

❧ FORT GEORGE ADVICE ❧

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

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

Summer 2015

Shipbuilding at Fort George: the Radeau Invincible ❧

By Russell Bellico

Although we associate Major General Jeffery Amherst's 1759 campaign against the French with the construction of Fort George, provincial troops at Lake George were also engaged in shipbuilding and restoring the two wharves that French raiding parties had "broke[n] up" the previous winter.¹ The remains of the wharf adjacent to the Battlefield Park were discovered in 2000 by Bateaux Below and archaeologically surveyed by the organization in subsequent years.

After reaching Lake George on June 21, 1759, Amherst's troops were faced with the daunting task of raising the vessels that had been purposely sunk in the lake for safekeeping at the close of the 1758 campaign. Bateaux,

whaleboats, two row galleys, and a large sloop were eventually raised. On July 4, 1759, after ten days labor, the largest vessel, the sloop *Earl of Halifax*, was "Dragg[ed]" to the wharf for refitting.² Because the radeau *Land Tortoise* from the 1758 campaign could not be relocated in the lake, construction of a new seven-sided radeau, under the supervision of Major Thomas Ord, began during the first week of July. (The radeau *Land Tortoise*, a National Historic Landmark today, was discovered in 107 feet of water in 1990 by Bateaux Below under the leadership of Joseph W. Zarzynski.)

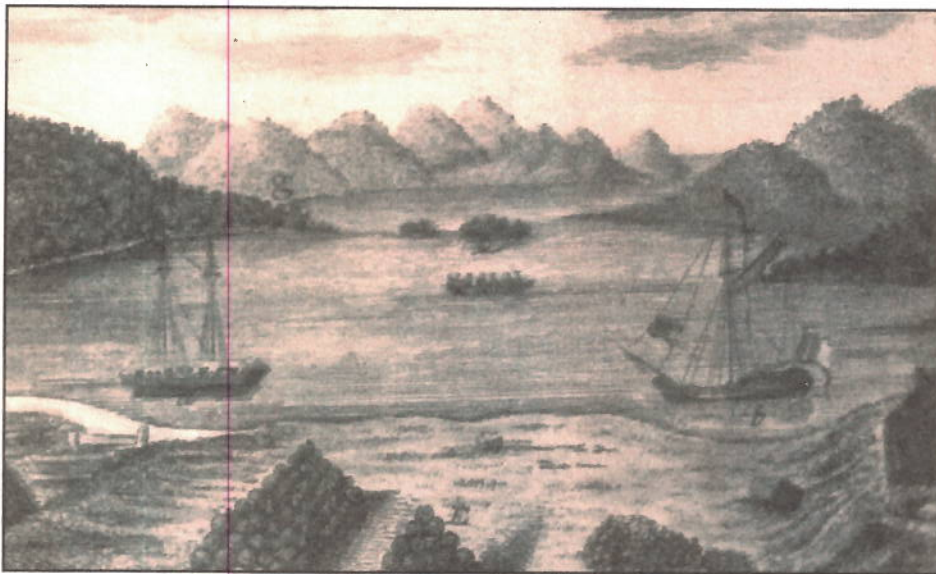
The radeau, meaning "raft" in French, denoted the flat-bottomed nature of the vessel. The lower sides of a radeau inclined slightly outward

while the upper sides or bulwarks curved inward at a steep angle over the interior to protect the crew and make it more difficult for an enemy to board the vessel. The radeau was a "floating battery" pierced for cannons and equipped with a large number of sweeps (oars) and one or two masts with square sails.

With the employment of 100 men, the radeau *Invincible* was finished on July 16 and launched at five o'clock in the evening. Viewing the odd-shaped vessel, James Henderson, a provincial soldier from Rutland, Massachusetts, remarked that the radeau was called "an Ark of Redoubt."³ Amherst noted that "a little mistake in the height of the Port Holes" had been made, but he concluded that the vessel was acceptable, and on July 20 her crew "Fired every gun out of her."⁴ According to Captain-Lieutenant Henry Skinner of the Royal Artillery Regiment, the *Invincible* "carried four 24 pounders and four 12 pounders" and transported the heavy artillery for the siege of Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga).⁵ Departing on July 21, 1759, the *Invincible* headed a column of artillery rafts in a huge flotilla of vessels that embarked from Fort George for Ticonderoga.

The original decision to build an armed radeau stemmed from the possibility of French opposition at the northern Lake George landing site. Much in the same way that the radeau *Ligonier*, also built by Thomas Ord, would aid the landing of British and provincial troops during the 1760 siege of the French fortifications at Isle Aux Noix on the Richelieu River, where the radeau "kept a fire on the enemys fort & vessels to favor our landing."⁶ This was essentially the same tactic used by U.S. Navy battleships in advance of the landing

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Detail of "A Perspective View of Lake George [and] Plan of Ticonderoga" by Captain-Lieutenant Henry Skinner, showing the radeau *Invincible* on the left and the sloop *Earl of Halifax* on the right. (Library of Congress)

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Secretary's Notes

By Nadine Battaglia

For July 4, 2015 – Happy 239th Birthday to our spectacular United States of America, and thank you forever, Founding Fathers for what you gave us.

Some news which has slipped past many of us for ten years running! Alliance member, Bill Pomeroy and his staff, have attempted to present us with the gift of a magnificent anvil-shaped stone monument which purpose is to honor the memory and actions of his ancestor, Lt. Daniel Pomeroy, and his comrades-in-arms who fought and fell on September 8th, 1755 at the Bloody Morning Scout. This unique anvil-shaped monument replicates the anvil presented in the year 1660 to the Pomeroy family in Northampton, Massachusetts. Establishing a patch of ground for the erection of the monument on or near the Battlefield Park has been a challenge for the Pomeroy's even though its presence would promote the goals we mutually desire – the knowledge of, and preservation of our precious history! The Pomeroy Association is ready to carve the stone but for a place to set it! Please note Susan Hughes' article carefully so that we might put our heads together and make this

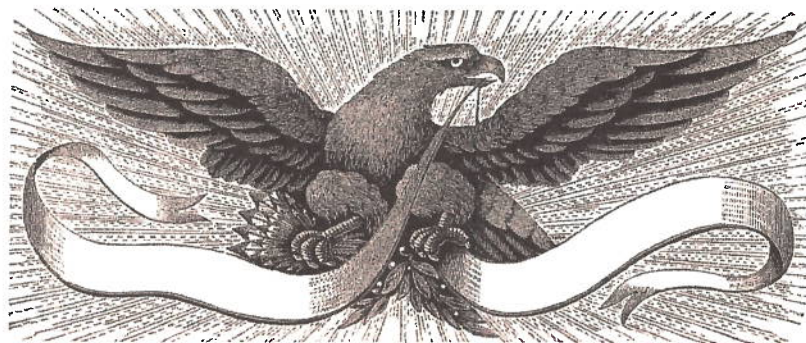
happen!

Our Third Annual Memorial Day Ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers was quietly graceful under rolling gray clouds. An echoed stillness in the misty morning air punctuated by solemn remembrance of the fallen soldiers held us separate from the rest of space and time. A military re-enactor recited a prayer in requiem for the soldiers which, he explained, would have been typically offered under similar circumstances during the eighteenth century. I share the lines for your thought and consideration.

“Oh Merciful God, take pity on those souls who have no particular friends or intercessors to recommend them to Thee, who either through the negligence of those who are alive, or through the length of time are forgotten by their friends and by all.

Spare them, O Lord, and remember Thine own Mercy when others forget to appeal to It. Let not the souls which thou hast created be parted from Thee, their Creator. May the souls of the faithful departed, through the Mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen. ■

Till next time . . .



President's Welcome

By Lyn Karig Hohmann

Welcome to the summer edition of the *Fort George Advice!*

Several years ago when I became president, we asked the membership what they wanted for the next few years for the Alliance. Overwhelming, the members said they wanted to see us more in front of the public. Well, you can't miss us now!

We had our third annual Memorial Day remembrance for the Four Unknown Soldiers in the Park. Each year the community attendance has grown. We continue to have support from the Reenactors and Fort William Henry, the Lake George Fire Department and the American Legion Post 374. Thanks to the excellent outreach by our secretary, Nadine Battaglia, we were able to have several newspaper interviews. Again, our local AP reporter released the story and it was picked up as far away as San Antonio, Texas. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation continues to be our partner in this and had local and state representatives present. The local staff also watches the site after we leave and ensures the flags and memorial flowers are safe and eventually returned to us for the next year.

The Lake George Battlefield Park was the featured topic for a talk at the Hadley Luzerne Historical Association and the Lake George Historical Association and will be again one of the summer topics in the Lake George Historical Association's summer lecture series. The artifacts, conserved by the Alliance from the 2000 dig, are still on exhibit at the Lake George Library.

We have finished an exhibit for the Lake George Historical Association Museum that will open shortly. The exhibit is entitled "Lake George Battlefield Park: 10,000 Years of

History" and includes the history from the earliest pre-contact Native Americans through the preservation of the park. Our beautiful painting by Ernie Haas is included in the exhibit as part of the segment, "Art in the Park". Many thanks go to Lisa Adamson for her great assistance in this project. Also, in researching the Park during the Revolutionary War, we reached out to the Parks-Bentley House for directions to the Grave of Daniel Parks, who took the key in 1775 when Fort George was surrendered to the colonial soldiers. Not only did we get beautiful pictures of his grave stone and his original cabin (now part of the Parks-Bentley House), but they also offered to lend us Daniel Park's own beautiful clock for the museum exhibit. This is a must see! We are very grateful to the Parks-Bentley folks for this generosity. Please take time this summer to visit the Parks-Bentley House as a thank

you for this wonderful loan.

Once more, David Starbuck will be conducting a field school at the Park under the academic sponsorship of SUNY Adirondack, Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Museum. The dig starts July 6th and continues for 6 weeks. We encourage our members to visit the dig. Last year, it attracted hundreds of visitors. The archaeologists and volunteers take time answering questions and showing the findings, bringing again this Park's story to more and more visitors. And, if you are interested, Dr. Starbuck continues to look for more volunteers. Training and supervision are provided. The application is included in this newsletter.

We hope to see many of you at the annual meeting, August 15th. We hope to have some exciting news for you then! ■



2015 Annual Memorial Day Service.

Pomeroy Anvil Trail

"...That Memorable Battle which will never be forgot..."

From the Diary of Seth Pomeroy, September 10, 1755

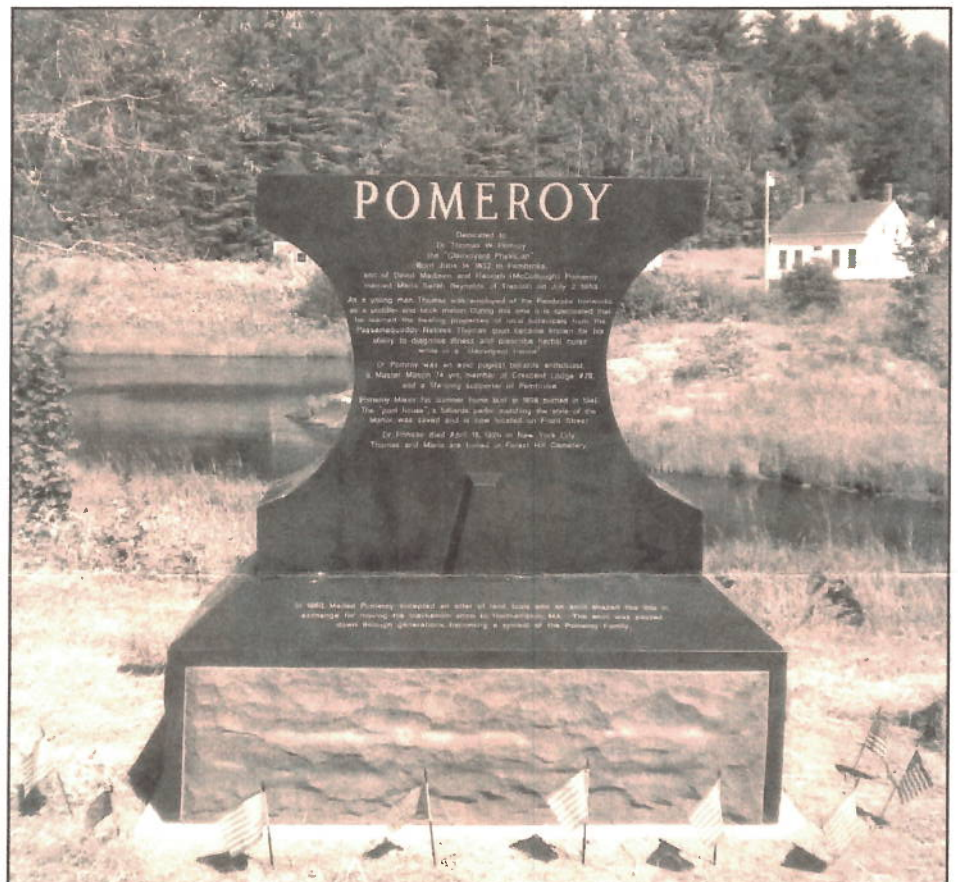
By Susan Hughes, Director

American Pomeroy Historic Genealogical Association (APHGA)

Such fine things are happening at the Lake George Battlefield Park -- an archaeological dig will return for a second year, locating more artifacts to tell us where the battle took place in 1755, where lime kilns and fortifications stood, and what camp life was like later. Artifacts uncovered are being conserved for future generations to study and enjoy. This Memorial Day was the Third Annual Service for the Unknown Soldiers of the Battle of Lake George who are buried in the Park. The Alliance is actively raising public awareness of the need for a visitors' center so the Park may be properly interpreted. The American Pomeroy Historic Genealogical Association wants to be part of this!

When Colonel Seth Pomeroy and his men set out on September 10, 1755 to bury the bodies of those slain, part of this solemn duty was to bury the body of his younger brother, Lt. Daniel Pomeroy, killed at the battle of The Bloody Morning Scout. Today, Daniel's 5th generation great grandson, Bill Pomeroy, is seeking a location to erect a monument to honor his fallen ancestor and his fellow colonial soldiers, which will help tell the story of the skirmish that signaled the start of the Battle of Lake George. Supporting historic preservation, conservation and interpretation is part of the mission of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance, and this is why the APHGA is reaching out for your help in locating and securing a site for this monument.

When the Pomeroy Anvil Trail was



Pomeroy Anvil Trail monument installed in Pembroke, ME

begun in 2006, it was with the idea of celebrating the American spirit through the progress and movement of one family. We, like the members of the Alliance, strongly believe in the necessity of celebrating and preserving American history because, without a strong understanding of the past, we cannot create a better future.

More information on the Pomeroy Anvil Trail may be found at www.americanpomeroy.org/Anvils.html. Please email me at roots@cxtec.com or Susan Hughes, APHGA, c/o CXtec, P.O. Box 4799, Syracuse NY 13221-4799, 315-476-3000 ext. 2530. We're anxious to hear your suggestions and look forward to speaking with you! ■



Shipbuilding at Fort George: the Radeau *Invincible*

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of American troops on Japanese-held islands in the South Pacific during World War II. In the case of the radeau *Invincible*, however, there was no enemy opposition at the Ticonderoga landing site in 1759.

The *Invincible* was relegated to the transport of supplies from Fort George to Ticonderoga during the remaining months of 1759, but during the 1760 season the vessel remained mired in mud at the northern Lake George landing. On June 23, 1761, the commander of Fort Ticonderoga reported that the *Invincible* had been "forced out of her bed" by a "Strong squall[!]." The vessel was soon repaired and pressed into service transporting captured artillery and stores to Fort George. The final disposition of the radeau *Invincible* remains a mystery.

Other vessels were also built at Fort George in 1759, including the large provision vessel *Snowshoe*. Several schooners and row galleys (the latter never completed) were part of the shipbuilding effort at the fort during the American Revolution. As a result, Fort George and the Battlefield Park are not only known for historic fortifications, but can justly claim a notable maritime heritage. ■

Notes:

1. J. Clarence Webster, ed., *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1931), 125.
2. Salah Barnard, "Journal of Major Salah Barnard," July 4, 1759, MS, Fort Ticonderoga Thompson-Pell Research Center; J.C. Webster, *Journal of Jeffery Amherst*, 131; See also *New-York Gazette*, 23 July 1759.
3. James Henderson, "James Henderson's Journal," in the *First Century of the Colonial Wars in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts* (Boston: Society of Colonial Wars, Mass., 1944), 204.
4. J.C. Webster, *Journal of Jeffery Amherst*, 141.
5. Henry Skinner, "Proceedings of the Army Under the Command of General Amherst, for the Year 1759," *The Universal Magazine* (December 1759): 286.
6. Samuel Jenks, "Samuel Jenks, his Journal of the Campaign in 1760," *Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society* 5 (2nd Series) (1889-90): 368., See also Russell P. Bellico, *Empires in the Mountains: French and Indian War Campaigns And Forts in the Lake Champlain, Lake George, And Hudson River Corridor* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 2010), 231-32.
7. Public Record Office, London 283/1, War Office Papers 34/50, folio 59.

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Please join us at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 22, 2015 at the Lake George Historical Association located in the Old Court House on Canada Street in Lake George Village for the celebration of the official opening of our long awaited exhibit, "The 10,000 Years of History of the Lake George Battlefield Park."

Lyn Karig Hohmann will give a lecture on the same and there will be a wine and cheese reception to enjoy, as well. ■



August 15, 2015 Fort George Alliance Annual Membership Meeting and Picnic Update!

We are pleased to announce that our guest speaker will be Joseph W. Zarzynsky, RPA (Register of Professional Archaeologists)

Mr. Zarzynsky will speak to us on the subject of "individual sunken vessels, multiple shipwreck clusters, and other submerged sites at the head of Lake George to gain a better understanding of the area's colonial military occupation. Included in the presentation will be a review of the archaeological studies of the lake's colonial bateau shipwrecks, the 1758 Land Tortoise radeau, a submerged 1758-built military dock, and other underwater cultural sites from the French & Indian War (1755-1763). Mr. Zarzynski was the Executive Director of Bateau Below during its 1987 to 2011 archaeological investigation of "The Sunken Fleet of 1758."

Same time and place, but please watch your mailbox for your invitation!