

# ❧ FORT GEORGE ADVICE ❧

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

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

Winter/Spring 2009

## Jared Sparks - Harvard, Class of 1815 ❧

By Edward J. Dodge

**F**ew people unless they are within the venue of early American literature, early American history or members of the Unitarian Church will recognize the name Jared Sparks.

He was one of nine children born to Joseph and Elinor (Orcut) Sparks of Willington, Connecticut. He was born on May 10, 1789. When he was six years old he went to live with relatives in Camden, New York to ease the financial burden at home, returning home in 1805.

He was quite intelligent and was known as "the genius" in grammar school. His interests were literature and history and he later developed an interest in astronomy. He worked at age 18 as a journeyman carpenter and school teacher. He started to study mathematics and Latin at age 20. He was able to obtain a scholarship to Phillips Exeter Academy. He was admitted to Harvard in 1811 and left in 1812 due to financial reasons and tutored a family in Maryland, later returning to Harvard and graduating in 1815. While attending Harvard Divinity School from 1817 to 1819, he tutored geometry, astronomy and natural history.

Leaving Harvard, he became a minister at the First Independent Church (Unitarian) in Baltimore, Maryland. As his feelings for the

ministry were less than strong, he resigned his position in April 1823 returning to Cambridge, Massachusetts.

It was at this point that his life leads him into the literary world as an owner, publisher and writer. He is probably best known for the twelve volumes of "The Writings of George Washington", which he completed between 1834 and 1837. His literary accomplishments are numerous covering early American histories. His discourse with Robert Peel of Great Britain over the release of some historical papers that Great Britain had concerning the Revolutionary War has become a rather lengthy discourse by other individuals.

How does Mr. Sparks become of interest to the readers of the "Fort George Advice"?

In 1830 Jared Sparks traveled through the Lake Champlain, Lake George area making notes and some sketches. His notes on Fort George are as follows: "Fort

George is a third of a mile from William Henry, and on much higher ground. It has high walls of stone, surmounted by earth. It is a very irregular structure, about 70 yards long by 50 yards wide, in its extreme dimensions. The ditch must always have been shallow, and the masonry of the walls was clumsy and imperfect. It seems to have been intended chiefly as a depot for provisions and other supplies, for the interior is much taken up with subterranean apartments strongly walled and covered over. It could have held but few men. Water was procured by a covered way from the river, 2 or 300 yards distant. A hill within 3/4 of a mile commands this fort. It is surmounted by a fortification which the people now call Fort Gage. The foundation still seen is of a very large warehouse, doubtless used in the Revolution as a temporary storehouse for the supplies for Burgoyne's army, which were brought up Lake George.  
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## FRENCH & INDIAN WAR COMMEMORATION

*250 years*

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**President's Message** 

By Herman C. Brown

**W**elcome to the year 2009, the year of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance's eighth anniversary and the 250th anniversary of the SUCCESSFUL British expedition led by General (Sir) Jeffrey Amherst against the French at Fort Carillon (Fort Ticonderoga). The land of our beloved park was the springboard for Amherst's Army during the 1759 campaign, the beginning of the incursion into Canada which led to North America being English speaking and not French. Imagine in your mind's eye 11,000 to 12,000 men camping at the south end of Lake George and then their embarking under the hot summer sun in small boats down the lake, all bellowing Huzzah, Huzzah, Huzzah in anticipation of things to come. More on this later, but first let me recap the Alliance's happenings of this past year.

A SPECIAL THANK YOU goes Stelfer Steel & Pipe, LLC of Fairfield, CT for their continuing Sponsor Membership support. A SPECIAL WELCOME is extended to Stephen E. Schlate of Suffern, NY our newest Paid-Up-For-Life member. A HEARTY THANK YOU is extended to ALL new and renewing members. It is because of ALL of YOU, that the Alliance is able to continue carrying out its mission and goals.

The Alliance Membership met last summer on August 23rd at the Park's picnic pavilion for its annual tour of the park, business meeting and picnic. Special guests in attendance were Mr. Thomas Folts, Assistant Director of Operations, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation from Albany; Dr. Christina B. Rieth, State Archaeologist for Research

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**Meeting Notice !****EIGHTH ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING****When: Saturday, August 15, 2009.****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. Guest Speaker TBA. (members and invited guests only).
- 1:15 PM: Board of Trustees Meeting.

# Buckles from the 2000 Fort George Collection

By Christopher R. Sabick

**A**mong the artifacts recovered from the Fort George excavations in 2000 were a significant number of buckles and buckle fragments. Though buckles are among the most common and utilitarian finds in archaeological excavations they can be very important diagnostically. In this article we will look at a small sample of the buckles from this collection and look at what they can tell us. Buckle A2000.41A.061.04 is a fragment of a brass shoe buckle. It was determined that this was a shoe buckle based on several diagnostic attributes. First of all it is quite a bit larger than buckles that would have been used for sock garters or as knee buckles.

Second, the buckle is concave, a shape that fits the top of the foot better than a flat buckle. The actual portion of the buckle that would grip the leather of the shoe is missing from this artifact but is represented in item A2000.41D.010.03. This portion of a buckle is called the "Chape" and the style represented here is referred to as "Cooking-pot" shaped. Shoe buckles came into vogue in the late 17th century and continued to be very popular until the end of the 18th century in Europe and slightly later in the Americas. The size of this buckle and the shape of the Chape dates it to the second half of the 18th century.

One of the best preserved buckles in the Fort George collection is A2000.41B.95.07. This example is a nicely decorated example of a knee buckle. In this case both the cupreous frame and the iron chape are extant and intact. Buckles of this type were made to hold a gentleman's britches either above or directly below the knee. The level of decoration on this artifact would suggest that it belonged to a fairly wealthy individual possibly an officer. Knee buckles fell out of fashion in the last decade of the 18th century when ties came into common use. This is a fairly large example of a knee buckle, its size in conjunction with its oval shape suggest that this buckle dates to the Revolutionary War period. ■



Figure 1: Partial Shoe Buckle A2000.41A.061.04

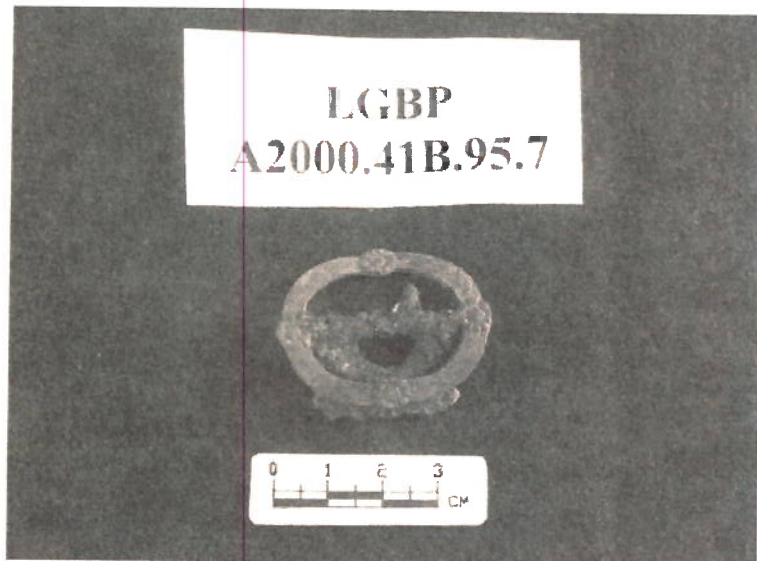


Figure 3: Knee Buckle with Chape A 2000.41B.95.07

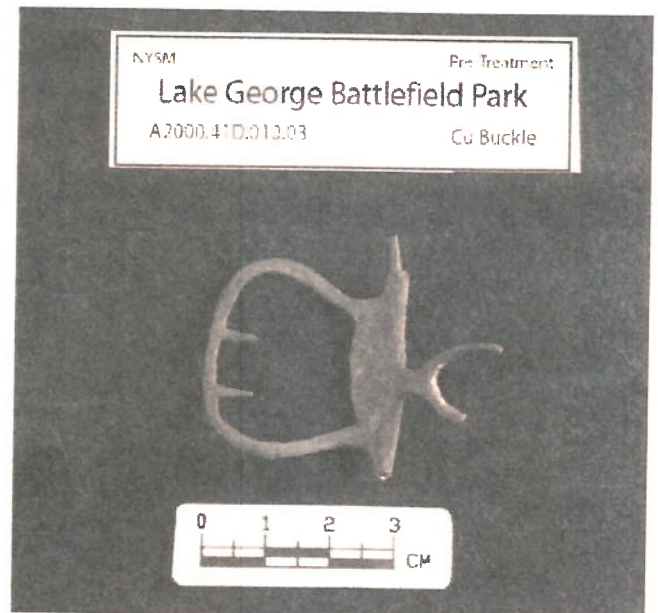


Figure 2: Shoe Buckle Chape A2000.41D.010.03

## Note To The Membership

By Edward J. Dodge

**A**ugust 23, 2008 - Some called it the first day of summer at Lake George, others just enjoyed the day. Members of the Alliance attending the annual membership meeting just enjoyed. New people were met and old friends seen again. The weather was perfect - blue sky, bright clear sun, great temperature, soft breeze in the trees, a clean picnic and rest area, THANKS to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Region 5 site maintenance folks.

The guests from the State were really great to be with and a great talk was given by our Alliance President after lunch. For this Illinois visitor, it was a dream come true - all I remembered about the area was basically the same. For me it was just too bad that it had to end. I enjoyed our President's hospitality and meeting all of you.

That is it for now. Hope to see you all in 2009. ■



(Above) The Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance Annual Membership Business Meeting.



(Above) Gathering at the Lake George Battlefield Park for the Annual Tour.



(Above) The Tour of the Historic Features of the Park Begins.



(Above) Alliance President Brown Presents the Year 2000 Conserved Artifacts to Drs. Rieth & Orsner of the New York State Museum.



(Above) Viewing the Battle of Lake George (September 8, 1755) British Lines of Defense.

## Welcoming New Members

By Nadine M. Battaglia

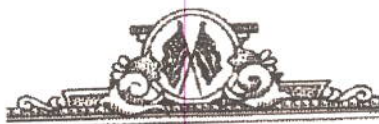
The March winds are whipping through the Adirondacks and melting our winter snows. I trust this will be a spectacular year for us on this the 250th anniversary of the arrival of General Jeffrey Amherst and his Army at our beautiful Fort George in 1759.

I wish to thank each and every member of the Alliance for their cherished support as well as extend a most cordial welcome to our new members:

- Terry and Debra Blanchfield of Granville, New York
- Charles E. Orser, Jr. of Albany, New York
- Dr. Bruce M. Venter of Goochland, Virginia
- Stephen E. Schlote of Suffern, New York

Please be so kind as to keep in mind the fine efforts to which we are dedicated at Fort George when you come upon your friends who may also be interested in our Colonial American history as they may wish to join the Alliance. To this end, I can be reached by telephone at 518 696-5889 or by email at tedda@frontiernet.net

I look forward to seeing all of you at our upcoming August picnic and meeting! ■



## President's Message

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and Education, New York Museum at Albany; and Dr. Charles Orser, Curator of Historic Archaeology, New York State Museum at Albany. Dr. Rieth's and Dr. Orser's presence gave us the opportunity to formally present and transfer custody of the professionally conserved artifacts from the year 2000 excavations at the Park and their documentation to the New York State Museum. That transfer now allows me to report that the first major project embarked upon by your Alliance, the \$15,000 year 2000 artifacts conservation project performed in conjunction with the Conservation Laboratory at the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum at Basin Harbor, Vermont, is complete.

This year, hopefully, will be the year that our second major project will also be complete, that is the nomination of the Lake George Battlefield Park to the National Register of Historic Places. Presently, we are anxiously awaiting TDT Consultancy, Inc.'s completion of that application.

The year 2009, is also the year of our unveiling Mr. Ernest Haas' painting title "Gen. Jeffrey Amherst's Encampment (Fort George) Summer 1759". This signature event will occur on Saturday, May 2nd at 4:00 in the afternoon at the Fourteenth Annual War College of the Seven Years' War to be held at Fort Ticonderoga, May 1-3, 2009. Mr. Haas, Historian Russ Bellico and I will lead a 30 minute forum on the research and background in creating that painting immediately

after it's unveiling. We hope to see many of you there. Following the unveiling copies of this painting will become available in various forms to supporters of the alliance upon donation. Please see a donor's form published in this newsletter for additional information.

Donations will be processed on a first come first served basis, but, please don't expect receipt of your donor's gift until at least six to eight weeks have passed.

The Alliance's new fiscal and membership year begins annually on April 1st. If you have not yet received your dues notice from our most efficient Secretary Nadine, I suspect you will shortly. Your continued membership and support will be greatly appreciated.

Our eighth annual membership meeting and picnic will be held on Saturday, August 15, 2009, same place same time as before. Please make a commitment to attend. Mark your calendar now. I hope to see you all there, as well. ■



## Treasurer's Report as of August 23, 2008

By William M. Herrlich

The Alliance in its fiscal year ending March 31, 2008 had revenue of \$4,443, almost all of which was in the form of membership fees. Expenses were low, totaling \$2,134, and at year end our cash balance had expanded to \$7,095 from \$4,786 at the end of fiscal 2007. The cash balance has since grown to \$9,172 as membership renewals have come in and as expenses have continued light.

It is not the Alliance's purpose to accumulate cash, but since we are so small, it has been important in certain years to proceed slowly in anticipation of developing needs.

Nevertheless, with a payment today to Mr. Ernest Hass, we will be at 80% of the way to meeting our obligation to him for his wonderful work depicting Fort George in the summer of 1759. Moreover, we have the cash on hand to prepare reproductions of the work for use in diversifying and expanding our fund raising efforts. Finally, we are also in a position to fund our obligation, when completed, for inclusion of the Lake George Battlefield Park in the National Register of Historic Places. Coming soon.

Thank You for your continued support! ■



## Jared Sparks - Harvard, Class of 1815

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The walls of Fort George as they now stand are from 15 to 20 feet high with a covered way to the lake." Sparks' diagram of Fort George resembles a crystal tear drop pendent from a crystal lamp with the gate at the lower end of the pendent opening toward the lake (see Figure 1).

After this trip, Jared Sparks went on to be involved with his historical writings, working for and on behalf of the Unitarian Church, education in general and President of Harvard University from February 1, 1849 to February 10, 1853. He married Frances Anne Allen in 1832. They had a daughter. Frances passed away in 1833. He remarried on May 21, 1839. His second wife

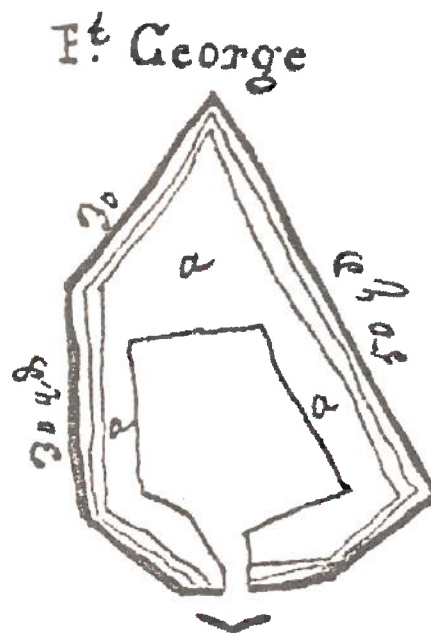


Figure 1 - Jared Sparks' sketch of Fort George, August 1830.

was Mary C. Silsbee. They had four children.

Jared Sparks passed away on March 14, 1866. ■

### REFERENCES:

- Mss. Pell Research Center - Fort Ticonderoga Museum, Ticonderoga, New York
- The Illustrated Columbia Encyclopedia - Vol. 19, Pg 5848
- University of Georgia Library System - Internet on Line
- ABC-CL10 - Internet on Line
- Harvard's Unitarian Presidents, edited by Herbert F. Vetter @ <http://www.harvardsquarelibrary.org/HVDpresidentssparks.php>