

Major General Seth Pomeroy - A Brief Biography

By Edward J. Dodge, Herman C. Brown & Nancy Maliwesky

Seth was born May 20, 1706, in Northampton, Massachusetts, the seventh child and fifth son of the Honorable Major Ebenezer Pomeroy and his second wife, Sarah King. Their other children were: Sarah (1693-abt. 1693), John (1695-1736), Ebenezer (1697-1774), Sarah (1700-1777), Simeon (1702-1725), Josiah (1703-1789), Daniel (1709-1755), and Thankful (1713-1790).

Seth was home educated, as was the practice at the time. The greater part of his education was toward learning the trade and principles that he was to follow and live by as a mature man. His father Ebenezer, his paternal grandfather Medad, and his paternal great-grandfather Eltweed were blacksmiths and gunsmiths by trade. Seth developed a reputation of being a religious man, strong in his convictions, kindly, honest, friendly, hard working and not tolerate of fools. There are no known pictures (paintings) of him. However, one account has him being a man of great strength and agility, tall, spare and erect.

At the age of 26, Seth married Mary Hunt on December 14, 1732. For years, the couple lived on the family homestead in Northampton where their nine children were born: Seth (1733-1770), Quartus (1735-1803), Medad (1736-1819), Lemuel (1738-1819), Martha (1740-1803), Mary (1742-1762), Sarah (1744-1808), an unnamed stillborn infant (1747), and Asahel (1749-1833). At Northampton he was involved in a number of land transactions and operated a gunshop.

The first known record of Seth's military service has him appointed, on January 23, 1743, Captain of the Third Company of snowshoe men being raised under Colonel John Stoddard. The same year (1743), he was a Militia Captain in the service of the Province of Massachusetts Bay. In 1745, he was commissioned a Major and served as the Captain of the 3rd Company of Colonel Joseph Dwight's Regiment during the expedition against Cape Breton during

which he fought at the siege and capture of Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, Canada. In 1746, he was placed in command of the frontier after the April attacks upon Charleston and Keene, New Hampshire. On June 15, 1746, he was commissioned a Captain of Colonel Joseph Dwight's Regiment in which he was actively engaged through 1747. During some of that period of time, he commanded Fort Massachusetts. In July and August 1748, he was involved in scouting expeditions against the French and their allies.

In 1755 during Massachusetts Governor Shirley's planned campaign/expedition to attack Crown Point on Lake Champlain, Seth served as a Lieutenant Colonel in Colonel Ephraim Williams's Regiment (see *Ephraim Williams* by Edward J. Dodge in the Fall 2004 newsletter). Following the Battle of Lake George (see *The Battle of Lake George - 8 September 1755* by Edward J. Dodge in the Spring 2005 newsletter), Seth reported himself as "being the only Field Officer in Colo. Ephreham Williams Rgement Suppos'd to be now Living". Seth lost his younger brother Daniel on that day worthy of memory (September 8, 1755) to enemy fire. During the remainder of the French and Indian War (The Seven Years War), Seth saw service in 1757 in an aborted attempt to relieve the French siege upon Fort William Henry (the Fort surrendered before the relief force could arrive), in 1759 and 1760 at a couple of frontier forts, and from April 5th through June 20, 1760 (22 weeks) during the West Hoosuck expedition.

Seth was a delegate to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress in 1774 and 1775. On February 9, 1774, that Congress appointed him a "General Officer" among others, all without more definite rank. On October 27, 1774, the same Congress appointed him third in command of the Massachusetts forces. Jedidiah Preble was first in command and Artemas Ward, second. Ward was commissioned

commander-in-chief in May 1775, and John Thomas made Lieutenant General, while Seth Pomeroy was commissioned a Major General, Preble having retired. The Massachusetts House of Representatives fixed the pay of its General Officers on January 25, 1776, naming Seth as a Major General. He drew pay at that rank on that date for two months and nine days.

While briefly at home in Northampton for a few days rest in June 1775 (a brief 24 hours), Seth was summoned by General Isreal Putnam to repair to Boston. Starting on June 16th, he rode all night and reached the site of the Battle of Bunker Hill (The Battle of Breeds Hill) at two o'clock in the afternoon. Here he fought through the battle as a private soldier, having refused repeated urgent offers of general command. Here, Seth, the old warrior advanced into the trench and took charge of the Connecticut troops. With a gun of his own making, which he had carried thirty years before at the siege of Louisburg, he directed the fire of his men during those two hours of struggle for the birth of American liberties.

On June 16, 1775, the Continental Congress authorized the appointment of the first eight Brigadier Generals of the American Continental Army. On June 22nd Congress appointed those officers, designating them by number. Seth Pomeroy was the first and senior. Notwithstanding that this appointment was short lived, General John Thomas was appointed first Brigadier General in the Army of the United Colonies by an act of Congress on July 19, 1775, the US Military Academy at West Point today memorializes the first Brigadier Generals of the Army and Seth's name heads the list.

In the 18th Century, it was customary for General Officers of the various Provincial/ State Militia to also hold Commissions

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President's Message

By Herman C. Brown

The year 2007 Park Summer Season was preceded by a walk-through of the park with Maintenance Supervisor Karl Dingman. Items noted as warranting special attention were: (1) controlling sapling and small vegetation growth whose root systems could damage the 18th century features i.e. the SW Bastion of the uncompleted Citadel, the existent entrenchments and the site of the stockaded fort and its building foundations; (2) the exposed trench remaining from the Archaeological Excavation during the

year 2001; (3) the safety hazard caused by exposed rusty and broken page wire fencing within the park, (4) the rusty and unsightly ornamental cast iron fence surrounding the King Hendrick and Sir William Johnson Statue; and (5) the need to annually train seasonal employees on the historic significance of the site and its features.

On May 5th, I spoke to the Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New Hampshire at their meeting in Concord, NH and on August 13th at the Rensselaer's Darrin Fresh Water Institute in Bolton Landing, NY to a full house of enthusiastic and interested persons.

Our sixth annual membership meeting and picnic was held at the pavilion at the Park on Saturday, August 25, 2007. Those arriving early were treated to a guided and interpreted tour of some of the Park's Historic features (see photo). Notables and Honored Guests in attendance during the day's events were Mr. Mark Malinoski, Director of Operations, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from Albany and Mr. Brett Blanchard, the Park Operations Supervisor. Historic Artist Ernie Haas presented his commissioned painting "Gen. Jeffrey Amherst's Encampment (Fort George) Summer 1759" to the Alliance. Mr. Tim Titus, representing TDT CONSULTANCY of Crown Point, NY, presented an update on their efforts to complete the Nomination to the National Registry of Historic Places.

A GREAT picnic lunch, cater by the East Cove Restaurant, was enjoyed by all those attending.

Other highlights of the annual meeting were the annual election of officers. The offices up for election were the President, Vice President, Secretary and one (three year term) Trustee. I, as well as Nadine M. Battaglia, and Dr. Lynda Karig Hohmann were reelected to our previously held positions. Dr. Marilyn Van Dyke was not available to be considered for the office of Vice-President due to her being otherwise committed. We extend to her our BEST WISHES and SINCERE THANK YOU for serving on the Board of Trustees, first as Trustee (2002) and then Vice-President (2003-2007). We look forward to her continued association with the Alliance and her support, from time to time, with special projects, as her time may permit. Mr. Gustaf S. Myhrberg has accepted the appointment as Director of the "Historic Painting Project" and requests your suggestions as to what painting print products should be offered to the membership and the public at large i.e. print sizes, medium, etc. Please submit your suggestions to him in writing at 88 Everts Avenue, Queensbury, NY 12804 or gmyhrberg@adelphia.net. Gus will present your input to the Board of Trustees for their consideration at their next meeting to be held in early 2008.

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(Above) Gathering for the Interpreted Tour of the Park - August 25, 2007 (courtesy of Nadine M. Battaglia).

Archaeological Trivia From the Test Pit

By Dr. Andrew S. Farry

One of the most striking features of the Fort George archaeological assemblage is its non-local character. That is, the vast majority of artifacts recovered during the excavations were imported to the site, many from rather considerable distances. This pattern is not necessarily unique to Fort George, with various other sites of the same period (Forts Crown Point, Stanwix, Edward, even Michilimackinac) demonstrating similarly imported assemblages. But while typical, such a pattern deserves considerable attention, particularly as to how it may inform us regarding British frontier sites—Fort George included—and their tendency to participate in wide-ranging networks.

Consider, for example, just how quickly all this imported stuff got to frontier sites like Fort George or the adjacent Fort William Henry. At the latter, scratch blue salt-glazed stonewares comprise just under 40% of the entire western barracks ceramic assemblage. This is no small amount of stoneware at William Henry, and it is interesting to note that scholars such as Noel-Hume, Arnold Mountford, and George Miller date the ceramic to between 1744-1775. The west barracks building in which the ceramics were found is dated very tightly between 1756 and 1757. This means that Fort William Henry, which during its time occupied the extended northern limit of British military power in the colonial interior, enjoyed access to the most recent ceramic wares available. It is quite remarkable that little or no time was lost between when new ceramic styles such as scratch-blue stonewares were first manufactured, and when those very same wares found themselves on the frontier fringe.

At Fort George, similar patterns are observed. Consider that the button assemblages from Sites 1 and 2 at Fort George (barracks building 1 and 2) (See *Archaeological Trivia From the Test Pit* by Andrew Farry, in the Fall 2005 newsletter) demonstrate an overall lack of embossed regimental buttons. Of the

59 buttons found, only 2 demonstrate specific markings (“USA” and “26”), and this general lack suggests a terminal occupation date some time around or not long after the inception date of regimental buttons by the British. Various scholars including Moreau Maxwell, Lew Binford, Lyle Stone, and Jacob Grimm place this inception at 1767 or 1768. At the same time, the presence of creamware ceramics in Sites 1 and 2 suggests a post-1762 date for their occupation, the specific date referring to exactly when Wedgwood perfected the manufacture of this ultimately very common ceramic ware. This date is, of course, only a few years after the documented first construction date of Fort George. So, taken together, these data suggest that the creamware ceramics at Fort George were imported to the site within a relatively short span of time following the inception of this particular ware type.

It seems obvious that an efficient transportation system linked British military settlements during the Seven Years’ War; a particularly able supply system that ensured material access to even those distant and remote settlements guarding the frontier fringe. No doubt this system was in part responsible for the eventual British victory in North America, for as good as the French were at taking British provisions, the British were always adept at getting more.

But fundamentally, this evidence reminds us of the wide-ranging political and economic networks in which settlements like William Henry and George served. These were not detached settlements cut-off from any and all influence from the external parent state, despite their wilderness settings. To the contrary, these settlements represented the direct extension of British military power into hostile and contested regions otherwise removed from other, more densely settled areas. As such, the British military ensured direct and efficient lines of communication and transportation so that even remote frontier settlements could carry out military dictates.

The settlement at Fort George served an integral role in British military policy during the Seven Years’ War, and careful study of even the smallest of artifacts can help shed light on this role.

Given the contemporary character of the Village of Lake George, it is often useful to reacquaint oneself with what the region was like during the Seven Years’ War. Largely devoid of nearby settlement (excepting other military sites), the vicinity of Lake George offered a remote and distant wilderness setting, one that was valued more for how its particular geography fostered transportation rather than intensive settlement. Few are better than James Fenimore Cooper in conveying the “wild” character of the region (and so will not be attempted here), particularly as perceived by the many Anglo-American soldiers who frequented the area during the conflict. So why, then, is this frontier wilderness character not at all evident when we look at the archaeological record of sites like Fort William Henry and Fort George? Why do these sites not at all reflect the distant and remote...A brief consideration of these issues is in order.

Of course, the first issue concerns exactly how historical archaeologist might measure the concept of remoteness (or lack thereof). To put it simply, if sites like William Henry and George do not look remote, then what exactly do they look like, archaeological speaking?

Historical archaeologists often endeavor to better understand archeological sites in part based on the political and economic networks within which such sites functioned. Consider, for example, our own Fort George, which though deployed in a remote frontier setting actually served as a direct extension of British power in colonial North America. As a frontier post, Fort George was not an isolated settlement far removed from external concerns or external influences. Indeed, Fort George was strongly connected to the

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Personal Armament Remains From 2000 Excavation

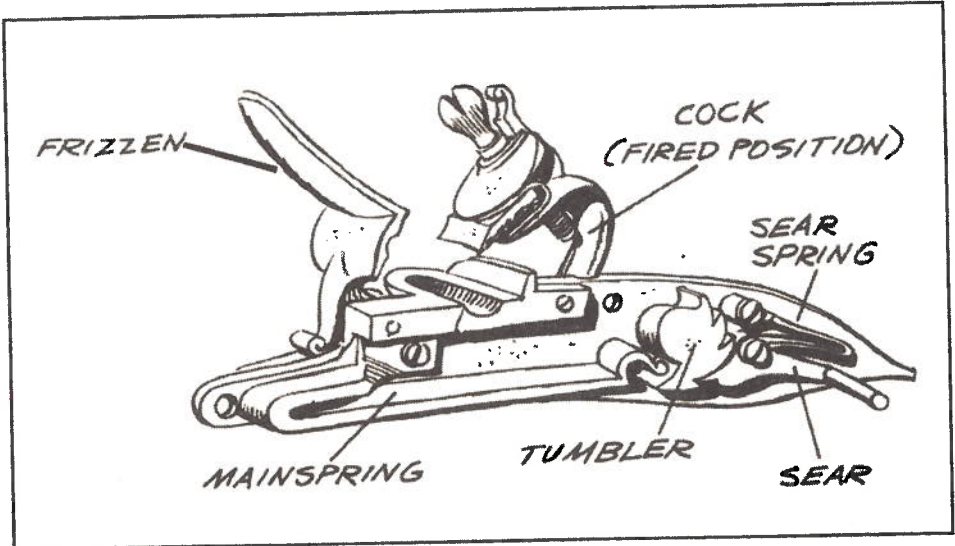
By Christopher R. Sabick

Having worked on the artifact collection from the year 2000 excavations at Fort George for the past 4 years I have developed several "favorite" artifacts.

This is something that a conservator is not supposed to do, however several of the pieces from this collection have spurred my interest more than others. As a student of military history I have found the fragments of personal armament to be particularly intriguing, especially those from muskets. This collection contained a small number of such artifacts but I would like to discuss them each in more detail.

Three of the items from this collection are related to the operation of a flintlock musket, two pieces of the lock mechanism and one ram rod pipe. The lock of an 18th century musket is an amazing piece of engineering and craftsmanship. The weapon is centered around the very basic principal that striking flint against steel creates a spark. The challenge to 18th century weapons designers and manufactures was making this basic function happen regularly and efficiently

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(Figure 1) General Sketch of a 18th century Musket Lock. (courtesy of Christopher R. Sabick, Chief Conservator, Conservation Laboratory, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum)



(Figure 2) Musket Lock Frizzen. (courtesy of the Conservation Laboratory, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum)



FRENCH & INDIAN WAR
COMMEMORATION

250 years

Personal Armament Remains From 2000 Excavation

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while the operator was under the stress of combat, no mean feat. To boil it down to its most basic elements a lock operates like this (see Figure 1): the hammer or cock (which held the chunk of flint) was pulled back compressing a spring on the interior of the lock. When the trigger was pulled the hammer would swing forward rapidly and strike the frizzen (the steel) creating a spark. This impact would also cause the frizzen to hinge open exposing a small pan of very fine gun powder. The sparks created would fall into the pan igniting the much larger powder charge in the musket barrel, firing the weapon. While by no means a fail

proof system this was the basic design of infantry weapons for more than 200 years.

Included in the artifacts from the 2000 excavation are a frizzen (Figure 2) and a broken main spring (Figure 3). As you can see from the picture the spring is not of the coil type like we commonly think of today but is simply a bent piece of spring steel that if compressed will rapidly return to its original shape when tension is released.

The other musket related artifact from this collection is a brass ram rod pipe or thimble. All muskets from this period were loaded from the muzzle. With an empty barrel an infantry man would set the butt

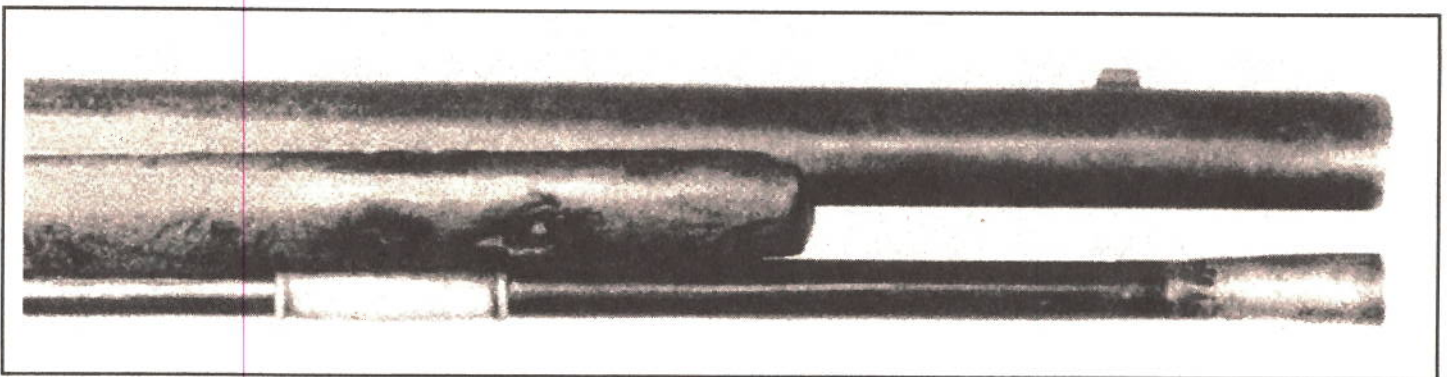
of his weapon on the ground with the muzzle pointed up. Using his mouth he would rip open a pre-measured powder and shot cartridge holding the lead musket ball in his teeth. He would dump the powder down the barrel, then the ball and finally the paper which would act as a wad. In order to ensure proper firing he then rammed all these components to the bottom of the barrel using a thin shaft of wood or metal called a ram rod. When not in use the ram rod was carried in a groove carved into the bottom of the musket stock (see Figure 4) and guided by one or more ram rod pipes like the one found in the Fort George collection (Figure 5). ■



(Figure 5) Musket Ram Rod Pipe/Thimble (courtesy of the Conservation Laboratory, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum).



(Figure 3) Musket Lock Main Spring. (courtesy of the Conservation Laboratory, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum)



(Figure 4) Musket Barrell, Stock and Ram Rod Pipe with Ram Rod. (courtesy of the Conservation Laboratory, Lake Champlain Maritime Museum)

Lake George Pomeroy Anvil Monument

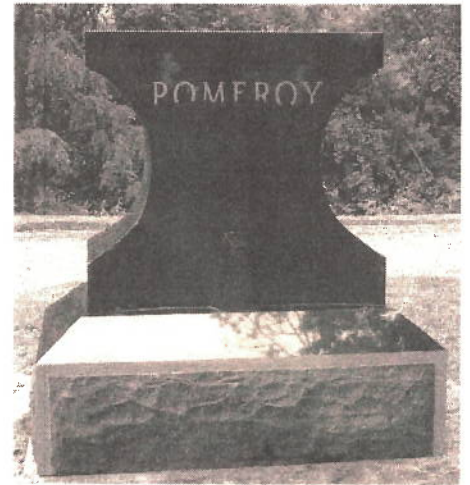
By Nancy Maliwesky

The American Pomeroy Historic Genealogical Association (APHGA) is pleased to announce plans for the installation of a Pomeroy Anvil Monument in Lake George, NY, in the spring of 2008. This monument will be dedicated to Lieutenant Daniel Pomeroy who fought and died at the Bloody Morning Scout on September 8, 1755. Daniel, a younger brother of Colonel Seth Pomeroy, was a member of Capt. Hawley's Company. In a letter written on September 9, 1755, to Colonel Israel Williams, Seth recounts Daniel's last moments on earth: "My Brother Lieut Pomeroy I have had an acct his being well till the army retreated & asked what are they a going to run: Yes It was said well said he I will give 'em one Shot more, before I run any further I hant heard, since I have heard he is ded & scalpt."

The Lake George Pomeroy Anvil Monument will stand 7'1" tall and weigh 12.5 tons. The monument will be in the shape of the Pomeroy Anvil, a colonial era anvil that was given to Daniel and Seth's grandfather, Medad Pomeroy, as an economic incentive to move to Northampton, MA, to become a blacksmith

for the town. This anvil has been passed down through many generations of Pomeroy gunsmiths and blacksmiths, becoming a symbol of the family. The monument will be constructed of black granite and will be placed in the front yard of the Tall Pines Motel, at 1747 State Route 9, close to the Ephraim Williams Monument. We wish to personally thank Brad and Allen Chambers, the owners of the Tall Pines; for their generosity in letting us install this monument on their property.

The Lake George Pomeroy Anvil Monument will be the seventh monument installed along the Pomeroy Anvil Trail. The Pomeroy Anvil Trail commemorates the western migration of the American people through the movement of the Pomeroy family. Existing Pomeroy Anvil Monuments are located in Pompey, NY; Sandusky, OH; and Northampton, MA. Three additional monuments will be installed this fall in Westhampton, MA; Syracuse, NY; and VanCortlandtville, NY. To learn more about the Pomeroy Anvil Trail and the American Pomeroy Historic Genealogical Association, please visit our website at www.americanpomeroy.org. ■



(Above) The black granite Pomeroy Anvil Monument installed in Sandusky, OH. (courtesy of Nancy Maliwesky, Director American Pomeroy Historic Genealogical Association)

Treasurer's Report

By William M. Herrlich

The Alliance is a small organization. From inception in fiscal year 2002 through fiscal year end 2007, it has had total receipts of \$28,371, an average of some \$4,700 per year. Fiscal 2007 was consistent with that small size, and the Alliance made 20 deposits of bundled checks and issued 11 payments. Most of the latter were for normal operating expenses (primarily the production and distribution of its newsletter), but several were of significance.

The Alliance completed its funding of the conservation of artifacts found at the Battlefield Park during the archaeological dig of the year 2000. The preservation project began in 2003 and cost the Alliance \$14,860 over the period. The Alliance also

contracted with TDT Consultancy of Crown Point, New York to complete the application of inclusion of the Battlefield Park in the National Register of Historic Places and with Ernest Haas of South Burlington, Vermont for his painting depicting the Battlefield as it was in the summer of 1759.

Overall, the Alliance in fiscal 2007 had receipts of \$4,586, expenses of \$5,926, and ended the year with a cash balance of \$4,786. All Internal Revenue Service returns have been filed in a timely manner, and the Alliance's filings with the New York State Museum have been consistent with its requests. Copies of these filings are available to the membership and the public upon request. ■

President's Message

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In September, the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum completed the Conservation Project for the artifacts selected from the Year 2000 Archaeological Excavation. The conserved artifacts and associated documentation was turned over to the Alliance for delivery to the New York State Museum at Albany in the very near future. A duplicate set of documentation (photos, drawings and other conservation records) has been provided to the Alliance for its retention as an acknowledgment for funding this project.

A HEARTY THANK YOU is extended to ALL new and renewing members. A SPECIAL THANK YOU goes to Karen S. Fisher, Russell P. Bellico and Jacqueline G. Schlate for joining the Paid Up For Life membership ranks. Again THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU, it is because of YOU ALL, that the Alliance is able to continue to carry out its mission and goals.

On a personal note, my Wife and I THANK YOU ALL for your cards, best wishes and prayers during her recovery from hip replacement surgery and as I fight the good fight against my recently diagnosed cancer. ■

Welcoming New Members

By Nadine M. Battaglia

The unmistakably beautiful Adirondack autumn is slowly showing her first touches of golden, orange and soft cherry red colored leaves. With cooler nights coming on, the foliage will soon be blazing and the Adirondacks will be in full glorious color once again. This is my favorite time of year to visit Fort George and the Lake George Battlefield Park, the sense of the past and echoes of former military encampments under the shadows of the tall pines at the headwaters of Lake George seem more perceptible under falling leaves with the enchanting scent of campfires drifting through the woods. Especially so this year with the magnificent commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the 1757 French siege against the English Fort William Henry reenacted so reverently recently.

We at the Alliance, in our sixth year, continue to grow and work together to-

wards the noble goal of preserving, securing and publicizing the significance of the Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort George through our work on the restoration of artifacts, our nomination of Fort George to the National Register of Historic Places, the preparation of our beautiful painting of Fort George circa 1759, and the maintenance of the park and its beautiful statuary.

To this end, we are collectively grateful to our standing membership and to our most recent new members including our first international members!

- ◆ *Carl Crego, Diamond Point, New York*
- ◆ *Brian and Christine Laing, Stouffville, Ontario, Canada*
- ◆ *Timothy and Renee Titus, Crown Point, New York* ■

Archaeological Trivia From the Test Pit

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parent state and to the dictates of British military policy. Because of these issues, it is worthwhile to briefly consider...

One of the means with which historical archaeologists can measure outside connections and outside influences at play within sites is the concept of *time lag*. *Lag* refers to the time difference between when a particular artifact is manufactured and when that artifact is subsequently deposited into the ground or archaeological record; in short, the "life" of an artifact. Items that have long time lag have lots of time between when they are made and when they are discarded or lost. By contrast, items that have short time lag have short lives with very little time between when they are made and when they are lost. Think of the difference between a glass bottle and a heirloom ring: the bottle can be used, broken, and thrown out in a very short period of time and therefore has very little time lag. The ring, on the other hand, may have been manufactured a long time ago and will likely have a long life before it is discarded, if ever.

Caution is always warranted when arguments are based on the non-existence of data, and such is the case here. The patterns are, however, as would be expected. ■



Major General Seth Pomeroy - A Brief Biography

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of lesser rank and command their own Regiments. Massachusetts was no exception to this practice. While serving at the head of the Massachusetts Militia, Seth Pomeroy, also commanded his own Militia Regiment from Hampshire County. On January 31, 1776, the Massachusetts House of Representatives appointed him Colonel of the Second Hampshire County Regiment of Militia. When he entered service in 1777 as head of the Massachusetts Militia destined to join General Washington in New Jersey, his Regiment went with him.

Seth died of pleurisy at Peekskill, Westchester County, New York on February 19, 1777 while he was traveling with his Massachusetts' troops to meet General Washington. Seth was buried in the Old Van Cortlandtville Cemetery in Van Cortlandtville, Westchester County, New York in an unmarked grave.

Seth Pomeroy lived and died as a man of strong convictions, both to his family, his God and his country.

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