

Learn the truth behind ‘Last of the Mohicans’ in Lake George

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LAKE GEORGE, N.Y. (NEWS10) – This August, the history of the French & Indian War comes alive in a historical program focusing in on a famous film. Skidmore College Professor Dr. Nick Junkerman is set to give a talk on “The Last of the Mohicans.”

At 7 p.m. on Thursday, Aug. 3, Dr. Junkerman will present “James Fenimore Cooper: History & Fiction in ‘The Last of the Mohicans’” at Fort William Henry Conference Center. Originally published in 1826, the novel by James Fenimore Cooper tells the story of Lake George’s involvement in the French & Indian War. The book and its various adaptations are a common point of reference for visitors to the Lake George region.

“Every day, guests come to the Fort William Henry Museum who either read Cooper’s book or saw the movie,” said Fort William Henry CEO Kathy Flacke Muncil. “Our guides separate fact from fiction so visitors leave with a better understanding of this era in history.”

Dr. Junkerman will lead a dissection of the facts and fiction that make up “The Last of the Mohicans.” The book follows protagonist Natty Bumppo, also known as “Hawkeye,” who returns in four other stories by Cooper, collectively known as “The Leatherstocking Tales.” “Mohicans” has been adapted for film several times, most recently starring Daniel Day-Lewis in 1992.

According to Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance Trustee Russell Bellico, “The Last of the Mohicans” has become a depiction of the most well-recognized event in the entirety of the French & Indian War. The book was published almost 70 years after the end of the war.

“The 1757 siege of Fort William Henry and the adjacent entrenched camp (present-day Lake George Battlefield Park), and the subsequent ‘massacre,’ were indelibly etched into the psyche of American colonists through vivid contemporary newspaper accounts,” Bellico said. “Rallying provincial troops at Crown Point in 1760 on the eve of the last campaign of the war in North America, Brigadier General Timothy Ruggles called on troops to ‘Remember [Fort] William Henry and the Massacres there.’”