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1949 -

EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA

by:

Charles W. Snell,  
Historian,  
Saratoga National Historical Park.

(History)

Chapter XIX - The Building of the Third Schuyler House, 1777.

On October 10, 1777, General Burgoyne, on his retreat to Saratoga, burned Schuyler's home to prevent his troops from being fired on as they forded the Fishkill and to prevent the house from being used as a cover to a hostile attack. Burgoyne regretted the act, which was based on military necessity. Later Burgoyne before the House of Commons said: "I expressed to General Schuyler my regret at the event which had happened, and the reasons which had occasioned it, according to the rules of war. He desired me to think no more of it, saying that the occasion justified it, according to the rules of war. He did more; he sent his aide-de-camp to conduct me to Albany, in order, as he expressed it, to procure me better quarters than a stranger might be able to find. The gentleman conducted me to a very elegant house, and, to my great surprise, presented me to Mrs. Schuyler and her family; and in this General's house I remained during my whole stay at Albany, with a table of more than 20 covers for me and my friends, and every other possible demonstration of hospitality."

Baroness Riedesel, who was also entertained by Schuyler, said that Burgoyne deeply moved by Schuyler's magnanimity said, "It is to me, who have done so much injury, that you show much kindness?" Schuyler replied, "That is the fate of war, let us say no more about it."

General Schuyler left Albany for Saratoga on October 14, 1777, and in civilian dress was present at Burgoyne's surrender. On November 1 the General began the rebuilding of his house, the present Schuyler House still standing at Schuylerville (Old Saratoga). At this time, Schuyler wrote to his friend John Jay: "As I shall shortly be altogether out of public life, I am earnestly engaged in building me a house at this place, that I may be as far out of the bustle and noise of the great world as possible. I am confident (provided we repel the enemy), that I shall enjoy more true felicity in my retreat, than ever was experienced by any man engaged in public life. My hobby-horse has long been a country life; I dismounted with reluctance, and now saddle again with a very considerable share of satisfaction (for the injurious world has not been able to deprive me of the best source of happiness, the approbation of my own heart), and hope to canter him gently on to the end of the journey of life."

"....What further buildings are necessary may cheaply and speedily be erected, as the frame of the whole house can be sawed, boards and every other material procured at the cheapest rates. I will not let any of these farms, except such as I am confident would not do for you, until I have the pleasure of hearing from you, or rather until I have had the happiness of giving you a bed in the new house, which I began on the 1st instant, and which will be under cover, and have 2 rooms finished by the 15th instant, unless the weather should prove remarkably wet; but observe that it is only a frame house, 60 feet long, 21 broad and 2 stories high, filled in with brick."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday August 18, 1949

SUBMITTED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York

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Chapters from the Early History of Saratoga County

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Chapter XVIII - Baroness Riedesel and the Surrender at Saratoga

By October 11th Burgoyne was closely besieged by the Americans and the British consequently suffered greatly from hunger and lack of water. The Baroness Riedesel noted in her memoirs: "As the great scarcity of water continued, we at last found a soldier's wife who had the courage to bring water from the river, for no one else would undertake it, as the enemy shot at the head of every man who approached the river. This woman, however, they never molested; and they told us afterward, that they spared her on account of her sex." The Baroness busied herself in this period by tending and aiding the wounded.

"On the 17th of October," wrote the Baroness, "the capitulation was consummated. The generals waited upon the American general-in-chief, Gates and the troops laid down their arms, and surrendered themselves prisoners of war. Now the good woman, who had brought us water at the risk of her life, received the reward of her services. Every one threw a whole handful of money into her apron. At last, my husband sent to me a groom with a message that I should come to him with our children. I, therefore, again seated myself in my dear carriage; and, in the passage through the American camp, I observed with great satisfaction, that no one cast at us scornful glances. On the contrary, they all greeted me, even showing compassion on their countenances at seeing a mother with her little children in such a situation. I confess that I feared to come into the enemy's camp, as the thing was so entirely new to me. When I approached the tents, a noble looking man came towards me, took the children out of the wagon, embraced and kissed them, and then with tears in his eyes helped me also to alight. "You tremble," he said to me, "fear nothing." "No", I replied, "for you are kind, and have been so tender toward my children, that it has inspired me with courage." He then led me to the tent of General Gates, with whom I found General Burgoyne and Phillips, who were upon an extremely friendly footing with him. Burgoyne said to me, "You may now dismiss all your apprehensions, for your sufferings are at an end." I answered him that I should be certainly be acting very wrongly to have any more anxiety, when our chief had none, and especially when I saw him on such a friendly footing with General Gates. All the generals remained to dine with General Gates. The man who had received me so kindly, came up and said to me, "It may be embarrassing to you to dine with all these gentlemen; come now with your children into my tent, where I will give, it is true, a frugal meal, but one that will be accompanied by the best of wishes." "You are certainly," answered I, "a husband and a father, since you show me so much kindness," I then learned he was the American General Schuyler. He entertained me with excellent smoked tongue, beefsteak, potatoes, good butter and bread. Never have I eaten a better meal. I was content. I saw that all around me were so likewise; but that which rejoiced more than anything else was, that my husband was out of danger. As soon as we had finished dinner, he invited me to take up my residence at his house, which was situated in Albany, and told me that General Burgoyne would also, be there. I sent and asked my husband what I should do. He sent me word to accept the invitation."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, August 11, 1949

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

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FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

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### Chapter XVII - Baroness Riedesel at Saratoga.

On the evening of October 9th the retreating British army finally reached Saratoga and halted. The Baroness Riedesel, wife of the Commander of Burgoyne's German troops, continues her story: "On the 10th, at seven o'clock in the morning, I drank some tea by way of refreshment; and we now hoped from one moment to another, that at last we would again get under way. General Burgoyne, in order to cover our retreat, caused the beautiful houses and mills at Saratoga, belonging to General Schuyler, to be burned. Thereupon we got out upon our march, but only as far as another place not far from where we had started. The greatest misery and the utmost disorder prevailed in the army. The commissaries had forgotten to distribute provisions among the troops. There were cattle enough, but not one had been killed.

"About two o'clock in the afternoon, the firing of cannon and small arms was again heard, and all was alarm and confusion. My husband sent me a message telling me to betake myself forthwith into a house which was not far from there. I seated myself in the carriage with my children, and had scarcely driven up to the (Marshall) house, when I saw on the opposite side of the Hudson river, five or six men with guns, which they aimed at us. Almost involuntarily I threw the children on the bottom of the carriage and myself over them. At the same instant the churls fired, and shattered the arm of a poor English soldier behind us, who was already wounded, and was also on the point of retreating into the house. Immediately after our arrival a frightful cannonade began, principally directed against the house in which we had sought shelter, probably because the enemy believed, from seeing so many people flocking around it, that all the generals made it their headquarters. Alas! it harbored none but wounded soldiers, or women! We were finally obliged to take refuge in a cellar, in which I laid myself down in a corner not far from the door. My children laid down on the earth with their heads upon my lap, and in this manner we passed the entire night. A horrible stench, the cries of the children, and yet more than this, my own anguish, prevented me from closing my eyes. On the following morning the cannonade again began, but from a different side. I advised all to go out of the cellar for a little while, during which time I would have it cleaned, as otherwise we would all be sick. They followed my suggestion, and I at once set many hands to work. After they had all gone out and left me alone, I for the first time surveyed our place of refuge. It consisted of three beautiful cellars, splendidly arched. I had just given the cellars a good sweeping, and had fumigated them by sprinkling vinegar on burning coals, and each one had found his place prepared for him - when a fresh and terrible cannonade threw us all once more into alarm. Many persons, who had no right to come in, threw themselves against the door. My children were already under the cellar steps, and we would all have been crushed, if God had not given me strength to place myself before the door, and with extended arms prevent all from coming in; otherwise every one of us would have been severely injured. Even cannonballs went through the house, and we could plainly hear them rolling over our heads. One poor soldier, whose leg they were about to amputate, having been laid upon a table for this purpose, had the other leg taken off by another cannon ball, in the very middle of the operation."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, July 21, 1949.  
FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

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## CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

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### Chapter XVI - Baroness Riedesel

One of the interesting individuals who accompanied Burgoyne's invading army in 1777, was the thirty-one year old Baroness Frederika von Riedesel, wife of the commander of the German troops with the British army. In 1776 the Baroness with her three small children, Gustava, Frederica, and Caroline, left Germany to go to England, hoping to sail at once from there for Canada where her husband was then located. The severe winter storms, however, delayed her departure for the New World until the spring of 1777, and it was not till June 11, 1777, that she was able to reach Quebec. On June 15 she rejoined her husband and accompanied Burgoyne's army in the invasion of northern New York. The Baroness was present at the two battles of Saratoga, and it has already been related how the dying General Fraser was carried into the small cabin occupied by the Baroness.

On the evening of October 8th, after the burial of General Fraser, the British army began to retreat northward towards Schuylerville (Old Saratoga). The Baroness and her three children were placed in a small carriage and followed the British advanced guard toward Saratoga. The Baroness described her experience as follows: "The greatest silence had been enjoined; fires had been kindled in every direction; and many tents left standing, to make the enemy believe that the camp was still there. We traveled continually the whole night. Little Frederica was afraid, and would often begin to cry. I was, therefore, obliged to hold a pocket handkerchief over her mouth, lest our whereabouts should be discovered.

"At six o'clock in the morning a halt was made, at which every one wondered.... as a few more good marches would have placed us in security. My husband was completely exhausted, and seated himself during this delay, in my carriage, where my maid servants were obliged to make room for him; and where he slept nearly three hours with his head upon my shoulder. At last, the army began its march, but scarcely had we proceeded an hour on the way, when a fresh halt was made in consequence of the enemy being in sight. They were about 200 men who came to reconnoitre, and who might easily have been taken prisoners by our troops, had not General Burgoyne lost his head. It rained in torrents...." The British halted at Dovegat (Coveville). "On the 9th", writes the Baroness, "we spent the whole day in a pouring rain, ready to march at a moment's warning. The savages had lost their courage, and they were seen in all directions going home. The slightest reverse of fortune discouraged them, especially if there were nothing to plunder. Toward evening, we at last came to Saratoga, which was only half an hour's march from the place where we had spent the whole day. I was wet through and through by the frequent rains, and was obliged to remain in this condition the entire night, as I had no place whatever where I could change my linen. I, therefore, seated myself before a good fire, and undressed my children; after which we laid ourselves down together upon some straw."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, New York, Thursday, July 14, 1949  
FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

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FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, New York, Thursday, July 14, 1949

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Chapter XV - Adventures of Lady Acland, Conclusion.

The reader will recall that last week Major Acland was badly wounded, being shot through both legs, in the Second Battle of Saratoga and taken prisoner by the Americans. After the British army retreated to Dovegat (now Coveville), Lady Harriet Acland, the wife of Major Acland, asked General Burgoyne for permission to join her husband in the American camp. Burgoyne continues the story: "The assistance I was enabled to give was small indeed; I had not even a cup of wine to offer her; but I was told she had found, from some kind and fortune hand, a little rum and dirty water. All I could furnish to her was an open boat and a few lines, written upon dirty and wet paper, to General Gates, recommending her to his protection.

"Mr. Brudenell, the chaplain to the artillery (the same gentleman who had officiated so signally at General Fraser's funeral) readily undertook to accompany her, and with one female servant, and the major's valet-de-chambre (who had a ball which he had received in the late action of Oct. 7 then in his shoulder) she rowed down the river to meet the enemy. But her distresses were not yet to end. The night was advanced before the boat reached the enemy's out-posts, and the sentinel would not let it pass, nor even come on shore. In vain Mr. Brudenell offered the flag of truce, and represented the state of the extraordinary passenger (Lady Acland was pregnant at this time). The guard, apprehensive of treachery, and punctilious to their orders, threatened to fire into the boat if it stirred before day-light. Her anxiety and suffering were thus protracted through seven or eight dark and cold hours; and her reflections upon that first reception could not give her very encouraging ideas of the treatment she was afterwards to expect. But it is due to justice at the close of this adventure to say, that she was received and accommodated by General Gates with all the humanity and respect that her rank, her merits and her fortunes deserved." The story has a happy ending, for Lady Acland was taken to her husband, and though her care, he recovered completely. The pair were then exchanged for American prisoners in the hands of the British, and Major and Lady Acland returned to England. Several 19th century historians have written that Major Acland was killed shortly after his return to England, in a duel, defending American courage against the aspersions of a brother officer and that Lady Acland afterwards married Chaplain Brudenell, the gentleman who had escorted her in the boat to the American lines. The facts of the case, however, do not seem to bear out this story. No less authority than George Bernard Shaw, assures us that Major Acland died in bed of the effects of a cold on November 22, 1778, and the records also show that Lady Harriet Acland died the widow of Major Acland, July 21, 1815, having never remarried.

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, June 30, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

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Chapter XIV. Further Adventures of Lady Harriet Acland.

Burgoyne continues the story: "This accident (the burning of their tent) neither altered the resolution nor the cheerfulness of Lady Harriet; and she continued her progress, a partaker of the fatigues of the advanced corps. The next call upon her fortitude was of a different nature and more distressful, as of longer suspense. On the march of the 19th of September, the grenadiers being liable to action at every step, she had been directed by the Major to follow the route of the artillery and baggage, which was not exposed. At the time the action began she found herself near a small uninhabited hut, where she alighted. When it was found the action was becoming general and bloody, the surgeons of the hospital took possession of the same place, as the most convenient for the first care of the wounded. Thus was this lady in hearing of one continued fire of cannon and musketry, for four hours together with the presumption, from the past of her husband at the head of the grenadiers, that he was in the most exposed part of the action. She had three female companions, the Baroness Riedesel and the wives of two British officers, Major Harnage and Lieutenant Reynell; but in the event their presence served but little for comfort. Major Harnage was soon brought to the surgeons, very badly wounded; and a little time after came intelligence that Lieutenant Reynell was shot dead. Imagination will want no helps to figure the state of the whole group.

"From the date of that action to the 7th of October, Lady Harriet, with her usual serenity, stood prepared for new trials, and it was her lot that their severity increased with their numbers. She was again exposed to the hearing of the whole action (of the second battle), and at last received the shock of her individual misfortune, mixed with the intelligence of the general calamity, the troops were defeated, and Major Acland, desperately wounded, was a prisoner of the Americans. The day of the 8th was passed by Lady Harriet and her companions in common anxiety, not a tent, nor a shed being standing, except what belonged to the Hospital, their refuge was among the wounded and dying.

"When the army was upon the point of retreating", General Burgoyne wrote, "I received a message from Lady Harriet, submitting to my decision a proposal (and expressing an earnest solicitude to execute it, if not interfering with my designs) of passing to the camp of the enemy, and requesting General Gates' permission to attend her husband.

"Though I was ready to believe that patience and fortitude, in a supreme degree, were to be found, as well as every other virtue, under the most tender forms, I was astonished at this proposal. After so long an agitation of the spirits, exhausted not only for want of rest, but absolutely want of food, drenched in rains for 12 hours together, what a woman should be capable of such an undertaking as delivering herself to the enemy, probably in the night, and uncertain of what hands she might first fall into, appeared an effort above human nature."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, June 16, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

C O P Y C O P Y

CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

XIII. Adventures of Lady Harriet Acland

Lady Harriet Acland was the wife of Major John Dyke Acland, A British officer serving in Burgoyne's army in 1777. She accompanied the British army in its invasion of northern New York and was present at the two battles of Saratoga. General Burgoyne has left the following interesting account of some of her adventures in the New World; "Lady Harriet Acland had accompanied her husband to Canada in the beginning of the year 1776. In the course of that she had traversed a vast space of country, in different extremities of season and with difficulties that an European traveller will not easily conceive. In the opening of the campaign of 1777 she was restrained from offering herself to a share of the fatigue and hazard expected before Concordia, by the positive injunctions of her husband. The day after the conquest of that place, he was badly wounded (at the Battle of Hubbardton), and she crossed Lake Champlain to join him.

"As soon as he recovered, Lady Harriet proceeded to follow his fortunes through the campaign, and at Fort Edward, or at the next camp, she acquired a two-wheel tumbril which had been constructed by the artificers of the artillery, something similar to the carriage used for the mail upon the great roads of England. Major Acland commanded the British grenadiers, which were attached to General Fraser's corps (advanced guard); and consequently were always the most advanced post of the army. Their situations were often so alert, that no person slept out of their clothes. In one of these situations (a short time before the British army crossed the Hudson River just above Saratoga), a tent, in which the Major and Lady Harriet were asleep, suddenly took fire. An orderly sergeant of Grenadiers, with great hazard of suffocation, dragged out the first person he caught hold of. It proved to be the Major. It happened, that in the same instant she had, unknowing what she did, and perhaps not perfectly awake, providentially made her escape, by creeping under the walls of the back part of the tent. The first object she saw, upon the recovery of her senses, was the major on the other side, and in the same instant again in the fire, in search of her. The sergeant again saved him, but not without the major being very severely burned in his face and different parts of the body. Everything they had with them in the tent was consumed.

"This accident was occasioned by a favorite Newfoundland dog, who being very restless, overset a table on which a candle was burning. (The Major always had a light in his tent during the night, when the situation required it) and the candle rolling to the walls of the tent, instantly set them on fire."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, June 9, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

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FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

Chapter XIII - The Death and Burial of General Fraser

On October 7th, after being mortally wounded, General Fraser was carried to the British hospitals on the banks of the Hudson and placed in a small house occupied by the Baroness Riedesel, the wife of the commander of the German troops with Burgoyne's army. The Baroness wrote, "About 4 o'clock in the afternoon, instead of the guests who were to have dined with us, they brought in to me, upon a litter, poor General Fraser mortally wounded. Our dining table, which was already spread, was taken away, and in its place, they fixed up a bed for the general. I sat in the corner of the room trembling and quaking. The noises grew continually louder. I heard him often, amidst his groans exclaim, 'Oh fatal ambition! Poor General Burgoyne! My poor Wife!' Prayers were read to him. He then sent a message to General Burgoyne begging that he would have him buried the following day at 6 o'clock in the evening, on the top of a hill, which was a sort of a redoubt."

General Fraser passed the night in great suffering and early in the morning of October 8th, 1777, at eight o'clock, he died. The British general was buried in the great redoubt on a hill along the banks of the Hudson. The funeral services were attended by all the high ranking British and German officers. The Americans, who were now across the river from the British camp, seeing the large number of soldiers in the British redoubt, opened fire on the party with the artillery. General Burgoyne has left the following description of the burial of his friend: "About sun-set the corpse of General Fraser was brought up the hill, attended only by the officers who had lived in his family. To arrive at the redoubt, it passed within view of the greatest part of both armies. General Phillips, General Riedesel, and myself, who were standing together, were struck with the humility of the procession: They who were ignorant that privacy had been requested, might construe it neglect. We could neither endure that reflection, nor indeed restrain our natural propensity to pay our last attention to his remains. The circumstances that ensued cannot be better described than they have been by different witnesses. The incessant cannonade during the solemnity; the steady attitude and unaltered voice with which the chaplain officiated, though frequently covered with dust, which the shot threw up on all sides of him; the mute but expressive mixture of sensibility and indignation upon every countenance; these objects will remain to the last of life upon the minds of every man who was present. The growing duskiness added to the scenery, and the whole marked a character of that juncture that it would make one of the finest subjects for the pencil of a master that the field ever exhibited - To the canvas and to the faithful page of a more important historian, gallant friend! I consign thy memory. There may thy talents, thy manly virtues, their progress and their period, find due distinction; and long may they survive; ---long after the frail record of my pen shall be forgotten."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, June 2, 1949

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

C O P Y C O P Y

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FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

Chapter XI - The Wounding of General Fraser

Throughout the Burgoyne Campaign of 1777 the Americans made a practice of placing marksmen in trees and of picking off the British officers. Of this General Burgoyne wrote: "It will be observable from the accounts of the killed and wounded, that the loss of officers in all the actions of the campaign was proportionably much greater than that of the private men....The enemy had with their army great numbers of marksmen, armed with riflebarrel pieces: these, during an engagement, hovered upon the flanks in small detachments, and were very expert in securing themselves, and in shifting their ground. In this action many placed themselves in high trees in the rear of their own line, and there was seldom a minute's interval of smoke in any part of our line without officers being taken off by single shot."

The most dramatic instance of this American marksmanship occurred in the Second Battle of Saratoga, Oct. 7, 1777. As the British flanking column was being driven back on their entrenchments on Freeman Farm, General Simon Fraser, Burgoyne's second in command and close friend, began to rally the retreating British troops and to form a second line. Colonel Daniel Morgan, leader of the famous regiment of Virginia riflemen, noticed the British general who was conspicuous in his brilliant uniform and riding a great charger, rallying the troops and Morgan gave the order to have him shot. Timothy Murphy, one of Morgan's riflemen and a famous Indian fighter, placed himself in a tree and fired the shot that mortally wounded Fraser. When the general fell the second British line broke and fled. General Fraser was the only one of the wounded that the British were able to carry back into their camp.

A British officer present wrote "nor can you conceive the sorrow visible on General Fraser's being brought in wounded, your old friends Campbell and Johnston on each side of his horse, supporting him. I cannot describe to you the scene; it was such that the imagination must paint. The officers, all anxious and eagerly enquiring as to his wound - the down cast look and melancholy that was visible to every one, as to his situation, and all the answer he could make to the many enquires, was a shake of his head, expressive that it was all over with him. - So much was he beloved, that not only officers and soldiers, but all the women flocked round, solicitous for his fate.

"When he had reached his tent, and recovered a little from the faintness occasioned by loss of blood, he told those around him, that he saw the man who shot him, he was a rifleman, and up in a tree; the ball entered a little below his breast, and penetrated just below the back bone. After the Surgeon had dressed his wound, he said to him very composedly, 'Tell me, Son, to the best of your skill and judgment, if you think my wound is mortal'. When he replied, 'I am sorry, Sir, to inform you, that it is, and that you cannot possibly live four and twenty hours.' He then called for pen and ink, and after making his will, and distributing a few little tokens of regard to the officers of his suite, desired that he might be removed to the general Hospital."

FROM: THE SCHUYLerville, STANDARD, SCHUYLerville, N. Y., THURSDAY, MAY 26, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

*Burgoyne*

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CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

Chapter X - Retreat and Surrender.

On the night of October 8, after burying General Fraser in a great redoubt along the banks of the Hudson, Burgoyne attempted to retreat with his badly defeated army to Canada. Heavy rains fell all that evening; the roads became a sea of mud. Parties of Americans had destroyed all the bridges as far north as Fort Edward. Starving horses dropped by the way side as they labored to move forward the great guns. In the wake of Burgoyne's retreating army lay mired and broken wagons and equipment thrown aside by the exhausted soldiers. Over 400 sick and wounded soldiers in the British hospital along the Hudson were abandoned by Burgoyne and taken prisoners by the Americans as they began the pursuit of the royal army.

On the evening of October 9 the main portion of the drenched and weary British army forded Fish Creek and bivouacked on the heights of Saratoga. General Burgoyne passed the night in the country house of General Schuyler. On the 10th the American army began to surround and besiege the British, and the English burned the second Schuyler house to prevent its use by the Americans. By the 11th of October the British army was almost completely surrounded and the Americans opened a heavy cannonade upon the British position that continued until October 14 when the British began to negotiate for terms of surrender.

After 3 days of discussion, the terms were finally agreed upon, and on the morning of October 17th the British army marched to what is now called the Field of Grounded Arms by the ruins of Fort Hardy, and laid down their arms. They then proceeded south and crossed Fish Creek where the American army of now more than 17,000 men had been drawn up. A British officer present wrote, "We marched out according to the treaty, with the drums beating and the honors of war. But the drums seemed to have lost their former inspiring sounds and though we beat the Grenadiers March, which not long before was so animating, yet then it seemed by its last feeble effort, as if almost ashamed to be heard on such occasion. As to my own feelings, I cannot express them. Tears, though unmanly, forced their way, and if alone, I could have burst to give myself vent. I shall never forget the appearance of their troops on our marching past them; the dead silence universally reigned through their numerous columns and even then they seemed struck with our situation...I must say their decent behaviour during the time (to us so greatly fallen) merited the utmost approbation and praise." As the British army filed by, the Americans saluted them with the tune, Yankee Doodle. On the south side of Fish Creek along the River Road was enacted the famous scene in which General Burgoyne offered his sword to Major-General Horatio Gates, thus ending the Burgoyne campaign of 1777. Approximately 5,700 men, 5,000 muskets and 35 bronze cannon, the entire remnants of Burgoyne's great army was surrendered by the Convention of Saratoga.

The importance of this surrender has been summed up in the following words: "Saratoga was the most important military engagement between Lexington and Yorktown. Not only was it the decisive battle of the Revolution, but it has gone down in history as one of the 15 decisive battles in world history. It called forth the forces that created a nation. It gave the Americans a new confidence that enabled

them to prolong the war until victory came in 1783. It brought more recruits with a finer morale into Washington's army. It knit the colonies together in closer union. It raised up new friends in Great Britain. It gave American prestige and credit abroad on which badly needed loans of money were secured. And finally it brought into the struggle on the American side, first France and then other nations and thus practically insured victory for the American cause."

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, May 5, 1949

THE SARATOGIAN, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Thursday, May 5, 1949

THE HUDSON VALLEY STAR, Mechanicville, N. Y., Thursday, May 5, 1949

FORWARDED BY: SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, Stillwater, New York.

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## CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

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Charles W. Snell, Historian  
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FROM: THE SCHUYLerville STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, May 5, 1949

THE SARATOGIAN, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Thursday, May 5, 1949

THE HUDSON VALLEY STAR, Mechanicville, N. Y., Thursday, May 5, 1949

FORWARDED BY: SARATOGA NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK, Stillwater, New York.

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## CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

BY

Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

### Chapter IX - The Battles of Saratoga

On September 19 the British army moved forward in 3 columns toward the American lines. While advancing through the great forests that covered the region, the center column of Burgoyne's army was attacked by picked American regiments under Colonel Daniel Morgan. A fierce and bloody battle developed on the small clearing of Freeman's Farm. The first battle was fought under the "fog of war" for neither Burgoyne nor Gates was sure of the disposition or intentions of the other. As a result both Generals held back the larger portions of their armies until late in the day, sending in only piecemeal reinforcements to the battling columns. The contestants were evenly matched till dusk when Burgoyne finally ordered in regiments from his flanking columns and drove the Americans from the field of battle. The heavy forests and darkness, however, prevented any effective pursuit. Although the British held the field of battle, they had been stopped 1 mile north of the American lines; moreover the royal army had lost more than 500 men as against 300 for the Americans; thus the British had won little but honor.

Early in the morning of the 21st a messenger reached Burgoyne from the south. Sir Henry Clinton, left in command of the small British force holding New York City when the main army had sailed south, had finally decided to move up the Hudson River in an effort to assist Burgoyne. This was the news that Burgoyne now heard. The general therefore decided to wait until Clinton approached close enough to threaten Albany and thus force Gates to weaken his army by sending troops south to check Clinton's advance. While Burgoyne waited, the royal army threw up a series of strong entrenchments about their camp.

*Went down Sept 1950*

The strong showing made by the American troops in the first battle greatly elated Gates' army and reinforcements poured in from all sides. The army rose to a strength of more than 11,000 men and 22 cannon. Burgoyne's supplies, however, continued to diminish. On October 3 his army was put on short rations. After 18 days of waiting, with no further news from the south, Burgoyne was faced with the choice of risking all in a second battle or attempting to retreat to Canada. On October 7, he offered battle a second time. Accompanied by 1500 picked men, his ablest generals and 10 cannon the British general moved out in an attempt to out-flank the American lines on Bemis Heights. The British movement was detected by American scouts and General Gates hurled 4,000 men under Morgan, Learned and Poor against the British column. Simultaneously the Americans struck the British right, left and center and poured in a withering fire. The British second in command, General Fraser, and many other picked soldiers fell in the first phase of this engagement. The Americans also took 8 British cannon. Burgoyne's flanking column was swept back on its entrenchments on Freeman's farm. At this point General Benedict Arnold, although removed from command because of a quarrel with General Gates, led the Americans up against the British lines and succeeded in out-flanking the British camp. It was in leading this assault which took the Breymann redoubt, a key British position, that Arnold was wounded in the left leg. Only darkness saved the British from complete disaster.

*on the other hand,*

The heavy loss in men and artillery that day, the shortage of supplies, and the fall of the Breymann Redoubt rendered Burgoyne's entire position most precarious and made necessary a radical change of front if Burgoyne was to save his army from being cut in two. Accordingly, on the night of October 7, the British general left his camp fires burning and moved secretly to a new position along the banks of the Hudson in the desperate hope of being able to retreat to Canada with his defeated and exhausted army.

FROM: THE SCHUYLerville STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, April 28, 1949  
and  
THE SARATOGIAN, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Friday, April 29, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

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CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

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*Original here*

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

*where this is related to Bennington Heights*

Chapter VIII. The Advance of the Armies.

On August 19, 3 days after the battle of Bennington, General Philip Schuyler was replaced by Major-General Horatio Gates as commander of the American Northern Department - a change that originated in the Continental Congress and was due to the feeling that existed between New Yorkers and New Englanders at that time. The American army had retreated down the Hudson as far as Half Moon, but as it increased in strength and confidence, growing now from a low point of about 3,000 men to over 7,000, it began moving back toward the British at Fort Edward. On September 9 the American army under General Gates occupied Stillwater; on September 12 it advanced to the much stronger position at Bemis Heights and under the direction of the Polish Engineer, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, began fortifying this position.

At Fort Edward, Burgoyne learned of the British defeats at Oriskany and Bennington. Of still greater concern to the British general, however, was the fact that no word had been received from General Howe relative to his cooperation from the south. As a matter of fact, Howe, in the absence of any direct order to the contrary from Germain, the British colonial secretary, had chosen to move southward and attack Philadelphia, even though he knew Burgoyne expected to receive his cooperation. Despite these setbacks to the British, which had greatly boosted American morale, Burgoyne, gambling on the belated cooperation of Howe and on his ability to smash the American force in his front, decided to cross the Hudson, sever his communications with Canada, and risk all on a push to Albany. By September 12 the British army accumulated enough provisions to last them for 30 days and Burgoyne, concentrating his forces, crossed the Hudson River on September 13 about 2 miles above Saratoga (Schuylerville). That evening and the next day, Sunday, the British army lay camped on the heights of Saratoga. On Monday at 12 o'clock the tents were struck and loaded and the army marched in 3 columns after passing Schuyler's house. The royal army moved slowly and cautiously down along the Hudson using batteaux to carry their supplies. Before them they found the road blocked with felled trees and the Bridges destroyed. Along their flanks hung Benedict Arnold with a force of several thousand picked American soldiers, ever watchful for an opportunity to catch the British off guard. Burgoyne, however, handled his army skillfully enough so that Arnold never made an attack. The night of the 15th and all day of the 16th the royal army camped at Dovegat (Now Coveville). On September 17 and 18 the army lay at Sword's house, about 4 miles from the American lines at Bemis Heights.

It was at this point in the campaign that Burgoyne felt severely the desertion of his Indian allies. As a result of the murder of Jane McCrea, when Burgoyne attempted to discipline his Indians, and of the 2 British defeats at Oriskany and Bennington, the Indian nations rapidly began to abandon the royal army. Hitherto the front and flanks of Burgoyne's army had been covered with an impenetrable cloak of savage warriors, who also closely harassed the retreating American army, attacking small detachments of American soldiers and bringing Burgoyne valuable information on American movements. Without his Indian warriors, Burgoyne's position was now exactly reversed. About Burgoyne's army hovered hundreds of American scouts who picked off small British detachments and who counted in detail the tents, wagons and boats of the British army. Burgoyne, on the other hand, now knew nothing of the strength or disposition of the American army that blocked the road to Albany. On the morning of September 19 a

heavy fog covered both the American and British camps. The Royal army prepared itself to advance in three parallel columns, as it had previously done, as soon as the heavy mists rose. The day proved to be one of the most memorable in the history of our nation, as it marked the first battle of Saratoga or of Freeman's Farm.

FROM: The SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, April 21, 1949.  
and  
THE SARATOGIAN, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Thursday, April 21, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

C O C O P P Y Y

## CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

### Chapter VIII. The Advance of the Armies.

On August 19, 3 days after the battle of Bennington, General Philip Schuyler was replaced by Major-General Horatio Gates as commander of the American Northern Department - a change that originated in the Continental Congress and was due to the feeling that existed between New Yorkers and New Englanders at that time. The American army had retreated down the Hudson as far as Half Moon, but as it increased in strength and confidence, growing now from a low point of about 3,000 men to over 7,000, it began moving back toward the British at Fort Edward. On September 9 the American army under General Gates occupied Stillwater; on September 12 it advanced to the much stronger position at Bemis Heights and under the direction of the Polish Engineer, Thaddeus Kosciuszko, began fortifying this position.

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THE SARATOGIAN, Saratoga Springs, N. Y., Thursday, April 21, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

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CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

Chapter VII - Jane McCrea, Oriskany and Bennington

On July 27 occurred the murder of Jane McCrea, the first of three events that turned the course of events in the favor of the American cause. Jane McCrea was a beautiful young girl in her twenties, who remained behind the retreating American army at Fort Edward, awaiting the arrival of the British. According to the most romantic version of the legend, she was engaged to a young Tory officer serving in Burgoyne's army. The young officer sent several Indians ahead to bring the girl to the British camp, where the lovers were to be married. While conveying Jane McCrea to the royal army, two of the Indians became involved in an argument over the division of the reward for bringing the girl to the Tory officer. The warriors settled the dispute by tomahawking the girl. The news of this murder sped like wildfire through the colonies, and the atrocity was at once seized upon by the Americans for propaganda purposes. "Look", they argued, "If Burgoyne cannot protect his own friends from his Indians, what will become of the women and children of his enemies." The murder had the effect of arousing a large part of the population that had hitherto been neutral or even friendly to Burgoyne and rallying them to the American cause for the purpose of protecting their families from Burgoyne's Indians.

On August 2 Colonel St. Leger and his western army began the siege of Fort Stanwix on the Mohawk River. The fort was defended by 500 Americans under Colonel Peter Gansevoort. The German settlers of the Mohawk Valley at once assembled under the leadership of General Herkimer and advanced to the relief of the fort. On August 6 the Tories and Indians prepared an ambush in a ravine near Oriskany 6 miles below Fort Stanwix where Herkimer and his farmer militia were almost entirely surrounded. In a desperate struggle with knife, hatchet, bayonet and clubbed rifle, Herkimer and his men finally put the Indians and Tories to flight from a field that has few, if any, equals in savage horror on the American continent. Herkimer, himself, died from the effects of a wound received on the field of carnage, and his followers were so reduced and exhausted by the ordeal that they were compelled to return to their homes. Sixteen days later St. Leger's force was dispersed by the defection and desertion of his Indian allies on receipt of the news that a large force under Benedict Arnold had been dispatched by General Philip Schuyler for the relief of Fort Stanwix. Thus the Americans completely repelled the western spearhead of the British three-pronged drive.

While the British army still lay at Ft. Edward awaiting supplies from Canada, Burgoyne learned of the concentration of large supplies of food and many horses for the American army at Bennington. This led him to send out an expedition of about 800 men, under Colonel Baum, to capture these provisions. General John Stark aroused the countryside, and the Vermont farmers turned out and administered a crushing defeat on August 16 to Baum's troops. ~~XXX~~ Another contingent under Colonel Breyman, came up at this time and threatened to undo Stark's victory, but the timely arrival of Seth Warner and his men ~~overwhelmed~~ overwhelmed Breyman, and he was forced to retreat. By this blow Burgoyne lost approximately 800 men, mostly Germans, and 4 cannon, which seriously weakened the British army. These two American successes after a long series of defeats greatly stimulated the hopes and efforts of the Americans, and men and supplies began to pour into Schuyler's tiny American army which was now camped at Halfmoon.

FROM: THE SCHUYLerville STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., April 14, 1949.  
FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

April 19, 1949.

MEMORANDUM for the Superintendent,  
Saratoga National Historical Park.

I wish to acknowledge receipt of Chapters IV, V, and VI in the series of "The Early History of Saratoga County," which Historian Snell has been preparing for publication in The Schuylerville Standard.

Compliments are in order for Mr. Snell on these last three chapters. We think that Chapter V, "The Rout of the Americans," is particularly good, and that Chapter VI, "The Battle of Supplies," is not far behind. Both are good examples of clear, concise writing.

Many of us in the office here are looking forward to the remaining chapters in this series.

Thomas J. Allen,  
Regional Director.

cc: Director,  
w/cc Chapters IV, V, and VI

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YCHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

Chapter VI - The Battle of Supplies

On Burgoyne's arrival at Skenesborough (Whitehall) on July 6, he was confronted with an immediate decision of how to proceed further southward. Should he withdraw his army to Fort Ticonderoga and travel down Lake George by boat, then marching to Fort Edward, or should he march directly from Skenesborough overland through the wilderness to Fort Edward? Burgoyne chose the land route, using Lake George only to move forward his heavy artillery and some of his supplies. The reasons for this choice are not definitely known, but it is believed that his decision was influenced by Colonel Philip Skene, a Tory and great landowner. A road from Skenesborough to Edward would have greatly increased the value of the real estate that Skene held in that region.

Meanwhile, far to the south the roads were jammed with long lines of wagons, horses and men of the retreating American armies, and with the families of frightened settlers as they fled before the savage Indians, who burned and killed all within their reach. Philip Schuyler, the American General of the Northern Department, however, had not given up the fight. He concentrated ~~not~~ what was left of fleeing American forces at Fort Edward. From there he sent out hundreds of axmen to fell the giant forest trees, blocking the roads to the north. Bridges were burned, creeks dammed, crops destroyed and the cattle and horses driven off in front of the invading army so that Burgoyne should have no use of them. Thus, while it was only a 23 mile march overland from Whitehall to the Hudson, Burgoyne found his way blocked before him. In order to move his men, supplies and train of 39 bronze cannon through this tangled wilderness, he found it necessary to build a completely new road and to construct 40 bridges. On July 30 Burgoyne finally reached the Hudson River at Fort Edward, just 23 days after the commencement of his march from Whitehall. The further Burgoyne advanced, as Napoleon was to learn in his invasion of Russia, the more difficult became his problems of supply. Food had to be found for his army of some 8,000 men, 1700 artillery and baggage horses and 200 head of oxen. His Indians had driven off friend and foe, and in territory where the British general had expected to receive support and supplies he found only abandoned homes and fields. Burgoyne, therefore, found it necessary to bring practically all of his supplies from Canada, which required the utmost efforts of his army. On July 27, several days before the British army reached Fort Edward, and during the next weeks of August, while the British army waited at Fort Edward for the arrival of sufficient supplies, there occurred three events which for the first time turned the course of events in the favor of the American cause. These incidents will be covered in the next chapter.

From: THE SCHUYLerville STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., April 7, 1949.

Forwarded by: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

*Reg. Ser. Register I*

## EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

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FROM: THE SCHUYLerville STANDARD, Schuylerville, New York, April 7, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

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FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, New York, April 7, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE  
STANDARD, Schuylerville,  
N. Y. March 31, 1949

FORWARDED BY: SARATOGA  
NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK  
STILLWATER, N. Y.

EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by  
Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

Chapter V. The Rout of the Americans

On July 5 the British army reached Fort Ticonderoga and began the siege of this fortress, which was considered by both the Americans and British to be the strongest fortress in North America. A number of factors, unknown to the British and to most Americans, however, had caused the strength of Fort Ticonderoga to be greatly overestimated by both sides. The lines of the fortress had been laid out to be defended by an army of at least 10,000 men, General St. Clair, commander of the American forces in the fort, had only about 3,000 men on hand to defend these vest works. St. Clair was also short of supplies and ammunition. Due to the shortage of men, and perhaps, also to neglect, the Americans had failed to fortify a high mountain, known as Mount Defiance, which stood to the south and rear of Ticonderoga and which completely dominated the fortress. The Americans believed that the slopes of Mount Defiance were so steep that it would be impossible for the British to drag cannon to its top. Burgoyne's engineers soon dispelled this American dream for on the afternoon of July 5 the Americans were horrified to see the British constructing batteries on top of the mountain. Once these cannon were in position the army was in acute danger of being completely encircled.

Accordingly, General St. Clair at once made plans to abandon the fortress. That night, under the cover of darkness, the American army began retreating in two sections. Half of the army marched across the floating bridge and chain, which ran from Fort Ticonderoga across the lake to the east shore, and the other half, with the sick and wounded, embarked on the small American fleet and sailed down South Bay towards Skenesborough (now Whitehall). This secret retreat was being successfully conducted when some of the building in the fort caught fire and the flames showed the British what was taking place below them.

Burgoyne ordered an instant pursuit. With blitzkrieg speed, Burgoyne, with the British fleet and part of the army, smashed through floating bridge and chain, which the Americans hoped would retard the British pursuit, and sailed swiftly after the retreating American forces. At the same time Burgoyne dispatched his second in command, General Fraser, with the remaining part of the British army in pursuit of the Americans retreating by land. On the afternoon of July 6, Burgoyne and the British fleet caught up with the Americans as they neared Skenesborough and captured or sank all that was left of the American fleet, taking many prisoners and supplies while the remnants of the American army fled into the woods. On the morning of July 7 General Fraser attacked the rear guard of the American army retreating by land near Hubbardton, and after a fierce little battle the American force was routed and dispersed over the mountains. On the 8th of July a third American force was defeated at Fort Anne. Everywhere the American forces were retreating before Burgoyne's army and ahead of the royal army swept great swarms of Indians, terrorizing the settlers of the Hudson Valley and Saratoga County. By taking Fort Ticonderoga, General Burgoyne had opened the road to the Hudson, had destroyed the American fleet on Lake Champlain, captured great quantities of American supplies and taken many prisoners as well as 128 cannon; all at a loss of less than two hundred men.

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*Regional Ser. Project*

## CHAPTERS FROM THE EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

by

Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

### Chapter IV - The Burgoyne Campaign

One hundred and seventy-two years ago, this year, the County of Saratoga was the scene of the thrilling climax of one of the most important military campaigns in world history. In 1777 a great British army had plunged into the wilderness in a mighty attempt to crush the American Revolution. For the next few months, all the eyes of the Western World were focused upon what is now the County of Saratoga. By December of that year the news of the Convention of Saratoga had reached all Europe. As a result of the two battles of Saratoga and the surrender of an entire British army, one of the greatest empires in world history was shattered, Europe was thrown into the turmoil of a great war, and the American Revolution was changed from a local conflict between the American colonists and Great Britain into a full fledged world war.

In 1776 the British had taken the initiative from the American armies and in the winter of that year, King George the Third of England, Lord George Germaine, his Colonial Secretary, and General John Burgoyne drew up in England a Plan of Campaign for 1777 designed to crush the rebellion in the thirteen colonies. Their plan for the reconquest of the colonies sought to wrest from the colonists the control of the historic Hudson-Champlain route with its lateral branch along the Mohawk. To accomplish this task a powerful British army of between 8,000 and 9,000 men under the command of General Burgoyne was to advance from Canada down Lake Champlain and the Hudson River to Albany. From New York City a second British army of 20,000 men under the British Commander in Chief, Sir William Howe, was to sail up the Hudson River and unite with Burgoyne's army at Albany. From the west, still another British army of about ~~15,000~~ 1,500 men under Colonel Barry St. Leger was to push down the Mohawk River from Oswego and join with the other British armies at Albany. The successful accomplishment of this plan would have split the thirteen colonies in two, thereby separating the two most powerful centers of the American Revolution, Massachusetts and Virginia. It would then have been the old story of divide and conquer.

#### The Commencement of the Campaign

With all the pomp and pageantry characteristic of the 18th century, Burgoyne embarked from St. John's, Canada, on June 17, 1777. The army consisted of about 4,000 British regulars, 3,000 German troops hired by the King of England, between 600 and 700 Canadians and Indians, and splendid train of artillery made up of 138 bronze cannon. Seldom, if ever, has the American continent witnessed a more picturesque display of military splendor. To the gay multi-colored uniforms of the various British, German, Canadian and Tory regiments, were added the bright war-paint and feathers of their Indian allies. With three large vessels, 20 gunboats and 200 flat-bottomed transports, Burgoyne sailed boldly along the 200-mile length of Lake Champlain to attack his first objective, Fort Ticonderoga, the American guardian of northern New York and New England.

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., March 24, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

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With all the pomp and pageantry characteristic of the 18th century, Burgoyne embarked from St. John's, Canada, on June 17, 1777. The army consisted of about 4,000 British regulars, 3,000 German troops hired by the King of England, between 600 and 700 Canadians and Indians, and splendid train of artillery made up of 138 bronze cannon. Seldom, if ever, has the American continent witnessed a more picturesque display of military splendor. To the gay multi-colored uniforms of the various British, German, Canadian and Tory regiments, were added the bright war-paint and feathers of their Indian allies. With three large vessels, 20 gunboats and 200 flat-bottomed transports, Burgoyne sailed boldly along the 200-mile length of Lake Champlain to attack his first objective, Fort Mifflin, the American guardian of northern New York and New England.

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., March 24, 1949.

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, New York.

## EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

By Charles W. Snell, Historian  
Saratoga National Historical Park

### Chapter IV

#### The Burgoyne Campaign

One hundred and seventy-two years ago, this year, the county of Saratoga was the scene of the thrilling climax of one of the most important military campaigns in world history. In 1777 a great British army had plunged into the wilderness in a mighty attempt to crush the American revolution. For the next few months, all the eyes of the Western world were focused upon what is now the county of Saratoga. By December of that year the news of the convention of Saratoga had reached all Europe. As a result of the two battles of Saratoga and the surrender of an entire British army, one of the greatest empires in world history was shattered, Europe was thrown into the turmoil of a great war, and the American revolution was changed from a local conflict between the American colonists and Great Britain into a full fledged world war.

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#### Commencement of Campaign

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## EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

B

Charles W. Snell, Historian, Saratoga National Historical Park

This is the third of a series of articles on the early history of Saratoga county and Schuylerville, N. Y.

On November 1, 1683, the general assembly of New York passed an act dividing the province into counties for better local government. In the act the county of Albany was bounded as follows:

"The county of Albany to contain the towns of Albany, the colonies of Renslaerwyck, Schenecteda, and all the villages, neighborhoods and Christian plantations on the east side of the Hudson river from Sawyer's Creeke to the Sarrahtoga."

From the above description it appears that Albany county at first contained about half of what is now Saratoga county, but by subsequent acts it was enlarged to contain all of the province to the north as far as Canada and eastward to the Connecticut river, thus including what is now the state of Vermont. The county of Saratoga was therefore not known as such until February 7, 1791 when the county of Albany was again divided after the creation of Vermont and the county of Saratoga was established on the west side of the Hudson and Rensselaer on the east.

In the summer of 1690 Major Philipp Schuyler - the mayor of Albany - in command of a body of Dutch troops, which formed the advance guard of the first great northern invasion against the French at Crown Point, camped at Saratoga (Schuylerville). There, he built a fort on the west bank of the Hudson below Fish Creek which he called "Fort Saratoga." This was the first application of this old historic name by white men. In 1684, six years before the fort was built, Cornelis van Dyk, Jan Jansen Bleeker, Peter Philippsen Schuyler and Johannes Wendel had acquired the right to lands in the vicinity of Schuylerville from the Mohawk nation. In the shadow of the new fort, under the protection of its guns, grew up the first village of Saratoga and it was here that the Schuylers built their three mansion homes.

The fate of the tiny town of Saratoga lay in the hands of the warring empires of France and England. From 1690 to 1745 the town served as a buffer against French and Indians from Canada for the protection of Albany. Past its walls slipped the numerous war bands of both. Suddenly, on the night of the 28th of November, 1745, a war party of French and Indians fell upon the town and pioneer Saratoga ceased to exist. The fort and every building including the first Schuyler house, were burned to the ground; every inhabitant, save one who escaped to tell the tale, was either killed or carried away a captive.

At the time of the burning, which marks the close of the pioneer history of Saratoga, the hamlet of Old Saratoga had a population of about 125 people. It was situated on the west side of the Hudson and was largely located on the south side of Fish Creek. The settlement contained about thirty houses, with barns and out-buildings, two or three mills and a large wooden fort. For a mile or more up and down the west bank of the river, above and below the fort stretched broad cleared fields, through which ran a single street north and south on which faced most of the dwellings.

FROM: THE SARATOGIAN, Saratoga Springs, New York

FORWARDED BY: Saratoga National Historical Park, Stillwater, N. Y.

*Saratoga*     *h*     *R*

## EARLY HISTORY OF SARATOGA COUNTY

This is the first of a series of articles which will present, in brief form, some of the highlights from the early history of Saratoga county and Schuylerville to the Revolutionary war period by Charles W. Snell, historian of the Saratoga National Historical Park.

### Indian Occupancy

The region comprising what is now called the county of Saratoga was mostly covered in olden times by the hunting-ground called Kay-ad-er-ros-se-ra. This hunting ground was of large extent, covering a part of the southern and all of the central and northern parts of Saratoga county, as well as parts of the adjoining counties on the north and west, and containing more than a million acres. It lay wholly within the "line of property" of the Mohawk nation, and was their favorite hunting-ground.

Its situation was unrivalled. Its fertile soil was covered with densely wooded primeval forests. The woods swarmed with wild beasts and birds of all types and its waters teemed with fish.

The old Indian hunting-ground of Sa-ragh-to-ga was of much lessextent than Kay-ad-er-res-se-ra. It lay along the banks of the Hudson River, on both sides of the river. It was about twelve miles in length and ran back from the river into the forests only about six miles on either side. That part of it which lay on the west side of the Hudson, in SaraToga county, extended no farther west than within a mile of Saratoga Lake. On the north it reached up as far as a point opposite the Batten Kill, whose Indian name was Di-on-on-de-ho-wa, thus including what is now the village of Schuylerville. On the south it reached as far as the mouth of the Anthony's Kill, thus including a part of what is now the city of Mechanicville.

It will be seen by the above descriptions that the Saratoga of 1600 did not include within its boundaries any of the mineral springs now bearing its name, for at that time they were far within the forest depths of the adjoining hunting-grounds, Kayaderrossera. It did include, however, the old historic Saratoga of colonial days (now called Schuylerville), and it finally gave its name to the county as well as to the famous mineral springs, while Kayaderrossera is no longer of territorial significance.

Strange as it may seem, the exact meaning of the word "Saratoga" appears to have been lost. While it is the concensus of opinion that the name originated from the Indian expression Sa-ragh-to-ga, several interpretations have been made on the original meaning. It has been variously described as follows: "the hillside country," "the place of swift water," "a place where the track of the heel may be seen" and again as "the place of good hunting." All of these definitions sound applicable but regardless of which is correct the name was apparently long associated with the vicinity by the Indians.

In the two hunting-grounds of Kayaderrossera and Saratoga the Mohawks and their near sister tribes of the Iroquois - the Oneidas and Onondagas, sometimes the farther off Cayugas and Senecas - built their hunting lodges every summer wround the mineral springs, to which the wild animals were attracted in immense numbers by the saline properties of the waters. They encamped also on the banks of the lake and streams in search of fish. The shad ran up the east side of the Hudson and lay in vast schools in the falls and rapids above and below Fort Edward. The herring ran up the west side of the river and up Fish Creek (giving rise to its name) into Lake Saratoga. Sturgeonwere to be found at the sprouts of the Mohawk river and there summed themselves in the broad basin below Cohoes Falls. Thus it can be seen that Wild Indian Kayaderrossera and Saratoga were as famous to the red man as modern Saratoga is to the white man.

FROM: THE SCHUYLERVILLE STANDARD, Schuylerville, N. Y., Thursday, March 3, 1949.

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