

historic resource study

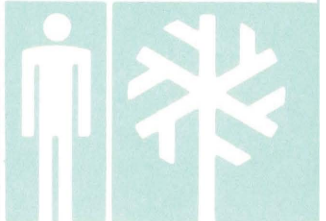
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SARATOGA

BARBER WHEAT FIELD
OCTOBER 7, 1777



NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK / NEW YORK

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY
BARBER WHEAT FIELD
OCTOBER 7, 1777
SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK
NEW YORK

by
Louis Torres

DENVER SERVICE CENTER
HISTORIC PRESERVATION TEAM
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
DENVER, COLORADO

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PREFACE

This report intends to fulfill the requirements for the historic resource study of the Barber wheat field, Saratoga National Historical Park. Its purpose is to present information on the ownership of the wheat field and to provide a description of the area and an account of the engagement fought there on October 7, 1777. The study should provide the basic data needed for the development of wayside exhibits and other interpretive media suggested in the interpretive prospectus.

No archeological studies of any extensive nature have ever been conducted on the Barber wheat field. However, in the course of preparing this report, a superficial study of the field employing photogrammetry was undertaken by an archeologist from the State University at Albany, Albany, New York. His report, which is included in this study as Appendix F, concluded that the chances of ever finding any evidence of remains are remote. This is because so much cultivation has taken place since the historic period that any remains would have by now disappeared. Moreover, the construction of park roads and highways over the years may have obliterated any vestige of historical roads.

Nevertheless, aerial photographs revealed the remote possibility of the existence of remains of historic roads, dwellings, and other man-made structures. While the report offers no positive evidence that remains exist, it does not exclude the possibility, given the opportunity to explore the area in greater depth.

I wish to express my deep appreciation to several people and institutions that helped to make this study possible. Much of the credit for the completion of this study should go to the staff of Saratoga National Historical Park, especially to Historian Michael M. Phillips. The park staff not only made available its excellent library and collection of notes on the battle, but was quick to provide me with very helpful hints in seeking out materials.

I am grateful to John F. Luzader, Supervisory Historian of the Historic Preservation Team and friend, whose extensive knowledge of Burgoyne's campaign lessened my task considerably. To Mrs. Elizabeth M. Abel, Historian of the Town of Stillwater, I owe a debt of gratitude for making available her collection of manuscripts and notes on

town history. Finally, a word of thanks must go to the staffs of the County Clerk Offices in Albany County and Saratoga County and of the Manuscript Division of the New York Public Library for their assistance in making available sources for my study.

Louis Torres

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	iii
I. AN EVALUATION OF THE SOURCES AND SECONDARY WORKS	1
II. IDENTITY OF THE WHEAT FIELD	25
III. DESCRIPTION OF THE WHEAT FIELD ON OCTOBER 7, 1777	35
A. Dimensions of the Wheat Field	35
B. The Nature of the Ground	37
C. Man-Made Structures on the Wheat Field	40
D. Fortifications	43
E. The Battle Scene	44
APPENDIXES	55
A. Section of map, "The Encampment and Position of the Army under Lt. Gl. Burgoyne, at Sword's and Freeman's farms on Hudson's River near Stillwater 1777".	56
B. Section of map, "Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under his Excellcy. Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights on Hudson's River . . . with the Position of the Detachment etc. in the Action of the 7th of Octr. . . ."	58
C. Section of map, "An Orthographical View of the American and British Armies on the 7th & 8th of October 1777"	60
D. "A Map of Saratoga Patent as laid in Lots & the subdivision of Margaret Livingston & Bayard's Lots by John R. Bleeker 1767"	62
E. Section of map entitled "Map of Saratoga Battle- field Showing Property Lines," 1927	64
F. Letter with map from Professor Stuart A. Reeve, State University of New York, on need for further archeology, October 1, 1974	66
BIBLIOGRAPHY	71

I. AN EVALUATION OF THE SOURCES AND SECONDARY WORKS

There are several early accounts of the battle that was fought on October 7, 1777, many of which were written after the battle and others not until several years later. Nearly all the authors of these narratives, who were English, German, and American, took part in the battle. Because the English and German participants marched southward into the Barber wheat field and surrounding area, their accounts (particularly the German) provide a very accurate and detailed picture of the situation. Since the battle had yet to begin, the English and their allies had sufficient time to assess the situation around them without the distractions and emotionalism that warfare often produces. This is not to say that their accounts are always consistent, for indeed they are not. The chief reason that they are sometimes at odds is that their forces were deployed in different parts of the battlefield, which made them view conditions from their own relative positions. The problems are sometimes compounded by poor translations of the German accounts.

The American reports corroborate much of what appears in the English and German accounts, but because the American outposts were south of the Middle ravine, or about one quarter of a mile from Burgoyne's line, the authors of these accounts were actually observing the enemy from a distance. Their impressions could not possibly be as accurate as those of the English or Germans who were right on the spot. When the Americans finally did begin their assault on the Barber wheat field they were under heavy fire. Conclusions reached under such severe battle conditions could not possibly be as accurate or as detailed as those in the German and English accounts.

The reader should understand that many of the place names for the fields, dwellings, roads, ravines, and etc. within or surrounding the area under consideration, were, with a few exceptions such as the Freeman farm and the Neilson house, applied in later years through the efforts of Charles Neilson, son of John Neilson, owner of the Neilson farm at the time of the battle. Thus, while the early accounts are deficient in this respect, Charles Neilson fills an important gap with his history of the battle.¹ Nevertheless, there remains the problem of reconciling those place names established by

1. Charles Neilson, An Original, Compiled and Corrected Account of Burgoyne's Campaign, and the Memorable Battles of Bemis's Heights, Sept, 19 and Oct. 7, 1777, From the Most Authentic Sources of Information; Including Many Interesting Incidents Connected With the Same (Albany: J. Munsell, 1844; reprint ed., Bemis Heights: Charles Neilson, 1926).

Neilson with the fields, structures, roads and ravines cited in the earlier accounts. In attempting to connect these place names with the historic sites, the author of this study has traced the land records and maps from the colonial patents to modern times. In the meantime, he has freely used names provided by Neilson for the sake of convenience.

The remainder of this section is devoted to an evaluation of some of the early accounts and of the several secondary works that have described the action and the general scene at the Barber wheat field on October 7, 1777.

Major General Friederick Adolph Riedesel, who commanded the German forces under Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, provided more than one account of the scene on October 7. These are not contradictory, but rather support and complement each other. Only one account is quoted here, in which Riedesel, describing the action on the Barber wheat field, says:

At ten o'clock in the morning of the 7th. rations and liquor for four days having been previously issued to the army, General Burgoyne, with fifteen hundred men and eight cannon, started on his reconnoitering expedition, accompanied by Generals Reidesel, Phillips, and Fraser. The troops, on this occasion, were taken from all the regiments except the 47th. All the Indians (one hundred and eighty) and the corps of provincials crossed the right flank in a large circuit through the woods. The detachment itself, divided into three columns, advanced toward the right to within a quarter of an hour's march of the enemy's camp. The first picket, which was met near Waisser's house, was driven in, and the enistence, on which it had stood, occupied. The British were then placed in such a position, that the smallness of their number was concealed as much as possible. In this situation they remained for an hour and a half, during which interval the generals consulted together as to the manner in which the reconnoissance [sic] should be continued. Toward three in the afternoon, the yagers discovered near a house that lay a little way in advance and was separated from them by a ditch, a small body of the Americans. The latter, however, grew stronger and stronger; and Burgoyne, supposing they meant to oppose his further advance, fired his two twelve-pounders at them several times, but without producing the least effect. On the contrary, they continued to increase in numbers. Finally,

at four in the afternoon, they attacked his left wing with great spirit, soon forcing the English grenadiers, who were stationed in the woods at this point, to retreat. They next threw their entire force upon the centre, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Specht, and consisted of three hundred men. But even then, Specht, who had already withstood the attack for a long time, would have maintained his ground, had not Lord Balcarras been called back through a misunderstanding. His flanks, however, were now exposed--the enemy were on his sides and front--and to avoid being cut off, he was obliged to retreat. This he accomplished in good order. The Americans now advanced with more vehemence and in greater numbers; and the detachment was nearly surrounded when Burgoyne determined to retreat to the great redoubt on the right wing.²

In all of his chronicles Riedesel made the following points, which should be borne in mind when making comparisons with other sources:

1. The British and their allies drove off an American picket "near Waisser's house."
2. The house discovered by the Yagers, where a small body of Americans were hidden, lay across the ravine. This house was south of "Waisser's house." The ravine noted by Riedesel was Middle ravine, south of Burgoyne's forces.
3. Eight cannons were taken along on Burgoyne's expedition.
4. The Americans were driven from a retrenched house, which was probably the dwelling on the Barber wheat field, or what Riedesel called the "Waisser's" house.
5. Burgoyne's left wing, consisting of English grenadiers, was the first to be attacked by the Americans. This wing was mostly deployed in the woods.
6. The center of Burgoyne's force consisted of 300 Germans commanded by Lieutenant Colonel von Specht. The Americans threw

2. Baron Friedrich Adolph Riedesel, Memoirs and Letters and Journals of Major General Riedesel during his Residence in America, in two volumes, translated from the original German of Max von Eelking by William L. Stone, 2 vols. (Albany: J. Munsell, 1868; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1968), 1:162-64; ibid., 1:164 fn., and Riedesel to Brunswick, Oct. 21, 1777, Brunswick Papers, Bancroft Collection, New York Public Library, copy in park files, are two other almost similar accounts of the engagement given by General Riedesel.

their entire weight against these troops and, pressing their sides and front, exposed the German flanks, precipitating a retreat.

7. Two cannons of the Hesse Hanau were taken by the Americans during the German retreat. As we shall see, these were the cannons that were in Captain Pausch's charge.

8. Brigadier General Fraser commanded Burgoyne's right wing, which consisted of English grenadiers, light infantry, and the 24th Royal Regiment. Fraser tried in vain to aid the Germans in the center.

9. Before the battle began, Fraser discovered two houses filled with forage that he promptly used. These were probably the two houses in a field west of the Barber wheat field.

Captain George Pausch's account of the events that transpired on October 7, just before and during the battle, describes even more precisely the area we know as the Barber wheat field. Pausch was chief of the Hesse Hanau artillery during Burgoyne's campaign. He noted that while following a road with his two 6-pound cannons, he found himself opposite the extended left wing of the Americans. However, because of these dense woods, he could not see the enemy's movements. He left the following account, which should be quoted in full because of the details it contains:

Here we found a small cultivated and open field entirely surrounded by woods, and at one end of which stood a small habitation entirely deserted by its former occupants. Its roof had been converted into an observatory from which all the adjutants, engineers and Quarter-Master Generals were gazing through their glasses. Nothing, however, could be discovered. We now continued our march flanked on either side by English troops; and at the same time, our small number of Yagers, the few men composing the Chasseur Battalion, and the Grenadiers started out from one side of our line to reconnoiter.

Meanwhile, on a piece of ground somewhat elevated and commanding an advantageous and clear position, I posted my two 6 pound cannon at a distance of 24 to 26 paces from each other, and 50 paces in advance of the front, near the place where the Regiment Hanau adjoined that of Rhetz. . . .

Presently, by order of Major Williams of the English Artillery, the two 12 pound cannon were brought up and placed in front of the above named . . . house, and after being made ready, they were loaded. . . . At the same time, word was sent into the entrenchments of Breymann and Fraser, and the foragers ordered to cut down the corn-stalks yet standing in our rear. . . .

After the lapse of half an hour we noticed a few patrols in the woods, and on the height to the left of the wood; and, at the same moment, the above mentioned two 12 pounders opened fire.

Shortly after this, a large number of the enemy's advance-guard, who were in the bushes, engaged our Yagers, Chasseurs, and Volunteers. The action extended all along the front, the enemy appearing in force. During this time, and while both sides were thus contending, and I was serving my cannon, there marched out of the enemy's entrenchment on their left wing, at a 'double quick' and in squares, two strong columns, one towards our right, and the other towards our left wing; while, at the same moment, additional forces of the enemy poured down in troops to reinforce those who were already engaged with us, and advanced madly and blindly in the face of a furious fire. The attack began on the left wing with a terrific musketry fire, but, in a few minutes, the enemy repulsed it; while the cannon, sent there by the English Artillery, was captured by the enemy before a single shot had been fired from them. And now, the firing from cannon and small arms began to get very brisk on our right wing.

At this junction, our left wing retreated in the greatest possible disorder, thereby causing a similar rout among our German command, which was stationed behind the fence in line of battle. They retreated--or to speak more plainly--they left their position without informing me, although I was but fifty paces in advance of them. Each man for himself, they made for the bushes. Without knowing it, I kept back the enemy for a while with my unprotected cannon loaded with shells. How long before this, the infantry had left its position, I cannot tell, but I saw a great number advance towards our now open left wing within a distance of about 300 paces. I looked back

towards the position still held, as I supposed, by our German infantry, under whose protection I, too, intended to retreat--but not a man was to be seen. They had all run across the road into the field and thence into the bushes, and had taken refuge behind the trees. Their right wing was thus in front of the house, I have so often mentioned, but all was in disorder, though they still fought the enemy which continued to advance. In the mean time, on our right wing, there was stubborn fighting on both sides, our rear, meanwhile, being covered by a dense forest, which, just before had protected our right flank. The road by which we were to retreat lay through the woods and was already in the hands of the enemy, who accordingly intercepted us. Finding myself therefore, finally in my first mentioned position--alone, isolated, and almost surrounded by the enemy, and with no way open but the one leading to the house where the two 12 pound cannon stood, dismounted and deserted--I had no alternative but to make my way along it with great difficulty if I did not wish to be stuck in a damned crooked road.

After safely reaching the house under the protection of a musketry fire--which, however, owing to the bushes, was fully as dangerous to me as if the firing came from the enemy--I presently came across a little earth-work, 18 feet long by 5 feet high.³

Pausch made some very significant contributions in his writings, which should be emphasized at this point as a basis for comparison with other sources:

1. After their march, Burgoyne's forces came to a "small cultivated and open field" surrounded by woods. This was the Barber wheat field.

2. At one end of this field stood a "small habitation," which was deserted.

3. The roof of the structure was converted into an observation post upon which officers stood to reconnoiter the surrounding area.

3. George Pausch, Journal of Captain Pausch, Chief of the Hanau Artillery during the Burgoyne Campaign, trans. and ann. William L. Stone (Albany: Munsell's Sons, 1866; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1971), pp. 161-69.

4. Pausch posted his two 6-pound cannons on an elevated piece of ground 50 paces from where Burgoyne's troops had stopped to deploy. This would have placed the cannons south of Burgoyne's main line.

5. Two 12-pound cannons were placed in front of the house in the field.

6. Foragers were ordered to cut "corn-stalks" in the field. This, as we shall see later, contradicts other accounts, which refer to wheat.

7. The Germans were stationed behind a fence in the line of battle.

8. In their retreat from their original position the German infantry had run across the road into the field and from there into the bushes, taking refuge behind trees. The German right wing was thus in front of the house in the field, and they continued to fight while the Americans were advancing (presumably in the field).

Other German accounts are not always as definitive as Pausch's, but they do corroborate much of what he said. One of these observers wrote on November 15, 1777, that "toward three o'clock in the afternoon the enemy were driven from several positions, and the corps marched up to Weisser's House." He noted that the English grenadiers formed the left wing of the expedition, and when hostilities erupted they were attacked on their flanks and on their front, forcing them to retreat. The same thing happened on the right wing of the expedition where the English light infantry was posted. Simultaneously Colonel von Specht's German grenadiers, who were covering the center of the expedition, were also attacked. The writer described this assault as follows:

The centre stood its ground for a long time; but as the enemy's regiments kept pouring in from all sides, nothing was left to it but to retreat. A more galling discharge of musketry could not be imagined. Captain Pausch of the Hesse-Hanau artillery afterward described to me with what frenzy the enemy threw themselves upon his cannon in the very teeth of a murderous fire of grape.⁴

4. William L. Stone, trans., Letters of Brunswick and Hessian Officers during the American Revolution (Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1891), pp. 120, 121.

Finally he closes his account by stating that both Pausch's two 6-pounders and Major William's two 12-pounders were lost to the enemy.⁵

This account is significant because not only does it agree with much of what Pausch stated, but it also contains a very graphic description of the German position at the height of the fighting, a position resting largely in the Barber wheat field.

Another German account provided essentially the same story presented by General Riedesel.

In three columns, we advanced to within about a quarter of hour's march of the enemy's left wing, where we met a portion of the enemy occupying a house (Weiser's house); drove him out, and took possession of the rising ground, which, however, was surrounded on both sides with woods. While we were deliberating in this place, how we could push the reconnaissance still further, the enemy attacked the left wing of our command, and flung, himself with greatest force upon the English grenadiers standing in the wood[s]. Lieutenant Colonel Speth [sic] who commanded the centre, maintained his position for a long time, and would have sustained himself still longer, had not my Lord Balcarras, who was stationed on his right flank, been ordered back through some misunderstanding. As he was now attacked in front and on both flanks, he found himself, with his three hundred men, forced to retreat.⁶

The English accounts are not as comprehensive nor as definitive as the German accounts, but they do nevertheless provide a good picture of the situation, and what they record generally corroborates much of what the Germans have said. One English account notes that

A detachment of 1,500 regular troops with two 12-pounders, two howitzers and six 6-pounders were ordered to move on a secret expedition. . . . The detachment . . . moved from the right of our camp, soon after which, we gained an eminence [sic] within half a mile of their camp, where the troops took

5. Ibid., p. 121.

6. German Staff Officer to Duke of Brunswick, Oct. 13, 1777, Brunswick Papers, Bancroft Collection, New York Public Library, copy in park files. This account is also identical to the description given by Baroness Friedericke Charlotte Luise Riedesel, Letters and Journals Relating to the War of the American Revolution, and the Capture of the German Troops at Saratoga, trans. William L. Stone (Albany: J. Munsell, 1867), p. 102.

post. . . . About 3 o'clock, our heavy guns began to play, but the wood around being thick, and their [viz., the Americans] exact knowledge of our small force, caused them to advance in great numbers, pouring in a superiority of fire from detachments ordered to hang upon our flanks, which they tried if possible to turn. We could not receive a reinforcement as our works, General Hospital Stores, provisions would be left defenceless, on which an order was given for us to retreat, but not before we lost many brave men.⁷

This account lacks some of the clarity and comprehensiveness of the German accounts. It does not fix the position of Burgoyne's forces other than a reference to an "eminence" within a half mile of the enemy's camp. Nothing is said about the American position when they first attacked Burgoyne's forces. Finally, except for the word "eminence" denoting the land upon which the initial phase of the struggle began on October 7, the account lacks any substantial amount of descriptive material. It does include one very important piece of information, however: it notes that Burgoyne took with him two 12-pounders, two howitzers, and six 6-pounders--a dubious number of cannons as we shall later see.

Captain Bloomfield, who was a Major of Brigade in the Royal Artillery and whose position was on the right flank of the British forces, was much more specific in describing the land and the action that followed. As Bloomfield was being questioned by General Burgoyne during the latter's hearing concerning his defeat, the following dialogue occurred:

Q. What circumstance of the action did you observe before you was wounded, particularly respecting the artillery and the enemy's advancing under the fire of the artillery, and what happened to the troops posted immediately on the left of the artillery?

A. The ground on which the artillery was posted was a clear spot in a great measure surrounded by woods, the skirts of which on our left was distant about two hundred yards where the attack

7. William Digby, The British Invasion from the North. The Campaigns of General Carleton and Burgoyne from Canada, 1776-1777, with the Journal of Lieut. William Digby of the 53rd, or Shropshire Regiment of Foot, Illustrated with historical notes by James Phinney Baxter (Albany: J. Munsell's Sons, 1887), p. 286.

first began. Two medium twelve pounders were posted on a small eminence, nearly in the center of this cleared spot between the German picquets, and a detachment of the Hesse Hanau regiment.⁸

The American narratives corroborate much of what the German and English accounts have to say, but they cannot match them, particularly the former, for detail, accuracy, and comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, since the Americans were observing Burgoyne's moves and since they were fairly familiar with the geographic location, their accounts cannot be minimized.

Colonel James Wilkinson, who was Major General Horatio Gates's aide at the time of the battle, provides the most comprehensive American account, which in some respects provides even more information than either Pausch's or Riedesel's recollections. It is quoted here at some length:

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 after observed several officers, mounted on the top of a cabin, from whence with their glasses they were endeavoring to reconnoitre our left, which was concealed from their view by intervening woods.

Their front is open, and their flanks rest on woods, under cover of which they may be attacked; their right skirted by a lofty height. . . ; he [Morgan] knew the ground, and inquired the position of the enemy: they were formed across a newly cultivated field, their grenadiers with several field pieces on the left, bordering on a wood and a small ravine formed by the rivulet before alluded to;

8. John Burgoyne, A State of the Expedition from Canada, as laid before the House of Commons, By Lieutenant-General Burgoyne, and verified by evidence with a Collection of Authentic Documents, 2d ed. (London: J. Almon, 1780; reprint ed., New York Times, 1969), pp. 67-70.

their light infantry on the right, covered by a worm fence at the foot of the hill before mentioned, thickly covered with wood; their centre composed of British and German battalions. Colonel Morgan, with his usual sagacity, proposed to make a circuit with his corps by, our left, and under cover of the wood to gain the height on the right of the enemy, and from thence commence his attack so soon as our fire should be opened against their left; the plan was the best which could be devised, and no doubt contributed essentially to the prompt and decisive victory we gained.

This proposition was approved by the General, and it was concerted that time should be allowed the Colonel to make the proposed circuit, and gain his station on the the [sic] enemy's right before the attack should be made on their left; Poor's brigade was ordered for this service, and the attack was commenced in due season on the flank and front of the British grenadiers, by the New Hampshire and New York troops. True to his purpose, Morgan at this critical moment poured down like a torrent from the hill, and attacked the right of the enemy in front and flank. Dearborn at the moment, when the enemy's light infantry were attempting to change front, pressed forward with ardour and delivered to a close fire; then leapt the fence, shouted, charged and gallantly forced them to retire in disorder; yet headed by that intrepid soldier the Earl of Balcarras, they were immediately rallied and re-formed behind a fence in rear of their first position; but being now attacked with great audacity in front and flanks by superior numbers, resistance became vain, and the whole line, commanded by Burgoyne in person, gave way and made a precipitate and disorderly retreat to his camp, leaving two twelve and six six-pounders on the field with the loss of more than 400 officers and men killed, wounded, and captured, and among them the flower of his officers, viz. Brigadier-general Frazer, Major Ackland commanding the grenadiers, Sir Francis Clark, his first aid-de-camp, Major Williams commanding officer of the artillery, Captain Money deputy quarter-master general, and many others. After delivering the order to General Poor and directing him to the point of attack, I was peremptorily commanded to repair to the rear and order up Ten

Broeck's brigade of York Militia 3000 strong; I performed this service, and regained the field of battle at the moment the enemy had turned their backs, fifty-two minutes after the first shot was fired. The ground which had been occupied by the British grenadiers presented a scene of complicated horror and exultation. In the square space of twelve or fifteen yards lay eighteen grenadiers in the agonies of death, and three officers propped up against stumps of trees, two of them mortally wounded, bleeding, and almost speechless; what a spectacle for one whose bosom glowed with philanthropy, and how vehement the impulse, which can exite men of sensibility to seek such scenes of barbarism! I found the courageous Colonel Cilley astraddle on a brass twelve-pounder and exulting in the capture--whilst a surgeon, a man of great worth, who was dressing one of the officers, raising his blood-besmeared hands in a frenzy of patriotism, exclaimed, Wilkinson I have dipt my hands in British blood. He received a sharp rebuke for his brutality, and with the troops I pursued the hard pressed flying enemy. . . .⁹

Several significant points are made by Wilkinson, which should be stressed:

1. From his advanced position he noticed the enemy--60 or 70 rods away--enter a wheat field that had not been cut. The field was separated from him by a rivulet, the one running through the Middle ravine.
2. After entering the wheat field, the enemy halted, formed double ranks running east and west across the field and the adjoining woods, and sat down with their weapons between their legs.
3. Foragers cut the wheat or "standing straw."
4. Several officers mounted the roof of a cabin in the wheat field.
5. Wilkinson noted that the enemy's "front was open." By this he obviously meant that the enemy was in an open field.
6. He also noted that the enemy was formed across a "newly cultivated field."

9. James Wilkinson, Memoirs of My Own Times, 3 vols. (Philadelphia: Abraham Small, 1816), 1:267-71.

7. The English grenadiers, with fieldpieces, were on the left bordering a wooded area and a small ravine formed by a rivulet. Again, this was the Middle ravine.

8. The light infantry was on the right protected by a worm fence at the foot of the hill.

9. Wilkinson provides a detailed description of the battle scene in and around the wheat field.

Many of the points Wilkinson made are reflected in other American accounts. Major Henry Dearborn, who commanded the light infantry in Colonel Morgan's Corps and who was in the thick of the battle, provided a similar story. He had this to say about the action on October 7:

About one o'clock PM of the 7th of October the enemy made a demonstration on our left, by advancing in force within 3/4 of a mile of the left of our line with a train of artillery and with an indication of turning our left, and possessing an eminence covered with wood which would command our camp. . . . The Enemy had 8 pieces of field artillery in action. We had none. In the meantime our light troops moved on with a quick step in the course directed, and after ascending the woody hill to a small field about 500 yards to the right of the Enemies [sic] mainline, we discovered a body of British light infantry handsomely posted on a ridge 150 yards from the edge of the wood where we then were. . . . We therefore determined to make a dash on this body of the Enemy and endeavor to force our way on to the rear of the Enemies main body. We accordingly agreed to jump over the fence, raise a shout and run upon the Enemy without firing. We acted accordingly and the Enemy gave way and ran in disorder without firing a shot. . . . We pursued him. He made an attempt to rally and make a stand, but without fire we compelled him to retreat in a disorderly manner entirely out of the field of action, which brought us into the open field in rear of the right of the enemies main line. Here Morgan's corps passed into a skirt of wood and advanced towards the rear of the Enemy's left wing, while . . . I advanced directly on the rear of his right wing and immediately came in contact with his field artillery covered by a body of Germans. Our fire killed, wounded and dispersed their covering party and I advanced and took possession of 2 12 & 2 6 pounders with the field ammunition etc. . . .10

10. Henry Dearborn, "A Narrative of the Saratoga Campaign," Fort Ticonderoga Bulletin no. 5 (January 1929).

There are two maps--one a manuscript, the other an engraving--drawn by Lieutenant William Cumberland Wilkinson, Assistant Engineer in the British 62nd Regiment and a participant in the battle, that are very remarkable for both accuracy and thoroughness in describing not only the topography of the area and cultivated fields with their habitations, but in illustrating the relative positions of the British and American forces as they opposed one another. The manuscript map shows the position of the British forces only during both engagements.¹¹ The published map, engraved by William Faden in 1780, contains a general delineation of the American camp, a detailed description of the British camp, and locates their advanced positions.¹² If these maps are combined with the more detailed contemporary accounts, one has the basis for a comprehensive study of the engagement of October 7 that was fought on and immediately surrounding the Barber wheat field.

Both maps depict Burgoyne's forces on October 7 on what is unmistakably a cultivated field opposite the left flank of the American fortifications. The field was located to the southwest of the Freeman farm where the Balcarras Redoubt, the British permanent fortifications, stood. The cultivated field was separated from the Freeman farm by a road that ran north and south and by a wooded area just to the east of the road. On the west side of the field was another wooded area to the west of which stood a second field approximately the same size as the first but shaped differently.

A road can be observed running east and west, beginning at the road that ran north and south, cutting across both fields and the intervening woods. According to the map, the English and their German allies were deployed along this route. On the first field, which is the area under study, one can observe the outlines of two structures. This field is bounded on the south by woods and a ravine through which a stream flowed.

11. William C. Wilkinson, "The Encampment and Position of the Army under Lt. Gl. Burgoyne, at Sword's and Freeman's farms on Hudson's River near Stillwater 1777," Map No. 69-1/2, Faden Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., reproduced as Appendix A.

12. William C. Wilkinson, "Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under his Excellency. Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights on Hudson's River near Stillwater on the 20th Septr. with the Position of the Detachment etc. in the Action of the 7th of Octr. and the Position of the Army on the 8th Octr. 1777. Drawn by W. C. Wilkinson, Lt. 62nd Regt. Asst. Engr. Engraved by Wm. Faden," Map No. 69, Faden Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., reproduced as Appendix B.

There is a third contemporary map, drawn by Colonel Rufus Putnam, that depicts the Battle of Saratoga. This map is not drawn to scale and represents a rough illustration of the situation. As a result, it is very inaccurate, and its only merit lies in the fact that it shows the general position of the two opposing forces.¹³

There are several accounts of the engagement of October 7 written long after it had occurred. Several of these were by men who had participated in the campaign and who in later years visited the battlefield. However, because recollections can be hazy after a lapse of time, these accounts should be carefully weighed. Also, many of these writers fell victim to the faulty memory and overly vivid imagination of their guides, who were also participants of the battle.

One of the first of these accounts was provided by the Marquis de Chastellux after a visit to Saratoga in 1780. In describing the area as he saw it only 3 years after the battle, Chastellux says:

If you descend again from this height, proceeding towards the north, you are presently in the midst of woods near Freeman's Farm and on the ground where the actions of the 19th of September, and the 7th of October happened. I avoid the word field of battle, for these two engagements were in the woods, and on grounds so intersected and covered, that it is impossible either to conceive or discover the smallest resemblance between it and the place given to the public, by General Burgoyne.¹⁴

Chastellux was mistaken, as William Stone, the editor of this account, is quick to point out, when he concludes that both engagements were fought in the woods. While this is partially true, a major part of the battle of October 7 was fought in cultivated fields. One need only point to the Wilkinson maps and other contemporary sources to disprove Chastellux.¹⁵

13. Rufus Putnam, "An Orthographical View of the American and British Armies on the 7th & 8th of October 1777," Map, The New-York Historical Society, New York, New York, reproduced as Appendix C.

14. William L. Stone, ed., Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds 1780-1880 (Albany: Joel Munsell's Sons, 1895), pp. 67-68. Under-scoring in original.

15. Ibid., p. 68 fn.

Professor Stillman's account (1819) adds to the description of the engagement on October 7. Although he relates the action in some detail, it is obvious that he does not distinguish the initial stages of the battle from the later developments. Hence, he insists on saying that the October 7 engagement was fought on the same ground as was the battle of September 19, that is to say, on Freeman's farm. Although he is quick to admit that the second battle "was not so stationary" as the first, nevertheless, his description of the initial phase of the encounter makes it obvious that he is actually describing the events that occurred on the Barber wheat field. It could not have been the Freeman farm as Stillman contends.¹⁶

William Wirt was also in error (1821) when he concluded that, except for the Freeman farm, the area at the time of the battle was covered "entirely [of] wood."¹⁷ After studying the contemporary sources it does not take long to conclude that this was not so. There were many cultivated and cleared fields in the vicinity.

Stansbury's account of 1821 is also very confusing for he seems to have mixed up the events and places of the two engagements. Quoting his old guide, who had been a participant in both engagements, he says:

'There . . . is an old barn still standing which stood within the British line of encampment, and there is the spot where Col. Cilley straddled a twelve-pounder, which had been taken twice from the enemy. Here stood the tents of the American army. . . .'¹⁸

Anyone familiar with the battlefield would have known that all three areas referred to by Stansbury were at significant distances from one another and therefore could not have been within sight of the guide at any one point. Such careless descriptions of the skirmish contribute little to a firm understanding of the two engagements that were fought at Saratoga.

The account by General Hoyt (also a participant) in 1825 is much more precise in its facts than most of the later ones. It may be well therefore to quote him in full:

16. Ibid., pp. 124, 127-28.

17. Ibid., p. 154.

18. Ibid., p. 169.

The British line extended from this point westerly about a third of a mile crossing two open fields and an intervening copse of wood, to some high grounds within view; the right occupied by Brigadier-General Fraser's elite, consisting of the Twenty-Fourth Regiment and Lord Balcarras' light infantry; the centre and left of the British and German troops of the line under Generals Phillips and Riedesel. Eight pieces of cannon, two of which were twelve pounders, were posted along the line, besides two howitzers in front of Fraser's elite. On the south, in front of the line, the ground falls off to a rill, then covered with brush, from which the American Columns debouched, as they advanced to the attack, under a heavy fire from the British artillery.¹⁹

In general, this is consistent with most of the early descriptions and the Wilkinson maps. Not only are the two fields clearly identified, but he also notes that they were separated by woods, that the right wing consisted of Fraser's elite and Lord Balcarras's Light Infantry, that the center and left wing consisted of British and German troops, and that there were eight cannons, two of which were 12-pounders. Finally, he speaks of the existence of a rill to the south of the British line. Today the ravine through which this rill once meandered is known as the Middle ravine.

Samuel Woodruff, who was also a participant in the two engagements, provided an account in 1827 in which he notes that Colonel Morgan and his riflemen "hung upon the left wing of the retreating enemy and galled them with a most destructive fire."²⁰ Woodruff was, of course, mistaken--Colonel Morgan's column attacked the enemy's right flank, which was posted in the second field and in the woods to the west of the Barber wheat field. He also concludes that the principal battleground of the October 7 engagement was the Freeman farm, but when describing the field and the scene of action, it is obvious that he is talking about the Barber wheat field. Thus he says that

It [i.e., the Freeman farm] was then covered by a thin growth of pitch pine wood without underbrush, excepting one lot of about six or eight acres, which had been cleared and fenced. On this spot the British grenadiers, under the command of the brave Major Acland [sic],

19. Ibid., p. 186.

20. Ibid., p. 224.

made a stand and brought together some of their field artillery; this little field soon became literally 'the field of blood'. . . . This occurrence hastened the retreat of the grenadiers, leaving the ground thickly strewn with their dead and wounded.²¹

There is little doubt that Woodruff was not describing the Freeman farm but the Barber wheat field. His memory was obviously faulty.

The remainder of this section will be devoted to a survey of the secondary works insofar as they deal with the Barber wheat field, beginning with Charles Neilson's history and continuing to the present.

Charles Neilson was the son of John Neilson, who owned the house occupied by General Poor and Colonel Morgan at the time of the battle. While still living in that house, Neilson wrote his history in 1844. He provided a distorted account of the action, which was probably the basis for many errors in succeeding histories. Nielson was also the first of all the writers to provide place names, previously unknown, for dwellings, roads, farms, and ravines. Thus, for the first time we learn that the wheat field where the initial phase of the October 7 engagement began was owned by a Joshua Barber. In one part of his history Neilson had this to say:

General Gates, having received information of their [viz., Burgoyne's forces] movements, dispatched one of his aids to ascertain their position, and if possible their intentions. He proceeded about half a mile to a small rise of ground (near Asa Chatfield's house), where he discovered them, about sixty rods in advance, in a wheatfield, and foragers in the act of cutting the wheat or standing straw; and several officers mounted on top of a cabin (Joseph Munger's), from whence, with their glasses they were endeavoring to reconnoitre the American left, which was concealed from their view by intervening woods.²²

In the above quotation Neilson refers to the occupation by the British of what he calls the Joseph Munger cabin. This is not so, because the Munger cabin was south of the Middle ravine, and except for a brief foray, the main British forces never did cross this gulch. The main British forces did, however, occupy the Barber house. Still, in a later section of his history he appears to be

21. Ibid., pp. 224-25.

22. Neilson, An Original Account of Burgoyne's Campaign, pp. 163-64.

aware of this when he speaks of the "farm owned by Joshua Barber, on which a part of the British line of battle was formed on the 7th October."²³ In explaining his map Neilson says that:

The fifteen hundred men with Fraser at their head, that first marched out of the British camp on the 7th of October, were posted near the northern extremity of a rise of land near J. Munger's house, and named in the 'Narrative' as the 'right advance'; but previous to the action, five hundred of them were withdrawn, and formed a part of the right wing of the British line of battle. Colonel Morgan, having posted his men on two hills, as designated on the map, made the attack in front and flank on the 'right advance' of the British, and drove them in a northwest direction, to a swamp or marsh, where about two hundred were separated from the main body, and pursued by about as many of the riflemen, to about eighty rods west of J. Barber's house, where the British troops being too hard pressed, ceased firing and took to their heels. The riflemen then returned to the main body, which had just commenced a vigorous attack on the flank of the British light infantry.²⁴

Fraser, of course, was not in command of the expedition of 1,500 men. The command was shared by Generals Fraser, Riedesel, Phillips, and Burgoyne himself. Fraser was in command of the British right column of light infantry and grenadiers. Fraser's column, much less the whole 1,500-man force, was not posted near J. Munger's house. This house, as we have already noted, was to the south of the Middle ravine, and the British main force had not reached this point. The Munger house that Neilson referred to was the house that General Riedesel noted as the advance post where the Yagers had discovered a small body of Americans. This house, Riedesel said, stood at a distance and was separated from the British forces by a ditch.²⁵

William L. Stone, who translated many of the German accounts and who provided his own history of the episode, contributed his share of errors. Nevertheless, his work is more reliable than Neilson's. In his account of the battle of October 7, Stone says:

23. Ibid., p. 288.

24. Ibid., pp. 286-87.

25. Riedesel, Memoirs, 1:163.

The British advanced in three columns toward the left wing of the American position, entered a wheat field two hundred rods southwest of the site of the action of the 19th [viz., Freeman's farm], deployed into line, and began cutting up for forage. The grenadiers under Major Ackland [sic] and the artillery under Major Williams, were stationed on a gentle eminence. The light infantry, skirted by a low ridge of land and under the Earl of Balcarras, were placed on the extreme right. The centre was composed of British and German troops under Phillips and Riedesel. In advance of the right wing, General Fraser had command of a detachment of five hundred picked men. . . . Col. Wilkinson, Gates' adjutant general, . . . proceeded to within sixty rods of the enemy, . . . informed General Gates that they [viz., the enemy], were foraging. . . .²⁶

In mentioning the knoll on which the British grenadiers and the artillery under Auckland and Williams were stationed, Stone says:

Then again forming on the flanks of the grenadiers they [viz., the Americans] mowed them down at every shot until the top of the hill was gained. Here a bloody and hand to hand struggle ensued which lasted about thirty minutes, when Ackland [sic] being badly hurt, the grenadiers gave way, leaving the ground thickly strewn with their dead and wounded. In this dreadful conflict one field piece that had been taken and retaken five times, finally fell into the hands of the Americans; whereupon Col. Cilley of New Hampshire leaped upon the captured cannon, waved his sword, and dedicated it 'to the American cause,' jumped down and turning its muzzle, fired it on the British with the ammunition they had left behind.²⁷

In much of his account Stone employs James Wilkinson's Memoirs with all the latter's dramatic fervor in describing the events that transpired on October 7, and in general his description corroborates the original sources. Nevertheless, Stone makes several errors, particularly when locating the cabin upon which the general officers

26. William L. Stone, The Campaign of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne and the Expedition of Lieutenant Colonel Barry St. Leger (Albany: J. Munsell, 1877), p. 57.

27. Ibid., pp. 58-59.

stood in order to reconnoiter the area. In his map that appears in Pausch's Journal he places this cabin on the right side of the road that ran north and south.²⁸ Most of the original accounts refer to this cabin as located on the left side (on the British right side going south) of the road. Stone's map has other errors, but possibly the most glaring is the fact that while its caption is dated September 19, 1777, referring to the earlier engagement, it is attempting to depict the action of October 7.

Brandow provides a more comprehensive account of the events that occurred on the wheat field on October 7. The following version seems to agree with the contemporary sources:

They [viz., Burgoyne's forces] moved toward the southwest about two-thirds of a mile and deployed in an open clearing and sat down while a detail of drivers and batmen from Fraser's brigade foraged in a wheat field. The place is the southern slope of the rise of ground just north of the Middle ravine. The highway running from Quaker Springs to Bemis Heights passes through the left of the center of the British position. The light infantry, under the Earl of Balcarras, were stationed on the right, Riedesel, with his Germans and a battary [sic] of two six pounders under Captain Pausch, held the center; Majors Ackland [sic] and Williams, with the grenadiers and most of the artillery, were posted on the left. General Fraser with five hundred grenadiers had occupied some high ground in the advance to the right with the intention of stealing around to the left of the American works and holding their attention while the main body could gain the high ground to the west of the American Camp.²⁹

He further notes that:

Gates having been appraised of the movement, sent out his Adjutant, Wilkinson, to ascertain if possible its purpose. Having posted himself on the high knoll at the turn of the road, about fifty rods south of the Middle ravine bridge he saw the enemy arrayed in the fields over against him, and several officers posted on the roof of a log house, with glasses, trying to get a glimpse of the American works.³⁰

28. Pausch, Journal, p. 163.

29. John H. Brandow, The Story of Old Saratoga: The Burgoyne Campaign to Which is added New York's Share in the Revolution, 2d ed. (Albany: The Brandow Printing Company, 1919) pp. 142-43.

30. Ibid., p. 143.

The remainder of Brandow's account is generally as accurate as the preceding statements. In general, his total assessment of the initial engagement of October 7 conforms pretty much to the early accounts as well as to the Wilkinson maps.

In 1928 Hoffman Nickerson wrote what was to be considered the most complete history of the Saratoga campaign. In speaking of the British advance on October 7, Nickerson stated:

Advancing slowly for about three quarters of a mile southwest from Freeman's farm . . . they reached the point at which the wagon track northward from the Neilson house crossed the Middle Ravine carved by the little brook known as Mill Creek. Here they halted on the little swell of land north of the creek, deployed into line with their left near the road, and sat down in a wheat field. The generals with their spy-glasses mounted to the roof of an abandoned cabin, from which they peered at the woods in a vain attempt to see something of the rebel position. Meanwhile, officers' servants and followers from the camp foraged in the wheat field.³¹

Nickerson goes on to explain why the British position was so weak and subject to attack:

The position of the fifteen hundred was weak. In the first place, they were dangerously extended, for the desire to hold a little rise on their right had strung them out over a front of more than a thousand yards. It was true that this rise, like a similar gentle hummock on which their left stood, had been cleared for cultivation and therefore gave a certain scope for artillery and for regular infantry tactics. A second disadvantage was that their whole front was practically open inasmuch as the Mill Creek Ravine, although it deepens opposite to the point on which their left stood, is nowhere a serious obstacle to infantry. Worst of all, both flanks rested upon woods admirably calculated to shelter an advancing army.³²

31. The Turning Point of the Revolution, or Burgoyne in America, 2 vols. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1928), p. 359.

32. Ibid., p. 360.

The description of the British position and of the area is generally consistent with other sources. On the other hand, Nickerson's map of the October 7 engagement leaves much to be desired. Why he captions his map "Freeman's Farm" is difficult to understand when the map includes the whole surrounding area as well as the Freeman farm. Secondly, the small road that ran east and west on the Barber wheat field is listed as having been built after the Revolution. This obviously contradicts the Wilkinson maps, which clearly depict this road in existence at the time of the battle.³³

33. Ibid., opp. p. 360.

II. IDENTITY OF THE WHEAT FIELD

Before describing the wheat field, particularly as it looked on October 7, 1777, an attempt will be made to identify its ownership. This can be done in two ways, neither of which, unfortunately provides a soundproof solution. The first of these is perhaps the most difficult, because it attempts to match the historical topography with the existing topography. The historical base map prepared by Historian Charles Snell has treated this aspect at some length. Needless to say, the task is complicated by the fact that much of the land in the historic period, particularly the wooded areas, cultivated fields, roads, rivulets, and man-made structures, has undergone profound changes.

A second means of identifying the wheat field is through an examination of land and other legal records, which is largely the aim of this section.¹ The problem is not always easy for several reasons. Records such as deeds, mortgages, and wills were not always kept by the counties in the early years. The result is that these records must be supplemented by privately-owned ones, and this procedure is frequently inconsistent and unreliable.

There is also the problem that land tends to lose its identity over the years as it is transferred from one owner to the next. Land was frequently conveyed in small parcels or with parcels of land that adjoined it. Hence, the legal identity of a lot was so altered over the years that it is extremely difficult to trace its history employing available means.

Adding to the whole problem is the fact that even if the land records were complete, it would be difficult to ascertain the inhabitant of a piece of property for the simple reason that in the early period many of these people were tenants or subtenants of large estates and their names frequently did not appear in deeds. Only the names of owners would appear. It was only after several years of tenancy that a tenant would sometimes acquire ownership in fee simple.

1. Land records of the area prior to 1791 are in the Albany County Clerk's Office, Albany, New York, and for the years after this, are in the Saratoga County Clerk's Office, Ballston Spa, New York. The reason for this division is that prior to 1791, Stillwater, where the battle was fought, was part of Albany County. In 1791 Saratoga County was formed and included Stillwater.

The early accounts of the battle have failed to identify by name the wheat field or the structures thereon as they have so often done with the Freeman farm. They have relied largely on topographical descriptions. The German accounts, on the other hand, have frequently referred to the "Waisser," "Weisser," or "Weiser" house on the wheat field.² Where this name originated is a mystery, because the early land records make absolutely no mention of it. If Waisser (or its other derivatives) was the name of a person, one explanation might be that he had been a tenant or subtenant, and therefore his name did not appear in the land records. Another explanation might be that Waisser might have been the name of a German officer who had temporarily made use of the house, but if this was so, how do we explain the fact that the Americans were using this house until they were driven off by Burgoyne's forces on October 7?

There is always the puzzling question of why the English did not refer to it as the Waisser house. After all, they had been in the general vicinity just as long as their German allies. If the Germans knew this place as being owned or inhabited by a person called Waisser, why didn't the English know this as well? The problem will have to remain a mystery at least until more can be gleaned from the records.

A more feasible argument can be made for the Barber place name given to the wheat field. Charles Neilson was the first writer to assign the property to a Barber--Joshua Barber. Neilson has a strong argument in his favor. He was the son of John Neilson, whose house was used as quarters by General Poor and Colonel Morgan. The house was within a short distance of the wheat field. Charles Neilson had inherited the Neilson house, and he therefore must have known all the later Barbers of Stillwater who were his contemporaries. In fact, both he and Abraham Barber appeared on the same jury list for 1829.³

2. Riedesel, Memoirs, 1:162; Stone, Letters of Brunswick and Hessian Officers, p. 120; Friedericke Riedesel, Letters and Journals, p. 102; Lt. August Uhlig to Herr Georg Wilhelm Gran, Nov. 23, 1777, Niedersachsishes Staats Archive, Wolfenbuttal, Germany, translated by John F. Luzader for the author.

3. The following names of people who were inhabitants of the battlefield also appeared on this list: Daniel Munger, Ezra Munger, and Jonathan McBride. Stillwater Names from Jury Lists, Saratoga County 1827-1829, copy in the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth M. Abel, Town Historian, Stillwater, N.Y.

In addition to the Barber name, Neilson also referred to the Joseph Munger cabin, the Chatfield house, and the Coulter cabin or farm.⁴ These names, as with Barber, do not appear in the early accounts of the battle, but they do appear, in some cases quite extensively, in early tax and jury records as well as in later land records. Neilson's acceptance of these names, therefore, cannot be taken lightly.

The earliest recording of a Joshua Barber, the Barber referred to in Neilson's history, is in a tax list of Stillwater in 1789.⁵ Also appearing in this early period and contemporaneously with the battle was a Simeon Barber. Simeon had enlisted in the 13th Regiment of the Albany County Militia. This regiment was known as the Stillwater regiment and was drawn from the vicinity of the Saratoga battlefield.⁶ It is possible that Joshua and Simeon were related, either as father and son or as brothers.

A Moses Barber (of Stillwater), with a family that included two males under 16 years of age, appears in the United States census of 1790.⁷ In a jury list of 1829 Abraham Barber was listed as a farmer. According to one genealogist, Abraham, who was born in 1779 and died in 1835, married a Patience Powel.⁸ There is the possibility that this Abraham might have been one of Moses's sons; however, if it is true that Abraham was born in 1779, it would have made him 11 years of age in 1790 (at the time of the census) and not 16.

The tax list for Stillwater in 1845 contains such names as Abraham Barber, Rensselaer Barber, Lewis Barber, and Patience Barber.⁹ Patience, who was still living in 1845, was the wife of the elder Abraham, who died in 1835. The Abraham and Lewis who appear on this tax list were probably the sons of the elder Abraham and Patience. Rensselaer, meanwhile, may have been a brother to the elder Abraham and Moses's second son. The tax list for 1845 lists Rensselaer

4. Neilson, An Original Account of Burgoyne's Campaign, pp. 163, 164, 288.

5. Tax list in the possession of Mrs. Bessie Farrington, Stillwater, N. Y., copy in the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth M. Abel.

6. William E. Meuse, Saratoga N.H.P., to Mrs. Dee Dunn, Saratoga County Historian, Sept. 21, 1970, in park files.

7. From notes in the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth M. Abel.

8. Names from Jury Lists, Saratoga County, copy in the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth M. Abel; Bruce H. Barber to John Hutzky, Saratoga N.H.P., Sept. 12, 1966, in park files.

9. Tax list in the possession of Mrs. Bessie Farrington, copy in the possession of Mrs. Elizabeth M. Abel.

separately as owning 100 acres of land. Lewis is listed as "Lewis and Bros.," owning 135 acres. Abraham, who must have been Lewis's brother, is also listed separately and not as the owner of real property. Patience, who died in 1868, was listed as owning only personal property.¹⁰

Up to this point a genealogist can make a fair case in tracing the Barbers of Stillwater. There is little doubt that Barbers lived in Stillwater at the time of the battle. What is difficult, however, is to tie the Barber family in with the wheat field. Nevertheless, in the absence of evidence to the contrary, one must conclude that Charles Neilson was probably correct.

Having established the strong possibility that the wheat field belonged to, or at least was inhabited by, a Barber, our next step is to establish its position within the battle area. This will be done by employing existing land records.

The Barber wheat field lay largely in Great Lot 16 of the Saratoga Patent, but some of it may have extended southward into Great Lot 15.¹¹ Great Lot 16, which was inherited by General Phillip Schuyler in 1763, was described as beginning

by the northeast corner of Lott [sic] No. fifteen by the mouth of a small Runn [sic] of water on the north end of the Vley [fly] and Runn North Twenty five degrees west four hundred and Fifty four chains then north fifteen Degrees East thirty one chains, then South Twenty-Seven Degrees East to the River, then Down along the River to the place where it first began. Contains Two thousand and fifty acres.¹²

10. Ibid.

11. Great Lots 15 and 16 were part of a division of land that made up a patent for a large tract of land on both sides of the Hudson granted to seven wealthy citizens by Governor Thomas Dongan. This patent was known as the Saratoga Patent. In 1750 it was divided among the patentees, with Great Lot 16 becoming the property of John Schuyler and Great Lot 15 becoming the property of Cornelius van Dyke. See "A Map of Saratoga Patent as laid in Lots & the subdivision of Margaret Livingston & Bayard's Lots by John R. Bleeker 1767," filed in the Albany County Clerk's Office, reproduced as Appendix D.

12. Philip Schuyler Papers, New York Public Library, New York; Indenture of Mar. 28, 1763, "Bounds of Lotts 2, 10, 16, 27, 41 and 44 in the Saratoga Pattennt," Philip Schuyler Papers, undated.

Soon after he inherited his lot, Schuyler leased much of it in a series of transactions. There is an interesting document in the Philip Schuyler Papers, which was apparently drawn up after General Schuyler's death in 1812. It is a copy of a manuscript allotting to each of his daughters lands in the Saratoga Patent in accordance with his last will and testament. According to his will, two of his daughters divided his lands in Great Lot 16. Of extreme interest is the fact that Joshua Barber was leased 70 acres of land on November 5, and Simeon Barber 72 acres on November 6, 1782.¹³ Also appearing in the same document were references to leases issued to William Cooper, Samuel Cooper, Increase Green, and William Anderson, all in Great Lot 16. According to this document, William Cooper was leased 142 acres on November 11, 1782, for a period of three lives.¹⁴ A copy of an indenture in the Schuyler Papers leases 142 acres of land to a William Cooper on August 3, 1769. The indenture describes this property as Farm Number 8 adjoining Farm Number 7 on the east.¹⁵ This is undoubtedly the same land noted in the document allotting Schuyler's land to his daughters. The William Cooper in this document was probably the son of the Cooper that appears in the 1769 indenture. In 1782 a new lease had been consummated with the younger Cooper.

Increase Green received a lease for 192 acres on April 9, 1783, and this lot was identified as Farm G, or Number 7, "beginning at the north west corner of Farm F." Thus, Farm F would appear to be to the east of Farm G, or Farm Number 7.¹⁶ William Anderson received a lease of 124 acres on August 3, 1769, and this lot was described as Farm Number 10, beginning at the "northwest corner of Farm number nine."¹⁷ Meanwhile, Samuel Cooper received a lease of 152 acres on November

13. "Copy of the Allotments of the residue of the lands in Saratoga Pat. divided by Gen. Ph. Schuyler to his daughters. Allotments Nos. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 of Farms etc. in the Residue of the Saratoga Tract mentioned in the Will of Philip Schuyler late of the City of Albany deceased," Philip Schuyler Papers.

14. Ibid.

15. Indenture of Aug. 3, 1769, Philip Schuyler Papers.

16. "Allotments of lands" Schuyler Papers; Indenture of Apr. 9, 1783, Schuyler Papers.

17. "Allotments of lands" Schuyler Papers; Indenture of Aug. 3, 1769, Schuyler Papers.

5, 1782. This land was described with references to Farm K on the east,¹⁸ which was the Anderson farm. Finally, John McBride was leased 100 acres on June 26, 1771, and this land was described as Farm I, with references to Farm M on its east side.¹⁹ Farm M was the same as Farm Number 8, which was occupied by William Cooper.

We know from an indenture dated in 1768 that John Freeman leased 170 acres known as Farm Number 3 in Great Lot 16²⁰ from Philip Schuyler. Because John Freeman and his son Thomas were loyalists who joined Burgoyne's forces, they never returned to their farm after the war. In the document allotting Great Lot 16 to Schuyler's daughters there is a reference to a lot consisting of 170 acres that was leased to a William Mead on October 18, 1782.²¹ It may well be that this is the same lot once occupied by the Freemans.

A simple arrangement of all the farms noted above on Great Lot 16 would look something like this:

Part of Great Lot 16

West				East				
Farm of Samuel Cooper Lot 11	Farm of William Anderson Lot 10 (or K)	Farm of J. McBride Lot 9 (or I)	Farm of William Cooper Lot 8 (or M)	Farm of Increase Green Lot 7 (or G)	Lot 6 (or F)	Lot 5	Lot 4	Farm of William Meade Lot 3

18. "Allotments of lands" Schuyler Papers; Indenture of Nov. 5, 1782, Schuyler Papers.

19. "Allotment of lands" Schuyler Papers; Indenture of June 26, 1771, Schuyler Papers.

20. Indenture of Aug. 2, 1768, Schuyler Papers.

21. "Allotments of lands," Schuyler Papers.

It should be made clear that in many indentures, farms or lots were not always arranged alphabetically for some strange reason. At times, as in the indenture to Samuel Cooper, there were no identifying symbols whatsoever. Nevertheless, from the description in the deed of the farm (or lot) and its surrounding lots, we can determine its relative position. Thus, if Farm F was to the east of Farm Number 7 (or G), then we can reasonably assume that Farm F was also Farm Number 6. Similarly, if according to the indenture Samuel Cooper's farm was located to the west of Farm Number 10, then Cooper's farm was also Farm Number 11.

With the exception of lots 4 and 5, we can establish ownership for Farms Numbers 3 through 11 in Great Lot 16. What about the rest of this huge lot? Since it is unlikely that any of the lots west of Samuel Cooper's were the site of the wheat field, we have discarded those documents that may refer to them. On the other hand, it is most likely that the site of the wheat field was to the east of Farm Number 7 and west of Farm Number 3; in other words lots 4, 5, and 6 would most logically have been the site of the wheat field.

It is unfortunate that the indentures of Joshua and Simeon Barber, who were mentioned as leaseholders in General Shuyler's allotment of lands to his daughters, were not among the Schuyler Papers. As in the case of similar documents, they would have established the relative position of the lots they pertained to. Because their leases were dated in 1782, we know that at least as early as this year both Barbers occupied farms in Great Lot 16. It is very logical to suppose that their lands were either all or part of Farms Numbers 4, 5, and 6 on our rough map.

As we have already seen, the early accounts of the October 7 engagement do not refer to the names of owners or inhabitants of the wheat field. Charles Neilson was the first of the later writers to assign the wheat field to a Barber at the time of the battle. William L. Stone, meanwhile, was the first of the later writers to tie in the Barber property with later owners, whose titles are largely supported by the land records.

Stone noted that a Mr. Michael Condon, who had died in 1891 and who had once been a day laborer on the Freeman farm, had purchased a very expensive farm nearby, which became known as the "Battle Farm."²² Land records mention a Michael Condon for the first time in 1846. Isaac and Sarah Freeman, who were not direct descendants of John

22. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Ground, p. 166 fn.

Freeman of Revolutionary days, had purchased land in Lot 4 of Great Lot 16. In 1846 they sold Condon a small parcel (2 acres) of land partially described as follows: "Beginning at the south west corner of farm number four known as such in the subdivision of lot number sixteen of the grand division of Saratoga patent. . . ."23 Because the small piece of land involved in this transaction adjoined the southwest corner of Lot 4, it would have placed the land to the west or possibly to the southwest of the old Freeman farm on the Lot 3 of Revolutionary War days.

In what may have been a series of transactions to sell much of Lot 4 in 1847, the Freemans sold another parcel of land, which leaves no doubt that Michael Condon's growing real estate stood to the southwest, although still on Great Lot 16. In the indenture for this transaction the land involved is described as follows:

being a part of Lot No. 16 of grand division of Saratoga Patent and known in the subdivision of said Lot as Farm No. four or part of Farm No. four bounded on north by land owned by Joseph Baker and deeded to him by executors of Isaac Freeman deceased on the east by land deeded by Freeman's executors to Robert and James Walker on the south by lands in possession of Henry Neilson and heirs of Ann Knight and land deeded by Freeman executors to Michael Condon and on west by land of last mentioned [viz., Condon] piece and the publick highway and lands owned by Joseph and Robert Walker.²⁴

From this description we can conclude that Condon's property was more or less southwest of the Freeman property being sold. According to this description Joseph and Robert Walker's property was to the west of the land in question. It is of interest to note that both Neilson and Stone mention the Walker property as being involved in the October 7 engagement, and from their description of its location there can be no question that it was to the north of Condon's property. In other words, both the Walker and Condon properties were to the west of Lot 4 except that Condon's land was somewhat southward. Two later transactions involving the sale of Freeman property provide similar descriptions of Condon's land.²⁵

23. May 12, 1846, Saratoga Co. Deed Book WW, p. 490, Saratoga County Clerk's Office.

24. June 7, 1847, Saratoga County Deed Book 53, p. 70.

25. Ca. 1847, Saratoga Co. Deed Book 53, p. 71; June 1, 1849, Saratoga Co. Deed Book 56, p. 539.

In the years that followed, Condon and his descendants were active buying more land to add to their original holding. In 1880 Sarah A. and Joseph B. Rodgers transferred to Perry D. Condon a parcel of land known as Farm E in Great Lot 16 as well as land adjoining it to the south.²⁶ This was the same land transferred in 1865 from Sette R. Walker to Joseph Rodgers.²⁷ Farm E was the equivalent of Farm Number 5 that adjoined Farm Number 4 on the west and Farm Number 6 on the east, as shown on the rough map (p. 30).

According to General Hoyt, who visited the battlefield in 1825, a Mr. Walker lived just to the north of what was then called the Barber wheat field.²⁸ An old jury list in Stillwater for the years 1827-29 contains the names of Joseph and Robert Walker and describes them as farmers.²⁹ Stone noted that Joseph Rodgers occupied the Walker house in 1867 and was apparently living in it as late as 1895.³⁰

Evidence is abundant that the property once owned by the Walkers, in what seems to be Great Lot 16, was transferred to Joseph Rodgers in 1865, who in turn passed it on to Perry Condon in 1880. Condon's forbears, as we have seen, had begun to acquire land on what was probably the Barber wheat field as early as 1846.

On a map drawn in 1927 in anticipation of New York State's acquisition of private lands to form an historical park, Perry D. Condon's property, a total of 105.94 acres, is described and plotted. While most of Condon's property rested in Great Lot 16, about one third stood in Great Lot 15.³¹

After evaluating the land records one is inclined to conclude that to plot the exact location of the historic Barber wheat field would be almost impossible. On the other hand, to conclude that the wheat field was probably located on Lot 5 with some overlapping of Lot 4 would hardly be unreasonable.

26. Mar. 11, 1880, Saratoga Co. Deed Book 150, p. 192.

27. Mar. 2, 1865, Saratoga Co. Deed Book 100, p. 126.

28. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 188.

29. Stillwater Names from Jury Lists, Saratoga County 1827-1829.

30. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 156 fn; ibid., p. 237; Pausch, Journal, pp. 162, 168 fn.

31. "Map of Saratoga Battlefield Showing Property Lines," Surveyed for the Conservation Department of New York State by Edward G. West and Albert T. Davis, Map No. 1616, with undated indenture, in park files, reproduced as Appendix E.

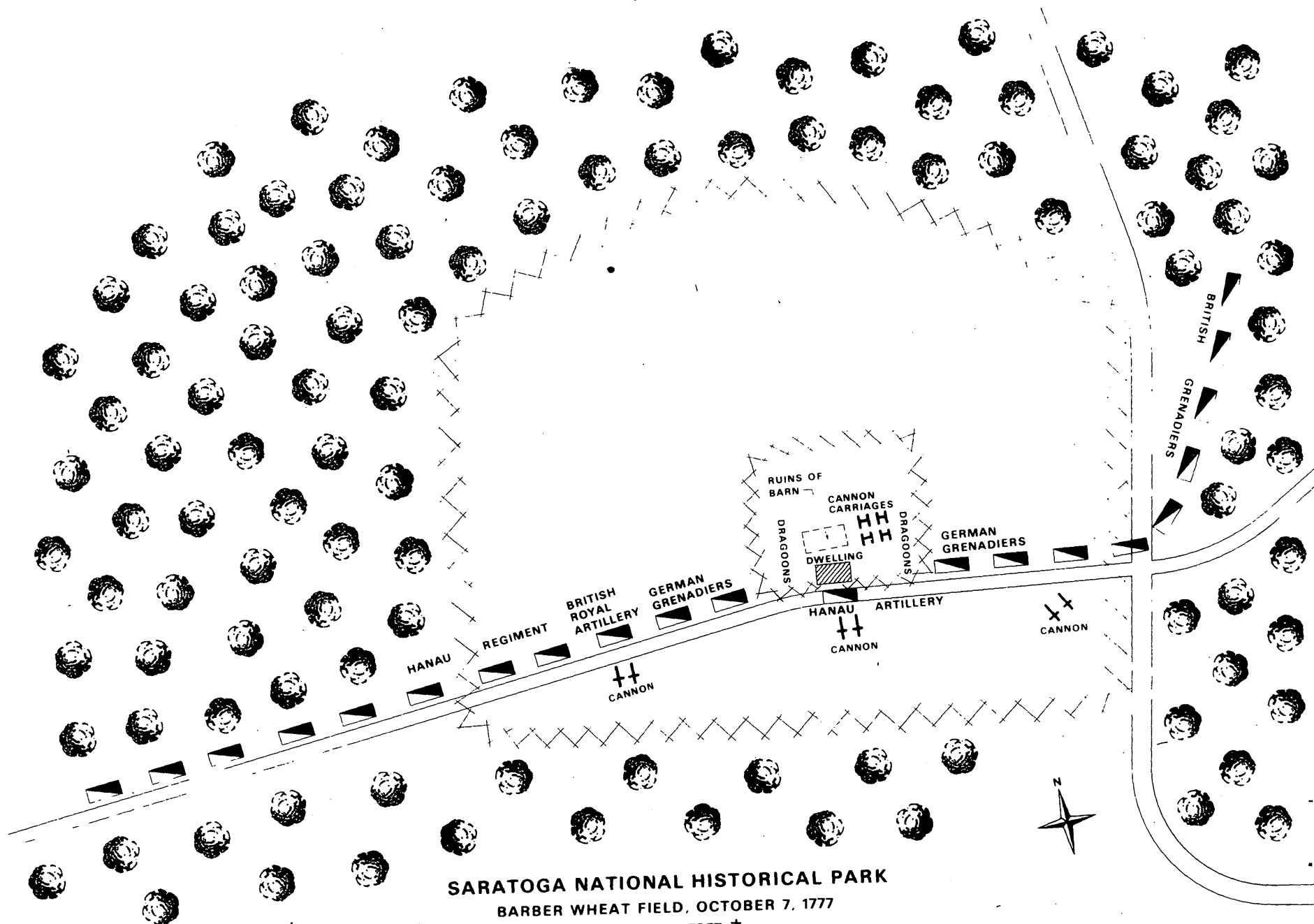
III. DESCRIPTION OF THE WHEAT FIELD ON OCTOBER 7, 1777

Of all the early accounts and maps dealing with the engagement of October 7, and there are several good ones, the most accurate and timely documents were the Wilkinson maps. These remain the focal point of this sizable body of information. The British and American permanent fortifications, particularly the former, and the advanced positions of both forces are shown in considerable detail, and are corroborated by contemporary accounts. The maps also provide a detailed illustration, drawn to scale, of the topography of the battlefield. Ravines, rivulets, wooded areas, heights, cultivated fields, roads, man-made structures, fences, and fortifications are depicted. Because the maps cover such a wide area and landmarks must therefore be fairly small, man-made structures are not always clearly delineated. Nevertheless, the fact that their positions are usually revealed makes these maps extremely valuable to a study of this nature. Mainly for these reasons, a simplified version of an historical base map of the Barber wheat field has been drawn (p. 36) pinpointing most of what appears on the Wilkinson maps.

A. Dimensions of the Wheat Field

According to the Wilkinson map, which is drawn to scale (approximately 400 yards to an inch), the wheat field measured about 300 yards east-west by about 250 yards north-south at its deepest point. The only other source providing some dimensions of the field was Woodruff's account several years after the battle. Woodruff, a participant in the fight, noted that the field was from 6 to 8 acres in size, although it was obvious he mistook the Barber wheat field for the Freeman farm.¹ If his dimensions were correct, 8 acres would make the field approximately half the size described by Wilkinson in his map. It should be noted, first of all, that Woodruff wrote his account several years after the battle, and his memory may have failed him. Secondly, even if his account had been recorded immediately after the engagement, an estimate of the size of an area is most difficult, particularly when the person making such an estimate is in the midst of battle. Finally, when Woodruff gave his account, he might have been misled by the existing conditions, which were not those at the time of the battle. Wilkinson's map must therefore be accepted as the more reliable of the two sources.

1. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 226.



SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

BARBER WHEAT FIELD, OCTOBER 7, 1777

1 INCH = 180 FEET ±

SKETCHED BY LOUIS TORRES

B. The Nature of the Ground

The Wilkinson maps provide an excellent description of the nature of the ground in and around the wheat field. Although they are not specific about what was growing in the field, the landmarks that do appear are usually substantiated by contemporary accounts. The maps reveal a cultivated field surrounded by thick woods, beyond which are other cultivated fields. The maps clearly show a road running east and west through this first cultivated area. The thick woods surrounding the field were a distinct handicap to the British because they inhibited their attack and prevented the effective use of artillery.

Once again, because the British and Germans were actually in and around the field, their accounts provide a more accurate and detailed story of the events of October 7. Thus Captain Bloomfield, who served in the Royal Artillery and who was on the left center of the British line on the Barber wheat field, noted that the ground on which his artillery was posted was a "clear spot" largely surrounded by woods. He also noted that the ground on which his two 12-pound cannons were posted was a "small eminence" in the center of this clearance.² Both General and the Baroness Riedesel mentioned this high ground on the field. The baroness did not mention a field, but when she observed that the high ground was "surrounded on both sides with woods," there can be no mistake that she implied the existence of a field.³

Captain Pausch, who commanded the German artillery on that ill-fated expedition, after describing Burgoyne's march and his final halt in the Barber wheat field, said that "Here we found a small cultivated and open field entirely surrounded by woods. . . . Meanwhile, on a piece of ground somewhat elevated and commanding an advantageous and clear position [he] posted [his] two 6 pound cannon."⁴

James Wilkinson, observing Burgoyne's moves from a distance of "60 or 70 rods," noted that the British had entered a wheat field that had not been harvested and that was separated from him by a rivulet. He noted that the American left flank was concealed from British view by intervening woods. Later when Wilkinson reported

2. Burgoyne, State of the Expedition, pp. 91-92.

3. Riedesel, Memoirs, p. 163; Friedericke Riedesel, Letters and Journals, p. 102.

4. Pausch, Journal, p. 162.

the results of his reconnaissance to General Gates and was asked about the nature of the ground on which the enemy was deployed, he answered, "Their front is open, and their flanks rest on woods . . . their right is skirted by a lofty height."⁵ The implication in this answer is that the ground on which Burgoyne's forces were deployed was an open field with woods on both sides. Also of interest in his description of the area was the reference to a rivulet. This streamlet, as the Wilkinson maps indicate, ran through ground that later became known as the Middle ravine, which ran along the south side of the wheat field and was separated from it by woods. The ravine as well as the woods isolated the British forces from the American advanced position.

Although Woodruff confused the Barber wheat field with the Freeman farm, he said that the farm was covered by a thin growth of "pitch pine wood without underbrush, excepting one lot of about six or eight acres, which had been cleared and fenced."⁶ Although his dimensions were wrong, he obviously was aware that there was a cultivated field in the midst of woods.

• Another American, Lieutenant Thomas Blake of the New Hampshire Regiment, wrote in his diary that a "detachment of the enemy march out upon the left of our army . . . and posted themselves on a small height in a cleared field about a quarter of a mile from our advanced guard."⁷

General Ebenezer Mattoon wrote many years later that when the Americans were advancing on Burgoyne's forces, ahead of them was a "field of corn" in which the Hessians were hidden. "On our advance towards the corn field a number of men rose and fired upon us."⁸ It is difficult to explain why General Mattoon referred to the crop growing in the field as corn when this is in contradiction to many of the early accounts. The only explanation for his statement may be that there were corn fields in Saratoga at the time of the battle, and because he wrote his account several years later, he confused their location.⁹

5. Wilkinson, Memoirs, pp. 267, 268.

6. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 224.

7. Frederic Kidder, History of the First New Hampshire Regt. 1775-83 (Albany: 1868), p. 34, quoted in Charles W. Snell, "A Report On The Ground Cover At Saratoga National Historical Park On October 8, 1777," unpublished typescript (Stillwater: Saratoga N.H.P., 1949).

8. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 244.

9. Thomas Anburey, who was among Burgoyne's forces, noted in (continued)

Pausch, who was on the field and whose account of the battle must be viewed as one of the best, referred to foragers cutting down the "corn-stalks yet standing on our rear."¹⁰ It is difficult to find fault with Pausch, because his account in every other respect is very reliable and accurate. Still, the evidence weighs in favor of a wheat field.

Roads in and adjacent to the wheat field played a significant role. In his report on the ground cover of the Saratoga battlefield, Historian Charles W. Snell concludes that the area from the Freeman farm southwest to the land west of the Barber wheat field seems to have been largely covered with trees and intersected only by the crudest wagon tracks.¹¹ The Wilkinson maps depict at least two roads that either adjoined or crossed the Barber wheat field. One of them ran almost directly north and south adjacent to the east side of the field. This road acquired the name of Quaker Springs Road in later years. According to Mr. Snell "this was one of the most important roads within the battlefield area in that it not only serviced the American line but also served as an important medium for the maneuvering of troops and the transportation of supplies by both the British and American armies in both battles."¹²

The second road, which may have been nothing more than a very narrow and primitive one, ran east and west almost bisecting the wheat field. The Wilkinson map very clearly depicts it. Hoffman Nickerson, in his history, is wrong in not representing this road as a Revolutionary War landmark.¹³ While Wilkinson was correct in

9. (Continued) 1777 that on the grounds of the Freeman farm were great quantities of fine wheat as well as Indian corn. The wheat was cut down, threshed, carried to the mill to be ground, and delivered to the men for food. The corn was cut for forage for the horses. Thomas Anburey, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America, 2 vols. (London, 1789; reprint ed., Cambridge: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1923; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1969), 1:239.

10. Pausch, Journal, p. 165.

11. Snell, Ground Cover at Saratoga, p. 25.

12. Charles W. Snell, "Historical Outline for Historical Base Map, Drawing NHP-SAR-2011 (2 sheets)," (1941; rev., Stillwater: Saratoga N.H.P., 1951; rev., 1963), p. 52.

13. Nickerson, Turning Point of the Revolution, map of "Freeman's Farm," p. 360 ff.

identifying this road, for some unknown reason it ends abruptly at the east side of the wheat field where it then joins the road that runs north and south (Quaker Spring Road). On the very same map there is a road that originates on Freeman's farm. It runs in a southwesterly direction through a wooded area where it suddenly disappears at a point indicated on Historian Snell's historical base map as 7D.¹⁴ Logic decrees that a road such as this does not suddenly end so abruptly in the middle of a forest. On examining the Wilkinson map closely, it is easy to imagine an extension of this road joining the route that ran east and west through the Barber wheat field. Why Wilkinson did not complete the road on his map when he was so careful to fill in other details must remain a mystery. One explanation for this omission might be that the road was considered to be of such little strategic value to the British that Wilkinson saw little purpose in including it. On the other hand, it is hard to imagine an engineer of Wilkinson's caliber, who produced a map in such great detail, not drawing this section of the road.

C. Man-Made Structures on the Wheat Field

The sources--both accounts and maps--are unanimous in speaking of the existence of a dwelling (or dwellings) and fences on the wheat field. The dwelling that is most frequently mentioned is the cabin whose roof was used by the British as an observation post after their forces had halted in the wheat field. The Germans referred to it as the "Waisser's," "Waiser's," or "Weiser's" house.

Lieutenant August Uhlig, a German participant in the October 7 engagement, provides us with additional significant information in a letter written a short while after the battle. In speaking of the events of that day he said:

At 10 o'clock in the morning, the reconnaissance column marched out of our camp. About one mile from the Light Infantry Redoubt, we entered the field of Weiser house, where there had stood two buildings. The barn had been destroyed and the dwelling fortified by the enemy. We drove then away and took up a position on the rising ground with both of our flanks surrounded by woods. Our grenadiers formed east and west of the house, with artillery in its front.¹⁵

14. Snell, Historical Base Map.

15. Lt. August Uhlig to Herr Georg Wilhelm Granu, Nov. 23, 1777, Niedersachsishes Staats Archive, translated by John F. Luzader, for the author.

In addition to other revelations of which we will say more later, Lieutenant Uhlig is the only contemporary, except possibly for Wilkinson, who refers to the existence of two structures. One of these, a barn, had been destroyed before the British arrived--by whom is not clear. Apparently the remains of the barn were still there when the British arrived. What Uhlig has noted in his account certainly makes sense, because it would be difficult to imagine a farm, even one as small as the Barber wheat field, without a barn--either for draft animals or for the storage of harvested crops and farm implements. The Wilkinson map is the only other source that depicts two structures (or at least what appears to be the remains of one) in the approximate center of the field immediately to the north of the road that intersected the field.

Meanwhile, other accounts, both English, German, and American, leave little doubt of the existence of at least one structure on the wheat field. Pausch notes the existence of a "small habitation," but places it at "one end" of the field. In at least three other places in his account he refers to this habitation as a "house."¹⁶ The Baroness Riedesel spoke of the "Weiser's house" being occupied by the Americans, who were then driven off by Burgoyne's advance on October 7.¹⁷ Colonel James Wilkinson observed several officers perched on top of a "cabin."¹⁸

From both the accounts and the Wilkinson maps it is difficult to judge what the house or cabin may have looked like, for no one took the time to describe it. The structure was alternately referred to as either a cabin or a house. Because of this, some later writers, such as Harrison Bird, have assumed that it was a log cabin. Bird also noted that the roof was made of cedar shingle.¹⁹ Where he obtained this information is hard to say, because the early accounts make absolutely no reference to construction materials. It may be that because roofs of the period were frequently constructed of cedar shingle, Bird just assumed this one was similar.

16. Pausch, Journal, pp. 161-62, 165, 168.

17. Friedericke Riedesel, Letters and Journals, p. 102.

18. Wilkinson, Memoirs, 1:267.

19. March to Saratoga: General Burgoyne and the American Campaign 1777 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 226, 227.

Charles Neilson noted in his history that all the dwellings on the battlefield, except those belonging to John Neilson, E. Woodworth, J. Bemis, E. Vandenburg, J. Vermor, and J. Taylor, were log cabins.²⁰ This would seem to include the Barber structure.

Without more basic historical data, it is difficult to provide a precise description of the building in question. One thing is certain: it was a small, almost square, single-room dwelling. It probably had a chimney, but whether the house was made of logs or simply of wood siding, or whether the roof had cedar shingles or was composed of some other material, is hard to say. That several of the secondary works have preferred to call it a log cabin may have some basis in fact, for log cabins were common in that area. Baroness Riedesel noted in her account the following story, which might provide some basis for comparison:

As the weather was beginning to grow cool, Colonel Williams . . . offered to have a house with a chimney built for me for five to six guineas, where I could make my home. I accepted his offer, and the house, which was about twenty feet square and had a good fireplace, was begun. These houses are called log cabins. They are made by fitting together thick logs all about the same size, which makes a sturdy building, and one that is quite warm, particularly when the roof is covered with clay.²¹

The fences that were found on the wheat field produce less controversy than the dwelling. The Wilkinson maps leave little doubt that the total cultivated area was enclosed with a fence. Also significant is the fact that a small square area within the field and surrounding the two small dwellings was enclosed with a fence. Because the map is drawn to scale, one can estimate that the small enclosure was approximately 80 by 70 yards, or 5,600 square yards. The only explanation for this inner enclosure was that the owner wished to keep his draft animals from wandering into the wheat field.

The early accounts contain several references to a fence or fences on or around the wheat field. In some cases the fences acted as a shield for the combatants while the fighting was raging. The only difficulty is that while fences are frequently mentioned, one

20. Neilson, An Original Account of Burgoyne's Campaign, p. 288.

21. Baroness von Riedesel and the American Revolution: Journal and Correspondence of a Tour of Duty 1776-1783, rev. trans. Marvin L. Brown, Jr., assisted by Martha Huth (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 50.

cannot distinguish between the outer and inner fence. We must therefore rely heavily upon the Wilkinson maps for this distinction.²²

While the sources are abundant in pointing to the existence of a fence, unfortunately only one original account describes it. James Wilkinson referred to it as a worm fence in several places,²³ while in his history of the campaign, Stone referred to it as a brush fence.²⁴ Nickerson called it both a "zigzag" rail fence and a rail fence.²⁵ Bird also referred to it as a rail fence.²⁶ There can be little doubt that all these references mean one and the same thing--that the fences were worm fences made of split rails.

D. Fortifications

Because the Barber wheat field had first been occupied by the Americans as an observation post and later by Burgoyne's forces, albeit briefly, the question has arisen whether some kind of fortification was constructed on the field. The Barber wheat field, like the rest of the area, had been deserted by its inhabitants before Burgoyne's forces arrived. The inhabitants left the farm in a hurry without taking time to harvest their wheat. It was soon after their hurried departure that the Americans took over the wheat field. Whether the barn was burned by its owners or destroyed by either the Americans or the British must remain a mystery.

In any case, on October 7 the American sentries were driven from the building, and the British forces occupied it, also utilizing it as a temporary observation post.

Captain Pausch was the only participant in the battle who made any reference to some form of fortification in the wheat field. In referring to his retreat from his original position in the field to a position close to the Barber dwelling, Pausch said that "after safely reaching the house under the protection of a musketry fire . . . I presently came across a little earth-work, 18 feet long by 5 feet

22. Some of the sources that refer to a fence on the wheat field are Pausch, Journal, pp. 167, 171; Wilkinson, Memoirs, 2:268, 269; Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 224.

23. Wilkinson, Memoirs, 2:267, 268, 271.

24. Stone, Campaign of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, p. 59.

25. Nickerson, Turning Point of the Revolution, p. 361.

26. Bird, March to Saratoga, p. 226.

high. This I at once made use of by posting my two cannon, one on the right, and the other on the left, and began a fire alternately with balls and with shells. . . ."²⁷ Stone said that this earthwork had been constructed for Burgoyne's advanced pickets between September 19 and October 7.²⁸ Stone was obviously mistaken inasmuch as the American advanced pickets had been making use of the Barber wheat field right up to the time they were driven off by the British on October 7. Thus, if any fortification existed, it was probably built by the Americans.

Unfortunately, the Wilkinson maps do not show the fortification, thus making it difficult to determine its definite location. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see how specific Pausch was in citing the dimensions of the earthwork.

E. The Battle Scene

Some attempt will be made in this section to reconstruct the battle scene on the Barber wheat field on October 7. In order to do this, however, we must first describe the positions of the British and German troops, with their artillery and supplies, on and around the field.

The three columns--consisting of 1,500 British, Germans, Canadians, Loyalists, and Indians--that marched on October 7 and halted north of the Middle ravine opposite the American left flank were strung over more than 1,000 yards. The Wilkinson maps show the deployment of Burgoyne's forces. The British Light Infantry was on the extreme right and stretched across a cultivated field west of the Barber wheat field.

Immediately to the east of this field and separating it from the Barber wheat field were Colonel von Specht's German regiments. To their left and in the Barber wheat field the British Royal Artillery was stationed. To its left and in what appeared to be the center of the field were the German grenadiers. Lieutenant Uhlig described their position as located to the east and west of the house.²⁹ On their left was the Hanau Artillery, which was posted on the easternmost part of the field. Finally, to its left and deployed in the woods across the road that ran north and south were the British grenadiers.

27. Pausch, Journal, pp. 168-69.

28. Ibid., p. 169, fn. 1.

29. Lt. August Uhlig to Herr George Wilhelm Gran, Nov. 23, 1777, Niedersachishes Staats Archive, translated by John F. Luzader for the author.

Wilkinson's maps show eight cannons, corroborating most of the early accounts. Nevertheless, the contemporary and early accounts contain some inconsistencies. Both General and Baroness Riedesel noted that Burgoyne's forces had taken eight cannons with them on the expedition.³⁰ Both Major Henry Dearborn of Colonel Morgan's Light Infantry and Lieutenant Thomas Blake of General Poor's brigade counted six cannons among the booty that was captured from Burgoyne's forces in the initial stages of battle--two 12-pounders and four 6-pounders.³¹ James Wilkinson, on the other hand, noted that in their retreat the enemy left two 12-pounders and six 6-pounders on the field.³² Ebenezer Mattoon also said that the British had eight cannons.³³ General Hoyt agreed with this number, the two 12-pounders being posted in front of General Fraser's Light Infantry.³⁴ Professor Silliman increased the number of artillery pieces in the possession of the British to ten.³⁵ Where he got this number is hard to say, but it is obvious he was mistaken.

According to Wilkinson's map six of these cannons were posted in the Barber wheat field: two at the southeast corner of the field, two at the center of the field just to the south of the dwelling, and two at the southwest corner. The remaining two pieces of artillery were positioned at the extreme right of the field that lay to the west of the Barber wheat field. Hence, these two pieces were not on the Barber wheat field itself. All six pieces of artillery on the wheat field were facing south, overlooking a wooded area just north of the Middle ravine.

General Riedesel stated in his account that after their forces drove off the American advance picket from the "Waisser's house," Burgoyne's forces were concealed as much as possible. While this may have been true of those troops deployed in the woods to the east and west of the wheat field, it was probably not true for those who were deployed in the field itself, even though the unharvested wheat might have hidden some of the men. Corroborating Wilkinson's map,

30. Stone, Major General Riedesel In The American Revolution, p. 162; Friedericke Riedesel, Letters and Journals, p. 102.

31. Henry Dearborn, "A Narrative of the Saratoga Campaign"; Account of Lt. Thomas Blake, Oct. 7, 1777, notes in park files.

32. James Wilkinson, Memoirs, 2:269.

33. Stone, Visits to the Saratoga Battle-Grounds, p. 244.

34. Ibid., p. 186.

35. Ibid., p. 125.

Riedesel noted that the Americans attacked Major Auckland's English grenadiers who were stationed in the woods on Burgoyne's left flank.³⁶ He also supports Wilkinson's map by stating that the Americans attacked Colonel von Specht's troops of Rhetz and Hesse Hanau, consisting of 300 Germans, in the center of Burgoyne's line. Again corroborating Wilkinson, Riedesel noted that the Germans had two cannons.³⁷ These had to be the same as those Wilkinson depicted in his map at the center of the wheat field.

General Riedesel concluded that Major Williams, with his two English cannons, would not have lost the hill on the "very outside" if General Fraser's Light Infantry had not been driven from their right.³⁸ If Fraser's Light Infantry was posted on Burgoyne's extreme right, the two cannons that Riedesel speaks of were the two located on the outside of the wheat field in the Wilkinson maps. The very fact that Riedesel speaks of Major Williams and his two cannons as being located on the "very outside" implies an extreme position.

Captain Pausch's account is interesting because he sheds considerable light on the Germans and their central position. Pausch commanded a small artillery detachment responsible for two 6-pound cannons. He describes his moves as follows: "on a piece of ground somewhat elevated and commanding an advantageous and clear position, I posted my two 6 pound cannon at a distance of 24 to 26 paces from each other, and 50 paces in advance of the front, near the place where the Regiment Hanau adjoined that of Rhetz."³⁹ This description not only supports information on the Wilkinson maps and in Riedesel's account, but in providing dimensions, although of a general nature, is also able to give us some idea of the relative position of Pausch's artillery pieces.

Unfortunately, Pausch provides us with a bit of information that appears to conflict with the Wilkinson maps. He says that Major Williams of the English Royal Artillery had two 12-pound cannons posted in front of the dwelling on the wheat field.⁴⁰ This statement would imply that the central part of the field had four cannons

36. Riedesel, Major General Riedesel In The American Revolution, 1:163 ff.

37. Riedesel, Memoirs, 1:163-64 fn.

38. Letter of Oct. 21, 1777, Brunswick Papers, Bancroft Collection, copy in park files.

39. Pausch, Journal, p. 162

40. Ibid., p. 165.

instead of two: two under Pausch (6-pounders) and two under Williams (12-pounders). Riedesel, however, had noted that Major Williams's two cannons were posted on the far right of Burgoyne's forces, thus supporting data on the Wilkinson maps. There may be an explanation for this apparent confusion, however. It may be that when the troops first entered the field and were deployed the two 12-pounders were temporarily positioned near the dwelling and later were probably removed to a more permanent location as indicated on the Wilkinson maps.

Pausch adds further confusion in the following account of events just prior to the battle:

An English officer . . . arrived in haste, saying that there were no cannon on the flank of the left wing, and that I must immediately send one of mine. Against this I protested, on the ground that I had but two cannon, and in case of complying with his wish I should only be able to serve one gun; that I desired, if it was a general order to march there either with both of the cannon or to give up neither--one cannon being no command for a subaltern, to say nothing of a captain; and finally, that they had four 6 pound cannon of their own, of which one had but just gone past the left wing. The officer at this made himself scarce and brought no other order; and I remained at the post which I had myself chosen and occupied.⁴¹

It is hard to understand the statement that the left wing held by the English had no cannons, when the Wilkinson maps clearly depict two cannons posted at the southeast corner of the wheat field. One cannot imagine how the left wing was left unprotected without the benefits of artillery, unless the two cannons noted in Wilkinson's maps had already been captured. That this conclusion is essentially correct may be deduced from Pausch's later account, in which he said that

The attack began on the left wing with a terrific musketry fire, but, in a few minutes, the enemy repulsed it; while the cannon, sent there by the English Artillery, was captured by the enemy before a single shot had been fired from them. And now, the firing from cannon and small arms began to get very brisk on our right wing.⁴²

41. Ibid., pp. 165-66.

42. Ibid., p. 167.

While Pausch's account is not very clear concerning the position of cannons at the center and on the left flank, it does agree with other accounts in stating that cannons were "on our right wing."

In describing the wheat field as it may have looked just prior to the outbreak of hostilities, one or two points should be made. One of these applies to the Wilkinson maps only, because none of the accounts mention it. A close look at the maps reveals four symbols within the small fenced-in enclosure just to the east of the dwelling. These appear to be identical to the symbols used for the cannons that were posted in various parts of the wheat field. Because of this similarity one could easily conclude that Wilkinson had intended them to denote cannons. However, knowing Wilkinson's penchant for accuracy, no one would dare to conclude that he meant that Burgoyne had taken twelve cannons with him on his expedition. The weight of the evidence is against this. Moreover, no one could actually imagine four cannons placed in tandem where they would be of little use to anyone. What then did Wilkinson intend these symbols to mean? In the absence of any evidence to the contrary, one must conclude that they signify nothing more than gun limbers, a very common piece of equipment on military expeditions of this sort.

The second point to be made in this description of the wheat field prior to the commencement of hostilities is the use of the roof of the dwelling as an observation post. In this regard, many contemporary accounts mention several officers, possibly generals, climbing up on the roof to reconnoiter the American position.

The preceding paragraphs describe the Barber wheat field immediately prior to hostilities on the afternoon of October 7, 1777. Because the situation was fairly stationary before the fighting began, there are not very many conflicting accounts. However, once the fighting began, the situation became quite fluid, and what appeared one way to one participant in the battle looked entirely different to another. Hence, the sources that narrate the events of the battle itself must be carefully examined for conflicting statements. Nevertheless, in spite of these understandable differences, one is surprised by the remarkable consistency in the accounts. Only the more significant of these will be discussed in the remainder of this section.

General Riedesel's narrative of the fighting, like his wife's description, is brief, but from it the reader is able to piece together the events that transpired. In speaking of the hostilities on and around the wheat field, General Riedesel had this to say:

Finally at four in the afternoon, they [viz., the Americans] attacked his [viz., Burgoyne's] left wing with great spirit, soon forcing the English grenadiers, who were stationed in the woods at this point to retreat. They next threw their entire force upon the centre, which was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Specht. . . . Specht, who had already withstood the attack for a long time, would have maintained his ground, had not Lord Balcarras been called back through a misunderstanding. His flanks . . . were now exposed--the enemy were on his sides and front--and to avoid being cut off, he was obliged to retreat. This he accomplished in good order. The Americans now advanced with more vehemence and in greater numbers; and the detachment was nearly surrounded when Burgoyne determined to retreat to the great redoubt on the right wing.⁴³

Captain Pausch provided a vivid account of the action, and because he was positioned near the center of the wheat field, he was able to describe almost everything going on around him. His description of the actual battle as he saw it is therefore quoted in full:

After the lapse of half an hour we noticed a few patrols in the woods, and on the height to the left of the wood; and at the same moment, the . . . two 12 pounders opened fire.

Shortly after this, a large number of the enemy's advance-guard, who were in the bushes, engaged our Yagers, Chasseurs, and Volunteers. The action extended all along the front, the enemy appearing in force. During this time, and while both sides were thus contending, and I was serving my cannon, there marched out of the enemy's entrenchment on their left wing, at a "double quick" and in squares, two strong columns, one towards our left wing; while, at the same moment, additional forces of the enemy poured down in troops to reinforce those who were already engaged with us, and advanced madly and blindly in the face of a furious fire. The attack began on the left wing with a terrific musketry fire, but, in a few minutes, the enemy repulsed it; while the cannon, sent there by the

43. Riedesel, Memoirs, 1:163-64; Baroness Riedesel's account was essentially the same as her husband's, Letters and Journals, p. 102.

English Artillery, was captured by the enemy before a single shot had been fired from them. And now, the firing from cannon and small arms began to get very brisk on our right wing.

At this junction, our left wing retreated in the greatest possible disorder, thereby causing a similar rout among our German command, which was stationed behind the fence in line of battle. They retreated--or to speak more plainly--they left their position without informing me, although I was but fifty paces in advance of them. Each man for himself, they made for the bushes. Without knowing it, I kept back the enemy for a while with my unprotected cannon loaded with shells. How long before this, the infantry had left its position, I cannot tell, but I saw a great number advance towards our now open left wing within a distance of about 300 paces. I looked back towards the position still held, as I supposed, by our German infantry, under whose protection I, too, intended to retreat--but not a man was to be seen. They had all run across the road into the field and thence into the bushes, and had taken refuge behind the trees. Their right wing was thus in front of the house, I have so often mentioned, but all was in disorder, though they still fought the enemy which continued to advance. In the mean time, on our right wing, there was stubborn fighting on both sides, our rear, meanwhile, being covered by a dense forest, which, just before had protected our right flank. The road by which we were to retreat lay through the woods and was already in the hands of the enemy, who accordingly intercepted us. Finding myself, therefore, finally in my first mentioned position--alone, isolated, and almost surrounded by the enemy, and with no way open but the one leading to the house where the two 12 pound cannon stood, dismounted and deserted--I had no alternative but to make my way along it with great difficulty if I did not wish to be stuck in a damned crooked road.

After safely reaching the house under the protection of a musketry fire--which, however, owing to the bushes, was fully as dangerous to me, as if the firing came from the enemy--I presently came across a little earth-work, 18 feet long by 5 feet high. This I at once made use of by posting my two cannon, one on the right, and the other on the left, and began a fire alternately with balls and with shells, without, however, being able to discriminate in favor of our men who were in the bushes; for the enemy, without troubling them, charged savagely upon my cannon,

hoping to dismount and silence them. But in this attempt, they twice failed, being frustrated each time by the firing of my shells. The two above mentioned 12 pound cannon--in serving which, Major Williams, Lieut. York, and several subaltern officers and artillery-men had either been captured or killed--stood, where I took up this second position, as it were dead and deserted.

A brave English Lieutenant of Artillery, by the name of Schmidt [Smith] and a sergeant were the only two who were willing to serve the cannon longer. He came to me and asked me to let him have ten artillery-men and one subaltern from my detachment to serve these cannon. But it was impossible for me to grant this request, no matter how well disposed I might have been towards it. Two of my men had been shot dead; three or four were wounded; a number had straggled off, and all the Infantry detailed for that purpose, either gone to the devil or run away. Moreover, all I had left, for the serving of each cannon, were four or five men and one subaltern. A six pound cannon, also, on account of its rapidity in firing, was more effectual than a twelve pounder, with which only one-third the number of shots could be fired; and furthermore, I had no desire to silence my own cannon, which were still in my possession, and thereby contribute to raise the honors of another corps. Three wagons of ammunition were fired away by my cannon, which became so heated that it was impossible for any man to lay his hands on them. In front, and also to the right and left of my guns, I had conquered for myself and for those who were in the same terrain, a pretty comfortable fort. But this state of things lasted only a short time, the fire behind us coming nearer. Finally, our right wing was repulsed in our rear; its infantry, however, fortunately retreating in better order than our left wing had done.

I still could see, as far as the plain and clearing reached, the road, on which I had marched to this second position, open, and a chance, therefore, to retreat. Accordingly, myself, the artillery-man, Hausemann, and two other artillery-men, hoping to save one of the cannon, dragged it towards this road. The piece of wood on the cannon made the work for us four men very difficult and, in fact, next to impossible. Finally, a subaltern followed with the other

cannon, and placed it on the carriage. We now brought up the other carriage, on which I quickly placed the remaining gun, and marched briskly along the road, hoping to meet a body of our Infantry and with them make a stand. But this hope proved delusive, and was totally dispelled; for some ran in one, and others in another direction; and by the time that I came within gun-shot of the woods, I found the road occupied by the enemy. They came towards us on it; the bushes were full of them; they were hidden behind the trees; and bullets in plenty received us. Seeing that all was irretrievably lost, and that it was impossible to save anything, I called to my few remaining men to save themselves. I myself, took refuge through [behind] a fence, in a piece of dense underbrush on the right of the road, with the last [remaining] ammunition wagon, which, with the help of a gunner, I saved with the horses.⁴⁴

James Wilkinson provides by far the most informative account of the engagement from the viewpoint of the attacking American forces. Allowing for some of the exaggerations that he is prone to make in his descriptions, Wilkinson's account, although written several years after the battle, is an excellent source, because it complements much of what is described in the English and German accounts. Wilkinson described the scene of battle in the following way:

I waited on the Colonel, whose corps was formed in front of our centre, and delivered the order; he knew the ground, and inquired the position of the enemy: they were formed across a newly cultivated field, their grenadiers with several field pieces on the left, bordering on a wood and a small ravine, formed by the rivulet before alluded to; their light infantry on the right, covered by a worm fence at the foot of the hill before mentioned, thickly covered with wood; their centre composed of British and German battalions. Colonel Morgan, with his usual sagacity, proposed to make a circuit with his corps by, or left, and under cover of the wood to gain the height on the right of the enemy, and from thence commence his attack as soon as our fire should be opened against their left; the plan was the best which could be devised, and no doubt contributed essentially to the prompt and decisive victory we gained.

44. Pausch, Journal, pp. 166-72.

This proposition was approved by the General, and it was concerted that time should be allowed the Colonel to make the proposed circuit, and gain his station on the the enemy's right before the attack should be made on their left; Poor's brigade was ordered for this service, and the attack was commenced in due season on the flank and front of the British grenadiers, by the New Hampshire and New York troops. True to his purpose, Morgan at this critical moment poured down like a torrent from the hill, and attacked the right of the enemy in front and flank. Dearborn at the moment, when the enemy's light infantry were attempting to change front, pressed forward with ardour and delivered a close fire; then leapt the fence, shouted, charged and gallantly forced them to retire in disorder; yet headed by that intrepid soldier the Earl of Balcarras, they were immediately rallied and re-formed behind a fence in rear of their first position; but being now attacked with great audacity in front and flanks by superior numbers, resistance became vain, and the whole line, commanded by Burgoyne in person, gave way and made a precipitate and disorderly retreat to his camp, leaving two twelve and six six-pounders on the field with the loss of more than 400 officers and men killed, wounded, and captured, and among them the flower of his officers, viz. Brigadier-general Frazer, Major Ackland [sic] commanding the grenadiers, Sir Francis Clark, his first aid-de-camp, Major Williams commanding officer of the artillery, Captain Money deputy quarter-master general, and many others. After delivering the order to General Poor and directing him to the point of attack, I was peremptorily commanded to repair to the rear and order up Ten Broeck's brigade of York Militia 3000 strong; I performed this service, and regained the field of battle at the moment the enemy had turned their backs, fifty-two minutes after the first shot was fired. The ground which had been occupied by the British grenadiers presented a scene of complicated horror and exultation. In the square space of twelve or fifteen yards lay eighteen grenadiers in the agonies of death, and three officers propped up against stumps of trees, two of them mortally wounded, bleeding, and almost speechless; what a spectacle for one whose bosom glowed with philanthropy, and how vehement the impulse, which can excite men of sensibility to seek such scenes of barbarism!⁴⁵

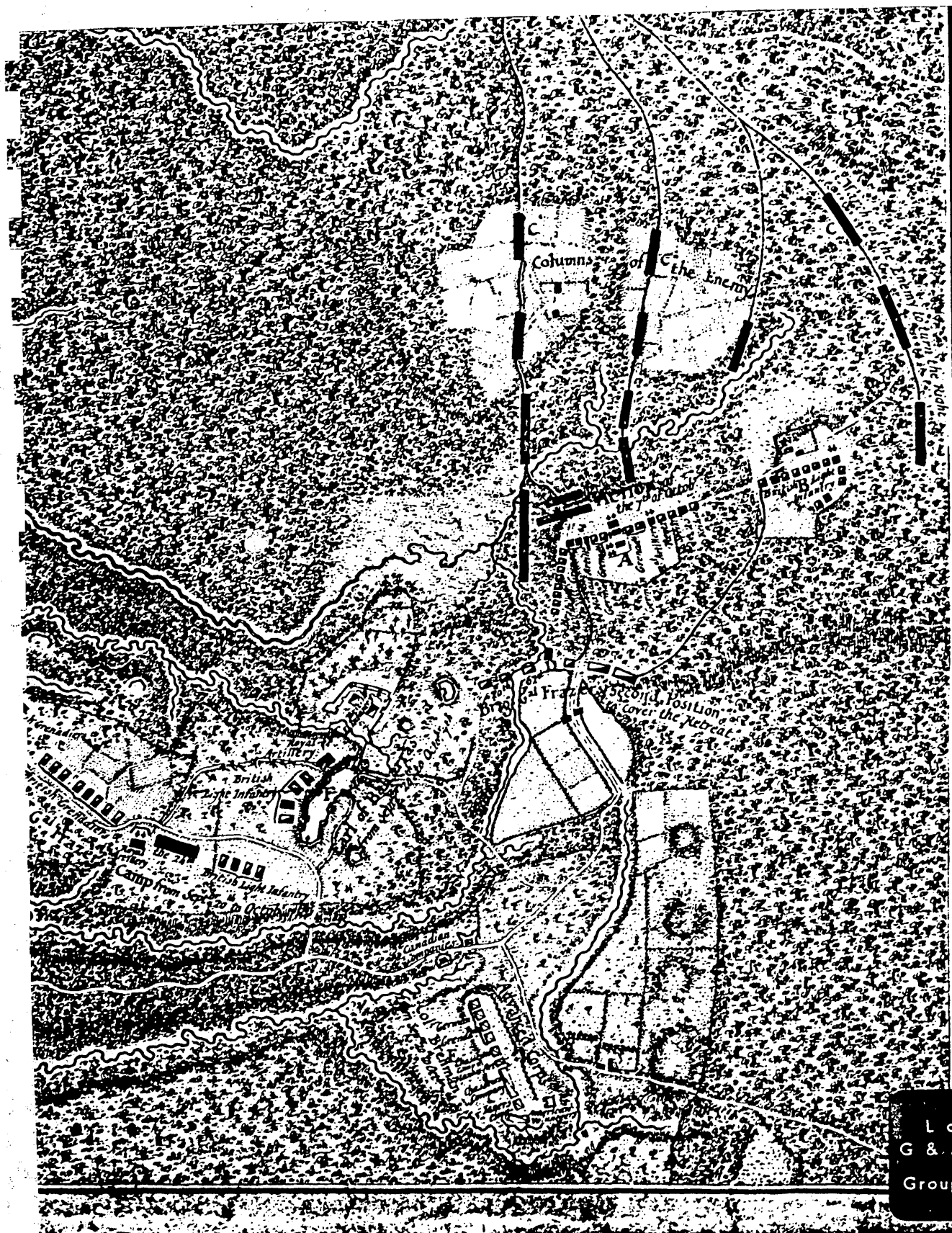
45. Wilkinson, Memoirs, 1:268-70.

There were other accounts of the actual battle written by participants on both sides soon after and in later years. Nearly all told a similar story. Some of the specifics may have differed, but in describing the general action that occurred on the Barber wheat field the contemporary accounts were pretty much in agreement.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Section of map entitled "The Encampment and Position of the Army under Lt. Gl. Burgoyne, at Sword's and Freeman's farms on Hudson's River near Stillwater 1777," by W. C. Wilkinson, No. 69-1/2, Faden Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.



L of C
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Group RMR

APPENDIX B

Section of map entitled "Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under his Excellency. Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights on Hudson's River near Stillwater on the 20th Septr. with the Position of the Detachment etc. in the Action of the 7th of Octr. and the Position of the Army on the 8th Octr. 1777. Drawn by W. C. Wilkinson, Lt. 62nd Regt, Asst. Engr. Engraved by Wm. Faden," No. 69, Faden Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

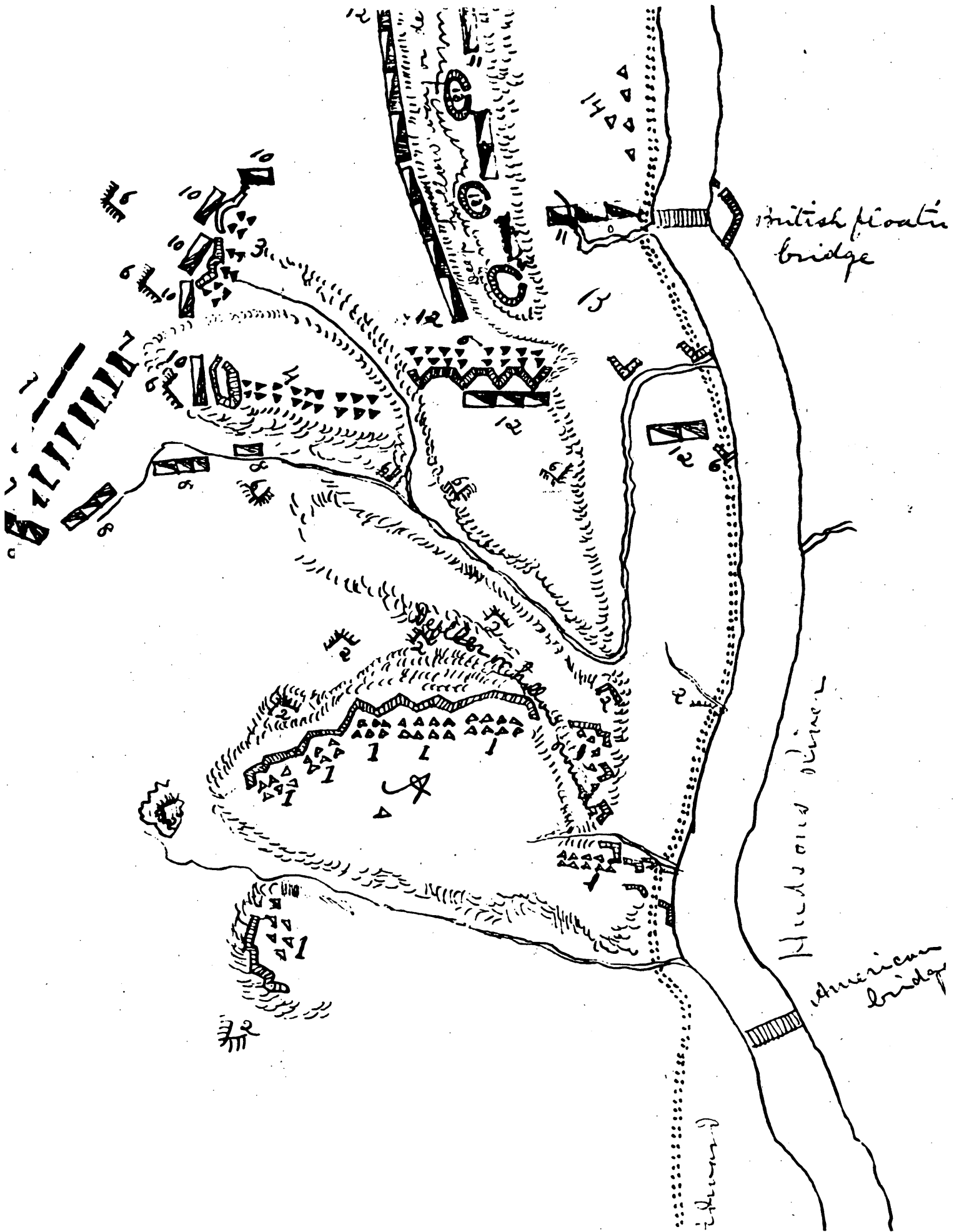


APPENDIX C

Section of map entitled "An Orthographical
View of the American and British Armies on
the 7th & 8th of October 1777," by Rufus Putnam,
The New-York Historical Society, New York, New York.

References to An Orthographical View of the American and British Armies on the
7th & 8th of October 1777 by Col. R. Putnam.

- A. The high ground on Hudson's river called Bemess Hights [sic]
- 1,1,1,1,1,1 The American army encamped behind their works.
- 2,2,2,2,2 Nien [Nine] outguards.
- B. The great Fly or Swamp being interval or meadow ground.
- 3, 4, 5 The principal encampment of the British army & works.
- 6,6,6,6,6 British outguards.
- 7,7 A column of the British army advancing with six pieces of artillery,
Octo. 7th.
- 8,8,8,8 The American troops attack the British on their march.
- 9 Col^d Morgan with the rifle corps and American light infantry having turned
the British right flank undiscovered falls on their rear. They are flung in
confusion, their artillery is all taken and they retire to their works with
great loss.
- 10,10,10,10,10 The American troops attacking the enemy in their works. They
storm the works defended by the German grenadiers and light
infantry at No. 3, carry the post take two pieces of artillery
with all the tents and baggage of that camp. The enemy quit
the encampments 4 & 5 that night and the Americans take pos-
session in the morning.
- 11,11,11 The position of the British army ye 8th of October.
- 12,12,12,12 Position of the American army the 8th of October.
- 13,13,13 British redoubts having in front a deep hollow ground full of trees
and logs, and prevented an attack of the British army that day. The
night following they retreated toward Saratoga. An excessive rain
which fell that night and continued all the next day prevented our
pursuit.
- 14 British hospital left when Burgoyne retreated.



APPENDIX D

"A Map of Saratoga Patent as laid in
Lots & the subdivision of Margaret
Livingston & Bayard's Lots by John R.
Bleeker 1767," Albany County Clerk's
Office, Albany, New York.

Part of the Lake

Part of the Division

170

Part of the Division

५३५२२

Partition & Division Saratoga Lot
1750.

The parties proceeded to dinner at 7:30, and then amiable dinner of the home in the presence of Sister Wines & family, Ten Tyals and the lady guests accordingly were drawn by two boys, William Wherry, son of Edward Wherry, and Thomas Wherry son of John Wherry, in the presence of the accompanying witnesses and

The Representatives of Cornwall Van Hook to James B. Wilson
The Representatives of John P. Hay to James B. Wilson of
Massachusetts

For the Representation of "Three Weeks," J. B. Campbell, and
at the request of Margaret Ten Pearch -
For the Representation of "Peter Schlegel," J. B. Campbell.

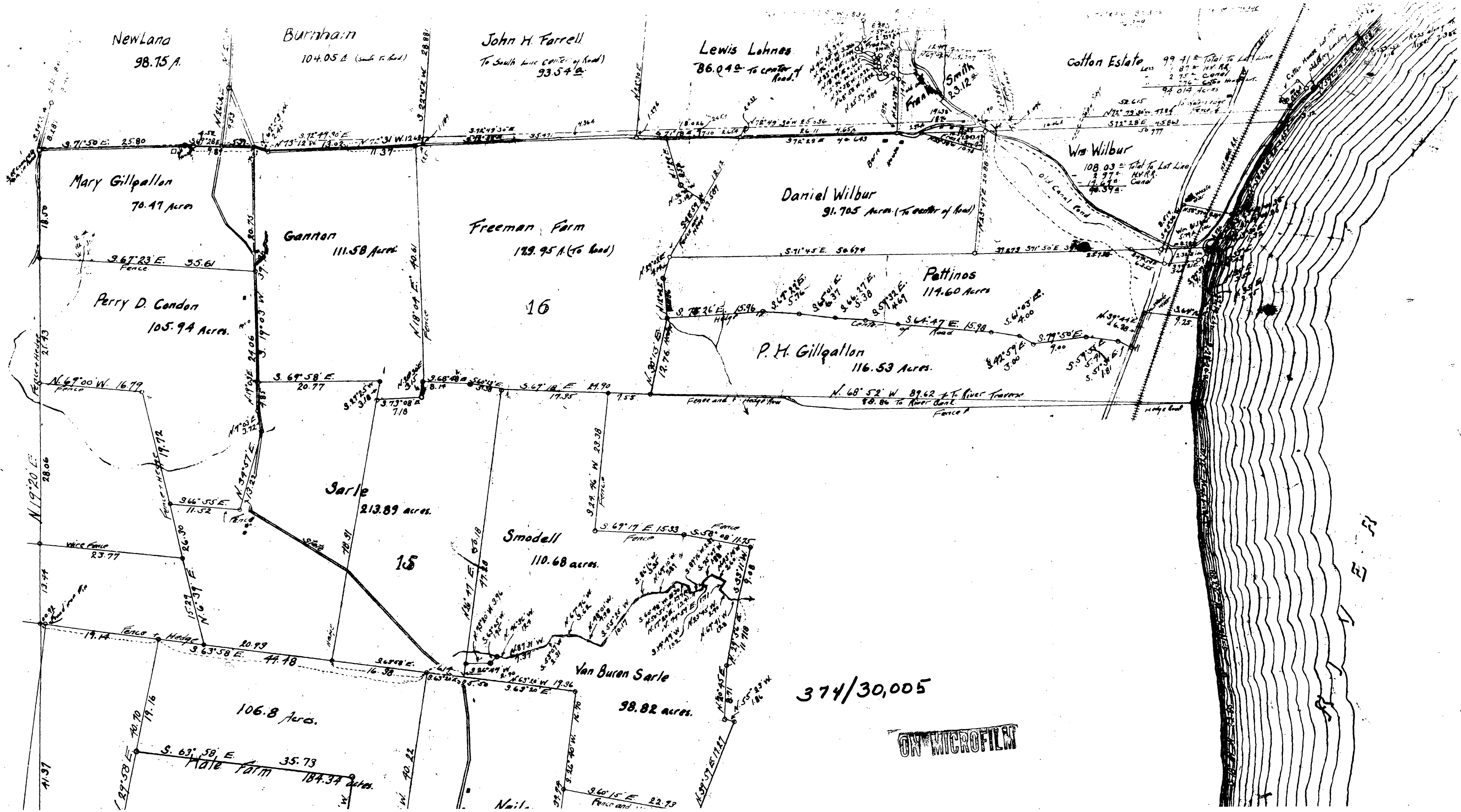
at the request of Margaret Livingston -
Robert Livingston Dec. 14

[illegible][illegible]

Warranted and examined the above Map by Survey July 29th 1902

APPENDIX E

Section of map entitled "Map of Saratoga
Battlefield Showing Property Lines,"
surveyed for the Conservation Department
of New York State by Edward G. West and
Albert T. Davis in 1927, Map No. 1616,
Saratoga National Historical Park.



374/30,005

ON MICROFILM

APPENDIX F

Letter of Stuart A. Reeve, Department
of Anthropology, State University of
New York at Albany, to author, October 1,
1974.

S.U.N.Y. at Albany
Albany, New York
October 1, 1974

Denver Service Center
National Park Service
Denver, Colorado 80225

Th-L
L

Dear Mr. Torres;

Mike Phillips asked me to assess the probability of defining the Revolutionary period road system and structures in the Barber Wheat Field area. To be brief, the chances for finding direct evidence for these features are remote. This conclusion is based primarily on 1927 aerial photographs which show that the area of the second battle had been completely deforested and cultivated for a considerable length of time. Since undisturbed areas of the Park have accumulated only a few inches of soil since 1777, it is fair to assume that plowing destroyed all surface features. Construction of Route 4 and the Park road system has compounded the destruction, particularly of a large portion of the Revolutionary road running south to the American positions. Aerial photographs, flown August 31, 1974, show the vegetational changes caused by these roads but indicate no analogous features which could be attributed to Revolutionary period roads.

Despite the lack of direct evidence, there are some interesting aspects to the aerial photographs suggestive of possible sites for buildings and roads. One such clue is charting old field lines with the hope that Colonial roads might have served the drainage pattern for later fields. All distinguishable field lines have been plotted on the accompanying map as "broken lines" or straight lines of trees. I would direct attention to the line

of trees running south from the "Bloody Knoll" fortification which is similar to a farm road noted by Wilkinson ("A" on the map). This appears as a field line on the 1927 aerial photograph. Any such field line might be integrated to a plan formulated on a sounder historical record. Special note should be given to a stone field wall ("B" on the map) which might be a remnant from any period. I did not excavate the wall so its depth and structure are unknown. But since the soils in the area are not especially rocky, a number of stones must have been transported for its construction. This might have included taking stones from a foundation, if records indicate a substantial structure. This is admittedly farfetched, but other rationalizations are equally so, especially evidence for buildings.

The aerial photographs show dark spots, "soil marks", indicating vegetational changes usually associated with field lines, stream channels, or other areas of increased moisture. Soil marks unassociated with these features have been plotted on the map ("C", "D", and "E"). I sampled these areas with a soil corer hoping to find charcoal layers, indicative of houses. No charcoal was found, but in all three areas, soils were less stoney, without small fragments of decayed bedrock. Clays were very moist, perhaps resulting from shallow pits filled with finer materials which acted as a water trap. Systematic soil profiles were not taken so stratigraphic verification is lacking. Area "C" has a large number of woodchuck burrows which is a key to soft soils from past digging at other sections of the battlefield.

An interesting affect was observed around areas "D" and "E". Not only did vegetational communities vary under different enviro-

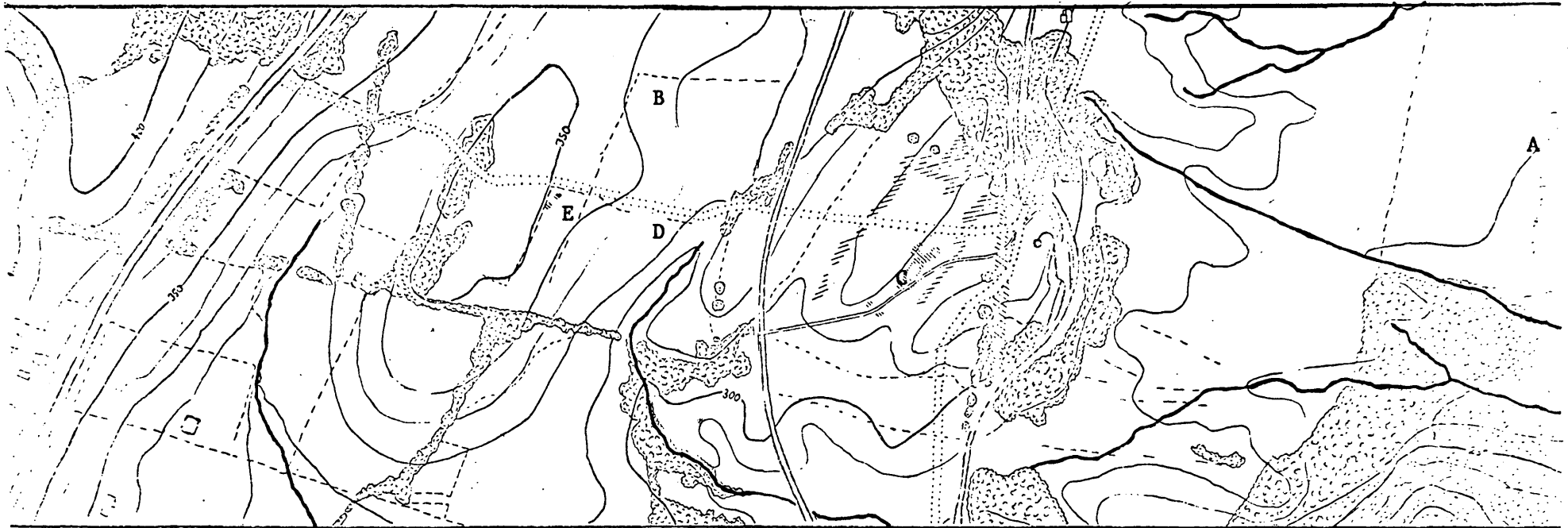
onmental conditions, but between August 31, when the photographs were taken, and September 13, when I walked the fields, considerable fall color changes had occurred between similar plant communities. Areas "E" and "D" had turned color earlier as a result of micro-climatic affects of high moisture and low heat retention of its soils compared to adjacent plants. This indicates more strongly subsurface soil disturbances, perhaps associated with an archeological feature. A similar situation was encountered with the Canadian cabins, between the Breymann and Balcarres redoubts. Excavations revealed no structural evidence for the cabins, but aerial photographs showed a square feature caused by differential melting of snow. Possibly the only remains of the cabins were chemical, resulting in differential heat absorption of soils.

It must be reemphasized that these factors provide no real proof. But with the lack of definitive evidence, my "best guess" is offered for the Revolutionary roads and buildings, integrating Wilkinson's record with the "oddities" of modern ecological relationships. These appear as "dotted" lines on the map.

Sincerely,

Stuart A. Reeve
Department of Anthropology
State University of New York at Albany
Albany, New York

BARBER WHEAT FIELD



- == Modern roads
- - - Proposed Revolutionary Roads
- - - Field lines
- Modern forests
- Recent vegetational disturbances
- Possible archeological sites
- Streams

1" = 575'



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