

EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARNOLD EXPEDITION
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



May, 2013

A Busy 2013 Schedule

This year will see a very active year for the AEHS. Below is a synopsis of those events and each will be explained further within *The Messenger*.

May 18th Saturday Trail Maintenance, & archeological Exploration, Great Carrying Place.

June 22 Saturday, Summer meeting of the AEHS Directors, Richmond, ME.

August 2-4 Joint Outdoor Weekend of the AEHS and the Flagstaff Association, to

Celebrate the Passage of the Expedition through the Dead River country.

Sept. 21 Annual Meeting of the AEHS. Plans for this meeting will appear in early Sept. Newsletter.

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Major Bigelow Letter
- Directors to Meet
- AEHS Weekend at Eustis
- Trail Clearing and Archeological Trips
- Remembrances of Flagstaff Village
- Historical Analysis: Twas Elevation that Defeated the Expedition.

Major Timothy Bigelow's Letter to his Wife

Editor's Note: Major Timothy Bigelow never wrote a journal of the Expedition, but we are fortunate to have access to a copy of his letter to his wife, Anna. The fact that it was dated Oct. 26 on the Dead River, indicates that he wrote this the same day that Arnold called a Council of War at Shatagee Falls. As a part of the decisions made there, it was decided to send back about 20 soldiers that were sick and could not proceed. They were sent back down the North Branch of the Dead River to join the rear division under Lt. Col. Enos. Undoubtedly, Major Bigelow sent this letter back with one of the sick men.

When these men reached Lt. Col. Enos's rear division, Enos and his officers had just made the decision to abandon the expedition and return to Cambridge. Therefore it is presumed that this letter went back with them.

The letter states some interesting observations as to the condition of the army at that time. Bigelow later in the war became a full colonel and is known in his home town as the "Patriot of Worcester. [MA]"

"October 26th, 1775

On that part of the Kennybeck called the Dead river, 95 miles above Norridgewock

Dear Wife. I am at this time well, but in a dangerous situation, as is the whole detachment of the Continental Army with me. We are in a wilderness nearly one hundred

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Bigelow letter, continued from page 1
miles from any inhabitants, either French or English, and but about five days provisions on an average for the whole. We are this day sending back the most feeble and some that are sick. If the French are our enemies it will go hard with us, for we have no retreat left. In that case there will be no alternative between the sword and famine. May God in his infinite mercy protect you, my more than ever dear wife, and my dear children, "Adieu, and ever believe me to be your most affectionate husband, "Timo. Bigelow."

News Item, Printed 1951

NEW FLAGSTAFF, ME October 5th 1951--

A Bronze marker honoring Col. Timothy Bigelow, Worcester Mass., Revolutionary War hero, originally set at the foot of Mount Bigelow will be re-dedicated here October 17.

The marker, a gift of Col. Timothy Bigelow Chapter Daughter of the American Revolution, of Worcester, was first erected in 1935 in the town of Flagstaff.

It was placed at the front of the Mountain in honor of Colonel Bigelow, believed to be the first man to climb Mount Bigelow.

Due to the recent flooding of the area by the Central Maine Power Company to make an artificial lake to insure hydro-electric power for the towns along the Kennebec river, the Worcester-donated marker was re-located in New Flagstaff [Eustis].

Directors To Meet

On June 22 at 10:00 AM, the AEHS Directors will hold their summer meeting in Richmond, at Dinsmore Hall, the home of the Richmond Historical and Cultural Society. This is located near the center of town at 164 Pleasant Street. Any AEHS member is more than welcome to attend. A variety of programs are now underway, including a possible new trail addition on the Great Carrying Place, a preservation project in the Chain of Ponds area, and the erection of new interpretive signs will be discussed.

After the meeting is over, and a bag lunch enjoyed, President Jay Robbins will guide us to an active archeological site near the Kennebec River at old Fort Richmond.

New Interpretive Panels

As most members know, the Society has embarked upon a program to cooperate with other entities to erect a new generation of Interpretive panels. These are long lasting ceramic panels that are mounted on a cross pipe which is embedded between two granite posts. It is presumed they will last much longer than those wooden panels installed in the 1970's. We have two completed and installed, one at the Colburn House and the other on busy US 201 just across from the point where the expedition left the Kennebec to cross the Great Carrying Place.

A new one is being prepared under the guidance of Director Tom Desjardin, for installation at a new DOT turn-out in Eustis, overlooking Flagstaff Lake and the Bigelow Range. This is scheduled to be installed this summer. Others are in the works.

There is also one planned for installation by the City of Lac Megantic, near the lake's outlet, the beginning of the Chaudiere River. It is the first to be installed on the Canadian portion of the expedition's route.

Flagstaff And Arnold Expedition Days
 Jointly sponsored by the **Flagstaff Chapel Association**
 And the **Arnold Expedition Historical Society**

When: August 2, 3 and 4th, 2013

Where: Eustis Area, Eustis, Maine

The Flagstaff Chapel Association and the Arnold Expedition Historical Society have jointly scheduled a weekend series of interesting, informative and historic public activities for their members and guests. These activities are designed to enjoy not only the country that the 1775 Quebec Expedition passed through, but to remember and honor the history and times of the three villages that existed in the Dead River Valley prior to its flooding in 1949. You can participate for a day or enjoy the entire weekend.

Friday Afternoon

There are several overnight accommodations located in the Stratton-Eustis area that may be utilized for the weekend. However, for those members that wish to camp out, we have reserved a large group campsite at the famous Cathedral Pines Campground on Route 27 in Eustis. This reserved group site is located just opposite the entrance to the Cathedral Pines Campground. The group site is reached by turning on the Eustis Ridge Road and 100 yards further to the group site entrance. An AEHS sign will be there to mark the entrance to the group site (on right). Plan to arrive in the afternoon to set up. AEHS director Dude Wing and others will be there to greet you and answer any questions you may have.

There are outdoor activities of all kinds that may originate here during the weekend, including swimming, canoeing, hiking, and tenting. Nearby is Eustis Ridge, affording great views of the entire Bigelow Range and Flagstaff Valley.

After you are settled, Dude will help you choose from a wide variety of activities.

Activities on Saturday, August 3.

A guided auto trip along 40 miles of the Arnold Trail, beginning at Cathedral Pines, and making stops at several expedition portages, at the Chain of Ponds, Natanis Point, and Arnold Pond. At that point, we can turn around and head back to camp, or if you have your passport, we can pass through Canadian Customs into Canada and continue along the expedition's route, passing the Arnold River, Lac Megantic and going as far as the beautiful town of Lac Megantic. Here we can have lunch at a local restaurant, and view the new interpretive panel at the lake's outlet, the beginning of the Chaudiere River, which the expedition followed. We will then return to Cathedral Pines the middle of the afternoon. Remember, to continue to Lac Megantic, you must have a valid passport. Great Trip!

2. Dude Wing has been kind enough to work out an arrangement for a boat cruise on the 22 mile long Flagstaff Lake, covering much of the same ground that the expedition followed. There are magnificent views of the Bigelow Range nearby. The cruise will take you to the site of the former Flagstaff Village (the home of the famous Indian, Natanis). This trip will be made only if six or more wish to participate. To make arrangements for such a trip, you may reserve a seat by calling Mr. Duluth Wing at (207) 246-6211 or (207) 462-7309. You may also contact him when you arrive at the group area at the campground. We will not know if the trip goes until early on Saturday morning. Details as to its cost and embarkation point will be given to you by Dude Wing. Cont. On Page 4

Page 4 Weekend, continued From Page 3

3. In Stratton Village, the Flagstaff Historical Society building has many fine displays. This will be open on both Saturday and Sunday. It is located at the junction of Routes 16 and 27. It has many fine displays of the history of both Flagstaff and the Dead River Valley life. It also has historical displays regarding the 1775 expedition. Check with host Dude Wing as to times it will be open.
4. At the Cathedral Pines Campground, you may rent canoes or kayaks to cruise on Upper Flagstaff Lake or up its inlet, the North Branch of the Dead River. Check at the campground office.
5. For hikers, there are several fine trails in the area. The Cranberry Peak Trail (part of the Bigelow Range), about 2 mi. in length leads to that open peak. It begins near the center of Stratton. It affords fine views over the Dead River Valley and the Boundary Mountains to the north. The Appalachian Trail winding its way along the Bigelow Range is only four miles south of Stratton. Details on these trails, can be obtained at the AEHS campsite.

Key Evening Events

At 5:00 PM, all are invited to a pot luck picnic supper at the Flagstaff Chapel on Route 27, 1/4 mi. north of the campground. This is a part of the Annual Old Home Days sponsored by the Flagstaff Chapel Association. You may bring your own supper as an option, or just take pot luck.

At 6:30 PM, all are invited into the Chapel for a talk and Q & A session by author Stephen Clark who is also an AEHS director. He will discuss the historic events surrounding the Arnold Expedition's passage through the Dead River Country in 1775. He will also discuss how Flagstaff Village got its name from events that transpired during the expedition's passage along the Dead River.

Events on Sunday, August 4

10:00 AM All are invited to attend church services at the Flagstaff Chapel along with members of the Flagstaff Chapel Association and former residents of Flagstaff Village and the Dead River Valley.

11:00 AM Join us in an outdoor picnic adjacent to the Chapel. Bring your own lunch.

12:00 Noon There will be a short business meeting for Chapel members. Others are invited.

For all events listed above, we encourage Colonial period dress. Reenactors are welcome. Ladies are encouraged to wear Colonial garb to represent Mrs. Greer or Mrs Warner who were two ladies who went on the Quebec Expedition with their husbands. This should be an exciting weekend for all.

Reminiscences of Flatstaff Village

by Duluth & Betty Wing

The village of maybe fifty homes and barns was nestled on the banks of the Dead River, with Flagstaff Pond at our back and the Bigelow Range close by to our south.

We had a general store, a sawmill, a Congregational Church, a Masonic Hall, a few boarding homes which served woodsmen and sportsmen and most of all, we had a twelve grade modern(1933) school,

Since the 1920's, the Central Maine Power Company told us the whole valley would be flooded to create a reservoir for generating electricity and to stabilize the flow of the Kennebec River below.

We had the option of selling our homes and property now or waiting until later when we would be forced to sell thru emanate domain.

By 1947 surveyors were marking the flow line (shoreline) of the proposed 26 mile long lake which would include parts of Eustis and Dead River townships. By 1949 about 4000 men were employed clearing and burning 18,000 acres of woodland, burning or moving houses, cutting shade trees, telephone poles and leveling everything.

By March of 1950, the new Long Falls Dam was closed to catch the snow melt. Most of the natives had already moved away, yet some of us watched as the waters rose to a depth of twelve feet over Flagstaff's streets.

Plans for Trail Clearing Work trip at Carry Ponds and Exploration of Portage Landing Site at East Carry Pond

When? May 18th (Sat.) 2013. Meet 9:00 AM.

This event will be divided into two parties, one to conduct an exploration of the presumed site of the Expedition's landing on the east shore of East Carry Pond. The second, will be a trail clearing and maintenance for the Great Carrying Place portage trails between Wyman Lake and Middle Carry Pond. Both groups will meet at the same place, same time to begin the two efforts, on Saturday, May 18th at 9:00 AM. The assembly site will be on the Pleasant Ridge Road (also known as the Carry Ponds Road). This is about 12 miles from US Route 201 in Bingham, and the unnumbered road passes through the hamlet of Pleasant Ridge. Write or call Steve Clark, Secretary, for more detailed directions (510-1230).

The Exploration

This will be led by AEHS director, Duluth Wing. Its objective is to explore a new site with metal detectors on the east shore of East Carry Pond, where presumably the Great Carrying Place portage trail coming up from the Kennebec River terminated.

Permission has been obtained from Eric Walter of Carry Ponds to use metal detectors on his private property in hopes of finding metal artifacts indicating where the Expedition's men "put in" on the east shore of the first of the three Carry Ponds. The group will be able to drive directly to the site. We will be able to systematically explore the shoreline where a small brook enters the pond. Bring metal detectors trowels, and bag lunch. For more information, call Dude Wing at 246-6211 or 462-7309.

The Portage Trail Clearing

This is the annual trail clearing that takes place on the portion of the Great Carrying Place portage trail from Wyman Lake (the old Kennebec River starting point) to the east shore of East Carry Pond. This is about 2.6 mi. In length. A second segment is the trail from the west shore of East Carry Pond to Middle Carry Pond, 0.8 mi. In length. This group will meet at the same place on the Pleasant Ridge Road, same time, 9:00 AM as the other exploration group.

Steve Clark and Ron Gamage will head up this trail clearing group. Bring chain saws, clippers and your lunch. For more info, call Steve at (207) 510-1230.

Those that wish to tent overnight are welcome to camp near the AEHS Nichols Cabin on Middle Carry Pond. There is both a fireplace and stove to do cooking there. Bring your own drinking water as only pond water is available. Again, for more information on camping overnight, contact Steve Clark at the aforementioned telephone number. See you there!

Twas Elevation That Defeated The Expedition

by Steve Clark

Over the years, many people knowledgeable about the 1775 Secret Expedition to capture Quebec, have attributed its defeat to a variety of reasons; bad bateaux, bad food, bad weather, bad guides, and of course, bad luck. Most likely, it was a combination of these factors, rather than by a single one.

However, there is another, much more subtle and less obvious factor that played a decisive role in the army's defeat. This was the great elevation of the land that had to be overcome to reach the St. Lawrence River. Unfortunately, few historians have ever considered this key factor.

Washington, Arnold and other officers who planned the strategy to invade Canada, devised a two pronged attack to include the capture of its capitol, Quebec City. One prong was to proceed from Albany under command of General Richard Montgomery, northward following the historic invasion route via Lake Champlain.

The second prong, was a secret attack through the Maine and Canadian wilderness following the Kennebec and Chaudiere River Valleys. The success was contingent upon two critical factors; speed and surprise. This premise is proven by the fact that the expedition carried no artillery whatsoever. They did not plan to batter down the walls of Quebec. Nor did they take with them equipment to clandestinely surmount the city's walls. They carried only limited gunpowder. They had no navy to blockade the city, and they did not have the food and supplies to sustain an extended sedge of the fortified city. Rather the city was to be captured by stealth and speed of attack.

Thus success depended entirely upon getting to the city's gates quickly and retaining the vital element of surprise. Neither occurred!

Modern readers should consider that the greatest obstacle to attain success for any army during the Colonial and Revolutionary periods was the ability to supply and support an army, particularly while it was in the field. The British military organizations had great success for centuries because it controlled the sea and could move and supply land armies anywhere they chose. Conversely, moving an army over land presented great logistical difficulties.

Example: Arnold's army of about a thousand men would consume per soldier about three pounds of food, per day, times one thousand men, or approximately a ton and a half per day. In addition was the weight of the food's containers (mostly wooden barrels). Therefore, to sustain his army, a rough estimate of the weight of just the food alone, would be about two tons daily.

Since Washington and Arnold estimated and planned for a 45 day campaign, that would be an approximate total of 90 tons. Add to that, the gunpowder, lead shot, tents, cast iron cooking equipment, weapons, canvas, blankets and many other items needed to sustain an army of a thousand men, traveling through a roadless wilderness.

One can quickly conclude that all this tonnage must be moved in boats over water routes. Thus Washington and Arnold ordered the construction of enough wooden boats to move all these tons of supplies. This is where the issue of elevation begins to play its decisive part.

Washington and the other strategists who planned the Quebec expedition had only limited knowledge and experience in equipping and moving an army during the initial phases of the Revolutionary War (1775). Some had participated in the British invasion of Canada in 1754-58 that followed the Lake Champlain route from Albany to the St. Lawrence. This route was over a mostly navigable water route, the lake being about 150 miles long. The normal elevation of Lake Champlain, this route's high point, was a mere 95-100 feet above sea level. It appears that the planners assumed it would be a similar process to follow up the Kennebec and down the Chaudiere Rivers. But they obviously did not know of the elevation this route entailed. It made this water route entirely different than the Champlain route.

The only written description of the Kennebec route to assist the planners, was written by an English engineer, Major Montresor, who traveled this route in 1763. In his journal, he did not cite or describe the issue of elevation along the route.

Let us now examine the actual elevation of the route and portages that the Quebec expedition had to overcome. We will start from the head of tide at Fort Western, in present day Augusta, ME.

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Elevation	Way Point	Gain of Elevation
Zero Feet	Fort Western at head of tide	----
480'	Kennebec River at the beginning of the Great Carrying Place	480 ft.
1,360'	Ridge east of East Carry Pond	880'
1,236'	East Carry Pond	----
1,229	Middle Carry Pond	----
1,500	Ridge between Middle & West Carry Ponds	270'
1,316'	West Carry Pond	----
1,550'	Ridge westward of West Carry Pond	234'
1,105' (approx.)	Dead River near Bog Brook Inlet	----
1,289'	Chain of Ponds	184'
1,389'	Arnold Pond	100'
1,670'	Height of Land at Boundary Mtns.	281'
Total elevation gained by expedition		2,339 Feet

In addition there were other short elevation gains not included here. These existed on the many shorter portages from Ft. Western to the Height of Land. It is impossible to accurately calculate these, but most likely it accumulated for an additional hundred feet or more. In a startling comparison, this would be like lifting the tons of boats and equipment up two Empire State Buildings.

Granted, as the expedition ascended the Kennebec and Dead Rivers, the weight they had to carry diminished by about two tons a day. But countering this was the fact that the numbers of healthy soldiers to carry the weight also rapidly diminished. These variables are impossible to accurately calculate.

One other very vital factor was that the soldiers did not traverse each portage just once. They had to carry their burdens over the same route several times. For instance, Rev. Spring stated in his journal that on the terrible portage between the Kennebec River and East Carry Pond, the men had to make as many as six trips to get all their boats and supplies over. It is a distance of 3 1/4 miles between these two points, so six round trips times this distance would be 39 miles for each man. Half of this distance would be spent carrying a very heavy load up out of the Kennebec Valley. Since the elevation gain over this particular portage is 880 feet, that would be a phenomenal 5,250 feet of elevation gain. This same situation occurred at each of the many portages.

The total elevation to be overcome caused great detrimental effects upon the soldiers, and it substantially diminished the chances of success by slowing down the expedition. As a secondary effect, it also diminished both the strength and numbers of the expedition. The worst event was the desertion of the entire fourth division, taking with them nearly three hundred men.

Just before the crossing of the St. Lawrence River, the expedition's muster was something less than 600 weary, weakened soldiers. This was a reduction of half of those who had started from Cambridge.

The element of surprise was lost by a combination of the slowness of advance caused by the issue of elevation and some inept leadership by its commander, Col. Arnold. He had sent ahead despatches to Gen. Montgomery and friends in Quebec City. These were captured or turned over by the Indian messengers and fell into the hands of the British leadership.

So both the elements of surprise, and speed, the two elements that the expedition depended upon for success, were both gone.

The day that the expedition approached the walls of Quebec, Nov. 14th, 1775, the gates were closed and the cannon on the walls, manned and ready. The Fortress Quebec defenders were prepared for the remnants of the American army.

Of all the factors that led to the defeat of the fledgling American Revolutionary Army before Quebec's walls, the unforeseen, unplanned for elevation gain between the Kennebec and St. Lawrence Rivers, played the most decisive role.

AEHs New 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.

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

➡ To order the Essay, "**Crisis in the Megantic Swamps**," on a no charge basis, Send order to Society at address below. This includes maps.

➡ To order the AEHS map of the 1775 Expedition's route from the Kennebec River to Lac Megantic, Canada, 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.

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