

# A SAMPLE OF FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR FORT EXCAVATIONS

The archaeology of these French and Indian War forts has focused on the documentation of military features such as stockades, bastions, officer and enlisted personnel quarters, water wells and the recovery of hallmark artifacts such as gunflints, musket balls and buttons. Archaeologists have also examined dietary remains to document the lives and health of soldiers, and ceramics (dishes) which document the lifestyle of these people.

Nearly all of these sites continued to be occupied after the French and Indian War, some as military posts and others as farmsteads. Many are now covered by small urban centers thereby complicating their excavation and interpretation. Interestingly, these sites were also the locations of Native American settlements, many of which document thousands of years of Native American prehistory. This increases not only the complexity of their excavation but also their significance.

The following four examples range in size from Fort Augusta, the largest British fort ever built east of the Allegheny's to Fort Hunter, a small supply depot. Their excavation has led to an improved understanding of warfare during this period and also enhanced our understanding of military and rural life on the frontier during a time of conflict and change.

## FORT LOUDOUN—A PROVINCIAL FORT IN FRANKLIN COUNTY THAT PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN THE FORBES CAMPAIGN THAT REGAINED THE OHIO VALLEY

Fort Loudoun (1756–1765) was built on the site of the Mathew Patton farm after it was burned in an early Indian raid. The garrison included as many as 400 enlisted men and officers. The fort site was completely excavated by The State Museum of Pennsylvania in 1970–1980. The stockade was constructed by Pennsylvania militia using British plans. The walls were 127 feet long with bastions on three of the four corners. The walls are somewhat haphazardly aligned and the uprights were placed in a trench. The triangular shaped bastions were supported by the fort walls with a tripod arrangement of uprights on the outside walls. The Patton house was used as the officer's quarters. One of the most interesting finds came from the well. This feature produced a variety of leather goods and an intact water bucket. In November, 1765, the local citizens became enraged over the excessive military control of their business affairs and laid siege with continuous musket fire for two days. The fort was abandoned by the British on November 18. Some historians consider this action to be the first act of the American Revolution.



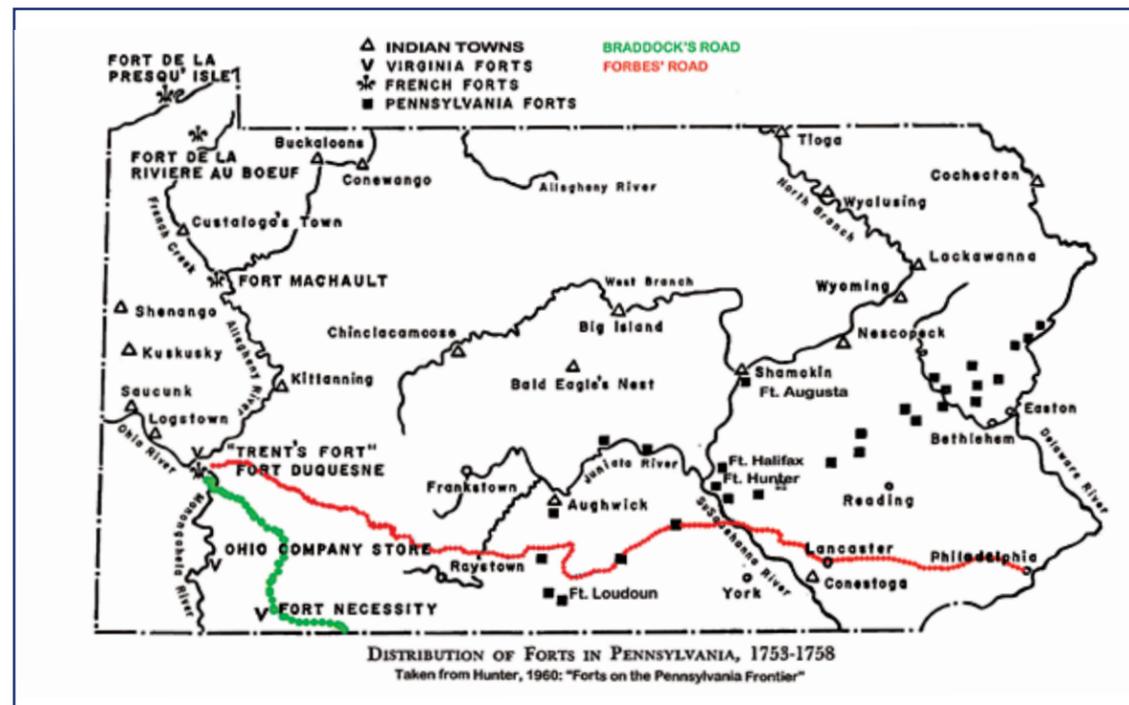
Fort Loudoun stockade trench and posts.

## FORT HUNTER—A SMALL BRITISH SUPPLY DEPOT ALONG THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER, DAUPHIN COUNTY

Fort Hunter (1756–1760) was hastily built by a British regiment as a supply depot for Fort Augusta. The garrison was generally occupied by less than forty officers and enlisted men. Annual excavations by The State Museum of Pennsylvania began in 2006 and are on-going as part of Archaeology Month's celebration in September and October. There are no maps or detailed narratives depicting the site. References note a blockhouse, officer's quarters, stockade and a surrounding ditch. Archaeological testing has yet to locate the stockade but auger tests have defined potential anomalies. Artifacts possibly relating to the fort consist of white, salt glazed stoneware, numerous gunflints, musket balls, a four pound cannon ball and a bale-seal. The later was used to certify the payment of taxes and suggests the presence of a fort rather than a private residence. The primary archaeological feature from this period was a "bake oven". This is a mortared platform surrounded by thermally reddened earth, large quantities of charcoal and animal bone. The majority of gunflints and musket balls were recovered from around this feature.

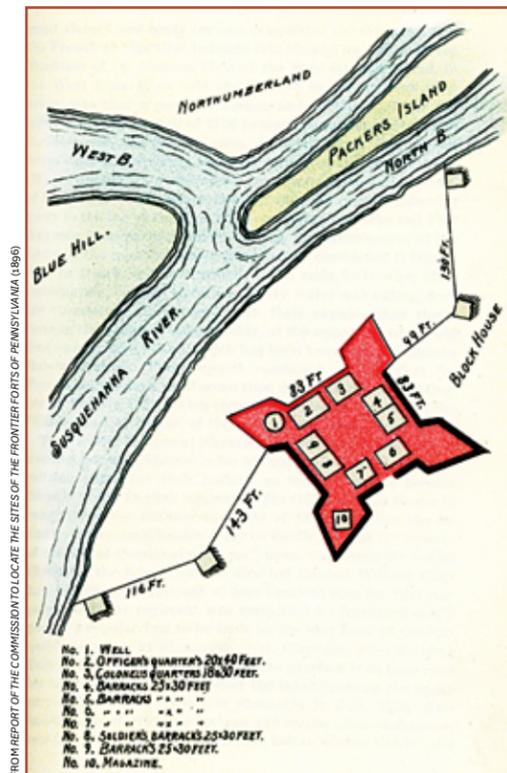
## A CHRONOLOGY OF THE HIGH POINTS OF THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR IN PENNSYLVANIA

1749	1753	12/11/1753	05/28/1754	07/04/1754	07/09/1755	10/16/1755	1756	1758	09/1760	02/10/1763	03/1763	08/06/1763
English traders increasingly move into the Ohio valley and compete with French traders.	The French build Fort Duquesne and three supply forts on the Venango Path to secure their trading region.	George Washington visits Fort LeBoeuf and demands that the French abandon their forts.	Battle of Jumonville Glen, opening conflict of the French and Indian War.	Battle of Great Meadows or Fort Necessity. Washington surrenders, returns to Virginia.	Braddock's defeat at the Battle of the Monongahela.	Penns Creek Massacre. Provincial government builds a series of forts along Blue Mountain.	British begin construction of forts Augusta, Halifax and Hunter.	Forbes Campaign begins. British capture Fort Duquesne and begin the construction of Fort Pitt.	Surrender of Montreal, Canada.	Treaty of Paris, official end of the French and Indian War	Beginning of Pontiac's Rebellion	Battle of Bushy Run. Pontiac's Rebellion ended.



## FORT LEBOEUF—A FRENCH FORT ALONG THE VENANGO PATH IN ERIE COUNTY

The site of Fort LeBoeuf (1753–1796) in Waterford was the location of French, British and American fortifications. It was excavated in 1937–1938 with federal funding from the Works Progress Administration (WPA) by Harry Schoff and a crew of local laborers. The American blockhouse was located and musket balls, gunflints, and glass trade beads were recovered from its location. Additional testing across several blocks of Waterford produced evidence of charred timbers and burned artifacts such as nails, glass and lead. Historic documents verify the burning of both the French and British forts. A series of trenches excavated to a depth of eight feet yielded evidence of a foundation and a concentration of musket balls, gun parts and a cut silver Spanish coin, a common form of currency in the eighteenth century. The extreme depth of over-burden in this area was attributed to destruction of one of the previous forts. The soil deposits and artifact concentrations were sufficient for Schoff to surmise that "the work at Waterford has established beyond all doubt the traditional site of the Le Boeuf forts". More recent investigations conducted by Dr. Renata Wolyneć, Edinboro University, confirmed the presence of charred remains of the forts.



Map depicting the layout of Fort Augusta based on historic documents.

## FORT AUGUSTA—THE LARGEST BRITISH FORT EAST OF THE APPALACHIANS LOCATED AT THE FORKS OF THE SUSQUEHANNA RIVER, NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY

Fort Augusta (1756–1792) was designed and built by the British at the Indian town of Shamokin. It served as a defensive facility against Indian raids in the upper Allegheny and Susquehanna River valleys during the French and Indian War and again during the Revolutionary War as a place to protect settlers from loyalist Indian raiders.

Archaeological investigations at Fort Augusta began in 1938 with Works Projects Administration funds. Archaeologists uncovered the remains of the officer's quarters and the stockade. Upright posts were found set into the ground to a depth of four feet. Many artifacts were discovered including iron cannon balls, lead musket balls, gun parts, bayonets, buckles, buttons and a host of other fort associated objects. There were also many non-military items such as domestic tableware, i.e. dishes, wine bottles and dietary remains in the form of discarded bones from butchered animals.

The 1978, 1979 and 1981 excavations conducted by the State Museum of Pennsylvania uncovered a section of earthen wall, wooden stockade, and the powder magazine. Finally, additional excavations by James Delle of Kutztown University recovered cannon balls, remains of the commander's home and blacksmithing activities. Excavation in the area of the northeast bastion revealed the massive earthen and wooden fortifications.



Excavations at Fort Augusta revealed a cluster of cannon balls.

