



ARMS OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, c. 1820 The motto "EXCELSIOR" and crest of an eagle perched atop a hemisphere. From a broadside masthead of an Ode published for a dinner given the Independent Boston Fusiliers at Albany, June 22, 1820. Museum of Our National Heritage.

Recipients of swords awarded by the Legislature of the State of New York to military and naval officers who commanded troops in defense of New York during the War of 1812, and the present location of those swords.

Thomas Macdonough (1783-1825) Commodore, USN	U.S. National Museum	Winfield Scott (1786-1866) Maj. General, USA	New York Hist. Soc.
Jacob J. Brown (1775-1828) Maj. General, USA	U.S. National Museum	Samuel Strong (1762-1832) Maj. General, VSM	Vermont Hist. Soc.
Edmund P. Gaines (1777-1849) Maj. General, USA	Sotheby Parke Bernet	Daniel Davis (1777-1814) Brig. General, NYSM	Metropolitan Museum of Art
Alexander Macomb (1782-1841) Maj. General, USA	Unknown	John Swift (1762-1814) Brig. General, NYSM	Ginsburg & Levy
James Miller (1776-1851) Brig. General, USA	Unknown	Peter B. Porter (1773-1844) Maj. General, NYSM	Buffalo & Erie Co. Hist. Soc.
Benjamin Mooers (1758-1838) Maj. General, NYSM	Unknown	Samuel C. Reid (1783-1861) Sailing Master	Metropolitan Museum of Art
Eleazer W. Ripley (1782-1839) Brig. General, USA	U.S. National Museum	n.b. — The author would be interested in knowing the present whereabouts of the Macomb, Miller, and Mooers swords.	

A Roland for an Oliver

Swords Awarded by the State of New York During the War of 1812

John D. Hamilton

During the American Revolution the Continental Congress awarded a number of swords to military and naval officers whose services and exploits on its behalf were considered deserving of special recognition. With such precedent before it at the outset of the second war for American independence, popularly referred to as The War of 1812, the Legislature of the State of New York had good and sufficient reason to establish a similar agency.

Burdened with the longest border opposite Canada, New York State bore the brunt of hostilities against Britain during the War of 1812. As a continuous seat of the war, the "Empire State" witnessed the launching of numerous military and naval campaigns in which New Yorkers played prominent roles.

Through initial American reverses at the outset of the conflict, the War Department was forced to reassess its command structure and cull its ranks of lethargic senior officers, many of whom, like Henry Dearborn, Alexander Smyth, and James Wilkinson, were famous Revolutionary War figures who had clung tenaciously to the higher rungs of the ladder of command. By making way for more vigorous and energetic leadership, younger officers of the army, navy, and militia who then commanded troops within New York's borders were afforded ample scope to establish reputations for success on battlefield and quarterdeck. In recognition of their efforts, the Legislature of New York became the first state body to award fine swords to its parochial heroes.

As New York entered the war with terribly exposed frontiers, Governor Daniel D. Tompkins (1774-1825) committed his State and even his personal fortune to a vigorous support of President Madison's war against England. Eventually, in the political campaign of 1814, Tompkins led his "war" party to a sweep of the state elections, allowing an active and unfettered Republican legislature to churn out war measures "like cloth from a loom." Tompkins' appointment to command the U.S. Third Military District (the northern frontier) set a capstone to New York's hawkish prosecution of the war. All in all, the situation in New York provided an excellent opportunity to ameliorate the deep feud that existed between high ranking officers of the regular army and the militia. Along the Niagara Frontier and on Lake Champlain, ability and mutual respect ultimately prevailed among comrades-in-arms who shared memorable moments of success.



In the summer of 1814, the American plan for the Niagara Campaign was, briefly, for Maj. General Jacob Brown to commence with the capture of Fort Erie opposite Buffalo, march on British fortifications erected at Chippewa Creek, and attack Fort George at the mouth of the Niagara River in concert with naval forces under Commodore Isaac Chauncey. The campaign would clear the way to seize the Burlington Heights depot at the head of Lake Ontario. From Burlington, it was hoped that a subsequent advance along Ontario's northern shore would culminate in successful attacks on British strongholds at York (Toronto) and Kingston.

The operation began on July 1st, as General Brown's invasion forces took possession of lightly defended Fort Erie and pushed forward down the Niagara River as planned. A tardy British relief force under General Riall halted at Chippewa and dug in as Winfield Scott's advance force moved into positions opposite them. On the following day, July 5th, the Battle of Chippewa opened with both sides having been reinforced during the night. Scott's disciplined brigade bore the brunt of the fighting, gaining much glory. This was Scott's finest performance in the field in a series of actions connected with the campaign, and the one particularly associated with the award of his sword. Afterward, Riall withdrew to Queenston.

Upon Brown's arrival at Queenston on the 10th, with the main American army, Riall retired to Fort George to await reinforcements enroute from York. It was during this period, on the 12th, leading an armed reconnaissance of the fort, that General Swift was tragically killed by a prisoner who had been granted quarter, but then treach-



DANIEL D. TOMPKINS (1774-1825) Governor of New York State (1807-1817) and Sixth Vice-President of the United States under James Monroe (1817-1825). In this portrait painted by John Wesley Jarvis, c. 1820, Fort Tompkins, which guarded the Narrows to New York harbor, is shown in the background. Tompkins wears the uniform of Commander-in-Chief, New York State Militia and Commander, Third U.S. Military District. (The New York Historical Society).

erously shot him through the chest. The sword awarded to Swift was presented posthumously to the nearest male relative, his son Asa.

Learning that Chauncey would not be able to join him, Brown retreated back to Chippewa hoping to draw Riall out of Fort George. On the 25th, a reinforced Riall and an expectant Brown met near Queenston at Bridgewater, their battle lines stretched along Lundy's Lane, in what became known as the Battle of Niagara. It was here that Col. James Miller distinguished himself with desperate gallantry in leading a crucial bayonet charge against the British artillery battery, and then defending his position through four successive British assaults to regain the guns. The whereabouts of Miller's sword is presently unknown.

Severely wounded, both Brown and Scott were evacuated, leaving General Eleazer Ripley in command to regroup the army. Without forward momentum, Ripley was forced to retire to Chippewa and then further back to Fort Erie, which he proceeded to reinforce and re-fortify. Fearful of Ripley's chronic reticence to act quickly and decisively on his own, Brown ordered General Edmund Gaines down from Sackett's Harbour to take command. Gaines arrived on August 5th, in time to assume command of the fort's defense and repulse the British "no-quarter" attack on the 15th. While preparing the fort for further assault, Gaines was seriously wounded and had to be evacuated to Buffalo, but lived to receive his sword for the successful defensive action he orchestrated.

Brown, in Buffalo recovering from wounds received at Bridgewater, arose from a sickbed to assume command at Fort Erie. Seizing the initiative, he planned a daring sortie against the British lines calculated to raise the siege. On September 17th, the militia under Generals Peter Porter and Daniel Davis, acting in concert with regular troops under Miller and Ripley, turned back the British lines investing the fort. Davis gallantly died in the attempt and Ripley was severely wounded. By their signal actions during the sortie, Davis and Ripley richly deserved their swords. Davis' sword was the second one that Governor Tompkins had to present posthumously.

Overall, the Niagara campaign could not be considered a success, yet through several commendable actions on the Canadian side, Brown's army acquitted itself well, and in so doing, prevented invasion of Western New York.

While Brown was preoccupied at Fort Erie, New York State was under invasion along the Champlain Valley. At Plattsburg a military force commanded by Maj. General Alexander Macomb attempted to stop a British invasion army under the command of Sir George Prevost. Macomb was supported by a squadron of vessels under Lieutenant Thomas Macdonough, who would have to face a nearly equal British squadron under Captain George Downie. On September 11th, the sound of cannonades from the two squadrons in Plattsburg Bay signaled the opening of the land phase of the Battle of Plattsburg. As the carnage mounted aboard the opposing vessels, Macomb's forces, assisted by New York militia under General Benjamin Mooers and Vermont volunteer militia under General Samuel Strong, repulsed Prevost's army on the banks of the Saranac River. Of the four American commanders who received swords for these combined actions, Strong's contribution was particularly exemplary in that under Vermont law, the militia were not to serve beyond their own state borders, yet his "brave volunteers" acquitted themselves well. An invasion from the North had been turned back as well. The people of New York had good reason to rejoice over the events of 1814.

On September 20th, 1814, the President's Sixth Annual Message to Congress praised officers of the regular army (Major General Brown and Brigadiers Scott and Gaines) for their achievements and victories on the northern border. Madison's omission of recognition for General Peter B. Porter, and the main body of the New York militia, stirred Tompkins to react strongly to such "pointed neglect." President Madison had cited the successes of subordinate officers such as Scott and Gaines; why not New York's militia commander, the twice-wounded Porter? Even in noticing the "affair at Plattsburg," the President carefully avoided mention of the role played by the New York or Vermont militia.



Battle of Niagara (Lundy's Lane), July 25, 1814. Scene of Scott wounded and the British artillery battery captured by Miller's men. Engraving from painting by Charles E. Chappel (Dawson, *Battles of the United States . . .* New York, 1858).

To Tompkins, this rank partisanship was unworthy of liberal-minded politicians. It had, of course, been caused by Porter's alienation of Stephen Van Rensselaer, a powerful figure in New York's Federalist party, whose inept command of the invasion of Upper Canada in the first year of the war turned into a debacle at Queenston. In a letter to New York Congressman Jonathan Fisk (October 3, 1814), Tompkins announced in no uncertain terms that:

Should the complimentary resolutions introduced into Congress exclude Porter and his brave comrades, I am satisfied that our Legislature will feel themselves called upon to do him justice by recitals and resolutions that will give you great men at Washington a Rowland (sic) for your Oliver.

Tompkins was alluding to the 11th-century epic poem "Song of Roland" and reference to the drawn combat between Roland and Oliver: a blow for a blow, tit for tat (*Bartlett's Familiar Quotations*, 14th ed.). When Congress failed to meet Tompkins' expectation in the matter of dispensing plaudits and laurels, State Elector Thomas H. Hubbard was induced to introduce a Bill in the New York Senate on October 10th, 1814, that would allow the state and its Governor to go Washington one better with a "Rowland." The Senate lost little time in reporting Hubbard's Bill out of committee, and the complete legislative package passed the Assembly on the 22nd, with final action occurring in the Senate on the 24th. There was no controversy over its unanimous passage:

WHEREAS, through the goodness of Almighty God, the valor and courage of our Generals, and the discipline and bravery of our troops, on the several occasions referred to, the Legislature are enabled to felicitate their fellow-citizens, that the dwellings of our virtuous yeomanry in the North and West, are not again given to the devouring flame, their wives and children to the savage knife, and our helpless to the brutality of an inhuman foe.

And Whereas, the battles of Chippewa and Bridgewater, the defense of Fort Erie, and the sortie from that fort, the battles of Plattsburgh and Lake Champlain, are events which perpetuate the memory of the brave, and are justly the subjects of our exultation; whilst the constellation of our heroes, for their supremacy in those warlike exploits, are deservedly the objects of our praise and admiration.

It is here, that the veteran warriors of Europe, after having conquered the legions of Imperial France, were in turn subdued by the matchless intrepidity of our heroic countrymen.

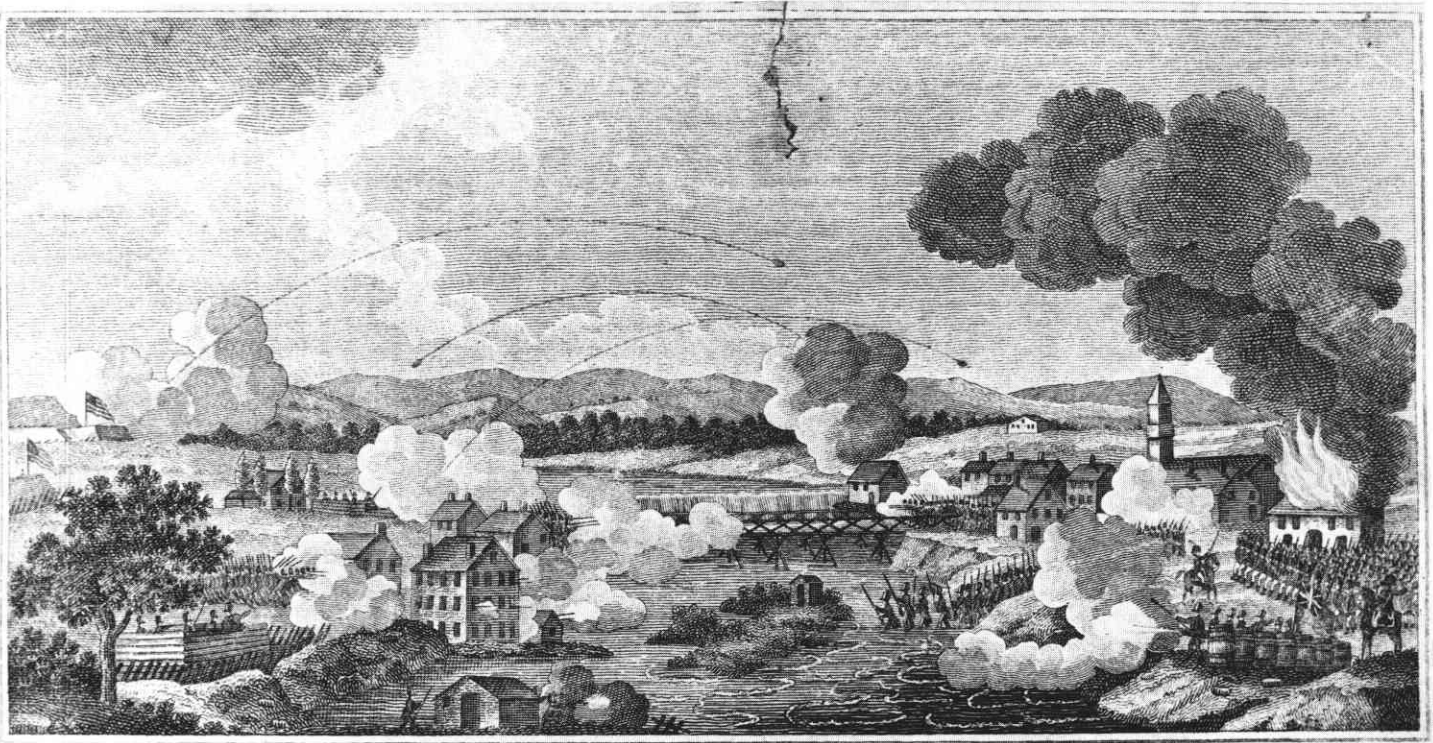
The valorous exploits on our Niagara frontier, challenge for our army and the General who conducted it to triumph, the plaudits of Nations, the envy of heroes. Brown shall receive his reward in the gratitude and esteem of his country.

Scott, Porter, Gaines, Ripley and Miller are presented to us, as the legitimate candidates for immortal honor. They have obtained an imperishable wreath. The faithful chronicler shall suit the garland to the brow of the victors.

And Whereas, in the North, we have seen an invading army, boasting of superiority in discipline and numbers, routed and put to flight, by Macomb and his brave associates. Whilst courage is a virtue, they shall take rank among the heroes of our country.

In contemplating the victory on Lake Champlain, truth bids us speak in the language of His Excellency, that "the achievement of Commodore Macdonough and his intrepid comrades is not surpassed in the records of naval history."

To his virtues belong veneration, to his valor be ascribed immortality.



BATTLE OF PLATTSBURG, September 11, 1814. Line engraving by Abner Reed from H. Kimball's *The Naval Temple* (Boston, 1816). View from the right bank of the Saranac River at its mouth; in the distance Fort Brown. A portion of the lower bridge is shown with the planks torn up, which forced the British to ford the stream. Photo courtesy John A. D'Orlando.

It is interesting to observe in the preceding recital that a repetition of the Indian warfare experienced by New York during the Revolution remained a paramount concern in 1812. Noteworthy also is a seemingly deliberate stress the resolutions place on the source of each recipient's rank, identifying them as emanating from either the Regular army or State militia.

That Major-Generals Brown, Scott and Gaines, and Brigadier-Generals Ripley and Miller, of the army of the United States, and Major-General Porter, of the militia and volunteers of this State, for their conduct during the present campaign, are entitled to the gratitude of their country, and the Legislature present to them, respectively, a sword.

That Brigadier-General Macomb, of the army of the United States, and Major-General Mooers, of the militia of this State, and Major-General Strong, of the Vermont volunteers, for their conduct at the battle of Plattsburgh, are entitled to the gratitude of their country, and the Legislature present them, respectively, a sword.

That Commodore Macdonough, in maintaining the honor of the American flag on Lake Champlain, against the superior force of a hostile fleet, is entitled to the gratitude of his country, and the Legislature present him with a sword, and 1,000 acres of land.

That this Legislature deplore the loss of Brigadier-General Davis, of the militia of this State, who fell in the sortie from Fort Erie, and present his eldest male heir with a sword.

That this Legislature deplore the loss of Brigadier-General John Swift, of the militia of this State, who fell near Fort George, and present his eldest male heir with a sword.

That His Excellency the Governor be requested to communicate severally to those surviving officers, the high sense entertained for their patriotism, talents and conduct, and through them, the thanks of this Legislature to the officers of the army and navy, and the soldiers and sailors whom they have led to victory.

Assured of quick action in the Legislature, Tompkins was able on the 20th to personally notify Commodore Macdonough of his award. Four days thereafter similar letters were sent to the other recipients as, simultaneously, the treaty of peace was being signed in distant Ghent. In these letters, Tompkins often added, "I shall have the honor to convey to you the sword at a future day . . .", implying that the swords had yet to be ordered and made.

Monies for the swords were drawn by Tompkins in 1815 from State funds. An undated entry in the annual "Treasurer's Report," submitted to the Assembly on February 2, 1816, recorded the payment:

To Governor, to provide swords
pr. act 24th October, 1814 \$ 5,500

For the twelve swords that had been awarded up to then, the budget allocated an average of \$459 for each sword, considerably more than had been expended by the Continental Congress in 1785, for "elegant swords of the value of one hundred dollars."

While awaiting Congressional reaction to the President's Message calling for recognition of American vic-

tories, a naval action occurred on September 26th, in the neutral Portuguese harbour at Fayal, Azores, that would ultimately inspire New York's Legislature to award yet another sword. News eventually reached Albany of the heroic defense at Fayal of the New York privateer *General Armstrong*. The vessel's commander, Samuel C. Reid, and his 90-man crew, withstood successive waves of boarding parties launched by an entire British squadron. Reid was eventually forced to scuttle his vessel and make for shore, but not before British losses had exceeded 300 men at a cost of only 2 American dead and 7 wounded. Originally destined to support the British attack on New Orleans, the squadron was sufficiently mauled to delay its departure long enough to allow Andrew Jackson time to organize and prepare his defenses.

The Legislature passed a resolution honoring Reid and awarding his sword on April 7, 1815. A congratulatory letter from Tompkins, penned on April 24th, described Reid's action as "hurling defiance at the foe," as well as "undaunted valor which disdained to yield," and "among the most glorious achievements of our late war."

The bullion sword hilts and scabbard mounts were cast and assembled by New York gold and silversmith John Targee (c. 1772-1850). It is Targee's touchmark (I.T.) and set of pseudo hallmarks (a lion's mask and the billowing sail of a ship running before the wind) that are on the crossguard of the hilts. Tompkins was well acquainted with Targee and his family even before the war, referring to him in their occasional correspondence as "my esteemed friend."

A comment made in 1834 by portrait painter and art historian William Dunlap (1766-1839) leads us to contractual engraver and diesinker Moritz Furst (b. 1782), as the artisan responsible for creating the counterguards. Furst's exceptional abilities led to contracts with the U.S. Mint to engrave and cut dies for a large number of the medals awarded by Congress to military and naval heroes of the war. As the finest independent engraver and diesinker then in America, his advertisements in Philadel-

phia newspapers would naturally have drawn attention in New York, even if his considerable reputation had not already preceded him.

Before the war, Dunlap served as a director of New York's American Academy of Arts and Keeper of the academy's art school. During the war, Tompkins appointed Dunlap to the post of Assistant Deputy Paymaster General of militia. As a member of the Governor's military family, Dunlap was in a cozy position to render advice on artistic matters pertaining to the design and execution of the swords.

It was, according to Dunlap, on his recommendation that Furst was employed on the sword project. Dunlap recalled that:

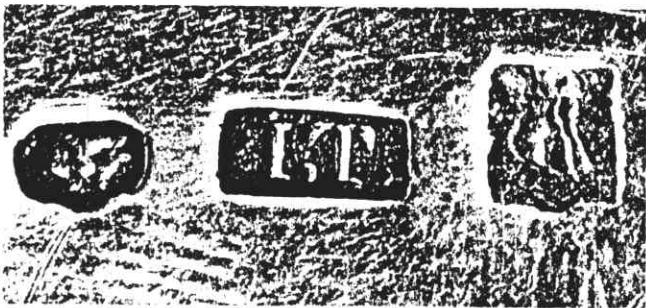
He (Furst) resided in New York many years ago, and in 1816 executed some work under my direction for the swords presented by the State to military and naval officers who had distinguished themselves.

With the introduction of Furst's role in the project, a question arises as to just how much of the work was Targee's, and how much of it Furst was responsible for. With their coin-like quality, the neo-classical Greco-Roman designs on the counter guards point to Furst's main contribution.

It is significant that a high proportion of the swords are encountered with their counterguards either fractured, repaired, or completely missing. Such components on most other cut and thrust swords of the period were solidly cast with the guard and bent into proper position. The thin counterguard medallions of the New York swords were die-struck, however, and then silver-soldered to the guard. At some stage of its career, the counterguard of Brown's sword became detached and subsequently re-attached by three screws! The Gaines sword, particularly, shows evidence that the metal fractured along a border delineating the central design. This hairline fracture started when the design was die-struck.

The counterguards were rendered in three different designs; two of which were derived from themes in classical mythology, and a third played on the nationalistic symbolism of an American eagle. The most readily identifiable classical theme used was that of Hercules wrestling the Nemean Lion. This scene, derived from the mythical "Herculean Labours," was conceptualized by English sculptor John Flaxman (1755-1826) for decorative bas-relief basalt and jasperware ceramic plaques produced by potter Josiah Wedgwood. Flaxman's design reappeared in 1803 as decoration on the scabbards of swords made by Richard Tweed for the Lloyd's Patriotic Fund.

The use of Hercules as a symbolic figure representing labor, duty, challenge, and the individual who acts for the good of his country, was sufficiently popular to justify an appearance on four of Targee's swords (Scott, Davis, Strong, and Ripley), and on other presentation silver of



Touchmarks of New York silversmith John Targee whose marks appear on guards of the gold swords awarded by the State of New York after the War of 1812.



Hercules and the Nemean Lion. A black basalt medallion by Josiah Wedgwood, c. 1790. The bas-relief figure of Hercules strangling the Nemean Lion was a theme used by Richard Tweed in the first decade of the 19th century, Nathan P. Ames in the 1840s, and Tiffany & Co. in the late 1860s. Photo courtesy Wolfe's Auction Gallery.

the period. The Flaxman theme emerged again in the 1840s on swords made by Nathan P. Ames for Mexican War presentation, and still later on a number of elaborate Civil War swords made by Tiffany & Company. Its continued popularity in America is most probably attributable to the considerable impact that Lloyd's magnificent swords had on military men everywhere. This design was apparently employed on the New York swords without distinction being made of its use for either regular army (Scott and Ripley), or militia officers (Davis and Strong).

The second classical theme was used on the Brown sword. It depicts a half-kneeling male figure supporting a female demi-figure whose trumpet announces victory to the weary warrior. In his catalogue of swords in the Smithsonian's collection, Theodore Belote identified this figure as Ulysses; but since it is unaccompanied by any attribute normally ascribed to the Argosy's hero, his interpretation of the theme should be open to reevaluation. Belote's contagious fixation with Ulysses also resulted in a catalogue description of the Ripley sword that would have Ulysses also strangle the Nemean Lion. Regardless of how the theme is interpreted, as the only

known example of the use of this design, its unique appearance on the sword of the Niagara Campaign's overall commander seems quite appropriate.

A third theme, used on the Gaines and Porter swords, appears to be the most incongruous of the three designs. The main motif presents an American eagle perched on a panoply of war trophies, merely offering the standard contemporary approach to the design of sword hilts intended for the American market. Tucked away in the remote corners of the counterguard, however, are whimsical equine heads that underscore the design's naive quality and belie Furst's ability as a superior draftsman. Unlike the classical medallions edged with a tasteful gadrooned border, the eagle counterguards are edged with a repeat of the gaudy studs or imitation "brilliants" employed on the grip. The overall effect is one of a lesser design talent at work, and fails to dispel the impression that this design was created after the others.

Damage sustained by two of the extant swords (Macdonough and Swift) resulted in complete loss of their counterguards. Counting these missing components, together with the three examples whose whereabouts are presently unknown (Maccomb, Miller, and Mooers), we are prevented from taking an accurate tally of the frequency or significance of design selection.

It would appear that Targee either realized his limitations as a swordmaker, or, was forced by a tight schedule, to use quality imported Cut & Thrust swords as "starter kits." The convenience of ready-made models for pommel and knucklebow, together with completely finished blades and scabbards, alleviated much unnecessary and time consuming labor.

The pommels, however, exhibit a certain amount of native artistic license. Lacking a noticeable tuft of feathers at the back of the eagle's head, a slight reptilian quality crept into the pommel design, giving the head a most evil and a predatory appearance. The entire guard was, in fact, a jury-rigged affair, with a standard European neoclassic style knucklebow riveted to a plain crossguard, and a not-so-conventional finial in the shape of a classical ram's head, fused to the quillon.

The "store-bought" blades were of the popular and prescribed "cut and thrust" variety: straight, single-edged, with etched and gilt-filled patriotic and floral motifs set against a brilliant fire-blued background. Their forte bear the non-committal phrase "WARRANTED" that characterized work from Sheffield (Strong, Davis, and Swift). On the other hand, several of the blades exhibit those bright-etched floral panels associated with Solingen decorative technique (Porter, Scott, and Brown).

A gold plaque engraved with the recipient's name

and rank was riveted to each scabbard. A panel engraved with the crest of the State of New York (an eagle perched atop the upper portion of a globe) flanked by military standards, was placed adjacent the chape. Between the state crest and the name plaque, two panels were engraved with scenes associated with the recipient's wartime exploits. The reverse side of each scabbard was engraved with a presentation inscription which contained a fairly standardized preamble:

Presented by His Excellency, Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor of the State of New York, pursuant to Resolutions of the Senate and Assembly of the said State as a tesitmony of gratitude to . . .

followed by rank, name, and a concluding variant phrase regarding service:

. . . as an expression of the high sense entertained by its Citizens of the patriotism, talents and conduct of Commodore T. Macdonough and of the importance of the glorious Victory gained by him on the ever memorable eleventh of September 1814 (Macdonough)

. . . for his eminent services and as a memorial of the repeated victories obtained by him over the enemies of his country. (Brown)

. . . as a token of high estimation and gratitude. (Gaines)

. . . as a testimonial to the high sense entertained of his talents, patriotism and conduct. (Ripley)

. . . as a testimony of gratitude for his services, and admiration of his gallant conduct. (Miller)

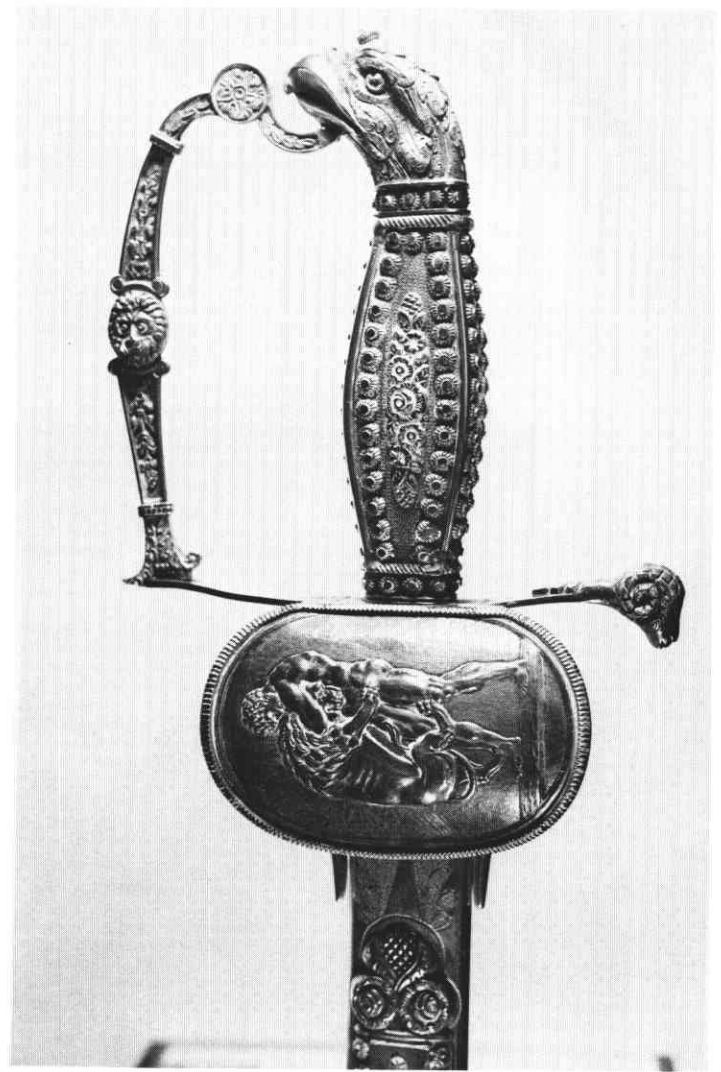
. . . as a memorial of the sense entertained by the State of his services and those of his brave Mountaineers at the battle of Plattsburg. (Strong)

. . . particularly in organizing his band of brave Volunteers, and repeatedly leading them to Victory during the glorious Campaign of 1814. (Porter)

It is not necessary to recall all the presentation occasions, yet several were of more than passing interest. With solicitous concern, Tompkins ensured that the posthumous presentation to Asa R. Swift, eldest male heir of General Swift, was made under the most favorable of circumstances for the young man. Tompkins delegated the honor to Gideon Granger, Postmaster-General of the United States (1801-14). The presentation took place in Asa's hometown of Palmyra, New York. To Granger, Tompkins expressed a certain sense of responsibility for the lad and clearly stated his intention of bringing the young man to public attention:

One object I have in view by presenting to young Swift his sword in the county where he lives, is to bring him into notice and respect among that portion of his fellow citizens, whose good opinions will be most serviceable to him afterward. As the father was a distinguished member of the corps of volunteers, which was raised by my orders and upon my responsibility, without Legislative authority, I feel a particular attachment to the son, and a strong desire to promote to the utmost of my power, his prospects and fame.

More pleasant circumstances enveloped the presen-



Sword of Maj. Gen. Samuel Strong (1762-1832). The counter-guard has the Hercules and Nemean Lion design. Vermont Historical Society.

tation of Scott's sword at New York's City Hall, on November 25th, 1816, the anniversary of evacuation of the city in 1783 by British troops at the end of the Revolution. That event was memorialized by public addresses from both the Governor and the General. Tompkins recalled Scott's achievements in the field and the General expressed his high sense of the "distinguished compliment" conferred on him by the Legislature "in its vote of the splendid sword, now so handsomely presented by your Excellency."

All the presentations appear to have been completed prior to February, 1817, when, as the newly elected Vice President of the United States, Tompkins departed New York to fulfill the duties of higher office in Washington. Such was the prestige of the New York swords, that they were soon held as ideal models for similar presentations by other States.

When Connecticut's Governor Wolcott invited



Sword of Brig. Gen. John Swift (1762-1814). Silversmith John Targee's touchmark and pseudo hallmarks are visible on the underside of the crossguard. The blued blade is etched in gilt with the female figure of "Liberty" and an American eagle. The counter-guard has been broken off and is missing. Photo courtesy Benjamin Ginsburg Antiquary.

Commodore Isaac Hull to choose the type of sword that the state should present to him, Hull responded with:

I have since determined that the cut and thrust such as was presented to the different officers of the army in the state of New York would be the most appropriate.

With such a glowing recommendation from the hero of the hour, New York's Governor had indeed set loose a Roland among the Olivers.

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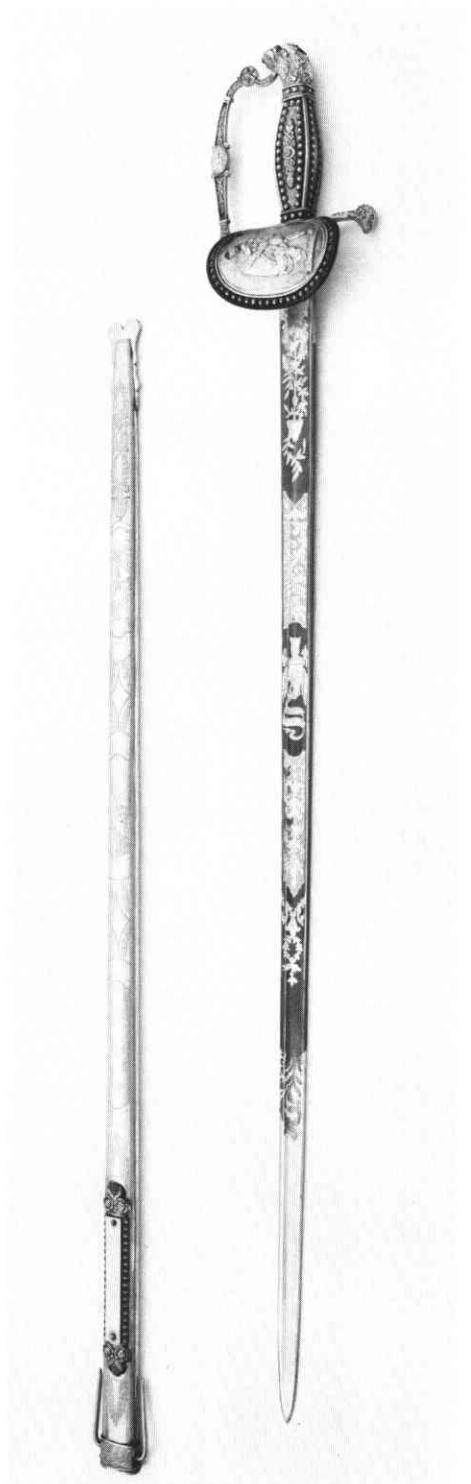
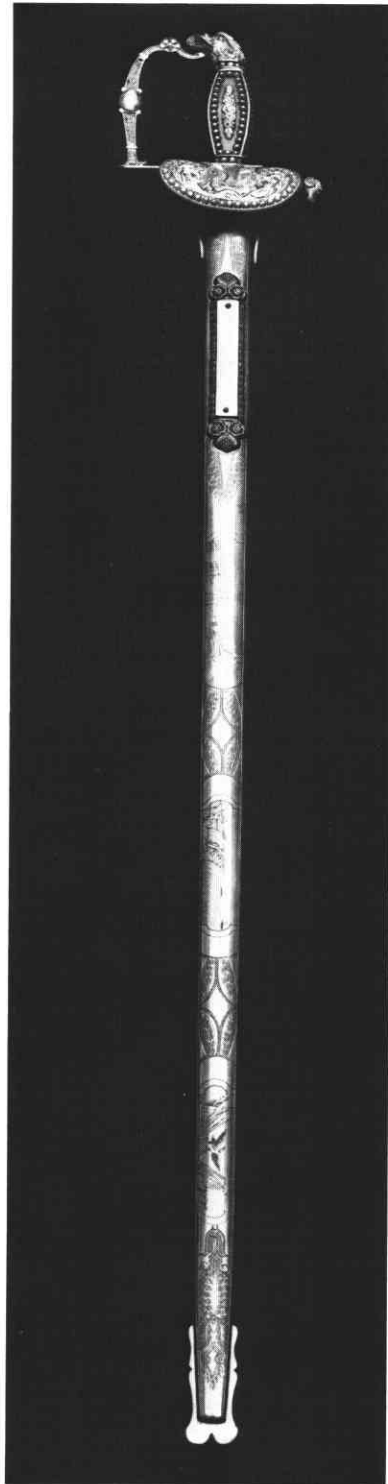
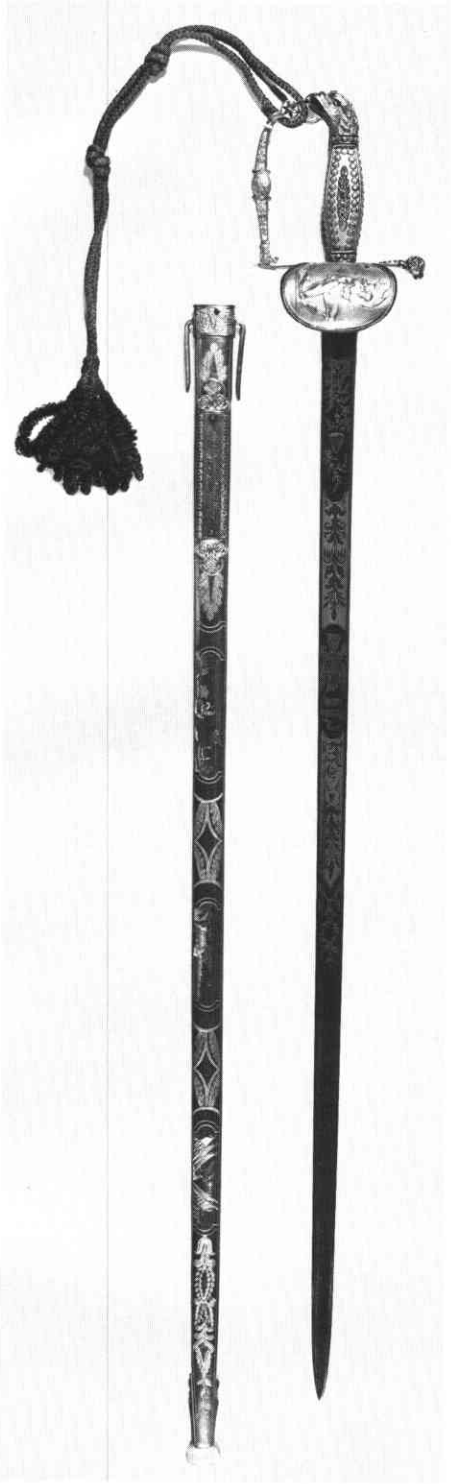
Belote, Theodore T. — *American and European Swords in the Historical Collections of the United States National Museum* Bulletin 163, Washington, 1932.

Auction Catalogs

Sotheby Parke Bernet

Sale 4478Y, Nov 19-22, 1980
(Major General Edmund P. Gaines sword), Lot #210.

Sale 4590Y, Apr 29, 1981
(Major General Edmund P. Gaines sword), Lot #402.



Left: Sword of Maj. Gen. Jacob Brown (1775-1828). The counterguard has the only known use of the half-kneeling figure supporting a demi-“Victory.” The Brown sword retains its silk sword knot, but the counterguard has been reattached to the crossguard by three screws. The National Museum of American History.

Center: Sword of Peter B. Porter (1773-1844), Maj. Gen. NYSM. The counterguard design with eagle and horseheads. Buffalo & Erie County Historical Society.

Right: Sword of Maj. Gen. Winfield Scott (1786-1866). The counterguard has the Hercules and Nemean Lion theme. The blued blade is decorated with alternating panels of bright-etched floral patterns. New York Historical Society.