

NAPA

Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists

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NEWSLETTER

Winter 1995

NAPA BUSINESS

For those of you who haven't already heard, the election last summer resulted in Doug Scott being elected as President Elect and Amy Koch being elected as Secretary-Treasurer. Stan Parks Chairman of the NAPA membership committee reports that the as of September 1, 1994, there were 93 total members. 29 of these were unpaid and 64 were paid. This breaks down to 53 Fellow members, 34 Associate members, and 6 Institutional members.

The bus trip, which took place last summer on June 18th, was a success. Thirty-three participants went on the tour, which gave us a profit of a little over \$470. The tour went through south central Nebraska and north central Kansas. We visited the University of Kansas Field school at Lovewell Reservoir, the Pawnee Indian Village Museum near Republic, the Hill Site and Guide Rock, the Atlanta prisoner of war camp, Ft. Kearney, and several other sites. Best of all we didn't get the bus stuck this year.

William Duncan Strong Memorial Award

The Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists has established the William Duncan Strong Memorial Award to recognize persons who, over the span of their professional careers or private lives, have made substantial contributions of lasting value to the knowledge, appreciation, and/or preservation of Nebraska's archeological heritage. The first recipient of the award is Dr. Waldo R. Wedel, whose many researches in Central Plains archeology over the course of a career that spanned six decades are well known to the Plains Anthropologist readership. The award, which was bestowed April 8, 1994, consists of a plaque and appreciatory certificate given to Dr. Wedel and a perpetual plaque displayed at the University of Nebraska State Museum.

The following letter, dated Sun, Jul 24, 1994, was received from Dr. Wedel in response to the award.

*Mr. John R. Bozell, President
Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists
Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68501*

Dear John:

When my son, Wally, handed me the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists Wm. D. Strong Award materials, I was completely surprised and in a sense overwhelmed. All I was really trying to accomplish professionally in my Plains work was to throw a little illumination on one of the darkest corners of American Archeology. Of course, that happened to be the area in which I grew up and I had some very good help, and a lot of fun doing it.

I owe much professionally to many old timers in Plains archeology who were in a sense the wheel horses of the game - Duncan Strong, A. T. Hill, Charles R. Keyes, W. C. McKern, Carl E. Guthe, Emil W. Haury, W. Van Royen, and Carl Sauer to name a few.

By today's standards they didn't know much theory, but in those days who did or grieved about it. I once heard Harold Gladwin tell A. V. Kidder that digging for archeology was nothing more than applied horse sense, easily and quickly learned by any reasonably intelligent being with his share of intellectual candlepower.

Mildred and Wally join me in regards and best wishes to you and your colleagues in Nebraska, the Plains, and the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists.

*Sincerely,
Waldo R. Wedel*

FIELDWORK/RESEARCH

Nebraska State Historical Society

The Nebraska State Historical Society is continuing excavations at the Patterson site in Sarpy County. Patterson is a Nebraska phase village with at least two occupations: one about A.D. 1050 and the other in the 13th century. Two houses and a midden were dug in the 1970's-early 1980's. The present investigation focuses on

a third house and exterior midden deposit. The project is funded by the Nebraska Department of Roads and the Federal Highway Administration through an Inter-modal Surface Transportation Enhancement Act (ISTEA) grant. The grant money will be used to finish Paterson fieldwork and laboratory analysis. The project will also result in installation of exhibits at two nearby 1-80 rest areas and publication of a short book on Nebraska phase in the lower Plate valley. Both will be designed for public consumption. A technical report or journal article will also be prepared.

Emergency salvage work was conducted by highway archeology program staff in Richardson county during September and October, 1994. Excavations were completed at two Central Plains tradition houses on a county road project south of Rulo. The contents of all features was bagged and transferred to Lincoln for flotation processing. Over 1,000 five-gallon samples were transported. Several members of the Iowa Tribe of Nebraska and Kansas participated in the excavations.

Laboratory work and report preparation at the Society continues to focus on a variety of Central Plains tradition components in Sarpy, Brown, Boone, Butler, Richardson, Hall, and Custer counties. Efforts are also continuing on the Early Archaic Logan Creek site collection and lithic quarries near Scotts Bluff.

The Nebraska State Museum

The University of Nebraska State Museum conducted excavations at two mammoth sites this summer. In May and June the La Sena Mammoth Site was again excavated at the Bureau of Reclamation's Medicine Creek Reservoir. Excavations were necessitated by severe bank erosion over the winter caused by extremely high water level at the lake. Excavation produced one nearly complete rib, a possible section of pelvis, and numerous highly fragmented limb bone fragments. The latter adds more evidence that the mammoth bone was processed by humans.

In July a 10 day excavation was conducted at the Jensen Mammoth Site near Cozad, in Dawson County. The goals of the excavation were to define the limits of the scattered mammoth bone to determine how much excavation would be necessary to complete the excavation. Excavation produced the desired results and in addition located several mammoth bones including a complete femur, causal vertebrae, and bones from the hind foot. The complete femur indicates the individual was a very large male, one of the largest yet found in Nebraska. A return trip to the site with a ground penetrating radar to look for more mammoth bone was unsuccessful as the clay B horizon soil on which the mammoth bone rests and the calcium carbonate in the soil disrupted the radar signal.

In May, Steve Holen, presented an invited paper at the Canadian Archaeological Association meetings in Edmonton, Alberta in a symposium entitled "The Settle-

ment of Northwestern North America: New Approaches to a New Problem. The paper, "Sites Without Lithics: Mammoth Bone Processing Sites in the Late Wisconsinan Loess of Nebraska" was co-authored with Dave May, geomorphologist from the University of Northern Iowa. The paper presented data interpreting the two mammoth sites described above as being a product of human processing of mammoth bone at 18,000 and 14,000 years ago. This interpretation is based solely on the fracture patterns of the limb bones and other taphonomic data. Although controversial, the paper was well received. A revised version was published in the most recent issue of the *Mammoth Trumpet*. Another version of this paper, concentrating more on the geologic setting, was presented by Dave May at the Geological Society of America meetings in Seattle.

University of Kansas

In June, the Kansas Archaeological Field School (KAFS), sponsored by the University of Kansas and Kansas State University, investigated two sites in the Lovewell Reservoir area, Jewell County, Kansas. Portions of the Warne and White Rock sites were excavated by ten students from KU, KSU and Mount Holyoke College, Massachusetts under my direction and with the assistance of KU graduate students William Banks and Margaret Beck, and Nancy Pearson, Bureau of Reclamation. Both are extensive sites of the White Rock culture, an as yet poorly understood adaptation based on bison hunting and maize agriculture that was centered in northcentral Kansas and south-central Nebraska.

White Rock, previously believed to date to the protohistoric period (ca. A.D. 1500-1700) of the Central Plains, has recently been radiocarbon dated as early as ca. A.D. 1260-1450. These dates suggest White Rock may have been contemporaneous with other late prehistoric cultures of the same region. However, there is no archaeological evidence of interaction between these other cultures. It appears that the White Rock people were migrants from the Lower Missouri River valley on the eastern margin of the Central Plains. Our understanding of the origin and nature of White Rock and its relationship to other Central Plains cultures of the late prehistoric and protohistoric periods needs further study, to which end the KAFS made a substantial contribution.

With the support of the Bureau of Reclamation, the federal agency in control of Lovewell Reservoir, and the Kansas State Department of Wildlife and Parks, which manages the area, the KAFS explored and documented the research potential of the sites. Both have been subjects of excavations by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (1935, 1937), the Smithsonian Institution (1956), and the University of Kansas Museum of Anthropology (1991-1993). Our work at the Warne site revealed a hearth, a concentration of burned bone and earth associated with an area of fire-reddened soil. Lightly scattered around the hearth for a

distance of several meters were many pieces of stone chipping debris, pottery and burned limestone. Though plowing has disturbed much of the Warne site, the subplowzone presence of the hearth and another feature, a small cache pit excavated in 1991, points to its research potential.

In 1992, our work at the White Rock site uncovered a hearth like that at Warne. Together with its status as the type site of an archaeological culture, this feature indicated its eligibility for placement on the National Register of Historic Places. This status will eventually protect the site from federally or state supported construction activities. In the meantime, it has been subjected to such activities that ironically have provided us with additional evidence of its importance.

Last year, KU salvaged contents of two trash-filled storage pits at the White Rock site. Both had been exposed in and partially disturbed by a drainage ditch along the gravel road that crosses the upland ridge on which the site is located. One pit yielded a rich variety of stone tools, ceramics, and bone artifacts. The KAFS was able to recover additional material of the same nature from five features exposed in or along the same road. Three of these were trash-filled storage pits. They contained arrow points, knives, gardening implements, and pottery. At least one pit has provided enough charcoal for more radiocarbon dates. Another appears to have been a shallow pit or borrow area that was bereft of artifacts. Nonetheless, exploration there indicated the topsoil, generally thin elsewhere at White Rock, was relatively thick and partially unplowed. This area, believed to have been a midden, or trash dumping area, contained many artifacts, including points, knives, scrapers, blades, chipped stone debris, pottery fragments and bison bone. Another area, in the path of a proposed road, was found to be unplowed. Here too, artifacts were plentiful. The road was rerouted to preserve these remains.

In keeping with Murphy's Law of Archaeological Fieldwork, it was not until the final day of the KAFS that a heretofore undocumented feature of the White Rock culture was discovered. While monitoring excavation of a short extension of the notorious drainage ditch, I noted a small cluster of bone and pottery on the grader's final pass. Further exploration of the find revealed a mass of bison bone, pottery shards, part of an arrow point, a chipped stone knife and lithic debris. Concentrated in an area about three feet square, the bone is predominately meatpoor elements. We know from ethnographic accounts that the Indians of the Great Plains boiled such bison parts to produce bone grease, a component of pemmican. Our current interpretation of this feature, then, is that it is the base of a boiling pit. It was covered with plaster bandages, removed and transported to the Museum, where a latex mold of it has been cast. It is now being meticulously excavated and analyzed. Study of this feature and all the data acquired by the KAFS promises to provide new

insights to the White Rock culture and its place in the prehistory of the Central Plains.

Bureau of Reclamation

The Bureau of Reclamation working in cooperation with area universities continued several projects over the last year. Under the cooperative agreements, the University of Nebraska performed emergency salvage work on the LaSena Site at Medicine Creek Reservoir and evaluated and recorded initials carved in the sandstone bluffs along the Smoky Hill Trail. These are at the Thrashing Machine Canyon Site, at Cedar Bluff Reservoir. UNL also is continuing lab work on the Fullerton Canal sites. Wichita State University worked at Waconda Reservoir in Kansas, surveying areas exposed by the extremely high water in 1993 and evaluating a Central Plains Tradition Site and a possible intaglio site near the Reservoir. The University of Kansas continued work at Lovewell reservoir as described elsewhere in this newsletter. The University of Colorado at Boulder continued reevaluation of materials from the Lime Creek Site at Medicine Creek Reservoir. Under a Reclamation contract, Donna Roper recently completed the report on 25GY12, an Archaic site along the Scotia Canal in central Nebraska. In the Grand Island office, Nancy Pearson has been hired on a temporary appointment. Myra Giesen is still working for Reclamation, but is now stationed in Lawrence, Kansas as the NAGPRA coordinator for the Great Plains Region.

Pawnee Delegation Visit to Tribal Sites

On June 5th through the 8th a small group of Older members of the Pawnee Tribe returned to their tribal homeland in Central Nebraska. The Tribe has been residing in Oklahoma since the 1870's, and few Tribal members have ever been back to their ancestral homeland. Cosponsors of the trip included the Nebraska State Historical Society, The Bureau of Reclamation, The Nebraska Council for the Humanities, The Winnebago and Omaha Tribes, Historical societies in Hall, Howard, Nance and Dodge Counties in Nebraska, Nebraska Public Schools, and several local hotels and restaurants who provided free services. The Pawnee participants were able to visit for the first time places where their grandparents were born, and had told them about. They were given copies of pictures from area museums that included photos of ancestors which they had never seen before. They were also able to identify people in photos at some of the museums, whose identities were not known to the museum staffs. A film crew followed along on the trip and is producing a video on the trip and the reminiscences of the Pawnee participants. Two of the modern participants were grandchildren of Knife Chief, who made a similar return trip 80 years ago in 1914. The video of the trip will be used as part of an education kit to be designed by Pawnee tribal members, and distributed to public schools throughout Nebraska and in Pawnee, Oklahoma. During travel around the State by van, Bill Eaves, who is now 84, was able to remember

and record Pawnee dance songs from ceremonies that he last attended when he was only 10 years old. He also tutored other participants on the proper pronunciation of place names in Pawnee. It is hoped that the video and photos from this trip can be used to encourage young people in the Tribe to learn Pawnee languages and traditions, and learn more about Nebraska, which those on the trip referred to as “the Old Country”.

LEGISLATION/ETHICS

Society of Vertebrate Paleontology’s Statement of Responsibilities to the Amateur Community (Approved Oct. ‘94)

“The fundamental goals of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology are to provide new knowledge on the history of fossil vertebrates and to foster the scientific, educational, and personal appreciation of fossil vertebrates by amateur, student, and professional paleontologists and the general public.

NAPA Newsletter

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The ultimate aim of the Society is to increase the enjoyment, appreciation, knowledge, and understanding of fossil vertebrates as the fundamental evidence of past vertebrate life on our planet.

In collecting and conserving fossil vertebrates, the professional community assumes a curatorial as well as an educational trust.

- The professional community recognizes that it must provide training, field, and laboratory experiences to students, educational institutions, the amateur community, and the general public.
- The professional community shall offer its expertise to the educational, public, and amateur communities. The professional community recognizes that members must communicate their needs and principles in research and education.
- The professional community shall recognize the valued contributions of amateurs to research and education. The professional community recognizes the status of responsible amateurs as colleagues, and will acknowledge and respect their contributions to paleontology.
- Institutions with collections held in public trust guarantee that specimens be kept in the public trust and will be made accessible for legitimate scientific and educational purposes.”

Reminder...

A yellow stripe on your mailing label indicates your membership has expired. Please send \$15 (Fellow)/\$10 (Associate) to Amy Koch at the return address.

