

A DIARY
OF THE
WEATHER

KEPT AT QUEBEC IN THE YEAR OF THE SIEGE
BY THE AMERICANS IN 1776

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IN 1776 (1)

April 1st, 1776.—Wind soft at S. W. ; much thaw. We plainly discover four embrasures in the enemy's battery at Pointe Levi, and we are throwing shells into it.

2nd.—Wind S. W., warm clear sunshine. A cutter sent in the evening to look into Wolfe's cove, got inclosed in the ice and received some shots, but got clear.

3rd.—Wind easterly, soft and cloudy, heavy rain in the afternoon. The Pointe Levi battery playing on the town ; their aim the shipping in the Cul de Sac ; the frigate Lizard's foremast damaged by a shot. Some spent shots fell on the houses in Palace street.

4th.—Rain all night. We fire without intermission on the enemy.

5th.—Cold wind N. W., but thawing. A 13 inch shell burst over the Cul de Sac, and wounded a sailor. The enemy afraid to stand at their guns at Pointe Levi. Cut the fascines

(1) This *Diary* has been published in the *Quebec Gazette* of April 18th, 1832, and was preceded by the following note :

" SIR,—Perhaps the following diary of the weather kept at Quebec in the year of the siege by the Americans in 1776, will be of some interest at this time, when the season drags itself so slowly along. Some of the incidents recorded may instruct your readers."

This prefatory note was signed : " D. P."

on their battery. Fatigue parties forming ditches in the snow outside of the walls; the enemy firing on them.

6th.—Wind easterly and much thaw. Deserter informed us that they are soon to bombard us from Pointe Levi, the heights of Abram and the ferry-house at the Little River.

7th.—Rain, hail, sleet; wind N. E.

8th.—Wind south and soft weather. In the evening a cannon shot entered a window in Upper Town, and carried off the head of the eldest boy, 10 years old, sitting at the tea table with his father, mother and family. Some roof a little damaged by the cannon shot.

9th.—Wind easterly, soft drizzly weather. Enemy preparing a fire vessel to burn the shipping in the Cul de Sac. Boats row guard every night. We have guns on all the wharfs, and strong guards and picquets in different parts of the Lower Town.

10th.—Wind W., clear day, streets almost impassable from the great runs of water.

11th.—Heavy rain, wind N. E. The enemy threw a number of signal's from Menut's and Holland House, their principal quarters.

12th.—Thawing, sleety easterly weather. A good many shots fired at the Cul de Sac; very little damage done.

13th.—Wind W., cold and freezing hard in the evening. Hunter, sloop of war, received a shot through her cabine.

14th.—Wind W., clear and warm. Lizard's stern and main mast of transport damaged. Finished a block house

100 yards outside of St. Lewis gate, and posted a guard of 20 men. Every thing in motion among the enemy.

15th.—Clear frosty weather. Voices heard on the heights, as is customary in raising heavy bodies. A great body of the enemy assembled at Menut's. At night guns were fired by the enemy at the Point of Orleans and signals made.

16th.—Mild and clear, wind strong E., rain in the evening; geometrically measured the distance to the batteries on the heights of Abram, and found it 716 yards and 2 feet. Canoes and bateaux passing and repassing at Sillerie, full of men.

17th.—Wind N. E., two inches of snow in the night.

18th.—Wind S. W., showers of snow. Deserters inform us that the enemy have heard a rumour that there are two ships in the river. The ice of Lake St. Peter passed down to-day.

19th. Hard frost and clear at night; cloudy and cold in the day.

20th.—The enemy made a fire vessel of the Brig Gaspé, which they took last fall, and offer £20,000 to any person who will steer her into the Cul de Sac. An Acadian said he would do it for £30,000 *en bon argent sonnante*.

21st.—A clear serene night, fine weather, wind S. W., swallows seen. The enemy beat to arms at 3 o'clock this morning. They fired at Point Levi at the hour of going to Mass; a diabolitic spirit. At dusk Laforce's schooner hauled out; the enemy fired at her from Pointe Levi.

22nd.—There fell three inches of soft sloppy snow. The enemy continue firing from the ferry-house battery and from

Pointe Levi. The new battery on the heights of Abram was also opened.

24th.—Clear and cold, wind N. W. Red hot balls fired into town, some chimnies only destroyed. Eleven of our guns bear on the enemy's ferry battery.

25th.—Froze hard last night. Little River clear of ice. None of the enemy's batteries can sweep our streets.

26th.—Last night was the worst we have had for many months; violent gale from N. E. with heavy rain. Firing on all sides.

27th.—Last night very foggy; much on our guard; morning clear. We begin to look towards Point Levi for ships coming to our relief. About eleven the Cathedral great bell rang the alarm, and the garrison was posted in a few minutes. False alarm.

28th.—Froze hard last night.

29th.—Wind S. W., serene and mild.

30th. Light wind from the E., with rain. The fogginess of the night made a general picquet necessary, and every man slept in his cloathes.

May 1st.—At four this morning it began to snow; and by eight there lay three inches of snow on the ground. The enemy fire red hot shot; one wounded 4 men on board the armed ship Fell.

2nd.—Very cold, standing water froze a third of an inch. Made a sortie from St. Lewis gate for wood.

3rd.—Delightfully clear with sunshine. Enemy still firing red hot balls. Between 9 and 10 at night a vessel was seen

coming up before the wind ; people where wishing one another joy ; was hailed off Cul de Sac ; no answer ; the batteries from the wharfs and from the ships opened, and in a minute she appeared on a blaze, 200 yards from the Cul de Sac. A boat was seen to leave her the moment she sheered in shore. Her hull floated down with the tide in a bright blaze.

4th.—Easterly wind with rain.

5th.—Froze hard, wind N. W.

6th.—Froze a little. Guns heard down the river about 4 A. M. At six the frigate Surprise, with a part of the 29th regiment, hove in sight. Troops landed and the garrison marching out to the Plains to attack the enemy. General Carleton headed 800 men. Col. McLean, second in command ; Col. Caldwell heading the Militia. The enemy fled precipitately when our field pieces played on their guard-houses ; they left every thing behind Holland House, General Hospital, Duprès, &c., in our possession.



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