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A REPORT ON THE LEFT WING OF THE BRITISH FORTIFIED

CAMP AT FREEMAN'S FARM, SEPTEMBER 20 TO OCTOBER 8,

1777. by: Charles W. Snell, Park Historian,
Saratoga National Historical Park,
(February 28, 1950)

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

April 6, 1950

Memorandum

To: The Director

From: Regional Historian

Subject: "A Report on the Left Wing of the British Fortified Camp at Freeman's Farm, September 20 to October 8, 1777," by Historian Charles W. Snell.

I am attaching a copy of Park Historian Charles W. Snell's "A Report on the Left Wing of the British Fortified Camp at Freeman's Farm, September 20 to October 8, 1777," dated February 28, 1950.

A similar research covering the American fortified camp at Saratoga was sent to you by my memorandum of February 20. This report by Mr. Snell was entitled, "A Report on the American Fortified Camp at Senis Heights, September 12 to October 8, 1777," and was dated February 15, 1950.

There will be sent to you tomorrow a file of reports, memoranda, and related material bearing on the Saratoga ground cover plan. The ground cover plan has actually grown to be an historical base sheet, with special studies which probably will become additional historical sheets in the master plan. Both the research report attached, and the one on the American fortified camp (dated February 15 - mentioned above) should be studied in connection with the material you will receive on the ground cover plan.

Mr. Snell has accomplished a remarkable amount of research work in the time he has been on duty at the park, and has brought it together in usable, topical reports. His accomplishments in this field are, indeed, exceptional. The result is that now the Service is in a position to have drawn up and incorporated in the master plan accurate historical base sheets that are needed as guides to the development of the area.

Regional Historian

Attachment-1

Copy to: Sept., Saratoga N. H. P.

A REPORT ON THE LEFT WING OF THE BRITISH FORTIFIED
CAMP AT FREEMAN'S FARM, SEPTEMBER 20 TO OCTOBER 8,

1777

by

Charles W. Snell
Park Historian
February 28, 1950

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SKETCH of the Left Wing of the British Fortified Camp at Freeman's Farm, September 20 to October 8, 1777, with the encampment positions of the various British and German regiments.	

A REPORT ON THE LEFT WING OF THE BRITISH FORTIFIED CAMP AT FREEMAN'S
FARM, SEPTEMBER 20 TO OCTOBER 8, 1777

by

Charles W. Snell
Park Historian

Introduction:

The objective of this report is to bring together for purposes of correlation and study, all contemporary and secondary material relating to the left wing of the British fortified camp at Freeman's Farm, that is available in the collections at Saratoga National Historical Park. This study was performed as a part of the project of preparing the Interpretive Series Booklet for this Park and when read in conjunction with "A Report on the Balcarres and Breymann Redoubts," dated February 2, 1949, by Charles W. Snell, will present all known evidence on the British fortified camp, Right and Left Wings, at Freeman's Farm from September 20th to October 8th, 1777.

A REPORT ON THE LEFT WING OF THE BRITISH FORTIFIED CAMP AT FREEMAN'S FARM

SEPTEMBER 20 to OCTOBER 8, 1777

I. Contemporary German Accounts of the Left Wing of the British Camp

1. General Riedesel

General Riedesel commanded the German troops which occupied the extreme left wing of the British army camped at Freeman's Farm, September 20 to October 8th, 1777. He described in his journal this position as follows:

"Accordingly, on the 20th he [Burgoyne] inspected, with his other generals, the entire region of the country which had been hitherto occupied by his three columns. The result of this inspection was the posting of the army from Freeman's farm across the woods and hills as far as Taylor's house (the house where General Fraser died), in front of bridge No. 2 [this bridge was constructed by the Germans on September 19th across the Wilbur Basin stream], and thence to the Hudson.....The right wing of the English brigade [of Hamilton] was placed in close proximity to the left wing of Fraser, thus extending the line to the left as far as bridge no. 2. The road, on which Riedesel had hastened to the succor of the British the previous day, was therefore now in the rear of the army. The left wing was also extended to a considerable eminence. The Hesse Hanau kept its position on the cross road behind bridge no. 2. The 47th and the corps of provincials remained in its old position for the defense of the ground between bridges No. 2 and No. 3 [No. 3 was six hundred paces south of bridge No. 2. This is an error; Bridges 1 & 2 are meant - see below], where the artillery and supply trains were placed. General Burgoyne took up his head quarters in the centre of the army. The entire front was covered by a deep, muddy ditch [ravine] running nine hundred paces in front of the outposts of the left wing, but, at the same time, being so near the centre, that the outposts were on the farther side. This ditch ran in a curve around the right wing of the English brigade [of Hamilton], thereby separating Fraser's corps from the main body. The space between them was filled up with artillery and a few detachments. Near the water, about four hundred paces from bridge no. 3, was a corner of the forest extending down the hills, behind which the enemy had his outposts. There was also a detachment of the Hesse Hanau regiment stationed behind some embankments, for the defense of bridge No. 3. This was the new camp of Freeman's farm."

The following, also, is the description of the British left wing as given in the Auxiliaries taken from the Brunswick Journal:

"The encampment, after the action, extended from Freeman's farm through the forest, over the ridge of a hill up to the height behind Taylor's house; and from the bridge No. 2, down to the Hudson..... Behind Fraser's left flank the right wing of the British brigades began, and thence the entire line of the army stretched across the hills up to Taylor's House before bridge no. 2. On the left wing there was a height from which the entire breadth of the valley from the river up to bridge No. 3 could be swept by shot. The regiment of Hesse Hanau was to keep its position in the valley on the cross road behind bridge No. 2, having its outermost posts near the bridge No. 3. The 47th Regiment and the corps of provincials, together with the few Indians that still remained with the army were also directed to defend the valley, and were stationed between the bridges 1 and 2, where the train and the hospitals were also placed.

✓ "Burgoyne camped between the English and German troops of Riedesel on the heights at the left wing. The entire front was protected by a deep marshy ditch [ravine], with an undergrowth of wood along its sides; said ditch running close to the line in the centre and winding off around the right flank, so that it cut its way between said flank and Fraser's division. The empty space left in this manner, was covered by guards and batteries. To the left the ditch lost itself in the valley near the declivity of the hills, at the distance of 300 paces on the other side of the chain of sentries. Behind the ditch, palisades and barricades of immense trees, cut down, rose up -- for trees were close at hand. In the valley, about 400 paces beyond the outer bridge No. 3, the angle of a forest extended along the Hudson, and ran through the hollow as far up as the declivity of the hill, and behind said angle or edge of the forest, the Americans had stationed their most advanced outposts in the valley. To protect the bridge No. 3, one officer and forty men of the Hesse Hanau regiment stood entrenched on the road, with a subaltern guard of ten men posted at some distance before them in a house with loop holes. Each regiment had to detach one picket, which was stationed 1,000 paces in advance of its front; and between said pickets and the camp were the outposts. For the protection of these outposts triangular redoubts were thrown up. Such, pretty nearly, was the disposition of the camp at Freeman's farm."

Riedesel describes road building in front of the left wing:

"At day break of the 21st, ordered 1000 working men, under the supervision of two engineers, to cut a road through the woods in the direction where the Americans were supposed to be encamped.....The working party, after making a road on the left wing as far as the ditch....."

British Bridge of Boats:

"During the interval between the 21st and 22nd, a pontoon bridge was constructed alongside of bridge No. 2, under the direction of Captain Schenck."

Clearing fields of fire:

"The work of fortifying the camp was continued daily. On the 23d, a place d'armes was laid out in front of the regiment, which was also fortified as much as possible and strengthened with batteries, the army having abundance of artillery. In front of the lines in the woods, trees were felled to within a distance of one hundred paces; while between bridges Nos. 1 and 2, large embankments and redoubts were thrown up. More than one thousand men were employed for fourteen days on this work."

Fortifications in the rear of Burgoyne's headquarters:

"Americans sent patrols around the right wing of the English, and even had the audacity to come up close behind headquarters in the centre. On the 1st of October, English soldiers.....500 paces in the rear of headquarters, were suddenly surprised.....For the safety of headquarters, moreover, some fortifications were thrown up and several of the outposts pushed further into the woods."

Further fortification of the British left wing:

"Meanwhile Burgoyne still kept the men at work on the fortifications. On the morning of the 4th of October, the 47th was ordered to throw up a new line of embankments toward bridge No. 1. The pontoons were defended by sailors who were daily drilled for the purpose.

"On the morning of the following day [On October 6th], the generals, in consequence of yesterdays consultation, rode to the designated spot [ground between bridges Nos. 1 and 2]. Here they found considerable fault, both in regard to the manner in which the fortifications had been located, and the place chosen for the artillery and supply trains. Three of the fortifications not only were built too large, but were not proportionately adapted for defense, since it being impossible for their guns to reach the valleys between the hills, the enemy could debouch from the woods on to the ground without being obliged to take the batteries on the heights."

Burial of Fraser:

"He [Fraser] requested that he might be buried at four o'clock the next afternoon in the embankment No. 1. This had always been with him a favorite spot, ^{an} account of the beauty of the view." (1)

In his letter from Albany, dated October 21, 1777, to the Duke of Brunswick, Riedesel described his position at Freeman's farm as follows:

"On the 20th in the morning General Bourgoyne reconnoitred, and in the afternoon the army occupied the position near Frieman's [sic] house on the hills.....In the valley by the water the Hesse-Hanau regiment and the 47th English regiment remained to cover the batteaux,

artillery and baggage. I stood with the left wing of 3 battalions on the ridge of the mountain, on my right hand 4 English regiments, whose right wing was covered by a ravine, across which Fraser's corps began.....As the greatest part of the army stood in the middle of a wood, all the trees were cut down and rows and layers of trees and earth made, so that our position was very strong."(2)

The following orders are from the Riedesel Letter File, Morristown National Historical Park:

Ovens:

To Riedesel:

Camp at Freeman's Farm Sept. 24th 1777

Sir:-

The General I would be obliged to you if you would have the goodness to order three men per Regiment of the left wing to assist the Commissary Mr. Clarke in building Ovens, and afterwards three men per Regiment to assist in baking the bread....."

Francis Carr Clarke, aide de camp.

Headquarters Sept. 22, 1777

"The left Wing including the Regiment of Hesse Hanau are to furnish to morrow morning at day break 200 men to work at two Redoubts for the security of the provisions and artillery stores and Baggage of the Army. These 200 men to be relieved by an equal number at twelve o'clock noon.....This party is to parade in front of the artillery Park near the bridge....."

Francis Carr Clarke, aide de camp(3)

2. Baroness Riedesel

The Baroness Riedesel, wife of General Riedesel, has left a description of several houses on the left wing of the British army:

Taylor House: (The House Where Fraser Died)

September 19th: "I saw a great number of wounded, and what was still more harrowing, they even brought three of them into the house where I was."

"I lived in a pretty well built house, in which I had a large room. The doors and wainscot were of solid cedar, a wood that is very common in this vicinity."

October 7, 1777..."I had scarcely got back to my quarters.....About three o'clock in the afternoon, in place of the guests who were to have dined with me, they brought in to me, upon a litter, Poor General Fraser,.....mortally wounded."

The Baroness also mentions a block house that was being built for her:

"The house, which was twenty feet square, and had a good fire place, was begun. They called it the block-house. For such a structure, large trees of equal thickness were selected, which are joined together, making it very durable and warm, especially if covered with clay. I was to remove into it the following day [October 8th]." "

The Baroness also tells of the destruction of her block house on October 8th:

"About four o'clock in the afternoon, I saw the new house which had been built for me, in flames; the enemy, therefore were not far from us." (4)

Note: From General Riedesel's Memoirs:

"During the time that the army was lying in the camp at Freeman's farm, Mrs. General Riedesel occupied a little house about an hour's march behind the army.....A house twenty feet square, made of logs filled in with clay, was built for Mrs. Riedesel. It was called the Block House. She was to have moved into it the very day that the army began its retreat [William L. Stone's Note: "This block house was standing until within twenty years about half way between Wilbur's basin and Bemis Heights. It was built after the regular model of a block house with the upper story projecting." Above, however, in Stone's translation of the Baroness's Memoirs - Mrs. Riedesel states that the block house was burned]. (5)

3. Captain Pausch

Captain Pausch was Chief of the Hesse Hanau Artillery with Burgoyne's army and was stationed on the left wing. The following description of the construction of the left wing is from Pausch's Journal:

British Burials September 19, 1777:

September 20th "The dead were buried on the field of battle, instead of on the hill, because a breastwork [The Balcarres Redoubt] were thrown up there."

On the afternoon of September 20th, Pausch was ordered to the left wing of the British army:

"I sought the left wing of the German Division, where I found Lieutenant Dufais encamped with two other cannon, which were silent during yesterday's action. I now posted my brigade according to my best judgment on this mount [just south of Wilbur's basin], and then encamped with the entire company on a line close behind my two cannon. My brigade consists, at present, of only two six pounders under my command on the left wing of the army. Two more six pounders were ~~4~~ detailed for the use of the Brunswick Grenadiers Battalion von Breymann.."

Nature and Location of the British Hospitals:

September 20th: "the next morning all the wounded were carried from the battle-field on provision and Infantry ammunition wagons, past us to a hospital on the Hudson, consisting of tents and former stables."

"The left wing of our army, under Gen. Riedesel, rests on a mountain opposite the right wing of the enemy, and is also in a forest. My four 6 pounders, to the left but on the side of the hill, are there for the protection of Capt. Schachten of the Grenadier Company of the Hesse-Hanau Regiment. Contiguous to the left wing of the army one officer and fifty men of the Regiment Hanau are stationed close to the Hudson on the plain, in front of a bridge on the road to Albany behind a little Tete de pont. Five to six hundred paces further on and in front of a house, a subaltern and ten men are likewise stationed. This forms, as it were, a chain from our pickets to the Hudson. Behind our left wing, down on the plain (which borders the river) stands the Park of our heavy Artillery, our ammunition, provision and baggage train, and our hospital and batteaux, together with a few companies of the 47th Eng. Reg. - partly in a fortified camp, partly not.

"Between our left wing and the enemy's right are a swamp and a very deep ravine, covered with heavy bushes and trees, which begins at my post (where are the Regiments Rhetz, Specht and Riedesel), and extends to a point where the ravine is not so deep; and thence to an eminence, thus surrounding a few English regiments, towards the right. Our army is thus encamped according to the natural formation of the land."

September 21st. "There was an alarm this morning among the men who were chopping trees in the woods for the purpose both of making a clearing in front of the army, and of opening up a communication between the pickets and outposts.....

"The position of our left wing was finished today, and the tents were properly pitched.....

"This night a bridge was built with our batteaux across the Hudson; and on the opposite bank a beginning was made on a Tete de Pont."

September 24th: "To-day, the Tete de Pont, on the opposite side of the river, was completed.....An entrenchment of newly felled trees laid on top of each other has been made. The battery for the cannon and howitzers is placed on the hill; and the openings between the trees are filled in with earth. On the outside, too, earth is thrown over them." (6)

4. German Officer

The following remarks are from a letter of a German officer with Burgoyne's army:

British Hospitals:

"Our poor wounded were brought down to the low ground on the river bank. No houses were near at hand to carry them into, [Stone's note: 'The writer is hardly correct here. There were two small log houses and one frame one of two rooms, in the latter of which General Fraser died'], nor did we have help enough to tie up their wounds. There was no help for it therefore, but for them to remain in the open air during the entire night....until the next day, when tents were put up for their use."

"On the 20th of September we took up a position as near as possible to the enemy's intrenchment,....being separated from them by forests and ravines."

"On the 21st the enemy decidedly objected to our hewing paths through the forest to our advanced outposts."

"We intrenched our quarters, placed all our guards and pickets in a circle around our camp, and protected them by means of redoubts and batteries. In the rear of our camp we also placed two large redoubts for the protection of our magazines, trains and hospitals. [Stone's note: 'These two redoubts on two high elevations by the river side, in one of which Fraser was buried'....] Then we cut down several thousand trees, not only to give our cannon more play-room, but also to increase the efficiency of their range."⁽⁷⁾

II. Contemporary British Accounts of the Left Wing of the British Camp.

1. General Burgoyne:

In his letter of October 20, 1777, from Albany, to Lord Germain, Burgoyne described the British fortified camp:

"The army lay upon their arms the night of the 19th [September], and the next day took a position nearly within cannon shot of the enemy, fortifying their right, and extending their left to the Brow of the heights, so as to cover the meadows through which the great river runs, and where their bateaux and hospitals were placed. The 47th regiment, the regiment of Hesse Hanau, and a corps of Provincials incamped in the meadows as a further security.....

"On our side it became expedient to erect strong redoubts for the protection of the magazines and hospital."

Burial of Fraser and British Hospital:

"Early in the morning of the 8th, General Fraser breathed his last...his last request was brought to me, that he might be carried without parade by the soldiers of his corps to the great redoubt, and buried there...."

"The enemy were formed in two lines....During this suspense, wounded officers, some upon crutches, and others ^{EVEN} carried upon handbarrows by their servants, were occasionally ascending the hill from the hospital tents...."

Houses on the Left Wing:

"On the march of the 19th, the grenadiers being liable to action at every step, she [Lady Aoland] had been directed by the major to follow the route of the artillery and baggage, which was not exposed. At the time the action began she found herself near a small uninhabited hut, where she alighted. When it was found the action was becoming general and bloody, the surgeons of the hospital took possession of the same place, as the most convenient for the first care of the wounded...."

"The day of the 8th [October] was passed by Lady Harriet and her companions in common anxiety, not a tent, nor a shed being standing, except what belonged to the Hospital, their refuge was among the wounded and the dying."⁽⁸⁾

2. Burgoyne's Orderly Book

The following excerpts from Burgoyne's Orderly Book pertain to the left wing:

Road Construction:

Camp at Freeman's Farm: 21st Sept. 1777

"As parties are to be employed making roads this day in order to advance towards the Enemy, it's the General's Orders that the Corps encamp on their present Ground immediately."

British Bridge of Boats:

Camp at Freeman's Farm 23d Sept. 1777

".....No person whatever to pass the Bridge from this side of the water.."

British ovens:

Camp at Freeman's Farm 27th Sept. 1777

".....Each British Regiment to send a baker to Mr. A: Commissary General CLARKE to assist in baking for the Army." ⁽⁹⁾

3. Earl of Harrington

The Earl of Harrington, a Captain in the 29th Regiment, served as a supernumerary aide de camp to Burgoyne: The following testimony was given in the House of Commons:

"52 Q. Had the army made a movement to gain the left of the enemy's entrenchments before the redoubts were constructed that commanded the plain near the river, would not all the bateaux, stores, and hospitals been exposed to attack?

A. It certainly would have been so.

"54 Q. Would not the bridge of boats, constructed for the purpose of foraging to the east side have also been exposed before the redoubts, above mentioned, were raised?

A. They certainly would, had it not been for those redoubts, and a work called the Tete du Pont which was raised for the protection of the bridge.

"55 Q. Do you recollect how long it took to raise those redoubts, to throw the bridge, and raise the Tete du Pont?

A. If I recollect right, the bridge itself was finished in one night; the making and completing of the other works took some days.

"95 Q. How was our army employed between the 19th of September and the 7th of October?

A. The army itself was employed in strengthening its position.

"96 Q. Did it take the army eighteen days to strengthen its position before it made any movement?

A. I can't exactly say. They were working all the time.

"97 Q. What works were executed in that time?

A. There were a number of redoubts erected; the tete du pont; lines before the camp; outworks to the lines, in which guards and picquets were placed, and batteries.

"98 Q. How many redoubts were erected?

A. I think in all there must have been five or six."(10)

4. Earl of Balcarres:

The Earl of Balcarres commanded the British Light Infantry and was stationed on the right wing of the British camp.

"46 Q. Was you in a situation on that day [October 7th], to observe the general disposition of the army, made by General Burgoyne, previous to the action?

✓ A. I remember two redoubts having been erected on the left, to cover the boats and provisions to enable General Burgoyne to make a detachment from his army."(11)

5. Anburey

Thomas Anburey was a Lieutenant in the 24th Regiment and stationed on the right wing of the British camp:

The army "the next day took position nearly within cannon-shot of the enemy; we have fortified our right, and our left extends to the brow of the heights, so as to cover the meadows, by the river side, where the batteaux and hospitals are placed. The 47th Regiment, with the regiments of Hesse Hanau, are encamped in the meadows, as a farther security."

Burial of the Dead - September 19th

On September 20th Anburey had charge of a burial party and describes burying 15, 16, and 20 men in one hole, the officers were placed in a hole by themselves.

Night of October 7th "we had orders to quit our present situation during the night, and take posts upon the heights, above the hospital...."

"Early this morning [October 8] General Fraser breathed his last, and.....was buried,.....in the great redoubt."(12)

6. Digby

Lieutenant William Digby of the 53rd Regiment was stationed on the Right Wing of the British camp:

"September 20th: About 12 the general reconnoitered our post and contracted the extent of the ground we then covered to a more secure one nearer the river, which we took up in the evening--our left flank near the Hudson river to guard our battows and stores, and our right extending near two miles to heights west of the river, with strong ravines, both in our front and rear...."

"September 22. Formed a bridge of boats across the Hudson, on our left flank."

"October 8th: During the night [of October 7th] we were employed in moving our cannon Baggage &C nearer to the river."

"Took post in battery which commanded the country around, and the rest of the army surrounding the battery and under the cover of our heavy cannon."

British Hospital

October 8: "At 12 o'clock some of their balls fell very near our hospital tents, pitched in the plain, and from their size, supposed to attract their notice, taking them perhaps for the general's quarters."(13)

7. Wilkinson

Lieutenant William C. Wilkinson, Assistant Engineer, 62nd Regiment, drew two excellent and detailed maps which show the British fortifications and positions of the regiments on the left wing of the British fortified camp, at Freeman's farm, September 20th to October 8th, 1777. These maps are (1) the Encampment of the Army Under His Excy. Lt. Gl. Burgoyne at Sword's and Freeman's Farm on Hudsons River near Stillwater, 1777 (unpublished map), and (2) "Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under His Excellency. Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights near Stillwater, on the 20th Sept. with the Position of the Detachments &c in the Action of the 7th of Octr. & the Position of the Army on the 8th Octr. 1777. Engraved by Wm. Faden. Published at London, Feb. 1, 1780."

III. Contemporary American Accounts of the Left Wing of the British Camp

1. Varick

Colonel Richard Varick was an aid de camp to General Arnold. Writing to General Philip Schuyler on September 24, 1777, from the American camp, Varick remarked:

"The Enemy have no Men above their Rear Picket, at Taylors Barns is their Hospital." (14)

2. James Wilkinson

Colonel James Wilkinson served as Adjutant General to Gates during the Burgoyne Campaign. He described the left wing of the British camp on October 8 as follows:

"On the 8th in the morning the whole army except the camp guards, moved forward and took possession of the enemy's abandoned camp.... The heights on which Burgoyne had condensed his force were strong by nature and had been improved by art; the great ravine which now covered his front, ran parallel with the entrenchments of his late camp, and several small drains, covered with saplings and brushwood, emptied their waters into the great ravine from the rear of those entrenchments, the ground in front being an open pine plain;...."

British Hospital

"I accompanied him [October 9th], and after examining his hospital tents (British), where I found about three hundred men comfortably accommodated, I was introduced to the officers, who occupied Sword's house." (15)

3. Benjamin Lincoln

Major General Benjamin Lincoln commanded the right wing of the American army on October 8th 1777. Writing in 1799, Lincoln described the British left wing on October 8th as follows:

"October 8th. The right [American] accordingly moved; and on showing ourselves in front of their lines, they immediately abandoned their works, and retired to rising ground, covered with a thick wood, a little to the rear."(16)

4. Warren

Captain Benjamin Warren served in the Seventh Massachusetts Regiment in General Nixon's Brigade and was stationed on the right wing of the American camp. Warren noted in his diary:

October 8th "The General came and marched us up the road in the low land, till we came within fifty rods of the enemy's lines. Formed on the great height; a smart cannonade ensued on both sides. They being in their lines, and we in the open field. Their Indians ordered to rip up bridge over the river under which were 60 battoes with provision in them...."

British Hospital

October 9. ".....marched in and took possession of their lines; took about 400 prisoners, sick, wounded and well; took their battoes with provision. They left their wounded in barns and 20 Markees left."(17)

5. Hitchcock

Emos Hitchcock served as Chaplain in Brigadier General Patterson's Brigade.

✓ "Oct. 9. This morning about forty Deserters came in who inform that the Enemy left their Encampment between Twelve oClock & Day - we soon took possession of it- & found a number of Hospital Tents & a large Barn with 340 wounded, Doctors & Nurses &x..."(18)

6. Blake

Lieutenant Thomas Blake served in the First New Hampshire regiment in Poor's Brigade:

"Oct. 8. The enemy moved their baggage and artillery back from their front lines, and in the night marched their whole army for Saratoga, leaving their sick and wounded in some large hospital tents....."(19)

7. Putnam

Colonel Rufus Putnam of the 5th Massachusetts Regiment, drew the only known contemporary American map of the positions of the armies at Bemis Heights. This map is entitled "An Orthographic View of the American and British Armies on the 7th & 8th of October 1777." The map shows in a general manner the left wing of the British camp on those dates.

IV. Secondary Accounts of the Left Wing of the British Camp

1. Marquis De Chastellux, 1780

In December of 1780 the Marquis De Chastellux visited Burgoyne's camp and wrote:

"After surveying Burgoyne's lines, I at length got down to the high road, passing through a field where he had established his hospital."(20)

2. Silliman, 1819

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

✓ "The place of interment was formerly designated by a little fence surrounding the grave. I was here in 1797, twenty-two years ago; the grave was then distinctly visible. [Stone's note: "Now (1895), two tall pines stand like giant sentinels on top of the hill, watching over the dead.]"(21)

3. Dwight, 1820

In 1820 Dr. Theodore Dwight visited the battlefield;

"We visited, also, the headquarters of Gen. Burgoyne [Stone's note: 'An error - the house where Fraser died']. The house [Smith's-Taylor's] stands by the roadside, but the place where it then was is a spot at the foot of the hill [where Fraser is buried], and about 200 yards from the river. The cellar is still to be seen (now, 1894) in a field near an apple tree, a little north of the road that crosses the canal....."

"The house was converted into an hospital during the second battle, and Gen. Fraser died on the 8th of October in what is now the barrack. His grave is on the hill back of the house."(22)

4. Stansbury, 1821

In September of 1821 P. Stansbury visited the battle ground and wrote:

"The house which the British army made their hospital is about three miles from the town where I had stopped, and is colloquially termed in the neighborhood the house where Fraser died. It is now called Smith's tavern (once the Taylor House). There is a wide meadow between it and the high grounds under which it formerly stood. It has since been removed half a mile to the bank of the river. Its form is antique, the rooms are large and not in the least ruinous....[Fraser's] corps ~~was~~ borne without parade to the top of the hill behind the house, where a redoubt had been built and is still visible."(23)

5. Hoyt, 1825

In 1825 General Epaphras Hoyt visited the battle area:

"In the meadow in the rear of the left of Riedesel's German Corps was the British hospital camp, protected by several batteries, and three redoubts, on the projecting points of as many hills, overlooking the meadow."

"Smith's house (where Fraser died), which stood at the foot of the hill at the period of the battles, and has been drawn forward to the road on the bank of the river, is situated in a handsome meadow bordering on the Hudson, the same embraced by Burgoyne's hospital camp, and taken up by his whole army in the night succeeding the second battle."

"A few yards below the great ravine, so called by the British officers, we noticed the point where Burgoyne's bridge of boats was thrown across the Hudson, at the head of which, on the left bank, are the remains of his tete de pont. The bed of the great ravine, through which a road formerly led from the hospital camp to that on the height, is now flowed by the water of the canal.....

"Of the three redoubts on the hills adjoining the meadow, little or no~~y~~ remains are to be seen, excepting that in the center, where Fraser was buried, which is still distinct. The remains of another work may be traced in the meadow a short distance south of Smith's, near which was posted the park of artillery. In the bar room of Smith's tavern General Fraser breathed his last...."

"Sword's House, the latter, it appears by Burgoyne's plans, was situated about a mile above his camp, taken up on the 17th of September; the house is now demolished." (Stone's note: 'The site of Sword's house is on the south side of a spring brook about fifty yards west of the Hudson River, a few rods north of the south line of the town of Old Saratoga and is about a mile north of where the "Smith House" formerly stood. It may be readily found from its being

about 30 rods north of a highway leading from the Hudson River road westerly, which highway is the first north of Wilbur's Basin. This highway was nearly the same at the time of Burgoyne's visit, in 1777, as now]"(24)

6. Woodruff, 1827

In 1827, Samuel Woodruff, who had fought in the battles, revisited the battle ground and wrote:

"Three and a half miles south of Fish Creek called at the House of a Mr. Smith, in which Gen. Fraser died of wounds....and near which house, in one of the British redoubts, that officer was buried. This house then stood by the road on the west margin of the intervalle, at the foot of the rising ground. A turnpike road having since been constructed, running twenty or thirty rods east of the old road, the latter has been discontinued, and Mr. Smith has drawn the house and placed it on the west side of the turnpike."(25)

7. Sparks, 1830

In 1830 the eminent historian Jared Sparks visited the battle-field and was guided over it by Major Ezra Buel.

".....arrived at Ensign's Tavern near the River and on the spot of Burgoyne's encampment before his retreat. The house was then standing, and belonged to the present occupant's father. The people say also, that it was the residence of Lady Harriet Acland while Burgoyne's Army remained here."

"Frazer Grave"

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

"Some years ago the supposed spot of his burial within the redoubt was surrounded by a wooden railing, but this has long since disappeared."

"The house in which Frazer died stood at the foot of the hill, a little to the north. It belonged to a man named Taylor and was called Taylor's House. It was afterwards removed to the road, on the bank of the river, where it now stands. Additions have been made to it, but the room in which Frazer died still exists, in precisely the same condition, with the same windows and doors, (so the occupant told me) as at that time. It was two stories high containing two small rooms on a floor, and was occupied by Madame Riedesel with her children....The old cellar is still visible, and marks the former site of the House."

"Sword's House, as drawn on Burgoyne's plan, has for many years been pulled down. Its site is known, but no house now stands there - Sword, who lived there, had been an officer in the French war, but took no part in the Revolution."

"Burgoyne's Camp"

"After the action of Sept. 19th Burgoyne took possession of the Heights between Freeman's Farm and the River, where he established his camp, and fortified it as well as he could. A few remains of the old breastworks are visible. They were formed of timber and earth.....All these localities are represented with great accuracy on Burgoyne's drawing of the second action."(26)

8. Neilson, 1844

Charles Neilson, the early local historian of the Burgoyne campaign, wrote in 1844:

"He (Burgoyne) pitched his camp within cannon shot of the American lines. He threw up a line of entrenchments, with batteries, across the plain to the river hills; also an entrenchment with batteries, across the defile at the northern extremity of the flats, and extending to his left, the whole being about two miles in extent. An English regiment, the Hessians of Hanau, and a detachment of Loyalists were encamped on the flats, where he had established his magazines and hospitals, for greater security."

Neilson states that the J. Taylor house was not a log cabin; "... (The Smith house, which now stands near the river)... This house was occupied, a portion of the time, by Burgoyne, as his headquarters, and also by the Baroness Reidesel.....It is also the house in which General Frazer died."

"And the Smith house, then owned by John Taylor of Albany, and occupied by Billy M'Gee astenant, previous to the approach of Burgoyne, and which, I regret to say, is now in the act of being demolished, is the last remaining one in which any of the British officers quartered."(27)

9. Lossing, 1848

In 1848, the famous historian Benson J. Lossing visited the battle-ground and wrote:

"Burgoyne's Camp was pitched within cannon shot of the American lines. Across the plain to the river hills a line of entrenchments, with batteries, was thrown up, crossing the north ravine not far from its junction with the Middle Ravine or Mill Creek.....Intrenchments were also made along the hills fronting the river and four redoubts,

upon four hills or large knolls, were erected, two above and two below Wilbur's Basin. A short line of intrenchments, with a battery, extended across the flats to the river, and covered their magazine and hospital in the rear. These composed the principal defenses of the enemy."

"The house in which General Fraser died stood until 1846, upon the right bank of the Hudson about three miles above Bemis's Heights, near Ensign's store, and exhibited the marks of the conflict there...."

Fraser's Grave:

"The hill on which the 'great redoubt' was erected, and where General Fraser was buried, is about 100 feet high, and almost directly west from the house wherein he died. The center hill [see Lossing's map] is the one here represented. The grave is within the inclosure on the summit of the hill."(28)

10. Stone, 1877.

William L. Stone, the well known student of the Burgoyne Campaign, writing in 1877, described the left of the British camp as follows:

September 20th, "Burgoyne devoted to the laying out of a fortified camp. He made the site of the late battle his extreme right, extended his intrenchments across the high ground to the river.... The right wing of the English (Hamilton's) was placed in close proximity to the left wing of Fraser, thus extending the line on the left to the river bank where were placed the hospital and supply trains. The entire front was protected by a deep muddy ditch, running 900 paces in front of the outposts of the left wing. This ditch ran in a curve around the right wing of the English brigade, thereby separating Fraser's corps from the main body."

"General Burgoyne made his headquarters between the English and German troops on the heights at the left wing."

"Meanwhile the work of fortifying the [British] camp continued, a place d'armes was laid out in front of the regiments, and fortified with heavy batteries."(29)

In commenting on accounts of visitors to the Saratoga Battlefield, Stone made the following remarks on Burgoyne's headquarters and the Taylor-Smith House:

"Burgoyne's headquarters were on the high ground - the farm (1894) of Mr. Wilbur. The 'Brunswick Journal' is very explicit in stating that 'Burgoyne camped between the English and German troops on the heights of the left wing.' This statement, moreover, receives additional confirmation by the following incident: viz: On one of my visits to the battle-ground, I pointed out to Mr. Wilbur (on whose

land we were then standing) the place designated by the 'Brunswick Journal' and Burgoyne's map - which I then held in my hand - as Burgoyne's Headquarters. 'That,' exclaimed Mr. Wilbur, 'explains what I have often wondered at'. He then stated that when he first plowed up that particular spot he was accustomed to find great quantities of old gin and wine bottles; and that until my explanation he had often been puzzled to know "how on earth those bottles came there!"

"The House mentioned by Mrs. Dwight, and which was formerly known as the 'Taylor House', and since as the 'Smith House' stood in tolerable preservation until 1864. The site is now (1894) marked by a few of the foundation stones and a small poplar tree. At the time of the battles it stood under the knoll where Fraser was buried, but was afterwards moved down to the bank of the Hudson, on the right hand side of the river road, going south." (30)

11. Brandow, 1919

John Henry Brandow, in 1919, gave the following description of the left wing of the British camp:

"He [Burgoyne] moved the major part of his army up on the heights, occupied a portion of the late battle-field and began the construction of a fortified camp....Others [other redoubts] were located at proper intervals from this point [Balcarres Redoubt] east, across the plain to the crest of the bluffs near the river. These redoubts were connected by strong entrenchments.....At Wilbur's Basin, a pontoon bridge was thrown across the river, its eastern end was defended by a redoubt....On each of the three hills just north of Wilbur's Basin a redoubt was erected. The middle one was called the Great Redoubt. In addition to these defenses, breastworks of logs were thrown up at intervals along the brink of the Middle Ravine as cover to the advanced pickets. Thousands of trees were cut to give free play to the artillery. Burgoyne had his hospitals and magazine on the river flats below the hills. These were defended on the north by the lines of breastworks. His headquarters were with the center on the high ground."

Burial of Fraser:

"Before his death he [Fraser] requested that he might be buried at 6 P.M. within the Great Redoubt on the second hill north of Wilbur Basin."

Taylor House:

"General Fraser died in a small farm house which at the time was occupied by the Baroness Riedesel.....The house was located near the foot of the ^{hill} whereon he was buried. When the road was changed it was moved and stood on the present highway near the river till 1873, when it was torn down." (31)

12. Nickerson, 1928

Writing in 1928, Hoffman Nickerson gave the following description of the British left wing:

"The army from Canada began entrenching the position they had taken up on the 20th.....The batteaux and stores of the army were collected on the river-bank northward from the mouth of the Great Ravine. To cover them and serve as a sort of citadel of the whole position, three redoubts were begun, one known as the "Great Redoubt" on the high northern shoulder of the Ravine itself, and two others on the next two spurs of the bluff northward from that point."

"Burgoyne's outposts were hardly anywhere 500 yards in front of the main position and on the right not over 250."

"On his side, Burgoyne too continued to consolidate his position, and he too spanned the river with a floating bridge."

"Fraser's last request of Burgoyne was that he might be buried at evening in the Great Redoubt....."(32)

13. Section of Map No. 2 of the Champlain Canal, 1834

This map was drawn from Surveys by Edwin F. Johnson in 1819-1821 with original field notes (Journal Building District Engineers Office, Albany, N. Y.) The map contains the following information: "Former site of Smith's house (The house where Fraser died)", Site of "House in which Genl. Frazer died; since removed to this place," "Site of Burgoyne's hospital (Barn site)", "An entrenchment here formerly" (on first hill north of Great Ravine), "Redoubt in which Genl. Frazer was buried" (on second hill north of Great Ravine and ^{the}map includes bearings and distances), and "the residence of Maj'r Ezra Buell."

V. Summary and Conclusion

The most valuable contemporary sources on the left wing of the British Camp at Freeman's Farm are the two maps of Lt. Wilkinson and the written accounts of General Kiedesel, Captain Pausch and a German Officer. The Wilkinson maps show in great detail the location and type of fortifications on the left wing and the positions of the regiments in this sector. These two maps are fully supported at every point and further information afforded by the contemporary German journals.

Contemporary British and American records offer little information on the general nature of the left wing, although they are of some value on the British hospital and bridge of boats. The same may be said of the information contained in secondary sources, with the exception of the Map No. 2 of the Champlain Canal, 1834.

Summary
ON the Basis of the report, the following can be said of the British Left Wing:

1. British Bridge of Boats

This bridge was constructed on the 21st and 22nd of September and was located just south of the Wilbur Basin or Great Ravine stream.

2. British Redoubts

On each of the first three hills north of the Great Ravine, the British erected a redoubt to defend the hospital and stores. A fourth redoubt was erected on the river bluffs south of the Great Ravine in which Captain Pausch was stationed.

3. Great Redoubt and Fraser's Grave

The Great Redoubt stood on the second hill north of the Great Ravine and General Fraser was buried in this redoubt. For the exact location of this grave and the redoubt see the Champlain Canal Map, 1834.

4. The Taylor (Smith) House

The site of the Taylor (Smith) House where General Fraser died is known, see the Champlain Canal Map, 1834. The house stood slightly to the north and at the foot of the second hill north of the Great Ravine.

5. British Hospital

The British hospital stood on the river plain just north of the Great Ravine. It consisted of one large barn, and perhaps one or two more, and a number of large tents. For the exact site of the barn see the Champlain Canal Map of 1834.

6. Burgoyne's Headquarters

Burgoyne's headquarters was on the high land west of the river and south of the Great Ravine. He encamped between Hamilton's and Riedesel's brigades.

7. British Fortifications

The British fortifications on the left wing were constructed of trees and earth. The outposts were placed 1,000 paces (or 3,000 feet) before the main works and consisted of triangular redoubts. A field of fire, 300 paces (or 300 yards) was cleared in front of the left wing along the entire extent of the main lines.

8. Roads

On the 21st of September the British constructed a road running from their main line south on the heights west of the river, to Mill Creek (at 5G Field Study Map). The purpose of this road was to open up communications with the outposts and pickets.

9. Ovens

The British army constructed ovens to bake their bread. The site of the ovens is unknown.

Accompanying this report is a tracing, 800' to the inch, which shows the fortifications and positions of the regiments on left wing of the British fortified camp at Freeman's Farm on October 7, 1777. Also shown on this map are the locations of bridges number 1, 2 and 3, mentioned in Riedesel's Memoirs.

Charles W. Snell

Charles W. Snell
Park Historian
February 28, 1950

Fraser's Corps

→ N

MILL Creek

OUT POSTS

Road Built Sept 21

HANAU Artillery

Riedesel's Brigade

Specht

Royal Art

SIMON HANAU

Dragoons

Royal Art

Great Ravine

HAMILTON'S Brigade

Burgoyne's Headquarters

Artillery Stores & Park
Great Redoubt

Baggage Companies

Taylor House

Indians

COMMISSARY DEPT
AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS

Left wing of
British Fortified
CAMP
Sept. 20-Oct 5, 1777
Scale 1" = 800 ft

Charles W. Snell

Tête de Pont

Bridge of Boats
Built Sept 21-22

Royal Art

NAVAL DEPT

NAVAL DEPT

Artillery

47th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

9th Regt

Royal Art

21st

Royal Art

62d

20th

Royal Art

Riedesel

Royal Art

Specht

Royal Art

HANAU

Artillery

Dragoons

Royal Art

HANAU

Artillery

NAVAL DEPT

NAVAL DEPT

Artillery

47th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

60th

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