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THE SITE OF THE SWORD SURRENDER CEREMONY
AT SCHUYLERVILLE (OLD SARATOGA), NEW YORK

by

Charles W. Snell
Park Historian
Saratoga National Historical Park
October 5, 1949

History of
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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Saratoga National Historical Park
Stillwater, New York

THE SITE OF THE SWORD SURRENDER CEREMONY

AT SCHUYLERVILLE (OLD SARATOGA), NEW YORK

A report on the Identity of the Site Where Lieutenant-General
John Burgoyne Offered His Sword to Major-General Horatio Gates
in the Sword Surrender Ceremony on October 17, 1777.

by

Charles W. Snell
Park Historian
Saratoga National Historical Park

INTRODUCTION

A distinction must be made between the surrender site where the British Army grounded its arms, and the surrender site where Burgoyne surrendered his sword to Major-General Horatio Gates, who commanded the American Army. These actions were separate and occurred at localities at least a mile apart. The site where the British Army grounded its arms near the ruins of Fort Hardy has been ably investigated by Former Historian Richard J. Koke in his report on "The Field of Grounded Arms at Schuylerville (Old Saratoga), New York," dated May 2, 1947. The site where Burgoyne surrendered his sword, on the south side of Fish Creek, has also been ably investigated by former Junior Historical Technician Francis F. Wilshin in a report dated August 11, 1941, which constitutes part of his Narrative Report for July of that year and in the Appendix, pp. I-XVII of A Supplement to the Museum Prospectus

Report of Superintendent Warren F. Hamilton, Saratoga National Historical Park, dated April 23, 1945. The writer has simply checked over all available sources and Historian Wilshin's work, as will appear below.

On the morning of October 17, 1777, the British Army marched out of its entrenched camp on the heights of Saratoga to the meadows along the Hudson River. There, near the ruins of Fort Hardy, the British Army grounded their arms. General Burgoyne, with his generals and staff, proceeded south across Fish Creek, where they met and were formally introduced to General Gates and his staff. General Gates then invited the British and German officers to a dinner which was served in a tent pitched at this spot. As the generals dined, the British army forded Fish Creek and marched southward along the river road between the American army which had been drawn up on both sides of the road. After the generals finished their meal, General Gates and General Burgoyne stepped outside of the tent, and in full view of both armies, General Burgoyne surrendered his sword to General Gates, who accepted it with a bow and promptly returned it to the British General. This act constituted the formal surrender ceremony of the British Army and thus brought to an end the Burgoyne campaign of 1777.

I. CONTEMPORARY EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE SWORD SURRENDER CEREMONY

1. James Wilkinson:

Colonel James Wilkinson served as Deputy Adjutant General to General Gates during the latter part of the Burgoyne Campaign and has left the following description of the surrender scene:

"Early on the morning of 17th (October), I visited General Burgoyne in his camp, and accompanied him to the ground where his army was to lay down their arms, from whence we rode to the bank of the Hudson's river, which he surveyed with attention, and asked me whether it was fordable. Certainly, Sir, but do you observe the people on the opposite shore? Yes, replied he, "I have seen them too long."

"He then proposed to be introduced to General Gates, and we crossed the Fishkill and proceeded towards his headquarters, General Burgoyne in front with adjutant-general, Kingston, and his aide-de-camp Captain Lord Petersham and Lieutenant Wilford, behind him then followed Major-general Phillips, the Baron Riedesel and the other general officers and their suites according to rank. General Gates advised of Burgoyne's approach met him at the head of his camp. Burgoyne in a rich royal uniform, and Gates in a plain blue frock, when they had approached nearly within sword's length they reigned up and halted. I then named the gentlemen and General Burgoyne raising his hat most gracefully said, "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner," to which the conqueror, returning a courtly salute promptly replied, "I shall always be ready to bear testimony that it has not been through any fault of your excellency." Major-General Phillips then advanced, and he and General Gates saluted and shook hands with the familiarity of old acquaintances. The Baron Riedesel and the other officers were introduced in their turn, and soon as the ceremony was concluded, I left the party and returned to the British camp to establish guards, take an account of the ordnance and give orders for the march of the prisoners."1 (Underscore Mine)

2. Ebenezer Matton:

Ebenezer Matton served through the Burgoyne Campaign in an American artillery company. Writing in 1835, he recalled the surrender as follows:

"Here (at their positions upon the Battenkill) we remained till the morning of the 17th (October), when we received orders to repair to Gen. Gates's head quarters on the west side of the river.

"As we passed along we saw the British army piling (not stacking) their arms; the piles extending from Schuyler's creek northward nearly to the house before mentioned. The range of the piles ran along the ground west of the road then traveled, and east of the canal as, I am informed, it now runs.

"Just below the island we passed the river and came to Gen. Gates marquee, situated on a level piece of ground, from 130 to 150 rods (2145 to 2475.5 feet) south of Schuyler's Creek (Fish Creek). Little south and west of this is a rising ground, on which our army was posted, in order to appear to the best advantage. A part of it was also advantageously drawn upon the east side of the river. About noon on the 17th, Gen. Burgoyne, with a number of his officers, rode up near to the marquee

in front of which Gen. Gates was sitting, attended with many of his officers. The sides of the marquee were rolled up, so that all that was transacted might be seen. Gen. Burgoyne dismounted and approached Gen. Gates, who rose and stepped forward to meet him. Gen. Burgoyne then delivered up his sword to Gen. Gates who received it in his left hand, at the same time extending his right hand to take the right hand of Gen. Burgoyne.

"After a few minutes conversation, Gen. Gates returned the sword to Gen. Burgoyne, who received it in the most graceful and gentlemanly manner. The rest of Burgoyne's officers then delivered up their swords, and had them restored to them likewise. They then all repaired to the table and were seated, and while dining, the prisoners were passing by."²
(Underscoring Mine)

3. J. M. Hughes:

J. M. Hughes served as an aide-de-camp to General Gates during the Burgoyne Campaign and has left the following description of the surrender:

".....On the eighteenth the enemy piled their arms on the low grounds of General Schuyler's farm, about ten o'clock A.M., of that day, when General Burgoyne sent an officer to inform General Gates that he was approaching. General Gates at that time was mounted on horseback, with his family, reviewing the general situation, when General Burgoyne with General Philips, Lord Petersham, General Riedesel, and a number of others composing his suite; with General Gates, Colonel Wilkinson, Colonel Troup, Major Armstrong, Major Pierce, Major Hughes, Colonel Lewis, D.Q.M. General and a number of other officers, if I recollect right, were at their posts. The salutations were familiar and polite; and the two suites, &c, retired to a large marquee that had been prepared for their reception. I do not recollect the circumstances about General Burgoyne presenting his sword in token of surrender; this can be procured from General Gates. The army was, on that day drawn up in two lines, colors flying, - the head of the lines beginning at Fish Creek, and so extending towards headquarters, under the command of General Glover; and, about eleven o'clock, the British began their march through them, with colors cased, which was not completed till late in the afternoon. On the entrance of British front, the music beat "Yankee Doodle", and so continued till the march was completed. The Americans behaved with admirable order, with shouldered arms, and not a single insult was given."³ (Underscoring mine)

4. John Becker:

John Becker was a young boy at the time of the surrender and was at Saratoga that day. He describes the scene as follows:

"When I heard that Burgoyne was at headquarters I waited no longer to observe the march of the light infantry, but ran as fast as I could to reach the marquee of Gen. Gates.....Eager beyond expression for a

glimpse of the man (Burgoyne), I stood at the side of the tent door which now and then opened as a servant passed in and out. I was soon gratified by closer observation. Near me there was an officer who was mounted and stationed a little higher up, and stood ready to receive the British troops as they approached the lines of our camp, and were coming down the road to pass through them, our men were paraded, if I remember right, opposite the place where they were to enter, and the moment they stepped foot upon our line our drums and music struck up Yankee Doodle. At this moment the two generals came out of the marquee together. The American commander faced the road, and Burgoyne did the same, standing on his left. Not a word was said by either, and for some minutes, to the best of my recollection, they stood silently gazing on the scene before them....Presently General Burgoyne, as by previous understanding, stepped back, drew his sword, and in the face of the two armies, as it were, presented it to General Gates, who received, and instantly returned it in the most courteous manner. They then returned together to the marquee."⁴

5. Ralph Cross:

Ralph Cross commanded the Essex Regiment which was present at the surrender of Burgoyne. In his journal he gives the following information on the position of the right of the American camp:

"Oct. 13, Marched from Behmas Heights to Saratoga $\frac{1}{2}$ miles Short of the Meeting House & Encamped and one mile from Enemies Lines".....⁵
(Underscoring Mine)

6. Ephraim Squier:

Ephraim Squier served in the Connecticut Militia that was attached to Gates' army during the Burgoyne Campaign. His journal contains the following information on the surrender site:

"Oct. 17. This morning at 4 o'clock paraded, then about 8 o'clock paraded again, ground our arms at 11 o'clock, orders to strike our tents and load them and parade to head quarters immediately, which we did as soon as possible and paraded by the road just north of the Meeting House, so as to see the prisoners parade toward Head Quarters, a very agreeable sight, I thought for some time, but was weary before they had all passed by though they marched brisk, yet they had hardly all passed us by the sun half an hour high. They was more than three hours in passing."⁶
(Underscoring mine)

7. Ebenezer Wild:

Ebenezer Wild served in the First Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Line, under Colonel Joseph Voses, during the Burgoyne Campaign. His Journal contains the following information:

"17 Oct. This morning very dark and foggy. About 10 o'clock we marched from our encampment in the woods in order to receive Genl. Burgoyne and his army. We marched round the meeting house and came to a halt. Gen. Burgoyne and his Chief Officers rode by us there, and then we marched further down the road and grounded our arms and rested there. At half after 3 o'clock Genl. Burgoyne's Army began to pass us, and they continued passing till sunset, when we marched down the road a little and into the woods, where we encamped for the night."7 (Underscoring mine)

8. Samuel F. Merrick, M.D.:

Samuel F. Merrick was present at Burgoyne's surrender. He noted in his Journal:

"Oct. 17. A day never to be forgotten by the American States. About eleven o'clock A.M. Gen. Burgoyne with a number of Other officers rode out, escorted by sundry officers of the Continental army and a little south of the church was met by Gen. Gates, and after a polite compliment proceeded to head quarters; about two the army began to march out. I tarried till after four when I returned"....9 (Underscoring Mine)

9. Henry Hallowell:

Henry Hallowell served in the Fifth Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Line, under Colonel Rufus Putnam, during the Burgoyne campaign and was present at the surrender:

"....But Birgoyne and his generals Din'd together with gen. gates on a small hill, There being awning taken from vessels placed like a marquee."9 (Underscoring Mine)

10. British and German Contemporary Journals:

The writer has examined all available British and German diaries but has failed to find any information that pertains to the spot where the sword surrender ceremony took place.

II. SECONDARY ACCOUNTS OF THE SWORD SURRENDER CEREMONY SITE

1. Duc De La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, 1795:

The Duke de La Rochefoucauld-Liancourt, a French publicist, visited the eldest son of Philip Schuyler, John Schuyler at Saratoga in 1795. He left the following account of his visit:

"Yes I have seen this truly memorable place, which may be considered as the spot where the independence of America was sealed; for the events which induced Great Britain to acknowledge that independence were obviously consequences of the capture of General Burgoyne, and would, in all probability, never have happened without it. The dwelling house of John Schuyler stands on the spot where this important occurrence took place. (W. L. Stone's note "This is, of course, an error. He confounded it with the fact that near the house the preliminary conferences were exchanged.")....

"You see the way by which the English column, after it had been joined by the Germans, filed off by the left to lay down their arms within an ancient fort, which was constructed in the war under the reign of Queen Anne; you see the place where the unfortunate army was necessitated to ford the creek in order to reach the road to Albany and to march along the front of the American army; you see the spot where General Burgoyne surrendered up his sword to General Gates.....This memorable spot lies in the corner of the court-yard of John Schuyler (Stone's note. The lake Champlain canal now runs through the site of the surrender), he was then a youth twelve years old, and placed on an eminence, at the foot of which stood General Gates and near which the American army was drawn up, to see their disarmed enemies pass by. His estate includes all the tract of ground on which both armies were encamped and he knows as it were their every step. How happy must an American feel in the possession of such property if his bosom be anywise susceptible of warm feelings! It is a matter of astonishment that neither Congress nor the Legislature of New York should have erected a monument on this spot reciting in plain terms this glorious event and thus calling it to the recollection of all men who should pass this way to keep alive the sentiments of intrepidity and courage and the sense of glory which for the benefit of America should be handed down among Americans from generation to generation."¹⁰

2. Visit of General Epaphras Hoyt in 1825:

General Epaphras Hoyt was an ardent student of the Burgoyne campaign and has left an unpublished history of that expedition. In 1825 he visited Saratoga, the following information is taken from his account:

"South of the creek is Schuyler's house, standing nearly on the site of General Schuyler's, burnt by Burgoyne. The old church which stood on the height southwest of this house, in 1777, is demolished...."

"The right of Gates's camp was about a mile south of Fish Creek, and the line extended into the woods over elevated ground opposite to Burgoyne's right, and the advanced posts were near the creek opposite those of the British.

"A short distance south of the site of the old church at Schuyler-ville we noticed the place where the right of Gates's camp rested on the 10th of October."¹¹ (Underscoring mine)

3. John Neilson, 1844:

John Neilson, early historian of the Burgoyne Campaign, has left the following account of the surrender. After quoting James Wilkinson's description, Neilson wrote:

"After the introductory ceremony was gone through, Burgoyne, with his general officers, was invited to the head quarters of General Gates, and entertained by him at dinner. They were received with the utmost courtesy, and with the consideration due to brave but unfortunate men....

"After the British troops left their encampment, and had marched to the "green" in front of Old Fort Hardy, where they deposited their arms, and emptied their cartridge boxes; they were again formed in line, with the light infantry in front, and escorted by a company of light dragoons, preceded by two officers mounted, and bearing the stars and stripes waving triumphantly, through the American Camp. On their approach, and as they marched between the long lines of victorious troops, who were then paraded on opposite sides of the road, for near a mile extent.... (Yankee Doodle was played).

"At this moment the two Generals came out of Gates's marquee together. The American commander faced front, and Burgoyne did the same standing on his left. Not a word was spoken by either, and for some minutes, they stood silently gazing on the scene before them..... Presently General Burgoyne as by previous understanding, stepped back, drew his sword, and in the face of the two armies, as it were, presented it to General Gates, who received and instantly returned it in the most courteous manner. They then returned to the marquee."¹² (Underscoring mine)

4. Benson N. Lossing, 1848:

Benson N. Lossing, a famous American Historian, visited Saratoga in 1848 and left the following account of the surrender ceremony. It

is to be noted that the account is based on James Wilkinson's work and the latter part taken from Neilson:

"The place where Gates and Burgoyne had their first interview (delineated on p. 81) is about half way between Fish Creek and Gates's headquarter. After visiting these localities, we returned to the village, and spent an hour upon the ground where the British army laid down their arms. This locality I have already noted, and will not detain the reader longer than to mention the fact that the plain whereon this event took place formed part of the extensive meadows of General Schuyler...."(See Sketch p. 81)

"As soon as the troops had laid down their arms, General Burgoyne proposed to be introduced to General Gates. They crossed Fish Creek and proceeded towards headquarters, Burgoyne in front with his adjutant general, Kingston, and his aide-de-camp Captain Lord Petersham and Lieutenant Wilford, behind him. Then followed Generals Phillips, Reidesel, and Hamilton, and other officers and suites, according to rank. General Gates was informed of the approach of Burgoyne and with his staff met him at the head of his camp, about a mile south of the Fish Creek. Burgoyne in a rich uniform of scarlet and gold, and Gates in a plain blue frock-coat. When within about a sword's length, they reigned up and halted. Colonel Wilkinson then named the gentlemen, and General Burgoyne raising his hat gracefully, said, "The fortune of war, General Gates, has made me your prisoner." The victor promptly replied, "I shall always be ready to bear testimony that it has not been through any fault of your excellency." The other officers were introduced in turn, and the whole party repaired to Gates headquarters, where a sumptuous dinner was served." Lossing then gives Neilson's account, almost word for word, of the dinner and sword surrender ceremony." (See Above)¹³ (*Italics mine*)

5. William L. Stone, 1877:

William L. Stone, a famous student of the Burgoyne Campaign, has left the following account of the sword surrender ceremony site:

"The place where this meeting (of Burgoyne and Gates on Oct. 17, 1777) took place is about a hundred rods south of Fish Creek, and fifty rods north of Gates' headquarters. The bridge over the Champlain canal at this point (1877) probably indicates pretty accurately the precise spot (Where Gates and Burgoyne first met Oct. 17.)"

"As soon as this introduction was over the other captive generals and their suites repaired to the cabin which constituted the head-quarters of Gates."

"The headquarters of Gates was in the language of Wilkinson, "A small hovel partially dug....."(Writer's note - this is a mistake of Stone's - Wilkinson's description of this headquarters is dated as of the 10th of Oct. and Gates moved to the marquee for the surrender ceremonies on Oct. 17.)

"The headquarters of General Gates' - when the surrender took place - were situated about one hundred and fifty rods south of Fish Creek very nearly on the west side of the present river road from Schuylerville to Stillwater, in a rude cabin partially dug out of the bank on that side of the road. (See writer's note above - this was Gate's headquarters from Oct. 10 to Oct. 15).

Stone then quotes Wilkinson's and Neilson's account of first meeting of the two Generals, adding incorrectly, "they repaired to the cabin which constituted the headquarters of Gates." Stone states that the generals dined together and "As the company rose from the table, the royal army filed by in their march to the seaboard. Thereupon, by preconcerted arrangements, the generals stepped out, and Burgoyne drawing his sword presented it in the presence of the two armies to General Gates. The latter received it with a courteous bow, and immediately returned it to the vanquished general".¹⁴
(Underscoring mine)

6. J. Watts de Peyster, 1880:

General J. Watts de Peyster, another gentleman greatly interested in the Burgoyne campaign, visited Schuylerville in 1880, wrote the account of his visit from which the following is drawn:

"Burgoyne delivered up his sword to Gates on a little level spot overlooking the river road, about a mile south of Schuylerville, and the British laid down their arms about the site of Old Fort Hardy..."¹⁵

7. John Henry Brandow, 1919:

The author of The Story of Old Saratoga, John Henry Brandow, gives the following information on the location of these various points:

"The Old Dutch Reformed Church (or meeting House). About one-third of a mile south of the (Fish) Creek, and in the fork of the River and Victory roads, stood the Old Dutch Reformed Church. It was built in 1771... This church was taken down in 1822."

"Where Burgoyne Delivered His Sword. Pass down the road (from the Old Dutch Reformed Church) a few rods till you stand under the rocks and in front of a small house on the hill..... Somewhere between the above mentioned house and the canal bridge, and south of where you stand, is the place where Burgoyne went through the formal act of surrender by drawing his sword and delivering it to General Gates. The exact spot has been irretrievably lost. The tablet that purports to mark the place should probably stand several rods to the north. The old road is said to have run where the canal now is."

"Gates's Headquarters. About one and one third miles below Fish Creek, on the east side of the road, stands the house which was probably used by General Gates as his headquarters from the 10th to the 15th of October 1777, and again used by him after the surrender. On the 14th or 15th of October 1777, and again used by him after the surrender. On the 14th or 15th of October he moved up to the place south of the old Dutch Church, where the formal surrender occurred on the 17th."¹⁶ (Underscoring mine).

8. Francis F. Wilshin, 1941 & 1945:

In 1941 former Junior Historical Technician Francis F. Wilshin, then historian at Saratoga National Historical Park, submitted a partial report on the sword surrender site, which is to be found in his Narrative Report for July 1941. His monthly reports for the fall and winter of 1941 indicate that he was continuing research on this project. Mr. Wilshin was transferred to Fredericksburg & Spotsylvania N. M. P. in March of 1942 before he was able to submit a completed study of this problem. On April 23, 1945, however, Mr. Wilshin submitted the results of his further research in the Appendix, pp. I-XVII of A Supplement to the Museum Prospectus Report of Supt. Warren F. Hamilton, Saratoga N. H. P. The writer has thus simply gone over all of Mr.

1 Wilshin's work and checked all available contemporary and secondary material on the surrender site in the Park's collections. A comparison of Mr. Wilshin's reports and the writer's will show that the only new material I have found, and not used by Mr. Wilshin, are the accounts

of William L. Stone and John Henry Brandow. It is the writer's opinion that Mr. Wilshin did a very excellent job in his research on the site of the sword surrender ceremony. Quoted below are Mr. Wilshin's conclusions on this problem from his 1945 report.

"Though these accounts don't definitely establish the exact spot of Gates' temporary field Headquarters on Oct. 17, 1777, they do pretty definitely establish the locale as being a short distance south of the Meeting House. Cross indicates that he encamped on Oct. 13 "1/2 miles Short of the Meeting House" one mile from the enemies' lines. (This is significant in that it puts the head of Gates's camp about 1/2 mile south of the Meeting House - a point which can be readily established from contemporary maps.) See: "Plan of the Position Which the army under Lt. Genl. Burgoyne took at Saratoga on the 10th of September, and in which it remained till the Convention was signed." Engraved by Wm. Faden. 1780.

"Both Squier and Wild state that Burgoyne and his staff rode by the Meeting House to meet Gates, a meeting which according to Merrick took place "a little south of the church." The statement of Henry Hallowell that "Burgoyne and his generals Din'd together on a small hill" is significant for it definitely serves to tie in the site with the present topography.

"Where then is the site?"

what direction?
"Though as formerly stated, the exact site cannot be definitely established, it would appear to have been on a gentle knoll approximately 30 or 40 feet short of the first bridge of the Old Champlain Canal south of Fish Creek. See: Lossing, Benson, Pictorial Field-Book of the Revolution, N. Y. 1851, p. 81 and Brandow, John, Historical Map of Old Saratoga. From Brandow's map it can be seen that the site was at the intersection of the North-South river road and a road which runs due west from this point. This point is .2 of a mile south of the Old Dutch Church (Meeting House); .4 of a mile south of the present New York State surrender marker and approximately .8 of a mile south of Fish Creek. Apparently this site was a traditional one for no evidence has been found that any of the numerous writers on this subject have ever attempted to locate this spot by documentation. Tradition placed it at this point certainly as early as 1848 as we learn from Lossing's visit. Thus the inescapable conclusion, based on tradition and documentation, is that the present New York State Marker is incorrectly located being .4 of a mile north of the proper point. The marker which indicates the "Field of Grounded Arms," however, is correctly placed."¹⁷

Contemporary Maps of Value:

1. Plan of the Position which the army under Lt. Genl. Burgoine took at Saratoga on the 10th of September 1777, and in which it remained till the Convention was signed. Engraved by Wm. Faden, published in John Burgoyne's A State of the Expedition from Canada.....London, 1780. This British map shows the location of the Meeting House or Old Dutch Reformed Church and the river road south of Fish Creek.
2. Putnam, Rufus, An Orthographical View of the American and British Armies on the 7th and 8th of October 1777. Putnam was at Saratoga; his map represents the only known contemporary American map showing the American positions at Bemis Heights, and Saratoga. Putnam's map also shows the General location of General Gates' headquarters at Saratoga. (Item No. C).

Relevant Distances:

On September 28, the writer checked from the following distances by car:

- A. From the Bridge across the Fish Creek to the present New York State Historical Marker, supposedly marking the site of the sword surrender ceremony, is .18 of a mile
- B. From the bridge across the Fish Creek to southernmost boundary of the Schuyler Property (that section located south of the Schuyler House, bounded on east by Hudson River and on the west by the river road) is .36 of a mile (or 1900 feet on map).
- C. From the Bridge across Fish Creek to the site of Old Dutch Reformed Church or Meeting House is .38 of a mile (or 2050 feet on map).
- D. From the Bridge across the Fish Creek to the old (now unmarked) Traditional Site of the Sword Surrender Ceremony is .65 of a mile (or 3350 feet on the map).
- E. From the Bridge across the Fish Creek to the site now marked by a New York State Historical Marker as General Gates Headquarters (from Oct. 10 to Oct. 15, 1777) is 1.36 miles.

*.65 miles
1.8
- .47

1.47
by Wilshin*

III. Conclusion:

It is to be noted that Mr. Wilshin's and the writer's measurements of these points are very close, the differences probably being due to the variations in the car speedometers. The writer also finds himself in full agreement with Mr. Wilshin's conclusions on the actual location of the sword surrender ceremony site.

It is the general consensus of all contemporary and secondary authorities that sword surrender ceremony took place south of Fish Creek along the river road. Matton, Cross, Squier, Wild and Merrick, individuals all present at the surrender, place the site as a little south of the Old Dutch Reformed Church or Meeting House, and Hallowell places it on a small hill. All contemporary and secondary authorities (with the exception of Stone) are agreed that it took place at Gates' temporary headquarters, a marquee pitched for the occasion. Thus the northermost limits of the site would be the Old Dutch Church and the southermost limits, Gates's headquarters of from Oct. 10 to Oct. 15, 1777, the exact location being somewhere in between. On the basis of the contemporary and secondary evidence, together with the topography of the area, the writer believes Mr. Wilshin is correct in placing the scene of the sword surrender ceremony on the small hill just west of the ^{present} river road at point where the road is intersected by the second road south of Fish Creek coming into it from the west.

On the basis of the evidence and measurements of the ground the following conclusions are in order:

1. As the surrender scene undoubtedly took place south of the Old Dutch Reformed Church, the present New York State marker supposedly marking the surrender site and which now stands north of the Church is incorrectly placed. This site therefore has no other historical value than that part of the American army was drawn up on Oct. 17, 1777, to meet the British army after the English and German troops had laid down their arms on the field of grounded arms.
2. As the southermost boundary of the section of land which now makes up a part of the Schuyler estate, this land lying south of the Schuyler

house and bounded on the east by the Hudson river and on the west by the river road and Champlain canal, is just north of the site of the Old Dutch reformed Church, it is apparent that the sword surrender ceremony could not have taken place in this area. The only historical event connected with the Burgoyne campaign that took place on this land was that undoubtedly part of the American army was drawn up on it on October 17, 1777, to meet the British troops after they had laid down their arms near the ruins of old Fort Hardy.

Charles W. Snell

Charles W. Snell
Park Historian
October 5, 1949

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