

Introduction

Despite national recognition Fort Harmony stands in jeopardy of degradation and disturbance. Investigations could enhance the understanding of this important pioneering period of Utah history & give opportunity for the public, historical societies and other organizations to be involved in the field research and analysis of a local archaeological site; also, assess the nature of the Fort's remains for future preservation and stabilization.

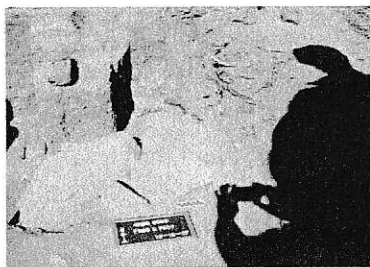
Site Description

Fort Harmony is located in Washington County, Utah; [NE1/4, NW1/4, NW1/4 of Section 24, Township 38 South, Range 13 West on the Kolob Arch 7.5' USGS Quadrangle (1972) with UTM coordinates of 301713 mE, 4150335 mN (NAD27) - elevation 5100 feet ASL (1555meters)] approximately 3.5 miles east of the town of New Harmony. The site lies in an open valley - upper Sonoran life zone with vegetation including sagebrush, rabbit brush, snake-weed, pinyon, juniper and various grasses. The surface shows the partially exposed Fort rock foundation. On the northern and western sides sediment accumulation of up to four feet above current ground surface appears to have preserved the lower portion of the foundation walls and interior of the Fort. In the deepest areas there may be up to six feet of deposits that contains artifacts and other remains from the main occupation.



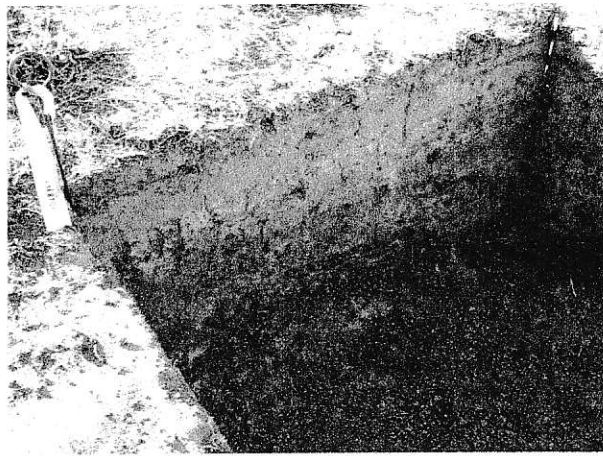
Mormon Expansion & Colonization

Fort Harmony was one of the earliest forts constructed by Mormon pioneers. It was part of a vast project, envisioned and initiated by Brigham Young, to colonize areas outside the Salt Lake Valley as well as utilize natural resources (Prince 2004:171; Seegmiller 1998:41). It was the first settlement in Washington County, Utah and served as an important base for settlements in southern Nevada, northwestern Arizona and California. The Fort was an outpost for missionary efforts to Great Basin and southwestern Native Americans groups as well as a base for settlements by Mormon immigrants.



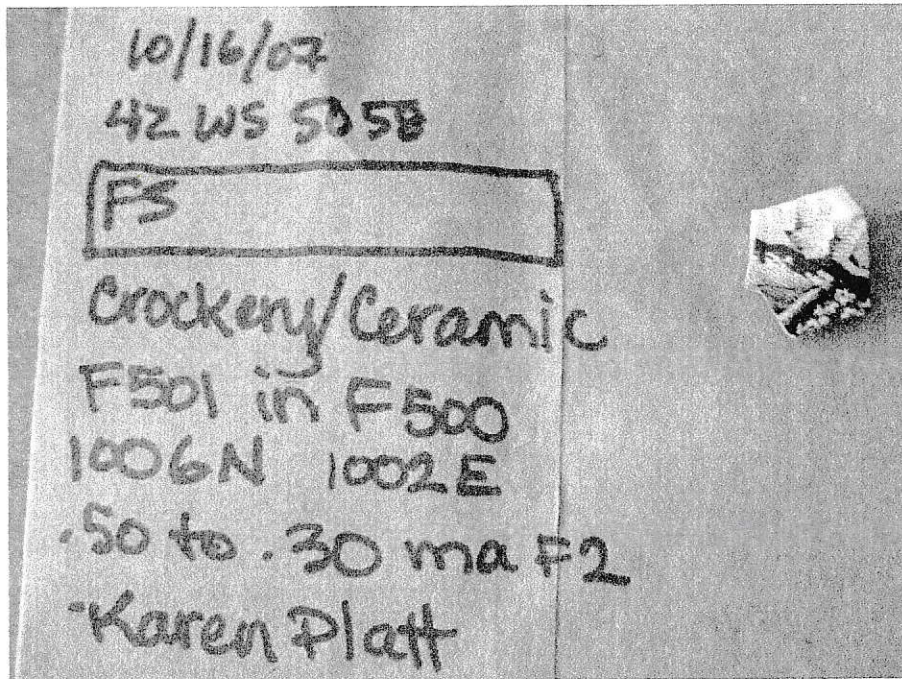
Methods and Procedures

Excavation areas were controlled by a one meter grid system. All excavation was by hand, with shovels being used in the upper disturbed deposits and trowels in the lower intact deposits. All soil removed was sifted through 1/4 inch mesh screens. All significant features, surfaces and artifacts were photographed. All materials were brought to the lab for processing. Artifact categories included the following: ceramics, glass, metal, wood, bone and stone.



From Archaeology

A 1x1 meter unit was placed in the center of the Fort in an attempt to locate the original use surface of the interior courtyard. The surface associated with the Fort's occupation is approximately 20 - 30 cm below current ground level. In the southwest corner of the Fort there appears to have been a 20 foot room. A feature found within this room is a possible fireplace. A concentration of ash and charcoal seems to extend into the adobe wall. There appears to be a pilaster used to support the second story. The items recovered from this room include: ceramics, monocle, button, metal, bone and wood fragments. In a second room a wall, hearth, chimney and probable fireplace were excavated. Items recovered from the second room include: thimble, eggshell fragments and brick fragments.



Summary

The 2007 test excavation at Fort Harmony added a wealth of information to the local history of the area as well as to the understanding of the Early Mormon period in Utah. Future work at the site will expand on these research issues and awaits further funding.