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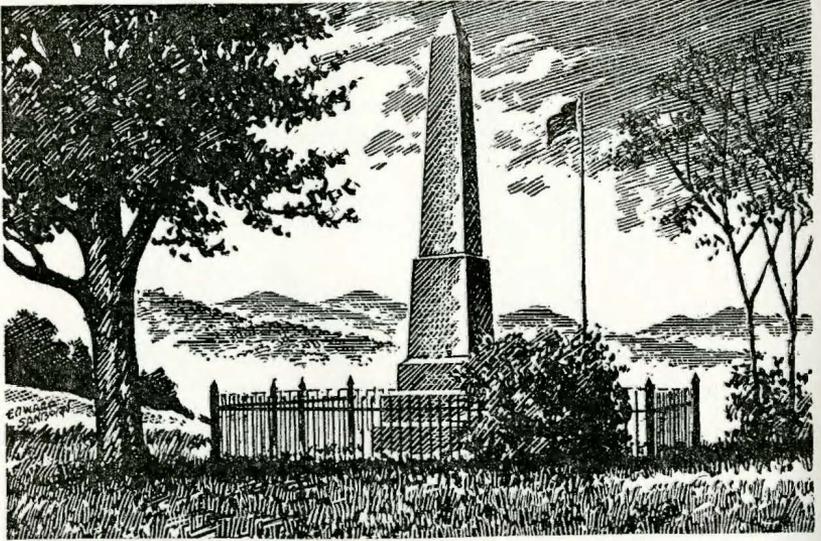
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THE HUBBARDTON BATTLE MONUMENT

THE BATTLE OF HUBBARDTON WAS FOUGHT ON JULY 7, 1777

“It was an *important* battle. . . . The year preceding was one of the greatest gloom, especially in the North. The retreat of two large armies from Canada . . . the evacuation of Ticonderoga and Fort Independence . . . and the triumphant entry of Burgoyne with a splendid army . . . all these filled the country with consternation and despair. Washington was terribly disappointed; New England was alarmed . . . The first gleam of hope appeared when Warner turned upon Frazier at Hubbardton, like a tiger upon his pursuers.” From the Address by Henry Clark at the Dedication of the Monument, July 7, 1859, at Hubbardton, Vermont.



THE BATTLE OF HUBBARDTON

By WILLIAM R. FOLSOM

The action fought at Hubbardton, Vt., on July 7, 1777, has continuing reverberations, but the battle seems to be taking on a significance it has not had in past years. Also, the figure of the commanding officer in the action seems to loom across the century in larger stature. In the valley where much of the battle was fought, he stood staunchly with his Green Mountain troops, and there the tide of battle seems to have turned. Editor.

THE battle of Hubbardton was a small affair in proportion to the number of troops taking part in it. It represents a little known, well-nigh forgotten episode in our Revolutionary War.

There are, however, a few notable facts about it: it was the first engagement with a foreign enemy on Vermont soil; it was the first time band music was ever heard in battle in America, although I believe General Sheridan, on one occasion, at least, used a mounted band to play his troops into action; it is also noted for the scenic beauty of the battlefield. There are few spots in Vermont more lovely than the hills above the tiny town. Hubbardton was a Waterloo on a small scale; opposing forces were just one-tenth of those at Waterloo; the losses were in exactly the same proportion. Both battles were decided by the appearance of a German force on the right flank.

Hubbardton was just a little frontier settlement at the time of the battle—only nine families in the township, and judging from a recent visit, there has been no overwhelming increase in population in 175 years.

The battle itself was a small fight, a fierce fight, a rear-guard action, but battles are not measured by the numbers involved or casualties suffered. Hubbardton was fought in one of the darkest hours of the Revolution—dark as the winter at Valley Forge, but it saved the garrison of Ticonderoga from destruction and enabled that garrison to unite with General Schuyler's forces at Fort Edward on the Hudson. The combined garrisons fell down the river to Saratoga and took part in the famous Battle of Bemis Heights which resulted in the defeat of General Burgoyne and the surrender of the British Army. Burgoyne's surrender brought about the intervention of France

which was the first long step toward the independence of the Colonies.

At the beginning of the Revolution, the British War Office found itself with a very tough problem on its hands. North America covered a very large amount of territory—much of it wilderness. Of course, with the aid of the British Navy, troops could be landed almost anywhere along the Atlantic Coast and key cities captured, but getting at the interior cities and towns was a very different matter. There were few good roads, many just stump-filled gashes through the wilderness; all of them offered splendid opportunities for the deadly ambush.

However, there was one feasible way of invading the heart of the Country—a water way. British troops could be sent across the Atlantic on transports, up the St. Lawrence to the Richelieu River, up that river to Lakes Champlain and George. From the upper end of Lake George a land march of only twenty miles would bring an army to navigable water on the Hudson and so on to Albany and New York. Thus New England (the hot bed of the Revolution) could be cut off from the other Colonies, overrun and conquered.

The British War Office tried this plan twice. In 1776, the year of the famous Declaration, the Continental Congress decided to invade Canada in the foolish hope of winning over the Canadian people to the cause of Independence. A more intimate knowledge of French customs and character would have revealed the unwelcome fact that among the French habitants scarcely a word of English was spoken or understood, a country where land was held under the feudal system of the Middle Ages and which could boast of but one printing press. To the Canadian habitant the word "Independence" had no meaning.

Possibly the Colonies were a bit over-confident after Lexington and Concord had shown the British commanders the deadly qualities of the backwoods rifle, for that rifle in the hands of expert marksmen had made Bunker Hill one of the bloodiest battles in our history. As a result, the Canadian Expedition was a ghastly failure and General Arnold's forlorn army, half-starved, half-naked, half-dead from smallpox, retreated down Lake Champlain and found a refuge of sorts behind the walls of the old French fortress of "Ty."

Through the courage and fighting ability of Benedict Arnold at the Battle of Valcour Island, an invading British Army was obliged to return to Canada. This ended the British invasion of 1776.

In the campaign of 1777, it was decided by the British War Office to seize and hold the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. These valleys contained the bulk of the inhabitants of New York State. New York

ranked seventh among the seventeen Colonies and many of her people were Tories. To capture and occupy the State looked like a comparatively easy task. Besides, this maneuver would make it impossible for New England to receive support from the southern Colonies.

I

Before putting the Battle of Hubbardton upon the stage of history, perhaps it would be well to submit a cast of the characters who took part in the play. Many Brass Hats and Belted Earls were on the hills above Hubbardton that hot July morning in 1777.

Lieutenant General Sir John Burgoyne was born in London in 1722—fifty-five years old, his mother a great beauty, and the son looked like his mother. A gay young cavalry officer, Burgoyne eloped with Lady Charlotte Stanley, daughter of the eleventh Earl of Derby, the originator of that famous steeple-chase race which has caused so much grief to so many of us. Whatever faults the General had (and he had them), he was always a kind and affectionate husband. Young Burgoyne was on active service in the Seven Years War and was present at the disaster of St. Cas in France where the British forces were routed and driven to the beach, much like the disaster at Dunkirk. One interesting fact, however, redeems this affair from oblivion. The Quartermaster General of the British Army, instead of getting busy and hustling the men on board the ships, sat on the beach (quote) "Spending his time in the trivial amusement of reading the Gazette." Good old British nonchalance—my word!

The General's faults and virtues seem to be pretty well balanced. We believe that Sir John was no stranger to the fire-water of the Paleface or to the famous wines of Portugal, but we must remember that this was an age of heavy drinking both in and out of the army—and men were classified as one, two, and three-bottle men. This was a unique method of classifying drunks and might deserve the attention of our highway police. Burgoyne was very fond of rattlesnake soup, which puts him in a class by himself as a connoisseur of fine foods. The General liked the theatre and wrote plays himself. Here is a song from his *Lord of the Manor*, a musical comedy:

*Sing & Quaff,
Dance & laugh
A fig for care or sorrow
Kiss & drink
But never think
'Tis all the same to-morrow.*

This *could* be used as a commercial for the beer that made Milwaukee famous.

Burgoyne's chief success was *The Heiress*. It was acted fifty times in one season, a long run for its day. The play was translated into many languages and ran into many editions. The *Heiress* was popular in its time, but today I fear it lies on the top shelf of some dust-covered storeroom.

The General liked the ladies, high and low, and would, I think, have made quite a figure in Hollywood. The General was also not averse to taking Dotty Twinkletoes of the stage out to supper and a hot bird and cold bottle after the show.

His virtues were, on the other hand, many and great: first, courage—that indispensable requisite of a good commander; he was no more afraid of a bullet than was John Stark or Seth Warner. He was devoted to the welfare of his men; they, in turn, were devoted to him. Like General Washington, he issued orders against swearing in the army. He had had much experience in the art of war on European fields, but the wilderness of North America was a new terrain which contributed to his downfall in the end.

General Burgoyne's subordinate commanders were able and experienced officers. General Simon Fraser, forty-six, commanded one of the three brigades of the army—a veteran soldier who had served with Wolfe at the capture of Quebec.

The Indians, about 500, were commanded by Luc de la Corne St. Luc, an old and experienced Canadian officer and a well-known leader of Indian war parties. St. Luc had been present at the capture of the English Fort William Henry in the late war with France and had watched with cold-blooded indifference the massacre of the helpless garrison by the Indians.

The commander of the Hessian troops was General Friederick Adolph von Riedesel—a veteran German officer who had served with General Fraser in the French Wars.

In 1775, following the capture of "Ty" by Ethan Allen, Warner and Remember Baker seized the fortress of Crown Point with its garrison of a sergeant and twelve men.

Near the end of the battle of Bennington, Colonel Warner with his regiment of 350 men arrived from Manchester; the only fresh troops on the field, they turned the tide and brought victory to General Stark's exhausted men. Warner's obstinate rear-guard action at Hubbardton allowed the main body of the retreating Americans to escape.

Frontier hardships and exposure took their toll of Warner's strong constitution; his mind gave way and in delirium he lived again his battles; he died at forty-one, leaving his family destitute.

In the retreat from "Ty" and in the battle itself, he is the outstanding figure. With his little force of demoralized, hungry, and exhausted men, most of whom had never fired a shot in battle, he bravely turned and for a time fought a veteran British force "off its feet." The memory of his deeds is enshrined forever in the hearts of all true Vermonters.

We know little of the other commanders at Hubbardton. Colonel Ebenezer Francis was—like Warner—a huge man with some military experience, for he had commanded a regiment at the siege of Boston. He commanded a Massachusetts regiment at Hubbardton, was killed at the head of his men, and buried by the Hessians. Colonel Francis was a fine example of the patriotic citizen-soldier. He died—as every true soldier would wish to die—in the forefront of the battle—his face to the foe. "No man died on that field with more Glory than he—yet many died and there was much Glory."

Colonel Nathan Hale, at the first onslaught of the enemy, retired with his regiments, as many of his men were sick and exhausted; he was overtaken on the road to Castleton and surrendered. Colonel Hale was bitterly criticised for his action and asked for a court martial, but before it could be granted, he was taken prisoner and died on Long Island. He was thirty-seven years old.

II

The British War Cabinet's plan for the campaign of 1777 was based on these elements. Burgoyne's army, about 8000 men including 3000 Hessians and 500 Indians, was to cross Lake Champlain and come down the Hudson to Albany—there to meet Sir William Howe's army coming up the Hudson. A third force under Colonel Harry St. Leger was to march down the Mohawk Valley to Albany. All three armies—an overwhelming force—would strike the American Army front, flank and rear. New England, thus cut off from the other Colonies, could be overrun and subdued.

The fly in the ointment was this: 300 miles of enemy wilderness separated the British armies at Montreal and New York. Messages between them had to go by sea—15,000 miles.

To turn back this triple invasion, the Colonies had a small disease-ridden, disheartened half-armed army at "Ty" of about 2,000 men—many mere boys; some had neither shoes nor stockings; there were

no beds or bedding for the sick. The circuit of the entrenchments was so large that it would have required 10,000 men to hold them, and St. Clair, the commander, had a weak 2,000. "Had every man I had," he said, "been disposed of in single file along the lines of defense, they would scarcely have been in reach of each other's voices."

The commander of this pitiful force was General Arthur St. Clair; born in Scotland, St. Clair was an Ensign in the British Army at twenty-one; he married a niece of Colonel Bowdoin of Maine, took part in the retreat of the American Army from Canada in 1775, and was with Washington at the battles of Trenton and Princeton.

In the spring of 1777 he was ordered to take charge of the defense of "Ty"; his evacuation of that post brought a storm of wrath and protest upon his head. Congress recalled him from service in the field; he was court-martialed but was completely exonerated.

John Adams said that they would never be able to defend a post until they shot a General.

In 1791, eight years after the Revolution, St. Clair, then Governor of the Northwest Territory, was overwhelmingly defeated by the Indian tribes of the northwest under the celebrated Miami chief, Little Turtle. St. Clair was sick, feeble, old, eager to do his duty, yet totally unfit to encounter the hardships and responsibility of frontier war.

The Indians attacked St. Clair's camp at dawn. A desperate fight followed. St. Clair walked up and down the battle line, his clothes cut by eight bullets, a lock of his thick gray hair taken off by a bullet. Several times he led charges, sword in hand; the army became panic-stricken and an uncontrollable stampede took place.

Now General Washington had warned St. Clair of the danger of surprise. When Washington heard of the disaster, he broke out in one of his rare fits of rage. "To suffer that army to be cut to pieces, hacked, butchered, tomahawked by a surprise. Oh God, oh God, he's worse than a murderer! How can he answer to his Country?" Then in a calmer mood he said: "Gen. St. Clair shall have justice." And St. Clair did get full justice and mercy from both the General and Congress, for they found him not guilty of the disaster. As a result of signing notes for friends and the failure of Congress to reimburse him for funds advanced for Government use, St. Clair lost all his fortune; his last years were spent in poverty and he died in a log cabin.

In St. Clair's defense, it might be mentioned that as late as June,

1777, he was assured that the British would transport most of the troops in Canada by water to help General Howe take Philadelphia.

Such was the fate of the commander of "Ty," a brave man, a good soldier, but lacking in judgment.

III

The battle of Hubbardton was a consequence of the British invasion of 1777. Burgoyne arrived in Quebec in May, 1777, and at once proceeded to mobilize his army for the passage of Lake Champlain and the march down the Hudson to Albany. His army was small but consisted mainly of well-disciplined regulars with a powerful train of artillery.

The employment of Indians against the New England Provinces was a great mistake on England's part. Burgoyne's address to the tribes did not help the situation. "Warriors," cried Burgoyne, "strike at the common enemies of Great Britain and America," to which an old Iroquois Chief, not to be outdone in rhetoric by a mere British General, assured their Great Father that "Their hatchets had been sharpened upon the whetstone of their affections." Now the Revolutionary generation of New Englanders were an exceedingly tough and courageous lot. They had been brought up on tales of Indian raids, of murders, home burnings, scalplings and the carrying off of helpless women and children; so when they learned that hundreds of these human tigers were coming down on them, tomahawk and scalping knife in hand, they seized their familiar long rifles and swarmed out from their farms and villages to meet the invaders.

They tell the tale of the old Vermont farmer who was cutting hay on his lower meadow near Bennington, when a neighbor dashed up on a foaming horse and shouted that 8000 British Regulars and 500 Indians were only 10 miles away and coming fast. The old man stooped down, took a wisp of hay, wiped off his scythe blade, hung his scythe on a peg in the barn, went into the house, took down his rifle from over the kitchen fireplace, tested the hammer and flint and said, "Wal, goodbye, Priscilly, I am going to find out by God who owns this farm afore night."

The Hessians were utterly unsuited for backwoods fighting; they carried knapsack and haversack with four days provisions, a very heavy rifle with sixty rounds of ammunition, a sword of enormous size resembling the sword of St. Michael, a canteen holding a gallon, long-skirted coats, leather jack (hip) boots, grenadier caps with

heavy brass ornaments. General Fraser spoke of the Hessians as "a helpless king of troops in the woods." (He never spake a truer word.)

One can imagine the exhaustion of these men burdened like pack mules with groceries and hardware, marching at top speed over the twenty-four miles of steep hills which lay between "Ty" and Hubbardton. These Hessian troops were a queer lot: among them were found a runaway poet from Jena, a fringe-maker from Hanover (wonder if he put some on the surrey), a monk from Wurzburg, and a cashiered Hessian major.

Burgoyne's army slowly made its way south along the Richelieu River and proceeded to cross Lake Champlain. Lieutenant Thomas Anburey of one of the British infantry regiments gives a graphic picture of the crossing: "When the widest part of the lake was reached, it was remarkably fine and clear, not a breeze stirring.—In front the Indians went in their birch canoes, containing 20 or 30 in each; then the advance corps in regular line with the gunboats; then followed the Royal George and the Inflexible (the ship which crippled Arnold's flagship the Royal Savage in the battle of Valcour Island the previous year) with the other brigades and sloops following."

The British War Office, in their stupidity, imagined that Burgoyne would have an easy time of it marching down to Albany. It was a tragic mistake. The Hampshire Grants were roused to fury by the advance of a foreign enemy along their borders accompanied by hundreds of Indians. The American Militia were all in the field and hung—as Burgoyne graphically described it—"like a gathering storm upon my left."

The situation of the Colonies was this: Crown Point, that mighty fortress of the old French wars, had been partially destroyed by fire and abandoned. "Ty," thirteen miles south of Crown Point, now became the strong point of the American defense. Here everything was in chaos and neglect. The garrison was commanded by Major General Horatio Gates of whom it was said that during all his northern campaign he had never heard a bullet whistle; he was a good-looking political officer, but showed no evidence of any skill or courage.

The defences of "Ty" extended two and one-half miles; the garrison was far too small and poorly equipped to man them. Some of the soldiers were given poles with sharp iron points—something like the pikes carried by King Arthur's men-at-arms. June came,

and the defense of "Ty" was intrusted to Major General Arthur St. Clair.

The soldiers at "Ty" were in as pitiful condition as the fort. Smallpox which they had brought back with them on their retreat from Quebec still prevailed. Dysentery and pneumonia raged in the miserable huts as a result of a lack of proper food and exposure to the harshness of a Lake Champlain winter. There were no beds nor bedding for the sick other than their own ragged garments. "The first object presented to my eyes," said a witness, "was one man lying dead at the door, then inside two more dead, with 2 living between them."

The British army landed a few miles above "Ty," where the Indians proceeded to make things lively by getting drunk. The Americans had built an extensive fort on the east side of the lake to which they gave their favorite name, "Independence." This fort was a star-shaped affair, well-supplied with guns; in the center was a square of barracks, part of which was used as a hospital. The fort was on top of a high hill, which was also named Mt. Independence.

To defend the two forts and the huge floating bridge between them, 12 feet wide and 1000 feet long, necessitated a circle of entrenchments so large that, as we have said, it would have taken at least 10,000 men to hold them; St. Clair had a scant 2,000 half-starved, half-dead militia to do it.

Directly south from "Ty" was an eminence called Sugar Hill—600 feet high and very steep and heavily wooded. Should Burgoyne be able to get a battery of heavy guns up there, "Ty" would become a trap, and evacuation would be the only thing left to do to save the army from capture or destruction. Sugar Hill was so steep and rugged that the Americans had not thought it necessary to occupy or fortify it. At an earlier date, following the retreat of the army from Canada, Colonel Trumbull of the militia had fired a 6 lb. gun from the fort which reached the summit, yet General Gates had ridiculed the idea that the enemy could move guns up the mountain.

General Phillips, Burgoyne's artillery expert, looked at Sugar Hill, and said, "Where a goat can go—a man can too and where a man can go, he can haul up a gun."

Burgoyne's chief engineer carefully explored Sugar Hill and reported that a road could be cut up the mountain good enough for artillery. After a day and half of hard work on the part of the naval detachment with block and tackle, a battery of heavy guns was in place on the summit, and the fate of "Ty" was sealed.

On the afternoon of July 5, Burgoyne occupied Sugar Hill which was promptly named Mt. Defiance. The British battery of heavy guns commanded both "Ty" and Mt. Independence.

On the morning of July 6, St. Clair coming out on the parade ground, looked up and saw the top of Sugar Hill covered with guns and scarlet uniforms; he saw the game was up. "Ty" was doomed. "To remain," said Benjamin Lossing, the famous historian, "would be to lose his army; to retreat would be to lose his character." St. Clair, to his infinite honor, chose to retreat and was court-martialed for his action. St. Clair wrote the President of Congress: "I saw no alternative but to evacuate the posts and bring off the army. Whereupon I called the General Officers together to take their opinions; they were unanimously of opinion that the places should be evacuated without the least loss of time, and it was accordingly set about that night—the 5th instant." At 2 A.M. St. Clair left "Ty." About three troops were put in motion for the evacuation of the Mount. The retreating men were demoralized, exhausted and disheartened. Colonel Francis brought off the rear-guard about 4 o'clock.

It took the Royal Navy just a half hour to break the heavy boom of timbers, bolted and riveted with large bolts and double chains of iron, and cut a passage through the bridge which had been built with so much labor and pains. The British fleet destroyed all that was left of Benedict Arnold's little squadron of the previous autumn, and burned all the barges, storehouses, sawmills and forges at Skeenesborough at the end of the lake. The official report to General Schuyler stated that "not one earthly thing was saved."

General Riedesel reported that the English, to their great surprise, found that the Americans had evacuated the two forts, "Ty" and Independence. Riedesel immediately took possession of Fort Independence; at the same time General Fraser occupied "Ty." "As there were many to plunder," said Fraser, "it was with very great difficulty I could prevent horrid irregularities." Eighty large guns, 5000 tons of flour, (which seems impossible, pounds would be nearer the mark) a great quantity of meat and provisions, 15,000 stand of arms, a large amount of ammunition and 200 oxen, were found in the two enemy camps.

The fat German General was, I think, drawing a long bow regarding what was found in the forts, in order to stand well in the eyes of his Commanding General, but he shrewdly observes that "Great fright and consternation must have prevailed in the enemy's camp; otherwise, they would have taken time to destroy the stores."

A council of war was held and under cover of darkness St. Clair and his garrison crossed the lake on the bridge and retreated toward Castleton, 30 miles from "Ty" and 12 miles from Skeenesborough. A house on Mt. Independence was set on fire, a stupid blunder on the part of the stupid French General de Formoy. He was in command there, and asleep when all this took place; he awoke and set fire to his quarters as he was leaving them about 2 A.M., July 6. By its light the British scouts saw the last of the American Army going up the hills and into the woods. The British flag was hoisted over the fort, while General Fraser with 900 men started after them. "I got planks," said Fraser, "by which I crossed my Brigade to the Mount." Riedesel was sent forward in support while Burgoyne, leaving 1,000 men to garrison the fort, started up the lake to Skeenesborough.

IV

On July 7 Fraser overtook the American rear-guard under Colonels Warner and Francis at Hubbardton, twenty-two miles from Mt. Independence, where it had halted for the night six miles behind the main army on its way to Castleton.

Luckily, most of the Indians went with Burgoyne. The rear-guard under the command of Colonel Seth Warner, which with stragglers and sick amounted to about 1200 men, had stopped at Hubbardton for the night. Colonel Warner had his own regiment of Vermonters and two other regiments under Colonels Francis and Hale. Colonel Warner, who had been sent to Otter Creek, had returned to the fort on the 5th, bringing a reinforcement of Vermont militia.

General Fraser gave his men a much needed rest until 3 A.M. of the 7th, then pushed on at top speed and overtook the American rear-guard which was in camp and cooking breakfast. At 5 A.M. he attacked.

A fierce fight now took place, one of the most furious of the Revolution; the lines of battle were within sixty yards of each other (shotgun range). One side would advance only to be driven back by the other. It is said that when Warner saw Colonel Francis' men falling back after his death, he went wild with wrath and cursed them in true Ethan Allen style. For two hours the fight went on. The Vermont farmers and woodsmen posted themselves behind trees and rocks and took a terrible toll of the enemy with their long-barrelled rifled guns. Fraser was hard pressed and had lost one-fifth of his force when General Riedesel arrived with the Hessians. Sitting on his horse at the side of road, he cursed his men fluently in high Dutch

for their slowness, then sent them forward into battle from a high hill on the right of the American line, the band playing and the men singing battle hymns. Perhaps he made use of selections from "Die Gotterdammerung" or excerpts from the "Damnation of Faust," who knows? Anyhow, the "Dead March from Saul" would have been a perfect pace setter for the panting Hessians. Fraser heard the racket and ordered a bayonet charge, and the right wing of the American line took to the woods. Fraser and Riedesel were old companions in arms in the old French wars. General Fraser acknowledged that Riedesel's opportune arrival saved his men from being surrounded and cut off. The Americans lost 324 men killed, wounded and missing; the British lost 183 rank and file killed and wounded—3 officers killed and 12 wounded. Some of the Green Mountain boys fell back from the German bayonet attack, but the rest kept up the fight in true "bush" style from behind cover of logs and trees.

The fierce resistance of the Americans at Hubbardton enabled St. Clair and the "Ty" garrison to join the main American Army at Fort Edward. For evidence on this point let us consider the testimony of the British commanders who took part in the fight. Said Earl Balcarras, commanding the British Light Infantry, "The enemy very hard pressed on their retreat, they certainly behaved with great gallantry." "Was it practical to have pursued the enemy further after that action, considering the nature of the country, fatigue of the King's troops, care of the wounded, etc? It was not. Difficulties of removing the wounded from Hubbardton to Ty very great, due to the distance and badness of the roads."

Lieutenant Thomas Anbury said that the British losses were so heavy that further pursuit of St. Clair and the main body was useless. Another English observer said that the Americans had no tactics, no knowledge of maneuver, no discipline, and would rather shoot from cover—on the other hand, they were wonderful marksmen, with great knowledge of woodcraft. All this is an excellent estimate of the Vermonters' fighting ability.

There was great difference in the weapons of the contending forces. It was the long-barreled, true-grooved small-caliber rifle in the knarled and knotty hands of the Green Mountain Boys which saved the "Ty" garrison from destruction. It was that same rifle ("that cursed, twisted gun," so described by a British officer at the Battle of Bunker Hill) that brought about the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga—the turning point of the Revolution.

Swiss and German gunmakers had migrated to Pennsylvania before

the Revolution. From them, Vermont gunsmiths had learned the art of grooving gun barrels,—drilling out the “lands” or grooves. The rifle was of equal value with his axe to the Vermont pioneer, and he was an expert with both. He could drive a pin in the ground and lay a tree on it with his axe: he could shoot a grey squirrel through the head from the top of the tallest tree, cut off the head of a partridge at 30 yards, and any deer within a circle of 100 yards was definitely in the danger zone.

The Vermonters at Hubbardton were a very weary, discouraged, demoralized lot of men, but when the British and Hessian infantry came whooping and yelling through the woods, they did not run very far; they took cover Indian fashion; behind trees, they pulled the wooden stoppers from their powder horns, poured a charge down the barrel of their long rifles, knocked up the lid in the breech, took out a circular patch of linen or tow, greased with tallow and cut with a die, wrapped a ball in it; pushed it down the barrel until it rested on the charge of powder; tapped it a couple of times to set the ball in the grooves, cocked the weapon and were ready for battle almost in the matter of seconds. Now powder and lead were scarce in Vermont villages; therefore, the farmers and hunters learned through bitter necessity to make every shot count. Furthermore, it is a well-known fact that the Vermonter fights best when the situation is more or less beyond hope.

On the other hand, the British infantry were equipped with the ancient smooth-bore, large-caliber “Queen Anne” musket carrying a ball weighing approximately an ounce. I had occasion some years ago to look up the manual of arms used in the British Army in the Revolution. It was an interesting experience: to load and fire his clumsy weapon (with a trajectory something like that of a sling-shot) the British G.I. had to go through 16 separate and distinct movements under 16 separate commands, before pulling the trigger. No wonder he was no match for the swift-footed Vermonter in his native hills. Furthermore, the lean Vermont farmer was not in the least scared of the Hessian whooping through the woods, equipped like one of King Arthur’s knights and carrying sixty pounds of assorted hardware and groceries, even if, as asserted, he had double rows of teeth.

Colonel Warner’s force was reduced to seven or eight hundred men after Colonel Hale retreated. Fraser’s force outnumbered Warner’s two to one, and was the flower of the British army, yet Warner’s casualties were only half those of the British. The reason

for this was explained by Ethan Allen in a brief paragraph: "I hear that the British Officers complained," said Ethan, "that the Green Mountain Boys took sight." Had the British troops been taught to do the same, the result might have been different. The British killed and wounded only a little less than those at Bennington.

At the first blast of fire from Warner's men, a major of the British army was killed and twenty-one men of the leading platoon were shot down.

The Americans, following Indian custom, had protected their camp by felling trees and brush.

Great difficulty was experienced in removing the British wounded from Hubbardton, as the only means of transportation were hand-barrows and litters. Wolves came down from the mountains to devour the dead, as at the battle of Saratoga.

Such was the Battle of Hubbardton. It enabled General St. Clair to join General Schuyler at Fort Edward. After the great victory of the Americans at Bennington, the combined armies fell down the Hudson to Saratoga where they defeated the veteran British army and forced its surrender. The victory was won through the dare-devil leadership of Col. Benedict Arnold.

Under the terms of Burgoyne's surrender, the American Congress agreed to send the Hessian troops back to England. This, Congress refused to do—fearing that these German troops would take the place of British garrisons, and these garrison troops would be released for duty in America. These Hessians after the war was over became part of the American way of life; they became loyal, hard-working, efficient citizens of America. They introduced band music into the Colonies.

For a time the Hessian prisoners were confined in barracks at Winchester, Virginia. These old buildings can be seen today. Winchester, however, has other claims to historical recognition. The little city was in a sort of no man's area in our Civil War and changed hands seventy-four times during four years of war. From Winchester a famous cavalry commander started on a famous twenty-mile ride.

Among the Hessian prisoners was an unknown insignificant private named Koester. His name is rescued from oblivion by the fact that he became the grandfather of one of the most able and spectacular cavalry generals of the Civil War. A brigadier general at thirty-two, he fought all through the war; took part in many Indian campaigns after the war and died a hero's death—smoking pistol in hand and surrounded by hordes of galloping Cheyenne warriors—on the battlefield of the Little Big Horn. The general's name was George Armstrong Custer.

From the papers of Capt. John Hall, a great-great-great grandfather of Mrs. Ina White of South Hero (who very kindly allowed me to examine them) we have this vivid, personal description of the battle:

"Sunday, July 6, 1777, when the inhabitants of this frontier town (Hubbardton) were at church in a school house (there was no church in the village) they were surprised by a scouting party of British and Indians and a skirmish took place about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile east of the village. Captain John Hall of the militia received a mortal wound of which he died Aug 6, 1777 in the 55th year of his age."

It is said that Capt. Hall was shot in the leg and while lying helpless on the ground, a British soldier stabbed him with a bayonet. Capt. Hall's sons, Elias and Alpheus, were taken prisoner at the skirmish at Castleton and taken to "Ty," but shortly after that made their escape. Elias was in the battle of Stillwater and witnessed the surrender of Burgoyne. Alpheus Hall settled in South Hero, near the Edward Borinson farm; his son, Lorenzo, is buried in the South Hero Cemetery.

Capt. Hall had settled on a farm of 400 acres in East Hubbardton a mile and a half north of the village. The Indians found the house and I quote: "destroyed and carried off every dollar's worth of property he possessed."

VI

In the spring following the surrender at Saratoga, Sir John Burgoyne was permitted to return to England as a prisoner on parole. As the ship stands out to sea, we can picture the General pacing the forward deck.

In his mind are dark and bitter thoughts; his high hopes, his dreams of success, his military reputation lie in the dust and ashes of defeat: he is going home to face the hostility of his King; the open triumph of his enemies; the pity of his friends, to face an investigation of his campaign by the House of Commons, a campaign ending in complete surrender of a veteran army with a fine train of artillery to a lot of farmers who could not form a straight line on a parade ground. The whole thing was intolerable.

The sea is rough outside the bay; the sun goes down and darkness creeps over the face of the waters. The wind freshens, and the vessel lies over in the quick puffs as she picks up speed.

Burgoyne turns and walks to the stern of the ship, for a last look at the land which had given the death blow to his career.

Above the rugged New England Hills a star appeared—dim at first, in the red afterglow. As it rose higher, it burned with a greater

brilliance, throwing a slender shaft of light across the tumbling waters.

It was the rising Star of Independence!

Drive over the Seth Warner Memorial Highway today: it is full of memories. This is the route of the demoralized, exhausted men who fled from "Ty": seven miles from "Ty" to Orwell; five miles from Orwell to Sudbury; six miles from Sudbury to Hubbardton Village. From the Village the road winds six miles up steep hills, with thick woods on either side. The country appears as wild as in the days of the Revolution. Blackberry blossoms line the narrow roadside; red and white peonies bloom in the dooryards of the little houses.

The battlefield itself is on a high plateau, with steep hills around about, covered with the tender green of early summer. Spread over the field is a Joseph's coat of many colors: red clover, white clover, yellow clover; white daisies; yellow buttercups. ("I sometimes think that never blows so red the Rose as where some buried Caesar bled.") In the distance are the majestic peaks of the Green Mountains—gigantic and ghostlike in the blue haze. It is a typical Vermont summer day, with the wind in the clover, the sweet scented air and the white clouds drifting by.

Near the road stands a granite shaft, with the flag of our Country beside it, swinging slowly in the soft breeze—a shaft sacred to the memory of the men who died on this field, who gave their lives for a dream (a dream only to be realized through long years of blood and tears), the dream of Independence.

Perhaps the good God has covered this field with glowing beauty in honor of the soldiers who sleep here in eternal peace.

*Under the wide and starry sky,
There dig my grave
And let me lie.*

Never forget that the dust of these brave men who fell in glory on this field, is consecrated dust—consecrated to courage, to loyalty, to sacrifice.

Go to Hubbardton and—*sursum corda*—lift up your hearts in gratitude and devotion to the heroes who died on that hilltop above you, who gave their lives that you and I might have the priceless heritage of this fair land of freedom.

Go to Hubbardton; stand on that battlefield and breathe the very spirit of patriotism!