

2021 Archaeology Month Poster

Center Photo:

The center photo on the poster was taken around 1890. It shows blacksmiths putting new horseshoes on a horse. One blacksmith is shaping a horseshoe at the anvil. Another is working on the horse's hoof. The picture also shows a brick forge (1), tongs hanging on the front of the forge (2), the anvil (3) and wooden stump (4), a workbench (5), a tool rack (6), a farrier's toolbox (7), and two quenching tubs (8). The photograph was taken in a blacksmith shop in the town of Milan in Bedford County, Pennsylvania. It was provided by Dawn Fenton. Her grandfather is one of the blacksmiths in the photo.

Artifact Photos:

The side photos on the poster show artifacts from three archaeological sites in Pennsylvania, the McQuilken Blacksmith Shop, the Frazier Brothers Blacksmith Shop, and the Metropolitan Detention Center Site.

The McQuilken Blacksmith Shop was started in the 1850s by Samuel McQuilken in Indiana County. McQuilken made iron parts for wagons and shoes for horses. He also fixed metal items and farm equipment. Samuel retired in the late 1800s. Then, other blacksmiths ran the shop. Some of them owned the shop and some rented the shop. The shop was used until the 1950s, but not as many people needed blacksmiths anymore. Some of the blacksmiths traveled to other nearby towns to work also. Archaeology at the McQuilken Blacksmith Shop found evidence of three forges, an anvil, a power hammer, a workbench, a post vise, and a horse shoeing area. Some of the artifacts are shown on the poster, including a metal part from a forge, a horseshoe, horseshoe nails, horseshoe caulkins for traction, wagon parts, and early automobile parts. A gunflint and sheep teeth were also found. Blacksmiths sometimes repaired guns and helped farm animals.

The Frazier Brothers Blacksmith Shop was part of the Frazier Sawmill Site #3. This site is along Clear Creek in Clear Creek State Park in Jefferson County. The sawmill operated between 1878 and 1903. Archaeology digs at the blacksmith shop have been done by Clear Creek State Park and the North Fork Chapter #29 of the Society for Pennsylvania Archaeology. The program began in 2005 to teach park visitors about archaeology. So far, forty-nine excavation units have been dug at the site. The forge area will be dug next. Thousands of artifacts from the blacksmith shop have been found. The poster shows a picture of half of a pair of tongs. The tongs were found near the forge. Oxen shoes were found across the site. Some oxen shoes are also shown on the poster.

The Metropolitan Detention Center site is in the city of Philadelphia and was dug by archaeologists in 1995 and 1996. In the late 1700s, the site had a pottery factory, a coach house, and stable. There might have been a nail factory, also. In the early 1800s, town houses were built. In the late 1800s, the houses were turned into shops on the 1st floors. Shop owners lived on the 2nd floors. Some signs of blacksmithing activities were identified by the archaeologists. A small crucible, shown on the poster, was found and would have been used for melting metal.