

SARA. 064 c.2  
CRBIB#000790  
374/135737

DOCUMENTARY STUDY OF THE DEATH AND  
BURIAL OF  
GENERAL SIMON FRASER

by

John F. Luzader, Park Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park  
Stillwater, New York

May 1, 1958

DOCUMENTARY STUDY OF THE DEATH AND  
BURIAL OF  
GENERAL SIMON FRASER

by

John F. Luzader, Park Historian

Saratoga National Historical Park

Stillwater, New York

May 1, 1958

Introduction: The purpose of this report is to examine the documentary data that is available relative to the death and burial of Brigadier General Simon Fraser. The objective of the study is two-fold: (1) to provide information for interpretation; (2) to assist in locating the site of General Fraser's grave, which is to comprise, along with the Great Redoubt, Stop No. 9, of the proposed Tour Route for Saratoga National Historical Park.

General Fraser's Career Prior to Saratoga: The early portion of Simon Fraser's life is clouded by obscurity. William L. Stone and others stated that he was the son of Simon Fraser, 12th Baron Lovat, who, after a checkered career, was captured at Culloden and beheaded in 1748. In fact, there is an unsupported and stubborn tradition that General Fraser was attempting to vindicate his family's honor and retrieve its fortune by unusually gallant service in America. On the other hand, E. B. O'Callaghan said that he was the youngest son, it is said, of Hugh Fraser of Balnain. His mother was the daughter of Fraser of Forgers. Fonblanque wrote that he was the younger son of Alexander Fraser of Balmain and Glendo, of the Gerraline branch of the Lovat family by the daughter of Angus Mackintosh of Killachy. A member of the Mackintosh family, Sir James Mackintosh, wrote:

My father, Captain John Mackintosh, was the representative of a family which had for two centuries possessed a small estate called Kellachie, which I was obliged to sell. He had served four and twenty years in the Army, into which he entered very young. He was very severely wounded at Frelinghausen

in the seven years war; and his last place of service was Gibraltar, where he was during the whole siege. My mother was Majiory, the daughter of Mr. Alexander Macgillivray by Anne Fraser, sister of Brigadier General Fraser who was killed in General Burgoyne's army in 1777; aunt to Dr. Fraser, physician in London; and to Mrs. Fraser Tyler, wife of Lord Woolhouselee, now (1805) a judge of the Court of Sessions in Scotland.<sup>1</sup>

These mutually contradictory accounts appear to contain all that is known concerning the parentage of Simon Fraser.\*

Most of the writers have agreed that Fraser was born in 1729 and that he entered the army at an early age, probably sometime after the publication of the Army List of 1754, since no subaltern of that name appears in that source.

- 
1. (1) Hadden, Lieut. James M., Hadden's Journal and Orderly Books, a Journal Kept in Canada and Upon Burgoyne's Campaign in 1776 and 1777 with an explanatory chapter and notes by Horatio Rogers, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1884, p. 454.
  - (2) Stone, William L., Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1860, p. 112.
  - (3) O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), Orderly Book of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1860, p. 184.

\* Note: After this report was prepared the writer located evidence that definitely established the fact that General Fraser was not the son of Baron Lovat. The May, 1782, issue of the Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military and Literary Journal carried a notice of death of Lieut. Gen. Fraser, son of Lord Lovat, at his house in Downing St., at the age of 52. The Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military and Literary Journal for the Year M, DCC, LXXXIII, Vol. III. London, Printed for J. Bew, Paternoster Row.

It is impossible to fix the date of his first commission since Simon Fraser's appear on the Army List of 1757, six of whom were assigned to Fraser's Highlanders, as the Second Highland Battalion, later the 78th Foot, was called. In that organization, besides the Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant and a Captain, there were four subalterns of that name, ranking as follows: an ensign appointed January 9, 1757, and three Lieutenants appointed January 5, January 30, and February 8, 1757. Then, of the same name, there was an ensign in the 50th dating his appointment from January 1, 1756, and a Lieutenant in the 60th, or Royal American Regiment of Foot, whose commission dated from January 31, 1756.<sup>2</sup>

The subject of this study probably was one of the three Lieutenants in the 78th Foot mentioned above. After his initial commission, his career can be traced with more certainty. On September 27, 1758 he became a Captain-Lieutenant; Captain, April 22, 1759; Major, in the army, March 15, 1761; Major in the 24th Foot, February 8, 1762; and Lieutenant-Colonel, July 14, 1768.<sup>3</sup> On June 10, 1776, less than two weeks after arriving in Canada, he received the local rank of Brigadier, pending confirmation by the Crown, and apparently was confirmed in that rank. His last commission was that of Colonel in the army on July 22, 1777.<sup>4</sup>

---

2. British Army Lists, quoted in Hadden's Journal, lxxii.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

During the Seven Years War he served with his regiment in the action at Louisburg and with General Wolfe at Quebec. After the war he was on garrison duty at Gibraltar and in Ireland. On April 5, 1776 he embarked from Cork, Ireland, with the 24th Foot and arrived at Quebec on May 28. Thus, Fraser came to the Burgoyne Campaign with a solid professional background, and he was to prove one of the most valuable and effective of Burgoyne's Lieutenants, as well as one of the most attractive.

When Burgoyne's army set out from Canada, General Fraser commanded the advanced corps, which was composed of ten grenadier companies, ten light infantry, companies, and the 24th Regiment.<sup>5</sup> The command of the advance corps was a post of great trust, involved considerable ability, and the command of picked troops.

It was in the action against Ticonderoga that Simon Fraser's importance in the story of the Burgoyne campaign began to be apparent; and because the events that took place there were both interesting and significant, a brief account of that portion of the invasion is worth giving.

Ticonderoga, a familiar and romantic name on both sides of the Atlantic, is a prominent, blunt-nosed promontory a mile long and three-quarters of a mile wide, that juts out from the western side of Lake Champlain. At the foot of the southwest shoulder a narrow gorge extends westward for more than a mile, through which the waters of Lake George pass into Champlain. The highest part of this promontory is about seventy feet above the lake.

---

5. Hadden, op. cit., lxxii

Across the lake, a rocky bluff about fifty feet high, called Mount Independence, juts into Lake Champlain towards the southeast corner of Ticonderoga. The passage between these headlands is about a quarter of a mile wide, and it is the gateway between the upper and lower Champlain and to Lake George. Once through it, the way is open by water into the narrow upper end of Champlain, and from its extremity up Wood Creek to within a few miles of the northern reaches of the Hudson River. Or one may turn westward at Ticonderoga into Lake George and follow it to a point equally near the Hudson.

Two miles northwest of Ticonderoga, Mount Hope commands the road to Lake George. A mile to the northwest, Sugar Loaf, renamed Mount Defiance, rises 750 feet above the water; in 1777, the countryside, except where Ticonderoga was cleared for fortifications, was heavily forested.

In 1775 the French built a star shaped stone fort, with bastions, on Ticonderoga. Attacked by Amherst in 1759, its garrison retreated, blowing up a large portion of the works. Although the British rebuilt it, the post was allowed to fall into disrepair after the Peace of Paris, 1763. In 1777, the portion of the fort facing the lake was still serviceable.

During the period of French occupation, lines had been constructed in a circle across the promontory, about three-quarters of a mile behind the fort.

When the American troops were concentrated at Ticonderoga in 1776, efforts were made to strengthen its defences. The remains of the old fort were repaired, the French lines enlarged, and blockhouses erected to protect the flanks and rear of the lines. The lower slopes on the

north and south were defended by blockhouses, redoubts, and breastworks.

Mount Hope was armed with a new barbette battery, erected in a position that covered the outlet of Lake George and the road that ran along the shore.

Mount Independence was protected in the rear by a stream and a swampy morass. Batteries, stone breastworks, and an eight-pointed star redoubt comprised its defenses.

The water passage between Ticonderoga and Mount Independence was closed by a boom of heavy logs, bound together on a massive iron chain. Behind the boom lay a bridge.

The ominous presence of Sugar Loaf posed a threat to Ticonderoga that was discounted by the Americans because, in spite of the fact that the eminence was scaled by Wane and Arnold, a decision was made that it was so inaccessible as to preclude any necessity for securing the summit.

The American garrison, as of the end of June, consisted of ten Continental and two militia regiments; however, they were considerably below strength, ranging in number from 45 to 265, present and fit for duty, the average being 160. There was also a body of 19 scouts under Benjamin Whitcomb, Thomas Lee's Rangers, 23 strong, 124 artificers and 250 artillerymen.

In other words, Ticonderoga was being defended by about 2,500 men.<sup>6</sup> The exterior lines around Mount Independence and the old French lines behind Ticonderoga extended more than 2,000 yards. This meant, that without any reserve and excluding Mount Hope, the blockhouses and other works, the Americans were capable of manning the post at the average of about one man per yard - five times that number were needed.

---

6. Journals of the Continental Congress, Vol. VIII, pp. 656-7.

Scottish born Arthur St. Clair, a former British officer and veteran of the Seven Years' War, had been in command since June 12.

The conditions at Ticonderoga were something less than satisfactory. Not only were there not enough men, but, in spite of all the attention that the place had received, there was a shortage of every military necessity. What had happened to most of the supplies that had been dispatched to Albany had never been satisfactorily explained.

The commanding general of the Northern Army was Major General Philip Schuyler, whose administration had been severely criticized for a number of reasons, not the least of which was his practice of exercising his command from the peculiar vantage points of his homes at Albany and Saratoga - now Schuylerville. Schuyler came up from Albany and held a council of war on June 20. That meeting resulted in a decision that there were not enough troops to hold the entire works. However, they were to hold out as long as possible and then concentrate on defending Mount Independence. The bateaus were to be held in readiness if that position should prove untenable.<sup>7</sup>

Several important questions were neither posed nor answered. One was: how were the troops to be taken from Ticonderoga to Independence in the face of an enemy that had driven them out of the former? Another was: how were the batteaux to be preserved and used to effect a retreat with the enemy in possession of Ticonderoga, Independence, and the watergap in between?

Having provided for a defensive strategy, Schuyler returned to his Albany headquarters, leaving St. Clair to conduct the defense as best he could with what he had at his disposal.

---

7. General Philip Schuyler Papers, New York Public Library

On June 26, Fraser's advance corps left Crown Point, and the main body of the army followed on the first day of July, with the Germans on the eastern side of the lake and the British on the western.<sup>8</sup> Three miles above Ticonderoga, the British landed and encamped. Fraser was a mile in advance. On July 2, operations against Ticonderoga began.

Fraser's advance point, under General Phillips, and one British brigade started for Mount Hope, whose garrison sensibly set fire to the works and fled to the old French lines. The British, after failing to cut off their retreat, took up a position within less than a hundred yards of these lines, took cover, and opened fire. General St. Clair thought that this was the prelude to an assault and ordered his troops to sit down on the firing step, keep under cover, and hold their fire. Emboldened by the lack of firing, one of the British marksmen came quite close to the lines and Lieutenant Colonel James Wilkinson, who had something less than a passion for anonymity, ordered a sergeant to take a shot at him.

The troops took the sergeant's shot as a signal to open fire, and the whole line leaped to their feet and poured volley after volley at the enemy. They were joined by the artillery. When order was finally restored, the British had retreated to three hundred yards, leaving Wilkinson's target lying alone on the field. However, when a burial party went out to dispose of remains they found him unhurt and dead drunk. At least 3,000 musket shots and eight pieces of artillery had been fired at a force of 500 men, killing one man and wounding two - all within a range of 100 yards.

---

8. Hadden, op. cit., p. 63.

While this noisy business was going on, Riedesel's Germans advanced close to the creek behind Independence, where they halted as darkness fell. During the next day Mount Hope was occupied, and both sides engaged in rather indecisive artillery fire.

Meanwhile, some less boisterous but more decisive things were happening on Sugar Loaf. That promontory piqued Burgoyne's curiosity, and he sent Lieutenant Twiss, his engineer, to take a look. Twiss climbed the hill and came back to report that it commanded Ticonderoga at 1,400 yards and Independence at 1,500 yards, and that he could open a road and have guns up there within twenty-four hours. With Phillips in charge, the work was begun on July 4.

The Americans, by this time, had been strengthened by the arrival of 900 militiamen, and, for the moment, St. Clair's hopes were somewhat more optimistic. He had been expecting an assault on some part of his fortifications, but could detect very little activity. However, there was some movement as Burgoyne shifted Gall's brigade from Riedesel to the Ticonderoga side, giving Riedesel, in exchange Fraser's Canadians, Tories, Indians, and Alexander Fraser's marksmen. Riedesel was to move southward around Independence and close the route of retreat by the road on the eastern side of the lake, the guns placed on Sugar Loaf being expected to prevent any retreat by water. Fortunately for the Americans, Riedesel had not yet started on his round-about move.

On the morning of July 5, St. Clair noticed some activity on the top of Sugar Loaf that caused him to take a longer look. The British were in the process of mounting two 13-pounders on the mount.<sup>9</sup>

What he saw caused St. Clair to convene a council of war that resulted in an unanimous decision to retreat as soon as darkness fell.<sup>10</sup>

---

9. Wilkinson, James, Memoirs of My Own Times, Printed by Abraham Small, Philadelphia, 1816, Vol. I, p. 184.

10. Ibid., pp. 184-5

The invalids and supplies were to be taken up the lake to Skenesboro by the boats that were anchored behind the bridge. The main body of troops was to march from the eastern side of the lake by a road that ran from behind Independence southeast to Hubbardton, thence to Castleton and west to Skenesboro.

A continuous cannonade was fired to conceal the noise of the evacuation preparations and to divert British attention. It probably drowned the noise of preparation, but it also led Burgoyne to suspect what was going on, although it was not until the following morning that Fraser learned from deserters that the retreat had actually begun.

The destruction of the fort on Independence by General Roche de Moy had alerted the British to the fact some general movement was being undertaken.

General Fraser's headquarters were on the Ticonderoga side of the lake, a mile and half from the bridge to Independence. After learning from the deserters that the retreat was underway, he hurried to the bridge and found it partially razed, with some cannon trained along its length. Four men had been detailed to fire a volley at the enemy when they attempted to cross, and then to retreat. However, when Fraser's men approached nothing happened because the gunners were too drunk to do anything except sleep. An Indian accidentally discharged one piece which was elevated so high that the only damage done was to nerves.<sup>11</sup>

Thus did Burgoyne's army recapture the Gibraltar of the North for the Crown. The conduct of the defense and evacuation did nothing to instill awe of military skill of the Americans in the minds of the invaders - seeming only to confirm the contempt already felt by many British and German officers. Nor was the fall of Ticonderoga calculated to fill American bosoms

---

11. Anburey, Thomas, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York, 1923, Vol. I, p. 193

with pride, and the search for a scapegoat to bear the sins of the land into the wilderness of condemnation began.

Burgoyne ordered Fraser's light infantry and grenadiers, supported by Riedesel and Breymann's grenadiers and light infantry, to pursue the main body of the retreating Americans. Leaving the 62nd at Ticonderoga and Prinz Frederick's Brunswickers at Independence, Burgoyne took the balance of his force toward Skenesboro.<sup>12</sup>

St. Clair's army sweated through the sweltering, breathless heat along the rutted frontier road towards Hubbardton. Leaving Set Warner at Hubbardton with orders to bring in the rear guard, St. Clair pushed his men on to Castleton, six miles away.

Colonel Warner was as brave as a military commander needs to be, but discipline was an anathema to his Vermont soul. He had been a Green Mountain Boy, accustomed to acting on his own and taking orders from no one, including major generals. Rather than bringing in the rear guard, he and Colonel Francis, its commander, decided to spend the night at Hubbardton. So Warner's Vermonters, Francis' 11th Massachusetts, Colonel Hale's New Hampshires, and some stragglers from the main body bedded down without bothering to post any pickets.<sup>13</sup>

Fraser had lost no time in following the Americans. Starting at four o'clock in the morning, he marched his corps along the same frontier track that St. Clair had taken until about one o'clock in the afternoon. Riedesel was following with equal vigor. When Fraser paused to give his men a rest, Riedesel, with a company of Jager and 80 grenadiers, came up. The march was resumed, and they encamped a short distance from Hubbardton.

---

12. Burgoyne, John, State of the Expedition from Canada, Printed by J. Almon, London, 1780, Appendix I.

13. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 186-7.

As the Americans were preparing breakfast, the enemy attacked. The surprise was complete, and Hale's men, the first to be hit, fled in disorder. Warner and Francis succeeded in rallying their men, and a bitter fight began.<sup>14</sup>

The scene of the fighting was heavily wooded. While this suited the Americans, it presented the Europeans with a frustrating maze that grabbed at their gear and which seemed to harbor an American behind every tree and stump, and in which there could be no orderly fighting. Warner's men held the left of an irregular line, with steep Zion Hill on their left. Francis' men held the right on a lower hill. The whole line measured about a half a miles

Fraser acted to turn the American left by drawing men from his own left to strengthen his right. When this shift was completed, he ordered the grenadiers to ascend Zion Hill. The climb was so steep that an orderly charge up the hill was impossible; and the grenadiers slung their muskets and, grasping trees, bushes, and rocks, scrambled up on all fours. Gaining the summit, they took a position behind Francis and across the road to Castleton.<sup>15</sup>

This tactic would have made Francis' position untenable if he had not adopted Fraser's tactics in reverse by moving against the weakened British left. This neutralized the grenadiers' action, and under a heavy fire, these troops suffered severe losses. The British situation was becoming serious; and in desperation, Fraser was about to order a bayonet charge when a strange sound reached the ears of the fighting troops. A band was playing a lusty German song and German voices were singing a sturdy German hymn. Riedesel's Brunswickers were coming.

---

14. Ibid., p. 188.

15. Anburey, op. cit., p. 194.

The baron had heard the firing and had brought his advance guard onto the field. Without waiting for the remainder of his troops he sent his Jagers against the American right. He then ordered his grenadiers against the extreme flank, to turn it. With their band playing, as if on parade before the ducal palace, the Jagers advanced in formation against a withering fire. Francis' men held their position for almost a quarter of an hour, but the turning movement had begun to envelope their right. Francis was killed, and when Fraser's troops delivered their bayonet charge, and Massachusetts regiment broke and disappeared into the woods. The Vermonters had maintained their position, but when the right broke, they could hold out no longer, and at Warner's order evaporated into the wilderness to meet at Manchester.

St. Clair, at Castleton, had heard the firing too, but he had no hymn-singing regulars to send against the enemy. What he did have were two regiments of militia who, with their usual freedom from discipline, had dropped out of the line of march and encamped two miles from Hubbardton. He sent these orders to go to the aid of Warner and Francis while he prepared to take a force back to the fight. The two regiments refused to fight and hastily rejoined the column which they had not been eager to keep up with the day before. His troops at Castleton had no stomach for a forced march and a fight and their reluctance was reinforced with the arrival of the mutinous militia. While trying to get underway, St. Clair received word of Warner's retreat, and the issue was settled; they would proceed to Skenesboro.<sup>16</sup>

---

16. Anburey, op. cit., p. 196, Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 187.

This little battle had been the occasion of sharp fighting. The British had lost 15 officers and 183 men, killed and wounded. The Americans' loss, including captured, were 12 officers and 312 out of a force which after Hale's flight numbered slightly more than 600.<sup>17</sup>

After the Battle of Hubbardton General Fraser rejoined the main body of the British force and commanded the advance corps in the march toward Albany. His primary duties during this period were to cover the advance and serve as the point for the army as it moved southward. The contemporary sources do not reveal any especially noteworthy incidents in Fraser's career during this time, unless one considers the story of Mrs. McNeil and Jane McCrae important.

The details of Jane McCrae's murder are obscure and contradictory. The only facts that seem indisputable are that a young woman named Jane McCrae was on her way from the house of Mrs. McNeil to meet her lover, a Loyalist officer, when she was killed, either by Indians who were accompanying her or by Americans firing on the party. Mrs. McNeil, according to local tradition, was a cousin of General Frazer, and when she was brought into camp, wearing nothing but a chemise, gave him a terrible tongue lashing. Because she was a lady of more than generous proportions there were no clothes in the camp that would fit her, and the general gave her his great coat.<sup>18</sup> Fraser's relationship to Mrs. McNeil, and his part in this incidental drama are matters of tradition, for which there appears to be no contemporary authority.

---

17. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 187-8. Hadden, op. cit., App. 15, 88.

18. Detailed and contradictory accounts of the "McCrae Massacre" are found in all the literature of the Saratoga Campaign.

While the McCrae murder has been credited with bringing militia into the Americans' camp and persuading some people who had been either neutral or inclined toward the royalist cause that they should go over to the Americans, no contemporary accounts support this interpretation. Gates did cite the episode in his correspondence with Burgoyne concerning the treatment of prisoners at Bennington.<sup>19</sup>

During the advance down the Hudson Fraser's command was primarily concerned with providing security against rear-guard action and surprise. There was really little to fear from such threats because the Americans could do little more than burn some bridges and fell trees across the road. As yet, their strength was not sufficient to warrant their making any kind of a stand that would risk an engagement.

By the time General Horatio Gates succeeded Philip Schuyler as commander of the Northern Department on August 19, the Americans had retreated to the vicinity of what is now Cohoes, and the British were in the neighborhood of Fort Miller, with Burgoyne's headquarters located in the Duer House, which stood on the hill east of the present village.<sup>20</sup>

While the British were still east of the Hudson River, the Americans, strengthened by reinforcements, began to move northward to challenge Burgoyne's drive on Albany. General Gates realized that Burgoyne could not remain in the Fort Miller area indefinitely he would soon either retreat to Ticonderoga or advance on Albany. Winter was

---

19. Baxter, James Philley, The British Invasion from the North, the Campaigns of Generals Carleton and Burgoyne With the Journal of Lieut. William Digby, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1887, pp. 235-7; 264-5

20. O'Callaghan, E.B. (ed.), Orderly Book of Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne, J. Munsell, Albany, 1860, pp. 77-78.

approaching and there were no possible winter quarters between Albany and Ticonderoga. Whether Burgoyne retreated or advanced, Gates would be wise to be moving northward.

If Burgoyne were to retreat, Gates would be in a better position to take harrassing action. If on the other hand, he chose to advance, it would be wise to take up a position against him farther northward, away from the broad meadows that bordered the Mohawk where European tactics could be employed. While on the Hudson, Burgoyne's advance would be parallel to the river, and Gates' position could be covered by wooded hills where traditional tactics would be less effective. Although this is not the proper place, a reevaluation of Gates is overdue.<sup>21</sup>

On September 3, the American Army moved northward from the Mohawk. It halted the next day at Stillwater, and defensive works were begun. Before long, Gates realized that the river meadows were too wide to afford the type of position he desired, and he chose a site three miles to the north. At this point the river, curving westward, squeezed the road to Albany into a narrow passage dominated by the bluffs that form a part of Bemis Heights. The American took up a position at this point on September 12 and began to construct works beginning on and below the bluffs and running westward onto the heights.

The selection was an excellent one that would force Burgoyne to attempt one of two moves, with which either would place him in the unpleasant position fighting on Gates' terms. He could try to fight his way along the road and river under the fire of the Americans at the defile; or he could move into the hills west of the road and contest the American

---

21. In his Horatio Gates, Defender of American Liberties, Professor Patterson undertook a reevaluation of Gates that came close to being a panegyric.

position in terrain that precluded the maximum use of massed troops and artillery. As we shall see, he chose the latter course.

September 18 found the British at Sword's House, about four miles north of Bemis Heights. It was at this point that the reconnaissance capacity of the British was put to a severe test. Burgoyne had depended upon the Indians and Provincials. Most of the Indians had "gone over the hill" after the general's Sand Hill reprimand, and the Provincials were hollow reeds upon which to lean. Thus the British were left with a very imperfect reconnaissance system in densely wooded and unfamiliar area. The result was that while he knew that the Americans commanded the road at Bemis's Tavern, he did not know the exact location and strength of the remainder of the American Force. He was to pay dearly for this ignorance.

Congranted with a lack of knowledge concerning terrain and the enemy, Burgoyne decided to divide his force. Leaving six companies of the 47th British Regiment as bateaux guard and the Hess-Hanau infantry regiment to guard the baggage, he organized three columns to move against the Americans.

The left column, under Riedesel, was composed of three German infantry regiments, numbering about 1200 men. The element was to advance along the road in order to take advantage of any weakening of the American right.

The center column, under Hamilton and accompanied by Burgoyne, and composed of the four regiments that were known as the British Line, the 9th, 21st, 62d, and 20th, numbering somewhat over 1100, was to move westward from Sword's house for a distance and then to turn south.

The right column, consisting of the auxiliaries, numbering about 2200 was placed under Fraser. This force was to proceed westward from the Sword House to some clearing near the crest of the hill and thence southward.

A comprehensive reconstruction of the subsequent movements from the available sources is somewhat difficult, and a degree of uncertainty exists in several points. However, the two battles are discussed in some detail in the National Park Service Historic Handbook, Saratoga, by Francis Wilshin and Charles Snell, and the present study does not justify a recapitulation.

Fraser's part in the first battle, September 19, was not especially dramatic. He brought the right column into the fight on the Freeman Farm as soon as he learned that the center had contacted the Americans. However, since the center bore the brunt of the fight, his command played a secondary role in that engagement. In fact, Nickerson states that Fraser did not act as vigorously as he might, with the result that the British failed to envelop the American right.<sup>22</sup>

According to Wilkinson, the British failure to renew the attack on September 20 was due to Fraser's insistence that the grenadiers and light infantry were exhausted and that they needed a day's rest before fighting again. On the other hand, Digby, who was a member of the advanced corps, related that Fraser and Philips urged an immediate attack, but that Burgoyne believed that his hospital was overtaxed and that the magazines by the river were too exposed to risk an engagement on that day.<sup>23</sup> Since neither the light infantry nor the grenadiers had been so heavily engaged, Digby's account is possibly the more accurate.

During the next two and a half weeks the armies faced one another while they improved their positions and prepared for the ultimate contest.

---

22. Nickerson Hoffman, The Turning Point of the Revolution, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1928, p. 311.

23. Wilkinson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 251  
Baxter, op. cit., p. 272

This period was filled with fatigue and forage details, punctuated by alarms and picket action.

On the evening of the fourth of October, the day after the army had been put on short rations, Burgoyne conferred with Fraser, Phillips and Riedesel. They reviewed the various factors involved and discussed a plan that for sheer rashness has few counterparts in British military history. Riedesel discussed the council as follows:

On the fourth of October General Burgoyne called together a council of war, consisting of General Phillips, myself, and Brigadier Fraser, and asked our advice on what should be done in this affair, proposing whether we could not by a round about way turn the enemy on his left flank and attack in the rear. As by such a movement, we would have to remove ourselves from the water at least three whole days, we would risk losing all the boats and provisions, and then have nothing at all to live on, because it was not to be expected that two battalions could defend the valley and river bank for three days. I took the occasion to point out the danger of our situation, as the enclosure may indicate, and to press for a retreat to Fort Edward as soon as possible, especially because of the improbability of the early arrival of General Clinton. However, we waited, fed by hope, and it was decided on the 7th of October to attempt a reconnaissance against the left flank of the enemy, and if it proved impenetrable to consider a retreat.<sup>24</sup>

On October 7, Burgoyne launched his movement against the American left, employing 1500 of his best troops and ten pieces of artillery. The following units were detailed to participate in this flanking movement. The right column included the British Light Infantry, the 24th Regiment and Breyman's Jagers and Grenadiers; the center column was composed of detachments of the German regiments of Riedesel, Rhetz, Specht, and Hess Hanau and a detachment of the Royal . The left column was made up of the British Grenadiers and picked troops from the 9th, 20th, 21st, and 62nd regiments. Indians and

---

<sup>24</sup>. Letter to the Duke of Brunswick from Baron von Riedesel, October 21, 1777, Bancroft Collection in the New York Public Library, Saratoga Microfilm No. 9.

provincials scouted the British right flank to divert the Americans to cover the western exposure of the attacking column.<sup>25</sup>

The artillery that accompanied the movement included six pounders six, two 12-pounders, and two howitzers. Captain Pusch, who commanded the Hesse Hanau artillery wrote the following concerning the flanking action.

Oct. 7. In the afternoon, I received an order to have in readiness two six pound cannons with the requisite ammunition; also my Brigade, prepared to march immediately at a given signal. About 10 o'clock there gathered in front of the camp on the Place de Armes of the left wing of the German troops a division consisting of all those portions of the German regiments then represented. Altogether, these numbered about three hundred men under the leadership of Lieut. Col. Specht (Pausch meant Speth. Brigadier Specht was commander of the Regiment Specht. Speth was Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment Riedesel.) the commander of the Infantry Regiment of Riedesel. To this latter regiment, the Regiment Hesse Hanau furnished 1 officer, 6 Subalterns, 1 drummer, and 75 privates under the command of Captain Schoel. We defiled to the right in front of our army towards its right wing as far as the Brigade of Brigadier Gen. Fraser, where we halted. Here I found already assembled, among the other regiments, the English battery of light infantry grenadiers, the Albanian and Canadian volunteers, and the small remnant of our Indians who were in readiness for the march. The English Artillery furnished two howitzers, two 12-pound and our 6-pound cannon for the right wing of our battery, under Lieut. Defais. Everything being quiet along the lines, I went, myself, with the first named two cannon of my brigade, on the expedition.

Behind the entrenched camp of Fraser, where we halted and were observed to wait for further orders, there were collected in Fraser's tent the Generals of the army. After first holding in it a council of war, the Generals went to another tent, in front of which the Savages were gathered, and announced to them (as I suppose, according to the usual Indian custom, which to me is entirely unknown and unintelligible.) the order of today's march and the duties required of them. The conference lasted, in all, two hours, when we again resumed our march; and the reassembled corps once more started. There were now added to the German Division the small remnant of the Brunswick company of Jagers consisting of about 100 men; and as many more of the Brunswick Grenadier Battalion. The latter constituted the entire force of this small corps, now reduced to about fifteen hundred men in all.<sup>26</sup>

---

25. (1) Ibid.

(2) "Diary of Joshua Pell, Jr., an officer of the British Army in America, 1776-1777, 'The Magazine of American History, Vol. II, part I (1878), p. 110.

26. The Journal of Captain Pausch, Chief of the Hanau Artillery During the Burgoyne Campaign, translated and annotated by William L. Stone, Albany, 1886, pp. 159-61.

In his desperation, and in the face of approaching winter, Burgoyne was attempting to drive the Americans out of his path to Albany, where he felt his orders rigidly commanded his proceeding, and where he still hoped to effect a junction with Clinton. The subject of his strategy of the 7th of October is thoroughly discussed in former Park Historian's Charles E. Shedd's lucid Burgoyne's Objective in the Second Battle of Saratoga, October 7, 1777, dated December 15, 1952.

The Second Battle of Saratoga began when British troops were seen in a wheat field on the Barber Farm, southwest of the Freeman Farm, southwest of the Freeman Farm and north of the western end of the Middle Ravine. The story of the opening phase of the battle is recorded by James Wilkinson in his Memoirs. While he was no shrinking violet, and always blew his own trumpet with sometimes deafening volume, the details of his account conform to the facts as they are known from other, more respectable sources. Concerning this portion of the story he wrote:

... on the afternoon of the 7th of October, the advanced guard of the center beat to arms; the alarm was repeated throughout the line, and the troops repaired to their alarm posts. I was at headquarters when this happened, and with the approbation of the General, mounted my horse to inquire the cause; but on reaching the guard where the beat commenced, I could obtain no other satisfaction, but that some person had reported the enemy to be advancing against our left.

I proceeded over open ground, and ascending a gentle acclivity in front of the guard, I perceived about half a mile from the line of our encampment, several columns of the enemy, 60 or 70 rods from me, entering a wheat field which had not been cut, and was separated from me by a small rivulet; and without my glass I could distinctly mark their every movement. After entering the field, they displayed, formed the line, and sat down in double ranks with their arms between their legs. Foragers then proceeded to cut the wheat or standing straw, and I soon observed several officers, mounted on the top of the cabin, from whence with their glasses they were endeavoring to reconnoiter our left, which was concealed from their view by intervening woods.

Having satisfied myself, after fifteen minutes attentive observation, that no attack was meditated, I returned and repeated to the General, who asked me what appeared to be the intentions of the enemy. "They are foraging, and endeavoring to reconnoiter your left; and I think, Sir, they offer you battle."<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Shedd points out in his study that Wilkinson misinterpreted the halt in the wheat field and that it was intended to give the force time to assume its position on the American left flank.

Gates, deciding to follow the precedent of the First Battle, ordered Morgan, Poor and Dearborn to attack the enemy rather than awaiting the assault within his fortifications, as Burgoyne apparently expected him to do. Attacking almost simultaneously, the three American columns drove the British from the Barber Farm area and into full retreat towards their fortified line.

Fraser, with the British Light Infantry and the 24th Regiment, undertook to cover the retreat by forming a second line. Moving constantly among his troops, he attempted to rally them and to save the British flanking column. It was in the midst of this effort that he suffered his fatal wound.

Accounts by contemporaries are not in complete agreement concerning the circumstances of Fraser's wounding, nor do they agree upon whom the credit for bringing him down should be bestowed.

The diaries and correspondence of the British and German participants in the battle are disappointingly meager in detail concerning the incident. However, this may be readily understood if one remembers the circumstances. The British were retreating under terrific pressure, and the perspective of the individual soldier was limited to his immediate vision. In the excitement and danger of the moment, little could be noted beyond the fact that the general had been wounded, and there was not time to record

---

27. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 267-8

dialogue or the exact sequence of events.

Thomas Anburey recorded the event as follows:

...nor can you conceive the sorrow visible on General Fraser's being brought in wounded, your old friends Campbell and Johnston, or our regiment, on each side of his horse, supporting him. I cannot describe to you the scene; it was such that the imagination must help to paint. The officers, all anxious and eagerly enquiring of his wound - the down-cast look and melancholy that was visible to everyone, as to his situation, and all he could make to the many enquiries, was a shake of his head, expressive that it was all over with him. So was he beloved, that not only his officers and soldiers, but all the women flocked round, solicitous of his fate.

When he had reached his tent, and was recovered a little from the faintness caused by loss of blood, he told those around him that he was the man who shot him, he was a rifleman, and up in a tree; the ball entered a little below the breast, and penetrated just below the backbone. After the surgeon had dressed his wound, he said to him very composedly, "Tell me, <sup>one</sup>, to the best of your skill and judgment, if you think my wound mortal." When replied, "I am sorry, Sir, to inform you, that it is, and that you cannot live four and twenty hours." He then called for pen and ink, and after making his will and distributing a few little tokens of regard to the officers of his suite, desired that he might be removed to the general hospital.<sup>28</sup>

While there is reason to doubt that Anburey's Letters that comprise this source were written on the dates that are given in the published collection, and that may even have been prepared after he returned to England, when checked against other contemporary sources, his presentation of the details of the campaign appear relatively accurate.

William Digby recorded in his Journal that:

... Brigadier General Frazier was mortally wounded which help to turn the fate of the day. When General Burgoyne saw him fall, he seemed to feel in the highest degree our disagreeable situation. He was the only person we could carry off with us.<sup>29</sup>

Baroness Fredricka von Reidesel, whose account of her travels and adventures in America make for both informative and delightful reading, gave us the following story of Fraser's death:

But several trials awaited us, and on the 7th of October our misfortunes began; I was at breakfast with my husband and heard that something was intended. On the same day I expected Generals Burgoyne, Phillips, and Fraser to dine with us. I saw a great

---

28. Anburey, op. cit., p. 259-60.

29. Baxter, op. cit., pp. 287-8.

movement among the troops; my husband told me that it was merely a reconnaissance, which gave me no concern as it often happened. I walked out of the house and met several Indians in their war dress, with guns in their hands. When I asked where they were going, they cried out War ! War! (meaning they were going into battle.) This filled me with apprehension, and I had scarcely got home before I heard reports of cannon musketry which grew louder by degrees until at last the noise became excessive. About four o'clock in the afternoon, instead of the guests who were to have dined with us, they brought in on a litter poor General Fraser, mortally wounded. Our dining table, which was already spread, was taken away, and in its place they fixed up a bed for the general. I sat in a corner of the room, trembling and quaking. The noises grew continually louder. The thought that they might bring in my husband in the same manner was to me dreadful, and tormented me incessantly. The general said to the surgeon, "Do not conceal anything from me. Must I die?" The ball had gone through his bowels precisely as in the case of Major Harnage. Unfortunately, the general had eaten a hearty breakfast, by reason of which the intestines were distended, and the ball had gone through them. I often hear him, amidst his groans, exclaim, "O fatal ambition! Poor General Burgoyne! My poor wife!"

Prayers were read to him, then he sent a message of General Burgoyne, begging that he would have him buried the following day at six o'clock in the evening on the top of a hill which was a sort of redoubt.<sup>30</sup>

The Barneess continues her account, describing the death and burial:

... As for myself, I could not go to sleep, as I had General Fraser and all the other gentlemen in my room, and was constantly afraid that children would wake up and cry, and thus disturb the poor dying man, who often sent to beg my pardon for making me so much trouble. About three o'clock in the morning they told me that he could not last much longer. I had desired to be advised of the approach of the moment. I accordingly wrapped up the children in the coverings, and went with them into the entry. Early in the morning, at eight o'clock, he died.

After they had washed the corpse, they wrapped it in a sheet and laid it on a bedstead. We then came again into the room, and had this sad sight before us the whole day...

... We learned that General Burgoyne intended to fulfill the last wish of General Fraser, and to have him buried at six o'clock in the place designated by him. This occasioned an unnecessary delay, to which part of the misfortunes of the army was owing.

Precisely at six o'clock the corpe was brought out, and we saw all the generals with their retinues attend it to the hill. The English chaplain, Mr. Burdenell, performed the funeral service, made more solemn and awful by it being accompanied by constant peals from the enemies' artillery...The American General, Gates, afterwards said that had he known it was a burial he would not have permitted firing in that direction.<sup>31</sup>

---

30. Riedesel, Baroneßs Charlotte, von, Berufs Reise, 1800, p. 124.

31. Ibid.

Baron Riedesel's account of the burial follows his wife's with the remark: "Certainly it was a really military funeral - one that was unique of its kind."<sup>32</sup>

Anburey gives the following account of the burial:

Early on the morning (October 8) General Fraser breathed his last and at his particular request, was buried, without any parade, in the great redoubt, by the soldiers of his own corps. About sunset, the corpse was carried up the hill, the process was in view of both armies; it passed by Generals Burgoyne, Phillips, and Riedesel; they were struck at the plain simplicity of the parade, being only attended by the officers of his suite; but lest the army, not being acquainted with the privacy that he desired, should construe it into neglect, and urged by a natural wish to pay the last honors to him, in the eyes of the whole army, they joined the procession.

The enemy with an inhumanity peculiar to Americans, cannonaded the procession as it passed, and during the service over the grave. The account given me by friend Lieut. Freeman was, that there appeared an expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance - the scene must have been affecting.<sup>33</sup>

General Burgoyne's eloquent account, free from the fashionable bombast of the day, was recorded in his State of the Expedition as follows:

About sunset the corpse of General Fraser was brought up the hill, attended only by the officers who had lived in his family. To arrive at the redoubt, it passed within view of the greatest part of the armies. General Phillips, General Riedesel, and myself, who were standing together, were struck with the humility of the procession: They who were ignorant that privacy had been requested, might construe it neglect. We could neither endure that reflection, nor indeed restrain our natural propensity to pay our last attention to his remains. The circumstances that ensued cannot be better described than they have by different witnesses. The incessant cannonade during the solemnity; the steady attitude and unaltered voice with which the chaplain officiated, though frequently covered with dust, which the shot threw up on all sides of him; the mute but expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance: these objects will remain to the last of life upon the minds of every man who was present. The growing darkness added to the scenery, and the whole

---

32. Riedesel, General Baron, Fredrich, Journal.

33. Anburey, op. cit., p. 265.

marked a character of that juncture that would make one of the finest subjects for the pencil of a master that the field ever exhibited - to the canvas and to the faithful page of a more important historian, gallant friend! I consign thy memory. There may thy talents, thy manly virtues, their progress and their period, find due distinction; and long may they survive; - long after the frail records of my pen shall be forgotten.<sup>34</sup>

Contemporary American accounts that have been examined do not supply any details concerning Fraser's death, beyond noting that news of it had been received. This is not surprising. The only thing that interested the Americans was that an enemy general had been killed. Nothing that they knew of Fraser recommended him to them, and how he died was secondary to the fact that he was dead.

The first detailed stories from the American participants in the battle appeared from several to many years later.

One of the earliest accounts appears in Wilkinson's Memoir., in which he quotes Baroness von Riedesel,<sup>35</sup> adding nothing to her version.

On October 17, 1825, on the fiftieth anniversary of Burgoyne's surrender, Samuel Woodruff of Windsor, Connecticut, visited the battlefield, and wrote a letter to Colonel William L. Stone, Sr., concerning his visit. In this letter he gave the following account of Fraser's death:

" The circumstances attending the fall of this gallant officer have presented a question about which military men are divided in opinion. The facts seem to be agreed that, (Here Mr. Woodruff erred; the facts seem to have disagreed; else why would there have been any question?) soon after the commencement of the action, General Arnold, knowing the military character and efficiency of Gen. Fraser, and observing his motions in leading and conducting the attack, said to Colonel Morgan,

---

34. Burgoyne, op. cit., pp. 1256.

35. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 293-6

"That officer upon a grey horse is of himself a host, and must be disposed of. Direct the attention of some of the sharpshooters among your riflemen to him." Morgan nodded his assent to Arnold, repaired to his riflemen, and made known to them the hint given by Arnold. Immediately upon this the crupper of the grey horse was cut off by a rifle bullet, and within the next minute another passes through the horse's mane, a little back of the ears. An aide of Fraser's noticing this, observed to him, "Sir, it is evident that you are marked out for their aim; would it not be prudent for you to retire from this place?" Fraser replied; "my duty forbids me to fly from danger"; and immediately received a bullet through his body. A few grenadiers were detached to carry him to the Smith house.<sup>36</sup>

Samuel Woodruff's account poses certain difficulties besides having been written half a century after the event. His crediting Arnold with giving the order for shooting Fraser is open to question partly because the exact time of the former's appearance on the field has not been explained and partly because, according to the available evidence, Arnold's first action, on the 7th of October was the leading of Learned's troops against the German forces under Riedesel, and not against Fraser's Light Infantry and 21st Regiment. The account also gives lengthy, stilted quotations that, while very much a part of the writing of this period, were quite out of character for me in combat. The fact that he quotes Fraser and his aide, while no British or German source does so, does not argue for the faithfulness of his narrative.

In 1835, Ebenezer Mattson, who had commanded an artillery battery at Saratoga recorded his recollections in a letter to Philip Schuyler II, dated October 7, 1835. In it he gave the following account of Fraser's death:

... Just at this moment, an elderly man, with a long hunting gun, coming up I said to him, "Daddy, the infantry mustn't leave, I shall be cut to pieces." He replied, "I'll give them another gun." The smoke then rising again, several officers, led by a general, appeared moving to the northward, in rear of the Hessian line. The old man at that instant discharged his gun and the general officer pitched forward on the neck of his horse, and

---

36. Stone, William L., Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds 1780-1880, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1895, pp. 225-6.

instantly they all wheeled about, the old man observing, "I have killed that officer, let him be who he will."

Here I will offer the reasons why I think this officer was Gen. Fraser and that he was killed by the shot of this old man. In the first place, the distance, by actual measurement, was within reach of a gun: for the next morning a dispute arising about the distance, some contending that it was eight rods and others fifteen, two respectable sergeants, both man and Laxell, were selected to decide this dispute by pacing the ground. They did so, and found the distance from the stump where the old man stood to the spot where the horses fell just twelve rods. In the next place the officer was shot through the body from left to right as was afterwards ascertained. Now from his relative position to the posted riflemen, he could have been shot through in this direction, but they must have hit him, in front. Moreover, the riflemen could not have seen him on account of the smoke in which he was enveloped.<sup>37</sup>

Whether or not the old man shot Fraser, Mattoon's point concerning the direction from which the shot was fired is well taken. If, as it appears, Fraser was shot through the left side, Morgan's riflemen were too far to the left of the American line to have inflicted the wound unless Fraser had his back to the firing line.

Senator Richard Brent of Virginia related the following account, which he said he had received from Daniel Morgan:

In the battle of October, the seventh, the last pitched battle that was fought between the two armies, General Fraser, mounted on an iron grey horse, was very conspicuous. He was all activity, courage and vigilance, riding from one part of his division to another, and animating the troops by his example. Wherever he was present everything prospered, and when confusion appeared in any part of the line, order and energy were restored by arrival.

Colonel Morgan, with his Virginia riflemen, was immediately opposed to Fraser's division of the army. It had been concerted, before the commencement of that battle, that while the New Hampshire and New York troops attacked the British left, Colonel Morgan, with his regiment of Virginia riflemen, should make a circuit to come upon the British right, and attack them from there. In this attempt, he was forced by a wooded hill, to the foot of which the British left, "true to his purpose, Morgan at this critical moment poured down like a torrent from the left, which was assailed with increased violence, and while executing this movement, General Fraser received his mortal wound."

---

37. Ibid, pp. 215-6.

In the midst of this sanguinary battle, Colonel Morgan took a few of his best riflemen aside; men in whose fidelity and fatal precision of aim, he could repose the most perfect confidence, and said to them: "That gallant officer is General Fraser; I admire and respect him, but it is necessary that he should die - take your stations and do your duty." Within a few moments General Fraser fell, mortally wounded.<sup>38</sup>

This account would carry greater weight if it were supported by Morgan's personal papers, which it is not.<sup>39</sup>

In 1831, Jared Sparks made his second visit to Saratoga, accompanied by General Morgan Lewis, who had been a quarter-master on Gates' staff. Lewis contradicted the stories concerning Fraser's having been shot on horseback by riflemen, under orders to do so "by some Officer". He claimed that Fraser was on foot when shot, and in the midst of action, where the smoke so thick that he could not be identified, and that he must have been wounded by a random shot.<sup>40</sup>

Neither the papers of Gates, Schuyler, nor Lincoln give any details concerning Fraser's death. While contemporaries, except those quoted above, furnish meager data concerning General Fraser's death, secondary materials often include lengthy accounts of the event.

Charles Neilson repeated the story that Senator Brent said he received from Morgan, adding the name of the man who fired the fatal shot - Timothy Murphy.<sup>41</sup>

Benson J. Lossing follows the same account, probably received from Neilson, and gives a biographical sketch of Timothy Murphy's life.<sup>42</sup>

---

39. Daniel Morgan Papers, Library of Congress.

40. Sparks, Jared, Sparks Collection, Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

41. Neilson, Charles, An Original Compiled and Corrected Account of Burgoyne's Campaign and the Memorable Battles of Bemis Heights, Joel Munsell, Albany, 1844, pp. 170-1.

William L. Stone's The Burgoyne Ballads gave the following version of Fraser's death:

The first we hear of Murphy was his being one of the best shots among Morgan's sharpshooters. At the second battle of Saratoga the latter noticed repeatedly during the conflict a noble-looking British officer, who mounted upon a magnificent black charger, dashed from one end of the line to the other, appearing wherever the danger was the greatest, and by his judgment, courage and activity, frequently retrieving the fortunes of the day when all seemed on the point of being lost.

He recollected having seen this officer in the battle of September 19th, having on that occasion admired him for the skill and bravery which he displayed. While this officer lived, Morgan considered the issue of the contest a doubtful one. He therefore, as stated in the text, selected twelve of his best marksmen, and leading them to a suitable position whence he pointed out the doomed officer, he told them to kill him when next he came within reach of their rifles. Several of the sharpshooters discharged their rifles without effect, but when Murphy fired Fraser fell.<sup>43</sup>

As an authority for this account, Stone cites James Graham's Life of General Daniel Morgan of the Virginia Line the Army of the United States; however, this work does not mention Murphy.<sup>44</sup>

In the same biographical sketch, Stone said that Murphy was a native of Pennsylvania who enlisted in the Revolutionary Army in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania, in July 1775 in Captain John Loudon's Company, First Pennsylvania Continental Line. He was detached with Captain James Parr, who succeeded Loudon to Morgan's Corps. The authority for this data was a letter from the Hon. James B. Linn, of Harrisburgh, Pennsylvania.<sup>45</sup>

The crediting of Murphy with Fraser's death also appeared in Stone's Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds. He also said that Murphy was certain

- 
43. Stone, William L., Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1893, p. 291.  
44. Graham, James, The Life of General Daniel Morgan of the Virginia Line of the Army of the United States, Derby and Jackson, New York, pp. 162-3.  
45. Ibid, pp. 290-302.

that he shot Fraser, and that Murphy's son and two daughters assured Mr. Simms, author of "Frontiersmen of New York" that their father shot Fraser.<sup>46</sup>

Every effort to trace the crediting of Murphy with Fraser's death before 1844 has met with failure.

From the above accounts it is clear that a considerable disparity exists concerning the details of Fraser's death. On the basis of available evidence, several conclusions may be reached, beyond the fact that he was killed: (1) He was fatally wounded while rallying the Light Infantry and 24th Regiment following the initial American attack; (2) That while it be difficult to assess, his loss was a blow to the British, although caution should be exercised in overestimating its impact; (3) That the present evidence does not warrant the perpetuation of the story that he was killed at the orders of either Arnold or Morgan; (4) That there is insufficient evidence for identifying Timothy Murphy as the man who fired the fatal shot. Concerning the last two conclusions: The accounts that gave either Arnold or Morgan credit for giving the orders appeared fifty years after the event and gave accounts of conversations that could only have come from contemporary British sources, and these sources do not record the dialogues quoted. On the other hand, the wounding may have occurred prior to Arnold's appearance on the field, and did not take place within sight of Arnold's position with Learned's troops who were facing the Germans, not Fraser. Nor do contemporary American documents mention any such orders being given. Two participants in the battle say

---

46. Stone, Visits, p. 246.

that Fraser was not killed by Murphy - one that he was shot by an "old man" - the other that he was killed by random fire. The accounts concerning Murphy's role appeared even later than those concerning the orders, without any basic evidence beyond hearsay and tradition. The circumstances under which he was wounded - the noise and confusion of battle - raise serious questions concerning whether anyone could have said with any degree of certainty who fired the fatal shot.

While confusion exists concerning the details of Fraser's wounding, happily, the various accounts of his burial are in more agreement, although several American writers told that after the Americans became aware that a funeral was being conducted they ceased their cannonade and fired a minute gun. An example of this verious is found is Lossing:

...Suddenly, the irregular firing ceased, and the solemn voice of a single cannon, at measured intervals, boomed along the valley, and awakened the responses of the hills. It was a minute gun fired by the Americans in honor of the gallant dead. The moment information was given that the gathering at the redoubt was a funeral company fulfilling, amid imminent perils, the last-breathed wishes of the noble Fraser, orders were issued to withhold the cannonade with balls, and to render military honor to the fallen brave.

How such incidents smooth the rough features of war. In contrast with fiercer ages gone by, when human sympathy never formed a holy communion between enemies on the battlefield, they seem to reflect the radiance of the future, and exhibit a glimpse of the time to which a hopeful faith directs our vision, when "national shall not war against nation", when "one law shall bind all people, kindreds, and tongues, and that law shall be the law of UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD."<sup>47</sup>

One can share Mr. Lossing's hope without his credulity. The earliest mention of the firing of the minute gun seems to be included in Charles Neilson's account of Fraser's burial, in which he cites a General Winslow,

---

47. Lossing, op. cit., p. 66

"who commanded the gun which was fired on this occasion."<sup>48</sup> Stone and most of the regional writers told the same story, and it is still a part of the local folklore. Thus Madame Riedesel's statement that if he had known it was a funeral, Gates would have ordered the cannonade to cease, developed into a legend that ascribed such gallant sentiment to the Americans that they saluted the fallen Fraser. No basis in fact can be found supporting this tradition, all known evidence repudiates it.

Fraser's Grave: The location of Simon Fraser's grave is identified by both Burgoyne and the Baroness as in the redoubt on the hill above the house in which he died.<sup>49</sup>

Professor Silliman, writing concerning his visit in 1819, said:

Having taken my guide (Ezra Buell) home to breakfast, we made use of his knowledge of the country to identify with certainty the place of General Fraser's interment.

General Burgoyne mentions two redoubts that were thrown up on the hills behind his hospital; they are still very distinct, and in one of these which was called the great redoubt by the officers of Burgoyne's army, General Fraser was buried. It is true that it has been disputed, which is the redoubt in question, but our guide stated to us, that within his knowledge a British sergeant, three or four years after the surrender of Burgoyne's army, came and pointed out the grave. We went to the spot; it is within the redoubt, on the top of the hill nearest the house where the general died, and corresponds with the plate in Anburey's Travels, taken from an original drawing by Sir Frances Clarke, aide-de-camp to General Burgoyne,\* and with the statement of the general in his defense as well as the account of Madame Riedesel.

The place of the interment was formerly designated by a little fence surrounding the grave; I was here in 1797, twenty-two years ago; the grave was then distinctly visible.<sup>50</sup>

Prominent ambulatory traveler, P. Stansbury, visited Saratoga in 1821 and wrote:

...The brave and gallant soldier died the next day, and according to his request, his corpse was borne without parade to the top of the hill behind the house, where a redoubt had been built and is still visible... His remains are removed to England.<sup>51</sup>

---

48. Neilson, *op. cit.*, p. 186.

49. See above, pp.

50. Stone, *Visits to Saratoga Battle-Grounds*, p. 131

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 173-4

\* Note: Sir Francis could not have drawn the picture. He lay, fatally wounded, in Gates' headquarters at the time of the burial.

heresay. The details are always shadowy, and an air of mystery prevails. Efforts to determine whether the remains were exhumed and returned to England to Scotland have been futile. No British source has been located stating that the general was buried anywhere other than at Saratoga. One would assume that if so prominent a figure as Fraser were brought home for his final interment some note would have been made of it. This does not discount the possibility that some such records exist somewhere - only that it has not been found.

Stone gave what he believed to be the origin of the story of Fraser's removal in the following:

Mr. Allen - About thirty years ago (1821), the late Peter Barker, then of Schuylerville, Saratoga County, related to me an extraordinary circumstance which occurred in that village, during the time he was proprietor of the hotel, and also land agent for Philip Schuyler, Esq. 'Tis an old affair and may perhaps be interesting to the readers of the Old Settler. From a memorandum made at the time, I am enabled to give you the precise language of Mr. Barker. He said, "One morning a carriage drove up to my door, from which there alighted three gentlemen - One very aged, the other two much younger. On learning that Mr. Schuyler was absent (for whom they inquired), they informed me that their business with him was to obtain permission to remove the remains of a relative, who was many years ago buried on his land. I replied, that as an agent of Mr. Schuyler, I would not only grant the permission, but would render them any assistance in my power to effect the object of their visit. They thanked me, and requested me to order a box to be made, sufficiently large to contain the bones of person, and also engage six men to be in attendance when wanted, with implements for digging; and after ordering an early dinner, they left the house on foot. They were absent about two hours. On their return, they intimated to me that they had discovered the grave. After eating a hasty dinner, we summoned the men; and having obtained the box, started under the guidance of the old gentleman. He led us to a plain east of the house, (Schuyler's), and about half way to the river, to a large primitive elm tree, where he ordered us to stop. He then, with a pocket compass, ascertained the due north from the tree, and measured off a certain distance from the tree by pacing; there he stuck a stake. After spending half an hour or more measuring and remeasuring, he marked on the surface of the ground an oblong square of about five by eight feet, and directed the workmen to commence their digging, giving them particular directions if they should discover anything like rotten or decayed wood to stop. At the depth of four feet such a discovery was made. The old

In 1830, Jared Sparks visited the area and wrote the following concerning Fraser's grave:

A little before sunset I returned from my ride and ascended the hill to the spot where General Fraser was buried. The view from this place is exceedingly beautiful, and the effect was how heightened by the rays of the setting sun brightly gilding the distant hills, the waters of the Hudson, which are here seen for a long distance both to the right and left as you look toward the east. Few spots provide a greater variety of pleasing objects, and a peculiar charm was thrown over the whole by the solemn, peaceful spirit of tranquility, that seemed to brood over mountain and dale. Burgoyne's graphic description of the funeral procession, which was at that time of day and nearly at that time of year, came strongly to mind.

The redoubt in which Fraser was buried is distinctly visible in all its parts. It is an irregular figure adapted to the form of the hill, and at the time contained two cannon. The hill connected with the heights beyond by a ridge on a level with its summit. Trees have grown up on the redoubt around the edges of the entrenchment, but they have all recently been cut down, except two small pines and three or four of another kind, which stand near the redoubt on the east and north.

The tradition has been, that Fraser's bones have been dug up and carried away, but I have no faith in it. Major Buel, who has lived here since the time Fraser was buried, knows nothing about it, and it is impossible that such a thing should happen without his knowledge. It is true, people have dug for his bones within a few years, chiefly with the idle expectation of finding treasure. Two holes are still visible where such attempts were made, but it well ascertained, that neither his bones nor treasures were found. Some years ago the supposed spot of his burial within the redoubt was surrounded by a wooden railing, but this has long since disappeared. It was said to have been erected by some of Fraser's relatives in England.

... The house in which Fraser died stood at the foot of the hill, a little to the north. It belonged to a man named Taylor, and was called Taylor's House. It was afterwards removed to the road, on the bank of the river, where it now stands .... The old cellar is still visible, and marks the former sight of the House.<sup>52</sup>

A tradition to the effect that General Fraser's remains were removed to England has persisted for many years. In trying to trace the tradition and determine its validity, the writer has found it a very elusive thing. It is characterized by a kind of third or fourth repetition of

gentleman, much agitated, got into the decayed wood, which was in length about seven feet. Beneath the wood was another decayed substance, which the old gentleman said were the remains of woolen blankets; and, on removing that covering, human bones were discovered; with them the remains of two bayonets, which appear to have been crossed over the breast - a silver stock buckle, a gold masonic medal, and several musket balls, by which the remains were fully identified by the old gentleman, who, with his own hands, the tears streaming down his cheeks, and with the greatest care and reverence, gathered up all the bones and ashes, and placed them in the box which was carefully closed.

It was dark when we returned to the house. After supper, the two younger gentlemen invited me to their room, to give an explanation of the singular events of the day. They said the remains they had removed were those of a British officer in Burgoyne's army, in the war of the Revolution, and the old gentleman who accompanied them was the servant of that officer. The officer was mortally wounded in the battle of Saratoga. His servant (the old gentleman) and three of his soldiers carried him off the field of battle in blankets, and as far north as the elm tree, under which he died. The servant was determined, and did most effectually mark the place, that the grave might be found, should occasion afterwards require. They hastily dug a grave, laid the body in it in full dress, covered it first with several blankets, then with three or four boards, and filled it up with earth.

After peace the servant returned to England, and for many years afterwards importuned the family of that officer to send him over for the remains. They placed but little reliance upon his representations and declined doing it; and so the matter rested until that time, when the old gentleman because so importunate, giving them no peace, that they, grandsons of the officer, finally decided to gratify him by bringing him over to this country, but without, they said, the least hope or expectation of success; and they attributed the finding of the remains more to accident, than to the recollection of the old gentleman.<sup>53</sup>  
Troy, May, 1951

Whether this is the origin of the various stories concerning the removal of Fraser's remains may be open to question. It does seem that the earliest of the rumors appeared at this time.

The officer was, obviously, not General Fraser. The details do not fit those of any of the original accounts, and he was buried about nine miles north of the site identified by the Baroness and Burgoyne.

---

53. Stone, Burgoyne Campaign, pp. 328-331

In the absence of any clear evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that General Fraser's remains were never removed from the original grave.

Some confusion has prevailed concerning the location of the Great Redoubt, within which the grave is located. The hill that rose west of the British Artillery Park and Hospital and north of the Great Ravine has three conical spurs facing the east. The British constructed fortifications on each of these. The question has arisen concerning whether the Great Redoubt was the southern or central fortification. The original sources locate the grave on the hill immediately behind the Taylor house.<sup>54</sup> Stone and Lossing locate the house near the foot of the hill on which the center redoubt was built.<sup>55</sup>

The early drawing of the scene, attributed to Sir Francis Clarke, shows the funeral procession ascending the center spur.<sup>56</sup> However, the best reference is the attached Map of the Champlain-Hudson Canal. The engineers used Fraser's grave as a reference point, and the map indicates a triangulation locating the grave on the second, or central spur. On the basis of these materials, the Great Redoubt and Fraser's grave located on the central spur of the promontory.

Slight surface remains of what may have been the Great Redoubt are discernable on this site. However, the final chapter to this story must await an archaeological study of the location.

Conclusion: Not very much of the personality of Simon Fraser has been captured in this study. Contemporary documentary research does not reveal enough information about him to indicate whether the traditional picture of the gallant, heroic figure is valid. The fact that he was given the

---

54. See above pp. 24-27.

55. (1) Stone, Burgoyne Campaign, pp. 261-3.  
Visits to Saratoga Battle-Ground, pp. 126-8, 268-70.

(2) Lossing, op. cit., pp. 52-5.

56. See p. 36 above.

command of the advanced corps indicated that he enjoyed Burgoyne's confidence, and the latter's description of the burial scene indicates, unless the words are merely polite latitudes, that a strong personal friendship existed. It is interesting to note that Baroness von Riedesel had no unkind words for Fraser, and that in itself was something of a tribute because that lady was not given to flattering members of Burgoyne's staff.

Fraser is an important and romantic personality in the story of Saratoga, and his career and death should be carefully interpreted. It is hoped that the information which has been incorporated herein will be of value in supplying the background for that interpretation.

## Primary Sources

- Anburey, Thomas, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York, 1923. (2 vols.)
- Burgoyne, John, A State of the Expedition from Canada, Printed by J. Almon, London, 1780.
- Hadden, James, Hadden's Journal and Orderly Books, a Journal Kept in Canada and Upon Burgoyne's Campaign in 1776 and 1777, with an explanatory chapter and notes by Horatio Rogers, Joel Munsell Sons, Albany, 1884.
- O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), Orderly of Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne, J. Munsell Albany, 1860.
- Pausch, Capt., The Journal of Captain Pausch, Chief of the Hanau Artillery during the Burgoyne Campaign, translated and annotated by William L. Stone, Albany, 1886.
- Pell, Joshua, "Diary of Joshua Pell, Jr., an officer in the British in America, 1776-1777, "The Magazine of American History".
- Riedesel, Baroness Charlotte, von Berufs Reise, 1800.
- Riedesel, Baron General Frederick, Journal.
- Wilkinson, James, Memoirs of My Own Times, Printed by Abraham Small, Philadelphia, 1816.

## Journals

Journals of the Continental Congress.

## Secondary Sources

- Baxter, James Phinney, the British Invasion from the North, The Campaigns of Generals Carelton and Burgoyne with the Journal of Lieut. William Digby, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1887.

H 2215

Saratoga National Historical Park  
Stillwater, New York

June 24, 1958

Memorandum

To: Regional Director, Region Five  
From: Superintendent, Saratoga National Historical Park  
Subject: Documentary Study of the Death and Burial of General Simon Fraser

Attached in triplicate is the documentary research report on the subject matter, prepared by Park Historian John F. Luzader.

In accordance with Mr. Barnes suggestion, the study is not bound and punched.

(Sgd.) I. J. ELLSWORTH

I. J. Ellsworth  
Superintendent

In triplicate  
Attachments

DOCUMENTARY STUDY OF THE DEATH AND BURIAL

Of

GENERAL SIMON FRASER

By

John F. Lusader, Park Historian

Saratoga National Historical Park

Stillwater, New York

May 1, 1958

Introduction: The purpose of this report is to examine the documentary data that is available relative to the death and burial of Brigadier General Simon Fraser. The objective of the study is two-fold: (1) to provide information for interpretation; (2) to assist in locating the site of General Fraser's grave, which is to comprise, along with the Great Redoubt, Stop No. 9 of the proposed Tour Route for Saratoga National Historical Park.

General Fraser's Career Prior to Saratoga: The early portion of Simon Fraser's life is clouded by obscurity. William L. Stone and others stated that he was the son of Simon Fraser, 12th Baron Lovat, who, after a checkered career, was captured at Culloden and beheaded in 1748. In fact, there is an unsupported and stubborn tradition that General Fraser was attempting to vindicate his family's honor and retrieve its fortune by unusually gallant service in America. On the other hand, E.B. O'Callaghan said that he was the youngest son, it is said, of Hugh Fraser of Balnain. His mother was the daughter of Fraser of Forgers. Fonblanque wrote that he was the younger son of Alexander Fraser of Balnain and Glendo, of the

Ferraline branch of the Lovat family by the daughter of Angus Mackintosh of Killachy. A member of the Mackintosh family, Sir James Mackintosh wrote:

My father, Captain John Mackintosh, was the representative of a family which had for two centuries possessed a small estate called Kellachie, which I inherited from him, and which I was obliged to sell. He had served four and twenty years in the army, into which he entered very young. He was very severely wounded at Frelinhausen in the seven-years war; and his last place of service was Gibraltar, where he was during the whole siege. My mother was Marjory, the daughter of Mr. Alexander Macgillivray by Anne Fraser, sister of Brigadier General Fraser who was killed in General Burgoyne's army in 1777; aunt to Dr. Fraser, physician in London; and to Mrs. Fraser Tytler, wife of Lord Woodhouselee, now (1805) a judge of the Court of Sessions in Scotland. 1

These mutually contradictory accounts appear to contain all that is known concerning the parentage of Simon Fraser. \*

Most of the writers have agreed that Fraser was born in 1729 and that he entered the army at an early age, probably sometime after the publication of the Army List of 1754, since no subaltern of that name appears in that source.

- 
1. (1) Hadden, Lieut. James M., Hadden's Journal and Orderly Books, a Journal Kept in Canada and Upon Burgoyne's Campaign in 1776 and 1777, with an explanatory chapter and notes by Horatio Rogers, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1884, p. 454.
  - (2) Stone, William L., Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1893, p. 112.
  - (3) O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), Orderly Book of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1860, p. 184.

\* Note: After this report was prepared the writer located evidence that definitely established the fact that General Fraser was not the son of Baron Lovat. The May, 1782 issue of The Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military and Literary Journal carried a notice of death of Lieut. Gen. Fraser, son of Lord Lovat, at his house in Downing St., at the age of 52.

The Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military and Literary Journal for the year M, DCC, LXXXII, Vol. III, London, printed for J. Bew, Pater-noster row.

It is impossible to fix the date of his first commission since Simon Fraser's appear on the Army List of 1757, six of whom were assigned to Fraser's Highlanders, as the Second Highland Battalion, later the 78th Foot, was called. In that organization, besides the Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant and a Captain, there were four subalterns of that name, ranking as follows: an ensign appointed January 9, 1757, and three Lieutenants appointed January 5, January 30 and February 8, 1757. Then, of the same name, there was an ensign in the 50th dating his appointment from January 1, 1756, and a Lieutenant in the 60th, or Royal American Regiment of Foot, whose commission dated from January 31, 1756. <sup>2</sup>

The subject of this study probably was one of the three Lieutenants in the 78th Foot mentioned above. After his initial commission, his career can be traced with more certainty. On September 27, 1758 he became a Captain-Lieutenant; Captain, April 22, 1759; Major, in the army, March 15, 1761; Major in the 24th Foot, February 8, 1762; and Lieutenant-Colonel, July 14, 1768.<sup>3</sup> On June 10, 1776, less than two weeks after arriving in Canada, he received the local rank of Brigadier, pending confirmation by the Crown, and apparently was confirmed in that rank. His last commission was that of Colonel in the army on July 22, 1777.<sup>4</sup>

---

2. British Army Lists, quoted in Hadden's Journal, lxxii.

3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

During the Seven Years War he served with his regiment in the action at Louisburg and with General Wolfe at Quebec. After the war he was on garrison duty at Gibraltar and in Ireland. On April 5, 1776 he embarked from Cork, Ireland, with the 21st Foot and arrived at Quebec on May 26. Thus, Fraser came to the Burgoyne Campaign with a solid professional background, and he was to prove one of the most valuable and effective of Burgoyne's Lieutenants, as well as one of the most attractive.

When Burgoyne's army set out from Canada General Fraser commanded the advanced corps, which was composed of ten grenadier companies, ten light infantry companies, and the 21st Regiment.<sup>5</sup> The command of the advance corps was a post of great trust, involved considerable ability, and the command of picked troops.

It was in the action against Ticonderoga that Simon Fraser's importance in the story of the Burgoyne campaign began to be apparent; and because the events that took place there were both interesting and significant, a brief account of that portion of the invasion is worth giving.

Ticonderoga, a familiar and romantic name on both sides of the Atlantic, is a prominent, blunt-nosed promontory a mile long and three-quarters of a mile wide, that juts out from the western side of Lake Champlain. At the the foot of the southwest shoulder a narrow gorge extends westward for more than a mile, through which the waters of Lake George pass into Champlain. The highest part of this promontory is about seventy feet above the lake.

---

5. Hadden, op. cit., lxxii

Across the lake, a rocky bluff about fifty feet high, called Mount Independence, juts into Champlain towards the southwest corner of Ticonderoga. The passage between these headlands is about a quarter of a mile wide, and it is the gateway between the upper and lower Champlain and to Lake George. Once through it, the way is open by water into the narrow upper end of Champlain, and from its extremity up Wood Creek to within a few miles of the northern reaches of the Hudson River. Or one may turn westward at Ticonderoga into Lake George and follow it to a point equally near the Hudson.

Two miles northwest of Ticonderoga, Mount Hope commands the road to Lake George. A mile to the northwest, Sugar Loaf, renamed Mount Defiance, rises 750 feet above the water. In 1777, the countryside, except where Ticonderoga had been cleared for fortifications, was heavily forested.

In 1755, the French built a star shaped stone fort, with bastions, on Ticonderoga. Attacked by Amherst in 1759, its garrison retreated, blowing up a large portion of the works. Although the British rebuilt it, the post was allowed to fall into disrepair after the Peace of Paris, 1763. In 1777, the portion of the fort facing the lake was still serviceable.

During the period of French occupation, lines had been constructed in a circle across the promontory, about three-quarters of a mile behind the fort.

It is not clear here  
to me how and when  
the revolutionary American  
forces came into possession  
of Fort Ticonderoga.  
J.C.

When the American troops were concentrated at Ticonderoga in 1776, efforts were made to strengthen its defences. The remains of the old fort were repaired, the French lines enlarged, and blockhouses erected to protect the flanks and rear of the lines. The lower slopes on the north and south were defended by blockhouses, redoubts, and breastworks.

Mount Hope was armed with a new barbette battery, erected in a position that covered the outlet of Lake George and the road that ran along the shore.

Mount Independence was protected in the rear by a stream and a swampy morass. Batteries, stone breastworks, and an eightpointed star redoubt comprised its defences.

The water passage between Ticonderoga and Mount Independence was closed by a boom of heavy logs, bound together on a massive iron chain. Behind the boom lay a bridge.

The ominous presence of Sugar Loaf posed a threat to Ticonderoga that was discounted by the Americans because, in spite of the fact that the eminence was scaled by Wayne and Arnold, a decision was made that it was so inaccessible as to preclude any necessity for securing the summit.

The American garrison, as of the end of June, consisted of ten Continental and two militia regiments; however, they were considerably below strength, ranging in number from 45 to 265, present and fit for duty, the average being 160. There was also a body of 19 scouts under Benjamin Whitcomb, Thomas Lee's Rangers, 23 strong, 12 artificers, and 250 artillerymen.

In other words, Ticonderoga was being defended by about 2,500 men.<sup>6</sup> The exterior lines around Mount Independence and the old French lines behind Ticonderoga extended more than 2,000 yards. This meant, that, without any reserve and excluding Mount Hope, the blockhouses and other works, the Americans were capable of manning the post at the average of about one man per yard—five times that number were needed.

Scottish-born Arthur St. Clair, a former British officer and veteran of the Seven Years War, had been in command since June 12.

The conditions at Ticonderoga were something less than satisfactory. Not only were there not enough men, but, in spite of all the attention that the place had received, there was a shortage of every military necessity. What had happened to most of the supplies that had been dispatched to Albany has never been satisfactorily explained.

The commanding general of the Northern Army was Major General Philip Schuyler, whose administration had been severely criticized for a number of reasons, not the least of which was his practice of exercising his command from the peculiar vantage points of his boxes at Albany and Saratoga - now Schuylerville. Schuyler came up from Albany and held a council of war on June 20. That meeting resulted in a decision that there were not enough troops to hold the entire works. However, they were to hold out as long as possible and then concentrate on defending Mount Independence. The bateaux were to be held in readiness if that position should prove untenable.<sup>7</sup>

---

6. Journals of the Continental Congress, Vol. VII, pp 656-657.

7. General Philip Schuyler Papers, New York Public Library.

Several important questions were neither posed nor answered. One was: how were the troops to be taken from Ticonderoga to Independence in the face of an enemy that had driven them out of the former? Another was: how were the batteaux to be preserved and used to effect a retreat with the enemy in possession of Ticonderoga, Independence and the watergap in between?

Having provided for a defensive strategy, Schuyler returned to his Albany headquarters, leaving St. Clair to conduct the defense as best he could with what he had at his disposal.

On June 26, Fraser's advance corps left Crown Point, and the main body of the army followed on the first day of July, with the Germans on the eastern side of the lake and the British on the western.<sup>8</sup> Three miles above Ticonderoga, the British landed and encamped. Fraser was a mile in advance. On July 2, the operations against Ticonderoga began.

Fraser's advance point, under General Phillips, and one British brigade started for Mount Hope, whose garrison sensibly set fire to the works and fled to the old French lines. The British, after failing to cut off their retreat, took up a position within less than a hundred yards of the these lines, took cover, and opened fire. General St. Clair thought that this was the prelude to an assault and ordered his troops to sit down on the firing step, keep under cover, and hold their fire. Emboldened by the lack of firing, one of the British marksmen came quite close to the lines and Lieutenant Colonel James Wilkinson, who had something less than a passion for anonymity, ordered a sergeant to take a shot at him.

---

8. Hadden, op. cit., p. 63

The troops took the sergeant's shot as a signal to open fire, and the whole line leaped to their feet and poured volley after volley at the enemy. They were joined by the artillery. When order was finally restored, the British had retreated to three hundred yards, leaving Wilkinson's target lying alone on the field. However, when a burial party went out to dispose of remains they found him unhurt and dead drunk. At least 3,000 musket shots and eight pieces of artillery had been fired at a force of 500 men, killing one man and wounding two—all within a range of 100 yards.

While this noisy business was going on Riedesel's Germans advanced close to the creek behind Independence, where they halted as darkness fell. During the next day Mount Hope was occupied, and both sides engaged in rather indecisive artillery fire.

Meanwhile, some less boisterous but more decisive things were happening on Sugar Loaf. That promontory piqued Burgoyne's curiosity, and he sent Lieutenant Twiss, his engineer, to take a look. Twiss climbed the hill and came back to report that <sup>it</sup> commanded Ticconderoga at 1,400 yards and Independence at 1,500 yards, and that he could open a road and have guns up there within twenty-four hours. With Phillips in charge, the work was begun on July 4.

The Americans, by this time, had been strengthened by the arrival of 900 militiamen, and, for the moment, St. Clair's hopes were somewhat more optimistic. He had been expecting an assault on some part of his fortifications, but could detect very little activity.

However, there was some movement as Burgoyne shifted Call's brigade from Riedesel to the Ticonderoga side, giving Riedesel, in exchange, Fraser's Canadians, Tories, Indians, and Alexander Fraser's marksmen. Riedesel was to move southward around Independence and close the route of retreat by the road on the eastern side of the lake, the guns placed on Sugar Loaf being expected to prevent any retreat by water. Fortunately for the Americans, Riedesel had not yet started on his round-about move.

On the morning of July 5, St. Clair noticed some activity on the top of Sugar Loaf that caused him to take a longer look. The British were in the process of mounting two 13-pounders on the mount.<sup>9</sup>

What he saw caused St. Clair to convene a council of war that resulted in an unanimous decision to retreat as soon as darkness fell.<sup>10</sup>

The invalids and supplies were to be taken up the lake to Skenesboro by the boats that were anchored behind the bridge. The main body of troops was to march from the eastern side of the lake by a road that ran from behind Independence southeast to Hubbardton, thence to Castleton and west to Skenesboro.

A continuous cannonade was fired to conceal the noise of the evacuation preparations and to divert British attention. It probably drowned the noise of preparation, but it also led Burgoyne to suspect what was going on, although it was not until the following morning that Fraser learned from deserters that the retreat had actually begun.

---

9. Wilkinson, James, Memoirs of My Own Times, Printed by Abraham Small, Philadelphia, 1816, Vol. I, p. 184

10. Ibid., pp. 184-185.

The destruction of the fort on Independence by General Roche de Fermoy had alerted the British to the fact some general movement was being undertaken.

General Fraser's headquarters were on the Ticonderoga side of the lake, a mile and half from the bridge to Independence. After learning from the deserters that the retreat was under way, he hurried to the bridge and found it partially rased, with some cannon trained along its length. Four men had been detailed to fire a volley at the enemy when they attempted to cross, and then to retreat. However, when Fraser's men approached nothing happened because the gunners were too drunk to do anything except sleep. An Indian accidentally discharged one piece which was elevated so high that the only damage done was to nerves.<sup>11</sup> c/

Thus did Burgoyne's army recapture the Gibraltar of the North for the Crown. The conduct of the defense and evacuation did nothing to instill awe of American military skill in the minds of the invaders--seeming only to confirm the contempt already felt by many British and German officers. Nor was the fall of Ticonderoga calculated to fill American bosoms with pride, and the search for a scape-goat to bear the sins of the land into the wilderness of condemnation began.

Burgoyne ordered Fraser's light infantry and grenadiers, supported by Riedesel and Breymann's grenadiers and light infantry, to pursue the main body of the retreating Americans. Leaving the 62d Regiment at Ticonderoga and Prinz Fredrich's Brunswickers at Independence, Burgoyne took the balance of his force toward Skenesboro.<sup>12</sup>

11. Anburey, Thomas, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston and New York, 1923, Vol. I, p. 193.

12. Burgoyne, John, A State of the Expedition from Canada, Printed by J. Almon, London, 1780, Appendix xci.

St. Clair's army sweated through the sweltering, breathless heat along the rutted frontier road towards Hubbardton. Leaving Seth Warner at Hubbardton with orders to bring in the rearguard, St. Clair pushed his men on to Castleton, six miles away.

Colonel Warner was as brave as a military commander needs to be, but discipline was an anathema to his Vermont soul. He had been a Green Mountain Boy, accustomed to acting on his own and taking orders from no one, including major generals. Rather than bringing in the rearguard, he and Colonel Francis, its commander, decided to spend the night at Hubbardton. So Warner's Vermonters, Francis' 11th Massachusetts, Colonel Hales' New Hampshire, and some stragglers from the main body bedded down without bothering to post any pickets.<sup>13</sup>

Fraser had lost no time in following the Americans. Starting at four o'clock in the morning, he marched his corps along the same frontier track that St. Clair had taken until about one o'clock in the afternoon. Riedesel was following with equal vigor. When Fraser paused to give his men a rest, Riedesel, with a company of Jager and 80 grenadiers, came up. The march was resumed, and they encamped a short distance from Hubbardton.

As the Americans were preparing breakfast, the enemy attacked. The surprise was complete, and Hales' men, the first to be hit, fled in disorder. Warner and Francis succeeded in rallying their men, and a bitter fight began.<sup>14</sup>

---

13. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 186-187.

14. Ibid., p. 188.

The scene of the fighting was heavily wooded. While this suited the Americans, it presented the Europeans with a frustrating maze that grabbed at their gear and which seemed to harbor an American behind every tree and stump, and in which there could be no orderly fighting. Warner's men held the left of an irregular line, with steep Zion Hill on their left. Francis' men held the right on a lower hill. The whole line measured about a half a mile.

Fraser acted to turn the American left by drawing men from his own left to strengthen his right. When this shift was completed, he ordered the grenadiers to ascend Zion Hill. The climb was so steep that an orderly charge up the hill was impossible; and the grenadiers slung their muskets and, grasping trees, bushes, and rocks, scrambled up on all fours. Gaining the summit, they took a position behind Francis and across the road to Castleton.<sup>15</sup>

This tactic would have made Francis' position untenable if he had not adopted Fraser's tactics in reverse by moving against the weakened British left. This neutralized the grenadiers action, and, under a heavy fire, these troops suffered severe losses. The British situation was becoming serious; and in desperation, Fraser was about to order a bayonet charge when a strange sound reached the ears of the fighting troops. A band was playing and lusty German voices were singing a sturdy German hymn. Riedesel's Brunswickers were coming.

The baron had heard the firing and had brought his advance guard onto the field. Without waiting for the remainder of his troops, he sent his Jagers against the American right.

---

15. Anburey, op. cit., p. 194.

He then ordered his grenadiers against the extreme flank, to turn it. With their band playing, as if on parade before the ducal palace, the jagers advanced in formation against a withering fire, Francis' men held their position for almost a quarter of an hour, but the turning movement had begun to envelope their right. Francis was killed, and when Fraser's troops delivered their bayonet charge, the Massachusetts regiment broke and disappeared into the woods. The Vermonters had maintained their position, but when the right broke, they could hold out no longer, and at Warner's order evaporated into the wilderness to meet at Manchester.

St. Clair, at Castleton, had heard the firing too, but he had no hymn-singing regulars to send against the enemy. What he did have were two regiments of militia who, with their usual freedom from discipline, had dropped out of the line of march and encamped two miles from Hubbardton. He sent these orders to go to the aid of Warner and Francis while he prepared to take a force back to the fight. The two regiments refused to fight and hastily rejoined the column which they had not been eager to keep up with the day before. His troops at Castleton had no stomach for a forced march and a fight and their reluctance was reinforced with the arrival of the mutinous militia. While trying to get under way, St. Clair received word of Warner's retreat, and the issue was settled—they would proceed to Skenesboro.<sup>16.</sup>

This little battle had been the occasion of sharp fighting. The British lost 15 officers and 183 men, killed and wounded. The American's loss, including captured, were 12 officers and 312 out of a force which after Hale's flight numbered slightly more than 600.<sup>17</sup>

---

16. Ambury, op. cit., p. 196 Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 187.

17. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 187-188 Hadden, op. cit., Appendix 15, 88.

After the Battle of Hubbardton General Fraser rejoined the main body of the British force and commanded the advance corps in the march toward Albany. His primary duties during this period were to cover the advance and serve as the point for the army as it moved southward. The contemporary sources do not reveal any especially note-worthy incidents in Fraser's career during this time, unless one considers the story of Mrs. McNeil and Jane McCrae important.

The details of Jane McCrae's murder are obscure and contradictory. The only facts that seem indisputable are that a young woman named Jane McCrae was on her way from the house of Mrs. McCrae to meet her lover, a Loyalist officer, when she was killed, either by Indians who were accompanying her or by Americans firing on the party. Mrs. McNeil, according to local tradition, was a cousin of General Fraser, and when she was brought into camp, wearing nothing but a chemise, gave him a terrible tongue lashing. Because she was a lady of more than generous proportions there were no clothes in the camp that would fit her, and the general gave her his great coat. 18 Fraser's relationship to Mrs. McNeil, and his part in this incidental drama are matters of tradition, for which there appears to be no contemporary authority.

born 181  
years too  
soon

While the McCrae murder has been credited with bringing militia into the Americans camp and persuading some people who had been either neutral or inclined toward the royalist cause that they should go over to the Americans, no contemporary accounts support this interpretation. Gates did cite the episode in his correspondence with Burgoyne concerning the treatment of prisoners at Bennington. 19

- 
18. Detailed and contradictory accounts of the "McCrae Massacre" are found in all the literature of the Saratoga Campaign.
  19. Baxter, James Hinney, The British Invasion From the North, The Campaigns of Generals Carleton and Burgoyne With The Journal of Lieut. William Digby, Joel Mansell's Sons, Albany, 1887, pp 235-237; 264-265.

During the advance down the Hudson Fraser's command was primarily concerned with providing security against rear-guard action and surprise. There was really little to fear from such threats because of the Americans could little more than burn some bridges and fell trees across the road. As yet, their strength was not sufficient to warrant their making any kind of a stand that would risk an engagement.

By the time General Horatio Gates succeeded Philip Schuyler as commander of the Northern Department on August 19, the Americans had retreated to the vicinity of what is now Cohoes, and the British were in the neighborhood of Fort Miller, with Burgoyne's headquarters located in the Duer House, which stood on the hill east of the present village.<sup>20</sup>

While the British were still east of the Hudson River, the Americans, strengthened by reinforcements, began to move northward to challenge Burgoyne's drive on Albany. General Gates realized that Burgoyne could not remain in the Fort Miller area indefinitely he would soon either retreat to Ticonderoga or advance on Albany. Winter was approaching and there were no possible winter quarters between Albany and Ticonderoga. Whether Burgoyne retreated or advanced, Gates would be wise to be moving northward.

If Burgoyne were to retreat, Gates would be in a better position to take harassing action. If, on the other hand, he chose to advance, it would be wise to take up a position against him farther northward, away from the broad meadows that bordered the Mohawk where European tactics could be employed.

---

20. O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), Orderly Book of Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne, J. Munsell, Albany, 1860, pp. 77-78.

While on the Hudson, Burgoyne's advance would be parallel the river, and Gates' position could be covered by wooded hills where traditional tactics would be less effective. Although this is not the proper place, a reevaluation of Gates is overdue. <sup>21</sup>

On September 3, the American Army moved northward from the Mohawk. It halted the next day at Stillwater, and defensive works were begun. Before long, Gates realized that the river meadows were too wide to afford the type of position he desired, and he chose a site three miles to the north. At this point the river, curving westward, squeezed the road to Albany into a narrow passage dominated by the bluffs that form a part of Bemis Heights. The American took up a position at this point on September 12 and began to construct works beginning on and below the bluffs and running westward onto the heights.

The selection was an excellent one that would force Burgoyne to attempt one of two moves, ~~wither~~ either of which would place him in the unpleasant position fighting on Gates' terms. He could try to fight his way along the road and river under the fire of the Americans at the defile; or he could move into the hills west of the road and contest the American position in terrain that precluded the maximum use of massed troops and artillery. As we shall see, he chose the later course.

September 18 found the British at Sword's House, about four miles north of Bemis Heights. It was at this point that the reconnaissance capacity of the British was put to a severe test. Burgoyne had depended upon the Indians and Provincials.

---

21. In his Horatio Gates, Defender of American Liberties, Professor Patterson undertook a reevaluation of Gates that came close to being a panegyric.

Most of the Indians had " gone over the hill " after the general's Sand Hill reprimand, and the Provincials were hollow reeds upon which to lean. Thus the British were left with a very imperfect reconnaissance system in a densely wooded and unfamiliar area. The result was that while he knew that the Americans commanded the road at Bemis's Tavern, he did not know the exact location and strength of the remainder of the American Force. He was to pay dearly for this ignorance.

Confronted with a lack of knowledge concerning terrain and the enemy, Burgoyne decided to divide his force. Leaving six companies of the 17th British Regiment as bateaux guard and the Hesse-Hanau infantry regiment to guard the baggage, he organized three columns to move against the Americans.

The left column, under Riedesel, was composed of three German infantry regiments, numbering about 1200 men. This element was to advance along the road in order to take advantage of any weakening of the American right.

The center column, under Hamilton and accompanied by Burgoyne, and composed of the four regiments that were known as the British Line, the 9th, 21st, 62d and 20th, numbering somewhat over 1100, was to move westward from Sword's house for a distance and then to turn south.

The right column, consisting of the British advanced corps, Breyman's Germans, and nearly all of the auxiliaries, numbering about 2200, was placed under Fraser. This force was to proceed westward from the Sword House to some clearings near the crest of the hill and thence southward.

A comprehensive reconstruction of the subsequent movements from the available sources is somewhat difficult, and a degree of uncertainty exists in several points.

However, the two battles are discussed in some detail in the National Park Service Historic Handbook, Saratoga, by Francis Wilshin and Charles Snell, and the present study does not justify a recapitulation.

Fraser's part in the first battle, September 19, was not especially dramatic. He brought the right column into the fight on the Freeman Farm as soon as he learned that the center had contacted the Americans. However, since the center bore the brunt of the fight, his command played a secondary role in that engagement. In fact, Nickerson states that Fraser did not act as vigorously as he might, with the result that the British failed to envelop the American right. <sup>22</sup>

According to Wilkinson, the British failure to renew the attack on September 20 was due to Fraser's insistence that the grenadiers and light infantry were exhausted and that they needed a days rest before fighting again. On the other hand, Digby, who was a member of the advanced corps, related that Fraser and Philips urged an immediate attack, but that Burgoyne believed that his hospital was over-taxed and that the magazines by the river were too exposed to risk an engagement on that day. <sup>23</sup> Since neither the light infantry nor the grenadiers had been so heavily engaged, Digby's account is possibly the more accurate.

During the next two and a half weeks the armies faced one another while they improved their positions and prepared for the ultimate contest.

---

22. Nickerson Hoffman, The Turning Point of the Revolution, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1928, p. 311.

23. Wilkinson, op. cit., Vol. I, p. 251  
Baxter, op. cit., p. 272

This period was filled with fatigue and forage details, punctuated by alarms and picket action.

On the evening of <sup>the fourth of</sup> October, the day after the army had been put on short rations, Burgoyne conferred with Fraser, Phillips, and Riedesel. They reviewed the various factors involved and discussed a plan that for sheer rashness has few counterparts in British military history. Riedesel discussed the council as follows:

On the fourth of October General Burgoyne called together a council of war, consisting of General Phillips, myself, and Brigadier Fraser, and asked our advice on what should be done in this affair, proposing whether we could not by a round about way turn the enemy on his left flank and attack in the rear. As by such a movement, however, we would have to remove ourselves from the water at least three whole days, we would risk losing all the boats and provisions, and then have nothing at all to live on, because it was not to be expected that two battalions could defend the valley and riverbank for three days. I took the occasion to point out the danger of our situation, as the enclosure may indicate, and to press for a retreat to Fort Edward as soon as possible, especially because of the improbability of the early arrival of General Clinton. However, we waited, fed by hope, and it was decided on the 7th of October to attempt a reconnaissance against the left flank of the enemy, and if it proved impregnable to consider a retreat. <sup>24</sup>

On October 7, Burgoyne launched his movement against the American left, employing 1500 of his best troops and ten pieces of artillery. The following units were detailed to participate in this flanking movement. The right column included the British Light Infantry, the 24th Regiment and Breymann's Jagers and Grenadiers; the center column was composed of detachments of the German regiments of Riedesel, Rhetz,

---

24. Letter to the Duke of Brunswick from Baron von Riedesel, Oct. 21, 1777, Bancroft Collection in the New York Public Library, Saratoga Microfilm No. 9.

Specht, and Hesse Hanau and a detachment of the Royal Artillery; the left column was made up of the British Grenadiers and picked troops from the 9th, 20th, 21st, and 62nd regiments. Indians and provincials scouted the British right flank to divert the Americans to cover the western exposure of the attacking column. <sup>25</sup>

The artillery that accompanied the movement included six pounders, 6, two 12-pounders, and two howitzers. Captain Pausch, who commanded the Hesse Hanau artillery wrote the following concerning the flanking action:

Oct. 7th. In the afternoon, I received an order to have in readiness two 6 pound cannons with the requisite ammunition; also my Brigade, prepared to march immediately at a given signal. About 10 o'clock, there gathered in front of the camp on the Place de Armes of the left wing of the German troops a division consisting of all those portions of the German regiments then represented. Altogether, these numbered about three hundred men under the leadership of Lieut. Col. Specht (Pausch meant Speth. Brigadier Specht was commander of the Regiment Specht. Speth was Lieutenant Colonel of the Regiment Riedesel.) the commander of the Infantry Regiment of Riedesel. To this latter regiment, the Regiment Hesse Hanau furnished 1 officer, 6 Subalterns, 1 drummer, and 75 privates under the command of Capt. Schoel. We defiled to the right in front of our army towards its right wing as far as the Brigade of Brig. Gen. Fraser, where we halted. Here I found already assembled, among the other regiments, the English battery of light infantry grenadiers, the Albanian and Canadian volunteers, and the small remnant of our Indians who were in readiness for the march. The English Artillery furnished two howitzers, two 12-pound and our 6-pound cannon for the right wing of our battery, under Lieut. Dufais. Everything being quiet along the lines, I went, myself, with the first named two cannons of my Brigade, on the expedition.

Behind the entrenched camp of Fraser, where we halted and were obliged to wait for further orders, there were collected in Fraser's tent the Generals of the army. After first holding in it a council of war, the Generals went to another tent, in front of which the Savages were gathered, and announced to them (as I suppose, according to the usual

---

25. (1) Ibid.

(2) "Diary of Joshua Pell, Jr., an officer of the British Army in America, 1776-1777, " The Magazine of American History, Vol. II, part I (1878), p. 110.

Indian custom, which to me is entirely unknown and unintelligible) the order of to-day's march and the duties required of them. The conference lasted, in all, two hours, when we again resumed our march; and the reassembled corps once more started. There were now added to the German Division the small remnant of the Brunswick company of Jagers consisting of about 100 men, and as many more of the Brunswick Grenadier Battalion. The latter constituted the entire force of this small corps, now reduced to about fifteen hundred men in all. <sup>26</sup>

In his desperation, and in the face of approaching winter, Burgoyne was attempting to drive the Americans out of his path to Albany, where he felt his orders rigidly commanded his proceeding, and where he still hoped to effect a junction with Clinton. The subject of his strategy of the 7th of October is thoroughly discussed in former Park Historian Charles E. Shedd's lucid Burgoyne's Objective in the Second Battle of Saratoga, October 7, 1777, dated December 15, 1952.

The Second Battle of Saratoga began when British troops were seen in a wheatfield on the Barber Farm, southwest of the Freeman Farm and north of the western end of the Middle Ravine. The story of the opening phase of the battle is recorded by James Wilkinson in his Memoirs. While he was no shrinking violet, and always blew his own trumpet with sometimes deafening volume, the details of his account conform to the facts as they are known from other, more respectable, sources. Concerning this portion of the story he wrote:

...on the afternoon of the 7th of October, the advanced guard of the center beat to arms; the alarm was repeated throughout the line, and the troops repaired to their alarm posts. I was at headquarters when this happened, and with the approbation of the General, mounted my horse to inquire the cause; but on reaching the guard where the beat commenced, I could obtain no other satisfaction, but that some person had reported the enemy to be advancing against our left.

---

26. The Journal of Captain Fausch, Chief of the Nassau Artillery during the Burgoyne Campaign, translated and annotated by William L. Stone, Albany, 1886, pp. 159-161.

I proceeded over open ground, and ascending a gentle acclivity in front of the guard, I perceived about half a mile from the line of our encampment, several columns of the enemy, 60 or 70 rods from me, entering a wheatfield which had not been cut, and was separated from me by a small rivulet; and without my glass I could distinctly mark their every movement. After entering the field, they displayed, formed the line, and sat down in double ranks with their arms between their legs. Foragers then proceeded to cut the wheat or standing straw, and I soon observed several officers, mounted on the top of a cabin, from whence with their glasses they were endeavoring reconnoiter our left, which was concealed from their view by intervening woods.

Having satisfied myself, after fifteen minutes attentive observation, that no attack was meditated, I returned and repeated to the general, who asked me what appeared to be the intentions of the enemy. "They are foraging, and endeavoring to reconnoiter your left; and I think Sir, they offer you battle."

Mr. Shedd points out in his study that Wilkinson misinterpreted the halt in the wheatfield and that it was intended to give the force time to assume its position on the American left flank.

Gates, deciding to follow the precedent of the First Battle, ordered Morgan, Poor, and Dearborn to attack the enemy rather than awaiting the assault within his fortifications, as Burgoyne apparently expected him to do. Attacking almost simultaneously, the three American columns drove the British from the Barber Farm area and into full retreat toward their fortified line.

Fraser, with the British Light Infantry and the 24th Regiment, undertook to cover the retreat by forming a second line. Moving constantly among his troops, he attempted to rally them and to save the British flanking column. It was in the midst of this effort that he suffered his fatal wound.

---

27. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 267-268

Accounts by contemporaries are not in complete agreement concerning the circumstances of Fraser's wounding, nor do they agree upon whom the credit for bringing him down should be bestowed.

The diaries and correspondence of the British and German participants in the battle are disappointingly meager in detail concerning the incident. However, this may be readily understood if one remembers the circumstances. The British were retreating under terrific pressure, and the perspective of the individual soldier was limited to his immediate vision. In the excitement and danger of the moment, little could be noted beyond the fact that the general had been wounded, and there was not time to record dialogue or the exact sequence of events.

Thomas Anbury recorded the event as follows:

...nor can you conceive the sorrow visible on General Fraser's being brought in wounded, your old friends Campbell and Johnston, of our regiment, on each side of his horse, supporting him. I cannot describe to you the scene; it was such that the imagination must help to paint. The officers, all anxious and eagerly enquiring of his wound-- the down-cast look and melancholy that was visible to everyone, as to his situation, and all he could make to the many enquiries, was a shake of his head, expressive that it was all over with him. So much was he beloved, that not only his officers and soldiers, but all the women flocked round, solicitors for his fate.

When he had reached his tent, and was recovered a little from the faintness caused by loss of blood, he told those around him that he saw the man who shot him, he was a rifleman, and up in a tree; the ball entered a little below the breast, and penetrated just below the backbone. After the surgeon had dressed his wound, he said to him very composedly, "Tell me, Sone, to the best of your skill and judgement, if you think my wound mortal." When replied, "I am sorry, Sir, to inform you, that it is, and that you cannot live four and twenty hours." He then called for pen and ink, and after making his will, and distributing a few little tokens of regards to the officers of his suite, desired that he might be removed to the general hospital. <sup>28</sup>

---

28. Anburey, op. cit., pp. 259-260.

While there is reason to doubt that Anburey's Letters that comprise this source were written on the dates that are given in the published collection, and that they may even have been prepared after he returned to England, when checked against other contemporary sources, his presentation of the details of the campaign appear relatively accurate.

William Digby recorded in his Journal that:

.... Brigadier General Fraser was mortally wounded which helped to turn the fate of the day. When General Burgoyne saw him fall, he seemed to fall in the highest degree our disagreeable situation. He was the only person we could carry off with us. 29

Baroness Fredricka von Riedesel, whose account of her travels and adventures in America make for both informative and delightful reading, gave the following story of Fraser's death:

But severe trials awaited us, and of the 7th of October our misfortunes began; I was at breakfast with my husband and heard that something was intended. On the same day I expected Generals Burgoyne, Phillips, and Fraser to dine with us. I saw a great movement among the troops; my husband told me that it was merely a reconnaissance, which gave me no concern as it often happened. I walked out of the house and met several Indians in their war dress, with guns in their hands. When I asked where they were going, they cried out War! War! (meaning they were going into battle.) This filled me with apprehension, and I had scarcely got home before I heard reports of cannon and musketry which grew louder by degrees until at last the noise became excessive. About four o'clock in the afternoon, instead of the guests who were to have dined with, they brought in on a litter poor General Fraser, mortally wounded. Our dining table, which was already spread, was taken away, and its place they fixed up a bed for the general. I sat in a corner of the room, trembling and quaking. The noises grew continually louder. The thought that they might bring in my husband in the same manner was to me dreadful, and tormented me incessantly. The general said to the surgeon, "Do not conceal anything from me. Must I die?" The ball had gone through his bowels precisely as in the case of Major Harnage. Unfortunately, however, the general had eaten a hearty breakfast, by reason of which the intestines were distended, and the ball had gone through them. I often heard him, amidst his groans, exclaim. "O fatal ambition! poor General Burgoyne! My poor wife!" Prayers were read to him. He then sent a message to General Burgoyne, begging that he would have him buried the following day at six o'clock in the evening on the top of a hill which was a sort of redoubt. 30

---

29. Baxter, op. cit., pp. 287-288

30. Riedesel, Baroness Charlotte, von, Berufs Reise, 1800, p. 124.

The Baroness continues her account, describing the death and burial:

... As for myself, I could not go to sleep, as I had General Fraser and all the other gentlemen in my room, and was constantly afraid that children would wake up and cry, and thus disturb the poor dying man, who often sent to beg my pardon for making me so much trouble. About three o'clock in the morning they said that he could not last much longer. I had desired to be advised of the approach of the moment. I accordingly wrapped up the children in the coverings, and went with them into the entry. Early in the morning, at eight o'clock, he died.

After they had washed the corpse, they wrapped it in a sheet and laid it on a bedstead. We then came again into the room, and had this sad sight before us the whole day.....

... We learned that General Burgoyne intended to fulfill the last wish of General Fraser, and to have him buried at six o'clock in the place designated by him. This occasioned a unnecessary delay, to which a part of the misfortunes of the army was owing

Precisely at six o'clock the corpse was brought out, and we saw all the generals with their retinues attend it to the hill. The English chaplain, Mr. Brudenell, performed the funeral service, made more solemn and awful by it being accompanied by constant peals from the enemies artillery....The American General, Gates, afterwards said that had he known it was a burial he would not have permitted firing in that direction. <sup>31</sup>

Baron Riedesel's account of the burial follows his wife's with the remark: "Certainly it was a real military funeral-one that was unique of its kind." <sup>32</sup>

Anburey gives the following account of the burial:

Early on this morning (October 8) General Fraser breathed His last, and at his particular request, was buried, without any parade, in the great redoubt, by the soldiers of his own corps. About sunset, the corpse was carried up the hill; the procession was in view of both armies; as it passed by generals Burgoyne, Phillips and Riedesel, they were struck at the plain simplicity of the parade, being only attended by the officers of his suite; but lest the army, not being acquainted with the privacy that he desired, should construe it into neglect, and urged by a natural wish to pay the last honors to him, in the eyes of the whole army, they joined the procession.

---

31. Ibid.

32. Riedesel, General Baron, Freerich, Journal.

The enemy with an inhumanity peculiar to Americans, cannonaded the procession as it passed, and during the service over the grave. The account given us by friend Lieut. Freeman was, that there appeared an expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance—the scene must have been affecting. <sup>33</sup>

General Burgoyne's eloquent account, free from the fashionable bombast of the day, was recorded in his State of the Expedition as follows:

About sun-set the corpse of General Fraser was brought up the hill, attended only by the officers who had lived in his family. To arrive at the redoubt, it passed within view of the greatest part of the armies. General Phillips, General Biedesel, and myself, who were standing together, were struck with the humility of the procession: They who were ignorant that privacy had been requested, might construe it neglect. We could neither endure that reflection, nor indeed restrain our natural propensity to pay our last attention to his remains. The circumstances that ensued cannot be better described than they have been by different witnesses. The incessant cannonade during the solemnity; the steady attitude and unaltered voice with which the chaplain officiated, though frequently covered with dust, which the shot threw up on all sides of him; the mute but expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance: these objects will remain to the last of life upon the minds of every man who was present. The growing darkness added to the scenery, and the whole marked a character of that juncture that would make one of the finest subjects for the pencil of a master that the field ever exhibited—to the canvas and to the faithful page of a more important historian, gallant friend! I consign thy memory. There may thy talents, thy manly virtues, their progress and their period, find due distinction; and long may they survive;—long after the frail records of my pen shall be forgotten. <sup>34</sup>

Contemporary American accounts that have been examined do not supply any details concerning Fraser's death, beyond noting that news of it had been received. This is not surprising. The only thing that interested the Americans was that an enemy general had been killed. Nothing that they knew of Fraser recommended him to them, and how he died was secondary to the fact that he was dead.

---

33. Ambrey, op. cit., p. 265.

34. Burgoyne, op. cit., pp. 125-126.

The first detailed stories from the American participants in the battle appeared from several to many years later.

One of the earliest accounts appears in Wilkinson's Memoire, in which he quotes Baroness von Riedesel, <sup>35</sup> adding nothing to her version.

On October 17, 1825, on the fiftieth anniversary of Burgoyne's surrender, Samuel Woodruff of Windsor, Connecticut, visited the battlefield, and wrote a letter to Colonel William L. Stone, Sr., concerning his visit. In this letter he gave the following account of Fraser's death:

The circumstances attending the fall of this gallant officer have presented a question about which military men are divided in opinion. The facts seem to be agreed that, (here Mr. Woodruff erred; the facts seemed to have disagreed; else why would there have been any question?) soon after the commencement of the action, General Arnold, knowing the military character and efficiency of Gen. Fraser, and observing his motions in leading and conducting the attack, said to Col. Morgan, "that officer upon a grey horse is of himself a host, and must be disposed of. Direct the attention of some of the sharpshooters among your riflemen to him." Morgan nodded his assent to Arnold, repaired to his riflemen, and made known to them the hint given by Arnold. Immediately upon this the crupper of the grey horse was cut off by a rifle bullet, and within the next minute another passes through the horse's mane, a little back of the ears. An aide of Fraser's noticing this, observed to him, "Sir, it is evident that you are marked out for their aim; would it not be prudent for you to retire from this place?" Fraser replied, "my duty forbids me to fly from danger;" and immediately received a bullet through his body. A few grenadiers were detached to carry him to the Smith house. <sup>36</sup>

Samuel Woodruff's account poses certain difficulties besides having been written half a century after the event. His crediting Arnold with giving the order for shooting Fraser is open to question partly because the exact time of the former's appearance on the field has not been det-

---

35. Wilkinson, op. cit., pp. 293-296.

36. Stone, William L., Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds 1780-1880, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1895, pp. 225-226.

ermined and partly because, according to the available evidence, Arnold's first action on the 7th of October was the leading of Learned's troops against the German forces under Riedesel, and not against Fraser's Light Infantry and 24th Regiment. The account also gives lengthy, stilted quotations that, while very much a part of the writing of this period, were quite out of character for use in combat. The fact that he quotes Fraser and his side, while no British or German source does so, does not argue for the faithfulness of his narrative.

In 1835, Ebenezer Mattoon, who had commanded an artillery battery at Saratoga recorded his recollections in a letter to Philip Schuyler II, dated October 7, 1835. In it he gave the following account of Fraser's death:

....Just at this moment, an elderly man, with a long hunting gun, coming up I said to him, "Taddy, the infantry mustn't leave, I shall be cut to pieces." He replied, "I'll give thee another gun." The smoke then rising again, several officers, led by a general, appeared moving to the northward, in rear of the Hessian lines. The old man at that instant discharged his gun and the general officer pitched forward on the neck of his horse, and instantly they all wheeled about, the old man observing, "I have killed that officer, let him be who he will." I replied, "You have, and it is a general officer, and by his dress I believe it is Fraser...."

Here I will offer the reasons why I think this officer was Gen. Fraser, and that he was killed by the shot of this old man. In the first place, the distance, by actual measurement, was within reach of a gun: for the next morning a dispute arising about the distance, some contending that it was eight rods and others fifteen, two respectable sergeants, both of whom since have been generals in the militia of Massachusetts, Boardman and Lanell, were selected to decide this dispute by pacing the ground. They did so, and found the distance from the stump where the old man stood to the spot where the horses fell just twelve rods. In the next place the officer was shot through the body from left to right as was afterwards ascertained. Now from his relative position to the posted riflemen, he could not have been shot through in this direction, but they must have hit him in front. Moreover, the riflemen could not have seen him on account of the smoke in which he was enveloped. 37

---

37. Ibid., pp. 215-216.

Whether or not the old man shot Fraser, Mattoon's point concerning the direction from which the shot was fired is well taken. If, as it appears, Fraser was shot through the left side, Morgan's riflemen were too far to the left of the American line to have inflicted the wound unless Fraser had his back to the firing line.

Senator Richard Brent of Virginia related the following account, which he said he had received from Daniel Morgan:

In the battle of October, the seventh, the last pitched battle that was fought between the two armies, General Fraser, mounted on an iron grey horse, was very conspicuous. He was all activity, courage and vigilance, riding from one part of his division to another, and animating the troops by his example. Wherever he was present everything prospered, and when confusion appeared in any part of the line, order and energy were restored by arrival.

Colonel Morgan, with his Virginia riflemen, was immediately opposed to Fraser's division of the army. It had been concerted, before the commencement of that battle, that while the New Hampshire and New York troops attacked the British left, Colonel Morgan, with his regiment of Virginia riflemen, should make a circuit to come upon the British right, and attack them from there. In this attempt, he was forced by a woody hill, to the foot of which the British left, "true to his purpose, Morgan at this critical moment poured down like a torrent from the hill, and attacked the right wing soon made a movement to support the left, which was assailed with increased violence, and while executing this movement, General Fraser received his mortal wound.

In the midst of this sanguinary battle, Colonel Morgan took a few of his best riflemen aside; men in whose fidelity and fatal precision of aim, he could repose the most perfect confidence, and said to them: "That gallant officer is General Fraser; I admire and respect him, but it is necessary that he should die—take your stations and do your duty." Within a few moments General Fraser fell, mortally wounded. 38

This account would carry greater weight if it were supported by Morgan's personal papers which it isn't. 39

---

38. Ibid., pp. 111-112.

39. Daniel Morgan Papers, Library of Congress.

In 1831, Jared Sparks made his second visit to Saratoga, accompanied by General Morgan Lewis, who had been a quarter-master on Gates' staff. Lewis contradicted the stories concerning Fraser's having been shot on horseback by riflemen, under orders to do so " by some Officer. " He claimed that Fraser was on foot when shot, and in the midst of action, where the smoke so thick that he could no be identified, and that he must have been wounded by a random shot. <sup>40</sup>

Neither the papers of Gates, Schuyler, nor Lincoln give any details concerning Fraser's death. While contemporaries, except those quoted above, furnish meager data concerning General Fraser's death, secondary materials often include lengthy accounts of the event.

Charles Neilson repeated the story that Senator Brent said he received from Morgan, adding the name of the man who fired the fatal shot-Timothy Murphy. <sup>41</sup>

Benson J. Lossing follows the same account, probably received from Neilson, and gives a biographical sketch of Timothy Murphy's life. <sup>42</sup>

William L. Stone's *The Burgoyne Ballads* gave the following version of Fraser's death:

The first we hear of Murphy was his being one of the best shots among Morgan's sharpshooters. At the second battle of Saratoga the latter noticed repeatedly during the conflict a noble-looking British officer, who mounted upon a magnificent black charger, dashed from one end of the line to the other, appearing wherever the danger was the greatest, and by his judgment, courage and activity, frequently retrieving the fortunes of the day when all seemed on the point of being lost.

---

40. Sparks, Jared, Sparks Collection, Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

41. Neilson, Charles, An Original Compiled and Corrected Account of Burgoyne's Campaign and the Memorable Battles of Bemis Heights, Joel Munsell, Albany, 1844, pp. 170-171.

He recollected having seen this officer in the battle of September 19th, having on that occasion admired him for the skill and bravery which he displayed. While this officer lived, Morgan considered the issue of the contest a doubtful one. He therefore, as stated in the text, selected twelve of his best marksmen, and leading them to a suitable position whence he pointed out doomed officer he told them to kill him when next he came within reach of their rifles. Several of the sharpshooters discharged their rifles without effect, but when Murphy fired Fraser fell. 43

As an authority for this account, Stone cites James Graham's Life of General Daniel Morgan of the Virginia Line the Army of the United States; however, this work does not mention Murphy. 44

In the same biographical sketch, Stone said that Murphy was a native of Pennsylvania who enlisted in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania in July, 1775 in Captain John Loudon's Company, First Pennsylvania Continental Line. He was detached with Captain James Parr, who succeeded Loudon, to Morgan's Corp. The authority for this data was a letter from the Hon. James B. Linn, of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. 45

The crediting of Murphy with Fraser's death also appeared in Stone's Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds. He also said that Murphy was certain that he shot Fraser, and that Murphy's son and two daughters assured Mr. Simms, author of "Frontiersmen of New York", that their father shot Fraser. 46

Every effort to trace the crediting of Murphy with Fraser's death before 1844 has met with failure.

---

43. Stone, William L., Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign, Joel Husell's Sons, Albany, 1853, p. 291.

44. Graham, James, The Life of General Daniel Morgan of the Virginia Line of the Army of the United States, Derby and Jackson, New York, 1859, pp. 162-163

45. Ibid., pp. 290-302.

46. Stone, Visits, p. 246

From the above accounts it is clear that a considerable disparity exists concerning the details of Fraser's death. On the basis of available evidence, several conclusions may be reached, beyond the fact that he was killed: (1) He was fatally wounded while rallying the Light Infantry and 24th Regiment following the initial American attack; (2) That while it be difficult to assess, his loss was a blow to the British, although caution should be exercised in overestimating its impact; (3) That the present evidence does not warrant the perpetuation of the story that he was killed at the orders of either Arnold or Morgan; (4) That there is insufficient evidence for identifying Timothy Murphy as the man who fired the fatal shot. Concerning the last two conclusions: The accounts that gave either Arnold or Morgan credit for giving the orders appeared fifty years after the event and give accounts of conversations that could only have come from contemporary British sources, and these sources do not record the dialogues quoted. On the other hand, the wounding may have occurred prior to Arnold's appearance on the field, and did not take place within sight of Arnold's position with Learned's troops who were facing the Germans, not Fraser. Nor do contemporary American documents mention any such orders being given. Two participants in the battle say that Fraser was not killed by Murphy - one that he was shot by an "old man" - the other that he was killed by random fire. The accounts concerning Murphy's role appeared even later than those concerning the orders, without any basic evidence beyond hearsay and tradition. The circumstances under which he was wounded - the noise and confusion of battle - raise serious questions concerning whether anyone could have said with any degree of certainty who fired the fatal shot.

While confusion exists concerning the details of Fraser's wounding, happily, the various accounts of his burial are in more agreement, although several American writers told that after the Americans became aware that a funeral was being conducted they ceased their cannonade and fired a minute gun. An example of this version is found in Lossing:

...Suddenly the irregular firing ceased, and the solemn voice of a single cannon, at measured intervals, boomed along the valley, and awakened the responses of the hills. It was a minute gun fired by the Americans in honor of the gallant dead. The moment information was given that the gathering at the redoubt was a funeral company fulfilling, amid imminent perils, the last-breathed wishes of the noble Fraser, orders were issued to withhold the cannonade with balls, and to render military honor to the fallen brave.

How such incidents smooth the rough features of war. In contrast with fiercer ages gone by, when human sympathy never formed a holy communion between enemies on the battlefield, they seem to reflect the radiance of the future, and exhibit a glimpse of the time to which a hopeful faith directs our vision, when "nation shall not war against nation," when "one law shall bind all people, kindreds, and tongues, and that law shall be the law of UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD." <sup>47</sup>

One can share Mr. Lossing's hope without his credulity. The earliest mention of the firing of the minute gun seems to be included in Charles Neilson's account of Fraser's burial, in which he cites a General Winslow, "who commanded the gun which was fired on this occasion." <sup>48</sup> Stone and most of the regional writers told the same story, and it is still a part of the local folklore. Thus Madame Riedesel's statement that if he had known that it was a funeral, Gates would have ordered the cannonade to cease, developed into a legend that ascribed such gallant sentiments to the Americans that they saluted the fallen Fraser. No basis in fact can be found supporting this tradition, all known evidence repudiates it.

---

47. Lossing, op. cit., p. 66.

48. Neilson, op. cit., p. 186

Fraser's Grave: The location of Simon Fraser's grave is identified by both Burgoyne and the Baroness as in the redoubt on the hill above the house in which he died. 49

Professor Silliman, writing concerning his visit in 1819, said:

Having taken my guide (Ezra Buel) home to breakfast, we made use of his knowledge of the country to identify with certainty the place of General Fraser's interment.

General Burgoyne mentions two redoubts that were thrown up on the hills behind his hospital; they are still very distinct, and in one of these which called the great redoubt by the officers of Burgoyne's army, General Fraser was buried. It is true it has been disputed, which is the redoubt in question, but our guide stated to us, that within his knowledge a British sergeant, three or four years after the surrender of Burgoyne's army, came and pointed out the grave. We went to the spot; it is within the redoubt, on the top of the hill nearest the house where the general died, and corresponds with the plate in Anburey's Travels, taken from an original drawing by Sir Francis Clarke, aide-de-camp to General Burgoyne, \* and with the statement of the general in his defense as well as the account of Madame Riedesel.

The place of the interment was formerly designated by a little fence surrounding the grave, I was here in 1797, twenty-two years ago; the grave was then distinctly visible. 50

Prominent ambulatory traveler, P. Stansbury, visited Saratoga in 1821 and wrote:

... The brave and gallant soldier died the next day, and according to his request, his corpse was borne without parade to the top of the hill behind the house, where a redoubt had been built and is still visible ... His remains are removed to England. 51

In 1830, Jared Sparks visited the area and wrote the following concerning Fraser's grave:

A little before sunset I returned from my ride and ascended the hill to the spot where General Fraser was buried. The view from this place is exceedingly beautiful, and the effect was now heightened by the rays of the setting sun brightly gilding the distant hills, the quiet valley

---

49. See above, pp. 25 & 27.

50. Stone, Visits to Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 131.

\* Note: Sir Francis could not have drawn the picture. He lay, fatally wounded in Gates' headquarters at the time of the burial.

51. Ibid., pp. 173-174.

and the waters of the Hudson, which are here seen for a long distance both to the right and left as you look toward the east. Few spots provide a greater variety of pleasing objects, and a peculiar charm was thrown over the whole by the solemn, peaceful spirit of tranquility, that seemed to brood over mountain and dale. Burgoyne's graphic description of the funeral procession, which was at that time of day and nearly at that time of year, came strongly to mind.

The Redoubt in which Fraser was buried is distinctly visible in all its parts. It is an irregular figure adapted to the form of the hill, and at the time contained two cannon. The hill rises beautifully in conical shape from the plain, but is connected with the heights beyond by a ridge on a level with its summit. Trees have grown up in the Redoubt around the edges of the entrenchment, but they have all recently been cut down, except two small pines and three or four of another kind, which stand near the redoubt on the east and north.

The tradition has been, that Fraser's bones have been dug up and carried away, but I have no faith in it. Major Buel, who has lived here since the time Fraser was buried, knows nothing about it, and it is impossible that such a thing should happen without his knowledge. It is true, people have dug for his bones within a few years, chiefly with the idle expectation of finding treasure. Two holes are still visible where such attempts were made, but it well ascertained, that neither bones nor treasures were found. Some years ago the supposed spot of his burial within the redoubt was surrounded by a wooden railing, but this has long since disappeared. It was said to have been erected by some of Fraser's relatives in England.

.... The house in which Fraser died stood at the foot of the hill, a little to the north. It belonged a man named Taylor, and was called Taylor's House. It was afterwards removed to the road, on the bank of the river, where it now stands....The old cellar is still visible, and marks the former sight of the House. 52

A tradition to the effect that General Fraser's remains were removed to England has persisted for many years. In trying to trace the tradition and determine its validity, the writer has found it a very elusive thing. It is characterized by a kind of third or fourth repetition of hearsay. The details are always shadowy, and an air of mystery prevails. Efforts to determine whether the remains were exhumed and returned to England or Scotland have been futile. No British source has been located stating that the general was buried anywhere other than at Saratoga.

One would assume that if so prominent a figure as Fraser were brought home for his final interment some note would have been made of it. This does not discount the possibility that some such records exists somewhere-only that it has not been found.

Stone gave what he believed to be the origin of the story of Fraser's removal in the following:

Mr. Allen - About thirty years ago (1821), the late Peter Barker, then of Schuylerville, Saratoga County, related to me an extraordinary circumstance which occurred in that village, during the time he was proprietor of the hotel, and also land agent for Philip Schuyler, Esq. 'Tis an old affair and may perhaps be interesting to the readers of the Old Settler. From a memorandum made at the time, I am enabled to give you the precise language of Mr. Barker. He said. " One morning a carriage drove up to my door, from which there alighted three gentlemen-one very aged, the other two much younger. On learning that Mr. Schuyler was absent (for whom they inquired), they informed me that their business with him was to obtain permission to remove the remains of a relative, who was many years ago buried on his land. I replied, that as an agent of Mr. Schuyler, I would not only grant the permission, but would render them any assistance in my power to effect the object of their visit. They thanked me, and requested me to order a box to be made, sufficiently large to contain the bones of person, and also to engage six men to be in attendance when wanted, with implements for digging; and after ordering an early dinner, they left the house on foot. They were absent about two hours. On their return, they intimated to me that they had discovered the grave. After eating a hasty dinner, we summoned the men; and having obtained the box, started under the guidance of the old gentleman. He led us to a plain east of the house, (Schuyler's) and about half way to the river, to a large primitive elm tree, where he ordered us to stop. He then, with a pocket compass, ascertained the due north from the tree, and measured off a certain distance from the tree by pacing; there he stuck a stake. After spending half an hour or more measuring and remeasuring, he marked on the surface of the ground an oblong square of about five by eight feet, and directed the workmen to commence their digging, giving them particular directions if they should discover anything like rotten or decayed wood to stop. At the depth of four feet such a discovery was made. The old gentleman, much agitated, got into the pit, and under his direction the earth was carefully removed from off the decayed wood, which was in length about seven feet. Beneath the wood was another decayed substance, which the old gentleman said were the remains of woolen blankets; and, on removing that covering, human bones were discovered; with them the remains of two bayonets, which appear to have been crossed over the breast-a silver stock buckle, a gold masonic medal, and several musket balls, by which the remains were fully identified by the old gentleman, who, with his own hands, the tears streaming down his cheeks, and with the greatest care and reverence, gathered up all the bones and ashes, and placed them in the box which was carefully closed. c

It was dark when we returned to the house. After supper, the two younger gentlemen invited me to their room, to give an explanation of the singular events of the day. They said the remains they had removed were those of a British officer in Burgoyne's army, in the war of the Revolution, and the old gentleman who accompanied them was the servant of that officer. The officer was mortally wounded in the battle of Saratoga. His servant (the old gentleman) and three of his soldiers carried him off the field of battle in blankets, and as far north as the elm tree, under which he died. The servant was determined, and did most effectually mark the place, that the grave might be found, should occasion afterwards require. They hastily dug a grave, laid the body in it in full dress, covered it first with several blankets, then with three or four boards, and filled it up with earth.

After peace the servant returned to England, and for many years afterwards importuned the family of that officer to send him over for the remains. They placed but little reliance upon his representations and declined doing it; and so the matter rested until that time, when the old gentleman became so importunate, giving them no peace, that they, grandsons of the officer, finally decided to gratify him by bringing him over to this country, but without, they said, the least hope or expectation of success; and they attributed the finding of the remains more to accident, than to the recollection of the old gentleman. 53  
Troy, May, 1951

Whether this is the origin of the various stories concerning the removal of Fraser's remains may be open to question. It does seem that the earliest of the rumors appeared at about this time.

The officer was, obviously, not General Fraser. The details do not fit those of any of the original accounts, and he was buried about nine miles north of the site identified by the Baroness and Burgoyne.

In the absence of any clear evidence to the contrary, it is assumed that General Fraser's remains were never removed from the original grave.

Some confusion has prevailed concerning the location of the Great Redoubt, within which the grave is located. The hill that rose west of the British Artillery Park and Hospital and north of the Great Ravine has three conical spurs facing the east.

---

53. Stone, Burgoyne Campaign, pp. 328-331.

The British constructed fortifications on each of these. The question has arisen concerning whether the Great Redoubt was the southern or central fortification. The original sources locate the grave on the hill immediately behind the Taylor house. 54 Stone and Lossing locate the house near the foot of the hill on which the center redoubt was built. 55

The early drawing of the scene, attributed to Sir Francis Clarke, shows the funeral procession ascending the center spur. 56 However, the best reference is the attached Map of the Champlain-Hudson Canal. The engineers used Fraser's grave as a reference point, and the map indicates a triangulation locating the grave on the second, or central spur. On the basis of these materials, the Great Redoubt and Fraser's grave located on the central spur of the promontory. 9/

Slight surface remains of what may have been the Great Redoubt are discernable on this site. However, the final chapter to this story must await an archeological study of the location.

Conclusion: Not very much of the personality of Simon Fraser has been captured in this study. Contemporary documentary research does not reveal enough information about him to indicate whether the traditional picture of the gallant, heroic figure is valid. The fact that he was given the command of the advanced corp indicated that he enjoyed Burgoyne's confidence, and the latter's description of the burial scene indicates, unless the words are merely polite latitudes, that a strong personal friendship existed. e/p/

---

54. See above pp. 24 & 27.

55. (1) Stone, Burgoyne Campaign, pp. 261-263.  
Visits to Saratoga Battle-Grounds, pp. 126-128; 268-270.  
Burgoyne Ballads, pp. 68-74.

(2) Lossing, op. cit., pp. 52-55.

56. See p. 38 above.

It is interesting to note that Baroness von Riedesel had no unkind words for Fraser, and that in itself was something of a tribute because that lady was not given to flattering members of Burgoyne's staff.

Fraser is an important and romantic personality in the story of Saratoga, and his career and death should be carefully interpreted. It is the hope of the writer of this report that the information that has been incorporated herein will be of value in supplying the background for that interpretation.

## Bibliography

### Primary Sources

- Anburey, Thomas, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America, Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston and New York, 1923. (2 vols).
- Burgoyne, John, A State of the Expedition from Canada, Printed by J. Almon, London, 1780.
- Hadden, James, Hadden's Journal and Orderly Books, a Journal Kept in Canada and Upon Burgoyne's Campaign in 1776 and 1777, with an explanatory chapter and notes by Horatio Rogers, Joel Munsell Sons, Albany, 1884.
- O'Callaghan, E. B. (ed.), Orderly Book of Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne, J. Munsell, Albany, 1860.
- Pausch, Capt., The Journal of Captain Pausch, Chief of the Hessian Artillery during the Burgoyne Campaign, translated and annotated by William L. Stone, Albany, 1886.
- Pell, Joshua, "Diary of Joshua Pell, Jr., an officer in the British in America, 1776-1777, "The Magazine of American History."
- Riedesel, Baroness Charlotte, von, Berufs Reise, 1800.
- Riedesel, Baron General Frederick, Journal.
- Wilkinson, James, Memoirs of My Own Times. Printed by Abraham Small, Philadelphia, 1816.

### Journals

Journals of the Continental Congress.

### Secondary Sources

- Baxter, James Phinney, The British Invasion From the North, The Campaigns of Generals Carlston and Burgoyne With the Journal of Lieut. William Digby, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1887.

- Graham, James, The Life of General Daniel Morgan of the Virginia Line of the Army of the United States, Derby and Jackson, New York, 162-163.
- Lassing, Benson J., Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution, 3 vols., Harper Brothers, New York, 1850.
- Neilson, Charles, An Original Compiled and Corrected Account of Burgoyne's Campaign and the Memorable Battles of Bemis Heights, Joel Munsell, Albany, 1904.
- Nickerson, Hoffman, The Turning Point of the Revolution, Houghton Mifflin, New York, 1928.
- Stone, William L., Ballads and Poems Relating to the Burgoyne Campaign, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1893.
- Stone, William L., Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, 1780-1880, Joel Munsell's Sons, Albany, 1895.
- Stone, William L., The Campaign of Lieut. Gen. John Burgoyne and the Expedition of Col. Barry St. Leger, J. Munsell, Albany, 1877.

#### Periodicals

The Political Magazine and Parliamentary, Naval, Military and Literary Journal for the year M, DCC, LXXXII, Vol. III, London, Printed for J. Bew, Pater-noster Row.

#### Maps

Champlain-Hudson Canal Map, 1822.