

Captain William Hendricks

and the

March to Quebec

(1775)

By

Robert Grant Crist

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For guidance in advance and for constructive scrutiny of the manuscript this amateur thanks deeply three friendly professionals: the good Doctors Whitfield Bell, Hubertis Cummings and Henry Young. For suggesting the work and paying the costs of its publication, for his daughter, his friendly counsel and a hundred favors during twenty years, the author thanks John E. Myers, Esq.



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by

ROBERT GRANT GRIST

PREFACE

In Camp Hill, Cumberland County, stands a marker erected by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission commemorating the Hendricks Riflemen, who earned their glory at the very outset of the Revolutionary War. Six months before the year of independence began the riflemen had marched a thousand miles, fought, and disappeared into a haze of oblivion which never has really cleared. Except for the marker and an occasional word in a reference book, the tale of their valor is forgotten.

Yet Hendricks' men were among the first half dozen military units from beyond the Hudson to join the Continental Army, and the Hendricks Company was the first of these whose captain led it into an attack on the enemy. They have been neglected because the first year of the War in general was a Yankee affair recorded principally by New England historians. So thoroughly have those regional authors done their national histories that the common impression is that the events of 1775 were exclusively Yankee affairs provoked by improper Bostonians and won by farmer-fighters living within range of Paul Revere's voice.

Illustrative of this misleading New England emphasis is a footnote in "The March to Quebec," a collection of journals which Kenneth Roberts edited as a by-product of his research for "Arun-del," the fictional version of the American invasion of Canada. Roberts, working with New England manuscripts to the neglect of Pennsylvania source materials, states: "Nothing is known of the career of Captain Matthew Smith [whose company raised in Paxton, Pennsylvania, participated at the side of Hendricks'] after the retreat from Canada." The fact of the matter is, however, that reference works as ubiquitous as the printed "Pennsylvania Archives" trace Smith to the State's Supreme Executive Council two years after the retreat, to the prothonotary post in Northumberland County in 1780, and to a rousing military funeral in 1794, with several stops in between these events.

William Hendricks was not always forgotten. In February, 1776, the most famous men in America listened to accounts of his bravery. They heard the Reverend Doctor William Smith, founder and president of the College of Philadelphia, eulogize him in an address before a joint gathering representing the General Assembly

of Pennsylvania and the Congress of the United Colonies. This was Dr. Smith's statement:

"Captain Hendricks was known to me from his infancy. No fatigue or duty ever discouraged him. He paid the strictest attention to his company and was ambitious that they should excel in discipline, sobriety and order."

Here is the story of that brave captain and his eighty-four riflemen.

CHAPTER I

It was a time for great rejoicing that first week of Fall, 1776. In the capital on the Delaware the good people of Philadelphia, still exhilarated from the wine of national independence first sipped only two months before, were sampling another heavy draught—life under a new and radically democratic State government which had just replaced an of ttimes unpopular proprietorship. One incongruous event diluted the pure air of celebration.

Into the festive city shuffled a short column of ragged, weary men. After debarking at Elizabeth and giving parole, they had headed for home across the Susquehanna by way of the capital to collect back pay and a word of news. As they limped along beneath the curious glance of well-dressed Quaker City burghers, they craned thin necks about in search of two men they knew there—old neighbors and delegates of Cumberland County in the Assembly, Jonathan Hogue and Robert Whitehill.

When the twenty-one parolees finally encountered their representatives, the exchange began of fourteen months of news. For neighbor Hogue the ex-soldiers could bring word from Lieutenant John Hogue, a prisoner in Quebec. They could give Whitehill first hand accounts of the death of his nephew, John Harris, and of William Hendricks, who was Whitehill's nearest neighbor back in Lowther Manor. For thirty-seven other homes they bore the information that their men-folk, as British-born subjects, had been impressed into the service of the King under threat of trial for the treason of rebellion. For five other homes they could tell only of death.

Their captivity had dated from the last day of the year, 1775, when the alert commander of the fortress of Quebec, Sir Guy Carleton, ordered a sally from the Palace Gate upon the rear of the American assault force. Catching the overextended line of attackers at its tail, the British sortie had methodically rolled up the column. At the head, seething with anger, stood the acting commander, Captain Daniel Morgan. Some of his Frederick County, Virginia, wrath presumably fell on the absent ones. In this case these were another column, New Yorkers, who had failed to fight to the rendezvous point. Unknown to Morgan, the commander of the other column, General Richard Montgomery, had been killed just at the moment he launched his attack. Montgomery

marched straight to Valhalla, but his column without him had retreated forthwith.

In addition to Morgan, 424 besiegers were captured that day, including eighty-six from Pennsylvania. The latter numbered 60 from Hendricks' Company and 26 from Matthew Smith's. Thirty-seven of Hendricks' men were impressed into British service, and the remaining 23, who as second generation Americans were less vulnerable to threats of treason trials, become prisoners of war. Two of these, Thomas Gibson and John Blair, escaped. Their departure left the twenty-one, who exchanged life in prison for a promise not to "do or say anything contrary to the interests of his Majesty or his government."

Before their parole the men had fared better than might have been expected in an age not noted for its humanity. Sir Guy Carleton, for example, issued them rations comparable to the food given his own garrison. In January one of his first acts was to arrange a decent burial for Montgomery, Hendricks and three other officers. In August his last act was to send gifts of wine and sheep to the departing prison transports.

Boredom and disease were the enemies. Accentuated by the continuing siege of the city, the food shortage reduced the resistance of the captives to various illnesses. The lack of green vegetables brought on nutritional diseases until the rhubarb was gathered in May. Respiratory troubles added to the misery, as snow drifted twenty feet deep and thermometers showed sixty degrees of frost.

Of all ailments scurvy was the most awesome. A diarist recalled: "limbs contracted, large blue and black blotches appeared on bodies . . . gums became black . . . morbid flesh fell away . . . teeth loosened and in several instances fell away."

The Church in several instances lightened the burdens of the good Presbyterian prisoners. Lieutenant Francis Nichols, who had been second in command in Hendricks' Company, contracted scarlet fever and was sent to the Hotel-Dieu to be cared for by the Nursing Sisters. Afterward he confided: "I feigned myself sick after I recovered for fear of being sent back."

One of the Teaching Sisters, having been persuaded that Gibson's bright cheeks were, as he pretended, the results of a fever,

gave him a shilling to purchase medicine. He used the money to buy gunpowder to blow his cell door in an abortive escape attempt.

A final act of charity came from the Bishop himself when the captives were preparing to sail home. From the episcopal stores came several gifts, including a quantity of tea. With what must have been painful recollection they remembered a pledge taken months before "not to use it during the contest" and returned the tea. With good will His Excellency sent coffee as a substitute.

For their twenty-one constituents Hogue and Whitehill could recount first hand knowledge of many great events occurring between their departure in July, 1775, and their return in September of the following year. In July, 1776, one year after the eighty-five men had marched away, the other 300,000 Pennsylvanians finally heard their delegates in Congress vote them independence from Great Britain. To demonstrate its determination to preserve that freedom the former Quaker Colony was placing 4,824 "regulars" in the Continental Service that year, of whom no less than 2,178 were men in regiments commanded by colonels who lived in Carlisle, the seat of Cumberland County. When those 84 had marched with Hendricks, Cumberland had not exhausted its patriotism. Since then support had continued to grow for a new government, a new relation with the other counties in Pennsylvania, and a new independent nation in America.

These ragged survivors were dissonance in a new symphony, symbols of a major failure in a campaign now abandoned. The invasion had been recalled, and the plan to woo the "Fourteenth Colony" replaced. A new war was at hand.

CHAPTER II

When the twenty-one veterans were young recruits, the temper of the Province had been quite different. Very many Pennsylvanians, in fact, were deaf to the "shot heard 'round the world." Even the slaughter near Bunker Hill in June, 1775, had left much of the Colony unmoved. Boston in mid-1775 lay a fortnight's ride away—as remote as Sarajevo in 1914 or Munich a generation later. Pennsylvania did not have its Pearl Harbor until 1777 when Howe and his Hessians finally stood on the Brandywine.

The publicly apathetic men of '75 included not only the one-third of the population which was either pro-British or resolutely neutral throughout the whole war but also a host of latter-day heroes. "Mad Anthony" Wayne, of Brandywine fame, even after Bunker Hill expressed abhorrence for independence and asked publicly for reconciliation with England. Assemblymen all swore allegiance to George III, promising to oppose "all traitorous conspiracies and attempts whatsoever." Delegates from Pennsylvania in the Continental Congress received unequivocal warnings from Assembly to oppose moves tending to separate the colony from England.

Though many men were deaf, others heard the volleys of April 19, 1775. Cumberland County received the word in all likelihood by way of Philadelphia, which itself learned the news from one Israel Bissel, who galloped into town five days after the events at Lexington. Stirred by his tidings, the inflammable city "Radicals," with whom the ascendant political force in Cumberland County was allied, called a meeting which created a "Military Association." This group asked sympathizers in other counties to raise and arm volunteer companies of men.

County by county the frontier responded politically, by supporting the aims of the Yankees, and militarily, by offering them armed men. The piecemeal support was at first the only feasible mechanism, since the reactionary Provincial government was still sitting adamantly, debating further negotiation with the English.

Arming large numbers of men, of course, meant that the rebellion could become revolution. It made impossible the quick quelling of the armed uprising by decisive Redcoat action. Perhaps more important, the prompt organization of military companies

by the rebels prevented the enrollment of Loyalist militia in significant numbers.

Pennsylvania's "Associators," given their euphemistic name because the Quakers would brook nothing termed "militia," served their purpose simply by existing. They forced all citizens to show their colors. They pulled the perch from the mugwump. If you didn't "associate," you were suspect. If you were suspected, you did not openly prepare to fight in the Loyalist cause.

John Armstrong, viewing the troops with a military eye sharpened by field experience in earlier wars, missed the point that pivotal May when he wrote "the Associators are a seedy lot poorly equipped and possessing a military spirit more inclined to manifest itself in resolutions than in fighting." Their importance was more political than military.

In Cumberland County on May 5 nineteen townships sent representatives to Carlisle to "Associate." Finding 3,000 men theoretically available but only 1,500 firearms, the officials voted to form a force of 500 to march in an emergency. Unfortunately for the men at Boston who wanted help, an "emergency" in 1775 was nothing less than an invasion of Pennsylvania itself.

With civilian "Associators" ready the war could not be lost, but neither could it be won. Defeating the British forces would require soldiers controlled by a central authority trained well and enlisted for a long period. For example, home troops in 1778 were sufficiently menacing to keep quiescent the 623 men living in Cumberland County who had secretly enlisted as underground Loyalist Associators, but they did not chase a single professional British soldier from a single seaport garrison.

To tackle the job of winning the war by fighting the Redcoats, the Congress of the United Colonies on June 14, 1775, asked Pennsylvania to raise six companies of riflemen and Maryland and Virginia two each to enter the Continental service. "Asking Pennsylvania" at this time meant summoning sympathetic men in the counties, not appealing to the Provincial Assembly. That body on June 14 was ineffective, dying, and unwilling to strike for independence.

This call for a national army before there was a nation, issued to a state which was still a colonial dependency, was answered by various individuals acting personally. Nine of them in Pennsylvania

accepted the challenge, recruited about eighty-five men each, outfitted, armed, fed and marched them 400 miles to Boston largely at their own expense. All men were enlisted for twelve months with the understanding that they could be sent to fight anywhere without regard for provincial boundaries or wishes of nervous, local politicians.

Each company was supposed to have one captain, three lieutenants, four sergeants, four corporals, one drummer, one trumpeter and sixty-eight privates. Each unit was designated by the name of the man who had been commissioned by Congress on June 25 to recruit it at \$1 per head. It might be noted that this bounty system, together with the practice by which militiamen hired substitutes to fight in their places, receives somewhat less attention than does the British use of hired Hessians. Some idea of the extent of the practice can be gained from knowing that in 1777 twenty-three of the forty-four men in a Cumberland County militia company hired substitutes. Some idea, too, of the waning of enthusiasm can be found in the records of the Second Battalion which show that the men paid 19,622 pounds as fines for non-performance of militia duty during the last three years of the War.

Two of the nine company captains lived in Cumberland County, two others west of the Susquehanna and none in the three original, conservative counties which in 1775 still controlled the government. Listed alphabetically, these were the commanders.

James Chambers, of Loudon Forge, was the man who by 1777 succeeded to command of the whole regiment in time to lead it at Brandywine for Wayne, who had meanwhile warmed to war for independence. *Robert Cluggage* commanded the troops from the Bedford end of old Cumberland County and *Michael Doudel* the boys from the Adams section of old York County. Doudel, by enlisting his men on July 1 at Gettys' Tavern (where four score and eight years later to the day a titanic battle began) was the first to swear in his men. When they entered Washington's lines on July 25 they were probably the first force from across the Hudson to reinforce the Yankees.

William Hendricks, of the Lowther Manor section of eastern Cumberland County, will figure below. *John Lowden* raised his force in Northumberland County and *Abraham Miller* in Northampton. *George Nagel*, of Berks, and *James Ross*, of Lancaster,

commanded companies which met at Reading but arrived in Boston later than Hendricks and Chambers, whose units traveled together. A veteran of the earlier war, Matthew Smith, of Paxton, commanded the ninth company. His force preceded Hendricks to Boston but thereafter shared its particular trials.

Soon after the nine companies came under Washington's control, they were designated "Thompson's Battalion," later "Thompson's Regiment," the terms used interchangeably. Colonel William Thompson, of Carlisle, brought to his command certain military experience from the French and Indian War, as well as the support inherent in his connection by marriage with the powerful Ross-Reed-Bird family. Some clue, indeed, to the recruiting procedure might be found by examining with care the genealogies of the principal officers. Captain Ross, for example, was related to his colonel's wife. Lieutenant Michael Simpson and Captain Chambers were brothers-in-law.

On the first day of 1776 "Thompson's Regiment" became "The First Regiment of the Pennsylvania Line in the Continental Service." With approximately this name it remained in existence throughout the war under various commanding officers.

The evidence suggests that Washington placed high value on the force raised by his fellow-surveyor, William Thompson, for within a few months two of the Colonel's Carlisle neighbors were named to command Continental Regiments. Robert Magaw received the Fifth and William Irvine the Sixth. Of them, Thompson wrote on January 25, 1776:

"I rejoice at the appointment of the Officers for the five

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Courtesy of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania

To finance the expedition Captain Hendricks received a draft authorized 1) Congress.

new regiments . . . The Honour of Pennsylvania is entirely safe in their hands; and when they get the regiments compleat the liberties of America will be better supported by them than ever it was, or can possibly be, by the whole Troops Raised, or to be raised in the Massachusetts. Thank God I am not a Yankey . . . keep our troops out of this damned Country if possible."

Thompson presumably turned to families of prominence to find company commanders. Hendricks qualified. His Swedish-descended grandfather, Tobias, himself was probably the third generation of his family to live in America. William's father, also Tobias, had been living in the Manor of Lowther as a representative of the Penn family for nearly forty years when the Revolution became war.

As his father had done in 1748, William Hendricks resolved to do military duty. On June 23, 1775, he accepted fifty pounds from Robert Miller to pay some of the recruiting expense. Twelve days later he raised another fifteen pounds by selling his half-interest in a tract of land on Buffalo Run, a branch of Bald Eagle Creek, in Northumberland County. The grantee, Francis Nichols, within a week became first lieutenant in the rifle company. Eighty-three others joined.

When the rolls of Hendricks' and Chambers' companies were called on July 13, 1775, about 170 men answered. With the exception of three names suggestive of German ancestry—Henry Crone, George Albright, and George Rinehart—the roster read like a census of Ulster. As was the custom, the men apparently elected the officers: George Francis, John McClellan, and Nichols. Named to draw the \$6 pay of sergeants were: Crone, of York County; Joseph Greer, whose wife walked with him all the way to Quebec; Thomas Gibson, medical student from Carlisle; and William McCoy, who was probably the man who kept a diary labeled "Hendricks' Journal" in the "Pennsylvania Archives" that records the events from the departure hour until the day that most of the men were captured.

Two privates should here be introduced, since they, like McCoy and Nichols, wrote accounts of the two companies which figure in these pages. George Morrison, of Sherman's Valley, during 1775 kept a diary of life in Hendricks' Company which corroborates other accounts. John Joseph Henry's relation, though dictated thirty-six years after the event, is of great value. Writing from the eminence

of retirement as a Lancaster County Judge, Henry told of his adventures as a volunteer participant in the Canadian invasion and supported his recollections by securing a statement as to the accuracy from his former lieutenant, Michael Simpson. The latter rose from a subordinate position in Smith's Company to the post of brigadier general before retiring to the quieter life of owner of the Susquehanna River ferry located next below John Harris'.

Hendricks appears in Henry's narrative as "tall, of mild and beautiful countenance . . . soul animated by a genuine spark of heroism," and Smith as a man "with the air of a soldier," but "illiterate, outrageously talkative," and a ruffian overly fond of liquor. Henry's disapproval of Smith expressed in 1811 may have originated in events quite separated from the year 1775, such as his participation as a principal in the Paxton Boys Affair in 1764, his resignation as prothonotary of Northumberland County, or his absence from the fighting at Quebec in 1775.

Possibly Hendricks did not select each private in advance of July 13 but simply broadcast an appeal for men to gather in Carlisle. A Philadelphia newspaper of the period said that one of the captains received so many volunteers that he devised a contest to weed out the less skillful. This unnamed captain drew with a piece of chalk the figure of a nose on a board which he placed at a distance of 150 yards. Sixty riflemen hit the target and were chosen.

The men collectively must have been a splendid force. Colonel Ganoe in the "History of the United States Army," give this evaluation: "the first troops raised by Continental authority became the backbone of the force which finally achieved independence . . . they made possible the continuance of the Revolution."

It has been suggested that Hendricks attended the College of Philadelphia and recruited some of his force from among his undergraduate friends. The inference arises from the President's statement that he knew William Hendricks "from his infancy." But the fact is that there is no mention of either Hendricks or of any of his commissioned or non-commissioned officers on the rather complete students rolls of the College. Dr. Smith and Hendricks, therefore, met somewhere else. The most likely spot, of course, was Hendricks' Tavern which Smith probably passed in 1756 and again in the 'sixties during trips to Huntingdon.

In any event, Hendricks found his men and instructed each to

bring "a good firearm, cartouch box, blanket and knapsack." A frock, open in front, of tow cloth or linen, was the principal article of clothing. Dyed the shade of a "dying leaf," it reached below the knees but was tied tight with a belt. Leggings, moccasins, and a small round hat adorned with a high tuft of deer's fur completed the outfit.

For the chief business of war the men carried a tomahawk, a scalping knife, and a long, balanced flintlock with a rifled barrel. This was the weapon which was as revolutionary as the first machine gun, tank, or airplane. Before the adoption of the rifle, when smooth-bore muskets were the soldier's weapon, the practice was to mass the men so that a storm of bullets could be discharged from the same general spot toward the same general target. Musket fire was virtually unaimed. Bullets being so indecisive, the vital tactical move was the massed bayonet charge which followed the volley. With the introduction of the rifle into the arsenal of armies the tactics of foot warfare had to be changed.

With the rifle, the infantryman could strike accurately at distances up to 300 yards. Concealed behind a bush, he could handily pick off the brilliantly uniformed troops of the King. The red coat made sense in the old tactics, its vivid hue a rallying point to companions, but it was an inviting target for a rifle.

Without the rifles the frontiersmen might actually have been a liability to the army. In the static warfare outside Boston, with their notably lax discipline, the riflemen were at best a nuisance. Washington on September 11 had to dispatch a special guard of 500 men to watch Thompson's Regiment. Thirty-three of Captain Ross's men were arrested and court-martialed because they had broken open a guard house to release some friends who, they thought, had been unfairly jailed.

At the root of the loose discipline lay the **system** of electing officers. An officer chosen by his own men was subject not only to removal but also to post-war reprisals at the hands of his old subordinates, who were all his neighbors. In this situation the dimension of a rum supply and the brawn of a commander were more effective restraints than the Articles of War. The election system bred insubordination, desertion and mutiny. Even worse, it transformed military decisions into compromises, **hedged, qualified and delayed.**

Before leaving home, Hendricks' men had cast their own bullets, storing the one-ounce balls twenty-three to a cartridge box. Each consisted of two hemispheres of lead. Being hollow, the ball flattened out on contacting human flesh, tearing through muscles, smashing bones to pulp and gouging ragged wounds from which there could be few recoveries. It was a precursor of the dreaded "dum dum" bullet, which nations have since banned from warfare as barbarous.

Although the rifle strengthened the armament of the army, it was no panacea. It could not be fitted with a bayonet. It required nineteen different operations to load and could fire no more than two shots per minute. At that rate the rifle was only half as fast as the musket. If the wind blew, it was difficult to shake powder into the pan. In damp weather firing was impossible.

CHAPTER III

The roll called, Hendricks and Chambers *set* forth down the Great Road from Carlisle. On the first day they passed Tobias Hendricks' Tavern, near a limestone spring, and at the next source of water a few hundred yards beyond, the substantial home of Robert Whitehill. The night was spent at the Ferry Landing operated by Whitehill's brother-in-law, John Harris, Jr. Harris may have told them that his son was off for Boston too, with a company raised in nearby Paxton.

That night of July 13, in bivouac on the mile-wide Susquehanna, some young men as they watched the sun settle into the valley must have asked themselves why they were leaving home anyway. Private Abraham Swaggerty gave one answer a generation later: "We thought little of pensions. Our main object was to obtain independence—which thank God was done."

Why did they go? To seek independence, yes, several kinds of independence. To farmer boys whose horizons normally did not extend beyond a stand of stumps waiting to be burned, the hike to Boston was high adventure and a chance for personal independence from endless drudgery at home. To clerks and artisans by the campfire the independence most fervently sought may have been freedom for the frontier from economic and political control by the capital on the Delaware. Perhaps, too, some wanted independence from London, particularly from the arbitrary and vexatious regulations of the Crown.

They marched slower the second day—eight miles to Hummels'-town. On July 15 the march was seventeen miles to Lebanon, and on the 16th eighteen miles to the "Sign of the King of Prussia," near Womelsdorf. By the 17th, they had covered another fourteen miles to "Riding, a county town of Berks." Here Hendricks and Chambers met four other company commanders who also within a few days would leave for Boston. On July 21 and 22 they made the 36 miles to "Allan's Town," also known as "Northampton" in this period, stopping half way at Swan's Tavern.

Sergeant McCoy reported passing "Bethlem . . . with beautiful gardens and also an elegant nunnery" before crossing the rivers "Jordan and Lehay" on the eighteen-mile leg to "Easten," where they were joined by Captain Miller's company. In the Jerseys and again in Lichfield, Connecticut, the force found diversion in tormenting

"a Ministerial tool who refused to comply with the resolves of the Continental Congress." In all, the men made fourteen stops between the Delaware and Cambridge, a distance of 303 miles.

According to Captain Chambers, the Cumberland companies arrived August 7, although McCoy puts the date a day later. Sighting the camp, they discharged their rifles and marked in their journals the end of a twenty-eight day march of 432 miles.

Camp life plainly bored the riflemen. Rather than be drilled, they hid out in advanced positions with clear views of the British lines, where they deftly picked off enemy sentries. That practice brought censure from both sides—the American command disliked the expenditure of scarce gunpowder, the British regarded killing at such long range downright unsportsmanlike.

August 26 broke the monotony. On that day Captain Chambers took fifty men and marched "without beat of drum" to Prospect Hill. There he gathered more riflemen and lead them on to "Ploughed Hill." Concealing themselves within 300 yards of the enemy lines, the men provided fire cover for 2,000 others digging a redoubt. Their mission invited a British sortie as well as fire from a floating battery. In the clash Private William Simpson, of Smith's Company, was struck in the leg. Washington himself, according to tradition, visited the young man before he died in a field hospital following amputation.

Knowing the danger of idleness, the Commander-in-chief personally arranged a shooting match to demonstrate the efficacy of aimed fire. Astonished Yankees reported that the "Southern riflemen," (men beyond the Hudson) could strike a seven-inch target on the run at 250 yards!

During August somebody not identified brought Washington's attention to a suggestion made in June that 600 men be dispatched to Quebec via the Kennebec and Chaudiere Rivers. Postponed by inclement weather, the expedition had remained but a vague plan not known to be feasible, since there were neither trails nor guides.

Yet, sending a force to Quebec would contribute to the Congressional plan of wooing Canada into the fold of rebelling colonies. Knowing that the Crown maintained only 800 men in the vastness of the "Fourteenth Colony," the Congress hoped that a military force of its own might easily seize the Canadian towns and bring them into an alliance. This they hoped to achieve before the mili-

tary commander, Sir Guy Carleton, should be able to obtain reinforcements. Congress hoped to divide and conquer. Specifically, it hoped at least to wean the French population which had had only fifteen years in which it could develop affection for the English victors.

The hope was that a strike at Quebec via the Kennebec could be kept secret and that Carleton would have concentrated his meagre forces at Montreal to meet the well-advertised advance by General Montgomery's army up the Lake Champlain route. Washington sought the opinion of Montgomery's superior, General Schuyler, by a letter on August 20, but meanwhile permitted his staff to institute planning.

In August a 34-year-old Connecticut colonel, who had participated creditably in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga, arrived in the camp outside Boston with several missions in mind. Of first importance to him was the settling of accounts with the Massachusetts Provincial Congress for personal funds spent in buying livestock to feed his troops. Of hardly less moment was the effort to secure an independent command to prove his mettle. While he pursued these missions, Benedict Arnold carried with him pressing burdens. Not only did he suffer the physical pain of gout, but also the mental anguish brought upon him by the death of his wife just two months before and the problem of rearing children aged three, six, and seven. Fortunately, he had friends in the camp, not the least being General Horatio Gates, adjutant to Washington, who prepared for the commander a plan for invading Canada via Maine.

On September 2 Schuyler's letter supporting the Kennebec venture arrived, and on the following day Washington appointed Arnold its commander. Immediately Arnold wrote Reuben Colburn, a Maine boatbuilder, ordering 200 bateaux to be ready within eighteen days to transport the proposed army up the Kennebec.

That same week ten companies of New England musketeers were selected for the march. Joined to these were three rifle companies—Hendricks', Smith's, and the company recruited in Virginia by Captain Daniel Morgan, whose men Hendricks overtook at Sussex Court House on the approach to Boston.

Sergeant McCoy in his account reports that the rifle company captains outside Boston cast lots to determine which should be the three to go with Arnold. It is not clear whether this device was

selected because there were too many volunteers or too few. Perhaps Quebec pasture looked both greener and cooler to the backwoodsmen sweltering outside Boston. On the other hand, it may be assumed that the riflemen disliked the thought of walking another five hundred miles. Lieutenant Colonel Edward Hand, of Lancaster, at the time Colonel Thompson's assistant regimental commander and after March, 1776, the commander, wrote on September 23 that "had Smith's Company been better behaved, they might probably have saved themselves a disagreeable jaunt." The belief that the riflemen went because they were ordered rather than because they volunteered is lent further credence by a letter which McClellan wrote Chambers, when the former had completed 220 miles of rough travel across Maine:

"With my best wishes, I send this to inform you that it is your indispensable duty to thank God for not permitting the devil to put it into General Washington's head to send you here . . . The sufferings are a sufficient punishment for all [the men's] sins."

So simple were the logistics, and so anxious was the commander to leave that the impetuous Arnold could send 1,050 men on their 547-mile trip three days after their selection and hardly a week after detailed planning had begun. Joseph Reed, Washington's secretary and later President of Pennsylvania, handed Arnold a proclamation, which welcomed Canadian subjects to the cause of rebellion.

CHAPTER IV

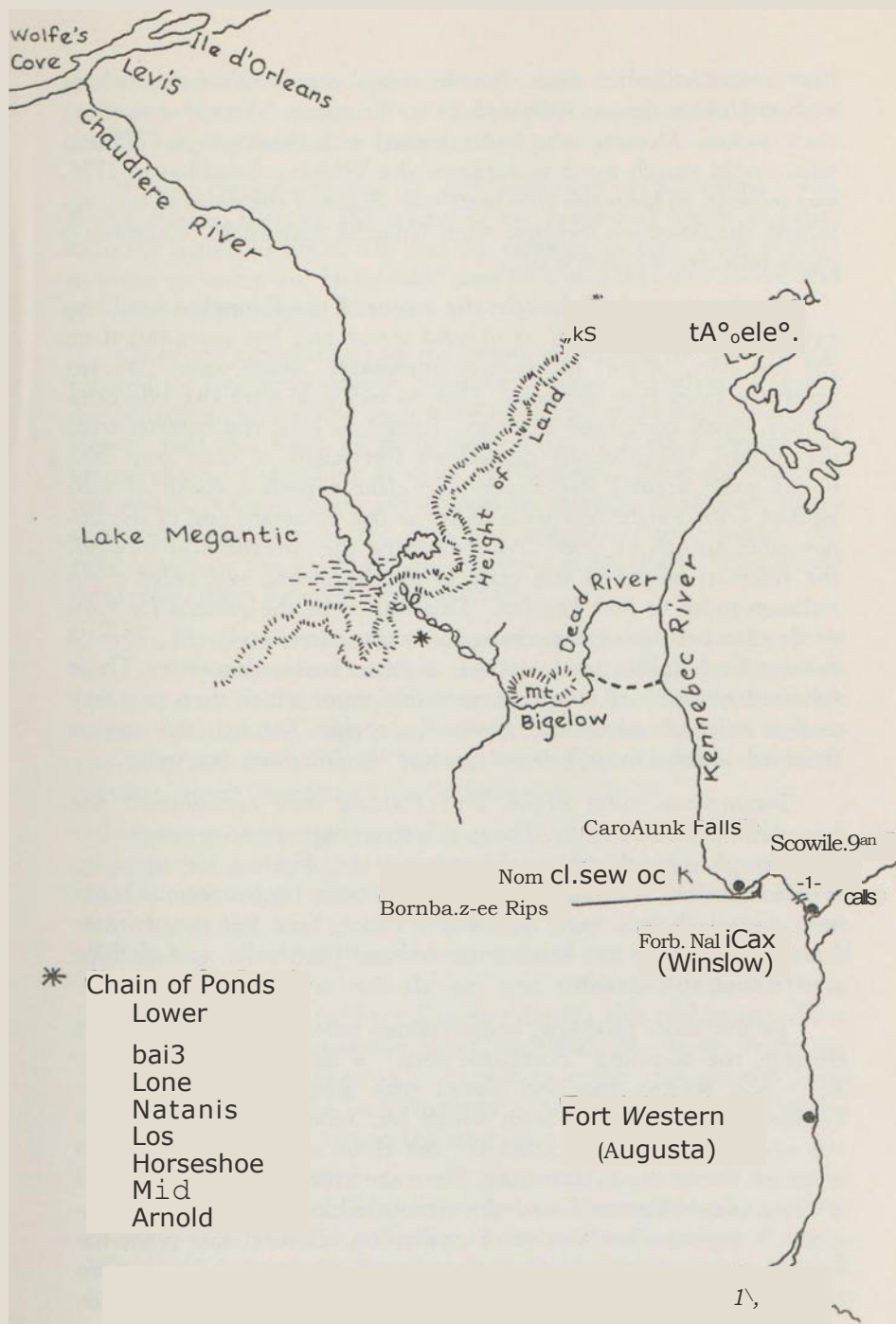
To fife and drum the little army marched out of Cambridge on September 11 in two sections: the "musket-men," as McCoy termed them, under Lieutenant Colonel Roger Enos, of Vermont, and the riflemen under Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Greene, of Rhode Island. There had been some delay: some riflemen refused to budge until they had received a month's pay of six and two-thirds dollars, and the Chaplain prayed one hour and forty-five minutes for the success of the expedition. Two days later they were spreading their tents in a field 45 miles from Boston near "Rolfe's Lane" and were awaiting the ships which would take them the rest of the distance up the coast.

Here at "Newberry" they camped for five days while Arnold sent a patrol boat to reconnoiter for the British cruisers which had been snooping offshore. By September 18 they embarked a fleet which took them in twenty-three hours the fifty leagues to the mouth of the Kennebec. Hendricks' Company was delayed because its sloop hit a rock. Transferred to the schooner "Broad Bay," they arrived quite seasick at the head of tidal navigation on the Kennebec Saturday, September 22. There at Fort Western, modern Augusta, the force found Colburn and the bateaux which he had somehow managed to construct within Arnold's time limit. The craft were flat-bottomed vessels with pointed, upturned prows and sterns. Three to five men could pole one bateau, and four could carry it.

For two days the little army reorganized and studied the best map which could be found, a draft made in 1761 by John Montessor, who had marched from Quebec to Fort Western. Unfortunately for the adventurers of 1775, the mapmaker had chosen to remain loyal to the Crown and, in fact, was in Boston serving as Howe's chief engineer.

Realizing the limitations of the sketchy Montessor map, Arnold ordered an advance party to blaze a trail. Young John Joseph Henry and four others of Smith's riflemen, together with three of Morgan's, made the reconnaissance.

During the Sunday halt there arose a disagreement in which the three rifle company commanders announced that they would receive orders only from an officer commissioned by Congress itself. This was in effect a demand that they be segregated as a command under



This map shows the land which the expedition crossed in striking north-west from the Atlantic coast of Maine to the St. Lawrence River at Quebec.

their own leadership, since Arnold *was* the only other man whose authority, like theirs, stemmed from Congress. Arnold bowed to their wishes. Morgan, who had marched with Braddock in 1775 and who would march again to suppress the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, was selected to head the rifle battalion. Some of the enlisted men resented the selection because they believed Hendricks' commission made him senior by a few days.

If any person had thought the ascent of the Kennebec would be easy, his optimism drowned in cold water and hot perspiration on the first day. A full 160 rods of impassable "white water" lay just upstream from Fort Western. First to tackle it were the rifle companies which comprised the van. Forced to haul the bateaux from the stream, the riflemen carried all forty-eight of their own 400-pound craft around the rapids. To clear a path a detail of men hacked a road eight feet wide as far as the upstream end of the unnavigable stretch of river. After carrying the bateaux and supplies, the riflemen launched the craft in the Kennebec and poled them eighteen miles to Fort Halifax. This was to be the pattern for hundreds of miles and six weeks—pole, hack, carry, and pull. Ticonic Falls at Fort Halifax made another arduous portage necessary. There followed a stretch of relatively navigable water which then gave way to five miles of shoals and protruding rocks. Through this section the men alternately poled and pushed in chin-deep, icy water.

Twenty-one miles above Fort Halifax they encountered the waterfalls at Skowhegan. There the river narrows to a twenty-five foot funnel through which the water races. Finding the gorge utterly impassable, the riflemen hoisted the boats up precipitous banks and carried them around the water which here fell twenty-three feet. By this time the bateaux needed caulking badly, and clothing was freezing stiff at night.

Twelve more plodding, bone-breaking miles brought the column through the so-called "Bombazee Rips," a section filled with potholes and sunken logs and paved with slippery moss and great boulders. Norridgewock, from which McClellan wrote a discouraging note to Chambers, called for the third major portage around a ninety foot drop in the river. Here the riflemen and the second division under Greene found the remote cabin of a pioneer woodsman. It was the last vestige of civilization. Beyond this point the forest was so utterly desolate and devoid of game that not even Indians occupied it. On October 2 the going had become so difficult

that the army advanced only one mile with its thirty-five tons of food, four tons of ammunition and thirty-six tons of leaking, battered, fresh pine bateaux on their backs.

A new danger emerged as they advanced on Carritunk Falls. Water seeping through the seams in the boats had begun to penetrate the barrels of salted fish and the casks of biscuit. Only in time to delay rationing did Hendricks' men stalk a 200-pound moose and spice their monotonous diet.

Carritunk conquered and the moose devoured, the men fought forward for five more days to cover forty miles. To advance against the stiffening current, the men were forced to wade the treacherous stream, pull the boats by their painters or by their gunwales and get purchase by clutching at roots and branches along the banks of the stream. Oozing matter on the bottom, mixed with slippery stones and deep holes, tripped the men into water over their heads. Arnold, watching the bleak procession, wrote in his diary: "You would have taken them for amphibious animals."

Finally, on October 7, they dropped exhausted at the point where they were forced to leave the Kennebec and strike northwest by the course of the ominously-named Dead River. This mountain stream rose on the ridge which divided the watersheds of streams emptying into the Atlantic through New England from the headwaters of rivers flowing into the St. Lawrence.

A heavy rain and the first snow squall kept them in camp all through October 8, but by the Ninth they could begin the dreadful 12-mile carry which stretched ahead. Too difficult for beasts of burden, the stretch had to be traversed on foot. For one entire week the riflemen with their back-breaking loads cut through a tangle of natural abatis, around culs de sac, and through treacherous bogs. For seven days and twelve miles they fought this nightmare. Then a part of the reconnaissance party stumbled into camp in an advanced state of emaciation to report that the trip up the Dead River was eighty miles, not the thirty shown by Montessor! Somber news, then the order putting the army on half rations.

Providentially three days of reasonably easy travel followed. The expedition made forty-six miles and recouped spirits, if not strength. On October 21 arose a new peril. A hurricane struck. When night closed in, the river level had risen three feet into full flood. As the darkness deepened the wind mounted to even great-

er intensity, and the forest began to fall on the army. Morning brought a slackening in the wind but a sight not seen since that day in the wilds of Maine. Usually rocky and tumultuous, the Dead River in the mist of morning was a lake one mile wide. Under it lay most of the supplies, including a dangerously large portion of the food and many of the bateaux. Over the chaos began to fall a gentle snow, obliterating the wreckage, chilling what spirit remained.

Commanders of the four divisions called councils of their officers on October 24, after the water had subsided. Colonel Enos and the entire fourth division turned about and went home, satisfied that not enough food remained to get the army to civilization in Canada. Morgan's division, Bigelow's, and Meigs', voted to push ahead but to send invalids back to Fort Western. Food remained the principal problem, for the men had burned up prodigious amounts of energy pushing across the wilderness with bateaux on their backs. To seek a solution Arnold sent a relief column ahead to secure food from the French and return. The rest of the column bedded down for the night, huddling close for warmth in weather which had suddenly turned colder. Two inches of snow fell before dawn.

During the next two days the army by sheer determination slogged over and between no less than eight ponds—"Lower, Bag, Natanis, Lost, Horse Shoe, Mad, and Arnold"—a chain of lakes located between the uppermost mountain tributary of Dead River and Lake Megantic. Ahead lay the supreme test, climbing the Height of Land.

Crawling steeply upgrade, individual soldiers crumbled under their burdens. Commanders ordered the bulky bateaux abandoned one by one. Finally, all companies, save those under Morgan's eye, abandoned their boats, as the column stumbled ahead. With great exertion Morgan's Virginians dragged seven bateaux over the crest. Hendricks' men, trying to match Morgan's, got theirs to the top but could take them no farther. One man remembered in his diary that their shoulders were "so bruised that we could not suffer anything to touch them." Young Morrison named the area "the terrible carrying place." He relates that the men fell to their knees in the snow, feeble from their exertions and painfully weak from the diet of one pint of flour per man per day on which they had been existing for a fortnight.

Hendricks' men managed to retrieve one absolutely necessary boat. Without it there would have been no transportation for their own Lieutenant McClellan, who had contracted pneumonia and had been carried to this point on the backs of his friends. On the 28th there remained eighty miles to be traversed but only four or five pints of flour per man. Still there was no game in the trackless waste.

Studying the terrain four generations after Arnold crossed it, the historian Codman described the stretch between Dead River and Lake Megantic as "loathsomely fertile, bubbling with tainted gas, death in life, the morgue of the wilderness." In this morass the map was useless. Hendricks' Company in the front of the army wasted irreplaceable energy walking in a wide circle to return to its own trail after ten miles of struggle. Four more inches of snow fell October 30.

Staggering forward for two more days, the starving riflemen finally left the Lake area and headed down the upper reaches of the Chaudiere. The men resorted to the classic, last desperate expedients of men dying of hunger. Candle ends were stirred into gruel. They chewed at shaving soap, lip salve, and black birch bark. One ate a dried squirrel skin. Others sought nourishment in carefully-boiled cartridge pouches and hoary moosehide breeches. The remaining dogs were killed and devoured. Then, with provisions entirely gone, the demands on the men increased sharply again. Ice formed on the bogs. Too thin to support even the wasted remnant of a man, it was thick enough to require additional effort to break a way, waist-deep in frigid water. Mrs. Greer negotiated the swamp, according to Henry, by lifting her skirts above her waist, while the riflemen averted their eyes. Jemima Warner's husband gave out, but the brave woman shouldered his gear and marched off with the column.

A final, overwhelming disaster broke on them — an unexpected waterfall across the Chaudiere. Into it and over the brink went the few bateaux which Morgan's men had managed to bring over the Height of Land. In the plunging water disappeared all of the war chest and every item of supply and ammunition except that carried on the persons of the men. Chaudiere, "the cauldron," deserved its name.

Now without any food at all, the long line of men knew that

the goal was simple and urgent. The choice was either to claw a way to French food or die. Sergeant McCoy recalled that on November 2, with life itself at stake, the Hendricks Company covered twenty miles, despite the fact that "a small stick lying across the ground was sufficient to bring the stoutest of us to the ground." The following day saw whole squads of men falling to the ground and remaining there too weak to rise. **In** this extremity Hendricks ordered the stronger not to help the weaker but to save themselves, if possible. By nightfall not a man remained with strength enough **to** light a fire.

As they lay in this desperate condition, the relief column, which had been sent ahead some days before, nosed out of a clearing. **A** heifer was set a-roasting almost before the beast could be slaughtered. Other rescuers continued upriver, combing the forest to locate men like Jemima Warner's husband who might still be alive. Thrown over the horses' backs, the survivors were brought to the bivouac area. On the day when the tattered riflemen tore ravenously at the half-cooked heifer, Congress was resolving that the regiment of which they were a part should be outfitted in brown uniforms with buff facings, "Russian deck mittens," stockings, leggings, waistcoats, and knee breeches. The two companies on detached duty in the snow by the Chaudiere would have settled for a dry blanket.

The supplies apparently sufficed to rejuvenate the men. Young and strong, they recuperated quickly and stepped off downriver for sixty miles to civilization. They were interested to see the thatched and whitewashed cottages, the shrines, crosses, and roadside statues of the Virgin Mary. A tavern evoked enthusiasm which was dimmed somewhat after they asked the price—one shilling sterling for a quart of milk **and the same for a "small loaf of bread."**

The head of the column reached Point Levis across from Quebec **on November 8. Henry, even with** the sophistication of middle age, could say forty years later "our Susquehanna, which from its grandeur attracts the European eye, stands on a low grade compared with the St. Lawrence."

CHAPTER V

Counting heads there on the bluff, Hendricks could report most of his company still answering muster, 900 miles from Carlisle. Only Lieutenant McClellan and John Taylor are known to have died. They had traversed 350 difficult miles in forty-six days. George Washington summarized the feat in a letter to Arnold: "It is not in the power of any man to command success, but you have done more—you have deserved it."

Quebec was strangely apathetic. Officials of the town ignored both what they saw and what they heard from spies. Thus for three days five hundred enemy soldiers stood 1,200 yards from the city, and little was done to prepare for an attack. The invaders, after sitting out a storm, collected transports and ferried 400 of their number to the Quebec side. In three trips the army crossed unmolested. Arnold led his force swiftly up the escarpment from Wolfe's Cove to the Plains of Abraham to the west of the city where the decisive battle of 1759 had been fought. Once again the city sat with no sentinels at their posts. Incredibly, even the St. John's Gate in the city wall stood unbarred on that November 13, 1775. An immediate attack might well have brought the surrender of the city and its ninety professional soldiers, but the invaders could not have guessed that the gate was open. They formed into parade ranks, marched in front of the city walls and gave three rousing cheers. The watch, aroused at last, took defensive stations and clanged shut the gate.

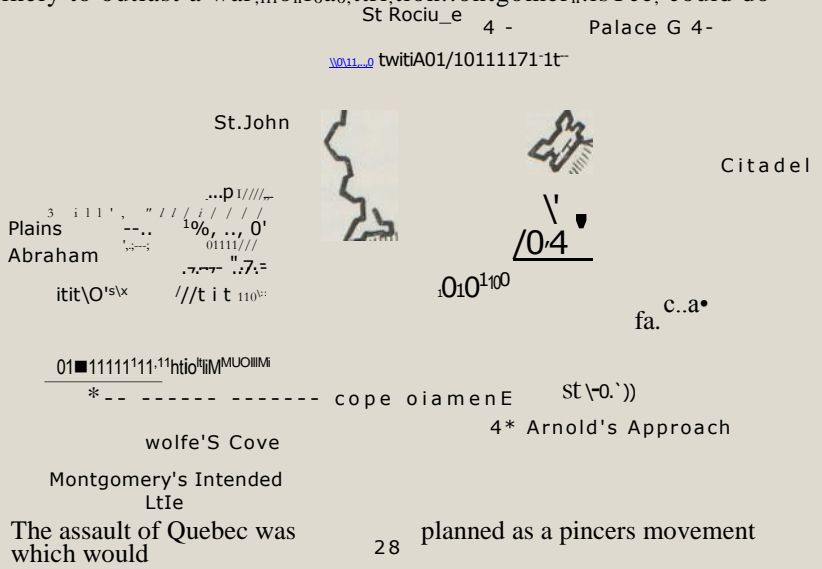
Arnold's failure to attack immediately destroyed all reasonable chances for a victorious campaign, for soon there arrived in the city a man competent to organize its defense, Sir Guy Carleton. Flaying served with Wolfe in 1759, he learned from the mistakes of that General's opponents. He was no commander to march troops out of the safety of the citadel, as Montcalm had foolishly done, to fight for glory on an open plain. Carleton wisely ordered his men to positions behind the stout walls of the city and organized the inhabitants and ice-bound sailors into para-military organizations.

Outside the city the Americans found quarters in the suburbs, which had been abandoned. No wonder—the rumor was circulating that the invaders were "vetu en tole," clothed in iron. The story can be traced to the Chaudiere settlers who said they saw men sifting from the woods "vetu in toile," clothed in linen.

Telling about the week of futile waiting for Carleton to emerge, Henry observed that Americans plundered only Tory households and that only food was taken, since the riflemen where "principally freeholders, or the sons of such, bred at home under the strictures of religion and morality."

After a week, if previously there had been any doubt about the matter, it was evident that Canada would join its southern neighbors in rebellion only if the King's troops in Quebec, who were stiffening the backs of the reluctant Canadians, could be subjugated. Yet subjugation meant seizing one of the most formidable fortresses on the continent. Either siege or assault could better be undertaken if a juncture could be made with Montgomery, who was moving downriver with 1,000 men after the capture of Montreal. Montgomery had stores and powder. Finding his own troops almost without ammunition—Hendricks' men had only five rounds each—Arnold moved his force on November 21 westward twenty miles to Point aux Trembles. By December 5 the united invading armies marched to Quebec and resumed this, the fifth siege of Quebec, the riflemen finding shelter for themselves and their "widow and orphan makers." Twenty sentries fell before their aim.

As December wore on it became plain which side was least likely to outlast a war.



converge in the Lower Town.

Map by Dorothy Kendall

little more than peck away feebly at the thick walls with its few light cannon. As snow deepened and food dwindled outside the city, siege became futile. At a Council of War on December 16 the officers voted to storm the fortress at the earliest opportunity, but, at the latest before the first day of 1776, when many enlistments would expire. Deeming their enlistments as agreements only to be away from home until January 1, some of the men had already departed, including the fabled Green Mountain Boys, of Vermont, who had become increasingly less anxious to do battle as winter nights lengthened and they lost the stimulation left by Ethan Allen, who had been captured.

In the absence of a detailed statement by Montgomery himself, it is not possible to determine the scope of the commander's plan. John Joseph Henry, who as a private certainly was not privy to the thinking of his superiors, states that Montgomery intended only to seize the Lower Town of Quebec, the area resting on the ledge along the river. Under this theory Montgomery's purpose would have been only to destroy the usefulness of the city as a base of supplies. It would have ended with his burning the Lower City and retreating until he received reinforcements to batter a path into the more formidable Upper Town at a later date.

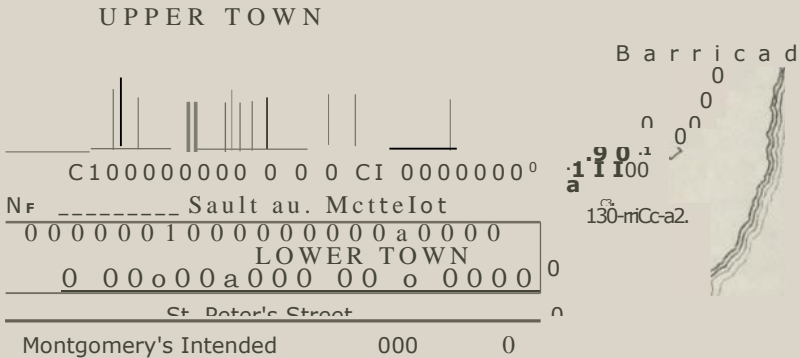
What materialized, however, was a version of the tactic of double envelopment, a maneuver which is difficult to coordinate even with the advantages of instantaneous communication and fair weather. Montgomery was to have neither of these. After a pair of diversionary feints against the Upper Town, the plan called for two principal columns to fight their way from opposite directions toward each other at a rendezvous point in the Lower Town. Since 2,500 men would probably have been needed to execute successfully such an attack on 1,000 armed men, Montgomery decided to make up for the difference by depending on the element of surprise. Surprise, however, could be achieved only under the cover of severe storm or darkness, factors which at the same time added to the difficulty of double envelopment. Knowing some of these facts, presumably Hendricks and his fellow captains proceeded with their plans for an attack which they knew would be particularly hazardous but not quite impossible.

The last week of the year and of the enlistments dragged past, with smallpox adding its miseries to a besieging army already weakened by frostbite, respiratory troubles, and dysentery. As a Christ-

mas present the riflemen announced their intention to remain with Montgomery, regardless of the decision of the remaining musket companies.

Late in the night of December 30 the temperature dropped, and snow began to fall heavily. Sifting over the countryside, it cast a pall over the city and its defenders. Silently, at 2 o'clock in the morning of December 31 the attacking force assembled.

Arnold's Approach



Arnold, moving south, reached his objective, but Montgomery never started into the Lower Town.

Map by Dorothy Kendall

Montgomery, leading one enveloping arm, advanced downriver on the Wolfe's Cove-Cape Diamond Road skirting the base of the escarpment. Arnold, in charge of the other arm, moved out of St. Roque toward the south. As was the custom in the day of unaimed musket fire the two commanders personally led the attack, which started with a signal rocket at 5 a.m.

Behind Arnold followed the three rifle companies and some artillery under Captain Lamb as well as some of the musketeers. Morgan's Virginians led the column, followed by Smith's Company under Lieutenant Archibald Steele. Smith apparently had drawn guard duty on Ile d'Orleans. Hendricks guarded the rear of the column.

In Montgomery's plan the *sine qua non* of success was surprise, an element which disappeared. Very early in the pre-dawn darkness the sentries, who had been warned by a deserter, spotted the attack and caused fire to be directed on the besiegers. From the palisades and windows over their heads the Arnold command drew fire as soon as they cleared the Palace Gate section. For one-third of a mile they dodged lead as they tramped down the St. Roque Road along the river. In the semi-darkness they could not find targets at which to fire, in the snow the rifles would not function.

At the end of the 600-yard gauntlet they found, veering to the right, the little street of Sault au Matelot (Sailor's Leap), known among the inhabitants as "Dog Lane." This narrow thoroughfare was the avenue of approach into the town. Carleton had barricaded it at its entrance and protected the barrier with a cannon.

Without hesitation Arnold personally led a direct assault into the hail of lead. Almost at the barricade itself he fell with a bullet in the leg. Morgan took command. Hendricks, meanwhile, obtained permission from Major Meigs, commander of the rear, to advance to the front and participate in the assault. His company helped the attackers push through an open gun port in the first barricade and race on up the street.

About three hundred yards ahead arose a second barricade, where Mountain Street crossed the Sault. Morgan, in the lead, found the gate temporarily ajar. However, Morgan's subordinates—according to Morgan—prevailed upon him to wait for reinforcements before he continued. Before he got them Carleton rushed in his own reinforcements, and the gate was barred.

Thwarted, the riflemen huddled before the barricade, while the defenders, spreading out into houses lining the street, poured heavy fire from the upper floors. Morgan used scaling ladders to get some men over the barricade and into the street beyond, where they were scattered into the lower floors of the houses to clear them. The defenders, in turn, seized some of the ladders, leaned them against the outside walls of the houses and piled into the attic windows to fight their way downstairs. Other defenders managed to get a cannon into position and fired grape shot into the floors which held attackers. About six o'clock, one hour after the signal rocket which launched the assault, a bullet caught Hendricks in the left

breast. In full view of Lieutenant Nichols the Captain staggered across the floor to a bed where he collapsed and died.

Nichols rallied quickly, assumed command, and, with the shout "We'll have revenge," began firing out the window. Hendricks' Company fought on for several more hours in the stone houses near the second barricade but proceeded not much farther into the City. As the defenders stalled the riflemen, Carleton, carefully assessing the whole action, decided to commit his reserves in a sally from the Palace Gate. This fresh force, like a pack of bloodhounds, advanced over the exact route taken a few hours earlier by Arnold, came upon his column at its rear and rolled it up into a neat pack of 450 prisoners. All but a lucky thirteen of Hendricks' Riflemen began the new year, the year of independence, as captives of His Majesty's commander, Sir Guy Carleton, in the fortress of Quebec.

