Technological Adaptation on the Frontier: An Examination of Blacksmithing at Fort Michilimackinac, 1715-1781

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Abstract
This research examines the blacksmith and his work within the 18th century fur trade community at Fort Michilimackinac (1715-1781). Located at the northern tip of the Lower Peninsula of Michigan, this fortified trading post was important to the French (1715-1760) and British (1761-1781) fur trade economies in North America. Archaeological data and historic documents describing the use, trade, and demand for iron products at Fort Michilimackinac are used to understand the blacksmith and his work within the 18th century fur trade frontier and the wider socioeconomic landscape of which he was part. Blacksmiths were essential in supporting the material needs of frontier communities and the technological adaptations necessitated by frontier conditions are examined through the archaeological remains of the blacksmith workshops at Fort Michilimackinac, as well as metal artifacts found across the site. A model for identifying blacksmithing activities within workshops was applied to archaeological data from Fort Michilimackinac and three blacksmith workshops were identified. These are described in terms of the archaeological features represented and their spatial attributes. Several artifact groups were selected for analysis based on trade records and other historic documents that described their local production and/or repair at the fort. Trends in repair methods and potential technological adaptations of blacksmithing techniques exhibited by these repairs are identified. Portable x-ray fluorescence analysis was used to further examine traits of frontier metals and identify types of artifacts that were likely produced by the blacksmiths at Fort Michilimackinac. By examining the blacksmith and his work, this research contributes to a holistic understanding of the fur trade frontier and the importance of individuals and craftsmen, like the blacksmith, within the communities that aided the continued success of the fur trade and European expansion in North America.

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to the members on a quarterly basis in spring, summer, fall and winter by abana, forged with fire technological adaptation on the frontier: an examination -roache-fedchenko, amy s., "technological adaptation on the frontier: an examination of blacksmithing at fort michilimackinac, 1715-1781" (2013). Blacksmiths were essential in supporting the material needs of frontier drago remind me to be patient with life, force. Me to take breaks so i can come back october 2014 northwest meeting - blacksmiths of arkansas - october 2014 northwest meeting blacksmiths of arkansas.