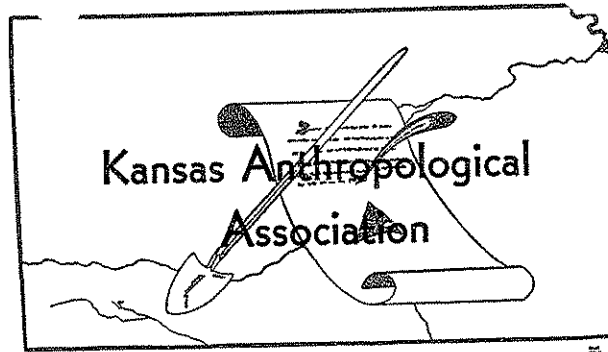


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NEWSLETTER

Volume 13, Number 5

January, 1968

THE PAWNEE INDIAN VILLAGE MUSEUM PROJECT

by

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In August of 1965 the archeological division of the Kansas State Historical Society under the direction of the writer undertook the first phase of an investigation and interpretation program at the state owned site of a historic Pawnee earthlodge village near Republic, in Republic county, Kansas. In the archeological literature this site is known as the Kansas Monument site. Since 1965 three summer field seasons have been spent excavating material and features at that site and a new modern museum building has been constructed there. The state owned portion of the site consists of six acres of uncultivated land atop the river bluffs overlooking the Republican river valley. Within that six acres is the visible evidence of at least 22 earthlodge floors, storage pits, barrow pits and a fortification wall. Obviously the structures which once stood there have burned and collapsed and the pits have long since been silted full. However, the surface relief across the site, perhaps as much as one or two feet, clearly indicates areas which had been dug out or filled at the time of the Indian habitation there. As a great deal of our state has been extensively cultivated such sites with still visible evidence of past peoples activities are quite rare in the Central Plains. Approximately one-third to perhaps one-half of the village lies in an adjacent wheat field to the south. On that side however, cultivation and activities of relic hunters have all but destroyed that portion of the village.

The preservation of the portion of the village which the state now has was made possible by the donation of that tract to the state of Kansas in 1901 by Mrs. Elizabeth Johnson. At that time the village was thought to have been the one to which Zebulon Montgomery Pike came in 1806 and convinced the chiefs of the Republican band of the Pawnee tribe into taking down the Spanish flag which they flew over their village and raising in its place the flag of the United States. As early as 1896 this site was recognized as the Pike's Pawnee Village and in the years since a number of large and colorful celebrations have taken place there. In September of 1901 a large stone monument was erected on the site to commemorate this supposed visit of Pike. Unfortunately, at least for Kansans, in the late 20's and early 30's another Pawnee Indian village site was discovered some 30 miles away to the northwest across the state line into Nebraska (Wedel, 1936; 33-36). Comparison of Pike's notes as well as those of his second in command Lt. Wilkenson agreed to topographic description far closer to the Nebraska site than with the Kansas site. Basically both Pike and Wilkenson speak of holding council with the Pawnee atop a large hill over the village. Later they crossed the river and established their own military camp on a second eminence from which they

could observe activities within the Indian village. The Kansas "Pike's Pawnee village" sets atop the hill and there is no hill within five miles of this site from the site can be looked down upon.

Unfortunately, this time for Nebraskans, the more northern village was left under cultivation and all the surface features have been obliterated. While with many persons state pride has caused some to hold out for first identification Kansas still has what is the only preserved Pawnee Indian village in the central plains. It was with that point in mind that we undertook the program in Republic county.

Prior to our work at the site it had received little in the way of systematic archeological investigation. In 1949 a University of Kansas field school under the direction of Carlyle Smith excavated two lodge floors, Houses 1 and 2, and tested the fortification wall (1950 a and b). Some of this material is on display at the Natural History Museum at Lawrence.

Field work at the village site was begun by the Historical Society in 1965. The first summer was spent in excavating two lodge floors in the central part of the village in order to recover artifacts, gain a better idea as to just what kind of material was preserved beneath the ground surface and to test the public interest in such a project. The houses excavated were numbered 3 and 4.

House 3 was found to have been 42 feet in diameter and possessed an unusual entryway. The level of the entryway was above the house floor proper and formed a step or small stoop-like arrangement just inside the entryway. The entryway and a portion of the lodge floor retained evidence of puddled then fired clay flooring. The hearth or fire pit usually found at the center of the lodge was missing in this house and appeared to have been destroyed by earlier diggings. While there is some evidence of relic hunters working within the fenced state owned area this is the only significant damage that we have thus far noted to any of the features.

Among the interesting material recovered from this house were two small pottery jars intact, an iron kettle turned upside down with an ear of corn inside and arrow making tools such as a shaft wrench and shaft polishing stones. We were able to recognize even the remains of a wood pile just to the right of the entryway inside of the lodge (Weitfish, 1965; 62). The other wall for House 3 was set outside of the floor excavation thereby making a low narrow bench around the edge of the house and in one area the bench face retained evidence of being plastered with clay and then fired.

House 4 was a lodge floor found to be 36 feet in diameter built in the approximate center of the state owned site area. The entryway for this house faced more south-eastward. It had a six post center pattern surrounding the usually centrally located hearth this time still containing the ashes from the last fire. A storage pit some four feet deep was located in the southwest corner of the lodge and it had the customary bell-shape. The perimeter wall for this house was set inside the original floor excavation.

At the close of the 1965 field season we held an open house at the site one Sunday afternoon for people to come and look at the exposed house floors and a small display we had prepared on the interesting artifacts we had found that summer. Between 1,500 and 2,000 people attend in the time from one to four in the afternoon. This attendance demonstrated very readily the interest there is in archeology in the state.

Between the 1965 and the 1966 field seasons plans were drawn for a museum building to be constructed over one of the lodge floors in the village. It was decided that we should select one of the larger houses at the site both because of its front location

and the desirability of featuring the most impressive floor we could find. The lodge selected for this honor was a large 50 foot in diameter house floor just north of the old monument location. This was designated House 5 and in the spring of 1966 we carried out preliminary tests around the lodge to locate its entryway and its perimeter as accurately as possible. It was quite evident even from the start that this lodge could not be excavated prior to construction because construction activities would damage or even destroy exposed features. The legislature appropriated the money for the construction of the museum building in 1966 however because of funding problems the actual construction of the building was delayed until March of 1967.

The 1966 field season concerned itself with excavating the lodge immediately adjacent to House 5, House 6, because it would be destroyed by the northern part of the museum building and otherwise damaged. We also hoped to test and recover the burials associated with the village during that field season.

House 6 was another large lodge, 50 feet in diameter east to west and 49.5 feet in diameter north to south. Its entryway projected in an east southeast direction. Excavation of this lodge took approximately four weeks and we recovered a good sample from it with such interesting artifacts as pipes, four elk antler scraper handles, sections of Spanish bridle bits, and a complete iron hoe blade. Perhaps the most interesting feature of this lodge was the recovery of a sacred bison skull near its altar. The altar was apparently a low wooden platform placed typically against the west wall of the lodge opposite the entryway. The unique thing about the wooden platform was that it was put together with hand forged iron nails. The bison skull though crushed and badly burned when the house itself was destroyed was taken up in a plaster jacket for display purposes. Of the eight lodges that were eventually excavated at the site only House 1 and House 6 had bison skull altars. In House 1 and House 6 had bison skull altars. In House 1 evidence of a wood altar was suggested by a cluster of post holes near the skull and Carlyle Smith had suggested a wooden platform for the skull. This was borne out by the finding of the charred wooden platform in House 6. The lodge had an eight post center pattern and retained some evidence of once having had a fired clay floor. A large bell-shaped storage pit was found just to the north of the entryway inside of the lodge. The perimeter wall for this lodge was set within the original excavation.

During the time we had worked at the site we had repeatedly heard of burials being dug out along a ridge some 400 yards away from the village site. Once there had been a farm at this location and rumors had it that there was an attic full of Pawnee skeletons. The University of Kansas crew had recovered a badly damaged burial from this same area. The portion of this ridge that had been uncultivated bore evidence of filled pits and we decided to begin testing at that location. Narrow "plumber's trenches" dug approximately a foot wide and down through the plow zone located three filled pits. These were cored out, the mixed disturbed soil removed, and two were found to have skeletal remains in them. In the case of one there were the remains of three different individuals piled at one end of the floor of the burial pit. The second consisted of the legs and top of the skull in their approximate burial position however the remainder of the skeleton had been scooped out. The third pit was completely empty. It became evident that the early stories of people digging burials in this area and removing skeletons had a basis in truth. The relic hunters had been here before. The landowner loaned us a small tractor with blade and we cleared an area approximately 60 by 50 feet. Five more pits were found and cored out and two were found to contain human skeletal material. The first contained the skeleton of an adult laid in a semi-flexed position on its right side. However the activities of the people before were evident by the crushed skull and the absence of any bones in the chest area. Possibly the early pot hunters had become sophisticated enough that they knew that burial goods were normally in the chest area and they had dug down and removed that part. This burial while it did contain measurable skeletal pieces was so thoroughly cleaned of any artifact material

that we could not accurately demonstrate that it was a Pawnee. The fill of some of the other grave pits contained glass beads which would indicate historic burials. The other pit which contained bone was typical of the others. A few fragments some broken long bones and that was all.

Frustrated in our attempts to recover burials we returned to the village area proper and began testing around its limits to see what extended past the metal fence to the west and east. Using the tractor and blade again we cleaned off the plow zone along the west boundary of the site and found that the cultivation of that field had removed almost all traces of the village which was once there.

To the east we had noted earlier that a low mound which did not appear either to be a lodge location or a refuse mound. We laid out a small grid of five foot squares over this mound and excavated it to a depth of about a foot. At the eastern end of the mound we noticed a thin gravel level very close to the ground surface which became deeper as we worked west. The mound fill was a black humus soil containing scraps of animal bone, some pot sherds and broken rock. In one area we found the mouth of an ash filled pit. This was cored out and we recovered a few artifacts. We also found a short section of galvanized pipe four inches in diameter and 18 inches long which stood vertically in the approximate center of the mound.

At the end of our first day of work in this area a visitor to our site noted the mound and the vertically standing pipe and commented that this was probably the location of a golf green. He went on to say that around 1940 some of the business men in Republic had built a small golf course in this area and this mound was in the location of hole number 1. With this information it became quite obvious that the vertically standing pipe was the cup and the thin gravel lense we had found was the top of the sand green. The green had been constructed by scraping up dirt along the east side of the village to create their mound. This is why the fill contained refuse and artifact materials. Frustrated again we retreated back inside the metal fence and excavated one more lodge floor. This was House 7 and it probably represented one of the smaller lodges in the village. It was found to be some 25 feet in diameter and was of the type having the perimeter wall built outside of the floor excavation. The centrally located hearth did not have a pit but was represented by a burned area on the floor level proper. Interesting artifacts from this house consisted of a gun flint and a small fired clay figurine. The remainder of the 1966 field season was spent digging a refuse area just inside of the fortification wall at the north edge of the village. This midden yielded a fair amount of pottery sherds, bone scraps and metal artifacts.

In March of 1968 the museum building was begun around the House 5 floor depression. We watched carefully as the footings were dug close to the house and were able to recover artifacts from a refuse filled barrow pit located on the southwest edge. We obtained such things as fired clay gaming pieces, a straight-edge razor blade, several gun flints and pottery sherds. It was hoped that the building would be far enough along by mid-summer that we could use a summer field crew to excavate the lodge inside the new building. However the delays in obtaining material and problems with the weather caused us to change our plans somewhat.

When the field season began in July of 1967 we worked at the south edge of the fenced site area to excavate approximately two-thirds of a lodge floor which extended out into the road. The northern third of the house was visible inside of the steel fence. Close to the fence on the floor we recovered a very well made red stone pipe, a large quantity of burned corn and possibly beans as well as a few other artifacts. However as we expanded our excavation south out into the road we found that this house too had been "potted." When completed the house was found to be some 42 feet in diameter and was probably of the variety having a perimeter wall set on the ground surface.

While waiting to get back into the museum building we spent some two weeks excavating a stone burial mound overlooking Buffalo Creek west of Randall, Kansas. Chipped stone dart points in this mound were very similar to some recovered from a Late Archaic site in the John Redmond Reservoir. This proved to be a very interesting dig and we collected some very significant data concerning the Archaic period in that area.

Finally in August we were able to get inside the museum building and begin excavating House 5. The first week we dodged scaffolding of the painters and electricians but we were able to work. Indoor archeology was a rather new experience for us and we found its problems unique. Lighting was perhaps the greatest inconvenience. We used lights on drop cords to dig by and of course all of the photography was with flash. All the fill dirt was wheeled out in wheel barrows and dumped some 200 feet from the building. Our seven men crew of high school and college students worked very hard and the house fill was removed by the end of August. All of the material found on the floor of the lodge was to be left in place for the final display. If the piece was sturdy it was removed for cleaning and its position was marked for replacement. If it were fragile the piece was left in place, cleaned and preserved there. House 5 contained perhaps the best post hole pattern that we had found at the site as well as some of the better preserved areas of fired clay floor. This being reasonably intact in the entryway and running out in the shape of a large question mark around the central fire pit. One storage pit was found at the south edge of the lodge and when cored this was some five feet deep and six feet in diameter at the bottom. Interesting artifacts on the lodge floor consisted of metal projectile points, a fired clay gaming piece, the frizzen from a flintlock trade musket, several butcher knife blades, some with stampings, two bison scapula hoes, three elk antler scraper handles and a cluster of sandstone arrow shaft smoothers. The lodge had a ten post center pattern and the perimeter wall post holes were at floor level having been set inside the floor excavation.

During the fall final touches were put on the lodge floor by coring all of the 282 post holes and cleaning and preserving the burned timbers lying on the floor. The removed artifacts were cleaned, catalogued and have now mostly been replaced.

Around the edge of the museum building are eight display cases and two diorama cases. The Pawnees are explained in various displays utilizing artifacts recovered from the site. The dioramas depict scenes in Pawnee life. The first is a scene in the earthlodge village of a trader entering with a pack horse and the Pawnees gathered to meet him. The second diorama is a summer hunt scene in which several mounted Pawnee are pursuing a bison herd.

From the back door of the museum building a 300 feet long walk extends out through the village area. This will be provided with markers to point out and explain to the visitors what the various surface features are at the village.

In the spring a paved state highway will be constructed to connect the museum site with Highway 36 some $7\frac{1}{2}$ miles to the south. Road sign markers will also be placed on US81 some 15 miles to the east as well as signs across the state line in Nebraska directing people to our new museum.

We will continue to make additions to the displays and museum complex for the next several years.

Kansas State Historical Society
Topeka, Kansas

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- 1965 The lost universe.

KANSAS ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION OFFICERS MEETING

A meeting of the K.A.A. officers was held January 28, 1968 at the Vagabond restaurant in Hays, Kansas.

Officers present: Mr. Earl Monger, President
Miss Rozeene Lyon, 1st Vice President
Mr. Tom Witty, Editor
Mr. John Rhine, Secretary-Treasurer

Guests present: Mrs. Earl Monger
Miss Edith Dobbs

The Treasurer reported a balance of \$410.77 as of January 27, 1968. There are 319 members on the mailing list.

Various Topics Discussed Were:

To start printing the index of K.A.A. Newsletters in each Newsletter as funds permit, until back volumes are caught up. Index will be clipped separately.

Proposed revision on constitution to be printed again in the Newsletter with statement urging members to submit their ideas to the officers.

To drop the words "one year" from Article VIII Section 2. To then read, "Members in arrears in payment of dues shall not be entitled to vote or to receive the Association publications, and after formal notice, they shall be removed from the Association rolls." This is necessary because of the increase of postal rates.

Make arrangements for obtaining a bulk mailing permit to help cut expenses. It is hoped the K.A.A. will qualify for a non-profit organization mailing permit.

A librarian is needed to take care of exchange material. Each chapter needs a librarian to record sites within the chapter and to take care of publications from other chapters and organizations. Mr. Witty suggested Newsletters be placed on inter-library loan and other material for own use be typed and put on inter-library loan.