Title of Document: "THE WARPATH OF EMPIRE”: PRESERVATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR SITES IN LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK.


Directed By: Dr. Don Linebaugh, Director, Historic Preservation Program, School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation.

The Military Road, built by the British in 1755 during the French and Indian War, was used to move men and supplies from the Hudson River to Lake George in upstate New York through the North American wilderness. As such, it was a vital link in the “warpath of empire” between three mighty powers: the British, French, and Iroquois. After the war ended, the Military Road faded from the landscape, but the fortifications, blockhouses, and battlefields associated with it remain part of the landscape to the present day. This project examines these sites for their preservation and interpretive history and status, and based on these observations, recommends the creation of a Military Road Trail. This recommendation, based on other successful national preservation and interpretive programs, allows stakeholder participation in creating unified narrative and interpretive themes and creates an enhanced visitor experience for the French and Indian War in Lake George, New York.
“THE WARPATH OF EMPIRE”: PRESERVATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR SITES IN LAKE GEORGE, NEW YORK.

By

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Dedication

This project is dedicated to my parents:

Albert Oetken, who instilled in me the love for history and who helped me conceive the original idea for this project.

Susan Gammon, who shared with me her love for the mountains, and watches over and protects me daily.
Acknowledgements

Many thanks are due to an army of people who supported and encouraged me over the past four years, especially in this last, very difficult year:

Don Linebaugh: HISP program director and mentor.

Susan Generazio: my friend and HISP colleague since Day One.

Christine Henry, who was friend, mentor, and reader during the development and writing of this project.

My fellow HISP colleagues, especially my Kiplin classmates.

Robert Gordon, who took the first trip with me down the Military Road and supported me during the development of this project.

Paul Hawke and Matthew Borders, from the American Battlefield Protection Program.

Marilyn VanDyke, from the Warren County Historic Society, who opened many doors for me along the way.

Tom Nesbitt, co-author of the Military Road report, for sharing his enthusiasm for the Military Road and its sites.

My family and friends who saw me less and less over the years but continued their love and support.

Jeffrey Dayton, who supported me through the writing of this paper, and traveled with me on the last foray down the Military Road, taking some of the beautiful photos used in this project.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

Lake George, located sixty miles north of Albany, New York, has been a popular tourist destination since the nineteenth century. Those who currently come for the boating, outdoor activities, and shopping may not be aware that this area saw significant action during the French and Indian War (1754-1761). The reconstructed Fort William Henry, a major tourist destination on the southern shore of Lake George, is just one of several French and Indian War sites situated along the Military Road. Built in 1755, the Military Road was a fourteen-mile pathway cut through the New York wilderness by Sir William Johnson’s troops during the French and Indian War. It was established as a resupply and retreat route between Fort Edward, located on the banks of the Hudson River, and Fort William Henry, on the southern shore of Lake George. Connecting the vital water routes of Lake George and the Hudson River, the Military Road was an integral part of the “warpath of empire” that ran between Canada and the frontiers of New York and western Pennsylvania. The battlefields and other historic sites along the Military Road figured prominently during two major French and Indian War conflicts: the Battle of Lake George in 1755 and the Siege of Fort William Henry in 1757. Despite the historical importance of these battles, few people visit these sites due to a lack of interpretation to help the visitor understand the site in the context of the French and Indian War.
Both intangible and tangible elements are necessary in creating an experience for visitors to historic sites. Tangible, in that a historical event must be put on the ground and that its physical elements – landscapes, structures, viewsheds – must be identified, preserved, and interpreted. Intangible, in that the events that occurred in these places had causes and effects, creating narrative and thematic threads in history. Each individual site on the Military Road has its own story to tell within the context of the French and Indian War. The value of a historic site varies for each community that claims an interest in the site, so the values inherent in the tangible and intangible components of a historic site must be carefully considered when interpreting and preserving the site.
The purpose of this paper is to examine how French and Indian War sites located along the historic Military Road can be interpreted through a proposed French and Indian War Trail program. This study utilizes the historic research done in 2006 by the Warren County Historical Society for their Military Road study (funded by the American Battlefield Protection Program) [ABPP] as well as analysis of the preservation and interpretive status of selected sites along the Military Road based on site visits. The paper proposes a French and Indian War Trails program for Lake George sites based on other nationally prominent preservation programs. This proposed Trail program would allow visitors to understand the nature of the French and Indian War in Lake George within both the context of the Military Road and the larger picture of a wilderness war for empire. Identifying these sites in a comprehensive interpretive program that links them to both a local and national historic context will enhance the value of these sites and allow for a deeper appreciation of the French and Indian War in Lake George, New York.

The research questions to be considered in the study include:

• Why should French and Indian War sites be preserved?

• What is the general attitude towards preservation of French and Indian War site stakeholders?

• What are the positive and negative issues surrounding preservation in Lake George?

• What are the challenges to visiting French and Indian war sites in Lake George?

• Why put these sites in the context of the Military Road?

• Are the Military Road sites ready for visitors? How should people visit these sites and what should be there for them to visit?
• Which national models are helpful in preparing a French and Indian War Trail program? Which model would work best for Lake George?

While the original trace of the Military Road may be hidden, the modern road system approximates its route, and old metal historic markers modestly signify the presence of significant sites. The Warren County Historical Society authored a comprehensive report in 2006 that identified and described battlefields, forts, and historic sites along the Military Road. While providing essential detail on these sites, the report does not explain how to interpretively tie them together. A comprehensive interpretive program for French and Indian War sites along the Military Road, based on national preservation and interpretive models and using the Military Road as a narrative backbone, would provide visitors a more meaningful story of the French and Indian War in Lake George. Additionally, this program could provide a template for interpreting and preserving French and Indian War sites in other communities across the nation.

There were several parts to the research methodology for this project. A bibliography of literature pertaining to the French and Indian War, historic preservation, and French and Indian War sites in the upstate New York region was initially developed. Historical research was conducted on the French and Indian War, including historic and modern photographs and maps. The author conducted three site visits to the Lake George area in July and October 2010, and March 2011.
Figure 2: The blue line represents the approximate route of the Military Road through the upstate New York landscape. The label "A" is Fort William Henry, and the label "B" is Fort Edward. Map from Google Maps. Created by author.

Most helpful was an interview with the Chief and Chief Historian of the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program. This interview helped shape the focus of the project and also directed the author to the Military Road Project report done by the Warren County Historical Society and funded by the ABPP. Lastly, the author conducted interviews with local, state, and federal stakeholders.
The report’s five chapters build the case for a Military Road Trail that would unite all the French and Indian War sites under one preservation and interpretive program based on national models. Chapter 2 offers a brief history of the French and Indian War, introducing us to the eighteenth-century conflict and providing a compressed timeline of the war and how the Military Road figured into that narrative. A portion of that narrative focuses on the two battles fought in the Lake George area along the Military Road, the Battle of Lake George on September 8, 1755, and the Siege of Fort William Henry in August 1757.

Using a variety of sources on fortifications of the Lake George area, Chapter 3 addresses the preservation history of the Military Road and its associated sites. The chapter also explores the question of why earlier preservationists did not focus on French and Indian War sites, and how this was reflective of a general indifference towards the past. This indifference is key to understanding why French and Indian War sites were not actively preserved and allowed to fall into picturesque ruin. The chapter concludes with an examination of stakeholders values for these French and Indian War sites.

Chapter 4 places the Military Road in the context of a cultural landscape, unique geographic areas that include cultural and natural resources. The Military Road, it will be argued, possesses all the traits of a cultural landscape. Using the concept of dramaturgy, the dramatic elements of the landscape as stage set and props, along with the story and actors, gives us a vocabulary to describe and analyze the historical narrative and sense of place that the Military Road possesses. Based on
literature review and site visits, the chapter provides case studies that examine current preservation and interpretation issues at five sites along the Military Road.

Chapter 5 examines several national preservation and interpretive programs that, like the Military Road, encompass multiple sites. These programs, including the National Park Service’s National Heritage Areas and National Trail System, Battle Road at Minute Man National Historic Park, Forbes Trail in Pennsylvania, and the Civil War Trails, each provide compelling arguments for creating a Military Road Trail program. The chapter concludes with a discussion of nine criteria for the proposed program.

Chapter 6 offers some lessons gleaned from the case studies, organized around five preservation and interpretive issues for French and Indian War sites in the area. These issues lead to a discussion of the tangible and intangible benefits of preservation, and examine the value of preserving and interpreting these French and Indian War sites for the Lake George community. Lastly, the chapter develops the framework for a Military Road Trail, weaving together the French and Indian War sites along the Military Road in one preservation and interpretive program. Perhaps this Military Road Trail program could lead to a wider appreciation of French and Indian War sites nationwide, and begin to connect the Military Road with other French and Indian War historic sites historic sites in the region, the state, and nation.
Figure 3: Lake George offers dramatic landscapes (Photo by Jeffrey Dayton, used with permission).

Figure 4: Monument commemorating the Battle of Lake George, erected by the Society for Colonial Wars in Lake George Battlefield Park, in 1903 (Photo from Library of Congress).
Chapter 2: Historical Overview of the Military Road and the French and Indian War

The Military Road was a fourteen-mile overland route connecting two British fortifications in the wilderness of colonial New York. The importance of the Military Road, and the sites along it, is more fully appreciated when examined within the context of the French and Indian War in the Lake George region of upstate New York. The Military Road was part of the water and land route that linked the British colonies with France’s Canadian empire. Few places in colonial America have such a rich concentration of French and Indian War sites as does the trace of the Military Road.

The French and Indian War, known as the Seven Years’ War in Europe, spanned the period 1754 to 1761. While we think of the French and Indian War as a conflict fought in the woods and meadows of colonial America, and indeed, the most critical battles were fought in North America, it was truly a world war with military campaigns waged in exotic locales of Europe, Canada, India, West Africa, the East Indies, and the Caribbean.¹

This chapter examines the Military Road within the context of the French and Indian War, a wilderness contest between three major powers fighting for supremacy in North America. The first section will identify the three major players and explore how a war erupted in the forests of western Pennsylvania. The second section shifts to the conflict along the shores of Lake George, examining the circumstances that led to

¹ The North American portion of this conflict is known as the French and Indian War, and the entire worldwide conflict is known as the Seven Years’ War.
the building of the Military Road. The story then turns to the two major campaigns that occurred along the Military Road: the Battle of Lake George in 1755, and the Siege of Fort William Henry in 1757. The chapter concludes with a discussion of how

Table 1: Significant dates and events of the French and Indian War.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Significant event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July 1754</td>
<td>George Washington surrenders Fort Necessity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1755</td>
<td>General Braddock arrives in Virginia to plot the course of war.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1755</td>
<td>General Braddock is defeated at the Battle of the Monongahela.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1755</td>
<td>William Johnson and his men build the Military Road. Construction begins on Fort Edward at the site of the Great Carrying Place on the Hudson River.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1756</td>
<td>Great Britain officially declares war on France.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1756</td>
<td>France officially declares war on Great Britain.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1756</td>
<td>Surrender of British forts at Oswego.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 9, 1757</td>
<td>British surrender Fort William Henry. During the retreat to Fort Edward, Indians allied to the French attack colonial provincials and civilians.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1758</td>
<td>Battle of Fort Carillon (Ticonderoga).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 1758</td>
<td>French surrender Louisbourg to Amherst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1758</td>
<td>Grant’s battle outside Fort Dusquene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1758</td>
<td>Battle of Fort Ligonier.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 1758</td>
<td>French abandon Fort Dusquene.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1758</td>
<td>Wolfe’s troops land near Quebec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1758</td>
<td>Battle of the Plains of Abraham (Quebec). French surrender Quebec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1760</td>
<td>Second Battle of Quebec.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 1760</td>
<td>Fort Loudoun surrenders to the Cherokee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1760</td>
<td>French surrender Montreal and all of Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1761</td>
<td>William Pitt resigns his office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1763</td>
<td>Treaty of Paris signed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 1763</td>
<td>Proclamation of 1763 issued by George III.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the Military Road was utilized for the remainder of the war, offering a brief analysis of the legacy of the French and Indian War.

**The Players: The French, the British, and the Iroquois Confederacy**

The story of the French and Indian War is often portrayed as a conflict between the British and the French, two fundamentally different empires vying for control of the North American continent. In reality, there were three nations competing for supremacy in the American colonies – the French, the British, and the Iroquois Confederacy. The role of the Indians in this struggle has historically been subjugated to that of an accessory to the other two powers, based on the assumption that the Iroquois were destined to disappear from America once the Europeans arrived; in reality the outcome of this war was anything but straightforward.³

France’s North American empire, New France, was a Catholic empire based primarily on a trading economy drawing on strong alliances with North American Indian tribes. The area of New France stretched in a huge arc from the Gulf of the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, the Mississippi Valley, and the Gulf of Mexico, including what became the contested area of the Ohio River Valley. While the empire was large in land area, it was sparsely populated, with an estimated 55,000 inhabitants in the mid-eighteenth century.⁴ The French were determined to hold on to their territory against any real or perceived invasion by British settlers.⁵

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⁴ Ibid p. xxiii.
⁵ Ibid p. 27.
Figure 5: British and French possessions in North America, circa 1754 (Map from Walter Borneman, *The French and Indian War*).
The British colonies, in contrast, were part of a Protestant empire based largely on farming, settlement, and transatlantic commerce. While the area of New France was sparsely settled, the population of the British colonies grew by leaps and bounds, reaching a population in the mid-eighteenth century of at least 1.1 million colonists and an additional quarter million enslaved African Americans. This disparity in population can be attributed to the nature of the British colonies as a “western European melting pot,” while the French kept a tight rein on immigration up the St. Lawrence River, restricting population in absolute numbers and religious affiliation to French Catholic.\(^6\) The British colonists were hemmed in along the Atlantic coast, with ocean on one side and the Appalachian Mountains on the other. With these limitations, the British colonies eyed the area of the Ohio River Valley for expansion.\(^7\)

The Iroquois Confederacy was a powerful coalition of the Five Nations of the Iroquois – Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senacas – created in response to European invasions in the seventeenth century. The Five Nations adopted the “mourning war,” where the families of people killed in raids could only grieve properly for loved ones by replacing them with captives from the enemy’s community. This evolved into a closed system of raids, kidnapping, suffering, death, and grief that would later play a large role in how the French and Indian War was waged. As European nations established colonies and trading networks in North America, the Five Nations split internally into Francophile, neutralist, and Anglophile wings, alliances that would be manipulated by the French and English during colonial

\(^7\) Ibid p. xxii.
wars. The Iroquois Confederacy attempted to maintain independence and autonomy even during this internal fragmentation, and as the Ohio country became a source of contention, the Iroquois turned the “geopolitical anxieties” of the British and the French to their own advantage.\(^8\)

![Figure 6: Native American tribes in Northeast America, circa 1750 (Map from Ben Hughes, *The Siege of Fort William Henry*).](image)

Additionally, the various alliances between the three nations added a layer of complexity to the conflict. There were Indian allies fighting for the British (Iroquois from the Mohawk Valley, mostly) and other native groups fighting for the French (mostly Algonquian-speaking tribes from the Saint Lawrence Valley.) Canadian militia fought beside the French, and provincial militia from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, New York, and New Jersey helped, and hindered, the

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efforts of the British. All of these groups clashed in a wilderness conflict that would have huge consequences for European states and the North American colonies.

**Causes and Beginning of the War**

The French and Indian War began essentially as a boundary dispute over land in the Ohio River Valley region of the American frontier, an area that included modern-day Pittsburgh. The French, in an attempt to keep British colonists from settling on their lands west of the Appalachians in the Ohio River Valley, began building fortifications in the Ohio River Valley in the mid-eighteenth century. The French also began to secure the vital New York frontier with a string of fortifications along the Richelieu River – Lake Champlain corridor. Virginia’s governor Robert Dinwiddie saw this action as a brazen French attempt to seize lands that he felt belonged by natural right to the king of Great Britain. Dinwiddie was ordered to remove the French from the Ohio River Valley, and so he planned to build a fort at the Forks of the Ohio, the site of modern day Pittsburgh, at the very center of the disputed territory. The governor picked George Washington, a twenty-one-year-old major in the Virginia militia, for the mission. Utterly lacking in formal education and diplomatic experience, Washington led his troops into the Ohio Valley and, in May of 1754, started the French and Indian War when he attacked a contingent of French

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10 Warren County Historical Society. *Research and Mapping of Colonial Road Between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, Project Report*, Self-Published, 2005, pg. 4. The five different sections of the Military Road report are not numbered consecutively, so the page notations in the footnotes for this project will be according to section, and will be so noted in the notation.
11 Fort Presque Isle, Fort Le Boeuf, and Fort Machault.
troops at the battle of Jumonville Glen.\textsuperscript{13} Washington’s Indian allies assassinated a
French diplomat during the battle, and Washington, in his ignorance of the French
language, signed a document admitting to this serious crime. Washington’s mission
ended with the surrender of his army two months later at the Battle of Fort Necessity.
The assassination of the French diplomat was essentially an act of war, and
Washington had handed the French all the justification they needed to start a war with
Great Britain.\textsuperscript{14}

![Figure 7: Fort Dusquene, at the forks of three major rivers, in the disputed territory of the Ohio River Valley (Photo from http://fc.lovett.org/~lpowell/Social%20Studies).](image_url)

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid p. 39.
\textsuperscript{14} Ibid pp. 47-52.
War on the New York Frontier

Reacting to the news of the surrender of Fort Necessity, the ministers in London sent troops to America to prepare for an impending war with the French. In the spring of 1755, a meeting was held in Virginia between the commander of British forces, General Edward Braddock, and several colonial governors to develop a four-pronged attack strategy against the French; one of these major prongs included the Lake Champlain – Lake George – Hudson River corridor. This corridor was considered vital for conducting war on the North American frontier, as it provided a military and operational route between Quebec on the St. Lawrence River and Albany on the Hudson River.

Colonel William Johnson was given command of the New York prong of Braddock’s plan, and was ordered to lead an army made up entirely of provincial forces from New York and other New England colonies and attack the French forces at Fort St. Frederic (Crown Point). By July 1755, this army had gathered in Albany, a frontier town that had served as a mustering place for previous expeditions, to move up the Hudson River and towards the Great Carrying Place.

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15 Ibid pp. 56-57.
17 Fort St. Frederic was located at Crown Point, a vantage point located on the western shore of Lake Champlain where the French were able to control water passage up to Canada. Crown Point is located about 40 miles north of Fort William Henry and 15 miles north of Fort Carillion (Ticonderoga.)
Figure 8: Map of the Lake Champlain - Lake George – Hudson River corridor (Map from Walter Borneman, The French and Indian War).
Johnson ordered his second-in-command, Brig. General Lyman,\textsuperscript{18} to construct a supply magazine on the site of the Great Carrying Place that would become Fort Edward, and to clear an overland route heading north that would link the Hudson River at Fort Edward to Lac du St-Sacrement (Lake George) to the northwest. This road was to be built on terrain that was well drained to allow for the movement of heavy wagons, bateaux (flat-bottomed boats), gear, and artillery.\textsuperscript{19}

The fourteen-mile overland route between the Great Carrying Place on the Hudson River and Lac du St-Sacrement, known as the Military Road, was completed three days after Johnson’s arrival on August 23, 1755. Army surgeon Thomas

\textsuperscript{18} Colonel William Johnson, as an officer in the regular British army, outranked Brigadier General Lyman, an officer in the provincial forces.

Williams wrote that the road was built where “no house was ever built not a rod of land cleared.”

“The fact that this road…could be capable of travel on the 26th, may sound improbable but it should be remembered that road construction in those days meant principally the felling of trees along the best available route and the building of crude bridges or causeways over streams or marshy ground as could be avoided. The vehicles in general use were two-wheeled carts and at best the bumped along over stumps and into gullies while a heavy rain storm or a brief period of neglect soon rendered the roads impassable.”

It should be noted that once built, the Military Road was not a static landscape. Work on the Military Road was continuous, as men repaired the road during each campaign from 1755 – 1760. Although made “passable from time to time it quickly fell out of repair.” For example, in 1758, enough vegetation grew that a work party needed to go out and reopen the road. The road was corduroyed or bridged where it crossed wet areas.

The French forces deployed the newly arrived Troupes de Terre, commanded by Baron Dieskau, to defend Fort St. Frederic, the objective of Johnson’s army. Johnson’s army began clearing ground on September 3 for a fortified camp on the

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20 Warren County Historical Society. Research and Mapping of Colonial Road Between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, Historical Monograph, Self-Published, 2005, pg. 9. Letter written by Dr. Thomas Williams, an army surgeon, to his wife, dated August 17, 1755.
23 Ibid, p. 10.
24 A corduroyed road is a type of road made by placing sand-covered logs perpendicular to the direction of the road over a low or swampy area.
southern shores of Lake George. Johnson’s Mohawk Indian ally, Chief Hendricks, reported that his scouts had discovered tracks from French and Indian warriors in the area. Johnson prepared his camp for battle and sent Chief Hendricks and his scouts out into the woods to search for the enemy. The forces of Johnson, Dieskau, and Hendricks met in a three-part engagement that played out along the Military Road.

**The Battle of Lake George**

The Battle of Lake George, fought on September 8, 1755, consisted of three engagements fought along the Military Road. The first engagement, known as the Bloody Morning Scout, occurred at a spot along the Military Road about four miles south of Lake George. The French troops and their Mohawk Indian allies laid an ambush for the British troops, who were marching along the Military Road looking for the French and were accompanied by their own Mohawk Indian allies. The battle was fought where the Military Road passed through a steep-walled defile at the base of two mountains, along a stream called Rocky Brook. The Mohawks on both sides called off their participation in the initial engagement and withdrew down the Military Road. The Massachusetts provincials fired on the ambushers and began a confused retreat with their Mohawk allies back to the camp they had just left.

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26 Lac du St - Sacrement was renamed Lake George in 1755 by William Johnson in honor of King George II.
28 Ibid. p. 78.
29 Mohawk scouts allied with both the French and the British recognized each other before the battle, and out of respect for familial ties between tribes, decided to withdraw from the fight before inflicting casualties on each other.
Both Chief Hendricks and Colonel Ephram Williams, the commander of the Massachusetts provincials, were killed during the engagement.

The second engagement of the Battle of Lake George occurred shortly after the retreating British provincials arrived at their camp on the shore of Lake George. There, they found their comrades busily reinforcing the hastily constructed barricade with overturned wagons and boats and positioning four cannons to fire on the Military Road. This improvised barricade was enough to halt the pursuing French Mohawks. Dieskau organized his regulars into a column and charged the barricade. Halfway through the French charge, the British opened fire with devastating effect. The French Mohawks were disinclined to follow their French comrades into this maelstrom and continued their long-range fire at Johnson’s men.
The French and Indian forces eventually retreated north to Fort St. Frederic at Crown Point. Dieskau, wounded during this engagement, was left behind and cared for by the British, dying later from his wounds.31

The third engagement was known as the skirmish at Bloody Pond. Responding to the sounds of battle coming from the lake, a colonel at Fort Edward sent a detachment north for intelligence. These provincials, men from New York and New Hampshire, ran into a group of French and Mohawk troops who were attempting to return to the site of the Bloody Morning Scout to scalp and plunder. The provincials drove off these stragglers, inflicting heavy losses to the French.32

31 Ibid. pp. 80-82.
This last engagement took place along the Military Road in a marshy area with several natural springs bubbling to the surface. Rather than bury the dead soldiers, legend has it that they were thrown into one of these springy ponds, and that the blood from the dead and wounded turned the standing water red.\textsuperscript{33} The fight at Bloody Pond brought the Battle of Lake George to an end.

The Battle of Lake George was the only victory in a dismal year for the British. The British and the French each suffered about 300 casualties.\textsuperscript{34} Mohawk casualties were lighter because they withdrew early from action during the Bloody Morning Scout and Battle of Lake George engagements. Although tactically a British victory since the French withdrew from the field, the French could claim a victory since they were able to stop the British advance towards Fort St. Frederic at Crown

\textsuperscript{33} Ibid. p. 70.
\textsuperscript{34} Fred Anderson. \textit{The War That Made America}. New York: Penguin Books, 2005, p. 82.
Point. Johnson’s men were too shocked and demoralized by the battle to pursue the French, who regrouped at Crown Point and resumed building a large fortification at the confluence of Lake George and Lake Champlain. Fort Carillion became a major obstacle for the British along the Lake Champlain route and a base for French raids against the New England frontier. To counter the building of Fort Carillion, Johnson built Fort William Henry on the south end of Lake George at the terminus of the Military Road. The building of these two forts was a direct result of the three-part Battle of Lake George, along the Military Road.

Figure 13: Fort William Henry and Fort Edward (Sketch on the left from Ben Hughes, *The Siege of Fort William Henry*. Sketch on the right from the Warren County Military Road report).

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35 Ibid, p. 82.
Strengthening the Military Road

From the fall of 1755 through summer of 1759, the French conducted raids against British convoys moving along the Military Road between Fort William Henry and Fort Edward. In response to these raids, the British built intermediate posts to provide protection against such attacks and additional bases for their own scouting parties. Although the majority of the fortifications along the Military Road were very simple stockades, Forts Edward and William Henry represented a rather significant change in the way forts were built in North America. Before the French and Indian War, the only substantial forts in North America were built by the French, and these were imposing, bastioned fortifications of the type designed by Sebastian Le Prestre Vauban. And, like Fortress Louisburg in Nova Scotia, they were built to last. British forts, on the other hand, were little more than log stockades that were easily taken by the enemy. Forts Edward and William Henry were the first British fortifications built to match the French style of defense.36

After the Battle of Lake George, a new fortification was built along the Military Road halfway between Fort William Henry and Fort Edward. It was likely just a picketed blockhouse, built north of a stream that crossed the road and on a small rise. Known as Halfway Brook Post, this fortification would be updated and rebuilt as necessary during the course of the war.37

The Siege of Fort William Henry

Fort William Henry became the front line of British defenses in the warpath of empire, and France, determined it should fall, began preparations for the largest military operation yet undertaken from New France. General Montcalm, commander of the French expedition against Fort William Henry, assembled eight thousand men — troupes de la marine, troupes de terre, Canadian militiamen, and Indians — at Fort Carillon in July 1757 for an advance towards Fort William Henry. Even with this manpower, the French did not expect an easy victory; Fort William Henry was defended by a force of 2,400 men, along with carpenters, women, children, and settlers. Sturdily built under the supervision of a regular-army engineer, the fort was well provisioned and formidably armed with eighteen heavy cannon and a variety of lighter ones. Montcalm planned a European-style siege that would capture the fort in six to eight weeks, provided that no reinforcements arrived.

The French sent Indians to infiltrate the woods around Fort William Henry, cutting the British off from communications with Fort Edward by setting ambushes along the Military Road. On August 3, 1757, Montcalm landed his artillery at Lake George and began the siege of Fort William Henry three days later. Lieutenant Colonel Munro, in charge of British forces at Fort William Henry, surrendered on August 9, 1757, and arrangements were made to turn the fort over to the French. Munro and his men were allowed to march off for Fort Edward, while the French cared for the sick and wounded.

39 Ibid. p. 111. The siege, expected to last 6 to 8 weeks, instead took only three days; French artillery was able to come within firing range fairly quickly, battering the fort into surrender.
The next morning, a column of surrendered troops marching along the Military Road towards Fort Edward was attacked by Indians allied to the French. The Indian fighters felt that they had not received their due reward in the surrender agreement, and decided to take their reward by force. Their attack focused on the rear of the long column, where the Massachusetts provincials and camp followers marched. Within minutes approximately 185 soldiers and camp followers lay scalped and stripped on the Military Road and in the surrounding woods. The Indian attackers took between three hundred and five hundred prisoners. That night, the remainder of the column reached the safety of Fort Edward.40

Montcalm was supposed to take Fort William Henry and then march down the Military Road and capture Fort Edward, securing this important passageway between Lake George and the Hudson River for the French. But after the “massacre” Montcalm realized that he could not control his Indian allies and found himself without the Indian scouts he would need to carry out the expedition. He therefore satisfied himself with destroying Fort William Henry and returned to Canada.41

The most immediate result of the Siege of Fort William Henry was that the fort was reduced to a pile of rubble and not rebuilt during the course of the war.

The event that became known as the “massacre of Fort William Henry” left an indelible stain on the reputation of Montcalm and his officers, who were seen as unable to control their Indian allies. As a result, no British commander in North America would offer any defeated French force the option of surrender with the full

honors of war for the rest of the conflict.\textsuperscript{42} A fierce anti-Catholic and anti-French rage erupted across the frontier, and the colonists vilified Montcalm as having planned the entire event. It also triggered indiscriminate Indian-hating that became more prevalent as the war dragged on.

**Peace on the Frontier**

The British army established a new camp at Lake George, near the ruins of Fort William Henry, to launch their attack against Fort Carillion in 1758. The Military Road was used to move troops and supplies between this encampment on the lake and Fort Edward.\textsuperscript{43} Other forts and advanced guard posts were built along the Military Road to support the army during the campaign against Fort Carillion. Fort Gage, begun in July 1758 along the Military Road about a mile from Fort William Henry, was initially built as a “small breastwork” that was expanded during the course of the war.\textsuperscript{44} After the attack against Fort Carillion failed, French raiding parties began to strike the Military Road. With the loss of Fort William Henry in 1757, the only fortification that stood on the Military Road north of Fort Edward was Halfway Brook Post. New blockhouses were built to fortify the British position along the Military Road: Four-Mile Post, Three-Mile Post, and Fort George, built in 1759 near the ruins of Fort William Henry.\textsuperscript{45} But after British successes in taking Fort Carillion and Fort St. Frederic, there was little reason to finish work on Fort George. The commander was instructed to close off the bastion and it was abandoned until the

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid, p. 113.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid p. 15.
American Revolution.\textsuperscript{46} Although Fort Edward remained in operation, no fortification remained at the northern terminus of the Military Road, and the road’s use during the French and Indian War came to a close.

The British victory over the French on the Plains of Abraham, on September 13, 1759, was a crushing defeat for the French but did not end the war. Peace came in 1763 with the signing of the Treaty of Paris and the issuance of the Proclamation of 1763.

There were several important outcomes from the war. It ended in the decisive defeat, after many years of off again, on again warfare, of one belligerent European power, resulting in the dramatic rearrangement of the balance of power in both Europe and North America. The Treaty of Paris in 1763 effected several territorial changes in North America: France ceded Canada to Great Britain and Louisiana to Spain; Spain ceded Florida to Great Britain.\textsuperscript{47} By destroying France’s North American empire, the war created a desire for revenge that would drive French foreign policy, shape European affairs for two decades, and have a significant effect on the outcome of the American Revolution. The scope of Britain’s victory enlarged its American empire to a size that would have been difficult for any European power to control.\textsuperscript{48}

The American Revolution is often viewed as inevitable, that the British colonists were, from the earliest days of colonization, rebelling against England. But it is important to note that the colonists saw themselves as an integral part of the

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid p. 10.
British empire, even during the later controversy over taxes, tea, and stamps. The common connection of belonging to the “freest, most enlightened empire in history,” and from shared enemies, the French and the Indians, bonded the colonists to the Crown while it also set wheels in motion to sever that bond.\textsuperscript{49} The story of the American Revolution is deeply rooted in the story of the French and Indian War. In fact, we should not date the march towards independence as beginning in 1763, when the Treaty of Paris took effect, but in 1754, when Washington started a war in the woods of western Pennsylvania. The British colonists would learn lessons during that war that would come in handy when another war broke out on Lexington Green in 1775.

\textsuperscript{49} Ibid p. xviii.
Figure 14: Sketch map that shows the Military Road leading from Fort Edward to Fort William Henry (From Ben Hughes, *The Siege of Fort William Henry*).
Chapter 3: Preservation History of French and Indian War Sites in Lake George

As detailed in Chapter 2, the Military Road played an important logistical role during two French and Indian War campaigns in the Lake George region of New York. The road was an operational route used to transport men and equipment between Fort William Henry and Fort Edward and a convenient route of invasion for the French, British, and Native American forces. The three engagements that comprised the Battle of Lake George on September 8, 1755, were all fought along the Military Road. The Military Road was also used by the French during the siege of Fort William Henry to choke off the fort, and later as a means of retreat and massacre.

This chapter will look at what became of the battlefields and fortifications along the Military Road after the cessation of hostilities. The chapter examines how these sites were preserved, who preserved them, and how the legacy of the French and Indian War may have influenced their preservation. The first section of the chapter explores the preservation history of the Military Road and its battlefields and fortifications after the Treaty of Paris. The section also includes a brief discussion about early American attitudes towards preservation and historical memory. The second section identifies modern stakeholders for these French and Indian War sites, and what role and interest they may have in their preservation and interpretation.

Table 2 summarizes the important dates in the preservation history of these sites, and provides a valuable reference point for this chapter.
Table 2: Key Dates in the Preservation History of French and Indian War Sites in Lake George, New York.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Preservation Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1755-1761</td>
<td>The Military Road is periodically rebuilt as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Fort William Henry burned by the French. The British choose not to rebuilt this fortification, allowing the site to become picturesque ruin.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Fort George is left in an unfinished state.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1761</td>
<td>Fort Edward is decommissioned by the British.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1783</td>
<td>George Washington tours French and Indian War sites along the Military Road with the intention of securing funds for maintenance of these fortifications. Those funds are never allocated. Land at Fort George leased to settlers with the stipulation that no historic material on the site should be removed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1805</td>
<td>Last known survey of the Military Road, which would disappear from the landscape shortly after, replaced by a plank road and other, newer forms of transportation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Garrison grounds at Fort George sold to Colombia and Union colleges, and then to James Caldwell, who was buying up propert that became the Village of lake George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1842</td>
<td>Francis Parkman, noted author and historian, visits Military Road sites and notes their poor state of preservation. He is inspired to write <em>Montcalm and Wolfe</em>, a landmark French and Indian War narrative.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1854</td>
<td>Williams College alumnus build a monument to Colonel Ephram Williams near the site of the Bloody Morning Scout engagement. This is the first memorial along the Military Road for a French and Indian War site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1855</td>
<td>Fort William Henry Hotel built on the grounds of the ruins of Fort William Henry. The hotel’s owners purchased the grounds of the fort as well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>The Delaware &amp; Hudson Railroad extends service from Fort Edward to the shore of Lake George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1898</td>
<td>Society of Colonial Wars lobbies New York State to purchase the lands around Fort George. Lake George Battlefield Park encompassed the ruins of Fort George, the Fort William Henry barracks and smallpox hospital site, and the site of the Battle of Lake George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1900</td>
<td>The town of Caldwell (Lake George Village) builds a pool of water along the plank road and passes it off as the historic “Bloody Pond.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1903</td>
<td>Dedication of Battle of Lake George Monument in Lake George Battlefield Park.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>New York State Historical Association erects a commemorative plaque at the Bloody Pond site.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>The battlefield park begins a “systematic excavation” of Fort George. The project is not completed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. 1930</td>
<td>New York State Historical Association erects markers at French and Indian War sites in Lake George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953 - 1955</td>
<td>Developers purchase the Fort William Henry Hotel and Fort William Henry site. Archaeologist Stanley Gifford excavates the original foundations of the fort, and a replica of Fort William Henry is built on those foundations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>The site of Fort Gage is completely obliterated by construction of a Ramada Inn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Remnants of an outpost of Fort Gage are discovered on a nearby, undeveloped hillside.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>First professional archaeology at Fort George.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>250th French and Indian War Commemoration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>The Warren County Historical Society, supported by the American Battlefield Protection Program, publishes its Military Road Report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>First professional archaeology at Fort Edward.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>The Village of Fort Edward buys acreage on Rogers Island with the intention of opening a park commemorating the French and Indian War.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preservation Efforts after the French and Indian War**

The forts and battlefields along the Military Road became places of considerable interest to both colonial and British travelers after the war ended. Some of the earliest descriptions of the forts along the Military Road were written directly after the war. Lord Adam Gordon, a colonel in the 66th Regiment and member of Parliament, made a grand tour of northern sites of the French and Indian War in 1765 and provided descriptions of the fortifications. Fort George was “a Complet[e] Bastion built of Stone, the Casements of Wood; It mounts ten guns” and Fort Edward was already a “Log Work, all in ruin, there are about 24 guns, most of which are falling into the Casements.”

Francis Grant, son of Sir Francis Grant (Lord Cullen), made an identical journey in 1767. There was nothing left at Fort George “except a redoubt mounting 12 guns, about 200 yards from shore, and some barracks.”

Passing Bloody Pond, he rode on horseback to Fort Edward and described “the

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Hospital, the buildings of which still remain” on Rodgers Island. Fort Edward had been abandoned by the British a year earlier.

The period between the French and Indian War and the American Revolution was a relatively peaceful interlude. Other than the ever-present raiding by Indians, the frontier was quiet enough to allow settlers to build homes and cultivate farms. During this early period, the forts and battlefields had little associative preservation values, while the building materials from the forts held practical value for the settlers. Additionally, some of the forts were still in use as the British army maintained a strong presence in the colonies.

Fort William Henry, which only existed from 1755 to 1757, was not rebuilt during the French and Indian War or in the period of peace before the American Revolution. Settlers undoubtedly used some material from the ruins, although the British army had salvaged whatever Montcalm had not burned to the ground. The site of the bastion on Lake George became, in time, overgrown and a picturesque ruin for visitors.

The Military Road itself was an ever-changing course; the path it took was based on the needs of the military. While settlers used the Military Road as a means of movement after the French and Indian War, usage of the Military Road declined, as it was no longer the primary route through the area.53

**Preservation Efforts During the American Revolution**

The forts and sites along the Military Road witnessed renewed activity during the American Revolution. Just as it had been in the French and Indian War, the vital

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52 Ibid. p. 256.
water and overland route that included the Military Road was critical for the British and Americans. The extant Military Road sites were used for their original purpose. As an example, Henry Knox used the Military Road as part of his route to move cannons from Fort Ticonderoga to Boston.

Fort George was one fort that was used in the American Revolution. Captain Henry Livingston of Third New York Regiment, writing in September 1775, said Fort George was “much out of repair although still defensible, being built mostly of stone” with “a few wretched Hovels that were formerly used as Barracks.” Charles Carroll of Maryland visited the area in April 1776 and found Fort George “in as ruinous condition as Fort Edward, it is a small bastion, faced with stone” with “one barrack which occupied almost the whole space between the walls.” Fort George was used during the Canadian Expedition of 1776 as a way station and for soldiers suffering from smallpox and then again during the Saratoga Campaign in 1777.

Fort Edward was also used as a post for Americans during the Canadian Expedition of 1776. One British officer dismissed Fort Edward as “nothing but ruins” and “so utterly defenseless that I frequently galloped my horse in one side and out the other.” But the British noted that Americans had built additional defensive works at some of the old forts. The old French and Indian War sites were important because their reuse saved labor and material. Fort George was undoubtedly saved for the

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55 Ibid. p. 259.
future by its reuse in the American Revolution, and was also injected with a secondary layer of significance by its role in the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{59}

Three weeks after the Battle of Saratoga in October 1777, British troops burned or destroyed many Lake George fortifications, and the area saw little action for the rest of the American Revolution.\textsuperscript{60} The forts were not forgotten after the American Revolution. In July 1783, George Washington embarked on a tour of the fortifications of northern New York, becoming the first tourist to visit the sites along the Military Road.\textsuperscript{61} Washington attempted to secure funding for provisioning and maintaining these forts, but with the end of the war the idea failed.

**Post-Eighteenth Century Preservation Efforts**

After the American Revolution, the sites along the Military Road ended their usefulness as military fortifications and began their life as tourist attractions. Indeed, visitors were drawn to the Hudson Valley, upstate New York, and Lake George for its scenic beauty and the ruins of its historic sites. A number of travelers recorded their impressions of the historic ruins in the Lake George area during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Peter Sailly, a visitor from France, wrote in 1784 that the “ruins of the rampart and ditch only remain” at Fort Edward.\textsuperscript{62} The site of Fort William Henry was slightly more picturesque, containing the “remains of the old ramparts of earth…covered with

\textsuperscript{59} The only permanent sign at Fort George is a small wayside erected by the State of New York, marking the role of Fort George during the American Revolution, as part of a Revolutionary War Heritage Trail.

\textsuperscript{60} Warren County Historical Society. *Research and Mapping of Colonial Road Between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, Project History*, Self-Published, 2005, p. 7

\textsuperscript{61} Both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison also visited sites along the Military Road as part of a tour of northern battle sites.

wild cherry trees” and “a little above the fort…the remains of an entrenched camp” with a graveyard in the center “covered with strawberries and wild roses.”

Yale Professor Benjamin Silliman wrote a book in 1819 based on his travels, describing the ruins of Fort Edward as: “walls…in some places still twenty feet high, notwithstanding what time and the plough have done to reduce them; for the interior of the Fort, and in some places, the parapet are now planted with potatoes.” He described Fort George’s “circular mossy walls of stone” as “still twenty feet high and in pretty good preservation.” Bloody Pond was “shaped exactly like a bowl; it may be two hundred feet in diameter…and covered with pond lily.”

Jared Sparks, a prolific nineteenth-century writer and editor, visited Lake George in 1830 on a similar battle site excursion, visiting the ruinous site of Fort William Henry, Fort George, and Bloody Pond. He notes that the site of Fort William Henry was so degraded that it was “not easy to ascertain its original dimensions.” Fort Edward was “in the midst of the present village, and has been laid out into house lots, and more than half of the old fort has been partially leveled and converted into gardens. The east and south sides of the Fort are in a partial state of preservation and the embankments fifteen or twenty feet high. But the owner is digging them down, and the whole structure will soon disappear.”

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63 Ibid, p. 262.
64 Ibid, pp. 266-267.
Francis Parkman, an American historian who wrote the landmark French and Indian War narrative history, *Montcalm and Wolfe* (1884), visited these same three sites in the summer of 1842. During his trip, Parkman lamented the careless way that French and Indian War sites were being preserved and cared for, noting the “huge, awkward bridge” built over Cooper’s Cave (a site featured in *Last of the Mohicans*) and the road that had been constructed “directly through the ruins” of Fort William Henry.66 Parkman’s dismay at this careless handling of historic resources motivated him to write about the war.67

By the mid-nineteenth century, the sites along the Military Road were falling into disrepair, and undoubtedly the Military Road itself was not maintained. The last remaining proof of the road is from a (now lost) survey document undertaken by the

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state of New York in 1805. As of that point, the Military Road was still in general use and traceable. Sometime after that point, however, the Military Road’s actual trace disappeared. By 1849, the old Military Road had been replaced by a plank road, then later by railroad lines.68

Due to the remoteness of this area, the fortifications and battlefields of the French and Indian War in Lake George remained on open land free from development pressures. This began to change after the American Revolution, when petitions for land flooded offices of state officials. On July 26, 1783, four settlers leased the Fort George land for one year with the stipulation that no “Bricks, Timber, or Stones…be removed” or fortifications be “taken down.”69 This obligation to preserve the fortifications from the French and Indian War – coming so early, in 1783 – is an important first impulse at preserving the physical reminders of the war. This impulse was probably not altogether altruistic, however, as an agreement was made in 1811 to turn over the garrison grounds at Fort George to Columbia and Union colleges so that they could benefit from the rents from leases or sell the property.70

The college sold the property to James Caldwell, a developer who bought up land around the southern shore of Lake George. The town that developed there would eventually be named Caldwell, and then changed to Lake George Village, its current incarnation.

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70 Ibid, pp. 263-265.
The development of better transportation options in the nineteenth century helped bring more visitors to the Lake George area. Steamboats brought tourists to the area via Lake George after 1817. The golden age of the stagecoach in Lake George was 1869-1882, as guests traveled to the various area hotels over rutted, bumpy roads, likely including the remnants of the Military Road. But the greatest boost to tourist travel to Lake George was the railroad. Rail service reached Glens Falls in 1869, but guests still had to endure a bumpy stagecoach trip to the lake’s shore. The Delaware & Hudson Railroad finally expanded from a station at Fort Edward to the shore of Lake George in 1882. The Delaware & Hudson built a train station – still standing today – on the shore of Lake George, directly between the

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73 Ibid, p. 27.
ruins of Fort William Henry and the site of the Battle of Lake George (today the Lake George Battlefield Park.)

Figure 17: D&H Railroad Station, built on the shore of Lake George (Photo from Gale Halm, *Lake George*).

The destination for most guests to Lake George was the Fort William Henry Hotel, built in 1855 adjacent to the grounds of the fort.\(^{74}\) Guests were encouraged to visit the picturesque ruins of Fort William Henry and Fort George, but what history lesson was imparted to the guests is difficult to say.\(^{75}\) The publication and lasting popularity of *Last of the Mohicans* by James Fenimore Cooper in February 1826 brought the story of the French and Indian War, and the Siege of Fort William Henry, into the mainstream of nineteenth-century popular culture, likely inspiring visitation to the site. The hotel was enlarged in 1868, coming close to but not resting on the

\(^{74}\) Ibid, p. 41. \\
ruins of the fort. The original Fort William Henry Hotel burned in 1909, was rebuilt in 1911, and still stands today.\textsuperscript{76}

Figure 18: Fort William Henry Hotel, circa. 1900. The ruins of Fort William Henry are in the wooded area to the left of the hotel (Photo from Library of Congress).

\textbf{Intentional Preservation}

During the eighteenth and much of the nineteenth century, preservation of the French and Indian War sites along the Military Road was sporadic, involving mostly an admiration of the forts as picturesque ruins or their reuse as military fortifications. Many of the original stockades and other structures along the road, such as the stockade at Halfway Brook, were still standing. However, these silent sentinels hinting at past events in the area were not intentionally preserved or interpreted. The attention of most visitors was drawn to the sites of Fort William Henry, Fort George, Fort Edward, and the site of Bloody Pond (though not a significant action, no doubt

\textsuperscript{76} Ibid, p. 294.
the catchy name led an air of danger and excitement to visiting the site). There had been no official or institutional preservation actions taken for these sites up to the mid-nineteenth century.

There are several reasons for a lack of any official preservation at these French and Indian War sites. They were used for their intended purpose through the end of the Revolution. During the peacetime between the French and Indian War and the Revolution, colonists were more concerned with building and settling than preserving the memory of a war that played no real role in defining their identity as Americans. As previously described, the fortifications were a great source of material with which they could build homes, barns, and walls.

In his work *Mystic Chords of Memory*, author Michael Kammen suggests three ideological reasons for American ignorance of, and their indifference to, the past, and hence to preservation of that past. The first concept is pluralism, the concept that the American society in this early period was a diverse society that shared a future but not a common history. The country’s genesis was perceived as starting with the Declaration of Independence, so the French and Indian War was a mere prelude to conception rather than a part of the birthing process of the nation. Thus, the sites of the French and Indian War, tainted with their associations to the period when we were British subjects, were not venerated.

The second concept is physical and social mobility, the idea that American society was fluid and ever changing. Relentless and constant mobility, including western migration, meant that “newness” was the norm, and “pastness” was

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irrelevant, so that the lesson and narrative of the French and Indian War was not strong in newly settled areas.\textsuperscript{78}

The third concept was the pervasive belief that government ought not to bear responsibility for the maintenance of collective memories. This belief helps underscore why there was no institutional preservation of historic sites and ruins in the early part of our history. Preservation, commemoration, and anniversaries of historic events were left up to the individual group or citizen, who were often not inclined to bother.\textsuperscript{79} So, we do not begin to see preservation of French and Indian War sites in any meaningful way until later in the nineteenth century.

It was during the mid- to late nineteenth century that we see the beginnings of the preservation movement in America due to the activities of individuals and citizen groups. Women’s groups, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution, Mount Vernon Ladies Association, and the Colorado Cliff Dwellers Association began to fight for preservation of important national sites. The balance of historic preservation began to shift in favor of saving these sites for their historic importance and not just on their scenic beauty alone. Additionally, after the Civil War, veterans groups began to buy up battlefields from the conflict in an effort to preserve these sites of national conflict and trauma and to make them places of commemoration.

The ruins of Fort William Henry and Fort George continued to hold interest after the Civil War. The first commemorative marker to be placed at a French and Indian War site in Lake George was to honor Colonel Ephram Williams, the Massachusetts officer killed at the Bloody Morning Scout engagement on September

\textsuperscript{78} Ibid, p. 51.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid, p. 55.
9, 1755. The marker, installed by the Williams College Society of Alumni in 1854, honored Williams and marked the approximate location of the engagement.  

Figure 19: Colonel Ephram Williams Monument, near the site of the Bloody Morning Scout, ca. 1900 (Photo from Gale Halm, *Lake George*).

The next effort came in 1898 from a group called the Society of Colonial Wars. This group, organized in 1892, was formed because

up to 1892, although there were hereditary societies honoring the soldiers of the American Revolution, of the War of 1812, of the Mexican War, and of the Civil War, the men who participated in the American Colonial Wars had somehow been neglected. No society existed to commemorate the military events of this significant and formative period in our history; nor was there any patriotic organization dedicated to keeping alive the ideals of liberty that our Colonial forebears achieved by their courageous exploits—those ideals of individual and community freedom that we know as the American way of life.  

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Text of wayside panel at the Monument. For more details, see: http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=17329.  
The Society petitioned the state of New York to acquire lands that encompassed the remains of Fort George and the site of the 1755 Battle of Lake George. The result, Lake George Battlefield Park, consisted of 33 ¼ acres and was placed in the custodianship of the New York State Historical Association. One of the first actions of the Society was to erect a monument commemorating the Battle of Lake George, featuring a bronze statue of William Johnson and Chief Hendrick. The dedication event on September 8, 1903, was well attended and helped to spark interest in other French and Indian War sites in the area.\textsuperscript{82} The Society also erected a blue highway marker near the site of Fort George, on the road through the Battlefield Park and near the entrance to the State Park.

One site that had always been popular with tourists was the site of the Bloody Pond engagement. The plank road and railroad tracks had been located in such a way as to make sure that visitors could see the famous Bloody Pond on their journey to Lake George. In 1908, the New York Historical Society purchased the Bloody Pond site for $200 and erected a boulder plaque and roadside marker.\textsuperscript{83} Current scholarship suggests that the town of Caldwell “created” the present Bloody Pond site as a tourist attraction, and that the actual site of the Bloody Pond (which was not an actual pond, but rather a spring) was a few hundred yards southwest of the current pond.\textsuperscript{84}

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid, p. 291.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, p. 291.
Inspired by the complete reconstruction of Fort Ticonderoga, a “systematic excavation” of Fort George was begun in 1921 under the direction of the superintendent of the battlefield park. Following the excavation, the fort was only partially rebuilt. Newspapers and the public urged the New York State Historical Society to complete the fort and display artifacts found on the site. However the job was never completed. The first professional archaeology at the Fort George site was done in 2000, yielding much information about the fort and the lives of the men stationed there.85

One site along the Military Road, Fort Gage, was systematically and purposefully destroyed. Built in 1758 by the British, it was located on a hill 200 feet above the lake, and one mile south of the site of Fort William Henry. The ruins of the

fort remained visible until 1901, when an electric trolley line was built directly through the remains of the fort; the railroad company even named the stop built atop the ruins after the destroyed fort. The construction of the Northway (Interstate 87) during the early 1960’s destroyed more sections of the ruined fort; it has been estimated that the trolley line and Thruway construction destroyed about 40% of the fort site. Despite this damage, officials from the Bureau of Historic Sites (now the New York State Office of Parks and Recreation) reported as late as 1972 that well preserved earthworks and a bastion remained on the site. But three years later, a developer razed the remains of the site without seeking a permit from the Adirondack Park Agency.\textsuperscript{86} State archaeologists were given a narrow window of time to do archaeology at the site in 1975, discovering a number of features from the fort and a plethora of military accouterment from the French and Indian War and American Revolution time periods. Despite these important finds, the site was ultimately destroyed to make room for a Ramada Inn. However, an advance post from Fort Gage was discovered on a nearby undeveloped hillside by an archaeologist in 1994, giving hope that even a small part of this French and Indian War site may be studied in the future.\textsuperscript{87}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{86} Ibid, p. 297. The developer avoided APA review by first illegally bulldozing the remains of the fort, then escaping APA review by scaling the project down to 99 rooms, utilizing a code loophole.
\end{flushleft}

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{87} Ibid, pp. 297-28.
\end{flushleft}
Archaeology and Preservation in Lake George

Archaeology has played, and will continue to play, an important part in the preservation of French and Indian War sites along the Military Road, since many fortifications have long since ceased to exist above ground.

Archaeology was used to recreate Fort William Henry when developers from Albany decided to rebuild the fort as a commercial tourist attraction. In 1953 they hired amateur archaeologist Stanley Gifford to uncover the fort’s original footprint, locate the outlines of key buildings, find the fort’s cemetery, and recover artifacts that would help create exciting new exhibits. Gifford finished his work in 1954 and, guided by the archaeological finds and the original engineers’ drawings, the fort was
quickly reconstructed and opened to tourists in 1955. No significant archaeology was conducted at Fort William Henry until 1997, when archaeologist David Starbuck conducted intensive excavations inside and outside the fort.

Archaeology continues to play an important role in revealing more about Fort Edward, the other anchor fort on the Military Road. As described earlier, the Village of Fort Edward grew up on the site of the old fort. Archaeologist David Starbuck led some informal digs at the site starting in 1991, uncovering foundations and artifacts. But a formal archaeological dig was not done at the Fort Edward site until 2009, when crews dredging PCB-contaminated sediment from the Hudson River accidentally ripped out wooden beams thought to have been from the fort. Archaeologists spent two weeks excavating original foundations to the fort. Excavations on neighboring Rodgers Island found evidence of barracks and other structures belonging to the Fort Edward complex. In fact, the tie between Fort Edward and Rogers Island is so strong and significant that the Village of Fort Edward is planning to purchase acreage and artifacts on Rogers Island for a public park commemorating the role of Fort Edward and Rogers Island in the French and Indian War.

Recent Commemorative Activity

The 250th Commemoration of the French and Indian War in 2004 was an attempt to draw attention to the history of the war through reenactments, programs,

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90 “Plan calls for Fort Edward to buy Rogers Island acreage, artifacts for park.” Accessed at [http://poststar.com](http://poststar.com). Rogers Island is a French and Indian War site, where Major Robert Rogers, leader of the British army’s main scouting unit, gathered his men and came up with the still-used Army Ranger training manual.
and other media and marketing activity. The French and Indian War Commission was charged in part with commemorating seven events over five years. The New York State appropriation for the Commission was $350,000 over the five years (about $70,000 a year). The actual economic impact of the French and Indian War Commission was reportedly in excess of $9 million dollars, a return on investment (ROI) for the State of New York of $25.71 for every $1.00 spent.91

Locally, the 250th Commemoration met with great success with little budget support. Events were well attended by reenactors and the public. A two-day reenactment event at Fort William Henry in 2007, featuring 1,500 reenactors and a dozen pieces of ordinance, brought 35,000 visitors a day to the Village of Lake George and Lake George Battlefield Park. Hotels were full and restaurants ran out of food. People, especially in the hospitality industry, wanted more.92

The French and Indian War Commission was able to leverage in excess of $350,000 in matching money ($1 match for every $1 spent by New York State). There were over one hundred different organizations that partnered with the Commission, including New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation. Over two hundred teachers were trained in how to teach the French and Indian War in their classroom through the Living History Education Foundation. The Commission sponsored two major academic symposiums, an educational poster, and two books. The French and Indian War Commission Legacy Project was a partnership with the State Library that

92 Author interview with Charles Vandrei, 11/21/2011.
digitized the Sir William Johnson Papers. Sadly, based on site visits conducted by this author in 2011 and 2012, it does not appear that the success of the Commemoration resulted in a long-term interest or investment in promoting the French and Indian War heritage of the area by the stakeholders.

**Stakeholders**

There are many stakeholders interested in or engaged in preserving the sites along the Military Road. Any attempt to unify these sites under one interpretive plan should involve all these stakeholders. This section identifies stakeholders and attempts to identify their motivations to preserve and interpret these French and Indian War sites.

Why is it important to identify the stakeholders? Activities at all these sites have helped to distinguish those who are “insiders” and “outsiders” in American culture, those who belong in the stories and, equally important, how they belong in them. For insiders, these sites are like “places of worship, where patriotic revitalization can be accomplished through the celebration of the enduring inspiration of the heroic age of battle.” For outsiders, these places are where they can begin the process of “symbolically reshaping the nation’s sense of its past, a process that outsiders believe can significantly alter their own marginal status.”

**Landowners**

Power over landscapes flows from Constitutional principles of property ownership, the common good, and democratic processes for conflict resolution. Community power perspectives enlarge our understanding of landscape evolution by identifying the various power structures and

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recognizing the role of belief systems. These perspectives also suggest which paths lead towards optimal landscape preservation.95

The people or agencies who own the land encompassing these sites are primary stakeholders. The controlling factors in how well the sites are preserved are related to whether they want to preserve the sites as historic attractions, in their natural state, or to utilize the land for their own interest and gain (i.e., farming or development.) In the end, landowner’s wishes are paramount in preservation. Nothing can happen without their approval. Property rights and local government rights are a big issue in the Warren County area, which brings an added challenge to securing property or easement rights.96 How can these landowners be engaged? If preservation is to work, landowners must benefit somehow from preservation – which generally means some kind of monetary gain. In Chapter 6, I explore how preservation can increase value to the landowner, and not just financial value.

The public

Any use of public money or resources would invite the input and participation of “the public,” the taxpayers and residents of the counties and townships where these historic sites reside. Their interest in preservation and interpretation efforts goes beyond the issues of landowners. How do residents want to remember the French and Indian War in their community? Are they interested or engaged in this history? How much does their participation or interest matter? We can see many of these issues in the relationship between local residents and the broader Civil War community during the recent fight in Orange County, Virginia, over plans to build a Wal-Mart adjacent

96 Author interview with Tom Nesbitt, 11/9/2011.
to the Wilderness battlefield (more of which is discussed in Chapter 6). At what point do regional or national interests and values take precedent over local landowner and citizen rights? These are questions that must be raised and discussed in the local communities with French and Indian War sites.

**Local agencies involved in preservation**

The Warren County Historical Society has an active interest in preserving the Military Road sites. The French and Indian War and the Military Road and its associated sites play a role in the local landscape. There are historic signs that are generally visible from the road, as well as scattered along the Warren County Bikeway, so it would seem that the local historic society has a major stake in preserving these sites. To their credit, they have been proactive in installing signage and preparing the recent Military Road study. Preserving these sites seems built into their mission, which states:

> The Warren County Historical Society was chartered in 1997 by the New York Education Department for the collection, preservation, and promotion of the heritage of Warren County. The Mission of the Warren County Historical Society is to promote the history of Warren County, New York and its environs by supporting research and preservation efforts and encouraging public participations.

Local historical groups really hold the key to preservation and need to lobby state and federal agencies as well as their own planning and zoning boards to seriously address preservation. Professional historians and archaeologists need to add their voice to this call for action as well. The French and Indian War is known as one of America’s forgotten wars, and one of the best ways to remove that stigma is to

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97 For information about the Wilderness Wal-mart controversy, see [www.civilwar.org](http://www.civilwar.org). We will also return to this subject in Chapter 6 of this paper.

increase awareness and knowledge of the conflict through both the volume and quality of scholarship. Many of the sites along the Military Road exist only below ground, making the job and responsibility of archaeologists in the recognition of these sites even more important and valuable. Archaeology programs at Fort William Henry, Fort Edward, and Rogers Island have helped us understand the role of these sites in the French and Indian War much better. Before historic material is lost to looting and development, professional historians and archaeologists need to make the same assessments for the other sites along the Military Road.

State of New York

In New York, historic sites are managed by the Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, while historic parks are managed by the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). This is an important distinction, as historic parks are not managed for their historic or cultural value but for their natural value as a wilderness or environmental site. Lake George Battlefield Park is one of seven French and Indian War sites in the state managed by this agency as a day use/picnic area and campground that has “historic ruins.” While they feel they do a decent job of caring for and interpreting French and Indian War sites, these resources are not given any priority over any other site. While this is not a strict value judgment over which period of history is more valuable, French and Indian War sites in Lake George may have extra merit, it may be argued, because of the date of the conflict (eighteenth century, pre-dating the Revolutionary War) and by the concentration of the number of
sites in the area. But no effort has been made to call out these sites as heritage tourism destinations through active preservation, interpretation, and marketing efforts.99

**Local Governments and Businesses**

Local government and businesses can both bear the burden and reap the benefits from a concerted effort to preserve and interpret these French and Indian War sites. Preservation efforts are the most effective at the local level. Recognition on state and federal registers, while important for contexts and recognition on those levels, bring no protections to a historic site from development and destruction. Thus, local town and county governments need to draft policy in the form of preservation ordinances and zoning code to ensure that these sites are safe from destruction. Local governments and businesses should also realize that they could reap economic benefits from historic preservation.100

**American Battlefield Preservation Program**

The American Battlefield Protection Program (APBB) encourages public and private partners to identify and evaluate battlefields so that information about them can be incorporated into land use, site management, economic development, and tourism plans. This effort helps avoid conflicts that can divide communities and lead to the destruction of important historic sites. By funding the site identification study along the Military Road, the ABPP is being proactive and setting the framework for future projects.101

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99 Author interview with Charles Vandrei, 11/21/2011.
100 Further discussion on the economic values of preservation can be found in Chapter 6 of this paper.
101 [http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/](http://www.nps.gov/history/hps/abpp/)
Native American Indian Groups

The role of the Iroquois in the story of the French and Indian War is complex and has been marginalized, and only recently has their participation been recognized. Much of the narrative regarding the Iroquois in the Military Road story is of brutal and “savage” attacks. The Native American story is largely peripheral, for example, at Fort William Henry they are reduced to making crafts. Only in reenactments is their presence in the conflict shown and those performances may very well reinforce the traditional narrative of savage Indians. The need exists to supplement the story at the sites to include information about the life and culture of Native Americans in the area before the war, as well as to explain how the Native Americans came to be involved in the conflict.

Reenactors

Reenactors are an active part of French and Indian War commemoration. They are important because through reenacting, they bring these sites and their stories alive, adding a tangible dimension to the interpretation. Battle reenactment is a form of veneration, especially for those who feel visiting a battlefield is simply not enough. They seek “imaginative reentry into the heroic past, re-creating the total environment of the time of the battle and thus paying meticulous attention to details such as clothing and food. Reenactment serves as an articulation of patriotic orthodoxy and a symbolic defense against various forms of ideological defilement and physical defilement.”¹⁰² By living the battle, reenactors may claim the history as their own and on their own terms. But it is important to note that reenactors may not be locals, and

that interest in and plans for a particular site may not be in sync with the local residents or the landowners.

Figure 22: Remnants of the Military Road can occasionally be seen in Lake George (Photo by Jeffrey Dayton, used by permission).
Chapter 4: Cultural Landscapes and Site Surveys

As discussed in the previous chapter, the preservation of French and Indian War sites along the Military Road in Lake George, New York, has had a varied history. For many years, the forts left over from the war were utilized for their building materials by settlers to the area. Some forts, like Fort George, were also reused during the American Revolution. Other sites, like the Bloody Pond site, became tourist attractions, and one site, the Bloody Morning Scout site, became a commemorative site. Still other sites, like Fort Gage, were lost to encroaching development.

Although these French and Indian War forts and battlefields all have one unifying element, that is, their role along the Military Road during the 1755 and 1757 campaigns of the French and Indian War, they are not remembered together in any contextual way. They have been managed, preserved, and interpreted on a site-by-site basis, and each site holds different values for the various groups of stakeholders.

This chapter examines how the Military Road may function as a unifying element for these sites. The first section looks at the Military Road as a cultural landscape, drawing on the concept of dramaturgy. This approach examines the landscape, actors, and the narrative of the French and Indian War, to help us visualize and understand the story of the French and Indian War in Lake George, New York. The second section places the Military Road and its sites in its modern context so we can better understand their current condition. The third section explores five selected Military Road sites and offers a brief description of each site’s remaining original features, preservation threats, and interpretation issues.
The Military Road as a cultural landscape

As described in Chapter 2, the Military Road was built between Fort William Henry and Fort Edward to facilitate the movement of men and supplies between the two forts. While it occupied a prominent part of the landscape as the only viable land route through that part of the New York wilderness, the Military Road was not a rigidly fixed object; its path varied through the years as terrain conditions required. But if we take the Military Road and its associated sites together, they form a cohesive whole that creates a cultural landscape in Lake George.

A cultural landscape is defined by the National Park Service as "a geographic area, including both cultural and natural resources and the wildlife or domestic animals therein, associated with a historic event, activity, or person or exhibiting other cultural or aesthetic values." The Military Road fits this description as it sits in a defined geographic area (even if the exact trace of the road has not been precisely defined, its general path is known and it links to defined points of reference, Fort William Henry and Fort Edward), is associated with a specific historic event (the French and Indian War) and exhibits an aesthetic value in that it traversed through an American wilderness landscape that has been defined and described in American literature (James Fennimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans*) and art (Hudson River School of Art). This wilderness landscape contains its own distinct elements, from the balsam and white pine trees, to the distinct flowers, and water features such as brooks, lakes and waterfalls. Wildlife indigenous to the area also fit into this landscape inventory.

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The NPS defines four types of cultural landscapes that are not mutually exclusive: historic sites, historic designed landscapes, historic vernacular landscapes, and ethnographic landscapes.\textsuperscript{104} The Military Road could be classified as one of two types of cultural landscapes” a historic vernacular landscape and a historic site. These two characterizations apply to the Military Road in terms of the war and post-war period of the landscape.

A historic vernacular landscape is defined as a landscape that evolved through use by the people whose activities or occupancy shaped that landscape. Through social or cultural attitudes of an individual, family or a community, the landscape reflects the physical, biological, and cultural character of those everyday lives. Function plays a significant role in vernacular landscapes. They can be a single property such as a farm or a collection of properties such as a district of historic farms along a river valley. The Military Road is a historic vernacular landscape in that it was a path through the wilderness to move men and material and later allowed for settlement of the area. The forts and battlefields and later farmsteads along the route of the Military Road could tell us a great deal about the lives of eighteenth-century Americans and Native Americans, as well as how eighteenth-century military campaigns were developed and executed. The role of the Military Road in this capacity is characterized by post-war criteria, meaning that it gained these characteristics after its military usefulness was complete.

The second type of cultural landscape, a historic site, is defined as a landscape significant for its association with a historic event, activity, or person. This is the most likely category for the Military Road because the path of the road and its

\textsuperscript{104} Ibid, p. 2.
associated sites played important roles in the narrative of the French and Indian War. These criteria characterize the Military Road during the French and Indian War and immediate post-war periods.

What makes a cultural landscape particularly important is that it is by definition unique, a combination of natural and cultural elements that defines a particular place or region. Preserved and interpreted for the public, the cultural landscape can tell us who we are, as Americans, far more effectively than most individual works of architecture or exhibits in museums ever can.105

Figure 23: Lake George Battlefield Park retains many dramatic elements of a cultural landscape (Photo by Jeffrey Dayton, used by permission).

But how can we understand the complex relationships of places and narratives related to the Military Road? One approach to understanding the Military Road is

through dramaturgy. Dramaturgy is defined by Rhys Isaac as a series of social-dramatic devices through which interactive communication – expression, direction, and ultimately coercion – may be accomplished; each culture and subculture has its own distinctive dramaturgical “kit” consisting of “settings,” “props,” “costumes,” “roles,” “script formulas,” and “styles” of action and gesture.106 Dramaturgy introduces a type of history that tries to “understand life as it was experienced by ‘actors’ on past ‘stages,’ each playing his or her own part, and responding to the roles of others in ways that expressed their particular conceptions of the nature of the ‘play.’”107

The sites along the Military Road – and the Road itself – have dramaturgic elements. The theatrical metaphor is essential to the idea of dramaturgy. The natural setting of Lake George, such as mountains, lakes, trees, and ravines, creates the stage setting and backdrop for the action for this cultural landscape. Props include the military accouterment that we visualize with eighteenth-century warfare, tomahawks, guns, cannon, powder horns, horses and wagons, as well as provisions for daily living. We can also visualize the costumes: the red coats of the British, the colonial garb of the settlers, the buckskins of the frontiersmen, and the war paint and feathers of the Native American warriors. We can visualize the “styles” of action, marching, attacks, massacres, all the associations with eighteenth-century warfare, or the simple acts of setting up camp, standing watch, or building wilderness roads. All these elements forge a dramaturgy, a synergy that creates a dramatic sense of place and narrative.

107 Ibid, p. 357.
Dramaturgy also concerns itself with cultural milieus, best defined as the roles we see played out against the stagecraft of the cultural landscape: the noble and savage Indians, the disciplined British troops, the brave and sometimes victimized settlers, the tough frontiersmen. Everyone has a role to play against the dramatic backdrop. Isaac notes that “every social setting has congeries of action-settings with overlapping casts, styles, and conventions. Such clusters, based on shared ‘stagecraft,’ may be designated milieus.”

There is a certain amount of tension in the idea of the Military Road that adds to the dramaturgic element. There is the conflict between the Military Road’s sense of security and usefulness and the sense of unexpected danger. This idea is played out in the Old World vs. New World dynamic of the French and Indian War, of men in bright uniforms and muskets marching through a wilderness to confront breech-clothed Indians using bows and arrows; it is the dichotomy of the natural versus the unnatural world. This clash of two cultures, of an “advanced” culture bringing its accouterment into the pastoral world, is a theme elaborated on by author Leo Marx in *The Machine in the Garden.* Marx describes how the sound of a train whistle in the woods of 1844 Concord, Massachusetts, brought change to that wilderness. “Now the great world is invading the land, transforming the sensory texture of rural life – the way it looks and sounds – and threatening, in fact, to impose a new and more complete dominion it.”

The building of the Military Road through the New York wilderness must have appeared as just such an invasion, infusing the landscape with new elements and creating a tension in that landscape.

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A good example of cultural landscape as part of dramaturgy is the film version of “Last of the Mohicans.” The pseudo landscape of upstate New York (filmed in North Carolina) was featured prominently at the beginning and end of the film. Throughout the movie, the cinematic style emphasizes the wilderness as primeval forest, dark, foreboding, and mysterious.

![Figure 24: Photo still from FOX's "Last of the Mohicans" (1992) The landscape provided a dramatic stage setting for James Fennimore Cooper's tale of the siege and massacre of Fort William Henry (Photo from bluray.com).](image)

Dramaturgy gives us a good framework for explaining how the conflicting elements of the landscape create a drama that continues to enthrall people today, and entices them to visit the original sites, hoping to catch a glimpse and experience a part of that dramaturgic element. Landscapes are essentially a participatory experience; these dramatic elements cannot be fully appreciated or understood without being present in that landscape.
The Modern Context of the Military Road

A cultural landscape, like the Military Road, includes its environment and sites, people, traditions, and cultures, all of which give it a sense of place with unique character that can be described, enjoyed, and understood. A sense of place involves recognition of a larger context, but the individual pieces confer a distinction on the entire landscape. The Military Road landscape is unique and special, but only because of the individual sites that make up that landscape. In describing and discovering this sense of place, it is important to place the Military Road and its sites “on the ground” to identify the environment and surroundings, as they currently exist.

Historically, the terrain surrounding the Military Road was a varied landscape from flat, dry land (along the Hudson River, north of Fort Edward) to the marshy land around Halfway Brook Post (current town of Queensbury) to the ravines and streambeds at the base of French Mountain and the site of the Bloody Morning Scout (the southern reaches of Lake George Village).

While the old Military Road is no longer visible, there are some modern clues to its path. Portions of the old plank road can still be seen in various places, such as at the site of the Bloody Morning Scout. Modern NY Route 9 approximates the route of the Military Road, and the Warren County Bikeway runs from Lake George Battlefield Park to Fort Edward along the approximate route of the Military Road.

Today, US Route 9 from Glens Falls to Lake George Village is more or less the same location as the plank road from the 1840’s. US Route 4, the Boulevard, and Warren Street (NYS Route 32) connect the villages of Fort Edward and Hudson Falls to Glens Falls generally following the original Military Road.
The once-hidden trace of the Military Road has been rediscovered, thanks to the efforts of the Warren County Historical Society and their Military Road Project. The goal of the Military Road Project, undertaken by the Society and funded with grants from the National Park Service’s American Battlefield Protection Program, was to assemble materials describing the events in the French and Indian War that occurred in Warren County, New York, and to produce maps showing the probable
location of the Military Road. The project produced several important documents that add much to the understanding of the Military Road including information on present land use and ownership of lands over which the Military Road was constructed; a historical monograph providing background to researchers, teachers, and laymen who may be using the project; and topographic and political maps showing the probable location of the Military Road and the location of events that occurred along and near it.

Survey of Selected Sites

Over 240 years have passed since the siege and massacre at FWH. The original log forts have rotted away, highways lie alongside the old Indian paths, most of the forests have been cut down, and Lake George is ringed with restaurants and tourist beaches. It takes a bit of effort to rediscover the historical sites, but they are there, and visitors to the region may still delight in traveling in Hawkeye’s (and Cooper’s) footsteps.

Table 3 lists all the known sites along the Military Road. Some are visible as recreated forts, some are battlefields, and some exist only as archaeological sites. Many of the sites are not marked because of the fear of looting and other illegal activity.

This section closely examines five sites along the Military Road: Fort William Henry, Lake George Battlefield Park, Bloody Morning Scout site, the Bloody Pond site, the Halfway Brook Post site, and Fort Edward, a group of specific scenes in the larger drama of the Military Road and the French and Indian War.

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Table 3: Fortifications and Battle Sites along the Military Road in Lake George, New York.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Fort William Henry</td>
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<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Battle of Lake George</td>
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<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Fort George</td>
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<tr>
<td>1758</td>
<td>Fort Gage</td>
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<tr>
<td>1757</td>
<td>Fort William Henry Massacre Site</td>
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<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Bloody Pond</td>
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<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Bloody Morning Scout</td>
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<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Three Mile Post (Fort Williams)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1756</td>
<td>Halfway Brook Fort</td>
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<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Fort Amherst</td>
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<tr>
<td>1759</td>
<td>Four Mile Post</td>
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<tr>
<td>1755</td>
<td>Fort Edward</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

They all vary in terms of their current preservation status and the interpretive means used to tell the story of the site. The analysis of each site will include a site description, preservation status (including what original features remain visible at the site), interpretive status (including waysides and visitor logistics), and current threats to the site. All these criteria are important in considering if a site is in condition for visitors.

There is a relative abundance of blue metal historical markers that identify the historic sites along the Military Road; these signs were installed in the late 1920’s and early 1930’s by the New York State Historical Association. Only two historical markers denote the Military Road, one in Lake George Village, currently on the grounds of the Comfort Inn and Suites Hotel, and the other in the Village of Fort Edward.112

112 According to the Historic Marker Database (www.hmdb.org) there are a total of 446 markers that commemorate a French and Indian War site. Of that number, 98 (equaling 21%)
The Warren County Historical Association installed several historic signs about the Military Road at sites along the Warren County Bikepath. These signs, while helpful to those utilizing the bikepath, are not visible or accessible from roads. The project was organized as part of an Eagle Scout program, under the auspices of the Warren County Historical Society, with the assistance of the Warren County Historical Association.

Of those markers are in the state of New York. Of those markers in New York, 40 (equaling 40%) are found in the direct vicinity of the Military Road.
Department of Recreation (who built the sign posts and did the installation). Since the bike trail is a county trail, it was far easier to get all the permissions, etc. from the county, since signs on state highways require a longer list of approvals by several agencies.  

![Image of Boy Scout wayside sign, located at Bloody Morning Scout site and next to the Warren County Bike Path](image)

**Figure 27**: Example of Boy Scout wayside sign, located at Bloody Morning Scout site and next to the Warren County Bike Path (Photo by author).

**Fort William Henry**

As discussed in Chapter 3, the current Fort William Henry is a reconstruction based on a 1950’s archaeological investigation of the original site. The fort is located on the southern shore of Lake George in the town of Lake George Village, adjacent to and owned by the Fort William Henry Hotel and Conference Center, a for-profit corporation. The Resort also owns a strip mall just steps from the entrance

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113 Author interview with Tom Nesbitt, 4/6/12.
114 The site of Fort William Henry was originally closer to the water’s edge, but the receding edge of Lake George, aided by construction of Million Dollar Beach, has pushed the site of the fort further from the water than it had been originally.
to the fort. The site is bounded by Lake George Battlefield Park to the east and Lake George Village to the west. Lake George Village relies heavily on summer tourism. Fort William Henry is seasonally operated and open May through October 23, which is not unusual for a summer tourist town in upstate New York. Most businesses in town close between October and March or April.

Figure 28: The reconstructed Fort William Henry, looking northeast (Photo by author).

The site, officially called “The Fort William Henry Museum and Restoration,” consists of the reconstructed fort, a visitor center and gift shop inside the fort, and two recreated barracks. An orientation film is shown inside one of the barracks, and the other contains exhibits pertaining to regional history, the French and Indian War and the archaeology of the fort. There is a large parking lot behind the fort and strip parking between the fort and the lake.
The only remaining original features of the site visible above ground include artifacts that have been excavated over the past 50 years and a well located on the parade ground; the reconstructed fort itself contains no original material. This should not be viewed as a negative, however; without the reconstruction, a valuable historic resource would likely have been paved over, or lost to development. The reconstruction can be utilized as a preservation and teaching tool, and provides a study in contrast to the site of Fort Edward.

The interpretation of the fort is basic and minimalist. The signage placed around the fort points out features of the fortress and period military life, but does little to place the fort in the context of the French and Indian War and makes no mention of the Military Road. All signage is found inside the fort; there is nothing outside to mark Fort William Henry as a historic site. The site interpretation uses artillery firing demonstrations and docents in period dress. The orientation film is
outdated and uninspired and provides little contextual information. Exhibits have not been updated in decades, but that is scheduled to change as control of the museum’s exhibits and collection of Colonial-era military artifacts was handed over to the French and Indian War Society in 2011. Made up of local history buffs, archaeologists and educators, the group is dedicated to telling the story of the original fort and Lake George’s pivotal role during the conflict. The fort conducts a summer archaeology program led by Dr. David Starbuck; the excitement of seeing French and Indian War artifacts recovered from the ground may be the most inspirational and authentic part of a visit to Fort William Henry.

Figure 30: Example of artifact display case in Fort William Henry (Photo by author).

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The biggest threat to the Fort William Henry site may be its ownership by the for-profit company that operates the Fort William Henry Hotel and Conference Center. A for-profit company’s goals are generally centered on profit-making enterprises and they may not always do the right thing when it comes to preservation of artifacts. To the company’s credit, they have recently launched a Facebook page that includes historic photos, stories, and anecdotes that connects visitors with a source of historic information about the site.

Logistically, Fort William Henry provides an excellent starting point for a Military Road tour. There is plenty of parking available, as are amenities like food and hotels in Lake George Village. The fort, like many of the sites along the Military Road, is relatively intact as an archaeological resource, but differs from other sites in offering a reconstruction above ground.
Lake George Battlefield Park

Lake George Battlefield Park, part of the Adirondack Forest Preserve, is a 35-acre park located on the southern shore of Lake George, just east of Fort William Henry. The Park is managed by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation as a campground and picnic area with historic ruins, so there is a mix of commemorative and interpretive elements with picnic tables, trash cans, picnic shelters, and other recreational amenities. The park contains a portion of the site of the Battle of Lake George, the site of Fort George, and the archaeological remains of the smallpox hospital and barracks from Fort William Henry. Commemorative features in the park include a 1902 monument marking the Battle of Lake George and featuring bronze statues of Chief Hendrick and William Johnson. The park is also the northern terminus of the Warren County Bikeway.

Figure 32: Location of Lake George Battlefield Park (Map by Google Maps, created by author).
Lake George Battlefield Park contains a great deal of archaeological resources. According to archaeologist David Starbuck, the park is a rich source of archaeological remains, such as the foundations of eighteenth-century barracks and the remains of Fort George. Fort George Road, which runs through the park from the shore of Lake George up to Route 9, may be an original trace of the Military Road.

![Figure 33: Ruins of Fort George (1759) in Lake George Battlefield Park, facing east (Photo by author).](image)

The battlefield park has minimal interpretation. The park contains the ruins of Fort George and part of the site of the Battle of Lake George. There are a few waysides describing the battle and what may remain in the park. Unfortunately, the majority of the site of the Battle of Lake George is not in the Battlefield Park, but underneath the Lake George Forum (an ice skating rink and conference center.) The actual site of the battle is not marked with interpretive markers, and it is impossible for the visitor to visualize the battle. The site of the Battle of Lake George has largely
been lost to development. Fort George is marked by a wayside that is removed during the fall and winter (as are all waysides in the park, to prevent damage from snow.) There are early twentieth-century metal interpretive signs for Fort George on the main park road. A small fee-collection shack is located at the entrance to the area near Fort George, but doesn’t offer any orientation maps or literature for visitors. The park has very little visitor parking and no orientation or visitor center.

Figure 34: Interpretive signage in Lake George Battlefield Park (Photo by author).
What the park lacks in visitor amenities and interpretive material, it makes up for in dramaturgic value. Large sections of the park retain the wilderness environment that closely resembles the eighteenth-century appearance. Visitors standing at Fort George, or looking out towards the lake from the grounds of the smallpox hospital, can glean a momentary sense of what the landscape must have looked like to William Johnson and Baron Dieskau in 1755. This retention of the dramaturgic landscape element is largely due to the park’s inclusion in the Adirondack Forest Reserve.

A major problem for the overall interpretation is the disconnect between Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort William Henry. The narrative link between the two sites and the short distance between them could provide the perfect opportunity for the two sites to work together to present a unique French and Indian War visitor experience. Currently there are no such linkages, and no signage to direct visitors
between the sites. There is also no working arrangement between the two entities responsible for the sites.\textsuperscript{117} It is truly a missed interpretive opportunity for a beneficial private/public partnership.

![Figure 36: Streetscape between Lake George Battlefield Park and Fort William Henry, facing west (Photo by author).](image)

Continuing threats to the Battle of Lake George site include post-WWII commercial and residential development and highway construction; however the site is largely lost to development. The Town of Lake George Village continues to permit commercial development and redevelopment of land along the state highway without any consideration for archaeological resources.\textsuperscript{118} According to historian and Military Road Project author Tom Nesbitt, the Town of Lake George has little interest in

\textsuperscript{117} Author interview with Charles Vandrei, 11/21/2011.

\textsuperscript{118} Warren County Historical Society. \textit{Research and Mapping of Colonial Road Between Fort Edward and Fort William Henry, American Battlefield Protection Battlefield Survey Form}. Self-Published, 2005. Presumably, these projects are undertaken without federal money, which would kick in the Section 106 requirement of NHPA. Stakeholders interested in mitigating the damage to historic resources by these development projects may need to review the cases for violations.
historic preservation. Currently there are no local ordinances or zoning that would save historic resources from being developed.119

**Bloody Pond**

The site of Bloody Pond is located along Route 9, about two miles south of Fort William Henry, wedged between Route 9, a western-themed campground, and a string of retail businesses including a Ford dealership and a sushi restaurant. The feature described as Bloody Pond is prominent from Route 9; the Warren County Bikepath runs along the eastern perimeter of the site. According to historian Tom Nesbitt, the Bloody Pond property was once owned by the New York Historical Society and was transferred to Warren County in the 2000's. The Bloody Pond battlefield is in 85% private hands and 15% local government ownership relating to the Warren County bike trail.120

The original Bloody Pond site, now covered up by hillside slump and railroad construction, is located on private property. The current “Bloody Pond” was created right next to the plank road (now Route 9) so that tourists riding the stagecoach to Lake George could see “Bloody Pond” as the drivers recounted “bloody and gory stories of war.”121

The site of Bloody Pond is well marked with a metal historical sign and a boulder with a descriptive commemorating plaque dedicated by the New York Historical Association in 1904, both of which are visible from the road. This plaque tells the story of the Bloody Pond struggle. Additionally, there is a Warren County

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119 Author interview with Tom Nesbitt, 4/7/12.
121 Author interview with Tom Nesbitt, 4/2/12.
wayside panel along the bikepath that tells the Bloody Pond story but doesn’t note the inaccuracy of the site location.

Figure 37: Map of Bloody Pond location (Map by Google Maps).
Figure 38: Boy Scout signs for Bloody Pond, placed next to the Warren County Bikepath, facing south (Photo by author).

Visiting the Bloody Pond site is difficult. There is no pull-off or parking area at the site; visitors must either park across the street at a souvenir shop and cross a busy highway or park on same side of the road at the sushi restaurant. There is no visitor orientation to the site other than the commemorative plaque. Visitors must stand on the side of the road dangerously close to traffic to read the plaque.

Some original features of the site still remain. The eastern edge of the former pond is very distinct, being the bottom of the mountain slope. The flat area, now silted in, has the appearance of a wetland, as does the area west of the old railroad bed (now used as an access road.) Much of the landscape has been altered and fragmented. There is a steady rate of change in the area, and the biggest threat to the
site appears to be expanded development of the western-themed campground, in particular their need to maintain and expand their campsites and access roads.122

**Bloody Morning Scout**

The Bloody Morning Scout site is located roughly three miles south of Fort William Henry (and roughly one mile south of Bloody Pond) in a forested area just north of the retail outlet corridor of Lake George Village. A pull-off on the shoulder of Route 9 allows visitors to pull over to read the wayside or park their car; there is room for two or three cars to park simultaneously. Visitors must walk down a rather steep hillside (the embankment of Route 9) to a clearing with the Williams Monument. Another path leads down to the former track bed of the D&H Railroad. Another path leads further down into the ravine where the Warren County Bikepath winds its way south. Although the site is wooded, there is a clearing at the D&H Railroad tracks for overhead power lines. A large portion (71%) of the Bloody Morning Scout site is privately owned; the rest is owned by local government.123

The Bloody Morning Scout site contains the most interpretive waysides of the sites along the Military Road, largely due to the fact that the site is a memorial to Colonel Ephram Williams, the commander of the Massachusetts provincials, who was killed along with Chief Hendricks at the engagement on September 8, 1755 (see Chapter 1).

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123 Ibid.
There are two waysides erected by Williams College that inform visitors about both Colonel Williams and the events of the Bloody Morning Scout engagement.

Unfortunately, the Military Road is not mentioned at all. Additionally, while the signs describe the action and put it in the context of September 8, 1755, they do not orient the visitor to the site or attempt to point out significant features. A wayside next to the bikepath, part of the Eagle Scout project, describes the significance of the train tracks during the tourist era of Lake George but makes no mention at all of the Bloody
Morning Scout action, or that the site is a French and Indian War battlefield. Despite the fact that the Williams College signage does a good job of describing the action of the morning of September 8, 1755, there are no markers for the actual battle site. The site is isolated enough that, should such markers be erected, the visitor could experience some of the dramaturgic element of the site as a wilderness battlefield.

Figure 40: Williams College signage at the Bloody Morning Scout site. This wayside is placed at the pull-off on Route 9, facing northeast (Photo by author).

There are a few original features remaining at the site, such as Rocky Brook, which was partially relocated by the D&H Railway Co. in the 1880’s, and rocky outcrops and boulder-strewn slopes east of the bicycle trail. Several landscape elements distract from interpretation of the event, such as the overhead electric transmission line on the built up berm of the former railroad and the paved bicycle trail, which is the former Lake George Branch of the Delaware & Hudson Railway

\(^{124}\) Ibid.
Company. Additionally, the town permitted filling adjacent to U.S. Route 9 that is covering portions of the Canadian/Indian position.\textsuperscript{125} The site is threatened by more commercial activity; the town of Lake George Village has been permitting fill along U.S. Route 9 to allow road level commercial structures to be erected.\textsuperscript{126}

**Halfway Brook Post**

The site of Halfway Brook Post is located halfway between Fort William Henry and Fort Edward, about seven miles from each fort, on Route 9, on the border of Queensbury and Glens Falls. The Halfway Brook site is bounded by Upper Glen Street (Route 9) on the south, Glenwood Avenue to the east, and the brook to the west. The northern reaches of the site extend to the 12-acre Hovey Pond Park. The site of the post is almost completely obliterated by housing and a service station. The brook still flows above ground, and the site, which was historically a marshy area, has been partially returned to wetlands by a community Wetland Restoration Project.

A blue metal highway marker, visible from the road, marks the site of Halfway Brook Post. Originally, there was a plaque mounted on a boulder close to the Half Way Brook site describing the various uses of the site during the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. The plaque-mounted boulder was moved next to a walking path at Hovey Pond Park, presumably for better viewing, although the sites described on the plaque are no longer in the same vicinity. \textsuperscript{127}

\textsuperscript{125} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{126} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{127} The site of Halfway Brook Post also contained a small bastion called Fort Amherst that saw most of its action in the American Revolution. For details see [http://www.hmdb.org(marker.asp?marker=18477](http://www.hmdb.org(marker.asp?marker=18477).}
Figure 41: Location of Halfway Brook Post. The red dot locates the previous spot of the commemorative plaque and the current blue wayside marker. The yellow dot indicates the current location of the commemorative plaque. Halfway Brook is indicated in blue (Map from Google Maps, created by author).
Figure 42: Halfway Brook Commemorative Plaque, located in Hovey Pond Park, facing southwest (Photo by author).

Figure 43: Wayside marker for Halfway Brook, on Route 9, at the Queensbury/Glens Falls border, facing north (Photo by author).
Visitors have to park at the service station to look at the sign, and there is no orientation as to what the site is or what the visitor should look for (especially since the plaque was moved to the park.)

The site of Halfway Brook is already obliterated, although there may be some archaeological remains in the area. The Hovey Pond Park Wetlands Recovery Project has restored some of the historic appearance to a part of the site, however it is doubtful that George Washington (who visited the site in 1783, see Chapter 2) would recognize any part of the site today. The area of Halfway Brook Post has been so fully developed that there are no dramaturgic elements remaining, but the site remains an invaluable site for understanding the geography of the Military Road.

**Fort Edward**

The site of Fort Edward is located on the eastern bank of the Hudson River, directly across from the tiny Rogers Island, on Route 4, in the Village of Fort Edward. A small neighborhood of houses sits on the fort site, with a small park-like clearing in the middle that offers the best chance for a public site.

There are no remains of Fort Edward extant above ground. A cluster of blue historical markers indicate the site of Fort Edward, and adjacent street names – Old Fort Road and Edward Street - indicate the site’s previous use. One of the blue historic markers is located in the parking lot of The Anvil Restaurant, along the main road (Broadway Street, Route 4). This marker, denoting the northeast corner of the fort, is the first indication of the site for drivers. There are no interpretive waysides or informational signs describing the site’s importance.
There is a small “park” at the end of Fort Road with a boulder-mounted plaque, erected in 1914 by the Jane McCrea chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, which commemorates the spot as the location of Fort Edward.

The site of Fort Edward is perhaps one of the most threatened sites along the Military Road. The only remnants of the fort are archaeological remains, which have not been thoroughly documented. The Hudson River dredging project, required after river pollution from a GE plant in Glens Falls, has exposed original timbers from the fort and likely damaged archaeological remains along the banks of the Hudson.128

The entire site of Fort Edward is privately owned.

128 Chris Carola. “Dig along upper Hudson opens window to old NY fort.” Accessed at http://ourhistoryproject.lefora.com/2009/09/30/fort-edward-found/. This article details information about GE’s contamination of the Hudson, and also the work of Richard and JoAnne Fuller, a self-professed “French and Indian War buff” couple who live in a house on the site of Fort Edward, and engage in amateur archaeology of the site.
Figure 45: Houses now stand on the site of Fort Edward, facing southwest (Photo by author).

Logistically, the site of Fort Edward is difficult to view for the casual visitor. Although there are several blue historical markers that mark the existence of Fort Edward, there is no indication from the road that those signs are there. They are located on private property and on a dead-end residential street that, frankly, does not have a welcoming appearance. The only sign visible from the main road is the one in the parking lot of The Anvil Restaurant. Creating any sort of publicly accessible site would create a hardship on private property owners. The nearby Rogers Island Visitor Center could provide a starting point at Fort Edward similar to Fort William Henry. Rogers Island is easily accessible via bridge from the Village of Fort Edward and contains parking and orientation for visitors.
Figure 46: Fort Edward wayside marker in the parking lot of The Anvil, Village of Fort Edward, facing west (Photo by author).

The Island also has a significant French and Indian War history and narrative. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Village of Fort Edward is creating a public park on the Island to showcase archaeological finds from the Fort Edward site. Using the Rogers Island Visitor Center to interpret the connection between Rogers Island and the Military Road narrative is a logical choice since some of Fort Edward’s structures were located on Rogers Island.

The primary message of this chapter is that sites along the Military Road have minimal visitor services, are difficult to experience with current interpretation, and have no narrative connection. But there is one element that currently does serve to connect these sites along the Military Road.
Figure 47: Rogers Island Visitor Center, located on Rogers Island, directly across the Hudson from the site of Fort Edward. It would provide a convenient southern anchor point for a Military Road Trail (Photo by author).

The Warren County Bikepath, built in 1977-78, is a ten-mile bike path (and early Rails-to-Trails project) that runs from Lake George to downtown Glens Falls, where it connects with the Feeder Canal Trail. The bike path follows the tracks of the old D&H Railroad, which ran from Glens Falls to the shore of Lake George (see Chapter 2). Since the tracks followed the basic path of the plank road, which itself followed the old trace of the Military Road, the bike path provides another way of viewing Military Road sites. The Boy Scout signage program, mentioned earlier in this chapter, installed its waysides along this bike trail. Bikers can follow the route of the Military Road from Fort William Henry down to Fort Edward (via the Feeder Canal

129 Facts about the Warren County Bikeway can be found at: http://poststar.com/article_b37efe58-8772-11df-a25c-001ce4e002e0.html.
Trail. The bike path is a good example of an alternative interpretive element to consider when creating a Military Road Trail.

Figure 48: Map of the Warren County Biketrail (Map from http://warrencountyny.gov/transport/bike.php).
Chapter 5: National Preservation and Interpretation Programs

The Military Road and its associated French and Indian War sites in Lake George, New York, offers the potential for an invaluable visitor experience. The Military Road played an important role in the French and Indian War as an overland route connecting the Hudson River to Lake George. Although the road faded from the landscape, the sites along the road remain as part of a cultural landscape, offering up dramatic elements still visible at some of the sites. Visitors to these sites, however, have a disjointed experience. Sites that were historically connected by narrative and geography are not interpreted together. The Military Road, which could form a narrative backbone for interpreting and preserving these sites, is rarely mentioned in the few historic waysides and panels that mark and commemorate the individual sites. Some sites have visitor infrastructure already in place, while others are nearly impossible to visit. What seems to be missing is a narrative and operational thread to tie these sites together and that enables the visitor to experience the sites as a cohesive whole.

There are several national preservation and interpretive programs that could serve as models for a trail-type program for the Military Road. This chapter briefly discusses several potential models that weave different sites into one narrative and interpretive program: National Heritage Areas (with the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield Historic District serving as an example) National Historic Trails (with the Star Spangled Banner Trail serving as an example), the Forbes Road trail, the Battle Road trail at Minute Man National Historic Park, and the Civil War Trails program.
**National Preservation and Interpretive Programs**

**National Heritage Areas and the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District**

National Heritage Areas (NHA’s) are “places designated by Congress where the natural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources are considered uniquely representative of the American experience.”¹³⁰ The NHA program, created in 1984, currently includes 49 heritage areas encompassing 500 National Historic Landmarks and over 12,800 places on the National Historic Register. NHAs are not national park units; rather, the NPS partners with, provides technical assistance for and distributes matching federal funds from Congress to NHA entities.¹³¹ NHA’s are significant partners in pursuing the NPS stewardship and educational mission, including the identification and protection of nationally significant historic sites and fostering community stewardship of our nation's heritage. Where appropriate, they also strengthen, complement, and support existing units of the NPS. The emphasis of the NHA program is on partnerships with local sites and broad collaborative relationships.

The Military Road area is not a National Heritage Area, and none of the Military Road’s associated sites are part of the National Park Service system. But the Military Road area lies within the boundaries of two NHA’s, the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor. Neither NHA interprets or includes the narrative of the French and Indian War, so the Military Road sites do not necessarily benefit from their geographic inclusion in these

¹³⁰ National Park Service Advisory Board. *Charting a Future for National Heritage Areas.* Indianapolis, Moore Langen, 2006, p. 3.
¹³¹ [http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FAQ/](http://www.nps.gov/history/heritageareas/FAQ/)
NHA’s. Of the two, the better fit for inclusion of a French and Indian War narrative would be the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. This NHA embraces a wide range of themes relating to the history and cultural traditions of the Hudson Valley with sites grouped into categories such as: architecture, corridor of commerce, freedom and dignity, Hudson River School, Landscape and Gardens, Revolutionary War, and Environment.\textsuperscript{132} The Military Road would certainly benefit from inclusion in the itinerary of this NHA, as the narrative could be linked together with other French and Indian War sites in the Hudson River Valley through NHA marketing and promotional channels, increasing the visibility of these historic sites and providing narrative links between them.

For purposes of comparison with the interpretation for the Military Road, we will look at the Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District (SVBNH), one of two NHA’s thematically built around Civil War battlefields. The SVBNH includes twenty battlefield sites and encompasses two military campaigns during the Civil War: Stonewall Jackson’s Campaign of 1862 and Sheridan’s Campaign of 1864. The Valley was itself a “warpath of empire,” providing a natural transportation route between North and South.\textsuperscript{133}

In creating this heritage area, the preservation of battlefields was a challenge because the national park concept was seen as too intrusive and expensive. This District created a “locally driven vehicle for preserving the valley’s historic character, protecting the battlefields, and increasing public awareness.”\textsuperscript{134} Cedar Creek and

\textsuperscript{132} \url{http://www.hudsonrivervalley.com/Home.aspx}
\textsuperscript{133} \url{www.shenandoahatwar.org}.
Belle Grove National Historic Park anchors preservation and interpretive efforts in northern portion of the district. This role, of one park serving as an anchor site for the heritage area, is a role that Fort William Henry could and should play for any similar endeavor in Lake George.

The Shenandoah Valley Battlefields Foundation is the management entity for the historic district; the foundation’s mission of preserving the valley is achieved by “keeping stewardship of the resources in local hands.” The group has undertaken a Valley Pike Trail Project, a $1.9 million effort funded in part by transportation enhancement grants that will connect preserved properties using federal, state, local, and private funds. Ultimately, the project will not only link areas of the battlefield to one another, it will connect key elements of the community to one another: the battlefield, the town, and the national park. It will offer visitors and residents increased recreational opportunities, and by interpreting the area’s Civil War history it will support the region’s tourism economy and educate visitors about the role of the Shenandoah Valley in this important part of American history. A steering committee for the project that includes landowners from throughout the project area, representatives of potential user groups (bicyclists, hikers), local preservation organizations, and the town and the county, has been guiding decision-making about the trail’s location and design. Any Military Road project with similar aims and goals would benefit from local input by a community of stakeholders, so that the Military Road sites would connect with local residents and the community at large. This type of partnership could create a sense of ownership over historic sites and

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135 Ibid, p. 17.
136 www.Shenandoahatwar.org
serve to connect history and preservation to recreation and other needs of the community.

**National Historic Trails and the Star Spangled Banner Trail**

The National Trail System (NTS) of the National Park Service, made up of thirty National Historic Trails (NHT’s), is the network of scenic, historic, and recreation trails created by the National Trails System Act of 1968.\(^{137}\) There are three types of NHT’s: National Scenic Trails, National Historic Trails, and National Recreation Trails.

National Scenic Trails are 100 miles or longer, continuous, primarily non-motorized routes of outstanding recreation opportunity and are established by an Act of Congress. National Historic Trails commemorate historic (and prehistoric) routes of travel that are of significance to the entire Nation and are also established by an Act of Congress. National Recreation Trails, also authorized in the National Trails System Act, are existing regional and local trails recognized by either the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior upon application.\(^{138}\) These trails provide for outdoor recreation needs, promote the enjoyment, appreciation, and preservation of open-air, outdoor areas and historic resources, and encourage public access and citizen involvement. They are designated to protect the remains of significant overland or water routes that reflect the history of the nation. Most of them are highway routes and are not hiking trails, although they provide opportunities for hiking and other outdoor activities along their routes.\(^{139}\)

The newest addition to the NHT system, the Star Spangled Banner National

\(^{137}\) [www.nps.gov/nts](http://www.nps.gov/nts)

\(^{138}\) [www.nps.gov.nts_faq.html](http://www.nps.gov.nts_faq.html)

\(^{139}\) [www.nps.gov/nts](http://www.nps.gov/nts)
Historic Trail, offers some examples of how a trail can use alternative interpretive methods, united by a focused narrative, to connect various historic sites and present a clear interpretive message to visitors.

The SSBNHT “provides visitors the means to experience sites, landscapes, and stories related to the War of 1812, following more than 300 miles of land and water routes in Virginia, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.” The interpretive thread of the Trail is that the sites, which comprised the Chesapeake campaign of the War of 1812, inspired the lyrics that would become the national anthem and solidified the U.S. flag as a beloved national symbol.

The SSBNHT differs from an NHA in that there is one thematic element in a NHT, rather than the wide variety of themes found in an NHA. The Trail’s Interpretive Plan provides guidance for the NPS and Trail partners and envisions a unified approach for developing and sustaining meaningful, high-quality interpretive services and visitor opportunities along the Trail. The plan encourages consistent messaging and a cohesive approach to programming at Trail sites and encourages intellectual and emotional connections between local, national and international visitors and the Trail’s unique sites and associated history. The plan is a result of extensive public input from organizations, governments and other stakeholders who are deeply committed to preserving and promoting the SSBNHT’s resources and stories, envisioning a collaboration of public and private partners working to interpret the Trail’s cherished assets and advocate for their protection. Any cohesive,

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141 Ibid, p. 3.
interpretive program for Military Road sites, or indeed a broader French and Indian War trail program, must include a similar interpretive plan and include an anchor attraction or site. The sites currently are all under different ownership and have varying levels of interpretive planning and preservation interventions. An interpretive plan would help these sites unite under one narrative program and build collaboration between various stakeholders with different agendas.

Additionally, the SSBT utilizes non-traditional interpretive methods for site interpretation, including material transmitted to cell phones, iPods and iPads. The Trail utilizes a geocaching program called Geotrail that allows participants to earn “geocoins” when visiting sites. These interpretive methods give the visitors many different ways to experience the history and also make the sites more engaging and accessible. Other more traditional interpretive methods include experiencing live, historic reenactments of battles, and sailing the Bay on large sailboats or paddling canoes. This use of modern technology would be beneficial on a Military Road Trail and allow for multiple storytelling platforms and opportunities.

**Battle Road at Minute Man National Historic Park**

Minute Man National Historic Park, a unit of the National Park Service, encompasses and interprets the Battles of Lexington and Concord, the opening engagements of the American Revolution, including the battle sites on Lexington Green and at the North Bridge in Concord and structures and landscape between

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142 Geocaching is an outdoor sporting activity in which the participants use a Global Positioning System (GPS) receiver or mobile device and other navigational techniques to hide and seek containers, called "geocaches" or "caches", anywhere in the world. (Source: Wikipedia).
Lexington and Concord. This landscape was itself part of the battle, as colonial militia battled with trained British regulars.\(^{143}\)

The Battle Road section of the park, a roughly five mile stretch of road and landscape between western Lexington and Merriam’s Corner, includes many eighteenth-century structures, and was the scene of the later stages of fighting, as British regulars made their way back from Concord and Lexington. The Battle Road winds its way through an “immortal New England landscape” that includes farm fields, wetlands, and forests.\(^{144}\) The road recently underwent a $3.9 million renovation that seamlessly blends the trail and its wayside exhibits into the surroundings. The success of the design is not only the minimal impact on the land but the “impression of timelessness” it conveys.\(^{145}\)

The landscape plays a dramaturgic role, creating a stage on which visitors can begin to experience an eighteenth-century landscape and contemplate the events of April 19, 1775. Indeed, the dramaturgy of the site may be the most fully realized of these trail examples, due to the effort of the designers to “blur the notion of boundaries – physical, intellectual, and emotional.”\(^{146}\) They have attempted to create the ultimate visitor experience; allow the visitor to be a player on the stage of the landscape, blur the line of preservation so that the visitor does not sense that he is in a battlefield park, but part of a living cultural landscape. As such, the visitor can experience the sights, smells, and sounds of the site. The Warren County Bikeway

\(^{143}\) www.nps.gov/mima
\(^{145}\) Ibid, p. 35.
\(^{146}\) Ibid, p. 35.
already provides a link between the Military Road sites and could allow for the creation of a similar visitor experience.

![Battle Road, Minute Man National Historic Park](image)

Figure 49: Battle Road, Minute Man National Historic Park (Photo from www.nps.gov).

**Forbes Trail**

In 1758, British General John Forbes and his army cut a trail from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, at the Fork of the Ohio, in an effort to take Fort Duquesne from the French. Similar to the Military Road, Forbes Road was a logistical spine for the British army, studded with blockhouses and forts along the way. The Forbes Trail program utilizes the modern road network that closely approximates the historic Forbes Road – the Pennsylvania Turnpike and U.S. Route 30 – and includes sections of the original road to create a tourist experience. Unlike the Military Road, the route

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of Forbes Trail has been documented and is still traceable; portions of the original roadbed still exist in parts of Pennsylvania.\(^{148}\)

The intent of the Forbes Trail program, created under the auspices of the French and Indian War 250\(^{th}\) Commemoration celebration, is to connect historic sites, landscapes, and other historic attractions that have both specific and marginal ties to the French and Indian War in a single trail program.\(^{149}\) This is accomplished by linking French and Indian War history to the American Revolution under a united “Colonial America” narrative. By linking the legacies of the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, the program allows visitors to experience a broad range of the early American experience in one geographical area.

While the Forbes Trail program spawned a book and a television program, it is essentially a marketing program for historic sites in Pennsylvania. The Forbes Trail program has no presence on the road, such as signage or waysides. But the program does a great job of condensing different periods of history into one program with a clearly defined narrative, one in which French and Indian War narrative takes a prominent role.

**Civil War Trails**

Civil War Trails (CWT) is a non-profit program that installs wayside markers at Civil War sites; currently they have more than 2,000 panels erected at 1,300 sites across six states and the District of Columbia. The mission of CWT is to promote visitation to Civil War sites. Their focus is on the visitor to the sites, and therefore they make the waysides interpretive in nature, not commemorative. They use

\(^{148}\) Ibid, p. 10.
\(^{149}\) Ibid, p. 10.
“resource-based” interpretation and the surrounding landscape to tell as much of the story as possible.¹⁵⁰

Wayside markers, all with consistent graphics and content, tie together interpretive themes and campaigns whenever possible. Markers with the distinctive Civil War Trails logo direct visitors from major roads to the waysides. Additionally, the program has a website with links to all the state programs and the waysides in that state.¹⁵¹ The Civil War Trails does not buy property; it functions as a rather efficient marketing machine for Civil War sites.

The program has a small staff consisting of an executive director, regional representatives, and representatives from state travel offices. Civil War Trails relies on the localities to provide the material on the waysides. They must “want” to bring the sites into the program. The site must provide the first draft of texts, along with images etc. from local archives. Therefore, the localities feel a sense of ownership in the program. Mitch Bowman, executive director of the Civil War Trails Program, considers the program a grassroots, local-based program. Localities, historical attractions, and other local groups provide the funding for the waysides. Program funding sources including annual membership/maintenance fees cover the cost of design, fabrication, and installation of the markers.¹⁵² The focus of Civil War Trails waysides, according to Mr. Bowman, is on interpretation, “but time and again I have seen interpretation lead to Appreciation, which leads to Education, which leads to Preservation.”¹⁵³

¹⁵⁰ Author interview with Mitch Bowman, 11/16/2011.  
¹⁵¹ Ibid.  
¹⁵² Ibid.  
¹⁵³ Ibid.
This could be a direct take-away lesson for the Military Road sites. Many of the sites along the Military Road suffer from a lack of interpretation. A consistent and engaging wayside program would allow for an easier appreciation of the sites on the Military Road by visitors to Lake George. Once visitors are educated about the importance of these sites to the local context, and the broader narrative of the French and Indian War in North America, their appreciation can be directed towards preservation efforts. Consideration should also be made for any negative effects that increased tourism to these sites would bring to the area. Proper planning could help alleviate concerns about infrastructure, but increased traffic to individual sites needs to be monitored by the owners of the sites, or by a managing foundation.

Table 4 presents the benefits and drawbacks of these various programs as they would apply to a Military Road Trail in Lake George.
### Table 4: Benefits and Detriments of National Preservation and Interpretation Models for a Military Road Trail program in Lake George, New York.

| Program                                | Benefits                                                                 | Drawbacks                                                                 |
|----------------------------------------|==========================================================================|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Shenandoah Valley Battlefields National Historic District | • Include multiple sites under single story narrative.  
• Encompasses multiple stakeholders in decision-making process.  
• Foundation manages operations of NHA.  
• Allows for active pursuit of preserving sites in the program area. | • Model calls for multiple visitor centers due to wide geographic area is NHA.  
• No NPS units in Lake George to support a NHA.  
• This model would not allow for inclusion of historic sites not under narrative of French and Indian War. |
| Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail | • Includes multiple sites of varying sizes under single story narrative.  
• NHT operates under an Interpretive Plan.  
• Strong Anchor Site.  
• NHT utilizes modern interpretive technology.  
• NHT program allows for inclusion of Lake George recreational activities.  
• Allows for active pursuit of preservation of sites in the program area. | • Relatively small size of Military Road area (roughly fourteen miles) precludes large-scale interpretation unless part of a larger thematic narrative.  
• No NPS units in Military Road area to support a NHT. |
| Forbes Road Trail                      | • Includes multiple sites from various historical eras under a single story narrative. French and Indian War narrative not subjugated.  
• Strong marketing platform. | • Wayside signage (not a part of this program) would be necessary to draw visitors and provide site orientation in Lake George.  
• Does not allow for active pursuit of preservation of sites in the program area. |
| Battle Road                            | • Integrated landscape and interpretive elements create unique visitor experience within the NPS unit.  
• Allows for visitor to experience historic landscape. | • Military Road not a continuous park or under one ownership; no physical connection between sites. Warren County Bikeway currently the only connective element.  
• Historic landscape evident in only few spots along the Military Road path. |
Civil War Trails

- Waysides allow visitor orientation to site without necessity of visitor center.
- Highway signage draws visitors to sites.
- Waysides contain consistent messaging, content, and design.
- Allows for inclusion of sites under private or public ownership.
- Program emphasizes local ownership and participation.
- Marketing platform includes website and print publications.

- Does not provide any logistical tourism support.
- Does not allow for stakeholder input over Military Road interpretation.
- Does not actively advocate for preservation of sites on a local level.

Creating a Trail Framework

There are several lessons from these national interpretive and preservation-based programs that, taken together, could form the framework for a similar program that would interpret and preserve French and Indian War sites along the Military Road.

1. Encompass the natural, cultural, and ethnic heritage of the area that forms the Military Road to create a true cultural landscape.

2. Employ a non-profit foundation comprised of multiple stakeholders to manage logistics and operations of the historic area.

3. Recognize that there are multitude stakeholders and give them a place at the table and a voice in the narrative.

4. Emphasize local ownership of sites and local preservation tactics that would benefit the local community, as well as the French and Indian War community.
5. Find ways to “blur the boundaries” of the sites with the landscape and the community to create a seamless visitor experience.

6. Have an anchor site or sites for interpretation and visitor logistics.

7. Create an Interpretive Plan for a clear, consistent, and unified narrative and vision for the historic area.

8. Use wayside signage and modern technology to interpret the sites and engage the visitor.

9. Encourage the visitor to visit other historic and cultural sites in the region that share the historic area’s narrative. This narrative scope can be as broad or as narrow as needed.
Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

The peaceful tranquility of Lake George, New York, was the scene of violence and bloodshed during the years of the French and Indian War, 1754-1761. Three mighty nations, the French, English, and Iroquois Confederacy, battled each other for supremacy of the North American continent. Both the English and the French established colonies in the New World, looking for new trading opportunities and lands for settlement. These aims ultimately infringed on the third combatant in the conflict, the Iroquois Confederacy, who sought ways to balance their relationships with European nations while maintaining their own balance of power on the North American continent. The ambitions of all three empires would lead to a seven-year war on the North American frontier, started in a small glen in western Pennsylvania by an untrained colonel in the Virginia militia named George Washington. The war would span the globe and forever change the map of North America and the destiny of all three empires.

While the French and Indian War was fought in many exotic locations, upstate New York saw a great deal of fighting. The strategic water route of Lake Champlain, Lake George, and the Hudson River proved to be of great importance to all three armies. But these water routes, which provided invasion routes to both France’s Canadian empire and Great Britain’s New England colonies, was useless without an overland route to connect the river and the lake. The Military Road, a fourteen-mile road constructed in 1755 by British General William Johnson, was the vital link between the Hudson River and Lake George. Fortifications were built at each end of this route, Fort Edward on the Hudson River and Fort William Henry on Lake
George, and various blockhouses and fortifications were constructed along the route to provide safe shelter for British convoys traveling between the two forts. The Military Road figured prominently in two fierce campaigns of the French and Indian War. The Battle of Lake George, fought on September 8, 1755, consisted of three separate engagements that were all fought at sites along the road. The Military Road was also the scene of tragedy during the Siege of Fort William Henry in 1757, a drama immortalized in James Fennimore Cooper’s novel *Last of the Mohicans*, and in the many film versions of the story.

After peace came to the North American frontier in 1763, and later after the turmoil of the American Revolution again brought war to the Lake George region, the Military Road and its sites passed from military necessity to tourist attraction. Never more than a cleared path through the woods and swamps of upstate New York and requiring constant maintenance, the Military Road faded from the landscape; the rutted dirt path gave way in places to plank roads for stagecoaches, then tracks of iron for trains, and finally to ribbons of asphalt for the automobile.

During all these transitions, the battlefields and fortifications of the French and Indian War remained part of the landscape, offering a glimpse back in time. Some sites were more heavily visited than others. While monuments and commemorative markers were erected, the sites never attained the same reverence reserved for battlefields from the Civil War or even from the American Revolution. The land was parceled out and sold as the region became more settled and the land more and more valuable. Over the years, forts were demolished to make way for hotels and thruway exits, and markers were moved around when they stood in the
way of progress. By the end of the twentieth century, many sites still remained on the landscape, but retained little connection to the colonial past. The remaining sites also help mark the route of the wilderness road that defined a “warpath of empire” during the French and Indian War.

The goal of this project has been to explore how best to preserve and interpret historic sites along the Military Road. Currently, they are a disjointed collection of resources without a unifying narrative. What does Fort William Henry have to do with Bloody Pond? With the Bloody Morning Scout? And why was Fort Edward such an important site, and what role did it play in the creation of the Halfway Brook Post? The broader story of the Military Road can tie all of these sites together once again in a common narrative. In fact, the very existence of the sites is due to the Military Road, a spine for the army between two strategically important forts. A trail program, linking the sites along the Military Road, would allow visitors to experience the sights, sensations, and other dramatic elements of the French and Indian War in Lake George, New York.

The first section of this chapter summarizes the preservation and interpretation issues of five selected sites along the Military Road, particularly those that may prevent successful implementation of new programming. The second section will provide recommendations for a French and Indian War trail program based on an analysis of several prominent national preservation programs.

Common Issues of Preservation and Interpretation

The sites along the Military Road vary widely in terms of their preservation and interpretive status, but they do share some common issues.
1. There is no unifying interpretive thread among the sites that allows the visitor to follow the story of the French and Indian War in Lake George, New York.

2. Visitor access to these sites is minimal. Parking issues seem to be common, as these sites were not developed with visitors in mind. The exception is Fort William Henry, which has a developed tourist infrastructure and the Bloody Morning Scout site, which has a pull-off space on the shoulder of the road.

3. Signage is a major issue at these sites. Although each site described in this paper has some kind of signage, there is no consistency to the information presented on the signs or markers. Some markers attempt to relay historical information, while some markers merely denote the presence of a historic feature. Additionally, highway signage is lacking; no signs direct the visitor to any of the historic sites along the Military Road except Fort William Henry.

4. There is a disconnect between stakeholders. Currently, there is no cooperation between site owners to accurately and efficiently promote, preserve, and interpret French and Indian War sites along the Military Road.

5. All of the sites suffer from an indifference to preservation. Lake George Village has developed into a tourist town where businesses vie for tourism dollars during the summer season. The town has no ordinances or local protections for historic sites. There is no integration between the Military Road sites and the everyday lives of residents and business owners in the area. The Village of Fort Edward has recently taken some steps to incorporate the narrative of the French and Indian War by purchasing Rogers Island for a park
to showcase artifacts and other archaeological findings on the island and at the
Fort Edward site just across the Hudson.154

This last point raises the question of the value of these French and Indian War
sites to the different stakeholders? What are the tangible and intangible benefits of
preserving French and Indian War sites?

Sites are interpreted and preserved in response to a range of values. Preservation
generally signals that these are important sites, but often without full
consideration of the full range of values. Randall Mason’s work on values-centered
preservation advocates for a regime of planning and site management described as
“the coordinated and structured operation of a heritage site with the primary purpose
of protecting the significance of the place as defined by designation criteria,
government authorities or other owners, experts of various stripes, and other citizens
with legitimate interests in the place.”155 Essentially, the sites along the Military Road
are infused with multiple values by multiple stakeholders. Values-centered
preservation is a critical tool when addressing both the intangible and tangible values
of historic sites.

How can preservation begin to address the importance of historic sites to a
community and the value of history? David Lowenthal, in his book The Past is a
Foreign Country, asserts that our relationship to the past is not a given, that it is
shaped by social forces, politics, and the like, and constructed out of remnants,
stories, and fragments. Historic preservation becomes the tool for that reconstruction.

154 Jamie Munks. “Plan calls for Fort Edward to buy Rogers Island acreage, artifacts for
155 Randall Mason. “Theoretical and Practical Arguments for Values-Centered Preservation.”
By including value-centered preservation into this mix, it becomes evident that when

telling the story of French and Indian War sites along the Military Road, we must

construct that narrative with the input and consideration of multiple stakeholders to

insure a comprehensive and diverse story of these sites. While it may be easier to

acknowledge the contribution of tangible values of preservation (generally in
economic terms) we cannot ignore that the intangible values and their benefit to

society. Table 5 lists intangible traits of history, according to Lowenthal, and their

benefit to society.

Table 5: Intangible traits of history beneficial to society.¹⁵⁶

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intangible Traits of History</th>
<th>Benefit to Society</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Antiquity</td>
<td>Allows us to root our credentials in the past so we can trace our ancestry, institutions, culture, and ideals to validate claims to power, prestige, and property.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Embraces the conjunction of the whole or parts of the past with the present and implies a living past bound up with the present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termination</td>
<td>Allows that the past is appreciated as a completed event, creating a sense of permanence that is lacking in the ingoing present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequence</td>
<td>The past is a length of time whose length lets us order and segment the past and hence explain it, clarify it, place it in context, and form into the lineaments of a true landscape.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Just as important, and probably the most important to landowners in Lake George, is that historic sites create economic value. Preservation can reap economic benefits for local communities in several ways.

1. Battlefield communities can attract potential employees by positioning the area as a good family-friendly job market based on heritage tourism. Tourists help maintain a healthy and steady job market.

2. Non-resident taxes provide needed dollars to defray the costs of state and local services. Community leaders should consider how additional investment in the marketing of battlefields as tourist attractions could increase tax revenues and offset residential service costs.

3. A battlefield community that links its historic sites to other battlefields as part of a state or regional driving tour is likely to attract more visitors than one that does not.

4. Community leaders should consider recruiting retail shops and hospitality services to further attract lucrative heritage tourists to their market. Such development should be sensitive to preserving the battlefield resource – the source of patrons for these establishments.

5. To increase visitation communities can successfully target an affluent and active demographic group by partnering with other battlefield communities. Joint marketing programs will raise awareness and visitation for all sites involved.

Considering that the main business in the Lake George area is tourism, area stakeholders can reap the benefits from having a large number of historic sites located so closely together and united by a narrative theme.

**Proposed Military Road Trail Program**

Based on the recommendation of this paper, the French and Indian War sites along the Military Road should be organized into a trail program that would unify the sites under a single and consistent narrative and interpretive plan with the goal of

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increasing visitor appreciation and visitorship. As demonstrated in the previous section of this chapter, the community, which includes landowners and stakeholders, could benefit from the tangible and intangible benefits of historic preservation.

A trail program seems to be the best interpretive model for preservation of these sites. Trail programs, similar to the ones described in Chapter 5, allow for interpretation of multiple sites under a single-story narrative so that the visitor can experience a broader context; the individual sites have compelling stories of their own, but contribute to a larger story. A trail program also allows for a physical progression through a particular landscape, rather than a stationary experience. The French and Indian War sites in Lake George are spatially aligned to benefit from a trail program; guests can begin their journey at one of two anchor sites and follow a narrative thread through the landscape, visiting the actual sites along the way. Trail programs also allow for the inclusion of sites that may not be part of the trail’s narrative, but add to the visitor’s experience. As demonstrated earlier in this chapter, historic sites can benefit economically from adjacent historic sites.

This trail program should utilize the best elements of the national programs discussed in Chapter 5 to create a unique visitor experience and preservation model for French and Indian War sites in Lake George, New York. Based on its success, this program could widen its focus to include French and Indian War sites in other regions of New York, then other states with French and Indian War sites, then possibly even internationally, to include Canadian sites.
The following discussion will encompass the nine recommended elements suggested at the end of Chapter 4. For purposes of consistency, the proposed program will be referred to in the rest of this chapter as the Military Road Trail (MRT.)

1. The MRT should include the natural and cultural heritage elements of the cultural landscape. These elements could include the water culture of Lake George, the wilderness landscape, the military tactics of the British and French, the nature of wilderness warfare, the nature of fortifications, the lives of the Native Americans in the area and the supremacy of the Iroquois Confederacy, the lives of British and French settlers to the area, and the ecological and environmental system of the Adirondack Forest Preserve.

2. The MRT should encourage visitors to visit other historic and cultural sites in the region that share the historic area’s narrative, such as Fort Stanwix and Fort Ticonderoga. This can be accomplished through signage and effective marketing channels such as brochures and web content. As demonstrated in the economic study done by the Civil War Trust, raising awareness of other historic sites creates increased visitorship for all.\textsuperscript{158} This cross-marketing would increase awareness of the Military Road narrative to other segments of the French and Indian War community stakeholders and beyond.

3. The MRT should be managed by a non-profit foundation comprised of multiple stakeholders; this organization would coordinate logistics and operations for the historic area. The MRT Foundation, following the model of the Shenandoah Valley Battlefield National Historic District, would not

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid.
own any land but would work with local owners to manage the sites under a consistent vision, mission, and interpretive plan. The Foundation’s Board should include local landowners, historic society presidents, business owners, Native Americans, and any other representatives of stakeholders in French and Indian War sites in Lake George and the wider community of upstate New York.

4. Recognize that there are multitude stakeholders and give them a place at the table and a voice in the narrative. That narrative needs to explore the diversity of the story of the French and Indian War to include all three major players – the French, the English, and the Iroquois Confederacy. Reviewing modern literature and scholarship, perhaps sponsoring symposiums and conferences, would bring this narrative story up to date and allow for a discussion on constructing a more diverse and inclusive French and Indian War narrative.

5. The MRT should emphasize local ownership of sites and local preservation tactics that would benefit all stakeholders. Different stakeholders own all the sites that would be included in the MRT, and they hold a range of different visions for the best use of the site. The MRT should not attempt to purchase sites except in rare instances where the site could be lost forever (as in the case of the Battle of Lake George site, which could have benefitted from such a purchase.) It is also critical that the local preservation ordinances need to be reviewed and strengthened. Preservation works best on the local level. Considering the pro-business, anti-preservation stance of
the Lake George government, this recommendation should be viewed as essential.

6. The MRT should find ways to “blur the boundaries” between the sites and the landscape and the community to create a seamless visitor experience. The Battle Road at Minute Man National Historic Park incorporates waysides, historic structures, and historic landscapes into one seamless visitor experience, allowing the dramatic elements of the site to envelop the visitor. The MRT could blend interpretive elements with historic landscape elements to similarly allow visitors to experience the eighteenth-century Military Road landscape.

7. The MRT should have an anchor site for interpretation and visitor logistics. Each site cannot provide the full visitor orientation role or provide all historic context. One anchor site should serve this purpose, much like Fort McHenry does for the Star Spangled Banner National Historic Trail. The MRT has two possible anchor sites – Fort William Henry and Fort Edward. Fort William Henry already has the visitor infrastructure needed (but not the narrative context) to be an anchor site for the MRT. Although the site of Fort Edward cannot support such a role, the adjoining Rogers Island Visitor Center could be an anchor site.

8. The MRT should include an Interpretive Plan with a clear, consistent, and unified narrative and vision for the historic area. Primary interpretive themes embody the most important concepts or ideas communicated to the public about a site and provide a framework for making the events, people,
and places relevant to visitors and help Trail partners establish a rich context for stories. The SSBNHT developed four trail themes, and Fort Necessity National Battlefield (the only FIW site in the National Park Service) established five interpretive themes. The MRT should base these themes on a narrative constructed with the input of stakeholders, based on a values-centered preservation model (as presented earlier in this chapter.)

9. The MRT should use wayside signage and modern technology to interpret the sites and engage the visitor. Waysides are the traditional method of interpreting a historic site. They can impart information that ranges from site specific to contextual. Especially for sites without visitor orientation facilities, waysides can be of tremendous value to the visitor. The Civil War Trails program is a successful example of how waysides can bring interpretive value to a historic site. The MRT should utilize a similar wayside panel program that also includes branded signage from major roadways directing visitors to those sites. But traditional waysides are not the only interpretive method that could be used by the MRT. Podcasts and web-based content could allow for an almost endless variety of stories and information to be passed on to visitors to these sites.

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this paper was to explore how a Military Road Trail program could help weave together French and Indian War sites in Lake George, New York, under one interpretive and preservation program. Such a program would raise

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awareness of these sites, which vary in their preservation and interpretive status. As noted by Mitch Bowman, interpretation very often leads to appreciation, which leads to education, which leads to preservation.\textsuperscript{160} A good interpretive plan creates and enhances the value of sites such as those along the Military Road to a wide variety of stakeholders and to the local community.

While the creation of a Military Road Trail would enhance the current interpretive tools used in Lake George and raise awareness of French and Indian War sites, the program is really just a first step. Unless the community changes the preservation and development culture of the area, these sites, plus dozens of others that have not been so well identified, may be lost forever.

A lesson on the importance of proper community planning for historic preservation can best be illustrated by the example of the Wilderness Wal-Mart. The Wilderness Battlefield, located in Orange County, Virginia, was the site of a bloody and pivotal Civil War battle in 1864. In recent years, Orange County made headlines due to a controversial proposal to build a Wal-Mart superstore on part of the Wilderness Battlefield on the eastern edge of the county. After an outcry from the preservation and Civil War community (and multiple lawsuits), Wal-Mart decided to build in a more appropriate spot. Believing that advance planning and better communication would prevent future conflict, the wilderness Battlefield Coalition began work on a study investigating opportunities for “broadly beneficial land use strategies” in the Wilderness Battlefield gateway region.\textsuperscript{161} The Wilderness Battlefield Coalition. \textit{Wilderness Battlefield Gateway Study: Concepts for Preservations and Economic Development, Orange County, Virginia}. Self-published, 2012, p. I-1. Accessed at www.civilwar.org.

\textsuperscript{160} Author interview with Mitch Bowman, 11/16/2011.
Battlefield Coalition released the findings of their year-long “Wilderness Gateway Study” in April 2012. The project team assessed the land within the project area identifying opportunities and constraints related to development and preservation. The team conducted thorough analysis including: National Park boundaries, American Battlefield Protection Program boundaries, topography, hydrology, battlefield view shed and visibility from corridors, natural features, proximity to utilities, access and infrastructure. They concluded with four summary points of the findings of land analysis and planning:

1. Natural and cultural features present are valuable resources that may be leveraged to establish “destination appeal” with proper planning, connectivity, and programming.

2. Future conservation of land should be prioritized by its significance and proximity to natural and cultural features, including but not limited to the Rapidan River, Germanna and Wilderness Battlefield.

3. Planned infrastructure capacity for water and wastewater is critical to planning for growth.

4. Unless future growth is well-planned, sprawling development patterns along Route 3 will increase infrastructure costs, threaten naturally and culturally valuable resources, and forego the opportunity to strengthen the community address of eastern Orange County.\(^{162}\)

It could easily be argued that the Lake George community could benefit from such a study, as development is encroaching on French and Indian War sites in the area. As evident from the building of the Lake George Forum ice skating rink on the

\(^{162}\) Ibid, pg. I-3.
site of the Battle of Lake George site, historic preservation does not play a valued role in development considerations in the area.

The Wilderness report was intended as a starting point, a discussion-maker, between planning professionals in the county and the stakeholders in the area, and calls for a round-table to be established to help implement and advance the findings of the study. The ultimate aim is for Orange County to become a better steward for their historic and cultural resources when it comes to development and planning. According to the Coalition Study project manager, “preservation and development need not be mutually exclusive. Nor is there ever a single ideal solution for achieving this balance.”

The next step for the Lake George community (which includes Warren and Washington Counties) should be to implement a similar gateway study in order to better understand how planning and development can work together with historic preservation to benefit the community as a whole. Jim White, an Orange County supervisor, explained that “the gateway study has taken steps to reflect the priorities of local stakeholders, and shows how a range of services and industries can co-exist to create a vibrant growth area that is compatible with its surroundings. It is encouraging to see the gateway study’s vision for economic vitality and the study’s analysis of alternative ways to enhance a destination for visitors and residents.”

Perhaps under an interpretive and preservation program such as the Military Road Trail program, and aided by an economic and development gateway study, the

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164 www.civilwar.org.
Military Road and its associated French and Indian War sites can once again be a valued part of the landscape in Lake George, New York.

Figure 51: One of only two historic markers commemorating the Military Road. This one is along Route 9, on the grounds of a Comfort Inn and Suites (Photo by author).

Figure 52: The second Military Road sign is located in the Village of Fort Edward (Photo by author).
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