

**THE CAPTURE OF TICONDEROGA,  
IN 1775: A PAPER READ BEFORE  
THE VERMONT HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY, AT MONTPELIER,  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19TH, 1869**

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The capture of Ticonderoga, in 1775: a paper read before the Vermont Historical Society, at Montpelier, Tuesday, October 19th, 1869 by Hiland Hall

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# **HILAND HALL**

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POLANDS' STEAM PRINTING ESTABLISHMENT,  
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1869.

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## ADDRESS OF GOV. HALL.

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*Mr. President of the Vermont Historical Society,*

*and Ladies and Gentlemen:*

Before I commence the paper which I have been requested to read this evening, a word of explanation seems necessary. Within the past dozen years a special enmity toward the early inhabitants and institutions of Vermont has been exhibited by a few historical writers in New York City; perhaps inherited from their land-jobbing ancestors. Their hostile demonstrations have not been made by any attempted production of facts or arguments, but in dark insinuations against the patriotism or integrity of the founders of our State, and by calling them an abundance of hard names. Ethan Allen has come in for a large share of their hostility, though it has generally been without assuming any tangible form. But in December last, Mr. B. F. DeCosta, who I understand is a retired clergyman living in New York city, so far departed from the previous practice as to come forward with an elaborate article in the *Galaxy Magazine*, in which he undertakes to show that John Brown, Esq., of Pittsfield, and the traitor, Arnold, were the real heroes in the capture of Ticonderoga, and that what Ethan Allen did was of very little account.

The magazine article was very thoroughly and effectually answered by Professor George W. Benedict, in the *Burlington Free Press*, and by the Hon. J. Hammond Trumbull, in the *Connecticut Courant*, and in newspaper articles by others in Boston and St.

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Albans. The paper which I am about to read was prepared soon after the publication of the *Galaxy* article, under the impression that it might be advisable, at some future time, to publish a refutation of it, in a more permanent form than in the daily or weekly newspaper, but without intending to read it before this Society. It is read now, in consequence of the unexpected failure of the person selected to deliver the annual address on this occasion.

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#### THE CAPTURE OF TICONDEROGA IN 1775.

Who took Ticonderoga? is a question recently asked in the *Galaxy Magazine*, by Mr. B. F. DeCosta, of New York city, which question he at once proceeded to answer by giving an account of the event quite different from that which has been commonly received.

The leading facts relating to the capture have hitherto been regarded to be, that the expedition was secretly planned by some gentlemen in Connecticut, who furnished a few men with funds for expenses and supplies for the undertaking; that these men set off for Bennington with the intention of engaging Col. Ethan Allen in the enterprise, and with the expectation of raising the force for the capture on the New Hampshire Grants; that on their way, at Salisbury and in Berkshire county, their number was increased to some fifty or sixty; that on the New Hampshire Grants they were joined by nearly two hundred Green Mountain Boys collected by Allen and his associates, Allen being elected to the command of the whole; that after the men had been mustered at Castleton for the attack, Benedict Arnold, with a single attendant, arrived there, and claimed the command by virtue of written instructions from the Committee of Safety of Massachusetts, authorizing him "to enlist" four hundred men, and with them seize the fortress; that Arnold, having no authority to command these

men already raised, and to whom he was an entire stranger, his claim was denied, and Allen was confirmed in the supreme command; that Arnold was allowed to join the party as an assistant, and when the fort was surprised, was permitted to enter it by the side of Allen at his left; and that Allen, being thus in command of the expedition, demanded the surrender of the fort from Capt. Delaplace, its commander, "in the name of the Great Jehovah and the Continental Congress."

Such is a brief outline of the account of the capture given by Gordon in his contemporaneous history; by Holmes in his Annals; by Sparks in his Lives of Allen and Arnold; by Hildreth in his History of the United States; by Irving in his Life of Washington; and by Bancroft, and numerous other historians.

In contravention of this uniform current of history, the writer in the *Galaxy Magazine*, disregarding the most important features of this account, claims that John Brown, a lawyer of Pittsfield, Massachusetts, "was the person who first suggested the enterprise" by which the fortress was taken; that he had visited Canada by the request of Gen. Joseph Warren and Samuel Adams, "to secure the aid of the people to the cause of independence," and that in the month of March, 1775, he had written to Warren and Adams, "that the fort of Ticonderoga must be seized, as soon as possible, should hostilities be committed by the king's troops;" that Samuel Adams, who was a delegate from Massachusetts to the Continental Congress, while on his way to Philadelphia, was at Hartford on the *twenty-seventh of April, 1775*, when he and "a number of gentlemen met with the governor of Connecticut and resolved on the capture of Ticonderoga," in furtherance of "Brown's recommendation;" that the party sent on the expedition from Connecticut, "at once reported to Brown for the express purpose of advising with him about the whole matter." Therefore, the writer concludes that Col. John Brown is entitled to the credit of originating the plan for the capture,