

Frontier Forts

IN WEST VIRGINIA

HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATIONS



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THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL material reported on in this

booklet resulted from the combined efforts of many scholars who are not cited individually in the text (but see the “Archaeological Studies” section in “For Further Reading” at the end of the booklet). Without their interest and persistence, the data summarized here would not exist. Bill Gardner of Thunderbird Archaeological Associates directed the early work at Fort Edwards and Greg Adamson the excavations at Fort Ashby. They, along with Carole Nash of James Madison University, currently work to locate Forts Seybert and Hinkle. Subsequent excavation at Fort Edwards was directed by W. Stephen McBride of Wilbur Smith Associates, with the assistance of Kurt Rademaker and Chris Rankin. Fort Martin was first brought to the attention of the archaeological community by the survey work of Michael Dorsey, then of the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey. Subsequent excavations were directed by archaeologists Ted Payne and Kenneth Basilik from Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Research, Inc. Both field seasons were later summarized by Hunter Lesser, formerly of the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey.

Archaeologists J. David McBride and Hunter Lesser as well as students and staff from the Kentucky Archaeological Survey (a joint undertaking of the Kentucky Heritage Council and the University of Kentucky) assisted authors Stephen McBride and Kim McBride in surveying the Greenbrier and Middle New River Valleys and in excavating Arbuckle’s Fort and Thompson’s Fort. Archaeologist Chris Rankin of Wilbur Smith Associates constructed the CAD drawing that appears as Figure 3.24, based on his mapping at Arbuckle’s Fort. Terry Martin of Illinois State Museum analyzed the animal bones, and Jack Rossen of Ithaca College analyzed the ethnobotanical remains from Arbuckle’s Fort. Robert Maslowski of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers secured funding and administered two fort surveys in Summers County. His classes from Concord College participated in survey and in excavations at Arbuckle’s and Thompson’s Forts. Archaeologist Pat Trader compiled the 2001 Archaeology Month poster, which focused on frontier fort research. Local citizens with an interest in archaeology also contributed many hours to the survey and excavations. We especially mention Dave, Mona, Barbie, and Cass Dobbins, Larry Hefner and Rob Mott for their continual assistance in the Greenbrier and Middle New River excavations.

Frontier fort research and archaeology have been funded by many institutions. The long term research in the Greenbrier and Middle New River Valleys, including background research on the frontier defensive system, archaeological survey, and excavations at Arbuckle's and Thompson's Forts, was nurtured by the fund raising efforts of Steve Trail and Myra Ziegler of the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission. This process also benefits from Steve Trail's many years of research and involvement with the West Virginia Archaeological Society. Funds came primarily from the West Virginia State Budget Digest to the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission, with support of legislators Leonard W. Anderson, Mary Pearl Compton, Robert Kiss, Ron Thompson and others from southeastern West Virginia. Excavations at Arbuckle's Fort were also supported by funds from Mr. Joseph Jefferds, the West Virginia Humanities Council, and the Daywood Foundation in the form of grants to the Greenbrier Historical Society. These grants were administered by North House Museum Director Joyce Mott, who also created the Arbuckle's Fort web site (www.greenbrierhistorical.org/fort.html). We thank Pam LeRose of the West Virginia Humanities Council for her enthusiastic support of the project. The original Greenbrier and Middle New River fort survey was supported by a Survey and Planning Grant from the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, State Historic Preservation Office to the Summers County Historic Landmarks Commission.

Non-profit foundations and associations are important in supporting archaeology on frontier fort sites. The Fort Edwards Foundation, led by Charles Hall, Ken

Edwards, David Pancake, Terry Gruber and others, promotes the preservation and accurate interpretation of this fort. Their efforts include construction and maintenance of a visitors' center adjacent to the fort, maintenance of a web site (www.fortedwards.org) and funding the 2001 excavations. They secured federal transportation enhancement funds (TEA-21 program) and other funds to support these efforts. The Old Augusta County Foundation supports long term research on various fort sites in eastern West Virginia. The Hinkle Association, which placed a marker commemorating Hinkle's Fort, has provided grant money to James Madison University to search for this site.

Fort research also relies heavily on the knowledge of local historians. Some of this research, such as that by William Ansel, Jr., culminated in published works. More frequently local historians informally share their knowledge of specific fort sites with archaeologists. For example, archaeological survey in the Greenbrier and Middle New River Valleys was greatly advanced by the help of local historians John Montgomery, Ron Ripley, Haskell Schumate, Steve Trail, and Bill Tuckwiller, among others. Fort research in the Tygart and Potomac drainages was aided by the efforts of Johnny Dahmer, Mary Dalen, Dalton Dasher, Shobe Fisher, David Harmison, Johnny Hedrick, Kenneth Hinkle, Nellie Kuykendall, Breletta Leatherman, Russell Lawrence, David Mallow, Jurl Mallow, Bill Painter, Tison Propst, Marvin Sine, Renick Williams, Don Woods, and Edna Yokum, among others. Much of this research, whether by historians or archaeologists, would not be possible without the many libraries where documents have been preserved and organized. The Library of Congress, the National Archives,

the Wisconsin State Historical Society (home of the Draper Manuscript Collection), the Virginia State Library, the West Virginia Archives and History Library at the Cultural Center, the West Virginia Regional Collection at West Virginia University, and The Papers of George Washington at the University of Virginia are among those who deserve special recognition for their stewardship in this area. Although too numerous to list individually, county libraries and courthouses also provide key information on frontier forts and settlement, and are always enthusiastic supporters of this research. Publishers, such as McClain Printing Company in Parsons, West Virginia, also make major contributions by reprinting older historical texts.

Stewardship of fort sites is often assumed by local governments and private organizations. For example, the Monroe County Historical Society owns Wood's Fort, and Greenbrier County owns most of Arbuckle's Fort. The Greenbrier County Historical Society raised funds, organized school visits, mounted exhibits at their North House Museum and devoted a portion of their web page (www.greenbrierhistorical.org) to the Arbuckle's Fort excavations. Many years ago, as part of their ongoing research on frontier forts, both this society and the Randolph County Historical Society placed historical markers at fort sites. The Berkeley County Historical Society, under the leadership of Don Wood, is gathering information and preserving fort sites and structures in Berkeley County. The Fort Ashby Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution restored a log building (see Figure 3.2) reportedly part of Fort Ashby, utilizing it as a museum since July 4, 1939.

Supportive landowners who own and protect fort sites are truly the unsung heroes of fort preservation. The archaeologist

generally comes in for a brief few weeks of intense activity, but the duties of maintaining sites continue day in and day out. We have recently experienced the enthusiasm of landowners Dan Clay and Diana Shay, and their son Nathan, who own the south bastion of Arbuckle's Fort and oversee the entire site. They, like the Jeffrey Pritt family, owners of the Thompson's Fort site, or Elliot Ridenour, owner of part of Fort Ashby, not only protect these sites but volunteer their own labor and moral support to the excavations. Jed and Jake Conrad protected the Fort Seybert site from looters for several decades and currently work to keep the history of the fort alive through living history presentations. Nellie Kuykendall and family restored Fort Van Meter near Romney, WV. Many others, though not acknowledged here by name, deserve the thanks of all West Virginians.

If you own or know of fort sites that you would like to protect, or have an interest in frontier research or the archaeology of frontier fort sites, we encourage you to take an active role in their preservation. Work with your local historical society or county government. In addition, the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office can provide technical assistance to landowners and interested persons to register and protect frontier fort sites.

Introduction

THE IMPORTANCE OF FRONTIER FORTS to West Virginia's colonial history 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. 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.

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) 1755-1756, the first years of the French and Indian War; 2) 1774-1777, 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, 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.

Knowledge of West Virginia's frontier fort era can be greatly furthered through archaeological excavation. Although still limited in number and intensity, archaeological investigations in West Virginia are beginning to make contributions to our understanding of forts and frontier life. In particular, excavation can reveal information about fort design and construction, intensity and type of occupation (such as civilian versus military), functional specialization of forts, and site location, as well as the foods people ate while there, the kinds of tools they used, and the activities in which they participated.

This booklet provides a contextual 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 it developed. Chapter 1 presents this historical context, summarizing the military struggle for the land that would become West Virginia. Chapter 2 describes the frontier defensive system and the role of frontier forts within it. A list of known forts is presented in the appendix. Very few eighteenth century descriptions of frontier forts exist and most are somewhat imprecise. Recently, archaeological methods have been used to help us examine the size and appearance of forts, discover who lived there and determine the activities that took place. Archaeological investigations of West Virginia's frontier forts are summarized in Chapter 3.

Note: Most of the events discussed in this book occurred before West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky became states. Before 1792 and 1863, respectively, Kentucky and West Virginia were part of Virginia. Ohio was part of the Northwest Territory until 1803 when it became a state. Individual state names are used throughout this book as a matter of convenience.

Early Settlement Through French AND Indian War: 1730 - 1764

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 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 Iroquois Confederacy (Six Nations), Cherokee, Shawnee, and Mingo. 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 18th century settlement of West Virginia were the 1722 Treaty of Albany and the 1744 Treaty of Lancaster, both formed between the Iroquois Confederacy and the British. In the Treaty of Albany, the Iroquois 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 Iroquois were also

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 American Indians 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 will be the subject of this chapter.

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 the area was 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 (Figure 1.1). 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 its 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.

In July 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

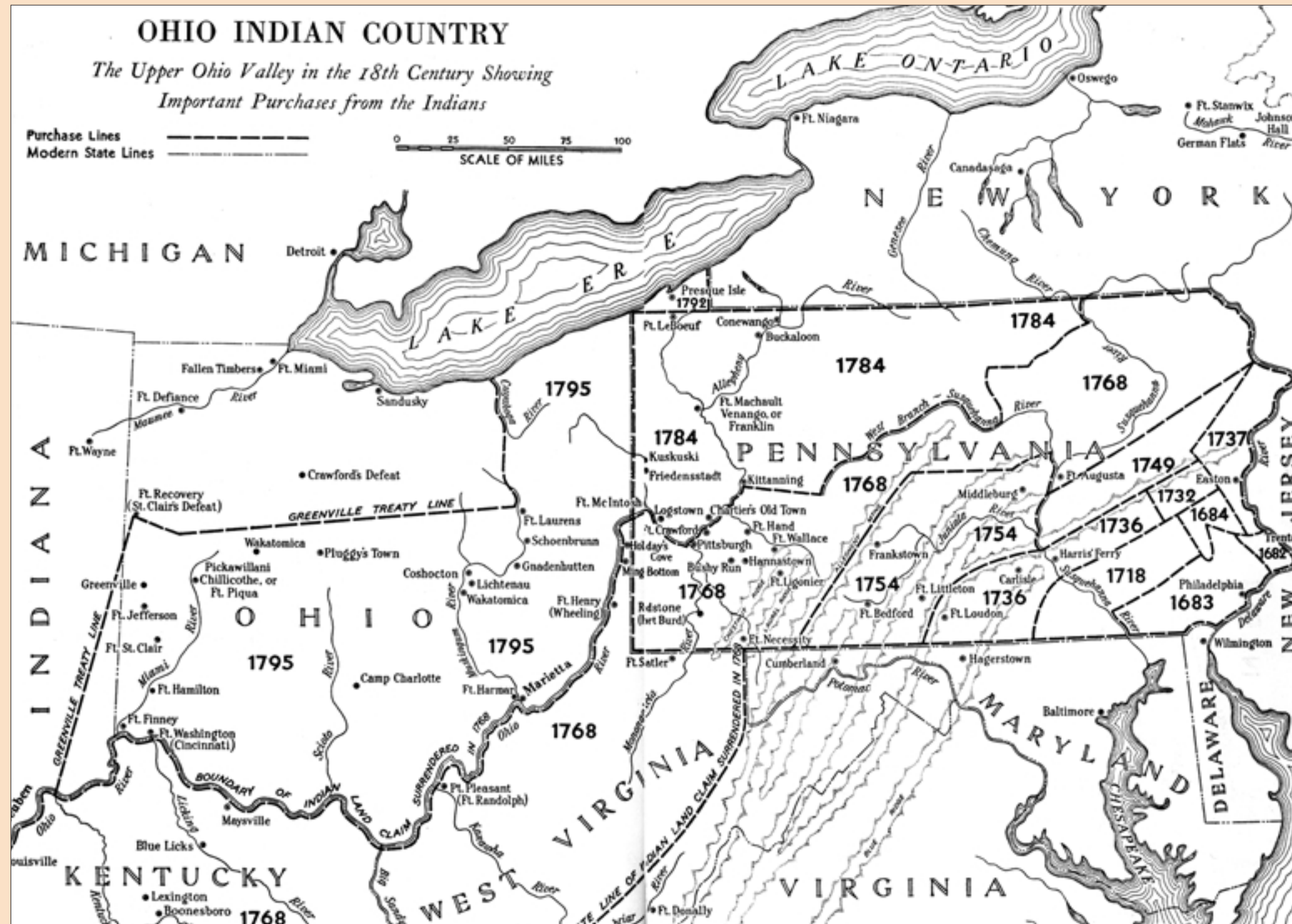


Figure 1.1
Ohio Indian Country. From *Council Fires on the Upper Ohio*, by Randolph C. Downes, ©1940, 1968.
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residential forts. The attack prompted Colonel George Washington, now Commander in Chief of Virginia's forces, to order the construction of Fort Ashby and Fort Cocke on Patterson's Creek. Three months later Forts Pleasant and Defiance were built along the South Branch of the Potomac (Figure 1.2).

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

Forts Constructed
During the French
and Indian War and
Pontiac’s War
1750 - 1764

*This list contains
only those forts that
the authors were able
to identify through archival
research or archaeological
survey. Additional frontier
forts may exist. If you know
of a fort not included in this
list, please contact the West
Virginia State Historic
Preservation Office.*

Potomac
River
Drainage

Berkeley County

Baldwin’s Fort
Bell’s Fort
Cunningham’s Fort
Fort Evans
Fort Hedges
Fort Mendinall
Fort Neally
Newkirk’s Fort
Small’s Fort

Grant County

Fort Bingaman
Fort Defiance
Fort George
Fort Ogden
Fort Welton
Wilson’s Fort

Jefferson County

Shepherd’s Fort

Mineral County

Fort Ashby
Fort Cocke
Fort New Creek
Fort Ohio
Fort Paris
Fort Sellers

Morgan County

Fort Dawson
Fort Maidstone
Fort Sleepy Creek

Pendleton County

Fort Hinkle
Fort Seybert
Fort Skidmore
Fort Trout Rock
Fort Upper Tract
Unnamed Fort

Hampshire County

Fort Capon
Fort Cox
Fort Edwards
Fort Enoch
Fort Forman
Homer’s Fort
Kisner’s Fort
Fort Kuykendall
Fort J. Parker
Fort T. Parker
Fort Pearsall
Fort Van Meter
Fort Williams

Hardy County

Brake’s Fort
Fort Buttermilk
Fort Harness
Fort Holland
Fort Hopewell
Fort Lost River
Lynch’s Fort
Fort Pleasant
Power’s Fort
Fort Ruddle
Stump’s Fort
Fort Warden
Unnamed Fort

Greenbrier
River
Drainage

Pocahontas County

Marlin’s Fort

Summers County

Baughman’s Fort

Table 1.1
Forts Constructed during the French and Indian War and Pontiac’s War, 1750 - 1764

rangers (Figure 1.2).

In 1756 attacks or battles took place at or near Fort Neally, Fort Edwards, and Fort Pleasant. The local defensive strategy for the frontier continued without British assistance until 1758, when Fort Upper Tract and Fort Seybert 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 lead 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 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 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 Ottawa 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 (Figure 1.1). 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



Figure 1.2

William Alexander's map of the English defenses against the French in North America (1756). From *Early Maps of the Ohio Valley: A Selection of Maps, Plans, and Views Made by Indians and Colonials from 1673 to 1783*, by Lloyd Arnold Brown, ©1959 by University of Pittsburgh Press. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH PRESS.

under Colonel Charles Lewis overtook a large war party of American Indians at the head of the South Fork River above Fort Seybert. 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 (Figure 1.3). 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 Iroquois 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 was such a failure that troops had to be moved from the west 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 (Figure 1.3). The northern negotiations were more complex and controversial. First, Johnson negotiated directly only with representatives of the Iroquois Confederacy. He treated the Ohio Indian tribes as dependents of the Six Nation tribes and as mere 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 Iroquois Confederacy and the British signed the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, in which the Iroquois ceded lands south of the Ohio River and east of the Mouth of the Tennessee River (Figure 1.3). 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 (Figure 1.4). 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 (Figure 1.3). 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

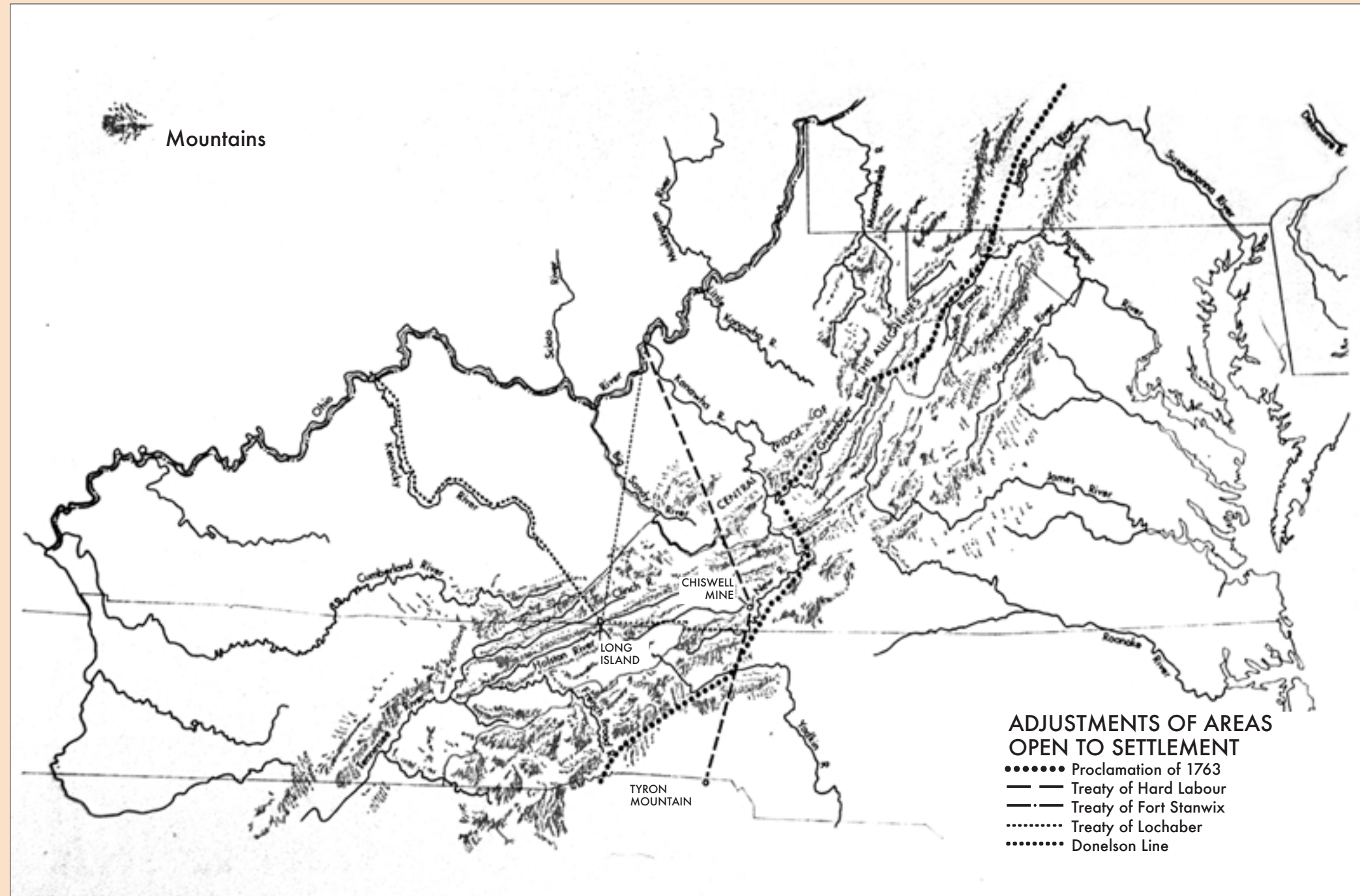


Figure 1.3

Adjustment of Areas Open to Settlement. From *The Allegheny Frontier, West Virginia Beginnings, 1730 - 1830*, by Otis Rice, ©1970, by The University of Kentucky Press. REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY PRESS.

violent encounters. In an attempt to state their claims and keep settlers out of Kentucky, the Shawnee and Mingo 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 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, Delaware, Mingo, and Ottawa Indians (Figure 1.1).

The Battle of Point Pleasant raged all day until the Indian forces withdrew across the river. Lewis lost 46 men, 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 (Figure 1.1). 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 patriot's cause. Also spreading down the coast was a feeling of uncertainty and dread by the settlers as to which side the Iroquois, Cherokee, and Ohio Indian tribes 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 American Indian tribes at Fort Pitt in September and October 1775. In the resulting Treaty of Pittsburgh, the Treaty of Camp

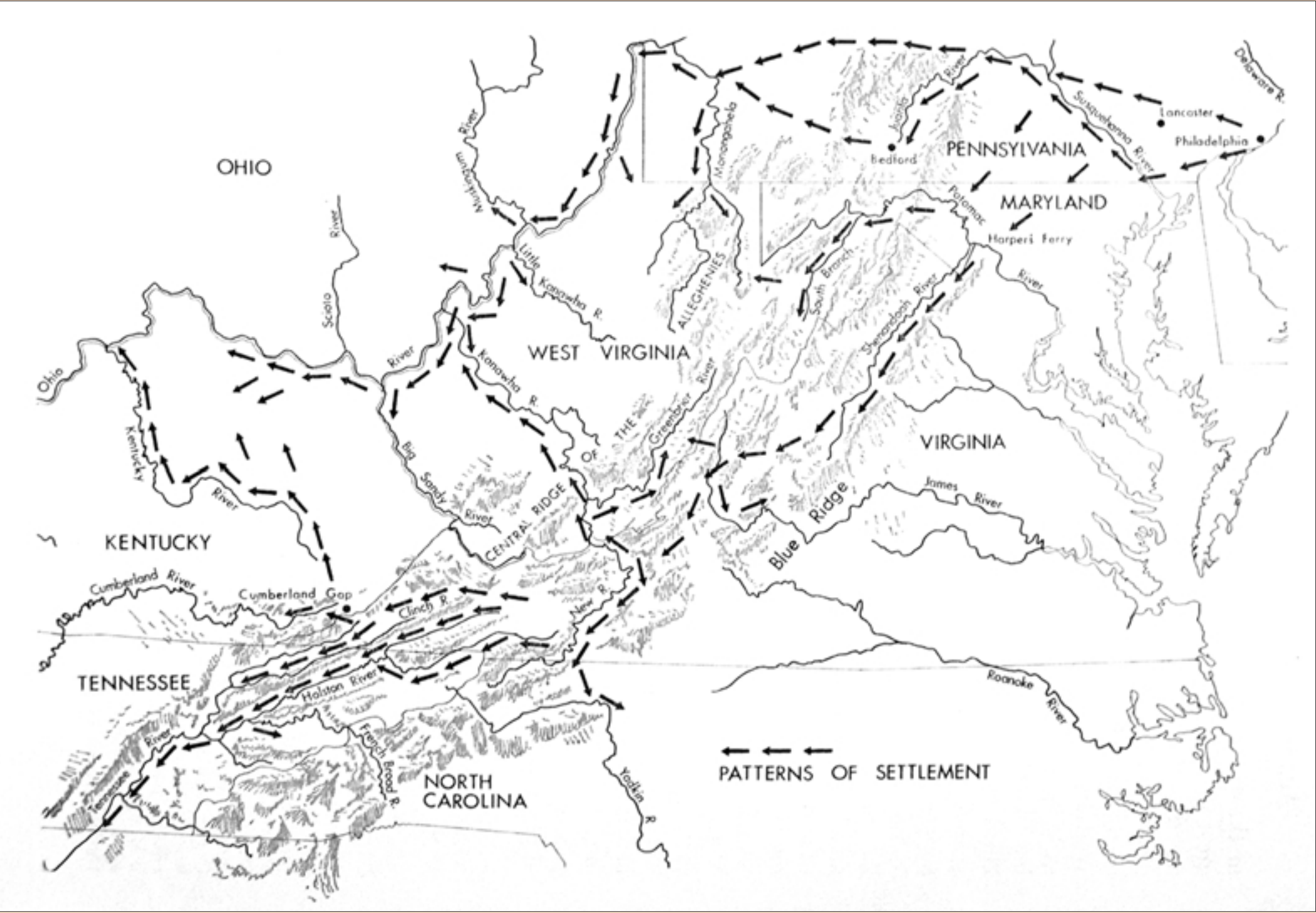


Figure 1.4
Patterns of Settlement. From *The Allegheny Frontier, West Virginia Beginnings, 1730 - 1830*,
by Otis Rice, ©1970, by The University of Kentucky Press.
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Pre-Revolutionary
and Revolutionary
War Era Forts
1770s - 1782

This list contains only those forts that the authors were able to identify through archival research or archaeological survey. Additional frontier forts may exist. If you know of a fort not included in this list, please contact the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

Potomac
River
Drainage

Pendleton County

George Hammer Fort
Adam Harper Fort
Philip Harper Fort
Fort Teter

Greenbrier
AND Middle
New River
Drainages

Greenbrier County

Arbuckle’s Fort
Donnally’s Fort
McClanahan’s Fort
McCoy’s Fort
Fort Savannah
Renick’s Fort
Stuart’s Fort

Mercer County

Fort Davidson Bailey

Monroe County

Burnside’s Fort
Cook’s Fort
Craig’s Fort
Estill’s Fort
Hamilton’s Fort
Handley’s Fort
Jarrett’s Fort
Knox’s Fort
Lewis Fort (John)
Mann’s Fort
Fort Sweet Springs
Thompson’s Fort
Vanbibber’s Fort (Peter)
Wood’s Fort

Pocahontas County

Fort Clover Lick
Day’s Fort
Drennon’s Fort
Ellis’s Fort
Warwick’s Fort (Jacob)
Warwick’s Fort (John)

Summers County

Culbertson Fort
Farley’s Fort
Ferrell’s Fort
Lafferty’s Fort
Van Bibber’s Fort (John)

Monongahela
River
Drainage

Harrison County

Fort Davisson
Fort Harbert
Fort Jackson
Nutter Fort
Fort Powers
Richards Fort

Lewis County

Flesher’s Fort
Fort West
Marion County
Fort Coon
Fort PawPaw
Prickett’s Fort
Fort Worley

Monongalia County

Fort Baldwin
Fort Burris
Fort Cobun
Fort Dinwiddie
Fort Harrison
Fort Huffman
Fort Kerns
Fort Martin
Fort McIntire
Fort Morgan
Morgantown Fort
Fort Pierpont
Fort Pleasant
Fort Statler
Fort Stewart
Fort Tabor

Preston County

Fort Butler
Fort Morris

Tucker County

Fort Minear

Upshur County

Fort Buckhannon
Fort Bush

Tygart
Valley
Drainage

Randolph County

Fort Currence
Fort Friend
Fort Hadden
Fort Roney
Fort Warwick
Fort Westfall
Fort Wilson

Taylor County

Fort Edwards

Kanawha
River
Drainage

Kanawha County

Kelly’s Fort

Mason County

Fort Randolph
Webster County
Fort Lick

Upper Ohio
River
Drainage

Brooke County

Fort Beech Bottom
Fort Bowling
Fort Decker
Fort Edington
Fort Rice
Fort Wells

Marshall County

Fort Baker
Fort Beeler
Fort Clark
Fort Grave Creek
Fort Tomlinson
Fort Wetzel

Hancock County

Fort Holliday

Ohio County

Fort Henry
Fort Liberty
Fort Link
Fort Shepherd
Fort Van Meter

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 (Figure 1.4). Throughout 1775 and 1776, the British were also negotiating with various Indian groups hoping to gain alliances. A number of groups, particularly the Mingo, were more sympathetic toward the British, who seemed more powerful, better 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 (Figure 1.1).

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 (Figure 1.1). 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

Table 1.2
Pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary War Era forts, 1770s - 1882

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 at Fort Kittanning on the Allegheny River above Pittsburgh (Figure 1.1). Hand also ordered that 150 militia be stationed in each county. In addition, he attempted to organize an offensive strike against a Mingo 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 Greenbrier settlements. On May 29, 1778, they attacked Donnally's Fort where approximately 85 settlers had taken refuge, but were again unsuccessful (Figure 1.1).

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 (Figure 1.1). As a result, some Indian tribes reconsidered their alliance with the British and requested talks with the Americans.

The Americans, however, were unable to press their advantage. 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 Delaware town of Gnadenhutten and killed nearly 100 peaceful Christian Indians (Figure 1.1). 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 commissioners met with representatives of the Iroquois at Fort Stanwix, New York, with representatives of the Wyandot, Delaware, Ottawa, and Chippewa at Fort McIntosh, Pennsylvania, and with the Shawnee at Fort Finney, Ohio (Figure 1.1). 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 (Figure 1.1). 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 this proposal.

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 Fort Tackett 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 (Figure 1.1) 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 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 (Figure 1.1). This ended the decades-old contest for the Upper Ohio, including the lands of present day West Virginia.

Forts Constructed
Post-Revolutionary
War
1784 - 1790s

This list contains only those forts that the authors were able to identify through archival research or archaeological survey. Additional frontier forts may exist. If you know of a fort not included in this list, please contact the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

Monongahela
River
Drainage

Barbour County

Fort Meadowville
Harrison County
Fort Salem

Monongalia County

Fort Amos
Fort Cordray

Kanawha
River
Drainage

Kanawha County

Fort Cedar Grove
Fort Lee
Fort Morris
Fort Tackett

Mason County

Fort Cooper
Fort Robinson

Little
Kanawha River
Drainage

Wood County

Fort Backus
Fort Belleville
Fort Flinn
Fort Neal

Upper
Ohio River
Drainage

Hancock County

Fort Chapman

Table 1.3
Forts Constructed Post-Revolutionary War 1784 - 1790s

CHAPTER two

The Frontier Defensive System

Introduction

WHEN THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR BEGAN in 1754, local frontier defenses 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 residential forts, 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 (see Tables 1.2 and 1.3) by settlers and militia 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. 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 in this chapter.

Forts Built BY THE Virginia Regiment

Fort Defiance
Fort Welton (possibly)
Fort Cox
Fort Enoch
Fort Buttermilk
Fort Pleasant
Fort Ashby
Fort Cocke
Fort Sellers
Fort Maidstone
Fort Upper Tract

Forts Used BY THE Virginia Regiment

Fort George
Fort Edwards
Fort Kuykendall
Fort J. Parker
Fort Pearsall (enlarged)
Fort Harness
Fort Holland
Power's Fort

Table 2.1
Forts Built by the Virginia Regiment

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. (Table 2.1)

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 20 to 80 men and officers. The county lieutenant could order the militia to serve 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, and they often moved 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 provides an example of this:

...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...”¹

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 Defensive System

FORTS ANCHORED THE local defensive system, providing operational bases for militia and scouts, and serving as places of refuge for settlers. The concept of a community fort 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 generally 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 17th century.

Historical records indicate three periods of intensive fort building in West Virginia. 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 (see Table 1.1). 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 (see Table 1.2). 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, 1785 to about 1792, continued the shift west into the Kanawha, Little Kanawha and Ohio River drainages (see Table 1.3). 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.

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:

“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.”²

Early in 1756 Washington ordered Captain Thomas Waggoner to build two forts on the South Branch of the Potomac (Forts Pleasant and Defiance) and to “...Build the Fort[s] as large as those on Patterson Creek, and the same model.”³ A drawing of a fort belonging to Washington, dated 1756, depicts a fort with four bastions (Figure 2.1). This drawing

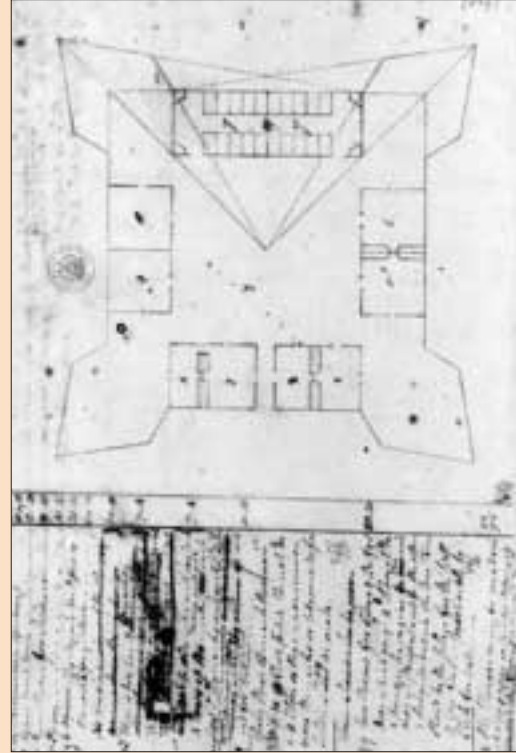


Figure 2.1
Plan of a fort. From the George Washington Papers at the Library of Congress 1741-1799.
COURTESY OF THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, MANUSCRIPT DIVISION

illustrates a variety of buildings or rooms, including captains' quarters, officers' and soldiers' guard rooms, barracks, a prison, and store rooms. Written documents indicate that at least part of George Washington's plan for the construction of buildings within a fort was carried out. In a letter to Robert Stewart on July 27, 1756 at Fort Maidstone, Washington writes, "...I would have made the gate wider, but think though it would cramp the guard-rooms too much: If you think they are wide enough, you may widen the gate."⁴ In addition, the minutes from a Council of War held at Fort Cumberland on July 10, 1756 states that "...The forts on Patterson Creek have already been built, and provided with several necessary houses."⁵

Fort construction, however, did not always follow a standard plan. In Washington's January 9, 1756 letter to Waggoner he states, "...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."⁶ 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."⁷ 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 Washington followed these instructions.

Fort design may have changed slightly by the 1770s, with a growing incidence of corner blockhouses rather than corner bastions. However, very few first hand descriptions of forts exist and great variability is to be expected. One of the best written descriptions of West Virginia frontier



Figure 2.2
Example of a blockhouse, from Fort Marr, Benton, Tennessee.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF TENNESSEE STATE LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES.

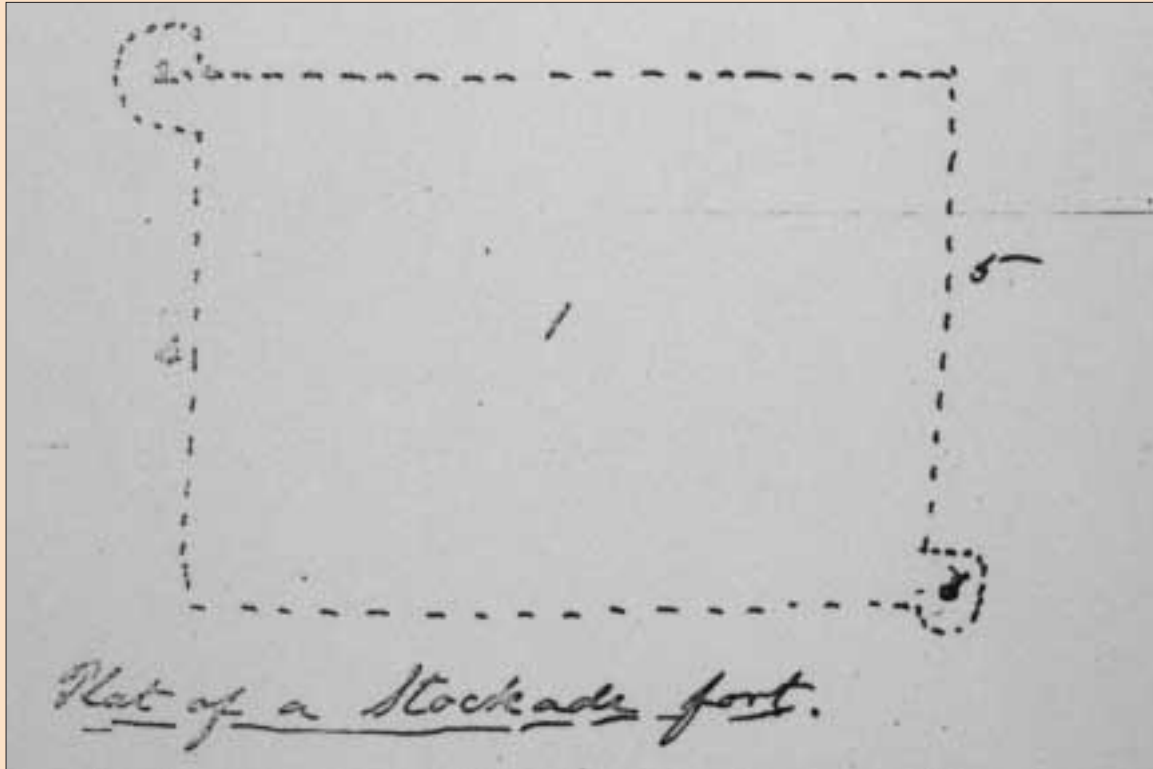


Figure 2.3
Spencer Records' plan of a typical fort. From Draper Manuscripts 23CC (Kentucky Papers), page 96.

forts is provided by Reverend Joseph Doddridge in his *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 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."⁸

This statement provides an idea of the possible variation among residential forts. 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 forts), and large forts (typically militia forts). Blockhouses are sturdy two-story log houses that have an upper story that projects several feet beyond the lower story (Figure 2.2). 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 the forts to take refuge in them during an Indian raid. Consequently they fortified their own houses by adding gunslots or other defensive measures. Log

houses with a surrounding palisade were referred to as stockades. Doddridge aptly 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 2.3). The document has been preserved in 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 25 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....”⁹

Descriptions of forts in West Virginia are



Figure 2.4
Painting depicting early Fort Henry, by J A Faris.
COURTESY OF THE WEST VIRGINIA ARCHIVES AND HISTORY LIBRARY.

very rare, however one is provided in DeHass' *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."¹⁰

Fort Henry was also depicted in an artist's reconstruction (Figure 2.4), although it should be noted that this painting shows blockhouses at the corners, rather than bastions as mentioned above.

Life in the Fort AS NOTED, MANY OF THE FORTS were protected 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. Fort Randolph, however, commonly was fortified by 150 soldiers. The occupation of these forts ranged from a few days to six months with three or four months being more typical.

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:

"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."¹¹

Another example, provided by Captain John Stuart, describes settlers moving into Fort Donnally 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.”¹²

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.

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. Doddridge’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 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.”¹³

Conclusion 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. By the Revolutionary War this defensive system was primarily a local or county affair. Few frontier settlements utilizing this system were abandoned, especially after 1774. The frontier defensive system can be viewed as an adaptation. Like log architecture, a mixed hunting and farming economy, and dispersed settlement patterns, it allowed for the gradual settlement by Europeans of rugged and disputed territory.

The vast majority of forts was built within three short periods: 1) 1755-1756, the

first years of the French and Indian War; 2) 1774-1777, Lord Dunmore's War and the early Revolutionary War; and 3) 1786-1791, American efforts to claim and dominate lands north of the Ohio River. 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 beyond the defensive period. Many forts became important social and economic centers, and some developed into more permanent nucleated towns.

CHAPTER three Archaeology of Frontier Forts in West Virginia

The Purpose of Archaeology

FRONTIER FORTS ARE relatively difficult sites to study. Complete information about them rarely comes from a single source. Oral history provides some background on approximate site locations, and often includes stories of attacks or heroic actions. Written records generally document attacks, militia and scout activities, but rarely describe the appearance of individual forts. Neither source provides consistent details regarding the size, appearance, exact location, and occupational

history of frontier forts. Here, archaeology contributes a crucial and complementary source of information. Careful and intensive archaeological excavation of frontier fort sites often uncovers the remains of building foundations, stockade trenches and cellar pits documenting the exact locations of former fort structures. Archaeology serves as a source of insight into the tools, clothing and other

items used by the early settlers at their forts and home sites. Artifacts, when studied in combination with such things as building remnants and other archaeological features, help archaeologists determine the date and function of sites and understand the kinds of activities and events that took place within the forts.

Interesting and surprising information often results from the work of archaeologists. For example, professional excavation demonstrates that militia forts contain relatively few

artifacts when compared to residential forts. Low artifact density is, in itself, 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, who wrote about frontier life in the Virginias, helps us understand the lack of china 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."¹⁴

These frontier period artifacts are meaningful in that they contain important information not available in documents or other sources, and serve as a tangible connection to the past. Especially when used in museums and other public forums, frontier artifacts help a variety of visitors relate to this important part of our state's history and to the vast differences between life in the eighteenth century and today.

Frontier Fort Archaeology in West Virginia

WHILE MANY FRONTIER forts once stood in West Virginia, archaeological investigations have been limited. Previous archaeological surveys and extensive excavations concentrated on French and Indian War forts in the Potomac drainage and on Revolutionary War forts in the Greenbrier and Middle New River Valleys. In addition, Fort Martin, dating to the Revolutionary War, was located and excavated in Monongalia County. The rest of the chapter discusses what has been learned from the survey and excavation of forts, beginning with those dating to the French and Indian War.

Fort Ashby, Mineral County

FORT ASHBY, LOCATED in the present town of Fort Ashby, Mineral County, was the subject of several seasons of excavation. Written documents suggest that it was erected on the farm of John Sellers between October 26 and November 20, 1755, by a Virginia Regiment company of 33 men under the command of Captain John Ashby. The work was supervised by Lieutenant John Bacon, dispatched from Fort Cumberland to oversee the construction of Fort Ashby as well as Fort Cocke further upstream. These were the first two forts George Washington ordered to be constructed in this region. Colonel Washington directed that the forts be quadrangular in shape, with walls 90 feet in length and bastions in the corners to aid in observing the walls, and with barracks and a magazine inside. Fort Ashby was generally guarded by 21 to 60 soldiers of the Virginia Regiment, although it was never attacked. It was probably abandoned by the end of the French and Indian War.

Archaeological excavations revealed the remains of the stockade trenches and individual log stockade posts within the trenches (Figure 3.1). The post molds indicate that the wall was constructed with logs that were 4-19 inches in diameter and were hewed flat on two sides so the posts would fit tightly together to form a bulletproof wall. The posts were seated in the ground to a depth of approximately 4 feet below the ground surface. In a few areas, pieces of split posts appear to have been used to fill gaps between larger posts. No evidence exists for elevated firing platforms along the interior of the fort walls.

Sections of a number of stockade trenches were identified (Figure 3.1). Some trenches lie in a north/south direction while others extends east/west, suggesting that a

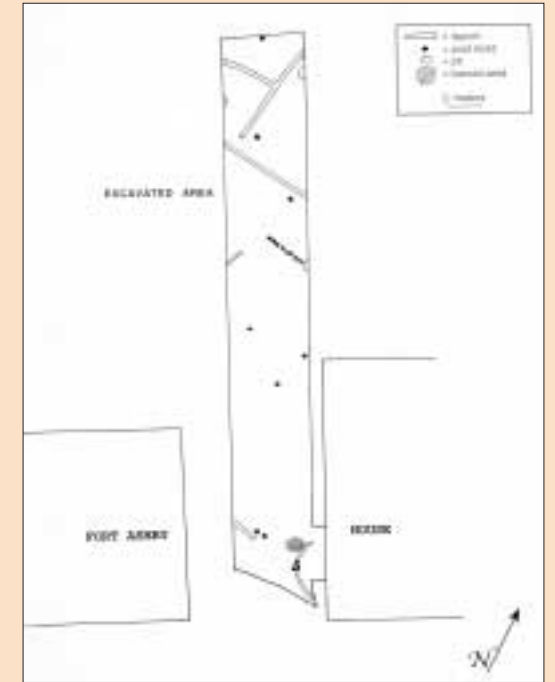


Figure 3.1
Features found at Fort Ashby.
COURTESY OF THUNDERBIRD RESEARCH CORPORATION.



Figure 3.2
Log structure in town of Fort Ashby.
COURTESY OF GREG ADAMSON.

compass was used to lay out the fort. Colonel Washington ordered bastions to be built at the four corners of the fort and the gap between the stockade trenches may represent this structure. A January 9, 1756 letter from Colonel Washington to Thomas Waggoner records that the bastions at Fort

Ashby were constructed of hewed timbers, laid horizontally and perhaps reinforced with earth. A bastion constructed of horizontal logs could easily leave no archaeological remains. The semi-circular shape of the stockade trench found in the southeastern corner of the excavation block (Figure 3.1) is suggestive of a bastion, but the additional excavation needed to clarify this is presently impossible because a modern house sits on this part of the site (Figure 3.1). The contrasting placement of the stockade trenches suggests that Fort Ashby was remodeled at some point (Figure 3.1). Additional excavation may clarify whether and when a second fort was built. A squared post 19 inches in diameter was found at the eastern end of one stockade trench. Two metal gate hinges were found in the soil just east of this squared post, adding further support that a gate was located in this area.

According to local oral tradition, the old, one-story oak log building with full dovetailed corners that stands on the site of Fort Ashby today (Figure 3.2) is a remnant of the old fort. This is supported both by written records and archaeology. A 1784 map

of the town of Fort Ashby, then known as Frankfort, shows a building in this location resembling the present one that is identified as Fort Ashby. In addition, Colonel Washington's 1756 fort drawing shows barracks roughly matching the present oak log building. Archaeological evidence also suggests a relationship between this building and the fort as the west end of the uncovered portion of one stockade trench is less than 10 feet from this log building. Further investigations at the site may yield clues as to the purpose of the building.

A large number of artifacts was recovered from Fort Ashby. Two eighteenth century coins, a Spanish "piece of four" and a 1730 English copper penny, were found in the ground between two of the trenches. Ceramics include white saltglazed stoneware and Rhenish stoneware (Figure 3.3). A large number of arms-related artifacts, including gunflints and lead balls, were also recovered (Figure 3.4). Some of the gunflints and lead balls were very large, indicating the use of smooth bore muskets like the Brown Bess British models. These were typical arms of the Virginia Regiments and help to verify

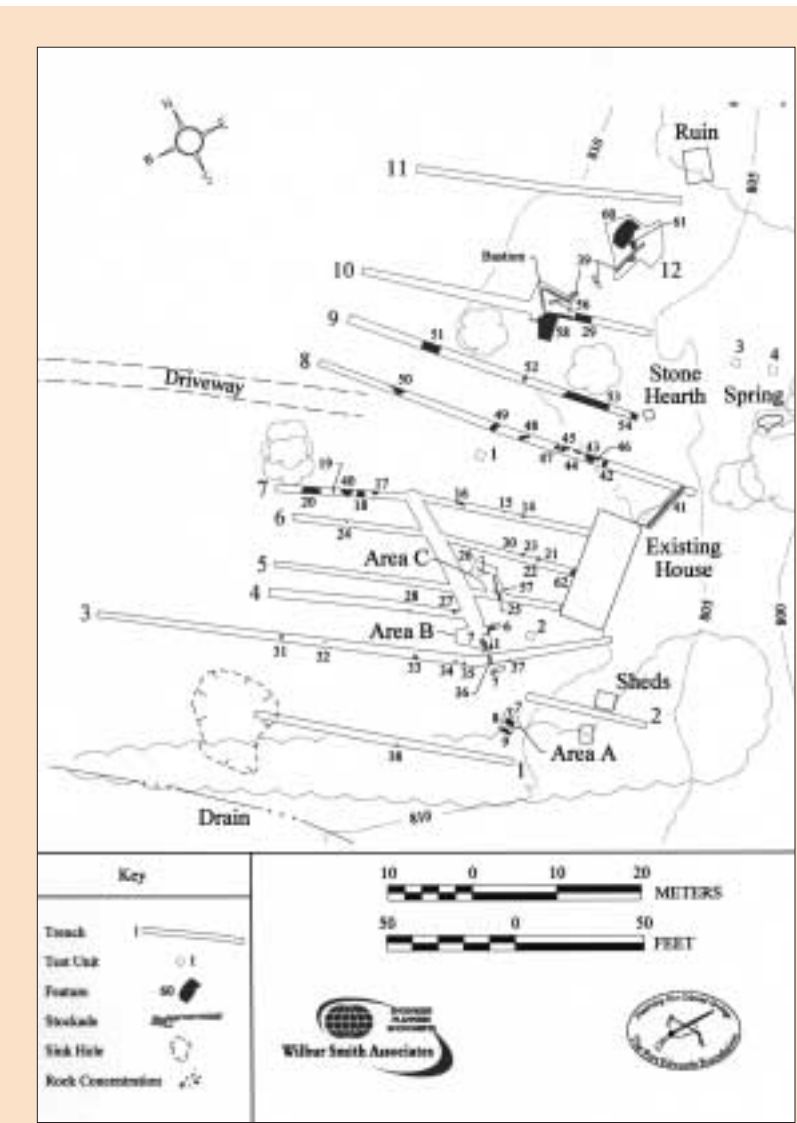


Figure 3.5
Fort Edwards site map.
COURTESY OF FORT EDWARDS FOUNDATION.

Indian War. The fort was probably constructed in 1755 by Joseph Edwards on a terrace overlooking the Cacapon River near present day Capon Bridge, Hampshire County. Edwards settled his farm by the early 1740s, and likely lived rather peacefully until the beginning of the French and Indian War. As a result, Fort Edwards became one of a number of residential forts that were soon constructed in West Virginia's eastern panhandle.

Fort Edwards was directly involved in the largest French and Indian War battle to take place in what is now West Virginia. A company of 60 soldiers under Captain John Mercer ventured out of the fort on April 18, 1756 and engaged a force of nearly 100 French and Indians a few miles away. The battle resulted in the death of 15 soldiers including Captain Mercer and at least nine Indians. The surviving soldiers retreated to the fort.

Following the battle, the Virginia legislature greatly increased spending on frontier defenses. Fort Edwards was likely no longer garrisoned by the Virginia Regiment after the fall of Fort Duquense in November 1758, and was probably dismantled soon after the end of Pontiac's War in 1764. Joseph Edward's house remained standing.

Although historic descriptions have not been found, archaeological investigations at

their presence at Fort Ashby. Settlers and many militiamen, however, preferred smaller caliber rifles.

Fort Edwards, Hampshire County EXTENSIVE investigations have been conducted at Fort Edwards, an example of a residential fort dating to the French and



Figure 3.3
Food-related items and personal artifacts from Fort Ashby.
ARTIFACTS COURTESY OF THUNDERBIRD RESEARCH CORPORATION,
PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. DAVID MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.4
Arms-related artifacts from Fort Ashby.
ARTIFACTS COURTESY OF THUNDERBIRD RESEARCH CORPORATION,
PHOTOGRAPHY BY J. DAVID MCBRIDE.

Fort Edwards have added to our knowledge of its history. Initiated in 1990, excavations resulted in the discovery of a section of stockade trench and a mid-18th century refuse pit (Figure 3.5). The exposed section of stockade trench is 30 feet long, 1.5 feet wide, and 3 to 3.5 feet deep. It was discovered west and south of a possible 19th century log and frame house, still standing on the property. A number of circular post molds were identified within the trench, indicating that the stockade was constructed of vertically placed whole logs. Three to six inch gaps between the post molds may have been filled by boards, branches, or smaller logs.

This stockade trench was oriented on magnetic north and terminated on its north end with an expanded 3-foot-wide trench

area and multiple post molds, suggesting a possible gate. Further excavation in 1990 did not uncover portions of a stockade trench to the north or the east, indicating that it either abutted a building or that there was a change in the construction methods used. For example, additional posts could have been set individually on the ground, rather than in a trench, and further apart, which would make them harder to locate. The construction may also have switched to horizontally placed logs, although this is less likely.

Three additional stockade trenches (Figure 3.6) discovered in 2001 were oriented on cardinal directions and indicate that a “V” shaped bastion existed along the northern wall of the fort (Figure 3.7). Placing a bastion



Figure 3.7
V-shaped bastion from 2001 excavations at Fort Edwards.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.6
Stockade cross-section from 2001 excavations at Fort Edwards.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

along a wall rather than in a corner, although unusual, has been documented elsewhere such as Hannahstown and Fort Allen in Pennsylvania. The two parallel north-south trenches may suggest a corner bastion. The abrupt termination of the Fort Edwards stockade trenches is perplexing. The end points may abut buildings or bastions that were constructed of horizontal logs, which would leave little or no trace in the ground. More excavation is necessary to better delineate the structure of this fort.

Mid-18th century features discovered in the northern and southern portions of the site indicate two distinct centers of activity within Fort Edwards. The features include a cellar, two refuse pits (Figure 3.8), an area of burned earth, and an intact midden located

in the northern half of the site. A third refuse pit and a cellar were found southwest of the house in the southern part of the site. Further excavation is needed to determine the ways in which these two activity areas were used. Artifacts recovered from these features include delftware, white saltglazed stoneware, Chinese porcelain, glazed and slipped redware, Jackfield ware, 18th century bottle necks (Figure 3.10), eating utensils indicating cooking and dining activities, and personal items such as clay smoking pipes stems, button, and buckles. The presence of expensive Chinese porcelain suggests that occupants of this fort indulged in refined cultural practices such as formal teas and dining. Artifacts such as gunflints (Figure 3.9) and musket balls represent



Figure 3.8
Pit feature from 2001 excavations at Fort Edwards.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

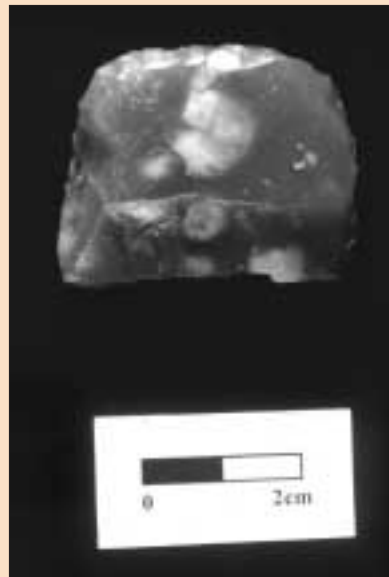


Figure 3.9
Gunflint from 2001 excavations
at Fort Edwards.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE
AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.10
Bottle necks from 2001 excavations at Fort Edwards.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

Fort Seybert AND OTHER Fort Survey Efforts IN THE Potomac Drainage

FORT SEYBERT, which burned in 1758, is thought to be located in the town of Fort Seybert, West Virginia. Although archaeological efforts are ongoing, no definitive 1750s artifacts or fort architecture have been located in the area thought to contain the fort. Efforts to locate nearby Fort Hinkle, Pendleton County, are also underway. Architectural studies have been conducted at Forts Pleasant, Skidmore, and Van Meter. New information will be gathered as efforts continue to locate these and other forts.

Fort Martin, Monongalia County

BY THE REVOLUTIONARY War, construction of forts waned in the Potomac drainage, but they continued to be built further west. One such fort was constructed by Charles Martin at his 1770 cabin located on a knoll overlooking Crooked Run of the Monongahela River. Typical of residential forts, Fort Martin was a home with a stockade constructed around it for protection.

Documentation for Fort Martin, although scarce, includes mention of an attack in April, 1778. The attack is recorded in a letter from Colonel John Evans to General Edward Hand at Fort Pitt:

“The Indians on the 15th Instant on the Monongahela, Above the Mouth of Cheat River Killed and took ten persons belonging to Majr. Martins Fort, and took at least 20 horses, on 16th...[This] leaves our part of the Country in such a situation that the forts are all a Breaking the Inhabitants

hunting and military activities.

all seem Determined to move to some place of Safety...”¹⁵

Fort Martin was discovered during an archaeological survey in 1979. Subsequent excavation revealed a 60 by 100 foot rectangular area of dark soil and a number of stone concentrations. A large quantity of artifacts was also recovered, including ceramics, glass, buttons, and nails dating from the late 1700s to the middle 1800s (Figure 3.11). The area of darkened soil was the result of refuse disposal. Interestingly, the darkened area had distinct boundaries, rather than the typically vague boundaries found in refuse middens. This suggests that an enclosure restricted the activities of the inhabitants. Excavation of the stone concentrations revealed evidence of three buildings, including the main house which contained a cellar (Figure 3.12) and an ell addition. A blacksmith shop and an unidentified outbuilding were also located. The blacksmith shop was identified by the presence of burned rocks and soil, slag, and many hand-forged iron artifacts.

Attempts to locate evidence of the stockade were inconclusive. Test excavations revealed two large rock-filled post molds just west of the darkened area, 16 feet apart and roughly 3 feet in diameter. It is possible that these posts are from the stockade. Excavations in South Carolina and Virginia have revealed evidence of frontier fort stockades built like picket fences or paling, with posts spaced far apart and picket or logs attached to horizontal beams in between the posts. The post molds at Fort Independence in South Carolina were also 16 feet apart. The presence of bedrock near the ground surface in some areas at Fort Martin may have encouraged this building style, rather than excavation of a continuous trench in which to place vertical posts. Further

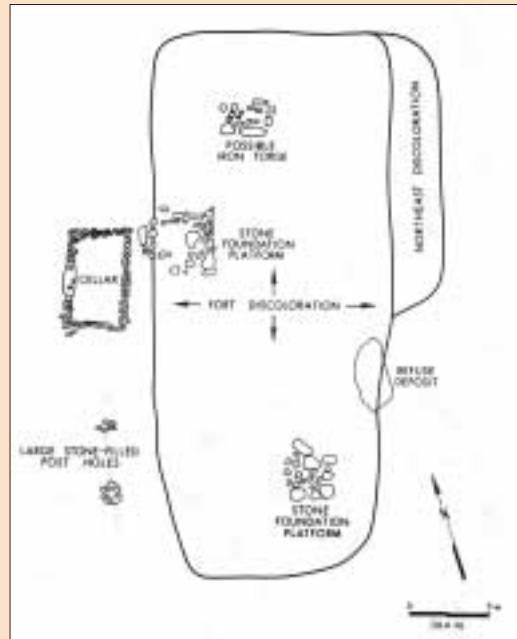


Figure 3.11
Map of excavations at Fort Martin. From "Archaeology at Fort Martin: Uncovering Pioneer Lifeways in the Mountain State", by Hunter Lesser, in *Mountain State Geology*, December 1982: 37- 43.

excavation may help to confirm these ideas. Over 8,000 artifacts were recovered during the excavations and include fragments of 18th and 19th century ceramics such as delftware, white saltglazed stoneware, Jackfield ware, creamware, slipped and glazed redware (Figure 3.13), pearlware, whiteware, and Chinese porcelain. Fragments of 18th and 19th century glass bottles, window glass, hand wrought nails, buttons, gunflints, lead balls, table utensils (Figure 3.14), architectural hardware, other wrought iron objects, and four coins, dated 1750, 1788, 1812, and 1826 were also recovered. The artifacts suggest that the site was occupied from 1770 to 1840. The large quantity of ceramics dating from the late 18th century clearly indicate that this site was a residential fort rather than a militia fort. A large quantity of cow and pig bone was also

recovered, indicating a preference for domesticated meat. The excavations indicated that the site is intact and eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. It is hoped that this knowledge will lead to the future protection of the site and further archaeological investigation.

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 archaeological survey attempted to locate a number of forts. 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



Figure 3.12
Cellar feature at Fort Martin.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE WEST VIRGINIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS FACILITY.

Fort in Monroe County; and Baughman's Fort, Farrell's Fort, and Van Bibber's Fort in Summers County. All of these date from the 1770s and 1780s except for Baughman's Fort, which was built and destroyed in 1755. Archaeological survey proved successful in identifying all but Baughman's Fort, Farrell's Fort, and Van Bibber's Fort.

Additional archival research and archaeological survey conducted throughout the 1990s increased the number of documented fort sites in the area to over 35. While most were not located archaeologically, a number of fort locations in Monroe County, including Thompson's Fort in Pickaway and the Lewis Fort near Moncove Lake, were surveyed, and efforts are underway to locate Jarrett's Fort and Handley's Forts (also Monroe County), Clover Lick Fort (Pocahontas County), and Roney's Fort (Randolph County).

This research revealed a pattern in the locations that were chosen to build frontier era forts. For example, most of the forts were built on ridges or terraces overlooking a nearby permanent spring, creek or river. In all cases, the source of water is outside of, but close to, the fort, making it easily



Figure 3.13
Redware ceramics from Fort Martin.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE WEST VIRGINIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS FACILITY.



Figure 3.14
Forks, knives and spoon from Fort Martin.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE WEST VIRGINIA
ARCHAEOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS FACILITY.

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. Interestingly, 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. Research by Louis Koontz (*The Virginia Frontier, 1754-1763*) 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.

Artifacts recovered during the 1990 archaeological survey were informative.



Figure 3.16
Cannon ball from Stuart's Fort.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF
W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND
KIM A. MCBRIDE.

Most of the fort sites produced a low density of 18th 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 were hand-wrought nails followed by animal bone, redware and creamware ceramics. Artifacts of particular interest 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, Figure 3.15), a two-tine fork (from Donnally's Fort), and a two inch cannon ball (from Stuart's Fort, Figure 3.16). The cannon ball from Stuart's Fort may indicate the presence of a small

cannon. Donnally's Fort yielded a large caliber musket that may have come from the large gun, known as a wall gun, on display at the Greenbrier Historical Society's North House Museum in Lewisburg. This gun is famous for its association with Dick Pointer, a slave who fired it in the successful defense of the fort in 1778.

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 a more intermittent occupation. Day's Fort and Wood's Fort were not well documented in this regard but the archaeology suggests



Figure 3.15
Pipestem, lead, and triangular file from Warwick's Fort.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

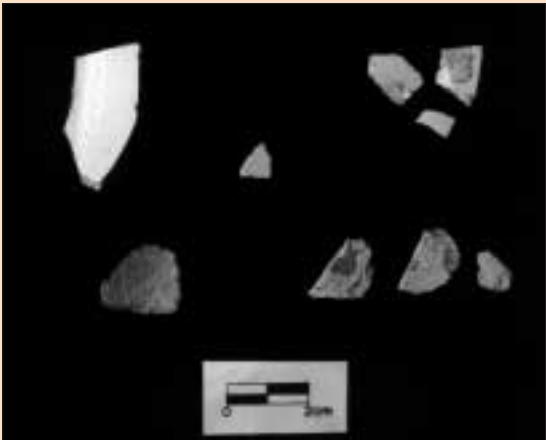


Figure 3.17
18th century ceramics from Thompson's Fort.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

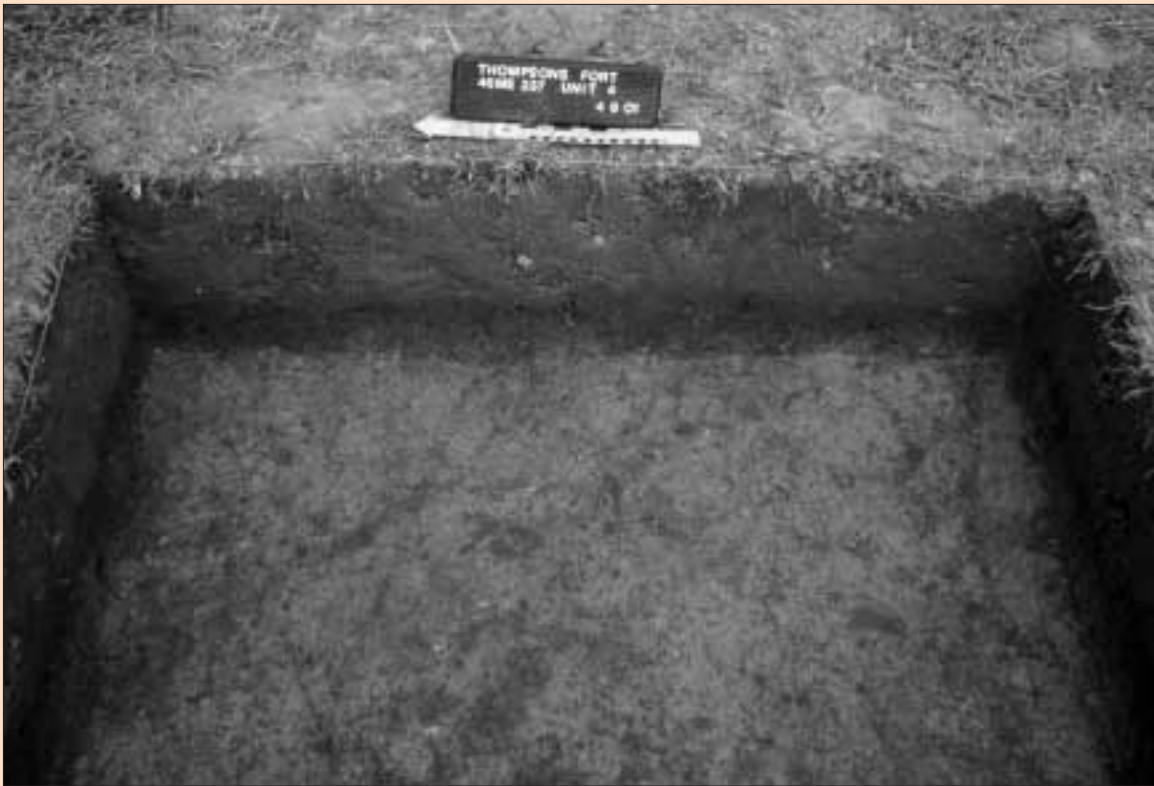


Figure 3.18
Organic soil staining, or cultural midden, at Thompson's Fort.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

Test Excavations AT Thompson's Fort

that they were residential forts.

JAMES THOMPSON'S

Fort, a residential fort located in Pickaway, Monroe County, is also known as Pickaway Fort and Gray's Blockhouse. It was built by 1774 and used to garrison militia in 1777 and 1778. Its designation as Gray's Blockhouse, after John Gray who bought the property from Thompson in 1788, indicates that a blockhouse was part of the fort. However, in his Revolutionary War pension application, Samuel Gwinn stated that he "...lived at Thompson's Fort for a year or two and then moved to a blockhouse...",¹⁶ suggesting that the fort may have been more than a single blockhouse for a time.

Archaeological investigations resulted in the discovery of many eighteenth century artifacts, including ceramic fragments of white saltglazed stoneware, delftware, creamware, and redware (Figure 3.17), cast iron kettle fragments, a pewter spoon, a knife blade, wrought nails and spikes, small pieces of clay (daub) used to chink log cabins or stockades, wrought horseshoe nails and animal bones. Other artifacts recovered include numerous white-metal and brass coin buttons, a musket or rifle ramrod guide, and lead shot, as well as ceramic fragments of slipped redware and pearlware. The presence of buttons and ceramics indicates that this was a residential fort, while the presence of pearlware indicates that the fort may have been occupied into the 1780s and 1790s. Many of the artifacts as well as animal bone were recovered from a midden found at the center of the site (Figure 3.18). While no architectural features or signs of a stockade were found at this site during excavation, the site has great potential for increasing our understanding of frontier

Arbuckle's Fort, Greenbrier County

lifeways.

ARBUCKLE'S FORT IS exceptional in its combination of short-

term occupation and well preserved subsurface architectural and refuse features. It was constructed in April 1774 by militiamen of Captain Matthew Arbuckle's company. The fort was located at the confluence of Mill and Muddy Creeks in western Greenbrier County and was sometimes called Keeny Fort (after landowner John Keeny) or Muddy Creek Fort. Captain Matthew Arbuckle's militia company probably occupied the fort from the spring to the fall of 1774. Evidence for summer occupation and an attack is found in an August 1, 1774 letter from Major James Robertson to Colonel William Preston:

"...this minet I got flying news of the Indians shooting at one of Arbuckle's Centery's on Mudy Creek. they say Likewise that they attacked one Kelley's yesterday about half a mile from that Fort where they Tomhak'd Kelley and Cut him Vastly, but the men from the fort heard the Noise and Ran to their Assistance and drove the Indians off before they Either Kill'd or Sculp'd Kelley."¹⁷

The fort may have been the site of additional conflict in 1777. A letter from John Stuart to William Fleming, dated September 12, 1777, noted that "...a number of guns were heard by sundry persons in our neighborhood supposed to be at muddy creek fort about sundown last night"¹⁸. In this letter, Stuart also requested that a Sergeant's command be sent to Arbuckle's Fort "...to assist the people in muddy creek who is very few in numbers, and I am afraid will be much distress'd"¹⁹. After 1777, the occupational history of Arbuckle's Fort is less clear, but it was likely occupied sporadically by militia and settlers during the remainder

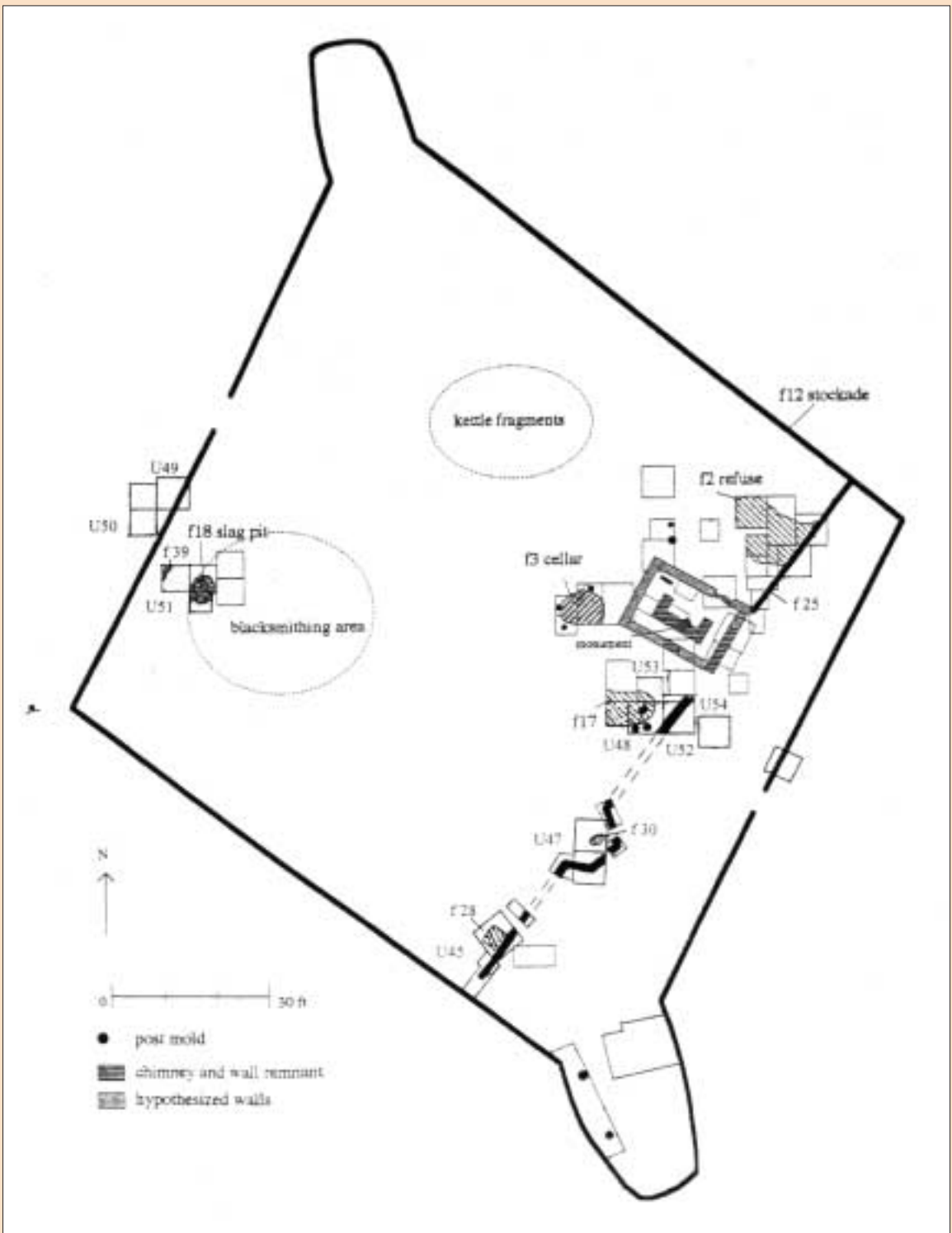


Figure 3.19
Map of excavations at Arbuckle's Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.20

Chimney remains at Arbuckle's Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

of the Revolutionary War and dismantled in the late 18th or early 19th century.

Arbuckle's Fort is the most intensively excavated frontier fort site in West Virginia. In total, about 1,150 square feet have been hand excavated, which amounts to 7% of a total area of approximately 16,000 square feet within the stockade line (Figure 3.19). Eleven subsurface features were discovered including foundations from dry-laid limestone structural walls and a chimney, a cellar, two refuse middens, a slag- and bone-filled pit associated with blacksmithing, and a number of post molds (Figure 3.19). One of the most significant finds was the outline of the stockade. These features yielded a variety of artifacts and information that enabled archaeologists to interpret the

history of the fort.

The dry-laid limestone and river cobble chimney foundation (Figure 3.20) had a seven-foot-wide opening for a hearth. Remnants of dry-laid wall foundations were found to the northeast and southwest of the chimney. While only short segments of the foundation remain, three of the four walls are represented. The location of the fourth wall was determined by examining the soil. Comparison of the foundation and chimney remains with historic building plans revealed that the layout of this structure is not like most early settler houses but matches the floor plan of a frontier blockhouse. The fact that the chimney took up so much of the first floor was not so critical in a blockhouse because it was

typically used for cooking, storage, and other short term activities. The living quarters, where people slept and spent more of their time, were on the much larger second floor. The overhanging second story made the building more defensible since the outer walls of the first floor could be easily protected from above.

A small cellar was identified near the blockhouse. It was surrounded by several post molds, which suggests that it was roofed. The cellar also may have served as a powder magazine, because no evidence of a separate powder magazine has yet been found. A dense refuse deposit of organic soil containing animal bone, daub, wrought nails, and a few other artifacts was identified near the cellar. Another midden

containing a large amount of animal bone was discovered on the other side of the blockhouse (Figure 3.21). A large quantity of iron slag, the waste material produced by blacksmithing, was recovered primarily from the west side of the fort in a large circular pit that also included burnt animal bone. Although no archaeological remains of a forge have been located at the fort, one may have been installed in this pit and later removed.

Certainly the most exciting discovery at Arbuckle's Fort was the outline of the entire stockade. Excavations revealed that the fort was diamond shaped with two bastions and was constructed of vertical logs placed in a trench (Figure 3.22). Each wall was 110 to 120 feet long. The north end of the fort had



Figure 3.21

Pit with animal bone at Arbuckle's Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.22
Aerial photo of Arbuckle's Fort after stockade excavation.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

a 20 foot long bastion while the south end had a 30 foot long bastion. The fort enclosed between one-third and one-half of an acre. Examination of the stockade trench indicates that the trench was originally excavated about 2.5 feet below the ground surface. The size and location of the postmolds indicate that larger posts were placed in the trench one to eight inches apart, and often not in a straight line. Smaller posts and clay daub were used to fill in the gaps. Most larger posts extended to the base of the trench while many of the smaller posts did not, suggesting that the trench had been partly backfilled before their

placement. Interestingly, many of the post profiles included the remains of roots that had sprouted from the log posts indicating that the posts were not dried before being put into the trench. A five-foot gap was found along the northwestern wall and a three-foot gap was found along the southeastern wall of the fort, indicating the presence of gates. Both gaps were flanked by large post molds. The northwestern gate posts were especially large (2.5 feet in diameter), suggesting a very heavy gate (Figure 3.23). A computer-aided reconstruction of the fort, based on the dimensions and other information gleaned from the excavation, provides an estimation

of its appearance (Figure 3.24).

Arbuckle's Fort was of the type recommended for construction throughout the Shenandoah Valley by Colonel George Washington in 1756, and illustrated by Spencer Records in his drawing of a "typical" frontier fort (Figure 2.3). Building two bastions was the most efficient way to defend all four walls of a fort, and two-bastioned forts have been documented through excavations at sites in Virginia as early as the 17th century, and in Europe by the 15th century. Because no other forts in West Virginia have been as thoroughly excavated as Arbuckle's Fort and because we do not have drawings of other forts, it is not known how common such forts were in West Virginia.

While double bastions may have been a common feature of frontier forts, an inner stockade line discovered at Arbuckle's Fort may not have been so typical. It extended east from the blockhouse where it joined the east wall of the main stockade trench. Further excavations revealed that it also extended from the western side of the

blockhouse over to the western side of the main stockade, where a small gap may indicate a gate. The western segment also contained a small bastion west of the blockhouse (Figure 3.19). The exact function of the inner stockade and bastion is not known, but it may have served as a secondary line of defense. Postmolds in the outer bastions (Figure 3.19) indicate the presence of viewing platforms.

Although the artifact density at Arbuckle's Fort is low, multiple seasons of excavation resulted in a most interesting collection. The ceramic fragments recovered from this excavation include delftware, creamware, white salt glazed stoneware, scratch blue decorated stoneware, British Brown stoneware, pearlware, Chinese export porcelain, and redware. These types are similar to those found in other forts. Several small pieces of gourd rind were recovered from the bottom of the cellar feature near the blockhouse, which may indicate that they were used for storage. Other food-related artifacts recovered during the excavation include



Figure 3.23
Arbuckle's Fort, soil stains indicate a gate opening.
PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.24

Artist's reconstruction of Arbuckle's Fort, based on the excavations.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

fragments from cast iron kettles, bone handles from forks or knives, knife blades, and a tiny fragment of a pewter handle, probably from a spoon. Most of the cast iron kettle fragments were found north of the blockhouse, perhaps indicative of an outdoor cooking area.

Faunal remains were the single most common artifact type found during the excavation with well over 6,000 fragments recovered. Cattle provided the primary source of meat, but white-tailed deer and swine provided important supplements and variety in the diet. The high proportion of deer bones suggests that the fort inhabitants hunted for much of their meat. This interpretation is also supported by the wide variety of wild species found, including rabbit, squirrel, woodchuck, black bear, raccoon, and skunk. Two horse bones were found, but it is difficult to say with certainty that these represent food. While wild turkey, domestic chicken, and waterfowl remains are present, they appear to be under-represented. No fish or turtle remains were

recovered, which is surprising given the close proximity of the fort to Mill Creek and Muddy Creek.

The different anatomical portions represented by the bones suggest that the cattle and pigs were probably butchered at the fort site, while the deer were field-dressed at a kill site and select portions carried to the fort for cooking. Some of the bones display cut marks made by hatchets and knives. Most of the bones (nearly 70% by count and nearly 44% by weight) were recovered from

the general midden areas outside of archaeological features. These bones were highly fragmented, perhaps due to trampling. Animal remains were also found in association with refuse pits, wall trenches, and other subterranean features. Because these portions were recovered from more protected locations, they were larger and weighed more. These differences hint that the fort interior may not have been a completely tidy place, with animal bones and other refuse scattered about. In comparison to faunal collections from other 18th century fort sites, the faunal remains from Arbuckle's Fort are more similar to those from a short-term militia post in South Carolina than they are to those from residential forts within the same region.

Tiny seeds that are often preserved in the archaeological record are another source of information about diet. These seeds are recovered by a special process in which soil samples are dissolved in water. Seeds and other light matter are collected, identified, and analyzed. Seeds from Arbuckle's Fort suggest

that the site inhabitants relied heavily on corn, fruits, berries, and nuts, with some use of grains such as wheat and barley.

Architectural items recovered during the excavation are dominated by hand-wrought nails, many of which could have been made at the fort's blacksmith shop. Of special interest are many small pieces of "daub," or clay that was fired at a very low temperature, if at all, and used to fill in gaps around the stockade and between the logs of the blockhouse. A variety of metal- and wood-working tools, such as chisels and wedges, file fragments, and an iron gouge, may have been used in the construction and maintenance of the fort. Other tools include a scissors fragment and several whetstones for tool maintenance. One of the more intriguing tools recovered during the

excavation is a small iron gig or harpoon that would have been fitted on a wooden shaft, for use in fishing or frog gigging.

As is expected, gun-related artifacts are commonly found at militia forts. At Arbuckle's Fort numerous lead rifle balls and gunflints were recovered. The small to medium caliber size of the lead balls (.28, .42, .47, .51, .53, and .55 caliber) suggests the use of rifles rather than larger smooth bore muskets such as the British Brown Bess, which was used by some militia units and most Continental troops. This is also supported by the recovery of a front sight that would have been mounted on a rifle. Many of the arms-related artifacts were found within the blockhouse, suggesting that it functioned as an armory. Several spent lead balls were found on the north side

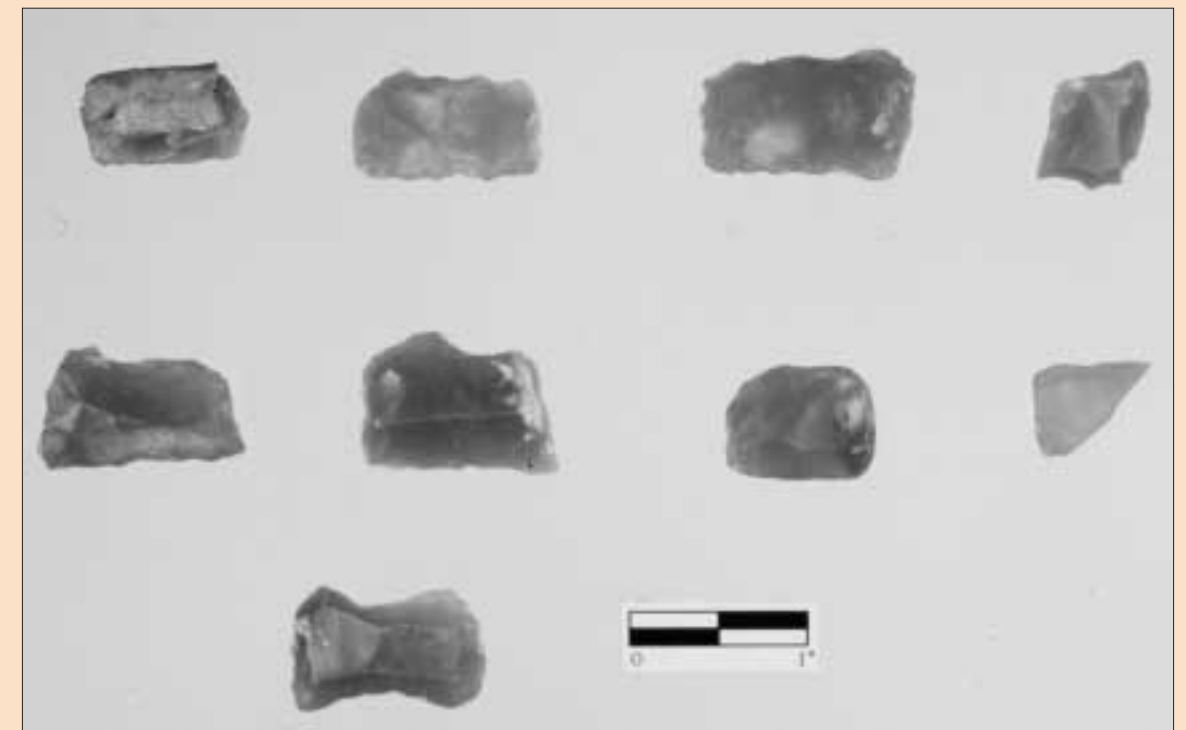


Figure 3.25

Gunflints from Arbuckle's Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A.



Figure 3.26

Metal disk with X from Arbuckle's Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.



Figure 3.27

Liberty document seal from Arbuckle's Fort.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

of the fort, particularly near the northwestern gate, perhaps confirming the historical account of the attack on Arbuckle's Fort. Of the 18 gunflints that were found, 11 are of the honey-colored French variety, at least two are dark gray European-type flints, and four were possibly made locally. Most of these flints are smaller than normal, having been "used up" by repeated firings. One of the flints exhibits a piece of lead folded back several times over the shrinking flint to make it larger. Other flints are constricted in the middle from being reused as "strike-a-lights" to start fires (Figure 3.25).

Most of the personal items recovered from Arbuckle's Fort, such as brass buttons (none of which are military) and fragments from shoe buckles, are related to clothing. However, the presence of several faceted glass jewels, which were sometimes part of buckles or other ornamentation, and a silver-plated shoe buckle suggests that attire at the fort was not just "plain buckskins." Other

personal items include smoking pipe fragments, a metal "whizzer" or noise maker, and three Spanish coins dating to between 1700 and 1749.

One unusual personal artifact recovered from Arbuckle's Fort was a small eight-sided metal item found outside the fort wall near the blacksmithing area (Figure 3.26). Both the uneven shape of this item and an engraved "X" suggest that this artifact is of African American origin. Seven or eight-sided charms or polygonal objects made of a variety of materials have been found in slave quarter contexts. The "X" is generally interpreted as a cosmogram, representing a general conception of life, death, and the structure of the cosmos and the flow of life's energy through it. Ritual artifacts such as items with an "X" are thought to have often been carried by African Americans as amulets or charms. The presence of this artifact in the blacksmithing area, and in association with blacksmithing items, raises the possibility that an African American blacksmith operated

at Arbuckle's Fort.

One of the most interesting personal items found during the excavation is a small glass oval document seal that would have been set in a ring or perhaps worn on a chain around the neck. The seal imprints the word "Liberty" (Figure 3.27). This artifact perhaps best illustrates that frontier warfare was not only about conflict over disputed territory, but also about the struggle to found a new nation. Matthew Arbuckle, founder of Arbuckle's Fort, expressed his devotion to this cause in August 1776 in a letter to Colonel William Fleming, recorded in the Lyman Draper Manuscripts as follows:

"Sir, My country Shall Never have to Say I Dare not Stand the Attacks of the Indians or fly the Cause they are So Justly fighting for, on the Contrary I will Loose the Last Drop of My Blood in Defence of My Country when fighting for that Blessed Enjoyment Call(d) Liberty ..."²⁰

Conclusion WITH THE EXCEPTION of the Arbuckle's Fort investigations, the archaeology of West Virginia's frontier forts is still in a preliminary stage. The Arbuckle's Fort excavations illustrate the potential of archaeology to add to our understanding of the appearance of these forts and the activities that took place within them. More complete excavations are needed at additional sites before we can provide any conclusions about their size, design, and occupational history.

Although excavations at Fort Ashby, Fort Edwards, and Fort Martin were not as extensive as those at Arbuckle's Fort, they produced a number of interesting discoveries. The stockade at Fort Ashby appears to be more irregular than Washington's plans for

the fort suggest. Evidently the fort was altered over time to better suit local conditions. Fort Edwards appears to have been of an irregular design and also possibly altered over time. Fort Edwards also appears to contain at least two separate concentrations of 1750s and 1760s refuse features that may indicate two separate habitation areas. More excavation of both of these forts is necessary before we can begin to understand differences and similarities between residential and Virginia Regiment forts of the French and Indian War.

Fort Martin dates from the same period as Arbuckle's Fort but is radically different in design, construction and intensity of occupation. It was a residential fort as opposed to a militia fort and produced a higher density of domestic artifacts. Preliminary archaeological investigations at Fort Martin suggest that, if a stockade was present, it resembled a fence with widely spaced posts. Only through more excavation will we be able to determine the presence and nature of the stockade.

Archaeological survey of a number of frontier fort sites in the Greenbrier Valley also illustrate strong differences in occupational intensity between residential forts and militia forts. This survey adds to our understanding the types of locations chosen for the forts and the factors that influenced site selection. More intensive survey and excavation of fort sites in this and other regions across the state is necessary to fully understand these forts and their place in our shared cultural history.

FOR Further Thought

THE CONTINUATION OF research into West Virginia's frontier fort era depends upon the preservation of frontier fort sites. Archaeological survey efforts demonstrate that many fort sites were destroyed by subsequent building episodes, a frequent occurrence in areas where forts functioned as economic or social centers and then gradually developed into a town. Well preserved fort sites are most often those that were abandoned in the late 18th century and then used as pasture.

CHAPTER four

For Further Thought

Previous research suggests that there are patterns in the locations that settlers and the Virginia Regiment chose to build their forts. A broader sample of well-documented locales may permit a more complete synthesis, and lead to more successful efforts to locate additional sites. Previous experience also suggests that fort sites are easily overlooked due to their low artifact density, and as a result,

standard archaeological survey techniques may not always be successful. For example, if shovel test excavation is complemented by the use of metal detectors, the results are generally much better. Archaeological survey and excavation should only be conducted with professional guidance, especially because these resources are non-renewable and the most careful excavation destroys a site.

As more and more fort locations are identified, increased interest in and education about frontier history may make a

significant difference in their preservation. Because frontier fort sites are fragile resources, landowners are encouraged to protect and preserve these properties. This can be accomplished through a variety of strategies. For example, preservation of a frontier fort site can be achieved through stewardship where a landowner agrees to monitor and protect a site located on their property. This may also involve notifying state archaeologists about damage or threats to the site and working to resolve those issues.

A conservation easement is another option available to landowners that provides a more permanent means of protecting a site. Conservation easements are legal agreements that serve to protect and preserve the natural and historical aspects of a property while allowing it to remain in private ownership. The protective measures outlined in an easement are generally designed to meet the specific needs of the resource and the needs of the landowner. In this way it is beneficial because it allows a property owner to continue to live on the land and use it as before while limiting activities, such as residential development or mining, that could harm the resource being protected. Typically, a land owner would set up an easement with a non-profit conservation organization such as the West Virginia Land Trust or the Archaeological Conservancy. In exchange for preserving a natural or historic aspect of a property and if certain conditions are met, a land owner may be eligible to receive property, income and estate tax breaks.

Nominating a frontier fort site to the National Register of Historic Places can help a landowner gain recognition of the site's significance. It also enables the landowner

to seek technical and financial assistance to preserve the site. Once listed in the National Register of Historic Places, grants are available from the State Historic Preservation Office for such activities as developing a site management plan, creating educational materials about a site and site stabilization. A multi-property National Register nomination that includes Arbuckle's Fort, Thompson's Fort and Wood's Fort is currently being prepared. Over time as other fort sites are listed in the National Register of Historic Places, recognition of their importance to West Virginia's frontier heritage will help promote their long-term preservation. For more information about the National Register of Historic Places and site protection strategies, contact the staff of the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

FOR Further Reading THE INFORMATION PROVIDED in this booklet comes from a wide range of sources. Primary sources such as Revolutionary War veterans' pension applications are available at the National Archives. The Lyman Draper Manuscript Collection, stored at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Madison is an invaluable source. These kinds of manuscripts on frontier history are generally available on microfilm in larger libraries, but select excerpts have been published. Much of the material cited here references various Kellogg or Thwaites and Kellogg publications. *The Guide to the Draper Manuscripts* (Harper 1983) is a published index of these manuscripts. Also invaluable are the George Washington Papers from the Library of Congress and the Papers of George Washington at the University of Virginia (see Abbot below). Many of these papers are available via the internet. Several

collections from the West Virginia Regional Collection at West Virginia University were helpful. These include Johnston's Historical Notes in Ice's Ferry (collection no. 379); the Scott Thomas manuscript (collection no. 2052); and the Fort Van Meter papers (collection no. 2071). Interesting accounts can also be found at the West Virginia Division of Culture and History, Archives and History Library. Unpublished manuscripts are often found in local libraries and court minutes. These, along with wills, deeds and land surveys in county court houses, provide a wealth of local information.

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**West Virginia
Fort Excavations
ON THE Internet**

*Two recent fort
excavations have been
chronicled over the
internet. To follow the
excavations at Arbuckle's
Fort, Greenbrier County,
see the site constructed
and maintained by the
Greenbrier Historical
Society, at
www.greenbrierhistorical.org.*

*To follow the 2001
excavations at Fort
Edwards, Hampshire
County, see the site
constructed and
maintained by the Fort
Edwards Foundation, at
www.fortedwards.org.*

Glossary

Artifact – Any object that has been made, modified or used by people. This does not include botanical and faunal remains, which are usually analyzed by other specialists.

British Regulars – The national soldiers of Great Britain, commonly referred to as “Redcoats” by the colonists.

Daub – clay that was fired at a very low temperature, if at all, and used to fill in gaps around the stockade and between the logs of the blockhouse.

Features – Subsurface remnants of past human activity such as hearths, storage pits, posts molds and burials.

Midden – A dark organic layer of soil that has been stained from the repeated dumping of organic material

Militia fort – A fort constructed and garrisoned by the county militia. These forts were stockades or large forts and tended not to include a civilian residence, although there were exceptions. Both militia and residential forts served as sanctuaries for neighborhood settlers.

Post mold – A dark, organic stain in soil resulting from a post that has been put into the ground and decayed. Often the dark soil is full of debris that was placed into the hole to help support the post.

Pottery types – Archaeologists often refer to the pottery (ceramics) found on sites by type (or ware) names, some of which come from the manufacturers themselves, and others defined by the archaeologists based on characteristics of paste, glaze, and decoration. Because pottery changed more rapidly than many other artifacts during the 18th century, and because much is known about these changes, pottery is one of the most useful artifacts for dating sites. Some of the ceramic types found at frontier forts in West Virginia are listed below, with general dates for when we think they would have been most commonly available and popular. These include creamware (1762-1820), pearlware (1780-1840), British Brown stoneware (1700-1800), Jackfield ware (1740-1780), white salt-glazed stoneware (1720-1780), and delftware (1600 - 1800). These ceramics were all made in

Europe, and except for delft, most commonly in England. Other ceramic types mentioned in this booklet include Chinese export porcelain, which is from China, and redware, a more utilitarian pottery often made in the colonies. Since both were available throughout the entire colonial period, and beyond, they are not as precise a dating guide, but still helpful in identifying a colonial period site. Those interested in more details on colonial ceramics should consult the basic guide, *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial North America*, by Ivor Noel Hume (1970, Alfred Knopf, New York, NY), or general books on antique china. An excellent internet source on historic pottery types is http://www.jefpat.org/diagnostic/Historic_Ceramic_Web_Page/Historic_Main.htm.

Rangers – specialized frontier troops who traveled (ranged) between forts and away from the settlements searching for and engaging Indian raiding parties. The term is more common in accounts of the French and Indian War.

Residential fort – a fort constructed by a family at their house. This fort type

included both blockhouses and stockades. Many residential forts were garrisoned by militia, but their primary function was a neighborhood sanctuary.

Scouts or Indian Spies – Volunteer militiamen who watched for Indian raiding parties between forts and along known trails and then spread the alarm to forts and settlers. Indian spies was the term they frequently used to describe their work when giving pension application statements of their service.

Shovel test pits – small circular or square holes excavated into the ground for the purpose of locating artifacts.

Virginia Militia – the county level military organization of the colony and later State of Virginia. All adult white males, unless exempted, were required to serve. Each county had at least one militia regiment, led by a colonel and his staff, and subdivided into companies of 40 to 80 men under a captain, junior officers and non-commissioned officers. Militia officers were generally from the local gentry and middle class and were often political leaders as well.

Virginia Regiment – Virginia colonial volunteer army.

First commanded by Colonel Joshua Fry, then by Colonel George Washington.

Virginia State Line Troops – Regular state soldiers who enlisted to serve during the Revolutionary War within the state boundaries. These troops primarily garrisoned the forts on the Ohio River, although they wintered at Fort Savannah, Greenbrier County, one winter during the Revolutionary War.

French ^{AND} Indian War/ Pontiac's War: 1750-1764

Potomac River Drainage

This appendix contains a list of known forts in West Virginia. It contains the name of the fort, the general location, if known, and any additional details known about the fort. The list was compiled by combing many local histories, as well as books or articles focused specifically on forts and frontier history in general (see For Further Reading) and is limited to forts that could be located at least to the county level, or are otherwise well documented in published sources. Many small neighborhood forts that were never attacked or otherwise the center of recorded history are sure to have existed. Readers are urged to send information about other forts to the West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office.

Ashby (Patterson's Creek, Mineral Co) walls 90 ft long, encloses .2 acre, bastions, barracks, magazine, built by Virginia Regiment

Baldwin's (branch of Mill Creek, Berkeley Co), stockade

Bell's (Mill Creek, Gerrardstown, Berkeley Co), stockade

Bingaman, also called **Peterson** (4 miles south of Petersburg, Grant Co)

Brake's (South Fork of South Branch, Hardy Co)

Buttermilk, also called **Waggoner's Lower Ft** (South Branch River, Moorefield, Hardy Co), possibly like Fort Ashby, Built by Virginia Regiment

Capon- likely same as Enoch's Cocke, also called **Fort G. Parker** (Patterson's Creek, Mineral County) similar to Ashby, built by Virginia Regiment

Cox (Little Cacapon, Hampshire Co) similar to Ashby, built by Virginia Regiment

Cunningham's (Bunker Hill, Berkeley Co)

Dawson (mouth Great Cacapon, Morgan Co)

Defiance, also called **Waggoner's Upper Fort** (N. Mill Creek, Grant Co) two bastions, similar to Ashby, built by Virginia Regiment

Edwards (Great Cacapon River, Hampshire Co) two story log structure, stockade, later used by Virginia Regiment

Enoch (forks of Great Cacapon, Hampshire Co) stockaded fort, probably built, or remodeled by Virginia Regiment

Evans (near Opequon Creek, Berkeley Co)

Forman, also called **Furman's** (South Branch River, Hampshire Co)

George (South Branch River, Grant Co) later used by Virginia Regiment

Harness (South Branch River, Hardy Co) later used by Virginia Regiment

Hedges (Back Creek, Berkeley Co)

Hinkle (Mill Creek, Pendleton Co)

Holland, also called **Town Fort** and possibly **Lynch's Fort** (Fort Run of South Branch River, Hardy Co) later used by Virginia Regiment

appendix Alphabetical Listing OF Frontier Forts BY Time Period AND River Drainage

Homer's (Cacapon River, Hampshire Co)
two story log house

Hopewell, possibly early name for **Fort Pleasant** (S. Branch Potomac, Hardy Co)

Kisner's (Brushy Run of Great Cacapon River, Hampshire Co)

Kuykendall (South Branch River, Romney, Hampshire Co), later used by Virginia Regiment

Lost River (Lost River, Hardy Co)

Lynch's (South Fork of South Branch, near Moorefield, Hardy Co) possibly same as **Holland**

Maidstone (Opequon Creek, Morgan Co), possibly fort with same name, Conococheague Cr, Berkeley Co, built by Virginia Regiment

Mendinall (Tuskarora Run, Berkeley Co)

Neally (Opequon Creek, Berkeley Co)

New Creek (Block Run of New Creek, Mineral Co)
blockhouse/strong house

Newkirk's (Potomac River, Little Georgetown, Berkeley Co), strong house

Ogden, also called **Logsdon** (Difficult Creek, Grant Co)

Ohio (Ridgely, Mineral County) fortified storehouse for Ohio Company

J. Parker (S. Branch River, Hampshire Co) later used by Virginia Regiment

T. Parker (North River, Hampshire Co)

Paris (Possibly near Ashby, Mineral Co)

Pearsall (South Branch River, Hampshire) enlarged, used by Virginia Regiment

Pleasant (South Branch River, Hardy Co) probably similar to Ashby, possibly expanded, built by Virginia Regiment

Power's (mouth of North Fork River, Hardy Co) two story log house, possibly used by Virginia Regiment

Ruddle, sometimes called **Riddle's**
(Lost River, Hardy Co)

Sellers (mouth Patterson's Creek, Mineral Co) probably similar to Ashby, built by Virginia Regiment

Seybert (S. Fork of South Branch River, Pendleton Co)
2 story blockhouse, surrounding stockade said to be round. Rebuilt after April 1758 burning

Shepherd's (Potomac River, Shepardstown, Jefferson Co)
stone dwelling and stockade

Skidmore (Upper Reeds Creek, Pendleton Co), two story log house

Sleepy Creek (Sleepy Creek, Morgan Co) possibly not constructed

Small's (Elk Branch of Back Creek, Berkeley Co), strong house

Stump's (east side South Fork of South Branch, 3 miles south Moorefield, Hardy Co) possibly strong house and stockade

Trout Rock (South Branch River, Pendleton Co) planned with two bastions, but not built

Upper Tract, also called **Hugh Mann's** (South Branch River, Pendleton Co) walls 60 or 90 feet, bastions, built by Virginia Regiment

Van Meter (South Branch River, Hampshire Co)
stone house

Warden (Lost River, Hardy Co)

Welton (Lunice Creek, Grant Co) probably similar to Defiance, possibly built by Virginia Regiment

Williams (S. Branch River, Hampshire Co)

Wilson's (Mill Creek of South Branch, Grant Co)

Unnamed (S. Branch River, 3-4 miles north of Franklin, Pendleton Co) two story log house

Unnamed (south of Lost City, Lost River, Hardy Co)
strong house

Greenbrier River Drainage

Baughman's (near Alderson, Greenbrier River, Summers Co)

Marlin's (Marlinton, Knapp's Creek-Greenbrier River, Pocahontas Co)

Pre-Revolutionary AND Revolutionary War: 1770s-1782

Potomac Drainage

George Hammer (S. Branch River 2 miles north of Franklin, Pendleton Co) blockhouse

Adam Harper (Mouth of East Dry Run of S. Branch, Pendleton Co) strong house

Philip Harper (N. Fork of S. Branch, 2 miles south of Seneca Rocks, Pendleton Co), strong house

Teter (mouth of Seneca Creek of N. Fork, Pendleton Co), two story log house

Greenbrier AND Middle New River Drainages

Arbuckle's (Muddy/Mill Creek, Greenbrier Co) militia built, blockhouse, 2 bastions, walls 110-120 ft

Burnside's (Union, Monroe Co)

Cook's (Indian Creek, Monroe Co) 1.5 acres in size

Craig's (Sinks Grove, Monroe Co)

Clover Lick (Greenbrier River, Pocahontas Co)

Culbertson (New River, Summers Co)

Davidson Bailey (Beaver Pond Creek, Mercer Co) blockhouse

Day's (Mill Point, Pocahontas Co)

Donnally's (Sinking Creek, Greenbrier Co)

Drennon's (Edray, Pocahontas Co) blockhouse

Ellis's (Little Levels, Pocahontas Co) blockhouse

Estill's (Indian Creek, Monroe Co) blockhouse

Farley's (New River, Summers Co) blockhouse

Ferrell's (Greenbrier River, Summers Co) blockhouse

Hamilton's (possibly Monroe Co) blockhouse

Handley's (Burnside's Branch, Monroe Co) blockhouse

Jarrett's (mouth of Wolf Creek, Monroe Co)

Lafferty's (New River, Summers Co) blockhouse

Knox's (Second Creek, Monroe Co) blockhouse

Lewis (John) (Cove Creek, Monroe Co)

Mann's (Indian Creek, Monroe Co) blockhouse

McClanahan's (possibly Levels, Greenbrier Co) blockhouse

McCoy's (Muddy Creek, Greenbrier Co) blockhouse

Savannah, also called **Ft. Charles** (Lewisburg, Greenbrier Co) large fort, cabins and stockade

Renick's (Spring Creek, Greenbrier Co)

Stuart's (Fort Springs, Greenbrier Co)

Sweet Springs (Wm Lewis) (Sweet Springs, Monroe Co) blockhouse

Thompson's (Pickaway, Monroe Co)

Van Bibber's (John) (Greenbrier River, Lowell, Summers Co)

Van Bibber's (Peter) (Wolf Creek, Monroe Co) blockhouse

Warwick's (Jacob) (Dunmore, Pocahontas Co) blockhouse

Warwick (John) (Deer Creek, Pocahontas Co)

Wood's (Lindside, Monroe Co)

Monongahela River Drainage

Baldwin (Monongalia Co) blockhouse

Buckhannon (Red Rock, Upshur Co)

Burris (Monongahela River, Monongalia Co)

Bush (Buckhannon River, Upshur Co)

Butler (Cheat River, mouth Roaring Fork, Preston Co) blockhouse

Cobun (Cobun Creek, Morgantown, Monongalia Co)

Coon (Coon's Run, Marion Co)

Davisson (Clarksburg, Harrison Co) blockhouse

Dinwiddie, also called **Dunmore's and Roger's**

(Cheat River, Stewartstown, Monongalia Co)

Flesher's (Weston, Lewis Co) blockhouse

Harbert (near Lumberport, Ten Mile Creek Harrison Co) blockhouse

Harrison (Crooked Run, Monongalia Co)

Huffman (between Snider and Stewart Runs, Monongalia Co)

Jackson (Fink's Run, Upshur Co)

Jackson (Ten Mile Creek, Harrison Co) blockhouse

Kerns (Decker's Creek, Morgantown, Monongalia Co)

Martin (Crooked Run, Monongalia Co)

McIntire (Enterprise, W. Fk Monongehela, Harrison Co) blockhouse

Minear (Cheat River, Tucker Co), originally blockhouse then expanded 1776

Morgan (Univ. And Fayette, Morgantown, Monongalia Co)

Morgantown Fort (Lot 88, Walnut and Chestnut, Morgantown, Monongalia Co)

Morris (Sandy Creek, Preston Co) 1 acre area, 2 cabins

Nutter (Elk Creek, Nutter Fort town, Harrison Co)

PawPaw (PawPaw Creek, Marion Co) 90 ft on a side

Pierpont (Union District, near Morgantown, Monongalia Co)

Pleasant (Little Falls, mouth Tom's Run, Monongalia Co)

Powers (Simpson's Creek, Bridgeport, Harrison Co)

Prickett (mouth Prickett's Creek, Marion Co) 10 + cabins, blockhouses in four corners

Richards, also called **Lowther** (West Fork Monongehela near West Milford, Harrison Co)

Statler (Dunkard Creek, Price, Monongalia Co)

Stewart (Stewart's Run, Monongalia Co) blockhouse

Tabor (Laurel Point and Snider Cemetery, Monongalia Co)

Tomlinson (Moundville, Marshall Co)

West (rebuilt as **Beech**) (Jane Lew, Hacker's Creek, Lewis Co)

Worley (Blacksville, Marion Co)

Tygart Valley Drainage

Currence, also known as **Cassino** (Mill Creek/Crickard, Randolph Co) possible blockhouse

Edwards (Booth Creek District, Taylor Co)

Friend (Leading Creek, Randolph Co), possible blockhouse

Hadden (Elkwater Creek, Randolph Co)

Roney (Leading Creek, Randolph Co) blockhouse

Warwick (Randolph Co)

Westfall (Files Creek, Beverley, Randolph)

Wilson (Tygart Valley River, Randolph Co)

Kanawha River Drainage

Blair - same as **Randolph**

Kelly's (mouth Kelly Creek and Kanawha River, Kanawha Co)

Lick (Salt Springs, Webster Co)

Randolph, also called **Blair** (Mt Kanawha, Point Pleasant, Mason Co) major fort, rebuilt several times

Upper Ohio River Drainage

Baker (Cresap's Bottom, Marshall Co)

Beech Bottom (Brooke Co)

Beeler (Marshall Co)

Bowling (above Wheeling, Brooke Co)

Clark (Pleasant Hill, Marshall Co) 4 cabins

Cresap - probably same as **Baker**, see above

Decker (Ohio River, Follansbee, Brooke Co)

Edington (Harmon's Creek, Brooke Co)

Grave Creek (Grave Creek, Marshall Co)

Henry (Wheeling, Ohio) major fort
Holliday (Holliday Cove, Hancock)
Liberty (W. Liberty, Ohio Co) blockhouse
Link (Ohio Co) blockhouse
Rice (Buffalo Creek, Brooke Co)
Shepherd (Forks of Wheeling Creek, Ohio Co)
Van Meter, also called **Courthouse Fort**
 (Short Creek, Ohio Co)
Wells (Brooke Co)
Wetzel (Wheeling Creek, Marshall Co)

Post-Revolutionary AND Revolutionary War: 1784-1790s

Monongahela River Drainage

Amos (Crown, Monongalia Co) blockhouse
Cordray (Stewart Run, Monongalia Co)
Meadowville (Belington, Barbour Co)
Salem (Salem, Harrison Co) blockhouse

Kanawha River Drainage

Cooper (Kanawha River, Mason Co) blockhouse
Cedar Grove (Kanawha River, Kanawha Co)
Lee, originally **Clendenin** (Kanawha River, Charleston, Kanawha Co) two story 36 x 18 bldg, huts, stockade 250 x 175 ft Morris (Kanawha River opposite mouth Campbell's Creek, Kanawha Co)
Robinson (Ohio River, Mason Co) blockhouse
Tackett (Kanawha, near St. Albans, Kanawha Co)

Little Kanawha River Drainage

Backus (N. End Blennerhasset Island, Wood Co) blockhouse
Belleville (Wood Co) four blockhouses
Flinn (Ohio River in Wood Co)
Neal (Parkersburg, Wood Co)

Upper Ohio River Drainage

Chapman (New Cumberland, Hancock Co)

Endnotes

*See For Further Reading
section for full citations
for published sources.*

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ON THE COVER:
Aerial photo of Arbuckle’s Fort after stockade excavation.

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF W. STEPHEN MCBRIDE AND KIM A. MCBRIDE.

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