
EXPEDITION MESSENGER

NEWSLETTER OF THE ARNOLD EXPEDITION HISTORICAL SOCIETY

May 2022



Calendar

May 21: trail clearing, meet at the turnout up the Carry Pond Rd.

May 28: (rain date)

June 11: Ft. Halifax Days, noon to 4:00 PM

June 18: Directors' meeting at Colburn Barn, 9:30 AM

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Steve Clark's third chapter

We're grateful to all members who have remitted their annual dues for 2022.

If you have not already renewed, please do so by clicking here: [Membership Archives - Arnold Expedition Historical Society](#) . You can also send a check made payable to: AEHS c/o Steve Gehrich (treasurer), 386 Murphys Corner Rd, Woolwich, ME 04579.

250th Anniversary Planning

The year 2025 will mark the 250th anniversary of Arnold's march to Quebec. A planning committee has explored activities the AEHS might undertake to celebrate one of the most significant events of the revolutionary war. Suggestions so far

include day tours to important historical sites along the route, reenactments, lectures by Arnold historians, and hikes along parts of the historic trail. Other suggestions are also welcome. All will be explored further at the next Board of Directors meeting and details will be presented in an upcoming AEHS newsletter.

Committee members include Mike Holt, Pat Holt, Fred Clark, Steve Clark, Christopher Ireland, and Norm Kalloch. AEHS members are encouraged to send their suggestions for the celebration via email to pondstream@yahoo.com or post them on the AEHS Facebook page.

Q&A with New Treasurer

Steve Gehrlich was elected AEHS Treasurer at the board meeting in September. To introduce him, here are his answers to various questions.

What is your job?

I was a biology professor at Salisbury University (Maryland) for 33 years before retiring in July of 2021. I received my B.S. and M.S. degrees in biology from the U. of Wyoming. I began my Ph.D. research at the U. of Alaska, but ultimately completed my Ph.D. in biology at Tufts. While teaching at Salisbury University I also earned an M.A. in History.

Do you want to share any family info?

My wife, Pauline, and I met in Alaska, and we have been married for 39 years. We have two daughters (both of whom are married) and two granddaughters, all of whom live in Maine.

Do you have Revolutionary War ancestors?

No. All my ancestors came from Germany and arrived in America sometime in the late 19th Century. I was born and raised in Huntington (on Long Island) in New York.

What is your connection to Maine?

My wife and I have always loved Maine,

and we were fortunate to spend several summers in Maine when our daughters were little. When our daughters finished college, they each moved to Maine, so their being here added to our desire to move up. Other members of our extended family live in NH, MA, and ME so we are happy to be near all of them. I have done some hiking in Maine, including Mount Bigelow. My wife and I did some canoeing in Alaska, and now that we are in Maine bought a kayak which we have tried a few times. We would love to do more hiking and kayaking in the future.

What is your interest in Arnold and the March?

I first read about the Arnold Expedition in John Ferling's book, [Almost a Miracle](#). I was so intrigued by the story that I subsequently read [Through a Howling Wilderness](#) by Thomas Desjardin; [Kenneth Robert's Arundel](#); [Arnold's March from Cambridge to Quebec](#) by Justin Smith; many of the men's journals, and books by [Arthur Lefkowitz](#) and [Stephen Clark](#).



Have you traveled any of the March route?

I have hiked the Great Carrying Place trail twice; once with each of our daughters. I have driven along the Kennebec and Dead Rivers, all the way to Lake Megantic. I have also walked around Quebec City to see where Arnold's force was ultimately defeated. I am interested in other aspects of Arnold's career and have read several biographies. I have also visited the site where Arnold met with Andre, Arnold's West Point HQ where his treason was discovered, and the places where Andre was captured and hanged. I have also been to Fort Ticonderoga, Crown Point, Valcour Island, and Saratoga (all in NY) and Fort Griswold (in New London, CT). My wife has grown accustomed to stopping at Benedict Arnold sites on our travels.

As treasurer, are you prepared to go out and see whether the guides who dug up the sunken gold missed any? All proceeds to AEHS of course.

There must surely still be some gold scattered along the bottom of the Dead River. Maybe we could organize an AEHS expedition to hunt for gold the next time the water level is low.

Do you think we would have taken Quebec if Montgomery had not been killed?

Unfortunately I think the attack on Quebec was desperate and doomed from the start, regardless of Montgomery's death. The British had all the advantages of being safely ensconced behind (and above) the barricades and the narrow streets of the lower town, and I think the colonial forces were too small and too weakened by their prior ordeals to take the citadel.

How do you think the Revolution would have played out if we had taken Quebec?

With the British out of Canada, Washington could have brought large numbers of soldiers to protect the Atlantic and southern coasts. The British could have kept New York, but it would have been difficult for them to break out, or attack anywhere else (e.g., Charleston or Philadelphia).

Back in our real timeline, how guilty was Peggy Shippen?

I'd give her a 7 out of 10. I think Benedict was really disgruntled with how things were going, and although Peggy may have stoked his anger and facilitated his contact with Andre, she was an accessory and not an instigator of his plan. But she was certainly not ignorant of the plot!

I am looking forward to being an active member of the AEHS, and I hope we can put together some significant commemoration events for the 250th anniversary of the march.

Steve Clark Joins AT Hall of Fame

Nearly 70 years ago, a group of friends at Waterville High School decided to head north to climb [Katahdin](#). For Stephen Clark, that hike set him on a much longer path that would encompass much of his life. On that trip, Clark met Percival Baxter, the former Maine governor whose commitment to establishing a wilderness haven in Maine would lead to the creation of Baxter State Park.



Before long Clark was helping to clear trails in the park, and in the ensuing decades he's filled several different roles with organizations that oversee the Appalachian Trail, which runs through the park and famously concludes (or begins) at the summit of Katahdin. That lifelong commitment resulted in Clark being inducted into the Appalachian Trail Hall of Fame in November 2021.

“Certain people’s instincts are to go out and clear trails. When I was in grade school, I would make paths in snow or make trails on my father’s land,” Clark said. “Later on I discovered I liked working with other people on things that didn’t deal with money. I think for me, it’s a combination of being in the woods and public service.”

Clark started maintaining sections of the A.T. decades ago. He then oversaw trail maintenance in western Maine and elsewhere. And when he wasn’t on the trail he was often writing, overseeing various publications including spending 16 years as the editor of the *Guide to the Appalachian*

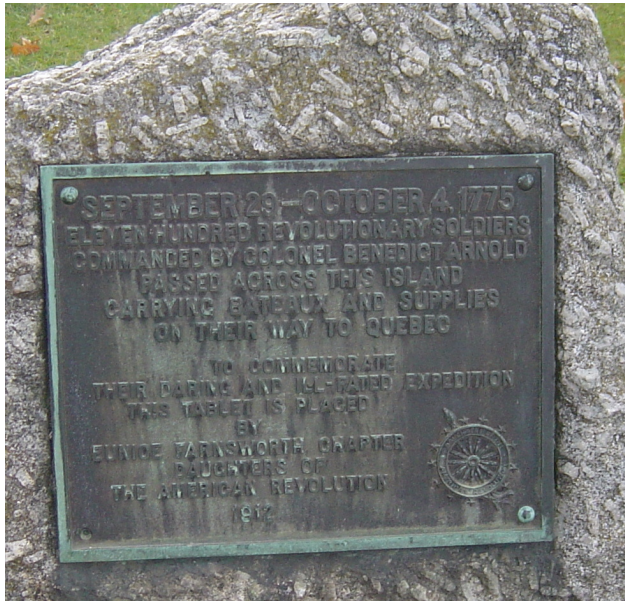
Trail in Maine. He also authored [Katahdin: A Guide to Baxter State Park & Katahdin](#) and [Following Their Footsteps](#), an account of Col. Benedict Arnold’s expedition to Québec in 1775.

Jim Foster, chair of the Hall of Fame selection committee, said, “Steve Clark is a legend on the Appalachian Trail.” Foster said that Clark “is synonymous with the 100 Mile Wilderness portion of the A.T. in Maine. In fact, he reportedly coined the term in the 1980s to describe this most isolated section of the trail.” Full article: [Haley Hersey, Morning Sentinel 12/11/21](#)

Road Markers at Skowhegan by Clayton McLaughlin

Here are pictures of the bronze plaques located just above the dam in Skowhegan. The first one was placed in 1912, and the second (closest to the river) in 2000. Both were donated by the D.A.R. This section of the river looks calm and peaceful today, but in 1775 it was a raging cataract that stalled the progress of the army from September 29 through October 4th. It





was probably here, where Bloomfield, Norridgewock, and Canaan met, that the troops began to realize the true scope of their undertaking.

At that time Skowhegan had not yet become a town and the name referred only to the falls.

Book Review by Laura Stewart
[Life in the Backwoods](#) by Norm Kalloch

Longtime AEHS member, Norm Kalloch, has written another novel. For those not familiar with Norm, his novel, [A Long Way to Walk](#), was released in 2018. This story was based on a stranded immigrant family in 1783 who attempted to walk from Quebec City to Maine via the ancient Indian portage trail used in the Arnold Expedition just eight years earlier. Like many other members who read it, I could not put it down.

When I picked up Norm’s most recent novel, I was not particularly optimistic that it would draw me in. Judging by the back cover, it sounded as if it would appeal mostly to avid anglers. I sorely underestimated it. The story is set in The Dead River Valley and the Third Carry Pond, smack in the middle of the Arnold trail, in the late 1930s, a decade before the Valley towns were deliberately flooded by the Central Maine Power Company’s dam project. Our esteemed AEHS co-founder, the late Dude Wing, grew up in Flagstaff, one of the three Valley towns forced to relocate, along with Dead River and Bigelow.

The story centers on a city couple with no experience who buy a run-down sporting camp on Third Carry Pond. David and Carol Cooper’s pipe dream seems doomed to fail. The many characters as well as the depiction of rural Maine life in the 1930s cannot help but captivate the reader. Add to

that a mysterious murder with such twists and turns cannot help but make the reader wonder if it's based on a real event. My heart rate rose as I turned pages hours after my normal bedtime. See for yourself by clicking on the link: <https://maineauthorspublishing.com/life-in-the-backwoods/>

Movie Review by the Rhode Island Chapter of the Arnold Expedition Historical Society.

Members of the Arnold Expedition Historical Society will be interested in a new documentary film about the life of Benedict Arnold. [Benedict Arnold: Hero Betrayed](#) investigates the question of what drove that eminent American soldier to betray the Revolutionary cause, conspire with the enemy to surrender the American stronghold at West Point to General Henry Clinton and then lead a British regiment in attacks against his fellow Americans.

Based on John Kirby Martin's 1997 book [Benedict Arnold, Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered](#), the new film traces Arnold's life from a childhood in Norwich, Connecticut, to an appointment as colonel in the Continental Army and subsequent rise through the ranks, to his treasonous change of loyalties, to his last years as a London merchant, all the while dwelling on the disappointments and frustrations he felt along the way. Taking its cue from Martin's book, the

film attempts to show that the mounting grievances he felt throughout his life, especially that he had been repeatedly denied the recognition due him for successes on the battlefield, caused him finally to transfer his allegiance. *Benedict Arnold: Hero Betrayed* hammers that point home repeatedly over the course of its length (two hours and six minutes).

Throughout the film a parade of college professors like Kirby, military historians, and park rangers are interviewed in period settings like historic houses and forts. Reenactments, all accompanied by a dramatic musical score, are staged on shipboard where we see men wounded by cannon fire, on battlefields where we see men shot, and in the woods, where we watch Jane McCrae being scalped by Oneida scouts loyal to the British. There's a lot of blood and guts in this movie.

As for the Quebec Expedition, we see six minutes of men dragging bateaux through a sparsely planted forest (a grove bearing little resemblance to the Maine woods we know) and a great shot of a someone working a bilge pump in a badly a leaking boat, followed by seven minutes of the attack mostly outside the walls of Quebec City (it's hard to reconstruct that scene in modern-day Quebec) and then a scene of Arnold in bed healing from his wounds and eventually retreating south with the remaining troops in the Spring. In all the expedition gets fifteen minutes out

of a two-hour-plus film. Subsequent chapters in Arnold's life get longer play, at the Saratoga National Historic Site, Fort Ticonderoga, and historic houses such as Mount Airy, the beautifully restored mansion where Arnold lived in Philadelphia.

Don't look for this film at the Academy Awards. It was meant to offer a dramatized explanation for Arnold's betrayal, along with lots of battlefield scenes and naval engagements, and is intended for an audience of history buffs-- so narrow an audience that in the end it was funded with the help of a GoFundMe campaign. If your interest lies in knowing more about the life and times of Benedict Arnold, this film covers it all. If you really just care about the March, you'll be sitting through a lot of New York State history while you wait to see shots of the Maine woods, and this may not be the one for you.

Medical Vignette: What They Were Up Against

In 2008*, a 49-year-old man was accidentally shot during a battle reenactment. No bullets or balls were being fired, but a black-powder musket sparked during loading and the ramrod was thrown some twenty meters (65 feet), striking a man's shouldered rifle. The impact broke this man's arm, his gun and the flying ramrod itself; and at least one piece of something went

through the man's abdomen, damaging his liver.

Although at 49, this man was arguably a bit older than the average American Revolutionary War soldier, he had several advantages over most victims of musket wounds, starting with helicopter transport to a Level One trauma center, followed by CT imaging rather than probing with a surgeon's bare and unwashed fingers. He also likely had better health and nutritional status to begin with, and was up-to-date on his tetanus shots. Not to mention that this was not an actual battlefield, so he was the only casualty.

And so, after two operations, seventeen blood transfusions, three weeks in intensive care and three more weeks in the hospital, he lived to reenact another day.

It goes without saying that back in the 1700s anyone with this injury would simply have bled out and died in the field. The same goes for the 1800s and probably much of the twentieth century as well. We know Arnold survived his two severe leg wounds, and without the customary amputation at that. Bullet wounds to the chest or even the head were occasionally survivable in those days. But to be "gut-shot" was almost certain death.

(**J. Forensic Sci.* March 2009, Vol. 54, No. 2.)

AEHS Membership Form

Mail this form with your check to: AEHS, c/o Steve Gehrich, 386 Murphys Corner Rd., Woolwich ME 04579. Include your phone number, and email address if this is acceptable; and please advise whether or not you want to receive the newsletter electronically. Make check payable to AEHS.

Category:

_____ Individual Membership \$30

_____ Family Membership \$35

_____ Contributing Membership \$75

_____ Life Membership \$250 (one-time payment)

Additional donation for Society programs _____ (tax-deductible)

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 \$12.00. 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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