

**Survivors of the Battle of Bald Eagle
Creek were Held in British Prisons
Ted Bainbridge, Ph.D.**

This is a sequel to *The Battle of Bald Eagle Creek*, which was posted to the Clinton County Genealogical Society's web site in June of 2015.

Part of Captain Thomas Robinson's company of Northumberland County rangers was attacked by a much larger force of Indians on the 16th of April, 1782. Three rangers escaped the scene at the end of the battle. Thirteen rangers were killed in the battle or killed by their captors immediately after the battle or during the forced march away from the battle site. The other ten rangers were taken to Fort Niagara where they were turned over to the British army. Those ten prisoners were Jonathan Burwell, Leonard Croninger, James Daugherty, Adam Hempleman, Elisha or Elijah Hunt, John Knapp, William McGrady, William Miller, Jonathan Pray, and Moses Van Campen.



Figure 1: Fort Niagara, restored and preserved, is a tourist attraction today.

Moses Van Campen said the British moved him from Fort Niagara to Montreal and then to Quebec. In November, 1782 he was taken in a British fleet that sailed from Quebec to New York. In March, 1783 he was exchanged and rejoined Robinson's company in Northumberland County.

Of the ten men taken to Fort Niagara, only Jonathan Burwell, James Daugherty, William McGrady, Jonathan Pray, and Moses Van Campen appear in the papers [101] of General Sir Frederick Haldimand, Governor of Quebec [102]. All information in those papers about our men follows, carefully preserving the original spellings without using *sic*.

James Daugherty: Ja^s Dochardy, from Pa, age 21, captured at Bald Eagle on 16 April 1782, was a prisoner at Coteau du Lac on 22 July 1782.

Coteau-du-Lac is a town on the north shore of the Saint Lawrence River, about 35 miles west and slightly south of Montreal. It is at the site of some rapids. In 1779 a military canal was dug to circumvent those rapids. The drawing below shows part of those canal works and the associated fort. [107] This might be where James Daugherty was imprisoned, but this is not certain.



Figure 2: Canal works and fortifications at Coteau-du-Lac.

William McGrady: Wm McGrady, from Pa, age 23, captured in April of 1782 “In the woods”, appears on a list entitled, “Return of American Prisoners forwarded from Ticonderoga to their respective States, July 18, 1783 by order of His Excellency General Haldimand”. The list specified the rations given to each prisoner; full rations for men, half rations for women and children, and quarter rations for toddlers.

Jonathan Pray: Johnⁿ Pray, from Bald Eagle in Pa, age 23, captured in April of 1782 at Bald Eagle, appears on that same list.

Jonathan Burwell: Jonaⁿ Burwell, from Susquehana in Pa, age 22, captured in March of 1782 at Big Island, appears on that same list. [March is an error; our men were captured near the middle of April. Big Island is exactly where Bald Eagle Creek empties into the Susquehanna River.]

During the 1770s Fort Ticonderoga was British, then American, then British again, and finally American again. Rebel forces took permanent possession of the fort in November of 1777. [106] Therefore we know that McGrady, Pray, and Burwell, captured in April of 1782, never were imprisoned at Ticonderoga. The title of the document cited here probably indicates that the British moved these prisoners from Montreal to Ticonderoga and turned them over to the Americans, who then forwarded them to their homes. The trip from Montreal to Ticonderoga is 130 miles south on waterways.

Moses Van Campen: Lt Moses VanCamp, age 23, was captured at Susquehanna on 16 April 1782. On 22 July 1782 he was a prisoner in St. Marya in Quebec Province. On 9 October 1782 Lt Moses Vancamp was removed from the Island of Orleans and taken on board a ship, to be sent to New York and there delivered to the Commissary of Prisoners.

Listing imprisonment as being in St. Marya might be a typographical error that should have been St. Marys. In the 1780s Sainte-Marie was a small town about 35 miles southeast of Quebec City. Whether any rebels were imprisoned there or not has not been determined.

Van Campen remained in Fort Niagara for only a short time. He was put on a boat and sent to a prison in Montreal. That building was a guard house about 75 feet long by about 35 feet wide, with iron gates. When Van Campen arrived about 40 other Rebel prisoners were present. The building sat opposite the current location of Nelson's Monument, which was erected later. Each man's daily ration was a pound and a half of bread with a gallon of water. [104, 105] The building no longer exists, and no drawings of it have been found.

Van Campen was moved out of Montreal to the Île d'Orléans, at the down-river edge of Quebec City. He might have been kept in a prison on that island, but no such building has been identified. Alternatively, he might have been put on the island as farm labor and housed in a farm building; no such location has been identified. (Île d'Orléans, almost 20 miles long, is a rich agricultural area and might have been considered inescapable because of being an island surrounded by cold river currents. [103]) From the island he took ship to New York, where he was returned to the Americans.

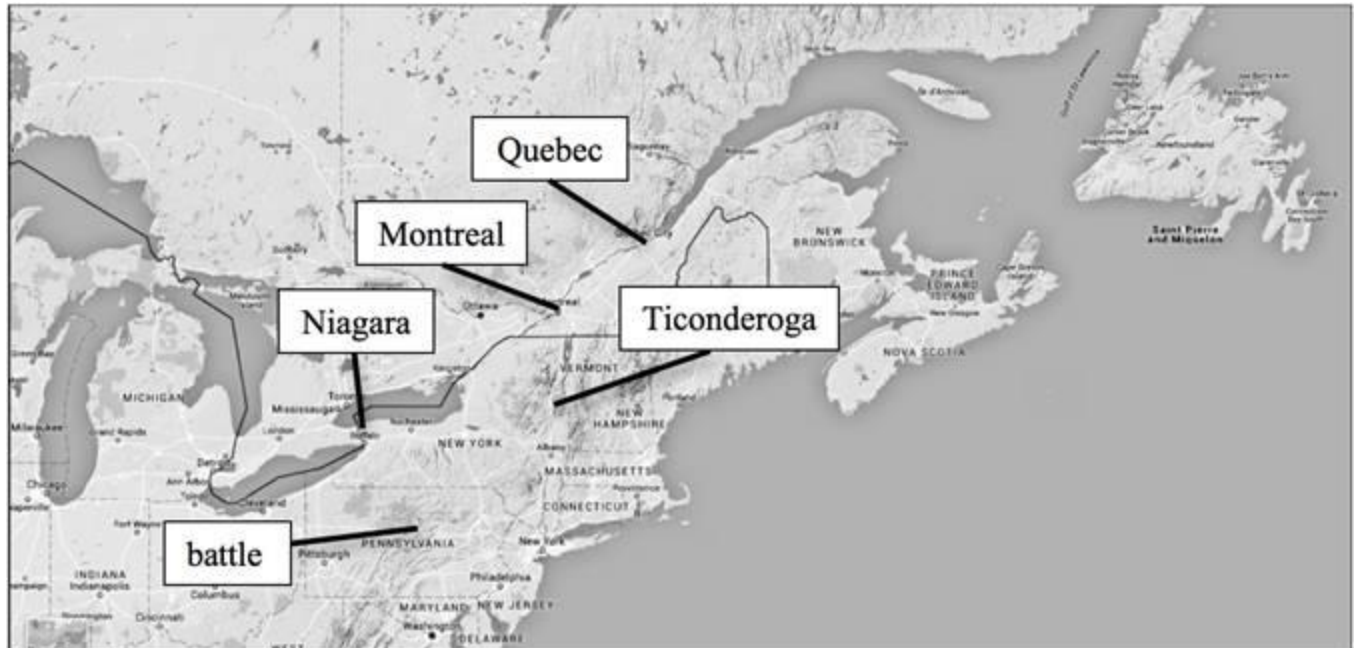


Figure 3: The battle site, Fort Niagara, Fort Ticonderoga, Montreal, and Quebec.

Sources Not Cited in

“The Battle of Bald Eagle Creek”

- [101] McHenry, Chris, *Rebel Prisoners at Quebec 1778 - 1783*, Lawrenceburg, Indiana, private publication, 1981. Burwell, Daugherty, McGrady, Pray, and Van Campen are named only on pages 34, 42, 55, 66, 67, and 68.
- [102] Sutherland, Stuart R. J., Pierre Tousignant, and Madeleine Dionne-Tousignant, “HALDIMAND, Sir FREDERICK,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5, University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–, accessed February 2016, http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/haldimand_frederick_5E.html .
- [103] Anonymous, *Saint Lawrence Global Observatory*, <https://slgo.ca/ocean/> visited February 2016.
- [104] Borthwick, Douglas, *History of the Montreal Prison from A.D. 1784 to A.D. 1886*, Montreal, A. Periard Bookseller, 1886, <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/hv%209510.m6%20b6%201784-1886-eng.pdf> visited February 2016.

[105] Hubbard, John Niles, *Sketches of Border Adventures in the Life and Times of Major Moses Van Campen, a Surviving Soldier of the Revolution*, Bath, New York, H. L. Underhill & Co., 1842.

Minard, John, editor, *Sketches of Border Adventures in the Life and Times of Major Moses Vancampen by His Grandson J. Niles Hubbard*, Fillmore, New York, Jno. S. Minard, 1893.

[106] Anonymous, *The Capture of Fort Ticonderoga*, <http://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/capture-of-fort-ticonderoga> visited February 2016.

[107] Société d'histoire de Coteau-du-Lac, *Les fortifications de Coteau-du-Lac*, <http://www.societedhistoire-coteau-du-lac.com/les-fortifications-de-coteau/> visited February 2016.

Anonymous, *Coteau-du-Lac Canal*, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coteau-du-Lac_canal visited February 2016.