

D4

Kansas City Area

Elementary students visit 19th century farmstead **MoDOT Archeological Team Shares Findings at Historical Site**

by Jennifer Benefield

Union Chapel Elementary School students didn't have to travel far for a hands-on lesson in Platte County history in October. After a brief hike through the woods adjacent to the school, they arrived at a 19th century farmstead.

A team of six archeologists, led by MoDOT Senior Historic Preservation Specialist Michael Meyer, had already begun to excavate the house's foundation and explore a nearby well – a process that will soon tell the story of the Joshua Noland family. The Nolands are presumed to have been among the early families to settle Platte County in the 1830s.

Surveyors taking measurements for a MoDOT project to construct a new roundabout west of the existing Route 45 and K intersection came across the site in 2004 and contacted MoDOT's Historic Preservation Section.

The Noland family occupied it for more than 100 years until the farmhouse burned down in the 1940s. Initial excavation of the house foundations in 2004 confirmed the presence of late-19th century and early 20th century deposits, relating to the life of the grandson, Edward. Because the house appeared to have burned accidentally, there were a number of personal and perhaps treasured items that were left behind on the site.



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MoDOT Senior Historic Preservationist Michael Meyer shows Union Chapel Elementary School 5th graders a 20-foot well hand-dug by a member of the Joshua Noland family about 160 years ago.

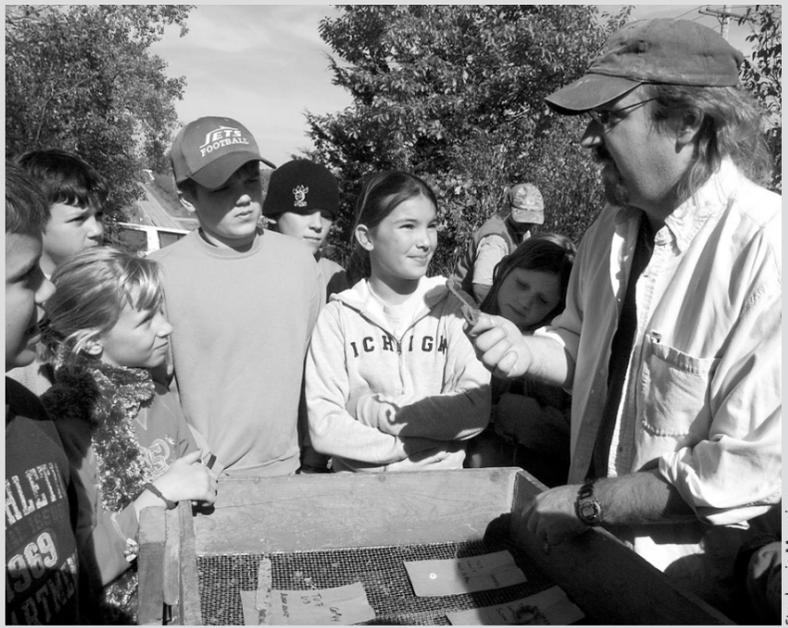
"Because there was a fire, nothing was thrown away," Meyer explained to the students. "We are finding things at this historic site that we don't normally find." Items found to date include porcelain figurines; toys, such as clay marbles; souvenirs from a trip to Chicago; World War I uniform insignia; and household items, such as tableware, pots, plates and pieces of hand-painted china.

"Does anyone know what this is?" Meyer asked the students. "It's a rusty nail. Why is this important? Well, I can look at a nail and tell you when the nail was made, and therefore, when the house was built. Every artifact gives me a little more information."



Stephanie Manning

MoDOT Senior Historic Preservationist Michael Meyer shows Union Chapel Elementary School 5th graders an excavation area at the Joshua Noland historic site.



Stephanie Manning

MoDOT Senior Historic Preservationist Michael Meyer shows Union Chapel Elementary School 5th graders items excavated from the Joshua Noland home built in about 1840. Numerous items were unearthed at the historic site located close to the school near Routes 45 and K in Platte County. MoDOT plans to construct a roundabout southwest of the site in spring 2007.

Meyer also showed the students a handle presumed to come from a cup belonging to a tea service. "We can learn a lot about people who lived here by the quality of the things they owned. Artifacts are important because they help us learn about the history of the people and the area in which they lived."

Four groups of 5th graders visited the site over a two-day period. Each group

spent about an hour at the site listening to Meyer, looking at the artifacts, exploring the site and asking questions.

"I thought it was really interesting," said 5th grader Madison Hill. "I learned that it really does take a long time to carefully dig, and some time to figure out where you should start, depending on what you want to learn."

Grant Brady appreciated being shown the items found. "I liked seeing the silverware. The trip out here was cool and I really learned a lot."

Meyer said one unique aspect of this project is the opportunity to acquire oral history from the surviving family members, several of whom still live in the area, in an attempt to develop a more complete history of the region, the site and the family itself.



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MoDOT interns Courtney Blair (left) and Rosanna Runyon (right) sift through soil and look for artifacts at the historic site located near Routes 45 and K in Platte County.



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MoDOT Intermediate Historic Preservationist Jane Lee unearths artifacts from the historic site.

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