

FORT GEORGE POST

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

PO BOX 26, LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK 12845

www.lakegeorgebattlefield.org

WINTER/SPRING 2025

Reinterment Project Moves Forward toward May '26 Dedication

By Dan Barusch, AICP

Calendar year 2024 was quite a successful one in regard to the advancement of the Courtland Street Reinterment Project, officially known now as "Repose of the Fallen". Finally, over six years post-discovery, the Courtland Street Committee and the Town of Lake George are approaching the conclusion of a unique cross-sector effort that will rebury 44 early American patriots in the Lake George Battlefield Park, near where they drew their final breaths in 1776. There are roughly 15 months left until the May 22, 2026 dedication ceremony, and all project stakeholders are working with great care to produce a respectful and memorable event.

The Adirondack Park Agency's approval of the Battlefield Park's Unit Management Plan (UMP) update in April 2024 paved the way for the Town's and the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance's formal inclusion of the Repose project into the Park's future. UMP approval has also helped foster an enhanced relationship among the Town, the Alliance, and the State Department of Environmental Conservation. As the Town oversees the development of the reinterment site this year and in early 2026, DEC will be upgrading walkways on the Park's east side and improving nearby restroom and parking facilities to ensure handicapped accessibility and a safer path connection for visitors accessing the site. Together with Alliance-led improvements to the statues in the Park and previous site enhancements by DEC, the Repose project will complete a dramatic overhaul of Lake George Battlefield Park that underscores its significance in America's history.

The Committee's fundraising efforts are well underway, with informational literature and a website (www.reposeofthefallenlg.org) helping to generate financial support big and small. The project has received donations of all sizes from more than 60 individuals

as of late January. Business partners are contributing as well, with community leaders such as the Lake George Steamboat Company, the Fort William Henry Corporation, and Arrow Bank among those making or pledging major donations, along with philanthropic organizations including the William G. Pomeroy Foundation. In addition, the Town is awaiting notice from New York State of an award amount for the project from the Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI). There are indications from the State that this project is being very favorably received; a DRI award would address remaining project costs that are not covered by funds raised from donors.

The Town is currently in the midst of the public bidding process, designating contractors to fabricate and deliver/install the columbaria in which remains will be permanently placed, and to develop the site consistent with the project design. It is expected that construction will commence by the fall of 2025 and be substantially completed before snowfall in the winter. Spring 2026 will see finishing touches and the columbaria setting, as well as some final site prep.

We anticipate that the ceremony on May 22, 2026 will represent the beginning of an ongoing homage to the 44 patriots of 1776 whose permanent burial at Lake George Battlefield Park will

become a lasting source of inspiration and contemplation for the thousands who annually visit our community. The support of Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance members has been vital to our success in carrying the project forward thus far, and we look forward to continuing the Town-Alliance-New York State partnership to produce a memorial that's worthy of these early American heroes.

Dan Barusch has been the Director of Planning and Zoning for the Town and Village of Lake George since August 2015. He chairs several committees as part of his duties with the Town and Village and is responsible for much of the Town's success in grants, capital projects and planning studies. Dan is a Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance Trustee and a Board Member of the New York Planning Federation. He is an award-winning Urban Planner and holds a Masters in Urban and Environmental Planning and a Bachelor's Degree in Design Studies, both from Arizona State University. ■



Repose site project meeting: (left to right) Dan Barusch; Jeff Anthony (Studio A), Andrew Longacker, Andy Niles, Josh Houghton (DEC)

NOTICE: Please Renew Your Alliance Membership!

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 3/31/25 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. (If not sure of your Alliance membership expiration date, email us.)

The "members-only" events we sponsored last year provided many special moments for those who participated. We have plans for more unique programs this year, which we hope almost everyone can join in on. This, of course, is in addition to the public presentations that do so much to get and keep the Alliance "brand" in the spotlight. Even for those events, Alliance members are the ones who receive the first notices.

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!



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Fort George Post is the official journal of the Lake George Battlefield Park (Fort George) Alliance, PO Box 26, Lake George, NY 12845



President's Welcome

By John DiNuzzo

I would be remiss if I didn't lead this piece with an acknowledgement of the passing last July of **Chuck Vandrei**, the Department of Environmental Conservation's longtime Historic Preservation Officer. His DEC colleagues pay him a nice tribute at the bottom of this page. Chuck's contributions to our park will not be forgotten.

More recently, a guiding light in the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance's initiative to restore the site's magnificent sculptures was extinguished with the death on January 4 of **Dan George**. This internationally renowned sculptor, a Lake George native, worked tirelessly in the weeks before his passing to put in motion a plan to repair and refurbish our statues of the *Battle of Lake George*, *Mohawk Warrior*, and *Isaac Jogues*.

In addition to the sculpture beautification initiative, we'll see other exciting activities this year at our historic site. **Professor Siobhan Hart** of Skidmore College is expected to lead a new archaeological exploration this spring, advancing from her team's initial findings in 2024. The Battlefield Park Visitor Center, reopening in May for its fourth season, will feature several new artifacts and displays that

further complement its existing exhibits. And best of all, we anticipate the beginning of preparations in the park late this summer for the *Rest of the Fallen* plaza, where in 2026 the remains of 44 individuals who perished at the Fort George military hospital in 1776 will be reinterred.

Alliance members have also come to expect top-rate events off-site, and I'm very proud of what we presented last year and what's to come in the months ahead. The reactions to programs such as our *Floating History Tours*, presentations by nationally-known historians, and YouTube podcasts are uplifting—our volunteers pour their hearts and souls into ensuring these are presented with excellence.

Lastly, our request, led by Alliance Trustees **Dan Barusch** and **Bob Wilcox**, to have Lake George Battlefield Park reclassified to "Historic" in the Adirondack Park Agency's Land Use Master Plan generated 86 letters of support from our members and other history-lovers this past fall. (Like you, we don't understand why it's even a question!) Hopefully there will be some good news in this regard before too much longer.

See you at the park! ■



Department of Environmental Conservation

A Tribute to Chuck Vandrei

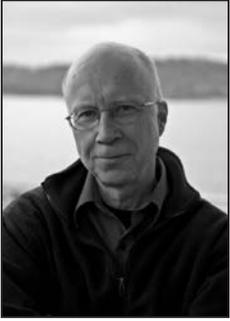
Charles "Chuck" Vandrei, who passed away suddenly on July 19, 2024, was highly esteemed for his work as the NYS DEC Historic Preservation Officer, including at the Lake George Battlefield Park where he recently worked to reinter remains of Revolutionary War soldiers and open a visitor center. But in addition to his valued impacts to the New York State landscape, Chuck also left a lasting impact on those who knew him.

Robert Ripp, DEC Regional Forester, describes knowing and working with Chuck as an "absolute pleasure...the breadth of knowledge Chuck exhibited coupled with a true passion for historic preservation and archeology made him a well-respected expert in his field," shared Ripp.

Beyond being a beloved colleague and limitless source of knowledge and initiative within DEC, Chuck's legacy is felt throughout the entire Adirondack region. **Nolan Cool**, Educational Programs Director for Adirondack Architectural Heritage (AARCH), remembers Chuck for not only his dedication to his research, but also for his good humor and collegiality. Cool stated, "Chuck left an indelible mark on the Adirondack region."

Erin Tobin, AARCH Executive Director, also remembers Chuck for his expertise—and his willingness to share it. "Chuck typically responded to my emails with one line, 'Give me a call.' We would then talk, with me mostly listening and writing as

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Jack Kelly

Historian's Corner

Jack Kelly is an award-winning historian and novelist. His books about the Revolution include *Band of Giants* and *Valcour*. The Wall Street Journal said his latest book, *GOD SAVE BENEDICT ARNOLD: The True Story of America's Most Hated Man* "propels readers into the brutal action with vigorous prose and sentences that are often short and pugnacious—much like Arnold himself." Jack lives and works in New York's Hudson Valley.

Please describe your current book.

My most recent book, *GOD SAVE BENEDICT ARNOLD: The True Story of America's Most Hated Man*, is now out from St. Martin's Press. Benedict Arnold is probably the most well-known soldier of the Revolution after George Washington himself. For a good reason. Arnold was one of the most savvy natural warriors of the era. He also stands as a prime example of the intricacies, contradictions, and changeable qualities of human nature.

We like to think that the citizens of that era were patriots or loyalists. In fact, many were ambivalent about the Revolution. They straddled the fence, shifted sides as circumstances changed, or never had any strong impulses in either direction. Yes, Arnold was a traitor to the cause. He was also a traitor to his king, as were all the patriots. He lost his enthusiasm for the war after his wounding at Saratoga. Perhaps he imagined that he could bring peace to America on good terms. Sadly, he betrayed the very men he had led in battle.

My book emphasizes the reason that Arnold's treason was such a shock to the country: he was among the best and brightest of his generation, a natural and supremely successful warrior, and a beloved and celebrated officer.

Why did he turn traitor? I argue that we can speculate on his reasons but never really know them. Arnold was a hard, enigmatic man of action, not introspective and apparently free of self-doubt. I sometimes wonder if he could himself have convincingly explained his motivation.

GOD SAVE BENEDICT ARNOLD is not a biography. It makes the case

that Arnold deserves another look and a new image. It presents him in all his paradoxical complexity but emphasizes his heroism and success.

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

Lake George and the nearby Lake Champlain Valley were in many ways the very epitome of strategic locations during the 1700s. In fact, the area's significance predates that century, since it was a critical point of conflict for various indigenous tribes and the site of a battle involving Samuel de Champlain in 1609. I was always impressed that the disastrous British defeat at Fort Carillon on July 8, 1758, was the bloodiest single day of warfare in North America before the Civil War more than a century later.

The reason is water. America was a coastal settlement during the colonial era. All major cities had access to the sea. Given the fact that roads were virtually nonexistent, the corridor that ran from the Hudson to Lake George and the Lake Champlain corridor was the one key path to the interior. It was this connection from Quebec to Albany to New York City that made it strategic.

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).

Because I wrote another book called *Valcour: The 1776 Campaign That Saved the Cause of Liberty*, I am most aware of Lake George as the site of the hospital for smallpox patients following the patriots' retreat from Canada. The men waited in difficult, exposed conditions for their illness to either kill or spare them. Medical care and nursing were lacking. In the eighteenth century, disease was a far more lethal aspect of war than battle. Military camps were more densely populated than most cities; hygiene was primitive. The fact that human remains are still being uncovered in the area testifies to the fate of hundreds of American soldiers in the summer of 1776.

Crown Point, a nearby and sometimes overlooked site, is another densely layered repository of history. The French built a fort at this narrow section of Lake Champlain in the 1730s. Later the British built a much larger fortification in the 1750s, one which has been called "the greatest British military installation ever raised in North America." That structure was destroyed by an accidental fire in 1773. Benedict Arnold made the site his headquarters after its capture by patriots in 1775. It was from there he launched his small fleet of warships to confront the British at Valcour Island.

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

Go to the sites and recommend them to your friends. The more visitors who come, the more local authorities will understand the economic benefit of history tourism. I would not be surprised if many of those who come to Lake George for recreation were unaware of the deep history of the region. It might be worthwhile for local businesses to put more emphasis on history as another interesting dimension of a vacation. I am, of course, all for reading about the details of the events. In my own writing I have always emphasized that the Revolutionary War was not a costume drama but was full of graphic, brutal, exciting events performed by a fascinating cast of real people. But there is, I think, no better way to get a sense of that

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Historian's Corner

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reality than by standing where they stood and realizing that “this happened here.”

What is your next book project about?

The book that I'm currently writing is about Thomas Paine, another figure of the Revolution who fell into public disfavor during his own time. Many know Paine as the immigrant author whose pamphlet *Common Sense* pushed the colonists toward declaring independence. He also wrote *The American Crisis*, one of the most quoted documents of the era (“These are the times that try men's souls . . .”). Fewer might be aware that Paine enlisted in the militia and marched alongside Washington's troops on the forlorn retreat across New Jersey in the autumn of 1776. My book focuses on America's first existential crisis in that period from August 1776 to January 1777. It also emphasizes Paine's continuing relevance to America's founding.

How do you see the 250th Anniversary of the Revolution shaping up?

I think Americans are eager for two things in the coming years. The first will be a renewal of their understanding of the values that were being fought over in 1776 and the sheer newness of patriot efforts to upend the centuries-old institution of monarchy. I am perpetually amazed at the hardships and dangers that patriots had to endure year after year in order to become free men and women. The second benefit will be a sheer sense of celebration. The fact that our republic has endured for a quarter of a millennium is cause for great joy and great pride on the part of every American. It's a time to party!



My Favorite History

In each edition of the **Fort George Post** we present this feature, through which Alliance members share their most memorable history experiences. This list is furnished by **Pam Collyer** of Glens Falls, NY.



Pam at Battlefield Park dig, 2015

There is a significance to the areas we call Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort George that we each seek to appreciate. We have studied the stories left behind in soldiers' journals. We have recently come to a clearer understanding of an 18th century map drawn by a sutler, Samuel Blodget, of the first battle fought on these grounds thanks to **Mark Silo's** research.

My path to appreciation is found through archaeology. I always felt that finding an item and being the first to touch it since it was lost to the ground is the best way to connect with the past.

Therefore, my favorite historic spot in Lake George Battlefield Park is an unassuming flat area west of the Indian statue near the pavilion. In 2015, I had the opportunity to excavate this area under the direction of **Dr. David Starbuck**.

At the time, it was my favorite spot for practical reasons – it was shaded by the surrounding tall trees (which also means tree roots to dig around), close to the water faucet for washing, and close to the restrooms.

However, it soon became my favorite site for another reason. It is here I found my favorite artifact. The item I found was in situ, meaning it had not been moved from its original resting place. I can be certain of this because it was jammed under the edge of the bedrock, which is close to the surface in that area. It is a six-inch metal cone designed to be used on the bottom of a flagpole to facilitate its placement into the ground. It was obvious that when the flagpole was removed, the metal cone was caught on the rock and left behind. In all certainty, a flag had been planted in that spot sometime during the eighteenth century. It is not possible to date the artifact to a more specific time since the design of the cone never changed.

From that location, I noted a full view to the west of the reconstructed Fort William Henry. Eighteenth century maps note the area between where I was and the original fort as a morass. Therefore, I could be fairly certain there was an unobstructed view of the Fort during the 18th century as well.

Why would someone in the 18th century plant a flag on a flat high ground with a full view of the Fort William Henry? Perhaps to identify the command tent of Lieutenant Colonel George Monro during the period surrounding the French attack on the fort in the summer of 1757. If you were to believe what you saw in the “Last of the Mohicans” movie, Monro was in the fort as the French cannonballs rained down, destroying the walls surrounding him. In reality, Monro, along with almost 2,000 soldiers and an unknown number of camp-followers, found shelter in the entrenched camp 750 yards southeast of the fort—in today's Lake George Battlefield Park.

Other Favorite Historic Sites:

- 1) **American Revolution Museum at Yorktown, Va.** This museum is modern with interactive exhibits and 360-degree visual experiences.
- 2) **Valley Forge National Park PA.** This site was a wonderful surprise. It is 3,500 acres of landscape telling the story of the winter of 1777-1778. It deserves a full day to visit.
- 3) **Colonial Williamsburg, VA.** A wonderfully immersive experience which takes several days to explore. Never disappoints!

Favorite History Books

- 1) **The Siege of Fort William Henry** by Ben Hughes, 2011
- 2) **Diary of Lady Riedesel** by Fredericke Riedesel (multiple publishers/dates)
- 3) **Don Troiani's Campaign to Saratoga – 1777** by Eric Schnitzer and Don Troiani, 2019

Trustee Profile: Francis Coccozza



Francis Coccozza, is a dedicated community leader and educator. Currently serving as the Vice President of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance and an alliance board officer since 2017, he has made contributions to the preservation and promotion of local history. Simultaneously, he has held the position of Principal of Lake George Jr.-Sr. High School for the past 18 years, demonstrating a lifelong commitment to education.

Beyond his professional roles, Francis actively engages in various community initiatives. He is an Honorary Director of the Lake George High School Alumni Association, a Parish Council Officer at Lake George Sacred Heart Church, and a member of the Warren County, NY Commission for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution. Additionally, he serves on the Lake George Downtown Revitalization Initiative (DRI) Board and the Lake George Courtland Street Reinterment project committee. Francis also facilitates the region's area principals group and is a member of the Capital Area School Development Association (CASDA) Principal Center Board.

Francis Coccozza's educational journey began at Siena College, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in American History and teaching certification. He commenced his teaching career in 1998 at Fallsburg, New York, instructing 9th and 10th-grade Global History. Subsequently, he taught 8th and 9th-grade Social Studies

at Shenendehowa Central Schools' Acadia Middle School from 1999 to 2003. After obtaining a Master's degree in Educational Administration and Policy Studies from SUNY Albany, Francis served as a middle school principal at Lisha Kill Middle School in the South Colonie Central School District from 2003 to 2007. In December 2007, he assumed his current role as Principal of Lake George Jr.-Sr. High School.

Francis and his family are residents of Lake George and active parishioners of Sacred Heart Roman Catholic Church. He imparts his faith to the next generation by teaching grades 9, 10, and 11 High School Faith Formation at Sacred Heart and preparing students for confirmation in the 11th grade. An avid runner, he has completed six marathons, four in New York City and two in Philadelphia. When not running, he enjoys spending quality time with his family, hiking, and delving into American history.

Francis and his wife, Laura, are proud parents of five children: Joseph, Jonah, Anthony, Margaret, and Thomas. All of their children have attended or are currently attending Lake George Central Schools. Joseph is a Vassar College alumnus working as a computer programmer for The Hartford Company, while Jonah is a second-year student at Virginia Tech, pursuing a Commissioned Officer Program in the Marine Corps through the National Navy ROTC scholarship program.



UPCOMING EVENTS

***APRIL 8 - 1PM** "Lake George Battlefield Park: History & Future", presentation by Alliance Trustee **Margy Mannix** and President **John DiNuzzo**. The Conkling Center, Glens Falls.

****APRIL 12 - 11AM** Presentation by historian **George A. Bray III**, "Lord Howe: The Soul of General Abercromby's Army". Holiday Inn Resort Lake George.

APRIL 14 - 1PM "The Colonial Wars at Lake George" presentation by Alliance President **John DiNuzzo**. Chateau Ramezay, Montreal.

MAY 23 - 10AM-4PM Opening day of Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center for 2025 season.

MAY 26 - 10:30AM Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony at burial site of four unknown soldiers killed at the Battle of Lake George (1755). Guest speaker **Command Sgt. Major (ret.) Robert Van Pelt**, US Army. Lake George Battlefield Park.

*****JUNE 30 - 9:30AM & 1PM MEMBERS ONLY** "Floating History Tour - North", hosted by Alliance member-historian **John-Eric Nelson** and Trustee **Todd Earl**. Departure from Silver Bay YMCA.

JULY 4 - 11AM Reading of Declaration of Independence by re-enactors provided through Fort William Henry. Held at Fort George ruins, Lake George Battlefield Park.

****AUGUST 9 - 10AM** Annual membership meeting of Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, featuring elections of Trustees, annual report. Guest speakers **Matt Moore** on "The 1st Pennsylvania Battalion & the Northern Campaign of 1775-76" and Alliance Trustee **Dan Barusch** with an update on the *Repose of the Fallen* project. Fort William Henry Conference Center.

*****SEPTEMBER 2 - 9:30AM & 1PM MEMBERS ONLY** "Floating History Tour - South", hosted by Alliance member-historian **John-Eric Nelson** and Trustee **Todd Earl**. Departure from Lake George village.

* Registration required to tgolden@theconklingcenter.org

** Registration requested to info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org

*** Members-only event; for details info@lakegeorgebattlefield.org

Follow the Alliance on Social Media



"Lake George Battlefield Moments" airs each Saturday at 9:40 AM Eastern Time on 93.5 Lake FM. Listen at <https://www.lakefm.com/glens-falls/player/> or by downloading their app on your iPhone.

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance YouTube Channel Our weekly "Lake George Battlefield Moments" podcasts are uploaded here, plus videos of programs the Alliance has sponsored. <https://www.youtube.com/@LakeGeorgeBattlefield>

Facebook on which Alliance news is shared and members post their reactions.

Remembering Dieskau: A New Epitaph

By Michael J. Stoehr

Most books written about the French and Indian War and the Battle of Lake George close with a wounded and defeated General Jean-Armand de Dieskau and a few sentences in a closing paragraph or footnote to wrap up the general's movements from North America to Europe and his death in 1767. Dieskau has been forgotten by history, just as he was forgotten and abandoned during the Seven Years War/French and Indian War.

The battle at Lake George was the second encounter of September 8, 1755 between British and French forces, after the Bloody Morning Scout. Once near the lake, Dieskau attempted multiple attacks on William Johnson's fortified position, only to be repulsed each time. While leading a final advance towards the entrenchments, Dieskau received three musket ball wounds to his legs, thus preventing the general from playing any further role in the battle. After the French retreat, Dieskau laid helpless at the base of a tree near the enemy lines. It was at this time that an enemy soldier encountered the wounded general and fired a shot that passed through his hips and pierced his bladder. After this fleeting exchange, a group of militiamen took Dieskau prisoner and brought him to General William Johnson's tent.

General Jean-Armand de Dieskau remained at Lake George until 17 September 1755 when William Johnson transported his French counterpart, along with 22 other wounded prisoners of war, to Albany. To ensure that the general continued receiving proper respect and medical treatment, Johnson requested that those transporting Dieskau "prepare the best Accommodations possible for the general & during his Stay to have him treated with the utmost respect."¹ Johnson ordered that Dieskau and the French general's aide-de-camp, Lieutenant Colonel Benoît François Bernier, accompany part of the New York regiment. Johnson also

entrusted Dr. Peter Middleton, the camp's physician, to accompany Dieskau and to utilize his skills to cure his wounds and restore the general's health.



The capture of Baron Dieskau

Captain Philip Schuyler of the New York militia, at William Johnson's request, also traveled with Dieskau to ensure that comfortable quarters were prepared for the general and his aide-de-camp. As the only officer in Johnson's army with fluency in French, Schuyler was valuable as an interpreter and became close to both gentlemen, who appreciated his diligent attention to their care.² Their friendship continued after the French gentlemen departed the camp and convalesced in Albany. During his recovery in Albany, Dieskau experienced generous hospitality from Johnson's sister, Catherine Johnson Farrell, as well as the Schuyler family. Before leaving Albany to return to Lake George, Captain Schuyler instructed his mother and his newly wedded wife, Catherine Van Rensselaer, to do everything necessary to ease the general's suffering. Both women carried out their roles as caregivers to Dieskau, who gratefully accepted the care provided and their kindness. Even though Dieskau's soldiers had killed her husband during the Lake George battles, the French general writes that he never observed Catherine Farrell's grief because she concealed it, and even

persuaded the wounded general that he was causing her no trouble.

Dieskau's wounds gradually improved, and he was able to travel to New York City in October 1755.³ The Baron arrived there on Monday 20 October, and received medical care under Dr. John Jones's observation in lodgings prepared for him on Nassau Street until March 1756.⁴ In his letters to Marc-Pierre de Voyer de Paulmy, the Count d'Argenson, the general noted that he expected to stay in New York for two or three months before departing for Bath, England. He planned to use the city's natural hot spring water in the aid of his recovery during his imprisonment there. In the early months of 1756, he felt his condition had greatly improved and reported that three of his wounds had healed, yet the wound to his bladder refused to fully heal.⁵

Later in March, Dieskau and Bernier departed New York and, after a three-week voyage, arrived at Falmouth, England in early April.⁶ Despite his rank and influence, there is little information regarding Dieskau's time in England. From 12 October, 1755 to 5 August, 1758, the Département de la Guerre acknowledged receiving Dieskau's personal correspondences. Marc-Pierre de Voyer de Paulmy, Count d'Argenson is apparently the only minister who remained in contact with Dieskau.⁷ Despite receiving the general's letters, the governor-general and the ministers appear to disregard his pleas for assistance, something Dieskau mentions in a letter to the new French Secretary of War, Charles Fouquet in August 1758, stating that he had not received answers to any of his letters for more than six months⁸

Once Dieskau arrived in Bath in June 1757, he began treatments for his wounds under the supervision of Mr. Jeremiah Pierce, the Surgeon to the

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Remembering Dieskau

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Royal Mineral Water Hospital, whose work included bloodletting, bandaging, splinting, excising foreign objects, and cauterizing and incising abscesses.⁹ While in Bath, the general continued to dispatch letters to d'Argenson and Charles Fouquet, outlining his condition in explicit detail, stressing his scarcity of funds and defending his conduct at Lake George. Dieskau also wrote d'Argenson requesting that his property be preserved, as he proposed to sell it if he could not recover from his wounds.¹⁰

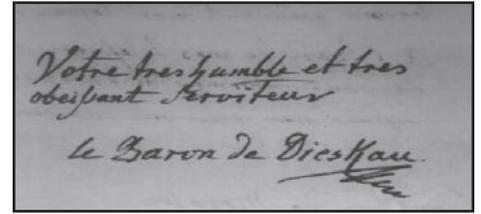
Because of poor communication between the Count d'Argenson and finance minister André Doreil, the French government erroneously assumed that the general had died and auctioned off his personal effects.¹¹ Even though King Louis XV granted a pension of 4000 livres per annum, an amount that was possibly sufficient to cover his expenses and debts, Dieskau sought additional financial assistance and borrowed from his captors.¹² In his letter to Fouquet, the general explained that he was without resources except for the 100 guineas he borrowed from Lord William Barrington. The French government rejected his draft for the payment of his debt to Lord Barrington, and Louis XV then withdrew a fund for the sustenance for all French prisoners abroad in 1758.¹³ Regrettably for Dieskau, Fouquet and the French court ignored his pleas for assistance. Without further communiqués and remuneration, a desperate and frustrated Dieskau felt abandoned by the Court.

Just as there are scant records of Dieskau's imprisonment in England, there are few accounts of his life after his return to France. Professor Oliver P. Hubbard's article in *The Magazine of American History with Notes and Queries* provided more information on Dieskau's life than previous publications. His article, "Harmony of History, Dieskau," provided a more precise timeline for Dieskau's journey and discussed the difficulties when composing a narrative

of the general's time after the Battle of Lake George. He states that in the Paris documents from the *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York, Vol. X*, he could find "no farther account of his [Dieskau's] exile in England or of his life after his return to France."¹⁴ The article also provided the only reference to the French philosopher Denis Diderot's *Memories*, which sheds additional light on Dieskau's post-battle life with frequent references to his letter of visits and conversations with the French general in Paris in 1760. Diderot's letter to Louise-Henriette Volland, dated 6 November 1760, discloses the severity of Dieskau's wounds five years after the battle.

Even more helpful was Benson John Lossing's biography of George Washington, which explains, in a footnote, that "as his [Dieskau's] restoration was deemed impossible, he was permitted to retire, on his parole, to Germany, at one of the spas of which country the veteran soldier lived several years, a sufferer from his wounds, of which he finally died."¹⁵ Lossing's reference of a parole permitting the wounded general to retire to Germany supports the probability that the English government released Dieskau under a "freedom on parole," on the condition that the major general gave his word of honor not to fight the English until the French exchanged another officer of similar rank.¹⁶ An exact date of his parole is still unknown. However, the signing of the Convention of Écluse/Sluys on 6 February 1759, which applied to the sick and the wounded, prisoners of war, deserters, and ground troops (les troupes de terre) and Diderot's letters from 6 November 1760 provide a sufficient timeframe to ascertain Dieskau's time of release.

Major General Jean-Armand de Dieskau died at age 61 in Suresnes, Hauts-Seine, France on 8 September 1767, twelve years to the day after the battle at Lake George.¹⁷ Unfortunately, La Société Généalogique Canadienne-Française's *Project Montcalm* database contains no record of the general's death certificate in their registers.



Your very humble and obedient Servant
- the Baron de Dieskau

Michael J. Stoehr is a graduate of Auburn University at Montgomery, MLA in History, and Southeastern Louisiana University, BA in History and Political Science. He taught English as a Second Language (ESL) in Seoul, South Korea from 2001 - 02, 2004 -2011, 2012 - 2015. This article is an abridged version of the third chapter "Dieskau's Capture and His Journey Back to Europe" from his thesis, entitled Noncompliance or Tactical Adaptability? General Jean-Armand de Dieskau and The Defeat at Lake George, 8 September 1755. This is Mr. Stoehr's first published work since graduating from Auburn University at Montgomery in 2020. ■

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2 Benson John Lossing and Philip John Schuyler, *The Life and Times of P. Schuyler*. Vol. 1. New York: Mason Brothers. 1860. 124.

3 *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), September 25, 1755. 2.

4 *Pennsylvania Gazette* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania), October 30, 1755. 2.; *Kentish Weekly Post/Canterbury Journal* (Canterbury, Kent, England), January 1756. 3.

5 *The Reichs-Post Reuter* (Hamburg, Germany), January 23, 1756, p.2.

6 Bernier remained with Dieskau until 1756, when the British government imprisoned him in Edinburgh Castle as recorded in the 1 May 1756 issue of *The Kentish Weekly Post/Canterbury Journal*.

7 E. B. O'Callaghan, *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New-York*, Vol. X. Albany, New York: Weed, Parsons, & Company, 1858. 422.

8 *Ibid.*, 806.

9 *The Bath Journal* (Bath, England), June 27, 1757. 4.

10 O'Callaghan X., 394.

11 *Ibid.*, 564

12 *The Public Advertiser* (London, England), January 10, 1756. See also Papers of Sir William Johnson. Vol. 2. 403.

13 Erica Michiko Charters, *Disease, War, and the Imperial State: The Welfare of the British Armed Forces during the Seven Years' War*. Chicago, Illinois; London: University of Chicago Press. 2014.173.

14 Oliver P. Hubbard, "Harmony of History, Dieskau" *Magazine of American History with Notes and Queries*, Vol. XIX, January - June 1888. 341.

15 Benson John Lossing, *Life of Washington; a biography, personal, military, and political*. Vol. 1. New York: Virtue and Company. 1860. 183.

16 Renaud Morieux, "French Prisoners of War, Conflicts of Honour, and Social Inversion in England, 1744-1783." *The Historical Journal* 56, Issue 1 (March 2013): 61.

17 *La Gazette de France* (Paris, France), September 18, 1767. 4.; *Altonaischer Mercurius* (Hamburg, Germany) September 25, 1767. 4.

Visitor Center to Open For Season May 23

The Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center will open for its fourth season on Friday, May 23 and feature several displays that were added during the course of 2024's record-breaking season which saw total attendance reach 3,500.

Alliance Curation Committee member **Russ Bellico** noted that new exhibits since the beginning of last year include: two circa 1758 13 - inch diameter mortar bombs, which had been raised from Lake George near the park during the 1960s (loan of the State Museum); a scale model of a colonial military bateau, built by **Paul S. Andriscin** from a kit donated by Alliance member **Joseph W. Zarzynski**; and three 18th Century cannonballs loaned by **Marylee Gosline**, plus another from Alliance Trustee **Margy Mannix**. Also now gracing the Visitor Center is a live edge waterfall entry table/desk built and donated by Alliance member **Al Rider**.

Battlefield Park visitors can now also experience outside the building entrance two adjacent resin "Park Orientation" signs, which tell the role of the site during the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. The signs were underwritten by the Lake George Park Commission and installed by the State Department of Environmental Conservation. Under the day-to-day management of **Dick Carlson**, the Visitor Center will be open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on weekends from late May until Independence Day Weekend, when it expands to five days per week. ■



Russ Bellico with Park Orientation signs

Alliance Summer-Fall '24 Program Highlights



George A. Bray III: "Munro: The Last Commander of Fort William Henry"



Pat Niles: Washington County AmRev History Tour



Larry Arnold: Saratoga Battlefield Tour



Mark Silo: Johnson's Line Tour

Alliance Holds Annual Meeting, Updates Membership

The Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance conducted its annual membership meeting on August 17, 2024, updating the 45 members in attendance on accomplishments over the past year, electing members of its governing board, and modifying its by-laws in response to the organization's 46% growth in membership over the preceding 12 months.

The Alliance Board of Trustees paid tribute to **Russ Bellico**, its longtime member and inspiration for the creation of the Battlefield Park Visitor Center, who opted not to serve another three-year term as Trustee. Elected to replace Russ was **Dan Barusch**, Town of Lake George Planning & Zoning Director who also chairs the Courtland Street Reinterment Committee. Re-elected to the Board were **John DiNuzzo**, President; **Fran Cocozza**, Vice President; **Rosemarie Earl**, Treasurer; **Peter Wuerdeman**, Secretary; and **Bruce Venter**, Trustee. Still serving on the Board in the midst of three-year terms are **Larry Arnold**, **Vinnie Crocitto III**, **Todd Earl**, **Jay Levenson**, **Margy Mannix**, **Pat Niles** and **Bob Wilcox**.

Members voted to amend the Alliance by-laws to provide an option to hold the organization's annual meeting at a site within the town of Lake George other than the Battlefield Park. The consensus was that an off-site venue might provide for better capacity, presentation and food alternatives.

[The Board of Trustees' annual report to the membership for the 2023-24 season was presented orally to the attendees. Due to space restrictions in the **Fort George Post**, the report was emailed in its entirety to all members in February. New members who would like to see the membership report should feel free to request it from **John DiNuzzo** (jpgdinuzzo@gmail.com).]

The Self-Redeemed Captive: Jonathan Dore

By Alan Stone

The story of sieges and massacres of soldiers at Fort William Henry in August 1757 and two years later to residents of the Native village of St. Francis are well known by those with even a casual interest in the French and Indian War (1754-1763). The story of Jonathan Dore is a small, but interesting tale of capture and self-redemption. His actions during both of those events shed a little more light on their impact on the individuals caught in this harrowing conflict.

If you drive on New Hampshire Route 108 from Dover into Rochester and look carefully to your left, you may notice, buried in the weeds, a small memorial (provided photo) to the events that transpired there in June 1746. To quote from the Adjutant General's Report, Vol 2 in 1866, "The fall of Louisbourg (the year before during King George's War) exasperated the French in Canada, and their Indian allies made no less frequent attacks on our frontier settlements. In fact, the year of 1746 is noted for the attacks by the Indians on the Province (sic) of New Hampshire...Indians were constantly patrolling"¹. As a result of this threat, surveillance parties were constantly sent out from various local settlements, including a patrol from Rochester.

The Rochester of the 18th Century was typical of settlements on the edge of the frontier, with settlers eking out an existence. The 1742 Estate List of Philip Dore (Jonathan's father) is typical for a Rochester resident. He is listed as possessing "1 pols (poultry?), 1 ox, 2 cows, 1 horse, 1 swine, 3 plantings and 1 house."²

On June 27, 1746, French-aligned Indians struck Rochester. Written in "A Book of Records of the Church of Christ in Rochester" is the following: "June 27th 1746 Joseph Heard, John Wentworth and Gersham Downs were killed by the Indians on the main road about two miles from the foot of the town. At the same time and place John Richards

was wounded and captivated and on the same day Jonathan Door (sic), a young lad was captivated by the Indians at Salmon Falls Road in Rochester"³.

The journal of William Pote Jr. offers the first-hand account of a man named John Richards "who was taken by the Indians at a place called Rochester in ye province of Newhampshire (sic). He gave us an account there was four men and a boy killed when he was taken and himself wounded"⁴. Nehemiah How's narrative provides more details. "July 21 John Richards and a boy of nine or ten years old belonged to Rochester in New Hampshire, were brought to prison and told us there were four Englishmen kill'd when they were taken"⁵.

Nothing more is heard about Jonathan Dore until after the conclusion of King George's War and the 1748 Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. The *Boston Post-Boy* on July 10, 1749 has this announcement in it: "Mr. Timothy Brown, were he had been with some others to endeavor to redeem some Captive Children... there is also a boy who was taken from Rochester in New Hampshire with the Indians at St. Francois, his name is Jonathan Dore."⁶ In 1749 Massachusetts Colonial Governor William Shirley sent Phineas Stevens to recover whatever prisoners were held there, either by the French or the Indians. Despite two attempts to ransom Jonathan, the St. Francis Indians refused to let him go.

Jonathan Dore's name resurfaces eight years later, with the surrender of Fort William Henry. On August 10, 1757, as New Hampshire troops were the last regiments to march out of the surrendered site, they were attacked by St. Francis Indians, and their column disintegrated. Some sought protection from their English brethren, while others ran into the adjoining forest. Dore, one of the attacking tribal warriors, chased a New Hampshire soldier into

the woods. About to bring his hatchet down after catching his prey, he recognized the soldier as a man who had done business with his father and spared the soldier's life. The man Dore saved eventually returned to Dover and told people of being spared by Dore.

My research over the last several years, going through records and muster rolls from the hometowns of these soldiers, shows that it's likely the spared soldier was William Randal. In 1757 Randal was 52 years old, from Dover, and a farmer—someone fellow-farmer Philip Dore would likely have known.

By the summer of 1759, the tide of the French and Indian War had decidedly turned in favor of the British. Having taken control of Lake George and the southern portions of Lake Champlain, Robert Rogers and a force of 150-200 troops departed Crown Point on September 10 with orders to destroy the Abenaki village of St. Francis in the French province of Canada. Arriving on October 4, Rogers and his forces fulfilled their mission, decimating the community in which Dore was residing. For whatever reason—perhaps due to the deaths of his Abenaki family--Dore returned to Rochester in December, only to find that his New Hampshire relatives had moved across the Salmon Falls River into what is now Lebanon, Maine.

The diary of Thomas Moody, a lieutenant in Captain Wentworth's company in Berwick (modern-day Maine), shows Jonathan Dore enlisted as a private in that regiment in May 1760. The group moved along the customary military campaign route of the time, through Albany and Fort Edward, past the ruins of Fort William Henry at the head of Lake George, past Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point on Lake Champlain, into Canada. There are two mentions of Dore during this campaign near Isle Aux Noix

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... Jonathan Dore

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and St. John. The first is from Moody's entry on Friday, August 22. "This day 2 prisoners were brought in from St. John by Jon. Dore and 5 or 6 of the Light Infan(try)".⁷ At this time, Dore may have been acting as a Ranger, for in a diary by Lt. J.M. Bradbury it states "Jonathan Door went out with 8 of the light infantry and in 4 days brought in three persons for which Col. Haverland gave him 32 dollars, besides other things".⁸ Moody's diary also indicates that Dore was released from service in October 1760, ahead of the rest of his company.

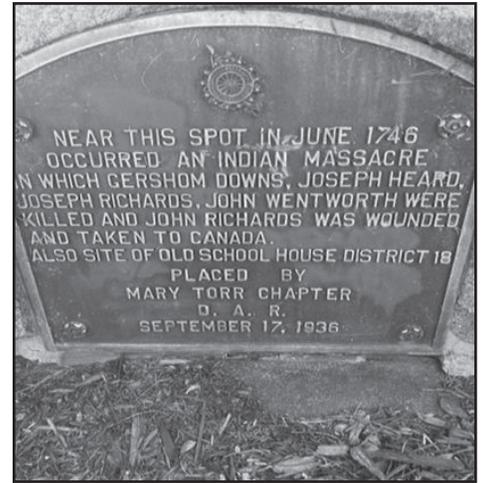
Found in Collections of the Records of the American Colonies (HathiTrust Digital Library) are records of the Massachusetts General Court, which contain this entry: "Jonathan Dore of Berwick, to attend this House as soon as may be". On June 26, 1761, a "Committee of Inquiry ordered, that Mr. Welles, Major Hartwell, Capt. Howard, Capt. Livermore and Mr. Bradbury examine Jonathan Dore, respecting the nearest route to the country of Canada and report". The Committee reported back on June 27: "The Committee appointed to consider what was proper to be granted to Jonathan Dore, lately returned to captivity made a report. Read and accepted and ordered, that the sum of thirteen pounds be granted and allowed

to be paid out of the public treasury to said Jonathan Dore, in consideration of his services and suffering in captivity and his journey to Boston to wait upon this House according to the order."⁹

Dore married Dorothy Farnum (year unknown) and they had no children, but adopted John Dixon. He had one more service for his country. In September 1776, the New Hampshire House of Representatives resolved that "James Knowles and George Place of Rochester should serve as a committee and visit Jonathan Dore of Lebanon and desire that he would show them the lead mine lately discovered by him".¹⁰

Despite Jonathan Dore's permanent return to the area—and with the people—of his early childhood, he never fully gave up his tribal ways. In later years, he was known locally as "Indian Dore". Jonathan Dore died in 1799 and is buried in an unmarked grave in Lebanon, Maine.

Alan Stone received a BA in History from the University of New Hampshire and Social Studies Teaching credentials from Franklin Pierce College. He is a retired high school Advanced Placement-American History teacher and a retired CWO4 from the US Coast Guard Reserve. He is a member of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, Friends of Fort Ticonderoga, Fort Plain Museum, Montgomery County Historical Society, Mayflower Society, and Sons of the American Revolution.



The plaque near the site of the Indian massacre at the corner of Anita Drive in Rochester, NH.

The site of Dore's capture was about a mile northeast on Salmon Falls Road.

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2. Oesterlin, Pauline Johnson, "New Hampshire 1742 Estate List". Heritage Books, 1992.
3. "A Book of Records of the Church of Christ in Rochester" Church of Christ Records, Rochester, NH1766.
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Philbrick the Elder and Cooper's Last of the Mohicans

Edited by Bruce M. Venter

Editor's Note: Most Alliance members are probably familiar with the non-fiction writings of the award-winning, best-selling author **Nathaniel Philbrick**. Nat, a personal friend, wrote *In the Heart of the Sea*, which was made into a major motion picture in 2015. He also penned *Mayflower*, *Travels with George*, and a trilogy on the American Revolution, among other works. His father, **Thomas L. Philbrick**, is a

leading authority on James Fenimore Cooper. The elder Philbrick spent his career in the halls of academia as an English professor at the University of Pittsburgh.

Recently, in looking for some information about the Fort William Henry "massacre" in the research data base JSTOR, I came upon Thomas Philbrick's article entitled "The Sources of Cooper's Knowledge of Fort

William Henry", which appeared in the May 1964 issue of *American Literature*. After reading it, I contacted Nat and asked him if it would be okay if we reprinted an edited version of his father's monograph. Dr. Philbrick, 95, was thrilled that his work would be revived for our Alliance membership. Some text and footnotes in the original article have been modified for this reprint for the sake of brevity.

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Philbrick the Elder

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The following is Thomas Philbrick's take on Cooper and his knowledge of Fort William Henry and the massacre:

In his preface to the first edition of *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), James Fenimore Cooper warned those of his readers who expected to encounter “an imaginary and romantic picture of things which never had an existence” that the “work is exactly what it professes to be in the title page”—a narrative.¹ As David P. French has ably demonstrated,² Cooper's insistence on the factual basis of the novel is to be taken seriously. The central scenes of the novel, the siege of Fort William Henry in the summer of 1757 and the massacre which followed its surrender, tally closely with the historical record in broad outline and in many specific details. Cooper's interest in the battle, Professor French makes clear, was a natural one. He had visited the shores of Lake George, the site of the fort, shortly before he began the novel. As a boy, he had attended a school in Albany near the grave of Colonel Monro, the British commandant of the fort, and was exposed to local traditions of the siege and its central figure[s]. It is possible that his wife's uncle, James Delancey, had been a participant in the battle and that the events he witnessed formed a theme of the family's conversations. Associations of this sort may well have prompted Cooper's choice of subject, and yet it is difficult to believe that they furnished him information so full and precise as to account for the “grasp of historical minutiae” which Professor French finds in the novel and attributes to them. On the other hand, Susan Fenimore Cooper's account of the hurried and harried composition of *The Last of the Mohicans* makes one skeptical of Robert E. Spiller's assertion that the novelist “had studied the historical facts behind his story with the thoroughness of a scholar.”³

A survey of those accounts of the events at Fort William Henry which would have

been available to Cooper indicates that he did make extensive use of written sources, but it also suggests that his research was by no means arduous or prolonged. The brief references to the battle in the standard histories, it is true, could offer little of the vivid particularity that the novel required, but occasionally they seem to have been of some use. Trumbull's *History of the United States* (1810), for example, had noted that during the massacre “infants and children were wantonly taken by their heels and their brains dashed out against the trees.”⁴ One of Cooper's Indians, having snatched a baby from the arms of its mother, “dashed the head of the infant against a rock, and cast its quivering remains to her very feet.” But Trumbull's grisly detail is an exception to the remote and highly statistical view of the massacre that prevails in most of the formal histories. If the scenes of the siege and massacre were to be firmly grounded in fact, Cooper needed the authority that only a participant or their results could furnish.

Whatever details may have come to Cooper by way of the family memories of the Delanceys, Marcel Clavel showed some time ago that many more were supplied to him by the eyewitness account of the battle by Jonathan Carver's *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America* (1776). Carver's description of the massacre, M. Clavel points out, provided at least five major features of Cooper's rendition of the siege and its aftermath: the attitude of Colonel Munro (Cooper's spelling) at the time of the capitulation; the deep and rapid changes worked on Munro by the humiliation of his defeat; his futile effort to persuade the French officers to stop their Indian allies from menacing the defenceless [sic] British garrison; the Indian war cry which triggers the savage slaughter; and the spectacle of the Indians in the act of drinking the blood of their victims. Indeed, Clavel is so impressed by the extent of Cooper's debt to Carver that he contends that the *Travels* alone satisfied the novelist's requirements for the authentic historical information.⁵

Clavel's opinion is almost correct in

respect to the immediate action of the siege and the massacre. But Cooper's treatment of the atrocity does not end with the completion of that action. As Hawkeye and his party set out in pursuit of Magua and the Colonel's two daughters, they return to the site of the massacre. The fort, burned and abandoned by the French, is “a smouldering ruin; charred rafters, fragments of exploded artillery; and rent masonry, covering its earthen mounds in confused disorder”. The ground is littered with “the mangled victims” of the massacre, but most appalling of all is “a group of females who lay in a cluster, a confused mass of dead”. Without any doubt, this ghastly scene derives from a second and still more widely known narrative of frontier warfare, David Humphrey's *Life of Israel Putnam* (1788). Putnam, the commander of a company of provincial rangers, was stationed at nearby Fort Edward at the time of the massacre. [Humphrey writes:]

The day succeeding this deplorable scene of carnage and barbarity, Major Putnam [,] having been dispatched with his Rangers, to watch the motions of the enemy, came to the shore [of Lake George], when their rear was scarcely beyond the reach of musket shot. They had carried off all the cannon, stores and watercraft. The Fort was demolished. The barracks, the out-houses and sutlers booths were heaps of ruins. The fires, not yet extinct, and the smoke, offensive from the mucilaginous nature of the fuel, but illy concealed innumerable fragments of human skulls and bones, and, in some instances carcasses half consumed. Dead bodies, weltering in blood, were every where to be seen, violated, with all the wanton mutilations of savage ingenuity. More than one hundred women, some with their brains still oozing from their battered heads, others with their whole hair wrenched collectively with the skin from the bloody skulls, and many (with their throats cut) most inhumanly stabbed and butchered; lay stripped entirely naked, with their bowels torn out, and afforded a spectacle too horrible for description.”⁶

This passage from *The Life of Putnam*

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Philbrick the Elder

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and Clavel's list of details from Carver's *Travels* form the most striking parallels to the materials of *The Last of the Mohicans*, but they by no means encompass the whole of Cooper's probable borrowings from the two books. Everywhere in the novel one encounters incidental references to Indian customs and frontier military tactics that echo the experiences and observations of Carver and Putnam.⁷ It seems clear that the *Travels* and *The Life of Putnam* served as Cooper's principal sources for his treatment of the central historical action of the novel and as valuable supplements to Heckewelder⁸ for his depiction of Indian warfare.

In view of Cooper's dependence on Carver's *Travels* and Humpreys's biography of Putnam, Professor French's conjecture that the novelist had access to private sources of information about the fighting at Fort William Henry seems unwarranted. If the experiences of James Delancey had offered Cooper any substantial amount of specific detail concerning the siege and massacre, he would hardly have needed to draw as heavily as he did on popular published accounts. Nor does Spiller's image of Cooper as scholarly researcher accord with his reliance on Carver and Humphreys. If the novelist was not already acquainted with the two books, a standard authority like Williams's *History of Vermont* would immediately have called them to his attention. Forsaking the painstaking method of research that had gone into the writing of his previous book, the unsuccessful *Lionel Lincoln* (1825), Cooper, it would appear, gratefully seized on *Travels* and *The Life of Putnam* as convenient sources for the vivid, first-hand information that his "narrative" required.

Dr. Thomas L. Philbrick received his BA degree from Brown University. After serving three years in the U.S. Army, he earned a MA and Ph.D. in English from Harvard. Dr. Philbrick retired as emeritus professor of English from the University of Pittsburgh. He competitively raced Sunfish sailboats at the national level. ■

1 *The Last of the Mohicans: A Narrative of 1757* (Philadelphia, 1826), iii.

2 "James Fenimore Cooper and Fort William Henry" *American Literature*, XXXII, 28-38 (March 1960).

3 *The Last of the Mohicans*, ed. Robert E. Spiller (New York and London, 1951), vi. According to Cooper's daughter, the tour of upstate New York took place in the summer of 1825 and at its conclusion the novel was immediately commenced. It was published February 6, 1826.

4 Benjamin Trumbull, *A General History of the United States of America* (Boston, 1820), I, 372-373. Certain minor details of the account of the siege in the *Last of the Mohicans* suggest that Cooper may have drawn on Joseph Frye, "Journal of the Attack on Fort William Henry" (May 1819) and on Timothy Dwight, *Travels in New England and New York* (New Haven, Conn. 1822).

5 Clavel's book is written in French. Philbrick quotes Clavel's book in his article in French.

6 *An Essay on the Life of the Honorable Major-General Israel Putnam* (Brattleboro, Vt., 1812), 35-36.

7 Examples include the stoic taciturnity of Indians when meeting after long separation; the skill of Indians in discovering footprints; their devices in concealing their own tracks; the return of a war party to its village and the treatment of captives; skirmishes with Indian canoes on the waters of Lake George; the report by an Indian runner of a white army as numerous as leaves on the trees; the torture of a white prisoner by near-misses with a tomahawk. It is possible, moreover, that Humphrey's account of the efforts of Mrs. Howe to save her daughters from marriage to their Indian captors contributed to Cooper's main plot.

8 John Heckewelder was a Moravian missionary to the Indians in Pennsylvania and Ohio who wrote *Account of the History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations . . .* (1818).



Dr. Thomas L. Philbrick

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A Tribute to Chuck Vandrei

much as I could, for at least an hour." Tobin valued any time spent talking with Chuck such as their last conversation over lunch, discussing cultural preservation efforts, which "extended long after" they finished eating.

A story shared by Howard Kirschenbaum, the founder of AARCH, demonstrates Chuck's ambitious personality. In 1994, Chuck eagerly showed up for a volunteer workday to install a roof at Camp Santanoni (an overdue project). Chuck promptly decided to use his own vehicle and money to buy a truck-full of materials to get the ball rolling. Kirschenbaum recalls, "He said he'd worry about getting permission and getting reimbursed later." ■



DEC's Heather Engwer and Chuck Vandrei working I Love My Park Day at Lake George Battlefield Park, 2017 (photo provided by NYS DEC)

Major General Abercrombie's Camp at Lake George 1758

By George A. Bray III

While viewing exhibits at the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitor Center last year, I noticed a plan of Major General James Abercrombie's camp was not on display, as it is displayed at Fort Ticonderoga. After bringing this to the attention of Battlefield Park Alliance President **John DiNuzzo**, I found that there was a different plan published in **David Starbuck's** book *Archaeology in Lake George Battlefield Park*. Learning that **Lyn Hohmann** had been looking at this material, and another plan as well, I volunteered to write this article.

Following the disastrous defeat of the British army at Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga) on July 8th, 1758, the soldiers retreated to the head of Lake George, arriving the following night. Establishing camp, they debated and decided not to return north to Carillon for another attempt at defeating the French. Consequently, they spent several days accounting for the losses of personnel and equipment, taking care of the sick and wounded, and unloading armaments and provisions.¹

The camp was established in the area where Fort William Henry and an entrenched camp had previously stood.² Alexander Moneypenney's orderly book records on July 12th that regimental quartermasters were to report to the general's tent at 7 PM; the following day the camp was to be removed at 6 AM and laid out according to the instruction of the regimental quartermasters. Four days later, the tents were to be struck at 6 AM and moved to the "New Ground" which the quartermasters would show them.³ This would seem to be the layout that is reflected upon the three undated plans showing Abercrombie's camp.

The first plan is found in the British Library Collection and online at <https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:hx11z192c>. The plan is named "PLAN of the Encampment Intrenchment with thier (sic) Environs at LAKE GEORGE". It is dated on the website as being "ca. 1759" perhaps because it was formerly owned by Major General Jeffery Amherst. But I contend it is 1758, as will be demonstrated using the other two plans

yet to be discussed, and it does not align with Amherst's camp at Lake George that year. This plan is shown as Exhibit 1.

The first plan shows several features but has no explanation for them. A retrenchment, or breastwork, with rectangular shapes representing various military units within it, is shown. Also depicted is a tent, artillery pieces and a building within the interior. Further, as presented by **Russell P. Bellico** in the Spring/Summer 2014 issue of the *Fort George Advice*, there are the stockaded fortifications at the northern end of the breastwork containing an L-shaped building within, and the other near the lakeshore where Fort William Henry had been.⁴ An additional advanced stockade post is located on the eastern shoreline of the lake. Remains of the French entrenchments from 1757 and Fort William Henry are also illustrated. Other works are outside the main camp to the south. Artillery pieces are also shown at various places along the breastwork. Though not certain, I surmise that this was the preliminary plan laid out by the regimental quartermasters with Abercrombie on July 12th.

The next plan, shown as Exhibit 2, mimics the previous plan except that it is keyed, and adds a decorative device above the title. The title is the same except that "thier" is spelled as "theier" on this one. This plan comes from the George Sackville Germain Papers and is in the William L. Clements Library Collection. The Clements shows its date as 1758 on the website (<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/w/wcl1ic/x-853/wcl000947>).

Neither plan has a name associated with it. However, the British Library considered Bernard Ratzer to be the cartographer of both. He was a lieutenant in the 60th Regiment of Foot, or Royal Americans, and an engineer, surveyor and draftsman. As he was an officer in the 1st Battalion of the Royal Americans, it is possible he did produce them since a portion of that battalion was with Abercrombie.

Examining the plan's key, Fort William Henry is identified by the letter "A" and the French approaches by "B". The plan also identifies where the French landed ("C") and the advanced posts around

the encampment ("D"). The interior encampments are shown again as on the first plan, but this one names the units assigned to those locations. It also names the artillery park in the center of the encampment in a redoubt⁵, along with the storehouse for provisions to its east. Further, this plan identifies the units encamped outside the breastwork.

The regular British army regiments placed along the southern wall within the retrenchment from west to east are the 4th battalion of the 60th Regiment (Royal Americans), six companies of the 1st battalion of the 60th Regiment (Royal Americans), the 44th Regiment, the 55th Regiment, the 46th Regiment, and the 42nd Highland Regiment. The 27th Regiment was located opposite them along the angled wall to the north.

The provincial regiments were distributed along the remaining sections of the breastwork. Colonel Jonathan Bagley's Massachusetts Regiment was located on the west side of the retrenchment next to the 27th Regiment. Colonel Israel Williams's and Colonel Jedediah Preble's Massachusetts Regiments were located inside the southwest section of the breastwork. To the southeast corner was Colonel Nathan Whiting's Connecticut Regiment. The remaining regiments were aligned along the southeast side; from west to east were Colonel John Hart's New Hampshire Regiment, Colonel David Wooster's Connecticut Regiment, and Colonel Phineas Lyman's Connecticut Regiment. One rectangle, south of Colonel Bagley's encampment, does not contain any name or designation.

Though neither plan contains a date, it is obvious that the units depicted are those that composed Abercrombie's army, and therefore they establish the date of the first plan as being 1758 and not 1759. Further, Ratzer produced a plan of the camp at Lake George in 1759, and, while similar in some respects to the 1758 plans, it also differs regarding features and units which were part of Amherst's army.

Gen. Abercrombie

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Lastly, the plan also identifies the irregular camps without the entrenchment to the south. Along the road to Fort Edward, on a ridge, is the camp of the famous Major Robert Rogers's Rangers. Further down the road are Colonel Oliver Partridge's Massachusetts Rangers/Light Infantry, whose nickname was the Royal Hunters.⁶ This post was called Fort Gage after Colonel Thomas Gage.⁷ It also appears to have had an exterior post on a ridge to the east. To the west of the road, southwest of Rogers's camp, was the camp of Gage's Light Infantry, the 80th Regiment of Foot, nicknamed the Leather Caps.⁸ To the rear of these irregular encampments were three more advanced posts, with an additional one to the east of them.

The final plan (Exhibit 3) was drawn by Andrew Fraser and is in the collection of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, entitled "A Map of the retrenched Camp at Lake George in 1758." It can be viewed online at <https://fortticonderoga.catalogaccess.com/archives/29628>.

Andrew Fraser obviously had some specialized education to create such a product, the type of training afforded to engineers and artillerymen who were commissioned under the Board of Ordnance. The best information I can offer at this point is that he may have been the Andrew Fraser who later held the rank of engineer practitioner in the corps of engineers as an ensign in the British army as of 1759.⁹

Unlike the other plans, this map orients 180 degrees, with the lake to the bottom, and is colored. Only the British regular regiments are labeled. The provincial camps are not. And it identifies features the previous plans do not.

This plan shows the hospital being within the stockaded post at the northern end of the breastwork. It also labels the tent feature as being the army's headquarters. The advanced post on the lake to the east is shown as protecting a dock. Finally, the post (Fort Gage) near Gage's Light Infantry is labeled as Provincial Light Infantry, which again refers to Colonel Partridge's Rangers.¹⁰

Having discussed the plans, looking at contemporary sources will provide insights into how this encampment came to be.

Caleb Rea, surgeon to Colonel Jonathan Bagley's Massachusetts Regiment, wrote on July 12th "the Camp very idle this Day, but received various orders for fortifying at this Place and the Provincials to remove their Encampment. . . . this Day began to level an Emanance which was Sharp, uneven & Rocky, to Build a Fort thereon, also demolishd the French Lines east up against Fort Wm Henry last year. There is a Piqueted Fort where W. H. stood another opposite on the East side of ye Swamp, the Place is now prepearing is about 100 Rods South of ye East one and looks over ye others and all ye adjacent plain."¹¹

On July 13th, Rea continued that "this Day the whole Proventials ordered to mover their Incampment, they had moves & removes, vexation enough, about ye midle after Noon got Pitched. the Connecticut Regiments to clear ye Ground near ye Woods and thro up a Breast Work."¹² Orders were issued that a captain from each regiment was to visit their sick in the general hospital daily.¹³ On the same day, Benjamin Glasier, a ship carpenter from Ipswich, Massachusetts, wrote in his journal that he "went to work on the hospital."¹⁴ The following day, huts were built by each regiment for their sick in their camps.¹⁵

The next day, Rea revealed that "the Saw Mill that was begun here immediately after our return from Ticonderoga was worked on but two or three Days & then laid aside, as is also ye desined Fort on ye Eminance near ye East Piquets, and only some Breast Works Building, as there is in Several other places."¹⁶ The sawmill is not shown on the plans.

As mentioned earlier, on July 16th the army was directed to be ready to move. The after-orders for the same day further instructed that "the Regt to send their Qr Masters & five men pr Company, at four O'Clock this afternoon, to clear the ground, where they are to encamp, & the army to move to their new Encampment at six tomorrow morning."¹⁷ Whiting's orderly book stated on the same day that the tents were to be struck at 6 AM and move to the "New Ground: which the regimental quartermaster was to show them."¹⁸ Also, an officer and 25 men

were to mount guard "in the Redoubt, where the artillery Stores are lodg'd, to receive Directions from Capt. Ord."¹⁹

On July 17th, Rea described how the previous day's order was executed. "Again Removed our Incampment thro' ye whole forces General and all. ye Regulars employed in cutting up ye Stumps where our Regmt moved from. their method was to digg round ye Stumps with Mathooks cutting off ye out Side Roots, then fastening to it a Tecele 15 or 20 Men wou'd hawl it up or break it off some depth under ground, thus fourty Men cleared off about Twenty Stumps a Day makeing all smooth our Regt placed on ye Right Wing was order'd to east up on Entrencht, against ye Lake which would compleat a Breastwork around ye whole Camp Save on ye Rear where ye Lake secured us."²⁰ The orders for the day specified that "An engineer will be sent, to the Regulars, another to General Lyman, & another to Colonel Preble, at four o'clock this afternoon, to mark out the Breast work to be thrown up, before their respective Corps."²¹

On the 18th, small redans were "to be thrown up for their protections, & fell'd trees from Post to Post, to prevent any persons from creeping in, betwixt them."²² All the plans clearly detail this breastwork and its redans. The redans are the "indented Works running in and out like the teeth of a saw, forming Salient and Re-entering Angles" along the breastwork wall.²³ These redans would provide a defensive crossfire aimed against any enemy that would approach the protective wall.

To provide some insight into the number of men that were be employed in this work, Whiting's Orderly Book states a captain, three subalterns, four sergeants, four corporals, and 88 privates from the Connecticut regiment were to be employed in building a breastwork before the regiment at 6 AM the same day. A subaltern and 25 men were also to be employed at the hospital along with a carpenter from each company.²⁴ Captain Samuel Cobb, commander of the first company of Preble's Regiment, wrote in his journal that day they "Began to thro up a breast Work Round our Whole Encampment every Regt. Regular and Provl. Ordered from the Genl. to Build their proportion in the front of their parade."²⁵ An additional order also directed "The Engineers to go round the Breast

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work, & fix on proper places for Batterys.²⁶ Rea indicated that “ye Brestwork well nigh finished. ye Artillary brou’t into ye center of ye Encampment, now ye Camp appears under Some citation of Defence.”²⁷ This day the order was rescinded for the captains of the regiments having to visit the hospital daily, but the commanding officers of the regiments were to send officers “at times to visit their sick in the Hospital.”²⁸

On July 19th, the work parties on the breastwork were to be increased to 140 men.²⁹ Rea wrote, “A Breastwork was now on ye Rear of ye Incampment which would compleatly Surround ye whole. The whole work was built either with Stone, Timber or Fascine Baskets³⁰ and an Entrenchment east up on ye out Side and a little Ditch within to secure our loading.”³¹

On the 20th, Rea makes a bit of a confusing entry in his journal: “the Building ye Vessel goes on with expedition, also a large Stone House ye Hospital in ye East Stockade finished.”³² Construction of a vessel had been going on for several days, but it is not clear if the large stone house was also still being constructed or finished as the hospital. The large stone house probably refers to the storehouse shown on the plans.

Orders for the 25th directed “The chief Engeneer to make a Report this Evening to the General, of the condition of the Breast work, & what may be still wanting to compleat it.”³³

The irregulars were not ordered to their positions until July 27th as verified in Moneypenny’s Orderly Book. “Coll Gage’s Light Infantry, Coll Partridges, Major Putnam’s, & Major Rogers Rangers, to encamp between the advanc’d Posts, & the Entrenchments; Coll Gage’s on the Right, Coll Partridges on the Left, Major Putnam on the Right, next Coll Gage’s, & Major Rogers on the Left near Col Partridge. Lt. McLean³⁴ will show them their ground. As soon as the Light Troops are posted, the outposts from the Line, to be brought with in the Breast work, & posted in the Redans. The ground to be mark’d out for Major Rogers Rangers, who will remain in their present Encampment till further orders.” This order reveals

who the Provincial Guard and Provincial Light Infantry were on Fraser’s plan: Major Israel Putnam’s Connecticut Rangers for the Provincial Guard and Colonel Oliver Partridge’s Massachusetts Light Infantry for the Provincial Light Infantry.³⁵

The following day, July 28th, the orders stated that “the general expects the Rangers to be encamped on their new ground, tomorrow, without fail, for which purpose, Major Rogers Rangers, join’d by Capt Lovell³⁶ with the New Hampshire Ranger, will move to their new ground tomorrow morning at seven o’clock, to apply to the Qr Master for carriages. The Connecticut Rangers, under Major Putnam to move at the same time.”³⁷

Rea once again confirmed this on the following day, writing “the Light Infantry, Royal Hunters, and Rangers were now Incamped as an Advanced Guard about ¼ mile without ye Breast work toward ye path of ye enemy in case they come by South Bay to attack us.”³⁸

On August 20th, a subaltern and 20 men were to finish the guard house and two carpenters to get timber for boards for the hospital. The guard house is not denoted on any of the plans, which may indicate they predate the 20th.³⁹

The works would be raised or burned down by the end of the year.⁴⁰ On October 24th, Moneypenny’s Orderly book recorded that “The Breast Work in Front of the Regulars to be thrown down by them beginning at three o’clock this afternoon. Coll Eyre to oversee the whole.”⁴¹ However, in 1767, Francis Grant did record in his journal that between the non-existent Fort William Henry and Fort George he saw the “lines thrown up by General Abercomby after the defeat at Ticonderoga extending about two miles.”⁴²

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Exhibit 1

<https://collections.leventhalmap.org/search/commonwealth:hx11z192c>



Exhibit 2

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/w/wcl1ic/x-853/wcl000947>



Exhibit 3

<https://fortticonderoga.catalogaccess.com/archives/29628>

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1 Caleb Rea. *The Journal of Dr. Caleb Rea: Written during the Expedition against Ticonderoga in 1758*. Edited by F. M. Ray. Salem, Mass.: Essex Institute, 1881; 106-107.

2 Samuel Cobb. "The Journal of Captain Samuel Cobb, May 21, 1758 – October 29, 1758", *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 14, no.1 (Summer 1881), 19.

3 Alexander Moneyppenny. "Moneyppenny Orderly Book, June 30 to August 7, 1758", *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 12, no. 6 (October 1970), 443-444, 446; Nathan Whiting Orderly Book, unpublished, in the collection of Yale University, New Haven, CT., 56. These are only two of other orderly books that could be referenced.

4 Russell P. Bellico. "The Stockaded Forts at the Battlefield Park: 1758 and 1759", *Fort George Advice*, Spring/Summer 2014.

5 A redoubt was a small square fort. *A Dictionary Explaining The most difficult Terms made use of in Fortification, Gunnery, and the whole Compass of the Military Art*, printed by George Faulkner, Dublin, 1747, 33.

6 Their nickname is found in John Cleveland's Journal for July 5th stating, "Colonel Partridge with the Royal Hunters brought up the rear." The editor was unable to decipher Hunters from original and left it blank in the bulletin. Hunters is derived by other sources. John Cleaveland. *Diary of Rev. John Cleaveland, Chaplain of Colonel Jonathan Bagley's 3rd Regiment of Provincials (June 14, 1758 – Oct. 25, 1758)*, *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 10, no. 3 (1959), 197. They may have taken the name from a unit that served on the European continent during the war. (*The New York Gazette or Weekly Post Boy*, September 19, 1757).

7 Lois M. Fiester, & Paul R. Huey. "Archaeological Testing at Fort Gage, A Provincial Redoubt of 1758 at Lake George, New York", *The Bulletin and Journal of the Archaeology for New*

York State, No. 90, Spring 1985, 41.

8 George A. Bray III. "Leather Caps During the French and Indian War", *Military Collector and Historian*, 38, no. 2 (Summer, 1966), 66.

9 Whitworth Porter. *History of the Corps of Royal Engineers*, 1, London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1889, 189.

10 There are several instances where ranger and light infantry are used synonymously or interchangeably.

11 Caleb Rea. "The Journal of Dr. Caleb Rea, Written During the Expedition Against Ticonderoga in 1758", *Historical Collections of the Essex Institute, XVIII*, No. 4,5,6, April – June 1881,107.

12 Ibid.

13 Moneyppenny, 444.

14 Benjamin Glasier. "French and Indian War Diary of Benjamin Glasier of Ipswich, 1758-1760", *The Essex Institute Historical Collections, LXXXVI* (1950), 77.

15 Moneyppenny, 445.

16 Rea, 109.

17 Moneyppenny, 446.

18 Whiting, 55-56.

19 Moneyppenny, 446. Captain Thomas Ord, an officer of the Royal Artillery, commanded Abercrombie's artillery train for the campaign.

20 Rea, 111.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid., 447.

23 Dictionary, 33.

24 Whiting, 56.

25 Cobb, 20.

26 Moneyppenny, 447.

27 Rea, 111.

28 Moneyppenny, 447.

29 Whiting, 63.

30 Fascines were a bundle of sticks bound together with rope used in a variety of ways to reinforce trenches or fill ditches. However, Rea mentions baskets which would seem to indicate the use of gabions which were made from interwoven sticks and branches forming the basket that would be filled with earth and were five or six feet high

and about four feet in diameter.

31 Rea, 112.

32 Ibid., 113.

33 Moneyppenny, 452.

34 Lieutenant Allan McLean of the 60th Regiment of Foot recently appointed as Assistant Deputy Quarter Master General on the 17th. (Moneyppenny, 446) He was appointed to do this duty as Lieutenant Colonel John Bradstreet had been sent on the mission to take Fort Frontenac on Lake Ontario.

35 Moneyppenny, 453.

36 Captain Nehemiah Lovewell.

37 Ibid., 454.

38 Rea, 117.

39 Whiting, 86.

40 Bellico.

41 Moneyppenny, *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum*, XIII, No. 1, December 1970, 114. Coll Eyre was Lieutenant Colonel William Eyre of the 44th Regiment and an engineer who built Forts William Henry and Edward in 1755.

42 Francis Grant. "Journal from New York to Canada 1767", *Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association, Volume 30* (1932), 321.

Sculpture

Restorations Set for Early Spring Start

Repairs to the Lake George Battlefield Park's three iconic sculptures—*Battle of Lake George* (featuring William Johnson and King Hendrick) dedicated in 1903, *Mohawk Warrior* (1921), and *Isaac Jogues* (1939)—are currently scheduled to begin in late March by Workshop Art Fabrication of Kingston, NY. Those interested in contributing to the restoration project and being listed on signage adjacent to the sculptures are encouraged to contact **John DiNuzzo** at jpdinuzzo@gmail.com.