Conservation project in progress

Restoring the prairie

In an effort to revitalize our historic prairie, we are currently working on cutting and treating invasive black locust trees. Thank you for your understanding on days when our trails are temporarily closed to allow this work to be safely undertaken before the spring thaw. Phase one tackles invasives. Phase two involves seeding and prescribed burns. Follow Facebook or our “events” webpage for the opportunities to be involved.

Thank you to Alliant Energy and Sally & Michael Connelly for their financial support of this prairie conservation project.

Outdoor exhibit to be dedicated

A Landscape of Families

On the frigid morning of November 8, 1832, over four hundred forty Hoocąk (Ho-Chunk) family representatives gathered here at the Fort Winnebago Indian Agency. Indian agent John H. Kinzie carefully recorded the names, villages, and the sizes of their families in preparation for the annual payment for land which had been sold under pressure to the U.S. government. The census penned that day offers an unparalleled look into the lives of these families who would be driven from their homes. By the end of the decade, the faces of the people who have called this region home for millennia.

A name on the register represents a family who was at that very moment on the cusp of losing all that was familiar and known, for in only a year’s time, seventy-five percent of these families would be driven from their homes. By the end of the decade, the faces of the Historic Indian Agency House will endure as a monument to the historic landscape of 1832 from geographical, ecological, and cultural perspectives.

This season’s programming and exhibitions investigate the historic landscape of 1832 from geographical, ecological, and cultural perspectives. Come explore with us this season. Become a French voyageur on the Fox River. Come to know the Ho-Chunk people who have called this place home for generations. Build a dugout canoe with fire. Revitalize the historic prairie. Tour John Kinzie’s Indiana Agency. Try your hand at skills that were part and parcel of the 19th century cultural landscape. Work alongside a professional archaeologist. Attend riveting lectures. Go “On Location” via our online history series. Read Wau-Bun and Native People of Wisconsin. Hear the ringing of the blacksmith’s hammer that once echoed across the Fox-Wisconsin portage. Examine an exciting rediscovery from Fort Winnebago. Contemplate the history beneath your feet on our Stories of The Land trailway. And much more. Our season runs from May 15 through October 15.

There is much to see, do, learn, and consider. We look forward to a great season of discovery with you!

Respectfully,

Adam Novey
Executive Director & Curator

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Wisconsin's cultural landscape would change entirely.

The Historic Indian Agency House and the Ho-Chunk Nation Museum and Cultural Center have partnered to educate through the powerful material encapsulated in the 1832 annuity record. The result is “A Landscape of Families” — a new outdoor exhibit which stands on the site where the census was taken 190 years ago. A dedicated website designed to enhance the exhibit with extensive, interactive content is also in the final stages of completion. It is our joint hope that you will enjoy your engagement with this material, but even more, that you will come away changed by the insights gained.

Join us for the exhibit grand opening event on Saturday, May 14, at 1 p.m., featuring thought-provoking speakers, a performance by the Wisconsin Dells Singers and Dance Troupe of the Ho-Chunk Nation, and a free book for kids at events.

First published in 1836 by Juliette Kinzie, Wau-Bun endures as a fascinating and indispensable firsthand account of the “early day” in the frontier Midwest. The volume also serves as a catalyst for deeper consideration of the crucial lessons of history. The 2021 Historic Preservation Edition also includes more than 65 pages of extra features.

Stay in the loop

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FAMILIES
From Page 1

A firsthand frontier account

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www.agencyhouse.org/wau-bun

Free book for kids at events

Children who attend events this season will receive a free copy of Native People of Wisconsin by Patty Loew, compliments of the Madison Reading Project (one per family, while supplies last).

Broadening Perspectives
Five-part video documentary goes “On Location”

If one tries to think about history, it seems to me — it’s like looking at a range of mountains. And the first time you see them, they look one way. But then time changes, the pattern of light shifts. Maybe you’ve moved slightly, your perspective has changed. The mountains are the same, but they look very different.” — British novelist Robert Harris

This year, we have been going “On Location” to capture present-day footage of various locations related to the people and places of the region’s historic landscape at the time the Fort Winnebago Indian agency house was constructed in 1832. Enjoy all five episodes of our 2022 history series.

Traces of Times Gone By

“A Landscape of Families” and the grand opening event have been made possible in part by the support of Wisconsin Human Conservation project in progress

The Historic Indian Agency House
Volume 22, Issue 1, March 2022

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Unassessing structure reveals notable provenance

Sometimes historians and scientists find themselves conducting vital research in unconventional places. Our quest to document, preserve, and analyze vestiges of a potential Fort Winnebago structure took us to an Amish cow pasture.

Remnants of a Fort Winnebago building are the subject of an important new study and exhibit. Because the structural remnants were deteriorating rapidly, urgency was necessitated. If the remains did, indeed, turn out to be one of the officers’ quarters from Fort Winnebago as preliminary research seemed to suggest, then it would be the only timber frame building from the military complex known to be extant. The surgeon’s quarters—a trader’s cabin which predates the 1828 fort—is unable to offer insights into military construction practices on the frontier, and the Fort Winnebago Indian agency house was built in 1832 by private contractors rather than by the military.

Our main queries at the outset involved the identity of the structure; the construction methods and materials employed; whether or not examples of key architectural features could be preserved and exhibited; and how the results of the research would be shared.

A multidisciplinary effort enlisting the expertise of an archaeologist, a licensed architect, a historian, a forest products lab botanist, and others has been underway. Resources such as period maps and aerials; blueprints and photos; firsthand accounts; newspaper articles; 21st century documentary footage, and structural comparables from the period and region are being utilized within the framework of the scientific method to yield a thorough and careful interpretation of the evidence. Such is the process of “buildings archaeology.”

A paper co-authored by Peter Chiappori, Adam Novey, and Daniel J. Joyce is currently under peer review for prospective publication. A brand new exhibit using elements from the structure is also in the works at HIAH.

Although all the professionals have graciously volunteered their time, there is expense involved in the preservation of the artifacts and the construction of the exhibit components. The Community Foundation of South Central Wisconsin and Michael & Sally Connelly (in honor of NSCDA president Barbara J. Meyer) have provided the financial support needed to accomplish this important undertaking.

In addition to the original investigative inquiries, another question must be posed at this juncture: What do you get when you put an architect, an archaeologist, and a historian into a cow pasture to conduct research?

There was the exceedingly friendly kitten who insisted upon being the center of attention; the calves who sucked with earnestness; the years of faithful service; and the delightful bouquet given by a kind Amish neighbor. There were the incredibly plucky goats who grazed around the structure and the equally maddening chickens who invaded the area, and the Mennonite family who welcomed our research in the house and barn.

It’s all part and parcel of an unexpected research project in an unexpected location.

We are eager to share our findings with you. Keep an eye on our web page (below) or our Facebook page for forthcoming details.

www.agencyhouse.org/landscape
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2022 SEASON EVENTS

Opportunities Abound

Save the Dates

There’s something for everyone!

- **March** - May 14, 1pm: Prairie rehabilitation: Be a part of it! - Ho-Chunk dancers, singers, and speakers
- **June 4** - 6pm: Living history weekend: Civil War era
- **June 11, 10am** - Flag Day: pledge, free tour, S off in gift shop
- **June 14, 6:30pm** - Speaker series #1: Katrina Crowley Conn: “Juliette Kinzie: A Chronicler of Cultures...”
- **June 17, 6pm** - Fire-wrought dugout canoe workshop #2
- **June 24, 6pm** - Fire-wrought dugout canoe workshop #3
- **June 25, 9am** - Guided history hike
- **July 8, 6pm** - Fire-wrought dugout canoe workshop #4
- **July 9, 10am** - “After the Burn” prairie hike by Tony Abate
- **July 12, 6:30pm** - Speaker series #2: Speaker and topic TBA
- **July 30-31** - Enduring Skills Weekend: Try your own hand at scores of fascinating historical skills!
- **July 30, 3 trips** - Paddle Through Time voyageur canoe excursions
- **July 30-31** - Ice cream and lemonade fundraiser
- **Aug. 6-7** - Archaeological dig (public partic.) & blacksmith.
- **Aug. 9, 6:30pm** - Speaker series #3: Matt Blessing: “Reading the Landscape: Aldo Leopold’s Use of History”
- **Sept. 13, 6:30pm** - Speaker series #4: Dr. Patrick J. Jang: “Eye-witnesses: Early Explorers on the Fox-Wis.”
- **September 17** - Living History: 1830s frontier tavern
- **Sept. 23 - 25** - Scouts BSA Camping & Cultures badge wind
- **October 15** - Free admission day: celebrate 90 years!
- **November 5** - “Reflections” campfire: 190th anniversary of Ho-Chunk council at Ft. Winnebago just prior to forced removal the following spring
- **Dec. 10, 1-3pm** - 16th annual Kiddie Christmas / gift shop open

www.agencyhouse.org/events

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Where history and science meet

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[Image 161x34 to 284x207]

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It’s full STEAM ahead

Enjoy our newest curriculum

What is a landscape? What are the components of a landscape? How do people interact with the landscape? Does physical and cultural landscapes change over time? How and why?

Investigate the historic landscape with engaging lessons and hands-on activities through the perspectives of science, art, humanities, and American Indian Studies in Wisconsin (Act 31).

Although geared toward grades four through six, this free curriculum is readily adaptable for younger or older children and adults.

In a classroom, the curriculum may be used as a stand-alone unit, or the lessons may be used as a-la-carte to supplement a standard curriculum. Wisconsin educational standards are also included.

I.   What is a Landscape?
II.   Components of a Landscape: Geography
III.  Components of a Landscape: Ecology
IV.   Components of a Landscape: People
V.    The Historic Landscape
VI.   Our Story: The 1832 Landscape
VII.  I. What is a Landscape?
VIII. II. Components of a Landscape: Geography
IX.   III. Components of a Landscape: Ecology
X.    IV. Components of a Landscape: People
XI.   V. The Historic Landscape
XII.  VI. Our Story: The 1832 Landscape

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