

they were successful in eluding observation, and on Tuesday afternoon, August 12, they safely reached their destination. There they were informed that Brigadier-General Learned was then marching to the relief of Fort Schuyler with his brigade of Massachusetts troops, which had been in camp on Van Schaick's Island, at the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson rivers.

On Wednesday morning the two zealous officers set out on horseback to meet the advancing force. The information given them by Brigadier General Learned that Major-General Benedict Arnold had the command of the troops then on their way to the besieged fort, caused Lieutenant-Colonel Willett to proceed on Thursday to Albany, where he learned from Major-General Arnold that the First New York Regiment was also marching toward Fort Dayton. On the following Sunday, the commanding general and Lieutenant-Colonel Willett arrived there, "where the whole force intended for the relief of Fort Schuyler was assembled."

It evidently was Brigadier-General St. Leger's final purpose to get possession of Fort Schuyler by sapping and mining, for his troops shortly began making advances toward it by throwing up a series of approaches on the open ground north of it. The constructed parallels were extended so near the fort by Wednesday, August 20, that the well-directed fire of the garrison's riflemen greatly hindered any further rapid advancement of the work on them.

About that time the first intelligence of the presence of a large body of American troops at Fort Dayton reached the busy besiegers. "Long before its approach," as related by Bancroft, "an Indian ran into Saint Leger's camp, reporting a thousand men were coming against them, another followed doubling the number, a third brought a rumor that three thousand men were close at hand; and deaf to remonstrances and entreaties from their superintendents and from Saint Leger, the wild warriors robbed the British officers of their clothes, plundered the boats, and made off with the booty. Saint Leger in a panic, though Arnold was not within forty miles, hurried after them before nightfall [on August 22d], leaving his tents, artillery, and stores."<sup>1</sup> This pusillanimity terminated the siege.

The historic genesis of the flag of the United States of America at Fort Schuyler, where, under its streaming insignia, in that brief space of nineteen days, were witnessed those spirited acts of fidelity and valor that ever notably crown men with renown, was most glorious and auspicious. What omens of success could better cheer the armed patriots strenuously battling to vindicate their right to be free and independent than the five flags hanging beneath the waving colors of that emblematic standard?

<sup>1</sup>A narrative of the military actions of Colonel Marinus Willett, pp. 55-61, 62, 63. History of the United States of America. By George Bancroft. 1891, vol. v., pp. 168, 169, 170.