



## Out of the Attic: Smith-Etley Projectile Point

By Julie Martineau



This object has been used and abused over the thousands of years of its existence. It was probably originally used as a projectile point, and over time was sharpened and resharpened until it was exhausted and retired from use.

The Smith sub-culture, part of the Etley Cluster of Indigenous people, was originally named for the Smith Site in Oklahoma, and they lived between 4,000 and 7,000 years ago. They were hunter/gatherers who lived lightly on the land, leaving few traces of their passing. Most of what we know about them comes from the scattered lithics, or stone tools that they left behind.

In our case, the original lithic was much larger than what it is now. Over time, repeated use would dull the edges of the point, which meant that the user would have to resharpen it periodically. That meant removing more and more of the chert, which in turn made the point smaller and smaller. Naturally, this changed the shape of the lithic, eventually resulting in the shape that we see today.

The original material, Burlington chert, was probably harvested in the area, although it is impossible to be sure as the material can be found throughout SE Iowa, into west central Illinois, and down into Arkansas. To add to the mystery, the Des Moines County area is right on the edge of the northwestern-most range of the Smith-Etley people. One of the few things that can be said for certain about our projectile is that it seems to have been heat treated, meaning that the rock used to create the projectile was heated in a fire prior to being shaped into our lithic.

In addition to hunting game, the Smith-Etley people were also harvesting wild plants, nuts, and fruits, as well as fishing in the local waterways. They would likely have followed the game, as well as the plants that they depended upon for food, moving south in the winter and north in the summer.

Unfortunately for us, we don't know if the owner abandoned the lithic when it couldn't be resharpened, or if it was lost in an animal that got away during a hunt. We do know that it was eventually found by Captain Jack Beckman (USAF) sometime prior to 1945, and later donated to DMCHS.



Want to learn more about prehistoric Iowa, and the earliest inhabitants? Come to Dr. Julie Morrow's program on the Clovis people on June 25th at the Heritage Museum! Please RSVP by calling 319.752.7449 and asking for Julie or emailing [juliem@dmchs.org](mailto:juliem@dmchs.org).

Special thanks to Don Weiss Photography.

## From the Director's Desk

It's worth repeating that this summer both Viking and American Queen are set to dock on our shoreline as many as 19 times. It will be more important than ever to have you, our members, on-hand to help us provide the best experience to our visitors.

If you would like to help us share our history, please consider volunteering for one or more of these dates. It will take at least 4 to 6 people at each location (Heritage Museum & Garrett-Phelps House) each day to accomplish this. Volunteers are needed from late July through October. A full list of docking dates and other pertinent information is available if you call the office at 319.752.7449. Many thanks!

## Dr Julie Morrow: Early Iowa Paleo People

Have you ever wondered who the first people to colonize Iowa were, why they left so few traces behind, or what their lives were like? If so, we have just the program for you!

On June 25, 2022 Dr. Julie Morrow will be at the Heritage Museum\* giving a once in a lifetime presentation about early Paleo people in Iowa. From 1 to 3 pm, Dr. Morrow will cover the most mysterious and fascinating journey ever taken in the history of humankind.



About 14,000 years ago an Ice-age hunting culture and their canine companions began exploring the Icy Corridor between Siberia and the mountains of western North America. By 12,900 years ago, their descendants had made it to the tip of South America. Rare campsites and a few dozen mammoth kills containing some stone and bone tools are all that remains to scientifically reconstruct their life. This is the story of the origins and ways of life of the Clovis people who successfully colonized the New World.

Dr. Morrow is an acclaimed archaeologist and expert on Clovis and Paleo Indigenous peoples. She has worked extensively at sites in Iowa, as well as across the country, and is now an adjunct professor for the Arkansas Archaeological Survey and The University of Arkansas System.

This event is free, and open to the public, but seating is limited, and is on a "first come, first served" basis. Please RSVP to 319.752.7449 and ask for Julie or email [juliem@dmchs.org](mailto:juliem@dmchs.org). Please use the Columbia Street entrance (with the blue awning).

\*If confirmed RSVPs exceed our capacity at the Heritage Center, we will be moving it to a larger venue. We will give advance notice if we do decide to move.

**Our Mission: Provide Opportunities for education, research and the preservation of Des Moines County History**

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# Donations & Memberships

Names are for receipts dated from the 15<sup>th</sup> through the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

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## Donation Form/Membership Renewal

**Check** ( # \_\_\_\_\_ )  **Cash**  **Credit Card** (For credit card please call the Heritage Museum@ 319.752.7449)

Please send completed forms to DMC Historical Society, 501 N 4th Street, Burlington, IA 52601. Make checks payable to DMCHS.

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## Museum Hours

Heritage Museum: Open Wednesday through Saturday from 10 to 3 pm beginning June 1  
 Garrett-Phelps House & Crapo Park Log Cabin: Open on Sundays from 1 to 4 pm beginning May 8  
 Updates will be posted through Facebook, email and our webpage: [www.dmchs.org](http://www.dmchs.org)