

This is NewsLetter Issue No. Four ~ For the year 2016



The quarterly meeting of the  
Frontier Patriots Chapter  
of the Sons of the American Revolution  
will be held at King's Family Restaurant, 3001 6th  
Avenue, Altoona, PA  
on Saturday, December 3rd, 2016  
at 12:00 Noon.

We will be holding election of the officers for 2017. After serving as President for 14 out of the last 18 years I have decided to 'retire' from this position. Larry Smith has agreed to serve as President. I hope others will step forward to fill some of the officer ranks. We have a very small number of members doing most of the work and assistance would be appreciated.

We hosted the Fall State Board of Management Meeting in November. The meeting went very smoothly and we received quite a few compliments from those attending. Thanks to John Betting, John Faulds, Larry Smith and Bob Williams for all your help.

We have begun making donations using the funds we received from the Ramsey Estate bequest. To date we have donated \$1000 to an award being set up at the Merchant Marine Academy, \$1000 to Blair County Genealogical Society, and \$1000 to Clearfield County Historical Society. We have also approved future donations to the Huntingdon County Historical Society and the Bedford County Historical Society.



Reminder ~ For those of you that receive this newsletter by US mail, if you have an email address, we would appreciate you sending it to us to use for future newsletters. Printing and mailing these newsletters is very expensive. Please send to our Secretary Melvin McDowell at [melvin.mcdowell@gmail.com](mailto:melvin.mcdowell@gmail.com)



# American Revolutionary War:



# The Fortifications

## 1758 ~ 1780s

### 1758 Fort Bedford

Fort Bedford was constructed to serve as a supply depot during Forbes' Campaign in the French and Indian War. By the mid-1760s the fort was disintegrating. It was used, though, by the local settlers during the American Revolutionary War as protection against Amerindians and Tories.

### 1778~1780 Fort Roberdeau

Fort Roberdeau was constructed primarily to provide protection for workers engaged in the mining of lead in the Sinking Spring Valley. The fort also provided protection for the local settlers against Amerindian incursions. Four 'dubel fortified four pounder' cannon were employed as defensive weapons at Fort Roberdeau.



### Cannon Balls and Musket Balls

Cannon balls were designated by weight. The largest shown here is a 12-pounder. The smaller one is a 3-pounder. It measures 2.91 inches in diameter. The 12-pounder measures 4.62 inches in diameter, so you can see that caliber size and weight did not necessarily match.

These two cannon balls are solid cast iron. The much smaller musket balls were cast out of lead that was possibly mined at the Sinking Spring Valley in Bedford County, Pennsylvania.



★ Fort Roller

### Fortifications In Bedford County

★ Fort Roberdeau

During the American Revolutionary War, Bedford County encompassed the region that today includes Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon and Somerset counties. Within that vast area were about 22 fortifications. Of them, at least three were constructed as we think of forts: palisade walls enclosing buildings for barracks or supplies {Bedford, Lyttleton & Roberdeau}. The rest included many private buildings such as barns, which were converted into forts by simply chopping holes in their walls.

The owners and their neighbors could use the holes to watch for attackers or to stick the muzzles of their muskets through to fire at anyone actually attacking.

#### Bedford County

- Fort Bedford
- Fort Coulter
- Fort Defiance / Martin
- Juniata Crossings Fort
- Fort Piper
- Fort Shop

#### ★ Blair County

- Fort Fetter
- Fort Holliday
- Fort Lowry
- Fort Phillips
- Fort Roberdeau
- Fort Roller

#### Fulton County

- Fort Coombs
- Fort Lyttleton
- McConnellsburg Blockhouse

#### Huntingdon County

- Fort Anderson
- Fort Hartsock
- Fort Lytle
- Fort McAlevy
- Fort McCormick
- Fort Shirley
- Fort Standing Stone

#### Cambria & Somerset Counties

No fortifications have been identified  
★ Harbuck's Fort

### Military Incidents

#### Phillips Rangers Massacre

Bedford County militia from Fort Phillips were attacked by Amerindians and Tories. Ten militia men were scalped and killed.

#### Frankstown Engagement

Bedford County militia unit left Fort Fetter to save some settlers taken captive by Amerindians. They were themselves ambushed by Amerindians (goaded on by the British). Thirteen militia men killed.



Fort Roberdeau ~ From a pencil sketch published in the Columbian Magazine, December 1788

★ Fort Bedford



# 1700s

## American Revolutionary War



# "the frontier Inhabitants being Generally fled..."

### Stone Ax

Amerindians were still using stone tools when the Euro-Americans arrived.



### Hunting Grounds

There were very few Amerindian villages located throughout the frontier of Pennsylvania. The Iroquoian tribes that resided in the Ohio Valley and northward into the Province of New York used this region that would become Bedford County for hunting and migration routes to the south. The Amerindians were, understandably, offended as the English, Irish, Ulster Scot, Swiss and German settlers moved in ~ establishing farmsteads, and in the process, disrupting the Amerindians' lifestyle. Despite repeated complaints to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, the Euro-American settlers continued to move in and establish settlements.

### The Burnt Cabins

Euro-American settlers were moving into the region to the west of the Susquehanna River and to the north and west of the Blue Mountain. After receiving numerous complaints from the Amerindians, the Pennsylvania General Assembly ordered the settlers to remove themselves from the region. The settlers ignored the orders. On 24 May 1750, the provincial government sent men to a village of eleven log cabins located in then-unpurchased lands in what is today Dublin Township, Fulton County. The collection of log cabins near the Little Aughwick Creek was called Sidneyville.

The Pennsylvania authorities ordered the inhabitants to vacate their homes. The settlers objected at first, but grabbed what articles they could as their cabins were set afire.

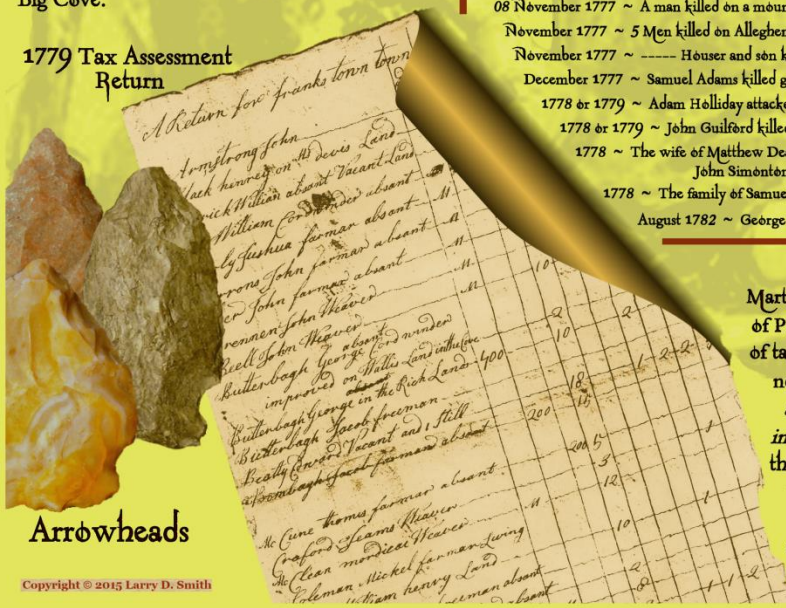
Similar burnings were conducted at Path Valley, Sherman's Creek, Aughwick and the Big Cove.

### The Amerindians Retaliate

The reaction of the Amerindians to the influx of Euro-American settlers into their hunting grounds was to retaliate by killing the men and taking the women captive. There were a couple notable instances in which Amerindians stealthily attacked Euro-American settlers in the frontier region that was erected as Bedford County in 1771. The Euro-Americans, as a group, may have been guilty of intruding upon the Amerindian lands, but that crime surely did not merit the punishment of innocent individuals being ambushed and killed outright ~ being tortured, such as being scalped while still alive ~ or being taken captive and forced to endure the horror and hardship that that entailed.

- 31 October/02 November 1755 ~ 47 Euro-Americans killed or taken in the Great Cove and the Conolloways valleys (Fulton Co) It is believed that over 100 Amerindians (Delaware and Shawnee) were led by Shingas. 27 Houses were destroyed.
- 31 October 1755 ~ Indian trader, Peter Shaver and two other men were killed and their houses burned. (Huntingdon County)
- 24 June 1757 ~ 1 son of William Linn (Fulton County) was killed; 1 son scalped but not killed; and 1 son taken captive.
- June 1763 ~ Warriors led by Pontiac and Guyasuta kill numerous settlers along Dunning's Creek and near Fort Bedford.
- 1768 ~ James Henry killed near Frankstown. (Blair County) He had killed 5 Amerindians before they finished him.
- 19 June 1777 ~ Felix Denny and son, Francis, killed while trying to get to the safety of Fort Standing Stone. (Huntingdon County)
- 1777 ~ The Tull family did not leave their home six miles west of Bedford and all - parents and 9 children - were killed.
- September 1777 ~ Adam Ernst and two neighbors killed and Adam's wife, Eve (Indian Eve), and 1 child taken captive.
- Fall 1777 ~ Nearly 30 Dunkards residing in Morrisens Cove were killed. (Blair County)
- 12 October 1777 ~ 1 settler killed near Stony Creek. (Somerset County)
- 08 November 1777 ~ A man killed on a mountain near Fort Bedford.
- November 1777 ~ 5 Men killed on Allegheny Mountain near the head of Dunning's Creek and 3 killed or taken near Three Springs.
- November 1777 ~ Houser and son killed and his wife and 2 children taken. (Blair County)
- December 1777 ~ Samuel Adams killed going from Fort Bedford to Johnstown. ----- Bridges taken captive. (Cambria County)
- 1778 or 1779 ~ Adam Haldiday attacked but escaped with 2 children; his 2 oldest children killed (Blair County)
- 1778 or 1779 ~ John Guilford killed going from Fort Fetter to his home. (Blair County)
- 1778 ~ The wife of Matthew Dean and 3 children killed in their Canoe Valley home (Huntingdon County) A visitor, John Simonton, was taken captive.
- 1778 ~ The family of Samuel Moore was attacked, and 1 son, James, was killed. (Blair County)
- August 1782 ~ George Peck, his wife and all their children were killed at Rays Cove.

### 1779 Tax Assessment Return



### Arrowheads

### "Absent"

On 16 February 1779, Bedford County Commissioners, James Martin and Samuel Davidson wrote a letter to the General Assembly of Pennsylvania. They requested permission to forego the collection of taxes due to the county being ravaged by the Amerindians. It was noted "that for eighteen months past the frontier inhabitants have almost entirely been deprived of the fruits of their labour by the incursions of the Indians." The residents who had fled eastward to the relatively greater safety of Cumberland County were noted as 'absent' on the tax assessment return. Of 163 residents listed for Frankstown Township, 79 or nearly half, of them were either recorded as 'absent' or 'vacant land' indicating that they had fled.



# American Revolutionary War

## The War On The Homefront



# 1775 ~ 1783

### Loyalists & Tories

The name 'Tory' was derived from the Irish word *tóraidhe*, which meant 'outlaw.' Both, Loyalists and Tories were those who remained loyal to Great Britain. But whereas Loyalists tended to remain neutral, the Tories actively fought against their Patriot neighbors ~ usually by guerilla tactics.

Hanger  
1760 Pattern



### The British Incursion Into Bedford County

In the spring of 1781, Loyalist Colonel John Butler sent British Army Captain Nelles on an expedition into central Pennsylvania in order to disrupt Patriot communication between eastern Pennsylvania and the Ohio Valley. Nelles led a unit of British troops from western New York to the West Branch of the Susquehanna. On the way they rallied nearly 100 Seneca warriors. It was that group of Amerindians, goaded on by Nelles and his British troops, who ambushed Captain John Boyd and his Rangers on 03 June 1781.

### The Tory Expedition to Kittanning

On 04 May 1778, Colonel John Piper wrote to President Wharton of the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council to inform him about a Tory plot to launch a murder spree throughout Bedford County. He noted that: *"A Number of evil minded persons, to the amount of thirty-five (I think), having actually associated together, marched away toward the Indian Country in order to join the Indians, and to conduct them into the Inhabitation, and there united kill, burn and destroy Men, Women and Children."*

The Amerindians at Kittanning were initially in favor of joining the Tories, but became suspicious of them when the Tories would not lay down their muskets. The Tory ringleader, John Weston, was grabbed, scalped and killed; the rest of the Tories fled.

Two years later, in July 1780, Tories would join the Amerindians in attacking Captain William Phillips' troops in the Woodcock Valley of Bedford County.

#### Tories and Loyalists of Bedford County

- James Armstrong
- Samuel Berrow
- James Campbell
- William Campbell
- Joseph Cessna
- Peter Daly
- William Hamsen
- Jacob Hare
- Michael Hare
- John Hess
- James Little
- Alexander McKee
- Adam Portmenser
- 'Old' Portmenser
- Peter Portmenser
- Peter Shaver
- John Shilling
- William Shilling
- John Weston
- Richard Weston
- Loyalists: Harry Gordon
- Zebediah Ricketts



### Linsey Woolsey Blanket

This blanket was carried and used by a soldier during the American Revolutionary War. Although warm, it would have been kind of scratchy because the fabric was made of a blend of linen and wool. The wool threads provided warmth while the linen threads provided stability to the fabric. When new, the colors would have been bright and bold.

The 1760 pattern Hanger initially would have had a 'knuckle guard' consisting of a bow and quillon. In 1796 a new pattern was introduced without the knuckle guard. It made the sword easier to grasp quickly, and became popular. Owners of these older hangers sometimes, as with this one, cut off the guard in order to conform to the new pattern.



# American Revolutionary War



## A Soldier's Life In The 1700s

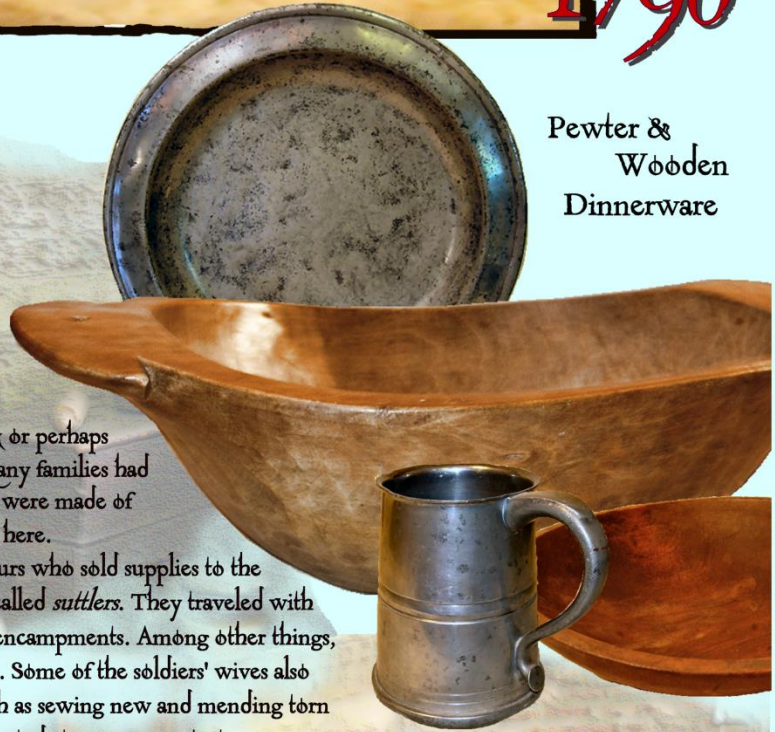
# 1750 ~ 1790

### Everyday Objects Used By Soldiers

In many ways, a soldier's life during the American Revolutionary War wasn't that much different from the life he had at home. Although his bed might not have been as comfortable as the one he had at home (that is, assuming he had a bed at all), the soldier had almost the same other things. Wooden bowls and pewter plates and tankards were used by the Continental Line as well as by the militia garrisoning a local fort.

The soldier ate his food using a two-prong fork or perhaps a knife ~ but that's how he ate at home too. Many families had only a few utensils, and the ones they did have were made of pewter with bone handles, like the one shown here.

Every army had its 'followers.' Entrepreneurs who sold supplies to the soldiers, which the army didn't provide, were called *suttlers*. They traveled with the army and set up small shops outside of the encampments. Among other things, the suttlers provided liquor to the army troops. Some of the soldiers' wives also traveled with the army, providing services such as sewing new and mending torn clothes. Thimbles and needles have been excavated at encampment sites.



Pewter & Wooden Dinnerware



### The Family They Left Behind

For the family of a militiaman, life didn't change much. A man serving in the county militia would be away from his home for a two or a four week tour of duty. Ranging companies might even pass their own homes while on duty.

For the family of a man who had joined the Continental Line, the story was much different. The regular army soldier might be away from home for a year or two ~ or his enlistment might have been for the duration of the war, which could have lasted until 1783 when the war was officially declared at an end. For those families, at a time before regular mail service existed, the only information they received about the battles in which their husbands and fathers may have been involved would have come from newspapers and so-called 'magazines.' Magazines, such as the *Annual Register* and the *Gentleman's Magazine*, published in England, were widely circulated through the colonies.

### Magazines

Magazines resembled books, and in fact were published as books in serial form each month. At the end of the year they would be bound together as an actual book with hard covers.





Preceding pages ~ three more of the panels of the exhibit *Bedford County In The American Revolutionary War*, which is still open at the Bedford County Historical Society at 6441 Lincoln Highway, Bedford, PA.

The exhibit, meant to point out Bedford County's Role in the American Revolutionary War, can be viewed during the Bedford County Historical Society's regular hours of Monday through Friday 9:00am to 4:00pm and the third Saturday of the month 9:00am to 12:00noon. The BCHS can be contacted by phone at 814-623-2011. Their email is [bedfordhistory@embarqmail.com](mailto:bedfordhistory@embarqmail.com)



## Nova Scotia: The Fourteenth Colony

It is interesting to consider the idea that the original thirteen colonies, which gained their independence from Great Britain in 1783, might have been the original fourteen colonies if the Continental Congress would have more seriously considered a petition from the inhabitants of the colony of Nova Scotia. On Thursday, 02 November, 1775 a petition was presented before the Congress in which it was stated that *"The Inhabitants of Pafsamaquaddy in Nova Scotia, having chofen a com(mitt)ee of Safety, and having, by their petition, applied to Congrefs to be admitted into the afsociation of the North Americans, for the prefervation of their rights and liberties."* A committee of five was appointed to consider the petition. The matter was brought up during the session held a week later, on 09 November, but was not resolved. It again was discussed on the 10th, at which time the decision was made to send two persons to Nova Scotia to *"enquire into the ftate of that colony, the difpofition of the inhabitants towards the American caufe, and the condition of the fortifications, Docks, yards, the quantity of artillery and warlike ftores and the number of foldiers, failors and fhips of war there..."*

The subject of admitting Nova Scotia into the union of "North American" colonies was put off until the 24th of April, 1776. The committee chairman, Benjamin Harrison, reported that there had not been sufficient time to review the petition of the colony of Nova Scotia. It was resolved that the Congress would form itself into a "committee of the whole" the following day to discuss the matter, but more pressing items arose and the petition of Nova Scotia was again set aside.

On 25 April, 1777 another petition for military aid was read before the Congress. That

petition came from Robert Forster of the County of Cumberland in Nova Scotia. It was referred to the Board Of War for consideration. On 13 May, 1777 the Congress finally arrived at a resolution which stated that *"the council of the Mafsachusetts bay be requefted to confider the cafe of the inhabitants of Cumberland and Sunbury counties in Nova Scotia, who are fufferers by their attachment to the American caufe and to devife and put into execution at continental expence fuch meafures as the faid council fhall think practicabale and prudent for the relief of the faid fufferers."*

The Congress authorized assisting in removing any families from that colony to places of greater safety if they wished. The matter was eventually laid to rest on 21 May, 1778 when Congress resolved that *"the wrefting of Nova Scotia from the Britifh power and uniting the fame to thefe States is... a very defirable object; but that the propriety of making this attempt at the prefent cris is feems doubtful; and upon the whole, it appears moft wife to wait a while, until the event of a war taking place between France and Great Britain, and the confequences that (it) may have upon the Britifh force on this continent, fhall render an attempt upon Nova Scotia more likely to fucceed."*

One can only wonder at why the Continental Congress did not act upon the petition by the colony of Nova Scotia sooner than it did when it could have succeeded. Perhaps it was because only the county of Cumberland was really pro-American and the Congress may have foreseen too much Loyalist opposition. Nova Scotia remained British and became a haven for exiled American Loyalists.