

EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE
ARNOLD EXPEDITION
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

December 2012

Steve Clark, Editor



Annual Meeting Held At Colburn House

More than 70 Society members and guests attended the Arthur Lefkowitz Lecture held on a balmy September 23rd. It was the largest meeting of the Society ever.

The wonderfully renovated Barn was the scene of both the annual meeting of the AEHS and the Arthur Lefkowitz lecture. He is a noted author of several histories of the Revolutionary War, and chronicles of the Northern Campaign. Mr.

Lefkowitz presented an interesting program of slides, descriptions of his travels to various

historical sites, as well as insights regarding the 1775 Expedition to Quebec. Mr. Lefkowitz also discussed his soon to be released book, *Benedict Arnold; In The Company Of Heroes*.

This was the first public meeting held this barn. It had been in the process for more than two years. A new display area on the second floor was opened for the display of the various bateau and other implements.

The main house was also open for visitors and the newly rebuilt fireplace burning and hot. Several new displays were available for visitors. A new outdoor public sanitary facility was also available for visitors. The Carriage House was open with various displays of artifacts and information about the 1775 Expedition to Quebec. There were several reenactors that entertained the gathering with their period dress and displays of Revolutionary War arms.

Great credit should go to hard working **Tom Desjardin** and his wife **Laurie**, who together had worked for many weekends and nights, to prepare the Colburn facility for this event. Thanks Tom and Laurie, for your recognized dedication to the Colburn House. Major Colburn, his wife and family would have been very pleased with the restoration of their beautiful home, so lovingly transformed. The many Colburn descendants of today will find the restored home a place of brightened memories, as well as truly, a place of honor.

New Addition To Society Website

At our fall annual meeting, one of our members suggested that the video starring Duluth Wing be installed on our website. This is a 10 minute summary of the Expedition as it passed through the Dead River country and is narrated in Dude Wing's own voice. It is a fine piece of history.

Our webmaster, Tom Desjardin has installed the video and it can now be viewed by going to our website. Go to:

1. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwX0dlUSv0I&feature=youtu.be>

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Annual Meeting Held
- New Video on Website
- Interpretive Panel Installed
- Officers and Directors Elected
- Wandering Hurricanes
- Pictorial Essay Society Activities

New Interpretive Panel Installed

The second of a new series of Interpretive panels was installed this fall. Many of the members that have been associated with the Society for some time, will remember there formerly was a series of fine pictorial wooden Interpretive panels installed along the route of the Expedition. However, as these weathered away, they all were eventually removed.

Now we have a new series of panels, to be set up jointly by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands and the AEHS. These are very attractive, being mounted on a horizontal steel cross piece between two Maine granite posts. The panel itself utilizes a new ceramic material that withstands the rugged weather, lasting far longer than wooden panels. They are however, initially expensive, costing the Society more than a thousand dollars each. The BPL also contributes substantial labor and time in the preparation and installation of the panels.

The process is overseen by AEHS director and BPL historian, Thomas Desjardin. This panel was installed at a key point on US 201, near Caratunk, ME. At a small turnout, near a historic DAR plaque, the Interpretive panel provides the visitor with information of how the expedition left the Kennebec River to begin the audacious task of ascending out of the valley and traversing the 12 mile Great Carrying Place.

The spectacular view across Wyman Lake which at this point covers the Kennebec, indicates the point where the expedition left the river. One can still see the cove formed by Carrying Place Stream, and the steep valley wall up which the soldiers struggled to carry their 400 lb. bateaux.

The Society now has two panels in place (the other at the Colburn House). Next year a third will be installed at a new turn-out on ME Highway 27 in Eustis, with spectacular views of the Dead River Valley and the Bigelow Range.

The Society estimates that there could be as many as ten additional Interpretive panels, extending along the route in Maine from Popham to Coburn Gore. More could be installed in both Massachusetts and Quebec Province.

Officers and Directors Elected

At the business meeting on Sept. 23, 2012, the following Officers and Directors were elected.

Officers, a one year term:

President: John (Jay) Robbins, Richmond, ME

Vice President: John Parsons, Monroe, NY

Treasurer: Alan Burnell, Eustis, ME

Secretary: Stephen Clark, Scarborough, ME

Director: For a term of one year

Norman Kalloch, West Carry Pond, ME

Directors: For a term of three years

Thomas Desjardin, Augusta, ME

Hank Dillinback, Winslow, ME

Ronald Gamage, Cornville, ME

John (Jay) Robbins, Richmond, ME

Duluth Wing, Eustis, ME

We are pleased to point out that for the first time in many years, we have a full compliment of fifteen directors. Hopefully this may indicate the growing strength of the Society. Each director serves a term of three years, unless one is filling a vacated position.

Arnold Trail Plaque Stolen

As most members know, there is a series of beautiful bronze plaques that mark the Arnold Trail. Recently, Tom Desjardin was in Solon, Maine near what was known as Devil's or Caratunk Falls. There was an important portage here, encountered on the expedition's ascent of the Kennebec River.

Tom noticed an old bolder near the falls, where once a plaque had been mounted (see photo). It was gone! Upon checking with the Solon Town Clerk, she stated that it had been taken more than 10 years ago. So it is long gone! It was verified through the Solon Historical Society that it was a DAR plaque. DAR officials have been notified by the AEHS.

In this day and age of mounting copper and other metal thefts, we will have to be vigilant regarding the remaining plaques.

Pictorial Album of Society Activities, 2012



AEHS Meeting on Oct. 23,
Held at the newly renovated
Colburn House Barn.

More than 70 attended.
Noted Author, Arthur Lefkowitz
delivered a fine lecture. Photo
By Robert Cunningham

To right is a painting of
Gen. Benedict Arnold,
conferring with Col.
Daniel Morgan at
Saratoga. This is the
cover picture that will be
on Arthur Lefkowitz's
new book, *Benedict
Arnold; In The Company
of Heroes*. This may not
be reproduced without
written consent of
Mr. Lefkowitz.



Bolder showing stolen
DAR plaque at
Devil's (Caratunk)
Falls, in Solon, ME.
Tom Desjardin photo



New interpretive panel on
Granite Posts on US 201
in Caratunk, overlooking
Wyman Lake at the old
Great Carrying Place. The
Kennebec River and the
beginning of the old
portage trail are inundated
at this point. Note the
bolder with an old DAR
Bronze Plaque to right.

Tom Desjardin Photo

AEHS Sign located at
Colburn House in
Pittston. Restoration
was done by Lisa Loder
daughter of Sherri and
Steve Clark. Done in
2010.

Sherri Clark Photo



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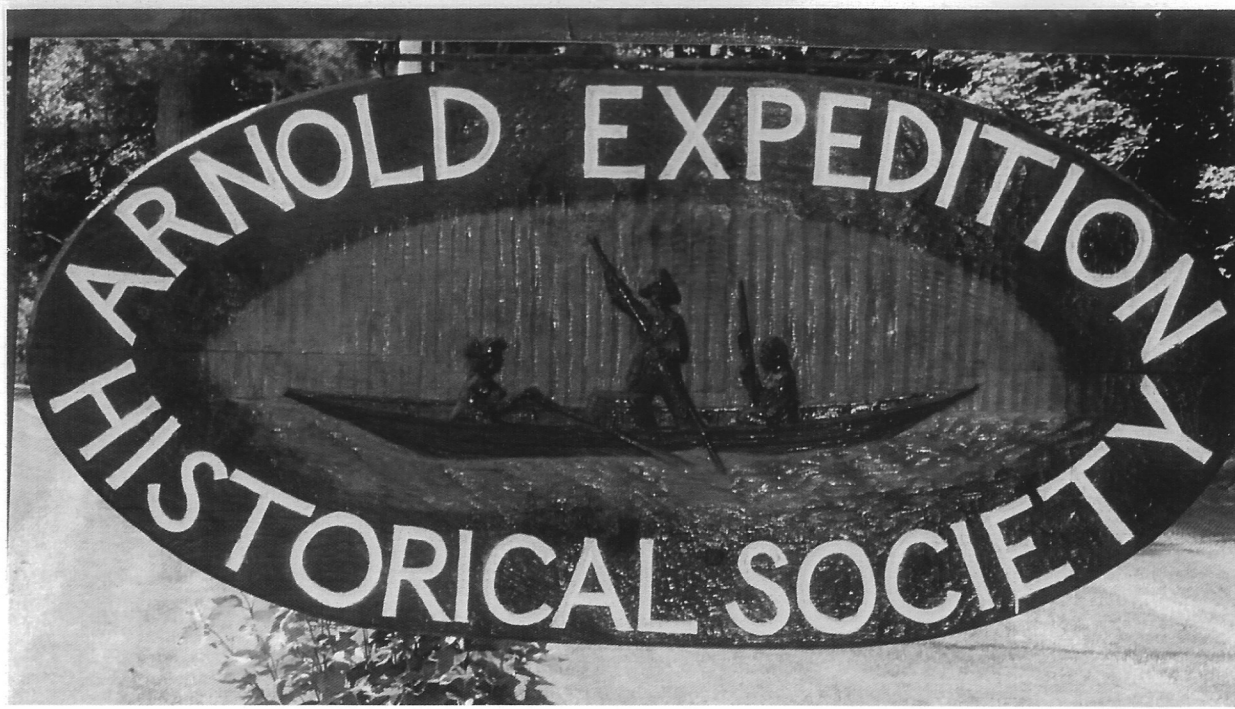


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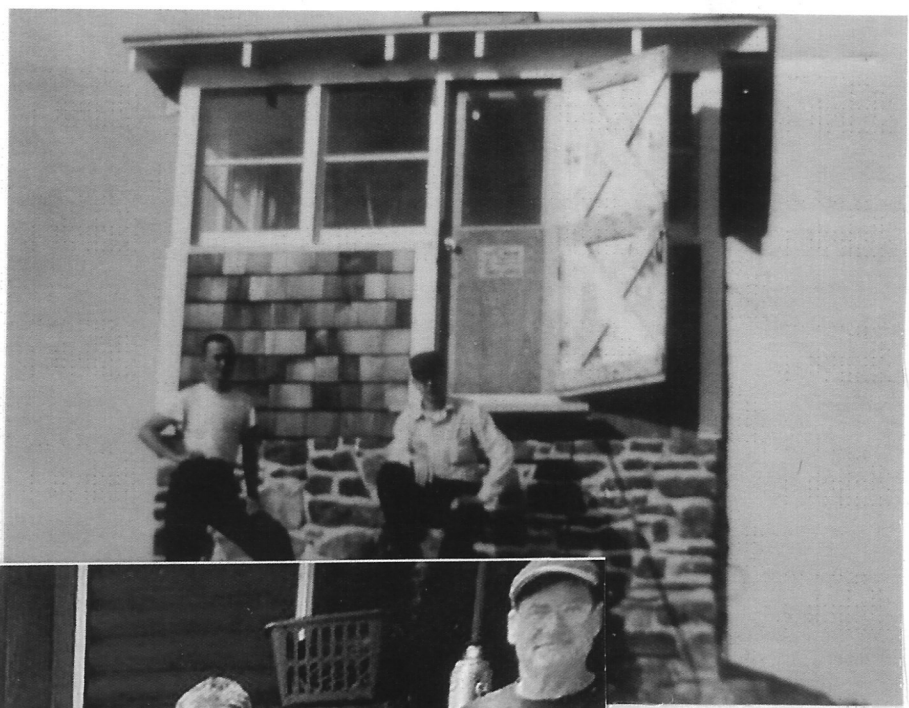
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Sherri Clark Photo



Old Stone Firetower on Avery (East) Peak of Bigelow Mtn. This was recently removed by the State as being no longer needed. The Appalachian Trail passes this spot.

Duluth Wing Photo



Part of the spring trail Crew that worked on the Great Carrying Pl. trail system. Photo taken at the AEHS Nichols Cabin on Middle Carry Pond.

A rare oil painting of Hurricane Falls on the Dead River. This was the first portage encountered by the Expedition on the river. It now lies under Flagstaff Lake. Note the long logs waiting to be rolled into the river. It was used for driving as early as the 1800's. Bigelow Mtn. is in the background.

Duluth Wing photo.



Wandering Hurricanes!

The recent experience of New Englanders, New Yorkers and New Jerseyites with Hurricane Sandy, reminds us of a similar hurricane experienced by the soldiers of the Arnold Expedition, 237 years ago. Both occurred on the same dates in late October of 1775 and 2012.

It must have been a very frightening experience for the lightly clad soldiers. Trees crashed in the woods about them, the waters rose into the woods adjacent to the Dead River, and no one was dry. Tents ripped away in the high winds, cooking or warming fires were impossible to start, meaning their meager food supplies went uncooked or raw.

Worst of all, their highway, the Dead River, was no longer dead, being virtually unnavigable in the raging flood waters. Arnold said the river rose nine feet in one night and they had to run and haul their equipment onto higher ground. Men had to push or pull their bateaux through the flooded woods, grabbing onto bushes or trees.

Students of the Expedition will remember that the hurricane hit the three rear companies under Lt. Col. Roger Enos, while they were encamped in the vicinity of Arnold Falls, and the forks of the Dead River.

Question! How much did the experience of surviving such a hurricane have on their decision to abandon the army without orders, just after the hurricane abated?

This decision was made at a council of war the day after the storm ended. According to Capt. Thayer in his journal, the three company captains McCobb, Williams and Scott and their aids, claimed the reason they decided to vote to go back was that they were short of food and many of their men were sick. Arnold had sent back orders to equip all men who were fit, to carry 15 days food and to come join the rest of the army. 15 days food would have been enough to get them to the French settlements on the Chaudiere River. Interestingly, it took less than 15 days to complete the return journey down river to Ft. Western in

Augusta and civilization. We must assume they had enough food to do this, even though they were accompanied by many sick and disabled men. So there must have been other, unstated reasons for their decision to turn back.

Again, timing of this event is an important consideration. What mental effects did the experience of surviving a hurricane have on their decision? we will never know. But it is significant that such effects on them were never mentioned in the men's journals, or later at Enos's Court of Inquiry. To admit to fear, was unthinkable.

Try to imagine if you had to camp out in an isolated wilderness, with a raging hurricane sending down sheets of rain, the wind so strong it sent trees crashing down all around you, no shelter to hunker down and no fire to cook or keep you warm. Would fear and discouragement enter your mind? What would you decide to do the next day, assuming you barely survived? The poor people in New Jersey that just experienced such conditions may be able to illuminate an answer.

The power of hurricanes is both awesome and frightening! They do affect us all. It did affect the men of the expedition, even though they did not mention it! Showing fear amongst brave soldiers is always hidden, if possible. The famous novel, *The Red Badge Of Courage* addressed this issue.

New Members Needed

Currently, we have about 140 AEHS members of all categories. We need more to strengthen our Society, particularly younger members who will bring in the proverbial "new blood." We would ask each member to look around and see if they can identify potential new members, who have an interest in history, not only of our country in general, but Maine history in particular. If so, just drop us a line with contact information, and we will take it from there. Thanks for your help!