



*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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MVAC Video Series

Cindy Kocik, MVAC Research Intern

Since September 2020, I have worked with a team including Bonnie Jancik, Connie Arzigian, Wendy Holtz-Leith, and Kathy Stevenson on monthly videos for the MVAC YouTube channel. These add to the collection of interesting videos, mainly from MVAC's public field schools since 2015, already gracing the channel. The videos allow viewers to explore artifact types, like end scrapers, and lab processes in an easily accessible format, and they offer a great way to learn more about MVAC's work and research while the lab is closed to visitors due to COVID-19.

Filming the videos requires fairly simple equipment—a cell phone, a tripod, and a microphone—but they involve a fairly extensive process leading up to the end product. We start by choosing a topic, such as an artifact type, in which we have expertise and know we have example artifacts, and in some cases replicas, to feature. We also conduct a brief search of YouTube to see if other institutions have produced videos on the same subject and if we can contribute something new, like a focus on the La Crosse region and the wider Driftless Area. In addition, we consider the time it would take to meaningfully cover the topic and if it is possible to distill the nuances and different research perspectives on the subject into an ideal four- to five-minute time frame.

With terrific help from the previously mentioned team of supervisors and their extensive archaeological knowledge and public outreach experience, I write a script with narration, plans for staging the filming at MVAC, and notes on which artifacts and equipment to include. After polishing and approval of the script among the team, I film the live scenes of artifacts and record audio to accompany still images such as photos or drawings, and Wendy graciously films the clips in which I speak on-screen. Bonnie then does the production: editing



Cindy Kocik has developed a series of videos on archaeology topics for MVAC viewers.

the clips together, adjusting appearance, sound, speeds, and effects; combining audio with still images; adding transitions between scenes; and bookending the video with title and closing credit cards. She uploads each video to YouTube, adds closed captioning, and includes them in MVAC's monthly e-News and on MVAC's website, Facebook page, and Tumblr blog.

So far, the videos have covered a reconstructed Oneota pot, mammoths and mastodons, manos and metates, flotation, and end scrapers. Upcoming videos will feature MVAC stalwart Bill Gresens for the 20th anniversary of his reviews of archaeological fiction, and MVAC Senior Research Associate and UWL Professor Emeritus Dr. James Theler discussing bison scapula hoes.

We gladly welcome new viewers and greatly appreciate those who take the time to explore our expanding video series! You can watch our videos by clicking the "Watch Our Videos" link on our website (mvac.uwlax.edu). If you sign up for MVAC's monthly e-News, you'll receive descriptions and links as new videos come out. You can also find the videos through YouTube, Facebook, or Tumblr (see links on back page).

Interested in helping to support the production of more videos? Just click the "Donate" button at the top of our web page!

Collectors stay busy during pandemic

The 2020 Artifact Show was the last public event MVAC held before the Covid-19 shutdown. This year's show has been cancelled to help slow the coronavirus spread. The collectors invited to the show have remained busy surface collecting, analyzing artifacts, and recording sites. Below is an update on what some of our friends have been up to since last year's show, based on e-mail messages we've received. Photos courtesy of the collectors.

Jay Bittner noted that heavy rains washed out several flakes, projectile points, and other artifacts where he collects. This winter he is working on recording some new sites and adding data to previously recorded sites. Jay and his wife Amanda have two young daughters who regularly join him in the field. Elise (7) found her 1st projectile point this spring (see back page). She is still excited about her find and talks about it all the time. Olivia (5) has found one flake so far, which she is very proud of.

David Christensen was recently given a box full of shards that were found near Stoddard. There are some beautiful examples of Havana ware, along with other types of Woodland pottery. Connie Arzigian is working with David to identify the different types.

Jaremy Cobble spent quite a bit of time last spring surface collecting some of his favorite sites in Sheboygan County. A special find was the basal half of a Durst point made of Hixton Silicified Sandstone. Jaremy had found the tip of the point a few years ago and kept a mental note of the location,

and then found the base this past spring. He is looking forward to getting back into the fields this spring, because he plans to take his 4-year old daughter with him for the first time. In 2019, Jaremy volunteered at the Noble-Wieting site in McLean County, IL. He will be giving a virtual seminar on the site for the Ritzenthaler Archaeological Society in March.



For the past several years, Jim Losinski has been viewing Lidar images to identify possible mound sites in a number of Wisconsin counties. He has received permission from several landowners to field check the images and confirm the mound groups. As a result, Jim has reported a number of sites to MVAC, which we in turn have recorded into the state database maintained by the Wisconsin Historical Society. He's also recorded a number of non-mound sites from his collecting efforts. Jim noted the importance of connecting with landowners to get permission to record more sites.



Photos: (top left) Woodland pottery from Stoddard; (top right) projectile point recovered by Jaremy Cobble; (above) points recovered in Trempealeau County by Jim Losinski.

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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. The funds can be used for virtual classroom visits as well as in-person presentations. For details, contact Jean at jdowiasch@uwlax.edu or (608) 792-0781.

MVAC Educational Programs are supported by

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

Throwback Thursday: The Dahl Site

Prior to the organization of MVAC, Jim Gallagher and local volunteers formed the La Crosse Area Archaeological Society (LAAS) for those interested in the preservation of western Wisconsin's prehistory. Beginning in 1978, Gallagher and LAAS volunteers conducted annual surveys of cultivated fields throughout the region, recording dozens of sites throughout La Crosse County. As municipal areas expanded into the surrounding countryside, some of these sites were threatened by development.

One such example is the Dahl site (47LC-148), currently occupied by Crossroads Shopping Center in Onalaska. Dahl Properties and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation had purchased separate portions of the farm, once owned by the Pralle family, for development and infrastructure. The site was first surveyed by Gallagher and LAAS volunteers in 1979, recovering evidence of Oneota habitation with three areas of dense concentration. The three concentrations were recorded as the Leon site (47LC-49).

A knoll with a much higher artifact density than the rest of the farm was later separated out as the Dahl site. In 1982, 13 test units were excavated during the fall field school mentioned in the newsletter excerpt (above right). Artifacts from the site indicated the campsite was inhabited during the Middle Archaic, Late Woodland, and Oneota Traditions. While the site has been severely damaged or destroyed by development, the artifacts recovered are curated at MVAC. These early excavations provided valuable knowledge about La Crosse's prehistory, in accordance with the mission of LAAS and MVAC.

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FALL WEEKEND FIELD SCHOOLS

Two weekend field schools were held recently for LAAS members. The projects were supervised by Bob (Ernie) Boszhardt of the Mississippi Valley Archaeology Center, with the assistance of Barb Kooiman and Kathy Stevenson. LAAS President Jim Eilers was also there to lend a hand.

The first field school was held on September 25 and 26, at the Leonard and Charlotte Pralle farm, near the Valley View Shopping Mall north of La Crosse. The farm, owned by Dahl Properties, is the location of the Dahl Site, an early cemetery site partially excavated by the Society and MVAC last spring. Light scatters of artifacts had been found in other parts of the farm. Because the farm will undoubtedly be developed in the next few years, it was decided that the rest of the property should be tested. Despite the overcast skies and chilly winds, the 14 participants enthusiastically surface-collected fields and excavated test pits. Unfortunately, no undisturbed remains were found below the plow zone in any of the test pits. All of the participants deserve acknowledgment for their good humor as well as their enthusiasm! Madeline Anderson; Dean and Tim Blumentritt; Shelly and Stephanie Goldbloom; Jennifer, Dave, Brian, and Rick Grimsled; Elinor Kofta; Tom McDonald; Harry Nay; Karen Oberhauser; and Jean White. The project was made possible through financial assistance of the Dahl Ford Co. in La Crosse.



The Dahl Site (LC-0148) today, west of Valley View Mall.

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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Please make checks payable to UWL Foundation, Inc. for MVAC and send to MVAC, 1725 State St., La Crosse, WI 54601. Gifts to the UWL 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.

Membership Categories

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Upcoming Events

As part of the effort to slow the coronavirus spread, MVAC is doing the following until further notice:

- MVAC staff are telecommuting, and the building is closed to visitors.
- We will still be working on contract archaeology projects and will conduct contract fieldwork if possible.
- MVAC 2021 events are on hold.

For the latest information on future events, check our website and Facebook page.

Feel free to contact us by email (mvac@uwlax.edu) or leave a voicemail (608-785-8463) on our office number—we'll receive them remotely and reply as soon as possible. In the meantime, stay safe, and stay healthy!

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



Elise Bittner, daughter of Jay and Amanda, shows off the first point she found in 2020. Photo courtesy of Jay Bittner.

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