

Early Nebraska Archeology

Nebraska was one of the first places where professional archeology was practiced in the vast Plains region of the United States. The state has a rich heritage of archeological studies by pioneers such as Frederick Sterns, A. T. Hill, Earl Bell, Waldo Wedel, John Champe, and especially William Duncan Strong, whose pioneering "Introduction to Nebraska Archaeology" stands as a classic in its field. Lincoln was home to the Missouri Basin Project Office of the Smithsonian Institution's River Basin Surveys (RBS) program for nearly 24 years. In these years as many as two dozen RBS field crews were sent out from Lincoln to perform archeological surveys and excavations in planned reservoir areas throughout the vast Missouri River basin, one-sixth of the area of the contiguous 48 states, some of them within Nebraska's borders. Decades of archeological investigations in reservoir areas and other places have resulted in a rich legacy of published and unpublished literature regarding the tangible evidence of Nebraska's prehistoric and historic past. Many reports were never published, however (especially reservoir appraisals by RBS staff), and have remained largely unknown and inaccessible to modern researchers.

Most of these documents have reposed in the libraries and research files of the National Park Service's Midwest Archeological Center and the Nebraska State Historical Society, and many are in very delicate condition from age and repeated use. With the dual objectives of preserving the contents of these documents and making them available to a wider audience, this CD has been compiled. It contains many reports from the Smithsonian Institution's Missouri River Basin Project, as well as reports from other salvage archeology projects completed by the Nebraska State Historical Society, University of Nebraska State Museum, and University of Nebraska Laboratory of Anthropology (often in conjunction with the Smithsonian Institution). For more information on the history of the RBS program, Thomas D. Thiessen's *Emergency Archeology in the Missouri River Basin: The Role of the Missouri Basin Project and the Midwest Archeological Center in the Interagency Archeological Salvage Program, 1946-1975* is also included on the CD in the Other Documents folder.

These documents have been scanned from original manuscripts and photos when possible. Some documents may contain writing in the margins or other hand written notes as a result of their manuscript format. Donald J. Blakeslee's "A Bibliography of the Aboriginal Archeology of Nebraska," Donna C. Roper's "An Annotated Bibliography of Upper Republican Archeology in the Medicine Creek Valley," and an additional list of reading material are also included to assist in research. Two versions of this CD are available. The version that is being distributed to members of the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists has been edited to remove site specific location information from some of the scanned documents. This edition of the CD will also be available to other members of the general public. A research version of the CD has also been made which contains complete, unedited copies of all of the documents. This later version will be available by request to any professional archeologist for research purposes. See the contact information below to request a copy of that CD.

The files on this CD are stored as PDF documents and organized by author in the annotated bibliography, which has links to each of the manuscripts. A copy of Acrobat Reader is included

on this disk, but it can also be downloaded off the Internet for free. Acrobat Reader 5.0 is recommended for use with the articles on this CD.

In the attempt to reduce the size of each of the files, the images were scanned at a resolution of 72 dpi. Due to this fact some of the documents may be slightly blurry, especially those items that were carbon copies on onion skin. It may be easier to read these documents at a higher or lower magnification on Acrobat Reader. The documents may not print very clearly either. Due to the large size of some of the manuscripts, the files on this CD have been divided into smaller segments, which should reduce the amount of time necessary to open the larger files. It may be more inconvenient to have to open many little files rather than one large file, but we believe that the smaller size will lessen the amount of time needed to access the documents in the long run.

This project was completed through a National Park Service Challenge Cost Share Grant. Organizations participating in the project include the Midwest Archeological Center (MWAC) of the National Park Service, the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) Archeology Division, the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists (NAPA), and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL) Anthropology Department. Employees from both MWAC and NSHS scanned the manuscripts. A student from the UNL Anthropology Program worked on the project at MWAC through a Cooperative Agreement. NAPA provided the funds to reproduce the CD and distribute the CD to its members. As a part of the project, copies of the CD are also being provided free to the UNL Library and the Lincoln Public Libraries. For more information about this project or to obtain additional copies of the public or research versions of the CD, contact Anne Vawser or Karin Roberts at:

Midwest Archeological Center
Federal Building Room 474
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508

Phone: (402) 437-5392

Fax: (402) 437-5098

E-mail: anne_vawser@nps.gov
karin_roberts@nps.gov

For more information on the Midwest Archeological Center visit the National Park Service web site at

<http://www.nps.gov>

For more information on the Nebraska State Historic Society visit their web site at

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org>

For more information on the Nebraska Association of Professional Archeologists visit their web site at

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/archeo/napa/index.html>

For more information on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Department of Anthropology and Geography, visit their web site at

<http://www.unl.edu/anthro/>