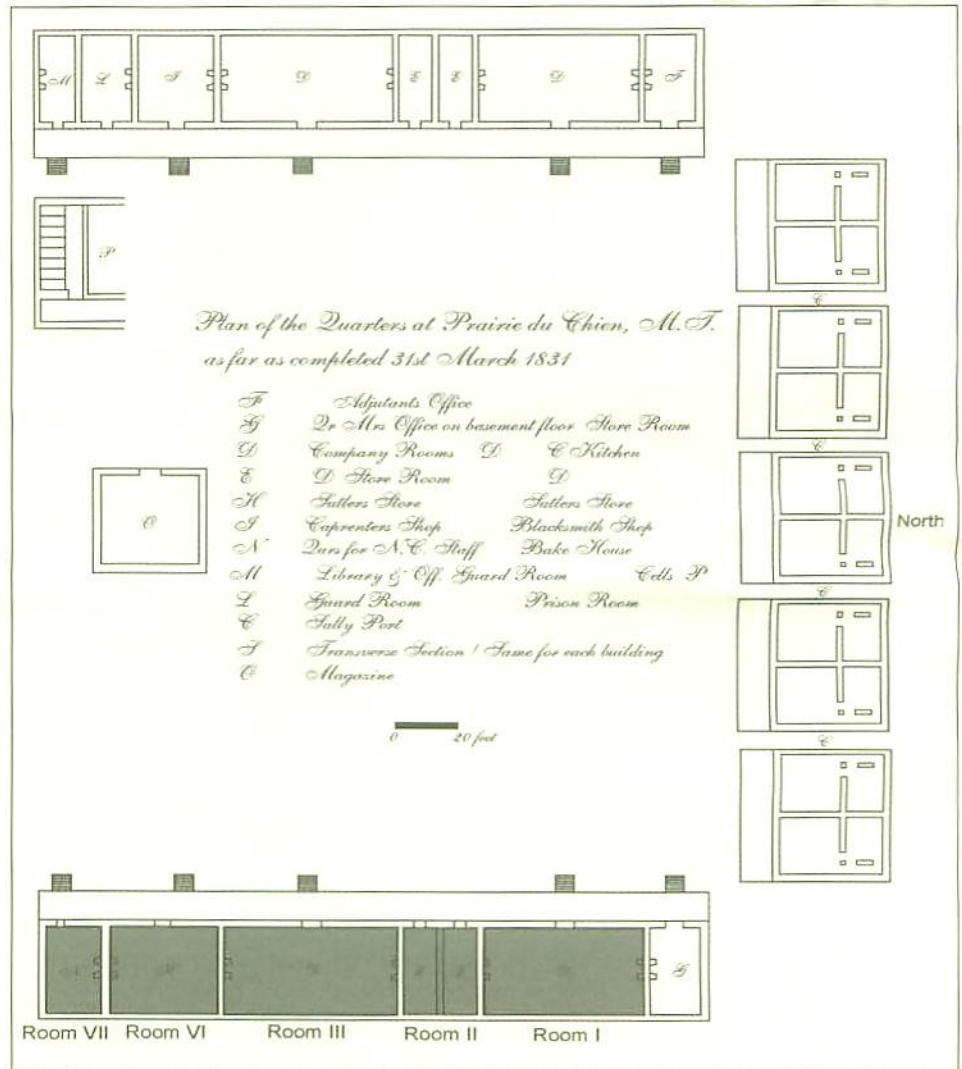


The theme of this year's Archaeology Education Program newsletter is "Historic Archaeology." The Fall issue discussed what historic archaeology is and how it differs from prehistoric archaeology. The Winter issue looked into historic research and how written records help identify historic artifacts. In this issue, we compare historic and prehistoric site types and excavation techniques. Special thanks to Research Archaeologist Vicki Twinde for writing this series.

Historic archaeology deals with archaeological sites after written records while prehistoric archaeology deals with archaeological sites before written records. In the United States, historical archaeology deals with archaeological sites after the arrival of the Europeans. As discussed previously in this series, one advantage to doing historical archaeology can be written records including deeds, tax rolls, newspapers, diaries, plat maps, and other old maps. Historical documents can have errors, so these should be used in combination with the archaeology.

Historical maps, if available for a site, can be a wealth of information for the archaeologist while out in the field. The map illustrated to right is a partial historical map of Second Fort Crawford, and the shaded rooms indicate what portion of the rooms MVAC excavated in 1999. This is valuable information for anyone viewing the map, as it orients where you did the excavations in perspective to the original map plans. Sometimes the archaeology can prove the historical documents wrong. MVAC excavated Second Fort Crawford in 1999 using historical maps to orient where we were on the site. However, as we began uncovering more and more rooms within the fort, we

Historic Archaeology versus Prehistoric Archaeology



Partial historical map of Second Fort Crawford, and the shaded rooms indicate what portion of the rooms MVAC excavated in 1999.

realized that the historical map of the fort we were using from a book on Prairie du Chien was incorrect. The number of rooms on the map in the area we were excavating did not match the number of rooms we found in the field for this area. The person who made the map had inverted the west side Enlisted Men's Quarters with the east side Enlisted Men's

Quarters. Before excavation, the historical map was assumed to be accurate, but the archaeology proved it was not.

In the United States, excavation at historic sites differs from excavation at prehistoric sites. Archaeologists working at prehistoric sites map and excavate everything

using the metric system (meters and centimeters). However, at historic sites, the English system is usually used for mapping and excavation (feet and inches). This is because buildings built during historic times were built in feet, therefore excavating in feet will help to compare any historical plans or maps available of the area to the archaeology.

Artifacts

Although the range of artifacts on prehistoric and historic sites are obviously different, some have similar functions. For examples, axes found on prehistoric sites are made out of stone, while axes on historic sites are made of iron. They both serve the same purpose, although they are made of different material.

Pottery or ceramics is one common object found on later prehistoric sites and historic sites. Groups of prehistoric Native Americans in this area that used pottery are the Woodland (circa 2500-1000 years before present) and the Oneota (circa 900-350 years before present). These groups used raw clay sources to make their pots and the Woodland tempered their pottery with crushed grit while the Oneota tempered their pottery with crushed shell. Beyond the different tempers determining age, different decorations on these vessels help determine their age. Some ways these decorations are made is using fingers, small tools, nets, or cords.

Historic pottery is categorized by a variety of different ware types and decoration. Some of the different historic pottery types include redware, yellow ware, pearlware, moca ware, creamware, ironstone, bone china, canary ware, stoneware, etc. There are a variety of decoration types associated with many of these pottery types including transfer print, annular ware, handpainted, edged, decal prints, etc.

Lesson Plan

Write what material each object listed below would be made of in historic and prehistoric times.

| | Historic | Prehistoric |
|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Arrowhead | _____ | _____ |
| Clothes | _____ | _____ |
| Drawings | _____ | _____ |
| Jewelry | _____ | _____ |
| Pottery | _____ | _____ |



Some of these have bright colors. Similar to prehistoric pottery, historic pottery is identified by the ware (what it is made of) and the decoration, if any, on it. Although the material the pottery is made of and the decoration and colors vary vastly between prehistoric and historic, they are used for similar things - holding, storing, or transporting food or liquids.

Historic Archaeological Resources
Snyder, Jeffrey B.
1997, *Romantic Staffordshire Ceramics*.
Schiffer Publishing, Ltd.

Williams, Petra
1971, *Flow Blue China*. Fountain House East,
Jeffersontown, Kentucky.

1978, *Staffordshire*. Fountain House East,
Jeffersontown, Kentucky.

Places to Visit:

Villa Louis Historic Site

Tour the beautiful house built by the descendants of pioneer fur trader Hercules Dousman, who built Villa Louis in 1870. Fur traders and native tribes mingled here to swap pelts, rum, horses, and wild tales of life on the edge of the unexplored western territories. The fur trade sparked a clash of armies on this site too, in the only battle of the War of 1812 fought on Wisconsin soil. The Villa Louis is operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily May 10 through October 31. Admission: Adults \$8.50; children (5-12) \$4.50; senior citizens (65 and over) \$7.75; family (two adults and two or more dependent children 5-17) \$23.

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www.wisconsinhistory.org/sites/villa/index.html