

being no railways, these regiments had to march, so that it was the end of August before the force at Burlington was considered large enough to take the field. The command was entrusted to General Wade Hampton. His instructions were specific, he was to co-operate with the army at Sackett's Harbor, and to be found waiting on the shore of the St Lawrence, anywhere between Caughnawaga and the mouth of the Chateauguay, when the flotilla from Sackett's Harbor appeared. The first step in the journey was taken early in September when the army embarked on boats and crossed lake Champlain to Cumberland Head, N.Y. The British commander, Sir George Prevost, had waited in Montreal all August, expecting an attack by the army at Burlington. On hearing they had crossed the lake he rashly concluded they were going to join the force at Sackett's Harbor for an assault on Kingston, and thither he hurried with his available forces. Being instructed to make an incursion into Canada to distract the enemy, Hampton broke camp at Chazy, and taking again to his boats, on the 19th September, sailed to the point where the lake narrows into the Richelieu, and established his camp at Champlain. From there a party crossed into Canada, surprising the outpost at Odelltown, killing part of its inmates. The first day's march was a surprise. Their chief assailants were the Indians, who kept up a fusilade from the bush on either side of the road, which, however, inflicted only trifling losses. What convinced the Americans that it was impossible to go on, was their inability to find water. They were crossing a black ash swamp yet it was dry as tinder. The beds of brooks and small rivers were dry. Scouts reported there was no running-water in the Lacolle. The summer had been the hottest and driest on record, and even rivers of considerable size had ceased to flow and only in the deeper hollows of their course were pools to be found. The horses had to be sent back to Champlain to be watered in the lake; the rank and file were desperate with thirst. A council of war was held, when it was decided to advance farther was impracticable, and that the St Lawrence would have to be reached by another route than the road to Laprairie. The suggestion was made they go by the Chateauguay valley. On being notified of the proposed change, Armstrong approved of the Chateauguay route, expressing his regret, however,