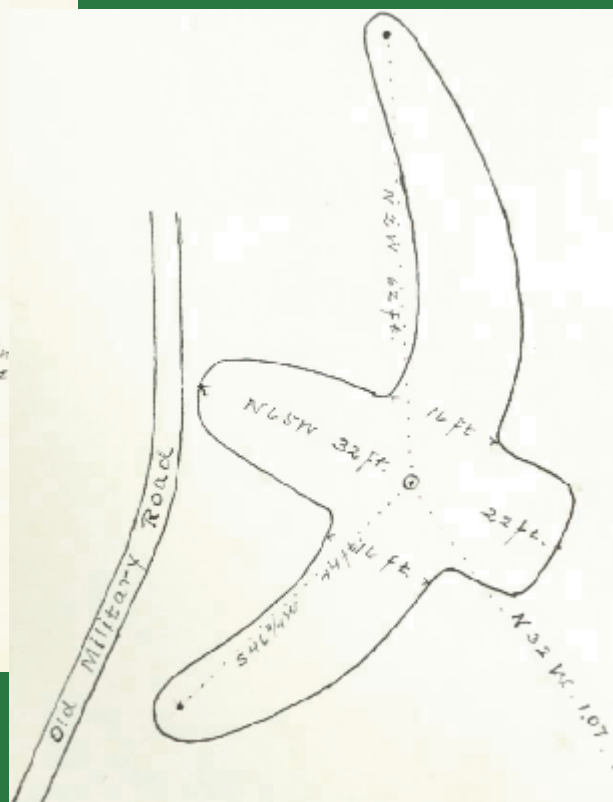
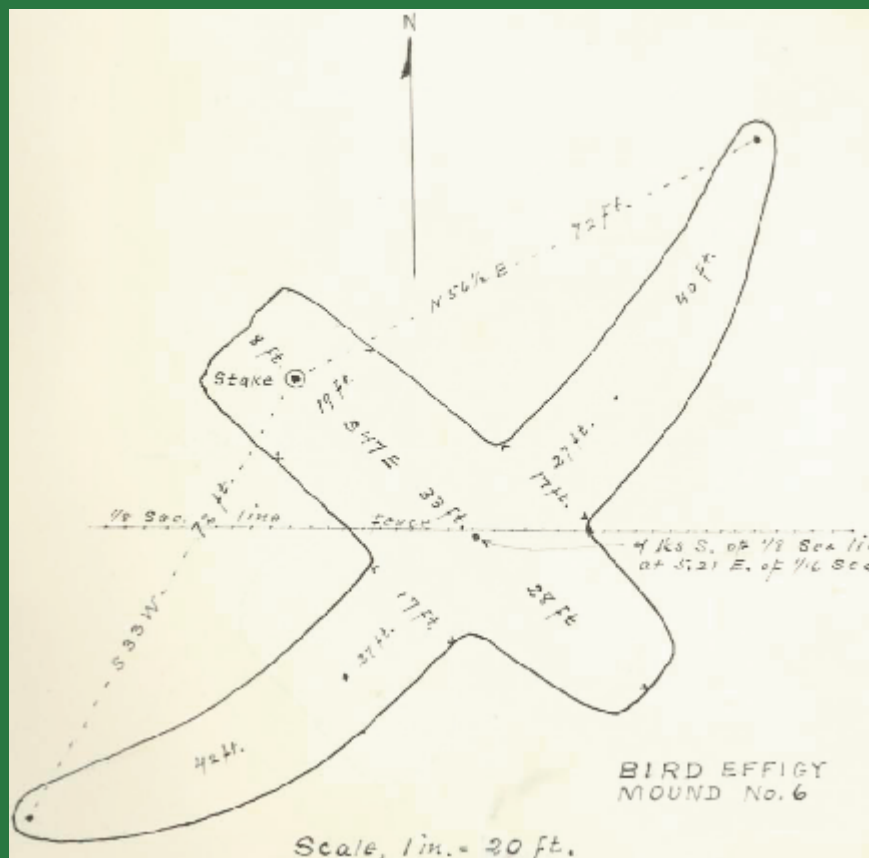


# Newsletter of the Iowa Archeological Society

Spring 2015, Issue 232, Vol. 65 No. 1



Est. 1951



## Falcon Effigies of the Upper Mississippi River 2-4

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# Falcon Effigies of the Upper Mississippi River

Robert Anderson

Raptor Resource Project

Decorah

When we began our efforts to return the peregrine falcon to the bluffs of the Mississippi River in 1998, we collaborated with Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry, Iowa. Effigy Mounds National Monument runs along the west bank of the Mississippi River. It preserves prominent bluffs, unfragmented forests, and over 200 prehistoric mounds constructed by groups of indigenous people more than one thousand years ago. The mounds usually take one of three different shapes:

1. Conical mounds that are round and dome shaped
2. Linear mounds that are long and tubular
3. Effigy mounds that are shaped like birds, bears, panthers, snakes and other animals

I became very interested in the mounds while we were hacking\* young falcons from Hanging Rock, located at the north end of the Monument. I learned of stunning aerial images of effigy mounds outlined in white lime and photographed from small planes. We owe these images to the late Dr. Clark Mallam, a professor of anthropology at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa from 1969 to 1986.

Dr. Mallam believed that the effigy mounds were works of art. He conscripted his students to haul hundreds of 50-pound bags of Luther College football field lime out to the bluffs to outline the monuments, which he photographed from small airplanes. Altogether, Dr. Mallam recorded 220 mounds on film. I still run into students who smile while recalling the monumental effort it took to tote the lime out to the bluff top mounds and photograph the mounds.



Figure 1. Two falcon effigies.

When I first viewed Dr. Mallam's aerial images, I was immediately struck by the shape of the bird mounds, which greatly resemble the silhouette of a peregrine falcon. The similarity inspired me to research mound builder culture. Over the past decade, I have found a great deal of evidence to suggest that the bird mounds are in fact falcon effigies. The mounds resemble falcons, the mound builders venerated falcons, and the mounds are often located near historic falcon eyries. This aerial image of two falcons is located on private property adjacent to an historic falcon eyrie near Lansing, Iowa. The falcon on the right has a wingspan of 227 feet and the falcon on the left has a wingspan of 141 feet. These two falcon effigies are the largest bird effigies remaining in the State of Iowa. Their long wings and

general body plan resemble falcons more than eagles, hawks, or generic passerine birds. Lidar, or Light Detection and Ranging, shows the resemblance even more clearly. Lidar is an optical remote sensing technology that can measure the distance to properties of ground targets by illuminating the target with laser light and analyzing the backscattered light. The spectrum it uses penetrates foliage and provides high-resolution ground surface imaging.

The lidar image on the top of the next page was taken of a Wisconsin bluff top along the Mississippi River. It shows drainage, watershed topography, and a detailed image of a falcon effigy, which has a wingspan of 271 feet. If you look closely, you will see the falcon's head is directed left. Visitors to the mound report that it appears to have a curved beak.

A professor at Luther College in Decorah, Iowa, told me soil analysis revealed that some of the material used to make these massive earthen effigies was mud gathered from the river bottom. I was completely shocked



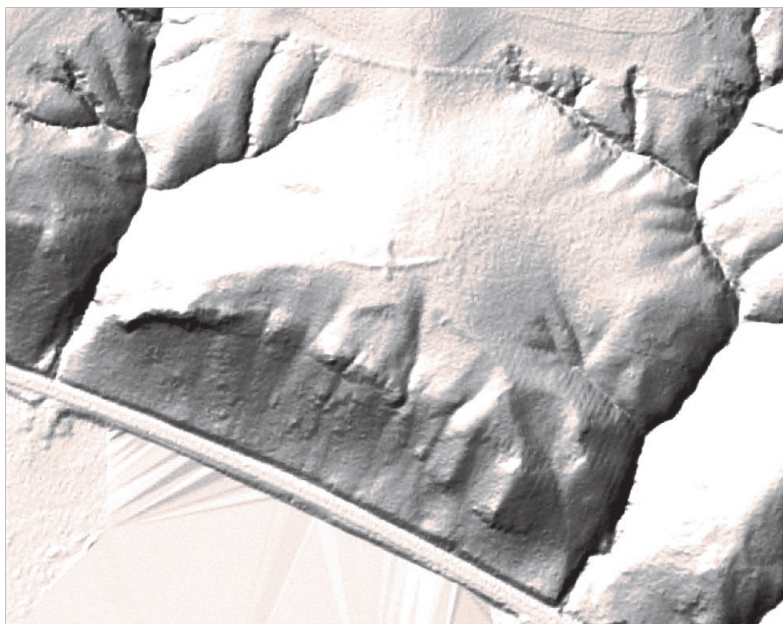


Figure 2. Lidar image of a falcon effigy.

since sometimes we have to haul ropes and gear from the bottom of the bluff tops to band falcons, a lung and leg-busting effort even with modern backpacks and hiking gear. I can't imagine the amount of work it would have taken to haul thousands of pounds of mud up to the bluff tops, which tower 400 feet over the river in some places. Surely, the effigy builders would not have bothered unless the project was grandly important to them.

Several decades ago, I was standing below a large cliff near Lansing, Iowa. An elderly gentleman approached me and asked what I was looking at. I told him about our falcon reintroduction work and expressed the hope we might someday have falcons back at their historic cliff nest sites. He enthusiastically responded, "You mean duck hawks!" and went on to tell me that duck hawks were his entertainment before radio and television. Fifteen years after we began our cliff-

directed releases, I now understand what he meant. When I carry out my spring cliff surveys, I look for peregrines hammering bald eagles, the occasional golden eagle, red-tailed hawks, red-shouldered hawks, and (to a lesser extent) turkey vultures as they make their way up the Mississippi River flyway. This territorial behavior by the falcons is nothing like crows mobbing an owl or black birds mobbing a hawk. The defending falcons put on an amazing, acrobatic show: diving, chasing, and loudly vocally protesting as they drive away or outright kill birds many times their size. This impressive sight must have inspired the mound builders to build falcon mounds and adopt the falcon as a model for warriors who achieved leadership through daring feats in war and hunting.

Growing up in Minnesota, I was accustomed to seeing Indian mounds. Minnesota at one time had over 11,000 known mounds. Most were conical mounds varying 25 to 40' in diameter and three to eight feet high. However, one mound in northern Minnesota measures 100 by 140 feet and is 25 feet high. The mound is composed of 5,000 tons of earth and thought to contain the remains of thousands of individuals. Most mounds served as burial sites, although some of the effigy mounds appear to have been purely ceremonial in nature.

The remaining falcon effigies along the Mississippi River are commonly found near historic falcon eyries. Sadly, far too many mounds have been destroyed. In 1892, Theodore Lewis surveyed the Harpers Ferry, Iowa "Great Group" of mounds. He identified approximately 900 mounds, of which 274 were effigy mounds. By 1973, less than a dozen badly disturbed conical mounds remained. This hallowed ground had been plowed under or dug up, and the graves robbed of their bones, implements, and ceremonial artifacts. The largest mound group ever recorded in North America was all but gone.

I first began looking for falcons on these cliffs thirty years ago, in 1983. I longed to see them back where they truly belonged, as mound build-



Figure 3. More effigies; four bears, two falcons, and one linear mound. Each of the bear effigies is approximately 85 feet long.

ers and earlier generations had. Thirteen years later, I was tired of waiting. I moved to northeast Iowa, built a rock-lined eyrie with the help of several friends, and raised falcons for release. Not everyone approved of the project. The peregrine falcon was still endangered and our proposed cliff releases attracted a great deal of controversy, especially since earlier release attempts had failed. However, I believed that it could be done. We persevered and, despite influential opposition, received the backing of the Iowa DNR and Effigy Mounds National Monument. We hacked falcons in 1998 and 1999 from Hanging Rock at Effigy Mounds, an arduous process that required a 100-mile round trip and a three-mile mosquito-infested hike along a muddy, narrow trail every day, for over 40 days each season.

In 2000, the first falcon returned to the cliffs of the Mississippi River at Queen's Bluff, a large cliff located south of Winona, Minnesota. The unnamed female was a cliff hack from Effigy Mounds in 1998. Our project had worked! The move, the fighting, the planning, the building, releasing, driving, and hiking - all of it had paid off, and falcons were back! The long wait was finally over and we had accomplished our goal.

The falcons return from their winter haunts toward the end of February. As soon as they take up residence on the bluffs, every migrating bird of prey on the Mississippi flyway has to run the gauntlet of the territorial falcons. Sometimes when I am down below a river cliff, I see a migrating eagle or hawk making its way towards a cliff with falcons. I wonder: will this bird catch the wrath of the territorial falcons? Just as it nears the cliff, it loops out over the river, bypassing the cliff face entirely. It always brings a smile to my face. That bird has been educated. But don't take my word for it... visit the Upper Mississippi River cliffs and come see it yourself! On the river's east bank, the majority of the cliffs can be found from Diamond Bluff, WI south through Prairie Du Chien, WI. On the west side, the cliffs run south from Red Wing, MN, to Waukon Junction, IA. It is a spectacular setting for a spectacular bird of prey, and an ongoing show.

We owe a special debt of gratitude to the many falconers who supported our work, along with the Iowa DNR and Effigy Mounds National Monument.

\* Hacking is a complex method of raising and then releasing birds so they do not imprint on humans, learn to live and hunt independently, and become habituated to the natural environment of the area where they are to be released.

Editor's Note: Bob Anderson passed away in July, 2015. In the months prior, he had given permission to have this article reprinted in the IAS newsletter and had agreed to speak at an upcoming IAS meeting. He will be missed. Thanks to David Kester for explaining hacking to me.

The cover illustrations are two of the many mounds mapped by Ellison Orr.

#### 2014 New Members

Jo Ann Benda, Iowa City, Iowa  
Norah Brenny, Bettendorf, Iowa  
Paige Brevick, Chatfield, Minnesota  
Mike Curran, West Des Moines, Iowa  
Randy DeDecker, Silvis, Illinois  
Greg Haggerty, Dell Rapids, South Dakota  
John Holman, New Hope, Minnesota  
John Hope, DeForest, Wisconsin  
Lisa Kelley, West Des Moines, Iowa  
David Kollmorgen, North Liberty, Iowa  
James Krapfl, Cascade, Iowa  
David Kurimski, Lovilia, Iowa

Josephine Nichols, St. Petersburg, Florida  
Elizabeth Regenold, West Des Moines, Iowa  
Upton Rehnberg, Silvis, Illinois  
Teresa Rucker, Iowa City, Iowa  
Ron Seymour, Dubuque, Iowa  
Rob Steiner, Clarion, Iowa  
Megan Stroh, Cherokee, Iowa  
Thomas Sutton, Appleton, Wisconsin  
Steven Waggoner, Sioux Rapids, Iowa  
Jake Williams, Merrill, Iowa  
Don Williams, Merrill, Iowa

Congratulations to Tom Browner of Davenport, Iowa; Carl Merry of Coralville, Iowa; and David Lee Reeves of Devils Lake, North Dakota; on achieving the 30-Year Honorary Lifetime membership status in 2014!



# Shirley J. Schermer Retires from OSA

John F. Doershuk

Shirley Schermer's history with the University of Iowa and Office of the State Archaeologist dates to her admission to the graduate program in Anthropology in 1980. She was a departmental research assistant her first year and began work in 1981 at OSA as an hourly employee. In 1982 she completed her Master's degree and in October 1983 she was hired as a permanent salaried OSA staff member. Shirley worked for State Archaeologist Duane Anderson and Physical Anthropologist Alton K. Fisher through most of the 1980s, gradually assuming more and more responsibility for directing the OSA Burials Program and consulting with the Indian Advisory Council. Under State Archaeologist Bill Green, Shirley assumed the formal leadership role for the Burials Program, which she directed through her retirement on August 1, 2014.

In addition to the thousands of individual burial projects with which Shirley was involved in her career, she was also a key part of several significant research efforts. During 1985–86 she was co-principal investigator and co-director of field school investigations at the Blood Run site (13LO2), Lyon County, Iowa beginning what became a career-long effort to insure the long-term preservation of this National Historic Landmark. Shirley also worked closely with Joe Tiffany and Deb Zieglowsky Baker documenting archaeological sites in the Charles R. Keyes Collection, an effort they published in 1990 in the *Journal of the Iowa Archeological Society*. Shirley organized and directed the University of Iowa NAGPRA compliance activities in the 1990s and also provided expertise to the State Historical Society of Iowa and other Iowa institutions in their efforts to comply with this important federal legislation. Shirley's NAGPRA-related work continued and she worked with State Archaeologist Beth Pauls in 2004–2006 as co-principal investigators on a National Park Service funded effort involving consultation to design and foster a process for the disposition of unaffiliated human remains. In the last few years before her retirement, Shirley provided much needed expertise to the National Park Service conducting skeletal analyses of materials from Effigy Mounds National Monument.

Throughout her career, Shirley was very active in public education, both about the Iowa laws protecting ancient human remains and about the importance of protecting archaeological resources of all types. Shirley served as Society for American Archaeology Education Network Coordinator for Iowa (1995–2003) and member of the SAA Public Education Committee

(1998–2008, 2011–2012). Shirley played an active role in the creation and preservation of state preserves in Iowa, serving on the State Preserves Advisory Board (1991–1998; chairperson, 1993–1997) and then continuing for many years in the role as archaeological advisor to the Board. The Iowa Archeological Society awarded Shirley the Keyes-Orr Award in 1995.

On July 23, 2014, the OSA Indian Advisory Council held a meeting at the Meskwaki Tribal Museum, and the members marked the occasion by thanking Shirley for her leadership role in respectful treatment of human remains. She was presented with a beautiful basswood spoon carved by Luke Kapayou, and the name the Meskwaki long ago bestowed on Shirley, "Mamidi ikwe" (meaning honored-woman-ceremonial attendant-caretaker-grave digger) was revealed. Council member Suzanne Wanatee Buffalo later shared that Shirley is "a fantastic woman [who] deserves to be recognized for her professional contributions and good heart!" Suzanne also agreed that the Meskwaki enjoyed a very high level of trust with Shirley—and thus by extension, the OSA—and the Tribe has been very grateful for Shirley's leadership in the protection of ancient human remains in Iowa, saying "I think the words you came up with are wonderful and accurately summarize everyone's sentiments! *Ketebi* (thank you)."

In retirement, Shirley continues work on several projects relating to Iowa bioarchaeology as an OSA adjunct research associate while also enjoying traveling with husband Doug and keeping up with their grandchildren. Congratulations on retirement, Shirley!



Shirley with Meskwaki colleagues (L to R) Don Wanatee, Suzanne Wanatee Buffalo, and Johnathan Buffalo displaying her retirement gift (carved wooden spoon).

# Meet “Hųc” and “Mauna,” Two Newly Discovered Effigy Mounds in Allamakee County, Iowa

Bill Whittaker, Office of the State Archaeologist

Two newly identified effigy mounds were recorded in Allamakee County in recent months, a bear and a bird. In October, members of the OSA and the Ho-Chunk Nation visited a remote location in Allamakee County where the statewide lidar hillshade suggested a linear mound. Although it was difficult to get to, the hike was worth it, for the mound revealed itself to be a bear effigy. The mound was named “Hųc” (more or less pronounced “hoonch,” Ho-Chunk for “bear”) and assigned site number 13AM586. Because time was short– we had to get back from a remote area before the sun set– our investigations were limited. The bear was traced with GPS and stereoscopically photographed. From nose to tail it was ca. 35 m long, and its withers height (top of shoulder to end of foreleg) was ca. 18 m. Its highest elevation was ca. 60 cm. Several large trees were growing on it, but there were no visible depressions or other signs of disturbance.

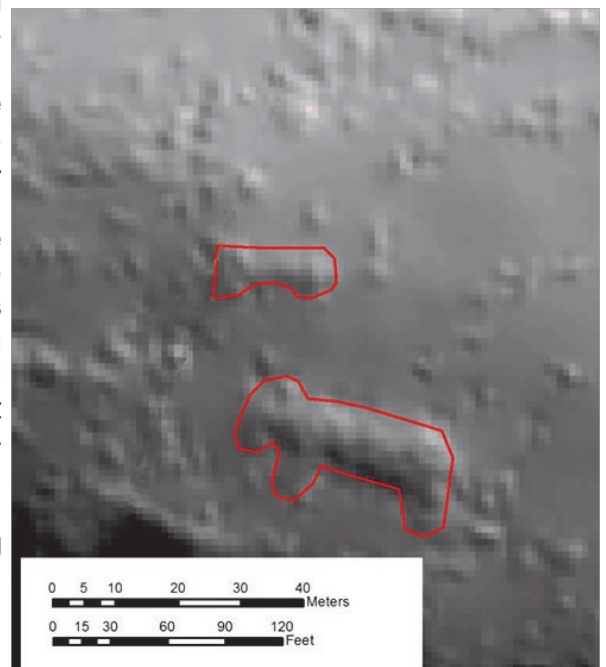


13AM586, Bear Effigy, looking down the body from the tail.

We found a second mound nearby, it was an irregular linear in which one end had been cut off by a power line corridor. It was about 20 m by 8 m, and perhaps 50 cm high. It may have been an effigy that was damaged, detailed mapping may help to determine its shape better.

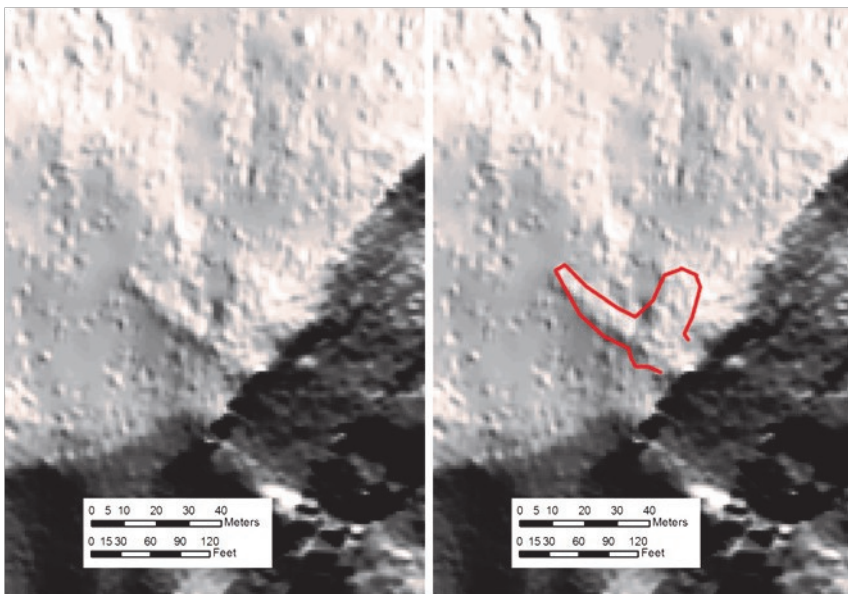
In April, the same team investigated a possible unrecorded bird effigy on a remote ridge top (13AM590). The body of the possible bird ran parallel with the ridge, a bit on the backslope side, the body was ca. 20 m long. The right wing was intact, from the tip to the center of the body was ca. 30 m. The left wing was missing, except for perhaps an ill-defined tapering stump extending from the body that was truncated by the ridge top trail. If the left wing was as long as the right, much of it would have eroded down the bank edge long ago, and the bird would have had a ca. 60 m wingspan. The mound was covered in trees and brush, and only about two feet high at its highest as seen from the uphill site. It compared quite favorably in size and shape with the larger bird mounds known from area sites. It was named “Mauna” (pronounced roughly “maa-oun-au”), a Ho-Chunk term meaning Creator or Earthmaker.

These brief investigations show that there are still amazing sites to be discovered in Iowa. Thanks to Bill Quackenbush and Melody Pope for their help in discovering the mounds.

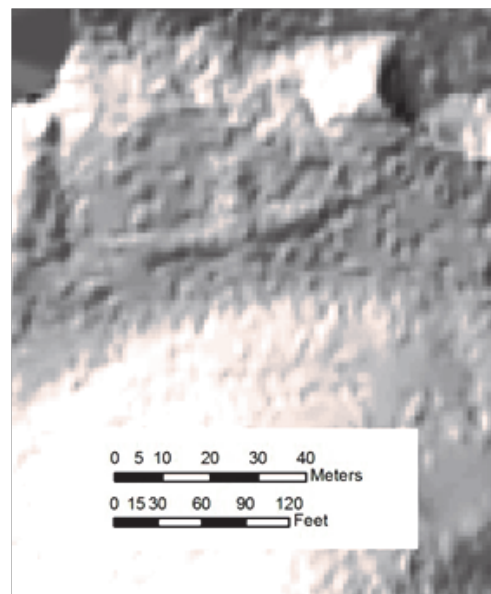


Lidar hillshade showing the Hųc effigy and nearby mound fragment.





13AM590, Bird Effigy, lidar image. Note right wing is damaged.



A previously recorded bird of similar size, for comparison.



13AM590, Bird Effigy, facing along the right wing.

### IAS FALL MEETING

The fall meeting will be held in conjunction with the **Current Research in Iowa Archaeology** Symposium at the 73<sup>rd</sup> Plains Anthropological Conference in Iowa City.

Saturday, October 17, 2015, 8:30 AM –12:00 PM

Iowa City Sheraton Hotel

On-Site registration begins at 7:00 AM or go to <http://www.plainsanthroconf.com/registration.html> for more information and pre-registration Registration Fee \$25.00

There will also be free International Archaeology Day events going on that afternoon.

# WHAT'S THE POINT?

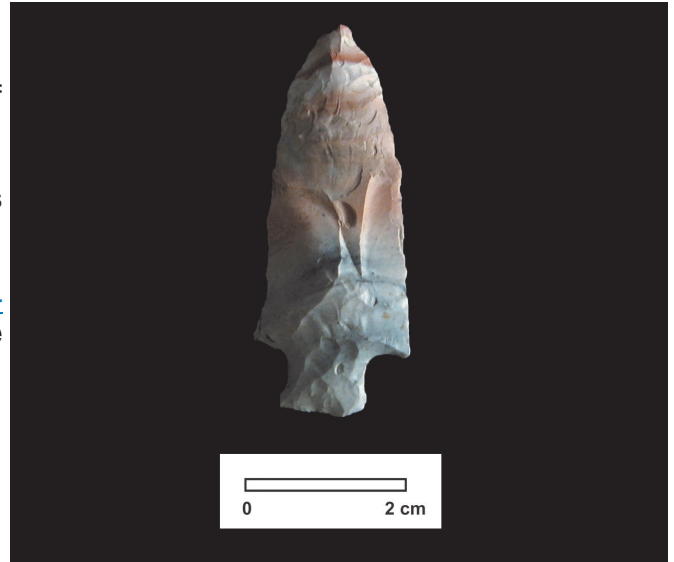
Daniel Horgen  
Office of the State Archaeologist  
Iowa City

Discovered: Des Moines County, Iowa.

Measurements: 2 inches in length with a maximum width of  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch.

Notes: The slightly expanding stem and barbed shoulders are typical features of this point type.

Send your responses to Daniel G. Horgen at [daniel-horgen@uiowa.edu](mailto:daniel-horgen@uiowa.edu). Answers will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.



Last Issue's Point: The specimen illustrated in the last issue of the Newsletter is classified as a Hemphill. These types of points were named by E.G. Scully in 1951 during his work at the Hemphill site, Brown County, Illinois. These medium to large dart points have the same attributes as those of the Osceola, Big Sandy, and other large side notched points, but are usually better made. The specimen illustrated is smaller than the average size range suggested for the type, but size variations occur. The parallel blade margins extending from the shoulder and converging blade edges that form a needle-like tip are characteristic of the type. Hemphill points are commonly found in the lower Illinois River Valley with examples occurring in much of the Mississippi River Valley from Wisconsin to Arkansas. Hemphill points are diagnostic of the Late Archaic, specifically the Red Ochre Culture, but accepted dates have credited them to the transitional Early Woodland period dating from approximately 2000-500 B.C.

Dan Boddicker and John Lisle submitted correct responses.

The raw material is classified as Burlington chert. Burlington limestone is abundant with white and light-colored cherts that occur in lenses and irregular beds commonly found in south-eastern Iowa, western Illinois, and eastern Missouri.

## References:

Justice, Noel D.  
1987 *Stone Age Spear and Arrow Points of the Midcontinental and Eastern United States: A Modern Survey and Reference*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, Indiana.

Perino, Gregory H.  
1971 *Guide to the Identification of Certain American Indian Projectile Points*. Special Bulletin No. 4. Oklahoma Anthropological Society, Norman, Oklahoma.







# Iowa Archeological Society

## Financial Report for January 2014 to December 2014

### Account Balances as of January 1, 2014:

|  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| Certificate of Deposit (matured 2/20/2015) | \$1,190.10        |
| Checking                                   | \$4,174.92        |
| Savings                                    | <u>\$4,318.19</u> |
|  | \$9,683.21        |

### Account Balances as of December 31, 2014:

|   |                   |                 |
|---|-------------------|-----------------|
| Certificate of Deposit (matures 12/20/2016) | \$1,213.96        |                 |
| Checking                                    | \$1,354.12        |                 |
| Savings                                     | <u>\$1,205.84</u> | Gain or Loss(-) |
|   | \$3,773.92        | -\$5,909.29     |

### Income - January 2014 to December 2014:

|  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| Certifications                             | \$10.00         |
| Interest dividends                         | \$27.46         |
| Meetings                                   | \$480.00        |
| Memberships                                | \$8,293.00      |
| Research and Education Fund Contribution   | \$846.00        |
| Sales (Journals, Patches, Pins, Royalties) | <u>\$253.81</u> |
|  | \$9,910.27      |

### Expenses - January 2014 to December 2014:

|   |                   |                  |
|---|-------------------|------------------|
| Archaeology Outreach 2014                         | \$2,000.00        |                  |
| Journal Volumes 60(2013) and 61(2014)             | \$3,655.37        |                  |
| Keyes-Orr Awards                                  | \$207.15          |                  |
| Meetings  | \$526.50          |                  |
| Newsletters (5 - Summer 2013 through Summer 2014) | \$4,511.29        |                  |
| Office Supplies                                   | \$432.75          |                  |
| Postage   | \$1,653.82        |                  |
| Printing  | \$832.68          |                  |
| UI Press (Archaeological Guide of Iowa)           | <u>\$2,000.00</u> | Gain or Loss (-) |
|   | \$15,819.56       | -\$5,909.29      |

Net Gain or Loss (-) since January 1, 2014 -\$5,909.29

Respectfully submitted by,

Alan Hawkins, IAS Membership Secretary/Treasurer

Photos from the Spring 2015 Iowa Archeological Society and the Illinois Association for the Advancement of Archaeology Joint Meeting Courtesy of Branden K. Scott



Registration



President Megan Stroh

Vice President Mike Christensen





John Doershuk presents the Keyes-Orr Award to Jim Collins



2015 Charles Keyes-Ellison Orr Award recipient James M. Collins

Iowa Archeological Society  
The University of Iowa  
700 Clinton Street Building  
Iowa City, IA 52242-1030



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#### CALL FOR ARTICLES AND PICTURES

The IAS Newsletter always needs articles. Do you have something you'd like to share with the membership? Did you take photos at any of the meetings or field trips? Do you have a collection, individual artifacts, or a site that you would like to highlight? Let the newsletter editor know.

Email: [Lowell@BearCreekArcheology.com](mailto:Lowell@BearCreekArcheology.com)  
US Mail: Lowell Blikre  
Bear Creek Archeology  
P.O. Box 347  
Cresco, Iowa 52136

#### NOMINATIONS SOUGHT FOR THE CHARLES KEYES—ELLISON ORR AWARD

The Keyes-Orr Award is presented to individuals in recognition of outstanding service to the Iowa Archeological Society and in the research, reporting, and preservation of Iowa's prehistoric and historic heritage.

Nominations should be sent by mail or e-mail to:  
Mike Christensen  
1903 175th  
Fort Dodge, IA 50501

[mchristensen45@yahoo.com](mailto:mchristensen45@yahoo.com)

#### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Please contact the IAS Membership Secretary:

Alan Hawkins  
The University of Iowa,  
Office of the State Archaeologist,  
700 Clinton Street Building,  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242-1033,  
(319) 384-0989,  
[alan-hawkins@uiowa.edu](mailto:alan-hawkins@uiowa.edu)

#### MEMBERSHIP DUES

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

#### NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

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. The Newsletter is published four times a year.

All materials for publication should be sent to the Newsletter Editor:

Lowell Blikre  
Bear Creek Archeology, Inc.,  
P.O. Box 347  
Cresco, IA 52136  
[Lowell.Blikre@gmail.com](mailto:Lowell.Blikre@gmail.com)

When submitting articles, please provide text, captions, tables, and figures separately. All photographs should be at least 300 dpi. Graphics should be high-resolution tiff or eps files or be scan-ready paper copies.

#### IAS WEBSITE

<http://archaeology.uiowa.edu/iowa-archeological-society>