

Margaret
Chuck

Return to Dr Lambert

Early Man

Being an account of the Koster Expedition and other explorations of the Northwestern University Archeological Program in Southern Illinois

Newsletter I

June 1974



1974 NEWSLETTER — EXCAVATING THE FACTS

Worthy-Merrigan Site

Location--3 miles south of Hardin in
Calhoun County
Archeologist-in-charge--Vernon Wettersten
Land Owner--Alfred Schleeper

The Worthy-Merrigan Site was named many years ago by a University of Michigan survey team. It is a village site of the Jersey Bluff people and is located at the point where a small secondary valley drains out of the hills of Calhoun and enters the Illinois Valley. This big village was built on an elevated terrace and shows evidence of a long occupation.

This village dates again to the same period as Jane Buikstra's Helton Site or Horl at Koster (namely 800-1200 A.D.) This site is located almost directly across the river valley from the Helton Site. On the east side Jane will be working on the mortuary evidence of malnutrition, disease, arthritis, environmental stress on the body, etc., and on the west side of the river valley Vernon will be working on diet, environment, availability of resources etc. These 2 sites are complementary and may be joined together for analysis.

Hacker Site

Location--7 miles south of Koster Site
Archeologist-in-charge--Gregory Perino
Land Owner--Mrs. W.F. Hacker

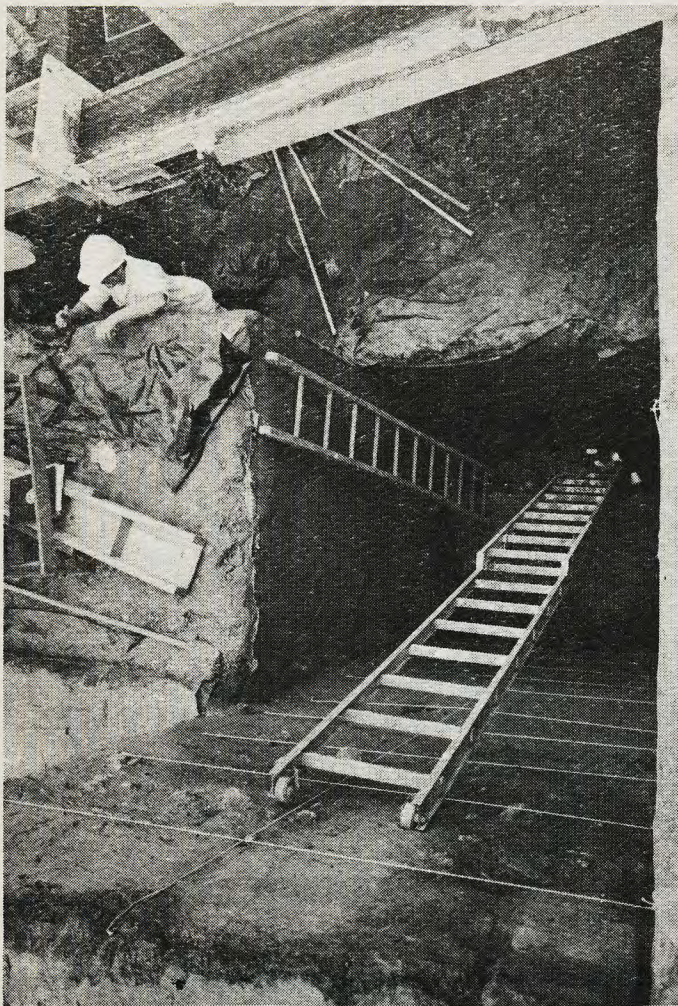
Hacker Site is located 7 miles south of Koster on top of the bluff. This site is both Hopewell and Jersey Bluff. (Hopewell 100 B.C. to 400 A.D. and Jersey Bluff 800 A.D. to 1200 A.D.). This site is the area assigned to the adult archeological field schools. Five 1 week adult field schools were in session on that site this spring and digging will continue through June and July. The adults are aiding in the conservation of archeological information which is being destroyed piecemeal by curiosity seekers. The entire site is pocked with holes, and human bones and unwanted debris have been dumped on the surface, left by "treasure" hunters who care nothing about the valuable information they are destroying.

Crane Village Site

Location--East of Kane, Illinois
Archeologist-in charge--Ken Farnsworth
Land Owner--Donald Crane

This Hopewell Village Site (100 B.C.-400 A.D.) is located on a terrace 9 miles A.D.) is located on a terrace 9 miles or so up the Macoupin Valley from its mouth. One of the major purposes of our archeology program is to understand the way of life of any culture we dig and how the people were gearing themselves to their environment. One of the things about Hopewell civilization, on which so much ink has been spilled by ourselves and others as well, is that Hopewell culture has been thought to be an exclusively big river valley phenomenon. Ken Farnsworth did a survey of the Macoupin Valley in 1969 and in the entire 70 mile length of this valley located 9 Hopewell Sites, of which the Crane Site is but one. He chose this particular site to excavate because: it shows little or no evidence of any other culture on the site except Hopewell; it is located on an elevated terrace on the south side of Macoupin Creek, 10 miles from the mouth of where Macoupin Valley enters Illinois Valley; this area was broken out of timber only 4 years ago and Mr. Crane has plowed only a few inches deep so there is little disturbance. The entire 7 acre site is located out in a plowed field where it can be surveyed and excavated; there is little agricultural disturbance; and this extraordinarily well preserved Hopewell community Site is located many miles away from the normal location of Hopewell villages.

These secondary valleys offer a less plush environment with less food available, and we never gave a thought to them being up these secondary valleys until Farnsworth's survey. Ken is interested in discovering why these people were in this particular location. Was it only a hunting party or did the whole group come? Did they live there for a season and then move back to the Illinois Valley? Was this a daughter community formed by a budding-off or hiving-off to form a new village from a parent community after a conflict? The deeply stained soil of the site suggests a rather long occupation.



What will archeologists find in Hor. 12 at the bottom of this hole?

Photo by D.R. Baston

Koster Site

Location--5½ miles south of Eldred, IL
 Archeologist-in-charge--Gail Houart
 Land Owner--Theodore Koster

The goal of the '74 season at the Koster Site is to lower the ground water table to at least 34 or 35 feet and hold it down by continuous pumping while we expend a major effort to study Hor. 11 and possibly Hor. 12.

Helton Site

Location--2 miles south of Koster Site
 Archeologist-in-charge--Jane Buikstra
 Land Owner--Harlan Helton

The Helton Cemetery Site is Late Woodland (between 800 A.D. and 1200 A.D.), dating

basically to the period of Hor. 1 at Koster. In fact the human remains from the Helton Site may specifically be the remains of some of the people who lived in Hor. 1 times at Koster. The Koster cemetery on the bluffs above the Koster Site and the Helton Cemetery are the 2 biggest in the area so it wouldn't be surprising if the people were either Kosterians, or the Kosterians' friends or adversaries.

The value of the site is that it dates to the period right after the Hopewell decline. Jane Buikstra, osteology specialist, is interested in documenting any physical evidence from the skeletons of the people of what might have happened to cause the Hopewell decline. Was it partly diet or nutrition? The site represents a total population of Late Woodland or Jersey Bluff culture and may show signs of stunted growth, evidence of retarded bone growth, etc.

Gardens-Of-Kampsville Site

Location--Kampsville
 Archeologist-in-charge--Steve Noble

Immediately north of the Kampsville Roofing Supply along highway 100, the Northwestern Archeological Program purchased 4 lots for the purpose of building an artifact repository. This building will be 60 x 100 feet and will have parking space on the front of the property. We find ourselves faced with the same mandate that we usually initiate when we discover a building project that will destroy archeological information. This time we are the ones who will be destroying archeological information when our building project is initiated because it turns out that almost the entire village of Kampsville is the site of a Hopewell village (100 B.C.-400 A.D.) onto which modern man has built his own village. So we are digging our own site before we destroy it and also available vegetable garden sites, etc. Many private collections in Kampsville contain artifacts turned up in vegetable gardens, building excavations, road work, etc.

Students From 122 Schools Participate In The 1974 Northwestern Archeological Field School

A major goal of the Koster Expedition that is seldom discussed is to introduce as many students as possible to field archeology. In the summer of 1974 students from 56 high schools and 66 colleges will participate in the Northwestern Archeological Field School. Twenty-five per cent more schools are represented in the 1974 Field School than in the field school a year before. The Northwestern Archeological Field School allows any student from sophomores in high school and beyond to enroll in the Northwestern University Summer Session in order to take the excavation and laboratory courses in archeology. Therefore all students in the 1974 summer field school, who are in their sophomore year of high school or beyond, are enrolled at Northwestern and will receive credit for Northwestern archeology courses. All of these courses are taught in Kampsville. The Foundation for Illinois Archeology, which co-sponsors the archeological program with Northwestern University, maintains 22 permanent laboratory buildings and dorm houses in Kampsville.

The following is a list of the schools from which students in the 1974 Field School have come and the number of students from each.

High Schools

Abington (Pennsylvania) High School, North (1)
 Arlington (Ohio) High School 1
 Brookfield (Wisconsin) East High School 1
 Byron Junior High School (Shaker Heights, Ohio) 1
 Calhoun County High School 1
 Cary Grove High School (Cary, IL) 1
 Cheltenham (Pennsylvania) High School 1
 University of Chicago Laboratory School 1
 Cleveland Heights (Ohio) High School 1
 Columbus (Ohio) School for Girls 1
 Concord-Carlisle High School (Concord, Massachusetts) 1
 Cornell (Illinois) High School
 J.D. Darnall High School (Geneseo, IL) 1
 Elgin Academy 1
 Elmira Free Academy (Elmira, New York) 1
 Evanston Twp. High School (Evanston, IL) 4
 Glenbard West High School (Glen Ellyn, IL) 1
 Glenbrook (IL) North High School 2
 Glenbrook (IL) South High School 2
 Great Neck (New York) High School 1

Harvard (Illinois) High School 1
 Immaculate Conception High School (Elmhurst, IL) 1
 Kirkwood (Missouri) High School 2
 Lake Forest (IL) High School 1
 Loomis-Chaffey School (Hartford, Conn.) 1
 McCluer Senior High School (Florissant, Missouri) 1
 Marquette High School (Godfrey, IL) 1
 Mather High School (Milford, Conn.) 1
 Moline (IL) High School 1
 New Trier East High School (Glencoe, IL) 4
 New Trier West High School (Winetka, IL) 2
 North Shore Country Day School (Winnetka, IL) 2
 Parma (Ohio) High School 1
 Pekin (IL) Community High School 1
 Phillips Exeter Academy (Exeter, N.H.) 1
 Potosi (Wisconsin) High School 1
 Regina Dominican High School (Wilmette, IL) 1
 Renbrook School (Hartford, Conn.) 1
 Rich Township High School, East (Park Forest, IL) 1
 Rippowam High School (Stamford, Conn.) 1
 Roxboro Junior High School (Cleveland Heights, Ohio) 1
 Shaker Heights High School (Shaker Heights, Ohio) 2
 St. Charles High School (IL) 1
 St. Mary's Academy (Nauvoo, IL) 1
 Streator High School (Streator, IL) 1
 University City High School (St. Louis, MO) 1
 University of Illinois High School (Urbana, IL) 1
 Upper Arlington High School (Columbus, Ohio) 1
 Wachung Hills High School (Warren, New Jersey) 1
 Birch Walther High School (New York, N.Y.) 1
 Warren High School (Warren, N.J.) 1
 Washburne Junior High School (Winnetka, IL) 1
 West Leyden High School (Franklin Park, IL) 2
 Westmont Hilltop High School (Johnstown, Penn.) 1
 Windsor High School (Windsor, Conn.) 1
 Wissahickon High School (Norristown, PA) 1

COLLEGES

Universidad de las Americas (Cholula, Mex.) 1
 American University (Washington D.C.) 1
 Arizona State University (Tempe, Ariz.) 1
 Augustana College (Rock Island, IL) 1
 Bradford Junior College (Mass.) 1

Bradley University (Peoria, IL) 1
 Brigham Young University (Provo, Utah) 1
 University of British Columbia 1
 Brown University (Providence, R.I.) 1
 University of California (Berkeley, Cal.) 1
 Calvin College (Grand Rapids, Mich.) 1
 Carleton College (Northfield, Minn.) 1
 University of Chicago (IL) 1
 Colby College (Waterville, Maine) 1
 Connecticut College (New London, Conn.) 1
 Cornell College (Mount Vernon, Iowa) 1
 Cornell University (Ithaca, N.Y.) 2
 Drake University (Des Moines, Iowa) 1
 College of DuPage 1
 Edinboro (Penn.) State College 1
 Elgin (IL) Community College 1
 Florissant Valley (Mo.) Community College 1
 Franklin Pierce College 1
 Garilan College (Gilroy, Calif.) 1
 University of Georgia (Athens, Ga.) 1
 Illinois College (Jacksonville, IL) 1
 University of Illinois (Chicago Circle) 3
 Indiana University (Bloomington, Indiana) 10
 Upper Iowa College (Fayette, Iowa) 1
 Knox College (Galesburg, IL) 2
 Lake Forest College (Lake Forest, IL) 2
 Laney College (Oakland, Calif.) 1
 Lawrence University (Appleton, Wisc.) 2
 Lewis & Clark Community College (Godfrey, IL) 1
 University of London (Institute of Archeology) (London, England) 1
 University of Louisville (Ken.) 1
 Macalester College (St. Paul, Minn.) 1
 MacMurray College (Jacksonville, IL) 1
 Maryland Institute of Art (Baltimore, Maryland) 1
 Southern Methodist University (Dallas, Tex.) 1
 St. Mary's College (Notre Dame, Ind.) 2
 University of Michigan (Ann Arbor, Mich.) 6
 Michigan State University (East Lansing, Mich.) 1
 Michigan Technological University (Houghton, Mich.) 1
 Middlebury College (Middlebury, Ver.) 8
 Monmouth College (Monmouth, IL) 1
 Newcomb College (Tulane University) (New Orleans, Louisiana) 1
 University of New Mexico (Albuquerque, N. Mexico) 1
 University of New Orleans (Louisiana) 1
 City University of New York (Richmond College) (N.Y., N.Y.) 1
 Northwestern University (Evanston, IL) 19
 University of Notre Dame (Indiana) 3
 Pomona College (Claremont, Calif.) 1
 Miss Porter's School (Farmington, Conn.) 2

College of Racine (Wisconsin) 1
 Radcliff College (Cambridge, Mass.) 1
 Sangamon State University (Springfield, IL) 1
 St. Louis University (Missouri) 1
 Southern Illinois University (Carbondale, IL) 1
 Union Graduate School (Chicago, IL) 1
 Washington State University (Pullman, Washington) 1
 Washington University (St. Louis, Mo.) 1
 Webster College (Webster Groves, Mo.) 2
 Wisconsin State University (Eau Claire, Wisconsin) 1
 Yale University (New Haven, Conn.) 1

Long Awaited De-Watering System Now A Reality

Koster Horizon 11 is potentially the richest and best preserved community ruin of any in the Koster Site, but previously has been impossible to dig, except in small test squares, because of the water problem. Horizon 11 lies largely below the water table and when we dig a square into this area water oozes out of the walls, eventually causing them to slump and greatly increasing the danger of cave in.

The de-watering system, designed by Drs. Keros Cartwright and Frank Sherman of the Ill. Geological Survey, consists of a series of 6 wells drilled by the Alton Well Drilling Co. to a depth of 40 feet. These wells, located along the north and east walls of the Koster main trench have been drilled into a sand layer which drains well. Pumps with float valves pump the water out of the wells as it builds up and empties it into a nearby spring branch, thus intercepting the ground water table moving down through the sand layer from the upper elevations to the west and north and intercepting the water before it gets to the excavation.

It has been rather difficult to judge the probable efficiency of these wells due to the above average rainfall this spring which has dumped copious quantities of water directly into the huge excavation. Preliminary evidence suggests that the system will indeed temporarily lower the ground water table when the heavy rains cease.



The Koster Site as it looks during the quiet winter months. Photo by D.R. Baston



The 1974 season starts and the dirt begins to fly again. Photo by D.R. Baston

Are You A New Subscriber To EARLY MAN? Here Is A Capsule History Of The Koster Site And Why The Koster Site Is Important

Dr. Stuart Struever, Northwestern University Professor of Anthropology has organized archeology expeditions to the Lower Illinois Valley since 1959. In 1968 he was persuaded to visit the Koster farm by Harlan Helton, local artifact collector, who lives next to the Koster farm. This small well-protected valley, strewn with pottery fragments of the Jersey Bluff Culture, seemed ideal for human habitation and indeed had even been chosen by one of the very early Greene County pioneers--as evidenced by the old stone house still standing in this valley. Struever speculated that older artifacts lay below the surface.

In 1969 Struever conducted test excavations proving that older cultures did in fact underlie the surface. A small crew returned in 1970--in 1971, 1972, and 1973 major expeditions were organized.

We now know that the Site has at least 12 culture layers all neatly separated by layers of sterile soil washed from the bluffs when the site was temporarily unoccupied. This layer cake of civilization dates from about 6,000 B.C. to about 1200 A.D.

Three things make the Koster Site a unique and valuable site. One, many cultures have lived in one spot, giving us a chance to study their differences. Two, there is a high level of preservation of the more fragile artifact, plant and animal remains in every level. Three, the unusual interbedding of cultural ruins with sterile soil allows each ruin to be studied as a separate entity rather than a mixture of many ruins.

The most important discoveries made in the summer of 1973 were the remains of prehistoric houses. Dating to 4200 B.C., the houses are the earliest habitations yet discovered in North America. They predate by 1700 years the ancient dwellings discovered at Koster Site in 1972.

16 Labs To Analyze Evidence From 6 Sites

Scattered throughout Kampsville are 16 labs--Central Data Processing, Computer, Human Osteology, Zoology, Koster Faunal, Late Woodland Faunal, Botany, Pollen, Koster Lithics, Koster Coordinating, Hacker Site, Worthy-Merrigan Site, Gardens-of-Kampsville, Crane Site, Malacology, Flotation. We plan to do articles on some of these labs during the summer newsletter season.

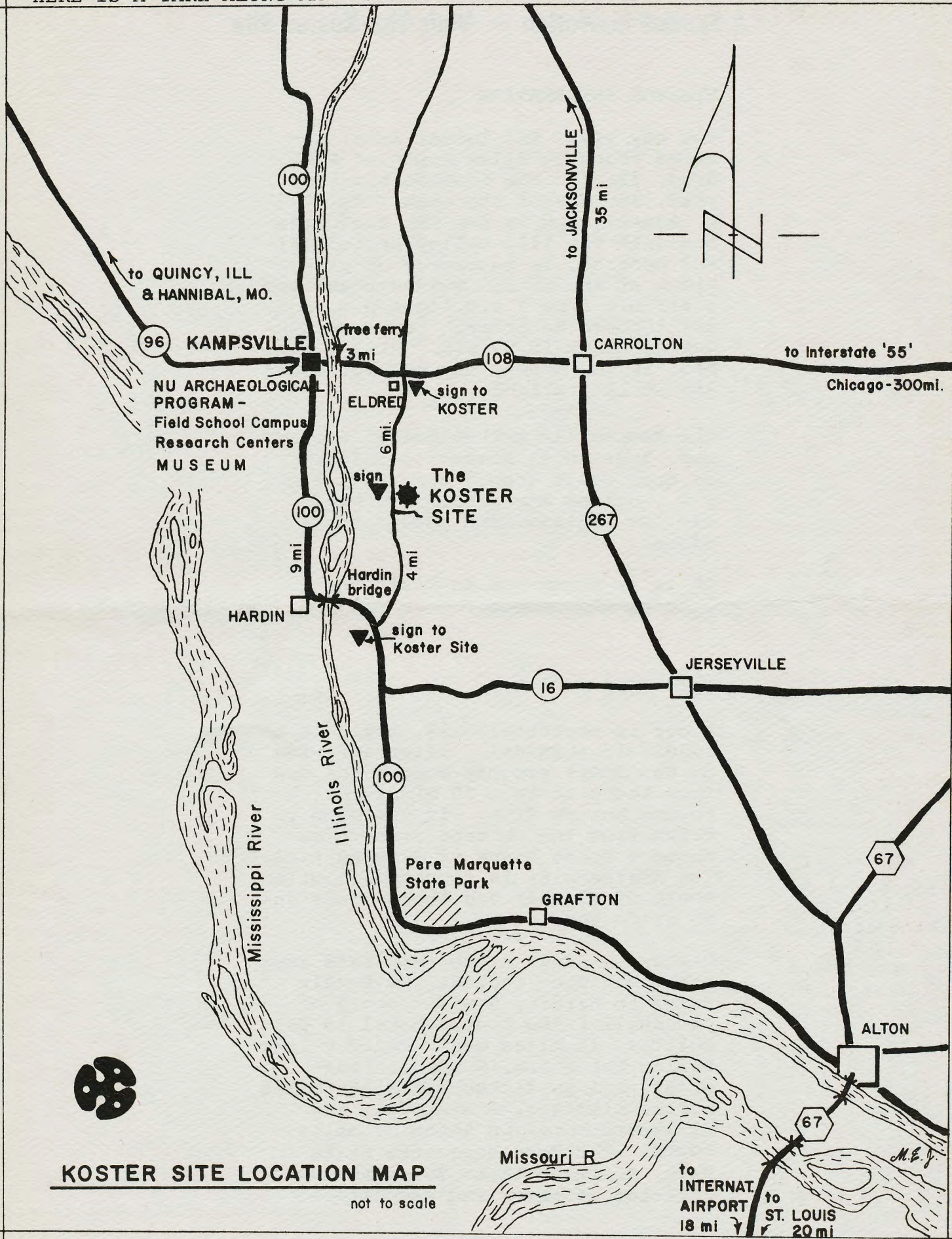
New Shop To Open In Kampsville

Visitors to the museum in Kampsville will want to visit the Early Man shop, which will be open soon, directly across the street from the museum. Proprietess Carol Stitzer plans to stock arts-and-crafts-of-the-world articles--canoe paddles from Easter Island, Navaho blankets, Indian jewelry both old and new, replicas of Egyptian jewelry, Inca material, antique duck decoys, Amish quilts, and natural specimens. The shop will be open daily.



Jr. High students will arrive in Kampsville in July to begin their two week dig. Photo by D.R. Baston

HERE IS A TAKE-ALONG MAP TO HELP YOU PLAN YOUR TRIP TO THE KOSTER SITE.



KOSTER SITE LOCATION MAP

not to scale

A Special Invitation — Visit The Koster Site

VISITOR INFORMATION

You may visit the Koster Site, located about 5½ miles south of Eldred, Ill. on the Grafton blacktop road, any day of the week. Gail L. Houart, now in her 7th field season with the Ill. Valley archeological program, is in charge of excavations at the Site. Guided tours are available from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Tours on Sunday are from 10:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. Wed. is the crew's day off but tours are still available.

The Kampsville Archeological Museum, located in Kampsville, Ill., is open daily from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. Guides are present to explain the exhibits and answer questions.

There is no charge to visit the Site or the museum.

TRIP TIPS

A car is essential. St. Louis is a major air terminal. After arriving at St. Louis you may rent a car and from there it is a 90 minute drive to the Koster Site. If you plan to drive from the Chicago area, plan about 6 to 6½ hours of driving time. The Koster site is situated 5½ miles south of Eldred; and there are signs to guide you.

Places to stay in the immediate area are few. They include the Hardin Hotel in Hardin, 9 miles south of Kampsville, the Sierra Motel in Carrollton, 15 miles west; Holiday Inn, Dunlap Motor Inn, Sandman, Starlight, all in Jacksonville, 50 miles north; Flamingo, Travelodge, and Stratford Hotel in Alton 30 miles south. The Pere Marquette State Park, Grafton, IL is 20 miles south, offering cottages and campsites.

FRIENDS OF THE KOSTER EXPEDITION

In 1973 more than 5,000 private individuals, companies, banks and foundations provided 60% of the budget of the Koster Expedition. Memberships in the Foundation for Illinois Archeology, which shares the sponsorship of the Koster Expedition with Northwestern University, range from \$5.00 to \$1,000 and are tax deductible.

Members receive the Early Man newsletter detailing progress of the expedition (5 issues) and are notified of special activities, such as Members' Weekend and archeology laboratory open houses. Contributing Members, Sponsors, and Benefactors receive all special publications issued by the expedition.

To renew your membership or become a new member, send your donation to The Koster Expedition, Kampsville, Illinois 62053. Make checks payable to the Foundation for Illinois Archeology.

____ FRIEND OF KOSTER (\$5) ____ CONTRIBUTING MEMBER (\$25) ____ EXPEDITION SPONSOR (\$100)
____ EXPEDITION BENEFACTOR (\$250) ____ FOUNDATION PATRON (\$1,000)

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

Group Tours Welcome

To arrange for a tour of the Koster Site and the Kampsville Archeological Museum for your club or organization, write: Miss Roxanna Siefer, Northwestern Archeological Program, Kampsville, Illinois 62053, or phone: 618-653-4525. While there is no charge for group tours it is suggested that the group consider making a donation to the Foundation for Illinois Archeology to help maintain the guide program.

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