

**MEMOIRS, AND LETTERS AND  
JOURNALS, OF MAJOR  
GENERAL RIEDESEL, DURING HIS  
RESIDENCE IN AMERICA, VOL. I**

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Memoirs, and Letters and Journals, of Major General Riedesel, During His Residence in America, Vol. I by Max von Eelking & William L. Stone

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*Riedesel*

General of the Army of the Republic of France

MEMOIRS,  
AND  
LETTERS AND JOURNALS,  
OF  
MAJOR GENERAL RIEDESEL,  
DURING HIS  
RESIDENCE IN AMERICA.

TRANSLATED  
FROM THE ORIGINAL GERMAN OF MAX VON BELKING.

BY  
WILLIAM L. STONE,  
AUTHOR OF THE LIFE AND DEEDS OF SIR WILLIAM JOHNSON, BART.;  
LIFE AND WRITINGS OF COL. WILLIAM L. STONE, 1792, &c.

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TO

MY FRIENDS

RICHARD L. ALLEN AND WILLIAM HAY

OF

SARATOGA SPRINGS, N. Y.,

WHO HAVE SO KINDLY AIDED ME IN MY  
HISTORICAL INVESTIGATIONS,

*These Volumes*

ARE

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED.



## P R E F A C E.

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The life of General Riedesel,<sup>1</sup> during his residence in America, is a more complete and accurate history of the CAMPAIGN OF GENERAL BURGOYNE than any that has yet appeared. The statements of our ablest historians concerning the movements of the British in that campaign are, necessarily perhaps, extremely vague; while those of our pictorial and school histories, respecting both the British and the Americans, are full of gross errors. The present work, however, is based on the private and official journals of Riedesel and his officers, and presents the campaign with a minuteness of detail, which must, hereafter, make it a standard authority upon the subject of which it treats.

After I had translated the work, and before placing it in the hands of the printer, I spent several days in going over the battle-grounds. With Riedesel's journals in one hand, and the maps—drawn on the spot by Burgoyne's chief engineer—in the other, I began

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<sup>1</sup>This name has been universally mispronounced in this country. It is composed of two German words, *ried* and *esel*, and is pronounced *Re-day-sel*, with the accent on the second syllable.

my investigations at the place where the British army crossed the Hudson, and traced every step of its movements down the river to the scene of the last battle of October 7th, 1777, and back again to the site of the surrender. In the course of this tour two important facts were elicited :

1st. That the face of the country has undergone scarcely any change. The same trees, the same brooks, and even the same stones remain in the precise localities where they were sketched by the British.

2d. That the term Battle of *Bemis's Heights*, which has hitherto obtained when designating the scene of the action, is entirely erroneous, and only calculated seriously to mislead. The first action, on the 19th of September, was, as is well known, fought on Freeman's farm. But, with a few exceptions, it has always been supposed by the best informed writers upon the subject, that the second battle on the 7th of October, was fought on *Bemis's heights*. The maps, however, show, that the action began on ground about two hundred rods southwest of the site of the first Battle of Freeman's Farm, and ended on the *same* ground on which the first action was fought. Thus Bemis's heights are fully one mile and a half south of the battle ground. In fact all the interest which attaches to these heights, is, that they were the headquarters of General Gates during and a short time

previous to the battle. The origin of this mistake, as the maps clearly demonstrate, was in the belief that the army of Burgoyne began the advance in two columns from Taylor's house, the ruins of which are yet standing a few rods north of Wilbur's basin. It is now, however, ascertained that the advance began in three columns from Sword's house, the site of which is about one mile and a half north of the Taylor house.

As the historical student will readily believe, I found local tradition, as a general thing, entirely unreliable. By the aid, however, of the journals and the maps I think I succeeded in all I set out to accomplish, viz: to verify tradition when possible — to overthrow it when necessary; but in every case to put the matter beyond the peradventure of a doubt. The results of my investigations in detail will be found in the notes to the present translation.

This work also contains valuable information in regard to the movements of the Brunswick troops, while residents of America, and affords a clear view of the condition and internal relations of Canada during the latter part of the revolutionary war — points which have, hitherto, been involved in obscurity.

My thanks are due to Henry A. Fisher, Esq., of New York city, for valuable aid in the translation of these volumes; to George Washington Greene of East