

NWTA Courier

P U B L I C A T I O N O F
T H E N O R T H W E S T T E R R I T O R Y A L L I A N C E

A NOTE FROM YOUR NEW COMMANDER

My name is Bart T. Durbin, and I have been a member of Bowman's Company for almost 11 years. I was introduced to reenacting by my lovely wife, Alyssa, and son, Thad, who have been doing this hobby for 17 years. I never knew one could change their clothes, step back in time, and have so much fun while educating others. It doesn't hurt to have the smell of gunpowder and bacon in the morning.

I am 60 years young, went to college in Oklahoma, and spent some time on a Destroyer escort

as a lead Radar Technician during Vietnam. I have been driving a truck for the last 30 years.

That being said, I am very proud that you have entrusted me with the position of Commander. I am also very excited to see what we as an organization can accomplish in the next two years. I have some ideas that I will put before you in the coming months. Also, any ideas that might have, do not hesitate to let me or my staff know.

I would personally like to thank Steve Klepfer and Bill Hess for the outstanding jobs that they have done. Bill has been a guiding light as I continue to learn about the NWTA. I would also like to thank David Jahntz for being my touch stone during this learning process.

In closing, we as an organization need to keep an open mind and be willing to

accept changes as we all strive to continue to make the NWTA the premier living history organization that we have been and will continue to be, with everyone's help.

Your Humble Servant,
Bart T. Durbin



Bart Durbin surveys the field at this year's Forest Glen event October 6 & 7.

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

I welcome this opportunity to serve the NWTA, and I hope that I can serve mainly as a channel for the membership to voice ideas, share experiences, and pass along research. I welcome any and all submissions, from the briefest (campfire recipes, helpful hints, photos) to longer articles. I make only a couple of stipulations: First, if your article is submitted as a research piece, it must be accompanied by specific documentation, preferably in a standard citation format (such as end noting—this makes it easier for others to get at your

sources). Any research article submitted without documentation will be published as an opinion piece—as the history maxim goes, "Argument without evidence is only opinion." Second, I reserve the right to edit for length or request that we work together to serialize long articles. Finally, I will not publish anonymous articles (you should be willing to stand behind what you write) nor will I pull from the message board—if you wish to submit, please do so directly. Thanks—I look forward to seeing more of the membership in the pages of the Courier.

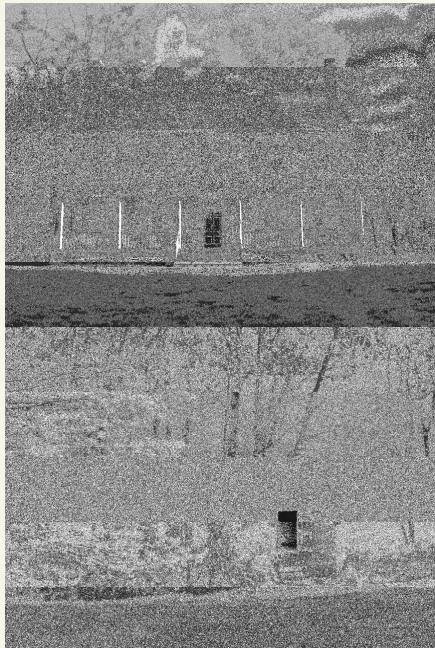
LOCUST GROVE—AUTUMNAL FINALE REFLECTIONS ON THE 2006 EVENT

David M. Howell
King's Regiment, 8th of Foot

Reflections on the 2006 event

LOCUST GROVE, KY—The start of this weekend was anything but delightful. It had rained hard earlier in the week across Louisville, Kentucky, a city named after the King of France for his generous help during the American Rebellion. But no one was expecting the torrential downpours of Friday. The camp was a

"Locust Grove is as excellent a season ending site as Vincennes is a season opener."



The 1790 brick home (top) is the centerpiece of the historic estate, but outbuildings like this spring house (bottom) add to the property.

Photographs courtesy of Erica Satterthwaite.

swamp!

With tents and fly up the rain returned for one final onslaught that persisted well into the early morning hours. By daybreak, with coffee brewing, the clouds began to recede and the weekend turned most beautiful.

Locust Grove is a wonderful site nestled on the edge of a huge rolling hill with outbuildings ideal for battle demonstrations. The Clark House itself is a museum treasure harkening back to the buildings I'd seen only a week earlier in Williamsburg while attending the 225 anniversary of Yorktown. Much of the Clark House was decorated in either original artifacts or pieces familiar to the period. Surrounding the house were a variety of sutlers including an eccentric flamboyantly foppish silk merchant who never broke character no matter what questions were asked. What I enjoyed most from the sutlers were their wares. These folks geared their offering to the re-enactor and there was plenty to see and enjoy.

There was only one battle a day but it didn't matter as the day was filled with walking the grounds and touring the house and many of the outbuildings. There was a generous crowd and the hosts did something unique. They offered camp tours to the public. Any event participant could lead a tour through the camps. It was a wonderful way to interact with the public as well as treat guest to a very special history lesson. It would take some coordinating, but was an interesting enough idea that we should attempt more often at other events. Hey, something for the civilian participants to do. It really drew a continuing crowd and created ebullient interest in the people, the camps, and the period.

With canvas dried, Saturday evening was set aside for the children of the regiment who trick-or-treated among the camps. With no rope lines (much like Yorktown—and something the N W T A should seriously consider eliminating) the camp had a grand open feel and invited modern guest in for a more intimate conversation.

There was also a bon fire on the far hill of the estate where Father, Son and Friends performed to a swelling crowd and story tellers retold period tales for the youngsters in attendance. With a crescent moon, limited modern lighting and a blanket of shimmering stars above, it was a perfect evening and I'm delighted to say, one in which very few donned modern dress—another necessity for the N W T A to consider.

Sunday brought an equally beautiful day of sun and cool autumnal temperatures. Though our numbers diminished over night, there were plenty of forces on hand for a riotous sparring. The Crown forces eventually gave way to the field but not until after a heated exchange of musket music. In the end, I exhausted almost entire cartouche box in one battle. It was invigorating.

Locust Grove is as excellent a season ending site, as Vincennes is a season opener. I hope more of you will join me next year for this event. If nothing else but to take in the museum and tour the estate, you will not be disappointed.

This year's event took place the 27th and 28th of October; see the next page for a photo recap of the entire season.

WINTER QUARTERS: BUILDING YOUR OWN FORT

David M Phipps
71st Regt of (Highland) Foot

Editor's Note: In this issue and the next, the author will describe his adventure in fort-building. Part I of the article begins below, and Part II will appear in the next issue.

Since I was kid and first visited Old Fort Niagara, I have always wanted to be the commander of a large fort with high walls that bristle with cannon. My service with the U.S. Army however, was a hard reality check on my illusions of forts. Modern forts have no walls and cannons are now self-propelled armored vehicles. Fortunately, my love of history and reenacting have provided me opportunities to enjoy my ideas about forts, and to learn more about the nature and purpose of the buildings that absorbed so much of an 18th Century soldier's time and industry.

When visiting a modern reenactment site, one will most likely find a setup built around the depiction of a battle. The battle, however, represents only a small aspect of the 18th Century soldier's daily life. Depending on the campaign, the typical soldier spent much of his time building defensive works such as forts, redoubts and batteries. Because many of these defensive works were small and temporary in nature, they are perfectly suited for the modern reenactor to try their hand at recreating.

Today's common view of 18th

Century forts comes from the surviving major forts like Fort Niagara, NY, and Fort William Henry (as depicted in the film "The Last of the Mohicans.") Imposing structures such as these did play a large and important role in 18th Century American wars. Often overlooked is the fact that there were numerous small fortifications dotting the landscape as far west as the Mississippi River during this period. Most of these military posts were diminutive, humble and independently commanded by "Fort Majors" whose real ranks were sergeants or junior officers. Their commands were to be temporary rather than permanent establishments. In theory, all fort designs were on principles laid down in

the 1600's by French Field Marshal Vauban and reinforced by various military engineering manuals of the period. Surviving large forts such as Fort Niagara NY, Fort McHenry MD, and Fort George, Ontario, reflects Field Marshal Vauban's principles. Small posts such as Ft Quaitenon IN did not. As usual with most military operations, the various governments wanted to do things on the cheap. In addition, these armies had to deal with officers and men who were untrained as engineers, often unmotivated and unsupported to build proper forts for housing supplies along "safe" routes.

Story continues on page 8



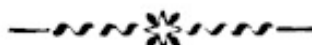
CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS!

With winter, long nights, cold days, the dearth of events and the resulting boredom approaching, many of us look to fill the time we spend at reenactments with expanding our knowledge, filling in the gaps of our research, or engaging in some escapism with a book. So, I would like to ask for "recommended reading" from the membership. In essence, send in a book review (under 500 words, please) in which you recommend—or caution against—any book that relates to any facet of our period, whether it be a scholarly non-fiction piece, an edited collection of primary documents, or a fictional work. Send submissions via email to nwtacourier@yahoo.com, or "old fashioned" mail at 1385 W. Allen Street A4; Bloomington, IN 47403.

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NWTA 2008 Historical Sewing Workshops

Presenter: Henry Cooke of Historical Costume Services, Randolph, MA

Dates and times:

Saturday, April 5, 2008, 9:00 am – 5:00 pm: Military Coat Workshop

Sunday, April 6, 2008, 9:00 am – 4:00 pm: Breeches Workshop

Place: College of DuPage, Glen Ellyn, IL

Local hotel accommodations will be available.

General Description:

Military Coat Workshop: participants learn the rudiments and construction details and techniques needed to construct a period military or civilian coat.

Breeches Workshop: participants learn to measure and draft their own pattern and cut and construct a pair of breeches or trousers.

Maximum number of participants:

15 sewers per day

15 models/subjects per day

Sewers will be registered on a first come first serve basis, limited to one from each NWTA unit until February 1, 2008.

Fee to participants:

\$10 per day non refundable registration fee for sewers only to cover copy and mailing expenses

Materials to make garments:

Participants may purchase materials on their own from a materials list or purchase precut kits based on model/subject measurements from

Historical Costume Services (*recommended*).

Military coat kit: \$170.00 includes generic buttons, but no lace.

Breeches kit: \$80.00 includes linen or hemp fabric

Organizers: Andrea Studzinski, Hazel Dickfoss and Marilyn Hess

Questions? Contact Andrea Studzinski

By email: andreastudzinski@sbcglobal.net

By phone: 630-942-0670 (Please do not call after 9 pm)

By US Postal Service:

Andrea Studzinski

309 N Park Blvd

Glen Ellyn, IL 60137

Registration on reverse

NWTA 2008 Historical Sewing Workshop Registration

Name: _____

Unit: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Subject/Model name: _____

Registration for:

_____ Military Coat Workshop, Saturday, April 5, 2008, 9 am – 5 pm

_____ Breeches Workshop, Sunday, April 6, 2008, 9 am – 4 pm

Date Received _____

Amount Paid _____

Historical Workshop



Historical Workshop: Hands-On Skills for Living History

January 19, 2008

Prairieview Education Center

2112 Behan Road, Crystal Lake

8:30 a.m. - 9:00 a.m. -- Morning Coffee and Tea *

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. -- Morning Session

12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m. -- Lunch (On Your Own)

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. -- Afternoon Session

4:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. -- Social Hour with Snacks **

* Free with purchase of morning or full day session

** Free with purchase of afternoon or full day session

Bobbin Lace: How to Really Do It

Presenter: Kate Henry

9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. / Cost: \$30 / Class Limit: 10

Students will learn how to make bobbin lace, recognize and produce the basic stitches and combinations, learn to decipher printed instructions, and see how to make their own working tools. Students will make a sampler, and start a lace pattern appropriate to the 18th century to demonstrate in camp. Handouts and patterns are included. Tools will be on loan for the class, and available for purchase. Suppliers addresses will be provided. Bring sewing pins, notebook, pen, and paper scissors. Cameras welcome. Students welcome to bring personal laces for identification during break time.

18th Century Style Floor Cloths

Presenter: Pat Rogge, Lynn Creegan

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. / Cost: \$15 / Class Limit: 20

This class will provide the history and construction of floorcloths. All necessary materials to make your own small floorcloth will be provided.

Native American Flute Making for Beginners

Presenter: Andy Talley

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. / Cost: \$15 / Class Limit: 12

In this hands-on beginners' workshop, you will learn the basics of how Native American flutes are made and played. We will discuss the materials and methods used in making flutes. Each participant will have the opportunity to make a very simple flute, made from bamboo in the same style of Native American River Cane flutes.

Woodworking

Presenter: Ernie Kraak

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. / Cost: \$15 / Class Limit: 8

In this class you will make your own split bench and trencher. You will use the draw knife, foot & bowl adze, gouge, hand drill and shaving horse. You will need to bring your own small sharp knife.

Make Your Own Day Cap

Presenters: Pat Rogge, Lynn Creegan

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. / Cost: \$15 / Class Limit: 20

Ladies, having a hard time deciding what style day cap is for you? At this workshop, there will be several styles for you to try on, as well as patterns for you to start sewing. You will need 1 & 1/4 yards of white muslin or linen, 2 yards of white 1/4" cord or tape, a sewing needle, a spool of white thread and straight pins. Please pre-wash your fabric to prevent shrinking.

Tinsmithing

Presenter: Max Schram

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Cost: \$15 / Class Limit: 6

In this class you will make a pair of wall sconces from an early American primitive pattern. You will use the pan swedge, cullender swedge, beakhorn stake, hatchet stake, tinsnips, and hollow punch. A brief description of the various tinsmithing tools, both stakes and rotary machines will be given.

The History of Music

Presenter: James Kuehl

1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. / Cost: \$15 / Class Limit: 20

We will study songs that have common melodies but may have come from various backgrounds. Did you know that the "Star Spangled Banner" tune was once an English drinking song? Bring your instruments if you have them as we will play the music and sing the lyrics in this hands-on class.

Pre-registration is required; space is limited. Registration must be received by January 11th, 2008. No refund will be awarded for cancellations made after that date.

Choose two half-day sessions or the one full-day session. Register online at www.MCCDistrict.org, or via phone at (815) 479-5779. Online and phone registrations with payment by credit card will receive spots first. Mailing your registration will risk the class being filled before we get your payment.

Questions? Contact Kim Caldwell at (815) 678-2219 or kcaldwell@MCCDistrict.org.

For modern reenactors, this means that opportunities exist to build a wide range of small, authentic military works in your own backyard. ("Backyard" is loosely defined, mine is almost 70 acres). The proper historical term for a small 18th Century defensive work is a redoubt. The problem is that even the 18th Century definition of a "redoubt" is very wide. It can be a small, separate, four-sided earthwork comprised of log-reinforced earth, or incorporated into a larger line of earthworks. "Earthworks" can be a small, independent work in front of a fort, or they can be part of a complex set of works with a small fort inside a larger fort. A blockhouse standing by itself is referred to as a redoubt, and this blockhouse can have works around it that are separate from anything else.

For the engineer in charge of fort construction manpower was just as much of a problem then as is now. My own project has been no different, as I always seem to fall considerably short of getting help from a 100-man infantry company. However, the 21st Century has given the reenactor the kind of help that could not have been even imagined about in the 18th Century: bulldozers, backhoes, and skid loaders can provide the type of mechanical assistance needed to match and exceed the manpower equal to an infantry company. Once you complete your research and finish your plans, you can speed the process along by inviting your friends to come and help you build. Nevertheless, before starting to buy materials and laboring away, there are several important factors to consider; time, money, zoning laws that apply, and authenticity.

Time is a balance of when you want your construction to be complete and just how much of your time you can dedicate to the building process. Consider that digging by hand will slow the completion time, but it will be cheaper and beneficial to your health. Other labor-intensive aspects such as hand-hewing your own squared timber can slow down progress as well. Your neighbors, your reenacting unit and your wife may want you to finish sooner, than later.

Money considerations can range from funding a small earthwork fortification out of your own wallet, to building Fort Niagara and having a national budget at your disposal. It is wise to plan for some form of liability insurance in your cost planning before you invite your friends over, or before your neighbor stops by to be a sidewalk superintendent. Irresponsible fools generally have mean lawyers.

Zoning laws are a fact of the modern age and the government is very happy to remind us of that. Governments are here to help you. Know the laws in your area that apply to your project before you start building or you may have to defend your fort the hard way. Your city or county planning office has all of those details. Remember,

lawyers are expensive and courts no longer believe in the owner's rights.

Authenticity issues range from Hollywood style stage sets to something where nothing that cannot be documented is in place. The primary argument concerning authenticity is whether to use modern construction materials or historic building materials. Rough sawed lumber for planks is all that is needed to replicate Fort Picalata. The draw back is that untreated raw wood rots quickly but treated timbers do not. Historically speaking, the bottom line for the wood requirement is that it needs to be musket and arrow proof, which does not require the use of massive timbers. The realities of time, money, and zoning will modify authenticity, no matter how much of a stitch counter you are. Understand your limitations and remember the original builders had limitations too. The overall looks are important and remember this for fun. Keep your perspective!

Story will continue in the next Courier

God Bless each and everyone of
you, and it is mine and
Alyssa's hope that you had a
wonderful Thanksgiving and will
have a fantastic Christmas, I hope
that you get everything that you
want and want everything that you
get. We both hope to see each
and everyone next year.

~Bart Durbin,
NWTAC Commander

A Merry Christmas to you and
yours, with wishes for a bright and
joyful New Year!

~Rowenna Hamper, Courier Editor

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**PUBLICATION OF
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Rowenna Hamper, Editor
1385 West Allen Street A4
Bloomington, IN 47403

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Mailing Address Line 1
Mailing Address Line 2
Mailing Address Line 3
Mailing Address Line 4
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FINAL EDIT: THOSE CRAZY REENACTORS

By Melanie Ruley

Before I became a one myself, I thought that reenactors were a little strange. I had visited the Renaissance Faire and enjoyed being a spectator. I even stayed the night in their camps with a friend of mine and still felt that they were strange folk. But when I went to my first Revolutionary War Reenactment with my husband Ken, I was in awe. First of all, it was the Grand Encampment of Vincennes, so I was doubly impressed with all of the reenactors, the battles, the displays, etc. WOW! All of you sure put on a great show and boy did I learn a lot; more so than I ever had in my

high school history class. I know I did not pay much attention to my teacher, who droned on and on each day, text book style. -Yawn-

My husband's passion for history, especially the Revolutionary War, had a lot to do with all that I had learned as well. My two children and I dressed the part and did our best to help portray the all important war of our country. I loved the way that everyone was like a family and helped one another. The blasting of the cannon by the river as well as the men all lined up with their muskets on the bridge was quite a sight. I'll never forget it. My children and I had a wonderful time and contin-

ued to join Ken in other reenactments.

Quickly I learned that reenactors aren't crazy or strange. They are full of passion for the history that they portray and are very important teachers to the public. Had it not been for my husband and all of you, I would never know just how important the Revolutionary War was. I'm still in awe with each reenactment some years later. And now I'm proud to call myself a reenactor. What fun, what pride, what enthusiasm you all have! Thank you all for wowing me and allowing me to take part of this wonderful hobby.