



*MVAC at the University
of Wisconsin-La Crosse*

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

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Archaeology News

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Investigations continue at Goose Island

Constance Arzigian, MVAC Research Associate

MVAC returned to Goose Island for a second year of excavations at the Turtle Hill site this past July. Eighteen high school students and adults participated along with 14 middle schoolers and 7 UWL student volunteers. The beautiful high knoll next to the Mississippi River seemed like the perfect location for a site, but had never been tested before the 2018 field school. Last year, an Early Woodland component dating from around 500 BC to about 100 AD, and several later Middle Woodland and early Late Woodland components were found.

In 2019 we opened nine additional 2x2 meter units, including several units near where we found a biface during shovel testing in 2018. We excavated down to about 70 cm below the ground surface, but the majority of the materials came from the upper 50 cm.

We found two small concentrations of burned and fire-cracked rocks that appeared to represent hearths. We took all the soil from around these rocks, and will process it in the lab using flotation so that hopefully we can recover some seeds or wood from the campfire. We can date these features from the abundance of small pottery sherds that were recovered nearby. Most of the sherds have a cord-roughened surface, with dentate stamped impressions as decoration, marking this as a Middle Woodland occupation, around AD 200-400 AD.



We also found a number of bifaces and lots of flakes of a wide range of raw materials. They included mostly the local Prairie du Chien chert, but there were also flakes of Grand Meadow chert from southern Minnesota, and silicified sandstone likely from Jackson County. Last year we also found a few flakes of Knife River flint from North Dakota, confirming the essential role of trade and travel along the Mississippi.

We would like to thank the La Crosse County Facilities Department, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-St. Paul District, our many volunteers, those who provided funds for student scholarships, and all our visitors.
-see Goose Island, p.2



Goose Island Shelter 2 and Shelter 3

In the fall of 2018, MVAC conducted investigations for improvements at Shelters 2 and 3 on the island's north side. Areas set aside for horseshoe pits at each shelter, and a volleyball court at Shelter 2, were tested prior to installation. Permission to involve students from nearby Southern Bluffs Elementary School was granted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE) and the La Crosse County Facilities Department.

Shelter 2 lies on a natural knoll on the east side of CTH GI, with Shelter 3 further north, on a knoll west of CTH GI. In 2016, archaeologists from the COE shovel tested both knolls, with artifacts from the Woodland tradition recovered from both locations.

MVAC staff and students from Ms. Meyer and Ms. Gardner's 4th grade classes excavated three 2x2 meter units at Shelter 2 and two 2x2 meter units at Shelter 3. Grit-tempered pottery was recovered from both Shelter areas, including five decorated rim sherds from Shelter 3. The largest rim sherds were coarse grit-tempered with thick walls, fingernail impressions, and a flat lip form. Based on the thickness of the rim and several other sherds, the ceramics appear to be an indeterminate Early Woodland variety dating to approximately 600 to 100 B.C. Five shell-tempered sherds were also recovered from the investigations at Shelter 3, adding an Oneota component to the site. Working with students from the local elementary school not only introduced them to the process of archaeology, but also gave them first-hand experience in uncovering the area's history.



Southern Bluffs Elementary School students shovel testing at Goose Island.

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Betty Steele Receives Award

MVAC is pleased to share the news that long-time MVAC supporter, Betty Steele, was recently recognized for her contributions to the history of Jackson County by the Jackson County Sheriff's Office in honor of National Woman's History Month. The award was presented this past spring by Jackson County Sheriff's Officer Mark Moen and Jackson County Board member Ray Ransom.

Betty developed an interest in archaeology to support her husband's amateur archaeology hobby, and they both became involved with MVAC. She learned how to create resin replicas of artifacts, and became very adept at mixing the colors to match the original artifact. Her replicas are used in museum displays and hands-on activities including classroom presentations. Betty traveled around Jackson County documenting private collections and doing public presentations. She especially enjoyed sharing her knowledge of archaeology in local third-grade classrooms. She still shares the Gary Steele Collection annually at MVAC's Artifact Show in La Crosse, WI, and at the Black River Falls Public Library during Archaeology Month every May.

Betty Steele is the recipient of MVAC's Regional Archaeology Award in 1993 and the Archaeology Education Award in 1997. Congratulations, Betty!

2020 Events

Artifact Show

Date: Saturday, March 7, 2020

Lecture: The UW MIA Recovery and Identification

Project: Bringing Missing Service Members Home

Date: Thursday, March 26, 2020

Wisconsin Archaeology Month

Dates: May 2020

Member Field Survey

Date: Saturday, May 2, 2020 (May 9 rain date)

Public Field School

Date: July 13-17, 2020

Public Field School – Open House

Date: July 16, 2020

Youth Classes

Date: July 13-16, 2020

Marcee Peplinski Retires



Marcee Peplinski has retired after 21 years as MVAC's Business Manager/Development Director. We wish her all the best, and know she will fully enjoy her retirement!

MVAC Educational Programs are supported by

The United Fund for the Arts and Humanities

The National Endowment for the Humanities

Education News

Matching Funds Grant:

MVAC's Matching Funds Program may have some limited funding available to assist teachers interested in using MVAC's Archaeology Education Program resources in their classroom. For more information, contact Jean Dowiasch at (608) 785-8454 or jdowiasch@uwlax.edu.

La Crosse School District:

Funds are available from the La Crosse School District for their elementary and middle school teachers to use MVAC presentations and resources in their classrooms. Thanks to the La Crosse School District for providing funds for this program.

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.

Yes! I want to support the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center Programs!

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Upcoming Events

Contact MVAC at (608) 785-8454 for more information or visit our web site: mvac.uwlax.edu

Silver Mound - WAS Fall Assembly - Open to Public

The Wisconsin Archeological Society's (WAS) Fall Field Assembly, co-sponsored by MVAC, will be held at Silver Mound, one of the oldest and most important archaeological sites in the Midwest. "Hixton Silicified Sandstone," the stone found at Silver Mound, was used by Native Peoples for nearly 12,000 years. Activities/displays include: flintknapping artifact identification, atlatl throwing, Native American games, and local artifact collections. Guided tours of prehistoric rock shelters, rock art locations, and quarry pits. Bring a lunch and water.

Date: Saturday, October 19, 2019

Time: 10 AM–4 PM

Location: Hixton-Alma Center KOA,
N9657 STH 95, Alma Center

\$5 admission fee for non-members of WAS

Fall 2019 Lecture and Annual Awards

Prehistoric Archaeology at 120 Feet: Investigating 9,000 Year Old Hunting Sites Beneath the Great Lakes

At the end of the last Ice Age, the newly formed Great Lakes oscillated between levels that were much higher and much lower than today. During the low-water stage, a feature known as the Alpena-Amberley Ridge divided the Lake Huron basin and provided a continuous corridor between southern Ontario and northern Lower Michigan. This talk will describe recent research focused on discovering and investigating hunting sites and other cultural features from this era that are preserved beneath modern Lake Huron. These finds provide important new insights into the lives of early Great Lakes hunters, and one that could only be recovered underwater.

John O'Shea is the Curator of Great Lakes Archaeology at the University of Michigan Museum of Anthropology, and the Emerson F. Greenman Collegiate Professor of Archaeology in the university's Department of Anthropology.

Date: Thursday, November 7, 2019

Time: Social 6:30 pm, Awards 7 pm,

Lecture 7:30 pm

Location: UWL Student Union, room 3310

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