



## **Exploring the Past: Archaeology in the Upper Mississippi River Valley**

NEH Summer Institute July 14–August 1, 2014

University of Wisconsin–La Crosse

Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center

### **Field Trips and Field Activities**

*updated: March 27, 2014*

#### **Field Trip (Wednesday, July 16)**

- **The Driftless Area and the Upper Mississippi Valley**

Untouched by glaciation, the “Driftless Area” is known for its rugged ridge-and-valley topography, divided by the broad valley of the Mississippi. Scenic stops overlooking the Mississippi and at interior valleys and ridge tops will introduce you to the region’s landscape and environment, past and present.

- **The Dynamic Environment of a Driftless Area Valley**

Next you’ll explore the region’s secluded interior valleys that will serve as a study area for the Institute. You’ll find out how archaeologists learn about past environments, and how this particular landscape and environment has changed since humans first arrived some 13,500 years ago.

- **Adaptive Strategies in the Driftless Area: Amish Case Study**

The Driftless Area is home to a growing population of Amish peoples who live at the interface between traditional and modern ways of life. As a follow-up to a classroom case study, we’ll visit an Amish community near Cashton, Wisconsin. You’ll see first-hand how the region’s Amish peoples have adapted to life in the Driftless Area, seeking to preserve traditional practices and beliefs while surrounded by and interacting with modern American culture.

#### **Excavation Experience (Friday, July 18)**

- **Introduction to the Cade Archaeological District**

This scenic portion of the Bad Axe Valley is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and contains a number of important Archaic and Woodland archaeological sites, including burial mounds, a rockshelter, and open-air campsites. Landowner and avocational archaeologist Loren Cade will join the Institute staff in introducing you to this fascinating archaeological area.

- **Excavation Instruction and Experience**

Through hands-on experience, you'll learn the basics of archaeological excavation, including setting up excavation units, proper use of equipment, and how archaeologists excavate sites and record information. You'll also learn about the serious responsibilities inherent to field archaeology, from deciding when and where to dig to using appropriate methods for collecting artifacts and recording information. **(Note: This experience involves some moderately vigorous outdoor activity, potentially in hot weather.)**

### **Technology Field Day (Friday, July 25)**

- **Demonstrations and Experimental Activities at the Cade Farm**

The field day will feature a variety of demonstrations and hands-on activities. You'll try using an atlatl (spear-thrower) as well as pump and hand drills for grinding and fire-starting. Host Loren Cade will discuss bow-and-arrow technology and demonstrate a traditional bow and arrow. Then you'll experiment with making an arrow using traditional materials and techniques. Robert Keiper will provide hands-on instruction in flintknapping – the process of making stone tools such as arrowheads and spear points. Institute staff will lead discussions on the scientific basis and innovative nature of ancient technology (e.g., the physics of atlatls, the transition from spear to bow-and-arrow, and the principles behind detachable points).

- **Artifact Collecting: How Avocational and Professional Archaeologists Work Together**

Host Loren Cade will display his collection of artifacts and join Institute staff in leading discussions on the ethics of artifact collecting and how hobbyists can contribute to archaeological research.

### **Field Trip (Tuesday, July 29)**

- **Effigy Mounds National Monument in Marquette, Iowa**

Effigy Mounds National Monument encompasses one of the largest and best-preserved Native American mound complexes in the Upper Midwest. Located in a spectacular bluff-top setting overlooking the Mississippi River, these well-preserved earthworks include Hopewell burial mounds and Late Woodland effigy mounds formed in the shape of animals. Led by Institute staff, you'll hike up the bluff to view the mounds and consider their roles as burial places and symbols of group unity. The park's interpretive center features a brief film and displays materials associated with the occupation of the area, and the gift shop offers a good selection of books and other resource materials. For more information, visit the Effigy Mounds Web site: <http://www.nps.gov/efmo/index.htm>. **(Note: This stop includes a steep, vigorous hike up well-maintained trails.)**

- **Pikes Peak State Park near McGregor, Iowa**

Lunch at Pikes Peak State Park features a panoramic view of the confluence of the Wisconsin and Mississippi Rivers, a key location throughout prehistory and during

Euro-American exploration and settlement of the Upper Mississippi Valley. Effigy mound at Pikes Peak State Park are readily accessible for any participants unable to complete the strenuous hike at Effigy Mounds National Monument.

- **Battle of the Bad Axe, near Victory, Wisconsin**

At this location along the Mississippi River, Sauk and Fox men, women, and children were massacred by U.S. Army regulars and militia during a pivotal episode of the Black Hawk War of 1832. Institute staff will summarize what occurred and lead a discussion of cultural misunderstandings and conflicts related to Euro-American settlement and competition over resources and land.

- **Native American Mounds at Genoa, Wisconsin**

In this small town along the Mississippi River, Native American burial mounds have been preserved within a Euro-American cemetery. Institute staff will lead a discussion on site-preservation and burials-related issues: Are mounds and burials protected? Who “owns” ancient human remains? What happens to human remains today?

### **Field Trip (Thursday, July 31)**

- **New Adaptive Strategies in the Driftless Area**

As the culmination of our case studies, we’ll explore how our modern economy and evolving lifestyles have led to new adaptations for the region’s residents. We’ll look at how the traditional family farm is faring in today’s economy, and how alternative adaptations such as niche-market organic farming have developed.

- **Archaeological Consequences of Modern Land Uses**

Finally, you’ll see how changing land uses have affected the region’s archaeological sites. We’ll discuss the complex problem of managing archaeological resources in the face of current farming methods and encroaching development.

**Please note:** If you have any questions or concerns regarding the physical activities involved in these field trips, please feel free to contact Bonnie Jancik at (608) 785-6473 or [bjancik@uwlax.edu](mailto:bjancik@uwlax.edu).