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“KEEPING HISTORY ALIVE”

The Monuments of the State’s Battlefield Park Restored

By Anthony F. Hall

As was to be expected, far fewer than the 10,000 people who attended the 1903 dedication of the Society of Colonial Wars’ monument to “The Battle of Lake George – Sept. 8, 1755,” or the 5,000 people who witnessed the unveiling of the statue of Saint Isaac Jogues in 1939, gathered in Battlefield Park on June 27 for the rededication of the park’s three monuments.

(The third, of course, is “The Mohawk Warrior,” the 1921

sculpture by Alexander P. Proctor. According to historian Bill Orzell, it was originally intended to be installed at Saratoga Spa State Park. However, that city’s reputation for vice persuaded George Pratt, the civic leader who commissioned it, to place it in the wooded glen in Lake George.)





A: The restored “The Battle of Lake George – Sept. 8, 1755.” B: Andrew Pharmer of the Kingston NY-based firm, Workshop Art Fabrication, which restored the monument; Gary Dycus, Connecticut Governor, The Society of Colonial Wars; Charles W. Neuhauser, Governor General, Society of Colonial Wars; Deanne Montgomery, executive director, Society of Colonial Wars; J. Barclay Collins II, New York Governor, Society of Colonial Wars; Ian Montgomery, chaplain, Society of Colonial Wars. C: The restored monument to Isaac Jogues.

wooded glen in Lake George.)

Nevertheless, the scores of people who were present for the rededication of the three bronze statues, refurbished at a cost of nearly \$50,000, were among those who, as Lake George Supervisor Vinnie Crocitto remarked, “keep history alive.”

“History happened here,” said John DiNuzzo, president of the Lake George Battlefield Alliance, the organization that was the driving force in the rehabilitation of the statues.

Obviously, DiNuzzo was referring primarily to the 1755 Battle of Lake George and to the construction of Fort George, the embarkation point for the armies of Abercrombie and Amherst in the late 1750s and the colonies’ largest military hospital during the Revolution.

But DiNuzzo also meant to call attention to the restoration of the park’s three monuments, which he called “a milestone, a major landmark, in the history of our Battlefield Park.”

Like much of history, it emerged from an accumulation of random events, coincidences and decisions whose outcomes were unpredictable, all of which appear, in retrospect, pieces of a deliberate plan.

The restoration of all three pieces was conducted by the Kingston NY-based firm, Workshop Art Fabrication, whose co-owner, Andrew Pharmer, is, as it happens, a Lake George native.

Pharmer’s firm was brought to the attention of the Lake George Battlefield Alliance by another Lake George native, the late

Dan George, whose career as a sculptor included making civic art for Brooklyn and Belfast as well as Lake George and Warrensburg.

According to John DiNuzzo, George contacted the Alliance in 2024 and, without being aware of the organization’s discussions with the state’s Department of

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Environmental Conservation about the need to refurbish the monuments, offered “to help spruce them up.”

Interviewed by the Lake George Mirror before his death December, 2024, George said that he had been in Lake George earlier that year to attend a great-niece’s wedding and took advantage of the opportunity to revisit the statues.

“My wife and I were walking around Battlefield Park and I was astonished by the lack of attention to the monuments,” said George. “Both Andrew and I can remember going to Battlefield Park as school kids. Name me another town the size of Lake George that has bronze statues as wonderful as these, monuments that kids can learn from and an entire community can appreciate.”

George said that Andrew Pharmer agreed that something should be done to restore the monuments.

“Andrew, who runs this huge foundry, which does top of the line, multimillion dollar projects for the most prominent artists in the country, said he would be happy to become involved,” said George. “He’s essentially volunteering his time to fix these pieces.”

“While Dan did not get to live

to see this project to completion, he was deeply gratified to know that was underway before he passed,” George’s wife Erica Marks said at the rededication ceremony. “With the completed renovation of these sculptures, a circle is closing.”

The roughly \$17,000 required to refurbish the state of Isaac Jogues – the 17th century Jesuit martyr said to have “discovered” the lake and who is credited with giving it its French name, Lac du St. Sacrement – was raised with the help of the Lake George Park Commission, which voted in December, 2024 to contribute \$9,540 to the project.

According to the Park Commission, the agency is empowered by state law not only to protect Lake George’s water quality and recreational assets, but also, to “promote the study of history, science and lore,” enabling it “to partner on this important project,” to quote from the Dec. 17 resolution.

“We were absolutely delighted that we could be involved with the renovations of the statues,” said Commission chair Ken Parker.

“The repairs are magnificent.”

The statue of Father Jogues was originally dedicated on July 4, 1939. The sculptor chosen to create the piece was Charles Keck, one of the few sculptors still creating traditional, civic

sculptures for public spaces in the 1930s and 40s, and certainly the best known. Keck was also responsible for Ticonderoga’s 1924 Liberty Monument, a gift to the town from Horace Moses.

The restoration of the statue of Sir William Johnson and King Hendrick, formally known as “The Battle of Lake George – Sept. 8, 1755,” was funded with support from the Society of Colonial Wars of New York, which commissioned the statue in the 1890s.

According to J. Barclay Collins II, New York Governor of the Society of Colonial Wars, the founders of the society “believed that it was important to honor those who defended and preserved the colony, so it is only right that we take up the task of refurbishing the memorial to Johnson and King Hendrick.

Collins said the dedication ceremony in 1903 was an event of national significance. It was attended by the governors of New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont and seven hundred US troops, who arrived by train and who marched through the Village.

According to John DiNuzzo, the restoration of the Battlefield Park’s three monuments will complement the new memorial to those who perished at Fort George in 1776 and whose



Members of the Lake George Park Commission, which helped fund the restoration of the Jogues monument: Ken Parker (chair); Kathryn Flacke Muncil; Joe Stanek; Tom Jarrett

remains were discovered in Lake George Village in 2019. The memorial, where those remains will be interred, will be dedicated in July, 2026.

“With the restoration of these sculptures, along with some improvements to Battlefield

Park made this year by the DEC, the entire park will have been given a terrific facelift that will be visible to the thousands of people we expect to all see here, drawn by the reinterment of the Revolutionary War soldiers’ remains,” said DiNuzzo.