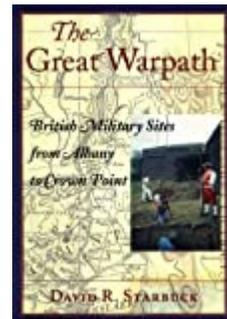


# H-Net Reviews

in the Humanities & Social Sciences

**David R. Starbuck.** *The Great Warpath: British Military Sites From Albany to Crown Point.* Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1999. xv + 205 pp. \$19.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-87451-903-7.



**Reviewed by** Kevin S. Gould (American Military University)

**Published on** H-PCAACA (July, 1999)

*The Great Warpath* was the water route followed by the French and their Algonquin allies from Montreal into the heart of the American colonies during the colonial wars of 1689-1763 and by the British invasion of the United States during the American Revolution in 1777. Many famous and bloody battles took place in this corridor, which comprised Lake Champlain, Lake George, and the Hudson River Valley. It was home to the largest and most important British strongholds as well as the site of the most brutal and memorable battles during the colonial period. Due to its long occupation and frequent battles, the Warpath is a treasure trove of historically significant sites and archeological relics.

The recovery of these archaeological treasures is the subject of David Starbuck's *The Great Warpath*. Starbuck's book is a professional memoir of his archaeological adventures in the Hudson Valley since 1985. Concentrating exclusively on military sites, Starbuck describes digs at the Saratoga Battlefield, Fort Edward and Rogers Island, Fort William Henry, Fort George, Mount Independence, Crown Point, and the underwater sites of Lakes George and Champlain.

Starbuck attempts to confirm the historical record through archaeology and to forge a tangible link between the present and the past. Through excavation and preservation, the archaeologist forges a bond between the peo-

ple of today and their ancestors, who, once we see their tools and trinkets, seem not so strange and distant as they did before.

Starbuck introduces each site with an historical background sketch and a history of past archaeological research. He then discusses his own digs, seamlessly weaving technical archaeology with personal anecdote to draw the reader with enthusiasm and immediacy. Starbuck searches for clues about the soldier's day-to-day life to fill gaps left by "dry orderly books." He digs for answers to specific questions. What did they eat? Did women and children live in the camps? Could individual soldiers be identified by their relics? Starbuck answers all these questions in his book.

Starbuck carefully emphasizes the difference between professional archaeologists and treasure hunters. In sidebars and anecdotes throughout the book, Starbuck bemoans and details the damage wrought on historic sites by amateurs and unscrupulous collectors. These robbers are the greatest threat to historic preservation.

Limiting his study to sites with established archaeological records enhances the book. Each chapter fully treats a different site that has been the subject of extensive research and has yielded significant cultural and material artifacts. Less-developed sites, such as the Ben-

nington and Hubbardton Battlefields, are treated in sidebars throughout the book. Starbuck is especially concerned with excavating military hospitals and several of his sites yielded information regarding this little-studied aspect of colonial history. He covers Mount Independence, Vermont and the bateaux wrecks beneath Lake George in scrupulous detail.

Starbuck's enthusiasm is infectious. He has written a book discernible to the history buff yet pleasing and informative to the expert. The book is abundantly illustrated with black and white photos of relics as well as historical maps, excavation schematics, and reconstructed buildings. The chapter covering the underwater site is particularly detailed with illustrations of wrecks and arti-

facts. The glossary adequately covers archaeological terminology and descriptive terms for the recovered relics and structures. Each chapter includes a brief list of suggested readings in archaeology. The book is not footnoted, and this makes it more difficult to track specific citations and quotes, but this in no way detracts from this excellent introductory study to the cultural and material history of the Great Warpath.

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**Citation:** Kevin S. Gould. Review of Starbuck, David R., *The Great Warpath: British Military Sites From Albany to Crown Point*. H-PCAACA, H-Net Reviews. July, 1999.

**URL:** <http://www.h-net.org/reviews/showrev.php?id=3217>

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