

ARCH1855 Write-Up 2

Jeremy Wagner

February 14, 2011

The Week 3 practicum was an interesting exercise in attempting to optimize all the variables which affect the success of iron smelting that had been discussed and read about so far in the course. While reading about the different elements involved in smelting (e.g. location, ore quality, power supply), it is often difficult to synthesize a complete idea about how one might take on the significant challenge of actually combining them all to establish a productive ironworks. This assignment, however, was a good chance to attempt that synthesis of the many and delicate variables that affect ironworking. Through in-class computer research, our group put together a basic plan for developing an ironworks. The need for power was one of our first thoughts, and with a limited number of hands available for work at the ironworks, the placement of the ironworks near a river to obtain water power seemed an attractive option. The abundance of nearby bogs, which would contain bog ores which could be roasted and smelted, further justified this choice. However, the choice of location was not without its drawbacks. Other groups chose to establish ironworks upstream of ours, and if this happened in reality, it would be problematic for our operation should the upstream works choose to use the river for waste or dam it up to increase their own power supply. This practicum developed my sensitivity to the huge amount of variables (both controllable and uncontrollable) that go into ironworking in general, especially when one has to make do with whatever landscape nature has made available to him and his society.