

# historic furnishing study

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# FORT STANWIX

NATIONAL MONUMENT / NEW YORK

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HISTORIC FURNISHING STUDY  
FORT STANWIX NATIONAL MONUMENT  
NEW YORK

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DENVER SERVICE CENTER  
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## PREFACE

This furnishing study is the last of several studies undertaken in order to reconstruct Fort Stanwix. Its illustrious predecessors consist of "The Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix" (1969), by John F. Luzader; Historic Structure Report: Fort Stanwix, Architectural Data Section (1973) by Orville W. Carroll; and "Casemates and Cannonballs: Archeological Investigations at Fort Stanwix, 1758-1781" (1973), NPS typescript by Lee Hanson and Dick Ping Hsu.

The scope of this study focuses upon the siege and repulse of Barry St. Leger's British forces in August 1777, the major theme of the interpretive program. In addition, its attention focuses primarily on those areas of the fort scheduled by the interpretive prospectus for complete or partial furnishing. These areas consist of the parade ground, bastions, southwest and northwest bombproofs, bakehouse, guardhouse, headquarters, east barracks, and north, southeast, and west casemates.

This study is limited by a dearth of sources containing data on furnishings directly associated with Fort Stanwix. Where this scarcity has occurred, I have sought those sources that contain data on furnishings of other military posts of the period, particularly those in New York State. These sources proved of inestimable value. Archeological studies of Fort Stanwix and of other military posts of the period also proved to be valuable, although the basis for conclusions for a study of this nature must ultimately rest with the historical record. Obviously, because this study relies on much documentation not directly associated with the fort, many conclusions must necessarily be conjectural.

In preparing this study, I have first sought to identify furnishings that did, or might have, belonged to Fort Stanwix during the siege. These are treated in Chapters I through VI. In Chapter VII I have brought all these furnishings together in an attempt to describe the appearance of those areas scheduled to be furnished.

For the sake of continuity and to avoid any confusion in the text, I have retained the name of Fort Stanwix throughout, even when sources have referred to the alternate name of Fort Schuyler.

My thanks go to many persons who have helped to make this study possible, but I wish especially to express my appreciation to Messrs. Luzader, Carroll, Hanson, and Hsu. Their knowledge, background, and long association with Fort Stanwix have produced scholarly studies and research without which the author would have been at a serious disadvantage. I would also like to thank the staffs of the following organizations for the assistance they gave me in seeking out possible

sources: the New York Public Library, the New-York Historical Society, the New York State Library, the William L. Clements Library of the University of Michigan, the American Antiquarian Society, the Sterling Memorial Library of Yale University, the New Haven Colony Historical Society, the National Archives, the Connecticut Historical Society, the United States Military Academy, and the Queens Borough Public Library in Jamaica, New York. Finally, a word of thanks goes to the many individuals, too numerous to mention here, who were so kind as to answer my many queries.

Louis Torres

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| PREFACE . . . . .  | iii |
| INTRODUCTION . . . . .   | 1   |
| I. PROVISIONS . . . . .  | 5   |
| II. ARMS AND ACCOUTERMENTS . . . . .                           | 17  |
| A. Large Armaments . . . . .                                   | 17  |
| B. Small Arms and Ammunition . . . . .                         | 21  |
| C. Edged Weapons . . . . .                                     | 22  |
| D. Accouterments . . . . .                                     | 23  |
| III. CLOTHING . . . . .  | 25  |
| IV. INDIAN SUPPLIES . . . . .                                  | 31  |
| V. LIVESTOCK . . . . .   | 33  |
| VI. HARDWARE, UTENSILS, FURNITURE, AND ACCESSORIES . . . . .   | 37  |
| A. Engineer Stores . . . . .                                   | 37  |
| B. Housewares, Utensils, and Glassware . . . . .               | 38  |
| C. Furniture and Accessories . . . . .                         | 40  |
| VII. THE FURNISHED AREAS . . . . .                             | 43  |
| A. Parade Ground and Bastions . . . . .                        | 43  |
| 1. Guns . . . . .  | 43  |
| 2. Sentry Boxes . . . . .                                      | 45  |
| 3. Wells and Water Barrels . . . . .                           | 47  |
| 4. Whipping Post . . . . .                                     | 48  |
| 5. Woodpiles and Haystacks . . . . .                           | 49  |
| 6. Temporary Storage of Provisions<br>and Ammunition . . . . . | 51  |
| 7. Wagons and Sleighs . . . . .                                | 51  |
| 8. Tents . . . . .   | 53  |
| 9. Necessary . . . . .   | 54  |
| 10. Flagpole and Flags . . . . .                               | 54  |
| B. Bombproofs . . . . .  | 55  |
| 1. Southwest Bombproof . . . . .                               | 55  |
| 2. Northwest Bombproof . . . . .                               | 58  |
| 3. Southeast Bombproof (Bakehouse) . . . . .                   | 60  |

|   |    |
|---|----|
| C. Guardhouse . . . . .   | 60 |
| D. Headquarters . . . . .   | 62 |
| E. East Barracks . . . . .  | 66 |
| F. Casemates . . . . .  | 73 |
| 1. North Casemate<br>(Officers' Quarters) . . . . .                                       | 73 |
| 2. Southeast and West Casemates<br>(Enlisted Men's Quarters) . . . . .                    | 74 |
| APPENDIX. The "Stars and Stripes" at Fort Stanwix,<br>A Summary of the Evidence . . . . . | 77 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .  | 85 |
| ILLUSTRATIONS . . . . .   | 89 |
| 1. Revolutionary War Fireplace . . . . .  | 90 |
| 2. Fireplace in Reconstructed Military Hut . . . . .                                      | 92 |



## INTRODUCTION

Fort Stanwix is known in history for its dramatic role during the British siege of August 1777. In defeating the designs of Barry St. Leger, it was able to contribute to the defeat of General Burgoyne, leading to new developments in the Revolution. Nevertheless, its significance cannot be fully appreciated without first realizing the strategic position it commanded on the frontier--first as a British post and later as an American possession. Located in central New York State, in an area commonly known as the Carrying Place, it became the connecting link between the several western posts on the Great Lakes and those posts on Lake Champlain and the Hudson River. Gen. Thomas Gage appreciated its strategic importance when he noted that, because of Fort Stanwix, the Mohawk River and all points eastward as far as Schenectady were well secured against any attempt by the French. In regard to the role it would play in supporting communications to the westward, Gage noted that the fort would give "assistance to every person going with stores / and / refreshments to the several posts . . . to Niagara."<sup>1</sup>

After the French and Indian War had ended and after fears of French incursions had subsided, there was no longer any need for a fully garrisoned fort. In recommending that Fort Stanwix be demilitarized, General Gage argued that the fort had ceased to serve its original purpose. He said that:

The use of Fort Stanwix was, that being Situated upon a Carrying Place, the Garrison assisted in the Transportation of the Boats and Stores; but as the Stores formerly demanded are now greatly reduced I am of opinion that the Service can be carried on in the Manner proposed, without being at the Expence of Supporting a Fort, and Maintaining a Garrison at so great a Distance.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after the outbreak of the Revolution, the forts' strategic importance was again realized. With the failure of the American campaign in Canada in 1776, Fort Stanwix along with all those posts on Lake Champlain and the Hudson River began to attract attention. Encouraged by their success in Canada, the British would almost certainly

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1. Thomas Gage Papers, William L. Clements Library, University of Michigan, Gage to Johnson, Feb. 1, 1759; *ibid.*, Gage to Massey, Nov. 12, 1759.

2. Clarence Edion Carter, ed., The Correspondence of General Thomas Gage with the Secretaries of State 1763-1775, 2 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), 1:141.

begin a drive southward to cut off the New England colonies. Gen. Philip Schuyler, who commanded the Northern Department, saw the possible consequences of an enemy drive eastward along the Mohawk Valley and the need to retain the loyalty of the Oneidas, the only family of the Six Nations of the Iroquois to remain neutral. Prompted by the fears of the inhabitants of Tryon County, he ordered the reopening of Fort Stanwix.<sup>3</sup>

During the Revolution, Fort Stanwix remained a frontier fort isolated from Albany and Schenectady, from where it received its direction and major supplies, by more than 90 miles. It found itself in the midst of Tories and unfriendly Iroquois. Because of this isolation it suffered more than its share of desertions.<sup>4</sup> In 1776 the post commander complained that he was "not able to get any publick intelligence, unless I make Particular application for it at some place more publick." To remedy the situation, he appointed a post rider to ride between Fort Stanwix and Albany once a week. His appeal for intelligence of any kind was almost desperate.<sup>5</sup>

General Schuyler was convinced that the enemy would one day make its strength felt by way of the Mohawk Valley, and he resisted any attempt to weaken that part of the country. He objected strenuously to a request from Gen. Horatio Gates to transfer troops from Fort Stanwix to the Champlain region. "I cannot think," he said, "of moving Colonel Dayton's Corps from Fort Stanwix. If I had any troops to spare I would strengthen that Quarter as all my Intelligence agrees that some Blow is Meditated."<sup>6</sup>

Schuyler worked feverishly to strengthen the fort with much-needed supplies. Unfortunately, the results were not always equal to the effort. Although Col. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Commander of the 3 New York Regiment, found the fort "extremely pleasant and agreeable" when he first arrived, he soon showed his annoyance at the lack of progress being made to strengthen the fort. He complained that construction was moving ahead very slowly. Only 2 months before the siege, he noted with some disgust that "Nothing of any importance /had/ yet been done toward the Strengthening /of/ the Fortifications

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3. Philip Schuyler Papers, New York Public Library, Caldwell to Schuyler, June 27, 1776; ibid., Schuyler to Committee of Tryon County, July 1, 1776.

4. Thomas Gage Papers, Gage to Campbell, May 13, 1764.

5. Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Elmore to Trumbull, Jr., Nov. 21, 1776.

6. Horatio Gates Papers, New-York Historical Society, Schuyler to Gates, Oct. 3, 1776.

which at present has little more than the name of a Fortification."<sup>7</sup>

By the time the siege got underway, the fort was still largely unprepared. While the garrison expanded rapidly to an approximate strength of 700 on the eve of the siege, the same could not be said for the heavy guns that were promised. Although ordnance supplies were being shipped daily to Fort Stanwix, Schuyler was finally compelled to admit to Washington that the garrison was weak and poorly supplied with cannon.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the siege had come and gone, but the fort remained without adequate facilities and supplies.

In the final analysis, the British were largely to blame for their unsuccessful attempt against Fort Stanwix. Although they outnumbered the garrison, they had underestimated their task; by not bringing guns of a larger caliber with them, they missed an excellent opportunity. The problems they faced with a restless and uncertain ally in the Indian was another contributing factor to their defeat.

Although the records are silent, Fort Stanwix must have presented a chaotic scene during the siege. Sleeping quarters were inadequate to house the normal complement of 400 men. These facilities had been planned but never completed. On top of this, the garrison suddenly expanded to about 700 men just before the siege. Although supplies of all kinds were arriving daily, there were many shortages, from clothing and eating utensils to big guns. Faced with a shortage of normal day-to-day supplies, the men were forced to improvise, borrow, and share. They slept on floors and possibly in tents with little bedding and a minimum of comfort, sharing their cooking and eating utensils and wearing tattered clothes. Fortunately it was summer, but the cool nights of that region must have produced considerable discomfort.

Inadequate facilities and lack of supplies must have seemed intolerable at times, but they were not the only problems. The garrison during the siege was made up of Yorkers and Yankees, as well as continentals and militia. Such a combination must have produced more than the normal amount of factionalism and jealousies. Mistrust of the Tryon County militia (whose members, after all, did come from an area where loyalties were divided) was inevitable, and must have added fuel to the fire.

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7. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, New York Public Library, Gansevoort to Van Shaick, May 5, 1777; ibid., Gansevoort to Schuyler, ca. May 1777.

8. Henry Glen Letter Book 1776-80, New York State Library, Schuyler to Morgan, June 19, 1777; Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Washington, June 30, 1777.

The siege went on for 22 days under these conditions. In the final analysis, the fact that the siege was finally raised with the loss of so few men must be credited to the bravery, courage, and ingenuity of the garrison.

## I. PROVISIONS

Providing food and supplies for the garrison at Fort Stanwix proved to be a job of considerable magnitude, frequently exhausting the patience of those who commanded the fort. All the logistical problems faced by Fort Stanwix were common to any frontier fort. The fort was separated from Albany and Schenectady by more than 90 miles of heavily wooded areas. In the spring, summer, and fall provisions were loaded onto bateaux, which sailed westward on the Mohawk River. In the winter, when the river was not navigable, supplies were shipped on wagons and sleighs over inland routes that often proved treacherous. Even when the elements were conquered, supplies en route faced the uncertainties of the Tories and their allies, the Iroquois, who thrived in large numbers, particularly in Tryon County.

Nor was the enemy the worst offender; the men hired to operate the bateaux frequently proved to be untrustworthy, and often stole the supplies. General Schuyler decried these practices in the most vehement language, and when these thieves were caught redhanded, punishment was severely meted out.

When the provisions finally did arrive, the garrison had to contend with other problems. Often food would either arrive spoiled or would spoil shortly after its arrival, especially if packaging or storage facilities were inadequate. The quantity of food and supplies available at the fort was frequently insufficient because it was affected by the fluctuating number of men at the fort. Despite General Schuyler's attempts to make sure that supplies followed new assignments to the garrison, the complicated supply line made this difficult. Then there was the extensive pilfering at the fort itself. One member of the garrison noted that men frequently broke into the stores and stole provisions.<sup>1</sup>

The inconsistency of the supply system often led to an imbalance in the diet of the soldier. As early as 1759, complaints were heard from Fort Stanwix that the "Scurvy begins to make its Appearance upon some . . . men, who have now been reduced some time to pork and Flower [sic]."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Almond W. Lauber, comp., Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, 1778-1780, The Second New York Regiment, 1780-1783 by Samuel Tallmadge and others with Diaries of Samuel Tallmadge, 1780-1782 and John Barr, 1779-1782, (Albany: The University of the State of New York, 1932), p. 545 (hereafter cited as Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment).

2. Thomas Gage Papers, Gage to Amherst, Feb. 18, 1759.

The food supplies eaten at Fort Stanwix consisted largely of salted pork and beef. At times when cattle were abundant, in an effort to avoid the ill-effects of too much salted meat, fresh beef was issued. Thus, in July 1776, while he was commanding the Northern Department, General Gates ordered his commissary to issue a 4-day ration of fresh meat and a 3-day ration of salted meat. As the number of cattle increased, the commissary was directed to issue a 5-day ration of fresh meat and a 2-day ration of salted meat a week.<sup>3</sup>

Most important among the foods eaten at Fort Stanwix were beef, pork, bread, flour, oatmeal, rice, peas, butter, and salt. Of lesser importance were cheese, bacon, suet, fish, raisins, and molasses. Occasionally, different kinds of vegetables were shipped to the fort, such as potatoes, parsnips, carrots, turnips, cabbage, and onions, but these were intended mainly for the sick. Vegetable seeds were also sent to the fort to encourage soldiers to plant their own gardens, and, as a result, several gardens flourished outside the fort. Beverages usually seen at Fort Stanwix consisted of beer, cider, rum, and wine. Rum was a significant part of the soldier's ration, particularly while he was on fatigue duty.

With spring approaching in 1777, it became more apparent that the enemy would strike from the west through Fort Stanwix. The garrison worked feverishly to make the fort defensible. In the meantime, Schuyler had reported as early as August 1776 to Washington that almost 80 days worth of pork and flour were in store for the garrison. Moreover, a considerable quantity of flour was also being shipped from Schenectady, and because the garrison had 23 head of beef cattle, Schuyler believed it would have a constant supply of fresh meat on hand. "I am under no apprehensions," he concluded with some optimism, "that the garrison will be under any Difficulty in the article of provision."<sup>4</sup>

In spite of these words of optimism and the effort made to supply the garrison with provisions, the desired goal was never reached. In fairness to Schuyler, however, it should be noted that at the time he made his statement the garrison numbered no more than 400 men, whereas the garrison continued to grow until mid-1777, when it reached almost 700. By June 1777 Schuyler had changed his tune, and he was now complaining that the quantity of provisions at Fort Stanwix was "very inadequate." He directed his subordinates to take the proper measures

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3. Horatio Gates Papers, Orderly Book, July 26, 1776.

4. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Washington, ca. Aug. 1776.

without further delay to convey to the fort whatever was needed.<sup>5</sup> Colonel Gansevoort, meanwhile, noted on the eve of the siege that although his garrison was small, it was too large for the amount of provisions in store.<sup>6</sup>

Salt provisions, such as salt beef and salt pork, were especially needed, and condemning more than 20,000 pounds of spoiled salt meat at Fort Stanwix did not help matters any. Nevertheless, every effort was being made to supply the fort. On July 10, 1777, John Lansing, aid to Schuyler, wrote to the commissary of the Northern Department that "The General wishes you to take the most effectual Measures to throw into Fort /Stanwix/ as much provisions as will compleat what is now at that post to a Sufficiency for four hundred men for two months." At the same time Schuyler reassured Gansevoort that he would give him all the assistance in his power.<sup>7</sup>

At the beginning of the siege, the commissary stores at Fort Stanwix consisted of 500 barrels of flour, 60 barrels of salted provisions, a quantity of peas, and 20 head of cattle. In addition, Colonel Gansevoort<sup>8</sup> had procured 50 head of cattle from the inhabitants around the fort.

Salted meat was always at a premium, and frequently reliance was placed upon livestock, which was not always plentiful.<sup>9</sup> One month after the siege, Lt. Col. Marinus Willett, second in command of the garrison, complained about the dismal situation due to the garrison's lack of provisions. The garrison, he said, had only an 8-day supply of salted pork. He had employed every possible method in his power

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5. Ibid., Schuyler to Lewis, June 6, 1777.

6. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Schuyler, July 3, 1777.

7. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, July 5, 1777; ibid., Dayton to Schuyler, Sept. 4, 1776; Philip Schuyler Orderly Book, American Antiquarian Society, Lansing to Lewis, July 8, 1777; ibid., Lansing to Cuyler, July 10, 1777; ibid., Schuyler to Gansevoort, July 10, 1777. Schuyler complained to Congress that great sickness prevailed in the Army as a result of relying too much on fresh meat and not enough on salted meat. He noted that there was practically no salted meat in the Northern Department, and the little that was available was retained for scouting parties only. The problem, therefore, was not just common to Fort Stanwix, but was present at all posts in the Northern Department. See Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, Aug. 8, 1777.

8. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, Aug. 8, 1777.

9. Schuyler complained that it was impossible to obtain much fresh beef because of high prices. See Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Trumbull, June 29, 1777.

to supply the garrison with provisions, but without effect.<sup>10</sup> Although the problem had somewhat ameliorated with the promise of a shipment of 40 head of cattle and a quantity of salt,<sup>11</sup> months later Colonel Gansevoort was complaining that ever

since my Command at this place since the 6th Day of May last I have been only Supply'd from hand to mouth and during the Siege /sic/ obliged to kill Milch Cows Hoggs /sic/ etc & which I had retained in the Fort Ditch being the property of the late Inhabitants of this place when the Enemy opened the Seige /sic/; from whence this neglect proceeds I cannot tell.<sup>12</sup>

A return of the provisions at Fort Stanwix in May 1778, only 8 months after the siege, noted that the commissary stores consisted of the following items:<sup>13</sup>

|       |           |    |         |
|-------|-----------|----|---------|
| 106   | barrels   | of | beef    |
| 160   | "         | "  | pork    |
| 470   | "         | "  | flour   |
| 3-1/4 | "         | "  | salt    |
| 3-3/4 | "         | "  | soap    |
| 5     | boxes     | "  | "       |
| 2-1/2 | "         | "  | candles |
| 5     | hogsheads | "  | rum     |
| 16    | bushels   | "  | beef    |
| 4-1/2 | tierces   | "  | rice    |
| 13    | fat       |    | cattle  |

A return of provisions made 7 weeks later by John Hansen, commissary at Fort Stanwix, noted the following items on hand:

|     |         |    |       |
|-----|---------|----|-------|
| 5   | barrels | of | beef  |
| 128 | "       | "  | pork  |
| 433 | "       | "  | flour |
| 2   | "       | "  | salt  |
| 24  | boxes   | "  | soap  |

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10. Thomas Gates Papers, Willett to Gates, Sept. 22, 1777.

11. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Cuyler to Gansevoort, Nov. 28, 1777.

12. Ibid., Gansevoort to Gates, Dec. 12, 1777.

13. "/sic/ A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison Fort Schyler /sic/ May 1st, 1778," Queens Borough Public Library, Jamaica, N.Y.



7 boxes of candles  
 7 " " rice  
 an unknown quantity of peas  
 " " " " fat cattle  
 30 gallons hogsheads of rum  
 3/4 hogshead of brandy  
 3/4 " " rum for the Indian Department<sup>14</sup>

One may conclude from these two returns that the items were more or less the same as those that were probably on hand at the time of the siege. The quantity of some of these items might have been larger during the siege, since at that time there were about 700 people in the fort, whereas by May 1778 the number had been reduced to 451.<sup>15</sup>

To appreciate fully in what quantities provisions were consumed at Fort Stanwix, a brief word should be said about rationing. It was evident that those soldiers on heavy duty were entitled to more of the commissary stores. In 1780 garrison orders read:

The several Issuing Commissaries at this post and its Dependencies, are to Issue provisions as follows Viz, to Artificers waggoners, Colleirs /sic/, Boatmen, wood Cutters, on Constant hard Duty 24 oz of Bread or flower /sic/, 24 ditto of Beef or 18 oz of pork or fish, one Jill of Rum /per/ Day if it be had, Eight lb of Soape /per/ hundred men, /per/ Week one Quart of salt to Every hundred lb of Beef.

To the troops one lb of Bread or flour and one lb of Beef Soape salt and Candles as usual, one Jill of Rum to men on fatigue When to be had.

When there is Vegetables in store, the Rations of flour is to be Reduced on Quarter of a lb and for every hundred Weight of flour so Reduced, two and half Bushells of peas or two and half ditto Beans or Eight ditto potatoes or twelve ditto Turnips, are to be issued in proportion for a Greater or Less Quantity.

If at any times the Commissaries are Destitute of flour at

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14. Philip Schuyler Papers, "Return of Provisions under care of John Hansen, Esqr, A D Comy Issues at Ft. Schuyler on 21st Day June 1778."

15. This number consisted of 402 men of the 3rd New York Battalion, 32 men of the artillery detachment, and 17 civilians, who were listed as artificers. See "A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison at Fort Schyler /sic/ May 1st, 1778."

such times a half lb Beef is to be Added to the Ration of meat agreeable to the Orders of the 2d Instant.<sup>16</sup>

Rum was a major part of the provisions at Fort Stanwix. As early as 1759 the importance of rum was clearly recognized when General Gage, speaking of bringing supplies through Wood Creek in November, complained that the garrison at Fort Stanwix "will not be well pleased to have their men up to the middle in Water at that season of the year & not a drop of rum to give them /and/ I fear the King's Troops will suffer greatly from such Service."<sup>17</sup> In 1777, at the height of construction, Colonel Gansevoort appealed to General Gates to have a "quantity of Rum . . . sent up immediately as our fatigue /details/ have already been 7 Days with what little is left."<sup>18</sup> Three days later he signed an order for the purchase of 25 gills of rum for fatigue parties under the engineer's supervision.<sup>19</sup> In 1776 and 1777, men on fatigue duty--much of which consisted of cutting down trees and clearing the forest surrounding the fort--wagoners bringing up supplies, and artificers working on the fort were always first to get whatever rum was available.

The quantity of rum issued to each man depended upon whether they were on fatigue duty, construction work, or some lighter detail. Moreover, the quantity issued to each man varied from time to time depending upon the quantity of rum on hand. Reflecting the shortage of rum, in August 1776 General Schuyler directed the commander of Fort Stanwix to distribute rum "at such times /and/ in such portions as you may think proper to Fatigue men," but cautioned that it should not exceed one gill a day "unless upon very Extraordinary occasions."<sup>20</sup> In October 1777 the commissary was ordered to deliver a half gill of rum to each man before he went on fatigue duty and another after such duty. In February 1778 fatigue men engaged in cutting two cords of wood a day were permitted to have a half pint of rum a day.<sup>21</sup>

Although commissary provisions represented the major part of a soldier's rations at Fort Stanwix, they were not by any means the

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16. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 549.

17. Thomas Gage Papers, Gage to Amherst, August 21, 1759.

18. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gates, May 23, 1777.

19. Miscellaneous American Revolution, New York State Library, Order signed by Col. P. Gansevoort, May 26, 1777.

20. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Dayton, Aug. 3, 1776.

21. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, New-York Historical Society, Oct. 22, 1777; ibid., Feb. 23, 1778.

sole source of his nourishment. Sutlers who made their way to the fort and farmers living in the neighborhood of the fort sold their vegetables, alcoholic beverages, and wares to the commissary and to the soldiers directly. Receipts signed by Colonel Gansevoort on December 13, 1777, and March 7, 1778, reveal that he purchased peas, oats, and other grain for the use of his garrison.<sup>22</sup> In addition to these items, cider, turnips, potatoes, cabbage, apples, sugar, fowl, geese, turkeys, butter, cheese, onions, and tobacco were also purchased from sutlers and farmers.

Because abuses in the sale of these items were flagrant, Colonel Gansevoort felt constrained to convene a "Court of Regulations" to fix prices on all items brought to the garrison for sale. Henceforth, no farmer, officer, soldier, or anyone else would be permitted to sell his articles at a price higher than that set by the court.<sup>23</sup>

An item that never appeared in the commissary stores, but which was sought by some men of the garrison, was milk. The milk was sold to the soldiers by farmers and even by the inhabitants of the fort who owned cows. Even in this instance there was price gouging, and the commandant of the fort was forced to issue a warning to these persons. He reminded them that since "they receive their Feed from the Publick," 6 pence a quart was the highest price they could receive for milk. If any person violated this rule, his cows were to be expropriated for the use of the sick at the hospital.<sup>24</sup>

There was a variety of items that were either purchased from sutlers or received directly from home which reflected the personal preferences of the soldier. In this respect, officers, many of whom were from the upper class of society and financially able, had a greater selection of provisions to choose from. So good was this source of supply to Colonel Gansevoort that in June 1777, while he was complaining of serious shortages of commissary provisions for his men, he wrote to his future wife: "I must inform you that I have Exceeding /sic/ good living here /with/ plenty of Veal Pigions and Fish of Different Sorts."<sup>25</sup> There is little doubt that these delicacies were purchased by Colonel Gansevoort through local sources. Another time

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22. Henry Glen Papers, 1770-1801, New York Public Library, Glen to Fonda, ca. Nov. 1777; Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, a small booklet showing various accounts.

23. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Feb. 7, 1778.

24. Ibid., Sept. 23, 1777.

25. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Caty Van Schaik, June 1, 1777.

Gansevoort upbraided his brother for not sending him some lemons when he had asked for them.<sup>26</sup>

While rum was usually a part of the commissary stores and the most common alcoholic beverage of the enlisted man, wine, brandy, and other fine spirits were usually the drinks of the privileged officer. General Schuyler, a wealthy aristocrat, was careful to specify imported brandy when he ordered five kegs for himself and "a Gallon or two for Mrs. Schuyler at Saratoga."<sup>27</sup>

Another means of obtaining provisions, other than through the commissary, was by growing a garden. Gardens were encouraged at all times by providing the commissary at the fort with bushels of garden seed. At times the commissary ran low on seed, but when this happened individuals were able to acquire it by other means.<sup>28</sup> Before the siege took place, guards were posted at the gardens to prevent anyone from stealing the crops.<sup>29</sup> During the siege, potatoes were growing in the garden.<sup>30</sup>

Medicines also comprised part of the provisions at Fort Stanwix. A fairly large hospital existed outside the fort,<sup>31</sup> but once the siege got underway, this facility was no longer practical. Although some of the sick were confined to their quarters, the more serious cases, as well as the wounded, were sent to the southwest bombproof where a hospital had been set up.

Although it is difficult to give a precise description of the medicines that were employed at Fort Stanwix, there is a very interesting

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26. Ibid., Gansevoort to Gansevoort, Dec. 16, 1777.

27. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Bleeker, Aug. 19, 1775.

28. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Willett to Gansevoort, Apr. 20, 1778; Miscellaneous American Revolution (Wendell Family Papers), Lender to Bradt, Apr. 6, 1779.

29. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, June 24, 1777.

30. William Colbraith, "Journal of the most material occurrences preceding the Siege of Fort Schuyler (formerly Fort Stanwix) with an account of the siege, etc.," negative photostat, New York Public Library, Aug. 2, 1777, (hereafter cited as Colbraith, "Journal").

31. "Gansevoort Map of Fort Stanwix," New York Public Library, copy in John F. Luzader, "The Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," (Washington, D.C: Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service, 1969), Appendix IX.

document, albeit illegible, prepared several months before the siege, which provides a good picture of what the situation probably was like. This document is significant not only because it gives us some idea of the medicines used, but also because it indicates the serious shortage of medicines that existed. A doctor who was at Fort Dayton in the German Flatts as part of a detachment from Fort Stanwix (and who later was stationed at Fort Stanwix) had requested medicines for one of his patients from Dr. Lewis F. Dunham, the surgeon at Fort Stanwix. Dr. Dunham was somewhat reluctant to part with them, but sent them nevertheless with the following advice:

By the Bearer you have Such Medicines as you mentioned, though I assure you I know not how to part with them being half of the kind I have with me and know not where to get any more this side of New York. For Mr. Giffords billious complaints I send you a few Pills Composed of aloes Soap gum ammonia & Squills three of which are to be taken night & morning Drastic carthart sic: composed of Aloes Soap and Calomel is to be taken as often as you may think necessary without paying any Respect to the Pills. Horse Radish sic is very essential with his Diet. . . . My Respect to Mr. Gifford and hope the Medicines may prove a Balsam to his Complaints, a Sweet Cordial to my Desires. . . .

If any Bayberry bark Could be procured with you & kept in Cyder sic or mild Vinegar a TeaCup full of which now and then might be of the utmost Service to Mr. Gifford.<sup>32</sup>

Just before the siege, Fort Stanwix received a supply of medicines. In June 1777 Colonel Gansevoort's brother Leonard, who was then in Albany, wrote to the Colonel that a Doctor Williams was headed for the fort with medicines and hospital supplies.<sup>33</sup> Despite this heartening news and a later shipment, medicines continued to be at such a premium that only the most serious cases would get to use them.<sup>34</sup>

There are several references in documents pertaining to other posts in the Northern Department which also describe medicines and related hospital supplies. There is no doubt that these medicines were also used at Fort Stanwix at one time or another. At Fort

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32. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, New Jersey Historical Society, Dunham to Elmer, Aug. 23, 1776.

33. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gansevoort, June 13, 1777.

34. Ibid., Glen to Gansevoort, Dec. 5, 1777.

Ticonderoga the doctor ordered chocolate and sugar for the sick in the hospital, and one-half the beef or other meat that a soldier normally drew. He also ordered the commissary to purchase sheep for the sick. At the general hospital in Albany, an inventory of the stores revealed, among other things, a gallon of rum, a gallon of wine, a gallon of molasses, chocolate, corn, and turnips.<sup>35</sup>

As in all logistical operations involving long supply lines, containers and packages in which food was stored played a major role. Numerous references to different types of containers are made in the manuscripts of this period. Barrels, bushels, boxes, bags, and hogsheads, and to a lesser degree, casks, tierces, firkins, and puncheons, were all containers in which provisions were shipped to and stored at the fort in bulk. Glass containers, such as gallon, quart, and pint bottles, though only mentioned as units of measurement, must also have existed in large quantities at Fort Stanwix.

Salted beef and salted pork, two large items, were usually stored in barrels, but occasionally a reference is made to "bushels of beef." Other items that also appeared in barrels were flour, rum, wine, salt, and even soap. Usually stored in bushels were corn grain, and peas, and sometimes salt. The hogshead usually contained rum and brandy. Rice containers were referred to as "tierces of rice." References are also made to "flour casks." Although no references were found to the employment of bags, the latter must have been used because the British Army constantly shipped bread and peas in bags. Similarly, though no references were found to the use of the firkin, it must have been used because the British Army shipped and stored its butter in firkins.

Glass containers, such as gallons, quarts, and pints, were probably used to hold rum, brandy, wine, beer, cider, and other liquids. Frequently, these containers stored liquids purchased from sutlers or farmers.

Food spoilage represented a very serious logistical problem to both sides in the Revolution. The longer the lines of communication, the greater the problem. It took several days by boat or wagon to ship provisions and supplies to Fort Stanwix from Albany and Schenectady. Such a long journey without modern refrigeration caused considerable spoilage. Proper containers and proper packaging were imperative if spoilage, particularly of meat, was to be avoided. In July 1777,

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35. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Nov. 19, 1776; United States Revolution Collection, "Inventory of all Stores Belonging to the General Hospital at Albany etc March 29th 1777," American Antiquarian Society.

on the eve of the siege, Fort Stanwix found itself with more than 20,000 pounds of spoiled salted meat.<sup>36</sup> Such instances of spoilage must have been frequent, because in April 1778 Lt. Col. Willett issued orders to fit up the southwest and northwest bombproofs for the storage of beef and pork provisions. He further instructed the commissary to take the necessary precautions to see that the beef and pork were properly examined and well coopered before they were stored in the bombproofs.<sup>37</sup>

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36. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, July 5, 1777.

37. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Apr. 16, 1778.





## II. ARMS AND ACCOUTERMENTS

### A. Large Armaments

Although Fort Stanwix was a solidly built fort for its day, it was actually never fully armed with the proper number of cannon.

In 1758, while it was under construction, 50 cannon and mortars were proposed for the fort. Each of the four bastions was to carry eight cannon; the remainder were to grace the curtains and other sections of the fort. The type and size of guns to be employed were as follows:

|        |                                     |   |           |
|--------|-------------------------------------|---|-----------|
| 6      | eighteen pound iron cannons         |   |           |
| 12     | twelve                              | " | "         |
| 12     | nine                                | " | "         |
| 10     | six                                 | " | "         |
| 2      | eight inch                          | " | Howitzers |
| 2      | "                                   | " | mortars   |
| 2      | thirteen                            | " | "         |
| 4      | four and three-fifths iron coehorns |   |           |
| Total: | 50 <sup>1</sup>                     |   |           |

This plan to arm the fort with 50 guns was never realized. About a year later General Gage, who was superintending the construction of other forts on the Great Lakes and was desperately in need of any kind of assistance from Fort Stanwix, reluctantly admitted that the latter could provide little help in the way of guns having only one 12-pounder, two 9-pounders, two 6-pounders, four 3-pounders, and two small mortars.<sup>2</sup> One traveller through North America in 1765 noted that while Fort Stanwix was "calculated" for a good many guns, it had only 18 mounted.<sup>3</sup> While the fort was undergoing reconstruction in 1776, an effort was made to supply it with the necessary guns, but the attempt was not any more successful than in 1758.

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1. James Abercromby Papers, Huntington Library, Stanwix to Abercromby, Sept 7, 1758, cited in Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," pp. 28-29; James Abercromby Papers, Stanwix to Abercromby, Sept. 18, 1758, cited in Orville W. Carroll's personal research file on Fort Stanwix, Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, Mass.

2. Thomas Gage Papers, Gage to Amherst, Aug. 21, 1759.

3. Newton D. Mereness, ed., "Journal of An Officer Who Travelled in America and the West Indies in 1764 and 1765," Travels in the American Colonies (New York: Macmillan Company, 1916), p. 369.

Anticipating the shipment of heavy guns, and before a detachment of artillerymen could be assigned, General Schuyler directed the commander of Fort Stanwix to

furnish the Officer of Artillery with such a Number of Men, as will be fully sufficient to work the Cannon in case of an Attack & they should be constantly exercised in that Business. This will not only be an advantage to the Regiment In case they /sic/ should be no Artillery men may be at hand, but be of service to the cause in general, that, one or more of your Officers, should also be instructed in the Management of Cannon.<sup>4</sup>

It was not until January 1777 that a company of artillery was dispatched to Fort Stanwix.<sup>5</sup> In the meantime, cannon and other guns, including related equipment and ammunition, were being shipped to Fort Stanwix. By June 1777 these supplies were leaving the quartermaster depot at Schenectady almost on a daily basis.

In spite of all this activity, however, a report issued the same month noted that the fort had only six "small" cannon and two field pieces to defend it. Schuyler unhappily complained to Washington that the fort was poorly supplied with cannon.<sup>6</sup>

After learning that the enemy had reached Oswego and was soon to threaten Fort Stanwix, Schuyler quickly set about sending provisions and ammunition to the fort, but the effort, unfortunately, bore little fruit.<sup>7</sup> At the end of the siege, one member of the garrison reported in his journal that Fort Stanwix had 13 cannon on hand besides several guns of varying sizes and types taken from the enemy.<sup>8</sup>

Manuscripts reveal that from March through June 1778 the number and types of cannon at Fort Stanwix remained essentially the same. During this period the fort had three 9-pounders, four 6-pounders,

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4. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Dayton, Aug. 8, 1776.

5. Ibid., General Orders, Dec. 30, 1776.

6. Ibid., Schuyler to Washington, June 30, 1777; Henry Glen Letter Book, 1776-80, Schuyler to Morgan, June 19, 1777; Diary of Jonathan Lawrence, May 27-June 28, 1777, New York State Library.

7. Philip Schuyler's Orderly Book, Schuyler to Gansevoort, July 10, 1777; Colbraith, "Journal," July 30, 1777.

8. Ibid., Aug. 23, 1777.

and four 3-pounders--a total of 11 cannon. In addition, it had four 4-2/5 caliber Royal mortars.<sup>9</sup> It is very likely that the above cannon were at least the same type of guns, if not the same ones, used during the siege.

An excellent inventory of the ordnance, including the cannon and mortars noted above, in store at Fort Stanwix in May 1778 revealed the following items in the quantities indicated:

- 11 cannon (three 9-pounders, four 6-pounders,  
four 3-pounders)
- 4 Royals, 4-2/5 caliber
- 4 traveling carriages for 3-pound cannon
- 9 garrison carriages for 6- and 9-pound cannon
- 2,269 round shot
- 31 cannister shot
- 393 case shot fixed with flannel cartridges (shot were in  
all 3 caliber)
- 148 grapeshot (for 6- and 9-pounders)
- 640 wads (for 3-, 6-, and 9-pounders)
- 360 tubes damaged (3- and 6-pounders)
- 450 paper cartridges filled (3-, 6-, and 9-pounders)
- 849 empty paper cartridges (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 40 handspikes (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 14 sponges (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 8 ladles (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 10 wad hooks (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 14 caps for sponges (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 11 aprons for cannon (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 8 priming wires (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 11 tompkins (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 12 lind stocks (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 8 tube boxes (3-, 6-, 9-pounders)
- 1 gin ropes
- 1 set of men's harness
- 1 coil of rope
- 5 sponges for Royals
- 4 aprons for Royals
- 4 trail spikes
- 8 post fire stocks
- 3 dozens of post fires
- 10 powder horns
- 1 pincher

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9. State of New York Public Papers of George Clinton, 10 vols. (Albany: State of New York, 1900), 3:510; "A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison Fort Schyler [sic] May 1st 1778."

- 1 hammer
- 2 gimblets
- 20 coils of slow match
- 16-1/2 rheems of cartridge paper
- 4 sets of dragropes for 3-pounders
- 5 haversacks
- 1 set of spare wheels for 9-pound carriages
- 1 spare carriage for 9-pounders
- 1 spare carriage for 6-pounders
- 1 gin
- 63 boxes of musket balls
- 18 oilcloths
- 2 hairclothes
- 127 shells for Royals
- 3.000 flints
- 37 barrels of powder<sup>10</sup>

It may be of interest to compare the similarity of the following partial list of heavy armament and ordnance supplies, which appeared in a return of ordnance needed in the Northern Department in August 1777, with the preceding list of items:

- 7 tons of 3-pound shot
- 4 tons of 4-pound shot
- 3 tons of 6-pound shot
- 3 dozens of large horns suitable for priming cannon,  
with belts, bits, priming wires, etc.
- 12 dozen post fires
- 1/2 ton of slow match
- 2000 tubes suitable for 3-, 4-, and 6-pounders
- 200 3-pound flannel cartridges
- 400 4-pound " "
- 200 6-pound " "
- 1000 paper cartridges for 4-pounders
- 1000 " " " 3-pounders
- 1000 " " " 6-pounders
- 20 sets of men's harnesses
- 20 " " dragropes
- 4 dozen scissors for the laboratory
- 2 dozen pairs of pinchers
- 2 dozen hammers
- 500 sheets of lead
- 2 dozen tube boxes with belts
- 100 yards of oil cloth for covering ammunition<sup>11</sup>

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10. Ibid.

11. Thomas Gates Papers, "A Return of Ordnance Stores wanted in the Northern Department," Aug. 19, 1777.

## B. Small Arms and Ammunition

Although the written evidence is meagre, the musket was probably the most common small weapon employed at Fort Stanwix during the siege. Whether the Brown Bess or some other English musket was used is not known, but in all probability an English musket was extensively utilized. On the other hand, there is some concrete evidence that a French type of musket was also used. In June 1777 Leonard Gansevoort again wrote to his brother that "Lieut. Mc Clallen has desired me to inform you that he has drawn out of the Store sixty good new French muskets and the like number of Quality Bayonets, Cartouch Boxes and Bayonet belts." This written evidence may be corroborated by the discovery by archeologists of a single iron forward band said to have probably come from a French weapon.<sup>12</sup>

Although there are few direct references to the use of the musket at Fort Stanwix, there are several references to musket ball and musket cartridges.<sup>13</sup>

There are several documents pertaining to the Northern Department and to posts in other parts of the colonies that make references to small arms and related items. From these documents we can conclude that generally the same arms and related equipment were probably employed at Fort Stanwix. A resolution passed by the New York Provincial Congress in August 1776 directed that every person in the militia, including the city and county of Albany and Tryon County, was to furnish himself with a

good Musket or firelock & Bayonet Sword or Tomahawk, a Steel Ramrod Worm, Priming Wire and Brush fitted thereto, a Cartouch Box to contain 32 rounds of cartridges, 12 flints and a knapsack agreeable to the directions of the Continental Congress. . . . That every man shall at his place of abode be also provided with one pound of powder and three pounds of bullets of proper size to his musket or firelock.<sup>14</sup>

Pistols, usually carried by officers, were also used at Fort Stanwix.

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12. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gansevoort, June 13, 1777; Lee Hanson and Dick Ping Hsu, "Casmates and Cannonballs: Archeological Investigations at Fort Stanwix, 1758-1781," 1:128 Fort Stanwix Archeological Project (New York District, 1973).

13. Philip Schuyler's Orderly Book, Lansing to Lewis, July 8, 1777; "A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison Fort Schuyler [sic] May 1st 1778."

14. State of New York, New York In the Revolution (Albany: J. B. Lyon Company, 1904), p. 31.

Reference to such a weapon appears in a letter from Jermiah Van Rensselaer to Willett.<sup>15</sup> Swivel guns also might have been items in use at the fort, but if they were, they were in small numbers. These guns, along with musket balls, powder, bullet molds, cartridge paper, and fuzes, were requested of the New York Provincial Congress by General Schuyler for the Northern Department in 1775.<sup>16</sup> A return of ordnance at Fort Ticonderoga in July 1777 noted, among other types of supplies on hand, reams of musket cartridge paper, powder (in whole or half barrels), swivels (guns), wall pieces (guns), muskets, bayonets, pistols, bayonet belts, cartouch boxes, bullet molds, musket cartridges, priming wires, flints, boxes of musket ball, powder horns, and hand grenades.<sup>17</sup> That same month General Schuyler appealed to Washington to send him, among other much-needed items, "a Quantity of fixed Musquet [sic] Ammunition, cartridge paper."<sup>18</sup> The following month, while Fort Stanwix was under siege, the Northern Department made a note of ordnance stores needed. Among these items were lead for musket balls, bullet molds, reams of musket cartridge paper, and molds for buckshot.<sup>19</sup>

### C. Edged Weapons

There is little documentation, other than on bayonets and spears, regarding the use of edged weapons at Fort Stanwix. In July 1777 a soldier at Fort Stanwix was punished for stealing a bayonet.<sup>20</sup> The use of bayonets is corroborated by the discovery of bayonets (one marked "U.S.") by archeologists in 1972.<sup>21</sup>

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15. Marinus Willett Miscellaneous MSS., New-York Historical Society Apr. 1, 1778.

16. Philip Schuyler Papers, "An Estimate of Military Stores, Provisions etc. to be sent to Albany," Schuyler to New York Provincial Congress, July 3, 1775.

17. Horatio Gates Papers, "A General Return of Ordnance and Stores at Ticonderoga, Mount Independence . . .," July 4, 1778.

18. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Washington, July 6, 1777.

19. Horatio Gates Papers, "A Return of Ordnance Stores wanted in the Northern Department," Aug. 19, 1777.

20. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, July 19, 1777.

21. Memorandum, Lee H. Hanson, Jr., to Director, New York District, National Park Service, June 1, 1972, copy filed in Denver Service Center, NPS, under A2615.

In describing his famous raid Willett noted that in order not to be encumbered with too many weapons, his men left the fort with no other weapon "but a spear for each, 8 feet in length, which was intended to serve as a staff as well as a weapon of defense."<sup>22</sup> Again, this evidence is supported by the archeologists who found six spear tips in 1972.<sup>23</sup> A source dated May 24, 1781, refers to spears being thrown "out of their places."<sup>24</sup>

The small hatchet or tomahawk may have been a common weapon at Fort Stanwix, particularly in the hands of the militia. The New York Provincial Congress provided its troops with small hatchets, and insisted that each member of the militia be furnished with either a bayonet or tomahawk.<sup>25</sup>

Swords, knives, and daggers were probably also common weapons at Fort Stanwix, although no specific references in documents have been found. There were probably a variety of swords used by officers, and noncommissioned officers must have used short sabers. Knives and daggers were especially plentiful, since they could be used for cutting food and other objects, as well as for in-close fighting. The Massachusetts and Tryon County militias were most likely to be seen with them.

#### D. Accouterments

As in the case of small arms and edged weapons, specific documentation attesting to the existence of accouterments of various sorts is also very meagre. Nevertheless, the use of tents at Fort Stanwix seems to be established as early as 1759, and in 1776 one officer took umbrage at the fact that he was obliged to "lye in the tents along with the men whilst" his superior officer slept quietly indoors.<sup>26</sup>

Because the tent was indispensable during the periods that construction was going on, it is probable that it may have played a significant

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22. Marinus Willett's "Narrative," cited in John Albert Scott, Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany (Rome, N.Y.: Rome Sentinel, 1927), p. 243.

23. Memorandum, Lee H. Hanson, June 1, 1972.

24. Lauber, Orderly Books of The Fourth New York Regiment, p. 583.

25. State of New York, New York In the Revolution, pp. 13, 31.

26. Miscellaneous American Revolution, Colin Campbell's "Account of Disbursements Fort Stanwix 1st June 1759"; Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Oct. 8, 1776.

role in housing some of the men during the siege, when the garrison was overcrowded. Overcrowding at the fort was inevitable, although sources are silent on this subject. No doubt some room for the overflow was made available in barracks and casemates, but it is not unreasonable to suppose that the tent was employed within the fort in order to absorb some of this increase.

The knapsack and canteen were two items barely mentioned in documents; it is possible that they may not have been as plentiful as one would have liked. In fact, in April 1778, Lt. Col. Willett in writing to Colonel Gansevoort, who was temporarily away from Fort Stanwix, asked, "Don't you think the men ought to have each a Napsack /sic/ of some kind or other in case anything should turn up to require us to march, as well as canteen. . . ."27 The conclusion that there were knapsacks and canteens is reinforced by the fact that just before the siege, men were arriving almost daily at the garrison. These men must have carried such items, because a long march was unthinkable without them.

Other accouterments that were undoubtedly at Fort Stanwix were the powder horn, flints, and cartouch or cartridge boxes. It is inconceivable not to imagine these items at Fort Stanwix during the siege. In 1776 the New York Provincial Congress set down what each member of the militia should have in addition to weapons. It directed that each man furnish himself with a steel ramrod, worm, priming wire (with a brush attached thereto), and a cartouch box containing 23 cartridges, 12 flints, and a knapsack.<sup>28</sup>

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27. Ibid., Sept. 10, 1776; Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Willett to Gansevoort, Apr. 20, 1778.

28. State of New York, New York in the Revolution.



### III. CLOTHING

As late as August 1776, while construction was underway, the garrison was experiencing a serious shortage of clothing. Col. Elias Dayton, then commanding the garrison, reported to General Schuyler that there were at least 250 men, more than half the garrison, without shoes, stockings, and shirts; facing the approaching winter without these basic items left him somewhat apprehensive.<sup>1</sup> A year later the situation had hardly ameliorated--many of the men were still in dire need of some of these items. To partially relieve this situation, an inventory was ordered of all hides at the post, presumably for the purpose of providing substitutes for shoes.<sup>2</sup>

Lack of adequate clothing continued to plague the garrison to the point of affecting morale. It seemed as if the problem would never improve, since the shortage was prevalent throughout the Northern Department. After a strong appeal for clothing in 1780, the commander at Fort Stanwix was told that there was not enough clothing in the public stores, and he was urged to use sparingly what he had. In order to magnify the seriousness of this shortage, soldiers were warned that any deliberate misconduct that led to the neglect of one's uniform would lead to severe punishment.<sup>3</sup>

From time to time clothing supplies arrived at Fort Stanwix, but frequently they were not in the quantities desired. In the spring of 1778 Willett wrote with some pleasure that:

This day we had the pleasing satisfaction of receiving a number of shirts shoes etc for our soldiers. The shirts however are not quite sufficient to enable every man to be supplied with two. . . .<sup>4</sup>

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1. Philip Schuyler Papers, Dayton to Schuyler, Aug. 30, 1776.
  2. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Oct. 12, 1777.
  3. John Lamb Papers, New-York Historical Society, Willett to Lamb, Feb. 24, 1778; Miscellaneous American Revolution, Van Schaik to Van Dyck, May 7, 1780; Lauber, Orderly Books of The Fourth New York Regiment, p. 559.
  4. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Willett to Gansevoort, Apr. 20, 1778.

By the end of 1780 a fair amount of clothing had arrived in Albany, some of which was scheduled for shipment to Fort Stanwix. Items to be shipped consisted of 205 coats, 205 jackets, 400 shirts, 410 pairs of shoes, 274 pairs of stockings, 238 pairs of mittens, 205 hats, and a quantity of breeches and blankets.<sup>5</sup>

It may be of value to review several documents, which, although not directly related to Fort Stanwix, may have some bearing on the understanding of clothing worn at that post. One of these documents is a letter to General Gates informing him that James Mease, Clothier General of the Continental Army, was shipping to the Northern Department, 1,000 coats and 380 shirts. This letter is important because it reveals the great variation in outer garments that existed in the Continental Army. The following types of coats are quoted verbatim:

300 privates brown faced red  
16 sergeants do.  
24 privates blue faced red  
10 sergeants do.  
100 privates brown faced white  
95 brown turned green  
19 sergeants do. do.  
126 privates blue faced red  
10 sergeants do. do.  
50 privates drab faced red  
10 sergeants do. do.  
96 privates faced green  
20 drummers & fifers green faced blue  
18 privates brown faced white  
36 brown faced white<sup>6</sup>

In all likelihood some of these coats eventually found their way to Fort Stanwix in time for the cold weather.

Another document not directly related to Fort Stanwix but that might shed light on the type of clothing worn contains a list of clothing allowed the Continental soldier by an Act of Congress. This list, dated September 6, 1777, included coats, vests, breeches, shirts, hose, shoes, blankets, linen overalls (for warm weather), woolen overalls (for cold weather), hats, and hunting shirts.<sup>7</sup>

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5. Orderly Books of The Fourth New York Regiment, p. 549.

6. It may be of interest that while this letter indicated that coats and shirts were to be shipped, it also revealed that such was not the case with shoes. See Horatio Gates Papers, Mease to Gates, Aug. 21, 1777.

7. Miscellaneous American Revolution, "An Estimate of the Average Price in December 1778 of the different Articles of Clothing allowed the Soldiery by the Act of Congress, September 6th 1777."

It might be of interest to compare this document with one issued in 1781, a resolution passed by the Continental Congress directing that all noncommissioned officers and soldiers who are or may hereafter be enlisted during the war be annually furnished with:

One Regimental Coat full made  
One Cloth Vest  
One pair of Cloth Breeches  
One pair of Woolen Overalls  
Two pair/s/ of Woolen Hose  
Two pair/s/ of Woolen Socks  
One Tall Hat or Leathercap  
Four Shirts  
Two Pair of Linen Overalls  
Four pair of Strong Shoes  
One Blanket  
One Rifle Shirt &  
One pair of Woolen Gloves  
Also one pair of Shoe Buckles and one Clasp every two years.<sup>8</sup>

At this point it might be well to inject several pieces of evidence which may provide us with clues concerning the regimental uniform of the 3 New York Regiment. Just prior to the siege, Colonel Gansevoort received one of his frequent letters from his brother reassuring him that the commissary clothier for the Northern Department was in the process of sending him "76 Coats blue with Red facings and white lining just your Uniform together with the like Number of Infantry Hats."<sup>9</sup> In 1778 an officer at Fort Stanwix wrote to Colonel Gansevoort, who happened to be temporarily in Albany, to order 8 yards of broadcloth, for him at the commissary for clothing because his "blue cloak" had been used for colors at Fort Stanwix.<sup>10</sup> This written evidence suggests that the uniform of the 3 New York Regiment was largely blue. The evidence produced by Mr. Frederick P. Todd, an authority on early American uniforms, appears to substantiate this conclusion, as does Colonel Gansevoort's uniform, presently in the Smithsonian Institution. Dated 1776 the uniform is blue with a red facing. On the other hand, a portrait of Marinus Willett painted by Ralph Earl sometime between 1784 and 1795 and owned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art depicts the uniform as blue with a white facing.<sup>11</sup>

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8. Ibid., "Resolution of Congress of the Clothing Department," June 18, 1781.

9. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gansevoort, August 29, 1778.

10. Ibid., Swartwout to Gansevoort, Aug. 29, 1778.

11. Fredrick P. Todd, Cornwall-on-Hudson N.Y., to author, Apr. 22, 1974, in author's file.

Another document sheds some light on the clothing worn by the militia in New York. The Provincial Congress of New York ordered the commissary to purchase coarse broadcloth for making 712 short coats, and crimson cloth for making cuffs and facing. In addition the commissary was to purchase light brown coarse broadcloth to make 712 short coats, with blue cloth for cuffs and facings, and dark brown coarse broadcloth for making 712 short coats, with scarlet cloth for cuffs and facings.<sup>12</sup>

Watch coats were used at Fort Stanwix in 1781. These were heavy coats worn by the guard while on sentry duty. One watch coat, for which the corporal of the guard was accountable, was furnished each sentry box.<sup>13</sup> Each guard that came on duty would use the same coat.

Snowshoes were also important items employed at Fort Stanwix during the winter months. Snowshoes were made at Fort Stanwix in fairly large quantities. In early 1777 General Schuyler ordered Colonel Elmore to "please to cause fifty pairs of Snow Shoes to be made."<sup>14</sup> When the guardhouse was consumed by fire in 1780, all the snowshoes stored there were destroyed.<sup>15</sup>

There were several items of clothing worn by members of the garrison which were not issued by the commissary. These were personal items either acquired from families or purchased from sutlers. The officers were usually in a better position to acquire these items because they had the money to buy them and the room to store them. Because of this fact, officers' clothing was superior to that worn by the enlisted man. An excellent case in point was the clothing worn by the Army chaplain at Fort George. His inventory of clothing seemed endless, and it was apparent that much of it was not commissary issue. It consisted of:

- hat
- cloak
- greatcoat
- coat
- jacket and breeches (thick cloth)

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12. Historical data on Fort Stanwix collected by Orville W. Carroll, Denver Service Center, National Park Service. Mr. Frederick P. Todd is fully convinced that the militia wore no uniforms. See letter to author, Apr. 22, 1974.

13. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 556.

14. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Elmore, Jan. 5, 1777.

15. V. Dyck to Van Schaik, Apr. 17, 1780, furnished by Lee Hanson, Archeologist, NPS.

coat and jacket  
knit breeches  
striped jacket  
blue waistcoat  
2 pairs of black stockings  
" " " grey "  
" " " blue yarns  
1 pair of Indian stockings  
2 pairs of shoes  
1 pair of boots  
7 shirts  
3 bands  
3 long neck cloths  
3 stocks  
1 silk handkerchief  
1 white "  
1 check "  
Gloves, mittens  
buckles, etc.  
1 bed of wool  
1 Check woolen blanket  
1 white " "  
1 pair of linen sheets  
1 woolen sheet  
1 pillow  
2 pillow coats  
2 towels<sup>16</sup>

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16. Robbins Family Papers, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, Journal of the Rev. Ammi R. Robbins: A Chaplain In the American Army In The Northern Campaign of 1776 (New Haven: Printed by B. L. Hamlen, 1850).



#### IV. INDIAN SUPPLIES

Situated in the midst of the Iroquois Confederacy, Fort Stanwix was literally at the crossroads of Indian traffic. Treaties were made there and Indians frequently visited. General Schuyler worked incessantly to improve relations with the Iroquois, and he used Fort Stanwix as his base of operations. He attached considerable importance to having goods for the Indians, either for purchase or gifts, a precedent long ago established by the British. He took special pains to see that all his posts in the Northern Department, especially Fort Stanwix, were adequately supplied with goods for this purpose. In 1776 Schuyler wrote to Congress that:

I should order to the value of about fifteen hundred pounds in Indian goods to Fort Stanwix to be there disposed of at such a price as to give no umbrage to the Indians and that the States may not lose above four hundred pounds upon them. . . .<sup>1</sup>

In January 1777 Schuyler ordered Colonel Elmore to purchase 20 pounds of goods as gifts for the Indians. Fifteen months later the Board of Indian Commissioners for Indian Affairs at Albany sent a quantity of goods to Fort Stanwix, also to be used as gifts for the Indians. Meanwhile, members of the garrison were warned not to purchase these goods from the Indians on pain of being punished.<sup>2</sup>

So significant was this activity at Fort Stanwix that in December 1776 John Hansen, the commissary at the fort, requested Colonel Elmore to set aside a room for Indian goods. The room he received adjoined the one in which he resided. His plans were to connect the two rooms by means of a doorway so that there would be only one door from the outside leading to both rooms. Apparently he decided upon this plan in order to have better control over the supply in his charge. Hansen immediately sent word to Reverend Kirkland, who was both chaplain to the garrison at Fort Stanwix and missionary among the Indians, to pass on to the friendly Oneidas that he had received large quantities of supplies for them.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, Nov. 19, 1776.

2. Ibid., Schuyler to Elmore, Jan. 5, 1777; Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Apr. 23, 1778.

3. Philip Schuyler Papers, Hansen to Schuyler Dec. 30, 1776. In a document dated Jan. 31, 1777, mention is made of a "store where Mr. John Hansen has the disposal of Indian Goods." The room set aside for this purpose was probably a lean-to connected to the store, a building standing next to the guardhouse. See ibid., certificate signed by John Post et al., Jan. 31, 1777, with letter, Hansen to Schuyler, Feb. 1, 1777.

From the sources on hand it is difficult to identify all the supplies available to the Indians, but rum was a major item. One Officer in Colonel Dayton's regiment said that "Rum is an Article we are obliged to give them /viz Indians/ & many of them cannot be pacified till quite drunk."<sup>4</sup>

Next to rum, clothing and blankets were also widely sought by the Indians, particularly during the cold weather. General Schuyler told Congress that there were Indians in Albany who complained constantly because of lack of clothing and blankets. Schuyler said with some despair that "To transact Business with Indians at any Time is a most disagreeable Task. To do it with empty hands greatly increases the Difficulties."<sup>5</sup>

Schuyler sought assistance from every quarter in obtaining Indian supplies, and in 1777 he requested blankets, blue strands, vermillion, knives, long and short pipes, and coarse white linen for shirts from Boston through an agent of Congress. Some of these items were destined for Fort Stanwix.<sup>6</sup> Other items provided the Indians at Fort Stanwix were bread and beef.<sup>7</sup> No doubt there were other provisions.

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4. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, July 11, 1776.

5. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, Jan. 25, 1777.

6. Ibid., Schuyler to Livingston, Feb. 7, 1777.

7. Miscellaneous American Revolution, Order of Colonel Gansevoort, May 23, 1777.



## V. LIVESTOCK

Livestock was employed in two ways at Fort Stanwix: first, as food, and second, as draft animals. Horses, beef cattle, milch cows, and hogs were found at the fort during the siege, and in all probability poultry was there also.

Beef cattle were a major food of the garrison, and were usually found in the commissary's returns. The number of cattle often fluctuated depending upon the number of people in the garrison and upon the erratic behavior of the supply line. In August 1776 the fort had about 23 head of cattle to provide fresh meat for the garrison.<sup>1</sup>

One year later, soon after the siege, Fort Stanwix complained about the shortage of provisions, but the general commissary in Albany could not understand the justification for this complaint when the latest commissary return revealed that the garrison had 42 head of cattle. He conceded, however, that the cattle "must have been small."<sup>2</sup> Despite what might have been a misunderstanding, 2 months later 40 head of cattle were on their way to Fort Stanwix.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile, as late as December 1780, 47 head of cattle were shipped to the garrison, but this was probably the last big shipment before the fort was evacuated.<sup>4</sup>

The cattle that were sent to Fort Stanwix were eventually slaughtered, salted, and barreled. Several barrels of salt were usually on hand for barreling cattle. The barrels were often made at the fort. Thus the commander was ordered in 1780 "to get at least 300 Beef Barrels made instantly."<sup>5</sup> The British often shipped staves, hoops and backings, along with other provisions, to their forces in America where barrels were then made. The same procedure was probably employed by the Americans.

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1. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Washington, Aug. 16, 1776. On July 24, 1777, Willett made reference in his Orderly Book to cattle belonging to the garrison.

2. Marinus Willett Miscellaneous MSS., Cuyler to Willett, Sept. 20, 1777.

3. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Cuyler to Gansevoort, Nov. 28, 1777.

4. "John Barr's Diary," Dec. 4, 1780, in Lauber, Orderly Books of The Fourth New York Regiment, p. 844.

5. Fort Schuyler Miscellaneous MSS., New-York Historical Society, "Plan for the relief and provisioning of Fort Schuyler," ca. 1780.

Some of the cattle were served as fresh meat, and officers usually reaped the benefits. An order issued in 1780 directed the commissary at Fort Stanwix to issue a 3-day ration of fresh meat for the officers of the garrison.<sup>6</sup>

Milch cows and hogs also made up part of the livestock, but these were probably small in number. Moreover, this livestock was usually privately owned, either by members of the garrison itself or by neighboring farmers. During the siege Colonel Gansevoort was forced to slaughter milch cows and hogs, "the property of the late inhabitants" of Fort Stanwix, in order to supplement his inadequate provisions.<sup>7</sup>

The owners of milch cows sometimes presented problems to the garrison. Although milk was always welcomed, they often sold it at exorbitant prices. In September 1777 the commander was compelled to put a ceiling on the price of milk, setting it at 6 pence a quart. He reminded these owners that their cows received feed from the public lands, and he cautioned them that if the price ceiling was violated, he would have their cows expropriated and turned over to the hospital.<sup>8</sup>

Hogs proved to be a nuisance; they were frequently let loose about the fort, injuring the works. At one point owners of these animals were ordered to have their hogs "ringed" on penalty of having them expropriated.<sup>9</sup>

Records dating as early as 1765 indicate that horses as well as oxen were employed at Fort Stanwix for pulling wagons transporting boats and supplies from the Mohawk River to Wood Creek.<sup>10</sup> Horses were also used for carrying couriers and the commander of the fort. In late 1776 there were sufficient horses to warrant the assignment of a blacksmith to the fort.<sup>11</sup>

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6. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 553.

7. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gates, Dec. 12, 1777.

8. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Sept. 23, 1777.

9. Ibid., Apr. 5, 1778.

10. Mereness, "Journal of An Officer Who Travelled in America and the West Indies in 1764 and 1765," p. 369.

11. Horatio Gates Papers, Schuyler to Gates, Oct. 3, 1776.

Just prior to the siege, Colonel Gansevoort requested two horses to be kept at "My Place for any Sudden Emergency."<sup>12</sup> Whether they were finally made available to Colonel Gansevoort is not clear, but it is certain that at least seven horses were at Fort Stanwix during the siege, and they were used for pulling wagons. In Willett's famous raid, seven supply wagons from the fort were used to cart away the plunder.<sup>13</sup>

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12. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., *Military Papers*, Gansevoort to Gates, May 23, 1777.

13. William Willett, ed., *A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett* (New York, 1831), p. 195.



## VI. HARDWARE, UTENSILS, FURNITURE, AND ACCESSORIES

### A. Engineer Stores

Engineer stores, as at many forts of the period, made up a very large segment of the furnishings at Fort Stanwix. Since the time of its reoccupation by the Americans and long after the siege, it was constantly under construction. The result was that there were always large quantities of tools and construction materials at the site.<sup>1</sup>

The situation was similar at almost every post in the Northern Department where the construction of fortifications was going on in contemplation of the attack that was expected from Canada. Tools such as axes (including the pickaxe, wood axe, and broadaxe), spades, and shovels, were always in great demand. So desperate was General Schuyler for axes at one time that he wrote to the committees of several towns and districts in the counties of Albany, Berkshire, and Bennington entreating them to procure whatever axes could be spared from the inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the best available document, which details the kinds and quantities of engineer stores at Fort Stanwix close to the period of the siege, is an inventory of May 1, 1778. The following tools and building materials are listed:

| <u>Item</u>    | <u>Number</u> |
|----------------|---------------|
| picks          | 280           |
| bill hooks     | 105           |
| cross cut saws | 6             |
| iron wedges    | 6             |
| grapling irons | 3             |
| axes           | 76            |
| spades         | 133           |
| crow bars      | 2             |

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1. It may help one to understand a little about the kinds of tools employed at Fort Stanwix by learning what kinds of artificers, both military and civilian, were employed there. In early 1778 there were 15 carpenters, 6 sawyers, 12 brickmakers, 4 colliers, 2 coopers, 2 gardeners, 2 blacksmiths, and 2 armorers. See "A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison Fort Schuyler May 1st 1778."

2. Miscellaneous American Revolution, Schuyler to Committees in Albany et al., July 14, 1776; ibid., Schuyler to Gansevoort, Oct. 27, 1776.

|                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| broad axes                | 16  |
| bars of iron              | 7   |
| bars of steel             | 15  |
| barrels of nails          | 1/4 |
| barrels of spikes         | 1/2 |
| chest of carpenters tools | 1   |
| iron squares              | 8   |
| adzes                     | 4   |
| barrels of tar            | 2   |
| set of blacksmith tools   | 1   |
| wagons                    | 5   |
| grindstones               | 5   |
| whip saws                 | 73  |

It is very probable that other types of tools were at Fort Stanwix besides those classified as engineer stores, but they may have been personal items. For example, because many of the gardens were maintained as an individual preference, it is quite likely that garden tools were private belongings.

There are other documents not directly associated with Fort Stanwix, but relating to other posts in the Northern Department, which provide additional examples of engineer stores that might have been employed at Fort Stanwix. Some of these consist of hoes, hammers, mill saws, trowels, and wheel barrows. The following items appeared at many posts in the Northern Department, and may also have been found in varying degrees at Fort Stanwix before, during, and after the siege: casks of penny nails and spike nails, oakum, barrels of pitch, bar iron, steel, twine, casks of tin plates, paint brushes, barrels of oil, boxes of tin, kegs of white lead, gimlets, gin blocks, and wire.<sup>4</sup>

#### B. Housewares, Utensils, and Glassware

There are few historical records that specifically refer to the housewares and utensils used at Fort Stanwix. Nevertheless, we are able to determine what was probably used at the fort by examining documents pertaining to other forts of the period.

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3. "A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison Fort Schuyler May 1st 1778."

4. Miscellaneous American Revolution, "Capt. Baker's Return of Camp Equipage," n.d.; Philip Schuyler Papers, "An Estimate of Military Stores, Provisions etc. to be sent to Albany," enclosed with letter, Schuyler to N. Y. Provincial Congress, July 3, 1775; Gates Papers, "A General Return of Ordnance and Stores at Ticonderoga, Mount Independence . . . ," July 4, 1777.

The members of the garrison did most of their own cooking in their rooms and needed pots, kettles, and pans in addition to plates, bowls, platters, cups, knives, spoons, and forks. They also probably had salt and pepper shakers, as well as vinegar to spice their food. As early as 1776 when construction was begun to restore Fort Stanwix, the garrison suffered from a shortage of cooking equipment. Almost on the eve of the siege, Colonel Gansevoort complained to General Schuyler that his garrison was so destitute of utensils for cooking that the men either had to double up on the use of utensils, and thus wait a long time to eat, or else they had to cook by other less sanitary means. He attributed the large number of sick men in his garrison to the unsanitary preparation of food.<sup>5</sup>

A document originating in 1768 describes the cooking and eating utensils employed by soldiers in South Carolina and notes that each room occupied by soldiers was to have a pot, frying pan, ladle, flesh fork (fleshhook), trivet, pothook, platters, bowls, pitchers, mugs, and trenchers.<sup>6</sup> Because it was shared by several persons in a room, the brass kettle was very much in demand and received considerable attention at Fort Stanwix, as well as at other posts.<sup>7</sup>

Little is known about the kind of spoons, forks, knives, cups, and plates employed at Fort Stanwix. Some of these items may have been made of tin, pewter, wood, and earthenware. Fortunately, there is a 1778 reference to the use of one-pint tin cups at Fort Stanwix.<sup>8</sup> Documents relating to other posts generally refer to wooden bowls and wooden spoons. This latter reference may have been intended to describe ladles rather than spoons. Ceramic dishes were also common, but such items were probably found in the officers' quarters, where many may have been personal items. In archeological explorations conducted at Fort Stanwix, restorable plates, bottles, and cutlery were discovered.<sup>9</sup>

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5. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., *Military Papers*, Gansevoort to Schuyler, June 15, 1777.

6. Charles M. Stotz, *Drums in the Forest* (1958), p. 106.

7. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Lewis, Dec. 17, 1776. These 2 items frequently appeared in the returns of post commissaries. See *Miscellaneous American Revolution*, "Return of Barrack Bedding and furniture etc at Oswegatchie and Fort Wm. Augustus 25 Sept 1767"; *ibid.*, Capt. Baker's Return of Camp Equipage; *ibid.*, "Return of Barrack Bedding and Furniture etc. at Oswegatchi and Fort William Augustus 25th March 1768."

8. Marinus Willett *Miscellaneous MSS.*, Van Renselaer to Willett, Apr. 1, 1778.

9. Hanson and Hsu, "Casemates and Cannonballs," *passim*.

### C. Furniture and Accessories

Those items of furniture that were made of wood are difficult to document at Fort Stanwix. On the other hand, those items made of iron are easier to trace. Despite the paucity of documents related to Fort Stanwix on this subject, however, there are documents relating to other posts that may lead to some reasonable conclusions.

In 1776 General Schuyler issued orders to his deputy quartermaster general to make available to garrisons at all posts in the Northern Department undergoing construction, including Fort Stanwix, sufficient "bedding or straw," "firewood," and "barrack utensils," the latter to include items such as pails, tongs, shovels, and trammels. These items were to be delivered to the barrack master of each garrison, who was to be accountable for them.<sup>10</sup> Several other documents make isolated references to bedding, straw, bunks, pails, "benches" or a "bench bed," and to gridirons, but the information is far too meagre to obtain a comprehensive picture of the furnishings of rooms in Fort Stanwix.

In 1768 South Carolina provided each room with 1 pair of dog irons, 1 shovel, 1 pair of tongs, 1 broom, 1 tub or box to carry out dirt, 1 long table, 2 forms (chairs), 12 trenchers, 1 hatchet, 1 candlestick, a rack for firearms, wooden pegs to hang knapsacks or clothing, 2 chamber pots, and for every two men 1 bedstead, 1 bed, 1 bolster, and 3 blankets.<sup>11</sup>

Another source originating in 1767 describes an almost identical list of furniture and accessories in use at posts in the northern region. This document lists such items as 36 beds, 36 bolsters, 107 blankets, 24 berths, 3 tables, 7 forms, 12 pairs of dog irons, 12 pairs of tongs, 12 fire shovels, 12 candlesticks, 12 iron pots (possibly chamber pots), 2 chimney ropes, 123 1/2 cords of wood, candles and hay. The reference to 12 pairs of dog irons and tongs, and to 12 shovels, candlesticks, and iron pots may be an indication that there were 12 rooms.<sup>12</sup>

A return of furniture for the same post 6 months later noted that there were 48 beds, 48 bolsters, 12 rugs, 131 blankets, 26 berths, 3

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10. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Lewis, Nov. 9, 1776.

11. Stotz, Drums in the Forest, p. 106.

12. Miscellaneous American Revolution, "Return of Barrack Bedding and Furniture etc at Oswegatchie and Fort Wm. Augustus 25 Sept. 1767."



tables, 7 forms, 12 pairs of dog irons, 12 pairs of tongs, 12 fire shovels, 12 candlesticks, 12 iron pots, and 2 chimney ropes.<sup>13</sup>

In 1776 the Committee of War of New York State instructed its barrack masters to furnish each officer's room with one pair of and-irons, one pair of tongs, one table, two chairs, and one candlestick. For each noncommissioned officer's and soldier's room containing 20 men, he was to furnish 10 cribs (2 men to a crib), 10 bedcases, and 10 bolsters (to be filled with straw every 3 months), 2 iron pots, 2 trammels, 1 pair of tongs, 1 wood axe, 1 iron candlestick, 1 table, 2 benches, and 1 bucket.<sup>14</sup> It is obvious from these sources, even taking into account the difference of 8 or 9 years between them, that the general furnishings of military posts in South Carolina were not materially different from those in New York.

That same year the Committee of Safety in New York delivered barrack furniture to Continental troops amounting to a total of 680 benches, 393 tables, 85-1/2 cords of wood, 261 cots, some lanterns, 249-1/3 pounds of candles, and 65 candlesticks.<sup>15</sup>

From what we have learned of the furniture and accessories in use at various posts within the colonies, one can establish a convincing picture of the furniture employed at Fort Stanwix.

Personal items of furniture, although few, might well have adorned parts of the fort, but in all probability if any such furniture did exist, it would have been found in the officers' quarters. It is known, for example, that Colonel Gansevoort had his "camp stool" sent to him at Fort Stanwix by his mother.<sup>16</sup>

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13. Ibid., "Return of Barrack Bedding and Furniture etc at Oswegatchi and Fort William Augustus 25th March 1768."

14. State of New York, New York in The Revolution, p. 81.

15. Ibid., p. 47.

16. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gansevoort, May 17, 1777.



## VII. THE FURNISHED AREAS

### A. Parade Ground and Bastions

For purposes of this study the parade ground includes not only the square of the fort, but the four bastions as well. In order to describe the appearance of this extensive part of the fort's exterior surface, one should attempt to locate the large guns, the sentry boxes, the flag-pole and its flag (or flags), the whipping post, wells, woodpiles, haystacks, wagons, sleighs, animal life, and any other object, short of buildings, existing on the fort's surface, particularly during the siege.

#### 1. Guns

In addition to the buildings within the fort, cannon were perhaps the most conspicuous objects. Although the fort had been constructed with as many as 35 embrasures to receive an equal number of cannon ( 6 to each of the 4 bastions, 2 to each of the 4 curtains, and 3 in the ravelin), there never were that many fixed, because cannon were always extremely difficult to acquire in the Northern Department.<sup>1</sup>

Although there is some doubt as to whether all four bastions were completed at the time of the siege, there is every reason to believe that all four bastions were manned at the beginning of the battle. Hence, Willett records that 1 captain, 3 lieutenants, 4 sergeants, 1 drummer, and 80 privates were to man the bastions in case of an alarm-- 1 officer, 1 sergeant, 1 corporal, and 20 privates to a bastion.<sup>2</sup> If there was a total of 80 privates to man the bastions--20 to a bastion-- then there had to be 4 bastions manned. The captain, who was the fourth officer, in addition to commanding the whole detachment, also assumed charge of one of the bastions. The orders issued at this time also directed that in case of alarm the whole garrison was to turn out immediately and assume their posts as follows:

Major Bedlams Detachment to man the S. E. Bastion and adjacent Curtain, Captains Aorson and Jansen to man the S. W. Bastion, Capt. Benshousen and Tiebout to man the N. W. Bastion Captains Dewitt Swartout and Bleeker to man the N. E. Bastion. Capt. Greggs Company to repair on the Parade till further Orders.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Orville W. Carroll, Historic Structure Report, Fort Stanwix Architectural Data Section, Denver Service Center: NPS, 1973), pp. 61-62.

2. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Aug. 1, 1777.

3. Ibid.

Even if a fourth bastion had not been completed,<sup>4</sup> the evidence is fairly conclusive that there were probably cannon on all four bastions. There might have been a difference, however, in the type of carriages employed in the unfinished bastion. Whereas the three completed bastions probably had stationary carriages mounted on platforms, the unfinished one might have had cannon mounted on movable carriages.

Although several documents record the number and types of large guns at Fort Stanwix, there is one that, because of its timeliness, is of great importance. This document, dated August 23, 1777, immediately after the siege was lifted, records that "mortars formerly the Enemys, and all the Cannon from the Bastions amounting in the whole to 13" were fired as a salute to General Benedict Arnold and his troops upon their arrival at the fort.<sup>5</sup>

The same source in the early days of the siege noted that "Two Cannon from the S W Bastion loaded with Grape Shott /sic/ were Fired at the Barnes to drive of [f] the Enemys Indians that might have been Sculking /sic/ About."<sup>6</sup> This indicates that there were at least two cannon on the southwest bastion.

Six months after the siege had been lifted, Fort Stanwix reported in its ordnance returns three 9-pounders, four 6-pounders, and four 3-pounders--a total of 11 cannon in addition to four 4-2/5 caliber mortar Royals.<sup>7</sup>

A contemporary map of Fort Stanwix depicts the southwest bastion with 3 cannon, the northwest bastion with 4 cannon, the northeast bastion with 3 cannon, and the southeast bastion with 4 cannon--a total of 14 guns.<sup>8</sup> This map appears to be in conflict with other contemporary sources. The two ordnance returns of March and May 1778 show 11 cannon, whereas the de Fleury map delineates 14. It should be noted, however, that the ordnance returns were prepared from 7 to 9 months after the siege, while de Fleury's map, though prepared sometime after the siege (possibly 1778), was actually depicting the situation as it

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4. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 41.

5. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug. 23, 1777.

6. Ibid., Aug. 2, 1777.

7. "A Monthly Return of the State of the Garrison Fort Schyler /sic/ May 1st 1778"; State of New York, Public Papers of George Clinton, 3:510.

8. "A Sketch of the siege of Fort Schuyler," by Frances de Fleury, cited in Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," Appendix VIII.

was during the siege, albeit from memory. Nevertheless, the map comes closest to corroborating Colbraith's journal.

In 1780 orders were issued directing that a "Brass Field Piece" be placed in the center of the parade ground opposite the main gate.<sup>9</sup> The implication is that the gun had been at another location within the fort. Thus, while it was customary in most forts to place the brass field cannon in the center of the parade ground facing the sally port, it would appear that at Fort Stanwix the practice was to place it at other points within the fort. From this one can assume that the same practice of moving the field piece could have prevailed during the siege. In view of the cannon shortage, it is difficult to conceive of this one cannon being stationed in the center of the parade ground at the time of the siege, when it could have served a more active role on a bastion, curtain, or ravelin. It may be that this cannon was employed on the unfinished bastion where embrasures were yet to be constructed.

The precise size of cannon during the siege is difficult to determine in the absence of more timely documentation. We do know, however, that just before the siege there were only small cannon. The returns of ordnances of March and May 1778 reveal that there were 3-pounders, 6-pounders, and 9-pounders. It is very likely that the 13 or 14 guns that were at the fort during the siege were not bigger.

To place the guns in their exact locations is also difficult without more precise documentation. The de Fleury map does show us that 11 guns were distributed among the four bastions. The other two or three were probably near the curtains or ravelin of the fort. The three or four mortars that were at the fort during the siege may have filled in the more critical gaps along the curtains.

Most of the cannon were stationary, their carriages constructed of oak and iron. They were probably painted black with the cannon resting on a platform. The cannon balls were mounted on the ground in a pyramidal shape alongside the cannon. The cannon balls, including the powder kegs, might have been covered with oilcloth when not in use to protect them from the weather. Artillery equipment needed to operate the cannon, much of which is listed in Section II, also remained in readiness alongside the cannon.

## 2. Sentry Boxes

There are several early references to sentry boxes at Fort Stanwix. A statement by the engineer in 1777 indicates that he had sentry boxes

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9. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, Nov. 23, 1870 p. 541.

constructed,<sup>10</sup> although he did not say how many or where they were built. An order in May 1778 directs the "Superintendent of the Engineers Department" to see that all sentry boxes were in good order and fixed so that they could not be blown down.<sup>11</sup> Once again, there is no hint of the number or the location of such structures, although one might infer from this last reference that they might have been located in areas subject to strong winds.

The first reference to the number of sentry boxes appears in January 1781, although indirectly, in an entry in an orderly book. It read as follows:

A watch Coate /sic/ will be furnished for Each Sentry Box on the Basteens /sic/ for which the Corpl of the Guard is to be Accountable.<sup>12</sup>

From this statement one may infer that there were at least four sentry boxes, one on each bastion, but sentry boxes may also have been located in other areas, as for example adjacent to the guardhouse, at the entrance to the sally port, or even at the entrance to the headquarters. There is evidence that guards and sentries were posted at these locations.<sup>13</sup> A drawing on a powder horn belonging to James Wilson, depicting Fort Stanwix in 1779-80, while Wilson was stationed there, shows five sentry boxes--one on each of the bastions and one in front of the entrance to the main gate.<sup>14</sup> According to this very crude illustration, the sentry boxes were located at the extreme points of the bastions.

The sentry boxes were probably very plainly furnished with few comforts for the soldier performing sentry duty. There was one item, however, furnished each sentry box--a watch coat to be used by soldiers on sentry duty--although the evidence may not be contemporary with the siege. A watch coat was a fairly common item employed throughout the Northern Department where the climate was extremely cold.

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10. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 117.
  11. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, May 15, 1778.
  12. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 556.
  13. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 118.
  14. "Hobbies: The Magazine for Collectors," cited in Carroll, Fort Stanwix, pp. 117, 158-59.

### 3. Wells and Water Barrels

A reference from a contemporary account leaves the reader with some idea as to how the garrison got its water. Written midway in the siege, this account says that:

This Day the Enemy having Observed that we brought water from the Creek altered its Course so that it became dry. This would have done us much Damage had we not been able to open two wells in the Garrison which with one We had already proved a Sufficient Supply.<sup>15</sup>

It is obvious from this account that before the siege the garrison obtained its water from the creek. In anticipation of what actually happened, the garrison wisely constructed two wells. The very same day that Colbraith recorded this event in his journal, orders were issued to keep barrels constantly filled with water, presumably not only for drinking but for cooking and washing.<sup>16</sup>

Undoubtedly there were two wells at the time of the siege, but their manner of construction and location cannot be precisely determined on the basis of written evidence. An original bank note issued by the Bank of Rome, Rome, New York, in 1832 depicts an oversimplified Fort Stanwix, with a blockhouse and a magazine, and with one well near the center of the north casemate.<sup>17</sup> Judging from this very simplified version, one cannot take this evidence as the last word.

Mr. John Luzader may have the answer to the other part of the question, that is, the wells' construction. He says that

While it would be easy to generalize, we can be safe in assuming that the wells mentioned in documents relating to the fort referred to relatively shallow ones, perhaps lined, at least near the top, with local stone and capped by a wooden pump. Pumps were relatively easy to construct and were capable of a steadier supply of water in case of fire or other emergency. If a pump was not used, the

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15. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug. 11, 1777.

16. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Aug. 11, 1777.

17. Rome Directory, 1857, p. 31, cited in Carroll, Fort Stanwix, pp. 125, 162-3.

well was equipped with a windlass and well-box. In connection with the lining, there were occasions when, in the absence of adequate stone, barrels were employed.<sup>18</sup>

The wording in the directive of August 11, 1777, clearly suggests that barrels filled with water were used extensively at the fort. These were located as close as possible to sites where groups congregated, inside or outside of buildings. There were probably one on each of the bastions, one or two inside the guardhouse, one in the storeroom, one in the headquarters, one or two in each of the barracks and casemates, and some located around the ramparts of the fort.

#### 4. Whipping Post

Punishment at Fort Stanwix took many forms--confinement, running the gauntlet, performing heavy duty, with their legs bound with blocks and chains, and flogging. Aside from confinement, flogging was perhaps the most common form of punishment. There are several references to flogging at the whipping post in contemporary accounts. Unfortunately, no mention is made of such punishment during the siege, maybe because flogging was done on the parade ground in the presence of a formal review of the garrison, and the siege did not permit this. Instead, men punished for a violation were confined.

Because flogging took place in full view of the garrison, the whipping post was probably in the center of the parade ground. There is no historical evidence showing the whipping post's appearance, but one document related to Fort Stanwix notes that

4 men were brought in and sentenced by the Lieut. Col. to stand 1 hour stripped and tied altogether at the whipping post, which was immediately put in execution.<sup>19</sup>

From this account we can conclude that the whipping post was constructed to facilitate the whipping of at least four men at one time. Mr. Orville W. Carroll has researched the details of a whipping post and may therefore have the solution.<sup>20</sup>

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18. John F. Luzader to Orville W. Carroll, Jan. 1971, in Carroll's research file, "Glossary, Fort Stanwix," Minute Man National Historical Park, Concord, Mass.

19. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, July 3, 1776.

20. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 126.



## 5. Woodpiles and Haystacks

Firewood for cooking and heating and hay for feeding livestock were two important items frequently mentioned at Fort Stanwix. In January 1777, General Schuyler, very much aware of the cold winters at Fort Stanwix, ordered the deputy quartermaster general "to take Measures for providing" the garrison with firewood.<sup>21</sup> Fatigue parties, at least before and after the siege, were always getting firewood in great quantities. The following will give the reader some idea as to how fatigue parties worked: the officers who commanded these details daily divided their men into three groups--the first to cut trees, the second to split logs with wedges,<sup>22</sup> and the third to pile the wood. At one time, men assigned to cut wood were given orders that each man was to cut at least 1-1/2 cords of wood a day, and "Whoever is found Deficient of that Quantity Shall be Mult /sic/ of their whole pay from the time they first began to Cutt."<sup>23</sup>

Even while the siege was underway, fatigue parties were sent out in the middle of the night to bring in firewood, sometimes in great quantities.<sup>24</sup> The distance they went could not have been very far for obvious reasons, and moreover it was sound policy to clear the ground around the fort of trees as much as possible.<sup>25</sup>

The trees around the fort were of several kinds. The swamp on the southwest side of the fort consisted largely of pine and white cedar. There were also white pines in the swamp on the east side of the fort. The rest of the woods surrounding the fort consisted of elm, beech, rock maple, birch, poplar, and a few wild cherries.<sup>26</sup>

There is considerable evidence to show that after the wood was cut, it was driven by wagon or sleigh, depending on the time of the year,

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21. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Elmore, Jan. 5, 1777.

22. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Dec. 2, 1777.

23. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 551.

24. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug. 21, 1777.

25. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Mar. 10, 1778.

26. Edmund B. O'Callaghan, The Documentary History of the State of New York, 4 vols. (Albany, 1850), II, p. 526.

to the fort.<sup>27</sup> There is no historical evidence, however, to indicate whether the wood was piled inside or outside the fort. It is this writer's conclusion that during the siege there probably existed one or more woodpiles centrally located within the fort, because, as with water, the garrison had to make sure it would be continually supplied with this important provision. In this respect it may be of interest to note that in November 1780 the quartermaster sergeant was directed to distribute firewood every other day "to Enable him to Make a Beginning for a Magazine," and because the weather was moderate, a small quantity of wood was sufficient for each room.<sup>28</sup> Although this source is dated well after the siege, it provides sufficient evidence that a magazine for firewood was probably nothing new inside the fort. It is fairly reasonable to suppose that one or more woodpiles were probably placed close enough to the buildings to make firewood easily available.

Hay, like firewood and water, needed to be on the inside of the fort in sufficient quantities to feed the horses. This was especially true during the siege. However, there are several references to hay stacked outside the fort during and after the siege. This was logical because haystacks would have taken up too much room on the parade ground. In an entry of August 3, 1777, Colbraith recorded in his journal that on that afternoon the enemy carried off some hay from a field near the fort. Again on August 10, 1777, he recorded that around 3 o'clock that afternoon the enemy was seen running across a field adjoining the fort and setting fire to some haystacks. In still another entry of August 4, 1777, Colbraith noted that on that night a party from the garrison was sent out to bring back 27 stacks of hay, which were then placed in the "trench" (probably the ditch), setting a house and barn on fire so that the enemy could not use them to its advantage.

One month after the siege Willett referred to a party of men collecting hay "which lies in the fields" and having it properly stacked for the use of the garrison.<sup>29</sup>

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27. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Jan. 3, 1778; "Journal of Samuel Tallmadge," in Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, Feb. 26, 1781, p. 744; Lauber, Orderly Book of the Fourth New York Regiment, Jan. 22, 1781, p. 559; Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Oct. 4, 1776.

28. Lauber, Orderly Book of the Fourth New York Regiment, Nov. 24, 1780, p. 542.

29. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug. 3, 4, and 10, 1777; Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Sept. 28, 1777.

Evidence of haystacks outside the fort is conclusive. Nevertheless the situation being what it was--the fort under siege and several horses and possibly other animals confined inside--logic would have dictated that haystacks should have been stored on the inside. Some attempt must have been made either prior to or during the siege to keep enough hay inside the fort. At least one sizeable haystack must have been close to where the horses stood.

#### 6. Temporary Storage of Provisions and Ammunition

From time to time the parade ground became the temporary storage place for provisions and ammunition. Ammunition and equipment employed in the firing of a cannon were located next to each gun, where they could be quickly reached. In order to protect the exposed ammunition and powder, they were sometimes covered by oilcloths.<sup>30</sup>

A most unusual event occurred on August 9, 1777; Colbraith tells us that on "This Day the Colonel ordered all the Provisions to be brought upon the Parade for fear of the Shells Setting Fire to the Barracks and thereby destroying it. . . ." <sup>31</sup> How long the provisions remained on the parade ground is not known, but apparently the practice was not an unusual one. Several months later Willett records a similar incident:

Garrison being destitute of proper Stores for the provisions, Lieut Tapp is to see, that a Number of spars are provided and Laid along the Parade in Order to Roll the Beef and Pork upon, which are to be Cover'd with Boards in the best manner possible, until proper stores are provided for that purpose. The Adjutant will Supply him with a Sufficient Number of Men for this Business.<sup>32</sup>

How often such incidents happened is hard to say. It is not too difficult to envision in the midst of the siege, when the fort was so congested, a parade ground covered with provisions, arms, and ammunition sometimes in complete disorder.

#### 7. Wagons and Sleighs

As we have seen, horses were used at Fort Stanwix chiefly for pulling wagons and sleighs loaded with supplies. Colonel Gansevoort felt

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30. Philip Schuyler Papers, Glen to Schuyler, July 8, 1776.

31. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug. 9, 1777.

32. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Mar. 15, 1778.

it necessary to request two horses for himself and his staff in the event of a "sudden emergency."<sup>33</sup> Willett wrote several years after the siege that there were seven wagons with horses in the fort during the battle.<sup>34</sup> Wagons and sleighs were used extensively for bringing in firewood and hay gathered from the surrounding woods and fields. They were also used extensively for bringing in supplies brought up by bateaux on the Mohawk River. In one instance horses and wagons were sent as far as Oriskany--some 20 miles--to pick up hay.<sup>35</sup>

Sleighs were used in winter when snow prevented the use of wagons.<sup>36</sup> Frequently sleighs, which brought up supplies from the east when the river was unnavigable, were temporarily housed at the fort, adding to the congestion. These sleighs were immediately put to use by the garrison in bringing in firewood. In February 1781 a caravan of 50 sleighs arrived at the fort, and these were quickly employed for the next few weeks in carrying wood for the garrison.<sup>37</sup>

Records reveal that before and after the siege, horses and wagons as well as cows were kept outside the fort. In September 1777 the Officer in charge of the guard was ordered to see that no horses or cattle "are Suffered to go in the Ditch."<sup>38</sup>

Of far greater interest is a later directive issued to the Officer in charge of the guard to see that "all the Slays /sic/, Horses & Cows are turn'd out of the Garrison, before the Gates are shut as they are a great Nuisance /sic/ to the Garrison."<sup>39</sup> One can interpret this to mean that up to this time horses, cows, and wagons were kept inside the fort. One can also conclude after reviewing the evidence that horses, cows, and wagons were kept outside as well as inside the fort, depending on circumstances and the whims of those in command.

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33. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gates, May 23, 1777.

34. Willett, A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett, p. 195.

35. Willett's Orderly Book, Sept. 28, 1777.

36. Ibid., Jan. 3, 1778; Lauber, Orderly Book of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 559.

37. "Journal of Samuel Tallmadge," Feb. 26, 27, 28, and Mar. 13, 1781, in Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, pp. 744-46.

38. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Sept. 22, 1777.

39. Ibid., Feb. 6, 1778.

Logic certainly dictated that during the siege they would have been kept inside the fort.

#### 8. Tents

There is no historical evidence that tents were used inside the fort during the siege. There is considerable evidence, however, indicating they were used before and after the siege. There are several references to the use of "markees" in late 1776. Ebenezer Elmer, a member of the 3 New Jersey Continentals, records that he retired to "Cplo. Whites Markee & to Rest." Several weeks later he again recorded with some resentment, that he was "obliged to lye in the Tents along with the men whilst the [his commanding officer] in quietude sleeps etc. in House."<sup>40</sup> Several days later Elmer was still sleeping in a markee, and he noted that as many as 51 men were "employed in getting & Halling [sic] Shingles & Wood etc.--Besides the Artificers & Sawyers Lodged in the Markee with the Serjants [sic] etc as Usual."<sup>41</sup>

In 1780 orders were issued to "Collect the tents and put them in Store." One can interpret this to mean that tents had probably been used from time to time within the fort, although these tents may also have been used after a long march.

There was always a shortage of sleeping quarters in 1776, and General Schuyler was deeply concerned about the approaching winter.<sup>42</sup> On the other hand, as long as the weather was relatively mild, as during the summer months when the siege took place, tents could readily be used. Moreover, the 700 or more people at the fort during the siege were too many for permanent facilities to absorb, and tents were the best substitute. In the several references to crowding in the barracks at Fort Ticonderoga, General Schuyler made a strong plea to Congress for more tents to relieve the congestion.<sup>43</sup>

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40. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Aug. 29, 1776; ibid., Oct. 8, 1776.

41. Ibid., Oct. 10, 11, and 12, 1776. In later entries Elmer notes that he occupied a room, presumably in the barracks or casemates, an indication that some construction had been completed. See ibid., and also Oct. 14, 17, and 18, 1776.

42. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Congress, Sept. 8, 1776; ibid., Schuyler to Elmore, Nov. 12, 1776.

43. Ibid., passim.

## 9. Necessary

Historical evidence clearly indicates the existence of a necessary outside the fort's ramparts and elevated above the ditch.<sup>44</sup> Of greater interest to this study is that some evidence indicates the existence of at least one additional necessary within the fort. The question is whether or not this necessary existed at the time of the siege. A reference dated September 17, 1777, notes that the quartermaster was directed "to have another Necessary built within the Fort to be set about directly." He was to consult with Major Hubble, the engineer, concerning the best place to have it erected.<sup>45</sup> A directive issued only 3 days later cautioned the garrison "not to make use of the Necessary House within the Fort in the Day Time. The one in the Ditch being designated for that Purpose."<sup>46</sup>

A quick consideration of this statement might lead one to the hasty conclusion that the necessary the men were prohibited from using in the daytime was the one referred to in the directive of September 17. But upon more serious reflection it would seem unlikely that the necessary ordered to be built on September 17 would have been completed in 3 days. It would seem more likely that a necessary had already existed in the fort before September 17--probably during the siege--and that a second one had been ordered.

A garrison consisting of about 700 men during the siege could not rely solely on the necessary elevated above the ditch, particularly when that necessary was exposed to enemy fire. Moreover it is known that there were women who sought refuge within the fort. Considering these circumstances, therefore, it is more likely that at least two necessaries existed at the time of the siege--one elevated above the ditch and a second within the fort. Having experienced difficulties during the siege because of inadequate facilities, those who commanded the garrison may have given orders after the siege to construct a third necessary (a second one inside the fort).

## 10. Flagpole and Flags

The location of the flagpole in 1777 has been established as being at the tip of the salient angle of the southwest bastion. For a

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44. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, pp. 86-90.

45. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Sept. 17, 1777.

46. Ibid., Sept. 20, 1777.

description of its appearance one must refer to the architectural data section of the Fort Stanwix historic structure report.<sup>47</sup>

The question of which flag flew over Fort Stanwix during the siege is a controversial one. The proponents of the traditional account are very strong in their conviction that the flag was the official standard of the United States, and consequently the first official standard to fly in battle. Historian John F. Luzader of the National Park Service has taken the opposite view. His study of the flag at Fort Stanwix is so exhaustive that it would have been fruitless for this writer to have carried the research further. This writer is of the opinion that Mr. Luzader's research--both that which appears in The Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix and in his typewritten manuscript "The 'Stars and Stripes' at Fort Stanwix: A Summary of The Evidence"--establishes beyond any doubt that the flag which flew during the siege was not the official standard of the United States. Instead, a "locally made version of the Grand Union"<sup>48</sup> flew over Fort Stanwix.

#### B. Bombproofs

The interpretive prospectus proposes to refurnish only three of the four bombproofs at Fort Stanwix: the southwest, southeast, and northwest ones. Hence, this section is only concerned with the furnishings of these three structures.

During the years of their existence, the bombproofs were used for many different purposes--sometimes for brief intervals, at other times for more extensive periods. An attempt will be made to establish the more permanent uses made of the bombproofs, particularly during the siege.

##### 1. Southwest Bombproof

Historical evidence has proven that there were at least two structures both inside and outside the fort that were used for hospitals, although perhaps not simultaneously. One hospital that is clearly identifiable in records existed outside the fort and was marked

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47. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, pp. 63-6.

48. Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," pp. 110-18; Luzader, "The 'Stars and Stripes' at Fort Stanwix: A Summary of the Evidence." See Appendix A.

"Hospital" on the "Gansevoort Map of Fort Stanwix."<sup>49</sup> There are several references to a hospital in manuscripts practically up to the time of the siege. An entry in the journal kept by Ebenezer Elmer refers to a visit he made to the "old lousy hospital, which represents such a scene of wretchedness that one could hardly bear to behold the abject souls therein confined."<sup>50</sup> Another manuscript speaks of a sergeant "being sick in the barracks and being carried to the hospital and there remaining sick for some time and being somewhat recovered of sickness was returned to his barracks being still unfit for duty."<sup>51</sup>

There seems little doubt that the hospital referred to in these manuscripts was the hospital located outside of the fort. Yet, there is also evidence of a hospital inside the fort at the time of the siege. During the battle one officer reported that a "woman that was wounded with a shell last Night was brought to bed in our /southwest/ Bombproof /giving birth to/ a Daughter."<sup>52</sup> It would seem that before the siege the hospital outside the fort was used. When it became impossible to use this facility during the fighting, a place inside the fort--the southwest bombproof--was used to handle the sick and wounded.

Consistent with the practice of employing the bombproofs to serve several purposes, the southwest bombproof was also used to store official papers and provisions. In the midst of the siege, and thus while the southwest bombproof was being used as a hospital, it was felt necessary to store valuable papers in this bombproof for their protection against shell fire. The order directing this read:

all the public papers and money in the hands of Mr. Hansen, and the papers in the hands of Mr. Van Vechten belonging to the paymaster to be lodged in the bombproofs in the southwest bastion.<sup>53</sup>

The amount of room used for these records is hard to say, but it is obvious that the bombproof served two purposes.

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49. Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," Appendix IX.

50. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Oct. 5, 1776.

51. Philip Schuyler Papers, "The Proceedings of a Court of Enquiry held at Fort Schuyler February 28, 1777. . . ."

52. Colbraith, "Journal", Aug. 22, 1777.

53. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug 9, 1777.



If the southwest bombproof was largely a hospital, what did it look like? First of all, it had to contain beds and bedding for the sick and wounded, similar perhaps to those in the barracks. The mattresses, or "sacks" as they were sometimes called, held straw "for the Sick to lay on," and whenever a sick person died or was discharged from the hospital, the sack with all its straw would be burned.<sup>54</sup>

In addition to beds and bedding, the hospital probably contained a doctor's bench and an operating table. There were also medicine chests containing drugs and supplies. Medical kits, containing scissors, scalpels, drugs, needles, suture materials, scales and weights, and mortar and leg splints, as well as an operating kit, containing forceps, bullet extractor, retractors, and amputating knives, might also have been found in the hospital. Other significant items that probably appeared in the hospital were a barrel of water, firewood, and pails.<sup>55</sup>

There is a very interesting document, which although not directly related to Fort Stanwix, nevertheless gives us some idea of the furnishings of a post hospital. This document consists of an inventory of supplies belonging to the general hospital at Albany in 1777. Because of the documents' timeliness and the geographic location it concerns, one can make a very convincing argument for the hospital furnishings employed at Fort Stanwix, but perhaps with one reservation. Because Fort Stanwix was a frontier fort, it probably did not possess all the items on this inventory, which contained:<sup>56</sup>

178 blankets in wards; 40 in store  
70 bed tucks in wards; 94 in store  
195 pillows in store  
41 bed gowns  
51 caps in store  
324 wooden bowls; 67 in the wards  
4 water buckets; 13 in the wards  
3 rugs in store  
54 camp kettles; 18 in wards  
3 bedpans

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54. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Dec. 5, 1776.

55. On Mar. 13, 1778, six men were directed to collect cedar wood in order to make pails for the garrison. Pails had many uses and were mostly found in quarters. See Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Mar. 13, 1778.

56. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Nov. 19, 1776.

19 chamber pots  
 1 branding iron  
 1 box of soap  
 15 gallons of rum  
 15 " " wine  
 15 " " molasses  
 candles  
 chocolate  
 Indian meal  
 turnips

Chocolate and sugar were important items in a hospital, and at Fort Ticonderoga the doctor ordered them for the sick and "Such other suitable Regimens as may be on the ground & one half the Beef, or other Meat."<sup>57</sup>

One last question concerning the furnishings of the southwest bombproof should be resolved and that is the source of heat the hospital needed for its sick. Unlike the freestanding structures or casemates in the fort, the bombproofs had no chimneys for fireplaces. How then did the hospital get its heat? The answer might well have been an iron stove, although there is no mention of one at Fort Stanwix. Iron stoves were employed throughout the Northern Department, although it was a difficult item to acquire. In November 1776 General Schuyler made a strong plea for 50 stoves for barracks in his department.<sup>58</sup>

## 2. Northwest Bombproof

Historical and archeological evidence indicates the magazine was placed in the northwest bombproof after the Americans reoccupied the fort in 1776.<sup>59</sup> Like its location, we know little about the appearance of the powder magazine when the fort was occupied by the Americans. As a place of storage it was probably simply furnished. We are fortunate in having an early map, albeit drawn during the British occupation,

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57. United States Revolution Collection, "Inventory of all Stores Belonging to the General Hospital at Albany etc. March 29th 1777."

58. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Livingston, Nov. 2, 1776; *ibid.*, Extract of Minutes by John M. Nelson, Sec., Committee of Safety for State of N.Y., Nov. 13, 1776.

59. Willett, A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett, p. 49; Hanson and Hsu, "Casemates and Cannonballs," 1:53.

which clearly depicts the shelving employed in the powder magazine. Shelves were off to one side of the bombproof, and they were sufficient to hold 2,000 barrels of powder.<sup>60</sup>

The rest of the magazine must have contained various ordnance stores. A document dated August 19, 1777, lists a number of different ordnance pieces in the Northern Department, besides powder, which might have been stored in the magazine at Fort Stanwix. They are:<sup>61</sup>

- bars of lead for musket balls
- bullet molds
- large powder horns for priming cannon, with belts, bits, priming wires
- post fires
- tubes for 3, 4, and 6-pounders
- 3-pound flannel cartridges
- 4-pound flannel cartridges
- 6-pound flannel cartridges
- paper cartridges for 4-pounders
- " " " 6-pounders
- " " " 3-pounders
- scissors for the laboratory
- molds for buckshot
- paint brushes of different sizes
- pinchers
- hammers
- sheep skins for covering sponges
- gun flints
- grape shot for quilting cannon
- Spanish brown paint
- oil cloth for covering ammunition

Another document originating in the Northern Department provides additional information on what might have been stored in the powder magazine. Paint, apparently, was used to identify specific ordnance items. Thus such paints as were "ground . . . of the proper colour for painting Cannon carriage . . . Spanish Brown for Painting the

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60. "Plan of Fort Stanwix Built at Oneida Station by Provincial Troops in 1758," British Museum, Crown Collection CXXI, 99, copy in Library of Congress, cited in Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," Appendix III.

61. Horatio Gates Papers, "A Return of Ordnance Stores wanted in the Northern Department, Albany, N.Y. by Eben Stevens, Commandant of Artillery."

Boxes which Contains the Cannons Cartridges in the Laboratory, & 1/2 of white Lead for painting & numbering those Boxes to lay them on" were ordered.<sup>62</sup>

### 3. Southeast Bombproof (Bakehouse)

Like the northwest bombproof, there is practically no written evidence to indicate what the southeast bombproof was used for. We do know, however, that it was once the powder magazine used by the British, which by 1764 had fallen into ruin. A bakehouse was built in its place, and although it is not known exactly when, it is certain that it existed in the southeast bombproof at the time of the siege. Archeological studies conducted in 1965 and 1971 show beyond any doubt that the bakehouse was located there.<sup>63</sup>

There are several references to a bakehouse and bakers at Fort Stanwix. One document refers to the baking of bread. Baking bread was probably a sizeable function since there were at least three bakers at one time.<sup>64</sup> A later document noted that a soldier was tried by a court-martial for taking ovenwood for his own private use while pretending he was taking it to the bakehouse.<sup>65</sup>

The bakehouse was probably simply furnished. Besides a brick oven sufficiently large to supply bread for as many as 700 people during the siege, it must have contained barrels of flour, pails of water, tables for rolling dough, benches, candles, brooms, scales, weights, and other equipment and supplies essential for baking bread.

#### C. Guardhouse

A new guardhouse was constructed around April 1777.<sup>66</sup> The guardhouse appears frequently in contemporary accounts and maps.<sup>67</sup>

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62. Philip Schuyler Papers, Trumbull to Varick, July 29, 1776.

63. Hanson and Hsu, "Casemates and Cannonballs," 1:37-42.

64. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Dec. 4, 1777; Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 543.

65. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 577.

66. Scott, Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany, p. 100.

67. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, June 5, 1777; ibid., June 9, 1777; ibid., June 12, 1777; ibid., March 22, 1778; "Gansevoort Map of Fort Stanwix," cited in Luzader "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," Appendix II.

The new guardhouse consisted of two sections: one for the confinement of prisoners, and the other, a lean-to, for housing the main guard. The section used for confining prisoners consisted of two rooms separated by a partition in which a central fireplace stood to heat both rooms.<sup>68</sup> The two rooms together measured 16 by 20 feet, and probably housed several prisoners. One document referred to two prisoners, and another referred to a court-martial that was to take place for "all the prisoners in the guardhouse."<sup>69</sup>

There is little historical evidence to indicate what the guardhouse furnishings looked like. Thus many of our conclusions are conjectural and are based upon the little information extracted from archeological studies and historical documents. The main guardroom, or place of confinement, was probably simply furnished, containing the barest of necessities. Since most confinements were brief, prisoners had few clothes with them. Probably the only clothing they had were fatigues.

The two fireplaces had andirons, tongs, trammels, and a kettle hung over a fire. A frying pan and the usual eating utensils (fork, spoon, possibly knife, dish, and cup) made up a prisoner's eating equipment. Simple bunks or cribs, containing two men to a bed, and chamber pots made up the furniture. In all probability, the bedding may have consisted of only a blanket without sacks, straw, or bolsters. The rooms probably had no tables or benches. In short, they contained few comforts.

The guardroom, which housed the guard while on duty, was perhaps no more lavishly furnished than the prisoners' rooms, although one might expect a few more comforts. Since it was only a temporary quarter for the soldier, one could hardly expect to find the furnishings normally seen in a permanent quarter like the barracks. Arms, possibly muskets, were no doubt stored in this room in some sort of gunrack.

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68. For a detailed description of this building, see Carroll, Fort Stanwix, pp. 78-79; A return of the main guard at Fort Stanwix in Nov. 1778 noted that there were 2 prisoners in confinement and a guard consisting of 1 subaltern, 2 sergeants, 2 corporals, 2 drum and fife, and 39 privates. There were also 13 daytime centinels and 12 nighttime centinels. See Philip Schuyler Papers, "Report of Main Guard, November 1, 1778."

69. Philip Schuyler Papers, "Report of Main Guard, November 1, 1778."; Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, March 22, 1778; State of New York, Public Papers of George Clinton, 4:131-33.

Besides guns there were blocks and chains stored here. The block consisted of a piece of heavy wood, 2 feet long by 6 inches in diameter. The block was chained to the legs of a prisoner to prevent his escape when on a work detail.<sup>70</sup>

In addition to the normal equipment found in a fireplace (that is, andirons, tongs, trammels, shovels, and pail) and some eating utensils, there were also bunks, possibly each holding two men. Unlike those used by the prisoners, however, these bunks may have had straw for mattresses, or maybe even sacks, blankets, and bolsters. One document contains a reference to an officer sleeping on a "Bench in the Guard Room" at Johnstown, New York. The following morning the same officer noted that he arose from "my Bench Bed as much refreshed as /though/ I had Slept on a Bed of /downfeathers/ in a Kings Palace."<sup>71</sup> A "bench" and a "bench bed" are probably the same as the bunks or cribs found in barracks.

The guardhouse at Fort Stanwix, particularly the room occupied by the guard, was also used to post general orders, garrison orders, and instructions of a general nature. Marinus Willett noted this practice at a number of posts to which he was assigned. In Fishkill, New York, he noted that general orders "are to be placed in the Main Guard Room, And Officers are hereby Requested to have all their Men acquainted with it."<sup>72</sup> Because all soldiers went on guard duty, all could see the orders. At a later date, while at Fort Constitution and just before leaving for Fort Stanwix, Willett issued strict orders prohibiting anyone from "tearing down any Orders that may be placed up in any Guard House."<sup>73</sup> These orders were probably hung by a nail on the inside of the room occupied by the guard.

#### D. Headquarters

A headquarters building at Fort Stanwix is clearly established in six contemporary drawings made between 1777 and 1781, and in one or two drawings made much later from memory. Moreover there are at least two references in documents to the word "headquarters."<sup>74</sup>

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70. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 577.

71. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, June 14, 1776; ibid., June 15, 1776.

72. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Mar. 6, 1777.

73. Ibid., May 7, 1777.

74. The 6 drawings are the McGraw powder horn, 1777; De Witt powder horn, 1778; Cornelius Chatfield powder horn, 1780; De Fleury map;

Much of what we can determine concerning the arrangement of rooms and furnishings must be conjectural.

Architect Orville Carroll of the National Park Service, after studying the features of this building, has concluded that it was divided into four rooms of equal size. One room was for the commander, another room was occupied by the second in command, a third was a dining room doubling as a staff room, and a fourth was occupied by two staff officers. A ~~lean~~-to room was used either for a woodshed or an officer's privy, or both, or for lodging an orderly, or finally, for the storage of supplies for the staff officers.<sup>75</sup>

The commander's room, Colonel Gansevoort's, was probably neatly furnished with a writing table, two or three chairs, and a bed bunk of the type used by officers.<sup>76</sup> His bedding was probably complete, consisting of a sack, blankets, and bolster. Colonel Gansevoort would also have had personal items received from home. Two of these items were a silver spoon and campstool, which his mother had sent to him.<sup>77</sup> Other objects lying about his room may have been items that his family had requested of him from time to time. At one point his mother had requested "Oswego Oil" and his brother wanted beaver fur to make a hat.<sup>78</sup> Colonel Gansevoort may have had these items in his room waiting to be shipped.

His fireplace probably had the usual tools, for example, andirons, tongs, trammels, a shovel, and a broom. Several pieces of firewood would probably have been piled next to the fireplace.

Usually high-ranking officers had their own personal chests containing liquors and wines. Pegs on which to hang clothing, a sword,

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Gansevoort map; and the map accompanying Willett's narrative of 1831, all cited in Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 80, fn. 135. One written reference appears in Scott, p. 95 and another on the Gansevoort map, also cited in Carroll, p. 80, fn. 136.

75. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 81.

76. Gansevoort's field bed, which he might have used at Fort Stanwix, is preserved at the Smithsonian Institution. See letter, Lee Hanson, Fort Stanwix N. M., to Manager, Historic Preservation Team, Denver Service Center, NPS, May 23, 1974.

77. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Gansevoort, May 17, 1777.

78. Ibid., Gansevoort to Gansevoort, June 2, 1777.

a holster, and other accouterments must have adorned the walls, perhaps close to his bunk.

We are not certain whether Colonel Gansevoort smoked, but if he did, clay pipes would have been found on his table or above his fireplace. One, or possibly two, candlesticks on his table provided light. Several pieces of writing paper, quills, and inkwell would also be found on his table.

The room occupied by the second in command, Lt. Col. Marinus Willett, would not have been too different from the first. In addition one might see his famous orderly book on the table, where he made entries from time to time.

The third room--the dining room--might have been furnished with items present on that auspicious occasion when the British submitted their surrender terms to the garrison. There is an excellent account of this event in Willett's "Narrative":

The afternoon of the next day, the chimade and the appearance of a white flag, was followed by a request that Colonel Butler, who commanded the Indians, with two other officers, might enter the fort, with a message to the Commanding Officer. Permission having been granted, they were conducted blindfolded into the fort, and received by Colonel Gansevoort in his dining room. The windows of the room were shut and candles lighted; the table also was spread with crackers, cheese and wine. Three chairs placed at one end of the table, were occupied by Colonel Butler and the other two officers who had come with them; at the other end, Colonel Gansevoort. Colonel Mellon and Colonel Willett were seated. Seats were also placed around the table for as many officers as could be accommodated, while the rest of the room was nearly filled with the other officers of the garrison indiscriminately; it being desirable that the officers in general, should be witness to all that might take place.<sup>79</sup>

There can be little doubt that this meeting took place in the headquarters, because it was the most logical place for a meeting of such importance. The dining room could be in no other place but the headquarters.

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79. Willett's "Narrative," MSS., cited in Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," pp. 132-33.



Based upon the account given by Willett, one can conclude that in the dining room was a large table surrounded by chairs. On the table were candlesticks, writing paper, quills and inkwells, crackers, cheese, wine, and glasses. The room might have had a rug, although this kind of luxury may not have existed at a frontier fort like Fort Stanwix. A dining room would have contained dishes, utensils, and glasses, as well as servers. These were probably stored in a cupboard somewhere in the room, although shelves might have served the same purpose.

The fireplace, meanwhile, would have contained the usual tools, including a large brass kettle hanging over the fire. Firewood would be piled alongside the fireplace in addition to a pail, shovel, and broom.

The fourth room, which was probably occupied by staff officers, was perhaps not too different from the first two, except that there were two of nearly everything--two beds, two tables, at least two chairs, etc. Each table would have had a candlestick, writing paper, quill, and inkwell.

In January 1777 General Schuyler gave commissions to members of Colonel Elmore's regiment, one of whom was the adjutant and the other the quartermaster.<sup>80</sup> A contemporary publication outlining military instructions for soldiers during the Revolution describes official books kept by the adjutant and quartermaster of a post. It instructs the adjutant to keep a "regimental book wherein should be entered the name and rank of every officer, the date of his commission, and the time he joined the regiment, etc." Finally, it states that the quartermaster "is to make out all returns for camp equipage, arms accoutrements, ammounition, provisions, and forage, and receive and distribute them to the regiment, taking the necessary vouchers for the delivery, and entering all receipts and deliveries in a book kept by him for that purpose."<sup>81</sup>

Such books were probably kept by staff officers at Fort Stanwix, and could therefore be found in this room. The regimental book would have been on the adjutant's table, and the book kept by the quartermaster would have been on his table.

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80. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Elmore, January 5, 1777.

81. Revolutionary War Military Instructions for Soldiers n.d., pp. 81, 83, owned by the New Haven Colony Historical Society.

Each officer would have had a bed bunk with such bedding as a sack, blanket, and bolsters. Next to his bunk on the wall would have been pegs for hanging clothing, swords, and accouterments. The fireplace would have had the usual tools plus a pail, shovel, broom, and firewood next to it. Personal items would probably be seen everywhere. Clay pipes, for example, would be found on tables or over fireplaces.

The furnishings of the lean-to must depend upon what the room was used for. If it was used for storage, then it would have contained firewood and supplies of various kinds. It might also contain a privy for the commander and his staff. Because it had no fireplace, it is unlikely that this room would have housed an orderly, unless it had an iron stove.

#### E. East Barracks

According to early documents and recent archeological studies, the east barracks measured approximately 20 by 120 feet. From the architectural features of the structure, Mr. Carroll has been able to conclude that the building contained seven rooms in addition to a hallway about 4 feet wide which divided the structure into almost two equal parts.<sup>82</sup> Due to the absence of written and archeological evidence, we are unable to determine the size of each room. The sizes must therefore be conjectural, but since both officers and enlisted men occupied these rooms, it may be logical to assume that because the enlisted men made up by far the largest number, they probably occupied the larger rooms. In any case, the difference may not have been too great. All seven rooms must have varied anywhere from 20 by 19.3 feet to 20 by 14.5 feet, assuming the existence of a 4-foot-wide hall. The interior walls of each room contained a fireplace.

Like the sizes of the rooms, the number of beds occupied by enlisted men must also be conjectural. It is very likely that because of the crowded conditions of the fort during the siege, there were not enough beds or bunks for everyone. Consequently some people may have slept on the floors of the barrack when not sleeping in tents on the parade ground. Several months after the siege, complaints were heard that the garrison had never been supplied with sufficient beds.<sup>83</sup>

The bunks that were in the enlisted men's rooms would hold two men. They were lined up against and parallel to the walls of the room.

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82. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, pp. 36-37.

83. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Feb. 24, 1778.

This arrangement of beds was adopted from the time that the fort was first constructed. Straw or sacks, but probably the former, made up the mattresses for the enlisted men. During the siege, sacks may have been a luxury, which only officers could afford. Because hay was the simplest form of mattress, it was an object sorely needed; however, it was not always available in sufficient quantities to serve both the personal needs of the men, and as food for livestock. The result was that at one point orders were given to the quartermaster to maintain a strict account of the hay by not permitting it to fall into the hands of anyone without his approval.<sup>84</sup>

The rest of the bedding consisted of bolsters and blankets, but like sacks, even these were in short supply.

The fireplaces in the enlisted men's rooms probably contained the barest of necessities, since just before the siege there were serious shortages of tools. General Schuyler directed the quartermaster general in Albany to supply, without further delay, Fort Stanwix and other posts in the Northern Department with "Fire Wood & Barrack Utensils, such as pails, Tongs, Shovels, Trammels, axes & kettles."<sup>85</sup>

Other supplies may have also been authorized for enlisted men's rooms at Fort Stanwix. In 1768 each room occupied by provincial troops in South Carolina was allowed 1 pot, 1 frying pan, 1 ladle, 1 flesh fork, 1 trivet or pot hook, 1 pair of dog irons, 1 shovel, 1 pair of tongs, 1 broom, 1 tub or box to carry out dirt, 1 long table, 2 forms, 2 platters, 2 bowls, 12 trenchers, 2 pitchers, 2 mugs, 1 hatchet, 1 candlestick, 2 chamber pots, a rack for arms, and wooden pegs to hang knapsacks, haversacks, and clothing. Every two men were to be given 1 bedstead, 1 bed, 1 bolster, 3 blankets, and a reasonable amount of firewood, candles, beer, pepper, salt, and vinegar.<sup>86</sup>

In 1776 the New York Provincial Congress authorized for its enlisted men's rooms almost similar items. For each room containing 20 men, it allowed 10 cribs, 10 bedcases, 10 bolsters "to be filled with straw every 3 months," 2 iron pots (probably chamber pots), 2 trammels, 1 pair of tongs, 1 wood axe, 1 iron candlestick, 1 table, 2 benches, and 1 bucket. In addition each room was supplied with three-eighths of a cord

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84. Ibid., Nov. 8, 1777; ibid., Dec. 31, 1777.

85. Philip Schuyler Papers, Schuyler to Lewis, November 9, 1776.

86. Stotz, Drums in the Forest, p. 106.

of wood each week between October 1 and April 1. For the 5 weeks preceding October 1 and the 5 weeks following April 1, three-sixteenths of a cord of wood was to be supplied each week. For the remaining 16 weeks of the year, only one-eighth of a cord was to be supplied each week.<sup>87</sup>

In 1775 and 1776 New York's Committee of Safety delivered the following furniture and equipment:<sup>88</sup>

680 benches  
393 tables  
85-1/4 cords of wood  
261 cots  
a quantity of lanterns  
249-1/2 pounds of candles  
65 candlesticks  
168 spoons  
650 bails of straw

A return of barrack furniture in 1767 at such posts as Oswegatchie and Fort William Augustus listed such items as beds, bolsters, blankets, berths, tables, forms, dog irons, tongs, fire shovels, candlesticks, iron pots, and rugs.<sup>89</sup>

It is apparent from the foregoing discussion that whether the authorization of supplies originated in South Carolina or in New York, the furnishings allowed the enlisted men's barracks were similar. Because of shortages, these items were not always present in each enlisted men's room.

As close to the time of the siege as June 15, 1777, Colonel Gansevoort complained to General Schuyler about how destitute his garrison was of cooking utensils. The men, he said, were frequently obliged to wait for their meals because they had to share equipment. So much improvising was going on that he attributed to the unsanitary practices in cooking the high number of men being sick.<sup>90</sup> A shortage of pails in barracks prompted the commander of the fort to order cedar pails made.<sup>91</sup>

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87. State of New York, New York In the Revolution, 2:81.

88. Ibid., p. 47.

89. Miscellaneous American Revolution, "Return of Barrack Bedding and Furniture etc at Oswegatchie and Fort William Augustus 25 Sept. 1767."

90. Peter Gansevoort, Jr., Military Papers, Gansevoort to Schuyler, June 15, 1777.

91. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Mar. 13, 1778.

Chamber pots were common items in Army barracks and other areas where men slept. However, there was a shortage of these pots at Fort Stanwix, and the few that existed were probably in the officers' quarters. Finding themselves without such essentials, and the necessaries being too inconveniently located, enlisted men relieved themselves in various parts of the fort. Although the men were warned that if caught they would be severely punished, the practice continued for several months. The quartermaster sergeant was finally instructed to have "Tubs placed at the Several Corners of the Barracks for the Men to make Water in which are to be Emptied and Washed every Morning."<sup>92</sup>

Shortages of many items frequently led soldiers to improvise. We have already seen how a shortage of cooking utensils led some to cook their meals in unsanitary ways. At huts uncovered in the Washington Heights section of New York City it was found that soldiers employed barrel hoops for holding kettles in fireplaces.<sup>93</sup> This practice might well have been prevalent at Fort Stanwix.

Gunracks, like other conveniences, were probably not common at Fort Stanwix, and in many cases muskets were stacked in a pyramidal fashion in various parts of the room. The enlisted man had few items of clothing, and the few he had were probably hung on pegs just above his bunk. Unlike officers, the enlisted man had few personal items that could make life a little more bearable.

Of some interest, particularly since it was issued at the height of the siege, was an order to the quartermaster to have barrels constantly filled with water.<sup>94</sup> This water was used for drinking, washing, and fighting fires, and the barrels were placed at various locations, wherever people slept or congregated. They may have been seen on the parade ground and bastions as well as in barracks, casemates, and bombproofs. A logical place for such a barrel in the east barracks would have been in the hall, where it was centrally located and quickly reached.

The four officers' rooms in the barracks represented a more orderly appearance than the rooms occupied by the enlisted men. There was

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92. Ibid., Sept. 15, 1777; ibid., May 21, 1778.

93. Photograph, Revolutionary War fireplace, Hut 34, Hut Camp of 17th Regiment of Foot, prior to reconstruction (negative 5486), New-York Historical Society; photograph, fireplace in reconstructed military hut, Dyckman House Park (negative 2644), New-York Historical Society, see Illustrations Nos. 1 and 2.

94. Marinus Willett's Orderly Book, Aug. 11, 1777.

little crowding in these rooms, even at the height of the siege. At most there were probably three or four officers assigned to each room. A summary of a few contemporary accounts will give us some general idea of the number of officers quartered in each room. On October 17, 1776, Dr. Ebenezer Elmer records in his journal that Captain Walker and his subalterns lodged in the room that he and another officer occupied. The following day Elmer notes that Captain Walker "liveth with us in the Room [that] we have all along occupied."<sup>95</sup> It is obvious from these accounts that only two officers were permanently quartered in one room, while Captain Walker and his subordinates were only temporarily quartered in the same room.

In a much later document one officer records that soon after his arrival at Fort Stanwix he "drew for the Rooms and Lieut Hyatt and I drew No. 1 on the Left of the North Side of the Fort."<sup>96</sup>

One week later the following order appeared, again establishing beyond doubt that there were two officers to a room in 1780:

the Duty being so Very heavy in the Garrison the Commandant is Reduced to the Necessity to Direct that Wherever there is two officers in A Room together; one visitor must be Detailed in his proper [tour] to do Duty only on Couvering [sic] parties.<sup>97</sup>

While the written evidence may be strong in establishing that there were two officers to a room at Fort Stanwix before and after the siege, the crowded conditions of the post during the siege made it very likely that there were three and sometimes four officers in one room. Even with an increased number of officers during the siege, the rooms presented a much more orderly appearance than the enlisted men's rooms. Moreover, if any of the more scarce items of furniture were available, one can rest assured that the officers got them.

In 1776 the New York Provincial Congress had each officer's room furnished with one pair of andirons, one pair of tongs, one table,

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95. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Oct. 17, 1776; *ibid.*, Oct. 18, 1776.

96. "John Barr's Diary," Nov. 24, 1780, in Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 843.

97. Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, Dec. 2, 1780, p. 547.

two chairs, and one candlestick. In addition it allotted the same amount of firewood to officers as it had to the enlisted men.<sup>98</sup>

Officers usually enjoyed greater conveniences than the enlisted man. They probably slept on single bunks, and in most instances their mattresses consisted of sacks, with bolsters and blankets available. One chamber pot was provided for each room. The tables contained writing paper, quills, and inkwells, as well as candlesticks. Clay pipes might be seen on tables or hanging above the fireplaces. In addition to the usual fireplace tools and cooking and eating utensils, officers frequently kept personal items. Chests containing liquor and wine were probably among these personal items. There are several references to parties and gatherings among officers in their rooms, which attest to the abundant use of alcoholic beverages. One such reference notes that:

After they had concluded the Business Laid before them being a number of Colts among them; they began upon Drinking wine which they Continued Successfully till about Ten o Clock at Night. With a good Creature many of them got very Happy upon [which] appointing Capts. Dickinson & Potter & Major Barber Sachins [sic] they Knocked up an Indian Dance at [which] they yelled much. . . ."<sup>99</sup>

One month later the same person reported that "At Evening Colo. White & Dr. Dunham came into our Room Drank & Conversed."<sup>100</sup> Another officer in later years reported a "Frolick [sic] at our Room" on Christmas Day.<sup>101</sup> The same officer, at the New Year's Day dinner which he and at least 10 others attended, noted that several toasts were given.<sup>102</sup>

Other personal items kept in the officers' rooms were beaver, otter, martin, and deer skins--articles usually purchased from the Indians. In January 1777 John Hansen, the quartermaster at Fort Stanwix,

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98. State of New York, New York In the Revolution, 2:81; Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, pp. 83-84.

99. Journal of Ebenezer Elmer, Sept. 12, 1776.

100. Ibid., Oct. 14, 1776.

101. "John Barr's Diary," Dec. 25, 1780, in Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 846.

102. Ibid., Jan. 1, 1781, p. 848.

complained to General Schuyler that he had been unsuccessful in getting Colonel Elmer

to stop his officers and men from buying anything from the Indians. He at last . . . put a Notice on the Front gate which I think has never been adhered to. The men in the Sight of their officers daily carrying them in their rooms & buying of them at a much larger price. . . . In several of the Officers Rooms you will find Beaver, Otters, Martins, Deer Skins etc.<sup>103</sup>

Buying from the Indians and indeed from sutlers was certainly not prevalent during the siege, but there can be little doubt that the practice had been carried on up to the time of the siege, and that therefore many of these items may have still been in their rooms.

Swords, holsters, accouterments, and various objects of clothing were probably hung on pegs within the rooms.

Archeologists Lee Hanson and Dick Hsu of the National Park Service have concluded in their studies that there were four cellars under the east barracks.<sup>104</sup> There is only one piece of historical evidence that shows provisions were stored in barracks. On August 9, 1777, Colonel Gansevoort "ordered all the provisions to be brought upon the parade for fear of shells setting fire to the barracks and destroying it."<sup>105</sup> Whether he was speaking about the east barracks or west barracks is not clear. Nor is it clear in what part of the barracks the provisions were stored; however, the cool cellars were the most logical place for storing provisions. Messrs. Hanson and Hsu have reported finding charred oats and wheat in one cellar of the west barracks--evidence that it was used extensively as a grainary.<sup>106</sup> It might well be that the cellars in the east barracks were also used for storing provisions.

The containers in which the provisions were packed have been discussed at some length in an earlier chapter, and it would be redundant

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103. Philip Schuyler Papers, Hansen to Schuyler, January 28, 1777.

104. Hanson and Hsu, "Casemates and Cannonballs," 1:45.

105. Colbraith, "Journal," Aug. 9, 1777.

106. Dr. John Cotter to Manager, Historic Preservation Team, subject: Report for July 1972 Northeast Region, n.d., in NPS files.



to describe them here. Suffice it to say that most provisions stored in cellars were packed in one kind or size of container or another. One final word should be said about these containers. At Fort George in the Northern Department, it was customary to paint the word "Stores" on all barrels.<sup>107</sup> It may be that a similar procedure was employed at Fort Stanwix.

Archeologists have found the remains of several cannon balls, mortar bombs, cannister shot, and flints in the cellars of the east barracks, an indication that the cellars may also have been used as a magazine or laboratory.<sup>108</sup>

#### F. Casemates

According to an early definition, a casemate was a "work made under the rampart, like a cellar or cave with loop-holes, to place guns in it."<sup>109</sup> Before the Revolution, however, this concept was modified so that the casemate became primarily either a soldiers' quarters or a place for storing provisions and ordnance.<sup>110</sup> The casemates at Fort Stanwix conformed to this principal.

The interpretive prospectus proposes to furnish two rooms (on the west side) of the north casemate as officers' quarters, the whole southeast casemate as enlisted men's quarters, and about one-third of the west casemate as enlisted men's quarters.

##### 1. North Casemate (Officers' Quarters)

There is no written evidence that shows the number of rooms in the north casemate; however, archeological studies have indicated that there were six fireplaces equally spaced, which leads to the conclusion that there were probably six rooms of equal size.<sup>111</sup> Both the artifacts that were uncovered and the evidence of one document indicate that this casemate was used as an officer's quarters. A diary notes in 1780

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107. Philip Schuyler Papers, Van Rensselaer to Fitz, October 6, 1775.

108. Hanson and Hsu, "Casemates and Cannonballs," 1:147, 151.

109. John Muller, A Treatise Containing the Elementary Part of Fortification, Regular and Irregular (London: Printed for J. Nourse, 1746), p. 214, reprinted by Museum Restoration Service, Ottawa, 1968.

110. Carroll, Fort Stanwix, p. 49.

111. Hanson and Hsu, "Casemates and Cannonballs," 1:60.

that its owner "drew for the Rooms and Lieut. Hyatt and I drew No. 1 on the Left of the North Side of the Fort."<sup>112</sup> Undoubtedly this room was the one on the left of the north casemate.

The furnishings of these rooms were essentially the same as those in the officers' rooms of the east barracks, with single bunks or beds, and sacks to give the officer extra comfort. Occasionally, the arrangement of an officer's room may have been improvised during the siege because of the increase in people. Some officers may have simply slept on loose straw on the floor, since there were not enough cribs. At least one chamber pot could be found in each room.

A table was in the middle of the room with at least two chairs or campstools around it. The table held a candlestick, inkwell, and quill. There were the usual cooking and eating utensils to be seen. Junior officers may have had the cheaper variety of utensils, whereas senior officers might boast of something better. The latter might have had porcelain dishes. Rum and wine bottles could also be seen on these tables, if not an occasional liquor chest.

The fireplaces contained the usual assortment of tools and accessories such as andirons, tongs, trammels, kettle, firewood, pail, and shovel. Clothing as well as weapons and accouterments were hung on pegs near the bunks. Finally, personal items such as clay pipes and skins of various sorts could be seen on tables, bunks, stools, and fireplaces.

## 2. Southeast and West Casemates (Enlisted Men's Quarters)

Life in the casemates for the enlisted man may have been a little more severe than in a barracks, but the furnishings were essentially the same. At the time of the siege there were probably more men assigned to a room than normally, without sufficient beds, bedding, utensils, and dishes to take care of everyone's needs. Field beds, two to a crib, were lined up against and parallel to the walls.

The casemates were designed to house 400 men, and the sizes of the east and north casemates were approximately 20 feet deep by 132 feet long (measured from center to center lengthwise.)<sup>113</sup> We also know that the three rooms in the west casemate were of equal size, which

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112. "John Barr's Diary," Nov. 24, 1780, in Lauber, Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, p. 843.

113. Luzader, "Construction and Military History of Fort Stanwix," p. 43.

made the north room (the one we are concerned with) about 20 by 44 feet. A room of this size probably had about 20 cribs around its four walls, holding two men to a crib, or a total of 40 men. During the siege this number may have been higher, with people sleeping on the floor.

The southeast casemate was 58 by 60 feet.<sup>114</sup> This casemate had two rooms utilizing a double fireplace. The two rooms in the southeast casemate together had about 50 cribs, sleeping 100 men.

Bedding was probably similar to that of the enlisted men's quarters in the barracks; those more fortunate than others had sacks, the rest had only straw. Blankets and bolsters may have been insufficient in number for everyone during the siege. The room in the west casemate probably had one table surrounded by benches, and since the southeast casemate was divided into two areas by a double fireplace, there were two tables, one for each area. Benches also surrounded these tables. Each table had a candlestick as well as eating utensils, dishes, cups, and bottles.

The few clothes the enlisted men had, as well as their accouterments, were hung on pegs whenever available, but some clothing may also have lain on bunks. Personal items were few, but whatever was available was kept out of sight for fear it might be stolen.

Gunracks might have been located in these areas, but more often than not muskets were stacked in pyramidal fashion in various parts of the room. Chamber pots may have been rare items in enlisted men's quarters, although an occasional one might be found.

Fireplaces contained the usual tools, firewood, and cooking utensils. Although large kettles may have hung over the fire, frying pans, when not in use, were hung on the wall above the fireplace.

All in all, the rooms occupied by enlisted men, especially during the siege, presented a chaotic and disorderly scene.

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114. Ibid.



## Appendix

### The "Stars and Stripes" at Fort Stanwix A Summary of the Evidence

by  
John F. Luzader

#### Introduction

The purpose of this brief report is to present the results of a study of the evidence concerning whether the flag flown at Fort Stanwix during the siege of August 1777 was the first "Stars and Stripes" flown in combat. This is not a history of the genesis of the national flag; nor is it an evaluation of the claims put forth in support of the Bennington and Guilford Courthouse flags.

#### The Tradition

Briefly stated, the traditional association of the flag that became the national standard with the Siege of Fort Stanwix is that the news of the passage of the "Flag Resolution" by the Continental Congress on June 14 was brought to the fort either in the form of a personal letter to Colonel Peter Gansevoort, the post's commanding officer, or in a newspaper by the batteaux that delivered a 100-man reinforcement from Wesson's Regiment at Fort Dayton under Lieutenant Colonel Mellen. Upon receiving the dramatic and important news, some of the people in the fort prepared a flag of thirteen stripes, alternating red and white, and thirteen stars on a blue field in compliance with congressional resolution. Early in the morning of Sunday, August 3, the first day of the siege, this flag was raised on one of the fort's bastions and a salute was fired, marking the first time the new national emblem was flown over American troops. If true, this was one of the most dramatically important events of the American Revolution.

One of the early champions of this interpretation was Pomeroy Jones, a local student whose interest in the history of the fort had a lasting influence on the work of later scholars. Jones was born several years after the siege; but he knew a number of veterans of the Revolution, and he cited their recollections to the effect that the flag at Fort Stanwix was indeed the "Stars and Stripes."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ltr., Oswald P. Backus to Captain Gustave Villant, U.S. Army Historical Staff 10 February, 1927, files of the Office of the Chief of Military History, Ft. McNair, Washington, D.C.

Jones's stories were the basis of a number of 19th century assertions concerning the flag, including Dr. James Weise's account that the new national flag was unfurled, a salute fired, and that an adjutant read the Congress's resolution from the newspaper the batteaux detail had brought to the fort on August 2.<sup>2</sup> Dr. Weise's account was picked up by The New Larned History, in which the following appears:

. . . Journal of Capt. Swartwout of Col. Gansevoort regiment written August 3, 1777 in Ft. Schuyler shows beyond cavil when the first flag of Stars and Stripes of which we have record was made and hoisted, but it was in a fort (Schuyler), not in the field, or at the head of a regiment.<sup>3</sup>

John Albert Scott's popular Fort Stanwix, (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany repeats the story of the newspaper report and the raising of the "first Stars and Stripes."<sup>4</sup> Although Fort Stanwix's claims were frequently disputed in favor of other sites such as Bennington, Cooch's Bridge, Brandyvine and Guilford Courthouse, many writers have perpetuated the tradition.

#### Evidence

Let us now take a look at the evidence upon which an evaluation of the tradition must be based. The basic document for the origin of the "Stars and Stripes" is the so-called Flag Resolution of June 14, 1777, which reads: "RESOLVED: that the flag of the United States be made of thirteen stripes, alternate red and white; that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field representing a new constellation."<sup>5</sup> The resolution was preceded and followed by matters brought to the Congress's attention by its Marine Committee. Since the resolution was converting the unofficial Grand Union Flag into an official standard, substituting thirteen stars upon a blue field for the canton derived from the British Union, which combined the crosses of Saints George and Andrew, it was appropriate that it emanate from that committee. This was the case because, following

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2. James Weise, Swartwout Chronicle (1899), 214.

3. The New Larned History, 1923 edition, IV, 3109. Swartwout did not leave a journal and his letter to Gansevoort concerning the cloak does not discuss the flag design.

4. John Albert Scott, Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler) and Oriskany (Rome, 1927), 175.

5. Journal of the Continental Congress, Monday, June 14, 1777.

British precedent, flying of the Grand Union had been normally limited to ships and permanent land installations. Thus, what Congress was providing for was a new marine flag, not a national military standard.

Crucial to the story of the Fort Stanwix flag is the record of what happened immediately after the passage of the Flag Resolution. Thacher's Military Journal's entry for August 3, 1777, notes that: "It appears by the papers that Congress resolved on 14 June last, that the flag of the thirteen United States be thirteen stripes, alternate red and white, that the union be thirteen stars, white in a blue field. . . ."6 So far as this writer has been able to determine, and this has been supported by the findings of other students, the first public notice of the resolution appeared in the Pennsylvania Evening Post on August 30 in the following item: "In Congress, June 14, 1777. Resolved That the FLAG of the United States be THIRTEEN STRIPES alternate red and white; that the union be THIRTEEN STARS white in a blue field. Extract from minutes, CHARLES THOMSON, sec."7

Other papers printed the resolution from September 3 to October 2, and the first New York papers to print it were the September 8 issue of the New York Journal and General Advertiser and September 11 issue of the New York Patent and The American Advertiser.

The papers to which Dr. Thacher at Albany was most likely to have access were the two New York and two Boston papers, the Gazette and the Spy, in which the story appeared in the September 15 and 18 issues respectively.8

There is an obvious conflict in evidence that can only be explained by acknowledging that the doctor may have had access to the newspaper that is unknown to historians or, more likely that when the Journal was prepared for publication prior to January 1, 1823, this was one of the instances in which alterations were made in the organization of the original manuscript.

More immediately pertinent to the Fort Stanwix problems are the testimonies of Lt. William Colbrath and Lt. Col. Marinus Willett. In his Journal, Colbrath noted in the entry for August 3: "Early this morning a Continental Flag made by the officers of Col. Gansevoort's Regiment was hoisted and a cannon levelled at the

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6. James Thacher, Military Journal, (Boston, 1823).

7. Pennsylvania Evening Post, Philadelphia, Vol III, Number 398, 453.

8. Milo M. Qualife, Melvin J. Weig, Roy E. Appleman, The History of the United States Flag (Philadelphia, 1966), 30.

Enemies Camp was fired on the occasion."<sup>9</sup> It is important to note that the lieutenant called the standard a "Continental Flagg," a term frequently applied to the Grand Union. It is also significant that he did not refer to the flag as a new one, as might be expected if he was witnessing such a memorable event.

Lt. Col. Marinus Willett wrote one of the earliest accounts of the siege on August 11 in a letter to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr. He was also probably the author of another account entitled "Extract of a Letter from a Officer of Distinction" that appeared in the August 28 issue of the Boston paper, The Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser. In neither of these did he refer to the Fort Stanwix flag, a surprising oversight if it was as historically important as such a "first" would have been. His Orderly Book is equally silent on the subject.<sup>10</sup>

A quarter of a century after the siege, Willett wrote his "Narrative," which his son edited and published after the colonel's death. This is what the father wrote concerning the flag:

The Fort had never been supplied with a Flagg - The importance of having one on the arrival of the Enemy had set our Ingenuity to work, and a respectable one was formed the white stripes were cut out of ammunition shirts the blue strips out of the Cloak formerly mentioned taken from the Enemy at Peekshill. The red stripes out of different pieces of stuff collected from sundry persons. The Flagg was sufficiently large and a general Exhilaration of spirits appeared on beholding it Wave the morning after the arrival of the enemy.<sup>11</sup>

When William Willett edited his father's manuscript, he altered the wording of the sentence describing the flag's components to read:

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9. William Colbrath, "Journal of the most material occurrences preceding the Siege of Fort Schuyler (formerly Fort Stanwix) with an account of the siege, etc.," microfilm, New York Public Library.

10. The Remembrances; or, Impartial Repository of Public Events For the Year 1777 (London 1778), 448-49; ltr. Willett to Jonathan Trumbull, Jr., August 11, 1777; The Independent Chronicle and Universal Advertiser, (Boston) August 28, 1777; Marinus Willett, "Orderly Book," New York Public Library.

11. Marinas Willett, "Narrative," MSS., Tomlinson Collection, New York Public Library.



"The white strips were cut out of ammunition shirts, the blue of the cloak taken from the enemy at Peekskill; while the red stripes were made of different pieces of stuff procured from one or another of the garrison."<sup>12</sup>

Marinus Willett's manuscript had this to say about the cloak from which the blue portion of the flag derived:

What Baggage the enemy had they left it consisting of only a few Blankets and Cloaks - A blue Comblot Cloak taken here afterwards served to enable us to use it for the blue strips of a Flag which was afterwards hoisted during the siege of Fort Schuyler. . . .<sup>13</sup>

Willett's Statement about red, white stripes and blue strips can only have reference to a Grand Union Flag, because a "Stars and Stripes" would have had a blue field, not blue strips.

Two powder horns that are purported to date from the historic period at Fort Stanwix have been offered in evidence concerning the flag. I have seen neither of the specimens, my knowledge of them being limited to photographs and written descriptions. At the same time, I would have to say that seeing them probably would not materially increase my knowledge, because in spite of several years of experience in museum work, I would not be able to date them with much precision, beyond noting whether the horns and their lettering conform to types representing a period, or to determine whether the engravings are contemporaneous with the purported date or are more recent additions. I have seen specimens whose provenience has been documented alongside known fakes whose workmanship resembles the authentic so closely that no "expert" could have identified the genuine. Thus I suspect that most other students share my limitations.

One of the horns is rather elaborately carved with a stylized representation of a fort that conforms to the general outlines of Fort Stanwix and bears the inscription "Fort Schuyler; Dec'r 25 1777, J. McGraw." Flying from the northwest bastion is a flag that, except for the absence of the St. George, resembles the Grand Union. John Albert Scott dismissed the powder horn's evidence, largely on the basis that John McGraw, whom Scott identified as the man who

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12. William Willett, ed., A Narrative of the Military Actions of Colonel Marinus Willett (New York, 1831), 132.

13. Willett, "Narrative."

did the carving, was enrolled in Visscher's regiment of New York levies, which was not posted at the fort in December 1777. However, there was a James McGraw in the 3rd New<sup>14</sup> York, which was there, and this man may have made the powder horn. If the horn is genuine and if John McGraw carved it, the evidence that it presents argues strongly that the Fort Stanwix flag was a copy of the Grand Union.

The other powder horn is attributed to Lt. Christopher Hutton of the Third New York Regiment of the Continental Line. If it is authentic, this specimen is the strongest piece of evidence that I know of in favor of the Stars and Stripes tradition. Several subjects have been carved on the horn's sides. These include: Chris. Hutton 1777; a diagrammatic sketch of Mohawk and Schoharie Rivers; Ft. Schuyler III REGT; Ft EDW (small and shallow cut), a field cannon with a pyramidal stack of six balls; an Indian armed with a musket and tomahawk; a man mounted on a horse with a caption PETER, and most important to this study--a flag that shows stripes and a field of stars.

Some questions are appropriate concerning the Hutton powder horn. The most obvious is whether it is what it is purported to be. Since there are no conclusive authentications, the question remains moot; although on the basis of design, lettering, and general appearance, I am inclined to accept it as a late 18th century specimen. The second is, what was the designer's objective? Was he using the characters as symbols to interpret the events that occurred at the fort in 1777? If that was his purpose, why was the small legend "Ft Edw.," which must refer to Fort Edward, included? That fort was located at the carrying place on the Hudson River between that river and Wood Creek. Why did the maker locate the flag where he did? It, obviously, was not intended to mark the fort's location in relation to the river. The answer to what his purpose was cannot be found in the characters, even the equestrian figure, who probably was intended to represent the Third's commander, Col. Peter Gansevoort.

On the other hand, the characters may merely be decorative, a form of doodling. But that still does not solve the problem of the flag. And the question of when the carvings were executed remains. Do they date from 1777, or are they later, done after the war as an exercise in nostalgia? There seems to be no satisfactory answer. However, after all the questions have been asked, one must conclude that, whatever its merits, the evidence offered by the horn contradicts that offered by the McGraw specimen, which has as good a claim to authenticity, and more significantly it is at odds with the documentary evidence. Perhaps, we should not afford either horn much credit and rely exclusively upon documentary evidence. Neither

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14. Revolutionary Service Record, John McGraw, National Archives.

horn can really be authenticated in a manner that will satisfy all the canons of evidence. With the documents, we are on safer ground. Their histories can be traced beyond reasonable doubt, and they can be tested by standards of internal and external criticism. So, let us continue to consult them.

As has been noted, the congressional resolution of June 14 concerned a maritime flag and was not intended to provide a national standard for use by troops in the field. This is borne out by subsequent events.

Almost two years after the siege, Richard Peters, secretary of the Board of War, wrote to General Washington that regimental requisition for drums and colors had not been filled because "we have not the materials to make either in sufficient numbers." He went on to say concerning the flag:

. . . as to the Colour, we have refused them for another reason. The Baron Steuben mentioned when he was here that he would settle with your Excellency some Plan as to the Colours. It was intended that every Regiment should have two Colours - one the Standard of the United States, which should be the same throughout the Army, and the other a Regimental Colour which should vary according to the facings of the Regiment. But it is not yet settled what is the Standard of the U. States. If your Excellency will therefore favour us with your Opinion on the Subject we will report to Congress and request them to establish a Standard and as soon as this is done we will endeavour to get materials and order a Number made sufficient for the Army.<sup>15</sup>

Peter's letter makes it so clear as to be obvious that the resolution of June 14 did not authorize a National military standard, that as of May 10, 1779, no such standard had been chosen, and that Congress would be requested to establish one after Washington had expressed his opinion on the matter.

The Board of War continued to consider the design during the summer of 1779, and by September had apparently narrowed its choice to between "one with the Union and Emblem in the middle" and a variant of the marine flag authorized by the 1777 resolution. Between the two, the Board preferred the former.<sup>16</sup>

The matter was not settled by the time fighting ended in 1781, and Congress never supplied the troops with a national color. This

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15. Washington Papers, Library of Congress, ltr., Peters to Washington, May 10, 1779.

16. Ibid, ltr., Peters to Washington, September, 1779.

does not mean that no variants of the "Star and Stripes" motif appeared on the field. The Bennington and Guilford Courthouse flags may have been carried in those engagements, but they were not the products of Congressional authorization, nor were they copies of a national standard, because none existed. They were local products that used an unofficial design that enjoyed a degree of popularity. But even in those instances, the evidences for their authenticity, while stronger than the Stanwix case, fall short of being conclusive.

It might be argued that the flag flown at Fort Stanwix was, like the Bennington and Guilford ones, an unofficial standard, designed independently of Congressional authority. However, that contradicts Culbrath's identifying it as a "Continental Flag" and strains Willett's statement that the cloak was the source of the flag's blue strips, to say nothing of the testimony, for what it is worth, of the McGraw powder-horn.

Negative evidence may be adduced from the absence of any reference to the appearance of a new flag in any of the German or British documents that have been studied. Of course, that omission is not conclusive evidence, but one could expect that at least some member of the besieging force would have been sufficiently impressed by the event to have noted it in some form.<sup>17</sup>

For what it is worth, and that is not much, Lieutenants Digbley and Anburey wrote that the new American flag was flown at Tieconderoga and Fort Anne before the siege of Fort Stanwix took place. Their testimonies in this matter can be dismissed because they compiled their accounts, partly from notes made in the field and partly from<sup>18</sup> other sources, some of which were post-war, sometime after the war.

### Conclusions

On the basis of the documentary evidence, identifying the Fort Stanwix flag as the "first Stars and Stripes to fly over American troops in combat" had its origins in 19th century local tradition; it is not supported by contemporary evidence; such evidence contravenes it; and there is no conclusive evidence identifying the first instance of the flag's use in combat.

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17. "Colonel [Daniel] Claus' Account of the Battle of Oriskany and the Defeat of St. Leyer's expedition," New York State Library; Colonial Office Records, Public Records Officer, London; Hessi-Hanan Urkunden and Brifen, copies of Hessi-Hanan documents in possession of Dr. Joachin Lischer, Stadtarchivist, Frankfurt am Main; Hessische Stratsarchiv, Marburg am Lahn.

18. William Digby, Journal, MSS. British Museum; Thomas Auburey, Travels Through the Interior Parts of America. (London, 1789).

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1.

Revolutionary War fireplace, Hut 34,  
Hut Camp of the 17th Regiment of Foot, Dyckman  
House Park, New York City, prior to reconstruction.

Photo by W. L. Calvea, 1915.  
Courtesy, New-York Historical Society.  
Negative 5486.





Illustration 2.

Fireplace in reconstructed military hut,  
Dyckman House Park, New York City.

Courtesy, New-York Historical Society.  
Negative 2644.















