



TUESDAY
AUG. 12, 2003

News story or photo
idea? Call City Editor
Steve Booher at
271-8583.

Or e-mail Steve at
steveh@npgco.com



Region's history topic of display at state fair

A Northwest Missouri man will present a local history lesson Thursday at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia.

Mike George, a farmer from Oregon, Mo., will lecture and present artifacts on American Indian prehistory and early man at 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Thursday at the Frontier Building. Mr. George will be at the display throughout the day to answer questions.

The presentation will focus on native artifacts and ice-age animals hunted by natives, as well as a brief historical overview of the region ranging from early hunters until the arrival of Lewis and Clark. Among the artifacts presented will be trade beads likely issued by the explorers.

Mr. George was selected to give the presentation by the Missouri Arts Council in St. Louis. A collector of American Indian art, his interest in artifacts originated when he built his Oregon home on an American Indian campsite. With the occasional help of historians, he has hunted for artifacts at the archeological site for 20 years, and now displays more than 9,500 items in a basement museum at his home. Mr. George also frequently gives educational presentations throughout the Kansas City area.

PHONE CALL TO MIKE

Well!

12-19-
00

Don's mad —

that J.D.B. (Mike George) is invading his territory (Agency)

Don has cooled down some now - But not much.

Indian Artifact Show
(Read poster)

Keith Rumpf is a friend of ours.

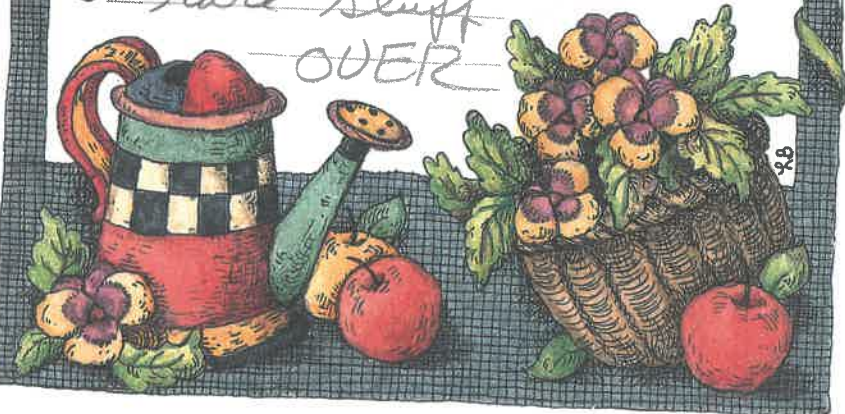
Does not know about Mike George —

Don told him and warned him!!

Don will not show his artifacts!!

They will have some rare stuff

OVER



For Information or Table Reservations Call:

Keith Rumpf 816-253-9301

OR

Mike George 660-446-2216

Artifact Identification and Appraisal Available

Sponsored by the Northwest Missouri Artifact Collectors Association

Not
responsible for
theft or
accidents

AGENCY MISSOURI

INDIAN ARTIFACT SHOW

Saturday March 3, 2001 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

To be held at the
Agency Community Center

Free Admission
to the Public

AUTHENTIC
Artifacts Only

Food Available

No Exhibitor Fee

For Information or Table Reservations Call:

Keith Rumpf 816-253-9301

OR

Mike George 660-446-2216

Artifact Identification and Appraisal Available

Sponsored by the Northwest Missouri Artifact Collectors Association

Not
responsible for
theft or
accidents



Starting at \$399

Lane®

SALE ENDS

Mon. at 8 p.m.

See store for details.

3603 Frederick
232-4486

Collectors of artifacts gathering

*Show will be held this weekend
at Agency Community Center*

By ALONZO WESTON
alonzow@npgco.com
St. Joseph News-Press

AGENCY, Mo. — The Northwest Missouri Artifact Collectors Association will hold its second-annual Indian Artifact Show in Agency this weekend.

The event will be from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday at the Agency Community Center.

Several Indian artifact collectors from Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri will display more than 75,000 American Indian items.

Keith Rumpf, Indian Artifact Show co-organizer, expects a larger turnout than last year.

"We had 29 tables and probably 800 people come through last year," he said. "We already have 35 tables reserved for this year."

Items on display will include Ice Age animal remains, stone tools dating back several thousand years, and American Indian jewelry and beadwork.

Collecting Indian artifacts has become a fast-growing hobby, Mr. Rumpf said. It can be a lucrative pursuit, he added.

"Back in the 1950s, you could have bought (Indian artifacts) for little or nothing," he said. "Prices have really went up, and now that people are finding out what they are worth there's a little more interest in them."

Patrons are encouraged to bring their own Indi-

**Back in the
1950s, you could
have bought
(Indian artifacts)
for little or
nothing.**

— Keith Rumpf,
co-organizer, Indian
Artifact Show

Artifacts attract hundreds

A.P. 3-4-01

By RAY SCHERER
rscherer@npgco.com
St. Joseph News-Press

AGENCY, Mo. — To Bob Horn of Maryville, it's a snap to hunt for arrowheads and other artifacts in the rugged frontier of Northwest Missouri.

Over the past decade, he's become so adept at scrounging for the ancient items that he has amassed a collection of 250 "good" arrowheads and 20 stone axes.

"I don't hunt them to sell," Mr. Horn says. "I went walking in a creek, looking for that stuff."

Mr. Horn and two dozen other artifact collectors proudly displayed more than 75,000 of their finds at Saturday's inaugural Indian Artifact Show at the Agency Community Center.

Organizers Keith Rumpf and Mike George said the show so exceeded their expectations that they plan to continue it annually and may move it to St. Joseph to accommodate larger crowds. They and Mr. Rumpf's wife, Sharon, had hoped for 500 spectators for the six-hour show.

"We're tickled to death," Mr. George said late in the morning. "We're topping 800 people already."

Visitors not only browsed the relics; they also participated by bringing their own arrowhead and ax collections. Exhibitors came from as far as Lincoln, Neb., and Wichita, Kan.

"We've got everything from animal bones to historic Indian items," Mr. George said. "There's a lot of appraising going on."

Books and glass frames were available to those who became even more interested in the hobby.

"A lot of these farmers have got things in shoeboxes," Mr. George said.

Locating Ice Age-era animal bones



TODD WEDDLE/St. Joseph News-Press

Exhibitor Dan Fox of Mayetta, Kan., talks with a group Saturday in Agency, Mo., during an Indian Artifact Show at the Agency Community Center. It was the show's first year, and it had 26 exhibitors from at least three states.

and other items from long ago provides the lure for those excited about collecting the pieces, Mr. Rumpf said.

"It just kind of boggles your mind," he said of the historical nature of the craft.

Donations left at the show will

help expand the Agency Ford Museum, which is housed in the town's former school along with the community center.

Museum board member Barb Lemley said the museum opened last July, with tours given by appointment.

advertising &
news release.

The highway patrol will conduct this checkpoint with the assistance of the Mercer County Sheriff's Department. The checkpoint is designed to remove dangerous drivers with a minimum delay to traffic, the release said.

Erratic driving should be reported to either of the highway patrol's toll-free emergency phone numbers, (800) 525-5555, or cellular *55.

Missouri State Fair will show ice age artifacts

N-P 8-13-04
SEDALIA, Mo.—Archaeologist Mike George will present the program "Travel Back in Time" at 10 a.m. and at 2 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 14 at the MO-Ag Theater building on the Missouri State Fairgrounds in Sedalia, Mo.

Mr. George will discuss life in Northwest Mo. during the ice age and after the arrival of early man. He also will illustrate the program with artifacts from his personal collection and explain how they were made and used.

The collection of 2,500 artifacts of ice age animal remains will be on display between the program

ARTIFACT SHOW

**SATURDAY,
MARCH 1, 2003
AGENCY, MO**

Agency Community Center

10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

ADMISSION COST: FREE

EXHIBITOR COST: FREE

**Appraisals available by Mike George
Food & Drink available**

For more information:

Sharon & Keith Rumpf (816) 253-9301

Mike George (660) 446-2216

**Sponsored by: Northwest Missouri Artifact Collectors Association
and the Agency Community Center**



Agency Missouri

I ndian

Artifact Show

Saturday March 2, 2002 10:00 A.M. - 4:00 P.M.

*To be held at the
Agency Community Center*

*Free Admission to the
Public*

MAURY MEADOWS
IND. REL. COLL.
will be at artifact
show Mar 2 '02
(Agency)

**Authentic
Artifacts Only**

Food Available



No Exhibitor Fee

For Information or Table Reservations Call:

Keith Rumpf 816-253-9301

or

Mike George 660-446-2875

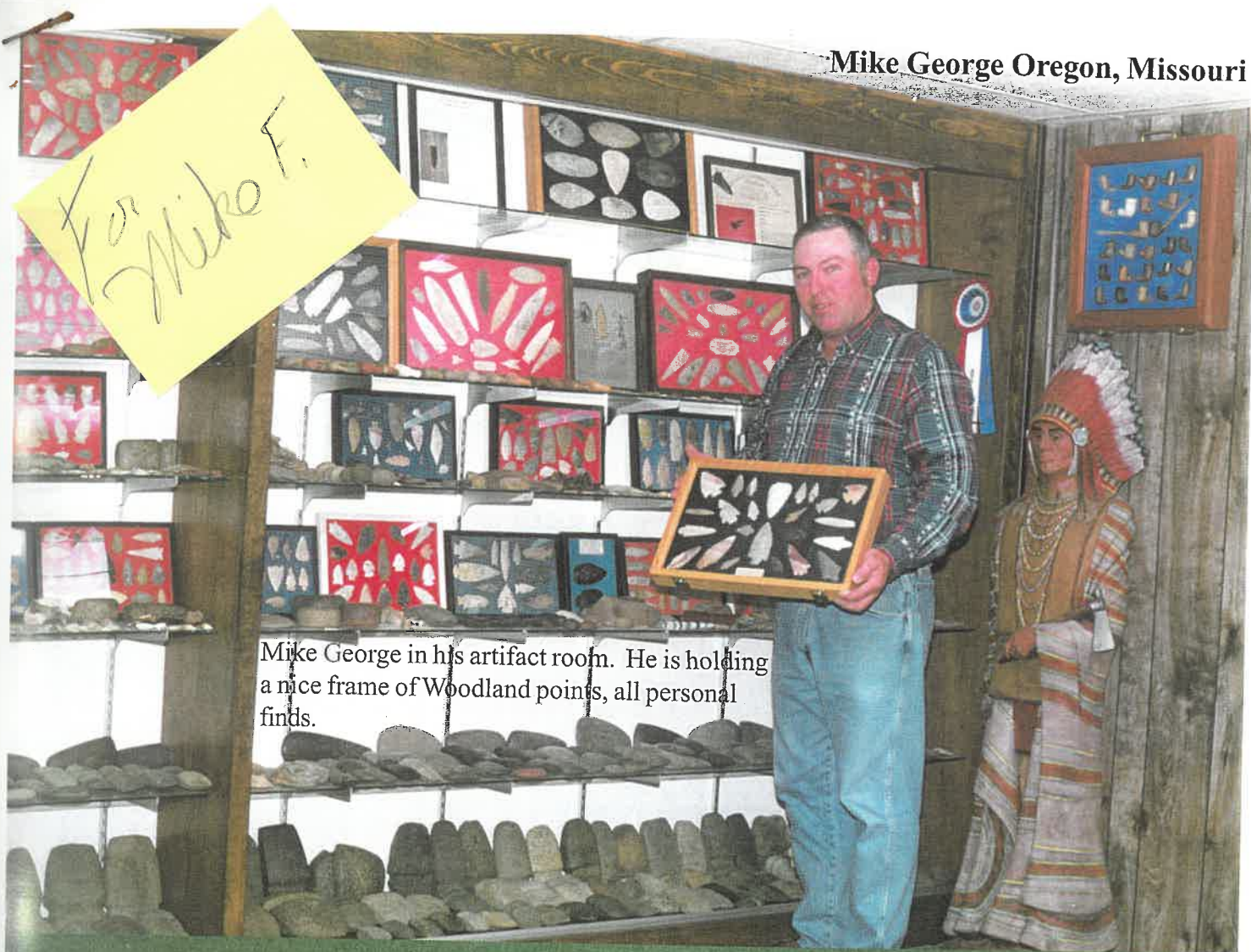
Artifact Identification and Appraisal Available

Sponsored by the Northwest Missouri Artifact Collectors Association

Photographer will be available to photograph artifacts

Not responsible for theft or accidents





Mike George in his artifact room. He is holding a nice frame of Woodland points, all personal finds.



artifacts
by Mike
e.

Exquisitely flaked Agate
point in the center is 3-3/4
long. The Clovis and
m points were found on Paleo
near Forbes, Missouri, Holt Co. The large blade at the right shows great patina.

Mike George Oregon, Missouri

A view of Mike's artifact room. The great blades on the bench are the "Geor Cache" and were personal finds of Mike's. The bison skulls on the floor are river finds, from Northeast Kansas.



This bottom photo shows artifacts found by Mike George and his family in Holt Co., Missouri. The Catlinite effigy pipe is 6-5/8 x 2-3/8 inches. Other items are: disc bowl pipes, ornaments, Paleo points. The larger elbow pipe is unfinished.



Who's Who in Indian Relics # 10

A historic record of prominent collectors and their collections.

Editor and Publisher
Janie Jinks-Weidner
13706 Robins Rd.
Westerville, Ohio 43082

Assistant Editor
Col. Leonard D. Weidner
Editorial Assistant
Jennifer Weidner-Akers

**First Edition
2000**



Mike George in his artifact room. He is holding a nice frame of Woodland points, all personal finds.



re artifacts
nd by Mike
ge.

exquisitely flaked Agate
in point in the center is 3-3/4
es long. The Clovis and
som points were found on Paleo
s near Forbes, Missouri, Holt Co. The large blade at the right shows great patina.

Mike George Oregon, Missouri A view of Mike's artifact room. The great blades on the bench are the "George Cache" and were personal finds of Mike's. The bison skulls on the floor are river finds, from Northeast Kansas.

A photograph of a museum display case filled with various archaeological artifacts, including pottery, stone tools, and framed collections of small objects, likely river finds from Northeast Kansas. The display is organized into several shelves and sections. On the left, there are three framed displays of small, light-colored, oval-shaped objects, possibly river stones or small shells. Above these, a large red display board features a grid of small, dark, oval-shaped objects. To the right, a large display board shows a collection of small, dark, oval-shaped objects, possibly river stones or small shells. Below this, a large display board shows a collection of small, dark, oval-shaped objects, possibly river stones or small shells. The artifacts are arranged in a way that allows visitors to view them from multiple angles. The background of the display case is a light-colored, textured material, possibly wood or plaster. The overall appearance is that of a well-maintained museum exhibit.

This bottom photo shows artifacts found by Mike George and his family in Holt Co., Missouri. The Catlinite effigy pipe is 6-5/8 x 2-3/8 inches. Other items are: disc bowl pipes, ornaments and Paleo points. The larger elbow pipe is unfinished.

126

ARTIFACT SHOW

**SATURDAY,
MARCH 6, 2004
AGENCY, MO**

Agency Community Center

10:00 am – 4:00 pm

Admission: Free

Exhibitor: \$10.00 (refundable D.O.S.)

Please mail deposit to:

**Agency Comm. Center P.O. Box
22 Agency MO 64401**

**Appraisals available by Mike George
Food & Drink available**



For more information:

Sharon & Keith Rumpf (816) 253-9301

Mike George (660) 446-2216

**Sponsored by: Northwest Missouri Artifact Collectors Association
and the Agency Community Center**

N-P 4-20-90

Not real archaeology

Editor, News-Press/Gazette:

While visiting my parents in Northwest Missouri April 8th, I read of the 130th anniversary of the Pony Express. When I read the part about archaeologists excavating behind the stables and the public would be able to watch at the open house that day, I decided to drive to St. Joseph for a visit. I am an archaeologist myself and always enjoy visiting with my colleagues no matter what the occasion. I was very disappointed when I found out that not one of the people at the dig was an actual archaeologist. It appears that the group is a local club, that is at best, interested in archaeology.

Of the people digging that day, three were retired individuals who liked to dig in the soil to keep themselves busy. Two had close ties with the St. Joseph Museum, but absolutely no training in archaeology proper. The other woman I visited with was just invited to come along and dig for things, only the week before the celebration.

I feel that this event has done the archaeological community a great disservice by passing off these people as "archeologists" to the uninformed public.

I cannot tell how many hundreds of classroom and field hours I spent in obtaining my degree. It takes much more than laying out a grid and troweling out earth before one should be labeled an archeologist.

Too many of our non-replaceable sites are being destroyed each week, because everyone thinks all you have to do to be an archeologist is to dig in the earth. This wrong must be righted so some uninformed person can be prevented from carelessly destroying a part of history with a shovel or a trowel.

STEVE PHILLIPS

Contract archaeologist in charge
St. Louis Site Preservation
St. Peters, Mo.

**rogram will feature
artifacts and fossils**

ND 7-22-98
Artifacts enthusiast Mike

George will present programs on American Indian artifacts, rocks and fossils at the following River Bluffs Regional Library locations: 10 a.m. today at the Savannah branch, 514 Main St.; 1:30 p.m. today at the Washington Park branch in St. Joseph, Third and Market streets; and 2 p.m. Thursday, July 23, at the Belt branch in St. Joseph, 1904 N. Belt Highway.

The event is free and is sponsored by the Friends of the River Bluffs Regional Library.

Hieroglyphics, artifacts are our only clues to our predecessors

NP 6-28-92
By ALLEN SEIFERT

News-Press Staff Writer

Before there was Wal-Mart and K-Mart, there were trading posts. But who, or what, came before Columbus?

No one can say. The people who were here left no libraries or printed words. They left no dwellings, like those at Mesa Verde in Colorado, and they left no tombs, like the ancient Egyptians.

All they left us are a few shards of pottery, a few spear-points and arrowheads, and the scrawlings on the wall of Indian Cave State Park, near Schubert, Neb.

Mike George of Oregon has devoted the last decade to a study of Native Americans and those who preceded them. His collection of artifacts is one of the best in this area outside a museum.

George is a member of the St. Joseph Archaeological Society, with members whose interests range from the days of the Old West to pre-history. The group meets on the last Monday of each month at the Bank of St.

Joseph at Faraon and Woodbine.

Officers include president Mike Fisher, vice president Edward Barlow, secretary Della Watkins, and treasurer Jim Jennings. The club was formed in 1963 and has between 70 and 80 members.

Several are extremely interested in area pre-history.

"Go back 10,000 or 12,000 years before Christ, and there probably weren't tribes. But there were people here — probably scattered across the area in small groups, maybe families living together," says George.

The Oregon farmer lives along the bluffs overlooking the rich Nodaway river valley and he has crisscrossed much of the land in that area looking for artifacts.

"They were hunters and gatherers. Farming came later. It could be that they hunted the dinosaur and the mammoth with crude spears and the atlatl, which was a spear-throwing device which allowed the man to throw his spear with more velocity than he could do

Please see **Artifacts**/Page 12

(OVER)

Artifacts share ancient lifestyles

Continued from page 11

it by hand," says George.

George, who lectures on his favorite subject to school groups and social organizations, has made his own version of the atlatl to demonstrate how it was used.

He can only guess where this area's earliest settlers originated. Were they pushed southward into the region by an ice-age glacier? Did they come to this area from the south/southwest as explorers from the advanced civilizations in Mexico and Central America?

"Everyone who has an interest in archaeology wants to

know how these people lived, what they ate, and where they originated, but they didn't leave that many clues," says George. If houses were built, they were simple structures probably made of mud and thatch, bark and leaves or animal skins. By the time the white man came, Native Americans were using animal skins for sophisticated housing.

"There were a lot of animals around, although we don't know precisely when man arrived and prehistoric animals like the dinosaurs became extinct," says George. "But there were animals here to be hunted."

you the best.

America's Best Bank. Again.

 **Commerce Bank**
Member FDIC

364-3131

*U.S. Banker, July 1991 study conducted by Olson Research Associates, Greenbelt, MD.

Mike George

MIKE GEORGE

Memo From
RICHARD NOLF

Oregon, MO

Basement for a house

Steve Loucks

8116 / 442-3121
64503

degree in
anthropology
M.I. (husband)
now a car dealer
He called Carl
from Carl Chapman
Wanted Mike
to get info

of town. turn south at
Pruessman's garage

12:30 PM
4:30 PM

15
39
61

Departure 53922

4-25-82

return 54039

Mike George

Rt #3,

Oregon, Mo, 64472

(Phone Call from 4-19-82)

"Built new house

1 yr ago - dirt from
basement spread over
yard area. Indian

artifacts now work-
ing out of the dirt"

at west edge of Oregon,
Mo. take Hi 111 west
of town. turn south at
Pruessman's garage

Mike George

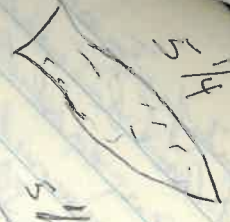
Ore

64503

No 2 1/2 shells
 New Brown house on
 left. House on right
 about miscellog on
 the following Sunday
 4-25-82
 3/4 piece, also
 cells (on number 100)
 Round hammer w/ on pencil
 green
 Two large paint (brown)
 opp 5" long. #1 & #2
 Two fan like shells
 One oval of shell (point)
 / three mussels (brownish)

Mike George
 at
 Ore

Other crudelous to possibly
 woodlark
 3 pieces just temper putting
 coral marked and incised

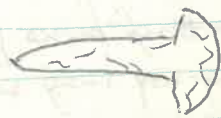


64503

188

Die

Older couple's (great)
woodland
3 pieces of wood (pitting)
and marked and mixed



#3



#2

5 1/2"



#1

5 1/4"

64503

20 2 1/2 blocks
New Brown horse on
left. Vams on right

West. mixed height
The following
4-25-82
3/4 grown
Celts (on
Round

We should send a
 note to him.
 I called Franko -
 He has a degree in
 anthropology. Shook
 under Carl. Has a
 car dealer.
 Wants M.V. & get into
 the group. He
 has covered other
 in 2000
 seems to have
 them to keep off
 thinking together
 of Carl's note all
 was been packed
 up as that was

4-28-82
 From the phone call
 most
 4-28-82
 From the phone call
 "packing plans" and
 a paper with a
 Mike George
 at
 are

64503

4-29-82
Auntie phone call
from Mr. George
"by how found a
pecking alone" and
a pipe with a

4-28-82
Thru call from Mr. George
After the summer
the AM. They have
found another large
apex and the fan-
tail of the and
more shells with

many are and
phylogeny as much
as possible.

04503

slide to
We should send them
+ info to him
I called for the
1-1 he has a degree in
anthropology. She
under Carl. He
car dealer.
Wants M.V. &
the 9
had
-C

from Mr. Chapman -
 we would not
 like to have
 brought that thing
 of more need
 mark. (Pencil)
 he may be a wild
 pipe long way.
 line around it.
 She mentioned
 first on it.

82
 The things came to
 stable. No fact
 found more now
 in general. Also at
 aches place. family
 that he and family
 interested
 keep clear separate to.

Mike George
 at
 Area
 6

Found in "hard end"
 Two "fish" appear
 Quoties "fish" & "cells"
 Several others
 Two more - all 20s
 Small oblong (pencil)
 (that makes two pen barrel)
 One clay pipe (might
 have been for old house)

64503

Found in performance
 Since the "in-painting"
 Another fresh appear
 General actor & sets -
 There were 3000
 Small children part
 (That makes two from beauty)
 One day pipe (night)
 have been from old house

Miss George
Box # 3, Mo,
Oregon, Mo,
64473

Mr. Don L. Reynolds
Box Express Stables Museum
914 Penn Street
St. Joseph, Missouri
64503



On 28 Forest City
(2 miles south of Forest City)
1 clay pipe
2 collumbe
3 fish point
1 long (67) (blackish)
1 small (504) "
99 purple + white boots
1/4 long + orange
2 - smallish shells
The record got from Mr.
Chapman.

Ut # 3
Oregon, Mo.
04473



Mr. Ron J. Reynolds
Don't & Horse Stables Museum
914 Penn Street
St. Joseph, Missouri
04503

One Ed. Paulsen (Oregon)
(2 miles south of Oregon)
1 clay pipe
2 Callumite
3 fish paint
1 large (60") obsidian
1 small (304") " "
99 purple + white
1/4" long + size of
2 - small oken
The word of
Chapman

Farmer yields historical harvest



TODD WEDDLE/St. Joseph News-Press
A small dreamcatcher dangles from the rearview mirror as Mike George drives the gravel roads of Northwest Missouri.



Mike George, 49, of Oregon, Mo., walks a creek bed recently looking for artifacts. Mr. George, a farmer and self-taught archaeologist, discovered a passion for the historical pastime when he routinely found artifacts while working his farmland.

TODD WEDDLE
St. Joseph News-Press

Hobby grows from unearthed ancient artifacts

9-11-03

By KEN NEWTON
kenn@njgco.com
St. Joseph News-Press

Also man approached life with hungry single-mindedness: kill an animal, eat an animal, move on.

Ten millennia before Christ lived, nomadic hunters wandered the landscape that would become Northwest Missouri. Native Americans to the extreme.

They left a trail. Mike George finds and ponders what remains.

"They weren't even Indians like you think about today," he says. "They were just little

survive."

The farmer examines a fluted point, the sharpened rock used as a spear tip.

"Just think, did the guy lose this, did he throw it at something, how did it end up here thousands of years later from when it was made, used and lost?" he wonders. "That's the intriguing part."

Mr. George calls himself an avocational archaeologist. He holds no formal education in the discipline that has become a second job for him and prides himself on layman explanations on matters prehistoric. He recounts the passage of time as a series of cultural

hunter-gatherers who

become village farmers who become traders. Glaciers carve up the land, thousands of years pass and humans interact as these changes slowly come.

Mr. George, 49, spends quiet moments now

and then mulling how a list of academic bona fides would have changed his mission. He

TIME Stories

An ongoing series of articles, appearing Thursdays, depicting compelling, unusual or noteworthy people from the News-Press readership area.

decides he likes his own view. "If I had been a professional," he said, "I might be like the majority of professionals now, that don't see it like I do."

He came from farm stock and knew he would continue that work. Graduating from South Holt High School in 1972, he spent a year in college studying agriculture, then figured that since farming would be his life, he might as well get on with it.

The plows bit the George ground and the upturned dirt at times produced an arrowhead. He'd climb down from the tractor, pick it up and drop the artifact in his shirt pocket. Eventually, there were a dozen pieces he left for safekeeping in

a shoebox.

An epiphany came in 1981. He and his wife, Beverly, would build a new house adjoining the family farmland on the outskirts of Oregon, Mo. A contractor from Maryville, Mo., came to dig the basement and asked a curious question afterward: "Did you bury some cat-tle around the area?"

Actually, he dug on the site of a previous house, but bones came up in the excavation. And as rains pounded the dirt that wet spring, arrowheads, axes and other artifacts came to the surface. They gathered them, and the local weekly published a story about the find.

Farmer yields historical harvest near Or

Continued from Page A1

Three weeks passed, and Roy Coy, a museum director of national reputation from St. Joseph, called to ask about the artifacts. When Mr. Coy visited, Mr. George listened closely — "I didn't want to appear the rube that I was ... still am," he said — then admitted being lost by his guest's evaluation.

So Mr. Coy connected him with the proper literature and convinced him to walk his fields ... and other fields ... and stream beds.

These long-ago people needed but a few things, Mr. Coy explained. A nearby source of water, for one. The George property has a spring where water runs out cold as winter. And elevated ground for another, where hunters could scan the countryside for food or enemies. The George house occupies a rise above the fields.

Mr. George lived just where prehistoric forebears had. The idea hooked him, and he put on his walking shoes.

"It was real hard to get any work done because every time it rained, the next morning we'd go," he said. "We hunted hard."

He enlisted his father in the hunt for artifacts. His two daughters loved to go out with their dad. Their outings numbered 50 to 100 times a year.

One day around Forbes, in southern Holt County, Mr. George and his father found 14 perfect arrowheads, a bonanza never since equaled.

In their walks along creeks, the Georges stepped among items they would have previous-



Students from the Stewartville (Mo.) School District inspect a variety of artifacts after Mike George gave a presentation last week.

TODD WEDDLE/St. Joseph News-Press

them to recognize mammoth teeth, remains of prehistoric animals that once roamed here.

"This was here 35,000 to 40,000 years ago, and here I am how many eons later holding the tooth of this elephant," Mr. George says.

The farmer fell hard into the pastime. He devoured books on earlier epochs. He accompanied professionals on their digs. At one time, he belonged to seven different archaeological societies.

Ten years into the hobby, with the artifacts outgrowing the display cases and becoming unmanageable in numerous boxes, Mr. George called in a carpenter to construct a relic room in his basement, with lighted displays of his thousands of finds.

On the glass shelves are the

in two decades of head-down curiosity.

When a local teacher asked to bring her students to see the exhibit, word spread to educators in nearby Craig and Mound City. He ended up doing six programs that year and found it gratifying. Each time, questions were asked he couldn't answer. So he researched and prepared for the next time.

Now, he does 20 to 30 programs a year. A Farm Bureau meeting in Rock Port. A Missouri Humanities Council gathering in Sedalia. A Daughters of the American Revolution convention at the Lake of the Ozarks. Numerous school groups.

"It's enjoyable, but it's hard to schedule everything," he says, noting he turns down engagements during spring planting



Mike George goes through his archaeological collection in the basement of his home while preparing for a presentation. Mr. George has amassed more than 9,500 artifacts, su

quarter of his collection, 2,000 to 2,500 pieces, for the programs. It's all hands-on. This part he loves, the sharing of his discoveries.

"Early on, and I told my wife and my family, if I can't share this with people, if I have to worry about somebody trying to get hold of it or stealing it, I don't want to do it," he says.

Things have changed in artifact gathering. No-till farming means less upturned dirt, less

passage in 1987 of the unmarked human burial law makes any discoveries complicated.

An unearthing of artifacts with human bones must be reported to the county sheriff, who in turn reports it to a state committee that has six months to respond to the finding. In the meantime, the excavation must be stopped.

Savvy construction workers learned to act like they never see the artifacts and keeping



This is a very small portion of the area used by archaeologist Mike George for displaying his collection of more than 7,550 artifacts. The cabinets and shelves

of artifacts are located in the basement of his farm home at Oregon, Missouri, the site where prehistoric Americans apparently also chose to make their home.

The Long Road to Now: An Archaeological Journey with Collector Mike George

In 1981, Mike George began building a house on his and to travel it with Mike during one of his presentations is a the occasional mammoth, mastodon, or bison fossil).
In September, 1999, Mike lead St. Joseph's recogni-
Missouri What he could not know rewarding experience.

but, as the contractor dug into the site, it became apparent that prehistoric Americans had also claimed that very spot as home.

Mike had been casually collecting artifacts for years, storing them (as boys do) in a shoe box. But what he found that day changed his life. He had uncovered a campsite, immediately recognizable as an important find.

He called Roy Coy, director of the St. Joseph and Pony Express museums, and what he learned so captivated him that he began to absorb archeological knowledge like a sponge and devote every spare minute to the search for artifacts.

Today, his collection of over 7,550 items is recognized as one of the finest representations of prehistoric Indian life anywhere — and one of the most complete.

"I've been real happy that Roy guided me down this road," Mike says with a big grin. It has been a good road,

Story by Harrison Hartley

Photos submitted by Harrison Hartley and Mike George



The skull cap of a bison is included in Mike George's extensive collection of archaeological artifacts.

actions between tribes and with native plants and animals, and the changes brought about by the coming of Europeans.

He illustrates his comments with an astonishing array of stone knives, spears, grinders, bowls, hammers, and restored tools, musical instruments, game pieces, and weapons (not to mention

there will be a special treat — free samples of native American foods, game, and grains stone ground on the spot. Mike will, of course, be on hand for comments and discussion throughout what promises to be an entertaining, informative, and worthwhile evening.

tools and hunting techniques of ancient man.

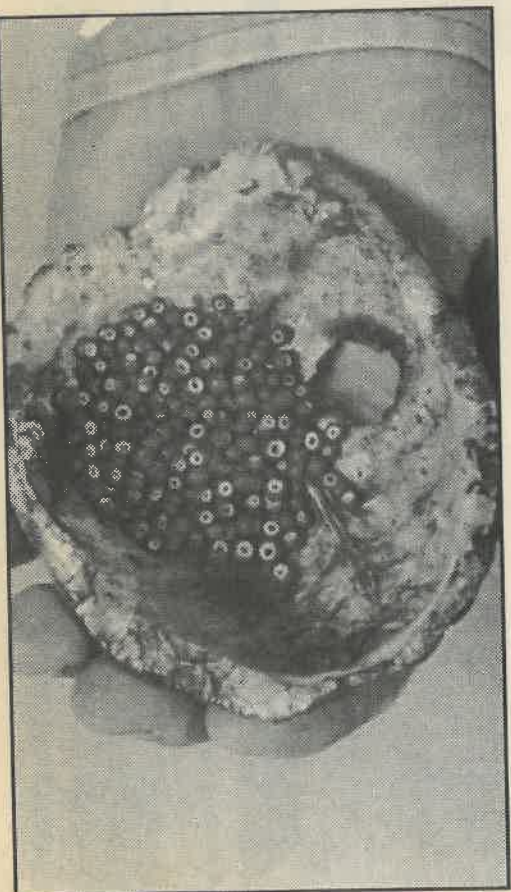
This year, on Tuesday, September 5, at the arena, he will discuss "The Agricultural Practices and Foods of the Mississippian People, 900-1700 A.D."

Sponsored by the St. Joseph Parks, Recreation, and Civic Facilities Department, in cooperation with the Sacred Hills Association and the Missouri Archaeological Society, the program (free and open to the public) will begin at 7:30 p.m. with a video, "On the Trail of the First Americans," followed by Mike at 8:00 p.m.

Then, at 8:45 p.m.,



Besides human artifacts, there are the fossilized teeth and partial jaw of the American mastodon, a prehistoric New World relative of the modern elephant.



Beads made by prehistoric Indians living in the Loess Bluffs around Oregon, Missouri, are one of the fine discoveries made by archaeologist Mike George.



Indian artifacts collector finds fulfillment in

Preserving the past

Mike George with one of his arrowhead displays and a chopping instrument at his home in Oregon.

OREGON, Mo. — There are different motivations for collecting. Some collect coins hoping to accumulate riches. Some collect cups or saucers to show off the places they've visited.

Mike George collects arrowheads out of respect, almost reverence, for the Indians who once roamed the land he now farms.

"The Indians were an amazing people," says George, looking at the ceiling-to-floor showcases which line the north wall of the basement of his ranch-style home. The showcases are filled with Indian artifacts, almost all of which was found within a 20-mile radius of his house.

"They were a very tough people," he continued, "How many people do you know who could survive today with the tools and the implements that they had to use?"

George's interest in Indians and relics of their culture built slowly to the point where now he devours anything written about tribes and their customs.

He explains how the interest developed.

"I didn't think much about it when I was in high school. I'd find an arrowhead now and then, but I didn't really look for them." Then, while building his house which sits on a hill in the southwest section of Oregon, he found the ground was littered with Indian artifacts — axe heads, trade beads, clay pipes.

He started picking up everything. "This particular area (which overlooks the river valley to the south) must have been a special meeting place," says George, "A lot of the pieces that I have come from the area right around the house."

"I guess I really started looking in 1981," he continues. "Now,

if I'm working in the field, I'm always watching the ground. With the heavy machinery used today, something as delicate as an arrow point will be shattered if it's run over."

He also makes forays into the countryside, looking for artifacts. One of his favorite areas is near a

people collecting them, and a lot are being destroyed by man."

He also spends a great deal of his time showing off his huge collection to school groups, scout groups, anyone who wishes to learn more about the artifacts or the hobby.

"I look at this as preserving the hobby."

"I don't believe the skull is beads around the neck.

"Many of the pieces that I found are thousands of years old," he says, "maybe as old as 10,000 years old, although some instances it's very difficult to tell."

Some of the artifacts he's discovered, like a digger tool made of a sea shell, have geographic ties to this area.

"It's difficult to explain something like that got to the area, unless it was traded from tribe to tribe. But it probably originated somewhere in the Pacific Northwest," says George.

If he has a favorite item in collection, it may be the various tribal ceremonies. Finding one of the fragile pipes is most like finding a chest full of treasure for the collector.

"I also like the axes. I always looking for stone axe heads," says George. He now has 30 axe heads in his collection, including one monster which weighs over ten pounds. He also partial to a spade made of well-worn flint. He estimates the tool to be almost 500 years old.

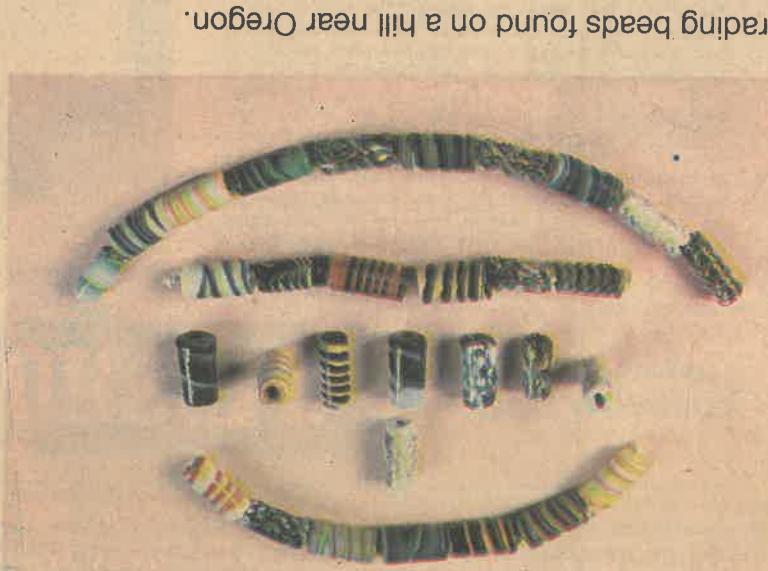
"It's just fascinating," he says. "they lived," he says.

Text by Allen Selfert; photos by Ival Lawhon

rock house once used as an Indian trading post back in the 1840s. He has literally baskets of pieces of pottery, pieces of arrowheads, and pieces of tools which are not a part of his in-home display. "I usually hunt about half a day at a time. It's an interesting hobby. It's inexpensive, and I've also met a lot of different people. But artifacts, especially good pieces are getting harder and harder to find. There are a lot of

history," he says, "I'm getting a few parts of the past out in the open so people can see it and hopefully appreciate how Indians lived and what they did."

One of the focal points of George's collection is the skull of an Indian he found back in 1983. He's almost apologetic about it. "I do not believe in disturbing Indian burial sites and I would never do that," he says. "If they have to be disturbed, it should be



Trading beads found on a hill near Oregon.

Farmer builds collection of Indian artifacts

Continued from Page A1

where it was found would keep a secretary busy eight hours a day. In addition, he belongs to six organizations dedicated to the preservation of Indian artifacts.

Since 1982, Mr. George, 43, has had virtually every thrill known to an artifact collector, down to the reburial of a Native American body that was washed from its grave by high water. This was done with all of the ceremony Mr. George could muster on the ridge just down from the original burial site.

Mr. George's biggest thrill came on Memorial Day in 1996. Cutting a new slice of road through a pasture, he heard the unmistakable

clank of stone on metal. He was sure he had scraped a major discovery. With the help of a Kansas City friend, the two sliced their way into the mound of dirt to find 30 pre-formed blades of heated quartz.

The find was unprecedented in Northwest Missouri — or any area.

After consultation with experts, Mr. George believes the blades were brought to this area for trading by members of the Hopewell clan or tribe.

The Hopewells were traders who traveled great distances from their homes near the Ohio and Mississippi River. They lived from approximately 100 B.C. to 350 A.D.

"I'd like to know more about where the blades came from and what happened to them," Mr. George said. "Obviously, they were hidden where we found them by someone who never made it back to reclaim them. We'll never know what happened."

Mr. George's find has been the topic of articles in numerous archaeological magazines across the Midwest.

Farmer makes fantastic finds of artifacts from early Indians

3-10-97

By AL SEIFERT
St. Joseph News-Press

OREGON, Mo. — In 1982, Holt County farmer Mike George was caught up in the building of a new house.

His house would sit high on a ridge on the east part of town, overlooking the Missouri River valley and much of the land farmed by Mr. George and his father.

Mr. George grew up in this area. Finding Indian artifacts was a

part of life. He collected arrowheads the way some youngsters select sports cards — with some interest, but without fire and fervor.

At the construction site, artifacts — arrowheads, spear points, shards of pottery — seemed to be all over the place. Mr. George found his interest warming.

It wasn't just the remnants of Indians that whetted Mr. George's appetite, it was the reading he did while he was hunting. So skillful did he become and so deep grew

his knowledge that he found himself called upon to talk to school groups and social and civic clubs.

Mr. George's collection of arrowheads swelled to more than 7,000 pieces — all found within seven miles of his home. His artifacts range from the very clean and precise to the jawbone of a woolly mammoth with a row of grass-crunching teeth.

In addition to his relic hunting, just labeling each piece and



DENNY SIMMONS/St. Joseph News-Press

Mike George has built a collection of artifacts he has found on his and his neighbors' farms in Holt County, Mo. He holds a knife used for skinning by early Indians in the area.

Pre-recorded history

AP 4-16-88

Indian artifacts featured in Squaw Creek exhibit

MOUND CITY, Mo. — Summer visitors to the Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge here will also get a small taste of the region's pre-recorded history.

An exhibit set up by the Missouri Archaeological Society focuses on Native Americans who roamed the area before the coming of the white man.

"This exhibit was placed here so that people visiting the refuge might see some of the artifacts used by Indians who lived here," said Mike George, the owner of most of the artifacts.

The display was set up under the auspices of the Missouri Archaeological Society and the Northwest Missouri chapter of that organization. Mike Fisher of St. Joseph is the president of both the local chapter and the state organization.

"All of the items on display were found within a two-mile radius of the refuge," said George, who has one of the largest collections of artifacts in Northwest Missouri. "Most were found in the hills to the east."

"It is not legal to pick up any artifacts on the refuge itself," George cautioned, "but this display, we hope, will perhaps stimulate interest in collecting and preserving them. Once items like this are destroyed, they are lost forever."

Items on display at the refuge range from tiny dart points carved from stone to primitive axes weighing several pounds and dating from 700 to 1000 B.C.

"Most of these artifacts probably belonged to the Kanza or Osage — the two most prominent groups that roamed this area," George said.



Staff photo by IVAL LAWSON JR.

Mike George with a display of artifacts at Squaw Creek Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center.

Freeze FRAME

ST. JOSEPH NEWS-PRESS

D

Thursday
SEPT. 3, 1998

Feature story idea?
Call Lifestyles
Editor Linda Wied-
maier at 271-8592.
Or e-mail Linda at
lindawled@npgco.com



500 years old once stood, of pottery after finding a st City, Mo. The piece of odland culture, which was in the area around that time. Ancient Indians liked to camp on high ground near water, he says. Between heavy rains, Mr. George can be found slowly walking back and forth across the slopes of hills, scouting the ground looking for artifacts. The large number of artifacts in his home is testament to his diligence.

country archaeologist



Along with many speaking engagements throughout the year, Mr. George is also an organizer of the Sacred Hills Encampment. At Trails West! he and Cindy Weaver of St. Joseph's Parks and Recreation Department help out in the heritage tent selling items to promote museums and the Encampment.



They can keep history alive, is the goal he has worked toward for more than 15 years. His collection of Native American artifacts began when some were unearthed from the foundation of his home in Oregon, Mo., in 1982. It has progressed to the point where Mr. George is now president of the Kansas Chapter of Kansas Anthropological Association and a past board member of the Missouri Archaeological Society — to name just two of the groups he is associated with.

His enthusiasm for archaeology is catching, and he loves to share it. "I think all of us have a little kid inside us and there is a certain thrill to finding something." That thrill shows in the more than 30 pre-



year he was an organizer of the Sacred Hills Encampment Park and was one of the participants with a display of artifacts from this area. His population speaker grows, as his book more people walk out area history. "I collected more people years ago Mr. George is lecturing and sharing of anyone who will listen. No matter how cold or Mr. George is out on the slope ally between big rains, he is that elusive arrowhead or bead that was washed up only be found before the covers it again. "It takes ded you have to like it," he says, ing his enthusiasm.

LEFT: When the pickup door opens, the Georges' farm dog Pepper is right there. Pepper is a constant companion when Mr. George goes looking for artifacts or when he's working around the farm.



During the daily feeding, Mike George greets Ringeye, one of 35 cows and 31 calves on his farm. He personally feeds the cattle protein cubes every day and takes time to be with them so they will not be afraid of him. This allows him to easily check each animal for pinkeye or other problems.

ABOVE: Recently uncovered from a heavy rain, the spearhead could be 8,000 old.

RIGHT: Another job on the that keeps Mr. George bu



Mike George to talk about ancient Indians

ST. JO TEL. 9-2-99

Mike George, one of the major educators and collectors of Indian artifacts in Northwest Missouri and Northeast Kansas, will be featured guest speaker at a public meeting to commemorate September as "Missouri Archaeological Month."

The event will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 7, at the St. Joseph Civic Arena and will be free to the public. It is sponsored by the City of St. Joseph Parks, Recreation and Civic Facilities Department in co-

operation with the Sacred Hills Association and the Missouri Archaeological Society.

George will acknowledge the amazing inventiveness of the continent's earliest human cultures and the remarkable aptitude they possessed in creating hunting tools from mere rocks. He will emphasize specific hunting methods, using various tools from his collection of more than 7,000 locally-found pieces. Many other artifacts will be

displayed as he explains how the area's early inhabitants created, stored, bartered and used them.

George inadvertently built his house on an Indian campsite in 1981 and started collecting seriously. His accumulation grew to 7,550 pieces. Almost the entire basement of his house is now a private museum, which busloads of children visit. He believes it is unconscionable to sell Indian artifacts for monetary gain and uses them only for education.

NP 3-6-02

Native American workshop offered

A workshop titled "An Experience with Native American Artifacts" will be held from 4:15 to 6:15 p.m. Thursday at the Hyde Elementary School Learning Resource Center, Sixth and Harmon streets in St. Joseph.

The event will feature archaeologist Mike George of Oregon, Mo.

The workshop, appropriate for elementary teachers, social studies teachers, science teachers, art teachers and others interested in American Indian history, will include information on cultures that inhabited Northwest Missouri, the many types of artifacts that have been discovered here, identification of several types of arrowheads and spear points, and the importance of geography and landforms to these cultures.

Refreshments will be served. For more information, call 232-1458.

MIKE
GEORGE

artifacts new life into 'old' history

By **MEREDITH
HINES-DOCHTERMAN**
meredithd@npgco.com
St. Joseph News-Press

Lafayette High School transformed its gymnasium into a hands-on museum Tuesday.

For more than four hours, students saw their classroom lessons come alive as they listened to experiences of Buffalo Soldiers, handled American Indian and ice-age animal artifacts or talked to experts about the Lewis and Clark Expedition.

Missouri's history was the theme of Lafayette's seventh-annual schoolwide project.

"It's really cool," said Amber Hays, 14. "We have a chance to actually see things we've only read about. It makes everything real. It really did happen, it wasn't just a story."

Which is exactly the goal of project coordinators Dena Bachman and Luanne Haggard.

"We started this because we wanted the students to see that connection of learning," said Ms. Bachman, a foreign language teacher at Lafayette. "It's easier to see a connection in elementary school because you are in one room, with all of your classmates. Once you get to high school, everyone takes different classes, and has different teachers. We want the students to see the big picture of all their class-

es."

A chapter in a history textbook on pioneer living was illustrated by the washing board, home-made wooden chair and butter churn on display at one station.

Music history was celebrated by various vocal and musical performances.

The students were able to hold science in their hand with the fossil of a mastodon tooth.

Art took on a whole new meaning as the students studied American Indian moccasins, baskets and jewelry.

"I think being able to pick up and touch the artifacts is important to the students," said Mike George, an archaeologist who brought his collection of American Indian and ice-age artifacts. "They don't just want you to tell them about it, they want to hold it."

Mr. George said most students were surprised to discover that all of his artifacts were discovered in Northwest Missouri.

"It doesn't occur to them that the things they've studied actually happened in their own backyard," he said.

Past schoolwide project themes include Ellis Island, the Holocaust and the Vietnam War.

"I don't know if the teachers or the kids are the first ones to ask 'What's the theme this year?'" Ms. Bachman said. "Everyone seems to enjoy it."

Letter



Missouri Archaeological Society

329 Noyes Hall P.O. Box 958
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65205
314-882-3544

Dear Trustee,

I hope this summer season finds you well. I am sure that this is a busy time of year for you, so I will try to take as little of your time as possible. I am the new Chairman of Trustees for the society. It is my belief, that we as trustees, should do as much as possible to promote the society and archaeology in our area. Here is what I would like for you to do.

First, take a few minutes and write down anything that you may have done to promote the society in your area. This may include such things as talks to school classes, scout groups, clubs, etc. Setting up displays at fairs, antique shows, or even in local librarys. Maybe you have persuaded a friend to join the society by just talking. Please drop me a line and let me know. If enough of you are interested, we might get a section of the Quarterly to report trustee news.

Second, let me know what you think we should do as a group. One idea given to me was for the trustees to operate the State Fair booth in 1989. Another was to host part of a spring meeting. Any ideas you have will be welcome and considered.

The last thing is this. If you are happy with the degree of involvement that you have with the society, please tell me. It will be pointless for the trustees to set goals which we cannot possibly attain. Interest has been expressed to me in all of the above ideas, but I need your input. The Board of Trustees will be just what we make it. Please reply, so that I know where you stand as a Missouri Archaeological Society Trustee.

Don,

You may not remember me, but I shall never forget you! You came to see the few artifacts we found when we dug our basement in 1981. You told us what books to buy to learn about relics & archaeology. From that first visit with you my desire to learn has grown and grown! You sent photos to Carl Chapman and so began my short acquaintance with him. Since then my hobby has grown to almost a full time job. If you have not to reply to the letter that will be no problem. If you do, however I would value any comments you may have!

Thank you,

Mike George
Rural Route 3
Oregon, Missouri
64473

Sincerely
Mike George



Missouri Archaeological Society

329 Noyes Hall P.O. Box 958
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65205
314-882-3544

PD
June 15, 1988

Dear MAS Member:

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your patronage of the Missouri Archaeological Society for the 1987 year. Without your support the Society would not have been able to meet its overall objectives and goals, and would not have been able to provide services to its members. During 1987 you should have received four issues of the MAS Quarterly, Volume 4, plus The Missouri Archaeologist Volume 48 (due out in December 1988). For members who paid for 1986 and 1987, The Missouri Archaeologist, volumes 47 and 48 also will be published this year.

You also should have received the first Quarterly for 1988--Volume 5 (2). Regrettably, we will not be able to send you 5(2) unless you renew for 1988. By paying your dues at this time you will avoid any unnecessary delays in the receipt of the MAS Quarterly.

During 1988 you will receive three more issues of the Quarterly, plus Volume 49 of The Missouri Archaeologist. The Society also will have an information-and-education booth and booksale at the Missouri State Fair in Sedalia, August 18-28. Persons interested in helping staff this booth should contact the Society office (314-882-3544) for more information.

Please use the following membership form for your renewal. Your prompt attention to this request will be appreciated tremendously.

Sincerely,

Mike O'Brien

Michael J. O'Brien, MAS Secretary



Answers



Mike George
Rural Route 3
Oregon, Missouri
64473

Mike George

Missouri Archaeological Society



Missouri Archaeological Society

329 Noyes Hall P.O. Box 958
COLUMBIA, MISSOURI 65205



Honorable Reynolds
3108 Edmond
St. Joseph, Mo 64501



I am sure that this is to take as little of your Trustees for the society. and do as much as possible our area. Here is what I would

anything that you may have this may include such things clubs, etc. Setting up dis-ocal librarys. Maybe you by just talking. Please if you are interested, we port trustee news.

ould do as a group. One idea e the State Fair booth in 1989. ng. Any ideas you have will be

with the degree of involve- e tell me. It will be pointless not possibly attain. Interest ve ideas, but I need your what we make it. Please reply , ri Archaeological Society

Thank you,
Mike George
Rural Route 3
Oregon, Missouri
64473

Answer

Don,

You

forget y
found u
us what
from th
grown a
so began
hobby h
choose not to

problem. If you
any comments you

Mike George