



Annual Report of the
State Archaeologist

1 July 1971-30 June 1972

Introduction

This report summarizes some of the archaeological activities in Minnesota over the past fiscal year--a year of active field research, interesting developments in public interpretation, in publication and in developing a system of consultation with resident American Indian groups. The State Archaeologist is a faculty member in the University of Minnesota, as required under the Field Archaeology Act in the Minnesota Statutes. The State Archaeologist works closely with the Minnesota Historical Society which administers the Field Archaeology Act and operates under a research budget provided through the Minnesota Resources Commission. This past year, as in previous years, many individuals have been of exceptional help and assistance, and while it is impossible to enumerate all of these, I would particularly like to thank Russell Fridley, June Holmquist, and Alan Woolworth of the Minnesota Historical Society; Jan Streiff of the University Archaeology Laboratory; and the members of the Minnesota Resources Commission.

Research Activities

Three major field research projects were undertaken by the University during the summer of 1971. The first was a five-week excavation program in southwestern Minnesota focusing on the problems of the Great Oasis focus at the Big Slough and Great Oasis sites in Murray County. The project was directed by Professor Dale Henning of the University of Nebraska operating with a crew composed of students from both institutions. Professor Henning has the previous Minnesota collections from the two sites and is combining these with the results of his work last year.

A second project of eight weeks centered on the excavation and analysis of data from a pit house site (the Winter Site) located on the north bank of the Snake River immediately upstream from Pine City. The project was directed by Elden Johnson who worked with a crew of University students. Mr. and Mrs. Steve Vach, Dr. Tony Romano, and members of the Pine County Fair Board offered exceptional help in both archaeological and logistic problems during the summer. The site is late prehistoric with an underlying late Archaic-Middle Woodland component(s) and seems to be indicative of the settlement pattern and structural form not previously known in Minnesota archaeology.

The third project, directed by David Webster of the University, began work at the very large Wilford Site on Lake Ogechie in Mille Lacs-Kathio State Park. This late prehistoric and possibly protohistoric village site is equivalent in size and importance to the previously excavated and nearby Cooper Site. A small beginning was made at the site and at least two more full seasons are needed to complete significant excavations.

While I cannot presume to report the work of others in the state, I should note that Alan Brew of Bemidji State College worked on late

prehistoric village sites in his region and Richard Lane of St. Cloud State College completed his excavations at the sites in the Sherburne National Wildlife Refuge. It is encouraging to see other state institutions adding field archaeology to their programs. There are innumerable significant archaeology problems in the prehistory of Minnesota and it is essential that the pace of field research be accelerated to at least keep close to the rate of destruction of sites in the state. The best way to accomplish this work is through the addition of research programs in the state and private colleges of Minnesota.

Survey and Salvage Archaeology

Survey of archaeological resources within the Minnesota State Park system continued with efforts concentrated in southeastern Minnesota. A University crew worked in Rice Lake, Sakatah, Helmer Myre, and Forestville State Parks during the latter part of the summer. A report on their results has been forwarded to the Division of State Parks. Gary Hudak, working with Dale Henning in the early summer, surveyed and tested in the important Blue Mound State Park near Luverne. His report has also been forwarded to the Division of State Parks and has also been submitted to the Minnesota Archaeologist for publication. Jan Streiff of the Archaeology Laboratory surveyed two U. S. Army Corps of Engineer projects in Minnesota. The first was the dam and spillway area of the Big Stone-Whetstone project on the upper Minnesota River. While the results in that localized area were negative, the much larger pool area needs to be intensively surveyed and negotiations are underway with the National Park Service to provide funds for that work.

The second survey involving Corps projects was the survey of the Zumbro River outlet below Kellogg, Minnesota, where the Corps will alter and dike the flowage for flood control purposes. Streiff located only two prehistoric burial mounds adjacent to, but not within, the construction area. Henry Langer of the St. Paul District office of the Corps followed through on the report and informed the contractor of the existence of the mounds to prevent any accidental destruction through the movement of heavy equipment or borrow pit activity. Lengthy negotiations were conducted with officers of the Dome Pipeline Corporation of Alberta in an effort to have the company provide funds for an archaeological survey along their proposed right-of-way through Minnesota. An agreement to this effect was reached in late June, with the work to be done by Richard Lane of St. Cloud State College. It became apparent during the negotiations that the Minnesota statutes need revision to require such archaeological survey along proposed utility corridors. A permit is now required from the Department of Natural Resources, but there is no provision for archaeological survey, and we are dependent solely upon the good will of the applicant. Fortunately the officials of Dome exhibited that good will, but their act is not guarantee of similar acts by others in the future. Archaeological survey and salvage along these corridors is as important as similar work on new highway

right-of-way and this requirement should certainly be a designated part of the permit requirements.

The Department of Archaeology in the Minnesota Historical Society has continued its highway survey and salvage work and that department and the Department of Historic Sites have conducted other intensive surveys. Their work is reported separately to Russell Fridley.

Analysis and Publication

Three major analytic and manuscript preparation tasks were completed during the past year. Professor James B. Stoltman of the University of Wisconsin completed his detailed manuscript on the "Laurel Culture in Minnesota" for inclusion in the Prehistoric Archaeology Series. Stoltman's work includes analysis of all major Laurel sites in Minnesota by combining the data from the work of A. E. Jenks and Lloyd A. Wilford with that of his own recent work at the McKinstry and Smith sites in Koochiching County.

Guy Gibbon, University of Illinois, has similarly analyzed the data from several Minnesota Oneota sites using the collections and field notes at the University. A paper on the Sheffield Site in Washington County, a monograph on the Bartron, Silvernale and Bryan sites of Goodhue County, a monograph on the Humphrey and Vosburg sites of Blue Earth County, and a final analytic paper are completed or will be by early fall.

Jan Streiff completely revised and updated the very useful "Roster of Minnesota Archaeological Sites" published in the Prehistoric Archaeology Series at the Minnesota Historical Society.

Work continues on the analysis of Cooper Site data and on the more recent work in Pine County. The completed manuscript on the Arvilla Complex of northwestern Minnesota is scheduled to be published late in 1972.

Several brief papers and talks at professional meetings were also prepared and appear in the following list of manuscripts and publications.

Gibbon, Guy

The Sheffield Site. Manuscript, 1972.

Hudak, Gary W.

Notes on the Archaeology of Blue Mounds State Park. Manuscript submitted to Division of Parks and Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, 1972. (Submitted to Minnesota Archaeologist for publication.)

Jarvenpa, Robert

"Political Entrenchment in an Ojibwa Wild Rice Economy." Journal of the Minnesota Academy of Science, Vol. 37, Nos. 2-3, pp. 66-71, 1971.

"The Wild Rice Gatherers of Rice Lake, Minnesota: a brief note on cultural historical indicators." Minnesota Archaeologist, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 71-105, 1971.

Johnson, Elden

"Parks as Preserves of Prehistory." Conservation Volunteer, Vol. 35, No. 202, pp. 46-49, 1972.

The Gold Island Site (21 LA 2). Manuscript, report submitted to Superior National Forest Supervisor, 1972.

Archaeological Survey and Testing: Big Stone Lake-Whetstone River Service Spillway Outlet. Manuscript submitted to U. S. Army Corps of Engineers and National Park Service, 1972.

"Archaeology and American Indian Protest: Minnesota 1971." Man in the Northeast, No. 2, pp. 89-92, 1971.

"Excavations at the Gull Lake Dam." Minnesota Archaeologist, Vol. 31, No. 2, pp. 44-69, 1971.

Roney, Jan

Archaeological Survey of Sakatah, Rice Lake, Helmer Myre, and Forestville State Parks. Manuscript submitted to Division of Parks and Recreation, Department of Natural Resources, 1972.

Stoltman, James B.

"The Laurel Culture in Minnesota." Prehistoric Archaeology Series, Minnesota Historical Society, 1971 (in press).

"Prismatic Blades from Northern Minnesota." Plains Anthropologist, Vol. 16, No. 52, pp. 105-110, 1971.

Streiff, Jan E.

"Roster of Excavated Prehistoric Sites in Minnesota to 1972." Prehistoric Archaeology Series No. 7, Minnesota Historical Society, 1972.

Archaeological Permits

A permit to John Steinbring, University of Winnipeg, for excavation at the Houska Point Site on Rainy Lake in Koochiching County was extended for one year to permit an additional field season during 1970.

A permit for excavation during the 1971 field season was issued to Edward Lugenbeal, University of Wisconsin-Madison, for excavations in the habitation area of the Smith Site (Grand Mound Site) in Koochiching County. This site is a state historic site, owned by the Minnesota Historical Society. That organization has generously supplied funds to Lugenbeal in support of his work in the knowledge that the excavation results will be of considerable value in future interpretation of the site. A copy of the permit is appended to this report.

Council for Minnesota Archaeology

The Council, composed of the various professional archaeologists in Minnesota and the current president of the Minnesota Archaeological Society, met twice during the past year. The fall meeting was held at St. Cloud State College. Reviews of current research were presented by the members at a session chaired by Professor Richard Lane. The very successful spring field meeting inaugurated last year at Itasca State Park was repeated this spring in southwestern Minnesota. The Sioux Archaeological Society with headquarters in Worthington acted as host for the group numbering over 100 people. A Saturday field tour of sites was led by Lew Hudson of Worthington and Wes Bakker of Westbrook. Blue Mounds State Park at Luverne and the Pipestone National Monument were among the areas visited and in both cases excellent, local walking tours were given. Author Fred Manfred led the Blue Mound tour, and archaeologist Roy Reeves of the National Park Service that at Pipestone. It is extremely encouraging to see the interest and response to these meetings by the public, and plans were laid to hold a larger meeting in the spring of 1973 either at Duluth or in the Red Wing area.

Interpretation

The responsibility of the archaeologist to interpret his results to the public is significant and, unfortunately, often overlooked. The Council field meetings are directed toward meeting these responsibilities as are the publications issued through the Prehistoric Archaeology Series by the Minnesota Historical Society. These responses are important, but only partially fulfill our obligations. Questions of what happens to the materials excavated and requests for access to the collections by interested individuals are numerous. Archaeology really needs to be seen to be understood, and seeing the products of archaeological research at the site or in the region of the excavation is the best way of achieving this understanding. The great success of the Pipestone National Monument museum, and the reconstructions at Grand Portage, the Connor Fur Post, Fort Snelling and Fort Ridgely clearly demonstrate this. That the prehistoric archaeology of the American Indian in Minnesota can

best be presented in this same way is the basic premise of the Division of State Parks and Recreation in the development of interpretation centers focusing on archaeology. Two such centers are now in process of development: one in Big Stone Lake State Park and the other in Mille Lacs-Kathio State Park. Jan Streiff of the University Archaeology Laboratory, undergraduate and graduate students, and myself have been planning these developments with Milton Krona and Ken Sanders on the Division of Parks and Recreation. The initial interpretative units are scheduled to be installed at Big Stone in July 1972 and an on-site interpretative program begun at Mille Lacs-Kathio this same summer. Plans for the units in the Mille Lacs-Kathio structure are nearly complete and Mr. Sanders will develop these this next year. Much additional work will need to be done to complete the Big Stone center as financial restrictions did not allow completion of the entire center.

In the planning of these centers, archaeological materials from the University collections and from local individuals are used, and the entire interpretation is placed in the context of the region. The ecological setting and the ecological interrelations of man and the environment are stressed and form the theme of the interpretation. Thus the archaeology is viewed in the context of the vegetation, fauna, climate, and special geological features of the region.

The entire development of these centers is a voluntary contribution from the archaeologists and students at Minnesota and thus the pace of development is probably slower than would be desirable if a full-time, paid staff were involved. The end product will be significant in adding a new dimension to selected state parks, and we hope that it will form a successful additional response toward fulfilling our obligation to the public.

Other Activities

The Committee on Public Understanding of the Society for American Archaeology was very active this past year in seeking legislation to broaden the participation of the federal government in providing for salvage archaeology and research on federal lands. My correspondence with the members of the Minnesota Congressional delegation indicated a nearly universal interest in this problem and I would like to express my thanks to all of those in the delegation for their responses and their help.

The Scientific and Natural Area Committee of the Commissioner of Natural Resources agreed that archaeological sites should be an integral part of that program and the members are now developing criteria and review processes for archaeological site acquisition.

The review process for nominations of prehistoric archaeological sites to the National Register of Historic Sites continued. This task is undertaken by the Historic Sites Division of the Minnesota Historical

Society for the purpose of identifying significant archaeological/historic sites in Minnesota. Several prehistoric sites have previously been registered and several more have now been nominated.

American Indian Protests and Minnesota Archaeology

Three overt protests against some kinds of prehistoric archaeology occurred during the summer of 1971. All were directed at excavation of what were assumed on the part of the protesters to be prehistoric burial mounds, though this was true in only one of the instances. While every archaeologist who has worked in Minnesota since the 1920's has known and contacted local American Indians resident in the area of a field excavation (and, in fact, many have furnished valuable site information and several, such as at the current Grand Portage project under the direction of Alan Woolworth, have been field crew members) there has been no systematic attempt on the part of the archaeologists to work with American Indians on a state-wide basis. A beginning in this direction was made then; as a result of the protests, I exchanged ideas and information with Artley Skenandore, Executive Director of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission. My letter of 11 August 1971 to Mr. Skenandore suggested, among other things, a set of criteria I apply as State Archaeologist in reviewing any request for an archaeological permit. That letter also pointed out that both Russell Fridley and I attempted to prevent one of the protested excavations before it had begun, but as the excavation took place on privately owned land, we had no official capacity in connection with the work and were not able to prevent the group from excavating. A further suggestion to Mr. Skenandore was to ask the Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission to appoint an advisory committee to the State Archaeologist for review of all projected archaeological work in Minnesota during the succeeding field season. The entire letter is appended to this report.

Mr. Skenandore's reply and our subsequent verbal conversations were positive and at their December 1971 meeting, the Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission did authorize formation of a consulting, advisory committee. Letters of 14 April, 5 May, and 11 June then transmitted to Mr. Skenandore and the committee the information on planned 1972 field excavations in Minnesota and also included a copy of the excavation permit issued by Russell Fridley and myself to Edward Lugenbeal, University of Wisconsin, for work at the habitation area at the Smith Site, Koochiching County.

I should note that most of the planned excavation reported to Mr. Skenandore was scheduled for private land where no state permit is required, but each member of the Council for Minnesota Archaeology volunteered the information on his work and asked that I forward it.

While I would not expect that all questions have been answered or that the mechanics of a communication system have been completely developed, a good start has been made and as the system is perfected, a much

better understanding should emerge. The archaeologists of Minnesota certainly recognize their responsibilities and will make every effort to cooperate with the Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission.

Elden Johnson
State Archaeologist
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota
30 June 1972

(letter appended)

August 11, 1971

Mr. Artley Skenandore, Director
Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission
117 University Avenue
St. Paul, Minnesota 55101

Dear Mr. Skenandore:

I regret that I have not had the opportunity to meet you personally and discuss some of the questions you and others of the Minnesota Indian community have raised about archaeological research in Minnesota. I hope that this lack of personal contact can be remedied in the near future, but in the interval, I would like to offer some comments that may be of use to you and to indicate that I certainly feel that the questions that have been raised through the press and television news are warranted and should be discussed.

As background, I am enclosing a copy of the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act of 1963, amended slightly in later sessions. You will note that the Minnesota Historical Society acts as the administrative agent for this act and that the State Archaeologist is given a specific series of duties and responsibilities. Among the latter are responsibilities to conduct archaeological research, to interpret the results of this research, to aid in the protection and preservation of archaeological sites, and to evaluate proposals for research on state lands. You will also note that archaeological materials obtained through research are the property of the state.

It is also important to know that there are three broad classes of land ownership in Minnesota and that each class contains archaeological sites although only one class is subject to any control by the state. These classes include federal lands, state or smaller governmental unit lands, and private lands. Sites on federal lands are subject to the rigid federal antiquities act which demands a valid permit authorized by the Secretary of the Interior and the Smithsonian Institution. Neither the Minnesota Historical Society nor the State Archaeologist have any control or authority regarding archaeological research on federal lands. State (or county, township, village, etc.) lands are subject to the provisions of the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act which requires application to the Director of the Minnesota Historical Society for an excavation permit. My role as State Archaeologist is to evaluate the proposed research and the qualifications of the archaeologist and thus accept or reject the application. Private lands are subject to no control other than the interest

and conscience of the land owner. Anyone, be he archaeologist, pot-hunter, rock hound, or Sunday picnicker, may excavate on private land subject only to the permission of the land owner. You will note that the Minnesota Field Archaeology Act recognizes this unfortunate fact and states that it is the intent of the legislature that private holders of such lands will voluntarily comply with the standards required for excavation on state lands. I should add that most private land holders do comply and are cooperative when informed of the provisions of the state act.

Finally, I should note that the Minnesota Historical Society, professional archaeologists at the University and in other institutions have long worked to protect and preserve important archaeological sites in Minnesota. The Society now holds three important prehistoric sites in public ownership--sites that would have been destroyed in the near future through private construction activities. The Society, the University, and all other institutions engaged in archaeological research in this state hold all excavated materials, field notes, and associated data in perpetuity. The University collections, for example, contain today every excavated item from Minnesota archaeological sites. These are never sold, bartered, or traded. All are held in public trust for future interpretation and as valuable historical collections.

I am in sympathy with most of the statements attributed to you by the news media. I personally agree that archaeological sites should not be excavated just because they are there, that digging prehistoric burial mounds just to be digging a mound is not justified, and that there is far too much looting of archaeological sites in Minnesota. I am sure, for example, that neither Mr. Fridley nor I would have approved issuing a permit for the Welch excavation had this been on state land and an application been necessary. We both, in fact, protested the project when we first learned of it and insisted on greater care and supervision when it became clear that the project could not be abandoned at that late date.

I would suggest that the only legitimate field archaeology is that which falls under one or more of these three categories: 1) problem-directed, carefully controlled and supervised excavation, 2) archaeological site survey and testing to locate sites not on record, and 3) archaeological salvage of important sites doomed to destruction through human or natural activities. This means that I would not consider as legitimate excavations for the sole purpose of finding "artifacts" excavations for the sole purpose of training students, or for the old-fashioned purpose, "its fun to get out in the field in the summer." Significant problems in American Indian culture history exist in Minnesota and full scale excavations should be directed toward these. When student training is necessary, it should be done in the context of this sort of problem-directed excavation and under careful, responsible supervision and direction. Archaeological site survey is a necessary corrolary of this, for selection of a site for careful work and in the framework of a significant culture historical problem necessitates knowledge of the location and range of sites in the region

concerned. We have records of over 2,500 such sites in Minnesota and each year add to that corpus of information and yet I would guess that we know of fewer than 15% of the archaeological sites that do exist in this state. Archaeological salvage is very important for through this method, valuable information is saved from the path of the bulldozer. The rate of destruction of archaeological sites in Minnesota is incredible and our combined efforts at salvage hardly dent the total.

The press has also attributed to you the feeling that all archaeological research in Minnesota should be stopped for field excavation now merely duplicates what is already known and contributes little or nothing. If this quotation is correct, I am afraid that here I would disagree strongly. I could list many examples of significant questions of American Indian culture history that remain unanswered but which can be answered through archaeological research, but let me mention just a few. The Cheyenne through their own traditions moved from the Minnesota region, where they were village farmers, to the Plains, where they became bison hunters. At this time, we cannot relate any known Minnesota archaeological complex to the Cheyenne. We do not know where they lived, what their culture was at the time they lived here, nor what their prehistoric relationships to the Dakota and Cree may have been. To answer these questions through archaeological research would add an important dimension to Cheyenne culture history. I might add that both the Mandan and Hidatsa have similar traditions and present data are as obscure.

We have been working on the problem of the significance of intensive wild rice utilization in the prehistoric period and the impact this has had on the growth of population and the establishment of permanent villages. This research is still in progress but our preliminary information suggests that this took place sometime around 600 to 800 A.D. and this was a local innovation. If this latter is true, this discovery is of great significance and parallels the earlier discovery of agriculture further south in Middle America.

Many more problems of this nature could be mentioned, but I will only enclose our recent report on the Itasca Bison Site to give you an illustration of the kinds of research going on in Minnesota. This report documents a very early (5,500-7,500 B.C.) hunting pattern that formed a part of the culture base from what the historic Plains Indian bison hunting systems arose.

Finally, I should add that I personally am in complete sympathy with the aims of many American Indians to destroy the inaccurate stereotypes that have existed, and to instill a strong sense of pride in being an Indian among your people. The archaeological record of the Americas is a record of incredible human achievement--something of which any human being, Indian or not, should be immensely proud. It is a culture historical record in which the Minnesota excavations figure significantly and it is a record known only because of archaeological research. Just as a brief synopsis of the Minnesota record for laymen and school children, the Society has recently published the enclosed booklet on Minnesota prehistory.

I am very interested in cooperating with you and the members of the Minnesota Indian Affairs Commission in any way possible. If the Commission would appoint a representative group from the various Minnesota Indian communities to serve as an advisory committee to the State Archaeologist, I would be very pleased. I really do not see the goals of responsible archaeologists and the members of the Minnesota Indian communities in conflict but rather as potentially reinforcing and mutually beneficial.

Please call on me at any time for additional information or comments.

Sincerely,

Elden Johnson
State Archaeologist

EJ:ml
Enc.
CC:Russell Fridley