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# The Great Plains Archeological Archive

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## *The building of an archeological research facility.*

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In October 1988 the Ablah Library instituted a new archival program in Great Plains archeology and anthropology. The author conducted a survey of more than fifty university libraries (including the Tozzer Library at the Peabody Museum), centers, and individuals throughout the country. The survey showed that a need existed for a research level library which would systematically collect, catalog, and circulate archeological literature focusing on the Great Plains as a region.<sup>1</sup>

The Great Plains Region is geographically defined as including the following states and provinces: Alberta, Saskatchewan, southwestern Manitoba, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Missouri, and Illinois.<sup>2</sup> Illinois is traditionally included by Plains archeologists because a significant portion of the state is part of what they refer to as the "prairie peninsula."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Robert C. Myers, "Survey of institutions and persons collecting archeological literature from the Great Plains." Wichita State University, 1988. Unpublished.

<sup>2</sup>Philip Kopper, *The Smithsonian Book of North American Indians: Before the Coming of the Europeans* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Books, 1986).

<sup>3</sup>James P. Gallagher and Robert F. Sasso, "Investigations into Oneota Ridged Field Agriculture on the Northern Margin of the Prairie Peninsula," *Plains Anthropologist* 32 (1987): 141-51.

The Archive collects site reports, cultural resource inventories, archeological salvage reports, conference papers, and Ph.D. dissertations. Such material is, at times, difficult to locate and access, and is often referred to by archeologists as the "gray literature" of their profession.

A major goal of the archive is to provide access to the gray literature of Plains archeology. By systematically collecting this material, cataloging it into the OCLC database, and providing interlibrary loan access, this goal should be realized.

### Materials

In order to systematically collect materials, the support of state and federal agencies, plus the help of private contract archeologists, has been enlisted. The response has been very good. The archive has been placed upon at least twenty distribution lists. For example, the Great Plains Archeological Archive is the sole permanent repository in Kansas for the *Research Papers Series* issued by the Office of the State Archaeologist of Iowa. A significant number of retrospective reports and surveys have also been received. The archive has collected not only archeological reports and surveys, but also conference papers and back issues of archeological journals published by various professional and amateur societies. Site reports have been collected in both paper and microform formats. Ethnologies and ethnographies related to the Great Plains will be acquired, too.

Currently the archive has over 2,000 archeological site reports and Ph.D. dissertations available for circulation and interlibrary lending. Subscriptions have been placed to journals, bulletins, and newsletters as well as appropriate museum journals published by various archeological societies throughout the Plains area including Canada. By June of 1989, the archive will have subscriptions to every state and regional professional archeological society and to several amateur societies in the Plains region.

### Access to the materials

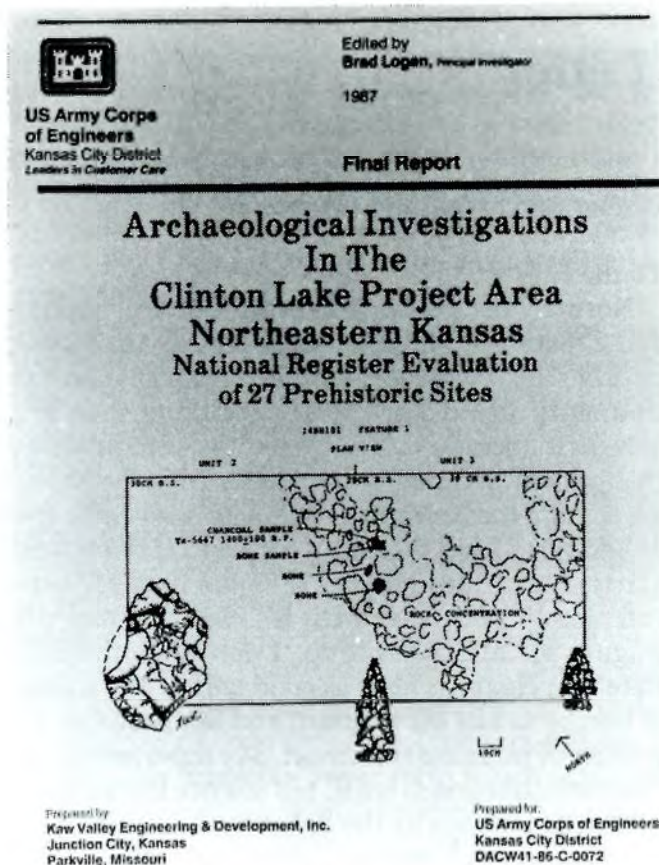
The Great Plains Archeological Archive is located at the Ablah Library at Wichita State University, Wichita, Kansas. The Library uses the NOTIS computer system. Its public catalog, LUIS (Library Users Information System), is accessible by telephone from anywhere in the United States and Canada. Using a personal computer, a modem, and a software package such as Procomm or MSKermit, a person may search the library's holdings by author, title, or subject. A handout on how to use MSKermit to access LUIS is available upon request. For those who do not have access to such equipment, reference services are available by calling (316) 689-3584. The library's holdings are also accessible through OCLC. Much of the material received by the archive requires original cataloging, thus adding to the OCLC database. Such cataloging represents improved access to this genre of literature.

Anyone who wishes to come to the Ablah Library is welcome to use this material. For those who are not affiliated with the university, a special borrower card may be obtained. Most of the archeological material circulates and that which does not may be photocopied. One exception is site location information.

Site location information cannot be freely circulated due to the federal laws and regulations governing who may visit and work on the sites. Requests for such information will be directed to the appropriate federal or state agency. Many of the sites are currently under evaluation for placement on the National Historic Places Register; the disruption of such sites and their artifacts destroys important data and decreases the site's significance.<sup>4</sup> The Anasazi Indian complex in Arizona, Utah, Colorado, and New Mexico is a prime example of site destruction due to illegal grave robbing and artifact hunting by those who are called "pot-hunters" by archeologists. One intact artifact such as an "olla" (a round, intricately decorated, ceramic vessel) is worth as much as \$30,000 to private collectors.<sup>5</sup> Therefore, it is of critical importance to

<sup>4</sup>Patricia L. Parker, "What Are the National Register Criteria?" *Local Preservation* (Interagency Resources Division, National Park Service), May 1987.

<sup>5</sup>Jim Robbins, "Violating History," *National Parks* 61 (1987): 26-31.



### Archeological "gray literature."

observe such federal and state regulations in order to preserve perishable information and knowledge.

### Summary

The Great Plains Archeological Archive was established to serve as a centralized research collection for those involved in the study of Great Plains archeology and anthropology. Approximately sixty percent of the archive's holdings consist of archeological gray literature which is often a problem to access. The Ablah Library's public computer catalog (LUIS) may be accessed by those who have the proper hard- and software via telephone. LUIS may be used to scan the archive's holdings. This may be done from anywhere in the United States and Canada.

By facilitating access to the archeological literature of this region, it is hoped that research will also be facilitated and therefore stimulated. This is the ultimate goal of the Great Plains Archeological Archive. For more information, please call or write: Robert C. Myers, Great Plains Archeological Archive, Campus Box 68, The Wichita State University, Wichita, KS 67208; (316) 689-3591. ■■

