

Carlyle House Historic Park
A property of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
121 N. Fairfax Street Alexandria, VA 22314

August 10, 2009

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to express my strong support for the grave marking ceremony and other programs planned for Saturday, June 26 and Sunday, June 27, 2010 in North Royalton, Ohio commemorating the military service of John Shepherd. Born in 1729, Shepherd served during both the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. He lived to tell the tale of Braddock's defeat in July 1755 and was the last survivor of that ill-fated campaign. Shepherd is also believed to be the longest lived soldier of the American Revolution, surviving to the historic age of 117 years, nine months. John Shepherd spent the last years of his long life in North Royalton, where his earthly remains rest unnoticed by most to this day.

As the Director of Carlyle House Historic Park, the residence of Colonel John Carlyle, one of Alexandria, Virginia's original trustees and commissary for the Virginia militia during the French & Indian War and the American Revolution, I have a particular interest in Shepherd's story. From March 26 through April 20, 1755, Alexandria became the center of British military operations in North America, when Major General Edward Braddock, the commander-in-chief of all British forces on the Continent, made Carlyle's home his headquarters. Shepherd may have joined up with Braddock's army in Alexandria and most certainly would have been familiar with Carlyle's Aquia sandstone home on North Fairfax Street.

On April 14, 1755 in the dining room of Colonel Carlyle's house, there was what he described as "*the grandest Congress held at my home ever known on this Continent ...*" General Braddock had summoned five colonial governors to Alexandria to discuss his proposed military campaign against the French and their Indian allies. General Braddock and his Army left Alexandria on April 20, 1755 never to return. The General was mortally wounded and his army routed by a French and Indian force at the Battle of the Monongahela near present day Pittsburgh on July 9, 1755. Of Braddock's staff, only the 23-year-old Virginia Colonel, George Washington, survived to lead the retreat back to Virginia. Among those few enlisted men and volunteers who lived through the battle was 26-year-old John Shepherd.

Over twenty-five years later, though now middle-aged, Shepherd fought in some of the major engagements of the northern campaign during the American Revolution at places etched on the tablet of this nation's history: Brandywine, Germantown, and White Marsh. Although considered "elderly" by his peers (only six percent of men lived beyond fifty at the time), he endured the harsh winter of 1777- 1778 at Valley Forge with General Washington. Shepherd survived the war and while in his eighties, he moved to North Royalton where he died in 1847.

John Shepherd's life story compels me not only as the Director of Carlyle House but as an historian and an American to support the June 2010 programs honoring this remarkable man. Shepherd was not only a witness, but a participant in two defining events in American history,

Carlyle House Historic Park

A property of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
121 N. Fairfax Street Alexandria, VA 22314

the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. Through his long service, sense of duty, and patriotism, he left behind a legacy that merits remembrance. By honoring Shepherd we also honor those countless unknown patriots who pledged their lives, fortunes, and honor for liberty. And remember: ***“John Shepherd was with Washington all the way!”***

The commemorative programs planned for June 2010 to honor Shepherd’s service first to King George II of Great Britain and then to the cause of American Independence will put into action key initiatives to educate the public about the French and Indian War and the American Revolution. An additional motivation for supporting the planned activities in North Royalton is that they will have a positive impact on the city’s economy by attracting new tourist dollars to the community, as well as making the public aware that North Royalton is home to one of the most historic graves in America.

Besides the endorsement of the City of North Royalton, this project has already received the support of a number of patriotic societies, historic sites, and organizations such as The Society of The Cincinnati, The Society of Colonial Wars, The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America, Carlyle House Historic Park, and various 18th-century re-enactment groups from Virginia to Ohio.

Please contact me to learn how you can play a part in this noteworthy program. I look forward to hearing that you have joined the growing number of supporters of this historically important event.

Sincerely,

James Bartlinski
Director
Carlyle House Historic Park
A property of the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority
(703) 549-2997
jbartlinski@nvrpa.org
www.nvrpa.org