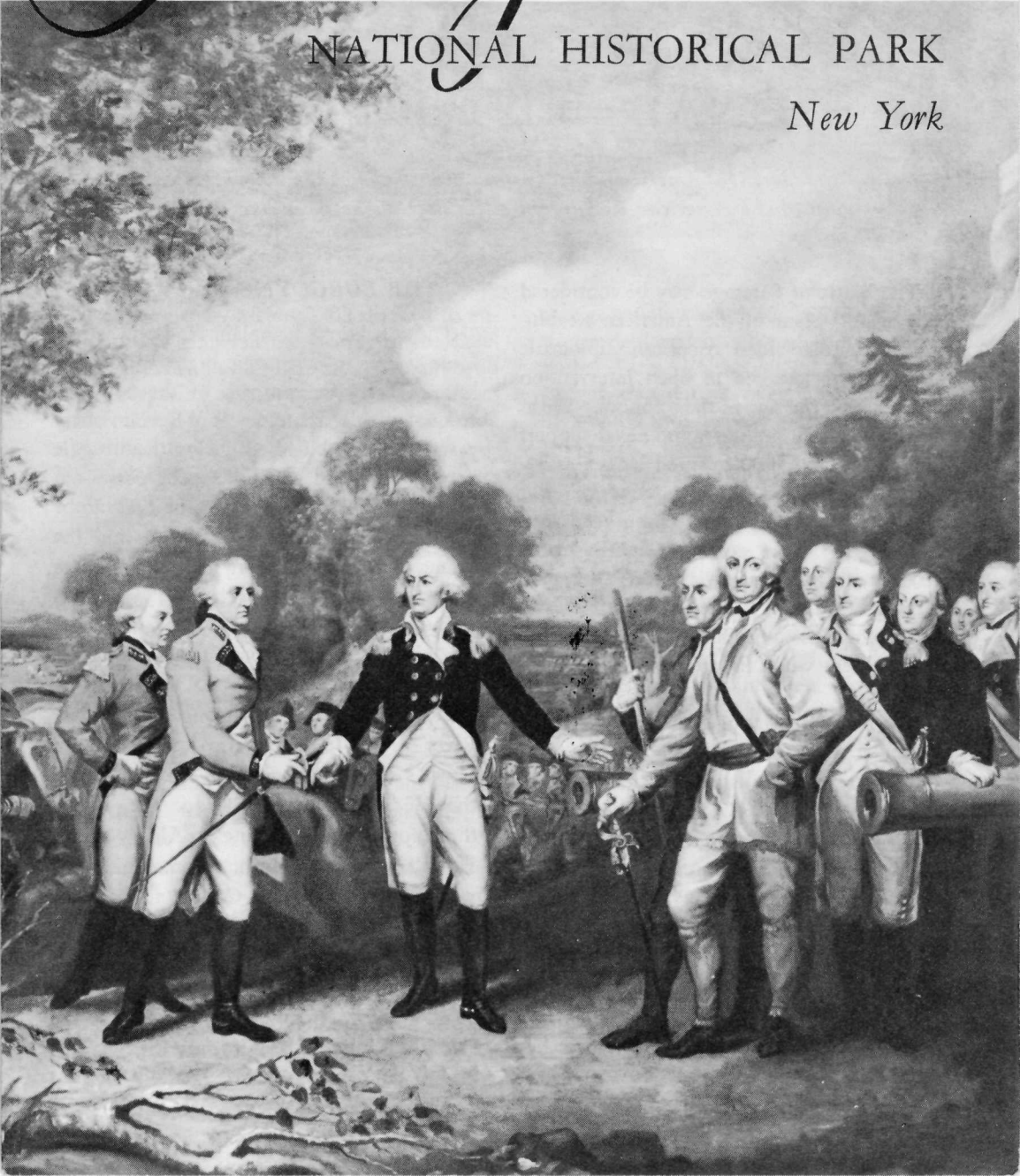


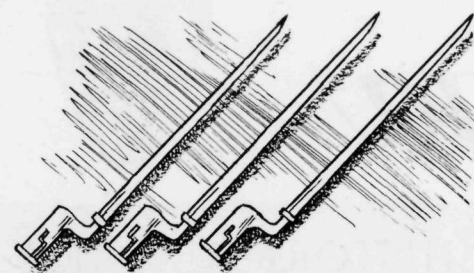
Saratoga



NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

New York





Saratoga

NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

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 Battle of Saratoga may be considered the turning point of the American Revolution. Saratoga aided American diplomatic efforts which resulted in open intervention by France on the side of the colonists. Without the financial, military, and naval support of France, later supplemented by the assistance of Spain and Holland, America's bid for liberty probably would have been lost.

Though 4 more years of fighting were necessary to bring final victory at Yorktown, Saratoga furnished the physical and psychological impetus to brighten a desperate cause at a moment when failure would have been disastrous.

The Battle of Saratoga, culminating in the surrender of Lt. Gen. John Burgoyne's army and the complete collapse of Britain's northern campaign in 1777, constitutes one of those momentous events which shape the destiny of nations. Even after two centuries, the full significance of this epochal victory is difficult to exaggerate or to appraise fully.

The National Park System, of which this area is a unit, is dedicated to conserving the scenic, scientific, and historic heritage of the United States for the benefit and inspiration of its people.

THE BURGOYNE CAMPAIGN

The Lake Champlain-Hudson River route had been a strategic highway for centuries. Long the warpath of the powerful Iroquois, this route in pre-Revolutionary years had been bloodied during the struggle between England and France for possession of the New World. Once again it was to be the theater of historic events—this time the drama of a people fighting to establish a free nation.

Burgoyne's plan for the campaign of 1777 was to strike south from Canada along the Champlain-Hudson route. Lt. Col. Barry St. Leger was to march east along the Mohawk River from Lake Ontario. Sir William Howe's army would simultaneously move up the Hudson from New York City. The three forces were to unite at Albany under Howe's command. Thus communications would be opened with Canada through an area known for its loyalist sentiments; thus



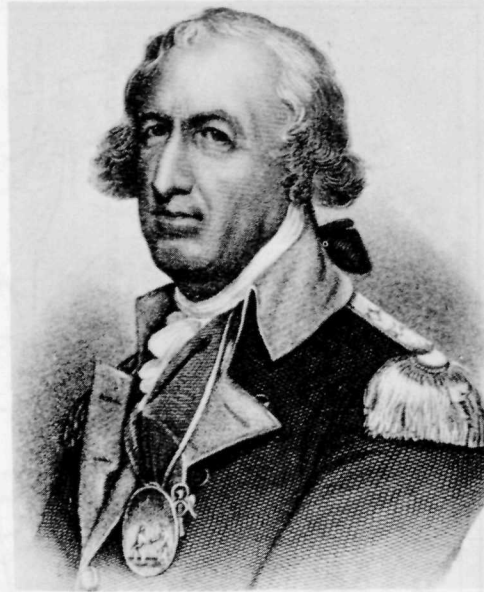
Gen. John Burgoyne

New England would be isolated from its neighbors.

The crux of Burgoyne's thinking was the three-way movement on Albany. But, unknown to Burgoyne until the last stage of the campaign, Colonial Secretary George Germaine had approved an alternate plan proposed by Howe. Instead of heading for Albany, Howe advanced on Philadelphia, leaving only a small force under Sir Henry Clinton to act on the Hudson.

Burgoyne embarked from St. Johns (now St. Jean), Canada, on June 17, 1777, with approximately 9,000 men. This force included some 4,200 British regulars, 4,000 German troops hired by the King of England, and between 800 and 900 Canadians and Indians. Burgoyne advanced confidently southward to attack Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain. It fell an easy prize on July 6.

Continuing southward through Skenesboro, Fort Ann, and Fort Edward, Burgoyne was slowed down by the rough terrain and the retarding tactics of Gen. Philip Schuyler, then commanding American forces in the Northern Department. Schuyler's troops



Gen. Horatio Gates

felled trees, destroyed bridges, and burned crops along the route of the British advance. Largely because of these tactics, 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 Gen. Nicholas Herkimer and his German farmer militia, in desperate hand-to-hand fighting, cut their way out of an ambush prepared by St. Leger's Indians and Tories.

Of greater concern to Burgoyne, however, was the fate of the expeditionary force he had sent to Bennington, Vt. On August 16, this force suffered about 800 casualties when it was shattered by New England militia under John Stark and Seth Warner.

Despite these setbacks, Burgoyne decided to sever his communications with Canada and risk all on a push to Albany. Accordingly, on September 13 he crossed to the west bank of the Hudson at Saratoga (now Schuylerville) and started marching south toward Albany.

Four miles north of the village of Stillwater, the British advance came upon the Americans, 9,000 strong, firmly entrenched at Bemis Heights under the command of Gen. Horatio Gates, who had replaced Schuyler on August 19.

FREEMAN FARM: SEPTEMBER 19

The American position had been selected and fortified by the Polish engineer, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, who was serving with the American Army. On September 19, the Royal Army advanced upon the American camp in three parallel columns through the heavy forests covering the region. The British objective was to discover and occupy a strong position close enough to the American fortified line to serve as a basis for siege operations against it.

The forward movement of Burgoyne's army was detected by American scouts on the east side of the Hudson. When advised of this, Gates ordered out Col. Daniel Morgan's corps to reconnoiter the enemy's position. The first phase of the engagement opened about 12:30 p.m. when a detachment of Morgan's men brushed with the advance

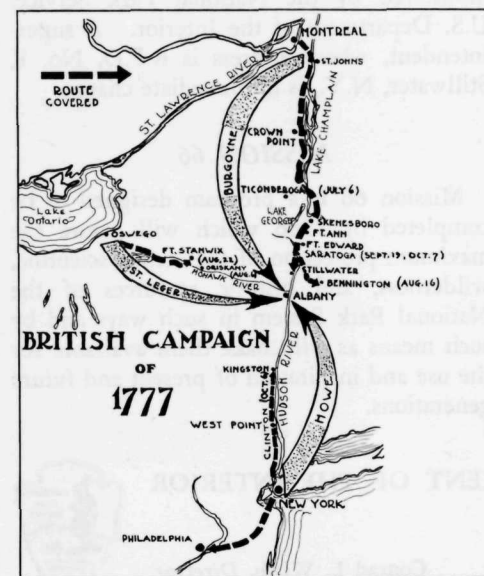
guard of Burgoyne's center column in a clearing known as the Freeman Farm, located about 1 mile north of the American camp.

For more than 3 hours the fighting swayed back and forth across this bitterly contested clearing as each side strove desperately for a decision. Repeatedly the hard-pressed British regiments charged with bayonets, only to be stopped short by the deadly fire of the American riflemen. Under the skillful direction of Gen. Benedict Arnold, American reinforcements were placed where they threatened to outflank the British right. Finally, when the British position had become critical, fresh German reinforcements arrived from the column near the river. Hurling these men against the American right, Burgoyne succeeded in steadying the British line and forcing the Americans gradually to withdraw.

But for the arrival of the Germans and the near exhaustion of the American's ammunition, Burgoyne might have suffered a decisive defeat.

Though he possessed the immediate field of battle, Burgoyne's advance had been stopped about 1 mile north of the American line, and his army had been badly crippled.

Map of Burgoyne's Plan of Campaign, 1777



Monument to Arnold's wounded leg



Shaken by this "victory," he decided to entrench his troops in the vicinity of the Freeman Farm and await help from Clinton, who was preparing to move toward Albany from New York City. Nearly 3 weeks of futile waiting brought no aid from the south, although on October 6, unknown to Burgoyne, Clinton succeeded in capturing the forts along the highlands of the Hudson.

BRITISH ADVANCE ON BEMIS HEIGHTS

With his opponent's strength increased by 4,000 reinforcements, mostly from New England, and with his own resources rapidly diminishing, Burgoyne's position became desperate, necessitating either an advance or a retreat. After studying the alternatives, he decided to risk a second engagement.

On October 7, Burgoyne ordered a reconnaissance-in-force to determine the nature of the American position and the advisability of a thrust against their left. With a force of 1,500 men led by some of his ablest generals and supported by 10 cannon, Burgoyne advanced toward the left end of the American line on Bemis Heights.

After moving in a southwesterly direction



The Schuyler House

approximately two-thirds of a mile, the troops deployed in an open clearing on the Barber Farm. Although the larger part of Burgoyne's front was open, both flanks rested in woods, thus exposing them to surprise attack.

As the Royal Army advanced, the American scouts retired, and the alarm was beaten in Gates' camp. At about 3 p.m., the Americans attacked in three columns under Colonel Morgan, Gen. Ebenezer Learned, and Gen. Enoch Poor. Repeatedly the British line was broken and rallied; both flanks were severely punished and driven back.

At this critical point, Gen. Simon Fraser, who commanded the right wing of the British column, rode among his men in a desperate effort to encourage them to make a successful stand and to cover the developing retreat. In the confusion of battle, Fraser was shot, possibly by a member of a party detailed for that purpose by Colonel Morgan. Mortally wounded, Fraser was carried from the field.

Before the enemy's flanks could be rallied, Arnold—without command because of a quarrel with Gates—rode onto the field and led Learned's brigade against Burgoyne's center, which was composed of German troops. Their flanks exposed, the Germans



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

soon joined a general retreat into the fortifications on the Freeman Farm.

The American forces rushed forward in a fierce effort to storm the British lines. Within an hour after the opening attack, Burgoyne had lost 8 cannon and more than 400 officers and men, killed, wounded, or captured. Flushed with success, and believing victory within their grasp, part of the American force was led by Arnold in a savage and futile attack on the Balcarras Redoubt, a position of great strength, located on the Freeman Farm.

When repeated attacks failed to carry this position, Arnold wheeled his horse and, dashing between the crossfire of both armies, rode northwest to the Breymann Redoubt. He arrived just as American troops began to assault the front and left of the fortification. Arnold joined the attacking force. The redoubt fell as Arnold entered the work, but not before he suffered a wound in the leg. Had he died there, posterity would have known few names brighter than Benedict Arnold. Col. Heinrich von Breymann was killed in the assault on the redoubt that bears his name.

Darkness brought the day's fighting to a close, saving Burgoyne from immediate disaster.

RETREAT AND SURRENDER

Burgoyne withdrew his men on the night of October 7 to the high ground beyond the

Great Ravine at the northeast corner of the battlefield. The following evening General Fraser, who had died from his wounds, was buried in the Great Redoubt. Early the next day, October 9, the British began 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 500.

Burgoyne's depleted army was completely surrounded in a few days on the heights at Saratoga (Schuylerville) by an American force which had grown to nearly 20,000 men. Hopelessly outnumbered, provisions all but exhausted, and receiving no help from the south, Burgoyne was forced to surrender on October 17. The remnants of his army numbered approximately 6,300 men. They stacked their arms on the flood plain along the banks of the Hudson at the edge of town, as required by the Convention of Saratoga drawn up between Gates and Burgoyne.

THE PARK

In 1938, Congress authorized the 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 almost 4 square miles.

The Schuyler House with 25 acres of land was acquired for the park on March 30, 1950.

Situated at Schuylerville (Old Saratoga), N.Y., this estate was the summer residence of Gen. Philip Schuyler both before and after the Battle of Saratoga. The present house was erected in 1777 by General Schuyler shortly after Burgoyne's surrender. It was the center of Schuyler's extensive farming and milling operations in the Saratoga area.

LOCATION

The park is on the Hudson River 28 miles north of Albany, between Stillwater and Schuylerville.

Taxi service is available from Saratoga Springs, Mechanicville, and Schuylerville.

ABOUT YOUR VISIT

Depending on weather conditions, the park is normally open from April 1 to November 30.

The visitor center, where you can see exhibits and dioramas depicting the Burgoyne campaign, is open daily from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. The John Neilson House, used as quarters for American staff officers during the battle, is usually open. Informational signs and markers along the park road will assist you to visualize battle action.

Organized groups are given special service if advance arrangements are made with the superintendent.

You can purchase a 36-page handbook relating to the Battle of Saratoga at the park, or by mail from the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D.C., for 25 cents a copy.

RELATED AREAS

Other nearby areas in the National Park System which commemorate events signifi-



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

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Gen. Philip Schuyler

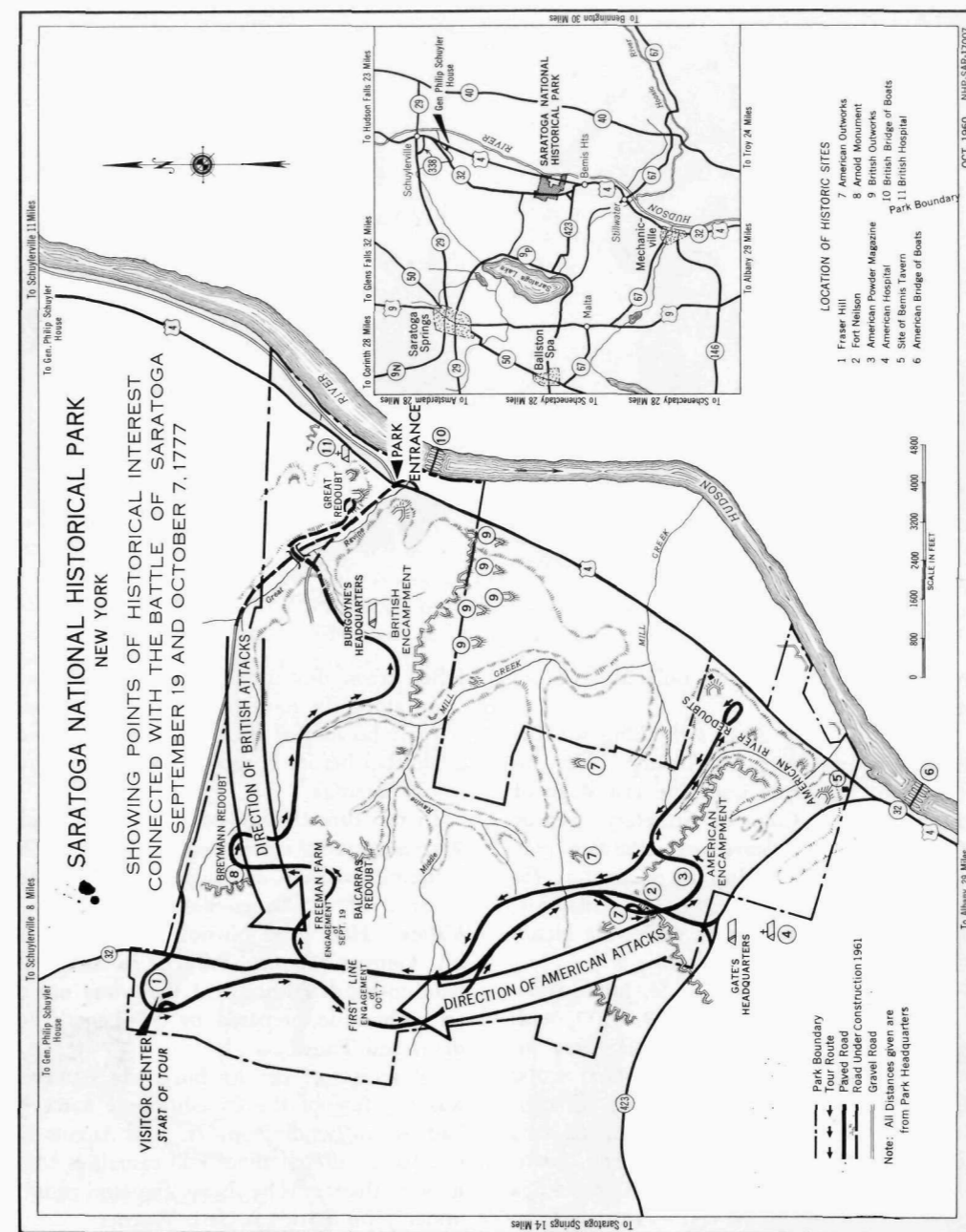
cant in the American Revolution are: Statue of Liberty National Monument and Federal Hall National Memorial, N.Y.; Independence National Historical Park, Pa.; and Morristown National Historical Park, N.J.

ADMINISTRATION

Saratoga National Historical Park is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. A superintendent, whose address is R.F.D. No. 1, Stillwater, N.Y., is in immediate charge.

MISSION 66

Mission 66 is a program designed to be completed by 1966 which will assure the maximum protection of the scenic, scientific, wilderness, and historic resources of the National Park System in such ways and by such means as will make them available for the use and inspiration of present and future generations.



PHOTOGRAPHIC CREDITS:

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

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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.

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