

Iowa Archeological Society

# newsletter



October 1980

30th anniversary

number 97

# 30th Anniversary Edition

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

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The Newsletter is published four times a year. Questions about your subscription should be addressed to the Office of State Archaeologist, Eastlawn, University of Iowa, Iowa City, Ia. 52242. All materials for publication should be sent to the editor.

## From the Editor

Yes, this is the *Newsletter* of the Iowa Archeological Society. Your editor has decided to change the 10-year-old format of the publication. We want to experiment with methods to upgrade the quality of the *Newsletter* and at the same time continue to feature articles, drawings, and photographs that are submitted by our members.

As a member of the Society, this publication belongs to you. Please share your opinions and suggestions with us so we can meet your needs. In addition use the *Newsletter* as a vehicle to contribute your archeological knowledge and discoveries to a permanent record that can be used by all Society members.

Our new format should speed up the printing process so we can get the *Newsletter* out on a more regular basis. We still have the problem, however, of a shortage of material to print. It is easy to submit items for publication. Just send drawings, photographs, announcements, descriptions, letters, and articles to the editor. We will edit the material and the printer will do the rest. With our new process, your *Newsletter* feature will have a professional quality that will impress your friends and establish your name in the Iowa archeological community.

With an offer like that, how can you refuse to select the best artifacts in your collection or your most recent archeological theory for publication?

Please let us know how you like the new format. Your editor takes full responsibility for the change and your complaints and/or suggestions should be sent to the editor.

Gary L. Valen

## New Members

Mary Frazier, Iowa City  
James and Elaine Waldon, Cedar Falls  
Harry Ritter, Muscatine  
Darrell Doss, Davenport  
Elizabeth Applequist, Rock Island, Ill.  
William Connelly, Davenport  
Mary Rogers, Cordova, Ill.  
Stephen Garrington, Davenport  
V.L. Sauer, New Hampton  
James Gifford, Ames  
Truman Slitor, Waukon  
Jack Wadsworth, Waukon  
Jerome Cross, Wapello  
Jeff Behm, Madison, Wis.  
William Stepka, Hillsboro, Wis.  
Mark Boswell, Corning, Ia.  
Greg Duncan, Mason City, Ia.  
Design Collaborators at Ames  
Frank Ehler, Kellogg, Ia.  
Curtis Altizer, Shenandoah  
Cynthia Graff, Evanston, Ill.  
Western Ill. University, Macomb, Ill.  
Library  
James Hill, Long Grove  
Kenneth Blank, Stanton  
Ken Vandervoort, Pella  
Larry Johnson, Des Moines  
Jerry Kelley, Indianola  
Orlendes Ross, Mt. Pleasant  
Ward Kamper, Washington  
Judy Kirchner, Donnellson  
Roger Johnson, Iowa City  
Tim Koester, Iowa City  
Eddie Vega, Bellevue  
Beverly Gorelick, Omaha  
Robert Wehrle, New London  
Robert Page, Muscatine  
Jeff Hird, Dubuque  
Mary Ruschmeyer, Ottumwa  
Dr. and Mrs. Miles Zintz, Albuquerque, N.M.  
Elaine Ball, Mt. Vernon

# From the President

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This new issue of the *Newsletter* is the product of our editor, Gary Valen. His efforts to provide us with an improved format and, hopefully, more timely issuance of the *Newsletter* are to be greatly commended. Please let us realize that the elected position of *Newsletter* editor is a weighty one. The responsibility for soliciting its contents, the editorial work involved, the compilation of the articles and illustrations are all time consuming tasks that we, as recipients may take too lightly or entirely overlook. We grumble when the *Newsletter* is late, yet fail to send in articles to facilitate the filling of the 16 pages available to us. It has been mentioned before that you don't have to be an accomplished writer to have your article printed. Most of you have something of interest that could be shared with the membership. Just send it in as if you were writing to a friend. Gary will edit it, if necessary, and your knowledge or question on a particular related subject or find will be shared with the 500-plus members of your Society.

Don Spears, our Associate Editor, has brought many interesting Iowa finds to light via the *Newsletter* by visiting local collections and reporting on unusual discoveries. If you are an "armchair archeologist," send in a book review or a research article on any subject related to native Americans or archeology. The subject matter is broad. We need your contributions!

*The illustration on the cover of this issue, created by Mesquakie artist Wayne Pushetonequa, first appeared in Issue Number 83—January 1977.*

## Special Note to Chapter Chairpersons

I have noticed that the *Newsletter* of the late 1960s always carried a paragraph, or a page length report, on your chapter activities (speakers, field trips, special finds, etc.). There also was notification of time and place of your meetings and who to contact. *This should be reinstated.* There are many new members in the I.A.S. who may be in your geographic area and would like to join your chapter. All of us are interested in what you are doing. So that this information may appear in the next issue of the *Newsletter*, please submit your chapter news to Gary as soon as possible and **quarterly** thereafter to meet each *Newsletter* publication.

With your help and the help of your members, we can improve the vitality of the Society through its best media, the *Newsletter*.

Richard Slattery, President

## Have You Paid Your Dues?

We are now on a calendar year. If your dues are paid to July 1980 they are being extended to the end of 1980. If you haven't paid current dues please do so.

Active \$7.00, \$7.00 Institutional, \$15.00 sustaining, \$5.00 student (under 18), \$1,000 benefactor.

Send to:  
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Storm Lake, Iowa 50588

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Newsletter Editor: Gary Valen, R.R. 2, Lacona, Ia. 50139.

# The Society's First Newsletter

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The first *Newsletter* of the newly formed Iowa Archeological Society was published on Aug. 25, 1951, at the Effigy Mounds National Monument by editor Wilfred D. Logan. The first issues were mimeographed sheets devoted mainly to Society news and business. Over the years short articles and illustrations were included.

It seems appropriate on the 30th anniversary of the Society that we reprint some of the material that has appeared in past *Newsletters*. Many new members will be exposed to these articles for the first time and long term members should enjoy the reminders of earlier days. The selection of articles was quite difficult due to the wealth of material that has been printed in the *Newsletter* over the years. I have tried to select a representative sample that covers the 30 years of the Society. Material from the past three years has been excluded because more of our members will still have those issues.

It is important to look back at the roads we have traveled in order to measure our growth and progress. We also should take time to honor those who came before us. I dedicate this issue to the editors who labored over the publication of the *Newsletter*. The Iowa Archeological Society has a proud tradition that should sustain us another 30 years or more.

Gary L. Valen

*(From Issue Number 1, August 25, 1951, McGregor, Iowa)*

Greetings! The Iowa Archeological Society opens what is hoped will be a successful run of publications with the mailing of this *Newsletter*. Those of you who have shown your interest in furthering constructive archeological work in Iowa by your membership in the society may look forward to receiving regular monthly communications from your editor in the form of a *Newsletter*. However, if we are to continue to give our members society news and the thoughts of the members on archeological and society matters, you must send such material to us for publication. Be sure to write to your secretary-treasurer at any time when you have news of your activities or interesting information or thoughts about the life of Iowa's prehistoric Indians.

## Death of Dr. Charles R. Keyes of Mount Vernon

*(From Issue Number 1, August 25, 1951, McGregor, Iowa)*

The Iowa Archeological Society was sorry to hear of the death of one of Iowa's greatest researchers in archeology. Dr. Charles R. Keyes, State Archeologist and Professor of German at Cornell College, Mount Vernon, Iowa died at his home on July 23.

Dr. Keyes' death represents a great loss to Iowa and to Iowa Archeology in particular. The Iowa Archeological Society, its officers and members, regret the loss of Dr. Keyes and extend their sympathy to his family and relatives.

## Editors of the Newsletter 1951-1980

Issues 1-10, August 1951-April 1953

Editor: Wilfred D. Logan

Issues 11-31, May 1954-May 1959

Editor: Reynold J. Ruppe

Issues 32-33, July 1961-November 1961

Editor: Earl Ingmansen

Issue 34, February 1962

Editor: Marshall McKusick

Issue 35, February 1965

Editor: John Vincent

Issues 36-49, October 1965-August 1968

Editor: Garland J. Gordon

Issue 50, January 1969

Editor: George Horton

Issues 51-64, March 1969-April 1972

Editor: Don G. Spears

Issues 65-87, July 1972-January 1978

Editors: Gary L. Valen and Betsy M. Lyman

Issues 88-Present, April 1978-Present

Editor: Gary L. Valen

# Turin Man

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*(From Issue Number 16, October 1955, Iowa City, Iowa)*

Since W.D. Frankforter was the only member of the Society to have been in actual contact with all the Turin finds and since "Frank" has written such a fine account of the happenings, we are reprinting his article from the Newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of the Iowa Archeological Society.

"On August 5 the University of Iowa was notified of the discovery of a human skeleton in a gravel pit at Turin, Iowa. Mr. Asa Johnston, owner and operator of the pit, had uncovered it while removing earth which was being removed for fill in other points in that area. Dr. Stout, Professor of Anthropology

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*The University of Iowa learned of the discovery of a human skeleton at Turin, Iowa, on Aug. 5, 1955.)*

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at S.U.I., called Dr. R.J. Ruppe who was conducting the Summer Session in Archaeological Field Research here at Cherokee. Dr. Ruppe invited W.D. Frankforter to investigate the find with him the following day when, along with students, John Ives, Eugene Fugle, and Adrian Anderson accompanied by Joe Beals of Cherokee, he went to Turin and Onawa. The

skeleton had been removed and cleaned and was in the office of Dr. S.R. Anderson, Monona County Coroner.

"The skeleton was examined and obtained for the State University of Iowa. The group then visited the pit from which the skeleton had been recovered and there met Mr. Johnson who had made the find. It was discovered that the skeleton had come from a vertical bank of silty loess and had

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*"Turin Man" was found in a vertical bank of silty loess approximately 20 feet below the modern surface.*

---

been approximately 20 feet below the original modern surface. No sign of a recent natural fill or of a man-made pit was seen.

"The removal of the skeleton had been accomplished in such a manner as to leave a section of the deposit directly over the area from which the feet are reported to have been removed. Since no evidence of disturbance was noted in this area and because of the considerable depth of the skeleton in the deposit it was concluded that it had been incorporated contemporaneously with the sediments at the level of the body or very shortly thereafter.

"Three more trips were made in the following week to begin geologic work and to collect bison bones which were found at a lower level in the deposit containing the human remains and, also to collect fossils from an older gravel which predates the

upper deposit by a number of years.

"Later in August, after the field course had ended and the crew had departed, Frankforter made several trips to Turin continuing geologic investigations. On August 26 he received a phone call from

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*Bison bones and fossils added to the gravel pit find.*

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Mr. Johnston saying that another skull had been found in a large block of earth which had dropped from the face of the quarry the previous evening. A hurried trip to Turin revealed that, except for a few fragments, the top of the skull was intact and still in the block which in all probability contained the entire skeleton.

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*Another skull was found at the pit on Aug. 26, 1955.*

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"The exposed bone was covered with a cloth and moist dirt to prevent its drying and cracking. Since Dr. Ruppe and Dr. Stout were both out of the state, the University of Nebraska was contacted and in the following few days the site was visited by Dr. C.B. Schultz, Director, and Lloyd Tanner, Curator, of the Nebraska State Museum, Lincoln. Dr. Gilbert C. Lueninghoener, Professor of

Geology, Midland College, Fremont, Nebraska, Dr. Mott Lueninghoener, Professor of Geology, Midland College, Fremont, Nebraska, Dr. Mott Davis and Franklin Fenenga of the Department of Anthropology, U. of Nebraska., and David Gradwohl and Tom Newman, students. They were accompanied by Hubert Smith from the Smithsonian Institution, Missouri River Survey Office, Lincoln. The

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*"The skeleton was carefully exposed and evidence of pit outlines or burial goods was watched for without success."*

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skeleton was carefully exposed and evidence of pit outlines or burial goods was watched for without success. The matrix was left around the skeleton and the whole encased in a plaster cast and brought to Sanford Museum.

"With the discovery of another individual a few days later and this still *in situ*, the time had come to make the finds generally known to anthropologists and geologists who might be interested and, therefore, calls were made to Dr. Frank Roberts, Jr., Head of the Smithsonian Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, and to Dr. Marie Wormington, Curator of Anthropology, Denver Museum of Natural History, both experts in the field of Early Man in America. Telegrams were sent to others in nearby universities and museums and the response was good. Several professionals visited the site and assisted in the work -

and the general public, along with television crews, news reporters, and what seemed like most of northwest Iowa, arrived daily.

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*"Turin Man" became recognized as a major find, and many professionals visited the site along with news media representatives.*

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"Among the geologists and anthropologists who came were Dr. Ruppe (who made a special trip back from the Southwest where car trouble detained him) and Dr. Sherwood Tuttle, Department of Geology, and Iowa Geologic Survey, Iowa City; Dr. Wormington from Denver; Smithsonian representatives were Dr. Waldo Wedel, Curator of Archaeology, Hubert Smith, Larry Tomsyck, and Dean Clark from the Lincoln office; University of Nebraska visitors, in addition to those mentioned before, were Dr. John Champe, Chairman of the Department of Anthropology, Dr. A.L. Lugh, Professor of Geology, and Eugene C. Reed, Head of the Nebraska Geologic Survey; Marvin F. Kivett, Director, and William Grange, Nebraska State Historical Society Museum, Lincoln.

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*The third and fourth skeletons were uncovered while observers watched.*

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"The third and fourth human skeletons were unearthed and collected during the presence of many of these individuals. Geologic observations and mapping of the area along with plotting the positions of all the human and bison remains

continued through the whole period and much still remains to be done.

"LIFE carried a brief story on the find which was good publicity except for the unfortunate omission of any reference to the institutions involved in the study and the failure to recognize the individuals who helped in the documentation of the find. The oldest probable date on the find was used instead of a more

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*"Special mention and credit must be given to (gravel pit owner) Mr. Asa Johnston, who not only discovered most of the material, but...cooperated so completely in the recovery..."*

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conservative figure which would have been more desirable from a scientific point of view. The statement was qualified in the text but this was probably read by only a few. The last three skeletons are still at Sanford and #2 is on display. They will be taken to Iowa City where they will be carefully exposed for study. The bison and other fossils will remain at Sanford for study and preservation. The final, accurate date must await radioactive carbon tests and further paleontologic and geologic studies.

"Special mention and credit must be given Mr. Asa Johnston, who not only discovered most of the material, but, even more important, cooperated so completely in the recovery of these specimens while still trying to conduct his business. We are indebted to him for his help and interest which permitted the study and collection."

# Excavation in Southwestern Iowa

By Adrian D. Anderson

(From "Preliminary Notes on Excavation in Southwestern Iowa," Issue Number 22, September 1959, Iowa City, Iowa)

On the week-end of the 27th and 28th of April, 1957 students enrolled in the Archeology Laboratory at the State University of Iowa conducted a field trip to Glenwood, Iowa in the southwestern corner of the state. The field party was made up of the following personnel:

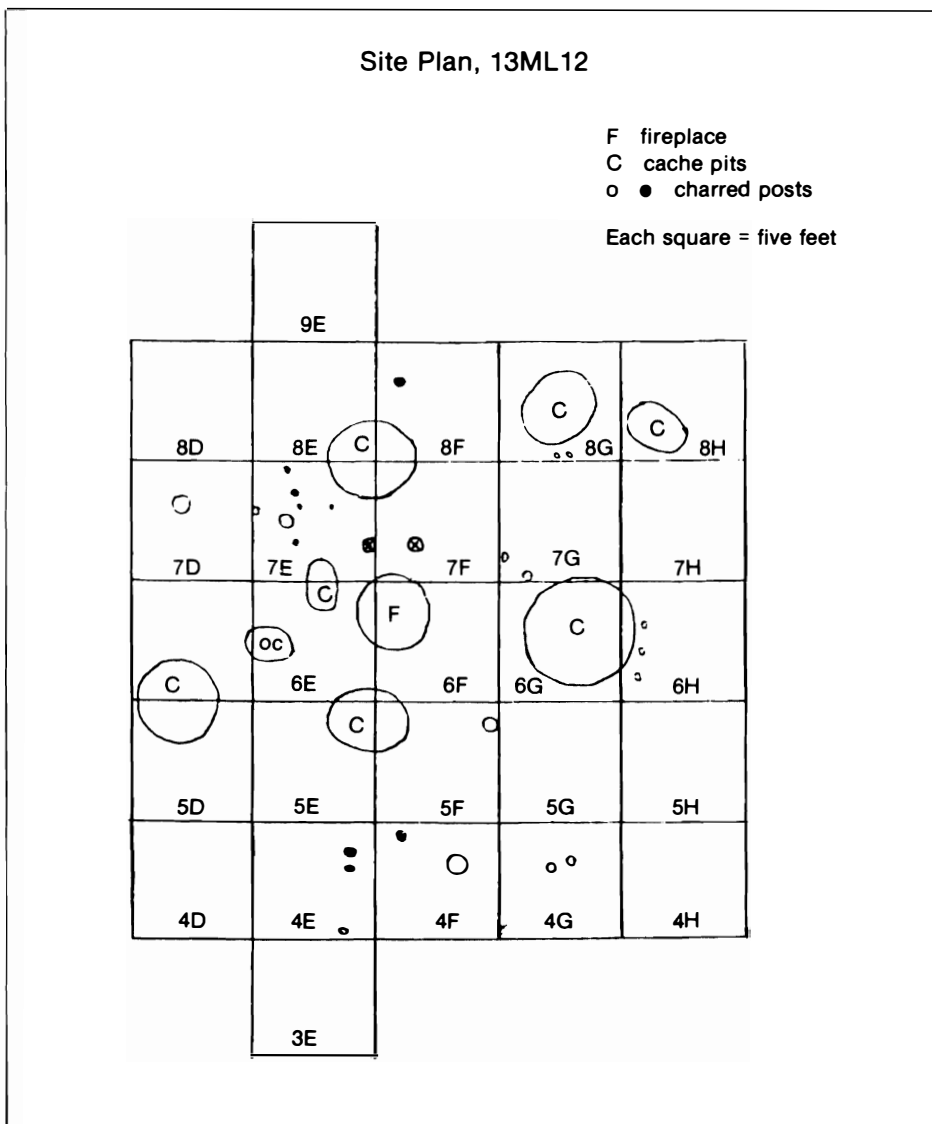
Dr. R.J. Ruppe  
 Dr. T. McCorkle  
 Dale Henning  
 Darrell Henning  
 Richard Flanders  
 Charles O'Neal  
 Carol O'Neal  
 Adrian Anderson  
 Barbara Anderson  
 Janis Runde  
 Patricia Wolfe  
 James Scholtz  
 Donald Beckmeier  
 Robert Schabaker

The purpose of the trip was the

planned excavation of a Glenwood Culture house-site which had been located for us by Mr. D.D. Davis of Glenwood. The house is one of fifteen which comprise an occupation area located in a small valley that opens onto the flood-plain of the Missouri River. The house sites are dispersed randomly along the valley floor from its mouth to the upper end. At the present time only the northern side of the valley seems to have been used for house sites. It is hoped that in the coming year we will find sites on the southern slope when it is in cultivation. Judging from a cursory examination of the material from these house sites it is probable that they can be equated with certain sites, such as the Burns site, directly across the Missouri River in Nebraska.

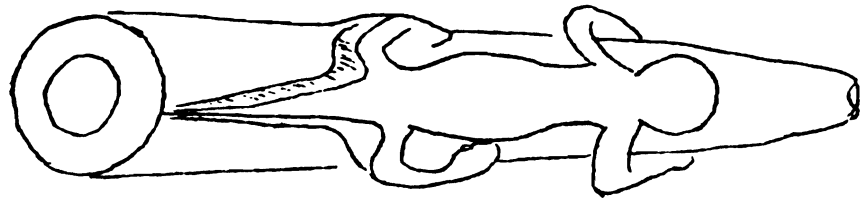
We were fortunate to be able to set up our tents in a pasture adjoining the cornfield where the house site is located. This meant that we had to carry our equipment only 100 feet, a fact for which all were grateful by Saturday evening.

We began work early Saturday morning. In spite of the fact that many of the students had not had previous experience in archeological field work the work progressed smoothly. We set up a datum line and the five-foot grid system which was oriented by compass. We then began the excavation of three squares. Shovels were used to remove the first six inches of earth to get below the plow line. From then on trowels were used to excavate by



six inch levels to the floor. All earth was sifted through one-quarter inch screens. The floor was found at thirty-six inches below datum and the excavation of the other square was started. By Saturday evening we had five squares down to the floor level.

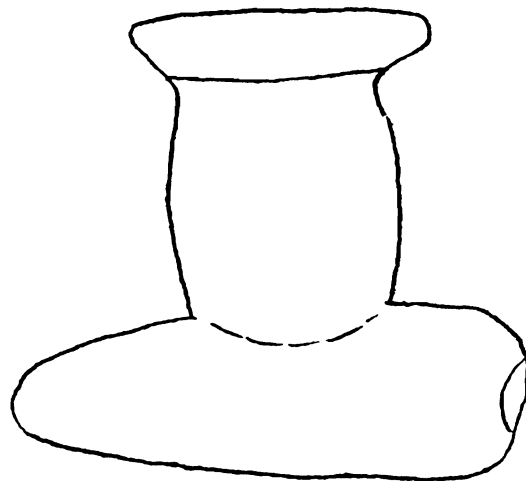
"Glenwood Culture" Artifacts  
Approximately natural size



A

Figure A is an elbow pipe of fired clay. The effigy on the upper surface of the pipe is a salamander or lizard. The figure is approximately natural size.

Figure B is a pipe of the Plains variety made of soft stone ground to shape and drilled. A stem is necessary for this type. The sketch is approximately natural size.



B

Figure C is a snug-nosed scraper of light tan flint. It is 2 1/4" long, 1" wide, 1/2" wide and almost triangular in cross-section.

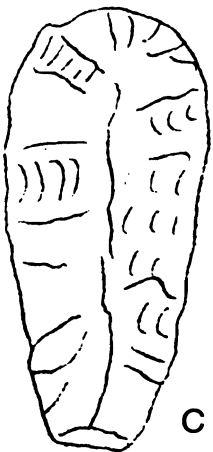
Figure D is a projectile point 1 3/16" long, 13/16" long and 1/4" thick. It is corner notched with the notches 1/16" deep about 1/16" wide. The base is 5/8" wide.

Figure E. Small side-notched point. 9/16" wide at the base, 3/4" long and 1/8" thick. The base has a slight basal notch.

Figure F. Side notched triangular projectile point. 1 1/16" long, 5/8" wide and 3/16" thick. Notches are 3/16" deep and 1/8" wide.

Figure G is one of the variety of snub-nosed side scrapers which has the usual median ridge close to one of the edges. 2 3/8" long, 1 1/16" wide and 3/8" thick.

"Glenwood Culture"



C



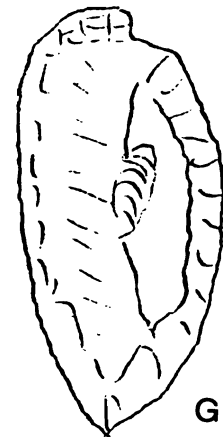
D



E



F



G



Sunday morning two large charred posts were located which were approximately nine inches in diameter and nine feet apart. They were apparently two of the main support posts. A large fire pit and two cache pits were also found. The cache pits contained ashes, earth, pottery and stone and bone tools.

Lack of time forced us to leave the site before excavation was completed. Further excavation was planned and during the summer Dale Henning and the author returned to the site and continued excavation for eleven days from

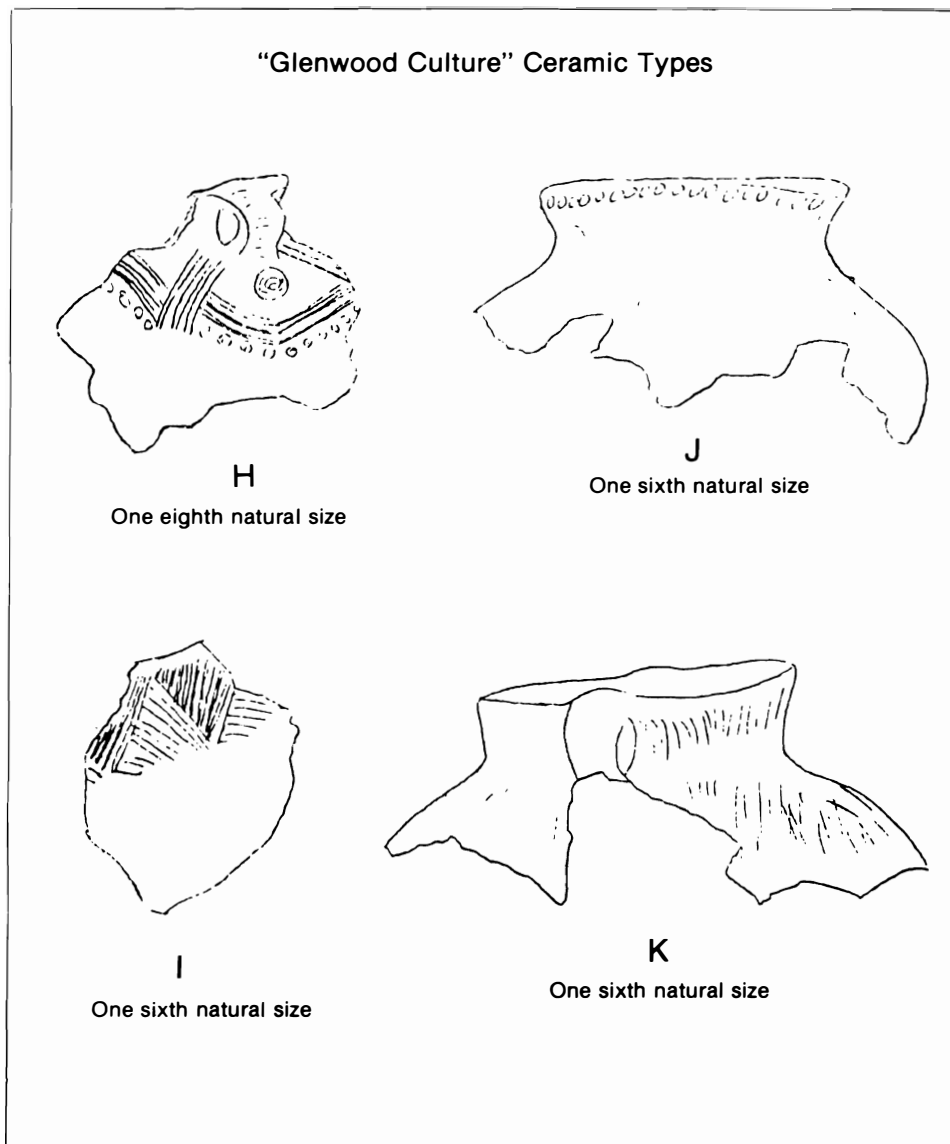
June 25th until July 5th. An area twenty-five feet square was excavated by us with the assistance of several interested amateurs from the Glenwood area.

It was discovered that the house had two occupation levels. The floor of the last occupancy was thirty-six inches below datum and separated from the floor of the first occupancy by an almost sterile layer of yellow earth approximately four inches thick. A total of seven large cache pits and three small cache pits were found as well as many smaller posts with diameters of from two to four

inches.

Very few artifacts were found on the lowest floor level. In direct contrast, there were many broken pottery vessels and other artifacts on the upper floor. The upper floor level had a layer of fired clay above it while the lower level did not. From these facts it seems safe to assume that the layer of sterile yellow earth which separated the two floors was carried in as an attempt at "house cleaning" and that following the span of time represented by the upper floor level there was a fire which destroyed the house. To the time of writing there have not been enough postmolds found to determine the shape of the house.

The diagram (page 8) of the excavated area illustrates the position of the features mentioned above as well as our system of designating squares by number and level. Also pictured are some of the artifacts found at this site.



*Figures H, I, J, K. H, and I are examples of pottery vessels with broad-trail incised design found in abundance at this site. Both are shell-tempered and lack the cord-marking which is so indicative of "Glenwood Culture" ceramics. J and K are examples of typical Glenwood pottery.*

# Spear Head and Earspool

## Northcentral Iowa Spear Head

(From Issue Number 31, May 1959,  
Iowa City, Iowa)

Mr. Ole Fjetland of Humboldt has found an interesting ground slate spear head which is illustrated below. This was found near Goodell in Hancock County. The piece was carefully ground to shape but the grinding marks show and it was never polished. Sharp edges have been dulled through use. We are somewhat puzzled by this artifact which is extremely rare in Iowa. Ground slate knives are found in the Archaic cultures of northeastern North America, and the Dorset culture of the Eskimo area.

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.

## A Unique Mill Creek Earspool

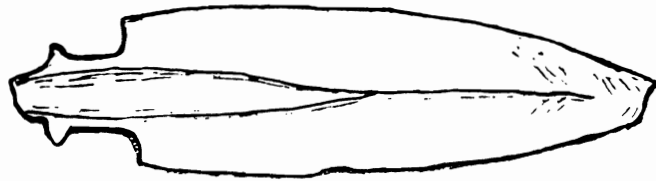
By Dale R. Henning

(From Issue Number 37, October 1965, McGregor, Iowa)

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

Spear Head from North Central Iowa



Mill Creek Earspool



0 5 Cm.

# Rattlesnake Effigy, Webster County

By Paul D. Kline

*(From Issue Number 45, October 1967, McGregor, Iowa)*

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 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, bluish-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

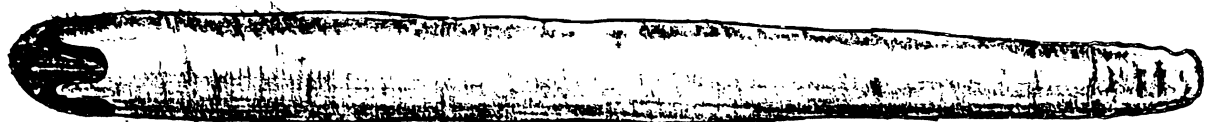
the IAS on this subject.

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.

Rattlesnake Effigy



Left Lateral View



Dorsal View

# Crosses and the American Indian

By Ruth Thornton

(From Issue Number 53,  
September 1969, Ottumwa, Iowa)

The American Indian used many designs and forms in his decorations. Some of which, to the primitive artist, had a special meaning or significance. Among these decorations was the cross design used by every culture throughout history and found all over the world on pottery, basketry, weaving, and other objects. This brief account will relate the cross to the American Indian. The cross, the most significant symbol in the world, is one of the oldest decorative forms and also a religious symbol of great antiquity. Among the remains and relics of practically every people in all parts of the world variations of the cross are found.

The cross to most people signifies the most sacred emblem of the Christian faith. Actually, the cross form, its origin unknown, comes to us out of the misty past. One of the Pre-Christian forms was constantly found in all old Egyptian remains. This form



known as Crus Ansata or Ankh was peculiarly identified with Egypt, yet was used as a religious symbol among other ancient peoples. It was a symbol of immortality.

The cross lends itself to a variety of forms but the most common are the Greek



and the Latin.



The Indians used the Greek form to represent the winds which bring the rains. The Aztec goddess

of rain held a cross in her hand. Among the Pueblo Indians the Latin cross was very popular. The Navajo called the equal-armed cross



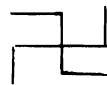
the morning star. The double-barred cross



was very

significant to the Pueblo because to them, it represented the dragon fly, a creature associated with water and water to them was very important. Indians tend to accept objects which have meaning in the light of their experiences. So the double-barred cross has been very popular in Pueblo decoration and is still made and worn by the Southwest Indians. These silver crosses are worn as pendants on the squash blossom necklaces of the Pueblo.

No doubt the most intriguing of the cross forms in Indian decoration is the swastika



or



, a symbol which has aroused the most interest among students of antiquity. This ancient symbol of unknown origin dates back to pre-Christian times all over the world. The mark existed long before the name which means "good luck" or "it is well."

Some archeologists believe it appeared spontaneously in different parts of the world. It appeared quite early in Europe and was revered in India 3,000 years before Christ, as a favored symbol of the Buddhists. It has been found on Greek coins and Celtic monuments. The Japanese and Chinese used it on porcelains

and bronzes. Although a pagan symbol, the swastika was adapted with other pre-Christian symbols by the early Christians and was used in the catacombs. The design is suggestive of rubbing two sticks together and the origin might have had something to do with fire.

Here in America, the swastika may have originated without foreign influence or it may have come from Asia through Alaska. Its presence in pre-Columbian times is still a mystery. Evidences show it was here long before white man. In prehistoric times it was known from Alaska to South America, and has been used as a religious symbol and a simple decorative figure. It was found among almost all tribes of the Southwest on pottery, weaving, jewelry, etc. The Navajo use it in their sand paintings where it is called "whirling logs." An equal armed cross with gods on each arm give it the swastika form. The Pima surpassed the other tribes in the number and variety of examples of this symbol, which was especially elaborate on their basketry.

In America, as throughout the world, it appeared in various forms. One of which with curved limbs,



was the symbol of the four winds. The ancient American belief was that the winds entered the spaces at the four quarters.

The swastika was found on mound builders pottery, gourd rattles, and used in Pueblo ceremonial dances. In Tenn. shell ornaments marked with the swastika have been found.

Before this ancient symbol fell into evil company and became the symbol of Nazi terror, it graced the beautiful silver jewelry of the Southwest Indians. For untold centuries it has carried a message

of peace and has been an amulet of good fortune. H.G. Wells, in his Outline of History, refers to it as the "odd little symbol" that "spins gaily around the world."

Frequently these designs,



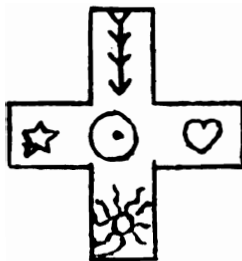
were used as fillers on pottery, weaving, bead work, quill work and basketry. It was natural for the primitive artist to make this simple arrangement in four in filling in the in the available space. Meanings may have been read into them by the decorator.

The connection of the cross with the religion aborigines of the American continent has something to do with the cardinal points--the four principal points of the compass and the four winds. Sometimes the simple cross



was painted upon the warrior's moccasins when going into a strange district in the hope of keeping them on the right trail. Primitive man kept in mind the cardinal points (north, east, south, west) and when an Indian considered the world, he thought of it as divided in four parts. His worship, ceremonies, games, etc. were arranged to conform to the cardinal points and this symbolism assumed the form of the cross. This was well illustrated in the beautiful altar paintings (dry paintings) of the tribes of the Southwest.

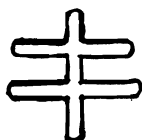
The Dakota cross carries much symbolism of the four winds.



To the top or north is the arrow representing the cold piercing blast of the north wind, the most powerful of all. It is worn on the body nearest the head. The east wind is represented by the heart which in the human body is under the left arm--the east wind coming from the seat of life and love. The south wind is pictured by the sun--as it symbolized by a star as it blows from the region of the night. In the center is the earth and man, indicated by a circle and a dot.

Many American tribes believed the cross invoked the rains. The Lanni Lenape drew a cross on the ground with the ends pointing towards the four directions and on this they placed a gourd, some tobacco and some red material to invoke the rain spirit. The Greeks at a ceremony of the "busk" set four logs in the shape of a cross, to the cardinal points and the the center they kindled a fire. The Blackfeet arranged large boulders in a similar manner in honor of Natose the old man who sends the rains.

The trade crosses should also be mentioned. They were usually made of silver and of the double-armed design,



sometimes called the Lorraine cross. They were

often used by the fur traders and formed a part of the goods brought into the Indian country. They were used as ornaments rather than religiously by the Indians. Montreal silversmiths made double-barred and triple-barred types for the Indian trade and many of those found have "Montreal" and the maker's initials stamped on them. Records show that double-barred silver crosses have been found in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Nebraska, South Dakota and Michigan. One such silver cross was excavated in Aitkin County, Minnesota in 1923.

A similar one is on display in the Nebraska State Historical Society Museum in Lincoln, Nebraska. It was found in 1812 near Peru, Nebraska. A few years ago, double-barred white metal crosses were found in a fur pouch in a grave near Mobridge, South Dakota. They are round based; with two slight lateral projections just above the base; the stem tapers toward the top, with a hole for suspension. The equal length crossbars have notched ends. These possibly were items sold by the traders to the Indians as ornaments.

The cross naturally and freely found its way into the art of primitive America and it had a great variety of form and diversity of meaning. It seems reasonable to suppose that the cross of the ancient Americans - (in any of its phases) was not derived from the Old World cross. However, it is well known that the Christian cross was introduced among all the tribes and was used to some extent in post-Columbian art.

If any reader has any additional information on this subject, I should be pleased to hear from him.

# Threatened Sites in Hardin County

(From Issue Number 66, October 1972, Indianola, Iowa)

The 25 mile segment of the Iowa River between Iowa Falls and Eldora is one of the most beautiful and unique areas in Iowa. This is one of the three "wild river" sections in the state and is important for its recreation and ecological potential.

The Hardin County Conservation Board has done a remarkable job in preserving and developing this area which is called the Iowa River Green Belt. The board is working to gain control of over 3000 acres of the total 8000 acres in the Green Belt for conservation and recreational purposes.

Canoe trips, nature trails, picnic and camping areas, winter sports, hunting and fishing areas, and conservation education have all been included in the board's plans for the Green Belt.

Such a river area is a natural setting to find evidence of man's inhabitation of the state prior to the settlement of the white man. Mound groups and village sites have been identified all over the Green Belt region.

As has happened in many parts of the state, the area is now threatened by the bulldozers and earth movers. The highway commission has proposed that Interstate 520 cut through the heart of the Green Belt.

Thanks to the dedication of conservation officer Homer Calkins and the conservation board, the Highway Commission is considering an alternative route which would bypass most of the Green Belt region.

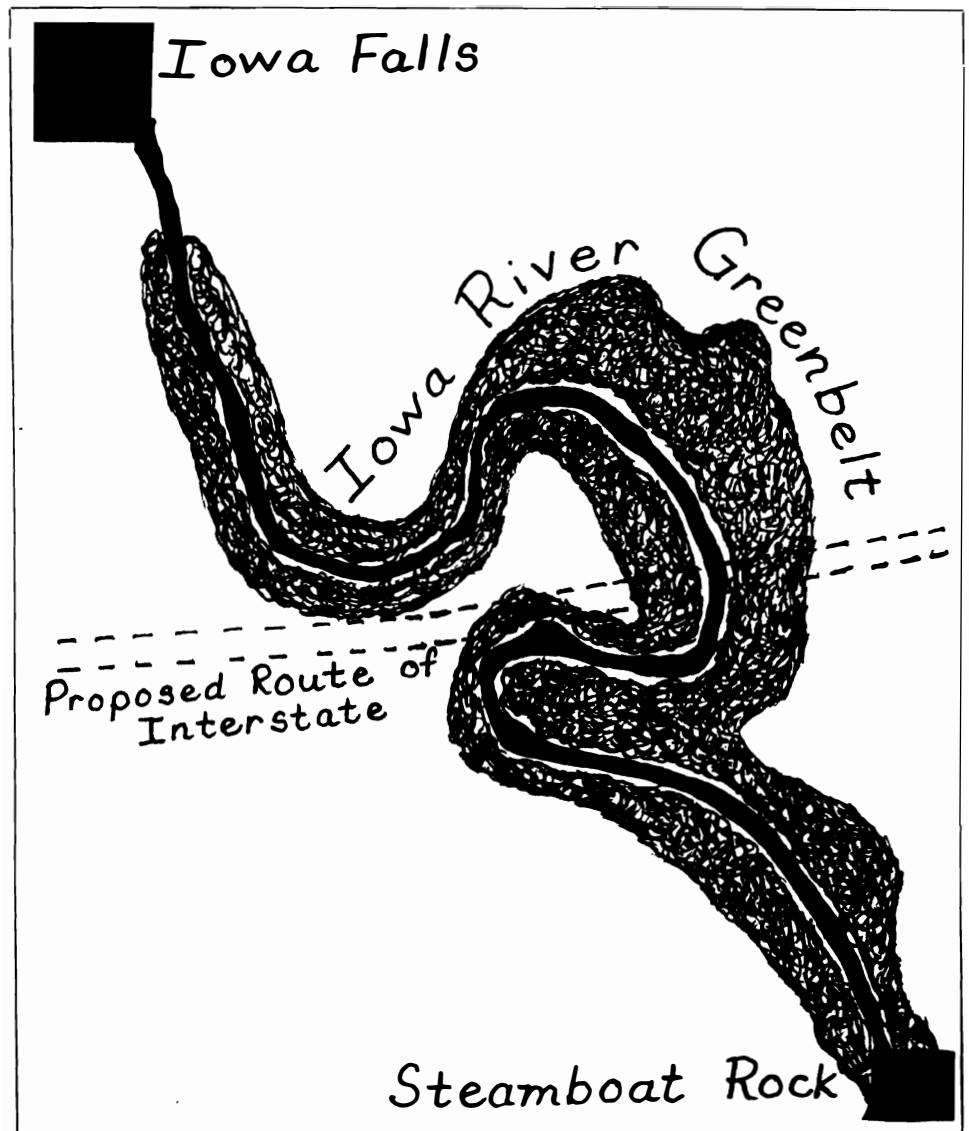
Opponents to the alternative proposal point out that it is better to run a highway through "worthless" timber land than to destroy farm fields.

Conservation officials counter that an interstate highway will disturb the wildlife, hamper the

recreation potential, and destroy the archeological sites of the Green Belt.

At last report, no decisions have been made, but the outlook seems bright for the preservation of the area. One can only hope that such dedication and good judgement will prevail when similar sites are threatened in other parts of the state.

The man who identified the Hardin County sites and pointed these out to the conservation officials is society member James



D. Reysack of Ackley.

Jim is well acquainted with the Green Belt and he has formed a theory about its prehistoric importance to Iowa's first residents. The following article reflects his views.

## **Island on the Prairie**

By James D. Reysack

The man stopped briefly to watch an elk with its young drink from a small spring seeping into a collective pool of clear water. As he started to move on, the animals saw the movement and slipped into a plum thicket bordering the watering area.

The young Indian continued to the south as he had several miles to go and did not wish to be caught on the prairie in the darkness.

He was completing a trip from an area now known as Waterloo-Cedar Falls to an area known by the Red Man as "Where the Water Runs Swiftly," currently the city of Iowa Falls.

He had followed the west fork of the Cedar until reaching a branch called Maynes Creek by later whites, continued westward to near the present day town of Bradford, then had turned south for the last dozen miles of prairie.

The rivers and creeks he had followed had only narrow ribbons of timber along the banks and did not offer much shelter at any time of the year.

Presently a haze of trees appeared like an island in the sea and his journey was rapidly drawing to a close. As he entered the trees a fragrance of wood smoke could be detected and in a few minutes he was being welcomed at his uncle's campfire.

This may have happened several hundred years ago as the Indians used Central Iowa for hunting, camping, and traveling to and from various river valleys on visits of local importance.

Perhaps one of the more important spots in Central Iowa is an area from Alden to Eldora on the Iowa River. In this area there is a large block of timber consisting of several thousand acres spread along the ridges, deep ravines, and bottom lands common to the area.

There was and still is an abundance of game and the river has considerable numbers of fish. To the south, east, west, and north the prairie stretches for miles with only small clumps of trees breaking the sea of grasses.

Few groves were large enough for shelter during stormy weather and certainly not in Iowa's harsh winters. For this reason I feel the area of the Iowa River briefly described was "an island" of trees and shelter in the prairie that was utilized quite extensively over many centuries and was very important for the survival of the Red Man in Central Iowa.

Artifacts from this area range from an occasional "Palo-Indian" point through "Oneota" with archaic, early and middle woodland material predominating. Mound groups are fairly common and nearly every farmer has "a

cigar box of arrowheads somewhere around the house."

The area was large enough for winter villages and even during white settlement, Indians wintered southwest of Ackley. There was even the usual unfounded "Indian Scare" at one time.

At present this area is largely unknown to professional archaeologists, but quite a number of collectors "stomp the fields."

Now the Highway Commission proposes to cut a highway through the heart of "the island" and will destroy much in the way of prehistory that cannot be saved due to the inadequate time allowed for salvage archaeology. Hopefully an alternative route can be found but help is needed to save our "island."

# Long Nosed God Masks & Other Items

By Duane Anderson

(From "The Manufacture of Long Nosed God Masks and other Items from Marine Shell," Issue Number 77, July 1975, Indianola, Iowa)

During the summer of 1974, Jim Hass, Peterson, Iowa, found a Long Nosed God Mask on a Mill Creek site (13CK1) in Cherokee County. Although some similar masks have been found on Mississippian sites in Tennessee, Louisiana, Alabama, Florida, Illinois and Wisconsin, the form has not been previously reported from Iowa.

Since the Mill Creek Culture has long been known for its Mississippian relationships, the discovery of the Iowa mask did not come as a total surprise. Typically, Long Nosed God masks have a shield shaped face, with large circular eyes, small pupils and a slit mouth. A horizontal line separates the forehead from the head-dress, which is generally notched at the midline and stepped on the sides. All known masks are made either of native copper or marine shell and seem to date from A.D. 1000-1300. The manufacture of shell masks and other items is the topic of this article.

After Jim Hass made his discovery, Pat Williams, Lennis Moore and I selected a large whelk shell approximately 13 inches in length and sketched the nose and one side of the face of a Long Nosed God on the top of the shell.

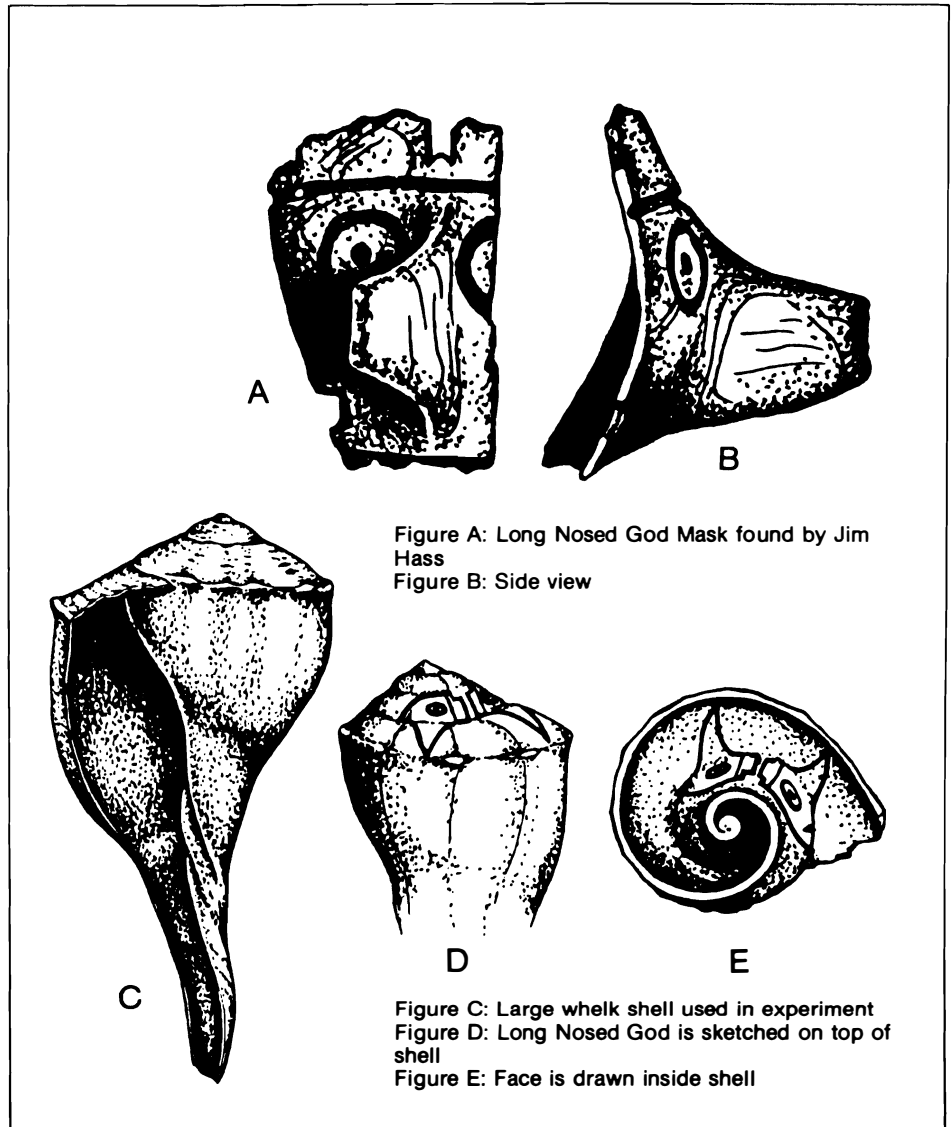
The top of the shell was then detached making it possible to sketch the other half of the face on one of the central whorls inside the shell. A mask preform was then cut from the shell following the outline.

It is likely that two pairs of Long Nosed God masks could be produced from a single shell if properly laid out in advance. It was noted after the shell had been experimentally cut that Short Nosed Gods of the kind found in Illinois near Cahokia could be made by sketching the mask on the shoulder of the shell. A Short Nosed God mask of this type was then produced as part of the experiment.

Once the masks had been cut from a large whelk, the by-products could be put to use in a

variety of ways. The spiral shaped column in the center of the shell, for example, could be shaped a long pendant, drilled and cut to form "Barrel-shaped" or "Cherrio-shaped" beads of the kind common to Mississippian sites.

In making items of whelk shell experimentally, no attempt was made to replicate specific methods of aboriginal manufacture, as the purpose was simply to determine the placement of masks on natural shells. Tools utilized in the study included a table saw with masonry blade, steel file, sandpaper and





and electric drill.

In a recent article, D.F. Morse (*Arkansas Archaeologist* 13:3-4) reported experimenting with aboriginal tools in making beads from whelk shells. He used a method of grooving and shaping the shell to rough out pieces and incorporated such tools as stone knives, sandstone abraders and a drill into his study. Fresh shell is quite hard and difficult to work.

What were Long Nosed God masks used for? The ritual function is not known, but they were apparently worn as ear ornaments by important religious

personages. This idea is based on a platform pipe from Spiro Mound in Oklahoma depicting a seated figure with mask ear ornaments resembling those discussed here. This placement on the body is born out by the discovery of a skeleton in a mound in St. Louis where a pair of Long Nosed God masks made of copper were found--one on either side of the skull.

Whatever the original function of such items might have been, Jim Hass' discovery of a Long Nosed God mask on a Mill Creek site in Iowa is important. It greatly

expands the distribution of an interesting art form, while at the same time, it tends to emphasize the degree and intensity of Mill Creek relationships with the Mississippian heartlands, indicating that the Mill Creek peoples participated in religious beliefs widely held across much of the eastern United States. We are grateful to Jim for reporting his find.

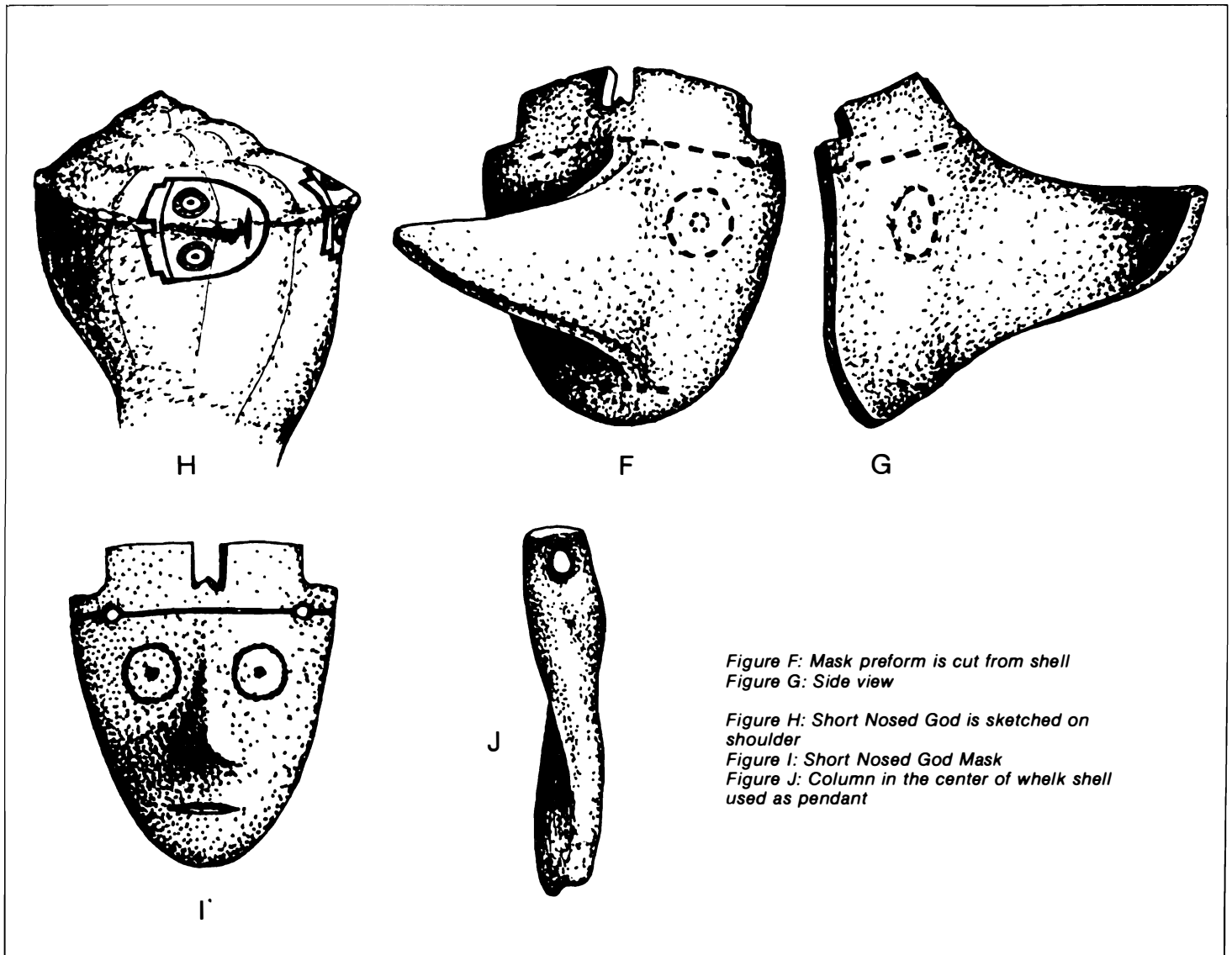


Figure F: Mask preform is cut from shell  
Figure G: Side view

Figure H: Short Nosed God is sketched on shoulder

Figure I: Short Nosed God Mask

Figure J: Column in the center of whelk shell used as pendant

# Nishnabotna River Dugout Canoe

By Dennis R. Miller

(From "Another Dugout Canoe from the Nishnabotna River," Issue Number 86, October 1977, Indianola, Iowa)

In the fall of 1975 a dugout canoe was discovered in the bank of the East Nishnabotna River south of Red Oak, Iowa. The subsequent excavation and treatment of this artifact caused a great deal of comment and controversy. (The details of this find are reported in *Research Papers*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 1976, Office of the State Archaeologist.

Through the research of this discovery, it was learned that another canoe had been recovered from the river approximately thirty years ago (1947?). Charles Mayer of Shenandoah, Iowa, was fishing from a sand bar on the river when he noticed what appeared to be a log that had been shaped or worked. When he turned it over, he discovered that it was a dugout canoe. It has remained in Mr.

Mayer's possession ever since, known only to a few friends.

The place of discovery (designated the "Mayer Canoe Find Spot") is approximately 17 miles downstream from the Red Oak canoe site, and two miles West of Shenandoah. The canoe may have been washed to the site from upstream as it was not deeply buried in the sandbar and the find was made after a flood. The river channel has moved slightly to the south since the find.

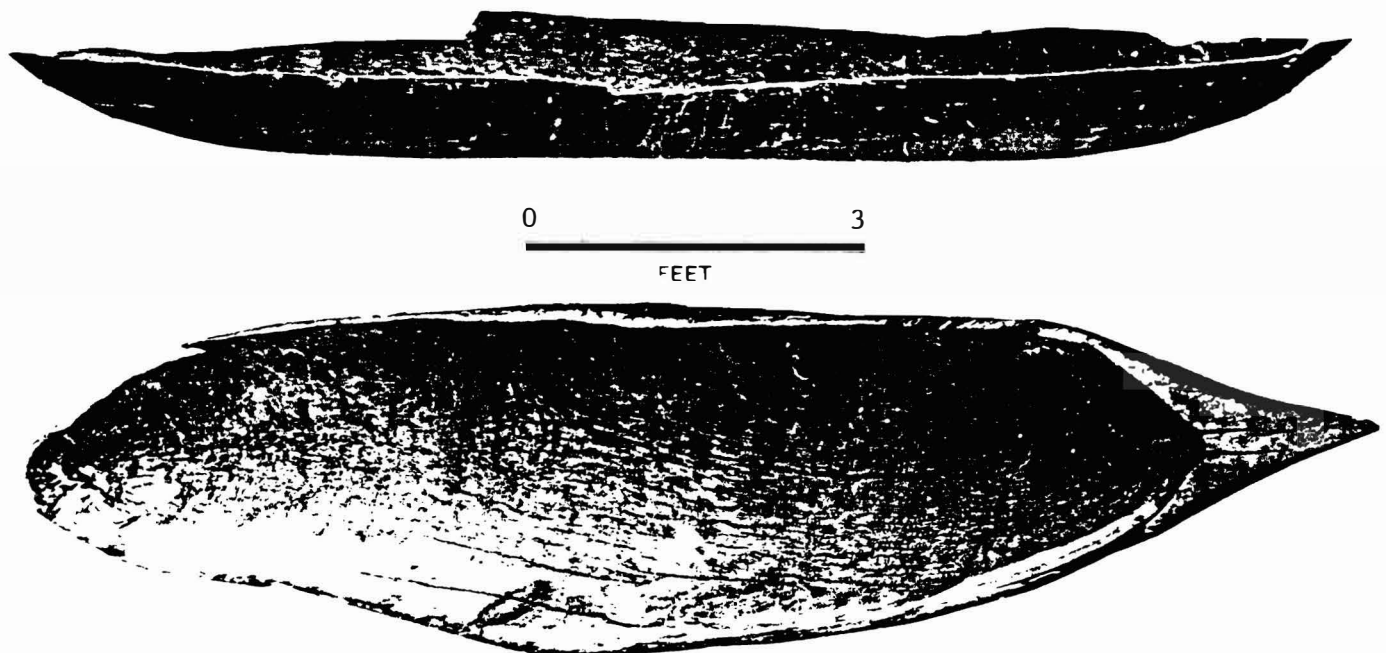
The craft, which was made of walnut was examined and photographed at Mr. Mayer's home, and appeared to be in very good condition. The center of the log from which it was made is visible on both ends at the midline. A plywood "patch" has been added to the gunwale at what I am calling the prow of the canoe. The stern has a crack at the inner rings of the tree, and the gunwales are broken off in places to a depth of 3 inches. The "front"

half seems to be warped to the right.

The Mayer canoe is 11 feet 9 inches long and appears to be the same width as the Red Oak canoe, but slightly shallower. The tree used for the canoe must have been at least 20 inches in diameter. There are numerous shallow depressions over some areas, both inside and outside, which are tool marks. I would suspect that craft is probably of the same relative age as the Red Oak canoe, which Duane Anderson places at A.D. 1600-1800. Historic tribes are known to have occupied Southwest Iowa during this period.

I wish to thank Charles Mayer for his cooperation and assistance in this study. He has preserved a very interesting and important part of Iowa's history.

The Dugout Canoe



# 38th Plains Conference

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The thirty-eighth Plains Conference will be held in Iowa City, Iowa, on November 5-8, 1980.

## Registration

A pre-registration form is enclosed. We encourage submission of this form to expedite registration. The registration desk will be open Wednesday evening and all day Thursday at the Conference. The registration fee for those who pre-register prior to October 1 is \$12; after that date \$15 is required; a student rate (with ID) of \$8 (\$10 after October 1) is available. Registration is required for attendance and participation in all sessions and activities.

## Banquet

The banquet will be held in the Main Lounge at the Iowa Memorial Union on November 7. Tickets for the banquet may be purchased as part of the pre-registration or at the registration desk on Wednesday evening or Thursday until noon. The cost will be \$11 for wine, brouchet of tenderloin and the trimmings. Following the banquet, Dr. Robert Bell, University of Oklahoma, will speak on the archeology of the Southern Plains.

## Symposia

Symposia have been accepted on the following topics: Kansas, Cultural Resource Management, Prior Mountains, Paleoenvironments of the Last 10,000 Years, Black Hills, Oneota, and Plains Woodland. No further symposium topics can be accepted at this time.

## Facilities

The conference will be held at the Iowa Memorial Union on the University of Iowa campus. Lodging will be coordinated by University Conference Center staff through three major hotels that have been booked to accommodate conference participants. Further details concerning transportation and parking will be provided in late September.

Projected room rates are \$25 for single occupancy and \$30 for double occupancy. Students are encouraged to register for multiple occupancy for maximum economy. Meals are available at the Iowa Memorial Union and a list of area restaurants will be provided at registration for those interested in dining out.

## Social Activities

In addition to the banquet, there will be a traditional pre-conference reception held the evening of November 5 from 8:00 until midnight in the Main Lounge at the Iowa Memorial Union. A country swing band will be provided in the ballroom at the Ironman Inn on the evening of November 6 for the now-traditional Plains Conference dance.

Conference Chairman:  
Duane C. Anderson  
Office of State Archaeologist  
Eastlawn  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242  
319-353-51-75

Program Coordinators:  
Holmes A. Semken  
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*To register, use the forms provided on the insert in this issue.*

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