

## **Row down Lake George – General Information – June 25 to June 27, 2008**

Also known as ‘The Big Row, 2008’

Last update of this document, May 11, 2008.

by David Manthey, Bateaux *DeSager* and *Bobbie G*, Captain

### **General Information**

#### **Overview**

We will be rowing and sailing one or two bateaux, plus possibly additional boats, from the southern end of Lake George to the northern end of Lake George starting on Wednesday, June 25 and arriving Friday, June 27. Most of us will participate in the 250th anniversary reenactment at Fort Ticonderoga from June 27 to June 29th. The trip is roughly 34 miles long. It will be done in replica 18th century bateaux (flat-bottomed cargo boats) owned by the Mabee Farm Historic Site and crewed by the Revolutionary War reenactors from the Second Albany County Militia and other groups. The crew will stay in 18th-century clothing and use period equipment and gear throughout the entire trip.

#### **Schedule**

General notes:

Arrival and transit times are very difficult to predict, as our speed is very much the subject of tide, current, wind, and crew. If there is a consistent north wind, our times will be slow. In practice, the average rowing speed we can expect is around 2 to 2.5 mph.

At present, we expect to be taking the *DeSager* from the Mabee Farm. We may also or alternately take the *Bobbie G* as the crew becomes more certain.

Preliminaries, Tuesday, June 24: Moving the boats to Lake George

I recommend that anyone who needs to travel a significant distance come ahead of time. There is camping at the Lake George Battlefield campsite.

First day, Wednesday, June 25: Lake George Village to Commission Island

Unfortunately, the boat launch at the Lake George beach is closed in June. Unless I can get special permission to use it, we will be launching from Dunham’s Bay Marina. They let you launch for a fee, and we permit us to leave vehicles and trailers at their facility. We will try to launch so as to be underway by 10 a.m.

We will roughly follow the eastern shore into the narrows, stopping and camping at Gravely Island. I have reserved both campsites on Gravely Island.

The total distance for today is around 10 miles (13 miles if we can start on Lake George Beach). The island has docks and outhouses.

Second day, Thursday, June 26: Gravely Island to Temple Knoll Island

We will try to depart by 8 a.m. The distance for the day is about 16 miles.

We will roughly follow the western shore of the lake, stopping and camping at Temple Knoll campground. I have reserved the two northern sites at the campground.

Third day, Friday, June 27: Temple Knoll Island to the north end of the lake

We will try to depart by 9:30 a.m. We will row all the way to the north end of the lake, then return to the state boat launch near the end. Total distance will be around 6 miles.

I expect most of us will then pack up the boats and relocate to Fort Ticonderoga.

A note about the weather: We will be proceeding with the trip unless the weather is actually dangerous. Remember, there is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.

### **About the Bateau**

The bateau *DeSager* is a replica of a 1792 bateau, similar to that used by Philip Schuyler for the survey of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers that was done in that year. The design is similar to a scaled drawing of a bateau recorded by the British admiralty sometime between 1750 and the late 1770s. The boat is 23' long, 5' of beam, and is capable of hauling a ton of cargo along with a crew of 5 men. The boat is the size of an original Albany Boat, as would have been frequently used on the upper Hudson River or used for small, express cargoes on the Mohawk River in the late 18th century.

The bateau is a flat-bottomed vessel, allowing it to have a very shallow draft. With a full crew, it only draws five or six inches of water. With a one-ton load, crew, and a month of supplies, it would draw twelve or thirteen inches of water. This shallow draft made the bateau an excellent river craft prior to the navigational improvements that were made on both Hudson and Mohawk Rivers.

The principal motive power of the bateau is oars. It is generally crewed by a steersman and from two to four rowers, though we have occasionally had as many as six rowers, and have occasionally maneuvered the boat by a single crew member. When there is a following or side wind, the bateau can be sailed to good effect. With a head wind, the bateau can make some progress, but rivers and narrow lakes are not generally conducive to tacking upwind. Historically, the bateau would have also been poled when in the shallows. As the lower Hudson River is quite deep, poling is not a useful means of propulsion to us on this trip.

The bateau *Bobbie G* is very similar to the bateau *DeSager*, except that it is 5' 8" of beam (somewhat wider) and a bit deeper.

Both the bateau *DeSager* and the bateau *Bobbie G* are owned by the Mabee Farm Historic Site, which is a property of the Schenectady County Historical Society.

The boat is crewed by volunteers, mostly from the 2nd Albany County Militia / Schuyler's Company of New York Provincials, which is a group dedicated to historical reenacting in the Revolutionary and French and Indian wars.

The bateau *DeSager* was built in 2002-2003 by the Capital District Maritime Center in Alplaus along the Mohawk River, which is a BOCES school for grades 6 to 9. It was constructed under the direction of shipwright Greg Patterson. The bateau *Bobbie G* was built in 2003-2004, also by the Capital District Maritime Academy.

All of the rigging, the rope fenders, and the sail were constructed by David Manthey, who is the captain of the bateaux. Various iron work, pennants, and other items were made by a wide

range of volunteers.

The *DeSager* has been in use for the last five years. Its longest voyage so far was a trip from Rotterdam Junction to Kingston. This was a 92 mile, 4 day trip down the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. The bateau has also made numerous voyages from its home dock down the Mohawk River to Schenectady, and also been as far afield as Vergennes, Vermont on Lake Champlain, and Oswego, New York on Lake Ontario.

## **Information on the Reenactment**

Our trip is not a reenactment of a specific event. Rather, we know that historically, bateaux plies Lake George with both commercial and military traffic. In June of 1758, hundreds of bateaux with British regular and New York provincial troops were sent north up the lake to besiege Fort Ticonderoga. As such, I ask that vessels that have a red ensign please fly it on their jackstaves.

## **Additional Information**

There are several auxiliary documents.

Please see <http://www.orbitals.com/pic/row08/index.html> for the latest information.

There is a separate write-up for crew-specific information.

The bateaux *DeSager* and *Bobbie G* are largely crewed by members of the Second Albany County Militia. See their website at <http://www.secondalbany.org>. You may also want to look at various web pages we have on the bateau:

[http://www.secondalbany.org/2nd\\_albany\\_main\\_albany\\_bateau.html](http://www.secondalbany.org/2nd_albany_main_albany_bateau.html) – overview  
<http://www.orbitals.com/pic/row03/index.html> – trip to Rogers Island in 2003  
<http://www.orbitals.com/pic/row04/index.html> – trip to Kingston in 2004  
<http://www.orbitals.com/pic/row05/index.html> – trip to Vergennes, VT in 2005  
<http://www.orbitals.com/pic/row06/index.html> – trip to Oswego in 2006  
<http://www.orbitals.com/pic/row07/index.html> – trip to Kingston in 2007

The bateaux are owned by the Mabee Farm Historic Site, which is a property of the Schenectady County Historical Society. If you need to contact them, the address at the farm is 1080 Main St., Rotterdam Junction, NY 12150. The telephone number at the farm is 887-5073.

If you have any questions, comments, or requirements for more information, please contact me, David Manthey. My full contact information is:

David Manthey

Telephone: (518) 280-4468 – home  
(518) 265-0215 – cell  
(518) 490-6140 – work (please try my cell phone first)  
email: [manthey@orbitals.com](mailto:manthey@orbitals.com)  
Address: 100 Kingsley Road  
Burnt Hills, NY 12027