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Archeological Day School (1)

Amy Wilson

The Archeological Day School, hosted by Amy Wilson, will take place on Saturday, September 29, 2007 at Royal Oak Farm, 1827 State Route 30, North Blenheim NY.

The day school will begin at 10 a.m. with a brief introduction to archeology, followed by hands-on practice with artifact identification. Please bring any personal artifact collections for discussion by Amy and the class!



The excavation will be held at the site of the original Fink's Tavern (left) that is below the Wilson's Golden Oak Farm.

Afterward, there will be a break for lunch (be sure to bring a [hearty] bag lunch), and the rest of the day will be spent using archeological field methods to detect the original location of Fink's hotel, a historic tavern on the river road that played host to both the sheriffs and the indians during the anti-rent wars. It figured centrally in Mayham's *The Anti-Rent War on Blenheim Hill*, and copies of that reprint will be available. The hotel was subsequently moved and became the Wilson farmhouse.

Please dress warmly (layers are best), wear old clothes that may get dirty, and bring a bag lunch. In the event of rain, the day school will take place on the following day, Sunday, September 30, 2007. Most important, please RSVP by Thursday, September 20, 2007 to amymwilson@gmail.com to let her know you will be attending. This is necessary to make sure that enough equipment is available. Remember, you can simply observe, or participate fully throughout the day—the goal is to learn and have fun. This FREE event is OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Archeological Day School (2)

Amy Wilson

On Saturday, September 29th, the Archeological Day School was hosted by Amy Wilson at Royal Oak Farm, North Blenheim, NY. The day began with an introduction to archeology and practice with artifact identification, during which various precontact and historic artifacts were shown and passed around by the participants. After a short break for lunch, the remainder of the afternoon was spent utilizing archeological field methods in hopes of detecting the original location of the Fink Hotel, which later became the Wilson Farmhouse. The approach employed the use of shovel test pits excavated at close intervals across the suspected location of the former hotel. Each shovel test was 40 cm (15 in.) in diameter, and when possible, was excavated into sterile subsoil. The soils from each test were sifted through fine hardware cloth screens and examined for cultural materials. After each test was completed, the soil levels were recorded according to their texture, color, and depth below ground surface. When artifacts were found, they were relegated to the stratum from which they were collected and bagged separately.

In all, three shovel tests were excavated along a single transect oriented north-south and parallel to NY State Route 30. The plow zone contained within these tests was a dark brown silt loam, while the subsoil below the plow zone was a dark yellowish brown compact sandy silt. The archeological remains of a historic laid-slate walkway was identified within the first shovel test, directly aligned to the existing front door of the farmhouse, which is also visible in early 20th century photographs of the farm.

The third shovel test, closest to the existing driveway to the farm, recovered a high concentration of historic artifacts, such as brick fragments, faunal bone fragments, various ceramics (e.g., Jackfield, stoneware, and whiteware), coal/charcoal, glass, metal fragments, mortar, and shell fragments. The most interesting finds were the fragments of a kaolin pipe, which displayed a pattern of parallel lines on the bowl. This test was expanded into a 1 x 1 square meter unit of excavation. Upon removal of the second stratum, an anomaly was detected within the soil, which may be indicative of the former building footprint of the Fink Hotel. Such a hypothesis could not be confirmed without further excavation, so in the interest of time—and more importantly, to preserve the archeological integrity of the site—the excavation of the unit was terminated at this point, and the stratum was sealed with plastic.

The archeological remains of the former Fink Hotel is a significant component of the historical fabric of North Blenheim. The hotel functioned throughout the 19th century and played host to both the local settlers and the king's tax collectors during the Anti-Rent Wars. The Archeological Day School confirmed the suspected location of the former hotel.



Activities at the Archeological Day School

Over the summer I may be hosting a similar sort of program in the area. If you or any of the GHS members would be interested in participating, please feel free to let me know at amymwilson@gmail.com

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