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“A Mere Matter of Marching”: US Soldiers on the Niagara Frontier during the War of 1812

Susan E. Maguire

The Niagara Frontier was as a primary location for the battles of the War of 1812. Old Fort Niagara, located at the mouth of the Niagara River and Lake Ontario, served as a headquarters for both the Americans and the British military during the war. Archaeological excavations of a soldiers' barracks at the fort revealed important material evidence for these occupations. This article reviews the ceramics, gun flints, military buttons, and a cap plate recovered from excavations in the summers of 2011 and 2013. This research seeks to distinguish between the American and British occupations of the fort and to better understand the meaning of this material culture to the soldiers living at the fort. The excavations recovered more evidence of the American, rather than the British, occupation of the fort. These excavations reveal the United States' poor preparation for war along with the lack of adequate and consistent sources of supply.

La frontière du Niagara était l'un des principaux endroits où se sont déroulées les batailles de la guerre de 1812. Le Old Niagara Fort, situé à l'embouchure de la rivière Niagara et du Lac Ontario, a servi de quartier général pour les Américains et l'armée britannique pendant la guerre. Les fouilles archéologiques d'une caserne de soldats au fort révélèrent des preuves matérielles importantes pour ces occupations. Cet article passe en revue les céramiques, les pierres à fusils, les boutons militaires et une plaque de casque récupérés lors des fouilles entreprises en 2011 et 2013. Cette recherche tente de distinguer les occupations américaines et britanniques au fort et de mieux comprendre la signification de cette culture matérielle pour les soldats qui y vivaient. Les fouilles ont permis de récupérer plus de preuves de l'occupation américaine du fort. Fait intéressant, la poterie fabriquée en Angleterre domine l'assemblage céramique, indiquant que ces articles n'étaient pas rejetés comme symboliques de leurs ennemis britanniques par les soldats américains vivant au fort.

Introduction

Prior to the start of the war, United States President Thomas Jefferson believed that the taking of Upper Canada would be “a mere matter of marching”. Small British garrisons in the province coupled with uncertain loyalties of recently arrived American settlers led many to believe that Upper Canada could be taken by the nascent American military. The Niagara Frontier became a primary front for the war, with Old Fort Niagara serving as the American military headquarters for the regular army (FIG. 1). The fort was poorly maintained and not situated to defend against attacks from British-held Fort George just across the Niagara River. A mix of regular army, militia members, and volunteers occupied the fort until the British takeover on December 19, 1813. The British would hold the fort for the remainder of the war.

Archaeological excavations of early 19th century structures at the fort have recovered features and artifacts dating to the War of 1812. This material culture consists of artifacts of military life along with items of everyday life. This paper will review some of the

material culture recovered from excavations at Old Fort Niagara (FIG. 2), including ceramics, gun flints, military buttons, and a shako cap plate, in an effort to disentangle American and British occupations as well as to better understand everyday life for soldiers at the fort during the War of 1812. Despite Jefferson's confidence that the war was a “mere matter of marching,” in fact, it was a hard fought conflict and the Americans were woefully unprepared. These excavations reveal the United States' poor preparation for war along with the lack of adequate and consistent sources of supply.

Plans of the Fort

Historic plans of Old Fort Niagara provide a wealth of information about the evolution of the landscape and the changes made with each succeeding occupation. This project focused specifically on the construction and renovation of the Red Barracks. The Red Barracks, as the structure was known during the early 19th century, served primarily as a soldiers' barracks. During the capture of the fort by the British on December 19, 1813, the Red Barracks

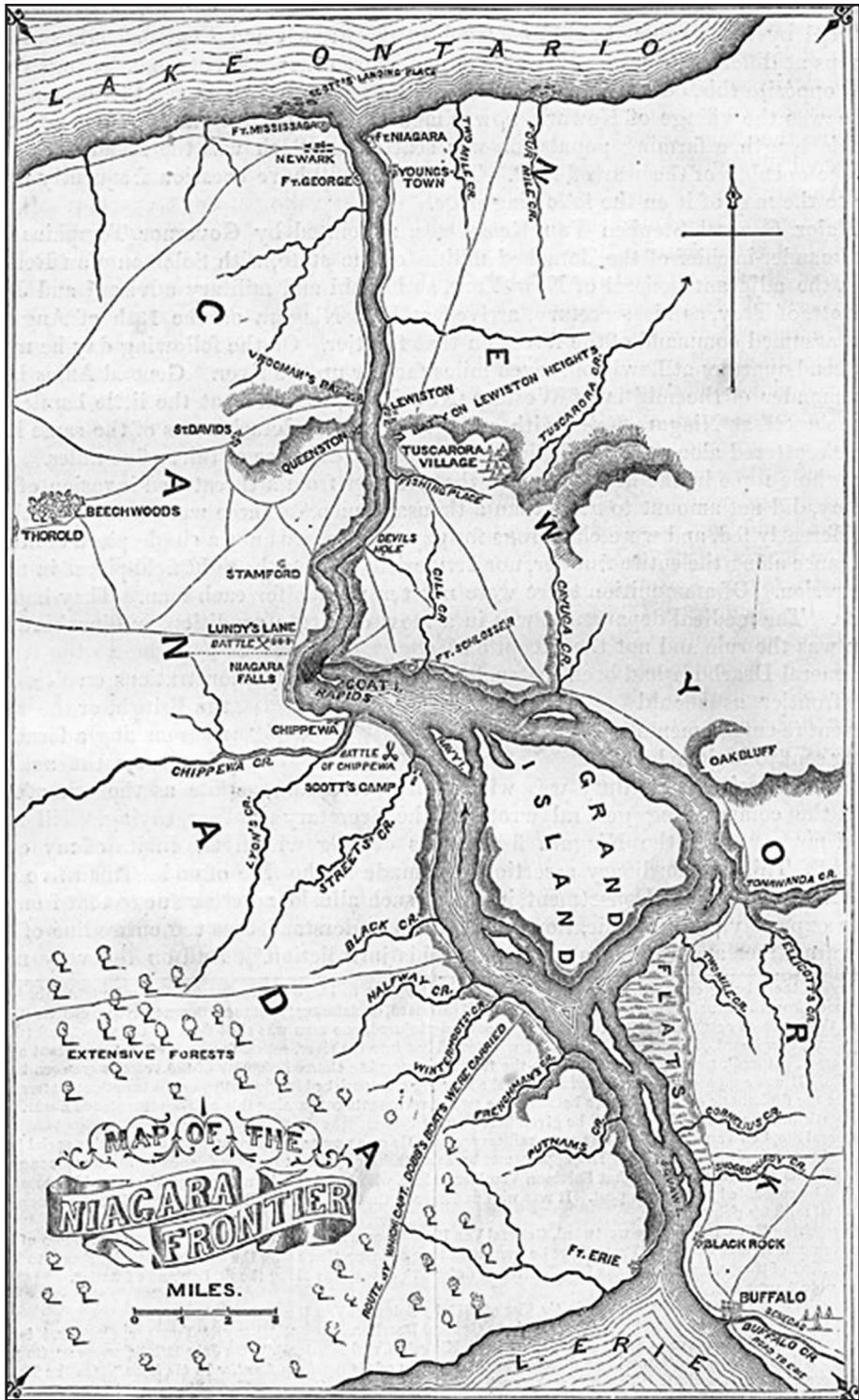


Fig. 1 Map of Niagara Frontier. (Lossing 1896).



Figure 2. Old Fort Niagara pictured with 2013 excavations in foreground. (Photo by author, 2013).

was serving as an infirmary for wounded soldiers and it was during this important battle that the Red Barracks became marked in the historic memory of Old Fort Niagara. Historic accounts indicate that the men in this barracks, along with the guard detail in the South Redoubt, offered the greatest resistance to the British attack (Porter 1896).

The name “Red Barracks” comes from an 1816 American plan of the fort which designates the structure as “Red Barracks used by the artillery” and differentiates it from the “Yellow” Officers’ Barracks (Smith 1816). This barracks stands just south of the bakehouse and was the site of an early French employees’ quarters listed as ‘old’ on a mid-18th-century French plan (Dunnigan and Scott 1991; Pouchot 1756). The French structure appears to have been torn down early in the British occupation as it does not appear on a 1768 British plan of the fort (Dunnigan and Scott 1991; Sowers 1768). The British built a new barracks at this location, most likely during the waning years of the American Revolution, as they ceased most new construction at the end of the Revolutionary War (Dunnigan and Scott 1991). The Rivardi plan (1798) shows the parade ground to be crowded with structures, most of them in ill repair. Many of these structures were removed over the course of

the next 12 years. Between 1807 and 1810, the barracks were renovated and what may be a new or renovated barracks is depicted on an 1810 plan of the fort and continues in a similar dimension on the 1814 plan (Grey 1810; Williams 1814). The 1816 plan shows an elongated barracks structure (Smith 1816), most likely renovations conducted by the British during their brief occupation of the Fort between 1813 and 1815. The barracks fell into disuse and disrepair after the War of 1812 and was removed between 1840 and 1864, based on its appearance on the 1840 plan but not the 1864 plan of the fort (Dunnigan and Scott 1991; Scott, et al. 1991). Thus the Red Barracks is thought to have been constructed by the American military in the late 18th century over the remains of at least one earlier barracks. This structure was expanded by the British military between 1814 and 1815.

Archaeological Excavations

Excavations conducted by the SUNY Buffalo State Archaeological Field School in 2011 and 2013 focused on the early 19th-century ‘Red Barracks’ within the parade ground at the fort (FIG. 3). In 2011, four units were excavated on the southern side of the structure (Maguire 2012, 2014b). These units

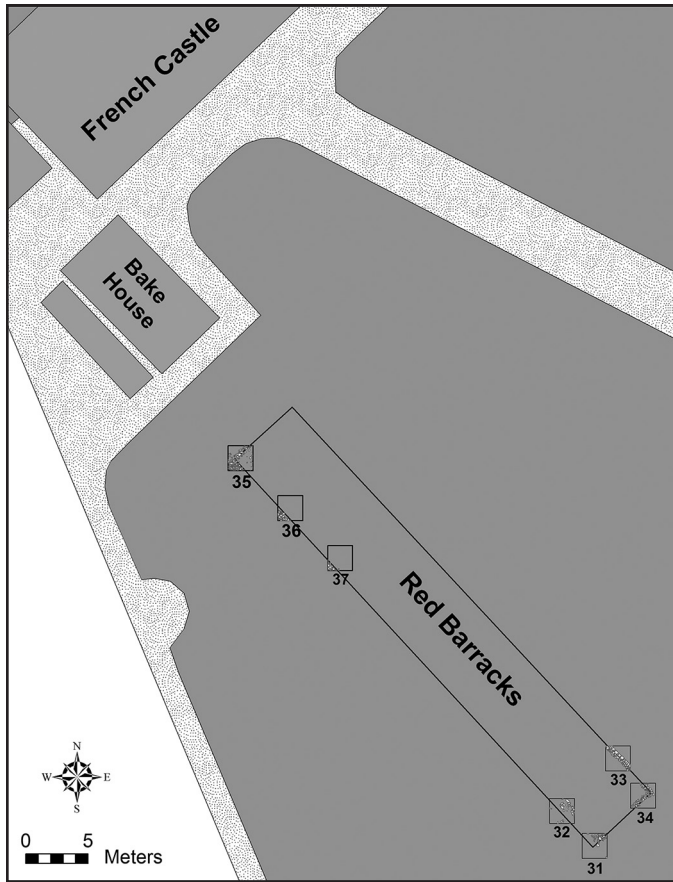


Figure 3. Red Barracks with 2011 and 2013 archaeological units. (Map by author, 2016).

were placed to explore the British expansion of the structure. In 2013, the field school returned to the Red Barracks to explore the northern end of the structure (Maguire 2014a). Three 2 x 2m units were placed to coincide with the northern portion of the structure in hopes of locating traces of the foundation of the barracks constructed by the Americans. The units were placed to coincide with the anticipated location of the original American foundation walls of the Red Barracks. Unit 35 targeted the western corner of the barracks; Units 36 and 37 the southwest wall of the barracks. All three of these units successfully revealed portions of the foundations of the Red Barracks. The foundation walls were encountered at an average depth of 15 cm below the surface and were comprised of a single course of stone, which was fragmentary

in nature. Similar to the foundation walls revealed in the 2011 excavations, the foundations in the northern part of the structure were placed over clay deposits. But the 2013 excavations also recovered evidence of earlier occupations just below some of the 19th century occupations.

Given the proximity to the bakehouse and the French Castle, and this structure's placement over the site of an earlier barracks, it is not surprising that the stratigraphy of these units was more complex and that excavations encountered remains of earlier British and French occupations. A timber frame construction was most likely placed over this single-course foundation. The excavated foundation fits with the documentary record which describes the structure as poorly constructed and the Williams 1814 plan which refers to the structure as a 'temporary barracks' (Williams 1814). Unit 35 revealed the northwest corner of the structure and Units 36 and 37 encountered portions of the western foundation wall. These excavations support the findings

from the 2011 excavations (Maguire 2014b) that the Red Barracks was quickly constructed on a small stone foundation. Unlike the 2011 excavations of the southern portion of the structure, which recovered primarily features and artifacts from the early 19th century, the 2013 excavations encountered features and artifacts from both earlier and later periods. The barracks appears to have been abandoned sometime after the 1840s.

Artifacts

The artifacts recovered from the 2013 excavations ranged primarily from the mid-18th century to the present. Some lithic artifacts, in the form of projectile points and debitage, were recovered from fill levels but no undisturbed Native American contexts were encountered.

This article reviews the artifacts recovered from the deposits associated with the occupation of the Red Barracks during the War of 1812. These data will be combined with the findings from the 2011 excavations to better understand the construction and use of this structure. The material relates primarily to the American occupation of the fort given that the bulk of the military objects are associated with the American military.

Ceramics

The 2013 excavation yielded only 96 ceramic sherds associated with the early 19th-century contexts and 81.25% (n=78) of these were British-manufactured refined white earthenwares (TAB. 1). The remaining 18 sherds included a mix of porcelain (n=4), stoneware (n=4), redware (n=3), and tin glazed (n=7). Similar to findings from other early 19th-century contexts at Old Fort Niagara, the only sherd that can be positively associated with domestic production was a stoneware sherd with an Albany slip interior glazing.

Of the 78 refined white earthenware sherds (TAB. 1), 67.95% (n=53) are undecorated (cream colored) wares. Of the decorated wares, 5.13% (n=4) are blue- or green-edged tableware, 5.13% (n=4) are painted wares, 12.8% (n=10) are dipped wares, and 8.97% (n=7) are printed wares. The 2013 excavations recovered significantly less ceramic material than the 2011 excavations (n=517) but the proportions of decorative types can inform about the uses and sources of these ceramics. Both assemblages consisted primarily of undecorated sherds. In 2013, decorated wares comprise 32.5% (n=25)

of the assemblage, compared to 15.1% of the 2011 assemblage. Of these decorated wares, 16.0% (n=4) are edged wares (blue and green), 40.0% (n=10) are dipped wares, 16.0% (n=4) are painted wares and 28.0% (n=7) are printed wares (blue). The dipped sherds mend and come from one straight-walled vessel (mug) and, as such, this category is significantly higher than the 2011 figures (3.1%). No enameled wares were recovered from these excavations.

As is typical for ceramic assemblages from the fort, the ceramic sherds from the 2013 excavations consisted of small fragments with a few larger fragments and only a small number of pieces that mend together. The small size of these sherds most likely reflects the disposal of large trash away from the parade grounds. The fragments recovered in 2013 were found either in features relating to structures or on occupation surfaces related to the construction and use of the Red Barracks. The size of these sherds makes identification of vessel forms difficult. Previous studies of vessel forms resulted in most sherds being identified either as 'unidentified hollow' (69.9%) with smaller amounts of 'unidentified flats' (16.7%). Only 13.4% could be assigned to a specific form and the majority of those were shell-edge plates (Maguire 2007: 310). Using the total sherd counts, rather than the minimum vessel counts, weighs more heavily the undecorated wares since body sherds, often undecorated, are included in the count.

The presence of ceramic vessels at Fort Niagara raises questions of military supply lines and the mess practices of both armies during the war. According to regulations, the

Table 1. Refined white earthenwares by decorative type.

	2011		2013	
	# sherds	% to total	# sherds	% to total
Cream colored	438	84.72	53	67.95
Blue edge	20	3.87	3	3.85
Green edge	17	3.29	1	1.28
Dipped	16	3.09	10	12.82
Painted	20	3.87	4	5.13
Printed	6	1.00	7	8.97
Total	517	100.00	78	100.00

British military supplied wooden trenchers and spoons for each enlisted men's barracks (Public Records Office 1795) but the regulations for Canada omit this requirement; soldiers may have been ordered to acquire their own plates, knives, and forks (Henderson 2016). Tin plates were listed in the mess plan of the 6th Regiment in 1806 but other regiments may have used wooden or ceramic plates (Henderson 2016). While wooden and tin plates were less expensive and less fragile, ceramics recovered from excavations at the blockhouse and guard house at Fort George, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, just across the Niagara River from Fort Niagara, support the finding that enlisted men were purchasing ceramic wares to furnish their mess tables in Canada (Wilson and Southwood 1976). British officers valued a formal mess which served to reinforce the distinction between the officers and the enlisted men. The officers dined on matching service sets, and edged wares in green or blue were a favored decorative type used to achieve a standard service (Plousois 2006; Sussman 1978).

Due to difficulties in obtaining supplies and the desire to acquire land, Americans were less focused on matching tablewares and proper table settings than their British counterparts during the early 19th century (Wall 1991). American officers at Fort Niagara were criticized by British officers and travelers for their failure to keep a proper mess (Weld 1799). The 1812 Regulations of the U. S. Department of War establish a mess of six men, or 'one common tent', and the regulations do not mention provisions for individual mess utensils (US Department of War 1812). Similar to the British soldiers' plates and drinking vessels, these utensils may have been made of wood, tin, or earthenware and may have been brought from home or purchased from local sutlers along the Niagara Frontier. Both British and American soldiers appear to use ceramic vessels to supplement rather than replace wooden trenchers and utensils as everyday tablewares. The ceramics excavated at the fort offer insight into the forms and decorative styles of ceramics available to the soldiers living in the Red Barracks who were required to provide their own wares.

Price was a primary consideration in the American ceramics market during this time

period and British manufacturers supplied the U. S. market with less expensive wares and older styles (Miller 1994). Miller (2012) reviewed the inventory of a brig captured by privateers in 1813 that included 250 crates of ceramics. This inventory provides some insight into the ceramics being shipped and made available to the American market to North America during the War of 1812. The collection consisted of 50% cream colored or undecorated wares, 21.8% edged wares (blue and green), 3.5% dipped wares, 15.9% painted wares, and 8.8% enameled wares (Miller 2012). In this shipment, decorative styles correspond with vessel forms: cups, saucers, and tea wares are available only in painted or enameled decorative styles; mugs, bowls, and jugs come in a variety of decorative styles and also as undecorated wares; dipped wares were exclusively mugs or bowls. This shipment was captured en route to Bermuda, a known center for illicit trading during the war (Andreas 2013; Miller 2012) and, as such, these ceramics may represent the general range of ceramics available for purchase in the United States during the war.

Cream colored wares were the least expensive form of ceramics. Edged and dipped decoration represent the cheapest form of pottery with color decoration (Miller 1991). Based on the high proportion of undecorated or inexpensive decorated wares, price appears to be a major factor in the acquisition of these ceramics (Ewins 1997). These decorative types also support the use of plates, dishes, mugs and bowls as opposed to teawares, including cups and saucers, as these types often are painted or printed wares (Miller 2012).

Despite the decline in the early 19th century associated with the Non-Importation Act of 1806, the Embargo of 1807, and the War of 1812 (Hickey 1981), British manufactured ceramics dominate the early 19th-century contexts at the fort. The preponderance of British ceramics reflects the strength of the British ceramic industry at the time, making these objects widely available at low prices (Ewins 1997; Miller 1991). The presence of these ceramics points to both the lack of unified support for the war and the US strategy of using privateering as an official policy during the war (Kert 2015; Miller 1994, 2012). Smuggling also was rampant along the

northern border between the United States and British North America (Andreas 2013; Ewins 1997; Hitsman and Graves 1999; Latimer 2008; Taylor 2010). The volume of trade across the Niagara River is estimated to have doubled during the Embargo of 1807 and the customs collector at Black Rock was unable to stem the tide of goods being smuggled across the border (Latimer 2008; Strum 1979). Ceramics manufactured in New York were available, particularly redwares and stonewares from Albany (Huey 2007; Ketchum 1970, 1987), but Fort Niagara assemblages contain only small amounts of these ceramics (Maguire 2007, 2014b).

The 2013 assemblage included small amounts of both transfer printed wares and porcelain. Early 19th-century assemblages from Fort Niagara typically contain small amounts of these decorative styles (Maguire 2007, 2012, 2014b). Transfer print and porcelain cost considerably more than undecorated wares (Miller 1991). The small amounts of expensive ceramics at the fort might indicate that these wares were smuggled across the border from British North America and not obtained from markets within the United States.

The ceramics excavated from the Red Barracks indicate a preference for undecorated plates, dishes, mugs and bowls (Maguire 2007, 2012, 2014a, 2014b). Given that these wares were the cheapest pottery available, the predominance of this type may reflect a preference for lower cost goods. Alternatively, using undecorated wares also may represent a desire for a standard or uniform mess table but this appears less likely given the historical accounts that indicate a lack of formality at the American mess tables for both officers and soldiers. The decorative styles present in this assemblage indicate a preference for low cost plates, dishes, mugs, and bowls for use in the soldiers' mess. The variety of decorative types in the assemblage also points to individual acquisition of these items from a variety of sources.

Gun flints

Gun flints were an important and necessary item for supplying an army. During the American Revolution, the Continental Congress supported expeditions in search of domestic sources of stone for the manufacture

of gunflints (Continental Congress 1776) but agreements with France allowed for a plentiful supply of gunflints throughout that war. The importance of ensuring a ready supply of gunflints arose again with the implementation of the Non-Importation Act in 1807 and Congress funded a new commission to research and locate domestic sources of the flint.

The non-importation law had, ever since its commencement, lessened the supply usually derived from England. The actual hostility increases the difficulty of deriving flints from that quarter, and indeed from the continent of Europe. It became therefore necessary that a martial and independent people should provide at home the means of perpetuating their institutions and liberties. (*Niles Weekly Register*, August 15, 1812)

On August 2, 1812, the commission reported the existence of excellent flint sources along the Musconetcong River in New Jersey and declared that the United States was independent of other nations for a supply of gunflint, ending their report with: "We hope this intelligence will be the more seasonable, inasmuch as since the 18th of June, when war was declared, imported flints have advanced from two to twenty dollars a thousand" (*Niles Weekly Register*, August 15, 1812).

The need for domestic flints was not an issue, as the American military continued to use European gunflints throughout the war with little evidence for the production or use of domestically produced gunflints. The British still took precautions to limit the export of gunflints to the United States as the *Niles Weekly Register* reports: "The British government have refused even chalk ballast to American vessels, lest some flint-stone should be found among it. Thank fortune, we have enough such stones at home, the present stock of gunflints is abundant" (January 23, 1813).

The 1841 Ordnance Manual refers to flints of the "black and inferior kind," also stating that "the best flints are translucent with a smooth surface of a uniform tint of light yellow or brown color and slightly conchoidal fracture. They are generally obtained from England or France... There are three sizes for military service: musket, rifle, and pistol flints. A good musket flint will last for more than 50 fires. Flints are issued to the troops in the proportion of 1 to 20 rounds" (US Army Ordnance Department 1841). However, the

documentary evidence from the early 19th century, in the form of requests for additional supplies of flints, does not indicate a preference for one source over another.

Given the lack of reliable domestic production of gunflints, the American troops relied on European-manufactured flints throughout the war. Only 2 gunflints were recovered in the 2013 excavations (TAB. 2). Both of these flints were of French origin and manufacture. Excavations of early 19th century contexts at Old Fort Niagara typically yield mixed assemblages of British and French flints. The 2011 excavations recovered 10 pieces of French origin (66%) and 5 pieces of British origin (33%). An early 19th century midden, or trash pit, yielded a high percentage of British flints (57%, n=53). Excavations at Fort Niagara have yielded slightly higher proportions of British flints than other War of 1812 sites. For example, assemblages from Sackets Harbor, at the other end of Lake Ontario, contained approximately 75% French flints (Mann 1999).

Military Buttons

By the War of 1812, most nations had established uniform regulations, including buttons that indicated the nation of origin, the branch of service, and often the regiment in which the soldier served. The 2011 and 2013 excavations recovered a total of 20 buttons (TAB. 3) dating to the early 19th century, including 14 from 2011 and 6 from 2013. The majority of these buttons (n=18) correspond with U. S. troops and only two of these buttons were from British troops. Of the US buttons, 7 were General Service buttons, 7 were from the Artillery, 3 were from the Infantry, and 1 naval button was recovered.

The General Service buttons were introduced in 1808 and intended for use on fatigue uniforms (Albert 1997: 20; Wyckoff 1988: 84). The buttons depict "US" in Roman letters on a plain

background. These buttons are quite common on military sites from the early 19th century (Wyckoff 1988) and the examples recovered in these excavations vary in size and letter shape. Later examples of this button are thought to have a star between the letters (Dunnigan 1975: 7).

Archaeologists found 7 artillery buttons spanning the War of 1812. Three buttons depict an eagle perched on a cannon facing left with three cannonballs stacked to the right below the cannon. This style was produced between 1802 and 1808 and was replaced by a variety of styles during the War of 1812. Two Script "A" buttons, with regimental numbers in an oval below, were recovered in the 2013 excavations, with one button each from the 1st and 2nd Regiments. These buttons were manufactured between 1813 and 1814 (Albert 1997: 52; Wyckoff 1988: 40). In 1814, the artillery button was redesigned once again. The 1814 button is similar to the earlier eagle and cannon button with the eagle facing left, but now the cannon is aimed to the right, the stack of cannonballs has been increased to ten, and the word "CORPS" is written below. The Red Barracks was listed as an artillery barracks during the War of 1812 so it is not surprising to have recovered these seven artillery buttons in the excavations. Both the 1st and 2nd Regiments of Artillery were stationed at Fort Niagara between 1812 and 1813 (Dunnigan and Scott 1991: 58).

Three infantry buttons were recovered in these excavations. These buttons were Script "I" buttons with the regiment number in an oval below the "I". The buttons were from the 12th, 13th, and 14th Regiments of Infantry. Script "I" buttons with the regimental number were manufactured between 1812 and 1813; later in the war the Script "I" buttons were produced with a blank oval, a star, or a mullet in the oval (Albert 1997: 22; Wyckoff 1988: 6).

The 12th Regiment of Infantry was mustered in Virginia and is not listed as having

Table 2. Gunflints by country of origin.

	2011		2013		Total	
	#	% to total	#	% to total	#	% to total
British	5	33.33	0	0.00	5	29.41
French	10	66.66	2	100.00	12	70.59
Total	15	100.00	2	100.00	17	100.00

Table 3. Military buttons.

Country	Branch	Description	Date range	2011 excavation	2013 excavation	Total
United States	General	US General Service	1808–1830	6	1	7
United States	Artillery	Eagle on Cannon	1802–1808	2	1	3
United States	Artillery	Eagle on Cannon, "CORPS" below	1814–1821	2	—	2
United States	Artillery	Script A, 1st Regiment	1813–1814	—	1	1
United States	Artillery	Script A, 2nd Regiment	1813–1814	—	1	1
United States	Infantry	Script I, 12th Regiment	1812–1813	1	—	1
United States	Infantry	Script I, 13th Regiment	1812–1813	1	—	1
United States	Infantry	Script I, 14th Regiment	1812–1813	—	1	1
United States	Navy	Eagle with foul anchor	1809–1820	—	1	1
British	Artillery	Royal Regiment of Artillery	—	1	—	1
British	Infantry	100th Regiment of Foot	—	1	—	1
Total	—	—	—	14	6	20

served at Old Fort Niagara during the War of 1812, but three companies of this regiment were sent to the Niagara Frontier early in the war (Barbuto 2000; Dunnigan and Scott 1991). The 13th Regiment of Infantry was raised in New York and commanded by Major General Stephen Van Rensselaer. This regiment served at Fort Niagara in 1812. The 14th Regiment of Infantry was raised in Maryland and also served at Fort Niagara during 1812 (Dunnigan and Scott 1991). The majority of military buttons recovered from these excavations date to the War of 1812 period and relate to the occupation of the Red Barracks.

A navy button featuring an eagle over an anchor surrounded by 15 stars was an unusual find at Old Fort Niagara (FIG. 4). The 1802 uniform regulations called for "buttons of yellow metal, with the foul anchor and American eagle, surrounded with fifteen stars"

(Albert 1997: 86; Naval History and Heritage Command 2015). This button is similar to Albert type NA 23Av (Albert 1997: 91). The stamp on the reverse, "A. M. P. Boston", refers to Aaron M. Peasley, a well known button manufacturer in Boston between 1809 and 1823 (Tice 1997: 58). Sailors certainly would have passed through the fort at different times during the war but the documents do not discuss these stays and the archaeological record does not provide many additional clues.

Interestingly only two of the twenty buttons relate to the British occupation of the fort. A Royal Regiment of Artillery enlisted men's button dating to the War of 1812 was recovered depicting three cannonballs over three stacked cannons all within a shield (Dunnigan 1975). Also recovered was a button bearing the regimental number for the 100th Regiment of Foot. This regiment was part of



Figure 4. US Naval button. (Photo by author, 2013).

the British force that captured Fort Niagara on the night of December 19, 1813 and was stationed at the fort between 1813 and 1815 (Maguire 2014b).

Other Militaria

A cap plate from the Corps of Artillery was recovered in the 2013 excavations (FIG. 5). This cap plate design was introduced in 1814 after the consolidation of 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Regiments of Artillery into the Corps of Artillery (Emerson 1996; Troiani, et al. 1998). The copper-alloy cap plate depicts a left-facing eagle with wings spread over a cannon pointing to the right, all on a grassy field. Above the eagle's head is a blank oval space. This cap plate was the only cap plate recovered from the 2011 and 2013 excavations. One example of the earlier design for the 2nd Regiment of Artillery and two examples of the British 'belgic' or Waterloo shako plates were recovered in earlier excavations, located just behind the Red Barracks (Maguire 2007).

Discussion

These excavations sought to reveal the foundations of the Red Barracks and to distinguish between the British and American occupations of Fort Niagara during the War of 1812. Historic plans and Ground Penetrating Radar surveys allowed archaeologists to locate and excavate the foundations of this important structure. A great deal of early 19th-century material culture was recovered from the excavations. Most of this material related to the American occupation of the fort and the terminus post quem for this material appears to point to the reoccupation of the fort by the US military at the end of the war.

Since both the American and British militaries occupied the fort during the war, distinguishing between the British and American occupations proved difficult. With the exception of military items, such as the buttons and cap plates, much of the material culture used by both forces was manufactured in Europe and imported to North America for use by citizens and soldiers on both sides of the border. Smuggling ensured that items such as British-manufactured ceramics were widely available in both the United States and British North America.

With the exception of the buttons and cap plates, the artifacts discussed in this article cannot be associated specifically with either military force and, as such, do not specifically mark national identity for these soldiers. But the patterns of material culture outlined here can help us to understand the patterns of everyday life at the fort during the early 19th century. The ceramics found were not issued by the military; instead soldiers transported these goods from home or purchased these



Figure 5. US Artillery cap plate alongside modern reproduction capplate at Old Fort Niagara. (Photo by author, 2013).

wares from local sutlers. Importantly, the majority of ceramic wares found at the fort are of British manufacture. Given that most of the military buttons are of US origin, at least some of these ceramic wares were purchased and used by American soldiers. Since these soldiers had the option to use domestically produced stonewares and redwares or vessels made of wood or metal, we can infer that these British-made ceramics were not understood as symbolic of the enemy forces. These wares served instead to mark social and economic identities in this new society.

The military buttons discussed in this article refer primarily to regular army forces from the United States. The United States was a fledgling nation at the start of the War of 1812. Producing uniform military buttons helped to reproduce and reinforce the nation's status as an autonomous and independent nation. Interestingly, the uniform regulations and style of dress often mirrored those found in the British army across the border. Styling the military uniform on the model of the British further supports the idea that the citizens and soldiers of the United States did not outright

reject these patterns due to their association with the British. Instead, this pattern shows a connection with Britishness in the construction of an American identity. Additionally, despite the idealization of a nation defended by its citizen militia, the regular army became an important component in the war. The power and place of forts, such as Fort Niagara, became identified with the regular army. The presence of regular army buttons in this assemblage reflect this reliance on the regular army for the protection of US strongholds over the use of an unreliable and ever-changing militia.

The US military was reliant on European sources of gunflint during the War of 1812. The gunflints from these excavations were primarily of French origin. In general, the British army was supplied with British-source gunflints. British supply lines were well organized and allowed for a reliable supply of these gunflints. British gunflints predominate in the archaeological assemblages of British military sites from the War of 1812. US military sites more often produce a mixed assemblage of British and French gunflints. In the early 19th century, the US military had a notoriously bad

system of supply. Thus, the army relied on an unpredictable system of supply; the sources of gunflints ranged from goods acquired by smuggling and privateering to goods captured in battle. The goods captured from Fort York on April 27, 1813 are known to have been stored at Fort Niagara and this may have been the source of English gunflints later found at Fort Niagara. The higher percentage of British gunflints in assemblages at Fort Niagara may relate to its position at the border, as well as its use as a major supply post by the Americans during the War of 1812.

The excavation of the Red Barracks at Fort Niagara provides some insight into the material culture of the early 19th century. Remnants of the US military predominate in these assemblages. These artifacts shed light on the motivations of these soldiers stationed along the border of the new nation. This research project used historic maps, Ground Penetrating Radar survey, and archaeological excavation to gain a better understanding of the history of the Red Barracks at Fort Niagara. This artillery barracks served as home to the regular army units stationed at the fort in the early part of the war and the regiments that reoccupied the fort at the end of the war.

The Red Barracks holds a strong place in the historical memory of the fort. It is here that injured soldiers tried valiantly, yet unsuccessfully, to hold the fort in the face of a British attack. The artifacts recovered from these excavations support our understanding of the US military as poorly organized, with an unreliable line of supply. The predominance of American military buttons, the presence of both French and British gunflints, and the use of a variety of ceramic shapes and decorative types, indicate that these remains reflect the American occupations of the fort, perhaps both before and after the war. Early Americans were convinced that the key to the defense of the nation was a well-trained militia. As a result, the military lacked organization and standardization. This national ideology is evident in the remains recovered from the Red Barracks at Fort Niagara.

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