An Archaeological Survey of the Land Approach to Mount Independence, 1776-1777
Orwell, Addison County, Vermont

by Ronald F. Kingsley

Abstract
Documents concerned with the American occupation of Ticonderoga during 1776-1777 indicate that American leaders held high expectations for a natural defensive position on a high bluff, directly across Lake Champlain from the fort at Ticonderoga. The Americans constructed a fortified post and named it Mount Independence. On the flat neck of land below the Mount the Rebels cut a crude military road. When completed, it would connect with the Great Road which was constructed from Crown Point to Fort Number Four on the Connecticut River. During 1777 this primitive military road and the land surrounding the base of the Mount would become the location of unfolding events in the history of Mount Independence during the American Revolution.

Preface
Since the summer of 1987 an archaeological survey project, The German Auxiliaries in the Burgoyne Campaign of 1777, has been in progress. The survey involves a half- to a mile-wide strip of land parallel to Lake Champlain, and extending along seven miles of the Lake and the East Creek shoreline in Addison County. The purpose of the research project is to document and interpret the activities of the hired German auxiliaries who engaged the Americans around the Mount in July 1777. The German Auxiliaries Project (GAP) is an unfunded, independent study, conducted in collaboration with the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation and Fort Ticonderoga. The findings from the study are in the process of being interpreted and disseminated in reports, articles, and public presentations (Kingsley 1987-1996, n.d., 1996).

This article addresses in particular the findings of the archaeological survey conducted on a portion of the total project area, namely on the land approach south of Mount Independence. The intent of this report is to summarize the evidence, make recommendations for preservation, and establish a record which will be available for use by future researchers.

Setting
No history of the Lake Champlain Basin during the American Revolution would be complete without the recognition of the events that occurred more than two centuries ago on a small peninsula. The basic geographic features still appear, as they probably did in 1776, as a towering mass of rock arising from the Lake and covered by brush, cliffs, and trees. A low and narrow strip of land, three miles long and over a half-mile wide, extends southeast from the bluff into what was then described as an "inaccessible wood".

Dominating the west side of the lake across from the peninsula was the great fortress of Ticonderoga. Prior to the European presence, Native Americans had long benefited from the rich resources of the Mount. Outcroppings of black flint provided raw material for making stone tools, while the natural environment offered ample resources for food and shelter.

In 1776 the peninsula was recognized by General Philip Schuyler, then commander at Ticonderoga, and other key military leaders as a strategic position for the Americans to occupy. The location was considered as a valuable defensive position when considered together with the existing fort at Ticonderoga. When the two positions were linked in a defensive manner, they could block British ships from advancing south on the lake toward the Hudson River portage routes. The additional position on the east side of the Lake could provide protection for those persons living in the nearby New Hampshire Grants. The promontory was named Mount Independence by the Americans. The natural features made the Mount an excellent location for a fortification. On the eastern side of the Mount was East Creek, the marshes and deep channel of which would even-
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tually become a major obstacle for a rapid encirclement by the German auxiliaries in July 1777.

The construction of works on and around the promontory was accomplished under the direction of the American engineer Col. Jeduthan Baldwin. Among the works were: buildings; earthworks; cabins; shops; barracks; lookout posts; and a mile-long road from the low landing on the north to the plateau on the top. In addition, three outer works were built: a narrow floating bridge which connected the forts and also could serve as a barrier: a chain-and-boom barrier across the Lake north of the forts; and pilings across the opening of East Creek which would interfere with the passage of vessels and men up the creek (Furcron 1954:230-248; Baldwin 1906:107). Numerous trees were cut from the Mount and the surrounding land below for construction and fuel.

A second major engineering task was undertaken by the Rebels. They established a connection to outside resources by constructing a primitive road from the Mount into the New England countryside. The road would serve as a route for supplies and troops from both the New Hampshire Grants and regions in the south; the road could also serve as an escape route, if necessary. Lieut. Col. John Barrett, of the Cumberland County militia and an engineer, was ordered by General Horatio Gates to cut a military road southeasterly. The road was to be constructed along the narrow neck from the Mount and then south to Hubbardton, Castleton, and on to Center Rutland where eventually it would join with the existing Crown Point Road (Crown Point Road Association 1955; Chariton 1934; Churchill 1967:8; Wheeler and Wheeler 1968:194-195).

During the winter of 1776-1777 the Americans experienced great suffering and loss of life. The Mount would become a vast cemetery for many hundreds who died from freezing, injury, and disease. Throughout the winter and spring the Americans continued work on establishing a strong defensive position in anticipation of a British offensive. In the late spring of 1777 General John Burgoyne left Canada with 3,724 British troops, supported by 3,016 hired German auxiliaries under the leadership of General Friedrich von Riedesel, around 250 Provincials and Canadian volunteers, and 400 Native Americans (Burgoyne 1780:12).

By July 1, 1777, Burgoyne’s army was landing at a point three miles north of Ticonderoga. The British disembarked on the west (New York State) side of the Lake, while the Braunschweig troops and a small contingent of artillery and infantry from Hesse-Hanau landed on the east (Vermont) side. By July 2 the Germans had reached East Creek and were seeking a crossing point upstream for their military road so as to avoid the marsh and deep channel. On July 3 General Riedesel sent Captain Heinrich Gerlach and a hundred men to reconnoitre the narrow neck of land south of the Mount and to find a road by which to attack from the rear. Recently Captain Gerlach’s report was discovered, identified, translated by Lion Miles, and edited by Helga Doblin (Gerlach 1777; Miles 1994; Doblin 1996). Unfortunately, there is no map to accompany his undated report.

To General Riedesel
in (the) British Camp

Your Excellency,

I am looking over the area as far as I have been able to get till now. Before daybreak I departed from the front of the bridge with Captain Sherwood and 20 men, and marched further on the road behind the house of Hunter at the woods to B. From A to B is 45 minutes. From B to C is 1 hour 4 minutes. Between B and C we met 4 men who were walking with guns on the road X and C with muskets, but going to Bennington. At Point Q, however, several were stopping whereupon we had to keep ourselves in hiding here until the guide finally returned through the woods with me and we chose the area at * for our stay until night when I shall go with the guide and Capt. Sherwood to Point P. Thus I shall see everything tomorrow morning so that I shall have completed my mission satisfactorily. Up till now I have found on this tour that the region from A - B. to X is impracticable for cannons and wagons because of the marshes. The hills could be passable, but the bogs are closely connected with each other.

I am remain with all respect

Your Excellency’s
most submissive servant
H D Gerlach

This is dispatched at 12:30.

On July 5 General Riedesel had his men stationed again on the Rebel’s road along the neck of land south of the Mount, but as evening approached Riedesel withdrew them (Hubbs 1978). During the early morning hours of July 6, the Americans retreated by water south on Lake Champlain to Skeensborough and by land along the Hubbardton-Mount
Independence military road. The British took possession of the forts, leaving the 62nd British Regiment and the Prinz Friedrich Regiment to occupy the forts. The British and Germans continued to pursue the retreating Americans by land and water.

Over July and into September the British-German garrison, occupying the Mount and Ticonderoga, made some modifications to the former American fortified encampment. By August the 62nd Regiment was replaced by the 53rd Regiment, and Brigadier James Hamilton was replaced by Brigadier Henry Watson Powell. Documents and a map, particularly those of officers of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment, provide helpful accounts of the garrison’s daily life and improvements to the plan (Hille 1993:74-78; verso). The garrison was busy establishing a picket along the road on the neck below the Mount, positioning three batteries, constructing blockhouses on the Mount, and maintaining gunboats in East Creek and on the Lake side at a bay by the Rebel road. The plan (Figure 1), drawn during the British occupation in July 1777, provides locations and descriptions of features on the landscape below the Mount, among them (t) the picket of 32 men on a breastwork of wood and stone and an abatis, and (u) the road to Hubbardton with a little bridge and the abatis.

On September 18, 1777, the Americans under Colonel John Brown and Colonel Thomas Johnson made an attempt to recapture the Mount and Ticonderoga. When Johnson’s troops were engaged in probing the Mount’s defenses, they were met with constant fire from the defenders on the Mount and from the British gunboats. A successful defense by the Prinz Friedrich Regiment resulted in the Americans withdrawing. Four officers of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment, Lieut. August Du Roi the Elder, Lieut. Christian Schroeder, Ensign Julius von Hille and Major Friedrich von Hille, provide descriptions of the Rebel attack (Epping 1911:102-103; Schroeder, in Kingsley n.d.; Hille 1993:78-81, 90-94). In early November 1777, however, the garrison at the forts began withdrawing to Canada after receiving news of Burgoyne’s surrender on October 17, 1777 (Hille 1993:74-89).

Over the last two centuries the landscape of the southern approach to the Mount has been modified by settlement. Orwell was chartered in 1763, first surveyed in 1783, and

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**Figure 1. A section of the map, PLAN of Carillon or Ticonderoga which Was quitte by the Americans on the night from the 5th to the 6th of July 1777. Anonymous. Courtesy of the National Archives of Canada.**
again in 1799, but it did not show the Rebel military road.

The fertile land on the neck supported an agricultural economy, based on grains, and later cattle, sheep, and cows in the 20th century. During the 18th and 19th centuries water from the Lemon Fair and East Creeks provided limited power to support some multi-purpose mills. By the mid-19th century some farmsteads, a school, a network of roads, and a small settlement at Chipman’s Point were established on the lakeshore of the peninsula, south of the Mount (Beers 1871; Bottum 1881; Smith 1886).

Past Research on the Mount and Its Approach

Investigations of military activity at and around Mount Independence for the period 1776-1777 have involved three areas of study:

1. The Fortification on Mount Independence. Two professional archaeological land projects have been conducted on Mount Independence: (1) A 1960s survey was conducted to locate archaeological sites for the Mount Independence Associates, and (2) During 1989-1992 a series of field schools were held under the direction of Dr. David Starbuck and sponsored by the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation, the Fort Ticonderoga Association, the Town of Orwell, the University of Vermont (1989, 1990), and Castleton State College (1992). The excavations focused on selected areas of the fortification (Starbuck and Murphy 1994; Howe, Robbins, and Murphy 1994).

2. The Hubbardton-Mount Independence Road. A major systematic study was undertaken from 1946 to 1960 by a group of dedicated Vermonters under the leadership of Joseph and Mabel Wheeler to document and map the route of the Rebel’s military road from the Mount (1959a,b, 1968). The Wheeler project generated public awareness of the historic road in a series of newspaper articles and professional journals. One of the outcomes of the study was a series of maps which reflect their findings on the route to Rutland Falls where the road eventually joined with the Crown Point Road. One of their maps is that of the first section of the Rebel’s military road which extends from Mount Independence in Orwell (1959:202; 1968:202). A series of stone markers were placed south along the route by the Daughters of the American Revolution (D.A.R.) to acknowledge the American achievement made in 1776.

3. Maritime Study. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, under the direction of Arthur Cohn, conducted a survey in Lake Champlain between Larrabee’s Point and Chipman’s Point. This project was initiated in 1992 in cooperation with Middlebury College, the Institute of Nautical Archaeology at Texas A&M University, the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, and the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. The research team located, identified and plotted cultural resources within the designated area. The evidence is now being made available to researchers for interpreting the events surrounding Ticonderoga and Mount Independence (Cohn 1992).


Context

Eighteenth century military documents provide historians and archaeologists with knowledge of some of the modifications made in the landscape along the narrow land approach extending from Mount Independence.

The Mount and the land approach were initially occupied by the Americans (1776-1777) for approximately a year. During the occupation the Rebels cleared timber from the Mount and a portion from the neck. The trees provided timber for construction and fuel, and enhanced their view of the approach along the road and the apron of land below the Mount on the neck.

The German auxiliaries found the neck as an exposed area through which the troops would have to cross and in order to occupy and encircle the Rebels on the Mount. On July 3 some German troops embarked across East Creek and were reconnoitering the approach to the Mount (Gerlach 1777; Hubbs 1978; Riedesel 1969). By July 5 the Germans had crossed East Creek again and had blocked the Rebels' escape route along the military road, but they were ordered to withdraw as darkness approached. The German military supply road under construction on the eastern side of East Creek was near completion on the west side. The Americans anticipated the road to be cut by July 6, and the main body of Germans would then be occupying the neck (Riedesel 1969; Moore 1867:472).

In the early hours of July 6 the Rebels made a successful escape. But only two and a half months later, on September 18, the Americans would appear again on the Rebel military road at the tree line and challenge the German picket (Hille 1993:78).
Survey of the Land Approach to Mount Independence

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**Research Questions**
The overall objective of the survey was to identify and assess archaeologically sensitive areas along the land approach to Mount Independence. The investigator sought to locate and validate the events of 1776-1777, as described in documents, by archaeological evidence recovered in a surface survey. The investigation pursued four lines of inquiry:

1. What evidence exists for the location of the Rebel Road (Hubbardton-Mount Independence 1776 Military Road)?
2. What evidence is there along the west shoreline of East Creek to suggest a disembarking location for Riedesel's batteaux and the route taken across the neck?
3. What evidence is there below the Mount to suggest a tree line, areas of engagement during the September attack by the Americans, and the picket position of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment (on the Rebel Road below the Mount) encountered by Col. Johnson's men?
4. What evidence is there for the location of the remaining section of the German military road further southwest across the neck to the Rebel military road?

**Survey Area**
The target region under investigation was the land approach to the Mount. The narrow neck of land varies in width from a half to one mile; it extends southeast from the base of the Mount to the 300 feet elevation, a distance of approximately three miles. The major focus of the survey was the terrain along the northeast side of the unpaved road (State Aid Highway No. 4) and the paved road (Route 73A).

The investigator first had to determine what areas along the neck would most likely be archaeologically sensitive to address the research questions. Some fields were not included in the survey, either because the crop land was in an advanced stage, or a location had excessively steep slopes and/or dense vegetation. The land under study by the end of 1995 consisted of three geographical areas, Areas I, II, and III, which appear in Figure 3.

**Methodology**
The survey involved two phases of study. Phase I, Information Gathering, involved acquiring data from interviews with property owners, collectors, and from documents (archival materials, maps, texts, and records). Phase II, Field Work, was concerned with retrieving archaeological evidence and mapping their locations by using coordinates from a field datum. Gridding and mapping of specific fields were accomplished using a compass, tape, and pacing.

Reconnaissance and metal sensing were used to recover artifacts and to identify surface features. Controlled collecting was found to be a useful technique for determining boundaries, densities of artifacts, and patterns of distribution. Plowing effects, ground conditions, artifact size, collection unit size, collector biases, and prior collecting are among some of the variables that influenced the interpretation. An interval of twelve feet was used. The survey was restricted to artifacts that were present within the plowzone. The evidence was collected, inventoried, and interpreted within a specific field and area. Attention was given to location, extent of distribution, type of artifacts, and density.

Large areas of land were subdivided into manageable-sized roads, or gullies. Each field or subdivision was given a designation for record keeping. As with any study, conditions of weather and property were not always optimal. Recently cut or plowed fields were used for the survey. In some cases fields had to be scheduled and rescheduled, sometimes over years, before they were examined.

The major focus of the survey was physical evidence associated with 1776-1777. Prehistoric and later period artifacts were noted for the record and considered when interpreting the evidence.

**Findings and Discussion**

**Prehistoric Period Component**
The fields along the approach are a favorite location for Indian relic collectors. Area farmers indicated that artifacts have been found scattered along the neck and have been plentiful. One former resident interviewed has an extensive and representational collection. His collection includes projectiles from the Middle Archaic period through the Late Woodland period. The survey revealed chert artifacts at one location, a quarter of a mile from the Mount, all of which are from the Late Woodland Period. The artifacts include four projectiles (two Levanna, one incomplete, and one Madison) and two chert knives. Some chert flakes but no fire-cracked rocks were noted in the field.

**Historic Period Component**
Numerous changes have occurred on the landscape over the past two centuries. There has been regrowth of vegeta-
Figure 3. Locations of the three areas studied.
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Archaeological Evidence

The findings from the survey were examined and analyzed for patterns in relation to the documentary record. The results have been grouped, presented, and discussed as features. Density of artifacts was found to be low, for reasons of the short duration of occupancy and the limitations of the recovery methodology previously stated. Distribution, location, and type were most helpful for interpreting the evidence. Several features were found on the low land southeast and below the Mount in Area I. The interpretation and speculations about the significance of the archaeological and documentary evidence from the survey should be considered as tentative. With subsequent and different levels of documentary and archaeological research, a better understanding of the historical events may emerge. Features located in the northern section of Area I are presented in Figure 5; the location of Features 9, 10, 12 and 13 appear in Figure 3 because they are beyond the physical limits of the northern section of Area I.

One important historic landmark along the entire approach was the road built by the Americans, the Hubbardton-
Mount Independence 1776 Military Road. The historic value of the southern land approach to the Mount was recognized by the work of John and Mabel Wheeler who investigated the Rebel's Military Road. The Wheelers' effort mobilized many Vermonters over several years. Information was gathered from documents, people, and field investigations. These investigations produced an interpretative route of the road. The Wheelers recognized that archaeological evidence is finite; much of the evidence of the past would be lost in time. However, the importance of documenting the historic route was of paramount importance.

The Wheelers determined that the Rebel road along the neck was situated along the northeast side of the present State Aid Highway No. 4 and Route 73A (Figure 2). This study revealed no residual evidence along the believed route on the land approach. The Wheelers determined the route of the road mainly through the use of early maps, interviews, and documents.

Area I
The first subdivision is an area situated immediately below the Mount. Area I extends approximately 3,000 feet south-easterly along the present road, and involves a mile along the East Creek shoreline and a mile across the neck. The area is the largest of the three areas and contains all the thirteen features.
Feature 1. Rebel Military Road
A wrought iron bolt and an 18th century flattened lead uniform weight were found in Field 1A. Their presence may be associated with the use of the road to Hubbardton. They could suggest the general location of the Rebel military road as it bends and exits from the Mount onto the flat apron below (Figure 2).

Feature 2. Early Roadway
Reconnaissance along the southeastern border of the former Robie Farm revealed physical evidence of a slightly bending primitive roadway extending part way across the apron for a distance of a quarter of a mile. The roadway was situated 1,200 to 1,600 feet southeast of the Mount. The road is present in Fields B and C, and then continues northeast into 7D before disappearing. Seven old oak trees stand in a row adjacent to the early roadway. The other end of the road fades southwest with entry to Field A. The land owner, residing adjacent to the most northern section of Area I, recalled that many years ago some signs of a roadway extended diagonally across Field A toward his barns. Metal sensing along the projected route revealed no metal nor surface evidence. During metal sensing a brass military strap buckle was discovered in Field C and a grapeshot nearby in Field B, both within the roadbed (Feature 5). Also an early 19th century household assemblage (ceramics, glass, brick, stone, and iron) was found superimposed and scattered in and around the vicinity of the roadway in Field B, adjacent to Field C (Feature 4).

Documents provide limited specific information regarding the whereabouts of the routes taken by the Germans in and around East Creek during July 3-6 (Riedesel 1969:112-123). The Wheelers identify a route near the base of the Mount which they interpret on a sketch as “Riedesel’s road to cut off retreat”. They also state that portions of early roadways had been discovered in the vicinity of East Creek, but unfortunately the Wheelers provide no documentation or sketches showing the locations (Wheeler and Wheeler 1968:99,106,204). A map of Orwell does show the presence of a road being used during the 19th century. The road is situated across the neck south of the Mount at approximately the same location where military artifacts were discovered. The map shows the road leading to three farmsteads (Beers 1871).

Feature 3. Grapeshot
Additional grapeshot was located in Field 2A approximately 200 feet north of the property boundary with Field A. The location of this grapeshot may represent another discharge or may be part of grapeshot scattered from another identified location.

Feature 4. Domestic Assemblage
A concentration of early 19th century artifacts (wrought and cut nails, kettle fragments, glass, pottery) was found along the roadway in Fields C and B, but with a concentration just adjacent to the southeast of the property line. The land owner indicated that he had filled in the dry stone cellar hole several years ago. The location is identified as “J.B.” (John Buttolph) on the Orwell map (Beers 1871). Only a wrought iron door hook was found in Field 1B, approximately 400 feet north from the former “J.B.” cellar hole. The Orwell map (Beers 1871) identifies a building at the location of this single artifact.

Feature 5. Grapeshot
Some military and other unidentifiable artifacts were located when sensing in Fields A, 1A, and 2A. The artifacts were distributed in a southwesterly direction, bending southwest 50 to 100 feet from the northwestern border of Field A. The distribution of grapeshot and other iron suggests that this evidence may be a continuation of the same roadway noted in Feature 2 and/or associated with possibly the 18th century tree line. Another grapeshot was located in the roadway in Field B, adjacent to Field C, in close proximity to Feature 4.

Feature 6. Burned Structure
Evidence of a former structure was uncovered by the unpaved road (State Aid Highway No. 4) during a drainage ditch excavation along the edge of Field 1A. No material was collected since permission for the survey had not, as yet, been obtained. However, an extensively burned area was observed within which were a few brick fragments, charcoal, some large stones, and fragments of late 18th and early 19th century pottery. Soil from the excavated ditch, along with the artifacts, was used to form a shoulder along the ditch, and some was distributed onto the rim of the field. This was the general location of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment picket (Anonymous map 1777) and a 19th century structure identified as J. (John) Buttolph (Beers 1871). In 1994 the field was surveyed, and a sizeable piece of melted brass was found fifty feet from the site of the burned area.

Feature 7. Melted Glass
An isolated piece of blue-green melted bottle glass was located in Field 4D. The glass fragment could be related to the H. Southwelb farmstead, the farthest north of three farmsteads along the roadway extending toward East Creek (Beers 1871).

Feature 8. Lead Musket Ball
A chewed lead musket ball was found in Field 2D near the
Table 1. Classification of Artifacts by Areas and Property Subdivisions.

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* prehistoric, not included in total
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base of the Mount on the east side. No other artifacts were found in this field.

**Feature 9. Rock Formation**
Attention was given to the shoreline of East Creek in order to identify evidence of a stone pier for use by the Braunschweig troops when disembarking from batteaux during early July. The survey revealed a group of twelve medium to large exposed stones extending into the Creek, a mile southeast of the Mount.

Stones are infrequently seen on the neck, and their presence is noteworthy. No associated artifacts were found either around the stones or on the terrace above the Creek. The embankment at this location could be easily negotiated by infantry. The feature is noted in Figure 3.

**Feature 10. Grapeshot and Musket Ball**
Residents who reside in the Bay area have reported finding grapeshot and musket balls on the shoreline of the Bay and by the ravine over which the small Rebel bridge crossed. A survey of the property revealed a 19th century dump area along the shoreline which was later confirmed by the resident. No military artifacts were found at either location during the survey. This feature is located in Figure 3.

**Feature 11. Domestic Debris**
Four 19th century artifacts were found scattered in Field 1D. The Orwell map identifies this as the location of the farmstead of R.W. Sholes (Beers 1871).

**Feature 12. Domestic Debris**
Five 19th century artifacts were located in South Field, adjacent to the gully over which Route 73A crosses. The Orwell map shows this to be the general location of I. Beckwith (Beers 1871). This feature is located in Figure 3.

**Feature 13. Grapeshot and Other Military Artifacts**
The residents at this location report finding grapeshot, a stirrup, a portion of a brass casting, one pound shot, glass, pottery, and inletting tools. The evidence of grapeshot here, along the Lake shore, suggests another location where the British gunboats engaged the Rebels along the military road. This feature is shown on Figure 3. This site had not, as yet, been surveyed at the time of this report.

The artifacts were classified and quantified for each of the locations within the areas. The findings are presented in Table 1 in order to show patterns by type, frequency and location within and between areas and subdivisions.

**Area I**
The area emerges to be a historically significant location along the approach to the Mount. A total of one hundred nine artifacts were located in Area I. The majority (61.5%, n=67) of artifacts were located on the southern side of the property boundary (Fields A, B, C and IA). The remainder of the artifacts (38.5%, n=42) were in fields outside this area. Most of the artifacts appeared to be distributed within a band 50 to 150 feet wide and at a distance of 1,200 to 1,600 feet from the Mount within the band. They represent 64.2% (n=70) of all the finds in Area I. The boundary emerges to be a historically significant location along the approach to the Mount.

**Area II**
This area is located in the middle section of the approach, approximately a mile and a half southeast of the Mount, an area a half mile square, and beginning opposite the Lakeview Cemetery Road. Only one unidentified, isolated, small, two-hole, flat iron plate was located at the Waist Site. No surface features were noted.

**Area III**
The most southeasterly section of land begins two and three-quarters of a mile from the Mount, a distance of a quarter of a mile and ending at the rise of the road leading to the 300 foot elevation. The shoreline of East Creek was examined for evidence of a roadway onto the west side of the Creek. At the north end of the Foot Site the Creek is shallow and has a shale bottom, a suitable location for cannon and wagons to cross. However, at this location the embankment is very steep. To date the survey has failed to reveal evidence of any roadway or military artifacts in Area III. Even areas with potential for recovery of artifacts along the Creek, the embankment, and on the half-mile-wide terrace leading to the Rebel road, were unproductive. Only a dump of 19th and 20th century farm debris was found in a ravine leading to the Creek.

Research question #4 cannot be addressed with the limited evidence available at this time. Further study of Area III will continue, and the land between Area II and III will be added to the survey. The entire route of the German Military Road will be the topic of a future report, and at that time, the investigator will be better able to address the results of the survey in and around Area III.
Conclusions

An objective of historical archaeology is to document the recorded past. The evidence from the archaeological survey of the land approach to Mount Independence has revealed the locations from the military encounters of 1776-1777 and offered a glimpse into prehistoric activity as well as activity of a 19th and 20th century agricultural economy.

Four major topics emerged from the survey. The evidence has opened lines of inquiry and speculation. The findings permit us to look back in time as we enter the 21st century and to have a better understanding of those who have made their imprint on the ground along this peninsula.

1. Military Engagement
Grapeshot was found distributed in Area I in Fields A, 2A, B, the Dock and Bay areas. The first three are located within the strip in the northern section of Area I (Figure 4). The fourth (Feature 13) is directly south and below the Mount. The fifth (Feature 10) location of grapeshot is about 3,400 feet southwest of the Mount and along the shoreline of the Lake. All of these locations of grapeshot are found in the line of fire shown on John Starke’s 1777 map of the September 18, 1777, attack of the Mount (Starke, 1964:207). The archaeological evidence strongly supports the narratives written by the officers of the Prinz Friedrich Regiment where they describe that the Americans were kept at a distance in the woods by vigilance and cannonading. The grapeshot pattern suggests the location of the tree line.

2. Picket Post
The remains of a burned structure containing stone, considerable charcoal, some brick and pottery was identified partially uncovered in the ditch of State Aid Highway No. 4 in Field 1A. According to the legend on a British map (Figure 1), a breastwork made of wood and stone was located around this same position. The German post was occupied by a picket of 32 men and an officer. The evidence revealed two structures along the early roadway, both of which are of the early 19th century and associated with the John Buttolph. One is identified as Feature 4, and the other (Feature 6) is in the same general area as the picket post. There is insufficient evidence, at this time, to determine if the debris (Figure 6) represents the former picket position or the 19th century J. Buttolph structure built upon the German abatis. This is an archaeologically sensitive location that needs to be excavated.

3. Early Roadways
The location of an early roadway was established along a section of the present southern boundary of the easement. Several military artifacts were found scattered along the route in Fields A, B, C, and 7D. The evidence suggests that this position was relevant in military activities during July 1777. However, there is insufficient evidence to establish that this was a route used by Riedesel’s troops during July 3-6, 1777; and the presence of a “J. B.” cellar hole almost in the pathway strongly suggests that the roadway existed prior to the construction of the early 19th century dwelling. The roadway may have been situated along the edge of the tree line.

A search for evidence of the German military roadway across the neck further south in Area III remains inclusive. Further study is needed. Perhaps unsurveyed land will provide clues to the route.

However, there is some evidence in Field 1A of the Rebel road. No surface features exist of the early roadway, but a flattened lead uniform weight and a wrought iron bolt were found nearly midway in the field and parallel to the present unpaved road. The Wheelers suggest that the Rebel military road was located in this vicinity.

4. Isolated Finds
A chewed musket ball and a piece of melted glass were found in 2D and 4D, respectively. While the ball is related to the military activity and the glass remains uncertain, the finds are isolated and difficult to interpret in the absence of other data.

Another isolated find was the presence of a rock formation extending into East Creek a mile south from the base of the Mount. No other archaeological evidence was found either around the rocks or on the terrace above. Thick deposits of sediment along the Creek may be hiding artifacts. The brief and often vague entries in the German journals do not describe the use of a stone pier for disembarking infantry. Perhaps a fallen tree or two may have met their need. Further archaeological study is indicated at this location in order to determine when it was built and who used it.

Epilogue

An analysis of the archaeological findings from the land approach revealed that the land nearest the Mount does contain meaningful data which is important to the understanding of military events surrounding Mount Independence during 1776-1777. Settlement and agricultural activities during the 19th and 20th centuries have not
removed all the evidence. The findings from this survey with the contributions from past research previously cited about the Mount, will likely provide the new Division for Historic Preservation Interpretative Center on Mount Independence with ample resources for future research and public education programs.

The investigation of the events surrounding Mount Independence has only begun. This survey was undertaken to address some of the questions about the movements and contributions made by the German contingent in Burgoyne’s 1777 Campaign at Mount Independence and Ticonderoga.

The land approach to Mount Independence is a historically significant location. The survey identified several features which provide meaningful evidence for an interpretation of the landscape. Interpretative markers along the approach to the Mount would assist visitors to better understand the events of 1776-1777 on the land approach to the Mount. While the land approach to the Mount still holds many secrets, they will be revealed by further archaeological research.

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