Working Towards Community-Engaged Research with American Indian Tribes

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Betsy Helder’s request: “present on your experience with the process of consulting with American Indian tribes during your investigation of the battles at Fort Recovery. Ideally, the session would cover not just what you did, but what you learned from the process that can be helpful to historical sites as they work on their own similar projects.”
Abstract

The Northwest Indian War Battles of the Wabash (1791) and Fort Recovery (1794) involved multiple tribes and the U.S. military. Archaeological research supported by the Fort Recovery Historical Society has evolved from sharing to reviewing to collaborating with descendent American Indian tribes. We share our many lessons learned as we work towards community-engaged research with all stakeholders.
Topics

1. Battle of the Wabash (1791)
2. Battle of Fort Recovery (1794)
3. Archaeological and preservation research
4. Community-engaged research
5. Evolution of tribal involvement
6. Lessons learned and tips
My Experiences – Huge Team

- Introduction
- Fort Recovery Historical Society
- Ohio History Connection
  - battlefield, museum, fort, monument
- Ball State research team
- Tribal partners
- Community of Fort Recovery
- Funding agencies
BSU Applied Anthropology Laboratories Research Team

Funding Agencies

Fort Recovery Historical Society

Ohio History Connection

Community of Fort Recovery

Descendent Tribes

* Relationships not to scale
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Northwest Indian War Timeline

• 1783 – Treaty of Paris
• 1785/6 – Western Indian Confederacy formed
• 1787 – Northwest Ordinance
• 1790 – Harmar’s Campaign
• 1791 – St. Clair’s Campaign
  – Nov 4, 1791 – Battle of the Wabash
• 1793 – Wayne’s Legion
  – December 1793 – built Fort Recovery
  – June 30, 1794 – Battle of Fort Recovery
• 1794 – Battle of Fallen Timbers
• 1795 – Treaty of Greenville
• 1803 – Ohio Statehood
VIEW OF THE MAUMEE TOWNS
DESTROYED BY GENERAL HARMAR.
October, 1790.

PRINCIPAL TOWN OF MIAMIS & SHAWANEES

SHAWANEES
DELAWARES

MIAMIS

CREEK RIVER OR MIAMI OF THE LAKE
Battle of the Wabash – Nov 4, 1791

• U.S. Army 1,400 soldiers & camp followers, Gen. Arthur St. Clair

• Devastated by American Indian confederacy of ~1,400+ warriors
  – Weyapiersenwah (Blue Jacket, Shawnee)
  – Mihšihkinaahkwa (Little Turtle, Miami)

• Worst defeat ever of U.S. Army at the hands of the American Indians
  – 632 soldiers plus nearly all camp followers killed; 250+ wounded
  – ~20-30 Native Americans killed
Casualty Rates

• Battle of the Wabash, 1791
  – U.S. (1,400) = 632+ and camp followers killed / 250+ wounded
  – Native Americans (1,400) = ~20-30 killed / unknown wounded

• Braddock’s Defeat, 1755
  – British (2,100) = 500+ killed / 450+ wounded
  – Native Americans (900) = 30 killed / 57 wounded

• Battle of the Little Bighorn, 1876
  – U.S. (~700) = 268 dead / 55 severely wounded
  – Native Americans (1,500-2,500) = 31 dead / up to 160 wounded
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Restructuring of Wayne’s Legion
1792-1793
Wayne to Burbeck - Dec 22, 1793

“...You will march tomorrow morning at reveille.....” “You will advance at the dawn of day the next morning and possess yourself of the most favorable ground on the south side of the Wabash or water upon which the battle was fought and immediately proceed to erect four blockhouses of twenty feet square in the clear, connecting with pickets, agreeably to the enclosed plan or draught.” “Let the ends of the block houses present outwards, with three embrasures for a small howitzer; the shutters of which must be musket proof as well as the door, or doors of the sally ports.....” “But your own good judgement and experience will best direct these minutia, as will the most suitable position for the Fort...”
Battle of Fort Recovery
June 30, 1794

- As many as 2,000 Native Americans
- Two day battle, U.S. victory
- U.S. victory at Battle of Fallen Timbers 6 weeks later
- Effectively ended Indian resistance in Northwest Territories and led to the Treaty of Greenville
Treaty of Greenville 1795

A Treaty of Peace
Between the
United States of America
And the
Tribes of Indians,
Called the
Wyandets, Delawares, Shawanes, Ottawas,
Chippewas, Potawatomies, Miamis, Eel-
river, Weeds, Kickapos, Pian-
koshwas, and Kaskahts.

To put an end to a destructive war, to settle all controversies, and to restore harmony and a friendly intercourse between the said United States, and Indian tribes; Anthony Wayne, major-general, commanding the army of the United States, and sole commissioner for the good purposes above mentioned, and the said tribes of Indians, by their Sachems,
1803 - Ohio

- Ended Northwest Territory
- Mix of towns and Indian villages

- “Fort” Recovery was destroyed most likely ca. 1814
- Fort Recovery, the town, was settled in 1817, incorporated in 1858
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Research Focus: landscape analysis, both in the context of the location of recovered artifacts and in the role the landscape played in the battle strategies of both the American Indian alliance and U.S. forces.

Research results: a more nuanced interpretation of the battle, one that more fully recognizes and balances the involvement and decisions of both the American Indian tribes and the U.S. military.
KOCOA Analysis – GIS Data Modeling
NPS American Battlefield Protection Program

- **K**ey and Decision Terrain
- **O**bservation and Field of Fire
- **C**over and Concealment
- **O**bstacles
- **A**venues of Approach/Withdrawal

Based on the U.S. military’s process for evaluating significance of battlefield terrain and use of the landscape in battle strategy.
Approximate 1791 Core Battlefield Area
Parcel 8
Unit 9
Feature 3
Trench

• 17 ft. segment
• 2 ft. wide
• 3 ft. below ground surface
• Large postholes every 5 ft.
• Small split pale-like post holes in between
THE BATTLE OF THE WABASH AND THE BATTLE OF FORT RECOVERY: MAPPING THE BATTLEFIELD LANDSCAPE AND PRESENT DAY FORT RECOVERY, OHIO

A Cooperative Project with National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program
Grant # GA-2215-12-001, GA-2217-13-001, GA-2217-13-002
Ball State University
Ohio History Connection
Fort Recovery Historical Society

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Battle of the Wabash – Field of Fire Map A

Firearms’ Field of Fire

Comparison of the Effective Ranges of Various Firearms at the Battle of the Wabash

Legend:
- Range - Charleville Musket - 50 yds
- Range - Pennsylvania/Kentucky Rifle - 100 yds
- Range - Brown Bess Musket - 75 yds

Note: The areas for the ranges indicate the topography of the specific locations and have nothing to do with the actual ranges, which would vary greatly for the different areas shown.

The ability to see the enemy and to effectively fire upon the enemy are not necessarily the same thing. In this analysis, the field of fire of individual weapons was considered. Field of fire calculations include variables such as height between the muzzle and ground, effective range of the firearm, and general accuracy of the firearm. A comparison of the relative fields of fire for the Charleville musket (carried by most of the U.S. Army), Brown Bess musket (carried by most of the Native Americans), and Pennsylvania Kentucky rifles (carried by most of the Kentucky militia) reveals the obvious advantage of a rifle in effective range.
Welcome to the Battles of...
This 1.5 mile battlefield tour loop with 15 stops can be enjoyed on any computer, smart phone, or tablet.

Wayside Exhibit 7: KOCOA Analysis
View of Battlefield West of Town

Since 2010, the Applied Anthropology Laboratories (AAL) at Ball State University has conducted archaeology research on the battlefield with funding from the National Park Service American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP). These investigations have shaped a new perspective of the battlefield by using the ABPP's KOCOA analysis, which is based on the U.S. military's process for evaluating battlefield terrain and the use of landscape in battle strategy. The battlefield is currently defined as 787 acres.

The Battle of the Wabash, ...
In spring 1791, Major General Arthur St. Clair became leader of the U.S. military campaign. St. Clair was to build...

The Old Wabash River
The Wabash River (since rerouted) played a key role in the Battle of the Wabash. Major General Arthur St. Clair...

Kentucky Militia Encampment...
St. Clair's Kentucky Militia camped across the Wabash River from the main encampment. The 1,500 warriors of th...
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What is Community Engaged Research and Scholarship?

“The goals of community engaged scholarship are the generation, exchange and application of mutually beneficial and socially useful knowledge and practices developed through active partnerships between the academy and the community.”
Mutually Beneficial
External Audiences
Collaboration
Partnership
Knowledge
Co-creation
Scholarship Designed for Wider Publics
Levels of Engaged Scholarship

Doing Research:

- To a community
- For a community
- In a community
- With a community
- Driven by a community
Levels of Engaged Scholarship In Fort Recovery

2016 - hadn’t heard term CES, innately doing this + community support requirements
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Miami, Shawnee, Delaware

Wyandot, Seneca, Cherokee

Battle of the Wabash
Militia Retreat and Camp Encirclement

Ottawa, Ojibwe, Potawatomi
9 Tribes in American Indian Alliance on Nov 4, 1791

= at least 39 federally recognized tribes today
“evolved from just doing to sharing to reviewing to collaborating”

• 2010 – “no federally recognized tribes in Ohio”, so no notification of tribes needed for grant application

• Everyone has evolved
“evolved from **sharing** to reviewing to collaborating with American Indian Tribes”

- BSU building NAGPRA relationships at same time
- Shared first results with NAGPRA tribes
- Didn’t really know if tribes would find our research useful – but once they did, we shared at every meeting **KEY**
“evolved from sharing to reviewing to collaborating”

April 2016
Shared with OHC Stacey Halfmoon, American Indian Liaison

October 2016
Shared with tribes at 1st OHC Tribal Nations Conference

December 2016
Shared with staff at Myamia Center. Invited to apply to CES-IC

April 2017
Shared at Community Engaged Scholarship in Indian Country in Tulsa
Community Engaged Scholarship in Indian Country: Two Communities to Engage!!

- Community of Fort Recovery
  - Local
  - Euro-American perspective of battle
  - Great pride in history and interest in our research

- Tribal Nations
  - Dispersed
  - Multiple tribal histories of battle
  - Great pride in history and interest in our research
In American Indian and/or indigenous communities, best practices in Community-Engaged Scholarship ensure:

• that the research undertaken is **meaningful and genuinely desired** by the Indigenous community concerned;
• that Indigenous people and academic researchers **work collaboratively to co-design and co-execute** research projects;
• that Indigenous communities and scholars **co-create and disseminate the knowledge** that emerges from the research and analysis.

Projects of this kind result from **sustained conversations** between **Indigenous and academic partners**. They derive from **trusting relationships** that transcend the life of a single research project. One measure of success is the extent to which Community-Engaged Scholarship “builds capacity” within the Indigenous communities that host scholarly projects.
Levels of Engaged Scholarship with Tribal Nations

To a community
For a community
In a community
With a community
Driven by a community

We needed to get better! Tribes wanted to collaborate and co-create.
“evolved from sharing to reviewing to collaborating”

- **May 2017**: Reviewed Wayside Exhibits with OHC
- **June 2017**: Reviewed Wayside Exhibits with Tribal Nations at OHC Interpretive Summit in Miami OK
- **October 2017**: Reviewed Wayside Exhibits at 2nd OHC Tribal Nations Conference
“evolved from sharing to reviewing to collaborating”

October 2017
Tribes agreed to collaborate on NEH grant to create Traveling Exhibit of Battle of the Wabash

January 2018
Collaborated on NEH application with five Tribal Humanities Scholars and OHC, involving all 39 tribes

Jan, July, Oct 2019
Collaborated at Tribal meetings to design Traveling Exhibit that will go to Tribal museums
We build upon our trusting relationships with tribal partners to co-create and co-design a traveling exhibit that truly represents and reflects the views of American Indians. The end product will be a traveling exhibit and presentations created with tribal communities for tribal communities.
BACKGROUND / CONTEXT
Introduction
Tensions leading to War
Northwest Indian War

BATTLE
St. Clair’s Defeat
Tribal and Settler Weaponry and Artifacts
Different Worldviews; Different Strategies

AFTERMATH
Immediate Aftermath, Treaty of Greeneville
Treatment and Expulsion of American Indians
Erasure of Memory / Loss of Identity

PERSISTENCE
Effects Reverberate to the Present
Recreating Lost Memories/ Filling in the Loss of Identity
Tribes Today
Topics

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“Things I wish I had automatically known or understood better in 2010”
Understand the Basics of Federally Recognized Tribes

- Sovereign Nation
- Government-to-government relationship with US
- Specific responsibility, powers, services and protections
- 567 federally recognized American Indian tribes in US
- ~44 have ties to Ohio – treaty claims, lived here, removal, hunting territory, etc.
- Not a club or group, a Sovereign Nation - citizens
Always Remember: Individual Tribes

• You are dealing with specific Tribes not American Indians as one large group
• Each Tribe will have different collective experiences, histories, and opinions
• Be aware of this in interpretation, use specific Tribal names when you can
• Deal with Tribes individually when you can
• Learn a little about each tribe’s history – tribal website
Learn Your Geography

- What tribes lived in, hunted in, traveled through, or had a treaty claim in your area?
- A subset of the 44 Ohio Tribes will most likely be most interested in your project
- Review tribal websites - history
- Good place to start

https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/american-indian-relations
Make Contact

• Have a project that involves tribes? Contact them!
• Look for: Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), Cultural Resource Officer or if NAGPRA, specific NAGPRA person
• Personal contact is best, vs. mass correspondence
• If OHC site, ask their advice first
Do Good Research

- Tribes expect and deserve scholarly research based on best practices
- Researchers in your organization or existing partnership or form partnership
- Look for research partner with existing Tribal relationships
- OHC site, involve them!
- OHC American Indian guidelines/policy
Stop Talking. Start Listening

- Be prepared to think about things very differently
- Do not assume your worldview is the only worldview
- Seemingly innocuous questions or statements may spur answers that you never imagined. Be open and patient.
Building Lasting, Trusting Relationships

- Building relationships IS doing something
- Long-term investment
- Networking
- We build “visiting” into our OK trips
- Take a real interest in your Tribal collaborators culture and events, etc.
Watch Your Language!

• Word choice is very important. Words are packing with meaning based on our experiences and worldview.
• Tribal trust, so they can point these things out to you so your interpretation is respectful and imparts the correct meaning.
• See your mistakes as opportunities to learn.
Keep Showing Up

• Go hear citizens from Federally Recognized Tribes speak – introduce yourself
• Conferences (you’re here today!)
• Special events involved Tribes
• OHC offerings
• Seek at academic partners
• Wonder what we would have missed had we not showed up for some things?
More on Community Engaged Research

- All of this takes time, better end product
- People are busy, plan ahead
- Be prepared to “unlearn” some things, so you can think differently
- “become an expert at not always being the expert” = sharing power (Jennifer Blatz, StriveTogether)
Be Prepared and Plan to Let Things Happen

• No idea in 2010 where this would end up
• If I would have predicted and planned it all, it would have been wrong
• Good Research
  + Tribal Relationships
  + Keep Showing Up
  + Keep Listening and Collaborating
= Let Good Things Happen
Learn More

- https://www.ohiohistory.org/learn/american-indian-relations
- https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/resources/American-Indian-Removal-What-Does-It-Mean-Remove-People.cshtml
- http://teachmyaamiahistory.org/
- https://www.wyandotte-nation.org/culture/history/
Contact Info

- Fort Recovery State Museum – www.fortrecoverymuseum.com or Facebook
- Christine Thompson – ckkeller2@bsu.edu

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- Fort Recovery Historical Society & State Museum
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American Battlefield Protection Program

History Fund
A competitive matching grants program supporting local history in Ohio.

Fort Recovery State Museum

Fort Recovery Historical Society