Discovery of a Socket Bayonet at the Thayer residence

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During November of 2007 BFS staff member Dale Webster was adding insulation to the attic over the kitchen in the Thayer Residence. While engaged in the work he found a primitive bayonet (Figure 1). In reasonable condition, it never-the-less appears to have been roughly used, perhaps as a digging implement.

It appears to be a split socket bayonet which, according to Reilly (1990), being “the very earliest form of socket bayonet used in the Western Hemisphere...”. Its use commenced about 1720 and continued until around 1750. It is believed that often they were made by local blacksmiths, very possibly to fit the muzzle of a particular weapon. They are “seldom encountered today, the survival rate having been minimal” (Reilly, 1990).

In my opinion the bayonet could have found its way to the Thayer farm from the Mohawk Valley during or after the French and Indian War (1755-1761) or, more likely it was brought there during the 1790s or 19th century.

Figure 1. The Thayer bayonet.

Reference


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