

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

Frontier Forts of West Virginia

State: West Virginia

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Section E. Statement of Historic Context

Historic Context: Frontier Forts within the Eighteenth-Century Frontier Defensive System of West Virginia

Introduction

This historic context is modified from the public booklet *Frontier Forts in West Virginia* (McBride et al. 2003), produced by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History. It provides a background and examines the nature and function of eighteenth-century frontier forts and their importance in West Virginia history. This will allow for a better understanding of not only the forts themselves, but the entire frontier defensive system and the historical context in which that system developed.

The Appendix of *Frontier Forts in West Virginia* (McBride et al. 2003) lists all the forts known at the time, which number 174. Many of these forts are known solely through references in local published histories or oral tradition and have not been verified or located on the ground through archeology or other means, but they remain potential research sites. Most forts located in West Virginia were constructed during periods of international conflict and/or periods of intense boundary disputes and western expansion, especially during three short periods: 1) 1755-1757, the first years of the French and Indian War; 2) 1774-1776, Lord Dunmore's War and the early Revolutionary War; and 3) 1786-1791, United States' efforts to claim and dominate lands north of the Ohio River. The frontier defensive system, which was put in place during the French and Indian War and refined during Lord Dunmore's War and the American Revolutionary War, should be viewed as an adaptation that was gradually fine-tuned over time. In combination with log architecture, a mixed hunting and farming economy, and dispersed settlements, it gradually allowed for the colonization and conquest of a rugged, wooded and, most importantly, disputed territory.

The Context of Indian and Settler Hostilities

Frontier forts can only be understood in the context of the hostilities that developed between the governments of France and Britain, the colonists who wanted to establish permanent settlements in this territory, and the indigenous peoples who claimed a right to the lands of West Virginia. These hostilities were not isolated events. Instead, their origin lay in colonial and European governments' desire for expansion and with Native Americans who refused to accept expansion into their ancestral territory. The historical context of western colonization and subsequent hostilities is presented here. In addition to sources cited below in the text, the major sources used for this section are Downes 1986, Hale 1971, Kellogg 1916, 1917, McConnell 1992, Rice 1970, Sosin 1967, Thwaites and Kellogg 1905, 1908, 1912, Titus 1991, and Withers 1831.

Early Settlement Through French and Indian War: 1730-1764

Beginning in the 1720s and 1730s, settlers began moving into the Shenandoah Valley from eastern Pennsylvania and the tidewater area of Virginia. In order to increase the King's funds and to strengthen the colony's western defenses, settlement was encouraged by the colonial government of Virginia through land grants and tax waivers. Changes made to Virginia's laws in the 1730s allowed land speculating companies to receive land grants of up to 100,000 acres as long as they settled one non-Virginia family per 1000 acres. The lure of new land attracted settlers from outside Virginia, particularly those from Germany, Scotland, and Ireland, to settle these grants.

During the early 1730s settlers began moving up the Potomac River and down the Shenandoah, Cacapon and South Branch Rivers. By the mid-1730s, there were enough people to create two new Virginia counties, Frederick and

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Augusta. Two decades later, 7,000 to 8,000 people lived in the eastern panhandle of what would become West Virginia. Early settlers generally enjoyed peaceful relations with their American Indian neighbors who had claims to what is now West Virginia and southwestern Virginia. These groups included the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy (Six Nations), Cherokee, Shawnee, and Mingo (western Iroquois). Although by the early 1700s none of these groups had large villages in this region, many still considered it their homeland and used it for hunting, trading, and as a political boundary. To keep peaceful relations with those groups, colonial representatives from Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania engaged in diplomacy during this period.

Two of the most important treaties resulting in the early eighteenth-century settlement of West Virginia were the 1722 Treaty of Albany and the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, both formed between the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the British. In the Treaty of Albany, the Haudenosaunee allowed settlement in Virginia south of the Potomac River and east of the Allegheny mountains. While the Treaty of Lancaster generally reaffirmed the Treaty of Albany, many land speculators and government officials interpreted this treaty to mean that the Haudenosaunee were also giving up claims to land as far west as the Ohio River. As a result, between 1745 and 1754, land grants totaling well over 2 million acres were distributed to land speculating companies, such as the Loyal Land Company, the Greenbrier Company, the Woods River Company, and the Ohio Company, and opened for settlement.

Initial settlement by Europeans of the Ohio River Drainage in the late 1740s and early 1750s occurred without confrontation with American Indian groups living in the Ohio Valley region. In contrast, however, the French, who had made previous claims to this territory, were greatly disturbed by British settlements advancing into the Trans-Allegheny region. They were particularly upset by the Ohio Company's activities on the Monongahela River and at the Forks of the Ohio, at present day Pittsburgh. First, Celoron De Blainville buried metal plates at numerous points along the Ohio River, including one at the mouth of the Kanawha River, to symbolically demonstrate France's claim to the region. In 1753 the French, despite British protests, began building forts in the Ohio and lower Great Lakes regions, including Fort LeBoeuf, Fort Presque Isle and Fort Venango in western Pennsylvania. During the next year, this territorial dispute deteriorated into an international war between France and Great Britain.

The French and Indian War

In January 1754, Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia sent men to construct Fort Prince George at the Forks of the Ohio. In April he sent two companies of militia under Major George Washington to garrison the fort. The fort was not built, however, because a French army detachment forced the work crew to leave before Washington could arrive and occupy the Forks of the Ohio area. At Great Meadows, Pennsylvania, Washington's forces defeated a small detachment of French soldiers. Following the battle, Washington hastily constructed Fort Necessity in anticipation of another attack by a larger French force. The ensuing battle resulted in Washington's surrender. The French allowed him to withdraw from the region if he promised not to build other fortifications in the Ohio Valley for a year. Thus began the French and Indian War.

In September 1754, Governor Dinwiddie ordered Andrew Lewis and 30 to 40 men to protect the Augusta (Virginia) frontier. That winter the British Government began to reestablish their claim to the Ohio Valley with an offensive campaign led by General Edward Braddock. In the spring of 1755 Braddock, 1,400 British regulars and 450 soldiers of the Virginia Regiment began their march to the Forks of the Ohio to capture France's Fort Duquesne. On July 9, 1755 they were ambushed by a combined French and Indian force and soundly defeated, resulting in a great loss of prestige for the British and Colonials in the eyes of the Ohio Indian tribes. Consequently, the level of Indian raiding increased on a large scale.

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In August and September, American Indians attacked settlements on the Greenbrier River and the New River, including Baughman's Fort, a stockade built by Major Andrew Lewis near present day Alderson. Soon after, the entire Greenbrier Valley and all settlements west of the Alleghenies were abandoned. In October 1755, approximately 150 American Indians raided settlements along the Upper Potomac River and Patterson's Creek. The raids forced some settlers to move east while others sought refuge in newly constructed residential forts. The attack prompted Colonel George Washington, now Commander in Chief of Virginia's forces, to order the construction of Ashby's Fort and Cocks's Fort on Patterson's Creek. Three months later Forts Pleasant and Defiance were built along the South Branch of the Potomac.

In February 1756, Governor Dinwiddie launched an offensive campaign against Shawnee villages in the Ohio Valley. He sent Major Andrew Lewis and 340 men, including 80 to 130 Cherokee, to attack the Shawnee towns. This campaign, known as the Sandy Creek expedition, failed before it reached the Ohio River due to shortages of food, bad weather, and bad troop morale. In order to prevent depopulation of the western Virginia frontier and keep the battle lines from shifting further east, Dinwiddie and Washington devised a defensive strategy that relied upon a system of fortifications. The strategy called for a chain of forts to be built along the western perimeter of the Virginia frontier from the Potomac River southward to the North Carolina border. The plan depended on military forts to serve as defensive positions, operating bases for soldiers, places of refuge for settlers, and supply depots. Soldiers were to patrol between forts searching for raiding parties along Indian trails and at large springs. To this end, the Virginia Regiment was reorganized and enlarged to 1,500 men and reinforced by county militia. Aided by militiamen and local settlers, the soldiers quickly constructed a number of military forts through 1756 and into 1757. In all, over 40 forts, typically 12 to 25 miles apart, were built in what is now West Virginia. Twenty of these forts were considered to be of strategic importance and were garrisoned full time by the Virginia Regiment, militia, or rangers.

In 1756 attacks or battles took place at or near Neally's Fort, Edwards' Fort, and Fort Pleasant. The local defensive strategy for the frontier continued without British assistance until 1758, when Fort Upper Tract and Seybert's Fort were burned. When William Pitt took over British war policy in 1758, he enacted an aggressive offensive policy. In order to secure the frontier, Pitt sent Brigadier General John Forbes and British forces to the Forks of the Ohio, where they burned the abandoned French Fort Duquesne. Forbes sent emissaries to the Shawnee and Delaware to negotiate a change in their allegiance. This effort resulted in the Treaty of Easton, signed in October 1758, requiring the British to stop settlement in Pennsylvania west of the Alleghenies. When the Cherokee, who had broken relations with the British in 1759, were defeated by Colonel James Grant in November 1760 a tenuous peace came to the Southeastern frontier. Pitt's offensive policy reaped its greatest rewards with the British victories at Quebec in September 1759 and at Montreal in September 1760. The latter victory led to the French surrender of Canada. In January 1763 the signing of the Treaty of Paris formally ended the French and Indian War and ceded to the British the French lands not just in Canada but also the Ohio Country.

Pontiac's War

Beginning in 1759, a number of events occurred that led up to what is now known as Pontiac's War. It began when the British curtailed the exchange of certain goods with American Indians and made them come to British posts to trade. They also ended the practice of gift giving, an important symbolic act to the American Indians through which bonds were created and agreements substantiated. As well, American Indians were unhappy with the continued British occupation of old French posts and the construction of new ones in their territory. In 1761, after a more liberal interpretation of the Treaty of Easton by the British Board of Trade, the Greenbrier Company and Loyal Company began

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encouraging resettlement of land west of the Allegheny Mountains, especially in Greenbrier and New River country. Soon after, settlers began returning to these areas, offending Ohio Valley Indian tribes. The same year the Seneca began enticing other tribes including the Shawnee and Delaware to go to war against the British. Ironically, the Treaty of Paris, which formally ended the French and Indian War, became the catalyst for Pontiac's War. This treaty ceded French lands in Canada and the Ohio Country to the British. This angered many American Indian groups because they believed that the French had no claim to these lands. As a result, by winter 1763 most Ohio Valley and Great Lakes Indian tribes had decided to go to war with the British.

In May 1763 Pontiac's War, named for the Odawa chief, began with attacks on Fort Detroit and Fort Pitt. These defenses held, but attacks on Fort Venango, Fort LeBoeuf, and Fort Presque Isle in northwestern Pennsylvania were successful. Other forts in Pennsylvania and the Great Lakes region were also attacked. Beginning in June 1763 American Indians began raiding frontier settlements in Pennsylvania, New York, Maryland, and Virginia. For example, a Shawnee raiding party led by Chief Cornstalk struck and killed numerous settlers and burned cabins and crops in the Greenbrier Country in late June 1763. In retaliation, a detachment of 150 soldiers under Colonel Charles Lewis overtook a large war party of American Indians at the head of the South Fork River above Seybert's Fort. The soldiers killed 21 Native Americans and recovered 250 pounds of goods taken during raids along the Jackson and Greenbrier Rivers.

In an attempt to pacify the Ohio Valley and Great Lakes Indian tribes and to control land-hungry speculators and settlers, the British king announced the Proclamation of October 7, 1763, forbidding colonial settlement beyond the Allegheny Mountains. Immediately following the king's proclamation, land speculators and settlers, who already had land claims west of this line, began protesting and lobbying to move the line further west. Although this led to new negotiations with the Six Nations of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy in 1765, a new boundary line was not drawn. Despite this effort, raids continued through 1764, including attacks on settlers along the Cacapon River in Hampshire County. Successful military campaigns into the Lower Great Lakes region and into the Muskingum Valley in Ohio led to the end of Pontiac's War in the Fall of 1764.

From Permanent Settlement through Dunmore's War: 1768-1774

By the mid-1760s the British government could no longer adequately finance their policy of trade, diplomacy, and monitoring of the western frontier. Their attempts to fund this policy through colonial taxation were such a failure that troops had to be moved from the west, including Fort Pitt in 1772, to maintain order in the east. One effect of the diminishing British presence on the western frontier was the increase in illegal settlement and unregulated trade with American Indians in the Ohio Valley. The situation became so chaotic by the late 1760s that most American Indian groups wanted to negotiate a new permanent boundary line in the Trans-Allegheny region. Negotiations began in the fall of 1768. Sir William Johnson, the Northern Superintendent of Indian Affairs, directed the negotiations with the Six Nation and Ohio Indian tribes while John Stuart, the Southern Superintendent of Indian Affairs, directed negotiations with the Cherokee. Both Johnson and Stuart were directed by their superiors in London to establish the western boundary for colonial settlement at the mouth of the Kanawha River.

The southern negotiations were straightforward. On October 17, 1768 the Cherokee and the British signed the Treaty of Hard Labor, in which the Cherokee ceded their claim to lands south of the Ohio River and east of a line extending from Fort Chiswell (now located in Montgomery County, Virginia) to the mouth of the Kanawha River. The northern negotiations were more complex and controversial. First, Johnson negotiated directly only with representatives of the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. He treated the Ohio Indian tribes as dependents of the Six Nation tribes and as mere

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observers at the negotiations. The Ohio Indian tribes did not, however, see themselves as dependents, but rather as partners in a reciprocal relationship.

Second, Johnson placed the boundary for settlement not at the mouth of the Kanawha River, as he was instructed, but at the mouth of the Tennessee River. This opened Kentucky for settlement. On November 5, 1768, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy and the British signed the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, in which the Haudenosaunee ceded lands south of the Ohio River and east of the Mouth of the Tennessee River. This agreement ignored the interests of the Ohio Indian tribes who felt betrayed by the treaty and rejected it. Due to this, the British government in 1769 forbade settlement west of the Kanawha River until more negotiations could occur.

Settlement of the Greenbrier, New, and Monongahela River Valleys proceeded at a rapid pace, but did not create a great amount of tension with the Ohio Indian tribes. The increased European presence west of the Kanawha River and in Kentucky, however, caused great concern among them and with the Cherokee. The resulting negotiations moved the Cherokee-ceded boundary line to western Virginia in 1770 and to the Donelson line at the Kentucky River by 1771. No new treaties were negotiated with the Ohio Indian tribes.

Despite negotiations, the increased presence of colonial settlers in the Upper Ohio Valley and Kentucky led to numerous violent encounters. In an attempt to state their claims and keep settlers out of Kentucky, the Shawnee and Mingo (western Iroquois) traveled to Fort Dunmore (formerly Fort Pitt), but their efforts were unsuccessful. By mid-April 1774 John Connally, agent in charge of the Upper Ohio at Fort Dunmore, raised the alarm of a full-scale border war. Border killings and retaliations increased in late April 1774 when Daniel Greathouse and others murdered Chief Logan's relatives at Yellow Creek and when Michael Cresap attacked Shawnee and Pennsylvania traders near Grave Creek. Full scale raiding began in June 1774 when American Indians raided as far east as the Greenbrier Valley. As a result, additional residential and militia forts were constructed across the frontier, including Fort Fincastle at Wheeling. That summer Governor Dunmore ordered Colonel Andrew Lewis and his men to join Dunmore's force of men at the mouth of the Kanawha River for an expedition against the Shawnee.

Lewis and most of his troops reached Point Pleasant on October 6 where they received a message from Dunmore ordering them to proceed to a rendezvous near Chillicothe, Ohio. Chief Cornstalk, who had been observing both wings of the Virginia army as it moved north and west, decided to attack Lewis' wing before they united. On October 10, while still encamped at Point Pleasant, Lewis' force was attacked by approximately 800 Shawnee, Lenape, Mingo (western Iroquois), and Odawa Indians.

The Battle of Point Pleasant raged all day until American Indian forces withdrew across the river. Lewis lost 46 men killed, while approximately 80 were wounded. Cornstalk and his forces returned to Shawnee towns in Ohio. A few days later Cornstalk sent emissaries to talk with Lord Dunmore. The Treaty of Camp Charlotte was signed in 1774 and resulted in the Shawnee relinquishing their claims to land south of the Ohio River. Fort Blair was constructed at Point Pleasant following the battle to guard the mouth of the Kanawha River.

Frontier Hostilities During the American Revolution:1775-1783

The relative peace resulting from the Treaty of Camp Charlotte was quickly complicated by the beginning of the American Revolution in spring 1775. Word of battles at Lexington and Concord, Massachusetts quickly spread down the east coast and into the west, where most frontier leaders embraced the patriots' cause. Also spreading down the coast was a feeling of uncertainty and dread by the settlers as to which side the Haudenosaunee, Cherokee, and Ohio Indian tribes

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would take, and what actions the British would take on the frontier. Local Committees of Safety quickly met to determine defensive strategies while the colonies began diplomatic efforts in an attempt to obtain the neutrality of the American Indians.

The British abandoned Fort Dunmore (Pittsburgh) and Fort Blair (Point Pleasant) in spring and summer 1775. Fort Dunmore was quickly re-occupied by Captain John Neville and a hundred Virginia militia, who renamed it Fort Pitt. Fort Blair at Point Pleasant, however, was burned by Indians before it could be occupied by the Virginians. Meanwhile, the Virginia House of Burgesses and Continental Congress appointed a commissioner to meet representatives from Native American tribes at Fort Pitt in September and October 1775. In the resulting Treaty of Pittsburgh, the Treaty of Camp Charlotte was finalized, and the American Indians pledged peace and neutrality with the newly formed American government. The significance of this treaty cannot be overestimated. It not only gave the American government time to organize and establish its defenses, it also allowed for additional settlement of the frontier. Throughout 1775 and 1776, the British were also negotiating with various Indian groups hoping to gain alliances. A number of groups, particularly the Mingo (western Iroquois), were more sympathetic toward the British, who seemed more powerful, more interested in Indian claims, and more able to provide them with cheap and plentiful supplies. The Virginia state and county governments responded to the threat in spring and summer 1776 by strengthening frontier defenses. In the early summer of 1776, Captain Matthew Arbuckle was sent to the mouth of the Kanawha River to construct Fort Randolph on the site of the former Fort Blair. Fort Randolph was one of the largest and most important defense posts on the Ohio frontier.

Despite these defenses, a number of Indian raids into West Virginia occurred in fall 1776, and settlements in the Northern Panhandle and Monongahela Valley were attacked. By October 1776, Indian raids into Kentucky had caused the abandonment of all but three forts. Late February and March 1777 saw renewed attacks on the Kentucky and West Virginia frontiers. Raiding intensified in the summer. The year 1777 became one of the bloodiest in frontier history and was known as the "year of the terrible sevens." Raids extended east into the Greenbrier River, middle New River, and Tygart River Valleys. In late August 1777, approximately 200 Indians who were allied with the British attacked and besieged Fort Henry (Wheeling). The fort survived a three-day siege but many outlying farms were destroyed and numerous settlers and militiamen were killed. Colonel William Christian's successful campaign against the Cherokee in spring 1777 led to a treaty with all Cherokee bands, except the Chickamauga, and kept most Cherokee out of the war until 1780. During a peace mission to Fort Randolph in fall 1777, Chief Cornstalk and members of the Shawnee tribe were murdered by a mob of Virginia militiamen who were upset by the killing of a comrade near the fort. As a result, the Shawnee also joined forces with the British.

The Continental Congress recognized the growing problems on the Ohio frontier and sent Brigadier General Edward Hand and his troops to Fort Pitt to take command of the west. Before this, frontier defense had been left to state and county organizations and local citizens. Increased conflicts between settlers and American Indians, however, began to render this impracticable. As a result, defenses became more centralized. General Hand's initial strategy involved placing troops and militiamen at Fort Pitt, Fort Henry, Fort Randolph and Fort Kittanning on the Allegheny River above Pittsburgh. Hand also ordered that 150 militia be stationed in each county. In addition, he attempted to organize an offensive strike against a Mingo (western Iroquois) village at Pluggy's Town in July 1777, but was unsuccessful. In February 1778, Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia recommended that additional defensive measures be taken on the frontier, particularly those that would strengthen forts and increase the number of militia and scouts.

Indian attacks on the frontier renewed in spring and summer 1778. In May approximately 300 Indians laid siege to Fort Randolph at Point Pleasant. When this proved unsuccessful, they moved down the Kanawha to attack the

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Greenbrier settlements. On May 29, 1778, they attacked Donnally's Fort where approximately 85 settlers had taken refuge but were again unsuccessful.

As a result of successful campaigns beyond the Ohio River, the defensive position of the colonial government changed dramatically in summer and fall 1778. The first and most important campaign was George Rogers Clark's capture of Kaskaskia, Cahokia, and Vincennes in the Illinois Country in July 1778. The British retook Vincennes in October, but Clark returned in February 1779 and recaptured the post. The second American offensive consisted of the advance of Brigadier General Lochlan McIntosh from Fort Pitt into Ohio and the construction of Fort Laurens in east central Ohio near present day Bolivar. Fort Laurens successfully withstood a number of attacks in winter 1778 - 1779. As a result, some Indian tribes reconsidered their alliance with the British and requested talks with the Americans.

The Americans were unable to press their advantage, however. McIntosh wanted to resume his campaign toward Fort Detroit in spring 1779, but lacked logistical and political support and was replaced by Colonel Daniel Brodhead. In May 1779 Brodhead ordered the abandonment of Fort Randolph, which was immediately burned by the Shawnee, leaving the Kanawha Valley more open to attacks. Although Brodhead led a successful expedition into Pennsylvania and New York in August 1779, the American frontier was weakening. In August Brodhead abandoned Fort Laurens because of supply problems and manpower shortages. Later in the fall and winter, Colonel George Rogers Clark withdrew his main force from the Illinois Country and concentrated them at the Falls of the Ohio River (Louisville, Kentucky). His withdrawal to the east was seen as a sign of weakness. As a result, in spring and summer 1780, Indians renewed their attacks. The weakened American frontier reached a low point in 1781, when nearly all Ohio Valley tribes allied themselves with the British. Indian attacks on the frontier continued in the spring along the Tygart River Valley and down to the mouth of Indian Creek on the New River. Throughout the entire frontier region settlers suffered from continued attacks and lack of support.

Although the British army under Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown, Virginia to a combined American and French army, in October 1781, the war continued on the western frontier. The British attempted to hold as much territory as they could and continued to support and encourage border warfare. In response, the Americans continued their offensive. In March 1782 Pennsylvania militia attacked the Moravian Lenape town of Gnadenhutten and killed nearly 100 peaceful Christian Indians. In response, a force of 200 Indian and British soldiers attacked Fort Henry. The fort was under siege for three days but survived. The Indian army then moved north and attacked Rice's Fort (near Bethany, West Virginia), which also survived. These two battles were the last in West Virginia during the Revolutionary War. In September 1783, the Treaty of Paris was completed, and the Revolutionary War was over.

Post-Revolutionary Expansion and Warfare: 1783-1795

The Revolutionary War did not end all warfare on the frontier. Although Ohio Valley tribes did not feel that the British had the right to cede their land to the newly formed American government, they generally accepted the Ohio River as their boundary and wanted the Americans to keep south of the river. The Americans, however, believed that most of the Ohio Indian tribes forfeited their claim to the Ohio lands when they joined the British and broke the 1775 Treaty of Pittsburgh. The Americans wanted the boundary line to cross northern Ohio and took steps to do this with the passage of the Northwest Ordinance in October 1783. This ordinance, which was intended to be negotiable, claimed all of present-day Ohio east of the Miami River for the newly formed American government.

Soon after the passage of the Northwest Ordinance of 1783, Congress sent commissioners to discuss with groups of Indians the American policy toward the Trans-Ohio Country. Between October 1784 and January 1786, the

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commissioners met with representatives of the Haudenosaunee at Fort Stanwix, New York, with representatives of the Wyandot, Lenape, Odawa, and Chippewa at Fort McIntosh, Pennsylvania, and with the Shawnee at Fort Finney, Ohio. In the resulting Treaties of Fort Stanwix, Fort McIntosh and Fort Finney, representatives of these tribes ceded their claims to eastern and southern Ohio. Indians from the western reaches of Ohio, particularly the Miami, Wea, Piankashaw, Potawatomi, and Kickapoo, refused to meet with the commissioners unless the confederacy of northwestern Indians was recognized and treated as a whole. Consequently, they repudiated these treaties.

Despite these treaties, American Indian tribes increased their attacks during spring and summer 1786. The British, who still maintained their northwestern frontier posts at Fort Detroit and elsewhere, were actively encouraging the Indians to wage war. Settlements in Kentucky and northern West Virginia were raided. In response, new forts were built in West Virginia along the lower Kanawha and upper Ohio Rivers. In September 1786 Kentucky militia under the command of George Rogers Clark and Benjamin Logan retaliated with attacks on Shawnee towns. By summer 1788 border raiding by both American Indians and settlers reached such a high level that a full-scale border war seemed inevitable. In an attempt to avert this, the American commissioners and a council of American Indians met at Fort Harmer between October 1788 and January 1789. Here the Indians requested that the newly formed American government recognize the Ohio River as the boundary between Indian and American settlement. The Americans rejected these proposals.

Indian and settler hostilities continued in spring 1789. In retaliation for a failed offensive into Ohio by General Josiah Harmar in September 1790, Indians burned Tackett's Fort at the confluence of the Coal River and the Kanawha River. Another failed offensive against the Miami in October 1791, led by Northwest Territory Governor Arthur St. Clair, gave the Indians' confederacy new life and resulted in increased attacks on settlements on the Upper Ohio, Monongahela, Kanawha and Tygart Rivers. Following unsuccessful negotiations between the U.S. commissioners and American Indian tribes in July and August 1793, settlers living as far east as the Greenbrier Valley were in a state of panic.

After the failure of the 1793 negotiations, Congress authorized another expedition during which General Anthony Wayne defeated approximately 800 Indians in Ohio in a conflict now known as the Battle of Fallen Timbers. In November 1794, the British signed a treaty with American Commissioner John Jay agreeing to abandon their western posts, including Fort Detroit and Fort Miami. Without British aid and encouragement, the American Indian tribes could not continue their fight. In August 1795 the Treaty of Greenville was signed by American Indian representatives and U.S. Commissioners. As part of this treaty, a new boundary line was created that extended west of the Cuyahoga River across central Ohio and turned south into southwestern Indiana. This ended the decades-old contest for the Upper Ohio, including the lands of present-day West Virginia.

The Frontier Defensive System

The frontier defensive system, which primarily included the use of forts, a military or militia force and scouts, was put in place in the French and Indian War and gradually fine-tuned over time. When the French and Indian War began in 1754, local frontier defenses in what is now West Virginia were not well developed. As a result, the colony of Virginia created and administered a frontier defensive system that included the construction of fortifications and the creation of a colonial military force known as the Virginia Regiment. These initiatives reinforced the construction of residential forts built in 1754 and 1755 and the activities of the poorly organized local militia.

Following the French and Indian War and Pontiac's War, as settlers moved once again into what is now West Virginia, they established a locally organized defensive system that consisted of military forces composed of volunteers and known as the militia, and a scouting system. This system was later strengthened by the construction of new forts by

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settlers and militia and the establishment of a scouting system during Dunmore's War (1774) and the Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and by offensive military campaigns such as Andrew Lewis' Point Pleasant campaign and the campaigns of George Rogers Clark and Lochlan McIntosh. Still, settlers relied heavily on their local defensive system for protection. Few frontier settlements utilizing this frontier defensive system were abandoned, especially after 1774. Throughout this era forts were at the heart of this defensive system, but other elements were also involved. These included a military force to protect the forts and engage the enemy, a network of scouts to observe enemy movements, offensive campaigns, and government sponsored peace negotiations (the latter two initiatives were used infrequently). Military force, scouting, and frontier forts within the defensive system are discussed below.

Military Force

During the frontier period the primary military force was the local county militia, who garrisoned frontier forts and engaged enemy forces. During the French and Indian War these forces were supplemented by the Virginia Regiment. Made up of volunteers and appointed officers, it was divided into commands of men, each under the supervision of a captain. Under the command of Colonel George Washington after August 1755, the Virginia Regiment constructed at least ten forts and later occupied seven or eight others in what would become West Virginia. During the Revolutionary War the militia was supplemented by Virginia State Line Troops, regular state soldiers who enlisted to serve within the state boundaries and who garrisoned forts on the Ohio River.

The Virginia militia was modeled on an ancient English institution, requiring all free white males aged 18 to 50 (except those with vital occupations) to serve. Although the Governor was the overall commander, the militia was organized at the county level and led by the county lieutenant whose staff and company officers commanded the men. Each county had at least one regiment that was divided into five to ten companies of approximately 30 to 80 men and officers. The county lieutenant could order the militia to service within the county, but to take his regiments outside of the county he had to ask for volunteers. This often hindered offensive actions because forming a sizeable army of more than 200 to 300 men usually required the assistance of volunteers from adjacent frontier counties.

Due to relatively peaceful conditions in most of Virginia, the local militia system of volunteers did not become well organized until after the French and Indian War. Later, during Dunmore's War and the Revolutionary War, local militiamen built and garrisoned local forts as well as the larger forts on the Ohio River. They also participated in military expeditions. Accounts given in pension applications suggest that entire companies would guard a fort for anywhere from a few days to as long as six months, but usually for three months, often moving from fort to fort. Militiamen protected farmers and pursued Indian raiding parties. In addition, they participated in a number of offensive campaigns during the 1770s and 1780s.

Scouting

The use of scouts, or "Indian spies" as they were sometimes called, was another common element of the frontier defensive strategy. During the French and Indian War, scouts functioned in an offensive capacity, gathering intelligence about the enemy and attacking them in their camps when possible. Scouting parties often included hired American Indians as well. By the 1770s and 1780s, scouts had become more defensive, roaming over the landscape to look for enemy signs. Given the widely dispersed nature of frontier farms and forts and the desire of most settlers to stay on their farms during the warmer months, this system was a critical aspect of frontier defense. The Revolutionary War pension application of scout Michael Swope (Va R10366, summarized in McBride et al. 1996: A.24) provides an example of this:

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...when [scouts] saw signs of Indians they would fly from Fort to Fort and give the alarm so that preparations might be made for defensive operations by the people that were Forted and that those who had ventured out to work their corn might betake themselves to the Fort before the Indians would attack them..."

Depending upon the circumstances, scouts operated by themselves or in groups of two to three men. Sometimes scouts volunteered their services, while at other times they were drafted or ordered out. Regardless of the situation, all scouts seemed to have provided their own clothing, arms and oftentimes food, and usually operated near their homes where they were familiar with the terrain. Scouts' pension applications describe outings that lasted from four to eight days, with a set circuit of thirty to seventy miles. Often they stopped at other forts along the way and returned home for a few days of rest. When danger was anticipated, usually in the spring to fall planting and harvesting seasons or after rumors of Indian movements, scouts were generally relied upon to keep watch. During times of particular danger, extra scouts often were posted along known trails and passes.

Forts Within the Frontier Defensive System

The vast majority of frontier forts were built within three short periods: 1) 1755-1757, the first years of the French and Indian War; 2) 1774-1778, Lord Dunmore's War and the early Revolutionary War; and 3) 1785-1792, American efforts to claim and dominate lands north of the Ohio River. Each period gradually shifted the frontier further west. During the 1750s and 1760s (French and Indian War and Pontiac's War), the construction of forts was concentrated in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. Two forts were also built in the Greenbrier region during this early period. During the 1770s through the early 1780s (Dunmore's War and the Revolutionary War), as settlement shifted westward, more forts were built in the Greenbrier and New River region, the Monongahela Valley, the Tygart Valley, and in the Northern Panhandle. Two forts built during this period, Forts Randolph and Henry, were distinct from the rest as they were sometimes garrisoned by Virginia State Line Troops as well as by militia. They were constructed on the Ohio River as the first line of defense, as bases to watch for Indian movements, and to support offensive campaigns. The last major episode of fort construction, from 1785 to about 1792, continued the shift west into the Kanawha, Little Kanawha and Ohio River drainages. These forts were constructed in response to renewed levels of hostility and danger resulting from failed or incomplete negotiations by the new United States government and two failed offensive campaigns against the Ohio Valley Indian tribes. After the Battle of Fallen Timbers and the Treaty of Greenville ended the dispute over land in what is now West Virginia, frontier fortifications were no longer needed, and they gradually fell out of use. Forts have often been seen by West Virginia historians as important to the state's history. More thematic multiple fort publications include Ansel 1984, Bond 1974, Cook 1935, Lewis 1906, McBride et al. 2003, Morrison 1975, and Trail 1984.

Occupants and Life in the Fort

As noted, many of the forts were garrisoned by militia or, in the case of the French and Indian War, by Virginia Regiment troops. Garrisons usually ranged from a company of approximately 50 to 100 men to a lieutenant's or sergeant's company comprised of about 10 to 30 men. In contrast, Fort Randolph, however, commonly was fortified by 150 soldiers.

Because forts also provided a place of refuge for settlers during times of danger, especially between March and October, they functioned as centers of everyday domestic life. Oftentimes getting to the fort proved to be a harrowing experience as described by Reverend Joseph Doddridge (1824:95):

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“I well remember that, when a little boy, the family were sometimes waked up in the dead of night by an express with a report that the Indians were at hand....The whole family were instantly in motion. My father seized his gun and other implements of war. My stepmother waked up and dressed the children as well as she could...Besides the little children, we caught up what articles of clothing and provision we could get hold of in the dark for we durst not light a candle or even stir the fire. All this was done with the utmost dispatch and the silence of death. The greatest care was taken not to awaken the youngest child. To the rest it was enough to say Indian and not a whimper was heard afterwards. Thus it often happened that the whole number of families belonging to a fort who were in the evening at their homes were all in their little fortress before the dawn of the next morning. In the course of the succeeding day their household furniture was brought in by parties of the men under arms.”

Another example, provided by Captain John Stuart in his journal (Draper Manuscripts 6NN, p,112-118) describes settlers moving into Donnally's Fort in May 1778 following a warning by soldiers from Fort Randolph:

“...Captain McKee [at Fort Randolph] discovering [the Indians'] route, and concluding what their designs, dispatched [Philip] Hammon and John Prior in pursuite of them [with] orders if possible to pass them undiscovered and give the people notice of their approach...Hammon and Prior...pursued on with all speed to Colonel Andrew Donnalles, where the[y] gave the alarm [of the] approach of Indians, consisting according to the last estimate of about 200 warriors. Colonel Donnally lost no time in collecting in all his neighbors that night and dispatched a man to my house to inform me before day [that] 20 odd men including Hammon and Prior was collected and the[y] had the advantage of a stockade fort round the house. There was women and children to the amount of 60 in the fort. On the next day the[y] kept a good lookout in momentary expectation of the Indians.”

The length of time settlers remained in the forts varied greatly. In times of particularly active raiding, settlers might stay in their forts from spring until fall, less so in years when sightings or attacks were not as frequent. While some pensioners described families living in forts for the whole summer, many settlers insisted on returning to their cabins once the immediate danger subsided, making them much more vulnerable to subsequent attacks.

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F. Associated Property Types

The only associated property type for this context is the frontier fort, a building or defensive complex constructed in the middle to late eighteenth century to provide defense in the context of hostilities between Euro-American settlers/militia and initially Native Americans and after 1775 also the British military. The major bursts of fort building would have been during and in association with the French and Indian War and Pontiac's Uprising (1750-1763), Lord Dunmore's War (1774), and the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783). Currently there are at least five resources from West Virginia listed on the National Register that might meet the criteria of this Multi-Property Documentation Form. These include the eighteenth century Prickett's Fort in Marion County, which is listed as Prickett's Bay Boat Launch Site or Prickett's Fort Monument (and not to be confused with the Jacob Prickett log house near the reconstructed Prickett's Fort, neither of which meet the requirements of the Frontier Fort Multi-Property Document). Four buildings in northeastern West Virginia are listed as French and Indian War or Revolutionary War period fortifications: the stone Fort Van Meter in Hampshire County, the brick Fort Pleasant (also called Van Meter's Fort, Town Fort or the Isaac Van Meter House) in Hardy County, the log Michael Kern's cabin in Morgantown, Monongalia County, and the log Fort Ashby in Mineral County. While the latter is listed for the log structure on the site, recent archeology has demonstrated the preservation of fort stockade trenches and other archeological features from French and Indian War and Revolutionary War periods preserved adjacent to and under the log structure.

Frontier forts were established as a base for militia and a place of refuge for settlers. The concept of a fort that military personnel and civilians would use for refuge from an enemy is an ancient one that settlers of many nationalities brought with them to the New World. While forts in Europe were often made of stone or earth, those on the western frontier of colonial America were more often constructed of logs because wood was plentiful. Most frontier settlers were likely familiar with both log blockhouses and wooden stockaded forts, as these structures had been constructed in the New World since the seventeenth century. A frontier fort can be composed of a cluster of resources, such as buildings (which can be a house that predates the fortification, as long as it was built with some connection to defense, or a specialized building like a blockhouse), structures like stockade walls/fences, powder magazines, small structures like lean-tos, or tent platforms for temporary lodging of militia or settlers, storage buildings or cellars for keeping food and supplies, parade grounds or other activity areas for militia training, and the below ground remains from any to all of the above. Since we have no known cases of earthworks being built during this time (given a lack of field artillery), this is not mentioned but should be considered if a new example of an eighteenth-century fort with an earthwork is found. If all or most of the buildings or structures from the fort are no longer extant (which is common), the main component or resource is the archeological remains from any to all of the above buildings, structures, or objects that had composed the fort.

Early historians of the West Virginia frontier usually classify frontier forts into three main types: blockhouses (usually residential forts), stockades (common on both residential and militia-built forts), and large forts (typically militia-built forts). Blockhouses are sturdy two-story log houses that may have an upper story that projects several feet beyond the lower story. Strong log or stone houses with gun slots were often called blockhouses even though they did not possess the second story overhang. In contrast, some settlers simply lived too far from a fort to take refuge in them during an Indian raid, consequently, they fortified their own houses by adding these gun slots or other defensive measures. Log houses with a surrounding palisade were referred to as stockades.

Frontier forts can be located in any setting, though most frontier forts were built on ridges or terraces overlooking a nearby permanent spring, creek or river with a high degree of defensibility. But some were also built on floodplains, and in the case of residential forts where the house was built first, the location might not be very defensible. In most cases, the source of water is outside of, but close to, the fort, making it easily accessible but less likely to become polluted by human

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activity. Interestingly, the forts in the Greenbrier Valley were generally not located on the top of a ridge or terrace, but rather on the slope facing the water source, in a position known as the military crest, slightly downhill from the actual ridge crest. This position enabled fort residents to better see the valley below while concealing them from enemies above, rendering the forts much easier to defend. The consistent placement of forts in this location suggests that frontiersmen may have had some knowledge of or experience with military tactics. Forts were often located close to major transportation corridors. If frontier forts were not built by militia, they were often built by community leaders, or persons with a higher-than-average wealth and/or social status, and the resources to be able to provide defense for the community.

Fort Design

Written records document orders issued by the colonial government that provided guidance for the construction of new forts. For instance, on October 26, 1755 George Washington ordered Lieutenant John Bacon to build two forts on Patterson Creek (Forts Ashby and Cocke), as follows (Abbott 1983, Vol. 2:137):

“You are to make choice of the most convenient Ground, and direct them in building a Quadrangular Fort of Ninety feet, with Bastions. You will direct them in what part of the Fort to build their Barracks, and the most convenient part of a Magazine.”

A drawing of a fort belonging to Washington, dated 1756, in the George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress depicts a fort with four bastions (Figure 1). This drawing illustrates a variety of buildings or rooms, including captains' quarters, officers' and soldiers' guard rooms, barracks, a prison, and storerooms. Fort construction did not always follow a standard plan, however. In Washington's January 9, 1756 letter to Waggoner he states (Abbott 1983, Vol. 2:266), “...If you find that the plan of the forts on Patterson's Creek will be too tedious to erect (as the Bastions are of hewn logs) you are to make the whole a Stockade.”

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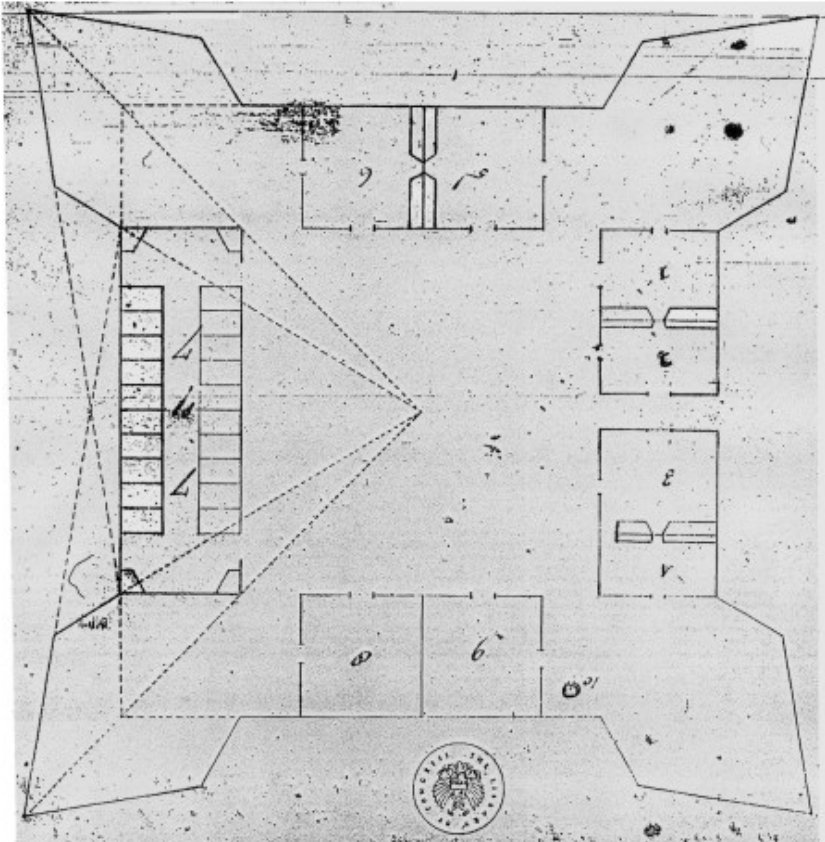


Figure 1. George Washington's plan for a fort.

This indicates that the bastions on the Patterson Creek forts were constructed of horizontally hewn logs, while at other forts they were a continuation of the vertical stockade logs. Some forts may have had only two opposing bastions, rather than the above mentioned four. As stated by the Virginia Council of War in July, 1756, "...It is agreed that the commanding officers give orders...that the stockades be at least fourteen feet long; that all other forts [except Vause] be made 60 feet square with two bastions in each fort." (Kontz 1925:100-102). These instructions were issued for the Trout Rock Fort at Hugh Man's Mill (Fort Upper Tract) and at Peterson's Fort (Fort Defiance), located in the Eastern Panhandle. It is not known whether these instructions were followed.

Fort design may have changed slightly by the 1770s, with a change from four to two corner bastions or blockhouses. However, very few firsthand descriptions of forts exist and great variability is to be expected. One of the best written descriptions of West Virginia frontier forts is provided by Reverend Joseph Doddridge in his (1824:94) *Notes on the Settlement and Indian Wars*:

"The fort consisted of cabins, blockhouses, and stockades. A range of cabins commonly formed one side, at least, of the fort. Divisions or partitions of logs separated the cabins from each other. The blockhouses were built at angles of the fort. They projected about two feet beyond the outer walls of the cabins and stockades. In some forts, instead of blockhouses, the angles of the fort were furnished with bastions. A

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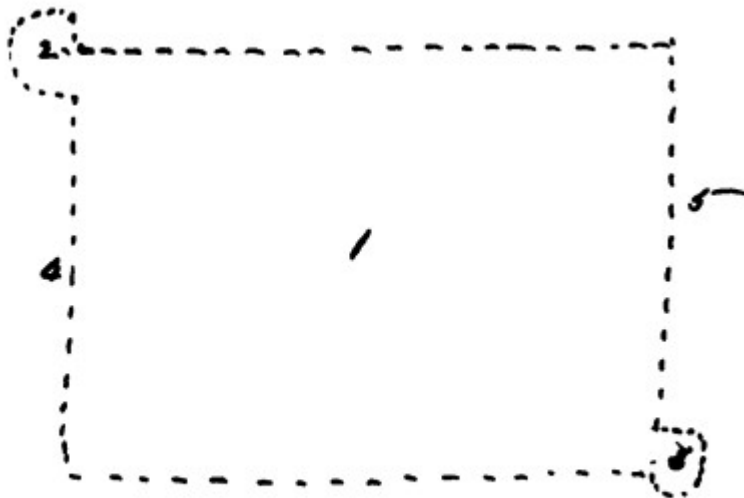
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large folding gate made of thick slabs, nearest the spring, closed the fort. In some places less exposed a single blockhouse, with a cabin or two, constituted the whole fort.”

This statement provides an idea of the possible variation among residential forts. Doddridge aptly above-described large forts. A more general account of the structure of frontier forts is provided by Spencer Records whose narrative of frontier life in the region includes a sketch of a typical fort (Figure 2, Spencer Records journal, Draper Manuscripts, 23CC1-108).



Plan of a Stockade fort.

Figure 2. Spencer Records' drawing of a typical stockaded fort.

The document has been preserved within the Kentucky Papers of the Draper Manuscripts:

“In the first place the ground is cleared off, the size they intend to build the fort, which was an oblong square...Then a ditch was dug three feet deep...Logs, twelve or fifteen inches in diameter and fifteen feet long were cut and split open...[and] set in the ditch...Port holes were made high enough that if a ball should be shot in, it would pass overhead. The cabins were built far enough from the stockades to have plenty of room to load and shoot. Two bastions were constructed at opposite corners with port holes...The use of [each of] these two bastions was to rake the two sides of the fort, should the Indians get close up to the stockades...

Some forts, sometimes called stations [or large forts], were built with cabins all set close together, half-faced, or the roof all sloping one way with high side out, raised eight feet high, and overlaid with split logs. The upper story was over-jutted two feet, and raised high enough to have plenty of room to load and shoot, with port-holes both above and below. The use of the over-jut was to prevent the Indians from climbing up, should they get close to the wall, and from it they could shoot down on them....”

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Descriptions of forts in West Virginia are very rare, however one is provided in De Haas' *History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of Western Virginia* (1851).

“Fort Henry was a parallelogram, having its greatest length along the river. The pickets were of white oak, and about seventeen feet in height; it was supported by bastions, and this well adapted for resisting a savage force, however powerful. It contained several cabins, arranged along the western wall. The commandant's house, store-house, etc., were in the centre; the captains house was two stories high, and the top so adapted as to be used for firing a small cannon from...The store-house was but one story, and very strong, so as to answer for a lock-up.”

Fort Henry was also depicted in an artist's reconstruction, although it should be noted that this painting shows blockhouses at the corners, rather than bastions as mentioned above.

In summary, forts that were constructed by the Virginia Regiment as part of George Washington's chain of French and Indian War forts should typically include a stockade with either 90 foot or 60-foot-long walls, and two to four bastions, some of which may have been constructed with horizontal logs. Most forts would likely have included one or more central structures, either blockhouses or cabins, surrounded by a log stockade. Later forts constructed between 1763 and the 1790s were likely more variable, possibly with a greater emphasis on multi-purpose blockhouses, rather than the more customary bastions. Many places described as “forts” in local history likely consisted of nothing more than a strong cabin, stone building, or blockhouse, without a stockade. Some forts were also residences, with an existence preceding and extending beyond the defensive period.

Documents and oral tradition suggest that many of the smaller forts, both blockhouses and stockades, were private residences, in which case they were occupied year-round with the population swelling in times of danger. Militia-built forts were typically not civilian residences. Many forts also served as the social, educational, economic and political center of the community, especially since there were very few towns or other central places at this time. Doddrige's account, especially his wording of “families belonging to a fort,” suggests a close connection between the community and the fort within it. Mercantile and service activities such as blacksmithing often occurred in forts. Some forts, such as Fort Pleasant in Hardy County and the Fort Van Meter located in Ohio County, functioned as county courts. Most fort builders or owners became community leaders, gaining social and political prestige by helping to protect neighboring settlers. When building his Virginia chain of forts in 1756, George Washington instructed his men to consult local leaders in locating fort sites. Activities documented at forts include dances, marriages, church services, and school classes. In his autobiography, Paul Henkel (n.d.) describes attending school at Hinkle's Fort and at another fort in Pendleton County during the French and Indian War:

“It was indeed a very restricted life in the fort, a veritable imprisonment. In the same place however I was sent with other children to a German school. We had a German woman for a teacher, Catherine Alein by name. She was well versed in reading, writing, and arithmetic. As soon as I could read properly I was sent away from home to school in another fort. My teacher here was a learned man, a doctor of medicine, William Geinitz by name.”

Previous Archeology at Frontier Forts in West Virginia

Because many frontier forts in West Virginia will be represented primarily by archeological deposits, archeological investigations of frontier forts are very important. While the archeology is best combined with documentary

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and oral history sources, it is often only the archeological deposits that can provide details on the size, appearance, exact location, and occupational history of frontier forts. Many of the frontier fort sites have been plowed but archeology has demonstrated consistent preservation of fort era artifacts in the plow zone and in subsurface features below the plow zone that contain data applicable to research questions. These features include stockade trenches defining curtain walls and bastions (projections from a stockade fence wall that allows for the better coverage of those walls, a design that goes back in Europe at least to the 15th century if not earlier), storage cellars including powder magazines, living quarters, and activity areas. These features enhance our understanding of fort design and construction, intensity and type of occupation (such as civilian versus military), functional specialization of forts, and site location.

Archeological investigations of frontier forts have demonstrated that militia forts contain relatively few artifacts when compared to residential forts because of their shorter occupation. Low artifact density is a significant and meaningful finding, drawing our attention to the temporary nature of fort occupation and the scarcity of material goods during this early period of settlement. Reverend Joseph Doddridge (1824), who wrote about frontier life in the Virginias, helps us understand the lack of refined ceramics at many fort sites when he states, "...The furniture for the table, for several years after the settlement of this country, consisted of a few pewter dishes, plates and spoons; but mostly of wooden bowls, trenchers and noggins. If these were scarce, gourds and hard-shelled squashes made up the deficiency." Archeology serves as a source of insight into the food consumed, the tools, clothing and other items used by the early settlers at their forts and fortified home sites. Artifacts, when studied in combination with such things as building remnants and other archeological features, help archeologists determine the date and function of sites and understand the kinds of activities and events that took place within the forts.

Although still limited in number and intensity, archeological investigations in West Virginia are beginning to make contributions to our understanding of forts and frontier life. These previous archeological investigations have concentrated on French and Indian War (1750-1763) forts in the Potomac drainage and on Lord Dunmore's War (1774) and Revolutionary War (1775-1783) forts in the Greenbrier and Middle New River Valleys. In addition, two forts in Monongalia County, Fort Martin and Kern's Fort, dating to Lord Dunmore's War/ Revolutionary War, have been located and investigated.

The Potomac Drainage

Williams' Fort is a French and Indian War house fort built by Richard Williams in Springfield, Hampshire County, in 1756 in what is now called Washington's Bottom. In June 2015, Stephen McBride utilized a metal detector to survey an area where a private collector had found buckles, metal buttons, lead balls, and other artifacts, recovering wrought nails, a buckle fragment, creamware ceramic fragments, and unidentified lead and iron fragments. In 2018 Oxbow Cultural Research and the Western Maryland Chapter of the Archeological Society of Maryland excavated 28 shovel test pits (STPs) in this same area, recovering historic artifacts, including creamware, redware, clear glass, and a thimble. In May 2019 three experienced metal detectorists identified a second concentration of colonial artifacts on an adjacent ridge (Suzane Tressel, personal communication 2024).

Excavations at the French and Indian War Edwards' Fort in Hampshire County (Gardner 1990, McBride 2001, 2005, 2013) produced a number of interesting discoveries, including the cellar of the original Joseph Edwards house, sections of stockade trenching including two bastions, and two shallow features that are the basins of subterranean winter huts. Edwards' Fort appears to have been of an irregular design with side and corner demi bastions, and also was possibly altered over time. Edwards' Fort also appears to contain at least two separate concentrations of 1750s and 1760s refuse features that may indicate two separate habitation areas. The fort included a protected passageway to a spring. A local

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preservation group, the Fort Edwards Foundation, built a museum building where they interpret the history and archeology of Edwards' Fort, including reconstruction of a section of stockade wall.

Bill Gardner and W. Stephen McBride have directed archeological investigations at the French and Indian War stockade at Ashby's Fort in the town of Fort Ashby in Mineral County. These investigations showed that this fort had three very regular bastions that follow the plan laid out by George Washington, and then one irregular bastion enlarged to reach near a spring and to fit the local topographic conditions. The curtain walls were constructed of a vertical stockade, and the bastions by horizontal stockading. Internal features such as cellars and possibly internal partitions to create storage and sleeping areas were documented in the bastions. A subsequent stockade was constructed at Ashby's Fort during the Revolutionary War, at the same location but not on exactly the same footprint as the French and Indian War fort. Stockade trenches are present from this second fort as well (McBride and McBride 2022b). Much of the archeology at Ashby's Fort has been conducted in concert with a well-organized local preservation group (the Friends of Ashby's Fort). The Friends created museum exhibits inside two structures and marked the French and Indian War fort on the ground. Stockade curtain walls are marked by wooden postmold sections, and the horizontal bastions are marked and interpreted by wooden planks laid on the ground, and with seven outdoor interpretive signs. The interior museum exhibits include artifacts from the excavations. Other frontier fort sites in the Potomac drainage have been searched for, but the failed attempts are not discussed here as they do not advance our understanding of the nature of these sites, as needed for National Register evaluation.

Middle New River and Greenbrier Valley Studies

Frontier forts located in the middle New River and Greenbrier River valleys have also been studied systematically. One of the first attempts to preserve the frontier history in the Greenbrier Valley occurred in the early 1900s when local historians erected monuments on or near several prominent frontier fort sites. In 1990, because reliable documentary or oral history information was available, an archeological survey attempted to locate a number of these forts, most of which were built in 1774 during Lord Dunmore's War but used through the American Revolution. These are: Day's Fort, Drennon's Fort and William Warwick's Fort in Pocahontas County; Arbuckle's Fort, Donnally's Fort, Fort Savannah, and Stuart's Fort in Greenbrier County; Cook's Fort, Knox's Fort, and Wood's Fort in Monroe County; and Baughman's Fort, Farrell's Fort, and Van Bibber's Fort in Summers County. All of these sites date from the 1770s and 1780s except for Baughman's Fort, which was built and destroyed in 1755. Archeological survey proved successful in identifying all but Baughman's Fort, Farrell's Fort, and Van Bibber's Fort (McBride and McBride 1991). This survey was important to provide a baseline of what frontier fort sites looked like. We found that the exclusively militia fort sites typically had a low artifact density and a higher proportion of arms artifacts (such as lead balls and gun flints) and less ceramics and container glass, compared to forts that were built at an established residence. In the latter case, there would still often be a higher proportion of arms artifacts compared to a non-fort residential site.

This baseline survey was augmented by archival and oral historical research and archeological survey throughout the 1990s to early 2000s and resulted in the identification of McCoy's Fort in Greenbrier County; Thompson's Fort in Pickaway, the Lewis Fort near Moncove Lake, Jarrett's Fort on Wolf Creek and Handley's Fort, all in Monroe County; and Clover Lick Fort in Pocahontas County (McBride and McBride 2014, 2018). Other frontier fort sites in the Greenbrier and middle New River drainages have been searched for, but the failed attempts are not discussed here as they do not advance our understanding of the nature of the frontier fort sites and the deposits they contain, as needed for National Register evaluation.

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The location of frontier forts in the Greenbrier and middle New River Valleys revealed a pattern in the locations that were chosen to build frontier forts. For example, most of the forts were built on ridges or terraces overlooking a nearby permanent spring, creek or river. In most cases, the source of water is outside of, but close to, the fort, making it easily accessible but less likely to become polluted by human activity. Interestingly, the forts were generally not located on the top of a ridge or terrace, but rather on the slope facing the water source, in a position known as the military crest, slightly downhill from the actual ridge crest. This position enabled fort residents to better see the valley below while concealing them from enemies above, rendering the forts much easier to defend. The consistent placement of forts in this location suggests that frontiersmen may have had some knowledge of or experience with military tactics.

Comparing a 1775 tithable tax list for the Greenbrier Valley with information about fort locations provides some insight into the distribution of forts across the landscape. All areas within the Greenbrier Valley with 12 or more tithables, or taxable adult males, had at least one fort. In most areas the ratio of forts to tithables ranged from one fort for every 12 to 17 adult males. The distance between forts ranged from 3 to 18 miles, with an average distance of 6 miles. A higher density of forts was present in the western edge of the Greenbrier and Middle New River valleys, probably due to its greater exposure to Indian incursions (McBride and McBride 2014). This matches with the description of Revolutionary War militiaman David Crouch (Draper Manuscripts 12CC227) who wrote, "In Tygarts Valley the forts were not more than 4, 5, or 6 miles apart. There were some 10 or 12 forts. All of the forts were stockaded, with bastions for the sentries to stand in at night." The 3-to-18-mile interval between forts in the Greenbrier Valley falls well within the maximum interval of 25 miles recommended by George Washington in 1756. Much earlier research by Louis Koontz (1925) suggests that the distance between the major West Virginia forts of the French and Indian War ranged from 10 to 26 miles. If smaller stockades and blockhouses were included, the interval would have been smaller as well.

As mentioned above, the 1990 survey of Greenbrier and Middle New River forts (McBride and McBride 1991) showed that most fort sites produce a low density of eighteenth-century artifacts, not surprising given the isolated conditions of the frontier and the short length of occupation of many of the forts. Of the artifacts recovered the most common have been hand-wrought nails followed by animal bone, redware and creamware ceramics. Artifacts of particular interest recovered in 1990 included two French gunflints (recovered from Arbuckle's and Cook's forts), two coin buttons (from Arbuckle's and Drennon's Forts), melted lead and a kaolin pipe stem (from Warwick's Fort), a two-tine fork (from Donnally's Fort), and a two inch cannon ball (from Stuart's Fort), all of which were illustrated in McBride et al. 2003. The cannon ball from Stuart's Fort may indicate the presence of a small cannon. As expected, residential forts (Drennon's, Donnally's, and Knox's) produced more artifacts and a higher proportion of ceramics, especially in proportion to the architectural artifacts, than the non-residential forts (Warwick's, Arbuckle's, Savannah, Stuart's, and Cook's), which had more intermittent occupations. Day's Fort and Wood's Fort were not well documented in this regard, but the archeology suggests that they were residential forts.

Since these surveys, Stephen and Kim McBride have conducted more intensive archeological investigations on Arbuckle's Fort, Donnally's Fort, and McCoy's Fort in Greenbrier County; Jarrett's Fort, Thompson's Fort and Cook's Fort in Monroe County; and Warwick's Fort in Pocahontas County. They have written three more synthetic booklets on the archeology of frontier forts in the Greenbrier and Middle New River Valleys, by county, that summarize the major findings of this work (McBride and McBride 2014, 2018, 2022a), much of which was funded by grants from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History or the West Virginia Humanities Council to the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission. These investigations have resulted in a much larger artifact assemblage compared to the survey work, and have revealed some very interesting and unusual artifacts that appear to be unique to frontier fort sites (or at least have not yet been found on regular eighteenth century residential sites), such as a glass letter seal that imprints the word "Liberty" and an amulet with an inscribed X suggesting an African American occupant at Arbuckle's Fort, and a

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glass intaglio with a likeness of King George III at Warwick’s Fort. This is along with the previously demonstrated pattern of a higher proportion of arms-related artifacts compared to eighteenth century residential sites. The Cook’s Fort artifact distribution pattern was very unusual in that the interior of the fort appears to have been kept very clean and a dense refuse midden was found just outside the fort’s northern wall (McBride and McBride 2022a).

The more intensive archeology has also showed that frontier fort sites typically have good preservation of floral and faunal remains useful for understanding past diets, and features which provide information on the physical structure of the forts, something that is rarely mentioned in the archival record. The archeological investigations have revealed the dominance of classic two bastion wooden stockades (as documented by stockade trenches) on militia-built frontier forts like Arbuckle’s Fort (plus an interior chimney and blockhouse), Donnally’s Fort (built around Andrew Donnally’s house), and Cook’s Fort (no blockhouse located), and less academic one bastion designs with intermittent stockading on Jarrett’s Fort (build around David Jarrett’s house) and Warwick’s Fort (a militia-built fort with another unusual features, a circular tower attached to a log building). These differences are illustrated in Figures 3 and 4.

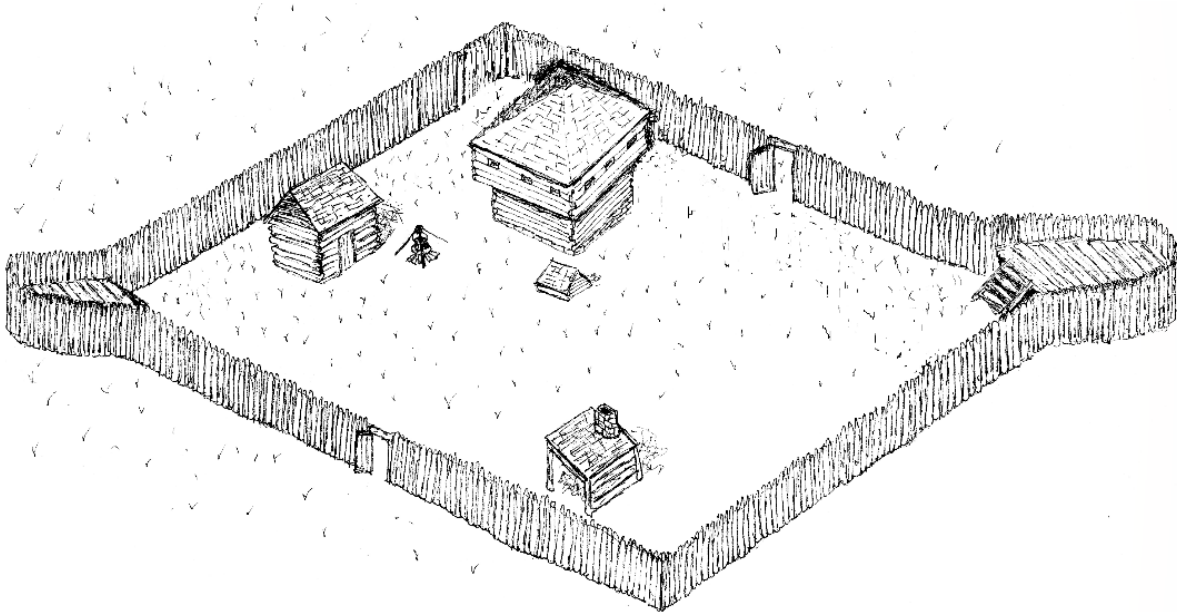


Figure 3. Arbuckle’s Fort based on archeology, by W. Stephen McBride.

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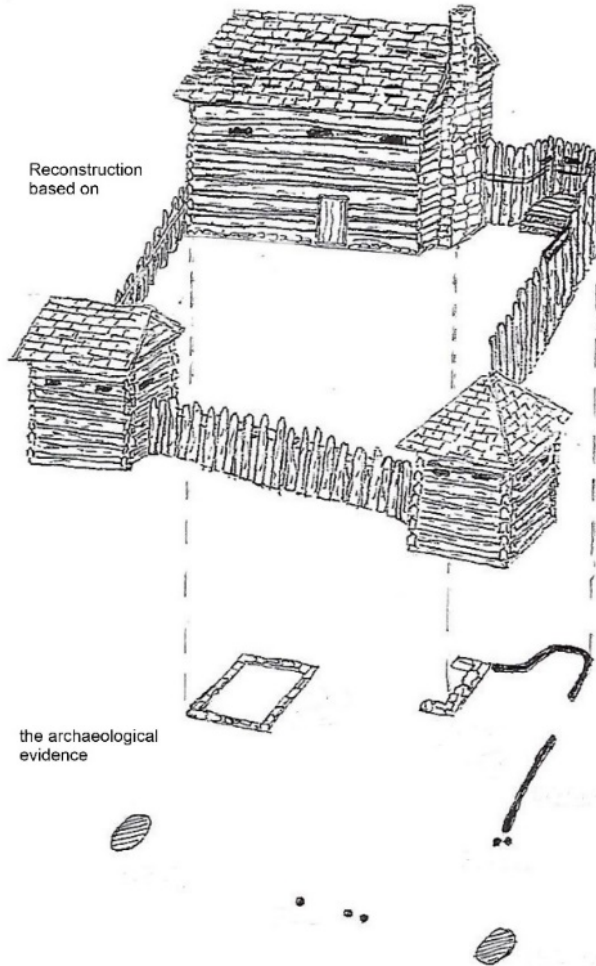


Figure 4. David Jarrett's Fort based on archeology, by W. Stephen McBride.

Archeology at the residential Thompson's Fort and McCoy's Fort did not result in any evidence of stockade trenches but have produced the remains of structural features like the house chimneys and cellars. The investigations suggest that common features at fort sites include stockade trenches, cellars and refuse pits (some cellars possibly functioning as a powder magazine), postmolds around cellars to suggest the present of overlying support buildings, and discrete activity areas of high concentrations of animal bone and cast-iron kettles indicating food preparation, and at Arbuckle's Fort, a separate area for blacksmithing (McBride and McBride 2014, 2018, 2022a).

Monongalia County

Excavations at Fort Martin, a 1770 residence fortified in 1774 (Lord Dunmore's War), showed that it was radically different in design, construction and intensity of occupation than the Greenbrier Valley militia-built two-bastion

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forts like Arbuckle's, Donnally's and Cook's forts. Fort Martin was a residential fort as opposed to a militia fort and so not surprisingly produced a higher density of domestic artifacts than most exclusively militia fort sites. Preliminary archeological investigations at Fort Martin suggest that if a stockade was present, it resembled a fence with large posts spaced out about 16 feet, with connecting fence of a much less substantial nature in between (Lesser 1982; Payne and Basilik 1980).

Kern's Fort was a 1772 residence fortified in 1774 (Lord Dunmore's War), with a standing log structure (covered in clapboard, with port holes for rifle firing on the back wall) and oral tradition of an enclosing stockade fence. Shovel test survey led by Pam Casto (2013) identified potential eighteenth century artifacts at about 70 cm below surface. A geophysical survey led by Jarod Burks identified a series of small round anomalies that may be postmolds spaced about three feet apart on a lot across from the log house. Near the log house is a later stone house that contains a spring in the basement; local oral history is that this spring was within the fort's stockade fence (Casto 2013).

Property Type Significance

The importance of frontier forts to West Virginia's colonial history and settlement cannot be exaggerated. Forts were part of a defensive system that also included a military presence, a network of scouts, offensive campaigns and government peace negotiations. This system was a frontier adaptation that made possible the colonization and conquest of a territory whose ownership was very much in dispute with Native Americans and in some cases European powers. Forts anchored the local defensive system, providing operational bases for militia and scouts and serving as places of refuge for settlers. Without a network of residential and militia forts, most of West Virginia would not have been settled by people of European ancestry until well after the end of the American Revolution.

During the eighteenth century, there were not that many nucleated settlements in West Virginia, especially in the central to western parts of the state. Many forts functioned as the first nucleated central places, or entrepôts, and were the locus for county court meetings, economic transactions, social and religious gatherings. Activities documented at forts include dances, marriages, church services, and school classes. The fort builders or owners were either community leaders when the fort was established, or became community leaders, gaining social and political prestige by establishing a fort and helping to protect the neighboring settlers.

Frontier forts are often mentioned in local histories, even though the documentation on their exact location or structure is relatively vague. Families passed down that their ancestors took refuge in a fort in times of danger from attack by Native Americans, or that certain family members were born in a fort and maintain an attachment to the forts as places that helped their ancestors establish their settlement. The placing of monuments on or near to fort sites, or their place on at least 76 historic highway markers (Adams 2001) all across West Virginia, shows the high value given to these sites as places of significant history.

Criteria and Level of Significance

Frontier Forts can be significant under any of the usual National Register Criteria, A-D. They can be significant under Criterion A (events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history) as long as this association between the frontier fort in question and these broad patterns of history can be established. Frontier forts can be significant under Criteria B (associated with the lives of persons significant in our past) as long as the relationship between the frontier fort and persons important to history can be established. Frontier Forts can be significant under Criterion C (that embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the

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work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction) but this will probably be a more difficult Criteria to justify given the relatively low number of extant Frontier fort buildings and the low number of archeological frontier forts with a sufficient level of excavation to demonstrate the placement of that fort within typologies or as representative of a type. It is more likely that a frontier fort site could demonstrate construction methods. Many of the other subsets of this criteria, such as possessing high artistic values, will probably not be relevant to frontier forts. The most common Criterion for frontier fort nominations, especially for archeological frontier forts, will be Criterion D (yielded, or may be likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history). For a listing under Criterion D, the frontier fort needs to have sufficient integrity and a level of information about its date, structure, and occupational history to provide an understanding of how the frontier fort functioned within the eighteenth-century frontier defense system.

As for the level of significance, many neighborhood house or residential forts are probably significant only at the local level, especially if they did not draw settlers from a broader region and did not involve stationing large numbers of militia. But regional forts, often those built by militia, can take on extra-local or state level significance if they involved persons significant at the state level or played a stronger role in events at the state level, such as protecting the settlement of a regional to statewide area, or were a staging ground for state level events (such as the gathering of militia before the 1774 march to Point Pleasant during Lord Dunmore's War). Forts can be potentially significant at the national level if they involved persons significant at the national level or were important in nationally significant events. A case for national level significance might be made for Fort Blair, associated with the Battle of Point Pleasant in 1774. It is recommended that authors of frontier fort individual listings confer with the SHPO office regarding the preferred level of significance if they have questions about this.

Property Type Registration Requirements.

There are general registration requirements for frontier forts, and then some more specific requirements for archeological deposits stemming from their unique nature. Frontier forts must have primary archival or very strong secondary historical documentation to establish their function as a fort, preferably being called a fort historically and having a demonstrated connection to being built by the Euro-American settlers or militia for frontier defense in the eighteenth century in relation to the French and Indian War, Lord Dunmore's War, the American Revolutionary War, and periods of settlement conflict following the Revolutionary War, typically ending by the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794. Oral history is helpful but there should be other sources (archival or archeological) to corroborate the oral tradition. The frontier fort should have Integrity of location (should not be moved), and setting, with the setting retaining sufficient similarity to the eighteenth century setting to convey how the fort functioned within its cultural landscape and setting. Buildings, structures, or objects should have some means of precisely dating the resource to the eighteenth-century defense system, such as archival records, archeological data, chronologically diagnostic architectural components (such as gun slots). For log buildings dendrochronology is strongly recommended. Buildings, structures, or objects should also have good integrity of workmanship and building materials; changes or additions need to be minimal and not detract from a viewer's ability to read the building, structure, or object as built for defense in the eighteenth century.

Features Unique to Archeological Sites

Because most frontier forts were built for the short term, and often dismantled after the need for defense was past (by 1794 and most often earlier), usually no buildings, structures, or objects will be extant, and the only remains of the frontier fort will be archeological deposits. Due to the methods of archeological interpretation, archeological sites with relatively short occupations present the most clarity and facilitate application of site data to research questions about fort

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structure, occupants, and lifeways within the fort. Some sites with longer occupations can qualify if there is a demonstrated separation of the middle to late eighteenth century fort period deposits from earlier or later deposits, either by vertical stratigraphic separation (discrete layers of occupations) or horizontal separation such as in concentrations or the artifacts that are part of discrete fort features like a trash pit or building foundation or more diffuse and scattered refuse middens that have horizontal separation from the areas of earlier or later deposits.

Archeological frontier fort sites must have diagnostic middle to late eighteenth century artifacts to help confirm the time of occupation, and to address research questions about material culture and lifeways, and activities at the fort. These include such temporally sensitive artifacts as delftware, white salt glazed stoneware, creamware, and redware ceramics, wrought nails, hand blown bottle and drinking glass, lead musket/rifle balls, French honey and European gray gunflints, flat brass or pewter buttons, and brass shoe or knee buckles, and coins or other artifact with dates on them. Good preservation of faunal and botanical preservation is necessary to address subsistence questions. Frontier forts that are purely archeological sites should also contain artifacts that relate to the military function of the fort, and the stationing of militia there, such as arms (gun parts) and ammunition (such as lead balls). Since many forts were also domestic houses, a wide range of non-military domestic artifacts can be expected.

G. Geographical Data

The geographical context for this multi-property documentation form is the state of West Virginia.

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H. Summary of Identification and Evaluation Methods

This multi-property documentation form grew out of archival research, archeological survey, and archeological excavations on frontier forts by the authors, beginning in 1990 and continuing today. Many of the publications which developed out of this research are listed in Section I below. McBride and McBride 2011 gives special attention to methods in the research on frontier forts. The archival research was focused on putting the forts into a broader context, and gradually developed into an understanding that they functioned within a frontier defensive system composed of militia, specialized roving militia called Scouts or Indian Spies, and forts, with the latter being the physical and geographic anchor to the system, the place where militia were based and where settlers could take refuge. Besides relying on secondary sources, we learned over time that certain primary documents, especially correspondence preserved in the Draper Manuscripts (Kellogg 1916, 1917; Thwaites and Kellogg 1905, 1908, 1912), and Revolutionary War pension applications (which we initially researched via microfilm at the National Archives in Washington but now widely available online via the Fold3 database) provided the best information about frontier forts. We also learned that the oral tradition could be invaluable for more specific locational information, but also subject to error. The temporal focus of the historic context on the eighteenth century was determined by an understanding of the boundaries of the conflict between the Euro-American settlers and the Native Americans (who after 1775 were increasingly allied with the British) and the extent of the hostilities that formed the French and Indian War and Pontiac's War (1755-1763), and Lord Dunmore's War (1774) and the American Revolution (1775-1783), up to the Battle of Fallen Timbers (1794) which ended all Native American attacks in the Ohio Valley. The listings of frontier forts presented in a comprehensive statewide booklet published by the West Virginia Department of Culture and History (McBride et al. 2003) relied on both secondary and primary sources. An understanding of the factors influencing frontier fort location developed from archeological survey, especially in the Middle New River and Greenbrier Valley, as well as the archival and oral historical data.

The property type of frontier fort is a construct based on its function as a defensive center, within the delineated time period in which these forts were needed. Information on the structure of forts came from limited archival sources but especially from archeological excavations. These were summarized above in Section F. Associated Property Types. The geographical focus on the state of West Virginia is somewhat arbitrary, and all of the lands were at that time were within the state of Virginia. But the state of West Virginia is a useful construct since National Register Nominations are submitted by the State Historic Preservation Office.

Registration requirements were developed based on our professional knowledge about frontier forts, and especially from the data on the structure of archeological sites from our archeological excavations on a number of French and Indian War, and Lord Dunmore's War to American Revolutionary War frontier fort sites, and our resulting understanding of the kinds of archeological resources contained in these fort sites. We were also influenced by the nature of archeological site inference and our knowledge of the categories of data that are needed to provide reliable data that can be applied to an understanding of the structure of frontier forts, their occupants, material culture used in the forts, and activities and lifeways within the forts.

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