Students, faculty and the public are invited to attend the September edition of the Milwaukee Wisconsin Archeological Society talks.

Archeology Along the Upper Mississippi River Fur Trade Periphery: French and British-Period Sites at Prairie du Chien

Featured Speaker:
Ryan Howell, M.A., RPA, WAS
Senior Archaeologist at Cardno, Inc.

November 20th, 2017 7:00 pm
3413 N. Downer Ave, Milwaukee
Sabin Hall Room G90

Abstract:

The early village that became the modern town of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin is the site of a deep and complex pre-historic and historic period occupation. At various times occupied and under the authority of Native Americans, the French, the British, the Spanish and finally Americans, the village appears to have been a neutral ground/trading center going back well before European times. Early French outposts begin as early as the 1680’s and the Creole “Valley French” remain a significant portion of the population in the town to this day.

Always at the outskirts of political and military control of its supposed European and Early American “owners”, Prairie du Chien’s historic residents constituted a unique collection of French voyageurs and explorers, Scots-British fur clerks and Lairds, dense Native American and Metis communities, as well as Spanish priests and former African and Native slaves. The arrival of the “Yankee Americans” in the Lead Rush of the 1820’s added but one more thread in the thick, early ethnic tapestry that was historic Prairie du Chien.

This diverse “outpost culture” managed to find their own ways to live and work together as well as adapt to each other’s cultures, economics and religions for nearly 200 years. As such, their history has much to teach our present as we struggle with issues of cultural diversity, cultural identity, and the boundaries of tolerance in our own society. This lecture explores the general history of Prairie du Chien through the unique archaeology and artifacts from the village that represent the physical remains of the Early French/Terminal Native American through Terminal British periods from A.D 1675-1815.