

# FORT GEORGE POST

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

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

[www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org](http://www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org)

WINTER 2024

## Schumer Visits, Reaffirms Reinterment Support

Lake George Battlefield Park played host to US Senate Majority Leader **Charles E. Schumer** on August 28, allowing the Senator time to explore exhibits in the Battlefield Park Visitor Center and inspect the grounds where the remains of Continental Army soldiers who died in 1776 at Lake George are expected to be reinterred.

The Senator reviewed the proposed reinterment site with **Dan Barusch**, Director of Planning for the Town of Lake George. They were joined by **Marisa Muratori** of the Lake George Town Board and **John DiNuzzo**, President of the Alliance.

“As we approach the 250th anniversary of the birth of our nation, it is important that we honor our country’s original patriots. That’s why I have called on the U.S. Army to help facilitate the reinterment of the remains found of Revolutionary War soldiers in the village of Lake George back in 2019,” said Senator Schumer. “In my visit to Lake George Battlefield Park, I was impressed by the devotion of local leaders to preserving and promoting the significance that this region has had on the birth of America, and, of course, the spectacular beauty of the grounds. I am proud to support the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance’s and local officials’ efforts to honor these soldiers with the burial they deserve, and I am hopeful that the Army will endorse this effort as well.”

Senator Schumer also viewed displays at the Battlefield Park Visitor Center that tell the story of the site’s key role during both the French & Indian War and the American Revolution.

“Senator Schumer expressed his great love of New York’s history, connecting Alexander Hamilton and his father-in-law, Philip Schuyler, to the hospital that was on these grounds,” John DiNuzzo remarked. “The Senator enjoyed ‘talking history’ with us. His knowledge of the Revolutionary era was very evident!” ■



Above: Sen. Charles Schumer signs guest book at Battlefield Park Visitor Center (photo provided)

Left: Sen. Charles Schumer (in Alliance baseball cap!) speaking with Alliance President John DiNuzzo (left) and Lake George Town Planner Dan Barusch at planned reinterment site (photo provided)

## NOTICE:

### It’s Time to Renew!

April 1 is the beginning of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance’s fiscal and membership year. We ask all whose Alliance membership cards indicate a 3/31/24 expiration date to renew their commitment by returning the enclosed remittance envelope with their payment or by going online (<https://lakegeorgebattlefield.org/join-support/>) to do so.

Alliance members are the first to learn of new events and have access to “member-only” programs, of which several are in the works for later this year. The amazing growth of the Alliance in recent years is recognized by public officials and potential benefactors, reinforcing the key role our organization plays in enhancing the Battlefield Park’s prominence among New York State’s heritage tourism attractions.

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance is a 501 (c) (3) charitable organization, allowing contributions to be tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law. Thank you again for your support!

*The Alliance supports the historic preservation, conservation, interpretation and associated maintenance, improvement and development of the Lake George Battlefield Park at Lake George, New York.*



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*President's Welcome*

By John DiNuzzo

This edition of the *Post* is filled with articles about areas of ongoing progress. The inclusion of funding by New York State under the Town/Village of Lake George's Downtown Revitalization grant for the reinterment of Continental soldiers' remains in the Battlefield Park—not far where they perished at the smallpox hospital that was located here in 1776--will jump-start the process of developing a permanent tribute to these early American heroes.

Visits to the site over the past year by political leaders such as US Senate Majority Leader Charles Schumer, State Senators Dan Stec and Neil Breslin, Assemblymembers Matt Simpson and Carrie Woerner, and Lake George Town Supervisor Dennis Dickinson and the entire Town Board have helped the Alliance's Board of Trustees to better understand how to maximize our public education efforts.

The Alliance's public calling card, the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center, will be opening for the season on Memorial Day Weekend with a few enhancements to the great exhibits that guests have enjoyed during its first two seasons. Our thanks to the center's Curation Committee Chair, Lyn Hohmann, for continuing to provide a first-rate experience there.

See you in spring! ■

UPCOMING EVENTS

**MARCH 23 - 10AM TO 3PM** Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center open as Fort William Henry stages French & Indian War reenactments in the Battlefield Park at 11:00 AM and 1:00 PM.

**\*APRIL 26 - TIME TBD** Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance and the Lake George Historical Association co-sponsor a cleaning of historical markers within the town.

**\*APRIL 27 - 11AM** "Peter Ganesvoort: A Hero and His Legacy", presentation by historian Michael P. Barrett. Holiday Inn Resort Lake George.

**\*MAY 4 - 10AM** "I Love My Park Day", clean-up of Lake George Battlefield Park. Meet at Battlefield Park Visitor Center.

**MAY 24 - 10AM to 4PM** Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center opens for 2024 season, weekends and holidays through June, and then Thursday to Monday.

**\*MAY 25 - 11AM** 1-hour free guided tours begin of Lake George Battlefield Park, held each Saturday through October starting from Park Visitor Center.

**MAY 27 - 10:30 AM** Annual Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony at burial site in Lake George Battlefield Park of four unknown soldiers killed in the Battle of Lake George (1755).

**JUNE 16 - 1PM** "Path through History" event, program TBA.

**\*AUGUST 17 - 11AM** Annual membership meeting of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, includes elections of Trustees and officers, annual report, guest speaker.

\*Registration recommended to [info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org](mailto:info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org)



**Reinterment of Remains from Revolutionary War Era Soldiers**

*DEC Proposes Amendment to the 1981 Lake George Beach and Battlefield Park*

The Lake George Battlefield Park has served as a scenic public park and rich historic site all in one since its establishment in 1898. What is now filled with picnic tables and peaceful walking paths was once a potent setting for pivotal historic events that visitors can learn about through ruins, monuments, and commemorative interpretative panels.

Classified as a Day Use Area by the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan—which was adopted in 1972 by the Adirondack Park Agency (APA)—the park is a type of "intensive use area" that accommodates outdoor recreation while conforming with the wild character of the Forest Preserve. It is managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) in partnership with the volunteer-driven Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance.

The early to mid-20th century marked a major time for State stewardship developments of the park. Some of its first monuments were erected throughout 1921-1939. In 1935, human remains thought to be from the Battle of Lake George were reinterred there. Much of this was done under the administration of the Conservation Commission, a predecessor agency of NYSDEC assigned jurisdiction in 1923.

*continued on page 16*



Phillip Hamilton

## Historian's Corner

**Phillip Hamilton** is originally from northern New Jersey. He attended Gettysburg College where he received his BA in History and later attended Washington University in St. Louis where he received his PhD. Hamilton is the author of a number of books and journal articles dealing with America's founding era, including *The Revolutionary War Lives and Letters of Lucy and Henry Knox* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017) and *The Making and Unmaking of a Revolutionary Family: The Tuckers of Virginia, 1752-1830* (University of Virginia Press, 2003). He is a professor of History at Christopher Newport University in Newport News, Virginia and is currently writing a biography of General Henry Knox.

### Please describe your current book and/or work(s)-in-progress

My current book project is a biography of the Revolutionary War general and Washington's first Secretary of War, Henry Knox. Using his life as its touchstone, I plan to tell the story of Knox's eventful life, but I will also explain the reasons behind the revolutionary general's meteoric rise and tragic decline.

This, of course, would not be the first book about Henry Knox. In 1958, North Callahan wrote an in-depth study of the man and Mark Puls wrote a shorter, more popular account of Knox's life in 2008. Both of these historians argue not only that Knox was an individual who contributed mightily to the establishment of the new republic, but he was also a forward-looking, visionary figure. My argument will be that Knox was indeed a man who accomplished many remarkable deeds. An exploration of his entire life, however, tells us more about him and the complicated age in which he lived. For better or worse, Henry Knox lived his life in two separate worlds. Born into an age where rank, deference, and respect for one's betters shaped society, he successfully fought in a revolutionary war that helped to bring about a very different epoch in human history, one in which equality and democracy increasingly ruled the day. Unfortunately for Knox, he was unprepared for this new age.

Born into a modest Boston family and a bookseller before the war, Knox joined the Continental army following Lexington

and Concord, and, hence, he began a remarkable ascent in American society. Possessing both ability and ambition, he worked his way into Washington's inner circle, commanded the army's artillery branch, and ended the war as a major general. His rise continued afterwards when he served as Washington's Secretary of War, during which he spearheaded the administration's military policies. Knox proved successful because he possessed exactly the right skill-set to succeed during these years: a determination to educate himself, an affable personality combined with an innate self-confidence, and a knack for presenting himself to the larger world as a refined gentleman. He also had an impressive talent for cultivating friendships with men of higher rank.

Although such traits allowed him to succeed during the war, they ironically left him unprepared for the democratic transformations unleashed by independence. As a result, Knox began a precipitous decline in the 1790s. Throughout the decade, for instance, he invested in massive land speculation schemes in central Maine. Following a path pursued by ambitious men of previous generations (including George Washington), he believed such activities would guarantee his financial security and validate his position as a "great man" in the new nation. He also lived on a grand scale in order to further confirm his elevated status. These activities, however, ruined him. Amid the nation's shifting social attitudes and economic ways (which Knox neither fully

led to political marginalization, settler discontent and resistance upon his lands, and bankruptcy. Therefore, by the time of his death in 1806, Knox's once stellar reputation had collapsed, and his family stood on the threshold of ruin.

Several years ago, I wrote and edited a work entitled *The Revolutionary War Lives and Letters of Lucy and Henry Knox*, which is an offshoot of this project. In that book, I collected and annotated over 100 letters that Knox and his wife, Lucy, wrote to each other throughout the war. These letters tell a very different story from the ones most commonly recounted in histories of the Revolution. Through their letters, we see expressions of deep love as well as the private pain caused by separation and fears that a loved one in harm's way might not return. We can also see through their epistles how many women, left alone throughout much of the conflict, gained self-confidence at being able to cope without their menfolk around. In fact, one can see Lucy Knox growing more self-assured with each passing letter to her husband.

After completing my Knox project, I plan to write a book about the global impact of the Allied victory at Yorktown. Because this event on the shores of the York River in tidewater Virginia essentially guaranteed American independence, it reverberated not only across the new United States, but across the entire world. In short, I intend to tell the story of this great triumph within a broader and more complete context.

### As a historian, what's your sense of Lake George's most important role(s) during the military conflicts of the 18<sup>th</sup> century?

Lake George, in a sense, proved to be one of the most vital strategic linchpins (as well as a dangerous "no man's land") throughout much of the French & Indian War. With the French in control of territories north of the lake and possessing Crown Point and Fort Ticonderoga (then Forts Saint-Frederic and Carillon), and with the British commanding the lake's southern end at Fort William Henry and later at Fort George, both sides conducted decisive operations across its waters and throughout

*continued on page 4*

## Historian's Corner

continued from page 3

the area. These actions – such as the Battle of Lake George and the siege and surrender of Fort William Henry- forever changed French, British, and American fortunes throughout the entire region. For instance, Montcalm's success at Fort William Henry, followed by the killing of his English prisoners by Indian allies of the French, mobilized provincial Americans from across New England and New York as well as caught the attention of British war planners in London. The event, meanwhile, forever altered the relationship between the French and their Indian allies.

Although the Lake played a less dramatic role in the American Revolution, its strategic significance remained undiminished, and its importance was recognized by both sides. Indeed, the British capture of Ticonderoga followed by Burgoyne's sweep through the region in the summer of 1777 (to say nothing of the murder of Jane McCrea around Fort Edward) so shocked the American public that it helped convince a number of state militia units to join General Gates's Continental forces, which of course helped lead to the American victory at Saratoga.

**Please share your experiences with visiting Lake George Battlefield Park and other historic sites in the region (e.g., Fort William Henry, Fort Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Rogers Island, Saratoga National Historical Park).**

My father loved the French and Indian War and, when growing up outside of New York City, we would explore the Hudson Valley's eighteenth-century historical sites on weekend trips. But we never got as far north as Lake George during my childhood. Therefore, I was rather late getting to see the region's historical sites. My first visit came in the early 2000s and it was a short one. I was driving with my wife and two children from Rhinebeck (where we had been visiting my brother's family) to Burlington (for a planned visit with my sister-in-law's family), and, knowing its history, we took

a quick detour to drive along Lake George's western edge followed by an all-too-brief stop at Fort Ticonderoga. My next visit came in 2019 when I spoke about Knox at Fort Ti's annual American Revolution Seminar, and I loved being able to tour its fortifications and surrounding grounds more thoroughly. My most recent visit, however, was my favorite. I recently spoke to a wonderful group of folks at a talk co-sponsored by the Battlefield Park Alliance and the Warren County Commission for the Revolution's 250th Anniversary. The day before my lecture, John DiNuzzo personally drove me around the lake visiting many of its historical sites. And, through John's intrepid determination, we even found the ever-elusive Henry Knox marker at Sabbath Day Point!

**What recommendations do you have for history-lovers to get greater support for historic preservation and awareness?**

I believe it's important for history-lovers to join local organizations that are attempting to preserve the past. Furthermore, go to the events they sponsor (as you will very likely meet fellow history aficionados). If possible, take an active hand to help guide these organizations by volunteering or even by taking on a leadership role. I would also recommend that people take their children and grandchildren to various historical sites. Of course, not every youngster should become a practicing historian, but we need to provide them with tangible links or connections to our past. By visiting such sites (as opposed to them simply reading about them), they will so much better understand the very important events that transpired around them. ■



## My Favorite History

In each edition of the *Fort George Post* we present this feature, through which an Alliance member shares his/her most memorable history experiences. This list is furnished by **Gary Moon** of Lake George.



Gary Moon at Johnson-Hendrick monument

My favorite historic spot in Lake George Battlefield Park is probably also the first one that any visitor sees: the monument to Sir William Johnson and King Hendrick ("Battle of Lake George"). I love it because of its location and the photographs of its dedication in 1903. At that time (before trees overgrew) the grand view of the head of the lake, the many attendees in carriages and on horseback, soldiers in uniform and dignitaries in top hats--a very early recognition of the importance of Lake George in American history.

My grandmother grew up a short distance from there. Born in 1906, she was steeped in local history – both the early 20th century history she would experience and the 18th century history that was all around her – walking to school with her young friends by that monument, occasionally finding musket balls and arrowheads, buttons and other literal detritus of the battles that had taken place on the very ground she walked, before souvenir scavengers had picked it clean. It was her stories of the history of this area that sparked my own interest in local history, which led me to serve on the Board of Trustees for the Lake George Historical Association and to want to help to preserve the history of this town.

continued on page 5

## Trustee Profile: Rosemarie Earl



**Rosemarie Earl**, our Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance Treasurer for the past six years, grew up in Fort Edward and was the Director of Guidance in the Lake George School District for 28 years. She has lived at Lake George for over 30 years.

Rosemarie received a Bachelor's degree from St. Lawrence University and a Master's degree from the College of St. Rose. She has been involved

in many community activities, including 20+ years as an Emergency Medical Technician, past President of the Lake George Emergency Squad, and past President of the Adirondack School Counselor Association. Currently, Rosemarie is a member of the Lake George Central School Board of Education, a Director of the Lake George Scholarship Association, and a member of the Lake George Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary. She is also the Co-Director of the Double H Ranch Ski Patrol (and a Patroller for 34 years). She and her husband, Todd, have a daughter, Maggie, who is a mechanical engineer with Lockheed-Martin Corporation in Syracuse.

Rosemarie is happy to assist the Alliance with its financial needs and looks forward to the planned reinterment of Continental soldiers in our Battlefield Park. "We are fortunate to learn about and enjoy the rich history of our area!"



## My Favorite History

*continued from page 4*

### Other Favorite Historic Sites:

1. **Historic Deerfield, Massachusetts.** They have an impressive collection of revolutionary-era powderhorns, many engraved at Lake George with Fort William Henry as a subject matter.
2. **Saratoga Battlefield.** When you look out over the battlefield you understand this area was private land and farms that had been handed down already for generations before the battle for independence began. Saratoga's battlefield looks unassuming, a lot like Gettysburg in Pennsylvania or the dozens of other small sites that played a part in struggles to create, and later keep, our democracy. It brings home the fact that the true heroes of those wars were the average citizens who did what they needed to do and paid the ultimate sacrifice.
3. **Washington D.C.** Specifically, the Smithsonian Institution. The reasons are many, and obvious!

### Favorite History Books:

1. **Jefferson's America, 1760-1815** by Norman K. Risjord (2009)
2. **A People's History of the United States** by Howard Zinn (2015)
3. **Almost a Miracle: The American Victory in the War of Independence** by John Ferling (2007) ■

## Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Grant to Help Fund Courtland Street Reinterment Project

By Dan Barusch

Most readers are likely aware of the 2019 Courtland Street archaeological discovery in the village of Lake George which has led to a wide-ranging collaborative among dozens of partners to reinter 44 Continental soldiers' remains in the Lake George Battlefield Park. Since the finding of the remains, the Courtland Street Reinterment Committee, formed and led by the Town of Lake George, has been working to plan for the proper reinterment of these patriots in their rightful final resting place—the grounds of the Battlefield Park, where

they likely drew their last breaths.

The Committee has had unwavering success and support to date. Initial project plans, which include columbaria structures to reinter the remains as well as a full interpretive public plaza, are in the final stages of approval with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the Adirondack Park Agency. Once those approvals are granted, active fundraising for the project can commence, a final design developed, and construction scheduled.

The anticipated project, aptly entitled "Repose of the Fallen", is now expected

to cost just north of \$500,000, which includes full construction and landscaping costs as well as a large dedication ceremony in 2025 or 2026 with tributes by military and civilian officials to unveil the plaza. While it was originally expected that the majority of that money would be generated by fundraising efforts sponsored by the Committee, the Town and Village also strategized early with the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance to enlist the help of Senator **Charles E. Schumer** and State and local elected officials to explore additional options for funding.

*continued on page 16*

## Bloody Pond

By Russell P. Bellico

From the eighteenth century to the present day, Bloody Pond has been one of the most notable sites associated with the French & Indian War. Early in the twentieth century, the New York State Historical Association purchased the site and placed a bronze plaque on the shore of the pond (facing Route 9 today). During the past two decades a controversy surrounding the location of the site of Bloody Pond has surfaced. The pond has been associated with both the first and third engagements of the 1755 Battle of Lake George, and the name Bloody Pond was supposedly derived from the story that the bodies of the French and their allies had been thrown into the pond following the battle. Although the first and third engagements of the Battle of Lake George have been covered in numerous books, a brief overview may be useful.

### OVERVIEW

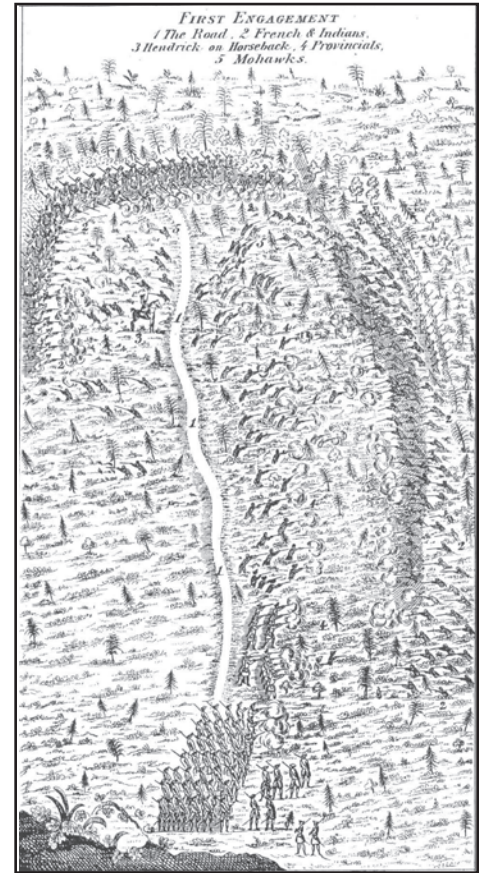
To counter the threat of a French attack on Fort Lyman (later renamed Fort Edward), on September 8, 1755 a council of war at Lake George, composed of provincial officers (Americans) led by Major General William Johnson, dispatched 1,000 provincial troops and 200 Mohawk warriors to reinforce the fort. Between eight and nine o'clock on the morning of the 8th, Colonel Ephraim Williams departed for Fort Lyman on the military road with troops from the Third Massachusetts and Second Connecticut regiments, along with Mohawks led by sachem King Hendrick (Theyanoguin). The detachment marched south on the military road straight into an ambush set up by Major General Jean-Armand Dieskau and his men. Late in the day, after the main battle at Lake George, provincial troops from Fort Lyman, proceeding north on the military road, encountered a French force of Canadians along with Caughnawagas

and Abenakis. This resulted in the third engagement of the Battle of Lake George.

### ORIGINAL ACCOUNTS

Samuel Blodget, a sutler (merchant) at the Lake George camp during the battles, described the ambush site on the military road, using information provided by surviving participants. Blodget reported that “the French and Indians” had been deployed in the form “of a Hook,” enveloping the unwary provincial and Mohawk detachment in a trap: “on the Left [east] of the road ... [the enemy] had the Advantage of being covered with a thick growth of Brush and Trees ... on the Right [west] ... by a continu[ous] Eminence filled with Rocks, and Trees, and Shrubs as high as a Man’s Breast.”<sup>1</sup> Captain John Burk (also spelled Burke and listed as a Captain-Lieutenant), serving in a Massachusetts regiment at the lake, wrote that the Williams detachment was handicapped by the “enemy having advantage of the ground.”<sup>2</sup> Daniel Claus, Johnson’s chief interpreter, mentioned that “Col. Williams took possession of a rising Ground [on the west side] with some of his Men & defended it for a good while till He & party were killed.”<sup>3</sup> Johnson estimated the distance from the Lake George camp to the site of the ambush as “about three or four miles” and others recorded similar distances.<sup>4</sup>

Following the main battle back near Johnson’s encampment at Lake George, which resulted in the defeat of the French army and the capture of Major General Dieskau, a French force, composed of Canadians and Caughnawaga and Abenaki warriors, returned to the site of the first engagement to retrieve their packs and scalp and plunder the corpses of the Williams detachment. A relief column from Fort Lyman, consisting of 143 New Hampshire militiamen under Captain Nathaniel Folsom and 90 New York troops led by Captain William McGinnis, proceeded north on the military road, encountering a small number of Native Americans apparently



Samuel Blodget’s drawing of the “First Engagement” on September 8, 1755, depicting the ambush of provincial troops under Colonel Ephraim Williams and Mohawks led by King Hendrick. (American Antiquarian Society)

guarding the French packs. The English provincials pursued the warriors “up a rising ground and then met a large body of French & Indians,” and the third engagement of the Battle of Lake George commenced.<sup>5</sup> Thomas Pownall, an ally of William Johnson, subsequently disclosed that the provincial troops from Fort Lyman “Advanced up the Hill and discovered a party of Canadians and Indians in the number of 300 sitting by a run of water in the Valley.”<sup>6</sup> Writing in his journal at the Lake George camp on September 8, Captain John Burk recorded that the provincial troops had found the “enemy stripping our dead.”<sup>7</sup> The third engagement lasted several hours, leaving Captain McGinnis mortally wounded.

*continued on page 7*

## Bloody Pond

continued from page 6

### ORIGIN OF THE BLOODY POND STORY

Samuel Blodget, who later viewed the dead on the military road, never wrote anything about a pond. None of the participants mentioned a pond connected to either the first or third engagement. So how did the story of Bloody Pond begin? Apparently, the story surfaced following the burials. On “a fair hot Day” after the battle, Lieutenant Colonel Seth Pomeroy (promoted to Colonel on September 9 by officials in Boston) noted in his journal “the melanc[h]oly work of bur[y]ing our Dead,” including his own younger brother, Lieutenant Daniel Pomeroy.<sup>8</sup> Two days after the battle Pomeroy commanded 400 men on a burial detail.

On October 6, 1755, the *New-York Mercury* reported that an officer, returning from the Lake George camp, recounted that “Parties from the Camp, were daily sent to discover the Enemy’s slain, and pick-up Arms & c., and that they had found a great Number of dead Bodies in Swamps and Holes which they had carried off on Biers [primitive stretchers], 40 of which were found, all bloody at the Side of a Pond.”<sup>9</sup> Samuel Blodget had similar comments, writing that “50 [bodies] in one Place” were discovered, some corpses had been “concealed,” and “Scores of Biers ... found in a bloody Hue”; the bodies produced an “offensive Stench which has been smelt in all Places within 6 or 7 Miles of the Camp.”<sup>10</sup> Based on first-hand accounts of provincial officers, Charles Chauncy, a few weeks later, wrote a 16-page account of the battle. He indicated that “at least 40 biers,” described as “poles with cross-sticks of wood, hastily put together” had been found by burial parties, “besmeared with blood, upon which, it is supposed they carried off numbers of their slain.”<sup>11</sup> Chauncy also recounted that some

bodies of French Indigenous allies had been concealed in a “sunk piece of land,” and Private James Hill noted that corpses had been buried “in a Swamp.”<sup>12</sup>

Provincial documents of participants in the 1755 battle do not mention that bodies were thrown into the pond by burial details. Apparently, when burial parties found the blood-smearing French stretchers, they assumed that the bodies had been cast into the pond. However, no one wrote of bodies floating in the water. Chauncy commented on the “excess of civility in our people toward the French” by “bury[ing] their dead.”<sup>13</sup> Captain Burk, who accompanied the burial detail on September 10, recorded that the party “buried 136 dead of ours, and some French.”<sup>14</sup>

Bloody Pond became a notable site thereafter. Connecticut militiaman Abel Spicer referred to “Bloody Pond ... between Lake George and Half Way Brook” in his diary entry of July 30, 1758; James Henderson disclosed an ambush “near Bloody Pond” in his journal on September 9, 1758; and a surveyor’s field book in 1764 recorded a “small pond call[e]d the bloody one.”<sup>15</sup> In 1767 Scottish visitor Francis Grant observed “bloody pond”; a Massachusetts officer marching on the road to Lake George in 1776 was the first to mention that “many Hundred[s] were killed and thrown into a pond which gave it the name Bloody Pond, many bones are now to be seen in the Pond and about it”; another observer in 1776 noted passing “the Dismal pool.”<sup>16</sup>

In 1780 Bloody Pond would once again become a memorable landmark. On October 11, 1780, Captain John Chipman, the commander of Fort George, ordered a detachment of 48 men under Captain Thomas Sill to investigate “a small Party of Savages near Bloody-Pond.”<sup>17</sup> Chipman directed Sill to “proceed on [the] main Road,” but Sill took “a Rout[e] different from his Orders,” and the American detachment

was observed returning to the fort by Major Christopher Carleton’s army, consisting of British troops, Tories, and warriors of the Seven Nations. The Americans were vanquished in a bloody engagement.<sup>18</sup> The location of the battle remains somewhat uncertain. Lieutenant John Enys, an eyewitness serving in the British 29th Regiment, wrote of being near the fighting “on the road,” and others disclosed that the battle occurred “between Bloody Pond and Gage’s Hill [formerly Fort Gage].”<sup>19</sup> Militiaman John Nielson recounted that he had “helped to bury the men that w[ere] mas[s]acred at Gages hil[l].”<sup>20</sup> Traveling south after revisiting Lake George in 1787, Enys noted passing “a small Pond to the left [east] of our road called Bloody Pond, on account of some Action ... near it in the french war,” which was “about two Miles from Fort George.”<sup>21</sup> This mileage estimate also coincides with the “Garrison Orders from October 11th, 1780,” which recorded “Bloody-Pond about a Mile and Half from the Fort.”<sup>22</sup>

The documentation suggests that the 1780 engagement was not at Bloody Pond. In addition, Captain Chipman’s statement implies that perhaps two military roads existed at the time. William Lee Richards’s 2004 update (“Concordance”) of A. W. Holden’s *A History of the Town of Queensbury* concluded that the collection of maps indicated “that there were not one, but two highways from the forts to Glens Falls. One through the ravine, and one along the high ground.”<sup>23</sup>

### COMPARISON OF SECONDARY ACCOUNTS TO ORIGINAL SOURCES

During the nineteenth century new accounts of the Battle of Lake George were published. In 1802 Timothy Dwight, the president of Yale College, visited the Lake George region, later writing *Travels in New-England and New-York*. He wrote that “Bloody Pond; a name, which it received from the

continued on page 8

## Bloody Pond

continued from page 7

fact that the French, and probably the English ... were thrown into its waters," was located "a small distance from the road on the Eastern side," and he also viewed "Rocky brook, where this battle began" about four miles from the lake.<sup>24</sup> In his 1824 book *Antiquarian Researches*, Epaphras Hoyt maintained that the site of the first engagement was at a "ravine ... formed by French Mountain; a high rock ridge on the left [east], and a more gradual rise on the right [west] ... forming a defile of no great width."<sup>25</sup> (This defile is located on the present-day Warren County Bike Trail about a mile north of Route 149.) Learning of the advance of the Williams detachment, Hoyt suggested that Dieskau "advanced to the defile," before deploying his men.<sup>26</sup> During the retreat from the site of the first engagement, provincial troops paused at "Bloody pond" to restore order and hold their position, according to Hoyt.<sup>27</sup> The description of the defile as the site of the first engagement has been carried forward for two centuries. In *Betrayals*, Ian K. Steele wrote that Dieskau, on learning of the approach of the Williams detachment, decided to move his troops to "a narrow ravine through which the road passed just four miles [from Lake George] ... [where] the western side of the ravine was superb ... having a thirty-foot embankment."<sup>28</sup>

However, the participants in the Battle of Lake George described a different scenario. In a letter written at Lake George on September 14, 1755, Dieskau revealed that upon learning of the advance of the English detachment, he "immediately... ordered the Indians to throw themselves into the woods [on the west side]... [the] Canadians took them on the flank [east side] ... in front ... the regular troops," which formed "a cul de sac."<sup>29</sup> Dieskau did not describe a preplanned position or a ravine/defile. Samuel Blodget reported an

"Eminence" of rocks, trees and shrubs only "as high as a Man's Breast."<sup>30</sup> His drawing, based on testimony from participants and an inspection of the site, does not show a narrow defile or a brook. (Blodget's drawing of the first engagement depicts a glimpse of a ridge in the lower left corner, similar to the ridge sketched in his image of the main battle at the lake.) In a letter to his wife on September 11, 1755, Captain John Burk described the ambush site of the first engagement without mentioning a narrow defile: "The French lay on one side of the road on rising ground; the Indians on the other side in a swamp."<sup>31</sup>

### MAPS OF THE MILITARY ROAD

Researchers often examine period maps to determine the sites of historic events. In an attempt to shed light on the issue of the location of the military road and Bloody Pond, it is important to review maps, the history of several roads, travelers' accounts, and archaeological discoveries. However, research is often encumbered by contradictory primary observations, embellished secondary accounts, and inaccuracies or a lack of detail in many maps.

Dieskau's 1755 map seems to show a pond east of the military road, but the position of the road in relation to the Hudson River is not accurate. A 1756 map by provincial engineer Harry Gordon is very useful, particularly in pinpointing the location where Colonel Ephraim Williams was killed west of the military road. The subsequent discovery of Williams's remains has helped to establish the area of the first engagement. On the day of the engagement, Williams's body was hidden by John Morse and a fellow soldier to prevent scalping. The next day his body was buried under a tall pine tree (west side of present-day Route 9). Williams's personal belongings were retrieved by a burial party, and his watch, sword, "memorandum-book," and other items were given to his brother, Dr. Thomas Williams, serving as a surgeon at the Lake George

camp. The items were later donated to Williams College in Massachusetts, which was established in 1793 with funds bequeathed by Ephraim Williams.



Detail of a "Plan of the Country from Fort Edward to Crown Point" by Engineer Harry Gordon, 1756, showing "Col. Williams being killed on the spot A," located west of the 1755 military road. (Norman B. Leventhal Map & Education Center, Boston Public Library)

During the 1830s, Ephraim Williams's grand-nephew removed his skull from the gravesite and in 1920 his remains were reinterred at the college. In 1854 Williams College alumni erected a marble obelisk on a large boulder to mark the area where Williams had been killed (east side of present-day Route 9). A new obelisk was erected on the site in 2005. Given that the area of the Williams rock is a recognized landmark associated with the first engagement based on engineer Gordon's 1756 map and subsequent archaeological evidence (Williams's gravesite and provincial soldier remains), how did Williams and his men manage to traverse nearly 400 feet uphill from the military road (bike trail) before being killed? Seth Pomeroy's letter of September 9, 1755, revealed that "CoL Williams was Shot Dead in a Moment & before he had Time to Fire his Gun."<sup>32</sup> Consequently, there is some lingering uncertainty about either the Blodget drawing of the first engagement or the location of the 1755 military road.

In recent years the location of the original sites of the first engagement has come under closer scrutiny. An excellent comprehensive study in 2005 of the "Colonial Road" by the Warren County

continued on page 9



## Bloody Pond

continued from page 8

Historical Society, funded by the National Park Service and the American Battlefield Protection Program, concluded that sections of the 1755 military road lay to the east of present-day Route 9.<sup>33</sup> Several maps, as well as the reexamination of mileage estimates of soldiers and early travelers, have raised reasonable questions about the location of Bloody Pond. This seems puzzling to some because the pond was never out of public sight and became one of the most well-known sites of the French & Indian War.

To evaluate the evidence on the pond's location, it is critical to review the path of the military road. The roads from Lake George to Fort Edward have witnessed a number of changes over nearly two and three-quarter centuries. The military road may have changed course during the French & Indian War. For example, a 1757 map of Fort Edward (Crown Collection) shows the "Former Road" and the "New Road."<sup>34</sup> Enhancements to the road occurred in 1758 and major changes were implemented the following year. On July 8, 1759, William Amherst, brother of Major General Jeffery Amherst, observed that "thirty yards on each side of the road to Fort Edward has been cleared of wood" and on July 17 wrote that "500 men [were] cutting a communication through the wood upon the right [west] of the road to Fort Edward to fall into the old road beyond the next post."<sup>35</sup> Commissary Wilson recorded that approximately 400 "Working Men" [provincials], including "ax-men," labored on the military road for weeks during June and July 1759.<sup>36</sup> Roads during this period were described as "four rods wide [66 feet]," which Surveyor General Alexander Colden noted in a 1766 survey near Fort Edward.<sup>37</sup>

An examination of the rocky "defile" on the present-day bike trail would suggest that if this was part of the 1755 military road, it would have been impossible to have a width of 30 yards on each side in 1759, given the steep rock formation on the east side and the closeness of Rocky Brook/Cold Brook at the edge of the bike trail on the west side. Moreover, the width would have been narrower at the time because the rock face on the east side was cut away during the rail construction by the Delaware and Hudson Company in 1882.<sup>38</sup> In December 1759, Captain Pierre Pouchot, a captured French officer being transported south for exchange, described the military road as "very good for all types of vehicles, although the landscape is rather hilly."<sup>39</sup> This observation might suggest that the road was farther west. A 1785 Queensbury map plotted a road to Lake George four rods wide on the west side of Bloody Pond (see note); the Moses-Harris 1808 map showed the original military road (shown as a dotted line) to the west of the new "coach road [Northern Turnpike]" to Lake George.<sup>40</sup>

### TRAVEL DESCRIPTIONS

Travelers to Lake George during the first half of the nineteenth century observed Bloody Pond on the east side of the stagecoach road. No one mentioned a second pond farther east or another pond at all. Bloody Pond was a well-known site and described by visitors in virtually identical words. In 1802 Timothy Dwight remarked that "Bloody-Pond is a small distance from the road on the Eastern side," and in 1819 Professor Benjamin Silliman of Yale College wrote that Bloody Pond was "just by the present road ... is circular ... [about] two hundred feet in diameter ... covered with pond lily," noting that "not a child in this region" who could not point "to the bloody pond."<sup>41</sup> On another trip in 1821, Silliman viewed Bloody Pond again and was also "shown a rock by the road ... on the east side ... where Col. Williams fell."<sup>42</sup> Henry Dilworth Gilpin's *A Northern*

*Tour* (1825 ed.) also noticed Williams' "rock on the east side" before observing Bloody Pond "near the roadside."<sup>43</sup> In his 1831 guide, *The Northern Traveller and Northern Tour*, Theodore Dwight, Jr. reported that six years earlier "the skeleton of a man was dug up from a depth of one and a half feet near the pond, with a marble pipe, and some silver-eyed buttons bearing the royal stamp," adding that the pond was "nearly circular ... covered with Pond Lily."<sup>44</sup> The October 29, 1825, edition of the *Alexandria Gazette* had published a story that "skulls and bones may still be fished up" from Bloody Pond.<sup>45</sup>

In 1830 historian Jared Sparks (later a professor and president of Harvard) documented the historic sites along Lake Champlain and Lake George, drawing maps of the area and also keeping a journal of his tour. On August 20, 1830, he viewed "Bloody Pond ... a dead pool ... about 200 feet in diameter" on the east side of the road.<sup>46</sup> His next stop was "Williams Rock" located at "a gorge in the mountains."<sup>47</sup> He did not record what side of the road that the rock was located, but his map may have implied that it was on the west side. Traveling north on the road to Lake George in 1842, Francis Parkman, who would become one of the most renowned historians of the nineteenth century, saw the "pile of stones" at the Williams gravesite on the west side of the road to Lake George and "farther on is the rock on the right [east]" and then "Bloody Pond ... covered with weeds and pond-lilies."<sup>48</sup> (In 1878 Parkman revisited Bloody Pond, located on the east side of the plank road.)

Archaeological discoveries continued to emerge during the nineteenth century, suggesting that this area was the site of military activity. In 1844 the *Niles National Register* disclosed that workmen who had been repairing the road near "Williams' Rock" had found "large quantities of human

continued on page 10

# Bloody Pond

continued from page 9

bones ... about eighteen inches” below ground and that “four skulls ... bore the marks of Indian tomahawk[s].”<sup>49</sup> An article published in a July 1869 edition of *The Daily Saratogian* commented on Bloody Pond, where “the remains of the dead are frequently plowed up in the neighboring grounds and along the road, and children amuse themselves by playing with the bones and skulls of the disinterred warriors.”<sup>50</sup>

## NEW ROADS AND THE HISTORIC SITES DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Nineteenth century travelers viewed Bloody Pond from the road that connected Glens Falls to Lake George. The path of this road is important in determining the actual location of the pond, especially in relation to Williams rock.

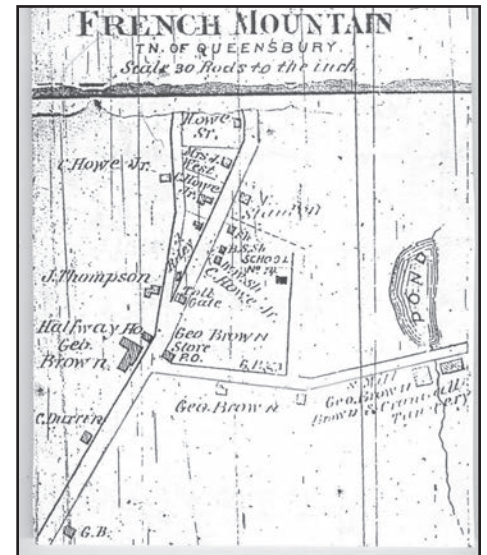
A significant improvement in the road came as the result of the formation of the Glens Falls and Lake George Plank Road Company in 1847. The road, constructed of four-inch planks placed over heavy hardwood timbers (sleepers), was largely complete the following year. The plank road, financed by tolls, was positioned to the east of the coach road. The coach road was located on the west side of Williams rock when Timothy Dwight, Benjamin Silliman, Henry Dilworth Gilpin, and Francis Parkman viewed the rock. The plank road was constructed on level terrain below the hillside of the rock. The plank road then curved to the west and proceeded north on the roadbed of the old coach road with Bloody Pond on the east side. The “map of French Mountain” on the 1876 *County Atlas of Warren County, New York*, shows the plank road toll gate to the east of the old coach road.<sup>51</sup> The northern section of the plank road was apparently the same roadbed that had existed earlier. In his 1853 book on



Detail of the map of “Caldwell” from the *County Atlas of Warren County, New York*, by Frederick W. Beers, 1876. Although the distance may seem to vary between the plank road (present-day Route 9) and Bloody Pond on the Warren County maps of 1858, 1865, and 1876, the maps are virtually the same, showing only one pond east of the road. (Office of the County Clerk, Warren County Municipal Center)

Lake George, Henry Marvin remarked that the ride to Lake George was “exceedingly pleasant ... over a good plank road,” observing “on the right hand side [east] ... Bloody Pond.”<sup>52</sup>

Three twentieth-century surveys verify that the path of the plank road had been on the east side of the Williams monument. The “Map of the Lands of James McPhillips” labeled the road as the “Former Plank Road ... Now Abandoned” in this location; similarly, the map of the “Lands of Dora Chambers” identified the lower road as the “old Glens Falls Lake George Road.”<sup>53</sup> The 1904 “Plans for Improving the Glens Falls-Lake George Road” also plotted the southern section of the existing road on the east side.<sup>54</sup> The abandoned roadbed is still clearly visible, lying approximately 120 feet below the Williams monument. Access



The map “French Mountain” from the 1876 *County Atlas of Warren County, New York*, by Frederick W. Beers, which shows the toll gate of the plank road to the east of the coach road. (Office of the County Clerk, Warren County Municipal Center)

to the Williams monument was via a path, which ascended the hillside from the plank road and stills exists.

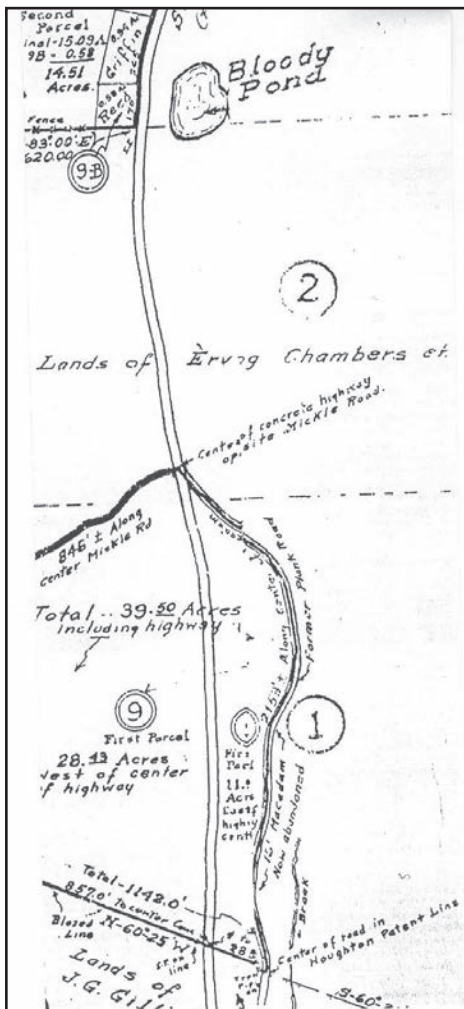
In his 1874 *History of the Town of Queensbury*, A. W. Holden wrote that the Williams rock was “west of the plank road ... a little below the old stage route.”<sup>55</sup> Numerous travel guides confirmed that the Williams monument was on the west side of the plank road and Bloody Pond on the east, including E. R. Wallace’s 1875 guide, Seneca Ray Stoddard’s guides and maps, and the Delaware and Hudson Company guides.<sup>56</sup>

The economic viability of the coach lines, plying the plank road, was significantly impacted by the completion of a rail line from Glens Falls to Lake George (present-day bike trail) by the Delaware and Hudson Company in May 1882. The rail line would follow part of the original military road, notably in the section north of present-day Route 149. As expected, artifacts were uncovered during the construction process. In January 1882, the *Plattsburgh Sentinel* and the *Essex*

continued on page 11

# Bloody Pond

continued from page 10



“Maps of the Lands of James McPhillips,” showing the “Macadam [Road] Now Abandoned” plotted on the same roadbed as the “Former Plank Road,” lying on the east side of Route 9. Another map referred to the road as the “old Glens Falls Lake George Road.” (Office of County Clerk, Warren County Municipal Center)

County Republican published stories that “two skeletons and a wagon load of shot and weapons, relics of French and Indian Wars, have been unearthed during excavations for the new railroad to Lake George. The [rail]road will not disturb the bones of French soldiers at Bloody Pond.”<sup>57</sup> Other reports suggested that the relics had been found at an “old swamp” where King Hendrick had been killed, and additional artifacts were

found by workers near Fort George in April 1882.<sup>58</sup> Unfortunately, we do not have a definitive location for the first discovery, although by then the railroad bed had been substantially completed as far as the Fort George area. However, the January story may have reflected all the artifacts found during the construction of the rail lines.

## THE PURCHASE OF BLOODY POND

The fascination with Bloody Pond motivated William S. Tuttle, who would later raise the 1756 sloop *Earl of Loudoun* from the waters of Lake George, to propose dredging Bloody Pond. The March 30, 1899, edition of the *Glens Falls Post-Star* reported that Tuttle would dredge during the low-water summer months for “relics of the French and Indian War,” noting that many military artifacts, including “skulls ... have [been] taken from the pond. A large collection ... [is] in possession of George Brown.”<sup>59</sup> Brown was the proprietor of the Halfway House (located at the site of a present-day shoe outlet on the west side of the intersection of Routes 9 and 149). Apparently, the plans did not materialize because there were no further reports about dredging the pond in this period.

The preservation and protection of historic sites gained heightened popularity during this timeframe. The New York State Historical Association, chartered by the Regents of the University of New York on April 24, 1899, specified provisions that included marking places of historic interest and “to acquire custody or control of historic places,” which was incorporated into Article 2 of the organization’s constitution.<sup>60</sup> At the time the NYSHA was headquartered in Caldwell (the modern-day town of Lake George), and their plans focused on historic sites in the region, including a museum at the Lake George Battlefield Park. In 1906 the “Committee on History Spots” reported that a tablet marking Bloody Pond had been ordered, but the exact placement

(within “a few feet”) would await any changes resulting from the work on the new macadam state road (formerly the plank road).<sup>61</sup> In 1908 Dr. Sherman Williams (NYSHA) urged the purchase of Bloody Pond; shortly thereafter, the organization purchased the pond. Although newspapers reported that the NYSHA had purchased the pond for \$200, the Committee on History Spots at the annual meeting in 1909 listed a payment of \$305 for the “pond and a strip of land around it.” The committee also recorded \$314 for the construction of a “good road... around the pond,” as well as expenses for a “wire” fence on three sides of the pond and for placing the bronze tablet by the highway. The work was funded by several well-known Lake George residents, including W.K. Bixby, George Owen Knapp, Edward M. Shepard, and Spencer Trask.<sup>62</sup> The pond is now owned by Warren County.



The New York State Historical Associations purchased Bloody Pond in 1908, marking the pond with a bronze plaque as part of their campaign to recognize “spots of historic interest.” (Photo by the author)

## MODERN STUDIES

In recent years several studies have raised questions about the location of Bloody Pond. A 1999 book, covering the military sites along the “Great Warpath” concluded that “the pond that presently lies on the eastern side of Route 9 was created in recent times by the Town of Lake George and is [located] one hundred feet or more west” of the real Bloody Pond.<sup>63</sup> The 2005 Warren County study of the “Colonial Road” postulated that the “present” Bloody Pond “was probably set up to accommodate travelers along the Plank Road in the late 19th century,” and is

continued on page 12

## Bloody Pond

*continued from page 11*

“slightly to the northwest of the original pond.”<sup>64</sup> The study surmised that the original Bloody Pond was situated “about 100 feet east of the Bike Trail and [located] 1½ miles north of Route 149,” but also concluded that “the actual site of Bloody Pond is still uncertain.”<sup>65</sup>

There is no evidence that the marked Bloody Pond on present-day Route 9 was artificially created. The alternate Bloody Pond, located on the east side of the bike trail, is a depression at the bottom of a slope of French Mountain without any visible source of water. (A small stream on the other side of the bike trail would seemingly have to travel uphill to fill this land depression.)

A 1916 railroad survey entitled “Right of Way and Track Map” sketched two small former ponds adjacent to buildings of the “Lumber Processing Corp.” These two former ponds would have been located north of the marked Bloody Pond and south of Bloody Pond Road, Mill Road, and Ellsworth Road. A third small pond, labeled “Former Mill Pond,” was drawn approximately 1,500 feet south of the other two former ponds and depicted mainly west of the railroad tracks.<sup>66</sup> (Substantial logging operations occurred in this area during the 1880s.<sup>67</sup>) The ponds would have been too small to correspond to the measurements or fit the descriptions provided by earlier travelers. All three former ponds would have been located in the path of the D&H railroad tracks, and major portions of each pond would have been on the western side of the rail bed. If the 1755 military road had been located where the rail bed was later constructed, then the road would have to cross these three ponds if they had been in existence at the time. No 1755-era journal or document ever mentioned a bridge over a pond, which

would have been highly unlikely in any event, given that wagonloads of heavy cannons had to be transported to Lake George. (The marked Bloody Pond on Route 9 is only about 125 feet from the rail bed/bike trail.)

An exhaustive 2018 study of the eighteenth century historic sites in the Lake George area by the Hartgen Archeological Associates, funded by the National Park Service and the American Battlefield Protection Program, indicated that “historic maps in the 19th century depict the pond in similar locations and with a similar shape, it is often labeled ‘Bloody Pond’ attesting to its popular allure and important geographic landmark” and concluded that the “existing historic markers mark the widely-accepted location of the area known as ‘Bloody Pond’”<sup>68</sup> The study also indicated that the pond “would have been visible from the Military Road.”<sup>69</sup> The Hartgen map (1755-B1a), which delineates locations of the “First and Third Engagements,” plotted the approximate path of the 1755 military road as coinciding with present-day Route 9 at the location of today’s marked Bloody Pond.<sup>70</sup>

No soldier, traveler, or historian ever mentioned two ponds or any question about the location of Bloody Pond -- there was only one pond. From the nineteenth century through the twentieth century, the existing maps only show one pond in the relevant



*Photograph of Bloody Pond (ca. 1903), showing the ridgeline of French Mountain in the background. From **Glens Falls and Vicinity**, printed by C.S. Dutton. The original caption read “Bloody Pond, Lake George Road.” (Author’s collection)*

area. (Maps include the 1858 map of Warren County by J. Chase, Jr.; the Warren County map published by Stone and Stewart, 1865; the *County Atlas of Warren County, New York*, by Frederick W. Beers, 1876; the map of Caldwell, *County Atlas*, 1876; the Seneca Ray Stoddard maps of Lake George, 1880, 1897; the Charles H. Possons map of Lake George, 1891; “Plan for Improving the Glens Falls - - Lake George Road,” 1904; the map of the Hudson Valley Railway Co., 1915; the map of Lake George, 1926, NYS Conservation Commission; and the “Map of the Lands of James McPhillips,” 1937.<sup>71</sup>)

If a case could be made for presence of another pond, the swampy area where Rocky Brook/Cold Brook meanders east of the bike trail, north of present-day Route 149 might be a better candidate. This area would be closer to the French line of retreat in 1755 that engineer Gordon sketched on his 1756 map.

### NEW ROADS AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES DURING THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Improvements and changes in the road between Glens Falls and Lake George have yielded archaeological evidence of the 1755 engagement and subsequent military activity. With the end of the plank road’s economic viability by the turn of the century, construction of a new macadam road began in 1907, which followed the roadbed of the earlier plank road. The macadam road lay east of the Williams monument but then turned west before passing Bloody Pond, which lay on the east side of the road. Although macadam is sometimes referred to as paving, it was a graded surface of crushed stone, gravel, and stone dust. It was costly to maintain and very dusty, especially as automobile traffic to Lake George increased over time.

In addition to roads, electric trolleys, replacing horse-drawn trolleys, were

*continued on page 13*

## Bloody Pond

continued from page 12

extended from Glens Falls to Lake George. The Hudson Valley Railway Company (subsidiary of the D&H) began service to Lake George in July 1901. According to a history of the trolley company, the tracks of the electric trolley lay on the east side of “the plank road [later macadam] and just above it the old military road [present-day Route 9] ... still traveled”; the trolley passed on the east side of Bloody Pond “before crossing the highway” and proceeding north on the west side of the road.<sup>72</sup> The service ended in 1928.

The movement to improve roads was aided by the 1916 Federal Aid Road Act, providing dollar for dollar grants to states, and the Federal Highway Act of 1921, which advanced funding to states that designated a system of highways as primary roads (such as US Route 9). Improvements to the Lake George road, however, were slow to begin. During the 1920s, plans evolved to replace



Williams College alumni erected a marble obelisk in 1854 (replaced 2005) to mark the area where Colonel Ephraim Williams had been killed in 1755. The plot of the monument corresponds to the location that Gordon identified on his 1756 map.

(Photo by the author)

the macadam road, lying on the east side (below) the Williams monument, with a new road west of the memorial, where a dirt road existed (sometimes referred to as the “old military road”).

In September 1921 nine cannonballs

were found as a result of workers digging postholes for a sign “near” the Williams monument.<sup>73</sup> Newspapers reported that the cannonballs “were unearthed near Williams’ monument on the Glens Falls – Lake George state highway.”<sup>74</sup> This discovery suggests that a military road subsequent to the 1755-era road may have been in this area. In 1921 the Glens Falls – Lake George road was the macadam (crushed stone) road on the east side of the monument (below the hillside), formerly the plank road.<sup>75</sup> Period literature verifies the path of the macadam road. The best way to visit the Williams monument, according to Arthur S. Knight’s 1922 *Guide to the Adirondacks*, was “to take the dirt road to the left [west] immediately after passing the Halfway House, and proceed north over the hill until” arriving at the site, after which “one can then proceed north and come out again on the macadam highway just south of Bloody Pond.”<sup>76</sup>

In May 1924 *The Post-Star* reported that the state had begun “acquiring lands along the old Military road between the Halfway House and Bloody Pond.”<sup>77</sup> On December 9, 1925, *The Glens Falls Times* disclosed that the “plans for the extension of the concrete highway just north of the Halfway House to Lake George” were disapproved by the county highway superintendent because the grades would be too steep compared to the more level macadam road (former plank road).<sup>78</sup> But by 1928, the issues were resolved. Arthur Knight’s 1928 guide referred to the “new cement highway” that passed the Williams monument and Bloody Pond; construction continued from 1929 to 1931 by the Troy Paving Company using concrete for the roadbed.<sup>79</sup>

As workers were excavating for a culvert for the new road in 1931, human remains were discovered south of the Williams monument on the west side of the highway. The first discovery occurred on October 3 when four skulls, bones, and an ornamental bear claw were unearthed, and a few days later

more bones were found.<sup>80</sup> On August 31, 1935, *The Post-Star* indicated that the skeletons had been discovered “near Bloody Pond” and that historians believed that the remains were of “four members of the Massachusetts Regiment of Colonel Williams.”<sup>81</sup> The four skeletons were reburied in the Lake George Battlefield Park on September 8, 1935, the 180th anniversary of the battle.

### SUMMARY

There is no more famous site of the French & Indian War than Bloody Pond. Historians and travelers for over two centuries have written similar descriptions of the pond and never mentioned more than one pond in the area. Many embellished secondary accounts of the pond were published during this period. There is no period documentation that the site was the location of a battle in 1755 or 1780. None of the participants in the 1755 campaign recorded observing bodies in the pond or the water turning red with blood. In September 1755, provincial burial parties discovered 40 hastily made French stretchers stained with blood at the side of the pond and assumed that the French had thrown dead bodies into its waters.

Beginning at the turn of the nineteenth century, all travel accounts of Bloody Pond were based on a view of the pond from the stagecoach road (later plank followed by macadam) that became the roadbed of Route 9 in this section of the thoroughfare. There is no evidence that the marked Bloody Pond on Route 9 was artificially created for tourists; the pond has been observed by travelers at this location for more than two centuries. There is some evidence that the route of the military road shifted westward during the French and Indian War. The road is crucial in the explanation of the Battle of Lake George and is hallowed ground for those who sacrificed their lives in the course of the evolution of American independence. The military road and associated sites

continued on page 14

# Bloody Pond

continued from page 13

deserve interpretation and preservation. Additional period maps and original documents may yet be found that shed new light on the details of the events of September 8, 1755. More research needs to be completed on the sites associated with the military road. Archaeological work, perhaps beginning with ground-penetrating radar, should be able to better define the areas of the first and third engagements of the Battle of Lake George.

Alliance Trustee Dr. Russell P. Bellico is the author of *Empires in the Mountains: French and Indian War Campaigns and Forts in the Lake Champlain, Lake George, and Hudson River Corridor* (Purple Mountain Press) and four other books on the two lakes.

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12. Ibid; James Hill, "The Diary of a Private on the First Expedition to Crown Point," ed. by Edna V. Moffett, *The New England Quarterly* 5 (1932): 609; See also Pomeroy, *Journals and Papers*, 116.

13. Chauncy, *Second Letter*, 11.

14. Burk, "John Burk's Diary," 46.

15. Abel Spicer, "Diary of Abel Spicer," in *History of the Descendants of Peter Spicer*, comp. by Susan Spicer Meech and Susan Billings Meech (Boston: F. H. Gilson, 1911), 399; 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), 200; New York State Archives, Land Survey Field Books, A 4019-77, H U I, Reel 14, Volume 40, 278.

16. Francis Grant, "Journal from New York to Canada, 1767," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* 30 (1932): 321; *From Cambridge to Champlain* (Middleboro, MA: Lawrence B. Romaine, 1957), 28; B. F. DeCosta, *Notes on the History of Fort George During the Colonial and Revolutionary Periods* (New York: J. Sabin & Sons, 1871), 23.

17. DeCosta, *Fort George*, 51.

18. Ibid.; See also Daniel Chipman, *Memoir of Colonel Seth Warner* (Middlebury, VT. I.W. Clark, 1848), 76.

19. Elizabeth Cometti, ed., *The American Journals of Lt. John Enys* (Syracuse, NY: The Syracuse University Press, 1976), 45; See also Franklin B. Hough, *The Northern Invasion of October 1780* (New York: Frank B. Hough, 1866), 123.

20. *Analysis of Military Campaigns Associated with Fort George and Environs* (Rensselaer, NY: Hartgen Archeological Associates, Inc., 2018), Volume 2, Resource Inventory Form 1780 – BI, "Second Battle of Bloody Pond," 3.

21. Cometti, *Journal of Enys*, 178.

22. DeCosta, *Fort George*, 51.

23. William Lee Richards, *Concordance to A History of the Town of Queensbury By A. W. Holden* (Harrisena, NY: William Lee Richards, 2004), 43. Richards also suggested that there may have been three military roads. Ibid. Research assistance by Dr. Bruce Venter, who

provided a copy of this work.

24. Timothy Dwight, *Travels; in New-England and New-York* (New Haven, Ct: S. Converse, 1822), Volume 3, 247-48. Both Dwight and Hoyt (note 25) had spoken with a few surviving participants from the 1755 campaign.

25. E. Hoyt, *Antiquarian Researches: Comprising a History of the Indian Wars* (Greenfield: MA: Ansel Phelps, 1824), 273.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 274.

28. Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry & the Massacre* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 48.

29. O'Callaghan, 10: 317, 342.

30. Blodget, *Prospective-Plan*, 1.

31. William A. Pew, *Colonel Ephraim Williams: An Appreciation* (Williamstown, MA: Williams College, 1919), 22; Several major skirmishes occurred in 1756 along the military road and in a swamp east of the road. John Graham, "The Journal of Rev. John Graham," *Magazine of American History* 8, Part 1 (1882): 210-11.

32. Wyllis E. Wright, *Colonel Ephraim Williams, A Documentary Life* (Pittsfield, MA: Berkshire County Historical Society, 1970), 137; Arthur Latham Perry, *Origins in Williamstown*, 3rd ed. (Williamstown, MA: A. L. Perry, 1900), 355; *Fort Edward Advertiser*, 17 June 1920; Pomeroy, *Journals and Papers*, 138-39.

33. *Research and Mapping of the Colonial Road Between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry* (Glens Falls, NY: Warren County Historical Society, 2005), Section 1: 4.

34. Crown Collection, New York State Library, Albany, NY.

35. John Clarence Webster, ed., *Journal of William Amherst in America* (London: Butler & Tannes, Ltd., 1927), 40, 44; See also J. Clarence Webster, ed., *The Journal of Jeffery Amherst* (Toronto: The Ryerson Press, 1931), 47.

36. Commissary Wilson, *Commissary Wilson's Orderly Book, 1759* (Albany: J. Munsell, 1857), 44, 59-60, 62-63, 66.

37. Alexander Colden, 1766, Crown Collection, New York State Library, Albany, NY.

38. *Colonial Road*, Warren County Historical Society, Section 2: 30.

39. Pierre Pouchot, *Memoir Upon the Late War in North America Between the French and English*, trans. Michael Cardy and ed. Brian Leigh Dunnigan (Youngstown, NY: Old Fort Niagara Association, Inc., 1994), 349.

40. Robert L. Eddy, *Queensbury's Heritage* (Queensbury, NY: R. L. Eddy, 1986), 151. The 1785 Queensbury map shows Bloody Pond on the east side of the road, but the pond may have been added to the map later; The "Road Districts" March 22, 1808 map: Folklife Center, Crandall Public Library, Glens Falls, NY. I appreciate the assistance of Amanda Franzoni, manager of Research and

continued on page 15

# Bloody Pond

continued from page 14

Special Collections. The Northern Turnpike, chartered on April 4, 1805, wasn't entirely completed until 1820. *Warren County: A History and Guide* (Glens Falls, NY: Warren County Board of Supervisors, 1942), 254; See also *Colonial Road*, Warren County Historical Society, Section 2:28.

41. Dwight, *Travels*, 347; Benjamin Silliman, *Remarks, Made on A Short Tour, Between Hartford and Quebec in the Autumn of 1819* (New Haven, S. Converse, 1820), 160.

42. Benjamin Silliman, *Remarks Made on a Short Tour, Between Hartford and Quebec in the Autumn of 1819*, 2nd ed. (New Haven: S. Converse, 1824), 162.

43. Henry Dilworth Gilpin, *A Northern Tour* (Philadelphia: H. C. Carey & Lea, 1825), 70-71.

44. [Theodore Dwight, Jr.], *The Northern Traveller and Northern Tour* (New York: J. J. Harper, 1831), 165-66. Dwight also noted that a hut stood on the shore of the pond. *Ibid.*

45. *Alexandria Gazette*, 29 October 1825; The following year a Nashville newspaper reported "just by the present road ... a few years ago, the skeleton of some human being was found" in Bloody Pond. *National Banner and Nashville Whig*, 30 September 1826.

46. Jared Sparks, "Plans & Descriptions of Gates's Camp, Ticonderoga, Crown Point, St. John's and Other Places," 1830, MS 128, 3a,4, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

47. Jared Sparks, "Tour for Historical Research," August 20, 1830, MS 141G, Volume 2:160, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA.

48. Parkman Collection, "Diary July - August 1842," 2nd Series, Volume 3: 6-7, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston; Francis Parkman, "Parkman at Lake George," *Scribner's Magazine*, July 1901, 24. For a chapter-length version of Francis Parkman's journey to Lake George, as well as similar chapters on Timothy Dwight, Benjamin Silliman, and Theodore Dwight, Jr., see Russell P. Bellico, *Chronicles of Lake George: Journeys in War and Peace* (Fleischmanns, NY: Purple Mountain Press, 1995).

49. *Niles National Register* (St. Louis), 15 June 1844.

50. *The Daily Saratogian*, 16 July 1869.

51. "Caldwell," *County Atlas of Warren*, New York, F. W. Beers & Co., 1876, Map Collection, Office of County Clerk, Warren County Municipal Center, Lake George, NY.

52. Henry Marvin, *A Complete History of Lake George* (New York: Sibells & Maigne Printers, 1853), 8-10; Benson Lossing had similar descriptions, but at the time the plank road "was

laid a small part of the way." He described Bloody Pond as a "bowl-shaped pond, about three hundred feet in diameter." Benson J. Lossing, *The Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1851), Volume 1, 106-8; Other travelers to the region viewed "Bloody Pond" from the plank road, including English tourist Amelia M. Murray in September 1855. Amelia M. Murray, *Letters from the United States, Cuba and Canada* (New York: G. P. Putman & Company, 1856), 376.

53. "Map of the Lands of James McPhillips"; "Lands of Dora Chambers," Caldwell Survey Maps, Office of County Clerk, Warren County Municipal Center.

54. "Plans for Improving the Glens Falls -- Lake George Road," 1904, *Colonial Road*, Warren County Historical Society, GIS, CD disc #2.

55. A. W. Holden, *A History of Queensbury* (Albany, NY: Joel Munsell, 1874), 187.

56. E. R. Wallace, *Descriptive Guide to the Adirondacks* (New York: The American News Company, 1875), 172; S. R. Stoddard, *Lake George and Lake Champlain: A Book of To-Day* (Glens Falls, NY: S. R. Stoddard, 1898), 35; *A Summer Paradise* (Albany, NY: The Delaware and Hudson Company, 1917), 104.

57. *Essex County Republican*, 12 January 1882; *Plattsburgh Sentinel*, 13 January 1882; See also *Glens Falls Daily Times*, 23 March 1882.

58. Joseph W. Zarzynski, "1882: Railroad Workers Excavating Near Lake Make Historic Finds," *Lake George Mirror*, January 2018; Additional relics, as well as skulls and bones, were discovered at the "new railroad depot at Lake George," *Glens Falls Times*, 26 April 1882.

59. Joseph W. Zarzynski, "1899: Area Businessman Planned to Dredge Bloody Pond," *Lake George Mirror*, 1 June 2018; *Glens Falls Post-Star*, 30 March 1899. See also *Essex County Herald*, 14 April 1899. Another collection of relics, including some found at Bloody Pond, was in the possession of Alton J. Webb. *The Fort Edward Advertiser*, 8 June 1910.

60. "Charter of the New York State Historical Association," *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (1901): 7; *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (1902): 50, 61.

61. *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (1907): 8.

62. *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association* (1910): 16; *The Greenwich Journal*, 20 May 1908; *Warrensburg News*, 30 July 1908; *Glens Falls Daily Times*, 25 July 1908.

63. David R. Starbuck, *The Great Warpath: British Military Sites from Albany to Crown Point* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999), 113.

64. *Colonial Road*, Warren County Historical Society, Section 2:33. The study suggested that railroad construction in 1882 "caused reshaping" of the original Bloody Pond. *Ibid.*

65. *Ibid.*, Section 3:49, Section 2:31.

66. "Right of Way and Track Map," Rensselaer

& Saratoga Railroad/Delaware & Hudson Co., 1916, *Colonial Road*, Warren County Historical Society, CD disc #2. One of the former ponds measured 88' X 75' (pyramid-shaped), another 125' X 150' (L-shaped), and the third one 50' X 62' (tear-drop shaped). The 1897 U.S. Geological Survey map shows several very small ponds in the area, but plots Bloody Pond where it is marked today on Route 9.

67. *Analysis*, Hartgen Archeological Associates, Volume 2, Resource Inventory Form 1755-3, "Bloody Pond," 5.

68. *Ibid.*, 2-3.

69. *Ibid.*, 1.

70. *Ibid.*, Resource Inventory Form 1755-B1, "Battle of Lake George," Map 1755-B1a; See also Vol. 2, Resource Inventory Form 1755-2, "Military Road," Figures 3,9; Resource Inventory Form 1755-3, "Bloody Pond," Figure 7.

71. Maps sources: Map Collection, Office of County Clerk, Warren County Municipal Center; New York State Library; *Colonial Road*, Warren County Historical Society, GIS, CD disc #2; *Analysis*, Hartgen Archeological Associates, Volumes 1 & 2; author's collection of maps.

72. David F. Nestie, *A History of the Hudson Valley Railway* (Greenwich, NY: David F. Nestie, 1967), 14; *Lake George Mirror*, 3 June 1893.

73. Joseph W. Zarzynski, "1921: Maintenance Work Unearths Cannonballs at Williams Monument," *Lake George Mirror*, 28 August 2015.

74. *Greenwich Journal*, 28 September 1921; *The Salem Press*, 30 September 1921.

75. "Map of the Lands of James McPhillips"; "Lands of Dora Chambers."

76. Arthur S. Knight, ed., *The Adirondacks: Guide and History* (Lake George, NY: Press of Lake George Printing Co., 1922), 12.

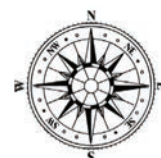
77. *The Post-Star*, 15 May 1924, 9 December 1925.

78. *The Glens Falls Times*, 9 December 1925; See also *The Post-Star*, 16 December 1925, 9 December 1925.

79. Arthur S. Knight, *The Adirondack Guide* (Lake George, NY: Press of Lake George Printing Co., 1928), 15; *The Glens Falls Times*, 4 October 1929, 17 June 1930; *The Post-Star*, 20 November 1929, 3 October 1930.

80. *The Glens Falls Times*, 5 October 1931, 12 October 1931; *Ithaca Journal*, 8 October 1931.

81. *The Post-Star*, 31 August 1935. The article mentioned that one skull had a "bullet hole"; See also *The Saratogian*, 16 July 1935.



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## *DRI Grant to Help Fund Reinterment Project*

*continued from page 5*

It gives me great pleasure to share that Lake George is the latest recipient of the coveted crown jewel of grant funding in New York State, the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). Through the efforts of the Planning and Zoning department, the Town and Village teamed up to submit a comprehensive joint application for the \$10 million funding award, which Governor **Kathy Hochul** stated in her announcement speech (at Fort William Henry's Carriage House on December 27) was "steeped in ambition".

The application effort, led by a committee comprising more than a dozen dedicated community and regional partners, included 15 "transformative" projects to be funded, with one of them being the Courtland Street Reinterment initiative. The Governor's office and Empire State

Development staff tell us they are encouraged by the uniqueness of the project as it relates to economic development expenditures (this will be the DRI program's first "reinterment" project), the potential it has to further invigorate the Battlefield Park, and the pivotal support the project has garnered since the soldiers' remains were discovered five years ago.

It is expected that, once the planning phase of the DRI project is completed in late 2024/early 2025, the reinterment of the soldiers in Lake George Battlefield Park will be granted no less than \$300,000 of the \$10 million funding. This will greatly help the Reinterment Committee's effort to implement the project. The Committee will focus the majority of 2024 on fundraising for the project, and is very confident that the remaining funds needed for construction and

landscaping will be secured over the next year.

The importance of the Continental soldiers' burial site is well understood within the Lake George Region and the history community. Its significance as an additional heritage tourism destination at the majestic Battlefield Park will be especially timely as the nation plans the 250th anniversary of the American Revolution. ■

*Dan Barusch has been the Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town and Village of Lake George since August 2015 when he was hired at age 25, the youngest individual to ever serve in that municipal position in the State's history. He chairs several committees as part of his career with the Town and is responsible for most of the Town's success in grants, capital projects and planning studies. He is an award-winning Urban Planner and holds a Masters in Urban and Environmental*

*continued from page 2*

### **Reinterment of Remains from Revolutionary War Era Soldiers**

*DEC Proposes Amendment to the 1981 Lake George Beach and Battlefield Park*

Now, a second set of remains could be reinterred at the Battlefield Park as the result of a recently proposed amendment to its 1981 Unit Management Plan (UMP).

(UMPs assess the resources present within a unit of State-owned land and identify opportunities for public use that are consistent with the classifications of these lands. In the Adirondack Park, UMPs are developed with the APA in compliance with the Adirondack Park State Land Master Plan.)

The remains under consideration by the proposed UMP amendment were found because of a basement excavation for a triplex apartment on Courtland Street, in the Village of Lake George, in February 2019. There, the partial remains of 13 people contained in 11 partially disturbed graves were revealed. Lisa Anderson, Curator of Bioarchaeology at the New York State Museum, and Charles Vandrei, Agency Historic Preservation Officer and Archaeologist at DEC, organized the recovery effort. Anderson and Vandrei then led the recovery of adjacent remains, involving 100+ volunteers who spent 15 months sifting through the equivalent of 80 dump truck loads' worth of soil. Among the volunteers were several members of the Alliance and numerous avocational archaeologists/students from nearby colleges. In total, the remains of at least 44 presumed Revolutionary War-era soldiers were recovered.

Seven possible approaches to reacting to the discovery of the remains are listed in the draft amendment: no action, reburial near the Courtland Street Site, reburial in another nearby State Land Unit, an earth contour enclosed vault on the Battlefield Park, interment in a grave or graves on the Battlefield Park, a mausoleum structure on the Battlefield Park, and, lastly (the preferred alternative), low-profile columbarium structures on the Battlefield Park.

The preferred alternative would feature granite columbarium structures to house the remains, a walking path connected to the park path system, stone benches, landscaping with native plants, and interpretive panels. These features would allow for a visually appealing memorial located near the original burial site, with minimized impact to archaeological resources and the surrounding landscape.

Another critical factor in the decision-making process for proposing to reinter the remains there is the established commemorative purpose of the Battlefield Park. Not only could the remains be kept where their stories can be told, but they could also be kept safe so that their stories can be told for as long as possible.

There has been considerable support for this amendment within the local community, with the proposal itself having been developed by the Town of Lake George in consultation with the Alliance and other interested contributors. The full draft amendment is available at [www.apa.ny.gov/Mailing/2024/01/stateLand.htm](http://www.apa.ny.gov/Mailing/2024/01/stateLand.htm). A public input period was provided through February 19, which DEC and APA are now reviewing before finalizing a management action. Stay up to date at [www.dec.ny.gov/news](http://www.dec.ny.gov/news).