



Archaeology News

Volume 22 Number 3

FALL 2004

The UW-La Crosse 2004 Summer Field School

*Dr. Jim Theler,
UW-L Archaeology Professor
and Dr. Constance Arzigian,
Laboratory Director*

The first three weeks of the UW-L summer Field School took place under the direction of Jim Theler, with eleven students working at the Cade Archaeological District. The District is a cluster of more than twenty prehistoric archaeological sites in the Bad Axe Valley of Vernon County. The sites are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

During the 2004 season, an eight acre field in the Cade District was plowed for the first time in 15 years. A pre-Field School survey located three known sites and four new sites. This area was the focus of our Field School activities. The entire plowed area was carefully surveyed on foot, with each site mapped and collected by the students. The field is located just west of an area tested in the 1990's and produced a surprising number of Middle and Late Archaic projectile points of types called Raddatz Side-Notched and Durst Stemmed. Relatively few Late Woodland points or pottery sherds common to the 1990's field work were recovered. Following the survey and shovel testing in unplowed areas, limited excavations were undertaken at various locations to evaluate the depth and quality of archaeological deposits. Additionally, two one-meter

squares were excavated in a stratified rock shelter which had been previously tested, in an attempt to increase the sample of animal remains from this site.

Most excavations took place at the eastern end of the site cluster on the Cade 3 site. Portions of Cade 3 were found to be underlain by dense flows of coarse rock that probably moved down a side valley into Bad Axe valley during the last Ice Age or Pleistocene according to Dr. Dean Wilder of UW-La Crosse. We located what appeared to be a small, buried stream valley that may have once carried water from a nearby artesian spring. The course rock was surrounded by a very fine particle soil deposit. The undisturbed soil of Cade 3 contained a buried, very dark colored "paleosol" or ancient soil, perhaps formed under prairie vegetation. This soil contains archaeological materials that are believed to be Late Paleoindian, dating to about 8000 B.C.

The two portions of the site sampled by excavation produced no identifiable points, but we did find several end scrapers, a finely made serrated biface fragment, and a variety of local and non-local stone flakes, including Hixton silicified sandstone from Jackson County, Cochrane Chert from Buffalo County, and a greenish chert from the Door Peninsula.

Loren Cade found the base of a lanceolate Agate Basin-like point on the surface of this site many years ago. The rarity of sealed Paleoindian sites like Cade 3 makes it a likely candidate for future excavations, perhaps in 2006 or 2007.



Rockshelter excavation at the Cade Archaeological District.

The last three weeks of the Field School took place just north of Holmen at 47LC333. The students opened up two areas, and identified 10 pit features that date to the Oneota culture. The term Oneota is applied by archaeologists to the Native Americans who occupied this area from about 1300 to 1625 A.D. They were agriculturalists, farming on the major river terraces and growing corn, beans, squash, tobacco, sunflowers, and hunting and gathering in the Mississippi River and the surrounding uplands.

MVAC has excavated many summer village sites of the Oneota culture. We found many of the storage pits that had been dug to hold food, and then later filled with garbage.

(see Field School, page 2)

*MVAC at the University
of Wisconsin-La Crosse*

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From The Director: Joseph A Tiffany



Joseph A. Tiffany

Hello, everyone! MVAC had a very busy and productive summer. Work continues under Wendy Holtz-Leith's direction in the Sanford Archaeological District near Gundersen Lutheran and downtown La Crosse. Many more Oneota pit features have been identified along the re-routing of US Highways 14/61 since work began again last spring. Wendy is doing a great job! This is the largest project MVAC has ever undertaken. The university and public field schools were also successes. Students worked in both the Bad Axe Valley and Long Coulee near Holmen. The public field school continued work in Long Coulee on the Swennes brother's farm. John and Otto were gracious hosts to both field projects.

Bonnie Christensen and Connie Arzigian implemented the two large educational grants they received last spring from the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction and began working with teachers in earnest. Vicki Twinde-Javner is nearing completion on a report of her work on Fort Crawford II in Prairie du Chien for the Wisconsin DOT. The remodeled repository in Wimberley Hall was finished and Connie Arzigian has begun to move our federally curated collections into this new facility. I finally (!) finished a long overdue monograph on a Plains Village earthlodge site in South Dakota. A colleague of mine and I are now completing a book on excavations at the Cowan Great Oasis culture site in

northwest Iowa, and my oldest daughter, Christine got married this summer on my mother's birthday (the something borrowed). So, I think we all have been pretty busy at MVAC.

MVAC will be co-hosting the fall meeting of the Iowa Archeological Society in Decorah on October 8-9. Featured speakers include Ernie Boszhardt of MVAC and John Anfinson of the Mississippi National River and Recreation Area; Vicki Twinde-Javner and Ernie will also lead tours. This is a great opportunity for MVAC members to visit with archaeologists, avid collectors and lay people. An announcement on this meeting is provided later in the newsletter or contact me for details. As always please take the opportunity if you can to participate in one of our public archaeological activities, visit us in the field, or stop by the lab. We are open daily (8 a.m. to 5 p.m.).

I hope you enjoy our newsletter as much as we enjoy sharing with you our research, education and outreach activities. As you know MVAC is unique because we do provide many opportunities for active involvement in archaeology and our programs for the university and the region we serve. We can not do these things and provide the services we do without your help and support. If you have not renewed your membership for this year or are thinking about gifting to MVAC in other ways, please take a moment and consider MVAC and the services we provide.



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Field School (continued from page 1)

At this site, we may be seeing a different part of the "seasonal round" of the Native Americans. The major village sites on the broad terraces are adjacent to the Oneota farm fields, but the Holmen site is in a side valley about a mile from where Long Coulee enters the main valley of the Mississippi.

This is an area of heavier soils (silts rather than sands), and closer to the wooded uplands and other resources of the interior. From our preliminary work, it appears that the Holmen site might have been a campground for short-term activities such as gathering resources from the interior, and may have served as a winter base camp or as a summer "extractive" site for other resources from the interior valleys. We have found only a few fish bones and no other summer resources

that are so common at major summer villages. Instead, at 47LC333, we have deer bones, with deer being a typical fall to winter resource.

There were a number of decorated potsherds that will allow us to determine when the site was occupied. Triangular projectile points, end scrapers, bison scapula hoes, and lots of flakes from making stone tools were also recovered. Most of the raw materials were of local origin, including both orthoquartzite and chert from the surrounding hillsides.

Analysis of the stone tools, pottery, and plant and animal remains from both the Bad Axe and Long Coulee excavations will be undertaken this winter.

Announcements

MVAC to co-sponsor 2004 Iowa Archeological Society meeting

Mark your calendar for two exciting days of archaeology on October 8-9, 2004! Luther College in Decorah, Iowa will host the Iowa Archeological Society (IAS) meetings, co-sponsored by MVAC and the Orr Chapter of the IAS. Friday, October 8, MVAC's Robert "Ernie" Boszhardt will discuss "Deep Cave Rock Art of the Upper Mississippi Valley" at Luther College. The talk is free and open to the public.

Saturday's activities include artifact displays, member presentations, a 10:30 a.m. presentation by John O. Anfinson on "The Vanishing Landscape of Zebulon Pike" and afternoon field trips. There is a \$10 registration fee to attend Saturday's events.



Examining artifacts from the Long Coulee site.

Saturday evening Ernie Boszhardt will discuss "Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi Valley: The Late Woodland/Oneota Transition" at Effigy Mounds National Monument in Harpers Ferry, IA. This presentation is free and open to the public.

Laboratory Work Day

Join archaeologist Connie Arzigian on Saturday, November 6, 2004 at the Archaeology Laboratory to process artifacts recovered this past year. Registration required at (608) 785-8454 or dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu.

UW-La Crosse Foundation grant provides Youth Scholarships

Three young men from Wisconsin were able to attend MVAC summer programs thanks to a grant from the UW-La Crosse Foundation. Two high school students attended the Public Field School, and one middle school student attended the Middle School Field Experience. Thanks!

Read More In Our Digital Newsletter

There will be a link to the digital newsletters on the MVAC Home Page at www.uwlax.edu/mvac

Look for the following articles in the Fall 2004 Digital Newsletter:

- *Laboratory busy keeping up with summer collection
- *Math/Science ESEA grant update

In the Education Newsletter:

Our new theme for 2004-2005 is *Native American use of the Mississippi River*. Information and lesson plans are available on the MVAC web site.

Estate Planning

Successful estate planning is a valuable way to continue your support for MVAC into the future. By giving a gift in your will or estate plan, you are providing for future programs in archaeological research, public education and site stewardship. Please consider MVAC when planning for trusts, gifts and bequests. Contact Marcee H. Peplinski, Development Director at the MVAC office for more information, (608)785-8463.

MVAC MEMBERSHIP FORM

Become a member of MVAC

MVAC's innovative public education Program brings the excitement of archaeology to children and adults throughout the area. Become a member of MVAC and receive our newsletters, which report on programs, current research, upcoming events, and volunteer opportunities. Also, as a member, you will receive reminders of special "members only" events. Please remember that your contribution is tax-deductible.

Yes! I want to support the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center Programs!

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Please make checks payable to UW-L Foundation, Inc. for MVAC and send to MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Gifts to the UW-L Foundation for MVAC qualify as charitable tax deductions to the full extent of the law as applied to the individual circumstances of each donor. You can increase your gift's value if your employer has a matching gift plan. Check with your human resources office.



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of Wisconsin-La Crosse*

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Upcoming Events

Unless otherwise noted, events are free and open to the public. Contact MVAC at (608) 785-8454 for more information or visit our web site:

www.uwlax.edu/mvac

Deep Cave Rock Art of the Upper Mississippi Valley

Friday, October 8, 2004
7:30 p.m., Noble Recital Hall
Center for Faith and Life
Luther College
Decorah, Iowa

*Co-sponsored by MVAC



Painter Geri Schrab will exhibit at the Pump House Regional Center for the Arts, October 29 - 30th. Ms. Schrab uses Native American rock writing sites as her subject matter. Call the Pump House at (608) 785-1434 for more information.

Iowa Archeological Society Fall 2004 Meeting

Luther College, Decorah, Iowa
Saturday, October 9, 2004
8 a.m. - 5 p.m.
\$10 registration fee

Archaeology of the Upper Mississippi Valley: The Late Woodland/Oneota Transition

Saturday, October 9, 2004
7 p.m.
Effigy Mounds National Monument
Harpers Ferry, IA

Laboratory Work Day

Saturday, November 6, 2004
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Registration required at (608) 785-8454 or
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Highlights of MVAC's Summer Excavations

Tuesday, November 16, 2004
7 p.m., Port O'Call
UW-L Cartwright Center