

EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARNOLD EXPEDITION
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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What A Coincidence!

As most AEHS members know, last August members of the Society uncovered significant artifacts and located the original site of "Arnold's Hospital." One of the items uncovered was pieces of a large, cast iron camp kettle. It was found close to other expedition identified artifacts, so it was most certainly from the 1775 expedition.

These large kettles were issued to each company to do communal cooking for the men. These kettles were extremely valuable even though they were quite heavy and hard to be carried over the many miles of portages. Why it was destroyed, can be only mere speculation. Best guess is that the retreating soldiers of the Fourth Division did not want to carry this heavy item with them. Previously it had been left at the hospital site to cook food for the sick soldiers. The retreating soldiers felt it was too valuable to leave for their enemies to use. So it was broken up by a few sharp blows from an axe head.

Since its discovery, AEHS member Thomas Desjardin has investigated to identify the kettle, with little luck as there was no identifying marks or numbers on the broken kettle. Also, there were pieces missing from the remains of the kettle.

But one fine day, Tom happened to be passing through the Keeping Room at the Coburn House in Pittston, when he glanced over to the kettle hanging in the fireplace. Just out of curiosity, he took the pieces of the broken hospital kettle and tried to match them with the intact Colburn kettle. What a surprise! They were an exact match and obviously were cast from the same type and size of mold. The accompanying picture will show this. (See Page 2)

How could the same manufactured kettle that was used on the Expedition be identical in size and type to that which hangs in the Colburn House fireplace? Most mystifying! !

Over time, we may be able to gain more information about the kettles and at least date their manufacture. But how the same type kettle could appear in both places raises a host of speculations. Example: could the kettle in the Colburn's fireplace be one that was salvaged from the equipment and bateaux left when the three retreating companies (more than 200 soldiers) reached the Colburn shipyard? What did happen to all the equipment and bateaux they had as they returned to civilization.?

We most likely will never know the details of the mystery, but stay tuned as the story unfolds. We solved one mystery of where the hospital was located, only to have new mysteries unfold.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

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The Kettles

The picture below is actually a complete kettle, with parts of another. The complete kettle came from the fireplace in the Colburn House. The parts of a kettle came from the expedition's Hospital Site in the Carry Ponds country.

Initially, they look like one kettle. That is so because they came from the same or similar mold and fit closely. Note the irregular white lines drawn in, outlining the perfectly fitting pieces overlaying the complete kettle. The crack towards the center of the kettle, again indicates a broken piece from the Hospital site.

These may be seen at the Colburn House. What do you think? See article on cover page.

