Early Man

Being an account of the Koster Expedition and other explorations of the Northwestern University Archeological Program in Southern Illinois

NEWSLETTER II

July 1974

Members' Weekend

This festive weekend will begin Aug. 16 (Friday evening) with a special lecture featuring a guest speaker and will be held in St. Anselm's Hall in Kampsville. At 10:30 a.m. Sat. morning visitor registration will be held at the Koster Site. Following registration visitors will go on a 2 - 2½ hour tour of 3 of the 6 archeological sites that we're digging. At 2:30 p.m. we will have our staff lecture in the Kampsville park next to St. Anselm's Hall. These talks will review the research now being done by the various scientists in charge. Following the staff lectures all 16 laboratories will be open and visitors will be divided into lab tour groups. This is the one time in the year that we open up all of our laboratories and all of our sites to visitors. This is your chance to really see what the archeologists do with the material they dig up, after they dig it up. On Saturday evening we will have our traditional dinner in the river front park which will be cooked by the archeologists. Entertainment will be by the Armstrong Family Folk Singers. On Sunday there will be tours of the sites, staff lectures and lab tours.

Horizon 8 Tool Repair Shop Found

Archeologists today are scanning their sites to identify activity areas. An activity area has been identified in Horizon sub 8. Activity areas are small localized areas where people were doing one certain activity and left characteristic debris. We found what is apparently a tool repair shop. When you are making tools the kinds of debris you expect to find are large hunks of chert, cores, and large flakes that were taken off as the tool was being made and processed, large hammer stones to take off the large flakes, and some small tools for finishing and getting a sharp edge. When you're fixing tools the tool is already made but may need a new edge, sharpening, or maybe a broken point modified. Now you expect to find small refinishing flakes, little tiny flakes, and maybe an antler flaker, and broken tools perhaps. That's just what we found--very tiny flakes and the flakes were all different kinds of chert--some heat treated and some not--some local chert and some not. In that same area we found 6 or 7 broken artifacts, broken knives, other kinds of bifaces, scrapers, etc., some of which could be reconstructed into a single piece as if when they were fixing it it shattered in their hand and they just gave up right then. As well in that area we found an antler flaker--one of the nicest ones I've ever seen--the kind of tool you would need to do that kind of work.

DID YOU KNOW...that for 6,000 years (from Hor. 11, 6500 B.C. to Hor. 2, 500 B.C.) hickory nuts were a major dietary staple in the diet of the Koster people.
Un-Gapping The Generations At Koster

Verne Carpenter, RR#3, Carlyle, IL might be called the archeologist on call. He has been called to be a supplemental member of a team needing help; he has been in on something very special. One thing he knows...that every spring he starts feeling the call...the call to find a team and go to work. Koster in June had been the place, i.e., until the advent of adult field schools. Adult field schools have given him the call earlier and earlier in the past few springs.

After Harlan Helton persuaded Dr. Stuart Stuever in 1968 to take a look at the "three-acre-patch" or the north field on Theodore and Mary Koster's farm, the next steps came in 1969. A surface survey and archeological probing were done. The next logical step was a test square. Who would be taken from the precious days of the Apple Creek Site for the job? The persons doing that first test square were Verne Carpenter and Carl Udesen.

IF YOU HAD A CHOICE, WHAT WOULD BE YOUR FAVORITE PLACE TO DIG?

"I'd really like to work on every one of the sites, but Koster is a must! Ever since Carl Udesen and I dug that first test square, I have been with Koster. And I want to stay with it as long as a square is open".

Verne has been part of every exciting development--from the 5100 B.C. Koster Dog in 1970, to the de-watering system of 1974.

WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE KIND OF SITE?

"Village sites in general are my favorite. I like to help do a controlled surface survey, all the getting ready, then start down. Koster has all of that. Digging a village is putting back together a way of life. That is the New Archeology".

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR FAVORITE VILLAGE SITE?

"Much as I love Koster, I'll have to say the Hatchery Site has been my favorite. Hatchery was named for the State of Illinois fish bearing unit located across the road. We were able to excavate it before the damming of the Kaskaskia River to form Carlyle Lake. Mr. Lou Binford directed that dig for two years. We found wonderful things! We found square houses, rectangular houses and we even found oval shaped house floors"...Verne mused a few moments...

"But then there was Peisker. That was the most perfect village site I have ever seen. There was that Black Sand Culture village located in a sand ridge. Why, we found the first Black Sand pot intact, in existence. The gumbo Hopewell Mound covered the Black Sand Culture village. This gave the village such perfect preservation. Some of the Hopewell tombs had sand covered floors. We found those two beautiful clay pipes and those wood impressions. The log impressions were of cottonwood logs up to 40 inches in diameter, and they were perfect. That was really an experience."

"I like that part of digging too. I like burials and burial mounds. I think I have helped Greg Perino with at least 92 burial mounds. Burials are very important. But it's Koster right now. I plan to stay right here and do whatever Gail Houart wants me to do".

Unfolding "This Is Your Life, Verne Carpenter" was taking place at Koster on a 95o afternoon. The subject would surely have preferred to unwind with all the others at Koster's spring. He did let the cool water flow over his soil-colored arms and mopped his face. But he did abstain from the refreshing water fight of the day. Verne was graciously willing to respond and reminisce for Early Man.

HOW DID YOU GET STARTED IN ARCHEOLOGY?
"I was what you call an amateur collector. I was one who admired the art of artifacts. I was a business man of Centralia, Ill. I was in business there for 28 years. I was a man with a hobby. In 1956 I went to a meeting at Shaw's Garden in St. Louis. At that meeting I met Gregory Perino of Bellville, Ill. I liked him immediately. He was consulting with Dr. John McGregor of the Illinois State Museum (now of the Univ. of Ill.). Later I was invited to the late Mr. Dan Throop's home in French Village. Greg was there again, and that was where I met the late Mr. Thomas Gilcrease".

Verne was on crutches at that meeting. He had been disabled from Arthritis for many years. The crutches eased the pain in his lower legs as he kept going with his daily activities.

At the Throop home, Thomas Gilcrease asked Verne Carpenter if he would like to join a team planning to excavate Klunk Mound at Kampsville, Ill. Learning and working in this Hopewell mound was an exciting experience which gave Verne roots in Calhoun and Greene counties, almost deep enough to make him "honorary citizen".

WHAT EFFECT DID THAT FIRST DIG HAVE ON YOUR ARTHRITIS?

"I took my crutches to Kampsville in June. By the time we covered over the mound in September I had put the crutches away, and had thrown away all the pills...forever!" Verne smiled, "Why, I could almost run up those hillsides".

"I Sometimes wonder if Mr. Gilcrease didn't think that the hot sunshine and the fresh Calhoun air wouldn't be good for me. Mr. Gilcrease was a wonderful man".

The next few years, the hobby of
archeology became more and more a part of Verne's life, especially in summer.

"That time in Calhoun was when I met the Struever's. I met Alice first. It was at the Snyders Site about 1961. I even remember how she was just sitting there on the ground gazing at a beautiful snail bed. The next year, 1962, I found myself on a team, helping Stuart on the Apple Creek Village Site. That is how it all started".

Businessman, Verne Carpenter, continued this life style with business and hobby until 1964. That was the year of complete retirement. He has been with a dig every summer since then, except one.

"I took one summer out to play with the Muzzle Loaders. We did a lot of performing". All through those years Verne arrived in the very early days of the summer to help with uncovering operations and preparation of the site. He would stay until the end of the summer, helping to close the operation and cover up.

Another new experience came to Verne from Sept. 17 to 23, 1972. The FAAFS of FIA--the famous FIRST ADULT ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD SCHOOL OF THE FOUNDATION FOR ILLINOIS ARCHEOLOGY was scheduled. It needed to go smoothly. It would be the actualization of a Stuart Struever dream--about to happen. Verne returned from a short stay at home in Carlyle, for the first adult field school. He stayed through it--the scope of cold to hot; dry to wet; newcomer to "pro"...His presence added an element of warmth and humor, along with a high degree of teaching skill. He was such a help to those 25 then-shy novices! Next to Koster, the five succeeding field schools in 1973 and 1974, as well as field schools of the future, are very close to Verne Carpenter's heart. ONE LAST QUESTION:

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR FUTURE IN ARCHEOLOGY?

"I'm just thinking about one year at a time. I want to make a contribution to the dig. I like to be in personal relationship with these young people at Koster. And I love to work with Gail."

"January 10 will be my 75th birthday. I wish I could have a great big party with all these students here at Koster. That would be the best celebration I could ever have"!

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Editor's note...The following are candid comments from Verne's coworkers.

GREGORY PERINO: "He has a great ability to get along with youngsters. He likes young people and they like him. He has probably seen more archeology than most professionals. And he has met most of the greats of archeology. And he still goes home every couple of weeks to mow the grass for his wife, Rosie".

ALICE STRUEVER: "Great old man. Great morale builder. He gets right in there with the students and helps them".

GAIL HOUART: "Verne is an amazing type of person. Just about every digger out there really takes to him and will do things for him that they wouldn't do for anybody else in the whole world. He works harder just about than anybody else down there, but he keeps them all working and keeps them all happy."

STUART STRUEVER: "Verne Carpenter is a great morale booster. On the hottest day of the season you'll find him down in the main trench at Koster excavating right along with high school students who are only 20% as old as he is. Verne probably has as much aptitude for field archeology as anybody I've ever met and has become a very good self-trained archeologist."

DID YOU KNOW...that the people of Koster Hor. 6 (2500 B.C.) were able to catch large catfish weighing 30 to 40 lbs.
A Puny Bone And 5 Pieces Of Rock

Thirty-five students from 19 different junior high schools accompanied by Junior High Field School Director, Mrs. Genevieve R. MacDougall, and staff assistants, Mrs. Janith Mac Donald of Winnetka, Ill., Jim Wells of Northfield, Ill., and Mrs. Marion Chamberlain of Clayton, Mo., participated in the Winnetka Junior High Archeological Field School, held from July 3- July 19, 1974. The students had their own site to study located on an old beach of the Macoupin Creek. Field Supervisor Alice Berksen, Member of the Northwestern Archeological Program, was in charge of excavating. New students first attended a 3 day classroom and orientation session while returnees went directly to their excavation site.

Andrew Deppe and David Bales measure and record.

Andrew Deppe, 11 year old youngest participant in the Northwestern Archeological Program, told us what a typical day is like. (These students live in a large 2 story house in the nearby town of Mozier, Ill.) Andrew said, "We get up in Mozier at 6:30 a.m. and go to Kampsville to eat breakfast and fill our jugs full of water--as full as we can get them because it gets so hot. About 8:30 we go to the site and get things organized and start working. We are assigned a special square or sometimes a feature to work on. We do our own screening and we take samples for flotation.

Lunch is brought to the site. Quitting time is about 3 or 3:30 in the afternoon. At quitting time we have to check in all our stuff and finish what we're doing for awhile and put tarps over the holes so they don't get too dried out. After we get back to Kampsville we take showers because we're awful hot after a day of 100 degree weather. We talk and play baseball, eat at the cafeteria, and go hang out at the dairy bar and talk to people. Then we just go back to Mozier to sleep. Lights out time is 10. In Mozier we make up our own games. One of the vans has stereo and plays tapes and we turn it up full blast and dance like we're going crazy."

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED ABOUT BEING AN ARCHEOLOGIST? Laura Segal, 7th grade, Evanston, Ill. "We get a square and dig and screen to find artifacts and find features. You have to learn as you go along. It's really hard to learn just by someone telling you. There's a special way, not really to dig, but--digging is digging--but where to dig, and what you do if you find things, and how to notice things is important and you learn that as you go along."

Richard Beile trowels while Greg Gelzinnis shovel scrapes. Ray Brownlee in background.

HOW DO YOU RECOGNIZE A FEATURE? Greg Gelzinnis, 6th grade, Godfrey, IL, "They look like chocolate Malts." Ben Haglund, 7th grade, Naperville, IL, "Generally it's a darker color.
because of the organic matter."
Andrew Deppe, "It's like you can't move a feature out of the ground. It's there and you have to get what you can from it."

Lisa Rosenthal and Valerie Komives screen dirt from their square.

WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND? Val Komives, 6th grade, Winnetka, Ill., "We've gone down a level (2 inches) and all we've found is a puny bone and 5 pieces of rock and that's it!" (This was after Val's second day of digging. We checked with her later in the week and she had had better luck--including some interesting pottery pieces. Most exciting finds of the group included a platform pipe and a bird effigy.) Laura Segal, 7th grade Evanston, Ill., "I found a bone pin outside my square 2 inches on the surface, but we graphed it. It wasn't in the square but even though it isn't exactly in your square it's helpful."

We asked every student we talked to IF THEY THOUGHT WHAT THEY WERE DOING WAS IMPORTANT and all of them answered with a very positive yes. Bob Hawley, 7th grade, Winnetka, Ill., "Yes, because you're going down digging for early man and you can find out about your history. I was never really into it, but ever since I got to this--this really helped me."
Tom Coogan, 7th grade, Winnetka, Ill., "We're digging up old bones which will help make history--help put facts in the books." Carolyn Kiesler, 6th grade, Northbrook, Ill., "Well, they can find out who lived here before we did and what they believed in and if there was war and what they ate and things like that."
Nancy Chamberlain, 7th grade, Clayton, Mo., "It might help man now, to understand how man lived long ago to help him live better with his surrounding environment and that's why I came or I wouldn't have come because I paid half of my tuition to get here."
James Van De Graaff, 8th grade, Glencoe, Ill., "You don't have to have it. You could live without it, that's for sure, and the information is not essential, but it's something that does down in records and things like that. We can dig up our ancestors and the people who were first here on our continent and it's something that's not only very interesting, but it's something that has to be done by someone. If it's not done it's just going to go on forever and no one is ever going to know whatever happened. I think it's something that's very important to me and I really like doing it a lot."
Laura Segal, 7th grade, Evanston, Ill., "I think it's important to find out how early man--people who lived before us--lived, and we can get some helpful hints from them because we aren't doing too great."

Are you enjoying the work? Joe Buehler, 8th grade, Marengo, Ill., "Yeah, the work's hard and it's hot but we all have a lot of fun." Mercer Doyle, 6th grade Kenilworth, Ill.,
"I sort of like digging. If I find something I sort of like to think that I'm the first person to touch it since it's been made. It's sort of fun, really, the feeling that it was made by someone that I've never seen, but I know he was there." Dawn Richardson, 7th grade, Northbrook, Ill., "Yes, I'm a masochist." (Dawn was a 2nd year returnee).

Lisa Rosenthal, 7th grade, Winnetka, Ill., "I love finding things." David Bales, 7th grade, Carrollton, Ill., "I've been really interested since I found my first artifact."

WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR DAY?

Immediate answer from unknown source, "Going to the cafeteria! Ah, the chicken legs!" Carolyn Kiesler, 6th grade, Winnetka, "LUNCH!!!!!!"

We found several returnees including Roy Brownlee, 8th grade, Evanston, Ill., a 3rd year veteran. Success of the program seemed to be summed up with a talk we had with Luvie Owens and Kim Brooks. Luvie was supervising a crew of jr. high stu-
dents who were on artifact washing assignment in Kampsville. Luvie reported, "I came down in '71 with the first jr. high students to come down. I was going to be a freshman in high school, so this is my 4th summer down here and now I'm a supervisor. Right now I'm really into archeology and I'm going to be a senior in high school and I'm thinking about majoring in archeology in college. I like the life style down here. I like the people a lot. You know, like I'm meeting people down here who I'm sure will be friends for the rest of my life. I really love it. It's really neat."

Kim Brooks was also a member of the original 15 member first jr. high field school. Kim also was a supervisor this year and told us, "Jr. Hi students are eager to learn. You kind of have to keep after them to keep them working, but they seem interested in learning and seem to enjoy it even though it's hard work. It's really good experience to help somebody grow up both mentally and physically."

Junior High snaps by Genevieve R. MacDougall.

Happy Birthday, Kampsville

On July 20th and 21st Kampsville (headquarters for the Northwestern Archeological Program) celebrated her 100th birthday. Kampsville, IL is a small community of some 450 people (in the summer we add another 210 student and staff members). Kampsville is located in the heart of Calhoun County which was dubbed "The Kingdom of Calhoun" by early settlers because it is peninsular in shape and her boundaries are formed by the Mississippi River on the west and the Illinois river on the East with the rivers forming a 3 sided moat around the kingdom. Calhoun County is located in the fertile Lower Illinois Valley which offers some of the most beautiful scenery in the state.

A short distance north of the present village is a landmark called "Perrin's Ledge". Marquette and Jolliet visited with the Indians there in August of 1673. Kampsville was at first called Farrowtown, but the people petitioned to change the name to Kampsville to honor M.A. Kamp. Mr. Kamp was a native of Bavaria, Germany, arriving in the U.S. in 1853, to practice his trade as barber and surgeon. He came to Calhoun County in 1863 and moved to Farrowtown in 1873.

Kampsville was a very popular summer resort from about 1904 until 1938. The old paddle wheelers such as Bald Eagle, Grey Eagle, Spread Eagle; Golden Eagle, Piasa, and the City of Peoria made regular stops in Kampsville carrying vacationers. Show boats were regular visitors also--Price's Water Queen, Emmerson's Floating Palace, Sunny South, Cotton Blossom, the Golden Rod and the Hollywood. The first show boat ever to play in Kampsville was French's Sensation in 1896. They played "Uncle Tom's Cabin".