



# Archaeology News

Volume 21 Number 1

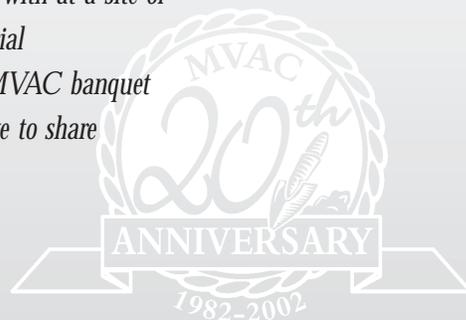
WINTER 2003

## Celebrating 20 Years



*Archaeology News will be celebrating MVAC's 20th Anniversary all year long. In each of our three issues we will be bringing our readers highlights of MVAC's past- significant excavations, important events, and updates from past staff and students you may have dug with at a site or sat next to at the annual banquet. If you have any special memories of digging with MVAC, attending a special MVAC banquet or an open site tour, please send them to me as we'd love to share them with our readers.*

*Jean Dowiasch, Editor*



*MVAC at the University  
of Wisconsin-La Crosse*

*Archaeology News  
is a publication of  
the Mississippi Valley  
Archaeology Center*

[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

*1725 State Street  
La Crosse, WI 54601-3788*

## Discovery of the Lessard Cabin Site

**Ryan J. Howell,**  
*Research Archaeologist*

During the summer of 2002, MVAC archaeologists spent several months working on the large US 18-Marquette Road highway-corridor project near Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin. The survey and test-excavations, which were sponsored by CH2M Hill Engineering and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, revealed a number of historic and prehistoric archaeological sites throughout the Prairie du Chien area.

A major highlight of the summer's excavations was the discovery of the Lessard Cabin Site, a French Fur-Trade era



***The foundation of the Lessard Cabin site.***

cabin foundation. Intact habitation sites of this period are extremely rare, and few have been excavated in Wisconsin. The site was initially discovered when shovel testing in a fallow field recovered a concentration of early 1830-1850 historic

ceramics. Later test excavations revealed a small, ten by fifteen foot foundation made of rough-hewn limestone blocks and set with homemade mortar. The foundation is similar in style and layout to those common in French communities such as Prairie du Pont and St. Genevieve in the Illinois Country, during the late 1700s and early 1800s. It may represent a distinctly French colonial style of cabin architecture called, poteaux-sur-solle (posts-on-stone), that was commented on by early historic travelers to Prairie du Chien.

*(Lessard Cabin continued  
on page 3.)*

## From The Board:



**Carole Edland**

New Year's greetings to all of you, our supporters, from your Board of Directors. It has been a busy 20th Anniversary year and we were very pleased with all that transpired. We now look forward with great expectation for a good 2003. The executive committee met recently and mapped out plans some for our Research Endowment Fund Drive. This is a very important addition to the MVAC mission and goals so that we can get the original research findings to the public. Our staff is doing some great work at the Center and we need to share their findings. We will be applying for a National Endowment Challenge grant similar to the one we obtained for the Education Endowment drive some five years ago. This new grant will be a 4-to-1 match! There is a lot of competition for any grant money available, but we are hopeful that with your support and contributions, we will be successful.

Carole Edland, Board President

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*Members of the  
2002 - 2003 MVAC  
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*Photo courtesy  
of Carole Edland.*

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# Fisher Site Excavations

by *Connie Arzigian,*  
*Laboratory Director*

Excavations continued at the Fisher site (47Ve-825) in Stoddard during the summer of 2002. Two separate sessions were held, the first session undertaken in June by area teachers working on a grant from the Eisenhower Professional Development Fund, and the second group consisted of MVAC's Public Field School. The Fisher site was first noted by W.C. McKern from the Milwaukee Public Museum in the early 1900s. Limited archaeological testing has been conducted at the site since that time, including surface collection and shovel testing during the 1980s. The site is currently owned by the U.S. Corps of Engineers, which leases lots for cabins to local tenants. Portions of the Fisher site were tested by MVAC in 2001, with Woodland and Middle Mississippian components recovered.

The teachers excavated a portion of the Fisher site prior to the installation of a septic holding tank for some tenants. A block of 6 x 4 meters was excavated. Historic artifacts recovered from the upper layers of soil dated to the depression era, including a white clay pipe bowl and stem, glass, ceramics and metal. Prehistoric stone tools



*Fisher: MVAC Board member Ron Schnick displays an artifact he recovered during the Public Field School.*

recovered included several triangular points from the Late Woodland/Oneota occupations, Steuben points and one Waubesa Contracting stem from the Woodland period, and two Archaic points. Ceramics recovered from the site indicate an Oneota component, which had not previously been noted at the site. The Middle Woodland occupation appears to be

more diverse than earlier excavations, with a Hopewell component possibly represented by several sherds with distinctive burnishing on the exterior.

The part of the Fisher site tested during the week-long Public Field School was in the woods at the northern end of the site. Two 2 x 2 meter units were excavated in hopes of uncovering further evidence of the Mississippian component of the site. Soils within the units were very acidic, limiting artifact preservation to lithics (stone tools), ceramics and maybe some charcoal. Exotic flakes were recovered from both units, with many of the flakes showing evidence of heat-treating. A large groundstone artifact, possibly a metate (the base rock used for grinding food) was recovered from one of the units. In addition, a large chert scraper and an orthoquartzite biface tip was found during the field school. Woodland and Mississippian pot sherds were recovered from both units.

While no further construction is currently planned for the Fisher site property, MVAC hopes to continue research excavations at the site if small areas are to be disturbed, or if areas are endangered by erosion caused by the Mississippi River.

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*(Lessard Cabin, continued from page 1)*

Artifacts recovered from the foundation and surrounding area include a French honey-colored gun flint, a dagger or sword-blade fragment, kaolin pipe fragments, musket balls, brass pins, buttons and ornaments. Other finds include fragments of kettle-brass, a primary trade-good in the fur trade period, and historic ceramics. These types of artifacts and the general layout of the cabin foundation suggest a date for the cabin at the later part of the French-related occupation of Prairie du Chien, ca. 1790-1820. Some of the artifacts, including a majority of the ceramics, found near the site date to a slightly latter period from 1830-1860. These artifacts may represent a latter occupation of the cabin or may be the result of later trash-dumping into the abandoned foundation.

The presence of a French settlement at Prairie du Chien is documented in traveler accounts of the late eighteen and early nineteen centuries, but the exact nature and layout of the Prairie du Chien community of this time is poorly understood. French occupations at Prairie du Chien date

as far back as 1680, when trading posts in the area were constructed by French trader-explorer Nicholas Perrot. In conjunction with a large native Mesquakie village, a French settlement of some kind probably existed at Prairie du Chien throughout the middle and late 1700s. This French and metis community would have initially consisted of voyageurs, traders and clerks associated with the fur-trade and would have been later supplemented by French farmers and settlers moving north from the Illinois Country in the 1770-1790s.

At present it is unknown whether the Lessard Cabin Site (named after the oldest recorded French landowner of the property Pierre Lessard, ca.1795) represents a small isolated trader's cabin or farmstead, or is part of a larger, and as yet unknown, cluster of French period buildings in the surrounding area. Future work at the site is presently on hold, pending the finalization of the highway's construction plans by CH2M Hill and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation, but may eventually involve MVAC conducting a large-scale excavation of the cabin site and the surrounding area.

# MVAC Memory Lane

MVAC has grown from a staff of one in 1982 - Jim Gallagher - to a staff of fifteen in 2003. Two archaeology students, Tom Pleger and Holly Halverson Hopkins, who worked as field supervisors for MVAC in the late 1980s/early 1990s share their MVAC memories.

## Tom Pleger

After receiving his undergraduate degree in Political Science at UW-L, Tom Pleger moved on to UW-Madison to obtain his Masters and Ph.D. degrees in Anthropology/Archaeology. As one of MVAC's past Field Supervisors, Tom says he can't choose just one favorite MVAC memory: all of the field projects he worked on are memorable! From 1994 to 1998, Tom came back to MVAC and UW-La Crosse as a Research Archaeologist and Lecturer. He is currently the Associate Campus Dean

and Assistant Professor of Anthropology/Archaeology at the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley.



*Tom Pleger (left) explains excavation procedures at the Staublely site, 1989.*

Tom has encouraged several students who attend his courses at Fox Valley (which is a 2-year campus) to transfer to UW-L to obtain their bachelor's degree in Archaeology. Tom continues to work with MVAC as an Adjunct Research Archaeologist.

"I am very proud of my association with MVAC. MVAC has provided me with numerous opportunities for professional development and experience."



## ***Favorite Memory:***

***"All of the field projects I worked on are memorable."***

***~Tom***

*Tom Pleger (left) excavating at the Staublely site, 1989.*

## **Holly Halverson Hopkins**

Holly Halverson Hopkins completed her B.S. in Archaeological Studies at UW-La Crosse and is currently working toward her M.A. in Interdisciplinary Archaeological Studies at the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis. Holly is currently a Project Manager in the Cultural Resource Group at URS Corporation in Minneapolis. Holly worked at MVAC throughout her college career as a Lab Assistant and Field Supervisor, and stayed on shortly after graduation as a Graduate Research Intern.

Like Tom, Holly can't decide what her favorite MVAC memory is, so she's shared several with us:

"There are so many...I can't pick just one. One was when I was a supervisor on the 1992 field school. We found a carved stone bird-like effigy. First of all, it was one of the best things I have ever seen come out of a test unit. Secondly, I loved the look of ABSOLUTE SHOCK on Rollie Rodell's face when we showed it to him! I swear he nearly passed out! It eventually became the drawing for our summer field school t-shirts!

"There was also the teasing about 'postmolds' and 'longhouses' from Ernie following my two summers working for the State archaeological crew at the Tremaine site (digging postmolds and longhouses)...then what did we find at the Gundersen Site? You guessed it: postmolds and longhouses. The Gundersen Site in general is probably one of the best sites I have ever worked on!

"I also have a fond memory of the police stopping Vicki (Twinde) on the sidewalk in Friendship, WI, thinking



*Holly Halverson Hopkins and MVAC Board member Bill Gresens excavate a garbage pit at the Olson site, 1992.*

### ***Favorite Memory:***

***"There are so many...  
I can't pick just one."  
~Holly***

she was a teenage runaway! Of course, we had just finished work for the day so she had no identification on her and we were all dirty. They eventually believed the rest of us that she wasn't a teenager and she wasn't a runaway!

"I believe that MVAC provided me with a wonderful opportunity to get some hands-on training in the world of archaeology. I came into my cultural resource job with a higher level of training and broader experience base

than many others did. I think the staff at MVAC was key in my training. They were always willing to help us learn new things and get experience doing all aspects of the job. I hope all the other students making their way through the program today have as wonderful an experience as I did."





# Archaeology Education Program

Winter 2003

Volume 21 Number 1

***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<sup>A</sup>•ARMITAGE•". The "PHI<sup>A</sup>//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<sup>A</sup>•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/](http://www.wimaritimemuseum.org/)***

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

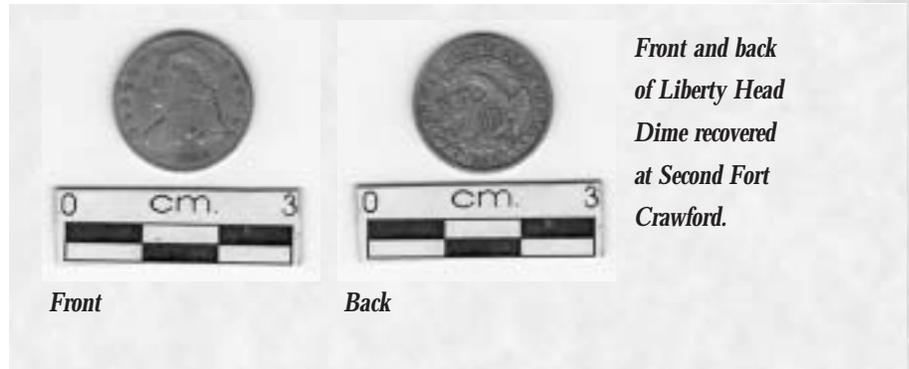
Coins are often found on historic sites. Many times people would purposely place a coin underneath a footing or part of a foundation as a symbol of when the building was constructed for later generations to find. Although coins have dates, the historical archaeologist knows one must be cautious about 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



*Front and back of Liberty Head Dime recovered at Second Fort Crawford.*

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 broach 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.

## Open Lab.....

On Saturday, November 9, seven volunteers joined Lab Director Connie Arzigian for an open lab day. All of the volunteers had participated in the MVAC Field Survey conducted by Connie last May. The volunteers sorted the many thousands of artifacts that were recovered from the spring survey in Long Coulee. The materials were sorted both by tool categories and by raw material. The vast majority of the material at this site was Prairie du Chien chert, unlike some of the adjacent sites that have mostly silicified sandstone. The artifacts included both finished tools and a full range of lithic reduction stages from crude bifaces and cores that were mostly covered

with cortex, to finished points and scrapers.

Of particular interest was the flake of obsidian that had been found (all the way from Yellowstone) and the variety of types of cochrane chert, including a nearly clear milky white variant that is not commonly found in the Long Coulee area. Thus, the people who lived here long ago must have had some interesting and possibly specialized trade or communication networks. Participants: Lucy Davidson, Kegan Keller, Mike Lahner, Jaclyn Schnabl, Adam Simpson, Theresa Simpson, and Andrea Trocinski.

## Web Update

[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)

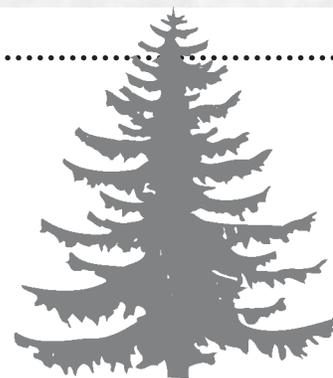
Haven't checked the web site lately? Take a minute to look at these new additions:

- ◆ Research leads you to new information on Native American Artists the MVAC Garden & Technologies
- ◆ 2003 Events list
- ◆ PDF files of the newsletter, annual report, activity brochure

## MVAC Tree sale a success!

In December, MVAC kicked off a new fundraiser - a holiday tree sale. The event was an unqualified success, the trees were beautiful, our 'customers' were pleased, the weather was nice, and the MVACers staffing the sale had a great time.

Many thanks to MVAC board members Dick Hilliker (for donating the trees from his family's tree farm) and Ron Schnick (for letting us use the Frank-Len site).



## Irish Hiking Tour

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center will offer a hiking tour to Ireland's scenic County Donegal June 1-12, 2003. The trip, led by Jim Gallagher, archaeologist and UW-L Professor Emeritus, will focus on hiking routes along the scenic and rugged Donegal coastline and exploring some of the beautiful and historic small islands. Jim will lead the group to places far removed from the usual throng of tourists including along spectacular coastal cliffs, across meadows ablaze with spring flowers, to the nesting places of thousands of sea birds, and to fascinating archaeological and historic sites. The number of participants is limited to 14. While hiking, the group will stay in two small lodges, each centrally located to the routes, and hikers will need only to carry a daypack while on the hikes. The cost of the tour is only \$2,380. For further information visit the trip Web site at <http://uwlax.edu/mvac/EventsDisplays/Ireland/>



*The beautiful coastal bluffs of Ireland.*

Ireland.htm or call (608) 785- 8463 for an itinerary and application form.

Jim Gallagher will be giving a slide presentation on the Donegal 2003 tour as well as showing slides from the 2002 Dingle trip on February 6, 2003 in the Port O'Call Room in Cartwright Center on the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse campus at 7:30 pm.

# Announcements

## 20 Years of Memories

Do you have fond memories of working with MVAC? Of getting sunburned, eaten by mosquitos or a particularly intense case of poison ivy? Did you find a unique artifact? Meet some interesting people? Well, during our 20th anniversary we're collecting stories and images that you have about your experiences with MVAC. We'll be sharing them in the newsletter, on the web and/or in the lab. Send your story and/or images of your memorable experiences to Jean Dowiasch at MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601 or e-mail to [dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu](mailto:dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu)

## Education Announcements

### Matching Funds Grant

The UW-La Crosse Foundation has awarded MVAC a \$2,400 grant to help teachers "double their money" when

using MVAC's educational resources. Teachers who would like more information on this program can contact Jean Dowiasch at 608-785-8454 or look on the MVAC web site at <http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac>.

### La Crosse School District Funds

Each elementary and middle school in the La Crosse School District has been awarded \$200 to use toward MVAC resources. Special thanks to Mark White and Sandra Fuhrman, the district's Supervisors of Humanities for their continued support of this program. Teachers interested should contact Jean Dowiasch at 608-785-8454.

### Summer School Classes

If you or your school would like to include an Archaeology class in your district's summer school offerings, contact Jean Dowiasch at 608-785-8454 or [dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu](mailto:dowiasch.jean@uwlax.edu).



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## Upcoming Lectures/Events

### Hiking in Ireland

Dr. James Gallagher will show slides and describe the June 2002 Walking Tour of the Dingle Peninsula in southwest Ireland. The group of ten participants hiked the mountains, coastal cliffs, and islands of this very scenic part of Ireland accompanied by the fabulous Irish guide Maeve Kelly. The slides will include views of some of the walks, historic and archaeological sites, and pubs that were visited. The lecture will also include slides of some of the routes and sites that Dr. Gallagher is planning to visit on the June 2003 Hiking Tour of the Coast and Islands of County Donegal on June 1-12.

**Date:** Thursday, February 6, 2003

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

**Speaker:** Dr. James Gallagher, UW-L Professor Emeritus

### Saving Wisconsin's Past for the Future

The Archaeological Conservancy is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving the nation's most important archaeological sites by acquiring title to them. Since 1980 it has purchased or received as donations over 200 archaeological sites nationwide, including seven in Wisconsin. This presentation will present an overview of the Archaeological Conservancy's endeavors with an emphasis on Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest.

**Date:** Thursday, March 6, 2003

**Time:** 7:30 p.m.

**Place:** Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

**Speaker:** Dr. Paul Gardner, Archaeological Conservancy

### Artifact Show

Join MVAC at Valley View Mall to see artifacts representing the area's long history. Local collectors will display their personal collections of artifacts. MVAC will display artifacts from local excavations, and archaeologists will be on hand to answer questions. Bring in your own artifacts for identification. Call MVAC at 608-785-8454 if you would like to display your artifacts.

**Date:** Saturday, March 15, 2003

**Time:** 10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

**Place:** Valley View Mall, Onalaska

# Middle Mississippian Component Identified at Sand Lake Coulee

*Robert "Ernie" Boszhardt,  
Associate Director and  
Joe Tiffany, Executive Director*

Sand Lake Coulee near La Crosse is well known for its extensive Oneota occupation, including a partially preserved ridged field agricultural system. The various Oneota sites in Sand Lake Coulee date from A.D. 1300 to 1550 and span the length of the Oneota occupation in the La Crosse locality. The ridged fields and some of the associated habitation sites were investigated in the mid-1980s by MVAC when Sand Lake Coulee was primarily agricultural land.

The Sand Lake Coulee sites were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1984. Subsequently, this area has experienced massive redevelopment including residential subdivisions and a golf course. Currently, only a portion of the Sand Lake Coulee Archaeological District remains rural in character, and most of the archaeological resources have been heavily impacted or totally destroyed by development.

Over the past several years as development in the Sand Lake Coulee District occurred, MVAC undertook excavations in advance of residential and recreational development. Important and extensive collections were made from the Krause (47LC41) and Meier Farm (47LC642) sites. This fall another small site in the Sand Lake District (47LC42) was also slated for development, and MVAC obtained permission to investigate this site prior to construction. Thirty subsurface pit features were exposed, four of which were excavated because they were situated within a utility corridor. The remaining features will be capped with fill preserving them.

Among the artifacts found at 47LC42 was a high frequency of Woodland pottery, unusual for Sand Lake where Oneota material culture dominates the record. Most of the Woodland pottery recovered indicates a Late Woodland component although some Middle Woodland pottery was also found.



*Angelo Punctated  
sherd recovered  
from 47LC42*

After MVAC work was completed at 47LC42 last fall, two avocational archaeologists, Pat Smetma and Todd Reichert, visited the site area. Among the artifacts they recovered from heavy machinery spoil piles were several rim sherds with distinctive rolled lips. This rolled lip form is characteristic of shell-tempered vessels produced by Middle Mississippian cultures in the upper Midwest during the Stirling phase (A.D. 1100-1200) at the Cahokia site near St. Louis, Missouri.

The rolled lip rim sherds found by Pat and Todd are grit tempered and probably represent locally made copies of Ramey Incised, an important Middle Mississippian vessel form derived from the Cahokia site. The influence of Cahokia and other Middle Mississippian centers on local cultures can be seen throughout the entire Prairie Peninsula. Ramey Incised and locally-made Ramey vessels as well as other Mississippian vessel forms, iconography, marine shell ornaments, chunky stones and other items indicating Mississippian contact and influence are found at such sites as Aztalan and Fred Edwards in southern Wisconsin, at Trempealeau and Diamond Bluff in west central Wisconsin, terminal Woodland sites in northeast Iowa, the Mill Creek culture in northwest Iowa, the Cambria site in southwest Minnesota and as far west as the Plains Village cultures of the Missouri River in central South Dakota.

Because of Todd and Pat's finds, MVAC re-collected the heavy

equipment spoil piles at 47LC42 and additional Middle Mississippian pottery rims were found. These finds led to recent data recovery at three of the remaining features at 47LC42. The storage pits produced more locally made (grit tempered) and shell tempered Mississippian pottery in association with Angelo Punctated, the diagnostic pottery type of the terminal Late Woodland Lewis phase. The Lewis phase is confined to the northern portion of western Wisconsin's Driftless Area. Two of the rolled lip rims have curvilinear shoulder designs that suggest derivation from Ramey Incised. One of the Angelo Punctated rims has an angular shoulder, which is another Mississippian ceramic trait. The surface and excavated data provide compelling evidence for a Mississippian component in the Sand Lake Coulee District and point to Middle Mississippian interaction with another terminal Late Woodland group regionally of which archaeologists were unaware prior to these discoveries.

The importance of these recent finds by Pat and Todd indicate the Lewis phase is a Stirling Horizon manifestation (the time that Ramey pottery spread across the Prairie Peninsula between A.D. 1100- 1200) in the Red Wing locality that now includes the La Crosse vicinity. Pat and Todd have donated their pottery finds to MVAC to allow for a detailed study of the paste. Plans call for thin sectioning the large grit tempered rolled lip rim to obtain a detailed description of the paste composition.

# 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 WISH LIST

- ◆ Display case to house an exhibit in La Crosse's City Hall
- ◆ 35 mm SLR camera
- ◆ Digital Camera
- ◆ Resource boxes for public school use
- ◆ Video camera
- ◆ Power Point Projector
- ◆ Set of matching wooden chairs for conference tables
- ◆ "Digging and Discovery" classroom set w/teachers guide

### MVAC Membership On-line

You can now renew your MVAC membership over the web! Simply call up the website at [www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac) and click on "Getting Involved." The support page provides a link to the MVAC membership form, which you can submit over the web, and an invoice will be sent for the amount committed.



## MVAC MEMBERSHIP FORM

### Consider becoming 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.

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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 the web site

*[www.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://www.uwlax.edu/mvac)*

### **Hiking in Ireland**

Thursday, February 6, 2003  
7:30 p.m., Port O'Call  
UW-L Cartwright Center

### **Saving Wisconsin's Past for the Future**

Thursday, March 6, 2003  
7:30 p.m., Port O'Call  
UW-L Cartwright Center

### **Artifact Show**

Saturday, March 15, 2003  
10 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Valley View Mall, Onalaska

