



Foundation Document Overview

Saratoga National Historical Park

New York



Contact Information

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Purpose



SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK preserves and protects sites associated with the battles, siege, and surrender of British forces at Saratoga—decisive events in winning American independence. The park staff interprets these and other sites, events, and people associated with the 1777 military campaign in the Champlain-Hudson and Mohawk Valleys.



Significance

Significance statements express why Saratoga National Historical Park resources and values are important enough to merit national park unit designation. Statements of significance describe why an area is important within a global, national, regional, and systemwide context. These statements are linked to the purpose of the park unit, and are supported by data, research, and consensus. Significance statements describe the distinctive nature of the park and inform management decisions, focusing efforts on preserving and protecting the most important resources and values of the park unit.

- An overwhelming American battle victory at Saratoga was a critical turning point in the Revolutionary War that both boosted morale and secured foreign support, which would prove essential for winning the war.
- The Saratoga estate of Major General Philip Schuyler, a significant figure in the American War for Independence and early U.S. politics, embodies the burgeoning industrial economy of a northern working estate and witnessed five generations of the Schuyler family who embraced the patriot cause in a rich multicultural borderland.
- The monumented landscape and views preserved in and around Saratoga National Historical Park reflect popular national commemorative movements that were shaped by eras of increased patriotism, rises in organized commemorations honoring veterans, and the advancement of a shared American identity.



Fundamental Resources and Values

Fundamental resources and values are those features, systems, processes, experiences, stories, scenes, sounds, smells, or other attributes determined to merit primary consideration during planning and management processes because they are essential to achieving the purpose of the park and maintaining its significance.

- **1777 Battlefield Landscape**
- **Commemorative Landscape and Monuments**
- **Museum Collections**
- **Battle-Related Archeological Resources**
- **Schuyler House and Estate, Cultural Landscape, and Archeological Resources**
- **Contemplative Visitor Experience**

Saratoga National Historical Park contains other resources and values that may not be fundamental to the purpose and significance of the park, but are important to consider in management and planning decisions. These are referred to as other important resources and values.

- **Internal and External Views and Viewsheds**
- **Natural Communities**
- **Non-Battle-Related Archeological Resources**
- **Old Champlain Canal**



Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are often described as the key stories or concepts that visitors should understand after visiting a park—they define the most important ideas or concepts communicated to visitors about a park unit. Themes are derived from—and should reflect—park purpose, significance, resources, and values. The set of interpretive themes is complete when it provides the structure necessary for park staff to develop opportunities for visitors to explore and relate to all of the park significances and fundamental resources and values.

- **The Battles of Saratoga.** Strategic and tactical successes of American forces in the Battles of Saratoga were the result of an innovative use of the natural landscape, incorporating bluffs, ravines, farms, and woods that British forces were unable to take advantage of despite enhancements made to their tactical doctrine. The Northern Army was well commanded, armed, experienced, and numerically superior to the enemy, all of which were brought to bear to beat the British invasion and force the first British Army in world history to surrender.
- **Global Conflict and Influence.** The American victory over British forces at Saratoga convinced the French government to recognize American independence and ally with the fledgling nation. This alliance resulted in crucial military support, financial assistance, and political legitimacy and expanded the conflict worldwide, all of which were essential for winning the American War for Independence.
- **History and Memory—Creating a Shared American Identity.** Monuments and memorials added to the battlefield’s “sacred ground” represent early national efforts to honor service to the nation and the causes for which many sacrifices were made. The park monuments and markers contributed to a shared American identity and an evolving sense of patriotism.
- **Corridor of Commerce.** The 1777 Schuyler Estate exemplifies a successful 18th-century estate community incorporating unique industrial ingenuity, massive farming and lumbering operations, and a thriving international trade economy supported by enslaved people, hired laborers, mechanics, tradesmen, and women. The estate’s location at the confluence of Fish Creek and the Hudson River was essential to its success and was the target of multiple 18th-century military raids. In the 19th century, localized warfare gave way to manipulation of the landscape in order to provide efficient and cost-effective north-south water transportation via the Champlain Canal.

Description

Saratoga National Historical Park was established by an act of the United States Congress on June 1, 1938, to protect land and resources associated with the pivotal Revolutionary War Battles of Saratoga fought on September 19 and October 7, 1777. Located in the upper Hudson River Valley in Saratoga County, New York, the park consists of four discontinuous sites known as Battlefield, Saratoga Monument, Schuyler Estate, and Victory Woods. The dominant characteristic of the park's setting is its location in the upper Hudson River Valley between the Adirondack Mountains of New York and the Green Mountains of Vermont.

Historically, the Hudson River served as a primary transportation and communication link between New York City, Albany, and Canada. It provided a route for trade and invasion for centuries, and its control was a focal point of the British strategy to divide the states during the American Revolution. Saratoga became a battlefield because of its strategic location on this river, and the heights above the Hudson River at the battlefield helped secure a critical victory over the British. The Battlefield Unit is located just west of the Hudson River, and the three other park sites, collectively known as the "Old Saratoga Unit," are approximately seven miles to the north in the Town of Saratoga.

