ARCHEOLOGICAL FIELD NOTES

FORT CLATSOP, ASTORIA, OREGON

Paul J. F. Schumacher, Archeologist

January 22, 1957

Revised May 28, 1957

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NEWTON B. DRURY,
Director.
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With additional funds made available by the Washington Office of the National Park Service to the Region Four Office, I was on assignment from the Regional Office to continue the archaeological investigation of the site. I arrived in Astoria on Sunday, April 7, 1957, and started on the following day.

April 8, 1957. I hired a crew of six laborers from the Oregon State Employment Office in Astoria. One of the men had worked for me during the previous December excavations. The tools we used I had picked up at Fort Vancouver, and the Clatsop County Historical Society furnished me the keys to the pump house and had the pump operating when we arrived. The men started at 9:00 a.m. I had two men complete the excavation of trench 7 which we had started in December but which was not completed. The other four men excavated in trench 8, which we had started in December. We now merely extended the trench northwestward and southeastward a total of 117 feet and went deeper to sterile clay. A very modern trash hole was uncovered in this trench—full of tin cans, etc., of a very recent vintage with the paper labels still on the cans. A square wooden post was located on the east face of trench 8. This post had a sawed base and was of hemlock wood. It was 18'6" long and 4" thick. No similar posts were found adjoining it and it was no doubt a former fence post of the mid to late 19th century.

Coming to the sterile clay in trench 7, and finding nothing except a few stones, I shifted the two men onto a new trench—9, which runs northeast-southwest and is three feet wide and 137 feet long. It runs from trench 8, through the cyclone fence gate, through the reconstructed fort gate to the north stockade wall.

Tonight an article on our excavations at the site of Fort Clatsop appeared in the Astorian-Budget.

April 9, 1957. The six laborers continued to excavate in trenches 8 and 9. As the sections in trench 8 were finished and we reached sterile clay, the men shifted over to trench 9. Finally reached sterile clay all along trench 8 and it seemed to be divided into three major artifact sections, the northern and southern ends producing very little, while the central section contained great quantities of mid to late 19th century material. This material was found in association with a layer of red fire-burned clay and black charcoal, and just beneath this same clay layer. The fired clay and late 19th century material must be from the Smith home of the 1870's which stood in approximately this location according to the photograph of 1899. It could also possibly be the site of the previous Shane house if W. H. Smith built his house on the old Shane house site.
Trench 9 can be divided into 3 artifact sections also. The northeast section, inside the reconstructed fort, had very few artifacts and a rather sterile soil. The central section, outside the reconstructed fort, had a few charcoal blackened roots and a few late 19th century artifacts. The southwest section of trench 9, tangent to trench 8, produced a vast quantity of late 19th century artifacts, all lying near the surface and in association with a large area of red fire-burned clay overlying a gray clay. This gray clay is generally found as a natural strata some 2½ or more feet below the surface. Here in trench 9, it was laid by man for some purpose, possibly as a flooring to a house or shed which, when it burned to the ground, produced the red clay layer we uncovered at the surface. This entire southwest section is in tree roots of the present standing trees and near the same trees which appear in the 1899 photograph of the site. This confirms my opinion that we were on the site of the old W. H. Smith house and possibly even of the Shane house.

We found a quantity of hemlock stakes, pickets or pegs in the northeast section of trench 9. They were all situated vertically in the ground, point down, generally a foot or more below the present surface and were similar in shape to those uncovered in trench 2 during the December excavation. These pieces of pointed wood we thought were man-made (whittled) but to my disappointment they turned out to be the hard center core or node of the evergreen tree branches where they are joined to the tree. These pieces are known to the local lumbermen as "buckhorns." Since these joints are full of rosin and do not rot, they stay hard and firm in the ground for many years. We were duped by their pointed appearance similar to man-made stakes or pickets, and had classified them as artifacts instead of the natural phenomena they are. They are extremely hard and have been found at substantial depths in the sterile clay, indicating age. Caywood, as well as myself, had been fooled by these objects.

Located an iron pipe near the southeast outside corner of the main gate to the reconstructed fort. This pipe definitely appears to have been hammered into the ground. We wondered whether this pipe was placed as a marker in 1900 by the Oregon Historical Society Committee when they were establishing the site of the fort with Shane and Gillette. Further study of the pipe showed very little corrosion and although placed in the ground at an unknown date and for an unknown purpose, yet it had definitely not been in the ground for more than about ten years at the most.

April 10, 1957. Six laborers today, finishing the excavation of trench 9. Nothing more came out of the northeast section of the trench inside the reconstructed fort, although there were a few dark spots that dipped down deeper than generally seen in the other trench faces. At these dark spots I had the men dig down to the sterile yellow-gray clay, leaving no possibility of missing some significant soil change. Flecks of charcoal were seen here and there but not in a concentrated quantity to be significant.
In the southwest section of trench 9, below the gray clay and fire horizon, there was nothing—all the late 19th century artifacts came from the fire horizon just beneath the surface.

After lunch the men started excavating two 3-foot wide trenches, each 74 feet in length, on either side of the reconstructed fort between the fort and the cyclone fence. These trenches run northeast-southwest and are parallel. I labeled them trenches 10 and 11. Nothing interesting came out of them. The southwest section of both of these trenches has a very rich black topsoil—a great deal richer than we have uncovered in the rest of the area. In trench 10 there is a very deep black earth hole, circular in shape, which intrudes into the gray sterile clay some 5½ feet beneath the surface. Could it have been the flagpole hole of the historic fort? I doubt it—it is more likely a deep tanroot of a former tree.

This evening I gave a talk to the Clatsop County Historical Society on the objectives of our archeological research and what the results were up to the present time.

April 11, 1957. Six men working today, continued to excavate trenches 10 and 11 down to the sterile yellow clay. Two fire pits appeared in each trench in about the dead center of the trench and opposite each other in relation to the reconstructed fort. These fire pits were bowl-shaped and were generally deep enough below the surface to indicate some age to them. No artifacts other than an occasional fire-fractured stone came out of these pits. They could be either—white man's or Indian's—there was no way of telling. We also uncovered in trench 10, in the northeast end just opposite the concrete marker, the remains of a wooden flagpole placed here in 1953, and identified by Mr. Burnby Bell.

Having reached the sterile clay in trench 10, we set up trench 12 running northwest-southeast, 3 feet wide, on the north side of the reconstructed fort, between the rear palisade and the cyclone fence. Trench 13 is parallel to trench 12, 3 feet wide, and located along the south side or front of the reconstructed fort. These two trenches are each 63 feet long. There are a lot of tree roots on the surface at the northwest end of trenches 11 and 12.

We had a number of visitors today, including a school group to which I gave a short lecture explaining our project at the site. The county highway engineer helped us to locate the site of the Shane house. The survey records came from an old survey made by Joseph W. and John Trutch in 1856.

April 12, 1957. Six laborers worked today. After four days of fine weather, rain fell during the night. Intermittent showers during the day made
the clay and soil a slippery gumbo, really a mess to dig in, since it stuck to the shovels, shoes, and everything else. Reaching sterile clay in trench 11, the men started excavating in trench 13 and continued to excavate trench 12. Three more red clay firepits came to light, two in trench 12 and the other in trench 13 in the southeast end. No artifacts of great importance came out of trenches 10 and 11, nor did anything exciting come out of trenches 12 and 13. Having made the measurements, field drawings and photographs necessary for the record, one man is already backfilling trench 11 and another is backfilling sections of trench 8 in order that visitors may have easier access to the reconstructed fort from the parking area. We have taken all precautions possible to guarantee the safety of the laborers and of the visitors who come to this non-Federal area. A heavy concentration of visitors is expected at the site over the weekend if the weather is pleasant.

The two old cherry trees, planted by Shane or some other former landowner a century ago, have been in full bloom all week and it has been a most pleasant task to excavate and work surrounded by such beauty.

April 15, 1957. Six men worked today. We finished excavating trenches 12 and 13 as we reached the sterile yellow clay. Had the men trace out and uncover the various fire pits which we ran across in the trenches within the fort compound, fire pits 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9. Torrents of rain fell over the weekend and part of this morning, but the weather turned clear and sunny and the gumbo clay dried out rather rapidly.

According to Messrs. Owen and Bell, of the Clatson County Historical Society, the County Highway Department has offered to backfill all the trenches and grade the site around the reconstructed fort as soon as the ground dries up. They will use a small blade or front end loader. Under this arrangement, all we have to do is backfill by hand the trenches inside the cyclone fence. This job we have started to do, muddling the clay to make the earth fill settle and more compact.

Following out the various fire pits, we have found fire pit 6 in trench 11 makes an unusual right angle forming a corner as if the corner of a structure had burned here. Could this be the corner of the old fort which Shane had burned? Not very likely, since Shane probably did not set fire to the logs as he found them, but gathered them into a pile before igniting them. All the fire pits have a bowl-like shape, with the red fired clay and soil concentrated at their thickest in the center of the depression and with a black lens of charcoal lying on top and at the edges. On the flanks of these rather uniform fire pits
one finds spots and flecks of burned red clay and charcoal scattered often as far as three and four feet out from the epicenter, yet not truly a part of the fire pit as such. These scattered pieces of the original fire indicate to me that parts of the fire were spread out beyond its original confines as if somebody was attempting to extinguish the fire by scattering it. Fire pit 5 is more definitely a fire pit. It is deeper, more bowl-shaped and confined to a 5' x 2' area, oval in shape.

Fire pit 6 is L-shaped and is 2' x 9 1/2' x 5'.

Fire pit 7 is very small and circular with a diameter of 1 1/2' and is bowl-shaped.

Fire pit 8 is bowl-shaped and oval, 1 1/2' x 3 1/2'.

Fire pit 9 in trench 13 turned out to be a late 19th century fire and rather irregular and extended. Late 19th century artifacts were found in association with it.

April 16, 1957. Only five men showed up today. We are backfilling all the trenches inside the reconstructed fort fence. It is a beautiful sunny day. With the trenches inside the fort nearly filled, I started two men excavating a three foot wide trench inside the east cabins of the fort running northeast-southwest. This we numbered trench 11, and it is divided into four sections because of the four rooms. The black topsoil generally ranges from one to two and one-half feet below the surface.

Colonel McBride of the Portland Corps of Engineers was out here visiting the area.

April 17, 1957. The five men continued to backfill by hand all trenches and fire pits we excavated inside the fort compound; muddling the earth in order to pack it well. Two men continued to excavate trench 11 inside the cabin. Its total length amounts to 147 feet. With two rooms finished since we reached the sterile clay, they started digging in the adjoining two rooms. Have come across another fire pit—numbered 10. It is bowl-shaped and oval, 2 1/2' x 4'. The heaviest concentration of fire pits is in the reconstructed fort area.

Intermittent light showers and warm sunshine made this an unpredictable day.

Superintendent Frank Hjort of Fort Vancouver and Mr. Thomas Vaughan, Director of the Oregon Historical Society in Portland, came out to visit the site and see our project. Mr. Vaughan approved of
our trenching and agreed to have the Clatsop County Highway Department
backfill all the other trenches with machinery, permitting my crew to
evacuate further.

Having finished leveling the ground inside the reconstructed
fort compound, we started two new trenches, each three feet wide.
Trench 15 runs east-west from trench 1 to trench 14 just north of the
monument, and is 31 feet long. Trench 16 is 78 feet long and runs
northeast-southwest just southeast of the monument.

April 16, 1957. Six men excavating trenches 15 and 16. These two trenches
are absolutely sterile. Trench 16 runs across an old roadbed, yet no
evidence of this old road remains except for the sunken surface with
a slight ridge on each side. Since there was nothing in these two
trenches, as we reached sterile clay, I shifted the men over to trench 17,
a three foot wide trench which runs parallel to trench 16, running across
trench 14 and up to trench 6. It runs in a northeast-southwest direction
and is 93 feet long.

April 19, 1957. Five men excavating trench 17. Reaching sterile clay in
this trench and finding nothing significant in it, we set out another
short trench, number 18, running from the concrete marker to trench 16,
in a north-south direction. As is the case with all the other trenches,
this one is three feet wide and it is 40 feet long. We uncovered another
fire pit, no. 11, and followed it out. It also was bowl-shaped and oval,
$4\frac{1}{2}$' x 7'. At the end of the day, I had the men clean their tools and then
terminated them. I finished making measurements, field drawings, and
the photographic record.

This last two weeks excavation required 154 man-hours or
56-3/4 man days of labor at a cost of $876.22.

During the entire three-week period, we excavated ca. 1,543
linear feet of trenches each three feet wide or 4,626 square feet of
surface. At an average of 3 1/2 feet depths, we removed some 16,000 cubic
feet of earth.

A list of the artifacts uncovered during the second period of
excavation and their trench of origin follows.
Artifacts

Trench 8 - in vicinity of the Smith house - second half of 19th century.

Section 1 - north section near the present pumphouse.

1 door knob rod
1 square cut nail
1 square cut spike
2 pieces of a cross-cut hand saw
1 meat hook
1 harness ring
2 pieces clear thick bottle glass - modern
5 pieces lime
15 ironstone china sherds
1 brownstone ware crock sherd
2 green porcelain sherds
2 animal bones (domestic cow)

Section 2 - middle section in association with red clay and charcoal.

Fit with very recent trash - tin cans still had the labels on them.

59 pieces clear bottle glass - modern
4 pieces brown glass - modern
8 pieces light green clear glass - ca. 1890-1910
13 pieces clear window pane
127 crudely fired brick fragments
 1 piece black obsidian from which two small flakes have been removed from the sides, otherwise the rock is in its natural state and is not an artifact.
11 pieces of iron stove plate
1 ring with eye screw
1 iron bed caster
1 iron sash weight section
1 iron rod with eye
1 round iron rod
1 iron door lock
1 brass drawer pull or knob
7 small pieces of unidentifiable iron
1 No. 12 shotgun shell cartridge - Peters - recent
1 30 special shell cartridge - recent
9 square cut iron spikes - late 19th century
65 square cut iron nails - mid-late 19th century
11 wire cut nails - modern
3 animal bones (domestic cow)
1 child's thick leather shoe sole and heel
14 brown stoneware sherds - 19th century
7 gray stoneware sherds - 19th century
19 white ironstone China sherds - mid-late 19th century
19 sherds of white and decorated chinaware - late 19th century
1 Chinese porcelain sherd
3 white porcelain sherds with gold rim

Section 3 - south section, near the approach road.

1 piece shoe leather
1 lock plate
1 soldering iron
1 piece iron bar

Trench 9 - Section 1 - inside the reconstructed fort.

1 tin can with paper label still on - recent
1 red plastic knife - recent
2 glass olive jars with part of label still on - recent
3 iron rings
1 square cut spike
1 tin plunger device
1 hemlock "buckhorns" - a natural phenomena
1 blue and white pottery sherd

Section 2 - middle section - outside the reconstructed fort

4 rusty tin cans with no labels - recent
4 pieces of charred hemlock "buckhorns" - a natural phenomena

Section 3 - in the vicinity of the Smith house, tangent to trench 8.

1 shovel blade
1 harness ham
1 hand sickle
13 pieces of iron stove plate
1 file
1 horseshoe
1 double axe blade
1 bridle bit
1 tin can rim
1 chain link
1 iron eye piece off a wagon
1 iron guide for a wagon
1 iron rope guide
1 iron pin
10 pieces of strap iron
12 square cut nails
120 crudely fired brick fragments
121 white ironstone china sherds - mid-late 19th century, with the following trade names:
Waterloo Potteries
House Carter - Burslem
T & R Boote - England
Edward Clarke - Burslem, Eng.

10) brown, black and gray stoneware sherds - 19th century
   1 blue transfer printed ware sherd
   1 white china bottle neck
   1 blue manufactured glass bead or button - possibly used for an Indian trade piece
23) pieces of dark green molded bottle glass - late 19th century
   1 frosted crystal blown glass bottle neck - late 19th century
20) pieces of clear window pane glass
   9 pieces of light green molded bottle glass
   1 Coca-Cola bottle deformed by intense heat
   1 piece brass plate
   1 circle brass plate
   1 brass holder or fastener
   1 animal bone (domestic cow)
18) pieces of light green molded bottle glass

Trench 10

   2 fire burned stones
   3 blue transfer ware sherds - late 19th century

Trench 11

   20 crudely fired brick fragments
   1 base of a tin can
   4 pieces of unidentifiable molten glass
   3 pieces green molded bottle glass - modern
   4 pieces clear molded bottle glass - modern
   4 pieces brown molded bottle glass - modern
   1 shoe sole and heel
   3 square cut nails
   6 white ironstone china sherds
   1 brown stoneware sherd

Trench 12

   14 pieces fire-fractured stone
   2 crudely fired brick fragments
   4 pieces red earthenware
   1 blue transfer printed ware sherd
   5 white ironstone china sherds
   2 brown stoneware sherds
   2 pieces clear cut crystal glass
   fragmentary animal bones from fire pit 8, probably elk or deer
Trench 13 - from fire pit 9.

22 fire-fractured stones  
3 crudely fired brick fragments  
1 tin can base  
1 square cut nail

Trench 14 -

Hemlock charcoal chunks  
2 crudely fired brick fragments  
1 square cut nail  
1 square cut L-head spike

Trench 15 -

1 flat tobacco tin  
1 iron leg for kettle or small stove - S-shaped

Trench 16 -

3 fire-fractured stones  
1 piece of shoe leather  
1 crudely fired brick fragment  
1 modeled, fired clay fragment, purpose unknown.  
Possibly Indian, probably white.  
2 pieces brown molded glass  
1 piece green molded glass  
1 piece white molded glass  
1 brown stoneware sherd

Trench 17 -

1 white ironstone china sherd  
1 wire cut nail

Trench 18 -

1 flake of basaltic rock with natural breaks and  
not an artifact

All the artifacts from the 3 weeks excavations manufactured during the late 19th and 20th centuries were discarded after being thoroughly identified. The stones, rocks, etc., which were natural objects were likewise discarded after having been thoroughly analyzed by David Cole, of the University of Oregon. The few artifacts of possible Indian origin, along with the animal bones, were given to the University of California Archaeological Survey for further identification and safekeeping. The wood specimens were identified by the U. S. Forest Service's Forest Products Laboratory in Madison, Wisconsin.
Conclusions

"From the three weeks of archeological exploration of the traditional site of Fort Clatsop, certain pertinent facts seem to come to light.

Although we had hoped to find evidence of the fort, we were unable to locate any feature which could, by the widest stretch of the imagination, be or have been part of the actual structure. The two principal features we did uncover were the heavy concentration of middle to late 19th century farm and home materials in one particular area, and the predominance of circular and oval red clay fire pits in another area of the present site.

The first mentioned feature gives us a strong indication of the location of the Smith house of the 1870's and possibly of the Shane house of an even earlier date. We knew from early photographs, the location of the Smith house in relation to the cherry trees, and I feel the excavations confirm this location. I strongly believe the Shane house was in this same general locality as the Smith house, since we found no evidence of concentrated mid-19th century occupation in any other locale and a striking lack of material in the area where the old 1856 surveying records of J. W. and John Trutch stated the Shane house should have been. As can be seen in the artifact records, the heavy concentration of mid to late 19th century material was where trenches 8 and 9 met, with only occasional late 19th century objects found in the other trenches on the site. Caywood does not mention finding 19th century material in his excavation, and trenches 4, 6, 16 and 17 were exceptionally barren in the particular area where the Shane house was supposed to have been. Any type of occupation over a period of several months or more would certainly have produced more artifacts of the Shane period. It is my conviction that the Shane house was in the general vicinity of the juncture of trenches 8 and 9, and that the 1856 survey is partially wrong; (the county engineer stated that these old surveys may very well be off a hundred feet or more). We found no structural evidence of either of these two houses or any of their outbuildings, but the heavy concentration of burned red clay on the surface in the area where trenches 8 and 9 join could well indicate the former earthen floor of one of these structures. The importance of our locating the site of Shane's and Smith's houses is required because Shane refers to his house being built a few feet from the southwest corner of the fort, and the photograph of 1899, showing the Smith house, has the men outlining the supposed site of the fort.

The second predominant feature appearing in our archeological explorations were the 11 fire pits and the many other traces of small fires as seen in the red burned clay and flecks of charcoal. All of the minor traces of red clay and charcoal flecks may be pretty well eliminated as being insignificant—possibly a brush fire or an overnight camper's fire. It is the fire pits themselves which we must consider more thoroughly.
The heavy concentration of fire clay at the surface near the juncture of trenches 8 and 9 may be dated as belonging to the late 19th century because of its associated artifacts. Similarly, fire pit 9, with its associated late 19th century artifacts, may also be eliminated. Fire pits 3 and 4 were in an area where late 19th century material was heavily concentrated, but none of these artifacts were found in direct association with the pits themselves. Fire pit 6 is basically not a true fire pit in that it is larger and more of an L-shape than the others, but it does have the bowl-like depression in cross section. Except for the heavy concentration of charred unculate (probably elk or deer) and bird bones in fire pit 1 and a few similar charred bone fragments in fire pit 8, there was no other material or artifacts in any of the other fire pits. (Fire pits 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11). All of these fire pits are sufficiently below the surface (7 feet to 2.9 feet) and have a thick enough overburden to indicate some age. Fire pits 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11 all had a concave shape in cross section, were all more or less of the same depth (ca. 1 foot) of thickness, and of the same formation of red clay with flecks of charcoal and a concentrated lens of charcoal at the top and edges. Gaywood located four similar fire pits in his 1948 excavations.

Nothing of the type of stone-encircled fire place or "barbecue pit" as was found in 1948 by Louis R. Gaywood was uncovered during these more recent excavations. This "barbecue pit" of Gaywood's, I believe to have been of a more recent camper's vintage similar to the stone-encircled fire pits existing and used at the site today.

My opinion is that these red clay fire pits indicate they were used sometime previous to 1850 (because of their depth below the present surface); that they were used over a long period of time, not merely by overnight campers (by their depth in thickness); that they were built by a group of people at approximately the same period (their similarity in shape, their rather heavy concentration in one area, and their equal depth stratigraphically). Now which group built the fire pits? No artifact evidence exists to give us a hint except for the charred bones. Both Indians and white men are said to have inhabited the site. I can only infer that probably Indians would have left their camp fire sites more littered, and white men, especially if a military group, would have been more careful with their litter. Therefore, it is possible that these camp fire pits were those of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Although the fire pits we uncovered do not present a uniform pattern on the ground, they could well be either the campfires used by the group during the half month they were constructing the fort, or the fires used inside the fort. The fires inside each cabin would not necessarily have to be of uniform size or in the same location in each room, since use of room and entrances would determine their placement inside the fort.
I can find no support for Mr. Caywood’s positive statement in the Oregon Historical Quarterly (Vol. XLIX, No. 3, Sept. 1948, pp. 209-210) that “it can be safely stated that the excavations were done on the Lewis and Clark site of Fort Clatsop.” The “lack of evidence” he uses does not definitely prove that the camp fire pits Caywood uncovered in 1948 were of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. Caywood uses as strong supporting evidence for his statements, the fact that he found two pieces of wood with metal tool marks. It is well known that the Indians of the lower Columbia had been in contact with European trade items for quite a period previous to the advent of Lewis and Clark. Secondly, he was fooled by the same “staghorns” as I was, believing them to be whittled sticks, pegs or stakes made by man, until a native of the region proved to me they were natural phenomena.

Although we both recovered a few items which Indians could have made or used (such as the goethite stones, blue glass bead, and the bone awl), on the whole the site is remarkable for its lack of Indian material, especially since the Clatsops are supposed to have moved into the abandoned fort. Although the expedition members were down to the bare necessities, probably taking back or trading with the Indians everything they had with them, it is still remarkable that neither of us found any actual evidence of their four months occupation of the site. I attempted to locate their latrines or disposal pits, but to no avail. We were well aware that the possibility of finding the actual remains of the fort were extremely slim, since the original logs were laid horizontally on the ground (probably without a foundation of any sort), and those few remaining logs still standing by Shane’s time were burned by him. Plowing of the land, occupation by subsequent families, and fern humus would have obliterated most of the remaining traces. Remains of the stockade of posts should still exist either as rotted wood or a shadow of a trench since the soldiers must have excavated a trench at least 2½ feet deep to place their posts in the ground. This type of stockade has been located for Fort Vancouver and Fort Astoria, and it is not impossible that remains of the Fort Clatsop stockade could still exist. The only trouble with finding the latter is the small extent of the original stockade, at most some 11 feet on the south side and some 18 feet on the north side. With exceptional luck we might have located it, but because of roots and other present-day features, our trenches were somewhat limited and could very well have missed the slight remains entirely. Although our trenching was extensive, and covered the site rather thoroughly, only a complete removal of the 10 inch overburden over the entire site would possibly locate the old stockade. Such an
undertaking was and is completely impractical. All of our trenches were excavated to the natural sterile clay which ranged from 2 to 4 feet below the surface.

Not having uncovered the positive evidence of proof we were seeking from an archeological standpoint, we are able to turn over to the historians merely two points of interest, the approximate location of a mid to late 19th century occupation site—probably Shane's and Smith's, and the location of a quantity of campfires, each one of a considerable duration, containing no artifacts to date them. It remains for the historians to evaluate the evidence relating to these two locations, along with the documentary sources, to see if it throws any significant light upon the history of Fort Clatsop.
Archeological excavations at Fort Clatsop - Trenches 1, 2 and 4 - facing northeast.

Archeological excavations at Fort Clatsop - Trenches 1 and 4 - facing north.
Archeological excavations at Fort Clatsop - corner of Trenches 8 and 9 - facing east. Note red fire clay horizon at surface.

Archeological excavations at Fort Clatsop - laborer excavating in Trench 9 - north end, inside reconstructed fort.
Archeological excavations at Fort Clatsop - laborer excavating in Trench 11 - facing east.

Laborer and Archeologist Schumacher pointing out fire pit 6 and red clay lens in Trench 11 - facing north.
Archeological excavations at Fort Clatsop - Trenches 16 and 17 - facing east. Note "old road" depression center left.

Archeologist Schumacher checking over artifacts.
Superintendent, Port Vancouver

September 16, 1953

Archeologist, Region Four

Archeological material from Fort Clatsop excavation--1948

Dear Frank:

Thank you for the box of material from Fort Clatsop excavated by Louis Caywood in July 1948. The material in the box is mostly scraps of wood and charcoal, burnt clay and burnt bone, probably of deer or elk. One piece of wood looks as if it was sawed off and one piece appears to have been cut with a knife. Since there is no other identification with these pieces as to where they came from in the excavations or at which depth, they are basically valueless as far as interpreting the location of Fort Clatsop. The burnt material could be of Indian origin or left by Lewis and Clark's men, or later hunters and campers. The sawed wood is probably modern and the whittled piece of wood could be Indian or white. The trouble is we do not know in what association these pieces were found, and therefore it is hard if not impossible to date them.

Nevertheless, Dr. Russey has suggested we keep these pieces in the box and turn them over to Fort Clatsop National Memorial when the area has a building to store this box in. In the meantime, we will keep it here in the Division of Interpretation. These items are being kept more as a proof of negative evidence, i.e., that basically nothing was found at Fort Clatsop to prove that Lewis and Clark had been in that particular spot. This corroborates the negative evidence I found in my excavations.

We wish to thank you for your alertness in finding these objects and sending them to us for our study.

Sincerely yours,

Paul J. F. Schumacher
Archeologist

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