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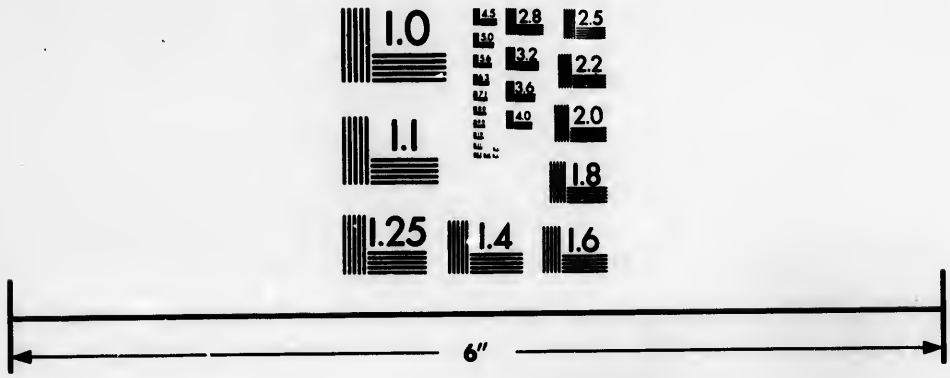

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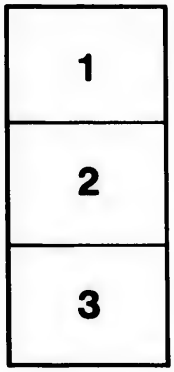

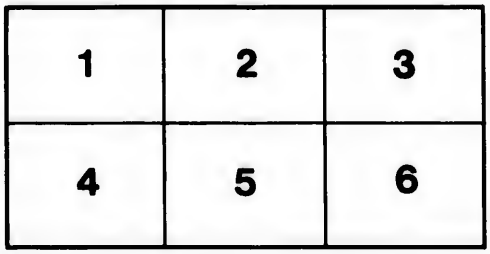

THE

BATTLE OF PLATTSBURGH:

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

Plattsburgh Lyceum,

FEB. 18, 1834.

By St. JOHN B. L. SKINNER.

PLATTSBURGH:

1835.

PLATTSBURGH LYCEUM, }
Feb. 13, 1835. }

On motion of L. Dow Brock, Esq.

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this society be presented to Gen. Skinner for the gra[illegible] and interesting address on the "Battle of Plattsburgh," deliv[illegible] the society this evening.

On motion of Isaac W. R. Bromley, Esq.

RESOLVED, That a committee be appointed to call [illegible], and request a copy of his address [illegible] publication.

The following gentlemen were [illegible] said committee by the chair: Isaac W. R. Bromley, L. Dow Brock, [illegible] Bailey.

(Extract from the mi[illegible]

B. J. TENNY, Se'cy.

Gen. [illegible] B. L[illegible]

Dear [illegible]

We [illegible] communicating to you the pleasure enjoyed [illegible] Plattsburgh Lyceum, in listening to your interesting address [illegible] the 13th ult. and do hereby in pursuance of the foregoing resolution [illegible] copy for publication.

With high [illegible] of respect, we are Dear Sir your friends and obe't serv'ts

I. W. R. BROMLEY.
L. DOW BROCK.
HENRY BAILEY.

Plattsburgh March 2d, 1835.

ADDRESS.

Mr. President,

And Gentlemen of the Society:

I am requested by your standing committee, to lecture this evening on "the Battle of Plattsburgh, its causes and effects." In most cheerfully complying with this request, I must be permitted to express my regret, that the subject had not been committed to abler hands; as it is an event in which this community must feel a deep interest—an event which in its commencement portended such disastrous consequences to our country and its inhabitants; but which resulted in saving our territory from rapine, our border dwellings from pillage, and our citizens from banishment, captivity or death.

In order to a proper understanding of the subject, it will be well to glance at some circumstances which preceded this event. It will doubtless be recollected by many present, that it was apparently the intention of the government to make the campaign of 1814, a glorious and decisive one—that a descent upon Montreal was contemplated, by the way of Lake Champlain and the river St. Lawrence at the same time—that for this purpose, great additions were made to the army on this frontier during the winter and spring—and that about the first of June of that year, the grand army of the North was from eight to ten thousand strong, under the command of Major General George Izard. About this time it was evident that measures of an offensive character were in contemplation—that it was the intention of General Izard, either to compel the

enemy to fight him near the lines, or to carry the war into the heart of his own country.

Gen. Thomas Smith, with his brigade of light troops, occupied the high ground immediately south of the village of Champlain, while the daring and gallant Col. Forsyth, with his Riflemen, occupied a position immediately upon the lines. Frequent skirmishes took place in the neighborhood of the lines, between our light troops and the enemy's light troops and Indians. In one of these skirmishes the gallant Forsyth fell; a victim to his hardihood and bravery; mourned and lamented by his officers and men, as much as any officer who fell during the struggle; for he was truly their leader and their head, in scenes of daring and of danger; and the idol of their hearts in camp. The writer of this article visited the Rifle Camp the day after they had committed the mortal remains of their beloved commander to the earth; and it was manifest, from the general gloom which pervaded the whole camp, that some great calamity had befallen them. There were no gibes nor jests among them, as is common among soldiers when off duty—each one seemed wrapped in his own gloomy meditations, and intent only on seeking and taking signal vengeance for the death of him, who had so often led them to deeds of valor—to victory and to fame.

They were not long waiting for an opportunity. For, I believe the next morning, Lieut. Bennet Riley a brave and daring officer, with sixteen men was over the line for the purpose of reconnoitering the enemy when he discovered capt. Mayhew, who commanded the British and Indians, in the affair in which Forsyth fell, and the Indian Chief who, it was understood and believed, was the individual who had taken such sure and deadly aim at him; advancing

on horseback towards the American Camp, attended by a small party of British soldiers and Indians, who were, however, considerably in the rear. Riley immediately ambushed and permitted the Captain and Indian Chief to pass him, before he discovered himself; after they had passed a short distance, he unmasked and commanded them to surrender: their attendants fled, and they preferring to make their escape also, attempted to do so, by putting their horses at the top of their speed—a second order to surrender was unheeded; and was followed by the order to "Fire!" both fell. The last spark of life had fled from the Indian Chief when the party came up, and on examination it was found, that he had received twelve of the sixteen balls which were fired, and Capt. Mayhew the remaining four; who, though not dead, was mortally wounded. He was brought to the camp where he received every attention, but survived only a few days.

About the first of August, Gen. Izard, with the main body of his army, moved from Plattsburgh toward the lines, and encamped near Chazy village. It was also well understood that the enemy had assembled in force at Isle Aux Noix and St. Johns, while a still larger force occupied the level country between St. Johns and Laprairie. From all these indications, we were led to expect a battle of a severe and decisive character in a short time. In a letter to Maj. Gen. Mooers, under date of 13th August, Gen. Izard says, "It is not improbable that an engagement will take place soon on the lines," and adds, "I see no cause for apprehending the result," from which it would appear, he felt perfect confidence in his strength and ability, not only that he could fight, but beat the enemy in open field.

While the whole community were thus anxiously

waiting and looking for an engagement between two powerful armies, the result of which was to be of such vast importance, not only to this frontier, but to the whole country; Gen. Izard received orders to move with the main body of his army to the western frontier. These orders must have reached him about the 25th August, as he mentions the fact in a letter to Gov. Tompkins, of that date.

The troops were immediately put in motion and Regiment after Regiment took up its line of march for the Niagara frontier, until our strong arm of defence was reduced to 1500 effective men who had retired to the works, which had been previously commenced, on the high grounds between the River Saranac and the lake, a short distance south of the village of Plattsburgh. The command of this small army, and the defence not only of this post, but of the whole frontier from Lake Champlain to the river St. Lawrence, the defence of our homes—our firesides and all we held dear, was committed to Brig. Gen. Alexander Macomb, and the result has shown that they could not have been committed to abler hands. The fortifications were in a considerable state of forwardness when Gen. Izard marched, and subsequently, the work of completion was prosecuted with an ardour and a zeal worthy the cause in which the troops were engaged.

For the purpose of creating an emulation and a zeal among the officers and men, in completing the works, they were divided by Gen. Macomb into detachments, and placed near the several forts, and it was published in orders, that each detachment was the garrison of its own work, and bound to defend it to the last extremity.

This had the desired effect; for the men worked day and night, and before the final attack was made

the forts were in a situation to withstand an attack from a much larger force than that by which they were defended.

The following order published the day before the enemy entered our village, is a fine specimen of the excellent arrangements made by Gen. Macomb for the defence of the post, and an evidence of the determination which pervaded all ranks, to retain possession of the works, or perish in their defence.

HEAD-QUARTERS,
PLATTSBURGH Sept. 5.

GENERAL ORDERS.

The General is now satisfied that the enemy will attack the post in a few days. He relies with confidence on the valor and intrepidity of those he has the honor to command. Let it not be said that Erie was better defended than Plattsburgh. It was there that the American Soldiers met, and defeated the heroes of Spain, France, and Portugal, and their example must be followed or our reputation is lost! The eyes of America are upon us! Fortune always favors the brave. The works being now capable of resisting a powerful attack, the manner of defending them, the General thinks it his duty to detail, that every man may know and do his duty.

The troops will line the parapet in two ranks, leaving intervals for the artillery. A reserve of one fifth of the whole force in infantry will be detailed and paraded, fronting the several angles, which it will be their particular duty to sustain. To each bastion are to be assigned by the several Commandants, of forts a sufficient number of infantry to line all the faces (in single rank) of each Tier. Should the enemy gain the ditch, the front rank of the part assailed will mount the parapet and repel him with its fire and the bayonet. If the men of this rank are

determined, no human force can dispossess them of that position. The officers are commanded to put to instant death any man who deserts his post.

The principal work, Fort Moreau, is intrusted to the command of Col. Melancton Smith, of the 29th Regiment; having for its garison the old 6th and his own Regiment. Redoubt No. 1 (afterwards named Fort Scott) is intrusted to Lieut. Col. Storrs, and the detachments of the 30th and 31st will form its garrison. Redoubt No. 2 (afterwards named Fort Brown) is intrusted to Major Vinson, and has for its garrison the 33d and 34th infantry. The block house near Platt's, is intrusted to Capt. Smith of the 1st Rifle Regiment, and has for its defence detachments of his company and convalescents of the 4th Regiment. The block house on the point is intrusted to Lieut. Fowler, and will be garrisoned by a detachment of artillery. The light troops under Lieut. Col. Appling and Capt. Sproul, will take post in the ravine near the Assistant Inspector General's Marque, when they come in, and will receive orders from the General.

The light artillery will take such position as will best annoy the columns of the enemy, keeping up constantly a brisk fire on them—they will also take post when not employed in the same ravine with the light troops.

Mr. Paris, Captain of the artificers will form a corps of Rocketeers with his men—they will take direction from the chief engineer. The artillery is to be considered a seperate service, and the officers of that arm are responsible to the Commanding General for the correct exercise of their functions. The officers of engineers will give directions for additional defences and for repairs, as occasion may require, which it will be the duty of the several

Commandants to lend all the aid in their power to execute.

Every man knowing his post, and his duty, no excuse can be received for not executing with firmness and decision, all that may be required for a vigorous defence of the place.

By order Brig. Gen. Macomb, Com'g.

WM. R. DUNCAN,
Act. Asst. Adj. General.

The withdrawal of our troops from the lines was immediately followed by the advance of the enemy into our territory. All was bustle and confusion in and about our village, consequent upon the breaking up of our families, and removing our women and children to places of safety.

It can scarcely be expected that any individual, after a lapse of more than twenty years, can recollect all the circumstances of an event, so fraught with important consequences, and acted under so much excitement as necessarily attends the seige and defence of a town. I therefore avail myself of a concise summary of the affair, (with occasional reminiscences of my own) as drawn up immediately after the retreat of the enemy, by our respected friend and fellow townsman Major Azariah C. Flagg, and published by him in the Plattsburgh Republican of the 24th September, 1814. I find this same account copied into a work entitled "American Naval Battles," without being credited. I therefore take this opportunity of giving credit to the true source for the article in question, and may be permitted also to remark, that the author of the article with his characteristic modesty, has omitted the mention of any service rendered by the corps of which he was a prominent and active member.

"On the 31st August, the advance of the British

army under Gen. Brisbane, entered Champlain, and encamped on the north side of the great Chazy river, and on the same day Maj. Gen. Mooers ordered out the militia of the counties of Clinton and Essex," *en masse.* I regret that I have not been able to procure a copy of this order, to lay before you at this time—I well recollect, it was a spirited and soul stirring document, and well calculated to arouse all the latent sparks of patriotism and love of country, and kindle them into a flame. "The regiment from Clinton county under Lt.Col. Miller immediately assembled, and on the 2d Sept. took a position on the west road near the village of Chazy; and on the 3d Gen. Wright with such of his brigade as had arrived, occupied a position on the same road, about eight miles in advance of this place. On the 4th the enemy having brought up his main body to Champlain, took up his line of march for Plattsburgh. The Rifle corps under Lieut. Col. Appling on the lake road, fell back as far as Dead Creek, blocking up the road in such a manner as to impede the advance of the enemy as much as possible. The enemy advanced on the 5th, within a few miles of Col. Appling's position, and finding it too strong to attack, halted, and caused a road to be made west into the Beekmantown road, in which the light brigade under Gen. Powers advanced; and on the morning of the 6th, about 7 o'clock, attacked the militia, which had at this time increased to nearly 700, under Gen. Mooers; and a small detachment of regulars under Major Wool, about seven miles from this place. After the first fire, a considerable part of the militia broke and fled in every direction. Many however, manfully stood their ground, and with the small corps of Major Wool, bravely contested the ground against five

times their number, falling back gradually, and occupying the fences on each side of the road, till they arrived within a mile of the town, when they were reinforced by two pieces of artillery under Capt. Leonard; and our troops ocupying a strong position behind a stone wall, for some time stopped the progress of the enemy."

At this point, one of the finest specimens of discipline ever exhibited, was shown by the British troops on the occasion of the opening Capt. Leonards battery upon them. The company to which I was attached, formed a part of the left flank of our little army, and was on the rise of ground west of the road leading from Mr. Halsey's corner to Isaac C. Platt's, and about midway between the artillery and the head of the British column; and the whole scene was open to our view. Here, (at Halsey's corner,) was a battery of two field pieces, so perfectly masked by a party of the infantry, that the enemy probably was not aware of it, until it opened upon him. There a dense column of men, with a front equal to the width of the road, and extending nearly half a mile in length, pressing on with a buoyancy and determination of spirit, betokening an expectation that they would be permitted to walk into our works without much opposition. How sad the disappointment to the victorious veterans of so many bloody fields of Europe! So perfect was the motion of the troops in marching, that they seemed a great mass of living matter moved by some invisible machinery: Yet I can now almost fancy we could hear them cracking their jokes, and each claiming for himself the honor of being the first to make a lodgement in the Yankee forts; when suddenly, with the niose of thunder, the sound of a canon came booming through the air. It sent forth a

round shot which took effect near the centre of the front platoon, about breast high, and ploughed its way through, sweeping all before it, the whole length of the column; opening a space apparently several feet wide, which, however, was immediately closed as if by magic; and on the column pressed as if nothing had happened: A second shot was fired with the like effect, and similar consequences; but when the third discharge came, with a shower of grape shot, there was a momentary confusion. Immediately, however, the charge was sounded by some dozen British bugles; which through the clear and bland atmosphere of a bright September morning, was the most thrilling and spirit stirring sound that could greet a soldiers ears. In an instant of time, the men forming the advance of the column had thrown their knapsacks on either side the road, and bringing their pieces to the charge, advanced in double quick time upon our miniature battery; the guns of which, in retiring said "good bye" to the advancing foe, by spitting fire from their mouths, and sending their compliments in the shape of grape and canister shot.

What with the music of the Kentish bugles, the groans of the wounded and dying, the beauty, the grandeur, I had almost said sublimity of the scene, our whole company came to a dead halt; and there remained as if spell-bound, until the head of the enemy's column was considerably in advance of us; and until we were reminded by receiving the fire of a party of the enemy's flankers, within a few rods of us, that they would be glad to occupy the ground on which we stood—which modest request, backed by such solid arguments, we could not withstand, therefore, yielding the point, we retired after returning the compliment received from them.

"Our troops being at length compelled to retire, contested every inch of ground, until they reached the south bank of the Saranac, where the enemy attempted to pursue them, but was repulsed with loss.

The loss of the British in this skirmish, was Col. Wellington, and a Lieut. of the 3d Buffs and two Lieutenants of the 58th killed; and one Captain and one Lieutenant of the 58th light company wounded, together with about 100 privates killed and wounded, while that on our part, did not exceed twenty-five. The corps of Riflemen under Col. Appling, and detachment under Capt. Sproul, fell back from their position at Dead Creek in time to join the militia and regulars just before they entered the village, and fought with their accustomed bravery."

"The British got possession of that part of the village north of the Saranac about 11 o'clock, but the incessant and well directed fire of our artillery and musketry from the forts and opposite banks, compelled them to retire before night beyond the reach of our guns." The bridge in the village, was defended during this day, by Capt. Martin I. Aikin's company of volunteers, who were stationed in the saw-mill on the south bank of the river for that purpose. [This company was composed of young men and boys of this village, most of whom were not subject to military duty, who volunteered after the the militia had gone out on the Chazy road, offered their services to Gen. Macomb, who accepted their offer, armed the company with rifles, and ordered them to repair to the Head Quarters of Gen. Mooers and report for duty.]

"The enemy arrived towards night with his heavy artillery and baggage on the lake road, and crossed the beach, where he met with a warm re-

ception from our row-gallies; and it is believed, suffered a heavy loss in killed and wounded. On our side, Lieut. Duncan of the Navy lost an arm by a rocket, and three or four men were killed by the enemy's artillery. The enemy encamped on the ridge west of the town, his right near the river, and occupying an extent of nearly three miles, his left resting on the lake about a mile north of the village. From the 6th, until the morning of the 11th, an almost continual skirmishing was kept up between the enemy's pickets, and our militia and volunteers stationed on the river, and in the mean time both armies were busily engaged—ours in strengthening the works of the forts, and that of the enemy in erecting batteries, collecting ladders, bringing up his heavy ordnance, and making other preparations for attacking the forts."

On the morning of the 7th, a body of the enemy under Capt. Noadie, attempted to cross at the upper bridge about seven miles west of the village, but were met by Capt. Vaughn's company of about 25 men, and compelled to retire with the loss of two killed, and several wounded. On the morning of the 11th, the enemy's fleet came round the Head with a light breeze from the north, and attacked ours which lay at anchor in Cumberland Bay, two miles from shore east of the fort."

Time would fail me, and your patience would tire, were I to attempt even if I were competent, a minute description of this most interesting scene.—Suffice it to say, "the action was long and bloody, but decisive, and the event such as we believe it always will be (except by accident) when our navy contends with anything like an equal force."

I will mention one circumstance for the purpose of showing the frame of mind in which the brave

McDonough entered the battle, and in whom he put his trust for success. After the enemy's fleet hove in sight, the men of his ship were assembled on the quarter deck, when he kneeled down, and in humble, and fervent prayer, commended himself, his men and the cause in which they were engaged to the God of Battles, and arose from that posture, with a calmness and serenity depicted on his brow, which showed he had received comfort and assurance from above. One other little incident, and I will proceed with my subject—During the hottest part of the battle, the hen-coop was shot away when a cock escaped and flew up into the rigging, flapped his wings, and crowed most manfully! The sailors considered this as a sure omen of success, and cheering from one end of the ship to the other, went to their work of dealing death to the enemy with redoubled exertion. The cock remained in the rigging during the whole of the engagement, ever and anon cheering the men on to greater exertion by his clear shrill voice.

"The enemy commenced a simultaneous bombardment of our works from seven batteries, from which several hundred shell and rockets were discharged, which did us very little injury; and our artillery had nearly succeeded in silencing them all before the contest on the lake was decided.

The enemy attempted at the same time to throw his main body in the rear of the fort by crossing the river three miles west of the town, near the site of Pike's cantonment. He succeeded in crossing after a brave resistance, by the Essex militia, and a few of the Vermont volunteers, in all about 350, stationed at that place who retired back a mile and a half from the river, continually pouring in upon them an incessant fire from

behind every tree; until Lieut. Sumpter brought up a piece of artillery to their support, when the enemy commenced a precipitate retreat." At this time, when the battle commenced on the lake Capt. Aiken's company was within the enemy's lines, for the purpose of attacking a picket guard, having been almost constantly employed since the morning of the 7th in reconnoitering the enemy, for the purpose of giving information to the General, and in harrassing his out posts. The General said to Capt. Aikin when giving the directions for this expedition, (as we afterwards learned,) you will *attack* and *take* the picket guard at Thorns; however, on arriving at the place designated, it was found the guard had had been some time withdrawn. While resting his company near this place, the sound of heavy ordnance reached his ears, and presuming an attack upon the forts had commenced, he took up his line of march for the south side of the river; to accomplish which, it was necessary for him to cross the river, some distance above Pike's contonment. No sooner had he reached the south bank, than he heard the rattling of small arms at the ford, where the enemy was attempting to cross, and immediately joined his brethren from Essex and Vermont, and retired with them befor the enemy, until he commenced his retreat.

"The Vermont volunteers who had hastened to the scene of action on the first alarm, fell upon the enemy's left flank, and succeeded in making many prisoners, including three officers.

"Had the British remained on the south side of the river 30 minutes longer, he must have lost nearly the whole detachment that crossed. Our loss in this affair was five killed and eight or ten wounded, some mortally.

"Immediately on ascertaining the loss of the fleet, Sir George Provost ordered preparations to be made for the retreat of the army, and set off himself, with a small escort for Canada, a little afternoon. The main body of the enemy, with the artillery and baggage, were taken off in the afternoon and the rear guard consisting of the light Brigade, started at day break and made precipitate retreat; leaving their wounded and a large quantity of provisions, fixed amunition, shot, shells, and other public stores, in the different places of deposite about their camp. They were pursued some distance by our troops, and many prisoners taken; but owing to the very heavy and incessant rain, we were compelled to return. The enemy lost upon land more than 1000 men, in killed, wounded, prisoners, and deserters, while our aggregate loss did not exceed one hundred and fifty."

Gen. Mooers took the field immediately on the appearance of the militia, in pursuance of his order, and was constantly and actively engaged, until after the retreat of the enemy from the place. An arrangement was entered into between himself and Gen. Macomb, that he (Gen. Macomb) should retain the command of the regular troops, and the works, while Gen. Mooers (who by his rank was entitled to the command of the whole force and defence of the place) should have the command and direction of the militia and volunteers; He accordingly soon after being driven to the south bank of the Saranac, established his Head Quarters at Salmon River village, for the purpose of organizing the militia and volunteers as they came in from the east and south, and also with a view of being in a situation to fall upon the rear of the enemy in case he should, as was most probable, attack the forts on

the south side. From this place, the following general Order was published on the eighth of September:

HEAD QUARTERS, SALMON RIVER,
SEPT. 8, 1814.

The General is not insensible to the merits and patriotism of those, who, upon the approach of hostile forces upon this frontier, have gallantly flown to the defence of their country, and who under his command, still continue steadfastly to oppose the progress of the enemy. The General regrets that there are some, who, lost to patriotism and to honor after coming forward in obedience to his call, fled at the first approach of the enemy, and afterwards basely disbanded themselves, and returned to their homes; thereby disgracing themselves, and furnishing to their fellow soldiers an example of all that brave men detest and abhor. The General is determined to have all deserters punished in the most exemplary manner, and all officers and others are directed to bring back such as are attempting to escape.

Those brave men of the militia and volunteer corps, who manfully kept their posts, and fought the enemy on their retreat, before a far superior force, for the distance of nearly seven miles, deserves the General's warmest thanks, and the love and gratitude of their country.

The cool, intrepid, and admirable skill and good order, displayed by the small detachment of less than 300, regulars under that excellent officer Maj. Wool, was highly honorable to themselves, and furnishes an example worthy of our future imitation.

The General cannot avoid noticing, that the determined resistance by Capt. Vaughan and his small band at the upper bridge, which obliged a much su-

perior force of the enemy to retire with loss, was both honorable to himself and the men under his command. Captain Aikin's company of Riflemen, and others of the volunteers, have displayed thro'-out, a degree of gallantry in opposing the enemy, and of enterprise and boldness, in reconnoitering him under all circumstances, highly gratifying to the General, and which merits his warmest thanks. Let every man strive to do his duty at this crsis as it will be much easier to retain our present position than to regain it after it is lost.

By order Maj. Gen. Mooers,

R. H. WALWORTH, *Aid D'Camp.*

Many interesting events transpired, many deeds of bravery and daring were performed, and many hair breadth escapes occurred, during the seige, but more particularly on the 11th. Some of which I will endeavor to lay before you.

Capt. Mc Glassin of the 15th regiment, with 50 men, crossed the river at midnight, and drove off a working party of 150 men, and defeated a covering party of the same number, who were constructing a battery on the right of the enemy's line near the river, within 500 yards of Fort Brown, killing one officer and six men in the charge, and wounding many. After destroying the works he retired in good order to the fort without the loss of a single man.

Some time during the seige, Mr. Abel Chamberlin and another individual, whose name has escaped me, procured leave of absence from their Captain for the purpose of visiting their families, some distance within the British lines. They divested themselves of all the habiliments of a soldier, and pursuing their way, arrived in the neighborhood of their homes about dark, when within a short distance of

Chamberlin's house, they discovered a British picket guard, which they avoided, and on entering the house, found the officer of the guard had taken up his quarters there, and was then in the next room. They were apprehensive some one of the family might inadvertantly expose them by asking questions &c., and therefore determined to make the officer a prisoner, and take him to the American camp, after taking a survey of the place, Chamberlin and his companion provided themselves with such weapons as were most ready. One had a large butcher knife the other a stout cudgel; they entered the room and informed the officer he was a prisoner, and so long as he was obedient to their requirements, he should be kindly treated; but the first attempt to escape, or the first sound of his voice, should be the signal for his instant death; and suited the action to the word by a flourish of the butcher knife: The gentleman concluded to accept their terms, and after changing his dress, marched with them to the American camp, where he was received and treated as a gentleman, and prisoner of war.

Three men of Aikin's company volunteered one day, to cross the river for the purpose of giving the company a supply of liquor. They crossed on to Mr. Griffin's farm, where they knew his goods were deposited when removed from the village. Two of them entered the building, which was immediately under a steep and high hill, and left the other outside, to give notice if any cause of alarm should arise. The two men had scarcely entered the building when the third discovered a British sentinel walking his "weary round" on the top of the hill, the alarm was given by both sentinels at the same moment—the British guard turned out and fired upon them, while our boys were making the best of their

way across the river, bringing with them however, the canteens, which they had filled with cherry rum. On reaching the south bank, they returned the fire of the enemy; gave them three cheers, and joined their company.

The names of these individuals, are Frederick P. Allen, Melancton W. Travis, and John Williams.

On the 11th, Major Joseph Skinner, of the Clinton militia, was taken prisoner by the enemy, and retaken by his friends under the following circumstances:

He was returning from the Fort, where he had been in the discharge of some duty, to Salmon River, while the enemy were driving us towards the same place from Pike's cantonement. A party of the enemy had gained the main Salmon river road unobserved by him, and the first intimation he had of being in the rear of the enemy, he was surrounded by this party; taken forcibly from his horse, his sword and money taken from him and given to one of the party, who monnted the horse, and rode off at full speed. The Major protested against their robbing him of his money, and insisted as he was a prisoner of war, he was entitled to be treated as such; the only satisfaction he received however, was a blow from the butt end of a musket, which laid him prostrate. On recovering from the effects of this blow, he was made to march with great speed towards the river. The party was soon discovered, and pursued, by a party of the Essex militia, under Capt. Abraham Aiken; and a constant fire kept up upon it, until it reached the river; when Capt. Aikin discovered that the individual in blue clothing whom he had supposed was a wounded British officer, was no other than his old acquaint-

ance Maj. Skinner, who, by this time, was half way across the river; with a British soldier holding on to each arm: Capt. Aiken, and his orderly sergeant John Cuyler, brought their pieces to the face, and fired—all three fell, and were carried down the stream together; very soon however, Maj. Skinner disengaged himself from his dead enemies, and came to land on the American side, where he was greeted with cheers by his friends; and they in turn received his most cordial and hearty thanks, for having thus timely, and providentially saved him from the horrors of a Montreal or Quebec prison. Several of the party surrendered themselves prisoners of war, and were brought into the fort by Capt. Aikin.

It is proper to remark, that this party of the enemy, was commanded by a sergeant, and that Major Skinner would, probably have received different treatment from a commissioned officer of the British army.

On the same day, Hazen Mooers, with two others, fell in with, and captured a party of five of the enemy, and brought them, together with their arms to the fort.

On the 13th September, Gen. Mooers disbanded the Militia and volunteers, and published the following General Order:

HEAD QUARTERS PLATTSBURGH,
September 13th, 1814

GENERAL ORDERS.

The sudden, unexpected and dastardly retreat of the enemy, renders it unnecessary that those patriotic militia and volunteers, who have so gallantly defended their country from invasion, should longer be detained from their homes. The General therefore makes known to the militia under his command

and the volunteers of the state of Vermont, that they may return to their homes, with the thanks of their General, and the reflection that they have deserved the gratitude of their country. Those few who basely deserted their standard, and returned to their homes without leave in time of danger, will meet their reward, by being despised as cowards, not deserving to be freemen. Had the enemy remained a day or two longer, we should have been enabled to have carried trouble and confusion into his camp. The spirit and emulation of the volunteers, show to their country, and to the enemy what may be expected in case of any future invasion of this frontier. The General tenders his thanks to General Strong, and the officers and volunteers of the state of Vermont in general, for their orderly conduct, and their promptness to meet the enemy on all occasions, and on the shortest notice: And he congratulates all who have been under his command as well as his country, on the total defeat, discomfiture and disgrace of the enemy in his attack on this place, both by water and by land.

By order Maj. Gen. Mooers.

R. H. WALWORTH, *Aid De Camp.*

I have before remarked, that the whole American force on land, on the morning of the 6th was only 1500 effective men of the regular troops, and about 700 militia. The number of militia and volunteers, was however, constantly increasing from this time up to the 11th, when perhaps they might have numbered between two and three thousand, while the British army was full FOURTEEN thousand strong, as will appear from the following detailed account of the several regiments and corps, of which it was camposed; collected at the time from sources entitled to full credit.

LIST OF REGIMENTS AND CORPS.

4 Troops 19th light dragoons			300
4 companies royal artillery			400
1 brigade rocketteers			25
1 brigade royal sappers and miners			75
1st Brigade	27th Regiment 1st battallion	900	
	48th regiment	900	
	5th	1000	
	3d or buffs	900	3700
2d Brigade	88th	1000	
	39th	900	
	76th 3d battallion	900	
	27th 3d battallion	800	3600
3d Brigade	8th or Kings 2d battallion	900	
	13th	600	
	49	600	
	6th	1000	3100
Light Brigade	Murons Regt. (Swiss)	1200	
	Canadian Chasseurs	900	
	Voltigeurs	550	
	Frontier Light Infantry	150	2800
			14000

As a matter of reference and of interest to some I subjoin the following list of the principal officers of the British army under the command of. Lieut Gen. Sir George Provost, at the siege of Plattsburgh.

Lt. Gen. Sir George Provost, Commander in Chief.
Maj. Gen. DeRottenburg, Second in Command.
Maj. Gen. Robertson Commanding first Brigade.
Maj. Gen. Powers, Commanding second Brigade.
Maj. Gen. Brisbane, Commanding third Brigade.
Maj. Gen. Baynes, Adjutant General.
Sir Sidney Beckwith, Quarter Master General.
Col. Hughs, Chief Engineer.
Maj. Sinclair, Commanding officer of Artillery.

Lieutenant Col. Tryall, Assistant Adjutant General.
Capt. Burke, Deputy Assistant Adjutant General.
Col. Murray, Assistant Quarter Master General.
Maj. Montgomery do do do do
Capt. Davis, Dept. Asst. Quarter Master General.

I have now Sir, hastily, and with much brevity, run through the Battle of Plattsburgh. I am fully aware that the sketch I have drawn, is a very imperfect one. Many interesting circumstances occurred during the seige, which should live on the historic page, but the time I have been able to devote to the discharge of this duty, has been barely sufficient to collect and arrange the facts now laid before you. I have purposely omitted any attempt at a description of the Naval engagement on the lake, which shed so bright a lustre upon our Navy, and its heroes; as that of itself, would be sufficient to occupy another hour of your time.

The immediate cause of this battle was, most unquestionably, the withdrawal of Izard's army from this frontier; and a desire on the part of the enemy, to penetrate our country as far as Crown Point, and Ticonderoga, and there entrench himself in those strong holds, until by an attack on the city of New-York, he could form a junction between his two armies through the Hudson, and thus sever the communication between the States. In this intention, however, thanks to an overruling Providence, and the brave men who periled their lives in the defence of our country, he was disappointed.

In looking for, and tracing the effects of this battle, we may easily loose ourselves in the field of speculation, but of this, one thing we are certain, the Battle of Plattsburgh gave us a consequence as a nation, among the powers of Europe, which we did not before possess, and had its full share of in-

fluence in bringing about the Treaty of Peace between the two Governments, which was signed at Ghent, in December following.

It was considered by our own country and government, an event of the greatest importance, as is manifest from the resolutions passed by our National and State Legislatures, expressive of their feelings on the subject. For the purpose of showing the light in which this event was viewed by the state and Nation, I crave your indulgence, while I present you with copies of those resolutions.

"Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled: That the thanks of Congress be, and they are hereby presented to Brigadier General Macomb, and through him, to the officers and men under his command, for their gallantry and good conduct, in defeating the enemy at Plattsburgh on the 11th September, repelling with 1500 men, aided by a body of militia and volunteers from New York and Vermont, a British veteran army, greatly superior in number. And that the President of the United States, be requested to cause a gold medal to be struck, emblematical of this triumph, and presented to Brigadier Gen. Macomb."

"Resolved, by the People of the State of New-York, represented in Senate and Assembly: That Brig. Gen. Macomb of the army of the United States, and Maj. Gen. Mooers of the militia of this State, and Maj. Gen. Strong of the Vermont volunteers, for their conduct at the Battle of Plattsburgh, are entitled to the gratitude of their country, and the Legislature present to them respectively a sword."

Resolved. That Commodore Mc Donough, in maintaining the honor of the American flag, on

Lake Champlain against the superior force of hostile fleet, is entitled to the gratitude of his country, and the legislature present him with a sword, and one thousand acres of land."

In pursuance of one of the foregoing resolutions, His Excellency Gov. Tompkins, presented to Gen. Mooers, in the capitol, in the city of Albany, the sword voted to him by the state, at which time His Excellency made the following address to the audience, assembled to witness the interesting ceremony:

Fellow Citizens—The Senate and Assembly of this State have directed me to communicate their approbation of the conduct and services of officers, who distinguished themselves in the late war; and to present to them, memorials of public approbation and gratitude. I avail myself of this occasion to discharge in part, the trust your represensatives have confided to me.

In entering upon the performance of this interesting duty, the occasion impressively requires a fervent acknowledgement of gratitude to the Great Arbiter of nations for having inspired so many patriots and heroes, to devote their services, and their lives to the cause of freedom, and for having crowned our efforts in two successive struggles for independence, with signal success.

And addressed Gen. Mooers as follows: Sir—The Senate and Assembly of this state, penetrated with a high sense of your services thro' the course of the late war have requested me to present to you a sword. Although your revolutionary sacrifices and merits are preserved in the recollections of your countrymen, yet the more immediate inducement to this distinguishing mark of public approbation, was your eminently brave conduct at Plattsburgh, in the campaign of 1814. One prominent object of the enemy in that campaign, was to penetrate with his northern army, the

waters of Lake Champlain, and by a simultaneous attack on the city of New York, form a junction through the Hudson, and thus sever the communication between the States. Situated as we then were, no event would have been so fatal to the union and independence of the country, as success in his enterprize. When we reflect, with what confidence his northern army advanced, and on the vast superiority of his land and naval forces, we are astonished, that he was not crowned with an easy and immediate victory. A severe but triumphant contest, terminated in the conquest of his whole fleet. His land troops, were also driven by a small corps of regulars, and an inconsiderable body of New-York militia, and Vermont volunteers, to a precipitate retreat. The deeds of Commodore Mc Donough and his gallant comrades, have crowned them with imperishable renown, and the conduct of our land forces, both in resisting the assaults of the enemy, and in annoying him in his flight, reflected the highest honor on the officers and soldiers. The inestimable advantages to this state, and to the nation, of that glorious victory, are duly estimated, and the names of those commanders who co-operated in achieving it, will live long in the recollection of a magnanimous and grateful people—Accept Sir, this trophy, awarded by your fellow citizens, as an acknowledgement of the meritorious and distinguished part you took on that occasion, and with the sword, receive an assurance of my most respectful regard.

To which Gen. Moers replied as follows: Sir—I am deeply impressed on this occasion, and wish not too disguise my sensations of gratitude to the constituted authorities of this State, for the honor they have conferred upon me, and sensibly feel my inability to express to your Excellency suitable acknowledgements. In early youth I entered into the revolutionary war, at the close of which I retired to the banks of the Champlain, where the achievements to which your Excellency refers took place. I have passed through different grades of office in the militia, to the rank I now hold. The duties enjoined on me by law, and the orders of your Excellency, the rights and liberties of my country, conspired together to rouse me into more than common energy on the occasions to which your

Excellency has particularly referred. I called my division into service, and co-operated with the regular troops to repel the invading foe. That my conduct, and that of my companions in arms should be so favorably noticed by your Excellency, and the Hon. the Senate and Assembly, with an unanimity peculiarly gratifying, excites a sensibility that I have no words to express.

I accept this token of respect Sir, and the gratifying expressions of approbation, with which your Excellency has accompanied the same, with unfeigned thanks, as well to the Honorable the Legislature, for the partial notice of my humble endeavors, as to your Excellency for the manner of communicating it, and for the continued confidence you Sir, reposed in me. And may the honor be ascribed to that invisible being that governs the ways of men and of nations.

Your Excellency's constant parental attention to the means of securing our exposed frontier, and your public and distinguished services have not only entitled you Sir, to mine, but to the applause and gratitude of the whole country.

In conclusion—I trust, I may be permitted to read the following resolution of Congress, and the subsequent proceedings under it, without subjecting myself to the charge of vanity or egotism.

Resolved, By the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled,—That the President of the United States be, and he is hereby authorized. to cause to be delivered to Martin I. Aiken, Azariah C. Flagg, Ira A. Wood, Gustavus A. Bird, James Trowbridge, Hazen Mooers, Henry K. Averill, St. John B. L. Skinner, Frederick P. Allen, Hiram Walworth, Ethan Everest, Amos Soper, James Patten, Bartemus Brooks, Smith Bateman, Melancton W. Travis, and Flavel Williams, each one Rifle, promised them by General Macomb, while commanding the Champlain Department, for their gallantry and patriotic services as a volunteer corps, during the siege of Plattsburgh in September, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, on each of which said Rifles, there shall be a plate containing an appropriate inscription.

(Approved 20th May, 1826.)

WAR DEPARTMENT,
WASHINGTON May 4th. 1827.

SIR—By a joint Resolution of Congress, approved the 20th of May 1826, the President of the United States is authorized to cause to be delivered to Martin I. Aiken, and others, each one rifle, promised them by Gen. Macomb, while commanding the Champlain Department, for their gallantry and patriotic services as a volunteer corps, during the siege of Plattsburgh in September, one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, of which resolution a copy is herewith enclosed.

In the fulfillment of the intentions of Congress as expressed by the resolution, I have thought it very proper and suitable, that you should be selected on the occasion to present the rifles to the individuals to whom they are awarded, especially as you bore so distinguished a part in the defence of Plattsburgh, and I have therefore to request that you will take upon yourself the pleasing service, as I am sure it must be, of presenting the rifles to the brave volunteers named in the resolution, who came forward so patriotically in the defence of their country, upon the trying emergency alluded to, and who by their conduct on that occasion merited the ARMS OF HONOR promised to them by their commander, and confirmed to them by the Legislature of the Union.

Colonel Bomford of the Ordnance Office has been directed to cause the rifles to be delivered to you at Plattsburgh.

I am very respectfully Sir, your obedient. servant
JAMES BARBOUR, Sc'cy of War.

Maj. Gen. MOOERS, Plattsburgh N. Y.

On presenting the rifles under the foregoing resolution, Gen. Mooers delivered the following address:

Captain Martin I. Aiken and his associates in arms, GENTLEMEN—By a resolution of Congress approved the 20th May 1826, the President of the United States was authorized to cause to be delivered to Martin I. Aikin and others, each one rifle, for their gallantry and patriotic services as a volunteer corps, during the siege of Plattsburgh in September 1814; in pursuance of which resolution, the rifles mentioned, have been forwarded to, preceded by a request from the Hon. the Secretary of War, that I would

aid in carrying into effect the resolution of Congress, by presenting them to you. And the opportunity thus kindly afforded me of performing the duty of putting into your hands these honorable tokens of your country's approbation, as well as of testifying my respect for your laudable exertions and patriotic services is most cheerfully embraced.

It would have been gratifying if all those named in the resolution could have met on this occasion. It would have caused a happy sensation, to have witnessed at this time, and at this place, so near the scene of operations, all those who with youthful ardor and alacrity so promptly met our country's foes. But alas! that invisible Hand that shields the brave in the hour of danger, has called some of your number from time into eternity; and the fortunes of others have led them from this to other and distant parts of our happy country.

Your corps, although not numerous, was efficient in the execution of its duties, and was worthy of the honorable notice of Congress. And may the spirit and patriotic feeling with which you took the field on that memorable occasion, ever glow in your bosoms, whenever the rights or liberties of our country shall again be assailed.

And to the fulfillment of the intentions of government, and in its behalf, I now present you, Martin I. Aiken, Ira A. Wood, Henry K. Averill, St. John B. L. Skinner, Frederick P. Allen and Hiram Walworth, and each of you individually, the rifle awarded you, as a token of approbation of your conduct and patriotism.

To which Capt. Aiken replied as follows: SIR—In behalf of my associates as well as in justice to my own feelings, I give you thanks for the very friendly manner in which you have been pleased to present us these tokens of the approbation of our country. We have indeed reason to be gratified, when we reflect how many of our fellow citizens rendered important and signal services to their country in the recent contest with a neighboring nation, and how few of them have been thus honorably noticed by their government. But the consciousness of having at all times discharged his duty towards his country, is the patriots best reward. These arms, Sir, these IMAGES OF WAR, shall be

preserved by us with a care expressive of the high sense we entertain of the intention of the Government in bestowing them; and the sight of our arms, as we hope, will be to each of us a sacred memento of the lasting debt of gratitude we owe to our country.

Please to accept, Sir, for yourself the assurances of our profound respect; and that your life may by long preserved as it has been hitherto, a life of usefulness to your country, is our constant and ardent wish.

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