

LAKE GEORGE MIRROR.

"THE QUEEN OF AMERICAN LAKES"

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Model of French and Indian War Sloop Commissioned for Battlefield Park Visitors Center

By Anthony F. Hall

A scale model of a 70' sloop which was built on Lake George and which sailed in Lord Jeffrey Amherst's 1759 invasion of Canada is now on display in the Lake George Battlefield Park Visitors Center.

The model is scheduled to be unveiled on August 18.

According to John DiNuzzo, president of the Lake George Battlefield Park Alliance, the non-profit that manages the Visitor Center, the Lake George Park Commission will be among the groups and individuals honored at an unveiling ceremony, which is scheduled to start at 1 pm.

Without the Lake George Park Commission, the model might never have been built.

At their March 24, 2026 meeting, the Commissioners voted unanimously to contribute the funds to build the model and display case and plinth.

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."

"Three types of boats were built by the British during the French and Indian War on Lake George. We have models of two of them – the bateau and the radeau. The sloop was the third and the largest type," said Battlefield Alliance president John DiNuzzo. "With this model of the 'Earl of Halifax,' we close the loop, as it were, and have on exhibit models of every boat type larger than a canoe launched from Fort George during the wars of the 18th century."

According to a 1933 biography of Amherst, the sloop, named for the second Earl of Halifax, took up the rear in Amherst's homegrown

armada in July, 1759 – "bristling with the black muzzles of 24, eighteen pound cannons" – as the van's four columns sailed down Lake George toward Carillon, or Fort Ticonderoga.

"This sloop was of a massive size for Lake George and even for the much larger Lake Champlain" said DiNuzzo.

Construction of the sloop began in 1758 and according to Battlefield Alliance trustee Russell Bellico, author of "Sails and Steam in the Mountains: a Maritime History of Lake George and Lake Champlain," sailed from the Military Dock

at the foot of the lake on several reconnaissance missions over the course of that summer.

Throughout the winter, it lay at the bottom of the lake, deliberately scuttled, protected from the enemy by the ice, to be retrieved the following spring.

According to DiNuzzo, Bellico was the first to suggest that the Battlefield Park Alliance commissioning a model of the Earl of Halifax for the Visitors Center.

The scratch built, plank-on-frame model is the work of David A. Petty of Kingston, a New Hampshire-based professional

model maker and is similar in construction to the original.

According to Bellico, who worked with Petty during the creation of the model, the miniature replica is based on period drawings, paintings, journal entries, and contemporary descriptions of the vessel.

The model is exhibited on her launching ways, as it would have appeared freshly built in 1758.

"The model represents an era in Lake George history when American shipwrights toiled in the wilderness of contested terrain to build vessels to secure control of a continent," said Bellico.



Model of 18th century Lake George warship, "Earl of Halifax"