

NYSAA NEWSLETTER



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Historic fort "not forgotten" on website

By JoAnne Castagna, Ed.D.

It's 1943 and the United States is in the throes of World War II. Gladys "Woodie" Borkowski, a young woman, is leading the first detachment of the Women's Army Corps (WAC) to Fort Slocum on Davids Island in New Rochelle, New York. The WAC allowed women to receive equal rank and pay to men for the first time.

At first, Woodie and the rest of her female detachment are laughed at and even ignored by their male officers, but soon they are seen as equals.

Woodie was a pioneer for women in the military and symbolized a maturing na-

tion that was trying to foster equality.

Woodie's story is one of several that can be read on a website named - The Army's Century on Davids Island -



Gladys "Woodie"
Borkowski

<http://davidsisland.westchesterarchives.com>

The website was created by a team of agencies and individuals as a way to preserve the rich history of Fort Slocum after the military installation's abandoned remains were removed from the island.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District performed the demolition and also collaborated on the creation of this website along with the Westchester County Historical Society, City of New Rochelle Public Library, Army Corps contractor, TetraTech, and the Fort Slocum Alumni & Friends Organization that included Woodie.

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Historical Perspectives, Inc. recently undertook the archaeological survey of a proposed residential development in Orangetown, Rockland County. The Pointe at Lake Tappan (PALT) project will impact about 25 acres of land between the west side of Blue Hill Road South and County

Highway Route 20. Most prominent on the site is an extant Dutch farm house, known historically as the Isaac Perry-Blauvelt House and now known as the Seth House. The house has three periods of construction dating to ca. 1752, ca. 1776, and ca. 1830. An earlier house, dating to ca. 1728, once

stood in the same general location but was demolished in years past. Little archaeological evidence of the historical occupation of the site was found due to extensive 20th century disturbance.

Phase IB testing in May 2009 identified several
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The PALT-1 Precontact Site in Orangetown

FORT SLOCUM CONTINUED:



Website Homepage -- The Army's Century on Davids Island. Credit: Army Corps, New York District.

"Fort Slocum is gone, but not forgotten. The virtual archive is etched into the internet, and will be a lasting memorial to those who served at Fort Slocum, and to the contribution of Davids Island to the history of the United States and the local community," said Gregory J. Goepfert, Project Manager, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District.

Davids Island is an uninhabited 80-acre piece of property located in the Long Island Sound, one half a mile off of the shore of New Rochelle, New York.

The island has had a rich military history. In 1867 Fort Slocum was established on the island on the site of a former Civil War hospital and in over a century served in various military incarnations. The active post has served as a military hospital, an artillery mortar battery and a training post. During World War II

the fort was the most active recruitment center in the United States and served as a staging area for troops heading overseas during the two world wars. In addition, for several years the fort was used by the U.S. Air Force.

The fort's last military incarnation was in the 1960's, as a missile command base. Since then the island has laid dormant.

The island has been eyed as a possible location for luxury condos, a power plant and a public park and nature preserve. The City of New Rochelle is contemplating the island's future use.

They asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District to remove the decaying structures on the island because they posed a serious safety hazard and impeded the renewal of the island. In 2005, the Army Corps began the demolition



Oblique aerial photograph of Fort Slocum, November 15, 1961: Fort Slocum Alumni and Friends Collection, Michael J. Cavanaugh, Los Angeles, CA, custodian.



Gladys "Woodie" Borkowski (on right), c. 1944. Credit: Gladys "Woodie" Borkowski.

and completed their work in 2009, removing 93 decaying structures from the former Fort Slocum.

With all Army Corps projects, there is always an effort to determine if there are significant historic resources to preserve within a project site. After doing initial research, the New York District determined Fort Slocum was historically significant.

Removal of the buildings meant there is a need to document and preserve these resources,

so the agency came up with a variety of solutions for doing this.

The project team performed extensive historical research on each of the 93 structures on the island, many of which were of various military architectural styles. A significant amount of this research came from the Fort Slocum Alumni & Friends organization, the New Rochelle Historian and the Westchester County Historical Society.

FORT SLOCUM CONTINUED:



Fort Slocum, February 1963. Credit: Unknown.



WAC Gladys Woodard SSgt at typewriter. Credit: Fort Slocum Alumni and Friends Collection, Michael J. Cavanaugh, Los Angeles, CA, custodian.

This research included digging up historical data, taking photos and performing archaeological investigations. Most of the structures were historically significant as the Fort Slocum Historic and Archaeological District.

Nancy Brighton, Lead Archaeologist, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District said that out of the structures, about one third were identified as having historical or archaeological significance and, if desired, could be restored or partially restored.

After the documentation was completed on each of the buildings, the structures were demolished if they were determined not restorable. So demolition and historical preservation efforts

were working in tandem in order to move the project forward and not waste time and money.

The Army Corps worked with a number of interested parties to determine what should be done with those historic structures that could be preserved. Since the future of the island hasn't been determined, the City of New Rochelle decided to not restore any of the island's structures. Understandably the City didn't want to fund the maintenance of structures, a requirement of restoration, as the use of the island is still unknown.

However, some of the remnants of the former fort are being kept on the island for the public to view including the fort's overall landscaped vegetation, a seawall, the flagpole, mortar pits from the

late 19th century, tennis courts, walkways, and a cannon used during the Spanish-American War.

As an alternative solution to preserving the fort's rich military history, the Army Corps, its partnering agencies and former residents of the island worked together to create an archival and educational website.

The website includes all of the extensive research the Army Corps gathered during this project including the historical data on each of the fort's structures, photos, maps, videos, and oral histories, in both print and audio formats, from over two dozen individuals who used to live and work at Fort Slocum. In addition, various museums will include the Corps reports in their archives.

At the website's roll out ceremony, former fort residents, politicians and the project team were present for this sentimental gathering, including Congresswoman Nita Lowey, who sponsored legislation to fund the project.

One of the individuals present was Woodie. During her time at the fort, one of her many roles as a Staff Sergeant

was a Drillmaster and in this capacity she composed and recorded several military chants that were played in the background during the roll out ceremony.

"Everyone was very happy that she was able to come as she was quite frail. Woodie was a bit of a rock star among the alumni in attendance and all of us involved with the project," said Brighton.

Unfortunately, just a few days after the ceremony, Woodie passed away. "The roll out ceremony was her last living opportunity to share a reunion with folks that were stationed at the former Fort," said Goepfert. One of her fellow fort alumni added, "We are all glad that she was present at the ceremony and received recognition for her part in the history of our island."

Dr. JoAnne Castagna is a technical writer-editor for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New York District. She can be contacted at joanne.castagna@usace.army.mil



Gladys "Woodie" Borkowski in 2007. Credit: Rob Jacoby.

The PALT-1 Precontact Site in Orangetown continued:

By Faline Schneiderman-Fox, RPA Historical Perspectives, Inc

isolated precontact artifacts scattered across the project area. On a terrace overlooking a fairly broad stream to the north of the Seth House, a chert flake was found in the subsoil of what became known as the PALT-1 site. Phase II testing produced additional lithics and one diagnostic artifact; a quartz small-stemmed projectile point suggesting a Terminal Archaic/Early Woodland occupation. Subsequent Phase III archaeological fieldwork was completed in early June 2010 under the direction of William Sandy, RPA. Although the boundaries of the site were fairly well established during the Phase II study, additional STs were completed to further refine artifact distributions. Testing concluded that cultural material was dispersed over an area approximately 78 square meters (840 square feet) in size. However, this calculation included many locations with sterile STs.

The artifact inventory from the Phase I through III investigations included 62 lithic artifacts; no non-lithic artifacts or features were found at the spatially confined site. The assemblage, analyzed by lithic specialist Luc Litwinionek, AbD, included the stemmed projectile point, one hammerstone, two core fragments, two preforms, one retouched flake, one tested cobble, one grinding stone and 53 flakes. One piece of fire-cracked rock was also recovered from a shovel test.

The quartz projectile point was probably discarded because it had reached the end of its use life as indicated by heavy re-sharpening of the edges and the tip which showed impact damage. The point, diagnostic of the small-stemmed tradition,

would suggest a Terminal Archaic/Early Woodland occupation at the site. The two preforms represent two distinct stages of production: the first of the preforms exemplifies an earlier stage of reduction with remnants of cortex on one face, while the second appears to be positioned later in the reduction process and is eventually reused as a scraper. Each of the core fragments, as well as the tested cobble, retains some cortical material. In addition, flake scars are minimal on all of these artifacts suggesting early stages of reduction, if not initial testing of available materials found in the secondary deposits at the site. The grinding stone exhibited grinding and striation marks on its rounded edges and is characteristic of a stone used to dull the edges of a variety of tools during the reduction process. The presence of the hammerstone in the assemblage tends to support the suggestion that one of the activities at the site was indeed the testing of materials.

The majority of artifacts were produced from chert of unknown source (n=38) followed by metabasalt (n=16), jasper (n=4) and quartz (n=2). It is more than likely that some if not all of these raw materials were present in the secondary gravel deposits found in the area, although there is no evidence of primary processing or core reduction. Almost 85% of the flakes (n=45) are tertiary while the remaining are either secondary flakes (n=5) or bifacial thinning flakes (n=3). The large number of tertiary flakes suggests either the refurbishing of stone tools or the final stages of tool production. The identification of 11

flakes exhibiting pressure flaking would support both of these arguments.

The horizontal distribution of the artifacts suggested a focused activity limited to one or two individuals oriented towards the rejuvenation of stone tools. However, the small number of artifacts coupled with the post-depositional disturbance observed in the testing, limited the ability to provide an accurate interpretation as to exact nature of the site. Because the overall assemblage is so small, one has to be cautious to avoid making assumptions about lithic material preferences (chert versus quartz, etc...) and cultural mechanisms that could account for the disparity in lithic types

PALT-1 is spatially limited in part because the west side of the site has been lost to erosion over the centuries. The site is interpreted as a small, relatively confined hunting and tool re-sharpening station located on a terrace adjacent to a seasonal stream. The lithic material from the PALT-1 Site was not associated with any features or botanical/charcoal deposits that could be subjected to radiocarbon analysis. Therefore, the date of the quartz small stemmed point, and thus the period of human occupation, can only be surmised. There is no data with which to definitively attribute the point and the period of use, let alone the seasonality of this short term encampment.

The PALT-1 Precontact Site in Orangetown continued:

By Faline Schneiderman-Fox, RPA Historical Perspectives, Inc.

Logistical organization can probably be summarized as a small group in search of additional raw materials with activities centered on the extensive reworking of tools. The presence of the small-stemmed point suggests a possible Terminal Archaic/Early Woodland occupation.

The model of predicted site locations and types for the Terminal Archaic/Early Woodland in the Lower Hudson Valley region is based on few secure radiocarbon dated sites. Early Woodland sites are scarce in the Hudson Valley, hence there is no definitive settlement pattern established for this period. With this in mind, it is difficult to say whether or not the PALT-1 site fits into a predicted model of site location. Stemmed points are found throughout the region on a multitude of landforms, suggesting a pattern of diverse resource exploitation.

The majority of lithics recovered from the PALT-1 site were chert and metabasalt tertiary flakes generated from the process of resharpening stone tools. It is posited that the site represents a small group in search of additional raw materials with activities centered on the extensive reworking of tools, as consistent with a hunting party. No pottery or features representing non-hunting activities (food processing, cooking, food storage, etc.) were found at the site.

Therefore, while the archaeological record does represent a small settlement unit, which Snow has postulated to be the social unit functioning on the landscape during the Terminal Archaic and Early Woodland Periods, the archaeological record most likely does not represent an

extended household unit.

Though the information available through the lithics is scarce, it at least provides insight into ephemeral activities that are rarely considered when describing the settlement patterns of these hunter-gatherer groups. Technological organization is considered to be a response to changing environmental and cultural conditions. The information gleaned from the analysis of the lithic assemblage and the observations as to the discrete nature of the occupation at PALT-1 suggests that during the transition between the Archaic and the Woodland Periods, cultural groups were responding to the changing environmental and cultural conditions by maximizing their resource exploitation (including raw materials) while minimizing occupation time.

Table 1:

Lithic Material	Quantity of Flakes
Chert	38
Metabasalt	16
Jasper	4
Quartz	2
Undetermined	2



ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECTS IDEA LIST

Projects for Schools and Local Communities
(adopted from Peebles 2001)

Learning about the past from archaeological sites provides an exciting opportunity for the public to experience archaeology through “hands-on” exercises. The role of the public in helping to preserve archaeological sites can not be underestimated and is necessary if these fragile resources are to be preserved and interpreted for future generations.

There are many ways in which community members can become involved in the preservation of archaeological sites and assist in the identification of such resources within local communities. The following “Project Ideas List” suggests different ways in which the public can find and record archaeological sites that are important to the community. Since identifying and recording archaeological sites is a continuous process, all activities that contribute to this effort are worthwhile and may serve as the town’s preliminary inventory of archaeological sites.

The public can become engaged in archaeology without ever putting a shovel in the ground. Digging is a destructive process and should only be carried out under the supervision of a professional archaeologist. Excavation of a site may be desirable once extensive background research has been completed and research questions about the resource have been formulated. The purpose of digging is to answer questions about our history and prehistory. As stewards, we have a responsibility not to dig until we know the questions that will be addressed. The ideas contained in this project list offer an alternative to digging and can be used by individuals and groups.

Project Idea #1: Interview local residents to identify and record sites where historic and prehistoric artifacts have been found so that a list of known sites can be generated for your community.

Possible tasks:

- Conduct interviews with residents who remember the site. These interviews may be video or audio taped for future use.
- Make maps of the site(s) using a compass and tape.
- Plot the sites on a United States Geological Survey topographic map
- Map sites using a GPS unit and develop a GIS based map of their locations
- Identify and discuss possible threats to sites and possible means of preserving them with local officials
- Send information on known sites to the State Archaeologist’s Office or State Historic Preservation Office so it can be added to state site files.

Project Idea #2: Record information about collections of historic or prehistoric artifacts found at a particular site in your community. Tasks associated with this project might include conducting interviews with landowners concerning the recovery of these artifacts, photographing and creating an inventory of the collection, and recording on a topographic map where the artifacts were found.

Project Idea # 3: Locate and study historic maps of your town to determine what buildings and structures existed in the past and whether they remain standing today. Buildings that are no longer standing may remain as historic archaeological sites. Remaining foundations may reveal important information about the sites construction and its period of occupation. Possible tasks associated with this project may include taking field trips to field verify the existence of a visible cellar hole relating to the structure, using a tape and compass to record the location of the foundation on a map, and completing historic research on the foundation by examining local deeds, agricultural census records, and historic photographs of the building.

ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECTS IDEA LIST

Projects for Schools and Local Communities

(adopted from Peebles 2001)

Continued:

Project Idea # 4: If an archaeological site contains a number of foundations, complete a preliminary assessment of which foundations may be less likely to be disturbed by local road improvement projects, flooding, grading/filling and/or vandalism. Such information is important and can help local planning boards avoid such resources during construction projects. Documenting disturbance around the foundations is also important and may provide important clues as to the relationship of other associated structures that have been removed.

Possible tasks:

- Interview past and current town officials about past projects that may have disturbed the foundations.
- Interview neighbors and nearby farmers about plowing and local nearby land use.
- Document disturbances through drawings, photographs, and other historic records.

Project Idea # 5: Identify a particular historic theme or industry in your community and collect information on sites that relate to that theme or industry. Historic themes that might be applicable to many different communities include education, farming, and transportation.

Possible tasks:

- Use historic maps to identify sites and buildings related to this theme
- Interview community members who remember related buildings and features
- Complete an inventory of natural and cultural disturbances to the study area

Project Idea # 6: Develop an exhibit, slide show or video of the project that can be displayed in a prominent location such as a local library, museum, school, or community center. Be sure to include information about the history of the resource and why it is important to the community.

Project Idea # 7: Develop a walking tour highlighting some of the sites you've located in your community. Selection of sites for the tour should be done with care however since publicizing the location of the site can often result in destruction to the site through ill-advised digging. Completion of this project might also include development of a "site watch" program to insure preservation of site.

Project Idea # 8: Let people know about the important resources in your community by presenting your findings to school groups, local and state archaeological societies, and town planning groups. Invite individuals who might be interested in the conservation of sites and collections in your community. Maps, photographs, and documentary research can be compiled into a notebook and displayed during the presentation. Copies can be shared with local libraries, county historians, community archaeologists, and town clerks following the presentation.

For more information, contact:

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Upper Susquehanna Chapter, NYSAA

The Upper Susquehanna Chapter, NYSAA will be conducting excavations at the Andrew Mann Inn, located in the Town of Unadilla, Otsego County, near the village of Sidney. The building dates to the mid 1790s and is among the first constructed after the village was burned during the revolution. Historic artifact identification workshops and architectural studies are also planned to coincide with the digging. Excavations are on alternate Sundays and Tuesdays. Contact Terry Letson 607-783-2903.

On May 14th from 9am until 3pm the Upper Susquehanna chapter will be hosting their 2nd annual Open House at the Roland Hill Memorial Museum of Archaeology in Otego, NY. The event includes flintknapping, fire making and other early technology demonstrations, children's activities and free admission to the museum.

The Roland Hill Memorial Museum is operated by the Upper Susquehanna Chapter, NYSAA and provides exhibits and displays about the prehistory and early history of the Upper Susquehanna Valley. The museum is normally open on weekends in the summer months and by appointment. Contact chapter president Terry Letson at 607-783-2903 for more information

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St. John Fisher College and the Mount Morris Historical Society

St. John Fisher College and the Mount Morris Historical Society will once again offer a field school at the Mills Mansion Site in the Genesee Valley. Fieldwork and concurrent on-site lab work will be conducted every Saturday and Sunday, June through mid-October. This is a multi-component historical/prehistoric site located on the property of the restored 1838 home of General William A. Mills, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Participation is limited, and there is a modest daily fee. Prospective students of all ages should contact Justin Tubiolo, JTubiolo@sjfc.edu.

NEW YORK STATE ARCHAEOLOGY POSTER 2013 CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS/PARTICIPANTS

In 2013, NYSAA is solely responsible for the creation of the New York State Archaeology Poster. A working committee is in the process of forming to complete the design and execution of the poster as well as a bookmark, a calendar, and a "History of the NYSAA" booklet.

Each NYSAA chapter is encouraged to select a liaison to the committee and to contribute a chapter history and photographs for inclusion in the booklet and/or in the calendar or poster. This is a great opportunity to highlight the work of avocational archaeologists that otherwise might not be recognized.

Submissions are needed by September 15, 2011 and may be forwarded to:

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