

# EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE  
ARNOLD EXPEDITION  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY



September, 2015

## Annual Meeting to be held

Our Annual Meeting this year will be at the Colburn House in Pittston as it has been for several years. It will be held at 1:00 PM in the renovated barn.

A directors meeting will also be held in the morning at 9:30 AM. All members are invited to attend this meeting as well.

**We have a fine guest speaker.**

**Embattled Farmers: Who Were Those Early Revolutionary Soldiers?** Our speaker is **Richard C. Wiggin** of Lincoln, MA, who will provide an

answer to that question. As Historian and past Captain of the Lincoln Minute Men, Rick has spent many days and nights as a colonial living historian. He has also served as a volunteer at Minute Man National Historical Park (on the Battle Road).

He formerly served as Executive Director of The Bostonian Society (Boston's Old State House Museum). More recently, Wiggin authored and published *Embattled Farmers: Campaigns and Profiles of Revolutionary Soldiers from Lincoln, Massachusetts, 1775-1783*.

In his extremely well researched 574 page book, Rick fully documents 256 individuals associated with the War and the Town of Lincoln. Included in the book are slaves, free blacks and 4 men who stayed loyal to their King. This massive undertaking has resulted in making our speaker an expert, able to paint a composite picture of the typical Rev. War participant.

He will also share specific stories of those soldiers that he now knows so well. Many myths are proven to be just that. Community and kinship networks tell much. These Lincoln men connect to all of New England.

For purposes of full disclosure, it should be stated that Rick and Bob Cunningham (AEHS Director) are long time friends and kindred spirits. It also turns out that Rick was Senior Patrol Leader when Jay Robbins joined Boy Scout Troop 34 as a tenderfoot many years ago. We look forward to finding out from Rick if our Bob is the one and same Sgt. Robert Cunningham of Smith's Co. on Arnold's March?

The public is most certainly welcome.

## HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Annual Meeting To Be Held
- Report of June Directors Meeting
- Directors and Officers Nominated.
- Interpretive signs Erected
- The Savanna , Article
- Directors Assist at Ft. Halifax
- Book Reviews



## **AEHS Directors Assist at Ft. Halifax**

On a Saturday in May, several AEHS directors appeared at Fort Halifax in Winslow, Maine to assist the effort to undertake major renovations at the beautiful Ft. Halifax Park, operated by the Town of Winslow. This will require several years of effort to raise the needed funds. The planning has been completed, but funds to undertake the construction are still needed.

AEHS directors Clayton McLaughlin, Fred Clark, Hank Dillenbeck and Steve Clark manned a booth at the site. Unfortunately the crowd was not as large as had been hoped. Steve Clark also made a short historical presentation during the afternoon. Reenactors in period dress also provided several demonstrations. This may become an annual event. The weather was very fine and all that attended enjoyed themselves.

A bateaux replica was launched into the Kennebec River. The current there was quite swift, as the water level was high from spring runoff. A crew of reenactors manned the oars and struggled against the strong current and were not able to progress up the river even with all oars flying. They got a taste of what the men of the 1775 Expedition had to endure. The 1754 fort blockhouse was also open to the public.

## **New Interpretive Sign Installed**

During the past winter, Kenny Wing, AEHS director, worked with the Dead River Area Historical Society in Stratton regarding a new interpretive bateaux sign.

Many Society members have stopped at their museum at the junction of Routes 16 and 27 in Stratton. Outside the building is a covered replica of an expedition bateaux. The old interpretive sign was beginning to weather and needed to be replaced.

Kenny, who is also a director of the DRAHS, was able to work with DRAHS officers to devise a

newly worded sign that would be used. After agreement on the text of the new sign, it was manufactured and then mounted by Kenny and AEHS director Alan Burnell in early June. This is an example of how the AEHS co-operates with other historical societies to better honor our country's history.

The sign was financed through the generosity of the AEHS's Duluth Wing Memorial Fund. Below is the text of the new sign.

"In 1775, a small American army of about 1100 brave soldiers struck northward from Cambridge, MA to attempt the capture of the fortified British stronghold of Quebec City. They utilized 220 bateaux of which this is a replica. They followed the Kennebec and Dead Rivers struggling against a swift current requiring many portages. Only 20 of these bateaux were carried over the Boundary Mountains into Canada."

Dead River Area Historical Society  
Arnold Expedition Historical Society

## **Officers and Directors Elections**

At the annual meeting to be held on Sept. 19, 2015, election of officers and directors will be held. The nominating committee will nominate the following directors for a three year term of office. Five of the fifteen directors are nominated each year on a rotating basis. Nominees for directors are:

Fred Clark, Winslow  
Thomas Desjardin, Pittsfield  
Henry Dillenbeck, Winslow  
Clayton McLaughlin, Fairfield  
John (Jay) Robbins, Richmond

Officers are elected for a term, of one year. Below are the nominees for the four officers.

President: Fred Clark  
V. President: Jay Robbins  
Treasurer: Alan Burnell, Eustis  
Secretary: Stephen Clark, Scarboro



## AEHS Directors Meeting, June 20, 2015 Swan Island, Kennebec River

The meeting was called to order at about 9:30 in a beautiful setting on Swan Island. Some of Arnold's officers rested here for one night. 14 directors and other guests were present. It was noted that John Parsons had driven all the way from the Hudson River, N.Y. to attend the meeting.

President Jay Robbins asked for a moment of reflection for Mabelle Haynes, long time director of the AEHS, who passed away recently. Her son has delivered many records of her involvement with the Society. She was a long time resident of East Boothbay, here in Maine.

Minutes of the September 2014 meeting were accepted without amendment.

Secretary Clark presented his Report. He stated that 18 members have not yet renewed their membership for 2015. He also encouraged directors to generate new members, as annual membership has been declining during the past several years.

The directors voted to approve a new yearly fee for individual membership of \$30. Other categories remain the same.

Clark stated that submissions for the upcoming September newsletter must be received by August 15. He requested that photos be submitted by early fall for the December pictorial newsletter edition.

President Robbins then submitted his report.

A. The Duluth Wing Memorial Fund has paid for a new sign mounted at the Dead River Area Historical Society. This was manufactured this spring and was mounted next to the bateaux display in Stratton by Kenny Wing and Alan Burnell. The society was very pleased by the new sign. The cost of the sign was nearly \$200.

B. The required corporate annual report has been submitted to the State of Maine.

C. Jay reported that Honorary Memberships were presented to Ron Gamage and Rusty Arsenault at a ceremony held at the Nichols Cabin on Middle Carry Pond. Ron and Rusty have been long time, active members of the Society.

D. Jay indicated that both the next directors meeting and the annual meeting will be held on Sept. 19, at the Colburn House. Notice of the meetings will go out in the upcoming September newsletter.

E. It was decided to award additional honorary membership certificates at the upcoming annual meeting. More on that will appear in the upcoming September newsletter.

F. A nominating committee was established. Both Jay and Steve volunteered but additional members would be welcome.

G. A discussion ensued regarding artifacts. There is no central depository for them. It is known that some are included in the Wing estate and that some of these have been loaned to the Dead River Area Historical Society in the Stratton facility. There is a large display located in the Carriage Building at the Colburn House, that had been conserved and displayed by Tom Desjardin. No action was proposed regarding this long term issue.

Moving on to other items on the agenda, it was reported by Norm Kalloch that Plum Creek Co. has granted the Society the use of their land to allow the Great Carrying Place Portage Trail to pass across their land near West Carry for 1.4 mi. This was followed by a long discussion about the fact that land over which the GCP trail passes between the Kennebec River and East Carry Pond is now for sale by the Bay Root Co. The Society has no easement here, but it does have some degree of protection because it is zoned as a P-UA corridor by the Land Use Planning Com. This bears watching.

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The question arose if the GCP Trail has been located by GPS coordinates. This has presumably been done by Steve Engles who operates a Cardiographic Firm in Farmington. He was supposed to have submitted this info to the LUPC several years ago, but there has been no confirmation of this. President Robbins said he would look into this important issue.

It was noted that no coordinates have been submitted to LUPC for the Hospital Site near East Carry Pond. It is crucial that this be done. This will be further discussed at our September meeting.

A discussion was held regarding the Nichols Cabin and the Key situation. It was pointed out that Directors Donovan, Kalloch, Wing, Freeman and Clark have gate and cabin keys. Also, member John Gamage has a set as he is the keeper of the cabin in the winter. Bob Donovan's generous donation of materials to construct the new privy was acknowledged by the directors.

The new Privy was discussed and thanks were given to Rocky Freeman and Bob Donovan for the fine new structure that was built last fall. The new paint job that Rocky and his son Josh did has substantially improved the cabin.

A long discussion ensued on the status of our efforts on the proposed Chain of Ponds land preservation and the related Height of Land Trail predication. The Trust for Public Lands is interacting with the two land owners to continue negotiations.

A related discussion regarding a proposed new non-motorized recreational trail to be established by Larry Warren took place.

There appears to be some conflict in the location of this proposed trail, as it is proposed to cross the historic portage trail three times, and closely parallels the portage trail very close in several spots. President Robbins was authorized to discuss this with Warren and the LUPC which has zoned the trail in this area. President Robbins was further authorized by the directors to send a letter to Mr. Warren stating our concerns for the proposed location of his recreational trail.

The Davis Family Fund is to be solicited to cover the cost of a proposed archaeological study in the Chain of Ponds area. It is estimated that it will cost \$ 35,000 and will have to be conducted prior to any possible acquisition of land in this area. Other possible sources of funding the study were discussed.

There was nothing new on the Kibby wind power project near the Chain of Ponds. There is no activity at present.

A possible bus trip along the route of the Expedition was discussed, and Jay will contact the Old Fort Western Historical Society to see if they are interested in both groups jointly sponsoring such an event.

Rocky Freeman described the new stickers that he has designed. He has kindly agreed to donate these to the AEHS. It was voted unanimously to give one to every member of the Society, on a no charge basis. This will be done during the next membership cycle. Rocky's generosity was acknowledged.

Because of the involved nature of a discussion of possible bylaw changes and the need to catch a ferry back to the mainland, the discussion on this issue was deferred until the September meeting.

The directors thanked President Jay Robbins for making the arrangements for such a fine meeting place.

The meeting adjourned about 12:30.

Submitted by Sec. Steve Clark



## The Savanna

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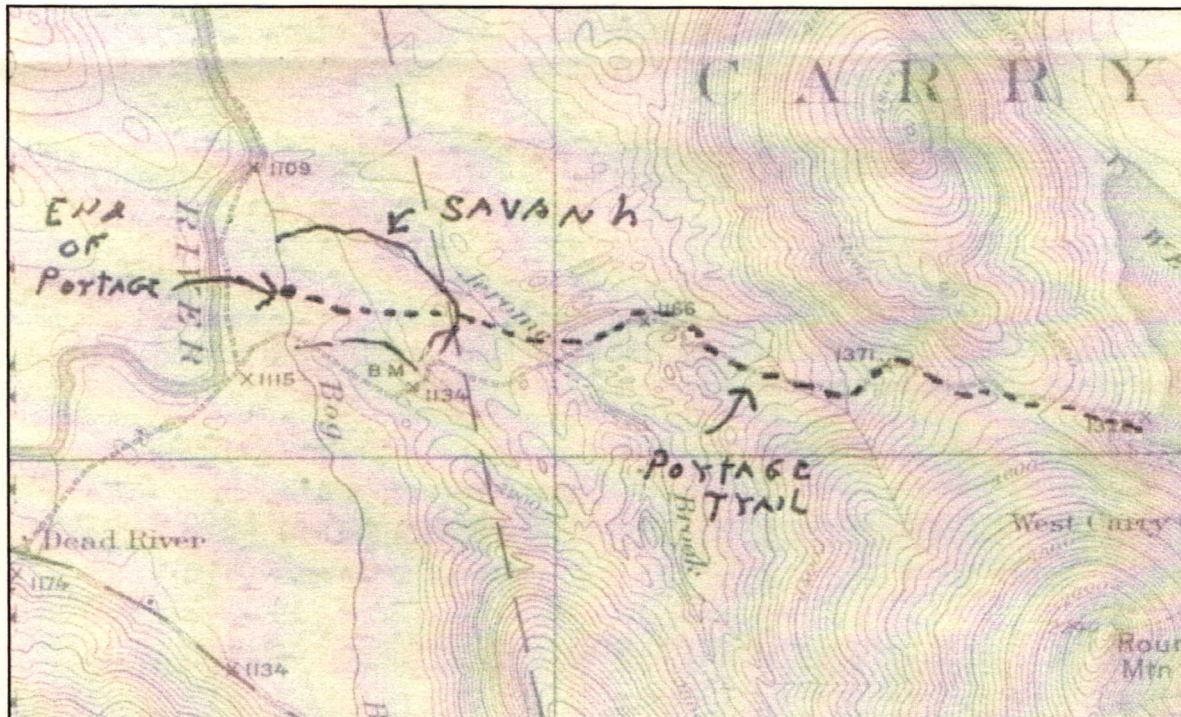
By Stephen Clark (reprinted from 2005 newsletter)

On Oct. 16, 1775 Arnold's party crossed what he and others called a "savanna." This was located on the forth part (most westerly) of the Great Carrying Place, from West Carry Pond to the end of the portage at Bog Brook, a tributary of the Dead River. The day before, he had crossed West Carry Pond and climbed through a gap [between Round Top Mtn. and a hill further north], then descended a mile to the edge of the feature he called a savanna. He and his party camped here for the night.

A savanna (also spelled savannah) is described as a flat, treeless grass-land. It was memorable to the men of the Expedition for several reasons. The country they had traversed to this point had been hemmed in by a continuous forest primaeval. There had been little chance to observe the topography of the land through which they passed in any significant way. Suddenly, here was this wide open, treeless area with views of a "snow covered, forked mountain" (Mt. Bigelow) in the distance to the west.

This savanna and those similar, are known to most Maine woodsmen as a spruce bog, usually to be avoided and always described with serious oaths. This is so because the low grass and bushes on the bog's surface, is a thin veneer covering a sinister layer of wet, black mud, tangled with a network of roots and half rotted fallen tree trunks.

With nearly a thousand men trudging back and forth over this bog with heavy loads and bateaux, it did not take long to punch through this thin coat of grass and moss, into the mud below. Arnold describes this muck as being knee deep. If their shoes or boots had not already been in bad shape before, they were dealt a severe blow here. These bogs have been known to suck the shoes right off the unsuspecting traveler's feet.



MAP OF THE WESTERN PORTION OF THE GREAT CARRYING PLACE

TAKEN FROM A 1928 USGS TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP



Col. Arnold, after crossing the bog and reaching Bog Brook at the end of the portage, ordered Major Meigs to send back ten men from each of his three companies to improve the path for the fourth division to follow. By this time the crossing of the savanna must have looked like a wide, muddy cattle path. Improvements usually consist of "corduroying" the path by cutting and laying thin, delimbed trees cross wise to provide a base to walk on rather than sink in the muck. This technique was and is widely known as it was often used during the 17 and 1800's to fill in bad spots on muddy tote roads to avoid horses and wagons from rutting the roads and sinking to their axils.

This savanna is clearly shown on the 1928 USGS topo map of this area. It measures approximately 3/4 of a mile on an east-west axes and more than a mile on a north-south axes. Jerome Brook passes through it. So the Expedition's traverse of this savanna was westward to Bog Brook, meaning a crossing of 3/4 of a mile.

The accompanying map also shows that the old 19<sup>th</sup> century West Carry Pond Tote Road after leaving the Dead River and crossing Bog Brook, was laid out to swing more southerly to gain higher ground and avoid this boggy area. The old tote road then headed uphill, crossing Jerome Brook, then continuing east, following the same route as the Expedition Portage Trail through the gap to the shore of West Carry Pond. The elevation gain over this ridge is more than 200 feet (east to west).

The entire savanna was inundated by Flagstaff Lake in 1949-50. The nearest USGS Base Marker to the savanna was at an elevation of 1115 feet. The pool elevation of Flagstaff Lake is 1142. So the entire bog-savanna is now under 27 feet of water. Thus all the secrets that the bog and portage trail hold, now lie submerged until some future age when the Long Falls Dam disappears and once again this land will emerge from its present watery veil.

*Capt. Dearborn's Journal, for Oct. 14, 1775*

".....and the last mile, a spruce swamp Knee deep in mire all the way."

*Melvin's Journal, for Oct. 16, 1775*

"... part of the way over a boggy swamp, overgrown with white moss and bushes, which seemed half withered; found it difficult getting over our bateaux and barrels, sinking knee deep in moss and mud."

*Morison's Journal for Oct 11, 1775*

"The rains had rendered the earth a complete bog; insomuch that we were often half leg deep in the mud, stumbling over old fallen logs, one leg sinking deeper in the mire than the other, then down goes a boat and the carriers with it, a hardy laugh prevails. The irritated carriers at length get to their feet with their boat, plastered with mud from neck to heel ..."



POLING UPSTREAM  
AFTER THE FLOOD  
(Library of Congress photo)



## Reviews Of Recent Books Regarding Benedict Arnold

By Jay Robbins

As all Benedict Arnold enthusiasts know, the many books written in an attempt to explain this enigma of a man can grow to fill dozens of shelf feet if one is not careful. Recently I did add two more volumes. Both are wonderful additions and highly recommended.

The first is *Benedict Arnold: A Traitor in our Midst*, by Barry K. Wilson. It was first published in 2001. It covers the life of Arnold from a Canadian perspective. It covers Arnold's life as a trader in Quebec during the 1760's and 1770's. It goes on to cover the March to Quebec before sharing well researched information on Arnold's later business dealings in St. John, New Brunswick. Wilson presents interesting insights into the mind of this man who fascinates us all. It is well and evenly written and is full of helpful chapter notes.

The second book is *Treacherous Beauty: Peggy Shippen, The Woman Behind Benedict Arnold's Plot To Betray America*, by Mark Jacob and Stephen H. Case. It was published in 2012, and is the first biography of Arnold's young wife. It was Peggy who introduced Major John Andre to Arnold. This Philadelphia society girl captured Benedict's heart and led him to cross loyalties. Their relationship through the later years of Arnold's life is as interesting to learn about as is the reading one may have done to understand his roles as American Hero. Well written, helpful chapter notes and an up to date bibliography.

We also recommend a book that has been out a while, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor* by Willard Sterne Randall (1990).

### Passing of Mabelle Haynes

We are sad to inform our members that long time member and director, Mabelle Haynes passed away last spring.

Mabelle had joined the AEHS in the late 1980's and worked each year to improve the various gardens around the Colburn House. She became a director in the 1990's and was a diligent and productive member of the Board of Directors.

She lived for many years in the Damariscotta area, and had a fine home in East Boothbay. In recent years she moved to Michigan to be near her family. Her son Tom is also a member of the Society.

President Jay Robbins representing the Society attended her memorial service held in Damariscotta.

She had asked that in lieu of flowers, that donations be sent to the AEHS, which was an important part of her life. We will sadly miss her.

**AEHS New Membership Form Note: membership fees change after Jan. 1, 2014**

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:	New fees as of Jan. 1, 2015
_____ Individual Member	\$ 30
_____ Family Membership	\$ 35
_____ Contributing Membership	\$ 75
_____ Life Membership	\$ 250 (one time payment)
Additional donation for Society programs	\$ _____ (tax deductible)



To order the Booklet, **The Great Carrying Place Portage Trail**, send check for \$5.00 to AEHS. For non-members, add one additional dollar for postage (\$ 6.00 total).



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 can be ordered unfolded, for framing or wall mounting for an additional \$ 6.00 to cover cost of shipping tube and postage.

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