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Arnold Expedition Historical Society

Pittston, Maine, September 2008 Newsletter 111
Edited by Daniel H. Warren, Jr.

ANNUAL MEETING

Dear Members: The 40th annual meeting of the AEHS will be held as usual on the Sunday, October 12th 2008, starting at 11:00am. We will gather at the Ground Round Restaurant, at the Holiday Inn in Augusta. A buffet lunch will be served at 12:00 noon at a cost of \$20.00 per person. Reservations must be received by October 8th. You may make your reservation by calling the society phone at 207-582-7080. Just leave a message confirming the number in your party, and then join the directors, officers, members, and guests. The Ground Round Restaurant is located on Community Drive, just off Civic Center Drive at exit 112 of I-95. This area is close to the area of Wall*Mart, just off Rt.27. Our buffet luncheon will include pickles, coleslaw, veggies, mashed potato, beef tips with gravy, baked stuffed chicken and warm French rolls, desert tray and beverages. If you need to contact the restaurant, their phone number is 207-623-0022

Jay Robbins has invited James Leeman, a retired Bates Professor and author of *Revolution Downeast*, to speak on Rev. Jacob Bailey. In the 1770s, Bailey was an Episcopal minister in the Kennebec Valley and converted to the Church of England (Anglican). He graduated from Harvard in 1755 and settled at Pownalborough where he became the region's first minister, holding the first service at Fort Western in 1763. At the outbreak of the Revolution, Bailey, a Tory, fled to Nova Scotia where he died in 1808. Among the fascinating aspects of Bailey's life is that he once dined with Benjamin Franklin in London. You can download an 1853 biography of the Reverend Bailey at the AEHS Web site:

www.arnoldsmarch.com in the "Research Room" area.

ANNUAL MEETING DISCUSSION

Every year it's a core group of members who attend the annual meeting. Other members who have an interest and are within a reasonable travel distance might also consider attending. While the meeting is a social event, it's also an opportunity for the members to help the board members and volunteers formalize the societies overall structure and future direction. This year there are two things that the members really need to provide input into. I hope many will attend and help solve lingering problems.

Election of Officers

The nominating committee is diligently working to put forth a slate of officers for the ensuing year. This year, as in years gone by, it's a challenge to find suitable candidates for the needed slate of officers. If ever anyone felt like getting involved, this would be the year. All key positions are up for consideration, with most officers very willing to let new blood have a hand at running the organization.

Colburn House Complex

Only a handful of faithful members remember when the society moved into the Colburn House, it serving as both a museum and as the society headquarters. The barn and carriage shed were included in that deal. The society has accumulated an interesting variety of artifacts and expedition re-enactment memorabilia, and has take great pride in displaying and showing these items. The Colburn House itself has been a

financial challenge for the society for many years. Decades of neglect by the state of Maine (our landlord), their lack of resources, our lack of financial resources, and the dwindling volunteer pool, has left the house ram shackled and sparsely staffed. While the fund raising campaigns of the early 1990's enabled us to put a new roof on all the buildings and to make major foundation repairs, our fund raising efforts have never been persistent enough to spruce up the building as its age and character warrants. Everyone seems to love the house, few have more than a passing interest in helping.

Directors are discussing turning the house back to the state, let the state focus on Reuben Colburn, with the hope that we might be able to use the carriage shed for our office, part of the barn for our boats, and focus the bulk of our attention on the trails. While it's obvious that as individuals this would be a painful choice to make, as a group it's likely the only financially viable choice we have. The constant struggle to care for the Colburn House, both structurally and operationally (lack of volunteer docents), has divided the board, consumed way too much ongoing planning and, and is just beyond our present financial capacity. It helps the board of directors if we can reach a solution that is good for the society, the public and all those who have such a keen interest in preserving the story of Reuben Colburn and Benedict Arnold.

TRANS-CANADA GRANT

The full-color, poster-sized map of the Arnold Trail from Wyman Lake to the Canadian border and beyond is half done. This map, created by the Center for Community GIS (geographic information systems) of Farmington, will be a great resource for those seeking to retrace the route of the expedition through its most undeveloped region. It will have a detailed and accurate computer-generated map on one side and text and photos of the expedition on the reverse. The finishing touch, which is in progress, is the written text which is to include history of the expedition, and the AEHS. While the narrative text is largely undone, this map should help the society raise awareness about the expedition and our work to maintain the trails in that region.

TRAIL WORK

There are new pressure-treated stairs at the Nichols cabin thanks to Ron Gammon and his son John who noticed that Plum Creek has been cutting along the road all the way in after Wyman Lake. The board of directors noted that AEHS members should be thinking about the next trail cleanup "work bee" to be held in early May 2009.

PAINT AT LAST

Much of the Colburn House has now received a new coat of maroon paint. In the process, workers have examined the sheathing and timber framing of the house to see what it may need for work in the future. Both gable ends of the house have been painted and those areas which had been primed white after some siding work after the last restoration projects has also be painted. Windows are getting new caulking and will be painted at a later date. The AEHS board voted to contribute \$2,000 from the restoration fund to pay for the labor and scaffolding for the project. Virtually none of the C.1840 clapboard siding needed replacing.

SIGNAGE

MDOT has placed a new "yardarm" sign out on Route 27 and another identical sign with a shorter post has been placed near the end of the walkway leading to the main entrance of the Colburn House. These signs will have smaller informational signs that can be hung on the bottom with hooks such as, "tours this weekend" or "event this weekend" etc. announcing future events. The AEHS carved sign has been moved

closer to the Carriage House in a better line of sight to approaching visitors now that the trees are removed.

TREE REMOVAL

Another large piece of one of the maple trees near the Pittston Congregational Church fell down earlier this summer. When the tree-cutting crew arrived, and at the direction of the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, they went ahead and removed all of the driveway trees that needed to be eliminated. Some were dead and others threatened the power-lines coming to the house. The result is a much more open appearance of the property as one arrives from Route 27.

ARNOLD BEDROOM

New displays in the Arnold Bedroom of the Colburn House are now in place. A full-sized mannequin now sports Arnold's uniform while four torsos wear the uniforms of a rifleman, a minuteman, a continental infantryman, and a mountain man in full buckskin. The buck skinner may find a home on a seated mannequin in the keeping room soon to represent a fur-trader in the Kennebec Valley in the 1760s.

NEW PICNIC AREA

The Bureau of Parks and Lands Wildlife Biologist did some research and determined the best way to rid the riverfront of the bamboo-style invasive plants known as Japanese Knotweed. He did one spraying in June and has sprayed a different chemical in late August. So far this regimen appears successful and the open field may again be open rather than overtaken by seven-foot tall plants every summer.

In mid-July, Dick Condon of Dick's Heavy Equipment in Chelsea was kind enough to donate an entire day of his time and a bulldozer to carefully clean up the area around the old Allen House foundation, including filling in the cellar hole for safety reasons. Dick got a little help from the Jewett Builders across Route 27 in his efforts.

The area where the Allen House once stood is now a beautiful plateau just perfect for picnicking. The Bureau of Parks and Lands has dumped off three picnic tables and planted some grass. Soon some apple trees will be added to make the area a beautiful spot to have a lunch.

BARN UPDATE

The AEHS board also approved the re-opening of the center drive-through area of the Colburn House barn by removing the second floor in the center area and using the lumber to replace the badly deteriorated flooring on the ground floor. There will still be a U-shaped loft on the second floor to connect the two staircases. The large lumbering-era bateau that now occupies this floor space upstairs will remain in the same area, only hanging from the ceiling by wires rather than sitting on the floor. It should make an impressive sight for visitors who come to the old "boat museum."

A Maine family has donated several wooden casks and barrels that can be used to help "fit out" one of the bateaux so it will appear as it would have during the expedition. The old Hilton panels will continue to provide a self-guided tour of the barn's upper floor.

The Bureau has foresters looking for standing hemlock so that it can provide us with 12" x 12" beams to replace the barn's sill.

QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS: Contact the society at the above address or:

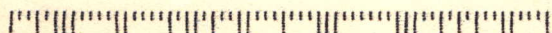
SOCIETY PRESIDENT & TREASURER

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AEHS MEMBERSHIP CLASSES:

Individual	\$ 20.00
Family	\$ 25.00
Contributing	\$ 50.00
Life	\$ 200.00

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