

**THE CAMPAIGN OF 1758; NEW  
HISTORICAL LIGHT ON THE  
REAL BURIAL PLACE OF GEORGE  
AUGUSTUS LORD VISCOUNT  
HOWE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649539833

The Campaign of 1758; New Historical Light on the Real Burial Place of George Augustus Lord Viscount Howe by James Austin Holden

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Cover @ 2017

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THE  
CAMPAIGN OF 1758

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NEW HISTORICAL LIGHT

ON THE

REAL BURIAL PLACE

OF

George Augustus Lord Viscount Howe

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BY JAMES AUSTIN HOLDEN, A. B.

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(From Contemporary and Original Sources.)



Courtesy of S. H. P. Pell. From Photo Given Him by Descendants in Howe Family  
GEORGE AUGUSTUS, LORD VISCOUNT, HOWE. (1724-1758)  
Killed at Ticonderoga July 6

NEW HISTORICAL LIGHT ON THE REAL BURIAL  
PLACE OF GEORGE AUGUSTUS LORD  
VISCOUNT HOWE, 1758.

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(From Contemporary and Original Sources.)

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By JAMES AUSTIN HOLDEN, A. B.

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[PREFATORY NOTE.—Owing to his sickness at the time of the October meeting which prevented his personal presentation of this paper, the writer was very fortunate in having it read in his customary acceptable and convincing manner by Sherman Williams, Pd. D. The necessity of giving the paper out of turn however, and the brief time which could be allowed for its rendering, made it necessary then to omit some parts and to condense others.

Since the annual meeting the writer has received from his expert searchers in England, and from several other sources, copies of official documents and letters which, while they confirm the writer's theories, throw an entirely different and new light on the whole affair. For the sake of historical accuracy, these papers have necessitated the recasting and rewriting of part of this article. This evidence being entirely new and vitally important, so far as now known, must be the excuse for thus changing the form of this paper, and the decision to present it.]

Some cynic has said, "all fiction is not history, but most history is all fiction." In the sense that all historical works reflect necessarily the individual opinions, prejudices, ideas and conclusions of their respective writers this aphorism is undeniably true.

It is the knowledge of this peculiarity in "us poor, frail, weak mortals" which compels and requires all historians to furnish facts, proofs and legal evidence to substantiate their claims. Permitting them only the field of tradition in which their imaginations may roam at will, to find material with which to garnish and adorn the bald, unromantic and dry details of fact.

As long as history shall be written therefore, just so long will there be two sides to every question, two parties to every discus-

sion, two rival bodies to espouse and battle for their supposed rights and historic prerogatives.

Realizing, then, that it is not often in these days that one is privileged to announce a real historical discovery, especially on a subject supposedly worn threadbare by generations of writers of history, it is with much pleasure that I offer to the Association, treasure trove, which up to the present time has remained unnoticed, or at least unused by other historians.<sup>1</sup>

Five years ago in presenting to the Association my Monograph on "The Half-Way Brook in History,"<sup>2</sup> I called attention therein to the first authenticated and recorded evidence of the bringing of Lord Howe's body to Lake George on the initial stage of its journey to Albany. It was through the publication of that evidence, that the clew was secured which finally led to the historical discovery (using the word in the sense of bringing to notice something before unknown or unperceived), which is given to this Association as the trophy of a successful hunt.

We have listened at this meeting to the eloquent and splendidly prepared paper on George Augustus, Lord Viscount Howe. In this monograph, it is neither the province nor purpose of the writer, to present the biography of that beneficent, magnanimous, capable but ill fated gentleman, who was repeatedly called "the idol" as well as "the soul and honor of the British Army" of that day. It would be a work of supererogation to describe his association with the army under Abercrombie in the spring of 1758,<sup>3</sup> or to more than touch upon the events leading up to the fateful July 6th. On

<sup>1</sup> In looking up this question, a careful investigation of four hundred or more historical works, pamphlets, monographs, and newspapers, covering this period, including supposedly authoritative papers on this topic, exhausting all then known references, made this statement one of fact. Since this paper was ready for the printer, however, I find that Kingsford's *History of Canada*, (London, 1890), IV, p. 165 (note)—quotes a part of this matter I have found, but makes no other use of it, so that my statement still holds true.

<sup>2</sup> Transactions N. Y. S. Hist. Assn. VI. pp. 169-189.

<sup>3</sup> For the impress which this amiable, talented, accomplished and promising young officer made on those with whom he came in contact, especially the provincials, consult the journals of the various colonial officers referred to herein, also Mrs. Grant's "Memoirs of an American Lady," (ed. 1846, ch. XL) pp. 175-180; Dudley Bean's Storming of Ticonderoga in *The Knickerbocker*, XXXVI, No. 1 (July 1850), pp. 1-14; Grahame's *United States of North America* IV, p. 29; Hutchinson's *Province of Mass.* (ed. 1828), III, p. 71; Munsell's *Annals of Albany*, VI, pp. 296-297.



June 8th he took command of the troops at Fort Edward, and on June 20th camped at the Half-Way Brook with three thousand men. Here for two days he received reports from Major Rogers and associated with Stark, Putnam and the other colonial officers, making his dispositions for the battle which was to come.<sup>1</sup> Two days afterward he moved forward with his command to the head of Lake George encamping on the former site of Fort William Henry. During all the time that he was with the army, he endeavored to inculcate by personal example, in the regular forces, the lesson that Great Britain to the present day has apparently never been able to learn, that success perches only upon the banners of that army which observes, adapts and respects the war manners and tactics of the people with whom it fights.<sup>2</sup>

It is stated that he adopted the costume and customs of the provincial rangers and among other things, according to a letter dated from camp May 31st, 1758 "sacrificed a fine head of hair of his own as an example to the soldiers, so that not a man <sup>is</sup> to be seen with his own hair."<sup>3</sup> This authority also states that it was cut short as it could be with the shears. I mention this here as it has its bearing on what comes a little later on.<sup>4</sup>

The army remained at Lake George until the early morning of July 5th. The triumphant procession down Lake George of sixteen thousand men, with their nine hundred bateaux and one hundred and thirty whale boats, filling the lake from shore to shore, in one grand, colorful, martial display; their encampment that night at Sabbath Day Point till nearly midnight; the landing

<sup>1</sup> *Roger's Journals*, (Hough's ed.), Munsell, (1883), p. 116; *Memoir of John Stark*, (Concord, 1860), p. 433; My "*Half-way Brook in History*," p. 174; *Reminiscences of the French War*, (Concord, 1831), pp. 68-69.

<sup>2</sup> As Kipling so well puts it in "The Lesson," written because of the Boer War.

"Not on a single issue, or in one direction or twain

But conclusively, comprehensively, and several times and again,

Were all our most holy illusions knocked higher than Gilderoy's kite,

We have had a jolly good lesson, and it serves us jolly well right."

*The Five Nations*, (Outward Bound ed.), pp. 113-115. The moral of which is, that the lesson taught Great Britain in the campaign of A. D. 1758, she had not yet learned in A. D. 1899.

<sup>3</sup> M. Dudley Bean in *The Knickerbocker*, (July, 1850), pp. 10-11 who quotes the *Boston News Letter* of June 22, 1758.

<sup>4</sup> See Watson in appendix.

at the Burnt Camp,<sup>1</sup> forever afterwards to bear the name of Howe's Landing, on the late morning of the 6th; the disembarking of the army, following Howe as he leaps ashore in the name of England and King George; the parade of enthusiastic, high-spirited troops who, drawn up in parallel columns marched in the early hours of the afternoon toward the fort, all need but the barest mention at this time.<sup>2</sup> We are all more or less familiar with the ordinary accounts of the unfortunate engagement in which the gallant and brilliant young soldier lost his life. These mostly taken from English sources naturally reflect somewhat the views of the British officers of that day.<sup>3</sup>

In order, however, to bring out more clearly the points the writer desires to make, he finds it necessary to recount as briefly as may be, in accordance with the written evidence recently discovered in this case, the story of Lord Howe's death from a new view point.

The Landing Place, afterwards known by his name as stated above, is approximately one third of a mile north, or towards the foot of the lake, from the present Lake George steamboat landing at Baldwin, in a small cove with a sandy beach, whose water approach has two feet average depth, and three feet depth to and about "Prisoner's Island," a third of a mile away.<sup>4</sup> Some authorities having referred to "Cook's Landing" confusing it with Howe's

<sup>1</sup> The Burnt Camp or *Champ Brûlé*, was the place where M. de Contrecoeur encamped in 1756, *N. Y. Col. Doc. X*, p. 894; C. Van Rensselaer's "Centennial Address on the Capture of Ticonderoga, 1759," (Phila. 1859), p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> For description of the pageant down the lake and events antecedent to Lord Howe's death, see Bancroft, (ed. 1852), IV, pp. 300-301; Parkman's *Montcalm and Wolfe*, (Frontenac ed.), pp. 298-300; M. Dudley Bean in *The Knickerbocker*, (July 1850), pp. 14-15; W. Max Reid's, *Lake George and Lake Champlain* pp. 152-153; Butler's *Lake George and Lake Champlain* (Albany 1868), pp. 204-207; Holden's *Queensbury* p. 321; Dwight's *Travels*, III, pp. 364-365.

<sup>3</sup> "Old Capt. Patchin' who was the first permanent settler within the limits of Warren County, and who had a short time previously, been sent forward as one of the advanced guard to examine the facilities for landing on Sabbath Day Point (where he afterwards settled) has often been heard to say as I have been informed, that the approach of Abercrombie's army was one of the most magnificent and imposing spectacles he ever witnessed." A. W. Holden *Mss.* p. 409.

<sup>4</sup> See Appendix for Bibliography of the Campaign.

<sup>5</sup> S. R. Stoddard's *Standard Chart of Lake George*, (1910), Hydrographic Survey of 1906-7-8.

Landing, a letter to A. A. Heard, Gen. Passenger Agent of the D. & H. brought the following communication addressed to him, which is inserted for its local value to some future historian.

"\* \* \* The old terminal at Lake George was what was always known as Cook's Landing. The Lord Howe Landing is in a little bay one and one-half miles south of Cook's Landing, refer to Stoddard's new chart, which will give you the situation as I understand it. So far as my records indicate here, the railroad between Fort Ti and Baldwin was completed and used for the first time during the season of 1875, and that year the present terminal at Baldwin was established, although for several years after that the company maintained their shipyards at the Old Cooks Landing Dock, and it was there that both the Strs. Horieon and Ticonderoga were constructed and laid up for the winter, and it was to the old dock the crews always went to bring out the boats in the spring, and to put them up in the fall.

I have a picture in my office of the old Str. Minnehaha<sup>1</sup> taken at Cooks Landing, the northern terminus on Lake George. I can't say what year that was, but the larger boats, the Horieon and Ticonderoga, never used Cooks Landing as a terminal as previous to the time of their building the present terminal at Baldwin was constructed and consequently the precise landing place of Lord Howe and his army was about one and a half miles south<sup>2</sup> of the old northern terminal on Lake George."<sup>3</sup>

At the beach was a comparatively level place, which was all needed to marshal 16,000 men into some say three and others four columns, which according to different writers was done before the march into the forest was begun.

A word about the local topography of the route may be per-

<sup>1</sup> Began service in 1857 in place of the "John Jay" (burned in July 1856), and was retired in 1876. "Her hull rests in the little bay north of Black Mountain point." Stoddard's *Lake George and Lake Champlain*, (1910), p. 46. Nelson's *Guide Lake George and Lake Champlain*, (London 1866), has several oil colored views of this boat to face title page, p. 8, etc. Also see Id. "*Our Summer Retreats*," (N. Y. 1858).

<sup>2</sup> "South" of course means towards the head of the lake. The distance from Cooks Landing to Baldwin being about one mile in a straight line from Howe's Cove.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from D. A. Loomis of the Champlain Transportation Company.