

Archaeology Camp 2017

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The staff of the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has completed our fifth annual Archaeology Camp, which was held June 20-22, 2017 on archaeology site Fort Pierre II. This highly popular 3-day camp is a cooperative venture with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is for students going into the 4th, 5th and 6th grades. The 20 participant slots were filled within 15 minutes of registration opening in May!

Team 4 members [Genevieve Oxford](#), [Alaina DeKrey](#), [Max Juhas](#), and [Rowdy Menning](#) excavate their pit with team archaeologist [Sandy Barnum](#) and team leader [Ted Spencer](#).



Archaeology Camp is an active, outdoor experience located on an archaeological site owned by the Corps. Over the years, we have worked on two different sites, Fort Galpin and Fort Pierre II. Both are former fur trading posts from the 1850s, and both lay along the Missouri River near the capital city of Pierre.

Participants learn an introduction to the field of archaeology, why archaeological excavations are held, what stories artifacts can tell about the past, the correct method of excavating and processing a site, and how to use team-building skills.



[Katie Lamie](#) with the SD Archaeological Research Center in Rapid City explains how to process artifacts.

In addition, we plan special programming to break up their day. Over the last 5 years, these have included flint knapping, practicing with atlatls, dissecting owl pellets, making pottery, and molding animal tracks. There have been presentations on fur trading posts, American Indian pottery, Zooarchaeology, flintlock guns, local fish, owls, and banding migratory birds. Tours are given of the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society, the State Archives, and several local historic sites, including a turtle effigy.

Students work alongside professional archaeologists. We have been fortunate to have the expertise of not only the SHPO and Corps of Engineers archaeologists but also those from the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center and the Bureau of Land Management. Special programming was also provided by staff of the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department.

There are five pit teams made up of four students, an adult team leader (SHPO staff), and an archaeologist. Students take turns excavating, screening, measuring, and mapping their sites. Each team also work with a separate archaeologist to process any artifacts they find.



[Kamden Eaton](#) and [Genevieve Oxford](#) examine bones while learning about Zooarchaeology.



Team 2 members Austin Griffith and Elijah Boutchee and team leader Liz Almie look for artifacts in the dirt being screened from their pit.



Paige Spomer with Team 1 measures the depth of their pit while team members Sorrine Ekle, Logan Griffith, Aiden James, and team archaeologist Meagan Maier watch.

Campers begin a new day by hauling equipment tubs to the excavation sites.



An English gun flint was found by Team 1 while excavating.



Team 3 members Luke Hodges, Mason Stoeser, Anthony Lennick, and Kamden Eaton learn how to conduct a pedestrian survey from team archaeologist Rick Rogers along with archaeologist Shaun Dinubilo.



This old Army tent is used as a gathering spot before morning excavation starts, for snack breaks, lectures, and artifact processing.



Campers and staff prepare to start their day. This photo gives a good overview of the six excavation sites. The atlatl field, pedestrian survey site, and army tent are off camera.



Team leader Matthew Remmich explains the atlatl to Team 3 members Mason Stoeser, Anthony Lennick, Kamden Eaton, and Luke Hodges.



Alaina DeKrey watches her dart as it flies from her atlatl while team leaders Ted Spencer and Matthew Remmich watch.



Campers gather around the turtle effigy to learn about its history from team archaeologist Paige Olson.



Elijah Boutchee enjoys trying on a hat in the dress-up corner of the Oahe Dam Visitor Center.



Left, Campers dissect owl pellets. **Above**, Luke Hodges accepts his certificate and archaeologist's trowel from SHPO staff Cindy Snow, Kate Nelson, and Paige Olson.