

AMERICAN BATTLEFIELD PROTECTION PROGRAM

Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort

**Final Program Performance Report:
GA 2287-17-011**

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Introduction and Project Summary

Old Saybrook Historical Society
Dedicated to Preserving, Protecting and Promoting the History of Old Saybrook

The Pequot War was an epic clash of cultures between European settlers and their Indian allies and the Pequot natives. While we only have the written word of the victors, we know that it was a brief and bloody conflict that set a pattern for settler and native relations for nearly 300 years.

In the summer of 1635 Lion Gardiner, an engineer with experience in constructing forts, signed a contract with English noblemen to build a fort and layout a town in the new world for “gentlemen of quality.”

Saybrook Fort was a military outpost that became the site of the most prolonged fighting of the Pequot War. There were more than 20 Pequot attacks and more than 30 English settlers and soldiers and an unknown number of Natives were killed.

This first fort, built between 1636-1637 on the highest point on Saybrook Point, was destroyed by fire during the winter of 1647-1648. Its precise construction and layout have never been determined. Until now, much of what we knew about the first fort was based on the writings of Lion Gardiner or first governor John Winthrop, Jr.

However, archaeologists and historians from the Mashantucket Pequot Museum and Research Center, working over a period of more than five years, are confident that they have identified several battle sites and the fort’s location in the east-central area of Saybrook Point.

This project was designed to build on this new information and consisted of developing programs and materials to increase awareness and understanding of the siege and battles of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War.

A work plan was developed to accomplish this through a series of public meetings, the development of interpretative and educational materials for use in schools and by the public, and the preparation of an application for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

To achieve the long-term goal of understanding and appreciating the significance of the siege and battles of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War, the Old Saybrook Historical Society informed and eventually held three meetings with property owners and the public about the Fort and the Pequot War, associated battlefield sites and encouraged their active involvement in this process.

In addition, we researched and designed historic markers, developed a walking/biking tour, created seven large display panels that told this story, prepared an elementary and a secondary curriculum, prepared a manuscript for a publication on Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War, upgraded the Historical Society website with Fort and War information, and submitted an application for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

We believe that project goals of increasing awareness and understanding of the siege and battles of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War were achieved and are evident with the interest

and support provided by the community. Further, we believe the products and services developed by the project will sustain and advance these goals going forward.

This work was made possible with funding from the National Park Service, American Battlefield Protection Program in the amount of \$43,000 for which the Old Saybrook Historical Society is very grateful. The project began in August 2017 and ran until July 2019.

Requirements and Work Plan

Several tasks were proposed and became the major requirements of the project. These included:

1. Research and design interpretive markers for the Saybrook Point area
2. Research, design and print brochure showing key sites for a walking tour
3. Prepare curriculum materials for secondary school about the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort
4. Prepare a publication on the siege and battles of Saybrook Fort for public dissemination
5. Develop materials to train and educate OSHS volunteers and guides to conduct public programs about the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort
6. Prepare a nomination for listing the siege and battles of Saybrook Fort in the National Register of Historic Places
7. Expand the Old Saybrook Historical Society’s website to incorporate information and visuals focused on the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort
8. Research and design traveling exhibit panels for use in schools and libraries
9. Develop a lecture and workshop series on preservation activities associated with the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort
10. Hold meetings with stakeholders
11. Prepare a final technical report

In addition to the above tasks, there were several specific contractual requirements. These requirements, and how they were met, include the following:

A. Training with ABPP

Project personnel attended a day-long training session at the Department of Interior, August 15, 2017.

B. Workplan

The contract called for submitting a detailed workplan to the ABPP which was done and approved on September 28, 2017. This formed the basis of project tasks, schedule and budget. Highlights included:

Chart A: Tasks

Date	Tasks
2017	
Aug. 15	Training Session
Sept. 30	Submit draft Workplan; revise as appropriate; submit final
Oct. 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP.
Oct. 30	Submit draft RFP. Nat. Reg listing, and Education materials development. Revision and approval by 1/1/18

Nov. 1	Plan for first public meeting (schedule for Mar-Apr, 2018). Obtain facility; goals, program, presenters, materials, equipment, note-taker, second public meeting to be held March-April 2019
Nov. 30	Revise RFP
2018	
Jan. 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
Jan. 1	Advertise for consultants. Deadline 1/30. Hire by 2/28.
Jan. 15	Hire consultant to develop webpage. Saybrook Fort and Pequot War content.
Feb. 28	Select consultants for Nat. Reg. listing and Educational Development
Mar 1	Announce new enhanced webpage
Mar-Apr	Hold public meeting. Second public meeting one year later, March-April 2019
Apr 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
March-April	Publicize and invite stakeholders and others to Public Meeting; confirm program arrangements
July 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
Aug. 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
Oct. 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
2019	
Jan. 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
	Coordinate, maintain records, report to ABPP
Mar-Apr	Hold second public meeting. Obtain facility; goals, program, presenters, materials, equipment, note-taker
Apr 1	Submit Project Status Report Form and Standard Form 425 Federal Financial to ABPP
July 1	Submit Final Technical Report
July 31	Submit all materials and reports; final billings. Maintain records, provide report, other grant documentation and products to ABPP
	Closeout

The Project budget totaled \$43,000 with the following categories:

Personnel	\$27,200
Consultant Fees	\$12,000
Travel/Per Diem	\$600
Supplies/Equipment	\$3,000
Other	\$200

C. Hire needed consultants

The project workplan called for hiring two consultants, one for Educational Initiatives and one for Preservation Initiatives, and specific tasks for each were outlined. A 'request for proposals' was prepared for each and using the consultant list developed by the State Historic Preservation Office, archaeologists recommended by NPS, and other sources placed an announcement on various websites and invited individuals to submit proposals. Forms and procedures, including criteria, were developed and an interview committee established. The committee unanimously selected James Powers to serve as consultant for educational initiatives and Mashantucket Pequot Museum [Kevin McBride and David Naumec] for preservation initiatives. Contracts were signed and work plans approved.

D. Coordinate the public planning process

From October through January, 2018, made public announcements regarding grant and held meetings with property owners, town officials, educators and other stakeholders.

In February began developing goals and procedures for holding first public meeting, scheduled for April, 8, 2018. Property owners and other stakeholders specifically invited. At meeting, consultants introduced and made presentations about tasks. Questions and answers about project, purposes, procedures. Approximately 90-100 participants.

A group of 11 volunteered to explore strategies to encourage preservation of historic resources. This group met several times over the next six months, held productive discussions, contacted several other preservation organizations, developed a constitution and explored the possibilities of forming a permanent organization. Ultimately, it was decided to abandon the independent effort and support the work of the Old Saybrook Historical Society. Historical Society committee selected Preservation Award recipient for her efforts in saving Saybrook Fort Monument Park site among other accomplishments.

E. Complete the information gathering

Consultants worked independently and met frequently with the project director. Primary and secondary source materials were researched and obtained and added to the collection at the Historical Society archives. Meetings were held between the project director and the educational consultant to discuss and determine the nature of curriculum materials. Both met with the Old Saybrook Public Schools director of curriculum and the social studies faculty to share plans and exchange ideas.

Discussions were also held with consultants for preservation initiatives. The project director met with the Old Saybrook First Selectman, the Planning Director and members of the Historic District Commission to keep them informed of plans and seek input. Regular progress reports were presented to the Old Saybrook Historical Society's Board of Trustees.

F. Complete the draft technical report/nomination form/educational materials.

A second public meeting was held on October 14, 2018 at which time draft materials and a discussion of preservation efforts were presented, including a walking tour brochure and information about listings in the National Register of Historic Places. A short walking tour of nearby sites was conducted and well received.

Arrangements were made with school officials to provide an inservice program on Nov. 6, 2018 for teachers to review the educational materials developed on Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War. At that workshop teachers responded to an evaluative form and their comments were gathered and later shared with the education consultant. Based on teacher comments and further reflection, it was decided to develop both a secondary and an elementary curriculum. Revisions were made to the draft curriculum materials.

In December the Historic District Commission approved funding of \$2000 for the fabrication and installation of historic markers related to Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War. Reproductions of the markers were shown to members of the Historic District Commission in June at which time they voted an additional \$2000 to complete the purchase of the remaining markers. Markers installed by local Department of Public Works in cooperation with Parks and Recreation department.

Also supportive was the Town Planner who arranged to have the Planning Commission underwrite the cost for printing 5,000 walking/biking tour brochures of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War sites. Copies have proven popular and have been distributed to the Chamber of Commerce, Town Hall, various organizations and retail outlets.

Several meetings were held with the education consultant to discuss and edit the manuscript for a publication for the general public. As part of this effort, and to enhance curriculum materials, a power point program developed along with a series of seven large-size display panels which would be available for use in schools and public places.

Work on listing the fort and battle sites on the National Register had been ongoing and a draft submitted to the State Historic Preservation Office. Initial responses were favorable but staff members had some questions regarding the listing of multiple, related sites. In June 2019 two representatives from SHPO visited Old Saybrook and were escorted by the consultant and project director to see the levels of integrity for the proposed nomination sites. Suggestions were made for adjusting the application for listing in the National Register which was done.

With substantial progress made on all products the decision was made to share these developments with the public and get feedback. A request for modification of the original grant was submitted and approved.

A third public meeting was organized and held on May 12, 2019 with a welcoming talk given by the First Selectman. The curriculum was presented to the state social studies consultant who spoke of the project's importance and his plans to place the curriculum on the State Department of Education website. Walking/biking tour brochures were given to all attendees.

In June 2019 the Historical Society, the educational consultant and the project were honored by the Old Saybrook school system for its support of education with the school system's "Recognition Award."

G. Report to the ABPP

The following chart provides an overview of the scope of the work undertaken by the project, the accomplishments and products, reasons why any goals or objectives were not met, and other information. Grant products to be submitted

Chart D: Scope of Work and Accomplishments

SCOPE OF WORK	ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND PRODUCTS	NOTES
1. Research and design six interpretive markers at Saybrook Point	Completed. Six historic markers have been researched, designed, fabricated and installed.	Purchase of markers made possible by local Historic District Commission at cost of \$4,200. Markers installed by Department of Public Works in cooperation with Parks and Recreation Department. Estimated value of \$200 x 6 markers = \$1200.
2. Research, design and print walking/biking tour brochure showing key sites related to siege and battles of Saybrook Fort.	Completed. Walking/biking tour brochure of Saybrook Fort and Pequot War battle sites researched, designed and printed. Distributed to local and various regional organizations, governmental agencies, retail outlets and others.	Printing of 5,000 brochures made possible by funding from local Planning Commission at cost of \$1,600. Currently working with CT Humanities to place Fort and War sites on an 'app' called ConnTours.
3. Prepare curriculum materials for secondary school about the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Point	Completed. Elementary curriculum and Secondary curriculum developed. Copies presented to local Board of Education and Social Studies teachers. Copy presented to CT state social studies consultant.	Considering plans for wider distribution, including electronically. Discussions to place on State Social Studies website. Received "recognition award" from Old Saybrook Public Schools for working with teachers and developing and contributing curriculum on Saybrook Fort and Pequot War.
4. Prepare a publication for the general public on Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War.	Completed. Currently seeking funds to publish.	Confident that we will find funding or Historical Society will publish.
5. Develop materials to train and educate OSHS volunteers and guides to conduct public programs about the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Point	Completed. Orientation for approximately 12 students held. Use of video to provide background ["Ten Days That Shook the World"]	Existing orientation materials have been augmented with information on Saybrook Fort and Pequot War sites.

6. Prepare a National Register nomination	Completed. Nomination forms completed and submitted. Nomination under review by SHPO. Decision anticipated by end of year.	Sites visited by two SHPO staff members to prepare recommendations to Board.
7. Expand the OSHS website to incorporate information and visuals focused on the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort	Ongoing. New web pages developed. Siege and Battle of Saybrook Fort and Pequot War material posted.	Ongoing efforts.
8. Research and design traveling exhibit panels for local schools and libraries	Completed. Exhibit panels researched, designed and printed. Six (6) roughly 2' x 3' panels have been placed on gator board and tell the story of the siege and battles of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War.	These panels are currently part of the Historical Society's Saybrook Fort and Pequot War exhibit. In the future they will be available for schools and displayed at the local Library, Town Hall, local banks and offered for display in neighboring towns.
9. Develop a lecture and workshop series on preservation activities associated with the Siege and Battle of Saybrook Point	Individual presenters identified and program topics outlined.	Topics and potential presenters were identified. Actual lectures or workshops not held due to conflicts with other public meetings provided by project.
10. Meetings with stakeholders	Completed and ongoing. Three meetings have been held. Presentations and Q and A conducted. Attendance ranged from approximately 60 to perhaps 85.	Meetings scheduled to develop archaeology program for high school students using the site where Pequot warriors ambushed English settlers. Meeting participants include property owner, State Archaeologist Nick Bellantoni, U. of CT anthropologist Kevin McBride, and Project Director Tedd Levy. Contact with school personnel to come later.
11. Final technical report and submission of closeout materials.	To be done.	

Media Reports

[Additional articles in Old Saybrook Historical Society newsletter and website.]

“Searching for Saybrook Fort,” Old Saybrook Annual Town Report, October, 2017

“OSHS received Grant from ‘American Battlefield Protection Program,’ Old Saybrook Events Magazine, Quarter 3, 2017

“Historical Society receives ‘battlefield protection’ grant,” Shoreline Times, September 15, 2017

“Biggest Man in Town,” [Lion Gardiner statue] Saybrook Neighbors, Jan. 2018

“Preserving and Protecting Saybrook Fort,” Harbor News, April 5, 2018

“Public Presentation Saybrook Fort Project,” Old SDaybrook Events, Quarter 1, 2019

“Talk and Walk Old Saybrook’s Pequot War Sites,” Old Saybrook Events, Quarter 3, 2018

“Saybrook Fort and Pequot War,” Annual Town Report, Oct. 2018

“Getting Saybrook Fort on the List,” Old Saybrook Events, Quarter 4, 2018

“Social Studies Teachers Review Local Curriculum,” Old Saybrook Events, Quarter 4, 2018

“The War at Saybrook Fort,” Old Saybrook Events, Quarter 1, 2019

“Talk Takes on the Battle for Saybrook Fort,” Shoreline Times, April 19, 2019

“Marsh Madness,” [Ambush at “The Neck”] Old Saybrook Neighbors, May 2019

“Saybrook Fort and Pequot War Program at Saybrook Point,” May ? 2019

“Program Sheds New Light on Local Role in Pequot War,” Shoreline Times, May 9, 2019

“Peddle with a Purpose,” [Bike tour of Saybrook Fort and Pequot War sites] Old Saybrook Neighbors, July 2019

“Fort and War Exhibit,” Old Saybrook Events, Quarter 2, 2019

Addendum

Since the above closeout was submitted:

- 1) Received grant of \$2000 from Saybrook Point Resort & Marina to publish book on Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War for general public and secondary students. Book has now been published, "Edge of Uncertainty: Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War, 1636-1637."
- 2) Worked with CT Humanities to develop ConnTours, a downloadable app for tour of historic sites including text and photos of siege and battles of 12 Saybrook Fort and Pequot War sites:
<https://conntours.oncell.com/en/the-siege-battle-of-saybrook-fort-1636-1637-tour-orientation-215376.html>
- 3) Have sent postcards to property owners thanking them for cooperation and support and asking for notification before they undertake major digging projects on their property so we can have archaeologists inspect.
- 4) Nomination for listing in National Register of Historic Places remains under consideration by staff at State Historic Preservation Office.
- 5) At request of others, have submitted ABPP *The Siege and Battles of Saybrook Fort and Pequot War* project for awards program to American Association for State and Local History.

Note: In May 2020, the Old Saybrook Historical Society was informed by the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) that our project was selected as a 2020 Award of Excellence winner.

*On behalf of the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), I am delighted to inform you that Old Saybrook Historical Society was selected as a 2020 Award of Excellence winner by the Leadership in History awards committee for the project *Siege and Battles of Saybrook Fort and the Pequot War*. The AASLH Leadership in History Awards is the nation's most prestigious competition for recognition of achievement in state and local history. We congratulate you for the work that has brought this honor....on behalf of the officers, Council, staff, and membership of AASLH, I offer my sincere congratulations on this recognition of your achievement and your ongoing excellent work.*

*Sincerely,
Bethany Hawkins
Chief of Operations
American Association for State and Local History*