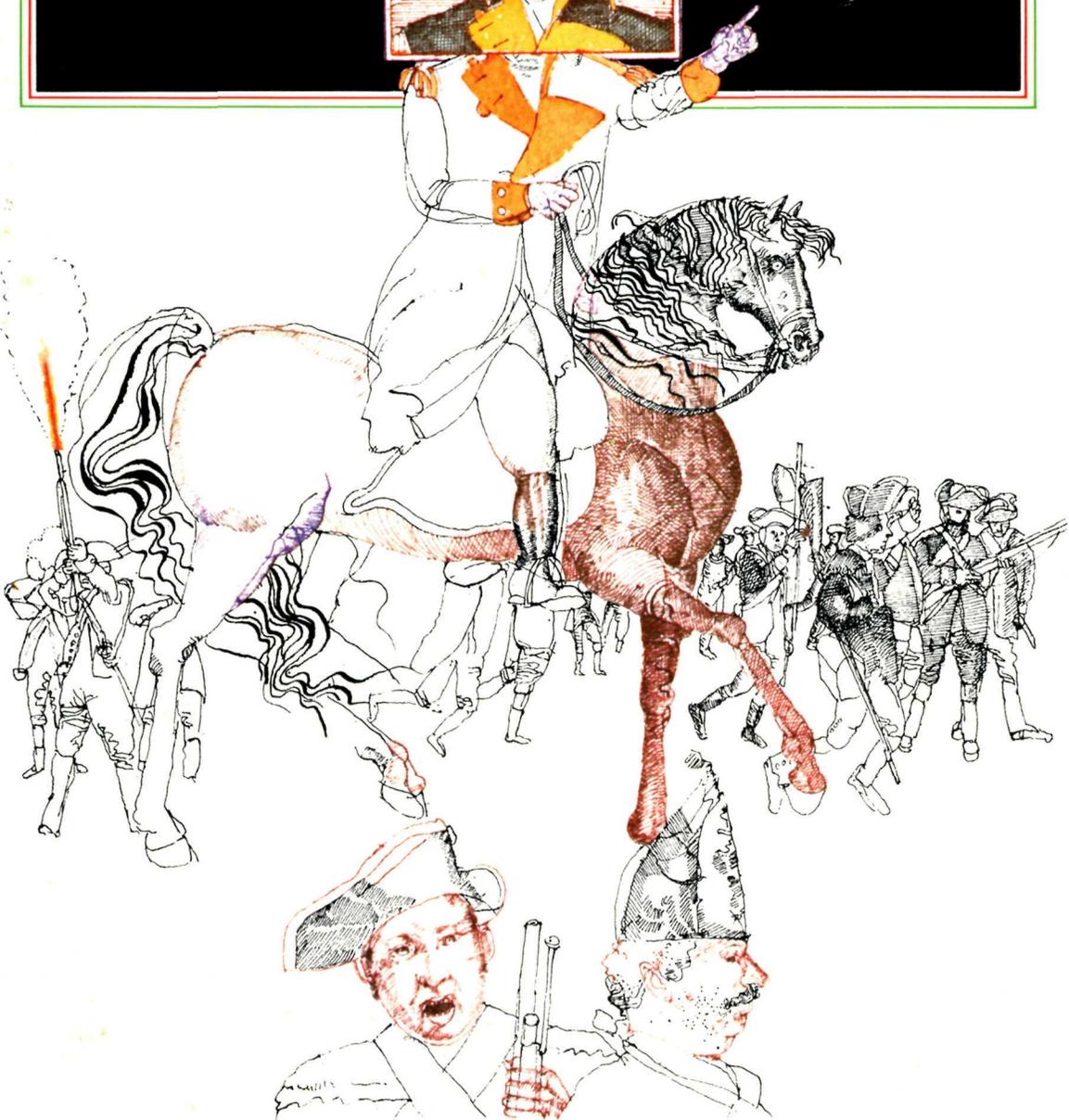
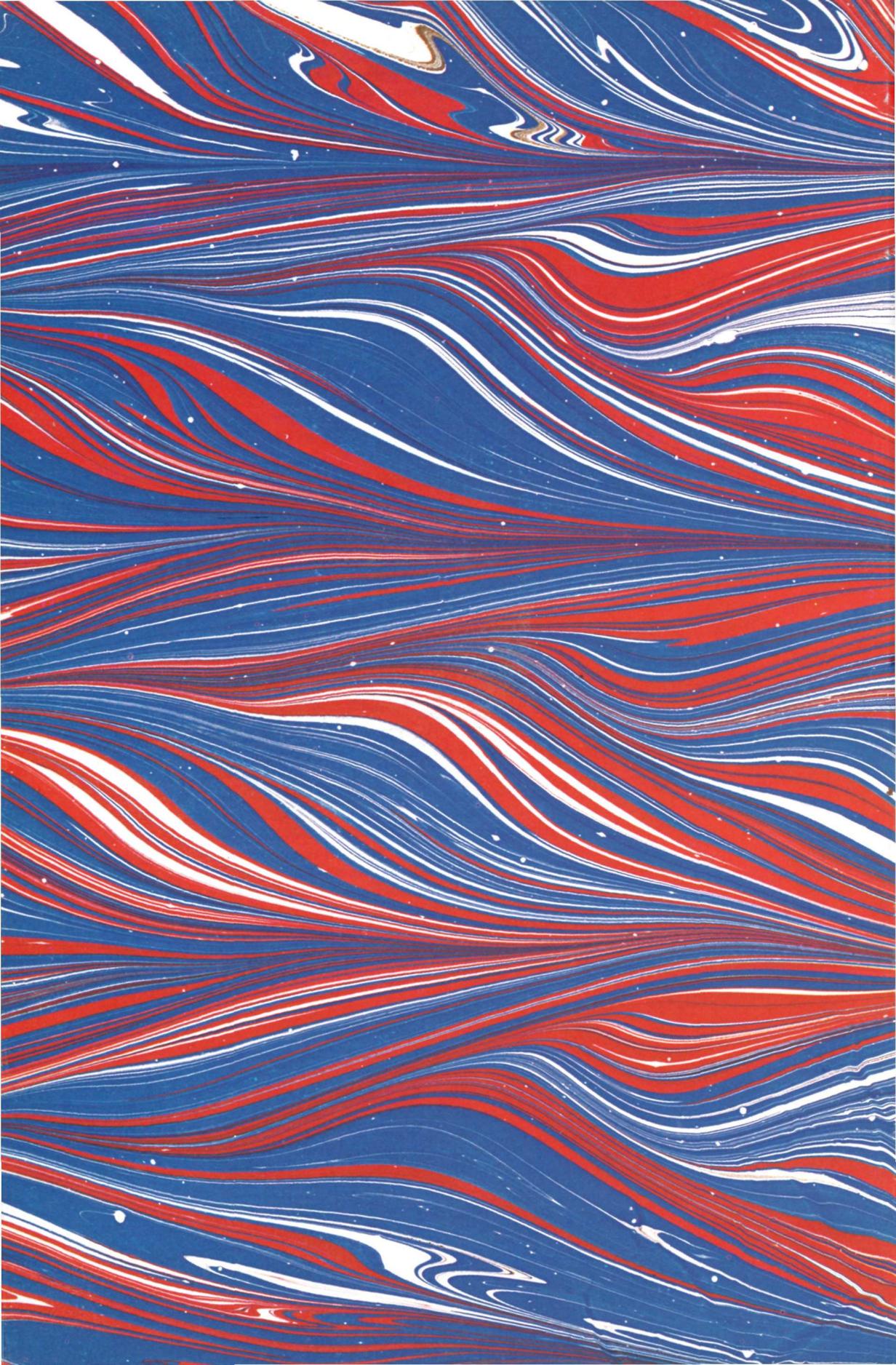


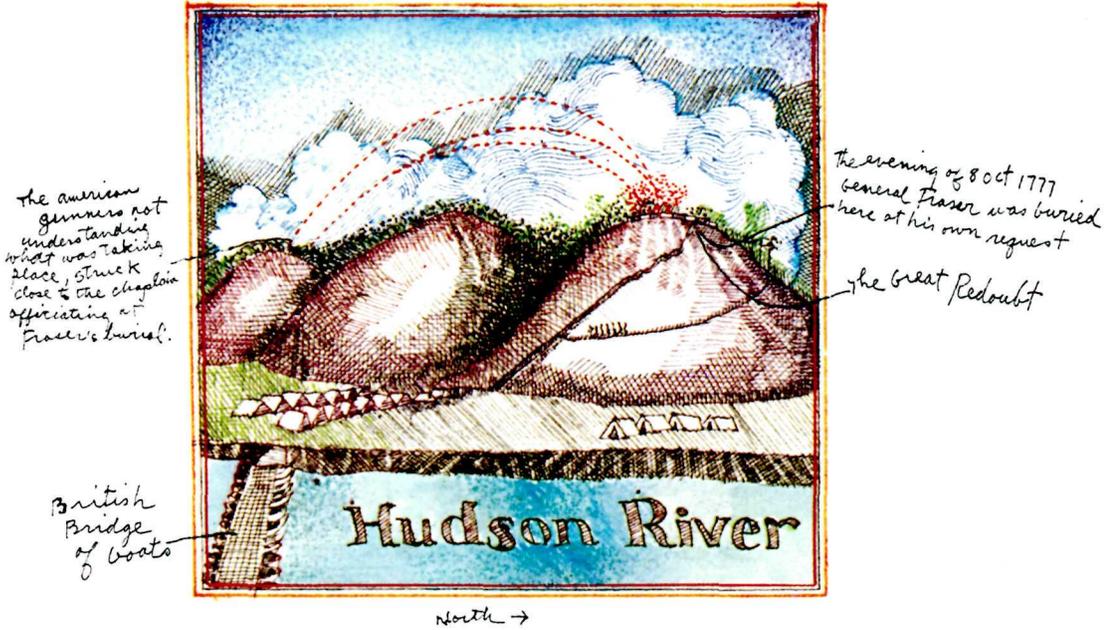
Decision on the Hudson





Illustrated
by
Alan E. Cober

Decision on the Hudson



The Saratoga Campaign of 1777

by
John Luzader

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Decision on the Hudson

1777: Year of Decision

Fort St. Johns, Quebec, was no stranger to war and soldiers. Situated on the Richelieu River near the head of navigation between Lake Champlain and the St. Lawrence River, it occupied an important site on an old invasion route between Canada and New York. Successful and defeated soldiers had marched past, and rebellious Americans had captured it twice during the first year of the Revolution. During the early days of June 1777, it witnessed the opening of still another chapter in history as Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne's army assembled there to launch a new British offensive along Lake Champlain and the Hudson River.

The commander of the army and the author of the plan for the campaign, 55-year-old John Burgoyne, was scion of an old Lancashire family and a man of many talents: veteran of 30 years' military service, member of Parliament, and playwright. He was, in many ways, a representative of the upper-class county families who dominated the political, social, and military life of 18th-century England. Intelligent, handsome, and humane, he was popular with his troops, who gave him the sobriquet "Gentleman Johnny." His less attractive traits were vanity and excessive ambition.

General Burgoyne's American service began on May 25, 1775, when he and Maj. Gens. William Howe and Henry Clinton arrived in Boston to serve under Gen. Thomas Gage, whose troops were then under siege by rebel forces. That tour of duty was brief and ended when he returned to England the next November. Burgoyne's service in Boston was undistinguished, but in a memoranda to General Gage, he set forth his views on the importance of the region with which his future career was to be so closely associated:

I have always thought Hudson's River the most proper part of the whole continent for opening vigorous operations. Because the course of the river, so beneficial for conveying all the bulky necessaries of an army, is precisely the route that an army ought to take for the great purposes of cutting the communications between the Southern and Northern Provinces, giving confidence to the Indians, and securing a junction with the Canadian forces. These purposes effected, and a fleet upon the coast, it is to me morally certain that the forces of New England must be reduced so early in the campaign to give you battle upon your own terms, or perish before the end of it for want of necessary supplies.

Burgoyne was not the first to appreciate the strategic significance of the Lake Champlain-Hudson River waterway. It had been a military route since pre-colonial times. It was used by the Algonquin and Iroquois tribes during the generations of warfare for the domination of the Old Northwest. French, Dutch, and English soldiers used it during their struggles for colonial empire. For nearly a century before the American Revolution, the tides of war had ebbed and flowed along this route, and Forts Crown Point, St. Frederick, Ticonderoga, Edward, Miller, William Henry, George, Hardy, and St. Johns had been built to exploit and secure its military potential. For traders, missionaries, and settlers, it was a highway linking Canada and Manhattan.

Burgoyne's opinion of the historic route was shared by both British and American strategists. In 1775, the Americans' abortive Canadian campaign, undertaken to add that Province to the roster of rebellious colonies, reflected an appreciation of the region's military and political importance. The resultant British counteroffensive under Gen. Sir Guy Carleton was based upon the same strategic assessment.

Carleton, governor and commanding general in Canada, began his campaign by driving the Americans back into New York. Then, in June 1776, he launched his army down the Champlain-Hudson route toward Albany, from whence he planned to cooperate with forces under Gen. William Howe advancing northward from New York City. The British would dominate upper New York; communications between New York City and Canada would be secured; and New England, the heart of the rebellion, would be caught between the sea and a successful, united royal army. The goals were not realized because Howe's advance ended on the Delaware River instead of the upper Hudson and because a lake flotilla under Gen. Benedict Arnold delayed Carleton's forces at Valcour Island until approaching winter persuaded the British commander to abort his campaign and return to Canada.

Burgoyne's role in Carleton's 1776 offensive was disappointing to him. He had hoped for an independent field command and conditions had favored his chances. Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for Colonies and the minister responsible for the conduct of the war in America, was determined that Carleton should not command the advance from Canada. His first choice was Gen. Henry Clinton, but

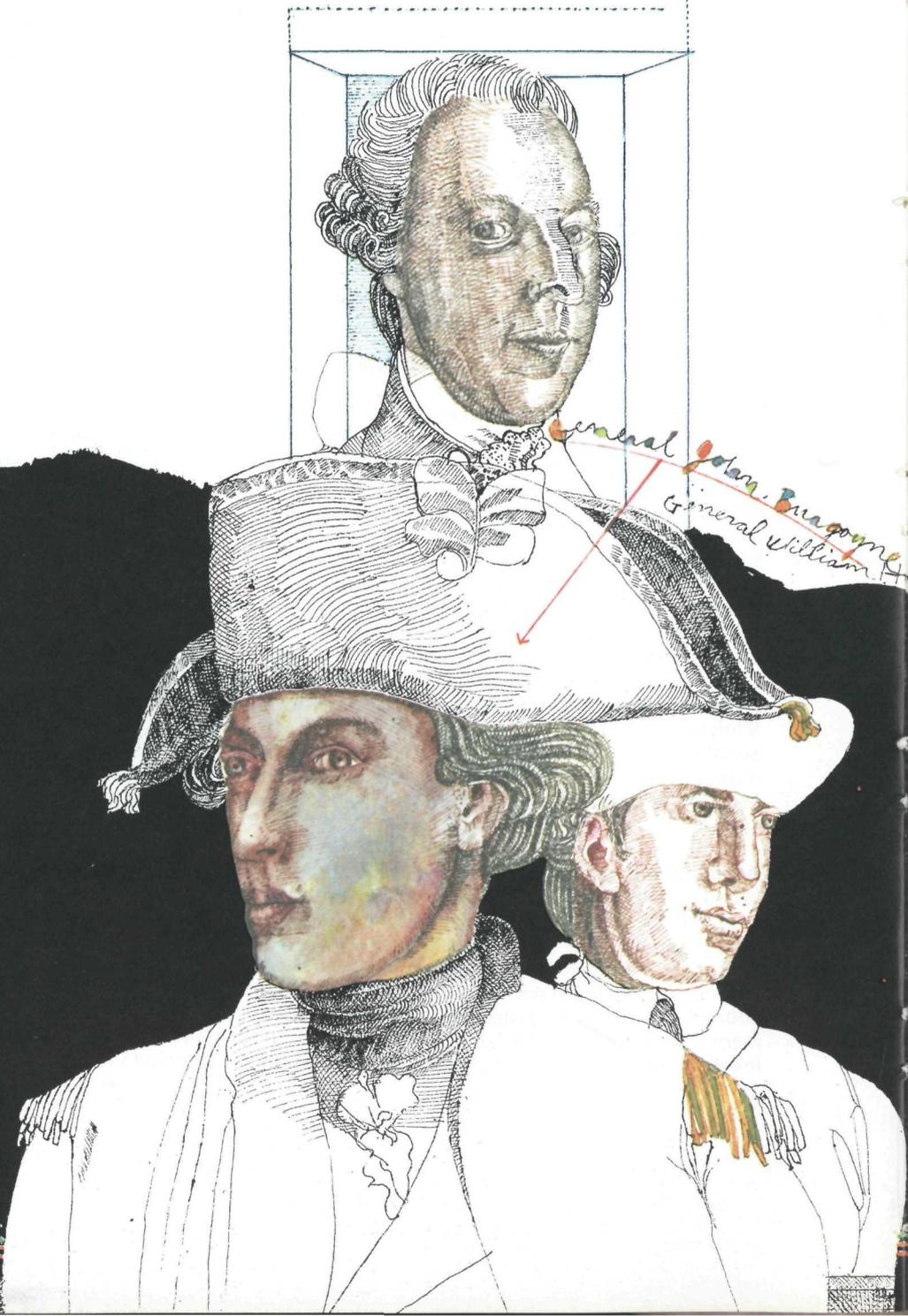
Clinton had been ordered south on what turned out to be an inglorious expedition against Charleston, S.C., and was not available. It seemed that Burgoyne's hour had arrived: he was dispatched to Canada as Carleton's second in command and commissioned to lead the offensive. Storms delayed delivery of the letter assigning him the field command, and when Burgoyne arrived, Carleton had already begun operations. Lacking orders to relinquish his command to his subordinate, Sir Guy retained it, and Burgoyne functioned as his second in command. Carleton's failure to pass Lake Champlain and secure the upper Hudson did not enhance his reputation at court.

Like Clinton and some other officers who were members of Parliament, Burgoyne returned to England at the end of 1776 to attend the winter sessions and to advance his personal interests. He carried a letter from Carleton recommending him to the Colonial Secretary as a source of information and advice; and Burgoyne used this to his own advantage, openly soliciting command of the next northern offensive.

The man who held the key to his success was 61-year-old Lord George Germain. Son of the First Duke of Dorset, Germain had started public life as a soldier. That career had ended in 1760 when a court-martial found him guilty of disobeying orders during the Battle of Minden the year before. Although the sentence did not result in his being cashiered, the court expressed the opinion that he was "unfit to serve . . . in any military capacity whatever." A member of Parliament since 1746, Germain concentrated on a political career and made the slow, difficult ascent to influence, eventually becoming a supporter of Lord Frederick North, who became Prime Minister in March 1770. Although he lacked a personal following in the House of Commons and had a number of personal and political enemies, Germain became Secretary of State for Colonies on November 10, 1775.

Advocating a staunch, coercive policy against the rebellious Americans, Germain energetically mobilized Britain's resources for the prosecution of the war. Regiment after regiment was raised, trained, equipped, and transported to North America. His responsibilities were not limited to allocating resources, however; they also included the development and definition of Britain's grand strategy. This involved important relations with the two command-

This is Britain's war minister.
Most of the responsibility falls on the shoulders of
Lord George Germain (1716-1785) for the fiasco of 1777.



George III
George III



ers he inherited when he came to office: William Howe and Sir Guy Carleton.

Germain's relations with Howe during 1776 had been amicable, but his attitude toward Carleton was very different. A hostility of obscure origin existed between them and fed upon every opportunity for friction until it ripened into a hatred that both men nurtured.

The Carleton-Germain feud bore fruit that poisoned British military administration in America. When General Gage was recalled to England in October 1775, Carleton became the senior general officer in North America—a status that normally would have guaranteed him the command of the united British army whenever the forces from Canada and those from the Atlantic seaboard should merge. But Germain's hostility blocked the general's chances of ever realizing this prospect. Instead of providing for an eventual unified command, the government divided the forces in North America into two independent armies. General Howe became commander in chief in the "thirteen colonies," replacing Gage, while Carleton retained the Canadian command. Germain's determination that Carleton should not lead an offensive from Canada was consistent with this division of authority.

Ministers at Whitehall assumed that the Champlain-Hudson offensive would be resumed in 1777. The most obvious question was who would lead it. With Carleton eliminated, the choice lay between Burgoyne and Henry Clinton, Howe's second in command, who, like Burgoyne, was unhappy in his subordinate status. Both men were in London and both were eager for independent commands. Clinton was senior of the two and he could have had the assignment had he asked for it. But he did not solicit the command, probably because he believed that Howe would give it to him when the army from Canada came under that general's authority. After considering Clinton, the Cabinet decided to send Burgoyne back to Canada to lead the next offensive. Clinton received a knighthood and returned to New York as Howe's second in command with a dormant commission to succeed the commander in chief should he resign or become incapacitated.

Burgoyne was not idle while his professional future was being considered. He was busy preparing proposals for the next northern campaign. On Febru-

ary 28, 1777, he sent Germain his "Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada."

The first objective of the campaign would be to secure the navigation of Lake Champlain. Crown Point would then be captured and used as a temporary base of operations. Hopefully, Fort Ticonderoga, the first major obstacle to the advance southward, would fall early in the summer, when it would "then become a more proper place for arms than Crown Point." Once these places were secured, "The next measure must depend upon those taken by the enemy, and upon the general plan of the campaign as concerted at home." If the ministry decided that General Howe's entire army would act on the Hudson and "if the only object of the Canada army is to effect a junction with that force," Burgoyne proposed to advance to Albany by way of Lake George. Otherwise, he suggested that his army might cooperate with troops in Rhode Island to gain control of the Connecticut River, stating that "Should the junction between the Canada and Rhode Island armies be effected upon the Connecticut, it would not be too sanguine an expectation that all the New England provinces will be reduced by their operations." Burgoyne also believed that a secondary offensive by way of Lake Ontario and the Mohawk River would be desirable "as a diversion to facilitate every proposed operation." Should these propositions be considered impractical and the force from Canada too small to undertake an overland campaign, it might be wise to transfer it by sea to join Howe in New York. Nothing in Burgoyne's proposals suggested that garrisoning the Champlain-Hudson line and isolating New England were the objectives of the campaign. British success on the Hudson might result in a strategic isolation of New England, but the general did not develop this thesis in his "Thoughts."

Because his proposals were, in the final analysis, a discussion of alternatives, Burgoyne did not precisely define his objectives. As he noted in connection with proposed moves following the reduction of Ticonderoga, his course would depend "upon the general plan of the campaign as concerted at home." He assumed that the King and his ministers would draft a comprehensive plan for 1777 defining how he and General Howe would coordinate their activities. In only one instance, and that somewhat ambiguous, did Burgoyne anticipate what his objective might be: "These ideas are formed upon the supposition that it be the sole purpose of the Cana-

dian army to effect a junction with General Howe, or after cooperating so far as to get possession of Albany and open the communication to New York, to remain upon the Hudson's River, and thereby enable that general to act with his whole force to the southward." He thus expected that the two generals would act in concert, but he did not detail how or to what extent this should be done.

While Burgoyne worked out his proposals for 1777, General Howe was developing his own ideas, and during the course of several months he drafted plans that were to have significant repercussions on the outcome of the campaign. Like Carleton, Howe had served in America during the Seven Years' War, commanding the 58th Regiment of Foot in Gen. Jeffrey Amherst's successful operation against Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, in 1758. The next year he headed the light infantry battalion that led Gen. James Wolfe's force onto the Heights of Abraham in the capture of Quebec. He also commanded a "brigade of detachments" in 1760, when Amherst captured Montreal. A Whig member of Parliament from Nottingham and a critic of the ministry's repressive American policies, he, nevertheless, returned to America with Clinton and Burgoyne in May 1775 to serve under General Gage in Boston. He personally commanded the British troops in the Battle of Bunker Hill on June 17 and later succeeded Gage as commander in chief.

After evacuating Boston in March 1776, Howe more than redeemed the British position in America during the following summer and autumn. At Long Island, N.Y., on August 27, he soundly defeated Gen. George Washington's Continental Army in the "first pitched battle" of the war. He followed this success by capturing New York City and Forts Washington and Mifflin on the Hudson; but he failed to profit by his tactical advantage, and Washington escaped across New Jersey with most of his army. The American general's retreat to Pennsylvania surprised the British, who had expected him to take refuge in New England. By pursuing Washington, Howe ended his campaign on the Delaware, making it impossible for him to cooperate with Carleton on the Hudson.

While Howe displayed sound strategic and tactical skill, he had not been very aggressive in following up his advantages. Nevertheless, he retained the King's and Germain's favor and was knighted for his victory on Long Island.

On November 30, 1776, while Washington's demoralized army retreated across New Jersey, Sir William wrote two letters to Lord Germain. In the first he reported on the successful operations around New York City. In the second he informed the Colonial Secretary that he intended to quarter a large body of troops in East Jersey for the winter and that he expected the Americans would try to cover their capital, Philadelphia, by establishing a line on either the Raritan or Delaware Rivers. Howe also notified Germain that he had learned that Carleton had abandoned his offensive. He presumed that it would be renewed in the spring, but he did not expect the Canadian army to reach Albany until September. Carleton's performance made this a reasonable assumption. Upon this premise, Howe proposed a plan he believed might "finish the War in one Year by an extensive and vigorous Exertion of His Majesty's arms."

His plan was essentially a continuation of current strategy against New England. Briefly stated, he proposed two simultaneous offensives: one, with Rhode Island as a base, to be directed at Boston; the second to ascend the Hudson and rendezvous with the renewed advance from Canada. A third force would act in New Jersey to check Washington by exploiting American fears for the safety of Philadelphia, which Howe "proposed to attack in the Autumn, as well as Virginia, provided the Success of the other operations will admit of an adequate Force to be sent against that Province." South Carolina and Georgia would be the objectives of a winter campaign. This ambitious plan would require two additional ships of the line and at least 35,000 men. Placing his present strength at 20,000, Howe figured that he needed a reinforcement of 15,000 men. He knew that these could not be raised in Great Britain and suggested that the Government hire troops from Russia and Hanover and other German states.

On December 20, ten days before his letters of November 30 reached London, Howe wrote another letter to Germain containing a new plan. At that time, the British seemed to have firm control of New Jersey, and Sir William believed that American capabilities to continue the fight were diminishing. He also thought the sentiments of the Pennsylvanians were turning toward peace, "in which Sentiment they would be confirmed by our getting Possession of Philadelphia." He was "fully persuaded the Prin-

cipal Army should act offensively on that side.” This change in priorities required that the New England offensive be postponed until after reinforcements arrived from Europe, so “that there might be a Corps to act defensively on the lower part of Hudson’s River to cover Jersey and to facilitate in some degree the approach of the Canada Army.” Howe lowered his troop requirements from 35,000 to 19,000, which he proposed to distribute in the following manner: 2,000 in Rhode Island, 4,000 in New York City, 3,000 to operate on the lower Hudson, and 10,000 for the campaign against Philadelphia.

Howe’s second plan represented a major change in strategy. Concerted operations against New England would be abandoned in favor of a campaign in Pennsylvania, and the renewed Champlain-Hudson offensive would have to be undertaken without a comparable effort on the lower part of the river. Lowering his manpower requirements was a retreat from ultimate needs to meeting immediate short-range objectives.

Before either of Howe’s plans could be received in London, the situation in New Jersey took a dramatic turn that dissipated Sir William’s fragile optimism and decisively affected his thinking. With an audacity born of desperation, Washington attacked and captured most of Howe’s German troops at Trenton on the morning of December 26; then he defeated a British force at Princeton and executed a skillful withdrawal into the hills around Morristown. Washington’s army, which had teetered on the brink of dissolution, not only continued to exist—it had regained West Jersey.

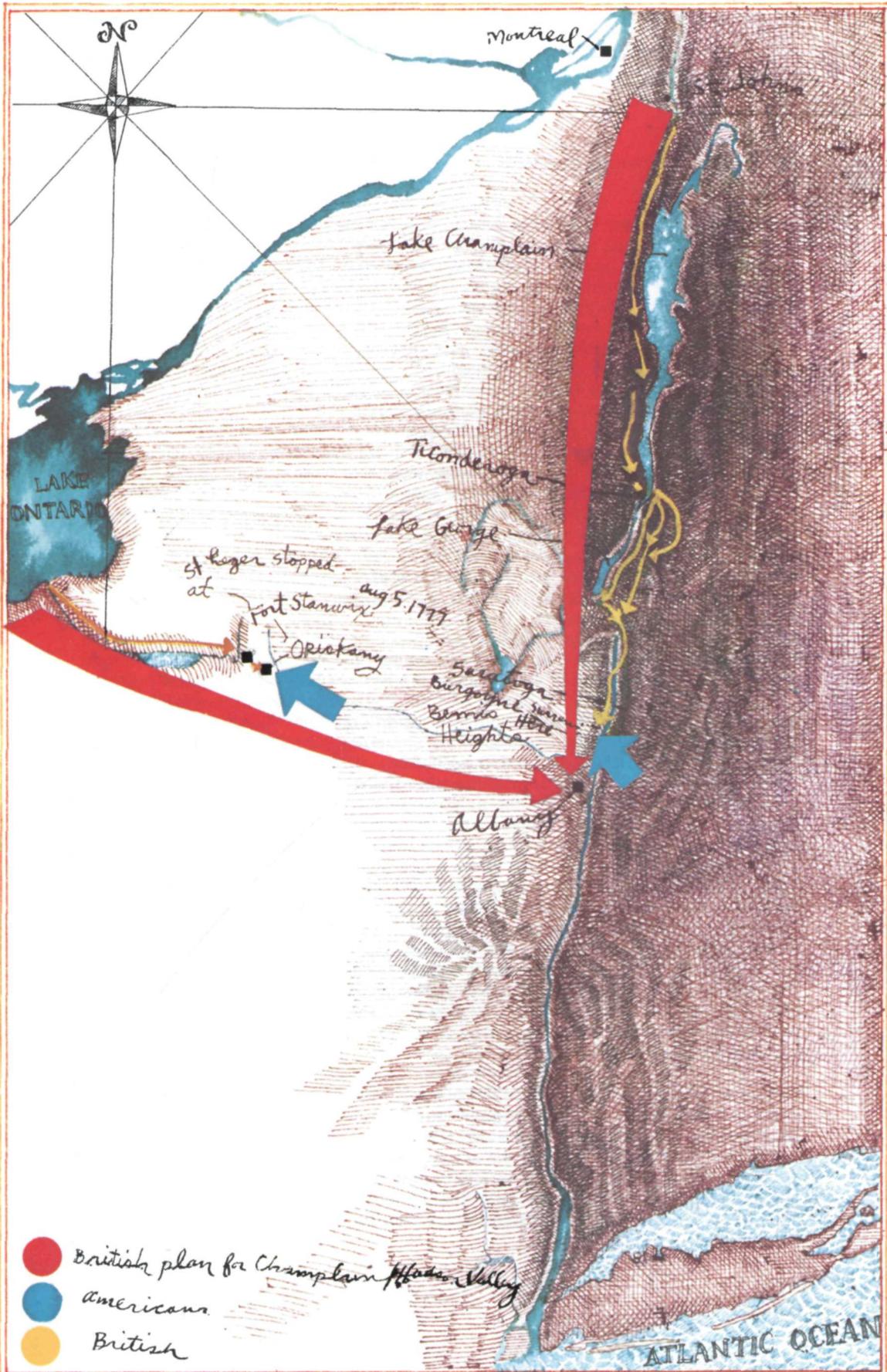
Howe’s November 30 correspondence containing his first plan reached London on December 30. In a letter dated January 14, 1777, Germain told Sir William that the King would “defer sending you his Sentiments on your Plan for the next Campaign until He was enabled to take the whole into His Royal Consideration.” On February 23, Germain received the December 20 letter containing Howe’s second plan, as well as a dispatch dated December 29 reporting on the Battles of Trenton and Princeton. The Colonial Secretary’s reply to Sir William on March 3 approved the plan to attack Philadelphia in these words: “I am now commanded to acquaint you that the King entirely approves of your proposed Deviation from the Plan which you formerly suggested, being of Opinion that the Reasons which have induced you to

recommend this change in your Operations are solid and decisive.”

While the Government in London studied Burgoyne's and Howe's proposals and prepared its own plans for 1777, Sir William became increasingly pessimistic. He believed that the winning of the war required the steady expansion of British occupation as well as the destruction of the American army. Frustrated by the Government's inability to provide him with adequate reinforcements and by his own failure to bring Washington to battle on British terms, he decided to alter his plans for the attack on Philadelphia. Washington's position on Howe's flank ruled out a direct advance across New Jersey, and crossing the Delaware with 90 miles of exposed communications in his rear would be folly. On April 2 Howe sent a third plan to Germain in which he proposed to abandon the overland route to Philadelphia in favor of one by sea. His letter contained a revealing note: "Restricted as I am, from entering upon more extensive operations by the want of force, my hopes of terminating the war this year are vanished." But he expected by the end of the campaign to hold New York, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, "though that must depend upon the success of the Northern Army."

The change from a land to a sea route had important results. First, it delayed the opening of the campaign. Secondly, it removed Howe's army from between Washington and both New York City and Burgoyne. Washington could not abandon the defense of Philadelphia, but he could send troops northward to help check the advance from Canada. Thirdly, by taking the major part of his army to sea, Howe made it impossible for him either to cooperate with Burgoyne or to go to his assistance should he get into difficulty. The force of 4,000 regulars and 3,000 Loyalists that Howe left in New York under Sir Henry Clinton was too small to carry out either of those contingencies. The British had thus lost the degree of tactical flexibility they needed to cope with two armies that were potentially numerically superior, relatively mobile, and operating on interior lines.

Behind Sir William's second and third plans lay three important attitudes. In the first place, he did not believe that the Americans could prevent Burgoyne from reaching Albany. Secondly, he conceived that his obligation to cooperate was not concerned with helping Burgoyne reach Albany, but rather to help maintain him once he arrived there. And thirdly, as



had been the case with Carleton's campaign in 1776, Howe, while paying lip-service to the importance of the invasion from Canada, showed little interest in it.

Sir William Howe and John Burgoyne could draft proposals and plans, but the King and his ministers were responsible for making the final decisions. They selected from among the available alternatives and tried to coordinate the efforts of the armies in the field, to define objectives, to assign priorities, and to apportion resources. The minister most intimately involved in this process was Colonial Secretary Germain. At the time Lord George and his colleagues began developing their plans for 1777 they were still ignorant of the dramatic and fateful events of Trenton and Princeton, and they could look back on 1776 with some satisfaction. Large armies had been raised, equipped, and transported to North America; Canada was still British; New York City and Long Island were reclaimed; and as far as anyone in London knew, New Jersey was securely in British hands. The rebellion seemed almost crushed.

While the King and the ministry had reason to congratulate themselves, the failure to win the American war by the close of 1776 exposed Britain to dangers that only a victory in 1777 could dispel. The concentration of so much of her military capability in America was a bold, calculated gamble taken in the face of a possible French attack. Against this danger had been weighed the greater advantage of ending the rebellion before European neighbors could intervene to England's detriment.

That the rebellion was almost crushed was not enough. Its total defeat had to be accomplished and soon, because during the summer of 1776 France had inched toward war, convinced that she faced an opportunity to redeem the interests and prestige she had lost in the Seven Years' War. The French were already providing munitions and other military supplies to the Americans. The decision to openly join the rebellion would depend upon events in America. Would Britain and the Colonies be reconciled? Could the Americans continue to fight with reasonable hopes for making independence a reality? British successes on Long Island and Manhattan seemed to answer in the negative, and France drew back. The amazing American recovery that attended and followed Trenton and Princeton made it even more obvious that England needed an early, decisive victory to make French withdrawal permanent.

When George III and his ministers studied Burgoyne's proposals, they had at hand Howe's first plan for 1777; his letter of December 20 altering that plan by shifting the offensive priority from New England to Philadelphia (to which the King gave his assent on March 3); and Howe's letter of December 29 reporting the American successes at Trenton and Princeton. The British leaders accepted the broad outline of Burgoyne's proposals and directed him to "force his way to Albany," seconded by a diversion down the Mohawk under the command of Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger. Burgoyne and St. Leger would meet at Albany and put themselves under Sir William Howe's command. Pending receipt of orders from Howe, Burgoyne was to act as his judgment and tactical situation required, always remembering that his main objective was a junction with his new commander. Howe was not required to meet Burgoyne and St. Leger at Albany, and Burgoyne, in defining the campaign's purpose, had not insisted upon a physical rendezvous. He would join Howe or cooperate with him in a way that would facilitate the latter's southern operations. In short, everyone, including Burgoyne himself, expected the Canadian army to reach Albany without assistance from the south.

As noted earlier, Germain's March 3 letter to Howe approved the plan to attack Philadelphia. Sir William's letter of April 2 proposing to take his army to Pennsylvania by sea was not received until May 8, after the other elements of the plans had been approved and after Burgoyne had returned to Canada. Ten days later, Germain wrote that the King, confident of Howe's judgment, approved of any alteration in plan that the general thought wise, "trusting, however, that whatever you may meditate, it will be executed in time for you to cooperate with the army ordered to proceed from Canada and put itself under your command." Because a letter dispatched in mid-May could not reach Howe for several weeks, the King and his colonial secretary had no choice but to concur. Their response was promptly posted, but it did not reach Sir William until he was on Chesapeake Bay en route to Philadelphia. By that time the only part of Howe's army that could cooperate with Burgoyne was that portion left in and around New York City under Sir Henry Clinton. And Clinton had received no positive orders, nor did he have enough men, to go to Burgoyne's relief should the Canadian army encounter more opposition than expected and need assistance.

Invasion

Burgoyne returned to Canada on May 6. On June 13, in a solemn ceremony at St. John's, Sir Guy Carleton invested him with the command of his 8,000-man army. Handing over the leadership of the great offensive was a bitter experience for Carleton, but he bore it with dignity. Despite his disappointment, Sir Guy did everything within his power to assist Burgoyne in organizing the expedition.

The "army from Canada" made a brave display as 4,119 British, 3,217 German, and 250 Canadian and Loyalist soldiers, attended by perhaps 1,000 non-combatants and camp followers and about 400 Indians, started the fateful march southward. Their train of artillery consisted of at least 42 field pieces; in addition, 30 armed boats carried 282 cannon and 10 howitzers. For land transport, the army had hundreds of carts, and for water carriage, 29 longboats, 20 cutters, 10 "flat bottom" boats, and 260 batteaux.

Despite problems in collecting adequate carts and a sufficient supply of draught horses, the expedition got off to a good start. The preliminary objective, Crown Point, was taken on June 16. For the next 2 weeks, the army and its support flotilla and train assembled for the actual opening of the campaign. On June 30, Burgoyne issued a general order that read:

The army embarks to-morrow, to approach the enemy. We are to contend for the King, and the constitution of Great Britain, to vindicate Law, and to relieve the oppressed—a cause in which his Majesty's Troops and those of the Princes his Allies, will feel equal excitement. The services required of this particular expedition, are critical and conspicuous. During our progress occasions may occur, in which, no difficulty, nor labour, nor life are to be regarded. This Army must not Retreat.

Having provided for the security of Crown Point, the troops and their popular, confident commander, were now prepared to move against their first major obstacle—Fort Ticonderoga.

Ten miles south of Crown Point, Ticonderoga stands on a promontory that dominates the entrances to the southern end of Lake Champlain and Lake George, both of which provide water routes to within a few miles of the Hudson. Built by France during the Seven Years' War, the square, bastioned, stone fort had been captured in 1759 by the British, who occupied it for the next 16 years. In 1775, American

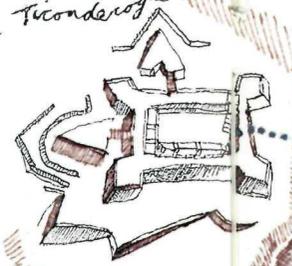
↑ Mt Hope
July 2 ↓

100 yds.

americans
retreat from
Mt Hope to
the old
French lines
The British
under General Burgoyne
took a position 100 yds from
the lines and opened fire

Old French lines

Fort Ticonderoga



5 July
St. Clair
leaves
cannon on
Mt. Defiance
leaves that
night with
men

Bridge of Boats

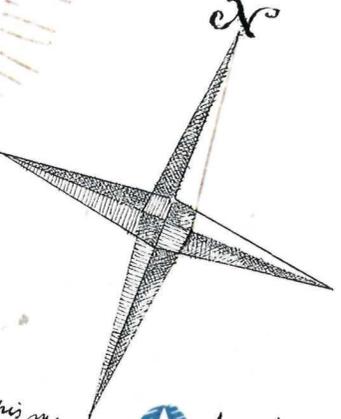
Fort
Independency

Mount
Defiance
(Sugar Hill)

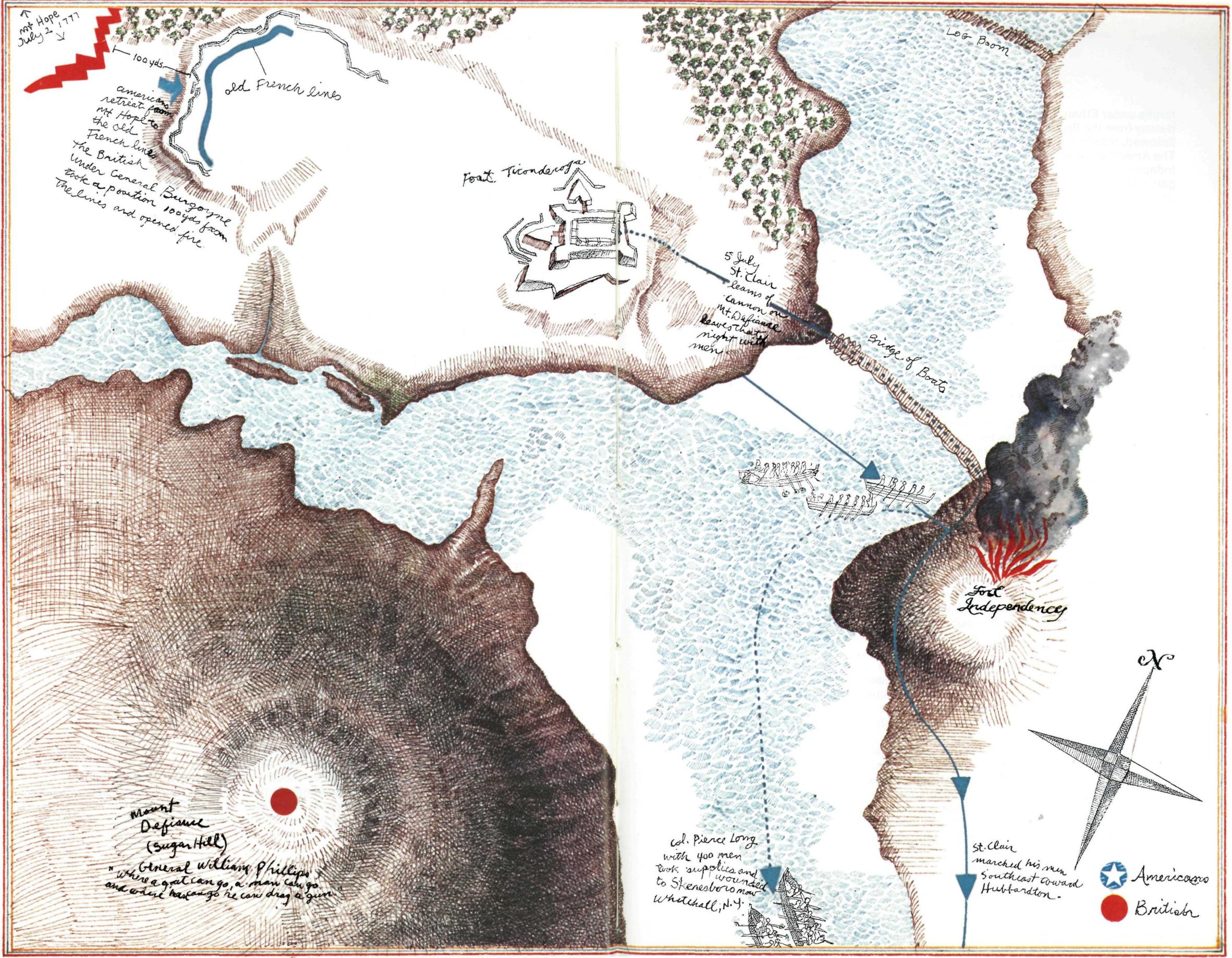
General William Phillips
"where a goat can go, a man can go
and where a man can go he can drag a gun"

Col. Pierce Long
with 400 men
took supplies and
wounded
to Stenesboro now
Whitchell, N.Y.

St. Clair
marched his men
southeast toward
Hubbardton.



Americans
British



forces under Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold took it away from the British and, during the months that followed, repaired and enlarged its defenses. *The Americans also built new works on Mount Independence across the river.* By mid-June 1777 the garrison under Scottish-born Gen. Arthur St. Clair consisted of about 2,500 Continentals and militiamen, one-fifth the minimum number required to man the more than 2,000 yards of outer defense lines. Not only were there not enough men; a shortage of every necessity—food, clothing, and arms—sapped morale and efficiency.

The American defenders watched the British approach their northern fortress with more apprehension than confidence. Gen. Philip Schuyler, commander of the Northern Department charged with halting the British offensive, had no illusions about the “combat-readiness” of his troops. In a frame of mind that reflected that pessimism, he left his headquarters in Albany and presided over a council of war in the fort on June 20. Knowing that the garrison was too weak to hold the entire works, the council decided to defend the fort as long as possible and then withdraw to Mount Independence across the lake to the southeast. If that position became untenable, the troops would retreat southward in small boats, or batteaux, moored behind the log boom the Americans had laid across the channel to close the passage between the upper and lower ends of Lake Champlain. Satisfied that he had provided for the defense of the “Gibraltar of the North,” as Ticonderoga was called, Schuyler returned to Albany, leaving St. Clair to carry out the council’s plan as best he could. The weakness of the plan was that any force strong enough to drive the Patriots out of Ticonderoga would be strong enough to prevent them from retreating to Mount Independence.

The British operations against Ticonderoga began on July 2 when Brig. Gen. Simon Fraser’s Advanced Corps approached the American outer lines at Mount Hope. The rebel garrison set fire to the works and fled to the “old French lines,” entrenchments that stretched across the promontory north of the fortress. The British next took up a position within less than 100 yards of the lines and opened fire. St. Clair, believing this to be the prelude to an assault, ordered his troops to hold their fire until a command for concerted shooting was given. Emboldened by the American silence, a British soldier crawled ahead of his unit. One of St. Clair’s officers, Lt. Col.

James Wilkinson, ordered a sergeant to shoot the man. The shot was interpreted as the signal to open fire. The entire American line leaped to its feet and, joined by the artillery, fired a series of volleys at the enemy. When order was restored, the British had withdrawn out of range. At least 3,000 musket shots had been fired and eight pieces of artillery discharged at a force of 500 men within a range of 100 yards. The results: one British soldier dead and two wounded! The only "casualty" remaining on the field was the sergeant's target. When a burial party went out to dispose of him, it found him untouched and "passed out" in a drunken stupor. He was taken prisoner.

On July 4, while an indecisive artillery duel depleted the Americans' ammunition and St. Clair received reinforcements in the form of 900 militiamen, Burgoyne deployed his forces. On the morning of the 5th, St. Clair learned that the enemy was mounting cannon on the summit of Mount Defiance, southwest of Ticonderoga. The Americans had not occupied the hill because they thought it too steep to be scaled by artillery. Burgoyne's chief of artillery and second in command, Gen. William Phillips, believed otherwise. "Where a goat can go, a man can go," he declared; "and where a man can go, he can drag a gun." While these cannon could not hit the fort, they could prevent the defenders from withdrawing across the lake to Mount Independence. That night, after a heavy artillery bombardment of the British lines, the Americans evacuated Fort Ticonderoga. Col. Pierce Long of New Hampshire, with about 400 men, took the supplies and invalids up the lake to Skenesboro (now Whitehall, N.Y.) by boat; St. Clair marched the rest of his army along the eastern side of the lake behind Mount Independence southeast toward Hubbardton. From there he would move on to Castleton and then west to Skenesboro to join Long.

While General Fraser's Advanced Corps, supported by German Jagers and grenadiers, pursued the main body of Americans, Burgoyne garrisoned Ticonderoga and Mount Independence, and decided upon his next move. He had a choice of two routes southward—one by way of Lake George, another by way of Skenesboro. He chose the latter, basing his decision on four factors. First, Lake George is 221 feet above Lake Champlain, and he would have to drag his artillery, stores, and boats up this rise through a connecting gorge 5 miles. Secondly, by choosing the Lake George route, he would alert the Americans

to the fact that he was not threatening New England. By keeping east of the lake, he believed he was confusing them concerning his objective. Thirdly, the Americans were retreating toward Castleton, and if he expected to catch them, he would have to move south and east, unless he could be certain that by advancing via Lake George he would cut them off before they reached the Hudson. Finally, the Lake George route had two portages (one of them 5 miles long), whereas the other route had only one.

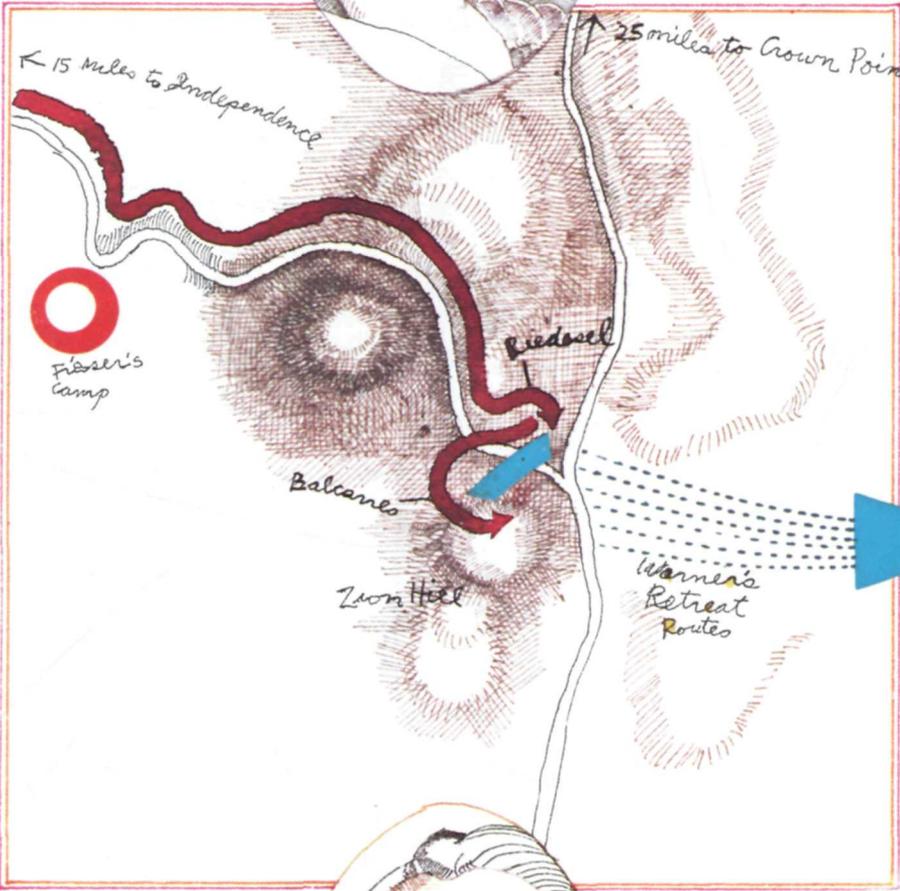
While the British prepared to continue their advance, St. Clair's men, sweltering in the intense July heat, swore their way along the narrow, rough, and rutted trace that led to the small hamlet of Hubbardton (in present-day Vermont). Arriving there on July 6, St. Clair drove most of his weary, disheartened soldiers another 6 miles to the day's objective, Castleton. He left Lt. Col. Seth Warner and 150 Vermont men at Hubbardton with orders to bring in the rearguard, consisting of the Massachusetts Regiment under Col. Ebenezer Francis and the New Hampshire Regiment under Col. Nathan Hale (not the youthful patriot hanged as a spy by the British in 1776).

Warner, long on courage and short on discipline, disobeyed his orders. Instead of bringing in the rearguard, he and Francis decided to spend the night where they were, not aware that General Fraser's British corps was camped just 3 miles to the northwest. The next morning, July 7, while the Americans were preparing breakfast, Fraser attacked. The Americans had not bothered to post sentries or pickets, and the surprise was complete. Hale's men fled in disorder, but Warner and Francis rallied their troops, and a fierce fight began.

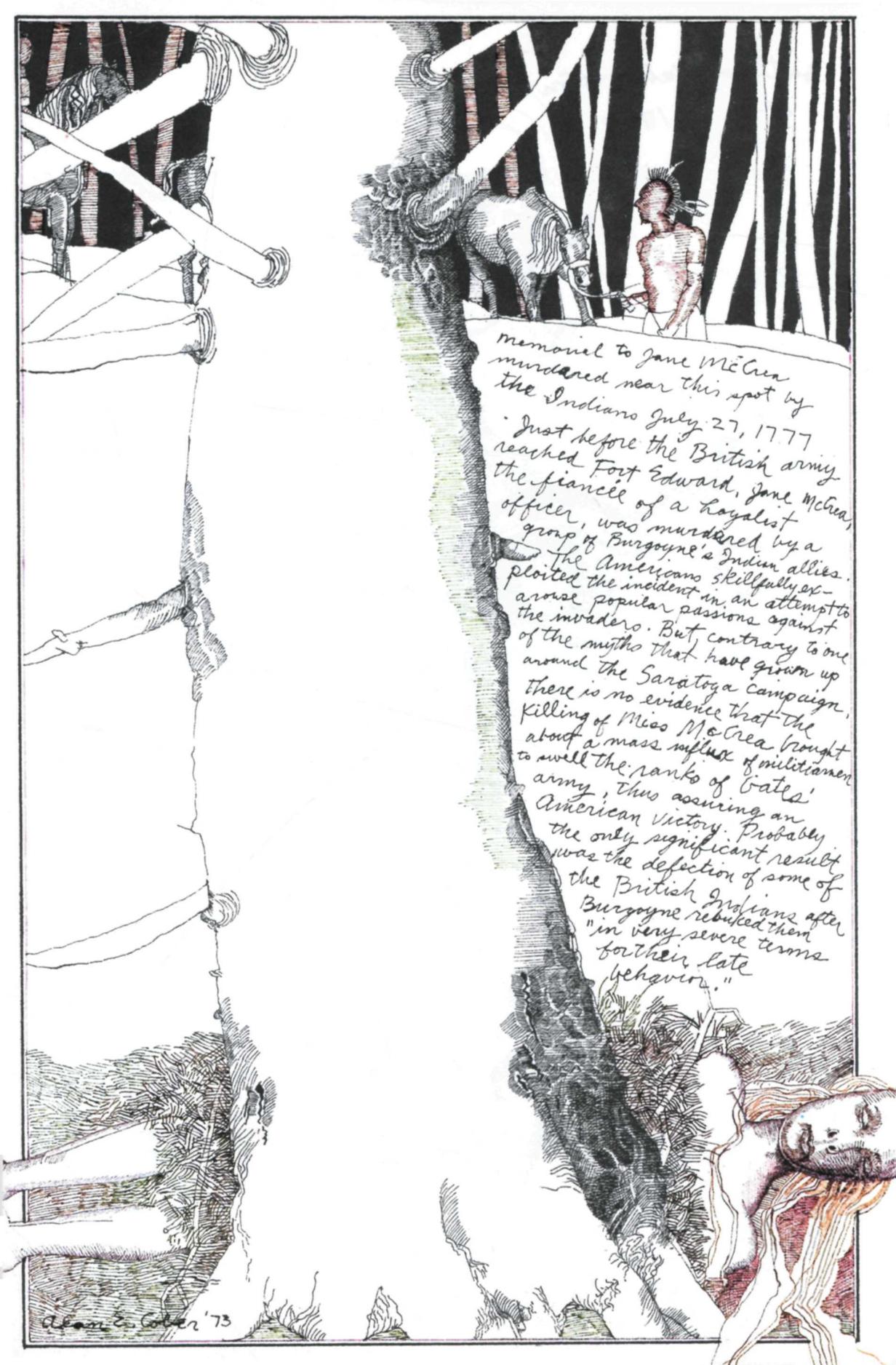
The heavily wooded Hubbardton area presented the British with a frustrating maze that snagged their gear and seemed to shelter an American behind every tree and bush. Orderly unit action was almost impossible. Fraser tried to turn the American left by sending his grenadiers under the Earl of Balcarres up steep Zion Hill, but the Americans drew back, "refusing the flank," while hitting the weakened British left. Balcarres' maneuver was neutralized, and he suffered severe losses from a withering fire. Fraser was about to order a desperate bayonet attack when he heard a strange sound from the forest. A band was playing and lusty voices were singing an ancient German hymn. The Brunswickers had arrived.

Battle of Hubbardton
July 7, 1777

Baron Friedrich Adolph Riedesel



General Simon Fraser



memorial to Jane McGrea
murdered near this spot by
the Indians July 27, 1777
Just before the British army
reached Fort Edward, Jane McGrea,
the fiancée of a loyalist
officer, was murdered by a
group of Burgoyne's Indian allies.
The Americans skillfully ex-
ploited the incident in an attempt to
arouse popular passions against
the invaders. But contrary to one
of the myths that have grown up
around the Saratoga campaign,
there is no evidence that the
killing of Miss McGrea brought
about a mass influx of militiamen
to swell the ranks of Gates'
army, thus assuring an
American victory. Probably
the only significant result
was the defection of some of
the British Indians after
Burgoyne rebuked them
"in very severe terms
for their late
behavior."

Gen. Friedrich Adolphus von Riedesel, commanding the German contingent supporting Fraser, had heard the sounds of battle as he approached Zion Hill. The 39-year-old veteran cavalryman hurried his men forward, sending his advanced guard against the American right. The Jagers, their band playing as though on review, advanced in formation against a vicious fire. Francis' Massachusetts Regiment poured volley after volley into them, but the Germans closed ranks and continued the attack. Francis held his ground until the turning movement enveloped his right, when he fell mortally wounded. Fraser's soldiers delivered a successful bayonet charge, and the Massachusetts Regiment broke and disappeared into the woods. The Vermonters, their right exposed, could stand no longer. At Warner's command, they evaporated into the wilderness to meet and reform at Manchester, south of Hubbardton.

At Castleton, St. Clair heard the sounds of battle, but he had no hymn-singing professionals to send back against the British. What he did have were two militia regiments, which, with their customary cavalier attitude toward discipline, had dropped out of the line of march and encamped 2 miles from Hubbardton. St. Clair ordered them to go to Warner's assistance, but they refused and hastily rejoined the main column toward which they had acted so independently the day before. While trying to organize a relief force among his own soldiers, whose reluctance increased with the arrival of the insubordinate militia, St. Clair learned of Warner's defeat. The issue was settled—the Americans would continue their withdrawal toward Skenesboro.

Meanwhile, Col. Pierce Long's invalid- and supply-laden flotilla, retreating from Ticonderoga, reached Skenesboro on July 6, closely pursued by the main part of Burgoyne's army. One look at the place convinced Long that it could not be defended against a strong enemy attack. After setting fire to whatever would burn, including most of the supplies, and abandoning everything else, he and his men set out quickly for colonial Fort Anne, about 12 miles to the south on Wood Creek.

Burgoyne entered Skenesboro that same day, sending Lt. Col. John Hill with the 9th Regiment in pursuit of Long, who reached Fort Anne before the British could intercept him. Fortunately for the Americans, Hill's advance was slowed by the nearly impassable road, and it was the evening of the 7th before the

British reached a position 1 mile from the fort. Early the next morning, an American entered Hill's camp, claimed to be a deserter, and told Hill that Long had 1,000 men in the fort. Because he had only 190 men, Hill sent back for reinforcements. The "deserter" noted Hill's weakness and promptly slipped away to report it to Long. By this time, Col. Henry van Rensselaer with 400 New York militia had reinforced Long, and the Americans attacked the British where they were encamped on a narrow, wooded shelf of land between the creek and a steep, 500-foot-high ridge. To avoid being surrounded, Hill's men scrambled up the ridge and held the Americans at bay for 2 hours. Just when the British were running out of ammunition and were under attack from all sides, they heard an Indian war whoop. The Americans heard it too. Short on ammunition, tired from pressing the attack, and having no desire to take on a fresh war party, they beat a hasty retreat, setting fire to the fort as they withdrew.

There had been a war cry, but there were no Indians—just one lone officer, Capt. John Money. He had been sent with a party of Indians to support Hill, and when the Indians lagged behind, the captain went on ahead. When he reached the scene of the fighting and saw Hill's predicament, he gambled and gave the yell. The ruse worked.

In the light of Long's withdrawal and the disaster at Hubbardton, all that St. Clair could do was to try to save his army by making a long detour around Skenesboro and retreat to Fort Edward, a dilapidated colonial war fortification at the Great Carrying Place between Wood Creek and the Hudson. He arrived there on July 12 and was met by Schuyler, who took personal command of the field operations. By this time, Schuyler was under fire for the loss of Ticonderoga, but his army was neither physically nor psychologically capable of stopping the British. Under the circumstances, he had no option but to continue to retreat.

While the Americans were exchanging territory for time, the British supply problem was growing more acute as their line of communication lengthened. Upon arriving at the Hudson, Burgoyne decided to remedy his situation by sending a raiding party into the Connecticut River country, which, according to his civilian adviser, Col. Philip Skene, was rich in Tories and livestock. The British commander planned the expedition to start at the mouth of the

Battenkill, move eastward across the Green Mountains to the Connecticut Valley, remain there long enough to encourage local Tories, enlist men for the loyalist corps, collect horses and supplies, and rejoin the army at Albany in about 2 weeks. As Burgoyne defined the mission, "The objective . . . is to try the affections of the country, to disconcert the councils of the enemy, to mount Riedesel's dragoons, to compleat Peter's [loyalist] corps, and to obtain large supplies of cattle, horses, and carriages."

Considering the nature of the country and the purpose of the raid, the composition of the force committed was remarkable. The commander was Lt. Col. Friedrich Baum, whose unmounted Brunswick dragoons were the nucleus of a force of 250 Germans, 50 British marksmen, and about 150 loyalists, Canadians, and Indians. Because Baum spoke no English, Skene went along as interpreter and adviser in local affairs. If the commander, a German officer who did not know the country or its inhabitants, was ill-suited to lead such an expedition, the decision to use dismounted dragoons was the height of folly. The mission demanded speed in a wooded, hilly region where the roads were nearly impassable to troops in any but the driest of weather. The dragoons were not used to walking, and their heavy jackboots and cumbersome swords not only made it impossible for them to move rapidly on foot but caused them to tire quickly.

Baum's force got under way on August 9. Shortly afterward, Burgoyne learned that the Americans had a large supply depot at Bennington in Vermont. This seemed like a godsend to the shortage-plagued British army, and it was much nearer at hand than the riches of the Connecticut. The commanding general rode after Baum on the 10th and directed him to change his objective.

Defending Bennington were about 1,500 New Hampshire militiamen under Brig. Gen. John Stark. A proud and experienced soldier, Stark had served in the famous Rogers' Rangers during the French and Indian War. In 1775, he had distinguished himself in the Battle of Bunker Hill outside Boston. The next year he gained additional laurels in the Canadian campaign and at Trenton and Princeton. Angered at being passed over for promotion early in 1777, he had resigned from the army and retired to his New Hampshire farm.

When Burgoyne launched his invasion of the northern frontier, the New Hampshire legislature called upon Stark to organize a brigade to help meet the British threat. He agreed but only on the condition that the brigade consist solely of New Hampshire men and that he be allowed to use it as he saw fit, independent of the Continental Congress and of the Continental Army. In short, he would be accountable only to the New Hampshire legislature. The legislature accepted Stark's terms and commissioned him a brigadier general.

During the first week of August 1777, Stark's brigade lay at Manchester, where the remnants of Seth Warner's troops had gathered to reorganize after their defeat at Hubbardton. On August 8, after refusing to join General Schuyler's army on the Hudson, Stark marched his men south to Bennington. There he learned of Baum's advance, and he sent a small force west to delay it.

On August 15, 3 days after leaving the Hudson, Baum's column encountered Stark's detachment at Van Schaick's Mill on the Walloomsac River. After harassing the British, the Americans withdrew toward Bennington and joined their main body. Baum set out in pursuit, sending back to Burgoyne for reinforcements. Although outnumbered two to one, the German colonel did not indicate that he was in any real danger.

The two forces met a few miles west of Bennington, where a small bridge crossed the Walloomsac. Stark, who had already sent word to Manchester for Warner's men to join him, posted his troops on the south side of the river, while Baum positioned his on the north. The British commander knew that the bridge was a critical point, and he sent 150 men across the river to throw up a breastwork. There, on a rise of ground near the crossing, they erected a fortification called the "Tory Redoubt." Canadians and loyalists took up positions at the end of the bridge. A 3-pounder cannon and about 75 German and British marksmen were posted on the right bank. Most of Baum's force, along with another 3-pounder, occupied a large fieldwork called the "Dragoon's Redoubt" on the hill overlooking the river. Three smaller works were built in support of the two redoubts, and 50 Jagers occupied a position on the riverbank. A third element covered the rear, and the Indians assembled on a plateau northeast of the Dragoon's Redoubt.

Battle of Bennington



Brig. General John Stark defeated the British under Baum and Germans



On the 15th, Stark's and Baum's men lay in their positions, soaked by the heavy rain that continued throughout the day. The rain stopped at about noon on the 16th, and Stark began a double envelopment, or complete encirclement, of Baum's position. The right element of this pincers movement, composed of 200 men from New Hampshire under the command of Col. Moses Nichols, marched about 4 miles through the woods and attacked the Dragoon's Redoubt at about 3 p.m. Shortly after Nichols began his attack, the left element of about 300 men under Col. Samuel Herrick struck the British rearguard. A third column of 200 men under Cols. David Hobart and Thomas Stickney moved down the road from Stark's camp and executed a double envelopment in miniature of the Tory Redoubt. At the same time, a force of 100 men demonstrated against Baum's front.

From his post in the Dragoon's Redoubt, Colonel Baum had watched contingents of Americans leave their encampment. He interpreted these moves as part of a retreat; and when small parties of men approached his position, he thought they were loyalists seeking protection in his rear. He did not try to stop them as they got into position to attack.

The men in the Tory Redoubt were routed after a brief resistance, and the troops covering the bridge and riverbank soon broke for the rear. The main force in the Dragoon's Redoubt held its ground against the attack until their ammunition ran low. Then their reserve supply caught fire and exploded, and Stark's men closed in to complete the day's work. The dragoons, rallying around their old commander, drew their swords and started to cut their way through the Americans. Stark's men lacked bayonets, and the Germans were making good progress when Baum was mortally wounded. The greatly outnumbered dragoons gave up the fight at about 5 o'clock.

About the time Baum fell, Lt. Col. Friedrich Breyman, sent out by Burgoyne in response to Baum's earlier call for reinforcements, arrived on the field with one battalion each of grenadiers and light infantry, one company of riflemen, and two cannons. Breyman's column had reached Van Schaick's Mill at 4:30 p.m. There it met refugees from Baum's command who gave confusing and contradictory accounts of the battle. But the tired Germans had continued their march, fighting off militia attempts to stop them.

Stark was in a poor condition to meet Breymann. Many of his men had scattered to loot and to chase fugitives. But Seth Warner's men had arrived from Manchester and they pitched into Breymann's troops about 1 mile west of the river crossing. Although both forces had made an exhausting march in wet and muggy weather, they fought vigorously. When the Germans had exhausted nearly all of their ammunition, Breymann ordered a retreat; the Americans, however, surrounded his troops and the German drummers beat a call to parley. This should have ended the shooting, but the militia, ignorant of the etiquette of war, continued to fire. Breymann, who was wounded, and Skene succeeded in leading a retreat that saved two-thirds of the relief force. Stark, who had lost control of many of his troops, wisely ordered the Americans to break contact.

The Americans reaped a rich harvest in booty, including four cannon, hundreds of muskets, ammunition wagons, and swords. The British lost 907 dead and captured, and Burgoyne would have to do without the stores at Bennington. The American casualties are unknown, because Stark never submitted a report, but they probably amounted to less than 100. The strange victory was a great boost to patriot morale at a time when such a boost was desperately needed. Perhaps the fortunes of war had begun to turn.

Almost simultaneous with the British failure at Bennington was another on the Mohawk River that helped to doom Burgoyne's campaign. Part of the invasion plan provided for an expedition to move down the Mohawk River and meet Burgoyne at Albany. That expedition, which left Oswego on Lake Ontario on July 26, consisted of about 300 British and German regulars, 660 Loyalists, and probably 800 Indians. The commander was Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger, member of an old Anglo-Irish family with a long, honorable record of service to the Crown, who held a "local" rank of brigadier general.

The principal American defense work on the Mohawk was Fort Stanwix (also known as Fort Schuyler), a large earthen, bastioned, and moated installation at the river's headwaters and guarding the Great Oneida Carrying Place that linked the river with the water route to Lake Ontario. The fort was garrisoned by the 400-man 3d New York Continental Regiment, 150 men from Col. James Wesson's Massachusetts Regiment, and 100 New York militiamen.

Twenty-eight-year-old Col. Peter Gansevoort was in overall command.

St. Leger's troops arrived at the fort on August 2 and began siege operations. Meanwhile, Brig. Gen. Nicholas Herkimer had learned of St. Leger's advance and collected the Tryon County militia to go to Gansevoort's relief. Enroute, the militia were ambushed on August 6 at Oriskany, about 6 miles southeast of the fort, and, after a desperate hand-to-hand fight in which Herkimer was mortally wounded, withdrew with heavy losses. During the battle, Marinus Willett, second in command at Fort Stanwix, led a sortie against the British and Indian camps. This action did not alleviate Herkimer's predicament, but Willett's men did destroy or capture a large quantity of enemy supplies. The British maintained the siege, but they were unable to mount an assault.

Despite the ease with which St. Leger was able to invest Fort Stanwix, General Schuyler had not neglected the defense of the Mohawk Valley. During July he had tried to obtain additional Continental troops for the western frontier of his command and sought the State's assistance in finding militia units that could be sent up the river to oppose just such a movement as that undertaken by St. Leger. He had also written letters of advice and encouragement to General Herkimer and the Tryon County committee of safety.

Schuyler's involvement in the defense of Fort Stanwix took a more concrete form when, beginning on August 9, he sent units of Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Learned's brigade from Van Schaick's Island, where the Mohawk empties into the Hudson, to raise the siege. On August 13, Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold left the main body of Schuyler's army at Stillwater, where it had been since the latter part of July, to take command of the relief column. Advancing rapidly to German Flats, about 30 miles east of the Oriskany battlefield, the Americans captured a number of loyalists, among whom was a semi-imbecile named Hon Yost Schuyler, a distant relative of General Schuyler. Sentenced to death as a spy, Hon Yost was reprieved on the condition that he spread the rumor among St. Leger's Indians that the Americans were advancing in overwhelming numbers. The ploy worked. The Indians, who constituted about one-half of the British force and who had joined the expedition with the expectation of little fighting and much loot, deserted wholesale. St. Leger abandoned

operations and retired to Canada. He would not rendezvous with Burgoyne at Albany.

Except for the militia's conduct at Bennington, there had been little about the defense of the Champlain-Hudson line to inspire American confidence and pride. There had been no heroic stands. In fact, since the loss of Skenesboro on July 6, the Americans had usually maintained a distance of several miles between the two armies. But the Northern Department's army had slowed the pace of the British advance by felling trees and destroying bridges along the route southward. More important, by exchanging territory for time, the Americans had shortened their own communications while lengthening those of the enemy; and they had more men and supplies available to them, while Burgoyne's resources had passed their maximum.

On August 14, his army reduced by the absence of the relief force under Arnold, Schuyler began to withdraw his troops from Stillwater to the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers. By the time they reached there, Schuyler was the object of a rising chorus of criticism and abuse. His lack of aggressiveness, the way he directed most of the defensive operations from the comfort of his Albany and Saratoga homes, the loss of Ticonderoga, the hostility of New Englanders who distrusted his military ability and political views, and his frigidly aristocratic manner united to bring upon him the censure of civil and military leaders. The Americans were afraid that the British were going to win in the North. They wanted a more aggressive commander.

As it had once before, in 1775, the command of the Northern Department became the subject of debate in Congress. It was an old issue that had long troubled civilian leaders and aggravated personal, political, and sectional tensions. Once again, it involved two men who, between them, had borne the hopes and frustrations of command on the northern frontier—Philip John Schuyler, Hudson Valley patriot and political leader, and Horatio Gates, former British army officer turned Virginia planter.

Schuyler had been appointed to command the Northern Department in June 1775. Two months later he was charged with leading an offensive up the Champlain-Hudson route against Canada. Plagued by ill-health, Schuyler turned over the field command to Brig. Gen. Richard Montgomery, who was killed in



Major General
Philip Schuyler,
first commander
of the American
troops opposing
Burgoyne.



Major General
Horatio Gates,
Commander
of the American
forces at
Saratoga.

an unsuccessful, climactic attack on Quebec. When the invasion failed and the Americans were forced to retreat from Canada in the spring of 1776, many soldiers and politicians blamed Schuyler for the defeat. Because of the rising criticism of the New York commander, Congress on June 16 directed General Washington to make General Gates, then adjutant general of the Continental Army, commander of the American forces in Canada.

Gates arrived at Schuyler's headquarters in Albany believing that he was to exercise complete command over the Northern Department. Schuyler refused to recognize Gates' jurisdiction, however, pointing out that the congressional resolutions and Washington's instructions limited Gates' authority to operations in Canada. Since the army was then in New York, Schuyler maintained that he was still in command of the department. Pending clarification of their respective positions, Gates acquiesced and submitted to Schuyler's authority.

After Congress confirmed Schuyler's interpretation, Gates remained in the north as commander at Ticonderoga. As the next ranking senior officer under Schuyler, he also functioned as second in command of the Northern Department. Both Schuyler and Gates tried to adjust to this less-than-ideal situation, but their personalities and perspectives made adjustment difficult. Schuyler was an aloof, class-conscious conservative. Although Gates had grown up on the fringes of English upper-class society, and had been a career officer in the British Army before the war, he was more democratic, both socially and politically. Sectionalism compounded their difficulties. New Englanders, whose attitudes toward Schuyler ran from critical to hostile, found Gates much more congenial and effective. Schuyler's much-publicized lack of aggressiveness and the military misfortunes attending northern operations earned him many critics in the army and Congress who considered Gates a more professional officer and the kind of commander the important northern frontier required.

Late in 1776, at the direction of Congress, Gates led the Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops south to join Washington for the campaign in New Jersey. For awhile Gates commanded at Philadelphia and then returned to his old job as adjutant general. In the meantime, Congress had again grown dissatisfied with Schuyler's handling of military affairs in

New York and was determined to replace him. On March 25, 1777, Gates was ordered to assume command of the Northern Department, and this time there were no ambiguities in the orders. Two months later, however, Congress, for reasons uncertain, reversed itself and returned Schuyler to the post. Thus it was that Schuyler commanded on the northern frontier when Burgoyne began his offensive.

The loss of Ticonderoga and the apparent success of the British advance provided Schuyler's critics with ammunition to further question his military capabilities and to gain converts from among those who had supported the general in the past, including some who were looking for a scapegoat upon whom to place the blame for American failures. After a debate that sometimes revealed as much about sectional and political loyalties as it did an awareness of military problems, Congress asked General Washington to select a new northern commander. The commander in chief politely declined. Congressional delegates then, by secret ballot, chose Gates by a vote of 11 States to 2. Schuyler afterward demanded a court-martial to clear his reputation. Acquitted of charges of incompetence, he resigned his commission on April 19, 1779.

Gates has been charged with intrigue in securing the command, but he was no more active in advancing his interests than his rival and most other general officers. Just why he should have conspired to obtain command in a department where he had already suffered enough frustrations to satisfy the most masochistic of men is not clear. It certainly did not hold much promise of glory; and the prospects in mid-summer of 1777 seemed to portend failure, not success. There were less controversial and more secure posts, and if Gates enjoyed the political influence attributed to him by his critics, he could have had any one of them.

Gates took over the Northern Department on August 19, 1777, and immediately attacked the army's problems with professional vigor. He sent letters to the executives and legislatures of New York and New England asking for militia and supplies. He improved the medical services, long a scandal. He tried to persuade John Stark, who heretofore refused to be bound by any authority other than the New Hampshire legislature, to integrate his militia into the department. When flattery failed, Gates bluntly reminded him that failure to act for the general good

would tarnish the glory he had won at Bennington. The result was that Stark did give limited and sporadic cooperation.

By early September, Gates matured a strategy for defeating Burgoyne. The terrain at the Mohawk-Hudson River junction was too flat and open to provide good defensive positions. He, therefore, decided to move the main part of his army back north to Stillwater where he would have a better chance of blocking Burgoyne's march to Albany. Militia units under Stark and Gen. Benjamin Lincoln were directed to operate east and north of Fort Edward along the attenuated, vulnerable British line of communication.

At Stillwater, Gates found that the distance between the river and the hills was too great to meet his requirements for a defensive position, so he moved his troops 3 miles northward to the heights behind Jotham Bemis' tavern, where a bend in the river forced the road to Albany against the base of the hills. The Americans arrived at Bemis Heights on September 12 and began to build entrenchments that blocked the road and fortified the bluffs. Under the supervision of Col. Tadeusz Kosciuszko, a 31-year-old Polish engineer, Gates' men laid out trenches along the crest of the bluff above the road. They built the main line of entrenchments from a ravine behind the bluff to the John Neilson farm on the crest of the heights, from whence they extended it southwest for about three-quarters of a mile. They posted their 22 cannons at strategic points, and pickets manned several outposts north of the fortified camp. The Americans were ready; the next move was up to Burgoyne.

Battles at Saratoga

By the time Burgoyne invaded the northern frontier, the land along the Hudson River below Fort Edward had been settled and under cultivation for more than half a century. The alluvial flats were dotted with farms and woodlots that varied in size according to the number of persons available to carry out the arduous work of clearing and cultivating farms in a wooded region. Most of the farmers held indentures from owners of old and extensive patents. In many cases, these were of such long duration that they almost amounted to ownership by the occupant.

Most of the houses were modest in size and design, often one-story or one-and-a-half story buildings that resembled the older homes of western New England or the Dutch areas to the south. There were several sawmills on the streams that empty into the river. Most of the houses on the flats were frame, similar to John Neilson's home on Bemis Heights. An occasional house, like the Woodworth home, where Gates had his headquarters during much of the American encampment, was more pretentious, with a gambrel roof and extensive outbuildings. The most impressive home north of the old Schuyler family seat at "The Flatts" was General Schuyler's country house at Old Saratoga (now Schuylerville). Barns and outbuildings were usually log and less impressive than contemporary German types in Pennsylvania. The Dutchmen who moved upstream and the Quakers and Congregationalists who came up the river or from New England were, generally, a thrifty, industrious lot, and they had been in the region long enough to make the valley floor rural rather than wilderness in character.

The hills above the valley had been settled later. There houses were cruder, often log like the Freeman cabin; outbuildings and barns were more primitive; fields less extensive; and the woods denser. This was new country that retained more of the wilderness character, and it bordered an even wilder back country.

Villages and hamlets had grown up around the old forts and blockhouses at places like Fort Miller, Saratoga, and Stillwater. They resembled their counterparts in other sections of the northern colonies. Most of them had a church or meeting-house; many had a school. They were agricultural centers; mills, shops, and taverns were their business establishments. Most of the inhabitants, including the miller, shopkeeper, and tavern-keeper, were also

farmers and active supporters of the Revolution. Several loyalist families lived around Fort Edward and there were others scattered about the area; but most of the people living along the upper Hudson sided with the rebels, not the British.

Despite the farms and settlements, the dominant feature of the country was the vast forest of hardwoods and conifers that stretched for hundreds of miles north, east, and west of the river. Most of these were mature woods, except for old fields that had been cultivated by the Indians who comprised the Iroquois Confederacy. Every stream junction was the site of an ancient campground or village, where generations of Indians had lived permanently or occasionally. Game, fish, and primitive woodland farming had sustained these people until the coming of the white man had produced the fur trade, of which they were the great entrepreneurs.

The farms and hamlets were connected by a surprising number of roads—or what passed for roads. They ran in all directions, usually at the whim of the people they served. Some went south, connecting the area with Albany and the old Dutch villages downstream. Others ran roughly east and west away from the river toward farms and settlements in the hills. Some of the roads running eastward provided links with Vermont and western Massachusetts. But the Hudson River was the major highway, providing the easiest, cheapest, and most reliable north-south transportation.

After the Battle of Bennington, Burgoyne remained on the east bank of the Hudson awaiting supplies because he knew that when he resumed his advance and crossed the river he would have to abandon his communications with the north. By September 11, he had accumulated 5 weeks' provisions and was ready to move. On the 13th he took his army across the river above Old Saratoga, about 12 miles north of where the Americans were waiting for him. Slowly the British moved southward along the river and the adjacent road with their boats, baggage, and artillery. On the morning of the 19th, they were encamped near Sword's house, 3 miles from Bemis Heights.

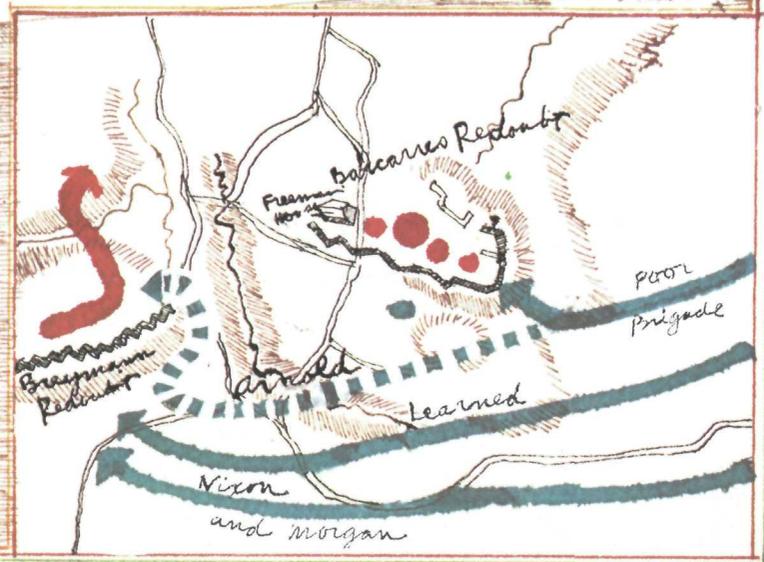
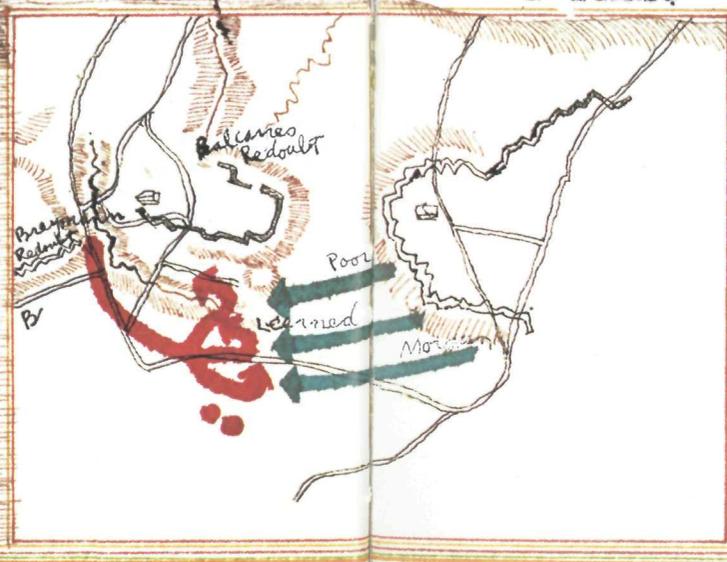
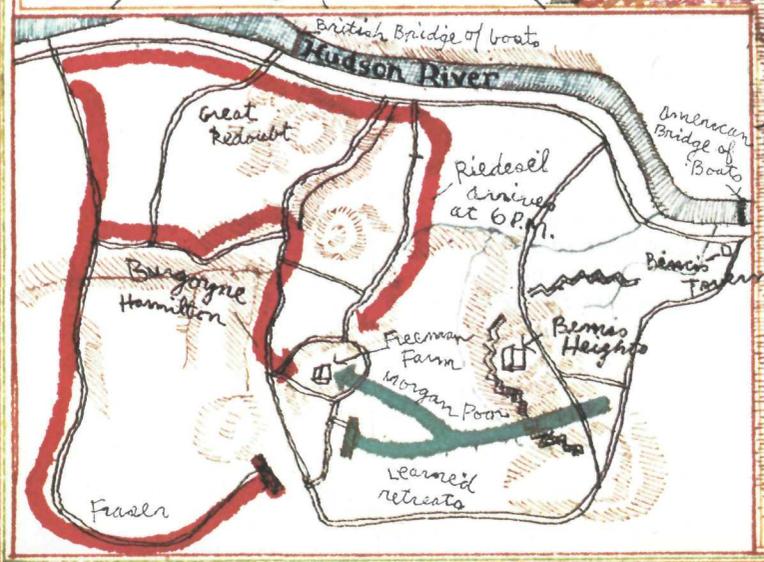
To understand the events of the next 4 weeks, it is necessary to keep Burgoyne's and Gates' objectives firmly in mind. Gates had a deceptively simple goal: block the British advance. The longer he could do

that the more nearly certain would be Burgoyne's failure, for the British general had to reach his objective, Albany, before winter. His army could not survive on the northern Hudson without supplies and shelter. Gates had access to stores in Albany and New England, and could remain in his position indefinitely. But Bemis Heights was the last good defensive position. If Burgoyne got past the heights, which he would have to do to get to Albany, there was little chance of stopping him on less favorable ground.

September 19 dawned unusually warm, and a fog hung over the river as Burgoyne faced a situation that every good commander tries to avoid—being forced to act on his opponent's terms. Two choices lay before him: he could keep his army in a column on the road and try to force his way through the American guns on the bluff and the batteries on the river flats; or he could attack the Americans in their fortified camp on Bemis Heights. Retreat was a third alternative, but Burgoyne seems not to have considered it. In any event, the militia under Lincoln, Stark, and Col. John Brown were ready to turn the route to the north into a succession of ambushes; and Gates, whose main army outnumbered Burgoyne's by nearly 2,000 men, could pursue the British with more ease and safety than they could retreat. The 100 miles back to Ticonderoga would have been a nightmare, even if Burgoyne succeeded in reaching the fort, which was highly unlikely.

The first alternative offered little or no hope for success. Burgoyne might have been able to drive the Americans out of the river batteries, but the fortified line on the bluff was secure against an army in the valley. Any force marching broadside to that line probably could not have survived an attempt to move through the narrow passage between the heights and the river.

That left only the second alternative—to get the Americans out of their fortified camp and open the way to Albany. The tactic that Burgoyne employed was a three-column movement toward the American position, whose extent and strength were unknown to him. General Fraser commanded the right column of 2,547 men—composed of the British 24th Regiment, the German and British light infantry and grenadiers, loyalists, and Canadians—and 12 guns. The center column consisted of 1,600 men of Gen. James Hamilton's division, and the 21st and 62d



Regiments of the British Line; Burgoyne accompanied this element. The left column, numbering slightly more than 3,000 men, was commanded by General von Riedesel and included the German Regiments von Riedesel, von Specht, von Rhetz, Erbprinz (Hesse-Hanau), 89 dragoons, 100 light infantrymen (Chasseurs and Jagers), six battalion companies of the British 47th Regiment, and 19 cannons.

Fraser's column marched along a road running westward from the Sword house to a point 3 miles from the river, and then turned southward. Hamilton's column followed Fraser's a short distance, then turned south at the first road and marched to the Great Ravine, crossed it, and moved west to a point north of the Freeman farm. Riedesel's column, the largest of the three, marched out along the river road. When the columns reached their assigned positions, a signal gun would coordinate a simultaneous movement against the American camp.

Learning of the enemy's movements, Gates ordered Col. Daniel Morgan's Rifle Corps and Maj. Henry Dearborn's light infantry battalion to reconnoiter the woods and fields north of the American lines. They were followed by the 1st, 2d, and 3d New Hampshire Regiments from Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor's brigade, which was a part of Benedict Arnold's division. At about noon, a part of Morgan's Corps fired upon and killed or wounded most of the advance guard of Hamilton's column in the Freeman farm clearing. The riflemen rushed forward to pursue the survivors and ran head-on into the main body of Hamilton's division. The British drove Morgan's men into the woods south of the farm, where they scattered. Morgan was chagrined by the sudden disorganization of his command, but by persistent use of his "turkey call" he rallied the men and deployed them on the fringe of the farm clearing.

After a brief lull, during which the New Hampshire regiments joined the riflemen, the fight resumed. As it intensified, other regiments of Poor's brigade, followed by Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Learned's brigade, also from Arnold's division, and the 10th Massachusetts Regiment from Brig. Gen. John Paterson's brigade, were committed. Morgan's riflemen and Poor's troops bore the brunt of the fight, while the other units faced Fraser and prevented him from going to Hamilton's support.

For more than 3 hours the battle surged back and forth across the weed-grown, stump-studded farm. This was no fight between professionals and raw backwoodsmen. The greater part of the Americans were veteran Continentals, or regulars, many of whom were in their third year of service. The troops deployed, attacked, retreated, rallied, and attacked again in a disciplined, soldierly manner. After the first, brief flight of the riflemen, there was no panic as the men of both armies fought an almost classic infantry engagement. The British enjoyed an important advantage with their artillery, for the Americans brought no cannon onto the field; but so persistently did Morgan's marksmen pick off the gunners that they were almost wiped out, and the guns were captured repeatedly. Because Gates' troops had neither limbstocks to fire the cannon nor horses to move them, the guns were each time retaken and turned against the Americans.

The British regiments upheld the great traditions of their service, counter-attacking again and again with bayonet against increasingly heavy odds. Time and again, Burgoyne exposed himself to enemy fire; his chief of artillery and second ranking general officer, General Phillips, led the 20th Regiment to the relief of the 62d when that unit was being overwhelmed. But all the gallantry and skill were inadequate to counter the Americans' numerical advantage and superior firepower.

At 5 o'clock, responding to an urgent order from Burgoyne, Riedesel started toward the Freeman farm with his own regiment, two companies of the Regiment von Rhetz, and Pausch's Hesse-Hanau Artillery, leaving about 2,500 men on the river road. He reached the battlefield about 6 p.m., just in time to throw his fresh troops against the American right flank and bolster the British who were slowly retreating to the woods north of the farm. The English delivered another bayonet charge, supported by the reinforced artillery; and at dusk, the Americans withdrew. Their comrades on the left, after a brisk exchange of fire with Fraser's elite corps, joined a general retreat to the camp on Bemis Heights.

Considering the opposing commanders' objectives, the Americans had won an important victory. Burgoyne possessed the field, but Gates still blocked the route to Albany.

Neither army made an all-out effort on the 19th.

Fraser's men were involved in a very limited manner against the Americans' left, and most of Riedesel's column remained in the valley to exploit an opening of the Albany route and to cover the British artillery and supplies. Gates retained approximately 5,000 soldiers in the fortifications above the river and in the flats to secure his right flank against any attempt to break through the roadblock.

The soldiers of both armies expected Burgoyne to renew the battle on the 20th; however, the British commander postponed a second engagement, partly because his hospital was taxed by the large number of wounded, but mainly because he hoped that Sir Henry Clinton, operating on the lower Hudson, would exert enough pressure south of Albany to make Gates divert troops to cope with that threat.

For the next 17 days the armies faced each other, but they were not idle. The British constructed a strong fortified line extending in a shallow arc from the Great Redoubt on the bluffs north of the Great Ravine to the Freeman farm, where they built the Balcarres Redoubt, thence to the Breymann Redoubt northwest of the farm. Meanwhile the Americans strengthened their own fortifications, collected supplies and militia, and harassed the enemy so relentlessly that the British slept on their arms in a constant alert.

On September 21, within a few hours of Burgoyne's decision to wait for word of Clinton's movements before resuming operations, the British soldiers heard cheering and cannon fire from the American camp. Gates' men were celebrating the news that General Lincoln's troops under Col. John Brown had captured Ticonderoga's outworks and taken nearly 300 prisoners. Although the British retained the great stone fort and the Americans eventually withdrew to join the operations against Burgoyne, the isolation of the main body of the British army was dramatically demonstrated.

But all was not well within the American camp. Within 3 days of the fight on Freeman's farm, a dangerous quarrel flared between Gates and Benedict Arnold. Relations between them had so far been cordial, and they had functioned well during the critical hours of the 19th when regiments from Arnold's command carried the fight to the British on Freeman's farm. But when Gates prepared his report to Congress, he credited the entire army with

stopping Burgoyne's advance without specifically mentioning Arnold and his division.

The 36-year-old Arnold was not one to take a slight lightly, regardless of the circumstances. He had a reputation for spectacular leadership and he was proud of it. He was also a good divisional commander, but vain, quick-tempered, suspicious, and very sensitive about his "honor" and rank. When Arnold learned of the contents of Gates' report, he interpreted the omission of any reference to his division as a personal affront, a belief in which he was probably encouraged by officers hostile to the northern commander. His anger was fed by a general order making Morgan's Corps, which had been posted on the left wing and which Arnold considered part of his division, an independent unit, with its commander responsible directly to Gates.

Never one to suffer silently, Arnold stormed into Gates' quarters and accused the general of insulting him. The two exchanged recriminations, and Arnold threatened to leave the Northern Department. Gates told him that he would be free to go as soon as General Lincoln arrived to take over the division. Arnold went to his quarters and wrote a long, bitter letter to Gates reviewing his services in the battle of the 19th, reciting his grievances, and demanding a pass to join Washington's army. Gates gave him permission to leave, but it was in the form of a letter that he was to deliver to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress. Arnold refused to accept the letter and demanded a common pass to Philadelphia. Gates gave it to him. Arnold still refused to leave camp, defied Gates to replace him, and continued to make recommendations concerning the conduct of the campaign. The commanding general had had enough. He removed Arnold from command, gave Lincoln command of the right wing, and took over Arnold's division himself. Arnold remained in camp without authority and became the center of a small clique of Schuyler partisans working to discredit Gates for having replaced their former leader.

The situation was dangerous, not only because it threatened the effectiveness of the army's command in the presence of the enemy, but also because it could bring to the surface personal, regional, and social tensions at a time when they might prove fatal to the American cause. That the results were not disastrous was a tribute to the good sense and



Alan E. Cohen '73

patriotism of the men and officers in the camp on Bemis Heights.

Meanwhile, the British commander continued to bide his time waiting for news that Clinton was ascending the Hudson. Burgoyne now knew that St. Leger had abandoned the Mohawk expedition and would not meet him at Albany. Cut off from the North, he hoped desperately for succor from the south. Gone were the days when Burgoyne believed that he could accomplish his mission unaided.

Clinton was doing his best to aid Burgoyne, but he was handicapped by a paucity of force and indefinite instructions. When Sir William Howe embarked on his campaign against Philadelphia on July 23, Sir Henry was left to defend New York City with a force of 6,900 infantrymen, of which 3,000 were recently raised loyalist militia. Clinton had disagreed with Howe's plan to attack the American capital, fearing that "Mr. Washington would move with everything he could collect against General Burgoyne or me, and crush the one or the other" The British position had a perimeter of 100 miles that included large defensive works on three New York islands and the Jersey shore. As long as Washington's army was within striking distance of the city, *Clinton could make no move in support of Burgoyne*. This was especially true since the American commander had dispatched 4,000 men under Gen. Israel Putnam to Forts Clinton and Montgomery on the Hudson, about 50 miles north of New York City, with orders to guard the Highlands.

Howe was certainly aware of Clinton's predicament and left no instructions to assist Burgoyne by taking the offensive on the lower reaches of the river. At the time, Sir William apparently did not anticipate the need for such an offensive. Seven days after setting out on his campaign, however, he had second thoughts and wrote Clinton: "If you can make any diversion in favor of General Burgoyne's approaching Albany, I need not point out the utility of such a measure." Clinton did not consider this a command. Even though the pressure on New York was eased when Washington crossed the Delaware to follow Howe's movements, the New York garrison was still too weak to open the Highlands. Nor was Sir Henry worried about Burgoyne's situation. He had received a letter written by the northern commander at Fort Edward, just before the Battle of Bennington, that indicated that he expected to reach

Albany about the 23rd. Burgoyne made no reference to needing or expecting help from the south.

By the end of August, however, the situation had changed. On September 11, Clinton learned of the British disaster at Bennington and that the Canadian army was still many miles north of its objective. He immediately wrote to Burgoyne: "You know my good-will and are not ignorant of my poverty. If you think 2000 men can assist you effectively, I will make a push at [Fort] Montgomery in about ten days." Burgoyne's reply, dated September 23, 4 days after the battle at Freeman's farm, stated that "an attack or even the menace of an attack upon Fort Montgomery must be of great use, as it will draw away great part of [Gates'] force. . . . Do it, my dear friend, directly." But the movement upon which Burgoyne came to place so much desperate hope was to be a demonstration only, a limited feint to take pressure off the Canadian army and not a rescue operation, to be undertaken when expected reinforcements arrived from Europe.

The reinforcements arrived on September 24, about the same time Clinton learned that Washington had withdrawn a part of Putnam's force for service elsewhere. It was now possible for the British to make a move against the Highlands. On the first favorable tide, October 3, Sir Henry hurried northward with 3,000 men to attack the Highland forts. By then he knew that Burgoyne's provisions were low and that his communications with Canada had been severed.

The expedition reached Verplanck's Point, across the Hudson from Stony Point, on October 5. The small American garrison fled in confusion. While Clinton was preparing to land his troops, an officer arrived from Burgoyne with news that gave a new twist to the situation. The position of the Canadian army was desperate. Losses had reduced it to less than half the enemy's strength, and provisions would not last beyond the 20th. Burgoyne claimed that he could force his way to Albany but was uncertain about supplies when he got there. Before he undertook such a move, he wanted to know if Clinton could open communications and supply him from the south. He asked for explicit orders to attack the enemy on his front or to retreat to Canada.

Sir Henry, gravely concerned about Burgoyne's situation, resolved to do what he could to relieve the pressure on the Canadian army. At the same

time, however, Clinton was irritated by Burgoyne's effort to throw upon him the responsibility of deciding what course to take. In his reply, Clinton declared that he had no orders from Howe relating to the Canadian army, that he could not presume to give orders to Burgoyne, who had an independent command, and could do no more than exert pressure on the Americans in his behalf.

General Putnam had been weakened by having to make detachments from his force (the most recent a reinforcement for Washington after the Battle of Brandywine) and he had only about 1,200 Continentals and 300 poorly armed militia. After the Americans evacuated Verplanck's Point, Putnam quickly withdrew 4 miles into the hills and ordered reinforcements from Forts Clinton and Montgomery to join him. This was precisely the objective that Clinton had intended to achieve by his demonstration at Verplanck's. Leaving about 1,000 men at the Point to mislead Putnam, Clinton crossed to the west bank of the river and marched his infantry through the hills, surprised the two forts, and stormed them with bayonets. The Americans lost both of the forts and a large number of stores, and the flotilla guarding obstructions in the river was unable to escape northward against the wind and was burned.

On October 7 Clinton broke through the log boom the Americans had stretched across the river and routed the small garrison at Fort Constitution near West Point. The next day, he wrote to Burgoyne: "*Nous y voici* and nothing now between us but Gates. I sincerely hope this little success may facilitate your operations . . . I heartily wish you success." Clinton's message never reached the northern commander. The messenger carrying it was captured and hanged after the note was recovered from a silver bullet he had swallowed. In any case, Sir Henry's encouraging note would have arrived too late. The day before it was written, Burgoyne had fought his second engagement with Gates—and lost.

Knowing nothing of Clinton's plans other than the proposed attack on the Highland forts at some future, unspecified date, Burgoyne, in his fortified camp on the Freeman farm, had decided in early October that he could not wait much longer for the expected relief. Plagued by severe supply shortages and faced with advancing autumn, he knew he must act soon. On October 4, the day after his men went on reduced rations and the day after Clinton began

his movement northward, Burgoyne called a council of war and made a startling proposal. He would leave 800 men to guard the supplies and use the rest of his army to attack Gates' left and rear. His subordinates were shocked. They argued that so much time would be required to make such a flanking movement that the Americans could overwhelm the 800 men left in camp, seize the supplies, repulse the attack, and cut off the retreat north. The conference adjourned without reaching a decision.

The next day, Baron von Riedesel recommended that the army be withdrawn to the mouth of the Battenkill, where communications with the lakes might be reestablished while awaiting news from Clinton. Then, he argued, if no help came from the south, the army would be in a position to retreat. On the face of it, the proposal had merit, but Burgoyne replied that a withdrawal would be disgraceful and futile. The Americans would surely interpret it as a victory, and this, coupled with their numerical and tactical advantages, would give them the psychological incentive to pursue and intercept the British before they reached a position of safety. Burgoyne was not ready to hazard such a retreat. He was determined to make one more attempt to drive the Americans off Bemis Heights.

On October 7, he revived his proposal of the 4th in a new form. Instead of committing all but 800 men to a flanking attack, he would organize a reconnaissance in force to probe the American position from the high ground west of the Neilson farm, in the angle formed by the apex of Gates' camp. If conditions proved favorable, he would then launch an all-out attack on the 8th. If an attack were not feasible, he would then try to save his army by retreating. It was a gamble, but Burgoyne was an old gamester and a proud, brave man who feared fighting against great odds less than he did being picked to pieces while on the run.

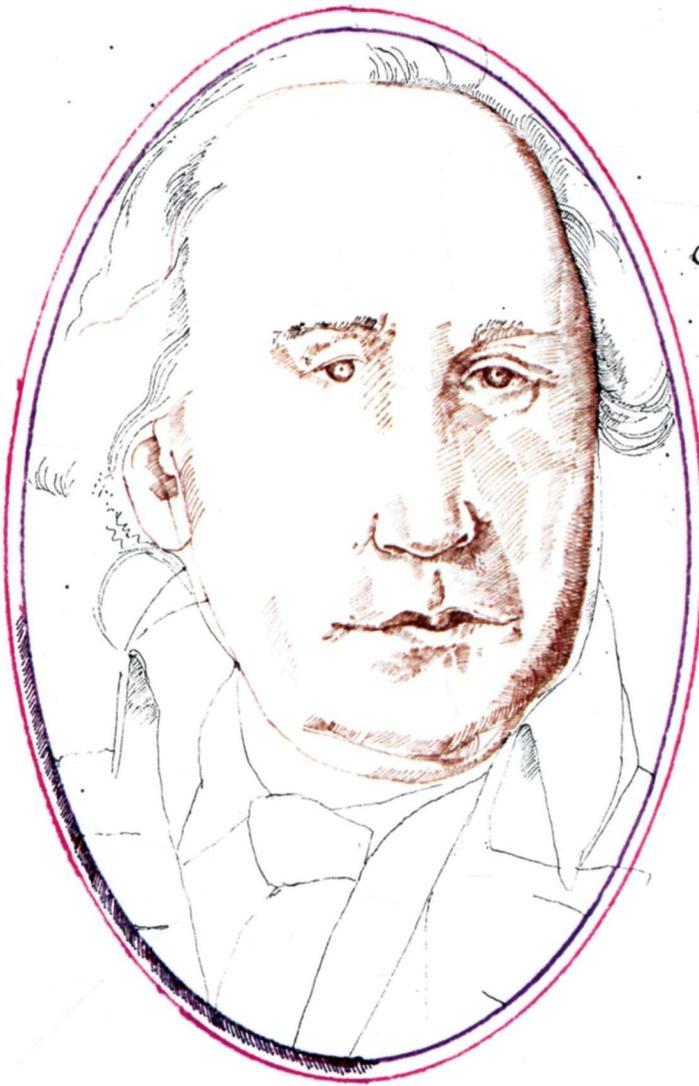
The probing force was carefully chosen for mobility and shock power. From Simon Fraser's Advanced Corps came Capt. Alexander Fraser's rangers, the British grenadiers and light infantry (Burgoyne's elite units), and the 24th Regiment. Also from the Advanced Corps came the German Jagers, chasseurs, and grenadiers, men who would have been the pride of any European army. Men from the Hanau, Rhetz, Riedesel, and Specht Regiments were drafted from Riedesel's division. Hamilton's division contributed

men from the British 9th, 20th, 21st, and 62nd Regiments who had borne the heat of battle on September 19th. Eight cannon served by 107 artillerymen accompanied the column. A total of 1,723 officers and men marched out of camp, leaving 5,423 to man the fortifications and await the outcome of the probing action.

About noon, Generals Fraser, Phillips, and Riedesel led the column out of camp. When their advance guard reached a point west of the Barber farm on the northern slope of the Middle Ravine, the column halted. Some of the officers climbed onto the roof of the farm cabin and tried to scan the American works through telescopes. Several soldiers foraged for grain in the abandoned fields, and some Americans believed that the British were only on a foraging expedition. The British front, which extended from the woods west of the Barber farm to the southern fringe of the Freeman farm, was mostly open, but the flanks rested in woods and were vulnerable to attack. James Wilkinson, the American deputy adjutant general, reported the British position to Gates, and the commander told him to order Morgan to “begin the game.”

The American attack, which opened between 2:30 and 3 p.m., was classic in its direct simplicity. Colonel Morgan’s corps of riflemen and light infantry struck the British right, composed of Fraser’s light infantry and the 24th Regiment. Col. Enoch Poor’s brigade attacked the British grenadiers and the units from Hamilton’s division. Ebenezer Learned’s target was the Germans in the center of the column.

Poor’s men soon overwhelmed the greatly outnumbered grenadiers, whose commander, Maj. John Dyke Acland, fell badly wounded. They then struck Hamilton’s men, who were strung out in a thin line from the Quaker Springs Road to near the southern end of the Balcarres Redoubt. Morgan’s corps opened fire from the woods west of the Barber farm, and Fraser’s veterans began falling before the deadly accuracy of the Pennsylvania and Virginia riflemen. Despite the soldiers’ dogged courage and the skill of their officers, Fraser’s men were forced to withdraw across the rear of the Germans and deployed parallel to the road to Quaker Springs. As Morgan’s men rolled back the British right, Fraser rode among his men, encouraging and rallying them to maintain their ranks, keep up their fire, and make the Americans pay dearly for every foot of ground.



Col. Daniel
Morgan
helped bring
about Burgoyne's
surrender with
his crack,
handpicked
riflemen.

He knew that he had to preserve the right flank long enough to allow the center and left to make an orderly withdrawal. But the Scotsman's efforts were in vain. He could not stop the turning movement. Just before his men reached the road, Simon Fraser fell mortally wounded. His command passed to a fellow Scot, Alexander Lindsay, Earl of Balcarres.

While Morgan and Poor drove back the enemy's flanks, Learned's brigade, soon supported by Brig. Gen. Abraham Ten Broeck's brigade of New York militia and a regiment from Jonathan Warner's brigade of Massachusetts militia, struck the Germans, who, with both flanks exposed, stubbornly fought them off. In the midst of the attack, Benedict Arnold rode onto the field and, though he had no command, led a second assault that caused the Germans to join the general retreat into the Balcarres Redoubt.

By 5 p.m. the probing column had lost eight cannons and suffered more than 400 casualties. Burgoyne's plan was thwarted, but behind the strong walls of the Balcarres Redoubt, his soldiers were still capable of putting up a stiff fight, as Poor's men soon discovered. After the Germans were routed, Arnold left Learned's troops and seized command of Poor's. Through the woods behind the Coulter and Freeman farms, Poor's men pursued the retreating enemy. They poured over the "Bloody Knoll," overran its small outpost, and swarmed into the open ground in front of the Balcarres Redoubt. A withering fire met them as they charged, in a series of futile and costly assaults, into the abatis covering the British front.

While the British and Germans were retreating into their fortifications, fresh American troops arrived from Bemis Heights. Brig. Gen. John Paterson's brigade, one of John Glover's regiments, and the 5th and 6th Massachusetts Regiments from John Nixon's brigade brought the number of Americans on the battlefield to more than 8,000.

While Poor's men fought and died in front of the strongest British position, Learned's and Morgan's men, reinforced by the fresh Massachusetts regiments, deployed to attack Burgoyne's right flank, consisting of 200 Germans in the Breymann Redoubt and two companies of Canadian militia in log buildings between the redoubt and the Freeman farm. The Canadians were soon driven from their posts, exposing the left and rear of Colonel Breymann's position. The Americans then mounted a massive

attack on the Germans. While most of the men stormed the front of the redoubt, a part of Learned's command and some riflemen swept through the gap left by the Canadians and into the Germans' rear. During the final minutes of the attack, as remnants of Breymann's corps made their last desperate stand, Arnold, who had heard the firing on his left and abandoned Poor's troops, joined a party of riflemen firing into the Germans from the rear. Just as the defense collapsed, he suffered a leg wound (now memorialized by the famous "Arnold Monument" on the battlefield).

Possession of the Breymann Redoubt opened the right and rear of Burgoyne's camp to the Americans. A German "forlorn hope" attempt to recapture the fortifications failed, and its leader, Lt. Col. Ernst Ludwig von Speth, and 10 of his men were captured. As darkness ended the day's fighting, the British situation was desperate. The army lay in an indefensible position in the presence of a numerically superior enemy, more than 5,000 of whom were fresh troops. Leaving their campfires burning, the soldiers of the royal army withdrew under cover of darkness to the Great Redoubt on the heights north of the Great Ravine and overlooking the river road, along which lay their hospital, artillery park, and supply depot.

All the next day, Burgoyne's weary, badly mauled men rested in a strong position. The Americans occupied the former British camp and kept up a steady cannonade. Shortly before sunset, a party of British and German officers slowly ascended the hill to the Great Redoubt, bearing the body of Simon Fraser to his grave. As the Royal Artillery chaplain, Edward Brudenel, intoned the Church of England's solemn Burial Office, American cannon made even that solemn duty hazardous.

The time had come when Burgoyne must make a decision he dreaded more than battle. He had been decisively defeated in the field, and only the rapid evacuation of his fortified camp to a strong temporary position had saved his army. He faced two alternatives: surrender or retreat. His pride and the fading, desperate hope that he could still profit from an aggressive move by Clinton persuaded him to try to buy time by retreating. If all else failed, perhaps the Americans might yet commit some tactical blunder that would permit him to escape. The old gambler was still fighting the odds.

During the battle on Oct 7
at Saratoga
Benedict Arnold
rode onto the
field and though
he had no
command, led
an assault that
caused the Germans
to join the general
retreat into the
Balscarres Redoubt.



Despite being under
tremendous fire, with
a few men he actually
entered the works,
but his horse was
killed and Arnold
was badly wounded in
the leg.



Gates had accomplished his primary goal of stopping the British advance; now he had an opportunity to capture Burgoyne's whole army. He had always appreciated the necessity of denying his opponent access to the north and east and had done everything in his power to accomplish that end. Fortunately for the Americans, their growing numerical strength gave Gates enough manpower to isolate Burgoyne from his northern base. During the first week of October, he posted militia on the east bank of the Hudson in the enemy's rear and received reinforcements from several areas. Stark and his militia reappeared, captured the small garrison at Fort Edward, and moved down the river toward Saratoga. More New Hampshiremen under Brig. Gen. Jacob Bailey occupied an entrenched position along the road that ran north of Fort Edward. Brig. Gen. John Fellows with a brigade of Massachusetts militia moved up the east side of the Hudson, crossed the river, and entrenched at Old Saratoga. Thus, when Burgoyne decided to retreat, there were more than 4,000 Americans behind him and almost 12,000 in front of him. He summed up the situation with these words: "A defeated army was to retreat from an enemy flushed with success, much superior in front, and occupying strong posts in the country behind. We were equally liable upon that march to be attacked in the front, flank, or rear."

At 9 p.m., about 3 hours after the burial of its old leader, Fraser's Advanced Corps marched out of the camp below the Great Redoubt; 7 hours later, the last unit of the British army was on the road north. After a halt at Dovegat (now Coveville), Burgoyne's soldiers slogged about 4 miles through a cold autumn rain toward Saratoga, where General Fellows' militia barred the way to the river crossing. Col. Nicholas Sutherland of the 47th Regiment urged Burgoyne to let him attack the Americans, whose security was temptingly lax. Because the regiment could muster only 250 men to attack Fellows' 1,300 in a prepared position, Burgoyne decided that the odds were too great and refused to grant the colonel's request. Instead, he kept his troops together as he approached Saratoga. Fellows did not wait for the British to attack; he withdrew across the river and entrenched along the crest of the hills, covering the ford over which the road crossed.

While Burgoyne's men dragged themselves northward, Gates' soldiers drew and cooked rations, replenished their ammunition, and prepared to pursue

the enemy. Their pace seemed almost leisurely, but there were reasons for this. The best troops, the Continentals, had borne the brunt of the fighting and needed rest if they were to be effective as flankers, an especially fatiguing duty; and rest was even more necessary if they should have to fight another pitched battle. The militia seldom marched in large numbers with much dispatch. The wretched weather slowed every preparation. Gates did have parties operating on the British left flank, but rapid movement was equally impossible for both armies.

The American advanced guard reached the Fish Kill at about 4 p.m. on the 10th and found the enemy encamped on the heights north of the creek. Maj. Ebenezer Stevens immediately placed cannon on the flats south of General Schuyler's country house and opened fire on the British batteaux and working parties.

If the opposing armies had been approximately equal, Burgoyne's position would have been strong. Just north of the Fish Kill a ridge stretches northward, breaks sharply to the east, and flattens into a plateau on the west. The soldiers threw up entrenchments along this ridge, working feverishly from the chill fall mornings until past the early dusk under constant fire from American artillery and small arms. Despite the recent defeat, short rations, and physical privation and discomfort, they were still capable of putting up a defense that would do honor to reputations won on European battlefields.

The day after the Americans reached Saratoga, the British burned the buildings of the Schuyler estate to prevent Gates' soldiers from using them for cover. The same day, Burgoyne sent a strong detachment to a road that ran west of the river to a crossing near Fort Edward, but recalled it in anticipation of a concerted move against the Americans based upon vague news of Clinton's activities.

When the road repair party moved out of the British camp, Gates was convinced that most of the enemy was evacuating, and he ordered an advance for the next morning. When it became apparent that most of Burgoyne's troops were still in position and prepared to defend themselves, the Americans broke contact, surrounded the encampment, and settled down to what amounted to a siege of the position.

Gates was under pressure from some of his staff and

civil leaders in Albany to attack Burgoyne's camp and bring the campaign to an immediate close. Some of the more impetuous officers were eager to add lustre to their laurels by attacking an enemy whose weakness seemed to guarantee an easy victory. More responsible men believed that an attack should be made for other reasons. Of the 20,436 effectives in Gates' army, more than 2,000 were militia. When their terms of service expired, these men would go home, as the 2d Hampshire County Regiment of Massachusetts militia had done on October 14th. While it was true that the Americans outnumbered Burgoyne's troops by slightly more than two to one, many of the militia, because of their inexperience, were of limited value. Nevertheless, their presence helped give the Americans a comforting sense of superiority while impressing upon the enemy a feeling of despair. Another factor, especially among the civilians, was concern about Clinton's operations. If that threat grew and materialized, and if the militia departed, the opportunity to destroy Burgoyne might be lost.

Sir Henry's activities were in everyone's thoughts—giving Burgoyne his last, desperate hope of salvation and disturbing Gates' peace of mind. Clinton had no intention of moving on to Albany after taking the Highland forts, but neither commander at Saratoga knew that; and the events taking place after the capture of those works gave color to the belief that Sir Henry had more ambitious purposes in mind. On October 13, he ordered Gen. John Vaughan with 1,700 men, supported by a flotilla under Sir James Wallace, "to feel his way to General Burgoyne and do his utmost to assist his operations or even to join him if required." Vaughan and Wallace burned Esopus (now Kingston) on the 16th and moved upstream to Livingston Manor, about 45 miles south of Albany. They got no further. At Vaughan's approach, civilian leaders in Albany importuned Gates to reinforce General Putnam's troops defending the town. Gates responded by sending them soldiers from Fort Stanwix and 553 men of General Ten Broeck's militia brigade from his own army. When the British reached Livingston Manor they found Americans blocking their path. Vaughan notified Clinton that he could not get through to Burgoyne. In the meantime, Clinton had received orders from General Howe, who had run into more opposition than expected at Philadelphia, to abandon the Highlands and send reinforcements to Pennsylvania. Vaughan was ordered to withdraw.

Burgoyne, who knew much less about what was happening to the south than did Gates, clung to his hopes. But as the days passed, those hopes were more difficult to sustain in the face of the knowledge that rations would be exhausted on the 20th, that there was not enough drinking water, and that many of the soldiers were without shelter and under the constant fire from an increasingly stronger army.

Burgoyne convened a council of war on October 12, reviewed the situation in starkly realistic detail, and requested the opinions of his generals on the following propositions: (1) to await an attack; (2) to attack the enemy; (3) to retreat with artillery and baggage; (4) to retreat at night without artillery and baggage; (5) to march rapidly to Albany if the enemy, by extending to his left, should leave his rear open. The fourth proposition seemed the only practical one, but it was eliminated when reconnaissance revealed that it would be impossible to accomplish.

A second council met on the 13th, and the members decided that their situation justified the seeking of honorable terms for a capitulation. Burgoyne then addressed a letter to Gates, and negotiations were begun on the morning of the 14th at Gates' headquarters. During the discussion, the American commander presented to Col. Robert Kingston, Burgoyne's representative, terms for unconditional surrender. Burgoyne rejected them. The British commander then presented his own terms. To everyone's surprise, Gates agreed to most of the details with the stipulation that the surrender must be accomplished by 2 o'clock that afternoon (the 15th). Burgoyne grew suspicious and quickly surmised that Gates' sudden eagerness to conclude negotiations must mean that Clinton's expedition was approaching Albany.

If this were true, Burgoyne knew that his wisest course would be to delay negotiations long enough for Clinton to come to his relief or bring sufficient pressure upon the Americans to force Gates to raise the siege. He convened another council, which decided to inform the American commander that, while the basis of the treaty was agreed to, the British needed more time to study some minor matters. Burgoyne proposed to have two commissioners from each army meet to resolve the differences in terms.

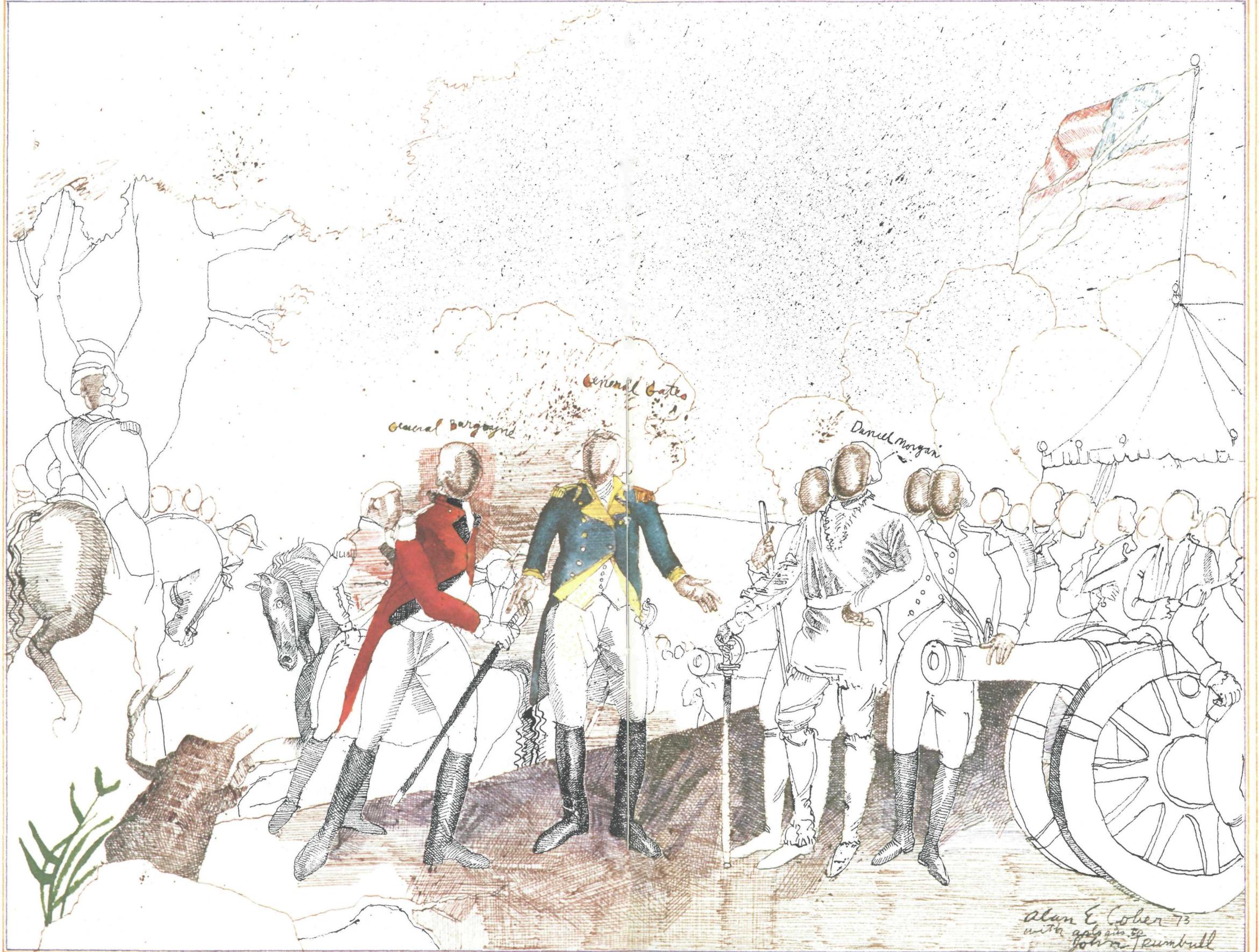
The commissioners met on the afternoon of the 16th near one of General Schuyler's sawmills on the

south side of the Fish Kill. After lengthy discussion, they signed and exchanged articles of capitulation. The British demurred at the term "capitulation," and the "Articles of Capitulation" became the "Articles of Convention." Gates hoped that his concession, which he did not feel to be important except to the defeated enemy's pride, would bring the negotiations to a close.

His hopes were premature. Burgoyne continued to play for time. Unaware that Vaughan had been stopped south of Albany, the British commander called another council and asked his generals two questions: could he honorably break the convention, and if the fragmentary and vague news of Clinton's operations to the south were true, did this improve their situation? The generals' answer to both questions was negative. Burgoyne and his staff then worked out a compromise that resulted in a letter to Gates accusing him of sending a sizable detachment of troops to Albany during the negotiations, that this had reduced the numerical superiority that had initially prompted Burgoyne to negotiate and therefore nullified the convention. To confirm this, Burgoyne requested that two British officers be permitted to check on the American strength. Gates rejected Burgoyne's reasoning and said that such a request was "inadmissable," that it was up to Burgoyne to ratify or dissolve the treaty, and that he expected an immediate and decisive reply. After another council of war, the British commander signed the "Convention of Saratoga" acknowledging defeat and delivering up his army to the Americans.

The surrender took place on October 17. The day dawned clear and cool, and the forests of the northern Hudson Valley were at the height of their autumnal splendor when Gates' soldiers paraded on the old military road south of the Fish Kill. Few of them were in uniform, but several of the British testified to their good physical condition and soldierly bearing. These men had earned a place in history vouchsafed to few others. They had defeated a brave, well-trained, professionally led army, and they were about to witness the first surrender of a British army on American soil.

At the appointed hour, Burgoyne, his general officers, and their staffs rode across the ford, between the American soldiers drawn up on both sides of the road, past the colonial Dutch Church to Gates' headquarters, where salutes were exchanged. Meanwhile,



General Burgoyne

General Gates

Daniel Morgan

Alan E. Cober '73
with assistance of
John Trumbull

north of the creek, on the parade of ruined Fort Hardy, the men who had fought faithfully against great odds laid down their arms, some with grim dignity, others with obvious grief and resentment. They too marched over the ford, past the silent lines of victorious Americans. As upon a signal, in the presence of both armies, Burgoyne tendered his sword to the American general who had once been a British major. Gates returned the sword; and while the "Convention Army" marched away to captivity, the principal officers on both sides retired to a marquee to dine.

The terms of the convention stipulated that Burgoyne's army would be returned to Europe, but because this would have freed other units to fight in America, the Continental Congress interposed a succession of objections and the terms were not kept. General Burgoyne returned to England on parole and other officers were exchanged, but the rest of the army was taken first to Massachusetts and eventually to near Charlottesville, Va., and interned for the duration of the war. Some of the soldiers, especially among the Germans, remained in America.

Fruits of Victory

The Convention of Saratoga took one of Britain's armies out of the war, and with it went her prospects of bringing the conflict to an early end through major land campaigns. Gone were the ill-defined hopes of Burgoyne, Howe, and the Cabinet for a victory in 1777 by capturing the American capital, invading the northern interior, and somehow uniting the two British armies to crush the rebellion. The King's ministers and generals reassessed the task in America and shifted their strategy to an emphasis on naval warfare and the capture of more limited strategic targets. The center of the war moved to the sea and the South, and the conflict in the North stalemated while the British undertook a war of attrition aimed at eroding the American will to fight.

The British achieved only one of the goals for 1777: Sir William Howe's capture of Philadelphia. But that success was made hollow by the failure of the northern campaign and the fruits of that failure. British plans suffered for the lack of a unifying concept. They rested upon the reckless premise that Howe could safely operate in Pennsylvania while a substantial garrison was immobilized on Manhattan and while Burgoyne was left to his own devices, each isolated from the others. The two campaigns were developed independently by Howe in New York and Burgoyne in England. They were out of contact with one another and gave almost no thought to what should have been their major concern—how to coordinate their offensives. But both men focused almost exclusively on his own undertaking, and the two plans were as different as their creators.

Burgoyne's called for speed and audacity in moving a relatively small force by a predetermined route to a goal that was not clearly defined; the terms "cooperation" and "communication" could be, and were in many instances, interpreted differently by their author, Burgoyne, and by Howe, Clinton, and Germain. Howe's plan called for deliberately moving a large army to a fixed geographical and political objective by a route that was not agreed upon until the last possible moment. Burgoyne was absorbed with reaching Albany and not with what might happen after he got there, beyond vaguely expecting to open communications and cooperate with Howe. Howe was obsessed with capturing Philadelphia and not with what might happen on the Hudson or how he would employ the troops from Canada once they reached Albany.

Because war narrows the perspective of field commanders, they frequently suffer from occupational myopia. But they are not sovereign. Government is responsible, theoretically at least, for seeing the whole picture and planning accordingly—assigning priorities, allocating resources, and requiring its military servants to integrate their energies. This responsibility rested with the Cabinet in general and Lord Germain in particular. The colonial secretary failed to discharge that responsibility. He knew that Howe intended to go to Pennsylvania. Despite warnings from Clinton, the lack of coordination between Burgoyne and Howe did not concern Germain early enough to make him effective in imposing unity on their campaigns.

Germain failed to explain Burgoyne's mission to Howe, contenting himself with sending that commander a copy of the letter to Carleton that contained Burgoyne's instructions. He did not raise the subject of an integrated effort with Howe until the middle of May, and then it was too late; by the time Howe received Germain's letter, he was already on his way to Philadelphia. Contrary to a persistent tradition, there were no "lost orders" directing Howe to ascend the Hudson; such orders never existed. Germain was confident that the two armies could shift for themselves until autumn and then, with Albany and Philadelphia secured, somehow establish contact and coordinate their future moves.

Despite the defects in British planning, the Americans did not win by default. Their retarding of Burgoyne's advance and their successes at Bennington and Fort Stanwix certainly contributed to the victory at Saratoga. But, Burgoyne might still have reached Albany if it had not been for the sound strategy that Horatio Gates developed after he took command of the Northern Department. He husbanded his resources and built up an overwhelming force that gave him the flexibility required to cope with Burgoyne's threat by isolating him and forcing him to fight on American terms. That strategy was ably executed by the army's general officers and regimental commanders. Finally, the Americans' great numerical superiority enabled them to defeat the soldiers of the royal army in two engagements that were fought according to standard European practices.

Saratoga was not a victory of frontier tactics over those of the Old World. Both armies had light troops

that used concealment and marksmanship in a manner dear to the imagination of romantics. Morgan's riflemen and Dearborn's light infantrymen had their counterparts in the British rangers, Balcarres' light infantry, and the German Jagers. However, the brunt of the fight was borne by the majority of regiments in both armies who deployed and fought in line, firing by volley in the only manner that made their muskets effective.

The Americans' victory at Saratoga boosted their morale and profoundly affected their military fortunes by internationalizing the war. After months of covertly supporting the Americans while weighing the pros and cons of becoming a belligerent, France's drift toward open involvement in the American conflict had reached a point by September 1777 where she was about to go to war against her ancient rival. The Declaration of Independence and the Americans' refusal to renounce that document as a condition for peace had, for the time being at least, ruled out the probability of a reconciliation between Britain and the rebellious colonies. The question of whether the Americans would be effective military allies had yet to be answered.

Despite the fall of Philadelphia, the French were encouraged by Howe's failure to destroy Washington's army in Pennsylvania, and they were especially impressed by the American commander in chief's audacity in the Battle of Germantown. Further encouragement came from a favorable report on the condition and morale of the Continental Army submitted by Gen. Johann de Kalb, a German who on September 15 became a major general in the American army. Gates' victory at Saratoga was even more persuasive proof that the Americans would and could fight.

Soon after receiving news of the American success, the French government decided that it was time to join the rebels in their fight against Great Britain. On January 8, 1778, the French foreign minister, the Comte de Vergennes, notified Benjamin Franklin, Silas Deane, and Authur Lee, the American envoys in Paris, that his government was prepared to enter into an alliance. On February 6, the three American representatives and Conrad Alexandre Gerard, France's minister to the United States, signed a treaty of amity and commerce recognizing American independence. This was followed that same day by a treaty of alliance that brought France into the war

as an active belligerent. In 1779, Spain, France's ally, declared war on England. The American Revolution had ceased being merely a family fight; it had become an international war. French and Spanish credits, money, supplies, ships, and men, without which American success would have been in doubt, supported the United States and helped to pave the way to ultimate victory on October 19, 1781, when Lt. Gen. Charles Lord Cornwallis surrendered to a Franco-American army at Yorktown, Va. Saratoga had borne great fruit.

Appendices

1. Organization of the American Army, September 19, 1777

General Officers:

Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates

Maj. Gen. Benedict Arnold

Col. Daniel Morgan's Corps:

Morgan's Rifle Corps [Regiment]

Maj. Henry Dearborn's Light Infantry

Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor's Brigade:

1st New Hampshire Regiment, Col. Joseph Cilley

2d New Hampshire Regiment, Lt. Col. Winborn Adams

3d New Hampshire Regiment, Col. Alexander Scammell

2nd New York Regiment, Col. Philip Van Cortlandt

4th New York Regiment, Col. Henry Beekman

Col. Thaddeus Cook's Regiment, Connecticut Militia

Col. Jonathan Latimore's Regiment, Connecticut Militia

Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Learned's Brigade:

2d Massachusetts Regiment, Col. John Bailey

8th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Michael Jackson

9th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. James Wesson

Col. James Livingston's New York Regiment

(formerly 1st Canadian)

Brig. Gen. John Glover's Brigade:

1st Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Joseph Vose

4th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. William Shepard

13th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Edward Wigglesworth

15th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Timothy Bigelow

2d Albany County Regiment, New York Militia,

Col. Abraham Wemple

17th Albany County Regiment, New York Militia,

Col. William Whiting

Col. Morris Graham's Regiment of Dutchess

and Ulster County New York Militia

Brig. Gen. John Nixon's Brigade:

3d Massachusetts Regiment, Col. John Groaton

5th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Rufus Putnam

6th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Thomas Nixon

7th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Ichabod Alden

Brig. Gen. John Paterson's Brigade:

10th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Thomas Marshall

11th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Benjamin Tupper

12th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Samuel Brewer
14th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Gamaliel Bradford

Cavalry:

Connecticut Light Horse, Maj. Elijah Hyde
Sheldon's Light Dragoons, 2d Troop, Lt. Thomas Seymour

Artillery:

Independent Battalion, Maj. Ebenezer Stevens

Engineers:

Col. Jonathan Baldwin's Detachment of Artificers

**2. Organization of the American Army,
 October 7, 1777**

General Officers:

Maj. Gen. Horatio Gates
Maj. Gen. Benjamin Lincoln

Col. Daniel Morgan's Corps:

Morgan's Rifle Corps [Regiment]
Maj. Henry Dearborn's Light Infantry

Brig. Gen. Enoch Poor's Brigade:

1st New Hampshire Regiment, Col. Joseph Cilley
2d New Hampshire Regiment, Lt Col. Jeremiah Gilman
3d New Hampshire Regiment, Col. Alexander Scammell
2d New York Regiment, Col. Philip Van Cortlandt
4th New York Regiment, Col. Henry Beekman
Col. Thaddeus Cook's Regiment, Connecticut Militia
Col. Jonathan Latimore's Regiment, Connecticut Militia

Brig. Gen. Ebenezer Learned's Brigade:

2d Massachusetts Regiment, Col. John Bailey
8th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Michael Jackson
9th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. James Wesson
Col. James Livingston's New York Regiment
(formerly 1st Canadian)
Col. Stephen Evans' Regiment, New Hampshire Militia
Lt. Col. Abraham Drake's Regiment, New Hampshire
Militia

Brig. Gen. Abraham Ten Broeck's Brigade:

(Parts of the following Albany County Regiments,

New York Militia:)

- 1st Albany County Regiment, Col. Jacob Lansing
 3d Albany County Regiment, Col. Francis Nicoll
 4th Albany County Regiment, Col. Robert Killian Van
 Rensselaer
 5th Albany County Regiment, Col. Gerrit G.
 Van Den Bergb
 6th Albany County Regiment, Col. Stephen John
 Schuyler
 7th Albany County Regiment, Col. Abraham Van Alstine
 8th Albany County Regiment, Col. Robert Van
 Rensselaer
 9th Albany County Regiment, Col. Peter Van Ness
 10th Albany County Regiment, Col. Henry Livingston
 11th Albany County Regiment, Col. Anthony Van
 Bergen
 12th Albany County Regiment, Col. Jacob Van
 Schoonhoven
 13th Albany County Regiment, Col. John McCrae
 14th Albany County Regiment, Col. John Knickerbacker
 16th Albany County Regiment, Col. Lewis Van Woert

Brig. Gen. John Glover's Brigade:

- 1st Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Joseph Vose
 4th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. William Shepard
 13th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Edward Wigglesworth
 15th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Timothy Bigelow
 2d Albany County Regiment, New York Militia,
 Col. Abraham Wemple
 17th Albany County Regiment, New York Militia,
 Col. William Whiting
 Col. Morris Graham's Regiment of Dutchess and
 Ulster County New York Militia

Brig. Gen. John Nixon's Brigade:

- 3d Massachusetts Regiment, Col. John Groaton
 5th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Rufus Putnam
 6th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Thomas Nixon
 7th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Ichabod Alden
 2d Hampshire County Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
 Col. Ezra May

Brig. Gen. John Paterson's Brigade:

- 10th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Thomas Marshall
 11th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Benjamin Tupper
 12th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Samuel Brewer
 14th Massachusetts Regiment, Col. Gamaliel Bradford
 1st South Berkshire Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
 Col. John Ashley
 3d York County Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
 Lt. Col. Joseph Storer

*Brig. Gen. Jonathan Warner's Brigade:**Central Berkshire Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
Col. John Brown**5th Middlesex Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
Col. Samuel Bullard**3d Suffolk County Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
Col. Benjamin Gill**1st Hampshire County Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
Col. Benjamin R. Woodbridge**4th Essex County Regiment, Massachusetts Militia,
Col. Samuel Johnson**Cavalry:**Connecticut Light Horse, Maj. Elijah Hyde
Sheldon's Light Dragoons, 2d Troop, Lt. Thomas Seymour**Artillery:**Independent Battalion, Maj. Ebenezer Stevens**Engineers:**Col. Jonathan Baldwin's Detachment of Artificers***3. Organization of the British Army in the
Saratoga Campaign of 1777***General Officers:**Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne**Maj. Gen. William Phillips**Maj. Gen. Baron Adolf von Riedesel**Brig. Gen. James Hamilton**Brig. Gen. Simon Fraser**Brig. Gen. W. R. von Gall**British Units:**9th Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. John Hill**20th Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. John Lind**21st Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. (Brig. Gen.) James
Hamilton**24th Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. (Brig. Gen.) Simon
Fraser**47th Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. Nicholas Sutherland**62d Regiment of Foot, Lt. Col. John Anstruther**10 Companies of Grenadiers, Maj. John Dyke Acland
(20th Regiment)**10 Companies of Light Infantry, Maj. Alexander Lindsay,
the Earl of Balcarres (53d Regiment)*

1 Company of Rangers, Capt. Alexander Fraser
Royal Artillery, Maj. William Griffith
Canadians, Maj. Samuel McKay (Royal Americans)
Highland Emigrants, Capt. Lt. George Law
Loyalists, Lt. Col. John Peters
Indians, Maj. John Campbell (47th Regiment)

German Units:

Hesse-Hanau Regiment Erbprinz, Col. (Brig. Gen.)
W. R. von Gall
Regiment von Riedesel, Lt. Col. Ernst Ludwig von Speth
Regiment von Rhetz, Lt. Col. Johann Gustav von
Ehrenkroock
Regiment von Specht, Maj. Carl Friedrich von
Ehrenkroock
4 Companies of Brunswick Grenadiers, Col. Heinrich
Christoph Breymann
4 Companies of Brunswick Chasseurs, Maj. Ferdinand
Albrecht von Bärner
1 company of Brunswick Jägers, Capt. von Geysso
Brunswick Dragoons, Lt. Col. Friederich Baum
Hesse-Hanau Artillery, Capt. Georg Pausch

4. A Note on Infantry Weapons and Tactics

One of the most persistent traditions associated with the American Revolution is that a major factor in its success was the difference in the tactics of the adversaries. According to this interpretation the British and their German auxiliaries, captives of an out-moded tradition developed on Europe's open battlefields, marched into battle in close formation against skilled American sharpshooters who fought as individuals from the cover of trees and walls. Events at Lexington and Concord in 1775 and at King's Mountain in 1780 seemed to lend some support to this belief, but even in those engagements American marksmanship has been over-rated. Most of the battles of the war were fought by the soldiers of both armies according to standard European practice and with standard European weapons.

The basic infantry weapon of the 18th century was the flintlock musket, a smoothbore piece that fired a lead ball approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch in diameter (.75 calibre). Because the ball fit so loosely in the barrel of this weapon, its accuracy was limited and its effectiveness depended upon the "linear tactics" of

the time. A line of battle consisted of two or three ranks drawn up shoulder to shoulder with minimum depth between ranks. Another rank of "file closers" sometimes followed at about six paces to replace casualties. In the attack the men moved forward, maintaining their alignment, aware that they were relatively safe until they were within about 100 yards of the enemy line. Fire discipline was important because it was desirable that soldiers not fire until they were about 50 yards from their opponents. In fact, the theory was that it was better to receive, not deliver, the first fire, to sustain the losses and fire when close enough to the foe that every shot found a mark.

Firing was by volley, not "at will." All loading and firing was done by command with little or no aiming in the modern sense. The volley was directed ahead or to the left or right oblique as commanded. The object was to lay down a curtain of fire, and rapidity was more highly prized than accuracy. A desired rate was one shot every fifteen seconds, a rate that would assure at least two volleys at an approaching enemy in a typical charge.

It is important to understand that the ranks of men were not normally in extended order. They formed a compact mass, presenting a good target for fire from another compact body of men at point blank range. As Harold L. Peterson, an authority on weapons and their effects, has observed, "Accuracy would have been superfluous in this type of warfare. Speed was everything. Speed for the defending force to pour as many bullets into the attacking force as possible; speed for the attacking force to close with its adversary before it had been too severely decimated to have sufficient strength to carry the position."

There were situations, even in Europe, in which a more accurate weapon was needed. Flankers, rangers, pickets, and small scouting parties where there was occasion for individual action required accurate marksmanship. It was for these men and in these circumstances that the rifle proved a valuable arm.

In contrast with the musket, the rifle was highly accurate. Rifling, or the spiral grooves in the bore of a firearm that cause a projectile to spin when fired, imparted greater stability to the bullet. When properly employed, as at Saratoga where Gates combined them with Dearborn's light infantry, the riflemen were invaluable for scouting, skirmishing, and sharpshoot-

ing. Except for these specialized operations, however, they were of little military value because of their slow rate of fire and their vulnerability to attack due to the fact that a rifle-bayonet had not yet been developed.

Both armies at Saratoga had riflemen. The Americans had Col. Daniel Morgan's Corps of Riflemen, and the British had the German Jagers (hunters) who performed the specialized functions for which they were equipped while their comrades fought in line in compliance with standard practice. At Saratoga, as elsewhere, the infantryman with a bayonet-bearing musket, capable of delivering a higher volume of fire than the rifle and with enough accuracy for the tactics of the period, was the man who won or lost the battle.

5. A Note on Infantry Organization

The regiment was the basic infantry unit of the British army, but it was an administrative—not a tactical—element. The nominal or administrative commander was the colonel who contracted with the Crown to raise the regiment for a given sum of money. Except for the units that carried the title "Royal," the regiments were thus the property of the colonel. The active or personal commander was the lieutenant colonel, who led the regiment in the field. The tactical organization was the battalion, and the terms "regiment" and "battalion" were practically synonymous, because during the war a regiment consisted of one battalion. The standard regiment/battalion had 10 companies, eight of which were called "battalion companies." The other two were the elite "flank companies": one company of grenadiers and one of light infantry.

The American regiments were modeled after the British, but the active command was exercised by the colonel until after January 1778, when the rank of "Lieutenant Colonel, Commandant" was created to facilitate the grade for grade exchange of regimental commanders who were prisoners of war. The number of companies and the strength of the American regiments varied from State to State and time to time.

A Note on Sources

This narrative of the Saratoga campaign is based upon American, British, and German sources, most of which are in manuscript form. Those for the complex story of the British plans for 1777 are found in the Colonial Office Records, Series 5 and 42, Public Records Office, London; British Museum, Additional Manuscripts 34313, 37883, and 38209; Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne, *A State of the Expedition from Canada . . .* (London, 1780); the Lord George Germain and Henry Knox Papers in the William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Sir William Howe, *The Narrative of Lt. Gen. Sir William Howe in a Committee of the House of Commons . . .* (London, 1780); and Sir John Fortescue (ed.), *The Correspondence of King George the Third from 1760 to December 1783* (6 vols., London, 1927-8).

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As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering the wisest use of our land and water resources, protecting our fish and wildlife, preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places, and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to assure that their development is in the best interests of all our people. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in Island Territories under U.S. administration.

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