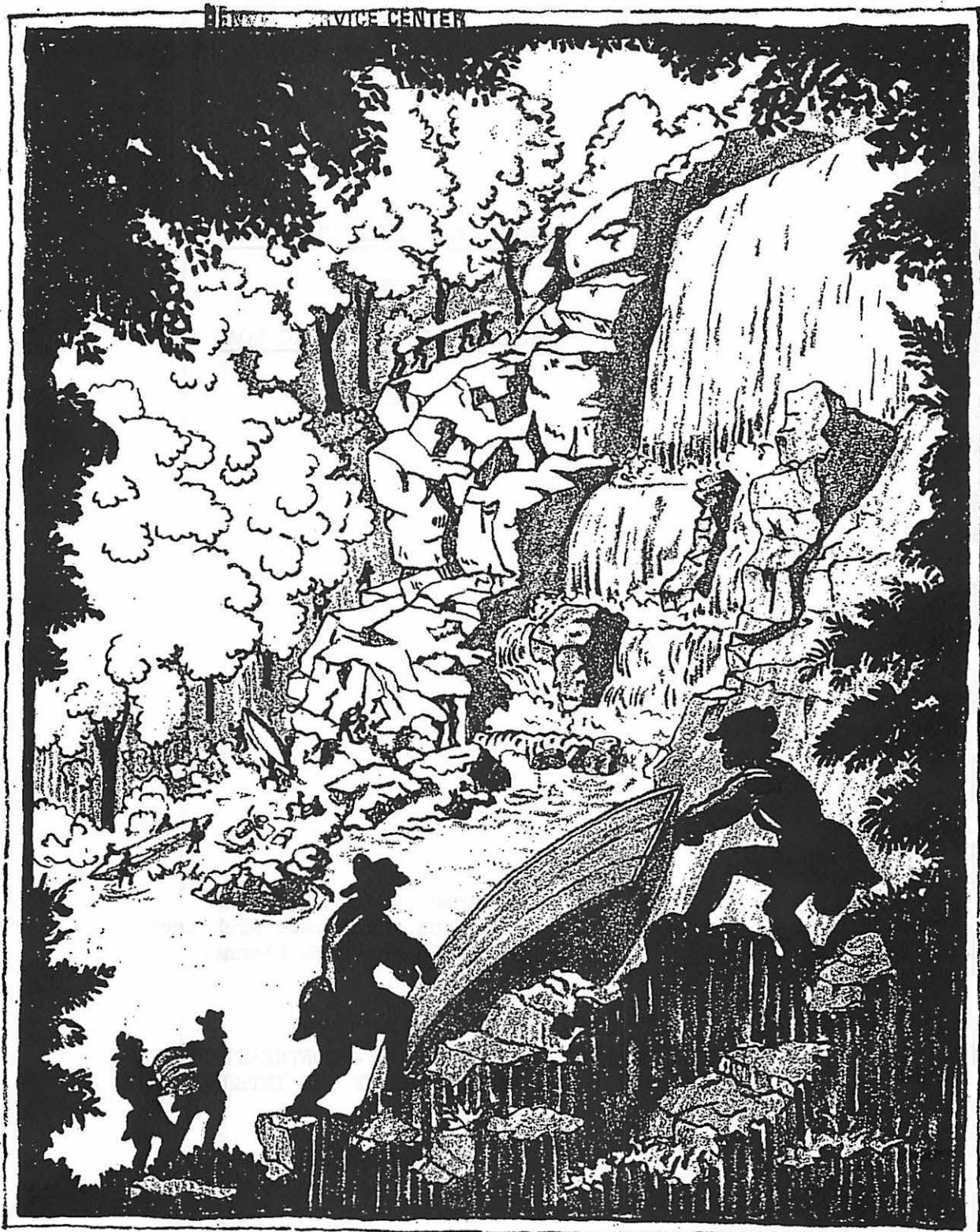


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ON MICROFILM
The Arnold Trail
SCENIC ROAD

D-33

Inactive
Proposed

AREA INVESTIGATION REPORT

ON

BENEDICT ARNOLD SCENIC ROAD

MAINE

By

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NATIONAL PARK SERVICE - NORTHEAST REGION
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

MARCH 1965

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the entire Benedict Arnold Trail in Maine in terms of historical importance and integrity, interpretative possibilities of extant sites and structures apropos to the trail, present conditions, and to provide recommendations which might include the possibilities for a parkway or scenic road and related developments.

At the request of Senator Edmund S. Muskie, the National Park Service was asked to investigate Benedict Arnold's march to Quebec which was recognized as an epic in American military history in studies made previously by the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings and to provide a report with recommendations for presentation to the Advisory Board.

In compliance with the above request, the writers inspected the area during the first week of September 1964. The present recommendations for development of the area are based on this four-day, on-the-ground study of the route of Arnold in Maine in which all roads paralleling the Arnold Trail to the Canadian border were studied and the ensuing principles of development were prepared.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the existing highways in the State of Maine which parallel Arnold's water and portage route be developed to preserve and interpret the remaining historic interests associated with Arnold's march

on Quebec, to conserve the scenery along the route, and to provide recreation opportunities.

That the entire route of 19¹/₂ miles, as shown on the maps included in this report, be designated by the State of Maine as a scenic road to be planned, developed and administered by the State Highway Department in conjunction with the State Park Commission, and that the Federal Government, at the request of the State, provide assistance in planning if so requested by the State.

That where no existing highways parallel the water and portage route followed by Arnold, i.e., between Carrying Place Stream and the town of Eustis, a distance of 40 miles, that a new road be developed to scenic highway standards to accomplish the same purposes outlined above for existing highways.

That the State consider the possibility for enlarging the existing Reid State Park to include large camping areas. Reid State Park would become the southern terminus of the scenic road.

That the State consider the establishment of a large recreation area in the vicinity of Three Carry Ponds, or Flagstaff Lake and Mt. Bigelow.

That additional picnic areas and interpretative sites be located at regular intervals along the scenic route to take advantage of historic sites or to describe the progress of the army.

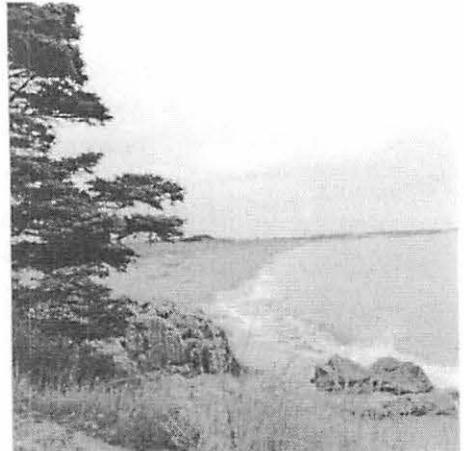
Preservation of Arnold's route as a recreation waterway or canoe trail is not recommended because the Kennebec River above Augusta is clogged with pulp during the spring and summer and is interspersed with dams. The remainder of Arnold Trail to the Canadian border contains too many long and rough portages for pleasurable recreation by canoe or boat.

The name "scenic road" used in this report is the name chosen by the President's Recreation Advisory Council to classify those highways that have scenic, historic, and recreation potential to be included in a nationwide program of scenic road development. A study is now underway in this regard and the states have been requested for their recommendations as to those highways and routes to be included in the program.

THE ARNOLD TRAIL TODAY AND INTERPRETATIVE POSSIBILITIES

Because Arnold's army followed a water route through Maine, it is possible to trace its steps today. The Kennebec is still there. So are portions of the Dead River. The three ponds on the link between the Kennebec and Dead Rivers still exist. So do the Chain of Ponds extending from the upper end of the Dead River to the Height of Land, the present Maine-Quebec border. Arnold himself has left a very complete journal of his daily activities from the time of his departure from Fort Western until his arrival at Sartigan, on the Chaudiere. In it he noted distances, directions, the location and height of rapids,

Todd Point at Reid State Park near the mouth of the Kennebec River. Facilities include swimming beaches, picnic areas, bathhouse and refreshment stand. Expansion of this state park could provide extensive camping areas at the southern terminis of the suggested Scenic Road.



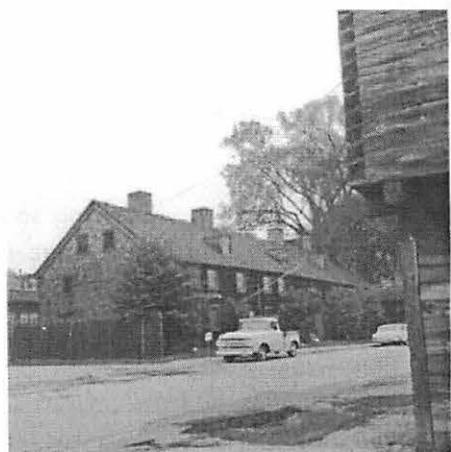
At courthouse Point in Dresden is the Pownal Borough Courthouse, built in 1760 and recently restored and furnished by the Lincoln County Cultural Historical Society.



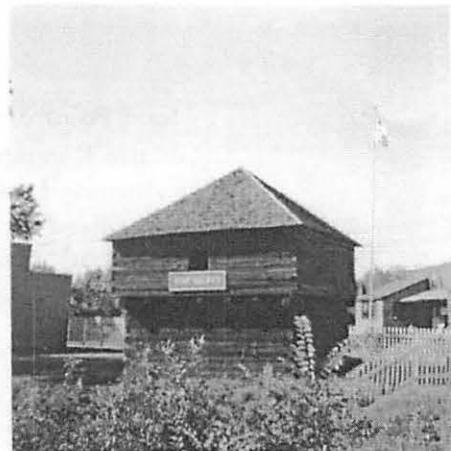
Major Ruben Colburn's House opposite South Gardiner at Pittstown, Maine. Major Colburn constructed the Batteaux and gathered supplies for the army.



Fort Western at Augusta was constructed in 1754 and restored in 1921. Fort Western was the starting point of the expedition.



The original blockhouse at Fort Halifax in Winslow was constructed in 1754.



State picnic area and interpretative site south of Skowhegan.



Pulp wood in the Kennebec River, south of Skowhegan, at the state interpretative and picnic site.



Looking south at the rapids of the Kennebec from Foot Bridge at Skowhegan.



Three miles northwest of Norridgewock
on the west side of the Kennebec,
Mt. Bigelow and Sugarloaf Mountain
Ranges in the distance.



State Interpretative Stop at Lake Wyman
on Route 201 opposite Carrying Place
Stream.



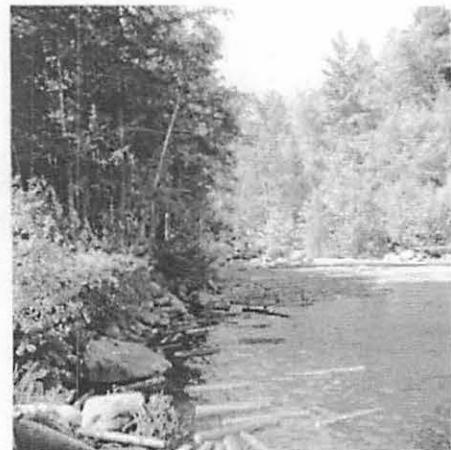
Lake Wyman looking southwest from Route 201
interpretative stop.



County Road on west side of Lake Wyman.
Scenic Road would follow the Lake to
Carrying Place Stream.



Carrying Place Stream entering Lake Wyman. Point where Arnold's army left the Kennebec River.



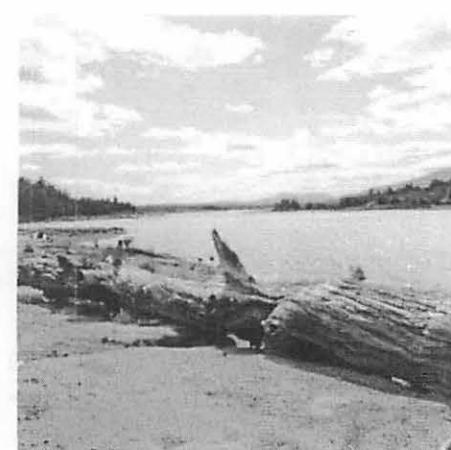
Looking west across Middle Carry Pond.



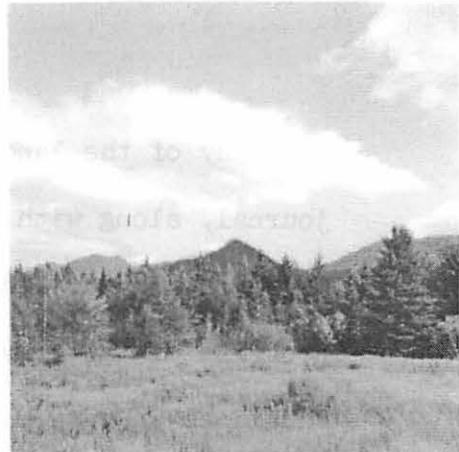
Logging Road between East Carry Pond and Middle Carry Pond.



Flagstaff Lake looking northeast toward Canadian border.



Looking southeast from Flagstaff Lake toward the Bigelow Mountain Range from right to left is Cranberry Peak, East Nubble and the Horns. This area could become an outstanding State Recreational Resource.



Cathedral of Pines State Park looking southeast toward Bigelow Mountain. Facilities include camping, picnicking and swimming.



State Picnic Site at the Dead River where Route 27 crosses.



Chain of Lakes looking west to "Height of Land" from Route 27.



and many of the landmarks, such as mountains and swamps. Arnold's journal, along with those kept by others on the expedition, like Meigs, Dearborn, Senter and Henry, enable us today to trace quite closely the progress of the army and its activities day by day. As a result, it should be an easy matter to devise a vivid and accurate interpretive program.

Much of the countryside through which the army passed looks much as it looked in the fall of 1775. Except for areas around Augusta, Winslow, Waterville, Skowhegan, and Madison, there has been moderate urbanization or commercialization. The banks of the Kennebec from its mouth to Bingham are a patchwork of farms and woodlands with most of the people and diversified industries in the communities on a narrow strip close to the river. In 1775, settlement had already pushed as far north as Norridgewock Falls, so the character of the region is basically the same as it was then. Above Bingham the agricultural section ends, the land gets more hilly and rocky, and the forest closes in. Dense forests, except for a few small villages and isolated cabins, extend north along the Kennebec, across the Great Carrying Place, up the Dead River, and along the Chain of Ponds to the Quebec border. Virtually no virgin timber remains, but the entire region does give the appearance of a vast, hostile wilderness, as it did in 1775.

A few of the buildings that the army passed are still standing. At Court House Point in Dresden stands the old Pownalborough Court House, which several of the journalists, like Henry Dearborn, noted as their

military transports carried them up the lower Kennebec. A large, square, three-story frame structure, it was built in 1760. Recently restored and furnished by the Lincoln County Cultural and Historical Society, the structure is in good condition. The old settlement of Pownalborough was abandoned long ago, and the court house stands alone today, except for one farm house nearby.

Further upstream, near Pittston, stands the home of Major Colburn, the man who constructed the batteaux and gathered supplies for the army. Arnold probably spent the night of September 22, 1775, under its roof. Built in 1765 and presently owned by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Plumer, this two-story frame building appears to be little altered and is kept in good repair. It stands on a small knoll about 200 yards from the Kennebec and has an excellent view of the valley. Unfortunately, the large shipyard along the river has long ago disappeared. The house, as the home of a major participant in the expedition, the place where the batteaux were built and the point where the men transferred from their transports to the smaller craft, is one of the important points of interest along the route. Though there are more modern buildings nearby, there is nothing that significantly detracts from its historical value.

At Augusta is Fort Western. On the head of navigation on the Kennebec, it was constructed in 1754, during the French and Indian War. The original barracks building, a dressed log structure covered with shingles, was restored in 1921. It is two and one half stories high, and measures

100 by 32 feet. It is in poor repair. Two small blockhouses, similar to the originals have been reconstructed, but not on site. The fort possesses three interesting items, a plan of the fort drawn in 1755, an account book for the fort for the year 1767 (Fort Western was then used as a trading post), and a collection of photographs of the building going back at least 75 years. Fort Western is historically important, for it was the starting point of the expedition. Arnold made it his headquarters from September 23-29, 1775. Much could be done with the barracks building. However, it stands today in the middle of an unattractive industrial area. A factory sits within 30 feet to the right. On the other side are several warehouses. The entrance road to the factory runs through the property and the old parade ground is used as a parking lot for the employees of the factory. Situated in the midst of urban Augusta, it would be very difficult if not impossible to re-create an historical setting at Fort Western.

Eighteen miles above Augusta, in Winslow, one blockhouse of old Fort Halifax still stands. Built in 1754, the original stockade was similar in design to Fort Western. A number of the troops spent at least one night there. The blockhouse is in excellent repair and maintained by the local Daughters of the American Revolution chapter. Unfortunately, the surroundings are similar to those at Fort Western. Railroad and highway bridges flank the structure on the east, and it is surrounded on the north and west by factories and warehouses. An effective interpretive program would be very difficult here.

The rivers have been altered more than anything since 1775. The tidal sections of the Kennebec below Augusta are probably little different than when the army coasted up them to Colburn's. The long reaches of salt marsh and tidal estuaries are unspoiled. But, above Augusta, the Kennebec has an entirely different aspect than it did in 1775. Dams have been constructed at 10-15 mile intervals up the river, giving the stream a rather placid appearance, far different than the quick flowing, shallow and treacherous Kennebec that the batteaux men knew. The modern dams have been constructed at the rapids and falls which gave the detachment the most trouble, such as the Ticonic Falls above Fort Halifax (modern Winslow-Waterville) and the Skowhegan Falls at Skowhegan. Even more damaging to the historical scene than the dams themselves are the unattractive industrial developments that they have attracted and the subsequent population concentrations that have resulted. Gone are the rapids themselves and any traces of the portages the men used to bypass these treacherous stretches of the river. It is frustrating to note that, while the banks of the Kennebec are relatively unspoiled for long distances, the points which are most important historically, such as Fort Western, Fort Halifax and Skowhegan, are precisely the isolated points where urbanization of the most unsightly variety has developed.

In addition to the dams, a second factor has made the Kennebec a far different stream from that which Arnold's army knew. Today pulp wood is cut in northern Maine and floated down the river to the paper mills.

Mile after mile of the stream is congested with floating logs, a far different scene from that of 1775.

One area of historical importance on the upper Kennebec that is relatively untouched is Norridgewock Falls. Arnold was at that spot from October 2-9, 1775, while the army struggled across a mile long portage. Colburn and his carpenters made repairs to the batteaux while Arnold inspected the detachment's supplies for damage. While there the colonel and others noted the ruins of the old Indian mission, with its church, fort, and the grave of its Jesuit mentor. Located above the modern town of Norridgewock and on the opposite side of the river, all that remains today is the grave of Father Rale, the French missionary. Not far away is a modern cemetery. Norridgewock Falls is by far the best location for archeological exploration and historic development along the Kennebec above Augusta. Unfortunately, it would be difficult to bring a scenic road into the area because it is on a point of land isolated by an important rail line. In fact, a scenic road on the Norridgewock Falls side of the Kennebec in this area would be hard to design unless a long by-pass were constructed around the city of Skowhegan, further downstream.

Along the Dead River, some of the same conditions exist as along the Kennebec. The huge Long Falls Dam has created Lake Flagstaff. This body of water covers many historic spots, such as the exact point where the army first struck the Dead River and the site of the Indian Natanis' cabin. Gone are the endless loops of the lower Dead River and some

of the falls and carrying places further up. Only above the village of Eustis is the stream yet in its natural state. In fact, the stretch of the Dead River between Eustis and the Chain of Ponds is the only part of the army's route where the wild, rapid water that caused so much grief can still be seen.

The area between the Kennebec and Dead Rivers, which the army knew as the Great Carrying Place, is the section of Arnold's route through Maine which has been altered least. It offers the most potential for park development. Though extensively timbered, it has an extensive cover of second growth and gives the appearance of being wild and untamed. The only access to the area is by rough logging roads, so only a few sportsman's cabins have been built. The three carry ponds the army utilized in crossing the region are still in their natural state. The exact portages between the Kennebec, the three ponds, and the Dead River are not known today, but a close examination of the journals of Arnold and other participants, together with intensive archeological research would probably locate these trails.

At the Great Carrying Place there are many opportunities for interpretation. Arnold reached Carrying Place Stream, the beginning of the 14 mile portage on the morning of October 11, 1775. He quickly established a camp on the shore of East Carry Pond, where he remained from October 11-14, while the army carried its boats and supplies across to the Dead River. There are many descriptions of this arduous task in the journals of those who endured them. Arnold held several important conferences at this

camp, wrote a number of letters, and there made some of the decisions that affected the outcome of the expedition. He also ordered two buildings constructed, one a small hospital between East and Middle Carry Ponds, the second a store house for the provisions he wished to hold in reserve. The latter was located somewhere between the Kennebec and East Carry Pond.

Late on October 14, Arnold broke camp and moved across the portage as far as West Carry Pond. By the evening of October 15, he was at the edge of a treacherous bog, described by him and almost all the other diarists. It took Arnold all the morning of the 16th to cross the bog, and it was not until afternoon that he reached Bog Brook, where the boats could again be launched. In less than a mile Bog Brook flowed into the Dead River.

Thus Arnold was in the region of the Great Carrying Place from October 11-16. The area was one of the most difficult to traverse. Important decisions were made in the locality. The area is isolated and its environment is virtually unchanged since the time of the march. As a result of all these factors, the Great Carrying Place offers excellent possibilities for interpretation.

BENEDICT ARNOLD TRAIL SCENIC ROAD

A. Brief Description of the Recommended Benedict Arnold Trail Scenic Road. (Please fold out the maps at the end of this section.)

The southern terminus would be at Reid State Park located on Georgetown Island between the mouths of the Kennebec and Sheepscot Rivers. This 792-acre park is well developed for picnicking, swimming, fishing, and

hiking and has two snack bars. As a termination for Arnold's memorial it would be advantageous to add camping facilities so tourists could have more time to travel along the southern portion of the Kennebec River and also see Fort Baldwin on the west side of the Kennebec. Further investigation of Reid State Park might reveal the need for the acquisition of additional acreage to accommodate a large camping facility.

From Reid State Park northward the road would follow existing highways that border the Kennebec River on the east side for 75 miles to Pishon Ferry.

At Pishon Ferry the route would cross on an existing bridge to Hinckley and then proceed north on the west side of the river to Carrying Place Stream, a distance of approximately 132 miles from the southern terminus.

Cities and towns north of Randolph would be bypassed.

No highways exist that parallel Arnold's route between Carrying Place Stream and the town of Stratton, a distance of 31 miles. It is suggested that a new section of scenic road, 40 miles long, be located in this highly scenic and relatively undeveloped section of Somerset and Franklin Counties, Maine. The scenic road would serve as a connecting link between the scenic road described, and by circumventing the existing and proposed developments together with the towns of Stratton and Eustis, would connect with State Highway 27 north of Eustis. This 40-mile section

would closely parallel and preserve Benedict Arnold's Trail and make it available so the public could follow it on foot and by boat. Facilities for picnicking and camping could be provided and perhaps a lodge and restaurant established. There would also be opportunities for swimming and fishing.

Due to this section's relatively short length and the region's particularly fine scenic qualities the land requirements in this section might far exceed that required for the portion of the scenic road south of Carrying Place Stream. For instance, the Three Carry Ponds could be preserved within the boundaries of the scenic road as well as a large area on the south shore of Flagstaff Lake. This area in particular might provide the State with an outstanding recreational area and include facilities for day and overnight use.

Consideration might also be given to an even more extensive recreational development on Flagstaff Lake to include portions of Bigelow Mountain for the specific purpose of creating a State ski and winter sports development on its slopes. Further study by the State might indicate that the mountain slopes are suitable for this type of development and a need exists. Winter use would not only extend the season of use for a large recreational development, but would further satisfy the need for the suggested 40-mile section of the scenic road from Carrying Place Stream to Eustis. The accommodations needed for visitor use during the winter season might be so designed and located as to be used by visitors of the scenic road and recreation development on Flagstaff Lake during the regular summer and fall recreation season.

From Eustis north to the Canadian border the existing highway would again be utilized as a scenic road because it closely parallels Arnold's route along the north branch of the Dead River. The north branch, Chain Lakes, Horseshoe Stream, Horseshoe Pond, and Arnold's Pond should be acquired to preserve Arnold's route and provide areas for recreation.

At the Canadian border, a distance of 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ miles from Reid State Park, an interpretive and welcoming station should be located to explain the Arnold Memorial and its purposes of preserving the scenery and provide recreation.

B. Principles Governing the Conversion of Highways to the Benedict Arnold Trail Scenic Road

1. The Scenic and Historic Corridor

The corridor is to be composed of the existing right-of-way, proposed right-of-way, scenic easements, and lands for historic preservation and interpretation and for recreation.

a. Proposed Right-of-Way

A basic right-of-way width of 220 feet is recommended. This width need not be uniform with the middle of the highway and might be adjusted to prevent the moving of buildings, but no building should be closer than 75 feet to the highway centerline, unless perhaps it has historic significance.

Congested areas with many buildings close to the highway and most towns and cities should be bypassed so that the 220 feet of basic right-of-way can be achieved.

In addition to the basic right-of-way, an additional 100 feet should be acquired in fee simple through woods or forests. This will provide a strip of woods bordering the highway of 210 feet (less the roadway and slopes) which is considered a minimum width needed to support an eventual stand of mature forest cover. This width will also screen from the public the harvesting of forest products by private enterprise.

Submarginal lands, or portions of them, lying adjacent to the basic right-of-way should be purchased outright. These lands would include but not be limited to marshes, steep hillsides, sand dunes, rock outcrops, streams, and unproductive lands. Many of these lands will be attractive to view and will remain so if placed under public ownership. Some of them will provide room for parking or active recreation and may contain natural, historic, or archeological interests.

Land of sufficient width for future interchanges with major traffic arteries should also be acquired initially.

b. Scenic Easements

Through open farmland additional land controls should be established through the acquisition of a strip of scenic easement contiguous with the right-of-way lines, if such is needed to protect views and the immediate roadsides.

In acquiring the scenic easement the right of the owner to change the use of his land is purchased. That is, in open farmland (croplands or pastures) the owner may continue to farm the land but cannot change its use to residential, commercial, or industrial development or permit the erection of advertising signs, utility lines, or create trash heaps, auto dumps, etc. In effect, scenic protection is acquired at an estimated fraction of the cost of outright purchase and the desirable farm scene is maintained by the farmer at no cost to the taxpayer.

The widths of scenic easement would generally average about 300 feet to 500 feet but these widths might be decreased or increased by natural barriers such as ridge tops or woods.

An alternate means of obtaining the same amount of scenic protection would be to purchase in fee simple the full width and then lease the land back to the former owner for farming.

c. Lands for Recreation and Tourist Accommodations

As a guide to location of recreation areas it is suggested that day-use areas (picnicking, restaurants, gas stations, boat launching, etc., in any combination providing only day use) be spaced 25 to 40 miles apart and that combination-use areas (picnicking and camping, lodges, gas, meals, etc., in any combination providing both day and overnight use) be spaced 50 to 80 miles apart. If either of these areas can be combined with historic or scenic values, the visit of the tourist to them will be more attractive. Otherwise, the selection of sites for recreation and history must depend on opportunities.

For sanitary reasons we recommend against the installation of individual picnic tables placed at intervals along the route. Picnic tables should be installed in sufficient numbers to justify development of a potable water supply and construction of pit toilets at least. Comfort stations with running water and a sewage disposal system are, of course, superior to pit toilets and their construction is encouraged for all public use areas.

Sufficient land should be acquired for development to allow for present needs and future expansion. As a guide, an average of about five campsites per acre will be realized depending on topography and other camp-ground site conditions. This figure includes all roads, parking, comfort stations, and other community-use facilities. Picnic sites will average between 10 to 15 to the acre.

Tourist accommodations and services such as motels and restaurants and gas stations can be provided by private enterprise outside of public owned lands between Reid State Park and Bingham. However, between Bingham and the Canadian border, the northern terminus, it appears that these accommodations and services should be developed either with public funds on public land or by private enterprise on public land under concession agreements.

One of the purposes of providing scenic controls is to eliminate billboards along the Benedict Arnold Trail Scenic Road. In lieu of billboards it is recommended that information centers be located at each

end of the project and at the outskirts of the cities and towns to provide tourist with information concerning accommodations, goods, and services available nearby. Most of this information would be presented through poster type advertising or pamphlets. These stations should be on off-road parking areas and might be manned during the busy tourist season.

2. Control of Access

It would be desirable to limit the number of private and public access points to no more than four per side per mile. This could be accomplished by constructing paralleling collection of the access rights, or by relocating the scenic road around the constricted area.

Unrestricted access contributes greatly to reduction in the pleasure of driving. Every point of access is a potential point of collision and several access points placed close together cause traffic to decelerate and thus reduce the capacity of the pavement.

Any access permitted without restriction on use will allow developments of any kind to take place outside the right-of-way and if the right-of-way is narrow, the road can become constricted with unsightliness and a source of casualties and property damage. Consequently, we recommend that each access point permitted be also limited in its use. In this predominantly rural or forested area we anticipate that use restrictions will be mostly for residential, farm, or forest use--generally not commercial or industrial.

3. Design Standards

For purposes of this memorial drive featuring historical, scenic, and recreation interests the standards of roadway design need be no higher than necessary for leisurely pleasure driving in passenger cars. It would be well if these standards could prevail because they will permit the fitting of the road to topography with pleasant curvilinear alignment resulting in minimum disfigurement to the landscape. Some of the highways selected for the memorial route are low class gravel or black top roads used primarily as access to farms and residences. When these roads are reconstructed or reconditioned the above guidelines for pleasure driving should be followed. However, some of the highways selected are arteries for mixed traffic and their primary purpose must be considered when selecting standards for their reconstruction or reconditioning. Consequently, there will be a variety of standards along the suggested memorial. The design standards covered in the publication A Policy on Geometric Design of Rural Highways by the American Association of State Highway Officials are flexible enough to meet most conditions.

As a possible exception to these standards it is suggested that Route 128 south of Randolph be maintained about as it is with the exception of black topping the gravel portion. It is a narrow, winding, tree-fringed road that is dangerous to drive at maximum lawful speeds. It is also a real pleasure to drive at a slow speed. Before improving the standards of width and alignment on this road, it is suggested that serious consideration be given to reducing the speed limit so the charm of its environment can be appreciated.

C. Further Study Needed

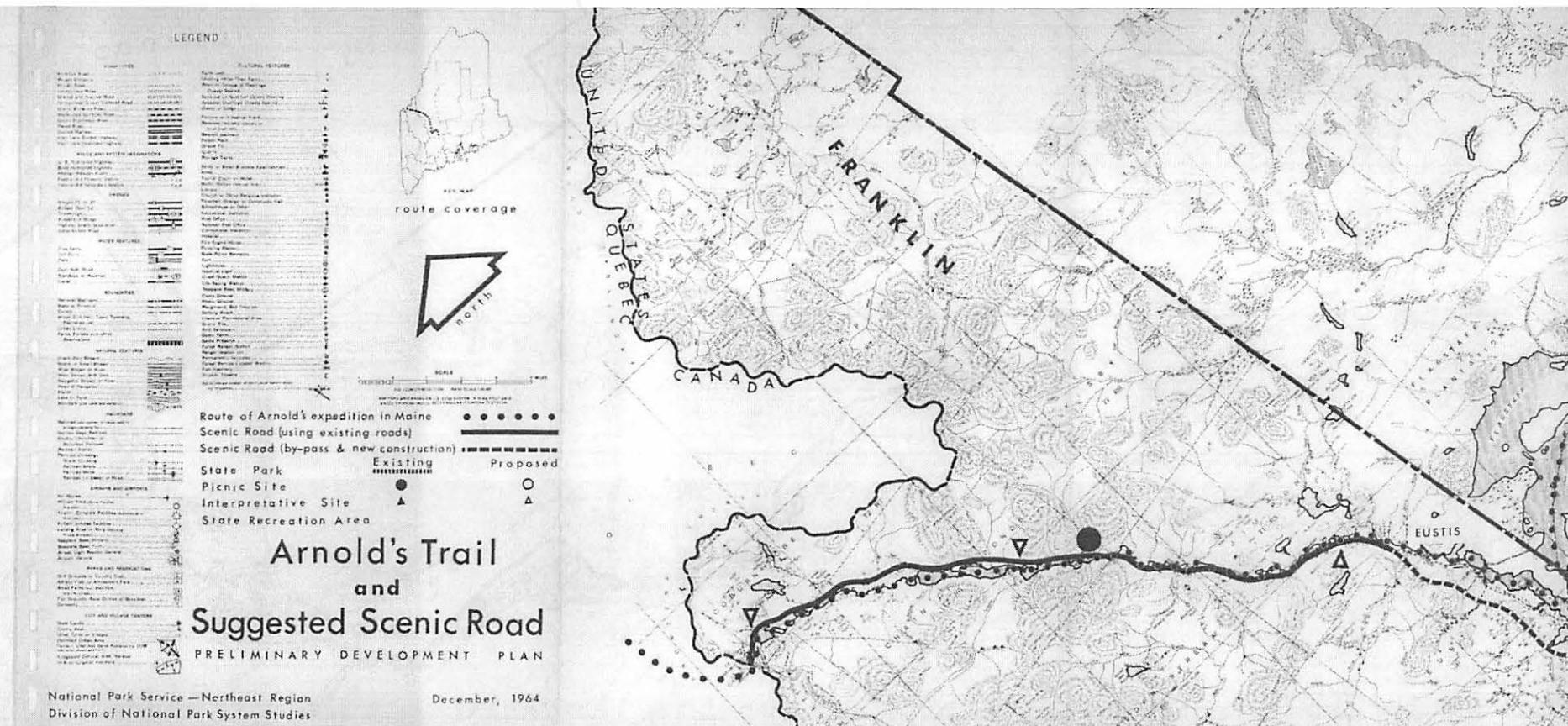
If the Benedict Arnold Trail is to be memorialized by the State of Maine according to the above recommendations further study is needed to graphically illustrate these recommendations. The detailed recommendations are needed to provide a basis for estimate of cost.

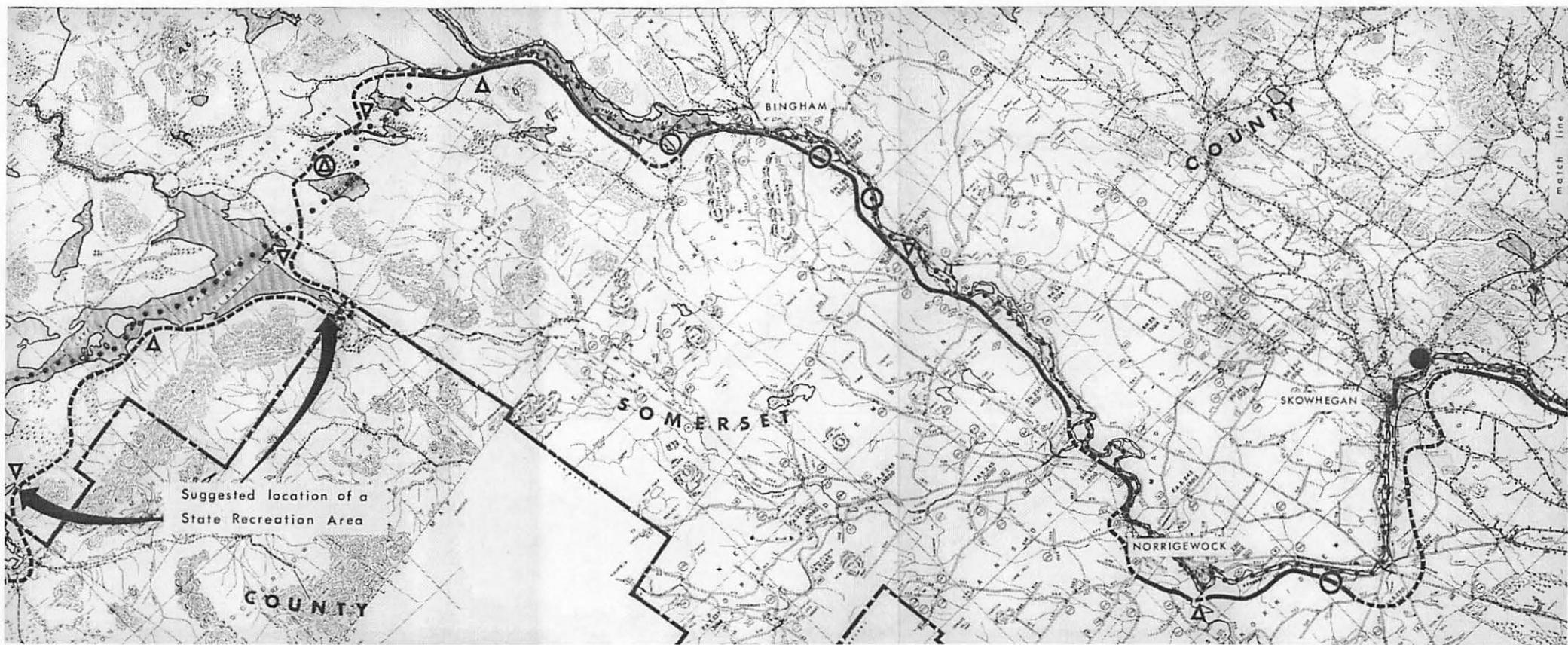
The present recommendations for development of the possible memorial are based on a four-day, on-the-ground study in which all roads paralleling the Arnold Trail to the Canadian border were studied and the principles of development outlined above were prepared. While the time allotted was sufficient to determine broad concepts, details could not possibly have been delineated.

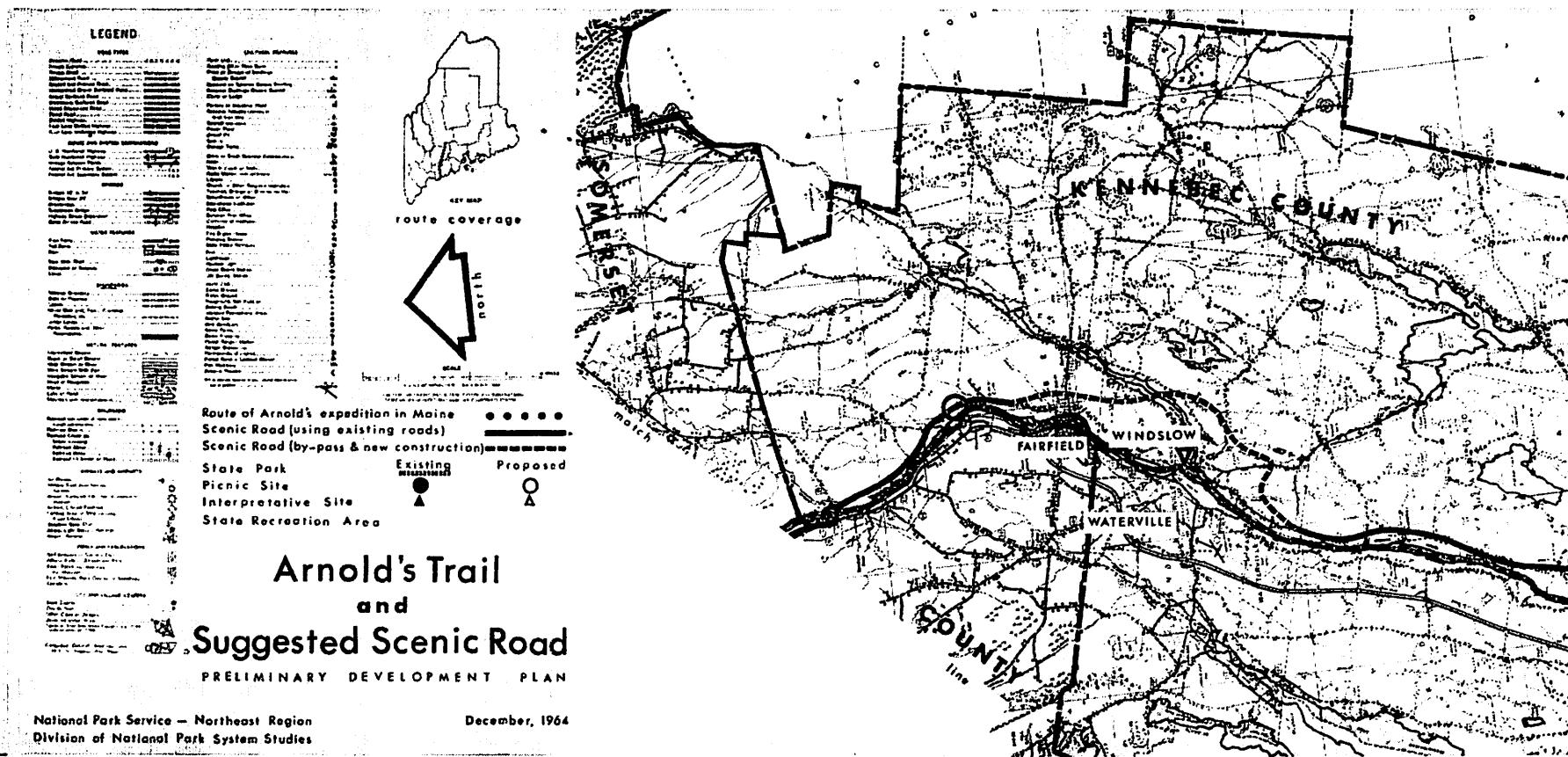
The further study should include detailed plans and recommendations for right-of-way taking, historic site acquisition, scenic easement purchase, recreation areas, and access control and would include an estimated cost of development. Such a study could be conducted by the Maine State Highway Commission in cooperation with the State Park and Historical Commission. The study might also be initiated by the National Park Service in cooperation with the Bureau of Public Roads if the State requested it and authorization of the United States Congress was provided and funds made available. The Federal agencies would, of course, cooperate in the study with interested State agencies.

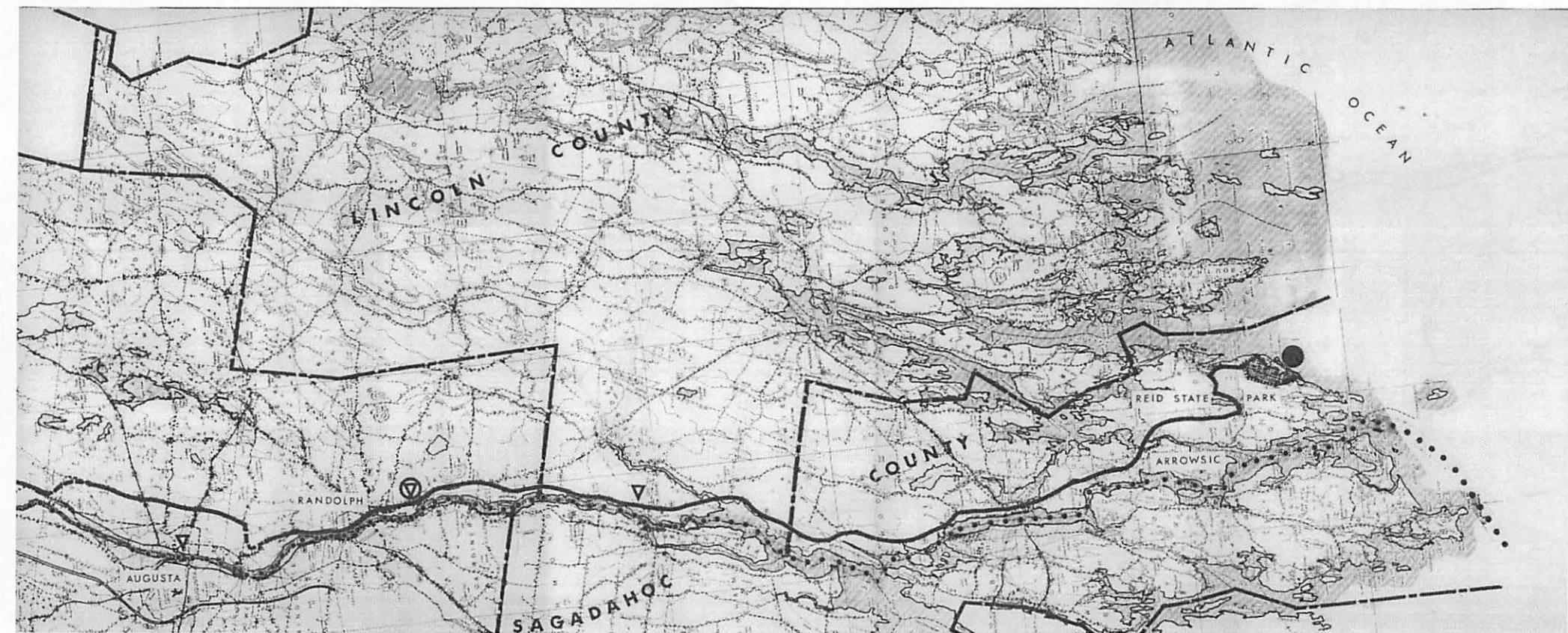
The following two maps depict the route in Maine which Benedict Arnold and the army covered on their march to Quebec. The suggested scenic

road location is shown by a combination of solid and dashed lines: The solid line indicates that portion of the route where existing highways and roads might be utilized, and the dashed line indicates where new construction or by-pass roads are suggested. The chronological events that occurred during the army's march are shown in the Appendix following the section on history.

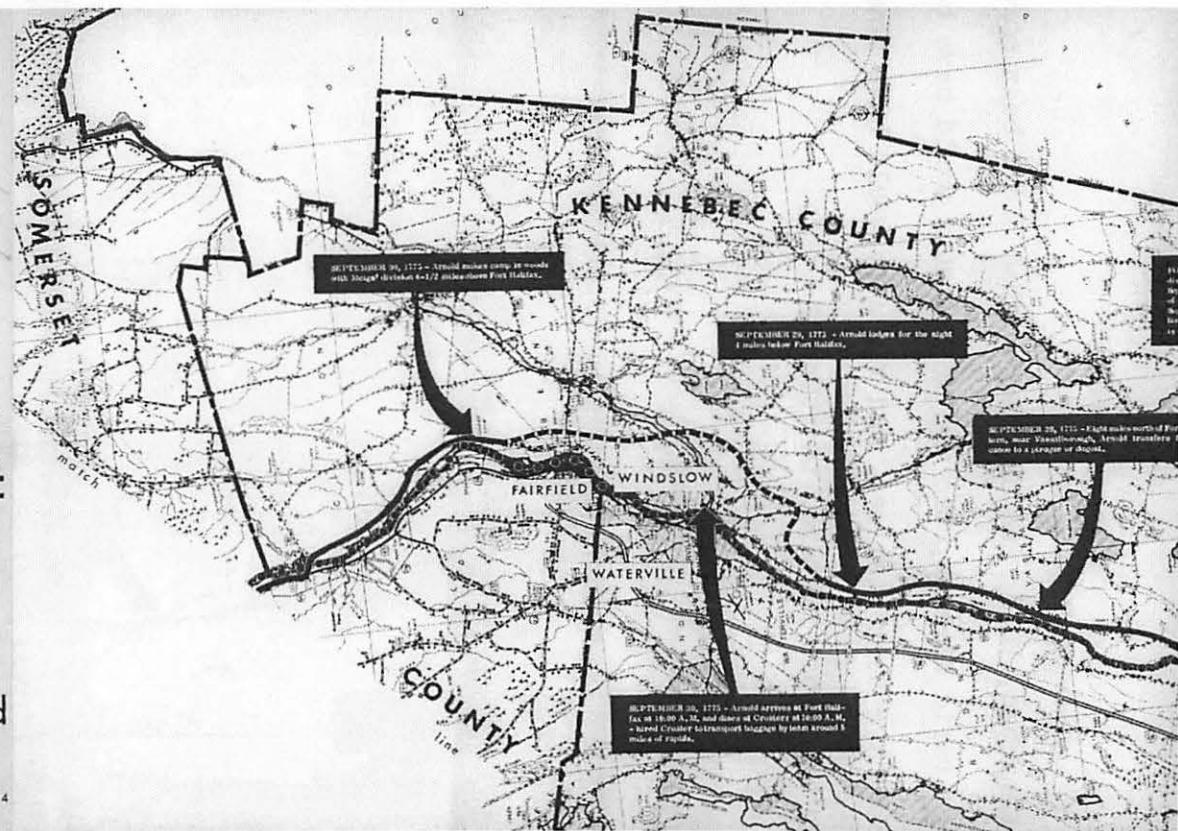


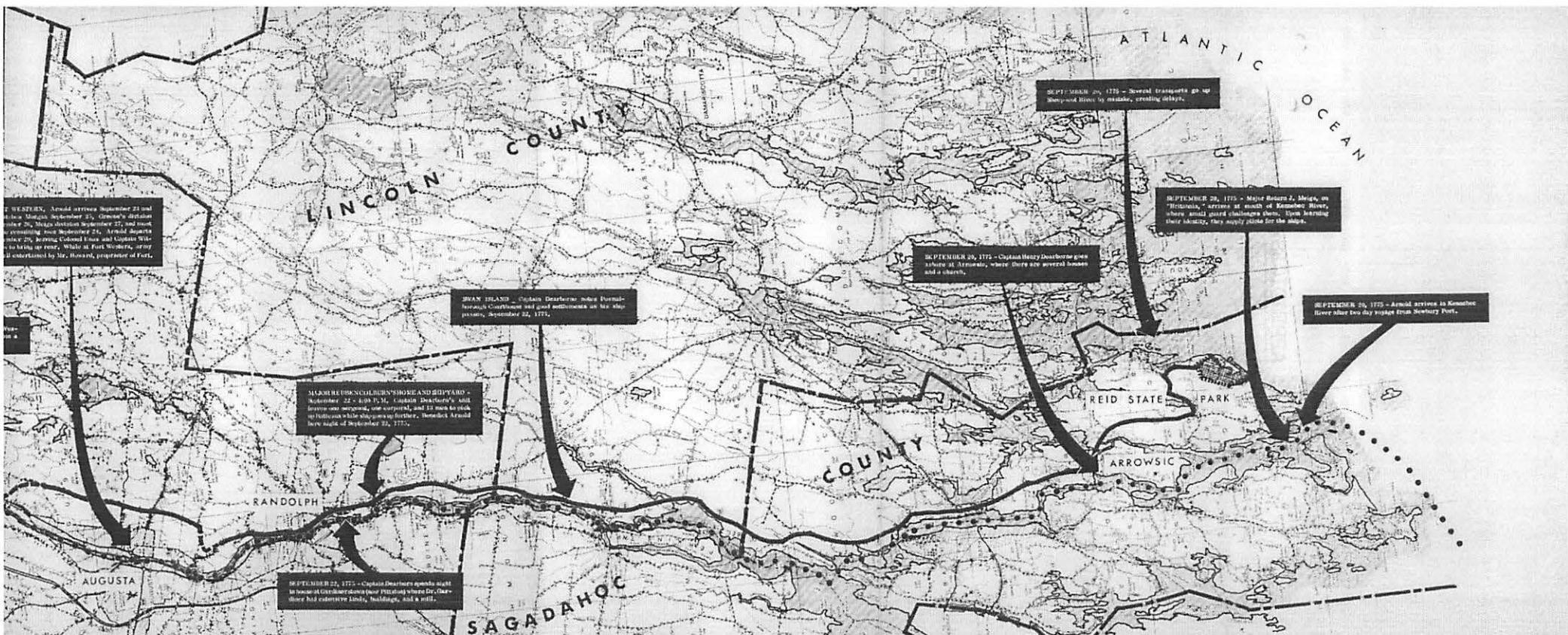






along the Kennebec, Dead, and Chaudiere. Had there been more preliminary study of the rapid streams, the use of batteaux would have been rejected. Canoes would have been utilized, and the army would have moved faster and arrived in Quebec prepared to storm the city.





APPENDICES

A. Arnold's March to Quebec

B. Maps

ARNOLD'S MARCH TO QUEBEC

The invasion of Canada was one of the first military operations of the Revolutionary War. To the revolting colonists, the vast territory to the north looked threatening. In 1774, when Parliament closed the Port of Boston, it also passed the Quebec Act. Viewed from any angle, this enactment looked ominous to American interests. By extending the boundaries of Canada south to the Ohio River, it excluded Americans from a valuable Indian Trade west of the Appalachians and halted American expansion westward. Even worse, by re-establishing French civil law and the Roman Catholic Church, it threatened to bring the French-Canadian inhabitants into a close alliance with the British. From Canada, the colonists could foresee the redcoats, with their Indian dependents and potential Canadian allies, descending without warning upon the long, unprotected American frontier, thereby crippling the entire war effort.

Always fearing the worst, the revolutionaries did see hope in the Canadian situation. There were, among the predominantly French settlers, a number of extremely vocal "old subjects," men of English blood who had come to Canada after its conquest from France. These men were primarily merchants and traders, and their aspirations were similar to those of their neighbors to the south. They were very hostile to the royal government as a result of the Quebec Act, which seemed to take from them traditional English rights, like a representative assembly and trial by

jury. An even brighter hope was the prospect of securing assistance from the French peasantry itself. While the habitants liked many of the provisions of the Quebec Act, they disliked others. They were particularly fearful that the new legislation would force them to again pay tithes to the Church and would require them to serve in the military under the old French nobility, whom they despised.¹

Nevertheless, it was not until the British capitulation at Fort Ticonderoga on May 9, 1775, followed by the American capture of Crown Point the following day, and the successful raid on the British post at St. John's on May 17, that Americans began to think seriously about an expedition against Canada. Upon first hearing of the incredulous success of American arms in the Lake Champlain area under the leadership of Benedict Arnold and Ethan Allen, the first impulse of the Continental Congress was to quickly evacuate the captured stores, and withdraw.² However, reports continued to drift down from the north telling of British weakness. It was learned that Guy Carleton, the royal governor had only 550 regulars to defend all of Canada, and that neither the French Canadians nor the Indians were rushing to his aid. Congress, realizing that the Americans were in control of the principal invasion route north, and that the door to Canada was wide open, eventually took action. In late June, 1775, Major General Philip Schuyler was sent north, with orders to defend

¹Allen French, The First Year of the American Revolution (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp. 144-147.

²Ibid., pp. 151-154

Ticonderoga and Crown Point, and if practical, and not disagreeable to the Canadians, to push on to St. John's, Montreal, and other parts of Canada.³

Throughout the summer of 1775, Schuyler and his second in command, Brigadier General Richard Montgomery, prepared for a thrust into Canada. Plagued with bickering among the troops, and endless delays in securing men and supplies, the undertaking was tediously slow in getting underway. Nevertheless, by August 23, Schuyler had gathered enough supplies to provision an expedition for 20 days and had constructed enough boats to transport 1300 men north.⁴

Sir Guy Carleton had not been idle since the British defeats at Ticonderoga and Crown Point. Though his resources were scant, he did everything in his power to gird his province for attack. He decided to contest every inch of ground he could, and by July he had over 400 men at St. John's improving the fortifications and preparing to put up a stiff resistance. Schuyler would have to fight if he wanted Canada.⁵

At headquarters in Cambridge, the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, George Washington, was watching the progress of the Canadian campaign with great interest. By mid-August, intelligence from scouts attached to Schuyler's force, and from other sources, indicated that almost all the small British force in Canada had been thrown into the Montreal and

³Allen French, The First Year of the American Revolution (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp. 158-159

⁴French, The First Year, p. 390.

⁵Ibid., p. 385.

St. John's area to slow down the expected attack from Lake Champlain. As a result, the important fortress city of Quebec was vulnerable, being guarded by only a handful of men. In fact, one report, from a Caughnawago Indian chief named Louis, asserted that Quebec defended by a single sergeant and five privates.⁶

As the reports trickled in from the fortress city on the St. Lawrence, headquarters turned its eyes in that direction. By August 20, 1775, Washington had devised a way to badly discomfort the British there. On that date he dispatched a messenger to Ticonderoga to inform Schuyler of his thinking and seek his advise. The idea, Washington wrote, had been carefully considered in Cambridge for several days and was to

penetrate Canada by way of the Kennebec River, and so to Quebec by a Rout ninety miles below Montreal. I can very well spare a Detachment for this purpose of one Thousand or twelve Hundred men, and the Land Carriage by the Rout proposed is too inconsiderable to make an objection. If you are resolved to proceed, which I gather from your last Letter is your Intention, it would make a Diversion that would distract Carlton, and facilitate your Views. He must either break up and follow this Party to Quebec, by which he will leave you a free Passage, or he must suffer that important Place to fall into our Hands, an Event, which would have a decisive Effect and Influence on the Publick Interests.⁷

⁶ Justin H. Smith, Our Struggle for the Fourteenth Colony; Canada and the American Revolution, (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907), I, p. 502.

⁷ Letter of George Washington to Major General Philip Schuyler, Cambridge, August 20, 1775, in John C. Fitzpatrick, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1931), III, pp. 437-438.

Washington asked Schuyler if and when his force would move into Canada, and for any additional details Schuyler might have on conditions in that country, such as the sentiments of the inhabitants and of the Indians, and how many men were at Quebec. Schuyler was to reply without delay.⁸

The idea of using the Kennebec River in Maine as a route into Canada was not original with Washington or his Cambridge staff. As early as the middle of the 17th century, French missionaries had used the route. By canoe, they would travel up the Chaudiere River, a stream that flowed into the St. Lawrence about four miles above Quebec, to its source. From there, it was a four mile portage across the watershed to the source of the Kennebec, which ultimately led them south toward the Atlantic. Three succeeding French Jesuits had worked among the Abenaki Indians of Maine, and the tribe was completely converted. The last of these priests, Father Sebastien Rale, had an extensive mission on the Kennebec at Norridgewock.⁹ As early as 1682, the Kennebec-Chaudiere route had been vaguely sketched on a French Navy Department map. As knowledge grew, new French and English maps showed more details.¹⁰ In 1760, John Montressor, a British

⁸ Letter of George Washington to Major General Philip Schuyler, Cambridge, August 20, 1775, in John C. Fitzpatrick, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799 (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1931), III, p. 438.

⁹ Justin H. Smith, Arnold's March from Cambridge to Quebec, A Critical Study, Together with a Reprint of Arnold's Journal (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 3-4.

Army engineer, had followed the route from Quebec to the Kennebec and back. The Americans had a copy of Montressor's map and an imperfect copy of his journal.¹¹

During the 18th century struggles between France and England, military use of the Kennebec-Chaudiere route had been proposed several times, though never effected. As a result, both British and colonists were aware of its potentials when the Revolution broke out. Immediately General Carleton stationed a small guard of fusileers on the Chaudiere to watch for signs of American activity. Likewise, in late April, 1775, the citizens of Portland, Maine, sent two scouts up the Kennebec to look for indications of a British incursion.¹²

A proposal for an attack on Canada by the Kennebec was made in the spring of 1775. Colonel Jonathan Brewer of Massachusetts submitted a plan for leading 500 volunteers by the Kennebec and Chaudiere Rivers against Quebec to the Massachusetts Provincial Congress. Nothing came of Brewer's suggestion, but it is possible that Washington knew of it.¹³

¹¹ Justin H. Smith, Arnold's March from Cambridge to Quebec, A Critical Study, Together with a Reprint of Arnold's Journal (New York, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903), p. 17.

¹² Ibid., p. 21.

¹³ Smith, The Fourteenth Colony, I, p. 498.

On August 14, 1775, Chief Swashan and four St. Francis Indians arrived in Cambridge from Canada. With them came a shipbuilder from the Kennebec Valley, Major Reuben Colburn. It is likely that the appearance of this band at headquarters had much to do with Washington's decision to attack Quebec. Chief Swashan's information confirmed other reports from Canada concerning the weakness of Quebec. Even more interesting was the fact that they had come from a village on the St. Lawrence above Quebec by the Chaudiere and Kennebec. As a result of this visit, both the weakness of the fortress city and a way of taking advantage of that weakness were brought into sharp focus.¹⁴

Benedict Arnold had been a leader in the capture of Fort Ticonderoga. However, disputes over command of the forces in the Lake Champlain area led to his resignation in late June.¹⁵ He was in Cambridge in August to settle accounts with the Massachusetts authorities, under whose orders he had acted in the northern theater. Washington had met him and was impressed by his initiative, energy and executive ability.¹⁶ Whether Arnold had anything to do with suggesting the Quebec expedition to the Commander in Chief, we do not know. It is more likely that Washington first decided upon the venture, then asked Arnold to command it.¹⁷

¹⁴Smith, The Fourteenth Colony, I p. 501.

¹⁵French, The First Year, p. 158.

¹⁶Smith, The Fourteenth Colony, I, pp. 495-496.

¹⁷Ibid., pp. 498-499.

Arnold accepted Washington's offer without qualification and immediately threw himself into the project. On August 21, the day after Washington's letter to Schuyler, he was already writing to Colburn, the Kennebec River shipbuilder, to inquire

how soon, there can be procured, or built, at Kennebec Two hundred light Battos Capable of Carrying Six or Seven Men each, with their Provisions and Baggage, (say 100 wt. to each man) the Boats to be furnished with four Oars two Paddles and two Setting Poles each, the expence of Building them and wheather a Sufficient quantity of Nails can be procured with you.¹⁸

Other important details had to be known, as well, like the quantity of beef available in the area, and the topography of the region, the hills and swamps, the depth and swiftness of the rivers, and the number of carrying places.¹⁹

For the 18th century, the speed with which the project moved was remarkable. On September 27, Schuyler replied from Albany that Montgomery was embarking immediately for St. John's, that he definitely intended to penetrate into Canada. Moreover, there was no more than a single company at Quebec. Schuyler's letter had reached Washington by September 2. On that date, the Commander in Chief ordered Nathaniel Tracy of Newburyport to start collecting transport ships to ferry the men from Massachusetts to Maine.²⁰ Also by that date, Major Colburn had also returned to Cambridge with his report to Arnold. On September 3, 1775, the shipbuilder was ordered to return to

¹⁸Letter of Benedict Arnold to Reuben Colburn, Cambridge, August 21, 1775, in Smith, Arnold's March, p. 75.

¹⁹Ibid., pp. 75-76.

²⁰Smith, The Fourteenth Colony, I, p. 504.

his home in Gardinerstown and begin work immediately on the 200 batteaux. He was to engage 20 men to act as carpenters and guides, and also begin collection for the commissary of 60 barrels of salted beef, plus all the pork and flour he could lay his hands on. For his efforts, he would receive 40 shillings for each boat.

With transportation and supplies taken care of, the next step, finding the men, was rapidly effected. On September 5, the call went out from headquarters for "Volunteers, as are active Woodsmen, and well acquainted with batteaux..."²² To serve on the expedition with Colonel Arnold, there were to be 2 lieutenant colonels, 2 majors, 10 captains, 30 subalterns, 30 sergeants, 30 corporals, and 676 privates. In addition, there were to be one company of Virginia riflemen and two rifle companies from Pennsylvania.²³ Recruiting went well, and by September 8, the volunteers were ordered to assemble and march to Cambridge Common, to be joined by the rifle companies the following morning.²⁴

Of the rifle companies, Daniel Morgan was in command of the Virginians, Captain William Hendricks led one company from Pennsylvania and Captain Matthew Smith the other. Altogether the riflemen numbered about 250. The musketmen, numbering 742, were formed into two battalions. The first, commanded by Lt. Colonel Roger Enos and Major Return J. Meigs, both of Connecticut, consisted of the companies of Captains Thomas Williams of

²²General Orders, Cambridge, September 5, 1775, in Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, III, p. 473.

²³Ibid., p. 473.

²⁴General Orders, Cambridge, September 8, 1775, in Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, III, pp. 482-483. 9

Massachusetts, Henry Dearborn of New Hampshire, Oliver Hanchet of Connecticut, William Goodrich of Massachusetts and Scott, whose first name is unknown. The second battalion, commanded by Lt. Colonel Christopher Greene of Rhode Island and Major Timothy Bigelow of Massachusetts, included the companies of Captains Samuel Ward of Rhode Island, and Simeon Thayer, John Topham, Jonas Hubbard, and Samuel McCobb, all of Massachusetts. Unfortunately, most of the musketmen were not frontiersmen at all, but New England farmers. In addition to the rifle and musket companies, there were others like the quartermasters, the chaplain, the surgeon, and six unattached volunteers. One of the latter was Aaron Burr of New Jersey. The total force amounted to 1,051 men.²⁵

On September 11, the rifle companies marched for Newburyport, where they were to board transports for the trip up the coast to Maine. They arrived on the 13th. By September 15, the entire detachment was in or near that seacoast town.²⁶

Arnold's orders were made up on September 14. In them, Washington repeatedly stressed one matter. The army was not to do anything that might offend the Canadians or the Indians. Purchases were to be made in specie. The strictest discipline was to be maintained. There was to be no plundering. Above all, there was to be no interference with the religion of the country.²⁷

²⁵Christopher Ward, The War of the Revolution (New York; The Macmillan Company, 1952), I, pp. 165-168.

²⁶Smith, Arnold's March, pp. 58-61.

²⁷Instructions of George Washington to Colonel Benedict Arnold, Cambridge, October 14, 1775, in Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, III, pp. 491-496.

Arnold left Cambridge on September 15, and arrived in Newburyport that evening.²⁸ On September 18, the men, aboard 11 small vessels, began the sea leg of their journey. Arnold, aboard the schooner "Broad Bay," made good time and had reached the mouth of the Kennebec on the 19th. The ship paused there to await the arrival of the others, most of which arrived on September 20. The Kennebec was large enough so that the ships were able to go up as far as Major Colburn's shipyard at Gardinerstown (now Pittston), and by September 22, Arnold was there.²⁹ Here the colonel inspected the batteaux that were to carry his army through the wilderness, and here he received the latest intelligence from Colburn's scouts.

The report of the guides, Denis Getchel and Samuel Berry was disappointing. They had not reconnoitered the entire route to Quebec, but had ventured only about 30 miles beyond the Great Carrying Place. On the Dead River they had run into an Indian by the name of Natanis who had threatened to report their movements to General Carleton and had told them that on the Chaudiere River, a British officer with six men were on guard. The guides also heard that there was a large contingent of hostile Mohawks at Sartigan, the first French settlement on the Chaudiere. Fearful, Getchel and Berry turned back, their mission incomplete. Even their description of the area they did traverse was sketchy.³⁰

²⁸ Letter of Benedict Arnold to Schuyler, Point aux Trembles, November 27, 1775, in Kenneth Roberts, Editor, March to Quebec; Journals of the Members of Arnold's Expedition (New York; Doubleday, Doran and Company, Inc., 1938), pp. 97-98.

²⁹ Simeon Thayer, Journal of Captain Simeon Thayer's March Through the Wilderness to Quebec, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 248

³⁰ Smith, Arnold's March, pp. 80-82.

Since information on conditions along the route was still scanty, Arnold probably did not realize, as he inspected Colburn's batteaux, just how unsuited for the journey they were. They were a type of boat common on the Kennebec and had narrow, flat bottoms, widely flaring sides, and long, pointed stems and sterns. In the gentle waters of the lower Kennebec, they were ideal, since they could carry heavy loads and they were not easily capsized.³¹ However, nobody--Washington, Arnold, or even Major Colburn--had any notion of actual conditions on the upper reaches of the Kennebec and beyond. As a result, instead of taking canoes which would have been easy to carry around the many rapids and waterfalls on the route, the expedition was weighted down with the batteaus. The vessels were cumbersome by nature, and the difficulties of using them were compounded because they had been hastily made of green pine boards.³² Within a few days, most of them were leaking, causing the destruction of badly needed foodstuffs and supplies.³³

For the next few days the army was engaged in transferring supplies from the ships to the batteaux and bringing the small boats up from Major Colburn's to Fort Western, the head of navigation, 46 miles from the mouth of the Kennebec. The outpost, at modern Augusta, was to be the jumping off point for the expedition.³⁴

³¹Ward, The War of the Revolution, p. 168.

³²Isaac Senter, Journal of Dr. Isaac Senter, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 199.

³³George Morrison, Journal of the Expedition to Quebec, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 511.

³⁴Senter, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 199.

Arnold reached Fort Western on September 23. Immediately he dispatched several advance parties to fill in the scanty knowledge of the way ahead. One group, under the leadership of Lt. Archibald Steele, was to locate and mark the various carrying places along the route. In birch bark canoes, this party with little trouble covered 15-20 miles a day and had reached the watershed between the Kennebec and Chaudiere by October 8.³⁵

At Fort Western, the army was divided into four divisions. The First Division, consisting of Morgan's, Smith's and Hendrick's Rifle Companies started out on September 25. It was expected that being first, they would have time to clear some of the portages for the others, particularly those at the Great Carrying Place between the Kennebec and Dead Rivers. The following day, the Second Division under Lt. Colonel Greene and Major Bigelow, with three of the musket companies departed.³⁶ The Third Division, commanded by Major Meigs, with the companies of Hanchet, Ward, Dearborn and Goodrich departed September 27. The Rear Division, under Lt. Colonel Enos, consisted of Scott's, McCobb's, and Williams' companies. Scott and McCobb left Fort Western on September 29, Enos, with Captain Williams' company, was to follow with extra provisions.

At noon on September 29, Arnold himself headed north. His canoe was as shoddy as the batteaux the men were plagued with. At Vassalborough, only 8 miles upstream, it was leaking so badly that he was forced to transfer to a pirogue or dugout canoe. That might he lodged about 4 miles below

³⁵ John Joseph Henry, Campaign Against Quebec, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 304-317.

³⁶ Henry Dearborn, Journal of the Quebec Expedition, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 132.

Fort Halifax. By 10 the next morning, Arnold reached Fort Halifax, 18 miles above Fort Western, where he caught up with Dearborn's and Goodrich's companies struggling over a 60 rod carrying place around the Ticonic Falls. Here the colonel was able to hire a team to carry his baggage around the falls and the 5 miles of rapids above. By evening, he had come up to Meigs and his Division, about 6 1/2 miles above Fort Halifax.

On the first day of October, the commander moved rapidly up the quick flowing river, surmounted Skowhegan Falls, at 5 p.m. and lodged 5 miles above at Widow Warren's. By the morning of October 2, he had reached Norridgewock Falls, about 50 miles above Fort Western. Here at the last settlement on the Kennebec and the site of Father Rale's Indian Mission, there was a 1500 yard portage which brought the army's progress to a creep. Two sleds and oxen were obtained to assist the men, but each division took at least a day to move their supplies around the falls. Arnold remained at Norridgewock a full week, until the last division was over the portage. During this period, he inspected the provisions of each company, and found much of the food had been ruined by water in the batteaux. Meanwhile, Major Colburn and his carpenters were put to work repairing the flimsy boats as best they could.

On October 9, with all four divisions now ahead of him, the colonel moved forward again. Next morning he passed the 15 foot high Caratunk Falls. The river became more rapid and more shallow as the mountains started closing in.

On Wednesday, October 11, Arnold reached the Great Carrying Place, where the army was to leave the Kennebec River and carry their boats across 14 miles of hills and swamps to the Dead River, a branch of the Kennebec. Fortunately there were 3 ponds along this route to provide the men with a little respite from the back-breaking task of hauling batteaux and supplies across such a long stretch. As Arnold reached the Carrying Place, he found that both Morgan's and Greene's Divisions had pushed through to the second pond, known as Middle Carry Pond today. Meigs had just arrived.

That day Arnold moved the 3 1/4 miles across rough country to the first, or East Carry Pond, where he remained until late on the 14th. At this camp, beside a lake full of trout, several important matters were decided. First was a conference with Lieutenants Steele and Church, who had just returned from their survey of the country ahead. They reported that it was 80 miles from the point where the troops would enter the Dead River to the place where the portage to the Chaudiere began. While 30 miles of the way would be in deep, calm water, there were 5 falls and plenty of rapid water beyond.³⁷ Arnold now realized just how faulty all previous reports had been. Washington had believed the distance of the Dead River leg of the journey to be 30 miles.³⁸ Getchel and Berry had not revealed anything about the falls and rapid water, because they had failed to go very far up the Dead River.³⁹

³⁷ Benedict Arnold, Colonel Arnold's Journal of His Expedition to Canada, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 45-50.

³⁸ Letter of George Washington to the President of Congress, Cambridge, September 21, 1775, in Smith, Arnold's March, p. 23

³⁹ Smith, Arnold's March, p. 81

Steele and Church had done a good job, so Arnold decided to use them further. They were again sent ahead, Church with 20 axmen and a surveyor to clear portages along the Dead River and Steele to go beyond for a careful examination of the falls and portages on the Chaudiere as far as the first French settlements.

Steele and Church reported one hopeful fact. They had run into no Indians or British spies on the Dead River. It looked as if the road to Quebec, though rough, would be unobstructed.⁴⁰ Therefore on October 13, Arnold sent several messengers forward. An Indian named Aeneas and another Indian were sent to Quebec with a letter to American sympathizers there to inform them that the Continental troops were on the way. These friends were asked to send back intelligence on British strength at Quebec, the sentiment of the inhabitants, and news of General Schuyler's expedition. Arnold also enclosed a second letter, which he asked be forwarded to Schuyler.⁴¹ This second letter informed the Commander in Chief of the Northern Army that things were going well and that Arnold hoped "in a fortnight of having the pleasure of meeting you in Quebec."⁴²

That same day, October 13, Arnold wrote Washington, informing the Commander of his progress, which he felt had been good. It had been a hard march and the men had been forced to wade in the stream and drag their batteaux behind them more than half the time. Nevertheless, the first 3 divisions

⁴⁰Arnold, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 50-51.

⁴¹Letter of Benedict Arnold to John Manir, Carrying Place, October 13, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 69-70.

⁴²Letter of Benedict Arnold to Philip Schuyler, Carrying Place, October 13, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 71-72.

were rapidly crossing the Great Carrying Place, the last division had arrived, and he had high hopes of reaching the Chaudiere in 8 to 10 days. Morale was excellent, and he could still count 950 effectives. There were sufficient provisions for 25 days, certainly enough to reach Quebec. As a footnote, the colonel added this bit of description:

P.S. Your excellency may possibly think that we have been tardy in our march, as we have gained so little; but when you consider the badness and weight of the batteaux and the large quantity of provisions, etc., we have been obliged to force up against a very rapid stream, where you would have taken the men for amphibious animals, as they were a great part of the time under water; add to this the great fatigue in portage, you will think I have pushed the men as fast as could possibly have been. The officers, volunteers, and privates have in general acted with the greatest spirit and industry.⁴³

Arnold also sent a man named Jakins ahead to go to Sartigan, the first French settlement on the Chaudiere, to determine the sentiments of the settlers and gather any intelligence he could.

At the Great Carrying Place, the colonel took several precautionary measures. First, he ordered a log hospital, large enough to house 8-10 sick, to be built on the portage between East and Middle Carry Ponds. Secondly, he ordered a log structure built somewhere between the Kennebec and East Carry Pond. This was to be a sort of supply depot.⁴⁴ Colonel Farnsworth, the Commissary was ordered to stock this building with the extra provisions left behind at Gardinerstown, so that the army would be able to eat should some disaster force them to retreat.⁴⁵

⁴³Letter of Benedict Arnold to George Washington, Carrying Place, October 13, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 72-73.

⁴⁴Arnold, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 50-51.

⁴⁵Letter of Arnold to Colonel Farnsworth, Carrying Place, October 14, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 73.

By October 14, two divisions had completed the 14 mile portage to the Dead River and the other two were well across, so Arnold broke camp and again moved forward. That day he crossed the half mile portage to small, muddy, Middle Carry Pond, then across a root choked trail to the beautiful West Carry Pond. From his camp on the banks of that lake he could see the snow covered peaks of Mount Bigelow ahead.⁴⁶ It was an inspiring sight, one that tempted Major Meigs and Captain Hanchet to attempt scaling the peak several days later as their division came into the vicinity.⁴⁷

Sunday, October 15, saw Arnold crossing West Carry Pond and beginning the arduous fourth portage from the third pond to the Dead River. Most of the afternoon was spent in climbing the mile long trail through a gap in the ridges and in descending to the edge of a low savanna. It took all of the next morning to struggle across nearly 3 miles of bog, where the men often sank to their knees in the mire. This stretch was one of the most treacherous for the men, laden with the clumsy batteaux and cumbersome provisions. Nevertheless, by 1:30 in the afternoon, the party had reached a small tributary of the Dead River called Bog Brook. There they were able to again launch their boats, and after proceeding for a mile or so, they reached the Dead River. Here, in deep water with a gentle current, the men were at last able to row the batteaux instead of dragging them through the water. However, the going was slow, for the river had endless loops and it was days before they lost sight of Mount Bigelow. Nevertheless, Arnold covered almost 20 miles that afternoon, passing Morgan's division,

⁴⁶Arnold, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 51.

⁴⁷Return Jonathan Meigs, A Journal of the Occurrences within the Observation of Return Jonathan Meigs, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 178.

and then the deserted cabin of Natanis, the Indian who had frightened Getchel and Berry into turning back several weeks earlier. Three miles beyond, Arnold camped with Greene's division, which was momentarily in the lead.

On Tuesday, October 17, hunger first began to stalk the expedition. Greene suddenly realized that his division was out of flour. Most had been damaged by water, but it is likely that much had been "borrowed" by Morgan's frontiersmen, who had dropped back to second in line of march the day before. Arnold decided to halt Greene and send back to the rear for some of the extra provisions.⁴⁸ Under the command of Major Bigelow, 96 men with 12 batteaux returned to Colonel Enos for help. For 4 long days the remainder of the division waited, occupying their time making cartridges. On October 21, the relief party returned almost empty-handed. Enos had given them only two barrels of flour, saying he was short himself.⁴⁹

As Greene's division sat idly on the banks of the Dead River, they watched as Morgan passed them on October 17, and Meigs on October 19. Arnold moved forward himself on the afternoon of the 19th. The Dead River was now becoming more like the Kennebec and he crossed 6 rips in the 2 1/2 leagues he went that day. When he camped that night near modern Stratton, it seemed to him that Mount Bigelow was still as close as ever.

⁴⁸Arnold, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 51-53.

⁴⁹Thayer, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 254-255.

A gentle rain had been falling that day as the army pressed on. In the night it increased to a downpour, accompanied by a strong southwest wind. The storm slowed the march, but did not halt it. By October 21, the river had risen 3 feet. Arnold covered about 12 miles that day, first passing Meigs and then Morgan. Progress was slow for the river was now very swift. There were 4 falls to surmount that day before the party camped, about a mile ahead of Morgan. Completely drenched by the incessant rain, it was close to 11 before they had dried out enough to bed down.

It was not a long sleep. At 4 a.m., now October 22, a flood deluged the camp. The river had risen 8 feet in 9 hours. Grabbing up their baggage, the small band retreated hurriedly to a small hill.

Naturally the camps of Morgan and Meigs, downstream, were also hit by the torrent. Nevertheless the men went to work drying out all they could salvage, they marched. The going was almost impossible, for the current was fierce against the batteaux. The land party had to detour for miles around flooded creeks and valleys. Because the land was completely inundated, it was hard to determine the true course of the river. On the following day, October 23, one party got lost and were several miles up a branch of the river known today as Alder Stream when Arnold learned of their error and sent after them.

The worst was yet to come. About 3 miles beyond Alder Stream, disaster struck. Seven boats were overturned and almost all of the few remaining provisions lost, as the men attempted the seventh portage on the Dead River.

Starvation now threatened to wipe out the entire expedition. They had gone too far to turn back, and Canada was still far ahead. On the evening of October 23, by the rapids known today as Shadagee Falls, Arnold called all the officers present into a Council of War. The council decided they would certainly starve if they turned back. Therefore, they must move ahead in hopes of finding help at Sartigan, the first French settlement on the Chaudiere. Arnold, along with Captain Hanchet and 50 men would rush forward, gather provisions at Sartigan, and ship them back to the remainder of the men. The sick, 26 in number, would be sent back and Colonel Enos was to supply them with enough food to reach the settlements on the Kennebec. Greene and Enos were ordered to send ahead as many of their men as they could feed for 15 days, and turn the rest back.

At noon on October 24, Arnold set out on his race to the Chaudiere. The rain turned to snow, but before darkness closed in, he managed to cover over 8 miles, portaging around two falls. Next morning, after several miles of rapid water, the party reached the first of the Chain of Ponds, the long narrow string of lakes at the end of the Dead River. Against snow and wind, they rowed for over ten miles, finally camping on a small connecting creek known as Horseshoe Stream today. Portaging between lakes, the group at length reached the last of the Chain of Ponds, today known as Arnold Pond. At 4 in the afternoon of October 24, they began the 4 mile portage across the Height of Land the divide between the Kennebec system and the Chaudiere system. For two miles they toiled up a 35° ascent, and at length crossed the summit that today marks the Maine-Quebec border. Darkness overtook them before they had completed the portage.

On October 27, Arnold found himself in a beautiful meadow, which he crossed to a stream known today as the Arnold River. Downstream, where the Arnold River ran into Lake Megantic, there was a terrible swamp, with many diverging channels and false mouths. Here they met Lieutenants Steele and Church, along with Jakins, the emissary to Sartigan. They had good news. Jakins reported that the inhabitants of Sartigan were friendly. At Quebec, there were few troops, Carleton and the regulars being at Montreal.

That night Arnold camped on the shores of Lake Megantic, after having rescued Hanchet and his party from the swamp on the Arnold River by boat. In the morning the colonel raced on by canoe, entering the Chaudiere itself about 10. Several times the party almost perished in the rapids on that stream, but they covered 15 miles. On October 29, the river carried them another 40 miles. On October 30, after proceeding 15 miles further, Arnold sighted a house. They had at last reached Sartigan.⁵⁰

Arnold had managed to break through. But what of the men straggling behind, close to starvation. Those under Greene and Enos had been downstream from the first two divisions when the Council of War had been held on October 23. Greene's division, whose supplies had been low for almost a week, was doggedly moving ahead. By October 25, they were near the point where the council had been held, Shadagee Falls. Here, reduced to eating candles, they halted to attempt to secure more supplies from Enos who was a few miles behind. Enos and his officers came up at noon, and asked for a council. All the subordinate officers in the Fourth Division wanted to turn back, but

⁵⁰Arnold, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec. pp. 53-61.

Greene and his officers stated their wish to continue forward. A vote was called, and Enos himself cast the deciding vote in favor of advancing. Nevertheless, the Fourth Division persisted in turning back. Enos knuckled under with little protest. Leaving Greene with only 2 1/2 barrels of flour, the entire Fourth Division faced about, and marched home.⁵¹

The men of Greene's, Meigs' and Morgan's divisions cursed Enos and his troops heartily when they learned of their defection, but pressed on.⁵² The pace quickened because there was now very little to carry. At the portage across the Height of Land, most of the few remaining batteaux were abandoned. Misfortune continued to plague them, for they got completely lost in the Alder Swamp at the mouth of the Arnold River, where they waded around for a day or more looking for a way out.

This time lost during a race for survival almost spelled the end. Yet the men still pushed on, skirted Lake Megantic and started the descent of the Chaudiere. Since October 26, they had been subsisting on a pint of flour a day. They were now reduced to eating shoe leather or anything else they could find substinance in. By November 1, the few dogs that had followed the army were devoured.⁵³ Some dug roots to remain alive. On November 2, the bulk of the army had not eaten for 48 hours, and many were falling by the way. Next day, November 3, the rest would probably have dropped, too. That afternoon many thought they were close to their doom, for they imagined they saw herds of cattle coming toward them. On closer view they realized

⁵¹Senter, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 210-212.

⁵²Dearborn, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 137.

⁵³Thayer, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 259-261.

it was not a mirage. Arnold had succeeded in securing supplies at Sartigan and sending them back to the starving men. The army was saved. The wilderness had been conquered.⁵⁴

By November 8, all the stragglers had been rescued, the army had been reorganized at Sartigan, and had pressed on down the Chaudiere. Arnold arrived at Point Levi, just opposite Quebec, on November 10. By November 13, two months after the departure from Cambridge, all were on the banks of the St. Lawrence. That evening they crossed that river in canoes, and approached the walls of Quebec.⁵⁵

It is tragic that Arnold's expedition, which had overcome the northern wilderness, could not overcome the British. The letters the colonel had written on October 13, to the American sympathizers in Quebec and to General Schuyler fell into enemy hands and the British had begun preparing for an assault. One of the first precautions was to remove all the canoes from the south bank of the St. Lawrence.⁵⁶ Lieutenant Governor Hector Cramahe also began putting the walls of Quebec in shape and enlisting civilians for defense.⁵⁷

Nevertheless, had Arnold been able to reach Quebec just a few days sooner, victory might have been possible. In the upper St. Lawrence area, Carleton

⁵⁴ Henry, Journal, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 341-342.

⁵⁵ Letter of Arnold to Schuyler, Point aux Trembles, November 27, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, p. 98.

⁵⁶ Letter of Arnold to John Manir, St. Mary's, November 7, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 81-82.

⁵⁷ French, The First Year, p. 602.

was being battered badly by Montgomery, who had succeeded Schuyler as Commander of the forces invading from Lake Champlain. St. John's was captured on November 2, Montreal fell on November 13.⁵⁸ The retreating British were trapped at Sorel, and the Americans captured 113 regulars and all their provisions. Carleton himself escaped only by disguising himself as a Canadian and slipping through the American lines.⁵⁹

It is possible that what saved Quebec was the destruction of the canoes at Point Levi by the British. Arnold quickly collected at least 20 others from friendly Indians, but his crossing was delayed.⁶⁰ By the time he had enough boats to cross the St. Lawrence, a severe storm developed, delaying the crossing several days more.⁶¹ During that storm, 80 veterans under MacLean were able to slip into the city. MacLean, a phenomenal leader, was able to organize all the British elements in the city into a force sufficient to defend the city. The 948 sailors, merchant seamen, and traders, plus 300 Canadian militia brought the number of men defending the walls to over 1,300, when added to MacLean's own band of eighty.⁶² Arnold, with only 550 effectives and 5 rounds of ammunition per man, saw that he had no chance of taking the city alone, so withdrew on November 18

⁵⁸French, The First Year, pp. 429-430.

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 602.

⁶⁰Letter of Arnold to Richard Montgomery, St. Marie, November 8, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec. pp. 82-83.

⁶¹Letter of Arnold to Montgomery, Point Levi, November 14, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 85-86.

⁶²French, The First Year, pp. 606-607.

to Point aux Trembles, some 20 miles above Quebec, to await Montgomery.⁶³ The two American forces made a juncture on December 2, and the combined forces, numbering about 1,000, began a seige of Quebec on December 5. Carleton, now in command of the garrison, merely lay behind his walls. In desperation, the American forces assaulted the city on the night of December 30, 1775. In snow and darkness they were able to enter the lower part of the city. However, British fire killed Montgomery, and Arnold was severly wounded in the leg. Confused and lost in the maze of narrow streets, the Americans were surrounded. In the fighting, 60 men were killed or wounded, and 400 captured. The American expedition to Canada was virtually over.⁶⁴

Arnold's march to Quebec is worthy of national recognition, despite its ultimate failure. It was a brilliant piece of strategy that came within a hair of changing the destiny of the North American continent. All had realized that there was an element of risk. In his instructions to Arnold, Washington noted that ". . . the Winter Season is now advancing and the Success of this Enterprize, (under God) depends wholly upon the Spirit with which it is pushed, and the favorable Disposition of the Canadians and the Indians."⁶⁵ Nevertheless, the Commander in Chief was

⁶³ Letter of Arnold to Washington, Point aux Trembles, November 20, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 93-94.

⁶⁴ French, The First Year, pp. 610-619.

⁶⁵ Instructions of Washington to Arnold, Cambridge, October 14, 1775, in Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, III, p. 492.

willing to gamble, for he felt success was "of the utmost Consequence to the Interest and Liberties of America."⁶⁶

The expedition was well received by the natives of Canada. Arnold was able to secure food from the French inhabitants, and at least some of the Indians joined his army.⁶⁷ From all appearances it would seem that, had Arnold taken Quebec, he would have had no trouble establishing effective control over the Canadians.

For the period, the expedition was organized and dispatched with incredible speed. The idea of a march through the back door to Canada didn't take definite shape until August 20, when Washington wrote Schuyler for his advice. One month later, on September 20, the men had been recruited, the supplies gathered, the batteaux had been built, and the army was debarking on the Kennebec.

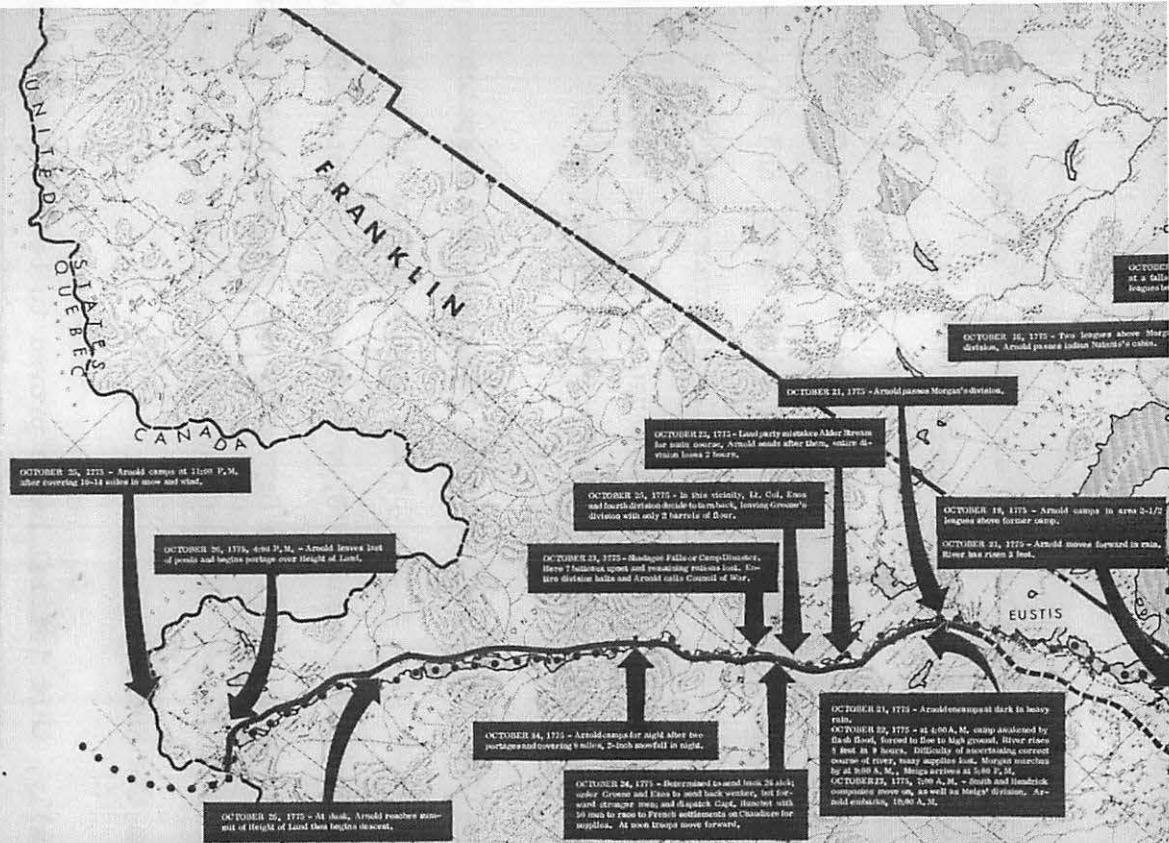
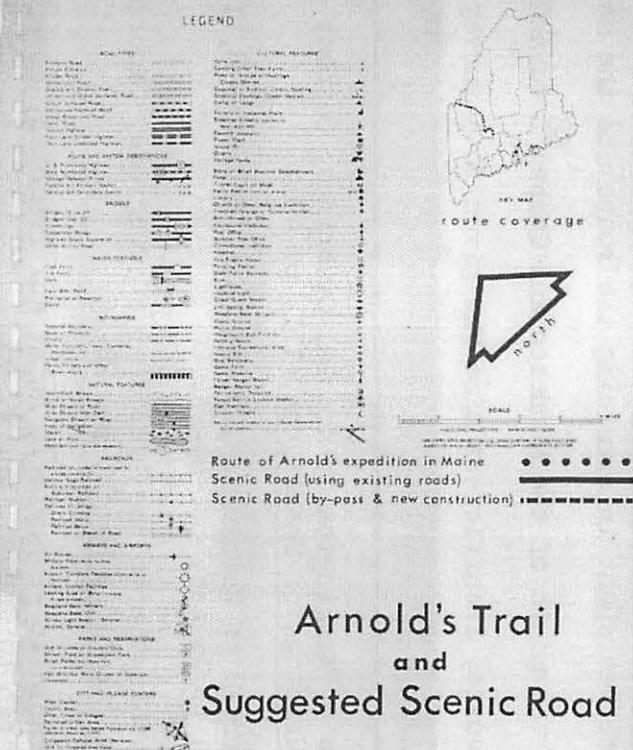
Paradoxically, this initial haste proved to be the doom of the expedition. Not enough time was spent in examining the route and the estimated 210 miles between the mouth of the Kennebec and Quebec⁶⁸ turned out to be 350.⁶⁹ Even worse, insufficient time was given to a survey of conditions

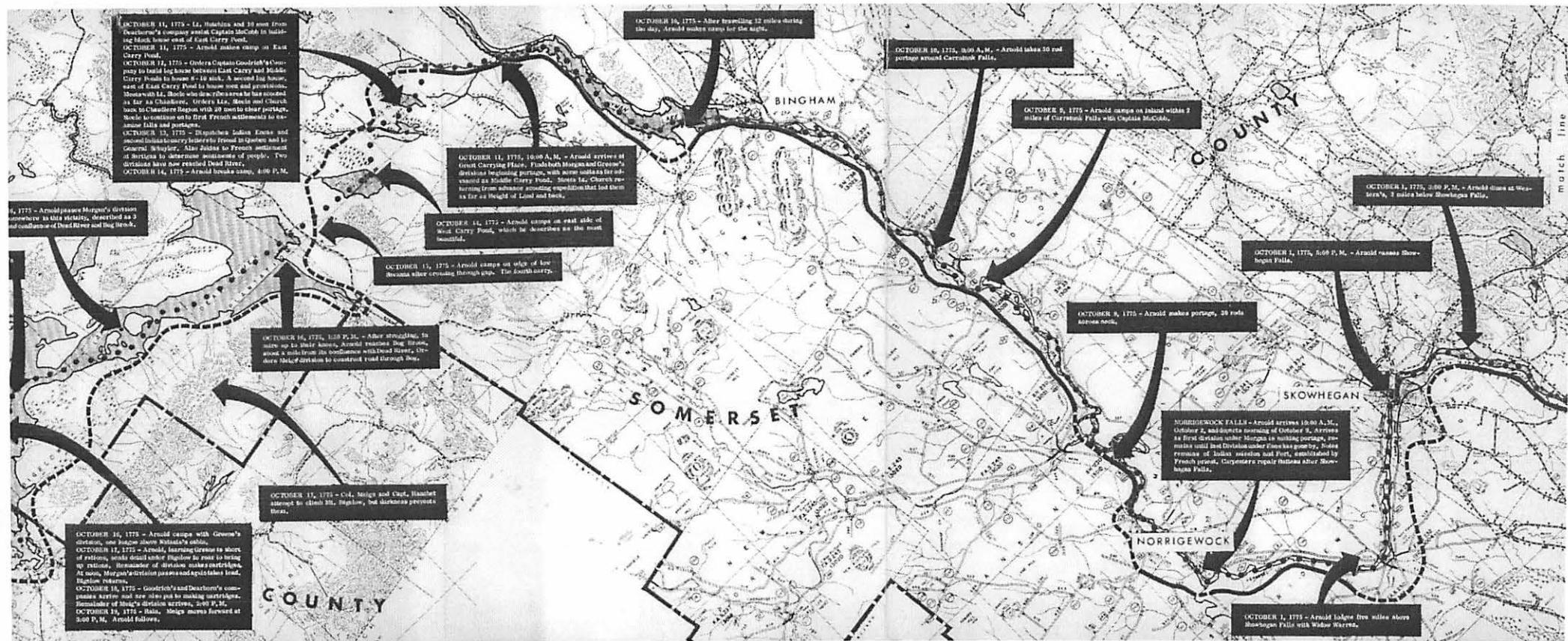
⁶⁶ Instructions of Washington to Arnold, Cambridge, October 14, 1775, in Fitzpatrick, Writings of Washington, III, p. 491.

⁶⁷ Letter of Arnold to Washington, Point Levi, November 8, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 84-85.

⁶⁸ Letter of Washington to the President of Congress, Cambridge, September 21, 1775, in Smith, Arnold's March, pp. 22-23.

⁶⁹ Letter of Arnold to Schuyler, Point aux Trembles, November 27, 1775, in Roberts, March to Quebec, pp. 97-98.







- REDUCED SIZE REPRODUCTION