

Mix and match



Sandy Swob, above, director of the Thomas County Household Hazardous Waste Program opened an oil-base paint can so that Larry Jumper, right, and Greg Swob, assisting with the collection, could mix it with the other oil-base paints received Saturday at the Colby site on West Fourth St. In total, 920 pounds of oil base paint was received. The collection was held in conjunction with the Colby-Thomas County Clean-up Week scheduled May 1-6. More results on the collection will appear in a later edition of the *Free Press*.



PATTY DECKER/Colby Free Press

Archaeologist to look for Civil War clues

LAWRENCE (AP) — Nearly 150 years after the Battle of Black Jack, the entire story about what happened in southern Douglas County between pro- and anti-slavery forces may still be untold.

That could change next month after a prominent battlefield archaeologist leads a team of sleuths armed with sophisticated metal detectors and connected to global positioning satellites scours fields, woods and ravines three miles east of Baldwin.

Called an archaeological survey, the searchers will use a procedure similar to detectives investigating a crime scene.

"We're looking for physical evidence," said Douglas D. Scott, adjunct anthropology professor at the University of Nebraska.

Bullets used during the Civil War era will be the primary artifacts sought in the search scheduled for May 4-6. The team also will watch for buttons and buckles from clothing, bullet-carrying pouches and anything else that may still be hidden on the battlefield.

"The physical evidence doesn't lie, and it doesn't have memory problems," Scott, 57, said. "It may be compromised by time, burial, deterioration or any number of things, but we can still recover the information."

Scott is a native of Independence who grew up hearing about Bleeding Kansas and the exploits of fiery abolitionist John Brown. He is retired from the National Park Service and is currently president of the Society for Historical Archaeology. He has explored about 30 battlefields in the U.S. and Great Britain, most of them where battles were fought in the 19th century.

Scott also has written books about his searches and findings at places like Little Big Horn in Montana, where Custer's Last Stand took place, and Sand Creek Battlefield in Colorado, among others. His findings have revealed new information, such as the types of weapons used by the American Indian tribes that fought Gen. George

Armstrong Custer.

At Black Jack, Scott hopes to find artifacts that will reveal more information about how forces under Brown and Henry Clay Pate fought in what many consider to be the first battle of the Civil War. Scott entered a bid for the project, and he will be paid with some of a \$87,000 grant received for restoration of the park a couple of years ago. The fund is administered by the National Park Service.

"We are incredibly pleased to have been able to procure the services of an expert of his stature," said Carol von Tersch, a member of the Black Jack Battlefield Trust. The trust bought what was known as the Robert Hall Pearson Farm, where the battlefield is located, in 2003 with plans to eventually restore it.

Scott will work with about a half-dozen or more assistants, most of whom he has worked with before. A couple of local volunteers will help, as will students in a Black Jack history course at Baker University under Brenda Day.

"It looks very good, so I'm thinking there is a good chance that we'll recover some artifacts," Scott said.

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