

NPS FORT VANCOUVER PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY FIELD SCHOOL 2011

July 29, 2011 Jeff Marks Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Education, Museum Archaeology 10th National Parks Service, Clark National Historical Park, Columbia District, Columbia River, Community Archaeology, Field School, Fort Vancouver, Fort Vancouver Public Archaeology Field School, Fur Trade, Geography of the United States, GPS, Great Lakes, Historic Archaeology, Hudson's Bay Company, Kanaka, Lewis, M&A, North America, NPS, NPS Fort, NPS Fort Vancouver Public Archaeology Field School, Oregon, Oregon Coast, Oregon Country, Oregon Trail, Oregon-Washington coast, Parks Service, Portland, Portland State University, Public archaeology, Saloon Archaeology, United States, United States Army, Vancouver, Village, Washington, Washington State University, Washington State University Vancouver, west coast, Western coast

This is the last day at the 10th National Parks Service (NPS) Fort Vancouver Public Archaeology Field School based in Vancouver, Washington. Over the past 7 weeks the 18 students from Washington State University Vancouver, Portland State University and a few graduate students from all over the United States have come together to excavate a multicultural village, called Kanaka Village by the Americans due to the large Hawaiian population brought in by the English traders, that served to support the Hudson's Bay Company trading post on the Columbia River in the 1830s and 40s. We have been well trained in field techniques and methodology while investigating the purpose of a fenced-in open area in the middle of the village. We have also been interacting with the public on a daily basis. Interpretative training is a part of our curriculum and an essential part of our mission to raise awareness and foster public involvement in the history of the Columbia River and the Oregon-Washington coast. In addition to all this we have been attending regular lectures from visiting archaeologists on topics ranging from Saloon Archaeology to Fur Trade Archaeology in the Great Lakes region, and race and ethnicity in a constructed landscape in the American South.

The Hudson's Bay Company Village was built along side the fort in the late 1820s as a place for non-officers or ranking company officials to live. The population dwarfed the fort population at its smallest with around 250 inhabitants and could swell into the thousands during the brigade season. It was the most culturally diverse area of the Western coast of North America for a significant portion of the 19th century with workers being brought in from across the globe by the Hudson's Bay Company trading and interacting with over 30 distinct Native American tribes at a major trading hub along the Columbia River. Most of the historic record of this era concerns itself with the lives and dealings of the officers and officials of the company and their perspectives of the villagers. Almost nothing is known about the daily lives of the villagers that is not revealed to us through archaeology.

Each of our trenches were investigating a different aspect of the open area in the village and students were rotated from trench to trench and would hone their interpretive skills informing any visitors who came to see what we were finding. Many times we would learn more from the public than they did from us but this is part of the beauty of Public Archaeology, each party walks away with a new outlook on the site.

This last week in our field school has been spent working on survey techniques. We have been camping at the Yeon Property, a new Parks Service acquisition by the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park on the Oregon Coast. New properties must be first archaeologically surveyed in order to identify any sites of significance in the area and to set up an archaeological baseline to protect and preserve any cultural resources on the property. We have been split into three groups of 5 or 6 each and over the past few days have rotated between digging 1m deep shovel probes at regular 30m intervals, conducting pedestrian surveys through the woods and sea grass to the ocean, and mapping the property with hand held GPS devices and today is no different. It will be sad to say goodbye to all of our new friends and the Fort and its Village which we've all come to know and love but this will be tempered by the knowledge that we got to participate in something special – a uniquely designed Public Archaeology endeavor that involves and

educates the public and trains all of us students to enter the field as well-rounded professionals and future leaders in archaeology.

If you're ever in the Vancouver/Portland area please come and visit the Fort and experience part of the rich colonial and frontier history of the Hudson's Bay Company and US Army eras on the West coast of the Oregon Territory, you won't be disappointed. For more information about the field school, Fort Vancouver, or Kanaka Village, please visit [our website](#).

