



THE BURNING ISSUES



WWW.BVMA.ORG

©2004 THE BURNING ISSUES

Volume 12 Issue 1 Official Newsletter of the Burning of the Valleys Military Association, Inc.

March 2004

From the Chair

Greetings!

1779 promises to be a somewhat more relaxed year than the campaign we just finished. Many have observed that we really do need a breather from the hectic schedule we contended with at the end of 1778. Even so, this year we will once again be visiting a number of familiar venues — Mabee Farm, German Flatts, Ticonderoga and Kingston, and we hope many will be visiting

Norwalk for the first time. It is a fact of life that we can't all attend all events, but we should encourage as many as possible to support the events that they can, as they are VERY important to the sites that host us. Many times the number of participants is less important than the experience

available to them at these events... and we strive to create the best experience possible.... not just for the combatants, but for all who attend.

Looking ahead, 1780 already promises to be a difficult year as the Valley's once again become the focus of a lot of attention... so enjoy this year, and savor the quiet time...

Like any organization, the BVMA can only be as strong and dynamic as its membership permits.

We have a new executive board, and new leadership in just about every office. Jim Stevens is wearing one coat (right!) this year as Deputy Chair and Crown Commander. Dean Barnes is our executive secretary, and Teresa Gage is our treasurer... a

(continued on p. 2)



1779

“The Sullivan-Clinton Campaign”

In this Issue:

| | |
|--|---|
| From The Chair | 1 |
| Behind the Lines | 1 |
| 2004 School of the Reenactor | 2 |
| Women's Winter Weekend | 2 |
| The 1779 Sullivan-Clinton Campaign and The Battle of Newtown | 3 |
| 2004 BVMA Schedule | 5 |
| Want Ads | 6 |
| From the Publisher | 6 |
| BVMA Online | 6 |



Behind the Lines

At our November 2003 meeting, we elected officers and delegates for the 2004 season. Returning this year are co-chairs Sue-Ann Wheadon and Deanine Kowalski. We welcome a new face to the BTL with Maxine Christman as BTL Secretary. Maxine was actively involved in several BTL programs last year, and we look forward to her support and input this year. Delegates this year are myself (Kristin Gitler) and Shari Yaddaw. If you have any questions, suggestions or concerns regarding Behind the Lines, these are the people to see.

Last year was a very busy year, and the BTL put on many programs throughout the year that were enjoyed by both the membership and the public. This year promises to be quieter, and provides us with an opportunity to think up new programs or make improvements on some of the ones we have done in the past.

Also note that several of our sustaining member historic sites are putting on programs of interest to civilians: Old Fort Johnson's Clothing Workshop in April and Fort Klock's Cooking Seminar in April are two of the upcoming programs. If we take advantage of these programs in good numbers, the Sites are likely to continue putting them on.

So get involved in BTL programs this year – it's a great way to learn something, meet new people, and have fun. We are looking forward to seeing you all in the coming season!

Kristin Gitler
BTL Delegate

From the Chair *(cont'd)*

first, and reflecting our amended bylaws! Sue-Ann Wheadon, Deanine Kowalski and Mike Kowalski are our BTL and Guild representatives.

Our objectives are relatively simple, and we will be true to our mission statement. If anybody has a problem, we expect to hear about it. But I personally would hope to hear more than complaints... I'd like to see suggestions how we can do something better, and what the membership is prepared to do to help make things better. A former president had a simple plaque on his desk that stated "the buck stops here", and that's a principle of leadership I personally adhere to.... but I expect help spending that buck when it gets here.

Working together we can accomplish more than we can working separately, or worse... working individually against our collective interests. Lets all pull together to make the BVMA, and its endeavors, the most successful we possibly can.

Lets have a successful and safe reenactment of the 1779 campaign!

J. Osinski
Chairman

2004 School of the Reenactor

Saturday, April 17, 2004 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Fort Stanwix, Rome, NY

It's time to prepare for the 2004 season! Come to the BVMA School of the Reenactor at Fort Stanwix to greet old friends and meet new ones as we review skill and procedures and learn more about our lively and interesting hobby. All BVMA members are invited to attend.

Schedule

| | |
|------------|--|
| 9:00 a.m. | Fort Stanwix opens for the day Registration in the Gregg Building |
| 9:30 a.m. | Military Drilling & Tactics in the Square BTL - Comparing & Contrasting Valley Ethnic Cultures |
| 10:30 a.m. | BTL - 18th Century Penmanship |
| 11:30 a.m. | BTL - Brainstorming for 2004 |
| Noon | Lunch |
| 1:00 p.m. | Safety Review and BVMA Orientation |
| 2:15 p.m. | Department Workshop |
| 3:00 p.m. | Member Introductions & Open Forum |
| 4:00 p.m. | Conclusion |
| 5:00 p.m. | Fort Stanwix closes for the day |

Women's Winter Weekend

Superbowl weekend usually has people prepping for the big game. But for a certain group of women, it has a different kind of prep. Bags are packed with colonial garments, research, sewing equipment, and a grab bag as they prepare for another Women's Winter Weekend.

Held at Indian House in Historic Deerfield, Mass., and headed up by Diane Stevens, WWW is a weekend-long learning experience for any lady interested in the 18th century. This year, it was nothing short of a success and a great time for all who were able to come. As usual, the fee was modest. We stayed in a reproduction colonial house, and we were catered by Beth Gilgun, who as usual, put together a spectacular menu. To help support Indian House, we had a silent auction that raised a pretty check that was presented to our hostess, Lynn. For each other, we had a grab bag, which received the usual "oohs," "ahhs," and giggles as the gifts were chosen one by one.

Perhaps the most satisfying part of the whole weekend were the workshops and endless education and sharing of knowledge! I, personally, was able to attend 5 workshops, including 18th century puddings, 18th century dance and etiquette, "Rhythm of the Seasons" by Missy Clark, 18th century children's clothing, and the 18th century grocery list. Other classes held were: Hat Decorating 2 by Laura Spickerman, The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly (fabrics) by Teresa Gage, an 18th century housewife sewing kit, wampum weaving, flax spinning, and others.

We also had a round fire discussion, an open forum where ladies could ask questions. Questions asked and answered ranged from personal feminine hygiene of the 18th century to how to catch good yeasties to make yeast.

There was also a surprise birthday party for one of our presenters.

If you are interested in learning more about WWW, please feel free to talk to Laura, Teresa, or me at any event.

— Kateri Scott

225th Commemoration Preview for BVMA Members
The 1779 Sullivan-Clinton Campaign and The Battle of Newtown:
A Brief Overview from Two Original Accounts
By: Dr. Todd E. Harburn (British 60th Royal American Regt./2nd Battalion)

As the 225th Commemorations of the American Revolution continue, of course, as everyone is well aware, included in the upcoming year of 2004 will be that of the 1779 Clinton-Sullivan Campaign. While there have been many previously written in-depth books and articles on the expedition, this small review is not intended as such, but rather to provide a very brief overview with particular mention of excerpts from two rare and most interesting original accounts, which provide some specific detail with regard to the Battle of Newton, NY. These are the *Revolutionary Diary of Lieutenant Obadiah Gore, Jr.*, Edited by R.W.G. Vail, New York Public Library, 1929 and the *Journal of Major Jeremiah Fogg During the Expedition of General Sullivan in 1779 Against the Western Indians*, The New-Letter Press, 1879. A limited number of first edition copies were printed and remain with various historical libraries; one of each are contained in the collections of the esteemed William L. Clements Library at the University of Michigan. For those who have the opportunity to read these rare surviving accounts at one of the archival collections where they may reside, it is indeed a worthwhile and enjoyable experience.

The overall basic objective of the expedition as planned in the spring of 1779 by General George Washington, Commander-in-Chief of the Continental forces (with approval from the Congress), was two-fold: 1) to destroy the corn and grain crops of the Western Indians Six Nations (whose region comprised the area from Lake Ontario south to the Susquehanna and between the New York Catskill Mountains to Lake Erie) which were used to supply the British army, Indians and refugees at Fort Niagara; and 2) as revenge for the massacres of troops and civilians at Wyoming and Cherry Valleys the year prior in 1778 by John Butler and his “infamous” Rangers and (allegedly) Joseph Brant and his Native warriors. Washington had authorized “. . . the total destruction. . . of their settlements and the capture of as many prisoners. . . as possible” . . . to include all ages and sexes as hostages, being “the only kind of security to be depended on for the future good behavior of the Indians” [American Heritage History of the American Revolution, 1971, pg. 306].

The American forces were about 4000 total in two columns. The main column, and overall command of the entire expedition was assigned to General John Sullivan of New Hampshire. Under his command was a rather “mixed” collection of brigades comprised of Brigadier-General William [“Scotch Willie”] Maxwell (four New Jersey regiments), Brigadier-General Enoch Poor (three New Hampshire and one Massachusetts regiment, Brigadier-General Edward Hand (two regular Pennsylvania regiments, a Pennsylvania German battalion, an artillery regiment and four units of Pennsylvania riflemen and miscellaneous volunteers [p. 5 Gore diary]. Other officers in this first column included Colonels Elias Dayton and Mathias Ogden in the New Jersey section, Joseph Cilley and Henry Dearborn in the New Hampshire sections, and James Parr with a detachment of Daniel Morgan’s own riflemen, Daniel Burchardt with the German battalion, [p. 307, American Heritage].

The second column was under the command of General James Clinton of New York (four New York regiments and a New York artillery detachment) and which included regimental officers such as New York’s Colonel Peter Gansevoort who was instrumental in the defeat of the 1777 British New York campaign under Barry St. Leger] and a New York artillery detachment) [p. 5, Gore diary]. To accomplishing the planned objectives, Sullivan’s column was to travel north from Easton, Pennsylvania into New York State, while Clinton’s column was to transverse down from the Mohawk Valley from Canajoharie in New York to eventually rendezvous with Sullivan near the New York-Pennsylvania border.

Sullivan’s column organized at Easton about May 7 and eventually progressed to make its way to Wyoming Valley on June 23, while Clinton’s column left Canajoharie on June 17. Both columns encountered numerous difficulties over the course of their respective routes including inclement weather, supply deficiencies and delay in replacements, bad roads and difficult terrain which were deterrents that prevented the large expeditions from the quick strikes at the Indian towns that was initially intended by Washington. Other previously published histories of this campaign relate details of these aspects and most interesting descriptions of the sites and scenes they encountered such as the deserted elaborate Indian towns at Chemung near Tioga on the Sullivan route [which included. . . “between 30-40 Houses, some large and neatly finish’d; particularly a Chapel and Council House” and the “good Log houses with Stone Chimneys and glass windows” in another Indian town” [p. 308-309, American Heritage]. Throughout this time, the Americans destroyed the great fields of grain, vegetables, orchards and corn [some stalks seen with “corn ears an awesome two feet in length!”] to avenge the raids of the year prior and destruction of other colonial settlements by the Indians and British. On the Clinton route, soldiers made particular mention of the destroyed remains in the Mohawk Valley region of the nice “solid chimneys and glazed windows that had once existed in towns like German Flats and Stone Arabia before Indians had raided them” [p. 309, American Heritage].

By August 22, the two columns had joined at Tioga and proceeded. The deserted Indian towns were a puzzlement and perhaps

(Continued on p. 4)

1779 Sullivan-Clinton Campaign (cont'd from p. 3)

should have been a warning to the commanders that something was amiss. This, in fact, was what was occurring i.e. Indian forces of the Six Nations had left their homes to combine forces and this culminated in an attempted ambush and resulting battle on August 29, 1779.

“At the Indian village of Newtown, some five miles below Elmira, NY, the now combined columns “encountered a force of 1,200 Indians and Tories under Colonel John Butler, with Captain Walter Butler and [James] Macdonald as subordinates with upwards of 800 Indians under Mohawk chief Joseph Brant (Thayendnegea). Fortifications made by the British forces consisted of a series of rough log breastworks and rifle pits on the crest of a ridge, in a position from which they had hoped to catch Sullivan’s army in ambush. Sullivan’s artillery, supported by Hand’s brigade (of which Lieutenant Gore was a member) posted on a rise of ground 300 yards in front of the enemy, while the rest of the army charged the works with flanking movements sufficient enough to threaten the British rear and they hastily retreated, leaving dead and equipment on the field. The American army lost 8 men and the Indians 12, but the latter were so disheartened by the results of this battle that they offered no further effective resistance during the campaign.” [p. 5 Gore Diary]

The Casualty List: August 29th, 1779 [p. 9 Fogg Journal]

| Killed | | Wounded |
|--------------------|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Col. Cilley’s Reg. | 1 Lieut. | Lieut. McCally* and 1 private |
| Col. Reid’s | 1 Corp | 6 privates |
| Col. Scammell’s | 2 Corp | 6 privates |
| Col. Alden | 1 private | 7 privates |
| Covering party | 1 private | several |

*Lt. McCally later died the following day from complications of the amputation performed following his wounding.

“Six Indians killed, One Tory taken prisoner who related the whole force was 600 Indians commanded by Brant and 200 whites commanded by Butler; among which were a British sergeant, corporal and 12 privates. A captured slave (Negro) afterward gave the same info with the exception that the Indian forces were only 400.”

“About Sept 3rd occurred the ambush, torture and murder of Lt. Thomas Boyd of the Riflemen along with about fifteen of his men, although about 8 including the famous frontiersman Timothy Murphy escaped” [p. 7, Gore Diary; Author’s Note: the Gore Diary actually relates more specific details about this skirmish]

Lieutenant Gore’s diary ends with the arrival of the expedition at Kanadaseaga (present day Geneva, NY) on Sept 19th, 1779. From the latter, both armies returned via their original routes; Sullivan’s back to Easton, PA arriving on October 15, 1779, and Clinton’s back to the Mohawk. “Forty one Iroquois villages were burned, and 200,000 bushels of corn destroyed as well as quantities of vegetables and thousands of fruit trees. Only forty-one American soldiers were lost.” [Gore diary].

Overall, the campaign had technically been a success in obtaining its original objectives, however, in reality it ultimately backfired in that the Indians themselves were not totally destroyed, survived the winter at Niagara under the protection of the British. They eventually returned to spew destruction and pillage on the Mohawk Valley in the subsequent famed raids of 1780 and 1781 under Sir John Johnson and his King’s Royal Regiment of New York (loyalists and former residents of the valley), John Butler and his Rangers and Major John Ross of the 34th Regt. and KRR/2nd Battalion.

Sullivan eventually sent his formal report to the Continental Congress relating “there is not a single Town left in the Country of the five [sic] nations, except for one spot far west of Genesee [NY]”; he did not mention, however, any aspect about the securing of hostages, of which “Washington...seems to have forgotten” in thanking the New Hampshire general” (p. 310, American Heritage]. Congress also returned its thanks to Sullivan, “who soon after resigned his commission and retired due to ill health” [Introduction of Fogg Journal].

Author’s Note: The above brief overview with excerpts was comprised from the aforementioned original accounts by *Gore* and *Fogg* (which again provide fine examples of vivid, contemporary eyewitness descriptions of the expedition), and *The American Heritage History of The American Revolution*, 1971, published by the same (which also is a fine brief overview of the campaign). While it may seem that more attention has been focused on Sullivan in the above review, this is not intended as a slight, as Clinton was no less important in the expedition. Rather this is due to the sources used i.e. Gore and Fogg who were with Sullivan and also as Sullivan was the overall commander as prior noted. Nonetheless, for further, more in-depth reading on the 1779 Sullivan -

(Continued on p. 5)

2004 Schedule of Events
Containing BVMA Events
As well as other Events of Interest to the Membership

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| March 20 | BVMA General Membership Meeting/Social Gathering |
| April 3 | Clothing Workshop - Old Fort Johnson |
| April 4 | Herkimer Home Sugaring Off |
| April 17 | BVMA School/Training Weekend - Fort Stanwix, Rome, NY (BVMA Sponsored) |
| April 24 | Wargame/Tactical - Schoharie, NY |
| May 14-15 | Minisink Massacre 225th (invitational) - Montgomery, NY |
| May 15 | Fort Klock Cooking Seminar |
| May 22-23 | Mabee Farm Encampment - Rotterdam Junction, NY (BVMA Sponsored) |
| May 29-30 | Fenimore House - Sullivan-Clinton Expedition Cooperstown, NY |
| May 29-30 | Fort Stanwix F & I Encampment - Rome, NY |
| June 12-13 | Johnson Hall Market Fair - Johnstown, NY (BVMA Supported) |
| June 19-20 | Raid on German Flatts - German Flatts, NY (BVMA Supported) |
| June 26-27 | Fort Ticonderoga F & I Grand Encampment |
| July 10-11 | 225th Burning of Norwalk - Norwalk, CT (BVMA Supported) |
| July 10-11 | Battle of Hubbardton - Hubbardton, VT (LHA) |
| July 23-25 | Fort Niagara F&I |
| July 24-25 | Old Fort Johnson Colonial Days |
| July 31- Aug. 1 | Plains of Abraham - Quebec |
| August 14-15 | Ft. Niagara Rev War |
| August 28-29 | 225th Battle of Newtown - Elmira, NY |
| Sept. 11-12 | Fort Ticonderoga (BVMA Supported) |
| Sept. 18-19 | The Destruction of Fort Engagement - Milford, NY |
| Oct.16-17 | The Burning of Kingston - Kingston, NY (BVMA Sponsored) |
| Nov. 13-14 | Fort Stanwix Fall Troop Encampment/Harvest Dinner |

1779 Sullivan-Clinton Campaign (cont'd from p. 4)

Clinton Campaign, those interested readers can consult their local libraries and/or historical museum archives as there are other extensive published studies and histories available.

Although this campaign might seem less important in the course of the American Revolution as compared to the more well-known and major campaigns throughout the war, it in reality was not. As such, the importance of the upcoming 225th Commemoration and Reenactment of the Battle of Newtown (and any other Sullivan-Clinton Campaign commemoration events that may be planned for the 2004 reenactment season) can be appreciated as we, the BVMA and others who will be participating in these events, celebrate the courage, determination and perseverance of all original participants (American, British, and Native) for the causes they believed to be right.

From the Publisher

I'd like to thank everyone for their contributions to the newsletter last year. We had some varied and interesting articles on such topics as military matters, music, religion, trade, and much more. We have such a diverse wealth of knowledge within the BVMA, and I look forward to receiving your articles this year. Submissions can be something as small as a relevant quote (I always need those small space-fillers!) up to a full article. Note that articles that are longer than 2-3 pages may be split between two issues.

Currently, the newsletter and other correspondence is mostly distributed online or via email. We realize that not everyone is "wired", so if you prefer to have your newsletters mailed to you, please indicate that on your dues roster when paying dues. If you have already paid your dues, you may indicate your preference by giving either myself or Teresa Gage, BVMA Treasurer, a written note with your name, address, & unit, & that you prefer your correspondence via regular mail. In the past, some of you have told me in person at an event - but honestly, I just can't remember that—if we have it in writing, it will get recorded.

— *KG, Publisher*

The BVMA Online - www.bvma.org

Please check your unit listing on the Members page of the website, and make sure that it is listed and linked correctly. Don't forget to check the web site for the latest news and information, always linked from the home page. And if you haven't joined already, don't forget our members-only lists:

BVMA: <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/bvma/> (Moderator - Dean Barnes)

BTL: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/btl_bvma/ (Moderator - Kate Scott)

I always welcome your ideas and input for the website—it should be your source for information & resources! — *KG, Webmistress*

WANTED: Antique/vintage wooden croquet set, preferably complete and paint chipped or faded. If wickets and pegs are missing, that's ok, but balls and mallots must be in good, usable condition. I need a set to recreate a game (not croquet but similar) that was played in the 18th century. Please contact Kate Scott at piseag@yahoo.com or 518-883-5265 before 8pm EST. Thank you!

NEXT ISSUE SUBMISSION DEADLINE

The next issue will be published in June, 2004. Please submit articles, ideas, questions, etc. at any time or by June 5th for the next issue.

— *Kristin*

To submit an Article for *The Burning Issues*, contact:

Kristin Gitler (Publisher)
604 E. Seneca St.
Manlius, NY 13104
315-682-4257
kgitler@twcny.rr.com

Steve Crawford (Congressional Ed.)
scrawfo2@twcny.rr.com

Shawn Natole (Crown Editor)
PO Box 48
Hagaman, NY 12068
tnatole@nycap.rr.com

Shari Yaddaw (BTL Editor)
865 St. HWY 30
Mayfield, NY 12117-1700
(518-863-4007)
yadd@klink.net



The Burning Issues
Kristin Gitler, Publisher
604 E. Seneca St.
Manlius, NY 13104

