Simultaneously with the appearance of Israel in history, the Egyptians were engaged in an ongoing conflict with the Sea Peoples. This designation refers to a number of Indo-European peoples from the Aegean world who began to make their presence known in Egypt and the Levant by land and by sea. The most significant Sea Peoples for our purposes is the Plist in the Egyptian record (Egypt had no vowels). They are called Pelleset with the addition of the e vowel. To Israel, they were the Pelishtim, in Aramaic, the Palastin, and in Assyrian the Palashtu. Herodotus in Book III 91 refers to the region as Palestine Syria probably drawing on the Aramaic version since Aramaic was the lingua franca. The word Palestine with the plst root derives from these people who were not Arab and not Semitic. The people known as Arabs first appear in the archaeological record in the Middle Kingdom Egyptian story of Sinuhe as one of the peoples of the West Semitic peoples to stop an invasion from the east by Assyria. According to the battle inscription, the Arabs engaged the Assyrians with a force of 1000 camels. It has been suggested that the Arab claim to fame was their use of camels which led to the Arabs being regarded as a superb police and guard force which also could provide swift transport when needed, such as in retreat. It also helped give them control of the trade route to the spices of Sheba in modern Yemen, a route that Assyrians sought to control. The Arabs choose to ally with their partners in trade, Ahab's Israel, the leading provider of chariots to the coalition. It is quite possible that the partnership began in the time of Ahab's father, Omri, and that the prevalence of Arab names with the “mr” root may be an offshoot of the friendship and respect among the two peoples then.

Thus there once was a time when Arabs and Israel were allies and Israel was part of the Semitic world around it as brother, cousin, and husband to its many peoples, when the image of Isaac and Ishmael standing together was the first time the biblical and Assyrian records. In 716 BCE, Sargon II followed the conquest of Israel and deportations of the Israelites with the addition of the e vowel. To Israel, they were the Pelishtim, in Aramaic, the Palastin, and in Assyrian the Palashtu.

Note: This abstract will be published in the fall issue of Israel Horizon. A full-length version will be published in the proceedings of the conference.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS: The American Revolution in the Hudson Valley – June 27-July 1 • The Greater Capital Region Teacherhostel – July 7-11 • The Hudson River: The Rivertown Experience – July 21-25 • Forts of the Empire State – August 3-7 • The Ride of Sybil Ludington, Mahopac – September 13 • The American Revolution Symposium, Garrison – September 27 • Integrating Local History into the 4-11th Grade Curriculum, Manhattanville College, Purchase, NY – October 21 • Supermarket Aisle Archaeology and the Bible, Harvard University – November 23

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The Battle of Saratoga: A British Perspective

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The morning of May 31, 2008 a group of teachers and lifelong learners gathered in the Saratoga Springs Visitors Center. As new participants in a Teacherhostel® sponsored by the Institute for History, Archaeology, and Education, we had no idea what to expect. Our two days of intense study of the Battle of Saratoga proved to be both informative and entertaining, providing us with a new perspective on a battle that we’ve been teaching about for years.

First on the morning’s agenda was Ray Raymond, a Gilder Lehrman Fellow and former British diplomat, from SUNY and The United States Military Academy. He spoke on the failure of the British strategy and planning which led to Burgoyne’s defeat. Professor Raymond captured our attention with his engaging presentation style and charming British accent. In his hour long presentation, we gained a new perspective on how the British lost Saratoga and a snapshot of the unique personalities of the various people engaged in the battle including Benedict Arnold.

This was followed by a presentation from Leslie Potter a descendent of John Freeman of Freeman’s Farm from the battlefield and an attorney who works with historic sites. Potter presented a unique court hearing in which she refuted Burgoyne’s rationale for the British defeat. Potter’s research into the history of Burgoyne and his writings was extensive. We had the opportunity to learn more from her in a post-dinner presentation on Patroonships and land grants in Saratoga County.

After a morning of educational presentations, we saw the battle come to life by walking the grounds of the Saratoga Battlefield. With Joe Craig, an incredibly knowledgeable tour guide from the National Park Service, we visited the Neilson Farm and Bemis Heights. A sudden storm cut short our tour while providing us with a first-hand experience of the condi-
Our battlefield trip concluded with a visit from a Revolutionary re-enactor who portrayed a British surgeon. We learned the process of becoming a re-enactor, the research involved in accurate portrayal of the time period, and the cost involved in travel, costuming and weaponry.

A lovely dinner at Panza’s Restaurant concluded our day. According to a veteran of the IHARE TeacherhostelSTM, “You are always well fed.” We found that to be very true as the weekend progressed.

We resumed the next morning in Saratoga Springs to hear Ray Raymond speak on “Saratoga and Britain’s Strategic Dilemma.” According to Ray’s presentation, the Battle of Saratoga was not only the most important battle of the Revolutionary War, but also of the entire late 18th century. It transformed the conflict from a civil war fought on land to a world war fought at sea for which Britain was unprepared. Saratoga forced the British to re-order their priorities and to withdraw forces to protect their interests in the Caribbean, thereby paving the way for the American victory.

This was followed by a walking tour of Saratoga Springs’ Congress Park where we learned about the rich history of Saratoga.

We went from there to lunch at Randy’s, in Schuylerville and then we made a quick trip to the Victory Monument and the Schuyler House. Unfortunately, we did not get to thoroughly explore these two sites before we embarked on a paddleboat cruise of the Champlain Canal and Hudson River. The canal cruise was a pleasant way to end the weekend and provided a river perspective of Bemis Heights and the site of Burgoyne’s surrender. Time on the boat also enabled us to share ideas about how we would incorporate what we had learned into our instruction.

As participants in the American Dream Project a Teaching American History Grant through OCM BOCES and SUNY Cortland, we have spent a year studying the American Revolution. We have heard many lectures from experts on the era and spent a weekend touring historic Philadelphia. We will culminate our experience with an intensive week-long course at SUNY Cortland in July. As a requirement of our grant we will be creating a video story about the Revolutionary War. Our experience at the TeacherhostelSTM gave us critical information that will serve to enhance our final project.

Our weekend experience at the IHARE TeacherhostelSTM was enjoyable and educational and provided us with many new contacts in the realm of history education. We enjoyed our interaction with fellow teachers from throughout New York and New England as well as the life-long learners we met. The quality of the speakers and program were clearly exceptional. We look forward to participating in future TeacherhostelSTM under the excellent leadership of Dr. Peter Feinman.

Note: This article will be published in Social Studies Dockets in the 2008/2009 school year.