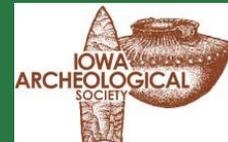


Newsletter of the Iowa Archeological Society

Spring and Summer 2018, Issue 242, Vol. 68 No. 1 & 2



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Archaeological Excavation at Mini-Wakan State Park

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Archaeological Excavation at Mini-Wakan State Park

John F. Doershuk

During the summer of 2017 Iowa Lakeside Laboratory archaeological field school students carefully excavated and documented 14.5 m² of site 13DK143 (Figure 1). Located within scenic Mini-Wakan State Park in Dickinson County, Iowa, 13WD143 is a Prairie Lakes Woodland deposit. Nine students under my direction worked at the site between June 12 and July 7. Much-appreciated assistance was provided by long-time IAS member and skilled excavator Fred Gee, who dug, mapped, and documented the site deposits for a full week alongside the Lakeside Lab students. Local residents Carl Klein and Jerry Wiekamp provided excellent screening and backdirt management support which the students and I greatly appreciated. Jerry was a new volunteer in 2017 involved in just the last few days of the project but his enthusiasm was infectious. Carl was with us nearly every day of the field school as he has done the previous three Lakeside Lab archaeology field seasons. Carl and his wife Sharon's whole-hearted support of Lakeside, its students, and archaeology projects is truly valued! Also deserving of special recognition is William "Bill" Moore, who participated in the field school as a student through the one-week Lakeside Lab "natural history workshop" version of the program. Bill, like Fred, brought previous archaeological excavation experience to the project and contributed in meaningful ways to the mentoring of the four-week students. Of equal importance Bill is assisting in the cataloging and curation of the 2017 assemblage, volunteering time at OSA's lab in Iowa City following up on the summer work initiated by the Lakeside students. Bill also generously provided funds for a radiocarbon date. Other generous local supporters of the field school include Karen Larson, Gustavus Adolphus College professor emeriti of cultural anthropology now resident on nearby Little Spirit Lake; Karen serves as volunteer local site steward of 13DK143.

Mini-Wakan State Park is among Iowa's smallest state parks, encompassing just 17 acres. It is all but in Minnesota, in fact the north edge of the park aligns with County Road 2 which also serves as the Iowa-Minnesota boundary. Facilities include a recently renovated Civilian Conservation Corp-era lodge and a busy boat ramp; renovation work on the lodge and associated planning for improved access and additional parking resulted in the discovery (Kendall 2011) and evaluation (Kendall 2012) of 13DK143. These efforts established the site as eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. No additional archaeological investigations had been conducted at 13DK143 prior to the 2017 Lakeside Lab effort.



Figure 1. Initial 2017 excavations at 13DK143.

archaeological investigations had been conducted at 13DK143 prior to the 2017 Lakeside Lab effort.

The site occupies an estimated 8,200 m² (~two acres) within the central grassy area of the park which supports several dozen large mature trees forming a savanna-like canopy. The site area is north of the parking, boat ramp, and lodge facilities which hug the Spirit Lake shoreline. While not the deepest of Iowa's lakes, the acreage of Spirit Lake is only exceeded by the two largest human-constructed reservoirs in Iowa (Red Rock and Rathbun), which places 13DK143 in an unusual landscape position compared to the majority of Iowa Woodland-era

sites. Including 13DK143, a total of 16 recorded archaeological sites are located within 0.5 miles of the Spirit Lake shoreline. Interestingly, none of these sites include deposits or artifacts currently identified as Paleoindian or Archaic, although sites from these periods are known in the larger Iowa Great Lakes region. The sites near Spirit Lake are predominantly assigned to Woodland (9 components), historic Euroamerican (4 components), and historic Native American or Late Prehistoric (5 components), with two components identified as simply “prehistoric.” Two of the sites with Woodland components include mounds, but no evidence of such features is currently known for 13DK143. It is possible of course that the occupants at 13DK143 are culturally affiliated with one or the other mound sites adjacent to Spirit Lake as these places are less than two miles from Mini-Wakan State Park.

Soils at 13DK143 are mapped as part of the Clarion series, which in much of Iowa is typically plowed but examination of the soil profiles indicates modern agricultural activities have not impacted the site. The upper portion of the stratigraphic profile from ground surface to depths of 30-40 cm below surface is typically a black (10 YR 2/1) to very dark grayish brown (10YR 3/2) silty clay to clay loam A horizon. In some units an A2 horizon is discernable as slightly lighter in color; in any case the A horizons extend to 50 to 60 cm below surface and overlay a B horizon notably lighter in color (10YR 3/4 dark brown to 10YR 5/3 brown) and more clayey in texture. The B horizon was sampled by excavating and screening a 5 to 10 cm thick level at the base of almost all of the 2017 units, but artifact density proved very low or absent. Two 3-inch solid cores extracted at 13DK143 with a Giddings Rig by Lakeside Lab soils students under the direction of soil scientist Lee Burras, Iowa State University Department of Agronomy, documented there is no potential for more deeply buried cultural horizons at the site.

The 2017 archaeological excavation units include 14 1-x-1-m units and two 50-x-50-cm units. These were placed singly or in sets of up to three contiguous units to sample anomalies and associated deposits identified through a magnetometer survey of portions of the site conducted by Megan Stroh of the Sanford Museum. Several of the anomalies explored were revealed to be large root masses or deposits of historic/modern metals and unfortunately no clear prehistoric features could be discerned in the very dark soil profile. However, many more anomalies were defined in the geophysical survey than there was time to explore during the 2017 field season; these await assessment by future projects.

A total of 2,067 items weighing in aggregate just over 22.6 kg were recovered (not including the weight of the 231 nails, bottle caps, and other historic/modern items recovered in Levels 1 and 2), an average of 142.5 items/m² (by weight, 1.56 kg/m²). Fire-cracked rock (FCR) was plentiful, representing 50 percent of the assemblage by count and almost all the weight (21.6 kg). The FCR—80 percent by weight—was mostly recovered from levels 4–6, with Level 5 and Level 6 each yielding more than 6 kg, including the three largest pieces, each weighing 1 to 2 kg.

Animal bone was ubiquitous throughout the site, being found in all excavation units, although not in all levels. The bones recovered ($n = 394$) are predominantly small in size with an average weight of just .57 g; 60 percent were recovered from Levels 2 and 3. These two levels also yielded the two largest pieces of bone (26.6 and 23.8 g, respectively). Both are bison, representing a portion of a right scaphoid carpal (Level 2) and a portion of a smashed sacrum (Level 3). The latter piece has both cut marks from stone tools and carnivore gnawing. While a comprehensive species list has not yet been finalized, in addition to bison there are elements from deer, possibly elk, various species of bird and fish including gar, mole, gopher, bullfrog, and turtle. In addition, 24.3 g of shell were recovered, although most was fragmented and poorly preserved. The previous testing at the site recovered a bear canine and elements from coot, goose, possibly prairie chicken, and muskrat, which in combination with the 2017 assemblage demonstrates a broad-spectrum utilization of both terrestrial and lacustrine animal resources.

Only a small number of chipped stone tools ($n = 5$) and flaking debris ($n = 53$) were recovered, with the tools found mostly in levels 4 and 5 (4 of the 5 items) and flaking debris mainly in levels 3 and 4 ($n = 25$). No concentrations were encountered but initial assessment of raw material indicates that in addition to local glacial till cherts being utilized at least one tool is likely Winterset chert and another Prairie du Chien chert, indicating trade with (or procurement expeditions to) south-central and northeast Iowa.

Pottery sherds (Figure 2) were far more frequently encountered than flaking debris. In total 253 sherds ranging in weight from just .1 to over 70 g were recovered. These sherds were found in virtually all levels excavated in all of the test units, most frequently in Levels 3 and 4. Interestingly the largest sherds, those more than 20 g in weight, were mostly recovered in levels 5 and 6. This may reflect, as with the larger FCR, a tendency for more sizeable artifacts to drift downwards as soil development takes place through time with lighter objects tending to move up in the soil column as an original occupational surface becomes dilated by insects, roots, burrowing animals, and other bioturbation. Sherds typical of both Fox Lake and Lake Benton wares have been recovered at 13DK143, but the relationship of these materials culturally and chronologically is not fully



Figure 2. Lake Benton sherd recovered at 13DK143 in 2017.

understood in the Prairie Lakes region so additional research at 13DK143 may well contribute to sorting out this relationship. Thus far, one radiocarbon date from 13DK143 using the AMS technique has been secured from burned residue scraped from a sherd discovered in Level 6 of Test Unit 8. This sherd has not yet been firmly assigned to type but the date is late in the Prairie Lakes Woodland sequence and tentatively assigned to the Lake Benton phase following Anfinson (1997). The date, 1140 +/-15 (ISGS-A4418) most likely calibrates to A.D. 875–972 ($p = .99$).

The 2018 Lakeside Lab archaeological field school has wrapped up for the season, but there are plans to return to 13DK143 in 2019. The research goals, in addition to providing training and experience for the student and volunteer participants, will be to increase the sample of artifacts—including careful documentation of provenience—to address chronology, subsistence, and technological organization. If you are in the vicinity next June or July, please plan on visiting the site—or sign up for the 2019 summer field school course via the Iowa Lakeside Lab website:

<https://iowalakesidelab.org/courses>

References Cited:

- Anfinson, Scott F.
1997 Southwestern Minnesota Archaeology: 12,000 Years in the Prairie Lake Region. Minnesota Prehistoric Archaeology Series No. 14. Minnesota Historical Society, St. Paul.

Kendall, Bryan S.

2011 Phase I Intensive Archaeological Investigation of the Proposed Parking Lot Project, Mini-Wakan State Park, Section 9, T100N-R36W, Dickinson County, Iowa. Contract Completion Report 1883. Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

Kendall, Bryan S.

2012 Phase II Archaeological Investigation of 13DK143, Mini-Wakan State Park, Section 9, T100N-R36W, Dickinson County, Iowa. Contract Completion Report 1890. Office of the State Archaeologist, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

New 30 Year Honorary Lifetime Members

Congratulations to William Gehlken of Illinois City, IL, on achieving the Honorary Lifetime membership status in 2017!

Welcome New Members in 2017

Sandra Barnum, Omaha, NE
Quinn Black, Trenton, GA
Susan Budden, Hospers, IA
Joseph Draper, Cherokee, IA
David Farrier, Kernersville, NC
Troy Finkbeiner, Spencer, IA
Bernard Fritz, West Burlington, IA
Heidi George, Des Moines, IA
Tony George, Sherrill, IA
Matthew Glasson, Coralville, IA
Don and Kathy Hudson, Coralville, IA
Jennie Jacobsen, Lincoln, NE
Roger Johnson, Iowa City, IA
Jared Langseth, Preston, MN
Janet Latchaw, Eldridge, IA
Tereasa Lenius, Fayette, IA
Tucker Lutter, Bronson, IA
Matthew McCullor, Bellevue, NE
Jeff Nall, Cumming, IA
Deb Otto, Dubuque, IA
Maggie Rains, Mondamin, IA
Kim Stangl Riesselman, Manilla, IA
Matt Schaeffer, Wellman, IA
Steve Schomberg, Iowa City, IA
Rob Stapp, Dayton, IA
Matt Thelen, Milford, IA
Tylia Varilek, Ankeny, IA
Kay Weiss, Burlington, IA
Donavin Wenger, Cedar Rapids, IA
Deanne Wortman, North Liberty, IA



This Issue's specimen for What's the Point?

WHAT'S THE POINT?

LOWELL BLIKRE

BEAR CREEK ARCHEOLOGY, INC.

CRESKO

Discovered: This point (see previous page) was recovered during excavations in a wooded, loess-covered upland setting in far southeastern Iowa, not far from the site that produced last issue's point. Both of these were recovered during excavations sponsored by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Description: The point for this issue has an irregular flaking pattern across both faces. It is 91 mm long, 32 mm at its widest, and has a maximum thickness of 12 mm. The lateral edges of the base are lightly ground or worn from hafting.

Send your responses to me at Lowell@BearCreekArcheology.com. Answers will be listed in the next issue of the newsletter.

Late Issue's Point: This point (see below) has been identified as a Hardin Barbed made of Burlington chert. Hardin points are an Early Archaic type and it has been suggested that Hardin points were introduced to Iowa by people following the northward expansion of the hardwood forest as it replaced the retreating boreal forest (Benn and Thompson 2009). If this is correct, the people who made Hardin points were first present in southeastern Iowa, then spread north and northwest via the Mississippi River valley and its major tributaries. Few Hardin points have been recovered from absolutely dated contexts, but at the Pigeon Roost Creek Site, located in northeastern Missouri, a layer with both Hardin and Dalton points produced a radiocarbon date of about 8000–7200 BC (O'Brien and Warren 1983). Further south in east-central Missouri, carbon from an excavation level containing Hardin, Meserve, and Thebes points produced dates of 10,300–8200 BC and 8800–6900 BC (Luchterhand 1970).

I received responses from John Lisle, Matt Kaufmann, and Dennis Sievers stating the point was a Hardin, while Dan Boddicker suggested it was a Kirk Corner-Notched, a similar style (and remember, point typology is suggestive, not absolute).

References:

Benn, David W., and Joe B. Thompson

2009 Archaic Periods in Eastern Iowa. In *Archaic Societies: Diversity and Complexity across the Midcontinent*, edited by T. E. Emerson, D. L. McElrath, and A.C. Fortier. Pp. 491–561. State University of New York Press, Albany.

Luchterhand, Kubet

1970 *Early Archaic Projectile Points and Hunting Patterns in the Lower Illinois Valley*. Monograph No. 2, Illinois Archaeological Survey, Urbana, Illinois.

O'Brien, Michael J., and Robert E. Warren

1983 An Archaic Projectile Point Sequence from the Southern Prairie Peninsula: The Pigeon Roost Creek Site. In *Archaic Hunters and Gatherers in the American Midwest*, edited by J.L. Phillips and J.A. Brown, pp 71–98. Academic Press, New York.



If you've got a point you'd like to have identified, send me a picture and a brief description, and I'll use it in a future What's The Point column. Try to get a good photo so we can see details and include a scale. A coin works great for scale; we all know how big a nickel is.

Iowa Archeological Society

Financial Report for January 2017 to December 2017



Account Balances as of January 1, 2017:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Certificate of Deposit (matures 7/20/2018) | \$1,257.25 |
| Checking | \$4,474.83 |
| Doug Jones Memorial Fund | \$2,610.00 |
| Research and Education Fund | <u>\$3,616.64</u> |
| | \$11,958.72 |

Account Balances as of December 31, 2017:

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Certificate of Deposit (matures 7/20/2018) | \$1,276.09 |
| Checking | \$4,586.30 |
| Doug Jones Memorial Fund | \$7,212.83 |
| Research and Education Fund | <u>\$2,429.69</u> |
| | \$15,504.91 |

Income - January 2017 to December 2017:

| | |
|--|-----------------|
| Certifications | \$20.00 |
| Doug Jones Memorial Fund | \$4,672.22 |
| Iowa Treasure Hunt | \$40.00 |
| Interest dividends | \$24.72 |
| Meeting (Annual Spring 2017) | \$619.10 |
| Memberships | \$9,146.94 |
| Research and Education Fund Contribution | \$1,605.00 |
| Sales (Journals, Patches, Pins, Royalties) | <u>\$211.73</u> |
| | \$16,339.71 |

Expenses - January 2017 to December 2017:

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Archaeology Outreach 2017 | \$1,500.00 |
| Display board | \$92.43 |
| Doug Jones Memorial Fund | \$500.00 |
| Doug Jones memorial flowers | \$65.29 |
| Journal Volume 64 (2017) | \$2,633.92 |
| Keyes-Orr Awards plaques | \$26.20 |
| Meeting (Annual Spring 2017) | \$743.01 |
| Newsletters (Issues 237, 238, 239, 240) | \$3,177.05 |
| Office Supplies | \$268.93 |
| Postage | \$3,211.78 |
| Preserve Iowa Summit/Fort Dodge | \$100.00 |
| Printing | \$439.91 |
| SAA Affiliated Societies | <u>\$35.00</u> |
| | \$12,793.52 |

Net Gain since January 1, 2017 \$3,546.19

Respectfully submitted by,

Alan Hawkins, IAS Membership Secretary/Treasurer

Scenes of Iowa, 1847–1850 (Part 1)

Bill Whittaker

Sometimes archaeologists find treasures in unexpected places. I was trying to find more information about a dot on a map made by William Clark after his famous journey with Merriweather Lewis. Placed just east of the fork of the Des Moines River in what is now north-central Iowa, the dot was labeled “Salt Peter Cave.” Clark never ventured into the interior of Iowa, so he presumably copied this dot from an earlier map. Saltpeter, one of the main ingredients of gun powder, was a valuable resource on the frontier. It was sometimes made from bat dung found in caves, so it is not surprising that an early explorer noted it on a map. Unfortunately, this earlier map has not survived, so Clark’s source of information about the cave is unknown.

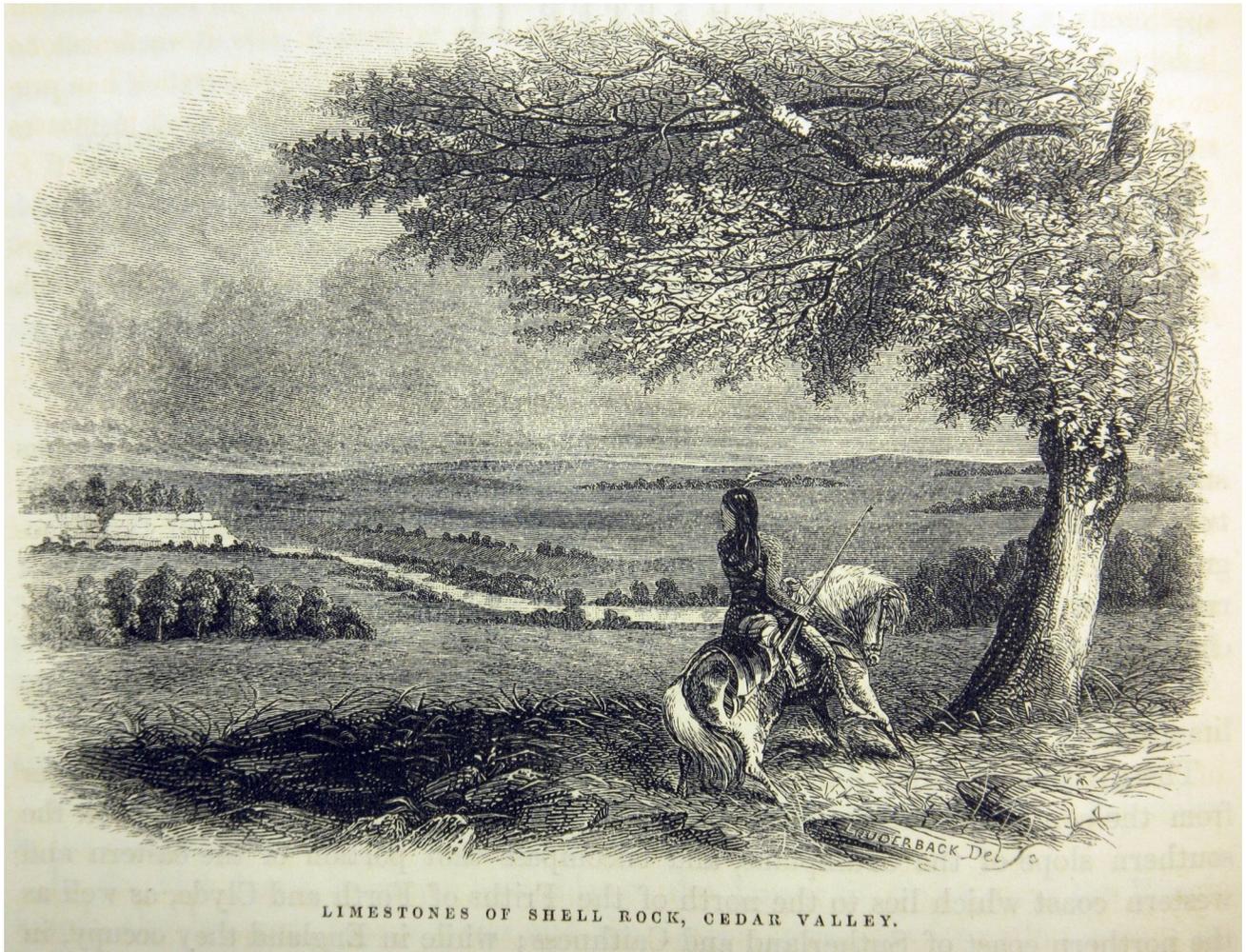
I made a few inquiries to historians and geologists about the possible saltpeter cave along the Des Moines, and while none had any information about the cave, Joe Artz, who has studied both geology and archaeology, referred my query to Ray Anderson, a geologist at the UI Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences. Anderson, who knows the geology of the region well, did not know of any saltpeter caves, but suggested I look at an old geology text to see if it contained any clues.

While the 1852 book, David Owen’s *Report of a Geological Survey of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota*, made no mention of the cave, it contained something far more interesting, a series of illustrations of Iowa between 1847 and 1850, during the brief window when free-ranging Indians were still present during the early days of American settlement. Owen, a U.S. geologist, led several expeditions in the upper Midwest, the names of his expeditionary comrades are not recorded, so the artist or artists who made the illustrations are unknown (the names on the prints were of the engravers). While there are digital versions of this book online their scanned images which were too murky to show details. I acquired a copy from the UI library and made better copies of the Iowa landscapes.

In a few of the engravings (shown on the following pages), Indians and their horses move comfortably across the landscape. These might be stylized generic Indians added later by the artist, but there is enough variation in them to make me think they might be actual drawings of Indians. The original artist certainly did his work in the field, accurately depicting the Iowa landscape, and it was likely that the geologists who surveyed Iowa had numerous encounters with the Ho-Chunk and Dakota, the two tribes which freely roamed in the area depicted at the time. Indians are only shown in the northeast part of the state, which also supports the idea that they were not added to the drawings later; if the engraver was simply adding Indians to field sketches he probably would have added them in other areas as well, not just within the actual range of Indians at the time. While there is not much detail, the Indians are not all the same. Some, likely Dakota, have fringe sleeves and more elaborate headdresses, others possibly Ho-Chunk, have simpler headdress and use upper body wrappings. Indians of Iowa were never mentioned in the text, but then again, neither were settlers. Owen was interested in rocks, soil, and water, to the exclusion of all else; it was up to the artist to notice the humans around them.

The drawings show a landscape vastly different than the modern Iowa. The state was dominated by open prairie with scattered trees. Even areas that we now consider to be naturally wooded, such as the bluffs of the Mississippi, are largely denuded. Other engravings, including the few showing settlers, will be presented in the next issue.

Here is Iowa as it was for a time.



LIMESTONES OF SHELL ROCK, CEDAR VALLEY.



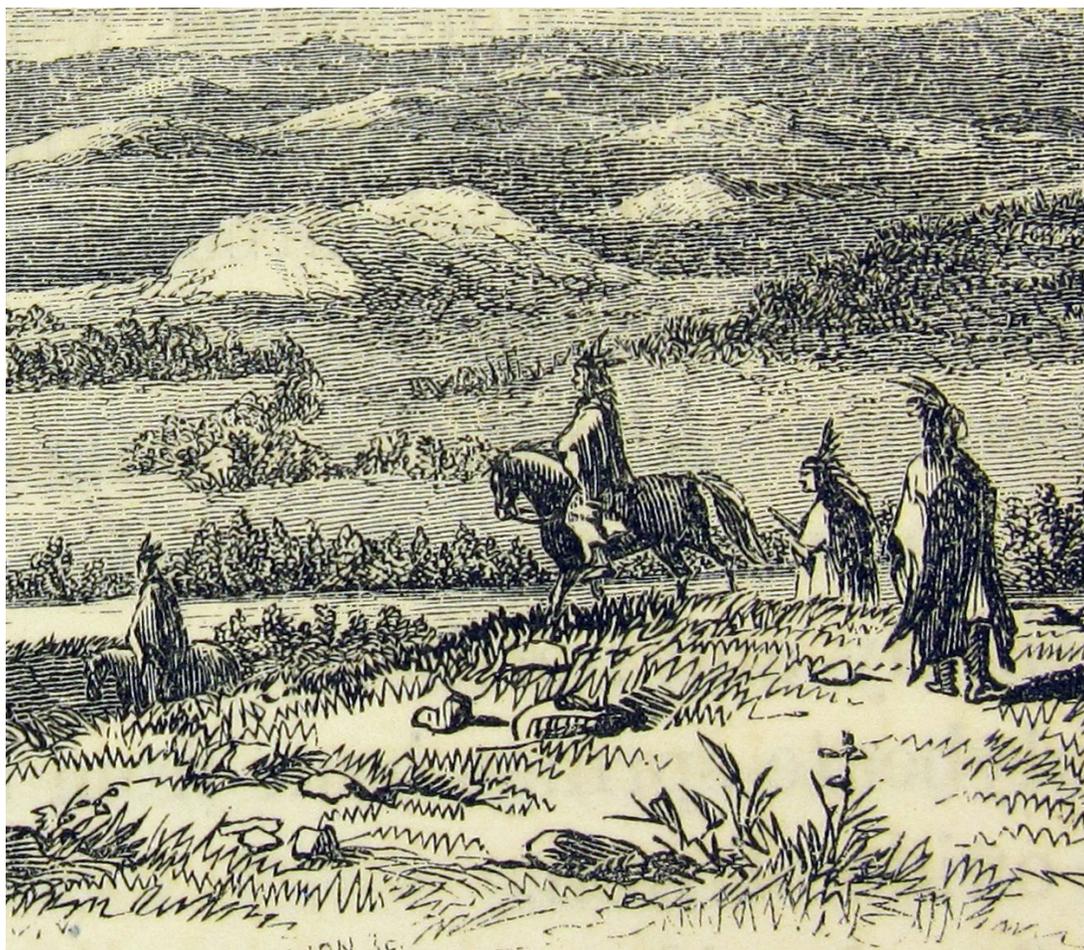
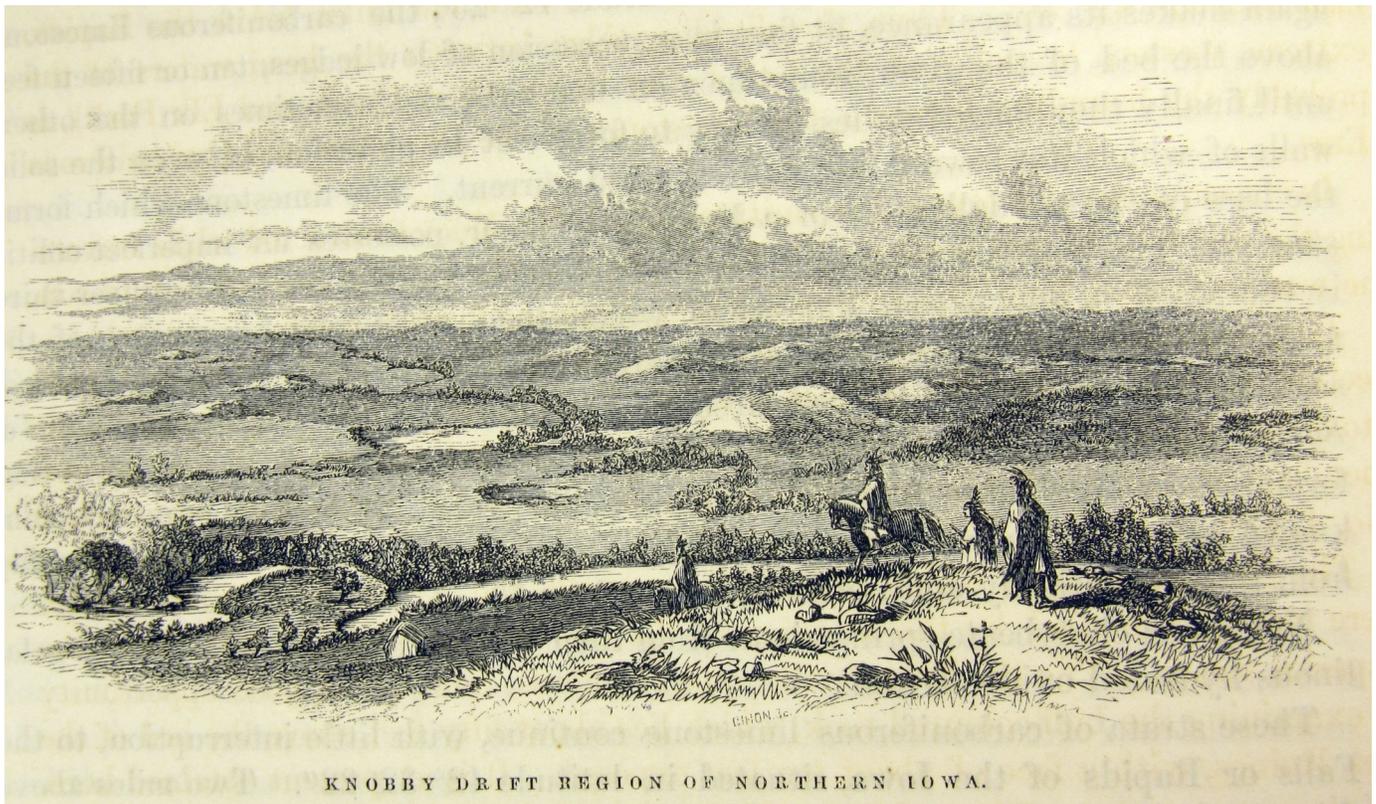
Detail from image above.



CLIFFS OF LOWER MAGNESIAN LIMESTONE, UPPER IOWA RIVER.



Detail from image above.



Detail from image above.

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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

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

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

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

MEMBERSHIP DUES

| | |
|--------------------|------|
| Voting | |
| Active | \$25 |
| Household | \$30 |
| Sustaining | \$35 |
| Non-Voting | |
| Student (under 18) | \$15 |
| Institution | \$35 |

NEWSLETTER INFORMATION

The Iowa Archeological Society is a non-profit, scientific society legally organized under the corporate laws of Iowa. Members of the Society share a serious interest in the archaeology of Iowa and the Midwest. The Newsletter is published four times a year.

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

IAS WEBSITE

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