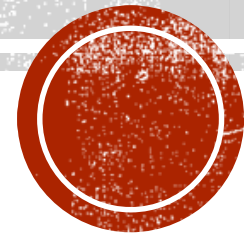




WHAT THEY CARRIED

An Archaeological Analysis of Artifacts found at Fort Steuben. By Sam Foresha





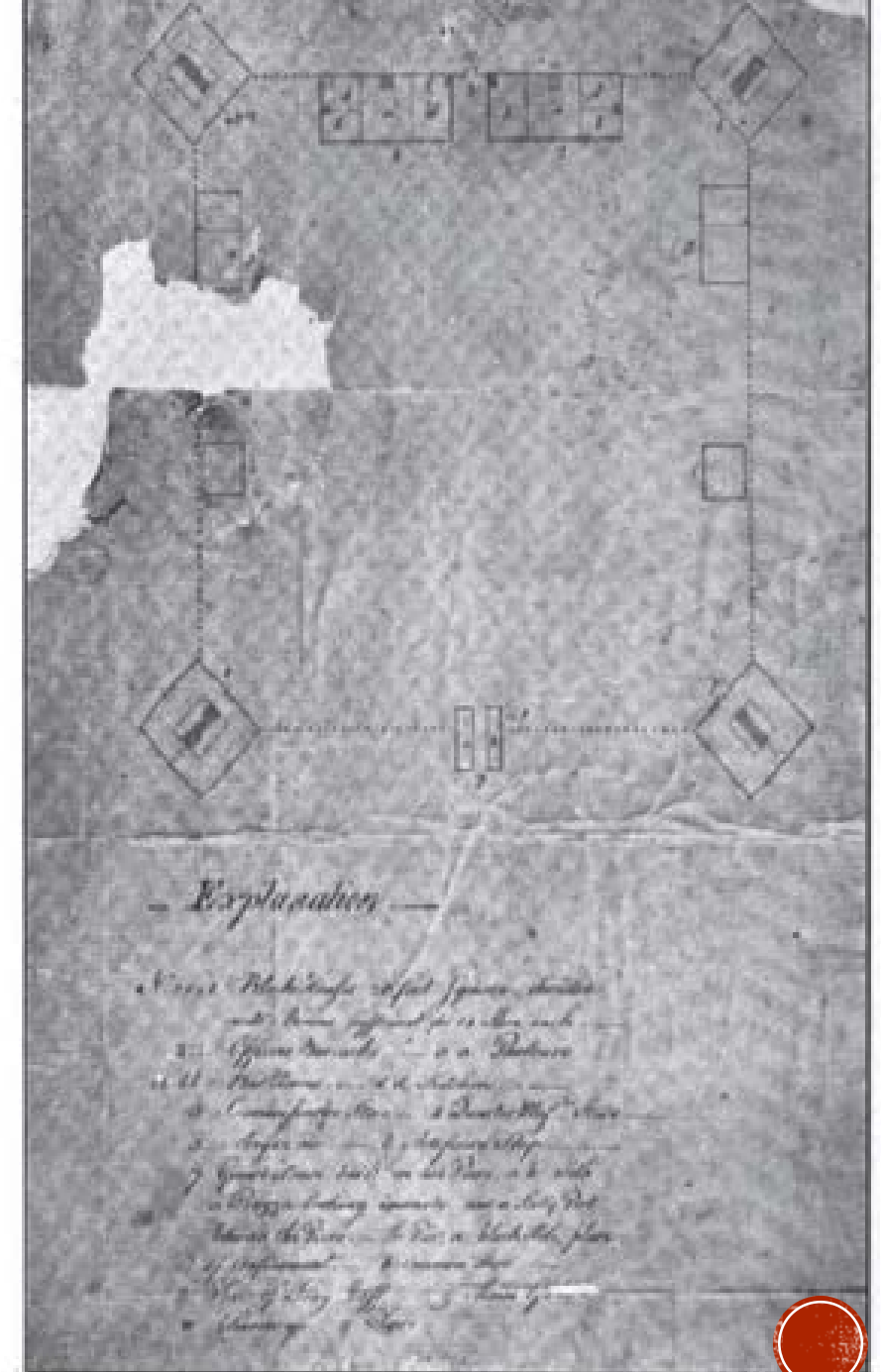
FORT STEUBEN

- Built in 1787, Fort Steuben was a frontier fort in what is now Steubenville, Ohio. Here we see the reconstruction of the fort itself, on what is believed to be the original site.
- The fort burned down in an accident in 1790 and was abandoned afterwards because of the fire.
- There is very little else known about the fort, hence the archaeological excavation to see what we can learn.



THE SITE

- To the right, you'll see a map from 1787 of the completed fort. This sketch was done by Major Erkuries Beatty, who was likely stationed at the fort or in one of the local forts.
- Other forts in the tristate area are Fort Pitt, now known as Pittsburgh, and Fort Mackintosh.
- It is believed that Fort Steuben was more of a holding fort than an actual military outpost—Pitt and Mackintosh saw more action and were more substantially manned.



THEORY

- The theory most predominately used in this research project was cognitive archaeology.
- Cognitive archaeology analyzes artifacts in how they were made as well as *why* they were made.
- The focus shifts less from the actual artifact to the people who used or created it and the cultural practices and thought processes behind said artifact's creation.
- So, who were the people who lived and worked at my site? Why did they have the artifacts I chose to analyze? What purpose did these artifacts serve, not just functionally, but recreationally? Socially?



THEORY

- This form of archaeology, called battlefield or frontier fort archaeology, is an underdeveloped and budding field. Not much research is done on these types of sites, particularly not in this area of the country.
- Most of the research I have done is only scraping the surface—there is much about Fort Steuben, and the archaeology of frontier expansion, that remains unknown.



ANALYSIS

- I analyzed three artifacts from the fort site with the help of Dr. Freidin and Professor Fitzgibbons, the director of the dig at Fort Steuben.
- The three artifacts (a musket flint, a pipe bowl, and a coin) give a glimpse into the lives of the people who worked and lived in the fort and the surrounding area.
- The musket flint lies directly with the fort and the military presence in the area at the time.
- The pipe bowl could be related to the other people living in the Ohio River Valley, such as colonialists or Native Americans, but the style and location indicates it fits closer to the white population and particularly the fort.
- The coin however, is unusual in when it was minted and where it comes from.



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MUSKET FLINT

- This musket flint is amber in color and slightly transparent. Flints like this were necessary for any and all firearms from this era, so finding them at a fort site is very common place. The pointed end (towards the bottom in this image) is the end that was used to strike the black powder.
- This flint was found on 6-20-1996 on the Fort Steuben site.



MUSKET FLINT

- This flint is French. The cut and color of the flint shows its origins in Europe; English flint was black or grey, while French flint was brown or "blonde." The flint here is more rounded, unlike the very boxy, rectangular cut favored by the English. The wear of the artifact shows it was used repeatedly in the musket.
- This pattern of wear shows that the gun it belonged to was fired, which may signal trouble that existed in the frontier at the time.
- The approximate date of this flint would be between 1770 and 1812, when the Americans switched to the English style of flint (Hume, pp. 220, 221).



PIPE BOWL

This is the bowl of a pipe from the late 1700s. Items like this are considered recreational items that soldiers and civilians would use in their "down-time."

This pipe bowl was considered "surface collection" which means that it was collected off the top of the soil at the excavation site. There have been collapses in the excavation pit, but given the matrix it was taken from, we can conclude that it is from the same era.



CLAY PIPE

- This clay pipe dates to about 1790-1820. The style of the bowl and the lip indicate the American or "Virginian" style of tobacco pipe.
- Being made of clay, and handmade, this pipe was likely for a soldier or civilian of the working or lower class. There is no maker's stamp, as the stamp would be on the stem of the pipe.
- Each pipe-maker had their own way of styling the pipe, so each pipe is unique and thus dating it is difficult. Even in the stylizations, there were trends that were standard in each era (Hume, p. 302)





BRITISH COIN

- This coin has King George III on the face. Coins like this were minted between 1770 and 1775, which is 10 years before Fort Steuben was built. This makes it a bit of an oddity—what is it doing on the site?
- There are many theories to how a coin can come to exist in a later era. It could have been someone's "lucky" coin. It could have simply been in the pocket of a veteran from the American Revolutionary War, and said veteran was transferred to the frontier and stationed at Fort Steuben.
- Still, the importance of this coin is in the relative dating it offers to the site and the fort.



BRITISH COIN

- The coin is a British halfpenny from 1770-1775.
- It is likely made of copper because most of the "low" coins were made of copper and not silver or gold (Hume, 158).
- Additionally, Hume suggests that the reason a British coin might be found on what was now, after the Revolution, "American" soil would be the incoming Irish or Scottish settlers. Any immigrants from the British Isles would likely have British coins.
- It also could have come from Canada with traders, as they were still a British colony and would have used the currency from the ruling country.



CONCLUSIONS

- These artifacts give insight into how the people who lived on the frontier of the Ohio River Valley in the late 1700s.
- The fort itself stands as an example of many others in the area, as well as how the people who lived in and around the fort, particularly white colonists, lived on the cusp of what they believed was civilization.
- Frontier fort archaeology is still a growing field. I hope that I have contributed in some way to the greater understanding of the importance of the study.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- With special thanks to Professor Philip Fitzgibbons and the lovely people at Old Historic Fort Steuben, without whom there would be no pictures, no analysis, and no paper.
- Special thanks also to Dr. Freidin and Dr. Laubach for their continued support and help over the course of this Capstone course.

