

Tour Tip: Tour #2 stops at the site of Fort Harmony, where excavations have unearthed a mystery

A Tale of Blue Willow China

From a conversation with Karen and Lyman Platt



Researcher Lyman Platt shows a shard of pottery unearthed at the old Fort Harmony site.

As archeological digs were underway at the site of old Fort Harmony, many wonderful relics were discovered--among them pieces of heavy pottery typical of those made by pioneer artisans.

But when delicate pieces of very fine blue and white china began to

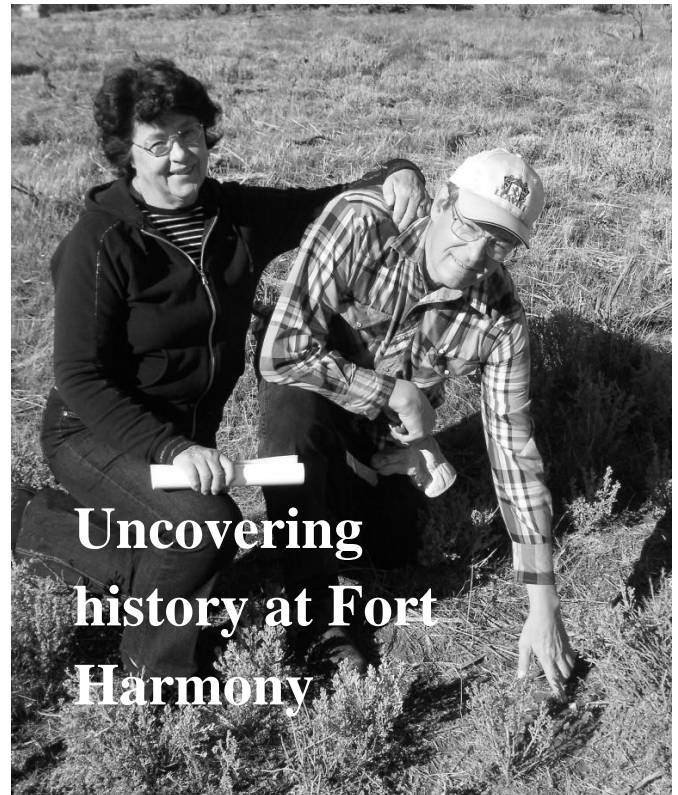
surface, a mystery also was uncovered. Where did they come from and how did they get to this rugged place? Researchers Karen and Lyman Platt began unraveling the mystery which is now part of the lore surrounding Harmony Valley.

The story began with “Aunt” Betsy Williams who was given some very fine china from relatives when she left the old country of Wales to follow her religion to America. Knowing the china would not survive the trek, she had it shipped, then carried by oxcart across the plains to Salt Lake City.

After the untimely death of her husband Aunt Betsy came to stay with relatives in New Harmony bringing the precious pieces with her. The dishes were prized possessions used only for the most important events. On one occasion when it was announced that Brigham Young himself would make a visit, she carefully laid out the beautiful china. But before his arrival, her young son who was playing marbles nearby carelessly knocked the table and the dishes were

unceremoniously thrown to the floor in a shower of shards.

As excavations began near her home at the fort, china shards were uncovered and identified as Betsy’s precious “Blue Willow” design. And as if to complete the story, also found nearby was a small glass marble! 🎲



Fort Harmony Historical Society president Karen Platt (left) and her husband, Lyman D. Platt uncover bits of history at the site of the old Fort Harmony.

About The Fort Harmony Historical Society

“Our mission is to promote the understanding and appreciation of Harmony Valley’s history, to preserve, protect, and enhance this historical heritage and insure proper utilization of historic resources for the benefit of the citizens of Harmony Valley, local businesses, the state of Utah, visitors, and future generations.”

Website: www.fortharmony.org