

Prelude to the Lewis and Clark Expedition: The 1802-1806 U.S. Army at Fort Kaskaskia, Illinois



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Earthen Walls of Fort Kaskaskia I Today....



They were there because two companies of U.S. Army soldiers—one Infantry and one Artillery—numbering approximately 120 were sent to the abandoned Fort Kaskaskia in 1802 under orders to turn it into a U.S. Army fort.

The two companies were **Captain Russell Bissell's Company** of the **1st/2nd Infantry Regiment** and **Captain Amos Stoddard's Artillery Company**



An understrength Civil War Infantry company

That was probably similar in size to Bissell's Company

Lewis and Clark arrive at Ft. Kaskaskia in

November 1803





Meriwether
Lewis



William Clark



Lewis and Clark recruited **Eleven** of the fort's soldiers to join their Expedition to explore

George Drouillard

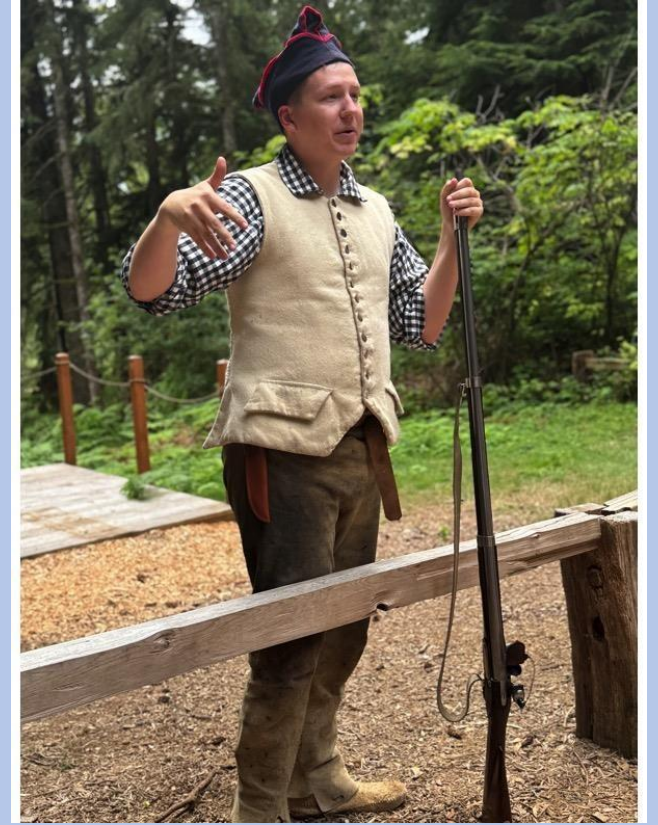
the American West

York

So why is Fort Kaskaskia important? Because archaeological investigations at other expedition sites such as the 1805-1806 Ft. Clatsop in Oregon have recovered NO artifacts!!! Fort Kaskaskia is the *only* Lewis and Clark related site to produce large numbers of artifacts that can inform on the daily lives of the expedition men.



Everything you see at Ft.
Clatsop has been brought
there from elsewhere!!
Even this guy...



So why are there so few artifacts at Fort Clatsop?

“Policing” the ground of trash to prevent disease is an old military practice...

Fort Clatsop may have been “policed” by the expedition soldiers with all of its refuse going into a large trash pit that has yet to be found.

Modern US soldiers policing their base of trash





we, we no artifacts
associated with the U.S.
years we worked at Fort

Excavation Units Located
North of North Entranceway
To Fort Kaskaskia I



Similar to Fort Clatsop;



Army the first several
Kaskaskia 1

This changed, however, we unexpectedly found a huge 1802 2nd Infantry Uniform Button
1802 U.S. Army refuse pit Inside the fort containing Original Replica hundreds of artifacts
discarded by the soldiers. So the
Soldiers were Policing the fort of trash...





Broken Unfinished Mic-

Mac Pipe Bowl

One of the more significant aspects of the trash
pit contained broken unfinished
Native American smoking pipes in combination with
US Army military items



Original



Replica

So The combination of these two types of artifacts suggests that someone who knew how to make stone smoking pipes was living with the soldiers in 1802

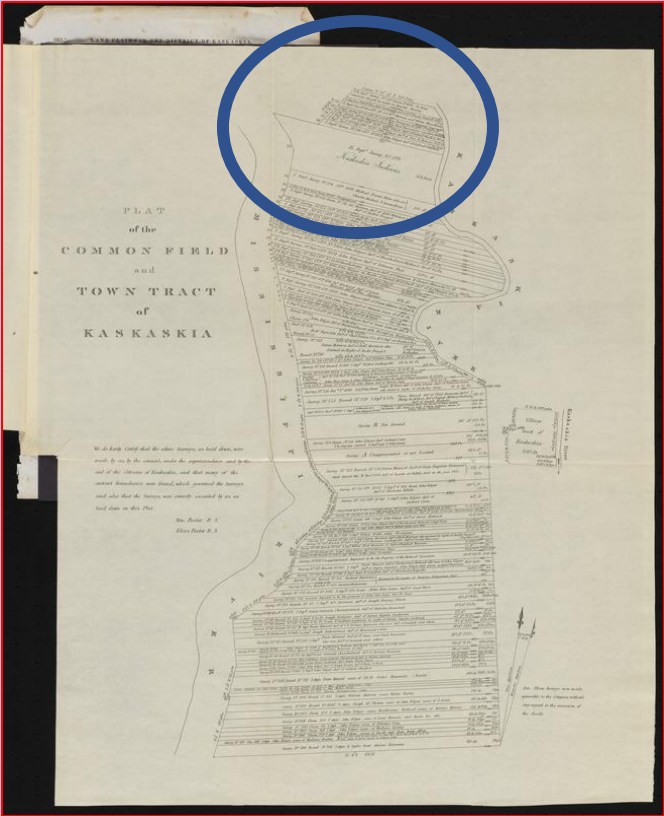


“mixed blood” (French and Shawnee) hunter and interpreter George Drouillard
Location of Kaskaskia Indian Village

Who
Situated Kaskaskia

Or it could have been Lewis and Clark’s

lived in a Shawnee village as a boy
Between French Land Claims



And would have learned how to make at the north End of the town
of stone smoking pipes.

. It could have been a Kaskaskia man from the Kaskaskia village located Near the fort

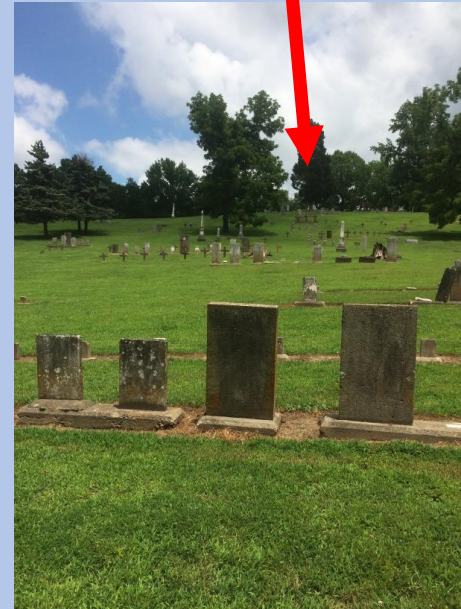
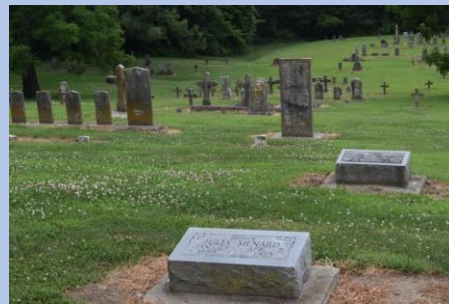
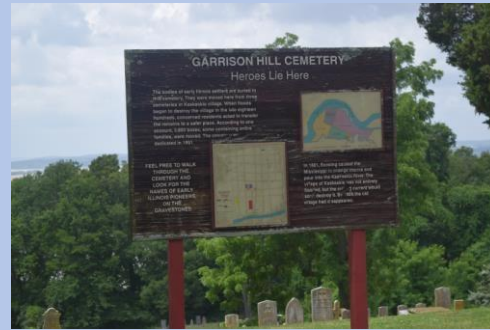
George Drouillard

The soldiers moved out of Fort Kaskaskia I in 1803
to a new fort (Fort Kaskaskia II) that they had built

on top of Garrison Hill which later contained a
cemetery



Obelisk



Obelisk

We discovered the remains of this fort for the first time in
2017. Prior to that no one knew it existed.

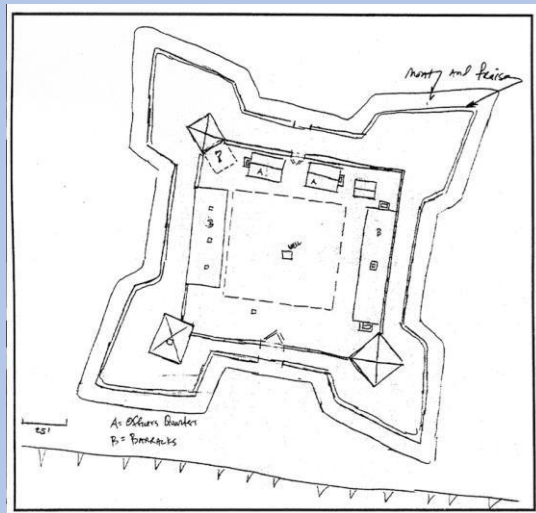


One of
the
things
we
found
were



Thousands of early 1800s brick fragments
From the fort's brick chimneys

What Did the Ft. Kaskaskia II Look Like?



Reconstructed Ft. Massac



Ft. Massac Log Building
Ft. Massac (1802-1810) With Brick Chimneys

Our investigations revealed
that It was a stockaded fort
That contained log buildings
With Brick chimneys

Fort Kaskaskia II had only two
blockhouses at opposing
corners as opposed to the four

believed to have formed part of
Fort Massac

The Types of Artifacts we found provide Information about the daily lives



Early
American
Army
Cartridge
Box



Iron Cartridge Box
Buckles found at
Fort Kaskaskia II



Early 1800s Leather Stock Collar
Worn by Soldiers to protect Their Necks



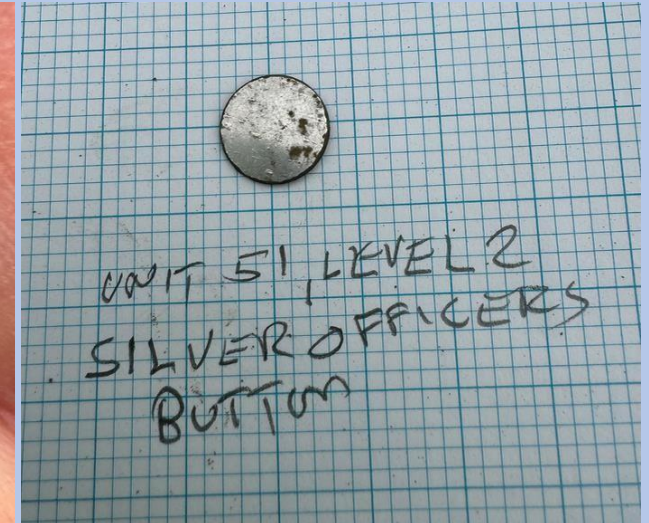
Brass Cartridge Box Buckle found at
Fort Kaskaskia II

and equipment of U.S. Army soldiers at the time of the expedition

Uniform buttons



2nd Infantry enlisted man's 4th Infantry enlisted man's pewter uniform button
pewter uniform button



Although not marked, silver was restricted to Infantry officers

The recovery of a 4th Infantry button suggests that one of the men in Bissell's Company
May have served in that regiment before being transferred to the 2nd Regiment

Personal items: Knives and Coins

Coins



several one-eighth

A table knife with a notched handle whose
have cut six notches in its handle to



We



recovered

"Bits" (12.5 Cents) of Spanish silver dollars

Minted in Mexico City that had been cut into owner may
"bits" to make change identify it as his property.

We also recovered the back half of a broken octagonal rifle barrel to a
“Contract Rifle” (?) similar to ones carried by the men of the
Lewis and Clark expedition



Meriwether Lewis ordered 15 of these Rifles for the expedition from the Harper's Ferry Armory in July 1803

They were called "contract rifles" because They were part of a special "rush" contract issued by the government to resupply the Army with rifles following the disastrous defeat of the U.S. Army by Native Americans in Ohio in 1792

The Ft. Kaskaskia rifle barrel may have been part of a contract rifle issued to Captain Bissell's company in the 1790s as part of the resupplying of the Army with such rifles

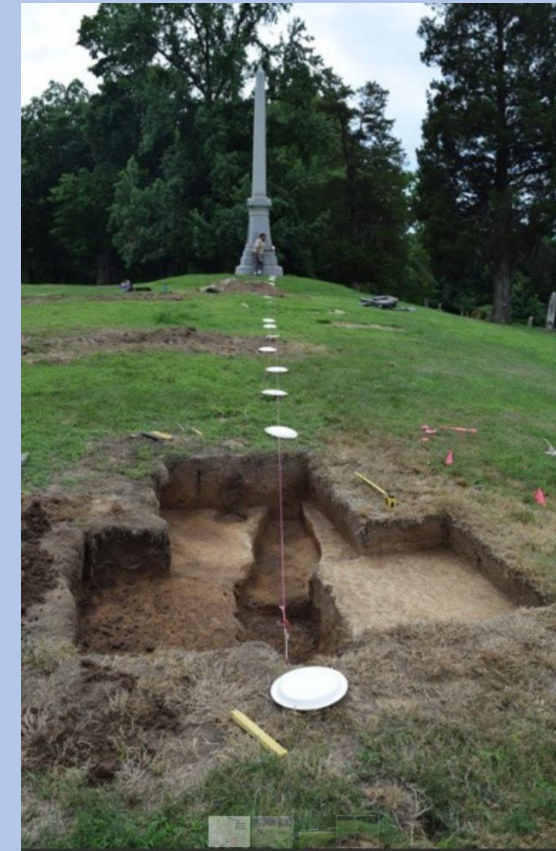
2792/1794 contract rifle (Center) at Fort Clatsop, Oregon



Finding the Stockade



Using a ground penetrating radar (gpr) unit to search for the stockade
Trenches at Garrison Hill



Trenches of Fort II

The GR survey And the hand excavations revealed that the fort measured about 120 ft north-south by 120 ft east-west

The West Stockade Trench

Excavated section of Trench

Postmolds in stockade trench Located by GPR survey as it appeared Before excavation
route as Indicated by GR survey With Paper plates showing trench
before excavation

What Happened to Fort Kaskaskia II?

- It gradually diminished in size as soldiers from the garrison were detached for other duties

- Captain Stoddard's artillery company appears to have accompanied him to St. Louis in March, 1804, for the ceremony marking the transfer of the Louisiana Territory to the United States.
- Other soldiers were detached to serve on the 1803 Lewis and Clark and 1805 Zebulon Pike expeditions, never to return.

The Cession of the Louisiana Territory to the US in 1804

The Final Days of Fort Kaskaskia II



Fort Kaskaskia disappears from Army rolls in 1806, with any remaining soldiers including Captain Bissell apparently transferred to Fort Bellefontaine in St. Louis.



Broken shovel discarded on the ground

Discipline appears to have broken down as the end approached with soldiers throwing worn out uniforms into cellars while numerous unwanted or broken tools and weapons were discarded on the ground and inside the fort

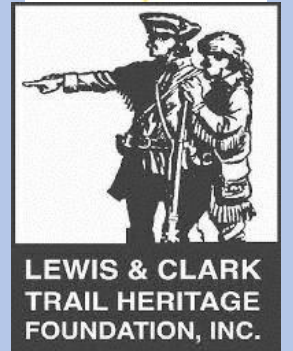


Old uniforms and other trash were discarded into building cellars

2017 Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma Tribal Members and
SIU Field School Students at Ft. Kaskaskia Overlook



Center for
Archaeological
Investigations



Thank You!!!