

LAKE GEORGE MIRROR.

Established 1880

"THE QUEEN OF AMERICAN LAKES"

\$55 For 1 Year

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LAKE GEORGE AND THE INVASION OF CANADA

Lake George itself played a significant role in the invasion of Canada, in the beginning, in the middle, and in the aftermath of the campaign.

Once Congress decided to invade Canada, "Lake George emerged as a crucial water highway, carrying supplies and reinforcements for the American army during the subsequent invasion. Hundreds of barrels of pork, flour, and other provisions were transported to Fort George from Albany," says Russell Bellico, author of "Empires in the Mountains: French and Indian War Campaigns and Forts in the Lake Champlain, Lake George, and Hudson River Corridor" and "Sails and Steam in the Mountains: A Maritime and Military History of Lake George and Lake Champlain," among other books on the two lakes.

British soldiers captured by the Americans in the early weeks of the campaign were interned at Fort George – among them, Lieutenant John Andre, who was subsequently paroled and who later conspired with Benedict Arnold to hand West Point over to the British, says Bellico.

In April, 1776, the embassy to Canada, commissioned by Congress to gauge support for the American cause, the one that included Benjamin Franklin, took refuge there.

Once the invasion collapsed, Fort George became, as Bellico has shown, the largest military hospital in North America, housing the troops who had contracted smallpox during the

unsuccessful campaign.

Horatio Gates, who replaced Phillip Schuyler as commander of the Northern Army in June, wrote George Washington that the survivors were "infected with pestilence...To put this evil from us, a General Hospital is established at Fort George... where every infected person is immediately sent."

By August of that year, roughly 2,000 patients were being treated at the new hospital, with twenty to thirty dying every day.

The graves discovered in Lake George Village in 2019 are among the hundreds that held the bodies of those who died from smallpox and other diseases at the hospital.

Dr. Lewis Beebe, a 27-year-old doctor travelling back and forth between Fort Ticonderoga and his home in Massachusetts and who stopped more than once at Fort George, wrote that as of August, 1776, three hundred graves had been dug at the cemetery, which he called "the burying place." It made him "melancholy," he wrote in his journal, "to see such desolation made in our army." Troops who had not contracted smallpox were sent to Fort Ticonderoga and remained there until Burgoyne's British troops seized it in October, 1777.

A Memorial Plaza, to be constructed to hold the remains of those who died at the Fort George hospital and which were found in Lake George Village in 2019, will be dedicated in May, 2026.

