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Community dig helps to rediscover Dowden's Ordinary

By Kiah Culver, Special to the Gazette

Scores of history buffs turned out Saturday for an archeological dig in Clarksburg held in commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the French and Indian War.

Montgomery County has deep roots in the 1755 conflict between the French and the British, with British Major General Edward Braddock and his army marching along what is known today as Route 355 to drive French forces out of the Ohio lands west of the Alleganies.

While on the way to meet with Benjamin Franklin to receive supplies needed for the mission, General Braddock and his soldiers found lodging at Dowden's Ordinary, a tavern in Clarksburg marked today only by a big rock and a plaque.

After their brief stay, General Braddock continued on toward Pittsburgh, where his army was confronted by French and Indian forces and defeated on July 9, 1755.

The Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission in association with the Archeology Society of Maryland sponsored "Family Dig Day" at Dowden's Ordinary and brought together various people in the community who made their imprints in history.

Participants shared an opportunity to excavate the site, witness militia re-enactors of the period and learn about the historical significance the French and Indian War has today with a speech given by archeologist Jim Sorensen.

Students from an archeology group at Richard Montgomery High School were among those participating in a dig in Clarksburg on Saturday.

Juniors Grace Lee (left) and Jill Serpa spent time sifting through an 18th century trash pit where artifacts such as gilded buttons, coins and pottery remains were discovered.