

iowa archeological society  
**newsletter**



**RECENT INVESTIGATIONS  
AT SAYLORVILLE LAKE**

# SAYLORVILLE LOG — Part One

by David W. Benn

Saylorville Lake is located just north of the City of Des Moines. Although the lake has been operated for more than seven years, it is still a major resource for archaeological research in Iowa. This article is the first in a series about recent archaeological work done in and around the reservoir.

For the first 14 years during its construction and early operation stage the archaeology of Saylorville Lake was done by personnel of Iowa State University, notably Dr. David M. Gradwohl and Ms. Nancy M. Osborn. Their massive efforts laid a basis in artifact collections and site data for all future research in the area, indeed in central Iowa. In the 1980's other survey, testing, and salvage projects have been accomplished by Impact Services, Inc. (Mankato, MN), by Luther College, and most recently by my organization and the Iowa Geological Survey. The National Park Service and the Corps of Engineers, Rock Island District, have supported all of the archaeology.

The Corps decided in 1984 to re-evaluate the impacts of recreational facilities on archaeological sites and to develop an overview of all past research. Their goal was to draw up a management plan for long-term use and protection of the archaeological heritage in Saylorville Lake. I directed the projects through contracts with the Center for Archaeological

Research, Southwest Missouri State University, and the fieldwork was directed by Dave and Lori Stanley, Highland Cultural Research Center.

Fieldwork during the hot months of August and September focused on testing sites that had been impacted by operation of the lake and its recreational facilities. Much of this work was terribly dull for the SMSU crew and field supervisors. They plodded over at least 30 sites, systematically probing for artifacts with transects of shovel tests set at regular intervals of 10-20 meters. They also excavated one meter test units far below culture-bearing zones to expose deep soil and geomorphic stratigraphy. Testing revealed that there were very few known sites in recreation areas that had not been seriously disturbed or completely destroyed by plowing, earthmoving or shoreline erosion.

We were pleasantly surprised by finds of undisturbed cultural zones in a few instances. On the

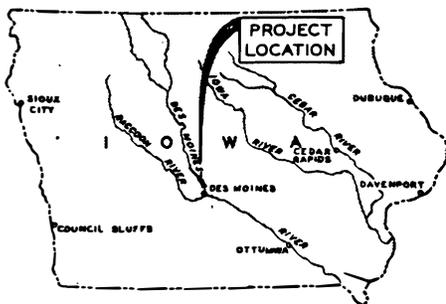
bleak, barren terraces that are alternately inundated and exposed along the lake shore (cover photo) we encountered surface scatters of artifacts as the ISU crews had a decade ago. Upon excavation some of these sites yielded undisturbed roasting pits filled with fire-cracked rocks as deep as 60 cm below the surface. The present Saylorville Lake shore is composed of Wisconsin aged terraces (ca. 11,000-13,000 B.P.) which are composed of loamy sand and gravel. Capping the older sediments are blow sands of more recent age and cultural layers embedded in this eolian sand. In a subsequent article I will discuss these roasting pit sites.

The ends of narrow, wooded ridges in upland recreation areas have not been as extensively disturbed as other parts of the Saylorville project. Here, the crew expended a considerable amount of time excavating grids of test units and trenches (accompanying photo) in an attempt to learn



Test trench at 13BN271. Crew members from left to right: Jon Sellars, Clark Rogers, John Northrip, Teresa Kacprowicz, and Mark Slaughter. SMSU photo ('84).

**Cover: Test excavations at 13PK112, on the shore of Saylorville Lake. Crew members Teresa Kacprowicz (left) and Robert Abbott. SMSU photo ('84).**



more about small, sparse lithic scatters that are so common in Iowa's uplands. Magnetometer survey was tried on two of these sites without much success (geological features show up much better than cultural features).

The months of October and November were spent testing sites outside recreation areas to obtain information for the Saylorville Overview and Management Plan. The purpose of this work was to test the geomorphic model being developed by E.A. Bettis (Iowa Geological Survey) and to search for deeply buried cultural deposits on the floor of the valley. More will be reported about these investigations in later articles.

The SMSU-HCRC project ranged over 56 miles of the Des Moines River—the length of the Saylorville project area. It encompassed archaeological work on more than 40 sites and included the reconnoitering of dozens more. Draft reports of this work will be available later in 1985, but I can summarize the status of Saylorville archaeological sites in the following manner.

There are 520 known cultural sites in the Saylorville reservoir and Downstream Corridor. A full range of cultural ages is represented, some better than others: few Paleo-Indian, Early, and Middle Archaic sites; many Late Archaic sites; a substantial Early Woodland phase; many Middle and Late Woodland sites; several Great Oasis sites and a

few Oneota campsites; and a huge number of historic components of all types.

Approximately 22% of all sites have been investigated in some fashion (i.e. shovel testing, test excavations, data recovery). At least 65% of the sites have been damaged or destroyed. Of the remaining ca. 300 sites approximately 33% are in danger of being damaged or destroyed by ongoing project impacts, while approximately 46% are out of danger.

It is important to note that the number of known sites may represent only 10% of the actual number of sites in the Saylorville project. The sites we know about are not a statistically reliable sample of the entire site population because sites beneath heavy vegetation cover or buried beneath alluvium have not been systematically located. This is the rationale for projects like the ones I have described. We must find out what part of all the cultural heritage the known sites represent, and then we need to develop plans for long-term preservation of the known resources as well as contingencies for protecting the sites we anticipate finding in the future.

*David Benn currently teaches anthropology at Southwest Missouri State University and conducts archaeological investigations through the SMSU Center for Archeological Research. He formerly taught at Luther College, where he was instrumental in building the L.C. Archeological Research Center.*

On March 2, 1985, your officers and directors held a board meeting in Iowa City. It is customary for the board to meet 6-8 weeks prior to the scheduled Annual Spring Meeting and at other times as circumstances require. Highlights of the March meeting are as follows:

A. Ruth Thornton reported that the IAS financial status is now solvent.

B. Deb Zieglowsky reported that the IAS membership mailing list has been computerized so that updating costs can be cut, resulting in a savings to the Society of \$30 to \$50 every 3-4 months.

C. Lori and David Stanley reported that the delay in publication of Newsletter #112 was due in part to the additional time required by the new publisher for initial set-up. However, further delay was due to insufficient copy. The latter problem is most frustrating for all editors. A special plea is therefore broadcast to all members to send in reports of their activities, finds, or other items which would be of interest to the membership. Please don't feel that you need to be an accomplished author or professional archeologist to submit articles for the Newsletter. Just put it on paper and send it to Lori and David. They will do the necessary editing. The Newsletter is an excellent medium through which the entire membership can share items of interest.

D. Nancy Osborn reported that the 1984 Journal is in press and that the 1985 Journal will soon follow, as she already has the required number of articles.

E. Deb Zieglowsky reported that we had a very successful Public Archaeology Program for the fall of 1984. Seventeen speakers presented programs to fourteen organizations, including four IAS

# A REWORKED PLANO POINT FROM NORTHEAST IOWA

by Toby Morrow

chapters. Although there was no program for the spring of 1985, the Office of the State Archaeologist plans to submit a grant proposal which, if approved, will renew the program for the fall.

F. The Annual Spring Meeting was discussed. Terry Walker announced that there will be several workshops and that Stewart Struever of Northwestern University will be our banquet speaker.

G. The Nominating Committee was appointed and it was further decided that the three senior directors (those whose terms expire in a given year) will comprise the Awards Committee. This will provide for a change each year.

H. The possibility of holding an IAS field school this summer was discussed. Providing sufficient funds can be obtained, it is now planned to hold the field school at the Blood Run site in northwest Iowa.

I. Meeting adjourned.

## IOWA HALL VISIT

After adjournment of the board meeting Duane Anderson invited all members present to attend a preview tour of the new museum, Iowa Hall, located at the center of the University of Iowa campus. All exhibits were not yet complete; nevertheless, what we saw was extraordinary. The life size dioramas and exhibits depicting life in Iowa from the earliest geological times through all periods of the Native American presence are realistic to the smallest detail. Iowa Hall will open to the public May 11, 1985. Ribbon cutting ceremonies will be at 11:00 A.M. The museum will be open daily until 5:00 P.M. I urge everyone to visit this new museum, designed to be pleasing and educational for all ages.

Dick Slattery  
President, IAS

While conducting a Phase I archaeological survey along proposed road improvements north of Epworth, Iowa, in central Dubuque County, an unusual example of a Late Paleo-Indian point was noted in one of the local collections. Jack Hill of Epworth reports that he found this point one mile northwest of Epworth.

This point, an example of the Angostura type (Wormington 1957:138-141, 268-269), exhibits well-executed oblique pressure-flaking scars across both faces. Several aspects of this particular specimen are noteworthy. First, Angostura points are fairly uncommon in Iowa and this is the only example of the type that I can recall from the northeast Iowa area. The distal end exhibits a very clear impact fracture which appears to have broken away ca. 5 mm of the tip. The lateral margin along one side of the lower one-third of the blade has been roughly retouched unilaterally by percussion, and no trace of haft grinding remains. Perhaps the most unusual feature of this artifact is that the proximal end has been unilaterally trimmed and rounded to form an end scraper. The scraper edge shows a moderate degree of wear and polish. While the reworking of exhausted or damaged points and knives into other forms of tools (i.e., scrapers and drills) is fairly common in the Early Archaic and later periods, this type of recycling is somewhat atypical for lanceolate Paleo-Indian points.

The remaining portions of this Angostura point provide the following measurements: Maximum Length — 91 mm; Maximum Width — 33 mm; Maximum Thickness — 8 mm. The point was manufactured from a light gray to cream colored chert with irregular

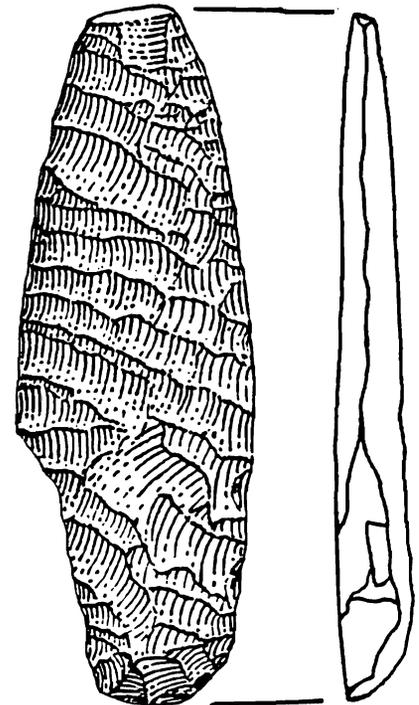
brownish-gray mottlings and resembles material obtainable from the Wapsipinicon Formation of Devonian age. The chert was apparently not heat-treated.

## REFERENCE CITED

Wormington, H. M.

1957 Ancient Man in North America. Denver Museum of Natural History, Popular Series No. 4, Denver.

*Toby Morrow is a native of Beaman, in Grundy County, where he began locating and reporting sites as a teenager. He has been a member of the IAS since he was in high school, and has given numerous talks and flint-knapping workshops and demonstrations for the Society. Toby received his B.A. and M.A. from the University of Iowa and is currently in the Ph.D. program at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.*



Actual size. Jack Hill collection, Epworth, Iowa. Drawing by Toby Morrow.

# A PALEO-INDIAN POINT FROM WINNESHIEK COUNTY

By Jeff McCarty

This article concerns a surface find projectile point from the Daniel (Art) and Ruth Price farm located in northern Winneshiek County, Iowa. The point is lanceolate in shape, has a concave base, and resembles point styles from the Paleo-Indian Tradition (10,000-6,000 years BC). The blade edges are parallel but tend to taper towards the distal end. The greatest breadth is immediately anterior to the horizontal midline. The point surfaces were constructed using a continuous lamellar flaking pattern. In addition, a number of oblique, lateral, slightly expanding flake scars are evident along the lateral edges, creating a lenticular cross section. These flakes were removed by soft hammer percussion during the secondary thinning stage. Tertiary flaking is evident along the lateral edges. Basal concavity has been achieved through the removal of large, secondary, soft hammer percussion flakes (two obverse, one reverse), and minute tertiary pressure flakes (five obverse, four reverse). The hafting area is represented by lateral edge reduction (grinding) on the distal one-third of the point. A number of points similar to this specimen have been recovered from sites in the Southwest (eg., Ventana Cave and the Scharbouer site) (Wormington 1957:41), and from the Kishwaukee River basin in DeKalb County, Illinois (Harrison, et al. 1973).

#### MEASUREMENTS:

maximum length	=	64mm/2.52in.
maximum width	=	28.5mm/1.12in.
thickness	=	8mm/0.31in.
basal width	=	22mm/0.87in.
basal concavity (ht.)	=	7mm/0.28in.
hafting length	=	20mm/0.79in.
		obverse,
		18mm/0.71in.
		reverse

#### REFERENCES CITED

Harrison, William F., Claude Karch, and James W. Springer

1973 Morphology and Distribution of Paleo-Indian Points from the Kishwaukee Basin, DeKalb Co., Illinois. Wisconsin Archeologist, Vol. 58, No. 1.

Wormington, H. Marie

1957 Ancient Man in North America, 4th Edition. Denver Museum of Natural History, Popular Series, No. 4.



Actual size. Drawing by Mark Smeby of Decorah.

*Jeff McCarty is a Decorah native and a Luther College graduate in anthropology. Over the last two field seasons Jeff has worked for Luther College, the Highland Cultural Research Center, and the Office of the State Archaeologist.*

#### CERTIFIED IAS MEMBERS... PARTICIPATE IN CONTRACT ARCHEOLOGY PROJECTS

Those of you who have completed the Society's certification program possess experience that could qualify you for field and/or lab positions with any one of the archeological contractors presently working in Iowa. At the March 2 Board of Directors meeting it was proposed that we facilitate the

hiring of IAS certified individuals by distributing a list of names and addresses to archeological contractors.

Members who have earned certification and who are interested in applying for field or lab positions with contractors working in this state should contact Debby Zieglowsky, c/o Office of the State Archeologist, Eastlawn Bldg., University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242. Include your name, address and phone number, and indicate your availability (summers, weekends, year-round). Deb will then compile a list of available individuals which will be mailed out to contractors.

#### NON-CERTIFIED MEMBERS... START YOUR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM TODAY!

Now is the ideal time for non-certified members to begin the certification program. The upcoming IAS field school at the Blood Run site in Lyon County will provide an excellent opportunity for many people to begin working toward certification. Information about the program can be obtained from the Office of the State Archeologist in Iowa City (address above).

#### EDITORS' NOTE:

Beginning with this issue of the Newsletter we will no longer be using the season/year and number to designate the issue. After consulting with the Associate Editor and weighing the pros and cons, a decision was made to institute the volume/number system used by most other periodical publications.

This is the thirty-fifth year of existence of the IAS Newsletter, and therefore it seems appropriate to designate the current issue as Volume 35, Number 1. In order to facilitate the transition, this Newsletter is also labeled as "Issue 113."

The editors welcome your opinions regarding this matter and all other aspects of the publication. We have already heard from a number of you on a variety of topics, and we appreciate the input. New ideas and constructive comments from the membership result in a better, more interesting publication.

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Deb Zieglofsky  
Office of the State Archeologist  
Eastlawn Bldg., Univ. of Iowa  
Iowa City, IA 52242

### NEWSLETTER EDITORS

Dave and Lori Stanley  
P.O. Box 27  
Highlandville, IA 52149

### ASSOCIATE EDITOR

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### JOURNAL EDITOR

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Mike Hosbein  
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Our apologies to DeLores Sobeski of Omaha whose name was misspelled in this column in Newsletter 112.

## MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

At the 35th Annual Meeting held in Cherokee in April we discussed the importance of increasing our membership in order to continue to support our publications, field schools, and other society activities. Each of us is encouraged to recruit at least five new members during the coming year. Let Ruth Thornton know which newcomers you are responsible for, and the individual with the most recruits will be recognized at the Annual Meeting to be held in Iowa City next spring.

## Annual membership dues are as follows:

### VOTING

1. Active - \$10
2. Household - \$17
3. Sustaining - \$25
4. Benefactor - \$250 minimum

### NON-VOTING

1. Student (under 18) - \$7
2. Institution - \$10

Dues should be sent to:

Mrs. Ruth Thornton  
326 Otsego Street  
Storm Lake, IA 50588

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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Iowa Archeological Society  
Office of Newsletter  
Lori and David Stanley, Editors  
P.O. Box 27  
Highlandville, IA 52149



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