

# FORT GEORGE ADVICE

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

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

FALL 2006

## The Battle of Lake George 11 October 1780

By Clifford Mullen

No battle's real beginning is with the first shots fired, the events that set up the situation that led to the battle tell a fuller story. Trying to pick a logical starting point for the Battle of Fort George, we can begin on the 29<sup>th</sup> of September, 1780, the day that Major Christopher Carleton, of His Majesty's 29<sup>th</sup> Regiment, embarked his raiding force at Isle aux Noix in the north end of Lake Champlain. The force destined for Fort George was a total of 776 men of all ranks, principally from the British 29<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup>, 53<sup>rd</sup>, and 84<sup>th</sup> Regiments of Foot, augmented by Jaegers, Royalists, and St. Regis Indians.

At Fort George, Captain John Chipman, of Colonel Seth Warner's Continental Regiment, commanded. Colonel Warner was home recovering from a wound he received while traveling the military road between Fort George and Fort Edward the month before; Lt Colonel Safford was away pursuing the Regiment's Paymaster who had slipped his arrest (for embezzling and selling the Regiment's cloths); and Major Brownson was a prisoner of war in Canada. This lack of senior leadership did not mean a lack of experience though. Captain Chipman and most of his subordinate officers, as well as the Sergeants and many of the Privates, had been in the Regiment since before the Battle of Hubbardton in 1777, and several were veterans of the invasion of Canada 1775-1776.

This experience showed in the Regiment's Security measures. The scouts that Capt. Chipman had out reported (at the beginning of October) the appearance of two British ships at Crown Point. This information, although

considered far from unusual, was passed on to Colonel Monroe, who was commanding the American forces in the region. In response to this report, Captain Chipman sent another scouting party down Lake George in a bateau to keep a "strict eye" on the British ships. In the Fort George orderly book is recorded an order from the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1780: "...*The men are also ordered to keep their arms and accoutrements in good order and in such a position that they can lay their hand upon them in the dark and if occasion Calls be ready for action in a moment- They are also to observe to be on the parade on every call of the drum without the least delay*". Captain Chipman was keeping his men alert but looking to the north. He thought his right was secured by the troops at Fort Anne to the east.

Major Carleton's raiding force reached Bulwagga Bay west of Crown Point on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October. Major Carleton's men spent the day of the 7<sup>th</sup> issuing 12 days rations and getting their packs set up. That night they set out for Ticonderoga, the boats moving single file up the lake, arriving there during the night, and pushed on to the South Bay of Lake Champlain on the night of the 8<sup>th</sup> of October.

Captain Sherwood, commanding the Militia at Fort Anne, had scouts out too. They reported the arrival of the British raiding force to him and he passed that intelligence on to Colonel Henry Livingston, who commanded at Fort Edward. Neither Captain Sherwood nor Colonel Livingston passed this information on to Captain Chipman, leaving him quite in the dark

about a large raiding force to his east.

Major Carleton sent his boats back to Ticonderoga with 103 officers and men, to wait there until the raiders returned. He sent another detachment with a Subaltern and 30 men in 2 bateaux back down the lake, to cross over to Lake George, with 2 Coehorn mortars, to proceed up Lake George. The mortars were to be used to support the planned assault on Fort George. This left Major Carleton a raiding force of 642 men. During the day of the 9<sup>th</sup>, the British force marched to 'Park's Farm', within a mile and a half of the blockhouse at Fort Anne. Between 4 and 5 in the morning, the British force began movement to Fort Anne, after leaving a party to destroy the Blockhouse and the Sawmill nearby.

Arriving at Fort Anne shortly after daylight, Major Carleton sent a flag of truce to the fort to summon it to surrender. Captain Sherwood, his 2 Lieutenants, and 72 Militia men who were down to 3 or 4 days of rations and 4 rounds of ammunition per man, agreed to surrender the dilapidated fort.

The British then marched towards Fort Edward as far as Kingsbury, burning all that they could enroute. Somewhere near Kingsbury, two gentlemen who were out for a ride, narrowly escaped capture by the British, and went to Fort Edward and warned Colonel Livingston, about noon on the 10<sup>th</sup>, that the British had captured Fort Anne and were in Kingsbury. Colonel Livingston dispatched warnings to the Countryside, but still no warning was sent to Fort George.

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## President's Message

By Herman C. Brown

It was five years ago this month, October 2001, when the Board of Regents of the New York State Department of Education granted the

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- ◆ Clifford Mullen, *Member*
- ◆ Christopher R. Sabick, *Lake Champlain Maritime Museum*
- ◆ Sharon Borgos, *Editor*

Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance its "Birth Certificate", a Certificate of Incorporation. **HAPPY FIFTH BIRTHDAY!**

Others will report on the Alliance's growth, accomplishments and future projects in this newsletter, so I generally will not dwell on those at this moment. However, please allow me to extend a SPECIAL WELCOME to Stephen and Jacqueline Schlate of Suffern, NY for their Sponsor Membership and a HEARTY THANK YOU to ALL new and renewing members for your support and dedication to the "Alliance" and its purposes. A HEARTY WELCOME is also extended to Mr. Karl Dingman, of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as the Parks' new Supervisor for Operations and Maintenance and his Supervisor. Mr. Brett Blanchfield. CONGRATULATIONS to each of you for your selection to such positions of responsibility!

As we celebrate our fifth year of associating together, let us that a moment to reflect upon the purposes for which we bond ourselves together as the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance. Those purposes are:

- To support the historic preservation, conservation, interpretation and associated appropriate maintenance, improvement and development of the Lake George Battlefield Park and its structures associated with Fort George at Lake George, New York as administered by the New York Department of Environmental Conservation.
- To foster, encourage and promote an increased awareness, interest, appreciation and a deeper understanding of Fort George at Lake George, New York and its significance to the history of the Lake Champlain/Lake George

Corridor, The Adirondack Region, the State of New York, and the United States, Canada and Europe.

- To conduct educational programs, services and activities in keeping with the historic nature of the Lake George Battlefield Park site including Fort George at Lake George, New York and beyond the normal scope of activities, for its members and the public at large.
- To support archaeological and historical research of Fort George at Lake George, New York.
- To develop a volunteer initiative to support the Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort George at Lake George, New York.
- To conduct fund-raising activities including the solicitation, receiving and administration of grants, gifts, donations and other forms of financial support (loans excepted); to acquire either by unrestricted gift or purchase objects, equipments, supplies and other personal property and real property; and to hold and convey interests in personal property (artifacts excepted) and real property for the benefit of the Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort George at Lake George, New York. All artifacts acquired for the benefit of the Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort George shall be conveyed to the State of New York.
- And, to otherwise promote, preserve, conserve, interpret, maintain, improve, develop, secure and publicize the historic significance of Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) at Lake George, New York for the benefit of the local community, the general public and posterity.

The Alliance's future is a bright one. May she continue to grow, prosper and meet its charge. ■

## Archaeological Trivia From the Test Pit

By Dr. Andrew S. Farry

A recent trip to the New York State Museum to examine ceramic sherds from the Site 1 and Site 2 year 2000 excavations at Fort George produced some interesting data patterns, a very brief bulleted summary of which is presented here. The examination was limited to only those ceramics recovered from inside the parallel barracks buildings, and was intended to identify and compare differences (or similarities) between the two structures in terms of their respective vessel assemblages. Both collections of ceramic sherds were spread out and grouped according to ware and decoration, with a minimum number of vessels tabulated based on rim sherds or other unique decorative motifs or surface treatments. Ceramic forms were assigned to each vessel, though far more often than not an "unidentified" category was necessary due to the small sizes of most of the sherds. The two assemblages were treated as separate units of analysis, though it is recognized that individual vessels could mend across both buildings. Many thanks are due to Chuck Fisher and Jon Vidulich for helping in this endeavor. The following includes a few of the salient points

revealed through analysis:

- Roughly equal assemblages were identified for each building: n=21 for Building 1 and n=27 for Building 2.
- Overall sherd size, though not formally measured, was quite small for each building. This precluded accurate form identification for many of the identified vessels (was it a bowl or a basin rim sherd?). The small sherd sizes, however, may shed light on artifact depositional patterns, with only very small sherds falling through floor cracks and the much larger broken pieces removed for disposal elsewhere. This suggests additional lines of research for the Fort George ceramic collection.
- In both buildings, porcelain, lead-glazed redware, and white salt-glazed stoneware were the most common ware categories. Neither dominated, with all three roughly equally represented in both buildings.
- Excluding unidentified vessels,

vessel forms were basically the same across both buildings. These included teaware ceramics such as teapots, cups, and saucers; tableware vessels such as plates; and health/hygienic vessels such as ointment pots. An almost complete gray salt-glazed stoneware chamber pot with cobalt blue painting was recovered from Building 1.

- Not only were vessel wares and forms similar across both buildings, but decoration as well. Blue hand-painting on porcelain, delft, and stoneware vessels was common, as was rim molding on white salt-glazed plates. The latter included the well known dot, diaper, and basket pattern as well as the "Barley" pattern (see Ivor Noël Hume's *A Guide to Artifacts of Colonial America*, Figure 35, pp.116).
- As a whole, the two buildings' ceramic vessel assemblages look much the same. This pattern matches well other observed patterns which suggest that two buildings were very similar in overall architectural form and artifactual content. ■

## Welcome New Members!

By Nadine Battaglia

The days are growing cooler at Lake George, and soon Autumn's blaze of color will descend upon the Adirondacks with its magnificent foliage. How perfect a decoration to celebrate Fort George Alliance's fifth birthday! In her first five years, the Alliance, among other things, has accomplished the professional conservation of historical artifacts, and is well underway in having Fort George included on the National Register of Historic Places. But, the best is yet to come with Fort George soon to be memorialized in a remarkably beautiful painting honoring those who lived, fought and died on that hallowed ground during our Colonial American history – a gift for Posterity!

The Fort George Alliance is extremely grateful to our standing membership which has made the above referenced a reality and we extend a warm welcome to our newest members:

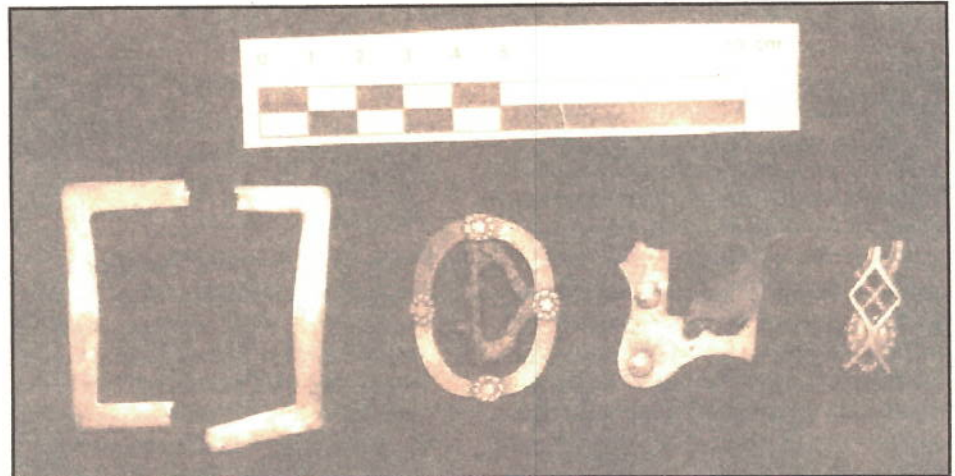
- ♦ Nancy Ross Bellamy, Ballston Lake, NY
- ♦ Jeff Bennett, Lake Luzerne, NY
- ♦ Thomas H. DuFore, Hudson Falls, NY
- ♦ The East Cove Restaurant, Lake George, NY
- ♦ Kenmore Emerson, New York, NY
- ♦ Samantha Giknis and Scott Simmons, Lake George, NY
- ♦ Ernest Haas, South Burlington, VT
- ♦ Airell B. Jenks, Woodstock, VT
- ♦ Peter J. Leahon, Lake George, NY
- ♦ Mary Alice Leary, Lake George, NY
- ♦ William G. Pomeroy, Syracuse, NY
- ♦ Dave and Kathy Redpath, Lake George, NY
- ♦ Keith Rouleau, Clifton, VA
- ♦ Stephen Scharoun, Farmington, ME
- ♦ Stephen E. and Jacqueline G. Schlate, Suffern, NY
- ♦ Fred Thomson, Lake George, NY ■

## Cupreous Buckles &

By Christopher R. Sabick

The excavations that took place at Fort George during the summer of 2000 uncovered a wide variety of copper alloy buckles and clasps. A selection of eight of these artifacts was brought to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Conservation Laboratory for cleaning and archival packaging. Though small, this collection contains a wide variety of buckle and clasp types and designs, ranging from plain to ornate.

As with all the artifacts brought to the lab for treatment, processing of the buckles began with detailed drawings of each as well as digital and Black and White photography. The Conservation of cupreous (copper, brass, and bronze) artifacts can be broken down into two steps: corrosion removal, and corrosion prevention. Removal of existing corrosion is accomplished by placing the artifact in a mild citric acid solution. Citric acid will loosen the corrosion allowing it to be removed with gentle mechanical cleaning. Once free of corrosion and thoroughly rinsed of acid residue an application of Inctalac will prevent future oxidation. Inctalac contains both a corrosion inhibiting chemical surface coating which will isolate the metal from oxygen and moisture which would restart the corrosion cycle.



(Above) Examples of cupreous (copper, brass, and bronze) artifacts excavated at Fort George and brought to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Conservation Laboratory for cleaning and archival packaging. (courtesy of Christopher Sabick, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum)

The buckles represented the artifacts from the 2000 excavations cover a wide variety of types and styles. The picture to the right/left depicts a selection of the different types of fasteners in this collection. At the top are fragments of two plain shoe buckles. The highly decorated piece below that is a knee buckle. This artifact retains the iron prongs which have been conserved separately from the brass buckle itself. The third artifact in the photograph is a damaged clasp from a cartridge box. This portion would have been attached to the front of the box and the

corresponding portion (not found) attached to the flap and locked into the grooves of the piece shown here. The artifact on the bottom is perhaps the most intriguing of the collection. It is only a small fragment of a shoe buckle, but as you can see it is very intricate and highly decorated. This must have been a beautiful piece when complete. The excellent preservation of cupreous alloys makes their conservation relatively straight forward and the results are very rewarding. The conservation of these buckles demonstrate how much detail can be revealed when artifacts of this type are properly conserved. ■

## Treasurer's Report

By William M. Herrlich

During Fiscal 2006, the Alliance received 52 payments for memberships or as donations. These totaled \$4,355, and all but some \$30 was for memberships. The Alliance's expenses during the year led to 10 payments totaling \$3,175. The largest of these was to the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum as part of the Alliance's continuing program to conserve artifacts found at the Fort George site during the archaeological dig of 2000. The payment amounted to \$1,565. The other large ex-

pense was the newsletter, which cost \$1,239 for editing, printing and mailing. Revenues, net of expenses, were \$1,179, and the Alliance's cash balance at the end of fiscal '06 was \$6,126. Subsequent expenditures, net of receipts for '07 membership renewals, have reduced that balance to the current \$5,578.

Chief among the expenses since fiscal year end has been a payment to the Maritime Museum. This was the final payment to them under the Alliance's conservation agreement, and the program of artifact preservation, which was a key early objective of the Alliance, is complete. When the Alliance

applied to the IRS in 2002 for tax exempt status, it was given a provisional status for 5 years. The 5 year period ended on March 31, 2006, and, like clockwork, we heard from the IRS. It wanted to know if we had conformed to its standards. The Alliance filed Form 8734 in May and supplied therewith the requested information. In June, the Alliance was informed that it indeed met the standards and could proceed as a tax exempt organization.

Our Fall '06 Federal tax form 990 EZ was filed in a timely manner and will be sent to the state shortly. All of our filings are available to the membership and public upon request. ■

## Notes On Oswego

By William M. Herrlich

*It so far deepened the stain which a previous and very similar event had left upon the reputation of the French commander.... It is now becoming obscured by time....*

James Fenimore Cooper

The Last of the Mohicans, 1828

Commemorations on the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of French and Indian War events have been held for three years now and will continue until 2010. They began at Fort Necessity in western Pennsylvania, continued at the Lake George Battlefield last year, and will return, at least in part, to that site next year. This year, the important activity was at Oswego, and it observed the fall and destruction of English fortifications there. The major Oswego events included a series of reenactments over 3 days at several locations.

As an English colonial site, Oswego dates from 1722, when New York governor William Burnet established it as a trading post. While this was a time of nominal peace between France and Great Britain, Oswego was a thumb in the eye to the French and greatly resented by them. They felt Oswego violated French claims to lands around Lake Ontario as well as the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht, which ended Queen Anne's War in 1713. Moreover, and most important, Oswego, located where the Onondaga (now Oswego) River empties into Lake Ontario, gave the English greater access to French and Indian trading patterns, and provided an alternate destination for western Indians traveling to trade in Montreal. English goods and trading practices had already given the English a trade advantage, and the new post made the French feel the competition even more, and during an exchange of letters, they demanded that the site be abandoned and dismantled. Nothing came of this exchange in the 1720s, but in 1756 the Governor General of New France, the Marquis de Vaudreuil still said of Oswego:

*All the world knows that this establishment is an encroachment made by them.... It was to put them in a position not only to usurp the commerce of the lakes which the French had never shared with any European Nation, but also to cut off, in the very centre of the Colony of Canada, the communications with the parts dependent thereon....*

The absence of early open conflict did not keep the English from fortifying Oswego. In a stiff 1727 letter to Burnet, Marquis de Beauhanois, Governor General of New France, noted the construction of a redoubt and other fortifications there. Burnet's reply acknowledged the building of a stone house "with some contrivances to hinder its being surprised" and the presence of some soldiers, but placed them in the context of the more substantial French defensive efforts at Niagara. In 1742, Lt. Governor George Clarke described Oswego to the Lords of Trade as "that Fortress, or rather trading House, for it is no better" and "in a very defenseless position," but at the time of the letter, he had already secured Assembly financing for a "stone Wall at a proper distance, round the Trading House at Oswego ... with a Bastion or Block House in each Corner to flank the Curtains...." However, neither the stone house nor the wall addressed the site's fundamental weakness: the post was situated on the western bank of the Onondaga River, and it was commanded by near-by heights on the eastern side of the river and to the west. General William Shirley planned to stage his 1755 campaign against Niagara from Oswego and recognized the need to improve its defenses as soon as he arrived. Work began on fortifications on both the eastern and western heights. The eastern structure was named Fort Ontario and, according to a French document, was "a star fort having strong oak stockades and a ditch, six to eight feet wide all around; all... agree that this work was the best of all those at [Oswego]." To the west, Shirley's forces set about building Fort George, a less ambitious structure. Lo-

cated about 600 yards from the original trading house, it was, in an English description, "a small unfinished Redoubt... made use of only in keeping cattle." To one Frenchman, it was a "miserable little fort." In addition, new earthworks armed with cannon and mortars upgraded the original Fort Oswego defenses, but these works were all to the west and south of the trading house. The new Fort Ontario was expected to provide protection from the east.

Marquis de Montcalm arrived in New France in the spring of 1756, and it was decided soon thereafter that his principal objective for the summer was to besiege and take Oswego. Already relatively isolated geographically in the New York colony, Oswego became more so during the spring when Canadians and Indians allied with the French were able to disrupt the fort's supply lines from the Mohawk River. With the English concentrating on the Champlain Basin generally and on Fort St. Frederic specifically, Montcalm was able to assemble, largely unnoticed until August 11, a 3,000 man force near Oswego and, on August 13, invest the nearly complete Fort Ontario. The French spent the day digging siege trenches to the east of the fort and preparing artillery batteries, all while under heavy musket and cannon fire from Fort Ontario. Such fire ended, however, later in the day, for the commander at Oswego, Lieutenant Colonel James Mercer, chose to abandon Fort Ontario and return its 300 plus man garrison to Fort Oswego. Upon realizing that Fort Ontario had been evacuated, the French immediately occupied it and prepared to take the sites west of the river. At 6 a.m. on the morning of August 14, nine French artillery pieces were in place and fired on the trading house. The Oswego garrison returned the fire with its artillery, and the exchange continued for four hours. Then, as Montcalm reported, "Though the fire of the besieged, up to that time, was more brisk than ours, they hoisted the White flag at ten o'clock and sent two officers..." to negotiate a surrender. Lt. Colonel Mercer's death early in the cannonading was a factor in the

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The Scouting party that Captain Chipman had sent down Lake George to keep an eye on the two British Ships, went ashore on the 10<sup>th</sup> of October, about 8 miles south of Lake George Landing at the north end of the lake to reconnoiter. It was at this point that they spotted the two bateaux with 30 British soldiers moving up the lake. With their retreat cut off, the Scouting party made their escape by land. They did not get back to Fort George in time to warn the Garrison.

At Kingsbury, the British force, turned north-west towards Fort George, passing through Queensbury, they continued to burn as many houses and barns as they could. The British halted for the night near some water falls on the Hudson River, some 7 miles from Fort George.

On Wednesday morning the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, Captain Chipman, at Fort George, decided he needed to send an express to Fort Edward. His garrison was all but out of food and he had heard no word from Fort Edward in some time. The man he sent as an express got no further than the vicinity of Bloody Pond, where he spotted 30 or 40 Indians. The Indians saw him too and they gave chase but failed to catch him. When he got back to Fort George he reported to Captain Chipman all that he had seen. Being short of provisions, Captain Chipman decided it would be wise to send out a detachment to either clear the road of 'savages' or protect any convoy of provisions that might be expected from Fort Edward. He issued orders to Captain Thomas Sill.

### GARRISON ORDERS FORT GEORGE

Octb<sup>r</sup> 11 1780-

*Sir as it is reported to me that there is a small party of savages near Bloody pond, you will immediately take Forty Eight men, officers included and Proceed on the main road until you make discoveries of them. Keeping a Sufficient advance and Flank garas in Such manner as to prevent being surrounded. if you find a large party you will Immediately Retreat to the fort except they should be savages only in*

*which case you will attack and immediately charge upon them -*

Captain Sill organized his men and marched from the fort quickly. He, however, was seen exiting the fort by the British Advanced Guard, and their Indians dropped their packs and went in pursuit of Captain Sill's men. Captain Sill proceeded by a slightly different route than Captain Chipman wanted him to. The Indians having lost track of them, returned to the rear of the British raiding party.

Captain Sill, meanwhile, having not made contact with the Indian party, began his return to Fort George. He then came upon the British flank guard that was now between him and the fort. Perhaps not initially knowing how large a force he was up against, Captain Sill leading his troops, attacked.

Major Carleton's Indians promptly headed for the fight, this time supported by the Royalist troops and 50 men of the British 34<sup>th</sup> Regiment, some 200 men all told. Captain Sill's initial assault drove the British flank guard off but with British reinforcements coming up rapidly and beginning to surround him the situation become critical. Trying to save his Detachment from capture or worse, Captain Sill formed his men and attempted a bayonet attack to break out. The attack was costly, 3 officers and 16 men of Warner's Regiment lay dead, including Captain Sill, 14 more were either wounded or captured. Only Ensign Benoni Grant and 14 men managed to break through the British line and escape.

As the Royalist troops and the Indians began to bring in the wounded and prisoners, Major Carleton moved his force to Gage's Heights, within sight of Fort George. Being seen 'thick' on the hill, they were fired on three times by Fort George's only serviceable cannon, a 6 pounder. Although there were no casualties by this cannon fire, Major Carleton moved his troops into a hollow to protect them, and sent a flag of truce forward

to summon the Garrison to surrender.

Captain Chipman's remaining 40 man garrison had only 18 rounds each for the muskets and not much more for the single cannon. They also had at most 2 days provisions. With no real hope of a successful resistance, he agreed to Major Carleton's terms of surrender:

*Fort George, Oct<sup>r</sup> 11 1780*

*Articles of Capitulation between Major Carleton Commanding*

*a Detachment of the Kings Troops and Captain Chipman*

*Commanding at Fort George*

*Article 1 the Troops in the Garrison to Surrender themselves prisoners of war*

*Article 2 that the women and Children be permitted to return to their homes with two Waggins and their Baggage*

*Article 3 each officer shall be Allowed their Servants*

*Article 4 no Indian to enter the fort until a British detachment shall take possession of the Fort*

*Article 5 Major Carleton passes his honour that no lives in the fort shall be lost nor any person molested*

*Article 6 each Soldier to Carry his Knapsack*

*Article 7 Ensign Bonnet Shall be permitted to return home with his Family & the Regiment Books on giving his Parole to Major Carleton*

*John Chipman, Capt, Commanding*

*James Kirkman, Lt, 29<sup>th</sup> Regt.*

*William Johnston, Lt, 47<sup>th</sup> Regt.*

*Christopher Carleton, Major, 29<sup>th</sup> Regt.*

While the terms of surrender were being negotiated, and the wounded brought in from the battle, one of Warner's Regiment's wounded was recognized as having deserted from the British 29<sup>th</sup> Regiment in the fall of 1776. This soldier had been under the

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command of LT Enys, who was also there at Fort George. He had been scalped alive, and struck three times by a tomahawk in the back of the head. This man died of his wounds three days later while on a boat transporting him to Canada. Major Carleton would later deny that any prisoners had been scalped while alive. Perhaps he didn't consider a deserter a rebel prisoner. The only man that the strength returns of Warner's Regiment listed as having died of his wounds was Private Thomas Latham.

After the Indians had plundered the fort, the British, with the objects of the Raid complete, set about moving back north. They put the wounded Americans in bateaux. The prisoners were marched to Ticonderoga by way of Roger's Road, along the west shore of Lake George, heading for captivity in Canada. As they left, the British burned the fort.

The Battle of Fort George, in the grand scheme of the War for American Independence, was a minor affair. No ground was taken and held, no heroes proclaimed, and the overall situation in the Northern Theater of the war was not changed. For the soldiers and citizens involved, however, this raid was as important as the campaigns being fought in the Carolinas at the time, their lives were at stake. 20 Men were killed, 130 captured from the two forts and 38 families lost their homes along with most of the winter's forage. For these people, a major catastrophe had torn through their land and then left them to face the winter homeless, or in a British prison. ■



**FRENCH & INDIAN WAR  
COMMEMORATION**

*250 years*

**The Men of Colonel Seth Warner's Regiment  
Who gave their lives in the Defense of Fort George  
11 October 1780**

**NAME / DATE OF ENLISTMENT / RESIDENCE**

- Private Rueben Ball, 2 January 1777 - New Fane, Republic of Vermont
- Private Benjamin Cummings, 5 December 1779 - Canaan, Connecticut
- Private James Chisley, August 1775 - Windham, Connecticut
- Ensign Martin Eno, 16 February 1777, Commissioned 1780 - Salisbury, Connecticut
- Corporal John Fletcher, August 1775 - Mohawk River, New York
- Private Joseph Fuller, August 1775 - Salisbury, Connecticut
- Private Joseph Hill, 31 March 1778 - Bennington, Republic of Vermont
- Private Joseph Hamilton, 10 March 1777 - Dorset, Republic of Vermont
- Private Jerimiah Holt, 3 December 1776 - York, Massachusetts
- Private Thomas Latham, 19 December 1776, Died of Wounds 14 Oct 80 - Rutland, Republic of Vermont
- Private John Lemmon, 23 December 1779 - Sharon, Connecticut
- Private William McGee, 27 November 1776 - Albany, New York
- Private Robert McKnight, 23 December 1779 - New Haven, Connecticut
- Ensign Alexander McLowery, 15 Dec 1776, Commissioned 2 May 1779 - Connecticut
- Sergeant Nehmiah, Oakley, 22 December 1779 - Sharon, Connecticut
- Corporal Richard Powell, 15 December 1777- Hadley, Massachusetts
- Captain Thomas Sill, Commissioned 5 July 1776 - Connecticut
- Private Chandler Tuttle, 22 February 1777 - Neshobe, Republic of Vermont
- Private Charles Vaughn, 10 January 1777 - Bennington, Republic of Vermont
- Private William Wright, 9 February 1780 - Salisbury, Connecticut



## Notes On Oswego &

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speed of the capitulation, but Oswego's defeat was never more than a matter of time. Even so, the garrison's defense of itself was limited, brief, and feeble.

The fall of Oswego was a great triumph for the French and Montcalm. Not only were the years of aggravation ended, but the spoils taken were considerable. Captured were various boats and bateaux, artillery and other ordnance, ammunition and other supplies, and provisions. In the words of a French officer, "These magazines, provided with everything, supply us with wherewith to subsist the army during the next campaign.... Their losses are unheard of...." Additionally there were prisoners to be taken back to Canada, lots of them. The numbers vary by source, but they center on 1,600-1,700 officers, militiamen, women, children, workmen and sailors. The fortifications were all destroyed, as was all of the property, equipment and material of little use to the French. Their work done, "On the 21<sup>st</sup> of the same month, all having been demolished, the prisoners, artillery, and supplies being removed, the army reembarked...."

What, though, of the stain referred to by Cooper, and of what relevance to is it to the Lake George Battlefield? What about casualties? Word of events at Oswego was slow to get to the English, and it arrived through the Iroquois network or from escapees as they returned to populated areas. Perhaps General Daniel Webb, on route to reinforce Oswego, was the first to hear. He was at German Flatts on August 17 and chose to advance no farther. William Johnson was in Albany on August 20 when he heard. In a letter dated September 5 to the Lords of Trade, Charles Hardy, Governor of New York, reported that he had received a letter from Lord Loudoun, Commander in Chief of the crown's forces in America, in which Loudoun said he had "reason to think" Oswego had fallen. Hardy sought to verify this report and told the Lords "it is past all doubt," but beyond that, there is limited clarity in his letter, especially as to casualties. Hardy cited two reports, one from participants who had fled and French deserters and

another from Indian sources via Webb.

In the first report, two officers (including Lt. Colonel Mercer) and eight or nine private men" were killed. In the second, the news was much worse: "that the enemy had put the whole to the sword, except one hundred and fifty, sailors, Carpenters and artificers included." This was consistent with a letter of August 27 to Johnson by Thomas Butler, who cited an Onondaga report that "Vast numbers lay Slauter'd round about Oswego So that the Staunch may be smelt at a Great distance from thence...." Montcalm's "Journal of the Siege" referred to about 150 English killed and wounded, "including several soldiers, who, wishing to escape across the woods, fell into the hands of the Indians." Most French documents reviewed center, not surprisingly, on the 150 number but vary on the manner in which those who died were killed. Several repeat Montcalm's reference to escape efforts leading to death at the hands of the Indians. Other assessments, however, are different. A French officer in a letter from Oswego dated August 22, said the Indians "have supped full of horrors, and have massacred more than 100 persons who were included in the capitulation; without our being able to prevent them or having the right of remonstrating with them. These...are, when drunk, beyond control." A French engineer at Oswego, M. Desandronins, also referred in a letter to "the horrors and cruelties of the Indians...especially when they are drunk...." In an "Abstract of Despatches from America" of August 30, 1756, there is this comment: "There have been killed...forty soldiers, exclusive of those scalped by Indians, who are estimated at about eighty." These reports are parallel with that from an Onondaga recorded by Peter Wraxall, Secretary to William Johnson, on September 12. The Onondaga stated that after the surrender, "the Indians got drunk with the great quantity of Rum found in the Forts and...fell upon the English Prisoners and murdered 100 of them...." Hardy, however, as late as October 13, continued to tell the Lords of Trade that two officers "were killed and about 12 or 14 men." Hardy appeared to prefer the optimistic appraisal of the number of casualties. For the

record, French losses were commonly reported as 30 killed and wounded, with the number killed in the single digits.

More recent works accept a substantial number of deaths after Oswego's fall. Francis Parkman's Montcalm and Wolfe was published in 1884 and does not quite qualify as recent, but it is a worth noting because of Parkman's lengthy and detailed account of the massacre at Fort William Henry in 1757. On Oswego, Parkman acknowledged drunken, plundering Canadians and Indians and said some prisoners "tried to escape in the confusion, and were tomahawked by the excited savages." In this account, Montcalm was able to intervene, and the overall English loss "did not reach 50 killed." Ian Steele in Betrayals (1990) revisited the story of Fort William Henry in an effort to soften some of Parkman's more sensational claims and, in the process, touched on Oswego, allowing that a "massacre" of at least thirty wounded prisoners by unnamed Indians... occurred. Most recently, Crucible of War (2000) by Fred Anderson used the journal of Stephen Cross of Newburyport to describe a scene of chaos in which "Indians killed between thirty and a hundred Anglo-American soldiers and civilians..." before Montcalm could restore order. Despite the absence of precision about the number of deaths, it seems clear from both period and recent sources that Montcalm never fully controlled his Indian allies at Oswego and was unable to protect completely his prisoners. Something bad happened there. Even if the numbers at Oswego were less than the most lurid available at the time, they were still high enough to affect the attitudes and nerves of frontier New Yorkers. Events at Oswego provided the first mark on Montcalm's reputation, and they foreshadowed more of the same at Lake George. When asked about the massacre and the part it played at the Oswego reenactment this summer, an observer from Fort Ontario had no memory of either. Perhaps this was a case of limited recall, and it is a single example, but how will 1757 events at Fort William Henry and the entrenched camp be treated next year? ■

*\*Please see bibliography on page 9*



## Art Work Commissioned

By Dr. Russell P. Bellico

**E**rnest Haas, the well-known Lake Champlain/Lake George artist, has been commissioned by the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance to paint a "bird's eye view" of the Fort George military encampment during Jeffery Amherst's 1759 campaign. Haas's work depicting numerous events, places, and vessels on the lakes are found in area museums and private collections. His paintings are a major component of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's exhibits that interpret the maritime events in the history of Lake Champlain. His "birds eye view" of Mount Independence during the American Revolution is a focal point at the visitor's center on the site.

Haas presented his preliminary sketches of the painting to members at their annual meeting at the Lake George Battlefield Park Picnic Pavilion on Saturday, August 26, 2006. The 2-foot by 3-foot painting will delineate the Fort George stone bastion, the stockaded fort nearer the lake, vessels, barracks, gardens, and other features present just prior to Amherst's 1759 expedition. Haas is working from historical materials provided by Alliance members, including maps, fort plans, period paintings/drawings, and French and Indian War journals.



(Above) Commissioned artist Ernest Haas presented his preliminary sketch of the Fort George military encampment during Jeffery Amherst's 1759 campaign at the Annual Meeting on August 26, 2006.

After serving in the Navy at the end of World War II, Haas enrolled in art school and worked as an artist for the Navy during the Korean War. Following the war, he returned to art school and was employed as a commercial artist in New York City. He subsequently earned a B.A. and M.A. in history and taught for two decades in Connecticut before retiring and resuming his career as an artist. Haas lives in South Burlington, VT. His paintings

are on display at the Blue Heron Gallery of Vermont.

The official unveiling of the painting is tentatively scheduled to occur at Fort Ticonderoga's 2009 French and Indian War College. A limited number of signed prints will be sold to the public. Eventually the painting will be displayed in a museum at the Battlefield Park. But in the meantime it will be available for loan to area museums. ■

## Bibliography - Notes On Oswego

continued from page 8

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## Blodgett's British Published Map of the Battle of Lake George

By Edward J. Dodge

Both the American and London (British) published versions of the map give a similar appearance (see *Samuel Blodgett's Map of the Battle of Lake George* by Edward J. Dodge, in the Fall 2005 newsletter). They are different in several ways. The London version has no horizontal element other than a descriptive narrative which reads "A Prospective View of the BATTLE fought near Lake George on the 8th of Sept 1755, between 2000 English with 250 Mohawks under the command of Gen. Johnson & 2500 French & Indians under the command of Gen. Dieskau in which the English were victorious capturing the French Gen. with a number of his men killing 700 and putting the rest to flight".

There is no dedication in the lower left corner on the London version as there is on the American version. Map orientation is again different and placement depiction within the map is totally different (see *Samuel Blodgett's American Published Map of the Battle of Lake George* by Edward J. Dodge, in the Spring 2006 newsletter).

On the London published version, reading from left to right, the map of the route from New York to Lake George is shown first. By having the route moved from the horizontal position as shown on the American map to the vertical position brought a minor but obvious compression of the route on the London map. Here the route map is oriented from south to north in the style of modern maps. The plans for the forts are no longer at the north end of the map, but printed at the bottom extending to the reader's right under the depiction of the first phase of the battle. Fort William Henry is depicted differently with trees and the shore of Lake George.

The map of phase one of the Battle of Lake George or "The Bloody Morning Scout" is next as one reads from left to right. The map of "The Bloody Morning Scout" is oriented north to south. At the top it is labeled "First Engagement". Next to the reader's right is the map of

the battle at the British main camp. That map is oriented east to west and labeled at the top "Second Engagement". As with the American version there is no map of the third phase of the Battle of Lake George. The map of the "Second Engagement" has been decompressed on the British version, making it easier to read as the spacing between objects is much more defined.

The London map was published by Thomas Jefferys with the Prospective-Plan reprinted for him at the corner of St. Martin's Lane, London, selling for one shilling. There is circumstantial evidence that the London map was carved in resin which would explain the cleaner definition of the map.

The American version of the map was done by Thomas Johnston (Johnson), sculptor, coppersmith and Japanner. It is believed that version was printed by Richard Draper of Boston.

The Blodgett maps, particularly the London version, has been reprinted over the years in various publications referencing maps of early North America, warfare in North America and military art. The American version remained lost in time until 1883 when a copy was presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society. Various printings occurred in 1762, 1790, 1803, 1902, 1911, 1992, 2002, 2003 and 2005. Publications occurred in North America, England and Spain. ■

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*\*Please be advised "Samuel Blodgett's Map" is reproduced in large format on page 11 for easier viewing.*



A Prospective View of the BATTLE fought near Lake George, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of Sep<sup>r</sup>. 1755. between one English with 2500 Men, and the command of the French & Indians under the command of the French Genl. with a Number of his Men killing 700 & putting the rest to flight

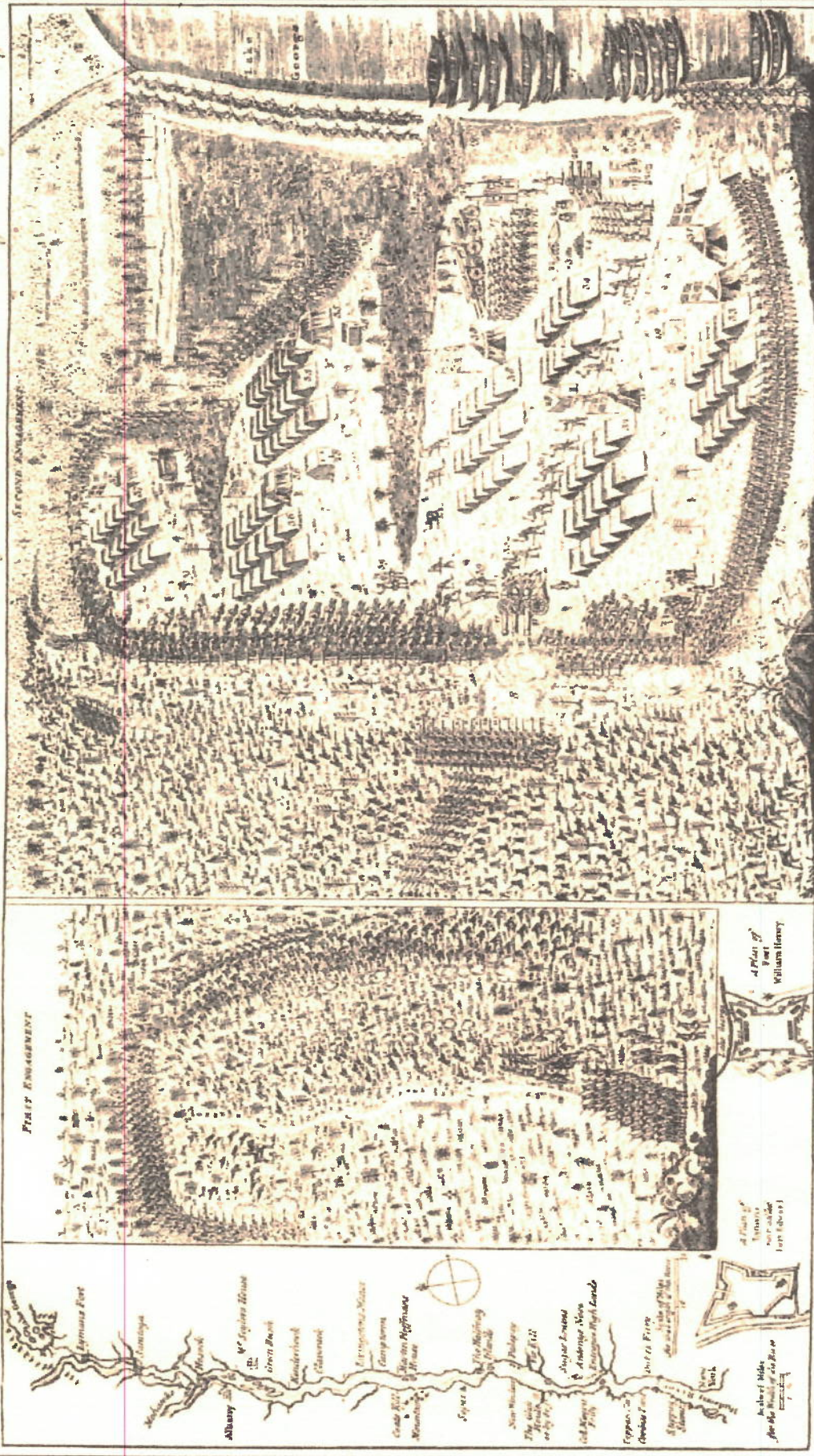


PLATE R.

PLATE R. FIRST ENGAGEMENT NEAR LAKE GEORGE, SEPTEMBER 8, 1755. From Frederick's History of the War, 1755.

Samuel Blodgett's Map—London 1756