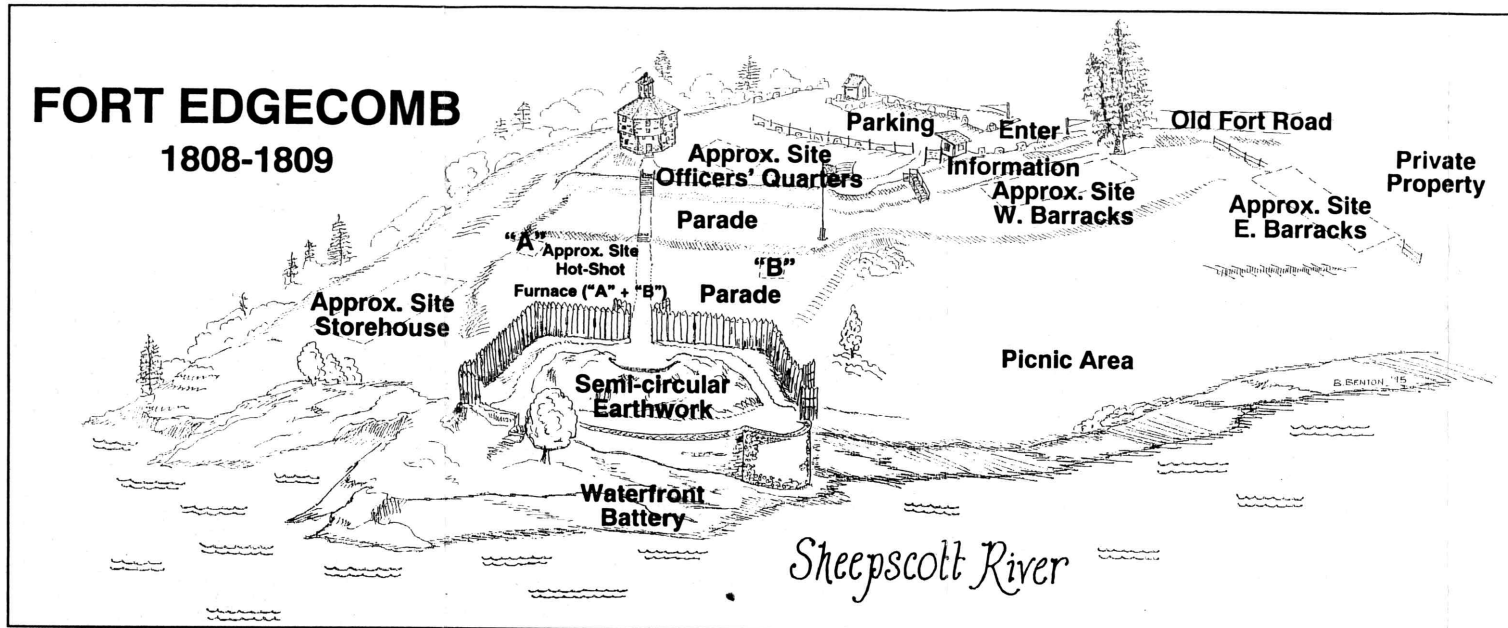


# FORT EDGECOMB

1808-1809



**BLOCKHOUSE** Built in 1808-09, the octagonal blockhouse stands as the most prominent feature of Fort Edgecomb, the nation's best preserved fort of the period. The Blockhouse is of hewn log construction. Sitting on the site's highest point, the blockhouse's watch tower, horizontal musket ports, and rectangular openings on eight sides afforded ample means to view and protect every water and land approach.

**OFFICERS' QUARTERS** A substantial structure, which probably served as an officers' quarters, stood immediately adjacent to the east

side of the blockhouse. This structure was undoubtedly an important feature of the fort, as indicated by its full cellar of large dressed granite slabs. As the need for Fort Edgecomb declined after 1820, this structure, like most others on the site, fell into disuse and was razed.

**BARRACKS** Fort Edgecomb had two barracks buildings, located at a lower level and to the east of the blockhouse. During excavations of the eastern-most structure in 1985, archaeologists determined that at least one of these large buildings, measuring 18 x 64 feet, was probably hastily built and somewhat temporary in nature. Its foundation, for example, consisted only of sills laid

directly on grade, a structural feature sharply contrasting to the granite and brick foundations of the blockhouse and officers' quarters. What archaeologists did not find in structural substance was offset by a wealth of objects excavated from the barracks area, including a number and variety of military buttons, remnants of the fort's garrison on site from 1814 to 1816.

**STOREHOUSE** A storehouse, measuring 18 x 45 feet, stood on the western side of the fort property, between the hot shot furnaces and the water battery. Little is known about this structure because its archaeological remains have not yet been investigated.

**FURNACE** Fort Edgecomb had two hot shot furnaces on the level directly below the blockhouse and behind the water battery. The hot shot furnaces were designed to heat cannon balls that could then be shot at enemy ships, setting them on fire.

**PALISADE** The wooden palisade on site today is a reconstruction of the original palisade in the same location.

**SEMI-CIRCULAR EARTHWORK** This earthwork likely protected the heaviest artillery at Fort Edgecomb. The historical record varies regarding the exact size and numbers of cannon, with some documents describing a fifty pound Columbiad on this site and other documents indicating two large cannons. Whatever the number and types

of cannon, the area enclosed by the earthwork was probably covered with wooden planks to make movement of the large guns easier.

**WATERFRONT BATTERY** Four long 18-pound cannon (18 pounds refers to the weight of the cannonball) were mounted behind Fort Edgecomb's waterfront battery. This battery also included a bastion on either end, which each mounted a cannon. The east bastion commanded the "front" or Sheepscott River and the west bastion the Back River. The east bastion also held a powder magazine.