

FORT GEORGE ADVICE

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

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

SPRING 2006

Shipbuilding during the 1755-1756 Campaigns at Lake George

By Dr. Russell Bellico

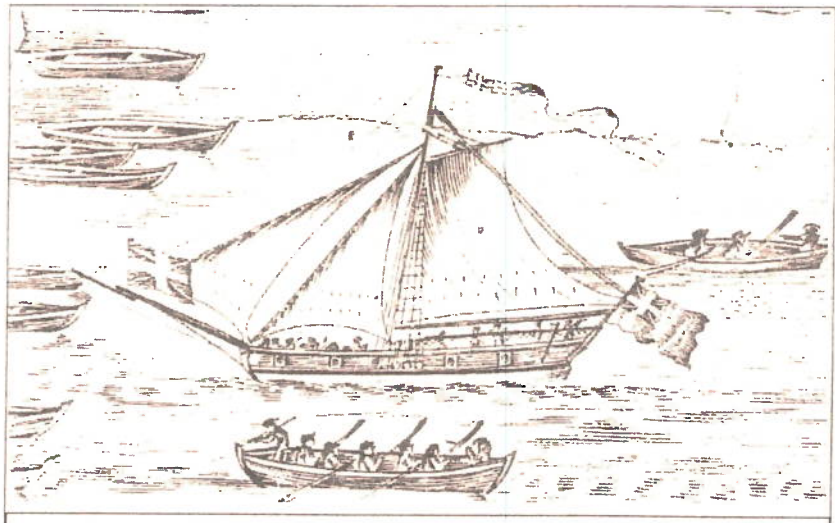
The building of large vessels at the southern end of Lake George began on September 6, 1755, just two days before the Battle of Lake George. James Hill, a 20-year-old recruit from Newbury, Massachusetts, recorded that he "went to hu[nt]in[g] timber for the lake bo[a]ts that w[e]re like flatbo[a]ts and about 40 f[ee]t long and to r[o]w with 20 oars, to car[ry] the artillery[y]." Work on the boats was suspended for 9 or 10 days following the September 8 battle. On October 7 Stephen Webster, the captain of the carpenters, reported to Major General William Johnson that one boat was complete and "2 partly caulked, one more ab[ou]t half built," but complained that, as a result of "building the new fort...there w[er]e not carpenters enough for both works."²

The expedition to Crown Point never proceeded beyond the southern shores of Lake George in 1755 and most of the carpenters were assigned to building Fort William Henry. A new expedition in 1756 failed to proceed north, in large part as a result of complications from a change in command of British forces in North America. After the British capitulation of the Oswego forts in August 1756, the new commander in chief, John Campbell (Earl of Loudoun) cancelled a planned expedition against Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga). The provincial troops at Lake George, under the command of Major General John Winslow, used the remaining season to complete a number of armed sloops at a shipyard near the present-day Battlefield Park.

A number of contemporary descriptions of four sloops and other vessels can be found in colonial newspapers and documents, as well as

journals of soldiers stationed at Lake George. In an inspection report to Lord Loudoun dated August 27, 1756, Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Burton of the 48th Regiment delineated the new fleet at Lake George: "two small Sloops of about twenty tons each, have four Swivels mounted on each, one Sloop of 30 tons launched the 23^d [August] Instant, another of the same size to be

reconnoitering the French position at the northern end of the lake. In early August 1756 Robert Rogers noted that he had "embarked on board a Lighter with twenty four of my Company...& 60" provincial troops.³ On September 2 Major General John Winslow "set off in the sloop *Earl of Loudoun*," which he described as carrying "two Six pounders One Seven Inch Mortar and



Above: Sloop depicted in a 1756 engraving by Thomas Johnston (American Antiquarian Society)

launched in a few days...in each of those Vessels, four small Cannons or Royals—Two large Scows, and one a Building a good many Whaleboats, and more building...A great many bateau [x] Scattered about no guard on board the Vessels, and they lay at Anchor a good way off from the Fort."³ One sloop, according to the *Boston Gazette* and shown on a Crown Collection "Plan of Fort William Henry" was called the *Earl of Loudoun* and a second, the *George*, was carved on a soldiers' powder horn.⁴

The sloops were used to assist in

Eight Swivels fifty men," and "one Sloop four Swivels forty men one Ditto two Swivels and thirty five men," on a "tour round the Lake."⁶ During the cruise Winslow's sloop fired a six-pound cannon at a French vessel.

On September 20, 1756, the day after an ambush of a provincial scouting party on the western shore of the lake, "a fresh party was sent down to their Relief, in one of the Sloops, with two Whale boats."⁷ One vessel returned in

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The Alliance supports the historic preservation, conservation, interpretation and associated maintenance, improvement and development of the Lake George Battlefield Park at Lake George, New York.

President's Message &

By Herman C. Brown

Welcome to the year 2006, the year of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance's

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- ◆ Sharon Borgos, *Editor*

fifth anniversary and the 250th anniversary of Massachusetts General John Winslow and his Provincial Army camping at the site we now know as the Lake George Battlefield Park during their aborted expedition against the French forts on Lake Champlain during the French and Indian War.

The fifth annual DEC/Alliance Site Management Review conference was held at the Department's Region 5 Offices in Warrensburg this past

complete funding the professional conservation of the various artifacts excavated in the park in 2000 (to date the Alliance has provided \$12,090 to this \$14,860 project); and (3) commission an artist (Mr. Ernest Haas) to paint the scene of General Jeffrey Amherst's 1759 encampment at Fort George. The unveiling of this historic art work will be in the year 2009.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU goes Stelfer Steel & Pipe, LLC of Fairfield,



January. Projects awaiting completion are: (1) replacement of the lower park men's and women's comfort stations; (2) re-pavement of the pathways to make them compliant with the provisions of the American Disabilities Act; (3) removal of a safety hazard, the old rusty (page) wire fencing that lies west of the Warren County Bicycle Path and (4) clearing the brush from and cleaning out the entrenchments still existent from General Abercrombie's camp of 1757. The Agency's Historic Preservation Officer continues with his task to draft and promulgate a Park (Site) interpretation Plan for inclusion in the next revision to the Park's Unit Management Plan. Three historic themes are to be addressed in the plan: the Colonial Wars (17th and 18th Centuries), The Revolutionary War and War of 1812, and a commemoration period (the 19th and 20th Centuries).

The Alliance Board of Trustees met on March 5th and adopted an action plan and operating budget of \$11,146 for fiscal year 2006-2007. Major goals for the year include: (1) complete the park's nomination to the National Register of Historic Places; (2)

CT for continuing their Sponsor Membership. A SPECIAL WELCOME is extended to the Society of Colonial Wars in the state of New York our new Sponsor and Clifford L. Mullen our new Paid up for Life Member. A HEARTY THANK YOU to ALL new and renewing members for your support.

The Alliance's new fiscal and membership year began on April 1st. If you have not yet remitted this year's dues to the Secretary please do so at your earliest convenience. A copy of the budget and last year's financial report will be presented at this year's annual membership meeting. Advance copies are available by request from the Secretary.

Our fifth annual membership meeting and picnic will be held on Saturday, August 26, 2006 at the pavilion at Lake George Battlefield Park, Lake George, NY. Please make a commitment to attend. Mark your calendar now. I hope to see you all there. ◆

Blodgett's American Published Map of the Battle of Lake George

By Edward J. Dodge

Modern man views a map as one of two things. First, as a way to find the shortest most direct route to where he wants to go. Secondly, as a small or large multi colored sheet of paper with a lot of symbols that he does not understand.

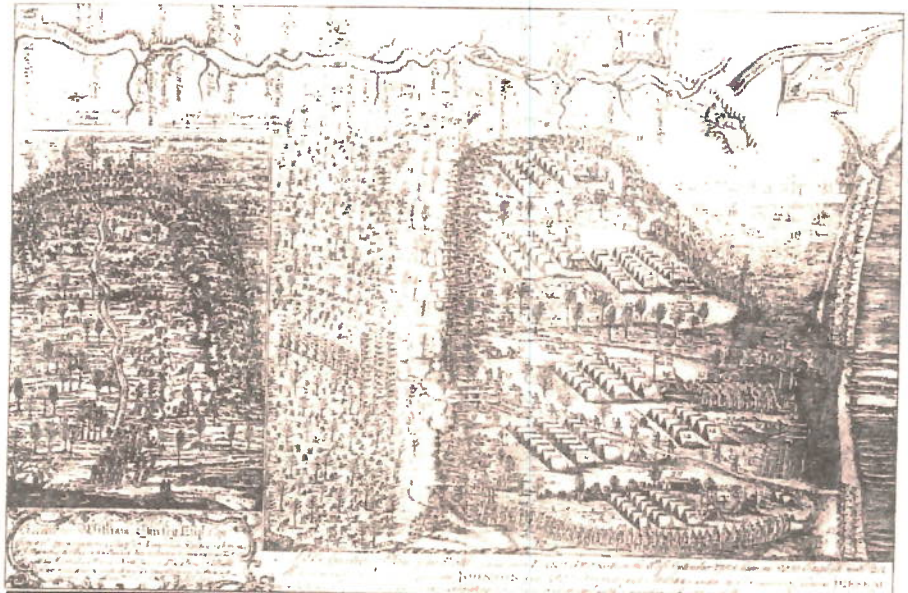
Historically, maps are about as old as man. Our ancestors using a finger or twig would draw lines in dirt, sand, snow, and scratch on rock with another rock to show someone the way from where he was to where he wanted to go. The oldest known map which still exists is a clay tablet from Mesopotamia showing a man's estate in great detail, dating from about 2800 BC.

A map by definition is a selective, symbolized and generalized picture on a much reduced scale of some spatial distribution of a large area, usually the earth's surface, as seen from above.

A Planimetric map does not show relief. A Topographic map shows relief (mountains, valleys, rivers, etc.). To accomplish this hydrographic symbols and symbols for man made objects are used and are basically modern in concept.

The earliest know colonial map from North America is a woodcut of Boston done by a Mr. John Foster in 1677. Most maps of North America were done by English, French, Dutch or Spanish cartographers. It is believed that the English reached North America in the vicinity of Newfoundland possibly as early as the 1480's. The French and Spanish shortly there after with the Dutch slightly later, touching the continent at various locations on the eastern seaboard. For the early explorers, maps were not their concern other than navigation maps of the ocean upon which they sailed, reflecting landfall with a corresponding safe anchorage.

Samuel Blodgett's map which appeared in Boston in late 1777 (see *Samuel Blodgett's Map of the Battle of Lake George* by Edward J. Dodge, in the Fall 2005 newsletter) is unusual in several



Blodgett's Map - Boston 1755

respects. It covers only two phases of the battle and is printed so that the map is both horizontal and vertical in presentation (see Figure 1).

Modern maps are orientated south to north. The left side of Blodgett's Boston published map showing phase one of the battle or the "Bloody Morning Scout" is orientated north to south. The second phase of the battle at the British main camp is orientated east to west as if you are looking down from the heights of French Mountain just to the east of the camp site. Blodgett was actually located in the center of the camp during the battle.

The top horizontal part of the map appears to have been drawn as an after thought to fill in a rather large open space on the map. It shows the route from New York City to Lake George and is orientated south to north yet depicted west to east on the map. Fort Lyman is shown as it existed. Fort William Henry is shown as apparently copied from Captain William Eyre's drawings of the fort, as only the foundations had been laid by Colonel Ephraim Williams regiment prior to the battle of Lake George on 8 September

1755. That the sketch of Fort William Henry came from Captain Eyre's architectural drawings is substantiated by the indicated linear footage of the curtains and bastions.

Finally, in the lower left corner of the map is a dedication to Governor William Shirley of Massachusetts (see Figure 1).

Blodgett in his Prospective-Plan, which accompanies his map, sets forth by number and description where the action took place as well as the location of opposing forces and camp equipment. Although much too lengthy to appear as an attachment to this article, this index covers thirty nine different points of reference. The final phase of the battle of Lake George or "Bloody Pond" is not shown on the map, in all probability as it was a running battle covering a distance of two to three miles with no knowledgeable cohesion. It is referred to in the Prospective-Plan by a rather extensive narration as is the route from New York to Lake George.

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Shipbuilding during the 1755-1756 Campaigns at Lake George

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the evening with ten bodies, three of which had "their Heads cut off."⁸ One of the last descriptions of the sloops written in 1756 was that of Dr. Ammi Ruhamah Cutter on October 16, 1756: "the Fleet consists of 1 sloop about 40 tons, 2 smaller about 20 tons each, another on ye Ways ready to Launch of ye Bigness of [the] former."⁹

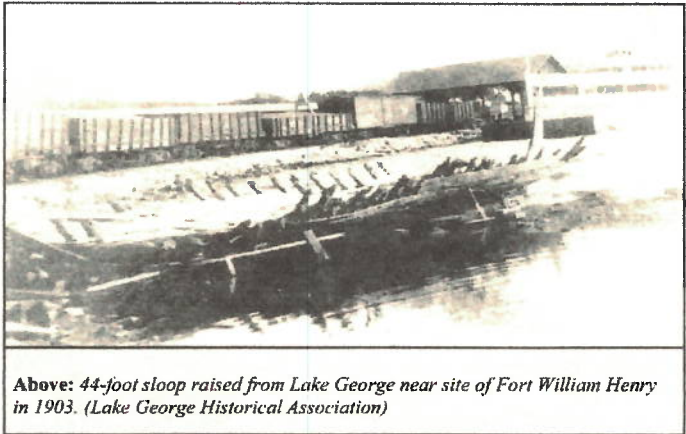
During the March 1757 attack on Fort William Henry, two sloops were burned by the French raiding force, including one on the stocks. The other sloop, burned in the water, was probably the sloop *Earl of Loudoun*. The two surviving sloops were present at Fort William Henry in July 1757 when Colonel James Montresor noted "2 Galliots [galleys under construction], 2 Scows, 5 whale-boats, 3 Batos, 2 Sloops" in his journal.¹⁰ Likewise, Major General Daniel Webb listed "two of the Old Sloops" in a letter written on August 1, 1757.¹¹ After the defeat of the British and provincial garrison at Fort William Henry, French troops burned "two Row Galleys which were ready to launch," according to Captain James Furnis, the British Comptroller of Ordinance who had witnessed the siege of the fort.¹² The two sloops and two scows, however, were taken to the north end of Lake George by the victors. A few weeks later the *Boston Evening Post* reported that a ranger patrol of Captain Israel Putnam had observed "one of our [captured] Sloops lies out in the Lake, at Anchor in order to give the earliest Intelligence."¹³ On September 6, 1757, Major General Webb at Fort Edward wrote to Lord Loudoun that French deserters divulged that the two sloops were "dismasted...and sunk" in the northern section of the lake.¹⁴ In 1759 provincial troops raised the two scows that had also been scuttled by French troops in 1757 in the shallow water at the Ticonderoga landing on Lake George, but the two captured sloops were never recovered.

The remains of three 1756 sloops survived into the twentieth century. The wreckage of one sloop believed to have been burned during the March 1757 raid, lay in open view for tourists at the south-

ern end of the lake for more than 100 years, as Benjamin F. DeCosta noted in 1869: "the hull of a large vessel is still seen in fair, calm weather, and appears to be nearly full of cobble-stones, probably ballast...the spot where this hulk may be seen is near the steam-boat landing."¹⁵ Laden with military relics, including old military buttons and buckles, grapeshot and a 1743 Spanish coin, the charred remnants of the 44-foot sloop were raised on July 2, 1903, by William S. Tuttle. The vessel was later broken-up for souvenirs. Several frames from this historic vessel, probably the *Earl of Loudoun*, are on display at the Lake George Historical Association. Under the direction of archaeologist Scott A. Padeni, with the assistance of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and Bateaux Below, a thorough study of the northern section of Lake George revealed the remains of many different types of vessels, including two colonial-era vessels that may in fact be the two missing sloops that had been scuttled by the French in 1757.¹⁶

Endnotes:

1. James Hill, "The Diary of a Private on the First Expedition to Crown Point," ed. by Edna V. Moffett, *The New England Quarterly* 5 (1932): 608.
2. James Sullivan, ed., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson* (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1922). Volume 2, 152.
3. Public Records Office: Colonial Office Papers 5/47, UP microfilm reel 2, frame 23; On September 9, 1756, Winslow wrote that he had "constantly men on board" the sloop. Loudoun Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA, LO 1752.
4. *Boston Gazette and Country Journal*, 13 September 1756; Nathan L. Swayze, *Engraved Powder Horns* (Yazoo City, MS:



Above: 44-foot sloop raised from Lake George near site of Fort William Henry in 1903. (Lake George Historical Association)

Gun Hill Pub. Co., 1978), 219.

5. LO 1437.

6. *The Boston Weekly News-Letter*, 16 September 1756; LO 1710.

7. *New-Hampshire Gazette*, 7 October 1756.

8. *Ibid.*

9. Ammi Ruhamah Cutter, "Dr. A.R. Cutter's Journal of his Military Experience, 1756-1758," in *A History of the Cutter Family of New England*, by William Richard Cutter (Boston: David Clapp & Son, 1871), 66.

10. James Montresor, "Journals of Col. James Montresor," *Collections of the New-York Historical Society* 14 (1881): 37.

11. PRO, CO 5/48, UP microfilm reel 2, frame 546.

12. James Furnis, "An Eyewitness Account by James Furnis of the Surrender of Fort William Henry, August 1757," ed. by William S. Ewing, *New York History* 42 (July 1961): 314.

13. *Boston Evening Post*, 12 September 1757.

14. LO 4407.

15. B.F. DeCosta, *Lake George: Its Scenes and Characteristics* (New York: Anson D.F. Randolph & Co., 1869), 63; See also Russell P. Bellico, *Sails and Steam in the Mountains: A Maritime and Military History of Lake George and Lake Champlain*, 2d ed. (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2001), 77.

16. Scott A. Padeni, *Colonial Shipwreck CV-2 Study and Stabilization Final Report* (Ballston Spa, NY: Scott A. Padeni, 2001), 40.

Blodgett's American Published Map of the Battle of Lake George

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It is not known if the original document exists. Apparently Blodgett's original American produced map of the Battle of Lake George was long forgotten until a copy of it was found in a bound volume of the Boston-Gazette for 1755 which was presented to the Massachusetts Historical Society in 1883.

References:

- Blodgett's Prospective-Plan
- An Introduction to The Study of Map Projections, J.A. Steers, University of London Press Ltd, 14th ed, 1965
- Principles of Cartography, Ewin Raisz, McGraw Hill Book Co., 1962
- Squanto and The Pilgrims - Native Intelligence, Charles C. Mann, Smithsonian, December 2005
- The Illustrated Columbia Encyclopedia. Columbia University Press, 1969, Vol. 13
- Holdings of The New York Public Library

Meeting Notice!

Fifth Annual Membership Meeting

When: Saturday, August 26, 2006.
Where: Lake George Battlefield Park Picnic Pavilion.

Schedule of Activities:

- ♦ **10:00 to 11:15 AM:** An interpreted tour of the Fort George Garrison Grounds (open to the public).
- ♦ **11:30 AM to Noon:** The Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance membership business meeting (members and invited guests only).
- ♦ **Noon to 1:00 PM:** Picnic lunch catered by the East Cove Restaurant. Quest Speaker TBA. (members and invited guests only).
- ♦ **1:30 PM:** Semi-annual Board of Trustees Meeting.

Proper Storage of Conserved Artifacts

By Christopher R. Sabick

Up to this point the articles I have submitted to the newsletter have focused on the specific treatments applied to artifacts from the 2000 excavations carried out at the Lake George Battlefield Park. Conservation of selected groups of these artifacts continues; however, in this article we will take a more general look at the proper storage of artifacts once they have been treated. Once an item has completed its conservation regimen it is stable and should last many years without the need for retreatment. However, of equal importance to the conservation method chosen is the environment and container in which the artifact is stored or displayed once it is stabilized.

The first portion of this equation is the storage environment. In general terms stability is the key. This means that the storage space should have good climate monitoring and controls, specifically temperature and humidity. The environmental preferences required for specific artifacts differ depending on their material type. Iron and most other metals require low humidity, typically under 30% is ideal. This particularly dry air will prevent moisture from condensing on the artifact and fostering future corrosion. Wood and other organic materials need slightly more moisture in the air to avoid shrinkage. Typically 40%-50% is considered ideal for these materials. If items of differing materials are to be stored in the same space the metal artifacts are often stored in a microenvironment that allows for more precise control of the humidity. This is most often achieved by the addition of a small container of silica pellets to the storage box. Silica absorbs moisture from the air and traps it with the pellets thereby lowering the humidity within the enclosure. This can also be employed in display cases where necessary.

The Storage containers and display units in which the artifacts are housed

must also be made from materials that will not react with the items stored within them. Most commercial paper products and many types of wood release a small amount of acid as they age, this processing is known as "off gassing." This acid can be very detrimental to artifacts that are stored in close proximity to these materials. Therefore a special coating must be applied to any wood that will be used for the storage of artifacts. Paper and cardboard boxes that are used to store artifacts must be designated as being of archival quality. This will insure that they have been treated or buffered against releasing compounds that might be harmful to artifacts. In many cases paper or cardboard are no longer used at all. A host of new products, most made from polyethylene, which are perfectly stable and do not off gas, have become available in recent years.

The combination of carefully conserved artifacts packaged in appropriate containers and stored in the proper environment results in collections that will be around for decades to come. ♦

Book Review

By Thomas V. Krug, Jr.

WHITE SAVAGE: William Johnson and the Invention of America. By Fintan O'Toole. (Farrar, Strauss, Giroux, 2005, pp. 402, hardback \$26.00).

The legendary man whose image as a frontier diplomat, military strategist, economic tycoon, the hero of the Battle of Lake George and Niagara is brought to life as the flesh and blood giant that he was.

O'Toole's new book on Sir William Johnson is painstakingly researched to the finest detail of Johnson's life. Beginning with his humble background as a Catholic growing up in an Ireland that was dominated by Protestant Britain,

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"The Mohawk Warrior" Statue Rededicated

By William M. Herrlich

The main events commemorating the 250th anniversary of the Battle of Lake George were popularly assumed to be the reenactments of the battle during the afternoons of September 17th and 18th, 2005. Considering the number of reenactors and spectators, perhaps they were, but earlier on the 17th, as part of the weekend's programmed activities, one of the jewels of Lake George Battlefield Park was rededicated.

In 1921, George Pratt, actively involved in early conservation matters in New York State, donated to the state a statue he had commissioned to be placed in the Battlefield Park. Known for most of its life as the Indian Fountain, the work was by the renowned sculptor Alexander Phimister Proctor. A native of Canada (born 1860), Proctor and his family were on the move in the western U.S. throughout his early life, but by the age of 25, Proctor had received an early art education and had secured the financing for a move to New York and classical training at the Art Students' League and the National Academy of Design. Subsequent successes, especially at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1891, provided the means for further study in Paris, and upon receipt of a commission from Augustus Saint-Gaudens, he returned to New York in 1894. Proctor had become a major factor among American sculptors and their patrons. His earliest successes were primarily of animals – horses, great cats, and other animals of the undeveloped American west – and they existed in both monumental and smaller forms, usually in bronze. After 1910 Proctor began to work more frequently with the human form, and the focus remained on western and Native American cultures. Ultimately this led to George Pratt's commission. Pratt was the son of Charles Pratt, who made his fortune in the late 1800s in oil refining in Brooklyn, NY before selling his business to the Rockefeller interests. It was this family wealth that allowed Pratt and his siblings to be prominent in a wide range of fields, including art. Proctor and Pratt had hunted together in the west, and Pratt

owned a number of Proctor's pieces. It is not surprising, then, that Pratt turned to him for what was initially named "The Mohawk Warrior." The statue's model, reflecting Proctor's many years in the west and among Native Americans, was a Blackfoot.

Given to the State of New York for placement in the Battlefield Park in 1921, the Fountain is a bronze of 7 feet, showing a warrior kneeling to drink from a pool. With all the prominence of Proctor's monumental works in the country's principal cities, it was quite remarkable that an important work by such a major artist would find its way to a small town and among the trees overlooking an upstate New York lake. There it remained, while time, indifference, and petty vandalism led to a deterioration of its appearance and workings. Recognizing this decline, Jay Levenson of the Eastern Woodland Alliance approached the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Warren County Historical Society in the spring of 2005 to see if some joint response could restore the statue. It could, and the three groups worked rapidly, knowing the 250th anniversary of the battle in the fall would be an ideal time to rededicate a renewed warrior. In a matter of months, a true community effort had coalesced around the project, and contributions of \$13,000 from 125 corporate and individual donors were secured. All the necessary work was contracted to local tradesmen and artisans.

The Fountain restoration was one of four items scheduled around the time of the anniversary. All were based on the initiatives of individuals or groups and reflected the work of the community in support of its heritage. Three – the ceremony at the expanded and renewed Colonel Williams site; the rededication of the Johnson/Hendrick statue; and the reenactment – recognized the military events at the site. The Fountain's rededication, however, focused on the different aspects of the Pratt gift and Proctor work – nature, conservation,

and the contributions of Native Americans. On the suitably tranquil morning of the 17th, representatives of the DEC, the Eastern Woodlands Alliance, and the Warren County Historical Society made remarks, Native American offerings and prayer were given, and the statue was unveiled. It looked wonderful and at home. ♦

Welcoming New Members

By Nadine Battaglia

In his 19th century homage, "The Last of the Mohicans", James Fennimore Cooper describes the colonial war era Lake George theater of battle as follows: "Though the arts of peace were unknown to this fatal region, its forests were alive with men, its shades and glens rang with the sounds of martial music and the echoes of its mountains threw back the laugh, or repeated the wanton cry of many a gallant and reckless youth as he hurried by them in the noontide of his spirits, to slumber in a long night of forgetfulness." Well, Mr. Cooper, here at the Alliance, we, the spiritual children of that gallant and reckless youth are not forgetting anything! We are in the business of securing and preserving our history for posterity and to that end, we extend gratitude and a warm welcome to our new members who make this effort a reality!

- ♦ Karen and Chuck Fischer
- ♦ Brian Bischer,
- ♦ Richard C. Wojcik
- ♦ Lawrence M. Bennet
- ♦ Ron Morgan
- ♦ 1SG Clifford L. Mullen, U.S. Army
(whose return from service in Iraq is fondly anticipated in June of this year!)
- ♦ The Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York

Membership 2005—2006

The Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance extends sincere thanks to its members for their generous support during the period from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006. We have made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the lists of members that follow. Please notify us immediately of any errors or omissions, so that we may revise our records.

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- ◆ Folk Life Center, Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY
- ◆ Historian, Warren County, NY

Thank you!

Book Review

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Johnson is transformed as a result of his influential uncle, Sir Peter Warren. [Both Johnson and Warren converted to Protestantism to further their careers in the service of Great Britain].



As a result, William is vaulted from Ireland and lands on the very doorstep of North America's most powerful Indian confederation: the Iroquois.

O'Toole's insight brings out of the shadows of history the intimate knowledge of Johnson's diplomatic and personal connections with the Iroquois. It was his involvement with the customs, beliefs, and ways of thinking that led Johnson to be regarded as one of them.

O'Toole does not stop at the Great Council with Johnson often taking center stage, but expands his research to include the growing political, business, and economic power of Johnson in the world of European rivalries and political maneuvering.

With Johnson's skill, the Iroquois were generally kept neutral in the French and Indian War, though the Mohawks who revered Johnson as a god sided with him.

There is no doubt that Johnson played the key role in helping the British win in that war and without his presence and ability on the frontier, the era might have turned out far different.

O'Toole, with a great talent for extensive research, lets us take peek into a time that is generally given little notice in 20th and 21st century America. The actors of that age, in all their beliefs, customs, politics, are so well brought to life that the reader can find themselves in a very real position to believe that they are experiencing these individuals on a one to one basis and are part of that great age.

A **GREAT** read. Find the time to enjoy. ◆