

Newsletter of the *Iowa Archeological Society*



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Spring 2011

A Glimpse of the American Frontier: The Hewitt-Olmsted Ho-Chunk Trading Post p. 6

Excavation of the Hewitt-Olmsted Trading Post (13WH160) foundations in 2000 by the University of Iowa (OSA file photo).



Ca. 1920 photograph of trading post reconstruction. The main building was reconstructed ca. 1915 by the Goddard family who purchased the property in 1849 and lived briefly in the trading post (courtesy Jennifer Lensing).

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Help the Wisconsin Historical Society Recover Stolen Native American Objects

Paul Bourcier

Wisconsin Historical Society

In the late 1990s, the Wisconsin Historical Society experienced a major theft of objects from its Native American ethnographic and archaeological collections. The Society has collaborated with "Antiques Roadshow" in an effort to recover these objects. Listed below are the artifacts the Society wishes to find. Perhaps with your help, some of these items may be returned.

Photographic documentation exists for only a handful of the missing objects. Unfortunately photography was not always a routine step in the cataloging process. Nearly all of the many thousands of museum objects belonging to the Society are now documented through photography.

Photos and descriptions of the missing objects from their catalog cards are listed below, provided by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Many of these photos are black and white. If you see any of these objects, please contact Paul Bourcier by email or phone: **Paul.Bourcier@wisconsinhistory.org** or 608-264-6573.



Indian doll, female

Catalog number: 1943.148

Doll 15 inches long. Cloth body. Face buckskin. Coarse hair, long braids tied with buckskin. Beaded eyes, nose, and mouth, colored cheeks. Two long strands of beads around neck. Heavily beaded blue and white strip forms arms and top of waist. Fringe of buckskin at ends of strip. Beaded band as belt. Beads on long skirt, fringe at bottom. Beaded strip on legs, beaded moccasins.



Scalp lock

Catalog number: 1954.1499 (original catalog number: E779). Scalp lock, formerly the property of Chief Spoon Dekorah.



Catlinite pipe with lead inlay

Catalog number: 1919.1389 (original catalog number: A4294; Hamilton #2214) length 6 1/2", height 3 1/2"



Neckband, Winnebago (Ho-Chunk)

Catalog number: 1950.6459 (original catalog number: E1970). Neck band, beadwork, 15" long.



Antler implement, engraved

Catalog number: 1919.1468 (original catalog number: A4373; Hamilton #559) Length 11 1/2".



Bear claw necklace, Potawatomi

Catalog number: 1954.1479 (original catalog number: E1699). Necklace, green glass beads, brass beads, beaded pendant, bear claws.



Shell ornament, Chippewa (Ojibwe)

Catalog number: 1954.1524 (original catalog number: E118). Shell ornament with beaded decorations.



Moccasins, Dakota Sioux

Catalog number: 1954.1997,A (original catalog number: E1198). Pair of moccasins, red, white, blue on blue beadwork. 10 1/4" long.



Shirt, Crow

Catalog number: 1968.35.1. Man's shirt of red blanket cloth with selvage along the bottom. Pink, blue, yellow, green and white beadwork strips down the sleeves and across the shoulders. Buckskin fringe along shoulders and down sleeves.



Pipe stem, Chippewa (Ojibwe)

Catalog number: 1961.249.3A. Wood stem 19" long. Carved sheep's head, turtle, and elk's head near bowl. Bands of mallard feathers and quillwork and horsehair on stem. Illustrated in Milwaukee Public Museum Bulletin 17, plate 178, but with different bowl and attached eagle feathers. Note: Pipe bowl (1961.249.3) remains in Wisconsin Historical Museum collection.



Pouch, Blackfoot

Catalog number: 1961.258.3
Beaded leather pouch and beaded leather strap. Pouch beaded on both sides with yellow, green, blue, and red beads. Strap decorated with white, blue, and yellow beads. Pouch is 6" x 9".



A Prehistoric Journey in Stone: The Steffen Family Collection

Dean Steffen is shown with his family and artifacts from the exhibit, "A Prehistoric Journey in Stone: The Steffen Family Collection," at the Mitchell County Historical Society, located in the Cedar River Complex in Osage; the display runs through March 27.

A review of the exhibit and an interview with Steffen will run in the next Newsletter.



Photo courtesy Marti Friest,
Cresco Times Plain Dealer

What's the Point? Continued from p. 8

fractures to see if traces of dirt, mineral staining, or other microscopic particles are present. In this case, fine-grained sand particles and subsurface hinge fracture patination are present under most of the hinge fractures. A uniformly well-stained hinge fracture is what you would expect to find on ancient points.

The fourth step, if needed, is to use a metallurgical microscope with magnification capacities between 50x and 400x. This helps to show micropolish and striations, and any modifications of the original lithic surface through contact with other materials.

Striations are grooves and scratches of varying dimensions which are often indicators of motion wear, such as friction between a stone tool and its haft. Taken together, micropolish and striations provide information on contact material, tool motion, and haft arrangement. This specimen exhibits variable wear traces on the edges and surfaces of both the blade and haft elements of the implement. The continuous distribution of polish along the blade edges is consistent with use as a cutting tool and similar to those created by use on soft animal tissue. Striations observed that were diagonal and

perpendicular to the longitudinal axis of the blade also reflect use as a cutting tool (Figure 1).

Hafting wear traces are typically manifested in the form of bright, flat friction spots, bright rippled polish, or a pitted, plastic polish. Striations in the haft area polish may provide indicators of pressure points and motion of the tool against the haft during use. Figure 2 depicts extensive polish from hafting likely the result of bindings or contact with a haft of wood or antler.

The final step in proving ancient manufacture and use of a projectile point is to compare and tally the positive traits against the negative gathered from the four step process. In this case, the positive traits appear overwhelming, thus suggesting that this is an ancient point. As a general rule, if you didn't personally see it come from the ground, you can't be sure it is the real deal unless you take the time to examine it thoroughly.

Special thanks to Melody K. Pope for her assistance with the microwear study.

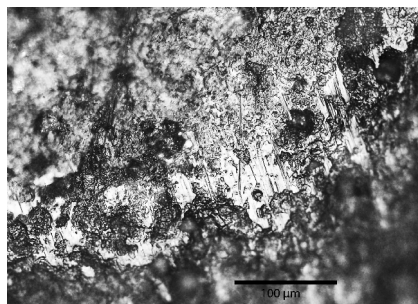


Figure 1. wear traces possibly from use.



Figure 2. wear traces possibly from hafting.

Where was Keokuk Prairie?

Francis McDowell, Jr.

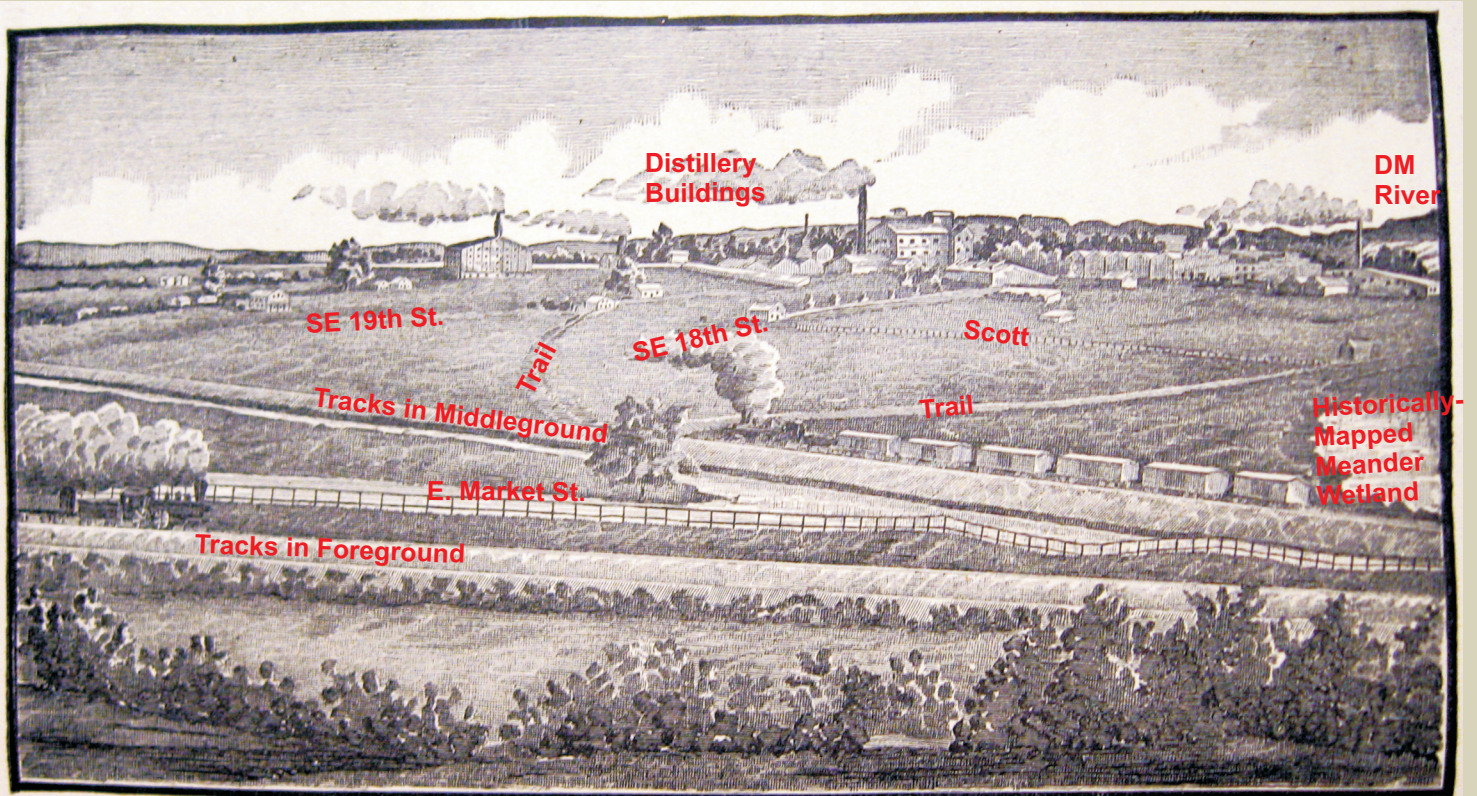
The far southeast side of Des Moines is a grim industrial landscape; a vast floodplain bordered by the Des Moines River on the south, U.S. Highway 65 on the east, and the low bluffs that stretch from the Capitol to the State Fairgrounds on the north, and seems to contain an endless ocean of junkyards, semi-abandoned factories, quarries, and rail yards, patrolled by packs of stray dogs.

But to the early settlers of Des Moines, this region was known as "Keokuk Prairie" or "Agency Prairie", and it held historical significance. This is the area where the Sauk were forced to relocate in 1843, living in small

villages along and near the Des Moines, overseen by the U.S. Army troops at Fort Des Moines No. 2 until they were removed from the state in 1846. Major John Beach and his interpreter Josiah Smart maintained an agency in this area, close to the Sauk villages, as did traders including the Ewing Brothers and Phelps and Co. The Meskwaki were supposed to live here as well, but lingering resentment between the two tribes led to most of the Meskwaki living farther east, along the South Skunk River; the Meskwaki occasionally escaped and returned to their traditional lands along the Iowa River. The Meskwaki especially

despised the Sauk leader Keokuk, who they felt did not treat them fairly; the Meskwaki and Sauk had been lumped together into one tribe by the U.S. government, and it was not a happy marriage.

While the Army post grew into the core of downtown Des Moines, the lands called Keokuk Prairie had a different trajectory. Occasionally flooded until levees were built, the floodplain was used primarily for farmland for the first decades of settlement, although few farmsteads were actually located in the floodplain. Farmers, understandably, preferred to build their houses on the higher bluffs and terraces to the



KEOKUK PRAIRIE AT DES MOINES.
SITE OF LAST SAG AND FOX AGENCY IN IOWA, AS IT IS NOW (1882)



Keokuk Prairie

Above: 1882 sketch, annotated

Left: Approximately same view in 2011. Most of the view is blocked by trees and the Heartland Co-Op elevator.

north. For this reason, Keokuk Prairie maintained a wildness and emptiness that contrasted with the densely populated downtown. By the 1880s Keokuk Prairie was protected from flooding and took on the character it still maintains, large railroad switchyards cutting across empty fields and scattered factories, but still a largely empty place where the necessary, but unsightly, facilities that makes a large city possible exist: rendering plants, grain elevators, distilleries, roundhouses.

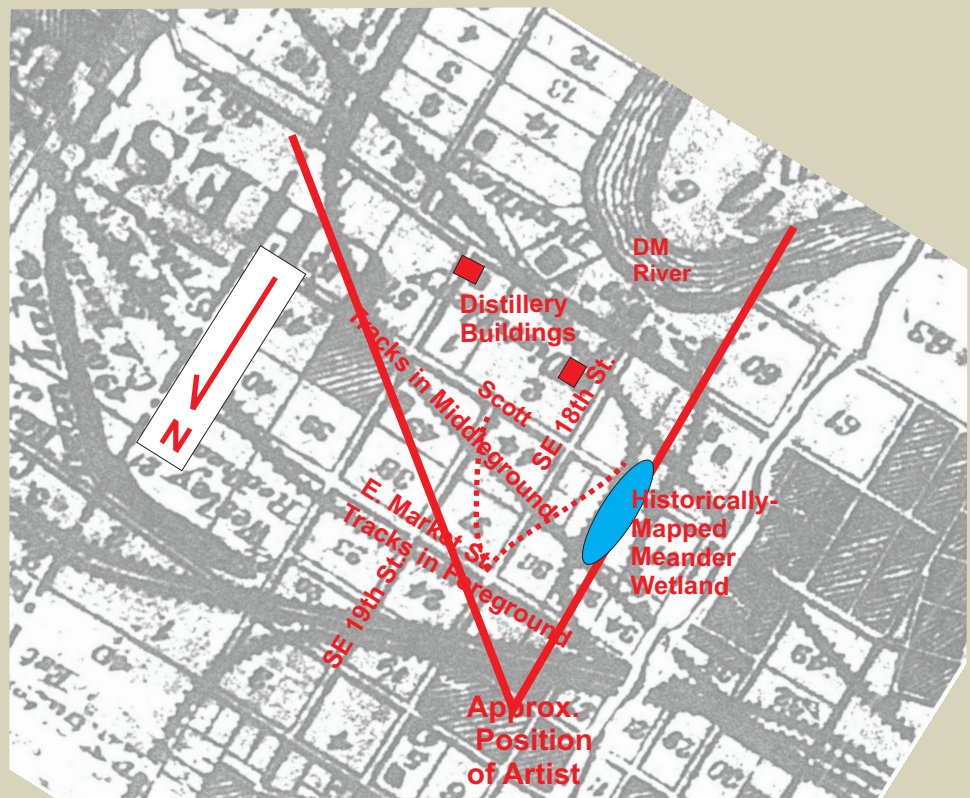
In 1882 Keokuk Prairie was in the midst of this transition when an unknown illustrator made a curious illustration of the prairie. By comparing the 1882 sketch with an 1885 plat map, it is possible to triangulate the location of the artist and identify some of his or her subjects.

The artist probably sat on Wesley Redhead's property, a few blocks from where Redhead Park stands today, and sketched the valley below to the southeast. It is possible that it was Redhead himself who made the sketch, by then he was a well-known amateur historian and booster of Des Moines.

The sketch is curious for its banality. Empty fields crossed by railroads, with a few large industrial buildings in the background. The true subject of the sketch was invisible—the artist wanted to show the location of the Sauk villages and associated trading posts, but instead produced a sketch of an industrializing landscape. It was published in A. R. Fulton's 1882 *Red Men of Iowa*, itself an odd collection of anecdotes and original research about Indians who lived in Iowa.

On the basis of GLO maps and historic research, several sites have been recorded in this general area that may be associated with the Sauk trading posts, including 13PK875, 13PK876, 13PK928, and 13PK929, but none of these have been found in the field.

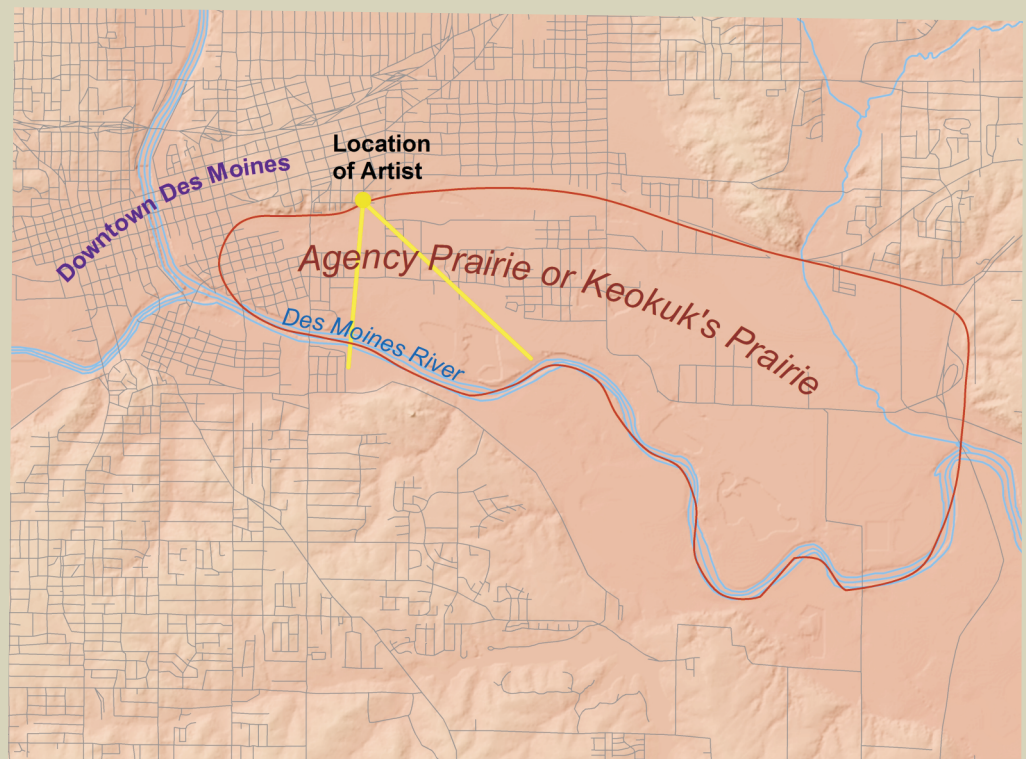
This winter I knocked on several doors along the bluff edge, searching for the artist's location in peoples' backyards. I think the most likely location was at a yard near the corner of 16th Court and Vine. Although the landscape has changed dramatically in content, it has not changed much in spirit. Most of the view is obscured by trees and the large Heartland Co-Op elevator, and there are far more buildings in view now than in 1882, but it is still an industrial landscaped, crossed by railroad tracks and roads with a few open grassy areas.



Location of the Prairie

Above: 1885 plat map, reoriented, showing location of features in the 1882 drawing.

Below: Modern map of Des Moines showing the location of the artist and Keokuk Prairie.



A Glimpse of the American Frontier:

The Hewitt-Olmsted Ho-Chunk Trading Post is Iowa's Newest Archaeological Conservancy Site

Josh McConaughy
Archaeological Conservancy

In 1840, construction began on Fort Atkinson in northeastern Iowa, which led to the development of a small town of the same name. This fort was established by the U.S. Army to enforce the government's Indian removal policy, and especially to monitor the Ho-Chunk—then known to the government as the Winnebago—to ensure they didn't return to their homeland in Wisconsin. The fort also served to prevent unlawful incursions from other tribes and European American settlers. The mid 19th century was a time of constant movement for native tribes as settlers moved west past the Mississippi River.

Seeing an opportunity to trade with these newcomers, David Olmsted obtained a permit from the government in 1842 to build an Indian trading post about two miles southwest of the fort, known as Hewitt-Olmsted. (A man named Joseph Hewitt is also thought to have played a role in founding the establishment.) This trading post consisted of five one-story log structures: a large store, a storage house, a blacksmith shop, and two large residences. It was a place where the Ho-Chunk, who lived nearby at the Winnebago Subagency (13WH111), could exchange goods and interact with white settlers.

According to oral history, a Ho-Chunk camp and an agricultural field were located near the trading post. The camp hasn't been found, but archaeologists have uncovered evidence of the field, which contains a series



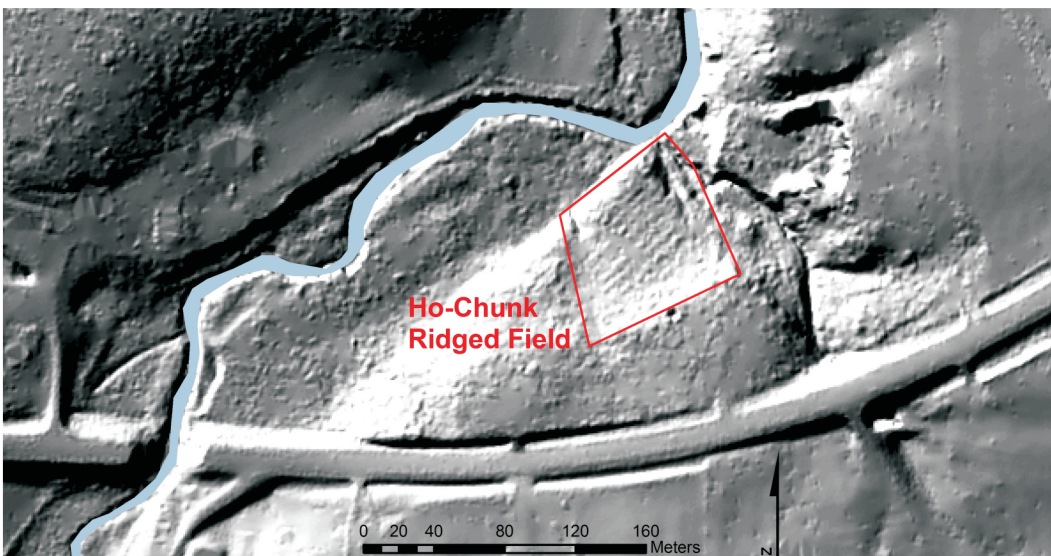
Excavated foundations of the trading post (13WH160). Inset: metal projectile point.

of ridges. The ridges—lines of built-up soil running roughly east to west across the field—are a feature of native traditional farming. This is only the second archaeology verified ridge field in Iowa. The Hewitt-Olmsted trading post was shut down in 1848, when the Ho-Chunk left northeastern Iowa for Minnesota. The property was then sold to the Goddard family, who lived in the trading post for a couple of years before building their new homestead nearby. Though the buildings fell into disrepair and were eventually torn down, the limestone foundations are still visible today.

In 2000, the University of Iowa conducted a field school at the site (13WH160), digging 30 test units that yielded more than 12,000 artifacts, including beads, gunflints, musket balls, and pipe fragments. Ted Schmidt and his family have owned the site for many years, and they were very excited about the research. The Archaeological Conservancy has been working with the Schmidt family and the Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist for some time to make sure this important site remains intact. The Conservancy recently purchased a 5-acre parcel that encompasses the entire site, guaranteeing its preservation. The Hewitt-Olmsted Trading post is the second Iowa Preserve, after the Woodfield Earthlodge site (JIAS, Fall 2010).



Evidence of a ridged field near the trading post site (13WH160) seen in LiDAR mapping.



REPORTS FROM THE FIELD

2011 Archaeology Field Schools

Contact people listed for more information.



Iowa Archeological Society and the Iowa Office of the State Archaeologist
Field School at Wickiup Hill, near Cedar Rapids.

June 25- July 10

John Doershuk
Office of the State Archaeologist
John-Doershuk@uiowa.edu



University of Iowa
Survey and excavation of a possible Middle Woodland site in Iowa City.
May 16- June 3

Margaret Beck
Department of Anthropology
University of Iowa
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margaret-beck@uiowa.edu



University of Northern Iowa
An Iowa field school is being planned, details were not finalized as of press time.

Donald H. Gaff
Assistant Professor of Anthropology
Department of Sociology, Anthropology
University of Northern Iowa
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Minnesota State University, Mankato
Survey and excavation of the Woodland Silvernail Site near Red Wing, Minnesota.
May 16- June 17

Ronald C. Schirmer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Department of Anthropology
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ronald.schirmer@mnsu.edu



17th Annual University of Iowa American Indian Student Association Pow Wow

April 9, UI Rec Building
930 Evashevski Drive, just west of Kinnick Stadium, Iowa City.

The Central States Anthropological Society Conference

April 7-9, University of Iowa Memorial Union, Iowa City.
<http://courses.missouristate.edu/MBuckner/CSAS2011.htm>



In Memoriam: Elmer Heller

Long time IAS member Elmer Heller passed away on May 23, 2010. He joined the IAS in 1963.

Lauri Chappell: New Newsletter Editor

Pending election at the Spring Meeting, Lauri Chappell will be the new editor of the *Newsletter*, beginning with the Summer 2011 issue. Lauri now works at ACT in Iowa City. She worked for Louis Berger and Associates for many years, and was a review editor for *The IAS Journal*, and has served as the Association of Iowa Archaeologists treasurer.

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 interim editor Lauri Chappell, thewillow301@gmail.com

IAS Spring Meeting 2011

The 2011 Spring meeting is Saturday, April 9 at the the Wickiup Hill Learning Center, Toddville, Iowa, near Cedar Rapids.

To register contact alan-hawkins@uiowa.edu

Tentative Schedule:

- 8:30 Registration, flintknapping demonstrations, coffee/juice and donuts
- 9:15 am Leah Rogers, Previous excavations at 13LN606, Wickiup Hill
- 9:45 Bill Green, Pottery from Wickiup Hill archaeological sites
- 10:15 John Doershuk, Summer 2011 IAS/OSA archaeological project at Wickiup Hill
- 10:30 Dan Horgen, Recent Research at Comstock Village
- 10:45 Dale Henning, What Can We Learn From Oneota Mound Excavations?
- 11:15 Cherie Haury-Artz, Native American Games
- 12:00-1:00 Lunch - Katering Kitchen
- 12:45 pm Business Meeting
- 1:00 Fred Gee, Cahokia
- 2:00-3:00 Cindy Peterson, Patterson Trading Post
- 3:00 Explore the Learning Center exhibits on your own
- 3:30 Group walking tour to 13LN606 and other sites



What's the Point?

Daniel Horgen

Identify the artifact shown here life-size. This point was discovered in Hardin County, Iowa and is from the Jeff Ulch collection. The point measures 4 inches in length with a maximum width of 1¼ inches. This extensively resharpened projectile point has an appearance of an awl or drill, but the concave base is characteristic of the type. The base has been thinned by one or more relatively large flake scars on both faces.

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

The projectile point illustrated in the last issue of the *Newsletter* is classified as a Hardin Barbed, associated with the Early Archaic period (8100 to 7500 B.C.) Tom Harvey, Toby Morrow, James Schmucke, Larry E. Van Gorden, and Jim Zalesky submitted correct responses.

There were some questions raised regarding the Hardin point as being ancient or a modern reproduction. The first step in determining authenticity is to establish provenance information for the specimen, the "who, where, when" of the collected artifact. The Hardin point has exceptional provenance information provided by family members who found it on the ground surface.

The second step is to observe the general characteristics of the projectile point, such as accepted style and manufacture techniques, natural surface weathering, and any negative traits that don't fit the typology. I also look for evidence of oils, stains, waxes, and suspicious residues. The Hardin point, although large in size, does represent the recognized size range (obviously early in its life cycle), correct notch depth, width, and placement. The notch area is nicely rounded with no signs of flint crushing or a lot of hinge fractures is usually indicative of modern tool application. It also portrays natural surface weathering with aged mineral deposits and specks.

The third step is to use a portable ultraviolet lamp and a 10x hand lens to examine the artifact. Using ultraviolet lighting helps to verify loss of patina,



due to modern reworking generally on the tip, notch, or basal area. It also provides a look for metal deposits left by a copper or other metal tipped pressure flaking tool. This specimen showed no sign of metal deposits or any modern reworked areas and an overall patination consistent on all surfaces. A 10x hand lens allows a closer look at hinge

Continued, p. 3

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	\$25
Household	\$30
Sustaining	\$35
Non-Voting	
Student (under 18)	\$14
Institution	\$35

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 acting editor Lauri Chappell, University of Iowa, Office of the State Archaeologist, 700 Clinton Street, Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1030. E-mail: thewillow301@gmail.com.

IAS website:

www.uiowa.edu/~osa/IAS