Archaeology of Pennsylvania’s Colonial Frontier: Forts Shirley, Lyttelton, and Ligonier

Jonathan A. Burns
Juniata College
AXIS Research, Inc.

Pennsylvania Statewide Conference on Heritage July 8 to 10, 2015
Session: The Archaeology of Colonial Military Sites in Pennsylvania
Academia

Cultural Resource Management
Students learn valuable professional skills in field school.
Pennsylvania’s Purchase History
The Central Pennsylvania Frontier
Fort Shirley, Huntingdon County, PA (1755-1756)
Commerce and Conflict on the 18th-Century Frontier

The investigation of Fort Shirley is revealing the story of a successful Irish trader, his Native American allies, and the threats they faced during the French and Indian War.
What’s the significance of our work at Fort Shirley?

1. We are documenting the unique design and ethnic composition of the fort, tracing the entire palisade footprint

2. We located Aughwick Old Town, the adjacent Mingo Seneca refugee village beside Croghan’s trading post

3. Over seventy students attended field school at the site

4. The project has given rise to four Master’s theses
Fort Lyttelton, Fulton County, PA (1755-1763)

Described in 1758... It was reported to be a stockade fort of “usual form” with four bastions, somewhat smaller than Fort Shirley [John Forbes to William Pitt].
The Augusta Regiment (Pennsylvania) 1757
Private
FORT LYTTLETON

Begun in 1755 by George Croghan.
named by Governor Morris after
Sir George Lyttelton, then the
Chancellor of the Exchequer.
Garrisoned variously by Provin-
cial and regular troops as well
as local volunteers in 1763. By
1764 it was reported in ruins
What’s the significance of our work at Fort Lyttelton?

1. We are documenting modern finds by various landowners

2. We located the blacksmith shop for the Archaeological Conservancy

3. We are broadening our view of the colonial landscape in central PA
Fort Ligonier, Westmoreland County, PA (1758-1763)
Fort Ligonier is reconstructed based on archaeology done in the 1960’s.
As you can see, we have an accurate map from 1758 to predict the location.
Fig. 2 View of Lower Parade and Fascine Battery. Fascine detail below.
A scaled model at the museum, showing the line of communication and feature.
What’s the significance of our work at Fort Ligonier?

1. We are collaborating with Fort Ligonier to test for additional features beyond their current reconstruction

2. We are continuing the tradition of historic reconstruction guided by archaeology (*ala* Jacob Grimm 1970)

3. We are forging new partnerships for undergraduate education in historic preservation
Thank you!