Over the past 15 – 20 years, survey and planning efforts supported through the Statewide Preservation Program have been an important part of the Archeological Survey’s initiative to record and preserve archaeological sites. With matching funds provided by the Oklahoma Historical Society and the National Park Service, we have examined areas from playa lakebeds in Beaver and Texas counties to the gulf coastal plain of McCurtain County and cultural contexts ranging from Folsom to historic Cherokee. In federal FY 1999, the Survey is receiving support for three proposals submitted this spring.

**Lee Bement** will receive $20,322 for a survey of bison kill sites in Washita and Beckham counties and preparation of a National Register nomination for the Certain Bison kill site in Beckham County. Lee’s survey entails an examination of some three square miles between Sandstone Creek and the North Fork of the Red River. **Richard Drass** and **Susan Vehik** of the Department of Anthropology will receive $24,928 for an archaeological survey of the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River basin in north-central Oklahoma. **Rich** and **Susan** plan to survey four square miles along the Salt Fork in Grant and Kay counties. **Larry Neal** and **Dave Morgan**, an OAS member, will receive $15,745 for an archaeological survey of the Packsaddle Bridge Wildlife Management Area. Larry and Dave’s project involves a continuation of previous Anthropological Society work at Packsaddle Bridge WMA and includes the examination of four square miles of the wildlife management area north of the Canadian River.

Funding support from OHS/NPS allows Archeological Survey researchers to continue their work in these highly important areas. This year, we are also fortunate to have formed partnerships with the Department of Anthropology and the Oklahoma Anthropological Society in conducting these field investigations.

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**Robert L. Brooks**

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**Oklahoma Tornadoes**

On May 3rd, many Oklahomans were devastated by the numerous tornados that ripped through the state. As the televisions and newspapers reported photos and videos of the destruction, we became aware that all of the storm debris would need to be hauled away and much of it buried -- possibly impacting historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. When President Clinton declared the area a federal disaster, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was brought in to assist the individuals and communities. Emergency meetings were held with the FEMA Environmental Officer, a representative from the
Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality, the US Army Corp of Engineer’s chief environmental compliance officer and their archaeologists, and Survey staff archaeologist Marjy Duncan. We met to discuss the problems of the tornado debris staging, sorting, and disposal sites. A one-page State/Federal application was produced for communities to use in order to keep them in compliance with State and Federal environmental and historic preservation laws and allow them to be reimbursed by the federal government for their tornado-related expenses. To date, we have assisted numerous communities by surveying their proposed emergency debris disposal sites and verifying that no archaeological sites will be impacted. 

Marjy Duncan

OU Archeological Field School

at the Odessa Yates Site

This summer Scott Brosowske and Lee Bement conducted an archeological field school at the Odessa Yates site (34BV100), a large Plains Village site in the eastern part of the Oklahoma panhandle. This summer’s work was co-sponsored by the Anthropology Department and the Oklahoma Archeological Survey of the University of Oklahoma, and marks the second year of ongoing investigations at the site. A crew of nine students (Jennifer Barbara, Casey Carmichael, Jethro Gaede, Royal Ghazal, Sara Naegli, Kim Schwab, Scott Sundermeyer, Heather Szarka, and Denyse Wyskup) worked on exposing three pithouses and one large pit feature at the site from June 1 to July 8. Additional volunteers from the Survey, the Anthropology Department, and the local community also assisted in the excavations. This work at Odessa Yates and its outlying sites is part of Scott’s dissertation research, which examines the interrelationship between long-distance exchange, economic specialization, and the development of hierarchical organization in Plains Village society.

Odessa Yates represents one of the largest sites currently recorded in the state (approximately 100 acres). Our knowledge of this important site stems from the Survey’s 1997-98 Playa Project, which, in part, made attempts to contact local artifact collectors of Beaver and Texas counties and document their collections. While working with the local collectors, Odessa Yates and several other related sites were recorded in southern Beaver County. Combined, these sites are unique for the region in that they are characterized by an absence of stone architecture, high percentages of decorated ceramics, lithic assemblages with 15 to 30% Niobrara or Smoky Hills jasper, use of pithouse style dwellings, and active involvement in interregional exchange. Although this series of sites remains undated at this time, projectile point styles and ceramic types suggest a tentative date of occupation between A.D. 1100 and 1450.

Typically, locating and excavating house structures at a Plains Village site lacking stone architecture requires a great deal of time and luck. To facilitate this task, Archaeo-Physics Ltd. of Minneapolis, Minnesota was hired to conduct a geophysical survey using a gradiometer and soil resistance meter at Odessa Yates in June of 1998. This initial survey covered some 7200 square meters and was successful in identifying several resistance and associated magnetic anomalies thought to represent house structures. Coring and test excavations carried out later that summer confirmed the presence of four prehistoric structures, each roughly five meters in diameter. This summer, Archaeo-Physics Ltd. completed an additional 18,000 square meters of resistance and magnetic survey. Currently, at least 15 pithouses have been identified at Odessa Yates, even though less than 5% of the total site has been surveyed. The houses located thus far form three discrete clusters, each containing four to six pithouses. Although it isn’t certain at this time, each cluster may represent the rebuilding of dwellings over time by individual families. This summer’s fieldwork examined three pithouses from two of these clusters.

Most of the work focused on the excavation of one of the pithouses identified last summer, designated as Pasture House #1. A total of 42 contiguous, 1 x 1 m units were completely excavated this field season to expose this structure. This pithouse was roughly oval in shape (4 x 5 m) and the floor would have been approximately one meter below the aboriginal ground surface. Two shallow pits, both accessible from inside the house, were present along the southeastern and western sides of the structure. Small post molds, six cm in diameter, were discovered around much of the house perimeter, including the antechamber pits.
Although three larger roof support posts were identified on the interior house floor, only two appear to have been used at any one time. No clear entryway was present at this pithouse, suggesting that access may have been gained through the roof. Post-abandonment fill in this house consisted of alternating periods of colluvial and aeolian deposition and irregular trash dumping episodes. Artifacts recovered from within the house fill include abundant faunal remains (e.g., bison, antelope, deer, turtle, dog or coyote, and various small mammals), Washita and Fresno projectile points, end scrapers, diamond beveled knives, lithic debris, mussel shell, scapula hoes, tibia digging sticks, bone awls, and cordmarked and plain ceramics. Although nonlocal items from elsewhere on the Plains were recovered (e.g., Niobrara jasper and Edwards chert), no materials originating from the Southwest were found.

A large, amorphous resistance and magnetic anomaly, located in a second cluster of houses, was also examined this summer, but not completely excavated. Testing of this anomaly consisted of excavating one backhoe trench and 15-1 x 1 m test units to provide north-south and east-west profile trenches of the feature. Work in this area identified the presence of two overlapping pithouses and a large storage pit-like feature. Both of these pithouses appeared to be more or less the same size and depth below ground surface as Pasture House #1. Irregular dumping episodes within the fill of each of these houses also contained cultural materials similar to that encountered at Pasture House #1. Interestingly, although no southwestern materials were associated with Pasture House #1, small amounts of obsidian were recovered in every unit excavated in this area. The large storage pit feature, in particular, contained a fair amount of southwestern trade items, including two sherds, one obsidian Washita point, and one turquoise bead fragment.

While trade goods are common at all of the study sites, Odessa Yates clearly stands alone in terms of the sheer number and variety of trade goods that are present, suggesting that it functioned as a regional trade center. These items demonstrate contact with groups from the Southwest, and the Northern, Central, and Southern Plains. Nonlocal items recovered include several thousand pieces of obsidian, turquoise beads and pendants, hundreds of Olivella shell beads, Mimbres Valley greenstone, conch shell, mica, catlinite and non-catlinite pipestone, southwestern ceramics, and a wide variety of nonlocal lithic materials. Preliminary analyses appear to indicate variation in the spatial distribution of exotic materials at Odessa Yates. These patterns may suggest either increasing interregional trade through time or that individual families may have controlled access to certain exotic trade items. To answer this question, investigation at the household level is being examined.

Overall, this was a very successful field season. Currently, the processing of recovered materials is already under way and dates from the site should be available sometime later this fall. Another season of fieldwork at the site is planned for next summer.

Acknowledgements: I wish to thank all of the students and volunteers for their hard work this summer. In particular, Lee Bement deserves special credit for his guidance and input this summer. I also thank the Department of Anthropology and the Oklahoma Archeological Survey, University of Oklahoma, for their support of the fieldwork. Additional thanks go out to Forest and Ellen Yates, Randy Cates, Harold and June Kachel, Kimmie and Becky Karber, Russel and Mary Tibbetts, Steve Parker, and several others for all of their hospitality. The continuing interest, support, and cooperation of

Pasture House #1 at the Odessa Yates site (34BV100).
the local community is nothing short of amazing and is greatly appreciated. I look forward to additional fieldwork in Beaver County next summer.

Scott Brosowske

Survey Library Growing

As many of you know, Dr. Joe Whitecotton has retired from the Anthropology Department at the University of Oklahoma. Last year, he donated a sizable number of his books to the Anthropology Graduate Student Association who, in turn, sold them to the Survey. The graduate students and the Survey staff did not want to see his collection divided and sold, and it was decided that the Survey would purchase them and house them as a collection to be used by students, faculty, and staff.

This year, he has generously contributed more of his anthropology library along with numerous journals to our library. We are fortunate to have received such journals as *American Antiquity*, *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Southwest Journal of Anthropology* (now *Journal of Anthropological Research*), *Ethnology*, *Ethnohistory*, and *American Ethnologist*. Many of these sets of journals date back to the late 1950s and are invaluable in much of our research. In addition to the journals, we have received several hundred more archaeology and anthropology books. We extend our sincere appreciation to Dr. Whitecotton for his generous donation.

Marjy Duncan

Museum of the Red River
23rd Anniversary and Grand Reopening

At long last, the construction of the new and improved Museum of the Red River in Idabel, Oklahoma is complete and exhibits are being installed. Patrons and donors to the Museum were treated to a sneak preview of the upcoming exhibits and the improved, enlarged galleries from Friday, June 25th through Sunday, June 27th upon the occasion of the museum’s 23rd anniversary. On the evening of the 25th, a black-tie-optional reception was held for some 150 donors to the museum improvements. The reception included a light supper, live Andean music by *Vision Andina*, and a tour of the new galleries. On Saturday and Sunday, the museum was open to the public, and entertainment included live Andean music, performance by the Choctaw Dancers from Durant demonstrating traditional social dances, and six competition fancy dancers. The Idabel Rotary Club was on hand with a “chuckwagon” serving hot dogs, nachos, hamburgers, and soft drinks. Over 1000 adults and children visited the museum through the weekend. The Museum of the Red River will return to regular hours of operation on August 3, 1999 (10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday). The museum is located at 812 East Lincoln Road in Idabel (along the south bypass).

Larry Neal

Newsletter editors: Lois Albert and Marjy Duncan