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# ‘Sleighbing’ history

How the North Country  
plans to commemorate  
America’s most important  
sledding expedition

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REGIONAL – [EDITOR’S NOTE: Alex Portal is a member of the Commission for the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution Warren County, N.Y.]

During the winter of 1775-1776, Henry Knox, a young bookdealer from Boston led a 300-mile expedition from Fort Ticonderoga to Gen. George Washington’s camp in Cambridge, Mass. He was hauling 59 pieces of artillery by sled desperately needed by Washington in order to drive the British fleet from Boston Harbor.

Beginning on Dec. 12, an epic reenactment commemorating the 250th anniversary of Knox’s journey will kick off at the head of Lake George.

“Lake George was not just a stop along Henry Knox’s route, it was a critical staging ground where plans were made and the journey to Boston truly began,” said John DiNuzzo, president of the Lake George Battlefield Alliance in a statement. “Knox’s time at Fort George (in today’s Lake George Battlefield Park) underscores how central this region was to the success of the Noble Train of Artillery and, ultimately, to the Revolution itself.”

At 3 p.m. on Dec. 12, a Henry Knox reenactor will land by boat on the shore near Lake George Battlefield Park, bringing with him a replica cannon carried on a recreated sled constructed by students from WSWHE BOCES. “Knox” and his replica artillery will be transported by horse and cart to the ruins of Fort George, where the historical Knox stayed and planned the next leg of his journey. The reenactor will speak to the crowd about Knox’s perilous journey to the south end of Lake George from Fort Ticonderoga.

At 4:30 p.m. Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Rick Atkinson will be featured during a special reception at the Holiday Inn Resort. Atkinson was recently in the area with co-directors Ken Burns and Sarah Botstein promoting the upcoming PBS docuseries “The American Revolution,” premiering Nov. 16. Signed copies of Atkinson’s latest book, “The Fate of the Day,” the second in his Revolutionary War trilogy, are available with purchase of a ticket. Local historians and history buffs of all levels will have the opportunity to mix and mingle while discussing the pivotal role Lake George played in the Revolution.

“History isn’t static on the page,” Atkinson said in a statement about his visit to Lake George. “Events like these give us the chance to experience history as a living, shared story — one that still shapes who we are as a nation.”

While the reception is a paid event with limited capacity, there will be a free public Q&A with Atkinson at 7 p.m. at Lake George High School with period music played by a quintet from the Glens Falls Symphony.

The festivities continue at 9 a.m. on Dec. 13 at Fort Edward High School where Washington County officials will gather with the replica artillery and invite the public to march along the old military road (Route 4) to the Old Fort House Museum, where the Washington County leg of the Knox commemoration will conclude with a wreath laying ceremony at 10:30 a.m.

At 1 p.m., representatives from Washington County will hand-off a ceremonial linstock and the replicas to their counterparts in Saratoga County on the Dix Bridge near one of the locations Knox and his Noble Train crossed the Hudson River. From there, the procession will march to Fort Hardy Park along the Old Champlain Canal Tow Path.

From 1 to 4 p.m. Fort Hardy Park will host a Knox festival, with living history demonstrations, draft animal rides, food, and other fun family activities. The Fort Hardy Park Visitors Center will be open and heating stations will be available for outdoor events. Once the Noble Train procession arrives, there will be an artillery demonstration to cap the day.

At 10 a.m. on Dec. 14, Saratoga will hand things over to Albany County on Peebles Island in Cohoes and the procession will continue to the Van Schaick Mansion where from 10:30 a.m. to noon there will be guest speakers, refreshments, and guided tours of the Revolutionary War site.

Beginning at 2 p.m. the Schuyler Mansion in Albany will host historical reenactments and an open house showcasing its new exhibit, “Tyrants, Tariffs, and Treachery: 1755, The Revolution Begins.”

The commemoration will continue in January 2026, when representatives from New York will gather in Rensselaer County to make the hand-off of the replica artillery and linstock to representatives

from Massachusetts, where the historical societies in that state will take up the Noble Train, culminating in a massive celebration at Dorchester Heights on March 17, 2026.

The conglomeration of counties has been meeting for over a year to coordinate the schedule, and much like Knox's task 250 years ago, it has been a Herculean in scope, albeit with much lower stakes.

"I do feel some comradery with Knox trying to figure that out," said Saratoga County historian Lauren Roberts who has been spearheading the Knox commemoration commission. "We're planning outdoor events for the middle of December. Knox was planning an incredible mission in Upstate New York, which he was unfamiliar with in December and January."

Roberts said the weather has been the most daunting factor to figure in to the commemoration, but like Knox she and the rest of the commission has relied heavily on their peers to make each event work for their particular area.

"Each county kind of has their own personality and their own claim to fame," Roberts said. "So, to let that type of thing shine through is really nice."

Roberts, speaking on behalf of all the local village, town, city, and county historians who share a stake in the Revolutionary War history of Upstate New York, said the coming years carry some very significant weight.

"It's exciting and its scary, because we have to get this right," she said. "This is the time when the spotlight is on the historians."



POST-STAR FILE PHOTO

Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Rick Atkinson will be featured during the kick-off to the 250th Henry Knox expedition commemoration in Lake George on Dec. 12.



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Saratoga County Historian Lauren Roberts, left, with Thomas Pettigrew as Henry Knox during the unveiling of the recreated sleds built by students from WSWHE BOCES, which will be used during the 250th Henry Knox expedition commemoration in December/January.