

## ARROWSMITH BATTLEFIELD

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Soon after their first contact with the French in Wisconsin, the Fox Indians developed a feeling of distrust and suspicion that later broke out in hostilities. The skirmishes interfered greatly with trade and settlement over a large portion of New France.

After many years of unpleasant relations with this tribe, the French authorities secured the assistance of other Indian tribes to aid in the destruction of the Foxes. A battle to that end, fought in 1730, lasted twenty-three days. It is recorded in history, but its location is not definite. Two authorities have selected sites near Starved Rock. Another has placed a marker for it on a hill near Plano. Reports, later uncovered, describe it as southeast of Starved Rock, about 150 miles south of Lake Michigan, and on a vast prairie between the Illinois and Wabash rivers. The Arrowsmith site in eastern McLean County fits well into this description.

When the white settlers came to the vicinity of the battlefield, they noticed numerous circular pits on the hill. The zigzag rifle pits to the northeast and southeast have long since been obliterated by cultivation. The ridge of yellow clay approaching the hill from the northeast (DeVilliers' attempt to undermine the fort) is no longer visible.

However, the archaeologist would be better satisfied after inspecting the various remains. Careful excavations of this site have revealed much of interest. By digging to the undisturbed soil at a depth of about thirty inches many interesting relics have been found. These include traders' axes, patina-coated bullets, broken bones, a razor blade, and other metal fragments. Studies of the finds show each piece to be readily associated with the period of this battle.

Thorne Deuel, after looking the situation over carefully, expressed much satisfaction. With his assistance a number of relics were sent to Arthur Woodward, Director of Anthropology at Los Angeles

County Museum. After examining them, Mr. Woodward stated that these were implements in common use about 1730 and that many such axes were made in Utrecht, Holland.

Mr. Deuel also asked the opinion of George I. Quimley, Jr., of the Department of Geology at Louisiana University. He placed the period of the pieces submitted to him at 1700 to 1760.

One of the bullets was found in the heart of a large oak log when it was being sawed. It is regrettable that no one thought to count the rings of growth in the tree. Our friend, John McGregor, could have actually checked the calendar had he been there.

An airplane photograph of the Arrowsmith site shows the bend in the stream and the direction in which it runs. In those respects it is almost a complete duplication of the map made by DeLery, French army engineer at Quebec, upon receipt of the report of the battle in October 1730.

While the historical records are rather conclusive, the traces that linger have helped to tell the story of this conflict. Those of us who have examined all data pertaining to the Arrowsmith Battlefield now feel it is definitely identified as the scene of the battle that sealed the fate of the Fox nation.

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### Relics from Arrowsmith Battlefield (three-eighths size).

**First row:** Section of bullet-lodged gun barrel fashioned into scraper, gun flints.

**Second row:** Section of gun barrel, war points for arrows.

**Third row:** Section of gun barrel, three patina-coated musket balls.

**Fourth row:** Blade of hunting knife, piece of sheet copper used as a patch.

**Fifth row:** Razor blade bearing a French name (Pierre Meman) the maker, section of gun barrel.

**Sixth row:** Two traders axes, piece of bone broken to obtain marrow.

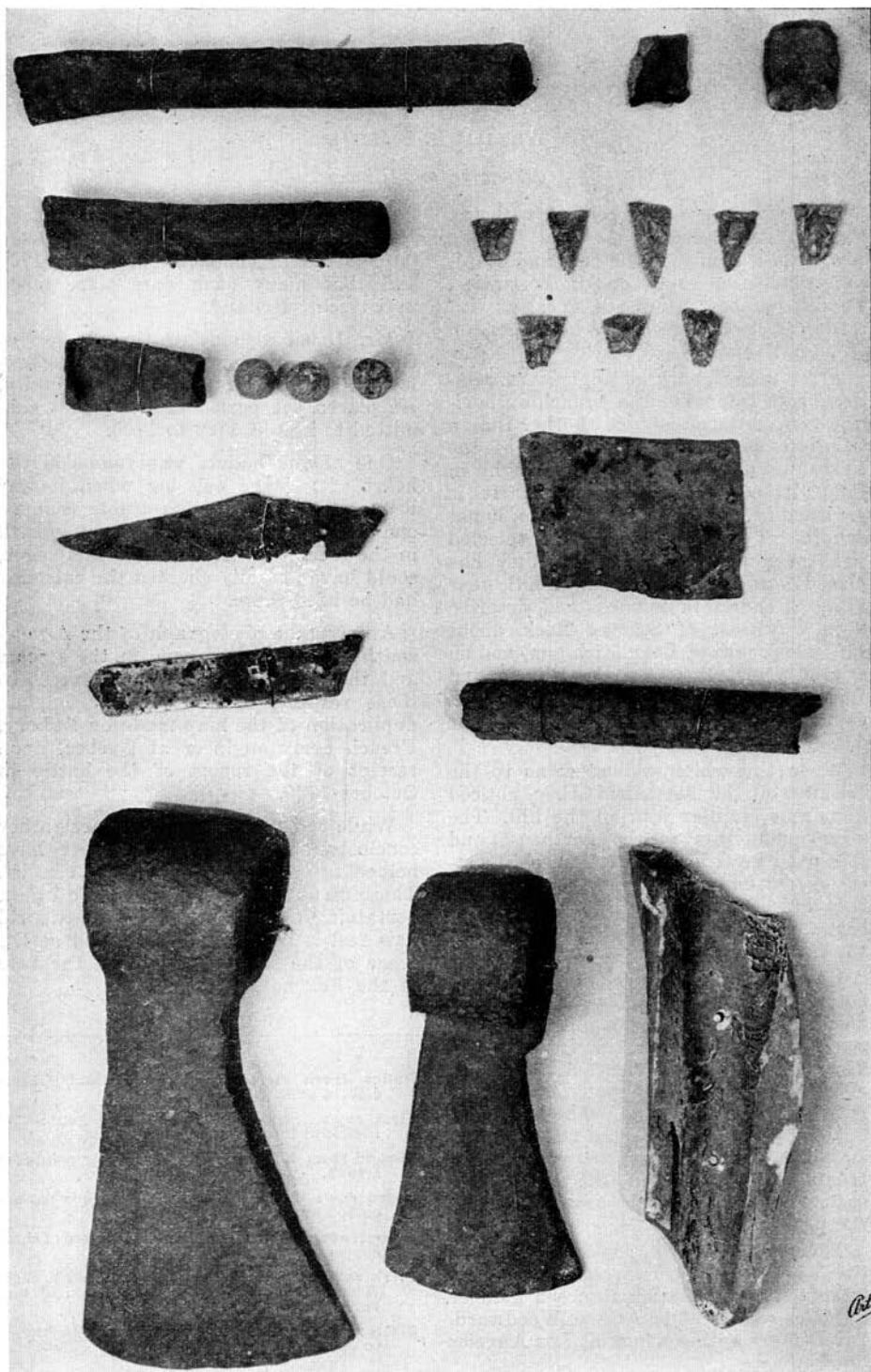


Fig. 1.—Relics from the Arrowsmith Battlefield.