

lett in possession of both of these encampments. Sir John Johnson with his troops took to the river, and the Indians fled into the woods. The troops under Lieutenant-Colonel Willett had fair firing at the enemy while they were crossing the river.

“The quantity of camp equipage, clothing, blankets, and stores, which Lieutenant-Colonel Willett found in the two camps, rendered it necessary to hasten a messenger to the fort, and have the wagons sent, seven of which were stored in the fort, with horses. These wagons were each three times loaded while Lieutenant-Colonel Willett and his men remained in the camps of the enemy. Among other articles they found five British flags, the baggage of Sir John Johnson with all his papers, the baggage of a number of other officers with memoranda, journals, and orderly-books, containing all the information which could be desired.

“Lieutenant-Colonel Willett, in returning to the fort, found Brigadier-General St. Leger stationed with such force as he could collect opposite the landing on the other side of the river, not more than sixty yards from the direction in which he was marching, with the intention of intercepting him. Lieutenant-Colonel Willett's position, however, enabled him to form his troops so as to present him with a full fire in his front, while at the same time he was enfiladed by the fire of the small field-piece; and, though Brigadier-General St. Leger was sufficiently spirited in returning his fire, it was so wild as to be altogether without effect. Lieutenant-Colonel Willett returned in triumph to the fort, without having lost a single man.

“Upon his return, the five flags taken from the enemy were hoisted on the flag-staff under the continental flag, when all the troops in the garrison, having mounted the parapets, gave three as hearty cheers as perhaps were ever given by the same number of men.”<sup>1</sup>

The engagement as described by Lieutenant-Colonel Willett in a letter written by him, at “German Flatts,” on the twelfth of August, six days afterward, and published, on Monday, the first of September, in the *Boston Gazette*, was an event of memorable importance, inasmuch as it occasioned the capture of five British flags which were the first taken from the enemy after the making of the first flag of the United States of America and the first displayed beneath the streaming colors of the national standard.

“Wednesday morning there was an unusual silence; we discovered some of the enemy marching along the edge of the woods downwards. About eleven o'clock three men got into the fort, who brought a letter from General Harkaman, of the Tryon County militia, advising us that he was at Eriska (eight

<sup>1</sup> A narrative of the military actions of Colonel Marinus Willett, pp. 51-55, 130-133.