

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

1. Name of PropertyHistoric name: Edwards' FortOther names/site number: Fort Edwards, 46Hm75

Name of related multiple property listing:

Frontier Forts of West Virginia

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

2. LocationStreet & number: 350 Cold Stream RoadCity or town: Capon Bridge State: WV County: HampshireNot For Publication: ☒ Vicinity: ☐**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

 national X statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

 A B C X D

Signature of certifying official/Title:

Date

State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official:

Date

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4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register
☐ determined eligible for the National Register
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register
☐ removed from the National Register
☐ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private: ☒
- Public – Local ☐
- Public – State ☐
- Public – Federal ☐

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s) ☐
- District ☐
- Site ☒
- Structure ☐
- Object ☐

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Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
<u> </u>	<u>1</u>	buildings
<u>1</u>	<u> </u>	sites
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	structures
<u> </u>	<u> </u>	objects
<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

DEFENSE/Fortification
DEFENSE/Military facility

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/outdoor recreation

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A

Materials: (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: N/A for the archaeological site; Non-contributing log house has limestone, logs, wooden siding.

Narrative Description (Organized following Bulletin 36)

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

Summary Paragraph

Edwards' Fort falls under the property type "Frontier Forts" as described in the "Frontier Forts of West Virginia" Multiple Property Documentation (MPD). The Joseph Edwards' Fort site is located on a flat terrace overlooking (to the east) the floodplain of the Cacapon River, in Capon Bridge, Hampshire County, West Virginia. The site is in grass, Autumn Olive bushes, and some trees, and contains a spring and the ruin of ca. 1790-91 Elias Poston log residence (Worthington and Seiter 2021) (Photos 1-4). It is owned by the Fort Edwards Foundation, who give reserved tours of the site from the adjacent property which contains a museum and interpretive trails. Archeological excavations of Edwards' Fort revealed the well-preserved subsurface remains of this fort, including post mold-filled stockade trenches with two bastions and a covered-way to the spring, two semisubterranean soldier huts, the cellar and foundation of Joseph Edwards' original house, and three middle-eighteenth century root cellars/refuse pits. Archeological excavation of three test units above the site's spring on the east portion of the site also discovered intact stratified midden deposits including a lower middle-eighteenth century soil zone. This intact midden is especially significant since most of the site has been plowed, and therefore only the sub-plowzone features have significant chronological integrity to address research questions and aid in the interpretation of Edwards' Fort, given the site's long occupation span (McBride 2001, 2005).

Edwards' Fort was constructed in 1755, likely by Joseph Edwards and local Hampshire County militia, although this is not well documented. Both militia and Virginia Regiment soldiers are documented as being stationed here from 1755 to 1758 during the French and Indian War (McBride and Gruber 1999; McBride 2005). Joseph Edwards had this 400-acre tract surveyed in 1748, but he likely settled it by at least 1742 if not earlier, since he is documented in the area (Quisenberry and Muske 2003). The fort served as a base for militia and Virginia Regiment soldiers, as a supply depot on the important convoy road between Winchester, Virginia (later Fort Loudoun) and Fort Cumberland, Maryland, the most important British fort on the Virginia-Maryland frontier, as a hospital during the 1758 Forbes Campaign, and as a safe haven for settlers (McBride and Gruber 1999; McBride 2005, 2013). Although the site has a long occupation (1740s-1980s) and has been plowed, the presence of numerous middle-eighteenth century fort architectural and refuse features and intact middle-eighteenth century refuse midden

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indicates that it can be used to address significant research questions, as discussed in more detail below in Section 8.

Narrative Description

Environment

Edwards' Fort is located on a terrace about 10 feet (3 meters) above the Cacapon River floodplain and about 675 feet (206 meters) west of the river. The site is part of the Fort Edwards Foundation park and museum which is used for occasional tours. The site is presently covered in grass, Autumn Olive bushes, and some trees. Much of the site west of the 1790-91 log house was used for agriculture in the past and has been plowed. The terrace above the spring and the slopes to the floodplain have not been plowed. Historically, the setting was probably much the same, except for the bushes and trees surrounding the fort which would have been cut to both build the fort and clear the viewshed (fields of fire) for the militia men/soldiers. The site may have been more heavily wooded before Edwards occupied the site and the fort was constructed, but this is unclear. The fort spring, located on the eastern section of the site, was the fort's major water source.

Time Period of Occupation

The significant period of occupation for this nomination is 1755 to 1763 (the French and Indian War). These dates are based on both archival research, particularly the George Washington Papers, and archeologically recovered features, midden, and artifacts. Diagnostic artifacts include English and European ceramics, wrought nails, gunflints, brass and pewter buttons, shoe and clothing buckles, and musket balls. English and European ceramics of this period include delftware, white salt-glazed stoneware, Whieldon Ware, British salt-glazed stoneware, and Rhenish (German) stoneware (Noel Hume 1970; Nelson 1968; Miller et al. 2002; Jones 1986). Arms and ammunition artifacts include both larger military musket gunflints and balls and smaller hunting fowler or rifle gunflints and balls. Local American ceramics include lead-glazed redware. At the end of the French and Indian War, the site returned to its original residential and agricultural function which continued into the 1980s, but archeology has demonstrated that subsurface features, midden, and artifacts with good integrity have survived this post-fort occupation.

Persons, Ethnic Groups, or Archeological Cultures

Archival material suggests that Edwards' Fort was used to garrison militia and soldiers, store supplies, nurse militiamen and soldiers, and protect settlers from 1755 to at least 1758, when the fall of Fort Duquesne at present Pittsburgh led to a reduction in frontier warfare, although it may have continued to the end of the War in 1763. The fort was primarily occupied by people of Euro-American descent, but some enslaved African Americans likely occupied the fort with their owners, although this is not documented. While militia and soldiers were men, civilian women and children sought refuge in the fort during times of danger. As this fort was built primarily as protection against Native American raiding parties, these people, particularly Lenape (Delaware) and Shawnee were important participants in the history of this site, although they were not occupants of the fort.

Besides Joseph Edwards and his family, other known occupants of the fort between 1755 and 1758 include militia Captain William Vance and his company, Virginia Regiment Lt. John Blagg and twenty

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men, Virginia Regiment Captain John Fenton Mercer and his company (at least 60 men), Virginia Regiment Capt. Henry Harrison and his company, Virginia Regiment Ensign Edward Hubbard and 10-15 of his men, Militia Captain William Baylis and his company, and Virginia Regiment Lt. John McNeill and his men (McBride and Gruber 1999; McBride 2005, 2013; Koontz 1925). Although this is not precisely documented, nearby families, including the Caudys, Pughs, Arnolds, Parks, Hamptons, and Powells likely lived in the fort during times of danger.

Physical Characteristics

The Edwards' Fort site is located on a terrace overlooking the Cacapon River and is approximately 220 x 167 feet (67 x 51 meters) as defined by the fort footprint and a buffer area containing fort period artifacts and features. Archeological investigations have revealed a soil profile over most of the site of a 10 to 12 inch (24 to 30 cm) deep medium brown silt loam plow zone overlying a yellowish-brown silty clay subsoil. In the eastern section of the site above the spring, soils indicate that this area has not been plowed. This soil profile consists of a 10 to 12 inch (25 to 30 cm) dark brown silty loam topsoil, a 7 to 9 inch (17 to 23 cm) dark yellowish brown silty loam fill zone, a 5 to 12 inch (12 to 30 cm) dark brown silty loam buried topsoil, and finally, a yellowish brown silty clay subsoil (McBride 2001, 2005). While the top two soil zones contained nineteenth century and late-eighteenth century artifacts, respectively, the third (dark brown buried topsoil) contained only middle-eighteenth century artifacts, including delftware, Scratch Blue white salt glazed stoneware, redware, hand-blown bottle glass, and pipestems (Figure 1).

Architectural features that define the fort's walls are composed of sections of stockade trenches with post molds that are remnants of the upright log stockade, plus individual post molds (Figure 2, 3). The stockade trenches are linear dark brown stains about 15 to 18 inches (35 to 50 cm) wide and extend 12 to 15 inches (30 to 35 cm) into the yellowish brown subsoil. The trenches often contain circular post molds 8 to 12 inches (20 to 30 cm) across. The total dimension of the fort is about 105 feet (32 meters) north-south by 98 feet (20 meters) east west. Sections of the stockade trenches were exposed in test units and by hand and mechanical removal of the plow zone (McBride 2001, 2005).

Two fort bastions have been exposed archeologically. These include one "V" shaped mid-wall bastion (Figure 4) along the northern stockade wall and a half-diamond shaped bastion at the southwestern corner of the fort (Figure 5). These bastions would allow the defenders to enfilade (or cover, or shoot along) the northern and southwestern walls of the fort. The southwestern and northeastern ends of the fort have yet to be exposed and there are likely additional bastions in these areas. Along the southern wall of the fort, the stockade trench takes a sharp right turn and runs down (southeast) toward the spring (McBride 2001, 2005). This section of stockade trench is a covered-way to protect people getting water. The covered-way could have also acted as a defensive position as the southern wall could have been enfiladed from here. The fort does not fit the standard two to four bastioned rectangular fort design but is more irregular. This likely relates to the fact that it was built by Joseph Edwards himself, possibly with the aid of local militia. Artifacts recovered from the stockade trenches and bastions include delftware, white salt-glazed stoneware, redware, wrought nails, kaolin smoking pipe fragments, a French gun flint, a gray British or Dutch gunflint, and animal bone (Figure 6). The presence of delftware and white salt-glazed stoneware, and lack of creamware in the trench backfill suggest a middle-eighteenth century date of construction (Noel-Hume 1970). The discovery of one creamware sherd in one stockade post mold suggests the fort was dismantled after 1762.

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Three oval pits were encountered and excavated to the north of the northern stockade trench. Two of these pits (Features 60 [Figure 7] and 73) are interpreted as the remains of two semi-subterranean soldiers' huts, and the third (Feature 61) was a hearth pit associated with the Feature 60 hut (Figure 8). The larger pits are 9 by 8 ft to 7 by 6 feet (2.7 by 2.5 meters to 2.1 by 1.8 meters) in area, and 12 to 14 inches (30 to 36 cm) deep at their deep end, and 4 to 6 inches (10 to 16 cm) deep at their shallow end. The hearth pit was 3 by 4.3 feet (.90 by 1.3 meters) and 5 inches (12 cm) deep (McBride 2005). These huts are just outside the fort. These pits are nearly identical to soldiers' huts found at Sevierville Hill, Tennessee and Valley Forge, Pennsylvania (Bentz and Kim 1993; Parrington 1979-80). Diagnostic artifacts from these hut pits include delftware, lead-glazed redware, a vented domed brass button (1726-1776, South 1964:115), hand-blown bottle lips (1730-1760, Jones 1986), a lead gaming piece, and a cooking gridiron (Figures 9-11). Faunal remains from these features include swine, cattle, deer, sheep, and horse.

The archeology revealed a large cellar (17 x 30 feet or 5 x 8 meters) with a limestone foundation inside the fort (Figure 12); this cellar is interpreted as from Joseph Edwards' original house. Excavation of one small (1 x 1 meter) test unit within the cellar exposed four soil strata below the plow zone: a 4 inch (10 cm) dark grayish brown silty loam fill (Zone 1), a .80 inch (2 cm) mortar zone (Zone 2), a 19 inch (48 cm) dark brown silty loam fill (Zone 3), and a rock-filled zone (Zone 4) of undetermined depth. Artifacts from the top fill zone include late eighteenth century to late nineteenth century ceramics, including pearlware (1775-1840) and ironstone (1850-1900, Miller et al. 2002). Artifacts from the thick dark brown fill (Zone 3) include creamware ceramics (1762-1830), pearlware ceramics (1775-1840), redware ceramics, wrought nails, and one kaolin smoking pipe (Figure 13). The presence of pearlware and lack of cut nails suggest that this zone was deposited between 1775 and 1830. The rock layer could not be excavated in this small (1 x 1 meter) test unit because of the size and packed nature of the rocks. The rock may represent the destruction or partial destruction of the house foundation and chimney. This house probably came down between Joseph Edwards' death in 1781 and the construction of the Poston house in 1790-91.

The remaining French and Indian War era features consist of three backfilled small root cellars or refuse pits (Features 6, 8 [Figure 14], and 18). All these cellar/pits were located outside the fort, so they may have originated during the early Edwards' civilian occupation, but artifacts within them suggest they continued in use and were filled during the fort period. Artifacts within Feature 6 (the richest pit) include delftware ceramics, white salt-glazed stoneware, including Scratch Blue decorated, redware, Rhenish (German) Stoneware, Whielden Ware ceramics, Chinese porcelain, glass beads, musket balls (some large caliber Brown Bess size used by the Virginia Regiment), hand-blown glass, wrought nails, and animal bone (Figures 15-19). Faunal material from cattle, swine, sheep, deer and chickens were recovered. This pit was 3.5 by 4 feet (1 by 1.2 meters) and 1.4 feet (43 cm) deep below the base of the plowzone (Gardner 1990). The other two pits (Features 8 and 18) were of a similar size and depth, and contained redware, eighteenth century hand-blown bottle glass, wrought nails, daub, a large military musket size French gunflint (like those used by the Virginia Regiment), and a large assemblage of animal bone (McBride 2001) (Figures 20-22). The artifact assemblage from these cellar/pits, particularly Feature 6, are the largest recorded middle-eighteenth century deposits in West Virginia.

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Likely Appearance of the Property During Its Period of Occupation or Use

Historically, the setting was probably much the same as it is today, except that all trees along Cacapon River might have been cut to both build the fort and clear a viewshed (field of fire) for the militiamen.

Current and Past Impacts

The fort was probably dismantled in the 1760s and the original Edwards' house was dismantled in the 1780s or early 1790s. After the French and Indian War, occupation of the site was a residence and farm. A second house was built south of the fort in 1790-91 and occupied until ca. 1980. During this occupation, much of the fort site area was placed under cultivation, so that a 10 to 12 inch plowzone was created. Sub-plowzone features, however, are preserved. Today, the 1790-91 log house remains, but in a poor condition and the collapsed ruins of a wooden shed south of the 1790-91 log home and a wooden privy north of the log house are visible on the surface. The site is presently in grass, Autumn Olive bushes, and trees.

Integrity

Archeological investigations in 1990, 2001, and 2004 (Gardner 1990, McBride 2001, 2005) have demonstrated that the site has a high degree of archeological integrity in its sub-plowzone features and deposits. Numerous French and Indian War era features, including stockade trenches with post molds, bastion trenches with post molds, isolated post molds near the stockade trenches, the original house stone foundation and cellar, two semi-subterranean soldiers' huts, and three cellar pits have been documented. Also, the ground above the spring contains unplowed stratified midden deposits with high chronological integrity.

Previous Investigations

Four archeological projects have been conducted at or near the site of Edwards' Fort. The first was conducted in 1990 by Dr. William Gardner and consisted of hand excavation and mechanical trenching/stripping surrounding the standing log structure (Gardner 1990). This excavation resulted in the discovery of one middle-eighteenth century cellar pit (Feature 6) and a number of late-eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth century deposits.

The second project was an archeological survey for the present Fort Edwards's Museum that is located south of the fort site (McBride and Gruber 1999). This project was led by Dr. W. Stephen McBride and consisted of shovel test probe (stp) excavation on that lot and recovered mostly nineteenth and twentieth century artifacts except for a few shovel test probes on the northern edge of the survey area near the fort site, which produced some late-eighteenth century artifacts.

The third and fourth archeological projects were also lead by Dr. W. Stephen McBride and had the goal of finding more middle-eighteenth century features and in particular, locating structural evidence of the fort itself (McBride 2001, 2005). These projects were successful in locating stockade trenches, bastion trenches, the original Edwards' house foundation and cellar, two more smaller cellar pits, and two soldier hut basins. These projects also located intact stratigraphic midden deposits near the spring.

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Contributing and Non-Contributing Resources

The resource is composed of one contributing resource, the Edwards' Fort archaeological site (46Hm75), and one non-contributing log building, the 1790-1791 Elias Poston house. This building is a two-story v-notched log (mostly yellow pine) west facing residence, circa 18 by 26 feet, with two six over six pane windows on each floor on the front and back elevations. It originally had a stone chimney on the north gable end, which was later enclosed in a frame addition; both the addition and chimney have been removed. The house is currently encased in aluminum siding. It is non-contributing as it is outside the period of significance and because its history has no connection to frontier forts.

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- ☐ A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☐ C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- ☐ B. Removed from its original location
- ☐ C. A birthplace or grave
- ☐ D. A cemetery
- ☐ E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- ☐ F. A commemorative property
- ☐ G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Archeology/Historic-Non-Aboriginal
Exploration/Settlement
Military

Period of Significance

1755-1763

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Significant Dates

1755 (founding)
1756 (Capt. John Mercer battle)
1758 (use in Gen. John Forbes Fort Duquesne campaign)

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

Euro-American
African American

Architect/Builder

Joseph Edwards and Hampshire County militia

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

This statement is abbreviated, as suggested by the National Register Bulletin 16A, Page 66 for individual properties registered under a Multiple Property Documentation Form. Edwards' Fort is significant at the state level under *Criterion D: Military, Exploration/Settlement*, and *Archeology/Historic-Non-Aboriginal*, for its association with the historic context "Frontier Forts within Eighteenth-Century Frontier Defensive Systems of West Virginia" as established in the "Frontier Forts of West Virginia" MPD. Edwards' Fort is an important private and probably militia built regional fort established by prominent landowner Joseph Edwards and Hampshire County Militia in 1755 and soon after garrisoned by Virginia Regiment troops. Besides local defense, it also served as an important supply depot, convoy station, and hospital during the French and Indian War. Its location on an upland terrace overlooking the Cacapon River provided a defensive position and its location on the important road from Winchester, Virginia to Fort Cumberland, Maryland led to its important transportation and supply functions. Edwards' Fort contains well preserved archeological features and artifacts from the French and Indian War that can be used to better understand the frontier defensive system of middle-eighteenth century western Virginia (now West Virginia). The Period of Significance is 1755-1763, the years the fort is believed to have been utilized.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

Joseph Edwards' original 400-acre settlement tract on the Cacapon River was first surveyed on May 3, 1748, though he may have been there as early as 1738 but certainly by May 1742 when he was appointed as overseer of the road from James Caudy's [adjacent to Edwards' property on Cacapon] to Parkins Mill. By the 1750s Edwards had become a prominent settler. He acquired an additional 1,239 acres between 1750 and 1762. By the middle eighteenth century Joseph and his wife Sarah's children David, Joseph Jr., Thomas and Mary had grown to adulthood and gotten married (McBride and Gruber 1999; Quisenberry and Munske 2003).

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It is not known exactly when Edwards' Fort was built or what it looked like, but it was certainly a site of importance by the fall of 1755 when Native American raids began to occur in Hampshire County (McBride and Gruber 1999). In October 1755, Edwards' Fort is mentioned by Col. George Washington when he ordered Frederick County ranger Captains Cocke and Ashby to make a stand against raiding Native Americans, but if they had to withdraw "... to retreat no farther than Joseph Edwards in Cacapehon..." (Abbot 1983:91). In October 1755, Washington also ordered Captain William Vance of the Frederick County militia, who had abandoned the South Branch, "...to halt at Joseph Edwards' on Cacapehon, until further orders, unless you should be drove from thence by superior force.." (Abbot 1983:93).

On April 7, 1756, Col. Washington ordered "A subaltern and twenty men to parade immediately to March to Joseph Edwards.... Lieutenant [John] Blagg for this Command" (Abbot 1983:331-2). Washington told Blagg, "You must endeavor to keep the inhabitants of the place together as much as possible...(Abbot 1983:332). On April 12, Col. Washington also ordered Captain John Fenton Mercer of the Virginia Regiment "immediately to return to Joseph Edwards's on Great Cape-capon.." (Abbot 1983:349). Mercer's troops soon returned to Edwards' Fort. On April 12, Washington's aide-de-camp George Mercer ordered Serg. Reuben Vass "to escort a Waggon with provisions, etc to Joseph Edwards', for the men there" (Abbot 1983:354).

On April 18, Mercer and 60 men left Edwards' Fort in pursuit of a large force of Native Americans seen near the fort. Mercer and his men were ambushed one and a half miles from the fort and soundly defeated, with the loss of Captain Mercer, Ensign Thomas Carter and 15 men (McBride and Gruber 1999; Abbot 1984a:17-18). The day after the battle, Col. Washington ordered Captain Henry Harrison of the Virginia Regiment "to repair to Joseph Edwards' Fort, and there to take upon you the command of all those different parties that are at that place" (Abbot 1984a:21). On April 21, Washington ordered Ensign Edward Hubbard of the Virginia Regiment at Enoch's Fort to retreat to Edwards' "if desired" (Abbot 1984a:29). Interestingly, on the same day, Washington asked Joseph Edwards to supply provisions to the soldiers stationed at this fort, since Washington could not, and threatened to remove the men if Edwards did not comply (Abbot 1984a:30).

On April 23, Col. Washington stated to Ensign Hubbard that it was "advisable" to abandon Enoch's and remove to Edwards' and he also ordered Capt. Harrison to return to Winchester, but "You are to have a subaltern, two Sergeants, and 25 rank and file, at Edwards' Fort; unless the inhabitants desire to come down here - if so, you are to take them under escort: and must take care, if they insist on leaving the Fort, to destroy it..." (Abbot 1984a:40-41). This quote is particularly interesting since it mentions the fort's "inhabitants."

A heightened level of anxiety certainly spread throughout the region after the Mercer battle/defeat. Colonel Washington worried that "the inhabitants that are there, will more probably fall a sacrifice to the Indians" (Koontz 1925:120). The battle had a sobering effect upon the Virginia legislature, "transforming a balky House of Burgesses to a supportive body when they appropriated over 20,000 pounds to the war effort" (McBride and Gruber 1999:6). In July 1756, the Virginia Regiment accelerated the construction of a chain of forts to protect the Virginia frontier.

Edwards' Fort became one of a number of settler forts added to the provincial chain of forts. Edwards' Fort was chosen because of its location on the main road between Washington's headquarters in Winchester, the forts on the South Branch, and Fort Cumberland. Edwards' Fort became a major

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stopover point for convoys moving between Winchester and Fort Cumberland. On July 13, 1756, Washington ordered Capt. Thomas Cocke of the Virginia Regiment to "inform Captain [William] Baylis it is ordered, that he send a party of the [Prince William County] Militia to guard wagons to Edwards' Fort; where Ensign Milner will receive them and conduct them to Winchester " (Abbot 1984a:266).

Edwards' Fort was also used as a base for "ranging" or searching for Native Americans. For instance, on August 12, 1756, Washington ordered Lt. John McNeill to range "On this road [between Edwards' and Pearsall's]; and in this manner You are to remain, until your provisions is out; and then repair to Edwards' Fort - where you will receive a sufficiency to bring you to this place [Winchester]" (Abbot 1984a:343).

On December 9-10, 1756, Washington ordered "A Sergeant, and ten men...[to] march to Joseph Edwards' to strengthen the party there, and escort the Cattle as far as Pearsalls [on the South Branch], and to return here again immediately..." (Abbot 1984b:47). Edwards' Fort continued importance in convoy defense is noted in a May 1758 letter from Washington where he stated, "A part of the Militia ordered for the [South] Branch, should take post at Edwards' (on Cacapehon) and at Pearsalls, for the security of the convoys passing hence to Fort Cumberland" (Abbot 1988:158).

In May 1757, Lt. Gov. Robert Dinwiddie and the Virginia legislature instructed Col. George Washington to station 25 men under a subaltern at Edwards' (Abbot 1984b:154; Koontz 1925:107). A month later Washington and his Council of War reported that there were 16 men stationed at Edwards (Abbot 1984b:221; Koontz 1925:108). On December 1, 1757, there were nine men stationed there (Abbot 1988:67).

During General John Forbes' June-November 1758 Fort Duquesne campaign, Edwards' Fort gained importance as a place to house sick soldiers as well as soldiers guarding the main supply convoy (Abbot 1988:208, 211). In July 1758, 17 sick men were at Edwards (Abbot 1988:269). Some soldiers also remained behind at Edwards' Fort, as Washington's June 23 and 24, 1758 letters to 2nd Virginia Regiment commander Col. William Byrd notes:

"One Company of the 2nd Regiment to be stationed at Job Pearsall's on the South Branch and Edwards's till all the Convoys of Provisions have passed and then to Join," and "You will want Provisions at Edwards' and Pearsalls' for that Company of Your Regiment Ordered to be left at those places..." (Abbot 1988:211, 237).

There is no description of Edwards' Fort or any records of its construction. It is not clear whether the Virginia Regiment improved the fort at all. The exact date of Edwards' Fort demise or dismantling, like its construction, is unknown. With the fall of Fort Duquesne in November 1758, the need for Edwards' Fort, like most of the Virginia chain, was greatly reduced. Occupation by provincial troops likely ended soon after this as Native American raids subsided (Ansel 1995; McBride and Gruber 1999). In any case, sometime between 1758 and 1763 Edwards' Fort probably ceased to be a fort.

Following the Indian Wars of the 1750s and 1760s, Joseph Edwards continued his career as a farmer. Following Edwards' death in 1781, the site continued to be operated as a farm by a number of owners and tenants until the 1980s and was sold to the Fort Edwards Foundation in 1999. The surviving log house on the property was built by Elias Poston in 1790-91 according to dendrochronology

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(Worthington and Seiter 2021), so no above ground evidence of Joseph Edwards' house or fort remained.

Edwards' Fort is extremely significant under Criterion D in the areas of Exploration/Settlement, Military, and Archeology/Historic-Non-Aboriginal. In regard to the Exploration/Settlement area of significance, Edwards' Fort was a key node in the settlement system, serving as a central place for defense, supplies, and medicine in the period before towns west of Winchester were established. Edwards's Fort was one of the main forts that settlers would go to in times of danger because of its location on the main road, its larger garrison (including Virginia Regiment troops), and substantial size and construction. It was essential for preserving the Euro-American settlements in the Upper Potomac-South Branch, Cacapon region, and keeping settlers from fleeing back to the more eastern settlements and hence moving the frontier.

Edwards' Fort is also significant under Military as it was the main fort for the Cacapon Valley and one of four forts (Pearsall's, Cocke's, and Ashby's being the other three) guarding the supply and convey road between Winchester (Fort Loudoun- Col. George Washington's headquarters) and Fort Cumberland (the largest fort on the Virginia-Maryland frontier). Col. George Washington saw Edwards' Fort as a critical regional fort and garrisoned it with militia and Virginia Regiment Troops to protect settlers and military and supply convoys, made it an important supply depot, and made it a hospital facility during Gen. John Forbes' Fort Duquesne Campaign of 1758. This fort was also the staging ground for Virginia Regiment Captain John Fenton Mercer's failed engagement with Native Americans in April 1756, which led the colony of Virginia to greatly strengthen its western frontier defenses. The design of Edwards' Fort as presently understood presents information on variations from the classic two or four corner bastion design for frontier forts such as Ashby's, Cocke's' (probably), Loudoun, and Cumberland. Its somewhat irregular design with at least one half-bastion, at least one mid-wall bastion, and a covered-way most closely resembles Fort Allen in Pennsylvania (Figure 23) and speaks to more private citizen and militia ideas of a proper fort.

Edwards' Fort is significant under the area of Archeology/Historic-Non-Aboriginal because the site contains structural features and artifacts that provide data useful in the study of the frontier defensive system, the design and construction methods of frontier forts, the material culture of the militia, Virginia Regiment, and settlers, and provision of food within the fort. More detail on the nature of the deposits and examples of information that they contain is provided in Section 7. The site has high sub-plowzone archeological integrity, with middle-eighteenth century architectural and refuse features and deeply buried midden. These features can be used to address research questions related to fort design and construction methods, the location and function of other buildings and activity areas (both inside and outside of the fort), and changes in the fort over time. Artifacts from these features and midden can answer questions related to foodways consumption patterns, clothing, arms and ammunition, gender-related consumption and activities, craft activities, and food provisioning.

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9. Major Bibliographical References

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Edwards' Fort
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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #
☐ recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #

Primary location of additional data:

- ☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☒ Other

Name of repository: field records and artifacts are curated at Fort Edwards Museum, 350 Cold Stream Road, Capon Bridge, WV

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): Archaeological site 46Hm75

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property .843 acres

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

UTM References

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

☐ NAD 1927 or ☒ NAD 1983

NE Zone: 17N Easting: 0721422 Northing: 4353656

NW Zone: 17N Easting: 0721356 Northing: 4353605

SE Zone: 17N Easting: 0721450 Northing: 4353615

SW Zone: 17N Easting: 0721393 Northing: 4353567

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The National Register property is defined by a rectangle that is 220 feet (67 meters) east-west by 167 feet (51 meters) north-south, sitting on a terrace about 10 feet (3 meters) above the Cacapon River floodplain and about 675 feet (206 meters) west of the river.

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Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The National Register area includes all stockade features, hut and cellar pit features, spring, and an approximately 50-foot (15 meter) buffer around the stockade and other period features.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dr. W. Stephen McBride and Dr. Kim A. McBride
organization: Greenbrier Valley Archaeology, Inc.
street & number: 1362 Washington Street
city or town: Lewisburg state: WV zip code: 24901
e-mail kim.mcbride@uky.edu
telephone: (859) 421 5943
date: June 19, 2026

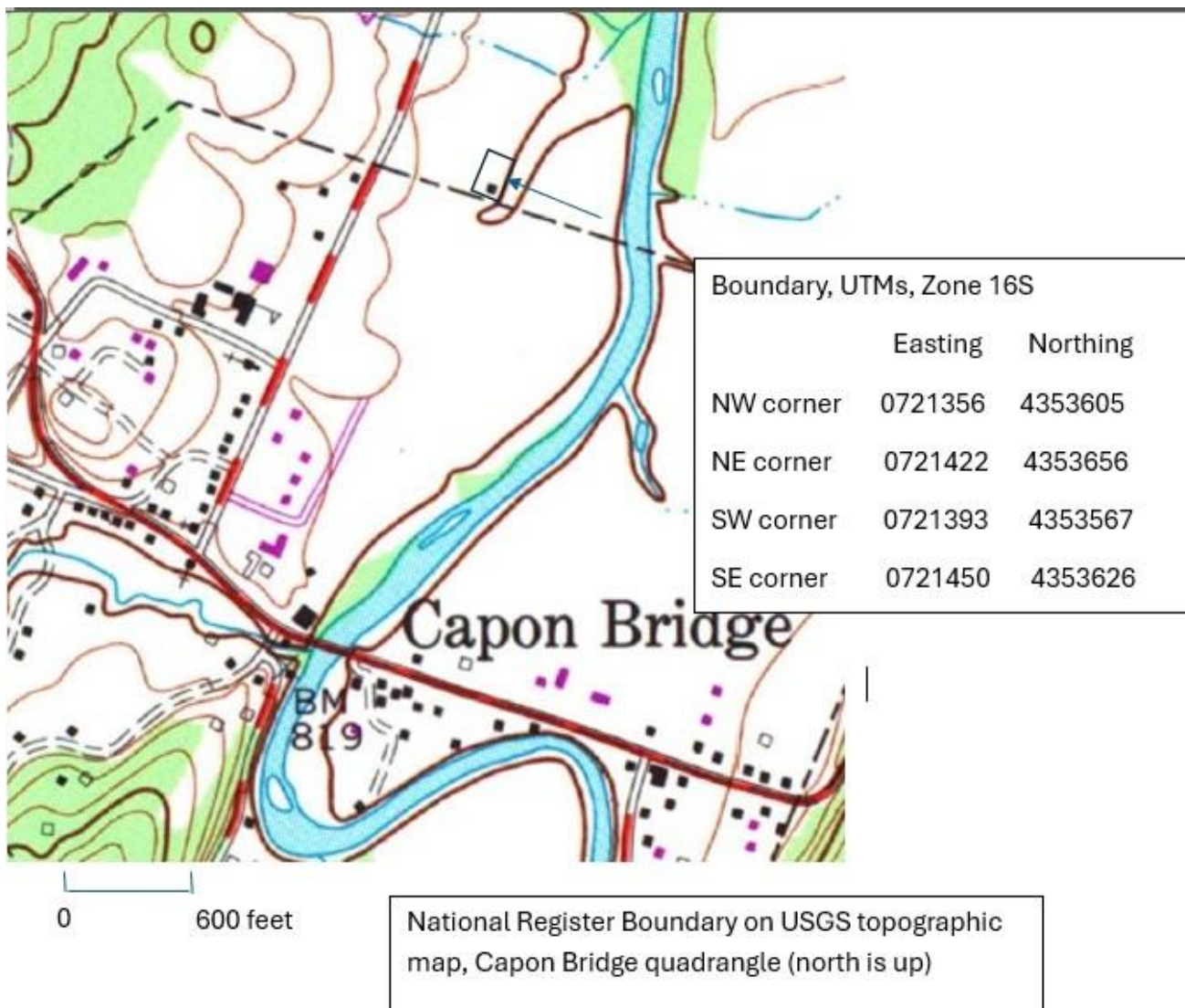
Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Edwards' Fort
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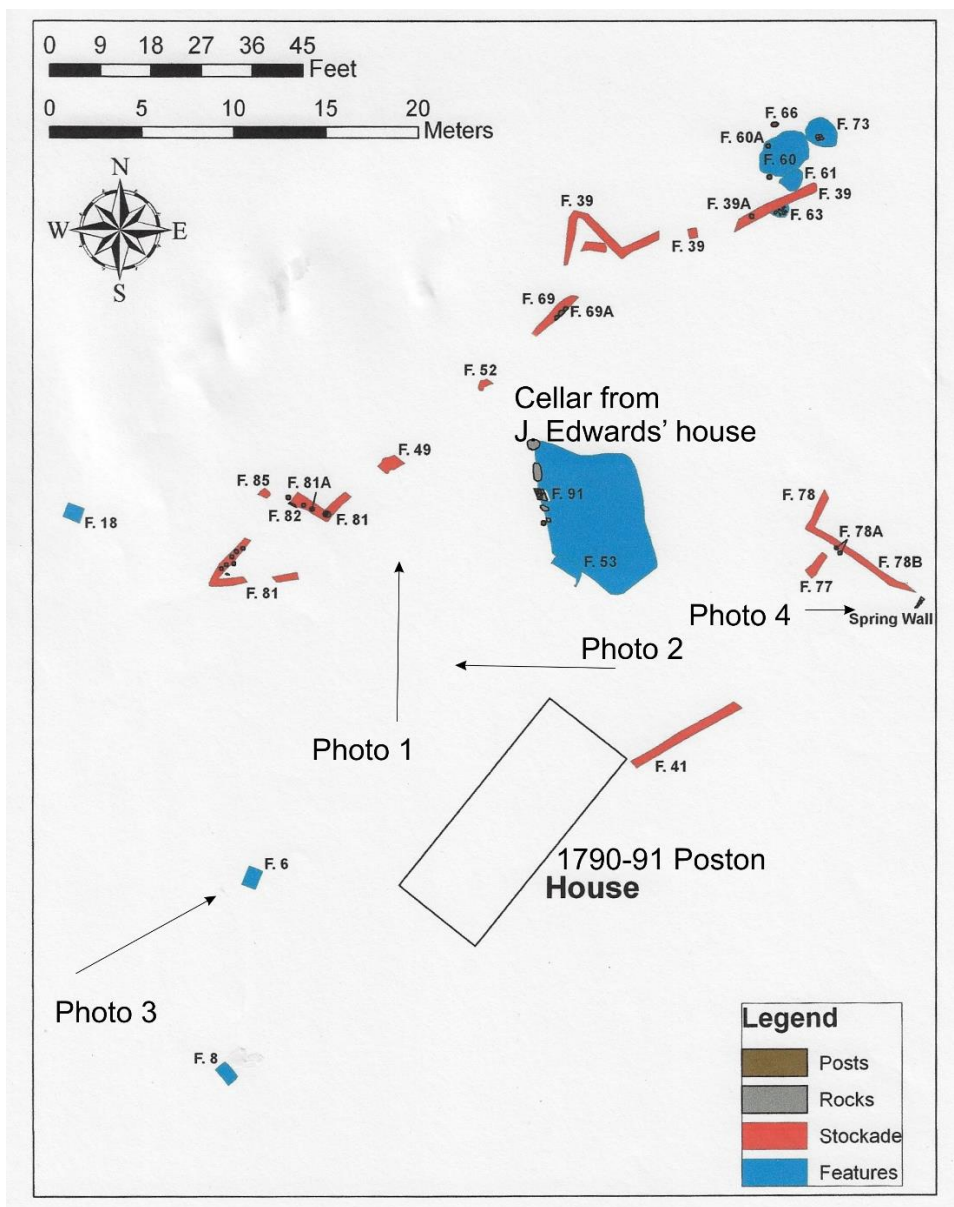
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- **Maps:** A USGS map or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.



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- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

Landowner, The Fort Edwards Foundation
250 Cold Stream Road
Capon Bridge, WV 26711
Phone (304) 856-2336

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Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

Photo Log

Name of Property: Edwards' Fort

City or Vicinity: Capon Bridge

County: Hampshire

State: West Virginia

Photographer: Dr. W. Stephen McBride and Dr. Kim A. McBride

Date Photographed: April 18, 2026

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 4. WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 001, site setting, looking north
- 2 of 4. WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 002, site setting, looking west
- 3 of 4. WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 003, site setting and log Poston house, looking northeast
- 4 of 4. WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 004, spring, looking east

Figure Log, all figures by W. Stephen McBride or Kim A. McBride

- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 001, Artifacts from Unit 3 Zone 3;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 002, Feature 41, Stockade Trench, looking west;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 003, Feature 81a, stockade post bisection, looking east;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 004, Feature 39, V- shaped mid-wall bastion, looking north;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 005, Feature 81, southwest corner bastion, looking east;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 006, Artifacts from Feature 41, stockade trench;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 007, Feature 60, semi-subterranean soldiers' hut, looking west;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 008, Bisection of Feature 61, hearth near Feature 60 (semi-subterranean soldiers' hut), looking east;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 009, Artifacts from Features 60 (hut) and 61 (hearth);
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 010, Bottle base from Feature 73, semi-subterranean soldiers' hut;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 011, , Gridiron for cooking, from Feature 60 hut (see also Figure7);
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 012, Feature 91, Joseph Edwards' house foundation and cellar, looking west;
- WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 013, Unit 7, Feature 53, house cellar, looking northeast;

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 014, Feature 8, cellar pit, looking northeast;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 015, White salt-glazed stoneware rims from Feature 6, cellar;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 016, Delftware, British Brown stoneware, Rhenish stoneware,
Chinese Porcelain, from Feature 6, cellar;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 017, metal buttons from Feature 6, cellar;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 018, shoe buckle and possible gun finial from Feature 6, cellar;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 019, glass seed beads from Feature 6, cellar;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 020, bottle lips from Feature 18, pit;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 021, redware jug from Feature 18, pit;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 022, gunflint from Feature 8, cellar;
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 023, Plan of Fort Allen, Pennsylvania, drawn by Benjamin
Franklin in 1756, from Waddell and Bomberger 1996:32.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.
Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
Tier 2 – 120 hours
Tier 3 – 230 hours
Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 001, site setting, looking north, April 18, 2026



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 002, site setting, looking west, April 18, 2026.

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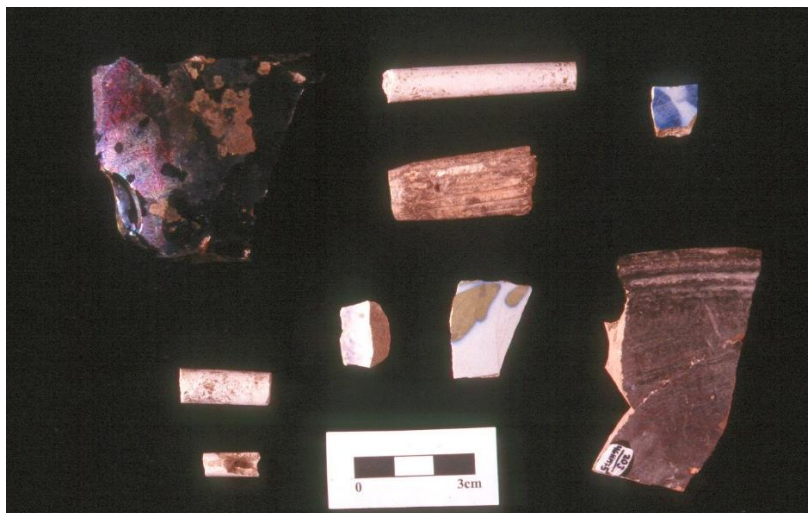
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 003, site setting and log Poston house, looking northeast, April 18, 2026.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Photo 004, spring, looking east, April 18, 2026.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 001, Artifacts from Unit 3 Zone 3.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 002, Feature 41, Stockade Trench, looking west.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 003, Feature 81a, stockade post bisection, looking east.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 004, Feature 39, V- shaped mid-wall bastion, looking north.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 005, Feature 81, southwest corner bastion, looking east.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 006, Artifacts from Feature 41, stockade trench.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 007, Feature 60, semi-subterranean soldiers' hut, looking west.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 008, Bisection of Feature 61, hearth near Feature 60 (semi-subterranean soldiers' hut), looking east.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 009, Artifacts from Features 60 (hut) and 61 (hearth).



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 010, Bottle base from Feature 73, semi-subterranean soldiers' hut.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 011, Gridiron for cooking, from Feature 60 hut.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 012, Feature 91, Joseph Edwards' house foundation and cellar, looking west.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort_Figure 013, Unit 7, Feature 53, house cellar, looking northeast.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 014, Feature 8, cellar pit, looking northeast.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 015, White salt-glazed stoneware rims from Feature 6, cellar.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _ Figure 016, Delftware, British Brown stoneware, Rhenish stoneware, Chinese Porcelain, from Feature 6, cellar.



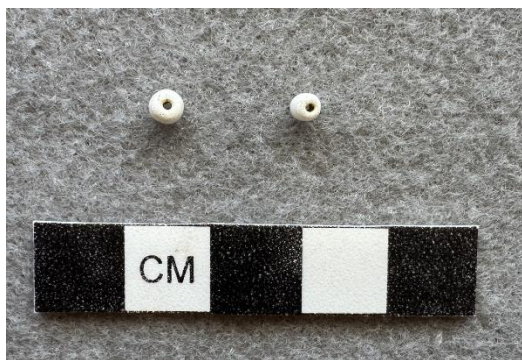
WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _ Figure 017, metal buttons from Feature 6, cellar.

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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 018, shoe buckle and possible gun finial from Feature 6, cellar.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 019, glass seed beads from Feature 6, cellar.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 020, bottle lips from Feature 18, pit.

Edwards' Fort
Name of Property

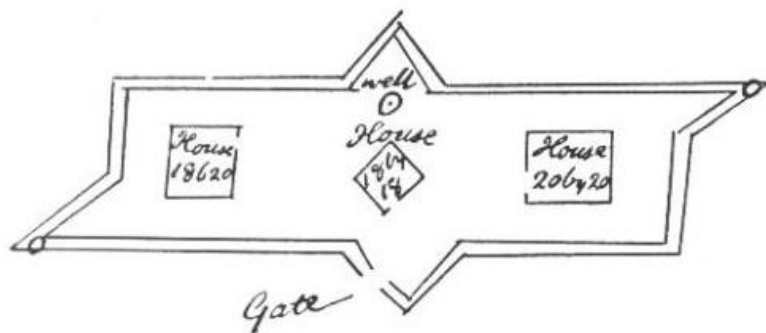
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WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 021, redware jug from Feature 18, pit.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 022, gunflint from Feature 8, cellar.



WV_Hampshire_Edwards' Fort _Figure 023, Plan of Fort Allen, Pennsylvania, drawn by Benjamin Franklin in 1756, from Waddell and Bomberger 1996:32.