

Fall 2007
Volume 8, Issue 2

To protect, promote
and preserve our
treasured historic sites



JOIN US AT FORT HERKIMER CHURCH



Upcoming Events

Fort Herkimer Church 250th Anniv. Of 1757 Raid	9/9
Fort William Henry 250th Anniv. Of 1757 Siege	9/15- 9/16
Village of Herkimer 200th Anniv. Parade	9/22
Fort Klock Interrupted Harvest	9/29- 9/30
Frankfort Library Colonial Gardens Lecture	10/2
Fort Edward, 230th Anniv. Battles of Saratoga	10/6- 10/7
Kingston, 230th Anniv. Burning of Kingston	10/20- 10/21

NFP BOOK AVAILABLE

*Gateway To Freedom
The American Revolution
On The Northern Frontier*
Allan D. Foote & Geoffrey Storm



\$6.95

118 pages w/ 80 images

To order:

Oneida County Historical Society
1608 Genesee St. Utica, NY
13502 (315) 735-3642
Email ochs@midyork.org

The volunteers of specializes in 18th century Northern Frontier Project medicine. This event is part of cordially invite the public to join Northern Frontier Project's them at Fort Herkimer Church continuing commitment to on Sunday September 9, 2007 to "protect, promote and commemorate the 250th preserve" our treasured colonial Anniversary of the Raid on era historic sites in upstate New York, of which Fort Herkimer German Flatts, which took place on November 12, 1757. (See Church can be numbered as enclosed article for a brief quite significant history of the attack).

The event is free and rare opportunity to view the will commence with a church interior of this restored period service at 10:00 AM followed by church, which figured so a "bring your own" picnic lunch. prominently in the life of the After the picnic, spectators can early Palatine German settlers witness military drills and of the Mohawk Valley. For ceremonial firing of muskets by further information, contact the 3rd Tryon County Militia. In NFP Chairman, Susan Seleway addition, there will be colonial 315-699-2072 or NFP President crafts demonstrations and a Allan Foote 315-736-4378. display by a re-enactor who



*The beautiful interior of
Fort Herkimer Church*

250th Anniversary 1757 Raid on German Flatts

Fort Herkimer Church

Schedule of Events

10 AM Church Service

11 AM Picnic Lunch

12 PM—4 PM

Militia Drill & Musketry

Colonial Crafts

18th Century Medicine

A Message From Our Chairman

I would like to take this opportunity to remind the public of the mission of Northern Frontier Project, a solemn obligation in which our all volunteer organization has remained steadfast for over twelve years. We were created as a non-profit agency:

To study and promote the heritage of the historic Northern Frontier in upstate New York. To protect and preserve our treasured historic sites dedicated to the interpretation of the area. To serve as a grass roots citizens movement in support of these endeavors. To encourage partnerships by linking

communities and persons with similar heritages, experiences and visions. The Northern Frontier Project believes upstate New York is more than just a geographic region. It is a valuable source of American history, which deserved to be explored, interpreted and nurtured. We invite you to join us in the celebration.

250 Years Ago...

Approximately twenty-five years of peace and prosperity were brought to an abrupt halt in the Mohawk Valley with the commencement of the French & Indian War. The first blow in the valley would be struck by a French and Indian expedition against the Oneida Carry and the tiny British garrison at Fort Bull on March 27, 1756. The French and Indians pressed the muzzles of their muskets into the narrow openings in the stockade posts and blasted volley after volley of deadly fire into the little cluster of determined defenders. The attackers chopped furiously with their axes and finally, the heavy gate crashed in and the French and Indians swarmed into the compound, butchering all around them. Sparing the lives of but a few prisoners, the raiders then broke into the powder magazines, set them ablaze and stealthily withdrew from the area. A few days later, Sir William Johnson would view the carnage at Fort Bull and remark, "all were inhumanly butchered and all scalped."

In November of 1757, the ruthless French and their native allies returned to wreak more havoc in the Mohawk Valley. French general de Belletre attacked the German Flatts settlement of Palatine's Village north of the Mohawk River on 12 November, burned sixty houses and many other structures, killed forty settlers, and took another one hundred fifty people captive. Though previously warned by friendly Oneida scouts, many of the villagers had scoffed at the news and made no preparations for the invasion. Many people escaped over the ford in the Mohawk River to Fort Herkimer where they took refuge. Time and time again in the ensuing conflict, Fort Herkimer and its stoic church would provide spiritual and bodily sanctuary to the beleaguered inhabitants of the valley. Inside the post, the garrison of two hundred fifty militia soldiers listened and watched in shock; apparently paralyzed with fear and did nothing as the massacre evolved and the settlement smoldered into the night. *The American Magazine* would report "...that some of the Indians continued at the Flatts near three days, laying waste to the country..."

Five months later, in April 1758, the French and Indians would return to brutalize the valley population for a third time. However, on this occasion, they would meet a more determined resistance from the armed settlers. This was due in no small part to the presence of a newly commissioned young Captain of Militia by the name of Nicholas Herkimer. At the first sign of danger, Herkimer collected within the stockade, all the inhabitants of the surrounding settlements he could gather before an attack was launched. The courageous young officer then led out a detachment of rangers who met the enemy head on and drove them back into the woods after killing or wounding fifteen of their number. The battered French and Indian raiders hightailed it back north.



(Photograph courtesy of Cheryl Pula, President, The History Club)

French and Indians on the warpath

230 Years Ago...



(Painting by Frederick Coffay Yohn, courtesy of The Continental Insurance Companies, Northern Frontier Project Collection)
The meeting of General Gates and Burgoyne at Saratoga

There had been no sudden and decisive stroke to bring about this disaster, but a gradual series of blunders and determined rebel resistance had led proud British General John Burgoyne to defeat and capitulation at Saratoga. On September 19, 1777 at Freeman's Farm, the colonial patriots stood firm in the woods against the exposed ranks of the redcoat infantry, who fell in droves standing out in the exposed fields, firing blindly at an invisible enemy shielded by the thick forest. On the 7th of October, the strengthened American positions along Bemis Heights were too formidable for the feeble thrust of the weakened Anglo-Allied forces. The following day, Burgoyne and his staff officers accompanied the burial party as they solemnly carried the body of slain British General Simon Fraser to his final resting place on a hill with a panoramic view of the splendid countryside in all of its autumn glory and the glistening Hudson River beyond.

It was a sunny day on October 17th, when Burgoyne asked to meet the rebels' commanding general, Horatio Gates. With his generals and staff behind him, Gentleman Johnny rode to American Headquarters. Gates got on horseback to meet him. Burgoyne saw before him a man smaller than himself and much more common in appearance, wearing no powdered wig, but his own gray hair. Gates was clad in a plain blue coat, in marked contrast to Burgoyne's scarlet gold-laced finery. Upon the two generals catching sight of each other, they pranced forward on their steeds until they were only at sword's length. Dismounting, Burgoyne then removed his richly decorated hat with streaming plumes and with a graceful bow said, "The fortunes of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner." Gates graciously replied, "I shall always be ready to testify that it has not been through any fault of your Excellency." And with this final act at Saratoga in upstate New York, the fate of a nation and empire were sealed. For the seemingly miraculous defeat of superior British arms by the insurgent American rebels would lead to an alliance between the young United States, France and other European nations.

NORTHERN FRONTIER PROJECT

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AREAS OF VOLUNTEER INTEREST

*Help protect, promote and preserve
our treasured historic sites in upstate
New York through our non-profit
grass roots citizens' movement.*

