

Exhibits On Line

"A Constant Patrol" New Jersey's Line of Defense in the French and Indian War

An Exhibit for Sussex County History Day: April 30, 2005



U.S. Dept. of the Interior
National Park Service

Delaware Water Gap National
Recreation Area

" You are...to take Post in such Places as shall appear to you best adapted for the Defence of this line of Frontiers. You are to order & See such Posts Fortified and Strengthened in the best Manner you are able keeping a Constant Patroll from Post to Post appointing at each Post Proper Signals of Alarm..."

The New Jersey Council to
Governor Belcher of New Jersey
and his Commander-in Chief

By the fall of 1758, New Jersey's line of defense in the French and Indian War consisted of a line of 9 forts or blockhouses and 4 smaller "ranging posts" stretching along the east bank of the Delaware River from downstream of the Water Gap to the Neversink Valley in New York.

Today, 5 fort sites and 2 post sites within or near the boundaries of Sussex County fall within the boundaries of Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area.

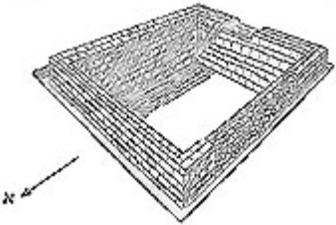
Jonathan Hampton

Much of what we know of these forts and posts is drawn from the letters and maps (*right*) of Quartermaster Jonathan Hampton, who was in the service of the provincial New Jersey government.

However, it should be remembered that civilians also took measures to provide for their own defense by adapting their sturdy stone houses, and various stone homes still standing in the recreation area today may have served as "forts," whether or not they figure on Hampton's map. These civilians used their own supplies and equipment; archeological finds at these sites would tend to indicate a period



A section of Jonathan Hampton's map, oriented with north at the top, showing the Delaware River from the area of Fort Coles (Port Jarvis NY, north of the recreation area) to the area of Forts Walpack and Van Campen (Walpack Bend

<p>home, rather than a military post.</p>	<p>within the recreation area.)</p>
<p>Fort Reading Hampton's "Post" No. 1: Ellison's: 13 man station New Fort</p> <p>These forts and posts were located to the south of the recreation area. Hampton described Fort Reading as "a good blockhouse 36-ft. square" and other structures, and his map shows it on the Pequest River, which would place it at today's town of Belvidere NJ. Ellison's "Post" may have been a structure, Allison's House, still standing in the town of Delaware NJ. The location of this New Fort is not known. It may well have been between Mt. Tammany and the Paulinskill River, but no further information exists about the fort's size or eventual fate. It is thus unclear if the fort was ever built, or was merely a <i>proposed</i> fort that Hampton was indicating on his map as a new fort to be built</p>	<p>.</p>
<p>Fort Van Campen</p> <p>Hampton described "Vankamps" as a 20-foot-square blockhouse, a 60 by 22 foot stone house, and a 65-foot-square palisade. He relates that <i>five men (were) sent from the blockhouse</i>, confirming that this was a real place. Van Campen's Fort was located at or just northeast of Abraham Van Campen's House, still standing today on Old Mine Road in Warren County close to the Sussex line.</p>	 <p>(Above) An archeologist's sketch of the blockhouse foundation uncovered in 1966.</p>
	<p>(Left) "A View at Pahaquarric, Sussex County, New Jersey," a woodcut by Scoles from a sketch by I. Hoffman for <i>New York Magazine</i>, February 1794. The square blockhouse highlighted at the right would appear to be at the location of Abraham Van Campen House and Van Campen's fort.</p>
<p>Excavation in 1966 revealed a red shale foundation, 22 by 25 ft., which could date to the mid-1700s, close to a fieldstone-and-mortar foundation about the same size, datable to about 1840. These findings are consistent with local reports that the</p>	<p>.</p> <p>.</p> <p>.</p>

remains of the blockhouse were joined to another square foundation by a passageway and a common roof in the early 1800s to form a dwelling. An 1891 sketch shows the dwelling. Evidence of possible earthworks, but not of a palisade, was also found.



(Below, left) An drawing done around 1891 by A. Van Campen of the farm dwelling that incorporated both the blockhouse foundation and another foundation.

(Right) The collapsed dwelling around 1912. The corners were still visible in the 1970s. *(Photocopy courtesy of Wayne Valentine)*



(Left) An old photo of Abraham Van Campen House on Old Mine Road, notated "Front of old Fort House Col. (?) Van C." and "Pahaquarry N.J. one mile from old Copper Mills (mines?)" It is the notation which is significant: this Van Campen House (early to mid-18th century) is still standing, and has long been associated with the location of the "fort" structure.

Fort Walpack

Hampton described **Fort Walpack** as a wooden church and a small blockhouse in a 50-foot-square palisade. He also mentioned the death of a William Ward who was slain by natives while hunting 1/2 mile from the fort - an invaluable specific reference to a real place.

The fort is believed to have been on a height east of today's Walpack Cemetery. Archeological investigation in the 1960s centered on a stone wall here, but could not confirm that the wall was Fort Walpack.



Looking east today across Old Mine Road at the slope on the east side of the road, from Walpack Cemetery. This slope is thought to be the site of Fort Walpack.

Hampton's "Post" No.2 Adam Dingmans

Hampton showed "**No.2 Adam Dingmans: 9 men.**" midway between Fort Walpack and Fort Johns. Deeds indicate that an Adam Dingmans owned property from 1735 in this area, now referred to as McBride's Field. (There was once an airfield on the flats along the river.) Other than foundations observed on the McBride property, though, nothing further is known of what was probably a fortified civilian dwelling.



Forts Johns, or Headquarters

The most prominent of Hampton's forts was **Fort Johns** or **Headquarters**, at the junction of *Military Road* and *Old Mine Road*, just north of Van Campen Inn. As drawn by Hampton, Headquarters had a 120-ft. square palisade enclosing two log houses and a 52 by 26 ft. stone dwelling, as well as a 50 by 24 ft. blockhouse at the perimeter.

Local stories place the stone blockhouse of so-called "Fort Shappanack" beside the Schnure farmhouse (the 3rd house on that site), or as part of a nearby cow shed on the south slope overlooking Van Campen Inn. Archeological investigation in 1975 documented a series of post moulds that were suspected to be part of the palisade.

To investigate these claims, further digs were conducted by New York University in 1999 through 2000. Before the 1999 dig began, Hampton's sketch of the Fort Johns was oriented with north at the top, and twice overlaid with trenches of the 1975 dig and with the outline of structures known to be on the site in the 1970s. The first overlay (*below*) placed the site of the fort's "dwelling" over the foundation of Schnure House, the so-called "Fort Shappanack" (*photo at right*). The second overlay (*not shown*) placed the site of the blockhouse over the stone wall of the cow shed. The subsequent digs, however, unearthed little evidence of a palisade or of 18th century occupation, and virtually no artifacts of 18th century colonial life.

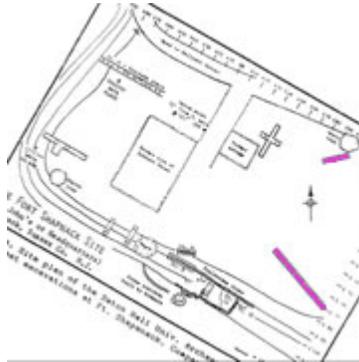
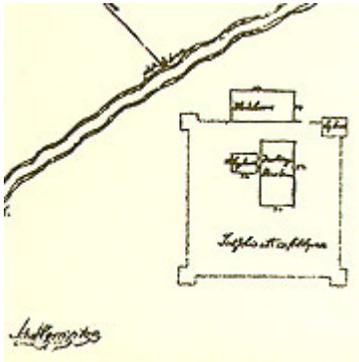
(Above) The area of McBride's Field today, seen from Old Mine Road. Flats such as these were a logical area for a farmstead, but were exposed in times of war. The ridge in the distance is on the other side of the Delaware River, in Pennsylvania.



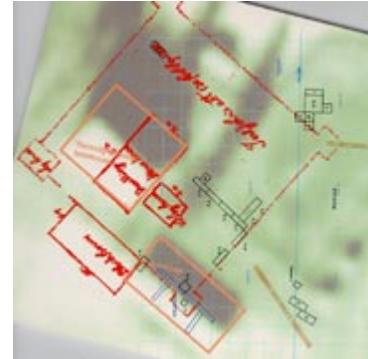
(Above) Finds from the 1999 dig such as medicine bottles and glass bottle lids can be dated back only to the last few decades of the 1800s.

(Below, left) In the corner of his map, Hampton drew a sketch of Fort Johns, and signed his name, but he did not orient the sketch to the rest of the map. (At the top left is the Hudson River, which flows almost directly **south**.)

(Below, right) Trenches (in pink) of the 1975 excavation by Seton Hall University found post moulds that were believed at that time to be from the fort's palisade.



(Below) Hampton's sketch of Fort John, enlarged and overlaid with the foundation of the Schnure House (left) and cow barn (right). Note the same trenches (shown in gold) as in 1975. (above right) (Map courtesy of New York University)



(Left) Looking eastward (uphill) at the front of the Schnure House in 1967. (NPS photo)

(Right) Looking southwest at the supposed ruins of "Fort Shappanack", with Schnure House in the background. (Photo courtesy of Myra Snook)

A second possibility, however, holds that Van Campen Inn on Old Mine Road was **itself** the structure which Hampton indicated as **Fort Johns or Headquarters**.

By 1758, Van Campen Inn consisted of the north or so-called "kitchen" wing (built around 1742 and demolished in 1917), and the large main section of the home which survives today as. (This combined structure is larger than the "stone dwelling" in Hampton's drawing.)

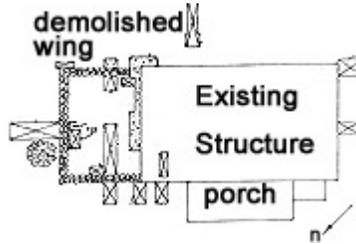
Archeological investigation on the site of the demolished "kitchen wing" revealed evidence of mid-



(Above) An actual photograph of Van Campen Inn before 1917. The so-called "kitchen wing" is the smaller wing at the left.

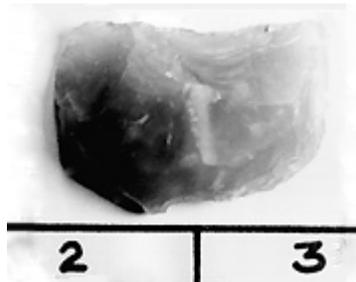
1700s occupation.

Since Hampton's map is inconclusive for the fort's exact location, perhaps his sketch of the fort merely indicated some *proposed* improvements to a fortified home at either site, rather than the exact condition of things.



(Left) Sketch of Van Campen Inn done at the time of the excavation, probably based on the photograph from 1917 (above).

(Right) Plan of archeological work at Van Campen Inn.



(Left) Brass buckle (?) from Stratum V. The numbered boxes indicates inches.

(Right) Chert gunflint from Stratum IV.

Hampton's "Post" No. 3: Carmer

Hampton showed "**No.3 Carmar**: 8 man station" midway between Fort Johns and Fort Normanock. The structure once called "Fort Carmer" now stands in impressive isolation at the junction of the original roadbed of Old Mine Road and Walpack Road. It was for many years, though, merely the back kitchen of a large brick farmhouse, attracting only the historian's curiosity as a logical site for Hampton's post. Historical studies of this structure, however, have not yielded evidence of 18th century use.



(Left) The structure called Fort Carmer, when it served as the kitchen at the back of the Bevans-Hellwig Farmhouse.

(Right) Fort Carmer (the Bevans-Hellwig Kitchen) as seen from the junction of Old Mine Road and Walpack Road in 2002. *(NPS photo by Ken Sandri)*

Fort Normanock

Hampton actually visited **Fort Normanock** (Nominack or Namanock), the next fort north of Headquarters, where he received reports of attacks. His description of the fort - "the same as Vankamps" - would indicate a 20-ft.-square blockhouse and a palisade 65-ft.-square, with perhaps a stone dwelling about 60 by 20 ft.

The foundation of this fort is believed to have survived until the 1960s as part of a stone building about 40 by 25 ft. Unfortunately, what remained of the structure in the 1960s was thoroughly demolished by the Army Corps of Engineers as part of the Tocks Island Dam project and is unlikely to yield any further insights.

(Above) A view of "Nomonock" before the 1960s.



(Left) The structure of Fort Normanock in 1947.

(Right) The same structure in ruins in 1967. It was later totally demolished and removed.

Fort Brinks

Hampton described **Fort Brinks** as a wooden dwelling 50 by 24 ft. with a 50-ft.-square palisade. His map later that year indicates a location near the present-day Deremer House in Montague NJ. Several people in the Montague area were named Brink. Local stories speak of a "blockhouse hill" but the location of the fort, or of a ruin with strong potential to be the fort, has never been confirmed.



A marker on Old Mine Road (River Road/Rt. 521, Montague) notes the area believed to be Blockhouse Hill.

Fort Coles

Hampton's "**Post**" No. 4: **Uriah Westfalls**: 11 man
Fort Gardiner

These forts and posts were likely located to the north of the recreation area. **Fort Coles**, described by Hampton as "a wooden dwelling house 60 by 26", is specifically traced to Port Jervis NY at Jersey Avenue and East Main Street. "**Post**" No. 4: **Uriah Westfalls** could well have been the home of Uriah Westfalls, outside Port Jervis NY. Hampton described **Fort Gardiner** as "a wooden dwelling, 5 loghouses, palisaded 100 foot square, 2 swivel guns, one family" -- altogether a substantial holding.

These three forts and posts are now in New York State, but this borderland was still in dispute between the colonies of New York and New Jersey at the time of the French and Indian War.