Unearthing Early Pulaski County

Dennis Naglich and Stephanie Nutt

Dennis Naglich and Stephanie Nutt are archaeologists contracted to Fort Leonard Wood. This article is based on the findings of on-going archaeological investigations conducted on the Fort Leonard Wood lands. For more information contact the Fort Leonard Wood Cultural Resource Management Program, Natural Resources Management Branch.

The authors have made every effort to accurately present the genealogical information relevant to the archaeological sites discussed below. The information has been well researched from a variety of sources including census records from several states, family histories, and local historical sources. However, as historical archaeologists are all too aware, there is always the possibility of an error or misrepresentation of a particular family’s genealogy, whether it be a date, a name, a place, or a relationship. If this be the case we do apologize and would welcome the correct information.

Introduction

A great deal of information has been gathered about early Pulaski County in the form of historical writings and documents, historical research, county histories, and family histories. People had taken up permanent residence in the county probably as early as 1816, and certainly by the 1820s. Just as there physical evidence has been uncovered that places these early families on the landscape of Pulaski County. In other words, archaeological sites that can be dated to the early to mid-19th century are few and far between.

According to the Missouri archaeological site files (on file at the Missouri State Historic Preservation Office in Jefferson City), as of August 2006 there were 224 recorded historical archaeological sites in Pulaski County. Only five of the sites could be positively identified as dating to before or during the Civil War. Of these five, only one was recorded as a residence or farmstead. The others consist of two cemeteries, a railroad tunnel, and the Waynesville Fort. The remaining 219 sites are identified as either post-Civil War or unknown historical period. Please keep in mind the key words here are recorded and positively identified. There are certainly more historical sites in the county and more that date to before the Civil War. However, they have either not been recorded with the official state files or there was no positive evidence found at the site proving it was occupied before the Civil War. But the numbers are rising, albeit very slowly. Thanks to archaeological investigations funded by the U.S. Army at Fort Leonard Wood, two more pre-Civil War sites can now be added to the list. One of the sites is somewhat of a mystery and the other was occupied by a famous Pulaski County resident. Before we get to these exciting finds, let’s take a moment to talk about the connection between archaeological research and the Army, and to explain some of the technical aspects of conducting archaeological investigations at historical sites.

Archaeology and the Army – How They Fit Together

The Basics

You may be asking yourself, “What does the Army have to do with archaeology?” Many would be surprised to learn that, along with a host of other environmental programs, the Army regularly funds projects such as investigating archaeological sites, inventorying historic buildings and structures, developing historic contexts, and conducting oral history projects, to name a few. Work like this is conducted at Army installations across the country and Fort Leonard Wood is no exception.

What compels the Army to investigate these cultural resources? Honestly, it’s the law. Just as there are federal laws in place to protect threatened and endangered species, so are there laws to preserve and protect cultural resources like archaeological sites and historic buildings. The National Historic Preservation Act, along with several other federal laws, provides cultural resource guidance for federal land managers, such as the Army or the Forest Service. In brief, the Act requires the federal land manager to inventory all cultural resources, determine which are significant, and preserve and protect these significant resources or mitigate their loss if necessary.

Note the word significant. A significant cultural resource is defined as one that meets some or all of the following criteria: A) it is associated with an event important to local, state, or national history; B) it is associated with a person important to local, state, or national history; C) it contains unique architectural remains indicative of a particular style or architect; and D) it contains or may contain information important to prehistory or history. These are the criteria used to determine if an archaeological site or other historic property is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, such as the Old Stagecoach Stop or the 1903 Pulaski County Courthouse.

Obviously, not all archaeological sites are going to be determined “significant” under the law. In order to make that determination, archaeologists conduct background research and field work to learn enough about the site to make a decision. In the case of Fort Leonard Wood, if the site is deemed significant, ideally, it is protected by placing it off limits to military training and construction. If this is not possible, the site is excavated so no data will be lost if the site is destroyed. If the site is not significant, no protection measures are put in place and no further excavation is warranted. This strategy only applies to federal lands, although many states have similar laws.

Fort Leonard Wood’s Role in Preserving Local History

For the past fifteen years major effort has gone into investigating the prehistoric sites on the Fort Leonard Wood lands. While a few prehistoric sites will still be excavated in the future, the main focus of archaeological investigations at Fort Leonard Wood has now shifted to the historical archaeological sites—those dating from the 1820s to the 1940s. Since 2004, thirteen historical sites have been investigated. Most of the sites were farmsteads, although a school (Palace School) and a mill (Kerr Mill) have been excavated too. Only two of the thirteen sites bear the distinction of having been occupied in the early to mid-19th century.

An historic context of the Fort Leonard Wood lands developed in 1993 categorizes these early to mid-19th century sites as having been occupied by either subsistence farmers or pioneer agriculturalists. The difference between the two has to do with the level of participation in a market economy intended by the farmers themselves. Subsistence farmers raised crops, but they also hunted, trapped, fished, and bartered and traded for many of the items they could not provide for themselves. On the other hand, the pioneer agriculturalist had the intention of farming as a full-time occupation, raising a cash crop, and creating and participating in a market economy. These people were entrepreneurs and looked for means of increasing their wealth in addition to farming, such as operating mills, rather than merely subsisting off the land. Pioneer agriculturalists typically were involved in local government as well.

Both subsistence farmers and pioneer agriculturalists began to settle in Pulaski County in the 1820s. While subsistence farming may have continued into the early 20th century, by the 1870s pioneer agriculturalists had been replaced by generalized farmers. General farmers fully participated in the local agricultural economy; but rather than raising just one grain as a cash crop, they often raised several, along with fruit and livestock for market.

Archaeological evidence of these early subsistence and pioneer farmers, circa 1820-1860, is sparse. It has been predicted that the visibility of these sites is very low. Because of the early and sometimes short-term occupation of the sites, there is often little left behind for an archaeologist to find 175 years or so later. This makes these sites highly sensitive to modern cultural disturbances, such as construction or military training. When a site dating to this time period is discovered on Fort Leonard Wood, it is extremely important. Every effort is made to learn as much about the site as possible and to protect it from further disturbance. Little is known archaeologically of these early Pulaski County settlers, making the few early to mid-19th century sites invaluable. As you will see, the treasures hidden in these early sites may be few in number, but they tell a tale of early pioneer life that cannot be fully understood just from history books and family records. Before we discuss the sites themselves, let’s speak a bit about the mechanics of doing archaeology.

Doing Historical Archaeology

Are You Digging For Gold?

Any archaeologist who has worked on a site the public could access has heard this question or something similar. When someone says he is an archaeologist, visions of Indiana Jones often cross people’s minds. Seldom, if ever, is your average archaeologist required to scramble across swinging bridges, have swords drawn at them, or fight off snakes or huge spiders (although mosquitoes and black flies can give you a run for your money and working in the cold and rain can be challenging.) All joking aside, archaeology is
a challenging, exciting, and rewarding job. It’s just not as glamorous as some people might think (Figure 1). An archeologist has to be a combination historian, surveyor, cartographer, carpenter, ditch-digger, educator, and community liaison, in addition to carrying out their archaeological duties. That’s why it never gets boring.

Of course, the most obvious part of doing archaeology is the field work. Survey work is done by digging shovel tests—holes about 50 centimeters wide and 50-60 centimeters deep, on average. The dirt from these holes is screened and all uncovered artifacts are collected and bagged. Excavation of shovel tests can help locate a site or determine the boundaries of a site that has already been identified.

The next phase of field work entails excavating units—square or rectangular holes that often measure 1x2 meters (Figure 2). Unit excavation is used to gain more information about the site. Units are typically placed in areas of the site where there are high concentrations of artifacts, as discovered through shovel testing. Units will hopefully yield many more artifacts and some features, telling the archaeologist even more about the site and the people who occupied. Features are things like fire pits, hearths, post holes, builder’s trenches, middens (trash pits), cellars, and privies (outhouses). Features are very important because they help determine the placement of structures or work areas at the site, and give a sense of what the site area may have looked like when it was occupied.

The final phase of archaeological field work would be large-scale excavation. This can be done by excavating many 1x2 meter units or by expanding the units to make them larger and expose more area of the site. The goal, again, is to find more features that show how the site was being used by the people who lived there in the past. Not all excavations include all three of these steps. For example, an historic site or museum may jump right to large-scale excavation because they want to learn as much about the site as possible in order to interpret it to visitors. Or, as in the case of the Army and other federal land managers, survey and excavation of a few units may be all that is required to determine if a site is significant and worthy of preservation. Large-scale excavation may only be conducted if it is necessary to mitigate a site because it cannot be preserved.

Figure 1. Archaeologists working at site 23PU278. All photographs courtesy of the authors.

Figure 2. Example of 1x2 meter unit from site 23PU757.
Some of the lesser known work of an archaeologist is often more important, in terms of educational value, than the field work itself. Archaeology is not about digging up cool stuff. It is about learning as much about the past as possible through the material culture, or artifacts, people left behind. Many hours are spent doing background research, archival studies, oral history interviews, artifact analysis, floral and faunal analysis, other specialized analysis, and, of course, writing the report. Proprietary, for every hour of field work, about two hours are spent doing research, analysis, or writing.

A Word About Artifacts and Dating

Artifacts to which one can assign a specific date or date range are called diagnostic artifacts. Diagnostic artifacts are important because they are used to determine when people were living at a particular site. If a site contains artifacts manufactured only between 1800 and 1850, you know that is when people were living at the site. On historical archaeological sites, some of the most notable artifacts are ceramics, glass, and nails. But, anything with a date printed on it (like a coin) or anything with a known date of manufacture (like an electrical insulator) can also be considered a diagnostic artifact.

As you will see below, ceramics have also be considered a diagnostic artifact. A ceramic manufacturer (like an electrical insulator) can be assigned to designs, patterns, and even colors used, such as transfer printed, hand painted, edge-decorated, slip banded, sponge painted, and so on. These terms refer to the decoration on the ceramic itself. All this information may seem a bit confusing, but as you read on you will see its importance.

Archaeological Site Terminology

For the sake of clarity, a note about site nomenclature is warranted. Archaeological sites across the entire country are numbered in the same manner – with a trinomial. This system was established and maintained by the Smithsonian Institute, and usually is managed on a state by state basis by each State Historic Preservation Office. Here is the system, with Missouri as an example. The states have been numbered alphabetically; Missouri is 23rd. Each county within the state is given a two letter designation; Pulaski County is PU. Each recorded site in the county is numbered consecutively as it is reported to the State Historic Preservation Office. One of the sites discussed below is 23PU757, meaning it was the 757th archaeological site in Pulaski County, Missouri, to be recorded.

Who Braved the Wilds of Southern Pulaski County in the 1820s-1830s?

The Likely Family Connections

A handful of prominent family names jump out as the early settlers of Pulaski County: Ballew, Bench, Christeson, Colley, Maxey, McElroy, Musgrave, Robinson, Tilly, Turpin, Vincent, and a few others. Not surprisingly, many of these families intermarried, making it that much harder to place a family member on a specific spot on the landscape in a specific year. Combine this with the spotty census and land records, and research can get quite frustrating. While this may not seem to be that important, to an archaeologist trying to match a family with a site it can be very exasperating.

Such is the case with site 23PU757, located within the boundaries of Fort Leonard Wood, in the southern portion of the county. It has not been possible to positively identify who lived at this location, and we may never know. What we do know is this: artifacts recovered during 2006 excavations indicated the site was the location of a residence occupied during the 1820s and 1830s. Historical records indicate the site may have been occupied by members of the interrelated Robinson and Musgrave families, previously of Tennessee and Illinois.

James and Sarah Robinson were married before 1798, probably in North Carolina. At some point in the early 1800s, they moved to Tennessee. They were the eldest members of the Robinson family to emigrate from Tennessee to Missouri. Not found in 1830 Missouri census schedules, they are, however, listed in the 1840 census for Pulaski County and James Robinson lived in the Cookville area at the time of his death in 1857. The site of 23PU757 is just south of the former town of Cookville, on the east side of Roubidoux Creek. James and Sarah Robinson were the parents of ten children: Alexander, Anna, John, Polly, Nancy, Olive, William R., Pleasant, Berry, and Isaac. At least five of the children can be positively identified as living in Pulaski County in the first half of the 19th century, but others may have lived here as well. Isaac, the youngest child of James and Sarah Robinson, born in 1820, would ultimately come into possession of the site property.

Anna Robinson, born in 1800 and the second child of James and Sarah Robinson, married Bennett Musgrave (born in 1803) in Lawrence County, Tennessee, in 1821. Anna and Bennett Musgrave moved to Illinois sometime between 1821 and 1830. In 1830, Bennett and Anna Musgrave lived in Macon County, Illinois, and by 1833 they had secured land there from the federal government. They apparently resided in Morgan County, Illinois, in 1839, paying taxes on land there. Although Bennett and Anna Musgrave were not listed in the Missouri census for 1840, they were living there in 1842 when Anna died.

Anna Robinson Musgrave’s sister Olive Robinson, born in 1810 and the sixth child of James and Sarah Robinson, married Bennett Musgrave’s brother Burrell in Illinois in 1825. Burrell and Olive Musgrave were probably in residence in Montgomery County, Illinois, in 1830 and by 1833 had acquired land there from the federal government. By 1837 they had moved with their growing family to Missouri, settling in the Cookville area near Olive’s parents, James and Sarah Robinson (Figure 3).

The Robinson and Musgrave family members discussed above, it appears that only James and Sarah Robinson, along with their youngest son Isaac, were not living in Illinois during the late 1820s and early 1830s, the time period that 23PU757 was occupied. Although they do not appear in the 1830 Missouri census, it is possible that they went unrecorded or were sharing a residence owned by someone else, since the 1830 census only recorded names for heads of household. It is alternatively possible that some other member of the Robinson or Musgrave families preceded James and Sarah Robinson to Pulaski County.

By the time of his death in 1874, Isaac Robinson had gained ownership of the site location and it was part of the real estate subsequently divided among his heirs. Portions of the site property remained in the hands of Robinson heirs until 1921. A deed recording James and Martha Robinson relinquishing interest in a parcel of 40 acres including the site location to A. W. Cook was filed in August of that year. Selling their one-third interest for $1, the Robinsons simply forfeited rights to the property and did not actually receive their share of its market value. Maps dating from circa 1906 and 1924 show no residence at the site location. On the 1924 map, W. H. Cook is indicated as owner of land including the site location. His residence was situated on the ridge summit to the east of the site. If Cook made any use of the site area, it was likely as a dump or outbuilding location. The property remained in the hands of members of the Cook family until it was purchased by Fort Leonard Wood in 1941.

Results of Excavations at 23PU757

Site 23PU757, believed to be the Robinson/Musgrave site, had been previously recorded by archaeologists working for Fort Leonard Wood in 1999. At that time, shovel tests were dug across the landform containing the site, and both prehistoric and historic artifacts were
discovered. Of the two historic artifacts, one was a green hand-painted piece of whiteware ceramic which likely dated to the mid-19th century or earlier. Just to the east of the site location is an intermittent drainage. On the other side of the drainage another site (23PU757) was recorded, and it contained prehistoric artifacts and a single historic artifact. This historic artifact, also ceramic, was a piece of blue edge-decorated whiteware, also dating to the early or mid-19th century.

Based on the presence of these two artifacts, it was thought that a pre-Civil War farmstead had once occupied that property. In order to learn more, further work, including more shovel tests and test unit excavation, would be necessary. For the time being, Fort Leonard Wood placed these two sites on the list of sites to be protected from further testing.

That time finally arrived in the Fall of 2006. A team of six archaeologists worked in October and early November of last year investigating sites 23PU755 and 757, along with four other sites on the installation (one of which is discussed below). Archaeological field work at the two sites included surface collection, shovel testing, and test unit excavation. No other early to mid-19th century artifacts were recovered at 23PU755, so the focus of the work turned to site 23PU757, the likely Robinson/Musgrave site.

A thorough surface collection and excavation of 57 shovel tests across the site area yielded a concentration of artifacts in the southern portion of the site. Twenty-five ceramic sherds were discovered, most dating to the late 19th and early 20th century, but with a few sherds dating to the early 19th century. This indicated there was some occupation of the site during the late 19th and early 20th century, as well as in the early 19th century. There did, however, appear to be a gap in the occupation of the property based on the ceramic dates; few, if any, artifacts dated to between 1850 and 1880.

One of the ceramic pieces discovered was a cobalt blue edge-decorated whiteware plate rim with a scalloped edge and deep, curved marring. The sherd probably dates to the 1830s or 1840s. This edge-decorated sherd closely resembles, and may have originated from, the same plate as the sherd found during previous investigations at site 23PU755, mentioned above. The sherd at 23PU755 may have been displaced by disturbance along the road track that passes through both sites. Less likely, it could mark the location of an outbuilding or subsurface feature associated with the early 19th century occupation of 23PU757.

Surface collection also yielded a key artifact: a single blue transfer printed pearlware sherd dating to the 1820s. The pearlware furnished evidence that the site was occupied as early as the 1820s. This small artifact would prove to be the first pearlware sherd ever discovered on the Fort Leonard Woodlands. The ramifications of this find were staggering. Not only had another pre-Civil War site finally been discovered, but here was a site that was definitely occupied in the 1820s, when only a few pioneers lived in the area. This was truly a remarkable little artifact.

While shovel testing and surface collection had uncovered some wonderful artifacts, they yielded no conclusive results as to site use. The few pieces of architectural debris recovered provided no clear indication of a building location within the site area, although presumably one had been there based on the early artifacts. Clearly, test unit excavation was needed to learn more from this amazing site.

A total of five 1x2 meter test units were excavated, four of the five located in the south portion of the site area where the majority of early 19th century artifacts were collected during shovel testing. Unit excavation yielded artifacts suggesting the presence of a circa 1820s to early 1830s residence at that location. Unfortunately, no foundations or evidence of a building footprint were encountered.

The test units yielded a total of 797 artifacts, with ceramics comprising the largest single artifact class. Among the 326 ceramics recovered were 43 pearlware sherds. The pearlware included four cobalt blue transfer printed, fourteen hand painted, and six edge-decorated examples (Figure 4). Whiteware comprised almost half of the total sherd count, although decorated sherds were limited to five hand painted, five transfer printed, one flown, and one annular decorated.

A concentration of pearlware was also uncovered in the southern portion of the site, primarily from two closely placed units. The pearlware likely marks the location of a house occupied during the 1820s and early 1830s, possibly by members of the interrelated Robinson and Musgrave families. On other sites in Missouri and Illinois dating from the 1820s, the heaviest concentration of domestic debris typically marks the location of farmstead residences.

The quantity of earthenware ceramics...
Ceramic Analysis and Minimum Vessel Count at 23PU757

A minimum vessel count is a technique used by archaeologists to try to determine how many different vessels (plates, bowls, cups, saucers, etc.) are represented by all the ceramic sherds recovered from a particular site. The minimum vessel count from the Robinson/Musgrove site yielded 32 vessels, including eleven pearlware, six white-ware, four ironstone, two semi-vitreous, one porcelain, and eight stoneware. Identifiable pearlware vessels included four plates, three bowls, two cups, and two saucers. Among the identified pearlware vessels were three blue or red transfer prints, one green shell edge, and seven hand painted.

Collected from the surface near one of the excavated units was a transfer printed pearlware plate sherd bearing a portion of a historic Staffordshire pattern depicting the Marine Hospital in Louisville, Kentucky, produced by Enoch Wood & Sons, a pottery established in Burslem, England, in 1818 (Figure 5). Among the first British potters to focus on the American trade, Wood produced dozens of transfer print designs depicting American scenes. The Marine Hospital pattern was one of a series primarily consisting of nautical views. The Louisville hospital was built in 1820 and the pattern was produced sometime over the following decade. Found nearby were fragments of another transfer print plate bearing portions of a floral and scrollwork border design closely resembling, although not identically matching, that used by James and Ralph Clewes of Cobridge, Staffordshire, England, for their series depicting various American cities. Established in 1815, Clewes was a popular exporter to the United States market during the 1820s.

Among the six whiteware vessels identified were a cobalt blue edge-decorated plate, an annular decorated bowl, a hand painted cup or bowl, and a red transfer print saucer. All these vessels have a potential circa 1830s manufacture date. Also represented in the assemblage were a flow blue bowl and a blue transfer print saucer. Ironstone vessels included two molded plates and two bowls. The two semi-vitreous vessels, a molded plate and a bowl with molded and floral decal decoration, were likely of very late 19th to early 20th century manufacture date. A porcelain saucer or bowl, represented by a single sherd, probably dated from about the same time period as the semi-vitreous vessels. Stoneware included three Bristol glazed vessels, a jar lid, a jar, and bowl or milk pan, all dating from the late 19th or early 20th century. The remaining five stoneware vessels were salt glazed and/or Albany slipped, likely dating from circa 1850 to the early 20th century.

All of the pearlware and early white-ware vessels recovered from the Robinson/Musgrove site were imported from England, supporting the conclusion that Ozark settlers at an early date had access to an international mercantile system. Considering the limited sample size (57 shovel tests and only 5 units), it is likely the minimum number of pearlware vessels present at the site is much greater than that derived from the 2006 excavations. It is unlikely that site occupants brought all these ceramics with them when they first emigrated to the Ozarks. Most, if not all, of the pearlware was probably purchased from local or regional stores that were handling English wares. It can be concluded that consumer purchase patterns in the Ozarks were not substantively different from those found elsewhere in the Midwest during the frontier period. This conclusion would seem to contradict the popular notion that Ozark frontier settlers were extremely isolated and barely subsisted off the land. This line of thinking will be explored further in the discussion of the next site.

Another Tilley Treasure!

Many people in the area are undoubtedly familiar with the historical figure of Wilson M. Tilley and the legend surrounding his demise during the Civil War. The work entitled The Tilley Treasure, by J.B. King, does an excellent job of recounting this tale as well as providing facts about the Civil War period in Pulaski County. However, there is little information about Tilley’s life before the Civil War included in the book. What of Wilson M. Tilley’s life prior to the 1860s?

Tilley’s Life in the Antebellum Period

Born in North Carolina in 1807, Wilson Tilley was married in 1827 to Elizabeth Tippett, a native of Tennessee, and together they journeyed from Tennessee to Missouri the following year. The Tillesy first settled in the Gasconade River valley and were residing there when recorded in the 1830 census. They moved to the Roubidoux Creek site location sometime during the next four years. The tract was eventually claimed by Wilson Tilley from the federal government in 1841.

Census records listed Wilson Tilley as the head of a household consisting of four people in 1830, seven in 1840. He was identified in the 1850 census population schedule as a farmer with $1500 in property. Tilley’s household at that time consisted of thirteen people, including his children William J., Nancy J., Isaac N., Charlotte, Wilson, Margaret, Mahala, and Missannah, ages 5 to 20. The elder sons, William and Isaac, were identified as laborers, presumably on their father’s farm. Also in the household were William and Jasper Vaughan, and Vandrue T. Christeson, ranging in age from 1 to 11 years.

Wilson Tilley was one of only a small number of people in Pulaski County who owned slaves. The census slave schedule for 1850 enumerated two people held as slaves by Tilley: a woman age 20 and a woman age 45. It is quite possible the women lived in the same residence as the Tilley family,
Although they may have occupied a separate adjacent dwelling, in the 1850 census for Pulaski County, 27 of 43 slaveholders are listed with one or two slaves, making Tilley typical among them. The largest slaveholder in the county at that time was Isaac N. Bradford, with thirteen people enumerated under his name. Isaac’s son, William Bradford, would later marry into the Tilley family and become owner of the site property.

According to the 1850 census, the Tilley farm consisted of 120 acres, including 60 improved acres, valued at $800. The most important grain crop on the farm was corn, with 2000 bushels produced in the most recent harvest. Swine, numbering 75, constituted the principle livestock. The farm also yielded 20 pounds of honey or beeswax during the previous year. In their practice of “hog and hominy” agriculture, the Tilleys were typical settlers from the Upper South on the 19th century frontier. The Tilley farm ranked above average for the local area. Among the 507 farms recorded in the agricultural schedule for Pulaski County, the Tilley farm ranks in the top 10% by value, the top 15% in size.

The 1860 census population schedule listed Wilson Tilley as a farmer with $5000 in real estate and $7000 in personal property. Tilley’s high personal property evaluation was unusual among period census listings and cannot be ascribed solely to the value of the four slaves held on his farm. It may have reflected the presence of a large residence built on the property sometime during the 1850s, perhaps a replacement to an earlier one of more modest dimensions. Living with Wilson Tilley in 1860 were Elizabeth, Charlotte, Mahala, and Missaniah Tilley, as well as Jasper Vaughan.

Four slaves were held by Tilley in 1860, two men ages 34 and 35, a woman age 30, and a boy age 13. Only 21 slavholders were listed for Pulaski County in 1860. Among those listed, only three held more slaves than Tilley. Eight was the highest number held by any single person. Slavery was never as integral to the agricultural economy of the Ozarks as it was in other portions of Missouri, but it was, nonetheless, a part of the early 19th century history of the Ozarks, challenging the stereotypical image of self-reliant pioneers wrestling a place for themselves in the wilderness. The Tilleys were an Ozark success story, among the wealthiest farmers in the area, but they gained that success with the aid of slave labor. As noted above, the Wilson Tilley farm increased in size and jumped dramatically in value during the 1850s, with the 1860 census evaluating the farm at $5000, including 470 acres, 180 improved. Tilley had diminished his swine herd and diversified his livestock holdings during the 1850s. Valued at $2000 in 1860, animals on the farm included 40 swine, 40 sheep, 30 cattle, 9 milk cows, and 13 horses. Corn again dominated crop totals, with 2000 bushels garnered from the most recent harvest, although wheat, oats, peas, potatoes, and hay were also being grown. Other commodities produced included butter, cheese, and molasses. Tilley in 1860 maintained his rank among the most successful local farmers with only slight modifications to his original agricultural strategy.

The Wilson and Elizabeth Tilley household had diminished by 1860 as their children came of age, married, and established farms of their own, some on acreage in the immediately surrounding area. Before and during the Civil War, several Tilley children married into other families that had moved to Pulaski County from the Upper South in the early to mid-19th century, forming a complicated web of interrelationships.

The Tilley Legend

At the outset of the Civil War in 1861, Wilson M. Tilley harbored southern sympathies, but reportedly suffered from tuberculosis and could not take an active role in the conflict. Later, as rebel fortunes waned, Tilley aligned himself with pro-Union forces. I. P. Sanderson wrote to federal authorities in April, 1864, that Tilley was originally in favor of secession, but had “been loyal for the last Two years or more,” acting out of “Self-interest,” and had voted for the radical Republican political faction. Tilley’s son, Wilson Leroy Tilley, on the other hand, briefly served with Confederate forces at the start of the war, then moved to Batesville, Arkansas, where he worked as a blacksmith. He later returned to Missouri and joined a bushwhacker band that attacked a Union patrol, acting in conjunction with a formally organized Confederate unit. Captured near St. Louis in June, 1864, he was subsequently convicted by a military court for his bushwhacking activity, and spent the remainder of the war imprisoned at Alton, Illinois.

On September 10, 1864, Wilson M. Tilley was killed at his home and his farmstead was ransacked and burned (Figure 6). The attack was the work of bushwhackers according to Tilley’s grandson, Joseph N. Morgan, who provided the most detailed and probably the most reliable account of the incident. Another source suggested the bushwhackers may have been disguised as Union troops. Morgan stated that Tilley’s wife Elizabeth was absent at the time of the attack, having gone away for her health. She returned on September 10, only to find her home ransacked and her husband dead.

Four communities existed on the landscape now occupied by Fort Leonard Wood. Probably the oldest was Cookville (lower left), originally Cook’s Mill on the Roubidoux. There were a handful of buildings at this crossroad trading center. Wharton (above left) was even smaller, consisting of a store and post office within the store. It was named for Mrs. Wharton, the first postmaster, who was succeeded by Melchesedec Brown. The largest community in the area was Bloodland (upper right), slightly exceeding 100 people with diverse business enterprises.

Pearl Brown pulling a wagon with a youngster at Wharton. Courtesy of Bob and Geneva Goodrich, George Lane Collection.

R. R. Hicks’ general merchandising store in Bloodland. Courtesy of Joann McDonald Moss.

General store and post office at Cookville, which had a population in 1930 of 48 persons. Courtesy of Joann McDonald Moss.
to the nearby farmstead of her daughter Margaret Hobbs to assist in the birth of her grandson. Returning the following morning, she found her husband hung from a large tree near their house. Tradition held that Tilley had buried money - gold and silver coins - near his house and those who took his life may have come in search of the so-called “Tilley treasure.”

Tilley family history indicates Elizabeth Tilley dug up the gold coins after her husband’s death and used the money to rebuild the farmstead, however, she did not know where the silver coins had been buried. Stories of buried treasure on 19th century farmsteads are common throughout the Midwest, but in this case the tale was ultimately verified. During earthmoving operations in 1962, two boxes filled with silver coins were unearthed within or adjacent to the current site location.

The Tilley Family After the Civil War

Wilson Tilley was not the only family member who did not survive the war. Two of his sons-in-law died as well, Robert L. Christeson in 1862 and Joseph J. Hobbs in 1864. Christeson’s widow, Charlotte, died in 1864, survived by her two-year-old son Robert L. Christeson, who was subsequently raised by his grandmother, Elizabeth Tilley. Robert presumably grew up at the Tilley residence, rebuilt after the war. Elizabeth Tilley continued to operate the family farm after Wilson’s death, her household in 1870 including her grandson Robert, her widowed daughter Margaret Hobbs, and Margaret’s children Lee, William, and Josephine. Also in residence with Elizabeth were Nancy Morris, age 12, as well as members of the Woodward family: Wesley, a minister, age 28; Sarah, age 22; and William, age 1. Wesley Woodward was probably minister for the nearby Mt. Gibson Church, built in 1868.

Appearing immediately beneath the household of Elizabeth Tilley in the 1870 census population schedule were those of two sons-in-law, William L. Bradford and William Pippin. Bradford married Missannah Tilley in 1867 and for the following six years rented a farm, most likely property owned by his mother-in-law Elizabeth Tilley. William Pippin, who married Nancy Tilley, is identified in the 1870 census as a farm renter and he, like Bradford, probably rented a portion of Elizabeth Tilley’s land. The household of William and Nancy Pippin in 1870 included eight children, ages 1 to 17. One among them was Missannah, age 6, who would live at the site residence 30 years later.

In about 1873 William and Missannah Bradford moved to a farm located about two miles southwest of Waynesville and apparently sometime during the 1870s William and Nancy Pippin likewise established an independent farm at a distance from the main Tilley family holdings. By 1880, Elizabeth’s son Wilson L. Tilley had taken over ownership and administration of the farm. According to the census of that year, Wilson L. Tilley’s household included Elizabeth (his mother), his wife Sue and their four children, as well as four laborers.

Following the death of Wilson L. Tilley in 1894, 120 acres of the family estate, including the site location, were put up for auction and purchased by William L. Bradford, husband of Wilson M. Tilley’s daughter Missannah. The site property would remain in the hands of descendants of Wilson M. Tilley and their families until Roy C. Wilson sold the property to Fort Leonard Wood in 1941.

Results of Excavations at the Tilley Site

Investigations began at the site (23PU278) in the fall of 2005. Based on the archival records, it was known that Wilson M. Tilley had been one of the past land owners of the property, but the visible structural remains and nearly all of the artifacts recovered during 2005 dated to the site’s occupation in the late 19th and early 20th century by the Bradford and Wilson families. As luck would have it, during the last few days of field work a small number of ceramic sherds dating to the 1830s and 1840s were discovered. Due to lack of time, it was not possible to investigate the possible early occupation area of the site. Still, Fort Leonard Wood recognized the importance of this discovery and determined to return to the site the following year for further work.

In the fall of 2006 archaeologists returned to the site with the goal of finding evidence of Wilson M. Tilley’s early residence (Figure 7). It did not take long before numerous pieces of 1830s and 1840s ceramics were being uncovered. Another Tilley treasure had been discovered! This treasure may not seem as valuable as the coins unearthed in the 1960s but to an archaeologist, concrete evidence of an antebellum frontier farmstead in Pulaski County is priceless.

Seven 1x2 meter test units were excavated during 2006. These units contained circa 1830s to 1850s artifacts, as well as artifacts of late 19th to 20th century date. The quantity of mid-19th century artifacts suggested that this could be the location of the residence first occupied by the family of Wilson and Elizabeth Tilley during the early 1830s. No evidence of a feature marking the exact house location was found, but the lack of ground disturbance within some of the units suggested the possibility that subsurface remnants of the residence could still remain intact.

A total of 2246 artifacts were recovered from the seven units excavated at 23PU278, with 552 ceramic sherds (Figure 8). The ceramics ranged in manufacture date from the 1830s to the 1930s. Among those of identifiable ware type, whiteware comprised over 1930s. Among those of identifiable ware type, whiteware comprised over 20%, while ironstone (circa 1850-1920) totaled a distant second. Comparative few fragments of semi-vitreous and porcelain (late 19th - early 20th century) were found. Sherds of utilitarian stoneware, yellowware, and redware, ranging in date from the early 19th century to the early 20th century, were present in a very small quantity. Artifacts other than ceramics and glass primarily consisted of animal remains, some likely representing food prepared and eaten by the occupants of the property. Other items included what appeared to be an iron Dutch oven lid fragment, part of a table knife blade, and a bone utensil handle fragment. All three were of 19th century date and probably associated with the antebellum occupation of the farmstead.

Fragments of hand-made brick were present in all seven units, as well as numerous cut nails and 59 pieces of window glass, a surprisingly low quantity. Its absence is unexpected if the area was the location of the main Tilley residence occupied from the early 1830s until 1864. Log houses built by frontier settlers on first arrival frequently were fitted with a limited number of small windows, but the Tilleys, with more than sufficient means at their disposal, would have surely altered and enlarged their first house or built a replacement. The absence of glass is perhaps best explained if the Tilleys moved into a new residence built nearby during the 1850s and their original home was subsequently used as a quarter for slaves who worked on the Tilley farm.

A Civil War era button was also recovered (Figure 9). While not an exact match for common military buttons of the period, the two-piece brass button was similar to those used by both Union and Rebel forces during the war. It featured a shield centered on the breast of an eagle with spread wings and head uplifted to the left. It is tempting to associate the button with the 1864 murder of Wilson Tilley and the destruction of his farmstead. According to one account, the bushwhackers responsible for the attack had been dressed in Union uniforms. Of course, members of the Tilley family served in regularly organized Confederate forces and the button could have originated from one of their uniforms.

Ceramic Analysis and Minimum Vessel Count at the Tilley Site

Among the ceramics collected from the seven units, a minimum number of 61 vessels could be identified, including 31 whiteware, eight ironstone, three porcelain, two semi-vitreous, fourteen stoneware, two yellowware, and one redware. Whiteware predominated the assemblage. Notable for its absence was pearlware, the most common refined earthenware in the 1820s; it was supplanted by whiteware, available in the American market by 1829.

Thirty whiteware vessels in the minimum count probably dated from the 1830s to 1850s, based on their decorative elements. Among them were nine blue edge-decorated, three annular, five hand painted, two sponge/spatter, and one combined hand painted and
Ten were transfer printed in red, brown, light blue and black; in scenic, floral, and geometric patterns common to the antebellum period. Two of the red transfer printed vessels, a saucer and a plate, were decorated with the same rim design, consisting of twisting vines on a background of parallel lines (Figure 11). The motif was similar to that used on the “Columbia” and other patterns produced by English potters in the 1840s and 1850s.

Ironstone included a plate with molded foliate design common to the 1850s and 1860s. A second ironstone plate was differentiated by its paneled Gothic edge, a design that was popular among consumers during the 1850s. Also present was a bowl with a ribbed design like those in widespread production during the 1850s and 1860s. The eight ironstone vessels identified included three plates, one platter, two bowls, one tureen lid, and one teacup.

If the artifacts recovered during the 2006 excavations represent the location of the main Tilley house occupied until 1864, then the number of ironstone vessels is unexpectedly low. With their fortunes rising during the 1850s, the Tilleys could have readily obtained the fashionable white ironstone enjoying widespread popularity at that time. Perhaps the scarcity of ironstone was a matter of personal preference. Alternatively, it is possible that the Tilleys moved into a larger, new residence sometime during the 1850s and that Tilley’s slaves took up residence in the old house. If this was the case, then the ceramics may represent hand-me-downs from the Tilleys rather than a full range of tableware in use in the main household at the time.

At least 54 burned ceramic sherds were recovered. Most, if not all, of the sherds may have been burned during the 1864 torching of the farmstead. Ten burned sherds could be identified by ware type, including six whiteware pieces. The whiteware included four edge-decorated and one transfer print.

The absence of pearlware from the assemblage indicates the Tilleys brought very few ceramics with them when they moved from Tennessee to Missouri in 1828. In fact, they would have had no need to bring them along as the items would have been available to them at an inexpensive price once arriving on the Missouri frontier. The transfer print whiteware of 1830s to 1840s date found at the site was almost certainly purchased from a local general store after their arrival in Missouri.

General stores selling a wide variety of goods shipped from outside the region were in operation in isolated small settlements in the northern Ozarks by the 1830s. Gerard Schultz, in his regional history, summarized listings in an account book dating from 1835 to 1836.
for a general store in Miller County. The ten most common items sold were whiskey, coffee, domestic cloth, sugar, wine, shoes, calico, powder and lead, tobacco, and buttons. Whiskey was priced at $1 per gallon, domestic 15 cents per yard, calico 20 cents per yard, coffee at 20 cents per pound. Also purchased at the store were cups, saucers, and plates (most likely English imports). Other items sold there included tin cups, tumblers, knives, forks, spoons, pots, oven lids, salt, tea, coffee mills, fish hooks, gun locks, looking glasses, candlesticks, candle molds, window sashes, nails, saddles, saddle bags, bits, blankets, handkerchiefs, socks, cloaks, mittens, seal skin caps, hats, suspenders, hook and eyes, silk, muslin, French linen, plaid, pins, needles, thread, books, and fiddles. Stores like the one in Miller County would have been located throughout the Ozarks, where settlement populations warranted. These general stores offered a wide range of items that likely satisfied all the frontier settler’s daily needs.

An invoice of merchandise dated May, 1832, from another Missouri general store listed prices for refined earthenware ceramics, including individual cup and saucer sets, bowls, and plates ranging from 12.5 cents to 60 cents, with the exception of one large “Liverpool dish,” probably a platter, valued at $1.50. Widely used during the period, the term Liverpool referred to transfer prints. Liverpool, England was the location of the first transfer print refined earthenware production and of the first potters to produce American transfer designs. In one portion of the inventory, units of six large blue edge-decorated dishes were valued at 23 to 55 cents and groups of six small blue dishes from 10.25 to 12.5 cents. Sets of 12 edge-decorated large plates, in both blue and green, were priced at 45 cents, smaller edge-decorated plates at 43 cents. Three round Liverpool dishes were priced at 34 cents, one dozen “fancy Col.” bowls (most likely hand painted) at 50 and 60 cents. A set of fancy cups and saucers was only 12.5 cents. In that same inventory, one piece of gauze cap ribbon was priced at $2.50, a Waterloo white scarf at $1.62, Waterloo shawls at $1.50 to $2.37, a cotton shawl 75 cents, a wool hat $1.50, Irish linen 58 cents per yard, women’s saddles $10.00 to $12.00, and men’s saddles $8.00 to $10.00.

In daily account books from the 1830s and 1840s, from a sampling of general stores in the region, ceramic purchases were fairly infrequent and clothing items comprised the majority of sales. When they did occur, ceramic purchases rarely exceeded $1 or $2. Typical was an 1832 purchase record including the sale of a set of plates at 37.5 cents, along with three bunches of fiddle strings, a cello, and three bunches of beads, the strings, pall, and beads were each priced at 37.5 cents. Another customer spent $1.33 for a Liverpool dish and 50 cents for a “common dish,” but paid more for his sugar — 20 pounds for $2.20.

The availability and low price of refined earthenware ceramics, along with the comparatively high price of clothing items held true in subsequent decades as well. Confirming evidence is supplied by the daybook from 1853 to 1854 for the H & H Store in Lebanon, Missouri, located about 30 miles west of Waynesville and the Tilley site. Not situated along any navigable watercourse, Lebanon was situated along the same overland route by which merchandise reached Waynesville and the range of goods available, as well as their prices, were no doubt similar in each town. Daybook entries for 1853 recorded sets of ceramic teas selling for 35 to 60 cents, sets of plates for 35 and 70 cents. Clothing on the other hand, ranged from a shirt costing $1.40 to a coat, vest, and pants for $23. Items selling in about the same price range as the ceramics, 30 to 80 cents, included a tin bucket, a damaged draw knife, a pattern for a vest, flax thread, a quarter bushel of blue grass seed, and six candles. A pocket knife cost $1.65, more than double the most expensive plate set. In addition to clothing, commonly purchased items at the H & H Store included food stuffs. Sale entries for 1853 included 1 bucket of molasses for 25 cents, 11 pounds of coffee for $3.00, 24 pounds of sugar for $2.00, and 37 pounds of flour for 84 cents.

**The Real Frontier Settler of Pulaski County**

A recent historic context developed for the Fort Leonard Wood lands portrays the early frontier settlers of Pulaski County as arriving with little and eking out a precarious living off the land, with little or no access to the goods and services available in the more populated areas of the country. This interpretation is clearly not supported by the archaeological record at sites 23PU757 and 23PU278.

Analysis of the Musgrave/Robinson and Tilley artifact assemblages and 19th century account books for the northern Ozarks tells a very different story. Instead of living a self-sufficient lifestyle, early to mid-19th century settlers of the northern Ozarks patronized general stores handling a variety of merchandise much like that available in any other part of the Midwest frontier. They were not hunting and gathering or relying solely on the products of their farms to sustain themselves,
but supplementing their larders with food purchased at the local general store. Rather than choosing isolation, Ozark settlers during the frontier period embraced an international trade and mercantile network. They bought their tableware from stores and ate their meals from plates that were manufactured in Staffordshire, England, and then shipped thousands of miles for sale in a small Ozark settlement that was difficult to reach, but by no means cut off from the rest of the world.

Anthony Hopkins in his book on the cultural iconography of the “hillbilly,” states that the pejorative image of backward, lazy, ignorant Southern mountain folk dates all the way back to the mid-19th century. The characterization was originally applied to residents of the Appalachians, but shifted to the Ozarks during the 1930s and 1940s. In a response to this negative portrayal, a counterpart was created of the stalwart, forthright, and picturesque white mountaineer “wholly isolated from modern civilization,” who embodied pioneer spirit and rugged individualism. Clearly both portrayals miss the truth. Both myths ignore large segments of the historic mountain population, including the entrepreneurs who opened the stores and mills on which the agricultural economy depended. Also absent from these depictions were the African Americans who provided an important minority within the agricultural work force.

Both the Musgrave/Robinson and Tilley sites reveal the extent to which simple stereotypes of unenterprising mountain folk or self-sufficient pioneer heroes fall short of reality. The Musgraves, Robinsons, Tilleys and their neighbors were frontier settlers, but they did not elect to disengage themselves from the new American mercantile economy. They purchased much of what they needed from stores and, in the case of the Tilleys and a few others, bought African American slaves to do their manual labor. They worked hard to establish a life for themselves on the frontier and, in most cases, succeeded. The bits and pieces of life left behind by the Musgrave, Robinson, and Tilley families are but a small fraction of the whole of their existence on the Ozark landscape. But these few items, along with family histories and historical records, help to paint a picture of what life was like in early Pulaski County.

**Other Treasures Awaiting Discovery**

Fort Leonard Wood will continue its investigation of historic period sites on the installation lands for the foreseeable future. Each year more sites will be researched and excavated and, in turn, more and more information will be revealed about the settlement of the area. When possible, sites with the potential of dating to the early 19th century will be chosen for excavation.

There is much more to be learned about this early settlement period, in addition to the later periods of occupation in the county.

To that end, the 2007 field season will include revisiting the Robinson/Musgrave site (23PU757) and conducting a third round of field work at the Tilley site (23PU278). It is hoped that structural remains and associated features, such as cellar pits, may finally be exposed at these two sites. While the artifacts have told us much about the

Robinson/Musgrave and Tilley families, identifying the locations of their homes and outbuildings would be even more informative. In addition, several other farmstead sites will be investigated, one also having the potential of dating to the early 19th century. Also, an archival and oral history project of the Bloodland community will be conducted.

The rest of the 2007 field season will be devoted to investigating the World War II Prisoner of War camp that operated at Fort Leonard Wood from December 1942 through May 1946. The focus of this article has been on the early pioneer settlement of Pulaski County, but historical archaeologists regularly investigate 20th century sites, many of them military in nature. The investigation of the Fort Leonard Wood WWII POW camp will be the first military site to be excavated on the installation. Numerous WWII POW camps have been archaeologically investigated across the country, and the results from Fort Leonard Wood are sure to add to this growing database of knowledge about our country’s 20th century military history.

**Figure 10.** edge-decorated, hand painted, annular, and sponge/spatter whiteware sherds from site 23PU278.

**Figure 11.** Transfer printed whiteware sherds from site 23PU278; twisting vine pattern sherds located in top row.

Dundas School, 1902. Ollie Vaughan, teacher. Dundas School was about midway between Bloodland and Cooksville, south central Pulaski County, on what is now Fort Leonard Wood. Pictures above and right courtesy of Pulaski County Historical Society.

Another casualty of the Fort Leonard Wood construction was the trading center of Tribune, with a population of 20 in the 1930s. Most small community names of the area have disappeared but the name Tribune survives in a form on weather and aeronautical maps indicating the airport location on Fort Leonard Wood.