

EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARNOLD EXPEDITION
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



September, 2009

New Arnold Route Map Completed

In late July, the long awaited route map for the 1775 Arnold Expedition Trail was completed. It is a four color illustrated map showing the route of the Expedition from the Upper Kennebec River to Lac Megantic in Canada. This portion of the route was chosen to allow a more detailed description rather than the smaller scale of the entire route from Cambridge to Quebec. Also, this was the most critical portion of the route, and the part which is still relatively undeveloped.

On this map is the Great Carrying Place, the Dead River, much of which is now under the impoundment of Flagstaff Lake. It also shows the many critical portages along the Dead River's North Branch including Ledge Falls and Camp Disaster, where the Expedition was hit by a hurricane. Also shown is the Chain of Ponds, the final portage over the Height of Land and finally the break-up of the Expedition near Lac Megantic.

The map is a topographical on one side, showing many details of the route. On the backside is guide information on current hikes, canoe routes and other historical data.

The map was designed and produced by the Center for GIS in Farmington, Maine and assessed by a number of AEHS directors including Dude Wing, Steve Clark and Tom Desjardin. At this time, free copies have been sent to all AEHS members, by vote of the Directors. If you inadvertently have not received your copy, by all means contact us and we will correct this oversight. Additional copies may be ordered from the AEHS Secretary, Sherri Clark. Also, the Society has a supply of unfolded maps which are suitable for wall mounting or framing. They will make great gifts for all occasions. See the order form on the back of the newsletter.

Major Renovations At The Colburn House.

In 2009 the Colburn House has seen major renovations conducted by the State Bureau of Parks and Lands under the supervision of Tom Desjardin. These renovations are extensive and apply to all three buildings. They are the most extensive undertaken in many years.

They include the following projects;

- Complete burial of all utility lines restoring the property's rustic appearance.
- Restored, replastered and repainted the Arnold Bed Room, Dining and front hall..
- A major rebuilding of the Keeping Room Fireplace and the wooden surrounding..

Continued.... page 4

Highlights in this issue

- New Route Map Produced.
- Major Renovations at Colburn's
- Annual Meeting Scheduled
- Election of Directors
- Middle Carry Work Report
- Trail Clearing Trip to Carry Ponds
- History: The Bigelow Firetower

by John Parsons

AEHS Annual Meeting Scheduled

The Annual Meeting of the Society has been scheduled for Sunday, October 11th at the Ground Round Restaurant in Augusta, Maine.

A director's meeting will be held at 10:00 AM. Any member is welcome to attend this meeting. After, lunch may be obtained on their own at the adjoining restaurant

The business meeting and election of officers and some directors will begin at 1:00 PM. Reports of this busy year of activities will be reviewed as well as discussions on activities for next year. We encourage members to attend.

After the business meeting is concluded we have a real treat for all attendees. Jay Adams, Executive Director of the nearby Old Fort Western will speak to us regarding the Expedition's stay at Fort Western. He will also discuss the comparisons between known facts and folk lore that develops over time. He is one of the foremost authorities on Kennebec Valley history, particularly as it pertains to what was then known as Cusnoc. It promises to be a most interesting presentation.

There will be no charge for members and guests. A noon meal can be purchased at the Ground Round Restaurant

The site is easy to reach as it is just off I-95 from the Augusta North, exit. Go south towards Augusta and turn into Civic Center Drive. The Ground Round Restaurant is in the same building as the Holiday Inn. The meeting will be in the function room.

We look forward to seeing and socializing with members at this meeting. Plan to be there! Good weather assured!

Officers and Directors to be elected

The nominating committee under long time director, Robert Cunningham has presented a slate of officers to be voted upon at the Society's annual meeting on Oct. 11, 2009. The slate of officers to be voted upon for a one

year term is:

President:	Stephen Clark
Vice President:	John (Jay) Robbins
Secretary:	Sherri Clark
Treasurer:	Robert Cunningham.

Directors to be voted upon for a new three year term are as follows:

Thomas Desjardin
Ronald Gamage
John (Jay) Robbins
Duluth Wing

Nominations from the floor are accepted under our by-laws.

Middle Carry Work Report

Bob Donovan and Sara Camenga traveled to the cabin at Middle Carry Pond on June 20, 2009 for a clean up day. This is their report.

"The major project was the storage area under the couch. We opened the lid - Bob screamed - it was a six foot mouse nest. How do such tiny creatures make such a big smelly mess? Droppings, feathers, dust, unbelievable! Unfortunately, most of the stored items were unsalvageable because they were caked with droppings and urine. I wore gloves and filled nine trash bags. I kept having to escape the smell and dust and go out on the porch to breathe for a while. This is how you catch hangovers! The items that had to be discarded included bedding, life preservers, and what appeared to be rubber blow up mattresses or boats. There were three orange cushions that I cleaned with Lysol and aired outside hoping they would be usable. They still smelled when we left but we will check them on our next visit. I could not bring myself to discard the moose antlers but they REALLY smelled. I soaked them in the pond, scrubbed them with Lysol and left them in the sun. After all the nest material was removed from the couch I brushed all the mouse droppings out of the tight corners with a gloved hand, swept and then scrubbed with Lysol repeatedly. See couch before and (continued next page)

Middle Carry Work Report, contuned...

Page 3

after pictures. As you can see, it looks much improved but take my word, it still smells. We think the smell hung around because of the damp weather and lack of breeze. What we need is a dry windy day but it doesn't look too hopeful for a while. We left the top open to air out.

Then I moved on - all of the clothes on the shelf in the back room had to be discarded due to mouse nests. See clothing before and after pictures. I also cleaned the sink in the middle storage area and swept everywhere.

Meanwhile, Bob picked up the gas tank from John Gamage and hooked it up. The burners and lights work. We didn't use the fridge. Bob swept the pine needles off the roof and noted a leak around the chimney flashing. He washed the windows and painstakingly cleared all the window tracks.

Our work accomplished we enjoyed a canoe ride and a hike to East Carry Pond via the Arnold Trail. For dinner we cooked shish kabob on the grill and had some-mores for dessert. The next morning we ate three quarters of a pound of bacon with eggs and hash browns. The smell didn't dampen our appetites!

Next project: clean the storage area that leads to the back room. This area was dark and scary (picture was taken with a flash) with evidence of mice and spiders. Another challenge and I like a challenge! It also might make sense to go through some of the cupboards - how old are those packets of relish and mustard anyway?

By the way, we did not see a single living mouse. The Decon has been effective, at least for now. There were several carcasses but that is what the broom is for. We

Plan to bring mothballs on our next trip."



AEHS Nichols Cabin, Middle Carry Pond

Page 4 **Renovations....continued from page 1**

- Improved and renovated all historic exhibits in the main house.
- Applied a grant of \$5000 to renovate and set up an exhibit in the Birthing Room on Martha Ballard and midwifery. The generous grant was awarded by the Maine Humanities Council.
- Extensive renovations of the caretaker's quarters including all new wiring, a new kitchen, bathroom, and all new floors.
- Renovated the main Entry Area. Did extensive scraping and painting of both the main house and Carriage House of both surrounds of doors and windows.
- Installed new sills and floor supports on the Carriage House.
- Cut several large trees that were decaying and threatening the property. Stumps were also ground up.
- Installed new signs on Route 27 and in front of the property.
- Installed a new interpretive sign on the lawn.

In addition, two other major projects will be done later this fall. The Barn will be jacked up two feet and all decaying sills will be replaced. After this is done, a rearrangement of the Bateau Museum will be undertaken. At the Kennebec River's edge, four new picnic shelters will be constructed so that boaters can stop there for a picnic and walk up to the Colburn House.

On June 20, the Bureau held an open house at which many demonstrations and displays of 1800's activities were conducted. More than 300 attended the day long event.

The AEHS contributed more than \$ 7,000 from its Restoration Fund for this work, however, the bulk of the money to do these extensive renovations were allocated from the Maine Department of Conservation, Bureau of Parks and Lands under the guidance of Tom Desjardin.

The Colburn property is now as good as it has been in this generation and future projects will upgrade the property to its rightful place as a major 18th century historical site within Maine. The

Society would like to sincerely thank Tom Desjardin and the many members of his crew that have accomplished this exemplary work. The spirit of the Colburn family must be well pleased.

Trail Clearing Trip to The Great Carrying Place, A Great Success

On May 11, the weather cooperated and an AEHS crew of ten worked on the old Great Carrying Place Portage Trail from Wyman Lake (Kennebec River) to the shore of Middle Carry Pond. The weather was perfect and no black flies!

Leaders Ron Gamage and Rusty Arsenault divided the crew into three groups and we covered different sections of the total three and a half miles of trail that had to be cleared. Ron said it was the biggest crew he could remember that had been out on the trail. The crews found many blowdowns and bush that needed to be cleared, but with three chain saws and a new chain brush cutter, it was cleared thoroughly and efficiently.

Don and Steve had gone up to the cabin several days earlier to do some repairs on the cabin and to clear the 0.8 mi. section from Middle Carry to East Carry Ponds.

The trail is now open and the new orange blazing and new directional signs, make the trail a pleasure to follow. We even thought we heard some of the Expedition's men mumbling that they wish we were around a few years ago to clear trail for them.

Those that participated were Ron Gamage and son John, Rusty Arsenault, Jeremy Whittemore and daughters

Ashley and Emily, John Miller and son Sam, Don Howard and Steve Clark. Five of this number were new to the Society and will receive well deserved gift memberships.

We finished in mid afternoon and gathered at the Nichols Cabin on Middle Carry Pond to socialize a while before heading home. Two loons added their two cents worth as well. About the time we headed home, a heavy shower came in from the west to remind us how lucky we had been.

All in all, a very successful and fun trip.

Bigelow Fire Tower and Trails

By John Parsons, Member of Board of Directors,
Arnold Expedition Historical Society

Page 5

This article is intended to shed a little light on the Bigelow fire tower and the trails leading up to it. This information comes from Duluth Wing, a great friend of many, and an even greater friend to the forests of Maine, for Duluth (Dude) had served in three capacities: Watchman, Ranger and District Forest Ranger, for 38 years, 1947-1984. This article is dedicated to him for his hard work and dedicated service to the Maine Forest Service.

The first continually manned fire tower in the United States was built in Maine on Squaw Mountain in 1905. The Bigelow fire tower soon followed. At 4088 feet, East Peak (Avery Peak) on Mt Bigelow was the obvious place to locate this first line of defense. Although West Peak is 4150 feet, strategically, East Peak was the right place to put the tower because of fire detection coverage. Both peaks are barren - no tree growth. The conditions according to Dude are similar to the conditions of the artic. To me, that sounds like, just plain COLD! The view is ideal. In fact, because of the terrain and some logical thinking on Dude's part, this tower is not very tall at all. It stands off the ground on top of a tall stone masonry foundation. That was tall enough, especially because past towers suffered ruination from severe icing. The view was perfect.



The current stone tower at Avery Peak

There were 3 fire towers constructed on East Peak. The 1st one, soon after the 1905 Squaw Mountain tower, was a wooden cab on steel

legs. The 2nd tower was built in 1917 and was a 38 foot steel tower. But, in 1962, Dude constructed a new tower, a 12 ft by 12 ft western style building. Now remember that I said Dude was a hard worker. OK, that winter, Dude, alone, constructed a new building inside the forestry headquarters, which was previously the Town of Eustis schoolhouse. This structure as stated was built in a western style wood structure, with windows and insulation and equipped with lightning protection.



Old Tower with steel legs and wooden cab

Now to me, building a fire tower as a winter project several miles away, in town, sounds a bit like building a yacht in the basement, only more difficult. Well, Dude had a plan. Upon completion, the tower was taken apart, piece by piece, in about 150 pound bundles and flown to the top of East Peak by a SMALL Bell helicopter, piloted by George Johnson of the Maine Forest Service. Dude and watchman, Bill Conner reassembled the entire building, piece by piece. But first, there needed to be a foundation. So, with tools and torch, the old tower and steel structure was taken apart and the steel was reused in the construction of the new foundation. The concrete and gravel used for this foundation also was flown up the mountain by helicopter. The stones were gathered and mined nearby. This effort indeed took the helicopter to task as it strained and was barely able to reach the heights. Let me mention too that the water for the concrete did not come easy either. It was lugged a 1/3 of a mile up hill out of the col spring, while rain water was also collected with tarps. Nothing was easy! And after 188 man days the tower was completed. Unmanned, it still stands to this day as a wonderful historical reminder of the

Page 6 Continued.... from page 5

way life used to be for many; and because of its existence and because of the men that served on this mountain, many a fire was discovered and extinguished, to the salvation of this beautifully forested country.

To give a little credit to some of the watchmen serving in these towers I mention the following names according to Duluth Wing: Ben Safford, 1924-1929, Herbert Blackwell, 1930-1932, Everett Parsons – years unknown, Bill Conner, for some 10 years, dates unknown, Stillman Johnson, 1945 or 46, (Stillman and his wife lived in a log cabin up top) Franklin Sargent, 1948 and 49 and, Duluth (Dude) Wing, 1947 and 49. Dude had reported at least 3 fires, using an instrument called an Alidade table (a brass and glass covered sighting table with map and compass readings.) Fires were reported by radio from spring of 1948 on.

So what did these guys do in the event of a storm? Well, there is a 12ft by 20ft cabin up there that Dude built in the col, but there was a nearer place. There was a tin shack that was built nearby that the men could retreat to in the event of a lightening storm. This shack was wire grounded to the earth through a metal rod, although poorly. The terrain simply did not offer ideal conditions for a good earth ground on the mountain top. The best way to ensure a good ground was to wet the ground rod. I am sure living through a thunder storm up there had its moments!



East (Avery) Peak from the West Peak

The original way up to the tower was a road to a hiking trail up the north side of the mountain near the Roy Parsons Farm. The trail started up the mountain at the road's end, 1 ½ miles up. The CCC built this road sometime around 1933. They also ran a pole phone line along the road. The Parsons trail is not discernable today, although when the lake is low you

may try to locate the road at the Parsons farm coming out of the lake, and then look for remnants of the phone line while ascending the mountain trail. Unless you are confident and adventurous, I would recommend the easier way on the South or East side. When you are on top, just for a moment try to envision Major Timothy Bigelow standing there, next to you, for legend says it was 234 years ago that Col. Benedict Arnold ordered Bigelow to take a few good men and hike this mountain in the hope that he could see the "Spires of Quebec City." As you may or may not know, Col. Arnold and his 1100 man army were near here, traversing the Dead River in 1775, attempting to sneak into Quebec City to liberate Canada from the British. Thou truly a valiant mission by all who attempted, it failed to accomplish its goal.

On the south side of Bigelow there is a trail that, once again, my dear friend Dude and his helpers, Sheridan Scibner and Helon Taylor cleared back in 1949 and 50, called the fire warden's trail. It is located off of route 27, about 2 miles North of Sugarloaf where a sign says, Stratton Brook Pond. Drive in about 2 miles to the brook and hike for about 2 ½ hours to the col. This is a 3000 ft climb. I cannot wait to climb it this summer. Please remember, hike safely, bring water and always be prepared.

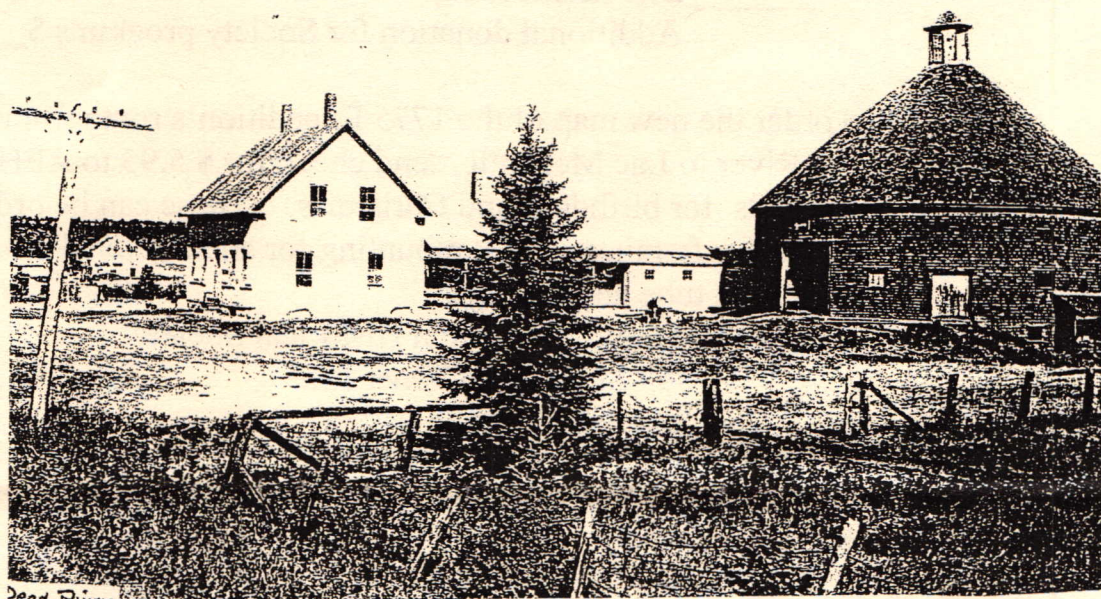
Because of technology this tower has long been out of use in lieu of airplane patrols conducted by M.F.S. It is my understanding that the administration of the Bigelow Preserve would like to see the remains of the fire tower removed from the mountain top. This nation is dotted with such historical sites all across the land. Unfortunately many sites get closed down. You cannot rebuild history once it is gone. When it is gone, it is gone forever! This is not an eyesore it is a thing of beauty! It was only a few years ago, until he retired, that Kenny Wing, Dude's successor has personally painted and replaced glass on this tower in an attempt to maintain it.

I can only hope that this piece of Maine history will get the respect it deserves. Yes, it requires a little effort, and some money. But will that not be worth it when in the future you and your kids and then their kids have the privilege to hike past this historical tower and see for themselves what life up here was once like for so many hard working men whose roots started right here, under that huge lake, at the base of beautiful Mt. Bigelow range?

Enjoy the mountain!

Editors Note: The photo below is the old "Round Barn Farm," a noted structure in the Dead River Valley. It was located on former Route 16 and a short distance from the Dead River. The old Parsons Trail, which led up the mountain to Bigelow Col between the East (Avery) and West Peaks, began near here. There was an old telephone line stung along this trail allowing the firetower warden to communicate with civilization below. This trail was abandoned when the valley was inundated in 1949-50 by the construction of the Long Falls Dam, creating Flagstaff Lake. Many of the old sites that Arnold and his men had known, such as Hurricane and Arnold Falls, the site of the cabin of Natanis and the river itself, now lie hidden under the lake's dark water.

The Round Barn Farm as it was in 1948, in Dead River Plantation



A visitor from Boston once asked the owner of the Round Barn why he had built such an "odd" structure. The farmer, a very religious man, said stoically that it was to ensure that while working in his barn, the Devil could not corner him! He went on to say that the structure induced his cows to produce more milk as they were well rounded beasts.

Today, the Round Barn site is utilized as a walk-in campground managed by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, as a part of the magnificent 33,000 acre Bigelow Preserve. This was set aside as a preserve by the people of Maine in a referendum vote in 1978. The preserve encompasses the entire 17 mile Bigelow Range, right down to the shore of Flagstaff Lake.

New Map, *The Valley Below* Is Now Available

A new two-sided map of the old Dead River Valley from Long Falls to Eustis is now available. It covers most of what is now Flagstaff Lake. It shows the location of the main farms and structures within the valley prior to the 1949-50 inundation of the valley. The route of the Dead River is imposed onto the map to show its old location in relation to the present lake. On the reverse side is a map of the same area showing current campsites and other recreational features. Much of the detailed information to produce this map was supplied by Duluth and Betty Wing of Eustis, Maine.

The map has been produced by the Northern Forest Canoe Trail of Vermont. The map is free, except for a \$ 1.00 charge to cover postage and handling. It can be obtained from the AEHS.

New AEHs Membership Form

Mail this in with your check and membership info. Include your phone number and email address if this is acceptable to you. Make check payable to AEHS.

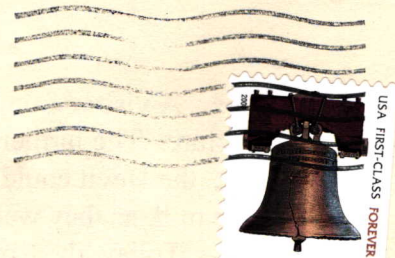
Category.

_____ Annual Member	\$ 20
_____ Family membership	\$ 25
_____ Contributing member	\$ 50
_____ Life Membership	\$ 200 (one time payment)
Additional donation for Society programs \$ _____	

To order the new map of the 1775 Expedition's route from the Kennebec River to Lac Megantic, send check for \$ 5.95 to AEHS. These make great gifts for birthdays and Christmas. These can be ordered unfolded suitable for framing or wall mounting for an additional \$ 6.00 to cover cost of shipping tube and postage.

Arnold Expedition Historical Society
599 Shapleigh Corner Rd.
Shapleigh, Maine 04076

Arnold Expedition Historical Society
599 Shapleigh Corner Rd.
Shapleigh, Maine 04076



To:

Mr. ROBERT ROTH
31 SOUTH ROAD
KINGSTON, NY 12401