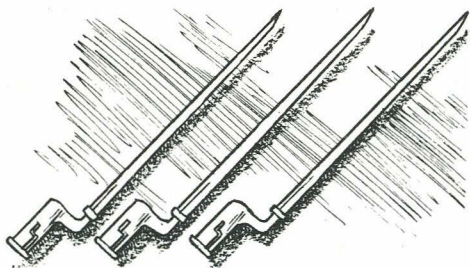


Saratoga

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

New York





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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

OSCAR L. CHAPMAN, *Secretary*

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE, NEWTON B. DRURY, *Director*

Scene of the decisive American victory over Burgoyne, 1777, marking the turning point of the American Revolution and a decisive battle in world history

THE two battles of Saratoga may be considered to mark the turning point of the American Revolution. Saratoga implemented American diplomatic efforts and brought the open intervention of France on the side of the colonists. Without the financial, military, and naval support of France, to which was added later the assistance of Spain and Holland, America's fight for liberty probably would have been lost. Though 4 more years of fighting were necessary in order to bring ultimate victory at Yorktown, Saratoga furnished the physical and psychological impetus which brightened a desperate cause at a moment when failure would have been disastrous. The battles of Saratoga, culminating in the surrender of Burgoyne's army and the complete defeat of the British plan of campaign in 1777, constitute one of those momentous events which shape the destiny of nations. Even in the light of nearly two centuries that have elapsed, the full significance of this epochal victory is difficult to exaggerate or to appraise fully.

The Burgoyne Campaign

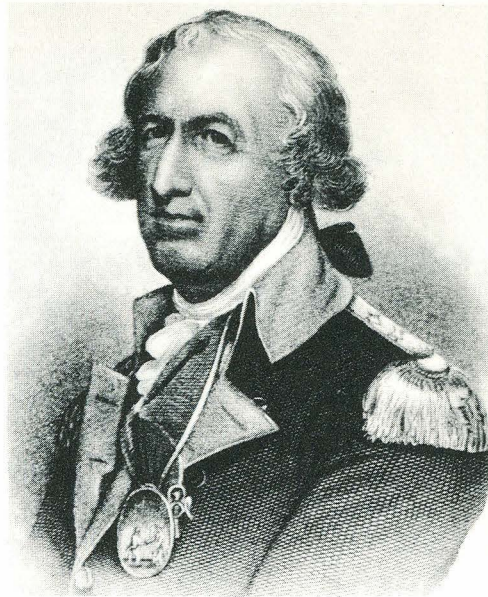
THE Hudson-Champlain route for centuries has constituted a strategic highway. Long the war-path of the powerful Iroquois, this route in pre-Revolutionary years had witnessed the ebb and flow of the tides of invasion as England and France had struggled for possession of the New World. Once again it was to be the theatre of historic events, this time in the drama of a people giving birth to a free nation.

Burgoyne's plan for the reconquest of the colonies sought to wrest from the colonists the control of the historic Hudson-Champlain route with its lateral branch along the Mohawk. Its control by the British would have separated the New England States from the rest of the struggling colonists. The plan called for a coordinated double advance along the Hudson in which the army of Burgoyne moving southward from Canada would effect a junction at Albany with the army of Sir William Howe moving northward from New York City, the

Cover: *Detail of the Trumbull painting of the surrender of Burgoyne at Saratoga. This picture is taken from the Minnigerode copy of Trumbull's work.*



Gen. John Burgoyne



Gen. Horatio Gates

two to be joined by Barry St. Leger moving eastward along the Mohawk from Oswego.

Embarking from St. Johns, Canada, on June 17, 1777, Burgoyne with a force of approximately 8,000 men, consisting of about 4,000 British regulars, 3,000 German troops hired by the King of England, and between 600 and 700 Canadians and Indians, advanced confidently southward to the attack of Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain, which fell an easy prize on July 6. Moving slowly southward through Skenesboro, Fort Ann, and Fort Edward, Burgoyne encountered innumerable delays caused by the rough nature of the ground and the retarding tactics of Philip Schuyler, then in command of the army of the northern department, in felling trees, destroying bridges, and burning crops along the route of the British advance. It was mid-September before Burgoyne crossed the Hudson at Saratoga.

By this time the tide of events had already started running against the British. The battle of Oriskany, on August 6, checked the advance of St. Leger down the Mohawk Valley. Here General Herkimer and his German farmer militia cut their way out of an ambush prepared

by St. Leger's Tories and Indians in desperate hand-to-hand fighting. Of still greater concern to Burgoyne, however, was the defeat of his expeditionary force to Bennington on August 16, by New England militia under John Stark and Seth Warner.

Despite these setbacks Burgoyne decided to cross the Hudson, sever his communications with Canada and risk all on a push to Albany. Four miles from Stillwater the British advance came upon the Americans 7,000 strong, and firmly entrenched at Bemis Heights under the command of Gates, who had supplanted Schuyler on August 19.

Battles of September 19 and October 7

THE American position had been selected and fortified by the Polish engineer, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, serving with the American Army. On September 19, Burgoyne struck the advancing American left wing on the high ground away from the river in the hope of outflanking the entire position. This fighting took place principally on and in the vicinity of a clearing of Freeman's Farm. Repulsed with heavy losses, Burgoyne decided to entrench his army in the

vicinity of Freeman's Farm and await the cooperation of Howe or Sir Henry Clinton who were then stationed in New York City. Nearly 3 weeks of futile waiting brought no aid from either, although on October 6, unknown to Burgoyne, Clinton succeeded in capturing the forts along the highlands of the Hudson.

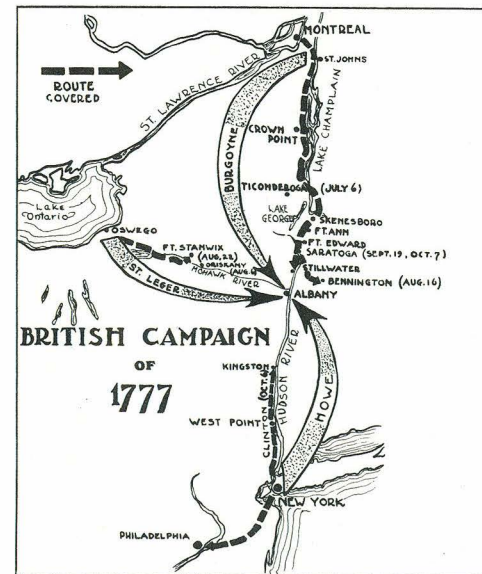
With the strength of his opponent greatly increased by 4,000 reinforcements mostly from New England, and with his own supplies rapidly diminishing, Burgoyne's position became a desperate one, necessitating either an advance or a retreat. On October 7 he moved in force against Gates' left, only to meet a withering fire from the Americans under the brilliant leadership of Arnold and Morgan. Repeatedly the British line was broken by the American attack which was directed simultaneously against their right, left, and center. The British column was swept back on its entrenchments, and the American forces rushed forward in a fierce attempt to storm the British lines. Finally, the successful assault by Arnold on the Breyman Redoubt, a key British position, served to turn the tide of battle and to seal the fate of the Burgoyne campaign. It was in leading this assault that Arnold was wounded in the left leg.

Retreat and Surrender

BURGOYNE withdrew his men on the night of October 7 to the high ground north of the Great Ravine. The following evening Gen. Simon Fraser, second in command to Burgoyne, mortally wounded during the battle, was buried in the Great Redoubt. Early the next day, October 9, the British took up their retreat to Saratoga. They had suffered approximately 1,000 casualties in the fighting of the past 3 weeks as compared to an American loss of less than half that number.

Burgoyne's depleted army was completely surrounded in a few days on the heights at Saratoga (Schuylerville) by an American force which by this time had grown to nearly 17,000 men. Hopelessly outnumbered, provisions all but exhausted, devoid of help from the south, Burgoyne was forced to surrender on October 17. The remnants of his army, numbering approximately 5,700 men, stacked their arms on the level flood plain along the banks of the Hudson at the edge of town, according to the terms of the Convention of Saratoga drawn up between Gates and Burgoyne.

Map of British Plan of Campaign, 1777



Monument to Arnold's wounded leg





View of Saratoga battlefield looking toward the Hudson River from Fraser Hill

The Park

IN 1938, Congress passed legislation authorizing establishment of Saratoga National Historical Park. In 1941, under this authority, 1,429 acres of historically important land, previously acquired by the State of New York, was accepted by the Federal Government for administration and protection as a national historical park project. Later, other historically significant parts of the battlefield were acquired and the establishment of the park was accomplished on June 22, 1948. The present area is 2,088 acres.

Saratoga National Historical Park is one of several areas in eastern United States commemorating events significant in the American Revolution which are administered by the National Park Service.

How to Reach the Park

THE park is situated on the upper Hudson River 28 miles north of Albany, N. Y., between the villages of Stillwater and Schuylerville, and may be reached by automobile from the north or south over U S 4 or State Route 32. From the west, convenient connections with U S 9 may be made over State Routes 9P and 423.

Daily bus service is available from Mechanicville or Schuylerville. Inquire locally for schedules.

Public Service Facilities for Visitors

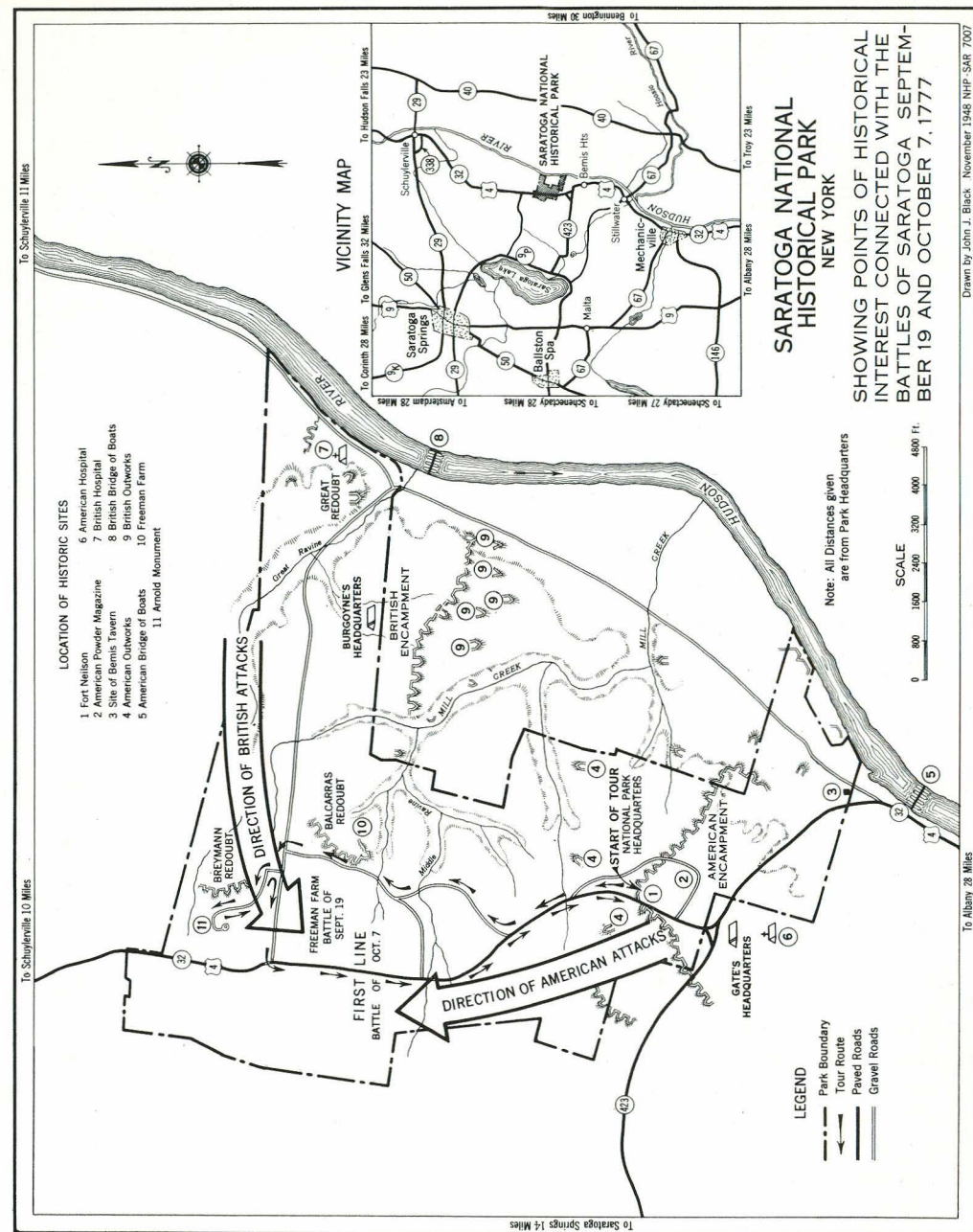
THE park and its facilities are open from early spring until late fall, dependent upon weather conditions, or normally from April 1 to November 30.

A temporary museum, containing relics of the Revolutionary Period and exhibits designed to present the story of the Battles of Saratoga and the Burgoyne Campaign, is open daily, Sundays and holidays included, from 8:30 a. m. to 5 p. m. The John Neilson House, used as quarters for American staff officers, during the battles, is also usually open for inspection. Informational signs and markers along the various park roads assist the visitor in visualizing events connected with the battles.

Special service, without charge, is provided for school classes and civic groups and organizations when arrangements are made in advance through the park administration.

Administration

SARATOGA National Historical Park is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. Communications regarding the park should be addressed to the Superintendent, Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.



PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS:
 Cover (New York Historical Society)
 General Burgoyne (Signal Corps, U. S. Army)
 General Gates (Fort Ticonderoga Museum)

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To Albany 28 Miles

To Schuylerville 11 Miles

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