**Mitigation** –

Definitions - Mitigation

Simply put, mitigation is the protection of material culture and other archaeological data that would otherwise be destroyed by human or environmental impacts. There are other techniques that archaeologists use to investigate the archaeological potential of a site, not just digging! Each stage of the process, from learning about a site area from historical records to survey, monitoring, and excavation can all be regarded as mitigation because in each the archaeological potential is identified and solutions to avoid damage are sought. All archaeologists know that the best way to avoid damaging cultural remains is to not impact them at all! Good background research may help alter a construction project so that the plan avoids area with high archaeological potential, but it is not always possible.

CAP works closely with Michigan State University Infrastructure Planning and Faculties (IPF) and Archives and historical Collections to protect and mitigate archaeological resources on campus. MSU Archives helps provide CAP with the resources to understand the history of particular places on campus, including its past occupants, activities, or structures and what materials, if any, may be buried and mostly forgotten. Our goals are to be able to inform IPF and construction crews of the archaeological potential in the areas they are working, to survey areas before construction begins, and to be in a position to monitor and collect data if historic artifacts are discovered on campus.

This type of mitigation, or cultural resource management, began in American archaeology when the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966. Federal and state laws were created to implement the Historic Preservation Act and these dictate when mitigation must be done. When a potential site cannot be avoided archaeologists work with agencies like the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), who represent state government and state preservation interests, and Tribal Historic Preservation Officer(s) (THPO), who represent federally recognized American Indian tribes and tribal preservation interests. The mitigation organization provides information on the site and project and recommends a course of action and the SHPO and THPO comment on those recommendations, but the final decision with the state or federal agency in charge of the project (Orser 2002:157-158).

While mitigation work at MSU is seldom federally mandated, CAP has developed a strong working relationship with IPF to our mutual benefit and to the benefit of MSU and those interested in the history of the University and the surrounding area.

**Whiteware Ceramics ­**­– Refined white earthenware refers to factory produced pottery with a white colored paste and are some of the most common artifacts found on late 18th and 19th century sites as it was produced in a verity of forms, including: dinner plates, bowls, tea cups and saucers, as well as mixing bowls, washbasins, and chamber pots. Refined white earthenware produced in Britain during the 19th century is also one of the most useful ceramics for dating purposes as it has a well understood chronology based on changes in decoration styles and techniques (Majewski and O’Brien 1987). CAP archaeologists have found many white earthenware ceramics on campus, including transfer printed and hand painted vessels.

**White Granite –** White Granite or White Ironstone is an extremally durable ceramic made to look like European porcelain, but at a fraction of the cost. It is possible to distinguish white granite from refined white earthenware because the paste, the part of the vessel you see when looking at a broken piece of pottery, is much harder for white granite. Another distinction is that, unlike white earthenware, which has quite porous or absorbent paste, white granite is often semi-vitreous or vitrified, meaning that the paste is glass like and will not absorb water (Majewski and O’Brien 1987). Archaeologists can test this by sticking ceramics to their tongue! The more porous the paste, the better it will stick.

White Granite was popular in the mid-19th century and was unpainted, but often had molded decoration, like the thistle motif on the chamber pot. Another similar ceramic is Ironstone, which was made popular by in the early 19th century. Unlike later white granite this vitrified ceramic was often decorated with transfer print designs (Majewski and O’Brien 1987).

**Porcelain** - **Porcelain** - Porcelain refers a variety of dense, highly vitreous and translucent white-bodied wares. There are a wider variety of porcelain, typically divided into categories of //soft paste//, //bone china// and //hard paste// (Majewski and O’Brien 1987; Samford 2019). Hard paste porcelain includes Chinese, Japanese, and most continental European produced porcelains and was made in China as early as the Tang Dynasty (AD 618-907) and exported to Europe in larger amount by the 17th century. Hard paste porcelain was reproduced in France in 1710 and England in 1782. Soft paste porcelain and bone china were produced in the 18th century as English potters experimented with porcelain formulas. Both are more porous than hard paste varieties Bone china became the standard English porcelain early in the 19th century. (Majewski and O’Brien 1987).

Most porcelain vessels imported into the United States in the 18th and 19th centuries were decorated (Majewski and O’Brien 1987). Imported Chinese produced porcelain teaware, often decorated with cobalt blue designs, had a strong and lasting impact on the British and continental European ceramic industry and the expensive vessels were transported throughout their colonies (Barker and Majewski 2006). As such, cobalt blue decoration was most common method on European produced porcelain up until 1880.

During the last decades of the 19th century, the porcelain market was more diversified than in previous times. Vessels produced in China, Japan, England, Germany, France, and from other European producers were all competing for a share of the American market (Majewski and O’Brien 1986). Decoration changed as well, after 1880 decal decoration, often pair with gilded or embossed designs, became more common.

The porcelain vessels found at Michigan State University typically date to this more diversified period and include a Bavarian sugar bowl and Japanese export “Geisha Girl” ceramic.

**Archaeological Periods of the Eastern Woodlands:** Eastern Woodlands refers to the part of what is now North America that ranges from the Gulf of Mexico to what is now Canada and east of the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Coast.

**Paleoindian** – The first phase of human occupation in what is now North America, beginning around 15,000 years ago. This was a time of glacial retreat along the Pacific Coast (16,000 – 15,000 years ago) and in the interior of what is now Canada (14,000 – 13,500 years ago) (Pitblado 2011).

**Archaic** – For the societies living in the Eastern Woodlands this was a period of vast cultural and environmental change between 12,500 and 1000 years ago. This period is split by archaeologists into three sub-periods: Early (12,500 – 9,000 years ago); Middle (9,000 – 5,400 years ago); and Late Archaic (5,400 – 1000 years ago) (Styles and McMillan 2009).

**Woodland period** – This period is seen by archaeologists as marking a change from the lifeways societies and individuals practiced during the Archaic period. At the transition between the two archaeological periods climate change, particularly in the resource rich flood plains, disrupted some of the ways in which societies lived, traded, and interacted with others and the environment (Kidder 2006). After these changes continuity …

**Secondary refuse** - Artifacts or other cultural materials discarded anywhere other than their location(s) of use.

* artifacts recovered from the site resulted from secondary deposition in one of three major middens associated with each of the structures (Tables 1 and 2). As such, they reflect residents' attitudes towards the appropriate disposal of trash rather than the location of individual activities such as dining, sewing, or socializing. An analysis, however, of the distribution patterns of specific artifact types within these middens and of the location of individual artifacts recovered from contexts other than the middens has offered some suggestions for yard use and raised some questions. (Barbara J. Heath and Amber Bennett - “The little Spots allow’d them”:The Archaeological Study of African-American Yards” Historical Archaeology, 2000, 34(2):38-55.)

**Refrences**

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