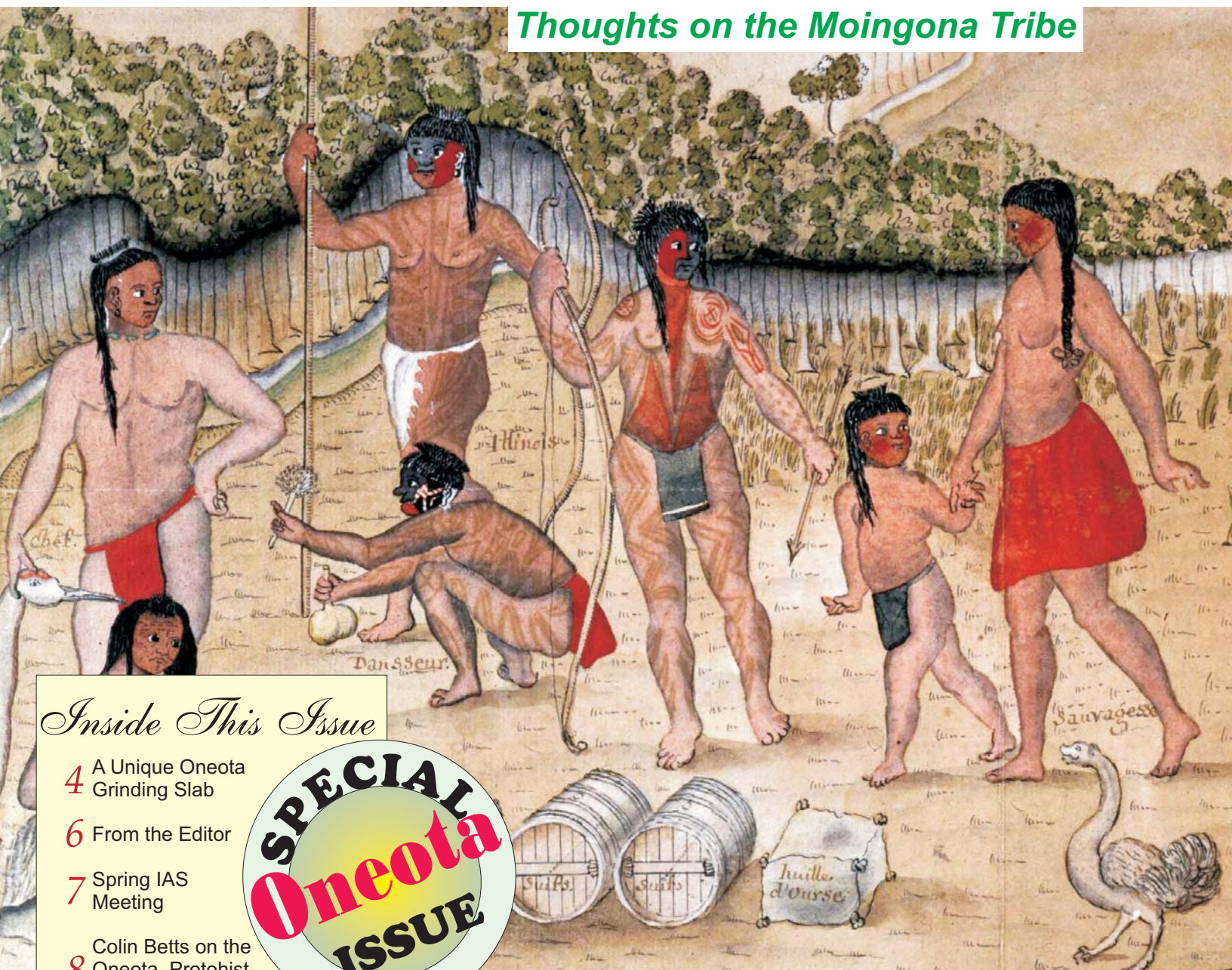


“Des Moines” is Not an Insult

Thoughts on the Moingona Tribe



1735 Alexander de Batz illustration of the Illinois or Peoria tribe (from Stelle 2005).

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SPECIAL
Oneota
ISSUE

Jim Fay

The history of the Miami-Illinois people who are today referred to as the Moingona or Moingwena is a sobering case study in historiography. Early maps, including the earliest map of Iowa made during Marquette and Joliet's 1672 journey down the Mississippi, show a Moingona village along the Des Moines River, making them possibly the first historically recorded Indian tribe in Iowa (Grantham 1993). There is ample evidence the place name “Des Moines” is derived, at least in part, from Moingona (Vogel 1983), so what, exactly, does “Moingona” mean?

—Continued on page 2

Mengakonkia, Mangekekis, Mouingoueña...

In 1672 Jacques Marquette documented that the *Peoualen* (the modern Peoria) and the *mengakonkia* (Moingona) were among the *Illinoue* (Illinois) tribes who all “speak the same language” (Thwaites 1899). Other names for them mentioned in 1672-73 records were “Mengakoukia,” and “Mangekekis” (Perrot 1864). Father Jacques Gravier describes a meeting of “respect and good will” with the closely related “Peouaroua” and “Mouingoueña” in 1700 (Thwaites 1900).

The first instance of the term being rendered *Moingona* was by Pierre François Xavier de Charlevoix, a missionary who explored the region in 1721 (de Charlevoix 1744). Charlevoix was a professor of the classics, and his spelling has come to be a preferred spelling in general and scholarly discussions.

The history of the Moingona, although rather sparse, is straightforward. Indeed, the Moingona were among the people the French explorers first encountered when they sought out the Illinois on their own soil. In 1673 Marquette and Louis Jolliet left their canoes and followed a beaten path away from the river out onto the prairie to three Illinois villages within about a mile and a half of each other. Marquette identified only one of the villages at the time, the “peouarea,” but a later map apparently by him identified another as the “Moingwena.” He said of the 1673 meeting that there was “some difference in their language” among the different

villages, but that “we easily understood each other. They are of a gentle and tractable disposition” (Thwaites 1899).

Any interpretation of any of these historical records to suggest that the name “Moingona” was a racial slur used by antagonists who did not speak the same language simply does not fit the facts.

In 1721 Charlevoix recorded that *le Moingona* was “an immense and magnificent Prairie, all covered with Beef and other Hoofed Animals.” He italicized the term to indicate it was a geographical term and noted that “one of the tribes bears that name.” The defining characteristic of the region was the detour or road around an unnavigable stretch of river that made it necessary “to make a detour of the river,” that is, “necessary to unload and drag the canoe” (de Charlevoix 1744).

Joseph Nicollet was a geographer who was commissioned to map the upper Mississippi basin. For him, as for Marquette, Jolliet, and Charlevoix and for virtually everyone else who had anything to say about the area the defining idea embodied in the expression “Moingona” was the road around the unnavigable stretch of river and out into the prairie.

The noted Algonquian linguist Henry Schoolcraft was on his staff, and Nicollet's report says that “Moingona” is a corruption of the Algonkin word ‘Mikonang’, signifying ‘at the road:’...alluding. in this

instance, to the well-known road in this section of country, which they used to follow as a communication between the head of the lower rapids and their settlement on the river that empties itself into the Mississippi, so as to avoid the rapids; and this is still the practice of the present inhabitants of the country. (Nicollet 1845)

Gravier is usually considered the author of what is by far the most highly regarded dictionary of the Miami-Illinois language. It did not include proper names, but did include some definitions that seem to shed light on the name “Moingona.” The expression *mi8i* means “road or path,” and *mi8nghi8i* means “on the road or path” (The ‘8’ is pronounced “ou” or “w.”) Moreover, the entry for the expression *m8nagami8* or frequently *m8na8agami8i* includes the gloss “water which does not prevent from walking without trouble, timber, plants.” These definitions all indicate a portage trail where goods were carried around a difficult part of a river. The earliest meetings probably took place near modern Keokuk, Iowa; the Des Moines Rapids extended from Keokuk to Montrose, Iowa, and this was a formidable obstacle to river travel until the late nineteenth century (Collins 1989). Gravier's dictionary also offers an entry for “m8ing8eta” meaning “face covered with filth,” (“*visage plein d'ordure*” in French) as well as “dirty metaphor,” “ugly insult” (Masthay 2002).

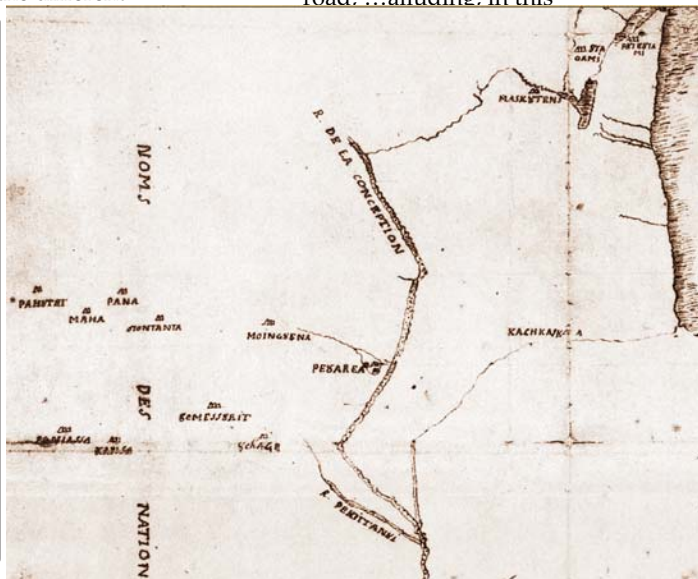
Which brings us to the whole notion of “etymology” and a sobering look at the historiography surrounding the Moingona.

“Moingona” as a Case Study in Historiography

Perhaps it is worthwhile at this point to out the difference between “semantics” and “etymology.” Semantics deals with the meanings of words; etymology deals with how words are pronounced and spelled. The meaning of the term “Moingona” as it was used by native speakers in vernacular speech by whatever spelling is straightforward and well documented. It was used to refer to the geographic area “at the road,” a portage around an unnavigable stretch of river, presumably the Des Moines Rapids, and to the people who lived there.

– Continued on page 3

Map based on the 1673–1674 Marquette and Joliet Mississippi expedition showing a “Moingwena” village in the interior of Iowa, presumably along the Des Moines River. The exact circumstances of this map have been debated, but it is generally believed to have been drawn within a few years of their expedition (Tucker 1942).



Other plausible, but less substantiated, interpretations of Moingona have been put forth, for example, Vogel (1983) felt the term was derived from an Algonquin clan name meaning “loon.”

The Moingona did not have a written language, so there is no native vernacular documentation of the use of the language. And the array of spellings the French explorers came up with “mengakonkia,” “Mengakoukia,” “Mangekekis,” “Moeng8ena,” “Moingoana,” “Moingona,” “Moingwena,” “Mouingouëña” and “Mikonang” to name a few, certainly give us nothing on which we can confidently draw any conclusions about subtleties of pronunciation or the derivation of that pronunciation.

This is true of any language for which there are no native written records of the use of the language over time. And yet etymologists sometimes delight in coming up with “reconstructed or hypothetical phonemicized forms.” And they treat these reconstructed forms as real words to come up with startling or amusing conclusions, which is, of course, the whole point of the exercise. The results are sometimes amusing, as puns often are, (“Is this a business trip?” “No, justification.”) but no more valid than puns. Indeed, no more valid than puns made up of make-believe words.

The purported etymology of “Moingona” as a slur offers a good case in point. A popular “hypothetical phonemicized form” theorizes that all those various spellings for “Moingona” show that the essential component of the pronunciation of the word is a beginning “mooyii” sound. And the hypothetical phonemicization “mooyi” means “shit-faced” according to the Gravier entry mentioned earlier (Challender 2003; Costa 2003).

This interpretation of Gravier’s dictionary is dubious, to say the least. None of the French -English dictionaries give anything like “shit” as a gloss for “ordure.” Indeed, of the first couple of hundred citations on the the web search engine Google of the French phrase used by Gravier, “plein d’ordure,” none of them appear to be dealing with excrement or feces with one exception. That exception is the several references to the recently constructed hypothetical phonemicized form referring to Moingona, glossed as “shit-faced” (Challender 2003).

These amusing reconstructions and interpretations are more newsworthy, more

web popular, and more ‘way cool’ than the soundly warranted historical evidence, and so, over time, the facts get lost in the shuffle. That seems to be what has happened or is happening to “Moingona.” There is no historical record that “shit-faced” was ever expressed or implied in the vernacular usage of the term. There is very substantial evidence to the contrary by probably the most knowledgeable Algonquian linguists who ever lived. Missionaries who understood the language repeatedly used the term, not as a dirty metaphor or ugly insult, but as a very respectful name used in very cordial interactions with the people to whom it referred. Linguistic, historical, and geographical evidence supports an interpretation of Moingona as “people by the portage” or something similar. And yet, judging from recent Google and Wikipedia searches, the “shit-faced” meaning of Moingona seems to be becoming the accepted history.

As such it is a very pertinent, and very sobering, case study in modern historiography.

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Franquelin’s (1688) map of the upper Mississippi, showing a “Moingoana” village along the Des Moines River, possibly in Boone County or just below the mouth of the Raccoon in Polk County.



A Unique Oneota Grinding Slab

Dale R. Henning

In 1957 I was a fully-enrolled graduate student at the University of Iowa. That summer, my good friend and fellow graduate student Adrian Anderson and I were told by Prof. Reynold J. Ruppé that this was our time to gain access to materials for our M.A. theses. There was to be no field school that season, and we were both blessed with the G.I. bill which would pay for a few hours of tuition plus a small stipend (read "gas money and a few meals"). So, we were sent forth with best wishes, several admonitions, two shovels, and a screen. We decided to pool our resources while satisfying our obligations to part-time jobs. Adrian was expected to help on his parent's farm when needed, and I was signed on to work weekends at my father's gas station. We began by excavating a Glenwood house on the Kullbom farm. This was an interesting two weeks with tenting on-site, sleeping on canvas folding cots, rain every night, heat and humidity daily and Kullbom's corn growing rapidly around us.

Paul Rowe, D. D. Davis and several other local enthusiasts helped when they could, allowing us to almost complete the project in the time allotted. The following fall, Ruppé led a group of students on a weekend project to finish scraping the floor and complete the excavation of several interior pit features. Adrian and I then shifted to northeast Iowa where I was expected to focus on Oneota sites along the lower Upper Iowa; the goal was to obtain a respectable sample of pottery from that locale. I grew up in Decorah and was familiar with a number of sites in the region. We escaped the moist tent, instead billeting in my parents' home not far from the research area. Our first day out we were attracted by the noise and dust created by a small gravel pit along Highway A26 that was undergoing extensive repair. Here, pit features were being exposed along the west terrace edge of the Buhlman site. The Buhlman Site (13AM21), also called the O'Regan cemetery, was excavated by Keyes and Orr in 1934, and is discussed by Mildred Wedel (1959), who felt the entire terrace was at one time occupied by the Oneota people ca. A.D. 1650, very likely ancestral Ioway and Otoe.



The grinding slab, on display, Effigy Mounds National Monument. Photo by David Rambow.

When we arrived, we were met by Gavin Sampson, a DOT inspector and collector with very positive interests in local archaeology. Sampson's extensive and well-documented collection is now curated at Luther College. He informed us that only a small amount of gravel had been contracted for; the work was to be completed at the end of the next day. Thus, only a small part of this large site was to be impacted. Mining had concluded for the day, it was getting dark and dinner was waiting, so we planned to get out there bright and early the next day. We returned to Decorah to find a message from Adrian's father; he was needed back at the farm. So, he ate and left. Early the next morning I set forth to learn what I could.

Upon arrival, I was met by Sampson who put in a good word for me, enabling my taking notes and some measurements between bulldozer passes. Unfortunately, the operations had to be fast-moving, giving little time to salvage the desired data and remains as they were exposed, but the operators cooperated as much as possible. With some help from Sampson I was able to make a surface collection; salvage the partial remains of three burials scattered across the site; take horizontal measurements on eleven exposed pit features (diameters ranged from 18 to 54 inches); draw a cross-section of a

partial feature (3 feet deep, 4 feet diameter) exposed along the pit edge, remove and screen the remaining fill; and excavate the bottom 22 inches of a pit 47 inches in diameter. The three burials were badly disturbed separate interments, either tightly flexed or secondary re-burials. At the time, I assumed they were Late Woodland because a few grit-tempered, cord-marked sherds were apparently associated. Diagnostic Oneota rim sherds found in the course of this salvage were small and few (14), but all were representative of the Orr phase. The materials recovered and notes were deposited in the archaeology laboratory, University of Iowa, and are on file at the OSA. A student paper by Charles F. O'Neal (n.d.) summarizing the information is also on file at the OSA.

The most interesting item recovered in this whirlwind salvage project was an immense grinding slab that had been pushed off to one side by a machine operator. Neither Sampson nor I saw where it came from, but it must have lain below the plowzone; there are no plow scars and, amazingly enough, no machine scars on any surface. But there it was, sitting on a pile of soil and gravel, the largest grinding slab either Sampson or I had ever seen, and for this region one that is unique.

This is a true Southwestern-style metate with characteristic rectangular grinding basin designed for use with a two-handed rectangular mano. Obviously it was prepared for use in the village, definitely not designed to be moved from place to place. The slab is fine abrasive dolomite that is 92 cm (36 in) long, 58.4 cm (23 in) wide, and 14 cm (5 in) thick. Huge flakes have been removed from the edges to form a rough oval; the upper face has been pecked and ground to produce a flattened surface. The central working basin is rectangular: 45.7 cm (18 in) long, 26 cm (10.25 in) wide and 3.8 cm (1.5 in) maximum depth. It bears many peck marks suggestive of basin shaping and preparation; some of the pecking may also have been done to retain grinding efficiency. Evidence for use can be seen in the numerous striations paralleling the long axis which clearly suggest a back-and-forth grinding motion. Considering its overall size and thickness, it was obviously prepared for long-term use in a permanent village. It seems logical to suspect that this artifact was buried by Oneota villagers who expected to return. The weight of this artifact has been estimated at from 150 to 1,000 pounds, the lower range by those who have just looked at it, the higher by those who have lifted it. So far as I know, it has never been weighed but I can state from experience that it is not portable. Grinding slabs are found on most Oneota sites and seem to be particularly plentiful on large intensively occupied village sites.

I have become quite interested in Oneota ground stone tools over the years and take every opportunity to study them when they become available. Thus far no slab with a rectangular working basin comparable to this one has turned up anywhere in the Midwest or eastern Plains in any cultural context of which I am familiar. All the regional specimens I have seen have a round to slightly oval working surface; some have two opposed grinding surfaces. Those surfaces always bear evidence for a rotary motion with a round mano. I have heard of a few very large grinding slabs in private hands in northeastern Iowa (Robert Palmer, personal communication 2009) but have not had an opportunity to see them; perhaps one or more of those is comparable to the Buhlman specimen. No manos suitable for use in a rectangular grinding basin have been recorded from an Oneota site of which I am aware. Perhaps one is still hidden somewhere on the Buhlman village site. Wouldn't it be fun to find that?

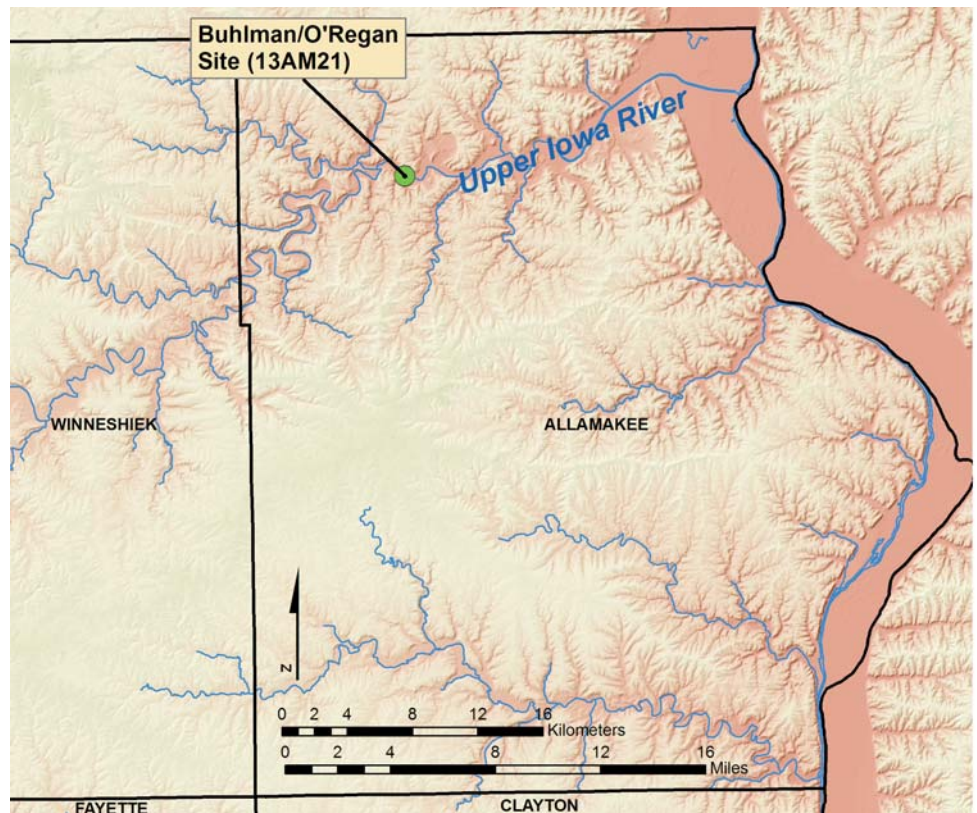
A variety of names are applied to grinding slabs in Oneota and Plains literature

including mortars, metates, milling stones, mealing stones and grinding stones. I prefer grinding slabs as the most generic term applicable but prefer metate for the deep rectangular stone basins ubiquitous to the American Southwest and Mexico that are always coupled with a rectangular mano designed for use with two hands. This huge Buhlman grinding slab with its rectangular basin fits the Southwestern-Mexican term metate very well, but is definitely out of place here. Oneota grinding slabs are discussed in some detail (Henning and Schermer 2004:498–500); that discussion reflects my current thinking on the subject.

To summarize: 1) The presence of grinding slabs (and manos) on a Late Prehistoric site suggests some dependence on horticultural products, especially corn, and non-domesticated seeds, nuts and berries, even small fauna. 2) Some grinding slabs bear deeply-cut scars on their surfaces. Those scars suggest that the slab was used in the manufacture, renovation, and resharpening of chipped stone tools. Similar scars often appear on manos. 3) The grinding slab's solid and more-or-less flat surface also served in preparing temper for pottery-making, shaping and sharpening bone and antler tools, and to crush and grind hematite for paint.

In the future, we can hope to see research on Oneota grinding slabs and manos that emulates and expands upon the studies of Yohe et al. (1991:659–666) who presented ethnographic, biochemical, and immunological evidence for their use (not in Oneota contexts) in processing a range of fauna. I would also like to see further identification of scarring on grinding slab surfaces to determine where such scarring is found (only on Oneota sites? among the Plains villagers? where?) and further research on the means whereby those scars appear. Obviously, these rather simple, bulky, and mundane tools have a great deal to tell us. They should be given the same attention we expend on pottery, projectile points, and well-formed ground and polished objects.

To conclude, let us return to the Buhlman village site. By evening, the machines were engaged in backfilling and cleaning up and all opportunities for further data recovery were over. And, as the sun was setting, there stood Sampson and Henning wondering what to do with this immense artifact. Leaving it there was not an option. We agreed that I should take it and see that it was given a safe home, probably at the archaeology laboratory at the University of Iowa. An end loader operator carefully (he scooped soil into the bucket to cushion it) transported it across



Location of the Buhlman/O'Regan Site.

a plowed field to my car. We then put a stout board on the car bumper and skidded and wrestled the thing into the trunk of my crummy '51 Studebaker, breaking the trunk latch. On the way back to Decorah that evening I resolved to find a suitable home for it ASAP; my headlights were aimed into the trees and the car wallowed and swayed dangerously on curves.

A few days later I set off to show the wonderful artifact to Robert T. Bray, then archaeologist at Effigy Mounds National Monument and a person whom I knew had lasting interests in the Oneota cultural manifestation. And, as I had fervently hoped, Bob happily agreed to add it to their growing collection of local artifacts. Not only would they take it, he would see that it was removed from my trunk and placed in storage by a notably unenthusiastic grounds crew. The Buhlman grinding slab is now safely curated by the National Park Service at Effigy Mounds National Monument.

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for more information

From the Editor

Hello! I am very pleased to be the new editor of the *Newsletter of the Iowa Archeological Society*. Lynn Alex and Steve Lensink did a great job maintaining and improving the newsletter for a few years after Mike Heimbaugh capably edited it for nearly a decade. In recent years you have noticed changes in the *Newsletter*, it is now color and printed on higher-quality paper, and has more of a popular magazine layout than the old *Newsletter*. These are changes our readers seem to enjoy. Membership in the IAS has increased in recent years to over 400, an encouraging trend.

However, the cost of printing and mailing the newsletter has increased, and is likely to continue to increase. Faced with the potential of a growing deficit, the IAS Board has recommended raising IAS dues by \$5. Another cost-saving measure is that we will now have an 8-page *Newsletter*; after this issue. It was difficult for Mike, Lynn, and Steve to produce four 12-page issues a year, and occasionally only three were published. As new editor, I also may struggle to put out four issues a year, even if they are smaller; I have a busy job at the OSA, I try to publish research in other publications, and I have a new son, but I will do my best.

Changes in the *Newsletter* includes replacing “*OSA News*” with a new section, “*Reports from the Field*”; this is an effort to get non-OSA organizations to participate more with the IAS. While OSA reports will always be welcome in the *Newsletter*, they will be part of a larger section that includes short reports about the activities of IAS chapters, academic and research institutions, and archaeological firms. Another change is that Dan Horgen has agreed to write the “*What's the Point*” column. This is a good thing, since I am notoriously bad at identifying points, and Dan is very good at it.

If possible, *Newsletter* issues will be themed. This Spring issue focuses on the Oneota tradition, with articles on the enigmatic Moingona tribe, an apparently unique Oneota grinding slab, and an interview with Colin Betts into his research into the Oneota and the Protohistoric period. The Summer issue will focus on flintknapping and collecting, and the Fall issue will highlight the upcoming 60th anniversary of the IAS.

The *Newsletter* is always looking for short reports, essays, and articles on Iowa and Midwestern archaeology. We also run articles on other subjects our members are interested in, such as early Iowa history (pre-Civil War), Native Americans, paleontology, and geology. If you are interested in contributing, drop me a line, or better yet, send a draft article.

Please contact me if you have any comments or want to contribute,
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Iowa Archeological Society Annual Spring Meeting, April 30 – May 2, 2010

Greetings IAS members!

Please join us in northwest Iowa for the annual Spring meeting of the IAS. This year's meeting centers around Mill Creek Culture, and will take a historical look at past research as well as current studies that incorporate the latest technologies available to archaeologists. This looks to be a great meeting that includes site tours. If this exciting program was not enough, even more good news—Registration is FREE. In order to help with facility set up, please let us know by email if you will be attending: sanfordmuseum@iowatelecom.net or call us at 712-225-3922. If you cannot contact us, that's not a problem, just remember to attend the meeting!

April 30 (Friday) **Welcome Reception @ 7:30 pm**

Location: Sanford Museum & Planetarium, 117 East Willow, Cherokee, IA

The IAS is invited to join us at the museum to view exhibits, telescope observations, and see special displays including a complete sloth pelvis, Stiles catlinite tablets, and more. Special presentation by museum archaeologist Jason Titcomb, Sanford Museum Research Program.

May 1 (Saturday) **IAS Meeting @ 9:00 am**

Location: Prairie Heritage Center (PHC), located along Highway 10 between the towns of Peterson & Sutherland overlooking the scenic Little Sioux Valley.

Mill Creek Culture Research: Past and Present

9:00 **Registration**, Flintknapping pit is open & artifact displays

10:00 **Welcome** to PHC and Mill Creek Research

10:15 Michael Perry (Office of the State Archaeologist), *Pioneers of O'Brien County Archaeology: Charles R. Keyes and Ellison Orr at Waterman Creek*

10:45 Dale Henning (Research Associate: ISM, NMNH), *Past Climates and the Archaeology of Northwest Iowa*

11:15 Joseph Tiffany (MVAC, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse), *Research at Chan-ya-ta: A Mill Creek Village in Buena Vista County, Iowa*

11:45 **IAS Business Meeting**

12:00 **Lunch** (Food will be for sale on site or bring your own sack lunch)

1:00 William Whittaker (Office of the State Archaeologist), *New Insights into the Mill Creek Kimball Village Site*

1:30 Melody Pope (Office of the State Archaeologist), *A Study of Stone Endscraper Use at Chan-ya-ta, 13BV1*

2:00 **Break**

2:15 Stephen Lensink (Office of the State Archaeologist), *Mill Creek Research on the Waterman*

2:45 Jason Titcomb (Sanford Museum), *Recent Magnetometer Survey Work on Mill Creek Sites and Demonstration*

May 2 (Sunday) @ 9:00 am

Location: Meet at the Prairie Heritage Center

9:00 am -11:30 am **Tour of Mill Creek Sites**—Join us on a tour of select Mill Creek sites along the Little Sioux and Waterman watersheds led by several archaeologists. Get a chance to see well preserved and protected Mill Creek sites while visiting others that are under threat.

Sponsors: Sanford Museum & Planetarium, Northwest Chapter of IAS



Colin Betts on the Oneota, Protohistoric, and the Ioway

Colin Betts is an associate professor at Luther College in Decorah, where he is chair of the Anthropology Program and director of the Anthropology Laboratory. He was willing to share some of his insights with us.

What is your main interest in Iowa archaeology?

My main interest in Iowa archaeology is the protohistoric period - especially Oneota tradition materials dating from about 1600-1750.

What types of archaeological projects are going on at Luther?

The primary field research being done is the field schools that I conduct every other summer. Typically we have worked on Oneota sites along the Upper Iowa valley in Allamakee County, but recently I have begun to shift my attention to some of the sites located further upstream in Winneshiek county. Luther has a large collection of materials from these sites that were collected over the years and we're in the process of reevaluating these sites - part of this process also involves having students in our lab reanalyze (or analyze) for the first time the materials we have in our collections. They really represent a great deal of untapped potential for understanding prehistory in northeast Iowa.

In terms of non-field research, this past year I have been working on an experimental archaeology project. During the fall of 2009 students in my Prehistoric Technology course worked on reconstructing the fabric 'collars' that were likely used in the manufacture of Late Woodland (Madison Fabric Impressed) pottery. We reconstructed the whole process from gathering fiber, making cordage, and weaving it into the fabric - guided by ethnographic and archaeological information. The next step is to use the fabric in manufacturing a pot.

At the MAC conference this fall you presented a paper on the Ioway, can you summarize your research?

Much of our knowledge of the people who became the Ioway and Otoe tribes comes from early French accounts. As with most groups experiencing these changes the tribes likely saw fairly substantial changes in how they were organized politically, socially, and in their cultural identity. As a result, it seems pretty unlikely that these groups existed as intact tribes as the way that we currently think of them throughout this time period. My primary approach was to conduct an analysis of the French maps from the late 1600 and early 1700s to see what clues they could provide about the nature of Iowa and Otoe people at this time. We've known for a long time that the French used a wide range of names to refer to the

people who would later be called the Ioway (Aiaouez or Baxoje). My initial impression at looking at the maps suggested that this use of different names wasn't just random, but actually was pretty patterned across space and through time. My basic conclusion is that the terms Aiaouez and Pahoute (Baxoje) represent different groups of "Ioway" peoples who were living in northeast and northwest Iowa in the late 1600s. Only after about 1718 do they seem to become a single "tribe" in the way that we think of them today (although I should note that even today the Ioway still exist as two geographically distinct groups).

What can you tell us about the Voyageur's trail across northern Iowa?

Not as much as I would like to be able to. It looks like it represents a fairly well established route across the state roughly connecting Prairie du Chien with the northwestern part of the state, especially the Iowa Great Lakes region. It first appears on maps ca. 1718. It clearly represents the route that the undocumented French traders took to



Luther College

reach the groups in this area - likely the Omaha, Iowa, and Oto. My suspicion is that it likely represents the historic period use of an earlier trade route, but it's difficult to say.

Why are there so few protohistoric sites recorded in Iowa?

Good question - I'd say it probably is the result of several intersecting factors. The first is that it's simply not that long of a time period. We have lots of prehistoric Oneota sites because the period lasts 300 years or so; in contrast, the protohistoric period is maybe 100-150 years. The second part is that there may have been fewer people, the arrival of European diseases at the beginning of this time period would have dramatically reduced the number of people living in the state. It might also be that they are harder to "see" archaeologically. Most of what we know is from surface collections, and for the earliest sites that don't have a great deal of historic materials, we may be missing that part of the component.

How can artifact collectors help your research?

Most directly by keeping careful track of where they recover materials. I have a strong suspicion that there are more unknown protohistoric Oneota sites in the upper reaches of the Iowa and Cedar River valleys. Several of the early French maps, as well as that drawn by an Ioway tribal member, No-Heart, seem to show villages in these areas. Unfortunately little formal archaeological work has been done in those locations. If anyone has knowledge of Oneota sites in these areas it would be a big help towards filling out our picture of the locations of these groups and further matching the archaeological and historic sources of information.

How did you get where you are today?

I grew up in Iowa and always had an interest in "history" as a whole. However, during my early years and college career I was influenced by several individuals. The first, somewhat



1718 Guillaume de L'Isle map showing the "Chemin des Voyageurs", or Main Voyageurs' Trail, across what is now northern Iowa, highlighted.

indirectly, was former Luther professor Clark Mallam who gave a talk at my grade school about Iowa prehistory that really made an impression. Later, as a student enrolled at Luther I took a course in anthropology offered by Dale Henning and was lucky to have Art Hoppin as a crew chief during a summer field project. As a whole, each of these individuals served to cement for me both a desire to pursue a career in anthropology and also an interest in the archaeology of the state.

What Oneota or Protohistoric site in Iowa do you think is most significant?

Good question - hard for me to narrow it down to just one. I don't know if I would label it as

the most significant, but the Lane Enclosure site in Allamakee County is one that has always piqued my interest for several reasons. The first is that it represents one of the earliest protohistoric sites that we know, so it represents one of the first situations where the indigenous people are dealing with the impacts of European contact. The second is the enclosure itself, there are/were a number of these types of sites in northeast Iowa prehistorically. I would like to know what role they filled in Oneota society. They clearly (at least to me) represent something more than simply defensive fortifications, and I would be curious to see how they fit into the larger Oneota cultural landscape.

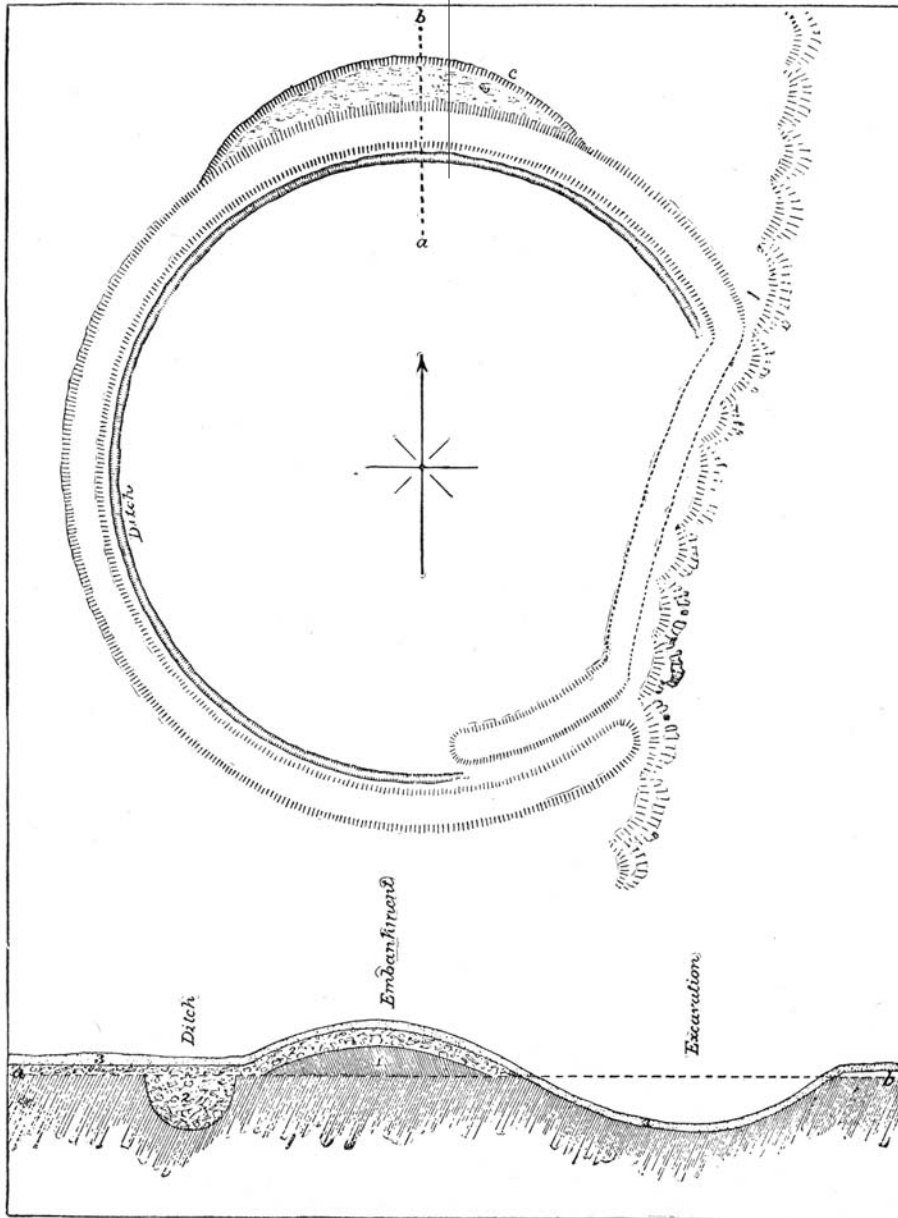


FIG. 48.—Circular inclosure near New Albin, Allamakee county, Iowa.

The Lane Enclosure, also called "Pottery Circle"
 (from Cyrus Thomas 1894:100; drawn by P.W. Norris).



What's the Point?

Daniel Horgen

This point was discovered on the surface of a field in Madison County, Iowa. The point measures 3 inches in length and the blade edges are serrated forming a coarse saw-like edge. The concave base is thinned and grinding is present. The workmanship is very good. The artifact is from a private collection.

Send your responses to Daniel Horgen at daniel-horgen@uiowa.edu. Answers will be listed in the next issue of the Newsletter.

The winner of last issue's *What's the Point* is Steve Kroeger, who guessed Pelican Lake. Nice job, Steve. Pelican Lake dates from the Early to Middle Woodland Period (500 B.C. to A.D. 500). Pelican Lake points generally have length ranges from 1 ¼ to 3 inches and display well made corner notches that project inward at a 45-degree angle and often have sharply barbed shoulders. Bases are sometimes thinned and ground. Workmanship varies from point to point, but generally is classified as fine to moderate in quality. Another possible answer would be a Koster, similar in shape and workmanship to Pelican Lake, except they tend to be smaller in size and date to the Late Woodland Period.



UNI Archaeological Field School

Hartman Reserve Nature Center, Cedar Falls Iowa

Tentative Dates: May 10 – June 17, 2010

Field School is a 6-credit course in which you learn the fundamentals of field archaeology and the prehistory of the Cedar River Valley. At field school, you will learn how identify and excavate archaeological sites. The field school is taught on-site at Hartman Reserve where previous field schools have discovered many prehistoric artifacts and sites.

Enrollment begins Spring 2010 *** Enroll Soon, Space is Limited!

No Prerequisites, Open to Everyone! (3 credit option for K-12 teachers)

Questions and to Enroll, Contact: UNI Continuing Education continuing@uni.edu
or 1-800-648-3864



2010 Summer Archeological Field School

Minnesota State University, Mankato

May 17th – June 18th, 2010

Field Survey Techniques

This year, the field school will focus on site survey and testing techniques that are the foundation of most field practice today: pedestrian survey, shovel testing, and test excavations. Survey locations will include cultivated fields, pastures, and wooded areas. We will be looking for unrecorded habitation, mound, and cairn sites and working at recorded sites.

Testing areas will include at least two little-known Oneota villages (Maurer [21GD0096] and McClelland [21GD0258]). These sites have only been investigated by surface survey, and need to be assessed for the existence and integrity of intact subsurface deposits. We may also be able to conduct research at the Mero village (47PI0002).

In addition, we will be surveying to find sites mapped in the late 1800s but that have never been revisited or officially reported. These sites will include both mounds and habitations, and a site type that Brower (1904) called "lodge circles".

For further information, contact:

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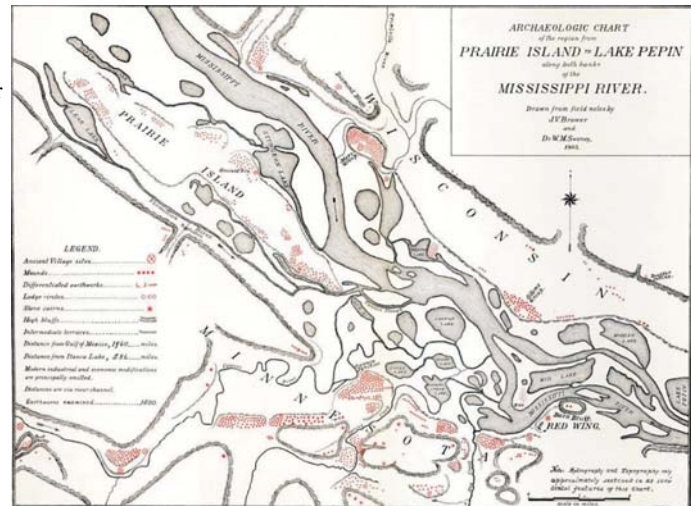
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Field reconnaissance at the McClelland site, 2006



REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

TALLGRASS HISTORIANS L.C.

Leah D. Rogers

Tallgrass Historians L.C. oversaw completion of the historic context for the **Des Moines sewer system** in its entirety. This study was prompted by a rehabilitation project that the City of Des Moines has undertaken that involves lining of some of the historic brick sewers. While the focus was on the brick sewers, the context examined the history of the entire system and resulted in a recommendation of National Register eligibility for certain sections of that system, including WPA projects dating from the 1930s to early 1940s. This context also compared the history of the Des Moines system to that of other cities in Iowa and elsewhere in the nation where similar context studies have been completed. The title of the study is: "Historic Context for the Des Moines Sewer System, City of Des Moines, Polk County, Iowa" and was authored by Leah D. Rogers, Tallgrass Historians L.C., Iowa City, for the City of Des Moines. The final report will be available once the review process is completed later this spring.

We have also begun the data recovery investigations for site 13DB575 (a historic farmstead) and a historic farm lane property in **Dubuque for the Southwest Arterial project**. These investigations will continue through 2010, with reports likely available late 2010 or 2011. Currently, the ground penetrating radar survey for 13DB575 has been completed by William Whittaker of the General Contracts Program of the Office of the State Archaeologist, the results of which will guide the data recovery excavations. The fieldwork for the close-interval mapping, geomorphological, and micro-morphological studies of the farm lane have also been completed, with research and reports in progress. These specialized studies were also completed by the OSA, specifically by William Whittaker (mapping), Joe Artz (geomorphology and LiDAR analysis), and Dr. Richard Josephs (micromorphology).



MISSISSIPPI VALLEY ARCHAEOLOGY CENTER
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN - LA CROSSE

Wendy Holtz-Leith
and Vicki Twinde-Javner

In 2009, MVAC conducted three Phase III mitigations in Prairie du Chien, Crawford County, Wisconsin as part of the **U.S. Highway 18 bypass project**. 47Cr656, the **Main Street Cistern site**, was mitigated in the summer. The Phase II evaluation at the site in 2002 had uncovered portions of a brick lined cistern. The Phase III mitigation in 2009 included excavation of the entire cistern, and other historic features within the proposed right of way. Archival research and the cultural material recovered indicate this cistern would have been used in the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Heavy equipment was used look for any possible remnants of a structure associated with the cistern, but none were identified. A limestone foundation was found during this stripping, but did not appear to be associated with the cistern. This limestone foundation appeared to be from the late nineteenth century.

In the fall of 2009, MVAC completed data recovery excavations of portions of the **Volleyball site**, 47Cr646, within the proposed ROW of the USH 18 corridor project. A total of 104 square meters was excavated. Excavations showed an intact Late Woodland component below historic-period fill. The majority of artifacts were grit-tempered sherds, few lithics were recovered. Floral and faunal remains were scarce to nonexistent, likely due to poor preservation at the site. Only one cultural feature was identified during the excavations. It is likely that other cultural features are located east of the project area in the main part of the site. Based on the current ROW alignment, the majority of the site will be preserved.

Also in the fall of 2009, MVAC completed data recovery excavations at 47Cr758, the prehistoric **Parrish site**. This is a multi-component site consisting of cultural material from the Paleoindian, Archaic, and Woodland time periods first identified during 2008 archaeological investigations of modifications to the proposed corridor. The area mitigated in 2009 was very limited due to project constraints but hundreds of prehistoric and a few pieces of pottery were

recovered. Diagnostic materials recovered include a small number of grit tempered pottery fragments and one small triangular point related to the Late Woodland time period, a fragment of a Durst Stemmed point related to the Late Archaic time period, another Archaic point turned into a drill, three unidentified projectile point bases, and two scrapers. Several hundred waste flakes were also recovered.

MVAC also discovered the remnants of three new mid- to late-nineteenth century historic sites in the late fall of 2009 as part of utility work for the bypass. The limestone foundations of T. L. Brower's second general store (which had formerly been a hardware store and hotel) (47Cr762), the limestone foundation of a doctor's office and general store (47Cr761), and a limestone well (47Cr763) were discovered. These sites all date to the mid- to late-nineteenth century, and were built during Lower Town Prairie du Chien's expansion because of the construction of the railroad depot in the southern part of the city. The physical integrity and historical background of these sites indicate that all three are potentially eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.



Iowa Archeological Society chapters, academic and research institutions, and professional cultural resource management companies are encouraged to contribute updates of their activities to *Reports from the Field*; send them to william-whittaker@uiowa.edu



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Support IAS Publications Buy A Cap



The Central Iowa Chapter is conducting a fundraiser for the IAS. The Chapter is selling caps with the CIC logo (wording includes Iowa Archeological Society) for **\$10.00**. **\$5.00 of each sale will be donated to the IAS.** **These funds will be used for IAS Newsletter and IAS Journal expenses.** The caps are either **light blue** OR **periwinkle** and adjustable in size. They will make great gifts, be fun to wear, and best of all....**support the IAS publications!**

Additional donations are encouraged and will be appreciated. If caps must be mailed there is an additional charge of \$5.00 (shipping & handling). Please contact:

Mike Heimbaugh
President, CIC of the IAS
3923 29th St.
Des Moines, IA 50310-5849
paleomike@msn.com

About the IAS

The Iowa Archeological Society is a nonprofit, 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.

Membership

Contact Alan Hawkins, IAS Membership Secretary, at the University of Iowa, Office of the State Archaeologist, 700 Clinton Street, Iowa City, IA 52242-1030.

Dues

Voting	
Active	\$20
Household	\$25
Sustaining	\$30
Non-Voting	
Student (under 18)	\$9
Institution	\$30

Newsletter Information

The *Newsletter of the Iowa Archeological Society* is published four times a year. The Newsletter actively seeks short reports and essays on Midwest archaeology, Native Americans, early Iowa history, paleontology, and related topics. All materials for publication should be sent to editor Bill Whittaker, University of Iowa, Office of the State Archaeologist, 700 Clinton Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1030.
E-mail: william-whittaker@uiowa.edu.

IAS website:

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