

See Military Collector and  
Historian: Winter 1976 Vol 28, Iss 4  
Pg 172

### 1812 CAMP KETTLES

One item of issue to troops during the War of 1812 was the sheet iron or tinned iron camp kettle. These prosaic but useful items were manufactured and issued in large quantities to soldiers in the field. Invoices of material shipped from Fort Fayette to Pittsburgh to Harrison's Northwest Army during a ten month period from 27 May 1812 to 28 March 1813 list 922 sheet iron or tin camp kettles, together with 923 iron camp kettles.<sup>1</sup> The latter are presumed to be the regular cast iron kettle or bulged pot form. In spite of the quantities of these kettles made and issued, few examples of the utilitarian vessels have survived.

Excavations conducted by The Ohio Historical Society at Fort Meigs, near Toledo, Ohio, have uncovered two nearly complete sheet iron camp kettles which date between February 1813 and the summer of 1815. The kettles, which nest, are heavily corroded but retain their bail handles and

are complete enough to provide accurate measurements. The larger kettle has a diameter of 11½ inches and is 11¼ inches high. The smaller version is 9¾ inches in diameter and 9⅞ inches high. Both have a wire reinforced upper rim and folded and crimped side seams. Forged iron bails are inserted through holes in the body and wrap around the rolled wire edge. No reinforcements are provided to eliminate wear. The larger kettle is reinforced along the bottom with a wrought iron ring inserted in the seam. The smaller kettle uses a simple turned and folded seam. Neither of these kettles retains any trace of tinning, and it is probably that they did not have this coating. These kettles together with many other artifacts from the site will be displayed at Fort Meigs as part of its reconstruction.

Joseph M. Thatcher

<sup>1</sup>F. F. Seeley and R. C. Knopf, "Fort Fayette Freight Book," *Document Transcriptions of the War of 1812 in the Northwest*, Vol. IX, The Ohio Historical Society, Columbus, Ohio, 1961.

