

# ARCHAEOLOGY EDUCATION PROGRAM

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**Mississippi  
Valley  
Archaeology  
Center**

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**This year's theme:  
Cultural Resources  
Management**

## **CRM: Step Three - Laboratory and Research Work**

The theme of this year's Archaeology Education Program newsletter is Cultural Resource Management. The first issue covered the steps utilized in pre-field planning, while the second issue looked into the preparation for and completion of field work. This issue will discuss laboratory and research work, to be followed by write-up and dissemination in the Summer issue. Learning the process taken from the beginning to completion of an archaeological project will help students and non-archaeologists realize there is more to archaeology than just 'digging up bones.'

### **Laboratory Process**

At the end of each field day, all the artifacts recovered are transported back to the archaeology laboratory for processing. The lab staff first check in the artifacts, comparing the number of bags lotted in the field with the number of bags which make it back to the lab. Each bag of artifacts is processed separately, to ensure that artifacts from different locations of the site aren't accidentally mixed together. During the cleaning process, laboratory technicians determine what method to use to clean the artifact without damaging it. Most stone tools can be cleaned with toothbrushes, while more fragile artifacts such as animal bone and pottery are cleaned with soft paint brushes and water. The artifacts are left to dry for several days before further work is completed. Broken pieces of artifacts are examined to determine if they can be reconstructed to their original shape. Once cleaning and reconstruction are completed, the artifacts are catalogued, or inventoried.

### **Researching the Artifacts**

For the purpose of researching a site, its artifacts are placed into two categories: diagnostic and non-diagnostic. Diagnostic artifacts allow an archaeologist to "date" or tell how old an artifact is, based on its shape, size, and other characteristics. For example, fluted projectile points such as Folsom or Clovis points, have been recovered from archaeological sites which date back 10,000 years. If an archaeologist finds a Clovis point at a site, it is assumed the site is that old. All diagnostic artifacts are researched, so an archaeologist can determine how many cultures were represented at one site.

Archaeologists use a variety of references when researching the artifacts from a site. References for prehistoric sites include point guides, reports done by other archaeologists in the site's vicinity, professional journal publications, books and websites. A large number of books have been published on specific historical artifacts such as buttons, pipes, military decorations, etc. Many times, more personal information can be gained from historical sites than prehistoric because old letters, journal entries, and even shopping lists are available for historic sites, while prehistoric people in the Midwest had no written language for archaeologists to reference. Oral tradition from today's Native Americans is one way information from prehistoric cultures can be obtained.

### **Researching Historic Buildings**

Architectural historians rely on several sources for information concerning historic buildings or historic districts. In addition to written records mentioned above, historians can look up land ownership from the deeds of old properties to get an idea when the building may have been built and by whom. The architectural historian determines whether a building is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NHRP) based on whether or not it still has its original integrity, if the building is in good condition, and its importance to the area. If the building is determined eligible, the historian fills out an application form to submit the building to NRHP.

Writing up reports and disseminating the information from an area's archaeological history will be discussed in the next issue.

# CRM Activity

While archaeology is considered a science, there are steps in the archaeological process which require math, history, art, and writing skills. The following scenario will cover some of these areas.

## Introduction

Several archaeologists and architectural historians have been working in the library at the same table, using the reference books to research sites they're working on. Overnight, someone has stacked all their books together, mixing up their references. Help the archaeologists and historians sort out their books by placing the number of the reference under the heading of the site type being researched by each person. Each person should have four reference books, so try to place them with the person to whom the reference would be most useful. The first reference is done for you.

## References

1. Flow Blue China: An Aid to Identification
2. Phase II Archaeological Survey of 3 Prehistoric Campsites in Jackson County, WI
3. Phase III Data Recovery of Fort Walker (a.k.a. Beggs' Fort), Will County, IL
4. The American Family Home
5. The Gundersen Site: An Oneota Village and Cemetery in La Crosse, WI
6. *A Field Guide to American Houses*
7. Chipped Stone Projectile Points of Western Wisconsin
8. A Study of the Pammel Creek Oneota Site in La Crosse, WI
9. *City of LaCrosse, Wisconsin Architectural Intensive Survey Report*
10. The Archeology of historic Galena, IL
11. American Vernacular Design, 1870 - 1940
12. Tippecanoe and Trinkets Too

### Answers

Archaeologist  
-prehistoric site  
2, 5, 7, 8

Architectural Historian  
4, 6, 9, 11

Archaeologist  
-historic site  
1, 3, 10, 12

**Archaeologist**  
**-prehistoric site-**

**Architectural Historian**  
**-historic buildings-**

**Archaeologist**  
**-historic site**

# Archaeological Resources

## Book Reviews

**Title:** Under Every Roof: A kids' style and field guide to the architecture of American houses

**Author:** Patricia Brown Glenn

**Publisher:** Garruba - Dennis, Washington, D.C.; Tien Wah Press, Singapore

**Age Range:** 8-13

This children's book covers many different aspects of architecture. Why do early homes built by the pioneers look different from those built in New York City at the same time? How do climate and landscape affect the way a building is designed? The book also details the style of houses from Prairie to Roman Revival, and provides a field guide for children's use.

**Title:** Digging up the Past

**Author:** Carolyn James

**Publisher:** Franklin Watts, New York

**Age Range:** 9-12

A comprehensive overview of the archaeological process, based on the fictional story of an archaeologist's son who works in all aspects of archaeology. He and his friend discover an historic site, and gets permission from the landowner to dig the site and process the artifacts as long as his mother supervises the work.

**Title:** Wisconsin Archaeology

**Author:** edited by Robert A. Birmingham, Carol I. Mason, and James B. Stoltman

**Publisher:** The Wisconsin Archeological Society, Milwaukee

**Age Range:** adult

This composite volume of the Wisconsin Archeologist discusses the history of Wisconsin Archaeology, prehistoric technology, rock art, early Native American cultures of Wisconsin, Aztalan, historic Native Peoples, and Euro-american archaeology. A must-have for Wisconsin archaeologists.

## Web Sites

### Wisconsin Historical Society Architecture and History Inventory (AHI)

<http://www.shsw.wisc.edu/ahi/>

The AHI provides historical and architectural information on approximately 130,000 properties in Wisconsin. The AHI contains data on buildings, structures and objects that illustrate Wisconsin's unique history. Historic properties such as round barns, log houses, cast iron bridges, small town commercial buildings, and Queen Anne houses are noted.

## Places to Visit

### Wisconsin Historical Society

A wealth of information about Wisconsin's past is available from the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS). Historic information from the early Native Americans living in the state, information on early European settlers, and geneological research can all be completed at the WHS. Wisconsin Historical Society, 816 State Street, Madison, WI 53706; 608/264-6400.

### Historic Downtown La Crosse

Downtown La Crosse is rich in history. Homes and stores built over 150 years ago continue to grace the city's downtown area and today house unique shops and businesses. For more information on La Crosse's historic past, contact Downtown Mainstreet, Inc., 712 Main Street, La Crosse, WI 54601; 608/784-0440.

*These book reviews, websites, and places to visit can be used as supplemental information for your lessons. Let us know if you have found any great resources we can share with our readers.*