



The French & Indian War Society Newsletter

September 2015

President-Melodie Viele, Edited by Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA

www.frenchandindianwarsociety.org

Fundraiser for Repair of Fort William Henry Museum's Historic Fireplace

On Saturday, September 26, 2015, Fort William Henry Museum and The French & Indian War Society are holding the First Annual 18th Century Dinner and Fundraiser. According to the event hosts, "All proceeds from ticket purchases and the silent auction go toward the conservation of the original Fort William Henry fireplace."

The event starts at 5:00 pm and will include dinner, drinks, live music, a silent auction, and 18th century reenactors. Tickets are \$40 per person and that includes dinner and one free drink.

Lindsay Doyle, the Fundraising Chairperson, recently wrote: "The fundraiser is being held to raise money for the conservation of the original Fort William Henry fireplace. It is located in the 'dungeon' of the fort and is extremely susceptible to water damage when it rains. Since it is one of the few original pieces of the fort that remains we really want to be able to conserve it and stop all future water damage. Besides the conservation and protection of the fireplace, the money will go towards installing a protective glass barrier in front to separate the fireplace

from the public, but also make it easier to view. We will also be adding more images and text [to the website] to provide visitors with more information about the fireplace itself, and what it may have looked like when the fort was built in 1755. We are still contacting local contractors in order to find out how much it would cost to install a drain in the parade ground to divert water away from the fireplace."

If you are interested in attending please RSVP to Lindsay Doyle, Fundraising Chairperson (The French & Indian War Society): phone (518-703-9961) or email (lid Doyle612@gmail.com).

Wiawaka Dock Damage Necessitates Repair Fundraising Campaign

By Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA

Wiawaka Holiday House, now called the Wiawaka Center for Women, has a capital campaign to raise \$130,000 to repair its dock. Engineers have determined the dock must be totally rebuilt. The waterfront structure, located on the east side of Lake George, has been used for years for many Wiawaka programs. It was damaged on May 31, 2015. Directly off the historic dock and lying in 20-40 ft. of water are seven French & Indian War shipwrecks

known as the Wiawaka bateaux. The 30-35 ft. long British and provincial warships were deliberately sunk in the autumn of 1758, part of over 260 British vessels submerged to protect them in the lake from French forces over the winter of 1758-1759; Fort William Henry had been destroyed in August 1757 and the British had no fortification to garrison their army over the winter. Many of those wooden warships were raised in 1759, but not this cluster. Bateaux Below, a not-for-profit corporation, studied the submerged vessels from 1987-1991. In 1992, the seven shipwrecks were listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the first sunken watercraft in Lake George with that designation. In 1993, the seven Wiawaka bateaux became part of a state-administered shipwreck park for scuba divers established by the state agencies, Bateaux Below, local government, and other interested groups. The Wiawaka shipwrecks then became known as "The Sunken Fleet of 1758" shipwreck preserve. The lake's "Submerged Heritage Preserves" system now has three shipwreck sites and this was the first state-administered shipwreck park in the Empire State.

The Wiawaka Holiday House was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1998. Just south of the boathouse and dock is a blue-and-yellow historic marker entitled WIAWAKA BATEAUX. The signage was sponsored by Bateaux Below and was installed in 1996. The folks at Wiawaka have long been supportive of historic preservation efforts for the seven French & Indian War shipwrecks lying off their property. Now it is time for historic preservation minded citizens and groups to support Wiawaka.

If you wish to help Wiawaka rebuild its dock, please send them a donation. Your donation is tax deductible and it should be sent to: Wiawaka, 3778 Route 9L, Lake George, NY 12845 (please indicate the check is for the dock repair). Thank you.

Results of Dr. David Starbuck's 2015 Excavation at Fort George (Lake George Battlefield Park)



On August 15, 2015, Lyn Hohmann, President of the Lake George Battlefield Alliance, shows state archaeologist Dr. Christina Rieth (right) and several other Alliance members around Dr. David Starbuck's successful summer 2015 archaeological field season. For more information see Associated Press reporter Chris Carola's story in the *Albany Times Union* newspaper. (www.timesunion.com/living/article/Fort-s-stone-walls-found-during-Lake-George-dig-6449850.php#photo-8480756). (photo credit: Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA).

1937: Lake George Swivel Gun Donated to Fort Ticonderoga Museum

By Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA

On January 28, 1937, the *Tupper Lake Free Press* newspaper reported on

the colonial artifacts that had recently been acquired by Fort Ticonderoga Museum. One of those relics was a colonial swivel gun that purportedly had been discovered while “excavating the foundation of the old Fort William Henry Hotel.” The newspaper article recorded that the Lake George 18th century cannon was a donation from Thomas Dunn to the Fort Ticonderoga Museum.

On July 31 of this year, lake historian Dr. Russell P. Bellico and I visited the Thompson-Pell Research Center at Fort Ticonderoga Museum and we examined the swivel gun. Bellico is a Society member and is the author of several books on Lake George history including *Empires in the Mountains* (2010) and *Sails and Steam in the Mountains* (1992, 2001).

Matthew Keagle, curator at the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, showed us the small artillery piece. The swivel gun (Fig. 1) was well cared for and was in excellent condition. Keagle, who joined Fort Ticonderoga’s leadership group in 2014, told us that the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum (LCMM) in Vergennes, VT conserved the colonial swivel gun. The LCMM does contract conservation of artifacts for historical societies and museums.

The muzzle loading swivel gun is a smoothbore iron cannon that fired a small caliber cannon ball or grape shot. The swivel gun is mounted on a Y-shaped fork that allowed for a wide arc of movement when aiming. The fork has a vertical iron rod that would have anchored the weapon to a warship’s gunwale (gunnel) or even for deployment to be fired from the top of the wall of a fort.



(Fig. 1): Lake George swivel gun at the Fort Ticonderoga Museum. The small cannon was reportedly uncovered during renovation work at Fort William Henry Hotel and in 1937 it was reported as a donation to the Fort Ticonderoga facility (photo credit: Joseph W. Zarzynski, RPA).

From where this artillery piece came is a mystery. In August 1757 when the French army and their allied Native American and Canadian militia laid siege to Fort William Henry, the British fortification had 18 cannons, 1 howitzer, 2 mortars, and 17 swivel guns.

Furthermore, in 1758, British General James Abercromby’s army at the south end of Lake George buried 14 cannons, 28 swivel guns, and ship rigging before the British and provincial army abandoned the area during the winter of 1758-1759.

Thus, this swivel gun could have seen action in the August 1757 siege of Fort William Henry. Or it may have been mounted on one of the British warships on Lake George. Furthermore, the artillery piece could even have been erected on the picket fort built in 1758 upon the ashes of Fort William Henry after the French burned the garrison in August 1757.

The swivel gun donated by Thomas Dunn to Fort Ticonderoga

Museum in the late 1930s is not on exhibit at Fort Ticonderoga. However, Matthew Keagle said an artillery exhibit is planned for Fort Ticonderoga Museum for next year. The swivel cannon dug up during foundation work of the “old Fort William Henry Hotel” could be one of the ordnance artifacts selected for the forthcoming exhibit. If so, it would be a colonial antiquity that many Lake Georgians and others would certainly want to view.

Calendar of Events Related to the French & Indian War

*September 25-27, 2015—260th Anniversary of the Battle of Lake George, Battlefield Park, Lake George, NY:

British, French, and Native American reenactors will recreate an 18th century military camp on the grounds of the Lake George Battlefield Park. Included will be battle reenactments, camp life, military drill and discipline, and sutlers. The camps are open: Saturday (9 am-5 pm) & Sunday (9 am-4 pm). For more information, contact Melodie Viele at Fort William Henry Museum: phone (518-744-8894) or email (melodiev@fortwilliamhenry.com)

*October 2, 2015—March to Fort Edward, NY:

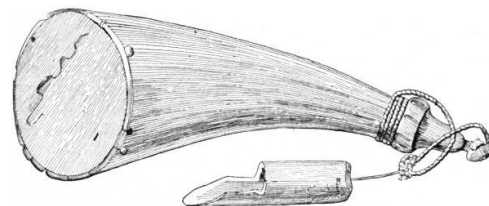
Reenactor troops will leave Fort William Henry in Lake George, NY for the 16 mile long march to Fort Edward, NY. Following the current Warren Co. Bikeway and Feeder Canal Heritage Trail, which is similar to the location of the old military road, the soldiers and their Native American allies will march, stopping at pre-selected locations, to reach Fort Edward to join the “end of the campaign.” The march departs Lake

George at 8:30 am.

*October 3-4, 2015—“The End of the Campaign”, Rogers Island, Fort Edward, NY:

This is an 18th century encampment and reenactment on Rogers Island in Fort Edward, NY. Robert Rogers wrote his 28 “Rules of Ranging” while based at Fort Edward during the French & Indian War. Join British, French, Native American, and provincial troop reenactors as they prepare for the “End of the Campaign” for the year. There will be reenactments of skirmishes, military camp life, sutlers, and more.

*****For Membership Information to The French & Indian War Society, See This Website Link: (www.frenchandindianwarsociety.org/membership/).**



Society Mailing Address:

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