



Archaeology Education Program

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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. This issue will look into historic research and how written records help identify historic artifacts. The difference between historic and prehistoric site types and excavation techniques will be covered in the Spring issue. Research Archaeologist Vicki Twinde will be writing this series.

Introduction

As discussed in the Fall issue of the MVAC newsletter, one advantage to historical archaeology over prehistoric archaeology is written records. When an archaeologist finds a historic site, there are a variety of written records that can be researched. Old plat maps can indicate if a structure was present and for how long. For example, if an archaeologist finds a scatter of historic artifacts in a plowed field, he or she can look at old plat maps and see if a structure was there at one time. Structures are represented on plat maps as small rectangles, so if a structure is present on 1876 and 1890 plat maps, but is no longer present on a 1910 plat map, then this site can at least be dated to earlier than 1910.

Historic Research

There is a multitude of historic documents that can be researched when doing historical research on an archaeological site - maps, tax records, deeds, Sanborn Fire Insurance papers, old post office records, genealogies, books, personal letters, etc. Many of these resources can be found at local history centers, and if dealing with

research in Wisconsin, many can be found at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Research on Second Fort Crawford, an 1829 to 1856 military fort excavated by MVAC in 1999, has led to a variety of other avenues of research including a trip to the National Archives in Washington D.C. which houses military and other federal public records. When dealing with deeds and papers written before the 1900s, they can be hard to read as they are many times written in long cursive writing, almost like calligraphy. Also, as discussed in an earlier issue of the MVAC newsletter, caution must be used when relying solely on written records - just because it is written down doesn't mean it is always accurate. Multiple sources work the best so one can verify information against other sources. For the historical archaeologist, comparing historical information to physical evidence is the only way to properly do research.

Dating Artifacts

Historical records can also help date artifacts. For example, many buttons from Second Fort Crawford have what is called a backmark with a company name on its back side. These backmarks are important, as sometimes the front of the button is too corroded to see the design. Backmarks can assist in dating buttons to a specific time period. In dealing with military buttons, multiple companies may have made the same type of button, depending on their individual contract with the army. Many of these companies stamped their names on the back of these buttons. If the dates of when a specific company manufactured buttons is known, it can "narrow" down the time frame for an individual button. For example, one back mark is "PHI^A•ARMITAGE•". The "PHI^A//ARMITAGE" back mark is

associated with George Armitage of Race Street in Philadelphia. Armitage first made military trimmings in 1798, and made military buttons from 1799 to 1826. So if you have a military button with the backmark of "PHI^A•ARMITAGE•", the date can at least be ascertained at 1799 to 1826.

Buttons are not the only type of artifact that can be dated by written records. Two other examples are embossed bottles and ceramic dishes with makers marks. Embossing is the addition of raised letter and symbols created on glass through use of full-size molds, either pressed, blown, or machine made. Often, manufacturer will emboss their names right onto the bottles, and written records kept by the company indicate when certain bottles were manufactured and for how long. Also, ceramics are often stamped with a makers mark on the bottom or back side of the item. Again, looking up the dates that the manufacturer existed will help narrow down the date of the artifact.

Places to Visit:

*Wisconsin Maritime Museum
The museum houses exhibits and displays which revolve around 19th and 20th century Great Lakes maritime history. An authentic reproduction of the midship section of the "Clipper City," a schooner built in Manitowoc in 1854 is on display, along with passenger ship interiors, original artifacts and model ships. Open 7 days a week - year round. Summer hours: 9 a.m. - 6 p.m., Winter hours: Monday - Saturday 9 am - 5 p.m., Sunday 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.*

*75 Maritime Drive
Manitowoc, WI 54220
920-684-0218
www.wimaritimemuseum.org/*

An example of historic archaeology: Coins at the Second Fort Crawford

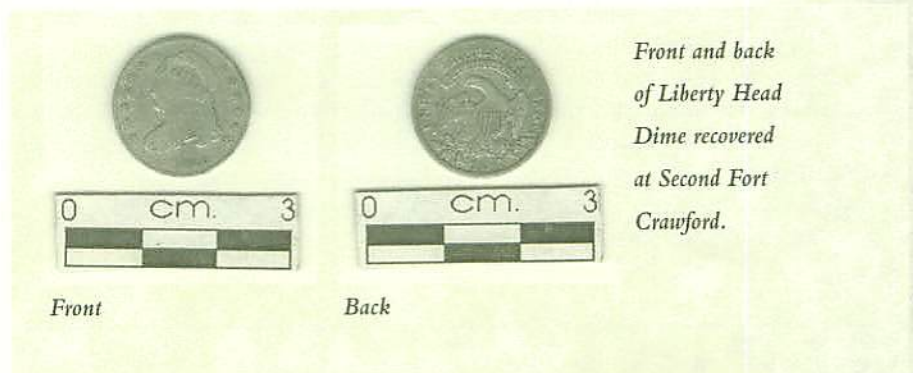
Coins are often found on historic sites. Many times people would purposely place a coin underneath a footing or part of a foundation as a symbol of when the building was constructed for later generations to find. Although coins have dates, the historical archaeologist knows one must be cautious about using them solely to date a site as coins are in circulation for many years after they are issued.

Perhaps the most important thing to look at is the design of the coin. For example, the modern penny has Abraham Lincoln on the front with the Lincoln Memorial on the back. Although Abraham Lincoln was put on the front of the penny in 1909, the original back contained wheat heads. The penny with Abe Lincoln on the front with wheat heads on the back was issued from 1909-1958, while the penny with Abe Lincoln on the front and the Lincoln Memorial on the back was issued from 1958 to the present day.

Prior to Abe Lincoln on the front, there were what is termed "Indian Head" type pennies which were issued from 1859 to 1909, and had different designs on the back.

Prior to the Indian Head type pennies were the Flying Eagle penny which was issued from 1856 to 1858. This type of penny was the first "small" cent (same size as the modern day penny). The actual date of this change came with the Act of February 21, 1857, so the 1856 Flying Eagle coins were not an authorized mint issue as the law governing the new coin was not enacted until 1857.

Prior to this were the large pennies, with styles changing on the face over time, i.e. woman with flowing hair to



the so-called "Jefferson Head" to the woman with draped bust design to the Classic Head to the Matron Head design. Each of these coins also had different variations. Also, the backs changed over time, as did the materials they were made out of. As you know, many collectors collect the early large pennies, the Flying Eagle penny, and the Indian Head-type penny and these are no longer in circulation for use as currency. It is even rare to find a penny with Abe Lincoln on the front and the wheat heads on the back in circulation. So if an archaeologist finds an 1828 large one cent coin, it is safe to assume that although the coin may have been used for many years after its issue date, it probably wasn't used much after the late 1850s or early 1860s, as the first small cent was issued in the late 1850s. So the date of the site is probably somewhere between 1828 and the late 1850s or early 1860s.

At Second Fort Crawford, a variety of coins were found. An example of one of the coins is the 1830 Liberty Head, Capped Bust dime. The Capped Bust dime was first used in 1809, and was similar to the Capped Bust half dollar first issued in 1807. The Capped Bust dime contains Miss Liberty on the front with her hair in a cloth cap secured with a band containing the

word "LIBERTY", with the tresses flowing down to her shoulders. A brooch or clasp secures a cloth or gown around her bust. Seven stars are to the left of her head, with six stars to the right and the date below. The reverse side depicts an eagle perched on an olive branch and holding arrows with a scroll above him with the words "E PLURIBUS UNUM." The words "UNITED STATES OF AMERICA" and "10c" are bordering. The dimes of this style minted from 1828 to 1837 are slightly different from those of the 1809 to 1827 style. The new dime was slightly smaller in diameter, had more closely spaced denticles on the outside, and the stars were slightly smaller.

Historic Archaeological Resources:

Bowers, Q. David
1989 *United States Coins by Design Types*.
Bowers and Merena Galleries, Inc., New Hampshire.

Krause, Chester L. and Clifford Mishler
1997 *Standard Catalog of World Coins, Eighteenth Century, 2nd Edition 1701-1800*.
Krause Publications, Inc. Iola, Wisconsin.

Krause, Chester L. and Clifford Mishler
1999 *Standard Catalog of World Coins, 19th Century, 2nd Edition 1801-1900*.
Krause Publications, Inc. Iola, Wisconsin.