

In the name of the
Great Jehovah
and the Continental
Congress...]



AP Photo

Fort Ticonderoga Is Taken Again

Combined News Services

Ticonderoga, N.Y.—Benedict Arnold complained that his feet hurt and Ethan Allen grew weary of rowing across Lake Champlain with 14-foot oars. But with history and television cameras waiting, they and other patriots captured Ft. Ticonderoga in a predawn raid yesterday.

A crowd estimated by fort officials at 6,000 huddled in the morning chill to watch as more than 150 descendants of Allen, Arnold and the Green Mountain Boys re-enacted America's first victory of the Revolution that had begun three weeks earlier at Concord and Lexington.

The long-planned bicentennial event was scheduled to start at 4 AM, precisely 200 years to the hour that the patriots rowed across the lake from

Vermont in two boats, marched through a hole in the ill-defended fort's walls and captured about 40 British defenders and a number of cannon without firing a shot. But there was a delay of 20 minutes when Ronald Arnold, 31, of Kingston, Ont., who portrayed his ancestor Benedict, got caught in a traffic jam of buses taking spectators to the pageant.

After rowing a mile across Lake Champlain in the pre-dawn mists from Vermont, the brightly clad "patriots" marched, then raced, up the slope to the fort. Surprising a sleepy "sentinel," the band seized the fort from a drowsy "British" garrison without bloodshed.

The role of Ethan Allen, leader of the Vermont rebels, was recreated by one of his descendants, John K. Lattimer. Echoing Allen's words, he ordered the British commander, "Get out of there, you damned rat," and demanded the surrender of the fort "in

the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress."

About 200 reporters, photographers and TV cameramen covered the event, leading to some grumbling among spectators, who were denied a seat inside the reconstructed stone fort. "Everyone in the news media included man. Izvestia is the Soviet government here," muttered one man. Investia is newspaper.

The capture of the fort was re-enacted twice more during the day, for those who couldn't get up in time for history. Ticonderoga Police Commissioner Donald A. Carter said, "Everything's running fine. At least 40,000 to 50,000 have come to the fort. We've never had anything like it."

Before the first re-enactment, neither Lattimer nor Arnold expressed dismay at the prospect of three elaborate performances. "It's not that that bothers me, it's the walk [from the

lake to the fort]," Arnold said. "It's a bloody mile down there, and these boots aren't mine."

Gov. Hugh Carey, who attended ceremonies at the fort to open New York State's official bicentennial celebration, said, "Let us admit that we are still trying to attain a more perfect union. If we call for unity in these times, let it not be a false unity that hides our blemishes, but a true unity that works together to erase them."

And in what might have been their own small rebuff to false claims of unity, the residents of Whitehall, 20 miles to the south, held their own celebration Friday, commemorating what they claim was really the first American victory of the Revolution. Marching units and bands paraded through town to commemorate the capture of Old Skenesborough and the British schooner Liberty, 12 hours before Ticonderoga fell.

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