

## The Newly Identified Lime Kilns of Lake George Battlefield Park ❧

By Lyn Karig Hohmann

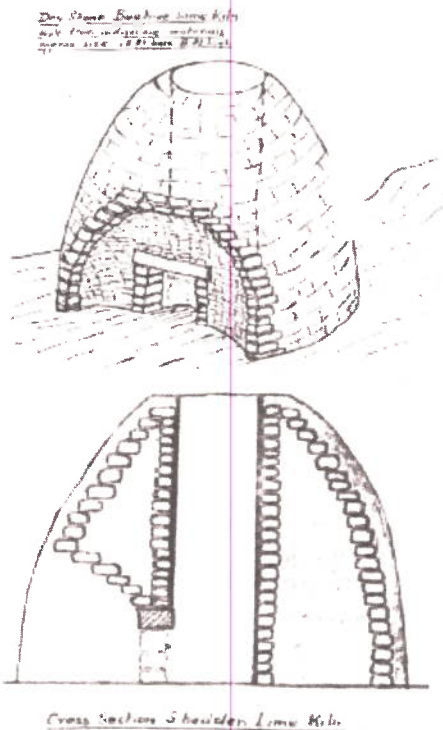
Two years ago we suspected that we had one site in the Park that could be a historic lime kiln. There was evidence of heated limestone coming out of animal burrows. And, it was conveniently placed near a number of obvious limestone quarries. Across the Park was one small quarry, a significant distance from the suspected kiln. It was never obvious if or how the pieces fitted together. After two years of archaeological digs, we have a much better picture. The story is not yet complete,

but we hope next year more pieces can be added.

The presence of lime kilns in this site would not be surprising. Mortar and plaster were needed to construct the various stone structures on this active military site and a ready source of limestone was available throughout the Park. The kiln was required to create the heated environment for the first step in this process. To make slaked lime, the naturally occurring limestone, calcium carbonate, would need to be heated to a temperature of 1640 degrees Fahrenheit causing thermal decomposition and releasing carbon dioxide, resulting in a product

called calcium oxide or quick lime. Once this product was obtained, it would be mixed with water to make slaked lime or calcium hydroxide for use in mortar and wall plaster. The shape of the lime kiln allowed the stacking of wood for the containment of the intense fire needed to convert the limestone pieces placed on above the wood. The quick lime could then be gathered below the fire area by an access portal.

During 2013, the New York State Museum undertook an archaeological evaluation of the beach and picnic area site as part of road resurfacing work  
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**Fig 2:** Sketch by Titus Thornber of a field lime kiln, about 3.5m diameter, based on what he found at Shedden Clough (near Burnley)



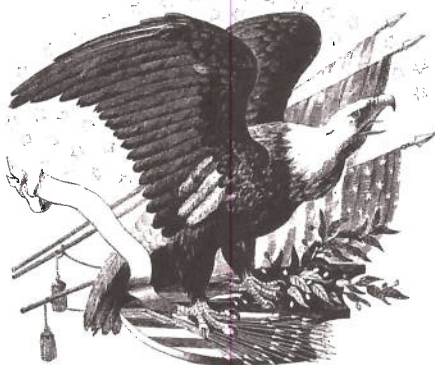
Lime kiln on beach side of Lake George Battlefield Park. Excavation has been backfilled to protect the site. Picture courtesy of Aaron J. Gore, Principal Investigator, NYS Museum.

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## Secretary's Notes

By Nadine Battaglia

First of all, I hope you are all well and facing our winter with good cheer in your hearts! It always seems to me that winter is chillier and more challenging after the holidays have passed, but settling down by the glow of a warm fireplace with a 'quaint and curious volume' helps resolve that problem!

A quick apology – please know that I have had “Windows” complications for weeks. This has resulted in stalled email communications and newsletter preparation. My apologies to anyone I've inconvenienced.

We've accomplished so much for Fort George – if we could just achieve our Visitors Center! Lyn included the electronic address to New York's Environmental Conservation Commissioner Joe Martens in her President's Message but for those do not have internet access and wish to speak up for Fort George, his office telephone number

is 518 402-8545, and his postal address is: New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, 625 Broadway, Albany, New York 12233. Writing a “letter to the editor” to the *Glens Falls Post Star* would be helpful as well. If anyone requires assistance, let me know and I'll be glad to help.

The Fort George Alliance membership needs increase! I am hopeful that our new Fort George exhibits will generate public interest and leaving a stack of membership application cards may draw in new dedicated members to our rolls.

Meanwhile, please mention the Alliance should an opportunity arise – my phone number is 518 696-5889, and I'd be happy to mail a membership application to anyone interested. ■

*Till next time –*  
Nadine Battaglia,  
Secretary

## From Trustee Todd Earl

Many years ago, veterans from the greatest generation in Lake George began a tradition of honoring those service members who have given the ultimate sacrifice. On Memorial Day each year they gather to conduct a brief service in each of the two cemeteries in the community. These ceremonies are conducted on the holiday itself, not during the weekend when the tourists gather to watch the parade up the main street.

Two years ago, I was able to convince those involved in the ceremony to extend their observance to include a third site – the grave of the four Unknown French and Indian War

soldiers in our own Fort George Park. Color guards from the Lake George American Legion, the Legion Auxiliary and the Lake George Volunteer Fire Department participate in a brief, but moving, ceremonial wreath-laying by our President at the headstone of what is commonly recognized as the oldest grave of governmentally recognized Unknown American Soldiers in the country. Last year, we were joined by a contingent of re-enactors from Fort William Henry, adding a feeling of connectedness to the honorees.

The tradition will continue on Monday, May 25 at 10:30 AM. Join us in paying tribute to our original veterans! ■

## President's Welcome

By Lyn Karig Hohmann

**G**reetings to all of our members! This has been an exciting year for the Lake George Battlefield Park and the Fort George Alliance.

First, the Second Annual Memorial Day Service for the Four Unknown Soldiers in the Park was a wonderful event. Among those honoring our Unknown Soldiers were the Lake George American Legion and Auxiliary, the Lake George Volunteer Fire Company, re-enactors from Fort William Henry and the community, and a number of local citizens. We received coverage in the local Lake George Mirror. In addition, an Associated Press news release was picked up by numerous papers across the nation. Due to the support and vigilance of the Park staff, we were able to keep our wreath and one of our four flags at the site for a week. Pictures from the event were displayed at our annual Membership Meeting and Picnic. A thank you is sent to everyone who supported this great event, especially Todd Earl who was able to have us included in the wreath laying events of the Fire Company and Legion. We encourage all of our members to join us next year. These are the types of events that increase interest in and understanding of the significance of this Park. The national coverage of the event supports the level of interest that can be generated.

David Starbuck, PhD, and his students and volunteers had a successful seven week archaeological dig in the Park this summer. Scheduled originally for only 6 weeks, the significance of the findings allowed the dig to extend for additional time. Several building sites were worked on including two along the Fort George Road, one closer to the Pavilion, and one in the Stockade area; additionally a number of other test pits in suspected building sites were done. Wonderful artifacts were found, including a number from the Revolutionary War

supporting use of the buildings during both the French and Indian War and the Revolutionary War. In the Stockade area, a small building was found with a brick floor and stairs. Please see the article in this edition which discusses our newly discovered lime kilns. The artifacts are now being further worked on in Dr. Starbuck's laboratory. At least several hundred people visiting the park stopped and talked to the archaeologists during the dig. In addition to these visitors, the New York State Archaeologist, Dr. Christina Rieth and her staff as well as the DEC archaeologist, Dr. Charles Vandrei, were frequent and enthusiastic visitors to our site. A number of persons joined us for one of our specially scheduled Walks in the Park, including our state guests! Based on all of this work, we have learned much more about the Park and are building a wonderful story to share with the community at large.

And we are working to tell that story. Our ultimate goal is to have a visitors' center at the Park. We have already written to the DEC Commissioner requesting an appointment to discuss such a center and asked Senator Little's office to assist us. Significant state

dollars are being used to improve the state facilities at the south end of Lake George. Not doing something for this Park seems a large miss!

Two exhibits in the Village of Lake George are being planned that will highlight the Park. Marie Ellsworth, Librarian at the Lake George Caldwell Library, is developing a display of the conserved artifacts from the 2000 year dig. As you are aware, the conservation of these artifacts was underwritten by the Alliance. This display will open in January 2015. We are also working with the Lake George Historical Association to develop a display in their museum that will be on exhibit for two years. The display will highlight the history of the Park with supporting historical maps and pictures of currently visible features.

Now the ask . . . we need your continued support. Join us for our events! If you have spare cash, make a tax deductible donation to support the Alliance. Finally, please let the DEC Commissioner Joe Martens know how important it is to develop a visitors' center. An email form can be found at this DEC site: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/about/407.html>. ■



2014 Annual Memorial Day Service.

# Excavations at the Fort William Henry Military Cemetery &

By Marie Ellsworth

The cemetery at Fort William Henry has fascinated summer visitors and archaeologists alike since 1953. After a series of excavations starting in 1953, Dr. Maria Liston and Dr. Brenda Baker carried out a thorough analysis of the bones and a great deal was learned about the health, age and cause of death of the individuals buried there. There are still unanswered questions. Who were these people? Are they British Regulars or Colonial troops or a mixture? Are these really French & Indian War soldiers? There was a large military occupation during the Revolution – including a hospital. A look at the burial practices associated with the skeletons is revealing.

The cemetery is located on the grounds of the Fort William Hotel and reconstruction of the 1755 fort – now a museum open to summer visitors.

Fort William Henry was built in the fall of 1755, after the Battle of Lake George. The log-built fort was burned in August of 1757, after a 10 day siege by the French under Montcalm. It was never rebuilt. The center of activity moved to Fort George in 1758, and there was a large military installation centered at Fort George during the Revolution.

Reports of discoveries of human remains in Lake George started in the 19th century. Francis Parkman mentions several skeletons being unearthed during construction of an ice house on Dr. Cromwell's property; Seeley mentions that the cellar of a cottage was "thickly" filled with remains; and newspaper accounts of accidental discoveries during road and sewer line construction are common during the 20th century. However, there was no formal excavation until 1953, when the owners of the Fort William Henry property hired archaeologist Stanley Gifford to investigate their property prior to the reconstruction of the fort

as a tourist attraction.

Gifford found many remains during his work there. The best known are the "crypt" remains – found inside the former walls of the fort; and those from the cemetery just south of the fort, where 10 individuals were found. The crypt remains were put on display behind a glass window. A building was constructed over the other 10 – these remained on display from 1953-1993. The cemetery bones were coated with a resin that was supposed to have preserved them – unfortunately it trapped moisture and contributed to decay in some cases.

In 1993 Dr. Maria Liston and Dr. Brenda Baker were asked to remove the remains for study, as times had changed and display of human remains was no longer considered correct. The remains were mapped, cleaned of the resin and analyzed for diseases, injury, age and sex. They also removed the burials from the crypt, and several boxes of unprovenanced bones were discovered in the fort's storerooms.

In 1995 three more previously untouched burials were excavated to try and answer more questions.

Most unexpectedly, the investigators found signs of violence on the crypt skeletons, and on some bones that had been stored in the fort and had no provenance. They had many injuries – cut marks, a blow from a war club and possibly a bayonet wound. There was one unfortunate individual who was probably hit by canister shot. Oddly, the 13 cemetery skeletons (the 10 excavated in 1953 and the three from 1995) showed no signs of trauma or wounds. They did show many signs of stress – especially arthritis and back problems – as well as signs of tuberculosis, treponemal infection and other infections.

Another oddity is the proximity of the cemetery to the fort. The burials

found accidentally by construction crews or road workers were located across what is now Canada Street, quite a bit farther away. Disease transmission was not well understood in the 18th century, but commanders would have avoided burying disease victims close to living areas for fear of infection and possibly for reasons of morale. A preliminary survey of contemporary forts, such as Fort Edward, suggests that cemeteries may have been usually located further from the forts.

Another unusual feature is evidence that several of the soldiers in the cemetery were buried in clothing. Several buttons were found indicating that men were buried in their uniforms. Burial ritual was very formalized during the 18th century. It was common practice to bury the dead in shrouds. The body was placed in the shroud, which could be fabric that was loosely wrapped around the body or a sort of nightgown with sleeves (and a ruffle!). The arms were crossed at the wrists and tied; the ankles were also tied together with a strip of wool. The position of the skeletons indicated that this was probably the case with

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## UPDATE: Battlefield Park Artifacts at the Lake George-Caldwell Library

We are anticipating that the display of artifacts from the Lake George Battlefield Park will be open in the next few weeks. At this time, there is a lecture planned for February 14th at the Library by David Starbuck, Ph.D., lead archaeologist on the dig during which these were found. Please check the Library web page for confirmation of the date and time of the opening and lecture.

## The Newly Identified Lime Kilns of Lake George Battlefield Park

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Unexcavated lime kiln on west side of historic park.

in that area. Prior to the dig, it was not clear what, if anything, would be found since the area had been modified and filled to construct the beach and picnic area. As I hope many of you are aware, numerous and very significant pre-contact Native American artifacts were found that pushed the age of occupation of this area back 8000 years. Some of these artifacts are on display at the Lake George Visitors Center and the Lake George Historical Association. Unfortunately, there were not significant findings of artifacts from the historic military period. However, while staff archaeologists were walking along the area below the bike trail, they noted an unusual configuration of rocks. Excavation identified a previously unknown lime kiln. Artifacts found in this site supported dating to the French and Indian War. After complete excavation and documen-

tation, the kiln site was refilled to protect it. The presence of this kiln was a potential explanation for the lone quarry found in the area above it in the Park.

Towards the end of the 2014 dig within the historical park itself, the site of the suspected lime kiln on the opposite side of the park was shown to Dr. Starbuck and the team from the New York State Museum. We were fortunate to have with that team the archaeologists who had worked on the beach-side lime kiln. There was excited agreement that this was actually a second lime kiln. A partial excavation verified this. A lime kiln in this approximate area is noted on a map, "A Particular Plan of Lake George Surveyed in 1756 by Capt. Jackson." Further excavation is planned for 2015. ■

## Excavations at the Fort William Henry Military Cemetery

continued from page 4

about half of the individuals – those in the east end of the cemetery. Towards the west there were buttons associated with the remains; the feet were spread and the arms were not folded. The clothing and the casual positions may indicate hurried burials. Some of these same burials were probably exposed for some time before they were buried – there are signs of insect activity.

A look at mortuary ritual at Fort William Henry has raised more questions than it answered (a common event in archaeology!). The proximity of the burials to the fort and unusual practices may suggest that these individuals were buried during an unusually stressful time. Much more work needs to be done to discover the answers. ■

### Works Cited

Gifford, Stanley M. 1955, *Fort Wm. Henry: a History*. Glens Falls, New York: The Bullard Press. Liston, Maria A. and Brenda J. Baker. 1995. "Reconstructing the Massacre at Fort William Henry, New York." *International Journal of Osteoarchaeology* 6:20-41. Seelye, Elizabeth Eggleston. 1896. *Lake George In History*. Lake George, NY: Elwyn Seelye. Starbuck, David R. 2002. *Massacre at Fort William Henry*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.

## Congratulations to our Trustee, Larry Bennett!

At the recent Annual Luncheon Meeting of the Warren County Historical Society, our own Larry Bennett was elected president for the 2015 year. Larry has been a strong voice advocating for the preservation of and education about the historical treasures of our region. In the last few years, we have worked closely with the Historical Society on several events related to the Park. With Larry's leadership in the Society, we can look forward to continued collaboration beneficial to the growth of both organizations.

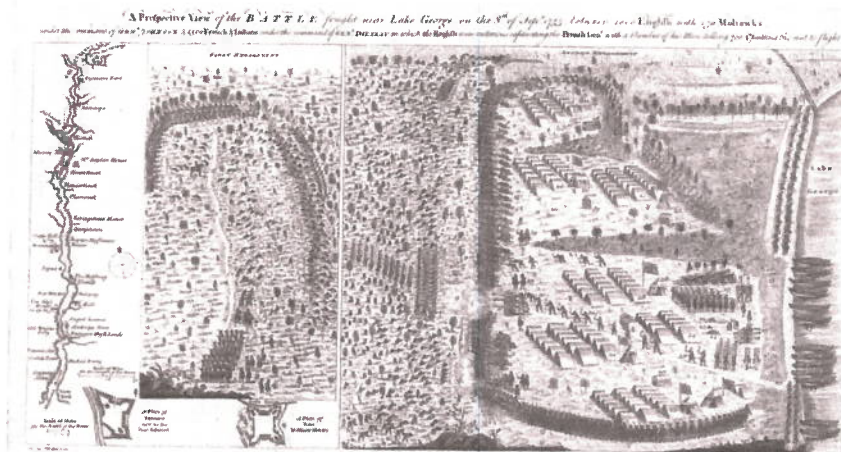
# The Stockaded Forts at the Battlefield Park &

UPDATE

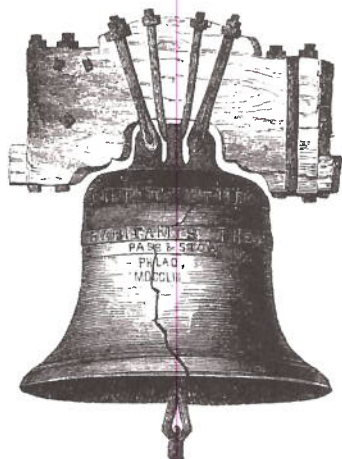
In the Spring/Summer 2014 Fort George Advice, Russ Bellico had a detailed article about the stockaded forts in the park, noting the historical documentation from 1758 and 1759 related to these structures as well as the findings from the 2000 and 2001 archaeological digs under Dr. David Starbuck. In the article, he referenced the find of two limestone foundations 17 feet in width and 67 feet in length, consistent with the reported barracks in the stockaded fort and period maps. Of interest in his article, he noted Samuel Warner reported three buildings inside the fort, "one stone[e] two wood House[s]". During this last summer Park dig, additional work was done within the stockade fort area. A surprise finding was a small stone foundation with a brick floor at one end of the long barracks structures. Is this the "one stone house?" Since the barracks did not have brick floors, why did this building? Each new find in the Park brings more questions and more details to the story of this beautiful park. We hope more work will be done in future years to clarify the use of this area as well as preserve it for future visitors. Members attending the annual meeting were able to view this beautiful foundation before it was closed for preservation. (Another good reason to come to the Annual Members Meeting!) ■



## Now Own a Copy of the Blodgett Map of the 1755 Battle of Lake George



The LGBPFGA has made special arrangements with **Battlemaps.us** for you to purchase a color copy of the famous Blodgett map which is suitable for framing. This fine art premium giclee print measures 23 x 12. The cost is \$65, plus \$10 s/h. Proceeds from the sale of the map are being donated by **BattleMaps.us** to the LGBPFGA. This map makes a great gift for anyone interested in the history of Lake George. To order the map go online to [www.Battlemaps.us](http://www.Battlemaps.us).



## Membership 2015-16

**T**he Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance extends a sincere Thank You to its members for their generous support during the period from April 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016. 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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- Dr. Russell P. Bellico, Feeding Hills, MA
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- Marcia J. Verville, Lake George, NY
- Town of Lake George, Lake George, NY
- Village of Lake George, Lake George, NY



## Congratulations to Trustee Todd Earl!

In December, Fort George Alliance Board Trustee Todd Earl was recognized by the Double H Ranch as the recipient of the Ron & Kathy Phelps Volunteer of the Year Award for 2014. In presenting the award, the Ranch stated *"we are incredibly thankful Todd retired and committed to a new passion to help the Double H children, families, volunteers and our staff in any way possible! While his support in every season and every program can sometimes be behind the scenes, his impact and generosity influence countless members of the HH community."* The Double H Ranch, co-founded by Charles R. Wood and Paul Newman, provides specialized programs and year-round support for children and their families dealing with life-threatening illnesses. All programs are free of charge and capture the magic of the Adirondacks. The full article appears on the Double H website at [http://www.doublehranch.org/camp\\_updates/volunteer-of-the-year-2014/2285/](http://www.doublehranch.org/camp_updates/volunteer-of-the-year-2014/2285/)

Todd has been a loyal member of the Alliance since its inception. On the Board, he has been a key coordinator for our annual Memorial Day Remembrance of the Four Unknown Soldiers buried in the Park. (see related article)