During the winter of 1997/1998, we surveyed three areas of the Washita River basin in Garvin County. Richard Drass, Valli Powell and Kris Dobschuetz, with the occasional assistance of volunteers, examined just over four square miles along the river and Rush Creek as part of a grant from the National Park Service and the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Office. The goal of the survey was to evaluate the types of archeological resources and their distribution in the Washita River basin in Garvin County. A particular emphasis was on the distribution of Late Prehistoric villages to test a settlement model.

One area surveyed was near the junction of Rush Creek and the river, a second was along the river and uplands near Maysville, and the third was along parts of Rush Creek west of Pauls Valley. These were chosen to examine different settings including uplands and terraces near the river and a major tributary, Rush Creek, away from the river. The project resulted in the examination of 46 sites and 21 isolated finds. Thirteen of these sites were previously recorded, but had not been examined by archeologists in some time. Sites included 10 with historic components, 16 with historic and prehistoric materials, and 20 with principally prehistoric components. Scattered items discovered during the survey were listed as isolated finds; these ranged from a few flakes to an isolated projectile point to a scatter of historic ceramics.

Most historic sites are farmsteads related to early Euro-American settlement after 1890. However, a few sites could be associated with earlier settlement of the area by southeastern Indian groups removed to Oklahoma in the 1830s. An early Cherokee town site was relocated along with a river crossing for an early road through the area. A cemetery in the same area relates to Choctaws who settled here in the late 1800s. Another interesting site is an early farmstead reported to be one of the homes of Wiley Post's parents. This farm near Maysville includes a barn where Wiley Post stored his plane. Most of the historic sites no longer have standing structures, and many of them have been bulldozed and the fields plowed. Historic site densities range from 3.1 per square mile in the Rush Creek area to 8.6 per square mile in the Pauls Valley area. Farmsteads are found on terraces and ridges near the river, but only on upland areas near Rush Creek. Prehistoric sites examined during the survey range from Archaic to Late Prehistoric in age and include large villages, large base camps, small camps, and lithic workshops. The earliest site is a Middle Archaic, Calf Creek occupation (roughly 5000 years old) on a ridge north of the Washita River. Collectors have a number of Calf Creek points made from Frisco chert, and we found many Frisco chert flakes and pieces of debitage on the surface of this site. A Late Archaic and Woodland period base camp is situated on a ridge overlooking Rush Creek and a small hearth was
found eroding from this site. Lithic workshops are sites where Ogallala quartzite and miscellaneous cherts were tested and initially reduced for transport to other camps. These workshops were only identified in the uplands near Rush Creek, but similar workshops are reported from upland areas near the Washita River. Five villages have been identified in the survey zones, and all of these relate to Late Prehistoric farmers. Three of these were previously recorded, but had not been visited by archeologists. All of the villages are large and there is evidence of extensive occupation. We were able to obtain subsurface information from two of these villages, 34GV6 and 34GV264. One village, 34GV264, was exposed in the cut terrace bank, and we recorded over 10 features exposed in profile. These features were all cleaned and profiled, and samples of soil were taken for flotation or screened for artifacts. Radiocarbon dates and artifacts indicate primarily a Washita River phase occupation, about A.D. 1250-1450. The features include cylindrical pits about one meter in diameter, large pits over two meters in diameter, an ash filled hearth, and a probable post mold. This site is rapidly being destroyed by movement of the river.

The second tested village, 34GV6, was recorded in 1951, but was never visited by archeologists. During our examination of the site, we observed dark stains on the slopes of the river terrace. Subsurface testing of a few of these stains revealed middens and two pits, one cylindrical and one bell-shaped. A charcoal sample from the bell-shaped pit dates to the Paoli phase, roughly A.D. 1000-1250, but artifacts from the site seem to indicate occupation also extended later into the Washita River phase.

The other villages were not tested during this project, but previous work at two, 34GV23 and 34GV43, has supplied dates indicating Paoli and Washita River phase occupations, respectively. Although our survey only discovered five villages, the survey included a relatively small portion of the terraces where these villages are commonly found. Examination of the site files for Garvin County indicate that 52 other villages are known in this county. These villages all occur on terraces in the river valley or on ridge toes adjacent to the river. Villages are generally within 50 meters of the river. For all reported villages in the county, village density is 1.2 per river mile. Village densities for river terrace settings surveyed during this project are as high as 7.3 per river mile. This is probably too high, because the sample area surveyed is relatively small. However, there is evidence that many terraces have been subject to flooding and movement of the river. For example, the features and most artifacts are buried at 34GV264, and are exposed principally in the eroding river bank. Similar buried villages are recorded in other settings along the river and partially destroyed sites are documented throughout the river basin. Thus, the density of villages in the survey area suggests that further survey and subsurface testing of other terrace and ridge settings along the river might reveal many more Late Prehistoric villages.
The most common prehistoric site type defined for the study area is camps. Most of the 19 camps are defined by small scatters of material, although several of these cover large areas. These sites are found on terraces and upland ridges. Some could represent buried base camps or villages which have only a few items exposed. Evidence of buried cultural deposits along terraces suggests that subsurface testing is needed to better define most sites classified as camps. Deep sandy soils in some upland settings may also contain buried cultural deposits. In addition, deeply buried soils, some over two meters deep, on terraces indicate that camps over 1000 years old will be difficult to identify in the valley without extensive, deep testing and careful documentation of eroding river banks and other exposures that reveal deep soil deposits.

Richard Drass

**Archaeological Field School in Beckham County**

The 1998 Archaeological Field School at the Certain Site (34BK46) near Elk City, Oklahoma has come to an end. Under the direction of Survey archeologists Lee Bement and Kent Buehler, this year’s field school consisted of six undergraduate students from OU, one undergraduate from the University of Ohio, one graduate assistant from OU, and a volunteer from OSU. The excavations centered on Trench C where numerous episodes of arroyo kills and butchering occurred during the end of the Late Archaic (ca. 1800 years ago). The kill deposits in the adjacent gully of Trench F provided comparative information for additional kills and butchering episodes. A trench was cut between these two arroyos to provide a view of the high ground between gullies where it was suspected that additional camp and butchering tasks may have been conducted. The connecting trench (Trench J) showed that any materials from activities on the high ground had been washed into the gullies. The paucity of camp debris along the margins of the gullies adds to the growing body of evidence that little camping was associated with the kill events. Apparently, the hunters stayed just long enough to butcher the animals and then packed up everything from meat to hides to return to a camp located some distance from the kill site. Late Archaic age camps are known along major spring fed drainages to the west and north.

Additional work was conducted at the bottom of the cliff in the main canyon. Bones were found at the base of the cliff last summer. These were radiocarbon dated to be 300-400 years older than the bones in the arroyo kills. This summer, we recovered four resharpening flakes and an elongated, rough bifacial butchering tool from this deposit, confirming the cultural hand in creating these deposits. In addition, we found another bison bonebed some two meters deeper than the first. Although little excavation has been accomplished in this lower bonebed, we did recover a flint chip, suggesting it too is the result of a bison jump. We will continue to investigate this important area of the site. The two deposits at the base of the cliff make the Certain site the second confirmed bison jump on the southern Plains. Bonfire Shelter in southwestern Texas is the only other known bison jump on the southern Plains. All other bison kills employed dead end gullies or perhaps other trapping methods, or were the result of ambush hunting.
Three projectile points were found in the arroyo trap areas of trenches C and F. These points are identical in form to others found at the Certain site and other Late Archaic sites in western Oklahoma and the Texas panhandle. Defining characteristics of the projectiles include large blades with convex edges, shallow side notches located very near the basal end, and straight to convex bases. Although somewhat similar to the defined Marcos dart point style, these projectiles are from sites dated much later in time. The Certain site points are made from Ogallala quartzite.

Other lithics from Certain include very small resharpening flakes indicating the butchers stopped and sharpened their butchering knives as needed. We hope to find a discarded knife at the site. So far we have only one possible knife that may have been made on a broken projectile point. The lack of discarded knives indicates these people were very frugal with their tools.

Lee Bement

Oklahoma’s First OAS Certified Archeologist a Survey Volunteer

Survey volunteer Dave Morgan recently garnered another first — he was the first person to complete the Oklahoma Anthropological Society’s certification program. Dave was awarded his certificate for completion of Level 4 (OAS Certified Archeologist) at the Society’s Spring Meeting in Lawton on April 25. He started to work toward his goal shortly before his retirement from the U.S. Postal Service in 1992. In order to attain this goal, he finished all of the specified levels, which included attending seminars, doing archeological fieldwork both under professional supervision and semi-independently, supervising others in fieldwork, and writing reports on the work he had done. The Survey staff presented Dave with a small present as a token of their appreciation for the effort he has made in gaining new information about Oklahoma archeology.

Lois Albert

OAS Spring Dig at the Kubik Site, 34KA354

Between May 23rd and June 1st, the Oklahoma Anthropological Society 1998 Spring Dig was carried out at the middle Holocene-age Kubik Site (34KA354) in Kay County near Newkirk, Oklahoma. The dig seemed to ignite what has become a very warm and dry summer, as “spring time” temperatures soared well into the 90s each day of the dig, and the damp clay loam soil baked quickly to pellets suitable for use in a slingshot! Nevertheless, some thirty die hard OAS members opened and excavated twelve 2x2 meter squares to expose and recover spear points, scrapers, preforms, debris flakes, flake tools and fireplaces ranging from an estimated 2,000 years old to possibly more than 7,000 years old. In one of five backhoe trenches dug to study soil and terrace formation a large and very deep fireplace was located. This trench was expanded, and two sequential hearths separated by nearly six feet of accumulated sediment were exposed. Charcoal, burned and some unburned animal bone, and identifiable burned plant remains were recovered, especially from the deepest feature found nearly 12 feet below ground surface. The artifacts recovered from this deepest deposit were not useful in helping us date the feature, but we are in the process of liberating the charcoal from its clay loam matrix for radiocarbon dating and identification of plants where possible.

From the excavated units we recovered materials and a fireplace relating to the Late Archaic (about 2,000 years old), but charcoal for dating is very sparse and of uncertain origin. In two of the squares, we reached the Calf Creek levels, and from one of those a pile of flake debris and a discarded biface, a Calf Creek base, a possible fireplace with small amounts of charcoal, and bison bone were recovered. In two other squares, reopened from excavations in the spring of 1996, we had left one meter by one meter blocks and these were excavated very meticulously, mapping in place all recovered materials to better enable us to understand the site stratigraphy.

These and two other squares from the 1996 excavations were cleaned out, and their deposits below Calf Creek from level 17 to 25 were excavated. Some of these squares...
revealed flakes and an occasional burned rock between levels 22 and 25. This confirmed the information in the creek bank profile made in 1996 and the stratigraphic profiles in the backhoe trenches. It is possible that this occupation could be the same age as the large deep fireplace in the backhoe trench, but no artifacts of known age were found in the deposits. Stratigraphically, the flakes of the deep squares are above and just into a soil layer with much calcium carbonate, and the same stratigraphic setting is present where the large fireplace was exposed. However, because of slope and ground water and possible differences in the soil accretion process from one area to the other, these may not be the same age. It will require further analysis, and possibly further excavations, to determine if there is a relationship between the deeper deposits of the two areas.

Some of the excavated materials have been cleaned and cataloged, but much remains to be processed for analysis. We need to obtain radiocarbon dates from the features and stratigraphy of the site, including trying a new method of dating called OCR (oxidizable carbon ratio), where remnant carbon is compared to soil chemistry to determine the rate of chemical change in carbon in the soil. This provides an estimate of age. This technique would be very useful where charcoal is not preserved in features, giving at least a relative date within a soil column. Most of our radiocarbon dates will be small sample size accelerator dates (AMS), which cost at least twice as much as regular carbon dates, so anyone wishing to contribute to the cause would be much appreciated. We will be continuing the processing as time, money, and lab personnel permits, with the final aim of combining two seasons of excavations in a single report.

Our thanks to landowners and OAS members Jeff, Lisa, Ross, and Matt Kubik for their hospitality and participation in making the Spring Dig a success.  

Larry Neal

Survey Hosts Open House at the Certain Site

Approximately 75 people braved high temperatures and dusty winds for an afternoon of burgers and bones at the Certain site. Sponsored by the Survey and hosted by staff archeologists Kent Buehler and Lee Bement, visitors were treated to a lunch of buffalo burgers, followed by a tour of one of the largest bison kills in the Southern Plains. The site is part of a long term excavation and research project and was again the location for an OU archeological field school (see related article, this issue). Guests included local business people, political leaders and historians, as well as University of Oklahoma administrators, representatives from state and national government offices, and members of the Oklahoma Anthropological Society.

Following the lunch, visitors were taken on a guided tour of the site. The tour covered most of the site’s major kill and processing areas, including the current excavations. People were able to see hundreds of bison bones still in place as they were being excavated, and were told how the bison were captured, killed and butchered. They were also given the history of the site’s discovery and of the ongoing research.

It was also a chance for the Survey staff to become better acquainted with the members of the local communities who have been so helpful to us in our research endeavors, and a chance to say “thank you for your interest and support”. Special thanks go to Richard, Rodney and Roger Givens, to The Butcher Shop in Clinton (buffalo burgers), and to Pool Well Services of Elk City for their loan of a really big charcoal cooker.  

Kent Buehler

Oklahoma Archeological Survey at the Oklahoma State Fair

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!! The Oklahoma Archeological Survey, in cooperation with the State Historic Preservation Office, will host a booth at the 1998 State Fair of Oklahoma. Volunteers from the Survey, the SHPO office, and the Oklahoma Anthropological Society will staff the booth, located in the Outdoor Adventure Building, during the 17 days of the fair, which runs from September 18 through October 4. This will allow us to share information about Oklahoma’s archeology, and the preservation of our cultural heritage with thousands of Oklahomans. We hope to see you there.  

Lisa Whitman

Donations to the Survey Library

During the fall of 1997, the Archeological Survey received the library of James Craig, a long time member of the Oklahoma Anthropological Society. Mrs. Virginia Craig graciously donated her late husband’s collection of books and monographs on archeology and anthropology. Mr. Craig’s library contained approximately 75 volumes from authors such as Paul S. Martin, Phillips and Brown, C. W. Ceram, Waldo Wedel, and Marie Wormington. There were also numerous other works on the Southwest, the Plains, and Native Americans.
In the spring of 1998, through the Department of Anthropology Graduate Student Association, the Survey also acquired a sizable portion of Dr. Joe Whitecotton’s library. Dr. Whitecotton is planning to retire in the near future and had given part of his library to the AGSA. The Graduate Student Association wanted the collection to remain together and approached the Survey about donating it. Instead, the Survey purchased Dr. Whitecotton’s library at what might have been gained from the student book sale. This portion of Dr. Whitecotton’s library consists of some 320 volumes on archeology, physical anthropology, ethnology, and linguistics.

The almost 400 additions to the Survey library will be a valuable source of new information for students, professionals, and avocationalists. We sincerely appreciate the generosity of Mrs. Craig and the Anthropology Graduate Student Association in making these collections available to the Survey. As with our other library holdings, they are accessible in the Survey during normal working hours. It is our hope that we will be able to continue this program of library acquisitions, eventually building the Survey library as a resource for use by the anthropological and archeological community.

Robert L. Brooks

**Renowned Anthropologist to Present Lecture at OU**

On Thursday, October 1, physical anthropologist Richard Leakey will present a lecture, “The Origins of Man”, on the University of Oklahoma campus. This event will take place in the Meacham Auditorium (in the Student Union) at 5:30 p.m. Leakey is well known for his work, both with his parents, Louis and Mary Leakey, and independently, at early man sites in eastern Africa.