



THE MOUNT INDEPENDENCE-HUBBARDTON 1776 MILITARY ROAD

1. RELATED EARLY ROADS. MOUNT INDEPENDENCE.

THIS is the first of a three part article on a Revolutionary Road, sorely neglected by historians and by the State of Vermont, almost obliterated, but important and interesting to the public at large as well as to the hundreds who have seen or heard of some part of it. It might be considered as a short cut branch of the Crown Point Road, though that was built seventeen years earlier.

What one British officer called "The Great Road," was built in 1776, through Orwell, Benson, Hubbardton, Castleton, Ira and West Rutland, to Rutland Falls, when, after the taking of Fort Ticonderoga, May 10, 1775, the Continental Congress determined to fortify Mount Independence, opposite Ticonderoga. It was used by the soldiers going back and forth from Ticonderoga and Mount Independence to Castleton, Rutland, Bennington, and "Number Four Fort" at Charlestown, New Hampshire and other parts of New England. From Mount Independence as far as the Battlefield and thence for two miles south on the earlier East Hubbardton road it was also the main road, from the Mount, in a wide half circle through Castleton, to Skenesborough (Whitehall); no shorter road from Orwell then existed until the Hydeville branch road was built, probably in 1781. No doubt much of the ammunition, equipment and stores on Mount Independence were hauled by wagon and packload over the earlier Crown Point Road up to Center Rutland and thence over this rough frontier road.

There are grounds for holding that Mount Independence is the most important, interesting and neglected historic site in Vermont. Independence was the main encampment for the Northern Army. According to Orders of July 22, 1776, three of the four brigades, under General Arnold, Colonel Reed and Colonel Stark, more than three thousand men at times, were stationed there and only one brigade at Fort Ticonderoga.¹ Most of the new construction was on the Vermont side rather than at "Ti". Most of the New England

soldiers assigned to the Mount and to Fort Ticonderoga must have marched over our road, and some 2500 men retreated over it to Hubbardton, Rutland and Skenesborough, in July 1777, pursued, as far as Castleton, by more than 2000 British and their allies; then in September 1777 on the second and final attempt to retake the Fort; thereafter by soldiers and settlers to the lake towns after it was given up by the British in 1780. As we shall see below, a branch road forking off in northeast Benson, a mile east of Howard Hill, was built in 1781 to the mills and new stockade at Hydeville, then called Castleton Falls.

Thousands of men from the northern colonies, and British, Hessians, French and Indians, travelled this road, through woods and swamps, between Mount Independence, Castleton and Center Rutland, three of the main frontier outposts of American civilization. For some time such celebrities as Benedict Arnold, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the Polish engineer who volunteered for the American cause, Generals Schuyler and Gates, and Colonels Anthony Wayne and John Trumbull were busy at the Mount. Over this road a famous American General Arthur St. Clair, as well as Seth Warner, retreated with two noted British and German Generals in pursuit, Simon Fraser and Baron Riedesel. Are we mistaken in thinking it should be of interest to our own generation? And that all those efforts, the memories of these men, many of whom died of hardships and disease at the Mount, deserve some recognition at this late date?

Several hundred persons are directly interested in this road, having lived on or near it at some time; some of them now living in distant states have given vital information. Scores have generously taken the time, in the true spirit of Sherlock Holmes, to search carefully through woods and fields for traces of the exact roadway; such traces still keep turning up. Old corduroy, stone abutments, fills and dugways are still visible at many points, but in general the road, after these 180 years of disuse, is scarcely traceable, just as the better known Crown Point Road is almost completely obliterated for most of its course. Strangely, we have discovered no other attempt to trace either the history or the route of this road, with the exception of a two page all too general letter from Captain Charles Abell, cited below, which describes part of the route, and led us to think at first that it went only to Hubbardton.

Since the summer of 1945, by spending two or three hours a week, by countless trips over portions of the route, by conversations with anyone who had a clue, by continual correspondence and hundreds of

telephone inquiries often resultful, by search through books, documents and maps, we have pieced together the story here told. We are grateful to the more than 350 persons who have helped us.

This was furthered by issuing three successive mimeographed summaries: 50 copies of 17 pages in March 1947; 75 copies of 45 pages November 15, 1949; 100 copies of a third draft, 81 pages, July 4, 1956, to interested persons, asking further help. A tentative account was published in four articles in *Rutland Herald*² in August 1951, the 175th anniversary of the road, with several air photos taken by the *Herald's* Andrew Merusi, and a map by Robert Wheeler from the Mount to Hubbardton line. Several assumptions in that series have since been corrected. At our request the Castleton Historical Society appointed a committee in 1950, and in 1952 the Vermont Historic Sites Commission appointed a committee in each town, resulting chiefly in valuable ground work by Mr. John Reil of Castleton. In December 1957 a request to West Rutland Rotary Club to appoint a committee to study the route there, resulted in three detailed articles based on extensive document and field research, by Mrs. Phyllis Humphreys in the *Rutland Herald*³, with promise of one or two more.

In October 1958 the Vermont Historic Sites Commission, after our continued requests, erected fifteen steel posts and metal signs "Hubbardton Military Road, 1776," at the intersections of the old road with present blacktop highways, with one in Belgo Gap. As this investment of \$75 by the State of Vermont seemed inadequate to mark the route followed by thousands of our Revolutionary soldiers, the selectmen in the seven towns concerned paid for and erected forty additional markers through the woods and fields where the route is easily lost, in the spring of 1959 to coincide with the 350th Champlain Celebration.

We shall attempt to give first the history of the road with a brief account of Mount Independence, and then its detailed course, including the Hydeville Branch.

PREVIOUS ROADS

The Hubbardton Military Road was not built, as some have thought, for the taking of Fort Ticonderoga. That expedition of the Green Mountain Boys under Ethan Allen from Bennington and Castleton to Ticonderoga, was a fairly sudden one. Paul Revere's famous ride "on the 19th of April in '75" occurred less than a month earlier. Ethan Allen had not heard of it until his own plans were well along. If any preparations, like the building of a new road, had come

to the ears of the British, it would have been fatal to the success of Allen's expedition. He and his men came up from Bennington, through Pawlet and Poultney (now East Poultney),⁴ and according to a tablet in front of Castleton Church were joined by Benedict Arnold at the Remington Tavern, a half mile west of Castleton village on present U.S. Route 4. However, it is more likely that Arnold found Allen and his men gone and caught up with them at the Abel Randall-Benjamin Hurlbut farm in Shoreham a little south of Hand's Cove.⁵ Their route thence is thought by some persons in Castleton to have been northerly along a bridle path west of the north road in Castleton village, coming out west of Pine Pond to the east shore of Bomoseen near Prospect Point, thence approximately along Route 30, via the north end of Bomoseen and the west side of Beebe Pond. This may have been the trail cut earlier by the Allens to reach their lands in Colchester, and later improved.

This seems to conform to a *Rutland Herald* letter⁶ describing corduroy and other traces of what was reported as "a military road" that ran "from the village . . . just north on the Rogers farm . . . skirts the ledge along the eastern side of the lake and joins the Troy-Burlington turnpike [Route 30] near the site of Castleton Town Farm [a bit SE of Crystal Beach] thence past Hubbardton Church where at Webster's Stand [in Sudbury] it joins the main route to Crown Point." Evidence of a "Ticonderoga Road" running along Beebe Pond's west shore, is noted below, in describing the road near Austin Pond, where we mention a Hubbardton deed and a letter to us,⁷ both citing a "Ticonderoga Road." This road could only have come from along the northeast shore of Bomoseen and connected further north in Sudbury with the Crown Point Road. It seems unlikely it could have been built as a real road before the Mt. Independence Road was built. Burgoyne's maps of his campaign and of the Hubbardton Battle, show no north-south road west of the East Hubbardton road. It seems more likely a branch north from the Hubbardton Military Road at the outlet of Austin Pond.

It is surprising to discover on a large wall map of Rutland County,⁸ 1854, that from Hydeville, on the Whitehall & Castleton Railroad, a branch of the Rutland and Albany Railroad had been surveyed and appears as "projected," leading along the east side of Lake Bomoseen, west of Route 30, passing near the outlet of Austin Pond, crossing the highway that had been the Hubbardton Military Road and skirting the west shore of Beebe Pond close to the present campers' road, then crossing the later turnpike Route 30, probably at the north end

of the hill on this main highway. It continued up through Whiting to the main line of the Rutland Railroad. Evidently this was a good grade for the obscure route of an early road along Beebe Pond, to reach up through Sudbury west of the 1772 East Hubbardton road, and strengthens the idea of some sort of road or path up from the Remington Tavern.

L. E. Chittenden⁹ quotes Goodhue's *History of Shoreham*:¹⁰ "It has been supposed by many that the expedition followed the nearest route through Benson, to a point opposite the fort in Orwell. This supposition is incorrect. Leaving Castleton, it moved by the way of Sudbury, where it struck the old Crown Point road, and following that through Whiting, reached the lake shore at Hand's Cove in Shoreham, about two miles north of the fort on the other side. The distance by this route was about twenty-five miles, seven or eight farther than by the other [i.e. by the Mt. Independence Road.] There were two reasons for taking it: it was farther from the lake, and there was less hazard of discovery, and it brought them to the shore in a wooded ravine, where they were perfectly sheltered from observation."

But Chittenden and Goodhue were in error in mentioning "the nearer route" through Benson; the latter was not built until seventeen years after the Crown Point Road and a year and a half after Allen's men took Ticonderoga. The mistaken idea that the Castleton-Hubbardton-Benson military road was used by Allen's troops seems to have started in Thompson's *Green Mountain Boys*,¹¹ "The route of [Allen's] troops was along the military road, which in the French war of 1759, had been opened from Charlestown, on Connecticut River, across the Green Mountains to Lake Champlain. . . . This road, leading directly through Castleton, and taking a northerly direction, branched off within a few miles of the lake, one fork . . . to Ticonderoga, and the other . . . to Crown Point." The 1759 road did have two forks, but Thompson's error lay in thinking that this Crown Point Road went near Castleton village or into Castleton at all. All the studies of the Amherst-Stark-Hawks-Goffe road, its two Rutland branches and its Ticonderoga branch, quite naturally fail to mention the Castleton-Hubbardton-Independence road because it was not built until 1776, and the Skenesborough Road through Castleton not until 1772. As Smith's *Rutland County* says,¹² "The first of the two Rutland branches of the Crown Point Road passed through Rutland, from what was called the Little Falls and Center Rutland and was only in use prior to 1759." [This date seems questionable]. "The second branch ran north from what is now Main Street, intersecting the first branch in Pittsford."

“Many towns have claimed to have been on the line, through which it did not go, especially in the western section of the county.”¹³ This latter statement is important because occasional references are found in various printed sources, that Castleton or Hubbardton were on the Crown Point Road, whereas this could not be so.

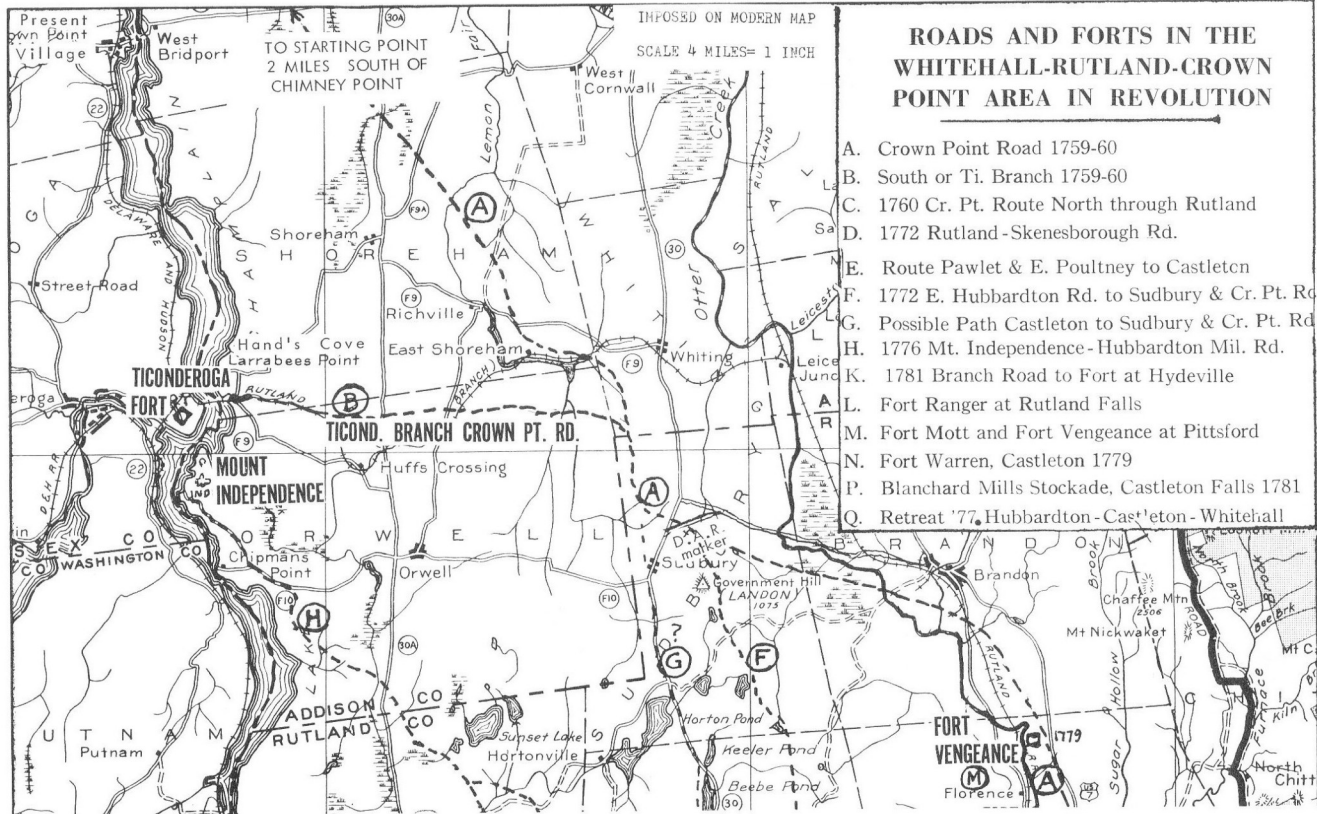
Smith states¹⁴ that “The first road in town, [Hubbardton] was the old “Ti.” road, which was too rough and crooked to be of much use to the settlers. The next was more useful, being a north and south road through the east part of town.” Unfortunately, the early records of Hubbardton were lost or destroyed so that events there are shrouded in uncertainty. But it is important that he mentions two roads in Hubbardton, the latter sounding like the present East Hubbardton highway past the Battlefield.

It is said¹⁵ that in 1772 Ira Allen had cut a bridle path from Castleton through Vergennes to their “Onion River land project” at Colchester. This may have been along Pine Pond, but it is known that the present main road from Castleton north through East Hubbardton* was built in 1772. On October 3, the proprietors of Castleton chose three of their number to lay this out, and another three men including Reuben Hickock, to lay out an improvement of the Skenesborough road.

Among diaries and letters of soldiers, such as Epaphrus Bull¹⁶ of Stockbridge, we have found no clarifying description of the route used. If they went from Remington’s Tavern via the Skenesborough-Rutland road east to where Fort Warren was built in 1779, thence northward through East Hubbardton (then called Hubbardton) to Sudbury, it would have been two miles longer than the Pine Pond route; most of the men appear to have been on foot, and a trail or bridle-paths rather than a road was all they needed.

As for the famous Crown Point Road, a full description of its route is almost certain to be written and published within the next year or two, by someone among the many persons now tracing it. In 1956 the writers realized that the 200th anniversary of the first building of this road would soon come up, that its route still uncertain in many towns should be traced and marked, and after collecting data that had drifted in to us we fortunately prevailed on Miss Flora B. Weeks of Rutland, later appointed State Historian of D.A.R., to undertake to head up the project of getting persons in each of the eighteen towns on its 87 mile route, to studying the detailed course of this famous road, which was started in 1759, finished in 1760, at the end of the French and Indian War. Little used by soldiers until the Revolution it immediately opened up central Vermont for settlement.

*Addenda, 93.



At this writing more than two hundred enthusiasts, encouraged by Miss Weeks, have been at work in 1957-1958 and several towns are ready for markers. Beside a series of preliminary articles by Miss Weeks¹⁷ a descriptive article and map is needed for each town, to draw out further data. This will supplement and modify the excellent substantial thirty-page account and map Mrs. Mary Fletcher Charlton prepared in 1931,¹⁸ which stimulated erection of a number of stone markers by chapters of the D.A.R. (so well informed a person as Mrs. Charlton told us in 1946 that she had never heard of the Mt. Independence-Hubbardton Road).

We therefore omit details of the history and route of the Crown Point Road from Fort No. 4¹⁹ at Charlestown, New Hampshire, crossing the Connecticut at Wentworth's Ferry, and through Springfield to North Clarendon, where its earlier route may have crossed Otter Creek, with a second route a year or two later running up Main Street in Rutland, the two routes joining again at Pittsford, thence through the southwest part of Brandon, into Sudbury, Whiting, Shoreham, Bridport and perhaps, as many writers assume, reaching the lake at Chimney Point opposite the Crown Point Forts, though this crossing point is uncertain to date; early maps show the road coming out at points on the east shore of Champlain, some distance south of Chimney Point. We leave this for others, as well as an account of the French village at Chimney Point, another interesting site neglected by Vermont historians, of Forts Mott and Vengeance, in Pittsford, and of Rutland Fort (which was at the northeast corner of the intersection of Main and West Streets and not where the D.A.R. marker stands in front of the Armory; the old well of this 1775 fort was filled in some years ago in the rear of the lot where Lindholm's restaurant stands.) The history of the building of Crown Point Road, but not its detailed route, has been thoroughly covered in an article²⁰ and a book²¹ by William Howard Brown.

Between Rutland, Rutland Falls and West Rutland the Crown Point Road is of direct concern, for evidently a short cross road, described in later pages, was built directly to the fort and bridge at Rutland Falls, the eastern terminus of the Hubbardton Road. *

We are also concerned with another fork, which might be called the Ticonderoga branch of the Crown Point Road which Ethan Allen's men took when they reached it in Sudbury; its destination was Fort Ticonderoga. Both branches are shown on the old Walling and Hagar²² wall map of Vermont, 1869, but neither of them on Scott's map of Rutland County, 1854.⁸ Walling's map shows it


branching off westward in the southwest corner of Whiting, through the northeast corner of Orwell above the present railroad station, and thence just above and close to the south line of Shoreham, to the present Larrabee's Point. Hand's Cove where the Green Mountain Boys embarked in crossing the lake to take the Fort, on May 10, 1775, is about one third mile north of Larrabee's Point Ferry. Several traces, noted by local residents, warrant our surmise that the route may have been from the northwest corner of Sudbury and across near the northern boundary of Orwell, until it passed the north side of Hardigan Hill and then swung north across the Shoreham line where later the Addison Branch of the Rutland Railroad²³ was built, in 1871, to its former Larrabee's Point station and crossing trestle, at a smaller point somewhat south of Larrabee's Point. *

The difference between our 1776 Hubbardton road to "Ti," and the "Ti" branch of the Crown Point Road is effectively shown in the remarkable map drawn in August 1776 by Col. John Trumbull, later famous as "Artist of the American Revolution" which appears in the 1841 edition of his Autobiography,²⁴ but not in Sizer's annotated edition of 1953.²⁵ This beautiful steel engraved map herewith reproduced in part, shows the "Road from Number Four" in words only, but not lines, coming out close to what seems to be the later railroad trestle point. It was two and a half miles south where a short road led down from the south end of Mount Independence to the "Landing from Skenesborough." It was from the easterly bend in this road that the new Hubbardton road builders started, about a month after Trumbull made his map. As it ran southeasterly instead of easterly it cut nearly five miles of travel compared to the Crown Point Road. We have tried, unsuccessfully as yet, to persuade a number of persons to trace the Ticonderoga branch of Crown Point Road.

As far back as 1861, Elias Hall, son of a soldier who had "walked the Old French Road in 1759"²⁶ wrote that "the state surveyor is now unable to locate this road on the west side of the mountains." This may explain doubts as to Walling and Hagar's map and uncertainties a century later.

Various chapters of the D.A.R. have erected numerous stone markers along the Crown Point Road; some of those on the Ticonderoga branch may not be accurately placed, as they do not seem to line up realistically. However, on Route 22A the granite marker at the first intersection south of the former Orwell railroad crossing and more than a mile south of the Shoreham boundary reads "Mili-

Heights between Lakes Champlain & George

Mount Desiance, a very high
inaccessible for Carriages.
Proposed Work. 

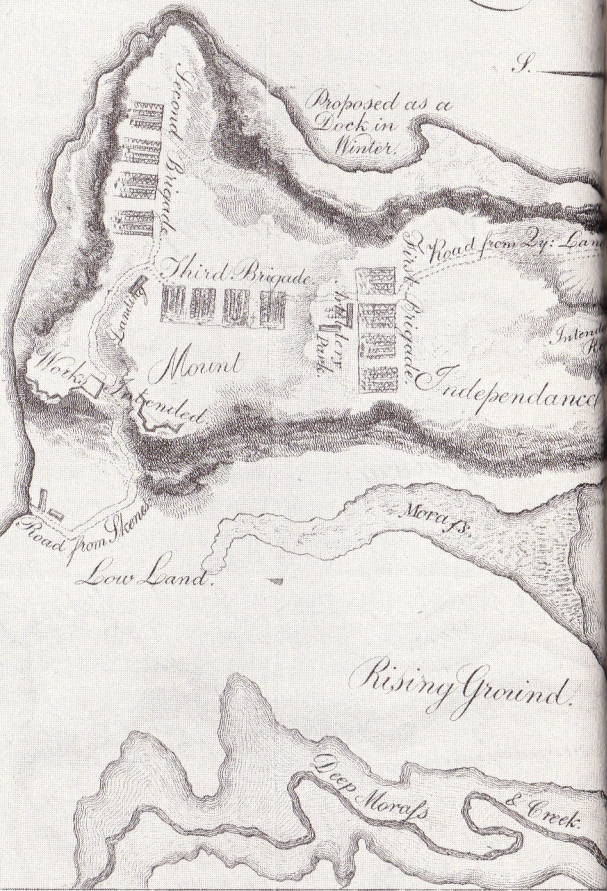
Part

of

Outlet of Lake George.

High Ground.

One Mile.



Low Land.

Low Land.

Landing Lake

Champlain.

Low Land.

Road from Number four.

Ticonderoga & its Dependencies August 1776 J.T.

tary Road from Mount Independence to the Amherst Road. Erected by Hand's Cove Chapter. D.A.R."

In 1958 Mrs. Mary Bodfish of Orwell told us all the members of the committee for this marker had passed away and that the chapter records contain no material about this road, which we have never seen mentioned in any book, document or map, but which could possibly have been used in the few weeks after Mount Independence was for the first time, in July, occupied by soldiers and before the Hubbardton Road was started in September. Tom Daniels of Orwell has found traces of an old roadway eastward crossing East Creek below the Mount. There is also the tradition of soldiers using the spring a few hundred feet southeast of the D.A.R. marker. We have not followed up this short crossroad, and have wondered as to why it should have existed.*

In the winter of 1775-1776, a few months before the Army officers considered and decided on fortifying Mount Independence, the situation at Boston was crucial, and some of the roads just discussed were used to transport guns and material through Vermont to Boston. Washington had tardily been appointed Commander in Chief of the Continental Army on June 15; the Americans were defeated at Bunker Hill on June 17; they were in desperate straits for military equipment and ammunition, with which to continue the siege of Boston in July. General, then Colonel, Henry Knox made an expedition to Fort George at the south end of Lake George, and to Ticonderoga and Crown Point, to gather all available guns and ammunition. More than fifty cannon, howitzers and mortars, and other materials from Crown Point and Ticonderoga were hauled through the winter snows to Boston, leaving the northern garrisons in a bad plight. "The winter of 1775-1776 was a terrible one for the American garrison at Ticonderoga. The sufferings were worse than at Valley Forge. Many men froze to death in their tents."²⁷

A large colored poster, published in 1947 by the Dixon Pencil Company to advertise Ticonderoga pencils, shows Knox's men and oxen hauling the dismantled cannon on sleds over the hills. The caption reads, "Immortal Guns. General Knox and his men taking guns from Fort Ticonderoga to General Washington at Dorchester Heights in

OPPOSITE. Portion of Trumbull's map, August 1776, with the three brigades spread out on the Mount before the Star Fort and Horseshoe Battery were built, but with road running from north to south. The star shaped stockade fort and the hospital were built later.

*Addenda, 99.

the siege of Boston in the winter of 1776." This colored illustration is also reproduced in *Vermont Life*²⁸ Autumn 1948, and in Newton's *The Vermont Story*.²⁹ When the writers first saw this poster, which shows Fort "Ti." across the lake, we thought it might portray the Hubbardton Military Road. But these guns were hauled more than six months before our road was built. We then thought they must have been drawn over the Crown Point Road. But a bronze tablet in the central yard at Fort Ticonderoga shows a map of their route south from "Ti." to Skenesborough, Fort Edward and Albany, where they crossed the Hudson on the ice, thence southerly into western Massachusetts and eastward to Boston. Another bronze tablet to the same effect is mounted on a boulder on the library lawn at Hudson Falls. In crossing the Mohawk River ice at Half Moon they lost one cannon (recently fished up and now set up in the central yard at the Fort). A third tablet stands at Woronoco, near Westfield, Massachusetts. This roundabout way was evidently the quickest and easiest at that time, for it was much more heavily travelled, especially in winter. A stone bridge at Wayland, Massachusetts, twenty miles west of Boston, had to be abandoned in 1956, damaged beyond repair after 233 years. Over it a train of forty sleds drawn by 80 yokes of oxen brought the guns to Boston.³⁰ No doubt this was the train that went through Westfield.

However, data at East Poultney seem to indicate that some of the guns, probably from Crown Point, were sledged "over corduroy roads down from Castleton by the old road [to Pawlet and Bennington] made the turn at Eagle Tavern, [around the northeast corner of the Green] over the old road where I had marked in 1935, 'The First Union Church in America,' then south over a bridge over Poultney River, the remnants of the old masonry still there the last time I looked at the site, and on top of the hills, to avoid sniping by British and Indians, and on in the direction of Boston."³¹ These guns probably came down over the Crown Point Road to Sudbury, thence by the East Hubbardton Road to Castleton. See also W. E. Johnson's article "The Eagle Tavern."³² Perhaps they took this roundabout way because the Pawlet, Bennington, Williamstown road was in better shape than some portions of the Crown Point Road. But there is also evidence that some of the cannon went via the latter road. Photographer C. E. Walker²³ says that below Twenty-Mile Encampment and Whitesville, "I have seen the rotted logs which were piled against the embankment at Downer's to ease the cannon for Dorchester Heights down onto the lower level to follow the North

*Addenda, 100.

Branch of Black River." The best account of Knox's trip, with an excellent map of the route taken by the main party, appears in *American Heritage* magazine.³⁴

MILITARY SIGNIFICANCE OF MOUNT INDEPENDENCE

It is difficult to explain the regrettable neglect of what, as we suggested above, is in many respects the most interesting and important historic site in Vermont. Chimney Point and the Hubbardton Battlefield are by many others thought to be Vermont's chief historic spots. The Mount is infrequently mentioned in state histories of the last half century.

The text and index, for example, of one of the best known and excellent Vermont histories, Earle Newton's,¹⁵ makes no mention of Mount Independence, though two or three of the maps show it.

No state official or organization has initiated any action to acquire, recognize and develop for public use the peninsula, once a hive of activity, on the Vermont shore, in Orwell, opposite Fort Ticonderoga. Adjutant General Francis W. Billado deserves credit for his long time interest in the Mount and his efforts, though unsuccessful, to persuade one of the Veteran's organizations to develop it. Judge Milford K. Smith of Rutland has also urged that the state acquire the Mount. Here several thousand American soldiers spent their time and labors for a year, elaborate fortifications and a hospital were built, many gave their lives for lack of sanitary and medical knowledge and proper shelter.*

If not technically true, as one local historian³⁵ has claimed, that "The Mount" was "designated as Headquarters of the Northern Army," it was unquestionably considered by the Continental Congress and by the Generals in charge as more important militarily than famous Fort Ticonderoga across the lake, which continued to be officially designated for orders and dispatches from the combined fortifications. This was no doubt because the name Ticonderoga was already so widely known and because the old stone buildings were soon repaired for occupancy by the officers directing operations on both sides of the lake. Many dispatches and reports, however, were dated from Mount Independence. A beautiful granite fourteen foot shaft on solid rock foundation was erected August 20, 1908 by Hand's Cove Chapter of the D.A.R. near the north shore of the Mount. "Memorial to the brave soldiers buried here from 1775 to 1784 in unmarked graves and to the military importance of this mount in the War of the Revolution," are the words on its west face.

*Addenda, 101.

Judge Robert Bascom's address³⁶ does some justice to the Mount's importance.

The only comprehensive account of Mount Independence was written as recently as 1954 for the Fort Ticonderoga Association, which now owns most of the land on the Mount. It was originally purchased by the late Stephen H. P. Pell, who gave it to his son John H. G. Pell, who in turn in 1952 deeded it to the Association. This eighteen page article³⁷ by Thomas B. Furcron of Brooklyn College, the Fort Association's 1953 Fellow, incorporates much of the material from the second, 1949, draft of this present report. But as it is not easily available to readers of *Vermont History* we give a shortened account which in turn borrows from Mr. Furcron's article which is very fully footnoted.

In May 1775, when Crown Point and Ticonderoga fell to the colonists' surprise attacks by Ethan Allen and Colonel Warner, the Continental Congress determined to retain these strongly fortified positions, and on May 22 directed General Schuyler to command the Northern Department including the Champlain forts, with headquarters at Albany. The British were planning to attack through Canada; the colonies must hold the Hudson River-Lake Champlain waterway. All the residents in the New England colonies and New York were aware of the constant threat to their safety; the British were at their northern gateway. "If the British could control the line of water communications from the St. Lawrence through Lake Champlain, Lake George and on down the Hudson, they might form in Canada an expedition which would cut the colonies along that line, isolate the New England colonies and conquer them at leisure."³⁸

The chief reason for building the Hubbardton Military Road was that Mount Independence in July 1776 became the major northern military post. Fort "Ti" had fallen into bad disrepair. Colonel John Trumbull's scale map of Mount Independence in August 1776³⁹ shows how comparatively unimportant the Ticonderoga works were then considered. The fort itself is labelled "Old Fort and Redoubts out of Repair." The first, second and third Brigades with elaborate fortifications were laid out on Independence, not on the New York side, a Fourth Brigade was located just inside the old French lines to the west of Fort "Ti." and these were repaired and continued eastward to the lake more than a half mile north of the Fort. Three redoubts were to be built along the shoulder north of the Fort. "Proposed Work," a fortification, was to be built near the lake at the foot of Mount Defiance, which Trumbull labelled "A very high hill sup-

posed inaccessible for carriages." This and the redoubts never materialized. See Trumbull's Map, reproduced in part, on page 98.

Early in 1776 after the Americans had made the unsuccessful attack on Quebec and feared reprisal by the British, a study was made by the American generals to see what should be done in the Champlain valley. A commission sent by the Continental Congress to Canada to win the Canadians to the American cause, consisted of Samuel Chase, Charles Carroll of Carrollton and John Carroll, a Jesuit priest, all three from Maryland, and Benjamin Franklin. According to Judge Bottum, one of the Carrolls, Chase and Franklin actually visited Mount Independence, which was even then being considered for fortification. Bottum, and Van Doren's biography⁴⁰ indicate this would have been on or about April 24, on their trip north. As the Colonies had been bitterly critical of Canada and religious animosities had been aroused, this mission failed.

Quoting from Crockett:

Early in June 1776, when General Schuyler saw the probability that the Northern army must abandon Canada, he made plans for strengthening the positions on Lake Champlain. He hoped to send an engineer to repair Ticonderoga, but held that a post on the ground opposite the old fortress 'would more effectually secure us against the enemy.' He so reported to General Washington, who wrote him on July 13 that Chase and Carroll, the commissioners who were sent to Canada by Congress, as associates of Benjamin Franklin, were of the same opinion, but he asked it if would not be well to fortify both Ticonderoga and the point opposite. Schuyler replied to Washington, June 17, 1776: 'If a fortress was erected on the east side of Lake Champlain, nearly opposite Ticonderoga, it would equally command both communications, with this advantage, that the militia of the northern colonies are more at hand for immediate succor, may all march by land to the post, and attempt to raise a siege.'

Early in July Generals Schuyler and Gates, having occasion to go to Crown Point, took Colonel Trumbull across the lake to inspect the site of the proposed fortifications, and the latter made such a favorable report that at a council of general officers held on July 7, 'it was unanimously resolved to take post there'.

In other words, Mount Independence, not Fort Ticonderoga, was to be the chief point of defense, and for the reasons given above in Schuyler's letter to Washington, in which Schuyler's rival Gates concurred. "The possible loss of Fort Ticonderoga itself would not be a complete disaster," Schuyler wrote on July 12. Among other proofs that Schuyler and others considered Mount Independence more important than Ticonderoga is his letter of instruction to St. Clair,

June 5, 1777, when the latter was taking over the command of both forts.⁴²

Colonel Trumbull in describing this location, said:

At the northern point it runs low into the lake, offering a good landing place; from thence the land rose to an almost level plateau elevated from fifty to seventy-five feet above the lake, and surrounded on three sides, by a natural wall of rock, everywhere steep, and sometimes an absolute precipice sinking to the lake. On the fourth and eastern side of the position ran a morass and deep creek at the front of the rock, which strengthened that front, leaving room only by an easy descent, for a road to the east, and to the landing from the southern end of the lake. We found plentiful springs of good water, at the foot of the rock.⁴³

Crockett gives the following details:

General orders issued at Ticonderoga on July 13 directed Captain Stevens of the artillery to encamp with his company 'near the landing on the east side of the lake, where all the artillery, stores, etc. are to be landed.' The Pennsylvania regiments were directed to encamp 'upon the new ground' July 16, where Colonel St. Clair and Colonel Wayne were to lay out the works. Orders were issued, July 22, to the three brigades commanded by General Benedict Arnold, Colonel Reed and Colonel Stark to encamp as soon as possible upon the ground allotted them upon the heights. General orders of July 30, showed that three of the four brigades were stationed at Mount Independence. As a result of the clearing of the forest and the exposing of the soil to the hot summer sun, a fever became prevalent, said to resemble the yellow fever, which sometimes proved fatal in two or three days.

The naming of Mount Independence occurred on July 18, 1776, when a courier arrived at Fort Ticonderoga with news of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence. A salute of thirteen guns was fired and the neighboring eminence was christened Mount Independence.

Schuyler was so well pleased with the strength of Mount Independence, that he wrote Washington July 24: 'Can they drive us out of the strong camp on the east side? I think not. I think it impossible for twenty thousand men to do it, ever so well provided, if the camp consists of less than even a quarter of that number, indifferently furnished, such is the natural strength of the ground.'

In accordance with a resolution of the Continental Congress, a general hospital was erected on Mount Independence. The summit of that mountain is a table-land and here at a later date, a strong, star-shaped fort was erected, surrounded by pickets. In the center was a square of barracks.

By direction of General Gates, a road was cut from the west side of Mount Independence to join the road at Castleton, and a good bridge was constructed across the Otter Creek at Rutland [where it joined the main Crown Point Road]. This work was performed under the direction of Lieut. Col. John Barrett of the Cumberland county militia. [Note. "Join the road at Castleton" is a phrase that has caused us much confusion, for we find no

evidence that the Hubbardton Military Road joined or followed any then existing road after it turned southeasterly from the East Hubbardton road at Ransomvale in East Hubbardton, thence through the Belgo Gap, meeting the 1772 Skenesborough Road west of Whipple Hollow in West Rutland.]

During the summer and fall of 1776, the greater part of the army at Ticonderoga was engaged in throwing up intrenchments, mounting guns, and securing provisions. [It is evident that 'Ticonderoga' in the foregoing sentence, as in so many other connections, actually referred to Mount Independence, which has suffered from the confusion in not distinguishing it clearly.] Early in September the barracks and parade ground were finished. The intrenching tools were so few that it was necessary to divide the men into shifts that the tools might not be idle at any time." [Messages in Oct. 1776 from Gen. Gates to Governor Trumbull and Gen. Schuyler were filled with pleas for more shovels.⁴⁴] "The works were completed in November, 1776, under the direction of Colonel, later General, Wayne. Among the garrison of 3,000 men there were several regiments from New York and one each from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Connecticut, with a large number of men from the New Hampshire Grants. The Massachusetts troops came by way of Springfield, Vt., Rutland, Castleton, and Skenesborough" [a few weeks before the Mt. Independence road was completed.]

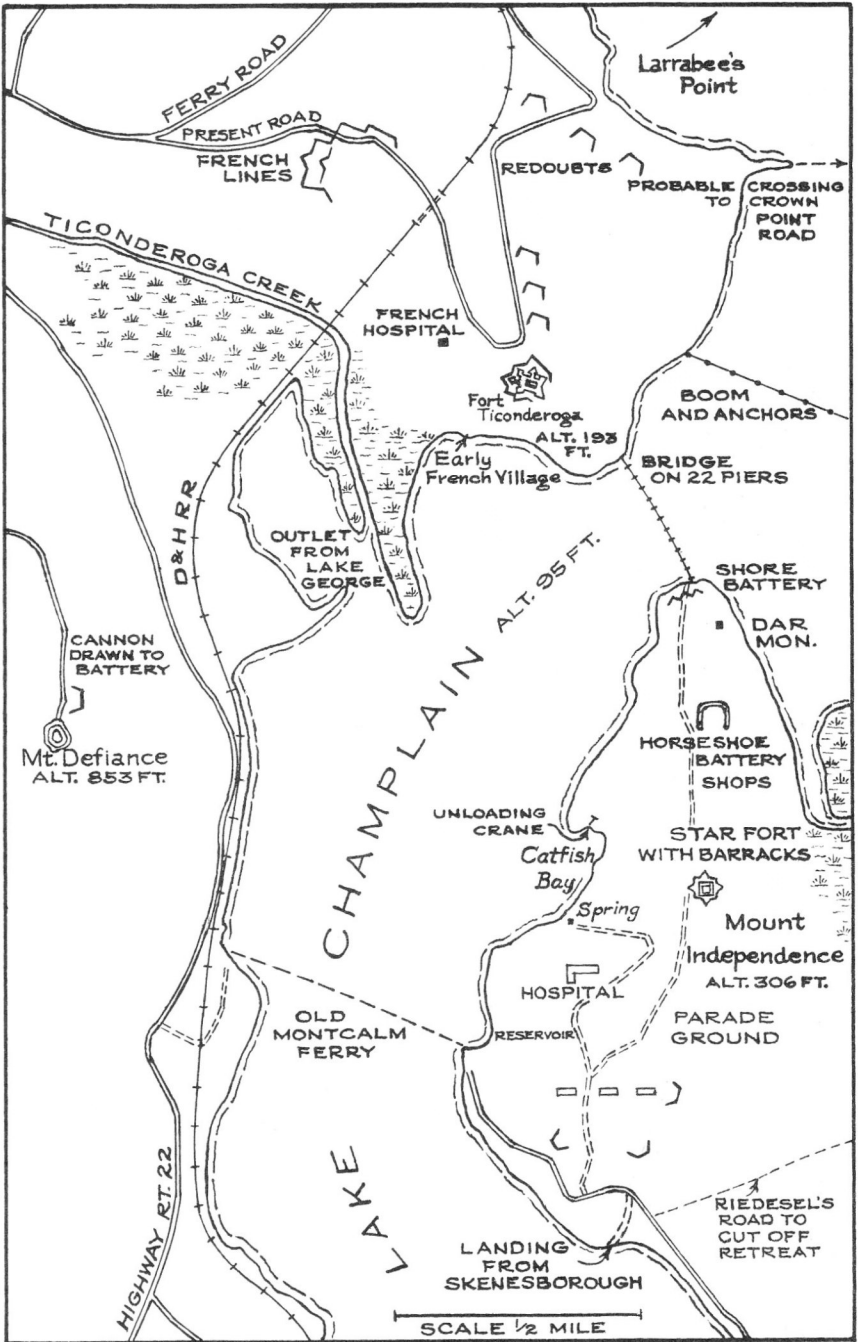
Conditions were still deplorable in September 1776, Col. Wigglesworth wrote in a letter: 'Gentlemen, I wish you could transport yourselves to this place to see the distressed situation of these troops. There are no medicines of any avail. It would make a heart of stone melt to hear the moans and see the distresses of the dying.'

In time, however, conditions improved. The smallpox gradually was conquered, and, although there was some fever and ague, the health and spirits of the men showed a great change for the better. Fresh beef and mutton added a pleasant variety to a salt pork diet and the distress caused by lack of tents was alleviated, in a measure at least, by the arrival of one hundred thousand feet of boards for purposes of shelter.

The sufferings of the army in Canada, and for several months after their return to Crown Point and Ticonderoga, deserve to rank with the privations endured by Washington's troops at Valley Forge.

The foregoing paragraphs are, in the main, quoted or condensed from Crockett;⁴⁵ more detailed references and a host of footnotes are given in Furcron.

Space precludes describing the various fortifications and works. Each involved immense toil, often under pressure from fears of impending attack. Instead we have attempted a diagram based on the latest, 1950, U.S. Survey⁴⁶ because only Trumbull's map of the Mount was nearly accurate as to the shape and contours of the area. On this we have marked in approximately the more important items from two other maps, ^{47, 48} drawn by the Colonists and by the British respectively, showing the defenses in July 1777. Tom Daniels and Capt.



MOUNT INDEPENDENCE—FORT TICONDEROGA AND MOUNT DEFIANCE, WITH MAJOR WORKS, 1777.

Edward G. Farmer, U.S.N. retired, of Orwell, are constructing an eight foot long model of the Mount.*

Among the numerous "works" on the Mount, four are best known and most frequently described. The Shore or Water Battery stood at the north point a short distance from the lake and directly across from "Ti." It was a heavy masonry structure and its foundations are still visible, though like the other masonry on the Mount most of the stones have been carted away by neighboring farmers and lake dwellers during nearly two centuries of neglect. Farther up the hill was the Horseshoe Battery, a more pretentious enclosure meant to protect both the landing and the Shore Battery. On the long plateau top of the Mount and about half way along its axis, a Stockade Star Fort was erected covering more than an acre and enclosing barracks for 600 men, with other brigades in barracks close by. There was also a new hospital. Protected by these considerable fortifications, on three levels, and with steep precipices on the west side along the lake, and on the east dropping steeply to the wide difficult morass of Vermont clay mud silt, and debris, threaded by East Creek, the colonists were justified in considering Mount Independence far less vulnerable than the old Fort on the opposite shore.

But in September and October 1776 they constructed a fourth major preventive, the famous chain boom and bridge, crossing the more than 1,500 feet between the north point landing of the Mount to a point just north of the nearest point on the New York shore, where the landing ground was not so steep. These barriers, firmly anchored, were expected to stop the British ships. Unfortunately the currents and the ice broke these up early in the winter and they had to be rebuilt the next spring. The use of "cassoons" or caissons, or piers, was something new in this frontier area. The heavy timbers, three or four feet thick and twenty-five feet long, were hewed out in February and made up in squares of four, chained together and filled in between by heavy stones; there were 22 of these piers. To get these into place vertically and hold them was a heartbreaking task especially when in May a heavy gale turned over the partly finished work. It was completed in June and the floating bridge, about twelve feet wide, was built in sections chained between the piers. According to a colored picture map of the area recently published at the Fort⁴⁹ the heavy chain boom with links an inch and a half thick, to stop the British ships, was stretched across a few hundred feet north of the bridge, doubtless to protect the bridge.

Two engineers labored hard on the fortifications. Colonel Jeduthan

*Addenda, 107.

Baldwin was not a trained engineer; there were few in those days. But as a diligent practical and resourceful planner, layer-out and supervisor he erected works which won praise from the British when they took possession. His *Diary*,⁵⁰ from July 6, 1776 when he received orders from Crown Point, probably from General Schuyler, to proceed to Ticonderoga as Chief Engineer of the Northern Army, until July 5, 1777, when the Americans evacuated the forts, is full of interesting detail. "As my business calls, I am on Mount Independence some days two or three times in a day." Among his many jobs was the road built from north end to south end of the Mount, somewhat more than a mile and shown by dotted lines in the Trumbull 1776 map herewith, which also shows where the Hubbardton Military Road led southward from the Mount. We found no mention in Baldwin's diary of the road from the Mount to Rutland Falls; evidently Colonel Baldwin had one job to do, Colonel Barrett had another job to do, and neither minded the other man's business, though the two pieces of road tied together. In May 1777 Lieutenant-Colonel Thaddeus Kosciuszko, the Polish patriot and engineer, arrived and joined at once in all the activity, as assistant to Baldwin. The Horseshoe Battery, which the British praised, was built by Kosciuszko. The chapter on Kosciuszko at Ticonderoga, in his biography,⁵¹ shows that most of his work during a two month stay was on the Mount. Unfortunately his rank as Baldwin's assistant, or perhaps a lack of frankness with his chief, discouraged his criticisms of Baldwin's ideas, and he failed to insist and prevail over Baldwin in what he considered failure to fortify Mounts Independence and Defiance adequately.

The colonists had already experienced one threat of British attack. All through the spring and summer of 1776, preparations were made for an expedition to attack the British in Canada by water, and under Benedict Arnold the fleet which the American troops had hastily constructed at Ticonderoga, Crown Point and Whitehall (twelve of * the fifteen "gondelos and galleys" were built at Whitehall) was assembled at Crown Point, the "First U.S. Fleet In Conflict,"⁵² and it left there on August 24. The details of this expedition and Arnold's resourcefulness in holding off the British when the Americans met defeat at Quebec and retreated up the lake, are highly creditable to Arnold. The failure of the Continental Congress to recognize his great ability and courage, shown also in his vital and heroic part at Saratoga, no doubt added to his frustration in having to give first place to Ethan Allen in taking the Fort the year before, and fanned

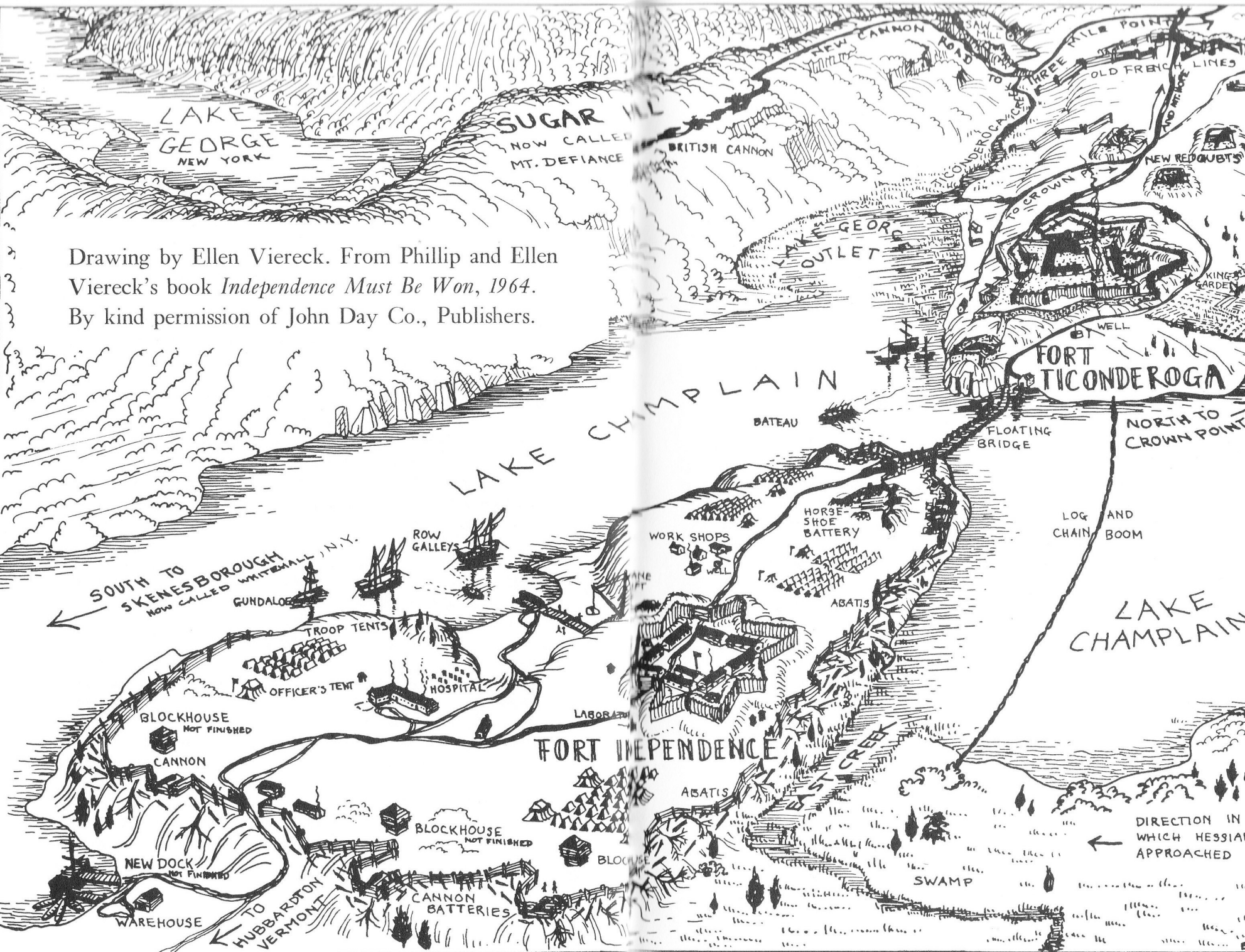
*Addenda, 108.

his bitter resentment and later disloyalty. The Americans were forced to retreat nevertheless and on October 14, 1776 the expedition was back at Crown Point, closely pursued by the British, who captured many of the American boats. The Battle of Valcour Island on October 11 was one of the incidents in this expedition. In a letter describing Arnold's conduct Gates, who had appointed Arnold as fleet commander, Aug. 7, 1776, wrote to Schuyler, "few men ever met with as many hairbreadth escapes in so short a space of time."

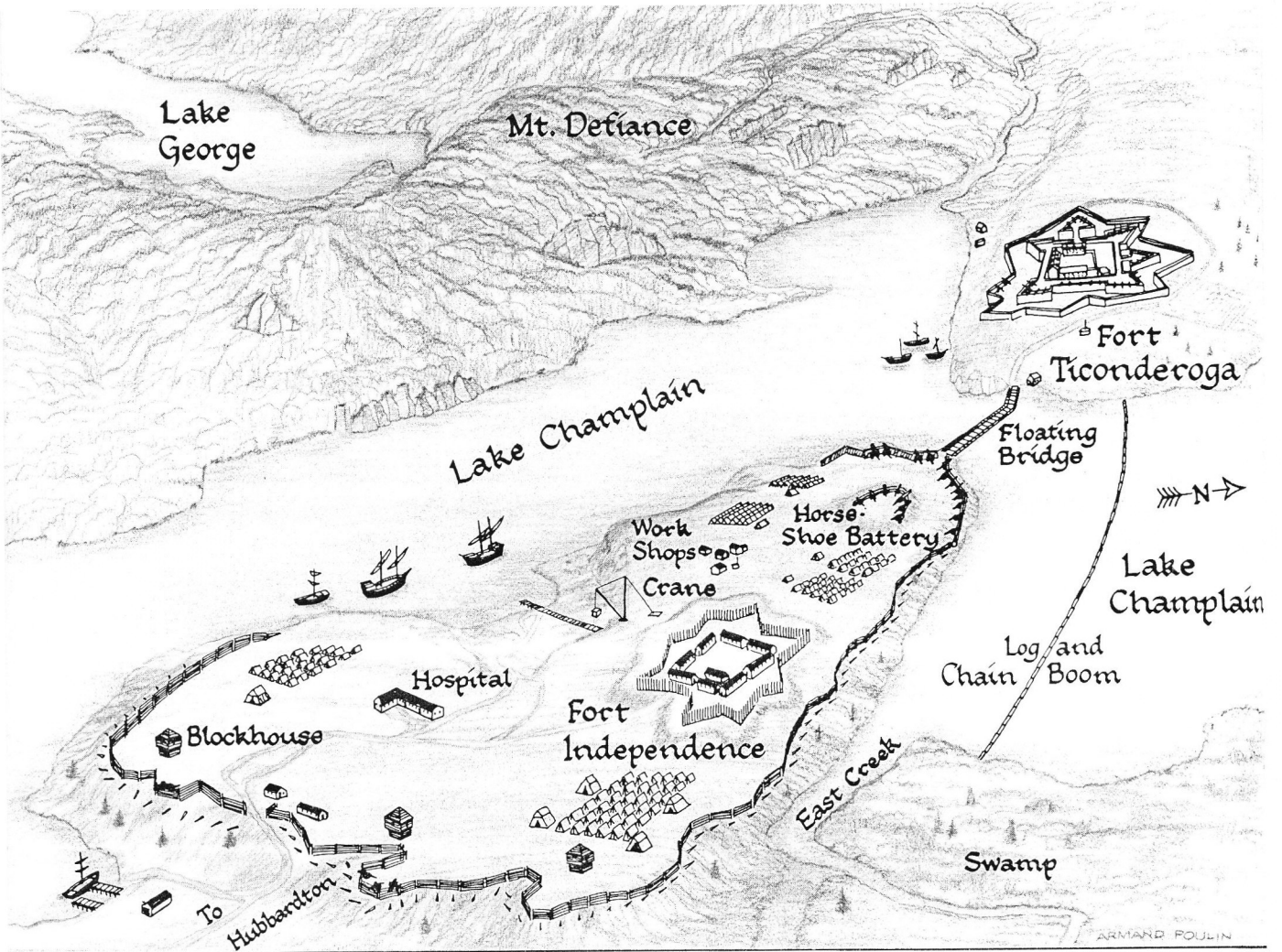
On the same day that Arnold reached Crown Point he destroyed the works there and removed the troops and stores to Ticonderoga. The British General Carleton close behind landed a force at Crown Point which occupied both east and west shores of the lake in a plan to proceed against Ticonderoga. But "a great wind" blew up on the next day and for eight days it was impossible for the British ships to start out. A lucky gale of wind for the Americans, for in those eight days they made such headway in surrounding themselves with cannon that when the British renewed their attack on October 27, Carleton was forced to withdraw from the attack on Ticonderoga and he returned to Crown Point. The Americans were so strong and Carleton's force so small that he then decided to withdraw to Canada, the rear guard of the British Army leaving there on November 3 and the American troops taking over. Military historians credit the Americans for delaying the British army for a whole year in its attempt to pierce the heart of the colonies by way of the Hudson Valley.

THE BIG MISTAKE: NOT FORTIFYING MOUNT DEFIANCE

This close call from one attack by the British failed to bring reconsideration of the continued warning by Colonel John Trumbull and Benedict Arnold. Most disastrously and for what reason, other than plain stubbornness, it is now impossible to understand or to excuse, Mount Defiance, which was higher than Mount Hope, a block house north of the Fort, or Mount Independence, and directly overlooked Fort Ticonderoga from a height 650 feet greater, and commanded the outlet of Lake George and the entire American encampments and works, was not fortified. The latest U. S. map of Ticonderoga quadrangle, 1950⁴⁶ shows Lake Champlain as 95 feet above sea level, Fort "Ti." as 193 feet, Mount Independence as 300 feet, and the top of Mount Defiance as 853 feet. Gates and Schuyler insisted that the British with their cannon could not possibly climb the steep slopes to occupy that height. It would have taken 10,000 men to man completely all the fortifications at Ticonderoga and the



Drawing by Ellen Viereck. From Phillip and Ellen Viereck's book *Independence Must Be Won*, 1964. By kind permission of John Day Co., Publishers.



Mount Independence as it may have looked in 1777. It commanded a view to the north; Fort Ticonderoga guarded the south.

Mount, for they extended in a half circle two and a half miles long, and St. Clair, less than a month in command, when Burgoyne arrived, had only 2800 regulars and 900 new and undisciplined militia.

“Around Mt. Defiance might be written a chapter of error and incompetence which, in the perspective of time, would seem almost unbelievable.”⁵³ General Horatio Gates, being chiefly in charge, may have been responsible for this failure, but Schuyler had been there to study the situation and by many is considered most at fault for his over-confidence, expressed in paragraphs quoted above, when he issued orders to occupy and develop the Mount, the year before. One of his nicknames was “the stubborn Dutchman.” William L. Stone says⁵⁴ that Stone’s father was told by Colonel John Trumbull, then Adjutant General of the Northern Army, that Trumbull had pointed out to the other officers in 1776 that it “was an error” to assume the British could not scale this mountain. But these protests, strongly seconded by Arnold, deserve to be read in Trumbull’s autobiography: “Our entire position formed an extensive crescent [more than three miles long] of which the center was a lofty eminence called Mount Defiance . . . which rises precipitously from the water to a height of six hundred feet . . . This important position had hitherto been neglected by the engineers of all parties, French, English and American.” He then recounts his arguing the matter with his fellow officers at General Gates’ mess table where his plea to fortify Defiance was ridiculed, upon which he obtained permission to fire cannon shot at Mount Defiance from the north point of Mount Independence. Against the opinion of Major Stevens the artillery officer, a twelve pound and six pound cannon were discharged, and both hit close to the summit. But the other officers still claimed “the summit was inaccessible to an enemy,” whereupon he and Benedict Arnold, Colonel Wayne and other officers rowed across the lake and climbed to the top; “it was obvious to all that there could be no difficulty in driving up a loaded carriage . . . Our present position required at least ten thousand men and an hundred pieces of artillery, for its doubtful security . . . A small but strong post [on Mount Defiance] commanded by an officer who would maintain it to the last extremity, would be a more effectual and essentially a less expensive defense of this pass, than all our present extended lines.” He then drew up a report on the matter with a diagram and figures as to the troops required for his project, compared to the existing plans. The resulting expense of the two systems “was as twenty to one nearly in favor of” the Mount Defiance scheme. His whole effort got no results, but the events of July 1777 proved all his predictions correct.^{55*}

Another basic trouble was that Washington, Schuyler and the Continental Congress had assumed that the British at Quebec were preparing for attack on the Atlantic coast cities; they had not manned nor provisioned the Mount and Ticonderoga to take care of a large attacking force. Because of political pressure the Congress, which kept the appointment of officers in its own hands instead of giving this authority to Washington, appointed Gates to succeed Schuyler, much to Washington's disgust, so there was a series of commanders each jealous of the others, with St. Clair arriving to take charge only at the last minute. Just before Gates was superseded, he approved in April 1777, Kosciuszko's earnest plea to fortify Mount Defiance, but Schuyler did nothing about it.⁵⁶ The attitude of Congress and of Washington, to these contending generals, and the effect of these differences on the morale of the northern troops, was to weaken the preparations when word came of Burgoyne's invasion. Congress, in a panic when it awoke to the facts, authorized General Washington to call on the eastern states to raise additional regiments for defense of "Ticonderoga."⁵⁷

BURGOYNE'S INVASION

After General Guy Carleton's failure to take Crown Point, and his retreat up the lake November 3, 1776, the period until the summer of 1777 was one of "watchful waiting" at the Mount. A large number of troops were kept in camp at Mount Independence and Ticonderoga as a precaution against attack from the north. Of the thousands of Americans who travelled our road, and camped on the Mount, several hundred died there in two epidemics, of typhoid and small pox. They lie in unmarked graves. Their hardships should never be forgotten. General Gates had reported to General Schuyler, October 4, 1776, "Our communications are free and unmolested, and the eastern post and travellers are continually coming to Mount Independence by Otter Creek and the roads that lead from thence, no scouts of the enemy appearing to disturb them."⁵⁸ November 5, writing again he mentioned that "there is an excellent bridge built over Otter Creek at Rutland, and a good road cut from Mt. Independence."⁵⁹

It was the invasion by General Burgoyne which brought the next and most important event in the history of Mount Independence. In February 1777, a scouting party discovered that 500 British troops were at St. Johns, just north of the Canadian line, and other British and Indians were already at Grand Isle. Obviously, the British were preparing to come up the lake and attack Ticonderoga again.

General Burgoyne, popularly called "Gentleman Johnny," and "Handsome Jack," who had a way with the ladies and had eloped with the Earl of Derby's lively daughter, had been appointed in March 1777 and sent across the Atlantic to succeed the able Guy Carleton in command of the northern British army. He was a man of resourcefulness, with much experience, but his military and political judgement are by many considered inferior to Carleton's. Among his 4,200 German troops most were Hessians, secured by conscription from Hesse and Brunswick. They themselves got little pay, most of the money paid by the British for their help going to the Hessian government. Recent studies show that, including the officers, the army numbered 4,700 British soldiers, 4,200 Germans and a total of 9,400 men, including Tories, Canadians and Indians.⁶⁰ With forty-two brass cannon the British and Germans arrived in Quebec in May 1777, and the army shortly started from St. Johns and reached the foot of Lake Champlain in June. A good popular account of Burgoyne and his expedition, with illustrations, appears in *American Heritage*, for June 1956.⁶¹ His was part of a three pronged campaign, in which General Howe with another army was to strike north from New York, a third army under General St. Leger was to get up to Oswego on Lake Ontario by way of the St. Lawrence from Montreal thence east and the three armies were to concentrate on capturing Albany after conquering the Champlain Valley, the Hudson Valley and the Mohawk Valley. This is shown in the accompanying diagram, reprinted by courtesy of the Saratoga National Historical Park.⁶²

It was not until June 5 that General Arthur St. Clair was assigned to command the Americans at Ticonderoga, arriving there on the 12th. He was dismayed to find a small force, half trained, poorly equipped and half armed. Everything was in poor condition to receive an attack. Further breast works were quickly thrown up at the foot of Mount Independence, and a battery constructed at the mouth of East Creek. The old French lines just west of Fort Ticonderoga were strengthened and guarded by a block house. The earthworks with guns on Mount Hope overlooking the marsh just west of the river flowing out of Lake George into Lake Champlain were reconditioned,⁶³ with new batteries on the land just below, while another outpost was established at the saw mill on the river and one at the rapids at the outlet of Lake George.

On July 2, 1777, Colonel Seth Warner was sent by General St. Clair to get reinforcements. He wrote ahead from Rutland to the Vermont Convention in session at Windsor that "an army of 10,000

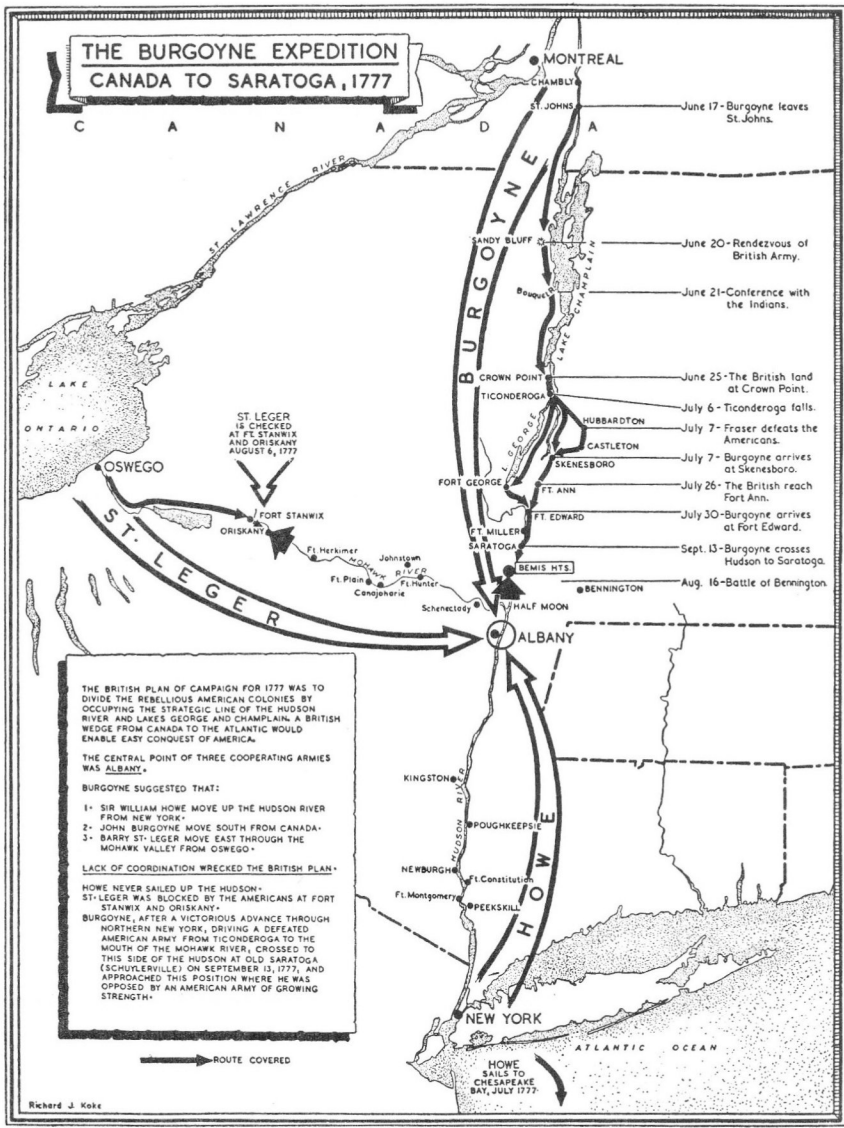


Diagram showing the three pronged attack planned by British to destroy and conquer the Hudson, Mohawk and Champlain Valleys, converging on Albany. Howe failed to start up the Hudson; St. Leger was stopped halfway from Lake Ontario to Albany; Burgoyne at Saratoga. Shows American retreat through Hubbardton. Drawing by Richard J. Koke, courtesy U. S. National Park Service.⁶²

veterans, one half of them German, had been collected in the province of Canada and attended by a formidable body of savages and a corps of Tories, was approaching the post at Ticonderoga." On July 5, he was back at Ticonderoga with the 900 militia just mentioned. General Riedesel, who commanded the Hessians, says 800 men had arrived on the third.⁶⁴ So either Seth Warner must have left before the second, or met the men who "were on their way from New Hampshire with ammunition and provisions." Hiland Hall says they reached "Ti." on July 5⁶⁵. But the position was already untenable. The British had already, July 2, captured the battery at Mount Hope, northwest of the Fort, and Riedesel and his troops had cut their way along the east shore, ready to surround the rear of the Mount. The Chief of Engineers, Lieutenant Twiss, had noted Mount Defiance, as a strategic point, unfortified. Within twenty-four hours, mostly under cover of darkness and without any cannonading from the Americans on Independence, his men cleared a narrow road up its steep flank, and on the morning of July 5 it was arrayed with heavy cannon on a shoulder about sixty feet below the summit, and it swarmed with red coats. According to publicity given out in 1950 at the opening of the new scenic toll road from Ticonderoga Village to the summit, "oxen dragged eight 24-pounders and 8-inch howitzers to a point near the top, where their positions are still visible."⁶⁶ But * the circular distributed in 1951-1952 to tourists visiting the summit states that six pieces of artillery were "dragged up by ropes," and this is borne out by testimony at St. Clair's trial. Despite the 900 new soldiers just arrived, that evening St. Clair's council of war unanimously decided that the British could wipe out the American army, and that Mount Independence must be abandoned before daylight the next morning. No other course could have saved his army.

EVACUATION OF THE FORT AND THE MOUNT

We have not space for the details of Burgoyne's attack, told so completely and interestingly in Lossing's hundred year old *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*,⁶⁷ in Chapter 5 of Hoffman Nickerson's *Turning Point of the Revolution*,⁶⁸ and in a chapter of Christopher Ward's two volume 1952 account of the battles of the Revolution.⁶⁹ The descriptions by the two generals, Riedesel⁷⁰ and Fraser,⁷¹ who pursued the Americans to Hubbardton are full of details. And as this retreat was over our road we next give an account of it.

The Americans started their retreat from the Fort at 2 a.m. and from the Mount at 4 a.m. July 6. Was any artillery drawn over our

*Addenda, 114.

“Military Road” on this retreat? “128 pieces of artillery, their shipping and batteaux, 1,748 barrels of flour, 70 tons of salt provisions, and a large drove of cattle,” fell into Burgoyne’s hands, and these would naturally and easily be transported by water to Skenesborough (Whitehall).^{72, 73} One German and one British regiment were left in garrison at Mount Independence and “Ti.”

Evidently the British thought that this pursuit through the woods did not warrant delaying to take artillery. One of his officers⁷⁴ states that Fraser “at the head of a little more than half the vanguard and without any artillery (it had been impossible to take it along, although he had tried very hard) met 2,000 rebels, [i.e. at Hubbardton] which were in a very good position.” He says also that Riedesel had the Yaeger Company and some grenadiers and chasseur battalions, indicating no artillery. Hadden says that Fraser was “without Artillery (which with the utmost endeavours it was impossible to get up).”⁷⁵

But the Americans drew some cannon over the road. At Hubbardton, when Riedesel’s Brunswick troops came to the rescue of Fraser’s corps, “The Americans seeing themselves surrounded . . . retreated, leaving behind them twelve pieces of artillery.”⁷⁶ This is confirmed by other records cited in Ward.⁷⁷ Reidesel, early in the spring of 1777, had listed in his journal the American artillery at Ticonderoga and Independence, some of which, including “four four-pounders made at Cambridge, near Boston,” had recently arrived and no doubt had been drawn to Lake Champlain over our road, i.e. via “Number 4” and Rutland to Mount Independence, because it was so much shorter than any other.

Part of the American garrison, “between four and six hundred effectives, with the worst of the sick also, went down the lake to Skenesborough, closely pursued by the English ships, commanded by Burgoyne himself. The rear of the American army, 2400 to 2600 men, retreating along the Military Road, was commanded by Col. Francis, pursued by General Fraser, with 800 or 900 of his men, followed later by Gen. Riedesel.”⁷⁸

As Nickerson says, “The country was heavily wooded. The road was a mere wagon track, cut through the woods the year before and probably unsuitable for guns.”⁷⁹ In spite of General Fraser’s reference to it, as the “great road recently built by the Rebels,” Ward calls it “but a pretense of a road . . . a mere wagon track, new, rough, rutted, and spotted with stumps of trees.”⁸⁰ Anyone who traces its course, winding, inadequately graded, and narrow enough

to just clear the tree trunks, can realize that it was not much of a road. We have not found statements that vehicles were drawn over it, but doubtless the flow of supplies and provisions required both ox-teams and packhorses.

Several participants record that both July 6 and July 7 were "burning hot" days. The general disorder, confusion and hardship on this retreat across part of Rutland County are described in a letter from soldier Cogan to General John Stark, dated Moses Creek, July 17.

Such a retreat was never heard of since the Creation of the world. I was ordered about five of the Clock in the afternoon to draw forty-eight Rounds pr man: afterwards, nine days allowance of provision, which I completed about 2 of the clock in the morning, and about the time I got home the Tents were struck and all was ordered to retreat; but it was daylight before we got below your old house; such order surprised both officers and soldiers . . . they left all the Continental cloathing there; in short every article that belonged to the army; which if properly conducted might be easily saved. . . .

Our main body was within six miles of us, the Indians took & killed a vast number of our men on their Retreats; then was hurried at an unmerciful rate thro' the woods at the rate of thirty five miles a day, obliged to kill oxen belonging to the Inhabitants wherever we got them; before they were half-skinned every soldier was obliged to take a bit and half Roast it over the fire, then before half done was obliged to March,—it is thought we went 100 miles for fear of seeing a Regular. . . .⁸¹

Lieutenant Digby says of the pursuit by Fraser's corps, "From the fort we [the British] were obliged to cross over a boom of boats . . . had they placed one gun so as the grape shot could take the range of the bridge . . . they would, in all probability, have destroyed all or most of us . . . We continued the pursuit the whole day without any sort of provisions . . . excepting one cow we happened to kill in the woods, which without bread, was next to nothing among so many for two days after, a few hours rest at night in the woods was absolutely necessary."⁸²

Fraser's own account⁷¹ is the most complete single detailed narrative of the pursuit. "We marched till one o'clock, in a very sultry day, over a continuous succession of steep and woody hills . . . very expeditiously from four in the morning, in order to harass their rear."⁸³ According to Crockett, "the German dragoons were heavily loaded with equipment—high, heavy jack boots with large spurs, stout, stiff leather breeches, gauntlets reaching high up their arms and a hat with a tuft of feathers." We mention below the silver shoe buckle found in 1946 in West Hubbardton by Bradley St. John. "At his side each officer carried a tremendous broadsword and a carbine

was slung over his shoulder.”⁸⁴ Riedesel, pronounced “Red Hazel” by the Americans, says all the German troops were provided for summer wear long light weight linen trousers, striped with blue and white.⁸⁵ Sketches at the New York Public Library, drawn by a German soldier, show the German Dragoons equipped with heavy sword and carbine but with these pantaloons rather than leather breeches, boots or gauntlets. No doubt the British and German officers wore boots with buckles.

A realistic account of the retreat, in fiction form, is given in Chapter 4 of Bruce Lancaster’s *Guns of Burgoyne*.⁸⁶

To save space we also omit the well known story of the Hubbardton battle, early in the morning of July 7, 1777, where the Americans suffered defeat because their army had divided in two, with General St. Clair’s main force at or on the way to Castleton, and General Riedesel with his Chasseurs and 80 Grenadiers arriving just when Fraser’s men were losing to the American rear guard. Colonel Francis was killed; the Battle Monument marks the spot.

The Americans wisely disappeared to the south and east as soon as the battle ended, some over the hills into Florence and Whipple Hollow. Later and until recent years there was a passible road to Florence and another, noted below, ran east from Belgo Road. But most of the men including St. Clair and Warner reassembled and joined Generals Gates and Arnold in the defeat of Burgoyne at Saratoga three months later. St. Clair, tried by a court-martial the next year, was exonerated on the clear evidence that his retreat and defeat resulted from inadequate preparations by his superiors.⁴² Unfortunately for our project there is in this report no detail as to the road or the march over it, except the short piece at the Mount shown on Trumbull’s map above. St. Clair was highly thought of by Washington, was a member of the Continental Congress of 1785–1787, its President in 1787, and became the first Governor of the Northwest Territory 1787–1802. The British General Simon Fraser, an able leader, was killed two months later at Saratoga, and in his dying hours was comforted by Baroness Riedesel, wife of his German fellow* officer, an attractive woman of notable fortitude and character who accompanied her husband through all the hardships of the campaign, and won the admiration of both sides. Pictures of all these officers appear in the U. S. Park Service Saratoga Battlefield booklet.⁶²

A marker was erected at the Battle Monument by the Historic Sites Commission in 1954, and it has scheduled for dedication in 1959 a beautiful Museum building, of stone. The location of the Museum

*Addenda, 117.

is strategic, for it overlooks the lowland and Sucker Brook just west of the plateau; some of the battle was fought on this lower ground. Many articles have been written on this battle but even yet the locations and sequence of some of it, are still uncertain. Mr. John P. Clement of Rutland is the chief living authority on the battle, and many hope for an elaboration of his recent *Herald* account.^{87*}

AMERICAN ATTEMPT TO RETAKE TICONDEROGA

It is not so well known that the Americans marched over the Mount Independence road again to make another attempt on Ticonderoga in September 1777. Its main objective was to cut off the rear of Burgoyne's army and to free the Americans who had been captured at Hubbardton. The German Lieutenant DuRoi says that eighteen American officers and 260 men had been made prisoners in the Hubbardton engagement and brought back to Ticonderoga.⁸⁸

As General Burgoyne says in his own history of the campaign: "An attempt was made against Ticonderoga by an army assembled under Maj. Gen. Lincoln [about 700 of them under Col. John Brown who rallied them at Pawlet; their route through Poultney, Castleton and East Hubbardton]⁸⁹ who found means to march with a considerable corps from Huberton undiscovered, while another column of his force passed the mountains between Skenesborough and Lake George,⁹⁰ and on the morning of the 18th of September a sudden and general attack was made upon the carrying-place at Lake George, Sugar Hill, Ticonderoga and Mt. Independence." The fort was defended by British Brigadier General Henry W. Powell. They tried four days, "and being repulsed retreated without having done any considerable damage."⁹¹ But Burgoyne should have admitted that Lincoln's men did succeed in freeing a hundred, most of the American prisoners still there, captured 225 British and German prisoners of their own, burned the boats at the dock, captured Mount Independence and the blockhouse on Mount Defiance, and destroyed cattle and the outer works. Their retreat was at daybreak, September 24. A bronze tablet at the Fort, erected by Massachusetts Society of the Colonial Dames in 1935, commemorates Brown's success. According to Nickerson they "retired eastward,"⁹² which means over the Hubbardton road, and evidently there must have been nearly 1000 men on this late September march. Though the British kept possession of the Fort, its inhabitants were removed and the fort was dismantled soon after Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga. In 1780-1781 another British force from Canada under General Haldimand

*Addenda, 118.

was stationed there but the military history of the Fort and the Mount ended in 1782.⁹³ Fear of new attacks by the British hovering along the Lake was the chief reason for the building of Fort Warren at its two locations in Castleton.

The next article will recount the building of the Hubbardton road, which connected Mount Independence with eastern New England, and its route from Mount Independence through the Battlefield.

NOTES

¹ Walter Hill Crockett. *Vermont, the Green Mountain State* (New York, 1921), II, 3-5.

² Joseph L. Wheeler. "The Hubbardton Military Road—1776." *Rutland Herald*, Aug. 24; Aug. 27; Aug. 29; Aug. 31, 1951. With map and airviews.

³ Phyllis Humphreys. "Tracing Old Roads," *Rutland Herald*, Sept. 25; Oct. 4; Nov. 11, 1958.

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⁵ Josiah F. Goodhue. *History of Shoreham*, (Middlebury, 1861), 16-17.

⁶ Letter. *Rutland Herald*, Nov. 30, 1934. Also, "Rebuilds Old Army Road at Castleton," Nov. 22, 1926.

⁷ Frank Maranville, Los Angeles. Letter to J. L. Wheeler, Jan. 22, 1952.

⁸ James D. Scott. *Scott's Map of Rutland County* (Philadelphia, 1854).

⁹ Lucius Eugene Chittenden, "The Capture of Ticonderoga," *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society* III, 40-41; also separately (Rutland, 1872).

¹⁰ Goodhue. *Shoreham*, 13, 16.

¹¹ Daniel Pierce Thompson. *The Green Mountain Boys*, (Montpelier, 1839). 174.

¹² H. Perry Smith and William S. Rann. *History of Rutland County, Vermont*, (Syracuse, 1886), 49.

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¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 619.

¹⁵ Earle William Newton. *The Vermont Story*, (Montpelier, 1949), 94.

¹⁶ Epaphrus Bull. "Journal." *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum*, VIII (July, 1948), 40. Also, *The Narrative of Ebenezer Fletcher* . . . 4th ed., (86 p. N.Y. 1866).

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²³ Harold L. Bailey. "Addison Branch Joins the Ghost Lines, Incorporated," *Vermont Quarterly*, XX (Oct. 1957) 282-285.

²⁴ John Trumbull. *Autobiography*, (New York and London, 1841), 33.

²⁵ John Trumbull. *Autobiography*. ed. by Theodore Sizer (New Haven, Conn., 1953).

²⁶ Elias Hall. "The Old French Road"; letter in *Rutland Herald*, Jan. 17, 1861.

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- 28 *Vermont Life*, III (Autumn, 1948), 27.
- 29 Newton. *The Vermont Story*, 63.
- 30 *New York Times*, Aug. 20, 1956.
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- 32 Walter E. Johnson. "We Came to Vermont for the Rest of Our Lives." *Vermont Life*, VII (Summer, 1953), 23.
- 33 Ernest Walker of Contoocook, N. H., letter to J. L. Wheeler, Mar. 24, 1955.
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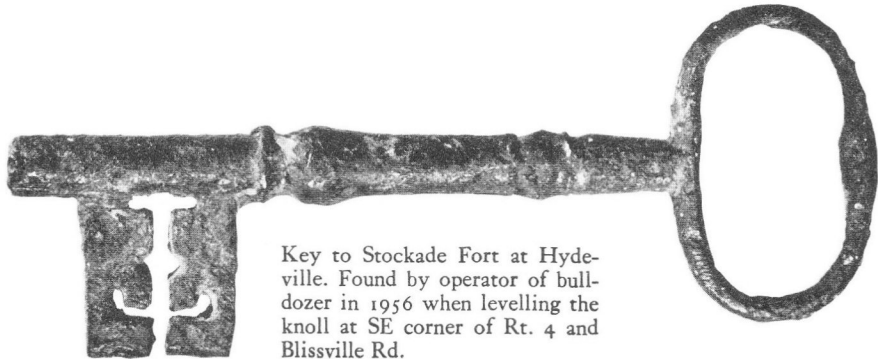
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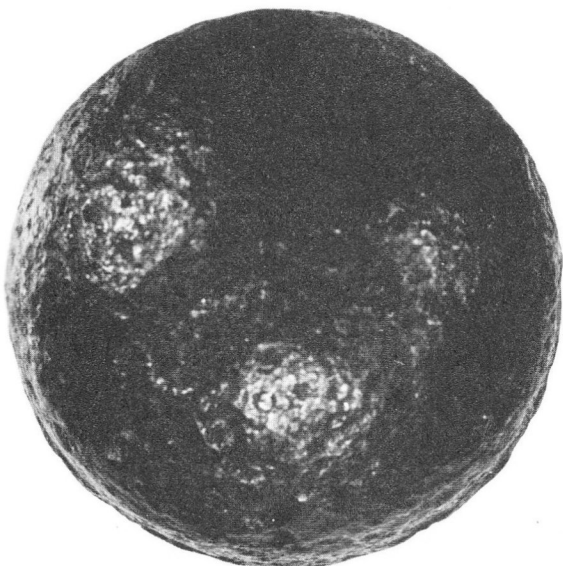
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Key to Stockade Fort at Hyde-ville. Found by operator of bulldozer in 1956 when levelling the knoll at SE corner of Rt. 4 and Blissville Rd.



Cannon Ball picked up on North End of Dickinson-Shaw farm, Benson, and given us by the late Miss Fannie Dickinson

Officer's Shoebuckle, probably German's, picked up by Bradley St. John in mown meadow NW of Bradley School, Hubbardton. Courtesy, Mr. & Mrs. St. John



Full size photo by Bartlett Studio