

meditated upon his widely scattered force, and General Macomb was sent to support him with an entire brigade. From Chazy, Macomb crossed the lake on the ice in sleighs to Isle La Motte and Swanton. On March 22nd, he entered Canada and took possession of Philipsburg. A small field force was at once collected at St. Johns under Sir Sidney Beckwith for the purpose of dislodging the invaders; but, on March 26th, Macomb recrossed the lake and joined the main body of General Wilkinson's division, which had advanced to Champlain.

By this time the American War Department had decided upon a plan of operations. A body of troops was collected at Batavia, ostensibly for the recovery of Fort Niagara, while five or six thousand men had been assembled at Sackett's Harbour. Information had been received from Kingston that the entire garrison did not exceed 1,200 men; and that the place, with the whole British squadron on Lake Ontario, might easily be taken by a sudden dash across the ice. Accordingly, on February 28th, orders were dispatched to General Brown at Sackett's Harbour to strike at Kingston with his whole force, but first to divert suspicion by moving a portion of his troops inland in the direction of Batavia and bring them back rapidly in time to take part in the proposed expedition. At the same time General Wilkinson was instructed to create a further diversion and prevent the reinforcement of the garrison of Kingston from Lower Canada by an offensive movement on the frontier of that province. On March 27th, Wilkinson reported, "my advanced post is at Champlain on this side. I move to-day; and the day after to-morrow, if the ice, snow, and frost should not disappear, we shall visit Lacolle and take possession of that place. This is imperiously enjoined to check the reinforcements he (Sir George Prevost) continues to send to Upper Canada." Before commencing this movement the inevitable council of war was held, at which it was estimated that the British troops, distributed over a distance of nine miles, consisted of 2,000 regulars and 500 militia; while he had a disposable force of 3,999 combatants, including 100 dragoons and 304 artillerymen with eleven guns. It was decided to attack the post at Lacolle. Orders were issued that the entire division should be supplied with sixty rounds of ammunition and four days' cooked provisions. Let every officer and every man take the resolution to return victorious or not at all; for with double the force of the enemy this army must not give ground. . . . An officer will be posted on the right of