



# NCRI Report

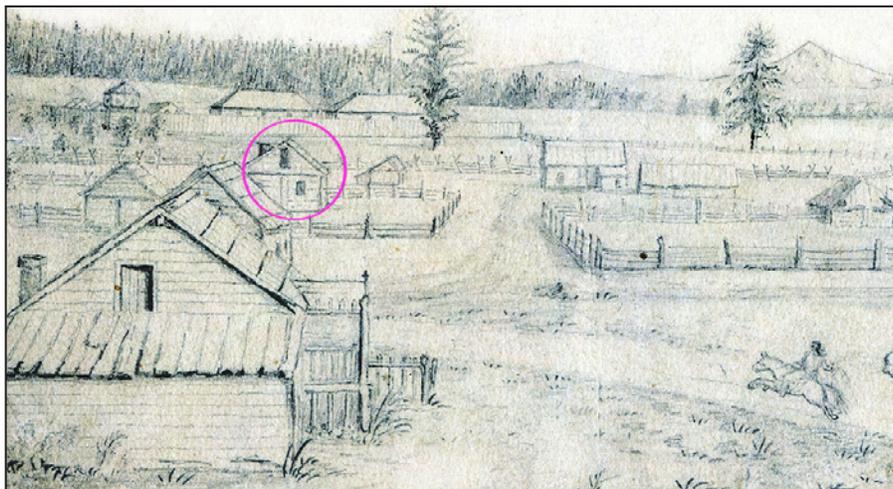
## Second House to be Reconstructed in the Fort's Village

by Tessa Langford, NPS Curator

As part of our ongoing efforts to interpret the workers of Fort Vancouver and their families, a second dwelling in the village area will be reconstructed this year. This house will join the Engagé House – completed in 2007 – in helping to bring the multicultural village to life. National Park Service staff and contractors have analyzed historic and archaeological evidence to produce a design for the house as well as interior furnishings and other features.

This structure was located near the middle of the east edge of the village. On the Covington map of 1845, the dwelling is labeled simply as “Servants”. Part of the house site was excavated by archaeologists Susan Kardas and Edward Larrabee during 1968-1969, and they located the northeast corner of the house foundation as well as the cooking hearth. During 2002, park archaeologists Doug Wilson and Bob Cromwell led test excavations to relocate the architectural features recorded by Kardas and Larrabee thirty years earlier. The entire site has not yet been investigated, and the new house foundation – which utilizes pins to anchor the brackets supporting the sills – has been designed for minimal ground disturbance.

*continued on page 5*



*House 2 is shown (circled) in this 1851 sketch, which may have been drawn by George Gibbs.*

*Image courtesy of Fort Vancouver NHS*



*Like most dwellings in the village, this house was small and constructed in a French-Canadian style. The overall dimensions of the replica will be approximately 20 x 24 feet, with one and one half stories.*

*Image courtesy of Derek Chisholm*

## Historical Fragment

*In 1839 Thomas J. Farnham was hired by Horace Greeley to travel West and report his experiences to those interested in moving. He reached Fort Vancouver in the fall of 1839.*

*The following excerpt contains his description of the fort's employee village and farm. From An 1839 Wagon Train Journal: Travels in the Great Western Prairies, the Anahuac and Rocky Mountains and in the Oregon. by Thomas J. Farnham 1843.*

Six hundred yards below the fort, and on the bank of the river, is a village of 53 wooden houses, generally constructed like those within the pickets. In these live the company's servants... Back and a little east of the fort, is a barn containing a mammoth threshing machine; and near this are a number of long sheds, used for storing grain in the sheaf. And behold the Vancouver farm, stretching up and down the river—3,000 acres, fenced into beautiful fields—sprinkled with dairy houses, and herdsmen and shepherds' cottages! A busy place this is. The farmer on horse-back at break of day, summons 100 half-breeds and Iroquois Indians from their cabins to the fields. Twenty or thirty plows tear open the generous soil; the sowers follow with their seed—and pressing on them come a dozen harrows to cover it. And thus thirty or forty acres are planted in a day, till the immense farm is under crop. The season passes on—teeming with daily industry, until the harvest waves on all these fields. And then sickle and hoe glisten in tireless activity to gather in the rich reward of this toil;—the food of 700 people at this post, and of thousands more at the posts on the deserts in the east and north. The saw mill, too, is a scene of constant toil. Thirty or forty Sandwich Islanders are felling the pines and dragging them to the mill; sets of hands are plying two gangs of saws by night and day. Three thousand feet of lumber per day—900,000 feet per annum; constantly being shipped to foreign ports.

# Archaeology Lab Update

by Dana Holschuh

I am happy to be joining the team here in the lab at Fort Vancouver as the archaeology lab director for the 2008-2009 school year. Currently, in addition to working in the lab, I am also working toward my Master's degree in historical archaeology at Portland State University. I have spent six years working in cultural resources management both in New York State and then here in Southwestern Washington.

This past summer I was a part of the 2008 NPS/PSU/WSU field school that took place on the U.S. Army Parade Ground and Officers' Row. This fall has been a busy one in the lab where I, along with many dedicated volunteers,

have been busily processing the artifacts that were excavated this past summer. We recently finished cleaning and numbering them all and are now moving on to analysis. The lab schedule for the remainder of the fall term, and the upcoming winter term, has the lab open to volunteers Monday, Wednesday, and Friday during the week and every other Saturday. If you would like to be a part of the exciting work being done here, we would be delighted to have your help!

To be added to the volunteer mailing list, send me an e-mail at [danaholschuh@hotmail.com](mailto:danaholschuh@hotmail.com), or contact the lab via phone at: 360-816-6250. I look forward to working with you this year!

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## NCRI Director's Letter

The Hudson's Bay Company village at Fort Vancouver has re-emerged as one of the places to visit at the park. Thanks to the Land Bridge, trails into and out of the village have been constructed and many people now walk through the site. The village is a special place, one that poses many questions about the history of the Pacific Northwest. The village had a unique population within a highly stratified class structure.

Diverse peoples, including Native Hawaiians, Scots, Irish, English, Métis, French Canadians, and American Indians from the breadth of the continent, lived in this colonial community, whose population at times would swell to between 600 and 1000 individuals. The diversity of occupations reflected the range of economic endeavors attempted by the Columbia Department, including the traditional fur trade professions, farmers, tanners, gardeners, sawyers, dairymen, millers, shepherds, boatbuilders, carpenters, coopers, seamen, and bakers.

How these diverse individuals came together to support the mercantile and industrial aspirations of the Hudson's Bay Company, and how they interacted with other communities, are some of the fundamental questions of this site.

The village is an exploration in the development of new cultures out of old, combined with the acquisition and use of new ideas and things from around the world. Its continuing study will provide new insights into one of the most important cultural resources sites in the Pacific Northwest.

A number of studies are planned to continue the work in the village. Delight Stone's Ph.D. dissertation for Leicester University is exploring gender issues, while a number of graduate students from Portland State University are currently exploring architecture, artifacts, aspects of American Indian slavery, and the "creole" community that emerged. These projects build on Bob Cromwell's recent study of ceramics, and the work of Susan Kardas in the 1960s. New research will allow a synthesis of information on this important community, setting site management and protection objectives and enabling us to better present the story of this unique site to the public.

- Doug Wilson

# Field School Update

by Robert Cromwell, NPS Archaeologist

The 2008 NPS/PSU/WSU Archaeological Field School was a rousing success. A total of 16 undergraduate students, representing five states and five universities, registered for the seven week course, instructed by Fort Vancouver and NCRI Archaeologist Robert Cromwell. The course was co-taught by WSU Ph.D. student Beth Horton, and we were ably assisted by three teaching assistants from Portland State University; Elaine Dorset, Stephanie Simmons, and Dana Holschuh.

This summer's field school continued archaeological testing of the ca. 1851-1870 enlisted men's kitchens on the west end of the current Parade Ground, as well as a ca. 1851-1865 officers' structure and kitchen on Officers' Row. Students and staff excavated an area of over 37 m<sup>2</sup>, revealing intact foundation remains of the enlisted men's kitchens, a large trash-filled pit feature on Officers' Row, and over 30,000 artifacts. Two contractors demonstrated and instructed students in remote sensing (magnetometer) and cartographic survey techniques, with all excavation locations incorporated into the Fort Vancouver Geographic Information System (GIS) database.

The recovered artifacts are currently being cleaned, cataloged, and analyzed in the Fur Store archaeology laboratory by Research Assistant Dana Holschuh, with assistance from our many volunteers. The results of this year's excavations will be used in conjunction with the 2007 excavations in Beth Horton's Ph.D. dissertation at Washington State University, and will also be presented at many upcoming archaeological conferences. These results will guide future interpretive programs, and help the park's management team develop programs and policies to ensure the continued protection of these intact archaeological deposits.

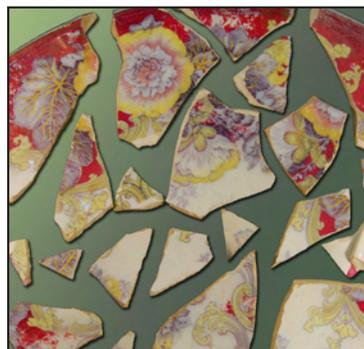


Photographs courtesy of Beth Horton

*2008 Field School group photo*



*Students sorting artifacts from the Parade Ground excavation area.*



*Wash basin fragments from Officers' Row excavations.*



*Students doing shovel tests on Officers' Row.*

# Mount Rainier Buck Lake Update

by Eric Gleason and Jacqueline Cheung, NPS Archaeological Technicians

This last fall we returned to Buck Lake at Mount Rainier National Park (MORA) for another field season of excavations at the site. The crew consisted of MORA archaeologists Greg Burtchard, Ben Diaz and Elizabeth D'Arcy as well as Joel Marrant, a retired anthropology professor from Linfield College. This season's goal was to excavate an additional three square meters adjacent to the area that had previously been excavated. These earlier excavations had yielded a large amount of lithic debitage and a few tools from an occupation surface that predated the Mt. St. Helens Y ash fall (3,500-2,900 years old). A single flaked tool had also been



Photograph courtesy of Eric Gleason

*This image shows the sticks, twigs and charcoal preserved under the 7700 year old Mt. Mazama ash deposit.*

recovered from below the Mt. Mazama ash deposits that date to some 7,700 years ago. Our excavations this year uncovered a number of interesting cultural and natural features as well as an unprecedented quantity of lithic debitage, flaked tools, cobble tools, and a single fragment of

bone. The pre-Mazama deposits in much of the excavation area were found to be intact, although we failed to find any additional cultural debris in our new excavation units. Further excavation at the site will be required to search for pre-Mazama artifacts and features.



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

The Vancouver National Historic Reserve is a partnership of the National Park Service, the City of Vancouver, the State of Washington, and the U.S. Army. It includes Fort Vancouver and its village, Vancouver Barracks and Officer's Row, Pearson Field and Air Museum, portions of the Columbia River waterfront, the Water Resources Education Center, and the McLoughlin House unit in Oregon City, Oregon.

**Fort Vancouver National Historic Site & Vancouver National Historic Reserve**  
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[www.nps.gov/fova](http://www.nps.gov/fova)

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

## Under the Microscope:

Van Meter Hord

Van has been volunteering for cultural resources at Fort Vancouver since March of 2007. She started volunteering for cultural resources after taking the Oregon Archaeological Society's "Archaeology for the Curious" training class held here in Vancouver.

Van was born in El Paso, Texas. As the child of a Naval officer, she lived in five different states before the age of five. Her family eventually settled in California. Van went to Occidental College in Los Angeles, and received a degree in chemistry. Over her career she has worked in the pharmaceutical industry, biochemical research, and wastewater treatment.

Van met her husband while scuba diving in San Diego. They have lived in Roseburg and North Carolina over the years, but really wanted to end up in the Northwest after living in Roseburg, which is why they came to Vancouver.

Both Van and her husband worked in the area and are now retired. Van has been dancing with the Vancouver USA Scottish Country Dancers for 12 years. With them, she has toured in Japan. While there, Van visited Vancouver's sister city Joyo. She was particularly fascinated by Joyo City Park, made to resemble Fort Vancouver, complete with stockade and bastion.



# Buckle Mystery Solved

by Greg Shine, NCRI Historian



Photograph courtesy of John Edwards

For years, staff at Fort Vancouver have hypothesized about the origin of the small metallic artifact pictured above. The consensus pointed to a "spoon and wreath" type belt buckle, but theories of its era and of the image featured on its face ranged widely.

Speculation on its origin ran the gamut from the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era, to the idea that the image represented one of the many train-like vehicles at the U.S. Army's Spruce Production Division Mill. Others believed that it came from a much earlier era, perhaps prior to the American Civil War.

When a photograph of the object appeared in local newspaper *The Columbian*, a retired fireman and collector came forward with his opinion on the matter. Mr. Blackburn

felt that the image was of an early pump truck, and it was indeed quite similar to that of a hand-pumped fire truck, right down to the asymmetrical wheels.

Recently, I sought the advice of Jay Graybeal, chief curator for the U.S. Army Heritage Museum. Although unable to find the exact pattern in his collection or reference materials, Mr. Graybeal believes that the artifact is half of an early fireman's buckle and is similar to others that date from the Civil War period, which corroborates the evidence of Mr. Blackburn. Graybeal explained that sources such as *American Military Belt Plates* by Michael J. O'Donnell & J. Duncan Campbell note that "many fire companies doubled as militia units, so it is not surprising to find a buckle at a military site."

## Village House

*continued...*

It is known from various historical sources, including an 1850 census, that some village houses were occupied by multiple bachelors while others were occupied by a family, sometimes multi-generational. There is no direct evidence to suggest one option or the other for this building. However, a review of archaeological data suggests a possible female presence, at least at some time during its history. A jeweled brooch and blue buttons were found during the Kardas and Larrabee project. The data also provide clues as to the cultural traditions of the inhabitants: in addition to the expected European goods like ceramics, bottles, and metal implements, a carved stone tobacco pipe bowl was also found, which features an American Indian style anthropomorphic figure.

Based on the evidence, park staff has decided to interpret the house as a Métis (mixed ethnicity) family home that reflects a mix of different cultural traditions: specifically with a Métis or French-Canadian male, an American Indian female, several children, and perhaps a maternal grandmother. This sort of arrangement was a common one in Métis homes and likely occurred at Fort Vancouver. We hope that this new "Métis House" will be completed by the end of next summer and open for programs soon after that.

## Announcements

We are pleased to announce a new series of booklets on Fort Vancouver material culture. The first in the series, featuring Marguerite McLoughlin's bone and ivory sewing tools, will be out this winter.

**Dana Holschuh** is our new Portland State University graduate assistant. She will be directing lab work. See page 2 for information on when the lab will be open and how to contact Dana.

**Martin Adams** (PSU) and **Heidi Pierson** (California State University, Chico) have successfully completed and defended their respective graduate theses. Congratulations!

**John Roberts**, NPS Chief Archivist, visited the park recently to help with our archives cataloging project and review the McLoughlin Memorial Association archives.



*John Roberts at the Barclay House.*

## Current Research

**Greg Shine**, NCRI Historian, recently published an article on Ulysses S. Grant's term at Fort Vancouver for the Oregon Encyclopedia. The article is available online at: [http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/entry/view/grant\\_ulysses\\_s\\_1822\\_1885/](http://www.oregonencyclopedia.org/entry/view/grant_ulysses_s_1822_1885/)

**Derek Chisholm**, **Tessa Langford**, and intern **Celeste Cuti** have recently completed the Reconstruction and Furnishings Plans for the new village house.

# Cannon Conservation and Furniture Condition Assessment

by Heidi Pierson, NPS Museum Technician



*Photographs courtesy of Heidi Pierson*

*Rich Collins, Al Levitan, and Dave Casebolt with one of the cannons in transit.*

Late this summer we were honored by the visit of two of the National Park Service's top conservation experts, Dave Casebolt, from San Francisco Maritime NHP and Al Levitan, from Harper's Ferry Center.

Dave Casebolt was here to treat the 18-pound cannons, which were sorely in need of attention. Dave cleaned off dirt and rust, then put a protective coat of paint on each cannon. The cannon carriages were also repainted, and will be partially rebuilt in the near future.



*The Fort Vancouver 18-pounders after conservation and repainting.*

Al Levitan assessed the wooden furnishings at the McLoughlin House, ninety objects in all. Al's job was to prioritize the furniture's treatment needs and provide a time estimate for conservation. He found that the furnishings are a mix of high-style objects of European manufacture, and locally produced rustic items.

The park will use his recommendations to implement conservation treatments in coming years.



*Marguerite McLoughlin's sewing cabinet was one of the items Al Levitan examined.*

# Material Culture Notes: Architectural Hardware

by Tessa Langford, NPS Curator

In earlier issues of this Report, we have written about the magnificence of underappreciated material types such as window glass and cut nails. Like those types of artifacts, architectural hardware has great potential for informing building reconstructions and even revitalizing traditional trades.

The images here feature hardware found during archaeological excavations at a single site, that of House 2 in the fort's village (see cover story). From historic sketches and maps we know a few details about the dwelling. It was built in a French-Canadian style called post-on-sill, or *poteaux-sur-solle*, and was one and one half stories. In known drawings of the village, however, only a portion of the west face is shown, leaving many gaps in our knowledge about its design. Where was the door and how wide was it? How many windows did the house have? Was it divided internally? To make educated guesses about these sorts of details regarding its construction and arrangement, we can turn to two sources: comparison with other Hudson's Bay Company sites, and the archaeological remains it left behind.



*Hook*



*Hook with o-ring and eye hook*

Photographs courtesy of John Edwards



*Latch Keeper*



*Pintle*



*Chain*

An important point is that the artifacts themselves are not the only significant element; their provenience, or position in the ground, is essential data. For House 2, our collection includes several pieces of hardware. Both a pintle and a latch keeper were recovered, giving clues to the placement of the front door. In addition, the discovery of a hook and chain suggest the hearth's location, since a common cooking method was to suspend a pot over the fire. Hardware never stands alone – its interpretation occurs in tandem

with analysis of site features like burn stains, post holes, and other evidence. But as a category, architectural hardware aids our work in a big way.

Another benefit of recovering original hardware is that our blacksmiths can manufacture exact replicas for the reconstructed house. Not only will these modern pieces help make House 2 accurate, the process of making them improves our understanding of blacksmithing practices and helps sustain a fading skill.



**National Park Service**  
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Fort Vancouver National Historic Site**  
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**The Northwest Cultural Resources Institute** is a cooperative partnership based at Fort Vancouver National Historic Site, dedicated to fostering cultural resources research, education, and stewardship in the Pacific Northwest. The NCRI brings together National Park Service staff, university professors, and subject matter experts to facilitate research and training, provide expertise, and support other innovative educational endeavors using national parks as laboratories.

**Director of the NCRI, Archaeologist**  
 Dr. Douglas Wilson

**Archaeologist**  
 Dr. Robert Cromwell

**Curator**  
 Theresa Langford, M.A.

**Historian**  
 Gregory Shine, M.A.

**Museum Technician,  
 Editor of the NCRI Report**  
 Heidi Pierson

**Archaeological Technicians**  
 Eric Gleason, Jacqueline Cheung,  
 and Martin Adams

**MYSTERY ARTIFACT**

This iron mystery artifact was uncovered during the 2008 field school at the U.S. Army Parade Ground.

The mystery artifact in the last issue was an **ivory sewing clamp** that belonged to Marguerite McLoughlin.



*Photograph courtesy of John Edwards*