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## **Solomon Trust Grant to Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance to Kick-start New Visitor Center**

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, the friends group of Lake George Battlefield Park, was awarded a \$22,472.55 grant from the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust for the new Park Visitors Interpretive Center (VIC) that will be constructed in the Spring of 2020. The grant will provide funding for ten panels that will sequentially explain the history of the park as well as two museum-quality display cases for artifacts that have been found in the park during several recent archaeological projects led by Dr. David Starbuck.

A Visitor Interpretive Center for the park has been discussed since 1898 when the land that would become Lake George Battlefield Park was first being purchased for conservation. The history of the park during the colonial wars is long. During the French and Indian War, it was the site of part of the Battle of Lake George in 1755, the entrenched camp during the 1757 siege of Fort William Henry, and where final preparations were made for the successful British attack on Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) in 1759. The park contains the burial site of the Four Unknown Soldiers of the Battle of Lake George. It was also home to a military hospital for the Americans in 1776 and served to protect the south end of Lake George during the Revolutionary War.

Many visitors to the Park enjoy it as a New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) day use/picnic park without ever realizing the key role it played in the early history of our country. “We want to change that and we are grateful to the Alfred Z. Solomon Charitable Trust for sharing our vision”, remarked Lyn Karig Hohmann, President of the Alliance. Alliance Trustee Dr. Russell Bellico, a noted historian who has written several books about the region’s history, has advocated for a visitor center for many years. When the Lake George Park Commission outgrew its offices located in an old farm house in the Park and planned a larger modern facility, NYS DEC, which will own the building, required the ground floor to become the VIC for the Park. Then, NYS DEC designated the Alliance to develop the historic content for the VIC.

Although a significant start for the funding necessary for the VIC, additional funding will be sought by the Alliance to complete the center. In addition to more museum display cases, the Alliance envisions a section dedicated to the Native Americans who used this site for thousands of years. The artifacts that have been found in the park include not only those related to military history, but many remnants of Native American life. The plan is to finally bring these objects out of storage by New York State in Albany and bring them finally back to the Park.

With the discovery in early 2019 of a cemetery related to the 1776 military hospital that was in the Park, the Alliance would also like to have a historically accurate uniform of a First Battalion Pennsylvania soldier made for display in the VIC. During the archaeological recovery of the cemetery, buttons from such a uniform were found that assisted in the dating of the cemetery. The Alliance already has several displays completed or in process. They have commissioned an original illustration of a Ranger in front of the Park’s stockade fort by Gary Zaboly. A scale model of the radeau Land Tortoise, built by historian and Alliance member Dale Henry, is complete, as is a painting by Ernest Haas of the park as it appeared in 1759.

Persons or organizations interested in supporting the VIC or wishing to join the Alliance may reach the Alliance by visiting its web site, [www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org](http://www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org), or through their email, [fortgeorgealliance@gmail.com](mailto:fortgeorgealliance@gmail.com).