

CLASSROOM ACTIVITY #1

FOCUS ON: VALLEY FORGE ARCHEOLOGICAL DIG

With "**Excavation Adventure**" students become junior archeologists as they interpret George Washington's orders to construct a log hut city at Valley Forge.

Procedure: Provide your students with an overview of the archeological dig being conducted at Valley Forge during the spring and summer of 2000. Have students answer the following questions. Discuss the answers as a class follow-up. (Visit www.nps.gov/LogCabin to follow the excavation of the Continental Army's Valley Forge encampment and to find further information to help in answering the following questions.)

HOW TO READ ARCHEOLOGY

1. What is archeology?

2. Does it help us to learn more about history? How?

3. What original sources can help us to learn about history?

4. What types of things are more likely to have survived over all these years? (Hint: think of things made of metal, stone, wood, paper, clothe or bone.)

5. What types of ideas do you think the archeologists will find when they begin to excavate the Valley Forge site during their project this year?

Read the following from General George Washington's orders to his troops about building log huts in the winter of 1777:

"The soldiers were to be formed into twelve-man squads, each charged with building its own hut. These shelters were to be made of logs chinked with clay, and were to be six and a half feet high, fourteen feet wide, and sixteen feet long. They were to be aligned along company streets, with doors (made of boards, if available, otherwise of split-oak slabs) facing the street. There would be a fireplace in the rear, made of wood and "secured" with clay. Behind the enlisted men's huts was to be a line of huts for officers. These were to be of the same design and dimensions; but instead of twelve men, each would house the officers of two companies (six to eight men), the three field officers (major through colonel) of a regiment, the members of a brigade staff, or one general officer."

6. Define

Excavation:

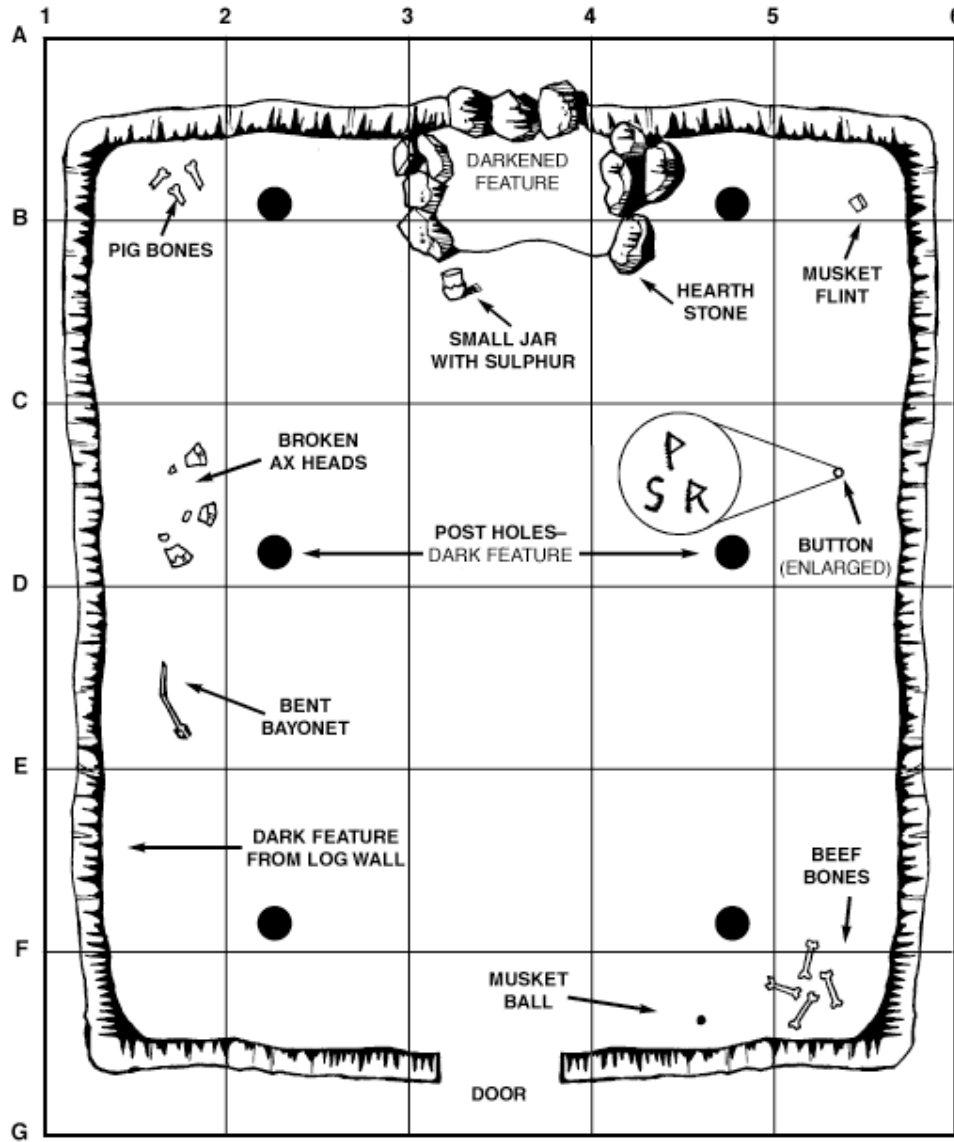
Artifact:

Site:

Dimension:

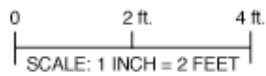
7. Why was it necessary for so many men to live together in one hut?

Excavation Of A Hut



HUT EXCAVATION AT VALLEY FORGE

Small Things Forgotten: Exploring Valley Forge Through Material Culture



(source: Valley Forge National Historical Park.)

ANSWERS – "Excavation Adventure"

1. Archeology is a specialized set of techniques for reclaiming, describing, and explaining past culture. It is the study of the past life and culture of humans.
2. Yes. It can supplement written information, or supply information where there is no written information.
3. Manuscripts: letters; diaries; newspapers; maps; other printed materials; art; architecture; antiques.
4. Examples of things made of metal, stone, wood, paper, clothe or bone provided by students.
5. Buttons, guns, ammunition, needles, teeth, bones, eating utensils. Other examples provided by students.
6. **Excavation:** To expose or unearth by digging for the purpose of supplying information.
Artifact: Those things made or modified by humans for their use. A cultural specimen.
Site: An archeological site is an area or location containing the material remains or traces past cultural activities that form a distinct unit of archeological study.
Dimension: the physical size (length, width and thickness) of an object or feature.
7. Lack of materials (wood); conserve heat and materials by living together; build a sense of teamwork and family, which was important in developing a cohesive army.
8. The size is approximately correct and the entrance is opposite the fireplace. Washington does not mention using stones for fireplaces, but rather logs lined with clay.
9. The bones tell us they ate pork and beef.
10. Axes, bayonet, musket flint, musket ball.
11. Axes could have been used to chop down trees to build huts, to cut firewood, to clear areas for building. The bayonet is used as a weapon on the end of the musket. The musket flint is used to create sparks when it is struck against steel, to set off the musket.
12. They were probably originally of poor quality.
13. The upright posts were used to support the bunks on both sides of the hut. (Approx. 12 bunks.)