

NEW ERA BEGINS AT THE OFFICE OF THE STATE ARCHAEOLOGIST

William Green was appointed state archaeologist by the Iowa State Board of Regents at their May meeting in Ames effective immediately.

Before assuming the position of research archaeologist at OSA last July, Bill worked for eight years as the staff archaeologist in the Historic Preservation Division of the Historical Society of Wisconsin. He received his undergraduate training at Grinnell College and his Ph.D from the University of Wisconsin. For the past five years he has served as the editor of the Wisconsin Archaeologist, the publication of the Wisconsin Archaeological Society.

Watch the next issue of the Newsletter for an in-depth report on Bill and his plans for OSA.

MOUND SALVAGE EXCAVATIONS AT BLOOD RUN: 1985

By David W. Benn
Center for Archaeological Research
Springfield, MO

In June, 1985, professional archaeologists and volunteers from Iowa participated in salvage excavations on the north end of the Blood Run National Historic Landmark site (13LO2) on the Big Sioux River, Lyon County, in northwestern Iowa. The excavations were directed by Dale R. Henning, Luther College, and Shirley J. Schermer, Office of the State Archaeologist, for the purpose of salvaging parts of the site being destroyed by a gravel pit (Henning and Schermer 1985; Schermer 1987). The salvage effort involved removal of the

plowzone from an acre-sized block and excavation of cache pits and one mound (feature 11).

The writer participated in two days of mound excavation and became the "keeper" of the mound profiles and soil data. Dale Henning and Shirley Schermer have kindly consented to preparation of this summary report, which includes information from their field notes and the published report (Ibid.). Lori and David Stanley, Highlandville, also deserve recognition for their efforts to map and profile the mound. Dean Thompson, Tom O'Connor, Joe Kristoff and E. Arthur Bettis III assisted with the soil profile descriptions.

People familiar with the Blood Run site know of its numerous conical mounds, stone alignments and other earthworks. Many of these features have been destroyed during the +100 years of site records. A few people are aware that some of the plowed-down mounds show today only as patches of gravel in the otherwise flat, loamy fields. This is the way feature 11 appeared in June of 1985. Any elevation in the mound feature was almost imperceptible. When the plowzone was removed from the salvage block, the gravel in feature 11 resisted the earthmover's blade, and the mound was left for hand excavation. A diverse group of volunteers and archaeologists excavated the mound by: 1) opening two 1x10 m. cross-trenches to provide mound profiles, and 2) excavating the quadrants of the mound outside the trenches (Figure 1). Digging was by trowelling and fine shovel skimming.

The mound turned out to be far more complex than one might have imagined by its size. Complexity was manifested by the mixing and layering of gravelly and loamy mound fills, by the application of rocks in different arrays and by the inclusion of already-processed human bones. The mound structure was even more complicated because natural soil

formation processes have had too little time (ca. 400 years or less) to blend the boundaries between layers and features (Figure 2). The best way to express the complexity of the mound structure is to describe its building sequence as interpreted from the excavation data.

Mound construction began on a previously occupied spot, since domestic (Oneota) debris of sherds, flakes and fire-cracked rocks were found in the soil beneath the mound. First, the builders removed the A0, A1 and A2 soil horizons (i.e. the sod) from an area approximately 10 m in diameter. This created an "intaglio," a depression in the ground surface where rituals and other activities associated with mound building ceremonies might have taken place. The builders left the intaglio surface uneven, and it was made more irregular by a shallow trench around its periphery on the north, west and south sides and by a deeper spot (pit?) in the southeast corner of quadrant C. Loose dirt and sod from the intaglio excavation were piled on its east and west sides ("dark loam;" see Figure 1 and appended soil description), and many rocks were placed on the cleared surface. Rock features noted by the excavators include a concentration in quadrant A, a diffuse scatter in quadrant B, a line of rocks on the west side and a rock-filled pit in quadrant C.

Two closely-spaced pits about 90 cm deep were excavated east of the mound center. Three bison scapula hoes were placed in the smaller (south) pit, and a Bijou Hills quartzite biface was put in the other pit. Both pits were filled with dark brown, loamy topsoil and capped by a layer of yellow clay and a concentration of rocks.

To prepare the mound fill, the builders gathered a large quantity of gravelly subsoil, the yellowish-red (5YR4/-58) sandy loam and gravel comprising the outwash terrace at the site. All of this gravelly material could have come from the digging of village cache pits, some of

BLOOD RUN MOUNDS

which are nearly 2 m deep. The larger rocks were sorted from the gravelly material. Part of the gravelly soil was mixed with the dark, loamy topsoil and loaded unevenly across most of the intaglio to form the "dark loamy gravel" layer depicted in Figures 1 and 2. Inclusions of disarticulated human bones and probably some animal bones as well as a grooved ax were placed beneath the first gravelly layer in quadrant C. The first earth loading probably brought the mound to the original elevation of the ground surface.

Although the sequence of mound construction is not known in all details, it is believed that rituals were conducted after the initial load of dark loamy gravel was in place. For instance, a fire was kindled above the deep pit containing the hoes and preform. Quadrant D also yielded evidence of two hearths at the base of the gravel layers, and a burned zone was noted in quadrant B. Additionally, the organic remains of an apparent bison hide were encountered in quadrant C. (Figure 1). Some human remains may have been broadcast over the fill at this time; bones were recorded by archaeologists as inclusions within the gravelly layers in quadrant D and in the trenches.

The next loading consisted of yellowish-red subsoil placed in an oval area across the center of the mound ("orange gravel"). Some human and animal bones were placed in this layer. Then, the mound was given vertical integrity by mixing gravelly subsoil with dark topsoil and loading this mixture as a thick layer over representations of spiritual symbols and power. This behavior can be traced back into the Woodland periods as well.

Much of the evidence at Blood Run points to the period of mound construction during the Proto-historic and Historic periods, ca. 400-300 years ago. Parts of the site have Euro-American trade goods on the surface, and past mound excavations have produced glass beads (Harvey 1979: 139) and iron (Starr 1889: 111). This is remarkable evidence for mound building activity lasting into the historic period on the midwestern prairies. The excellent preservation of mound layers and the possible bison hide in feature 11 also indicate a late building period.

We also observe that some mounds, like feature 11, were not built expressly to house recently deceased people, although other mounds on the Blood Run

site have yielded articulated burials (Harvey 1979). Rather, feature 11 contained the processed pieces of approximately four individuals (one elderly male, one smaller adult, one 9-12 years old, one fetus (Schermer 1987: 56), parts of whom were broadcast throughout the fills. The bones of these individuals had been processed and curated prior to raising the mound. In this case, rituals associated with mound building seem to have been conducted separate from activity related to the funeral of specific individuals. The sub-floor pits in some mounds also seem to indicate non-funerary rituals: for instance, the feature 11 pit contained hoes and a biface, and the sub-floor pit dug by Harvey (1979: 139) held a bison skull. Clark Mallam (1982) has depicted the significance of mound building as a device for integrating society. The fact that human burials may occur in mounds means that mortuary ceremonies were one of many forms of integrating behavior expressed during the cycle of mound construction.

Clark Mallam also speculated that Oneota burials placed in Woodland mounds "...served to symbolize their aggregate strength through appropriation of the sacred ground of others" (1984: 20). At Blood Run we have the Oneota literally creating "sacred ground" by piling earth into mounds. I would argue that this activity had political meaning within the context of the early Historic

period. If Dale Henning is correct in placing the Omaha tribe with others like the Ioway and Oto at Blood Run (1982: 39), such an agglomeration of Native peoples must have conducted mourning and life-renewal ceremonies to reinforce their cultural traditions and to solidify inter-tribal alliances. Building mounds and other earthen or rock features are forms of social labor that would have reinforced political power when the ceremonies were exchanged as obligations between independent tribes.

The preceding interpretations are merely notes about much larger and more involved subjects of Native ceremonies, world view, social solidarity and political identity. These are subjects that can be studied and interpreted by archaeologists from the information contained in the

Blood Run mounds. This is one argument for preservation of the site. But, the mounds have a greater significance as sacred ground. Not only do many mounds contain the remains of human beings, but the bones and the earthen structures hold sacred meaning for living Native Americans. Surely, this is the strongest argument for preservation of the whole Blood Run site.

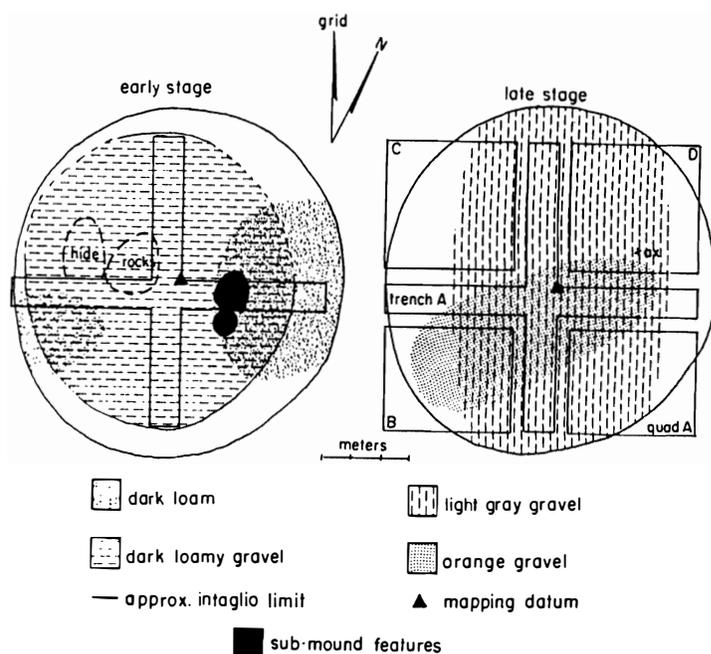


FIGURE 1: MOUND RECONSTRUCTION

BLOOD RUN

Site: Blood Run 13LO2

Location: Fea. 11 composite mound profile; T100N R49W sec. 24

Date: 6-20-85

Parent Material: late Wisconsinan outwash

By: D. Benn and D. Stanley

Slope: 0%

Vegetation: fallow field

depth (cm)	horizon	description
0-20	+ md. fill	dark brown (7.5YR3/2) loamy sand and gravel, massive, firm and compacted, mild effervescence, abrupt wavy boundary (termed light gray gravel on mound profiles)
20-39	+ md. fill	brown (7.5YR4/4) loamy sand and gravel, massive and single grain, loose, strong effervescence, abrupt wavy boundary (termed orange gravel on mound profiles)
39-48	+ md. fill	dark brown (7.5YR3/2) sandy gravelly loam, coarse granular, friable, mild effervescence, abrupt wavy boundary (termed dark loamy gravel on mound profiles)
pockets	+ md. fill	very dark gray (10YR3/1) loam, fine granular, friable, no reaction, abrupt wavy boundary (termed dark loam on mound profiles)
48-57	A2b	very dark gray brown (10YR3/2) silt loam, weak thin platy, friable, no reaction, common rootlets, abrupt smooth boundary
57-68	A3b	very dark gray brown (10YR3/2) silt loam, weak fine-medium subangular blocky, friable, no reaction, few rootlets, clear smooth boundary
68-83	ABb	dark brown (10YR3/3) loam, weak medium subangular blocky, friable, no reaction, no rootlets, clear smooth boundary
83-100	B1b	dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) loam, weak medium subangular blocky, friable, thin discontinuous cutans (10YR3/3), few krotovina, no reaction, clear smooth boundary
100-127	B2tb	dark yellowish brown (10YR4/4) loam, moderate medium subangular blocky, friable, common thin cutans (10YR3/3), few krotovina, no reaction, gradual smooth boundary
145- +165 base	C1	reddish brown to yellowish red (5YR4/4-5/8) sandy loam, very weak coarse subangular blocky to massive below, friable to single grain, pebbles and cobbles increasing below, strong effervescence, coarse mottling (grades into clast supported terrace deposits below)

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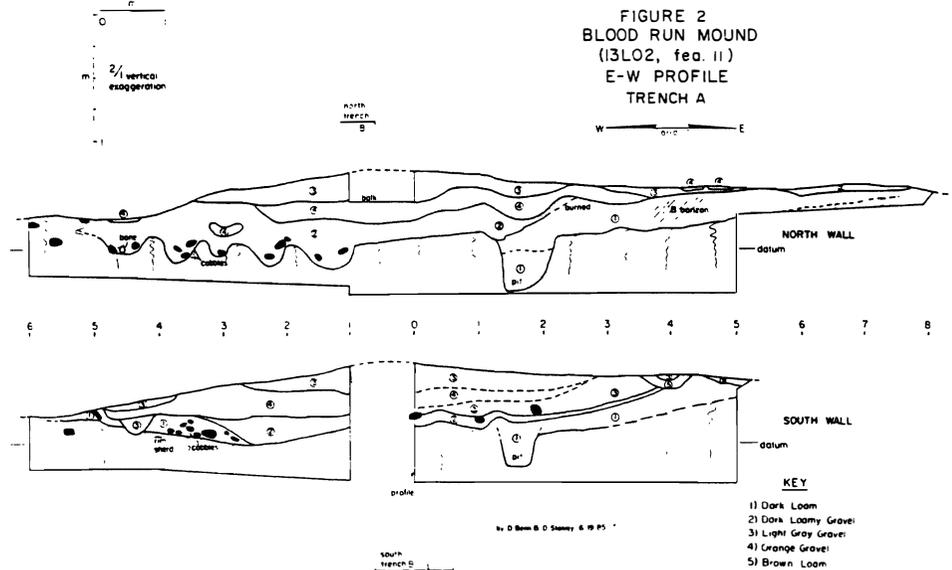
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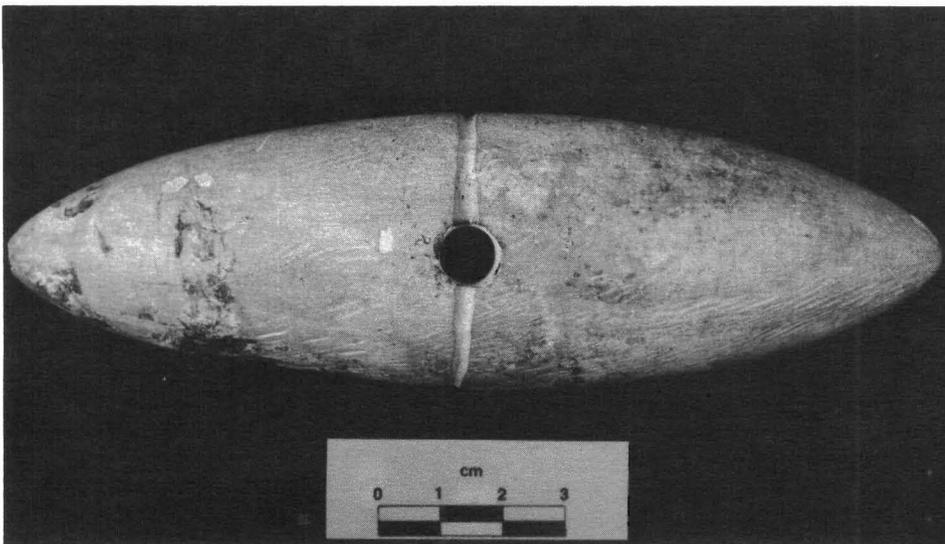
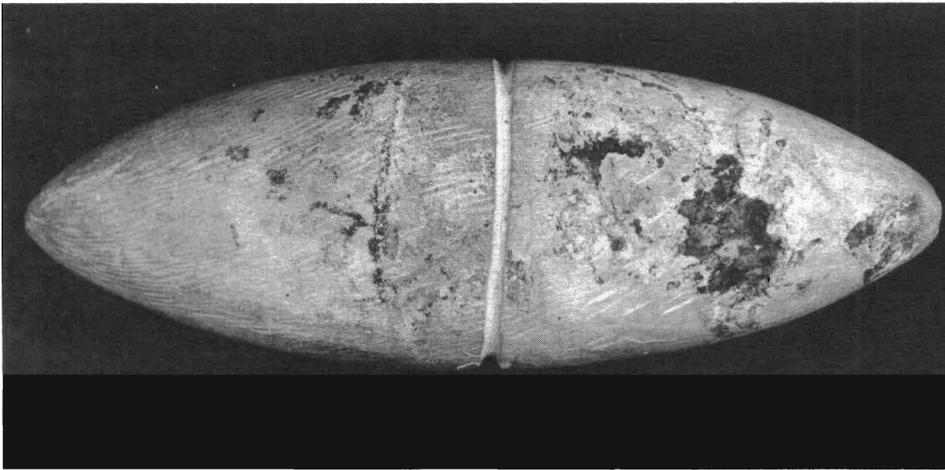
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Historic war club. The upper photograph clearly shows the discolored band bordering the midsection groove as well as the adhering organic material (left). The lower photograph shows the drilled hole. The preserved wooden handle fragment is at the opposite end of the hole and, hence, not visible.

War Club Found Near Wellman

Steve Lensink
Office of State Archaeologist

Recently, Kim Wasson of Kinross, IA, recovered an excellent example of a historic war club. The find was made in a freshly bulldozed area near the town of Wellman. The club, made of a very fine-grained limestone, appears to have been shaped with a metal tool such as a wood rasp. The club has been drilled for the insertion of a handle and grooved to assist in binding.

The object is remarkable for its preservation. A portion of the wooden handle is preserved in the hole and the stone displays a distinct discoloration where the binding surrounded the

midsection. A dark, adhering material visible in Figure 1 appears to be a residue of leather, suggesting that the club had been in a pouch or bag prior to its recent disturbance. Craig Chumbley of the University of Iowa Botany Department identified the wood of the handle as willow.

The war club measured a maximum length of 149 mm. Maximum cross-sections were 51 x 44 mm. The hole diameters at each end were 8.5 mm and 8 mm. The groove is 203 mm wide. And the club weighed 370.9 grams.

Stone Age Spear and Arrow Points of the Midcontinental and Eastern United States. Noel D. Justice. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1987. xiv + 288 pp., 54 figures, 8 color plates, 104 maps, appendix, index \$37.50 (\$27.50 for individuals).

How many archaeologists—amateur or professional—got interested in American prehistory because of projectile points? Probably most of us, and I would guess most of us are still fascinated by arrow points, spear points, and other stone tools.

The aesthetics of beautifully chipped prehistoric stone tools attract much attention in Iowa and throughout North America. Beyond aesthetics, we recognize that points and other tools are vital sources of information on the past. In order to obtain this information, we need guidance from specialists who can place our collections or data into a meaningful context. For points as well as other artifacts, we need to take advantage of existing knowledge to help us gain new knowledge.

The ages, affiliations, relationships, and significance of many midwestern projectile point types are well known. However, much information is not easily obtainable. Statewide point guides provide useful summaries, but few recent state guides have been published for midwestern states.

Iowa is fortunate in having Toby Morrow's excellent projectile point identification guide. Noel Justice's new book on points from eastern North America should be welcomed both by those who have found Morrow's book useful and by those who seek broader coverage.

Justice's book stands out from most other point guides in many ways. It contains over 485 drawings. It includes color plates. It is a well-produced, hardbound book. It attempts to cover the entire United States east of the Great Plains.

Amateur and professional archaeologists will find Justice's book to be a valuable guide to projectile point identification. However, this book is more than an identification guide. It is a synthesis of information on the prehistoric groups with which over 120 point types are associated. The user of this book learns about *cultures* as well as dates and distributions.

Every point guide is organized differently. I especially like the organization of this book because it is based on “type clusters”—groups of point types of roughly similar form and age. This format assists the reader in quickly reviewing several culturally related point types, permitting assignment of many unidentified points to a cluster. This helps provide a cultural or temporal affiliation even if a precise type determination cannot be made. Because not all points can be strictly assigned to a particular named type, this book may help shift attention away from pointless(!) hassles over typological nuances. It may encourage us to make more reasonable—and useful—assignments of “problem” points to clusters and thus to at least broad time periods and cultural affiliations.

The above statement is a long-winded way of saying “hurray” for Justice’s emphasis on type clusters. Because of this approach, users of this book will learn a great deal about points they encounter. Another point in the book’s favor is the welcome absence of academic discourse on whether types exist, i.e., whether archaeologists should do typology or classification. We all use type names; the justification for this practice rather than statistical derivation of classes identified by number or letter is thankfully unstated. Let’s not usurp valuable space by arguing whether we should call points “Dalton” or “12.0.” I think most archaeologists will applaud Justice’s focus on types and clusters rather than classes.

This book covers the complete range of prehistory, from the early Paleo-Indian fluted points through late prehistoric arrow points. Justice’s discussions of types, clusters, and more general topics draw upon hundreds of archaeological reports as well as unpublished data. Numerous illustrations and maps will assist both experienced archaeologists and neophytes.

The book’s utility as a supplement to state summaries is illustrated by the coverage of southern and eastern point types unfamiliar to most midwesterners. The type cluster method of organization allows the reader to readily appreciate similarities and differences between the stone tool traditions of different parts of the eastern United States.

In an appendix, Justice provides measurements for samples of each of the point types. Derived mostly from published descriptions, the measurements are of variable quality and utility.

Maps in this book show the western boundaries of many type distributions (except Paleo-Indian types) as cutting through eastern Iowa. This may reflect Justice’s emphasis on the Mississippi Valley and areas to the east. It would be interesting to examine this pattern in more detail to try to determine whether this line might represent a real distributional boundary for many types.

This book will become an oft-cited source on the ages, distributions, and cultural affiliations of midwestern, southern, and eastern projectile points. It is highly recommended as a reference work and as a source on prehistoric technology in North America.

William Green
Office of the State Archaeologist
University of Iowa

OBITUARY: ROBERT A. ALEX

Robert A. Alex, State Archaeologist and Director of the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center, died suddenly on April 21, 1988, at the Rockyford Visitor Center, Badlands National Park, SD. He was 46.

Bob was a native Iowan and avid researcher in Plains and Midwest archaeology. He received his Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees from the University of Iowa and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

During his student years at Iowa, Bob had the rare opportunity to be involved with research at a number of important archaeological sites. Among these were Rummells-Maske, the only excavated Clovis Paleoindian site in Iowa; the Wittrock and Brewster Mill Creek culture sites; the Turkey River Mound Group; the Late Woodland period Hartley Fort; the O’Brien-Christiansen site in Black Hawk County; and the historic site of Fort Madison. In 1969 Bob served as Research Assistant to Professor Thomas H. Charlton of the Department of Anthropology of the University of Iowa on his excavation of a series of post-conquest sites in the Teotihuacan Valley, Mexico. While teaching at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Bob excavated at the Diamond Bluff Oneota site.

Bob’s own research in Iowa archaeology culminated in his 1968 Master’s thesis, *The Rock Run Shelter: a*

Stratified Woodland Site in East Central Iowa. Bob’s long-term interest in the Plains Village cultures of the Middle Missouri valley were fostered at his NSF funded excavation of the Initial Middle Missouri tradition Mitchell site in Mitchell, South Dakota in 1971. This work served as the core of his 1981 dissertation, *The Village Cultures of the Lower James Valley, South Dakota.*

Bob and Lynn met as graduate students at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. They were married on Aug. 12, 1971, in Mitchell, SD, at the end of the field season. Among his fellow graduate students, Bob served as friend, confidant and colleague; he was an unfailing source of intellectual stimulus and personal support for all of us. Bob’s love of learning and genuine enjoyment in doing archaeology rubbed off on everyone. Bob had the unique ability to express his ideas and criticisms constructively and authoritatively in a manner that won over any doubter.

Bob’s interest in Mill Creek/Middle Missouri tradition interaction served as the spark for my dissertation project at the Chan-ya-ta Mill Creek culture site. His long-standing interest in Woodland subsistence strategies and prehistoric ecology provided the stimulus for Dave Benn’s dissertation research at Hadfields Cave in Jones County. Bob was also a source of encouragement and support on the dissertation project of another Iowa archaeologist and friend, Larry J. Zimmerman.

After completing his dissertation course work in 1972, Bob taught at Fort Lewis College in Durango, CO. From 1973 to 1975 Bob was a member of the Anthropology faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. From 1975 to 1976 Bob served as Chief Archaeologist for the Iowa Historic Preservation Program under the auspices of his long-time friend and mentor, Adrian D. Anderson who was then the State Historic Preservation Officer of Iowa. Since 1976, Bob served as Director of the South Dakota Research Center and Office of the State Archaeologist in Rapid City.

While Bob was Chief Archaeologist for the Historic Preservation Program, his wife Lynn, who is also an archaeologist, worked at the Office of the State Archaeologist of Iowa. Both were involved in several major developments in Iowa archaeology and their contributions in these events helped to

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shape the direction of Iowa archaeology for many years. Lynn was involved with several public education projects through the Office of State Archaeologist, culminating in, Exploring Iowa's Past, the source for Iowa archaeology for many years. Bob and Lynn were a great team. Iowa and Iowans are indebted to both.

At the time of Bob's appointment, Iowa had a new State Archaeologist, Duane Anderson; new state legislation implementing the federal historic preservation program in Iowa; a new state law mandating the reburial of Native American human remains; and NSF and NEH grant supported research projects at the University of Iowa and the State Archaeologist's Office. As Chief Archaeologist, Bob prepared the first report standards for Iowa contracted archaeological research and was instrumental in development of the administrative review procedures for contracted archaeological work still in use today. He convinced me and several other members of the then fledgling Association of Iowa Archaeologists that it was important to support the new burial legislation in Iowa.

Bob was a long-time member of the Iowa Archeological Society and the Northwest Chapter of the IAS. He also was a member and supporter of state archaeological societies in Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming. Bob was a member of the Society for American Archaeology, the American Anthropological Society, the Plains Anthropological Society where he served a term on the Board of Directors, the Society for Historical Archaeology, the National Association of State Archaeologists, the South Dakota

Historical Society, the Darton Geological Society and the Palmin Society.

Archaeology was always exciting and fun for Bob, and his contributions to Iowa archaeology are considerable. His sudden death has been a shock to his family, friends and colleagues. He will be missed by all of us.

Bob is survived by his wife Lynn and two children, Allison and Brendan of Sturgis; his mother Alice of Bettendorf, IA, and two brothers Tom of Des Moines and Don of San Francisco. Memorial contributions may be made to the Children's Education Fund in care of: State Archaeological Research Center, P.O. Box 5005, 2425 East St. Charles, Rapid City, SD 57701-5005.

Joseph A. Tiffany
California State Polytechnic University-
Pomona, Pomona, CA

NEW IAS MEMBERS AS OF MARCH 22, 1988:

Mike Andrews, Estherville
Brian J. Baldus, Sioux City
Harold Boysen, Morning Sun
Doris Briley, Moline, IL
David Burger, Gape Girardeau, MO
G. F. DeMarrais, Cedar Rapids
Mr. & Mrs. Rodney C. DeMott,
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Verna Detrich, Chapman, Kansas
Norman Dickman, Decorah
John Doershuk, Evanston, IL
Stephen Enright, Port Byron, IL
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David Swinehart, Waterloo
Kim Wassen, Kinross
Tom Wolforth, Urbana, IL
R. C. Zahm, Fairfax

Meeting announcements sent to two IAS members were returned as undeliverable. We ask your assistance in locating these lost members: Gary Valen, 553 Locust St., Conway, Arkansas, 72032; and Greg Helle, 209 W. Central, Estherville, Iowa, 51334.

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 Mid-west.

The Newsletter is published four times a year. All materials for publication should be sent to the editor:

Sheila Hainlin
1434 44 Street
Des Moines, IA 50311

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES VOTING NON-VOTING

1. Active \$10
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