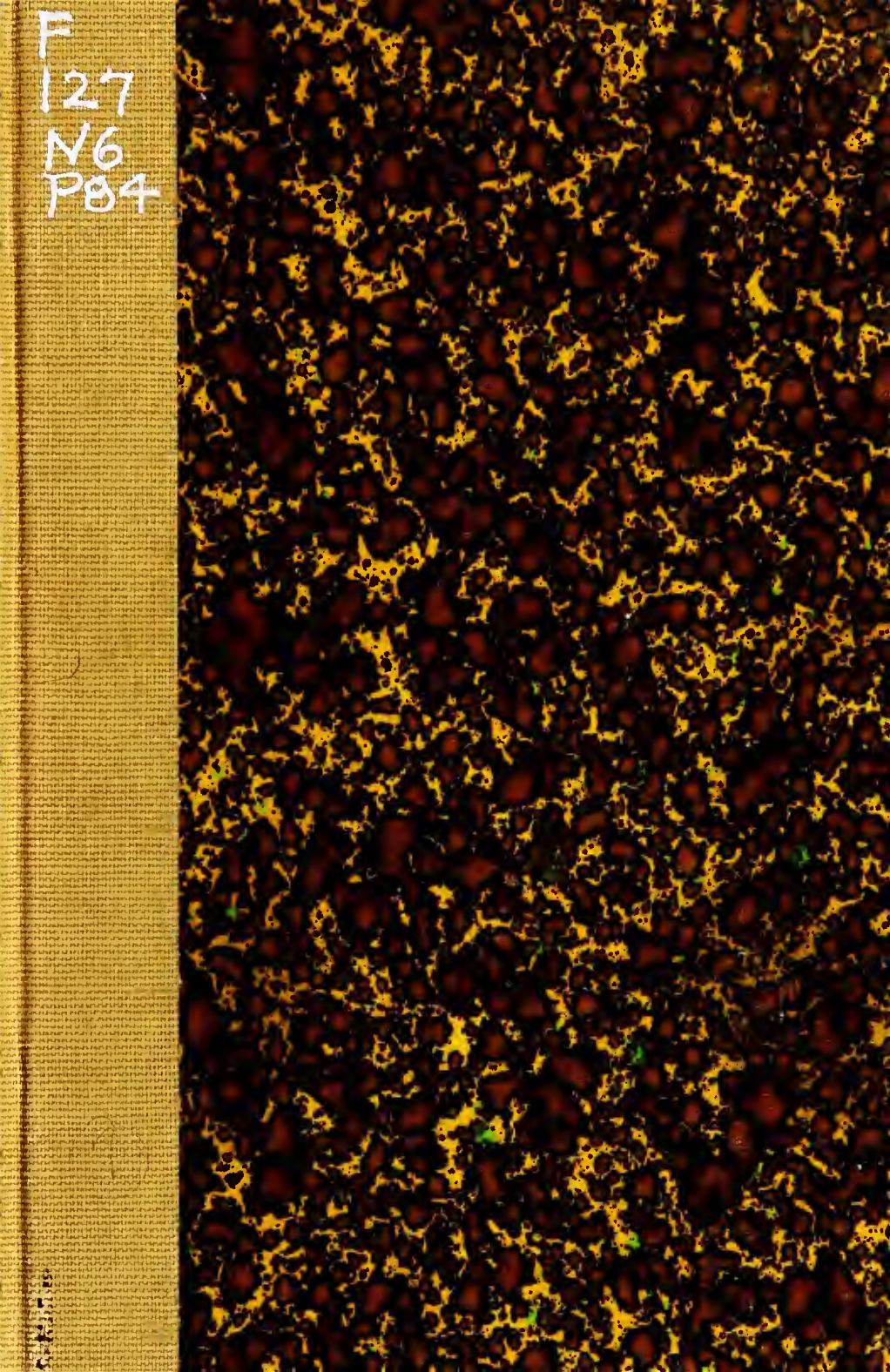


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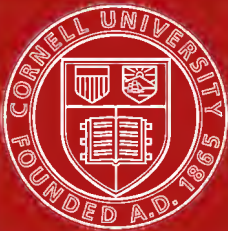
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**LAND-
MARKS
ON THE
NIAGARA
FRONTIER**

PORTER

**LANDMARKS
ON THE
NIAGARA FRONTIER**

**A
CHRONOLOGY
BY
PETER A. PORTER**

**NIAGARA FALLS
1914**

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By PETER A. PORTER

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BATTLES ON THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

WEST BANK

EAST BANK

	Onguiaahra, 1651
	Senecas-Eries, 1653
	Ft. De Nonville besieged, 1687
	La Belle Famille, 1759
	Ft. Niagara captured, 1759
	Devil's Hole Massacre, 1763
	Wilkin's attacked, 1763
Caledonia captured, 1812	Bombardments Forts 1812
Queenston Heights, 1812	Niagara and George, 1812
Smyth's Invasion, 1812	Bombardments Buffalo 1812
Ft. George, 1813	and Fort Erie, 1812
Newark burnt, 1813	Buffalo, 1813
Capture of Ft. Erie, 1814	Ft. Niagara captured, 1813
Chippawa, 1814	Devastation American
Lundy's Lane, 1814	Frontier, 1813
Siege of Ft. Erie, 1814	Black Rock, 1814
Assault on Ft. Erie, 1814	Caroline burned, 1837
Sortie from Ft. Erie, 1814	
Capture of "Somers," 1814	
Ridgeway, 1866	
13	16
	29

COMBATANTS IN ABOVE BATTLES

Indian (Inter-tribal),	2
Indian—French,	1
French—British,	2
Indian—British,	2
War of 1812,	20
Patriot War,	1
Fenian War,	1

— 29



Fort Niagara in 1814



Fort Niagara, 1914

LOCATION OF FORTS ON THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

WEST BANK

EAST BANK

BUFFALO CREEK

Fort of the Eries, . . . 1600? 1

SOURCE OF RIVER, SPACE OF 3 MILES

First Erie, . . . 1764	Black Rock, . . . 1807	
Second Erie, . . . 1779	Tompkins, . . . 1812	
Third Erie, . . . 1791	Porter, . . . 1844	
Fourth Erie, . . . 1806		8
Fifth Erie, . . . 1814		

BLACK ROCK TO CHIPPAWA, 16 MILES

0

CHIPPAWA TO LEWISTON, 10 MILES

Chippawa, . . . 1792	Kienuka, 1500?	
Queenston, . . . 1792	Onguiaahra, 1600?	
Drummond, . . . 1813	Hennepin, 1679	
	Joncaire, 1719	
	First Little Niagara, 1745	
	Second Little Niagara, 1751	
	Top of Mountain, 1751	
	Foot of Mountain, 1751	
	Schlosser, 1760	
	Foot of Mountain, 1761	
	Top of Mountain, 1764	
	Eleven along Portage, 1764	
	Gray, 1812	26

FROM LEWISTON, NORTH, 5 MILES

0

MOUTH OF RIVER, 2 MILES

First George, . . . 1796	La Salle, 1669	
Second George, . . . 1799	Conti, 1679	
Third George, . . . 1810	De Nonville, 1687	
Mississauga, . . . 1814	First Niagara, 1726	
	Second Niagara, 1730	
	Third Niagara, 1757	10

—
45

DATES OF ERECTION OF FORTS ON THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

WEST BANK	INDIAN	EAST BANK	
		Kienuka (Aboriginal),	1500?
		Onguiaahra (Neuters),	1600?
		Buffalo Creek (Eries),	1600?
			3
	FRENCH		
		La Salle,	1669
		Hennepin,	1679
		Conti,	1679
		De Nonville,	1687
		Joncaire,	1719
		First Niagara,	1726
		Second Niagara,	1730
		First Little Niagara,	1745
		Second Little Niagara,	1751
		Top of Mountain,	1751
		Foot of Mountain,	1751
		Third Niagara,	1757
			12
	BRITISH		
		Schlosser,	1760
		Foot of Mountain,	1761
First Erie,	1764	Top of Mountain,	1764
Second Erie,	1779	Eleven along Portage,	1764
Third Erie,	1791		
	CANADA		
Chippawa,	1792		
Queenston,	1792		
First George,	1796		
Second George,	1799		
Fourth Erie,	1806		
Third George,	1810		
Drummond,	1813		
Mississauga,	1814		
			25
	UNITED STATES		
		Black Rock,	1807
		Tompkins,	1812
Fifth Erie,	1814	Gray,	1812
		Porter,	1844
			5
			45

**DATES AND LOCATIONS OF BATTERIES
ON THE NIAGARA
FRONTIER**

WEST BANK		EAST BANK	
	MOUTH OF RIVER 1759		
1		6	7
	IN WAR OF 1812		
8	Mouth of River	6	
	Youngstown to Lewiston	3	
10	Newark to Queenston		
2	Queenston Heights		
	Lewiston	4	
2	Queenston to Falls		
3	Niagara Falls		
6	Chippawa		
3	Chippawa to Squaw Island		
14	Source of River	8	
— 48		— 21	69
	PATRIOT WAR 1837		
CANADA SHORE			
4	NAVY ISLAND,	4	8
			—
			84

FORTS ON THE NIAGARA FRONTIER

IT is doubtful if there is elsewhere in North America an area of equal size, whose history better exhibits, first the explorations and later the contentions among the nations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries for the control of territory and trade, than the strip of land which embraces the banks of the Niagara River, the connecting link, thirty-six miles long, between Lake Erie and Lake Ontario. For Niagara was the key to all the West; its portage of seven miles around the Falls being the only break in an all-water journey between Fort Frontenac and the far ends of all the upper lakes. Spain, Holland, Sweden, France, and Britain all coveted and all secured a foothold on this continent. The tenures of Holland and Sweden were of comparatively short duration. Spain, with longer occupancy and larger possessions (her territory lying to the south), made but little progress in the settlement of the country. France settled the northern and Britain the central Atlantic coast. Both gradually but surely increased their areas, extending their control westward, until, in their inevitable contest for supremacy, France was entirely dispossessed. These two were the only European nations that ever secured any foothold whatever on the Niagara.

The territory, known in history as the "Niagara Frontier," received its commonly accepted geographical boundaries at the hands of Sir William Johnson, who, so far as dealing with the various Indian tribes, was the most influential white man who ever trod this continent. At the great treaty held by him, in behalf of Great Britain, at Fort Niagara in 1764, there were present representatives of many Indian tribes from the East, West, North, and South; from the Hudson and from the Mississippi; from near the frozen regions of Hudson's Bay, and from the sunny lands of the Arkansas. A British army (under command of General Bradstreet), then on its western journey, lay encamped at the fort. With such an argument, and with their recent hostilities to the British fresh in their minds, "the Chenuseo Indians and other enemy Senecas" were in no position to refuse Sir William's request for a large grant of land. Only three months before, in expiation of the "Devil's Hole Massacre," they had agreed (though it is doubtful if they ever intended to fulfill the agreement) to grant to Great Britain the lands along both banks of the Niagara River, from a point

some two miles above the Falls to Lake Ontario. The grant was to be signed at a Treaty Conference to be held at Fort Niagara during the coming summer. When it assembled, the non-attendance of the Senecas caused Sir William to send and demand their immediate appearance, under threat of annihilation. They came at once, and when they arrived he calmly requested them to enlarge their promised grant so as to include both sides of the river from the Falls to Lake Erie, of the width of two miles on each bank, and to formally complete the transaction at once. So the Senecas promptly "surrendered to his Majesty for His sole use and that of the garrisons," the territory four miles wide, that is, two miles back from the river on each bank, along both sides of the Niagara River from its source to its mouth. The Senecas also now presented all the islands in that river to Sir William, who immediately transferred them to the Crown.

He wanted Great Britain to have a record title to all this territory from lake to lake. At its northern end was situated the famous Fort Niagara, the key to the entrance to the western country. Near its center was that indispensable portage around the Cataract. Along the seven miles of that portage and for its proper protection, the army had just completed eleven blockhouses, and had also built a blockhouse at the brow of the mountain; while for the defense respectively of its upper and lower terminals it had built, but three years before, Fort Schlosser and a new fort just below the mountain. The Niagara portage, in the fall of 1764, was the best protected highway in all America.

At the source of the river, without even the formality of asking the permission of the Senecas who owned the soil, a depot of supplies (the first Fort Erie) had just been built by the British army, and was now "defensible," though not fully completed. That he might have a legal title to this territory, where he had just built so many forts, and the specific legal, as well as martial, right to maintain them, was the white man's reason for demanding that the red man publicly deed away the Niagara Frontier, and for compelling him to do so.

In this article I make reference to some places, not included within the boundaries of the above designated Niagara Frontier, but not far beyond them, because of their direct connection with our Frontier History.

Along that Frontier, for over 150 years before Sir William Johnson held that great treaty, and during the century and a

half that has elapsed since, there have been "many wars and rumors of wars," and in those wars four great nations, namely the Indians, the French, the British, and the United States, have borne their parts. And in preparation for, during, and as a result of those wars, each of these nations have, in turn, erected forts and fortifications within its boundaries. Of at least one fort that there is good reason to believe the Neuters erected on this Frontier, about 1600, no vestige remains; of two other Indian forts, traces exist; while of the many forts built by the white man on the river, or along the portage; only two (third Niagara and Mississauga) remain perfect. Five others still exist, three of them in ruins (fifth Erie, third George, Drummond). The exact site of one portage blockhouse is recognizable. Fort Porter is still maintained as a garrisoned post, but all its works have been leveled to the ground. Of these seven forts, one (Niagara) was built by the French; four (Portage Blockhouse, third George, Mississauga, Drummond) by the British; and two (fifth Erie and Porter) by the United States; and of them Niagara, the Portage Blockhouse, and part of George ante-date 1800. Niagara, the most famous of them all, the last of six different forts on the same site, was owned by France for thirty-four years, then captured by the British and held for thirty-seven years, and then surrendered peaceably to the United States, who have held it, with the brief exception of fifteen months during the War of 1812, ever since. Over Fort Porter no flag save that of "the stars and stripes," and that always in peace, has ever floated.

The location of these seven forts is as follows: At the source of the Niagara River, on the Canadian shore, stand the ruins of the fourth and fifth Forts Erie, and opposite, in Buffalo, is the now rampartless Fort Porter. At the mouth of the same river, on American soil, is the historic structure, the third Fort Niagara, which, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, was, next to Quebec, the most important fortification in North America; on the Canadian shore opposite are the unoccupied Fort Mississauga and the perfectly outlined earthworks of third Fort George. On Queenston Heights are the earthworks of Fort Drummond; on the Portage road, in the American city of Niagara Falls, about half a mile from the river, are the traceable remains of the embankment that surrounded one of the blockhouses. The isolated stone chimney, that stands not far from the river bank, some two miles above the Falls on the American side, while not inside of either, is

closely connected with the history of two of the forts hereafter mentioned (second Little Niagara and Schlosser), having been a part of the "quarters" for the attachés of both. It originally stood much nearer to the river, a large amount of land having been made by filling in along the shore with the rock excavated in the construction of the tunnel of the Niagara Power Co.

The thus enumerated seven are all that are left of forty-five forts, all intended for permanencies, that were built on, or near, the shores of the Niagara River; forty-four of them between 1600 and 1844. Of thirty-four of the other thirty-eight, no trace remains, yet the approximate location of each is pretty well known. Parts of the fourth Erie and of the second George are included in the present remains of those two forts.

The word "fort" is used here in accordance with the custom of those early days, when it was applied not only to forts of a larger size (of which there were comparatively few hereabouts), but also to defensive works generally, whether blockhouses, stockades, or earthworks that were protected by cannon, and were intended to be regularly garrisoned and maintained.

And, in this enumeration, I have treated as a new fort each case where a new work either entirely replaced its predecessor, or so enlarged and strengthened it as to be really a new fortification — whether it stood on the exact site of the old one or near by it. Taking into consideration the needs and the periods of their erection, the forty-two forts which were built by the white men may be classed as follows:

One of the first grade: third Niagara.

Five of the second grade: second Niagara; fourth and fifth Erie; second and third George.

Six of the third grade: De Nonville, second Little Niagara, Schlosser, first Erie, Mississauga, Porter.

Five of the fourth grade: second and third Erie, Gray, Tompkins, Drummond.

Six blockhouses, very strong: Conti, Joncaire, first Niagara, first George, British Top and Foot of Mountain.

Nineteen blockhouses: LaSalle, Hennepin, first Little Niagara, French Top and Foot of Mountain, eleven along the Portage, Chippawa, Queenston, Black Rock.

It must be remembered that in each case these forts were built, not under the stress of immediate attack, but at selected strategic points, of materials deemed to be the most available, in the form, of the size, and of the strength that seemed to their

builders requisite for the protection needed. Along this Frontier, against the attacks of the crudely armed Senecas, the well-equipped French needed less powerful defensive works than they did later on against the artillery of the British. After their defeat of the French, the British (during their most conspicuous period of fort building hereabouts) had only the poorly armed Indians to contend with. During the War of 1812, the weight, calibre, and efficiency of cannon having increased, the resisting strength of the forts on both sides of the river had to be correspondingly improved. At that period, earth-work batteries, being capable of more rapid construction than regular forts, and gun for gun covering many more points, were the preferred form of offensive and defensive structures.

Of the forty-five forts thus enumerated, nine were at or near the source of the Niagara River; four of them within the limits of the present city of Buffalo; and five on the Canadian shore opposite. Twenty-six of them were built between Navy Island and the village of Lewiston, a distance of 9 miles; twenty-three of these being on the New York side, and three on the Canadian side. The remaining ten were at the mouth of the river; six of them on its eastern shore, built successively on the same site, and four on its western shore.

Of the entire number of forty-five forts, thirty-three stood on what is to-day United States territory, and twelve on what is now Canadian soil.

Three were built by the Indians, before 1640.

Twelve were built by the French, between 1669 and 1758.

Twenty-five were built by the British (Britain, seventeen; Canada, eight), between 1760 and 1815.

Five were built by the United States, between 1807 and 1844.

In addition to these forty-five forts, over eighty separate, offensive or defensive, temporary batteries have been erected along this Frontier. A few of these were built in 1759, a few in 1837, but the great majority were constructed during the War of 1812. So far as the efficiency of several of these batteries was concerned, they might be classed as "forts," with as much propriety as some of those enumerated above; except that they were all intended for temporary use and were invariably referred to, in the nomenclature of their day, as "batteries."

INDIAN FORTS

AS to forts along this frontier, which may have been built by the Indians prior to the advent of white men, we can in general only surmise; but three, at least—one aboriginal, one of the Eries, one of the Neuters—seem to be certainties. We do not even know when the Neuters came into existence as a separate tribe; it certainly was as early as 1600, for in 1615 Champlain speaks of them as well established. They lived on the north shore of Lake Erie, their lands, according to Sagard, being eighty leagues long; and thus extending from near the Detroit River to the Niagara River, and some thirty miles farther east. They had thirty-six villages west of the Niagara River, and four villages east of it, one of these four being Onguiaahra, on the east bank of that stream on the site of the present village of Lewiston. The authorities differ, though I think in an explainable way, as to the site of Onguiaahra. Our two authorities on this point are: First, the record of Father Daillon's visit to the Neuters, written by himself, and given in full in LeClerc's "First Establishment of the Faith in New France" (Shea's Translation, Vol. I, page 268); second, Father L'Allement's letter, describing the visit to that same nation by Fathers Chaumonot and Brebouef in 1640, this letter being found in the Jesuit Relation of 1641, published in 1642. (Thwaite's Translation, Vol. 21, page 209.)

Daillon's letter says "the easternmost village of the Neuters was Ouaroronon."

L'Allement's letter says, the last village of the Neuters "was called Onguiaahra, of the same name as the river, being one day's journey, on the east side, from the country of the Iroquois." A day's journey then was about fifteen leagues (French), equal to about thirty-five miles, or half way to the Genesee River, which was the supposed Iroquois frontier.

Daillon's letter about his own journey would seem to me to be more likely to be exact in such details than L'Allement's letter about the journey of others.

Again, Brebouef and Chaumonot suffered greater hardships among the Neuters, and returned to their Mission in more deplorable condition, both physically and mentally, than did Daillon—therefore more likely to confuse details.

Hence my deduction that the undeniably ancient Indian village at Lewiston was Onguiaahra, "of the same name as the river";

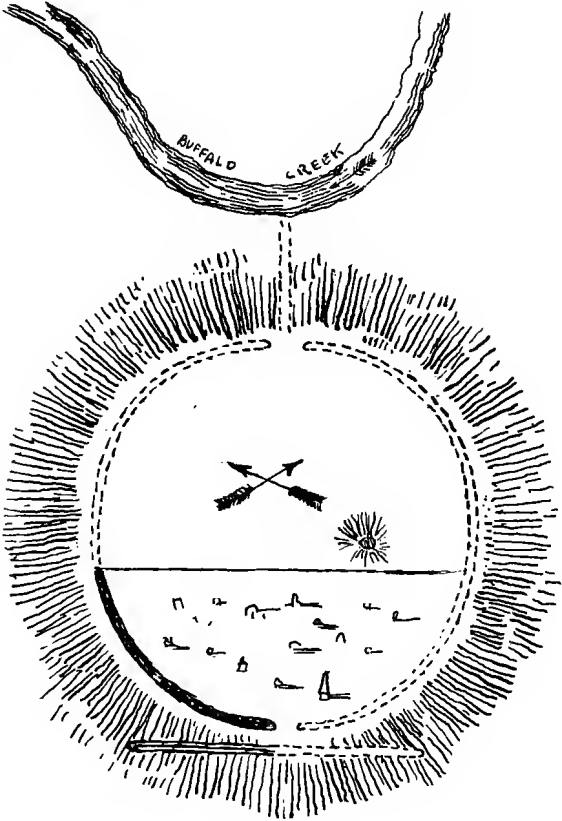
mistakenly located by L'Allement as the Neuter's easternmost village—a very easy mistake, by the way, under the circumstances.

Daillon's easternmost Neuter village would then be correct, and may have stood about one mile west of Lockport, N. Y., where are the remains of an ancient Indian fortification on the mountain; though I am inclined to believe that it is more likely to have been at Oakfield, Genesee County, N. Y., where are the remains of an extensive Indian work.

The Neuter nation derived its name from the fact that it was at peace with both the Iroquois, who dwelt to the east, and with the Hurons, who dwelt to the west. Between these two latter tribes there existed a bitter hatred, yet in the villages and wigwams of the Neuters even these dire enemies met in peace. The Neuters were not otherwise a peaceful nation and were often at war with other tribes. They were a fort-building tribe, and it is therefore deducible that each of their villages had the usual fortification or means of defense. We know that their village on the Iroquois frontier was so defended, and we know that their village, known as the "Southwald earthwork," near the site of St. Thomas, Canada, was also so protected, remains of these forts being traceable to-day.

Let me here note a very clear distinction between the village site and the camp site of the Indians, which should be specially borne in mind along this frontier. The shores of the Niagara River were permanently owned and, at Onguiaahra at least, permanently occupied by the Neuters until they were annihilated by the Senecas in 1651. Then the Senecas became the owners of these lands, although it was many years before they permanently occupied them. Yet during all that period the Senecas claimed and exercised control over them, and continually used them for hunting and fishing. Hence, Seneca camp sites are often found along the river, and, no doubt, earlier camp sites of the Neuters may be located there. Numerous evidences of Indian occupation abound hereabouts; spots where old ash beds are uncovered, and hammer stones, arrow heads, etc., have been, and are, found. These prove that Indians once camped there, but it does not follow that such spots were the sites of Indian villages, or their regular abodes. Indeed, unless the find, when carefully examined, for a very large area, shows many and deep ash beds, remains of pottery, implements of domestic use and of warfare, and an abundance of flint chips, flaked off in the manufacture of such implements, all in such abundance as to clearly indicate a long-continued

and permanent abode, it goes to disprove the assumption that the spot was anything more than a temporary camp. At their permanent abodes or villages the Neuters had fortifications, palisades or palisaded earthworks. Onguiaahra was one of their permanent abodes before 1640, being the first settlement on the frontier of which we have any actual record. It was located, as were all such Indian towns, on high ground, that it might be easily defended, and where water was obtainable in case of a siege. All over a very large area at Lewiston, there have been, and to-day are, often found relics and proofs of an extensive and permanent Indian occupation. There is no proof of this fort's exact site, but it can safely be said that at Lewiston stood a Neuter fort, which was probably the earliest really defensive work ever built on this frontier.



Fort of the Eries

The earthwork fort at South Buffalo, near which the bodies of Red Jacket and Mary Jemison were first interred, was a fort of the Eries (who are believed to be identical with the Kah-kwas), and so antedates 1653, when they were annihilated. Tradition names this fort as the spot where the last decisive, and to the former the annihilative, battle was fought between the Eries and the Senecas. Joseph Brant, in a letter to Colonel Timothy Pickering, dated Niagara, December 30, 1794, says the Eries "formerly lived southwards of Buffalo Creek," and D. M. Silver, of Buffalo, interprets this as proof that that creek was the northern boundary of their territory, and the dividing line between their lands and those of the Neuters, east of the Niagara River. Accepting this view, the location of this fort would be on the extreme northern boundary of the Eries' territory and confronting that of the Senecas', which the latter had acquired two years before, through their conquest of the Neuters.

The authorities and the deductions support the ancient Indian tradition, handed down even to the present day, that this was a fort of the Eries.

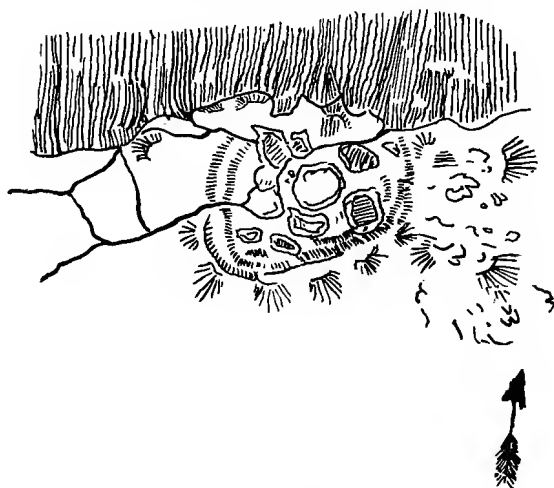
Not within the limits of the frontier as given above, but only about a mile and a half distant from it, is the site of one of the most interesting spots in all America in Indian history — the ancient rock citadel of Kienuka. The Indian traditions regarding it, as gathered from the story of Elias Johnson, the historian of the Tuscarora Tribe, is one that fascinates.

The word means a fort or stronghold, while the original designation of the spot was Gau-strau-yea, meaning "Bark laid down"; its metaphorical meaning, being in the similitude of freshly peeled slippery-elm bark, laid throughout the fort as a flooring, so that persons going in should be most careful and act according to the laws of the place or they might slip and fall to their destruction. Tradition says that at the formation of the Iroquois Confederacy, a virgin was selected from the Squawkihaw Nation, ordained as queen or peacemaker, and stationed at this fort to execute her office of peace — her official name being Ge-keah-saw-sa.

The fort was built by the Squawkihaws and Senecas, the former living along the Niagara River. It was situated on the very edge of the Niagara escarpment, which is the old shore of Lake Ontario. On the east, west, and south was dug a trench and in it were set upright posts, projecting ten or twelve feet above the ground, enclosing a space about twenty by fifty rods.

The queen's house was in the center of the enclosure, and adjacent houses were built in two rows, one on each side of the queen's house.

The entrances to the fort were at the east and west ends, the doors of the queen's house, respectively, facing the entrances.



Fortress of Kienuka

The queen was selected by the Iroquois or Five Nations, and to enforce her decrees, the entire strength of the Confederacy was pledged. A suitable number of warriors were selected from the Squawkihaw tribe, their bravest and ablest warriors; and these were stationed here to keep it in order and to enforce its laws. Kienuka was decreed to be a Fort of Refuge. At the formation of the Confederacy the law was established that no nation belonging thereto should make war against any other nation of the league, and that the Iroquois should not war against any alien nation without the consent of the queen. Kienuka was ever to be held sacred as a place of peace, and no blood was ever to be shed within its gates, any executions decreed by the queen were to be made outside the fort; and no one aside from the keepers should ever move faster than a walk within its enclosure. The queen must at all hours have food — it was designated "A kettle of hominy" — ready for fugitives and persons, no matter of what tribe nor from what part of the continent. All fugitives, irrespective of nationality, fleeing from an enemy — once their feet touched the threshold here, were safe from attack while they remained.

On reaching the fort, the queen would lead the fugitive into one end of her house, which was divided by a deer skin curtain in the center. When the pursuers arrived, she would conduct them into the other end of her house. She would give food to each, and then pull aside the curtain, and let them face each other. Both pursuers and pursued could then depart to their homes in peace. It was contrary to law, after a fugitive had reached Kienuka, and gone out from there, for his enemies to murder him without the queen's consent. Was this law violated, the Iroquois Confederacy were to demand the offender from the nation to which he belonged. If delivered up, he was to be put to death; if not delivered up, that nation was to suffer the devastations of war at the hands of the Iroquois.

Elias Johnson says the Kah-kwahs and Eries were branches of the Squawkihaws; all being of one language and nation — the former deriving their name from their settlement, named Kah-kwah-ka, near Buffalo.

Resentment grew up on the part of the Squawkihaws against the Senecas, because the latter were victorious in several contests to which the former challenged them. The Peace Queen, being a Squawkihaw, though ordained to her office by the Iroquois Confederacy, shared in their resentment against the Senecas.

Soon after, a party of Senecas scouting on the west of the Niagara River, were pursued by the Masassaukas, and at night reached Kienuka, where their pursuers followed them. Both laid down to sleep in peace, as they were wont to do within this fortress. But in the stillness of the night the treachery of the queen was tested. The Masassaukas asked her consent to murder the Senecas as they slept. She gave her consent and they were massacred, and buried southwest of the fort—the mound over them being recognizable until the early half of the nineteenth century. This breach of the law of the fort, the queen's consenting to the shedding of blood in that sacred place, grated on the conscience of the Squawkihaws; and knowing that their punishment would speedily follow, they urged the queen to consent to their exterminating the Senecas, and she finally consented. They planned to attack the Senecas unaware. By chance, a Seneca who had married a Squawkihaw lived near the fort, learned of the queen's consent and informed the Seneca's chiefs. Thus advised, the Senecas assembled their warriors, and

when the Squawkihaws arrived to annihilate them, they gave battle, and at the end the Senecas had killed or taken prisoners all their warriors, and the Squawkihaws were ended as a nation.

The fortress of Kienuka was forever abandoned as a Fort of Refuge; and according to Seneca tradition it was 600 years before another Peace Queen was ordained — which event happened about the middle of the nineteenth century, when Caroline Parker, of the Tonawanda Senecas, was elected to the office.

This tradition does not fit in with history, so far as the occupation of the Niagara Frontier by the Neuters is concerned; yet, as to Kienuka being the principal, if not, indeed, the only Indian Fort of Refuge in the northeastern portion of the United States of to-day (there were other known Indian Forts of Refuge in the South and Southwest), there is every possibility of its being correct.

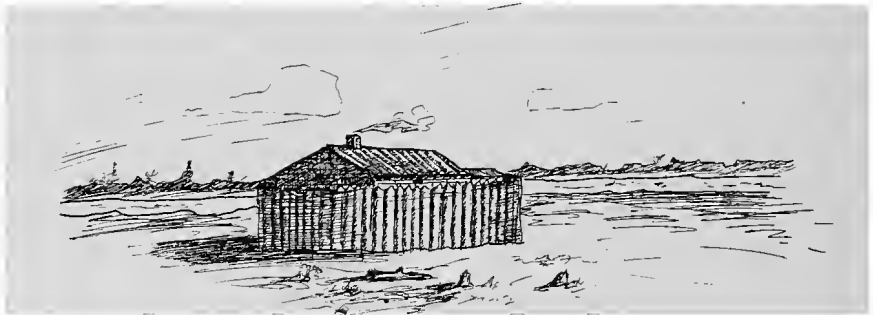
The tradition of its being a Peace Fort, and, therefore, in its day the best-known ancient Iroquois fortress, as well as the early date assigned to its erection, makes it a most historic spot.

In 1905, a mound, some 500 feet southwest of the fortress which had been mapped by Henry R. Scholcraft in 1846, was opened, and numerous bones, and skulls, two sword blades, brass kettles, shells, pipes, bits of French pottery, as well as Indian pottery, and over 4,000 discoidal beads were dug up. The date of the burial was considered to be 1640, the last of the ten-year burial ceremonies of the Neuters, thus adding additional proof of the occupation of the eastern shore of the Niagara River by the Neuters. Situated three and a half miles east of that river, Kienuka was doubtless used by the Neuters during their occupation of this region as a lookout or outpost for the protection of their larger village, Onguiaahra, situated to the west, on the plain below.

FRENCH FORTS

FRENCHMEN had been on the Niagara River before 1640. Brulé, Champlain's interpreter, was in western New York in 1615; but was never on our river. French traders or "coureurs de bois" had been there perhaps before, no doubt soon after, that date. Father Daillon was there in 1626. Fathers Breboeuf and Chaumonot were there, on their mission to the Neuters, in 1640. But all these sought either trade as individuals, or the spread of the Gospel. In 1669, however, there came to this region a man primarily on a voyage of discovery, and, as a result, seeking control of the western Indian trade; but necessarily he sought the resultant control by France over the Indian tribes and their territory, and such control meant fort-building. In company with de Casson and Gallinee, and their joint party, LaSalle in that year passed the mouth of the Niagara River, went as far west as the end of Lake Ontario, then, accompanied by a few men, turned back, ostensibly to return to Montreal, leaving the Fathers to proceed to and winter on the north shore of Lake Erie. Of LaSalle, during the next two years, we know little, only that he reached the Ohio in 1670; and made a trip on Lakes Erie, Huron, and Michigan in 1671. My own belief is that he and his small party went from the western end of Lake Ontario to the Niagara River, of whose importance as the "great river of the Neutrals" he had heard, and whose mouth he, no doubt, as he passed it shortly before, recognized as a desirable point for trade and as a base of supplies. At its mouth, I think, he spent the winter of 1669-1670. For here, according to the official report of de Nonville (made in 1686), he built "logements" or quarters in 1668. This date is clearly an error, and should be 1669, for LaSalle was never in the Niagara region until 1669. The destruction of these "quarters" of LaSalle's by the Senecas, in 1675, was given by de Nonville as one of the main reasons for his expedition against them in 1687. In building quarters for himself and his party in an unknown and semi-hostile country, LaSalle doubtless made them defensible from attack. Hence, in 1669, on the site of Fort Niagara, LaSalle built the first white man's house on the frontier. It was a temporary fort and I include it in my list of forts, and name it Fort LaSalle. In 1670, de Courcelles, governor-general of Canada, is said to

have recommended to his government the erection of a regular fort on the Niagara River. If so, he was probably instigated by suggestions made to him by LaSalle, after the latter returned to Quebec that year. In 1673, LaSalle himself was again in Quebec, and that year Frontenac, then governor-general, a personal friend of LaSalle, and without doubt at his request, recommended the erection of such a fort, and renewed the recommendation the following year. In 1678, LaSalle, finding that the French Government paid no attention to the project of a fort on the Niagara, arranged to build it as a private venture, in connection with his projected western explorations and for the building of forts where he thought necessary in connection therewith, for which he had obtained official consent in "Letters Patent." In December of that year, the advance party of his expedition, under command of LaMotte, in a brigantine of ten tons, entered the Niagara River; and some days later, near the site of Lewiston, they built a cabin, surrounded with palisades, which, though intended for a "fort," under the name of a "magazine," they felt compelled, in order to allay the suspicions of the Senecas, to call "an habitation." For the purpose of giving a distinctive name to this structure, the first one on the river that is recorded as being "palisaded," or protected, I have assumed to call it



Fort Hennepin

Fort Hennepin, after the priest and historian of the expedition, who helped to construct it. It seems, perhaps, incongruous to name a fort after a priest; but Hennepin was a very worldly Father, took a prominent part in furthering the commercial features of the expedition, and, by publishing the earliest detailed description and picture of Niagara Falls, has associated his name forever with this region, so it may be pardoned.

In January, 1679, LaSalle obtained the consent of the Senecas to the erection of a storehouse at the mouth of the river, and a few days later, in the presence of Tonti, Hennepin, and LaMotte, he traced out, on the high bank there, the outlines of the structure, to which he had two months earlier promised to give the name of "Fort Conti." It consisted of



Fort Conti

two blockhouses, forty feet square, built of logs, and connected by palisades. It stood on the point of land now embraced within the limits of the earthworks of Fort Niagara; but in the following August, through the carelessness of the sergeant in charge, this first pretentious defensive structure on the Niagara was reduced to ashes. It was the first distinctly so-called "fort" built by white men west of Frontenac. To LaSalle must be given all the credit for the first "fortification" of this frontier. He first saw the needs and benefits of it, and through official channels had urged it upon the French Government. When he could get no assistance in that direction, he accomplished it at his own expense. Seven years later, France recognized, and recognized most decidedly, the desirability of a fort at this point. In 1687, de Nonville, after defeating the Senecas in the Genesee Valley, led his army to Niagara, where, in July of that year, on the site of the burned Fort Conti, he constructed a fort "of pales with four bastions," which he named after himself, "Fort de Nonville." He left in it a garrison of one hundred men, with provisions for eight months. No sooner had his army started eastwards,



Fort De Nonville

than the Senecas, who, though defeated, had not been subdued, besieged it, maintaining the siege all winter. In the spring, its garrison, then reduced to a dozen men, was reinforced. On the erection of the fort, the British had promptly demanded its demolition, and the Senecas, at British instigation, refused to consider negotiations with France for a treaty of peace so long as it existed. So, in the summer of 1688, de Nonville, under compulsion, gave orders for its destruction. The French evacuated it, having first torn down the pales, but leaving the buildings, seven in number, and a great Cross, eighteen feet high, which stood on the parade ground, intact. The Senecas probably did not allow even these evidences of a hostile occupation of their territory to remain long.

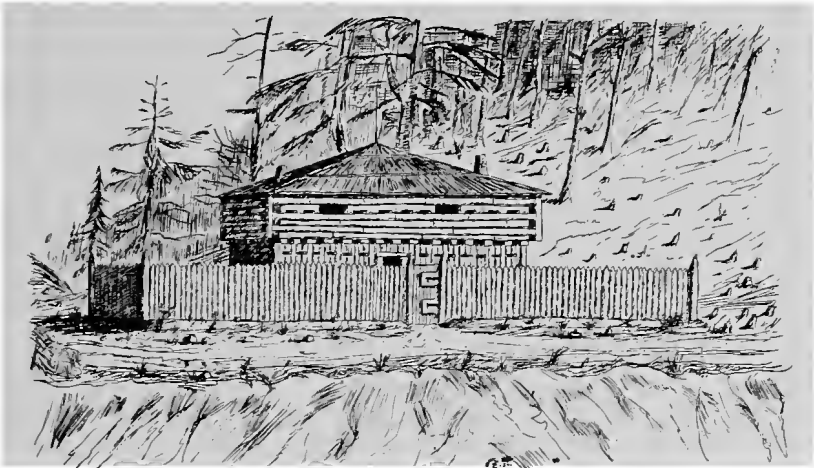
Baron La Hontan, who had helped to build this fort, and had then been ordered to the west, had a soldier's eye for strategic sites; for, as soon as he saw the present site of Buffalo, he declared it to be a most desirable point for a fort, and on a map which he included in his subsequent book, he there marked "Fort Supposè"; but no move was ever made by the French towards its erection.

During the next thirty years no fort was erected on the Niagara, though both France and Britain were watching for an opportunity to build one, and the influence of the French over the Senecas was constantly increasing. In 1719, through the personality of Joncaire, a Frenchman by birth, but a Seneca by adoption, the man who spokè "with all the good sense of a Frenchman, and with all the eloquence of an Iroquois," France obtained the consent of the Senecas to the erection of a house on the Niagara. The Senecas had previously told Joncaire that he might build a house for himself wherever he chose; and he now selected a site on the eastern bank of the Niagara River at the foot of the Trail or Portage, and here he built the first "trading house" in the western Indian country. The Senecas, true to their friendship for the French, but on the ground that Joncaire was a child of their nation, refused Britain's urgent demand for its demolition; they also refused her subsequent demand for permission to erect a similar "trading house" on the river.

Within a year Joncaire had enlarged his original "cabin" into a "blockhouse, forty feet long by thirty feet wide, musket proof, with port holes and surrounded by palisades." He was its "commander"; it was styled "Magazin Royal," and over it floated the flag bearing the Lillies of France. It

became a great center of trade, its attendants were French soldiers, and in it France again had a real fort on the Niagara.

In 1726, so well had Joncaire played his part, the French obtained the consent of the Iroquois to the erection of a stone house "on the river," and one hundred men were sent to build



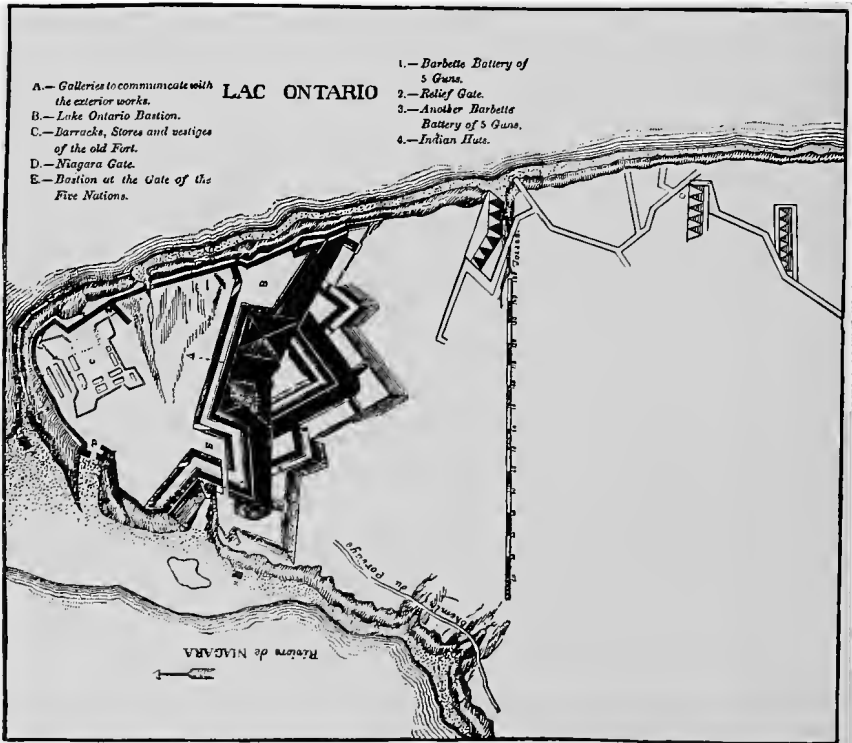
Fort Joncaire

it. The engineer, Chassegross de Levy, saw the superior advantages of the site at the mouth of the river, seven miles away; and, contrary to his official instructions, but very possibly in accordance with secret orders, built there (and not alongside of Joncaire's fort), a very large single structure, which is to-day the "castle" at modern Fort Niagara. LaSalle's plan of fifty years before was now a reality, and on the site of Fort Conti was thus commenced a fort destined in a few years to become the most important fortification on the lakes, and to play a most historic part in the history of the Iroquois, of the French, of their conquerors, the British, and of Britain's seceding and victorious colonies, the United States of America. The new structure was a large stone house, which later on became the residence of the French, and still later the residence of the British commandants, and was by them designated as "The Castle"; a name it has retained ever since. It was a two-story structure, the oldest masonry on the frontier, or west of Albany. The British protested vigorously against the maintenance of this stone house, and used all their influence with the other five Iroquois nations (the Senecas, the sixth nation of the Confederacy, were the firm friends of the French) to

have it torn down. But it was unavailing; the stone house, the first Fort Niagara, remained and in French possession. Joncaire's house, at the foot of the Portage, had served its purpose and served it well; now it was allowed to fall into decay.

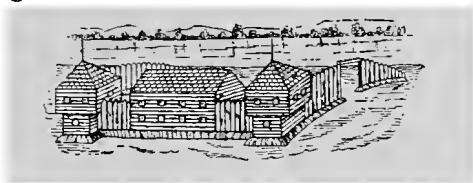
After it had been settled that France's ownership of this new house, or fort, was not to be disturbed, she proceeded to construct around it a real fort. Ramparts made of pickets, with four bastions, and enclosing about an acre of ground, were constructed around the buildings. This fortification, a fortress in every sense of the word, the second Fort Niagara, must have been finished about 1730; for by 1736 it mounted thirty guns. By 1739 the pickets of the ramparts had decayed and were falling down, necessitating repairs. The location and relative size of this second Fort Niagara is shown by Pouchot, on his map or plan of the greater fort, as it was when, under his command, it was besieged and captured by the British, in 1759.

French influence over the Senecas was now absolute and



Fort Niagara, Pouchot's Plan, 1759

was in the ascendancy among the western tribes, where French forts multiplied. The fur trade between Detroit, then the great western metropolis for peltries, and Quebec, by way of Fort Niagara, was very large. So great was the value of the military stores and the merchandise of the traders going west, and of the canoe loads of furs coming east, that it became necessary to erect some fortification at the upper end of the Portage, as a protection for this commerce. About 1745, a small fort or blockhouse, also a storehouse, was erected at this point, which is still called "the Frenchmen's Landing," and is situated just above the entrance of the Hydraulic Canal in the city of Niagara Falls. DeWitt Clinton, who was at Niagara in 1810, noted the "remains of stone buildings" at this spot. Local historians, of the succeeding generation, have also told of these remains, which were those of the first Little Niagara. But the current above was too swift, and the rapids below were too near, to permit the Frenchmen's heavily laden boats, which, with the increase of commerce, were gradually enlarged, to be handled with ease and safety at this point. So, in 1751, this upper end of the portage was moved about half a mile up stream, where was built a larger and more pretentious fort, called "Fort du Portage," or "Fort Little Niagara"; this, the second Fort Little Niagara, being merely a dependency of the greater fort. It consisted of three good-sized



Second Fort Little Niagara

blockhouses made of logs, and between them, as well as between the outer ones and the bank of the river, were strong palisades. Near it were barracks for the soldiers, cabins for the Frenchmen employed thereabouts, and huts for the Indians who carried the stores and peltries up or down the portage. At one end of the barracks was built the stone chimney, which is still standing, the only existing relic of what was in its day an important military post.

That fort stood until 1759, when its commandant, Joncaire (a son of that Joncaire previously mentioned), acting under orders from Fort Niagara, burned it, removed all its transportable goods to a location on Chippawa Creek, and took its

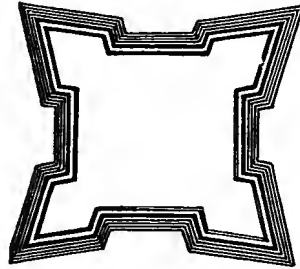
garrison of sixty men to aid in the defense of the greater fort, which was being besieged by the British. This second Fort Little Niagara had been kept in a fair condition, for after its erection the French felt more secure in their supremacy on this frontier. At the same time, for the further protection of the portage and of its increasing business, they built and garrisoned fortified warehouses or small forts both at the top and at the foot of Lewiston Mountain, the former close to the portage roadway where it reached the crest of the mountain, the latter at its terminal on the river bank below, which was the head of the lower Niagara River's navigation. A year or so later they built two more warehouses alongside of the one at the foot of the mountain. This fort stood on the river bank, some thirty feet above the river. The Portage terminated at the water's edge below it, descending thereto through a gully which still exists.

In 1754, Britain's aggressiveness and plans for war in the New World, caused France to make preparations for the inevitable coming struggle for control of North America. Fort Niagara, the one fort in the West that Britain specially coveted, was in a dilapidated state, in no condition to resist an attack by a large force. In 1755, France decided to greatly strengthen it, in fact, to entirely rebuild it; and that fall Pouchot, an experienced engineer, was sent there for that purpose. During the next three years, Pouchot was at Fort Niagara nearly half the time; at first as an engineer, later as its commandant. He made it a fort of enormous strength; built extensive new fortifications, extending from the lake to the river, thus increasing the enclosed area of the fort fully eight-fold, and built new barracks to accommodate the enlarged garrison. The work was commenced on January 14, 1756, appears to have been carried on uninterruptedly, and was not completed until October 12, 1757. All the earthworks on the land side, on the lines of the present ones, were constructed at this time. The palisades of the "old," or second Fort Niagara, were evidently removed on the completion of this new, or third Fort Niagara; but the buildings of the old fort (and it would seem that there were a number of them), so far as they were useful, were retained. In the spring of 1759 the fortifications were extensively repaired under Pouchot's supervision, and when, a month after their satisfactory completion, the British besieged it, Fort Niagara was the most important fort in the West. There were then inside of the walls twenty buildings,

at least four of them solid stone structures. It had accommodations for 1,000 men; its fortifications embraced some eight acres; its land side was heavily fortified; its lake and river sides being further protected by the steep banks. Its earth-work fortifications and four stone buildings, the former several times repaired, are to-day substantially as they were then.

The story of the siege and capture of Fort Niagara need not be told here, but its surrender to the British in July, 1759, put an end forever to French control along this frontier.

During the times both of her earlier influence and of her subsequent control over this region, which jointly extended over a period of ninety years, France had built twelve forts on the Niagara River, all on its eastern bank. Of these, one (Conti) had been accidentally burned; one (de Nonville) had been compulsorily abandoned; one (second Little Niagara) had been intentionally destroyed; four (LaSalle, Hennepin, first Little Niagara, and Joncaire's) had been allowed to decay; two (first and second Fort Niagara) were now included in the third and greater fort of that name; while three (third Niagara, one at the foot, and one at the top of the mountain) passed into the hands of the victorious British.

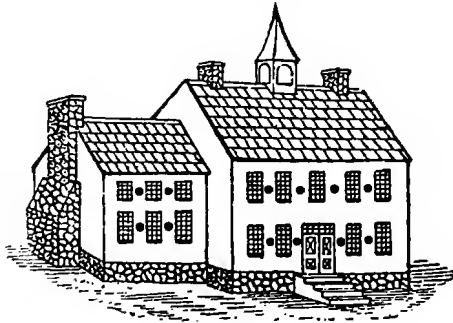


Fort Schlosser

Built by the British 1760; to replace the Second Fort Little Niagara, burned by the French.

BRITISH FORTS

WHEN Britain, through her victories over the French in 1759, succeeded to the control of the Western country, she had to contend with the remains of French influence among the Indians who had been the friends of her former rival, and she at once took steps partly to conciliate, partly to awe, those tribes. Of course, the maintenance of all existing forts was a necessary part of her policy. The former French forts in the West were strengthened and new ones were built there; and, of course, the defense of the territory on the Niagara River was not overlooked. The fortifications of Fort Niagara, badly battered by their artillery during the siege, were repaired and strengthened by the British. The need of a fort at the upper end of the portage was imperative. So, in 1760, a new fort to replace the burned Fort Little Niagara was constructed and named after its builder, Fort Schlosser. It was a strong fort; located some forty rods farther up stream, where the current was not so swift, and the water was deeper. It was a square earthwork and stockaded post, with four bastions; the inner plateau elevated, and the whole sur-



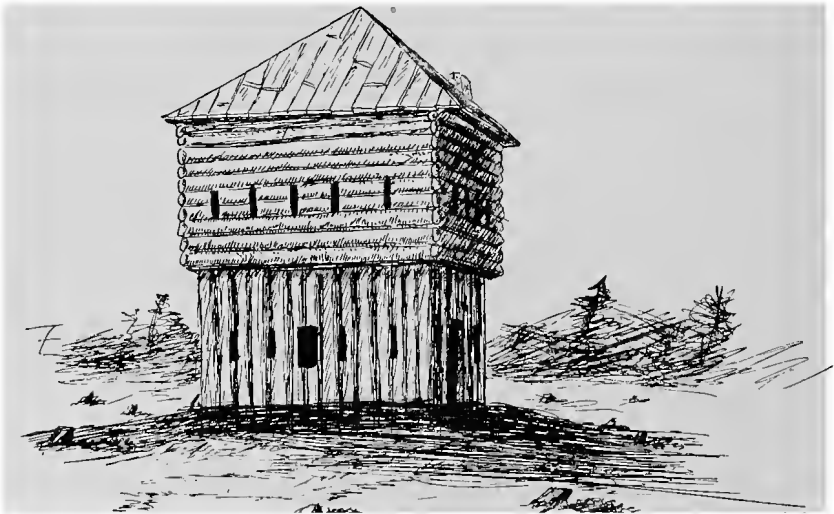
Stedman House

rounded by a ditch. A framework, which had been prepared by the French for a chapel at Fort Niagara, was carted over the portage by the British, and set up beside the stone chimney, for a "mess house." Here John Stedman, the master of the Portage lived; the building known as "Stedman's"—it was portholed. The warehouses, built by the French, still stood at the lower end of the portage, below the Mountain. The British constructed another fort

at this point, probably by surrounding these and some new structures with a stockade; and here two companies of soldiers were maintained, this fort having been finished during the year 1761. In 1764, when the British built an inclined railway up the bank, from the water's edge at this point, which was the head of navigation on the lower river, to the top of the mountain, this fort became of considerable importance. A better roadway over the Portage was next planned, and a contract for its construction made with John Stedman. The French had used but few carts, and these only for carrying boats, in transporting goods over the carrying place. By hiring the Senecas, each of whom would carry about 100 pounds' weight on his shoulders, for this work (in 1750, some 200 of them were thus employed regularly), they kept "the friendship chain" bright between themselves and the only tribe of the Iroquois that had not generally sided with the British against them. The British, partly overlooking this feature of the French policy, possibly as a punishment for past hostilities, not appreciating the resentment the Senecas would entertain, and in the interest of better transportation, decided to abandon the employment of carriers, and to use ox teams instead. Thus angered at the British, and recalling their former friendship for the French, the Senecas lent a willing ear to Pontiac's advances for a concerted hostile movement on the part of all the Western Indian tribes against France's conquerors.

In September, 1763, Stedman completed the new portage road, and conducted the first wagon train over it from Fort Niagara to Schlosser. The next day on the return journey, as the train, guarded by soldiers, reached the spot now known as the "Devil's Hole," a large party of Senecas, who had concealed themselves in the woods, attacked it, slew and scalped the escort (but three of them escaping), rifled the wagons, and drove off the oxen. The garrison, in the fort at the foot of the mountain, hearing the guns, hurried to the relief of their comrades, which was just what the Senecas had anticipated. They ambushed this party also; of the two companies that composed it but eight escaping, nearly one hundred British being slain in all. Britain was now compelled, for her own protection, to thoroughly fortify the portage. Before traffic opened, in the spring of 1764, four hundred Senecas waited on Sir William Johnson, at his home in the Mohawk Valley, to sue for forgiveness. He was Britain's agent, with practically abso-

lute power, and exercised greater influence over the Indians than any white man who had ever dealt with them. He recognized that here was an unrivaled opportunity to advance Britain's interests, and he improved it. "Land for lives" was the policy that he adopted, and the Senecas gladly acquiesced. He consented to forgive the "Devil's Hole Massacre" if a strip of territory, fourteen miles long by four miles broad, embracing both banks of the river from Lake Ontario to a point above Fort Schlosser (thus embracing the whole length of the portage), should be ceded to the Crown. The Senecas agreed to complete this transfer at a great gathering of Indian tribes that was to be held, on Sir William's invitation, at Fort Niagara, in July of that year. Sir William knew that at that time he would have there an army sufficiently strong to compel them to carry out this agreement, so he arranged to have the entire length of the portage fully fortified before the date set for the treaty gathering. On May 19th, Captain John Montresor arrived at Fort Niagara. He was the engineer of General Bradstreet's army that during that very summer was to proceed to the West, there to enforce British supremacy. He was now sent on in advance to make all provisions that Bradstreet's communications, after leaving Niagara, might not be inter-



A Portage Blockhouse

rupted. His first duty was to see to the safety of the portage, and along this he marked out sites for ten blockhouses, one about every twelve hundred yards, between Fort Schlosser and

the top of the mountain. In his journal he speaks of them as "redoubts" or "entrenchments," but they were ordinary blockhouses, the first story built of the trunks of trees, firmly set upright in the ground; the second story overhanging and formed of heavy framed logs; the whole strongly built with a view to permanent occupancy. Plenty of men from the garrisons at Fort Niagara and Fort Schlosser were detailed for the work of construction, ninety men being set at work on one of them. The "redoubt" nearest to Fort Schlosser, of which the embankment outlines are still traceable, was a "log work," instead of a stockade, this being made necessary on account of



Portage Log Work

the rocky nature of the ground. By June 6th, these ten forts were all completed, and were garrisoned as fast as finished. About a dozen men were quartered in each, which was defended by a cannon, a brass six-pounder. A cannon, of this caliber, was also placed at this time in the fort at the foot of the mountain. On July 13th, Captain Montresor received orders from General Bradstreet, to construct an additional "redoubt," "at the three-mile bridge," which point, from the distance typified



The Eleventh Portage Blockhouse



The Old Lewiston Incline, 1764

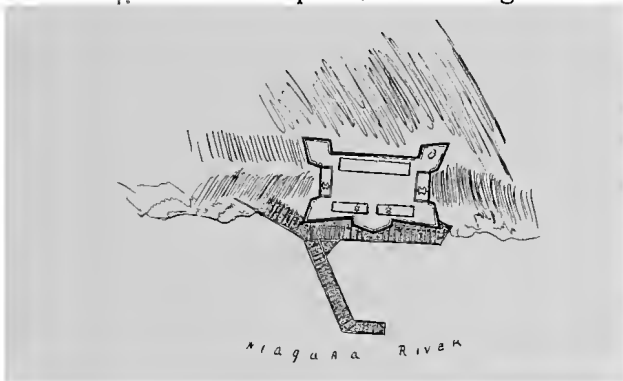
in the name, was the scene of the "Devil's Hole Massacre." Bradstreet wanted that point, the one selected by the Senecas as the best along the portage for an attack, specially protected before his army reached it. One hundred and fifty men were at once detailed for this work, and the eleventh redoubt on the portage was speedily completed and garrisoned. The blockhouse surrounded by a fence, of which a reproduction is given herewith, is probably something like this last or eleventh blockhouse on the Portage, erected at the site of the Devil's Hole massacre. In order to facilitate the forwarding of the supplies, munitions, and boats of Bradstreet's army on its western journey, Montresor devised and built in 1764 the first railway in America, an inclined plane (up the steep bank nearly four hundred feet high) from the head of navigation on the lower Niagara River to the top of the mountain above. And for its special protection he erected a fortified blockhouse and quarters for soldiers on the brow of the mountain at its upper end. These were supplemental to the fortified warehouse which the French had built near the same site in 1751, which stood back from the edge of the mountain. The lower ends of the logs which formed the lower story of this special blockhouse of Montresor were unearthed in 1812 by the Americans in building Fort Gray on the same site.

This blockhouse and the inclined railway are shown in the accompanying sketch. The fort and warehouses erected in 1761 by the British at the foot of the railway stood just beyond and around the foot of the mountain.

Bradstreet had planned his western expedition with great care. He now foresaw the need of a depot for provisions at the point where Lake Erie pours its waters into the Niagara River; and he well knew that it must be a fortified post. So he requested Sir William Johnson to ask the Senecas for their consent to its erection. Sir William was just then in the midst of a good-sized land deal with that very tribe, which he expected to complete at the treaty gathering at Fort Niagara, where he and General Bradstreet then were. There had come to this treaty, and were then at Niagara, representatives of almost every Indian tribe, living between the Mississippi and the Central New York of to-day, save only the Senecas. Their presence was of more importance than that of any other tribe in America. They had not yet fully determined whether they would keep the agreement, so recently made with Sir William, as to the cession of the land along the Niagara River. But

he would attend to none of the important business, for which he had called the treaty assemblage, until he had settled with the Senecas for the "Devil's Hole Massacre." He sent a peremptory message to them, that if they did not at once attend, Bradstreet's army would be sent to annihilate them. It is needless to record that representatives of that tribe promptly repaired to Niagara. Then Sir William had them in his power, and intended that they should comply with General Bradstreet's request, but he managed it in his own way. Captain Montresor had already examined the lands, on both shores, at the source of the river, where the projected fort was to be built. He had ascended Buffalo Creek, and viewed the present location of the City of Buffalo, but as a site for the fortification, he selected a point "just at the discharge of the lake," on the western bank. The fact that the Senecas, through their conquest of the Neuters, owned this location, and that their consent was desirable, though it had not yet been asked, made no difference to Sir William. He knew perfectly well that if they came to the treaty gathering, they would not dare to refuse his request; and that if they did not come he could and would annihilate them. In either event Britain would own the desired strip of territory. The Ojibways, who were represented at the treaty, occupied the land on the western bank of the river near Lake Erie, probably by consent of the Senecas. So Sir William in advance strengthened the position he intended to take, in case the Senecas failed to appear, by obtaining from the tribes present, including the Ojibways, "the liberty of building a post on the N. W. side of the river, at the mouth of Lake Erie." This permit was given on July 16th, and the very next morning Captain Montresor set out from Fort Niagara with five hundred men to begin work on it. Soon after that date representatives of the Senecas appeared, and when the treaty with them was signed, on August 6th, Article 5 read: "In addition to the grant made by the Chenusio Deputys to His Majesty at Johnson Hall in April, of the lands from Fort Niagara to the upper end of the carrying place beyond Fort Schlosser, and four miles in breadth, on each side of the river, the Chenusios now surrender up all the lands from the upper end of the former Grant (and of the same breadth) to the Rapids of Lake Erie, to his Majesty for His sole use and that of the garrisons, but not as private property." The right to erect and maintain forts was all that Sir William wanted; once the territory was legally in the control

of the army, it made but little difference what the Indians claimed. The Senecas had been powerless to object; they were paying for the "Devil's Hole Massacre" and for self-preservation. Sir William's first demand had been for a territory fourteen miles long by four miles broad, comprising some 36,000 acres. This treaty granted more than double that acreage. It surrendered a tract thirty-six miles by four miles, or some 92,000 acres. Nearly one hundred British soldiers had been killed at the "Devil's Hole Massacre," so the Senecas paid approximately 1,000 acres for each and every scalp they then took. Yet, for them, it was a cheaply bought forgiveness. General Bradstreet wanted the new fort completed by July 30th. On July 31st, or six days before that treaty was signed, Captain Montresor had reported that the new post (he named it Fort Erie, the first of five structures that have been built at that point, all bearing the same name)

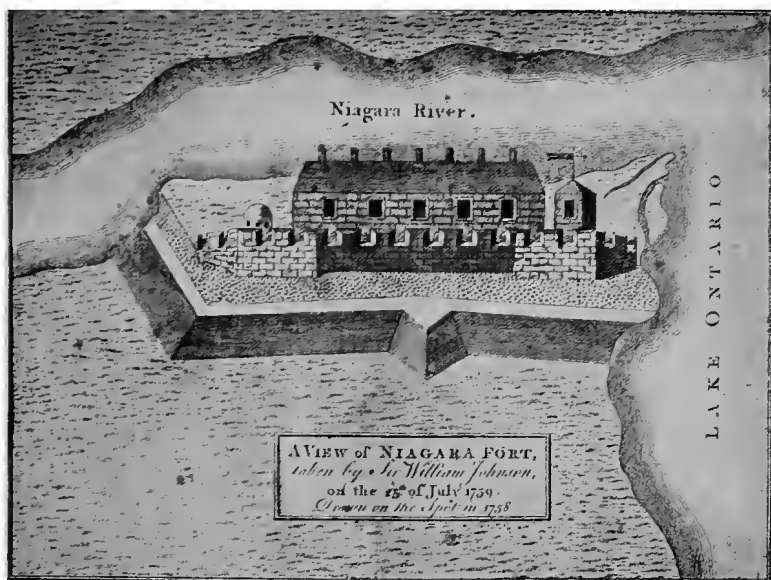


First Fort Erie

was "defensible." It was a "stockaded post," and consisted of a revetment made of stone surmounted by pickets facing the lake, and surrounded on the other three sides by a line of tree trunks sunk in the ground. It was built close to the water's edge, so as to be adjacent to the wharf. On its completion, Britain's line of communication between Lake Ontario and Lake Erie was well guarded; Fort Niagara stood at one end, Fort Erie at the other; while the seven miles of land portage, around the Falls, had Fort Schlosser at its upper, and the forts respectively at the top and at the foot of the mountain at its lower extremity, with eleven blockhouses between them. At this treaty the Senecas also presented to Sir William Johnson all the islands in the Niagara River, and he promptly turned them over to the Crown. It is interesting

to note that Israel Putnam, the "Old Put" of the Revolution, is said to have been among the detachment of Connecticut troops that built this first Fort Erie. It is by no means improbable, for he was with the Connecticut Provincial troops that were in Bradstreet's army then at Fort Niagara, and Montresor records that these Connecticut troops were among the builders. From now on, Fort Niagara, the most important fort off the seaboard, was kept up in a strong, defensive state. Its commander was the ruler of a large territory, extending both east and west. During the Revolution it was probably in the most important defensive condition of its entire history; and at that period there were within its walls at least seven stone and over a dozen wooden structures, besides a number of buildings outside of the ramparts. In 1766, probably on account of the great expense of maintaining so large a fort, "A Scheme, to inclose the present publick buildings at Niagara, and to prevent the expence of levling the old works," was presented to the military authorities, and was evidently carefully considered; for in 1768, John Montresor, Engineer, "agreeable to an order he received from the Hon'ble Major Gen'l Gage, Commander in chief of his MAJESTY'S Forces in North America," submitted a "design for contracting this Post," his "plan" being to reduce its size to that of the second Fort Niagara, which is shown on the plan of the third Fort Niagara. He does not state therein whether he proposed to level the great earthworks or not, but evidently not; his idea being to erect a fort within the fort. The inner fort with four bastions was to be located at the extreme point of land, its defenses coinciding with those of the second Fort Niagara; as in dotted lines is indicated the shape and area of that old fort. He also describes the "Castle" as having "a platform on the top." The sketch of the fort herewith given, showing the Castle with the second story and a peaked roof as built by the French, is taken from a very inaccurate drawing "made on the spot in 1758," attributed to Captain Jonathan Carver. Montresor's plan for a "contracted Post" does not seem to have been favored, for in 1770 and 1771, the two stone blockhouses were built outside of the lines of the contemplated "inner" fort; but inside of the earthworks,—adding much to the strength of the fort. This John Montresor, who had been intimately connected with the Niagara Frontier, where he had built more forts than any other man, was, in 1775, appointed by George III. as "Chief Engineer of America."

The Revolution, in actual warfare, never reached the Niagara Frontier, but Fort Niagara was a plague spot to the colonists. Here Brant and the two Butlers had their headquarters, with those of their savages and rangers; here were planned, and from here started out, during the seven years of



that war's duration, those murdering and marauding parties which devastated Western New York and Northern Pennsylvania. Among these expeditions were the ones that wrought the massacres of Wyoming and Cherry Valley; and it was to Fort Niagara that these, and many other similar expeditions, returned with their scalps and their booty. The capture of Fort Niagara was the ulterior object of General Sullivan's expedition sent out by General Washington in 1779. Had it not needlessly ceased its advance, after having defeated the Senecas in the Genesee Valley, it would have found the fort feebly garrisoned and surrounded by nearly 5,000 Indians, who, after their defeat had fled here, seeking the protection of the fort's cannon, as well as food, to prevent starvation. But it was not to be so. Fort Niagara was not then captured by force, and it was not until seventeen years afterward that the American flag floated over its ramparts, it being then evacuated peaceably by the British under the terms of Jay's Treaty. Fort Erie had frequently been mentioned in official

reports as practically useless for any defensive purpose; so in 1779 work was commenced on another fort at that point. The location selected by Montresor in 1764 was at the water's edge, where the waves beat upon and undermined the foundations, thus necessitating constant repairs; and even these proved ineffectual. The new structure, the second Fort Erie, was intended to be rather more of a defensive work than its predecessor, so a location a little farther away from the water, and farther south, was selected. It was a blockhouse, defending an adjacent storehouse and barracks, all surrounded on three sides with palisades, the water side "consisting of two bastions built of masonry upon a flat rock, and on the wall a stockade." It was built by Captain Matthews of the eighth regiment, under supervision of Lieutenant-colonel Bolton of the same regiment, who was then commandant at Fort Niagara. The new location was, no doubt, selected because of a better anchorage for vessels, the first fort being on the shore of the river where the current was swiftest, while opposite this new location there was much less current.

After the close of the Revolution, Great Britain retained, by consent, five forts (of which Niagara was one) on concededly United States territory, as a guarantee that her subjects, known as United Empire Loyalists, still living under the new nation, should be allowed reasonable time and protection to dispose of their possessions and move from the country. It was presumed, by the United States signers of the treaty of peace, that such occupation of these five forts would be of comparatively short duration; as a matter of fact it lasted for thirteen years, 1783 to 1796, being generally referred to as the "Hold Over" period. Not until 1795, on the ratification of Jay's Treaty with Great Britain, did that nation really abandon the hope of regaining control of her former colonies; although, after 1783, it would seem that all the smaller forts on the American side of the Niagara River were allowed to become much dilapidated, and after Jay's Treaty was signed all of these forts were practically abandoned.

After the close of the Revolution, the Six Nations, who (with the exception of a part of the Oneidas and Tuscaroras) had been allies of the British, complained that Britain, having induced them to engage in the war, in the treaty of peace had made no provision for their protection by the United States, under whose control their territory now came. Brant had used his influence to have them remove to Upper Canada,

and many did so. Under his leadership a band of Mohawks had started westward in 1780; but on reaching Lewiston, which was in territory directly controlled by the British at Fort Niagara, they encamped and remained many months; later continuing their journey to Canada. East of Lewiston they had quite a settlement, and Brant lived among them in a blockhouse. This blockhouse is not included in my list of forts, for it is to be regarded rather as a private dwelling — fortified after the manner of Johnson Hall, the residence of Brant's brother-in-law, Sir William Johnson, in the Mohawk Valley — than as a regular fortification.

CANADIAN FORTS

In 1791, the Province of Upper Canada was formed, General John Graves Simcoe, a noted warrior, who believed in forts and fort-building, being its first governor. He established the capitol of his province at Newark, directly across the river from Fort Niagara, where it was both protected and controlled by the guns of that fort. He was fully persuaded that the new government of the United States would soon collapse, and that they would again become colonies of Great Britain, and that the control of Fort Niagara, which she then held, would never pass from her hands.

In that same year, following the recommendations previously made by engineers, the foundations were laid for a new, the third, Fort Erie. Even as the second Fort Erie stood farther south than did the one Montresor built in 1764, so this new structure was located still farther south. It stood on the low bluff, on a site which had previously been recommended as "at short musket shot" from the second fort.

In 1791, Governor Simcoe received orders, and made preparation, to build a new portage road around the Falls of Niagara, which should be entirely on Canadian soil. This road ran from Queenston, at the upper end of the navigation on the lower river, to Chippawa Creek. In 1792, as a protection for its upper end, he built, on the northern side of that creek, some two hundred yards therefrom, and about the same distance from the river, a blockhouse, surrounded by cedar posts, twelve feet high and enclosing about a rood of ground, which was known as Fort Chippawa, or Welland. Outside of this enclosure stood the usual barracks and storehouses. At about the same time, for the protection of the lower end of this same

portage, on the high bank of the river, in the present village of Queenston, he built another small fort of stone, its roof covered with some sort of metal, which, for the purpose of identification, I call Fort Queenston.

In 1795, on the ratification of Jay's Treaty, which provided that in 1796 Great Britain should definitely conclude the



Fort Chippawa

“Hold Over” period and surrender possession of the five forts she was holding, Governor Simcoe at last realized that he must soon give up Fort Niagara. When that time came, his capitol would be at all times under the guns of a hostile fort, and no longer a desirable location. So he completed arrangements, already commenced, for its removal across the lake to York, now Toronto. . In 1795, the Duke of Liancourt visited this region, and of Fort Erie he wrote, “Fort Erie, as it is called, though we know not why, consists of some houses roughly formed of wood, and surrounded with tottering palisades. It has neither a rampart, a covered way, nor any other works. * * * It is to be considered merely as a point of defense against the Indians, for the British trade on the lakes.” He added that all the buildings were blockhouses. Isaac Weld, who visited it in 1796, described it as “a small stockaded post.”

Fort George, planned and the site selected as early as 1789, was not commenced until 1796. According to the terms of Jay's Treaty, Fort Niagara was to be evacuated on June 1, 1796; as a matter of fact, it was not until August 11th that the British soldiers left it. They then crossed the river and occupied a stone blockhouse and wooden barracks that had recently been completed for their reception. These constituted the first Fort George, but, in 1799, they were enclosed with a heavy earthwork, making a fairly strong fort, this being the second

Fort George, whose outline is included in the plan of the third Fort George. As built, it was smaller and less pretentious than as planned by the government. When Britain, in 1796, gave up Fort Niagara, and with it the control, both military and civil, which while she occupied it she had necessarily exercised over all the territory on the eastern bank of the Niagara River, she had had possession of this frontier for thirty-seven years. During that period she had built thereon twenty forts, of which fourteen stood on the eastern, and six on the western bank of the river. Those fourteen on the eastern bank she surrendered to the United States, namely Fort Schlosser, eleven blockhouses along the portage, and the forts at the top and foot of the mountain,—every one of them being in a dilapidated condition,—for with the probability of surrendering them, they had been allowed to fall into decay. Of the six which she had built on the western bank, the first and second Fort Erie had been abandoned; the other four she still had: namely, third Erie, Chippawa, Queenston, and second George, the latter being the only one of any strength. Fort Niagara was in good repair; in fact, it was a stronger post than it had been when she laid siege to it in 1759. From 1796, events gradually led up to the inevitable conflict between Britain and her former colonies which culminated in the "War of 1812." For this, along the Niagara Frontier, Britain made far better preparations than had the United States. General Sir Isaac Brock had charge of the Canadian Frontier after 1806, and it was due to his foresight that such preparations were made, both in the assembling of cannon and in the availability of troops. In 1806, Sir James Craig, governor of Upper Canada, received orders for, and began the construction of, a new fort at the source of the Niagara River. This was to be the fourth Fort Erie; and, unlike its predecessors, it was to be a permanent structure. It was erected quite a distance south of the site occupied by the existing fort. As each successive Fort Erie, second, third, and fourth, was erected, a site farther south, away from the rapid current at the source of the Niagara River, was selected. It was a strong, but not remarkably large, earthwork fort, with two bastions, facing the river. There were heavy woods close to it on the land side, a line of pickets at a very blunt angle defending it in that direction. Facing the river, midway between but extending far out in front of the bastions, was a ravelin. The possibility of this fort ever being attacked from the land side never

seems to have been considered by its builders. Inside of the earthworks were two large stone buildings, one used as a "mess house," the other for officers' quarters; besides barracks and other necessary buildings. These stone buildings were later on both enlarged and strengthened by the British. The plan of the fourth Fort Erie is included in that of the fifth Fort Erie.



Plan of Third Fort George

About 1810, Fort George, under the immediate supervision of General Brock, was made into a very strong fort; its size being doubled by the erection of a second and connecting set of earthworks, making it one large fort with an earthwork division across its center, the buildings in the old portion being strengthened, and others erected in the new part.



Third Fort George

During her control of the entire Niagara Frontier, 1759-1791, Britain (as distinguished from Canada) had built seventeen forts, fourteen of them on the eastern bank.

Under Canadian control of the western bank, between 1791 and 1796, there were built three forts; five more were built later.

When Britain evacuated American territory in 1796, of the fourteen forts which she had constructed on the eastern shore of the Niagara River, Schlosser, hardly defensible, was the only one of any value whatever.



Old Stone Chimney



Old Magazine, Fort George, Built 1810

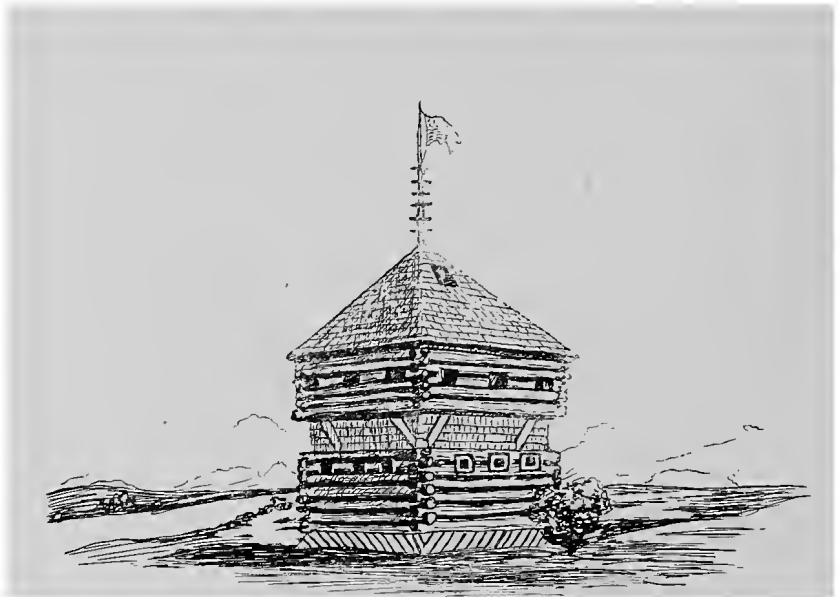
UNITED STATES FORTS

AT the end of the "Hold Over" period, the new nation garrisoned Fort Niagara and maintained it, but it does not seem that any garrison was placed in Fort Schlosser, or that any repairs were then made thereto, as at the beginning of the nineteenth century it was a ruin.

By 1800, the United States Government was ready to fortify the Niagara Frontier, projecting a military road from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie, and a fort near the source of the river. In 1801, General Wilkinson selected a site for the latter, and issued orders for the commencement of work on the former. The old road from Fort Niagara to the mountain was put in good shape; and, in 1802, the trees were felled, but not drawn off, along the proposed line from the mountain to Tonawanda Creek. As the first step toward the erection of the fort at Black Rock, the New York Legislature, in 1802, passed an act authorizing the holding of a treaty with the Senecas, for the purpose of the State's obtaining from them the cession of a large tract of land along the Niagara River, in order that it might cede to the Federal Government a site for a fort at Black Rock. At that treaty, the Senecas sold to the State their title to that part of "the mile strip" on the eastern bank of the Niagara River from Gill Creek to Lake Erie. Then the State of New York, under the wording of the act referred to, demanded that the Federal Government pay a part of the expense of holding the treaty. As the Federal Government wanted but a very few acres, whose proposed use was for the benefit of the inhabitants of the New York frontier, and as that State was unwilling to donate such a fort site without compensation, out of the 22,000 acres it had acquired at the treaty, it abandoned the project of a fort at Black Rock, and also the projected military road, for which, if there was to be no fort at the outlet of Lake Erie, there was then no requirement. The lack of any proper defenses on this frontier, when war was declared by the United States against Great Britain in 1812, has been laid to this action of the State of New York, declining to further the plans of the Federal Government for the defense of this region. About 1807, the State recognized its folly, and such arrangements were concluded that a navy yard, a small affair, was established on the south side of Squajoqueta Creek at Black Rock, and a block-

house built for its protection. In 1809, the State of New York voted \$1,500 to be used in extending the old military road, but that was the last attempt made to complete the project.

During its existence as a nation, the United States has built but five forts on this frontier, while of the fifteen that came into our possession at the British evacuation in 1796, Fort Niagara was the only one of any strength whatever. To-day it is only a relic of the past. During the War of 1812, we built two forts (Tompkins and Gray) on our own shore, neither of them of any strength — and enlarged for temporary use, Fort Erie on Canadian soil. Two months later we destroyed and abandoned it. Fort Porter was built in 1844, and the works razed in 1880.



Fort Black Rock

WAR OF '12 FORTS

WHEN the War of 1812 was declared, the only United States forts on this frontier were Niagara, in an excellent state at the mouth of the river; the Black Rock Blockhouse near its source; Schlosser, which was valueless.

At the same period, the only fortifications on the Canadian shore were Fort George, a strong fort at its mouth, and Fort Erie at its source; though Fort Chippawa was in existence, but of little account. But when in October, 1812, hostilities began along the Niagara River, it is reported that there were one hundred cannon on the Canadian frontier, brought there in preparation therefor. This explains how they were able to equip so many batteries along a very sparsely settled frontier.

I do not propose to discuss the War of 1812, except so far as its operations relate directly to the forts along this frontier that existed when it began, or were built during its continuance, for these forts played a prominent part in that struggle. After the declaration of war in August, 1812, the Americans built Fort Tompkins (or Adams as it was also called) on the top of the bluff, at the bend of Niagara Street, where the street railway barns stand to-day, in the city of Buffalo. It was a rather pretentious earthwork mounting seven guns, and was the largest of several fortifications erected during that summer along the shore in the villages of Buffalo and Black Rock—the others being known as “batteries,” and enumerated further on.

The Americans at this time also built, on the brow of Lewiston Mountain, near the edge of the gorge, a small but substantial earthwork, called “Fort Gray” after its builder, Nicholas Gray.

The first actual hostilities of that war along this frontier occurred on October 13, 1812, in the battle of Queenston Heights; on the same day Forts Niagara and George bombarded each other, and Forts Tompkins and Erie did likewise. A month later Fort George, and several batteries that had been constructed near it, again opened fire on Fort Niagara; that fort, with its adjacent batteries, replied in kind. It is recorded that 2,000 cannon balls were fired at Fort Niagara, within the space of one day, besides 180 shells. That fort's reply, while spirited, was not so great numerically, but was more effective.

A cannonade lasting a whole day, during which fully 3,000 cannon balls were fired, at a range of not over three-quarters of a mile, in which only about half a dozen men were killed,

and very few wounded, and as a result of which neither fort was even seriously damaged, sounds almost incredulous in these days of long-range effective artillery. But it was war — bitter war — at close range.

It was during this bombardment that Fanny Doyle, whose husband, a United States soldier, had been taken prisoner at the battle of Queenston, served one of the cannon at Fort Niagara, said in some accounts to have been on the roof of the Castle, all day long with hot shot. She explained her service by saying that "since the British prevented Pat from fighting against them, she would take precious good care, as his substitute, that they made nothing by his absence." According to Captain McFeeley's official report she "showed fortitude equaling that of the Maid of Orleans." Early in 1813, the



Fanny Doyle, at Fort Niagara

British built a heavy earthwork, on the extreme top of Queenston Heights, which they called Fort Drummond. It was of little use to them, for in May of that year, the Americans captured Fort George — Fort Drummond thereby coming into their control.

The Americans repaired Fort Schlosser, making it suitable for a garrison of 200 men; but only about twenty were in it when it was captured by the British in a dash across the river from Chippawa, on July 4, 1813. They held it only long enough to enable them to remove the guns and military

stores. In that same month British troops crossed to Black Rock, burned the blockhouse at the navy yard, occupied Fort Tompkins, carrying off some of its guns and spiking others, before they were repulsed. That was the Battle of Buffalo.

The Americans, after holding Fort George during the summer and fall of 1813, evacuated it hurriedly, leaving it intact, in December of that year. But, though it was the dead of winter, they burnt the adjacent village of Newark on very short notice. Bitterly angered at this, in retaliation therefor, ten days later, the British, by night, captured Fort Niagara, surprising it, gaining entrance and possession without hardly a struggle. As the American soldiers emerged from the barracks, many were bayoneted, not even those in the hospital being spared. Then, on signal, a large British force, augmented by a band of blood-thirsty savages, crossed over to the American side, and devastated that frontier from Fort Niagara to Tonawanda Creek, murdering many of the inhabitants, burning every building, destroying Fort Gray, and what little remained of Fort Schlosser. Returning to their own side, a few days later they appeared at Fort Erie, where they crossed to Buffalo and Black Rock, completely destroying both of those villages and the forts and batteries therein.

With the commencement of the spring of 1814, the British built Fort Mississauga (or Riall), a stone blockhouse surrounded by a strong earthwork, on the Canadian lake shore near the mouth of the river. They had long desired a fort at this point, but as the site was absolutely commanded by the guns of Fort Niagara, they were unable to build it, until they were in possession of that fort. The British retained the control of the territory on both sides, at the mouth of the river, during the rest of the War of 1812; so Fort Mississauga was not during that war, nor has it ever been since, the scene of any hostilities. It is to-day in a state of excellent preservation.

In July, 1814, the Americans captured Fort Erie, which surrendered on demand without resistance, to the great disgust of the British general in command of the Frontier. From this base the American army proceeded down the Canadian bank of the river, where, during that same month, were fought the Battles of Chippawa and Lundy's Lane; after which the depleted American army returned to Fort Erie, where, a few days later, it was besieged by the reinforced British. To Fort Erie, the Americans, during those days of quiet, hurriedly added two strong earthwork bastions on the land side,

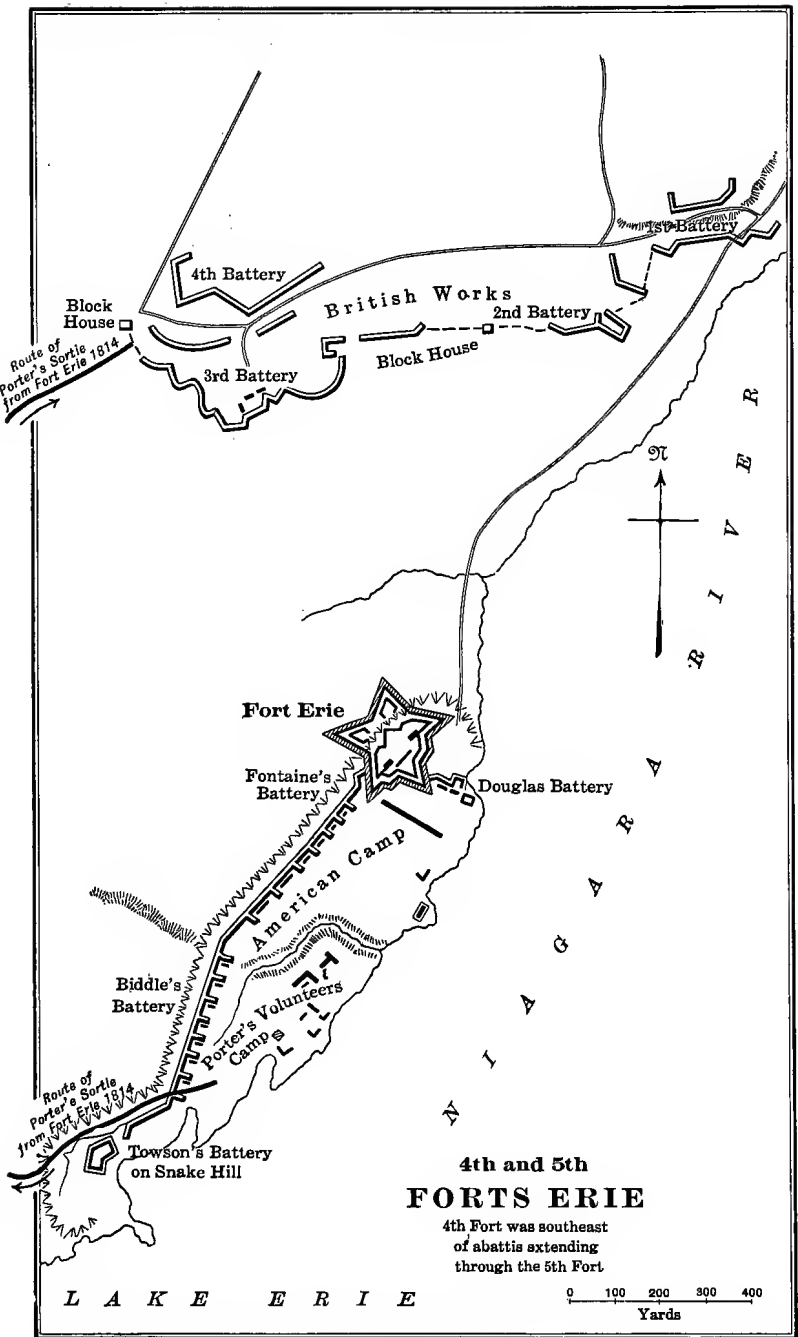


Fort Mississauga

making a new fort, fifth Fort Erie; which fronted toward the land as well as toward the river, largely increasing its size and efficiency, in preparation for the siege that was sure to follow. They further defended it by an entrenchment and abattis, starting at the river's shore, east of the northerly line of the fort extending to and around the old fort, but inside of the two new bastions; thence, for some 2,000 feet to the south, where it curved around a small elevation, called Snake Hill, to the lake shore. Along this entrenchment were placed four batteries, one at either of its extreme ends and two nearer its center.

As thus reconstructed, Fort Erie faced inland, as did these connecting works; between which and the river was an enclosed area of some fifteen acres, where was the American camp. It had been planned to carry this abattis still farther to the south, so as to enclose an additional area to be used as a camp for the militia: but this was never done, the smaller area being most sufficient for both the regulars and volunteers, the line being already as long as could well be amply defended with the forces therein, even when augmented by the reinforcements expected.

On August 2, 1814, the British army appeared before Fort Erie. Their first move was an attempt to capture the villages of Buffalo and Black Rock (which to some extent had been rebuilt), thus compelling the surrender of the fort. Being defeated in this project, they began a regular siege. During a period of six weeks, they built a long line of entrenchments and abattis, starting at the water's edge, and extending for nearly half a mile inland, about five hundred yards distant from the fort. Along this line they had three distinct siege batteries, marked on the plan, Nos. 1, 2, 3; and a fourth one had been almost completed at the time of the sortie. On this line also they built two blockhouses, making it a most formidable siege work. On the night of August 15th, they made a terrific attack on the fort; in fact, it was a series of heroic charges, each repulsed, with dreadful loss of life. The whole attack lasted for some three hours, the British finally storming the northwest bastion, one of the two new ones just built by the Americans, from which repeated attempts were made to dislodge them. All of a sudden, whether by accident or by design it has never been determined, when the British forces filled the bastion, the magazine therein blew up with a terrific explosion, and with fearful loss of life to the British, who were



Fort Erie during the Siege, 1814

thus compelled to abandon the attack; their killed and wounded, during the attack and in the explosion, numbering about 1,000 men. The land just outside the earthworks of Fort Erie became a veritable graveyard, the bodies, including the burned and maimed remains of those who perished in the explosion, being buried in long trenches, dug in the open space thereabouts.

It was with the object of avoiding further attacks like this, and especially to end the siege and rout the enemy, that General Peter B. Porter, a major-general of volunteers, who had been conspicuous in the war along the frontier, and was then in command of the militia at Fort Erie, proposed a sortie from the fort. General Brown finally requested him to draw up a detailed plan thereof, which he did. General Brown then approved the project, gave instructions for the preparations therefor, asking General Porter to lead the main column. On the afternoon of September 17, 1814, in a driving rain storm, it was executed. General Porter's troops, in three columns, left the camp at its southern limits, made a long detour through the woods, attacked the British line of defense at its western end, carried the west blockhouse, the not fully completed Battery No. 4, the trenches as far east as Battery No. 3, and that battery; and being there joined by Colonel Miller's command, which had directly approached the British entrenchments through a ravine due north of the fort, they then broke through, and carried the works, to and including Battery No. 2. The reserves on both sides now arrived; after a sharp fight, the works in front of Battery No. 1, which were the most intricate of all, were captured and that battery was stormed, the British abandoning it. The American line was then formed, to the north of the British entrenchments, for the protection of the detachments, engaged in spiking the enemy's guns and demolishing the captured works as much as was possible in a brief space of time. The object of the sortie having been accomplished, the American forces were ordered back to the fort, though the British force, having been further reinforced from its main camp, two miles away, attacked them determinedly as they left the line of siege works. The British loss in killed, wounded, and missing, at this sortie, was admitted by General Drummond, the British commander, as nearly six hundred. A few days later, Drummond raised the siege, withdrawing his troops northward. The sortie had been eminently successful. Sir William Napier refers to it as a



The Ruins of Old Fort Erie

“brilliant achievement — the only instance in history where a besieging army was entirely broken up and routed by a single sortie.”

Early in November, 1814, Fort Erie, no longer of use to the Americans, was mined and blown up by them. Its perfectly traceable earthworks, including the bastion that was the scene of the explosion, and the ruins of two of its stone buildings, render it an interesting historical spot. Fort Niagara was restored to the Americans in March, 1815, after the treaty of peace was signed.

During the duration of the war, Britain had erected, as already noted, two forts along this frontier; which, added to the twenty-three heretofore enumerated as having been built by her previously, make up the twenty-five forts she had built in all hereabouts.

At one time or another, during the war, along this river, every fort on the Canadian shore (save only Mississauga, after whose erection no hostilities occurred in its vicinity), and also every battery, was captured by the Americans. And, similarly, at some period during the war, every fort and every battery on the American shore was captured by the British.

In August and September, 1814, this curious feature was to be seen on this frontier: at the source of the Niagara River the Americans were in possession, not only of their own side, but also of the British Fort Erie; while, only thirty-six miles away, at the mouth of that same stream, the British controlled not only their own shore, but also the American Fort Niagara.

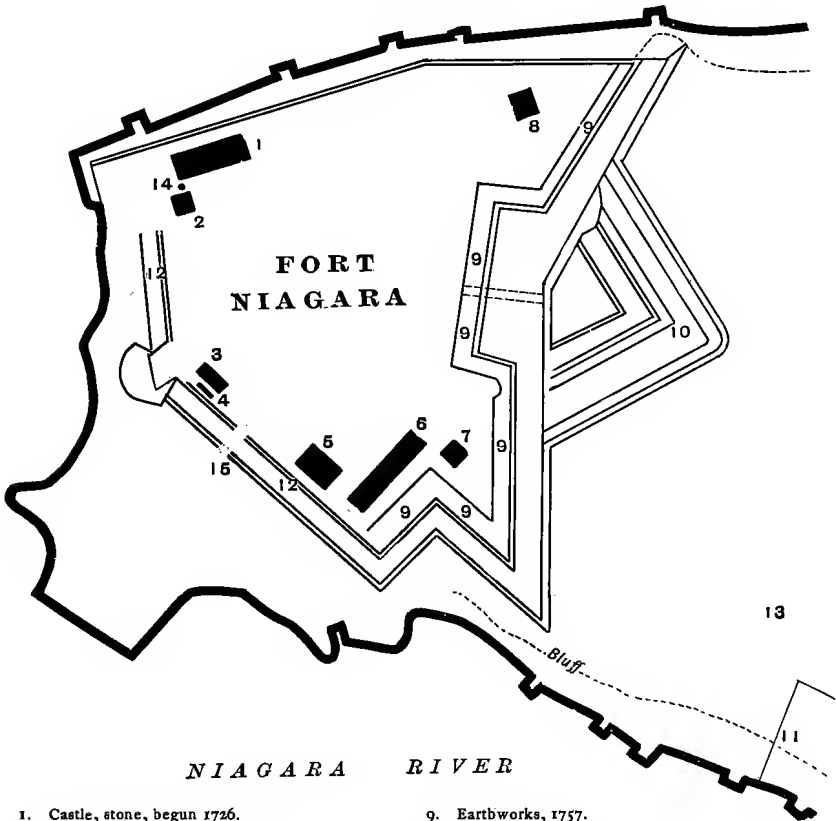


The Castle at Fort Niagara, Commenced 1726

FORT NIAGARA TO-DAY

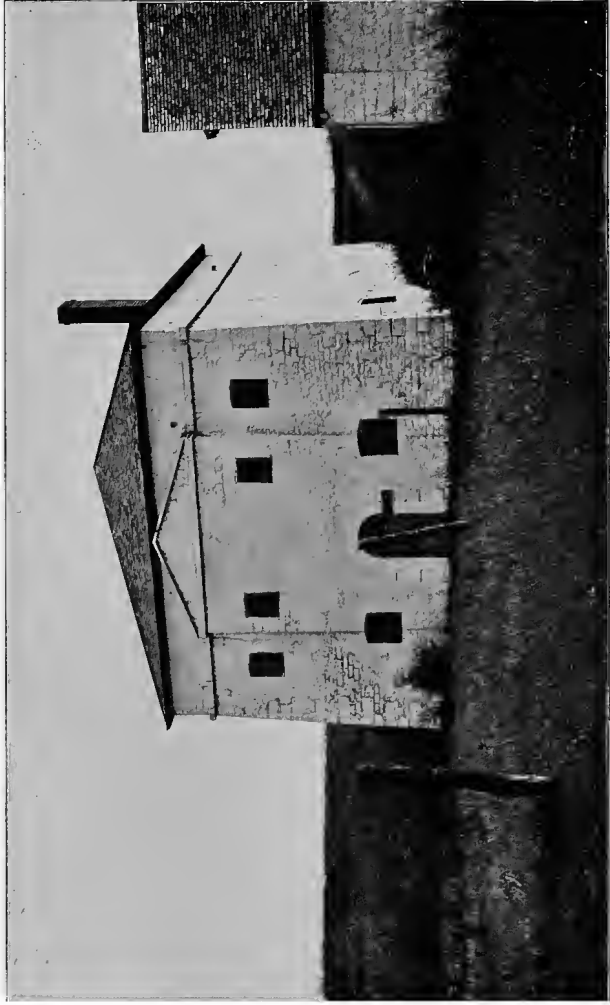
FORT Niagara, as it stands to-day, with the exception of the Citadel at Quebec, is the best preserved old fortification in North America; and bears within its ramparts the existing relics of French, British, and United States occupation, the earliest of these dating back over a century and three-quarters.

L A K E O N T A R I O



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|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Castle, stone, begun 1726. 2. Bake house, stone, rebuilt 1762. 3. Modern wooden building. 4. Hot shot Furnace, rebuilt 1839. 5. Magazine, stone (Morgan dungeon), 1757. 6. Barracks, stone, 1757. 7. Blockhouse, stone, 1770. 8. Blockhouse, stone, 1771. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Earthworks, 1757. 10. Ravelin, 1757. 11. British cemetery, still in use. 12. Stone walls, lower part 1830, upper part, 1839. 13. Site French cemetery, the first consecrated ground in Western New York. 14. Well, possibly dug 1726. 15. Entrance gate. |
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Of its seven stone buildings, the castle (begun 1726 and finished 1727) is to-day substantially as it was then, except for its one door instead of two; while the present timbered



South Blockhouse at Fort Niagara in 1914

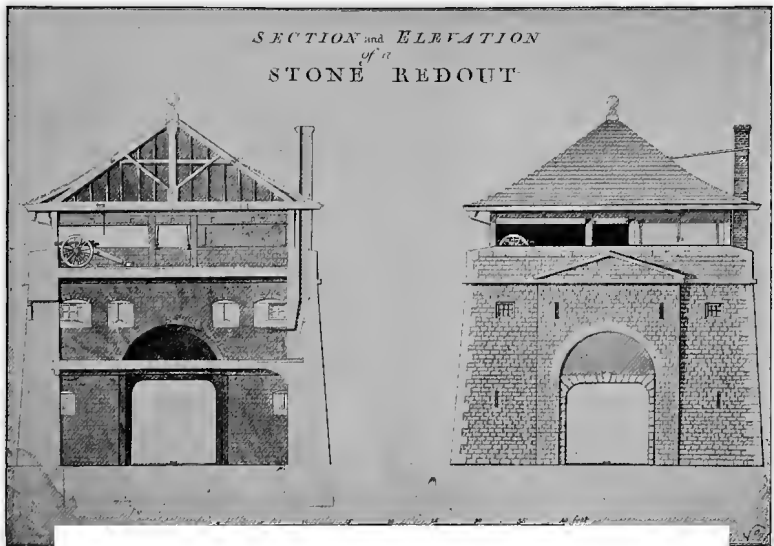
roof was added after 1814. The first lighthouse on the Niagara River was placed on the cupola of this castle in 1823.

The magazine, whose real top is a thick stone arch now covered with a shingled roof, and which in 1826 acquired international fame as the dungeon where William Morgan, of anti-Masonic reputation, was confined and last seen alive, dates from 1757.

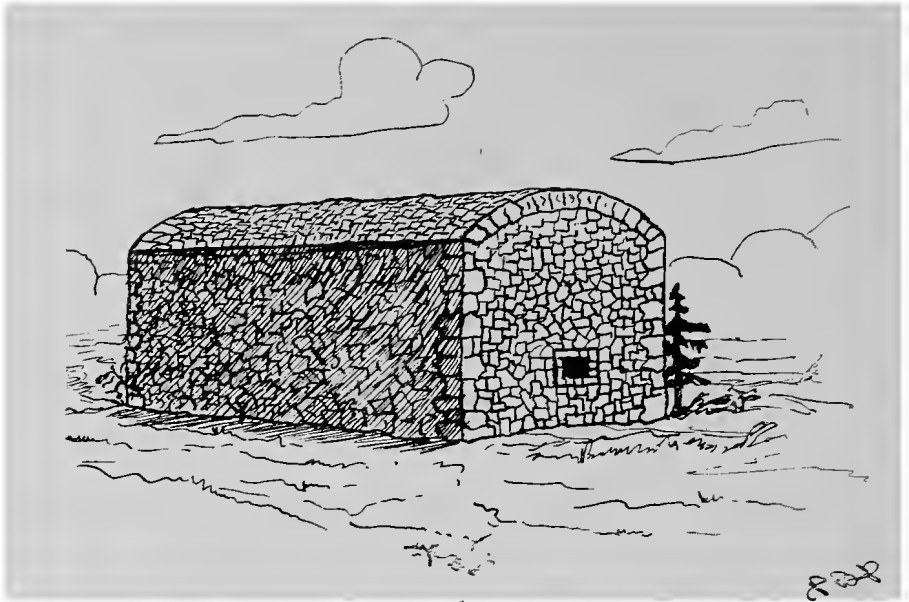
The long low Barracks was built by the French in 1757.

The bakeshop was rebuilt by the British in 1762.

The south blockhouse was constructed in 1770, while the north blockhouse was built the following year. The former protected the "Land Gate," or entrance to the fort, from that side, and as a further protection, the roadway which led up to and through the fortifications by a flight of steps, was carried through the lower story of this blockhouse. In its north and south faces, the stone arches over that old passageway are still plainly visible, although the openings in the walls have been filled in with masonry. The accompanying illustration, obtained by photographs from plans in the British Museum, show also how the roofs of both these blockhouses were used as "batteries," two brass six-pounders upon field carriages,



en barbette, and commanding the whole country within their range, having been mounted on each of them. The heavy



French Magazine at Fort Niagara, as Built in 1757. It is the Same To-day—the Outside Walls Plastered, and a Shingle Roof Placed Over the Stone-Arch Roof



French Magazine at Fort Niagara in 1914

beams, supporting the roof on which these cannon stood, were just above the level of the thin projecting stone bands or cornices, the masonry above them being merely a protection for the gunners. The modern shingle roofs are, of course, much lower than the old roofs that were merely coverings over the guns. Cannon were mounted on them, and used effectively by the Americans in the War of 1812. These two blockhouses are the best specimens of the old blockhouse form of defense to be found anywhere. The "Hot Shot" furnace was rebuilt in 1839. Similar, but cruder, structures were located near the various batteries on the fortifications, prior to the War of 1812, and were in use at that time. The earthworks, including



Old French Barracks, Fort Niagara in 1914

the ravelin on the east, are the identical work of 1757; though, until some time after the War of 1812, these fortifications extended clear to the bluff, both on the lake and on the river side; several times repaired, both by the British and by the United States. The present "casemates," as also the brick facings of the ramparts, were constructed about 1861. The stone wall along the bluff, on the river side, protecting that face of the fort, replaced a line of timber fortifications, formed of trunks of large trees, set upright and sloping inward. The lower part of this wall was built about 1830, and was heightened in 1839.

SINCE 1815

SINCE the close of the War of 1812, Great Britain has erected no fortification along this river; the United States has built but one, and that not in a spirit of hostility, but with a view rather of preventing our ever again, through the lack of troops hereabouts, being drawn into unnecessary international complications, such as had occurred, in the affair



The "Keep" at Fort Porter

of the steamer "Caroline," during the so-called "Patriot War" against Great Britain, on this frontier.

In 1844, the United States completed Fort Porter, named after the hero of the sortie from Fort Erie, in the city of Buffalo. It was a large stone building, sixty-two feet square, two stories high, casemated, with underground cellars. Surrounding the structure, with a moat between on all sides, was a powerful earthwork. Several cannon were placed on the roof of the building, whose outer walls were extended upwards as a semi-protection for them.

The huge stone "keep" or blockhouse was probably the largest blockhouse in America; and the best example of that

kind of defense (the last word in blockhouses) anywhere. Its demolition was an example of historical blundering; the needless destruction of a fine relic of martial architecture.

Since the acquisition of our Niagara Frontier, the United States have built four forts thereon, three of them (the Black Rock Blockhouse, Tompkins, and Gray) being destroyed by the enemy in the War of 1812. The great blockhouse and the ramparts of Fort Porter have entirely disappeared with the consent of the government; that fort never having seen any actual warfare. The fourteen forts or blockhouses that, besides Fort Niagara, came into our possession at the close of the "Hold Over" period, were useless when they were surrendered to us. Fort Niagara remains, in excellent condition, a relic, not a defensive work — for its fortifications would be useless against modern artillery. But it is so interesting a spot, of such age and historic interest, that a few data concerning it have been noted herewith.



Fort Niagara from Lake

BATTERIES ON THE FRONTIER

BESIDES the forts heretofore enumerated, there have been built along this frontier somewhat more than eighty temporary batteries, seven of them constructed by the British, during their siege of Fort Niagara in 1759; two of them at Four Mile Creek, where the besiegers landed; three were long trenches or "parallels," dug on the lake shore at right angles thereto, just east of the fort. In these, as the besiegers successively neared the ramparts, were mounted their heavy guns. They also built a battery on the Canadian shore directly opposite the fort at what was then called Montreal Point. About a mile to the south of the fort, they built a revetment of logs to aid them in resisting the French force that was hastening to the relief of the besieged garrison, and here they defeated it.

When the Patriots had their headquarters on Navy Island, during the "Rebellion" of 1837, they erected at least four batteries or fortifications on the shore of that island facing the Canadian bank. The British in turn planted guns and mortars behind protective works, four in number, on the main shore opposite.

The great majority of these eighty batteries were built (some by the Americans, some by the British) during the exciting times of the War of 1812. Let me enumerate them, following the course of the river.

On what is now known as "The Terrace," in the city of Buffalo, the Americans built a small earthwork, which was lightly armed, and on the high bank near the southerly line of the grounds of Fort Porter was another, "Gookins" (one heavy gun — a twenty-four-pounder). Below the bank, near the present location of the city water works plant, stood an earthwork, protecting one eight-inch mortar, usually referred to as "The Old Sow." The fortification next in line was Fort Tompkins, already described; while a little to the south of Ferry Street, on the high bank, stood "Gibson's" Battery of three guns. Just north of Ferry Street was "Dudley's Battery; north of that was "Swift's" Battery, and on the south side of Conjaquadie's Creek near its mouth, was another of three guns, thirty-two-pounders, known as the "Sailors' Battery." At the Battle of Black Rock, on the creek, Major Morgan erected a battery to prevent the British rebuilding the bridge

he had torn away. During their occupation of Fort Erie in 1814, the Americans not only added two bastions thereto, as recorded, but also added a line of entrenchments or abattis, extending from the river around the old fort, and some 2,000 feet beyond it southwards, to a small elevation called "Snake Hill," and around that to the water. On that hill (the southern limit of these entrenchments) was located Towson's Battery of six guns; while between the fort proper and the water, the Douglas' Battery of two guns guarded the line. Between the fort proper and Snake Hill were placed Fontaine's (sometimes called Fanning's) Battery with two guns, and Biddle's Battery of three guns.

On their own side on high ground back from the river, and nearly opposite the American end of the ferry, the British built four separate and distinct batteries, and at some distance south of these they had three others. At the siege of Fort Erie they built, about five hundred yards from it, extending inland from the water, a very long line of entrenchments and abattis. Along this line they had three separate siege batteries, besides one that was only partially completed at the sortie; on this entrenchment were also two blockhouses.

On the island at the mouth of Chippawa Creek they had a battery known as the "Tete du Pont," while on the north bank were two others defending the bridge. Near the mouth of that creek, on the river's shore, were three other batteries. The "batteries" mentioned in various accounts of the Battle of Chippawa as worked by United States troops (Towson's, Ritchie's, Hindman's, and Biddle's), I imagine, were merely field artillery hurriedly brought into action and served without any defensive works in front of them. The same is a fact in reference to the famous "battery" on the hill, at Lundy's Lane, around which centered the main battle; which was placed in position by the British and worked by them with such effectiveness, and was later stormed by the Americans under Colonel Miller, and held by them. The British had a small battery built of stone, below the Falls, near the river bank, where the Indian ladder formerly stood; and two others, with eighteen-pounders, stood on the hill half a mile away.

On Queenston Heights the British had one battery, and a little below the summit they had what was known as the "Redan Battery," which so hampered the Americans while they were crossing the river at the Battle of Queenston, and which they captured. In it were some eighteen-pounders and

two howitzers; also one on the river bank at the exact foot of the heights. On the high bank in the village of Queenston they had another battery, an extended work; a mile below on a point of land on the river, that still bears the same name, stood "Vrooman's" Battery, which commanded the river up to Lewiston; opposite the Five-mile Meadows they had another battery on Brown's Point. The Americans had built two batteries on the high bank in Lewiston, and two others half a mile above and below. They also had one near Five-mile Meadows. Lossing records, that on the Canadian bank between Queenston Heights and Fort George, a distance of six miles, there were batteries averaging one to each half mile. Besides the three named above, in Queenston, Vrooman's Point, and Brown's Point, I have found references to only three other Canadian batteries in that particular distance, but on the map I have added three, Lossing's estimate.

The Canadian shore, from above Fort George to the extreme mouth of the river, a distance of about two miles, was one succession of them, six being specially mentioned. Directly opposite on the American shore was a similar line, extending from Fort Niagara to a point south of the village of Youngstown, six being specifically noted within this distance of a mile, the most important being the "Salt Battery," situated in the above named-village.

This battery was so called because it was hastily built with 400 barrels of salt: a cargo arriving from Oswego on one of Porter Barton's vessels, just when a protected battery was needed at the dock where she moored.

On the Canadian shore of Lake Ontario, within a mile of the river, were two batteries—not shown on the map—which confronted the U. S. troops when landing at Battle of Fort George.

SUCH is the chronology of how the famous Niagara Frontier has figured in the war story of the nations; of the forts that have been built, of the work that has been done, of the hardships that have been endured, of the battles that have been fought, and of the victories that have been won; as this wondrous region passed successively from the control of the Indians to France, from France to Great Britain, and along its eastern shore from Great Britain to the United States.

Necessarily, by reason of limited scope, it includes merely a reference to many important military operations — the horrors of war, such as the burning of Newark, and of Buffalo, and the devastation of the entire American frontier; and no details of the Patriot nor Fenian wars. Yet through all of these the Niagara Frontier was called anew to the attention of the world. Among the many aspects in which it has presented itself to the world's attention, its martial record is by no means the least important nor the least instructive, in the long and many-sided story of the Niagara Frontier.

IN the interest of history, it should be stated that the illustrations in this pamphlet of forts Hennepin, Conti, DeNonville, Joncaire, the typical block houses and the log work on the portage, the 1757 French magazine, the inclined railway, and Forts Chippawa and Black Rock were drawn (by Preston B. Porter) after incomplete descriptions found in early books.

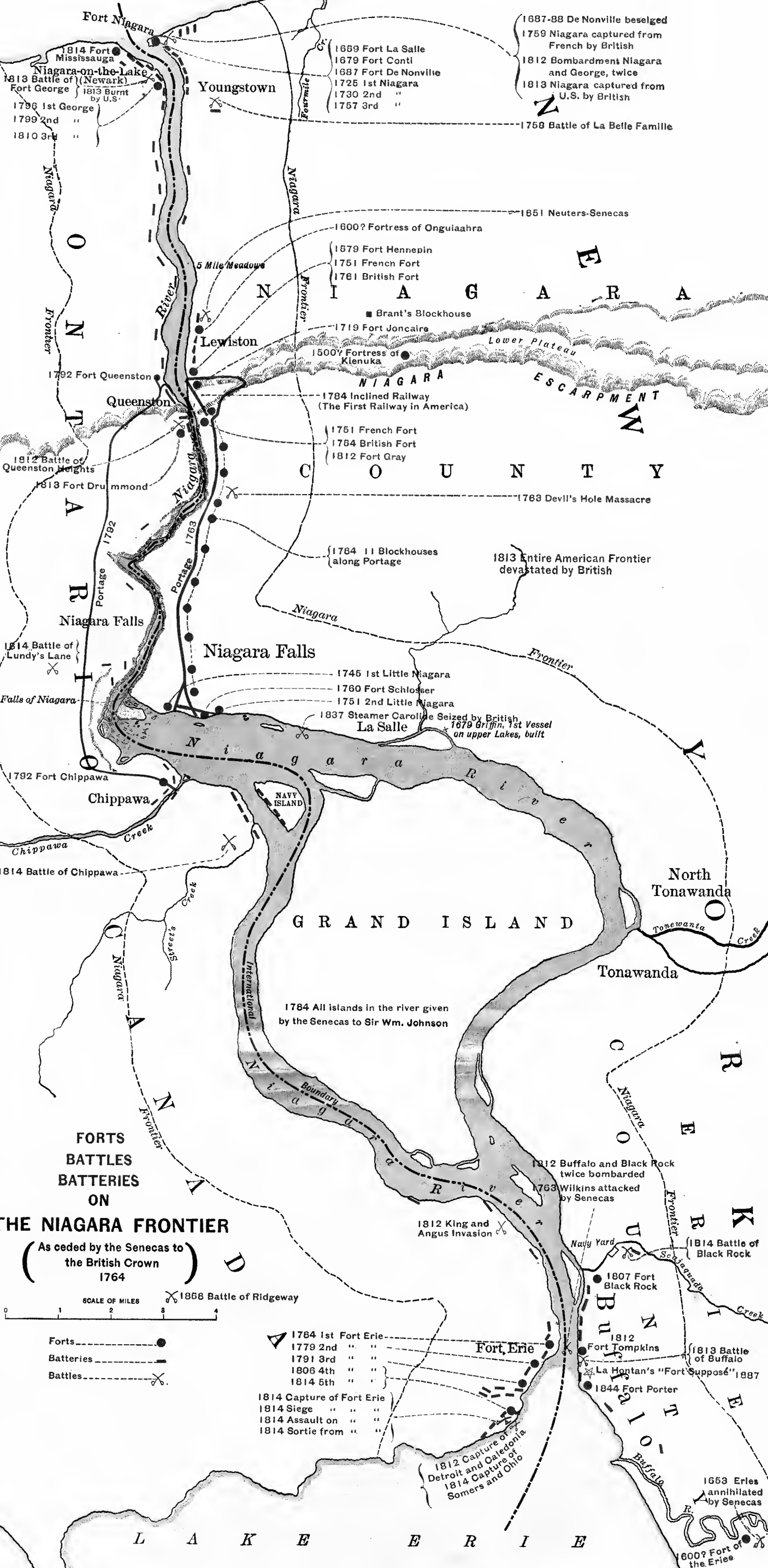
The fort of the Eries and Kienuka are taken from Schoolcraft's Works; the First Fort Erie is from Montresor's own drawing; Second Little Niagara, Stedman's House, and plan of Schlosser are from drawings made by a man, who, as a child, lived in that house in 1806. The others are from old books or magazines, or are modern photographs.

THE
MATTHEWS-NORTHROP
WORKS
BUFFALO CLEVELAND AND NEW YORK

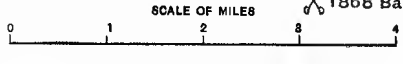


1759 Prideaux's Landing

1687-88 De Nonville besieged
 1759 Niagara captured from French by British
 1812 Bombardment Niagara and George, twice
 1813 Niagara captured from U.S. by British



FORTS BATTLES BATTERIES ON THE NIAGARA FRONTIER
 (As ceded by the Senecas to the British Crown 1764)



- Forts -----●-----
- Batteries -----■-----
- Battles -----X-----

- ▲ 1784 1st Fort Erie
- ▲ 1779 2nd " "
- ▲ 1791 3rd " "
- ▲ 1806 4th " "
- ▲ 1814 5th " "

- 1814 Capture of Fort Erie
- 1814 Siege " "
- 1814 Assault on " "
- 1814 Sortie from " "

- X 1812 Capture of Detroit and Caledonia
- X 1814 Capture of Somers and Ohio

1653 Erie annihilated by Senecas
 1600? Fort of the Erie

