



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

www.uwlax.edu/mvac

The electronic supplement of *Archaeology News* is published three times each year to inform MVAC members of new finds and upcoming events. 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

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2005 Field Schools at 47Lc333

Amy Aurit, UWL Archaeology Major and Connie Arzigian, Laboratory Director

Introduction

Work continued this past summer on the Swennes site (47Lc333) in Holmen, first opened in 1995, and excavated again in 2004 and 2005. The 2005 excavations expanded one area, opened up a new area at the site, and identified a number of pit features that date to the Oneota culture. The term Oneota is applied by archaeologists to the Native Americans who occupied this area from about 1300 to 1625 A.D. They were agriculturalists farming on the major river terraces; growing corn, beans, squash, tobacco, sunflowers; and hunting and gathering in the Mississippi river and the surrounding uplands.

MVAC has excavated at many of the summer village sites of the Oneota. From our preliminary analysis, it appears that the Holmen site might have been a campground for short-term activities such as gathering resources from the interior, and may have served as a winter base camp. We have found few of the fish bones and other summer resources that are so common at major summer villages. Instead, at 47LC333, we have deer bones, with deer being a typical fall to winter resource. Those fish bones that are present are of types that could have been taken during the spring spawning runs. Thus, this site gives us a chance to see a different aspect of the Oneota culture.

During the 2005 field season, a number of different kinds of features were identified, as well as the more typical storage pits reused as refuse pits. One small and shallow feature contained unfired clay similar to that used for making pots. A nearby feature contained fragments of heavily burned rock, along with what appears to be quantities of red ocher (Features 20 and 21 are discussed below). Several features had abundant ash and fire-cracked rock, supporting the suggestion that these might have been used as cooking features. Several of the features had a distinctive pattern to their deposition: there were quantities of artifacts representing refuse (lithics, potsherds, charcoal, etc) in the upper layers, then several levels of sterile soil, and finally more artifacts at the bottom of the features. Were these pits deliberately filled with sterile soil, or were they left open for a period and filled naturally from erosion and rain wash? This is one of the questions that we will be investigating as we continue our excavations in 2006.



Displaying a find at the Swennes site.

For artifacts, we recovered several bison scapula hoes, fragments of pottery, including fragments of both a miniport and larger cooking vessels, several end scrapers, triangular projectile points, an abrader, several cores, fragments of deer bone, some fish bone, and many flakes. Many of the artifacts were in the plow zone, suggesting that there may have been an extensive midden area or living surface that was churned up by plowing, leaving only the features intact below the plow zone. Analysis is continuing in the lab.

Following are discussions for each of the features excavated during 2005.

-continued on p.2

Feature 14

Feature excavation began in 2004, and was completed in 2005. This feature appears to have originally been excavated as a storage pit that was later used to get rid of garbage. These kinds of pits are common at this site.



The teachers in 2005 picked up where the Public Field School of 2004 left off, on level 4, 30-35cmbd (centimeters below datum), of the east half. Small shell-tempered pottery sherds and flakes were recovered from levels 4-6. In level 7, 45-50 cmbd, a fragment from a metate was exposed, then in Level 8 50-60 cmbd larger sherds of pottery and a piece of pottery with the handle and rim still intact appeared. The largest piece with the handle was taken out in level 9, 60-65 cmbd. When it was removed there were finger trails decorating the shoulder. The way the handle was attached to the rim told us that it was about 500 years old. Once the excavators hit sterile soil, around 75 cmbd, they noticed that a piece of FCR (fire cracked rock) was in the back wall and that the stain appeared to go into the wall as well. They excavated the stain back as far as it went and found that feature 14 was a bell-shaped pit.

Feature 16

This was a storage/garbage pit that lay immediately adjacent to Feature 14, first identified in 2004. It may have overlapped Feature 14 in the upper levels excavated in 2004. By 2005, it was clearly separate from Feature 14.

2005 excavations started with the second half of feature 16. Flakes, charcoal, and shell-tempered pottery sherds were found throughout the feature. A handle from a pottery vessel was found in level 4, 17-22 cmbd. Zone B started to appear in level 6, 27-32 cmbd. As zone B appeared, zone A disappeared. Zone B was lighter in color than zone A. There was an end scraper in level 8. The feature ended at 47 cmbd.



Features 18 and 19

In 2004, features 18 and 19 were excavated as one feature but when the first half was finished, it was clear that these were two features that were really close together and in areas

even touching. In 2005, the teachers finished excavating the south half of features 18 and 19 keeping the two features' artifacts and soil separate.

Some fragments of bone were found in feature 18 along with flakes and small pottery sherds. Only flakes were found in feature 19. Feature 19 bottomed out at 40 cmbd while feature 18 went as deep as 64 cmbd. It appears that feature 19 was originally excavated first; when feature 18 was opened for storage they reopened the pit that was feature 19. Both features are storage/garbage pits.

Feature 20

The first group of teachers found and excavated all of feature 20. The feature staining was a bright red color, and ended at between 25 and 35 cmbd. The red coloring from this feature was identified back in the archaeology lab as coming from deposits of unfired red clay, similar to the clay that was probably used in making pots at the site.

Feature 21

The first group of teachers found and excavated all of feature 21. Feature 21 was a small feature consisting of a red stain, similar in appearance to feature 20. Some FCR was found in the feature. The stain went down three levels to 17 cmbd in the south half. In the second half the stain was the darkest in level 1 and level 2. It was completely gone after level 5, 27 cmbd. The red coloring in this feature appears to derive from heavily burned iron-rich rock, or possibly ground hematite, giving the soil the appearance of red ocher staining. The red clumps themselves are grittier than the clay found in feature 20.

Feature 22

The first group of teachers found and excavated feature 22. Feature 22 had a dark stain in the middle, Zone A, and then a lighter stain surrounding it, zone B. Zone B was mostly sterile but taken down to see the changes in zone A. Flakes and shell-tempered pottery sherds were found throughout zone A in the feature. The stain disappeared at the base of level 3, 25cmbd. A pottery sherd was found outside of the feature, a rodent probably moved it from its original place. Flakes were found throughout zone A in the second half.



Feature 23

The first group of teachers found and excavated part of the first half of feature 23. Most of the artifacts were coming from zone A; zone B was the periphery of zone A. In level 5, they started to find pieces of pottery, with some sherds larger than others. The second group of teachers picked up in Level 6, 27-32 cmbd, that yielded decorated shell-tempered pottery sherds and a large piece of charcoal. Midway through level 7, two new zones were added but only lasted a little while. They continued to find artifacts throughout the feature. The Public Field School worked on the rest of the first half of feature 23. A pottery sherd from a miniature pot was found in level 8, 47-42 cmbd. The stain from zone A started to disappear in Level 11, 57-62 cmbd, but they continued to dig because of a rock in the corner. The rock turned into three rocks piled on top of each other. The last rock was found at Level 14, 82cmbd. After profiling, excavation began on the second half of the feature, the west half. In the first level they found an end scraper, pottery sherds, rim fragment, and flakes.

Feature 25

Unlike the other storage/garbage pit features, feature 25 is a hearth. The teachers found a lot of artifacts in the plow zone above the area that would become feature 25. They took the plow zone down and found a stain that consisted of three zones, A, B, and C, a central dark zone, and margins of lighter and more mottled soil. They only had enough time to work on level 1, 2.5-12 cmbd. Flakes were found in both zone A and zone B. Only FRC was found in zone C. The first thing that the public field school did was map the floor of level 1, then continue excavation.

Zones B and C disappeared in level 4, 25-30 cmbd, and then only zone A was excavated, the central darker zone. Fire cracked rocks appeared in levels 4 and 5, they were in a circular shape around zone A's stain. More fire cracked rocks were found in level 6, now in a smaller circle inside the large FCR circle, defining a new zone, zone D. Before the feature was abandoned for the year, they probed through zone D. The probe showed that there is a stain for an additional 40cm.

Feature 28

Teachers found and started excavating feature 28, the west half. The old unit from 1995 was found just to the south of feature 28's stain. When that was found they continued digging only the feature stain. Levels 1 and 2 had two zones. Zone B was very small and disappeared in level 2. Flakes and small shell-tempered sherds were found throughout the feature.

The public field school took over in level 3, 14-19 cmbd. Flakes, charcoal, and pottery sherds were found throughout the feature. A large piece of charcoal was taken from level 7,

34-39 cmbd. Levels 8 and 9 did not yield many artifacts, so they started to dig 10cm levels. Levels 11 and 12 were packed with artifacts; bone fragments, charcoal, flakes, and pottery sherds. The stain was getting significantly smaller at the base of level 12, 74 cm. That is where the feature was left, there is probably only a level or two left in the west half. The final dimensions are not yet known.



Feature 29

Feature 29 is a small but very rich feature found and excavated by the public field school. In the plow zone above the feature the only point of the year was found. There are two zones for feature 29, zone A that is packed with artifacts, and zone B which surrounds zone A. The feature was left at the base of level 3, 15 cmbd, and already deer bones, a bison scapula, flakes, and large shell-tempered sherds had been removed. Zone A is shrinking but zone B is growing. Feature 29 looks to be a promising feature for the future.



The **2006 Public Field Experience** will again be held at the Swennes site. This opportunity is open to high school students through adults. Supervised dorm facilities are available for high school students at an additional cost. Plan now to attend this summer!

Three Day Experience

Dates: Monday - Wednesday, July 17 - 19, 2006

Five Day Experience

Dates: Monday - Friday, July 17 - 21, 2006

For more information, contact Jean Dowiasch at 608-785-8454. To register, contact UWL Continuing Education & Extension at 608-785-6508.

Archaeology Day at Silver Mound

Over 300 visitors attended Archaeology Day at Silver Mound, held at the Hixton-Alma Center KOA on October 1, 2005. Thanks to KOA owners Jim and Donna Rankin and their crew, the grounds were beautifully set up to accommodate those interested in Silver Mound's history. Tours of Silver Mound, one of Wisconsin's oldest and largest archaeological sites, were well-attended as visitors hiked up to the Dwyer and Geske Rockshelters, and viewed both the prehistoric and European mine sites.

The Wisconsin Dells Singers, led by Elliott Funmaker, provided traditional song, dance and music demonstrations. Artifact displays were provided by Betty Steele, Keith Scaerce, Hoyt Strandberg, and Gene Hynek. Demonstrations throughout the day included arrow-making by Loren Cade, drilling by LeVern DeVries, flintknapping by Bob Keipers, and atlatl throwing by John Pellowski. Traditional basketry and beadwork were demonstrated by Delores Decorah and Velma Lewis. Traditional food was provided by Paul and Suzette Arentz.



The Wisconsin Dells Singers showcased dancing, singing and drumming for the crowd.



A number of tireless volunteers were on-hand to help out with the crowd at the campgrounds. A special thanks to those who took the time to join MVAC staff in making the day run smoothly.



Playing the Native American game of Chunkey.

- Alma Center First Responders
- Hixton First Responders
- Paul & Suzette Arentz
- Lucy Davidson
- LeVern DeVries
- Phil Palzkill
- Gene Hynek
- Chuckie Kohanek
- Jean Levissee
- Velma Lewis
- UW-L Archaeology Club
- Loren Cade
- Dorothy Decorah
- Scott Doblar
- John Pellowski
- Bob Keiper
- Keith Scaerce
- Betty Steele
- Hoyt Strandberg

Sponsors of Archaeology Day at Silver Mound include:

- Cain Orchard
- Hixton-Alma Center KOA
- Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center
- UW-La Crosse Foundation
- UW System Institute on Race & Ethnicity
- Wisconsin Archeological Society



Upcoming Events

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

Archaeology and Land Snails: A sluggish odyssey to understanding the environment of ancient Native Americans

Thursday, February 23, 2006

7 p.m.

Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

-Land snails are very sensitive to their environment, both temperature and moisture, and can therefore be used as indicators of specific climatic conditions. **Dr. James L. Theler**, UW-La Crosse Sociology/Archaeology Department, will discuss his work with modern snails from a series of transects across the United States. Theler's work has provided detailed environmental information that can be compared to archaeological assemblages, reconstructing ancient environments extending back many thousands of years.

Artifact Show

Saturday, March 11, 2006

10 a.m. - 5 p.m.

-Join MVAC staff and local collectors at Valley View Mall to see artifacts representing the area's long history. View artifacts from the 2005 field season and many personal collections. Bring in your own artifacts for identification. Call Jean at 608-785-8454 if you would like to display your artifacts.

Pyramids, Temples, Tombs and Traffic: Touring Egypt

Tuesday, April 11, 2006

7 p.m.

Port O'Call, Cartwright Center, UW-La Crosse

-Spring break 2005 found MVAC staffers **Dr. Connie Arzigian**, **Vicki Twinde-Javner**, and Bill Gresens of the UW-La Crosse Grants Office in Egypt, exploring great archaeological sites in Cairo, the Giza Plateau, Thebes/Luxor, and the Valley of the Kings, interspersed with felucca rides at sunset down the Nile. Join Connie and Vicki for a fully illustrated talk about these sites, as well as the joys of alabaster factories, camel rides around the pyramids, and truly crazy Cairo traffic.

Field Survey Opportunity

Saturday and/or Sunday, May 6-7, 2006

8:30 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Archaeology Center and Laboratories, UW-La Crosse

-MVAC will celebrate Wisconsin Archaeology Month by involving volunteers in the survey of local fields to find unreported archaeological sites. Each day will begin with an introduction at the archaeology lab, followed by helping with an actual field survey. Finally, participants will end each day back at the lab to wash the artifacts recovered and learn more about their history. Children may participate if accompanied by an adult. **Advanced registration required!** Call MVAC at 608-785-8454 to register.