

# EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ARNOLD EXPEDITION  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Spring, 2009



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### AEHS 2009 SUMMER ACTIVITIES

MAY 9 Trail Clearing Trip, Great Carrying Place  
JUNE 6 Director's Meeting, Colburn House  
AUGUST 29 Member Barbeque and Social  
SEPTEMBER 12, Artifact Hunt, Chain of Ponds

### Trail Clearing Trip to Carry Ponds.

On **May 9<sup>th</sup>, a Saturday**, we will hold a trail clearing work bee to clear the Great Carrying Place portage trail from Wyman Lake to East Carry Pond. Blowdowns and annual growth will be cleared.

The trip will be lead by AEHS Director, Ron Gamage. Rusty Arsenault will also be assistant leader. This is a one day trip and will go rain or shine. Bring your own tools, such as clippers, saws or chain saws and of course, a trail lunch and water.

As this is not easy to reach, those contemplating joining the group, should contact Ron to receive directions as to where and when to meet. He will also provide details on the task at hand. If we are successful, this will open up the portage trail for summer hikers. Bring rain gear, although Ron assures us that the sun will be out. Contact Ron at his home phone. (207) 474-3503. Hope we can get a good crew. Many hands make light work.

### Directors to Meet.

On **June 6<sup>th</sup>, a Saturday** the AEHS directors will meet at the Colburn House property in Pittston. The meeting will begin at 10:00 AM until noon. A bring your own lunch will follow.

At 1:00 PM, a tour of the property will be conducted by the State Parks and Lands personnel to show the various projects underway during the 2009 season. After, a short new 18 minute film describing the Expedition will be shown.

We invite any members to attend and join us for the full time, or maybe just the lunch and tour. It will be a chance for members to get to know the directors and visa versa. Call the president, Steve Clark for more information. (207) 636-1769.

**Did You Know That** Lt. Col. Roger Enos, commander of the rear three companies that turned back on the Dead River, faced only a Court of Inquiry upon his return at headquarters in Cambridge. He never faced a formal Court Marshall. The men who might have testified against him for his actions, were fighting and dying at Quebec. He never held command again.

### HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- 2009 AEHS Summer Activities
- Arnold's Connection to Barbados
- Dennis Getchell's Scouting Report
- John Rodrique, One Tough Guy
- New AEHS Director Elected
- Reuben Colburn, reprinted from 1975



## **First AEHS Membership Summer Get together, August 29.**

Over the past years, the only way for the membership to communicate is through the one-way newsletter.

This year, the Society has arranged for a late summer social meeting in the form of a barbeque at the Colburn House in Pittston. A full day of activities is planned. Here it is!

**August 29** (a Saturday) it begins at the historic Colburn House in Pittston, just off Route 27.

**10:00 AM**, tour of the property by AEHS leaders to view the many improvements made by the State Parks & Lands during the past few months. This will include repairs to the Carriage House to be used as the new Society meeting place, repairs to the Colburn House itself, the new presentation of the bateaux museum, Arnold's bedroom, other displays and a walk around the grounds.

**11:00 AM**, a short meeting of the Society will be held and a chance to meet many of the directors and long time members. This will be followed by a short 18 minute color film regarding the Expedition, that has just been produced this year.

**12 noon**, a chicken barbeque, with all the fixings followed by a period to just relax and socialize.

**1:00 PM** We will take our cars and travel ten miles north to Fort Western in Augusta. There we will have a special tour of the fort and a discussion of the Army's five day encampment here in September of 1775. There will be live demonstrations of activities of the Colonial period by members of Old Fort Western in period costumes. The tour here will last until 3:00 PM when we will head home. We hope this will be well attended as it will be both fun and informative. We will be able to learn much of the men of the Expedition's stay at both the Colburn House and at Fort Western, where the army embarked on its journey northward, through the Wilderness to reach Quebec.

So that we can order the correct quantities of food and make arrangements to accommodate those who plan to attend, we ask that you contact Sherri Clark, at her home in Shapleigh, Maine. She will be able to provide more detailed information about activities. You can reach her at

599 Shapleigh Corner Road, Shapleigh, Maine 04076 or by Phone, (207) 636-1769 or by email at [<scspringhill@metrocast.net>](mailto:scspringhill@metrocast.net). Call no later than August 10. As this will be the only newsletter before the event, this will be your only notice. We look forward to having a great time together.

## **Chain of Ponds Artifact Hunt.**

On Sept. 12, a Saturday, Dude Wing will lead an artifact hunt in the Chain of Ponds area. He and others have spent past years in discovering metal artifacts including hundreds of musket balls. We will have at least two metal detectors, hopefully more. D-6 bulldozers are not needed, just some good detective work, common sense, and a shovel or two to dig when the detectors go off. We should have a great time. Good weather guaranteed

We will meet at the Arnold roadside marker at the Cathedral Pines Campground in Eustis, at 8:30 AM. But it is imperative that you pre-check with the trip leader, Dude Wing before hand to coordinate meeting details.

His address and phone number are below. He does not have an email. Duluth Wing, 1301 Arnold Trail Eustis, Maine 04936  
Tel. (207) 246-6211



## Benedict Arnold's Connections to Barbados

From the Journal of the Barbados Museum and Historical Society.

*[Ed. Note; This historical reference was submitted for publication by AEHS Director, **Guy C. Grant** who often visits Barbados and is an historian of that area.]*

Arnold's Mill, Barbados is a very old building. It has borne this name from time immemorial. One William Arnold (correctly Wm. Arnold) -(it is said) was the first Englishman who landed in Barbados. He died in 1688 and is buried at All Saints Chapel, St. Peter. (The inscriptions on his tomb will be found on Page 398 of Capt. Lawrence Archer's "Monumental Inscriptions of The British West Indies").

The mill [a sugar mill] is all that remains of the plantation buildings, which it is said were burnt down by a well-known character named, "The Outlaw Downes," (the owner) to be revenged on his creditors. He is alleged to have fought a duel with Sir Reynold Alleyne. Note: A Lt. Colonel Richard Downes was a member of the Assembly in 1699- (cal. of State Papers America & W. I. 1699.)

Arnold is of interest to Americans because he is a direct ancestor of the notorious/heroic Benedict Arnold of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), a hero of the battle of Saratoga and guilty of plotting to betray the position of West Point to the British.

Furthermore, the surviving mill wall is unique in that it possesses a flue or built-in chimney with a hearth some 9 feet above floor level where coconut oil may have been burned to provide light for night operations. The flue exited 8 feet from the top of the mill wall which is 28 feet high. Being ancient, it had vertical grinding drums rather than later mills that had horizontal grinding drums. The unique flue is a feature in common with one smaller grist mill in Rhode Island, reputed to have been built by Gov. Benedict Arnold [ the grandfather of our Arnold of Revolutionary fame].



Arnold's Sugar Mill, Barbados

**Did You Know That:** Benedict Arnold was a fine seaman, and was the Commander of a small American fleet that fought an important delaying action at Valcour Island on Lake Champlain.



**Dennis Getchell's Scouting Report**

*[Ed. Note. This is a copy of a letter transcribed by then Capt. Reuben Colburn to Gen. Washington and Col. Arnold. Arnold used key information contained in this letter to plan the march. Three points are quite interesting. First, it took Getchell and Berry only five days from Vassalboro, up the Kennebec to reach the Great Carrying Place. It took the army ten. Second, he completely left out one of the Kennebec portages, at Ticonic Falls and the many portages on the Dead River.. Third, his conclusions regarding the allegiance of the Indian he met at the Camp of Natanis was the basis of Arnold's statements to Church and Steele, who lead the army's advanced parties that Natanis was a English spy and was to be dealt with harshly.]*

Vassalboro Sept. 13. 1775

Sir,

In compliance with your Orders I proceed:  
with Mr. Barry on our intended Journey to Quebec as follows. Friday Sept. 1st: we set out and got on Saturday 2nd to Howard's at Skowheign Falls 24 Miles distance, Rainy weather; Sunday 3rd: we arrived at Norridgwalk 12 miles distance, rainy weather; Monday 4th: we arrived at Carrytunk? Falls, 18 Miles distance, Swift water & shoal; Tuesday 5th: we reached the great Carrying: place, Water shoal & swift, distance 18 Miles; Wednes: day 6th: we got to the Third Pond is the great Carrying place, distance 9 Miles; Thursday 7th: we arrived at an Indian Camp 30 Mile up Dead River, good water there we got intelligence of an Indian that he was stationed there by Govr. Charlton as a Spy to watch the motions of an Army, or Spies, that was daily expected from New England: that there were spies on the Head of Chau:dare River, & down the River some distance there was Stationed a Regular Officer & six Privates-He possitively declared that if we proceeded any farther he would give information of ?

suspicious of our Designs, as otherwise he should Betray the trusts reposed in him. But not: withstanding his threats, we thought it of Moment to get all possible intelligence, & went the 8th: 30 Miles up the River aforesaid, but finding the Water partly shoal, and making with nothing new, we returned to the Camp\_ Upon our first arrival at the Camp our Indian Pilot thought it dangerous to proceed any farther, & declined going with us\_ in the time of our absence he conferred with an Indian Squaw\_ of whom we got intelligence that all the young indians from that Quarter had gone to Johnson, but the Indian trade a commission from Charlton, that at ? the uppermost Settlement on Chaudiere River there was a great number of Mohawks that would have destroyed us if we had proceeded, & that the spy hourly expected the arrival of three canoes of Indians We found the Carrying Places greatly passable, the water in general shoal, on account of the late dry season; the Trees were well marked as far as we went, & the way is so direct as maybe easily found-

Orders, & to the utmost of our power have we proceeded on our intended Tour & are with Esteem Sir\_ Your humble Srvt.

Dennis Getchell      Samuel Barry

The above is a copy of a letter I drafted for the above Gentlemen\_ and at the request of Mr. Getchell, I now send it by the Bearer; I am Sir

Your obs.

Mr. Reuben Colburn



## JOHN RODRIQUE, ONE TOUGH GUY

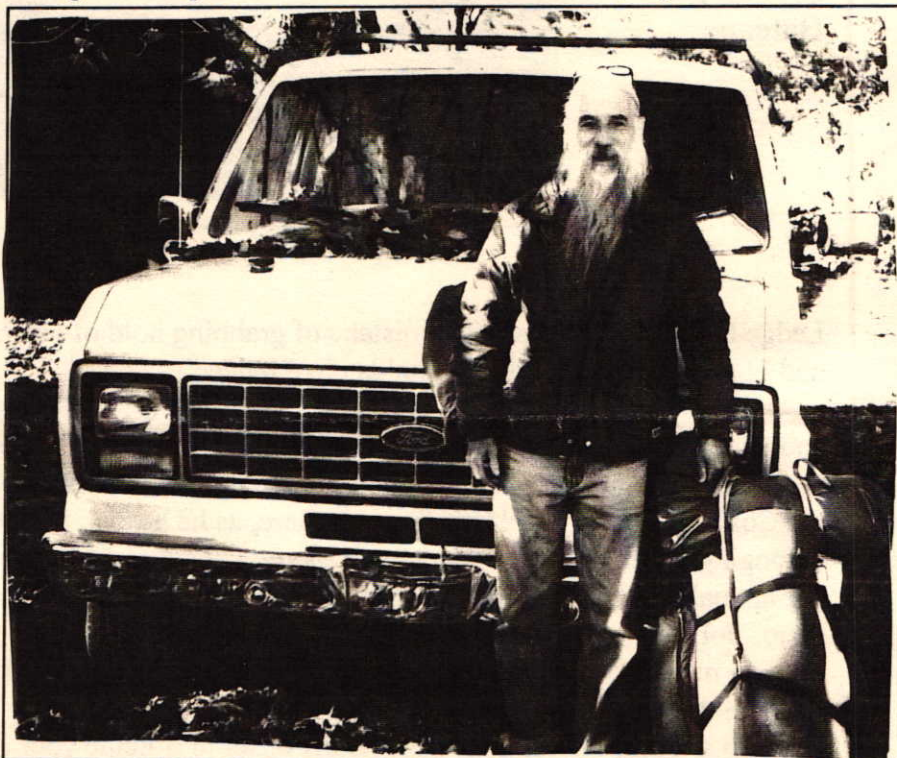
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By Dude Wing, 2009

I got word from Dan Warren in the fall of 2005 that a guy was leaving the Colburn House in a small rowboat to do the Arnold Trail. Fall and rainy weather was upon us as was cold temps. I figured he'd turn back at about Fairfield - was I wrong!! Time went by and nobody heard from him. I was uneasy about his plight. Then he phoned me from Stratton one evening saying he was getting "warm and a bite to eat." It was still cold and rainy when I went to meet him. John sported a long grey beard and a short pony tail - had a slight build and appeared very much like one of Arnold's men as they came out of the wilderness at Sartigan!

His boat and few belongings were overturned in the bushes near the bridge at Stratton and he said he'd be okay sleeping under his boat that night as he planned to continue up river at day light.

So far I've been using the term boat very loosely! He said he built it from a sheet of plywood! Plywood comes in 8ft lengths! It was square on both ends with one seat in the middle. I must dwell here a minute to tell you my experience with small boats. My father built all types of boats and I was trapping muskrats in Flagstaff at about age 12 when I asked him to make me a small boat I could drag overland to some of my secret muskrat haunts. He said, "I don't build boats shorter than 16 feet - they are what I call frog coffins. And besides, if you don't come home some night I'll have to fish you off the bottom of the river and that would make your mother mad!"



John's boat was a frog coffin indeed! It also had tin tacked over its bottom which was pretty well ripped up from the Kennebec ledges. His oars were home made and clumsy at best. Cecile Pierce would of shuddered!!

I asked him how he dared to head across Flagstaff Lake and he said, "It was scarey - I took on water." I later met a friend who has a camp on one of the Carry Ponds and he said he made John accept a life preserver! I doubt he wore it.

I showed John a small cabin I have down on the river near here and he spent the next night there and I took him to Chain of Ponds by car to show him the hardships along the river in hopes he'd give it up til spring but he was gone again at day light with a new ankle deep snowfall and 20 degree temperatures.

I lost track of him again. My cousin runs a store at Coburn Gore and she told me this guy, who knows me, had gone across the border carrying a "bathtub" boat. John later told me he overturned near

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John  
Rodrique's  
Bateaux



Ledge Falls when he made the mistake of grabbing hold of alders on the river bank which upset his boat, and I had to think, "just like Arnolds men, indeed"

Many cold nights later, John phoned me from Megantic saying he was leaving his over turned boat and knapsack at the public park and hitchhiking to Eustis. I offered to come get him but he said he'd see me in Eustis tomorrow. Betty fed him well, like she had before and I offered to take him to his van at the Colburn House. I bid him farewell there, as he headed back to Megantic to pick up his boat and belongings which we hoped were still there. I again saw him about a year later at the Ground Round at our annual meeting. He said his things were still covered with snow in Megantic when he got back there. John is an active life member off AEHS.

In my next life if I'm called to go with Arnold to Quebec, I hope John Rodrique will be with us to help me through!

p.s. John - if you read this, I don't mean to ridicule your boat, but it appeared very inadequate - again, like Arnold's!

**Arthur Spiess Elected to AEHS Board of Directors.**

Arthur Spiess received a PhD in Anthropology from Harvard University in 1978. Since 1978 he has been employed by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission as an archaeologist. The Commission job involves locating, identifying and protecting significant archaeological sites, including nomination of sites to the National Register of Historic Places. Review of development projects and requiring archaeological survey, legislation and regulations, and land conservation and land planning are all major parts of his job.

For about 25 years Spiess has been on the Board of The Maine Archaeological Society, and he serves as the Editor of *Archaeology of Eastern North America* for the Eastern States Archaeological Federation.

Arthur Spiess lives in Freeport, with his wife, Martha, a retired veterinarian. They both enjoy trips to the north Maine woods, and archaeological fieldwork. Arthur Spiess lives in Freeport, with his wife, Martha, a retired veterinarian. They both enjoy trips to the north Maine woods, and archaeological fieldwork.



## Reuben Colburn

*[Ed. Note: This is a reprint of a 1975 article written by Cecil Pierce, one of the founders of the Society. Cecil was a skilled carpenter and boat builder and constructed several of the bateaux now in the collection at the Colburn House. He and Dude Wing were the first known men in modern times to follow the route of the Expedition by canoe from the mouth of the Kennebec to Quebec City. It is reprinted here to honor his great contributions to the general understanding of the Expedition's place in history.]*

Reuben Colburn, unlike that other great landowner across the river from him, Sylvester Gardiner, was a staunch Patriot and well known as such to those who were dedicated to freedom in Boston and other parts. He was destined to be, next to Arnold, the most important man as regards to the expedition to Quebec. For without the drive of this man, there would not have been built the crucial bateaux.

In 1759, the formidable Wolfe had taken the fortress of Quebec with a resulting treaty, in 1763, signed by France giving up Canada. This was the end of the French and Indian War. The Redman was no longer a menace to Maine lands. It was this year, and undoubtedly the cessation of hostilities, that brought Reuben Colburn and others to Gardinerston on the Kennebec.

He settled on two hundred and fifty acres on the East Side of the river, where the town of Pittston is today. Here he proceeded to build a shipyard, and back of it, on an eminence, a fine dominating home, which stands today much as it was originally built. Indeed, he must have been a man of extraordinary energy and prevision, for in the next ten years he was to acquire additional land by the square mile.

In August of 1775, Colburn made three trips, by horseback, to Cambridge where planning for a Quebec campaign was going on. He acted as a consultant on all matters relative to the route, type of conveyance, and availability of provisions on the Kennebec. On the third trip he brought home with him an order, the likes of which few men, then or later, would have had the courage to accept; an order to construct 200 bateaux complete with 800 oars, 400 paddles, 400 setting poles, all to be, of course, hewn out by hand.

When completed, the bateaux placed end to end would reach up the river a mile! In about 20 days, Arnold and 1100 men would be in Gardinerston for them. That journey home, which was to take two of his precious days, must have been laden heavily with thoughts of accomplishing this tremendous task of construction. Where would he get twenty thousand board feet of long wide boards? Would the sparse working population, half of them Torys, rise to the occasion? It would take thousands of hand made nails; and the iron to forge them from. Were they available? Of one thing he was certain, this bountiful region had an unlimited supply of virgin pine and oak needing only to be cut and sawed. But would the water power mills on the Little Nahumkeag Stream, and Togus Stream, up river, have enough water running, in late summer, for operation?

We, today, only know that he was successful in mastering all problems for when Arnold and the expedition arrived, the boats were ready.

Later he would become Major Colburn. After the Revolution, this influential man was a very successful shipbuilder and lumber producer; active as a town officer and the region's first Representative to the General Court.



### **Renovations to Colburn House to be Celebrated on June 20 At An Open House**

The Bureau of Parks and Lands, who own and manage the historic Colburn House in Pittston, have been hard at work this past winter and spring, making major renovations to the property. Sills on the Carriage House, new wiring, new painting, re-arrangements to the barn, to better display the bateaux and other artifacts, and new work within the main house have been underway. It is the greatest improvements to the property in many years.

On June 20, a Saturday, there will be an open house to view the many changes. All Society members as well as the public at large are invited.

Under the guidance of Tom Desjardin, P & L Historian, there will be tours to highlight these changes. There will be craft demonstrations, flintlock musket firings. We also hope to have reenactors in period costumes. The Pittston Historical Society will also have an open house at the nearby Colburn Red Brick School House.

The Open House will run from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM and refreshments will be served. Plan to come to see the many improvements.

For further information, call Tom at the P & L office within the Dept. Of Conservation in Augusta (207) 287-4975 or <Tom.Desjardin@maine.gov>.

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