

Alexander Macomb Letters

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Plattsburgh State University College
Plattsburgh, N.Y. 12901

By
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Introduction

Alexander Macomb knew from a very young age that he wanted to have a military career.

"His father insisted on his completing his education first and brought him home for tutoring in mathematics, drawing, fencing and riding. In 1798, the young man was elected to an elite volunteer corps, the 'New York Rangers.' At sixteen, Alexander had matured remarkably. A well-trained mind in a robust body, an optimistic and eager attitude toward life, a wide circle of acquaintances from is own social stratum, and a driving ambition made him a young man of promise."(Everest, The Military Career of Alexander Macomb)

Macomb had training in mathematics, topography, and the science of fortification. In 1802, Macomb received a promotion to First lieutenant, and was assigned to the first class at West Point. Later, in 1805, Macomb made captain and worked planning fortifications along the southern coast of the Atlantic Ocean. In 1808 Macomb received a promotion to major. In 1811, another promotion to lieutenant colonel and in 1814 a promotion to brigadier general. Some may argue that one of Macomb's most noted and important accomplishments were his part in the defeat of the British at the Battle of Plattsburgh Bay. For this Macomb was thanked and given a medal by congress.

Most of the items in this file are transcriptions of letters from Macomb to Secretary of War, John Armstrong. (The manuscript letters are stored in the national archives.) The letters give detailed accounts of the number of men at specific places at specific times. In addition, Macomb writes about the battle at Plattsburgh.

Macomb gave descriptions of dress in some cases, as well as death tolls on specific dates, and at specific places. There is a list of principle officers of the British army, and there is a field report of troops under command of Brigadier General Macomb.

BACKGROUND SOURCES LOCATED IN SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Everest, Allan S. **The Military Career of Alexander Macomb and Alexander Macomb at Plattsburgh.** Plattsburgh, NY: Clinton County Historical Association, 1989. 85p.
Richards, George H. **Memoir of Alexander Macomb.** Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1979. 130p.

CONTENTS OF THE MACOMB LETTERS

Collection

1 Aug. 31, 1814 1 Item
2 Sep. 2, 1814 1 Item
3 Sep. 8, 1814 2 Items
4 Sep. 12, 1814 2 Items
5 Sep. 15, 1814 7 Items
6 Sep. 18, 1814 8 Items
7 Oct. 9, 1814 2 Items

Total 23 Items