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Fort Nya Göteborg and the Printzhof (36DE3): Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the first Two European Structures Built in Present Pennsylvania

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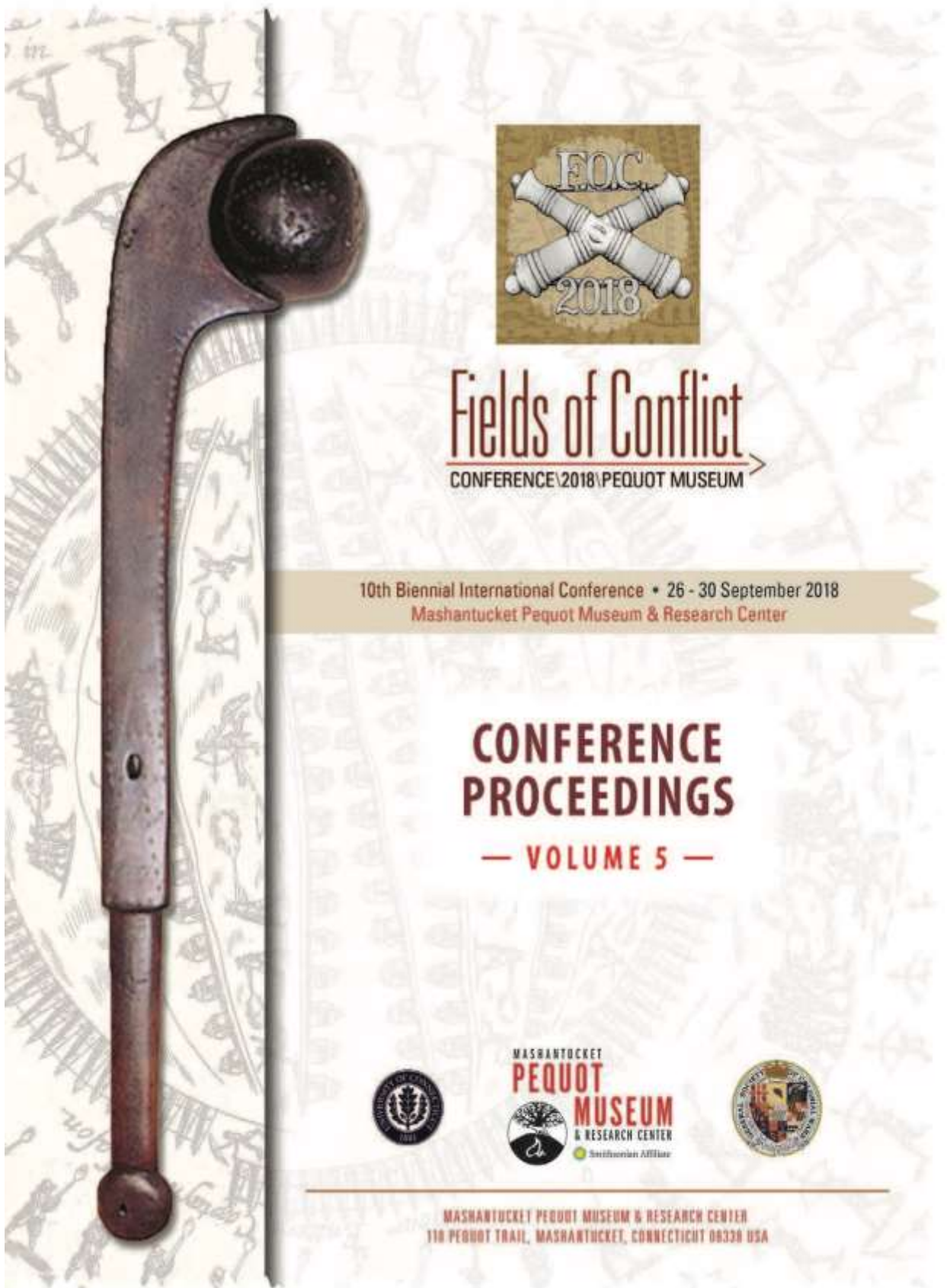


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Fort Nya Göteborg and the Printzhof (36DE3): Archaeology and Ethnohistory of the first Two European Structures Built in Present Pennsylvania

Marshall Joseph Becker

Background: Palisaded Enclosures

The term "palisade" in the New World as used by Europeans for their own constructions generally refers to a fence or an enclosure formed through the use of vertically set pales. Pales could be round posts (tree trunks), split trees, or planks that were riven or sawed (cf. Becker 1979). Distinguishing the specific type of pales used for any particular fence or fortification is impossible without direct archaeological evidence. Even the archaeological evidence is subject to differing interpretations, often depending on the skills of the excavators and recorders (cf. Noël Hume 1982: 70). The documentary record regarding palisades of any type, where it exists, generally was so vague as to provide little help in answering basic questions, but recent archaeological efforts have become increasingly detailed, revealing a wide variety of architectural variability.

Aside from the small, garden-protecting slot fences, two very different types of large palisades used in fortifications are known from the historical record, and I believe that they had two very different functions. The post-and-rail palisade, with widely spaced posts and rails hung in some fashion between the posts, appears to have been used primarily to enclose large areas and to span the considerable distances needed in the control of domestic animals, as indicated by the writings of Ralph Hamor (1615). John Metz independently reached the same conclusion (personal communication, 2000). A version of such fences, with the lower ends of the pales or planks set into slots in the ground, was used for Fort Wolstenholme in Virginia, built in 1619 (Figure 1). Fort Nya Göteborg employed a more elaborate type of palisade, using close-set and vertically placed pales set into a carefully dug trench. This became the common type used by Swedish as well as Dutch and English colonists (cf. DeCorse and Beier 2018) for defensive enclosures. The 1659 Dutch fort on Godin's (Delaware) Bay used this type of enclosure (Figure 2).

The distinction is quite important. Noël Hume (1982: 220), for example, indicates that the instructions for the construction of Berkeley Plantation, upriver from Martin's Hundred, called for enclosing 400 acres within a palisade of seven feet, six inches. While one might assume that this is the height *above* ground, it more likely reflects the interval between the upright posts between which rails were set. This type of post-and-rail palisade was the system retained in the standard post-and-rail fence known today, but the former using close-set pales fastened to the horizontal rails. This is quite different from a defensive palisade, except for the use of the term "palisade," as suggested by a rare document noting an example from far to the north of the Virginias. Regarding activities at Ferryland on the Newfoundland coast, Captain Edward Wynne wrote in 1622 that they should erect a "palizado" around four acres of land to defend against "man & beast, with post and rayle seven foot high, sharpened in the toppe, with the trees being pitched upright and fastened with spikes and nayles" (Prowse 1895: 129, in Noël Hume 1982: 221). The reference to both "spikes and nayles" is not redundant but rather indicates that metal spikes and wooden tree nails would be used in this construction.

Archaeological examples of agricultural fencing can be confused with defensive works. The findings presented here suggest that some if not most of these fence forms were primarily for the control of domestic animals (see Type 4, below).

Defensive Palisades

Our attention is now directed to variations in what are believed to be *defensive* palisade types, and the terms generally associated with them. Throughout the New World colonies, three very different types of defensive construction can be identified: stockades (palisades of various types), blockhouses, and earthworks. No national types reflecting specific European origins can be detected within these categories, with one

possible exception. Jope (1960) believed that the early Dutch bastion form was distinguishable from others, but this inference has neither been confirmed nor negated by any direct evidence. Palisaded forts as temporary field defenses evolved in the English areas of the New World only after A.D. 1600, and their origins can be traced back through Spanish examples in the 1500s to Native antecedents as early as 1200 if not before. European antecedents predate even these early Native American forms (see Christie and Herold 2016). In general the European types are set in regular and linear ditches with close-set pales, while Native types utilize irregular ditches, or low earthworks, on or into which wide set pales are placed, interwoven with brush, called wicker-style (Hasenstab 2018; also see Gerard-Little et al. 2012).

Four major types of palisades may be distinguished, with some minor variations within these types.

1. Full-Post Palisade

A full-post palisade involves the side-by-side, close setting of unsplit logs into a trench dug in the shape of the area to be enclosed, or the outline of a fort. Normally a ditch is dug into which the pales are set; the pales are then placed or thrust into an upright position, and earth is rammed into the ditch to fix the pales in an upright position. The term “palisade” also may be used to describe a barrier of pales that are fixed in an X pattern around a central axle. This unit can be placed on the ground to slow or block the advance of foot soldiers as well as mounted troops. Often either type of palisade is placed on the defenders’ side of a deep ditch. Either type could be what Purchas meant when he noted the placement of “A deepe Ditch, and a Pallizado of young Firre-trees” (1625 *Pilgrims* II: 1369, from OED 1989, XI: 97). The use of the term “young” is a significant indicator of the relatively small diameter of the pales.

The origins of European post-in-ground structures, or what Americans call earthfast constructions, can be traced back to well before the medieval period. Iron Age houses throughout continental Europe and down through the Italian peninsula all were built by setting their major structural posts into holes dug into the ground. This technique was still being used in rural areas of Europe throughout the 19th century and may have survived in some places into the 20th century. Earthfast construction, therefore, is not simply a frontier technique used only in the New World. The form of the pales and the pattern in which they were set do appear to have evolved during the 19th century as suggested by this quote from 1828: “Palisades are 9 [sic] feet long, and 6 or 7 inches square. When fixed they are generally planted 3 feet in the ground and about 3 inches asunder” (Spearman 1828: 317 as cited in the OED 1989, XI, 97). By 1828 the power of a musket ball could pierce these flimsy defenses. Fewer than 20 years later Spearman (1844) notes under “Field Fortifications” that “Palisades and Fraises are likewise formed out of trees and their branches” but that their use had become minor.

Earthworks often were augmented by post or plank retaining walls (Hodges 1993: 155-156, Figure. 4; see also South 1977: 325-327). The Swedish Fortress Christina, built in 1638, employed this construction technique (Figure 3). In these examples, the wooden wall used to retain the earth often is called a palisade since it is set into trenches, but it also serves as an outer coating to an earthworks “wall” (Figure 4).

An example of a squared ditch set with un-split, thin pales has been found surrounding all of the 1756 town of Bethabara, North Carolina (South 1977: 317). A variation of this type of construction was used at the Printzhof, where the stone foundation for the nearby house was laid in a squared trench and the palisade line also was set into a flat bottomed ditch. The full-post palisade at the Printzhof includes a few larger logs, over 20cm diam., that had been split in half for use.

2. Split-Post Palisade

When larger trees abound, efficiency in palisade construction may dictate that logs be split before use. This would produce half-round pales that could be set into the ground in a dug trench, in a fashion similar to that used to construct full-post palisades, with the flat surface facing out. A palisade nearly contemporary with that at the Printzhof (pre-1660), but almost certainly Dutch built, was erected in present Newcastle, DE. This example also had been set in a squared trench but most if not all of the pales were split and placed with their flat sides facing out (see Catts and Tobias 2006). Split-post palisades commonly are augmented with some un-

split, smaller-diameter trees.

3. Post-and-Rail Palisade

Although many close-set palisades are placed in trenches and thus have the bottom ends of all the pales buried in the ground, in Virginia and other southern regions many palisades were of the post-and-rail variety. Patrick (1983: 24-25, as cited in Metz et al. 1998: 35) believes that the typical post-and-rail fence in Virginia stood about five feet high and used five rails to span the eight-foot interval between posts. The archaeological remains of the posts used in a post-and-rail type of palisade are often difficult to distinguish from some types of building construction where the framing members of the building do not rest or sit on a stone foundation but instead sit directly on the ground or are set into holes dug into the ground. Earthfast or post-in-ground structures date back to the European Neolithic. Some excellent examples are known from the French Neolithic period (e.g., Hachem 2000).

Large logs may be split or sawn into a series of thick boards, thicker than the clapboards generally used for housing, and mounted on posts in one of two patterns. In both cases, the pales, whether split or sawn, commonly are attached to the horizontal rails by wooden pins (tree nails). The intervals between the posts vary widely, but six to nine feet is the general range for distances between posts. One example identified in the archaeological record may have had an interval of 9.5 feet (metric equivalent) between posts (Metz et al. 1998: 35).

Further, there are two means by which the spaces between the posts may be filled. Boards can be hung vertically or fastened horizontally between posts, as in a post-and-rail system. The posts may also be connected by rails at the top and perhaps also at the bottom, and the planks attached to the rails vertically. Either technique forms a board fence or a board wall, but this construction differs in many ways from a close-set palisade. The vertical posts are widely spaced, often as much as eight feet apart. Flat boards are hung from rails that are strung between the spaced posts to provide protection. The second fence style described uses the same style of construction that is found in modern picket fences although these early versions may have had thicker pales. The white picket fence of the classic American suburban house is, in fact, a direct descendant of this type of construction.

What we do not know archaeologically about post-and-rail fencing is what spaces, if any, were left between the boards, and if the bottoms of the boards were buried in a shallow slit trench. Setting the bottoms of the pales into a shallow and narrow trench provides stability and prevents shallow burrowing underneath. Archaeology may allow us to determine post intervals for post-and-rail fences but generally has little to offer regarding the actual above-ground construction details.

There is little archaeological evidence for the types of trees used in such constructions as well. We do know that since pales, posts, earthfast building frames, and other construction elements were placed in direct contact with the earth, if not actually buried into the soil, there was considerable concern for selecting the trees best suited for these tasks. Carson et al. (1981: 156) provide the best discussion of rot-resistant woods and the durability of various species of trees. The wood for fences was carefully selected, even for those that were palisade-set with the bases of the pales placed into the ground (1981: 156, 187). Cedar was in some places a commodity valued for its ability to withstand decay and rot. Scot (1685: 222) noted that in late-17th-century New Jersey, some houses were covered with cedar, perhaps referring to roofing shingles but possibly to "palisade" walls as well. Tracts of swampland in southern New Jersey were valued for the cedar logs that had fallen long ago but were preserved in the water where more recent trees were growing. These cedar swamps were timbered, and even mined for their fallen cedars under the surface of the water, very early in the colonial period.

Patrick notes that in Virginia the best rot-resistant woods for posts were locust, chestnut, cedar, and cypress. Rails commonly were fashioned from oak, poplar, and pine, although Patrick also includes chestnut. In 1686 William Fitzhugh noted that his property had "A Yeard wherein is most of the aforesaid necessary

houses, pallizado'd in with locust Puncheons, which is as good as if it were walled in & more lasting than any of our bricks..." (Patrick 1983: 10). In this context, the meaning of "puncheon" is probably that of a pole with a sharp point such as "a puncheon pole, spear, [or] staff" (OED 1989, XII: 837). This usage dates from 1548. After 1804, however, this term may have been used to indicate a piece of timber with one face roughly dressed or possibly a split trunk in the context of flooring and rough building, as suggested in Fitzhugh's 1686 description (in Patrick 1983)

Constructions using a post-and-rail system are often identified as palisades, but whether defense or enclosure was the goal has only recently been considered. Wooden defensive walls of post-and-rail construction with vertical planks (Type 3B) were very common in Virginia. Dutch colonists also used this same type of construction in the New World from at least 1659. In 1687 Governor Dongan of New York suggested that a "Pale" [plank] fence was more durable than "Pallisades." Dongan noted further that "the three inch Planks I have for the Batteries cost mee fifteen shillings the hundred foot" (Brodhead 1853a, III: 391, 398). One may presume that the cost of the planks was largely incurred during the sawing process because the wood and the timbering would have been a minimal expense. Although the term "pale" is generally used for an individual stake in a palisade, Dongan in this instance used "pale" to indicate a sawn plank, much as it would now be used for each vertical in a wooden picket fence.

Originally I had believed that the post-and-rail palisade was a defensive type and that it was related to the use of a blockhouse, but generally being set at a distance from the structure as with any palisaded fortification. This is not necessarily true in all cases, however. A French variant of the post-and-rail type of fencing involved setting into the ground a horizontal log "sleeper" into which mortise holes were cut. Tenoned vertical pales were then set into these holes. In theory, an entire palisade line could be set this way, but more likely the tenoned posts would be set at intervals. Boards were then hung horizontally from the posts.

An interesting clue to the production of rails for post-and-rail palisades in early colonial Virginia appears in a document written by John Smith in the early 17th century (1910: 608). In assembling "A particular of such nessaries as either private families, or single person" would need to establish a colonial homestead, Smith noted the need for "2 frowes to cleave [cleave] pale 18d. each. 3s." This notation suggests that a distinction was made between the type of frow needed to split shingles (see Becker 1975) and a type needed to split the much longer pales. No other frow type was noted on Smith's list, possibly indicating that shingles were not commonly used in early colonial Virginia. These colonists probably used thatch rather than shingles for roofing.

4. The Slot Fence

A fourth type of fencing, in which a shallow ditch is dug and short planks are set into it like a palisade, is often called a "slot fence." The construction technique is called "ditch-set" and is commonly associated with residences and small farmsteads. The posts and the fence height are, of course, much shorter than with defensive works. Noël Hume (1982: 70-74) has reported on slot fences as well as a variety of palisade types that he has investigated archaeologically in Virginia. A slot fence has only short pales and is used as an enclosure for animals. One example described by Noël Hume employed pales that he feels were split in the same mode as fence rails, with each log split into three or four sections rather than long boards. Noël Hume believes these to be re-used rails, but I suggest that they simply originated with logs of intermediate diameter of about five to ten inches (12 to 25 cm). An example related to board palings, called "split-log palings," was found to have planks that measured about 4 x 18 in (10 x 46 cm) in section. Obviously trees that were at least 18 in (46 cm) in diameter were needed to produce the logs that then were split into planks in this latter example.

Palisades, or wooden barriers of a wide variety of forms, were employed extensively in North America for a number of reasons. The abundance of trees available and the simplicity with which they could be converted to military as well as domestic uses led to their presence in contexts that formed part of the expected landscape. Because palisades were so common, they were rarely mentioned even by keen observers. Their presence as part of military fortifications was ubiquitous, but the details of their construction largely

faded as the wood with which they were formed rotted away. This review of some basic details and variations in the known types may answer some of the questions that occur to people reading old documents or excavating sites in which these features, perhaps with several variations, may be found. The following chapters focus on the history and use of palisading in European fortifications, and how these came into the Americas.

When Wood Grew on Trees: Continental European Fortification

City walls are often assumed to have been an integral part of urban development throughout the world (Tracy 2000a). This study of defensive boundaries, and palisades in particular, leads us to consider those European nations with the most active colonizing processes. An examination of Old World prototypes is useful for placing New World palisades of European origin into proper context. By examining how logs or wood were used in various forms of construction in the Old World, we may be able to see continuities in New World constructions and possibly recognize national differences in construction techniques. It should be noted, however, that Old World fortification systems had long outgrown the simple palisade as a defensive unit by the 17th century, though some exceptions may yet be identified in remote areas. In addition, the introduction of gunpowder and the evolution of fortifications rapidly led to an international style that evolved simultaneously throughout Europe. Thus palisades and log structures in the American colonies are, at best, only tenuously linked with any specific part of the Old World.

Old World Log Constructions

By 1500 AD an impressive portion of Europe had been cut over to provide fuel to an expanding population and materials to the industrializing economies. The vast fleets built by the rapidly forming nation-states required entire forests of specific wood types. Stone construction required lime for mortar; lime generated by burning of limestone. Bricks required fuel to fire them as well as lime to lay them. Control of forested lands became a major concern on every social and political level. Log constructions, and particularly the small versions that include the log cabin, fascinate modern Americans. Our interest in the European origins of this structure, a famous feature of American colonial and post-colonial architecture, has long focused on Scandinavian connections. The broad Germanic term *Blockhäus* as well as the Slavic equivalents of this term reflect the long and widespread history that includes the Scandinavian examples to which we generally allude. Examples that date back to the early Neolithic have been identified in central Europe. These log houses and the defensive works so commonly associated with them are functions of the densely forested environments of Europe that were home to the earliest agriculturalists in the region, perhaps eight or nine thousand years ago. Our interest here is in the early use of these once abundant trees to provide defensive constructions for European settlements, presumably beginning with the first Neolithic farmers who entered what was then a primeval forest.

Examination of the archaeological record for Central European hamlets from the Neolithic period onwards suggests that simple palisades commonly surrounded residential areas, but whether they were intended to keep livestock in or raiders out, or both, remains subject to interpretation. By the early medieval period in Europe, the evidence for hill forts suggests that they included defensive fences. But at small settlements, such as the tiny hamlet at Pohansko near Breslaw (Czech Republic), the evidence for defensive works remains difficult to interpret. Excavations at the Neolithic site at Pohansko revealed a square palisade surrounding the few small groups of structures that make up the known settlement. However, the reconstruction of this hamlet also revealed what seem to be pale fences dividing sections of the interior. These interior palisades appeared in both early and later phases of the hamlet's development. This suggests that the interior dividing walls were not originally exterior (defensive) walls that later were incorporated into the community as it developed. Precise dating of these individual fence-like features now appears to be impossible. Macháček's reconstruction of the hamlet reflects his own interpretation of these events (2000: Figs. 238, 239). Various reconstructions of similar defensive works, like Macháček's, lack critical information regarding the diameters of the original pales and the depths to which they were set into the ground (e.g., Ruttkay 2000). Voss (2000: 252-256) indicates the presence of a palisade-like barrier, but whether this was a defensive work or simply used for directing animal movement is not evident. The particular details of construction and location are of importance in understanding function and in linking these early European examples of "fence" features to their later descendants in the New World.

Bronze Age and Iron Age fortifications in Europe reveal slight regional variations, but the limited sample size remains a problem for analysts. Regional differences may reflect highly localized geographical conditions. By the time of the early Christian era, the Roman Empire had established rules for the size and shape of field fortifications, but with clear recognition of the need for flexibility under specialized conditions (Quilici and Quilici Gigli 2001). The decline of Roman imperial activities throughout Europe led to interesting cultural transformations as the tribal societies along the frontiers developed into the early states that are now the several continental nations. Defensive works surrounding small villages evolved into the larger fortifications needed to protect growing cities. The evolution of palisade and ditch fortifications into city walls requires a history of its own to explain, but one well-documented example provides insight into this process.

The Czech Republic offers a view of the development of fortification techniques as used in the middle of the European continent from the Neolithic to modern times. This area also has a long history of high quality archaeology that provides us with excellent data from the period of state formation in that region as well as from earlier time periods. The hill forts of Bohemia, at the center of the modern Czech Republic, evolved slowly from the earliest Neolithic villages. A major shift is evident, however, during the final stages of Roman withdrawal, A.D. 600-700. Tomková (2001: 39) dates the construction of the earliest complex hill forts in Bohemia to ca. A.D. 700, and she discusses the complexities of their rapid architectural development into the 12th century. Her summary of the specific developments that took place during these first centuries is important for understanding the evolving technology as well as the social changes that spurred these technological innovations. These social changes involved increased urbanization, emerging social class stratification, and increased political complexity centered on a king controlling the power of a state. Protecting urban centers required an expansion of the fortification types that were used to surround agricultural villages.

Kempke's (2000) summary of early city walls in the region between the Elbe and Oder rivers suggests that complex examples were being erected in the eighth century, between the Late Antique and early medieval periods. This is an era of early urbanization, when regional chiefdoms were developing into prototypic kingdoms, or low-level states. The relationship of these developments to the collapse of Roman power around the Mediterranean can be suggested. Tomková (2001: 40-41) discusses the centralization of power in Bohemia during the ninth and tenth centuries, a period of political aggregation marked by the development of a network of hill forts. Within this system, Prague Castle came to serve as the central "residence of the Premyslide princes" and thus became the principal hill fort for the military power of the emerging Czech state.

Examination of the history of village fortifications in central Europe suggests that earthworks may *not* have been the most common defensive constructions prior to the development of hill forts. Reconstruction (Müller and Müller-Muci 1989, 1999, see also Müller 2000) of the early wall around ancient Berlin (Spandau) suggests that it was made using wooden pales to amplify a ditch and mound defensive work (see also Tomková 2001: 40; Durdik 2001). The earliest progression from a simple ditch and mound was the construction of a wall such as that identified at the Bohemian hill fort of Stará Kourim. This wall was six meters wide and estimated to have been three meters tall, set up as fill between two parallel palisade walls. The pales of the outer unit presumably extended well above the top of the wall, while the pales on the interior need not have been higher than the surface of the fill. Angled struts were used to brace both interior and exterior palisade lines at one-meter intervals (Tomková 2001: 40-41, Figs. 4-6). Tomková's plans and section drawings, and her explication of the archaeological evidence, help to clarify details of these constructions. Where larger earthworks or earth-filled walls later developed, they most likely retained some form of palisade at their crests. The tops of these early medieval walls are the locations most subject to erosion, however, and the evidence for these features is commonly lost from the archaeological record. In addition, as in the archaeology of the New World, any evidence recovered for palisades, or traits related to palisade construction, is rarely published (but see Ciháková 2001).

Defensive Palisades in North America

The pre-Contact fortifications used by various tribal groups in North America are well documented in Milner's comprehensive studies (1999, 2000). The earliest fortifications in colonial Virginia, as elsewhere in

the American northeast, employed some variation of palisaded construction as part of their defenses. By 1620 a small fort had been erected at Wolstenholme Towne in Virginia to provide a safe haven for the immigrant colonists. This simple 3-bastioned construction appears to have been based on posts set at roughly 2 meter intervals between which were rails onto which boards were nailed. The “feet” of these boards were set into a shallow ditch, dug along the interior of the post line. In 1629 the Dutch West India Company purchased a tract of land from the Seconese, somewhere in the area of present Lewes, DE on what was then called Godins Bay (now Delaware Bay). The Fort and all traces of the whaling station built there were soon after destroyed by the Seconese or a raiding party from another tribal group in the general region. While a settlement seems to have been rebuilt in the area, the only fortification known dates from 1659. This later defensive work was a Dutch diamond shape, two-bastion construction typical of the period.

During this early period a Swedish colonial outpost was established in 1638 along the Delaware River at present Wilmington, DE. Fortress Christina, built on a peninsula where the Christina River enters the Delaware, appears to have been partially an earthwork entity with a board facing or retaining system. The lack of success of this trading post in capturing the pelt trade led the colonists to shift to the highly rewarding drug trade (tobacco), although they continued to struggle to compete with the Dutch for the pelt trade. Johan Printz, the third colonial governor of New Sweden, erected his log house further upstream on Great Tinicum Island in what now is Pennsylvania (map). This structure also served as a trading post. The name “New Gothenburg” also appears in the documents, but whether the term “Printzhof” referred only to the house as part of a fortified “gore” or to a separate structure was not determined until recent excavations revealed a fortification separate from the house.

Excavations revealed the two main periods of early foundation construction for the house (1643, 1645) but details of architectural work above the foundation were largely conjectural. A drawing of a Swedish colonial farmstead of the same period (1647), but within Estonia when it was part of the Swedish European empire (Magnusson 2003: 223-227, Figure 2), offers important clues as to how the Printzhof may have looked. Of special note are the tall chimneys in the drawing; important clues to the functions of the many yellow Swedish bricks found during excavations (Becker 1977). The dating of the Printzhof complex is confirmed by numbers of kaolin smoking pipes of the middle 1600s found during excavations. Finds of glass prunts, ornaments from elaborate and expensive drinking vessels, also provide evidence for the early date of this house. Equally important in dating the fortification is the absence of colonial materials in the ditch within which the pales of this initial construction were placed.

The elaborate ditch for the palisade of Fort Ny Göteborg, dug with military precision, was set with pales of small diameter harvested from this island setting (Figure 5). This excavation of a corner of the fortification reveals a possible entryway. As with known gates or other constructions providing entry to fortifications, the entry to Fort Ny Göteborg is at the corner opposite the water. A series of other post molds were identified in that area, but how they related to a gate or entryway is not evident. Nearby were two grave sites apparently located by an excavator in the 1930s. He believed them to be Indians graves, but failed to record their contents or save and label any artifacts that may have been recovered (Figure 6). The several archaeological sections cut through this important palisade trench (Figures 7 and 8) provide only an indication of the depth below ground that was customarily used for erecting a pole palisade. Surface erosion and re-contouring of this area may have removed 30 cm (12 inches) or more of topsoil.

The archaeological record indicates that pales of 8 to 9 cm diameter were preferred. Each was sharpened at the base before being driven into one edge of the square palisade trench. A very few trees of 12 or more cm diameter were employed in the palisade line; each being split into halves for use. A single brass button, perhaps for a pants leg or possibly for a shirt, was found within this trench, and no stone tools or *debitage* such as would indicate activity of Natives at this specific location. Two Native burial pits suggest Indian activity somewhere in this area, but not directly where the Swedish fort was built. Not far from this location evidence was recovered for a Native wickiup (two phases of use: Becker 1993), reflecting periodic occupation of this island for a warm weather fishing station for the local band of Lenape. Such periodically

established encampments enabled the Lenape to take advantage of the annual fish runs coming up (and down) the Delaware River (Becker 2006).

The Swedish colony was absorbed into the Dutch West India Company in 1655 (cf. Becker 2001), but members of the Printz family continued to occupy Tinicum island. Early in the 1700s the house and land was sold to an English colonial family, who altered the structure to conform to English tastes (cf. Becker 1978). The chain of title has been traced to the present, with the Corinthian Yacht Club becoming one of the more recent owners. By 1938 the overseers of the Corinthian Yacht Club graciously deeded a large portion of their property, that on which the actual Printzhof had stood, to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This relatively small tract became a tiny but well-used state park. For reasons known only to politicians, the "Commonwealth" divested itself of this treasure, turning it over to Tinicum Township. It remains an enormously popular and much appreciated park, and arguably one of the most important archaeological sites in the region.

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