



*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

Volume 33 Number 1

February 2016

## Archaeological Conservancy Preserves Additional 40 Acres of Silver Mound in 2015

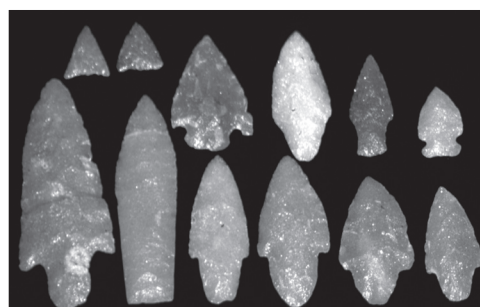
In March of 2015, the Archaeological Conservancy announced its acquisition of an additional 40 acres of the Silver Mound archaeological site and National Historic Landmark. This acquisition brings the total acreage of the Silver Mound Archaeological Preserve to 184 acres. The 40-acre parcel includes both the Dwyer Rockshelter and a Late Paleoindian lithic workshop.

The Silver Mound Archaeological District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1975. In 2006, it was designated a National Historic Landmark.

### Silicified Sandstone

While its name implies that it is a burial mound that contains precious metal, Silver Mound is neither. The mound is actually a large sandstone hill that contains layers of cemented silica, forming very hard, brittle rock. This rock, referred to as "Hixton silicified sandstone," "Hixton orthoquartzite," or "sugar quartz," was a unique material used by Native Americans to flintknape stone tools.

The rare cementing process that created the layers of bonded silica distinguish this rock from other sandstone, as it is harder than flint. This stronger material holds sharp edges longer when used for tools such as knives and hide scrapers, requiring less resharpening. Spear tips made from Hixton orthoquartzite have been found as far away as Mammoth Cave in Kentucky.



*Projectile points from the Archaic, Woodland, and Oneota cultures.*

### Archaeological Investigations

The first professional archaeologist to examine Silver Mound was Will C. McKern of the Milwaukee Public Museum in 1928. Charles E. Brown of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin created the first detailed records of parts of the mound in 1932 and 1933.

In 1973, the combined UW-Milwaukee and UW-Waukesha field school spent two weeks excavating a trench in the Dwyer Rockshelter and conducting surface collections in plowed fields around the base of the mound. The 1974, 1976 UW-Oshkosh field schools investigated portions of the Cody site, a workshop locality; and conducted additional work at the Dwyer Rockshelter.

MVAC conducted extensive investigations at Silver Mound in 1989, 1992, and 1993. These investigations documented three additional areas of quarry pits; three rockshelters, one of which contains a series of petroglyphs; several silicified sandstone outcroppings; and additional workshop localities.

Local collectors have played an important part in recording find locations on Silver Mound. UW-La Crosse graduate Matthew G. Hill documented the Paleoindian points recovered by the late Gary Steele, as published in the *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* in 1994. Gary's daughter recently wrote a book on her father, including his love of archaeology (see p.2).

### Significance of Silver Mound

Silver Mound served as a stable, predictable source of high-quality tool stone intensively used by the earliest populations colonizing this region. It remained a regionally important lithic raw material source throughout prehistory, and its na-

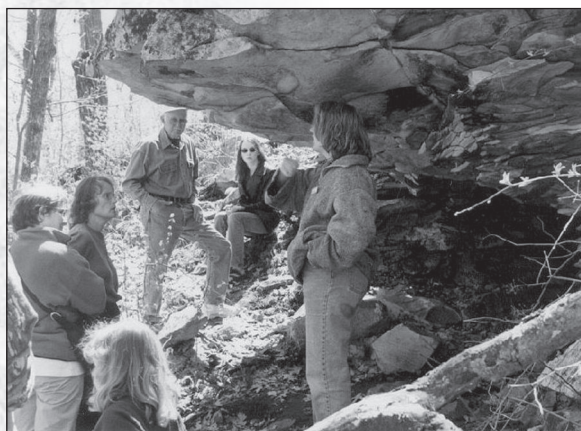
-continued on p.2



## Silver Mound (continued from p.1)

tinal significance stems from its intensive and widespread use during the earliest cultural tradition in North America.

The mission of the Archaeological Conservancy is to preserve archaeological sites throughout the United States. Expanding their holdings of the Silver Mound Archaeological Preserve serves to ensure that future use of Silver Mound will not damage its cultural resources.



MVAC archaeologist Vicki Twinde-Javner (right) at the Geske Rockshelter in 2005.

### For more information:

Carr, Dillon H., and Robert F. Boszhardt

2010 Silver Mound, Wisconsin: Source of Hixton Silicified Sandstone. *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 35(1):5-36.

Hill, Matthew Glenn

1994 Paleoindian Projectile Points from the Vicinity of Silver Mound (47JA21), Jackson County, Wisconsin. *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 19(2):224-259.

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James Theler  
Heather Walder

## 2016 Summer Events

### Wisconsin Archaeology Month

A variety of activities will be offered throughout the state during May to introduce the public to Wisconsin's long and rich cultural past. For a complete list of activities, check out the Wisconsin Historical Society's web site at <http://www.wisconsinhistory.org/> and type "Archaeology Month" in the Search field.

Dates: May 2016

### Public Field School

The Public Field School is open to high school students through adults. The Field School will be held at the Norskedalen Nature and Heritage site in Coon Valley, WI.

Three-Day Experience

Monday - Wednesday July 18-20

Five-Day Experience

Monday - Friday July 18-22

### Field School Open House

Thursday, July 21, at Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Site

### Youth Classes

Experimental Archaeology, grades 4-6

Monday, July 18

Introduction to Archaeology, grades 5-9

Tuesday, July 19

Middle School Field School, grades 5-9

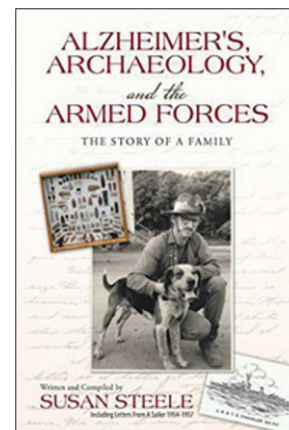
For details on fees and registration for these events, check out the MVAC website: [mvac.uwlax.edu](http://mvac.uwlax.edu)

## Alzheimer's, Archaeology, and the Armed Forces: The Story of a Family

Gary Steele was a meticulous collector who assembled an amazing collection of artifacts from around Silver Mound, including an important series of Paleoindian artifacts. He gladly shared his information with others. Gary's daughter Susan has finished her biography of her dad, whose life story was much more than just stones.

The book is now available on Amazon and at MVAC. Copies will be available for purchase at the Artifact Show at Valley View Mall on March 5.

Sign up to receive MVAC's e-News at: <http://mvac.uwlax.edu/mvac-e-news/>



## Great Attendance at MVAC's 2015 Awards & Lecture

Over 175 people attended Dr. James Gallagher's talk on archaeological sites in Ireland. If you didn't get a chance to attend the lecture, you will be able to access it on Wisconsin Public Television's University Place in the near future. We'll provide a link and let you know once it is available. For more information about this year's award recipients, visit: <http://mvac.uwlax.edu/aboutsupport/volunteer-recognition/>.

### MVAC's 2015 Awards were presented to:

James P. Gallagher Award for Archaeological Excellence: **City of Onalaska**

Archaeology Education Award: **Marilyn Burkhart**

Regional Archaeology Award: **Gene and Jeanne Hynek**



*Award winners (l-r): Gene and Jeanne Hynek; Jarrod Holter, City of Onalaska; and Marilyn Burkhart with MVAC Director Tim McAndrews.*



*Jim Gallagher*

## Education News

### Matching Funds Grant:

Teachers interested in using MVAC's Archaeology Education Program resources in their classrooms can get financial help with our Matching Funds Grant. The grant matches a teacher or school's cost dollar for dollar. Thanks to the UW-L Foundation for providing funds for this program.

### 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 District for providing funds for this program.

### MVAC Educational Programs are supported by

The United Fund for the Arts and Humanities

The National Endowment for the Humanities

## 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!

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Make your donation online at: [foundation.uwlax.edu/mvac](http://foundation.uwlax.edu/mvac)

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Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Categories

**Patron: \$1000 and above**

**Benefactor: \$500 - 999**

**Supporting: \$100 - 499**

**Contributing: \$50 - 99**

**Active: \$35 - 49**

**Students: \$10**

Please make checks payable to UW-L Foundation, Inc. for MVAC and send to MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Gifts to the UW-L Foundation for MVAC qualify as charitable tax deductions to the full extent of the law as applied to the individual circumstances of each donor. You can increase your gift's value if your employer has a matching gift plan. Check with your human resources office.





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## Upcoming Events

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

### **Digging Up the Facts:**

#### **Archaeology, Crime Fiction, and Science**

Archaeology often serves as a backdrop for mystery novels and crime fiction, and the most successful examples are steeped in realism and authenticity. Join crime novelist Mary Anna Evans as she discusses her award-winning Faye Longchamp archaeological mystery series, focusing on the importance of facts in writing an entertaining story. Evans, an assistant professor of professional writing at the University of Oklahoma, credits her training in engineering for helping her write about science for a mainstream audience. Her work has been recognized for its blend of historical accuracy, literary quality, and entertainment value by numerous organizations such as the Florida Historical Society, the Mississippi Library Association, the American Booksellers Association, and others.

Date: Tuesday, April 26

Time: 7 PM

Location: Graff Main Hall, Auditorium, UWL

Speaker: Mary Anna Evans

### **Artifact Show**

Come to Valley View Mall and see artifacts representing the area's long history. Local collectors will display their personal collections, and MVAC staff will bring artifacts recovered from local excavations.

Date: Saturday, March 5

Time: 10 AM–5 PM

Location: Valley View Mall, La Crosse

### **Volunteer Field Survey Opportunity for MVAC Members**

MVAC will celebrate Wisconsin Archaeology Month by involving volunteers in surveys of local fields to find unreported archaeological sites. The day will begin with an introduction at the archaeology laboratory, followed by helping with an actual field survey. Participants will end the day back at the lab to wash the artifacts recovered and learn more about their history. The number of participants is limited, so register early. Children may participate if accompanied by an adult. Call or e-mail MVAC at (608) 785-8454 or [jdowiasch@uwlax.edu](mailto:jdowiasch@uwlax.edu) to register.

### **Advance registration required!**

Date: Saturday, April 30 (rain date: Saturday, May 7)

Time: 8:30 AM–4 PM

Location: Archaeology Center & Laboratory, UWL

Fee: Free admission for MVAC members