



NEW DIGS

USI ARCHAEOLOGY STUDENTS WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO DIG INTO THE PAST FARTHER AFIELD NEXT SUMMER.

USI's Archaeological Field School has been held in New Harmony, Indiana, since 2008. The first year, the field school was a partnership with the Indiana State Museum and Historic Sites at Community House No. 2, a Harmonist site that served as a dormitory for single men and women. In addition to recovering many artifacts, the excavations uncovered information about the location and building techniques used to construct the stable behind the community house.



Since 2009, the field school has been held at the site of the Harmonist kiln, which was in operation from 1815 to 1824. At that site, Harmonist potter Christoph Weber produced redware, a type of ceramic pottery, for use in the community and for sale to surrounding settlers. USI's excavations uncovered large quantities of broken pottery vessels and "kiln furniture"—items manufactured to aid in the firing process. The excavations also identified one of the kiln's fireboxes.

This year, the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminal Justice Studies received a grant of \$60,241 from the National Parks Service's American Battlefield Protection Program to fund the 2013 Archaeological Field School, which will be held at Fort Ouiatenon, near West Lafayette, Indiana. Ten USI students will participate in the field school, led by Dr. Michael Strezewski, assistant professor of anthropology, for five weeks next summer.

Putting the pieces together

Established by the French in 1717, Fort Ouiatenon was a fur-trading and military post. Strezewski surveyed the site with colleague Dr. Robert McCullough in 2009. "In those investigations, we found evidence for a number of Native American houses in the vicinity of the fort and other possible fort-related activities," Strezewski said.

Using a magnetometer, an instrument that is able to identify magnetic

differences beneath the soil, Strezewski and McCullough detected circular anomalies near the fort.

"When humans do things—dig a hole, fill it back in, throw away artifacts, dig a ditch, burn something—they modify the soil," Strezewski said. "Even if those holes are filled back in, there is still a magnetic difference beneath the soil. The magnetic properties are changed by human activities, and you can see these little blobs on the maps you make."

Strezewski believes the circular blobs on the Fort Ouiatenon map are probably Native American winter houses. The Kickapoo and other tribes in the Great Lakes area often made circular houses for winter quarters. "We are virtually certain they are structures, but it's a matter of excavation."

Europeans and Native Americans lived in relative peace during this time, Strezewski said. "Both groups were working to their own economic advantage. All the furs were hunted out in Europe - they were long gone. Furs were the most desired items from the Americas, and the Indians wanted manufactured goods that they didn't have. The land grab came later."

The fort was occupied until the 1780s. The Native American villages in the area were attacked and

destroyed by the Kentucky militia in 1791 under the command of Charles Scott.

"That was the end of Ouiatenon being a hub of settlement," Strezewski said. "There still were Indians on the Wabash up to the removal period, but it never was what it was before."

Strezewski has been investigating fur trade sites since 2005, when he and McCullough worked at Kethtippecanunk, a fur-trading town in the same area. "The types of things we find typical of this period are gun parts, musket balls, sometimes silver items that were traded to the Indians, and pottery."

A hands-on experience

Before Strezewski joined USI in 2006, the University did not have an archaeologist on staff. Marjorie Jones, instructor in anthropology, took students to archaeological digs led by Indiana University.

"One of the great things about the 2013 field school is the experience. It's a class and you get six hours of credit for it, but it's not like any other course you'd take at USI. It's a completely hands-



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on course,” Strezewski said.

Experience in the Archaeological Field School led Aaron Harth '09 to a job as a field technician with Cultural Resource Analysts, Inc., a national company with an office in Evansville. Strezewski encouraged Harth to apply for a senior year internship with the company, which assists developers in complying with federal and state preservation regulations.

While working at the site of Community House No. 2, Harth and a fellow student unearthed many pieces of Christoph Weber's redware. “We could see his thumb print on the sherds. They all had the same thumb print. It's a direct connection with the man who made it 200 years ago. We can recover it and try to look into his life as he lived it. It's fun to think of what his life was like.”

The work sparked Harth's interest in New Harmony, and during his last semester at USI, he took a senior seminar course on communal groups. “I spent the whole next semester researching New Harmony and gaining a greater appreciation for what went on there,” he said.

GETTING PERSONAL

We know more about Harmonist potter Christoph Weber and the Harmonists as a result of efforts by Dr. Michael Strezewski and his students since the second Archaeological Field School was held at the site of the Harmonist kiln in 2009.

Weber was born in Germany in 1784. His life's work was making redware pottery for the entire Harmonist community and for sale to surrounding settlers. He left the first American settlement in Harmony, Pennsylvania, with his wife Maria and son Elias, arriving in New Harmony with other Harmonists in the spring of 1815.

Maria died in

October of that year and is buried in the Harmonist Cemetery.

“During that first year, lots of Harmonists died from a disease,” Strezewski said. “We're not exactly sure what it was, but they would catch a fever and die.

She may have been one who succumbed.”



Dr. Michael Strezewski, assistant professor of anthropology, describes archaeological techniques to a student during a dig at the kiln site—just to the north of the current Lenz House—of Harmonist potter Christoph Weber. Inset: Examples of pot sherds found during the excavation, including one with initials that may have belonged to Weber's son Elias.

Weber is listed as the head of the household on a Harmonist document showing that he and Elias lived with six other people in a house located near the potter's facility. "He would have been the master craftsman with unskilled people assisting. The Harmonists like to mix up people's jobs to keep them from being bored."



Strezewski identified the site using Harmonist maps, and confirmed it with a magnetometer and test digs. He and his students located the site of the kiln, half-buried under the historic Lenz House, in 2010. The Lenz House was moved from its original location in 1959.

Among many pieces of pottery, they found evidence that Weber passed his trade to his son. "We have a sherd—a base from a little pot—with Elias's initials on it. It looks like it was made by a little kid—thick and crudely done. It's likely from Elias learning to make pottery."

Weber didn't sign his work, Strezewski said. "He was a craftsman. He probably didn't consider himself an artist, though the work he did was artistic. He learned a trade and was doing his job providing pottery for everybody in town."

The majority of the redware he produced was utilitarian—storage jars, pitchers, jugs, cups, and mugs. "Once in a while he would decorate the pots and did a great job. They didn't have a whole lot of house guests, but they still wanted the things on the table to look nice."

After George Rapp sold the town to Robert Owen, Weber returned to Pennsylvania with the Harmonists to settle a third village at Economy. He committed suicide there in 1861. Strezewski speculates that he may have been sickened by long-term exposure to lead, which was used to glaze the redware he produced for decades.

Strezewski feels a connection to Weber after "poking around in his business for the last four years or so."

"It makes you wonder if they ever thought that 150 years after they died, anybody would be paying attention to their lives. I'm sure they didn't consider themselves all that important or interesting."

Strezewski was able to trace Elias to Albion, Illinois, where he worked as a potter for a time but eventually became a contractor/builder. "He was one of the few Harmonists who didn't go back to Pennsylvania when the Harmonists left New Harmony. I guess he just decided it wasn't for him. When they left in 1824, he was 17 years old."

Elias anglicized his last name, changing it to Weaver. "He blended in, married, and built a number of buildings in Albion, a couple of which are still standing. I am guessing that he lived out the rest of his life there."

Strezewski is still analyzing the results of the excavation, but he said the work shed light on Harmonists' everyday lives.

EXPANDING OPPORTUNITIES WITH ANTHROPOLOGY DEGREE PROGRAM

The USI Board of Trustees has approved a new bachelor degree program in anthropology. The College of Liberal Arts has requested approval from the Indiana Commission for Higher Education to begin offering the degree in spring 2013.

The anthropology degree program is comprised of 120 hours and meets regional and state needs by providing students with a solid foundation for success in positions related to anthropology. It also will prepare students for graduate study in anthropology, medicine, archaeology, cultural and heritage management, and other closely related fields.

The degree will prepare students as cultural and linguistic anthropologists who work in federal, state, and local government, including the military, healthcare centers, nonprofit associations, and marketing firms. It also can prepare physical anthropologists who work in biomedical research, human engineering, private genetics laboratories, pharmaceutical firms, and archaeological work.



John Sureck excavates a deep unit east of the Lenz House in New Harmony that reached the base of the kiln floor. Students get hands-on experience with tools and techniques during USI's summer Archaeology Field School.

"So much of what we know about them is from historic records and documents—mostly financial sorts of things, like receipts and orders for goods. There's very little we know about them on a personal basis. The types of pottery Weber made speak to the cooking techniques they may have had and things about them that are more personal."