

FORT LAURENS 1778-9:  
THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

With an Introduction by John L. Cotter

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buttons shown in Fig. 11 may have served as cuff-links when connected in pairs by brass wire loops. Two loops (not illustrated) were found in the excavation.

The final items of dress from the fort that will be discussed here are a German silver earring for a pierced ear (Fig. 11*o*) and three glass beads shown in Fig. 11 *q* and *r*. These objects were associated with Building J, and it is tempting to regard them as traded goods that were lost by friendly Delaware Indians sojourning at Fort Laurens. The two cane beads are of the type known as *cornaline d' Aleppo*, that is, they are layered beads made by coating clear canes with red glass. Beads of this style have had a long history in the Americas. They are frequently found on Jesuit missions dating to the early seventeenth century. Identical beads are attributed to the eighteenth century French occupation of Fort Michilimackinac (Stone, 1974:100). Since both of the specimens from Fort Laurens were directly associated with the floor-joists of one of the barracks, their period of use undoubtedly persisted until the Revolution. It is likely that the necklace to which they belonged was old when it was broken and scattered. The white seed bead has had an equally long period of popularity. White beads were especially favored in the Americas during the eighteenth century, and they are still offered for sale in some sub-Saharan African markets. In the absence of other traded goods, the white seed bead and *cornaline d' Aleppo* type are not very useful for establishing within narrow limits the period of occupation of a site. The German silver earring, on the other hand, is far more helpful. Vast numbers of white-metal brooches and earrings were manufactured by New World jewelers during the 18th-19th centuries for trade to the Indians. All sides took active roles in promoting the exchange of these trifles for highly-valued furs and the good will and cooperation of western Indians. Like patterned jewelry everywhere, styles went in and out of fashion relatively rapidly. The German silver earring from Fort Laurens is ascribable to the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century (Stone, 1974:135). Nearly identical ornaments were traded by the French at Michilimackinac to the Indians, but there is no reason to believe that French dealers had a monopoly on the style.

### Tableware and Other Utensils

The likelihood that durable wood, horn, cast iron and tinned iron containers were used by the garrison during their brief tenure of Fort Laurens helps us understand the scarcity of tableware and utensils in the artifact assemblage. Since all baggage was carried to the fort by packhorse or on the backs of soldiers, it is remarkable that

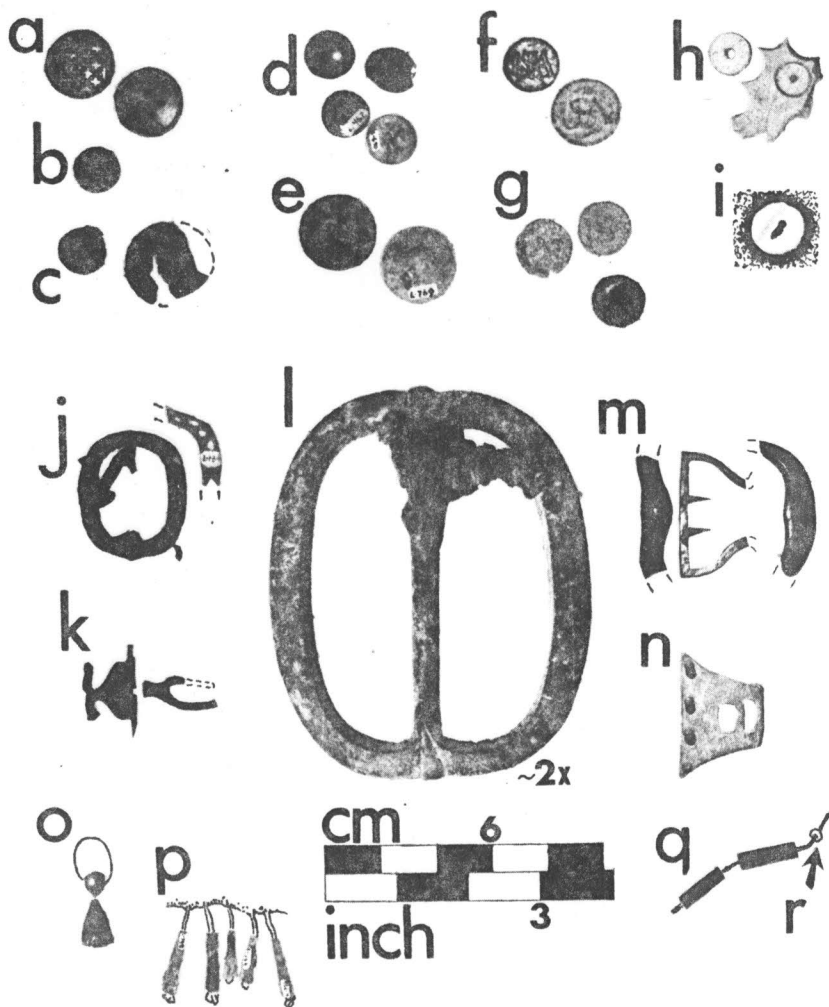


Figure 11. Items of dress recovered from Fort Laurens. *A*, pair of bone-backed buttons with gilt brass facings stamped with a basketwork design; *b*, gilt brass button stamped with swirling arm design; *c*, brass button facings; *d*, small-size pewter buttons with a high tin or copper content and soldered eyes; *e*, same as *d* only larger size; *f*, waistcoat and coat "USA" buttons of pewter cast one piece with eyes; *g*, plain pewter buttons cast one piece with eyes; *h*, simple bone button and bone scrap from the production of such buttons; *i*, simple shell button; *j*, brass knee buckle frames; *k*, upper and lower tongues from knee buckles; *l*, brass belt buckle with iron tongue; *m*, sections of pewter shoe buckle frame and brass lower tongue; *n*, stock buckle or clasp; *o*, German silver earring; *p*, "tinkling cones" ("tinklers") made of iron, perhaps fringe ornaments for a shirt or pouch; *q*, glass cane beads of the *cornaline d' Aleppo* type; *r*, seed bead of white glass.