

ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS

CONNECTING THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

2022 - IT'S MVAC'S 40TH ANNIVERSARY!

It's hard to believe that four decades have passed since Jim Gallagher turned his vision for community-oriented archaeology into reality. Many things have changed over the past 40 years, but two things have not: MVAC's dedication to its mission, and the public support that is key to MVAC's success. Over the next year we'll be sharing memories from MVAC's first 40 years and inviting you to do the same. We hope you'll join us in celebrating our four decades and moving into our fifth!

If you have a fond memory or image that you would like to share, please send them to: mvac@uwlax.edu.



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

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MVAC COVID-19 UPDATE

- MVAC is usually open during regular business hours, but if you would like to visit, we recommend calling or e-mailing in advance to make sure someone will be available.
- In accordance with current UWL policy, MVAC staff are wearing face coverings, and visitors are required to do the same.
- MVAC's 2022 in-person events are still on hold as we monitor the situation. Watch our **e-News**, **website**, and **Facebook** page for updates!

Feel free to email us at mvac@uwlax.edu, or leave a voicemail at 608.785.8463. In the meantime, stay safe, and stay healthy!

UPCOMING EVENT

Historic Indian Agency House Excavations

Join MVAC's Connie Arzigian and other professional archaeologists as the HIAH continues to search for the 1830s blacksmith shop. Participants can sign up to dig for 1 hour or all day. Pre-registration is recommended through the Historic Indian Agency House **website**.

August 6-7, 2022 & August 13-14, 2022

10 AM-4 PM

Historic Indian Agency House
1490 Agency House Road
Portage, WI 53901



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Copper sheet (approx.. 8" long, 5" wide) recovered from the HIAH. Anyone with more information on the object, please contact Connie at carzigian@uwlax.edu.



HIAH 2021 excavations at the Historic Indian Agency House.

HISTORIC INDIAN AGENCY HOUSE, 2021 EXCAVATIONS

CONSTANCE ARZIGIAN, MVAC Research Associate

Work with the Historic Indian Agency House (HIAH), Portage, Columbia County, Wisconsin over two weekends in July 2021, has uncovered new information about the site and raises new questions and lines of future research. The HIAH was built in 1832 to serve Indian Agent John Kinzie. The 1829 Treaty with the Ho-Chunk that transferred the lead mining region to the United States had also called for construction of a blacksmith shop and smithy. The Agency house was built in 1832, but agency structures predating the home included the blacksmith's shop, the blacksmith's house, and a small barracks. While the Agency House is now an historic museum, the location of the earlier structures is unknown, as are the details of their construction and the work taking place there for the Ho-Chunk, and potentially for the white settlers and soldiers from nearby Fort Winnebago.

Old drawings and maps and a narrative by Juliet Kinzie (1968) have suggested where the buildings might have been situated, but the drawings are not to scale and are difficult to match to the modern landscape. The area around the Agency House had been cultivated for many years, so surface indications are gone. Remote sensing by Dan Joyce (retired curator for the Kenosha Public Museums) identified some possible locations of interest, but no clear structures. Limited field investigations in 2020 and 2021 were designed to test the different possibilities and see if evidence could be found of the blacksmith operations.

The 2021 excavations involved over 210 volunteers from the public, working in one-hour shifts, supervised by archaeologists Connie Arzigian, Dan Joyce, and John Wackman, and volunteers from UWL, with the whole program organized by HIAH Curator Adam Novey. On Saturday July 17, Wisconsin Archeological Society members joined the excavations during the day, with a dinner social for the Society that evening. Folks of all ages joined us to help with the excavations. Demonstrations of blacksmithing helped everyone to understand both what was involved in the process and the kinds of debris (slag, etc.) that could be expected.

Work in 2020 found artifacts from later uses of the property, but nothing we could tie to blacksmithing. Following up on a remote sensing indicator in 2021, we tested five areas. In one, we came down upon a large area of heavily burned, reddened, and compacted sand associated with many flecks of white mortar or plaster. That isn't right for a forge area, which would not have a fire on the ground, but would be quite appropriate for one of the large clay fireplaces known to have existed at the blacksmith's house. None of the buildings would have had stone foundations, so the walls will be hard to detect. But we may find indications from the distribution of the plaster and nails. We hope to test this idea further in 2022 with expanded excavations.

We found a range of artifacts from the first half of the 19th century, including bricks, white clay pipe stems and bowls, and cut nails, as well as more recent nails, glass, and ceramics reflecting the lengthy occupation of the property. We also have some artifacts chipped from stone, including a complete stone drill that reflects the long period of Native use of the area, although we cannot tell when this particular tool was made. One item of particular interest is a sheet of copper with some sort of attachments on one side and the inscription "Ladies Aux. F. D. Assn" on the bottom, with some fragments of burned wood and other unidentified material adhering, along with modern roots.

The ongoing analysis of these excavations holds the promise of new answers to important questions about the past at the Historic Indian Agency House. We look forward to continuing the work in 2022. Check MVAC's Events page for further information.

Learn more about the HIAH archaeology project at www.agencyhouse.org/archaeology.

Photo/Information Credits:

HIAH 2021 excavations at the Historic Indian Agency House, Dan Joyce artifact information and photos.

Reference:

Kinzie, Juliette. (1960) Wau-Ban. The National Society of Colonial Dames of America in the State of Wisconsin. [www.agencyhouse.org/wau-bun]

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Cindy Kocik



Erik Anderson



Lindsay Lentz

FORMER STUDENTS ENHANCE, BROADEN MVAC RESOURCES

For the past four years, three graduates of UWL's Archaeology and Anthropology program have returned to UWL and greatly contributed to MVAC's research and public education programs. While attending UWL, all three worked for MVAC as field technicians before heading off to graduate school. They are now back in La Crosse as staff members, putting their expertise to use and expanding MVAC's capabilities.

Originally from Naperville, IL, Erik Anderson graduated from UWL in 2014 with a bachelor's degree in Archaeology and a minor in Anthropology. He received a Master of Science in Bioarchaeological and Forensic Anthropology from University College London in London, UK. Research interests and special skills include Oneota archaeology, skeletal analysis, and a working knowledge of GIS.

Cindy Kocik graduated from UWL in 2012 with a bachelor's degree in Archaeological Studies and minors in Anthropology and German. She received a Master of Arts in Archaeology from Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Research interests and special skills include dendrochronology, historical archaeology, Midwestern archaeology, and cultural resources management. Cindy is originally from Hudson, Wisconsin.

Originally from South Milwaukee, Lindsay Lentz graduated from UWL in 2006 with a bachelor's degree in Archaeology and a minor in Anthropology. She received her Master of Arts in Biological Anthropology from the University of Oklahoma in Norman, OK. Research interests include skeletal analysis, paleopathology, zooarchaeology, cultural resource management, and prehistoric and historic archaeology.

Special skills include processing modern animal specimens for osteological comparative collections and study skins, and photographing and drawing artifacts.

How did your undergraduate work at UWL/ MVAC influence the degree you pursued?

Erik Anderson: I enjoyed many of my undergraduate archaeology courses, especially field school, and the CRM work I did at MVAC. I wanted to get a master's degree so that I could work in archaeology.

Cindy Kocik: Taking the UWL field school, volunteering at MVAC, and working at MVAC under archaeology professionals before graduate school helped me to connect what I learned in archaeology courses with doing actual archaeological work. I was interested in historical archaeology, especially after taking a course in it at UWL, and developed a background in cultural resource management (CRM) and Midwestern Native American archaeology at MVAC.

Lindsay Lentz: I was interested in faunal and human osteological analysis and for my undergraduate thesis project I was fortunate to work with Jim Theler. He taught me faunal analysis for my thesis project and human skeletal analysis from the human osteology class I took with him. While working at MVAC I was able to continue these areas of work. I found them rewarding and decided to pursue a degree.

QUOTES

Lindsay: I always like the excitement of not knowing if you will find anything and then finding a projectile point, bison scapula hoe, large portion of a prehistoric pottery vessel, colorfully decorated historic ceramics, or interestingly shaped glass bottles.

Cindy: It has been great to return to La Crosse and work with many of the same staff members from my previous post at MVAC. I have learned much more about CRM and the process of undertaking different types of projects.

Erik: One of my favorite projects was in South La Crosse in 2016, since it was a long summer of Phase III excavations at a time where quite a few people I knew from undergrad were working here (MVAC), and there were some very interesting features and artifacts recovered from the site.

Check out future issues of MVAC's **e-News** for more information on the specialties Erik, Cindy, and Lindsay bring to MVAC from their graduate school, field and lab work prior to returning to MVAC.



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SUPPORTING MVAC

If you haven't already, please consider renewing your support for MVAC's ongoing mission of discovery, research, education, and preservation. If you would prefer, you can make your donation with our **secure online donation** option through the UWL Foundation. Your support is greatly appreciated!

MVAC EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS ARE SUPPORTED BY:

- The United Fund for the Arts and Humanities
- The National Endowment for the Humanities