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Connecticut

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**Transcriber's Note**

The punctuation and spelling from the original text have been faithfully preserved. Only obvious typographical errors have been corrected.

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AN  
INTERESTING  
JOURNAL

OF  
ABNER STOCKING  
OF  
CHATHAM, CONNECTICUT

DETAILING THE DISTRESSING EVENTS OF THE EXPEDITION AGAINST  
QUEBEC, UNDER THE COMMAND OF COL. ARNOLD IN THE YEAR 1775

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*Published by the relatives of Abner Stocking, now deceased*

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CATSKILL, N.Y.

EAGLE OFFICE

1810

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TARRYTOWN, N.Y.

REPRINTED

## EDITOR'S PREFACE

WE have already reprinted three journals of members of Arnold's famous expedition to Quebec, (Dr. Senter's, Captain Topham's and Private Morison's) and now present a fourth, written by Private Abner Stocking, which has not before been printed since its original appearance in 1810. Mr. Codman in his most valuable book on the Expedition, justly says of these and similar journals: "They constitute an invariably interesting body of historical material, which preserves unimpaired the quaint individuality of their widely-diverse authors, and the unmistakable color and atmosphere of a period which must always be of particular importance to the students of American history."

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## INTRODUCTION

THE reader cannot enter on the succeeding journal to advantage without first being acquainted with the object of the expedition, the circumstances under which it was undertaken, and the route marked out for the army to pursue.

In the month of June 1775 Gen. Schuyler was commissioned by Congress to invade Canada through the lakes—to take possession of Ticonderoga and Crown Point; and if practicable to proceed to St. Johns and besiege that fortress. Should he succeed in getting possession of these posts on the lakes, the way would be open to proceed on to Montreal and from thence to Quebec, the capital of Canada.

General Washington calculating on the success of General Schuyler, and foreseeing that the whole force of Canada would be concentrated about Montreal, projected an expedition against Quebec, by a detachment from his camp before Boston, which was to march by the way of the Kennebeck river, and passing through the dreary wilderness lying between the settled parts of Maine and the St. Lawrence, and crossing the rugged mountains and deep morasses which abound in that country, to penetrate into Canada about ninety miles below Montreal.

The object proposed by this hardy enterprise was to take possession of Quebec, which all his accounts assured him was absolutely unable to hold out against any considerable force, and would probably surrender without firing a gun.

This arduous enterprise was committed to Col. Arnold. About a thousand men consisting of New-England infantry, some volunteers,<sup>[1]</sup> and a company of artillery under Captain Lamb, and three companies of riflemen were selected for the service.

Notwithstanding the utmost exertions that could possibly be made, the detachment could not commence their march until about the middle of September 1775.

Mr. Stocking, a native of Chatham, in Connecticut, was one of the little band of patriots designed for this expedition. As he was a man capable of making judicious observations, and a good penman, he was probably appointed to keep a regular journal of the events of each day during this distressing campaign.

The detachment commenced their march from Cambridge, near Boston on the 23rd of September, at which time and place Mr. Stocking began his journal.



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## JOURNAL OF ABNER STOCKING

AS KEPT BY HIMSELF, DURING HIS LONG AND TEDIOUS  
MARCH THROUGH THE WILDERNESS TO QUEBEC, UNTIL HIS  
RETURN TO HIS NATIVE PLACE.

**A**LL things being in readiness for our departure, we set out from Cambridge, near Boston, on the 13th Sept. at sunset, and encamped at Mistick at eight o'clock at night. We were all in high spirits, intending to endure with fortitude, all the fatigues and hardships, that we might meet with in our march to Quebec.

September 14th. This morning we began our march at 5 o'clock and at sunset encamped at Danvers, a place twenty miles distant from Mistick.

The weather through the day was very sultry and hot for the season of the year. The country through which we passed appeared barren and but thinly inhabited.

September 15th. This morning we marched very early, and encamped at night within five miles of Newbury Port. The inhabitants who visited us in our encampment expressed many good wishes for our success in our intended enterprise.

September 16th. Zealous in the cause, and not knowing the hardships and distresses we were to encounter, we as usual began our march very early.—At eight o'clock we arrived at Newbury Port where we were to tarry several days and make preparations for our voyage. We were here to go on board vessels which we found lying ready to receive us, and carry us to the mouth of the Kennebeck. The mouth of the Kennebeck river is about thirty leagues to the eastward of Newbury Port.

September 17th. We are still at Newbury Port and are ordered to appear at a general review.

We passed the review with much honor to ourselves. We manifested great zeal and animation in the cause of liberty and went through with the manual exercise with much alacrity.

The spectators, who were very numerous, appeared much affected. They probably thought we had many hardships to encounter and many of us should never return to our parents and families.

September 18th. We this day embarked at six o'clock in the afternoon. Our fleet consisted of eleven sail, sloops and schooners. Our whole number of troops was 1100—11 companies of musketmen and three companies of riflemen. We hauled off into the road and got ready to weigh anchor in the morning if the wind should be favorable.

September 19th. This morning we got under way with a pleasant breeze, our drums beating, fifes playing and colours flying.

Many pretty Girls stood upon the shore, I suppose weeping for the departure of their sweethearts.

At eleven o'clock this day we left the entrance of the harbor and bore away for Kennebeck river. In the latter part of the night, there came on a thick fog and our fleet was separated. At break of day we found ourselves in a most dangerous situation, very near a reef of rocks. The rocks indeed appeared on all sides of us, so that we feared we should have been dashed to pieces on some of them. We were brought into this deplorable situation by means of liquor being dealt out too freely to our pilots.—Their intemperance much endangered their own lives and the lives

of all the officers and soldiers on board; but through the blessing of God we all arrived safe in Kennebeck river.

September 20. This day was very pleasant, and with a gentle breeze we sailed and rowed 30 miles up the Kennebeck river. By the evening tide we floated within 6 miles of Fort Western, where we were obliged to leave our sloops and take to our batteaus.

September 21. This day we arrived at Fort Western, where we tarried until the 25th in order to make farther preparation for our voyage up the river, and our march through the wilderness.

While remaining in this place I was called to witness a scene which to me was awful and very affecting; the more so I presume as it was the first of the kind I ever beheld. A civil, well behaved and much beloved young man, belonging to Captain Williams' company, was shot. He lived but about twelve hours, and died in great horror and agony of mind at the thought of going into eternity and appearing before his God and judge. He was from the north parish of New-London and had a wife and four or five children.

The supposed murderer was James McCormick. The circumstances of his being out all night, and his guilty looks and actions, were pretty convincing proof against him. He was tryed by a Court-Martial and sentenced to be hanged until dead, his gallows erected, and all things prepared for his execution. Our Chaplain conversed with him respecting his crime, the awful punishment he was soon to suffer, and the more awful and never ending punishment that would await him in the eternal world if he did not repent and believe in Christ. He would not confess himself guilty of intentionally murdering the young man; but that he intended to have killed his captain, with whom he had the night before a violent quarrel. He was brought to the gallows, a prayer made, and the time for his execution almost arrived, when Colonel Arnold thought best to reprieve him and send him to General Washington. I have been informed, that he died in gaol before the day of his execution arrived.

September 25th. Early this morning, we embarked on board our batteaus and proceeded on our way. We labored hard through the day and found ourselves at night but about 7 miles from the place of our departure. The current began to be swift. We encamped at night by the edge of a cornfield and fared very sumptuously.

September 26th. This day we started very early and made our encampment at evening 4 miles below Fort Halifax. We began to experience great difficulty from the increasing rapidity of the current, and the water becoming shoal.

September 27th. This day we carried our batteaus and baggage round Ticonnick falls. The land carriage was only about 40 rods. After launching in again and getting our provisions and baggage on board, we pushed against the stream on our way about three miles.

September 28th. This day we proceeded 8 miles but with great difficulty. The stream was in some places very rapid and shoal, and in others so deep that those who dragged the boats were obliged to nearly swim. We encountered these hardships and fatigues with great courage and perseverance from the zeal we felt in the cause. When night came on, wet and fatigued as we were, we had to encamp on the cold ground. It was at this time that we inclined to think of the comfortable accommodations we had left at home.

September 29th. This day we arrived to the second carrying place, called Skowhegan falls. Though this was only 60 rods over, it occasioned much delay and great fatigue. We had to ascend a ragged rock, near on 100 feet in height and almost perpendicular. Though it seemed as though we could hardly ascend it without any burden, we succeeded in dragging our batteaus and baggage up it.

September 30th. After getting over the carrying place, we found the water more still. We proceeded 5 miles and at sundown encamped in a most delightful wood, where I thought I could have spent some time agreeably in solitude, in contemplating the works of nature. The forest was stripped of its verdure, but still appeared to me beautiful. I thought that though we were in a thick wilderness, uninhabited by human beings, yet we were as much in the immediate presence of our divine protector, as when in the crowded city.

October 1st. This day we proceeded with unusual perseverance, but as the water was exceedingly rapid, we could advance but slowly. It was but a small part of the way that any thing could be done by rowing, or setting. While one took the batteau by the bow, another kept hold of the stern to keep her from upsetting, or filling with water. Thus our fatigues seemed daily to encrease. But what we most dreaded was the frost and cold from which we began to suffer considerably.

October 2d. This day we carried over Norridgewock falls, one mile and a quarter. At night we encamped at a place formerly inhabited by the natives and afterwards by the French and Indians; the former had erected a mass house for their devotions, but had deserted it at the time the New England forces made great slaughter among them in the French war. A few inhabitants were now living here, who rendered us some assistance. The temple of worship contained some curiosities, such as crosses &c. We took up our lodgings here for the night and were much pleased with our accommodations. The place had the appearance of once having been the residence of a

considerable number of inhabitants.

October 3d. Having had some better refreshment than usual, we pushed on our way with increased resolution. We had now taken leave of the last inhabitants. The remainder of our route was to be through a trackless wilderness. We now entered a doleful barren woods; the timber mostly pine and hemlock—some thick patches of spruce and fir, and some groves of sugar-maple.

One of the riflemen of Captain Hendricks' company this day killed a young Moose, which weighed about 200 lbs.

October 4th. This day with much exertion we got forward 8 miles, to Tentucket, or Hell-gate falls, which are of astonishing height, and exhibit an awful appearance. At the foot of the falls we found fine fishing for salmon trout. The land carriage here was but about 40 rods but very difficult to effect.

October 5th. This day we pushed up the river about eight miles. The stream decreased very fast and we were again much troubled with shoal water.

October 6th. This day we advanced about 7 miles. Our difficulties encreased, but our fortitude and patriotism did not fail us. We felt determined to do something for the freedom and welfare of our country before we returned.

October 7th. This day we reached the head of Kennebeck river. Here was a carrying place of three and a half miles through a wilderness without any tract to guide us.

October 8th. We this day were detained by a storm, from which we had but very little to shelter us as we had but few tents and the trees were stripped of their leaves.

October 9, 10 and 11th. These three days we were employed in carrying our batteaus, provisions and baggage over this long and difficult carrying place. Some were employed in cutting and clearing a road, and others in carrying. We had to go through swamps and quagmires—much of the way knee deep in mud and water. We here left behind everything which we did not deem absolutely necessary to our journey. Our pork we took from the barrels and strung it on poles, leaving the barrels behind. In the afternoon of the 11th, we launched our boats into a pool of considerable extent, crossed over it, and encamped on the west side.

October 12 and 13. We carried our batteaus and baggage three quarters of a mile to another pond, one mile over—then to a third, two miles over,—Though the water was now very cold, we caught trout in these ponds in great abundance.

Between these ponds we built a block-house, and gave it the name of Fort Meigs, designed for our sick, in case they should return this way. We viewed with much anxiety winter approaching—we had some snow squalls through the day.

October 14 and 15th. These two days we were diligently employed in carrying our batteaus, provisions, &c. to Dead river. Our hardships were greater than on any preceding day—the land carriage was four miles; one mile of which was a sunken marsh. Four men were assigned to each batteau—under the weight of their loads they almost every step sunk to their knees in mud, and were entangled in the low shrubbery. We arrived at the bank of Dead river at 3 o'clock and proceeding one mile up said river by sunset, took up our encampment for the night. On our right and left were excessively high mountains, the summits of which were covered with snow and ice. Could I have ascended to the top of one of these mountains I thought I could have overlooked all creation. The land between the mountains appeared to be very rich and fertile—wild grass covered the ground, four or five feet in height, and served us a good purpose for covering for the night.

October 16th. The water now being deep and dead, we betook ourselves to our oars and rowed up 6 miles. The river is so remarkably still and dead, that it is difficult to determine which way it runs. It is on an average about 4 rods in width and the banks of it very steep.

October 17th. After passing over a small carrying place of 16 rods we rowed 16 miles up the river through still deep water; the land on each side to appearance very good.

October 18th. This day we rowed 20 miles and passed a short carrying place. The river is very crooked and the water deep. We discovered on the bank of the river an old Indian hut, built as we supposed for hunting. Many bones of animals lay round the hut, and there was a clearing of about one acre.

October 19th. This day we passed four carrying places and advanced but five miles. We were detained by the great rains that fell which drenched us sorely as we had but very little to cover us. The weather grew cold and we had nothing better to screen us from the air, than hemlock boughs.

October 23d. The water growing shallow and rapid we were obliged to take to our setting poles, we pushed with them 10 miles this day. The water daily decreased as we approached towards the head of the stream, and land on each side of us was mountainous and barren.

October 24. This day our afflictions increased, fear was added to sorrow. We found to our

astonishment that our journey was much longer than we expected; what was more alarming, our provisions were growing scant. Some of our men appeared disheartened, but the most of them, with Col. Arnold stood firm and resolute. They were ready to encounter yet greater hardships for the good of their country.

At this critical and alarming crisis a council was called to consider what was most prudent to be done. They determined to send back immediately the disabled and the sick, with provisions sufficient to carry them to the first inhabitants on the Kennebeck river. They also determined to send a party forward to the nearest settlement in Canada to procure provisions and return to meet the army with all possible expedition. Captain Oliver Hanchet, with one subaltern and fifty privates set out with ten days provisions, each man taking 10 pints of flour and 5 lbs of pork. The sick, forty in number, went back. We then pushed forward with all possible speed. We gained nine miles against the stream this day, but suffered from losses, on the account of which we felt greatly distressed. Several of our boats were upset by the rapidity of the stream, and much of our provisions, cloathing, ammuniton, and some money were lost.

October 25th. This morning we proceeded on our way very early: the weather was somewhat cold, as it snowed most of the night. The thickets of spruce and fir were covered and exhibited a gloomy aspect.

To add to our discouragements, we received intelligence that Colonel Enos who was in our rear, had returned with three companies, and taken large stores of provisions and ammuniton. These companies had constantly been in the rear, and of course had experienced much less fatigue than we had. They had their path cut and cleared by us; they only followed, while we led. That they therefore should be the first to turn back excited in us much manly resentment. Our bold though unexperienced general discovered such firmness and zeal as inspired us with resolution. The hardships and fatigues he encountered, he accounted as nothing in comparison with the salvation of his country.

October 26th. Setting out very early this day we passed on with great resolution: we passed thro' four several ponds with outlets leading from one to the other. The course through these ponds, I should judge was nearly N.W. The land apparently very barren—the timber consisting chiefly of fir, spruce, hackmetack and hemlock. The ponds were large and deep; one of them I should judge was three miles in length and one in breadth.

October 27th. This day we crossed a pond, one fourth of a mile over, and soon came to another two miles in width. In this pond we caught plenty of trout. We had now come to the great carrying place, 4 miles and 50 perches over.

As we were all greatly fatigued, it was resolved to leave here most of our batteaus, which had already been reduced from 10 to 6 to each company—but 6 I think were carried from this place. We overhauled our ammuniton and found most of our powder damaged and unfit for use; all of this description we destroyed on the spot.

The last pond we crossed, appeared to be the head of Dead river, or rather as some suppose, the fountain from which Kennebeck river takes its first rise, that and the Dead river being one and the same. The river from the place where we left the Kennebeck, (so-called) to the place where we entered the Dead river making a long crooked circuitous route. We now appeared to be on the height of land, and to be several hundred feet higher than when we were at Fort Western.

October 28th. We this day passed the height of land. We then divided our provisions which we found did not exceed 4 pounds of flour and 40 ounces of pork to a man. We were in a meadow by the side of a small stream, running N.E. into Chaudière lake. We sent our batteaus down this creek and a little before sunset we had the inexpressible satisfaction to meet a messenger we had sent into Canada to find out the disposition of the inhabitants and know whether we should be well received. He was the bearer of good tidings, he assured us that we should be kindly received and furnished with provisions—He brought some fruit to Colonel Arnold, sent him by a lady, as a token of friendship and fidelity. Our joy on this occasion was too great to be suppressed. The whole valley was made to ring with our exultations. Our worthy Major Meigs was exceedingly elevated, and expressed such zeal and animation in the glorious cause of his country as revived the drooping spirits of all the soldiery. We were now to leave the remainder of our batteaus—what little we had to carry we put into our knapsacks, the whole of the detachment having now orders to march and make the best of their way to Chaudière river. We returned unto the rising ground and encamped for the night.

October 29th. Very early this morning, we left our encampment on the rising ground and began descending towards an ocean of swamp that lay before us. We soon entered it and found it covered with a low shrubbery of cedar and hackmetack, the roots of which were so excessively slippery, that we could hardly keep upon our feet. The top of the ground was covered with a soft moss, filled with water and ice. After walking a few hours in the swamp we seemed to have lost all sense of feeling in our feet and ankles. As we were constantly slipping, we walked in great fear of breaking our bones or dislocating our joints. But to be disenabled from walking in this situation was sure death. We travelled all day and not being able to get through this dismal swamp, we encamped. I thought we were probably the first *human* beings that ever took up their

residence for a night in this wilderness—not *howling wilderness*, for I believe no wild animals would inhabit it.

October 30. This morning we started in great haste and soon got through the swamp. From the time we had been travelling in it, we judged it to be about 7 miles in width; of its length from east to west I can give no account.

On leaving the swamp we had to pass a river two rods over and about three feet in depth. The water was excessively cold. As we had this day to make our way through thickets, and low sunken marshes, our progress was but slow.

During the fore part of the day we steered E.N.E. but thinking we were bearing too much to the east, we changed our course to W.N.W. which soon brought us in sight of a large pond or lake, which we supposed communicated with Chaudière lake. We encamped about half a mile from the lake. Our march this day we supposed was about 20 miles.

October 31st. This morning we began our march very early and pushed on with all speed, for the head of Chaudière river; at 11 o'clock we passed it. We here came up with Captain Morgan's company, which had gone before us. We learnt to our great sorrow, that in attempting to go down the river in their batteaus, which they brought to this place, they were carried down by the rapidity of the stream and dashed on rocks; that they had lost most of their provisions and that a waiter of Captain Morgan was drowned.

Their condition was truly deplorable—they had not when we came up with them a mouthful of provisions of any kind, and we were not able to relieve them, as hunger stared us in the face. Some of us were entirely destitute and others had but a morsel of bread, and we now supposed ourselves 70 miles from the nearest inhabitants. Some of Captain Morgan's company we were told had perished with the cold.

November 1st. Our fatigue and anxiety were so great that we were but little refreshed the last night by sleep. We started however very early, hungry and wet. Knowing that our lives depended on our speedy arrival to an inhabited country, we marched very briskly all day and even until late in the evening. We then encamped in a fine grove, but in a starving condition. Captain Goodrich's company had the good fortune to kill a large black dog, that providentially came to them at that time. They feasted on him heartily without either bread or salt. Our hunger was so great that many offered dollars for a single mouthful of bread. Such distress I never before felt, or witnessed. I anxiously turned my thoughts back to my native land, to a country flowing with milk and honey. I was surprised that I had so lightly esteemed all the good things which I there once enjoyed. Little thought I, do we know of the value of the common blessings of Providence, until we are deprived of them. With such reflections I laid myself down on the cold, wet ground, hungry and fatigued.

November 2d. When we arose this morning many of the company were so weak that they could hardly stand on their legs. When we attempted to march, they reeled about like drunken men, having now been without provisions five days. As I proceeded I passed many sitting, wholly drowned in sorrow, wishfully placing their eyes on every one who passed by them, hoping for some relief. Such pity-asking countenances I never before beheld. My heart was ready to burst and my eyes to overflow with tears when I witnessed distress which I could not relieve. The circumstances of a young Dutchman, and his wife, who followed him through this fatiguing march, particularly excited my sensibility. They appeared to be much interested in each others welfare and unwilling to be separated, but the husband, exhausted with fatigue and hunger fell a victim to the king of terrors. His affectionate wife tarried by him until he died, while the rest of the company proceeded on their way. Having no implements with which she could bury him she covered him with leaves, and then took his gun and other implements and left him with a heavy heart. After travelling 20 miles she came up with us.

Just at evening this day, we met cattle coming up the river, sent us for our relief. This was the most joyful sight our eyes ever beheld. The French people who drove them informed us that Colonel Arnold had arrived in their settlement two days before, with the advance party, and had purchased cattle as soon as possible and sent them on.

A cow was immediately killed and cut open in great haste; a small calf being found in her, it was divided up and eaten without further ceremony. I got a little piece of the flesh, which I eat raw with a little oat meal wet with cold water, and thought I feasted sumptuously.

November 3d. This day we proceeded on down the river about 20 miles, wading several small rivers, some of which were up to our middles. The water was terrible cold as the ground was at this time covered with snow and ice. At evening we came in sight of a house which was the first we had seen for the space of 31 days.

Our joy was inexpressible in breaking out of that dismal wilderness in which we had been so long buried, and once more beholding a country inhabited by human beings; it was like being brought from a dungeon to behold the clear light of the sun.

The French people received us with all the kindness we could wish, they treated our sick with much tenderness, and supplied us with every thing they could for our comfort. They seemed

moved with pity for us and to greatly admire our patriotism and resolution, in encountering such hardships for the good of our country. But they were too ignorant to put a just estimate on the value of freedom.

November 4. Last night we got a plenty of good beef and potatoes, but little bread could be procured. It snowed most of the night and the weather was cold. After marching down the river about 10 miles, we began to get such necessaries as we wanted; such as bread, milk, eggs, butter and most kinds of sauce.[2] To be supplied with these articles, of which we had been so long deprived was a great luxury.

The kindness and hospitality of the inhabitants, was to us very pleasing. After having been lately our enemies, at war with us, we did not expect to experience from them to much friendship.

Had we been in New-England among people of our own nation, we should not, I think, have been treated with more kindness. They readily supplied us with whatever they had to spare, and discovered much tenderness towards those of our company who were sick, or feeble. I last night lodged in a *house*, which I had not done before for 39 days.

November 5. We continued our march down the river. The people continued to be hospitable, with some few exceptions. Knowing our need of their articles, some of them would extort from us an extravagant price. We chose to live mostly on bread and butter and milk, having but little relish for meat, and supposing it not to be healthy food after fasting so long.

November 6. This day we come up with Colonel Arnold and the advanced party at St. Mary's. At two o'clock we marched off together, and continued on the road until 12 o'clock at night. The roads were very bad by means of the great rains and snows that had fallen—we most of the way waded half leg deep in the mud and water. Though we were very industrious through the day and half of the night, we marched but 17 miles.

November 7. We this day marched down the river about 3 miles and halted until night.

We now had arrived before the city of Quebec, to take which by surprise was the great object of our expedition.

A Lieutenant with 20 men was sent forward to see if our way was clear. At 2 o'clock at night the advanced party reached the St. Lawrence and halted. In the morning we perceived we were in fair view of Quebec, nothing but the river separating us.

November 8. We took up our residence in houses along the south side of the river St. Lawrence, and remained until the 13th waiting for the sick, the halt and feeble, who had been left behind at different places to come up. By the 13th all had arrived who were to be expected; many we learnt, to our great sorrow, had perished by the way.

When a general muster was made, and all appeared who had survived the perils of the wilderness, a more pitiful and humorous spectacle was exhibited than I had ever before seen.

In our long and tedious march through the wilderness, it was not with us as with the children of Israel, *that our cloathes waxed not old*, ours were torn in pieces by the bushes, and hung in strings—few of us had any shoes, but moggasons made of raw skins—many of us without hats—and beards long and visages thin and meager. I thought we much resembled the animals which inhabit New-Spain, called the Ourang-Outang. The French appeared a little surprised at the first sight of us; and had not Colonel Arnold gone forward to apprise them of our approach, they might have fled from their habitations.

In coming to this place we passed several very pretty villages, ornamented with handsome churches for worship. We discovered some people of fashion, living in good style, but most of the inhabitants appeared ignorant and to have but little ambition.

November 7. This day we were very busy in preparing to cross the river at night; we had collected a great number of Canoes, some of them made of bark by the Indians; but most of them of large pine logs. When night approached, we began to cross, and made our first landing at a place called Wolfe's Cove. We directly ascended a steep bank and paraded on the plains of Abraham, where we found a plenty of barracks which had been erected for the use of the British troops and were then unoccupied. Several of the bark canoes in crossing upset, by which accident we lost some muskets, and baggage, but no lives, though some of us very narrowly escaped.—Most of the troops were over by day break; those who crossed after were fired upon by the *Lizard*, a British frigate that lay in the river, but received no damage.

November 14. We now had in our possession the midshipman of the *Lizard*, and several other prisoners, which we had taken on the south side of the river. The frigate fired upon us in our encampment; but she was at too great a distance to do us any injury. We this day took a prisoner near our encampment—supposed to be a spy. We let him and our other prisoners, every day walk on parole.

The weather being very cold, we quit our barracks and took up our residence in houses, built for the King's officers, which they evacuated on our approach. We remained here until the 21st,



during which time we received intelligence that there were not more than 100 regular troops in the city—some sailors, and a few newly enlisted troops from Newfoundland; in all not exceeding 400 under arms. This intelligence was soon contradicted. A servant of Colonel Arnold's who had been taken prisoner and made his escape gave us a very different account: he stated that the inhabitants and King's troops exceeded 800 under arms; our whole force at that time not exceeding 500, and the most of our ammunition spent.

We this day lost one of our sentry, next the walls of the city. He was treacherously decoyed and taken. This event soon rallied all our detachment. We marched on to that place of the plains where Wolfe fought his battle, in sight of the city walls. Our troops were drawn up in battle array and we gave them a challenge for a field battle, our riflemen forming our right wing. Though much superior to us in numbers and better provided with arms and ammunition, they declined an engagement. They fired on us from the fort, and as they were in a situation in which we could not attack them, we did not choose to stand merely to be shot at: we deliberately retreated, and soon got beyond reach of their balls.

From this time no special event occurred for the space of seven days. We began to be in a very distressed situation, as the weather was continually growing cold and we were almost naked, crowded together in heaps, and nearly out of provisions—add to this we were in an enemies country, almost destitute of ammunition, near to a force much superior to our own and without a prospect of any reinforcements.

November 21. We were informed that the citizens of Quebec in conjunction with the soldiery, were determined to attack us the next morning having heard that our ammunition was very nearly expended. We judged it not prudent to hazard a battle with so little ammunition as we had on hand, our officers therefore determined on a retreat the night ensuing.

About 4 o'clock in the morning we began our retreat and effected it in good order undiscovered by the enemy. We made no stops until we arrived at Point aux Trembles, 20 miles. Most of the soldiers were in constant misery during their march, as they were bare footed and the ground frozen and very uneven. We might have been tracked all the way by the blood from our shattered hoofs.

In a few days after we arrived at Point aux Trembles, we were joined by General Montgomery with about twelve hundred of the York forces from Montreal. They brought with them a good supply of ammunition, clothing and provisions taken from the King's stores at that place and from eleven sail vessels which had been captured in the lakes. General Montgomery brought on likewise implements necessary for carrying on a seige against the city of Quebec. We lost no time in making every necessary preparation for our return, and on the morning of the 5th of December, took up our line of march and at evening arrived at the encampment we had precipitately left on the plains of Abraham.

Before we arrived, however, Governor Carlton had entered the town and was making every preparation for vigorous defence. The garrison now consisted of about fifteen hundred men of whom eight hundred were natives, and between four and five hundred seamen. Our whole force fit for service, was about one thousand men.

General Montgomery endeavored to frighten the garrison to surrender: he addressed a letter to the governor, giving an exaggerated account of his own strength and resources and demanded him to surrender. But Carlton who was an experienced, wary general, was not to be frightened. He persisted in his determination to hold no communication with Montgomery, and fired on the flag.

Our situation was such as would have disheartened any general of common resolution. The intense cold had set in, and we were unaccustomed to the hardships of an ordinary campaign. Besides, the time of service with most of us under Arnold was nearly out. But notwithstanding all discouragements, General Montgomery was determined to commence the siege. In a few days we opened a six gun battery within about seven hundred yards of the walls, but our artillery was too light to make a breach, and I believe the officers did not calculate on any effect from it,—the object was to amuse the enemy and conceal our real design. The intention of General Montgomery was to commence an assault. Before he undertook however, this hazardous and daring project, it was necessary to have the approbation of all the officers and soldiers. After conferring with each officer separately on the subject and bringing all to approve of the plan, he addressed himself to the soldiers, many of whom appeared unwilling to attempt so daring an enterprize; especially those of us who belonged to Arnold's corps. We had taken some disgust to our general, as he was for maintaining more rigid discipline than we were willing to submit to. But when he stated the great object that would be gained by getting possession of Quebec, and that it would probably lead to peace and the acknowledgement of independence, the fire of patriotism kindled in our breasts, and we resolved to follow wherever he should lead.

The attempt to storm a place so strongly fortified, I thought was rash and imprudent, but did not think proper to make any objections, lest I should be considered wanting in courage. The back side of the town, next the country, was guarded by a wall from 25 to 40 feet in height and 20 feet thick; this is called the lower town. The upper town is situated on a rock one hundred feet

above this. The ascent from the lower to the upper town is very steep and strongly fortified with pickets and gates. The front of the town bordering on the river is almost inaccessible, and strongly fortified by nature and art. But our heroic General seemed resolved on victory or death, and no difficulties were too great for him to encounter. While he was making the necessary preparations for the assault, the garrison received intelligence of his intention from a deserter. This circumstance induced him to change the plan of his attack, which had been, originally, to attack both the upper and lower towns at the same time. The plan now resolved on was, to divide the army into four parts, and while two of them, consisting of Canadians under Major Livingston, and a small party under Major Brown, were to distract the attention of the garrison by making two feints against the upper town, at St. Johns and Cape Diamond; the other two, led, the one by Montgomery in person, and the other by Arnold, were to make real attacks on opposite sides of the lower town. After gaining possession of the lower town, it would yet have been extremely difficult to conquer the obstacles to be surmounted in forcing their way to the upper town; but as all the wealth of the city would then have been in their power, it was confidently expected that the inhabitants, to secure their property, would compel the governor to capitulate.

Between four and five in the morning, the signal was given; and the several divisions moved to the assault, under a violent storm of snow. The plan was so well concerted that from the side of the river St. Lawrence along the fortified front round to the bason, every part seemed equally threatened.—Montgomery, at the head of the New York troops, advanced along the St. Lawrence by the way of Aunsee de Mére, under Cape Diamond. The first barrier to be surmounted on this side was at the Pot-Ash. It was defended by a battery in which were mounted a few pieces of artillery, about two hundred paces in front of which was a block-house and picket. The guard placed at the block-house, being chiefly Canadians, having given a random and harmless fire, threw away their arms and fled in confusion to the barrier.

Unfortunately, the difficulties of the route rendered it impossible for Montgomery instantly to avail himself of this first impression. Cape Diamond, around which he was to make his way, presents a precipice, the foot of which is washed by the river, where enormous and rugged masses of ice had been piled on each other, so as to render the way almost impassible. Along the scanty path leading under the projecting rocks of the precipice, the Americans pressed forward in a narrow file, until they reached the block-house and picket. Montgomery, who was himself in front, assisted with his own hands to cut down or pull up the pickets, and open a passage for his troops; but the excessive roughness and difficulty of the way had so lengthened his line of march, that he found it absolutely necessary to halt a few minutes, in order to collect a force with which he might venture to proceed. Having reassembled about two hundred men, whom he encouraged alike by his voice and his example, he advanced boldly and rapidly at their head, to force the barrier. One or two persons had now ventured to return to the battery; and, seizing a slow-match standing by one of the guns, discharged the piece, when the American front was within forty paces of it. This single accidental fire was a fatal one. The General with Captains M'Pherson and Cheeseman, two valuable young officers, near his person, the first of whom was his aid; together with his orderly sergeant and a private, were killed on the spot. The loss of their general, in whom their confidence had been so justly placed, discouraged the troops; and Colonel Campbell on whom the command devolved, but who did not partake of that spirit of heroism which had animated their departed chief made no attempt to prosecute the enterprise. This whole division retired precipitately from the action, and left the garrison at leisure, after recovering from the consternation into which they had been thrown, to direct their undivided force against Arnold, in whose corps I then was.

The division commanded by this officer moved in files, at the common signal for the attack, along the street of St. Roques, towards the Sault des Matelots. In imitation of Montgomery, he too led the forlorn hope in person, and was followed by Captain Lamb with his company of artillery, and a field piece mounted on a sled. Close in the rear of the artillery was the main body, in front of which was Morgan's company of riflemen commanded by himself. At the Sault des Matelots, the enemy had constructed their first barrier, and had erected a battery of two twelve pounders, which it was necessary to force. The path along which the troops were to march had been rendered so narrow by the rough cakes of ice thrown up on the side from St. Charles, and by the works erected by the enemy on the other, that the two pieces of artillery in the battery in front, were capable of raking with grape shot every inch of the ground, whilst his whole right flank was exposed to an incessant fire of musketry from the walls, and from the pickets of the garrison.

In this order Arnold advanced with the utmost intrepidity, along the St. Charles, against the battery. The alarm was immediately given, and the fire on his flank commenced, which, however, did not prove very destructive. As he approached the barrier he received a musket ball in the leg which shattered the bone, and he was carried off the field to the hospital. Morgan rushed forward to the battery at the head of his company, and received from one of the pieces, almost at its mouth, a discharge of grape shot which killed only one man. A few rifles were immediately fired into the embrasures, by which a British soldier was wounded in the head, and the barricade being instantly mounted with the aid of the ladders, brought by the men on their shoulders, the battery was deserted without discharging the other gun. The captain of the guard, with the greater number of his men, fell into the hands of the Americans, and the others made their

escape.

Morgan formed the troops, consisting of his own company and a few bold individuals who had pressed forward from other parts of the division, in the streets within the barrier; and took into custody several English and Canadian burghers; but his situation soon became extremely critical. He was not followed by the main body of the division; he had no guide; and was himself totally ignorant of the situation of the town. It was yet extremely dark, and he had not the slightest knowledge of the course to be pursued, or of the defences to be encountered. Thus circumstanced, it was thought unadvisable to advance further.

The cold was intense and the storm very violent; this, together with the fatigue by the exertion we had made tended to check our ardour. We had now passed the first barrier; but a second we knew was before us and not far distant. We had no pilot and the night was very dark and dismal. We took shelter from the fury of the storm under the sides of some of the buildings and waited for day light to direct us. At the dawn of day we collected in a body, seized the ladders and were proceeding to the second barrier, when on turning an angle in the street, we were hailed by a Captain Anderson who had just issued from the gate with a body of troops to attack us. Captain Morgan who led our little band in this forlorn hope, answered the British captain by a ball through his head, his soldiers drew him within the barricade and closed the gate; a tremendous fire from the windows of the buildings and port holes of the wall, was directed against our little host.

Thirty of our privates being killed and thirty five wounded, and surrounded as we were on all sides without any hope of relief, we were obliged to surrender ourselves prisoners of war.

During the whole of the attack by the different corps there were eleven commissioned officers, thirty four privates, sergeants and corporals, killed; thirty five wounded, and three hundred and forty five made prisoners. This was the melancholly issue of our long and distressing campaign. The prisoners, of whom I was one, were confined in a large building called the Regules, where we had but very little fire or provision. Our daily ration was three ounces of pork and two, (sometimes three) small bran biscuit, and a half a pint of the water in which our pork was boiled.

January 1st, 1776. Our condition, which we thought was almost insupportable by such a sparing allowance of fuel and provision as was furnished us, was rendered tenfold more distressing by sickness.—About the 10th of this month we began to be infected with the small pox, which we took the natural way. With this mortal disease about one ninth part of the prisoners died. While in hospital we were treated with some humanity, but when in prison we experienced much insolence from the garrison set over us.

After we had been some time in the old Dauphin Gaol, which was built of stone, and proof against musket and cannon balls, our fidelity was so much relied on by most of the King's officers, that they scarce guarded us at all. They appeared to consider us as deluded by the facinating sound of liberty and freedom, and induced to take up arms when we were not at heart inimical to his Britanic Majesty. Considering locks and keys as useless, they committed the sole care of the prison to one of our sergeants, who was faithful to the trust reposed in him, until about the first of April, when we formed a plan for our escape.

We had now lost all hopes of the city's being taken by the American arms, and we resolved to regain our liberty by our own efforts, or lose our lives in the attempt.

Having watched the movements of the enemy for several days, unknown to them, we determined with a party of 60 men to rise on the Gaol guard, and disarm them, which consisted of 14 old decrepit men and young boys, (whose appointment over us we considered rather an insult, than good economy in the commander:) next we were to proceed to St. John's Gate, about eight rods distant from the gaol and attack and disarm that guard, consisting chiefly of English sailors, 18 in number, from whom we expected a pretty warm reception: should we be thus far successful, an hundred men, or more, were to proceed under the command of Colonel Ashten, formerly sergeant major of Captain Lamb's train of artillery, to turn the cannon on the battery, which were kept constantly loaded, against the town, and to maintain this position at all hazards until notice could be given to our army, and thus be the glorious means of obtaining the object of all our toils, the possession of Quebec.

We made every preparation for breaking gaol, which we could do at a moment's warning. We had previously procured by means of some friends in town, six pistols, a sufficient quantity of powder and ball, and a good supply of port fire; and in addition, a number of old iron hoops with which we made cutlasses. Thus equipped, we intended the first stormy night to put our bold and desperate plan into execution. But we had among us a vile traitor<sup>[3]</sup>, who discovered our plot to the barrack master: it was a deserter from the King's troops at Boston. The intelligence was immediately carried to General Carlton and in a few hours we were all put in irons. Thus we remained until our army raised the siege, which was on the 6th of May. During this period of our close confinement our sufferings were greater, and our situation more wretched than it had ever been before. We were most of us afflicted with the scurvy and the flux, at the same time. Towards the last of April there was scarcely a well man among all the prisoners. We were also, all of us without comfortable clothing, and many of us almost entirely naked.

While in this deplorable situation, General Carlton, came into the gaol and gave us the offer of returning home on parole. This was to me very pleasing and joyful intelligence; but though this was on the sixth of June, we were kept between hope and fear until the first of August, when we were assured that we should embark for New-York by the 7th.

The general presented each of us with a new suit of clothes, for which he received our most hearty thanks, and on the 7th we went on board, and sailed for New York on the 11th. We forsook our direct course and sailed near to the west end of St. John's Island, in pursuit, as I understood of some American pirates—from this, passed through the gut of Canso, and after being delayed some by contrary winds, we arrived at New-York on the 10th of September, and joined the British fleet which lay at George's Island, and Statten Island, consisting, as I was informed, of 450 said—principally square rigged vessels.

We tarried here from the 10th until the 22d, during which time the city of New-York was evacuated by the American troops and taken possession of by the English; there was also in this time a great fire, which consumed near one-third of the city.

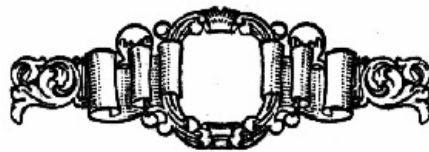
On the 22d of September we were landed within about 3 miles of Elizabethtown Point, to go where we pleased. The joy we experienced on setting our feet once more on the shores of our native country, with the liberty of returning to our families and friends cannot be conceived by any but those who have shared misfortunes like ours. We had been more than a year absent from our homes, seven months of which we had been in prison, and the remainder of the time had been suffering hunger, cold and fatigue.

We were kindly received by our countrymen and furnished with whatever was necessary to our comfort, that they had to bestow. Those of us who belonged to New-England, set out for our respective homes. At King's bridge I had the inexpressible joy of seeing my father and two of my oldest brothers, besides many of my old neighbors and acquaintance; by them I was informed of the welfare of my relations. After spending two days in camp with my friends, with great pleasure and satisfaction, I set out for Chatham in Connecticut, my native place. I arrived at New Haven the 2d of October, where I tarried until the 5th and then proceeded on my way to Chatham and went that day as far as Durham, the next morning which was the Sabbath, at 11 o'clock I arrived at Chatham and beheld once more my father's house and her whom the most sacred ties of nature hath endeared to me, still in the land of the living.

Never did my thanks to my Creator and preserver arise with more sincerity than at this moment.—How kind has been that Providence, which has preserved me through so many dangers and sufferings and returned me in health and safety to the bosom of my friends! When wandering through the wilderness, hungry, faint and weary, God was my support, and did not suffer me like others to fall by the way—when sick and in prison he visited me—when a captive he set me free! May I ever be grateful to my Divine Protector, and my future life be devoted to his service! such were my reflections on this joyful occasion.

I repaired to the house of worship where I saw most of my acquaintance and relations, who in the intermission flocked around me—shook me heartily by the hand and assured me of a welcome return.

FINIS.



#### FOOTNOTES:

- [1] Colonel Burr, since Vice-President of the United States, was one of the volunteers.
- [2] Garden "sass"—vegetables.
- [3] John Hall.

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