



August 13, 2012

BREAKING NEWS FROM HISTORIC ELK LANDING... Fort Hollingsworth is found! In a report released this afternoon to the Historic Elk Landing Foundation, the archaeologists who participated in this spring's archaeological field session said "Compilation of data from two geophysical surveys, detailed topographic mapping, soil boring, and excavation, leaves no doubt about the identification of the ditch that produced the material with which Cecil County's residents built the Fort Hollingsworth rampart in April 1813." The report, titled, "Little Guns on the Big Elk: Discovering Fort Hollingsworth," and was written by Dr. James Gibb, William Stephens, and Peter Quantock for the Archaeological Society of Maryland and is the result of the 2012 Tyler Bastian Annual Field Session in Archeology held at Elk Landing in late May and early June of this year. The report concludes that "Lensing of material in the ditch suggests that (the) ditch was purposefully backfilled (rather than filling gradually through erosion and/or plowing), and that may have occurred soon after the cessation of hostilities in January/February 1815."

Fort Hollingsworth was constructed to defend Elkton from British invasion during the War of 1812 and was pressed into service in both 1813 and 1814. It is described in several sources as being located to the east of the Stone Structure at Historic Elk Landing. Those descriptions are now confirmed by the work of the field school and its archaeologists.

As for interpretation of Fort Hollingsworth, the report has some suggestions. "Based on the 2011/2012 findings, the footprint of the ditch can be staked on the ground as the first step in the public interpretation of Fort Hollingsworth and the war in the Chesapeake. We also recommend further archaeological investigations at Fort Hollingsworth to define the east and west ramparts, identify better preserved portions of the ramparts, and to explore the internal structure of the fort. Specific features that should be sought include: gun emplacements (as many as eleven); bombproof or other storage facilities; and evidence of militia bivouacs."

We will post more on this exciting announcement that Fort Hollingsworth has finally been located as we sift through the 71 page report. Ultimately, the full report will be posted on the Historic Elk Landing Foundation web site.

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