

Fred Big Bear, Native American

There's been a lot of rain lately in the area of Kansas where John Walker lives. On Monday afternoon the weather finally broke, and John decided to take his dog out for a walk. As they set off, he noticed that the heavy rains had actually moved around some top soil in his yard. Trying to skirt the muddiest parts of the yard, John wandered through the warm sunshine toward the river. With all the rain it seemed like weeks since the sun had been out. Trying to avoid the water dripping from the trees he usually walked through, John stayed close to the edge of his neighbor's field. The sun felt good and added a sparkle to the day as it glinted off the wet grass.

John had just reached the edge of the field when something on the ground caught his eye. As he bent down for a closer look, he noticed several other objects that seemed out of place and a dark stain on the ground. His interest only increased after he picked up the pieces and wiped them off on his jeans. Even through the mud left on the pieces, he was certain he'd found a stone arrow point and a couple of pieces of pottery. After a moment's hesitation he placed them back on the ground and tied his handkerchief on the branch of a nearby bush. He decided to come back with a friend who was an amateur archeologist.

The next day, with the landowner's permission, John and his friend Laura were bent over the same spot looking at the pieces. Laura was pretty sure that the pieces were real. After making a couple of calls to archeologists she had worked with in the past, she was also certain the pieces were an important enough find to merit further investigation. She filled out a site recording form and made a sketch map. She planned to take them to the college the next day to show to the archeologists on staff there. If the pieces were thought to be from the Native American group she suspected, this site was a very important find.

Fred Big Bear is a Native American who lives in Oklahoma. His ancestors lived and hunted in what is now Kansas, but they were forced to move south by the 1820s. Still, if Archie Howloge's estimate is correct, the site on Muriel Farmer's land may date to the period when this area was part of his ancestors' territory. Fred is excited about the prospect of learning something about the way his people lived in Kansas, but he believes that his tribe should be consulted before any investigation takes place. Members of his tribe are torn between using science to learn about their ancestors or knowing about their past through the oral traditions of their tribe. He thinks that the artifacts should be placed in the tribal museum in Oklahoma.