



Electronic

Archaeology News

Volume 21 Number 3, Online Supplement

Fall 2003

From the Editor:

MVAC is excited to offer a new way for our members to receive current news about ongoing projects, new finds and upcoming events. We will continue to mail out a newsletter with announcements three times a year, and will provide more information in the online supplement. Please let me know what you think of this change and any suggestions you have for new material to include. Members who would like a hard copy of the supplement mailed to their homes can contact me at (608) 785-8454 or dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu. Enjoy the newsletter!

Jean Dowiasch, Editor

MVAC at the University
of Wisconsin - La Crosse
1725 State Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

www.uwlax.edu/mvac

State Highway 33 Projects Yields Upland Sites

Vicki Twinde, Research Archaeologist

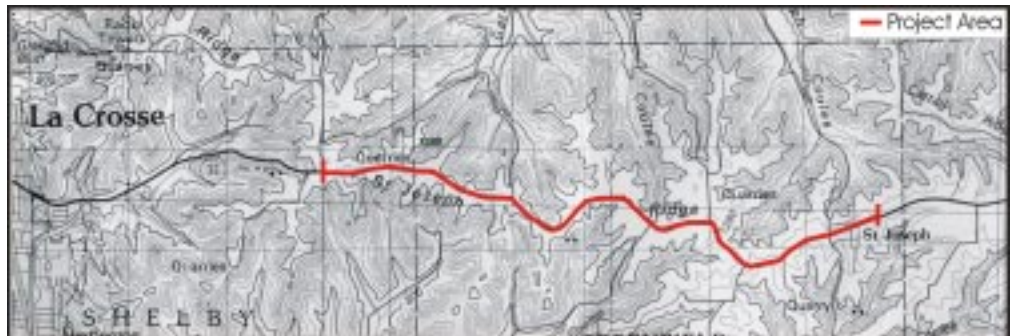
In June of 2003, MVAC personnel conducted a Phase I survey of approximately 7 miles of STH 33, from the intersection of County Highway F and STH 33 at the top of Irish Hill to approximately 1/2 mile east of the town of St. Joseph. This is part of a Wisconsin Department of Transportation project in which approximately 21 miles of STH 33 will be re-done from CTH F all the way into the town of Cashton. The highway project will be completed in three different sections, as will the archaeology.

This summer MVAC found thirteen new prehistoric sites. Four of these sites were isolated flakes, but the other nine sites were lithic scatters. It is hard to date most of these sites, as they did not have complete diagnostic (dateable) artifacts, although one of these sites had an early Paleoindian fluted point (circa 10,000 to 12,000 years before present).



Paleoindian point recovered from the Double "Y" site along STH 33.

MVAC has recommended more archaeological work be done on these sites. Therefore, this fall, pending landowner permissions, MVAC will undertake additional archaeological work on eight of these sites.



Highway 33 Project Area

Baked Onalaska

Connie Arzigian, Research Archaeologist

Introduction

During the summer of 2003 the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center's annual Public Field School had the opportunity to excavate an Oneota house structure at the Meier Farm Site (47 Lc 432) in Onalaska, Wisconsin. Twenty-one great individuals ranging in ages from middle school students to adults participated in this year's public field school. During the course of the week the participants experienced hot, dry desert-like conditions and a sudden downpour of rain that tested their dedication to archaeology and the project.

The Meier Farm Site is part of the Sand Lake Archaeological District, and represents a village associated with extensive ridged agricultural fields that have been found nearby. The house structure that was examined is one of the very few such structures in the La Crosse area that archaeologists have ever had the opportunity to investigate. The others that we presume existed have all been destroyed by decades of cultivation. This structure was defined by over 300 post holes, small circular stains left when wooden posts decayed. The structure was probably similar to a wigwam, or a long rectangular building. One of our research goals is to figure out what season(s) the structure had been occupied, and that will give us a better clue as to how the structure might have looked. Deer mandibles found at the site will help us to identify the seasons that the structure was used.

Inside the Structure

Within the structure we found a number of relatively shallow features that suggested mostly



The house structure at the Meier Farm site, 2003.

cooking activities, as well as perhaps pottery manufacture and stone tool reworking. The hearths were placed in several areas of the structure, not concentrated in one spot, suggesting multiple work areas, either for different activities or for different groups of people. The number of interior post molds suggests that there might have been racks inside, perhaps drying or smoking facilities to prepare foods and hides for storage. All of the activities appear to have taken place over a relatively short period of time, rather than continuous use over a full year or multiple years.

What we did NOT find is equally as interesting. We did not find large and deep storage pits such as we typically find on Oneota villages. These kinds of pits might not have been built within structures, but might have been placed outside the structure.

Most of the cultural remains that were found at the site are characteristic of the Oneota time period, from 1300 to 1625 A.D. Examples of Oneota cultural remains found at the site included: shell-tempered pottery, end scrapers, fire cracked rock (FCR), burning pits, and basin or bell-shaped storage pits. In addition, we found several features that had Woodland or grit-tempered pottery probably dating to between 700 and 1200 A.D., suggesting that this place had been occupied multiple times in the past.

The Meier Farm Site was a salvage excavation project. Recovery of information from the site was needed due to plans to turn the area into a new housing subdivision in the very near future. The 26 field school participants and supervisors working in the structure might have been typical of the total number of people in an extended family that once occupied this structure. Working together as a unit, the crew helped to preserve some of that ancient history for the future.

Wrap-up

Thanks to the help of the hard working public field school participants MVAC was able to obtain a better understanding of Oneota houses and their usage. Their efforts have made a major contribution to our understanding of the archaeology of the area. Thanks!

Public Field Survey, May 2003

Connie Arzigian, Research Archaeologist

Once again we had perfect weather as 27 people joined MVAC on Saturday, May 17 and 25 came out on Sunday, May 18, 2003, to continue MVAC's survey of the Holmen area and Long Coulee. We first revisited a site that has proved to be continually productive, a relatively small field located along a creek in the valley bottom. This field has produced many flakes, several triangular projectile points, end scrapers, knives, grinding stones, and several pieces of shell-tempered pottery that indicate that the site was used by the Oneota culture, sometime between 1300 and 1625 AD. These people were agriculturalists but they also harvested a wide range of wild plants such as nuts and berries, and many game animals such as deer. The Long Coulee sites probably represent short-term occupations for harvest of such resources.

We have wondered for several years about the uplands and other surrounding areas, and have speculated on how these lands might have been used in the past - as hunting or harvest areas, travel routes, places to get stone for tools, and so forth. We predicted that the ridgetops themselves would have the best view, would be the best travel route, and would therefore have the most material.

In 2003 we were able to survey the hillslopes and hilltops in this area to test these predictions. We were greatly surprised by the results. Rather than finding lots of material on the ridgetops, they proved to be almost completely bare of all cultural material. The hillsides were equally bare except for several isolated pockets of material. One was of a large end scraper. Although the Oneota made many end scrapers, the one found on the hillside was significantly larger, and is more similar to those made during the PaleoIndian era, roughly 9000 years ago. Another pocket of artifacts included a mano—a grinding stone, along with the tip of a projectile point, and some flakes. Thus, it looks like the utilization of the hillsides and hilltops was either not as intensive as anticipated, or the activities conducted there did not result in artifacts that have survived.

Other fields in the valley bottom were also surveyed. Here, the assemblage was different from that seen closer to the mouth of the valley, and the projectile point found dates to the Archaic period, between 3000 and 8000 years ago. The

point was found along with many other flakes. There was also a grit-tempered potsherd, indicating a Woodland occupation, possibly Middle Woodland around 300 AD. But there were no signs of Oneota occupation.

Thus, we have identified a variety of cultural components within close proximity to each other, but each culture appears to have utilized the land in their own unique way, leaving distinctive assemblages in each landscape setting. We will be continuing the survey next year to explore further types of landscape settings to see how this pattern continues.



Participants of the 2003 Public Field School

2003 Public Field Survey

Roy Anderson	Connie Hovel
Caroline Anfinson	Mike Kiffel & Emma
Debbie Butzler	Mike Lahner
Art T.Daleiden	Linda McAlpine & Ian Vandeberg-Smith
Lucy Davidson	Vance Mead, Cassidy & Caitlin
LeVern DeVries	Paul Mielke
Jason & Jeanne Gilman, Clint & Nick	Ron & Julie Pronsinski, Avery
Lee Gross Kreutz	Jacquelyn Schnabl
Mike Hansen, Matthew & Arron	Theresa Simpson, Adam
Mary Hatfield, Salem & Andrea	Andrea Trocinski, Grace



New Publication!

Connie recently co-authored a book with Kathy Stevenson, an Adjunct Research Archaeologist with MVAC. Connie and Kathy did extensive research for the book, entitled *Minnesota's Indian Mounds and Burial Sites*. Copies of the book can be purchased at the MVAC lab for \$40, or call Jody at (608) 785-8463 to place an order.

Hikers Experience the Wilds of Ireland with Jim Gallagher

In June the annual Ireland hiking trip took place and was greatly enjoyed by all participants. This year's hike featured the wild areas of the coast of County Donegal in far northwestern Ireland. This scenic area is not as populated or as heavily visited as most of the other coastal areas of the island. Betty Roskos of La Crosse especially liked all the spring wild flowers and walking along the spectacular sea cliffs of the Slieve League, while her husband Rollie liked seeing all the nesting shore birds, especially the puffins, and the camaraderie of the walking group. Marcie Hagge of Cedar Falls, Iowa especially enjoyed the rugged beauty of many the areas we hiked through, while John Nolan of Trempealeau liked the more serene Lough Gartan area as well as the various experts (archaeologists, historians, ornithologist, etc.) that we brought along on our daily walks. Everyone

liked the spectacular archaeology, our excursion out to Tory Island, our wonderful guide Maeve, and the pubs!

In 2004 Jim plans to offer two trips to Ireland in response to the increasing interest in these walking tours. The first will start on the 10th of June returning on the 19th and will be a return trip to County Donegal. The second tour is planned to start on July 9 and end the 18th of July and will take in the coasts and islands of West Cork and the scenically rugged Beara Peninsula at the southern end of Ireland. Both will include our Irish guide, Maeve Kelly. You can call Jim Gallagher at (608) 784-8042 for information or to be placed on the 2004 tour mailing list.

Summer Youth Camps

Jean Dowiasch, Education Coordinator

Three classes were held for students entering grades 1 - 9 during the summer of 2003. The Introduction to Archaeology class, grades 1-4, spent the first day of class exploring the archaeology laboratory, washing artifacts collected during the public field survey, and learning the basics of archaeology. The second day the students were busy touring the excavations near Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center and the Meier Farm site. We finished the day at Trempealeau's Perrot State Park, examining how the natural resources of the area would have been used by early Native People.



Participants in the Introduction to Archaeology class, grades 5 through 9 at the Lower Sand Lake site, 47Lc45.



Wendy Holtz-Leith gives a tour of the 4th St. project near Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center during an MVAC Summer Camp.

The Introduction to Archaeology class, grades 5-9 also toured the site near Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center, and then spent the rest of the day at the Meier Farm site. Students conducted surface collection of the site and excavated several garbage pit features.

The one-day Egypt class focused on everyday life of this ancient culture, as well as looking at mummies, pharaohs and hieroglyphics. Students made mummy masks and a mummy case during the class.

Public Outreach

Year End Report Highlights 2002-2003

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center's Archaeology Education Program has completed its thirteenth year. The program is continuing its mission of providing educational opportunities for the general public in all age groups along with training, resources, and an informational support staff for precollegiate instructors. This year end report reflects relative stability and balance between the public and educator components of the program. It also reflects cost saving strategic program cuts while maintaining baseline services. Following are some of the ways we've involve people in archaeological activities and brought the results of the center's research to the public.

- a minimum of 235 presentations were given, reaching 9,010 people
- 3000 people attended the annual Artifact Identification Day at Valley View Mall and 18 collectors displayed their collections
- 36 people helped to discover new archaeological sites at the two-day spring volunteer survey offered in celebration of Wisconsin's Archaeology Week 2003
- Dr. Gallagher took 5 individuals on a walking tour of Ireland's County Donegal
- the lab hosted a work day
- 12 people participated in the Public, Teacher, Middle School and High School Field School in Stoddard & 3 youth classes were offered during summer 2002
- *Archaeology News* and the *Archaeology Education Program Newsletter* were mailed three times during the year along with flyers and the 2003 activity brochure
- survey respondents rated MVAC staff and resources as excellent and 96% said they would use MVAC's services again
- Riverside Museum was visited by over 6,669 people and over 190 people visited the UW-L Archaeology Center and Laboratory
- educational staff presented at educational and archaeological conferences
- MVAC classes and field schools and 5 area schools involved in the Junior Archaeology Program helped at a number of area sites
- the web site had 8,262 hits with new components to the Research section being: Native American Garden and Traditional Plant Usage, Technologies (including pottery, stone tools, copper, catlinite), Replicating stone tools, Native American Artists and Native American Games; the Educators section's new information included: Meet the teachers participating in the Eisenhower project, Glossary of archaeology terms, Frequently asked questions, Web links for teachers, Book reviews and Resource help
- 4 grants were received to do special educational projects

The Archaeology Education Program staff is grateful for the continuing generous support of fellow colleagues, staff and the Board of Directors of Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, the assistance of numerous faculty and staff members of the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse, and students in the UW-L Archaeological Studies Program, without whose encouragement and involvement, the Program could not achieve its goals.



Upcoming Events

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

Annual Reception

Tuesday, September 23, 2003
6 - 7:30 p.m., Port O'Call
UW-L Cartwright Center
RSVP to (608) 785-8463, \$10

Members are invited to join the Board of Directors and Staff to honor MVAC supporters Elmwood Partners, Inc., LeVern DeVries, Jason Gilman, and Todd Murphy. Award presentation at 7 p.m.

Lubbock Lake Landmark

Tuesday, September 23, 2003
7:30 p.m., Valhalla
UW-L Cartwright Center

The Lubbock Lake Landmark is a 300-acre archaeological and natural history preserve in Yellowhouse Canyon on the Southern High Plains. Lubbock Lake is a National Historic and State Archaeological Landmark with an extensive late Quaternary stratigraphy within which are found detailed cultural and natural history records from Clovis to historic times. Primarily a record of hunter-gatherers on the grasslands through time, the material remains reflect subsistence and residential pursuits. Economic pursuits are represented in the Anglo-historic period with the establishment of a trading post. Speaker **Dr. Eileen Johnson** is from the Museum of Texas Tech University.

Highlights of MVAC's Summer Excavations

Tuesday, October 14, 2003
7:30 p.m., Port O'Call
UW-L Cartwright Center

MVAC had another busy summer! Two excavations were conducted in the Sand Lake Archaeological District, both of which will be discussed in this presentation. The Iva site produced Middle Mississippian pottery, a rarity in western Wisconsin. At Meier Farm site, four house features were discovered. A third dig continues on 4th Street in the city of La Crosse, near Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center. Speakers will include **Connie Arzigian, Robert "Ernie" Boszhardt, and Jon Baker.**

Laboratory Work Day

Saturday, November 8, 2003
9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
UW-L Archaeology Laboratory

Join Archaeologist **Connie Arzigian** as she takes registrants through the process of laboratory work. Artifacts from the May 2003 Public Field Survey will be examined and catalogued. What types of tools and raw materials were used by the Native People of Long Coulee are just a few of the questions to be examined during the open lab day. **Registration Required** at (608) 785-8454 or dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu.

MVAC at the University
of Wisconsin - La Crosse
1725 State Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

www.uwlax.edu/mvac



Next issue:

Look for the following articles in the Winter 2004 Archaeology News newsletter:

- * 2003 UWL Summer Field School near Gundersen Lutheran Medical Center
- * 2004 Events: including dates for the MVAC Artifact Show and Public Field Survey
- * The latest news on western Wisconsin Archaeology
- * Teachers learn Wisconsin Archaeology on the web
- * MVAC 2003 Award Receptions