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OU ARCHEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL AT THE CERTAIN SITE

The University of Oklahoma's 1995 Archeology Field School was held at the Certain site, 34BK46. As mentioned in the last newsletter, this excavation lasted from June 12 through July 24. The crew consisted of two Graduate Assistants, two graduate students, and nine undergraduate students.

This is the second time that the OU field school has been held at the Certain site. The first was in 1993. During that field session, we concentrated our efforts on Trench A, an ancient gully that contained the butchered remains of 20+ bison. We also began work on Trench C which is in another gully with extensive bison bone deposits. Trench C was the focus for the 1995 field school. Our main objectives were to determine the number of bison kill and processing events contained in this gully, to reconstruct the methods of butchering the animals, and to identify the culture or cultures responsible for the kills.

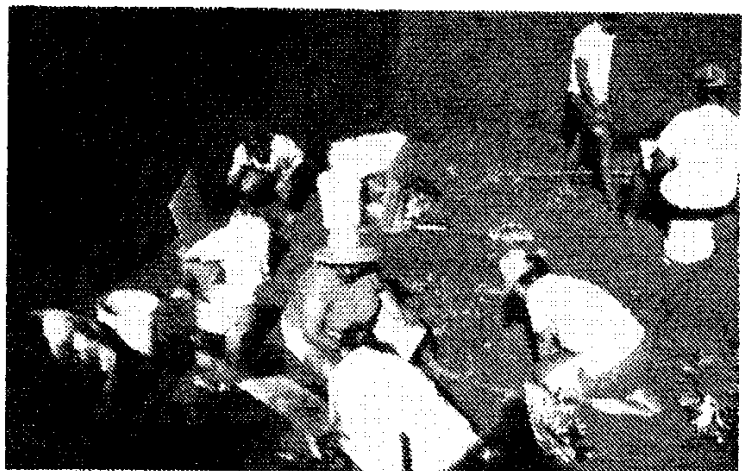
From previous excavations we know that the Certain site is a bison kill site that dates to the transitional period between the Late Archaic and Woodland periods. A radiocarbon date of 1730 ± 60 was obtained from charcoal removed from a hearth in Trench C. Projectile points are restricted to large, corner notched dart points. The only other components of the assemblage include resharpening flakes and a possible chopper/hammerstone.

The 1995 field school excavations extended our understanding of the site and provided additional tools. We recovered several hundred resharpening flakes from Trench C. In addition, an asymmetrical knife was also recovered. This tool is the first definite knife to come from the excavations. Projectile points found are also the large, corner notched variety.

We now know that the gully of Trench C

contains multiple kill and butchering episodes. Heavily weathered bones and a hearth from the center of the bone bed indicate the deposits probably contain three kill episodes. The bottom of the bone deposits has not been reached in the center of the gully. At least 40 cm of bones are yet to be removed.

Directly east of the Trench C gully is a modern arroyo that has eroded through the site deposits and is now over 30 meters deep. Remnants of the bone deposits along the edges of the gully are all that is left of another kill/butchering area of the site. In order to salvage some information about the number and nature of kills in this area, we placed a 2 x 2 meter unit along its western edge. This unit, designated Trench F, contained a dense bone deposit overlying a thin level of charcoal flecks and bone splinters. The bone deposit consisted of disarticulated bones, from the butchering of some animals, lying on top of some partially articulated skeletons of others. Two large sandstone blocks were probably anvil and hammers used to break many of the bones. The light scatter of charcoal and bone splinters



underneath the main bone concentration is similar to that found adjacent to the hearths above the bones in Trench C. It probably represents habitation in this gully while processing animals killed in one of the other gullies.

Two areas on the south bank of the main canyon that divides the site were also investigated. Trench D was a 1 x 2 meter trench placed at the head of a side gully where bison remains were eroding. In this trench was found the mostly articulated front leg of a bison, which was still intact. Burned bone fragments were concentrated on top of the articulated elements. The small size of the burned bone and the extent of the concentration suggests that they had been dumped here. Unfortunately no charcoal was found.

Trench E was also placed in the gully at another eroded bison bone exposure. This 1 x 2 meter test trench revealed portions of two rear legs that had been butchered. The gopher runs in this area contained concentrations of charcoal flecks, possibly indicating that a hearth was nearby.

Additional excavation is needed near Trenches D and E to determine the exact nature of the use of this side of the canyon. Neither trench yielded projectile points. Dating of the charcoal flecks from Trench E may provide evidence that these areas were utilized by the same people making the kills on the other side of the canyon.

By adding the results of this year's field school to the previous excavations, we are beginning to see patterns in the use of the Certain site gullies. It appears that numerous kills (at least seven) are represented in the gullies on the north side of the main canyon. Each kill probably consisted of 25 to 40 animals. The gully in which Trench C was placed contains several kill episodes and may have served as the principal kill locus at the site. The Trench F gully may also have been a prime area, although erosion of this arroyo has destroyed all but a small area of the cultural deposits.

Arroyos adjacent to kills served as habitation/processing areas following a successful kill. Additional small scale processing areas are located on the south side of the main canyon opposite the kill areas. These ancillary areas may represent warming/cooking fires for individual families participating in the butchering activities. No large habitation site has been found in the vicinity of the Certain site kills. This suggests that a larger, perhaps winter season, site is some distance from the kills and that meat, hides, and other materials obtained from the kill were transported to this more permanent site for additional processing. Such a situation would explain the lack of habitation debris and specialized processing tools such as scrapers and knives.

As a final note, the burned bone recovered from the processing areas of Trench B and Trench D consists mainly of ribs and vertebra. This suggests that these folks at least enjoyed fresh, barbecued ribs.

Leland Bement

IN MEMORIAM IVAN J. STOUT (1908 - 1995)

On October 23, Ivan Stout passed away while walking on his farm in the Bethel locality of northern Caddo County. With Ivan's death, Oklahoma has lost another of its staunch supporters of stewardship and heritage preservation. A member of the Oklahoma Anthropological Society since 1972, Ivan was a frequent attender of the Society's spring meetings and field schools; he was an active member of the West Central Chapter (Weatherford) of the OAS. From his farm and adjoining White Canyon, he accumulated a notable collection of historic and prehistoric artifacts. These latter



Ivan Stout in the field.