

FORT GEORGE POST

The Newsletter of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

AUTUMN 2018

Nation Building: The Provincial Chaplains (Part Three), Attitudes on Slavery

By Jeff Brozyna

This is the third article I have written based on my 2016 survey of the chaplains who served in the provincial regiments attached to the British Armies stationed at Lake George and the New York Frontier during the French and Indian War. The men in these colonial regiments were a cross section of their civilian communities and, therefore, they provide us a window into the world of their 18th Century attitudes and beliefs. The fact that each regiment was assigned a chaplain from their community was significant and we can learn a great deal by studying these men.

I was able to develop a detailed database on 46 chaplains of whom 40 served at Lake George. These men (who generally held the rank of captain) were older than the average colonial soldier (38.4 years at first service), better educated (typically Yale, Harvard or Princeton), disproportionally Congregationalist (Calvinist) and "New Light" (Evangelical) in their spiritual beliefs. Five of them (11%) owned slaves! Perhaps this is not surprising as our chaplains were often part of educated, wealthier families who were more likely to own slaves. Although we must be careful not to draw too many conclusions from five individuals, it is still fascinating to highlight the experience of these chaplains who owned slaves during the decades when efforts were first being made to modify and then abolish slavery in New England and New York.

When the French and Indian War began in 1754, slavery was legal in the British colonies. People of African descent could be sold into life-long bondage and the status of slavery would extend to their descendants. Slaves were generally considered property by most white people and even in Northern colonies free Black people faced severe legal restrictions on property ownership, mobility and rights to assemble. These restrictions were based on fear, a belief in their racial inferiority and Calvinist Biblical interpretation. (Douglas Harper, "Slavery in the North," 2003 at slavenorth.com.)

Who were these slaveholders among the chaplains in the provincial regiments? How did they react to the change in the climate of Northern opinion which gradually restricted slavery in their communities as the 19th Century approached?

REV. JAMES BEBEE (1717-1785): Chaplain of Colonel Wooster's 3rd Conn. Regiment during the 1760 campaign, traveled with Amherst's Army to the St Lawrence and on to Montreal where he witnessed the surrender of the remnants of the main French Army. He was a Yale graduate, a pastor at Unity Parish in Fairfield County, Conn., and a good family man. He was to become a Patriot in the coming Revolutionary War. He also was a business man who owned a substantial farm and was part owner of a saw mill and grist mill. At times he was slow to pay his bills. He

owned slaves, including Peg Hawley who was the wife of a free black man named Nero Hawley. He also owned Peg's children. Bebee baptized these children. The freedom of these slaves was purchased by Nero Hawley after Bebee's death in 1785. (Connecticut Historical Society, "Rolls of the Connecticut Men in the French and Indian war 1755-1762," Hartford, CT.: Conn. Historical Soc. Pub., 1903-1905; Franklin B. Dexter, "Biographical Sketches of Graduates of Yale College," Vol. II (1745-1763), New York, Henry Holt, 1896, p. 20.; as to biography and slaves: Richard C. Ambler, "A Sketch of owned slaves, the Life of Rev. James Bebee," Reports and Papers of the Fairfield Historical Society, Bridgeport, CT., 1882-1896-97, pages 79-95 at <https://books.google.com/book?id=lOxHAQAAMAAS>.)

REV. MARK LEAVENWORTH (1711-1797): Chaplain of Colonel Nathan Whiting's 2nd Conn. Regiment in 1760. He was a Yale graduate and was an older chaplain being 58 years old at first military service. He was a New Light pastor of Waterbury's Congregationalist Church and a future Patriot. In 1793 Rev. Leavenworth joined "The Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom and for the Relief of Persons Held in Bondage" which was an early organization formed to promote the enforcement of state laws providing for gradual Emancipation. Despite this, Leavenworth continued to own two

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slaves, Peg and Phillis! Both are listed in his estate inventory of 1797 and in the family's 1800 Census tally. Neither of them were given their freedom during the lifetime of Leavenworth or his wife Sarah. (Rolls of "Connecticut Men in the French and Indian War," "Waterbury's Slave Owners," Mattatuck Historical Society 2004 at <http://www.fortunestory.org/waterburysslaveowners/leavenworths.asp>; Elias W. Leavenworth, "Genealogy of the Leavenworth Family in the United States," Syracuse, NY., Hitchcock and Company, 1873, pages 49-52.)

REV. JONATHAN LEAVITT (1731-1802): A chaplain of Col. Goffe's New Hampshire Regiment on the Lake Champlain frontier in 1762 where he tended to the spiritual needs of the men during the on-going military construction projects at Crown Point and St. Johns. Leavitt was born to a well-connected family in Suffield, Mass. and his father owned slaves in the 1730s. He graduated from Yale in 1758 and was ordained the Congregationalist minister at the new church in Walpole, NH in 1761. Leavitt was a formal, austere man. Just before his tenure vote, Leavitt was seen beating his runaway slave and hauling her back to his home by a rope attached to his horse's saddle! This enraged his congregation which demanded his ouster! A financial settlement was negotiated and by 1764 Leavitt departed. He was hired at another church in Charlemont, Mass. in the Berkshires. The parishioners at his second church endured his monotonous preaching style but his support for the Crown during the Revolution could not be tolerated! In 1777 he was dismissed. The minister retaliated with a lawsuit for back wages. Leavitt died in Heath, Mass in 1802. Neither the 1790 or 1800 US Census indicate that

Jonathan Leavitt owned any slaves late in his life. Ironically, three of Leavitt's grandsons became noted Abolitionists. (As to military service: Henry True, Ed., "Journals and Letters of Rev. Henry True of Hampstead, New Hampshire," Marion, Ohio, 1900; Franklin B. Dexter, "Biographical Sketches of the Graduates of Yale College," Vol. II, 1745-1763, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1896; as to slave incident: Henry W. Bellows, "Historical Sketch of Colonel Benjamin Bellows," New York: John A. Gray printer, 1885 at <http://books.google.com/books?>; father's slave ownership: Hezekiah Sheldon, "Documentary History of Suffield in the Colony and Province of the Massachusetts Bay in New England, 1660-1749," Springfield, Mass: Clark W. Bryan Pub., 1879.)

REV. STEPHEN WILLIAMS (1693-1782): part of the powerful Williams Family, cousin to Col. Ephraim Williams, served as chaplain to his regiment as well as Ruggles' and Dwight's. As a boy of ten he was taken captive at the famous Deerfield Raid and carried off by the Abenaki. Some family members and many neighbors were killed but he was fortunate enough to be ransomed to freedom. Williams became pastor at Longmeadow Congregational Church, served for over 60 years and dedicated efforts to the establishment of the Stockbridge Mission. Continuing family tradition, which was common among landed gentry, he owned slaves. His life-long diaries and church records identify at least ten slaves: Nicholas, Scipio, Stanford, Tobiah, Peter, Tom, Cato, Joseph, Phillis and Betty. Like most clergy in New England he seemed to have no moral problem with slavery but he worried about his slaves' welfare. He educated and baptized some of them and allowed marriage. Williams was

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President's Welcome

By Lyn Karig Hohmann

Lxciting summer and an exciting upcoming year!

The start to the summer was very muted when a severe wind shear knocked down about two dozen of the huge pines in the park on the night of May 4th. A group of us arrived the next day to participate in "I Love My Park" day and were shocked by the damage. Fortunately, the damage was contained primarily to the west part of the park. Although the electricity and the water pipes were knocked out, the buildings were unharmed. None of the features or statues were damaged. Many thanks to NYS Department of Conservation (DEC) for the hard work done in cleaning up the park so it was usable. While the damage was still evident, it did not impact our Memorial Day event, for which we were very grateful.

You will read in the newsletter more about Memorial Day, but I cannot say "thank you" enough to all of our members and the community who made the improvements to the Unknown Soldiers's memorial possible. We hope that you have been able to visit the site. Sam Younes, who did the work, did an excellent job and was very attentive to ensure the integrity of the site. When you visit the site, you will note a square of blocks laid in a "soldier" pattern in front of the memorial stone. That is the actual site of the tomb of the soldiers. This year, we planted marigolds to decorate the site. Thanks are given to Chuck Vandrei from NYS DEC who supplied extra flats of the marigolds. We would like to do a permanent planting next year so if you have ideas of what would be appropriate, please let us know.

During the summer, we again had our Walks in the Park. Jeff Brozyna, Todd Earl and myself welcomed visitors and shared our history. We are hoping

to do more next year. We also again provided copies of a self-walking tour to be handed out at the kiosk on entry to the park. Several hundred were distributed and were appreciated by our visitors. The Colonial Walking Tour of Lake George also proved very popular and copies were distributed at several sites around Lake George, including the Chamber of Commerce Visitor's Center.

During the Annual Membership Meeting in August, we were able to accomplish some needed housekeeping for the Alliance. The updates to the Constitution and By-Laws as distributed with the notice of the meeting was accepted. We also shared our conflict of interest and ethics policies approved by the board. Our IRS 990 form was available for inspection as was the budget for the upcoming year. We had an excellent visioning discussion (see the accompanying article) to add to the planning for the planned Visitors Interpretive Center (VIC). We were sad to say farewell to two officers who have been dedicated to the work of the Alliance for years. Bill Herrlich has been Treasurer since inception of the Alliance and Nadine Battaglia has functioned as Chair of the Membership Committee and Secretary for many years. They both deserve a wonderful round of applause. The membership unanimously wished to have them recognized with a certificate of appreciation which has been sent.

We also now welcome Rosemarie Earl as our new Treasurer. Rosemarie and her husband, Todd (a Trustee), live in Lake George and have both been very supportive of the Alliance for years. We also welcome Francis Coccozza as our new secretary. Fran Coccozza is the principal of the Lake George Junior Senior High School and has had a strong interest in the history of our area. Finally, Patrice, our volunteer webmaster, show-

cased our new website. Patrice is a new member who was present at the Memorial Day celebration and volunteered to get a website up for us. We are very fortunate that a person with her skill has stepped forward. It is beautiful. She is not only technically adept, but also artistically adept. Thank you!

Did I mention the Visitors Interpretive Center (VIC)? The Lake George Park Commission is seeking a new building. They are currently housed in the old farmhouse within the Park. The Commission has received funding and permission to remove that building and construct a new one near that site. The ground floor will become a Visitors Interpretive Center for the Park. The Alliance is working closely with NYS DEC and the Park Commission to be ready to develop exhibits and support the day to day work at the VIC. We need your input so please read the feature article in this newsletter and forward your comments to us! We will begin seeking grant funding for our VIC project soon. ■



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deeply distressed when harsh discipline inflicted on Cato for a drunken attack on a woman in 1762 led to his apparent suicide. Williams owned slaves throughout his life. (Elizabeth Hoff, "Enslaved in Longmeadow," *The Town Crier*, Longmeadow Historical Society, Longmeadow, Mass., July 2016.)

THE WOODBRIDGE BROTHERS: Rev. John Woodbridge IX (1702-1783), a Congregationalist minister from Hadley, Mass., had married into the powerful Ruggles Family. Timothy Woodbridge, (1709-1774), was the well-known missionary, judge, legislator, land speculator and Indian Affairs Superintendent of Stockbridge, Mass. Reverend John was chaplain of Col. William Williams' Mass. Regt. at Lake George in 1758 according to Nehemiah Cleaveland, Editor of the "Journal of Reverend John Cleaveland-June 14, 1758-October 25, 1758," (Essex Institute Collections, Vol XII, No. 2, 1874, footnote 1 page 179). John apparently owned no slaves. Timothy Woodbridge served as the chaplain in Col. Israel Williams' Mass. Regiment during the Ft. William Henry Alarm in August 1757. Timothy, a future Patriot supporter and a New Light, owned a slave servant couple and at least one child. (George M. Marsden, "Jonathan Edwards: A Life," Yale University Press, 2003, p. 104.) Facts and circumstances indicate Timothy Woodbridge was also with the 1758 army, either assisting his brother and/or ministering to his friends and former students in the Rangers Stockbridge Indian companies. His presence is proven by a letter sent by him to Col. Israel Williams from the Lake George camp dated July 24, 1758 in the collection of the Massachusetts Historical Society. (Justin Winsor, Ed., "Narrative and Critical History of America: The English and French in

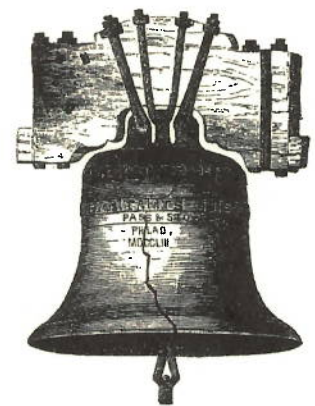
North America," Vol. V, Part II, New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1887, p. 597.)

State Court rulings effectively ended slavery in Massachusetts in 1783 and no slaves were reported living in the state by the Census of 1790. Connecticut law instituted gradual emancipation in 1784 which was to take effect no later than about 1810. Nine hundred fifty-eight slaves were listed in the 1790 Census. Only 310 slaves remained in that state during the 1810 Census. (Kathleen Logothetis Thompson, "When Did Slavery Really End in the North?," at [www.civildiscourse-historyblog.com/blog/2017/1/3/when-did-slavery-really-end-in-the-north.](http://www.civildiscourse-historyblog.com/blog/2017/1/3/when-did-slavery-really-end-in-the-north)) The climate of opinion was turning against slavery as an institution in New England in the late 18th Century due to egalitarian beliefs and decreasing economic underpinnings. Despite this, Beebe, Leavenworth, Williams and Timothy Woodbridge still owned slaves at their deaths late in the century.

What do the actions of these slaveholders tell us about their beliefs? Beebe and Williams made efforts to educate and baptize their slaves and Leavenworth showed concern about their future by joining an emancipation society. From this perspective, it may be said they related to their slaves as people. However, the hypocrisy of Leavenworth's failure to free his own slaves while maintaining membership in an emancipation society is hard to overlook! Leavitt apparently owned no slaves after the 1760s but treated his slave brutally and lost his employment due to public indignation! Williams allowed a slave to be subjected to discipline that was so harsh that it led to his apparent suicide. Leavitt was a Loyalist and although apparently neutral, Williams had strong ties to

Loyalists. However, the principals of freedom and equality espoused before and during the Revolution made no difference to Patriots Beebe, Leavenworth and Timothy Woodbridge. They kept their slaves. Perhaps the business perspective of Beebe's and Woodbridge's lives caused them to value the property aspect of their slaves above Revolutionary egalitarian principles. A disproportionate number of these chaplains (3) graduated from conservative Yale. In addition, New Light leaders like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards condoned slavery and their impact must not be overlooked. (Regarding Edwards' position, see Marsden, pages 255-258). We can infer these slaveholders continued to generally believe in their forefathers' racial, economic and Biblical rationale for slavery despite the changes going on around them.

We must be careful not to judge these 18th Century chaplain-slaveholders by 21st Century standards. However, as a group these chaplain/slaveholders demonstrated no greater enlightenment or spirituality on the slavery issue than their contemporaries in general. Not only did they fail to provide enlightened leadership on the issue, in many ways, they lagged behind their fellow New Englanders. ■



Bringing the VFC to Reality - What do you think?

As part of our planning for the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitors Interpretive Center (VIC), the Officers and Trustees have developed the following Vision Statement and Key Components for the VIC. This was presented at the membership meeting as part of the introduction to our speaker, Tracy Clothier, who walked us through additional steps in a visioning process to ensure we have the most complete understanding of what the VIC should become.

For your review, here is our statement. We would ask you to review this and share your input through the questions that Tracy has posed for us:

Vision Statement: Visitors shall have the opportunity to understand the role of this park in our military, social, and cultural history and to appreciate the people who served here during the period of the building of our nation.

Key Components to be in the VIC:

- 1) The Ernie Haas' painting of the Park during General Amherst's encampment in 1759. (May also include copy of Davies' painting for comparison)
- 2) Topographic diorama of the Park with the ability to show by LED lights the layers of use by year of the Park during its military history. This will need to include accurate vegetation cover.
- 3) Artifacts from recent archaeological digs incorporated into displays of the appropriate period. (Native American; French and Indian War; Revolutionary War)
- 4) Panel displays that highlight key features of each period of park use (Prehistory; F&I War; Revolutionary War) including timeline, comments from period diaries and reports; relevant maps;

- 5) Model of Fort George (and potentially model of stockaded fort)
- 6) Display featuring naval history – section of 1758 bateaux including model; radeau gun port lid; including photographic mosaic of radeau; supported by video from Bateaux Below
- 7) Children's interactive hands-on Entrance reception desk would include usual guest book, donation opportunity, and potentially sale of copies of EH painting, note cards.

From Tracy's Presentation, she notes the following are elements of successful local history museums from the American Association for State and Local History:

Some Elements of Successful Local History Museums:

- Immersive Environment: Virtual Reality, Mixed Reality, Art
- Authenticity: Content, Places and Objects
- Stories of People and Place
- Evoke Emotion

- Tie to Universal Themes or Questions
- Strong Social Capital: Bonding and Bridging
- Graphic Timeline Display
- Less is More

Reference: 2008 by American Association for State and Local History

In thinking of the VIC –

Do we have the right Vision Statement?

Are we missing key components that should be part of the display?

List five things you would like to see happen at the VIC to make this vision a reality.

How do we create a gateway area to bring the VIC to visitors' attention?

Finally, describe what you might write in a postcard or post on Facebook to family and friends about the new Lake George Battlefield Park Visitors Interpretation Center.

Please send your thoughts and comments to us at our email: FortGeorgeAlliance@gmail.com.

Thank you!

Passing of Long time Member

Mr. Robert F. Flacke

We were very sad to hear of the passing of our long-time member, Mr. Robert F. Flacke. Mr. Flacke joined the Alliance during the very early days of our existence. In this as in so many other ways, he showed his support for history and the environment in Lake George and the Adirondacks. He was the President of Fort William Henry Corporation, developing it into a preeminent resort in Lake George. He was the Commissioner for the state Department of Environmental Conservation from 1979 – 1983 and the chairman of the Adirondack Park Commission in 1975. His list of accomplishments is long as is his involvement in many local organizations. We were fortunate to have him as our member. Our sincerest sympathy is extended to his wife, Jean, and their children.



Update on the American Battlefield Protection Program Grant

The final report for the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) Grant has been completed and submitted. As you recall, the Town of Lake George, as lead, with the NYS DEC and the Alliance, collaborated on a grant proposal to identify sites within the town that were relevant to the military history of Lake George Battlefield Park. While the Park itself is a protected site, we were concerned that there were sites through out the town, known and unknown, that were at risk through development. Using an extensive review of historical documents and maps as well as field walking and interviews, Hartgen Archaeological Associates, our consultant, compiled an extensive collection of sites to be considered. The final document, over 1000 pages, will now become a resource document for

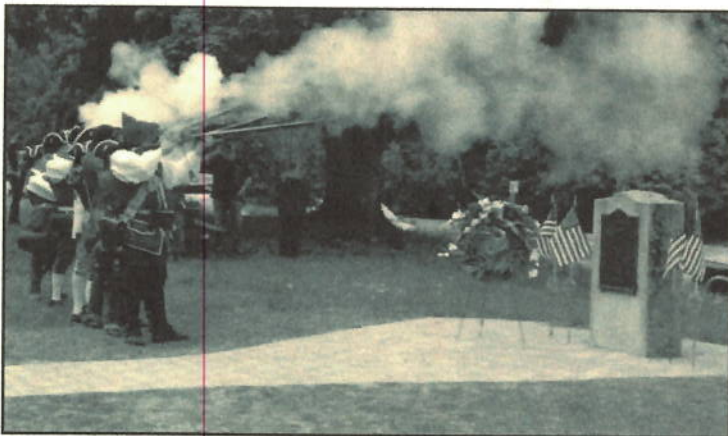
development within the town and further archaeological studies. The document is available on line at the Town of Lake George (<https://lakegeorgetown.org/departments/planning-zoning/>), scroll down to "Historic Preservation Planning" to the link "Hartgen Associates Report."

Sites that have been documented will now be entered into the state database of historical sites. Plans are being developed to identify sites that should be protected and determining the mechanism to accomplish that. Also, consideration is being given to better signage throughout the town to present a cohesive story to support historical tourism. This additional information will be helpful in ensuring a comprehensive story will be told by exhibits at the planned VIC. ■



We were delighted when we learned that Bill and Sandra Pomeroy would be attending our annual meeting in August. Bill, the principal of the William G. Pomeroy Foundation, has long been a member of the Alliance but has not been able to attend in recent years. Here they are inspecting the upgrades to the Four Unknown Soldier's burial site. We are proud to say they were very pleased with the outcome, for which they bear a great deal of responsibility!

REDEDICATION OF THE FOUR UNKNOWN SOLDIERS' GRAVE SITE



site. Deryn Pomeroy from the Pomeroy Foundation gave an inspiring speech regarding the site and the work of the Foundation. Since the date coincided with History Weekend in Lake George, Margy Mannix, Town Historian, gave a short speech about the meaning of history in our town. The reenactors from Fort William Henry as well as a group of community reenactors attended and gave the musket salute to these fallen comrades. The Lake George Fire Department and the American Legion Auxiliary again joined us in the ceremony. We were very pleased by the very excellent attendance by the community.

First, let us say thank you to our membership who helped us meet the William G. Pomeroy Foundation Challenge grant to fund the upgrades to this historically important site. As you may remember, we were challenged to raise \$3000 for a dollar to dollar match to reach our needed \$6000. We actually were able to raise \$4000 well within the time frame of the match. Thank you all! Those who contributed to the upgrades were recognized by a poster display at the site.

The site was rededicated on Memorial Day 2018. While the grass had not yet taken root, we still got many complements on the site. Our president gave a short introduction into the history and importance of this



These photos demonstrate the devastation that occurred in our Park on the night of May 4, 2018. Over two dozen large pines were felled by the sudden winds. Water and electrical supplies were interrupted. We were fortunate in that no buildings were harmed and there was no damage to the Fort or other historical features. Many thanks to the NYS DEC for their efforts to remove the fallen trees and reopen the Park for visitors.

We have a website!

As part of a growing effort to raise awareness of the Battlefield Park and its key role in our nation's history, the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance is in the early stages of building a web site (www.lgbattlefieldparkalliance.org). The site, along with the Alliance's Facebook page, will keep current and prospective members aware of the progress of the planned Visitors Interpretive Center at the Park and activities being sponsored by the Alliance and other groups.

Alliance member Patrice Lockhart has volunteered to advise the organization in the construction of the site. Members are encouraged to share their ideas for the web site by emailing us at info@lgbattlefieldparkalliance.org.