ancestor through the Sons of the Revolution, State of California. The D.A.R., however, in the September 1917 issue of their magazine, validate the account of Andrew McNair and *The Liberty Bell*. Major McNair did splendid research work on this story alone, not counting his exceptional McNair, McNear, McNeir family genealogies.

*Supplement, 1955.* In his introduction, the compiler evaluates "The Dream of Equality," "We must be inextricably interrelated" and "we are all largely related, and frequently much more closely than we realize," and family history has had a continuous and marked effect on national diplomacy. "In the history of our country there are but few events which did not have their start or involvement in genealogical connections." "Those who have preceded us are related to those who come after us and no one understands himself so well but that he can learn more about himself through consideration of the life histories of his forefathers." Further accounting is made in this supplement of Andrew McNair and the Liberty Bell. The following chapters comprise additional data and a correction on the subject to that in McNair, McNear and McNeir Genealogies (1922) and Supplement (1928).

These volumes, plus the additions and corrections, not previously identified in the parent work, are so arranged that no difficulty should arise in linking them to the proper family. The research is concise and well documented. Notes and complete name indexes further enhance the usefulness of these books. Finally, there is so much well-written biography that it is a pleasure to read these volumes.

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Margery Shore Scott

*Archeology and American History: Two Case Studies*

The contribution of the archeologist to the study of prehistoric periods is well known. Archeology has also told us much of the early story of historic periods in Palestine, Rome, and other such ancient cultures. We do not ordinarily think of archeology as a valuable tool for the study of American history, however. Yet archeology has been proved such by two recent archeological studies in western Pennsylvania. The reports of these two studies are reviewed below.

This little volume is really a corking detective story with an international flavor. The mystery to be solved is not a murder but the nature of an historic fortification, and the evidence is not of the fingerprints and ballistics variety, but archeological and historical. The solution is just as satisfying and convincing as any “whodunit.”

Harrington reviews briefly the well known story of the Battle of Great Meadows in 1754 when Virginia forces under George Washington clashed with French troops from Fort Duquesne in the opening battle of a war which was to decide whether France or Britain would be dominant in North America.

Having adequately sketched the background, Harrington presents the “problem.” How was the fort built?? The documents give three different versions, not easily reconcilable. In 1816, one Freeman Lewis surveyed the visible surface remains of the fort and reported that the fort was triangular. He drew this conclusion from examining embankments which he concluded were the remains of earth piled around what had once been the stockade. This triangular theory was also defended by a local resident, James Veech, in a work begun in 1850.

However, when Jared Sparks examined the site in 1830, he concluded that the still visible mounds indicated a diamond shaped fort. Archer Hulbert in 1901 and Reuben G. Thwaites in 1903 came to similar conclusions after examination of the battlefield. Cursory archeological examination in 1901 and in 1931 seemed to bear out the diamond-shaped theory and in 1932 a reconstruction of the fort along such lines was erected.

There was a third version of the shape of the fort. In 1759 Colonel James Burd visited the battlefield and reported that the fort had been a “small circular stockade with a small house in the center; on the outside there is a small ditch goes around it.” Here was a perplexing problem for the historian. An almost contemporary eye witness reported a circular fort, but the physical remains indicated either a triangular or rectangular structure. Historians finally concluded that weather and the French destruction of the
fort had wrought such changes in five years that Burd had been deceived. In the nineteen-forties, the deposition of one John Shaw, who claimed to have taken part in the battle, came to light. His account, made only two months after the battle, substantiated Burd's version, but it was discounted.

In 1952 the National Park Service, which administers the site, began archeological explorations to supplement knowledge of the battle. Their careful scientific examination combined with a skeptical and inquiring approach soon proved that the existing rectangular reconstruction of the fort was inaccurate and that Burd and Shaw were correct!

In retrospect it became clear that the quarreling theorists about the shape of the fort were like the famous blind men who examined an elephant and reported variously that it was like a tree, a wall, a rope and a snake, because they had touched different parts of the animal. The same was true of the fort. The embankments which Sparks and Lewis had examined had not been the remains of earth piled around the base of a stockade, but had been outer earthen entrenchments. Within these entrenchments had been the smaller circular stockade reported by Burd and Shaw. In 1953, a new reconstruction of the fort was made to conform to these new findings. The account of how the correct version was finally arrived at is presented in absorbing detail supplemented with excellent maps, drawings and photos. The potential reader should be warned that a reading of the book is likely to turn him into an amateur archeologist.

The work of the archeologist resulted in a reconstructed fort which will be more real to thousands of annual visitors. This was the principal reason for the excavations. Our basic knowledge of the battle is not greatly altered, although the archeologist's work gives greater credence to Shaw's account of the battle.

The real value of the excavation to the historian is its demonstration of how useful the archeologist's trowel can be, and, by implication, the tools of other disciplines than those dealing only with documents. Here we have a very neat case history of a "problem" with a happy and definite solution. Graduate students in history might profitably review the whole affair to impress upon their minds that an account repeated over and over in print and accepted by such eminent historians as Douglas Southall Freeman may still be successfully questioned, and that the more disciplines brought to
bear on an historical problem, the more likely an accurate solution.

Harrington’s book concludes with an appendix containing contemporary accounts of the battle. There are a few minor criticisms. The various historical theories about the shape of the fort might have been presented in “family” tables, as medievalists arrange variant versions of documents. Such a plan of organization might have avoided some confusion. On page 35, note 56, the brochure *A Young Colonel from Virginia*, listed as without an author, is by John W. Oliver, on the editorial board of this magazine.

The second study with which we are concerned is “Investigations at the Ravenscraft Site, CM 36Fa25,” by JAMES L. SWAUGER and DON W. DRAGO0. It is a mimeographed report of the Section of Man of Carnegie Museum, Pittsburgh 13, Pa., produced in May of 1957. The public may obtain a copy free by writing to the museum.

This report is of interest as an example of the negative value of archeology to the historian. It tells how experts in disciplines allied to history proved that a site under investigation was not of historic interest. The location in question, an early graveyard a few hundred yards from Braddock’s Road, is a short distance from Fort Necessity near Farmington, Pennsylvania. It was discovered by a local amateur archeologist, Glenn Hoskins. Local residents had no memory or record of who was buried in the graves, so Hoskins surmised that their nearness to Fort Necessity and to Braddock’s Road (which Washington had used in 1754 before it was so-called) might indicate that the graves were those of the casualties from the Battle of Great Meadows. If so, the site would probably be acquired by the federal government as a national shrine.

Hoskins invited Dr. James Swauger and Dr. Don Dragoo of the Section of Man of Carnegie Museum to investigate the graves. With the permission of the owners of the land, several graves were opened over a period of two summers. From a total of eight graves opened, all that was recovered (other than skeletal remains and the wood and nails of crude coffins) was six buttons. Of the six, two bore the manufacturer’s name, A. Matthews. A painstaking, thorough and patient attempt now began to date the graves through tracking down the button maker. At the same time, careful search of available documentary evidence was carried on, but no light on the graveyard was turned up in this way.

After innumerable leads had proved fruitless and experts on
two continents had been unable to identify the buttons conclusively, the elusive Mr. Matthews was finally located—through the patent office! He had once patented a button-making mold. The records showed that he had lived in Southington, Connecticut. Local records from Connecticut showed that he had first begun manufacturing buttons in 1806. The burials, then, were made after 1806 and could not be casualties from Fort Necessity.

As a by-product to the negative conclusion, the investigation taught the archeologists (and historians who read their report) much about coffin-making and burial practices in the early days of this region. A search for written information on these subjects had turned up almost nothing; we know all about the burial practices of the Egyptians of six thousand years ago, but almost nothing about those of our own ancestors. Thus the archeologist's report on this, gives us the most comprehensive account of this subject that we have and once again, the historian must tip his hat to the archeologist.

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