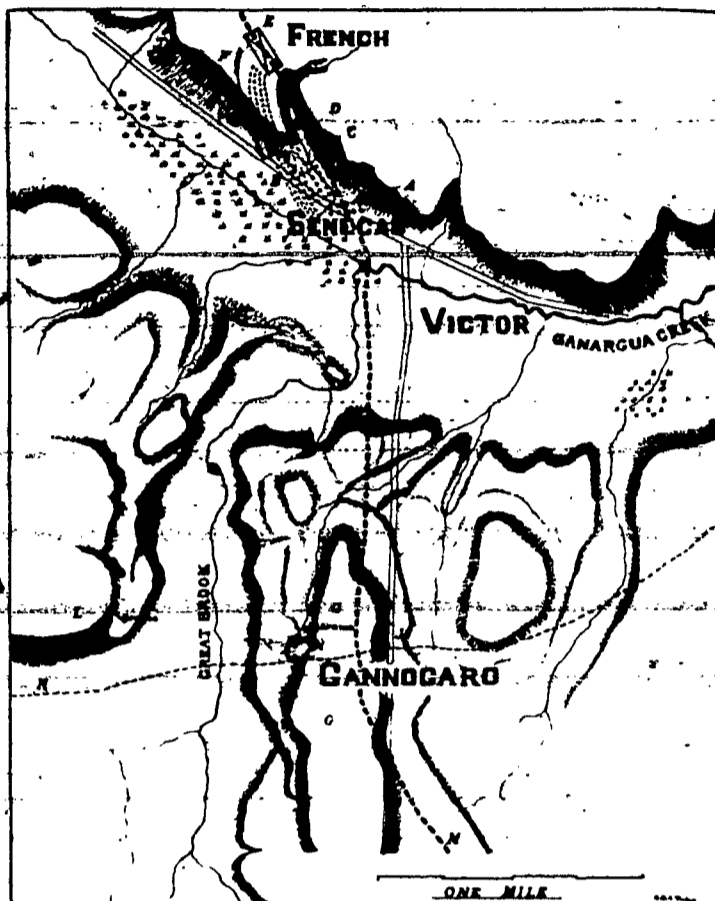
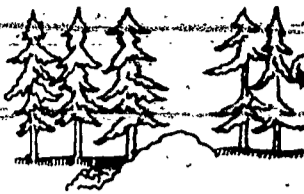


**An historic event  
vividly described  
by George B. Selden**



The above map shows the route of Denonville's march after his landing near Irondequoit Bay inlet. Following construction of a fort there, his troops pressed on to Victor.

yas and Father de Gueslis. Some of the following also might have been at the base camp although they were not mentioned in accounts of the expedition: Father Gravier, Father DeCarheil, Father Jean Lambertville and Father Milet.

Realizing the seriousness of the situation, the Jesuits offered many prayers which tried the patience of the pagan Indians whose only idea was to kill.

In his report, Denonville cites three defiles or points of danger to be passed before they arrived at the first Seneca town (near the present town of Victor).

These places of danger were Irondequoit Creek at Ellison Park, Irondequoit Creek at Jeskys Mill beyond Pittsford and the swamp at Victor. On the basis of these defiles, historians have tried to piece together the route of the Denonville march.

Behind a screen of shouts led by Kryn, the great Mohawk, the expedition descended the hill to Irondequoit Creek at Ellison Park. At this point Irondequoit Creek could easily be forded as it flowed in two streams. The army was now at the first defile with no Senecas present to contest the strategic point.

Some years earlier this place had been visited by Father Hennepin and his companions, who took refuge in the woods to escape the rioting of the French traders and Indians. Their bark chapel is commemorated in the monument erected on the grounds of Mercy High School.

Following Landing Road to East Avenue, the Denonville trail turned east to follow the line of the present Barge Canal. Again Irondequoit Creek was crossed at the second defile.

So scorching was the heat that even the Indians wished to call a halt but Denonville pressed on. Denonville is usually belittled by chroniclers of this campaign, but it would appear that he was an able military leader.

Arriving at Allyn's Creek and East Avenue, Denonville still had the Senecas guessing as to his ultimate objective: Victor or Rochester Junction. Finally, however, he had to show his hand and speed up the march before the Senecas could concentrate their forces at Victor.

Leaving the canal area at Bushnell's Basin, the trail led south along the LaSalle Road and then over the old high road to the present site of Vic-

tor. It was now three o'clock and the army was exhausted by a seventeen mile march through a wooded country on a torrid day. They paused at a little stream which flows down the hill into the Victor Swamp beyond which lay the Seneca village of Gannogaro on what is now called Boughton Hill.

Scouts were dispatched to find out whether the town was inhabited and what defense measures had been taken.

Meanwhile, the Senecas were all but napping. Dongan, the English governor of New York, had warned them to expect an attack from the French, but they had paid little attention to the warning and most of the warriors were away.

Those scouts, who saw the landing at Sea Breeze, spread the alarm. The Senecas then became alarmed, drank all the rum in the village, daubed themselves with warpaint and danced and screamed for several days. Finally one of the runners awakened them to the fact that the enemy was at the gates.

Panic ensued. Some rushed into the woods, while others rallied around a chief who proposed to hold their fort, a mile west of the town. The women were sent into the cornfield to give the impression that the town was inhabited and the Indians ignorant of their danger.

Here's a version of the ensuing battle as given by an aged chief to Mr. O. H. Marshall:

"A long while ago, perhaps almost 200 years ago, a large army of French landed at Irondequoit. Our warriors were all absent, fighting in the country between Eighteen Mile Creek and the Alleghany River. Only the old men and the young boys and the women and children were at home. They collected all the boys who were big enough to handle the club and went to a place where the cliffs shut in the valley of the Genesee into a long defile through which they perceived the enemy intended to pass.

"Then they rose with a yell which was answered by the French. A desperate conflict ensued. The Indians had no arrows, nothing but the war club. The French Army was so long, that the rear reached back almost to the harbor. They rushed on. The dead fell in heaps. At length the French gave way, fled to their vessels and left the country. Their rout

was complete and effectual. Their bones filled the defile and whitened all the valley; like the seeds where a heap of pumpkins have been broken or rotted on the ground. Thus the boys accomplished with their clubs, under the direction of the old chief in the absence of the warriors." An Indian version!

But to get back to Denonville. One group of scouts reported that the town was inhabited, as the women were working in the corn fields. Another party reported seeing the trail of a large war party entering the swamp but could not locate them.

A strong detachment under Calheres was despatched down the hill toward the town. The main body waited. From the swamp came a sudden roar of musketry and war whoops. Fugitives arrived and said they had been ambushed and cut to pieces by the Senecas.

Panic seized the army; but Denonville was equal to it. He ordered the trumpets to sound assembly. The men formed, and Denonville led them to the right of the Seneca position. Hearing the drums and trumpets and seeing the French advance in regular order, the Senecas raised their cry of retreat and fled.

The fight proved costly to the French. Two Mohawk chiefs and many of the advance guard had been killed.

Denonville reported his losses as twenty killed, but reports of the battle place the French casualties as high as 100. The Senecas lost eighty men, according to some Indian prisoners.

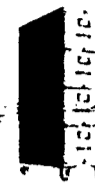
The cowardly Ottawas, who had run in a body from the fight, returned and urged the French to pursue the defeated Senecas, but with night at hand and the valley filled with wounded, Denonville ordered the army to bivouac on the hilltop.

The Indian allies gathered up the bodies of the Senecas and on their arrival in camp drank the hardy cold blood of their foes and quartered their bodies. Then with bloody scalps on poles, they danced around the fires waiting for the repulsive contents of the kettles to boil. It was a savage festival of victory.

Continued on Page 30



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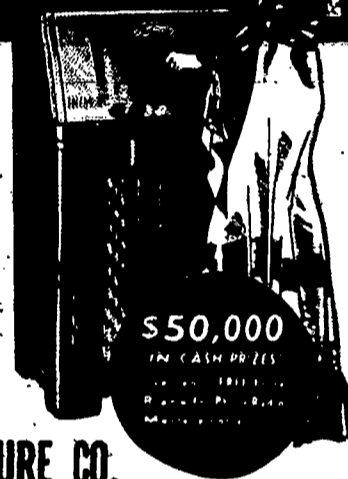


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