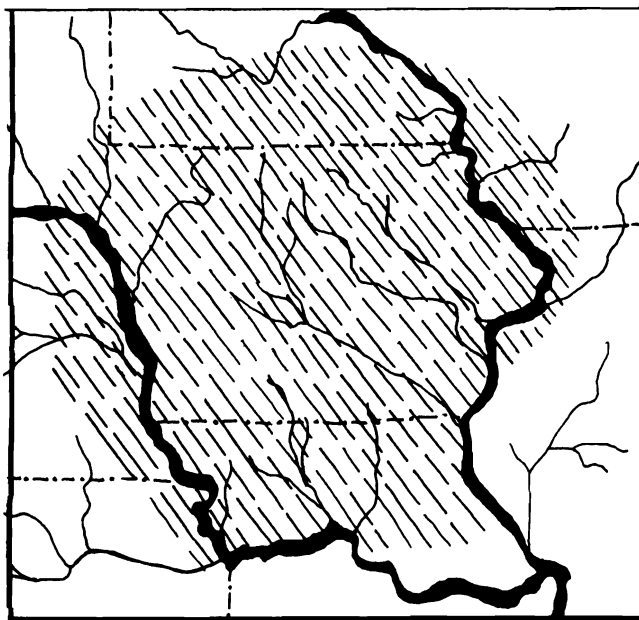


13MT30

13MT29

Figure 1. Artifacts from Sites Discussed in This Report. Actual Size.

Oneota



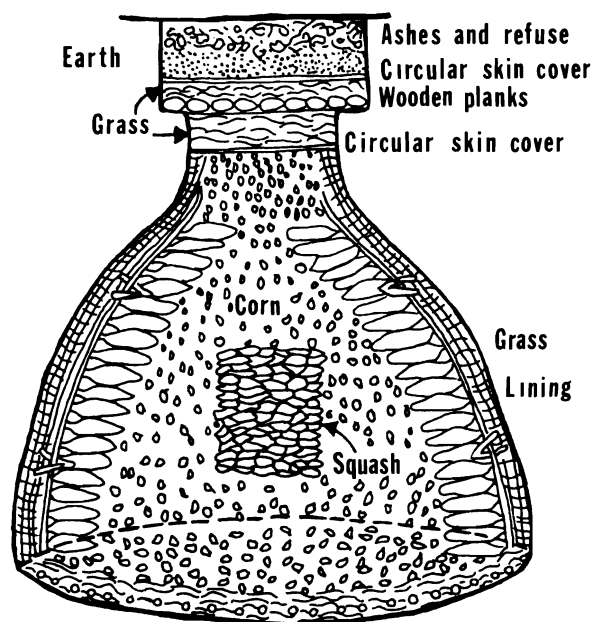
Distribution of Oneota sites in Iowa and surrounding states.

Between A.D. 1000 and about A.D. 1800 most parts of Iowa were inhabited by people of the "Oneota" Culture. Oneota sites have been identified not only in Iowa but also in a broad area throughout the Midwest including the states of Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, and South Dakota.

One of the most puzzling questions in midwestern archaeology is the origin of Oneota. We know that by about A.D. 1000 many midwestern groups were being influenced by a great political and religious center known as Cahokia. The site of Cahokia represents a huge urban complex which covered an area approximately the size of New York City. It is located in the central Mississippi Valley in present day East St. Louis, Illinois. For reasons yet to be explained, Cahokia began to decline as an important center beginning about A.D. 1150. Some archaeologists believe that it was in the migration of people outward from Cahokia that we can find the origin of Oneota. Others suggest that Oneota and Cahokia were distinct entities by A.D. 1000, but that they derived from a common Woodland cultural ancestor yet to be defined. Still others believe that Oneota Culture essentially evolved from an indigenous Woodland culture in the Upper Mississippi Valley. There is as yet no solution to this problem, and until additional evidence is forthcoming, it is likely to remain unresolved.

Most Oneota sites in Iowa are large villages, sometimes covering 100 acres or more, and typically located along large rivers and their tributaries. Cemeteries and occasionally burial mounds occur within the vicinity of the village. Along the Upper Iowa River in the northeastern part of the state we find Oneota sites such as the Elephant Cemetery, the O'Reagan Cemetery, the Flynn Cemetery, and the Lane site. Northwestern Iowa Oneota sites include Burr Oak, Bastian, Correctionville, Dixon, Gillett Grove, and Blood Run found along the Missouri, Big and Little Sioux rivers, and Mill Creek. The Mississippi River and its tributaries, the Flint and the Iowa, in southeastern Iowa, have produced the remains of Oneota sites such as the Kingston and McKinney villages. Finally, south central Iowa Oneota sites have been reported recently in the vicinity of the Des Moines River. While contact is known to have occurred between Oneota and the Nebraska Culture of the Glenwood area of southwestern Iowa, there are no well-defined Oneota sites in this region.

Unfortunately, we have very little idea of the type of house that Oneota people occupied since few actual structures have been excavated in Iowa. Sites elsewhere suggest that the house form was a long rectangle or rectangle with rounded corners. The most characteristic features found at Oneota sites are occasional hearths and bowl or bell-shaped trash and cache pits. Cache pits were dug into the house floor to allow for the storage of food, particularly corn, and other items.



Cross section of a historic Hidatsa cache pit (after Lowie, 1954).

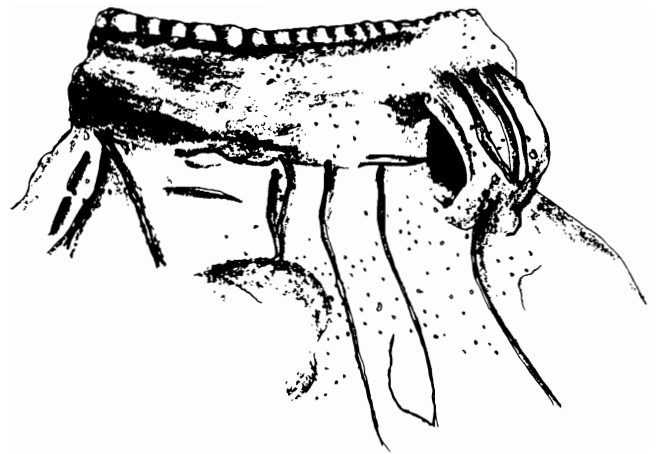


This bear claw necklace is believed to have come from an Oneota site in Jones County, Iowa.

Oneota people buried their dead in an extended position and placed with them a variety of artifacts. For instance, at the Flynn Cemetery in northern Allamakee County, 17 skeletons were found accompanied by artifacts such as bone whistles, pottery, chert flakes, numerous copper and brass bracelets, and beads. In one grave, the skull of a raven had been placed with the deceased. In the eye socket of the raven's skull was found a bone disc bead. We do not know the function or meaning of the raven to Oneota people, but to many native North American groups this bird had special significance, and perhaps this is the case with the Oneota as well.

The most distinctive artifacts of Oneota peoples are ceramics. These are usually elliptical, globular-shaped vessels with a rounded base and wide strap handles. Ground clam shell was added to the wet clay as a tempering agent. The size of the vessels ranges from miniature jars to those capable of holding several gallons. Decoration is most often found on the rim, shoulder, or handle of the vessel and consists of wide trailed lines (trailing refers to the formation of lines wider than they are deep) and bosses (raised bumps).

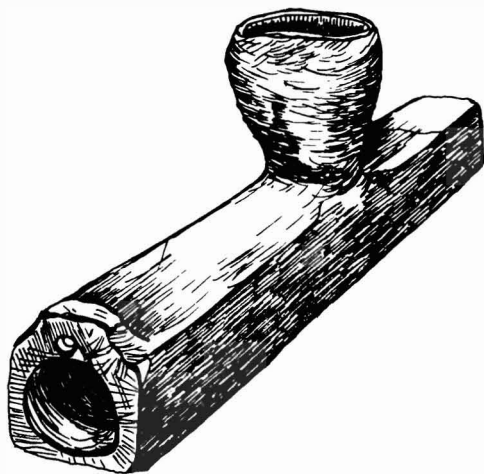
Other Oneota artifacts tend to be less distinctive than the pottery and include items common to contemporary Plains and Prairie cultures. Chipped stone



Oneota pottery is characterized by shell tempering. On most examples this appears as white, plate-like particles on the surface and in the cross section of the sherd. Wide strap handles and decorative trailing are two other distinctive Oneota ceramic traits.

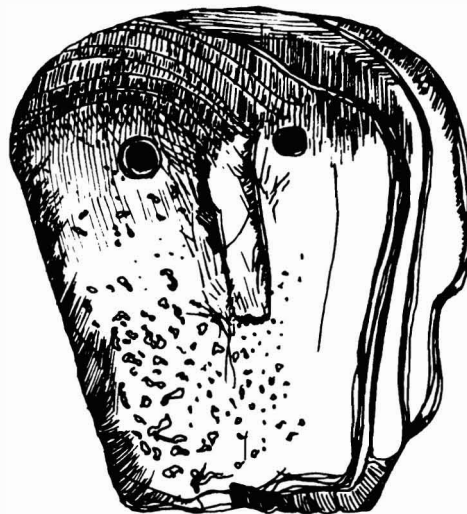
types include many tiny triangular-shaped projectile points which suggest the use of the bow and arrow as the principal weapon. Arrowheads were also fashioned from pieces of antler. A variety of stone tools such as scrapers, knives, drills, and abraders suggest the preparation of meat and the working of hides. Ground stone manos and metates were used to grind and crush seeds and nuts as well as to powder various minerals used in paint pigments. The bone of deer and bison was frequently worked into a variety of objects. Bone awls and hoes, made from the scapula (shoulder blade) of deer or bison, were common items.

One of the outstanding features of Oneota Culture was the use of red pipestone, called catlinite, which was obtained from a source in southwestern Minnesota. Catlinite was worked by Oneota people into pipes and plaques. As far as we can tell, these pipes were used for smoking during ceremonial occasions. Catlinite plaques found at the Blood Run site in Cherokee County, had been illustrated with drawings of hoofed animals and decorative motifs.



A catlinite pipe.

During their early history, Oneota people seem to have spent an equal portion of their time engaged in horticulture and hunting. Corn, squash, and possibly beans and tobacco were important crops sown in gardens on the soft river floodplains where the ground was easiest to till. Wild animals such as bison and deer seem to have been important hunted forms. Fishing and the collection of wild nuts and seeds would have supplemented this diet. To carry on this lifestyle, people would probably have lived a semisedentary existence, residing in permanent villages during certain times of the year, but moving away for the summer and winter bison hunt.



A piece of engraved marine shell, possibly representing the human face, is believed to be the work of an Oneota craftsman.

Climatologists tell us that at about A.D. 1200-1250, there was a significant change in the weather patterns throughout the Midwest. Summers became hotter and drier thus shortening the growing season. It would seem that this change was particularly unfavorable for horticultural groups and many people in Iowa were unable to adjust. Oneota people on the other hand, appear to have survived by becoming more dependent on hunting and less so on farming. Later Oneota sites are found further upstream and are located at higher elevations above the river. The numerous hunting tools from these later sites and the abundance of bison bone suggests that hunting became more important than raising crops once climatic conditions deteriorated.

Early Oneota sites such as Dixon, Correctionville, and Gothier have been grouped with sites of the Blue Earth River region in south central Minnesota into what is called the Correctionville-Blue Earth Phase. Judging by the date at the Dixon site, this early phase may have begun by the tenth century A.D. Related sites are distributed over a broad area which includes locations in southeastern Nebraska, eastern Wisconsin, the Chariton River region of Kansas, and southeastern Iowa.

Later sites are represented by localities on the Iowa River and its tributaries in northeastern Iowa. These include sites like the Lane site, Malone II site, and the Elephant Cemetery. These appear to be related to northwest Iowa sites such as Harriman and Gillett Grove, to the southeastern McKinney Village near Toolesboro, and to sites in adjacent states. All of these have been included in what is referred to as the Orr Phase. Orr Phase materials also appear to be present at the Blood Run site in Lyon County.

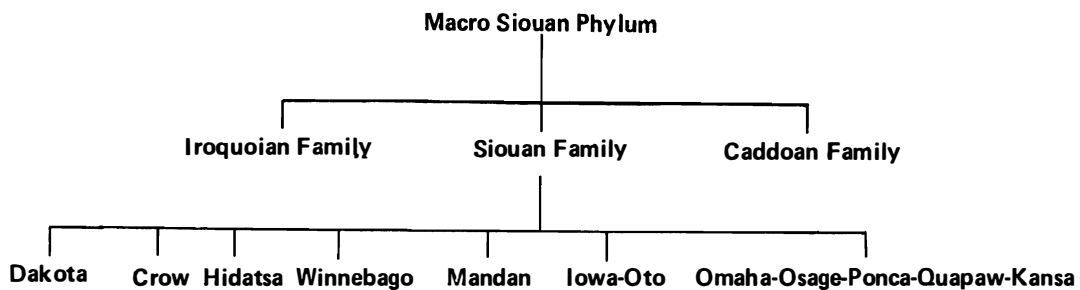
The Bastian site in Cherokee County, would seem to be intermediate in time between Correctionville-Blue Earth Phase sites and Orr Phase sites, and thus serves to link these early and late Oneota phases. Orr Phase sites date well within the late prehistoric and early historic period, and many are believed to be the remains of villages and cemeteries of historic Siouan speaking groups in Iowa such as the Oto and Ioway.

Late Oneota sites may also represent settlements of other Siouan speakers such as the Omaha. The presence of European trade goods such as glass beads, copper and brass jewelry, and cooking utensils in late Oneota sites point to contact between Siouan speakers and European settlers in Iowa.

*Lynn Marie Alex
Illustrations by
Mary Slattery*

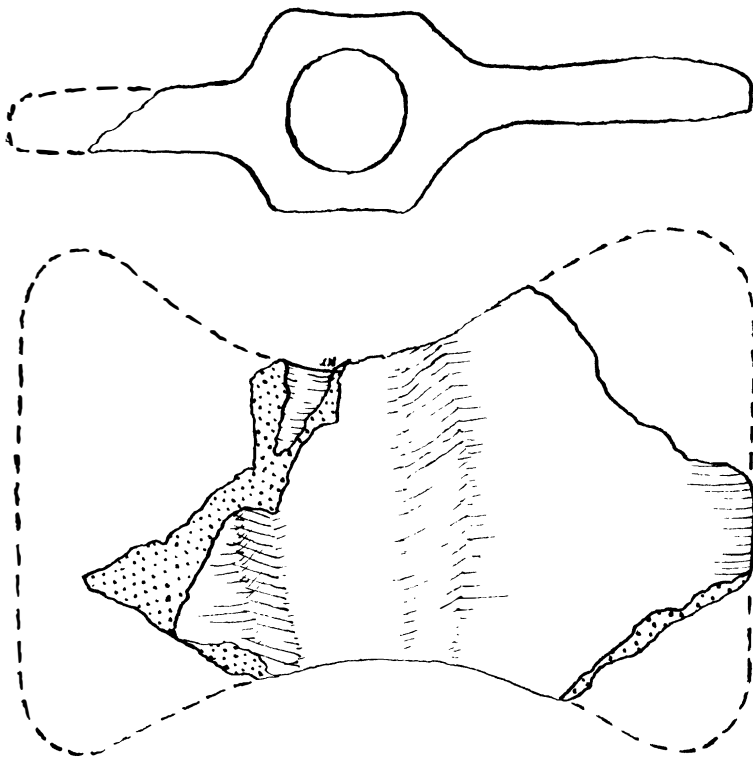


Small, unnotched triangular points are a typical Oneota artifact.



Late Oneota sites are thought to represent the remains of historic Siouan speakers such as the Iowa and Oto. There are many divisions of the Siouan language family, and not everyone who speaks a Siouan tongue can necessarily understand another Siouan speaker. In the same way, neither can speakers of Norwegian, Persian, or English necessarily understand one another although each of these languages belongs to one Indo-European language family.

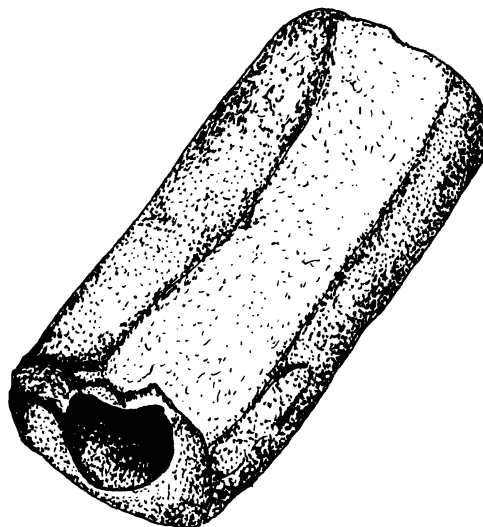
BANNERSTONES



Winged Bannerstone from Johnson County. Found by Norman Warner, Maryland Archaeological Society. Mr. Warner found the item at Boy Scout camp in 1937 when he was a resident of North English. Views from above and cross section are shown actual size. Special thanks go to Mr. Warner for sharing his discovery with the members of I.A.S.

Bannerstone found south of Chelsea in Tama County by I.A.S. member, Dan Beck. Thanks to Dan for the report of his find. (actual size)

The Newsletter had considerable success in its efforts to find early man projectile points. We would like to do a similar search for bannerstones, pendants, and other unusual artifacts. Please send your reports, photos, or drawings to the editors. This is an excellent way to build a record of such finds in Iowa.



Book Review by Richard G. Slattery

Black Hawk: An Autobiography, Edited by Donald Jackson
Paperback, 163 pages, \$2.50 University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1964.

This new edition is a republication of the first edition of 1833 with added new material from a 1916 printing published by Lakeside Press, Chicago. The editor has compiled a vast amount of factual back-up data from the Black Hawk collection at the Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield. This material appears in the book largely as footnotes relating to the actual translation of Black Hawk's own life story as related to his friend, Antoine LeClaire.

Admittedly, after the first edition was released there were conflicting judgements regarding the authenticity of the autobiography. This was largely based on the actual translation. Since Black Hawk knew no English and LeClaire's English vocabularly was poor, LeClaire enlisted the assistance of a John B. Patterson, a newspaper editor to aid in placing the translation in manuscript form. Both men swore that the final 1833 manuscript was a true account of what Black Hawk had told them. Much of the criticism stemmed from the translation into English using words, probabably supplied by Patterson, that no Indian would ever utter. Patterson wrote in a style that "a noble Indian deserved noble prose." In the 1964 edition, Donald Jackson treats all conflicting information in the introduction and builds a convincing argument for the book's accuracy and a plausible case for its authenticity. The former was checked by Jackson's exhaustive historical research and the latter by intelligent judgment tempered by a cautious statement on both absolving himself of responsibility for either.

The autobiography begins with Black Hawk at the age of 15 and relates details of his eventful relations with other tribal nations, Spanish, French, British and the Americans. The book is laced with physical conflicts concluding with Black Hawk's description of the events leading to, during and after the Black Hawk war.

The book is a valuable study of Indian life through the turbulent years of contacts with the Europeans in the midwest. It is considered good supplementary reading for greater understanding of Black Hawk, the man. Black Hawk's personal thoughts and his long and eventful struggle to maintain the traditional lifestyle for his people provides the reader with deep respect for the great leader.

I enjoyed this book very much and read it with the receptivity that, although the translation admittedly contained some minor inaccuracies, I was left with a feeling of closeness and understanding of the man that has become ledgendary.

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WHERE ARE YOU? We have lost a few members -- temporarily we hope -- and we would appreciate new addresses. Send all address changes to The Office of State Archaeologist, Eastlawn Bldg., Iowa City, Iowa 52242.

Missing persons: Linda Thomsen, Hiawatha, Iowa; Sue Erickson, Apt. 2 807 E. Washington, Iowa City, Iowa 52240; Judith A. Johnson, Box 178, Garrison, Iowa 52229; and Sandy Hay, 129 Walnut, Ames, Iowa 50010.

If you plan to move in the near future, remember to notify the Society. The postoffice charges 25¢ to supply a new address for any publication.

We do not have a list of new members for this issue, but we will include them in the October Newsletter. We need to hear from the members of the Society about their activities, finds, or thoughts that are of interest to the readers of the Newsletter. The next issue will be prepared after September 15, so please send all copy to the address below by that time.

Thanks to the contributors for this issue. We appreciate your support.

The Iowa Archeological Society is a non-profit, scientific society legally organized under the corporate laws of Iowa. Members of the Society are amateurs and professionals with a serious interest in the archeology of Iowa and the Midwest.

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