



Mercer County Historical Society Newsletter

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Editor: Mary Jane Sticklen

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Mercer County Historical Society & Essley-Noble Museum

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Hours

April – Oct: Wed, Sat, Sun 1-5:00pm
Nov - March: Saturdays 12:00-4:00pm



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For Genealogy Queries write to:

MCHS Genealogy Dept.
PO Box 269
Aledo IL 61231-2504



Please address all correspondence to:
PO Box 269

"Mail is no longer delivered to the museum
building."

Memberships available for \$15/household

For membership or change of address contact:

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Aledo, IL 61231
309-582-7762



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Hampton Indian Artifact Collection

Recently the Essley-Noble Museum has received a wonderful donation of Indian artifacts once owned by Wayne Hampton. Through consultation with state archaeologists most of the items have been identified and can now be put on display for the appreciation and education of visitors to the museum. The following narrative briefly describes the periods during which these points and tools were made.

Through most of human history, the region around Mercer County was a mix of forest and prairie where numerous archaeological sites have been found. These sites provide unique perspectives about 12,000 years of human existence within the region. The Wayne Hampton collection includes artifacts that span this 12,000 year period.

After the last glacial retreat, the first Native Americans moved into the mixed spruce and deciduous forests that were developing across the region. Little is known of these early PaleoIndian hunters and gatherers because their small numbers and roaming life left little indication of their existence, some 10,000 to 12,000 years ago. Aside from the discovery of a few of their fluted spearpoints, little evidence of PaleoIndian activity in the region is found. Still, the Hampton collection has five artifacts from the PaleoIndian period.

By 8000 BC, or 10,000 years ago, life had begun to change as the climate became warmer and drier. Over the next several thousand years, called the Archaic period, upland forests were gradually replaced by prairies, and a wide variety of new plants and animals became available. Humans responded to these changes by becoming more settled and adapting their lives to exploit the new environments. Their numbers increased to a level ten times that of the previous PaleoIndian period, and they occupied almost every available ecological niche. Most items in the Hampton collection are artifacts from this Archaic period, some 3,000 to 10,000 years ago.

Late in the Archaic period, the appearance of the distinctive Red Ocher mortuary practices and the arrival of Marion phase people (who developed the first pottery) marked the start of a new lifestyle called Woodland. Soon other early Woodland people, called

Black Sand, made their appearance. Unfortunately, little is known about either group, since none of their sites have been adequately investigated. There is one Red Ocher and several other Early Woodland artifacts in the Hampton collection

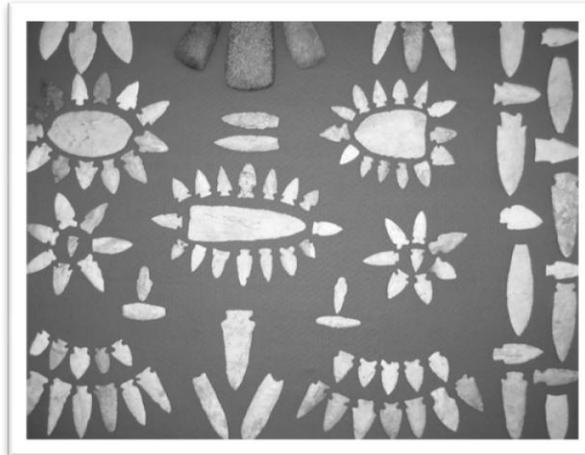
By 200 BC, or 2,200 years ago, starchy seed plants were being cultivated by Woodland people as their numbers increased. In some areas, these Middle Woodland people lived in homes grouped around large centers of substantial earthen mounds that contained graves of important people placed in log tombs. Elaborate expressions of material wealth, often obtained through long-distance trade, were placed as offerings with important dead. Their art forms rank among the finest ever produced in the Americas. Wide communication and trade networks connected people of the region with similar groups throughout the Midcontinent. There are several Middle Woodland projectile points in the collection.

By 300 AD, or 1,700 years ago, elaborate burials were disappearing, and the highly developed art forms that had distinguished the Middle Woodland faded away. Long distance trade diminished, and ceramic forms became simpler with the appearance of Weaver ware. For the first time in six centuries, habitation sites were again scattered over the landscape as subsistence patterns changed. The period between 500 AD and 1100 AD was characterized by widespread population movement, refining of gardening techniques, and social adjustment called Late Woodland. Maples Mills people inhabited the region. By 800 AD, corn was added to their gardens, which began to rely less heavily on native plants. This was the first of a series of changes probably generated by contact with a distant cultural center called Cahokia that would forever change the Woodland culture. There are 5 Maples Mills points in the collection as well as a few other Late Woodland points.

Ancient Cahokia, near the present East St. Louis, was well on its way to becoming a bustling metropolis by the end of the Late Woodland period. Within a few generations, its people would develop a distinctive culture called Mississippian, and Cahokia's population would explode into the largest Indian city north of Mexico. By 1100 AD, Mississippian people began to move out of the Cahokia region up the Mississippi River valley, introducing new lifestyles. This movement featured exotic religious expressions, rigid forms of social control, and a vast array of new

technologies. Mississippian artifacts in the collection include celts as well as points.

Increased Mississippian populations led to heavier reliance on cultivated plants and, although native plants were still being grown and collected, gardening gradually gave way to fields devoted to the production of corn and some squash. Soon beans were added to the crops. Despite greater availability of food, population consolidation and poor diet selection caused disease to become more prevalent, and the general health of the population began to deteriorate. Competition for land and resources brought about social unrest, and evidence of warfare increased from 1200 to 1300 AD. The population of the region declined, leaving little evidence of their presence.



Although no sites have been recorded of people who used the area during the nearly three centuries between 1300 AD and the arrival of the first Europeans, later Indian groups, principally the Sauk and Fox, used the region from the early 1700s until their removal in 1832. There is one metal point in the collection that may have been left during the time when recognized Indian tribes inhabited the area.

Thank you to Bill Bertrand for the above narrative. More information is forthcoming about the individual artifacts and an interpretive display is being developed. Also, more information in subsequent newsletters.



Curator's Corner

Good news to the genealogist in our group. We have purchased an additional Microfiche machine for our museum. We now have two available and you won't have as long to wait to review the old newspapers on film. Our volunteer group of ladies expanded the family files for easier access. We have many scrapbooks and interesting township binders with pictures for your viewing.

And don't forget that you can visit the museum in the winter. The museum will be open November through March, on Saturdays - 12:00 to 4:00 pm. Your Curator, Veda Meriwether

Museum Reading List

There are a number of little-known books or narratives at the Essley-Noble Museum that make interesting reading, many short enough to finish in one sitting. We are pulling a collection together and will place in a bookshelf for those who want to spend quiet time reading at the museum or who just need to "kill some time" while waiting for a family member to complete research. A few examples follow:

Reminiscences of Pioneer Life in the Mississippi Valley by John W. Spencer - 73 pages

John Spencer was born in 1801 and moved to the Rock Island area in the fall of 1828 where he spent the winter in Black Hawk's summer village. He met Black Hawk the following spring when the chief and his tribe moved back from their winter quarters. John Spencer provides a unique perspective on the impact that white settlement had on the Indians amongst whom the early settlers lived more or less in harmony. He provides details of the Black Hawk War from a perspective of one who knew and respected the chief and was intimately involved in the war. John prepared this short narrative to present at an Old Settler's meeting.

Autobiography of Black Hawk and a General History of the Black Hawk War of 1832 by J. B. Patterson (dictated by Black Hawk to interpreter Antoine LeClaire in 1833) - 208 pages

Black Hawk describes the seasons of life for his tribe prior to white settlement. He talks of his dealings with French, British, Spanish and finally Americans, providing his own perspective of events prior to his removal from Illinois and the ensuing Black Hawk War when he decided to return. Black Hawk does not speak with hatred but frequently mentions white Americans for which he had respect and admiration. His intelligence and leadership ability as a war chief are apparent in this narrative.

Autobiography of John Achison Morrow - 20 pages

The life of a Mercer Co. settler as a gold prospector, a Civil War soldier, and a prisoner of war at Andersonville, GA. Morrow, born in 1828, crisscrossed the country and Midwest by all means of transportation and relates thrilling stories of his adventures. He purchased land in Suez Township and eventually retired to Aledo with interests in farming and coal mining.

Mysteries of Mercer County Compiled by Sandra Sharer from articles in the Times Record of unsolved or inconclusive crimes and court cases from generations past.

Fall Open Meeting

The postponed visit to the Graham Lee barn is scheduled for Monday, Oct. 18, 2010, at 7:00 p.m. The Mercer County Historical Society's fall meeting will gather at the barn to hear and see the barn's history and to elect five directors for 3-year terms. W.J. Albertson, the barn's owner and restorer, will discuss the moving and restoration of the old barn, formerly located just south of Hamlet.

To get to the barn, go to the intersection of Rt. 94 and 135th Ave., four miles north of Aledo. (The site of the former Perryton Presbyterian church.) The barn is located one mile west on 135th Ave.



Car pooling is encouraged and in case of muddy conditions, some visitors can park at the lot on the site of the former church at Rt. 94 and 135th Ave. and vans will shuttle them to the barn between 6:40 and 7:00 p.m. Be aware that the terrain will be uneven.

The public is invited and refreshments will follow the meeting.



Items for Sale at the Museum

If not picked up at the museum, postage (book rate) is extra. Inquire for insurance or special shipping.

1882 History of Mercer County.....\$25.00
Hardback reprint, 1005 pages, add \$4 postage

Abe Lincoln in Mercer County.....\$10.00
Soft cover, 51 pages, add \$3 postage

Celebrating Yesterday-Viola 125 years.....\$5.00
Soft cover, 110 pages, add \$3 postage

Betty L. Beer note cards, pkg. of 6.....\$3.00.
Indicate "False Spring" or "Nathan Listening"
\$1 postage for one or both

RI Southern R.R. routes of Mercer Co.....\$5.00
Circa 1914, 18.5"X18.5" map copy
Add \$4.75 for postage and shipping tube

Bicentennial plate.....\$6.50
designed by Suzy Bogguss
Inquire about shipping

“Name the Tools” for 2010 Mercer Co. fair

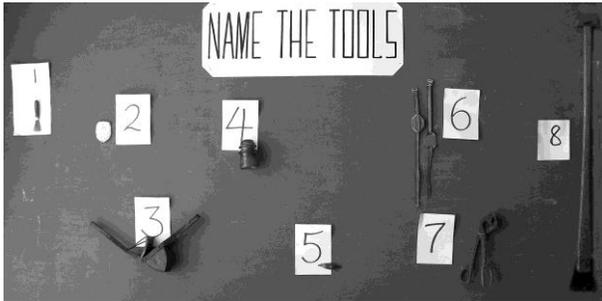
- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mustache comb | 5. Tatting Shuttle |
| 2. American Indian Scraper | 6. Ice Shoe Grippers |
| 3. Potato Ricer | 7. Hog. Snout cutter |
| 4. Electrical Insulator | 8. Garden Cabbage
Chopper |

Abe Lincoln in Mercer County Winners:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------|
| Alice Wainwright | Kim Nelsen |
| Dave Zwicker | Richard McMeeken |

1882 Red M. C. History Book winners:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| Roger Mixer | Jenny Hamann |
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Coming Events for 2010

- Oct. 18** Fall open meeting. 7:00 p.m.
About and at the restored Graham Lee barn 1 mile west on 135th Ave. at the intersection with Hwy. 94
- Oct. 31** Last day of summer hours
- Nov. 6-Mar 26** Winter hours, Saturdays only, 12:00-4:00

“Thank you to LeAnn McCreight Heflin for a copy of this interesting photo. We appreciate those sharing photos of Mercer Co. history and events, whether original or as a copy.”



Remember when: For a forthcoming story on “The Dolly,” we are interested in personal experiences and reminiscences about riding the Dolly. Please share your stories with us through e-mail, letter, or talk with Jim Runyon or Mary Jane Sticklen. Also, we encourage our members to send in other personal reminiscences or stories about life in Mercer Co. Talk with family and friends and share some of your favorite memories. Maybe, What did you do for fun in the winter? (Special sledding spots, sleigh parties, dances?) Contributions about any memories can be a page or just a few sentences. Pictures are welcome. Send by email or regular mail, or leave it at the museum for the newsletter. Thank you! Mary Jane Sticklen, editor.

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