

Enshrining the Past: The Early Archaeology of Fort St. Anne, Isle La Motte, Vermont

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Introduction

Though largely forgotten today, Fort St. Anne, on Sandy Point, Isle La Motte, dates to the earliest European occupation of Vermont and represents one of the most significant historic sites in the state. Fort St. Anne, constructed by French soldiers in 1666, is located at the northern end of Lake Champlain in what was once the colonial frontier between the Abenaki, Iroquois, English, Dutch and French. The fort served as part of the larger defense strategy designed to protect French and Abenaki traders against Iroquois attacks along the Richelieu River-Lake Champlain corridor. Sandy Point has been a borderland at the intersection of cultures throughout history and has served as a campground and stop-over for persons visiting the region or those engaged in many of the historic battles waged between English, French and, later, American troops (Figure 1).

Little archaeological research has been conducted at Fort St. Anne, save for the summers of 1895 and 1896 when Reverend Joseph Kerlidou uncovered remains of the fort while establishing St. Anne's Shrine. Though not an archaeologist by training, Kerlidou recorded numerous artifacts and features he encountered, revealing pieces of the rich history of the site that date as far back as the Early Middle Woodland Period (ca. 100 B.C. - A.D. 300). The most abundant information obtained from these excavations relate to the structure of the fort and the personal lives of soldiers, missionaries and Native Americans at the site, thus adding to our knowledge of this little understood period in Vermont history.

Isle La Motte and the Fur Trade

The European record of Isle La Motte begins in 1609 when Samuel Champlain, the first European in the region, explored the lake that now bears his name. During his travels Champlain mentions the island that would later be named Isle La Motte, and may have hunted and afterward spent a night on the island with his native guides (Bourne 1906:205; Stratton 1984:2).

In the course of his explorations, Champlain joined a Huron, Algonquin, and Montagnais war party against

the Iroquois, their long standing enemy, on Ticonderoga peninsula in present-day New York (Bourne 1906:209). During the ensuing battle, Champlain shot and killed two Iroquois leaders, forming an alliance with the Algonquians (which included the Abenaki) and Hurons, which was maintained throughout the rest of the century (Bourne 1906: 212-213). This French-Abenaki alliance made the French foes in the eyes of the Iroquois, especially among the Mohawk who inhabited the west shore of Lake Champlain.

The long standing hostile relations between the Abenaki located to the east of Lake Champlain, and Iroquois, whose territory was located to the west of Lake Champlain, were further aggravated by increasing competition in trade among warring European colonies (Calloway 1990:7, 10, 39). In the early seventeenth century European desire for trade access in North America led to greater rivalries between the French at



Figure 1. Map of Isle La Motte, Vermont, depicting the location of Sandy Point and Fort St. Anne in the northwest corner of the island (Beers 1871:42).

Quebec (1604), the Dutch in the Hudson River Valley (1612), and later in the Connecticut Valley (1624), and the English at Plymouth (1623) and Massachusetts Bay (1630) trading posts in Massachusetts (Gosden 2004: 285; Haviland and Power 1994:212). This competition forced the Iroquois to seek trade with French competitors such as the Dutch colonists at Fort Orange in present-day Albany, New York, and later with the English who took control of Fort Orange in 1664 in order to procure enough furs for European goods (Steele 1994:23, 119). As trade flourished, rich fur regions along the St. Lawrence River and the Richelieu River-Lake Champlain corridor became the scene of intensive competition for market dominance by Europeans and Native Americans (Thwaites 1899, Vols. XLIX, L, and LI; Richter 1992:55; Haviland and Power 1994:219).

By the mid-seventeenth century, Mohawk attacks along the junction of the Richelieu and St. Lawrence Rivers increased and began to take a toll on the Canadian colony (Richter 1992:98). These attacks were compounded by the failure of the *Compagnie des Cent-Associés* or Company of One Hundred (a private company that held seigneurial and trade rights over the St. Lawrence territory) to adequately supply the colony with food and reinforcements. Noting the declining state of the colony and realizing the potential for wealth that could be obtained from the fur trade, King Louis XIV took control of Quebec from the defunct Company of One Hundred in 1663 (Eccles 1973:68).

In an effort to revitalize the colony and secure trade routes, King Louis XIV assigned Minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert, the French minister of finance, to organize the French settlement along military lines in order to secure French trade interests (Eccles 1973:68; Steele 1994:73). Colbert's plan was to create a population in Canada that was large enough to defend the colony and provide a market for French goods, was self-sufficient in foodstuff, and able to produce a wide range of commodities to send to France (Trigger 1985:283). In order to carry out this plan, Lieutenant-General Alexandre de Prouville, Marquis de Tracy and Lieutenant-General to all French colonies in North and South America, was ordered to Canada along with the Carignan-Salières Regiment to put an end to the Iroquoian hostilities (Crockett 1909:23; Eccles 1973:62; Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX: 213, 217-225; Verney 1991:7, 15-16). The Carignan-Salières Regiment was chosen for its experience in fighting the Turks and because it was the first French regiment fully outfitted with the new and efficient flintlock guns (Verney 1991:7, 15-16).

The arrival of 1,200 troops to Canada by September of 1665 marked the beginning of a demographic and economic shift in the colony. Not only did these troops increase the colony's population by 40%, but they also created a much larger military populace (Steele 1994:7, 74; Verney 1991:57).

The Four Forts

Shortly after arriving in Canada, M. de Tracy ordered the Captains of the Carignan-Salières Regiment, M. M. de Sorel, de Chambly, and de Salières, to build a series of forts. The objective of these forts was to form bases from which soldiers could protect the trade routes against Iroquoian raids while increasing the show of military presence in the region (Steele 1994:74; Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:161; Thwaites 1899, Vol. L:81). The location of these forts was crucial to the future of the colony.

The entrance into the colony was geographically limited to only three gates: the lower St. Lawrence River, the upper St. Lawrence-Lake Ontario route, and the Richelieu River-Lake Champlain waterway (Steele 1994:134). The north-south route along the Richelieu River-Lake Champlain corridor is surrounded by the Green Mountains to the east and the Adirondack Mountains to the west and was frequently used by the Abenaki, Iroquois, Huron, French, Dutch, and English for trade and raids between Boston, New York, and Quebec (Calloway 1991:162; Palmer 1983:3; Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:265). Because this route was heavily used by competing colonies and Native Americans for trade as well as raids, the Richelieu River and Lake Champlain corridor was chosen as the logical area for defense "...which were deemed absolutely necessary, both for maintaining open communication and the freedom of traffic, and also for serving as magazines for the troops, and places of refuge for sick and wounded soldiers" (Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:253, 265).

Soldiers constructed three forts along the Richelieu River during their first summer in the colony: Fort Richelieu at the mouth of the river, Fort St. Louis, "seventeen leagues" further upriver at the foot of Richelieu Rapids, and Fort St. Thérèse located three leagues above the same rapids (Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:171, 265-267) (Figure 2). A fourth fort, which became Fort St. Anne, was planned as the furthest southern outpost that would serve to "...command those regions and whence reported sorties can be made against the enemy [Iroquois], if the latter refuses to come to terms" (Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:255). This fort would

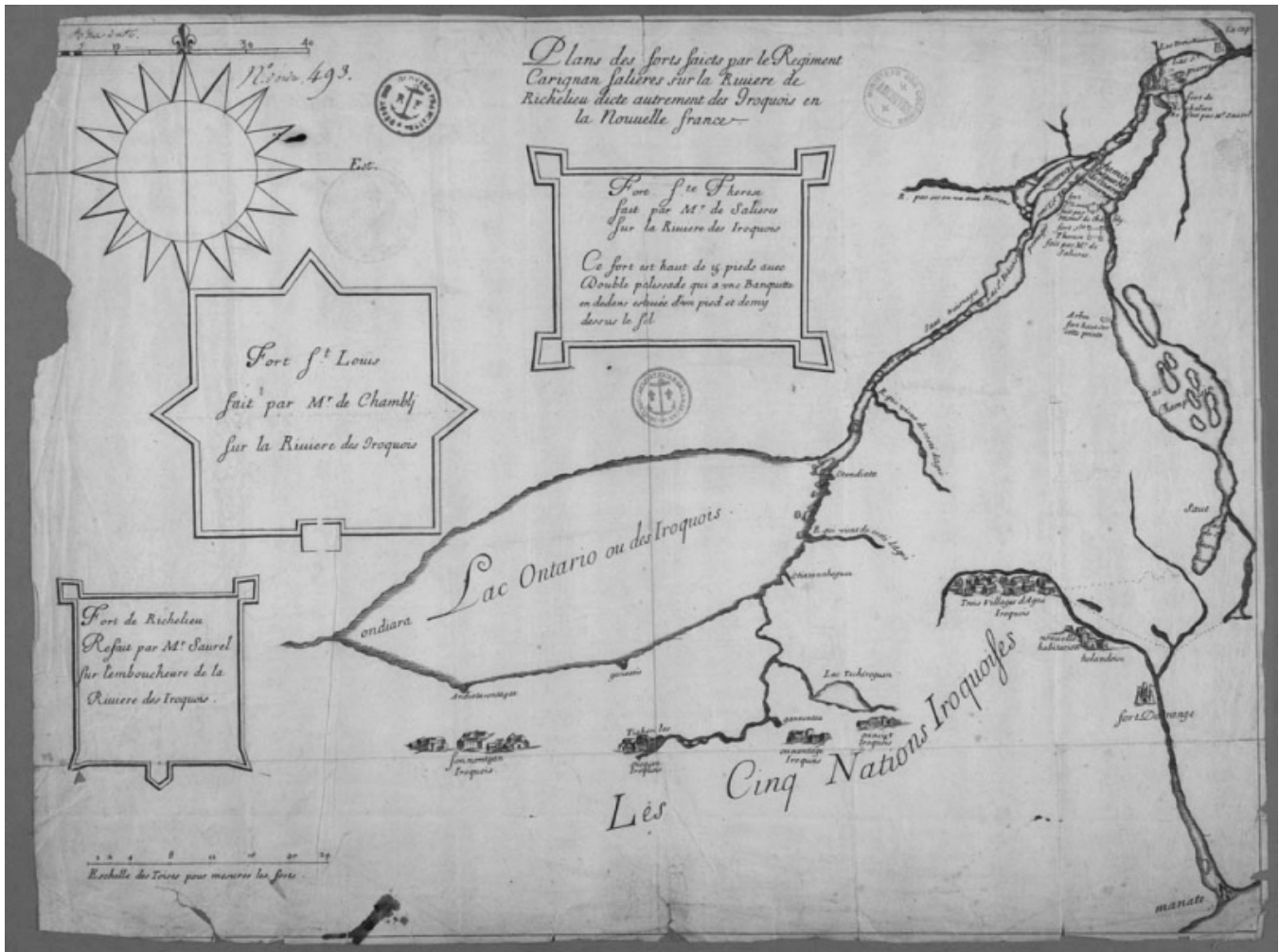


Figure 2. Plan of the forts made by the Carignan-Salières Regiment on the Richelieu River, formerly called the Iroquois River, in New France (FR CAOM 3DFC493C, Centre des Archives d’Outre-Mer (CAOM) à Aix-en-Provence).

serve as the first line of defense protecting the interior French forts and their settlements along the Richelieu River to the north.

The initial planning of the fourth fort began that fall when “Monsieur de Salières had caused a boat to be built at the fort of ste. Therese, and had sent 18 or 20 men to explore the entrance of lake champellein [sic]” (Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:173). This expedition consisting of Jean-Baptiste le Gardeur de Repentigny, soldiers, and ten “Indian” canoes, followed the Richelieu River south, to the northern tip of Lake Champlain where they chose the “sandy point on the north shore of the ‘first island’” as the location of the final fort (Verney 1991:33). Today, this area is known as Sandy Point, Isle La Motte (see

Figure 1).

Sandy Point was a strategic position for defense along the seventeenth-century Richelieu River-Lake Champlain trade corridor (Stratton 1984:3). The point, located near the northern end of Lake Champlain, was close to Iroquois territory, had a commanding north and south view, and was backed by an elevated terrace to the east (Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:255). The following spring, Captain Pierre de St. Paul, Sieur de la Motte (la Mothe) and 300 men, including his company of Carignan-Salières Regimentals, began constructing Fort St. Anne. They completed the fort on July 20, 1666 (Stratton 1984:4; Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:141, 255, 320).

Life at the Frontier Fort

The first months of operation were eventful for the soldiers stationed at Fort St. Anne. In the late summer of 1666 a group of Mohawk attacked a small party of French soldiers hunting and fishing near the fort killing two to seven and taking another four as prisoners (Thwaites 1899, Vol. L :139, 193; Verney 1991:61). By early October, an expedition consisting of 600 Carignan-Salières regiment soldiers, about 600 Canadian volunteers, and roughly 100 Algonquin and Huron warriors intent on ending Iroquois hostilities, gathered at Fort St. Anne (Thwaites 1899, Vol. L:141, 203; Verney 1991: 72). The Mohawk, however, soon learned of the attack and abandoned their villages before troops arrived. Undeterred, the soldiers and their allies burned the mostly empty Mohawk villages, destroying supplies, and taking anyone left behind as prisoner (Thwaites 1899, Vol. L: 143-145). The soldiers returned in November having failed in their mission (Thwaites 1899, Vol. L:147).

The unexpected failure of the assault left the soldiers reluctant to venture far from their bases, a result that brought devastating effects to Fort St. Anne. Believing the expedition would result in an end to Iroquois attacks, M. de Tracy had planned to abandon the fort in the fall of 1666. However, the unsuccessful attack required him to keep the fort open in case of Iroquois retribution (Flenely 1928:317). By the time the decision was made to keep Fort St. Anne in operation, it was too late to adequately supply the soldiers with provisions for the winter. Soldiers at Fort St. Anne, unlike those at Forts Richelieu and Saint-Louis, had not had time to develop farming to provide their own food. Therefore, the soldiers relied on food sent from St. Lawrence settlements to the north (Flenely 1928:317). In addition, travel to Fort St. Anne was difficult and could only be provisioned with ease during the months of May and June (Verney 1991:86-87). Consequently, the 60 men of the La Motte Company of the Carignan-Salières Regiment and the La Durantaye Company of the Chambellé Regiment garrisoned at Fort St. Anne had only bread and bacon to eat, "whilst even their bread was bad as their flour had been damaged on the voyage" (Flenely 1928: 317). To make matters worse, soldiers on the voyage over to New France had secretly taken brandy from the one cask sent to Fort St. Anne and, in an effort to hide the theft, refilled it with seawater (Flenely 1928:317).

The lack of nutrients in their diet soon led to a scurvy outbreak among the soldiers at Fort St. Anne (Flenely 1928:313-315; Verney 1991:87). With most of

winter ahead, Captain La Motte appealed to Montreal to send additional supplies and priests to minister the sick and dying at the fort (Flenely 1928:313; Verney 1991:87). In response, a Jesuit missionary named Francis Dollier de Casson and a military escort traveled to Fort St. Anne where they found two soldiers dead and 40 of the 60 remaining soldiers ill with scurvy and confined to their rooms (Flenely:313-319). De Casson, with the help of a surgeon named Forestier, who was also sent from Montreal, was able to improve the soldiers' conditions enough for the sick to be sent to Montreal for further treatment (Flenely 1928:317-321). Despite their efforts, another 11 soldiers succumbed to scurvy (Flenely 1928: 317, 321). Over the next three months, the groups of ill going to Montreal and groups of cured soldiers returning created a regular convoy of soldiers between Fort St. Anne and Montreal (Flenely 1928:317-319).

Peace and Abandonment

In July 1667 final peace was negotiated between the French and Iroquois allowing French traders and missionaries access to previously hostile Iroquois villages (Verney 1991:91). With peace, protection of all Richelieu River-Lake Champlain corridor forts was no longer necessary. In order to keep an adequate defense with the least amount of military presence and expense, de Tracy proposed that the Richelieu Valley forts be consolidated. M. de Tracy decided on keeping Forts Richelieu and Saint-Louis, which were already well on their way to self sufficiency and could easily be expanded by further encouraging settlement within their vicinity (Verney 1991:91). The growth of these forts would allow the remaining two southerly forts, Fort St. Anne and Fort St. Thérèse, to eventually be abandoned (Verney 1991:91).

For the next year Fort St. Anne continued to provide refuge for traveling Jesuit missionaries. It is unclear when the fort was abandoned, though the last known reference of the fort mentions a visit from Bishop of Petraea in 1668 (Thwaites 1899, Vol. LI:275). The lack of references to Fort St. Anne after 1668 suggests that the fort was abandoned shortly after this episode. Some historians, however, suggest the fort may not have been deserted until 1670, the year Captain de La Motte became governor of Montreal (Kerlidou 1895:9; Stratton 1984:5). By 1690, the fort was in ruins as historic documents from that year describe it as 'an abandoned French work' on Lake Champlain (Crockett 1909:29; Guttin 1916:21-23).



Figure 3. Father Joseph Kerlidou (Saint Michael's College Archives), Saint Michael's College, Colchester, Vermont.

Archaeology at Fort St. Anne

The ruins of Fort St. Anne were forgotten for the next 200 years as the adjoining land was farmed. It was not until Bishop DeGoesbriand of the Catholic Diocese of Burlington began researching the history of the fort in the mid-nineteenth century that the modern story of St. Anne's Shrine began (Kerlidou n.d.:1, 7).

DeGoesbriand was interested in the early Jesuit priests at Fort St. Anne, which he propagated as being the first Catholics in the state. He began to compile an extensive history of the fort and later published a small pamphlet for the Diocese (DeGoesbriand 1890). DeGoesbriand's interest in the early Catholic history of the fort culminated in the purchase of Sandy Point, specifically the ruins of Fort St. Anne, by the Burlington Catholic Diocese, between the years of 1892-1895. The Diocese, under the direction of DeGoesbriand, turned the fort ruins and surrounding land into St. Anne's Shrine, a sacred place for Catholic pilgrims honoring the site's early Catholic presence (DeGoesbriand 1890; Kerlidou

n.d.:9).

The Diocese emphasized the history of Fort St. Anne during the early years of the Shrine. During the summers of 1895 and 1896, shortly after the shrine opened to the public, Father Joseph Kerlidou, the first director of St. Anne's Shrine, excavated the then-visible ruins of Fort St. Anne (Figure 3).

On August 7, 1895 Kerlidou began excavating in an area where he noted "several flat stones embedded in the soil" (Kerlidou n.d.:25). Near these stones Kerlidou uncovered a 12- by 9-foot cellar, five feet deep, and "carefully built without mortar" (*Burlington Free Press* September 16, 1895; Kerlidou n.d.:26). Artifacts recovered from this area included six knives and forks, two small solid silver spoons, a great quantity of broken dishes of different shapes and colors, a buckle, buttons, pins and a frying pan (Kerlidou n.d.:26). A newspaper article written in September of that year lists additional artifacts uncovered in this area including "knives and forks with wooden handles, several pieces of blue and white pottery, fragments of brown glazed and other pottery, metal buttons, an iron bolt to a door, an iron spear point, part of a musket, a glass bottle, an iron cooking dish and other articles" (*Burlington Free Press* September 16, 1895).

The following year Kerlidou excavated 13 small mounds on Sandy Point, recording general locations and artifact associations for each mound (Kerlidou n.d.:27-30). Though detailed analysis of the fort is not possible from Kerlidou's notes alone, general information about the site can be gleaned from his descriptions and the few remaining artifacts in the collection of St. Anne's Shrine.

Native American Occupations

"Native pottery" and "arrowheads" excavated by Kerlidou provide evidence of Native American occupation on Sandy Point (Kerlidou n.d.:27-30). Though only a few of these artifacts remain today, they provide preliminary insights into the first settlers on the point. Three pottery sherds, minimally dating to the Early Middle Woodland Period, ca. 100 B.C. – A.D. 300, three black chert biface fragments, and a chert scraper are among the remaining artifacts currently on display at St. Anne's Shrine (Crock 2006, personal communication) (Figures 4 and 5). In 1917, Warren K. Moorhead and E.O. Sugden uncovered additional Native American artifacts such as bifaces, scrapers, a bone fish hook and numerous pottery sherds near the grounds of the Shrine.



Figure 4. Pottery rim sherd, ca. A.D. 800-1000 (Collection of St. Anne's Shrine, Isle La Motte).

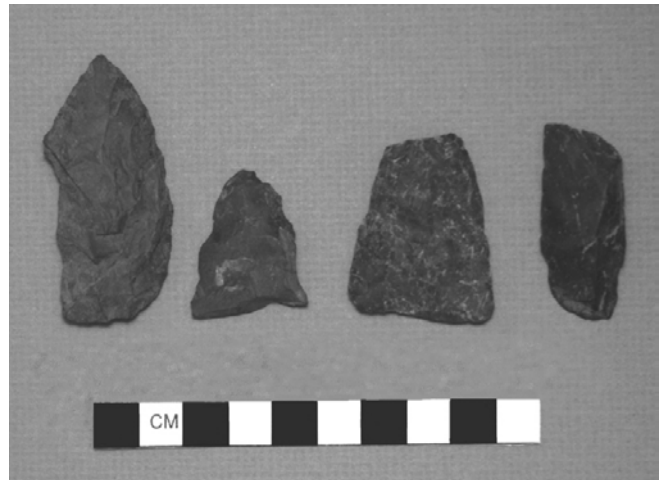


Figure 5. Black chert bifaces and a chert scraper, unknown date (Collection of St. Anne's Shrine, Isle La Motte)

In reference to these excavations, Moorehead wrote:

[Bishop Rice] permitted us to dig up to within ten meters of the shrine itself. In the sand, at a depth ranging from ten centimeters to one meter, much broken pottery was discovered from which we may be able partially to restore some vessels. While the pottery in the upper layers appeared to be later but not Iroquoian in character, the lower layers contained fragments of vessels of the pointed base type, the archaic Algonkian form. The amount of debris left by the Indians at this place would suggest that, with the possible exception of Colchester Point, the Isle La Motte shrine marks the largest Indian site upon Lake Champlain (Moorehead 1922:244-245).

Initial analysis of these ceramic sherds provides a date of the Early Middle Woodland Period, ca. 100 B.C. – A.D. 300 (Crock 2006, personal communication) (Figure 6).

In addition, Moorehead's excavations uncovered evidence of a Late Archaic Period (4000-1000 B.C.) occupation on nearby Reynolds Point, indicating a possible earlier presence at the site (Figure 7).

Native Americans were also present on Sandy Point during the historic fort occupation for a variety of reasons including trade, to act as guides for French soldiers, and as allies in attacks on the Iroquois. A "metal point"

was among the Native American artifacts uncovered during Kerlidou's excavations (*Burlington Free Press* September 16, 1895). Iron points are common to Native American contact period sites (Jury and Jury 1954:52). Other artifacts listed and now lost, such as a calumet pipe and carved bone and stone fragments, may also date to the seventeenth-century Native American presence at the site (Kerlidou n.d.:28-29).

Fort Architecture

No known illustration of Fort St. Anne exists, though illustrations of the contemporaneous forts along the Richelieu River were drawn in 1665, months before Fort St. Anne was built (Thwaites 1899, Vol. XLIX:267) (see Figure 2). The illustration of Fort Richelieu, Fort St. Louis, and Fort St. Thérèse depicts each fort in a slightly different configuration that may be a result of the "...type of materials available on the site, the shortage of skilled workers, and the need for all possible haste" (Verney 1991:29). Unfortunately, this introduces further uncertainty when trying to determine the shape and layout of Fort St. Anne.

Kerlidou speculates that Fort St. Anne was ninety-six feet wide, the same length as Fort Richelieu, though he notes that "...its precise length cannot be ascertained, since the water of the lake has eaten up one of its [western] extremities" (Kerlidou 1895:67). Additional

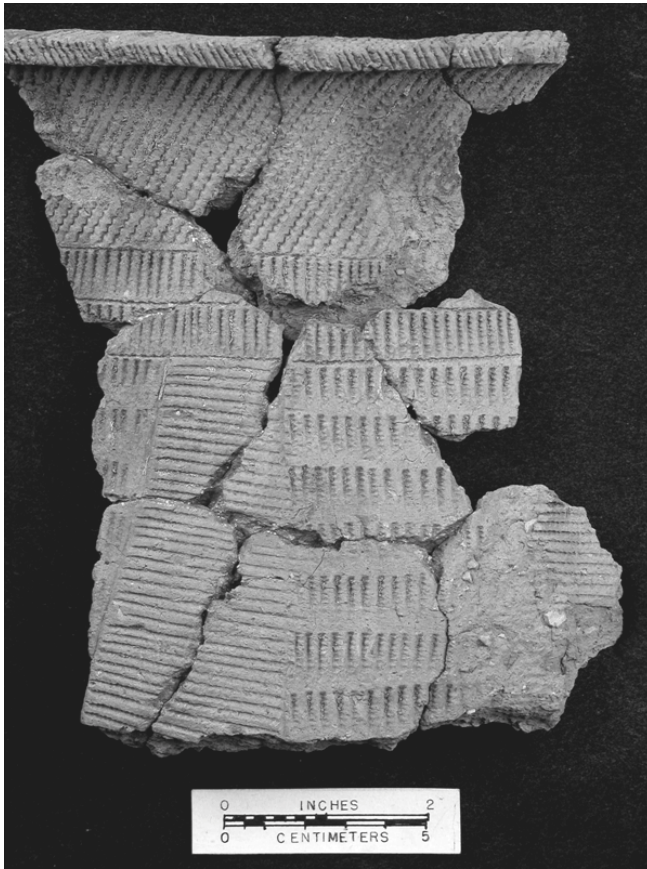


Figure 6. Early Middle Woodland Period, ca. 100 B.C. - A.D. 300 pseudo-scalloped partially reconstructed vessel (CP3). (Collection of the Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology) © Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. All Rights Reserved.

insights into the layout of the fort can be inferred from his excavations.

Kerlidou's excavations revealed stone foundations and ash under almost every mound he dug (Kerlidou n.d.:28-29). Due to the lack of massive amounts of stone, the archaeological remains of charred boards, and the abundance of wood in the region, Fort St. Anne was likely built of wood with a stone foundation. The use of wood would have allowed for quicker construction as opposed to stone which would have had to have been quarried first; an important factor in this hostile frontier. Though stone is commonly thought of as the traditional French building material, wooden construction was also well known in French architecture of this period. French colonists constructed wooden structures using *pieux en terre* or *poteaux en terre* (post-in-ground) and *poteaux*

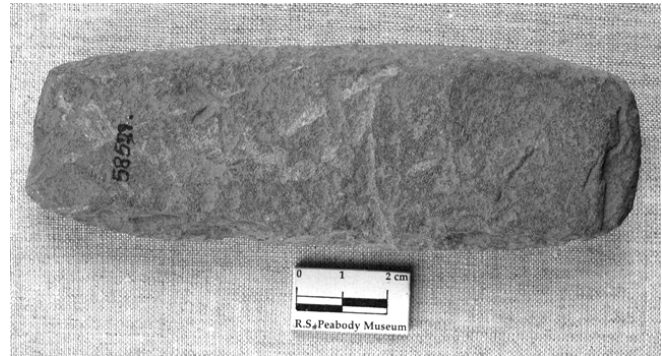


Figure 7. Pecked and ground stone Adze, Late Archaic period (4000-1000 B.C.) (Collection of the Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology) © Robert S. Peabody Museum of Archaeology, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts. All Rights Reserved.

sur sole (post-on-sill) techniques, the later of which was likely employed at Fort St. Anne (Thomas 1989:xvii-xviii). Shortly after his excavations, Kerlidou salvaged the original stone foundations of the fort to form bases for stations of the cross in the Way of the Calvary, a prayer station built over the ruins of the fort on Sandy Point (Kerlidou n.d.:26) (Figure 8).

The outside walls of French colonial wooden buildings were often coated with *Bouzillage* or baked clay daub, a type of mortar, varying from a thin coating to two centimeters thick and interior walls were always plastered (Gaumond 1976:41; Nassaney et al. 2002-2004:317). Evidence of plaster, however, is not perceptible in Kerlidou's notes. The only known description of the interior of the fort comes from de Casson, who spent the winter of 1666-67 at fort St. Anne, in which he described his room as "...such a tiny hole, so narrow and so dark, that the sunlight never reached it, and so low that he was quite unable to stand up in it" (Flenely 1928:321).

In addition to the remains of the fort foundation, Kerlidou also described uncovering eight fireplaces (Kerlidou n.d.:27-29). Fireplaces were not only necessary for warmth and cooking, but at Fort St. Anne, were also used as protection. De Casson wrote of an incident when "...large fires were lighted in all the huts in order to make them think there were people everywhere..." and "...all the doors of the huts were shut so that they might believe they were all full" in an effort to mask the reduced numbers of soldiers in the fort during the scurvy illness (Flenely 1928:323). Kerlidou described the fireplaces in terms such as "west half" or



Figure 8. Father Kerlidou standing next to a cross supported by foundation stones salvaged from Fort St. Anne, c. 1900 (Photo courtesy of Celine Paquette).

“east half,” implying a style of fireplace referred to as H-shaped (Kerlidou n.d.:27-28). The H-shaped fireplace, so named due to its resemblance to the letter “H,” was a common colonial architectural feature found at many French sites in North America (Gaumond 1976:26, 36). This type of fireplace was a type of double fireplace whereby each side of the “H” would become a fireplace for a separate room.

In addition to foundation and fireplace remains, Kerlidou also uncovered sections of the fort’s palisade; remains of charred cedar posts found 1½ feet in the ground on the west side as well as at the southwest corner of Sandy Point (Kerlidou n.d.:5, 30). Palisades constructed at Fort St. Louis and Fort St. Thérèse measured 13-16 feet high and were built by setting large logs upright into a trench that was subsequently filled in (Verney 1991:30). It is likely that this same method was employed to construct the palisade at Fort St. Anne. Kerlidou also located bastions along the south side of Sandy Point, two feet below the surface, and additional traces of bastions along the northwest side of the fort (Kerlidou n.d.:29-30).

The French at Sandy Point

Though many of the artifacts uncovered by Kerlidou are now lost and/or stolen, a few of the remaining artifacts



Figure 9. Seventeenth-century Brass Sword Guard (Collection of St. Anne’s Shrine, Isle La Motte).

in the collection of St. Anne’s Shrine, as well as descriptions of others no longer in the collection, provide valuable insight into the lives of the soldiers at Fort St. Anne.

Oral tradition has long connected Fort St. Anne to Sandy Point, however, it is important to note corroborative evidence that indicate this was indeed a seventeenth century French Military site. Kerlidou references seven mounds which contained artifacts, such as cannon pieces, cannon balls, lead shot, gun fragments, and gunflints, suggesting the site had a large military component (Kerlidou n.d.:28-29). In addition, Kerlidou uncovered sword fragments, including a brass sword guard currently in the collection of St. Anne’s Shrine (Kerlidou n.d.:29) (Figure 9). Though densely-wooded terrain made swords fighting impractical in mid-seventeenth century Canada, swords continued to be worn as a symbol of status by French militia men and are commonly found at French colonial sites (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987:88; Miville-Deschênes 1987:78).

In addition to the military artifacts, a single, green-glazed earthenware fragment indicative of French colonial occupation sites remains among the collection of St. Anne’s Shrine (Figure 10). This ceramic sherd is representative of the coarse undecorated or glazed utilitarian wares, known as Saintonge-type ceramics. Saintonge-type ceramics were produced in the Saintogne region in France during the 17th century and were popular within the French colonies of Quebec, Louisiana, and the Caribbean Islands (Musgrave 1998:6-7).

Work and Leisure at Fort St. Anne

An important task of colonial French forts was their ability to produce and fix their own tools and weapons. Ship lists of the Carignan-Salières Regiments' supplies record only a small supply of tools that were supplemented by on-site tool manufacture once they arrived in Canada (Verney 1991:30-31). In order to produce metal tools necessary for fort construction and crop cultivation, forts often had blacksmiths who were skilled at forging and gunspall manufacture (Faulkner and Faulkner 1987:135). Partially melted lead bars used in gunspall manufacturing, chisels and soldering irons in addition to fragments of "iron pieces" and "copper pieces" recovered from Fort St. Anne indicate on-site tool and ammunition manufacturing (Kerlidou n.d.:28-29).

A wide range of personal objects were uncovered during Kerlidou's excavations at Fort St. Anne (Kerlidou n.d.:27-29). The remains of tobacco pipes, sewing implements, buttons, and figurines hint at the individual lives that occupied the fort more than 300 years ago (Kerlidou n.d.:27-29).

One of the most revealing artifacts relating to leisure time at the fort was a single bone die which, unfortunately, is now lost (Kerlidou n.d.:28). Gambling was a popular past time among French soldiers and bone dice with drilled numbers have been found archaeologically at Fort St. Louis and other French fort sites in North America (Miville-Deschênes 1987:82). In addition to the die, scissors, buttons and thimbles were also found among the fort ruins (Kerlidou n.d.:28-29). Scissors and thimbles are common to other seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century military sites and likely represent the tools soldiers were given to make their own repairs to worn or damaged clothing (Miville-Deschênes 1987:41; Hume 1991:254-255, 267-269).

Trade at Fort St. Anne

Several artifacts relating to trade with Native Americans were recovered from Fort St. Anne (Kerlidou n.d.:28-29). Though now lost, a "little copper ring with a heart" found at the fort was most likely a Jesuit ring (Kerlidou n.d.:28). Jesuit rings were frequently given out by missionaries trying to convert Native Americans to Catholicism during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Walthall 1993:498-507). These rings, usually made of brass, had a variety of embossed or imprinted images on them, including that of a heart (Walthall 1993:498-507). Chronologies and typologies have been



Figure 10. Saintonge-type strap handle fragment with interior green glaze (Collection of St. Anne's Shrine, Isle La Motte).

attempted in order to date these rings, but without the actual ring for analysis, the exact date and type of Jesuit ring found at the fort cannot be determined (Walthall 1993:498-507). In addition to the ring, red "rosary" beads were also found on Sandy Point. Glass beads were a well known trade items and rosary beads have also been found at seventeenth-century Jesuit sites (Jury and Jury 1954:93, 95; Turgeon 2004). Unfortunately, like the ring above, these beads are also now lost, making identification impossible.

One other object among the shrine's collection, a French axe dating to c. 1608-1760, may also represent trade activities at Fort St. Anne (Bouchard 1976:41) (Figure 11). Axes were used as tools by the French, but were also commonly used in trade with Native Americans throughout the seventeenth century. Without archaeological context, however, the exact use of this axe may never be known (Bouchard 1976:40).

Conclusion

The rich past at Sandy Point, Isle La Motte, has the ability to provide important information about the little understood contact period in Vermont. Kerlidou recovered many artifacts from Sandy Point and thus renewed interest in the history of Fort St. Anne, though his excavations during his transformation of the site into a shrine disturbed its original layout. Through com-



Figure 11. Axe, c. 1608-1760 (Collection of St. Anne's Shrine, Isle La Motte).

parison with other French colonial sites, Kerlidou's notes provide limited information on the architecture of the fort and the lives of those living inside. Regrettably, the missing artifacts from Kerlidou's excavations have resulted in irreplaceable losses to our understanding of this important site that was a part of one of the most important transitional periods in the settlement of Colonial Canada.

Despite previous excavations around main architectural structures of Fort St. Anne and later re-use of the fort's foundation stones, potential archaeological information at the site remains. The possibility of discovering undisturbed portions of the fort would allow further insights into this frontier region at the borderlands of Iroquois, Huron, Abenakis, French, English, and Dutch peoples.

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