

FINAL DRAFT

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE INVENTORY FISH CREEK AMERICAN POSITIONS

Town of Saratoga, Saratoga County, New York

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in association with

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West Chester, PA

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of This Report

In March 2010, Saratoga P.L.A.N., a non-profit land and natural resources conservancy organization active in Saratoga County, New York, contracted with John Milner Associates, Inc. (JMA) and subconsultant Philip E. Pendleton, Historian, to perform an intensive cultural resources investigation of a study area located in and adjacent to the village of Victory in the Town of Saratoga in Saratoga County. The investigation is funded by a grant from the American Battlefield Protection Program (ABPP) of the National Park Service (NPS).

The study area, representing a portion of a larger historical resource identified by NPS as constituting the Siege of Saratoga battlefield (NY 226), is designated the Fish Creek American Positions (FCAP) (Figure 1). This battlefield was classified in the 2007 ABPP Report to Congress on the battlefields of the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812 as a Priority I, Class A resource for future preservation purposes. The Siege of Saratoga, in which American troops under General Horatio Gates surrounded an invading British army under General Sir John Burgoyne and besieged the latter with bombardment and sniping, took place during October 10-17, 1777. The siege, a crucial episode in the War of Independence, resulted in Burgoyne's surrender on October 17. The American victory at Saratoga is generally credited with bringing France into the war on the American side and thus enabling America's ultimate success in the conflict.

The study tract, approximately 100 acres in extent, straddles Fish Creek. It contains land on the north bank of the creek through which American soldiers moved on the morning of October 11 to a planned assault on the great south redoubt in the British lines. As events developed, the assault was called off and the Americans withdrew after some skirmishing. The study area portion on the south bank of Fish Creek consists of land that was the site of the central segment of the American siege lines during the siege. An interpretive walking trail has been proposed for the project study area that would link up with the unit of Saratoga National Historical Park known as Victory Woods, which adjoins the study area to the north. Saratoga P.L.A.N. is facilitating the furtherance of that goal.

There are two components to the 2010 Fish Creek American Positions project. One is an Archeological Verification study to document the American siege lines located on the south bank of Fish Creek within the study area and confirm the existence of remnants of the American earthworks. The Archeological Verification will focus its effort on a one-acre parcel, designated the Corbett Parcel, which is located on the heights on the south bank and which contains earthen berm structures that have had preliminary identification as potential surviving military earthworks from 1777.

The second component of the investigation, for which this report was prepared, is a Cultural Landscape Inventory for the entire 100-acre study area. It has been undertaken to fulfill the following objectives:

- To document the site-specific history of the study area, concentrating on changes in settlement patterns, land use, and architectural landscape over time, and in particular on the relationship of the study area to the military-historical events that took place at Saratoga in the autumn of 1777.
- To inventory the landscape characteristics and features surviving within the study area that help to convey the historic significance of the tract.

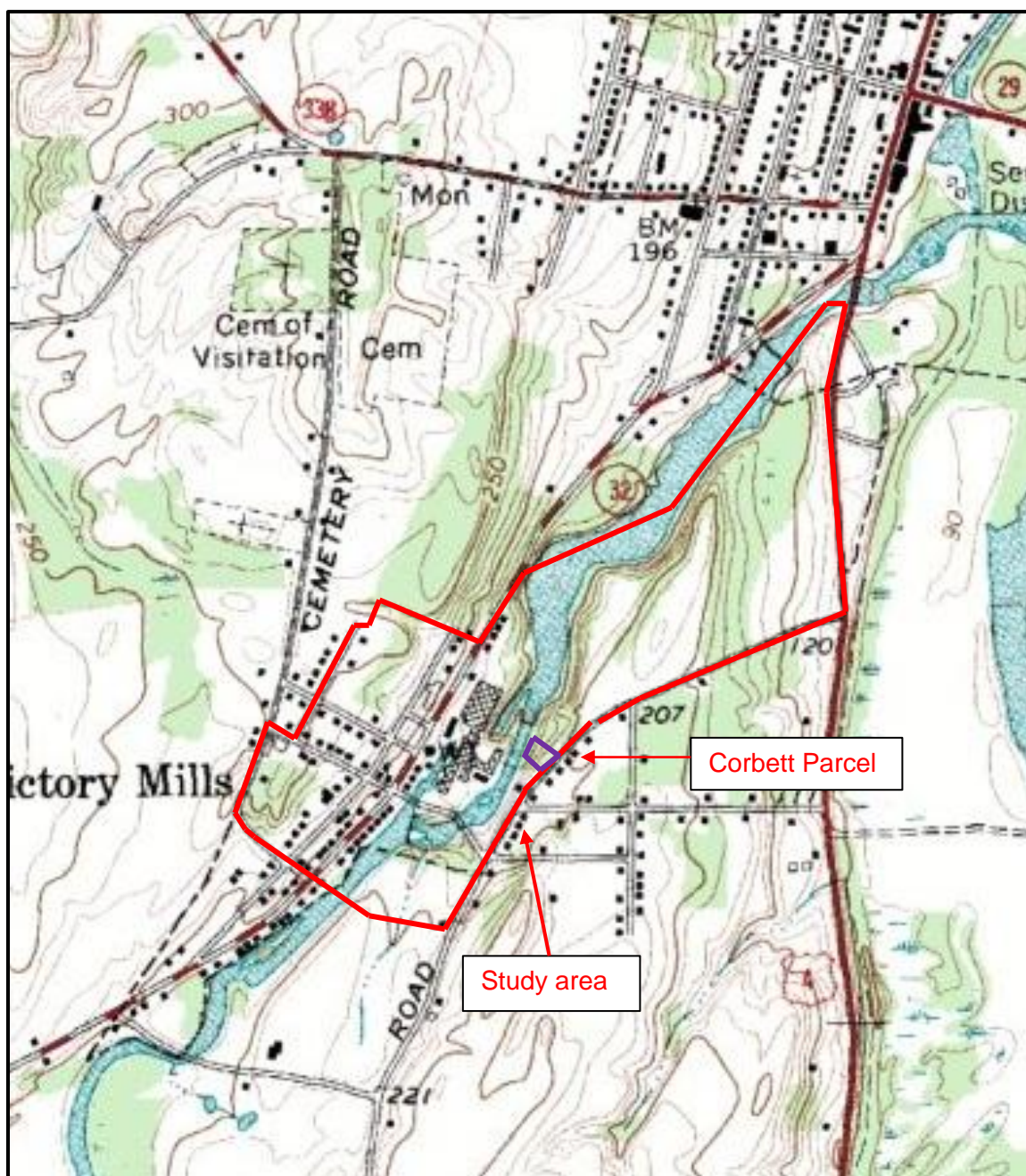


Figure 1

Location of Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

Source: US Geological Survey Schuylerville Quadrangle, 1967

- To assess the potential National Register eligibility of the study area for its significance under Criterion A as a battlefield.
- To establish a baseline of information enabling the design of a preservation program for the protection of the integrity of the historic setting and contributing historic resources within the study area.

B. Study Area Boundary

The Fish Creek American Positions landscape is located within the Town of Saratoga in Saratoga County, New York. Within the town boundary, most of the study area is situated within the village of Victory, but small portions are located within the village of Schuylerville and within the Town of Saratoga at large. The study area is defined by the Victory Woods NPS property and Fish Creek to the north, US Route 4 to the east, Evans Street and its continuation Haas Road to the southeast, property boundaries and Cemetery Road to the south, and Cemetery Road, a brief segment of Pine Street, and Jay Street to the west. The overall study area is approximately 100 acres. The study area is divided into four sections or landscape units according to the general character and developmental history of these units. The four units are

- South Bank of Fish Creek area (about 65 acres in extent)
- Victory Mills Complex and Milldam area (about 15 acres)
- Victory Village Center area (about 18 acres)
- “Gutter” area (about 2 acres)

C. Historical Overview

The study area is located within the Upper Hudson River Valley region (Figure 2). Until the seventeenth century, the region was inhabited by the Mohawk and Mahican tribes of Native Americans. In 1683, the Mohawks sold a large tract known as the Saratoga Patent, which contained the study area, to a consortium of seven Dutch families. In 1702, Johannes Schuyler acquired Lot No. 4 from the patent, which encompassed the land in the study area on the south side of Fish Creek. The Schuyler family developed their property as an estate farm and also established mills located within the study area. In 1768, Philip Schuyler, a grandson of Johannes, purchased Lot No. 5 on the north bank of the creek and thereby brought into the Schuyler holdings the study area’s land on that side of Fish Creek. To the Schuyler lower sawmill, located at the northeastern end of the study area, he added an upper sawmill situated on the south bank just to the east of the present-day Bridge Street bridge.

During the Siege of Saratoga (October 10-17, 1777), the study area composed a portion of the siege battlefield. The heights on the south side of Fish Creek became the key central segment of the American lines where the majority of the American artillery was evidently positioned to bombard the British. This strong position in effect anchored the overall American siege line. The study area land on the northern side of Fish Creek was the scene of much of the American troop movements for the reconnaissance in force that was made towards the British position on the morning of October 11. This was one of two locations where American units advanced in the resulting skirmishing engagement (the other being to the east of present-day US Route 4). The advance was called off when it was realized how strong the British position was.

The period 1777-1845 saw renewed gradual development of the property on the part of the Schuylers. Transportation improvements in the region during this era included the improvement of the river road (running along the eastern edge of the study area) as the Whitehall Turnpike in 1813, and the construction

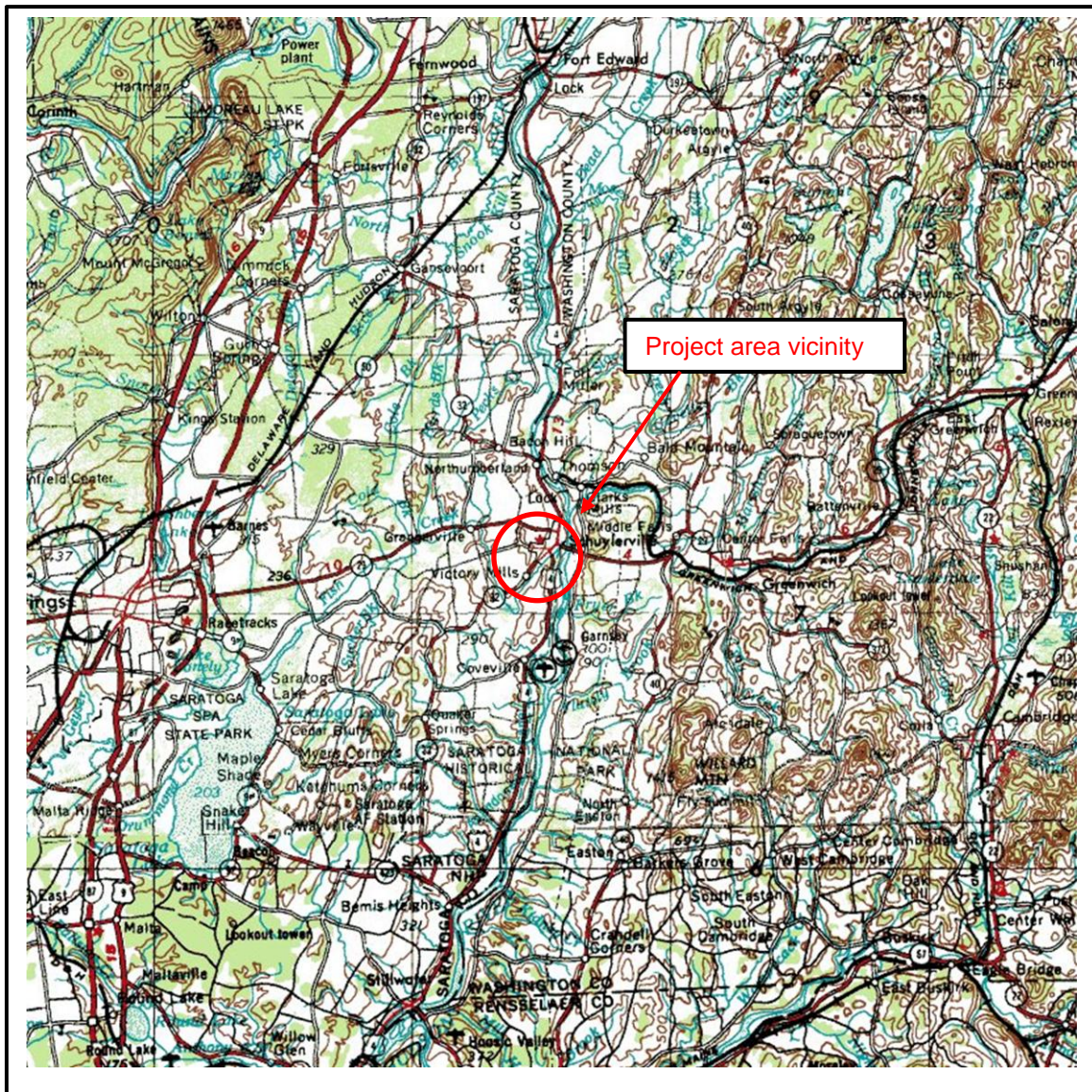


Figure 2

Regional Context: Upper Hudson River Valley Region

Source: www.mytopo.com

of the Champlain Canal during 1817-1823. In 1828, Philip Schuyler, representing the family's fifth generation in ownership, established a cotton textile mill named Horicon Mill, replacing the Schuyler lower mills complex on their site at the northeastern end of the study area. Schuyler was bankrupted in the Panic of 1837, however, and the Schuyler family lost ownership of the study area along with their adjacent Saratoga properties.

Real transformation of the portion of the study area on the north side of Fish Creek commenced in 1845. In that year a trio of Boston investors established the Victory Mill, a large-scale cotton textile manufactory. The partners began building workers' housing, retail and service businesses were attracted to locate at the nascent village, and in 1849 the settlement was incorporated as the village of Victory. In the same year, the Saratoga Victory Manufacturing Company took over the Horicon Mill and added it to the Victory Mills facilities, renaming the Horicon as the Saratoga Mill. The Victory Mills was long a successful concern, employing 550 workers and producing nearly 6 million yards of material in 1870. In 1910, however, the American Manufacturing Company, a producer of rope, cordage, and bagging, acquired Victory Mills for the purpose of expanding its operations. In 1918, then producing on a massive scale due to American military demand for World War I, American Manufacturing constructed the massive concrete and brick factory building that dominates the village skyline today.

In 1928, citing the need for cheaper labor, American Manufacturing pulled out of Victory and moved its operation to Alabama. The consequences of this action were ruinous for the local community. The village of Victory suffered a decline in population from which it never fully recovered, going from 1,065 in 1925 down to 480 in 1954. The Saratoga Mill was demolished at some date between 1925 and 1934, although its large milldam was continued in use as a hydroelectric facility. After nine years of vacancy, in 1937 the main factory complex was acquired by the United Board and Carton Corporation, a producer of cardboard containers, and continued in that function under various ownerships up to 2000. Since that date, the factory complex has again been vacant. National Register listing is pending for a portion of the old mill property containing the 1918 factory building.

The portion of the study area on the south bank has never been home to more than a handful of dwellings, and most of the land in that portion has evidently continued to the present as woodland and meadow. The upper sawmill was taken down circa 1845, and the textile mill building at the Horicon Mill site circa 1932.

D. Scope and Methodology

This report follows the format delineated in the NPS manual, *A Guide to Cultural Landscape Reports*, and thus is organized into three chapters: Site History, Existing Conditions, and Analysis and Evaluation.

Site History

The Site History chapter is divided into five sections corresponding to distinct periods in the development of the landscape of the Fish Creek American Positions study area. The periods are

- Prehistory and Early Settlement Prior to 1777
- The Siege at Saratoga, October 1777
- The Rural Economy, 1777 to 1845
- The Mill and the Village of Victory, 1845 to 1931
- The Study Area in Recent Decades, 1931 to the Present

Each section sets out the general historic context of the region surrounding the study area, the Upper Hudson River Valley region, and then addresses the site-specific history for that period. The section concludes with a discussion of the development of the landscape in the study area during the relevant period. The Site History presents historic maps, as well as historic photographs for the later sections, as additional documentation of the development of the landscape during the period.

Existing Conditions

The Existing Conditions chapter presents a narrative description documenting landscape characteristics including

- Natural systems and features
- Land use
- Circulation
- Topography
- Vegetation
- Buildings and structures
- Views and Vistas
- Small-scale features

The discussion of these characteristics is presented in three sections, each section covering a separate landscape unit, due to the considerable difference between the landscape units as regards appearance and land use. This section is based on site research, existing surveys, and field reconnaissance, and is illustrated with a site plan and survey photographs.

Analysis and Evaluation

The Analysis and Evaluation chapter discusses the historical significance of the Fish Creek American Positions landscape, identifies the characteristics and features that contribute to the significance of the landscape, and evaluates the integrity of the historic landscape. The analysis and evaluation is based on the criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places. The chapter treats each of the three landscape units in its own section.

E. Summary of Findings

A portion of the FCAP study area within the Victory Mills Complex and Milldam landscape unit, that is, a 6.5-acre parcel containing the main Victory Mills concrete and brick factory building constructed in 1918, is currently in process of being listed on the National Register. The nomination form contains a reference to the effect that the entire former Victory Mills property, including the circa 1847 mill building, should be listed if the owners become amenable to listing.

The South Bank of Fish Creek and the Gutter landscape units are recommended as eligible for the National Register. The historic significance of the Siege of Saratoga (October 10-17, 1777), is well established with regard to American military history. As the concluding phase of the Burgoyne Campaign, leading directly to British General Sir John Burgoyne's surrender of his army on October 17, the siege forms a watershed in the course of the Revolutionary War. Burgoyne's surrender was probably the most important immediate factor in the attainment of the American alliance with France, which in turn made possible the ultimate American victory in the war. The area of significance for the Siege of

Saratoga battlefield is that of military, the period of significance is 1777. The historic significance of the South Bank of Fish Creek and Gutter units is restricted to the history of the Siege of Saratoga in 1777.

The Victory Village Center landscape unit appears to possess the potential for listing on the National Register as an historic district, due to its historical association with Victory Mills and its distinction as a representative example of an industrial village of the mid- to late nineteenth century. It is possible that the village center of Victory does not possess the necessary integrity to convey its historic significance. A conclusive recommendation of National Register eligibility for the village center would require an investigation to survey the area in detail and research its history comprehensively. Such an activity is beyond the scope of the present study, hence the Victory Village Center is recommended as deserving further study to determine its National Register eligibility.

F. Recommendations for Further Work

The project team has developed these recommendations for future cultural resource investigations relating to the study area:

- National Register nomination for the South Bank of Fish Creek landscape unit as an eligible battlefield area
- National Register nomination for the Gutter landscape unit as an eligible battlefield area
- Archeological investigation of the South Bank of Fish Creek landscape unit, including the potential pre-1777 Schuyler estate roadway
- Archeological investigation of the Gutter landscape unit
- Archeological survey of the heights situated approximately one mile to the south of the study area and to the east of Haas Road (potential American artillery emplacements)
- Archeological survey of the pair of high ground areas, one on either side of Burgoyne Road, to the northwest of the village of Victory (potential American artillery emplacements)

II. SITE HISTORY

A. Prehistory and Early Settlement Prior to 1777

Before the arrival of European-American settlers in substantial numbers, the vicinity of the Fish Creek American Positions (FCAP) study area was inhabited by Native American people. Dutch people began settling in the upper Hudson Valley in the 1620s, clustering at Fort Orange (later Albany), just 35 miles downriver from the study area, although it took several decades to pass before settlers came to the Saratoga vicinity. The region of the Upper Hudson Valley above Albany witnessed a long series of wars involving various Indian tribes, Great Britain, and France. Due to the long lasting conditions of conflict, the Saratoga area remained relatively little developed throughout this period.

Regional Change and Development

Indigenous people established numerous settlements in the Upper Hudson Valley region during the Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland periods. The area was rich in natural resources and the Hudson River provided a natural corridor for trade with many suitable sites for settlement. Indian artifacts of varying age have been found by local people near the study area, e.g., in the Sword Surrender study area adjoining the FCAP study area to the east. Indian communities in the vicinity gradually gave way to European-American settlement in the course of the colonial period.¹

War broke out in 1625 between the Algonquian-speaking Mahicans and the Iroquoian-speaking Mohawks over the right to trade with the Dutch. By 1628 the Mohawks defeated the Mahicans, gaining a great territory extending along the west bank of the Hudson. The hold of the Mohawks on this land was not long in duration, however, as the Indian sovereignty receded in the face of the ever expanding domain of the Europeans. During the interval 1683-1713, the Mohawks sold large portions of this real estate to New York colonists. In particular, in 1683, the Mohawks granted a large tract known as the Saratoga Patent, containing present-day Saratoga County and a portion of Washington County, to a consortium of seven Dutch landowners including members of the Schuyler, Van Dyke, Bleeker, and Wendel families. Settlement of the study area vicinity soon followed.²

During the series of four imperial wars between France and Great Britain that transpired between 1689 and 1763, French and allied Native American forces repeatedly attacked the New York settlements in the Upper Hudson Valley. During this period, the British and their settlers established a number of forts and stockades along the Hudson above Albany for strategic military purposes and for the protection of local communities, including a stronghold at Saratoga located outside the study area. The fort was rebuilt or refurbished for each of the four wars and positioned at two different sites among its various iterations. Destroyed in combat by raiders on one occasion, in a raid of 1745, it was christened Fort Vrooman in 1689, Fort Saratoga in 1702, Fort Clinton in 1746, and Fort Hardy in 1757. The early forts were located by the west bank of the river about three-quarters of a mile south of Fish Creek; Hardy was constructed at the mouth of the creek on its north bank. Despite this effort at safeguarding the local inhabitants, settlement stagnated during the prolonged period of imperial conflict, with the extent of settlement and size of population even receding at times. Indian raids resulted in temporary abandonment of the Saratoga settlement in 1690 and 1745. On the second occasion, resettlement did not begin until after security was established for Anglo-American colonists in the region by the permanent British conquest of Montreal in 1760 (Figure 3).³

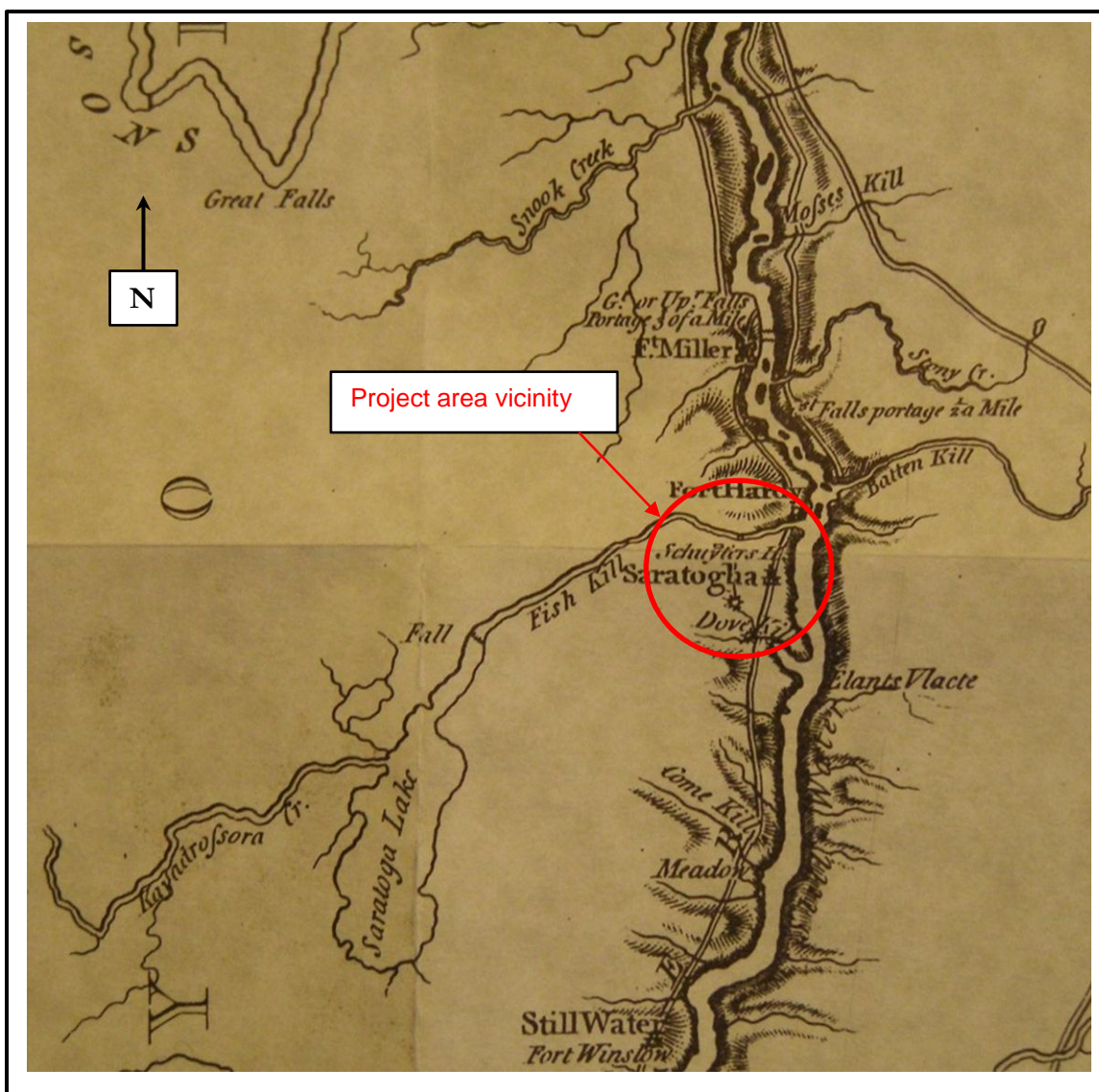


Figure 3

Upper Hudson River Valley Region, circa 1775

Source: Claude Joseph Sauthier, *Topographical Map of Hudson River*

(published by William Faden, London, 1776)

In 1763, with French Canada finally vanquished, the Treaty of Paris conferred mastery of most of the continent of North America upon Great Britain. The seeming triumph called for a reordering of Britain's colonial system with new trade regulations, imperial administrative structures, and restrictions on frontier settlement. These innovations in the system by which the Crown governed its American colonies soon resulted in deteriorating relations, and in 1775 in outright armed conflict between the Crown and the thirteen seaboard provinces including New York. The American colonies declared independence and became the United States in 1776.

Site-specific Historical Data on the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

Before the onset of European-American settlement, the landscape of the study area vicinity was characterized by mostly deciduous forest consisting largely of elm, birch, white fir, alder, dogwood, red willow, and chestnut trees. The Mahican and Mohawk inhabitants would have used the study area for hunting and fishing.⁴

Upon their arrival in the study area vicinity in the late seventeenth century, European-Americans commenced the first of their cycles of transformation for the area's landscape. Their impact would at first have been limited due to the relative paucity of settlers, but by 1777 the landscape of the study area vicinity would have looked considerably different from its largely woodland appearance of a century earlier. In 1689, the owners surveyed the most desirable portion of the Saratoga Patent, the central area immediately adjoining the Hudson on either bank. This tract, which became known afterwards as the Old Divided Lands, extended along the river for approximately five and a half miles with its north end at the mouth of the Batten Kill, and measured two miles in breadth east to west. The owners divided this tract into seven lots. Johannes Wendel drew Lot No. 4, which included the portion of the FCAP study area situated on the southeast side of Fish Creek (at first known by its Dutch name "Fishkill"), and in that same year Wendel established his homestead on a part of his holding situated closer to the river on land to the east of the study area. Robert Livingston, one of the great Hudson Valley grandees, drew Lot No. 5, which contained the portion of the study area lying on the northwest side of the creek (Figure 4).⁵

Johannes Wendel died in 1691, leaving the Lot No. 4 property to his son Abraham. In 1702, Abraham sold the tract to Johannes Schuyler. The Schuylers had been an influential presence in the society of the province since their arrival in the colony by 1650. At some point after 1720, Johannes conveyed the property to his sons Philip Johannes Schuyler and John Schuyler. Philip Johannes lived on the tract and exercised the role of active proprietor of the estate farm and the accompanying group of sawmills. He was killed in the raid of 1745, and the property afterwards passed to his nephew Philip Schuyler (1733-1804), who would achieve prominence in the Continental Army as one of the first officers awarded the rank of major general and as commander of the Northern Department during 1775-1777. He furthered the renewed development of his property and the Saratoga vicinity, bringing settlers to the area in the early 1760s and settling there himself in 1763. In 1768, Schuyler expanded his Saratoga property by purchasing 4,000 acres adjoining to the north from the heirs of Robert Livingston, including the Divided Lands Lot No. 5 on the opposite side of Fish Creek, thereby uniting the FCAP study area in a single ownership. Schuyler recruited numerous colonists in Scotland and Ireland in addition to encouraging Dutch-Americans to come to Saratoga. He enlisted many as bachelor hired men or indentured servants in his direct employ, for whom he constructed a set of barracks buildings north of Fish Creek (later employed and expanded by the Continental Army), and others as tenant farmers. Schuyler encouraged some of the hired men to marry and settle on the estate as tenants. Around 1763, he established the

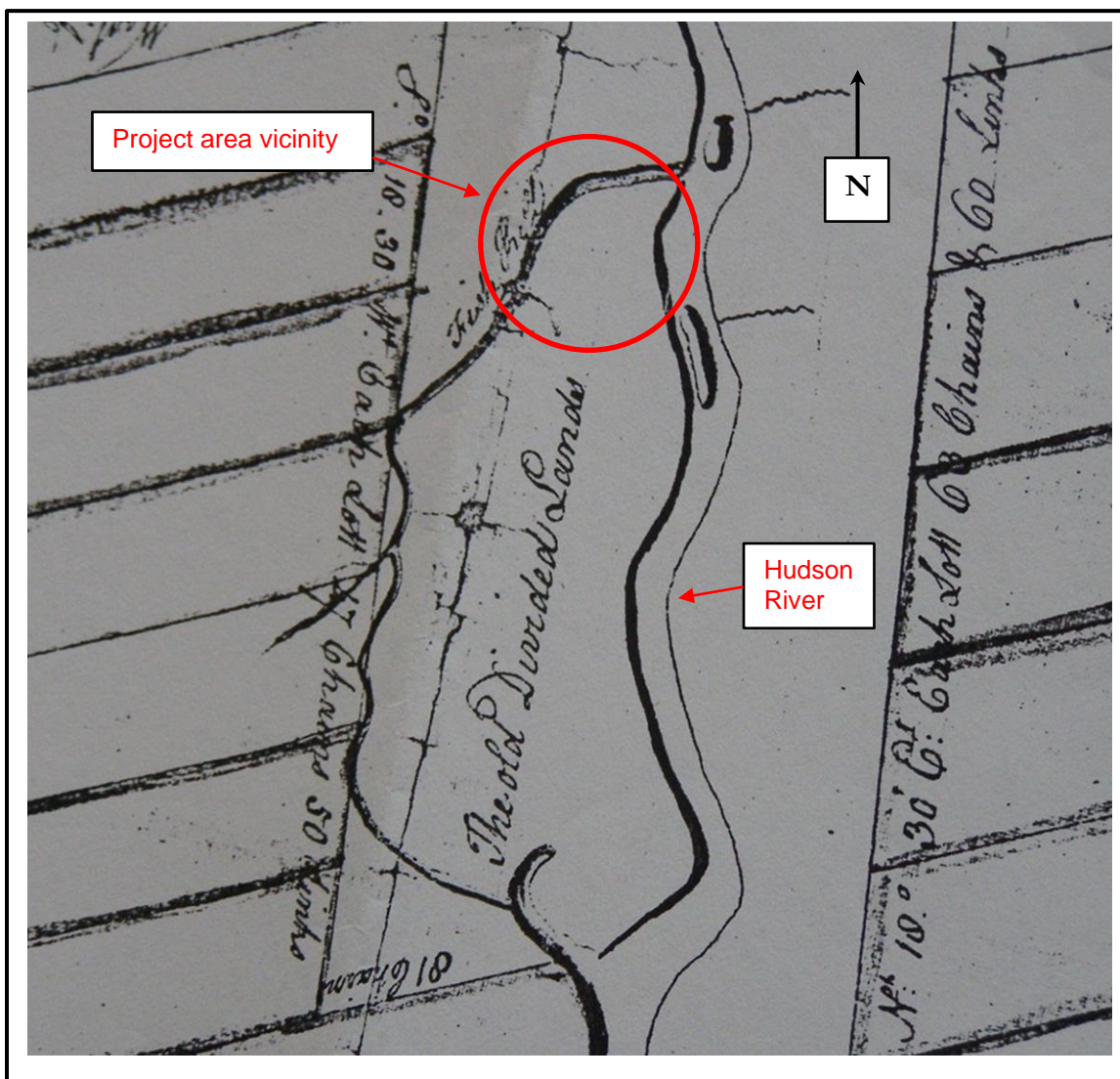


Figure 4

Old Divided Lands, Saratoga Patent, circa 1750

Source: C. Donald Carpenter, *Kayadosseras Allotments*, 1964

settlement's Dutch Reformed Church, located just south of the study area on the west side of the great river road (present-day US Route 4).⁶

Schuyler's most important economic activity was evidently lumbering; a large proportion of the single laborers housed in the barracks were enlisted to participate in this industry of the estate. The earlier Schuyler sawmills, of which there had evidently been three or four (exact locations uncertain), had been destroyed by the French in 1745. Philip Schuyler built two new sawmills on the south side of Fish Creek within the study area, probably both in 1763, one located on the low-lying ground by the creek and just to the west of the great river road, the other up the creek and next to it, to the northeast of the present-day Bridge Street bridge at the village of Victory. National Park Service historian Stephen G. Strach asserts that Schuyler built his second sawmill of 1763 at a location yet farther upstream about a mile from Victory. Although Strach does not mention the mill at the Bridge Street location in his comprehensive study of the Schuyler estate complex, this mill was clearly built by 1777 as is known from the testimony of several American and British siege participants. It is possible that Schuyler built three sawmills within the colonial years. The widely spaced sawmills would have facilitated his energetic and thorough exploitation of the estate's timber resources.⁷

Schuyler also established a large-scale estate farming operation for grain and livestock, and opened a general store as well as a gristmill and a flax- and hemp-breaking mill to service his own crops and those of his tenants and neighbors. Central to the farm operation was Schuyler's "Great Barn," an unusually capacious frame specimen of the Dutch barn type said to have measured at least 100 feet by 60 feet in ground dimension, built sometime 1762-1765. According to Strach, the great barn stood within the study area on the west side of the great river road a short distance south of the Fish Creek bridge location. Schuyler built the general store in 1765 and the flax mill during 1767-1768, both of these facilities situated across the road to the east and thus outside the study area. Strach dates the gristmill, located on the north bank of Fish Creek and also outside the study area, as being open and running by 1770; given the large scale of Schuyler's farm operation and the centrality of grain cultivation in the predominant Hudson Valley agricultural system, it was probably built several years before 1770. Strach estimates that about 1,200 settlers were living in the Saratoga area in 1767. In that year Schuyler constructed a large and elaborate frame mansion house that was palatial by standards of time and place.⁸

Landscape Character of the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

Apart from the small portion situated at the northeast end of the tract and lying within the river valley plain (adjacent to the US 4 bridge over Fish Creek and the Schuyler House location), the land within the study area represents upland terrain. Tending to be rocky, the study area was probably employed by the owners as woodland and partially wooded pastureland. According to Strach, Schuyler's lumbering operation probably felled a high proportion of the mature trees on the nearer portions of the estate by 1777.⁹

Another aspect of the study area's landscape character is that of waterpowered industry. At least one of the pre-1745 Schuyler sawmills was probably located within the study area. In 1763, Philip Schuyler established the lower sawmill on the southeast bank of Fish Creek, situated on the lowland portion at the northeast end of the study area. Probably within the same year, he built a second upland sawmill that evidently stood on the area of level ground just to the northeast of present-day Bridge Street, across the creek from the central area of the village of Victory. The waterworks for these mills would have included two dams extending across Fish Creek at the respective mills, necessary to impound the flow of water in

order to operate the mills, and millraces. British and German maps of the Saratoga Siege area, based on imprecise surveys made in 1777, omit the dams and the upper sawmill. They both, however, depict groupings of three buildings at the lower sawmill location with the buildings distributed to form a row of three buildings aligned end to end. According to Strach, the other two buildings in the row were probably a relatively large poultry house and one of the estate's secondary barns. The German officer's map shows two additional buildings, one by the road which Strach attributes as representing the estate's great barn, and one on a knoll at the northeast end of the high ground extending along the south bank of Fish Creek, perhaps a tenant dwelling. The 1837 surveyor's draft of the Schuyler estate depicts the upper sawmill as situated directly on the bank of the creek and immediately above its dam. The upper sawmill was not destroyed in the war and its dam at least was said by a 1777 veteran to have remained in its earlier configuration, suggesting that the sawmill did as well. For headrace it evidently had a reservoir tank or pool that took its water directly from the creek (as opposed to the form in which the race composes a lengthy walled channel and the mill itself is not situated directly next to the natural watercourse supplying the necessary flow) (Figures 5-7).¹⁰

There is relatively little documentation on the specific FCAP study area (as opposed to data on the overall Schuyler estate) for the period up to 1777. It is safe to assume that the five buildings referred to above—the lower and upper sawmills, the estate's great barn, the secondary barn, and the poultry house—would have represented the sum total of substantial building construction within the study area; in other words, development was probably fairly minimal. It is likely that dwellings built within the study area before 1777 were limited to a possible miller's dwelling by the upper sawmill. Additional tenant houses on the Schuyler estate were probably located on lower ground near arable cropland and the river road. Schuyler must have made a roadway or lane for access to the upper sawmill when he built that resource and its dam. The 1837 survey of the property shows a public road congruent with present-day Evans Street and no other road in the upper sawmill's immediate vicinity. However, as is discussed in some detail below in Section B, there is a likelihood that the extant dirt lane or track leading from US Route 4, near the Fish Creek bridge, and heading toward the southwest and the upper sawmill location, represents a surviving 1760s Schuyler estate roadway or lane (Figure 8). Such a road would have connected the upper sawmill location by the most direct route with the lower complex of Schuyler estate buildings including the mansion, the general store, and the other mills. The general character of the study area, consisting of upland terrain but for the small area of level ground (location of the lower mills) would have been characterized by woodland (albeit thinned by lumbering) and partially wooded pastureland. Fish Creek itself formed a visually dominant topographical element within the study area.

B. The Siege at Saratoga, October 1777

Regional Change and Development

The history of the Saratoga Campaign of 1777 is well known and present purposes require no more than a brief recapitulation. Lord George Germain, directly supervising the British war effort from London for the King and ministry, and Northern Theatre field commander Sir John Burgoyne envisioned a three-pronged offensive in New York state, with Burgoyne driving south from Canada along the Lake Champlain-Hudson River axis, Lt. Colonel Barry St. Leger leading a small diversionary force eastward along the Mohawk Valley, and a third and fairly major British force moving northward along the Hudson from the British base in New York to meet with or at least facilitate the progress of the other two

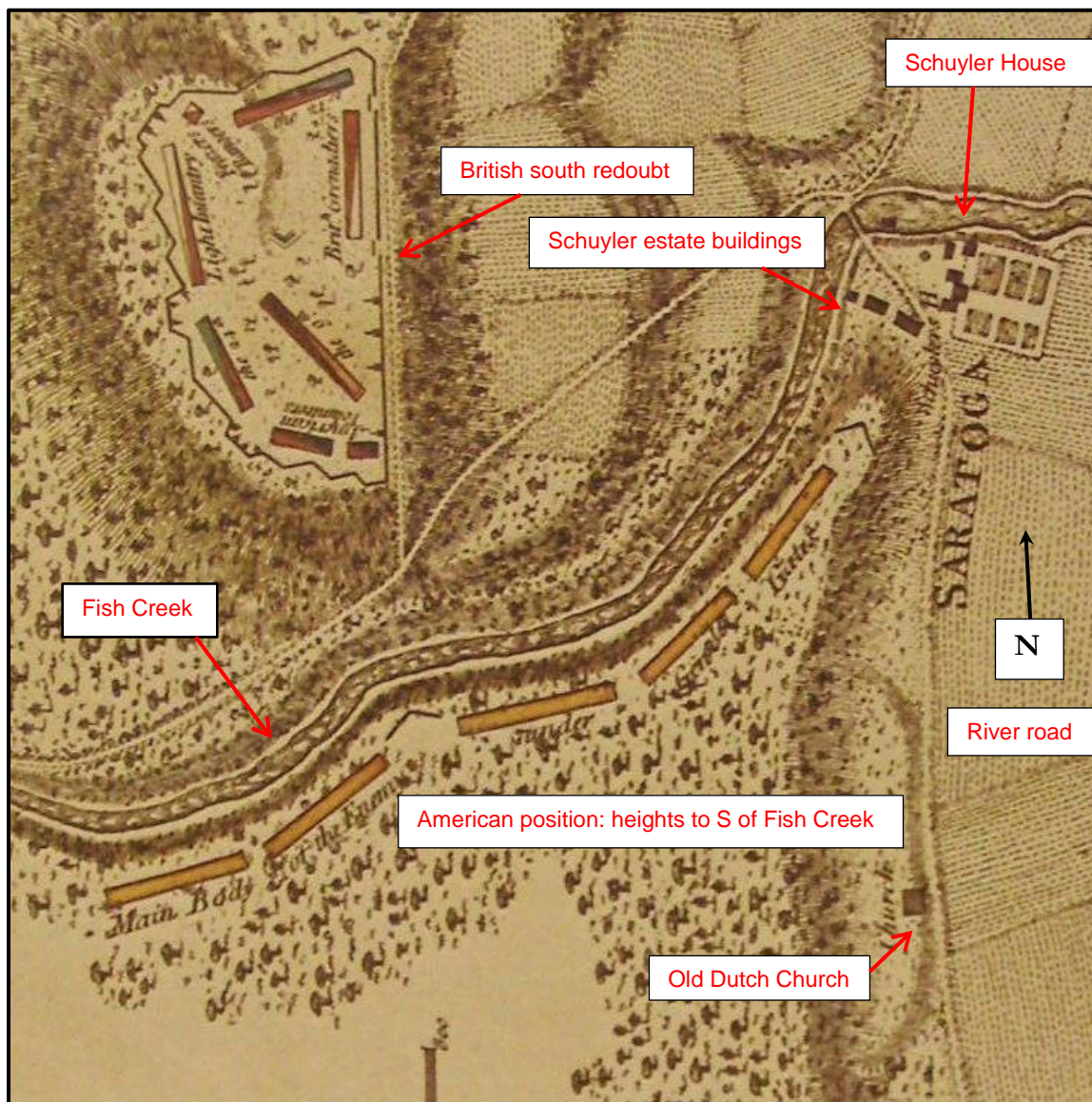


Figure 5

A British View of FCAP Study Area, 1777

Source: Lt. W.C. Wilkinson, *Plan of the Position Genl. Burgoine Took at Saratoga* (published by William Faden, London, 1780)

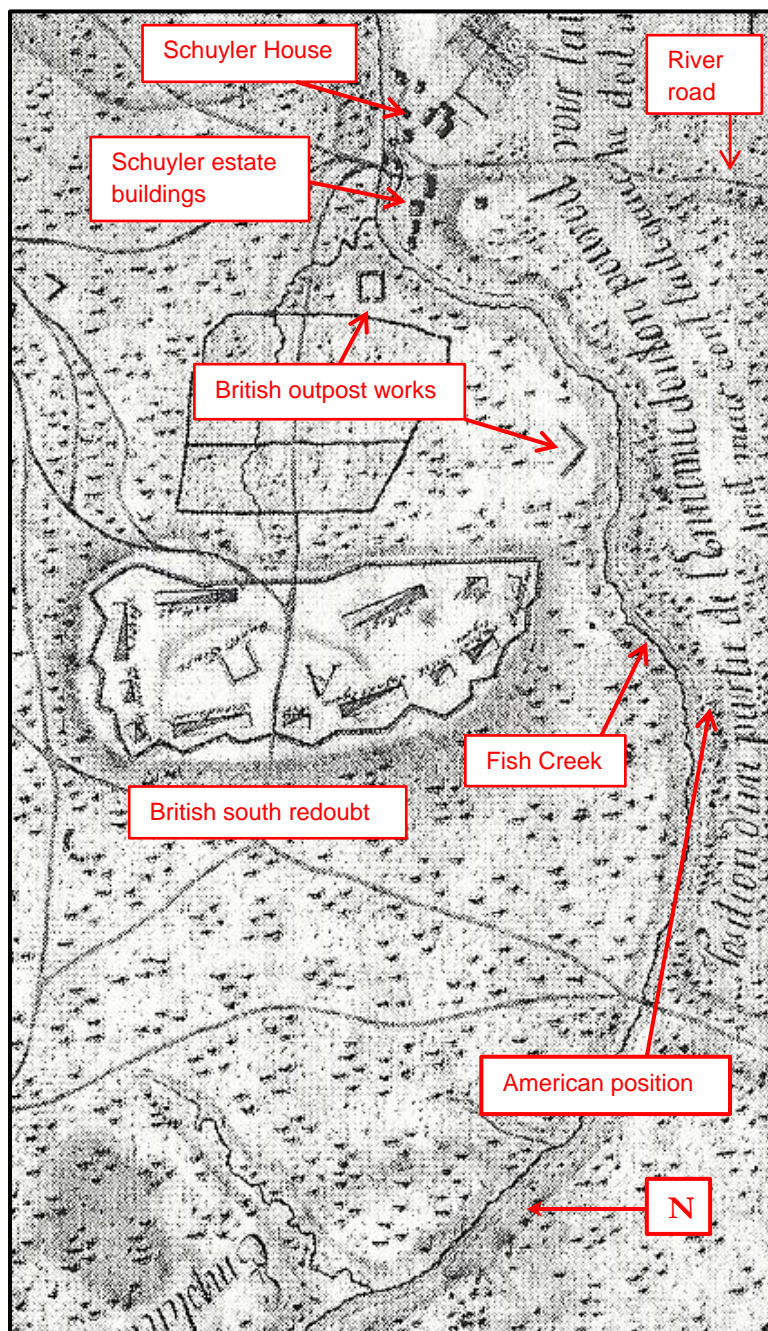


Figure 6

A German View of FCAP Study Area, 1777

Source: Capt. J.H.D. Gerlach, *Plan de la Position de General Bourgoyne à Saratoga* (n.d., original lost, photocopy on file at Saratoga N.H.P.)

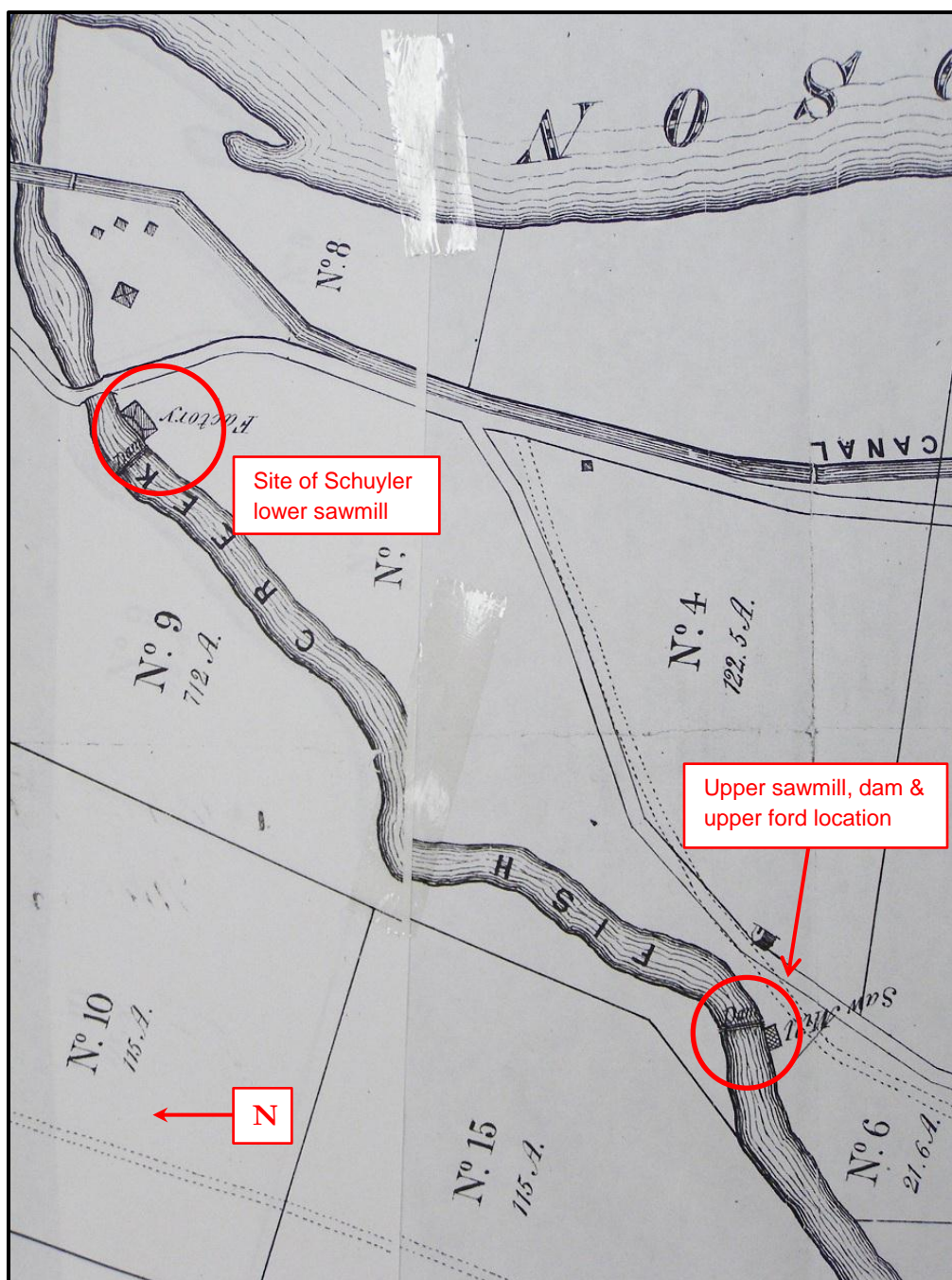


Figure 7

Detail of FCAP Study Area in 1837

Source: Harman Van Alen, *Map of the Estate of Philip Schuyler*
(published by G. Endicott, New York, 1837)

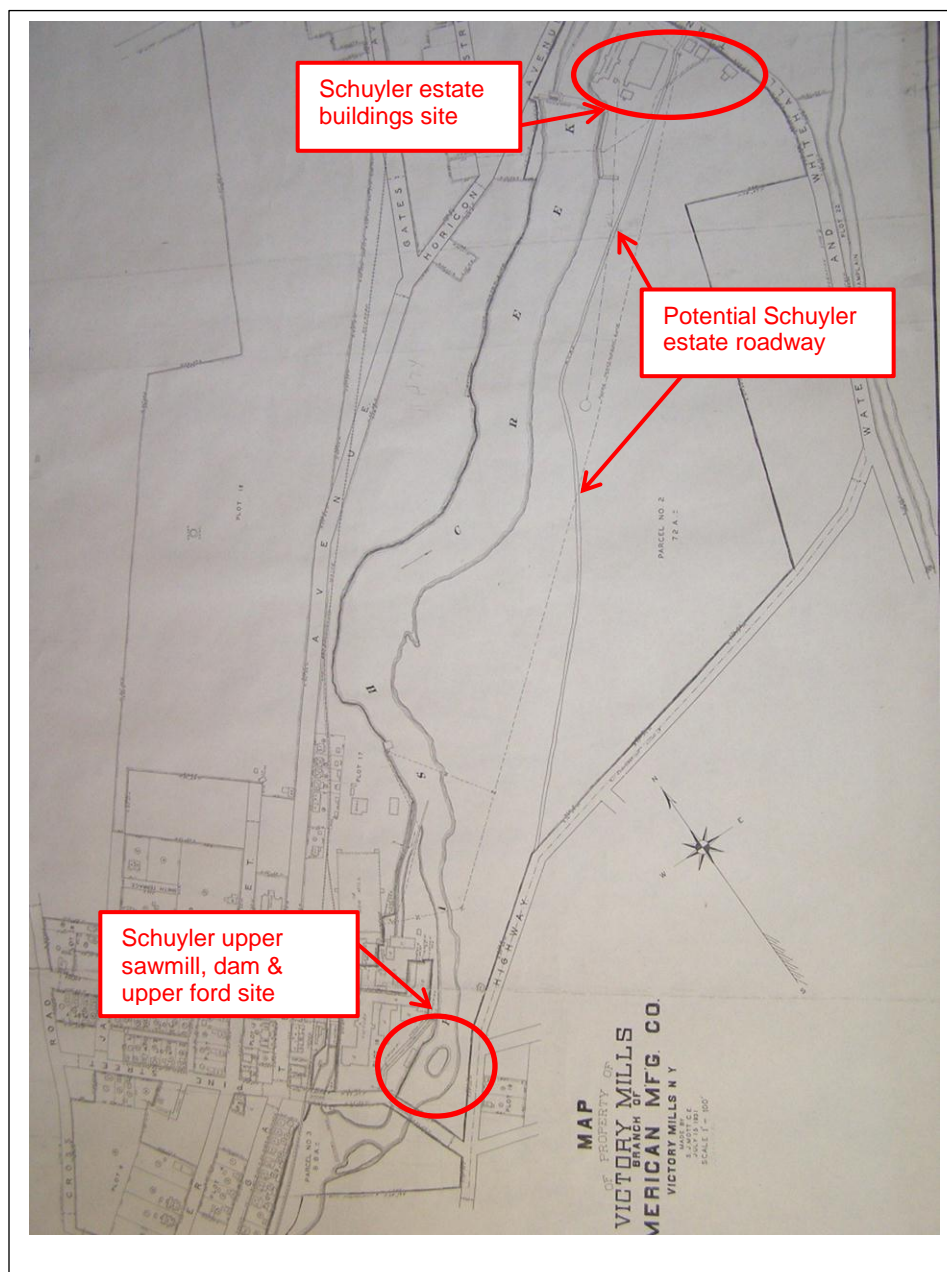


Figure 8

Potential Pre-1777 Schuyler Estate Roadway

Source: S.J. Mott, *Map of Property of Victory Mills Branch of American Mfg. Co.*, 1931
(Map AA-24, Saratoga County Real Property Tax Service Agency)

columns. The aim of the Crown forces was to occupy the Hudson Valley corridor and thereby divide the colonies and the American forces in two, causing what the British hoped would be a collapse of American morale and irremediable dislocations in the American war effort that would contribute to a British victory in the war. Unfortunately for General Burgoyne, Sir William Howe, the commander of the main British force in New York, had his own ideas regarding the appropriate British strategy for 1777. Whether Howe misunderstood the instructions he received from Germain, or chose to willfully disregard them, or thought that all the potential objectives could be achieved because he was overly optimistic about the capability of the various British contingents to deal with American troops, he led his strike force southward in 1777 on a campaign to capture Philadelphia. As a consequence, the support that Burgoyne received from British forces in New York (then under General Sir Henry Clinton), in the form of a limited advance up the Hudson in early October, amounted to too little, too late.

Burgoyne captured the American citadel of Fort Ticonderoga handily (July 6, 1777) and dealt the retreating Americans a harsh blow at Hubbardton, VT (July 8), but this promising inception to his campaign would lead to nought. An ill-planned foray to Bennington, VT (August 16) by a force composed mainly of German auxiliaries brought a catastrophic loss of troops, some 900 or about 13% of his field force. On the Mohawk Valley front, British commander St. Leger gave up his siege of Fort Stanwix on August 22 and returned to Canada following the defection of his Indian allies. In the meantime, American reinforcements, consisting of Continentals dispatched by Washington and of militia from lower New York state and western New England—who turned out in an especially numerous and sustained response—contributed to a rapid growth of the American force opposed to Burgoyne and commanded by General Horatio Gates. This army barred the way to Albany, Burgoyne’s critical objective, at a position taken up and fortified at Bemis Heights on the west bank of the Hudson. By mid-September, Burgoyne was facing approximately 9,000 American troops (increasing by hundreds by the day) with about 6,500 British and German soldiers. Burgoyne attempted unsuccessfully to batter his way through in two successive battles fought on September 19 (Freeman’s Farm) and October 7 (Second Saratoga or Bemis Heights). After the second battle, Burgoyne’s depleted force of about 5,200 effectives, diminishing by daily desertions and almost out of supplies, faced an American army of some 15,000 troops (that would grow by a few thousand more within another week). Burgoyne pulled back to his final position at Saratoga on October 10 and, finding himself surrounded with no realistic avenue of escape, fortified it as best he could. After three days of near ceaseless bombardment by Gates’s artillery and deadly sniping by the contingent of American riflemen (October 11-13), Burgoyne negotiated a surrender of his force to Gates, with the ceremony taking place on October 17.

The fighting at Saratoga during September-October 1777 forms one of the most significant episodes in American military history, as the American victory had far-reaching consequences. The American troops, including the militia, gave a good account of themselves, and their determination to win helped convince the political leadership of France that alliance with the American rebels could prove a successful strategy, resulting in the Franco-American alliance of February 1778. The good showing by the Northern Army under Gates bolstered American morale at large at a time when the reverses suffered by Washington’s Main Army in September 1777—defeat at Brandywine (September 11) and Howe’s capture of Philadelphia (September 26)—had threatened to undermine it. At Saratoga, for the first time, “British regulars were beaten in open battle by equal numbers of Americans,” as stated by historian Brendan Morrissey. Without the financial, material, and military assistance provided by the French alliance, American independence may not have been possible. The alliance completely altered the strategic situation faced by the British, as a civil war within the Empire expanded into a global conflict akin to that

of the Seven Years War, necessitating a reallocation in Britain's land and sea forces as well as in the Crown's strategic priorities. It would now become imperative in the summer of 1778 to send about 4,000 British regulars from the American theatre to the West Indies to defend the valuable sugar islands; combined with the loss of Burgoyne's army of about 7,000 soldiers, this weakening of Crown forces reduced Britain's capability to campaign aggressively in the northern colonies and necessitated a new emphasis on the raising of Loyalist provincial regular troops. Henceforth, impressed by evidence of widespread Loyalist sympathies in the American south, the British would shift their strategic attention to the southern colonies, in hopes of raising more Loyalist regulars and of pacifying those areas through civil administration.¹¹

Site-specific Historical Data on the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

After the battle of October 7, General Burgoyne concluded that his army's position to the north of Bemis Heights had become untenable with the loss of its right flank fortification (Breyman's Redoubt), and that a retreat to attempt to escape encirclement by the Americans in their superior numbers had become imperative. The British force commenced its withdrawal on the night of October 8. Evidently hoping that an advance by Sir Henry Clinton from the southward might still turn the tables on General Gates and Co., and that his own army should thus be prepared to sustain a full-scale fight, Burgoyne retained as much as possible of his extensive siege train of artillery, including several heavy guns, thereby slowing his retreat. The British reached Saratoga, camping on either bank of Fish Creek, on the evening of October 9. They found that an American militia contingent under General John Fellows had already destroyed the pontoon bridge spanning the Hudson that the British had earlier put in place, a bridge Burgoyne needed to continue his withdrawal, as well as the bridge over Fish Creek. Fellows was now in position with 1,300 men and two cannon on the heights across the Hudson to the east, prepared to oppose any attempt to cross the river. Burgoyne sent Lt. Colonel Nicholas Sutherland ahead about 12 miles northward along the west bank with a large detachment of about 800 men including the British engineers to build and safeguard a new bridge across the Hudson at Fort Edward. Some American scouts on reconnaissance interpreted Sutherland's movement as representing a continuation of the retreat by the main British force, and reported their supposition to General Gates.

Perhaps now confident of ultimate victory, General Gates with the main American army had been slow to pursue the enemy army as it withdrew from Bemis Heights, giving Burgoyne a sizable head start, but moved more rapidly than the mostly exhausted British. The American main body reached the south bank of the Fish Creek and went into camp on the night of the 10th. Early on the following day, Colonel Daniel Morgan's highly effective Corps of Rangers (combining his riflemen and Lt. Colonel Henry Dearborn's picked light infantry) began crossing Fish Creek to the west of the British and taking up positions on that flank. In addition to Fellows's force on the east bank of the Hudson, additional American militia forces of about 1,500 men each under General John Stark, victor of Bennington, and General John Bayley had moved northward on the east bank and captured the British base at Fort Edward. Bayley took up position securing Fort Edward and the crossing. British Colonel Sutherland returned with his troops to Saratoga to report to Burgoyne that the river could not be forded due to the American militia. General Stark advanced southward along the east bank with his troops, eventually crossing the river on the night of the 12th and seizing the high ground at Stark's Knob on the north side of Schuylerville. There would then be no possible egress from the box in which the British army found itself. On October 10, the British shifted their forces westward somewhat to their final position occupying an extended line on the high ground north of Fish Creek (today the westerly margin of the village of Schuylerville). Burgoyne burned General

Philip Schuyler's mansion house, outbuildings, and lower mills to prevent the use of these structures for cover by the Americans. These buildings were grouped along the creek on either side of the road, mostly on the south bank.

As of the early morning of the 11th, General Gates did not know the current position of all of his own outlying contingents (such as Stark and Bayley) and was not aware that the entire British force was still located just across Fish Creek; rather he thought that the enemy positions on high ground north of Fish Creek were occupied by a mere rear guard contingent shielding Burgoyne's further withdrawal. Gates decided, uncharacteristically impulsively, to make an immediate advance on the British position, in effect a reconnaissance in force by most of his Continentals with some militia in support. This contingent could attack the British rear guard if the conditions appeared promising. There thus occurred a skirmish that was the nearest instance to an episode of direct combat that would take place in the course of the siege. In conditions of thick fog, four brigades of Continentals with at least one battalion of militia forded Fish Creek at two locations to join Morgan's Corps for the movement forward. The Americans retreated, however, after the fog fortuitously cleared to reveal the King's infantry and artillery in full array and the British commenced firing. After suffering some casualties in this probing engagement, the two American brigades to the eastward, those of Nixon and Glover, fell back across Fish Creek and resumed their positions on the ridge above the creek. Their comrades to westward also withdrew but remained on the north side of the creek except for some militia that had reinforced them for the advance. The brigades of Learned and Paterson shifted farther to the west to form the American left flank and were joined by Poor's Brigade, while Morgan extended that flank well to northward. (The sources do not elucidate the positions taken by the militia brigades led by Warner and Ten Broeck, although at least one regiment under Warner, that of Woodbridge, took position on the heights south of Fish Creek.)

After the dust settled from the incipient fracas of the 11th, Gates and his officers applied their men and resources to the siege, and the American artillery and riflemen commenced subjecting the British to constant barrage and sniping, targeting the supply-laden bateaux that the Crown force had retained along the river at Saratoga with telling effect. Of the apparently at least 30 and perhaps as many as 40 field pieces supervised by artillery commander Major Ebenezer Stevens during the siege, the bulk of the guns were probably positioned on the ridge rising above the south bank of Fish Creek. A few field pieces were trundled across the creek to strengthen the American left flank, however, and it appears that some others were sent north along the east bank of the Hudson to augment Fellows's original pair.

While their army endured the punishing bombardment and rifle harassment, the British leadership convened two successive councils of war in their camp, on October 12 and 13. With only a few days' worth of provisions remaining (at half-ration), the first council concluded that the command's only hope lay in leaving the army's artillery and baggage behind and attempting a very difficult, widely outflanking march up the west bank to a river crossing point well above Fort Edward. Orders were given for the march to commence that night but then countermanded in the evening after it was realized that the woods were already so thick with American pickets from Morgan's Corps that the march could not possibly go undetected. Within a few hours afterwards, Stark's contingent was in place on the north to oppose in force any such escape attempt. The following day's council resolved to capitulate if honorable terms could be obtained from the Americans, and a message to that effect was sent to General Gates on the evening of the 13th. A ceasefire was called and contentious negotiations regarding the precise terms of surrender went on through the 14th, 15th, and 16th. Although his officers had evidently committed to capitulation, General Burgoyne was stalling for time while still praying that Sir Henry Clinton's relief

force would miraculously appear from the south. On the evening of the 16th, Burgoyne finally relented and bowed to the inevitable, agreeing to the surrender agreement known as the Convention. A few hours later, Burgoyne's intrepid courier Captain Alexander Campbell returned from a mission to Clinton, slipping through the siege lines to deliver a letter from Sir Henry in New York revealing that there was no hope of relief. The surrender took place on the 17th.¹²

Landscape Character of the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

When the opposing armies met to engage in the episode of siege and defense known as the Siege of Saratoga during October 10-17, 1777, the landscape of the study area presumably existed in the configuration of waterpowered industrial facilities, woodland, and partially wooded pastureland in which it had been maintained by the Schuyler family for some decades previously, albeit much of the available timber had evidently been felled. The siege must necessarily have resulted in much destruction of buildings and structures, and disturbance of the landscape via the erection of earthwork fortifications for the besiegers' lines, creation of temporary military campsites, potential overgrazing by the American army's livestock, and destruction of fences and cutting of trees to obtain firewood for the camps. The documentary evidence indicates, however, that afterward the Schuyler family and their tenants rebuilt the destroyed industrial and other structures within the next few years. There follows an account of the Defining Features of the Saratoga Siege Battlefield that are located within the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area, incorporating summaries of the primary source documentary evidence for the association of these landscape features with the 1777 siege activity. The complete military-historical research compiled for this study is presented in Appendix 1.

Application of the KOCO military terrain analysis method finds that the study area contains at least six battlefield Defining Features and a probable seventh Defining Feature associated with the Siege of Saratoga (Figure 9). These seven potential Defining Features include:

- Fish Creek (obstacle)
- American position: heights to south of Fish Creek (key terrain; observation and fields of fire)
- Schuyler estate buildings site (cover and concealment)
- River road—to south of bridge site (avenue of approach and retreat)
- Fish Creek upper ford—upper Schuyler milldam (avenue of approach and retreat)
- “Gutter” or depression—to south of British south redoubt (cover and concealment)
- Probable Defining Feature: Schuyler estate roadway (avenue of approach and retreat)

The CLI study area represents an important segment of the overall Saratoga Siege battlefield. It contains the position extending along the heights to the south of Fish Creek that formed the key central component anchoring the overall American siege line. The study area also encompasses the location of the ford at the upper milldam that was employed by American troops composing the western wing of the abortive advance on the morning of October 11, and which thus enabled the initial movement to form the American siege line to the west of Burgoyne's position. It also contains the easterly portion of the ground on which the American troops advanced after fording the creek and on which they exchanged fire with

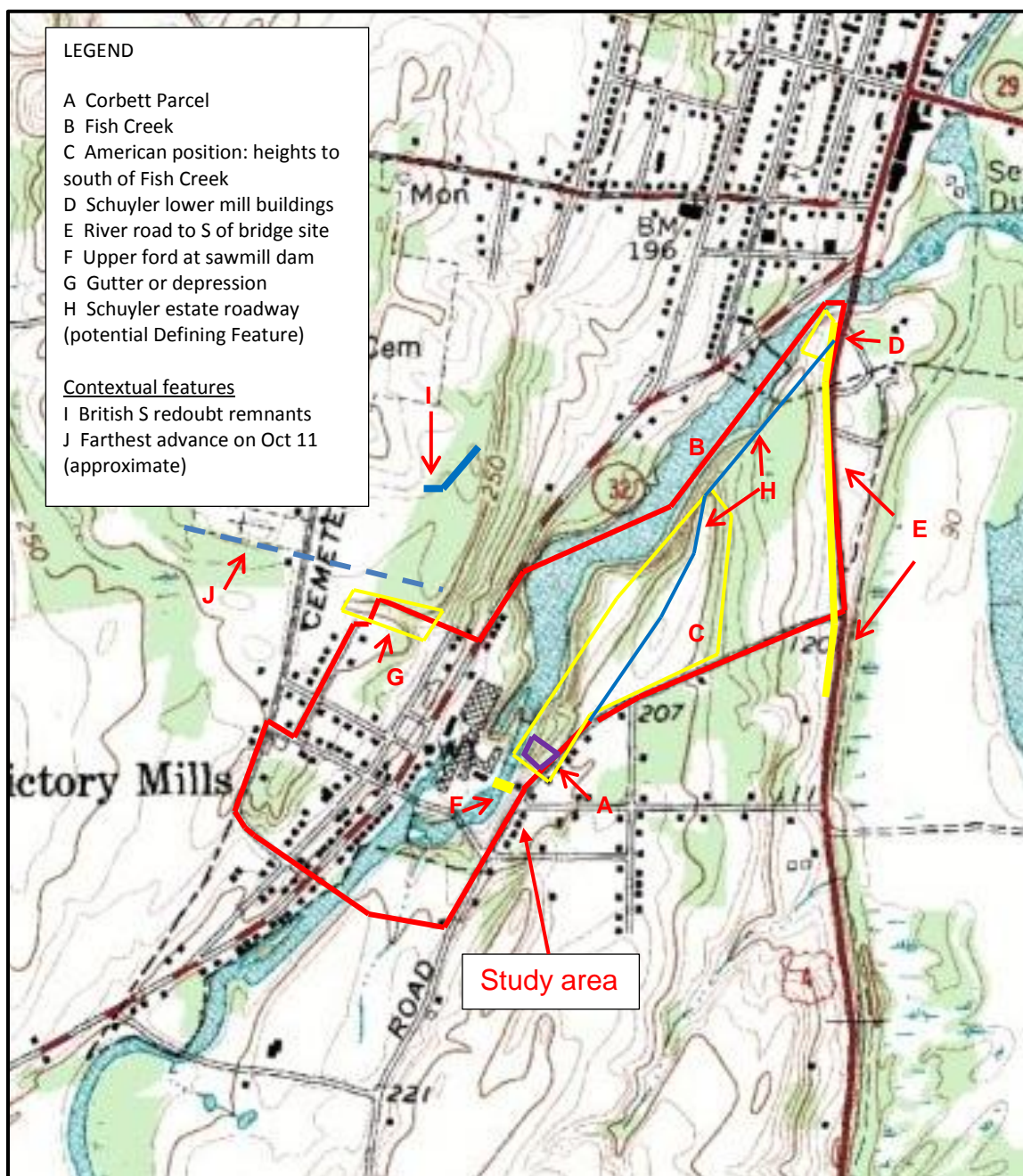


Figure 9

Locations of Defining Features within FCAP Study Area

Source: US Geological Survey Schuylerville Quadrangle, 1967

the British forces manning the south redoubt. A dirt lane running along the south bank heights position probably represents a colonial-period roadway for the Schuyler estate; this road would have facilitated the American army's exploitation of its position in this quadrant of the overall siege battlefield, enabling a rapid disposition of troops through the area.

DEFINING FEATURE: Fish Creek (obstacle)

The fast-flowing watercourse of Fish Creek and its steep-sided valley formed a terrain obstacle that clearly lent considerable defensive strength to the south side of the British position (see Figures 5-8). American options for crossing Fish Creek were limited to two fords.

**DEFINING FEATURE: American position: heights to south of Fish Creek
(key terrain; observation and fields of fire)**

British officer Lieutenant William Cumberland Wilkinson and German officer Captain Johann Heinrich Daniel Gerlach made maps of the siege battlefield, based on first-hand surveys of the troop positions and other features. Although these maps are not fully accurate in their depiction of location, scale, and alignment of topographic features (such as Fish Creek as it extends away from the siege area toward the southwest), they are impressively comprehensive in their approximate rendition of the landscape and the features associated with the siege. Both maps indicate American troop positions extending fully along the heights rising above the south bank of Fish Creek (see Figures 5 and 6). This location would have served the Americans as key terrain guarding against the possibility of British counterattack, and would also have enabled the Americans to observe and fire on positions occupied by Crown forces.

American chaplain Enos Hitchcock (source P6 in the Appendix, "Military-historical Context," for the archeological report) noted in his diary that Paterson's and Poor's brigades camped on the heights to the south of Fish Creek on the evening of October 10. American Deputy Adjutant General James Wilkinson (P8) stated in his detailed memoir that at that time "the army took a position in the wood on the heights in several lines." From the British perspective on the 10th of October, German regimental adjutant and diarist Lieutenant August Wilhelm Du Roi (P13) wrote that around 2 PM he saw "the enemy army arrive on the heights of Saratoga." The unidentified British source immortalized in the anonymous memoir titled *For Want of a Nail* (P9) commented that on that day "The enemy appeared on the heights of the Fish Kill in great force." James Wilkinson noted that after the skirmish on the morning of October 11, Nixon's and Glover's brigades "resumed their positions on the heights west of the great [river] road."¹³

The sources suggest that although the Americans succeeded in encircling Burgoyne's beleaguered army in the course of the siege, the line on the heights to the south of Fish Creek formed in a sense the nerve center of the American position, the key central segment where the brunt of Gates's force was disposed throughout the action. Gates is said to have had his headquarters in a dugout in the embankment by the river road at the foot of the east edge of the heights.

Based on survey of the ground and assessment of comparative elevations and sight lines, the American positions would not have incorporated the relatively low-lying terrace area that bulges out from the south bank shoreline, situated at about 150 feet of elevation above sea level. American troops occupying this area would have been at the mercy of the British troops and especially the artillery in the British south redoubt positioned directly opposite and on ground 100 feet and more above the terrace at about 350 yards distance.

Artillery positions: Longtime local resident Albert Clements (T3), born ca. 1789, informed local historians that he had frequently been told when young by veterans of the campaign that American artillery “erected a battery” on “a hill on the south bank of Fish Creek, nearly opposite the village of Victory.” There are unfortunately few references in the siege participants’ sources to the positioning of American artillery, which evidently numbered approximately thirty to forty field pieces at the time of the siege. On the east bank of the Hudson, General Fellows had two pieces on October 10. Brunswicker Lieutenant Du Roi (P13) noted that on the 13th an additional “battery” was placed on heights situated at the north end of the American position east of the river, and John Schuyler informed 1830 visitor Jared Sparks (T5) that by the end of the siege American guns on the high ground above the east bank were “so stationed as to command the plain and the German encampment.” British officer Wilkinson’s map shows two American guns placed on the heights east of the Hudson opposite the center of Burgoyne’s overall position, and another pair on the east bank but to the north, evidently the guns mentioned by Du Roi as added on the 13th.

On the American left flank, north of Fish Creek, light infantry commander Lt. Colonel Henry Dearborn (P3) stated that on the afternoon of October 11 reinforcing units brought “some field pieces” with them. American diarist Lieutenant Samuel Armstrong (P1) indicated that on October 12 two American batteries were established on the west side of the British. This use of the term “battery” probably referred to the earthwork gun emplacement structures, with each position perhaps limited to a pair of guns, rather than the term being used to denote an artillery unit of four to eight guns. The provision of fieldpieces for the American west flank would have necessitated an arduous process of manhandling each gun (or its disassembled components) through the Fish Creek gully via the ford at the upper Schuyler milldam. In 1780, General Philip Schuyler told the visiting Marquis de Chastellux (T1) that two American cannon were moved to the north of Fish Creek and that these guns “considerably incommoded the English.” With the difficulty and effort involved in moving artillery pieces across the Hudson and Fish Creek, from the central (south) contingent to suitable positions on the left and right flanks, it seems safe to assert that no more than a total of 12 to 18 guns were put into action on both the east and west fronts, and that the number so disposed was probably around the lower end of this estimate. Thus the largest concentration of American artillery firepower would have been ranged along the heights on the south side of Fish Creek, probably totaling about 16 to 24 pieces.¹⁴

Much remains to be learned regarding the employment of the American artillery in the Siege of Saratoga. The elevation for the evident position of the American main force on the heights above the south bank of the creek ranges approximately from 200 to 225 feet above sea level. Guns at this height would have been able to fire effectively on much of the central and northern areas of Burgoyne’s position which, based on comparison of the Wilkinson and Gerlach maps with modern topographic maps, were probably situated on ground ranging in elevation from slightly lower (around 180 feet) to somewhat higher (250 feet). The British main artillery park position was situated at about 160 feet in elevation, making it particularly liable to bombardment. Gates’s artillery on the heights within the study area would have been firing at these lower British-German positions at a range extending between about six tenths of a mile (.6 mile or about 1,050 yards) and 1.3 miles. American guns on the highest near ground on the east side of the Hudson could have been well placed for elevation, at 300 feet or more in the vicinity where Route 29 ascends the heights (due east of Victory Woods and the Schuyler Mansion), but would have been firing at fairly long range, a mile and a half or more, or twice the effective target-hitting range of artillery of the period. American guns positioned on high ground (about 250 feet elevation) north of the Batten Kill creek and east of the Hudson, as some are said to have been, would have commanded the

German north redoubt, but would also have been firing at mile-and-a-half distance. On the west flank, heights situated to the northwest of the present-day village of Victory and located at a distance of about a half-mile from Victory Woods, approaching 300 feet in height, would have enabled the Americans to employ the small artillery contingent in that sector against the British south redoubt in the Victory Woods area. Wade Catts, archeologist for John Milner Associates, has suggested that the Americans, in order to fire on Victory Woods, may also have placed guns on the highest piece of the south bank heights, which rise above 300 feet in elevation and are located on the east side of present-day Haas Road and due south of Victory Woods at a range of about one mile and a half. Guns so located could not have been capable of specific target accuracy but could have inflicted random fatalities, or at least considerable psychological stress, on the densely disposed British occupants of the south redoubt. Future studies should subject all of these potential American artillery positions to archeological study.

Potential earthwork fortifications: The Wilkinson map, drafted by an actual British participant, shows fortifications at two locations along the ridge, with one V-shaped redan or fleche situated at the center of the American line opposite the British south redoubt and another positioned on the northeasterly promontory that would have surveyed the Fish Creek bridge location (see Figure 5). A later and explicitly historical map, produced by Henry B. Carrington in 1881, represented an adaptation of the Wilkinson map with some additional details (Figure 10). This map depicted a series of three American earthwork structures, including the redan on the promontory, as well as American gun positions lining the edge of the heights. Carrington did not document the source of his additional features, which may have been based on information from local informants or on a survey of the ground.

American troops would naturally have desired to protect themselves via the erection of earthwork defenses. Toward the southwest end of the line, the American position was situated about 500 yards from the British south redoubt, where some artillery pieces and Captain Alexander Fraser's handpicked British ranger company were stationed. It is probable that some of the men in Fraser's unit, designated the Corps of Marksmen, were equipped with German-made rifles. In addition, there was always conceivably the possibility of a British counterattack or raid on some segment of the American position.

Massachusetts militia private Samuel Bacon was among the troops who occupied the area and at first made camp along the crest of the ridge on the evening of the 10th. Bacon reported that he and his campmates were soon subjected to artillery fire from the British. "After we had built our fires, the British fired some shots at us and we were ordered to put out the fires and go back under the hill out of the reach of their shot," i.e., evidently behind the brow of the ridge and toward the southeast.¹⁵ The construction of siege earthworks in eighteenth-century warfare was typically undertaken as a nocturnal activity, and it is possible that the Americans constructed and improved such works during the night of the 10th and subsequent nights. Cannons standing along the ridge and capable of firing on British positions to the north would necessarily have been exposed to fire from the British redoubt at Victory Woods, and thus the Americans would have needed to construct earthwork gun emplacements to protect the fieldpieces and their crews, despite the inherent difficulty posed by the gravelly nature of the soil on the heights. An observer traversing the area today does not remark evident earthworks extending along the brow of the ridge. Nor, however, would a visitor easily discern British earthworks in the vicinity of the south redoubt, where their earlier existence and their demolition by landowners as the decades passed is fairly well documented.

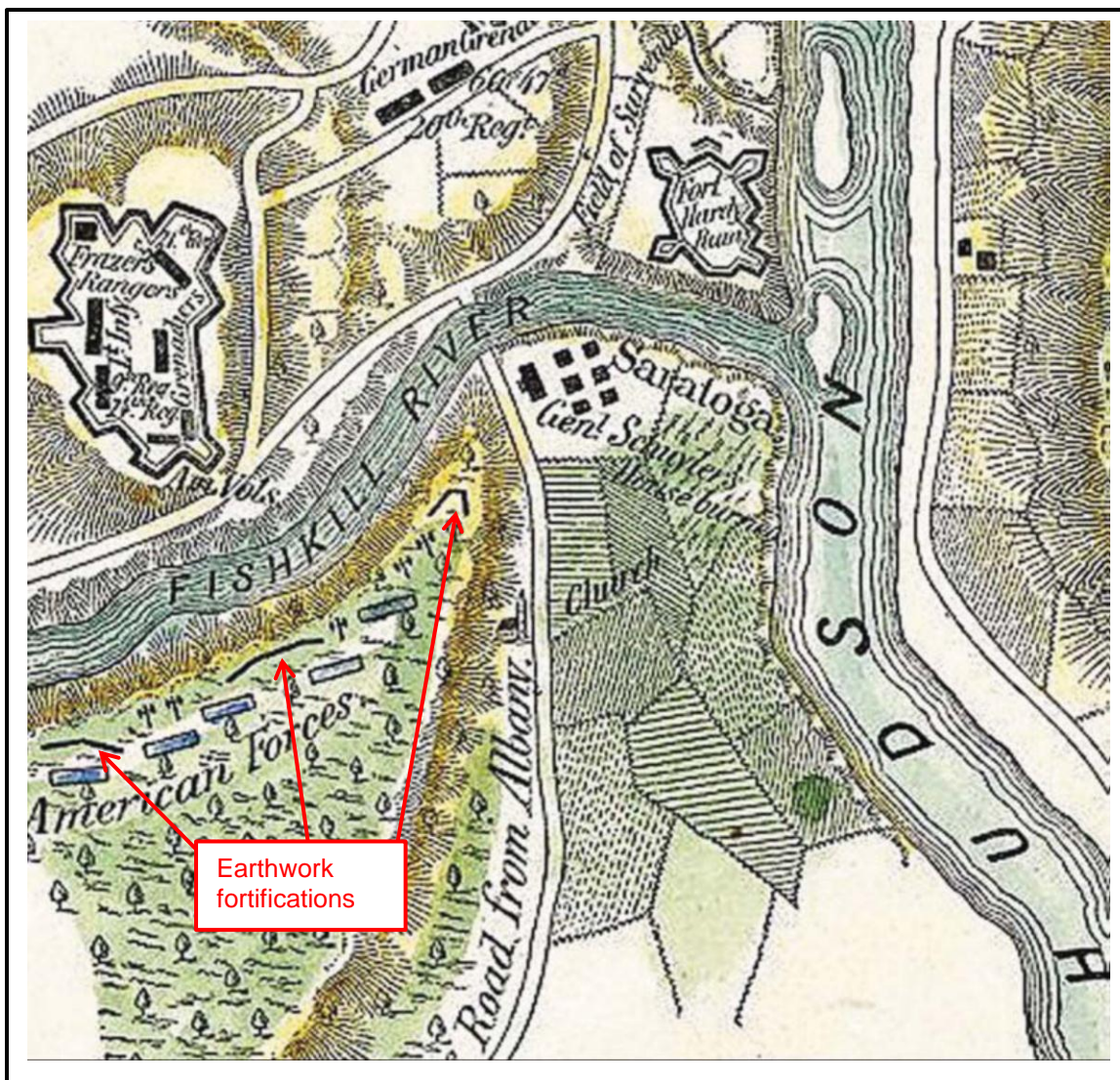


Figure 10

Carrington Interpretive Map of FCAP Study Area in 1777, Drafted in 1881

Source: Henry B. Carrington, *Battles of the American Revolution, 1775-1781* (Promontory Press, New York, 1881)

The visiting English naturalist William Strickland (T2) found American military earthworks intact on the ridge above the south bank of Fish Creek in 1794. He noted that “On the heights above Mr. Schuyler’s house, redoubts and other military works remain, though so overgrown with brush wood as scarcely to be accessible.”¹⁶

DEFINING FEATURE: Schuyler estate buildings site (cover and concealment)

The portion of the Schuyler estate buildings complex located on low-lying ground on the west side of the river road (present-day US Route 4), as documented by Strach in 1986, included the lower one of General Schuyler’s two sawmills, his great barn (center of the estate farm operation), and two other buildings that Strach hypothetically identifies as an auxiliary barn and a relatively large poultry house (see Figures 5, 6, and 9). Schuyler’s mansion, general store, mills, and various domestic and farm outbuildings figured in the history of the siege when the British destroyed them in about the late morning or early afternoon of October 10 so that the buildings would not afford cover to the besieging Americans. The mansion, store, flax- and hemp-breaking mill, and several other buildings were located across the road to the east from the study area and also on the south side of Fish Creek, while Strach asserts that the estate gristmill stood on the north side of the creek. Burgoyne’s destructive act (and its militarily sound self-protective motive) was remarked upon by the Baroness von Riedesel (source P15). English grenadier Lieutenant William Digby (P12) did not mention the mill buildings, but noted that the mansion was burnt “to prevent a lodgement being formed behind it.” American chaplain Enos Hitchcock (P6) commented that his brigade of Continentals arrived in the late afternoon to find “Genl. Schuyler’s buildings . . . all on fire.” Militia private Samuel Bacon (P2) found on the morning of the 11th that “the mills and the bridge were burnt.” Schuyler rebuilt his structures with alacrity from 1778 onward; those within the study area were supplanted by his grandson Philip’s Horicon textile mill in 1828 but the site is now partially occupied by a wing wall of the massive extant milldam that perhaps incorporates an eighteenth-century milldam structure and was apparently enlarged for the 1828 mill and then again in 1918 for the hydroelectric facility built by the American Manufacturing Company to power the Victory Mills complex.¹⁷

DEFINING FEATURE: River road (avenue of approach and retreat)

A segment of the river road extending southward from the bridge site (see Figures 5, 6, and 9) was used by both armies in approaching the area of the siege from the south and in particular this was the location where Continental brigade commanders General John Nixon and General John Glover marshaled their regiments before crossing Fish Creek at the lower ford to commence their advance and form the east wing of the reconnaissance in force on the morning of October 11, as stated by Lt. Colonel James Wilkinson (P8). The bridge had been destroyed weeks before by the Americans while retreating southward, rebuilt by Burgoyne, and then burned again by militia General Fellows when he occupied Saratoga in an effort to impede Burgoyne’s retreat. It appears that present-day US Route 4 is located very nearly on the alignment of the colonial-period river road if not exactly congruent with it.¹⁸

DEFINING FEATURE: Fish Creek upper ford—upper Schuyler milldam (avenue of approach and retreat)

The Fish Creek upper ford located at the upper Schuyler milldam (see Figure 9) figured prominently in the action of the siege. On the morning of the 11th, American troops used the ford to cross Fish Creek for the anticipated advance on the British south redoubt. As what proved to be a skirmishing engagement

developed, some of the American troops who had crossed then shifted toward the west to form the left wing of the American siege line.

Location of the crossing place can be interpreted via the site of the upper sawmill, which was not destroyed by the British as happened to the lower mills. The sawmill was still standing in 1837 when surveyor Harman Van Alen drafted a plat of the Schuyler Estate (see Figure 7). The sawmill of 1837 and its dam were positioned immediately adjacent to one another, with the waterwheel apparently situated beneath the sawmill platform and employing waterflow from a reservoir pool or tank that filled directly from Fish Creek instead of via a headrace. Logic and the slow-changing nature of traditional sawmill technology during the period indicate that the sawmill facility present during the Siege of October 1777 embodied the same configuration as was depicted in 1837; no evidence has been found to contradict such an assertion and an account of 1825 quotes a veteran who asserted that the arrangement remained in its 1777 state. Comparison of the 1837 draft with a present-day topographical map suggests that the sawmill dam was positioned spanning Fish Creek approximately 300 feet below or northeast of the present roadway bridge at the village of Victory. This location matches closely with James Wilkinson's specific attribution of the site as being three-fourths of a mile above Schuyler's lower mills.¹⁹

A problematic aspect of this locational interpretation for the upper sawmill has to do with the character of the topography and the configuration of the creek bank at the present day. The location at present lacks a level terrace area by the creek to serve as site for the sawmill platform itself and which would have enabled direct road access, a necessity for the operation of such a facility; instead the bank falls away sharply on the southeast side of the creek, forming an escarpment. On the positive side of the balance, the 1837 estate plat appears fairly precise as to the location, and the shape of the creek banks and the topography on the northwest side does provide the seeming remnant of a shallow, bowl-like area suggestive of a former impounded millpond (observable on the topographic map, see Figure 9). It is possible that, perhaps due to the hydraulic engineering activities associated with the construction of the textile mill in the 1840s, the alignment of the watercourse has shifted somewhat from what it was in the era of the sawmill. It is also possible that major flooding has wrought a natural transformation in the topographic configuration.

The ford itself, the existence of which was enabled by the dam's impoundment of the deep and at this point naturally rapid-flowing Fish Creek, was located just below the dam, but the water in the ford was evidently still too deep and fast-flowing for effective use by foot soldiers carrying flintlock firearms and black powder. Lt. Colonel James Wilkinson (P8), a senior member of Gates's staff, stated that on October 11 he and his horse twice crossed and recrossed Fish Creek "at a deep and rapid ford just below the dam," but Wilkinson's is the only account that makes reference to such a direct fording of the creek. Wilkinson observed that earlier that morning the men of Morgan's Corps had had to adopt the expedient of crossing by scuttling along the logs bunched up against the upper side of the dam. In Wilkinson's words, the Corps had

crossed the Fish-kill on a raft of loose logs, at the foot of a mill pond about three-fourths of a mile above the Saratoga mills.²⁰

Lt. Colonel Henry Dearborn (P3), Morgan's second-in-command, agreed that their men "had crossed on scattering logs." Private Samuel Bacon (P2) of Woodbridge's Massachusetts militia regiment, also involved in the west wing of the October 11 advance, stated that "our regiment crossed on the logs in the

mill dam.” General Hoyt (T4), a military-historical tourist of 1825 guided by a veteran of Woodbridge’s Regiment, remarked that upon

Reaching the creek, we passed it on floating timbers, resting against the mill dam, and my companion remembered that his regiment passed the mill pond in the same manner and at the same place as they advanced to attack the British lines.²¹

The upper ford would apparently also have figured in the history of the siege as the crossing location for the few artillery pieces that the Americans transferred to the west flank of the siege lines.

DEFINING FEATURE: “Gutter” or depression—to south of South British Redoubt (cover and concealment)

The “gutter” or depression below the south British redoubt is a feature associated with the skirmishing on the morning of October 11 as it transpired in the southwestern portion of the Saratoga Siege area (see Figure 9). The gutter provided defensive cover for the Americans in this brief engagement. Based on the position of the south side of the redoubt within the northern half of the Victory Woods parcel (as documented in the Victory Woods Cultural Landscape Inventory of 2007), and on statements from the narrative accounts, this feature is evidently the draw or swale that extends from west to east and is located just below the south boundary of the Victory Woods property, between Cemetery Road (to the west) and Herkimer Street (to the east).

The CLI study area encompasses ground that was the site of the east or right end of the American contingent’s advance toward the redoubt. Lt. Colonel Wilkinson (P8) asserted that he arrived in time to halt the advance by General Learned and General Paterson toward the British south redoubt. Their brigades were just entering the belt of terrain that had been cleared by the British to provide a clear field of fire around the south end of the redoubt, a location that according to Wilkinson was about 200 yards from the walls of the log and earthen fortification and would thus lie within the Victory Woods tract. As the Americans fell back into the screening woodland, the hitherto concealed and silent British troops in the redoubt arose and discharged a volley of artillery and musket fire that killed several Americans.²²

Private Samuel Bacon (P2) was a militiaman in Woodbridge’s Regiment, which composed the right end of Learned and Paterson’s line. This right flank position for Woodbridge was stated by the informed 1825 tourist General Hoyt (T4) and is evidently corroborated in that Woodbridge subsequently pulled his unit back across Fish Creek to rejoin the main body of militia on the heights while Learned and Paterson swung their brigades to the west in retreating from the skirmish. The Continental brigades’ withdrawal away from the upper milldam ford enabled them to join Morgan’s Corps in establishing the American left flank siege line. Bacon described the advance of Woodbridge’s Regiment as the unit moved northward from the area just west of the upper milldam, passing over two fences spaced well apart. Woodbridge’s troops then

came to a gutter of considerable depth and width where we were ordered to stop and unsling our packs and stack them. . . . Shortly after we had orders to march up to the fort and we left the gutter and marched a few rods when a cannon was discharged from an embrasure opposite us and the grapeshot passed directly over our company. At this we all fell back and made for the gutter as fast as possible, we had orders to march up again but did not and why we did not, I never knew. We lay in the gutter till evening when we were ordered back . . .²³

General Hoyt's guide in 1825 was also a veteran of Woodbridge's Regiment of Massachusetts militia. According to Hoyt, the regiment was ordered to fall back before the British opened fire (as per Wilkinson's account). Woodbridge

retired about thirty yards to a depression in the ground, where the men were covered from the direct fire of the enemy.

After a brief interval in which (according to Hoyt's guide) some of the militia went forward in loose or Indian-style order to take cover as the trees and other woodland obstacles offered, in order to snipe at the British, Woodbridge retired across Fish Creek.²⁴

Probable DEFINING FEATURE: **Schuyler estate roadway (avenue of approach and retreat)**

The attribution of the Schuyler estate roadway as a pre-1777 manmade topographic feature that represents a Defining Feature associated with the Siege of Saratoga is based on the interpretive concept of Inherent Military Probability, as developed by military historians Hans Delbrück and A.H. Burne and described in the ABPP Battlefield Survey Manual.²⁵ The dirt roadway extends from a location on US Route 4 just south of the Fish Creek bridge, opposite the Schuyler Mansion, running fairly directly toward the southwest and climbing the heights to intersect with Evans Street (see Figures 8 and 9). The earliest documentation of a roadway or lane on this alignment, a plat made to accompany the deed transfer for the hydroelectric property, dates to 1931. Circumstantial evidence, however, indicates that the roadway was present and available to facilitate the tactical purposes of Horatio Gates's army in 1777:

- The road leads directly from the main Schuyler estate building complex, clustered adjacent to the river road bridge over Fish Creek, to the upper sawmill location.
- The movement of the American units from the river road onto and along the ridge to take up campsites on the evening of October 10 seems to have been quite rapid.
- The identification by Morgan and Dearborn or other American officers of the upper sawmill dam and the ford there, as providing an appropriate avenue to establish a foothold across Fish Creek and to thus move around the flank of the British, also seems to have developed quite rapidly. The American commanders began using the dam to take their men across well before dawn on the 11th.
- The estate roadway, if it existed, would have facilitated all these activities and probably would have effectively channeled the movement of American troops along the heights above Fish Creek from the time that they reached the south bank of Fish Creek and began to become aware of the general disposition of the British position (regardless of how many of Burgoyne's troops they thought were in the vicinity).

This study recommends for future work that the history of this apparent roadway should be studied (via documents relating to the Schuyler estate—Stephen Strach did not address the subject of the estate's roads and lanes in his 1986 study) and that the roadway should be subject to archeological investigation. Researchers should also investigate public road records to ascertain the history of Evans Street, the other roadway linking the upper sawmill location to the river road. Evans Street is known from the estate plat by Van Alen to date back at least as far as 1837.

C. Rural Life, 1777 to 1845

The period following the Revolutionary War saw an acceleration in the settlement and economic development of the Upper Hudson River Valley, with improvements in agricultural production, industrial facilities, and transportation systems. One result of the surge in regional development was an increased pace in the transformation of the study area landscape in response to impact by human settlement.

Regional Change and Development

Following the War of Independence, the Upper Hudson Valley region flourished. The Saratoga area experienced a sustained expansion in its population between 1790 and 1810, one result of this growth being the formation of Saratoga County in 1791. Throughout the region, much more farmland was cleared and cultivated, and agricultural production grew considerably. Most farms were small family operations, typically between 100 and 200 acres in size. Field crops grown in the region consisted mostly of wheat, rye, Indian corn, and oats.²⁶

Transportation improvements helped fuel regional economic growth during this period. Improvements influencing the Saratoga area included the plank road Whitehall Turnpike built along the river road corridor in 1813, and the Champlain Canal extending along the west bank of the Hudson, constructed during 1817-1823. These improvements further fueled population growth in the area and encouraged incipient industrial development. The population of Saratoga County grew from 32,053 in 1820 to 40,533 in 1840.²⁷

Site-specific Historical Data on the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

The ownership of the study area continued in the Schuyler family after 1777. The village of Saratoga originated as a hamlet after the war and grew apace, to be renamed Schuylerville in 1831. In 1787, General Philip Schuyler turned the estate over to the control of his son John Bradstreet Schuyler while retaining title. John died in 1795 and his father resumed control. Philip Schuyler died in 1804 and his grandson Philip Schuyler II inherited the estate.²⁸

According to Schuyler estate historian Stephen Strach, although General Schuyler rebuilt the mansion and most of the other estate buildings in the years from 1778 onward, the property never again attained the state of prosperity and eminence in the larger region that it had enjoyed in the decade or so leading up to 1777. The Schuylers cut down almost all the timber on the huge property by circa 1795. By that time they had also begun leasing out their various mills and had already sold most of the estate land, reducing the property to about 1,500 acres in extent.²⁹

In 1828, Philip Schuyler established a waterpowered cotton manufactory he named the Horicon Mill, supplanting the lower sawmill on its site. The upper sawmill apparently continued to operate through at least 1837. Philip Schuyler II was among those who suffered severe financial losses in the Panic of 1837 and within that year he was forced to sell the majority of his real estate, including the study area. Surveyor Harman Van Alen drafted a map of the estate depicting the industrial facilities in the study area as well as the constituent land parcels surveyed for the sale. The study area, along with other Schuyler estate property, was purchased by Teunis Van Vechten, an Albany attorney. In a series of transactions during 1841-1843, Van Vechten gradually conveyed portions of the Schuyler estate that together contained the entire study area to local land speculator Benjamin Losee (see Figure 7).³⁰

Landscape Character of the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

From 1777 until 1845, while remaining a portion of the Schuyler estate and then during the first few years of new ownership, the landscape of the study area evidently continued in much the same pattern as previously, i.e., that of millseat, pastureland, and gradually regrowing woodland. The use of the study area landscape may have gradually become somewhat more intensive for secondary agricultural purposes as the Schuyler family continued the development of the estate farm. The Van Alen map of 1837 showed the Horicon Mill and the sawmill, but no dwellings standing within the study area. The public roadway that led from the Whitehall Turnpike (now US Route 4) past the sawmill and then extending southward, now designated Evans Street within the village of Victory and Haas Road in the Town of Saratoga, was in existence by 1837.

D. The Victory Mills and the Village of Victory, 1845 to 1931

In the study area and vicinity, the period from the mid-nineteenth century through the early twentieth century was characterized by significant development and growth for population, industry, agriculture, and the transportation system; the disappearance of sites associated with the Revolutionary War; and a renewed interest in patriotism and nationalistic feelings. These factors all had an impact on the Upper Hudson Valley region and the landscape of the Fish Creek American Positions study area. The establishment of a substantial textile mill business in the study area led directly to the growth of the associated village.

Regional Change and Development

The trend to development was strong in the Upper Hudson Valley Region during the period from the mid-nineteenth century into the early twentieth century. The expansion in industry and urbanism was particularly vibrant, marked by improvements in industrial processes, and growth of cities, towns, and transportation systems. One major demographic trend was the movement of people from the country to cities and towns. The number of farms and of people working in agriculture gradually declined, but improvements in farming methods enabled growth in agricultural production so that the region's rising population could be fed. The completion of the Fitchburg Railroad in 1882 provided rail transportation for products manufactured or grown in the region. In addition to the establishment of the railroad, the Hudson waterway saw extensive improvement that enabled larger vessels to travel the route hauling freight. Constructed during 1905-1918, the New York State Barge Canal followed the river channel and was equipped with large-scale dams and locks. The smaller Champlain Canal eventually was abandoned. The village of Schuylerville decided against having a Barge Canal docking station built there, a decision that cost the community an opportunity for further economic development. In 1899, an improvement for public passenger transportation was completed, the Hudson Valley Railway, a system of electric streetcar lines connecting many of the towns and villages in the region including Schuylerville. The HVR line ran alongside the Whitehall Turnpike skirting the eastern edge of the study area. During the 1920s, however, improvements were made to the Turnpike to facilitate automobile use, and soon after the completion of these highway modifications the HVR line was shut down and abandoned.³¹

During the final decade or so of the period, however, after the end of World War I in 1918, it was clear that for the Upper Hudson Valley region the great age of economic expansion had already come to its

close. After peace came, international demand for American agricultural products declined. The number of farms operating in Saratoga County went from 4,471 in 1880 to 3,611 in 1911 and then to 2,417 in 1930. Acreage actively employed in agriculture declined from 461,446 acres in 1880 to 259,324 in 1930, just 56% of the earlier level. Similar decline took place locally in industry in the 1920s, as mill owners began to disassemble their operations and transfer them to the American South where prevailing wage levels were much lower.³²

This era of marked economic and demographic transformation was necessarily a period of pronounced change in the character of the regional landscape as well. One consequence of this trend was the gradual loss of landscape features associated with the Burgoyne Campaign of 1777. The ongoing disappearance of Revolutionary War sites was a noticeable process by 1856 when local social and cultural leaders established the Saratoga Monument Association, the first organization in the nation that was dedicated to the recognition and commemoration of sites associated with the American Revolution. This group succeeded in acquiring land and raising funding for the Saratoga Monument, the 155-foot obelisk erected to memorialize the American victory, located in Schuylerville about one-third of a mile north of the study area and completed in 1877. In 1880, Association leader and author Ellen Haldin Walworth proposed marking historically important sites on the Saratoga battlefield with plaques and small monuments. A committee of the Association was established for this purpose and soon the Association was placing such monuments at locations throughout the battlefield. In 1888, the state government of New York as well as other organizations began adding markers referring to the history of the campaign on the battlefield and throughout the region. In 1927 the state, responding to the efforts of the Saratoga Monument Association and other organizations, established Saratoga Battlefield as a New York State Historic Park.³³

Site-specific Historical Data on the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

During 1845-1846, a consortium of Massachusetts and New York investors purchased a series of parcels from Benjamin Losee to assemble a large property straddling Fish Creek and capable of sustaining a waterpowered industrial complex. In 1846, these investors incorporated their partnership under the name Saratoga Victory Manufacturing Company and built and opened Victory Mill, a three-story cotton textile mill costing \$425,000, within the FCAP study area. The new mill was located on the northwest bank of Fish Creek on land adjoining Bridge Street to the north. In 1849, the owners purchased the Horicon Mill as well and added that adjoining complex to their operation (with the generally used name of the overall establishment then becoming Victory Mills). The mill proved a great success. As early as 1850, when the mill had been running for just four years, Victory Mill housed 369 workers (160 men, 209 women) operating 309 looms on which 12,500 spindles produced 1.8 million yards of cloth (Figure 11). The periodical *Flake's Bulletin* reported in 1870 that

One of the largest cotton mills in New York State is located at Schuylerville, Saratoga County. They furnish employment for 550 hands, male and female, run 531 looms, 24,000 spindles, consume 2,000 bales of cotton per year, turn out 5,980,400 yards of manufactured material per year, and pay \$104,000 per year in wages.³⁴

The establishment of Victory Mill led directly to incorporation of the Village of Victory in 1849, as lots were surveyed to new residents associated with the mill, and retail and service business owners were drawn to set up shop in the nascent community. Approximately one half of the built-up village is located within the boundary of the study area. In addition to the central area of the village, located mostly within the study area and to the west of the Victory Mill lot, there are sections of the village situated to the north



Figure 11

Victory Mills, Late 19th Century, View Looking North

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, *Around the Town of Saratoga*

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)

of the mill and Victory Woods, and to the east on the other side of Fish Creek. As asserted by SHPO historian Travis Bowman,

The company and the village are inseparable. The mill was the reason for the name, settlement, incorporation, growth and prosperity of the village. It dominated the local economy and subsequent manufacturing operations onsite remained a major employer in the area well into the late twentieth century.³⁵

Victory became the quintessential mill town. The 1860 census counted 637 inhabitants residing in the young community. The company built row housing for the employees, and also provided a 10-acre cemetery lot (known as the “factory cemetery”) in 1853 and a Methodist Church building constructed in 1854. By 1850 the village contained hotels, stores, and a post office. An initial wooden frame schoolhouse was replaced with a brick one holding four classrooms in 1872 (now the village municipal building). An atlas of Saratoga County compiled in 1866 as well as a bird’s-eye lithograph of 1889 depicted the village of gridded streets, row housing, detached dwellings, businesses, and community buildings (Figures 12-14). In 1882, the newly completed Fitchburg Railroad line featured a spur line serving Victory Mills and the village (Figure 15). Despite the generally paternalistic attitude on the part of the owners, there was at least one strike at the mill, in 1887.³⁶

The fortunes of the Victory Mills operations, like that of many other textile mills in the northeastern United States, began to decline markedly as the nineteenth century drew to a close. The year 1910 brought a major transition to mill and village when the now-bankrupted Victory Mills company sold the factory property to the American Manufacturing Company, a large-scale maker of rope, cordage, and bagging operating in Brooklyn in New York City since 1891. American Manufacturing was a very successful firm, despite a history of poor labor relations, and the acquisition in Victory was made to undertake a major expansion. World War I with its government contracts was particularly profitable for the company, and in 1918 American Manufacturing undertook a major rebuilding of the Victory facility, erecting the massive five-story building of reinforced concrete and brick that dominates the village landscape today (Figures 16 and 17). An essential element in this redesign of the Victory Mills plant was the construction of a hydroelectric facility to power the new mill building, created via an enlargement and adaptation of the Horicon Mill dam. At the same time, the company constructed the Victory Community House for their employees and their families, a brick building incorporating public baths, a restaurant, a library, a bowling alley, a barber shop and a large common room. The wartime prosperity proved ephemeral, however, and the company’s prospects began to dwindle with the coming of peace. In 1921 the owners moved the company’s bagging operation to India. In 1928, citing appealing aspects of conditions in the South such as a lower wage scale, the absence of unionism, and a lack of the restrictions on employers found in New York State in areas such as hours and working conditions, American Manufacturing announced that they had decided to transfer the operations conducted at Victory to Alabama. American Manufacturing completely closed down the Victory plant, shipping 328 carloads of machinery southward. The departure was a crushing blow to the denizens of Victory (of whom there were 1,065 in 1925) as well as Schuylerville, since the factory had been the principal employer for both communities.³⁷

The Horicon Mill property, located at the northeastern end of the FCAP study area, became part and parcel of the Victory Mill property. It evidently continued to operate as a textile mill during the period that it was linked with Victory Mill, and is identified on the 1866 atlas map as “Saratoga Mill” (Figure 18). The American Manufacturing Company made no use of this facility other than for storage, although



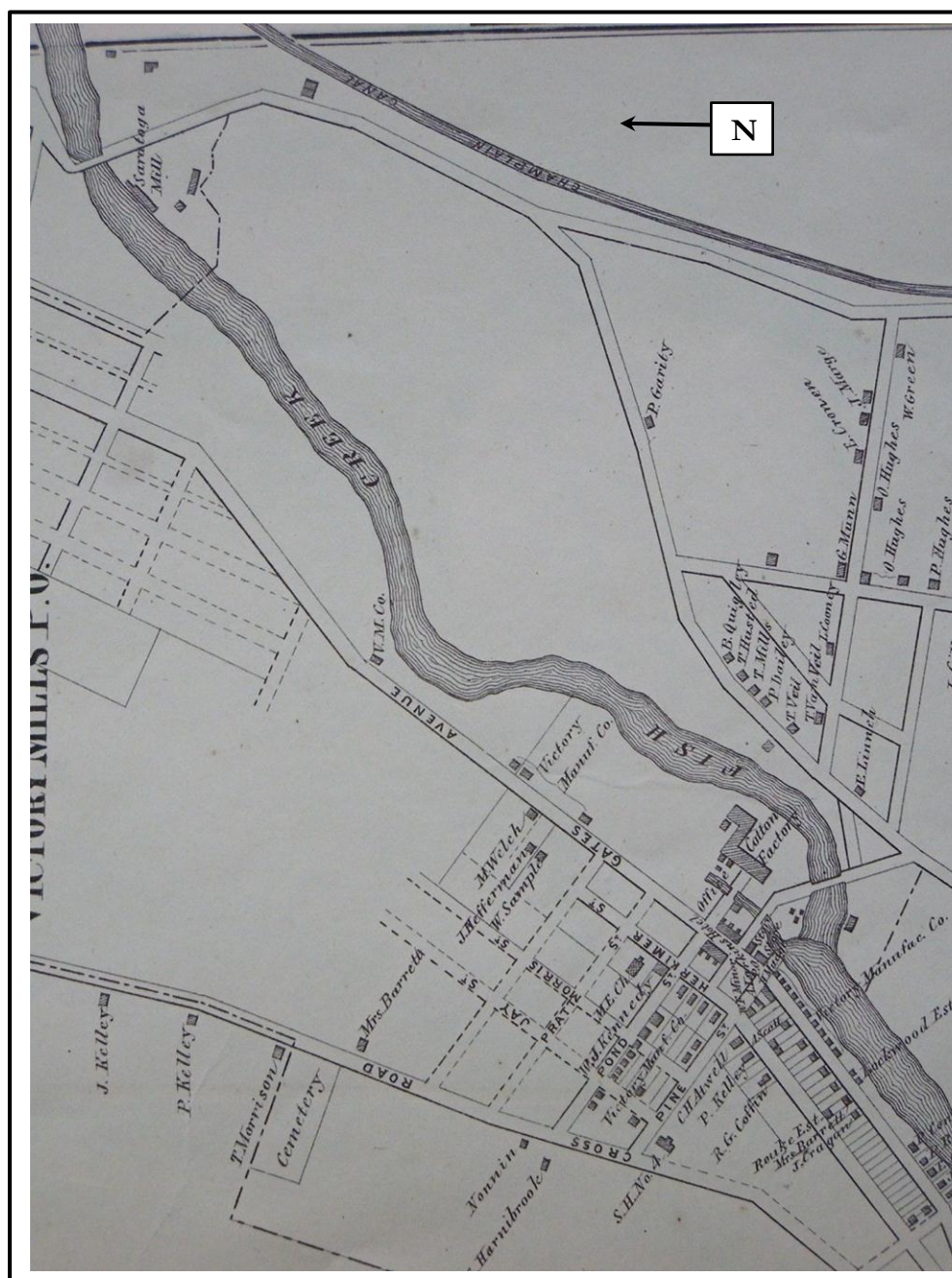
Figure 12

Millworkers' Houses, Victory, Late 19th Century

Location Probably Southeast Side of Gates Avenue below Bridge Street, View Looking South

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, *Around the Town of Saratoga*

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)



Village of Victory, 1866

Source: Beers & Beers, New Topographical Atlas of Saratoga County, 1866

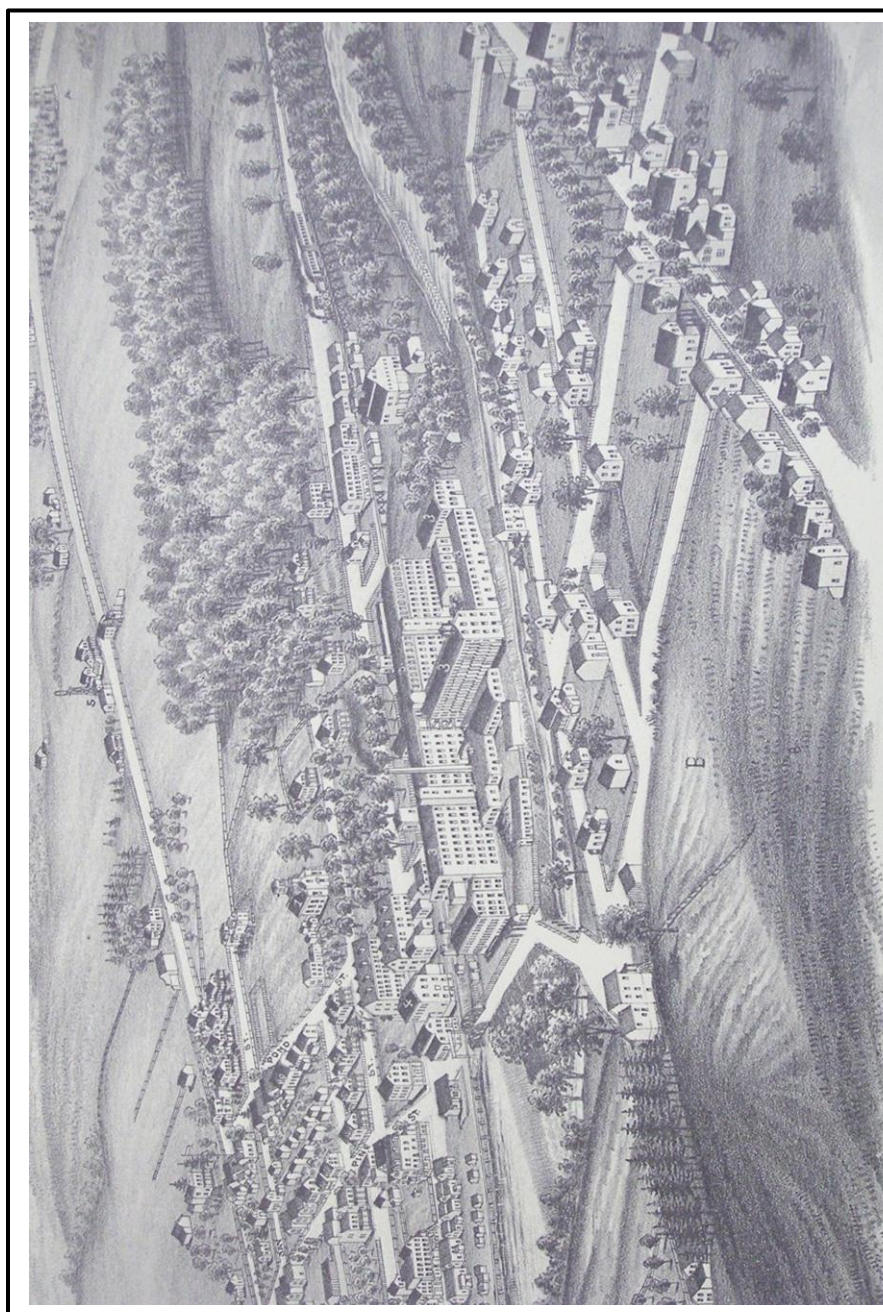


Figure 14

Bird's-eye View of Victory, circa 1889, View Looking Northwest

Source: L.R. Burleigh, Victory Mills (published in Troy, N.Y., circa 1889)



Figure 15

Victory Railroad Station, Date Unknown, View to North

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, Around the Town of Saratoga

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)



Figure 16

Victory Mills, Date Unknown, View to North

(1918 building in right background)

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, *Around the Town of Saratoga*

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)



Figure 17

Victory Mills, 1952, Aerial View Looking South

(showing 1918 building in left foreground)

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, *Around the Town of Saratoga*

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)



Figure 18

Saratoga Mill (formerly Horicon Mill) and Newly Enlarged Milldam, circa 1918

View Looking Southwest

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, *Around the Town of Saratoga*

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)

the company adapted the milldam in 1918 to provide electricity; the buildings were described as covered with vines in 1919 (Figure 19). The Saratoga Mill buildings are labeled on a 1925 Sanborn insurance map as property of American Manufacturing employed for “storage of old machinery.” The Horicon or Saratoga Mill complex was evidently demolished following the sale of this portion of the Victory Mills tract to the hydroelectric power utility New York Power and Light Corporation in 1931. The mill buildings are depicted on a 1931 plat, but not on the revised Sanborn map for 1934.³⁸

Landscape Character of the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

This period, extending from 1845 to 1931, represented the era in which the most extensive and far-reaching transformation in the character of the FCAP study area landscape took place. Before 1845, as discussed above, the study area was a thoroughly open and rural place except for the presence of the two waterpowered industrial facilities, the Horicon Mill and the old upper sawmill. Soon after the establishment of Victory Mill in 1846, the western section of the study area, approximately half of the study area in extent, rapidly became intensively built up as this same area represented the major portion of the village of Victory with its Victory Mill industrial complex. The mill buildings were constructed on the northwest side of Fish Creek across from the sawmill (which was discontinued circa 1850). A new complex of mill waterworks was constructed including a new dam and millrace (Figure 20). New public roadways were laid out including a grid of streets for the major portion of the village on the northwest side of Fish Creek, and Bridge Street connecting the village center to Evans Street on the southeast bank via a stone arch bridge located at the south end of the mill complex. Many buildings were constructed during the late 1840s and 1850s as the village rapidly took form. Among these was a pair of long, three-story masonry buildings flanking Gates Avenue by the mill, probably constructed by the company to house the numerous single mill workers, that are no longer standing today (Figure 21). In addition to the village center, located within the study area, an area to the southeast of the study area was developed during the late 1840s to 1860s as a less intensively built up and more open “suburban” district of houses on larger lots. (This latter area was documented in the Sword Surrender Site CLI report of 2008.) To state it briefly, the quarter-century beginning in 1846 represented a watershed interval during which the western half of the study area was transformed via industrial and residential development and imprinted with a visual character of mid-nineteenth-century vernacular settlement which it has retained in large measure to the present day.³⁹

The exception to the transformative effect within the study area is its eastern half, the wedge-shaped piece of land situated on the southeast bank of Fish Creek and to the northeast of the village. This area consisted mostly of woodland and partially wooded meadow or pasture on the heights above the creek so that it continued in the same state it had been for at least a century. In 1918, a system of power line wires supported by steel frame towers were erected as part of American Manufacturing’s new hydroelectric power system for their factory, although these lines were subsequently taken down at some point later in the twentieth century. The low-lying portion of the study area at the northeast end continued to be the location of a textile mill complex throughout this period, although the latter buildings and structures were demolished at about the conclusion of this period.

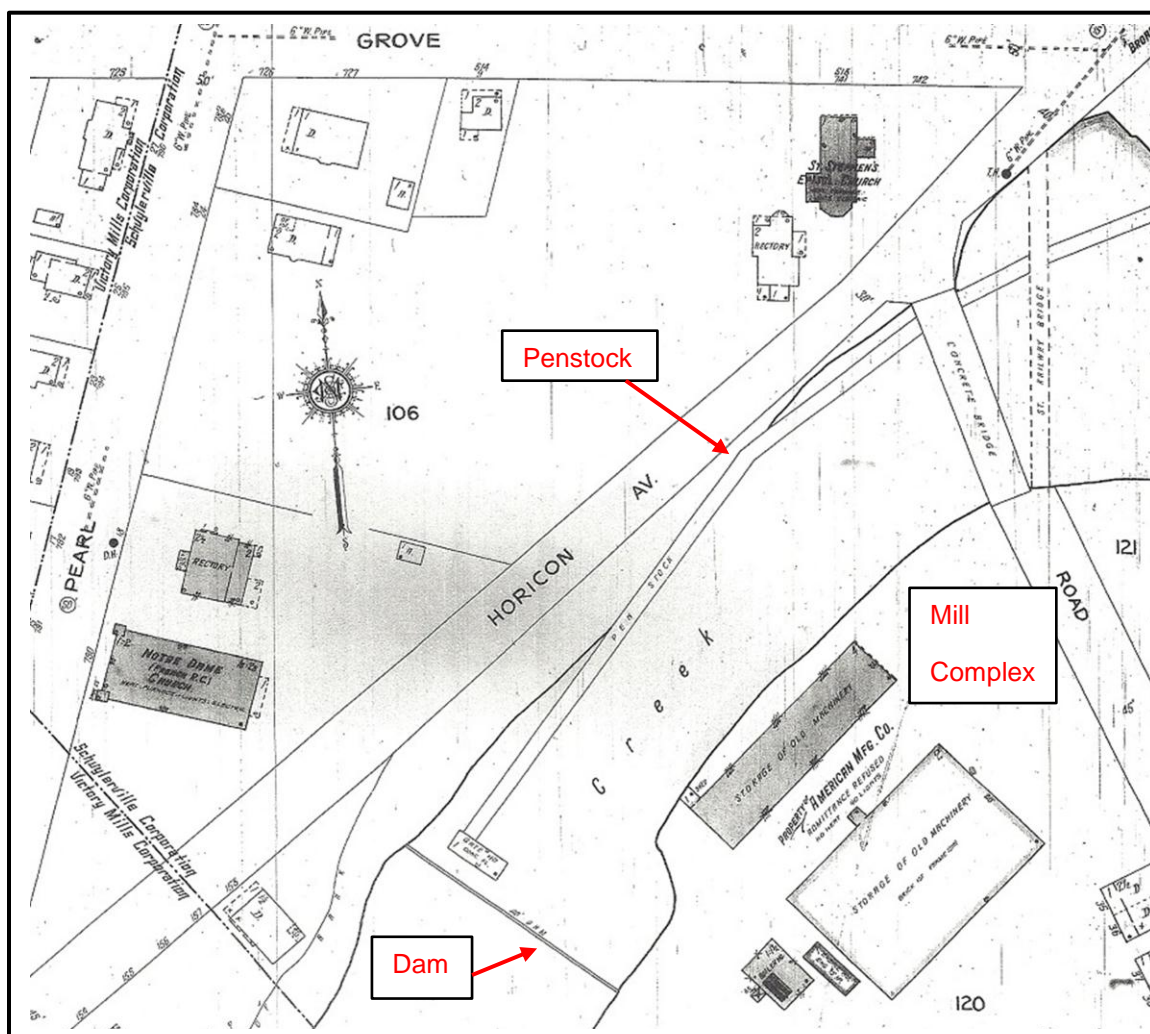


Figure 19

Saratoga Mill (formerly Horicon Mill), 1925

Source: Sanborn Map Company, Schuylerville, N.Y., 1925



Figure 20

Victory Mills Headrace, circa 1920s, View Looking Northeast

Source: Photograph Collection, Saratoga Room, Saratoga Springs Public Library



Figure 21

Large-scale Millworkers' Housing Flanking Gates Avenue between
Bridge and Pond Streets (North of Pine Street), circa 1930s, View Looking Southwest

Source: Thomas N. Wood, III, *Around the Town of Saratoga*

(Arcadia Publishing, 1999)

E. The Study Area in Recent Decades, 1931 to the Present

Since 1931, the modernizing process common throughout America, including the expansion of automobile highways, suburbanization, deindustrialization, and decline in family-scale farming, has exerted a great impact on the society and landscape of the Upper Hudson Valley region. Due in some measure to the economic decline for the local community, however, the FCAP study area landscape retains to a considerable degree its historic character, derived during the mid-nineteenth century for the western half of the tract, and from the colonial era for the major portion of the eastern half, largely wooded and somewhat rocky in nature.

Regional Change and Development

Although much of the Upper Hudson Valley region remains rural in character, the decades since World War II (1941-1945) have witnessed a marked increase in the extent of suburbanization in both residential and commercial properties, and in exurban residential construction, as well as a decline in regional agriculture and in industrial manufacturing.

Between 1940 and 1969, the number of active farm operations in Saratoga County plummeted from 2,591 to just 595. This trend was in part a response to the increased mechanization of farming that made agricultural less labor-intensive and tended toward a larger scale for individual farms, and in part a response to pressure from the demand for residential real estate in suburbs and countryside. The post-World War II housing boom stimulated by the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 and the expansion of highways, specifically the creation of Interstate 87 leading northward from Albany through Saratoga County (completed in the study area vicinity circa 1961), promoted the latter trend. Saratoga County began to become a bedroom community for Albany region commuters, at least in a corridor extending along the Interstate. As of 2010, agriculture persists as a primary economic enterprise in the Upper Hudson Valley region, concentrating on dairy, general farming, and apple orchard activity, but as population in the region continues to increase and farmland continues to be lost, the region's natural environment and historic resources are increasingly threatened.⁴⁰

Manufacturing has also declined as a factor in employment in the region as more and more factories and mills have closed over the decades. Many residents of the Town of Saratoga now commute to service sector jobs in the Saratoga Springs-Ballston Spa-Malta or Albany-Troy-Schenectady areas.

Saratoga Battlefield received national recognition in 1938 when it was taken into the National Park system by act of Congress. In 1948 it was designated Saratoga National Historical Park. Aware of the trend toward residential development in the Upper Hudson Valley region and concerned that this tendency would imperil significant battlefield areas, the National Park Service began to acquire properties in the Victory-Schuylerville area, obtaining 26 acres of the Schuyler manor house estate in 1950, the 23-acre Victory Woods in 1974 (via donation from Wheelabrator-Frye, Inc., then owner of the Victory Mills property), and the Saratoga Monument, previously a New York State property, in 1980.⁴¹

Site-specific Historical Data on the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

Although its days of major prosperity came to a close with American Manufacturing's departure in 1928, Victory Mills continued to be a manufacturing facility. In 1937, following nine years of vacancy, the United Board and Carton Corporation purchased the property from American Manufacturing. The plant

now became a factory producing cardboard boxes and packaging, which remained its function until the final closing. In 1972, UB&C sold the mill property to Wheelabrator-Frye, Inc. Successive owners were Clevepak Corporation, beginning in 1977, and Victory Specialty Packaging Company, in 1983. The plant closed permanently in 2000. The mill property was nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as significant under Criteria A and C in 2008; its final listing on the Register was pending in Summer 2010. In recent years the property has been the subject of several inconclusive series of negotiations regarding its potential redevelopment as a residential apartment complex.⁴²

Over the decades since 1928, several major portions of the overall Victory Mills complex have been demolished. The railroad line, then operated by the Boston & Maine Railroad, had discontinued regular service on the spur line to Victory after American Manufacturing left in 1928. The railroad removed the spur line track in 1956. The stone arch span carrying Bridge Street over Fish Creek was replaced with one of steel frame with concrete deck and abutments in the 1980s.⁴³

Although the cardboard box factory provided local residents some opportunities for beneficial employment, it never operated on anything like the scale that the earlier textile or cordage mills had. The plant employed 120 workers in 1982 and 152 in 1998. A 1954 newspaper article referred to the village population as being approximately 480 in number at that date, reflecting a decrease of about 55% from the level of 1925. Since 1954, the population has gradually rebounded to about 540 inhabitants (as of February 2010).⁴⁴

Landscape Character of the Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

The general character of the study area landscape has of course received some impact from modern construction since 1928, including the presence of a relatively low number of one-story modern vernacular dwellings and other buildings, modern architectural materials applied to the exteriors of older buildings in renovations, the new steel and concrete bridge built at Victory in the 1980s, modern utility structures such as the hydroelectric apparatus and its concrete base at the milldam in Victory, and modern signage, fencing and street surfacing. Despite these modifications, taken in all, the study area retains in a strong measure the visual imprint of the mid-nineteenth century in the village, and of the wooded rural nature it has apparently always possessed on the heights above the southeast bank of Fish Creek (Figures 22 and 23).

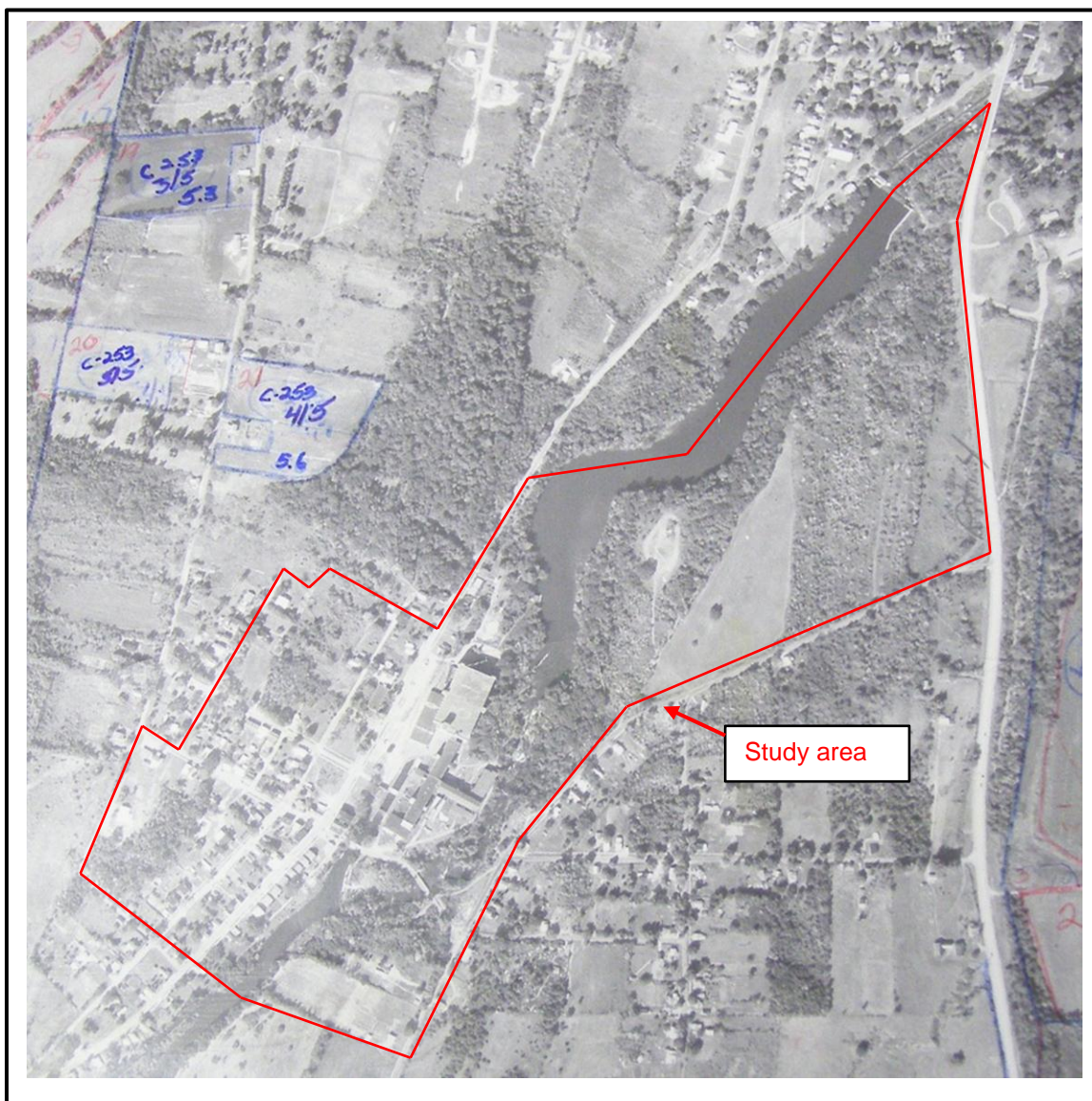


Figure 22

Study Area, Aerial Photograph, 1968

Source: US Dept. of Agriculture Aerial Photographs



Figure 23

Study Area, Aerial Photograph, 1990

Source: US Dept. of Agriculture Aerial Photographs

III. EXISTING CONDITIONS

This section describes the Existing Conditions within the Fish Creek American Positions (FCAP) site and setting. The FCAP study area comprises four *landscape units* (i.e., discrete portions of the landscape study area which can be further subdivided into individual features), viz.,

- the land on the south bank of Fish Creek extending between Bridge Street and U.S. Route 4
- the Victory Mills factory complex and milldam area, straddling Fish Creek at the center of the overall study tract, and
- the village center area of Victory, on the north bank of Fish Creek at the west end of the study area
- the small area of land to the north of the village center of Victory, about 2 acres in extent, representing that portion of the Siege of Saratoga Defining Feature identified as “the Gutter” and its immediate setting that is situated within the study area

Figure 24 delineates these four landscape units. Figures 25-27 are maps depicting the individual landscape units that incorporate photo key notations. The figures and photos are grouped at the end of this chapter. The units are largely defined by a combination of topography, circulation pattern, and historic land use. The area to the southeast of Fish Creek is nearly vacant of habitations or other built properties and consists in large part of upland terrain on the heights. The Victory Mills unit, occupying the center of study area, consists of the surviving factory complex and the waterworks structures that were historically associated with its operation. The third unit contains the central area of the Village of Victory and is grouped around the village street system. The remaining unit is defined by its character as the immediate environment encompassing a Defining Unit associated with the Siege of Saratoga battlefield.

Following consideration of the regional context of the FCAP study area, each landscape unit is described in turn with reference to its *landscape characteristics*. Landscape characteristics, in the parlance of National Register Bulletin 30 (*Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Rural Historic Landscapes*) are “the tangible evidence of the activities and habits of the people who occupied, developed, used, and shaped the land to serve human needs.” These processes and physical forms give a landscape its visual character and aid in understanding its cultural value. The appearance of a cultural landscape, both historically and currently, is a unique web of landscape characteristics. Furthermore, landscape characteristics are categories under which individual features can be grouped; for example, the characteristic *vegetation* could include such individual features as a specimen tree, a woodlot, or a perennial bed.

The landscape characteristics considered in this study include

- natural systems & features
- land use
- circulation
- topography
- vegetation
- buildings and structures
- views and vistas
- small-scale features

Regarding vegetation, the characteristic species occurring in this vicinity include those commonly associated in the Upper Hudson Valley region with old growth successional forest (such as Northern Red Oak, *Quercus rubra*, Red Maple, *Acer rubrum*, various birch species, *Betula spp.*, and Eastern White Pine, *Pinus strobes*), meadows and reclaimed farming fields (Orchard grass, *Dactylis glomerata*, Timothy, *Phleum pratense*, fescue species, *Festuca spp.*, goldenrod species, *Solidago spp.*, and herbaceous vegetation), and shrub land (Autumn-olive, *Elaeagnus umbellata*, Gray Dogwood, *Cornus racemosa*, multiflora rose, *Rose multiflora*, and Eastern Red Cedar, *Juniperus virginiana*).⁴⁵

A. Regional Context

The Upper Hudson River Valley is located between the Adirondack Mountains of New York and the Green Mountains of Vermont and has a varied landscape of gorges, bluffs, floodplain, and ridges. Located within the natural region of the Appalachian Provinces of eastern New York State within Saratoga County, in the Town of Saratoga, the Fish Creek American Positions study area occupies land extending along Fish Creek, a tributary of the Hudson River flowing into the latter from the west. The study area is part of the Town of Saratoga, a rural township which is a community of approximately 5,141 residents within an area of thirty square miles. Ninety percent or more of the land area in the study area lies within the boundary of the Village of Victory, a constituent element of the Town of Saratoga. Minor portions of the study area, each about 4 to 5 acres in extent, lie within the Village of Schuylerville (the small area of relatively level ground at the northeast end, former site of the Horicon or Saratoga Mill complex) and the Town of Saratoga at large (the southwest end of the portion on the south bank of Fish Creek).

B. South Bank of Fish Creek Area (Figure 25)

Natural systems and features: The dominant natural feature is the north end of the ridge that rises from the south side of the Fish Creek valley and extends southward along the west side of the Hudson River floodplain (Photo 1). The high ground is home to a mixture of woodland and meadow, probably formerly used as pastureland, that is in process of reverting to forest. Meadow reverting to forest also characterizes a portion of the small area of level ground by Fish Creek at the northeast end of the study area.

Land use: There are three residential properties situated on small lots along the northwest side of Evans Street. Otherwise this area would be characterized as unused woodland and unused meadow reverting to woodland, apart from the small area of level ground at the southwest end, adjoining the north corner of Bridge and Evans streets, which is treated as parkland and evidently maintained by the village (Photos 2 and 3).

Circulation: US Route 4 forms the eastern boundary of this landscape unit, Evans Street the southeastern boundary, and Bridge Street the southwestern boundary (Photo 4). A little used dirt vehicle trail, possibly representing the surviving trace of a lane that served the eighteenth-century Schuyler estate and its sawmill operations, in effect traverses the full northeast-southeast length of this area (Photo 5). Otherwise, internal circulation in this area consists of a network of footpaths in the woodland and meadow that have been made by common usage.

Topography: The relatively steep slopes of the ridge that extends southward from this portion of the study area form a prominent topographic feature. The slopes rise on the west, north, and east (Photo 6).

In the west-central area of this portion of upland, there is an expanse of relatively level terrace located at about mid-level elevation (relative to the bank of Fish Creek below and to the ridge summit within this landscape unit) (Photo 7). Two lower-lying pieces of level ground are also located within this landscape unit, one of them situated at the southwest end of this unit, adjacent to the Bridge Street bridge. This area adjoins the site of the dam for the Schuyler upper sawmill and the site of a ford through the creek that was used in 1777 (see Photos 2, 8, and 9). The other piece, the site of the Schuyler lower mills and the textile mill known as Horicon Mill and later Saratoga Mill, is situated at the northeastern end of the unit, adjoining Fish Creek and US Route 4.

Vegetation: Vegetation varies between woodland, meadow reverting to woodland, and lawn.

Buildings and structures: Buildings located within this landscape unit are limited to one mid-nineteenth-century house accompanied by a mid-twentieth-century garage (Photo 10), and two houses built within the past 25 years or so (hence not of historic age). Engineering structures include the fairly massive milldam of stone and poured concrete located at the site of the Horicon or Saratoga Mill (Photo 11), the great penstock pipe that extends northeastward along Fish Creek from the latter dam, carried above the bed of the creek by a framework of trestles, and a series of stone piers that at one time supported a railway bridge spanning Fish Creek (Photo 12).

Views: In general, the presence of numerous trees interferes with views from this landscape unit. Views are limited to prospects over Fish Creek that can be had from the relatively low-lying level area at the northeast end of the study area (looking west) and from the terrace area in the central portion of this unit (looking north and northwest) (Photo 13).

Small-scale features: Objects in this landscape unit include a circa 1920s historical marker (Photo 14) commemorating the 1740s Indian attacks and the original Philip Schuyler House (burned in 1777) and a pair of welcome and tourist information signs apparently put up since circa 2000, all of these signs situated on the west side of US Route 4 just south of the highway bridge over Fish Creek. Also in this unit, a 1927 New York State Historical Marker for the site of the Schuyler upper sawmill is located on the north side of Bridge Street at the east end of the bridge (Photo 15). In addition to the signs, there is a trio of concrete pylons positioned on the edge of the escarpment above the creek toward the southwest end of the heights extending along the south bank. These structures date to 1918, when they were placed as supports for one of the Victory Mills hydroelectric system towers. The pylons measure about two feet in height and about 30 inches square at the base (Photo 16).

A. Victory Mills Complex and Milldam Area (Figure 26)

Natural systems and features: This area consists of level land along the relatively rapidly descending Fish Creek, which is itself the dominant natural feature. Below the historic upper sawmill dam location (which was evidently positioned about 300 feet east of the bridge), i.e., on the east side of the Mills area, the creek enters a segment of relatively rapid fall where steep slopes on both sides form a gorge extending for a quarter-mile or so.

Land use: As of May 2010, the factory property was vacant and in disuse, and the buildings and other structures were progressively deteriorating. The milldam is maintained and employed for hydroelectric purposes by the regional electrical utility company, SNC Hydro, Inc.

Circulation: Bridge Street extends through this unit. The segment of Bridge Street to the west of Fish Creek has been realigned to the south from its nineteenth-century location so that it now extends straight into Pine Street (see Figure 11). Haas Road extends along the east side of this unit to the south of Bridge Street. The vacant factory property has parking lot on the western side and driveways on the west and on the southeast. An asphalt driveway, maintained by the electric utility, extends southward from Bridge Street to the south end of the milldam along the south bank of Fish Creek.

Topography: The relatively floodplain ground in this landscape unit is relatively level although there is a downward slope following the descent of Fish Creek toward the northeast and the Hudson River. The land surface of the unit is interrupted by water features including Fish Creek itself and the historic headrace and tailrace ditches for the Victory Mills. A segment of gorge for the creek borders the northeast edge of this unit. The milldam on the western edge of the unit also forms a prominent topographic feature.

Vegetation: There are woodlots at the north and south ends of this landscape unit. Otherwise the vegetation is that characteristic of empty lots, i.e., consisting of grass, weeds, and shrubs, with some trees.

Buildings and structures: Surviving buildings in the Victory Mills factory complex include the great factory building constructed by American Manufacturing in 1918 and portions of the range of nineteenth-century mill buildings (Photos 17 and 18). Unfortunately, extensive sections of the latter were demolished during the second half of the twentieth century. Field survey for this project did not have access to the factory property. Structures in this landscape unit include the Bridge Street bridge over Fish Creek, built of steel frame and poured concrete in the 1980s (Photo 19), a smaller concrete deck bridge spanning the headrace to carry the same street, the Victory Mills waterworks including the milldam (reinforced with wing walls of poured concrete in the late twentieth century) (Photo 20), the headrace (Photo 21), and the tailrace, a large spillway culvert by the south end of the dam, mechanical structures associated with the hydroelectric facility, streetlights, and the chain link fence securing the factory complex. A pair of residential properties, one built circa 1960 and one apparently built since circa 1990, are located on the west side of Haas Road at the south end of this unit.

Views: Views in this landscape unit are relatively limited in scope and consist of prospects across Fish Creek in the vicinity of the bridge and milldam, and views of the factory complex from Gates Avenue and Bridge Street. The hilly topography and tree cover of the surroundings effectively prevent wider or longer views from the ground surface, although views from the higher floors of the 1918 main factory building are probably impressive.

Small-scale features: Objects located within this landscape unit include a marker situated just within the factory complex fence on the east side of Gates Avenue and bearing the inscription “Victory Mill 1846.” This marker, set on a concrete plinth, has the appearance of an original plaster date plaque that could originally have been set into the wall of the first mill building (Photo 22). Also within this unit is a fairly recent sign commemorating Christina C. Perrotta, mayor of Victory during 1983-1985, on the south side of Bridge Street at the west end of the bridge (Photo 23).

D. Victory Village Center Area (Figure 27)

Natural systems and features: The village center area occupies ground including level floodplain area extending along the northwest bank of Fish Creek and the slope of the ridge that rises gradually toward

the west. Most of the area has been fairly thoroughly developed as a low-density residential urban place, so that natural systems do not form a prominent aspect of the landscape.

Land use: The village center is a low-density urban residential area that also contains a few non-residential properties such as the post office, the village government office, an antique store, and an auto parts shop.

Circulation: The principal thoroughfare in Victory is Gates Avenue (NY Route 32), a broad street aligned north-south and traversing the eastern edge of the village, and extending along the western boundary of the Victory Mills property. This secondary highway parallels the course of Fish Creek in the vicinity of Victory and Schuylerville, connecting Victory to the latter village to the north and extending into the rural central area of the township. Another north-south roadway, Cemetery Road, a segment in the western boundary of the FCAP study area, leads from Victory to the cemeteries north of the village, the Saratoga Monument, and the outskirts of Schuylerville. Herkimer and Jay streets are attenuated north-south streets within the village center, and Pine and Pond streets are east-west cross streets. Sidewalks, made of concrete or asphalt, are present in most areas.

Topography: The slope of the heights rising to the west is a prominent topographic feature characterizing a large portion of this landscape unit.

Vegetation: There are two woodlots located in the northern and southwestern areas of this unit. The vegetation otherwise varies between lawn and that characteristic of empty lots, with grass, weeds, and shrubs. Mature trees are fairly numerous, lining the streets and studding the lawns.

Buildings and structures: The building stock in the village center portion of the study area consists largely of frame and brick houses dating to the mid- and late nineteenth century (Photos 24-27). A relatively high proportion of the village center landscape unit's nineteenth-century buildings survive, perhaps as many as two thirds, although many have been altered with modern exterior cladding and additions. Structures include sidewalks, drains, streetlights, and electric wire networks and their supporting poles.

Views: In general, a view is available from the slope of the ridge rising on the west, over Fish Creek to the east, although this prospect is somewhat obscured at most locations by tree cover, buildings, electric wires, and fences (Photo 28). The Victory Mills factory complex may be viewed from the west side of Gates Avenue above Bridge Street.

Small-scale features: On the southwest corner of Gates Avenue and Pine Street, situated in a small lot of parkland, is a flagpole commemorating a bygone historic tree that had been designated the Liberty Tree by the village in 1976 (Photo 29).

E. "Gutter" Area (see Figure 27)

Natural systems and features: The "Gutter" area occupies a portion of the slope of the ridge that rises gradually toward the north and west. This area is steeply sloped, partially wooded, and largely covered by woodland shrubs (Photo 30).

Land use: The "Gutter" area is a largely disused piece land, rural in character although surrounded by area that is low-density residential in character.

Circulation: The “Gutter” consists of a steeply dissected gully or depression. An evidently little-used path extends along the bottom of the wending gully.

Topography: This unit essentially consists of a remnant draw or swale, evidently representing a former stream gully. The mouth of this depression is located just to the west of the northern terminus of Herkimer Street, and it extends from that location up the ridge slope on an alignment headed toward west-by-northwest. This topographic feature apparently played a role in the skirmishing on the morning of October 11, 1777, as a location where American troops took cover during their contact with British troops manning the south redoubt in the position of Burgoyne’s army.

Vegetation: The plant cover is typical of that in deciduous woodlands in the region.

Buildings and structures: Buildings are absent in this area.

Views: Given the constricted topographical character of this specific area, there are no broader views available to the observer.

Small-scale features: Such features are absent from this small and presently undeveloped area.

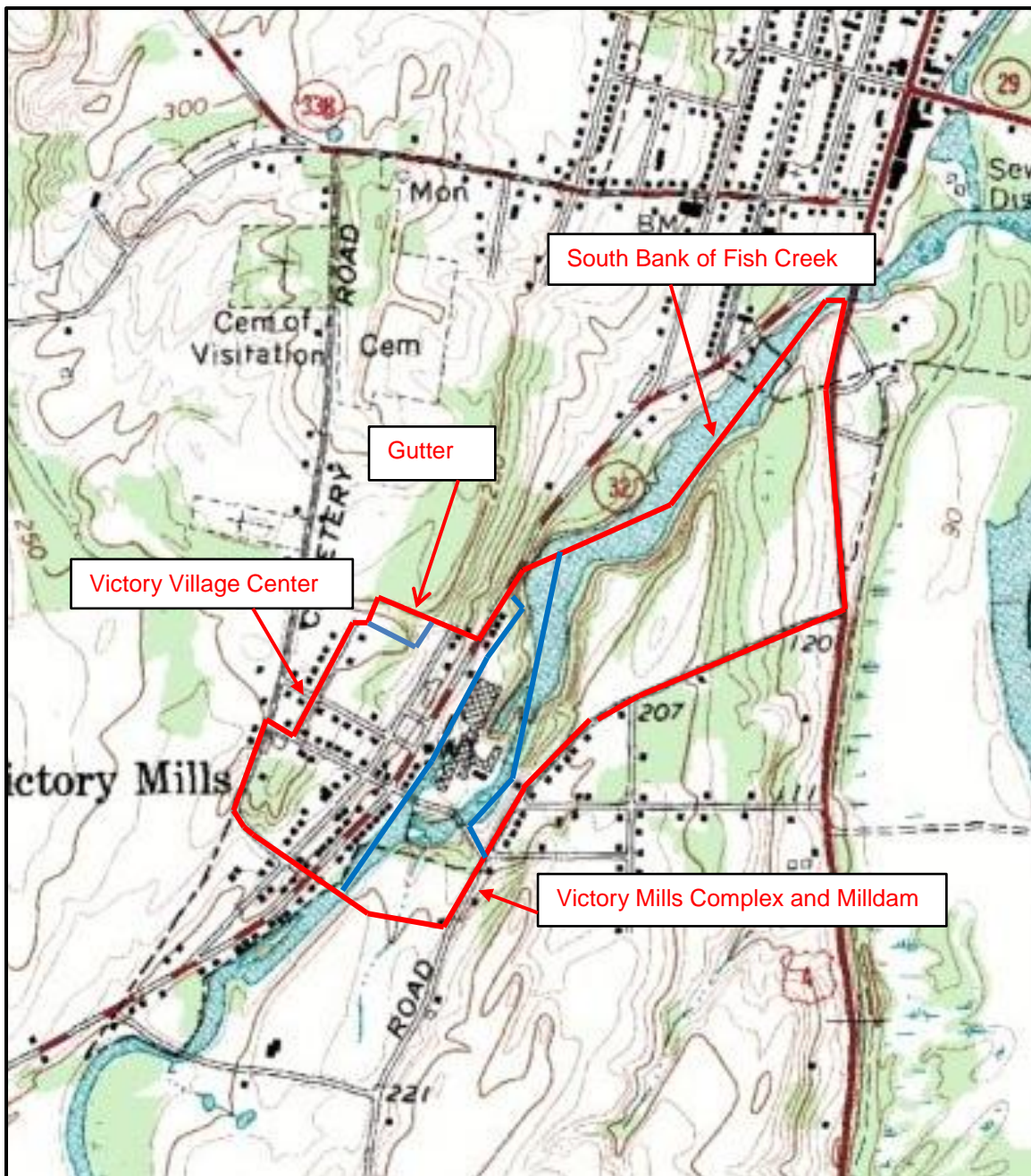


Figure 24

Location of Landscape Units within Fish Creek American Positions Study Area

Source: US Geological Survey Schuylerville Quadrangle, 1967

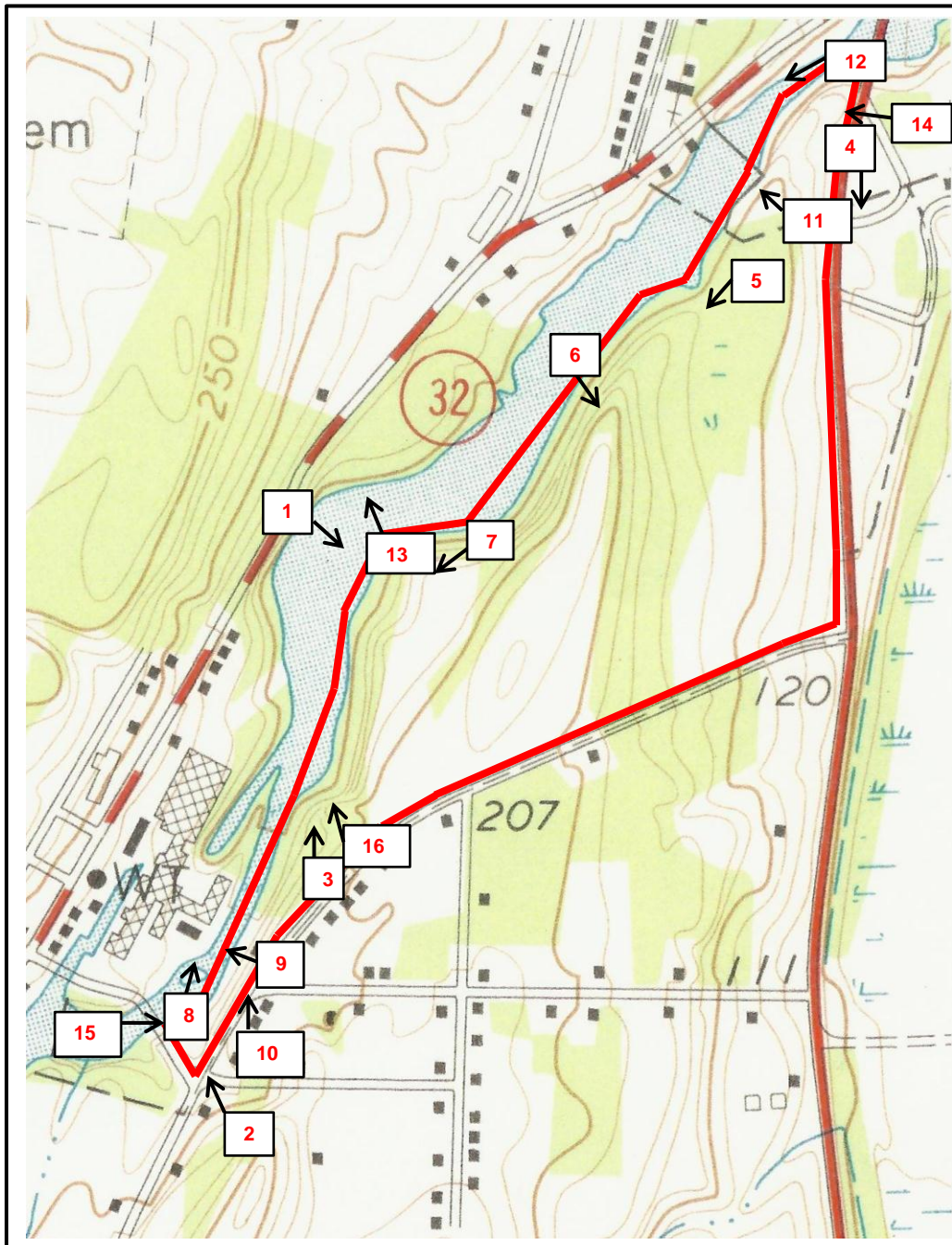


Figure 25

Photo Key: South Bank of Fish Creek Landscape Unit

Source: US Geological Survey Schuylerville Quadrangle, 1967

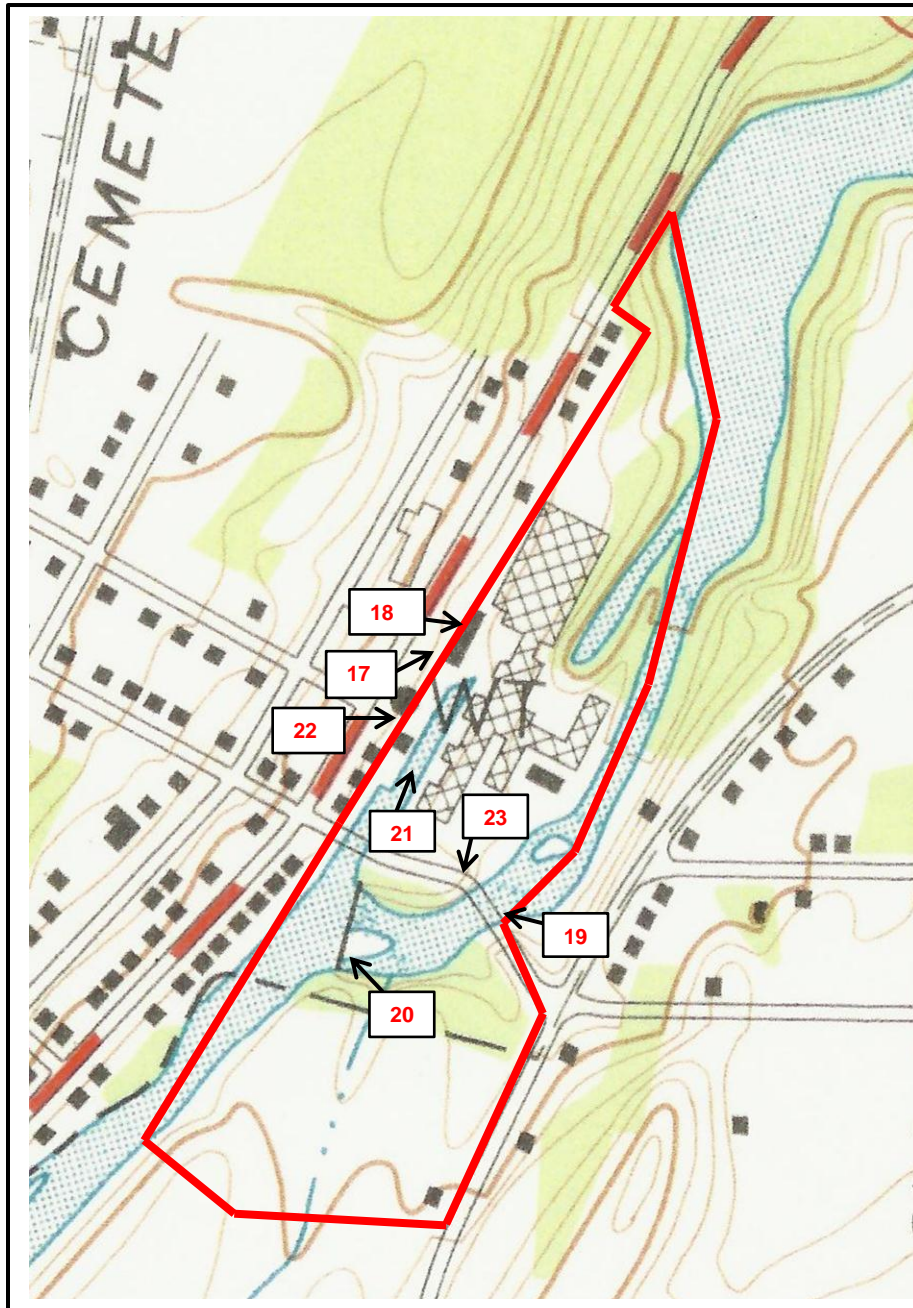


Figure 26

Photo Key: Victory Mills Complex and Milldam Landscape Unit

Source: US Geological Survey Schuylerville Quadrangle, 1967

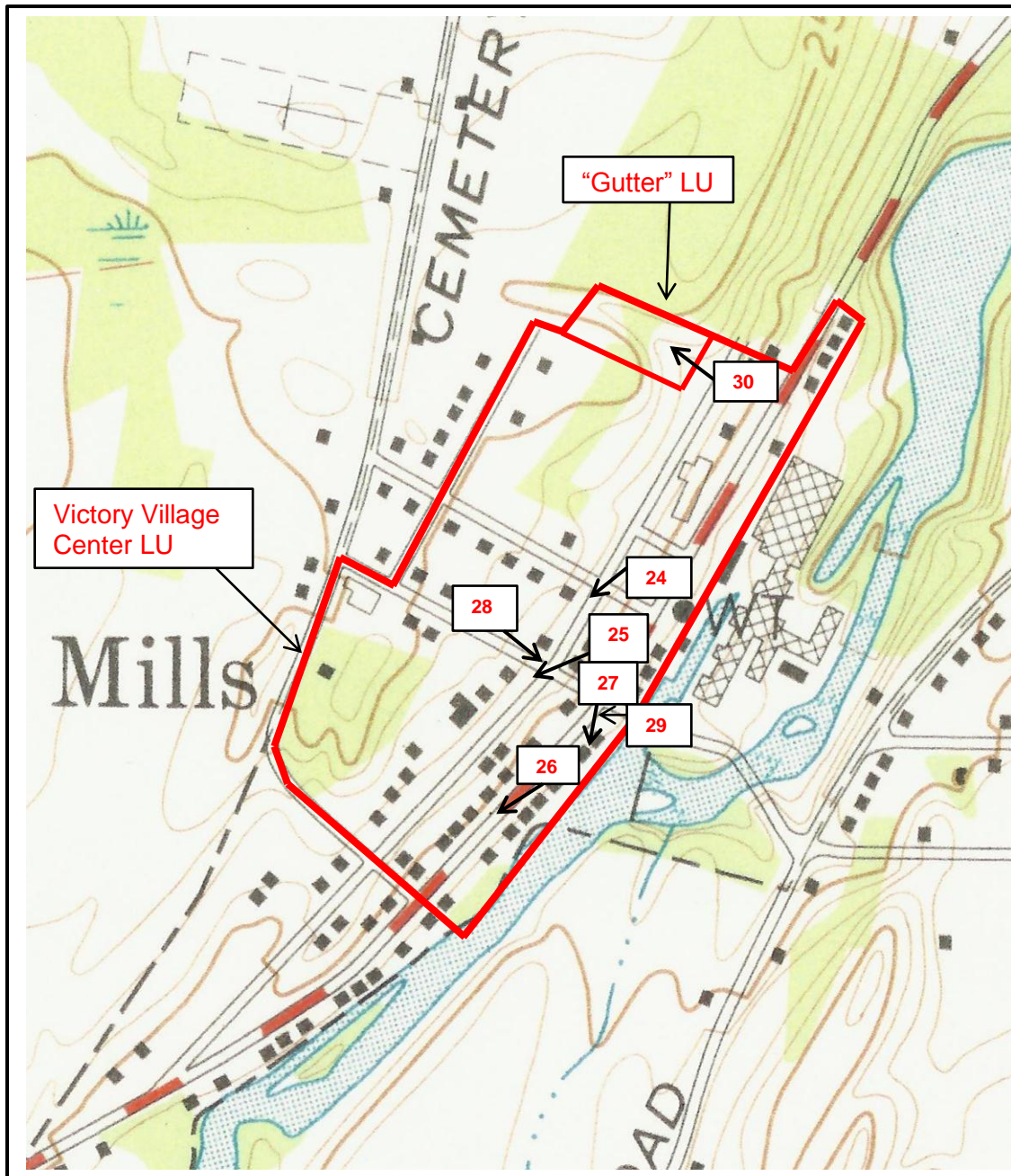


Figure 27

Photo Key: Victory Village Center and "Gutter" Landscape Units

Source: US Geological Survey Schuylerville Quadrangle, 1967



Photo 1

View of South Bank of Fish Creek Landscape Unit from across creek, looking southeast.



Photo 2

Area at southwest end of South Bank of Fish Creek Landscape Unit, looking north.



Photo 3

View of terrain in southwest-center area of South Bank of Fish Creek Landscape Unit, looking north.



Photo 4

US Route 4 at northeast end of South Bank of Fish Creek Landscape Unit, looking south.



Photo 5

View to southwest along dirt lane on property of SNC Hydro, Inc.,
potential pre-1777 Schuyler estate roadway.



Photo 6

View of terrain at northeast end of ridge above Fish Creek, looking southeast.



Photo 7

Level terrain in terrace area above Fish Creek, looking southwest.



Photo 8

Fish Creek at approximate location of Schuyler upper sawmill dam and ford, looking northeast.

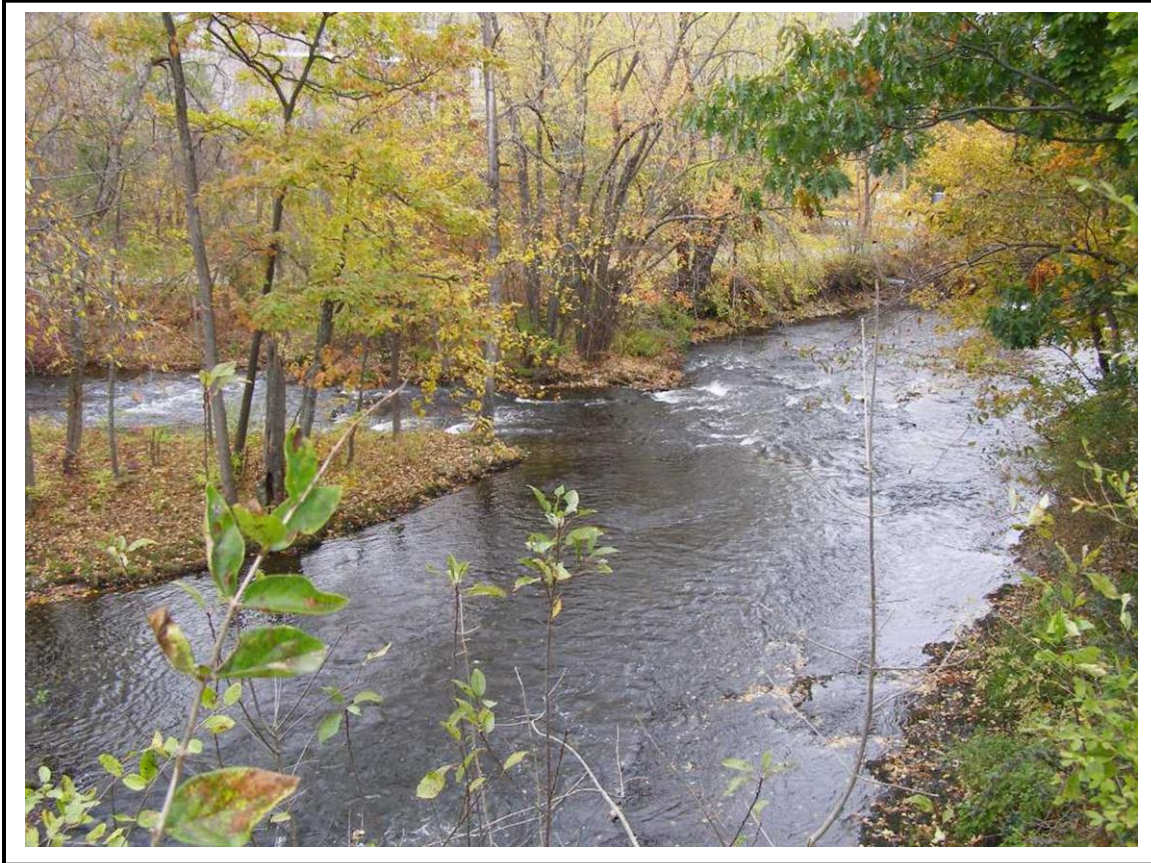


Photo 9

View across Fish Creek at approximate location of Schuyler upper sawmill dam and ford,
looking northwest.



Photo 10

Nineteenth-century house in South Bank of Fish Creek area, with later garage, looking north.



Photo 11

Dam on Fish Creek that was enlarged in and adapted for hydroelectric use in 1918, looking northwest.



Photo 12

View of Fish Creek at northeast end of study area, showing stone piers for railway bridge at center, penstock extending from milldam at right, looking southwest.



Photo 13

View across Fish Creek from north end of terrace area, looking to northwest.



Photo 14

Circa 1920s historical marker by highway at northeast end of study area, looking west.



Photo 15

1927 historical marker for upper sawmill, northeast side of Bridge Street, looking east.



Photo 16

Trio of concrete pylons in Corbett Parcel vicinity that formerly supported tower for hydroelectric system, built in 1918, looking north.



Photo 17

Victory Mills Complex, with 1918 building at left, looking northeast.



Photo 18

Victory Mills Complex, with 1918 building at left, 1871 building at right, looking east.



Photo 19

Bridge Street bridge spanning Fish Creek, built in 1980s, looking west.



Photo 20

Victory Mills milldam, with modern bridge spanning headrace in right background, looking northwest.

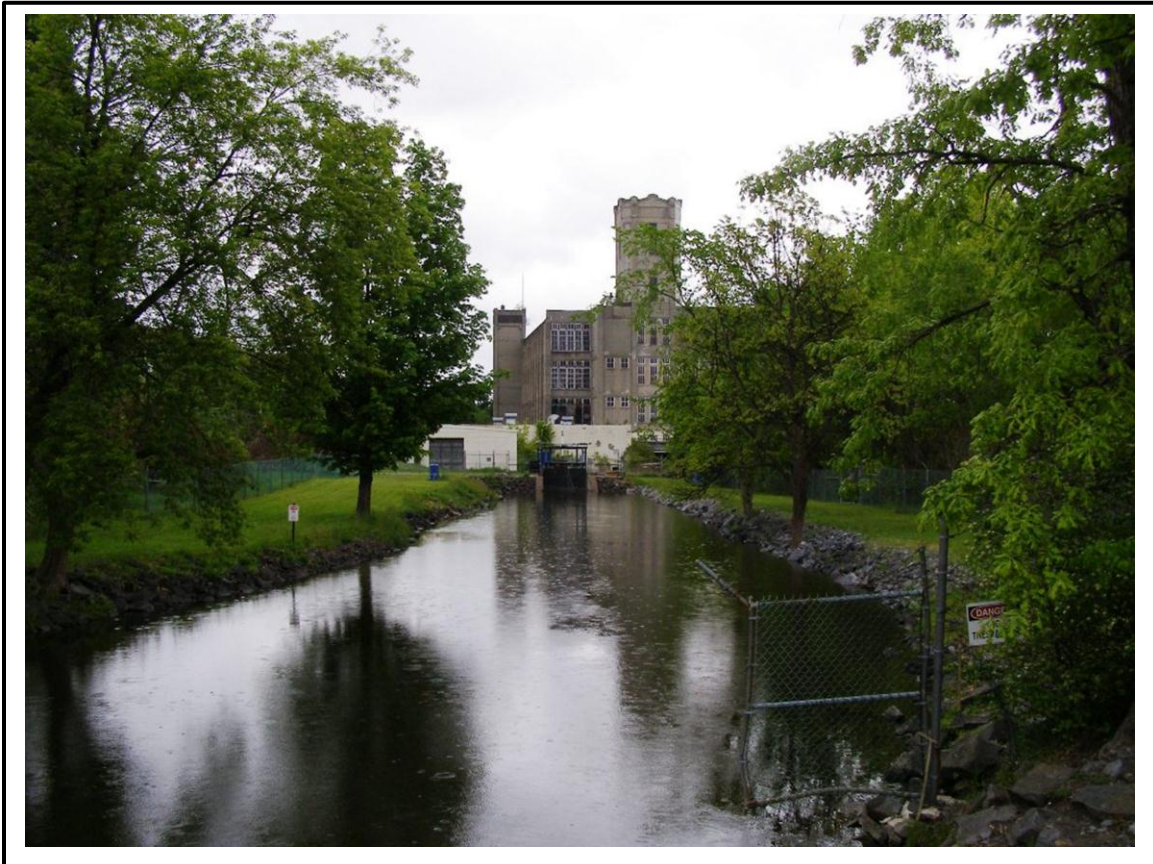


Photo 21

Victory Mills headrace, with 1918 factory building to rear, looking northeast.



Photo 22

Victory Mill memorial near entrance to complex, apparently an original date plaque removed from wall of first mill building, looking east.



Photo 23

Memorial to Mayor Christina C. Perrotta, located on south side of Bridge Street, looking south.



Photo 24

Streetscape view, west side of Herkimer Street, looking toward southwest from Pond Street.



Photo 25

Brick houses on west side of Herkimer Street, south of Pine Street, looking southwest.



Photo 26

Streetscape view, west side of Gates Avenue below Pine Street, looking southwest.



Photo 27

Streetscape view, east side of Gates Avenue below Pine Street, looking south.



Photo 28

Looking to southeast along Pine Street/Bridge Street toward Fish Creek.



Photo 29

Liberty Tree Park on southwest corner of Gates Avenue and Pine Street, looking west.



Photo 30

View of Gutter Landscape Unit from Herkimer Street, looking northwest.

IV. ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

The following section constitutes an analysis and evaluation of the historic significance of the Fish Creek American Positions cultural landscape inventory study area. This analysis and evaluation, drafted in accordance with National Register of Historic Places criteria of significance and standards of integrity, considers the potential historic significance of the constituent landscape units of the study area as they relate to the historic contexts delineated in the Site History section above. The Analysis and Evaluation then examines the relevant landscape units with reference to the landscape characteristics identified in the Existing Conditions section above, and evaluates the integrity of the units or portions of units that are defined as potentially historically significant. The significance of historically significant locations is further defined as to area of significance, period of significance, and potential National Register boundary. This section also includes a statement regarding some further recommendations for cultural resource study in regard to this portion of the Siege of Saratoga battlefield area, which appears to be nationally important for its military-historical significance.

According to the National Register program, as mandated in the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as revised), historic significance may be present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that meet at least one of the following criteria:

- A. Association with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history
- B. Association with the lives of persons significant in our past
- C. Embodiment of the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or representation of the work of a master, or possession of high artistic values, or distinction as a significant entity whose components may lack individual distinction
- D. Potential to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Furthermore, the historic resource must demonstrate integrity in the essential physical features that characterize it as significant. The National Register considers integrity in terms of seven aspects: location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. It is important to note, as set forth in National Register Bulletin 15: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria of Evaluation*, that in general practice it is not appropriate to evaluate a given property with reference to all seven aspects of integrity. Rather, evaluation identifies and considers those aspects of integrity that best apply to the nature of the historic property's significance. An historic property either retains integrity (that is, it possesses the physical integrity to convey its historic significance) or it does not. The retention of specific aspects of integrity is paramount for a property to convey its significance.

For battlefields in particular, as stated in National Register Bulletin 40: *Guidelines for Identifying, Evaluating, and Registering America's Historic Battlefields*,

A basic test of integrity for a battlefield important for its association with a historic event or person is whether a participant in the battle would recognize the property as it exists today. Generally, the most important aspects of integrity for battlefields are location, setting, feeling, and association. For a battlefield, **location** is the place where the historic military event occurred. . . . The location should be documented using primary and secondary sources and onsite inspection.

The location of a property, complemented by its **setting**, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events. Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where the battle occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historic role. It involves how, not just where, the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. The physical features of battlefield that make up its setting can be natural and manmade. They include topographic features (the physical geography of the battlefield), vegetation (the pattern of fields and woodlands), manmade features (stone walls or fences), and the relationship between buildings and open space. **Feeling** is a battlefield's expression of the historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. If a battle occurred in a rural district, then the presence of farm roads, agricultural buildings, and field systems combine to convey the feeling of the area at the time of the battle. **Association** is the direct link between the important historic event or person and a historic property.

With reference to association, Bulletin 15 adds that

A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to the observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. For example, a Revolutionary War battlefield whose natural and manmade elements have remained intact since the 18th century will retain its quality of association with the battle. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention *alone* is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the National Register.

In commencing the consideration of the potential National Register significance of this project area's significance as battlefield, it is perhaps appropriate to yet again remark the potentially transcendent level of importance of this overall battlefield, the Siege of Saratoga Battlefield, in relation to the history of the overall Revolutionary War. The cultural landscape inventory identified four significant or potentially significant historic resources located within the Fish Creek American Positions study area, viz., the South Bank of Fish Creek landscape unit, which contains the American siege line position on the Fish Creek heights as well as other Defining Features of the Siege of Saratoga battlefield (recommended as eligible for the National Register as a battlefield), Victory Mills (currently in process of National Register listing), the Victory Village Center area (recommended as deserving further study with regard to its National Register eligibility as an historic district), and the Gutter landscape unit.

A. South Bank of Fish Creek—American Siege Line

This section considers the historic significance of the South Bank of Fish Creek Area landscape unit as it relates to the historic context of the Siege of Saratoga, October 10-17, 1777. Most of the area within the South Bank of Fish Creek unit appears to have undergone relatively little alteration in its form and appearance since the momentous events of October 1777.

Analysis of Significance

As stated above in Chapter 2-Section B, the historic significance of the Siege of Saratoga (October 10-17, 1777), is well established with regard to American military history. As the concluding phase of the Burgoyne Campaign, leading directly to British General Sir John Burgoyne's surrender of his army on October 17, the siege forms a watershed in the course of the Revolutionary War. Burgoyne's surrender was probably the most important immediate factor in the attainment of the American alliance with France,

which in turn made possible the ultimate American victory in the war. The area of significance for the Siege of Saratoga battlefield is that of military, the period of significance is 1777.

The South Bank of Fish Creek landscape unit contains or immediately adjoins six of the Defining Features of the Saratoga Siege battlefield, viz.,

- Fish Creek
- American position: heights to south of Fish Creek
- Schuyler estate buildings site
- River road—to south of Fish Creek
- Fish Creek upper ford—upper Schuyler milldam site
- Schuyler estate roadway (a probable Defining Feature)

These constituent elements in the Saratoga Siege battlefield, as features that define the location of the battlefield, necessarily embody or share in the significance of the overall battlefield. The recommended National Register-eligible boundary for the battlefield, which is the boundary of the South Bank of Fish Creek landscape unit as represented in Figure 23, encompasses all six of these features and additional land that serves as the historic setting for them.

The historic significance of the South Bank of Fish Creek unit is restricted to the history of the Siege of Saratoga in 1777. Apart from its industrial properties, none of which are intact today, this area has evidently never seen intensive land use of any type. The only extant historic property, a nondescript vernacular house apparently dating to the mid-nineteenth century and accompanied by a mid-twentieth-century garage, does not possess any important historical associations or qualities of architectural distinction.

Evaluation of Integrity

The South Bank of Fish Creek landscape unit demonstrates integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. It is well documented (see Chapter 2-Section 2) as the location of American lines for the siege. Its historic setting, both in terms of its own natural character as an area of woodland and meadow on rocky heights above the creek, and its relationship to the adjacent topography of creek, upland, and rural river valley bottomland, is well intact. The area's sense of historic feeling and its quality of association with the siege are well expressed in the woodland setting above the Fish Creek bank escarpment. A participant in the siege would recognize the area as it exists today. The post-1777 architectural resources, including the late-nineteenth-century milldam at the northeast end of the study area and the three residential properties on Evans Street, are too few and far between to exert a deleterious visual impact. Although the upper sawmill milldam is no longer present, the creek and its banks at that location retain their historic natural character. The condition of most of the landscape characteristics in the South Bank of Fish Creek unit bears a strong resemblance to 1777 conditions. These intact characteristics include

- *Natural systems and features*—the area retains its general character of woodland and meadow on an upland above Fish Creek
- *Land use*—area largely continues as woodland and meadow
- *Circulation*—a dirt lane survives, which evidently originated in late colonial period as the road from the main Schuyler estate complex to Schuyler's upper sawmill

- *Topography*—land forms are not changed from their 1777 configuration
- *Vegetation*—regional plant species of woodland and meadow
- *Buildings and structures*—buildings and structures are largely absent from area, as in 1777; Schuyler lower mill complex was destroyed at onset of siege hence its site is essentially intact to siege period

B. Victory Mills

As of May 2010, final listing on the National Register was pending for the Victory Mills factory complex. The nomination form was prepared by the New York State Historic Preservation Office itself and was submitted in September 2008. Victory Mills is eligible under Criterion A, significant in the area of industry, and under Criterion C, significant in the area of architecture. The property being listed is a 6.5-acre parcel, owned in September 2008 by Riverview Realty of Lawrence, New York, that contains the monumental 1918 building of reinforced concrete and brick that was erected by American Manufacturing (Figure 28). The nomination form notes that, “If the original [brick] 1847 mill building should come under willing ownership, the boundary should be expanded to include it as well.”⁴⁶ Eligibility would potentially extend to include the milldam, headrace, and tailrace as well as any other surviving buildings that are more than fifty years old and that were elements in the factory complex.

The nomination form summarizes the significance of the 1918 mill building, asserting that

The Victory Mills factory building is historically and architecturally significant as a rare surviving example of early twentieth century industrial construction in the village of Victory. Constructed in 1918, the building represents the height of industrial development in the village, and was the culmination of the Saratoga Victory Manufacturing Company’s milling operations that began onsite almost seventy-five years earlier. The company and the village are inseparable. The mill was the reason for the name, settlement, incorporation, growth and prosperity of the village. It dominated the local economy and subsequent manufacturing operations onsite remained a major employer in the area well into the late twentieth century. The mill was clearly designed for utilitarian and practical considerations—large open floors with high ceilings, banks of windows for lighting and multiple stair towers, but is also distinguished by an embellished Mission-style water tower with elaborate coping on the parapet. Finally, the building is significant as an example of a “daylight factory;” a cast concrete building with reinforcing members—designed to be practical, strong, durable and fire resistant.⁴⁷

Regarding the pieces of land grouped within this landscape unit by proximity, but that were not directly associated with the factory operation, these do not appear to possess any important historical associations or qualities of architectural distinction, and thus lack historic significance. These parcels include the small piece of woodland to the northeast lying along the north bank of Fish Creek and the land to the south of Fish Creek and Bridge Street.

C. Victory Village Center

This study recommends the portion of the village center of Victory located within the study area as deserving of further study to determine its eligibility for the National Register. The village center is potentially eligible as an historic district due to its historical association with Victory Mills and its distinction as a representative example of an industrial village of the mid- to late nineteenth century. The



Figure 28

National Register Boundary – Victory Mills

Source: Saratoga County Tax Map (2010), Town of Saratoga, No. 170.30

village center landscape unit appears to present important landscape characteristics that continue from the 1800s largely intact, including

- *Land use*—residential with some commercial and governmental
- *Circulation*—street pattern is intact
- *Buildings and structures*—most buildings from the period appear to survive and their arrangement in groupings by type and function (such as row houses) appears to be intact

It is possible that the village center of Victory does not possess the necessary integrity to convey its historic significance, due to loss of buildings and other structures since the early twentieth century and due to the extent of alteration of dwellings and other buildings with the application of modern exterior materials, the construction of additions, and the removal of elements and details such as windows and decorative trim. A conclusive recommendation of National Register eligibility for the village center would require an investigation to survey the area in detail and research its history comprehensively. Such an activity is beyond the scope of the present study.

D. Gutter—Terrain Element in October 11, 1777 Skirmish

This section considers the historic significance of the Gutter landscape unit as it relates to the historic context of the Siege of Saratoga, October 10-17, 1777. The area of the Gutter landscape unit appears to have undergone little if any alteration in its form and appearance since the engagement of October 11, 1777.

Analysis of Significance

The historic significance of this landscape unit relates to the Siege of Saratoga (October 10-17, 1777), as discussed above. The Gutter landscape unit contains one of the Defining Features of the Saratoga Siege battlefield identified in the Revolutionary War contextual section above.

This constituent element in the Saratoga Siege battlefield necessarily contributes to the significance of the overall battlefield. The recommended National Register-eligible boundary for this segment of the battlefield encompasses the area historically identified as the Gutter and additional land that serves as the historic setting for this feature.

The historic significance of the Gutter unit is restricted to the history of the Siege of Saratoga in 1777. This area has evidently never seen intensive land use of any type.

Evaluation of Integrity

The Gutter landscape unit demonstrates integrity of location, setting, feeling, and association. It is documented (see Chapter 2-Section 2) as the location of American troops participating in the skirmishing against British units manning the British south redoubt. Its historic setting, in terms of its natural character as a wooded ravine, is well intact. A participant in the October 11th skirmish would recognize the area as it exists today. Intact characteristics include

- *Natural systems and features*—the area retains its general character of a wooded gully
- *Land use*—area largely continues as woodland
- *Topography*—land forms are not changed from their 1777 configuration

- *Vegetation*—regional plant species of woodland and meadow

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40 guns with 498 men fit and present on October 16 (in a statement of American strength presented by Gates to Burgoyne in negotiation). John Luzader puts American artillery strength at 248 troops manning 22 guns on September 12, with 302 artillerymen present on September 19 and 498 on October 16 but with no figure for field pieces. Morrissey, 26; Luzader, 210, 323, 369.

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