

iowa archeological society

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BLOOD RUN EXCAVATIONS - 1985

by Dale R. Henning and
Shirley Schermer

Field investigations on a small portion of the Blood Run site (13LO2) were conducted from May 29 through June 23, 1985, under the joint supervision of Dale Henning, Luther College, and Shirley Schermer, Office of the State Archaeologist. It was here that the summer field training session for members of the Iowa Archeological Society was conducted.

The project was developed in order that information being affected by gravel removal operations could be obtained for study. In the past, all investigations directed toward understanding of the Blood Run site have been concentrated upon the many mounds which once dotted its surface. Those persons who volunteered their time and participated in the IAS field training sessions were treated to working with large cache or storage pits which yielded good evidence of the past lifeways of the site occupants. To our knowledge, all participants enjoyed the experience of working in the heat and wind and everyone contributed significantly to our gaining some comprehension of what the site meant to those responsible for the many earthworks which characterize its surface.

As a review, the Blood Run site is one of three archaeological sites on the National Register of Historic Places which have been given Landmark status.

Landmark status was conferred not only on the basis of size (ca. 600 acres on both the Iowa and South Dakota sides of the Big Sioux River) and number of circular mounds (once counted at 286), but because of the additional features of an enclosed area surrounded by banks of heaped earth, "boulder circles" ranging from 18 to 60 feet in diameter, and the possibility that a serpent effigy could be seen on its surface in the late 1800s. In addition, the entire site offers vistas along the Big Sioux River valley of immense beauty and mystery. The site undoubtedly held deep meaning and signifi-

cance for the Indian groups who lived there and sculpted the earthworks on its surface.

In preparation for the "dig," the plowzone was stripped from the surface to be investigated, leaving us with about an acre upon which we concentrated our investigations. Nearly 200 features were located during the mechanical stripping; most of these were storage pits. These pits ranged in size from small basin-shaped ones of 2 feet in diameter and several inches deep to some that were 9 feet in diameter and over 6 feet deep. The larger pits were formidable, indeed; in addition to artifacts



Photo: Dale Henning

Shirley Schermer (left) and Dale Henning conducted the field work at the Blood Run site as a joint project of Luther College, the Office of the State Archaeologist, and the IAS.

and refuse, many had a large number of cobbles derived from the gravel deposits beneath. We were able to excavate thirty of the refuse pits which yielded large numbers of bison, some elk and dog and very few smaller mammals, fish, and bird bones. We were surprised at how few fish bones and mollusc shells we found in spite of being very near the confluence of Blood Run Creek with the Big Sioux River. In addition to the faunal remains, ash, charcoal and organic-rich soils, the pits yielded large numbers of bison scapula hoes, pottery fragments, projectile points, scrapers, knives, drills, manos and mortars, shaft abraders, grooved mauls, grooved axes, and some charred corn and beans. A few brass or copper finger rings and/or earrings were found. Artifacts were sufficiently numerous that everyone who worked with us had an opportunity to find something.

Help for our work came from many quarters. Several agencies and private foundations contributed financially to the project (see below). Backed by Richard Slattery, President of the IAS, and Roger Johnson of the Office of the State Archaeologist, we counted a total of 78 individuals who volunteered no less than 2502 hours. These hours were broken down as follows: Iowa Archeological Society: 856 hours, South Dakota Archeological Society: 240 hours, Sierra Club: 288 hours, professional archaeologists, geologists, students, and others: 1118 hours. Those who so willingly donated their time truly gave of themselves in an effort to save information from this important site.

This was a "high-profile" project designed to produce information as well as publicity for the site which we hope will

culminate in its preservation for future generations. In spite of the "wear and tear" upon the fabric of the site, much of its integrity remains. We sincerely hope that our descendants will be able to stand on a high hilltop and see the mounds that stand in mute testimony to the presence and activities of the Indians who gathered and lived there.

Financial support for the project came from the following:

Office of the State Archaeologist, Iowa Archeological Society, The Fred Maytag Family Foundation, The University of Iowa,

Luther College, The Iowa State Preserves Advisory Board, and The Rock Rapids Kiwanis Club.

INCITES

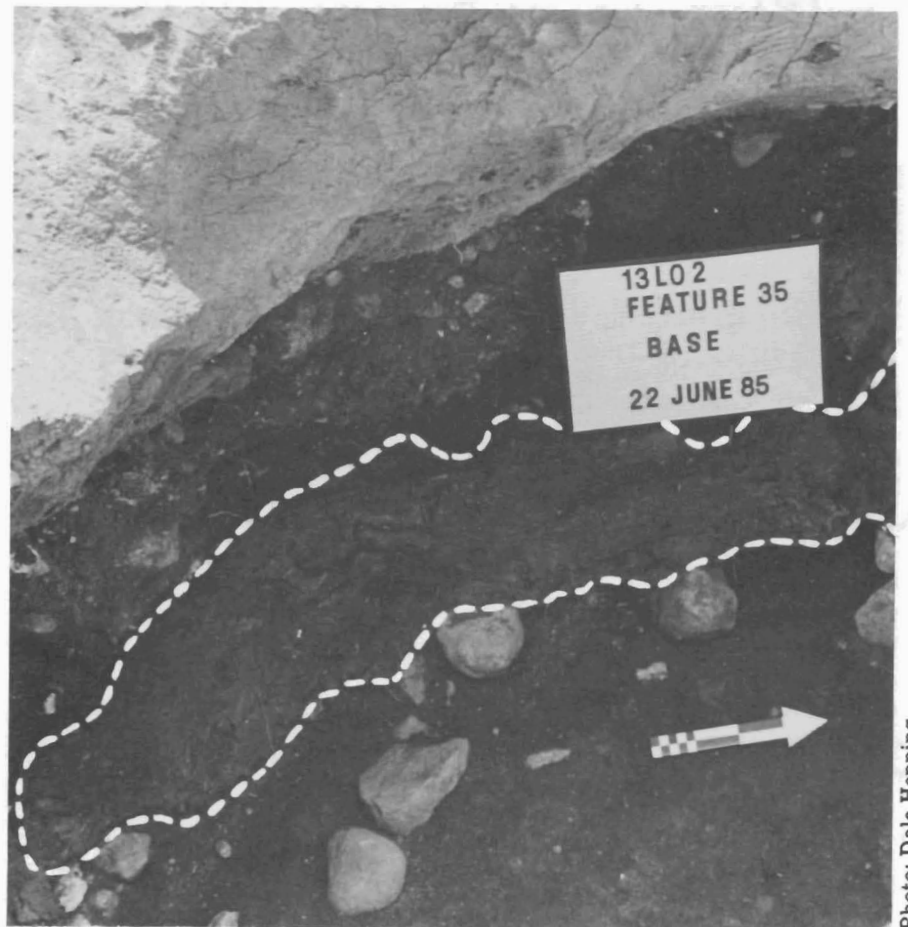
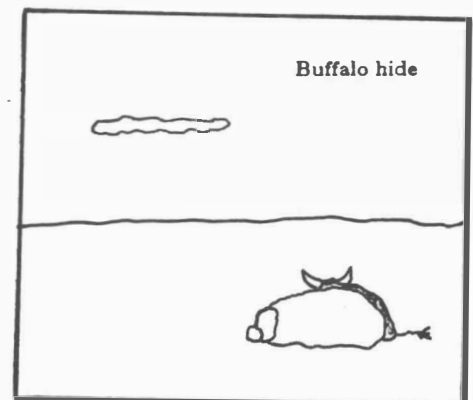


Photo: Dale Henning

One of the most unusual finds of the season was a rolled bison or elk hide found in the bottom of one of the cache pits (dotted line outlines the hide). Dale Henning unwrapped the skin this fall. He believes it may be a cover for the door of a lodge.

A COMMENTARY AND A PLEA FOR HELP

As many members are aware, during the last two years the Iowa Archeological Society and the Office of the State Archaeologist have cooperated in presenting a series of programs around the state under a project entitled *Public Archaeology*. The series has previously been supported by the Iowa Humanities Board and has been an overwhelming success.

Following action by the IAS board at its March 2, 1985 meeting, the application was resubmitted for the 1985-1986 season beginning this fall. The acting director of the Iowa Humanities Program has subsequently informed project officials that the project has not been approved. The principal reasons given were: (1) it was not clear that the project was sufficiently focused on the humanities; (2) it was an expensive request for 45 largely unspecified lectures on archaeology.

The IAS board is concerned because it feels that there is no question that the programs have genuine merit with respect to the humanities. In fact, the IAS president accepted an invitation at one point to make a presentation at an Iowa Humanities Board meeting after *Public Archaeology* had been designated a model project. The suggestion that the program is expensive is equally concerning. When the program was first initiated, speaker stipends were proposed at \$25. per program. The amount was increased to \$100. by the Iowa Humanities Board. It was noted in the recent application that if the grant was too costly, reductions could be made in the stipend category.

Another concern is the Iowa Humanities Board's objection to

the fact that many topics had not been specified. The practice from the beginning has been for the project coordinator to deal with chapter leaders at the beginning of the season and tailor the lecturers to the chapters' interests. In this way chapters could arrange for a speaker on a topic that was meaningful or useful to them at the time.

It appears that the only way to reactivate the program would be for you as an IAS member to express your wishes to the Iowa Humanities Board. If you think the programs are worthwhile please write to Donald Drake, Director, Iowa Humanities Program, Oakdale Campus, Iowa City, Iowa 52242, and send a copy to Richard Slattery, IAS President, 4106 El Rancho Drive, Davenport, Iowa 52806.

When you write, you might want to mention some of the accomplishments of our past projects:

1. The projects have always exceeded their attendance goals. Total attendance for all projects to date: 5212.

2. 111 different programs have been presented in 28 different communities in Iowa (Figure 1).

3. 49 presentors have been involved with the program from 6 states, representing 26 institutions (Figure 2).

4. The Humanities programs have been thoroughly publicized through 2220 news releases sent to radio and television stations, public libraries, and societies (Figure 1).

5. The program has been proclaimed an overwhelming success on four occasions by the Board of Directors of the Iowa Archeological Society, and by acclamation of the membership at three annual meetings.

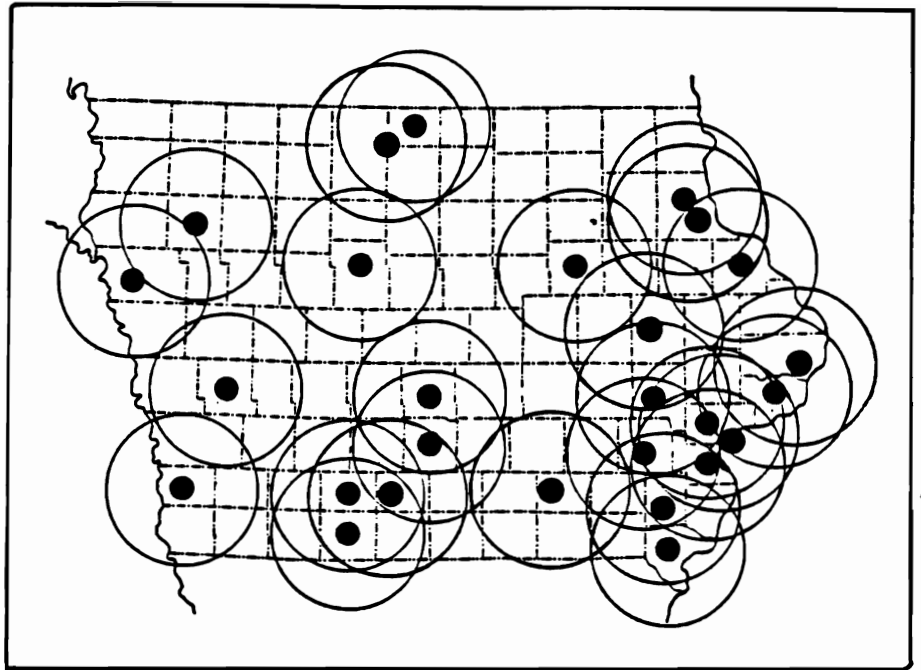


Figure 1. Media coverage (circles) is shown around places where IHB-sponsored programs were offered (dots) 1982-1985.

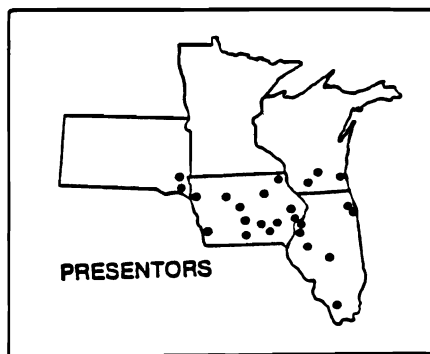


Figure 2. Map showing localities from which speakers were derived for "Public Archaeology" presentations from 1982-1985. (Presentations were also arranged from Maryland and Arizona.)

6. The program has increased interest and participation in the Humanities in areas of archaeology, history, and Indian studies in the Midwest, and has enriched participants' understanding of a number of topics of global scope.

7. *Public Archaeology* represents one of the longest sustained programs offered by the Iowa Humanities Board--it has also been one of the most successful.

If you have suggestions for other types of programs that might be supported by grants, please send your ideas to President Slattery. Thank you for your help.

Attention Teachers

A newsletter for teachers is published free of charge three times per year. To be placed on the mailing list contact Ann Kaupp, ANTHRO NOTES, Department of Anthropology, Stop 112, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Books Received

The IAS receives books from publishers for review in its publications. To date we have a backlog and need your help in getting caught up. If you are interested in reviewing any of the following publications please contact Joseph A. Tiffany, Book Review Editor, c/o the *Newsletter* editor.

Adovasio, J.M.

1977 *Basketry technology*. Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago.

Buikstra, J. (editor)

1981 Prehistoric tuberculosis in the Americas. *Scientific Papers* 5. Northwestern University Archeological Program, Evanston.

Droessler, J.

1981 Craniometry and biological distance--biological continuity and change at the Late Woodland-Mississippian interface. *Research Series* 1. Center for American Archaeology, Northwestern University, Evanston.

Gaines, S.W. (editor)

1981 *Data bank applications in archaeology*. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Gibbon, G.

1984 *Anthropological archaeology*. Columbia University Press, New York.

Gradwohl, D.M. and N.M. Osborn

1984 *Exploring Buried Buxton*:

archaeology of an abandoned Iowa coal mining town with a large black population. Iowa State University Press, Ames.

Keyser, J.D. and L. Sundstrom

1984 Rock art of western South Dakota. *Special Publication* 9. South Dakota Archeological Society, Sioux Falls.

Rick, J.

1978 Heat-altered cherts of the Lower Illinois Valley: an experimental study in prehistoric technology. *Prehistoric Records* 2. Northwestern University Archeological Program, Evanston.

Watson, P.J., S.A. LeBlanc and C.L. Redman

1984 *Archeological explanation: the scientific method in archeology*. Columbia University Press, New York.

Woolworth, A.R. and M.A. Hall (editors)

1978 Some studies of Minnesota prehistoric ceramics: papers presented at the first Council for Minnesota Archeology symposium, 1976. *Occasional Publications in Minnesota Anthropology* 2. Minnesota Archaeological Society, St. Paul.

New Conservation Easement in Clayton Co.

An unusual lizard effigy has been protected on an 80 acre parcel along the federally designated Great River Road near North Buena Vista in Clayton County. The easement, which was donated by Jeff and Ann Garland of Mission Viejo, Cal-

ifornia, limits development and public access under Chapter IIID of the Iowa Code and provides for permanent preservation of the natural and cultural resources while the property is retained in private ownership. The donation was arranged by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation in cooperation with the Clayton County Conservation Board, which is responsible for monitoring the property and enforcing the terms of the easement. IAS members interested in exploring the use of conservation easements for their property are encouraged to contact the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Insurance Exchange Building, Suite 830, Des Moines, Iowa 50309 (515-288-1846). Thanks to M. J. Hatfield for reporting on the Clayton County situation.

NEW MEMBERS

Mark Ackelson, Des Moines
Edwin H. Allen, Jr., Des Moines
Archaeology Institute, Bonn, Germany
Kathryn Barnett, West Des Moines
Charles Brenner, Sheldon
Karen Bumann, Battle Creek
David Conley, West Des Moines
Rene Dooly, Granger
Mary Fredericksen, Iowa City
Bruce Hayes, Des Moines
William Heusmann, Des Moines
Wilmer Kiner, Deep River
Madrid Public Library, Madrid
Paul Mann, Des Moines
Mark Minger, Anamosa
Greg and LaWanda Nepstad, Des Moines
Dr. John Richmond, Malibu, California
Richard and Debra Schaffer, Des Moines
Mrs. Frieda Shannon, Iowa City
Mark Smeby, Decorah

REVIEW OF IOWA PROJECTILE POINTS

Toby Morrow's new book titled *Iowa Projectile Points* was recently (1984) published as a Special Publication by the Office of the State Archaeologist. The book is 114 pages long and costs \$10.00. This new projectile point guide will be a useful addition to any amateur or professional archaeologist's library as it covers the great majority of "point types" found not only in Iowa, but much of the Midwest as well.

Six chapters (2 through 7) are devoted to points sharing and arranged by similar morphological characteristics. These are: Lanceolate; Stemmed; Side-Notched; Corner-Notched; Small points; and a final chapter covering the miscellaneous point types. Each point type is described and illustrated followed by age and distribution data and a reference given, as the majority of points have been named previously by other researchers.

Chapter 1 titled "Projectile Point Typology" provides information needed for a very basic understanding of projectile point typology, form and function, morphological attributes, and a short introduction regarding the organization of the book.

Following the point descriptions are appendices (A through D) covering the following topics: Raw Material Descriptions; Chronological Listing; Archaeological Site Survey Procedures for Filing Site Sheets and Assigning Accession Numbers; and Federal and State Laws Pertaining to Antiquities in Iowa. The final page of the book is an index to the point types.

Iowa amateur and professional archaeologists are fortunate to have this guide. The professional archaeologist interested in Iowa prehistoric

lithic technologies will appreciate Mr. Morrow's descriptions of raw materials and locations of chert outcrop areas. Although this specific area of research needs much more time and attention directed towards it, Mr. Morrow has laid a foundation from which to refine and improve upon.

Upon excellent recommendation of this book, only a few minor criticisms are offered here, but do not detract from the quality or basic intent of the purpose of the book as a projectile point identification guide. A brief statement of methodology would have given readers an understanding of why certain collections were examined and others were not--about 50 percent of the points illustrated are from Iowa, Johnson, and Cedar counties. When metric data such as length are given for points, care should be taken with the point(s) illustrated that it fits within this range--several of the points illustrated are either too long or too short for the metric data provided. Broken specimens should be avoided for illustration.

Iowa Projectile Points will serve as a standard reference to those interested in Iowa prehistory, projectile points, lithic technologies and chert source studies for many years to come.

Derrick Marcucci
Highlandville, Iowa

SPRING MEETING TO BE HELD IN IOWA CITY

The Annual Meeting will be held at the Iowa Memorial Union on April 12-13, 1986. Every effort has been made to avoid conflicts with other organizations. Please mark your calendar.

IAS OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

Dick Slattery
4106 El Rancho Dr.
Davenport, IA 52806

VICE-PRESIDENT

Dave Carlson
Route 1, Box 113
Otho, IA 50569

TREASURER

Ruth Thornton
326 Otsego St.
Storm Lake, IA 50588

SECRETARY

Deb Ziegrowsky
Office of the State Archaeologist
Eastlawn, Univ. of Iowa
Iowa City, IA 52242

JOURNAL EDITOR

Nancy Osborn
312 Hayward,
Apt. 5 Ames, IA 50010

DIRECTORS 1983-1986

Toby Morrow
416 N. Butler St.
Madison, WI 53703

Shirley Schermer
1008 N. Angus St.
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McNab Parkway
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Mary Jane Hatfield
Route 1
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Mike Hosbein
Sanford Museum
117 E. Willow St.
Cherokee, IA 51012

Dennis Miller
Route 1, Box 37-A
Silver City, IA 51571

IOWA ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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 archaeology of Iowa and the Midwest.

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

This issue of the *Newsletter* has been computer typeset by Laura Hudson.

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.

Dues should be sent to:
Ruth Thornton
326 Otsego Street
Storm Lake, IA 50588

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

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