

NAPA



Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists

Vol. 13

Fall/Winter 1999

NEWSLETTER

NAPA BUSINESS

New *Central Plains Archeology* Editors

Gayle Carlson, Stacy Stupka-Burda, and Amy Koch were voted to be the new *Central Plains Archeology* (CPA) editors at the August 30, 1999, NAPA Board Meeting. For a number of years Bill Hunt, Melissa Connor, and Eli Paul have attended to the duties associated with publication of the journal. Many thanks to them for their time and effort. Other individuals who have edited CPA include Tom Thiessen and John Ludwickson, and John Weymouth. They deserve recognition as well. Since 1989, Curt Peacock of the Nebraska State Historical Society has been responsible for the layout and design of the journal. He will continue to be the editorial assistant and work with the new editors for future publications. Thank you, Curt.

FIELDWORK/RESEARCH

Kansas State University

Donna C. Roper and a crew from Kansas State University continued investigations in the Medicine Creek valley under an on-going cooperative agreement with the Bureau of Reclamation. Excavations were initiated at 25FT167, an Upper Republican site, where testing in 1989 indicated a house remained. The 1999 excavation showed that while a house existed at this location, it was plowed down completely through the floor. All context and integrity were compromised. Excavations on a portion of 25FT39 were more productive. Beneath a thick overburden were the remains of an Upper Republican extramural facility tentatively interpreted as a cooking facility. The facility, while reasonably discrete and functionally distinct, is nevertheless somehow related to an area a few meters to the southeast partially excavated in 1998. Analysis will proceed through the winter of 1999–2000 to more fully understand the nature of the areas excavated in both 1998 and 1999.

Nebraska State Historical Society Archeology Division

New Staff

The Archeology Division is pleased to welcome two new permanent staff members. John Swigart was hired as an archeological technician. In that capacity, John will be primarily responsible for all the division's computer mapping and graphics operations. John is also manager of the GIS archeological site layer which is currently under construction. John will also be involved in various fieldwork and excavation report projects for the Nebraska Department of Roads. Jeannette Blackmar was appointed to the position of Museum Registrar and will serve as manager of the Society's archeological collections. Jeannette is in the position previously held by Teresa Jacobs. Teresa remains with the Society as the agency's computer specialist. Jeannette is responsible for coordinating collection management, site file and literature searches, laboratory work, assignment of new site numbers, and loans. She will also be involved in various aspects of the division's fieldwork and report writing.

Recent Fieldwork

In conjunction with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Division staff worked on various National Register evaluation projects. Work was conducted in anticipation of re-nomination of the Ashland site in Cass and Saunders counties. The site complex was resurveyed, tested and mapped under the direction of consultant, Bob Pepperl. A minimum of three components remain with high probability of intact features representing all three: Oneota (1300s), Central Plains tradition (1200s), and a proto-historic (Pawnee?) component probably dating to the early 1700s. The location of the ethnohistorically documented Oto village of the early 1700s remains elusive archeologically. It had been previously suggested the Oneota component at Ashland may be this village, but examination of material culture and radiocarbon dating firmly establish this as an early Oneota component. The confirmed proto-historic component at Ashland looks much more like Pawnee than Oto or any other

Siouan group. The SHPO desired work at Ashland in response to increasing developmental pressure in the area.

The SHPO also co-sponsored National Register testing and surveying in the Panhandle. Work was conducted at the Bronco Lake site near Alliance, Wildcat Hills State Recreation Area, and Wind Springs Ranch, north of Scottsbluff. The Bronco Lake site has been heavily collected and is very deflated. The site does not retain physical integrity or research potential and further National Register consideration was not recommended. Work at Wildcat Hills and Wind Springs was more productive. Two sites at Wildcat are National Register eligible. They appear to represent Archaic and/or Plains Woodland camps in a stratified setting. About 1,400 acres of the Wind Spring Ranch was surveyed by division staff. Seventy-six new archeological sites were documented. The sites are diverse both functionally and temporally and span early preceramic through protohistoric Native American occupation as well as Euroamerican ranch features and historic wagon roads. The locality seems to have been the most intensively occupied during the Middle and Late Archaic periods. Wind Springs will be considered for nomination as a National Historic District.

Excavations were conducted at two sites discovered on Nebraska Department of Roads projects. Division archeologists spent several weeks in April working at an extensive lithic scatter south of Beaver City in south central Nebraska. This work was in response to earthmoving activity for a nearby bridge project. The portion of the site to be affected by the project was the only area that had not been disturbed by agricultural practices. Excavation at this location revealed a relatively thin layer of cultural material within 30 centimeters of the present surface. Thousands of pieces of chipped stone debris, a few stone tools, and a small amount of animal bone were recovered. Nearly all of the material is Republican River jasper which is available in the immediate vicinity of the site. A few small pieces of obsidian were also recovered. A small corner-notched projectile point suggests a late prehistoric/protohistoric age for the site. An informal assessment of the materials and their horizontal distribution indicates the excavated area of the site resulted from a brief stone procurement/lithic reduction event. Analysis in upcoming months will focus on the spatial arrangement of materials, identifying reduction technique and refitting.

During June 1999, Archeology Division staff, four UNL field school students, and one volunteer conducted test excavations at a significant archeological site near Walgren Lake in western Sheridan County. The site was identified in 1998 during cultural resource survey for a county recreation road and state park improvement project sponsored by the Nebraska Department of Roads and the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. Site 25SH14 consists of an extensive scatter of chipped stone debris and tools and animal bone that covers an area nearly a quarter of a mile long. Test units yielded faunal

remains including burned bone, fire-cracked rock, ground stone, chipped stone debris, and a few stone tools. Two projectile points recovered from the site suggest it was occupied during the Early and Middle Archaic periods. Test excavations have provided evidence that the site is quite extensive and that the majority of cultural materials have been recovered from a well-preserved, 65 centimeter-thick buried paleosol. The site will be impacted by proposed camper pad construction and road grading. A data recovery plan and mitigation are pending.

Nebraska Cultural Resources GIS Project

Work began this summer on the development of a cultural resources geographic information system (GIS) for the state of Nebraska. The project is funded by the Federal Highway Administration. Construction of a polygon layer of archeological sites is underway and will be completed by the end of the year. Subsequent phases of the project will produce layers of cultural resource survey areas, historic architectural properties, and historic trails. Once completed, the GIS will benefit agencies and CRM contractors conducting archeological work in Nebraska as well as academic researchers. The time required for file searches for known sites and previously surveyed areas will be significantly reduced. The GIS will also aid in identifying the potential for archeological deposits at a given location. This information can be utilized in the planning stages of any project covered by federal and state cultural resource protection laws. Even though it is in its early stages, the GIS is already being utilized by Archeology Division staff to streamline preparation for Nebraska Department of Roads cultural resource surveys.

University of Nebraska Anthropology Department

In early June, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Department of Anthropology undertook emergency excavations on the UNL campus to salvage the remains of several privies and other features exposed by construction of the new Kauffman Honors Dormitory. The new dorm is being built on land that had been a parking lot south of Bancroft Hall. Getting the University to recognize its responsibilities was a challenge, but eventually the Chancellor made money available to pay for a field supervisor, Mike Chidley, to watch the heavy equipment and for site preparation. Mike salvaged the bottoms of ten turn-of-the-century privies as well as two brick-lined wells. UNL students are currently preparing materials recovered from these features and Mike will oversee their analysis during the current school year. Kathy Colwell completed a historical assessment of the site as well.

Peter Bleed and Erin Richardson completed a technical report on excavations conducted in 1998 at the site of late nineteenth century "Negro Shanties" in downtown Lincoln. The report entitled "In the Shadow of Downtown" was submitted to the City of Lincoln Planning Department and describes the stratigraphic and material evi-

dence that was recovered from the shanty sites. Not surprisingly, archeological reflections of the shanties were very subtle, but the report concludes that the remains of the structures do survive and that they could be investigated. The sites are now on private land that does have developmental potential. Thus, the problem now becomes knowing how to respond to the discoveries presented in the technical report. Limited copies of the report are available from Peter Bleed at UNL.

During the spring of 1999, with financial support from the UNL College of Arts and Sciences, and sponsorship of NAPA, Peter Bleed of the UNL Anthropology Department and Jerry Renaud of the UNL School of Journalism produced a series of seven, thirty-minute television shows on Nebraska archeology. This series entitled "Speaking of the Past—Conversations on Nebraska Archaeology". Each show featured a conversation between Peter and an archeologist from Nebraska. Guests included Mark Lynott, Melissa Connor, Rob Bozell, Effie Athanassopoulos, LuAnn Wandsnider, Doug Scott, and Erin Richardson. The shows are currently being aired on the Lincoln area cable system and there are plans to get the series shown in Omaha and other parts of the state.

The Archeology Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln is currently working on several projects, with the most extensive work located at two dam sites in eastern Nebraska. This work includes Phase I investigations related to the Army Corp of Engineers Lake Wanahoo Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) along Sand Creek. Phase II investigations are scheduled to begin this fall. The second dam site investigated during 1999 is a Natural Resources District (NRD) Lower Platte South dam located near Elmwood, Nebraska along Weeping Water Creek. Phase II investigations were conducted during the summer of 1999 with the assistance of four students from UNL's summer field school. These investigations are nearly complete, and will resume in the coming months. In addition, consultation continues on two projects located in and around Lincoln; the South and East Beltways EIS and the Antelope Valley Major Investment Study (MIS).

University of Nebraska State Museum, Nebraska Archeological Survey

Among other things during the past few months, the Nebraska Archeological Survey (NAS) has completed the final versions of two reports detailing earlier work related to the Bureau of Reclamation's Fullerton Canal Project. Reports on 25HW16, the Stabaco site, and 25MK15, the Tahaksu site, are now completed, and work on 25NC29 is nearing completion. John Peterson, a former staff member at NAS, now at Southwestern Missouri State University, has been actively involved in this work.

The NAS crew has conducted a busy field season this spring, summer, and early autumn. Testing of three sites at Sherman Reservoir was conducted throughout April and the first half of May. Limited testing (soil coring, cut bank

examination) was done on the previously excavated site, 25SM20, to determine the site boundaries in detail. Test excavations were carried out on two historic sites identified in 1997 to determine the integrity of these sites and locate subsurface features. These tests indicate 25SM202 had been heavily impacted during dam construction. The second historic site tested, 25SM23, has a dense near-surface artifact scatter as demonstrated by a controlled metal detector survey. Additionally, a deep structural feature with architectural and farmstead debris was tested and sampled. Both of these sites represent farmsteads with a short period of occupation, which were later masked or modified by construction or agricultural activity.

A survey of portions of the Lower Loup and Platte River drainages began in mid-April, continuing through May and much of June. A total of 5,410 acres of these drainages were surveyed under contract with the Historic Preservation Office of the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS). Despite setbacks from bad weather, 172 archeological sites were identified; 166 of these were new and six were previously known sites. Sites range in age from Paleoindian to Euroamerican occupations. This survey significantly expanded the body of data regarding the cultural components present at the Genoa site, 25NC20. The project provided volunteer opportunities for fifteen people. Three members of the Pawnee Tribe of Oklahoma worked on the survey crew for a period of one week. This project also provided both an educational opportunity and field experience for two UNL students over a two-week period. Two public presentations on archeology and ethnohistory were given at the Genoa Indian School facility for the benefit of the local community.

In late July and early August, NAS personnel conducted a survey of a substantial portion of the land around Merritt Reservoir as the initial stage of a two-year project. The crew returned in late September to conduct a complete shoreline survey while the water level was low. Steve Holen interviewed local collectors in the reservoir area to gain additional information regarding site location and cultural/temporal ranges in the Merritt Reservoir area. During these two work periods, twenty-one new sites and one previously known site were identified. This project provided paid field experience and an educational opportunity for two UNL students.

LEGISLATION

State Archeologist Bill

Rob Bozell and Peter Bleed met with State Senator Jerry Schmitt and his aide Mikki McCann to discuss another attempt to pass the State Archeologist Bill. Two years ago, this bill made it out of committee, but never made it to the floor for debate. Last year, when Senator Schmitt reintroduced the bill, it was killed in committee. The Senator still wants to work for the bill, however, so it will be reintroduced this year. It will be an uphill fight since this will be

a short legislative session. To give it a bit more hope, Senator Schmitt has suggested trimming the budget. Supporters must lobby extensively both before and after the next session begins in the new year. NAPA members, please mention the State Archeologist Bill to your District Senator and ask them to keep an eye open for it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Steve Holen will be leaving his position with the Nebraska Archaeological Survey in November to work as archeologist for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Huron, South Dakota.

Bill Chada is the new archeologist for the Bureau of Reclamation's Grand Island office.

The Kansas State Historical Society has a position opening for State Archeologist. A PhD and experience in Great Plains archeology are preferred. Review of applications begins January 31, 2000, or the position will remain open until filled. Call Kay Jones-Ray, Personnel, (785-272-8681) for an application.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

- *The Cheyenne Outbreak Barracks*, by T. L. Steinacher and G. F. Carlson, *Explore Nebraska Archeology* No. 4, Nebraska State Historical Society

Archeology Division
Museum of Nebraska History
131 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, Nebraska 68508

- *Archeology of the Patterson Site: Native American Life in the Lower Platte Valley, A.D. 1000–1300*, by J. R. Bozell and J. Ludwickson, prepared for Nebraska Department of Roads
- "Microevolution and the Skeletal Traits of a Middle Archaic Burial: Metric and Multivariate Comparison to Paleoindians and Modern Americans," by M. B. Lovvorn, G. W. Gill, G. F. Carlson, J. R. Bozell, and T. L. Steinacher, *American Antiquity*, 64 (3): 527-545
- "The Sidney Burial: A Middle Plains Archaic Mortuary Site from Western Nebraska," by G. F. Carlson, J. R. Bozell, T. L. Steinacher, M. B. Lovvorn, and G. W. Gill, *Plains Anthropologist*, 44 (168): 105-119.
- Don Blakeslee's manuscript entitled "Waconda Lake: Prehistoric Swidden-Foragers in the Central Plains" is tentatively scheduled for printing and distribution to NAPA members after the turn-of-the-century.

NAPA Newsletter

Published bi-annually as a service to members of the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists. Comments concerning the newsletter should be sent to the attention of the editor.

Editor: Amy Koch

Production: Deb Brownson

