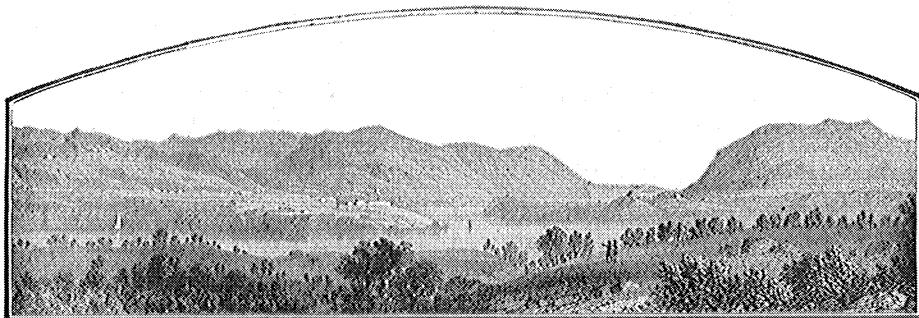


HISTORY OF WEST POINT—OF THE MILITARY ACADEMY—AND OF THE SERVICES OF ITS GRADUATES IN WAR AND PEACE.



WEST POINT, 1780—REVOLUTIONARY ARMY ENCAMPED. (DRAWN BY MAJOR L'ENFANT, ENGINEER.)

WEST POINT IN THE REVOLUTION, 1778—1783.

By Capt. HORACE M. REEVE,

Seventeenth Infantry, United States Army, General Staff—United States Military Academy, 1892.^a

* * * The importance of this last-mentioned post is so great, as justly to have been considered the key of America. It has been so pre-eminently advantageous to the defense of the United States and is still so necessary in that view, as well as for the preservation of the Union, that the loss of it might be productive of the most ruinous consequences. A naval superiority at sea and on Lake Champlain, connected by a chain of posts on the Hudson River, would effect an entire separation of the States on each side and render it difficult, if not impracticable, for them to cooperate. * * * Now, as West Point is considered not only by ourselves, but by all who have the least knowledge of the country, as a post of the greatest importance, as it may in time of peace, from its situation on the water, be somewhat obnoxious to surprise or coup de main, and as it would doubtless be a first object with any nation which might commence a war against the United States to seize that post and occupy or destroy the stores, it appears to me that we ought particularly to guard against such an event, so far as may be practicable, and to remove some part of the allurements to enterprise, by establishing the grand arsenals in the interior part of the country, leaving only to West Point an adequate supply for its defense in almost any extremity. * * * — *Washington writing to Hamilton, May 2, 1783.*

It [West Point] is a strongly fortified castle, which, with its dependencies, is considered by General Washington as the key which locks the communication between the Eastern and Southern States; and of all the posts in the United States this is the most important. * * *

Such is the formidable state and strength of this post, that it has received the appellation of the American Gibraltar, and when properly guarded may bid defiance to an army of 20,000 men. * * * It commands the whole extent of country on the Hudson from New York to Canada and secures a communication between the Eastern and Southern States. — *Thacher's Military Journal, September 26, 1780.*

^a The writer has had the advantage of the use of the exhaustive card bibliography of West Point, which has been prepared by the Librarian of the U. S. Military Academy.



INFANTRY PRIVATE,
1810.

LITTLE is known about West Point previous to the Revolution; doubtless there was little to record. The lands around the point of land from which West Point takes its name,^a and to the north and west thereof, were originally granted by the British Crown to Capt. John Evans.^b In 1723, the Crown having reassumed these lands, the larger portion was granted to Charles Congreve, and as the terms of his patent required settlement on the ground within three years, it is probable that the first buildings at West Point were erected about that time. In 1747 another portion of the old Evans patent was regranted to John Moore, who afterwards purchased Congreve's lands, and whose son, Stephen Moore, in 1790, sold both grants to the United States. The necessity for making this purchase was represented to Congress by Alexander Hamilton, when Secretary of the Treasury, and by Henry Knox when Secretary of

War, the latter eventually negotiating the purchase for the Government.

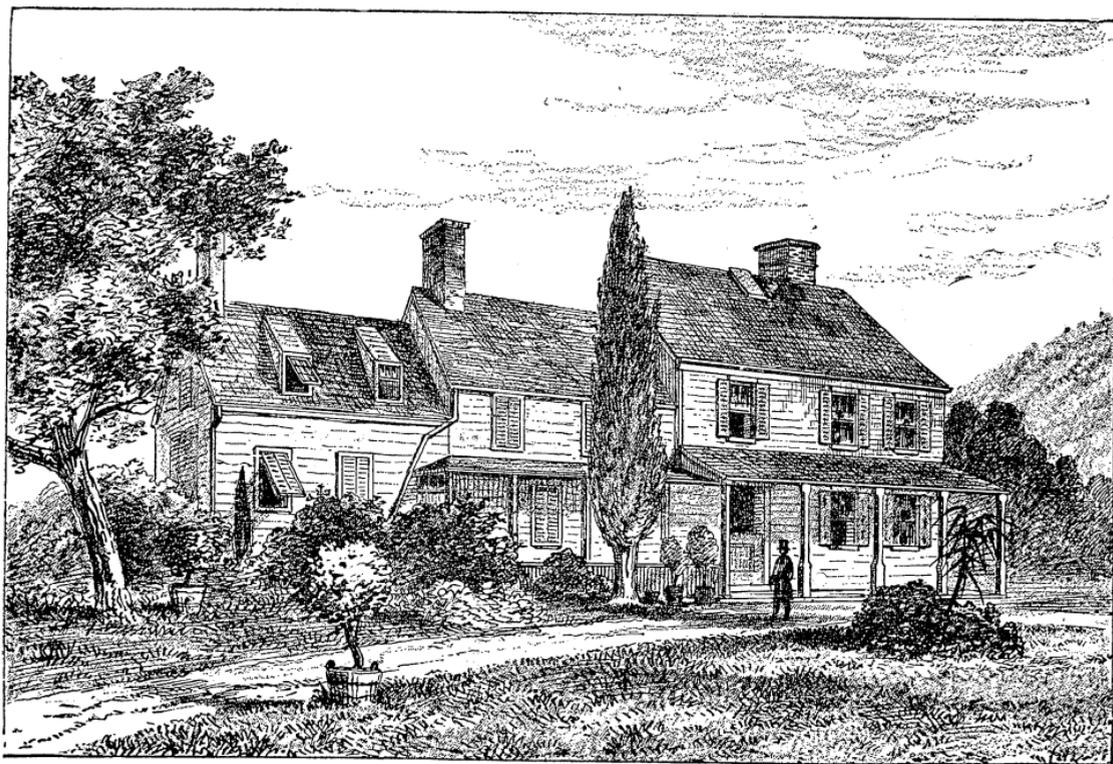
Constitution Island was formerly known as Martelaar's or Martler's Rock, on account of a French family named Martelaire who were located on the island or in its vicinity about 1720.^c During the Revolution the principal fortification on the island was called Fort Constitution, from which the island obtained its present name.

It is not possible to consider the revolutionary history of West Point without taking into account all the military works erected in and around the Highlands of which West Point

^a The extreme rocky point projecting from "West Point" is called Gee's Point, from Captain Gee, of the sloop *Federal*, who brought stores to West Point about 1790-1810, and whose house was near Gee's Point.—*Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts*.

^b On March 1, 1694, Capt. John Evans petitioned "for a grant of the land purchased by Governor Dongan of the Esopus Indians, on the west side of Hudsons River, from Murderers Creek back." Murderers Creek empties into the Hudson near Cornwall.—*Calendar of New York Historical Manuscripts*.

^c Martelaar's Rock was sometimes called Martyrs Cliff. The site of the present village of Garisons was formerly known as Mandeville's. The Point of land directly across from Gee's Point was known as Nelson's Point.—*Boynton's History of West Point*.



THE ROBINSON HOUSE.

proper was the citadel, for all were combined in one command, designated the "command of West Point and its dependencies."^a

Until the American troops began to cut timber for military purposes and to crown the surrounding hills with forts and redoubts, West Point and the neighboring Highlands were little else than a wilderness of rugged hills and virgin forests, presenting about the same appearance as first greeted Henrik Hudson when, in 1609, he sailed up the river which now bears his name.^b Although this tract of country could never lend itself kindly to the agriculturist, yet before the advent of the American soldier there were several houses standing at or near West Point, which were subsequently used for purposes very foreign to the peaceful intentions of their builders. Two of these houses became noted. One was "Moore's house"^c at West Point, used by Washington as his headquarters during the whole, or a part, of the time he was stationed at West Point, from July 21, 1779, until November 28, 1779. The other was the "Robinson house,"^d and was situated on the eastern shore of the Hudson, about 2 miles below West Point. It was used as a military hospital and afterwards as the headquarters of several successive general officers, among whom was Benedict Arnold, who was in this house when he was apprised of Andre's capture. It was from this house that Arnold made his escape. One of the surgeons who took possession of the "Robinson house" wrote in his diary on June 11, 1778:

In the location of a country seat the judgment of Colonel Robinson is not much to be admired, unless he was guided altogether by a taste for romantic singularity and novelty. It is surrounded on two sides by

^aOn August 3, 1780, when Washington appointed Arnold to the command at West Point, he informed him that his command was to consist of "West Point and its dependencies, in which all are included, from Fishkill to Kings Ferry."

^bHudson anchored near West Point on September 14, 1609, probably the first time that any European saw this section.

^cThis house stood in Washington Valley and was located near the shore of the Hudson, a short distance from the northeast corner of the present cemetery. It was built by John Moore sometime prior to 1749, and presumably was somewhat pretentious for the time and place, as it was known as "Moore's Folly."—See *Baker's Itinerary of General Washington*.

^dThe "Robinson house" was built about 1750 by Beverly Robinson, a man of note and wealth. He had been a personal friend of Washington until the Revolution separated them, when he went to New York and raised a regiment known as the "Loyal Americans," for service under the British. He assisted Arnold and André in their negotiations. At the close of the Revolution, Robinson went to England. This house was destroyed by fire March 17, 1892.

hideous mountains and dreary forests, not a house in view, and but one within a mile.^a

A glance at the map and a consideration of the circumstances of the Revolution and of the methods of war at that time will enable the military reader to appreciate the value of the control of the Hudson River to each contestant during the struggle. The importance of this river had been seen by both the Americans and British in the French and Indian war. The Hudson flows almost due south for more than 200 miles; there is an easy portage from Lake George to the Hudson, and Lake George is connected with Lake Champlain, which in turn is connected with the great Canadian River—the Saint Lawrence. Thus the Eastern colonies could be separated from the other colonies by controlling this chain of navigable waters. Moreover, the Mohawk, a tributary of the Hudson, connects the last-named river with the region of the Great Lakes. In the days of the Revolution the possession of the Hudson was indispensable to any army which was to operate north from New York City or south from Lake Champlain. The British used both Manhattan Island and Canada as bases of operation, and if, in addition, they had securely held the Hudson River, it would have furnished the best possible line of communication by which troops and material could have been transported. If they had held the river by means of strong posts and armed patrolling vessels, the New England colonies would have been cut off from the middle and southern colonies; and this not only would have prevented military combinations by the sections so divided, but would have prohibited the interchange of commodities necessary to both sections. Even to-day a vast amount of commerce is annually borne by the Hudson, although parallel railway systems afford means of land transportation.

At the beginning of the war, although the American authorities, as well as the British, saw the importance of holding the Hudson, it seems strange that West Point was not occupied until the war had been in progress nearly three

^a Dr. James Thacher served in the Revolution, first as surgeon to the First Virginia Regiment, and afterwards in the same capacity in the Sixteenth Massachusetts Regiment. He was stationed at West Point several times during the Revolution.—*Thacher's Military Journal*.

years. Situated in the heart of the Highlands, 50 miles from the river's mouth, this rocky point jutting boldly into the river receives the stream from the north after a straight course of 9 miles, veers it sharply eastward for a quarter of a mile, and then allows it to again flow south, which it does for several miles in a straight course. The reach to the southward can well be commanded by batteries across the river on Constitution Island; the reach to the northward by batteries on West Point. Between the island and the point the stream becomes narrower and swifter than it is at any other point in the vicinity, and sailing vessels from the south rounding West Point in the swift current necessarily lose their headway, and would strike with diminished force any obstruction which could be placed across the 500 yards intervening between West Point and Constitution Island; and such an obstruction could hold a vessel under the fire of batteries placed on the rocky bluffs on both sides of the river. Works at West Point, near the river's bank, could be protected by suitable forts and redoubts placed on the various heights in rear. The rugged nature of the Highlands and the absence of good roads would make it difficult for a hostile army to approach by land either West Point or Constitution Island. With the engineering and ordnance of revolutionary days, to properly hold and defend the Hudson where it passes through the Highlands, not only should West Point, Constitution Island, and the adjacent hills be fortified, but also outlying places, such as Fort Montgomery, Stony Point, Verplanck's Point, Anthony's Nose, and Pollopel's Island. All such fortified places should be made dependencies of West Point, which would be the strong citadel of the system and a depot for military supplies—in fact a secondary base of operation and a veritable mountain fastness. Such was the final view acted upon by the American authorities in 1778.

From the Revolutionary manuscripts it is not possible to compile a consecutive and detailed history of West Point during the struggle for independence. Much is lacking, but from the disjointed reports of that day, although at times contradictory, glimpses are afforded of the shifting war

scenes, by which something of the rôle of West Point in the Revolution may be understood and appreciated. This place became the most carefully fortified post possessed by the Americans during that war, containing at times the largest garrison and nearly all of the military stores. The troops labored on the fortifications and buildings from January, 1778, until the close of the war. More than \$3,000,000 were expended upon the military works and at times the garrison numbered 3,000 men. These figures mean much when we consider the straitened condition of the struggling colonies. The public treasury was almost always empty. The Army, which was small, lacked confidence in itself; the toiling soldiers who built these works were at times ill-clad, ill-rationed, poorly sheltered, and their full pay is to this day unpaid. An American should reverence the crumbling ruins which remain at West Point as monuments to those whose patriotic labor and privations made this nation a possibility.

To West Point, at one time or another, came nearly every officer prominent in the annals of the war. Washington was frequently here,^a and his subordinates came and went. Troops were continually arriving and departing; they assembled here from battlefields and recruiting districts to disappear again on expedition and foray. Men who had served around Boston, in the Quebec expedition, with Washington in the Jerseys, and against Burgoyne, were here camped with men who had seen service in the middle and southern colonies. Troops marched from West Point to maneuver against Clinton, to quell the mutineers in the Jerseys, to assist in the capture of Cornwallis's army at Yorktown, and, finally, to receive New York City from the evacuating

^a Washington presumably first saw West Point in November, 1776, when he came up the river to inspect the works on Constitution Island.

"November 11." [1776.]

"The commander in chief directed our General [Heath] to attend him in taking a view of Fort Montgomery and the other works up the river. Lord Sterling, Gens. James and George Clinton, General Mifflin, and others were of the company. They went as far up the river as Constitution Island, which is opposite to West Point, the latter of which was not then taken possession of; but the glance of the eye at it, without going on shore, evinced that this post was not to be neglected. There was a small work and a blockhouse on Constitution Island. Fort Montgomery was in considerable forwardness."—*Heath's Memoirs*.

Washington was subsequently at West Point a number of times. Exclusive of the period when his headquarters were here, there have been recorded about twenty visits which he paid to this post. His solicitude for the maintenance of this post during the Revolution is evinced in a number of his letters and orders and in the dispositions he made of his troops.

British. From their camp in the immediate vicinity of West Point Wayne's troops made their successful dash against Stony Point. Moreover, the most dramatic feature of the Revolution, the treason of Arnold and the execution of André, was centered around West Point.

On May 25, 1775, the Continental Congress sent to the congress of the province of New York the following:

Resolved, That a post be taken in the Highlands, on each side of the Hudson River, and batteries erected; and that experienced persons be immediately sent to examine said river in order to discover where it will be most advisable and proper to obstruct the navigation.

Upon this resolution the provincial congress on May 30, 1775, acted as follows:

Ordered, That Colonel Clinton and Mr. Tappan be a committee (and that they take to their assistance such persons as they shall think necessary) to go to the Highlands and view the banks of the Hudson River there; and report to this congress the most proper place for erecting one or more fortifications, and likewise an estimate of the expense of erecting the same.

This committee in its report, made June 13, suggested the erection of works where Fort Constitution (Constitution Island), Fort Montgomery, and Fort Clinton^a were subsequently constructed. This committee also stated that it had been informed that the navigation of the river might be stopped by means of booms chained together. On August 18 the provincial congress directed that the fortifications in the Highlands formerly ordered by the Continental Congress be erected immediately, according to the suggestion of the committee. No time was lost in carrying the resolutions of the continental and provincial congresses into effect.

On August 29, 1775, the fortifications in the Highlands were begun on Constitution Island, under the direction of Col. Bernard Romans as engineer in charge of works, his party consisting of 24 men. His scheme of fortifications embraced not only the works to be erected on Constitution Island, but also two works on the ridge directly east of what

^aThis Fort Clinton was located immediately south of Fort Montgomery and was built in connection with that work. It was situated between 5 and 6 miles south of West Point and should not be confused with the other Fort Clinton, the ruins of which are still visible on the northeast corner of the West Point plateau. This last-mentioned fort was called Fort Arnold until the treason of the general of that name.

is now Garrison (which works when completed were designated North Redoubt and South Redoubt), a work upon Sugar Loaf Mountain, and Fort Montgomery, with the adjacent work known as Fort Clinton. Colonel Romans proposed to expend on the fortifications on Constitution Island nearly £5,000 in blockhouses, barracks, storehouses, a magazine, etc., five batteries mounting 61 guns and 20 swivels, and a fort with a curtain about 200 feet in length. About this time the provincial congress passed a resolution of inquiry as to the advisability of constructing a work on the West Point side of the river at "Moore's house," but this was subsequently deemed inadvisable.

On November 3 the provincial congress ordered three companies to take station on Constitution Island, and on November 8 the Continental Congress resolved that an officer with the rank of colonel take command of the fortifications in the Highlands. In compliance with this resolution, Col. Isaac Nicoll, on January 16, 1776, was directed by the committee of safety to take command of these fortifications. On November 8, 1775, the provincial congress appointed a committee, composed of Robert R. Livingston, Robert Treat Paine, and J. Langdon, to examine and report upon the "fortifications upon Hudson's River." This committee, on November 23, reported to John Hancock, President of Congress, and among other things stated:

We must own that we found the fort in a less defensible situation than we had reason to expect. It does not command the reach to the southward,^a nor can it injure a vessel turning the West Point; and after she has got around, a small breeze, or even the tide, will enable a ship to pass the curtain in a few minutes. The fortress is unfortunately commanded by all the grounds about it, but the most obvious defect is that the grounds on the West Point are higher than the fortress, behind which an enemy might land without the least danger. In order to render the position impassible it seems necessary that this place should be occupied and batteries thrown up on the shore opposite, where they may be erected with little expense, as the earth is said to be pretty free from stone, etc.^b

^a The sketch of Romans's plan shows that he had designed a work to be placed on or near Gravel Hill which would command the reach.

^b On September 14, 1775, Colonel Romans, in a communication on the intended fortifications in the Highlands, to the New York committee of safety, submitted a drawing on which he locates a work at Gee's Point. This work was to consist, Colonel Romans explained, of a blockhouse mounting four 4-pounders and a battery mounting three 6-pounders. This drawing gives the direction of fire and the range of the ordnance in some of the proposed works.

At first the fortifying of Constitution Island does not appear to have progressed very favorably. The commissioners who had been appointed by the provincial congress "to manage the erecting and finishing the fortifications in the Highlands" differed with Colonel Romans on some essential points relative to authority, plans, expenses, etc. Colonel Romans was succeeded by Colonel Smith, an engineer who had been ordered to Constitution Island by General Lee. On February 29 the commissioners reported that Colonel Smith had "much to their satisfaction" laid out a barbette battery on Gravel Hill^a which would mount 18 guns commanding the reach to the southward, and which had been authorized by the Continental Congress on February 15, 1776.

Early in 1776, the Continental Congress appointed Benjamin Franklin, Samuel Clure, and Charles Carroll as commissioners to visit Canada in the interests of the colonies. While en route to their destination they arrived "off Constitution fort April 5," and going ashore, "from curiosity," they reported the state of the fort as follows:

The garrison consisted of three companies of minutemen, whose combined strength was 124 men. On the south bastion thirteen 6-pounders and one 9-pounder were mounted; the east bastion mounted seven 9-pounders and one 6-pounder. The blockhouse contained eight double fortified 4-pounder guns, mounted; the fortifications ordered by Congress on the 15th of February, and laid out by Engineer Smith, remain wholly neglected.^b

On May 21, 1776, Washington wrote to General Israel Putnam:

I have great reason to think that the fortifications in the Highlands are in a bad situation, and the garrison, on account of arms, worse. I would have you send Brigadier Lord Stirling,^c with Colonel Putnam and Colonel Knox (if he can be spared), to see and report such alterations as may be judged necessary for putting them into a fit and proper position for defense.

In compliance with this order a board was appointed, consisting of Brig. Gen. Lord Stirling, Col. Rufus Putnam and Captain Sargeant (in place of Colonel Knox). They left the

^a The southwestern eminence of Constitution Island, near the railroad.

^b Boynton's History of West Point.

^c William Alexander, a general officer in the American service, who claimed to be the rightful heir to the title and estates of the earldom of Stirling in Scotland. He was called Lord Stirling by courtesy.

city of New York on May 26, and a few days thereafter Washington received the following report from Stirling:

JUNE 1, 1776.

SIR: Agreeable to your request, I left New York on Sunday last, in order to view the fortifications on the Hudson's River in the Highlands. I took with me Colonel (Rufus) Putnam, chief engineer, and Captain Sargeant, of the Artillery. The winds were so adverse that we did not reach Fort Montgomery until Wednesday evening, but, with the help of our boat, we employed our time in visiting several other parts of the river that appeared proper for fortifying. At the mouth, or south end of the Highlands, about 4 miles below Fort Montgomery, there is a post (Stoney Point), which to me appears well worth possessing on many accounts. Should the enemy be in possession of it, we should be cut off from our best communication with the whole country below the Highlands, eastward as well as westward. There is a very remarkable spot of ground (Verplanck's Point), easily fortified, which commands the passage of the river, as well as either of the other posts; it also commands the mouth and landing of Peek's Kill, from which there is an excellent road into Connecticut, which is only 20 miles off; on the opposite side is an excellent road into New Jersey and Pennsylvania. In the passage from this place to Fort Montgomery is a large island, which would be very useful to the enemy in their approaches to that place.

Fort Montgomery is situated on the west bank of the river, which is there about half a mile broad, and the bank 100 feet high; on the opposite shore is a point of land called Anthony's Nose, which is many hundred feet high, very steep, and inaccessible to anything but goats or men very expert in climbing. A body of riflemen placed here would be of very great use in annoying an enemy, as the decks of every vessel that passes must lie open to them.

The works begun and designed at Fort Montgomery are open lines, and all lie on the north side of a small creek called Pooplopens Kill, on the south side of which is a point of land which projects more into the river, commands all the principal works and is within two and three hundred yards of them. On the top of this point is a level spot of ground of near an acre, commanded by nothing but the high, inaccessible mountains, at about twelve hundred yards' distance. This spot, I think, should by all means be fortified, as well as for the annoyance of the enemy in their approach up the river as for the protection of the works at Fort Montgomery. Indeed, this appears to me the most proper place I have seen on the river to be made the grand post, and in my opinion should be a regular strong work, capable of resisting every kind of attack and of containing a grand magazine of all kinds of warlike stores. The whole would then command the passage of the river with so formidable a cross fire as would deter any attempt to approach with

shipping. Those works built are all faced with fascines and filled in with strong, good loam, but, as they are liable to take fire, the commissioners who have the care and direction of the works propose to rough-cast the faces of the embrasures with a strong mortar made of quicklime and sharp sand, of which there is plenty at hand. I advised them to try the experiment on part of the work as soon as possible. As those open lines are entirely defenseless on the land side, it will be very proper to erect a small redoubt on the hill, in the rear of them.

Fort Constitution is about 6 miles above Fort Montgomery, on an island near the east side of the river, and near the north end of the Highlands, which on the west and south sides is bounded by the river, and on the north and east sides by low marsh and small creeks running through it. The works here consist of four open lines or batteries, fronting the river; the two easternmost command the approach up the river very well; the next, or middle line, commands the approach from West Point upward; the westernmost battery is a straight line, constructed by Mr. Romans, at a very great expense; it has 15 embrasures, which face the river at a right angle, and can only annoy a ship in going past; the embrasures are within 12 feet of each other; the merlons on the outside are but about 2 feet in the face, and about 7 feet deep, made of square timber covered with plank, and look very neat; he also built a log house or tower on the highest cliff, near the water, mounted with 8 cannon (4-pounders) pointed out of the garret windows, and look very picturesque. Upon the whole, Mr. Romans has displayed his genius at a very great expense, and to very little public advantage. The works, in the present open condition and scattered situation, are defenseless; nor is there one good place on the island on which a redoubt may be erected that will command the whole; however, I have marked in the plan (No. 3) those heights which are most commanding; yet every work on the island is commanded by the hill on the West Point, on the opposite side of the river, within 500 yards, where there is a level piece of land of near 50 acres in extent. A redoubt on this West Point is absolutely necessary, not only for the preservation of Fort Constitution, but for its own importance on many accounts. One also is necessary at the west end of the island, to command the approach that way, and to prevent a landing at the north side of the island. An easy communication by land, as well as by water, may be made with Fort Montgomery from the West Point.

The garrison of Fort Constitution consists of two companies of Col. James Clinton's regiment and Captain Wisner's company of minutemen, in all about 160, rank and file. The garrison at Fort Montgomery consists of three companies of the same regiment, amounting to about 200 men, rank and file. The field officer of the regiment is Lieutenant-Colonel Livingston; but the command of the whole of both garrisons is still in the hands of Colonel Nicoll, who, it seems, last fall raised a

regiment of minutemen for the purpose of garrisoning Fort Constitution, which regiment is all dismissed except Captain Wisner's company of about 40 privates. Lieutenant-Colonel Livingston has very prudently avoided any dispute with Colonel Nicoll about the command, rather referring the matter to Your Excellency's determination. The whole of the troops at both these posts are miserably armed, as will appear by the return (No. 4). Lieutenant-Colonel Livingston informs me he has lately received about 40 firelocks, all in very bad order, from the committees of Dutchess County, and expects several hundred more in a few days in the same condition. I have therefore directed the blacksmith's shop at Fort Constitution to be enlarged, so that it will at the same time serve for an armory. A blacksmith's shop and armory of the like kind I have directed at Fort Montgomery, and the artificers in those branches in Clinton's regiment to be employed in them.

* * * * * * *

Considering the different directions all these matters are under, I have avoided giving any determinate orders about them, but it is highly necessary that explicit orders should soon issue.

I am Your Excellency's most humble servant,

STIRLING.

To His Excellency GENERAL WASHINGTON.

In the meantime the work on Fort Montgomery and the neighboring Fort Clinton (which had been begun, May 14, 1776), was progressing under the personal supervision of Col. James Clinton, at that time commanding in the Highlands.

It was thought that land fortifications alone would not be sufficient, and that they should be supplemented by obstructions placed in the river itself.^a Therefore, on July 16, 1776, the provincial convention^b passed the following resolution:

Resolved, unanimously, That a secret committee be appointed to devise and to carry into execution such measures as to them shall appear most effectual for obstructing the channel of the Hudson River, or annoying the enemy's ships in their passage up said river; and that this convention pledge themselves for defraying the charges incident thereto.

Resolved, That Mr. Jay, Mr. Robert Yates, Maj. C. Tappan, Mr. Robert R. Livingston, and Mr. Paulding be said committee.

There were four points at which it was sought to obstruct the navigation of the river by means, either singly or combined, of fire-ships, booms and chains, and chevaux de frise. The first point was at Fort Washington, the second at Fort Montgomery, the third at Pollopel's

^a A suggestion to that effect was made on June 13, 1775, by the committee which the provincial congress sent to the Highlands to report upon the proper places for fortifications.

^b On July 10, 1776, the title provincial congress was changed to provincial convention. The body so named was the forerunner of the State legislature.

Island, and the fourth at West Point. The fire ships and obstructions at Fort Washington were constructed in the summer of 1776; the obstructions at Fort Montgomery and Pollopel's Island in the autumn of 1776 and springs of 1777 and 1778, and those at West Point in 1778.^a

The British ministry's plan of campaign in New York for 1777 was for a combined movement to seize the Hudson and to reap the obvious benefits. The details of this plan were for Burgoyne to march from Canada to Albany, there to meet St. Leger, who was to descend the Mohawk, and Howe, who was to ascend the Hudson. The first two officers received their orders and commenced operations which resulted in the return of St. Leger to Canada and the surrender of Burgoyne, at Saratoga, October 17, 1777. Washington surmised the intentions of the British ministry, and on the 1st of July, from headquarters at Middlebrook, he wrote Putnam:

* * * It appears almost certain to me that General Howe and General Burgoyne design, if possible, to unite their attacks and form a junction of their two armies * * * and I am persuaded, if General Howe is going up the river, he will make a rapid and vigorous push to gain the highland passes.

Howe did not receive his order until it was too late for him to comply with it; in fact, when his order arrived from England, Howe had left New York City and was in Philadelphia, with Washington in his vicinity. Howe's successor in New York, Gen. Sir Henry Clinton, organized an expedition to attempt to carry out the plan of campaign, or at least to capture the works in the Highlands, which would open the Hudson, and, if not too late, tend to the relief of Burgoyne. At that time the works in the Highlands consisted of those on Constitution Island and in the neighborhood, on the east side of the Hudson, Fort Montgomery and the adjacent Fort Clinton, those at Verplanck's Point, Peekskill, and around the base of Anthony's Nose. At Fort Montgomery there was a boom and chain across the Hudson. West Point was neither garrisoned nor fortified.

The American troops in the Highlands were under the command of Gen. Israel Putnam. Sir Henry Clinton's expedition, consisting of 3,000 or 4,000 men, transported on naval

^aRuttenber's Obstructions to the Navigation of Hudson's River, p. 15.

vessels, was very skillfully conducted. His men were embarked under the ruse of a southern expedition, but when the wind and tide served the flotilla turned northward up the Hudson. A feint, which was successful in misleading Putnam, was made by landing some troops at Verplanck's Point, but the main body was landed at Stony Point on October 6 and began operations against Forts Montgomery and Clinton. These two forts were defended by about 600 American militia under Governor George Clinton and his brother, Gen. James Clinton. The hastily assembled militia could not hold out against the British assault assisted by naval vessels. Governor George Clinton escaped to the eastern bank of the river, while Gen. James Clinton led a party of fugitives to New Windsor,^a retreating through what is now the West Point Reservation. A Continental frigate, the *Montgomery*, a 10-gun sloop, and two row galleys which had been stationed above the chain and boom, were burned by the Americans to prevent capture. The frigate *Congress*, which was higher up the river, was run on the flats opposite to West Point and was also burned. The garrison at Fort Constitution was little more than a mere guard, and consequently Constitution Island was easily occupied by the British on October 7. On October 8 General Tryon landed on the east side of the river and completed the demolition of the "fortifications in the Highlands."

A column under General Vaughn advanced up the Hudson as far as Kingston. A party of British commenced the rebuilding of Fort Clinton (near Fort Montgomery), under the name of Fort Vaughn. Another party made a raid upon the Continental Village^b and destroyed a large amount of stores collected there by the Americans, and also some barracks which they had built. It is estimated that the stores destroyed and works demolished by Sir Henry Clinton on his expedition to the Highlands had cost about a quarter of a million dollars, which was a considerable sum to the Americans at that time. But Clinton's expedition was too late to help Burgoyne; learning of the latter's surrender, Clinton

^a About 6 miles north of West Point.

^b The Continental Village, which was an American rendezvous and depot, was situated four or five miles southeast of what is now Garrisons.

returned to New York City, his troops having been in the vicinity of West Point for about twenty days. It is more than probable that the topographical features of West Point had attracted the attention of some military men in Sir Henry Clinton's command. Some years afterwards, when writing relative to the Arnold affair, Sir Henry stated:

“* * * I had myself been over every part of the ground on which the forts (at West Point) stood, and had of course made myself perfectly acquainted with everything necessary for facilitating an attack of them.” Some of Sir Henry's sailors also visited West Point about this time.”

The ease with which Sir Henry Clinton had advanced through the Highlands attracted the attention of the American authorities to the necessity of additional fortifications and obstructions in the river to prevent a recurrence of the unfortunate affair. Washington especially was awake to this necessity. The following is his letter to Gen. Israel Putnam on the subject:

HEAD-QUARTERS, *2d December, 1777.*

DEAR SIR: The importance of the Hudson River in the present contest, and the necessity of defending it, are subjects which have been so frequently and fully discussed, and are so well understood, that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them. These facts at once appear, when it is considered that it runs through a whole State; that it is the only passage by which the enemy from New York, or any part of our coast, can ever hope to co-operate with an army from Canada; that the possession of it is indispensably essential to preserve the communication between the Eastern, Middle, and Southern States; and further, that upon its security, in a great measure, depend our chief supplies of flour for the subsistence of such forces as we may have occasion for, in the course of the war, either in the Eastern or Northern departments, or in the country lying high up on the west side of it. These facts are familiar to all; they are familiar to you.

I therefore request you, in the most urgent terms, to turn your most serious and active attention to this infinitely important object. Seize the present opportunity and employ your whole force and all the means in your power for erecting and completing, as far as it shall be possible,

^aIn 1778 the farm at West Point was managed by Charles Moore, a son of John Moore. On February 10, 1778, Charles Moore wrote to Governor Clinton, asking permission to occupy Beverly Robinson's house and farm, in view of the fact that his own farm at West Point was wanted by our army and his house had been requisitioned for headquarters. Moore goes on to state, alluding to Sir Henry Clinton's expedition to the Highlands in 1777: "I suffered greatly last Fall by having almost all my Stock taken from me by ye Sailors belonging to ye enemy, and this affair will, I fear, entirely ruin me."

such works and obstructions as may be necessary to defend and secure the river against any future attempts of the enemy. You will consult Governor Clinton, General Parsons, and the French engineer, Lieutenant-Colonel Radière, upon the occasion. By gaining the passage, you know the enemy have already laid waste and destroyed all the houses, mills, and towns accessible to them. Unless proper measures are taken to prevent them, they will renew their ravages in the spring, or as soon as the season will admit, and perhaps Albany, the only town in the State of any importance remaining in our hands, may undergo a like fate, and a general havoc and devastation take place.

To prevent these evils, therefore, I shall expect that you will exert every nerve and employ your whole force in future, while and whenever it is practicable, in constructing and forwarding the proper works and means of defense. The troops must not be kept out on command and acting in detachments to cover the country below, which is a consideration infinitely less important and interesting.

I am, dear sir, etc.

At the same time Washington wrote a letter to Governor Clinton about this matter. The latter in his reply recommended that “ * * * a strong fortress should be erected at West Point opposite to Fort Constitution.”

Early in January, 1778, General Putnam having requested the provincial convention of New York to appoint a committee to confer with him relative to the necessary works to be constructed in the Highlands, a committee for this purpose consisting of five members was appointed on January 8. On January 9 this committee reported that they had conferred with General Putnam, Gen. James Clinton and Lieutenant-Colonel de la Radière about the necessary works for the defense of the passes of the Highlands, but, that disagreements having arisen relative to the location of the works, the committee recommended the appointment of commissioners to view the passes of the Hudson, with the generals and other officers, and advise in the selection of the places where such fortifications should be erected. Commissioners having been appointed they proceeded to West Point and having spent three days in examining the terrain there, and in the neighborhood, they reported as follows:

WEDNESDAY, *January 14, 1776.*

Your committee, who were sent to ascertain the place for fixing a chain and erecting fortifications for obstructing the navigation of the

Hudson River, beg leave to report that they have carefully viewed the ground on which Fort Clinton^a lately stood, and its environs, and find that the ground is so intersected with long, deep hollows that the enemy might approach, without any annoyance from the garrison within the fort, to within a few yards of the walls unless a redoubt should be raised to clear the hollows next the fort, which must be built at such distance from the fort that it could not be supported from thence in case of an assault, so that the enemy might make themselves masters of the redoubt the first dark night after their landing, which would be a good work, ready to their hand, for annoying the fort and facilitating their operations against it, and, together with the eminence and broken grounds within a short distance of the fort, would render it impossible for the garrison to resist a general assault for many hours together. Another objection that appeared to the committee was the want of earth on the spot, which would reduce the engineer to the necessity of erecting his works entirely of timber, which must be brought to Pooploop's Kill in rafts, and from thence drawn up a steep and difficult road to the top of the hill. The rafts can not be made till the water is warm enough for men to work in it, by which it is probable that a fort can not be erected before the ships of the enemy will come up the river. Besides, at this place the chain must be laid across the river, so that it will receive the whole force of the ships, coming with all the strength of tide and wind on a line of three or four miles. Add to these, if the enemy should be able to possess themselves of the passes in the mountains through which they marched to the attacks of Forts Montgomery and Clinton, it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, for the militia of the country to raise the siege.

Upon viewing the country at and about West Point, the committee found that there were several places at which the enemy might land and proceed immediately to some high grounds that would command a fort erected at West Point, at the distance of six or seven hundred yards, from which they might carry on their approaches through a light gravelly soil, so that it would be impossible for the fort to stand a long siege. But to balance this disadvantage in this place, there is plenty of earth. The timber may be brought to the spot by good roads from the high grounds at the distance of one to three miles. Three hundred feet less of chain will be requisite at this place than at Fort Clinton. It will be laid across in a place where vessels going up the river most usually lose their headway. Water batteries may be built on both sides of the river for protecting the chain and annoying the ships coming up the river, which will be completely commanded from the walls of the fort. There are so many passes across the mountains to this place that it will be almost impossible for the enemy to prevent the militia from coming to the relief of the garrison.

^a Near Fort Montgomery.

From these considerations the committee are led to conclude that the most proper place to obstruct the navigation of the river is at West Point, but are at the same time fully convinced that no obstructions on the banks of the river can effectually secure the country unless a body of light troops, to consist of at least two thousand effective men, be constantly stationed in the mountains, while the navigation of the river is practicable, to obstruct the enemy in their approach by land.

JNO. SLOSS HOBART.

HENRY WISNER.

JOHN HATHORN.

ZEPH. PLATT.

POUGHKEEPSIE, *January 14, 1778.*

On January 20, 1778, in the "Valley Forge winter," General Parsons's brigade crossed to West Point and began the building of the fortifications of West Point, which has remained an American garrison post from that day to this. The weather was severe, the ground was covered with snow, proper implements and material were lacking; but despite these facts the works were commenced according to the plans of de la Radière, who worked under the supervision of Putnam. A large work was laid out on the northeast corner of the West Point plateau, where the ruins of Fort Clinton now are, and the construction of the water batteries was begun.

An officer of Parsons's brigade has left the following picture of those first military days at West Point:

We had but just made ourselves comfortable when our regiment was ordered to remove on and occupy West Point. Government viewing it absolutely necessary to have a strong post established on the river Hudson, to serve as a barrier against the enemy's cutting off communication between the Northern and Southern States. This was in the month of February, 1778. I, being at the time senior officer of the regiment present, of course led on the regiment, crossing the river on the ice; the winter proving severe the ice had formed very firm. To the young gentlemen of the military school it may be interesting to be informed of the time and circumstances of its first occupancy as a military post. On the loss of Fort Montgomery, in October, 1777, West Point was selected to be fortified. Coming on to the small plain surrounded by high mountains, we found it covered with a growth of yellow pines 10 or 15 feet high; no house or improvement on it; the snow waist high. We fell to lopping down the tops of the shrub pines and treading down the snow, spread our blankets, and lodged in that condition the first and second

nights. Had we not been hardened by two years of previous service, we should have thought it difficult to endure this. The pines not being large enough for logs for huts, we were under the necessity of making temporary covers of those scanty materials until we could draw logs from the edge of the mountain and procure the luxury of log huts; this we effected but slowly, the winter continuing severe. In two or three weeks we had erected our huts, and a French engineer by the name of La Radière arriving, the snow being removed for the site of the present main fort, the works were traced out, and parties sent out every fair day up the river to cut timber and drag it on to the ice, to be ready to float it down to the Point when the river should be clear of ice. This service was rather fatiguing to the men, but as they had a cabin to lodge in at night and provisions served out with tolerable regularity, they thought themselves comparatively happy, though their work was incessant.

Our line of huts was built just below the summit of the upper bank, that they might be partially sheltered from the northwest wind. As spring approached we set ourselves to collect the rough stone which we found on the surface of the ground to use in erecting the fortification. Two other regiments coming on, and Brigadier-General Parsons arriving, the brigade was formed and a regular routine of duty was established. The duty of brigade major devolving on me, those of us of the staff had a tolerable-sized log hut erected near the center of the plain of the Point. La Radière, the engineer, was very assiduous in planning and laying out the fort, and as soon as the frost was out we broke ground under his direction. He was a young gentleman, educated at a military school in France, and, like many other ambitious men of his nation, was attracted by the celebrity our cause had gained by the capture of the army under Burgoyne to come and act a part with us. His delicate frame was not equal to sustaining those hardships which were so familiar to the soldiery of the Revolutionary army. He caught a severe cold, which ended in consumption, of which he died about midsummer following.

On his leaving the Point he was succeeded by the well-known Thaddeus Kosciusko, a Pole, as engineer. I quartered a considerable time with him in the same log hut, and soon discovered in him an elevation of mind which gave fair promise of those high achievements to which he attained. His manners were soft and conciliating, and, at the same time, elevated. I used to take much pleasure in accompanying him with his theodolite, measuring the heights of the surrounding mountains. He was very ready in mathematics. Our family now consisted of Brigadier-General Parsons, Doctor (afterwards President) Dwight, Kosciusko, and myself, with the domestics. As spring advanced orders and injunctions were communicated to us almost every day to press forward the works. We soon began to erect Fort Putnam far up the mountain. On beginning the work we found plenty of

rattlesnakes, which, of course, we dispatched as soon as discovered. We were in daily expectation of a visit from the enemy, but they did not see fit to interrupt us.

When the weather had become mild and pleasant in April I went one day with Doctor Dwight down to view the ruins of Fort Montgomery, distant about 8 or 10 miles. There was a pond just north of the fort, where we found the British had thrown in the bodies of their own and our men who fell in the assault of the fort. The water had receded, leaving a number of the bodies entirely out of the water, while others lay covered at different depths. I saw many fine sets of teeth, bare and skeleton-like. Mournful and impressive reflections arose in my mind. There lie the youth who stood in the hour of their country's trial; they fought and fell to purchase the independence of their country; and there they lie without burial. I thought, too, of the vicissitudes to which a soldier is subject. Had the fort held out a little longer, I very probably might have lain among them.^a

General Parsons, in writing to Colonel Wadsworth, thus describes his impressions of West Point at that time:

CAMP AT WEST POINT, *Feb. 22, 1778.*

DEAR SIR: YOUR Favor of the 9th inst. I rec'd by Col. Hughes, and thank you for the Care you have taken of me. You ask me where I can be found? This is a puzzling Question; the Camp is at a Place on Hudson's River cal'd West Point, opposite where Fort Constitution once stood. The situation is past Description, surrounded with almost inaccessible Mountains, and craggy Rocks which overtop the highest Hills, at present covered with Piles of Snow, the River in our Front affords a beautiful Prospect on our Right and Left to New Windsor on one Hand and to Fort Montgomery on ye other with some little Islands interspers'd. The surrounding Prospect affords as great Variety of Hills, Mountains, Rocks, which seem to shut up every Avenue to us, and of Swamps, Meadows, deep Vallies which obstruct the Passage of the Traveller and of small beautiful Plains in a good Degree of Cultivation intermixed, as almost any Place I have seen; to a contemplative Mind which delights in a lonely Retreat from the World to view and admire the stupendous and magnificent Works of Nature, 'tis as beautiful as Sharon, but affords to a Man who loves the Society of the World a prospect nearly allied to the Shades of Death; here I am to be found at present in what Situation of Mind you will easily imagine. * * * News arrives here by Accident only. * * *

Steps were at once taken to control the navigation of the river by placing an obstruction between West Point and Constitution Island. On February 2 General Putnam sent

^a Narrative of Samuel Richards, printed in the United Service Magazine for October, 1903.

Deputy Quartermaster-General Hughes to visit the Stirling Iron Works,^a owned by Noble, Townsend & Co., and the following contract was entered into:

Articles of agreement between Noble, Townsend & Company, proprietors of the Stirling Iron Works, in the State of New York, of the one part, and Hugh Hughes, deputy quartermaster-general to the Army of the United States, of the other part, witnesseth:

That the said Noble, Townsend & Company jointly and severally engage to have made and ready to be delivered at their works to the said Hugh Hughes, deputy quartermaster-general, or to the deputy quartermaster-general of the middle department for the time being, on or before the 1st day of April next ensuing the date hereof, or as much sooner as circumstances will admit, an iron chain of the following dimensions and quality; that is, in length 500 yards, each link about 2 feet long, to be made of the best Stirling iron $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches square, or as near thereto as possible, with a swivel to every hundred feet and a clevis to every thousand feet, in the same manner as those of the former chain.

The said Noble, Townsend & Company also engage to have made and ready to be delivered at least 12 tons of anchors of the aforesaid iron, and of such size as the said Hugh Hughes or his successors in office shall direct, in writing, as soon as the completion of the chain will admit.

In consideration of which the said Hugh Hughes, in behalf of the United States, agrees to pay to the said Noble, Townsend & Company, or their order, at the rate of £440 for every ton weight of chain and anchors delivered as before mentioned, unless the general regulations on trade, provisions, etc., which are now supposed to be framed by deputies from the United States, shall be published and take effect before the expiration of four months from the date of this; in which case the price is to be only £400 per ton for the said chain and anchors. The payment, if demanded, to be made in such proportion as the work shall be ready to be delivered, which shall be determined in ten days after requisition made by a number of competent judges, not less than three nor more than five, unconcerned with the proprietors, or the works, and if condemned, to be completed at the expense of the said company,

^aThe Stirling Iron Works are still in operation (1903). They are situated at Stirlington, N. Y., which is about 25 miles southwest from West Point. Remains of the Revolutionary furnace are still standing.

Lossing, in his *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution*, in a note on page 706, Volume I, states in "Documentary evidence" as follows, which differs somewhat from the above account of the manner of obtaining the work done: "Col. Timothy Pickering (Quartermaster-General), accompanied by Captain Machin, arrived at the house of Mr. Townsend late on a Saturday night, in March of that year, to encourage him to make the chain. Townsend readily agreed to construct it, and in a violent snowstorm, amid the darkness of the night, the parties set out for the Stirling Iron Works. At daylight on Sunday morning the forges were in operation; New England teamsters carried the links as fast as they were finished to West Point, a distance of about 25 miles; and in a space of six weeks the whole chain was completed."

who are also to repair, as aforesaid, all failures of their work, whenever happening, whether at the works or river, or in extending it across.

The said Hugh Hughes also engages to procure of the governor of this State for the said Noble, Townsend & Company an exemption for nine months from the date hereof, from military duty, for 60 artificers that are steadily employed at the said chain and anchors till completed. Agreeable to the said exemption, the said company complying with the terms thereof. Providing also that the said company give the said Hugh Hughes, or his successors in office, the refusal, by letter, of all the bar iron, anchors, etc., made at the said works in the said term of nine months, at the current price, unless what is necessary to exchange for clothing and other articles for the use of the works.

It is also agreed by the said parties that if the teams of the said company shall transport the said chain or anchors or any part thereof to any assigned post, they shall receive for such services the same pay as shall be given by the United States for the like; the teams of the company being exempted from impress by any of the Quartermaster-General's deputies during the space of nine months.

Lastly, the said company engages to use their utmost endeavors to keep seven fires at forging and ten at welding, if assisted with such hands as are necessary and can be spared from the army; in case of their not being able to procure others, the said company making deduction for their labor.

In witness whereof, the parties have interchangeably subscribed their names this 2d day of February, 1778, and in the second year of American independence.

PETER TOWNSEND,
In behalf of Noble & Company.
HUGH HUGHES,
In behalf of United States.

In presence of—
P. TILLINGHAST.

Governor Clinton, who was greatly interested in the obstruction of the navigation of the Hudson, directed Captain Machin, who had been engaged in the obstructions at Pollopel's Island, to take charge of placing the chain at West Point. The forges used by Captain Machin were at New Windsor, and there the links of the chain were welded together and fastened to the logs which were to bear the chain in the stream. The chain^a was stretched across the river on April 30, 1778.

^aIt has been stated by Ruttenger (Obstructions to the Navigation of Hudson's River), and by Boynton (History of West Point), that in addition to the great chain across the river at West Point there was a boom, consisting of a system of parallel logs 18 feet in length connected with each

The chain was taken up each winter on account of its liability to injury, arising from the movements of the heavy floes of ice which form each year in the Hudson. The following references to the chain are found in Heath's Memoirs:

November 14, 1780.—The great chain, which was laid across the Hudson at West Point, was taken up for the winter. It was done under the direction of Colonel Govion, Captain Buchanan, and Captain Nevers (Niven), with a strong detachment of the garrison, and with skill and dexterity. This chain was as long as the width of the river between West Point and Constitution Island, where it was fixed to great blocks on each side, and under the fire of batteries on both sides of the river.^a The links of this chain were probably 12 inches wide, and 18 inches long; the iron about 2 inches square. This heavy chain was buoyed up by very large logs, of perhaps 16 or more feet long, a little pointed at the ends, to lessen their opposition to the force of the water on flood and ebb.

The logs were placed at short distances from each other, the chain carried over them, and made fast to each by staples, to prevent their shifting; and there were a number of anchors dropped at distances with cables made fast to the chain, to give it a greater stability. The short bend of the river at this place was much in favor of the chain's proving effectual; for a vessel coming up the river with the fairest wind and strongest way must lose them on changing her course to turn the Point; and before she could get under any considerable way again, even if the wind was fair, she would be on the chain, and at the same time under a heavy shower of shot and shell.

April 10, 1781.—The great chain was hauled from off the beach near the Red House at West Point, and towed down to the blocks, in order to its being laid across the river. About 280 men were ordered on this duty.

April 11.—The chain was properly fixed with great dexterity, and fortunately without any accident.

other by a chain at each end, which was placed in front of the chain. A bill was submitted for materials furnished for this boom, and in 1855 two logs chained together, which might have formed part of such an obstruction, were found in the Hudson River near West Point. However, neither Heath nor Thacher, who describe the chain more or less at length, say anything about the boom, nor has the writer been able to find any indication of it on maps of the Hudson at West Point, made during the Revolution, although the chain is represented thereon. [Kosciuszko writes on December 28, 1778, that the chain is safe and can easily be taken up when the cold abates; and that the boom lies where it was and will be taken up. This letter, a copy of which is in the McDougall MSS., owned by the Library of the U. S. Military Academy, proves at least that the chain and the boom were not identical.—EDITOR.]

^a "Chain Battery walk" is so called on account of the water battery on the West Point shore which flanked the chain. This walk, as it passes in rear of the second small cove west of Gee's Point, has as a revetment a stone wall a few feet in height, which wall is possibly the remains of the original chain battery which stood in about this place, and directly in front of which the West Point end of the chain was fastened. On Constitution Island the other end of the chain was fastened near where at present there is a small boathouse and landing place. The distance between these points is about 500 yards.

The main work of fortifying West Point did not progress as rapidly as did the obstructing of the river. On February 18, 1778, General Parsons reported—

that almost every obstacle within the circle of possibility has happened to retard their progress. Preparations for completing them in April are now in a state of forwardness, unless something unforeseen as yet should prevent.

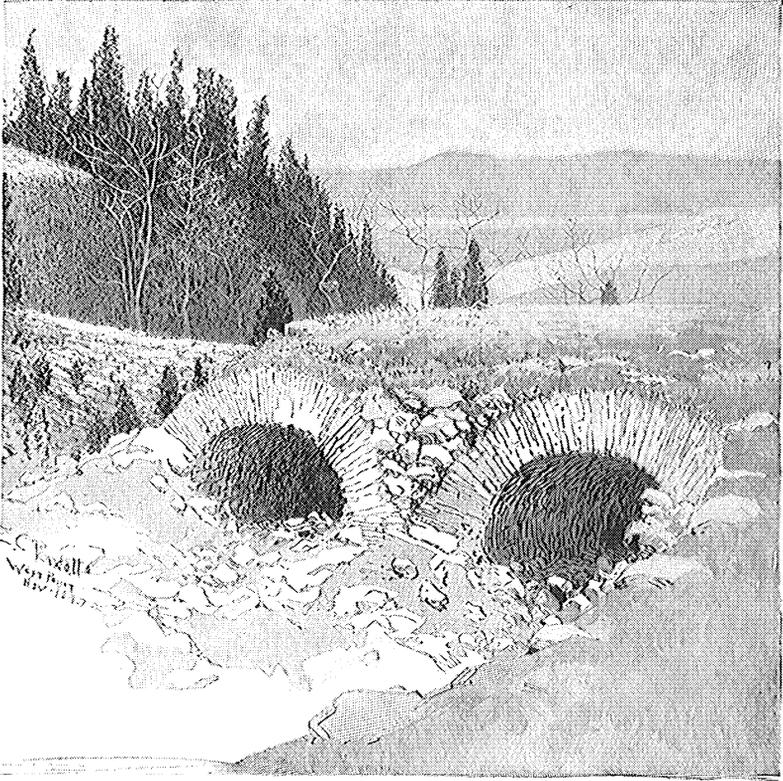
Again, from the "Camp at West Point, March 7, 1778," General Parsons communicated to Washington the perplexities arising from the acts of Congress relative to the direction of the works, and declared:

I most ardently wish to aid Governor Clinton, or any other gentleman appointed to superintend the work. At present no person has the direction. I have kept the troops at work because I found them here when I took the command. The weather has been such, since the 15th of February, as has greatly retarded the works; about seven days of the time has been such that we could do nothing. Lieutenant-Colonel Radière, finding it impossible to complete the fort and other defenses intended at this point in such a manner as to render them effectual early in the spring, and not choosing to hazard his reputation on works erected on a different scale, calculated for a short duration only, has desired to wait on Your Excellency and Congress, which I have granted him.

On the 16th of March General Parsons reported:

If the chain is completed, we shall be ready to stretch it over the river next week. I hope to have two sides and one bastion of the fort in some state of defense in about a fortnight; the other sides need very little to secure them. We have the works going on as fast as could be expected from our small number of men and total want of money and materials provided. I have several times advanced my last shilling toward purchasing materials etc., and I believe this is the case with almost every officer here.

The absence of General Putnam still continued, and the people of the province, regarding the works as under his command, and greatly incensed at the course he had pursued as commander in the Highlands, refused to render the necessary assistance while he remained, even nominally, at the head of the department; indeed, the current of public opinion ran so strongly against him that on the 16th of March Washington ordered Major-General McDougall to repair to



OLD FORT PUTNAM, THE KEY TO THE DEFENSES AT WEST POINT.

the Highlands and assume the chief command there, comprehending "the forts among the other objects of his trust." De la Radière had left as early as the 11th of March, and, visiting Congress, was relieved from duty by the appointment of Kosciuszko as the engineer, who arrived at the works on the 26th of March. General McDougall arrived on the 28th of the same month and assumed the command.

Col. Rufus Putnam had early in the war been appointed an engineer with the rank of colonel, which position he subsequently resigned to take the command of a Massachusetts regiment, and with it he shared the triumph of Gates over Burgoyne. Early in March he was ordered with his regiment to repair to West Point, at which post he arrived at the same time with General McDougall. He had been a colaborer with Kosciuszko under General Gates at the north, and his practical skill and experience rendered him a valuable assistant to the engineer.

Operations were at once resumed and pushed forward with great vigor. "As the fort then in progress was designed to annoy the enemy's shipping, should they attempt to turn the point and force the boom a little higher up, no provision existed against a land attack in its rear. A chain of forts and redoubts was therefore laid out on the high ground bordering the plain" (Forts Wyllys, Webb, and Putnam).^a

Colonel Putnam joined the army at Peekskill in the following June.

On the 11th of April, 1778, General McDougall issued to General Parsons the following

INSTRUCTIONS.

The hill which Colonel Putnam is fortifying is the most commanding and important of any that we can now attend to. Although it is secure in the rear from escalade, yet as it is practicable to annoy the garrison from Snook Hill, the parapet in the rear should be made cannon proof

^aFort Putnam was named for Col. Rufus Putnam, whose regiment, the Fifth Massachusetts, commenced it and did much toward putting it in shape.

Redoubt Webb, which stood where the present observatory is, was named for Col. Samuel B. Webb, whose regiment built it. This regiment was organized in Connecticut and was one of the "Sixteen additional Continental Regiments" raised in 1777, although during the time of the building of the redoubt Colonel Webb was a prisoner in the hands of the enemy.

Redoubt Wyllys, the remains of which are not far from the eastern abutment of the reservoir, was constructed by the third regiment of the Connecticut Line, which was commanded by Col. Samuel Wyllys, after whom the work was named.

against such as may be fired from Snook Hill. The parapet should be raised as much as possible with fascines and earth to prevent the ill consequence of splinters from the rocks. The easternmost face of this work must be so constructed as to command the plain on which Colonel Putnam's regiment is now encamped, and annoy the enemy if he should force the works now erecting by Colonel Meigs's and Colonel Wyllys's regiments, as well as to command the northernmost and highest part of the ground last mentioned, which commands the plain in the rear of the principal works at West Point. A temporary magazine should be built without delay on Colonel Putnam's hill, and have ten days' provision of salt meat and biscuit for his regiment deposited on the hill as soon as it arrives at West Point. This store must not be broken in upon on any pretense, till the enemy appears in force and puts it out of Colonel Putnam's power to procure supplies from West Point.

The next principal ground to be occupied for the safety of the post is the rising ground^a to the northward of the fort near the northwest corner of the Long Barrack. It will be necessary to erect a redoubt on this ground capable of containing 120 men. The west, north, and east faces should be proof against battering cannon and the south slightly palisaded, to guard against surprise. The westernmost face, flanked by the fire of the fort, must be ditched and to mount two pieces of cannon. The north face strongly abatised. The parapet of the west face should be raised so high, if practicable, as to cover the garrison from the fire that may be made against it from the ground on which Colonel Putnam is now encamped. This redoubt is so important that it must be finished without delay. The chain to be fixed on the west side, in or near the Gap of the Snook, commanded by the fire from the east curtain of the work. The water batteries now erected on the point to be completed as soon as possible and two cannon placed in each, with the necessary shot and stores placed near them. If any of the cannon to be placed there require to be proved, it must be done before they are brought into the batteries. Such provisions as are on the plain to be removed into the fort on the enemy's first appearing in force on the river and no quantity left out at any time. Two small temporary magazines for ammunition to be made in the fort for the present to guard against rain; one also to be made for that of the cannon in the batteries on the point.

It must be left to the discretion of the commanding officer at West Point, all circumstances considered, when to fire the alarm. In case of this event taking place in the present state of the works, the security of the fort depends so much on the heights in the rear, on which the greatest force should be placed, that the commanding officer at West Point should take his quarters on the hill Colonel Putnam is now fortifying. Colonel Meigs's regiment, now at Robinson's farm, on hearing the alarm, will repair to West Point by the safest and surest

^a Trophy Point, where Battery Sherburne was subsequently erected.

passage. Six companies of his and Colonel Wyllis's regiment will take post in the works they are respectively erecting. The other two companies, with the invalids of the post and artificers, are to garrison the fort under the orders of Major Grosvenor. Colonel Webb's regiment is to take post in the works they are now making, and Colonel Sherburne's to defend the redoubt to be erected near the northwest corner of the Long Barrack. Colonel Putnam's to take post on the hill which they are now fortifying, and not to be ordered from thence, but such detachments as he or the commanding officer at the post may judge necessary to secure the avenues to his works. Should the enemy force the regiments of Colonels Wyllis, Meigs, and Webb from their works, it will be most advancive of the defense of the hill, which commands the fort, that those corps retire to defend to the last extremity the avenues leading to Colonel Putnam's redoubt, and the ground on which he is now encamped, unless some maneuver of the enemy should induce the commanding officer of the post to detach some of those corps for the security of Putnam's redoubt. If the ground on which the enemy intend to land, or the route on which he advances to our works, render it necessary to detach any corps to oppose him it must be taken from the works erecting by Colonel Wyllis's, Meigs's or Colonel Webb's regiments, and not from the fort or Putnam's redoubt, as in case of misfortune, the enemy's possessing the works first mentioned, will not be so fatal to the post as his getting possession of the fort, or Putnam's redoubt.

P. S. The west face of the redoubt to be built near the Long Barrack, to be 18 feet (high), the north and east faces 14 feet; the stones to be kept as much as possible from the upper part of the parapet of the works.

Two days after the foregoing instructions were issued (13th) General McDougall wrote that—

the fort was so nearly inclosed as to resist a sudden attack of the enemy, but the heights near it were such that the fort would not be tenable if the enemy should possess them. For this reason we are obliged to make some works on them. Mr. Kosciuszko is esteemed by those who have attended the works at West Point to have more practice than Colonel Radière, and his manner of treating the people is more acceptable than that of the latter, which induced General Parsons and Governor Clinton to desire that the former may be continued at West Point.

On the 18th of April Col. Robert Troup wrote from Fishkill to General Gates, president of the board of war, that the works at West Point were in a great state of forwardness; that Kosciuszko was very much esteemed as an able engineer, and that the latter had made many alterations in the works, which were universally approved.

"The chain," he added, "will be put across the river this week, and if the enemy let us alone two weeks longer, we shall have reason to rejoice at their moving this way."^a

In the meantime Kosciuszko^b labored assiduously to place West Point in a defensible condition. When General Gates was given command of the northern department, with headquarters at Fishkill and at the Robinson House, General McDougall was ordered on April 22, 1778, to join the army at Valley Forge, and the command of West Point devolved on General Parsons.^c In June, 1778, the principal work on the northeast corner of the plateau was sufficiently advanced to receive its garrison and its name. At first this work was called Fort Arnold, but after the defection of Benedict Arnold the work was called Fort Clinton, although previous to that time it was occasionally called by the latter name.

Colonel Malcolm, who commanded at West Point in August, 1778, evidently placed more reliance in his men than he did in the works, he having written this letter to Colonel Lamb:

FORT ARNOLD, *August 2, 1778.*

DR. SIR: * * * On the arrival of the General I was sent to this command, which I found in just as bad order as even your imagination can conceive. Will you believe that there was not one pound of meat in the garrison of any kind, and but two hundred barrels of flour, altho' General Glover told me everything was complete. If the enemy do come, I shall fight them in the field, which is my only chance. The works are not worth a farthing, but I flatter myself they will never more pass Dobbs Ferry. * * *

W. MALCOLM.

^a Boynton's History of West Point.

^b There yet may be seen on the bluff between Memorial Hall and the river a winding path near which there is a spring. This part of the grounds is still called "Kosciuszko's Garden." Thacher records a visit to West Point which he made on July 28, 1778, and states: "Here I had the pleasure of being introduced to Col. Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a gentleman of distinction, from Poland. Having recently arrived in our country, he is employed in the engineer department, with the rank of colonel. He has amused himself while stationed at this point in laying out a curious garden in a deep valley, abounding more in rocks than soil. I was gratified in viewing his curious water fountain, with spouting jets and cascades."

^c The commanding officers at West Point during the Revolution were shifted with such rapidity that it is with difficulty that the dates of their respective régimes can be traced. Some of them commanded the post more than once.

The principal commanding officers of West Point of whom we have record, were: General Parsons, General McDougall, General Paterson, General Heath, Colonel Lamb, Colonel Malcolm, Colonel Wade, General Arnold, General St. Clair, General Greene, and General Knox. There were several others; the temporary absence of the ranking officer sometimes gave a subordinate an opportunity to command, but the duration of such periods have not, as a rule, been recorded; for instance, Lieut. Col. Aaron Burr (of Malcolm's regiment) commanded the post of West Point during a part of the winter of 1778-79.—(*Parson's Life and Times of Aaron Burr*, pp. 109-110.)

This same officer was evidently affected by lonesomeness, as on August 3, in writing to Parsons, he stated:

* * * Here I am holding committee among spades and shovels. Why was I banished? However, I begin to be reconciled. I must be so, especially as you are not moving towards York. If you do, don't be surprised to see me parade among you. We are driving on downwards. The more we do, the more we find we have to do. * * * Lend me news and newspapers, anything to keep us alive; this is actually t'other end of the world. * * *

In the early fall of 1778, while on an inspecting tour in the Highlands, Washington visited West Point, and wrote the following letter from Fort Arnold (Clinton) to General Dupontail, the chief engineer:

FORT CLINTON,^a *West Point, September 19, 1778.*

SIR: I have perused the memorial which you delivered relative to the defense of the North River^b at this place, and upon a view of it highly approve what you have offered upon the subject. Colonel Kosciusko, who was charged by Congress with the direction of the forts and batteries, has already made such progress in the constructing of them as would render any alteration of them in the general plan a work of too much time, and the favorable testimony which you have given of Colonel Kosciusko's abilities prevents any uneasiness on this head.

An additional regiment, which was from Massachusetts, was assigned to West Point in November, 1778.^c

In case of an attack the authorities counted on the garrison at West Point being assisted by the neighboring militia, to assemble which and to give a general alarm there was quite a good system of giving signals by means of beacon fires, flags, cannon, and express riders connecting Sandy Hook with Fishkill and both of these places with points in New Jersey and Connecticut. One of the signal stations was on top of Storm King.^d

^a At another time Washington designates this work Fort Arnold.

^b Formerly the Hudson was at times called the North River, in contradistinction to the Delaware River, which was called the South River.

^c During this year some of the labor on the works at West Point was performed by captured loyalists working without pay. On November 20, 1778, Malcolm reported to Governor Clinton that he had about two dozen Tories at work, but that he never kept any one of them for a longer period than three months.

^d The Revolutionary authorities had a system of signal stations which connected the frontier posts in West Chester with Beacon Hill (Fishkill), and from thence diverged along the hills east into Connecticut and south and west through New Jersey as far as Sandy Hook. In the daytime signals were made by flags and alarm cannon, and at night fires were used in place of flags; express riders were also employed. This system was designed to apprise distant posts of the movements of the enemy and to summon the militia to arms. The hill immediately north of Crow Nest, which at present is called Storm King, was known as Butler Hill in Revolutionary days.

On March 18, 1779, Governor Clinton issued the following:

General Orders.—The Signal of Alarm being fixed by the Honorable Major General McDougall, on the 19th Feb. last, are as follows, viz:

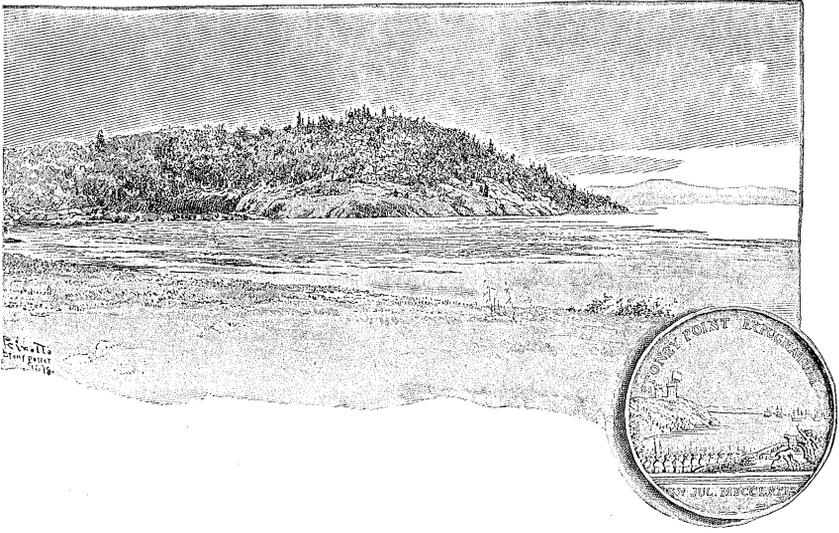
When Five Topsail vessels appear coming up of the Enemy three Cannon will be fired at Kings Ferry (Stony Point), five Minutes after each other; and if ten Vessels appear, four Cannon will be fired at the same Distance of Time, and in this Manner if a greater number of Ships appear, that is one gun for every five that shall exceed that number.

These Signals will be answered by the firing of the heaviest Cannon at West Point in the same Manner.

It is his Excellency the Governor's Orders that the same be Communicated to the Officers of the respective Regiments of Militia of the Counties of Dutchess, Ulster and Orange, who are strictly charged to see their men are properly provided with arms and ammunition and held in the most perfect Readiness; and that upon the alarm being given, Colonel Commandant Swartwout's Brigade will immediately march to Fishkill, and there wait further Orders, and the Regiments of Ulster and Orange (the Western Frontier Companies who are to attend to the Protection of the Frontier Settlements excepted), to the Post at West Point. * * *

Eleven miles below West Point are located Stony Point and Verplanck's Point, which in the Revolutionary war were not only important as outposts of the system of posts of which West Point was the center, but also because they were placed at each end of King's Ferry, which was of great importance as a part of the line of communication between New England and the South.

In May, 1779, the Americans had a few men posted at Stony Point and a few at Verplanck's Point. On May 31 Sir Henry Clinton with a formidable force took Stony Point, and on the next day occupied Verplanck's Point. He left a garrison of over 500 at Stony Point and a smaller garrison at Verplanck's Point. The greater portion of the Army was concentrated in the highlands, and the garrison at West Point was again augmented. About this time General McDougall was again given command of West Point, which was garrisoned by Larned's, Patterson's, and the Carolina brigades. General Heath commanded the troops stationed across the Hudson from West Point; one brigade was on Constitution Island, one on the road to Fishkill, and another near the "Robinson house." General Putnam was near Haverstraw with the main body of the Army.



VIEW OF STONY POINT AND MEDAL GRANTED BY CONGRESS TO GENERAL WAYNE.

Washington had organized a short time previously a corps of light infantry, consisting of four regiments, each of which contained about 340 officers and men, selected from about all of the organizations in and around West Point.

The command of this corps was given to Wayne, who was directed by Washington to capture Stony Point. Preparatory to undertaking this venture, Wayne's command was assembled and encamped a few miles south of West Point, at a place called Sandy Beach, which was located between Fort Montgomery and the present town of Highland Falls.

On July 15 Wayne paraded his troops for a careful inspection, but after the completion of which, instead of dismissing them to their quarters, he wheeled them into column and took up his march to Stony Point, which at midnight he successfully assaulted with the bayonet.^a This movement was the most successful and brilliant exploit of the Revolution.^b Wayne captured about 27 officers and 416 enlisted men, besides valuable munitions of war. After destroying the works he withdrew. The British shortly afterwards again garrisoned Stony Point, but abandoned the place after a short occupancy.

While Wayne's movement was taking place Washington, ever jealous of West Point, had so disposed the remainder of his command as to most securely guard that post in case of Wayne's defeat, or in case of any strong combination of the enemy against West Point, as it was very much feared at the time by our leaders that the British would make a desperate attempt to capture the place, which the Americans regarded as their stronghold.

Baron Steuben, writing from West Point on July 27, 1779, said:

* * * Whatever means they employ, I am positive their operations are directed exclusively to getting possession of this post and of the river as far as Albany. If this is not their plan, they have not got one which is worth the expense of the campaign. On their success depends the fate of

^a Immediately after the fall of Stony Point, Wayne sent the following to Washington:

"STONY POINT, 16th July, 1779—2 o'clock a. m.

"DEAR GENL: The fort & Garrison with Colo. Johnston are ours. Our Officers and men behaved like men who are determined to be free.

"Yours most sincerely,

"ANT'Y WAYNE."

^b See the storming of Stony Point, Johnston.

America. The consequence is, therefore, that there is nothing of greater importance to us than to avert this blow. Let them burn whatever they have not burned already, and this campaign will add to their shame but not to their success. Were West Point strongly fortified, supplied with sufficient artillery, ammunition, and provisions, and a garrison of 2,000 men, we ought not to be induced to take our forces more than a day's march from it. To have the means of relieving it, I go further and say that our army should be destroyed or taken before we allow them to commence an attack on West Point. * * * Let us defend the North River and hold West Point, and the end of our campaign will be glorious. * * *

Washington, knowing the weakness of his army and the strength afforded to it by the terrain around West Point, refused to allow himself to be drawn by Sir Henry Clinton into the open country, and the latter, aware of the difficulties attending a campaign in the Highlands, refused to attack Washington at bay at West Point.

On September 9, 1779, Clinton, writing to General Haldiman, who was in Canada, said:

* * * In the first place I opened the campaign three weeks before Washington expected, or was prepared for it. I seized his short communication with the Eastern Provinces by King' Ferry. I did suppose he must either march directly to recover it, risking a general action under unfavorable terms, or put himself immediately behind the mountains to save Fort Defiance, &c., at West Point. He had reason to be jealous of that Post, tho' without a fleet and a very superior army it is not attackable, and, for other motives, I should never form an idea of attacking it. He threw himself behind the mountains, where he was much distressed, as he was still obliged to live from his magazines at Trenton and Easton (Penn.). The country furnished little grass for cavalry or carriage horses, and the effects of a severe winter upon the roads were unrepaired. * * *

On July 28, 1779, Washington moved his headquarters to West Point and remained there until November 28 of the same year. He occupied "Moore's house," from whence a number of his orders were issued. It is not known whether or not he occupied any other house at West Point during this time.

During the summer of 1779 Fort Putnam, Redoubts Webb and Wyllys, and some outlying works were completed," to

"In addition to the forts and redoubts at West Point, there were some smaller works and block houses placed on commanding points on the neighboring hills.

accomplish which the roster for fatigue duty sometimes numbered 2,500 men per day.

In the autumn of 1779 the distribution of the American troops in and around West Point is shown by General Heath's entry in his memoirs, under the date of September 9, 1779, in which he states:

The American Army remained in its former position—the Virginia line near Ramapough, on the right; the light infantry, near Fort Montgomery; the Maryland line, on the left of the light infantry; Pennsylvania line and two brigades of Massachusetts, at West Point; North Carolina brigade, at Constitution Island; the Connecticut line, on the east side of the Hudson, between Nelson's and Robinson's; Nixon's brigade, at the gorge of the mountains, above the Continental Village; Glover's brigade, Moylan's, Sheldon's and Armand's horse at Lower Salem. On the west side of the Hudson, besides Fort Clinton at West Point and Fort Putnam on the height back of it, there were seven or eight redoubts, built and building. On the east side of the river, the north and middle redoubts, and a redoubt at the gorge of the mountain.

This disposition was one well calculated for the defense of West Point, as troops from the outlying posts could be marched there in a very short space of time.

On September 15 the Count de la Luzerne, recently appointed minister from France, visited Washington at West Point.

In the latter part of November the troops in the highlands were distributed to their stations for the winter. The Massachusetts line was left to garrison West Point and the adjacent highlands. The command of all posts and troops on the Hudson was given to General Heath. This officer, under the date November 25, 1779, made the following entry in his diary:

25th.—The troops were moving to their different places of cantonment; many of the soldiers (as fine men as ever stood in shoes) were marched barefooted over the hard-frozen ground, and with an astonishing patience. Remember these things, ye Americans, in future times!

On January 3, 1780, Heath recorded:

The snow had got to be about four feet deep on a level, and the troops were driven to great difficulties in keeping open the communications to the posts—obtaining provisions, fuel, forage, etc., and so intense and steady was the weather that for more than twenty days there could

not be discovered the least sign of the remission of the snow in any places the most open to the influences of the sun. The Hudson soon becoming passable on the ice, the troops were comfortably supplied with provisions; but many were in extreme want of cloathing.

During this winter the south barracks in Fort Arnold was burned, some of the stores were lost, and the north redoubt was twice in flames.

In April, 1780, Heath was succeeded in command by General Howe. Washington, thinking that the British intended a move against West Point, strengthened the garrison and sent both McDougall and Baron Steuben to that post. Shortly afterwards the British did entertain plans for the reduction of West Point, but not of the character anticipated by Washington.

Maj. Gen. Baron Steuben, Inspector-General, who had seen seven campaigns in the service of Frederick the Great, labored at West Point from about the middle of June until about the 1st of August, 1780, in disciplining and instructing the troops and in forming a corps of light infantry. There were in Howe's command about 3,000 old soldiers, two-thirds of whom and all of the recruits were drilled each day. The recruits were excused from guard and fatigue duty in order that no time should be lost in making them proficient in their drill. The men were exercised twice each day, one hour and a half at reveille and one hour and a half near retreat. At these exercises the commanding officers of regiments had to attend and were answerable for the attendance of the officers of their respective regiments, and on no account were the recruits allowed to be exercised by other than commissioned officers. Steuben at this time was busy also in forming a corps of light infantry from men selected from the regiments in and around West Point. On July 28 he wrote to Washington:

I have made the necessary arrangements for the light infantry and shall be happy if they meet Your Excellency's approbation. The companies are formed agreeably to Your Excellency's orders. I have myself chosen the non-commissioned officers and soldiers, and even the arms, and I dare flatter myself that the corps will be the admiration of our allies as much as the terror of our enemies. There is hardly a man

I *Benedict Arnold Major General*
do acknowledge the UNITED STATES of AME-
RICA to be Free, Independent and Sovereign States, and
declare that the people thereof owe no allegiance or obe-
dience to George the Third, King of Great-Britain; and I
renounce, refuse and abjure any allegiance or obedience to
him; and I do *Swear* that I will, to the ut-
most of my power, support, maintain and defend the said
United States against the said King George the Third, his
heirs and successors, and his or their abettors, assistants and
adherents, and will serve the said United States in the office of
Major General which I now hold, with
fidelity, according to the best of my skill and understanding.

sworn before me this B Arnold
30th May 1778 - at the
Artillery Park Valley Forge Henry B Elliott

FACSIMILE OF THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE UNITED STATES, SIGNED BY BENEDICT
ARNOLD AT VALLEY FORGE, 1778.

under 20 or above 30 years of age; they are all robust and well made, and have indeed a military appearance. * * * Nearly two-thirds of every company will be old soldiers.

Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold was assigned to the command of West Point and its dependencies in August, 1780. Arnold had been assigned to the command at Philadelphia after distinguished service in the American cause, notably in his expedition against Quebec in 1775, and in the operations resulting in the surrender of Burgoyne, in both of which campaigns he had been wounded.

While at Philadelphia, Arnold's conduct was far from satisfactory. His open preference for the British faction, his financial methods and embarrassments, caused by living far beyond his means, and his administration generally, not only gave umbrage to the Americans but also gave grounds for serious charges, upon which he was brought to trial and sentenced to be reprimanded. Arnold was also smarting under the fact that several of his juniors had been promoted over his head. Washington had held a high opinion of Arnold's military capacity, and the reprimand is curious as complying with the letter of the sentence and at the same time expressing confidence in the offender. When Arnold, with his own ends in view, sought the command at West Point, Washington offered him the command of the left wing of the army then in the field. Arnold pleaded to be given the West Point command, stating that the wound he had received at Saratoga prevented active field duty. His preference was gratified; he arrived at his new post on August 5, and made his headquarters in the Robinson House.

So far Arnold had allayed suspicion as to his object in seeking this post, but the fact was that he had been in secret correspondence with the British since April, 1779, nearly a year and a half previous to the time of his betrayal of West Point.^a It is not known how much assistance he had given to the enemy during these eighteen months. He desired

^aIn September, 1779, Lord Germain wrote to Sir Henry Clinton: "Next to the destruction of Washington's Army, the gaining over officers of influence and reputation among the troops would be the speediest means of subduing the rebellion and restoring the tranquillity of America. Your commission authorizes you to avail yourself of such opportunities, and there can be no doubt that the expense will be cheerfully submitted to."

rank in the British service and he desired and needed money. Neither of these rewards could he claim to any great degree if he simply deserted the American cause, but if in addition he could place the British in possession of the most important American post, he could obtain what his ambition demanded. Therefore, Arnold, who was essentially a field soldier, declined an important command in the field which promised much, and sought the command of West Point, which he intended to use as a salable commodity. Doubtless he had lost faith in the ultimate success of the Americans and believed that he was deserting a hopeless cause.

Arnold was only a few weeks at West Point, but he found time to practice some of the methods which had characterized his régime in Philadelphia. Alexander Hamilton, writing to Laurens, stated:

* * * Added to the scene of knavery and prostitution during his (Arnold's) command in Philadelphia, which the late seizure of his papers has unfolded, the history of his command at West Point is a history of little as well as great villainies. He practiced every dirty art of speculation, and even stooped to connections with the sutlers of the garrison to defraud the public."^a

Shortly after arriving at West Point, Arnold sought to come to terms with the British about the sale of the post. If he had succeeded in surrendering West Point the result would have been most disastrous to the American cause. America, as well as Great Britain, was tired of the war, and a large number of our people were willing to return to the old conditions. Governor Reed, of Pennsylvania, said in August, 1780:

"On August 13, 1780, Major Bauman of the Artillery, on duty at West Point, wrote a curious letter to Hamilton in which Bauman laments the existing order of things at West Point, he stated " * * * The troops have and still suffer from those and more like cases, they have been cheated in weights, in measure, and in their scanty allowance of fatigue rum. * * * * * There is not in all this garrison a proper guard house for the Convenience of Soldiers, nor for the Security of the Criminals, no powder magazine, nor a store for the reception and reserve of the Empliments of War. In short, the whole appears at present under the care of ingoverable and undisciplined Militia, like a wild Tatars Camp, instead of that shining fortification all America thinks not only an insurmountable Barrier against the Excursion of its Enemy, but likewise, an easy Defence in case of an unforeseen Disaster of its Army. * * * And let me once more in confidence assure you that I suffer incessant pain, not from any apprehensive view of fear, but from the present state this garrison is in. To rectify defects *my dear sir* when Roused to Arms, can never be attainable. * * * and as there is still room left on this sheet for another Paragraph, of still greater consequences intimately connected with the rest; I shall finish and prognosticate; that should ever capriciousness be on one side of the Contrast, may proove fatal to this Post. For here is an officer by the appellation of Commandant of the Garrison, and a major-general in the field as it were, who issues publick orders for the internal police of this Garrison. * * *"—*Manuscript in Library of State Department.*

“It is obvious that the bulk of the people are weary of the war.” The Treasury was exhausted. The ill-paid troops were inadequately clothed and often hungry; more than one regiment had mutinied. “There never has been a stage of the war,” said Washington, “in which dissatisfaction has been so general and so alarming.”

Lieutenant-General Robertson, of the British Army, stationed in New York, on September 21 wrote to the ministry: “So I will only say in general that since the year 1777 I have not seen so fair a prospect for the return of the revolted provinces to their duty.”

The defeat of Gates at Camden on August 16, 1780, had had a disheartening effect. It would have been most unfortunate for us if our French allies had witnessed our strongest fortress turned over to the British by a major-general, who gave as one of his reasons his dislike for the alliance with the French.

The immediate material benefits to be obtained by the British from the surrender of West Point were also very great. It was practically the only stronghold of magnitude possessed by the Americans; three years of labor and \$3,000,000 had been expended in fortifying it; the garrison contained a considerable fraction of the army; its surrender would have unlocked for the British the highway to Canada, and would have allowed them to separate the eastern colonies from the others. The morale of the American leaders would have been shaken, and their hopes dispelled; they had trusted in West Point, no matter what accidents might befall them in the field. The ordnance and other supplies contained at West Point if lost could probably not have been replaced by the Americans. The loss of this post would have paralyzed any movement which Washington's army might have been engaged upon at the time. It was thought that Washington contemplated an early movement on New York, in which the French were to assist him, and it was Sir Henry Clinton's plan to counteract this by receiving the surrender of West Point. Clinton's despatch of October 11, 1780, stated:

My idea of putting into execution this concerted plan with General Arnold with most efficacy, was to have deferred it till Mr. Washington,

cooperating with the French, moved upon this place [New York] to invest it, and that the rebel magazines should have been collected and formed in their several depots, particularly that at West Point. General Arnold surrendering himself, the forts and garrisons at this instant would have given every advantage which could have been desired. Mr. Washington must have instantly retired from King's bridge and the French troops upon Long Island would have been consequently left unsupported, and probably would have fallen into our hands. The consequent advantage of so great an event I need not explain.

Much, if not all, of Arnold's correspondence with the British was carried on with Maj. John André,^a adjutant-general of the British army in America, the former writing under the pseudonym of "Gustavus," and the latter under that of "John Anderson." A number of letters passed between them—how many is not known. An extract from this correspondence is the following letter from Arnold to André:

AUGUST 30, 1780.

SIR: On the 24th instant I received a note from you without date, in answer to mine of the 7th of July; also a letter from your house of the 24th July in answer to mine of the 15th, with a note from Mr. B—— of the 30th of July, with an extract of a letter from Mr. J. Osborn of the 24th. I have paid particular attention to the contents of the several letters. Had they arrived earlier you should have had my answer sooner. A variety of circumstances has prevented my writing you before. I expect to do it very fully in a few days, and to procure you an interview with Mr. M——e, when you will be able to settle your commercial plan, I hope, agreeable to all parties. Mr. M——e assures me that he is still of opinion that his first proposal is by no means unreasonable, and makes no doubt, when he has had a conference with you, that you will close with it. He expects, when you meet, that you will be fully authorized from your House; that the risks and profits of the copartnership may be fully and clearly understood.

^a Maj. John André was of Swiss and French extraction, and was born in England about 1751. He entered the British service in 1771 as second lieutenant in the Royal English Fusiliers. In 1774 he took station in Canada, and was a member of the garrison of St. Johns when it capitulated to General Montgomery in November, 1775. André was first sent as a prisoner to Lancaster and afterwards to Carlisle, Pa. In December, 1776, he was exchanged. In January, 1777, he was made a captain in the Twenty-sixth Foot, and later in the year was appointed aid-de-camp to Major-General Grey. The next year André was appointed aid-de-camp to Sir Henry Clinton, with the provincial rank of major. In 1779 he was appointed adjutant-general of the British forces in America.

Major André's rank in the regular establishment was never higher than that of captain; but if the enterprise he attempted against West Point had succeeded there is no doubt that he would have received considerable advancement. It is said that the King, in remembrance of André's services, ordered 1,000 guineas from his private purse to be paid to André's mother and an annual pension of £300 to be settled upon her for life, and for the same reason the King conferred a baronetcy upon André's brother.

Major André was buried beneath his gibbet, but in 1821 his remains were removed to England, where they rest in Westminster Abbey.

A speculation might at this time be easily made to some advantage with *ready money*, but there is not the quantity of goods *at market* which your partner seems to suppose, and the number of speculators below, I think, will be against your making an immediate purchase. I apprehend goods will be in greater plenty and much cheaper in the course of the season; both dry and wet are much wanted and in demand at this juncture. Some quantities are expected in this part of the country soon. Mr. M——e flatters himself that in the course of ten days he will have the pleasure of seeing you. He requests me to advise you that he has ordered a draft on you in favor of our mutual friend S——y for £300, which you will charge on account of tobacco. I am, in behalf of Mr. M——e & Co., sir, your obedient humble servant,

GUSTAVUS.

Mr. JOHN ANDERSON, *Merchant*,

*To the care of James Osborn, to be left at the Reverend Mr. Odell's,
New York.^a*

Now that Arnold was actually in command at West Point, Sir Henry Clinton lost no time in attempting to take advantage of the situation. On September 14 Clinton received a powerful ally in the distinguished British sailor, Admiral Sir George Rodney, who on that date put into New York Harbor with a squadron. For many reasons it was now necessary that the intercourse with Arnold, which had been by letters, should culminate by a personal interview between him and some representative of Sir Henry Clinton.

At this period Sir George Rodney arrived with a fleet at New York, which made it highly probable that Washington would lay aside all thoughts against this place. It became, therefore, proper for me no longer to defer the execution of a project which would lead to such considerable advantages nor to lose so fair an opportunity as was presented, and under so good a mask as the expedition to the Chesapeake, which everybody imagined would of course take place. Under this feint I prepared for a movement up the North River. I laid my plan before Sir George Rodney and General Knyphausen, when Sir George, with

^a Winthrop Sargent, author of a life of André, says of this letter: "Translated from its commercial phraseology into plain English, this letter teaches us that on the 7th of July Arnold had declared the probability of his obtaining the command of West Point, and the inspection he had just made of its defenses; and had written again on the 15th, when the projections connected with the arrival of the French may have been mentioned. The terms upon which he was to surrender were also doubtless named. To these André had replied in two notes; and, if we may suppose that B stood for Beverly Robinson, and J. Osborn for Sir H. Clinton, communications from these were likewise apparently conveyed. It may be easily gathered also that the present strength of the garrison, both in militia and continentals, was indicated; and that the feasibility of a coup de main, and the danger of the troops at Verplanck's retarding such an undertaking, were suggested. It will be observed that Gustavus writes as an agent for Mr. M——e: elide the dash, and we have Mr. Me; in other words, himself."—*Sargent's Life of Major André*, p. 259.

that zeal for His Majesty's service which marks his character, most handsomely promised to give me every naval assistance in his power.

It became necessary at this instant that the secret correspondence under feigned names, which had so long been carried on, should be rendered into certainty, both as to the person being General Arnold, commanding at West Point, and that in the manner in which he was to surrender himself, the forts, and troops to me, it should be so conducted under a concerted plan between us, as that the King's troops sent upon this expedition should be under no risk of surprise or counterplot; and I was determined not to make the attempt but under such particular security.

I knew the ground on which the forts were placed, and the contiguous country, tolerably well, having been there in 1777; and I had received many hints respecting both from General Arnold. But it was certainly necessary that a meeting should be held with that officer for settling the whole plan. My reasons, as I have described them, will, I trust, prove the propriety of such a measure on my part. General Arnold had also his reasons, which must be so very obvious as to make it unnecessary for me to explain them.

Many projects for a meeting were formed, and consequently several attempts made, in all of which General Arnold seemed extremely desirous that some person who had my particular confidence might be sent to him; some man, as he described it in writing, *of his own mensuration*.

I had thought of a person under this important description who would gladly have undertaken it, but that his peculiar situation at the time, from which I could not release him, prevented him from engaging in it. General Arnold finally insisted that the person sent to confer with him should be Adjutant-General Major André, who indeed had been the person on my part who managed and carried on the secret correspondence.^a

On September 7 Colonel Sheldon, who commanded an American advanced post some 10 or 15 miles northeast of Tarrytown, received the following letter from André:

NEW YORK, 7 *Sept.*, 1780.

SIR: I am told my name is made known to you, and that I may hope your indulgence in permitting me to meet a friend near your outposts. I will endeavour to obtain permission to go out with a flag, which will be sent to Dobb's Ferry on Sunday next the 11th at 12 o'clock, when I shall be happy to meet Mr. G. Should I not be allowed to go, the officer who is to command the escort, between whom and myself no distinction need be made, can speak on the affair.

Let me entreat you, sir, to favour a matter so interesting to the parties concerned, and which is of so *private a nature that the public on neither side can be injured by it*.

^a Sir Henry Clinton to Lord George Germain.

I shall be happy on my part of doing any act of kindness to you in a family or a property concern, of a similar nature.

I trust I shall not be detained but should any old grudge be a cause for it, I should rather risk that than neglect the business in question or assume a mysterious character to carry on an innocent affair and as friends have advised get to your lines by stealth. I am with all regard Yr. most humble sert.

JOHN ANDERSON.^a

This letter was written to apprise Arnold that André desired to see him and to give Arnold an opportunity of directing Sheldon to send André to Arnold's headquarters. Arnold notified Sheldon that he expected to meet a friend at his quarters through whom he desired to open "a channel of intelligence." Sheldon replied to Arnold that he was ill and could not be present at the meeting, and advised Arnold to meet this person at Dobbs Ferry. Arnold left the Robinson House on the 10th, and, going to Haverstraw on the 11th, he attempted to cross the river to the trysting place, but some British gunboats, not in the secret, opened fire on Arnold's barge and compelled him to retire at the risk of his life; he was nearly captured by a boat from the *Vulture*, sloop of war. He then went to an American post on the west shore opposite to Dobbs Ferry, and having waited in vain until nightfall for some sign of André he returned to his headquarters. To allay suspicion, Arnold wrote from Dobbs Ferry to Washington, explaining his being so far from his headquarters by the statement that he had gone to Dobbs Ferry for the purpose of arranging a set of signals to give the alarm in case the enemy came up the river.

On September 16, the *Vulture*^b appeared off Teller's Point opposite Haverstraw, having on board Col. Beverly Robinson, the Tory officer who was assisting in the Arnold-André plot, and who was the owner of the house in which Arnold was

^a This letter was afterwards submitted to the board of officers to which André's case was referred. It is hard to understand how an officer of André's character and reputation could allow himself to write such a letter and so abuse a flag of truce which has been instituted amongst nations to ameliorate the conditions of war, and the strict observance of the principles governing its use is inseparable from the principles of honor. "All's fair in war" does not apply to a flag of truce.

^b If any omen might be derived from names, the *Vulture* was a fortunate ship for the enterprise. She herself had been very successful against our privateers; and thirty-five years before we find a band of prisoners, some of them detained as spies (comprising not only the celebrated Home, in whose tragedy André had delighted to bear a character, but Witherspoon, now active for the Congress, and Barrow, in arms for the King), had escaped from Charles Edward's hands, and flying from Doune castle by Tullyallan, were received on board the sloop-of-war *Vulture*, Captain Falconer.—From *Life of Major André*, by Winthrop Sargent.

quartered. Robinson sent a letter to Arnold, ostensibly to inquire about his property, but really to signify his presence on board and that he wished to negotiate about matters other than those affecting his estate; this letter was sent ashore under a flag of truce.

Washington and his staff, on their way to Hartford to meet the French commander, crossed the Hudson on September 18 at Kings Ferry. Arnold accompanied the party as far as Peekskill. While crossing the river, the *Vulture* was seen and her object up the river was discussed. Arnold showed Washington the letter from Robinson, and Washington disapproved of Arnold holding any direct communication with Robinson. On the 19th, Arnold replied to Robinson, declining to hold further communication with him, but inclosing in this official letter two other letters, one of them for Robinson and the other for André. The tenor of these two letters was for the arrangement for a meeting with André. The latter came up from New York on the evening of September 20. On the 21st a complaint that certain Americans had fired on a flag of truce was sent ashore from the *Vulture*. This complaint was signed by the captain of the vessel and was countersigned by "his secretary" John Anderson, which was done for the purpose of apprising Arnold of André's presence on board the *Vulture*.

Another agent in this matter now appeared in the person of one Joshua Hett Smith,^a whose house was about 2½ miles below Stony Point, on the Haverstraw road. At about midnight on the 21st, Smith, in a boat, without a flag of truce, manned by two of his tenants, was sent by Arnold to the *Vulture*, while Arnold went to the appointed rendezvous, which was about 2 miles below Haverstraw, at the foot of the mountain south of that place. Smith returned from the *Vulture*, with André in uniform.^b Arnold was hidden in the firs near the shore, and there he and André were engaged until the approach of dawn made it dangerous to remain in that locality. Arnold and André then proceeded

^a Joshua Hett Smith was a lawyer of means and was a brother of William Smith, who was a Loyalist chief justice of New York in the Revolution.

^b André landed a short distance north of the northern end of the present West Shore Railroad tunnel south of Haverstraw.

to Smith's house.^a As they entered the town of Haverstraw they were challenged by an American sentinel; it was then that André entered the American lines.

Colonel Livingston, the American commander at Verplancks Point, had been annoyed by seeing the *Vulture* hovering about that part of the Hudson for the past several days and had brought a 4-pounder to within range of the sloop, and when day broke Livingston opened such a fire upon the *Vulture* that she dropped down-stream. From Smith's house André heard the firing, and was dismayed to see his ship compelled to change her anchorage. During the greater part of the forenoon Arnold and André remained closeted together, doubtless perfecting plans for the betrayal of West Point, and discussing the price Arnold was to receive.

Before Arnold left André, he did the astonishing thing of intrusting to the latter certain papers, which, if discovered, would implicate both. Clinton had cautioned André not to change his uniform nor to carry papers. Possibly the papers were given by Arnold, thinking that they would serve as a guaranty of his intentions. Most of the information they contained was probably already possessed by the British.

The papers in question were the following:

[In Arnold's handwriting]

WEST POINT, *September 5th, 1780.*

Artillery Orders.

The following disposition of the corps is to take place in case of an alarm:

Capt. Dannills with his Comp'y at Fort Putnam, and to detach an officer with 12 men to Wyllys's Redoubt, a Non Commissioned officer with 3 men to Webb's Redoubt, and the like number to Redoubt No. 4.

Capt. Thomas and Company to repair to Fort Arnold.

Captain Simmons and Company to remain at the North and South Redoubts, at the East side of the River, until further Orders.

Lieutenant Barber, with 20 men of Capt. Jackson's Company, will repair to Constitution Island; the remainder of the Company, with Lieut. Mason's, will repair to Arnold.

^a Smith's house is still standing in West Haverstraw, and is situated nearly a mile north by west from the present West Shore Railroad station. Washington dined with Arnold in Smith's house on the day he started for Hartford to meet Rochambeau. He also used it as a temporary headquarters when the allied armies were crossing King's Ferry on their way to Yorktown.

Capt. Lieut. George and Lieut. Blake, with 20 men of Captain Treadwell's Company, will Repair to Redoubt No. 1 and 2; the remainder of the Company will be sent to Fort Arnold.

Late Jones's Company, with Lieut. Fisk, to repair to the South Battery.

The Chain Battery, Sherburn's Redoubt, and the Brass Field pieces, will be manned from Fort Arnold, as Occasion may require.

The Commissary and Conductor of Military Stores will in turn wait upon the Commanding Officer of Artillery for Orders.

The artificers in the garrison, (agreeable to former Orders), will repair to Fort Arnold, and there receive further Orders from the Command'g Officer of Artillery.

S. BAUMAN, *Major Comm't Artillery.*

[In Arnold's handwriting]

Estimate of Forces at W'st Point and its dependencies, September 13, 1780.

A brigade of Massachusetts Militia, and two regiments of Rank and File, New Hampshire, Inclusive of 166 Batteaux Men at Verplanck's and Stony Points	992
On Command and Extra Service at Fishkills, New Windsor, &c, &c, who may be called in occasionally	852
3 regiments of Connecticut Militia, under the Com'd of Colonel Wells, on the lines near N. Castle	488
A detachment of New York levies on the lines	115
<hr/>	
Militia	2, 447
Colonel Lamb's Regiment	167
Colonel Livingston's at Verplank and Stony Pts	80
<hr/>	
Continent	247
Colonel Sheldon's Dragoons, on the lines, about one half mounted	250
<hr/>	
Total	3, 080

(In the handwriting of Villefranche, a French engineer.)

Estimate of the number of men necessary to man the works at West Point and in the vicinity.

Fort Arnold	620	Redoubt No. 2	150	Redoubt No. 7	78
Putnam	450	ditto 3	120	North Redoubt	120
.... Wyllys	140	ditto 4	100	South Redoubt	130
.... Webb	140	ditto 5	139	<hr/>	
Redoubt No. 1	150	ditto 6	110	Total	2, 438

VILLEFRANCHE, *Engineer.*

N. B. The Artillery Men are not included in the above estimate.

[In Arnold's handwriting.]

[Endorsement.]

Remarks on Works at West Point. A copy to be transmitted to His Excellency General Washington, Sep'r, 1780.

Fort Arnold is built of Dry Fascines and Wood, is in a ruinous condition, incompleat, and subject to take Fire from Shells or Garcasses.

Fort Putnam, Stone, wanting great repairs, wall on the East side broke down, and rebuilding From the Foundation. At the West and South side have been a Chevaux-de-Frise; on the West side broke in many Places. The East side open; two Bomb Proofs and Provision Magazine in the Fort, and Slight Wooden Barrack. A commanding piece of ground 500 yards West, between the Fort and No. 4—or Rocky Hill.

Fort Webb, built of Fascines and Wood, a slight Work, very dry, and liable to be set on fire, as the approaches are very easy, without defenses, save a slight Abattis.

Fort Wyllys, built of stone, 5 feet high, the Work above plank filled with Earth, the stone work 15 feet, the Earth 9 feet thick—No Bomb Proofs, the Batteries without the Fort.

Redoubt No. 1—On the South side wood 9 feet thick; the Wt., North and East sides 4 feet thick, no cannon in the works; a slight and single Abattis, no ditch or Pickett. Cannon on two Batteries. No Bomb Proofs.

Redoubt No. 2—The same as No. 1, No Bomb Proofs.

Redoubt No. 3, a slight Wood Work 3 Feet thick, very Dry, no Bomb Proofs, a single Abbattis, the work easily set on fire—no cannon.

Redoubt No. 4, a wooden work about 10 feet high and four or five feet thick, the West side faced with a stone wall 8 feet high and four thick. No Bomb Proof, two six pounders, a slight Abattis, a commanding piece of ground 500 yards Wt.

The North Redoubt, on the East side, built of stone 4 feet high; above the stone wood filled in with Earth, very Dry, no Ditch, a Bomb Proof, three Batteries without the Fort, a poor Abbatis, a Rising Piece of ground 500 yards So., the approaches under cover to within 20 yards.—The Work easily fired with Faggots diptd in Pitch, &c.

South Redoubt, must the same as the North, a Commanding piece of ground 500 yards due East—3 Batteries without the Fort.

These "remarks" were accompanied by the report of the council of war, held at Washington's headquarters September 6, 1780, which document, setting forth the weakness, wants, and gloomy prospects of the American Army, is as follows:

At a council of War, held in Camp Bergen County, Sept. 6th, 1780. Present—the Commander-in-Chief

The Commander-in-Chief states to the Council, that since he had the honor of laying before the General Officers, at Morristown, the 6th of June last, a general view of our circumstances, several important events have occurred, which have materially changed the prospects of the Campaign.

That the success (assistance) expected from France, instead of coming out in one body, and producing a Naval Superiority in these Seas, has been divided into two Divisions, the first of which only consisting of seven ships of the line, one forty-four and three smaller Frigates, with five thousand land Forces, had arrived at Rhode Island.

That a Reinforcement of six ships of the line from England having reinforced the Enemy, had made their Naval Force in these seas amount to Nine Sail of the Line, Two Fifties, two forty-four, and a number of smaller Frigates, a Force completely superior to that of our Allies, and which has in consequence held them Blocked up in the harbor of Rhode Island till the 29th ult., at which Period the British Fleet disappeared, and no advice of them has since been received.

That Accounts received by the *Alliance* Frigate, which left France in July, announces the Second Division to be confined to Brest with several other Ships by a British Fleet of thirty-two Sail of the line, and a Fleet of the Allies of Thirty-six, or thirty-eight Ships of the line ready to put to sea from Cadiz to relieve the Port of Brest.

That most of the States in their answers to the requisitions made of them, give the strongest assurances of doing every thing in their power to furnish the men and supplies required for the expected Co-operation. The effect of which, has been far short of our expectations, for not much above one-third of the Levies demanded for the Continental Battallions, nor above the Same proportion of Militia have been assembled, and the Supplies have been so inadequate that there was a necessity for dismissing all of the Militia, whose immediate services could be dispensed with to lessen our consumption, notwithstanding which the Troops now in the Field are severely suffering for want of Provisions.

That the Army at this Post and in the vicinity in operating Force consists of 10,400 Continental Troops, and about 400 Militia, besides which is a Regiment of Continental Troops of about 500 at Rhode Island, left there for the assistance of our Allies, against any attempt of the enemy that way, and two Connecticut State Regiments amounting to 800 at North Castle.

That the times of Service for which the Levies are Engaged will expire the first of January, which, if not replaced, allowing for the usual Casualties, will reduce the Continental Army to less than 6,000 men.

That since the state(ment) to the Council above Referred to, the Enemy have brought a detachment of about 3,000 men from Charles Town to New York, which makes the present operating Force in this Quarter between Ten and Eleven Thousand men.

That the Enemies Force now in the Southern States has not been

lately ascertained by any distinct accounts, but the General supposes it cannot be less than 7,000 (of which about 2,000 are at Savannah) in this estimate the Diminution by the Casualties of the Climate, is supposed to be equal to the increase of Force derived from the Disaffected.

That added to the loss of Charles Town and its Garrison accounts of a recent misfortune are just arrived from Major-General Gates, giving advice of a general action which happened on the 16th of August near Campden, in which the army under his Command met with a total defeat, and in all probability the whole of the Continental Troops, and a considerable part of the Militia would be cut off.

That the State of Virginia has been some time exerting itself to raise a Body of 3,000 Troops to serve till the end of December, 1781, but how far it has succeeded is not known.

That Maryland has Resolved to raise 2,000 Men of which a sufficient number to compose one Battalion was to have come to this army. The remainder to recruit the Maryland line—but in consequence of the late advices, an order has been sent to march the whole Southward.

That the Enemies Force in Canada, Halifax, St. Augustine, and at Penobscot, remains much the same as stated in the preceding Council.

That there is still reason to believe the Court of France will prosecute its original intention of giving effectual succor to this Country, as soon as circumstances will permit; and it is hoped the second Division will certainly arrive in the course of the fall.

That a Fleet greatly superior to that of the Enemy in the West Indies, and a formidable land Force had sailed sometime since from Martinique to make a combined attack upon the Island of Jamaica, that there is a possibility of a reinforcement from this quarter also, to the Fleet of our Ally at Rhode Island.

The Commander-in-Chief having thus given the Council a full view of our present Situation and future prospects, requests the Opinion of each Member, in writing, what plan it will be advisable to pursue, to what objects Our Attention ought to be directed in the course of this fall and winter, taking into consideration the alternative of having or not having a Naval Superiority, whether any Offensive operations can be immediately undertaken and against what Point, what ought to be our immediate Preparations and dispositions, particularly whether we can afford or ought to send any Reinforcements from this Army to the Southern States, and to what amount. The General requests to be favored with these opinions by the 10th instant at farthest.

André also carried this pass in Arnold's handwriting:

HEADQUARTERS ROBINSON'S HOUSE,

Sept. 22d, 1780.

Permit Mr. John Anderson to pass the Guards to the White Plains, or below if he Chuses. He being on Public Business by my Direction.

B. ARNOLD, *M. Gen'l.*

Smith represented to André that it would be impossible, at least very difficult, for him to attempt to reach the *Vulture*, and insisted that the best way for him to reach New York was by land. André was practically forced to disguise himself as a civilian, which he had no intention of doing when he came ashore. Late in the afternoon, armed with the pass from Arnold and accompanied by Smith,^a André crossed the river at Kings Ferry^b and passed the night at the village of Crompond, which is about 6 miles from Verplancks Point. On the 23d, having nearly reached the Croton River, the travelers parted, Smith going to Fishkill, leaving André to proceed alone to New York. When a short distance from Tarrytown, André was halted by three Americans, admitted that he was a British officer, and upon being searched the incriminating papers were found, whereupon his captors escorted him to the American advanced post at North Castle, which was commanded by Colonel Jameson.

The service these men^c did to the struggling colonies can not be overestimated. André had passed through the American lines, and also through that part of the neutral territory usually infested by American partisans—he had good reason to believe himself free. He carried mature plans for the fall of West Point, and was awaited eagerly in New York, where Clinton's troops were already embarked on Rodney's vessels, ready for a quick move up the Hudson.

There was another contingency which may have been left out of the original plot—Washington was on his way to West Point from Hartford, and the capture of West Point might involve the capture of the Commander-in-Chief, and never was

^a Smith was accompanied by a negro servant. These two, as well as André, traveled on horseback, André riding a Government horse which had been furnished by Arnold. Smith and his servant turned back after the former had breakfasted with André, about 2½ miles north of Pines Bridge.

^b It is about 3 miles from from Smith's house to Kings Ferry. The west landing of this ferry is in a cove, a short distance north of Stoney Point. The eastern landing is nearly a mile southeast of the extremity of Verplancks Point. Kings Ferry was of very great importance to the Americans in the Revolution. It was the ferrying place for the army, being a link in the line of communication between the New England colonies and the South.

^c They were John Paulding, Isaac Van Wert, and David Williams. The State of New York gave each a farm and Congress gave each a yearly pension of \$200, and a medal was caused to be struck. There is a monument to them at Tarrytown. It is said that André offered his captors 10,000 guineas for his liberty. That sum was larger than the amount Arnold received from the British. It has been stated that while the Army was encamped at Verplanck's Point Washington invited the three captors to dine with him, and took the occasion to present to them the silver medals awarded by Congress, and gave each a sword and pair of pistols, telling them that they "might expect to be hunted like partridges."—See *Abbott's The Crisis of the Revolution*.

a man's personality so necessary to an undertaking as was that of Washington's to the success of the American Revolution."

In the meantime Arnold had returned to his headquarters and was awaiting events, and had it not been for an error of judgment on the part of Lieutenant-Colonel Jameson, to whom André and his papers had been turned over by André's captors, Arnold would not have had an opportunity to escape. Jameson sent the papers to Washington by a messenger who was instructed to try to meet Washington on the road from Hartford, but André was sent under guard to West Point, with a note^b to Arnold giving an account of the affair. After this had been done, Major Tallmadge of Jameson's command, returned to North Castle from detached duty, and, learning what had been done, Tallmadge prevailed upon Jameson to send after André and his guard and bring them back to North Castle. André and escort, when only a few miles from Arnold's headquarters, were overtaken and brought back, but the letter to Arnold was allowed to go forward. This served as a warning to Arnold and gave him an opportunity to escape.

On the 24th, André was taken to Lower Salem, where he made known his identity to the officer commanding the guard placed over him and also wrote a letter^c to Washington

^a Hamilton, writing to Laurens, September, 1780, stated: "* * * There was some color for imagining it was a part of the plan to betray the General into the hands of the enemy. Arnold was very anxious to ascertain from him the precise day of his return; and the enemy's movements seem to have corresponded to this point. * * * Arnold, it is true, had so dispersed the garrison as to have made a defense difficult, but not impracticable; and the acquisition of West Point was of such magnitude to the enemy that it would have been unwise to connect it with any other object, however great, which might make the obtaining of it precarious. * * *"

^b Jameson wrote Arnold:

"NORTH CASTLE, 23, *Sept.*

"SIR: I have sent Lieutenant Allen, with a certain John Anderson, taken going into New York. He had a passport signed in your name. He had a parcel of papers taken from under his stockings which I think are of a very dangerous tendency. The papers I have sent to General Washington. They contained [describing them] * * *."

^c *Andre to Washington.*

SALEM, the 24th *Sept.*, 1780.

SIR: What I have as yet said concerning myself was in the justifiable attempt to be extricated: I am too little accustomed to duplicity to have succeeded.

I beg your excellency will be persuaded that no alternation in the temper of my mind, or apprehension for my safety, induces me to take the step of addressing you, but that it is to rescue myself from an imputation of having assumed a mean character for treacherous purposes of self-interest, a conduct incompatible with the principles that actuate me, as well as with my condition in life. It is to vindicate my fame that I speak and not to solicit security. The Person in your possession is Major John André, Adjutant General to the British Army.

The influence of one commander in the army of his adversary is an advantage taken in war. A correspondence for this purpose I held; as confidential, in the present instance, with His Excellency Sir Henry Clinton.

To favor it I agree to meet upon ground not within posts of either army a person who was to give

relating the circumstances which had brought him within the American lines and into American hands.

Washington did not return from Hartford by the same route he had taken in going there, but returned by way of Fishkill, which he reached on the afternoon of September 24. The messenger, carrying the papers taken from André, sought Washington by another road.^a Washington's intention was to press on that evening and pass the night at Arnold's headquarters, but, meeting the French envoy, he concluded to pass the night at Fishkill. At the table where he dined sat Joshua Hett Smith, who had left André well on the way to New York. Washington started early on the 25th for the "Robinson house," and, when opposite West Point, he dispatched two of his aids to announce his arrival, while he ascended the ridge east of Garrisons to examine the north and south redoubts. The two aids were seated at breakfast with Arnold when he was handed the note from Jameson which announced André's capture. Arnold excused himself, sent for the cockswain of his barge and a horse, and then

me intelligence; I came up in the *Vulture* M. of War for this effect and was fetched by a boat from the shore to the beach; being there I was told that the approach of day would prevent my return and that I must be concealed until the next night. I was in my Regimentals and had fairly risked my person.

Against my stipulation my intention and without my knowledge before hand I was conducted within one of your posts. Your Excellency may conceive my sensation on this occasion and will imagine how much more I must have been affected, by a refusal to reconduct me back the next night as I had been brought. Thus become prisoner I had to concert my escape. I quitted my uniform and was passed another way in the night without the American posts to neutral ground, and informed I was beyond all armed parties and left to press for New York. I was taken at Tarry Town by some volunteers. Thus as I have had the honour to relate was I betrayed (being Adjutant General of the B. Army) into the vile condition of an enemy in disguise within your posts.

Having avowed myself a British Officer, I have nothing to reveal but what relates to myself which is true on the honour of an officer and a Gentleman. The request I have to make to your Excellency and I am conscious I address myself well, is that in any rigor policy may dictate, a decency of conduct towards me [may] mark that tho' unfortunate I am branded with nothing dishonorable as no motive could be mine but the service of my King and as I was involuntarily an imposter.

Another request is, that I may be permitted to write an open letter to Sir Henry Clinton, and another to a friend, for cloaths and linnen.

I take the liberty to mention the condition of some gentlemen of Charlestown who being either on parole or under protection were engaged in a Conspiracy against us. Tho' their situation is not exactly similar, they are objects who may be set in exchange for me, or are persons whom the treatment I receive might affect.

It is not less Sir in a confidence in the generosity of your mind, than on account of your superior station that I have chosen to importune you with this letter. I have the honor to be with great respect, Sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

JOHN ANDRÉ, *Adj. Genl.*

His Excy. Gen. WASHINGTON.

^aJameson's messenger went almost to Danbury before he learned that Washington had left Hartford for Fishkill. He then returned to Jameson, who sent him to Washington with André's letter, Jameson's original letter to Washington, and the Arnold papers. This courier arrived at the "Robinson house" at about 2 p. m., September 25. Washington received the papers about 4 p. m.

went upstairs, followed by his wife, whom he informed of his danger. He returned to his guests and told them that it was necessary for him to cross to West Point to prepare for the reception of General Washington. Arnold then mounted his horse and, followed by his cockswain, dashed down to the landing place. The crew was hastily assembled and the barge sped down the river to the *Vulture*.

Arnold, seated in his boat, with a brace of primed pistols, and holding his cane to which was attached a handkerchief, urged his men to double exertion, promising them a reward and explaining that he must visit the *Vulture* under a flag of truce and return to Washington, at his headquarters, and consequently time was important. Shortly after Arnold boarded the *Vulture* that vessel got under way for New York, where Arnold collected his price.^a

Washington finally arrived at the "Robinson house," and, after a hasty breakfast, he crossed to West Point, accompanied by all of his staff save Hamilton. Upon arriving at West Point, Washington was surprised not to be met with the customary salute and at not finding Arnold there. After an inspection of the post he returned to the east side of the river, where he was met by Hamilton near the "Robinson house," who handed to him the papers brought by the messenger, who had arrived while Washington was at West Point.

Prompt action was at once taken to secure the safety of West Point. That night the Army was notified of the impending danger, and troops were made ready to march on a moment's notice to West Point, if needed.

Washington's first thought was for the security of West Point. Colonel Lamb was ordered to take command of Stony Point and Verplanck's Point. Greene, commanding the left wing of the Army, which was at Tappan, was ordered to march to West Point. At 3 a. m., September 26, this order reached him, and the regimental drums began sounding the alarm to the sleeping Army. Two Pennsylvania brigades and the Sixth Connecticut Regiment marched at once.

^aArnold was made a brigadier-general in the British service and according to Bancroft received £6,315 in cash. After conducting forays in Connecticut and Virginia he went to England at the close of the war where he died in 1801.

Washington immediately sent these directions to Colonel Wade,^a who was the senior officer left at West Point:

SIR: General Arnold has gone to the Enemy. I have just received a line from him, inclosing one to Mrs. Arnold, dated on board the *Vulture*. From this circumstance and Colonel Lamb's being detached on some business the command of the garrison for the present devolves upon you. I request you will be as vigilant as possible, and as the enemy may have it in contemplation to attempt some enterprise, even to-night, against these posts, I wish you to make, immediately after receipt of this, the best disposition you can of your force, so as to have a proportion of men in each work on the West Side of the River. You will see or hear from me further to-morrow.

I am, sir, your most obedient servant,

G. WASHINGTON.

On September 26 Washington wrote to Wade:

SIR: Under the present situation of affairs, I think it necessary that the respective works of West Point and its dependencies be supplied with provisions and water. You will therefore be pleased to have a proper quantity distributed to each of them without any loss of time.

I am, sir, etc.

To this letter Wade replied that about all the available provision consisted of some pickled fish, but added that the water supply was abundant.^b

Joshua Hett Smith^c was arrested, and on the 26th both he and André were taken to West Point,^d where they were confined until the morning of the 28th, when both were taken to Tappan, where the main body of the Army was encamped.

André was not tried by a court-martial, but Washington convened a board of officers to investigate the case and to give an opinion as to André's status.

^aA singular fact in connection with his [Wade's] West Point experience is his statement of a conversation with one of Arnold's aids—apparently Franks—shortly before the 23d. He was returning to the boat, after dining with Arnold. The major, accompanying him, said impressively: "There is something going on here that I do not understand and cannot find out. I say this to put you on your guard at the Fort" [West Point]. "I fear there is something brewing about us, and all I can say is, look out." With this he abruptly left Wade.—*Abbatt in The Crisis of the Revolution*.

^bAbbatt's *The Crisis of the Revolution*.

^cSmith was tried by a court-martial, which did not convict him. He was then conveyed to Goshen and turned over to the civil authorities. He escaped from jail at this point and made his way in disguise to New York. At the close of hostilities he went to England; but afterwards returned and died in New York in 1818.—*Field Book of the Revolution; Lossing*.

^dAbbatt in *The Crisis of the Revolution* states positively that while at West Point André was confined in Fort Putnam, Abbatt having obtained this information from a grandson of Capt. Ebenezer Smith, Thirteenth Massachusetts, who had charge of André at that time.

The board met September 29, and completed its labors the same day. Upon receipt by him of the proceedings of this board, Washington issued the following order:

“HEADQUARTERS, *September 30, 1780.*

“The Commander in Chief approves of the opinion of the Board of General Officers respecting Major André, and orders that the execution of Major André take place to-morrow, at 5 o'clock p. m.”

To conclude certain negotiations in André's behalf the execution was postponed until the next day. Major André was hanged in the early afternoon of October 2, 1780.^a So ended this enterprise for the betrayal of West Point.

On September 27 the command at West Point was given to McDougall, pending the arrival of Saint Clair, who assumed command of West Point and its dependencies on the 30th. Saint Clair's command consisted of the Pennsylvania division, Meigs's and Livingston's Continental regiments, and some militia from Massachusetts and New Hampshire. On October 6, General Greene, who had applied for the command, was ordered to relieve Saint Clair. Greene brought with him three regiments. Saint Clair, who was directed to rejoin the Army, took with him the Pennsylvania division and Meigs's regiment.

Hamilton said, writing of André, “never, perhaps, did any man suffer death with more justice or deserve it less.”

On October 6, Washington wrote to Greene:

* * * It is, I observed to you on that occasion, a matter of great question with me, whether West Point will not become the headquarters of the Army when we go into cantonments for the winter. I am very apprehensive that the diminution of our present force and the little prospect of recruiting the Army in season, the importance of West Point,

^aOn the day of André's execution Hamilton wrote to Miss Schuyler:

“I urged a compliance with André's request to be shot, and I do not think it would have had an ill effect; but some people are only sensible to motives of policy, and sometimes, from a narrow disposition, mistake it. When André's tale comes to be told, and present resentment is over, the refusing him the privilege of choosing the manner of his death will be branded with too much obstinacy.

“It was proposed to me to suggest to him the idea of an exchange for Arnold, but I knew I should have forfeited his esteem by doing it, and therefore declined it. As a man of honor he could not but reject it, and I would not for the world have proposed to him a thing which must have placed me in the unamiable light of supposing him capable of meanness, or of not feeling myself the impropriety of the measure. I confess to you I had the weakness to value the esteem of a dying man because I revered his merit.”

and economical motives will compel us to concentrate our forces on the North River, keeping light parties only on our flanks.

If, under this information, you should incline to take the immediate command of the detachment, which is about to march to West Point, and the general direction of matters on the east side of Hudson's River, it will be quite agreeable to me that you should do so. But candor has led me to a declaration of the uncertainty of that post's being long removed from my immediate command. * * *

The internal affairs at West Point at this time are brought to light by extracts from several letters written by Greene.

On October 9 he wrote to Governor Clinton:

I am ordered here by the Commander in Chief, with four brigades, to garrison this place. I got into garrison late last evening, and am sorry to find a place of such importance is in such a miserable condition. The condition of the works and the knowledge the enemy has of them from Arnold's late shameful and treasonable conduct makes it necessary that every exertion should be made to complete them, and I have it in charge from the Commander in Chief to leave nothing unattempted to accomplish it. Though the force I now command is but small, though the works are in such a bad condition, yet if the garrison is but furnished with provisions, wood, and forage I have nothing to fear from the enemy, being persuaded the discipline and bravery of the troops will make up for the smallness of their numbers and the defects in the fortifications. The garrison is now upon half allowance of flour and altogether unfurnished with wood and but a trifling quantity of forage. * * *

Writing to Knox on October 11 he complains: " * * * Everything here is in a bad state. But the worst of all is we have not a mouthful of flour in garrison, except the little lodged in the forts."

A few days later Greene stated that the number of the garrison was three thousand men and would perhaps continue so until the 1st of January, when that number would be reduced to a little less than two thousand. About this time he wrote to Washington:

* * * The works of the garrison are very incomplete; indeed very little has been done to them this campaign. On my arrival I made the following disposition of the troops—New Jersey brigade to man the redoubts Nos, 1, 2, 3, and 4. New York brigade to man Fort Putnam, Webb's and Wyllys' redoubts. Stark's brigade Fort Clinton. Two regiments of the New Hampshire brigade are on Constitution Island and two regiments are on the east side of the river on the table of ground at the foot of the mountains on which the north and south

redoubts are situated. On all alarms the troops are to man the respective works assigned to them. * * * We have been out of flour most part of the time since I have been here, and the troops have suffered exceedingly. * * *

In regard to the arrangement of the works, Greene at this time wrote:

I have been round and viewed the works with Colonel Gouvion, and am of opinion that a blockhouse is absolutely necessary to keep possession of the ground between the redoubts Nos. 3 and 4, and have given orders for the construction accordingly. If the enemy should possess that ground, I am persuaded they could soon dispossess us of the redoubts Nos. 3 and 4. Number 1 and 2 would become useless; and artillery be immediately opened upon Fort Putnam and all the lower works, which could not fail of reducing them.

Thacher, who was then at West Point, writes under date of October 20: "A scarcity of provisions is again complained of in camp."

Greene left West Point on October 19 to take command of the Southern army; he was succeeded in command at West Point by Heath.

On November 28 the Army went into winter quarters. The general headquarters were at New Windsor. The Jersey troops returned to their State, four Massachusetts brigades were added to the West Point garrison, while two Connecticut brigades were stationed on Constitution Island and on the east side of the river.

A very good description of some of the works at West Point is given by Marquis Chastellux, who visited the post about this time:

The first fort we met with above West Point, on the declivity of the mountain, is called Fort Putnam, from the general of that name. It is placed on a rock, very steep on every side. The ramparts were at first constructed with trunks of trees; they are rebuilt with stone, and are not quite finished. There is a powder magazine, bombproof, a large cistern, and souterrains for the garrison. Above this fort, and when we reach the loftiest summit, there are three strong redoubts, lined with cannon, at three different eminences, each of which would require a formal siege. The day being nearly spent, I contented myself with judging by the eye of the very intelligent manner in which they are calculated for mutual protection. Fort Wyllis, whither General Heath conducted me, was near and more accessible. Though it be placed lower

than Fort Putnam, it still commands the river to the south. It is a large pentagonal redoubt, built of huge trunks of trees. It is picketed and lined with artillery.

Under the fire of this redoubt and lower down is a battery of cannon to range more obliquely the course of the river. This battery is not closed at the gorge, so that the enemy may take but never keep it, which leads me to remark that this is the best method in all field fortifications. Batteries placed in works have two inconveniences: The first is, that if these works be ever so little elevated they do not graze sufficiently; and the second, that the enemy may at once attack the redoubt and the battery, whereas, the latter, being exterior and protected by the redoubt, must be first attacked, in which case it is supported by troops who have nothing to fear for themselves and whose fire is commonly better directed and does more execution. A battery yet lower and nearer to the river (Fort Meigs) completes the security of the southern part.

In returning to West Point we saw a redoubt that is suffered to go to ruin, as being useless, which in fact it is. It was night when we got home, but what I had to observe did not require daylight. It is a vast souterrain formed within the fort of West Point (Fort Clinton), where not only the powder and ammunition necessary for this post are kept in reserve, but the deposit of the whole army.

These magazines completely filled, the numerous artillery one sees in these different fortresses, the prodigious labour necessary to transport and pile up on steep rocks, huge trunks of trees, and enormous hewn stones, impress the mind with an idea of the Americans very different from that which the English ministry have laboured to give to Parliament. * * *

Thacher, a surgeon in Jackson's Massachusetts regiment, writing under date of January 3, 1781, said:

Our brigade took possession of our huts for the winter, in the woods about two miles in the rear of the works at West Point. Our situation is singularly romantic, on a highly elevated spot, surrounded by mountains and craggy rocks of a prodigious size, lofty, broken cliffs, and the banks of the beautiful meandering Hudson, affording a view of the country for many miles in all directions. We have now no longer reason to complain of our accommodations; the huts are warm and comfortable, wood in abundance at our doors, and a tolerable supply of provisions. Our only complaint is want of money.

On January 22, 1781, Washington, Lafayette, and a number of French gentlemen visited West Point, and on the same day Howe, with 500 troops, was detailed from the garrison and ordered to the Jerseys to quell a rising at Pompton, which was done by executing two of the ringleaders.

The Board of War, in a letter dated June 13, 1781, to the President of Congress stated that the Commander in Chief had called for the whole of the Invalid Corps to form part of the garrison at West Point. This peculiar corps was one which was organized in pursuance of the following act of Congress of June 20, 1777:

Resolved—That a Corps of Invalids be formed consisting of eight Companies, each Company to have one Captain, two Lieutenants, two Ensigns, Five Sergeants, six Corporals, two Drummers, two fifers and one hundred men. This Corps to be employed, in Garrison and for Guards, in Cities and other Places, where Magazines, or arsenals are placed; as also to serve as a military School for young gentlemen, previous to their being appointed to marching Regiments, for which purpose all the Subaltern Officers, when off Duty, shall be obliged to attend a Mathematical School, appointed for the purpose to learn Geometry, Arithmetic, vulgar and decimal fractions and the extraction of Roots. And that the Officers of this Corps, shall be obliged to contribute, one day's pay in every Month, and stoppages shall be made of it, accordingly for the purpose of purchasing a Regimental Library of the most approved Authors on Tactics and the *Pétite Guerre*.

That some Officers from the Corps be constantly employed in the Recruiting Service in the Neighborhood of the places they shall be stationed in; that all recruits so made, shall be brought into the Corps, and drilled, and afterwards draughted into other Regiments as occasion shall require.

This was an attempt of Congress to combine the conservation of military knowledge with the pensioning of officers and men who had become wounded or otherwise incapacitated for service in the field. This Corps was organized in and around Philadelphia, of which city the colonel of the Corps of Invalids, Lewis Nicola, was "Town Major" in 1779. In compliance with Washington's request, Nicola's command was brought to West Point" in the summer of

"A letter from Colonel Lamb, Chief of Artillery at West Point, alludes to the condition of this organization:—

"WEST POINT, *Aug. 10, 81.*

* * * Col. Nichols (Nicola), with his invalids, lately arrived here from Philadelphia. A number of these, unfortunate men, are capable of doing no duty but eating their rations. In their dress, and other circumstances, you may see, however, visible characters of the gratitude of the country, to the brave men who have bled in its cause. It is no doubt a piece of refined policy, to bring these maimed men from a distant post, to present them to our soldiery, who have sagacity enough to infer, that after losing eyes, hands and feet, in the public service that their patriotic sufferings will be amply rewarded, by being put in possession of the honors conferred on the invalid corps. They will, I understand, be parcelled out to Fishkill, Fishkill Landing, Newburgh, and New Windsor, where some of them may be employed in easy duty. * * *

1781, and stationed there and in the vicinity until the close of the war.^a

Heath, under date of April 26, 1781, wrote on his Memoirs:

At this time provisions were growing very scarce at West Point and the prospects daily growing more alarming. The magazines in Forts Clinton, Putnam, and some other of the most important works had reserves of the best provisions, which were not to be touched; that in case the enemy by any sudden movement should invest them and cut off the communication with the country, the garrisons might be enabled to hold out until other troops or the militia of the country could march to the relief of the besieged; but unfortunately the scarcity of provisions had become so great that even these reserves were broken in upon and some of them nearly exhausted.

Heath notified Washington of the straitened circumstances of the troops, and he was ordered by the latter to visit the authorities of the several New England States and call upon them to furnish supplies to the army.

In June, 1781, Washington began his movement which resulted in the surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown.

Doctor Thacher at West Point on June 20 wrote: "It is directed in general orders that the whole army at this place march and encamp at Peekskill, leaving the invalids and a small party to garrison West Point." During the movement against Yorktown, Heath, who was left in command of the Northern Department, was given specific instructions by Washington relative to the defense of West Point.^b

The French having joined Washington, an attack was

^aLincoln writing from the War Office, October 29th, 1782, to the President of Congress stated:—"I beg leave to lay before Congress the state of the Invalid Regiment, that if on inquiry it should be found to be rather a source of expense than answering the benevolent purposes of its original constitution and that little or no services may be expected from it, either in the field or garrison, that it may be reduced and really meritorious and debilitated officers and men may be provided for in a manner more consonant to their wishes, conducive to their happiness, and in a way more honorary and less expensive to the United States. * * * The miserable state in which the Regiment now is, the very great expense which attends its being kept up, and the very little service received from it, has made it my duty to make this representation to Congress." The descriptive roll which accompanied this communication showed that the organization at that time consisted of: 20 officers, 1 surgeon, 1 mate and 362 enlisted men, nearly all of whom were shown to be truly invalids.

On May 1, 1783 a Congressional Committee submitted this resolution: "Resolved that the Corps of Invalids be reduced, etc." but the organization was not disbanded for some time.

^bWashington notified Heath of his contemplated move against Cornwallis, and on August 18 sent him these instructions:

"You are to take command of all the troops remaining in this department, consisting of the two regiments of New Hampshire, ten of Massachusetts, and five of Connecticut infantry, the corps of invalids, Sheldon's legion, the Third Regiment of artillery, together with all such State troops and militia as are retained in service of those which have been under my own command.

"The security of West Point and the posts in the Highlands is to be considered as the first object of your attentions. In order to effect this, you will make such dispositions as in your judgment the circumstances shall from time to time require, taking care to have as large a supply of salted pro-

made on July 2 on the works on the northern end of Manhattan Island. This attack served only as a feint. Washington withdrew his command and crossed it to the west bank of the Hudson at Stony Point.

While the allied army was crossing the river, Washington, whose headquarters were located in Joshua Hett Smith's home at Haverstraw,^a found time to show West Point to Rochambeau.

Aug. 23d * * * M. de Rochambeau was not willing to pass so near West Point as nine miles, without seeing it. He left at eight o'clock in the morning to visit it with General Washington and several officers.^b

After the fall of Yorktown some of the troops returned to West Point. They left Yorktown on November 4 and reached their destination about December 8, 1781.

The cantonment of some of the Massachusetts troops at West Point was called "New Boston"—this was probably located in the valley at the northern part of the post. The troops at West Point, elated by their last campaign, passed a quiet winter with presumably less suffering than formerly, as fewer complaints were recorded. However, smallpox and putrid fever at times entered the garrison.

Occasionally deserters from the enemy came in at West Point.^c A duel between two of the officers took place.^d On April 6 we are told that Washington visited West Point and reviewed the First Massachusetts Brigade; this probably took place on the plain,^e where such exercises have taken place for more than a century.

visions as possible constantly on hand; to have the fortifications, works, and magazines repaired and perfected as far as may be; to have the garrison at least in all cases kept up to its present strength; to have the minutes, plans, and arrangements for the defense and support of this important post perfectly understood and vigorously executed in case of any attempt against it. * * * The most eligible position for your army, in my opinion, will be above—that is, on the north side—of the Croton, as well for the purpose of supporting the garrison at West Point, annoying the enemy, and covering the country, as for the security and repose of your own troops. * * *

In September, Heath sent three Massachusetts regiments to reinforce the small garrison then at West Point.

^a Baker's Itinerary of General Washington.

^b Diary of Baron Cromot du Bourg.

^c *Feb. 10, 1782.*—Two deserters came in from Arnold's corps, and also two Hessians. Ten had come in during the course of two or three days.—*Heath's Memoirs.*

^d *March 21, 1782.*—A duel was fought at West Point, between Capt. ——— and Lieut. ———, when the former was killed and the latter wounded. They fought with pistols at about ten feet distance. The lieutenant absconded.—*Heath's Memoirs.*

^e Although formerly the West Point plain did not present the level appearance it does to-day, the ground was more undulating, and an old map shows some ponds. There has been a good deal of work done at different times to place the plateau in its present shape.

Washington, writing to Robert Morris on May 17, 1782, stated that West Point had hardly a barrel of salted provisions and could not stand a siege of three days. This year Washington caused a celebration to take place, which surpassed in magnitude and uniqueness anything ever held at West Point. This was to celebrate the birth of the Dauphin of France.^a This affair took place on May 31, 1782, on which day Washington and a distinguished company came to West Point.^b All troops in the immediate vicinity of West Point were paraded on both sides of the river. The First and Second Massachusetts brigades were drawn up, with their left at the Washington Valley, center on the slope of Fort Putnam hill, and their right extending to the river. On the opposite shore of the Hudson, the first and second Connecticut brigades were drawn up on the high grounds in rear of Constitution Island, the Tenth Massachusetts in the cleared fields north of where Garrisons now is, and the third Massachusetts on the heights between the north and south redoubts.

The artillery regiment was drawn up on the West Point plain. Washington's Life Guard was drawn up in the colonnade, where he and 500 guests assembled for the banquet. Thirteen toasts were drank, each of which was greeted by a salute of 13 cannon. In the evening the arbor was decorated with lights, fireworks were set off from Redoubt Webb, and the troops on both sides of the river fired 3 rounds in a feu de joie, preceded by 13 guns.

^a Louis Joseph, son of Louis XVI, born in October, 1781, died in June, 1789.

^b June 1.—Yesterday was celebrated the birth of the Dauphin of France by a magnificent festival. The edifice under which the company assembled and partook of the entertainment was erected on the plain at West Point. The situation was romantic; and the occasion novel and interesting. Major Villefranche, an ingenious French engineer, has been employed with 1,000 men about ten days, in constructing the curious edifice. It is composed of the simple materials which the common trees in this vicinity afford. It is about 600 feet in length and 30 feet wide, supported by a grand colonnade of 118 pillars, made of the trunks of trees. The covering of the roof consists of boughs, or branches of trees curiously interwoven, and the same materials form the walls, leaving the ends entirely open. On the inside, every pillar was encircled with muskets and bayonets bound round in a fanciful and handsome manner, and the whole interior was decorated with evergreens, with American and French military colors, and a variety of emblems and devices, all adjusted in such style as to beautify the whole interior of the fabric. This superb structure, in symmetry of proportion, neatness of workmanship, and elegance of arrangement, has seldom perhaps been surpassed on any temporary occasion; it affected the spectators with admiration and pleasure, and reflects much credit on the taste and ability of Major Villefranche. Several appropriate mottoes decorated the grand edifice, pronouncing benedictions on the Dauphin and happiness to the two allied nations. The whole army was paraded on the contiguous hills on both sides of the river, forming a circle of several miles in open view of the public edifice, and at the given signal of firing three cannon, the regimental officers all left their commands and repaired to the building to partake of the entertainment which had been prepared by order of the Commander-in-Chief. * * *—*Thacher's Military Journal.*

"Afterwards," we are told, "His Excellency General Washington carried down a dance of 20 couple in the arbor on the green grass."

In August, 1782, Major-General Knox was appointed to the command of West Point and its dependencies, relieving Heath. Knox retained this command until he was made Secretary of War in 1785.

Even at this early day West Point attracted distinguished visitors, and for the entertainment of such Washington, in June, 1783, urged that Knox, while commanding there, be given an extra allowance of money.^a

When Knox assumed command of West Point the garrison consisted of the artillery, sappers and miners, Tenth Massachusetts Regiment, and the Corps of Invalids. A number of the troops previously comprising the garrison were ordered to take part in the mobilization, which Washington ordered on August 29, to take place in the vicinity of Peekskill.^b

The winter came and went without incident. On April 18 a schooner from Nantucket, laden with merchandise, arrived at Newburgh. This was the first American vessel to come up the Hudson since the British took possession of New York City in 1776.

The end had now arrived. Washington announced the

^a Letter from Washington to Lincoln, Secretary of War:—

"HEADQUARTERS, June 6th, 1783.

DEAR SIR: * * * On the other hand, although extra allowances have been discontinued to Officers commanding in separate Departments, yet General Knox's situation has been very peculiar for the time he has been in the command of West Point, particularly last year, while the French Army was in the neighbourhood, curiosity led many of the most respectable officers to visit that Post; which to a Gentleman, possessed, as General Knox is, of great Hospitality, Politeness and Liberality, led him into unavoidably great expenses, beyond what any other situation would have subjected him to. Independent of this particular reason, West Point being a Post of great importance, and much famed for its peculiarity of situation and circumstances, is at all times subject to much company, many of whom are so respectable as to claim the attention of the Commandant. In this view of his situation, I think the request of General Knox is extremely reasonable and just. * * * * *

"G. WASHINGTON."

—Vol. VII, *Washington Letters Mss.*, State Department Library.

^bThe enemy not giving this army an opportunity to become engaged there was little military activity. Washington reviewed the French army and Rochambeau the American; there were other reviews and some maneuvers. In October the organizations were distributed to various localities. The left wing under Heath crossed the river at West Point and took station for the winter at New Windsor. The troops crossed the Hudson in boats to West Point, the whole being crossed by half past 12 o'clock. In the afternoon the troops took up their line of march, and ascended Butter-Hill (Storm King), a tedious march, and halted and passed the night on the northern descent of the hill, in the open field.

28th.—At 7 o'clock a. m. the troops resumed their march from Butter-Hill, and reached the ground upon which they were to build their huts, in New Windsor, at about half past 10 o'clock a. m. Upon this ground, and its vicinity, the army passed the ensuing winter. The cantonment, for its nature and kind, was regular and beautiful. * * * *Heath's Memoirs.*

cessation of hostilities to the Army by an order which he directed to be read at the evening parade on April 19 at the head of every regiment and corps of the Army.

On June 20 Washington issued this order:

The troops of this cantonment (New Windsor) will march on Monday morning, 5 o'clock, by the left. The senior brigadier of the Massachusetts Line will conduct the column over Butter-Hill (Storm King) to West Point. * * * These corps, with the troops at West Point, will compose the garrisons of that post and its dependencies; Major-General Knox will be pleased to expedite in the best manner he is able the building of an arsenal and magazines, agreeably to the instructions he hath received from the Secretary of War. As soon as the troops are collected at West Point an accurate inspection is to take place, in consequence of which all noncommissioned officers and privates who are incapable of service, except in the Corps of Invalids, are to be discharged, and the names of all the men whose time of service will expire within a month are also to be reported to headquarters.

It was at first intended to celebrate at West Point the definitive treaty between the United States and Great Britain, but this was afterwards done at New York.^a

On November 25 the final act of the Revolution took place—the evacuation of New York by the British, who were relieved by an American force commanded by Knox. Troops were brought down from West Point to assist in this occupation.^b

Knox returned to West Point and busied himself with mustering out troops^c and putting the post in shape. A large

^a On August 27th, 1783, Pickering, the Quartermaster-General, wrote: "I missed the General; he went down the river. He will not return again, unless to celebrate the definitive treaty at West Point, when he will invite *Messieurs le Congres* to accompany him. There is a mighty colonnade erecting, near two hundred feet long and eighty broad. Twenty thousand lamps are made, and the posts erected to display the fireworks extend a hundred and fifty or two hundred yards. * * *"

On August 29 Pickering again wrote respecting this celebration: "* * * Great preparations have been and are making at West Point to celebrate that event. * * * But this will be an occasion so extraordinary, and the exhibition so splendid, etc."

^b On November 16 Pickering wrote to a friend:—"I have the pleasure of announcing to you that Sir Guy Carleton has fixed on the 21st instant for the evacuation of his outposts, and on the 22nd for the complete evacuation of the city of New York and its dependencies. In consequence, two companies of artillery commanded by Major Bowman (Bauman), with four six-pounders (all trophies, engraved with the times and places of their capture from the enemy), the light infantry, and the First and Fourth Massachusetts Regiments, have this day marched for the environs of Kingsbridge, to be prepared to take possession as the British relinquish the posts. The whole detachment will amount to eight hundred or a thousand men. * * * West Point and dependencies will be left with one regiment. * * *"

^c On January 4, 1784 a return from West Point showed that Knox's command consisted of

	Field & Staff	Capt.	Lts. & ensigns	Men
Gen. Jackson's Regt.	8	9	18	564
Corps of Invalids	4	4	30
Artillery	2	2	7	125

quantity of revolutionary arms and ammunition was collected and stored at West Point.^a Among other matters to demand Knox's attention was the case of 115 Canadians who had espoused the American cause and who, being refugees from their home, were subsisted at West Point.^b

Knox was succeeded by Major Fleming, who commanded the arsenal with the rank of ordnance and military store-keeper. The Corps of Artillerists and Engineers, consisting of four battalions, which were raised in pursuance of the act of Congress of May 9, 1794, were stationed at West Point under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Rochefontaine. In 1794 work was begun on repairing Fort Putnam, but in 1796 Liancourt, who visited West Point, stated that \$35,000 had been uselessly expended in repairing Fort Putnam, as Congress would not appropriate \$45,000 more, which would be necessary to complete the repairs. He also stated that the four battalions of artillerists and engineers were composed of about 250 men each, mostly foreigners, and that there were but 10 officers present representing all nations. But a new régime was about to take place, which will be discussed in another chapter.

During the Revolution there was no fighting at West Point—the garrison did its fighting elsewhere. The enemy might be kept away, but not death. The present post cemetery dates from 1817; only a few Revolutionary officers are known to rest there.^c Excavations made near the academic

^a The ordnance return from West Point on December 28 1783 showed that the garrison possessed fit for service:—

- “ 53 Brass Cannon of different calibres
- 97 Iron ditto
- 51 Mortars and Howitzers
- 201 Total.”

^b “Return of Canadian Refugees who draw provisions from the public: West Point January 4, 1784.

	Major	Captains	Lieutenants	Citizens	Women	Children
Total	1	3	5	50	23	33

Another person who drew supplies from West Point for several years after the war was “Molly Pitcher” who was quartered at Swimstown, now Highland Falls. She distinguished herself when the British assaulted Fort Clinton as well as at the battle of Monmouth. She is supposed to have died in 1789.

^c There yet may be deciphered on a crumbling stone in the post cemetery the name of Ensign Trant, of the Ninth Massachusetts Regiment, who was buried at West Point November 10, 1782, and whose remains “were followed to the grave by his excellency General Washington and a very respectable procession.” (Thacher.) His remains were probably removed to the present cemetery when it was instituted.

building, gymnasium, or mess hall not infrequently uncover the remains of Revolutionary soldiers. Their names are unknown, and no monument marks the resting place of these soldiers who kept their vigil in these Highlands and who first raised the American flag over West Point, the oldest United States military post over which it has continuously flown.

ORIGINS OF THE UNITED STATES MILITARY ACADEMY,
1777-1802.

BY EDWARD S. HOLDEN, M. A., Sc. D., LL. D.,

Librarian, United States Military Academy (U. S. Military Academy, 1870).

THE first English emigrants to America brought the martial virtues of their forefathers with them. As early as 1638 there was formed in the province of Massachusetts Bay "the Military Company of Boston," which became "the Artillery Company" in 1657. On the eve of the Revolution the company possessed certain brass 3-pounders that were active during the war. A British artillery command, on its way to Quebec, spent the winter of 1766 in Boston, and its officers—some of them probably from the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich (founded 1741)—trained their American cousins in the theory and practice of gunnery. At the battles around Boston the lessons were utilized, especially by Henry Knox, once an active member of the Artillery Company, who laid out and armed the works besieging the city, and who was appointed, on the recommendation of Washington, to be colonel and Chief of Artillery on the 8th of November, 1775.

On the 16th of May, 1776, Knox wrote a letter to John Adams, a member of the Board of War, in regard to establishing academies for educating young gentlemen in every branch of the military art, to which Adams replied on June 2: "I am fully of your sentiments," Adams writes, "that we ought to lay foundations and begin institutions * * * for promoting every art, manufacture, and science necessary for the support of an independent State." The disastrous engagements around New York occurred in August, and the Army was withdrawn to Harlem Heights, the artillery company, commanded by Alexander Hamilton (now the Eighth Light Battery, U. S. Army), covering the retreat. Knox

wrote to his wife on September 5: "It is Misfortunes that must raise us to the character of a great people. *We must have a standing Army.* The militia get sick, or think themselves so, and run home."

The lessons of war began to be impressed on Congress, on the country and on the army, the imperative necessity for trained officers being one of them. On the 15th of September Adams again wrote to Knox: "I wish we had a military academy and should be obliged to you for a plan of such an institution." On the 23d of the same month Knox wrote to his brother: "We ought to have academies in which the whole theory of the art of war shall be taught." On the 25th Knox again wrote to Adams: "Military academies must be instituted at any expense. We are fighting against a people well acquainted with the theory and practice of war, brave by discipline and habit." Knox's "Hints to Congressional Committee now in Camp, Headquarters, Harlem Heights, September 27, 1776" contained the sentence which follows: "*As officers can never act with confidence until they are Masters of their profession, an Academy established on a liberal plan would be of the utmost service to America, where the whole theory and practice of Fortifications and gunnery should be taught; to be nearly on the same plan as that of Woolwich making allowance for the difference of circumstances.*" He also recommended the establishment of a "Continental Laboratory."

Knox, therefore, was the first to propose a military academy of the type of Woolwich—an academy like our own. The visiting committee listened to the advice of other officers in the New York camps also. They reported (October 3) in favor of establishing a military academy. A different plan was, however, adopted, namely, to educate young officers while serving with their regiments. It is not yet known to whom this latter suggestion was originally due. It was carried out during the years 1777 to 1783 under the direction of Col. Lewis Nicola, a French officer of distinction and learning, who has gained a bad name in American history because he proposed that General Washington should assume the

functions of king. On the 1st of October, 1776, the Board of War, on the motion of John Adams, resolved "that a committee of five be appointed to prepare and bring in a plan of *a military academy at the Army,*" and on the same day Adams wrote to Knox to notify him that the committee was appointed and to ask for his advice upon the new project. What this project was appears in the Journals of Congress June 20, 1777:

Resolved, That a Corps of Invalids be formed, consisting of eight companies * * * this corps to be employed in garrison and for guards in cities and other places where magazines or arsenals or hospitals are placed; as also to serve as *a military school for young gentlemen* previous to their being appointed to marching regiments; for which purpose all the subaltern officers, when off duty, shall be obliged to attend a mathematical school, appointed for the purpose, to learn geometry, arithmetic, vulgar and decimal fractions, and the extraction of roots; and that the officers of this corps shall be obliged to contribute one day's pay in every month * * * for the purpose of purchasing a regimental library of the most approved authors on tactics and the *petite guerre* * * *

Lewis Nicola was elected to be colonel of the Corps, and the Board of War was ordered to report a plan for carrying out the foregoing resolve.

The report has a French flavor. The Corps of Invalids was in fact a Corps of Veterans; the Academy was an *Ecole d'Application*; the term *petite guerre* was naturalized in America from this time onward. General Washington always uses it in his letters, for instance. The Board of War reported its plan for raising the corps on June 23, and in July, 1777, the corps was organized in Philadelphia. According to the organic act, it was to contain 40 officers and 920 enlisted men.

The plan adopted by Congress (July 16, 1777) declares: "As this corps is intended, not only as a provision for disabled officers and soldiers, but as *a school for propagating military knowledge and discipline*, no officers need apply but such as produce ample certificates." During the winter of 1778 General Knox, with the artillery, was at Pluckemin, N. J., and here he established "an academy where lectures are read

in tactics and gunnery." The auditorium of the academy was 50 by 30 feet, "arched in an agreeable manner, and neatly plastered within."

The post of West Point received its first garrison January 20, 1778, and work on Fort Clinton was immediately begun. As early as February 8 there was a company of sappers and miners at the post; in November there were two companies of artillery there; a Laboratory was constructed in December; possibly some of the Corps of Invalids were present in April, 1778. In September a letter from West Point says that it is now too late to bring any of the Invalids on from Philadelphia—the meaning possibly being that no more can be sent this season. In November, however, it is recorded (November 17) that members of the Invalid Corps were then on duty at West Point. In July, 1781, the Invalids at Philadelphia were marched to West Point at the request of Washington. In August, 1782, the whole corps was at that post.

It thus appears that in 1778 some of the Corps of Invalids were at West Point; in 1781 the greater part of them; and in 1782 all of them. They constituted the Military Academy at the Army. How much did the term imply?

An elaborate map of West Point, made by a French officer in 1780, in the very midst of the war, throws a flood of light on the question.

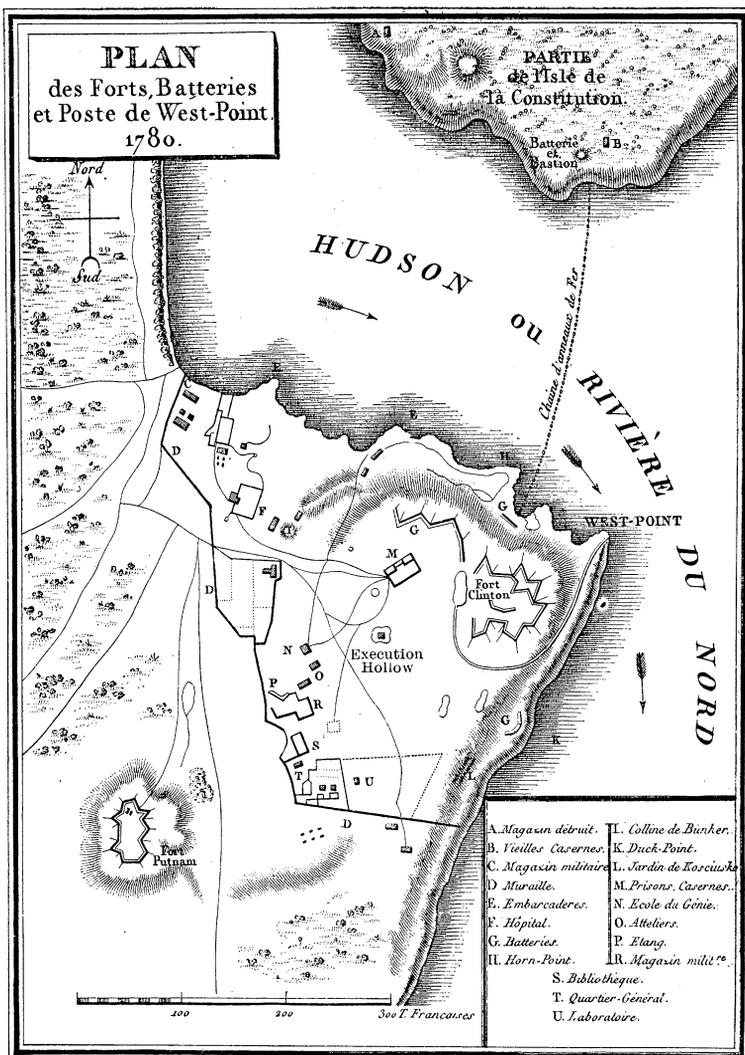
The legend of the map declares that it represents the post in 1780, and it is easy to prove that this is at least approximately correct. The situations and dimensions of many buildings are laid down, and among them three are especially important, viz:

N: *École du Génie*, about 64 by 56 feet (it is the "Old Academy" on the map of 1815).

S: *Bibliothèque*, about 120 by 60 feet (not on the map of 1815).

U: *Laboratoire*, about 30 by 36 feet (not on the map of 1815).

The engineers had been domiciled at West Point for something like two years, as we shall see, and they, or the officers of the Invalid Corps, or both, had established an engineer school, which was housed in a substantial building. The



MAP OF WEST POINT IN 1780.

N, Engineer school; S, library; U, laboratory.
(The words in English were added in 1904.)

building for the library is indicated only in outline; those for the school and the laboratory are drawn as permanent structures. Paths lead from the School to the barracks, and also to the springs where the water for the post was obtained.

There is, then, no doubt that in the very midst of the Revolutionary war, at least as early as 1780, and possibly as early as 1778, an engineer school was in operation at West Point.

There was also a laboratory, which must be considered as the "continental laboratory"—the parent of the Springfield armory. It was constructed before December 21, 1778. The library for the Military Academy at the Army was either built or projected on a large plan. This is the parent of the library of the U. S. Military Academy. It is the oldest Government Library in the United States. Military instruction of some sort was, no doubt, given intermittently. It is recorded that "experiments" in gunnery were tried on February 5, 1780. On October 29, 1780, a return of the Corps of Invalids at West Point gives the strength as 20 officers, 1 surgeon, 1 mate, and 362 enlisted men. In August and October, 1780, the entire garrison was 3,000 men.

Early in 1783 it was seen that the American Revolution had been successful. In the plans for the peace establishment of the Army the necessity for military education was not forgotten. It had been impressed on every officer of experience; on Knox, whose artillerists needed a training like "that of Woolwich;" on Alexander Hamilton, at first an artillery officer under Knox, and later a trusted member of Washington's military family; on Washington himself, who daily felt the necessity for artillerists and engineers; as well as on all in high command. The foreign officers in our Army had demonstrated the immense value of professional training. Duportail, Kosciusko, Villefranche, L'Enfant of the Engineers; Steuben, Inspector-General; are names that at once arise in the memory.

On April 11, 1783, Alexander Hamilton, chairman of the Committee of Congress on Peace Arrangements, asked General Washington's opinion on the military establishment of the new nation. Washington referred this request to his

general officers then encamped near Newburgh and at West Point. The subject was thoroughly discussed by other officers also about the same time.

On March 3, 1783, and again on May 17, Benjamin Lincoln, then Secretary of War, recommended to Congress the establishment of five arsenals at each of which there should be a military academy and that officers of ability should be placed in command who could superintend the instruction of the pupils. West Point was one of the sites selected for a school of the sort.

Baron Steuben, writing to Washington and to Lincoln upon the peace establishment (April, 1783), submitted a very complete plan for a military academy. The principal features were:

The establishment to consist of a military academy and a military manufactory under a director-general and a council (the council to be constituted somewhat like our Board of Visitors).

One hundred and twenty Cadets, to be over 14 years of age, were provided for, and each one was to pay \$300 per year.

All Cadets were to be instructed in natural philosophy, eloquence and belles-letters, civil and international law, history and geography, mathematics, civil architecture, drawing, French, horsemanship, fencing, dancing, and music; and artillery and engineer Cadets were to receive further and special instruction. Cadets were to be uniformed.

There were to be 5 professors (of mathematics, law, etc.) and 7 masters (of architecture, French, dancing, etc.).

No person was to be commissioned in the Army who was not a graduate of one of the military academies (unless he had served as an officer in the Revolutionary war).

The director-general was to receive a salary of \$2,832; professors, \$1,344.50; Cadets, about \$260 per year.

On the 16th of April, 1783, General Huntingdon, writing from West Point, said: "West Point has been held as the key of the United States. * * * With a little more expense than maintaining a garrison of 500 or 600 men it may be made a safe deposit where every military article may be kept * * * and with a small additional expense an academy might be here instituted for instruction in all branches of the military art."

Timothy Pickering, Quartermaster-General, wrote his

thoughts on the military peace establishment to Washington on April 22, 1783. He gives at length the duties that the Army will have to perform in time of peace, and recommends the establishment of five arsenals. The main arsenal was to be at West Point; the others in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and South Carolina. The garrison of West Point should be 100 men, besides the Corps of Invalids. Engineer officers must be retained in the reorganization. An elaborate plan for training the militia was laid down. Each State will probably choose to garrison, with troops of its own, all its forts on the seacoast. He then says: "I will take the liberty to add a page or two on the subject of military academies, which have been mentioned as proper to be erected where the Continental arsenals shall be established. * * * If these plans are not *impracticable*, I am clear that at present they are *inexpedient*. * * * If anything like a military academy in America be practicable at this time it must be grounded on the permanent military establishment for our frontier posts and arsenals and the wants of States, separately, of officers to command the defenses on their seacoasts. On this principle it might be expedient to establish a military school or academy at West Point. * * *"

General Washington wrote to Hamilton (May 2) his "sentiments on a peace establishment," recommending "academies, one or more, for the instruction of the art military, particularly those branches which respect engineering and artillery; * * * that the regiment of artillery and the Corps of Invalids should garrison West Point," * * * and saying: "I would propose that provision should be made at some post or posts where the principal engineers and artillerists shall be stationed for instructing a certain number of young gentlemen in the theory of the art of war."

The chief engineer, Brigadier-General du Portail, reported on the establishment for the artillery and engineering department on September 30, 1783. "The necessity of an academy to be the nursery of the corps is," he says, "too obvious to be insisted on." The academy would require masters (professors) of mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, and

drawing; military instruction should be given by officers of the Army; the course of study should extend over three years; twenty students should be appointed, "because if the Union of the States is durable," they will be needed in the future.

Capt. Lewis Garranger memorialized Congress in 1783 on the necessity of retaining West Point, and submitted a scheme of military education. The military academy should, he thinks, be established at Philadelphia, and other schools might well be founded—two in the northern States and one in Charleston, S. C.

The very first foreign suggestion for a military academy has been found by Capt. H. M. Reeve, U. S. Army, in a letter of M. Floborque de la Rocatelle to General Washington, dated August 5, 1777. He proposes to form a school where the theory of the military art shall be taught, and that the regiment of artillerists and engineers and that of bombardiers and cannoneers shall be stationed at the post chosen for the school. Nothing came of this suggestion.

The committee of Congress of which Lieut. Col. Alexander Hamilton was chairman brought in (1783) a plan for a peace establishment of the Army. Their report contemplated four regiments of infantry and one of dragoons, and one regiment of artillery incorporated in a corps to be denominated the "Corps of Engineers." This corps was to be composed as follows: 1 major-general, or brigadier general, commandant; 65 other commissioned officers; "1 professor of mathematics; 1 professor of chemistry; professor of natural philosophy; professor of civil architecture, etc." The professors were to receive the pay of lieutenant-colonels. Arsenals should be kept on foot in different parts of the United States. "With respect to the establishment of military academies * * * the committee are of opinion that the benefits of such institutions rarely compensate for the expense; and that, by having the 3 professors proposed to be attached to the Corps of Engineers all the utility to be expected from academies may be substantially obtained; that, at all events, such institutions can only be the object of future consideration."

Here, it will be seen, the plan of a military academy like that of Woolwich is again put aside in favor of a regimental

school of application. Washington had recommended the same plan. In a report of the Secretary of War—General Knox—of 1790, which was approved by General Washington, “adequate institutions for the military education of youth” were again advocated.

In order to follow the evolution of the idea of military education it will be necessary to summarize the early history of the Army, especially that of the Artillerists and Engineers.

On June 16, 1775, provision was made by Congress for a chief engineer of the Army and two assistants, and during the next years various persons, usually French officers, were appointed to be officers of Engineers with the rank of colonel, lieutenant-colonel, major, and captain, while in 1777 the Chevalier du Portail was made brigadier-general and head of the Corps. An order of June 9, 1778, from the headquarters of the army at Valley Forge reads as follows: “Three captains and nine lieutenants are wanted to officer the Corps of Sappers. As the Corps will be *a school of engineering* it opens a prospect to such gentlemen as enter it. * * * The qualifications of the candidates are that they be natives, and have a knowledge of the mathematics and drawing, or at least be disposed to apply themselves to these studies.” The engineers in the service were formed into the Corps of Engineers by act of Congress, March 11, 1779. At the termination of the Revolution the Secretary at War was directed to express to the French minister the high sense Congress entertained of the zeal, ability, and conduct of several French engineer officers, and the Agent of Marine was directed to provide them with a passage to France in the ship *Washington*. They had done a great work in America and had trained a large number of Americans in their art. They left behind them several younger officers who remained in the service of the United States. An act of Congress, of March 3, 1799, authorized the appointment of two engineers with the rank of lieutenant-colonel, and on March 16, 1802, the organic act of the U. S. Military Academy was passed. It authorized the President of the United States to organize and establish a Corps of Engineers to consist of 1 major, 2 captains, 2 lieutenants, and 10 cadets and to enlarge the corps so that the

number of the whole corps shall at no time exceed 20 officers and cadets. “*The said corps when so organized shall be stationed at West Point, in the State of New York, and shall constitute a military academy.*”

A military academy “on the plan of Woolwich,” first suggested by Knox in 1776, was thus finally established in 1802. The intervening years were spent in experiments in educating young officers with their regiments. It required nearly a quarter of a century to convince Congress and the country that a work that all recognized to be indispensable could best be done at a separate school.

The act of Congress of May 9, 1794, authorized the raising of a Corps of Artillerists and Engineers and provided for four battalions of four companies, each company to consist of 1 captain, 2 lieutenants, and 2 *Cadets* with the pay, clothing, and rations of a sergeant, and of 62 enlisted men. Thirty-two Cadets of artillery and engineers were thus authorized to be appointed. They were young gentlemen in training to become commissioned officers, and took the places, and some of the duties of the ensigns of earlier days. They carried muskets like sergeants, but were sometimes detailed (in later years) as judge-advocates of general courts-martial. The act of 1794 further provides “that it shall be the duty of the Secretary of War to provide, at the public expense * * * the necessary books, instruments, and apparatus for the use and benefit of the said corps.”

In 1798 the act of July 16 increased the Army. It fixed the pay of Cadets at \$10 per month and two rations per day, and enacted “that the President of the United States be * * * authorized to appoint a number, not exceeding four, of teachers of the arts and sciences necessary for the instruction of the artillerists and engineers, who shall be entitled to the monthly pay of \$50 and two rations per day.” The duties of the teachers were to instruct all the junior officers, and possibly the non-commissioned officers, not merely the Cadets.

The act of March 3, 1799, provided for 10 Cadets to each regiment of infantry and cavalry, and 32 Cadets to each regiment of artillery, and fixed the pay of Cadets as before (except

that Cadets of cavalry were supplied with forage). The act of March 16, 1802, retained 2 Cadets to each company of artillery and 1 to each of infantry at \$10 monthly pay, and established the Corps of Engineers with its 10 Cadets (the Military Academy) who were to receive \$16 monthly and two daily rations. Until this date the artillerists and engineers had formed one corps.

From 1794 to 1802 there were Cadets "of the Service," as they often called themselves then and afterwards, and only these. In 1802 10 Cadets of engineers were authorized. They, with their officers, were stationed at West Point, and constituted the Military Academy of the years 1802-1812. In 1808 the act of April 12 provided for an addition to the Army, consisting of infantry, riflemen, light artillery, and light dragoons. Each company or troop of the regiments was to contain two Cadets, paid like those already in the service.

The act of January 11, 1812, again authorized an additional military force, to consist of infantry, artillery, and light dragoons. Cadets were authorized (and paid) as before, two to a company or troop. The act of April 20, 1812, made further provision for the Corps of Engineers, and enacted "that the Cadets heretofore appointed in the service of the United States, whether of artillery, cavalry, riflemen, or infantry, or that may in the future be appointed as hereinafter provided," shall at no time exceed 250; that they may be attached, at the discretion of the President, as students to the Military Academy, etc." The sum of \$25,000 was appropriated for erecting buildings and for providing a library, apparatus, and instruments for the school.

The foregoing summary has carried us too far forward and it is necessary to return to the year 1783. From this date the subject of military education was allowed to sleep, until General Washington, then President, suggested the establishment of a military academy in his message of January 8, 1790, and repeated the recommendation in his message of October 25, 1791. In 1790 Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury, reported in favor of retaining West Point as

^aThe wording of the act unintentionally excluded Cadets of light artillery from the Military Academy.

a military post; and General Knox, then Secretary of War, in a report of January 21, 1790, expressed himself strongly in favor of a Military Academy. In November, 1793, the question of a military school at West Point was debated by the Cabinet—Washington, Randolph, Knox, and Hamilton favoring its establishment. Jefferson doubted whether such action would be constitutional. Washington declared that he would leave this for Congress to decide.

In the same year (1793) Pickering, Secretary of War, selected scientific foreign officers to be connected with a school at West Point. In President Washington's fifth annual address (December 1793) he declares that "it is an inquiry that can not be too solemnly pursued" whether the militia act ought not to be improved by affording "an opportunity for the study of those branches of the military art which can scarcely ever be attained by practice alone." On the 9th of May, 1794, the grade of Cadet was created, as before stated, and "in 1794 at the recommendation of Washington, a military school was commenced at West Point." It continued until its building—the old provost prison, was burned in 1796. Three battalions of the Corps of Artillerists and Engineers were assembled at West Point in 1795, and early in 1796 Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant Rochefontaine, and Majors Tousard and Rivardi, all highly educated officers, were at the post. The school began in earnest in February, 1796, as is shown by the following orders of Colonel Rochefontaine:

WEST POINT, *February 10, 1796.*

The officers are requested to attend in the study room every day, in the morning, between the hours of 11 and 12 o'clock, and from 4 to 5 in the afternoon, to receive the first lecture on the theoretical part of fortification. The morning meeting will be spent in explaining the different principles of fortification and copying the author (Mr. Muller). In the afternoon the officers will draw the plans relative to the explanation given in the morning. The officers will be furnished in the room with pen, ink, and paper in the morning, and the books from which the study is originated. In the afternoon they will be provided with paper, pencil, ruler, and mathematical instruments for drawing. Mr. Warren, temporary engineer, will attend the evening sitting and will explain the principles of drawing. The officers may meet an hour sooner if they



THE LIBRARY, U. S. M. A. (BUILT, 1841. DRAWN BY HENRY WINSLOW, 1903.)

please for their own information. The rule to be observed in the room for the preservation of good order will be that the senior officer present will be the moderator, and will preserve over the other officers that superiority which military subordination has established among military men.

Twelve companies, comprising 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 major, 3 adjutants, 8 captains (1 on furlough), 13 lieutenants, 3 Cadets (1 on furlough), were then present at West Point, according to the muster roll for February, 1796.

WEST POINT, *March 28, 1796.*

To-morrow at 10 o'clock in the morning the officers are invited to meet at the instruction room to copy the several plans of fortification drawn after the directions of Muller. Captain Finiel, temporary engineer, sent to this garrison by the Secretary at War, will assist the officers in the execution of said plans. To-morrow at 4 o'clock in the afternoon, meeting of the officers in the instruction room for the continuation of the lectures on the Baron's ^a Regulations.

[By order of Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant Stephen Rochefontaine.]

In May a parapet was constructed "for the field-pieces to practice upon," and about the same time a "wooden fortification" was erected for instruction. It was a model of a bastioned front made by Colonel Rochefontaine and Major Rivardi, and stood in the "model yard" near the present site of the Thayer statue. It was surrounded by twelve elm trees planted by Swift and Armistead about 1802.

In April the study room (otherwise "the instruction room") was destroyed by fire, but the school went on, as the following order shows:

WEST POINT, *April 28, 1796.*

The Secretary of War having intimated that it was his desire that the instruction of the officers should be continued daily, and that some of the officers' rooms might be made use of until the loss of the officers' barracks is repaired, it is the lieutenant-colonel commandant's request that a board of officers consisting of four captains of the garrison should sit as commissioners to visit in the private quarters the rooms that may be thought convenient to serve as a study room, and make a report immediately.

Gen. J. G. Swift, writing in 1807, speaks of a visit made by himself to Albany in 1802, during which he heard Alexander Hamilton express regret at the burning of the old provost at West Point in 1794.^b Hamilton said that "the fire

^a Baron von Steuben's Regulations.

^b Query: 1796?

was by some deemed a design of such officers as had been sent to the Point for instruction in the arts and sciences, as provided for by law." In a letter written in 1840, General Swift states that a school was commenced at West Point upon the recommendation of Washington in 1794, and that the building was burned down by an incendiary in 1796, with its contents of books and apparatus.

Alexander Hamilton's first draft of President Washington's message to Congress (December, 1796) recommended a military academy.

The school of fortification continued for some months at least, for under the date of December 16, 1797, we find an entry in the Quartermaster's waste book respecting the issue of 20 mahogany rulers, 4 sticks of india ink, gamboge, indigo, paint brushes, etc., which could only have been for the use of the study room.

Practical instruction was given to the young officers (Cadets recently promoted to be lieutenants) according to the order following:

WEST POINT *June 26th, 1797.*

SIR: You will inform Lieutenants Rodrigue, Vandyke, Ross, Rand & Parkinson—that there will be exercises for them every other day at five o'clock in the afternoon, untill further orders. It will begin this day, and they will meet at the woodyard^a at the hour aforesaid.

The Captains will take turn to Instruct the Gentlemen in the exercise of the *field Pieces, Howitzers, Mortars Seacoast pieces*, etc.

I am, Sir, Your obed't. serv't.

STEP. ROCHEFONTAINE

Lt. Col. Comt.

Lieut. Dransey. [Adjutant]

In June, 1798, Alexander Hamilton wrote to the Secretary of the Treasury regarding steps that should be taken "without delay," and one of them was "to establish an academy for military and naval instruction. This is a very important measure and ought to be permanent." The plan for a military academy held its place among the thousand preoccupations of Hamilton's far-seeing mind. In July, 1799, a project of his had been forwarded to Mr. McHenry, Secretary of War, as we learn from a letter of President Adams.

^aThe woodyard was, it is believed, situated on the site of the academic building of 1902.

In September of this year the superintendency of the Military Academy of the United States—an institution not yet established—was offered by Adams to Benjamin Thompson, Count Rumford. Rumford—major-general, minister of war and privy counsellor, fellow of the royal societies of London, Berlin, and Munich, founder of the Royal Institution—had reorganized the military establishment of Bavaria and had founded the Royal Military Academy of Munich. By his epoch-making experiments on artillery, on heat, and in chemistry, he had placed himself in the very front rank of men of science. It is curious to speculate on what the history of our Academy would have been had its direction been assumed in 1798 by Rumford, the great physicist, soldier, statesman, and practical man of affairs.

Hamilton, on November 23, 1799, presented to the Secretary of War (McHenry) a complete plan for the organization of a military school or group of schools.^a A copy of the scheme was sent to Washington on the 28th of the same month. On December 12 Washington replied to Hamilton in the very last letter that came from his hand:

MOUNT VERNON, *12 December, 1799.*

SIR: I have duly received your letter of the 28th ultimo, enclosing a copy of what you had written to the Secretary of War, on the subject of a Military Academy.

The establishment of an Institution of this kind, upon a respectable and extensive Basis, has ever been considered by me as an object of primary importance to this country; and while I was in the Chair of Government, I omitted no proper opportunity of recommending it, in my public speeches and other ways, to the attention of the Legislature. But I never undertook to go into a detail of the Organization of such an Academy, leaving this task to others whose pursuits in the paths of Science, and attention to the arrangements of such Institutions, had better qualified them for the execution of it. For the same reason I must now decline making any observations on the details of your plan; and as it has already been submitted to the Secretary of War, through whom it would naturally be laid before Congress, it might be too late for alterations if any should be suggested.

I sincerely hope that the subject will meet with due attention, and that the reasons for its establishment, which you have so clearly pointed

^a A letter on the same subject was addressed by Hamilton to the Speaker of the House of Representatives early in 1799.

out in your letter to the Secretary, will prevail upon the Legislature to place it upon a permanent and respectable footing.

With very great esteem & regard, I am, &c.

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

Washington "ever" considered the establishment of a military academy as of "primary importance." In writing these words his mind must have reviewed the whole history of his endeavors to establish a system of military education; the early proposals of members of his military family; the formation of the Military Academy at the Army; the assembly, by his order, of the Corps of Invalids at West Point in 1780-81, with its little engineer school on the plain; the "experiments" in gunnery during the war; the organization of the sappers; the Army's need of trained engineers; his own projects of 1783 to include a military school as a part of the peace establishment. Noting how all these had so far failed to fulfill the prime necessity, he would recall his frequent recommendations to the Legislature; the creation of Cadets of the Service in 1794; the provision for teachers, instruments, and apparatus; the selection of accomplished officers to conduct the school at West Point, and their beginning of systematic military education. For nearly a quarter of a century he had striven to establish a military academy for the nation. Now that the project was near accomplishment, he once more expressed to the Legislature his convictions and hopes, and in this final letter claimed his part. He had ever advocated the establishment of two national institutions of learning—a military academy and a national university. On the establishment of either it could claim him as its father and founder.

Hamilton's plan for a military academy contemplated the foundation of four schools—the fundamental school, the school of engineers and artillerymen, the school of cavalry and infantry, the school of the Navy.

The staff was to be a director-general; a director to each of the separate schools; 6 professors of mathematics; 4 of geography and natural philosophy; 2 of chemistry, including mineralogy; 3 architects; 4 drawing masters; 1 riding master; 1 fencing master. The fundamental school was to form

officers for all arms of the service and for the Navy, consequently in this school all the sciences necessary to a perfect knowledge of the military art were to be taught. Its plan corresponds exactly to that of the Military Academy of to-day, except as to its relations to the Navy. The school of engineers and artillery and of cavalry and infantry, were to be *schools of application* like those subsequently established at Fort Monroe, Fort Leavenworth, and Willets Point.

The schools were to be "provided with proper apparatus and instruments for philosophical and chemical experiments, for astronomical and nautical observations, for surveying, and such other processes as are requisite. * * * It would also tend greatly to the perfection of the plan if the academy of artillerists and engineers was situated in the neighborhood of founderies of cannon and manufactories of small arms." Here we have the plan of Knox—an academy like Woolwich—elaborated by Hamilton. In its essentials it is the scheme of military education of the whole American Army for the century 1802-1902.

On July 25, 1800, John Adams wrote to the Secretary of War (Dexter) respecting a military academy. He is ready to appoint 64 cadets, 4 teachers, and 2 engineers; he directs that books and instruments should be bought; is of the opinion that cadets should be instructed at different stations in rotation; that midshipmen should be admitted also; and he asks if Capt. W. A. Barron and Mr. B. de Pusy will do as teachers.

On the 28th of September, 1800, Col. Henry Burbeck, chief of Artillerists and Engineers, submitted to the Secretary of War (Dexter) a memorandum recommending the establishment of a "military school for instructing the arts of gunnery, fortification, pyrotechny, and everything relative to the art of war; that there be taken from the line of the Artillerists and Engineers 1 field officer and 4 captains well versed in science, especially in mathematics and natural philosophy, to be employed in superintending the laboratory and instructing the officers of the line and the Cadets, whom the commanding officer of each separate district shall send, in rotation,

* * * and that the whole superintendency and instruction be afforded by these officers." This plan for a school of application, for officers and Cadets jointly, was a return to the policy carried out in 1797 by Colonel Rochefontaine. The plan did away with the 4 civilian teachers of the arts and sciences authorized by the act of 1798, and thus effected a small economy.

On January 6, 1801, Mr. George Baron was, nevertheless, appointed as a teacher under this act. He acted as professor of mathematics at West Point until he was dismissed February 11, 1802. He was a man of force and ability, though not of high character. He had been a fellow-teacher with the celebrated Hutton at the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich, and his methods of instruction must have been those of the Woolwich of that day. Cadet Swift says (October, 1801): "Professor Baron furnished me with a copy of Hutton's Mathematics and gave me a specimen of his mode of teaching at the blackboard." The use of the blackboard in the class room is a special feature of West Point methods, the credit for which is often given entirely, but improperly, to Prof. Claude Crozet (1816-1823), formerly of the *École Polytechnique*. We owe to the *Polytechnique* many fine traditions, and especially our courses in Descriptive Geometry. The class-room use of the blackboard spread from West Point throughout the United States and has greatly influenced our common schools.

On the 14th of April, 1801, the Secretary of War writes to Lieutenant-Colonel Commandant Tousard to inform him of his appointment as inspector of artillery; "when you shall not be otherwise necessarily employed you will give all the assistance in your power in the instruction of such officers and Cadets as may be at West Point." On the next day the Secretary writes to the commanding officer at West Point that it is in contemplation to establish a military school there; and on the 12th of May he writes to General Wilkinson: "The President has decided on the immediate establishment of a military school at West Point; * * * Maj. Jonathan Williams is to be inspector of fortifications; * * * he is

to be at West Point to direct the necessary arrangements for the commencement of the school." A letter of the same date to the military storekeeper shows that it was contemplated to provide for 20 or 30 pupils—officers and cadets—a teacher of mathematics, and a "practical teacher of gunnery." The academy is to be a wooden two-story building, 30 by 20 feet, finished in a plain manner, the whole of each story to be in one room. The upper story was "the long room;" the lower was probably divided. On July 2, 1801, all cadets in the service (except one) are ordered to report at West Point early in September.

As in the school of 1796 the subaltern officers made difficulties and "refused to receive the instruction offered them by the wisdom of the Government." The Secretary of War (October 19, 1801) declares that such conduct must cease, and writes to an officer (November 19): "It is a duty to your country to improve this opportunity." An amusing picture of the discipline of the day is given in Swift's Memoirs. Cadet Swift had words with the professor of mathematics (Baron), who fled to the Academy and locked himself in, exchanging epithets with the angry cadet below.

Swift's account of the Academy in 1801 deserves quotation:

West Point plain is 190 feet above the level of the Hudson, and forms an area of 70 acres, bounded by the margin of the plain overlooking the river on the east and north. The buildings which I found on my first arrival at the Point were: At the [north] dock a stone house; on the brow of the hill above the first dwelling is the "White quarters," the residence then of the commandant, Lieutenant Osborn, and his beautiful wife; and then the artillery mess of Lieutenants Wilson and Howard. The Academy is situated on the western margin of the plain, near the base of rocks on whose summit, 400 feet above, stands Fort Putnam. Near the Academy was an office on the edge of a small hollow, in which depression were the remains of a mound that had been formed at the close of the Revolution, to celebrate the birth of a Dauphin of France, our great ally in those days. To the south of this relic were the headquarters that had been the residence of General Knox and the scene of many an humble meal partaken by Washington and his companions in arms, at this time the residence of Maj. George Fleming, the military storekeeper. Farther south the quarters of Lieutenants J. Wilson and A. Macomb and a small building afterwards used as a laboratory. In

front of these was the model yard, containing a miniature fortress in wood, used in the lectures on fortification, the handiwork of Colonel Rochefontaine and Major Rivardi. Around this yard Cadet Armistead and myself planted 12 elm trees. To the south and at the base of Fort Putnam Hill also were Rochefontaine's quarters, now the residence of the family of Lieutenant-Colonel Williams; diagonally from the garden gate of these quarters Rochefontaine had constructed a paved foot walk to the barrack on the northeast side of the plain, now the Cadets' quarters. They are 240 feet in length and were constructed by Major Rivardi, whose quarters were in a building at the northern base of the Fort Putnam Hill, by the road leading to the German Flats and Washington's Valley. Below the plain at the northwest, near the river, were the military stores, two long yellow buildings, containing the arms and accoutrements of the army of Burgoyne and also numerous brass ordnance surrendered at Saratoga, and especially a couple of brass "grasshoppers" taken by General Greene in South Carolina, and by resolve of Congress presented to that very distinguished commander, all under the care of Major Fleming, who seemed to view them as almost his own property, he having served in the conquest at Bemis Heights and Saratoga. To the east of these stores was the armory, and also the residence of Zebina Kingsley, the armorer, and his exemplary wife. To the east was the hospital, under the charge of Dr. Nicholas Jones, our surgeon, and brother of Mrs. Lieutenant Osborn.

At the northeast angle of the plain was Fort Clinton, a dilapidated work of Generals Duportail and Kosciusko, engineers in the Revolutionary war. This work was garnished with four 24-pounder cannon, on seacoast carriages. The fort also inclosed a long stone magazine filled with powder "many years of age." The gloomy portals of these walls might remind one of Dante's Inferno. To the west, overlooking the plain and 500 feet of elevation, is Fort Putnam, a stone casemated castle, having on its platform a couple of 24-pounder fieldpieces of artillery. This work was commenced in 1777, and had been repaired at various periods and never completed. The tradition was that Arnold had purposed to admit British troops from the rear of this castle to overawe the plain and works below. A surer plan for the purpose of the traitor could not have been devised. On the eastern margin of the plain and 60 feet below there are stone steps leading to a small area whose outward edge is of rock, sloping almost vertically to the Hudson. In this area is a small basin in which had played a fountain, the whole having been constructed by Kosciusko, and was his retreat and called after him, "Kosciusko's garden." Lieutenant Macomb and myself had repaired this garden, and it is a favorite resort.

Some 90 yards south of Rivardi's barracks is a circular depression in the plain, on the west margin of which are the ruins of the "old provost." Nearly a mile northwest of the Point a ravine leads to a

cascade over a rock, the water from which winds to the Hudson at the "red house," the occasional resting place of Washington, called "Washington's Valley," and is at the termination of the slope of the Crow's Nest, a mountain of 1,500 feet in altitude that overlooks the Point and river and many miles around. Adjoining the south boundary of the plain a road leads down the bank of the Hudson to Buttermilk Falls and to Fort Montgomery. The last named is the scene of the defeat of General Clinton, October, 1777. The road previously mentioned passed through the farm of Esquire North, whose house stood near the south boundary of the plain, a tavern that much annoyed the command at West Point by selling rum to the soldiers, because of an illegal act of Captain Stelle of the Army, who, in 1794, had leveled a fieldpiece at North's house and suffered a severe penalty therefor in a law suit. Mr. North's victory proved him to be a bad citizen, and his success an evidence of the law's supremacy.

On December 14, 1801, Major Williams, a grand-nephew of Benjamin Franklin, was ordered to repair to West Point and to take the superintendence of the military school. There were 12 "gentlemen Cadets" (the name was in use in 1816 or later). All of them were taught in one class. The academic hours were from 8 a. m. to noon. Hutton's Mathematics (a Woolwich book), Enfield's Natural Philosophy, Vauban's Fortification, and Scheel's Artillery were the textbooks. Surveying was taught by practice. The Academy was a small building near the present quarters of the Superintendent. It was "about as large as a country school-house, with its seats neatly painted in green"—all this by the care of Major John Lillie, commanding the post. His monument at West Point records that he was "an active agent in founding the Military Academy, 1801." It is worthy of note that he was the friend and business partner of General Knox. A model yard near the site of Thayer's monument contained wooden fortifications made by Rochefontaine and Rivardi. The staff of the school consisted of Capt. W. A. Barron (whose place was temporarily filled by Lieut. Stephen Worrell), Lieutenant Dransey, and Mr. George Baron. Several subaltern officers were ordered to West Point for instruction along with the Cadets, and the school went on during the summer—in "disorder," Colonel Williams reports. Cadet John Lillie, son of Major Lillie, was appointed

to the Army (not to the school) on December 24, 1801, at the age of 10 years and 7 months. He was at West Point from June, 1801, till December, 1805. In 1830 he writes in his journal, respecting the period of his Cadet life: "The Military Academy was then in its infancy. All order and regulation, either moral or religious, gave way to idleness, dissipation, and irreligion. No control over the conduct of the officers and Cadets was exercised."

By the act of Congress of March 16, 1802, the Military Academy was instituted, and on July 4 of that year went into operation. The act of 1812 established its present form. Its history begins with the year 1776. Its founder is Washington. Knox, Hamilton, Adams, Jefferson, Monroe, McHenry, Steuben, Huntington, Pickering, Duportail, and other patriots of the Revolution were the authors of various systems of military education for the new country born of war. In this group two names stand forth preeminent—Knox and Hamilton. Knox was the first proposer and the steady advocate of a military school of the very type of our own. To Hamilton the Academy and the Army owe a well-considered plan for military education that, in its main features, has sufficed for the needs of the century just passed.

[PREVIOUS](#)

[NEXT](#)