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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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History

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FILE NO.

A Report on the
BALCARRAS AND BREYMANN REDOUBTS
(Saratoga National Historical Park)

by:

Charles W. Snell
Historian
Saratoga National Historical Park
(February 2, 1949)

(History)

IMPORTANT

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ARNO B. CAMMERER,
Director.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

March 25, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for the Director.

There is attached a copy of Park Historian Snell's "A Report on the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts," dated February 2, 1949, together with three rendered drawings showing location and surrounding situations of the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts and a probable plan of the Balcarras Redoubt.

There is also attached a copy of Superintendent Ellsworth's transmittal memorandum of February 4. In this connection you will have received by this time a copy of my memorandum of March 24 to the Superintendent, Saratoga National Historical Park, concerning the preparation of PCP sheets for archeological work at the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts. It is the feeling of all who have reviewed Mr. Snell's report in this office that he has presented clearly and ably all the available evidence concerning the character and appearance of the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts, which protected the British right flank and proved to be the key to their position. It is also clear that further archeological work is necessary before restoration plans for these two important features can be undertaken. It is our recommendation that archeological work for this project be undertaken at Saratoga just as soon as funds can be provided for that purpose. It is also our recommendation that both the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts be restored as part of the historical development of Saratoga National Historical Park.

Elbert Cox,
Acting Regional Director.

Enclosure 177

cc: Supt., Saratoga N. H. P.

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

March 25, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for the Superintendent,
Saratoga National Historical Park.

There has been some delay on the part of those interested here in the office in reading Park Historian Snell's "A Report on the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts," but this has now been accomplished as you will note from copies of correspondence which you have no doubt received by this time.

I merely wanted to take this opportunity to express my own satisfaction with Mr. Snell's work on the report. He seems to have done a thorough piece of work with the sources and material he had at hand. In my opinion he has evaluated the evidence soundly and has presented it clearly without exaggeration, giving to the various sources the relative weight they merit.

The case for further archeological work at both the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts is very clear, in my opinion. This work should be done as soon as possible. It also seems to me beyond dispute that development plans for Saratoga National Historical Park should include the restoration of both the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts. Mr. Snell should be constantly on the lookout for any information bearing on these problems.

I wonder if Mr. Snell knows of any manuscript materials in German libraries, or repositories, that might be examined for us by members of the American military government in Germany. This might be a good opportunity to obtain valuable additional material.

There are a few typographical mistakes in Mr. Snell's report, one or two of which I think should be called to your attention. On page 2, last sentence, in the phrase "ran from the river east." Should not "east" be "west"? On page 26, first paragraph, there appears to be a typographical mistake in the sentence structure. I assume that the period after "fortifications" should be a comma and the following sentence beginning with "It is quite" is actually a continuation of the preceding sentence.

Roy E. Appleman,
Regional Historian.

cc: Director

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
REGION ONE
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

March 25, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for the Superintendent,
Morristown National Historical Park.

We have just recently received from Historian Snell a research report on the character and extent of the Balcarras and Breyman Redoubts at Saratoga National Historical Park, together with a description of their immediate environs as regards their open and wooded areas. This report was prepared in connection with needed archaeological work in the park and ultimate park development.

The report introduces certain evidence which relates to the ground cover plan for the park. This plan was prepared in the first instance by former Superintendent Hamilton and former Historian Koke. It has been in Historian Weig's hands for study for well over a year, I believe. It was intended that, following comments by you and Mr. Weig, the plan would be forwarded here for review and thence to the Director with recommendation for Service policy to guide ground cover development for Saratoga National Historical Park.

It is necessary that we bring the study of this plan to completion and establish a policy for the park. It would be appreciated, therefore, if all the materials in your possession relating to the Hamilton - Koke presentation of this problem be forwarded to us in the near future with whatever comments you wish to make. I believe Mr. Weig has already done extensive work on the problem and has valuable information concerning it.

Elbert Cox,
Acting Regional Director.

cc: Director
Supt., Saratoga N. H. P.

History file

A REPORT ON THE
BALCARRAS and BREYMANN
REDOUBTS

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UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Saratoga National Historical Park
Stillwater, New York
February 2, 1949

THE BALCARRAS AND BREYMANN REDOUBTS

AT

SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

A Report on the Physical Appearance and Method of Construction of the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts, about which centered the Second and Third Phases of the fighting of the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm on October 7th, 1777.

by
Charles W. Snell
Historian
Saratoga National Historical Park

Reference is made to a Memorandum from Regional Director Thomas J. Allen for Superintendent Ivan J. Ellsworth, dated January 3, 1949, requesting research reports on the Balcarras Redoubt and the Breymann Redoubt for the purpose of bringing together all the information that can be found on their physical appearance, method of construction, and a description of the military action which took place in and around them. The following report is submitted in compliance with this Memorandum.

I. An Account of the Nature of the Ground, of the Situation of the British Entrenched Camp, and of the Military Action of the 7th of October, 1777.

To understand fully the nature of the strategy and the course of the action in the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm on October 7, 1777, it is necessary

to have a clear picture of the ground and of the layout of the British entrenched camp. The Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts were erected after the First Battle of Freeman's Farm, September 19, 1777, in the period of September 20 to October 7, during which time the entire British camp was fortified. The great importance of these two redoubts and the part they played in the Battle of October 7, 1777, will be made clear from the following description of the British Camp.

The British Camp September 20th to October 7th, 1777

The front of the British camp was covered, in great part, by a strong series of ravines that begins in the southern section of the Freeman Farm area and runs east to within a half mile of the Hudson River, where the ravines then turn to the south. The sector of the lines covered by these large ravines was of great natural strength and the British found it necessary to erect only small scattered outworks along the edge of these ravines to render its fortification complete. At the point where the ravines turn south, the British line continued east across a high plateau to the Hudson River. The sector on the plateau was covered on the front by forests and the Royal Army further strengthened the position by constructing a continuous line of strong entrenchments across the plateau to the river. Along the river bluffs, north and south of Wilbur's Basin the British erected a series of strong redoubts to defend the river road, the batteaux, the hospital, and the Park of Artillery. The rear of the entire British camp was defended by a second series of strong ravines that ran from the river (east), ending in the northern section of the Freeman Farm area.

yes, it is west? H.
west. P. 20.
-2-

From the above description it can be seen that the front and rear of the British entrenched camp were strongly defended by large ravines and that the left flank of the Royal army was securely anchored on the Hudson River. The task that therefore confronted Burgoyne's military engineers was to find an adequate position on which to rest the right flank of the British army. As there were no positions of great natural strength on which to anchor the right flank, the British engineers attempted to remedy this defect by erecting on a series of knolls that runs north-south in the Freeman Farm area a strong redoubt, now called the Balcarras Redoubt, to cover the right flank of the army. A study of Wilkinson's maps, together with a personal inspection of the ground clearly indicates that the function of the Balcarras Redoubt was to close the gap between the southern and northern series of ravines in the Freeman Farm area that covered the front and rear of the Royal army, respectively. The Balcarras Redoubt was further designed to covered the heads of the southern system of ravines that protected the front of the line, at the point where they tend to become mere creeks in the Freeman Farm area.

Just north of the Balcarras Redoubt was a large area of relatively flat land, which, although intersected by 2 small ravines, still gave easy access to the British camp. This area was bounded on the north by a large and deep ravine that tied in with the system of ravines covering the back of the British camp. Also by this spot ran a road that continued on into the American camp.

To cover this final gap in the right flank, to prevent the Americans from sweeping across this flat area, and to cover the road, a second redoubt was erected, known now as the Breyman Redoubt. This also covered the right

flank of the Balcarras Redoubt. The Balcarras and Breymann redoubts were thus two separate works, intervisible from each other: the short gap between them was covered by artillery from both redoubts and was further protected by two small stockade redoubts or log cabins built in the gap. While the two large redoubts were separate works, it can be seen that their function was one and the same: to anchor the right flank of the Royal army.

British Strategy on October 7, 1777

The nature of the ground and layout of both camps, in turn, had a decisive effect upon the strategy of the British in the Battle of October 7. As has been stated, the fronts of both the British and American fortified camps were covered by a most intricate network of deep ravines that rendered the movement of artillery impossible; and, when it is remembered that this area was covered with heavy forest in 1777, it can be seen that the fronts of both camps were therefore practically impenetrable to all but small bodies of troops. This left two feasible routes of attack for the British (and for that matter the Americans) to choose from. First, there was the possibility of an attack on the American camp along the river road, but here the attacking army would be hemmed in on a narrow flood plain, with the river on one side and high river bluffs, which were securely in the hands of the Americans, on the other. It was clear that the attacking force on this ground would be at a tremendous disadvantage. The second feasible route of attack was to the west and south of Freeman's Farm. Here the ground between the flanks of both camps, although largely in forest, was ^{gently} rolling with only small creeks instead of large ravines to be crossed. It was possible for both armies to move artillery and large bodies of troops fairly rapidly across this area, as events were to prove.

The Battle of October 7, 1777, First Phase

Thus on October 7th when General Burgoyne, accompanied by 1500 men and ten cannon, struck out in a flanking movement to the southwest of Freeman's Farm, he was taking the only route that offered any real possibility of success: he was approaching the American fortified camp on its weakest side at the point where it could be most readily approached.

Major-General Horatio Gates resisted Burgoyne's advance by hurling a greatly superior force of American troops at the British flanking column. The Americans struck almost simultaneously the right, left and center of the British line and approximately fifty-two minutes after the first shots were fired or about 3:30 p.m. the British flanking column was in full retreat abandoning six pieces of artillery, thus ending the first phase of the Battle of October 7th.

The Battle of October 7, 1777, Second Phase

The second phase of the battle began about 4 p.m. as the defeated British and German troops retreated rapidly on their entrenched camp, leaving many of their officers and men dead on the field or prisoners in the hands of the Americans. The mortally wounded Brigadier-General Simon Fraser, Burgoyne's second in command, was one of the few wounded men the British were able to carry back into camp in the retreat. These troops poured into the sector of the British fortified camp that was closest to the scene of the previous fighting, namely, the Balcarras Redoubt. Here the retreating troops, together with the aid of units already stationed in the redoubt, turned and met the fierce onslaught of the American troops on the Balcarras Redoubt. Although the American troops,

now led on by General Benedict Arnold, were able to penetrate the abattis which covered the Balcarras Redoubt, they were unable to advance further into the work. The Americans continued assaulting this work until after dark but with no further success. Of this fierce phase of the fighting, a British officer stationed close by the Balcarras Redoubt, wrote "...the Americans stormed with great fury the post of the light infantry, under the command of Lord Balcarras, rushing close to the line, under a severe fire of grape-shot and small arms....In order that you may form some idea with what obstinacy the enemy assaulted the lines, from the commencement, at which time it was dark, till they were repulsed, there was a continual sheet of fire along the lines..."¹

In the House of Commons, Lord Balcarras remarked of this attack that "The lines were attacked, and with as much fury as the fire of small arms can admit."²

General Burgoyne in his letter of October 20th 1777 to Lord Germaine, wrote of this attack "The troops had scarcely entered the camp when it was stormed with great fury, the enemy rushing to the lines under a severe fire of grape-shot and small arms. The post of the light infantry under Lord Balcarras assisted by some of the line, which threw themselves by order into the entrenchments, was defended with great spirit, and the enemy led on by General Arnold was finally repulsed..."³

In his Defense, General Burgoyne further remarked of this attack "And if there can be any persons, who after considering that circumstance, and the positive proof of the subsequent obstinacy, in the attack upon the post of Lord Balcarras, and various other actions of that day, continue to doubt, that the Americans possess the quality and faculty of fighting... they are of a prejudice that it would be very absurd longer to contend with."⁴

After the first assaults on the Balcarras Redoubt had failed, General Arnold rode to the north, between the cross-fire of both armies, to the vicinity of the Breymann Redoubt. This may be said to have ended the second phase of the Battle of October 7 and although it was apparently unsuccessful, actually it made substantial contributions to the final American success that day. In making up his flanking column of fifteen hundred men, Burgoyne had drawn his men piecemeal from the various units of his force, and had left only two hundred men holding the Breymann Redoubt. When the flanking column retreated, the men had fled into the Balcarras Redoubt rather than to the positions where they had originally been stationed. The fierce and rapid American attack upon the vital Balcarras redoubt had therefore pinned down all the available British troops in that area and concentrated the attention of the British generals on this dangerous assault, while the Breymann Redoubt was still left in its weakly defended state.

Battle of October 7th: Third Phase

When Arnold came out in the vicinity of the Breymann Redoubt, he found before it fresh units of American troops that had circled further to the north, after the retreat of the British flanking column, and who had taken no part in the attack on the Balcarras Redoubt. Noticing the slack fire from the two log cabins or stockade redoubts that defended the short gap between the Breymann and Balcarras redoubts, Arnold took a part of the American forces and smashed through the gap, driving out the Canadian troops that had been defending these two works. Arnold then turned northward and struck the left and rear of the Breymann Redoubt while, at the same time, the main body of the Americans assaulted the redoubt on the front. The combined

assaults drove the defending German troops rapidly out of the redoubt and Arnold fell wounded as he entered the redoubt. Colonel Breyman, the commanding officer of the troops defending the redoubt, lay dead in his intrenchment as his troops retreated. Darkness fell and this together with the confused and exhausted state of the British army prevented any successful counter-attack to retake the Breyman Redoubt.

The Americans, on their part, sent in fresh units and artillery to hold the Breyman Redoubt. By taking the Breyman Redoubt the Americans had gained an easy access to the right flank and rear of the entire British camp. The Americans had unanchored the British right flank and now threatened the right flank and rear of the Balcarras redoubt, thus making that work also untenable. The heavy loss in men and artillery that day, the shortage of supplies, and the fall of the Breyman Redoubt rendered Burgoyne's entire position most precarious and made necessary a radical change of front if Burgoyne was to save his army from being cut in two. Accordingly, on the night of October 7th Burgoyne abandoned his lines and the Balcarras Redoubt and moved secretly to a new position along the Hudson in the desperate hope of being able to retreat to Canada with his defeated and exhausted army.

or a counterattack to retake redoubt.

From this account it can be seen that the Balcarras and Breyman Redoubts played a vital and central role in the second and third phases of the Battle of October 7th and around them centered the fiercest as well as some of the most dramatic action of the day. These two redoubts constituted the key to the entire British fortified camp.

II. The Physical Appearance and Method of Construction of the
Balcarras Redoubt.

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND GERMAN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF
THE BALCARRAS REDOUBT

The official and standing order on the method and type of fortification to be used by the British army in the Burgoyne Campaign of 1777 was issued by General Burgoyne at Sandy Bluff, Lake Champlain, on June 20, 1777. It reads:

General Orders:

"Officers of all Ranks commanding Posts, and Detachments, are constantly to Fortify in the best manner the circumstances of the place, and the implements at hand will permit. Felling Trees with their Points outward, barricading Churches and Houses, Breastworks of Earth and Timber, are generally to be effected in a short time, and the Science of Engineering is not necessary to find and apply such resources."⁵

1. Burgoyne, Earl of Balcarras, Earl of Harrington.

An examination of the Testimony of General Burgoyne, the Earl of Balcarras, and of the Earl of Harrington in the House of Commons proved to be disappointing. Lord Balcarras confined his remarks to the severity of the American attack on the Balcarras redoubt (noted on page 6 ante.) and to a discussion of strategy.

The Earl of Harrington, who served as a supernumerary aide-de-camp to Burgoyne on the campaign, discussed the British fortified camps as follows:

- " Q. How was our army employed between the 19th of September and the 7th of October?
A. The army itself was employed in strengthening its position.
Q. Did it take the army eighteen days to strengthen its position before it made any movement?
A. I can't exactly say. They were working all the time.
Q. What works were executed in that time?
A. There were numbers of redoubts erected; the tete-du-pont; lines before the camp; outworks to the lines, in which guards and picquets were placed; and batteries.

" Q. How many redoubts were erected?

A. I think in all there must have been five or six."⁷

General Burgoyne also confined himself to the discussion of strategy, tactics and the fierceness of the American onslaughts on the British lines (note - see page 6 ante.) throwing little light on the method or appearance of the British fortification. His letter of October 20, 1777 to Lord Germaine thus describes the British camp at Freeman's Farm;

"The army lay upon their arms the night of the 19th, and the next day took a position nearly within cannon shot of the enemy, fortifying their right, and extending their left to the brow of the heights, so as to cover the meadows through which the great river runs and where their bateaux and hospitals are placed. The 47th regiment of Hesse Hanau, and a corps of Provincials incamped in the meadows as a further security.... On our side it became expedient to erect strong redoubts for the protection of the magazines and hospital, not only against a sudden attack, but also for their security in case of a march to turn the enemy's flank."⁸

2. Anburey.

Thomas Anburey was a young volunteer who served in the Grenadier Company of the 29th Regiment of Foot. He fought in both battles of Freeman's Farm, and was stationed on guard duty a short distance from the Balcarras redoubt when it was attacked on the 7th of October by the American forces. Although he gives a full and colorful account of both actions and of life in the British camp, he throws little light on the subject of fortification. (see ante page 6). However, one of his remarks throws some light on the general nature of the British fortifications at Freeman's Farm:

"Whatever favorable opinion the General had entertained of our late encampment, after this attack (on the Breymann Redoubt) he thought our flank liable to be turned, and it would be impossible to accomplish an honorable retreat, fearing the only security of the army would consist in an ignominious flight, as our works would by no means resist cannon shot. Before we quitted them, we heard the enemy bringing up their artillery, no doubt with a view to attack us at day-break...."

Anburey does describe one redoubt he was stationed in at Saratoga from October 10 to 17.

"Upon our arrival at Saratoga, three companies of our regiment, one of which was that I belonged to, were posted in a small redoubt, close to the creek...This post was a small square redoubt, constructed with logs breast high...."⁹

3. Digby.

Lieutenant William Digby of the 53rd Regiment of Foot, fought in both Battles of Freeman's Farm. In his journal he gives a brief description of the fortifying of the British camp, which reads:

"Sept. 20th - About 12 the general reconnoitered our post and contracted the extent of ground we then covered to a more secure one nearer the river, which we took up in the evening - our left flank near the Hudson River to guard our battows and stores, and our right extending near two miles to the heights west of the river, with strong ravines, both in our front and rear....

"Sept. 23 - It was said we were to strengthen our camp and wait some favourable accounts from Gen. Clinton, and accordingly began to fell trees for that purpose.

"Sept. 26 - We still continued making more works."¹⁰

4. Lamb.

Sergeant Roger Lamb, also served through the entire Burgoyne Campaign in the British army. His only mention of fortification is as follows:

"20th (of Sept.) The army moved forward, and took post nearly within cannon shot of the American's fortified camp. Here the English strengthened their camp by cutting down large trees, which served for breast works."¹¹

5. Riedesel.

Major-General Baron Friedrich Adolph von Riedesel was the commander of the German contingent and fought in both Battles of Freeman's Farm. An examination of his Memoirs yields the following information:

"Accordingly, on the 20th, he (Burgoyne) inspected, with his other generals, the entire region of the country which had been hitherto occupied by his three columns. The result of this inspection was the posting of the Army from Freeman's farm across the woods and hills as far as Taylor's House, in front of bridge No. 2, and hence to the Hudson. At the same time - for the defense of the right wing, a redoubt was thrown up on the late battlefield near the corner of the woods, that had been occupied by the enemy, this side of the ditch (ravine). The defense of this ditch was entrusted to the corps of Fraser, who were to occupy the same position that the Germans had done on the day of the Battle (September 19th). The reserve corps of Breymann was posted the other side of the ditch (ravine), both for the protection of the right flank of Fraser's division and for the defense of a road leading from this point to the rear of the enemy.

"....The entire front was protected by a deep marshy ditch (ravine), with an undergrowth - outposts were made, these consisted of triangular redoubts. Palisade barricades of immense trees were cut.

"....The work of fortifying the camp was continued daily....In front of the line (on the plateau near the river) trees were felled to within a distance of 100 paces. More than 1000 men were employed for fourteen days on this work."

The Journal mentions that on October 4th the troops were still constructing more lines and it speaks of the Balcarras Redoubt in the Battle of October 7th as follows:

"....the detachment was nearly surrounded when Burgoyne determined to retreat to the great redoubt on the right wing."¹²

In his letter of October 21st, 1777, written from Albany to his Serene Highness, the Prince of Brunswick, General Riedesel refers to the Balcarras Redoubt (in the original German) as "Fraser's great redoubt" and states that the fortification was defended by "about 1500 men" on October 7th when the Americans attempted to storm the work.

In the same letter, General Riedesel gives the following description of the fortification on the left wing of the army (This account is translated from the original German of letter):

"As the greatest part of the army stood in the middle of a wood, all of the trees were cut down, and lines and points (Flechen) of trees and earth were made, so that our position was very strong."¹³

6. Pausch.

Captain Georg Pausch was the chief of the Hanau artillery that served in Burgoyne's army in the campaign of 1777, and he fought in both battles of Freeman's Farm. Although he was stationed on the left wing of the British camp, he yields considerable information on the method of construction of redoubts in that area, which may perhaps also apply to the Balcarras redoubt.

"20th Sept....The dead were buried on the field of Battle, instead of on the hill, because breastworks were thrown up there.

"24th Sept....An entrenchment of newly felled trees laid on top of each other has been made. The battery for cannon and howitzers is placed on the hill, and the openings between the trees are filled in with earth. On the outside, too, earth is thrown over them.

Pausch was attached to the flanking column in the first phase of the Battle of October 7th and upon the retreat of the column, he came upon one of Burgoyne's advanced pickets on the right flank, which Pausch describes as follows:

"I presently came across a little earth-work, eighteen feet long by five feet high."¹⁴

7. A German Officer.

A letter of a German Officer present in Burgoyne's camp during the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm, gives the following information on the Balcarras redoubt:

"The beaten corps took refuge within the large intrenchment of Fraser's division, and although the enemy attempted to scale and enter it, they were met with such a determined resistance that all their efforts proved vain."¹⁵

Contemporary British Maps

Two contemporary British maps, both drawn by Lt. W. Cumb. Wilkinson, Asst. Engineer, of the 62nd Regiment of Foot, who was with Burgoyne in both Battles of Freeman Farm, and both engraved by Wm. Faden in 1780, show the Balcarras Redoubt in some detail. They are (1) The Encampment and Position of the Army under Lt. General Burgoyne at Sword's House and Freeman's Farm on Hudson's River near Stillwater 1777, and (2) Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under his Excellency, Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights on Hudson's River near Stillwater, on the 20th Septr. with the Position of the Detachments etc. in the Action of the 7th of Octr. and the Position of the Army on the 8th of Octr. 1777.¹⁶

While both maps of Wilkinson seem to indicate accurately the general plan of the British camp from September 20th to October 7th, together with the outstanding topographical features of the area (This opinion is based on a careful study of the British and German contemporary accounts, the excellent study of the battlefield by Jared Sparks in 1830-1, and the archaeological work of Robert Ehrich in 1941), there is reason to believe that the maps are not actually in accurate scale. Many of the distances between known topographical landmarks on Wilkinson's map are inaccurate; the scale of Wilkinson's maps would indicate that the front covered by the Breymann Redoubt was 400 yards long while an actual measurement of the ground shows that the front between the two ravines that Wilkinson indicates as marking the limits of the redoubt is only 210 yards. The scale on his maps also indicates that the Balcarras Redoubt was only 466 yards long from north to south, which would make it only slightly larger than the Breymann Redoubt, yet when it is remembered that all the contemporary British and German accounts refer to the Balcarras Redoubt as the Large or Great redoubt, and that none of them refer to Breymann in such a manner, it would seem again that the scale of Wilkinson's map is off. My conclusion is then that while the plan of the Balcarras Redoubt shown on these maps may be generally correct, the scale of it is not.

An examination of all the other journals such as those of Hadden, the Baroness Riedesel and the material from the Canadian archives, etc., failed to yield any further information on the Balcarras Redoubt.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE BALCARRAS
REDOUBT

I have examined all the American journals, diaries, orderly books, and letters in the Park's possession for information on the Balcarras Redoubt without success. Most American accounts record the attack on the Balcarras Redoubt with the words, "Today we attacked their works."

Two accounts give some hints:

1. Mattoon:

Ebenezer Mattoon of Amherst, Massachusetts, served in an American artillery company that saw action in the second battle of Freeman's farm. In 1835, he gave the following account of the British camp:

"On the 7th of October....The British army, with its left resting on the river, commanded by Philips; their centre by Gen. Redhiesel, and the extreme right extending to the heights, was commanded by Lord Balcarras, where he was strongly fortified."17

2. Varick:

Colonel Richard Varick had served as Secretary to Major-General Philip Schuyler prior to Schuyler's removal from the command of the Northern Department on August 19, 1777. After Schuyler's removal, Varick served as a supernumerary aide-de-camp to General Arnold. Col. Varick continued writing to Schuyler throughout this later period, giving Schuyler information on the fortification of the American camp and the movements of the British and American armies. Varick was in the American camp at Bemis Heights from September 13th to September 26, at which time he was forced

to leave because of the quarrel between Arnold and Gates. His reports or letters to Schuyler are full of information based on American reconnaissance reports, which seems to have been very good. The following excerpt is taken from a letter of Varick to Schuyler dated Camp Sept. 25, 1777; 7 o'clock p.m.:

"The Enemy are strongly incamped & fortified....It is said the Enemy have fortified the Ground we fought on with a work of 12 or 14 feet high...."¹⁸

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN MAPS

There is in existence one known contemporary American map showing the British and American entrenched camps at Bemis Heights. This is the map of Colonel Rufus Putnam, entitled "An Orthographical View of the American and British Armies on the 7th & 8th of October 1777." Col. Putnam was in command of a Massachusetts Regiment that took part in the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm.

This map indicated that the Balcarras Redoubt was a large enclosed work defended by outguards, but there is no scale to the map, and no effort was made to depict the actual plan of the Redoubt. The map gives no information as to the method of construction or appearance.¹⁹

NOTE: See the extract from Putnam's Journal on page 29 of this report in which he refers to the Balcarras Redoubt as the enclosed redoubt.

LATER ACCOUNTS

In the years that followed the Revolution, many people visited the scene of the Second battle of Freeman's Farm, and some of them left accounts that throw some light on the nature of the British fortifications.

1. Silliman, 1819.

The following account of the visit of Professor Silliman to the Battleground - although he was not a participant in the battle - has value, from the fact that his relation is derived mainly from his guide, Major Ezra Buel, who was in the conflict.

42 years old.
"On our way to Freeman's Farm, we traced the line of the British encampment, still marked by a breast work of logs, now rotten, but retaining their forms; they were at the time covered with earth....This breastwork, I suppose to be a part of the line of encampment, occupied by General Burgoyne, after the battle of the 19th of September, and which was stormed on the evening of the 7th of October."

Speaking of a British redoubt at Saratoga, Silliman writes:

"When I was here in 1797 I examined it particularly. It was then in perfect preservation (I speak of the encampment of the BRITISH troops upon the hill near the Fish kil), the parapet was high and covered with grass and shrubs, and the platforms of earth to support the field pieces were still in good condition."²⁰

2. Stansbury: 1821:

P. Stansbury, a native of New York City, was a person who obtained some celebrity at the time by making a pedestrian tour of over 2,000 miles through New York, New England, and Canada. In his visit to the Battlefield he was guided by Ezra Buel. He wrote:

"The entrenchments of the two camps can to this day be traced, almost razed in some places, and in others overgrown with bushes and tall forest trees. The line of Burgoyne's camp, which lay north of the Americans, is visible and daily washing away and exposing rotten logs, which, in part, composed the breastworks."²¹

3. Hoyt, 1825:

In 1825 General Epaphras Hoyt, historian, born in 1765, visited the Battlefield and was guided over it "by one of the heroes of the battle of the 7th of October." Hoyt writes:

"Passing the small ravine south of Leggett's barn we rose an elevation, the post with another on a knoll a little further west, strongly fortified, and the woods cleared off by Burgoyne after the battle of the 19th. These elevations were occupied by Lord Balcarras' light infantry after their retreat from the first position....the battle of the 7th of October, and here, towards the close of the day, Arnold with Poor's and Patterson's brigades, made his desperate attack, and was repulsed, and he, with his horse, entangled in the surrounding abattis, from which, with the utmost difficulty, he extracted himself while under a heavy fire of grape and cannister from the British batteries."22

4. Sparks, 1830:

In 1830 and again in 1831, the eminent historian Jared Sparks visited the Saratoga battlefield. He was guided over the area by Major Ezra Buel and Mr. Charles Neilson. Both of these men had served through both battles of Freeman's farm and had resided in the area since that date. Aided by Buel and Neilson, Sparks drew an excellent sketch of the American camp at Bemis Heights. He did not draw one of the British fortified camp for it was his opinion that Wilkinson's maps gave an excellent picture of the plan of the British camp and of the action of both battles. Sparks' journal reads as follows:

"Burgoyne's camp

After the action of Sept. 19th Burgoyne took possession of the Heights between Freeman's Farm and the River, where he established his camp, and fortified it as well as he could. A few remains of the old breastworks are visible. They were formed of timber and earth. His division was posted nearest the River; Frazer's next; and then Balcarras on the southern part of Freeman's Farm. The German were still farther onward, and to the northwest of Freeman's Farm. All these localities are represented with great accuracy on Burgoyne's (Wilkinson's) drawing of the second action."23

5. Neilson, 1844:

Charles Neilson, the early historian of the Burgoyne campaign, writing in 1844, treats the Balcarras Redoubt in the following fashion:

"This long and bloody contest was now carried on between the British behind their works, and the Americans entirely exposed, or partially sheltered by trees, stumps or hollow at various distances....In the midst of this dreadful scene of blood and carnage, Arnold at the head of a band of brave fellows, from Poor's and Patterson's brigades, rushing like tigers, into the camp of Lord Balcarras, and encountering the British troops at the point of the bayonet, dealt death and destruction in every quarter...."24

6. Lossing, 1848:

In 1848 the famous historian Benson J. Lossing visited the battlefield, gathering material for his Field Book of the Revolution. He gives the following description of the Balcarras Redoubt and British camp:

"Burgoyne was equally busy strengthening his position. His camp was pitched within cannon-shot of the American lines. Across the plain to the river hills a line of entrenchments, with batteries, was thrown up, crossing the north ravine, not far from its junction with the Middle Ravine or Mill Creek. The intrenchments extended northward on the west side of Freeman's Farm....In many places these works may still be traced, especially by mounds and shallow ditches in the woods...."

"The light infantry, under Earl Balcarras, with the choicest portion of Fraser's corps, flanked on the left by the grenadiers and Hamilton's brigade, occupied the vicinity of Freeman's Farm...."

"With a part of the brigade of Patterson and Glover, he (Arnold) assaulted the works occupied by the light infantry under Earl Balcarras, and at the point of the bayonet drove the enemy from a strong ABATIS, through which he attempted to force his way into the camp. He was obliged to abandon the effort, and dashing forward toward the right of the enemy, exposed to the cross-fire of the contending armies, he met Learned's brigade advancing to make an assault upon the British works at an opening in the ABATIS, between Balcarras's light infantry and the German right flank defense under Colonel Breyman."25

7. Stone, 1877:

William Leete Stone, who devoted his life to the study of the Burgoyne Campaign, wrote in 1877 of the British camp and the Balcarras Redoubt:

"Accordingly, the day that was to have witnessed a renewal of the action of the 19th, Burgoyne devoted to the laying out of a fortified camp. He made the site of the late battle his extreme right, and extended his intrenchments across the high ground to the river. For the defense of the right wing, a redoubt (known as the Great redoubt) Balcarras Redoubt WAS thrown up in the late battlefield, near the corner of the woods that had been occupied by the Americans during the action, on the eastern edge

of the Ravine. The defense of this position was intrusted to the corps of Fraser. The reserve corps of Breymann were posted on an eminence on the western side of the ravine for the protection of the right flank of Fraser's division."

Stone writes of the attack on the Balcarras Redoubt:

"With a part of Patterson's and Glover's brigades he (Arnold) attacked, with the ferocity of a tiger, the Great redoubt (Balcarras Redoubt), and encountering the light infantry of Balcarras, drove them at the point of the bayonet from a strong abattis within the redoubt itself.... Then, spurring boldly on, exposed to the cross fire of the two armies, he (Arnold) darted to the extreme right of the British camp."²⁶

8. Trevelyan, 1907:

In 1907, the famous British Historian George Otto Trevelyan, without revealing his source of information, wrote of the Balcarras redoubt:

"....the open space in front of Freeman's Farm was searched by the fire of a redoubt, with walls from twelve to sixteen feet in height, flanked by strong entrenchments behind which some heavy guns were mounted."²⁷

9. Brandow, 1919:

John Henry Brandow, the author of The Story of Old Saratoga, describes the British camp and the Balcarras redoubt in the following terms:

"Burgoyne...began the construction of a fortified camp. The right embraced the Freeman farm, and also took in a hill about sixty rods to the northwest of the Freeman cottage, since called Breyman's hill. On this a strong redoubt was erected; another placed about fifteen rods north of the cottage, and the spot is now marked by a granite tablet; another called the Great Redoubt was located on a knoll a few rods southwest of the old battle well (this is a different well from the one now so marked). This defended the southwest angle of the camp. Others were located at proper intervals from this point east across the plain to the crest of the bluffs near the river. These redoubts were connected by strong entrenchments. The interval between Breyman's hill and the next redoubt to the south was defended by a breastwork of two parallel tiers of rails laid up between perpendicular posts and the space between filled with earth. (In this last sentence, Brandow gives no sources and it seems to be an original idea of his own.)"

In describing the action of the Balcarras Redoubt in the Battle of October 7th Brandow writes:

"The British in retreating to their defense were hotly pursued through the woods by the Americans, who assailed the front and entire right flank of Fraser's camp...He (Arnold) drove the enemy through and beyond the abatis at the point of the bayonet and then made desperate attempts to scale the works, but was finally beaten off with loss. This place proved to be a veritable "bloody angle" to the Americans, because in assaulting the redoubt they found themselves exposed to the fire of a strong battery shotted with grape and canister, and with little shelter to themselves save stumps and brush....Arnold seeing little chance for success here, recalled the men and then darted off alone northward toward the extreme British right in search of a more favorable opening."28

10. Nickerson, 1928:

Hoffman Nickerson, the author of The Turning Point of the Revolution, described the British camp and the Balcarras redoubt in the following words:

"The army from Canada began entrenching the position they had taken up on the 20th, including Breymann's post the main line of resistance was more than two miles long. Accordingly no attempt was made to hold continuous lines, especially on the right. Here was the most exposed part of the position, especially the angle at Freeman's farm, in which stood the British light infantry under Balcarras, some of them facing south and other west. To preserve the communication between Balcarras right rear and Breymann they ~~was~~ was only a redoubt feebly garrisoned by the handful of spiritless Canadians...."

"The reader will remember that the right of Burgoyne's entrenched camp had been held by Fraser and Breymann. Westward from the North Branch the British grenadiers had been posted and next to them the 24th Regiment, with Balcarras and the British light infantry strongly entrenched both in front and flank at Freeman's farm on the extreme right of the position. About half a mile north and a little west of Balcarras, Breymann and his German advanced corps had entrenched themselves on a little knoll, while the draw between them and Freeman's farm was held only by the spiritless Canadians posted in a couple of Log cabins."

Nickerson thus describes the attack on the Balcarras Redoubt:

"Arnold and the Americans already engaged, following the fugitives, arrived opposite Balcarras' post and promptly attacked. Although without artillery they pressed forward through a heavy fire both of musketry and of grapeshot from the British cannon....Under his (Arnold's) leadership the abatis in front of Balcarras' line was stormed and a determined attack made upon the breastworks themselves. Nevertheless their strength, together with the fact that Balcarras' light infantry had been reinforced by the survivors of the reconnoitring detachment, brought the assault to a stand. Notwithstanding the British artillery, the Americans continued a hot-fire fight at close range, sheltering themselves as best they could behind trees and stumps, or in hollows of ground within a hundred and twenty yards of the enemy."29

11. Later Maps of the Balcarras Redoubt.

The secondary maps that proved of some use in locating sites on the battlefield contain no information on the Balcarras redoubt. The maps fall into two classes; the maps of Neilson, Lossing, Stone and Nickerson have only general symbols to represent the fortifications and no effort was made to depict the actual nature of the works. The second class of maps are those of Brandow and Ruth Graham, who made a study of the battles of Saratoga for the War Department (her maps are in the Park Library). Their maps follow those of Lt. Wilkinson in attempting to represent the Balcarras Redoubt.³⁰

CONCLUSION

The writer has carefully studied all of the available contemporary American and British journals, diaries, documents, and letters. He has examined as well the numerous secondary accounts on microfilm, photostats and books in the Park's possession. All of the evidence that yields any information either on the general nature of the British fortifications or on the Balcarras redoubt has been extracted and presented in this report. The evidence is admittedly scanty but this appears to be due to the fact that the men involved in the Two Battles of Freeman's Farm gave rather full accounts of the action but paid little heed in their written accounts to the nature of their fortifications. An examination of the secondary authorities, Neilson, Lossing, Stone, Brandow and Nickerson, reveals that they, too, found themselves confronted with the same lack of evidence. These historians have therefore made no attempt in their works either to describe the Balcarras redoubt in detail or to relate its appearance or method of construction.

The writer has also carefully examined the Progress Reports of Archaeologist Robert Ehrich concerning his work at Saratoga National Historical Park in 1941. Armed with information from these reports and the two Wilkinson's maps, the writer has made the following attempt to establish the approximate north-south distance covered by the Balcarras Redoubt. By a careful study of the ground and of Wilkinson's maps, it is not difficult to determine the approximate northern end of the Balcarras Redoubt. Having selected this point, the writer, aided by Ranger Edward J. Schermerhorn, measured off the distance to the southern-most trench excavated by Archaeologist Robert Ehrich in 1941 on the Balcarras Redoubt. This is the trench in which Mr. Ehrich discovered two converging lines of entrenchments and hence believed himself to be somewhere in the vicinity of the south limit of the Balcarras Redoubt.³¹ The distance from the northern limit to this trench is 1374 feet. The writer then examined the area for a logical location for the southern end of the redoubt. About 126 feet further south the ground begins to fall away slightly so the writer selected this as a probable limit to the redoubt. The north-south distance of the Balcarras Redoubt was, therefore, possibly in the neighborhood of 1500 feet or 500 yards. The distance east-west from the top of the western slope of the Balcarras Redoubt to the head of the ravines which the work covered is 900 feet.

Gathering together now all of the evidence presented in this report on the Balcarras Redoubt, it would seem to this writer that the Balcarras Redoubt was undoubtedly the largest fortification that the British erected in their entrenched camp from September 20 to October 7th, 1777. Its north-south distance may have been 500 yards. It was an enclosed work mounting artillery. Its walls may have been from 12 to 14 feet high and its front

was covered by an abattis. Its walls were probably constructed of large trees, piled one upon the other, and these covered over with earth. Its ramparts, however, were probably not designed to resist prolonged artillery fire.

The reports and work of Archaeologist Robert Ehrich indicate that the Balcarras Redoubt, which is still in an open area, is readily subjective to successful archaeological work; that in 1941 sections of its walls were located, together with gun platforms, fire pits, graves and many relics. It thus seems to the writer that an archaeological program carried out on the Balcarras Redoubt would render a very real service to American history by uncovering information that is otherwise hopelessly lost. All surface indications of the redoubt have disappeared, and a search of the primary and secondary sources have not yielded enough information to make possible an accurate restoration of the Balcarras redoubt, but it is quite possible that an Archaeological program will fill in the large gaps in our knowledge of this fortification, which played such an important role in the Second Battle of Freeman's Farm.

III. The Physical Appearance and Method of Construction of the Breymann Redoubt.

CONTEMPORARY BRITISH AND GERMAN ACCOUNTS OF THE BREYMANN REDOUBT

1. British Accounts:

As there were no regular British troops stationed at the Breymann Redoubt, the standard British accounts of Amburey, Digby, Hadden and Lamb give no information on the nature of that fortification or of the action there on the 7th of October. They record merely that Breymann's works were carried by the Americans on the evening of the 7th and that Colonel Breymann was killed in this attack.

The testimony of the British officers in the House of Commons, to be found in Burgoyne's State of the Expedition, also contains no reference to the nature of Breymann's works. Burgoyne's only reference to the action before the Breymann redoubt is stated briefly in his letter of October 20th to Lord Germaine. After describing the fierce attack of the Americans on the Balcarras redoubt and its final repulse, Burgoyne wrote:

"....But unhappily the intrenchments of the German reserve, commanded by Lieutenant-Colonel Breymann, who was killed, were carried, and although ordered to be recovered, they never were so, and the enemy by that misfortune, gained an opening on our right and rear. The night put an end to the action."³²

The British accounts in letters and journals of that time are therefore most disappointing and yield little or no information on the nature of the Breymann redoubt.

2. German Accounts:

The German accounts contain a fuller narrative of the action at the Breymann redoubt but also yield little information as to the method of construction and appearance. The writer has been unable to discover any journal in the Park's

library written by a German officer or soldier actually stationed in the Breymann redoubt. As the journals in existence, written by Germans stationed on the left wing of the army, are fairly full of information on their position and fortifications, ^{it} it is quite possible that those written by soldiers stationed in the Breymann redoubt might well contain much useful information.

A. Riedesel:

Major-General Riedesel gives the following brief description of Colonel. Breymann's position and of the fighting at the Breymann Redoubt on the 7th of October:

"The reserve corps of Breymann was posted on the other side of the ditch (ravine) both for the protection of the right flank of Fraser's division and for the defense a road leading from this point to the rear of the enemy."

"Another body at the same time attacked the embankments of Breymann's division in front and on the left flank. The grenadiers composing this corps fought bravely, but being only two hundred strong, and their commander - the chivalric Breymann - being shot dead, they were compelled to retreat. This latter misfortune was owing to the fact that the Canadian companies, belonging to the reconnoitering expedition, were absent from their place, by the side of this corps, part of them being in the great redoubt (Balcarras) and the others not having returned to their position. Had they been in their places it would have been impossible to surround the left flank of Breymann."³³

B. Pausch:

Captain Georg Pausch, Chief of the Hanau Artillery, was with the flanking party on the 7th of October and gives the following account of the Breymann redoubt.

"In this confused retreat, all made for our camp and our lines. the entrenchment of Breymann was furiously assailed; the camp in it set on fire and burned, and all the baggage - horses and baggage captured by the enemy. The three 6 pound cannon of my brigade of Artillery were also taken...The enemy occupied this entrenchment, and remained in it during the night. The approaching darkness put an end to further operations on the part of the Americans. Meanwhile, everything was in commotion, and we were all on the alert behind our entrenchment."³⁴

C. A German Officer:

A letter of a German officer gives the following information on the Breymann Redoubt and the attack on it:

"The corps of Fraser and Breymann were separated by a ravine, and both stationed upon two separate knolls. The low ground between these elevations and on which Freeman's house lay, were occupied by Canadians and Provincials. Colonel Breymann's corps covered the entire right of the army, and there stood en potence."

"The enemy....overpowered the post in the depressed ground between the two posts, and then threw themselves from the side and rear upon Breymann's entrenchment. Breymann fell dead as he stood near two cannon."³⁵

It is apparent from these selections from the available German journals that not much information is contained in them on the nature of and appearance of the Breymann Redoubt.

Contemporary British Maps

Two contemporary British maps, both drawn by Lt. W. Cumb. Wilkinson, Asst. Engineer of the 62nd Regiment of Foot, show the Breymann Redoubt in some detail. They are:

- (1) The encampment and Position of the Army under Lt. General Burgoyne at Sword's House and Freeman's Farm on Hudson's River near Stillwater, 1777 &
- (2) Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under His Excellency. Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights on Hudson's River near Stillwater, on the 20th Sept. with the Position of the Detachments etc. in the Action of the 7th of Octr. and the Position of the Army on the 8th of Oct. 1777.³⁶

Both of these maps show the Breymann Redoubt to be a single fortified line, with no defenses indicated in the rear. A battery of two guns is indicated as standing near the center of the line.

The scale of Wilkinson's map is definitely known to be wrong in this instance. Wilkinson shows the Breymann Redoubt covering a front of four hundred yards but actual measurements of the area made by the writer show that this front is only two hundred and ten yards.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN EYE-WITNESS ACCOUNTS OF THE BREYMANN REDOUBT

I have examined the numerous diaries, journals and letters in the possession of the Park of the American officers and soldiers that took part in the attack on the Breyman redoubt; the majority of them deal only with action there and many have simply the laconic sentence "We entered their works sword in hand," or "Today, we stormed their lines." Fortunately, however, there are several outstanding exceptions to this rule.

1. Wilkinson:

Colonel James Wilkinson, Adjutant-General of the Northern Army, was an eye-witness and participant in the assault on the Breyman Redoubt October 7, 1777. He has left the following description of the Breyman redoubt:

"I then proceeded to the scene of renewed action, which embraced Burgoyne's right flank defense, and extending to his left, crossed a hollow covered with wood, about 40 rods to the entrenchment of the light infantry; the roar of cannon and small arms at this juncture was sublime, between the enemy, behind their works, and our troops entirely exposed, or partially sheltered by trees, stumps or hollows, at various distances not exceeding 120 yards. This right flank defense of the enemy, occupied by the German corps of Breyman, consisted of a breast-work of rails piled horizontally between perpendicular pickets, driven into the earth, formed en potence to the rest of his line, and extended about 250 yards across an open field, and was covered on the right by a battery of two guns. The interval from the left to the British light infantry was committed to the defense of the provincialists, who occupied a couple of log cabins. The Germans were encamped immediately behind the rail breast-work, and the ground in front of it declined in a very gentle slope for about 120 yards when it sunk abruptly; our troops had formed a line under this declivity, and covered breast high were warmly engaged with the Germans.³⁷

2. Putnam:

Colonel Rufus Putnam, in command of a Massachusetts Regiment, took part in the storming of the Breyman Redoubt and has left the following account:

"Storming of the works of the German reserve on the 7th of Oct. 1777.

"The facts are as follows, in front of these works was a clear open field bounded by a wood at the distance of about 120 yards. In the skirt of this wood I was posted with the 5th and 6th regiments of Massachusetts - the right and left of these works were partly covered by thin wood & the rear by a thick wood. The moment orders were given to Storm, I moved rapidly across the open field & entered the works in front, I believe the same moment that the troops of Learned's Brigade (in which Jackson's regiment was) entered the left and rear. I immediately formed the two regiments under my command & moved out of these woods (Works?) (which were not enclosed in the rear) into the woods toward the enemies inclosed redoubt (Balcarras redoubt) on the right flank of their main encampment.

"General Learned, as soon as he had secured & sent off all the Plunder taken in this camp, withdrew all other troops without bidding me a good night. However, some time before morning General Glover joined me with three regiment from the right wing of the army."³⁸

NOTE: See also the report listed under Sparks page 31 of this report for a first hand account.

CONTEMPORARY AMERICAN MAPS

Rufus Putnam Map

The one known contemporary American map is that drawn by Colonel Rufus Putnam, entitled "An Orthographical View of the American and British Armies on the 7th & 8th of October 1777."

Putnam's map shows the Breymann redoubt as a single fortified line with the German's tents pitched close behind it.

Legend Number "10,10,10 10" on this map reads:

"The American troops attacking the enemy in their works, they storm the works defended by the German grenadiers and light infantry at No. 3, carry the post take two pieces of artillery with all the tents and baggage of that camp. The enemy quit the encampments 4 & 5 that night and the Americans take possession in the morning."³⁹

LATER ACCOUNTS OF THE BREYMANN REDOUBT

The accounts of visitors to the battlefield in the years following the Revolution contain some information on the nature of the Breymann Redoubt:

1. The Marquis de Chastellux, 1780:

In 1780, only three years after the battles of 1777, the French author, Francois Jean, Marquis de Chastellux visited the battlefield and wrote of the Breymann Redoubt:

"The camp of the Germans...was situated EN POTENCE, and a little to the rear of the line.....I saw the spot where Arnold, uniting the hardiness of a jockey with that of a soldier, leaped his horse over the entrenchment of the enemy. It was like all those of this country, a sort of parapet, formed by the trunks of trees piled one upon another."⁴⁰

2. Silliman, 1819, and Standbury, 1821:

Professor Silliman's visit in 1819 and P. Stansbury's visit in 1821 have already been noted on page 17 ante. ¶

3. Hoyt, 1825:

In 1825 General Epaphras Hoyt visited the battlefield, and remarked of the Breymann Redoubt:

"Continuing our route northerly along Fraser's heights, we turned to the right, across lower ground, and rose a gentle hill covered with trees of recent growth, the fortified position of Colonel Breyton in the action of the 7th of October. This fortification was a temporary work of logs and rails, and has disappeared."

"....Quitting this interesting spot we passed on southerly over the ground where stood the two block houses so gallantly stormed by detachments from Brook's regiment in the same action..."⁴¹

4. Sparks, 1831:

In 1831 the eminent historian Jared Sparks paid a second visit to the battlefield, accompanied this time by General Morgan Lewis. General Morgan

Lewis, then 77 years old, had been a quartermaster in General Gates' army during the operations against Burgoyne, and had seen action in both battles of Freeman's Farm. Sparks recorded in his Journal in the following information, which was given to him in 1831 by General Lewis:

"There were neither redoubts nor palisades in front of this work (the Breymann Redoubt). There was one small passage into it near the center, with a traverse behind it, and two embrasures towards the right.... The Americans entered rapidly, some through the sally-port, some the embrasures, and others by climbing over the breastwork, which was formed of small timbers, seven or eight feet high, supported by strong posts fastened together at the top, with an opening about nine or ten inches wide, at a suitable height for small arms. It was a very excellent cover against infantry, being of sufficient thickness to prevent musket balls from passing through."42

5. Neilson, 1844:

Charles Neilson, the early historian of the Burgoyne Campaign, writing in 1844, follows almost literally James Wilkinson's description of the Breymann Redoubt:

"This right flank defense of the enemy, occupied by the German corps under Colonel Breyman, consisted in great measure, of a breastwork of rails piled horizontally between perpendicular pickets, driven into the earth, EN POTENCE, to the rest of his line, and extended about two hundred yards across an open field, and was covered on the high ground on the right, by a battery of two guns. The interval from the left of this defense to the light infantry, under Lord Balcarras, was committed to the defense of the Provincialists, who occupied a log house and barn, then owned by Thomas Leggett. The Germans were encamped immediately behind the rail breastwork, and the ground in front of it declined in a very gentle slope, for about one hundred and twenty yards when it sunk abruptly...."43

6. Lossing, 1848:

In 1848, Benson J. Lossing, the well known author of The Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution, visited the battlefield and gave the following account of the Breymann Redoubt.

"The Hessian camp was pitched upon an eminence about a half mile northwest of Freeman's Farm, where a strong redoubt was reared, and a line of intrenchments of a horse-shoe form was thrown up....The Hessians, under Colonel Breyman, occupied a height on the extreme right, and formed a flank defense rather than a wing of the main army."

"He (Arnold) met Learned's brigade advancing to make an assault upon the British works at an opening in the ABITIS, between Balcarras's light infantry and the German right flank defense under Colonel Breyman. Canadians and loyalists defended this part of the line, and were flanked by a stockade redoubt on each side."⁴⁴

7. Stone, 1877:

In 1877, William L. Stone, the great student of the Burgoyne Campaign, gave this description of the Breymann Redoubt following James Wilkinson's and Charles Neilson's accounts:

"The reserve corps of Breymann were posted on an eminence on the western side of the ravine for the protection of the right flank of Fraser's division." (Stone seems to be confused in his orientation, northwest seems more exact)

"This right flank defense of the enemy was occupied by the Brunswick troops, under Breymann, and consisted of a breastwork of rails piled horizontally between perpendicular pickets, and extended two hundred yards across an open field to some high ground on the right, where it was covered by a battery of two guns....In front of the east breastwork (????) the ground declined in a gentle slope for one hundred and twenty yards when it sunk abruptly." (This should read the western breastwork unless Stone is inferring that there was a second line of breastworks in the rear - which the two accounts he is quoting do not.)⁴⁵

8. Baxter, 1887:

In 1887, James Phinney Baxter, a scholar, author^{of} "The British Invasion From the North, and the editor of the Journal of Lieut. William Digby, wrote of the Breymann Redoubt:

"They were posted to defend the British right flank behind a breastwork of rails extending about two hundred yards across a field, the rails were piled horizontally and supported by pickets driven into the ground."⁴⁶

9. Brandow, 1919:

The testimony of John Henry Brandow, author of The Story of Old Saratoga, is given for what it is worth, Brandow's description of the Breymann Redoubt and area seems highly inaccurate and confused on this point.

"The interval between Breymann's hill and the next redoubt (for the complete description of the British camp by Brandow, see page 20 ante) to the south was defended by a breastwork, of two parallel tiers of rails laid up between perpendicular posts and the space between filled with earth." (Brandow gives no sources for the statement.)

"He replied (Wilkinson) that he had noticed a slack fire from behind the rail breastworks between Breymann's redoubt and Balcarras' camp, and suggested an assault there."⁴⁷

10. Nickerson, 1928:

In writing his "The Turning Point of the Revolution" in 1928, Hoffman Nickerson wrote this description of the Breymann redoubt and area.

"To preserve the communications between Balcarras's right rear and Breymann there was only a redoubt feebly garrisoned by a handful of spiritless Canadians."

"About half a mile north and a little west of Balcarras, Breymann and his German advanced corps had entrenched themselves on a little knoll, while the draw between them and Freeman's farm was held only by the spiritless Canadians posted in a couple of log cabins."

"The knoll upon which Breymann was stationed is a shoulder not unlike Freeman's farm, although a little higher and more abrupt. To the northwest, north and east the ground falls steeply away, but toward the southwest the slope is gentle. Here Breymann had thrown up a breastwork about two hundred yards long consisting of rails piled horizontally between upright pickets.....From the log cabins in the draw between Balcarras and Breymann there came only a slack fire."⁴⁸

CONCLUSION

While the British and German contemporary accounts of the physical appearance and method of construction of the Breymann Redoubt have proved to have been surprisingly disappointing, we do have, in this case, three American eye-witness accounts of the nature of the Breymann Redoubt that are of the utmost value. This is the testimony of General James Wilkinson, then Adjutant-

General in Gates' Army, General Rufus Putnam, then engineer and Colonel in Gates' army, and finally, that of General Morgan Lewis, then a quartermaster in Gates' army. In addition to this evidence, there are also three contemporary maps showing the Breymann Redoubt, the two British maps of Lt. Wilkinson and the American map of Putnam. Finally, there is also available valuable testimony on the Breymann Redoubt presented by several people who visited the battlefield within the next fifty years that followed the battle. It should be noted that evidence drawn from these sources is fundamentally in agreement on the nature of the Breymann Redoubt.

James Wilkinson, Putnam, Lewis, the Marquis de Chastellux and Hoyt are all agreed that the Breymann Redoubt was constructed of timber, no earth-works are mentioned by any of these writers, and that the redoubt mounted two cannon. The later historians, Neilson, Stone, Baxter, and Nickerson also all follow this interpretation of the Breymann Redoubt. Lt. Wilkinson's maps agree also with all the above-mentioned evidence except on the point of scale. Lt. Wilkinson's scale would give the Breymann Redoubt a front of 400 yards, whereas James Wilkinson, an eye-witness of the attack, places it as about 250 yards. The later historians, Neilson, Stone, Baxter, and Nickerson all state that this front to be 200 yards. It can therefore be said, that except for the scale of Lt. Wilkinson's maps, all the contemporary and near contemporary accounts are in agreement on their description of the Breymann Redoubt.

As none of these contemporary authorities mentions any defenses in the rear of the Breymann Redoubt, and Putnam specifically states that there were none, it would seem that the Breymann Redoubt was a work of a single breastwork on the front with short flank defenses on either side. Lossing's description of the Breymann Redoubt as a work of "horse-shoe form" and also Brandow's rather confused account of the defenses of the Breymann Redoubt area, thus

both seem to be inaccurate in this case.

A summary of the evidence indicates, then, that the Breymann Redoubt covered a front of about 200 yards, that it consisted of a single line of breastworks, with slight flank defenses and that there were not any defenses in the rear. On the right on the high level ground, it mounted a battery of two cannon. There was no abattis across the front of the breastwork. Its walls were constructed solely of logs, rails, or timbers, no earthworks being mentioned. The logs were laid horizontally, one upon the other, and supported between upright pickets or posts driven into the ground on either side of the wall and fastened together at the top. The walls were from seven to eight feet high, with an opening of about nine or ten inches wide, at a suitable height for small arms. The breastwork was of sufficient thickness to prevent musket balls from passing through, but not strong enough to resist artillery fire. There was one small passage or sally-port into it near the center, with a traverse behind it and two embrasures on the right, probably for the two cannon.

The two small works that stood between the Breymann Redoubt and the Balcarras redoubt are, however, the subject of much conflicting testimony. Lt. Wilkinson, on his two maps, indicates two small redoubts as being garrisoned by Canadian troops. James Wilkinson speaks of two log cabins defending the gap. Lossing mentions these defenses as two stockade redoubts, Hoyt calls them two block houses, and finally Neilson identifies them as a log cabin and barn. The only point on which all these accounts agree, is that the two defenses were constructed of logs. As a third map of Lt. Wilkinson, The Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under His Excellency. Lt. General Burgoyne at Sword's House on Hudson's River near Stillwater on Sept. 17th with that part of the Army engaged on the 19th Sept. 1777⁴⁹, which shows the Freeman farm area before any

British fortifications had been erected in that vicinity, indicates two small buildings as already standing on the same sites that were later occupied by the Canadian companies, it would seem that James Wilkinson's description of them as two log cabins, or Neilson's as a log cabin and barn, are most likely to be correct. The Canadian companies apparently merely utilized two buildings already standing before the battle of September 19th and probably only strengthened them.

Thus, unlike the Balcarras Redoubt, there would seem to be sufficient evidence from which to indicate accurately the length of the Breymann Redoubt, as well as its height, its various defenses, and its physical appearance and method of construction. The accurate restoration of this work should not be a difficult task. However, as all surface indication of the Breymann Redoubt have long since vanished, it will be most difficult if not impossible to locate accurately the exact alignment of the works, its sally port, the site of the battery, and the nature of flank defenses without the aid of an archaeological program. Reference to the Progress Report of Archaeologist Robert Ehrich indicates that although the Breymann Redoubt proved to^{be} more of a problem than at first had been anticipated, as much of that area is now in forest, he did meet with some success in his work on that redoubt in 1941-42.⁵⁰ A gun base, corresponding in position with that indicated on Lt. Wilkinson's maps, fire pits and other relics were uncovered on the Breymann Redoubt. Further archaeological work on the Breymann redoubt may therefore yield enough information on the alignment of the breastwork, the site of its battery and the position of the sally-port, to render the complete restoration of this work most authentic.

IV. GENERAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION.

The significance of the two battles of Freeman's Farm has been summed up in the following words:

"Saratoga was the most important military engagement between Lexington and Yorktown. Not only was it the decisive battle of the Revolution, but it has gone down in history as one of the fifteen decisive battles in world history. It changed the rebellion into a Revolution in the eyes of other nations. It called forth forces that created a nation. It gave the Americans a new confidence that enabled them to prolong the war until victory came in 1783. It brought more recruits with a finer morale into Washington's army. It knit the colonies together in a closer union. It raised up new friends in Great Britain, among them even General Burgoyne. It gave America prestige and credit abroad on which badly needed loans of money were secured. And finally it brought into the struggle on the American side, first France and then other nations and thus practically insured victory for the American cause."⁵¹

This, then, is the inspiring story that Saratoga National Historical Park has the great opportunity and privilege of presenting to the people of America and of the world. It should therefore always be kept in mind that this battlefield has been established as a National Historical Park with a view of inspiring the visiting public and giving them an insight into the action, tactics and strategy as well as the importance and significance of the Two Battles of Freeman's Farm. The justification for the restoration of the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts rests on this ground.

It has been pointed out that the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts made up the key to the entire British entrenched camp of September 20th to October 7th; and that these two works, together with the nature of the ground, had a decisive role in determining the strategy adopted by the American and British armies on the 7th of October 1777. It should be further remembered that the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts were the centers of the fiercest fighting in the second and third phases of the fighting on Oct. 7th and that the action that took place about them determined the final course and outcome of the battle.

In presenting this story to the people it has been found from experience that one of the best means of driving home such lessons is the accurate reconstruction of the scene as it was at the time of the battle. Today the visitor sees only fields and forests where the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts once stood, and it is most difficult for the average visitor to visualize these works or to even understand the reason for the severe fighting at these particular points without the aid of a detailed discussion of the ground by a guide, of whom there are unfortunately few. The restoration of these two redoubts would thus do much to render more vivid, dramatic, and intelligible to the visitor both the course of the action of the 7th of October and the nature of the British camp. When the park road system is completed it will be possible for the visitor to view the large ravines that covered the front and rear of the British camp and the strong ground along the river. The natural strength of these positions will go a long way in aiding the visitor to understand why the British selected this ground for their camp, and it will not require much imagination to visualize the nature of the British fortification on this strong ground. The vicinity of the Breymann and Balcarras Redoubts, however, does not fit in this category, and restoration of the works seems essential at these points.

The Balcarras Redoubt - Summary

The Balcarras Redoubt was the scene of the savage American assaults in the second phase of the Battle of October 7, 1777. The bravery and obstinacy of these American attacks on this work won the admiration and respect of the British officers and soldiers who defended the redoubt as is witnessed in the testimony of General Burgoyne, Lord Balcarras, and the Earl of Harrington before the House of Commons. One British officer wrote:

"The courage and obstinacy with which the Americans fought, were the astonishment of every one, and we now became fully convinced they are not that contemptible enemy we had hitherto imagined them, incapable of standing a regular engagement, and that they would only fight behind strong and powerful works."⁵²

A study of the evidence drawn from all available contemporary and secondary sources indicates that it is insufficient to make possible, by itself, an accurate restoration of the Balcarras Redoubt. The length of this work, the location of its batteries, its sally-ports, the height and thickness of its walls are still largely matters of conjecture.

A summary of the evidence gathered from written sources, indicates that the Balcarras Redoubt was the largest British fortification erected in their entrenched camp from September 20 to October 7th, 1777. Its north-south front may have been about 500 yards. It was an enclosed work mounting artillery. Its front was covered by an abattis. The walls of the redoubt may have been from twelve to fourteen feet high and were probably constructed of large trees, piled one upon the other, and then covered over with earth. Its ramparts, however, were not strong enough to resist prolonged artillery fire.

The successful exploratory work already completed by the Archaeologist Robert Ehrich in 1941-42, on the Balcarras Redoubt suggests that a more extensive archaeological program on this Redoubt may yield enough evidence to make possible a completely authentic and accurate restoration of this work, thus filling a gap in our knowledge of the Burgoyne Campaign on a point on which the written source yields little information.

Breymann Redoubt - Summary

The Breymann Redoubt was the scene of the third and final phase of the fighting on 7th of October 1777. It was at this point that the Americans achieved their great success and unhinged the right flank of the royal army,

thus making necessary the complete withdrawal of the British army. At the Breymann Redoubt there also occurred some of the most dramatic fighting of the day, and it was here that Benedict Arnold fell wounded and that Colonel Breymann was killed.

The primary and secondary sources on the Breymann Redoubt contain enough reliable information to make possible the authentic and accurate reconstruction of this work, provided that the exact alignment of the breast works, the site of the battery and sally-port can be established. As all surface indications of the work have disappeared, an archaeological program carried out on the Breymann Redoubt again seems to be the answer to this problem. The Breymann Redoubt occupied a much smaller area than the Balcarras Redoubt and therefore should require less time and labor. The fact that part of the original lines of the Breymann Redoubt are now covered with forest may, however, require a slightly raised estimate of the amount of work needed on the Breymann Redoubt area.

The available evidence indicates that the Breymann Redoubt had a front of about two hundred yards. It consisted of a single line of breastworks, with short flank defenses, and no defenses in the rear. There was no abattis in front of the breastworks. On the right, on the high ground, it mounted a battery of two cannon. The walls of the breastwork were constructed solely of logs, rails, or timbers, no earthworks being mentioned. The logs were laid horizontally one upon the other, and were supported between upright pickets or posts driven into the ground on either side of the wall and fastened together at the top. The walls were from seven to eight feet high, with an opening of about nine or ten inches wide, at a suitable height for small arms. The breastwork was of sufficient thickness to prevent musket balls from passing

through, but not strong enough to resist artillery fire. There was one sally-port or small passage into the redoubt near the center, with a traverse behind it and two embrasures on the right, probably for the two cannon.

The Two small works that stood between the Balcarras and Breymann redoubts, and which were defended by Canadian companies, were probably two log cabins already standing before the British army entered the area, and merely strengthened by the Canadians after the first battle. The archaeologists may, perhaps, be able to give us a more definite answer on this problem.

In conclusion then, it would seem that an archaeological program on the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts is essential, if these works are to be authentically and accurately restored. The restoration of these two redoubts, in turn, would add greatly to the interest in the Park and would render great service in aiding the visitor to visualize clearly the British camp and the action of the Battle of October 7th.

The restored Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts would certainly be the most effective and dramatic locations in which to mount seven or eight of General Burgoyne's cannon.

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The following three pages are tracings from enlarged photostatic copies of the two Lt. Wilkinson's maps of the Breymann and Balcarras Redoubts.

- Map No. 1 is traced from The Encampment and Position of the Army under Lt. General Burgoyne at Sword's House and Freeman's Farm on Hudson's River near Stillwater 1777. This map shows the Balcarras and Breymann Redoubts in some detail. Several sally ports, covered by traverses are indicated on the Balcarras Redoubt as well as the position of eight cannon. The Breymann Redoubt is shown with a battery of two guns.
- Map. No. 2 is traced from Plan of the Encampment and Position of the Army under his Excellency. Lt. General Burgoyne at Braemus Heights on Hudson's River near Stillwater, on the 20th Septr. with the Position of the Detachments etc. In the Action of the 7th of Octr. and the Position of the Army on the 8th of Octr. 1777. On this map Lt. Wilkinson leaves out some details of the Balcarras Redoubt in order to insert some lettering, not included on the first map.
- Map No. 3 The Probable Plan of the Balcarras Redoubt, is based on a study of the two maps of Lt. Wilkinson which show the Balcarras Redoubt. The writer has enlarged the plan of the redoubt.

Fraser's
Camp

Belcarms
Redoubt

Freeman
Farm
Fields

Belcarms
Redoubt

MAP NO.
I

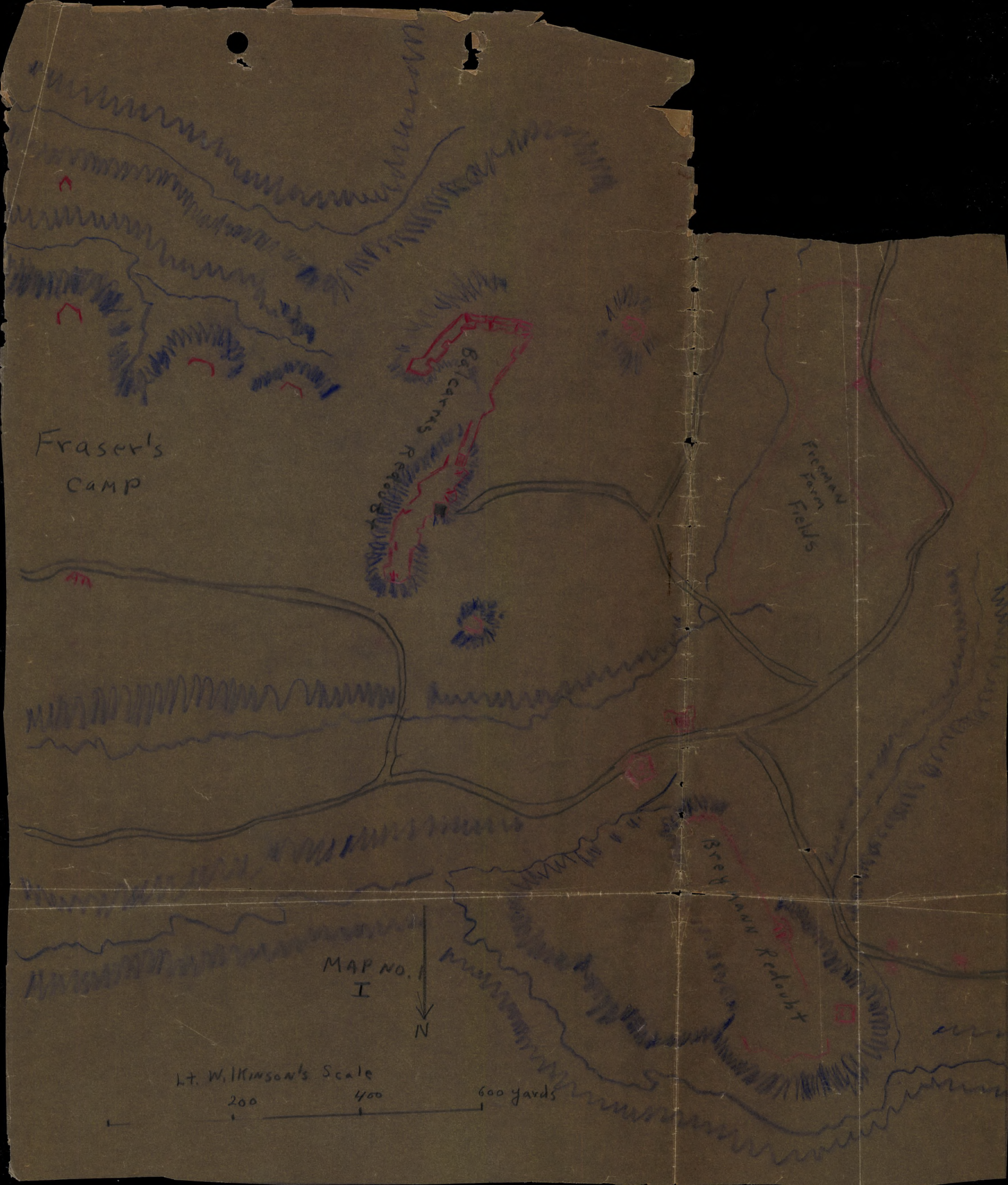
N

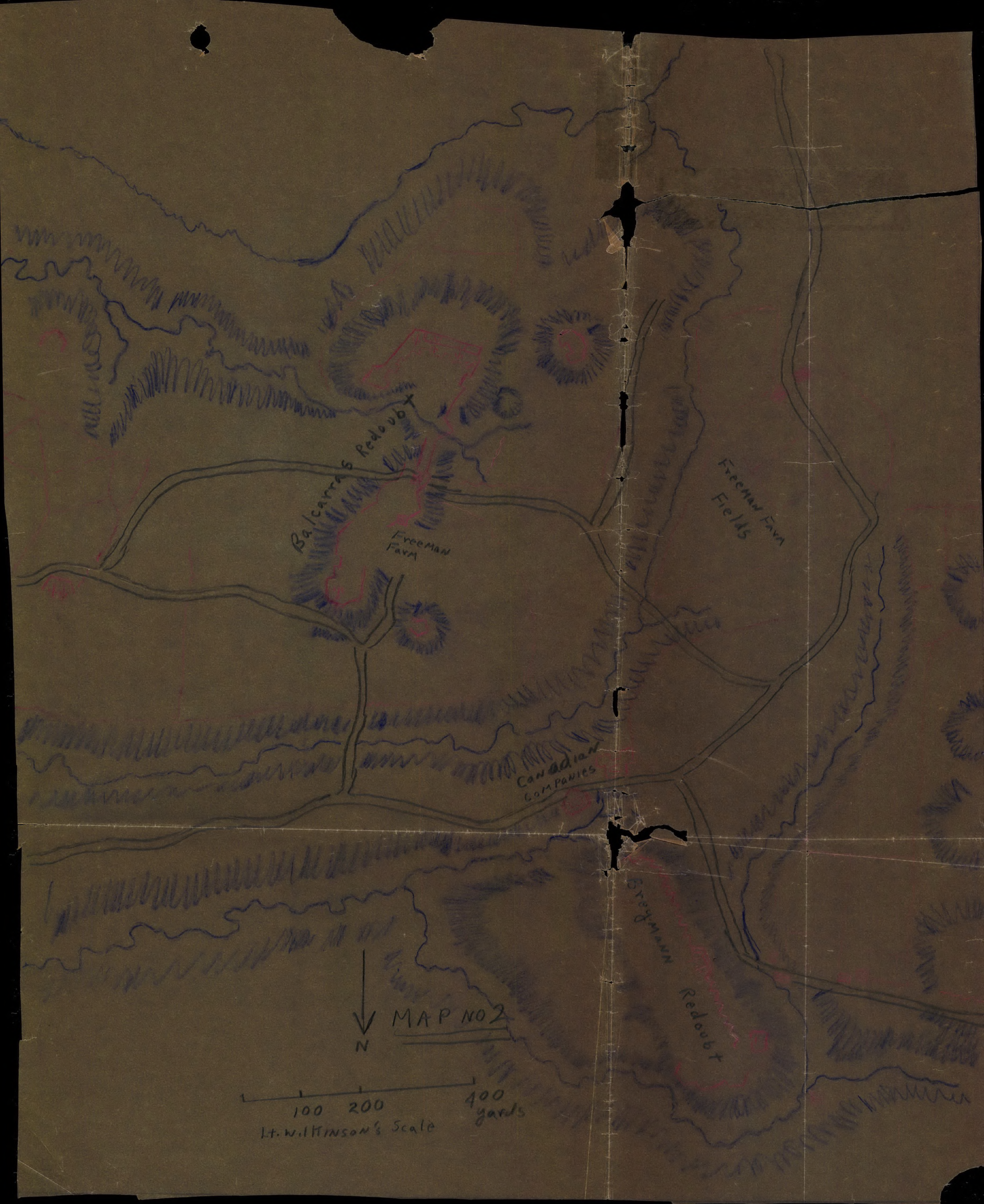
Lt. Wilkinson's Scale

200

400

600 yards





Balcarres Redoubt
Freeman Farm

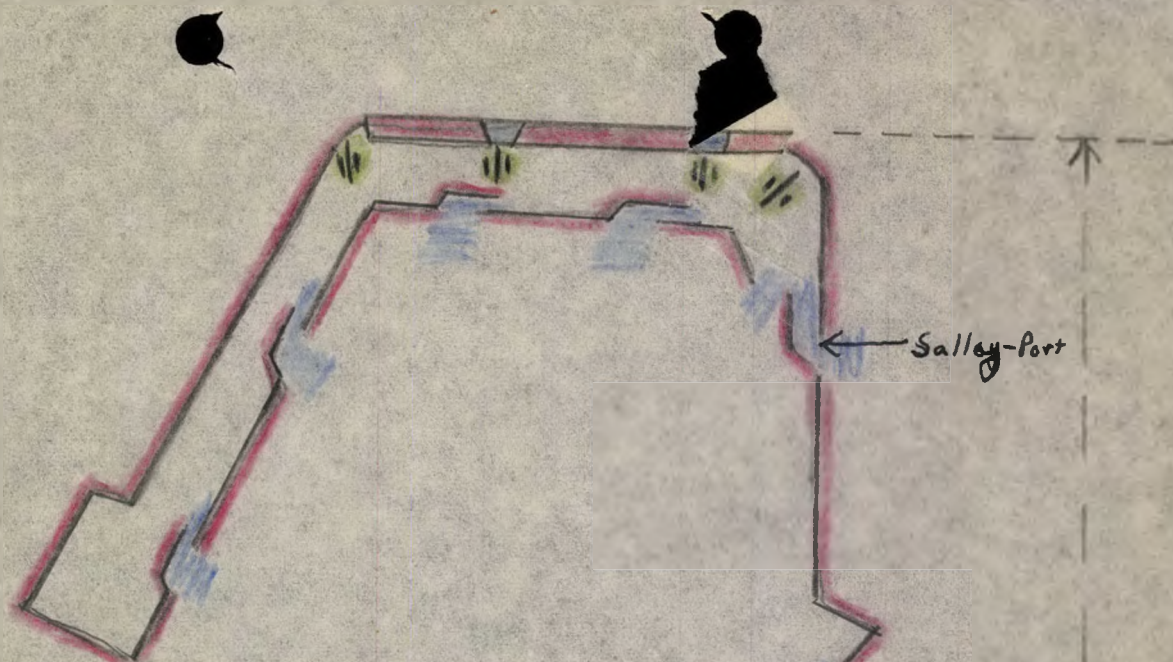
Freeman Farm
Fields

Canadian
Companies

Bregmann
Redoubt

MAP NO 2

100 200 400
yards
Lt. Wilkinson's Scale



- ← Rum Parts
- ← Sally-Ports or ENTRANCES
- ← Batteries
- ← Houses

The Probable Plan of the Balcarras Redoubt

Based on a study of the
Two Lt. Wilkinson Maps
showing this work

Map NO. 3

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N

