

FIGURE ONE – Map of Niagara Frontier

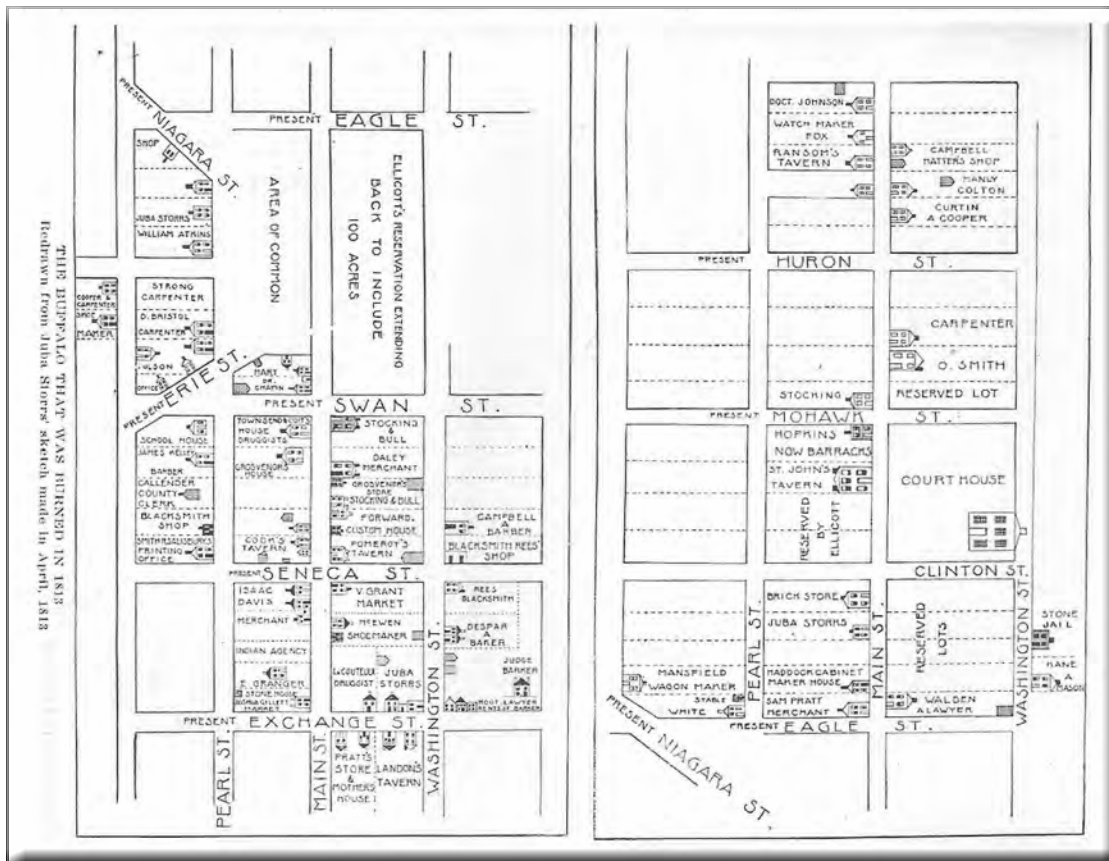


FIGURE TWO – Juba Storrs' sketch of Buffalo (April, 1813)

MAJOR GENERAL AMOS HALL'S IMPOSSIBLE ASSIGNMENT: DEFEND BUFFALO FROM DESTRUCTION

by Craig D. Bell

Prior to the Hostilities of 1813 on the Niagara Frontier

As the War of 1812 entered its second year, the Niagara Frontier of Western New York State had not yet tasted much in the way of major battles. Most of the skirmishes and battles took place to the north in what is now known as Canada,¹ starting notably with the British capture of Fort Michilimackinac on July 17, 1812. It is quite possible the Americans stationed at Fort Michilimackinac were not even aware that war had been declared by President James Madison, just a month before a British force appeared at the fort without warning and demanded the surrender of Fort Michilimackinac ... which the Americans promptly complied. Before the war started, Americans and Canadians living on both sides of the Niagara Frontier border had gotten along quite well conducting their business and trade, visiting and socializing with each other, and generally becoming a growing area for the migration of immigrants and new settlers to the area. A series of small towns and villages built up on both sides of the Niagara River that connected Lakes Erie and Ontario. On the western side of the Niagara River, towns such as Newark (now known as Niagara on the Lake), Queenston, Stamford, and Niagara Falls were established and loosely guarded by Forts George, Erie, and Niagara. On the eastern side of the river towns such as Youngstown, Lewiston, Black Rock, and Buffalo, together with the Tuscarora Indians who primarily congregated at a place known as "Tuscarora Village" just outside or adjacent to Lewiston, were established and grew in population.

Buffalo had a population of at most several thousand residents at the outbreak of the war. Streets had been laid out with a number of frame homes and businesses constructed, together with several stone houses.

As the intensity of the war increased in 1813, a number of battles took place in the Niagara Frontier, although most were on the Canadian side of the border. In late summer of 1813, most of the American regular troops stationed at Fort George, located near Newark, Canada, and across the Niagara River from Lewiston, joined the American

military offensive against Montreal. The rear forces left at Fort George numbered about 1500 New York militia under the command of Brigadier General George McClure, who served under federal authority. These militia forces had enlisted for 3 months of service. As their term of service neared completion, General McClure became nervous. He attempted to recruit additional volunteers but had only minimal success.

On November 17, 1813, General McClure wrote to the Secretary of War that the 400 volunteer soldiers he recruited were nearing the end of their period of enlistment, set to expire on December 9.² McClure implored the Secretary of War to send reinforcements if he sought to retain possession of Fort George.³ Prior to McClure's correspondence, General Armstrong, the US Secretary of War, had issued the following order to the commanding officer of Fort George.

*War Department,
Oct. 4, 1813*

SIR: Understanding that the defense of the post committed to your charge may render it proper to destroy the Town of Newark, you are hereby directed to apprise the inhabitants of this circumstance and to invite them to remove themselves and their effects to some place of greater safety.⁴

General Armstrong's order seems quite clear that the Town of Newark should be destroyed only in the event that McClure could not provide a defense of Fort George. The language of the order does not provide an authorization to burn the village at will or for any other reason other than if required for the defense of Fort George.

As the American soldiers' terms of enlistment neared their end, military discipline disintegrated, looting at the Village of Newark increased, and General McClure rapidly lost control of his forces. On December 10, 1813, General McClure convened a council of war consisting of his senior officers; they discussed General Armstrong's order regarding Fort George and Newark. The council of officers advised General McClure to abandon Fort George

and burn the village of Newark to deprive the British and their allies of winter quarters. The decision was made to immediately abandon Fort George on December 10, 1813. General McClure followed through that very night without giving proper notice to the residents of Newark. McClure provided a 2-hour notice to the inhabitants that the village would be destroyed. As snow began to fall that late afternoon, General McClure sent a detail out and the work of destruction immediately began.⁵ On that day 80 buildings were destroyed and about 400 women and children were rendered homeless.⁶ Many of the families had no support and no aid from the healthy male population of the village, for the majority of the men were absent from home in the service of US forces or in prison.⁷ All of the houses were burned except for one or two that somehow escaped destruction.⁸

While the village was in flames, McClure wrote the Secretary of War as follows:

NIAGARA

December 10, 1813

This day found Fort George left to be defended by only 60 effective regular troops under Captains Rogers and Hampton of the 24th Regiment of the United States Infantry and probably 40 volunteers. Within the last 3 days the term of service of the militia has been expiring and they have re-crossed the river almost to a man. Foreseeing the defenseless situation in which the fort was left, I had authorized some of my most active subalterns to raise volunteer companies for 2 months and offered a bounty in addition to the month's pay. It is with regret I have to say that this expedient failed of producing the desired effect. A very inconsiderable number were willing to engage for a further term of service on any conditions.

From the most indubitable information I learn that the enemy are advancing in force. This day a scouting party of Colonel Willcock's volunteers came in contact with their advance at the Twelve Mile Creek, lost four prisoners and one killed; one of the former they gave up to the savages. This movement determined me in calling a council of the principal, regular and militia officers left at Fort George this morning. They all accorded in opinion that the fort was not tenable with the remnant of force left in it. I in consequence gave orders for evacuating the

fort and since dusk and with but three boats have brought over all the light artillery and most of the arms, equipage, ammunition, etc, and shall doubtless have time to dispose of the heavy cannon before the enemy makes his appearance. The village of Newark is now in flames; the few remaining inhabitants in it having been notified of our intention were enabled to remove their property. This step has not been taken without counsel and is in conformity with the views of Your Excellency disclosed to me in a former communication.

The enemy are now completely shut out from any hopes or means of wintering in the vicinity of Fort George. It is truly mortifying to me that a part of the militia at least could not have been prevailed on to continue in service for a longer term, but the circumstance of their having to live in tents at this inclement season, added to that of the paymaster coming on only prepared to furnish them with 1 out of 3 months' pay has had all the bad effects that can be imagined. The best and most subordinate militia that have yet been on the frontier, finding that their wages were not ready for them, became with some meritorious exceptions, a disaffected and ungovernable multitude.

December 11th.

I have this moment received a communication from the Governor of this State, covering a requisition on Major General Hall for 1000 men. It is probable that not more than six or seven hundred will rendezvous on this frontier which will in my humble opinion be not more than competent to its proper protection as some will have to be stationed at Black Rock, Schlosser and Lewiston.

I have written to General P.B. Porter desiring him to employ the Indians for the protection of Buffalo until the detachment arrives. Our shipping is in danger. No exertion will be waiting within the pale of our limited means to afford the protection contemplated.⁹

General McClure's letter was proof of his own destruction as the only reason cited or assigned for his act of destruc-

tion was to prevent the British army from being housed at Newark during the winter, which admittedly was beyond the confines of General Armstrong's order.

General McClure and his remaining men left Fort George that evening and withdrew his troops to the east side of the Niagara River. A British force arrived at dawn the next day, after seeing the flames the night before. Newark was in total ruin. As to Fort George, General McClure and his men left so quickly that they neglected to destroy the small powder magazines, only destroying a single magazine. Tents for 1500 men were left standing, together with all of the barracks.¹⁰

The British reaction was immediate. On December 13, 1813, Lieutenant General Gordon Drummond, the new British commander in Upper Canada, was outraged and immediately wrote to General McClure.

YORK

14th December, 1813

*SIR: Lieutenant-General Drummond, President and commanding the forces in Upper Canada, having just received a report from the officer in command of the British troops on the Niagara Frontier that the whole of the town of [Newark] was destroyed by fire previous to its being evacuated by the American troops, I am directed to call upon you immediately and distinctly to state whether this atrocious act has been committed by the authority of the American Government or is the unauthorized act of any individual. It is essential that not a moment should be lost in returning a specific answer to this communication.*¹¹

New York State Governor Daniel D. Tompkins complained that McClure's needless vandalism would inevitably cause the British to seek revenge. Secretary of War Armstrong, extremely disturbed at McClure's actions, and acting under direction of the President, ordered Major General James Wilkinson, the senior American officer on the northern frontier, to contact Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, the British commander-in-chief in Canada, and officially disavow McClure's act on behalf of the US Government. General Wilkinson expressed the views of the President clearly that McClure's actions were not directed and are not condoned. Unfortunately for the United States, the mail moved very slowly from Lieutenant General Drummond to General McClure,

and ultimately to McClure's superiors, followed by a return communication by the United States. Drummond did not receive a response for over 6 weeks.

PLATTSBURG

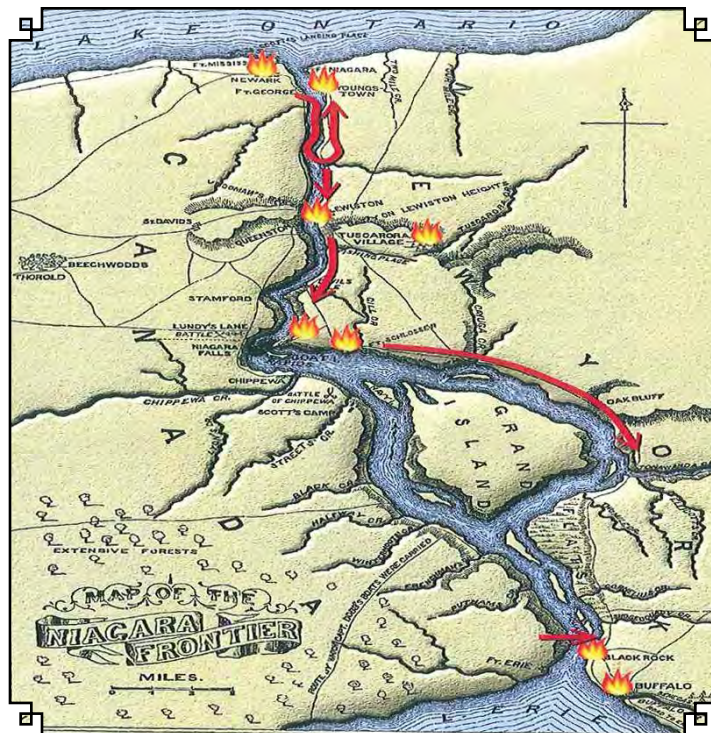
January 28, 1814

SIR: I am commanded by the Executive of the United States to disavow the conduct of Brigadier-General McClure of the militia of the State of New York in burning the town of Newark and in irrefragable testimony that this act was unlicensed to transmit to Your Excellency a copy of the order under color of which that officer perpetrated a deed abhorrent to every American feeling. From this testimony Your Excellency will perceive that the authority to destroy the village was limited expressly to the defense of Fort George, a measure warranted by the laws of modern war and justified by precedents innumerable.

*The outrages which have ensued upon the unwarrantable destruction of Newark have been carried too far and present the aspect rather of vindictive fury than just retaliation, yet they are imputed more to personal feeling than any settled plan of policy deliberately weighed and adopted, and I hope I shall receive from Your Excellency an assurance that this conclusion is not fallacious, for although the wanton conflagrations on the waters of the Chesapeake are fresh in the recollection of every citizen of the United States, no system of retaliation which has for its object the devastation of private property, will ever be resorted to by the American Government but in the last extremity, and this will depend on the conduct of your royal master's troops in this country.*¹²

By the time the letter from General Wilkinson was delivered to Lieutenant General Sir George Prevost, it was too late. The British retaliation and retribution was already accomplished.

The British Retaliation



**FIGURE THREE – Niagara Frontier
Color Map with Fire**

To avenge the burning of Newark, British Lieutenant General Drummond prepared to attack American Fort Niagara and to torch the nearby village of Lewiston. The British intended to deprive their enemy (the “Americans”) of winter shelter and provisions along the Niagara frontier. Drummond struck before dawn in the cold winter day of December 19, 1813, sending 550 experienced British regulars across the Niagara River.¹³ The Britons moved under the “strictest discipline” and maintained “the profoundest silence” as they landed and advanced in the darkness.¹⁴

The Britons overtook two American sentries posted outside Fort Niagara’s gates, and then they broke into the guard houses and bayoneted the American soldiers before moving onto the fort itself.¹⁵ The British force found the gates to the fort open and the sentry sleeping. After killing the sentry, the British quickly moved into the fort, announced themselves, and took complete possession and control of the fort. During skirmishes inside the fort, 65 Americans were killed and another 300 were captured and made prisoners. The British also released eight Canadians who the Americans held as prisoners within the fort. The British forces lost no lives and had only 12 wounded.¹⁶ In addition to controlling the fort, the British also captured 27 cannons, 3000 stands of arms, and tremendous quantities of ammunition and provisions, containing virtually

all of the American military supplies for the Niagara frontier, which were now in the possession of the British, thus ensuring plenty of food and comfort for the winter.¹⁷

With Fort Niagara under command of the British, Lieutenant General Drummond dispatched General Phineas Riall with a force of 1000 men composed of 500 soldiers and 500 Indians on December 19, 1813, to cross over to Lewiston. The Indians traditionally had not crossed the Canadian border into the United States; however, the retribution of the burning of Newark seems to have removed this impediment. General Riall’s forces and the British’s Indian allies advanced on Lewiston where a small group of American forces of militia and a few Indians were stationed. The Americans attempted to retreat with some of their artillery but they were dispersed by the Indians. Despite assurances by the Indians that they would exercise restraint, the Indians broke away from their British allies and went about killing and maiming by tomahawk, and scalping the dead, the wounded and the unhurt, irrespective of sex and age.¹⁸ The citizens of Lewiston and its vicinity sought to escape the early morning raid, many in a state of half dress. The Indians plundered the town, drank any liquor they could find, and killed a dozen or so American civilians (including at least one child), before moving on to burning all of the houses down.¹⁹

On December 21, 1813, General Riall pressed on to destroy and burn down the buildings in Manchester (now known as Niagara Falls), Fort Schlosser, as well as the nearby Indian village of the Tuscarora, a Haudenosaunee people who had helped the Americans.²⁰

Next, the British turned their attention to Black Rock and Buffalo, and to General McClure. Following General McClure’s hasty retreat from Fort George, and escape from Fort Niagara, he moved on to Buffalo to plan for its defenses. General McClure tried to explain his actions to New York Governor Tompkins and Secretary of War Armstrong as being in the nature of having insufficient troops and resources. Governor Tompkins and the Secretary of War were most distraught with General McClure. Governor Tompkins was not accepting of McClure’s excuses. In a letter to General McClure, Governor Tompkins wrote:

Albany,

Dec. 24, 1813

*SIR, I have this moment arrived from New York and received your communication detailing the disastrous state of things on the Niagara frontier . . . Upon my arrival there I learn for the first time that the former [Fort George] has been destroyed, the village of Newark burnt and Fort Niagara made the depot of all the cannon, military stores and equipments on that frontier, with but a handful of men to garrison it. I was not apprised of the intention to evacuate Fort George or to destroy Newark, or otherwise I should most assuredly have given direction to have the frontier supplied with a considerable force to guard against the consequences of the irritation and disposition to retaliate which the burning of Newark would naturally excite on the west side of the Niagara River . . .*²¹

Governor Tompkins told McClure that he ordered Major General Hall to depart from his command at Batavia, New York, to move out to Buffalo and assume command. Tompkins also provided authority to General Hall to call for additional numbers of men and to repel the invasion promptly and effectually.²²

General Hall Arrives in Buffalo December 26, 1813



FIGURE FOUR – Sketch of Amos Hall

After assuming command on December 28, 1813, Major General Hall had a force of about 2011 officers and men, located at Black Rock and Buffalo, although 811 of them seem to have vanished on the morning of the attack on December 30, 1813.²³ The civilian population seemed pleased that General McClure was gone and Gen-

eral Hall was in charge. However, the British gave no time to General Hall to become familiar with his new soldiers and the Buffalo area. British General Riall with approximately 1410 men crossed over the Niagara River in the very early hours of December 30, 1813. While the size of Riall's force was relatively small, it was composed mostly of seasoned British regular veterans, accompanied by a few militia and Indians. The leaders of the expeditionary force were experienced and battle tested, unlike virtually all of General Hall's green militiamen. The British force was composed of the following elements:

Royal Scots	370
8th Kings Regiment	240
41st Regiment	250
89th Light Infantry	50
100th Grenadiers	50
Militia	50
Indians	<u>400</u>
Total British Expeditionary Forces	1,410

General Riall divided his troops into two forces. The larger force of approximately 1000 men consisting of the Eighth Kings Regiment, and the 41st, 89th, and 100th Regiments, landed safely about 1 mile below Scajaquada Creek at midnight.²⁴ The 89th Regiment being in advance surprised the picket and captured one of the artillery batteries who were in positions designed to defend Buffalo from just such an attack. With little opposition, this British force moved up to Buffalo and waited for the time of attack.²⁵

The smaller force of about 400 men consisting of the Royal Scots and militia crossed the river near Black Rock but had difficulties affecting a landing. At dawn, the Americans manning the batteries of Black Rock opened fire and had great success.²⁶ The British lost about 50 men killed and wounded before getting a strong foothold on the shore. During the ensuing battle, the British captured the American battery and then joined the other larger force and marched up the road to Buffalo.²⁷

When the sounds of fighting broke out at Black Rock on the morning of December 30, General Hall took all of the forces he could muster, including Indians, and proceeded to Black Rock. Some of his men fled at the sound of the first shot. The others withstood the British attack for 15 or 20 minutes and then they joined the other militia men who were fleeing. The remainder of General Hall's forces managed to hold off General Riall's British

regulars for several hours at Buffalo, but his militia men gradually dwindled in number and took flight.²⁸ A cannon was placed at the corner of Niagara and Main Streets which was manned by Dr. Cyrenius Chapin, an American militia colonel. Colonel Chapin managed to get off several shots at the British forces as they converged on the streets of Buffalo until the cannon became dismounted from its carriage. Colonel Chapin then hoisted a white handkerchief on a cane and attempted to surrender the town. The British took Chapin prisoner and carried on with their attack.²⁹ As the evening of December 30 approached, General Hall succeeded in rallying 200 to 300 men at Williamsville, just outside of Buffalo, to counter attack. The British allied Indians attacked and shot many of them. Buffalo fell that day to the British forces and



Figure Five – Chapin Firing Cannon

their allied Indians.³⁰ Although no cameras existed back in the time of the burning of Buffalo in December 1813, there was one young boy, LeGrand St. John, who had a vivid memory of the events and who later turned out to be a very accomplished artist. Back in December 1813, LeGrand St. John was a 6-year-old boy who witnessed the burning of Buffalo. No doubt he was aware of his courageous mother who persuaded the British and Canadian Indians to leave her house standing as every other structure in Buffalo was burned to the ground. Several years after Buffalo was burned, LeGrand St. John made a series of 10 drawings from memory. The sketches were drawn in pencil. Of these drawings, 4 depict images or renderings of buildings before the fire, including the only known drawing of Buffalo's first courthouse (Fig 6). The other drawings show villagers fleeing British and Native American forces and the rubble of buildings as families return after the fire (Figs 7-9). The drawings included with the article, together with three others, were discovered by a descendant of LeGrand St. John and donated to the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society in 2005.³¹

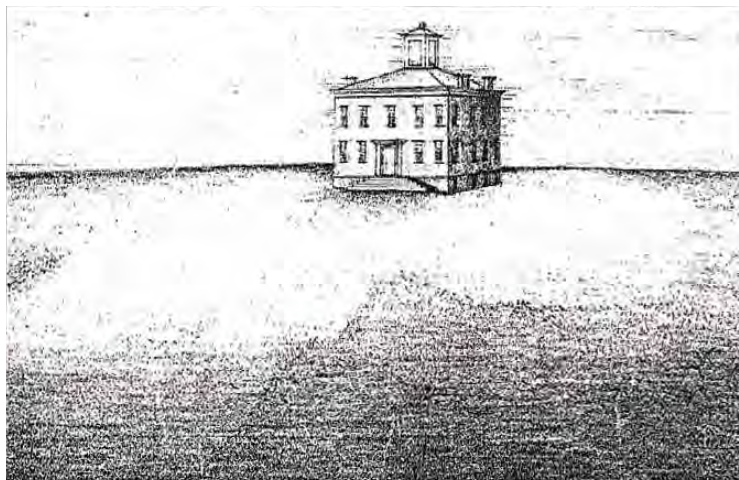


Figure Six – Drawing 1

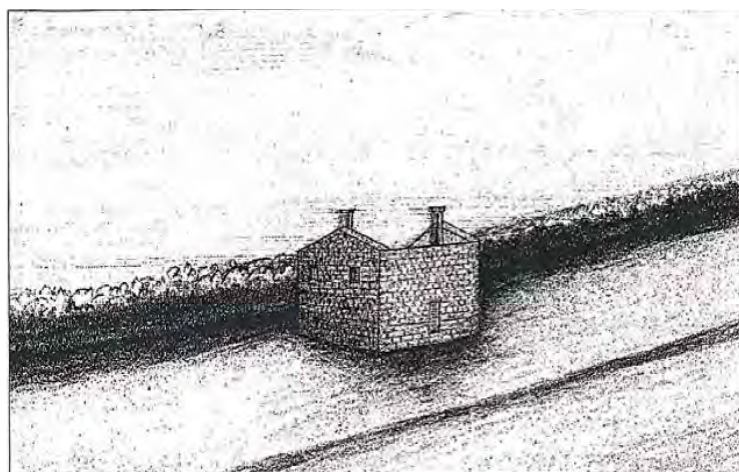


Figure Seven – Drawing 2

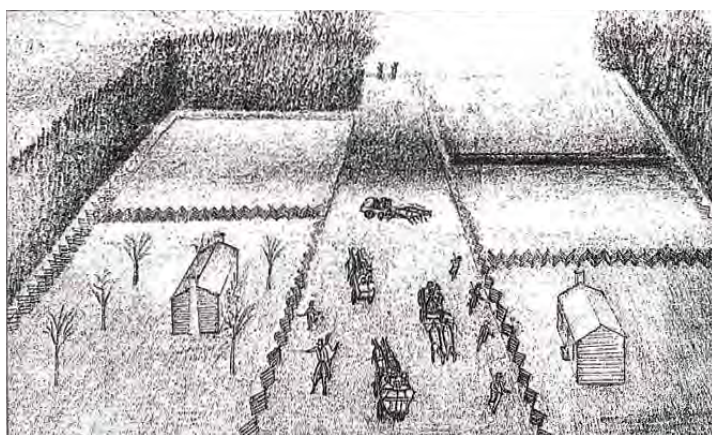


Figure Eight – Drawing 3

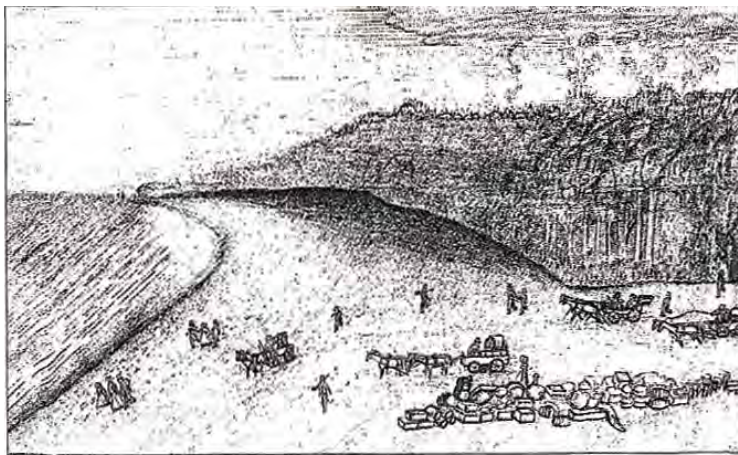


Figure Nine – Drawing 4

BUFFALO PROPERTY DAMAGE

DESTROYED

343 Houses, Hospitals, Taverns, Inns and
Places of Business

SURVIVED

One house confirmed left standing –
The St. John House.

It is possible 2 or 3 other stone buildings survived.

Figure Twelve – Slide of Buffalo Property Damage

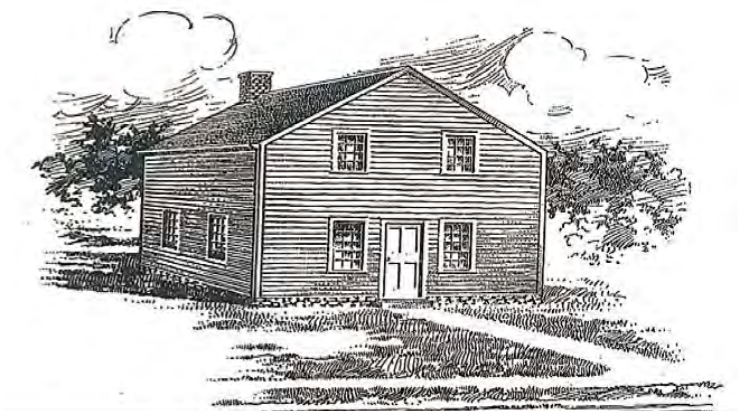


Figure Ten - Sketch of St. John House

burned in Buffalo and its vicinity.³²

The British loss in this raid on Buffalo included 31 killed, 65 wounded, and 9 missing, for a total of 105 casualties. The American loss was more severe. On January 6, 1814, General Hall reported a loss of about 30 killed, 60 wounded, and 69 prisoners, 12 of whom were wounded.³³ One week later, General Hall reported an additional 50 bodies had been found and the search was still in progress. The estimated loss of Americans killed, wounded, and captured exceeded 300, not to mention more than 800 militia men who disappeared at the sound of the first shot.³⁴ To this day the American loss has never been ascertained.

LOSSES FROM THE BURNING OF BUFFALO

BRITISH MILITARY LOSSES		AMERICAN MILITARY LOSSES	
Killed	31	Killed	80
Wounded	65	Wounded	60
Missing	9	Prisoners	69
Total Casualties	105	Others Unallocated For AWOL	100* 811
		Total Casualties and Missing	1,120*

*Total American losses have never been determined with any degree of certainty.

Figure Eleven – Slide of British and American Losses

With the total destruction of Buffalo, along with the other neighboring villages and towns along the Niagara River, complete, Sir George Prevost issued a proclamation that he hoped it would not be necessary to repeat the retaliation visited upon the Niagara frontier in consequence of the destruction of Newark.³⁵

Many commentators place the blame and destruction of the Niagara frontier upon the inability of the raw and undisciplined militia. However, we should not forget that Fort Niagara was filled with hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of supplies while guarded only by a small force, whereas thousands of regular US Regulars were idling in camps within a few days' journey.³⁶

The residents of Buffalo fled on every road out of the village as the British and Indians burned every home and building in Buffalo, save one. In all, 343 structures — houses, hospitals, taverns, and places of business — were

Major General Amos Hall: A Brief Biographical Sketch



Sketch of Amos Hall

Amos Hall was born at Guilford, Connecticut, on November 21, 1761.³⁷ At the age of 14, he joined Company H, Seventh Connecticut Regiment of Foot, commanded by his father, Captain Stephen Hall, as a fifer.³⁸ He served as a fifer throughout most of the war until sometime in late 1780 when he became an orderly sergeant; the rank he retained at the end of the war.³⁹ Although details of Amos Hall's service during the American Revolution are generally derived from company muster rolls, it appears his unit was a participant in several battles, including the Battle of Germantown (1777), followed by quartering at Valley Forge during the winter of 1777-1778, and participating in another battle at Monmouth in 1778. Amos Hall also spent time at West Point and in Newark, New Jersey, working on fortifications.⁴⁰

Several years after the end of the war, Amos traveled to Western New York to survey the Phelps and Gorham Purchase.⁴¹ He apparently liked the rolling fertile land in Western New York (as opposed to the hard and stony fields of Connecticut) as he moved to Western New York in early 1790. Amos purchased 3000 acres in what is now known as West Bloomfield, and two lots in Canandaigua Village.⁴² After 2 years of being a bachelor in West Bloomfield, he married Phoebe Coe of Granville, Massachusetts, on December 11, 1791.⁴³ Together they had eight sons and one daughter in their Ontario County home. All of his children survived Amos except one son named Stephen.⁴⁴

In July 1790, Amos Hall was appointed United States

Marshall; he took the first census of Western New York, showing 1084 persons living in the area, composed of 205 families of which all but 24 lived west of the Genesee River.⁴⁵ Sixteen blacks were reported, of whom 7 were free and 9 were slaves.⁴⁶ Adding to his responsibilities during the mid-1790s, Amos Hall served as a town supervisor for 3 years (1793-1795), becoming supervisor of Bloomfield on the organization of the town in 1796.⁴⁷ Hall was a surrogate judge for Ontario County from 1796-1798; a member of the New York State assembly representing Ontario and Steuben counties from 1798-1799, and again from Genesee and Ontario counties from 1804-1805.⁴⁸ He was re-elected in 1808, but he resigned. Amos Hall was elected to the New York State Senate where he served for the Western District from 1809 through 1813.⁴⁹

In addition to this public service, Amos Hall continued to serve in various posts in the New York militia. On April 7, 1790, Amos Hall was promoted to lieutenant in the Ontario County militia.⁵⁰ Less than 2 years later, on March 22, 1792, Hall was promoted to Second Major, then to First Major in 1795.⁵¹ One year later, in 1796, Amos Hall was promoted to Lieutenant Colonel Commandant.⁵² In 1800, Hall was promoted to Brigadier General of Militia for Ontario and Steuben counties, where he had six regiments placed under his command.⁵³ Ten years later, Hall was promoted to Major General and given command of the Seventh Division of Infantry; one of eight infantry divisions making up the New York State's infantry forces.⁵⁴ Major General Hall's military service ended in 1815, when he retired at the age of 53 years.⁵⁵

Amos Hall must have had a very busy life, for in addition to his public service, military service, raising nine children, being a land owner of more than 3000 acres of land, he also owned and operated a grist mill located about 1 mile from his home in West Bloomfield.⁵⁶ After the close of the war, General Hall was occupied on commissions for the distribution of landed estates and divisions of lands, a notable instance being the partition of a 100,000-acre tract between an English claimant and the State of Connecticut.⁵⁷ He died on December 28, 1827, at his home in West Bloomfield, at the age of 66 years.⁵⁸ General Hall is buried in Pioneer Cemetery, located in West Bloomfield, New York.⁵⁹ Also buried nearby are a number of General Hall's fellow soldiers who served under his command as members of the state militia for the counties of Ontario and Steuben.



Figure Thirteen – Gravesite with Descendant

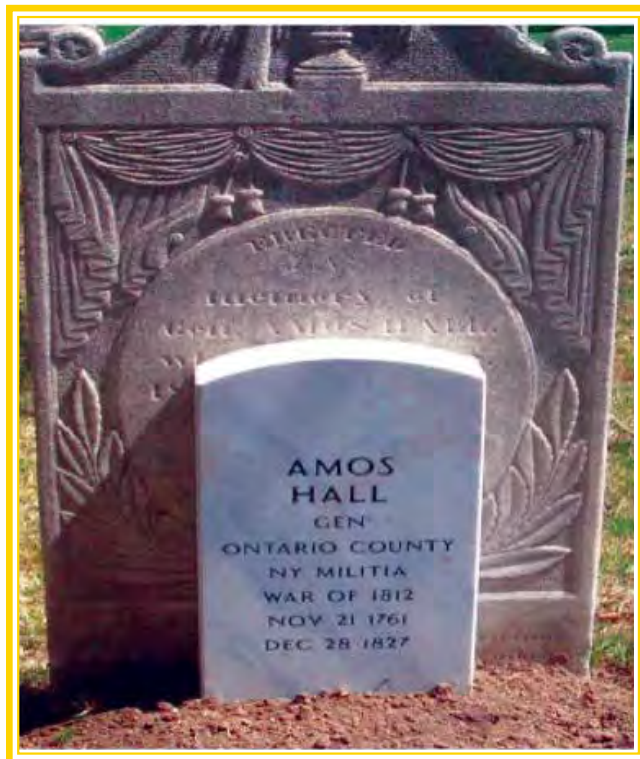


Figure Fourteen – “Double” Headstone

GENERAL HALL'S



FIGURE FIFTEEN – Pistols and Belt

MILITARY WEAPONS AND ACCOUTERMENTS

In 1933, several descendants of Amos Hall identified a number of military items still within the Hall family that were owned and used by Amos Hall during his military service. The family retains ownership of “fifer” Hall’s revolutionary war musket, which is surcharged or branded “U. States,” although I have not been able to either ex-

amine the musket or ascertain its place of manufacture. Family members also own General Hall’s militia uniform belt and a pair of his epaulets, together with a yellow vest with military buttons. I hope to one day be able to examine these items to complete my research on Amos Hall.

Around 1950, Norm Flayderman was able to acquire from the Hall family General Hall’s pair of flintlock pistols and pistol saddle holsters, together with his sword. About 5 years ago I was able to acquire ownership of these weapons and I am proud to own them as a former 26-year resident of Buffalo and Western New York, where I enjoyed reading and visiting the many military sites of the French and Indian War, American Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812 during my youth.

General Hall’s matched pair of fine quality flintlock pistols were made in London, circa 1780–1800. Each pistol, having an overall length of 14 inches, is stocked in walnut, and has a brass barrel. Each barrel is 8 inches long, in .54 caliber, and is engraved with their place of manufacture, “LONDON.” The barrel of each pistol has deep stamped proof marks “V” and “P.” Each brass barrel is engraved with an 18-star decorative border by the engraved tang, and a graceful engraved “fish” design on the top of the barrel. All of the furniture is made of brass, including the engraved trigger guards, engraved butt caps, and open or split side plates with double-edged engraved borders. Each pistol has a brass escutcheon on the wrist of

MATCHED PAIR OF FLINTLOCK PISTOLS



Figure Sixteen – Pistol Profile – Single



Figure Seventeen – Pair of Pistols



Figure Eighteen – Close up of Ketland Lock



Figure Nineteen – Pair of "H" Escutcheon



Figure Twenty – Ketland Lockplate – Close up of second pistol.

the stock with a stylish engraved “H” surrounded by an engraved oval border. The H stands for Hall, the owner of the pistols. The lock in each pistol is made by Ketland and Company, and they are an early design of Ketland lock.

Leather and Brass Pistol Holsters

The pistol holsters for these pistols are made of fairly rigid formed leather, and each holster has sturdy brass cylinder bottoms. The holsters are attached to each other by leather and have exquisite embroidered cloth flaps that comfortably cover the opening for each pistol holster. Although no makers’ marks can be found on the pistol holsters, they appear to be of English manufacturing probably from around 1800–1810 and most definitely made for a senior officer based on their construction.

Sword



Figure Twenty-one – Sword Hilt – Close Up

General Hall’s sword is unmarked by marker, but the ricasso is stamped “G&G.” The sword is probably of English manufacture, made for the American export market. The blade of the sword is slightly curved and approximately 31 inches in length. The blade is also heavily blued with gold inlay outlining American military motifs, including a panoply of arms, and has an American eagle with a shield containing 15 stars and 13 stripes. The 15 stars on the shield suggests a time period for the sword of sometime between 1795 until the end of the War of 1812. There is also a ribbon containing the words “E PLURIBUS UNUM.” There is one shallow fuller running the length of the blade. The hilt is made of brass with heavy gold gilt still present at a number of places on the hilt.

There is a field cannon cast into the guard of the hilt. The grip is of ivory with gently engraved rolling vertical lines spaced evenly throughout the grip. The pommel is an American eagle head. The sword’s scabbard is made of black leather and has three sections of scalloped brass encompassing the leather where the scabbard’s two rings are attached. There is also a brass drag at the bottom of the scabbard. The brass components of the scabbard still retain traces of gold gilt. Also present with the sword is a gold bullion sword knot and strap attached to the sword’s hilt.

Taken together, General Hall’s sidearms and sword have provided me with an enjoyable ride down memory lane as I reacquainted myself with several of my favorite military sites and haunts of my youth as a native Buffalonian. These treasured items have reopened my eyes to the early years of the Niagara frontier and its hardships. I stand reinvigorated in my search to learn more about the events and activities in the Niagara frontier during the War of 1812.

FOOTNOTES

1 As of 1812, British North America was made up of several colonies, two of which were known as Upper and Lower Canada (today's Ontario and Quebec, respectively).

2 The War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier, by Louis L. Babcock, Published by the Buffalo Historical Society, 1927, at p. 115.

3 Id.

4 Id.

5 Id. at p. 116.

6 Id.

7 Id. at p. 116.

8 Id. at p. 117.

9 Id. at pp. 117-118.

10 Id. at p. 118.

11 Id. at p. 119.

12 Id. at pp. 119-120.

13 Letter from Gordon Drummond to George Prevost, Dec. 18, 1813, published in William Wood, ed. Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, 3 vols. (Toronto: Champlain Society, 1920-1928); and in E.A. Cruikshank, ed., Documentary History of the Campaign on the Niagara Frontier in 1814, 2 vols. (Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.: Lundy's Lane Historical Society, 1896 [hereinafter referred to as "Cruikshank"] at vol. 8, p. 16 and vol. 9, at pp. 3, 18-19.

14 Id.

15 Cruikshank at vol. 9, at pp. 6-7, 11, and 18-19 (citing a letter from Lt. Driscoll on the capture of Fort Niagara).

16 Id.

17 Letter from Daniel D. Thompkins to Secretary of War John Armstrong, Dec. 24, 1813, published by the State of New York, Hastings, ed., Public Papers of Daniel D. Tompkins, Governor of New York, Vol. 3 at p. 407 (hereinafter referred to as either "Hastings" or "Papers of Thompkins"); Letters from Gordon Drummond to George Prevost, Dec. 18, 1813 and Dec. 20, 1813, in Select British Documents of the Canadian War of 1812, vol. 2 at pp. 487, 490-491.

18 Louis L. Babcock, ed. The War of 1812 on the Niagara Frontier," published by the Buffalo Historical Society (1927) at p. 127.

19 Id. at pp. 128-129.

20 Id.

21 Cruikshank, vol. 9, at pp. 42-43.

22 Id. at p. 43.

23 Babcock, p. 130.

24 Id. at p. 133.

25 Id.

26 Id.

27 Id.

28 Id. at p. 134.

29 Id.

30 Id.

31 Media Releases, dated June 9, 2005 and June 16, 2005 by the Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society. See Also Buffalo News, June 19, 2005 edition, at p. B-1. For additional information on these drawings contact the Buffalo History Museum, Research Library, 1 Museum Court, Buffalo, New York 14216 (ref. St. John papers/collections A00-507). The original drawings by LeGrand St. John are currently on display at the Buffalo History Museum in the War of 1812 Exhibit.

32 Id. at pp. 135-138.

33 Id. at p. 135.

34 Id.

35 Id. at p. 137.

36 Id.

37 Manuscript by Marietta Hall Gardner (a General Hall descendant) on the Hall family (1933) and another manuscript on General Amos Hall by Amos Hall descendant Myron S. Hall (undated). Copies of each manuscript are in the author's possession.

38 Id., Amos Hall's muster roll records from the period of February 6, 1777 through January 25, 1780 and related Veteran's papers retained as records by the National Archives and Records Service on Amos Hall.

39 Id.

40 Id.

41 Marietta Hall Gardner manuscript and Myron S. Hall manuscript.

42 Id.

43 Id.

44 Id.

45 Id.; see also Papers of the War of 1812, Vol. 5, at pp. 27-28, published by the Buffalo Historical Society.

46 Id.

47 Id.

48 Id.

49 Id.

50 Hastings, Vol. 1, at p. 180.

51 Id. at p. 217.

52 Id. at 317.

53 Id. at pp. 545 and 590.

54 Id. at pp. 1149, 1400, 1405, 1408 and 1640.

55 Id.56 Marietta Hall Gardner manuscript and Myron S. Hall manuscript. See also Papers of the War of 1812, Vol. 5, at pp. 27-28.

57 Id.

58 Id.

59 Id.