

# ARCHAEOLOGY EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Mississippi  
Valley  
Archaeology  
Center

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*Future issues  
will focus on  
commercial,  
residential,  
and agricultural  
structures.*

The Archaeology Education Program Newsletter is undergoing some changes. It will now be included in *Archaeology News* and the format has been adapted slightly so that information will be usable not only by teachers but also by informal educators. It is our hope that these changes will make it easier for members and educators to share the information with young people.

This year's Archaeology Education Program Newsletter's theme will be Architectural History. The first issue provides an introduction while future issues will look at commercial, residential and agricultural structures. Each issue will provide content information from MVAC's Architectural Historian, Barbara Kooiman, as well as an activity, glossary, and resource information.

## Architectural History

### Introduction

**Architectural History** is the study of architectural types, styles, building materials and engineering techniques used to construct them. **Architectural historians** often have training in history, architecture and art history. They research and record the history of buildings by looking at the background of the community or vicinity where the buildings are located, documenting the appearance of the buildings, defining the buildings' location on maps, and conducting detailed research on its history.

### Identification

Before historic research can be done on a particular building, it must first be identified as historic. The **National Register of Historic Places** considers a building which is at least fifty years old and looks much like it did when it was first built, with few, if any, alterations, to be historic. Historic buildings are identified through an architectural/historic survey.

### Background Research

Prior to surveying buildings, the architectural historian will go to the local library and local historical society or **archives** to conduct research about the history of the community in general. They look for information about when the community was first settled, by what **ethnic groups**, with what **transportation systems**, what kinds of businesses they had, and evaluate how all these factors influenced its history.

### Survey

Next, the architectural historian drives or walks around the community, with a map, camera, and information forms, and record details about individual buildings in the community. They look at building materials, **styles of buildings**, relationships of buildings to one another, and surrounding features such as streets, sidewalks, trees and parks. They photograph each building and plot it on the map.

### Evaluation

Once the information is gathered, the architectural historian decides which buildings represent the historic aspects of the community best, and may recommend them for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

NOTE: Phrases in bold are more thoroughly explained in the Glossary.

## Do Your Own Historic Archaeology Survey

*The surveyor can go to the survey site with a survey form (such as the one printed here), a camera, and a map of the area, and document the basic information needed to understand the historic environment.*

*Choose a building near your school or home, and using this form, record as much information as you can about the building.*

When looking at each of the individual buildings, think about the larger area as well. Are there other buildings nearby that are a similar style? Do the buildings all seem to be made of the same material, or of different materials? Have most of the buildings maintained their historic appearance, or have many of them been altered over the years? By considering these questions, you will begin to get an impression of the era when the neighborhood was built, materials that were available at the time, styles that were popular during that period, and the relative economic prosperity of the community.

Name of County/State:	*Record No.:	Location/Address of Building:
Name of City/Village/Civil Township:	Current Name of Building:	Building Materials (Walls, trim, foundation, roof)
*Map Code Number:	*Current Function of Building:	Number of Stories on Building:
*Photo Code Number:	Historic Name of Building:	Roof Shape of Building:
Survey Date:	*Historic Function:	*Style or Form of Building:
Surveyor Name:	Construction Date of Building:	*Type of property:

\* each field with an asterisk (\*) is more thoroughly explained in the Glossary.

# Glossary

**Architectural History:** The study of historic architectural styles and forms.

**Architectural Historian:** A person who is trained in history, architecture, and/or art history, and understands architectural methods and styles throughout history.

**Archives:** A repository of historic records and information. The kinds of records which may be in archives include county and local history books, historic photographs, journals, letters, and maps.

**Ethnic groups:** People who make up a group from a certain country or culture, and often share a common language. Ethnic groups such as Germans and Norwegians immigrated heavily to the La Crosse area in the nineteenth century.

**Function:** The designation given to a building indicating how it was used. For example, a house's function was residential. A bank had a commercial function.

**Map Code Number:** On the survey form, the map code number is the unique number given to the property by the state, and keyed to the map, connecting it to the information on the survey form.

**National Register of Historic Places:** This program maintains records of all the national historic sites in the country.

**Photo Code Number:** On the survey form, the photo code number is the unique number or numbers given to the photos by the state that represent a particular building. Usually, a roll of film is given a particular number (i.e.: Roll #1), then use the frame numbers on the negatives to indicate which photos belong to which property (i.e. Frame Numbers 2 -5 of Roll #1 represent Property #1).

**Record Number:** On the survey form, a record number is the unique number assigned to each building or property, and often is the same as the map code number.

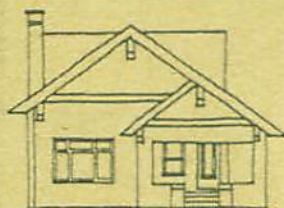
**Styles of Buildings:** Style is a distinctive quality, form or type of something. In architecture, this refers to the different forms that buildings take, often popular within a certain period of time. The Queen Anne style was popular in the 1880s, whereas the Bungalow style was popular in the 1920s.

**Survey:** An inventory of historic properties, most often buildings, which are recorded during the same period, and often evaluated or analyzed at the same time.

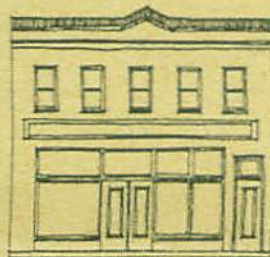
**Transportation Systems:** Modes and systems of transportation which connected one location to another, such as the railroad, state or federal highways, or riverways which linked from one to another.

**Type of Property:** The general category of a property, such as building, structure, site, district or object. Properties then have sub-types. Building types could include houses, schools, apartment buildings, commercial buildings, or city halls.

## Building Types



Residential:  
Detached House



Commercial:  
Store



Industrial:  
Mill



Public:  
School

# Architectural History Resources

*These book reviews, websites, and historic places in Wisconsin can be used to supplement historic architecture lessons. Let us know if you have found any great resources we can share with our readers.*

## Books Reviews

**Title:** A Visual Dictionary of Architecture  
**Author:** Francis D.K. Ching  
**Publisher:** New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1994  
**Age Range:** 12 - adult  
A great overall book for architectural definitions.

**Title:** Start Exploring Architecture  
**Author:** Peter Dobrin  
**Publisher:** Philadelphia: Running Press Publisher, 1993  
**Age Range:** 5-12

This is a fun book in coloring book format, educating the student on various architectural styles and types.

**Title:** Wisconsin's Built Environment: Teacher's Guide and Student Materials  
**Author:** State Historical Society of Wisconsin and Office of School Services  
**Publisher:** Madison: SHSW, 1999  
**Age Range:** teachers

Prepared for Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial, this teachers guide contains photos and student materials, giving teachers a number of architectural history lesson plans.

## Web Sites

**National Trust for Historic Preservation** <http://www.nthp.org>

This site gives the background of our nation's historic preservation organization, with information about their activities, their sites, and their mission.

**National Register of Historic Places** <http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr>

This program is operated through the Department of the Interior, National Park Service, and is the record of all national historic sites in the country. This site includes a way to search for National Register listed historic sites by state & county.

**State Historical Society of Wisconsin Historic Sites** <http://www.shsw.wisc.edu/sites>

The State Historical Society of Wisconsin operates 9 historic sites around the state, including a rural circa 1900 Main Street (Stonefield Village), a historic circus (Circus World Museum), nineteenth century lead miner's house (Pendarvis House) and a collection of ethnic and rural architecture from various parts of the state (Old World Wisconsin). This site tells about each of these sites.

## Places to Visit

**La Crosse County Swarthout Museum**, in the La Crosse Public Library, La Crosse  
The museum has a variety of interpretive exhibits, which change from time to time, specific to La Crosse area history.

**Area Research Center (ARC)**, in Murphy Library, UW - La Crosse, La Crosse  
The ARC hold a large collection of historic publications, photographs and maps; tax record books; and documents which are useful in researching local history in western Wisconsin.