

Dig extended at site of 1750s British, American encampments

August 12 2016, by Chris Carola

An archaeological dig that was supposed to wrap up this week at an 18th century military site has yielded such intriguing artifacts the project has been extended, the archaeologist leading the excavations said.

The six-week project was supposed to end Friday, but state officials have granted an extension for excavations in Lake George Battlefield Park to continue at least for another week and possibly two, said David Starbuck, an anthropology professor at New Hampshire's Plymouth State University.

More than two dozen pits dug along the two-lane road that cuts through the park have yielded evidence of the British and provincial American encampments known to have been located there in 1755-59 during the French and Indian War, which was part of the Seven Years' War. Those new excavations have been made along sloping ground above the park's open field, which was a swamp in the 18th century.

Among the many artifacts found so far are uniform buttons and buckles, musket balls, gun flints, and high-quality pottery and porcelain, Starbuck said. Those finds, along with a large number of butchered animal bones and oyster shells, indicate the site may have been occupied by high-ranking officers.

"Can we ever really prove that? Probably not," he said. "But given the quality of the artifacts, it's the best we've ever seen at any of our military digs."

It's the third consecutive summer the archaeological field school sponsored by the nearby State University of New York at Adirondack has been working inside the park, located on Lake George's southern shore 55 miles north of Albany. Volunteers and students have spent the past three summers excavating other spots in the park, including the site of an unfinished fort, but this is the first time digging has been conducted at this location.

"This is a special spot," Starbuck said.

A couple hundred yards away, excavations have uncovered more of the stone walls that were part of the only completed bastion of Fort George, built in 1759. The British halted construction because the threat of attacks had lessened by then.

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