

impress horses, teams, and carriages, and pay for the reasonable hire or use of the same." It was further resolved that the militia so called out should be allowed continental pay and rations.<sup>1</sup>

The command of the Department of the North, which had been assigned to Major-General Philip Schuyler, was transferred on the twenty-fifth of March, 1777, to Major-General Horatio Gates. At that time the most distant of the forts on the western frontier of New York was Fort Schuyler, originally named Fort Stanwix. Built as it was by provincial troops under General John Stanwix, in 1758, at what was then called "Oneida Station," or "Oneida Carrying Place;" its site, about five hundred feet west of the Mohawk River, is now a part of the city of Rome, one hundred and twelve miles from Albany, and about sixty from Lake Ontario, by the way of Oneida lake and the Oswego River. The stretch of land where Fort Stanwix was constructed had early obtained the name of "the Carrying Place," because at that point the Indians and fur-traders commonly took their canoes, boats, or bateaux from the Mohawk River and bore them thence to Wood Creek, which flows into Oneida lake, thirteen miles farther westward. The Carrying Place was a point where a number of old paths or trails diverged in the direction of the palisaded villages or castles of the Indians inhabiting the country adjacent the little and great lakes, which diversify that part of Western New York.

The fort was a square work, constructed of logs and earth, with four bastions, the salient angles of which were exteriorly two hundred and fifty feet from one another. It was "surrounded by a ditch of considerable width and depth, with a covert way and glacis around three of its angles; the other being sufficiently secured by low, marshy ground. In front of the gate there had been a drawbridge covered by a salient angle, raised in front of it on the glacis. In the centre of the ditch, a row of perpendicular pickets had been erected with rows of horizontal pickets fixed around the ramparts under the embrasures. But since the conclusion of the French war the fort had fallen into decay, the ditch was filled up, the pickets had rotted and fallen down."<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the year 1777 the garrison of Fort Schuyler was under the command of Colonel Samuel Elmore of Connecticut. As it was recognized as an available key with which to lock that door of entrance into the state against an enemy, and also an advantageous point of observation for acquiring knowledge of the movements of hostile Indians along the western and northern frontiers, it became a matter of special concern to the government to determine the fitness of the officer who should be put in charge of this important border fastness. The personal merits and exemplary military conduct of Colonel

<sup>1</sup> Journals of the provincial congress. 1842, vol. 1., p. 847.

<sup>2</sup> A narrative of the military actions of Colonel Marinus Willett, p. 43.