

ARNOLD EXPEDITION HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MAJOR COLBURN HOUSE, BOX 1775, GARDINER, ME., 04845

NEWSLETTER NO. 20

SEPTEMBER 12, 1973

DIG HANDICAPS

The 1973 season's outdoor activities got off to a poor start because of the wet and cold weather. Two scheduled digs at the Carry Ponds campsite area were rained out, although several hardy souls reported for the first dig and nine others reported for the second dig, which produced two interesting relics found near the supposed hospital site. The first was the cover from a tinder-box, uncovered by Cecil Pierce, of Southport, dating back to Revolutionary times; the other was apparently a tin drinking cup of the same period.

TRAIL PROBLEMS

On June 16th, members of this party reconnoitered the Arnold Trail through the forested area between the Carry Ponds and the Kennebec River (Wyman Lake). This section of the trail had previously been cleared for foot passage and blazed with orange-glow paint to mark the original route followed by Arnold and his army. It is now designated as a National Historic Place of approximately 195 miles as it winds through Maine.

The inspection party discovered one section of this trail on the Great Carry next to the Kennebec River had been obliterated by a woods cutting operation involving the use of 'skidders', which leaves a jungle of fallen trees, stumps, slash and ruts with no roads, or trails to follow. This unfortunate situation is now being partially corrected by the property owner, removing the debris from the trail; but the protecting corridor is gone leaving a devastating scene. The owners, obviously sincere, have expressed their regrets for the unfortunate occurrence.

The trail corridor acquisition or control project has received good cooperation from the various property owners along the route. However, this is a complex operation and requires considerable study and negotiation to reach a satisfactory arrangement with all parties. It is hoped that more progress can be made before the fall of 1975.

GRATITUDE TO PROPERTY OWNERS

A special acknowledgment of gratitude is in order to Mr. and Mrs. William P. Viles of Augusta for preserving a wilderness corridor, encompassing the Arnold Trail, through their property along the Great 12-mile Carry. It is hoped that this scenic and historical heritage will be preserved in a natural wilderness state for posterity by such public-spirited people that own and control such areas that are fast succumbing to the ravages of so-called civilization.

Maine does have such people and we are encouraged by their apparent concern and cooperation with responsible preservation interests.

FUTURE DIG PROGRAMS

All future dig programs will be scheduled according to the interest and participation of our Archaeological minded members. Letters signifying interest and intent will be required before future projects will be scheduled, with the exception of a scheduled underwater search in the Kennebec River off the Colburn Shipyard site and a dig on the bateau building site, now set for September 23.

A dig was conducted at this site on July 29th, when a baseline was laid out and a number of test pits were dug along this line. A quantity of cut rails and spikes, iron hinges, bolts and pins were recovered at the one foot level. It is believed that these were the residue from the burning of an old ice-house that stood on the spot at the turn of the 20th century. Since then the 1936 flood probably deposited the foot of sandy soil over the area.

Any relics from the Colburn shipyard would be below this level. Much more digging remains to be done to uncover these potential treasures.

Our Scuba-diving team, headed by Francis Cassidy of Winslow, and assisted by the U of M Orono team headed by Lea Nichols, Jr. of Hanover, Mass. also plan an underwater search on the Dead River at several fall sites in an attempt to recover relics and artifacts lost there in the spills occurring on the expedition. This activity is scheduled for October 14th. For further info contact Francis Cassidy at Winslow.

If ten or more members wish to go to the Carry Ponds for the final outing and dig on October 6-7, your Newsletter editor (White Nichols) will be pleased to arrange if given prompt notice. This should be the peak period for fall foliage color and no flies or mosquitoes! A dig and trail work on the agenda.

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SPONSORED EXPEDITION

On July 30th a group of six University of Michigan graduate students led by trip coordinator, Douglas Marshall, started the long trek over the route followed by Arnold from the Major Colburn Shipyard site in Pittston, Maine. They followed the water course in three canoes and, after nineteen days of harrowing experiences, arrived at Quebec City with one canoe, five survivors and new equipment to replace that lost in the angry waters of the Chaudiere.

A journal that was kept on the expedition has been promised to the Society and it is hoped will become invaluable to other potential explorers of this wilderness route, in planning and conducting their own trips. Much can be learned from the first hand experience of those that have encountered nature's rugged and fickle moods.

QUEBEC TOUR

The third annual tour to Quebec City, following the Arnold Trail as nearly as possible, was conducted on August 10-11-12 by nearly fifty Society members and their friends.

In addition to a tour of historic spots in the city, side trips were made to Saint Anne de Beaupri and the Caldwell Mill site in Levis. A delightful dinner banquet was held at our hotel, Le Chateau Laurier on the evening of our arrival.

MEETING WITH QUEBEC OFFICIALS

On Saturday evening, July 11th, six Society officials met with the Deputy Mayor Jules Blanchet of Quebec and Father Honorius Provost of the Quebec Seminary, (Our Quebec Liaison Agent) for preliminary discussions pertaining to Quebec's participation in the 1975 Reenactment.

After a dinner meeting at the Chateau Laurier, we were royally entertained at Monsieur Blanchet's lovely home.

If we consider ourselves as enthusiastic about the upcoming reenactment I am sure that we will find our Quebec friends even more so.

REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD BATEAU UNCOVERED

The AEHS is now the proud owner of an ancient bateau of Revolutionary war vintage. It was discovered this summer in the attic of an old colonial house about seven miles down river from the Major Colburn house.

The owners, Mr. & Mrs. Harland Everson, of Dresden, say that the boat was in the building at the time that Mrs. Everson's grandfather was born in 1806. This fact supported by the discovery that the vessel was assembled with hand made nails clearly indicate that it was built during the days of the American Revolution.

Because the hull had been used for grain storage in the attic of the two and one half story building was probably the only reason that this ancient craft was preserved to this day.

It was approximately eighteen feet long before the points were sawn off (possibly to get it up into the attic) and was built of three wide boards; one on each side and another for the bottom.

A replica will be made of it and both will be exhibited together. This is indeed a find of major historical significance relating to the Arnold Expedition. Our sincere thanks is expressed to the Eversons, and their daughter, Eleanor, who is a member of our Society, for their thoughtful donation of this historic relic.

FLAG GIFT

The most recent donation to our ceremonial flag collection is the beautiful State flag of Connecticut. It is a gift from Commander Edwin Williams of Stonington, Conn., who is our Connecticut State Coordinator. The flag will be on permanent exhibit with the others at the Major Colburn House in Pittston, Maine.

We hope to have the State flags of New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Rhode Island and New Hampshire added to this collection before documentary filming and the reenactment.

The AEHS Headquarters office is now established at the Major Reuben Colburn House in Pittston, Maine. It is located two and one half miles south of Gardiner; just off Route 27. The house is dark brown in color and next to the white Congregational Church, with steeple.

It is permanently occupied by our full time congenial secretary, hostess, and custodian husband Mrs. Jannice and Ray Baker. Be sure to call on us when in the area; you will usually find us in the office.

RECEPTION FOR TOWNSFOLK

Our Society played host to the residents of the town of Pittston at the Colburn House on June 23rd. An historical pageant oriented to Revolutionary days was delightfully presented on the green grounds facing the Kennebec River by the Treasure Hunt Associates of Lincoln County to an audience of nearly 300 persons. About twenty-five young lady members and neighbors dressed in Colonial attire acted as guides and hostesses for the occasion; the purpose being to acquaint the townsfolk with our plans for becoming a part of the neighborhood.

Other receptions will be held at the Colburn House for different groups and occasions.

REENACTMENT PROGRESS REPORT

Plans for the reenactment of the Arnold Expedition to Quebec (designated AEQ-75) in 1975 are now well under way with the assistance of State Coordinators from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York and Pennsylvania. Rhode Island is the latest entry with the appointment of Colonel Anthony Walker, USMC Ret. of Middletown, Rhode Island.

A military staff will coordinate and administer the reenactment activities.

Heading this staff is Colonel Thornton McGlamery of Mount Vernon, Maine. Serving on his staff is General Samuel Griffith, U.S.M.C., Ret., also of Mount Vernon; Colonel Anthony Walker, U.S.M.C., Ret. of Middletown, Rhode Island; and Colonel George Dyer of New Hope, Pennsylvania.

General Headquarters for the operation will be at the Colburn House in Pittston.

Questionnaires will be mailed to all prospective participants by mid-winter requesting final commitments and intent. The reenactment expedition will be composed of several segments. The first segment will represent the original Arnold Army of about 1150 men. This segment will be confined to authentic dress and accouterments and will play an important role in the documentary filming. All individuals and units wishing to take part in this outstanding event should indicate their wishes at the earliest moment.

The final events to be held in the Quebec area promise to be very impressive. Will you be there?

POSTAL SERVICE FAILURES

Although every effort was made to have each member receive their Newsletter, apparently about 3 to 4 % failed to receive it. The Newsletter is the most effective way of getting essential information to you. We issue them quarterly, sometimes at irregular intervals. The last was issued on June 1, 1973.

KENNEBEC RIVER CRUISE

The third Kennebec River cruise will be conducted on Sunday, September 30. It will not be postponed. If the weather conditions are severe the trip will be cancelled. Due to emergency conditions beyond our control, the cruise will start at Bath instead of Popham this year.

It should be a beautiful cruise with the fall foliage colors on display. Many migrant waterfowl, and the bald eagle should be observed as we pass along Swan Island in Merrymeeting Bay. The whole route is steeped in history. Arnold's eleven-ship fleet passed this same water course while enroute to the Major Colburn shipyard in Pittston. We shall go up-river as far as Colburn's, then drop down to Richmond to embark on buses to return to Colburns for a picnic lunch and tour of the property. On return we shall pick up our cars at the Bath Municipal parking lot on the waterfront.

Departure time at Bath is 9:00 a.m. - promptly. Estimated time of return is 5 p.m.

Our cruise ship is the "Goodtimes", a 125 passenger vessel from Boothbay Harbor and piloted by the able Captain Bob Fish, owner and operator.

Coffee and light refreshments will be served on board ship. Bring your binoculars, sunglasses, warm clothing and windbreak for a beautiful fall outing. Don't forget to bring your picnic-lunch. Coffee will be served at the Colburn House. The State Coordinators will meet at the Colburn House from 1-3 p.m.

The only reservation requirement is a check for ten dollars (\$10.00) payable to "AEHS-Boat Cruise". Mail to AEHS, Box 1775, Gardiner, Maine, 04345. NOW, please.

Happy Cruising to you all,

White Nichols, Pres. AEHS