















At the outlet of Lake Oneida, Captain Brewerton of the New York Provincial Regiment built and garrisoned Fort Brewerton in 1758. Just a few miles down the Oneida River, near a place called Three Rivers, standing on the highway bridge over the Oneida River, you can see the Seneca River draining the Finger Lakes, flowing from the west or left. Standing in the same place, but turning slightly to the right, you can see the Oswego River flowing to Lake Ontario.

Traveling down the Oswego River to today's Minetto, New York, on the left bank of the river, we pass Battle Island State Park. Here, on the morning of July 3, 1756 Captain John Bradstreet was leading a convoy of about 300 empty bateau upriver, having just delivered supplies to the British garrison at Fort Oswego. As he approached this small island he was fired upon by a small party of Canadians and Indians, part of a much larger body of about 450, commanded by the Monsieur de Villiers.

There can be no denying Bradstreet's executive drive and organizational abilities—nor his bravery. With six men in his boat, including Captain Philip Schuyler of the New York Provincial Regiment, Bradstreet landed on this island to oppose the 30 or so in ambush.

Bradstreet's determination must have been impressive, because he drove off the French and Indians. His men in the following boats drew up to this point, and once enough bateau-men had landed, Bradstreet led them up the east bank for about a mile, where he forded the river from the east to the west bank, and despite being outnumbered two to one, drove the French and Indians into a Pine Swamp which today is the Battle Island State Golf Course—adaptive re-use.

This is the British view of the battle, as reported to the New York City newspapers, probably by Bradstreet himself. You would be surprised, or maybe not, to read about the success the French enjoyed in this victory.



Figure 14. Map indicating Battle Island.

Please note that Battle Island is the small protuberance to the right of this island (see Figure 14). The larger portion of the island was separated from the mainland when the river was canalized early in the 19th century, and the spoil was used to fill in some of the channel which separated the original island from the mainland. Again, we can visit the site, but we may not see what they saw.

In today's Fulton, New York the river still flows over the falls which gave Bradstreet such difficulties when he passed in August of 1758, and later when he attempted to go upriver with the plunder from Fort Cadaraqui. Here Bradstreet had several bateaux upset, as you can well imagine, losing a brass cannon and a couple soldier's lives. Built after the French and Indian war, Fort Bradstreet was obviously intended to control the portage around the falls of the Oswego River. And if we are in Fulton, New York, can Lake Ontario be far distant?