

# EXPEDITION MESSENGER

## NEWSLETTER OF THE ARNOLD EXPEDITION HISTORICAL SOCIETY



May 2017

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### President's Spring Message

#### Archeological Study

We will be looking forward to a busy year! The archeological survey is on track for the coming season, but dates have not yet been determined. This will be conducted in the Chain of Ponds country along the old Height of Land Portage Trail. It will be managed and overseen by the Maine Historical Preservation Commission. It is planned to have key members of the AEHS to assist the professional people. For more specific information about this exciting project, contact our secretary or president. Remember that as of the publication of the *Messenger*, no dates are known. The study is being funded by a combination of generous bequests from the Mabel Haynes family and the Jean Lockyer bequest.

#### HIGHLIGHTS THIS ISSUE

- President's Spring Message
- Feature Story, The Hospital and a Shattered Kettle
- A Winter Trip to Middle Carry
- Obit of Taisto Maki
- Honoring Bob Cunningham

### Land Protection Along The Arnold Trail

The land next to the Nichols Cabin along with other land around Middle Carry Pond came onto the market last fall. The AEHS is exploring the possibility of acquiring this important shore lot next to the cabin. This would act as a buffer and provide more space for members to use as well as protect the portage trail from future development.

In order to fund this possibility, we are also investigating the sale of the four plus acres the AEHS owns on the SE shore of East Carry Pond.

These transactions are currently in the hands of a local realtor. These are complicated transactions and will take time.

### Fort Halifax Park Calibration

A Calibration will be held at the Fort Halifax Park, named Fort Day. This is in Winslow at the beautiful confluence of the Kennebec and Sebasticook Rivers. It will be held on Saturday, June 24 from 10 to 4 PM. The AEHS will have a table to display material to the public. We will need a few members to work the table during the afternoon. This will provide us another opportunity to explain the AEHS and hopefully acquire new members. Tours of the nearby 1754 blockhouse will be a part of the Calibration. (Cont. on Page 2)

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### **Trail Clearing in the Carry Ponds Area**

Again this year will be conducting a portage trail clearing trip to the Carry Ponds country, on the Great Carrying Place. This will be held on Saturday, May 20, and will begin at 8:30 AM. It will mostly be a walk through with chain saws to clear out winter blowdowns. In order to coordinate our work and tackle both ends of the route, contact Fred Clark at (207) 872-9471.

### **Colburn House Clean-Up Day**

This will be held on Saturday, June 3 and will begin at 8:30 AM. The facility is located on Route 17 in the town of Pittston.

Last year the AEHS made good progress on cleaning up the grounds around the Colburn House. Many old tree "leaners" and broken limbs were removed. There is still much to do on the grounds. We will also tackle the river trail if time allows. This will involve both chain saw and normal grounds work. It is also a time to calibrate the continuation of the wonderful history of the facility dating back to 1763,

We will need help with both the trail clearing work and clean up at the Colburn House again this year. Chain saws and loppers will be needed for both work days. To answer any questions about the activity or to obtain directions for new comers, call Fred Clark at (207) 872-9471.

See you there for a fun and fulfilling day!

### **Directors Meeting To Be Held**

On Saturday, June 17 our summer directors meeting will be held at the Colburn House Barn in Pittston. This will begin at 9:30 AM. Bring your own bag lunch as well.

All AEHS members and friends are invited to attend. We will be covering a wide range of Society business and welcome member's input.

### **Fall Meeting**

The AEHS Annual Meeting will be held at the Colburn House Barn on September 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 PM. The agenda and the featured speaker will be announced in the upcoming early September *Messenger*.

A directors meeting will also be held that morning beginning at 9:30 AM.

### **2017 Schedule of Activities**

May 20, Carry Ponds Trail Clearing  
June 3, Colburn House Clean Up  
June 17, Directors Meeting  
June 25, Ft. Halifax Celebration  
Aug. 4-8, Appalachian Trail Conference, Colby College  
Sept. 16, AEHS Annual Meeting.



## **The Arnold Hospital and a Shattered Kettle**

*by Stephen Clark*

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On October 11, 1775, Col. Benedict Arnold, leader of the secret Quebec Expedition, established his headquarters tent at a campsite between what is now East and Middle Carry Ponds. Encamped around the site were several companies, engaged in the arduous portage between the two ponds. Strung out several miles ahead and behind this campsite were various contingencies of the army struggling with their cumbersome, 400 pound bateaux and tons of barreled food and provisions. This was taking place all along the tortuous 13 mile Great Carrying Place Portage Trail located between the Kennebec and Dead Rivers.

Although there was no formal muster of the various strung-out companies, Arnold stated there were still about 950 effective soldiers in his diminishing command. Like all armies of that era, they were plagued by the presence of debilitating dysentery.

Dr. Senter, the army's chief physician brought this issue to the attention of Arnold. The latter realized that these soldiers could not be transported forward through the increasingly difficult wilderness. They must be left behind and eventually return down river back to civilization.

Many of the tents they had started with were in tatters and unuseable. So Arnold ordered that a log structure to house the invalids to be built in order to protect them from the increasingly cold and wet weather. Thus began the construction of the so-called "Arnold Hospital."

No record of its size or construction has survived. Only educated guesses remain. Materials onsite would have been utilized and only rough carpentry tools were available. Axes would be the main tool for this construction and of course it would have to be done quickly to allow the soldiers to continue onward.

Undoubtedly it was of notched log construction from readily available, straight spruce and fir. No spikes would have been brought so notched logs would have to suffice for the walls. Being October, the peeling season was long over, so the logs would have been unpeeled. Moss was present, so most likely this and mud were used to chink the gaps between the logs. After the roof timbers were placed, the best material for roof construction would have been cedar or black ash bark. They would not have had time to fashion more permanent cedar shingles.

Openings to the structure are, of course unknown. It might have been just a single door. Since no boards were available to fashion a door, most likely a simple blanket hung over the opening would have sufficed. Windows were extra work and were not really needed, plus no glass or oiled parchment was available.

A small fireplace may have been installed to warm the building, and only a hole in the roof could have been used to vent the smoke. Native Americans and pioneers had used this technique for many centuries. A larger fireplace would have been used outside for cooking.

How large the structure was is unknown. A reasonable guess is that it was approximable 20 by 15 feet or smaller. The larger the structure the longer it would have been to complete. The men were very anxious to proceed already being short of food.

How many sick men were left here is also unknown. Neither Dr. Senter nor Col. Arnold mention this in their journals or reports to Washington. A dart board guess is that it was 20 or less. The presumption is that when the men had recovered enough to walk, groups of them would stumble along the portage trail back down to the Kennebec River. Here they would have

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used abandoned bateaux to rapidly descend downstream to civilization. These bateaux would have been located at the mouth of Carrying Place Stream which was the beginning of the Great Carrying Place portage. Arnold mentions that men were left to care for the sick soldiers at the hospital.

The issue of what the sick men laid upon in the hospital now comes into consideration. It would not have been just on the cold, hard ground. Luckily, ample spruce and fir boughs were readily available. Six inches or more of these, properly laid, would have made most comfortable beds.

Several years ago, an exploratory team from the Arnold Expedition Historical Society searched for the site of the hospital. Any organic remains would be long gone having been absorbed into the earth, during 238 years. Only metallic objects would remain.

One of the drawbacks of a bough bed used by the sick soldiers, is that if one puts some small object down next to where they lay, it will soon disappear into the boughs. This accounts for the discovery of a concentration of metallic objects found in a small area near the portage trail. These were positively identified as artifacts from the expedition.

Due to the variety and type of the artifacts that were found in a small area, indicates that these were most likely misplaced within the hospital structure, the floor of which was covered with the thick bough beds.

Among the recovered artifacts was a pewter button with the number "3" molded upon it. This probably was from a coat worn by one of the soldiers from the Third Connecticut Foot and Horse Company. There were several enrolled in the army. It is probable that it popped off his uniform coat while laying down on the bough bed. These artifacts are presently on display at the Colburn House in Pittston, ME.

Most important of these recovered artifacts at the hospital site was a shattered cast iron kettle. Undoubtedly the kettle was left with the sick men to provide their meals during their convalescence. The use of kettles was the most important utensil used to prepare meals for groups of soldiers. Most of the pieces of this kettle were recovered. When cleaned and reassembled, it surprisingly matched a similar intact cast iron kettle located at the Colburn House. It most likely was made by the same manufacturer and from the same time period. The question that immediately arises, is why was such a valuable item destroyed? If all the sick soldiers had started back as a group, they certainly would have taken the kettle with them to prepare meals, even though it was a heavy item to carry by weakened soldiers.

A more likely circumstance is that it was destroyed by members of the army's retreating Fourth Division led by Lt. Col. Roger Enos. Its leaders had, without orders, decided to abandon the expedition after reaching a campsite on the Dead River near Arnold Falls. This occurred on Oct. 25<sup>th</sup>. See Capt. Thayer's Journal for illuminating details of this critical decision.

That would place this division consisting of three companies, plus sick soldiers from the forward divisions (somewhat over 250 soldiers) as passing back through the hospital site on or about Oct. 28-29.

This would mean that the lapse in time had been approximately two weeks between the coming and going of the division. The sick men should have regained enough strength so they could join the retreat.

These retreating soldiers would have been in a real bad temper, knowing they had abandoned their comrades. Their leaders had ignored a majority vote to proceed, instead leaving

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the army to its fate. Because of these leaders known timidity, soldiers discipline would have been very poor indeed. All the soldiers would have by then, known of their leaders dastardly decision.

Any of the remaining convalescing soldiers at the hospital would certainly have been taken along with the retreating division. It was about four miles over the portage trail to reach the Kennebec, then downstream in the bateaux back to civilization.

These same men would not have wanted to carry an extra kettle, particularly because it was of heavy cast iron construction. So in the mood they were in, the best and quickest way to dispose of a valuable kettle that could be used by their enemies, was to bust it up with the backside of an axe.

So the story of the recovery of a cracked kettle at the site of "the "Arnold Hospital" is forever intertwined. The image of a ragged, disheartened soldier, swinging an axe to destroy the kettle speaks volumes of the shameful and abortive portion of the Quebec Expedition.

Sometimes even after two centuries, an old shattered cast iron kettle can tell a profound story.

### **Winter Trip to the Nichols Cabin, Middle Carry Pond. January, 2017**

By Mike Holt (and brother Pat)

To my surprise we didn't see any wildlife other than the camp jays which were a treat. I looked all through my truck for something to offer them. Finally I found a green M&M (with peanut) under my drivers seat. The camp jays waited patiently while I crushed the M&M with my Leatherman and Pat pulled out his camera. After they finished the M&M we headed home and looked for additional wildlife on the way . We hadn't seen anything on the way in.

We did see what we thought were coyote tracks with regular yellow snow marking along side the road for a hundred yards or so and that was it.

Anyway, below here's the text from the email I sent earlier.

Hello,

Pat and I got my snowmobile out and used it to get into the White Nichols cabin yesterday. We thought it would be a good idea to beat this rain. There was a fair amount of snow on the roof.

When we got inside we checked the posts by giving one a good "thumping" kick. It nearly rang – there was plenty of tension on it. The posts were certainly doing their job. When we finished I kicked the post again and could easily move it.

After digging out the ladder (almost as hard as shoveling off the roof) we stood it up and started digging. We estimate it was 25 to 30" deep depending on where you were. The snow was iced on top with another layer of ice about 15" deep. The ice

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sheets at both levels were about ½" thick.

It appeared to be mouse free inside. I'm hoping the sealing we did kept the mice out. I looked at the bucket we had set up and both Pat and I commented that if there was peanut butter left on the trap they probably didn't get in.

Today I took a look at the picture of the bucket trap with the peanut butter and started laughing. Both Pat and I looked at this bucket and didn't notice that when someone moved it the stick ramp didn't get moved with it. If mice got in there they probably gathered around the base of that pail drooling while trying to figure out a way to get at the peanut butter.

Anyway, that aside, the trip went fairly well. There were no problems that we could see. We closed things up and headed out. Pat will get the key back to John Gamage. Hopefully, this rain cleared off the remaining snow and we can start fresh with no snow load at all. If not and we get lots of snow load Pat and I will get the key from John again and we'll give it another go.

### **Honoring Robert Cunningham**

The Society was incorporated in 1968 and one of the charter members was one Robert Cunningham. It is believed he is the last such member that is still actively involved with the AEHS. He currently is a director in the Society, however he has served in many capacities.

This would mean he has served for an astounding 49 years. Bob was also a key leader in the 1975 major Expedition Reenactment that followed the route from Massachusetts to the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City.

What is intriguing are the observations in the 1984 Society newsletter in that Bob as a trip leader "rescued" the trip from a lost bus by driving around Quebec's back streets until the bus was discovered. So Bob has been taking the Society on his shoulders now for many years. What do you think Benedict Arnold would have said about that?

Bob is a long time resident of Lincoln, Mass.

## Obituary of Taisto Maki

Taisto Manuel Maki 1926 - 2016 of Embden, Maine

Taisto Manuel Maki, 90, passed away peacefully on May 28, 2016, at Togus Springs VA in Augusta. He was born in New Portland on Feb. 15, 1926, the son of Manu and Milja (Nummlein) Maki. He grew up in Kingfield. Taisto enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 and proudly served his country during World War II in the Pacific. Taisto married Beatrice Farrin, the love of his life. They built a beautiful home on Embden Pond and lived many wonderful years together until her death in 1980. Taisto worked most of his life in the Skowhegan area. He worked as an auto mechanic and started his own business as a carpenter and builder. He loved spending time in his workshop and was a true craftsman. In his younger years, Taisto was a great baseball player. He told many great stories of games he played with his great friends, Ronald Gammage, Raynard Morral, and Lucien Dudley. He also loved fishing and working on the Arnold Trail Expedition. He was a member of the Embden Pond Historical Society, and one of the Bigelow Hill Boys. He was a kind, generous, and gentle soul, and has left many with precious memories that we will always carry in our hearts. Taisto is survived by special friends, Jack and Pam (Vainio), Paula (Vainio) Reynolds, Joyce Smith, and Nancy Keene. He was predeceased by his wife, parents, and sisters Anne, Effie, Maxine, and Ilmi.

At Taisto's request, there will be no visitation hours or funeral service. He will be buried at Frederic Cemetery in Starks. - See more at:

<http://obituaries.centralmaine.com/obituaries/mainetoday-centralmaine/obituary.aspx?n=taisto-manuel-maki&pid=180253942#sthash.D4z1XbQ3.dpuf>

**Ed. Note:** Taisto was a long time past director of the Society. He accomplished many maintenance projects on the Nichols Cabin and along the Great Carrying Place trails. He will be missed by all.



## AEHS New Membership Form

Mail this form with your check to: AEHS

280 Winthrop Rd.

Readfield, ME 04355

Include your phone number and email address if this is acceptable. Make check payable to AEHS.

Category:

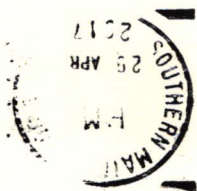
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Membership	\$ 30
<input type="checkbox"/> Family Membership	\$ 35
<input type="checkbox"/> Contributing Membership	\$ 75
<input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership	\$ 250 (one time payment)
Additional donation for Society programs	\$ _____ (tax deductible)

➡ To order the 16 page booklet-guide to **The Great Carrying Place Portage Trail**, 12 miles in length, send check for \$5.00 to AEHS. For non-members, add one additional dollar for postage.

➡ To order the AEHS 18 X 28 color, two sided map of **The 1775 Expedition's Route** from the Kennebec River to Lac Megantic, Canada, send check for \$ 5.95. These can be ordered unfolded, for framing or wall mounting, for an additional \$ 6.00 to cover cost of shipping tube and postage.

05/02

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