

# Preparing for War in the Fat Land

by Charles R. Keyes

## Introduction

Archaeology was a lifelong interest of Charles R. Keyes, a native of Mount Vernon, Iowa, and a professor of German language and literature at Cornell College. Despite his lack of formal training in archaeology, Keyes's scientific approach distinguished him from other untrained archaeologists and led to his 1922 appointment as director of the Iowa Archaeological Survey, a position he held until 1950. His efforts resulted in one of the Midwest's premier collections of museum-quality specimens of Iowa's prehistoric artifacts and archaeological research data.

The following story, untitled and undated, was recently discovered in a box of memorabilia and manuscripts in the Keyes Collection. Set in 1917, it is a fictional account of how Keyes built his personal collection as a young man in Linn County. Due to its agricultural productivity and industrious Bohemian farmers, he refers to the area as the "Fat Land."

The story reflects Keyes's talents as a creative writer and his literary background, but it also refers to questionable collecting methods and reveals his lack of formal training. First, his early practice of buying specimens for his collection would be frowned upon by modern archaeologists. But the story also explains why he abandoned the practice, and readers would be well advised to learn from his experience. Second, he mentions excavating "with only hands to dig with"—the kind of pot-hunting to which professionals are opposed. Third, Keyes describes human skeletal remains

exposed by erosion, although he does not explicitly say whether any were collected. Possession of such remains today probably would be illegal, but the story took place when attitudes about Native American burials were different. The conclusion, in which he refers to Native Americans as "sneaking" and "marauders," also reflects stereotypes of that time. Keyes later developed a more respectful view.

The story has a ring of truth to it. Several specimens described in detail in the story correspond with actual specimens in his collection, the details of which he logged into a large catalog. Even though he used pseudonyms and created composite characters from the Bohemian farmers he knew, it is clear that Keyes drew upon personal experience and acquaintances to develop the story. His log lists the names and dates of the Bohemian farmers he visited. When this information is compared to historical plat maps showing land ownership, it becomes clear that he often visited several farm families on an afternoon or day-long trip. In the process of building his collection, Keyes was indeed "something of an itinerant preacher," as he calls himself in the story. One can easily imagine him boarding the interurban at Mount Vernon with a knapsack of cigars, getting off at the Indian Creek station at the east edge of Cedar Rapids, hiking along the Lincoln Highway or a local branch road, and stopping at each farmstead along the way to talk with his Bohemian friends.

—Michael Perry

**T**he season of 1917 was one of unusual stress in the Corn Belt. Not only had the mighty Fat Land failed to pour its usual superabundance into humanity's bread-basket, but everywhere was felt the strain of a country preparing for war.

Both these facts have more or less to do with the following story and also they were chief factors in our faculty's decision to hold its autumn picnic as usual. This had long been postponed and was presumably, indeed, given up—when suddenly our nerves showed symptoms, and our Social Affairs committee was instructed to proceed.

It was late November before we reached our favorite glen above the Palisades of the Cedar. On the ground

about us the aspen leaves were dancing along before the chill breeze from up the river; on the hills above us the purple-brown foliage still clung to the oak trees; above the hills the gray clouds parted now and then and bright light fell upon a landscape of rare beauty.

With appetites satisfied and the almost frosty air inviting to activity, how many of the colleagues would care to go on an Indian relic hunt?

Now generally I have to go alone, for one must be honest when questioned as to distances to be covered and the nature of the country to be traversed. This time, however, the three main objectives were reasonably close at hand and the attractiveness of the route was visible and indisputable.



With knapsack and walking stick, Charles Reuben Keyes prepares for a hike, probably at Linn County's Palisades-Kepler State Park in the 1920s. Keyes was born in Mount Vernon, Iowa, in 1871; he later taught there at Cornell College. Before joining its faculty in 1903, he was principal of Blairstown public schools, a graduate student at Harvard, and an instructor at the University of California-Berkeley. He died in 1951, after nearly three decades directing the Iowa Archaeological Survey.

This last to the increasing wonderment of Smith, the new botany man. Three months previously he had come to us in a very bad mental state after hours of whirling through an unending succession of cornfields, oatfields, cornfields, and ever more cornfields.

"Iowa!" he had snorted, in answer to our well-meant but foolish questions as to how he liked the country, "Iowa! Why, Iowa is a desert! Fat Land? Fat Land, bah!" Very down-hearted at first, he was now learning that Iowa's rivers always bear with them a broad train of timber-covered hills, and that the Palisades region of the Red Cedar especially, with its miles of undisturbed native flora easily accessible from the campus slope, might be quite as productive for the botanist as it was claimed to be for the collector of Indian relics. He would be pleased to go on an afternoon's tramp. Miller, professor of musical theory, had pondered much over the melodies of the modern Indian tribes and would try to interest himself for a few hours among the remains of the tribes that were. Other colleagues preferred the trail down the river along the cliffs or, with the women, the comforts of the fine campfire.

The ancient Indian cemetery across the river is situated in the angle where a small creek enters the main stream. It is in no way to be distinguished from the level, sandy soil of the river bank at this point and would certainly have kept its own secrets except for the annual spring excavations of the river itself, uncovering now some broken pottery, now some flint arrowpoints, and again some fragments of human bones. We were delayed in reaching this prehistoric burial-ground only by the botanist, who lingered in surprised interest over a clump of ninebarks and rattleboxes. With only hands to dig with, no great discoveries could be expected; nevertheless, a number of potsherds, some plain and others ornamented as though by impressions of twisted cords—these and a few broken arrowheads were enough to create the atmosphere for an afternoon of possible adventure and to give edge to the imagination.

Why, for instance, were some of the Indian burials of this region in mounds along the higher ridges and others in the level sands along the river's bank? Different tribes? Different periods? What ceremonies attended the making of these solemn deposits? When were they made? Where lay the Indian village from which the slow procession moved?

And then these arrowheads? Who made them? Where did the arrow-maker establish his workshop? To what years of the White Man's history did his activities correspond? Who came to purchase the product of his skillful hands? Quickly one's mind is lost in a maze of fancy.

Apparently very few of our questions could be an-

swered at all and then only in case conditions were just right and good fortune abounded. But this was to be our lucky day.

Along the foot of the hills lying perhaps a quarter of a mile from the river the ground slopes gently toward the floodplain and had been cleared and brought under cultivation. A Bohemian farmer had here turned the soil, the fall rains had completed the work of discovery—and there before us lay the clear answer to at least two of the queries that had run idly through our minds not ten minutes before. Scattered here and there over the surface or projecting from it were fragments of pottery made of hard-burnt clay, quartz-tempered, and showing exactly the same types of ornamentation as those found at the burial-ground. But pottery is an appurtenance of domestic life and where found over a large area its testimony cannot be mistaken. No doubt about it whatever, we were walking across an ancient Indian village site. Moreover, many chips and flakes of flint told their story of peaceful occupation as contrasted with the deeds of war-path or hunting trail. In one place they seemed to fill the soil. With such evidence before us there was again no need to guess; on this very spot in the long ago

*Sat the ancient Arrow-maker,  
Making arrow-heads of sandstone,  
Arrow-heads of chalcedony,  
Arrow-heads of flint and jasper.*

As Longfellow was wrong about sandstone as a material for arrowheads, just change this to hornstone and all would have been as literally true here as it was in the Land of the Dakotahs. Blue hornstone, milky-white chalcedony, pink flint, and brown jasper were all represented in the arrowpoints from the cemetery or the flakes that lay scattered about our feet. Another Indian village site located; another fine addition to Iowa's archeological map; another spot that would ever retain its interest, ever produce its treasures of stone and burnt clay.



Our further objectives were, respectively, Mr. Joe Kratoska and Mr. Frank Louvar. On the way to their steep-sided farms among the hills I had to explain to my companions that these river bluffs were settled years ago by Bohemian immigrants who might have had prairie farms but who took these up-and-down ones by preference, perhaps because they looked more like the land from which they came.

These were the people whose acquaintance had

been of first importance to me in the making of a collection of Indian relics. Big, patient, good-natured fellows they were, for the most part, who worked their farms, hauled wood to town, raised a family of Joes, Franks, Marys, and Annas, saved their money and perhaps, in time, added a prairie farm to their possessions and sent the children to college; or, in some cases, didn't save their money and dropped somewhere along the broad highway of alcoholism. They could tell an Indian ax or arrowhead when they saw one, for most of these people had a little collection of such somewhere about the homestead—in the nail-box in the tool-shed, on top of a barn girder, or in the sewing-machine drawer, nearly all found when plowing the corn the first and second times over, when the ground is mostly bare and every flint chip washed clean by the rains of May and June, and when the eyes must in any case be directed toward the soil.

Mr. Kratoska and Mr. Louvar had hauled wood to town earlier in the fall and had answered affirmatively my inquiry concerning the finding of "Indiansky šipki" ["Indian things," in Czech]. So often have my roadside interrogations, answered from atop some fine load of seasoned wood or hay, or good, fat swine, had favorable outcomes that I have become almost superstitious on the point and now felt much confidence as to those good new specimens that were to be acquired, or at least entered into my record of local antiquities.

A fortunate guess as to direction over the hills and through the timber from this roadless river approach and by mid-afternoon we were passing the time of day with Mr. Kratoska. "I suppose you want to look at those Indian darts," said he, "just wait a minute and I will bring them out."

Every collector of Indian relics who gathers his specimens from the original finder knows well the peculiar clinking sound of flint implements when jostled together, and every collector of anything at all will appreciate the tension of interest with which one awaits the forthcoming revelation. With a careless sweep of his hand Mr. Kratoska spread his boxful



**According to Keyes's catalog, farmer Frank Havlicek gave this celt to Keyes on May 22, 1915. Celts were used to gouge or hollow out wood. Actual size: 2x4 inches.**

ARTIFACT PHOTOS COURTESY THE AUTHOR

of relics over the well platform: about the regular run of arrowheads, both perfect and more or less broken, some of the stem-less type, others with shoulders, notches, or barbs; a small well-made and smoothly polished greenstone celt; a very good flint knife—all artifacts scarcely noted at the time in view of the magnificent specimen of even-toned pale gray flint that was nearly enough to disturb even a veteran collector's schooled composure.



**Perhaps 8,000 to 10,000 years old, this gray flint Dalton point was given to Keyes by Frank Blazek on the same day that Keyes acquired the celt. He describes just such an artifact—"a rare right-handed rotary spearhead"—in his fictional account. Today it is on display in the Museum of Natural History on the University of Iowa campus. Actual length: 5 inches.**

Now a flint spearhead five inches in length is not necessarily a great find, but this one was of a purity and beauty of material, perfection of workmanship, and rarity of form which would have made it a welcome addition to any collection [on] earth. From a deeply concave base the edges of the narrow blade expanded slightly in straight lines for the first inch; then, tapering evenly toward the point, twisted in a gentle spiral over toward the right until the blade formed an angle of some thirty degrees with the base—a unique and undescribed form of the rare right-handed rotary spearhead, delicately and regularly chipped throughout, the very climax of the flint worker's art.

But this relic, for the like of which wealthy collectors would fight each other at an auction sale with good American dollars, was the possession of an honest Bohemian farmer whose property rights ought to be respected and had to be satisfied. What method of acquisition would be successful and still leave the transaction on a reasonably ethical basis? This last is important, if one is to live pleasantly with one's own conscience; and in the long run, if one collects year after year over the same territory, necessary also from the standpoint of self-interest.

Now I confess to a feeling that, although a collector of things that must in most cases be bargained out of other people, I have managed to keep above that level of godlessness on which some collectors who boast their

bargains appear to live and move. For instance, that furniture fancier who exulted over his exchange of an ugly Morris chair for a genuine old seventeenth-century beauty from the hand of a Flemish master; or that Chicago woman, a collector of old china, who came out to the Amana Society colony in Iowa one summer day, gave five dollars to an unsuspecting old German for a perfectly preserved Apostle pitcher and then, with a laugh, informed the old gentleman that the piece was worth [a] good three hundred dollars in the city any day. It does not offend me at all to be called in general terms a sinner, but certainly it would inspire my wrath if nominated one of this particular variety. However, I shall have to stand or fall on my action in case of the Kratoska spearhead, for, in very truth, it is typical of many other bargains made in these latter years. My two colleagues stood by and witnessed the proceedings and, whatever they may have thought, have not, so far as I know, accused me of base moral turpitude.

But first, a word of explanation. For several years I tried to buy my Indian relics for cash at the market price or, for a specimen that couldn't be passed by, often more than a dealer would ask for a similar one. Never a very successful method, still, during the later nineties, when to acquire the sum of twenty-five cents a farmer had to part with a bushel of corn or three dozen fresh eggs, my collection made moderate progress. With the early years of the present century, which saw land values leap skyward and prices of products increase by leaps and bounds, the cash system became dolefully ineffective. Not that these Bohemian farmers cared any more for their Indian relics than they did before; left in their hands they were, as usual, lost amid the litter of the farmstead, hammered to see the sparks fly, or thrown at the cat; only, in the latter instance, they, the relics, never, never came back. I was constantly losing to the joys of collecting and the uses of science many an interesting and valuable arrowpoint, spearhead, or grooved ax, and sometimes the rarer bannerstone, plummet, or pierced tablet. It became necessary to do some effective thinking.

Why, after all, should a prosperous farmer, every item of whose possessions had suddenly trebled and quadrupled in value, be interested in the small sums that his relics were really worth? Why not crack nuts with them, use them to weight the cover of the pickle

jar, or let the boys use them as ammunition against blue jay or bull-frog—if it were any pleasure so to do? Moreover—and I suspect this was the chief reason for the failure of the cash method—the offer of money was bound to conjure up every evil spirit that presides over property rights, to display the lure of lucre, to arouse every instinct for the making of a good bargain. These sons of Bohemia knew the market value of the product of the corn rows, but not of the Indian relics that were picked up between them; the fellow from town might be offering far too little and making undue profits for himself; so better keep on the safe side—that is, keep the relics—or take one's own pleasure in losing them. The logic of this situation was perfectly clear: avoid the bugaboos raised by the suggestion of money.

Well then, what did these Bohemian farmers earnestly desire in life outside the realm of clinking coin and seductive specie? The answer occurred to me one day and I have not ceased since then to wonder at my earlier obtuseness and enjoy the benefits of my tardy wisdom: just cigars; yes, cigars and a little plain sociability. These men generally smoked a corn-cob pipe and cigars were a special compliment and good enough for Sunday; moreover, the same as other folks, they liked an extra ray of sunshine now and then. Lucky the man who could at once create interest and establish confidence by proving some knowledge of those things with which the farmer has to deal: by estimating closely the weights of the big horses hitched to the hay-rack or making a reasonable prediction as to the yield in bushels of the grain fields, and was will-

ing, withal, to sit on the fence and talk a while. Fortunately my life in the Fat Land had sent some roots into the soil; my output of farm talk was ample and, now that I was facing the light of a new day, my collection began to grow apace.

After some exchange of opinion with Mr. Kratoska on the respective merits and demerits of Plymouth Rocks and Laced Wyandottes, I finally dropped in the query: "Well, Mr. Kratoska, how many good cigars do I have to give you for these Indian flints?"

"Oh, take them along," he said, "they don't do me no good and just get lost around here. I've lost that many already. Leave me a smoke if you want to."

And for the contents of my cigar case one of the finest spearheads recovered from the Mississippi val-



**A diorite groundstone ax head, with groove for shaft. Keyes was given this artifact by Frank Havlicek on his collecting foray on May 22, 1915. Actual size: about 2x3 inches.**

ley, along with a dozen other good specimens, and a box and some old newspaper to insure safe transportation thrown in, took their place along with the relics from the Indian cemetery in the bottom of my knapsack.

Now I realize that the above sounds very much like the regular run of collecting literature—mere boasting over a finely driven bargain. I do not think it is such. Long experience in forming my collection has shown this to be the one and only successful method. And, after all, have I failed to give value received? Is there nothing on a parity with the dollar? The money method having failed, was I really getting something for nothing when I substituted for money cigars and sociability? If my new plan were wrong in principle it ought to break down from its own inherent weakness. As a matter of fact, the years confirm its soundness. Instead of being greeted at the farm-house door, as in the earlier years of my collecting, with the statement "Yes, we have found a few relics but don't want to sell any," I am now given the welcome of an old friend and the relics are produced without the asking. And I pay for them by visiting a while on the back porch, suggesting a different adjustment for the sickle of the new mower, or perhaps even by staying for dinner in the summer kitchen (and these people live well too).

Criticize, ye who will, this reversal of all economic law; I have plenty of friends among the Bohemian farmers who inhabit the hills and from them comes my strength in this contention, as with them often I take my refuge.

O, the human experiences that the years have gathered since taking the road of adventure after Indian relics! One cannot enter the farmyard precincts year after year without at the same time looking into the inner room of many a human life and learning the story of its joys and its sorrows. Yes, by George, contrary to every expectation I cherished as a cub college professor fifteen years ago and quite by slow degrees long unrecognized, I find I am becoming at last something of an itinerant country preacher. And the fact that I happen to be a Protestant and nearly all the people of my wide parish Roman Catholic has not thus far occasioned either question or comment. When, as in 1917, a cold summer and an early frost meant a fifty percent failure of the corn crop, there is some occasion for dispensing comfort and encouragement; but when I stop, say in August, to see Mr. Zahradnek, who two years ago gave me that finely polished ax of mottled green and white diorite, and find him bravely struggling, in kitchen as well as in cornfield, to keep together the little brood who lost their mother in April, there is nothing to do but sit down and talk things over for a while.

Still deeper in the hills we found Mr. Louvar helping a neighbor remove from a long, high crib the corn—three thousand bushels of it—husked and cribbed only two weeks previously and now giving off to the cool air a light, almost imperceptible vapor that told of destruction begun in the depths of this pile of yellow wealth. The cobs on which lay the close rows of full and flinty kernels contained just a trifle too much water and so the great ears in the center of the golden mass were now steaming and turning black.

"Hard luck, Mr. Louvar," I called, "but you've done well to discover your trouble so early; this cool weather will help you out too; and say, everything you save this year, hard or soft, is going to be worth while; the corn expert was down from Ames the other day and said he was sure none of this year's crop would drop a cent below one-fifty."

"Yes," replied Mr. Louvar, "and if we had only had some good warm sunshine in October this corn would have dried out completely; or, if November had only stayed cold instead of throwing in those five hot days last week, these ears would never have heated and started to mold. Well, we'll scatter it out over the yard and save what we can; it's the first time this ever happened and I guess there's no use making much fuss about it now. Since I saw you in town mother has found some more of those Indian flints about the house and will give them to you if you care to walk that far."

My colleagues declared themselves good for another half mile and would this time watch the sunset from the high bank at the roadside while I was announcing my errand to Mrs. Louvar. This worthy lady understood at once my inquiry concerning the "šipki" and briskly, in spite of her eighty years, whisked into a front room for a small work-basket, the clinking contents of which she poured out with dangerous energy upon the bare-topped walnut kitchen table.

It may be unwise to tell here a second story of unusual collecting luck, but this narrative aims at the simple truth and collectors from the Mississippi country, at least, will understand and believe. If I am not greatly mistaken, understatement of the contents of Mrs. Louvar's work-basket will be much more likely than the reverse. Iowa has by no means received her dues yet as a field for archeological collecting and research.

Several of the arrowheads that lay before me were very good specimens indeed, especially the barbed and serrated point to which the ball of beeswax had evidently adhered one summer's day; a notched spearhead of pink flint would have satisfied an ordinary afternoon's ambition; but the two large, finely wrought

and beautifully translucent stone knives, the one of glittering, pale-brown quartzite, the other of bluish-white chalcedony—I could hardly believe my own eyes. Both in size and in outline, though not in thickness, they made one think of river croppies—just large enough to cover one's open hand. Double-pointed and very thin blades they were, scarcely reaching a maximum thickness of three-sixteenths of an inch, and with both widely convex margins worked down by the finest of chipping to a most delicate cutting edge. How implements thus fashioned could have passed intact through all the vicissitudes of their history was a wonder. My collection contained many Indian knives, but not one of this type and size and of this fineness of material and workmanship; and here lay two beauties together, as perfect as when they left the hands of the master workman with flaking and chipping tool.

"My son said you had a collection of these things," said Mrs. Louvar, "if these are of any use to you, why you are welcome to them; just sit down here by the fire and get warm; it's getting pretty chilly again."

Mrs. Louvar's generous heart, her kindly old face, and the wave of her hand toward the cane-bottomed chair by the kitchen stove were not to be misunderstood or denied, so I sat down for a little visit. Smith and Miller were enjoying the shifting reds and purples of a gorgeous sunset and they could wait.

In conversational matter, experience does not always insure a good start and this time my tongue must certainly have borne to the left. Where is the person, I should like to know, who can infallibly detect behind a kindly, benevolent face and a generous, motherly disposition a habit, in oral expression, of pessimism and gloom?

"I just saw your son down the road helping a neighbor," said I, "a fine son you have, Mrs. Louvar."

"Yes, it's terrible," she answered, "I know he'll be drafted and have to go to war."

With this quick thrust, for which I was totally unprepared, the great conflict from which for one short day I had sought, with my colleagues, surcease, was

forced into my consciousness; no escape from an age of iron into an age of stone, not even in the hill country of the Fat Land. Well, I reflected, perhaps after all we have no right to expect a single full day's vacation when the world's on fire. But it's pretty tough on such as botanists, musicians, and teachers of literature (and the Lord a' mercy if this literature happens to be that of our chief enemy), who have a hard enough time anyway to convince themselves of their own usefulness in a world of khaki, bombs, and bayonets.

"But, Mrs. Louvar," I expostulated, "your son is surely beyond the draft age and anyhow the government would probably exempt an experienced farmer on whom the entire field work depends."

"O, but my son is only fifty-two and he is such a good, strong boy; I know they will take him," said this fond old mother. My mention of the age limits of the draft by no means reassured her.

"And then too," said Mrs. Louvar, "every few days we have to buy a Liberty bond or give more money to the Red Cross or help the Y.M.C.A. or the K. of C. Somebody is canvassing all the time, and the corn is all spoiling; O, I know we'll starve this winter."

In vain I referred to the unusually fine harvest of small grains, the probable salvage of much of the corn crop, the life-sustaining possibilities in the two hundred and some chick-

ens that swarmed about the farmstead.

"They wouldn't last long; we would have to give a good many to the neighbors," said Mrs. Louvar.

"But we must try to keep up our spirits," I exhorted, "it's surely been a long time since the corn went bad; we must try not to complain. When, after all, did we have a year when the corn spoiled in the crib?"

A smile crept across Mrs. Louvar's face and then vanished. "This is the only one in fifty-three years," she said, "O, I know we shall starve this time. And then this awful war! O dear, O dear."

"Well, but our boys are in it now," I ventured, "things are turning for the better and we will win and the war will be over."



In Keyes's story, he marvels over two "finely wrought and beautifully translucent stone knives" and the craftsmanship of "the finest of chipping to a most delicate cutting edge." The larger of these two chert bifacial knives was given to Keyes by Frank Pitlik on July 18, 1918; the smaller, by Frank Blazek on May 22, 1915. Actual size: 2 1/2 x 4 3/4 inches; 1 1/2 x 4 1/2 inches.

A solemn look of incredulity came into Mrs. Louvar's face and I added hastily: "You surely think we will win this war, don't you, Mrs. Louvar?"

She shook her head slowly but decisively. "No, I don't think so," said she.

"Why Mrs. Louvar," I exclaimed, "why don't you think so?"

"We're too wicked," she said.

"Too wicked!" War as a punishment for sin; down the centuries through the mouths of poet and preacher and peasant has this simple philosophy of war perpetuated itself, but it was amazing to hear it pronounced in so few words and with such a tone of conviction and finality by the kindly old lady who sat opposite me at the kitchen table beside the stove.

"Do you think people are worse than they used to be?" I asked.

"I'm sure they are," said Mrs. Louvar, "the men don't go to church on Sunday any more; they just sit around the house or visit the neighbors and drink and swear all day."

Some cases of wrecked homes in the hill country occurred to me and for a moment I pondered again over a legal situation that had stopped the flow from the breweries but had forgotten about the more deadly product of the home vineyard and cider-press.

"It's hard for me to believe that your people are very bad," I finally ventured, "certainly they're no worse than the rest of us; they have always been very good to me."

"Then we shall die in our sins," said Mrs. Louvar. "I am sure we shall all starve this winter." And as I arose to go she added: "It's kind of you to come and see an old woman like me and I have enjoyed the visit; come again—and next spring Frank and I will save you some more Indian relics."

**D**arkness had settled thick along the timber trail before we reached the edge of the bluffs that overlooked the river gorge and stretching away infinitely beyond that, the rolling reaches of the Fat Land. Fortunately we ought soon to catch upon the water the ripples of light from the Palisades tavern or, failing this, to have at least the guidance of the white mists rising from the river.

But on some days and under some circumstances it is not possible that the merely ordinary should happen. From somewhere in the big cottonwoods on the river bottom came a sound that for a long, long time my ears had not heard, the regular, deep-toned hooting of a great horned owl. Quickly the uncommon passed into the unreal and the unreal became the only true reality. The

Fat Land vanished completely; the wilderness took its place. Here and there, and then everywhere, in the Indian village below us the dead campfires were rekindled and the white smoke floated away; from the river came the distinct sound of paddle dip; from the darkness beyond the range of campfire-light shadowy form stole forth; in and out among the wigwams dusky figures were moving. The deep reverberations of the tom-tom sounded. At first slowly, then more and more swiftly, the dancers began to circle about the medicine tree, stooping, peering, leaping, twisting, as the war chant of the Iowas resounded. The sneaking Sauk and Fox marauders of Algonquian origin would fare badly on the morrow. The grim-visaged warriors of the blood of the Sioux were gathered together. ❖

*Michael J. Perry discovered this manuscript in the Keyes Collection and researched its connections to actual artifacts in the collection. A project archaeologist at the Office of the State Archaeologist in Iowa City, Perry has found Charles R. Keyes's work to be a tremendous source of inspiration and utility.*

#### THE KEYES COLLECTION

Housed at the Office of the State Archaeologist on the University of Iowa campus, the Keyes Collection contains over 108,000 artifacts along with related notes, documents, and photographs. Readers are directed to the University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History to view some excellent specimens acquired by Keyes. Former State Archaeologist Marshall McKusick noted in 1963 that the collection contains numerous outstanding specimens of aesthetic and interpretive significance. The collection contains materials associated with all of Iowa's prehistoric cultures and time periods, a record that spans at least 12,000 years. Keyes's original catalog of the artifacts has been completely overhauled, and the artifacts and documents correlated to modern site records, making the collection much more useful to modern researchers. As an invaluable source for reconstructing Iowa's past, materials in the Keyes Collection have been and continue to be used for scholarly research.

#### NOTE ON SOURCES

Keyes's manuscript is presented here with minimal editorial modification. "Preparing for War in the Fat Land" also appears in the *Journal of the Iowa Archeological Society* (vol. 53, 2006) with in-depth analysis and additional commentary by Michael J. Perry.

The Dalton point on page 101 was photographed by William Lane Shields and John L. Cordell through the courtesy of David Brenzel, director of the University of Iowa's Museum of Natural History, where the point is on display. Cordell also provided access to the Keyes Collection documents and specimens.

Margo J. Perry, David M. Gradwohl, and Joseph A. Tiffany provided advice, comments, and encouragement in developing the introduction.

For more on Keyes, see Marilyn Jackson, "Charles Reuben Keyes: A Groundbreaker in Iowa Archaeology," *The Iowan* (Winter 1984).