

# SONS OF LIBERTY

**THE BIRTH OF  
THE UNITED STATES**

**JOEL PRATT  
MINUTEMAN**

REWRITTEN 2010



BY **DEAN LADD**, GREAT-GREAT-GREAT GRANDSON

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# DEDICATION

This is dedicated to the memory of my grandmother, Ellen "Nell" (Pratt) Elsom. She probably heard much from her father about her great grandfather Joel Pratt in the Revolutionary War. She was also a crusader until old age slowed her down.



Nellie Pratt is held in the arms of her father Silas Pratt, grandson of Joel Pratt.  
Picture is taken 1872, only 28 years after Joel's death



Nell and Thomas Elsom at their 60<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary

# INTRODUCTION

This is the story of Joel Pratt in the Revolutionary War that British call the American War of Independence. He was the great-great-great grandfather of the author and served a total of nine years in and out of military service during that conflict. The information starting point is a memorial sermon delivered at his funeral service in Sterling, MA on November 17, 1844 and this manuscript fleshes out details with a military emphasis, using *In Defense of the Public Liberty* by Samuel B. Griffith II, B Gen, USMC, Ret. Illustrations are from various history books.

When we look back to those days we see Washington crossing the Delaware River on a cold winter night or kneeling in prayer in the snow of Valley Forge. We see the minute-man or the lanky Virginia rifleman, picturesque in fringed buckskin, but somehow it all seems to be in a pageant and neither Washington nor the men who followed him meaningfully come alive for us. In reality the American Revolution was a hard, wearing, bloody and tragic business--a struggle to the death that we came very close to losing.

It was a struggle, furthermore, that was fought by people like us--often confused, often divided in sentiment and discouraged about the possible outcome. Like today, probably less than ten percent became actively involved. Those that did were willing to fight and die for what they believed in to make the dream of independence and freedom come true.

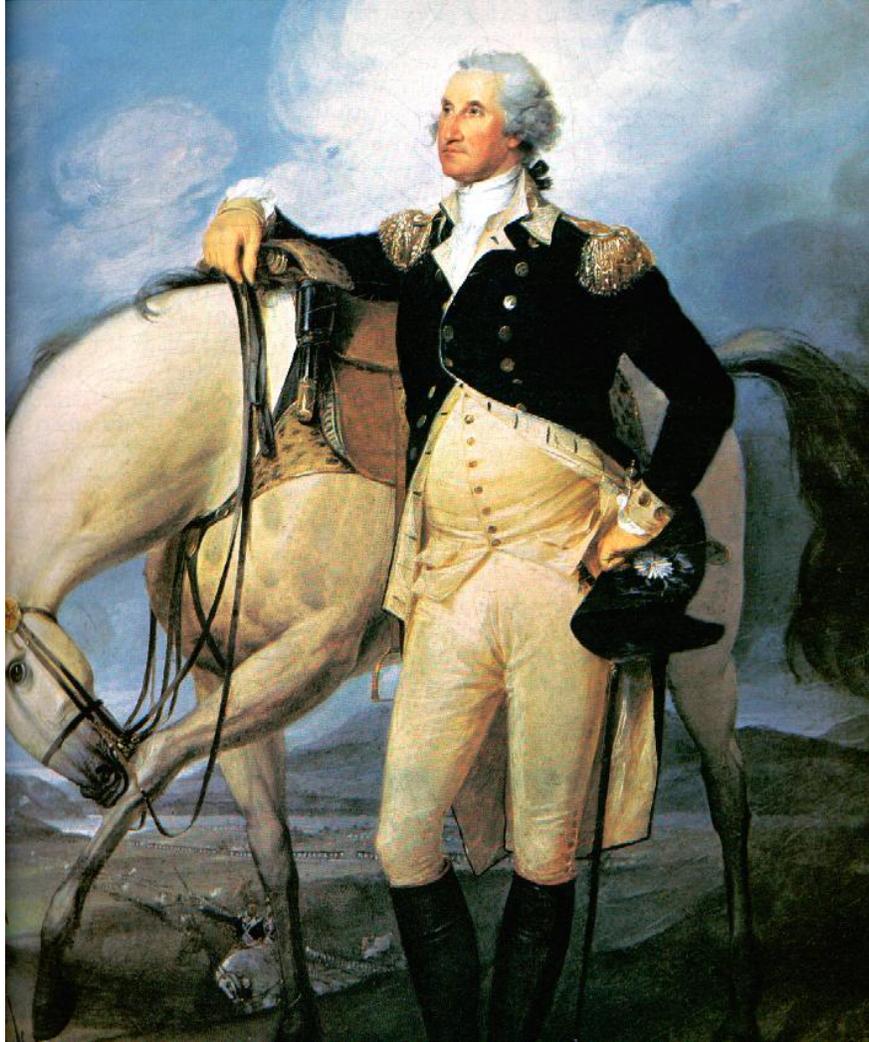
Like most other young people, I didn't appreciate these sacrifices though, because I wasn't motivated by the way history was taught. It was just another course to remember briefly and to earn an acceptable grade. After completing this research, I can better understand my own learning short-coming and why our society's attitudes have evolved to a more cynical perspective about our country's heritage.

The events, leading up to and during the Revolutionary War, are considered too complex for some armchair historians and textbook writers to present in an interesting manner. Besides, schools have less time in their newly expanded curriculum due to the addition of other social studies. College history texts tend to water-down the military aspects and instead emphasize social considerations.

For instance, some comment that we should look more into both sides of the conflict issues and understand that there were many loyalists to the mother country while only a relatively few put their lives on the line. They infer that we shouldn't glorify our victorious patriot ancestors, since they were really no better than those presently living--after all, revolutionaries who have died for forgotten causes are soon forgotten. The tendency is to describe the "Sons of Liberty" more as uncompromising radical hotheads with little reference to the strong faith that sustained them.

In reality, the colonists probably could not have won though if France had not joined in the conflict on the side of the Americans in the wake of the British surrender at Saratoga October 17, 1777. The Americans were hard men to beat, although they knew little about European methods of warfare and were inadequately equipped, fed and clothed. Because of their efforts our nation was born.

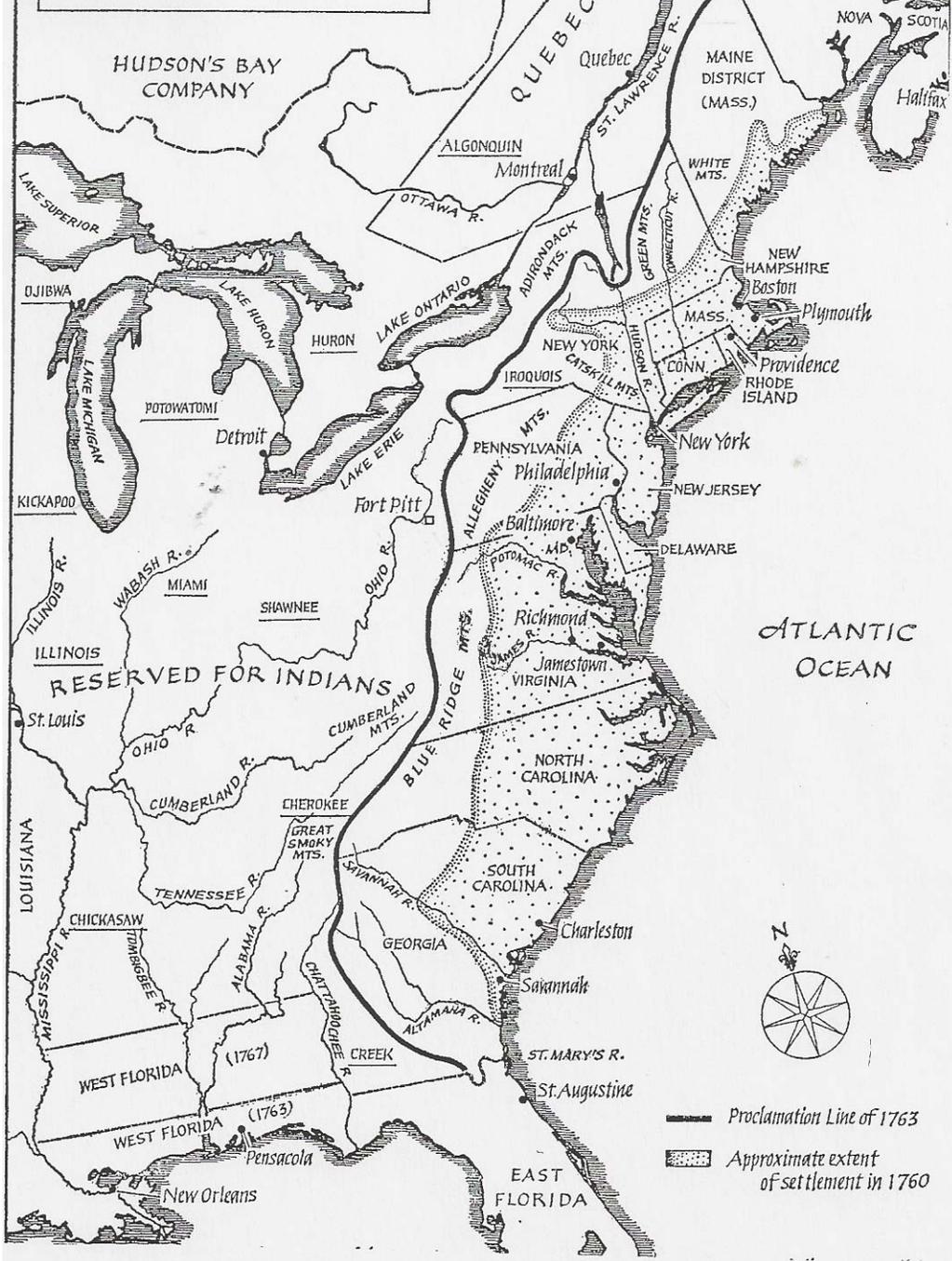
Hopefully this story will breathe life into the legend of those men who endured those trying times. Let's imagine ourselves back in those days walking through history in the footsteps of Joel Pratt, one of those typical, very dedicated patriots. What an exciting journey back in time!



“.....Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports.  
...Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on the minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.”

President George Washington's Farewell Speech on September 19, 1796

British  
NORTH AMERICA  
after the  
SEVEN YEARS' WAR



— Proclamation Line of 1763  
 [Stippled Area] Approximate extent of settlement in 1760

# CHRONOLOGY

- 1774**  
Fall Joel Pratt joined minute-men at Northborough, Mass.
- 1775**  
April 19 Battle of Lexington-Concord. Pratt joins the siege line in Cambridge.  
May 16 Americans under Benedict Arnold capture St. John, Canada.  
May 25 British Generals Howe, Clinton, and Burgoyne arrive at Boston with more troops.  
June 15 George Washington elected by Congress as Commander-in-chief.  
June 16-17 Battle of Breed's Hill and burning of Charlestown.  
July 3 Washington takes command.  
Aug 23 King issues proclamation for suppressing rebellion in the colonies.  
Nov. 13 Americans under Montgomery capture Montreal.
- 1776**  
Jan 1 Washington unfurls first Union flag of thirteen stripes at Cambridge.  
March 17 British Gen Howe evacuates Boston.  
June Pratt's unit went to New York.  
July 2 Pratt reenlisted as a corporal for another six months.  
July 4 Declaration of Independence adopted by Congress.  
Aug. 29-30 Americans withdraw from Long Island to New York City.  
Sept. 14 Americans evacuate New York City.  
Sept. 22 Nathan Hale executed by British as a spy.  
Oct. 28 Battle of White Plains, N.Y., inconclusive.  
Dec. 8 Washington crosses the Delaware River into Pennsylvania.
- 1777**  
Jan 1 Pratt reenlisted for the war's duration, starting as Ensign.  
Washington's first winter encampment at Morristown, N.J.  
June 14 Stars and Stripes adopted by Congress.  
July 31 Lafayette volunteers and is commissioned a major general.  
Sept. 11 Battle of Brandywine, Washington defeated.  
Sept. 27 British occupy Philadelphia.  
Oct. 7-17 Battle of Bemis Heights, ends in Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga.  
Dec. 4 Howe leaves Philadelphia with 14,000 men to threaten Washington.  
Dec. 18 Washington entered winter encampment at Valley Forge. Pratt got pneumonia and recovered at private home.
- 1778**  
Feb. 6 France signs a treaty of alliance and commerce with the Colonies.  
Feb... Baron von Steuben joins Washington at Valley Forge.  
May Pratt rejoined his unit at Valley Forge.  
June 18 British evacuate Philadelphia and retire into New Jersey.  
June 28 Battle of Monmouth Court House, N.J., British retreat to Sandy Hook.  
July 9 Articles of Confederation signed by eight states.  
Sept. 17 Pratt marched to Providence, Rhode Island.
- 1779**  
Jan... Pratt brought back deserters from Danbury, Connecticut.  
April 2 Pratt promoted to lieutenant in 15th Mass. Regiment.  
Late Spring Pratt's unit deployed in the highlands along the Hudson River and remained there to the end of the war.

- Aug. 14** Congress agrees to a basis of terms for a peace with Britain.
- 1780**
- Feb...** Pratt's unit manned the North redoubt.
- Rest of year** Pratt was in an inactive area where Benedict Arnold became a traitor.
- July 10** French army of 6,000 arrives at Newport, R.I.
- Sept. 24** Arnold escapes to British ship.
- Sept. 29** Arnold's accomplice, Andre, convicted as British spy. Hung on Oct. 2.
- Winter** Pratt commanded the security guard at Washington's Morristown encampment headquarters three times for two weeks each. Ate at same table with George and Martha Washington.
- 1781**
- Jan. 1** Pennsylvania troops break camp at Morristown, demanding back pay.
- Jan. 5-6** Benedict Arnold plunders Richmond, Va.
- March 1** Final ratification of Articles of Confederation by Congress.
- Aug. 25** Combined armies of Americans and French start for Yorktown, Va.
- Oct. 19** Cornwallis surrenders at Yorktown.
- Dec. 13** Day of public thanksgiving and prayer held throughout the country.
- 1782**
- Jan.1** Pratt acting as Paymaster at West Point.
- Nov. 20** Preliminary articles of peace signed.
- 1783**
- Feb. 14** Pratt returns to line duty.
- April 11** Congress proclaims a cessation of hostilities.
- Sept. 3** Definitive peace treaty signed. Pratt returned home after nine years service for his country.
- Nov. 2** Washington issues his "Farewell Address to the Army" and the army is disbanded the next day. A small force remains at West Point.
- 1784**
- Jan. 14** Congress ratifies the peace treaty.

## CHAPTER 1

### SEEDS OF CONFLICT

This is an “imaginary discussion in the period 1844” with Joel Pratt, Revolutionary War veteran, at his home in Sterling, MA shortly before he died at age 92. Picture him, surrounded by his military service memorabilia, including his certificates of promotions, maps, flags and charter membership in the Society of the Cincinnati for officers who served.

(Dean) Hello Joel, I am your great-great-great grandson, living in the northwestern region of our country where Lewis and Clark explored a few years after you served in the Continental army during the Revolutionary War.

I am also a war veteran and am writing about your perspective of combat in your day. I have done considerable research about the birth-pangs of our country and have visited some of the battle sites where you fought.

(Joel) Hello Dean, how interesting to meet a distant descendant and what a worthy project! I would be glad to tell you about my life.

I was born on a farm in Oxford, Massachusetts February 2, 1752, eight years before the reign of King George III of England. My father, David Pratt III, died before I was a year old so I lived for a short time with my grandmother, Brewer.

Before reaching the age of eight, I had lived with three different families in Farmington. Afterward, I lived with Captain Jessie Bingham from age ten to twenty-one, involving an indenture agreement from age 14, whereby I was to work for my keep and be able to attend school. Instead I endured ill treatment during that contract and wasn't permitted to attend school more than one month out of a year.

At age 21, I worked as a farm laborer for a year and then worked, learning the clothier's trade, for Abraham Wood in Northborough, Massachusetts. He was an accomplished musician and influenced me to develop such an interest. In the fall of 1774, before war broke out, I joined a company of fifty-nine in the Massachusetts militia, known as Minutemen, under the command of Capt Samuel Wood at Northborough. I ended up serving a total of nine years in and out of the Continental Army until the war ended and I returned home September 3, 1783.

(Dean) I have been to the Historical Museum of Northborough and found your entire service record included in a compilation of Massachusetts Soldiers and Sailors of the Revolutionary War. I also stood nearby on the exact place where you Minutemen assembled in front of Capt Wood's home to chase the British redcoats back to Lexington at the beginning of the war. We will discuss this later on.

Leading up to the war, the American colonists had become increasingly unhappy with the way the mother country was taxing and imposing galling controls on them. England had been preoccupied with its European wars until

King George III came to power in 1760. His ego demanded total submission to the throne and he had been waiting for the opportunity to quell the independent spirit of America. Now, with the conclusion of a peace treaty after the French and Indian War, British garrison troops still remained and were increasingly opposed by the Americans.

(Joel) Worse yet, the colonies had to pay a staggering sum to support these troops by the imposition of various acts and duties. First, came the *Molasses Act*, which allowed the Colonies to buy molasses for the making of sugar and rum only from British interests in the West Indies. Then, the old *Navigation Acts* were strictly enforced by corrupt Customs Commissioners collecting duties.

New tariffs were imposed, like the *Stamp Act* of 1765 whereby every legal document required the stamp of the British government. Even more infuriating were the *Townshend Acts* of 1767, which imposed duties on such items as glass, tea, paper, etc. It now became clear that the purpose of raising revenue went far beyond the cost of garrison troops. The mood in America got increasingly ugly, to the point that two additional regiments of British troops were sent to Boston in 1768.

A year later, tensions were relieved somewhat when the *Townshend Acts* were repealed, except for the one on tea. Two years afterward though, the East India Tea Company was excluded from these duties because of the company's impending bankruptcy.

(Dean) Then there was a tea party!

(Joel) This threatened the end of many American tea companies and precipitated the *Boston Tea Party*. When the Party culprits could not be found, the King decided to punish the entire city of Boston by closing her port to all commerce in 1773.

What was meant as a warning to all Colonies soon backfired. American sentiment quickly became nearly unanimous in support of resistance. Activist leader, Sam Adams, encouraged the effective *Committees of Correspondence* to keep all Colonies abreast of resistance developments. They had been disjointed and compartmentalized to the detriment of any concerted action. A political cartoon reflected this situation, showing a snake in thirteen sections with the caption, "Don't tread on me."

(Dean) These developments stirred-up the other colonies like an ants nest!

(Joel) The British punishment of Boston outraged the other Colonies into sending aid. South Carolina shipped rice. Connecticut sent sheep. Delaware, Maryland and Virginia joined in the contributions. George Washington and others personally sent money.

The *Massachusetts Congress* addressed their inhabitants, "Resistance to tyranny becomes the Christian and social duty of each individual...continue steadfast and with a proper sense of your dependence on God, nobly defend

those rights which heaven gave and no man ought to take from us."

Finally the colonies convened a general congress in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. During the next month there was much political activity as delegates were chosen. Many mounted well wishers drove by the Common where Gen Thomas Gage's Redcoat regiments were encamped. It must have been tempting for him to arrest them but he didn't.

(Dean) Sam Adams and others stirred the pot!

(Joel) Sam Adams was escorted to the most genteel restaurant in America to refresh himself. The following day he was introduced as The Sam Adams of Philadelphia, "the life and the causal of liberty."

Richard Henry Lee, of the Virginia delegation, urged repeal of all revenue laws, the four *Intolerable Acts* and the *Quebec Act*. Everyone was in high spirits--with the eyes of the millions upon them, they considered themselves and their posterity dependent on their conduct.

Philadelphia was festive, with bells ringing all day Saturday to welcome those riding in from all of the Colonies. That night the city served an elegant supper. The following morning the delegates assembled at Smith's Tavern and walked to Carpenter's Hall where they quickly got down to business. Adams proposed that a local Anglican priest, Jacob Duche, open the session with a prayer. The priest referenced Psalms 35:

"Plead thou my cause, oh Lord, with them that strive with me; and fight thou against them that fight against me.

Lay hand upon the shield and buckler; and stand up to help me.

Bring forth against the spear and stop the way against them that persecute me; say unto my soul, I am thy Salvation."

(Dean) What a gathering that was!

(Joel) After a week the delegates were beginning to assess one another and the inevitable polarization of radicals and moderates started taking shape. John Adams wrote to his wife, "There is in the Congress a collection of the greatest men upon this continent in point of ability, virtues and fortunes." Washington was described as standing over six feet with a very young look and an easy soldier-like air and gesture. He spoke very modestly and with a cool but determined style and accent. Patrick Henry spoke inspiringly with a musical voice and style.

Much of the business was accomplished out of doors before and during dinner. Even the moderates agreed that some of Gage's activities were unnecessarily provocative. So they addressed a letter to the General, charging him with attempting to precipitate armed conflict by fortifying the town of Boston and allowing his troops to inflict indignities upon the peace-loving citizens.

(Dean) So what was the outcome of all this activity?

(Joel) On October 14, Congress approved, by unanimous vote, a document entitled *Declarations and Resolves*. This set forth the "Rights" of the inhabitants of the Colonies which are derived from the "immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English Constitution and the several charters and compacts." These included:

- 1) The right to dispose of their own lives, liberty and property.
- 2) Enjoyment of all the freedom and immunities of natural-born Englishmen.
- 3) The right to participate in their own legislative counsels.
- 4) The right of trial by jury and their peers.
- 5) The right to peaceably assemble to consider their grievances and to petition the king. The Congress also resolved that the keeping of a standing army in these Colonies in times of peace without the consent of the legislature concerned was illegal.

Effective the first day of December, there was to be no importation from Great Britain of any goods whatsoever. The *Sons of Liberty* on October 15, who planned and directed mob violence, became impatient upon discovering that the Brig, *Peggy Stewart*, had arrived in Annapolis with a load of tea. They ordered the ship's owners to run her aground and burn her to the water's edge.

(Dean) The British decided that their handling of the colonies had to change.

(Joel) Gen Gage in mid-September reported that, "I have done all that I can do to get government on a firm footing and enforce the laws, but the arrival of the late Acts upset the whole and the flame burst out in all parts at once beyond the conception of every Body. The disease is so universal there is no knowing where to apply a remedy."

He now attempted to build barracks for his troops but there was little progress. Gangs were "burning the straw and sinking the boats with bricks." They were "overturning the wood carts."

He kept his troops in hand but many more were needed. On chilly October nights most British troops were still in tents on the common. Boston was now swarming with Redcoats. The more radical citizens did all they could to annoy, insult and harass the troops short of actually attacking them. Gage's younger officers called for action.

By November the entire province was up in arms. Most men from age 16 to 60 were armed and obliged to train at stated times. In the middle and southern colonies men were likewise arming--militia units were forming, and powder and ball ammunition was being collected and hidden.

(Dean) I understand that one gentleman in Philadelphia sent a Christmas message to his London friend: "There cannot be a greater error than to suppose that the present commotions in America are owing to the acts of demigods. It is no purpose to attempt to destroy the opposition by taking off our Hancocks, Adams and Dickinsons. 10,000 patriots of the same stamp stand ready to fill their place."

**(Joel) Gage was now convinced his Redcoats were going to have to fight and issued orders for intensive training and patrolling. The soldiers had target practice by firing from dockside at floating, silhouettes cut from thin boards. Detachments marched regularly into the surrounding countryside. Gage felt that orders would soon come from London to teach the rebellious Americans a lesson they would not forget. He would "scourge them with rods of iron."**

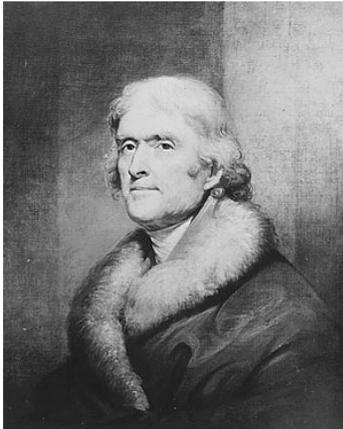
**(Dean) Edmund Burke, on March 22, 1775 in London, rose in the Commons to deliver his celebrated speech on conciliation. He believed there remained a chance that a reasoned review of the situation could bring about an accommodation. Otherwise the Colonies would be incurably alienated. As the stronger party, Britain should take the initiative, she could offer concessions with no impairment of her honor and such measures she took to conciliate her colonies must be inevitable to her great financial advantage. Here he was touching the key. Trade was Britain's lifeblood. Her growing commerce with the American colonies was the envy of the world. He closed his three hour speech with an urgent appeal, "Magnanimity in politics is the truest wisdom and a great empire and little minds go ill together." He called on his colleagues to, "elevate your minds to the greatest of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us" and urged the House to, "lay the first stone of the Temple of Peace."**

**(Joel) By coincidence on the following day, the Colonies were aroused to the ringing words of Patrick Henry, ".....An appeal to arms and to the God of Hosts is all that is left us! ...Three million people, armed in the holy cause of liberty are invincible...We shall not fight alone. God presides over the destiny of nations...The battle is not to the strong alone; it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave...Is life so dear, or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others will take but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!"**

**(Dean) In my life time, President Ronald Reagan expressed it this way:**

**"Freedom is a fragile thing, and it is never more than one generation away from extinction. It is not our inheritance. It must be fought for and defended constantly by each generation, for it comes only once to a people."**

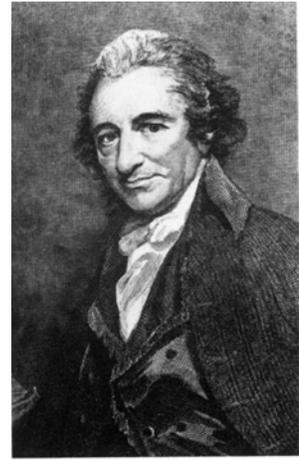
**LIBERTY ACITIVISTS**



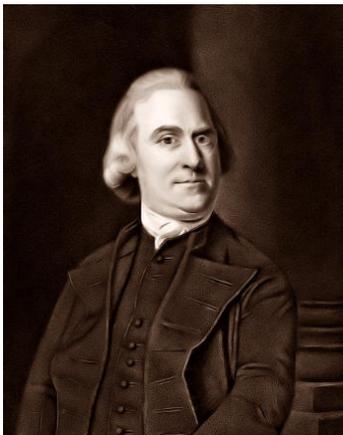
**Thomas Jefferson**



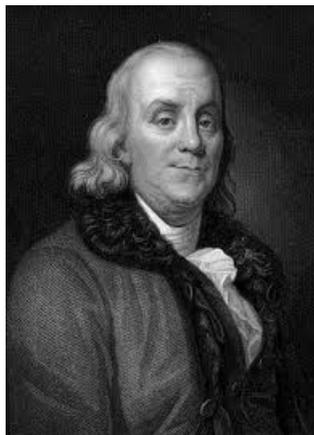
**John Adams**



**Thomas Paine**



**Samuel Adams**



**Benjamin Franklin**



**John Hancock**



**Abigail Adams**



## CHAPTER 2

### FIRST BLOOD AT LEXINGTON

(Dean) I mentioned earlier that I have stood on the exact place, looking at a plaque, explaining where you were assembled to chase the Redcoats back to Lexington.

(Joel) On April 10, 1775, the town voted to pay us minute-men one schilling for each half day we drilled. About noon on April 19th, we assembled in front of the Meeting House in Northborough to hear an address by Parson Whitney, the second minister of the town. While there, a messenger arrived from nearby Marlborough with the news about the British encounter at Lexington and Concord.

Our company was ordered to return to our homes and reassemble at Capt Samuel Wood's home, prepared to go to the battle area. Between 3:00 and 4:00 P.M., we re-gathered, received a benediction from Parson Whitney and marched on through Concord to Lexington.

By this time, the British troops were engaged in a rear-guard battle retreat in the eastern part of Lexington. By the time we arrived, the redcoats had retreated to Boston so we joined the siege line in Cambridge. My company remained there and participated in the Battle of Breed's (Bunker) Hill two months later but I became very sick with a cold and missed that action.

Before we heard about the British encounter, Paul Revere and William Dawes had responded to lantern signals from the tower of the Old North Church that the British were coming by sea and they had ridden to sound the alert.

British Gen Gage had landed a force of over 700 soldiers and marines to capture American cannon and powder that they suspected were stored at Concord. They also wanted to apprehend the two most wanted Americans, John Hancock and Samuel Adams.

At the Lexington village green the redcoats encountered 77 determined American militiamen standing in ragged ranks. They were tired from being routed out of bed about midnight. Their commander, Capt John Parker ordered, "Stand your ground... don't fire unless fired upon... if they want to have a war, let it begin here."

His cousin, Jonas Parker, accordingly took his position. He then removed his tri-cornered hat and placed it on the ground to fill it with musket balls and flints. He was resolved to not run from the enemy. On Jonas's left, Isaac Muzzy filled his powder horn from an open keg being passed down the line. On his right Jonathan Harrington was conscious of his young wife watching from their nearby house.

Before the advance guard of British light infantry reached Lexington, the alarm had been well spread by church bells, drums, bonfires and musket shots. The British arrived in Lexington at daybreak--tired, thirsty and hungry after landing and wading across tidal creeks.

Then the minutemen yelled, "Here they come" as the British approached on the

double. The British commander, Marine Maj Pitcairn (later killed at the Battle of Bunker Hill), rode toward the Americans and called out, "Disperse ye rebels. Lay down your arms and disperse." The Americans quickly realized that they were greatly outnumbered (three to one) so Parker quickly started to disperse his men. He knew from his experience in the French and Indian Wars that there would be unnecessary loss of life against such overwhelming odds. So (rather than make a stand here as according to legend) they moved toward a stone wall on the right flank of the British column to head-off their advance to Concord.

Without command, the frustrated British troops broke ranks to chase the minutemen. Pitcairn, realizing that he was losing control, spurred his horse forward, yelling, "Soldiers don't fire, keep your ranks; form and surround them. Then he called to the Americans, "Throw down your arms and you will come to no harm." In the confusion though, some pistol shots rang out and a junior officer, leading the charge, yelled, "Fire, fire, damn you, fire!" While waving his sword and pointing it at the Americans, a volley of fire erupted, but no one was hit.

The British then reformed into even lines and reloaded. An officer again yelled to the Americans to lay down their arms but some responded by shooting back. This prompted the British to fire a second well-aimed volley.

Jonas Parker fell wounded but still attempted to reload before being bayoneted. Isaac Muzzey was killed. Jonathan Harrington was hit in the chest but stumbled and crawled to his house where he died at the feet of his horrified wife. Some of the Americans, who had jumped over the fence, continued to fire at their pursuers.

The British then started marching toward Concord to the beat of fifes and drums. This confrontation had lasted less than fifteen minutes but it was the beginning of an eight-year nightmare as the Americans would fight for their liberty.

Paul Revere and other express riders aroused all towns, within three hours march, that they should send men to join the fight. Farmers for miles around immediately stopped their chores, grabbed their muskets, powder horns, and filled their pockets with musket balls as they hurried to their assembly points.

As the British neared Concord, they seized two bridges without resistance while they searched for and destroyed several cannon, some ammunition and a few barrels of flour. Then, as they resumed their withdrawal, shots were exchanged at North Bridge. Both sides suffered a few casualties.

The British withdrawal then rapidly became a near rout as they encountered close-range fire Indian-fashion from Americans, hidden behind boulders, trees and stone fences lining the road. Shortly after three o'clock in the afternoon, British reinforcements, with two cannon, helped cover their remaining retreat to Boston.

The British had suffered 273 casualties and the Americans 93 in this historic first bloodletting of the long struggle for American freedom. Undisciplined American farmers had demonstrated that they could resist the best military force in the world. British bayonets wouldn't have much effect against individual skirmishers who lay on their stomachs or knelt to fire through chinks in stone

walls.

(Dean) I have read that Pitcairn had previously written a letter that was forwarded to the King saying, "I am satisfied that one active campaign, a smart action, and burning two or three of their towns, will set everything to rights." King George responded, "Once those rebels have felt a smart blow they will submit and no situation can ever change my fixed resolution, either to bring the colonies to a due obedience to the legislature of the mother country or to cast them off."

At the Northborough museum, I found your name in the following listing of minute-men from Northborough in *Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution* who responded to that first encounter with the British. There was also a poem about your company's response, written by Wallace Rice of Chicago. He was the descendant of one of the Rices who were in your company:

Samuel Wood, Capt	Abraham Wood, Clerk (brother of Capt Wood)
Timothy Brigham, 1st Lt	Seth Rice, 2nd Lt
Thomas Seaver, Ensign	Oliver Barnes, Cpl
Jethro Peters, Sgt	Levi Gaschet, Cpl
Amos Rice, Sgt	Joseph Sever, Drummer
Asa Rice, Sgt	Ebenezer Hudson, Fifer
Joseph Allen	John Kelley
Reuben Babcock	William Kelley
John Ball	Thomas Kenney
Ezekial Bartlett	Abner Maynard
Zadock Bartlett	Hollon Maynard
Atemus Bringham	Levi Maynard
Abner Bruce	Alvin Newton
Jonathan Bruce	Paul Newton, Jr.
Joseph Eager	Joel Pratt
William Fay	Joseph Rice
Henery Gaschet	Josiah Rice, Jr.
Josiah Goddard	Luther Rice
Joseph Gold	Nathaniel Rugg
Asa Goodnow	John Tenney
Nathan Green	Eliab Wheelock
Isaac Howe	Benjamin Wilson
Alijah Hudson	John Wyman
Edward Johnson	Samuel Wyman
Nathan Johnson	

**THE MINUTE-MEN OF NORTHBOROUGH**  
**April 19, 1775**

**Tis noonday by the buttonwood, with slender shadowed bud;  
Tis April by the Assabet, whose banks scarce hold his flood;  
When down the road from Marlboro' we hear a sound of speed-  
A cracking whip and clanking hoofs--a case crying need!  
And there a dusty rider hastes to tell of flowing blood.  
Of troops afield, of war abroad, and many a desperate deed.**

**The Minute-men of Northboro' were gathering that day  
To hear the parson talk of God and freedom and the State;  
They throng about the horseman, drinking in all he should say  
Beside the perfumed lilacs blooming by the parson's gate;  
The British march from Boston through the night to Lexington;  
Revere alarms the country to meet them ere the sun;  
Upon the Common, in the dawn, the redcoat butchers slay;  
On Concord march, and there again pursue their murderous way;  
We drive them back; we follow on; they have begun to run;  
All Middlesex and Worcester's up: Pray God, ours is the day!**

**The Minute-men of Northboro' let rust the standing plough,  
The seed may wait, the fertile ground up-smiling to the spring.  
They seize their guns and powder-horns; there is no halting now,  
At thought of homes made fatherless by order of the King.**

**The pewter-ware is melted into bullets--long past due,  
The flints are picked, the powder's dry, the rifles shine like new.  
Within their captain's yard en-ranked they hear the parson's prayer  
Unto the God of armies for the battle they must share;  
He asks that to their fathers and their altars they be true,  
For country and for liberty, unswervingly to dare.**

**The Minute-men of Northboro' set out with drum and fife;  
With shining eyes they've blessed their babies and bid their wives goodbye,  
The hands that here release the plough have taken up a strife  
That shall not end until all earth has heard the battle-cry.**

**At every town new streams of men join in the mighty flow;  
At every cross-road comes the message of a fleeing foe;  
The British force, though trebled, fails against the advancing tide,  
Our rifles speak from fence and tree--in front, on every side.  
The British fall; the Minute-men have mixed with bitterest woe  
Their late vain-glorious vaunting and their military pride.  
The Minute-men of Northboro' they boast no martial air;  
No uniforms gleam in the sun where on and on they plod;**

**But generation yet unborn their valor shall declare;  
They strike for Massachusetts Bay; they serve New England's God.**

**The hirelings who would make us slaves, themselves are backward furred.  
On Worcester and on Middlesex, their flags furred.  
Theirs was the glinting pomp of war, ours is the victor's prize;  
That day of burgeoning has seen a race of freemen rise;  
A nation born in fearlessness stands forth before the world,  
With God her shield, the right her sword, and freedom in her eyes.**

**The Minute-men of Northboro' sit down by Boston-town;  
They fight and bleed at Bunker Hill; they cheer for Washington.  
In thankfulness they speed their bolt against the British Crown;  
And take the plough again in peace, their warrior's duty done.**

**That same source of Revolutionary War records, published in 1904, also provides "muster roll" information about your service record as follows:**

***Joel Pratt*, Northborough. Private, Capt Samuel Wood's company of militia, Gen Ward's regiment, which marched on the alarm of April 19, 1775; service, 7 days; reported enlisted into the army;... order for advance pay ...dated Cambridge, June 13, 1775;... service, 3 mos. 13 days; company return, dated Dorchester, Oct. 7, 1775.**

***Pratt, Joel*. Enlistment agreement dated July 2, 1776, signed by said Pratt, Corporal, and others, engaging themselves to serve until Dec. 1, 1776, unless sooner discharged, each man to furnish his own firearm, etc., and to march with the utmost dispatch to New York;...Capt Jonathan Houghton's company., Col Smith's regiment.**

***Pratt, Joel*. Ensign and Lieutenant, Col Biglow's regt.; Continental Army pay accounts for service from Jan. 1, 1777 to Dec. 31, 1779; reported as serving 26 months as Ensign, 10 months as Lieutenant; Ensign, Capt. Daniel Barne's company, Col Timothy Bigelow's regiment; muster roll for Jan.-Aug., 1777, dated at Van Schaick's Island and sworn to at Camp near Stillwater; appointed Jan. 1, 1777; return of officers for clothing, dated at Boston, May 25, 1778;**

**...muster roll for March and April, 1779, dated at Providence; reported promoted to *Lieutenant* April 2, 1779;...muster roll for Aug., 1779, dated at Lower Salem;...15th Mass. Regiment, Continental Army pay accounts for service from Jan. 1, 1780 to Dec. 31, 1780;...Maj William H. Ballard's company.**

**...muster roll of field, staff and commissioned officers for Jan.-June, 1780, dated at Robinson's Farm;...Gen Glover's brigade; list of officers dated at Boston, Dec. 14, 1780;**

**...muster roll for Nov. and Dec., 1780, dated at Garrison, West Point; reported on furlough;...Capt James Cooper's company, Col William Shepard's regiment; muster roll for May, 1781, dated at West Point;...Cap. Lebbeus Drew's 6th company; muster rolls for June and July, 1781, dated at Phillipsburgh.**

**...muster rolls for Aug. and Sept. 1781, dated at Continental Village; reported on command at Jersey; returns of effectives, dated Oct. 12 and Oct. 19,**

1781;...muster rolls for Oct., 1781-Feb., 1782, dated at York Hutts; returns of effectives, dated Verplanck's Point, Sept. 13, Sept. 20 and Sept. 27, 1782.

Reported acting as *Paymaster* at *West Point* from Jan. 1, 1782 by order of Col Shepard; returns of effectives between Oct. 11, 1782 and Oct. 25, 1782, dated Verplanck's Point and West Point; returns of effectives, dated Nov. 15, Nov. 22 and Nov. 29, 1782.

Reported acting as Paymaster;...4th Mass. Regiment, commanded by Lt Col James Mellen; returns of effectives, dated Camp near New Windsor, dated Dec. 6, 1782; reported acting as Paymaster; Lt Col Henry Jackson's 4th regiment, Dec. 13, 1782.

Returns of effectives, dated Feb. 14 and Feb. 21, 1783; reported on duty at the lines; return of effectives, dated April 24, 1783;...list of 1st Mass. brigade (date not given) showing dates of appointments...

(Joel) You certainly went to the best place to get this information about my service record and those I first served with in that Minuteman company.

I have some background information about the British generals we encountered. The day after the retreat from Concord, Maj Gen William Howe, Maj Gen John Burgoyne and Maj Gen Henry Clinton, all members of the House of Commons, embarked for Boston on the frigate *Cerberus*. One colonial wit wrote about this:

Behold the *Cerberus*  
The ocean plough  
Her precious cargo  
Burgoyne, Clinton,  
Howe, Bow Bow Bow!

Howe was a competent and ambitious professional soldier who had served under Gen Wolfe at Quebec. As a Lt Col, he had led the small storming party who scaled the forbidding cliffs to the Plains of Abraham. He had later devised effective troop battle arrangements. Now he anticipated succeeding Gen Gage as commander in chief in America.

Clinton, recently widowed, was 37 years old. He had numerous aristocratic connections. His early record was distinguished, being cited for gallantry during the Seven Years War, but he had very little command experience. He described himself as a "shy bitch." He was inclined to conceal his natural diffidence by stubborn assertiveness, leading to personal clashes.

Burgoyne didn't want to go to America to an unassigned position. He saw no chance of getting the independent command that he so ardently desired. His wife was in poor health and didn't want to remain in Boston. The King was fond of him though and would use him for high-level informing. Burgoyne was later referred to as "Gentleman Johnny" for his mode of personal operation.

They arrived with a "Letter of Instruction" authorizing rewards for the apprehension of rebel leaders. Or they could promise a King's pardon to all who would surrender their arms and subscribe to an oath of allegiance to the crown. It also authorized the enlistment of two corps of Loyalists--one in Canada and

upper New York and the other in the hill country of the Carolinas, where there were many immigrant Highland Scots.

Meanwhile, Continental Congress was debating appropriate action. Adams urged Congress, "...Throw away the scabbard and call forth every energy and resource of the country."

(Dean) On June 16, 1775, George Washington accepted his appointment as Commander in Chief of all Colonial forces. He wrote Martha that he had tried to avoid it but decided, "It has been a kind of destiny that has thrown me upon this service....I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose."

(Joel) Two other important appointments were Charles Lee and Horatio Gates as major generals. Both had been British officers. Lee was considered by some to be a flamboyant soldier of fortune who was conceited, brash, devious and arrogant. He was however, an experienced officer with an impressive record. Gates was a good administrator and well suited by temperament. Other appointments were younger officers of promise; Nathaniel Greene and Richard Montgomery. These decisions were very timely--just before Breed's Hill, the first major battle of the war.

Washington assumed command on July 3, as the troops were preparing to defend Boston. His command, of mostly militiamen, was a very unprofessional military organization at this stage. Most officers and their men, who had elected them to be captains or lieutenants, had enrolled for a temporary emergency. None expected to serve more than three months. They didn't plan on being away from their homes and farm chores for long. Many went home for brief visits whenever they decided they were needed there.

Officers were reluctant to order their fellow villagers into dangerous assignments and depended on persuasion. The men had enrolled as individuals and demanded to be treated as such. The citizen considered himself only temporarily under arms so resented regimentation and discipline. The professional's home might be the army but the citizen soldier's was elsewhere.

Washington quickly refused to put up with this poor discipline and began issuing regularity General Orders. One announced that taking leave without authority, "....may depend upon being punished with the utmost severity." He forbade profane cursing and ordered attendance at divine services.

General courts martial cashiered three colonels and six subalterns from the Massachusetts militia. Washington remarked that, "... these men would fight very well if properly officered although they are an exceedingly dirty and nasty people. Had they been properly conducted at Bunker Hill... the Regulars would have met with a shameful defeat."

(Dean) During the summer of 1775, clergy played an important role in crystallizing opinion. Washington and other generals were well aware of the profound influence the clergy could exert on untutored militiamen. Congress suggested that Sunday, July 20, be observed as a day of fasting and solemn

devotion. The troops spent several hours listening to addressees as they did on other ceremonial occasions.

(Joel) The army was not exactly a rabble though. Many of those from Massachusetts and Connecticut had previous experience of camp life. All were familiar with the muskets they had carried to camp. From 1758 to 1760 almost 11,000 had served with the British Army in North America during the French and Indian War.

On the same day Washington was appointed, Congress secretly adopted the Massachusetts troops, as well as those guarding the Highlands of the Hudson. They authorized the immediate enlistment of ten companies of riflemen at a strength of 66 per company.

Two brigades of militia from Connecticut, totaling 6,000, joined shortly after Lexington-Concord with seven month enlistments. Each individual had to provide his own blanket, knapsack, clothing and musket. Each regiment of ten companies of 100 was assigned an adjutant, a quartermaster, a chaplain and a surgeon with two mates.

The militias were untutored in infantry drill--attempting to march in a column of fours to the cadence of a fifer and drummer while keeping dressed up and in alignment. They were even more ignorant about how to deploy into battle formation. By comparison, the British regulars were the best in the world. Washington quickly ordered that a standard manual be prepared for drill.

So the militia was a loose agglomeration of volunteer detachments from almost every town in the four New England colonies. An organized supply system was needed. Items were collected from the countryside in a haphazard manner. The men slept on straw under any shelter they could assemble. Blankets were scarce. Most men carried powder horns and some ball ammunition and flints in leather pouches. The only horses were those owned by the men. They had few cannon and practically no cannon balls.

Both officers and men were dressed as they had come, in rough farm clothes. Few had a second pair of shoes or stockings. Officer's rank was distinguished by various colored ribbons. Some field-grade officers wore red or pink cockades on their hats.

(Dean) The British on the other hand were a professional army, conforming to continental military tradition. Their officers were reasonably competent and the troops were well drilled, rigidly disciplined and well equipped.

Their officer corps came from influential families and they often bought their commissions. The attitude of junior officers was influenced by the inflexible battle tactics of the times, offering them little opportunity to display original initiative. There was little incentive for a young officer to improve himself.

Promotion in time of peace was rarely made on merit--rather it depended on birth, connection, money and influence. An officer could leave the army by selling his commission. This created an opening for the next senior officer below him, who customarily bought the promotion if he could raise the cash. It wasn't until many years later that a common promotion list was used to make selections

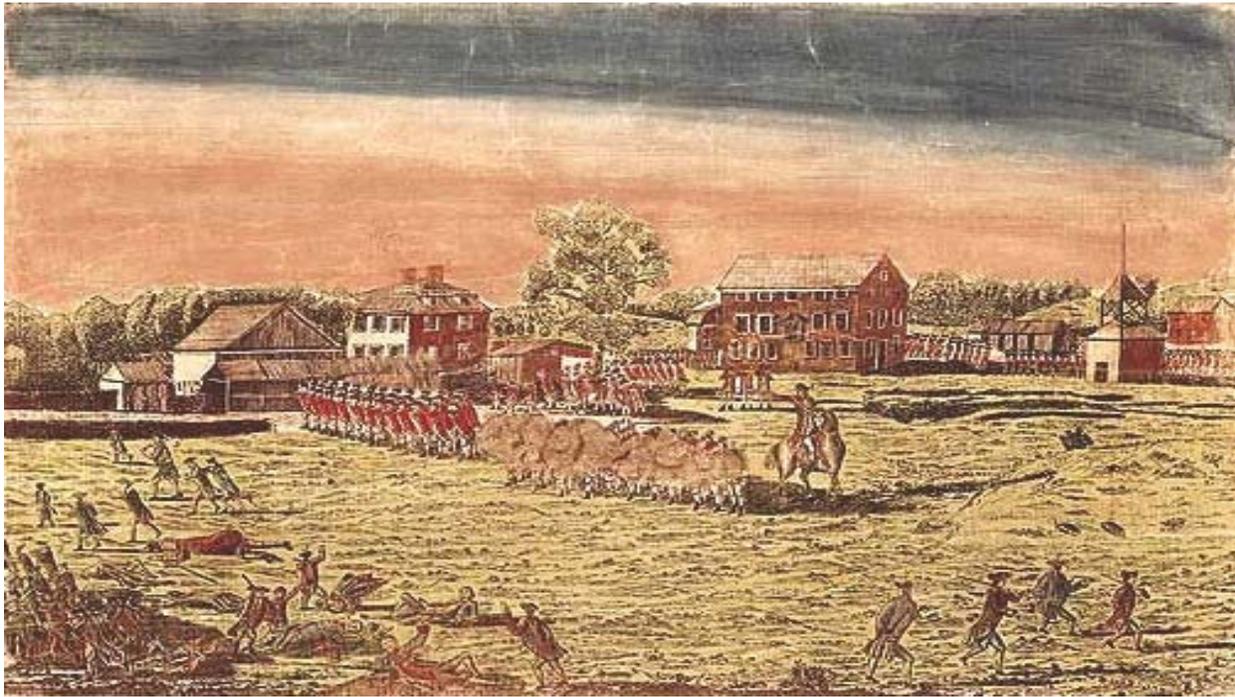
based on merit.

Practically all generals and admirals commissions could be revoked at the king's pleasure and could even be administered by an underpaid deputy on the spot. Many generals and admirals who also sat in the House of Commons had to especially toe the political line. Officers expected to live well in the field and did. Regimental baggage trains made generous allowances for their personal belongings.

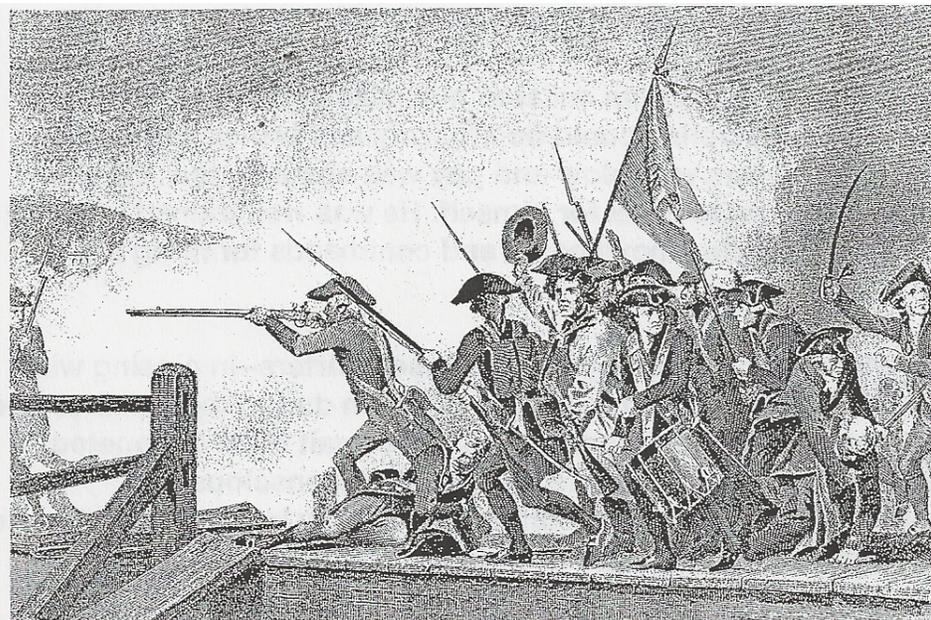
In comparison, the life of the British enlisted man was grim. Punishment for even minor infractions of discipline could be arbitrary and brutal, with lashes being common. Promotion was very slow and pay was absurdly low. He was thoroughly an automaton, not to think for himself. He was well trained in battle deployments, following complex movements and commands for firing his musket.

(Joel) He relied ultimately on the bayonet at close quarters--in closing with steel the British infantryman had no equal. The problem during their retreat from Lexington-Concord was that the Americans would not wait to be bayoneted.

Most of the enlisted men were illiterate, politically unconscious and unmotivated. They likely had no conception as to why they had been transported to a faraway place to kill people against whom they held no grudge.



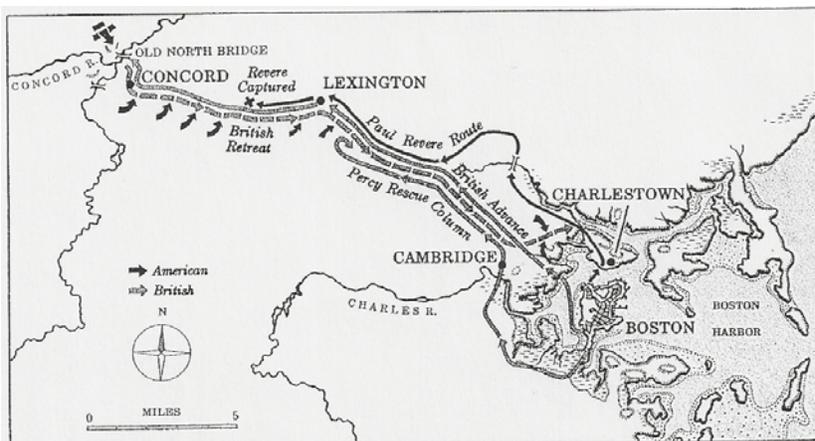
*At Lexington, outnumbered minutemen are shot down by the British. But on unawed colonial (lower left) shakes his fist at the redcoats*



**First ATTACK** by the Americans against a body of organized British troops is launched at old North Bridge near Concord. The minutemen, seeing smoke suspected the British of burning homes and acted to stop them. Only a few on each side were killed in this fight, but these were the shots "... heard round the world."

**FIRST MAJOR FIGHT  
CONCORD, APRIL 1775**

The road from peace to war was 32 miles long – from Boston to Concord and back. On April 19, 1775, Gage secretly dispatched some 600 men on this road. But Paul Revere was riding ahead, sounding the alarm. He reached Lexington and roused Sam Adams and John Hancock from their sleep. On the road to Concord a British patrol briefly held him prisoner, but a companion, Dr. Samuel Prescott, pushed through. At Lexington the British swept the minutemen aside, but from Concord home their road was lined by sharpshooting patriots (heavy arrows) and the war had begun.

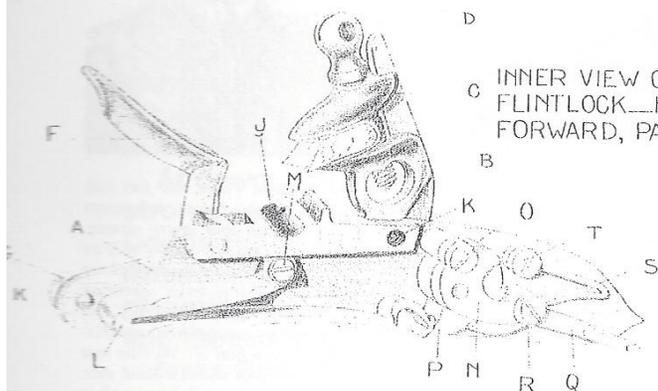
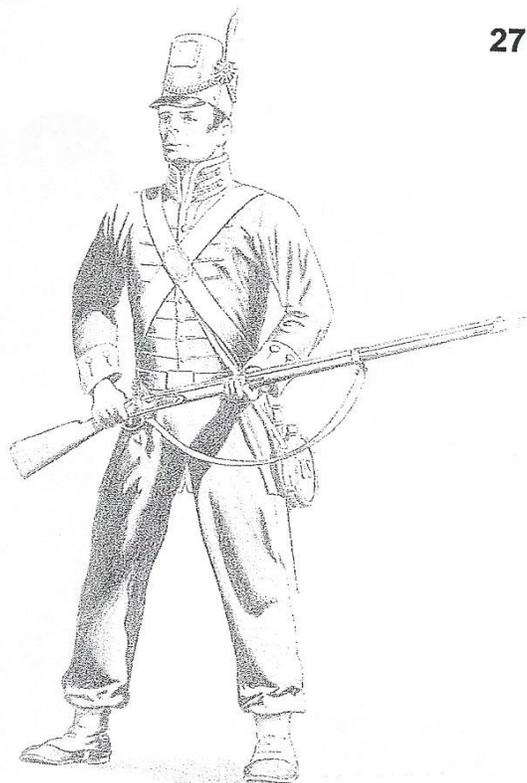




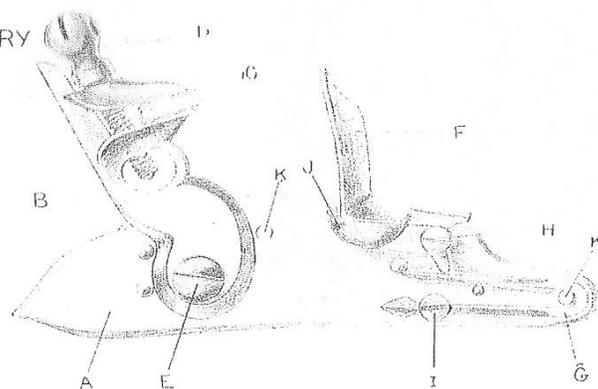
- CAMPAIGNS**
1. Breed's Hill
  2. Lexington/Concord
  3. White Plains
  4. Bemis Heights/Saratoga surrender
  5. Monmouth
  6. Highland Campaigns
  7. Yorktown

OPERATIONS OVERVIEW





D  
C INNER VIEW OF MILITARY FLINTLOCK—HAMMER FORWARD, PAN OPEN.



OUTSIDE VIEW OF U.S. MILITARY FLINTLOCK—HAMMER AT FULL COCK, PAN CLOSED.

- A\_\_LOCK PLATE
- B\_\_HAMMER
- C\_\_CAP
- D\_\_HAMMER SCREW
- E\_\_TUMBLER SCREW
- F\_\_FRIZZEN
- G\_\_FRIZZEN SPRING
- H\_\_FRIZZEN SCREW
- I\_\_FRIZZEN SPRING SCREW
- J\_\_PAN
- K\_\_SIDE SCREW HOLES
- L\_\_MAINSRING
- M\_\_MAINSRING SCREW
- N\_\_BRIDLE
- O\_\_BRIDLE SCREW
- P\_\_TUMBLER
- Q\_\_SEAR
- R\_\_SEAR SCREW
- S\_\_SEAR SPRING
- T\_\_SEAR SPRING SCREW

## British Leaders



Henry Clinton "had the faculty of . . . never working in harmony with his principal subordinate officer," Lord Cornwallis. Short and paunchy, extremely cautious, suspicious of those around him, and too timid to make fast decisions, he tried after the war to shift Cornwallis all blame in defeat.



General Cornwallis had opposed taxation, a courageous stand which forced him to withdraw from the House of Lords. But his loyalty was unquestioned by King George, who raised his rank and sent him off to fight in America, despite Lady Cornwallis' entreaties that he be kept at home



**Edmund Burke**



**Vice-Admiral Viscount Richard Howe**



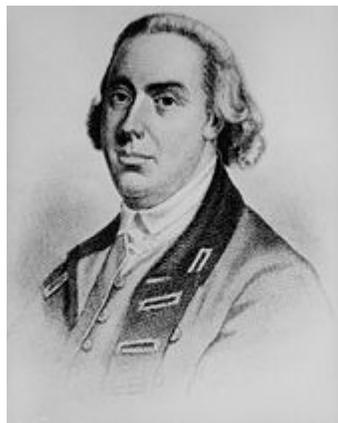
**King George III**



Sir William Howe, six feet tall, handsome and a great connoisseur of good food and pretty women, replaced Gage in the fall of 1775 as British commander-in chief. Howe won important victories, capturing New York and Philadelphia. But final victory escaped him, and suspicions grew that Sir William was more active in pleasure than war. When he resigned, disheartened, in 1778, all America mockingly sang:

Awake, arouse, Sir Billy,  
There's forage in the plain.  
Ah, leave your little Filly  
And open the campaign.  
Heed not a woman's prattle  
Which tickles in the ear,  
But give the word for battle  
And grasp the warlike spear

**Major General Sir Guy Carleton, K.B.**



**Lieutenant General Thomas Gage**

## CHAPTER 3

### BATTLE OF BREED'S HILL (BUNKER HILL)

(Dean) The *Massachusetts Committee of Safety* had decided to establish "a strong redoubt" on Bunker Hill to prevent the British from positioning cannon there that could interdict approaches to Charlestown and the mouth of the Mystic River. Boston was a city of less than 20,000. North of it, on a peninsula, lay the town of Charlestown with two hills--Bunker Hill and Breed's Hill. On June 15, they learned of Gage's plan to occupy these strategic heights. The next evening, American Col William Prescott assembled at Cambridge three under-strength regiments, part of another and one lone engineer (totaling 1200 militiamen) and a wagon load of shovels, picks, mattocks, and axes.

(Joel) My company, now with Gen Ward's regiment, also joined those forces at Cambridge, moving into position. Half of the regiment moved onto the hill but I had caught a severe cold and couldn't participate in the battle. Instead I was fortunate to receive sick leave and recuperate for three months at the home of my friend, Mr. Wood.

(Dean) One thousand Americans under the command of William Prescott quickly fortified their position in order for their cannon to bombard the British positions in Boston, but they had only eleven barrels of gunpowder.

Although they also planned to fortify Bunker Hill the first priority was changed to nearby Breed's Hill because it was closer artillery range to Boston. Work started around midnight--only four hours before daylight would expose the Americans to the British ships.

At dawn, one of the British warships in the Charles River spotted the American stronghold and opened fire, followed by several other ships and a gun battery on Cops Hill in Boston. The firing reached a climax about noon. Then the Americans saw what they most feared--over 2,000 redcoats with cannons, gleaming steel bayonets, and full field equipment were being loaded onto boats and moved into position, ready for attack. Gage's second-in-command, Quebec veteran Gen William Howe, led the expedition.

The weather was very hot. The Americans, who had marched and dug throughout the night, were tired, hungry and out of water. Meanwhile other American reinforcements, including the New Hampshire detachment, were also moving onto the peninsula. Unfortunately they were also short of gunpowder and carried only about fifteen bullets each--recently made out of the lead pipes in an organ in a Cambridge church.

The British landed easily on a rising tide shortly after 2 P.M. Their ships covered them with continuous shelling, setting Charlestown on fire. It was an imposing display--the sun shone brightly on the scarlet uniforms, the movement of landing boats, the flashes of fire and the belching of smoke.

Storming the hastily prepared American positions was another matter. Despite their superiority in numbers, weapons, training and leadership, the British faced the great handicap of attacking uphill. Each of the sweating infantryman carried heavy packs of equipment for a protracted field operation. The ground was rough and they had to climb over several rail fences and stone walls. They moved slowly forward in two brilliant scarlet lines to get into position for the final bayonet charge. Howe positioned himself in front on the right wing, calling to the men, "I do not expect any one of you to go any further than I am willing to go myself." Then he unsheathed his sword and started up the hill. Behind him, two lines of Redcoats, stretching all the way across the peninsula, began to advance up the open slope.

To conserve ammunition, the American officers and sergeants gave such commands as: "Fire low"; "Aim at the waist band"; "Shoot the officers"; "Wait until you see the whites of their eyes"; "Aim at the handsome coats; "Aim at the commanders".

As the British reached the point where the bayonet charge would begin, the blast of American musket fire shattered their lines, killing or wounding every man on Gen Howe's personal staff. The British fell back to reform.

Fifteen minutes after the failure of the first assault, the drums beat out the call to advance again. Back up the hill they marched, their eyes straight ahead as they stepped over their previous fallen. The Americans remained silent again, this time until the British approached within one hundred feet. Then they fired again, with a blast even more devastating than the first. They continued firing as fast as they could reload for nearly half an hour. The British received heavy casualties, but kept advancing--losing up to three fourths of their men within minutes. The British fell back again.

After a long wait, the British formed reinforcements with discarded heavy field packs for a third assault. This time the tactic would be a bayonet charge after they feinted another wide frontal attack. American losses so far had been light but their powder was nearly depleted and they had very few bayonets to meet the British steel.

Now the redcoats came on the run with their eighteen-inch bayonets leveled. Prescott shouted for any who had bayonets to meet them and for all those who still had powder to withdraw to the rear of the redoubt where they would have more room to take aim. Those with neither bayonets nor powder used their muskets as clubs. Finally, as they were about to be overwhelmed, Prescott ordered an orderly retreat.

The British captured the hill and the rest of the peninsula at a terrible cost. Had Howe pressed on after the retreating Americans, he could easily have taken Cambridge and thousands of prisoners. This lack of follow through became characteristic of British operations during the Revolution.

Gage reported 1,054 casualties. Of this number, 226 were killed, including Major Pitcairn whose troops had fired at the Lexington militia. He died, cradled in the arms of his marine lieutenant son. The grieving son cried out, "They have shot my father." His nearby men responded, "They have shot our father." Earlier as a midshipman, the son had given the name Pitcairn to a south sea island,

immortalized by the story, *Mutiny on the Bounty*.

American losses were 140 killed, 270 wounded, and 30 taken prisoner. Dr. Joseph Warren died wearing his red silk waistcoat. He was the family doctor of John and Abigail Adams and among the first to join the Sons of Liberty, which had for its rallying cry, "no taxation without representation."

(Joel) The heavy losses shocked all of the Colonies about the reality of war with Britain. This fighting demonstrated that both the British and American soldiers were capable of great bravery. The British had thought that the Americans lacked sufficient military discipline to stand up to a professional army's attack.

A Yankee newspaper boastfully summarized the British situation. Gage's army could be divided into three parts; one-third underground, one-third above ground and the remaining in the hospital. The battle drew a distinct line between patriots and Loyalists and forced neutralists to declare themselves but most were still not yet ready to accept a bloody civil war. Although the colonies were as yet not united, they had formed a common front in determination to resist further encroachments of what they conceived to be their liberties as British subjects.

As the word of the battle got out, Washington became very popular. Because of his humility, wisdom and now this added popularity, jealousy continued from some colleagues like Gen Lee. His mother had been a strong source of spiritual life in his early years-- urging him to not neglect the duty of secret prayer. This discipline stood him in good stead during the trying years to come.

(Dean) Now Gage faced a dilemma. For months, the ministry prodded him to do something. No ships were now available to withdraw by sea. Gage received fresh drafts of men in late July, bringing his strength to over 9,000. He nevertheless felt that he couldn't afford to attack more entrenched American positions and that he lacked adequate logistical support. He complained even more about needed intelligence about American intentions.

(Joel) American M Gen Charles Lee, once a Lt Col in His Majesty's service, expressed his opinion about Gage's army. "The Redcoats might know all the tricks of the parade" and could acquit themselves "tolerably in puerile reviews...the tinsel and show of war." To be sure, Regulars were "well dressed, well powdered" and were masters of the manual exercise. But powdered hair, neatly clubbed, was no criterion of their ability to fight.

In Lee's opinion, the Americans had an infinite advantage because they were better accustomed to the use of arms and were experts in handling the tools needed for constructing military works. He said that the British officers were competent primarily in mounting guard once or twice a week or preparing for a review.

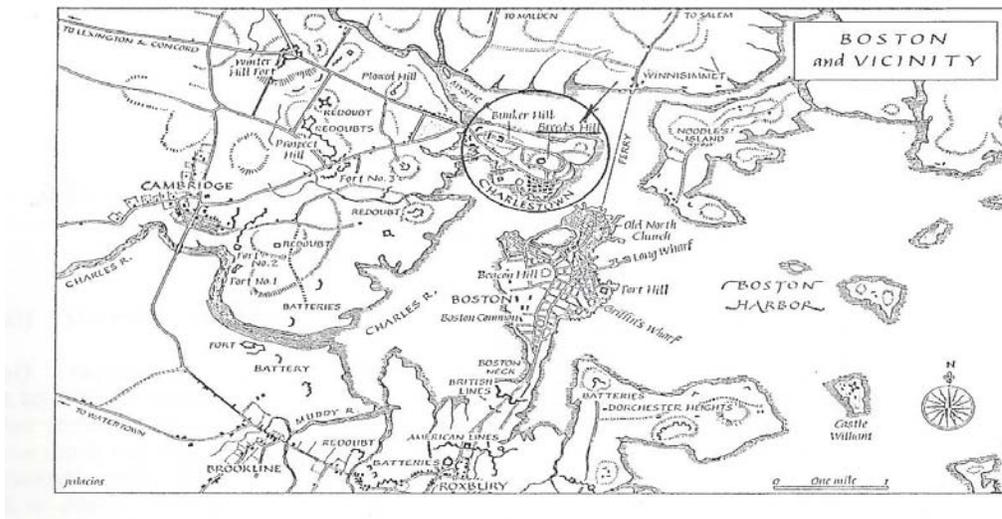
(Dean) On October 13, Congress authorized building the first two American ships and the beginning of a navy. A month later they authorized the formation of the first and second battalions of American Marines, each consisting of such officers and men "as are good seamen, or so acquainted with maritime affairs to be able

to serve to advantage by sea when required."

(Joel) The King's cause in America was not prospering. He needed ever more reinforcements but they were slow to be raised from loyal Canadians and Indians. He was now also becoming concerned about the defense of Quebec. He received alarms about militia drilling daily in Baltimore and Annapolis. Most Marylanders were armed and almost every hat was described as being decorated with a cockade.

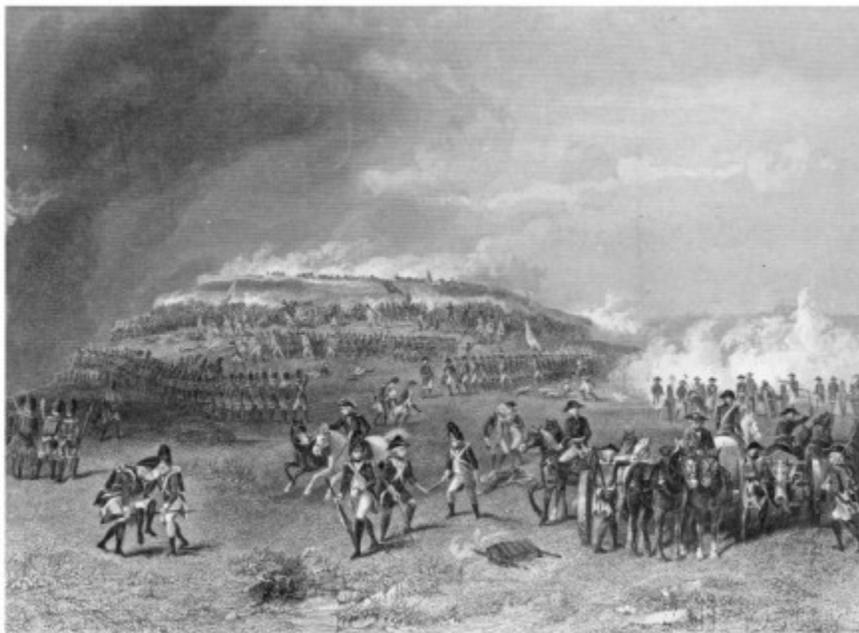
(Dean) The Americans too had crucial shortages of armament. Manufacture of gunpowder, cannon, muskets, rifles, and pistols had to be established. Bullets were manufactured in homes when lead was available. Cannon balls required scarce pig iron so furnaces were needed.

(Joel) Washington was becoming increasingly frustrated and angry with his seemingly fruitless effort to create an army capable of defending American liberties. With winter fast approaching, he wrote John Hancock about his distressing situation. The army was ragged, unpaid and short on rations. "...I am of the opinion that the army must absolutely break up...the troops are in a state not far from mutiny."

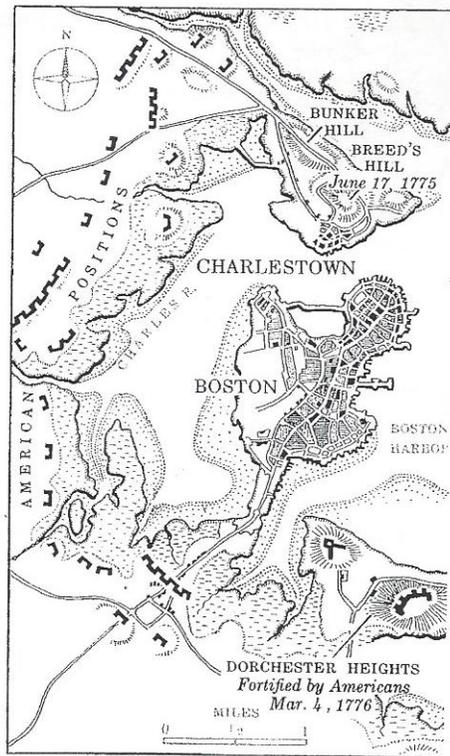


Americans defending  
Breed's Hill

BREED'S (BUNKER) HILL



*Battle of Bunker's Hill, from a painting by Alonzo Chappel engraved by John Godfrey*



**FIRST MAJOR VICTORY:  
BOSTON, 1775-1776**

Following Lexington and Concord, siege was laid to Boston. Famous British generals arriving on the scene were not amused by British wits who jeered: "Burgoyne, Clinton and Howe; Bow, Wow, Wow." On June 16, 1775, the Americans occupied Bunker Hill, threatening Boston from the north. Howe and Clinton swept them off, but at a fearful cost in lives. On July 2 Washington took command. On March 4, 1776, ready to last, he fortified Dorchester Heights, his cannon threatening enemy ships. On March 17 the British, deciding to fight somewhere else, departed.



## CHAPTER 4

### AMERICAN EVACUATION OF NEW YORK TO A STANDOFF AT WHITE PLAINS

(Dean) You recovered from your sickness and rejoined your unit.

(Joel) I rejoined my unit at Worcester for a month. Then Mr. Wood paid another man to take my place in the service so I could work the remainder of the winter for him in his cloth fulling mill. This was common practice during that time.

The next spring I reenlisted for another six months as a sergeant in a new company under the command of Capt Jonathan Houghton. That unit went to New York in June 1776 where I remained until the city's evacuation by the Americans on September 15 after a furious cannonading of the Americans works. During the last two weeks I became weak with dysentery and recuperated for several weeks with a family in Horseneck, Conn. I rejoined my unit on October 28, 1776.

(Dean) Prior to this, on July 2, 1776, the colonies had finally agreed to proclaim a Declaration of Independence and signed it on the 4th. The author, Thomas Jefferson, years later wrote to James Madison, father of the U.S. Constitution: "I know it only that I turned neither book nor pamphlet while writing it. I did not consider it as any part of my charge to invent new ideas altogether, and to offer no sentiments which had not been expressed before...I pray God that these principles may be eternal, and close the prayer with my affectionate wishes for yourself of long life, health and happiness."

(Joel) The signers took great risk in signing a document in spite of some historian's attempts at character demotion. At least fourteen of them later lost their lives in the war, of which five were killed after being captured. Another twelve lost their homes in enemy attacks.

(Dean) A fire broke out in New York early in the morning of September 21. The Americans had made off with every church bell in town to melt them down for badly needed cannon so there was no way to give the alarm. Winds whipped the flames to destroy on fourth of the city.

(Joel) The morning after the fire the British picked up a young Yale graduate, a Captain in the Continental Army, who was in civilian clothes. His pockets were stuffed with sketches and notes. This was Nathan Hale, who the British executed as a spy. His last remarks were, "I regret that I have but one life to give for my country."

(Dean) British General Howe was playing a waiting game for the Continental Army to disintegrate, which it seemed on the verge of doing. Washington was

frustrated and in a state of despair at Kips Bay when he and other officers made efforts to rally fleeing troops. He was so exasperated that he struck several officers during their flight. He dashed his hat on the ground and exclaimed, "Good God, have I got such troops as those?" Many senior officers began losing confidence in Washington, who himself admitted to "a divided state of mind."

Washington sent John Hancock a long letter, the most important he had yet dispatched to the President of Congress. He complained about the current situation and the temper of his troops. He wrote, "As it were on the eve of dissolution of our army, prospects for our future are gloomy. Beyond the possibility of doubt, our cause could be lost unless some speedy and effectual measures are adopted by Congress."

(Joel) He stressed that the army needed to be established on a permanent footing, with enlistments being for at least three years or the duration. One year enlistments were not working. Men must be offered substantial inducements to join the army, including a suite of clothes, a generous bounty, and regular pay.

Upon honorable separation from the service, they should receive on hundred acres and pensions for themselves and their widows. Of equal importance, was the need to induce men of character to receive commissions. Officers were finding it increasingly difficult to control their men. Washington had lost confidence in the militia which he likened to resting upon "a broken staff."

Congress reluctantly yielded to his pleas. In the meantime, the behavior of Howe's army in New York was creating increasing animosity against the King. Howe's orders to prevent plundering were not being obeyed. His soldiers were breaking into libraries and looting thousands of volumes of books with impunity.

Armed bands of Tories and plunderers, calling themselves patriots, roamed the countryside. They were stealing livestock, burning barns and terrorizing the inhabitants. Meanwhile Washington continued to suffer high desertion rate, reaching alarming proportions.

(Dean) While these developments continued with General Howe's and Washington's armies, a momentous struggle was unfolding for control of Lake Champlain. Both sides forged rapidly ahead with a naval armaments race. The British were building ships at St. John's, Canada. General Benedict Arnold drove his men around the clock at Skenesborough on South Bay.

The British fleet was ready by September 7 to drive the Americans off the lake. The Americans, 150 miles to the south, were lagging. They were short of shipbuilding materials and the sailors to man the ships. This didn't stop Arnold. He sent off the only three vessels that he had, manned by hastily trained militiamen to patrol the lake. Eventually by early October the Americans had finished a respectable fleet manned by farm bred militiamen being taught to row, sail, handle lines and fire cannon.

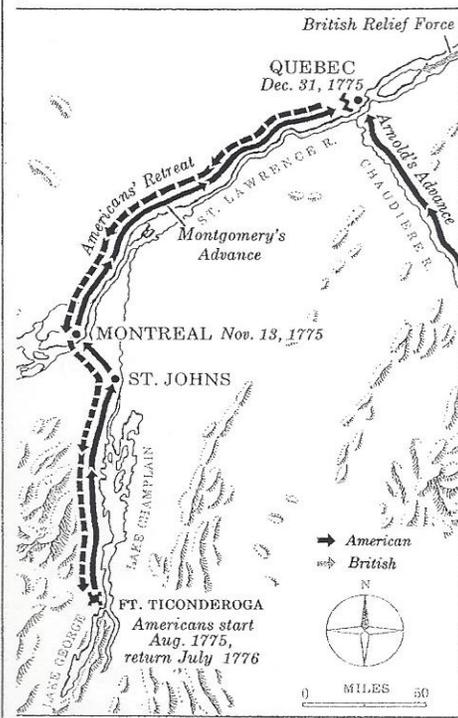
Arnold then proceeded to a position in the channel west of Valcour Island, where he anchored and awaited the British. They were not long in coming. The British laboriously came into the wind and tacked to get within range. When they did about noon, their experienced gunners told the tale. As darkness fell, the

American fleet appeared to be trapped. Arnold, determined to salvage what he could, slipped his ships away during the night, towing the damaged ones. The British followed in hot pursuit, again catching the fleeing Americans. Arnold ordered his damaged ships to be sunk and burned. The Americans reached the safety of Fort Ticonderoga.

(Joel) The British failed to push on to Ticonderoga to the later dismay of the King. Actually the Americans had delayed the advance of the British by forcing a shipbuilding program upon them. The season for fighting was now nearly over.

On the afternoon of the 18<sup>th</sup> the British put troops ashore at "Hell's Point" a mile east. Three days later they were in battle order at New Rochelle to attack the Americans at White Plains. Fighting continued for three days around White Plains with the result being inconclusive. The Americans fended off the attackers and fell back toward Cronon River. The German troops had probed their right wing but were thrown back in disarray-- "scattered like leaves in a whirlwind." The Americans suffered 100 casualties and the attackers three times that number, with some Germans deserting. Howe was disappointed with the German troops.



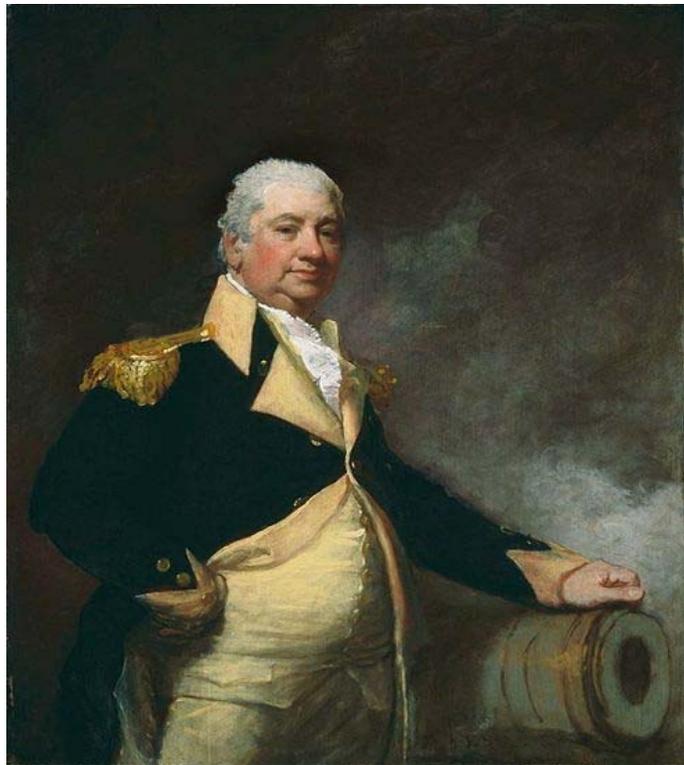


**FIRST MAJOR DEFEAT:  
QUEBEC, 1775-1776**

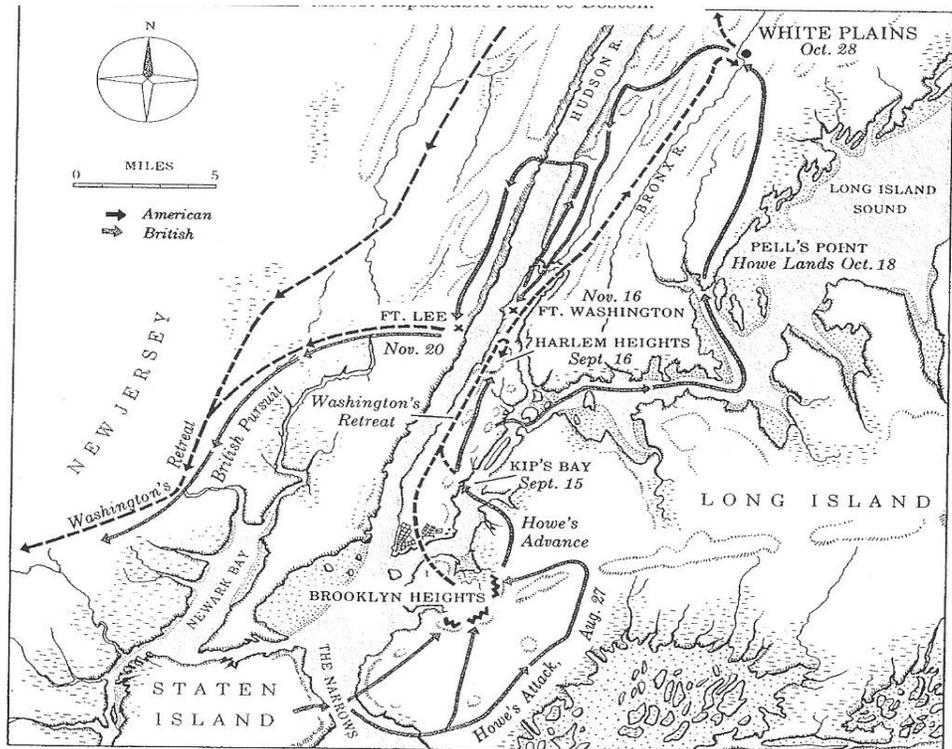
The first American offensive was a two-pronged attack on Quebec. One prong, led by Benedict Arnold, marched from Boston across Maine. The second, commanded by Richard Montgomery following Philip Schuyler's illness, went on along the St. Lawrence from Ticonderoga, taking St. Johns and Montreal on the way. They lost Ethan Allen, who was captured by the British at Montreal. Montgomery also lost numbers of troops whose enlistments had run out. But he pressed onward to Quebec, where he was killed and both his and Arnold's forces were defeated.

**BATTLES FOR NEW YORK  
AUG-NOV 1776**

On Long Island, General Washington's flank was crushed and he was trapped, his back against the East River. But Howe paused and the Americans escaped. When the British landed at Kip's Bay, patriot troops were caught in lower Manhattan; the British waited for reinforcements and the Americans got away. Through the fall of 1776 Washington and Howe matched blunders. When it was all over, Howe had New York, and a comfortable winter's billet. But Washington, because his army had been saved from total destruction, was on his way to winning the war.



**A GENIAL GUNNER, Henry Knox's military bearing started high because of the paunch below. An energetic officer, he did a fine job of guiding the "noble train of artillery" captured at Ticonderoga over almost impassable roads to Boston**



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **BATTLE OF BEMIS HEIGHTS AND SURRENDER AT SARATOGA**

**(Dean) By now you had completed your second enlistment period.**

**(Joel) After completing my second enlistment I again returned to work the winter with Mr. Wood, thinking my fighting days were over. January 1, 1777, I was approached by Col Winslow Bringham to again serve my country, this time as an officer with the rank of Ensign, receiving pay of \$20.00 per month. Enlistments were now for three years or the duration of the war, thus making recruiting more difficult.**

**(Dean) What motivated you to sign up for the duration, especially considering your sicknesses?**

**(Joel) That was my concern but then I recognized that my example could be a great influence so I remarked to some of the other veterans of previous service that they should again serve their country in order that others would follow. My example probably influenced the colonel's offer of a commission.**

**I next joined a company, commanded by Capt Daniel Barnes, which was part of the 15th Massachusetts regiment, commanded by Col Timothy Bigelow. They were part of Gen Gates command. This regiment had been wearing-down Burgoyne by holding a commanding position called Bemis Heights for several weeks. It was nine miles south of Saratoga where Burgoyne would soon face a humiliating surrender. It was fortunate that I didn't join a few days earlier because I missed the battle that led to the British surrender.**

**(Dean) Shortly after Bunker Hill, the British started evolving a concept of how best to isolate New England, the focus of rebellion, from the other colonies by control of the Hudson from Albany to New York. Albany was a strategic and rich agricultural center worth possessing. British Lt Gen John Burgoyne was ordered south to eventually take Albany while British Gen William Howe would move north, taking Philadelphia.**

**(Joel) Howe had conducted a series of marches and counter-marches to entice Washington from his strong defensive position into an action on ground of Howe's choosing. Washington wasn't tempted. Instead he harassed the enemy around the clock and placed his army in position to block an anticipated move by Howe up the Hudson.**

**(Dean) Washington's strategy was to be strategically positioned to contend with British forces, which were able to land quickly anywhere along the coast,**

bays, estuaries and navigable rivers. Thus the main Continental Army was on the defense and usually occupied a central position facing outward.

His main line of communications followed a line from the strategic head of the Elk River, where the British could access from Chesapeake Bay, to the mouth of the strategic Hudson River. Along this route, running above the heads of the major rivers, he moved his army to counter the moves of the seaborne British.

He was always careful that the British didn't get between his army and the back country which he held as a final line of retreat. On the left of the Main Army was the Northern Army positioned to counter invasions from Canada. However, the British did land at Elk River and out-manuever Washington at the Battle of Brandywine September 11, 1777 to occupy Philadelphia.

The Southern Army was so far removed and its theater so large that it acted independently. For all three armies, the back country represented security for retreat and stockpiled supplies and munitions.

(Joel) Fortunately my unit wasn't involved at Brandywine. Eventually Sir Henry Clinton arrived from England and reported as Howe's second in command. Clinton strongly tried to persuade Howe not to undertake his planned sea-born expedition to Philadelphia. Howe remained convinced though that seizing the rebel capital would end the revolt. Washington pondered Howe's likely moves during many staff conferences and finally decided to fight in defense of Philadelphia.

As his army marched toward the Delaware, there was a shake-up among his top command and eventually detractors, dissatisfied with Washington's recent performance, attempted unsuccessfully to replace him. Shortly before this, the Marquis de La Fayette and thirteen other French officers offered their services. La Fayette was given the rank of major general without pay and initially without command. Surprisingly, he was only nineteen years old! Eventually I served in his division.

(Dean) Meanwhile, Burgoyne--a red-faced 55-year-old, had been making himself unpopular in upstate New York. He was referred to as, "fashion plate" and "gentleman Johnny." He had had a play produced in London and greatly admired his own writing ability. In trying to explain his planned march towards Albany, his fancy phrases backfired and made the Americans furious. The Green Mountain Boys from Vermont joined men from New Hampshire who had hurried to enlist.

Burgoyne had written an accurate description of American fighting men and their conduct in combat through difficult terrain:

"Accustomed to felling of timber ... ready at earthworks and palisades... entrench themselves wherever they are...with surprising alacrity...every private man will in action be his own general who will turn every tree from whence he hath fired his shot with all the deliberation, coolness and certainty which hidden safety inspires...until dislodged, either by cannon or by a resolute attack of light infantry..."

(Joel) Burgoyne continued south from Fort Ticonderoga, which the Americans

had unhappily abandoned, toward Fort Edward on the Hudson River north of Saratoga. American, Maj Gen Horatio Gates, soon replaced Maj Gen Philip Schuler over a controversy about the poor defense of Ticonderoga.

Burgoyne's troops hacked their way from the southern end of Lake Champlain, through 23 swampy miles of giant pines and hemlocks. His army of 7,500 men also included German regulars, 250 Canadians and 400 Indians.

(Dean) Two days before his troops occupied Fort Edward, some of his Indian scouts murdered a young lady engaged to marry a Tory who had fled to Canada to fight for the British. This caused a dilemma for Burgoyne. If he punished the Indian murderers he could lose the Indian support. He soon lost them anyway and also infuriated thousands of New Englanders who, outraged by the murders, marched to Albany to reinforce the Americans. About the same time he made another mistake.

His German cavalry had no horses and he decided to send them into Vermont to steal some. This infuriated more Americans. Gate's scouts alerted him that the British were starting to move to the attack. The Americans immediately brought in reinforcements. Gen John Stark and his New Hampshire militia arrived on the following morning.

Burgoyne moved without delay having to advance through broken ground and boggy ravines choked with heavy brush that limited the scope of maneuver. Burgoyne decided that a wide sweep to the west and south would force the Americans to uncover their position. He had the Germans advance along the Hudson River road.

(Joel) September 19 dawned warm. The Heights were clear but fog hung heavily over the Hudson River as they advanced. Shortly after noon American scouts reported contact. Gates immediately ordered Col Daniel Morgan's sharpshooter riflemen and a brigade of Arnold's division to counterattack.

Some of Morgan's men, who were unaccustomed to encountering regulars with bayonets, fled into the woods. Morgan soon rallied them again with repeated turkey calls. Gates then fed more troops into the contested area around Freeman's Farm. Morgan directed his riflemen to pick off the officers which they did effectively. Artillery gunners were other prime targets. Riflemen in tree tops and hidden in the underbrush effectively took-out one four-gun battery manned by 48 crew members.

The German sector held against the Americans because of the quick reaction by their commander, Gen Baron von Riedesel. He hastily gathered together his regiment and remnants of another, along with two cannon and maneuvered towards the most concentrated part of the battle. The British regiments in the center had withstood six attacks by steady relays of Americans.

When Riedesel arrived they were thinned down to one-half. He found a small band, surrounded by dead and wounded. He attacked at once, with his cannon manhandled into a front line position to fire grapeshot. This saved the day for the British.

At dusk, the Americans ceded the bloody field and retired to their

fortifications. That night the British held their position and rested uneasily, with Burgoyne considering the day a victory. That night, however, many Canadians, Loyalists and Indians left camp. Candles on the general's table burned late as he reviewed the list of over 500 casualties.

Riedesel's loyal wife was convinced her husband never received due credit and later wrote, "Gen Burgoyne and a few other British commanders regarded the German general with secret envy.....British pride did not desire the acknowledgement of greater bravery other than their own."

(Dean) There was a difference of opinion between Gates and Arnold over the most effective tactics to use against Burgoyne. Gates was cautious and methodical, whereas Arnold was impetuous and aggressive, wanting to carry the fight to the British. Gates felt he could not afford the risk so Arnold called him an "old woman." This led to increasing tension between the two commanders. A few days later, Arnold retired in a rage over disagreement about Gates' orders and he requested that Gates let him go to Philadelphia to join Washington, where he could better serve the country.

(Joel) Burgoyne frantically requested reinforcements and more supplies on September 29. Clinton, claiming that he had other more pressing commitments, responded that Burgoyne would have to do with what he had and to either attack the enemy or retreat across the lakes while they were clear of ice. Actually Clinton, with a force of 3,000 men, was within easy marching distance to reinforce Burgoyne. Historians question why he deliberately avoided providing this reinforcement.

Burgoyne's situation was becoming desperate. His men and animals were hungry and there was no possibility of getting more food. His outposts were becoming increasingly harassed, his army was being weakened by sick and wounded and the Americans, at his rear, were threatening his strongest positions. His army was slowly disintegrating and he realized he didn't have much time left. He must either attack very soon or retreat.

He decided to leave a small force to hold his position, protecting the hospital and supplies. He would lead the bulk of the army, marching light, in a wide sweep deep into Gate's rear. Burgoyne's top commanders disagreed with him though and emphasized that no time should be wasted in attacking at once or withdrawing across the Hudson to reestablish the lines of communication to the north.

Burgoyne ordered a reconnaissance as near as possible to the American's west wing, in order to determine whether it could be attacked. This was a desperate gamble. The terrain favored the Americans, since it was heavily wooded with many ravines, streams and limited visibility. Their formations couldn't fight effectively in this kind of terrain.

(Dean) So, 1,500 British, with 10 cannon, seized a piece of commanding ground half a mile from the American camp. The Americans then counterattacked with a superiority of fire. Burgoyne was unable to support this reconnaissance in force

and ordered a retreat, losing many men.

Gen Simon Fraser, who led the reconnaissance, was mortally wounded. Burgoyne arrived on the scene shortly before Fraser was hit and they had a considerable disagreement about the situation. The British held the Americans off for a few minutes, but the Yankees rushed on with loud shouts and forced them to abandon their cannon. The fight seesawed until the British reached the security of their works where they had held off their assailants with grapeshot.

(Joel) Toward sunset Arnold was aroused by the smell of gunpowder and rushed from his tent, threw himself into his saddle and galloped toward the sound of the guns to encourage the Americans to assault the British right. He was on the field of battle, exercising command without permission of General Gates.

(Dean) He led the Americans to close on the British Valcarres redoubt which secured the deep right flank of Burgoyne's army. The historical fiction story, *Rabble in Arms*, by Kenneth Roberts well describes what this action could have been like.

"The surprised Americans yelled, "Arnold! Arnold! Come on Arnold!" From the blue-coated ranks, on the middle hillock, came the rattle of musketry and the roar of heavy guns. Above our heads we heard the clatter of grape shot. Arnold's mare picked her way through the troops, crowded among the birches at the bottom of the ravine. Behind those troops we could see other companies pouring down through the birches on the far bank.

"The soldiers seemed to caper about the brown mare. They waved their hats and their muskets; and their cheering was shrill, like a squall howling through a top-hamper.

"The mare leaped up from the ravine to stand on her hind legs and paw the air. Arnold cantered her back and forth before the swarming troops. Then he rose in his stirrups and shook his sword-hilt in their faces. He was shouting at them, we knew; but what he said we could only guess.

"The troops, silent now, came pouring out of the birches. Arnold turned the mare and put her at the hill-slope. The crest of the slope was ringed with smoke, and from the smoke came the crackling of musketry fire and the thundering of cannon. Long lines of brown-clad Americans poured upward. Across their front, back and forth rode Arnold, urging them on. We could hear his voice, a high, harsh shouting, between the roaring of guns and above the rippling clatter of musketry...

"High up on the slope lay a thin sprinkling of dark figures; and lower a ways backward and forward before the troops, rode Arnold, shouting to the men and swinging his sword...Unendingly, from the ridge above, the smoke of the German guns gushed out with a thudding and roaring that I expected, any moment, to see Arnold pitch from his horse in a heap.

"It was then, as long line of men emerged once more from the birches and set off up the slope after Arnold, that we, led by Morgan, slipped

nearer and ever nearer to the blue-coated Germans--so near that we could no longer see Arnold rallying his troops at the bottom of the slope.

"Over the crest of the wheat field came Arnold on his bay mare. He seemed to lean out over her head and lift her forward with the reins and hurl her at a gun-crew. He hacked at them with his sword, seeming to throw it rather than swing it. Close behind him, cheering and roaring with excitement, pressed a mass of brown-shirted Continentals.

"The gun-crew scuttled from under Arnold's sword. The wheat field was alive with running men--men in blue coats and white breeches. Leaping over stumps and dead horses, diving under guns, stumbling and shouting, open-mouthed with consternation, they ran to the rear, toward the forest, and we ran after them, led by Arnold and Morgan...

"Arnold repeated plunging into the fray to take several other hilltop positions. Then as it started to get dark Arnold urged the men on to take the German stockade. The story continues:

"There were Americans everywhere loading, firing, swinging clubbed muskets at fleeing figures. Arnold kept on shouting, "Get in here! Get in here! It's ours!" A dozen running Germans turned, faced us and raised their muskets. I heard Nason shout, "Load with buck-shot! We shot at the Germans. Four sprawled to the ground The others fired and ran.

"Behind me there was a breathless scrambling and commotion, a rattling humping. I looked around. Arnold's mare was on her back on the ground, her legs waving. Arnold was caught under her. I ran to him. It seemed, almost, that everyone did the same. His free leg, still across the belly of the fallen horse, was bent at a queer angle. Soaking through the white buckskin of his breeches was a splotch of blood the size of my head.

"Cap Huff struck the straining mare a terrible blow behind the ear and threw his whole weight across her neck. She lay still...Nathan seized the mare by a front leg and swung her free of her fallen rider.

"Arnold lay there, staring down at the widening stain on his breeches. Dearborn had him by the shoulders, holding his head from the ground.

"Where'd it hit you?" Dearborn asked, "Same leg." (The same one broken at Quebec). He made a little straining noise. "I wished it had been my heart." "He looked up suddenly, "Don't stand there, boys! Go to work! It's almost dark!"

(Joel) As Arnold was being carried to the rear, Gates' aide rode up beside him, saying that he had broken arrest and suggesting that he return at once to his tent.

One can imagine Arnold's rage. Historians comment that if he had been killed rather than survived a wound, he would have gone down in history as the greatest American Revolution general after Washington. Instead he is remembered as our country's most famous traitor.

Shortly the redoubt was a shambles. The Americans, wildly wielding clubbed muskets, battered the desperate Germans who held them off with bloodied bayonets. Tomahawks flashed. A man who took time to load his musket was

brained as he bent his head to ram a charge home. The slaughter was brutal and primitive. No quarter was asked and none was given. German Col von Breymann was mortally wounded.

The surviving Germans staggered off, dragging their wounded comrades. The Americans, having demolished the right flank of the British army, were too exhausted to pursue. Burgoyne's position was no longer tenable.

On the night of October 8, Burgoyne started falling back toward Saratoga. Rain fell in torrents as his half-starved horses and oxen attempted unsuccessfully to pull bogged-down guns and ammunition wagons through the mud and abandoned them. The exhausted and dispirited infantrymen staggered along, hungry, soaked and half asleep, into Saratoga.

(Dean) Gates mustered over 16,000 men to prepare to resist the British retreat across the Hudson. Gen John Stark and Morgan's men blocked forest trails to the north. The woods swarmed with militiamen. Any attempt for Burgoyne to break out would have been repulsed.

On October 13, Burgoyne decided, to surrender and called his officers to a council where he remarked, "You have brought me to this pass, now tell me how to get out of it." A resourceful Tory leader had an answer, "Scatter your baggage and everything that can be spared at proper distances and the Colonial militiamen will be so busy plundering them that we will get clean off."

His army had been weakened by desertion and disappointing performance of the Canadian and Provincial allies. His regular troops had sustained heavy losses, leaving them weakened to 3500 effective men of which less than 2,000 were British. He realized that there was no possibility of retreat, since their provisions were nearly exhausted and they were encircled by Americans four times his number. With the Americans incessantly firing at them, with rifle and cannon shot reaching every part of their camp, Burgoyne's men lost their fighting spirit.

Burgoyne sent a flag of truce to Gen Gates. To his surprise, Gates accepted the British terms--allowing Burgoyne's army to capitulate, rather than surrender. They were allowed to march out with full honors of war and to be evacuated to England with the promise that they would not serve again in America.

(Joel) On October 17, the British and German soldiers marched out of camp to the cadence of beating drums and the Grenadier's March. Burgoyne rode to Gates camp in a rich royal uniform where he was met by Gates in a plain blue frock. The two approached to within sword's length and halted. Burgoyne raised his hat, saying, "The fortunes of war, General Gates, have made me your prisoner." Gates responded with a salute, replying, "I shall always be ready to bear testimony that it has not been through any fault of your Excellency." Gates paid Burgoyne almost as much respect as if he were the conqueror.

Then, observed only by Gates' officers, the British and German soldiers paraded in a meadow where they laid-down their arms. Afterwards, I watched them from among the ranks of the Americans as Burgoyne's troops marched into captivity while the American band played "Yankee Doodle."

Then, as the defeated soldiers marched away, I watched the two generals face each other. Burgoyne drew his sword and offered it to Gates who courteously bowed and returned it in accordance with 18th Century manners. Burgoyne was permitted to return to England but many of his soldiers eventually became New World residents.

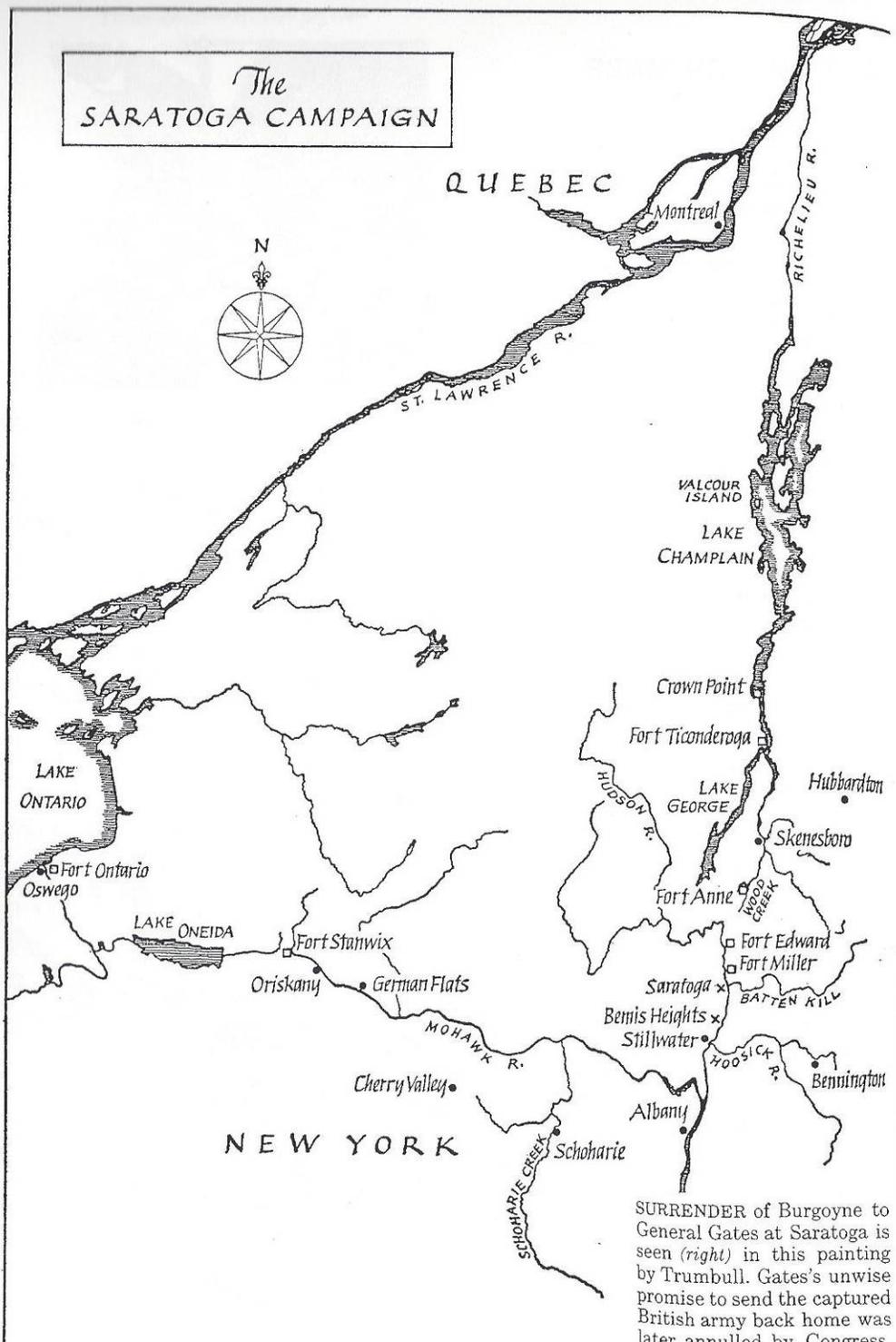
(Dean) The surrender at Saratoga was the turning point of the Revolution-- a far greater victory than the Americans realized at the time. There was no longer a threat to divide the Colonies. The Americans took as prisoner; 7 Generals, 300 other officers, 3,379 British and 2,202 German soldiers. The British and Germans had sustained 1,429 casualties.

When the news of Burgoyne's surrender reached Paris, King Louis XVI immediately declared his recognition of the United States. This was followed, several months later, by the formal Treaty of Alliance which expanded the fighting into a far-reaching conflict involving the formidable French navy. Washington called it "a most important event which exceeded our most sanguine expectations." The victory was particularly opportune as Washington had previously suffered two reverses.

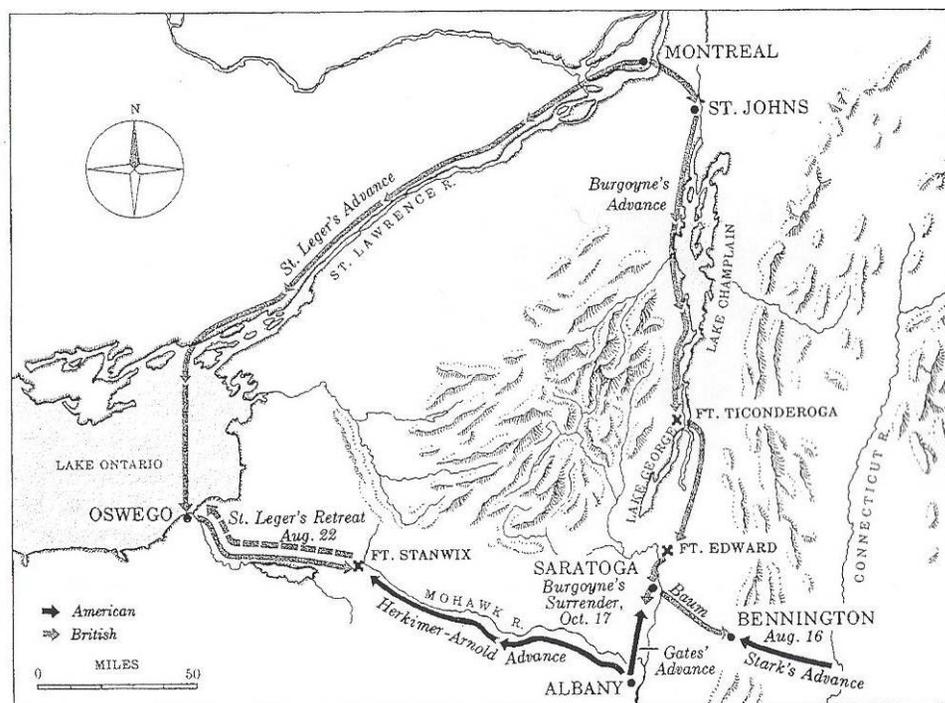
(Joel) Immediately after this our brigade forced-marched all night to Albany to head-off British Gen Clinton who, we were worried, could be coming up the Hudson River to reinforce Burgoyne. That threat didn't materialize though and our brigade remained at Albany until November. We then marched toward Philadelphia and encamped at White Marsh, under the direct command of Washington, where we expected skirmishing with the British.

We were poorly supplied now, sleeping without shelter for twenty nights until early December, huddling around campfires of fence wood and rolled up in our blankets. After some minor skirmishing, thankfully the British retired to Philadelphia to go into their winter quarters.

# The SARATOGA CAMPAIGN



SURRENDER of Burgoyne to General Gates at Saratoga is seen (right) in this painting by Trumbull. Gates's unwise promise to send the captured British army back home was later annulled by Congress.



## THE NORTHERN FRONT: JUNE-OCTOBER, 1777

In 1777 the British launched two armies from Canada, hoping to take Albany and thus cut off New England from the other colonies. St. Leger, attacking from the west, besieged Fort Stanwix, but was driven back by Arnold's Americans

(black line). Burgoyne, pressing south to meet St. Leger at Albany, was left with his western flank exposed. Then a Hessian detachment commanded by Friedrich Baum was smashed by John Stark at Bennington. Threatened from all sides, Burgoyne tried to fight free at Saratoga, but had to surrender to General Gates on October 17.





## CHAPTER 6

### CRUCIBLE OF FREEDOM AT VALLEY FORGE

(Dean) After the major American victory at Saratoga, Washington moved his northern army into winter quarters at Valley Forge. He selected a location across the Schuylkill River in a wooded wilderness area that could provide sufficient water and wood for fuel and shelter. Nearby was a village, consisting of a few scattered houses and a ruined forge on a slope, which rose to a low hill above the river. Washington told his troops that this was the best winter quarters that could be found.

I have visited that site and was impressed by the location being only fifteen miles from the British winter quarters at Philadelphia; yet being easily defensible for that stage of warfare development. It was now December 12, 1777 and bitterly cold. I can imagine those harsh living conditions.

(Joel) The health of the troops began to degrade, showing the effect of the continued fatigue from the earlier campaign. As conditions further deteriorated, men complained about such basic survival concerns as being sick, discontented, out of humor, poor food, hard lodging, cold weather, fatigue, nasty clothing, nasty cookery, vomit half the time, smoked out of my senses, the devil's in it, and I can't endure it.

This went on and on with other such complaints as, "Why are we sent here to starve and freeze? What sweet felicities have I left at home--a charming wife, pretty children, good beds, good food, good cookery, all agreeable, all harmonious. Here it's all confusion, smoke, cold, hunger and filthiness--a pox on my bad luck. Here comes a bowl of beef soup, full of burnt leaves and dirt, sickish enough to make a hector spew. Away with it boys. Your being sick covers your mind with a melancholic gloom which makes everything about you appear gloomy. When the poor soldier is in good health he cheerfully meets his foes and endures hardship. If barefoot he labors through the mud and cold with a song in his mouth extolling war and Washington. If his food is bad, he still eats it with seeming content and whistles it into digestion."

Other complaints I overheard were, "But there comes a soldier--his bare feet are seen through his worn-out shoes--his legs are exposed from the tattered remains of his only pair of stockings--his shirt hangs in strings--his hair is disheveled--his face is meager--he appears forsaken and discouraged." He cries with an air of wretchedness, "I'm sick--my feet are lame, my legs are sore, my body is covered with this tormenting itch. My clothes are worn out--my constitution is broken--I fail fast--I shall soon be no more. All the reward I shall get is, poor Will is dead."

Such were the problems that burdened Washington during a cold dismal day on December 19 as he sat on his big gray horse, watching his men file silently past on their way to winter encampment at Valley Forge. Many had strips of blanket wound around their feet while others walked barefoot through the snow.

**Almost none of his dwindling army of eleven thousand men was properly equipped for the cold winter. As they passed-by, their heads down in protection against the icy wind, no drumbeat marked the cadence of their steps, only the rattle of leafless branches overhead.**

**(Dean) Though he did not speak, the tall figure on the still horse was grieving for his men. This ordeal at Valley Forge would become known in history as our "crucible of freedom." History would recognize that this crucible was also forging the Continental Army into a new strength and determination. One soldier was quoted in a local newspaper: "Our attention is now drawn to one point--the enemy grows weaker every day and we are growing stronger. Our work is almost done, and with the blessing of heaven and the valor of our worthy General, we shall soon drive these plunderers out of our country."**

**(Joel) Snow fell early and stayed. Shelter now became an urgent need. On December 21, while preparations were being made for log huts and provisions were scarce, a cry went through the camp imitating the noise of crows and owls, "No meat, no meat--what have you for our dinner, boys? Nothing but fire, cake and water sir." The next morning, after a cold and uncomfortable night, "What have you got for breakfast, lads? The Lord sent more fire, cake and water."**

**As typically done by other soldiers, I obtained a small piece of raw cowhide and made myself a pair of moccasins which beat going barefoot and leaving a bloody trail on the rough, frozen ground. I shared the sentiment of others that they were engaged in the defense of their country and were determined to persevere. I had experienced many hardships previously in military life, although nothing to compare with the Valley Forge conditions.**

**(Dean) Washington kept well informed of conditions by spending most of each day riding to each regiment and talking to the men. He informed the President of Congress on December 23, "The army must inevitably be reduced to one or more of three things. "Starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain sustenance in the best manner they can. What then is to become of the army this winter? Soap, vinegar and other articles allowed by Congress--we have seen none of since the Battle of Brandywine. Few men have more than one shirt--some none.**

**The circumstances make it difficult for my soldiers to perform their common duties. Many sick are confined to hospitals and others to farmer's homes. I now have less than 2,898 men, however even they are unfit for duty because of lack of clothing.**

**It appears that our entire strength of continental troops, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amount to less than 8,200 fit for duty. My men are huddled in blankets by night around bonfires instead of resting comfortably in adequate housing."**

**Unfortunately, Congress sat snugly ninety miles west in New York, unconvinced about the needs of Washington's men and consumed with petty bickering.**

**(Joel) Log huts were eventually completed by Jan. 14 to shelter 12 men each. They were 14 ft x 16 ft, with the sides and ends 6½ ft tall. The roof framework was covered by wood slabs and the sides were caulked with clay. They had fireplaces in the rear made of wood, lined on the inside with clay .**

**Tom Paine visited the encampment and described the laboring soldiers as being like a family of beavers. Everyone was busy--some carrying logs, others clay mud and the rest fastening them together. Washington offered a reward of \$100 for anyone who could discover anything better than boards for roofing but none did.**

**A French volunteer, Pierre Ponceau, recalled seeing the intolerable conditions. The soldiers, covered with scabs, were popping their heads out of the huts calling out, "No bread, no soldier." He described their condition from lack of food and warm clothing as being pitiful but praised their courage and perseverance.**

**I shared the others thoughts. I don't know of anything that vexes a man's soul more than hot smoke, continually blowing into one's eyes, when attempting to avoid the cold, piercing wind.**

**Eventually I suffered an attack of rheumatism in my right hip and had a severe fever. I refused to go to the hospital though because I felt my chances of dying there were even greater. Instead I did what was customary--find a private home to take me in and nurse me back to health. I stopped at a farmhouse occupied by an elderly Irish widow with her family and begged for entrance. She reluctantly took me in and used her own effective remedies to help me recover. I rejoined my unit at Valley Forge in May 1778.**

**(Dean) Lt Col Laurens, Washington's aid and later a special envoy to France to negotiate another loan, was told by an European observer that Europeans wouldn't have withstood the hardships as well as Washington's soldiers. Laurens said, "I commend these dear ragged Continentals whose patience will be the admiration of future ages and I glory in bleeding with them."**

**There were many desertions however. Nine out of ten deaths were due to malnutrition and exposure. In spite of these conditions Martha Washington came to visit her husband.**

**(Joel) While these men suffered, many colonists discovered ways of making fortunes by investing with privateers. Even though one ship in three was caught running the British blockade, there was still a 100% profit. Contracting for the army was also lucrative, riddled with graft such as pay-offs and kickbacks.**

**Baron Friedrich von Steuben volunteered his services the next month, providing a great boost in morale. The stocky, robust former German army captain had served 25 years before on the staff of Frederick the Great of Russia. Washington welcomed him as a man of military knowledge. He appointed him as acting Inspector General, in charge of training in maneuver and discipline. Col Alexander Hamilton was then one of his aids. He first trained one company to rote precision and then used them to demonstrate to the rest of the army.**

**There were many steps to firing a musket, and if in the heat of battle, one step were overlooked, there would be a gap in the volley. By the time spring came, von**

Steuben had drilled the men to the point they could produce a crisp volley every fifteen seconds.

Although unable to speak English, von Steuben quickly learned to understand American character. His philosophy was that if a soldier understood the reason he would be most effective. He wrote at the conclusion of his term of duty as drillmaster that he would cheerfully die for the nation that had so honored him. He had previously remarked, "...what a happy country this is--without kings, without prelates, without blood-sucking idle Barons... here everybody is prosperous and poverty is an unknown evil...six foreign officers have caused me more trouble than 200 Americans." Washington promoted him to Major General and he later commanded a wing at the Battle of Monmouth.

Washington no longer now had to worry about those short term enlistments. Men were signing up for three-year terms and the Valley Forge veterans were signing up for the duration as I had done. France now became convinced that the Colonial army could stand up to the full might of the British and decided to enter the war. With that news, volunteers and supplies began pouring in from all over the country.

(Dean) Now that we have talked about the American victory at Saratoga and the training by Baron von Steuben, I will tell about what I have learned from reading an example of modern war-gaming designer notes which provide a realistic military insight concerning the Revolutionary War:

The war now became ever more wild and unpredictable. Every battle would become a figurative toss of the dice. Men could fight like demons on one day and wilt like morning glories the next for no apparent reason.

In 1774, Britain had an effective army of about 17,500 and a navy of 16,000. In 1775 the strength increased to 55,000 soldiers and 28,000 seamen. Ultimately by 1781, there were 110,000 soldiers and seamen in North America and the West Indies.

Military service was so unpopular in Britain at the outbreak of the war that manpower shortage was a major problem. Many were released from jails. Nevertheless, Britain had the finest fighting force in the world at the beginning of the war. Their main handicap was a supply base thousands of miles away and dependence on a navy that had decayed since the last European war.

The American Continental Army was created in June of 1775 when the Continental Congress took over the "Boston Army" besieging the British, and made Washington Commander-in-Chief. From the beginning, Washington was plagued by a constant ebb and flow of recruits. Logistics and supply was often nonexistent. Financing was primarily by well-to-do patriots and credit extended by France and Spain. Most of the few Americans with military backgrounds were trained under the British during the French and Indian War.

A characteristic deployment of the continental line would find clouds of riflemen acting as skirmishers to the front and flanks, with the line infantry deployed in long, thin, double ranks, with very little in the way of a centrally deployed reserve. They created transitional tactics that modified European linear

tactics to North American geography.

More than 200,000 men passed through the American ranks during the eight years of war. Massachusetts was by far the greatest contributor, with 68,000. The militia was a long-standing institution. Almost every village had such a force that could be called during times of Indian attack or civil disturbance. Many became nationalized starting in 1775. Tory militia were formed for the same reasons but they were much better trained since they were part of the British Army's Provincial Line. Tory sympathizers probably outnumbered the rebels.

The British use of Indians had very slight impact on the war due to their small number, totaling only about 1500. The biggest miscalculation by the British was the decision to use 30,000 German mercenaries to fill out the undermanned British ranks. The ill feeling generated by this decision far out-shadowed any military gain. Tory sympathy was chilled considerably wherever German troops were stationed. Of the 30,000 German troops, more than 5,000 deserted and 8,000 died from disease and battle. Many remained in America after hostilities.

When the fighting started, the French could not risk an open alliance with the colonists until they were sure that the young nation was capable of a sustained fight. Most of the early American victories were made possible though by French supplies. When the French came into the war after the British humiliation at Saratoga, the decisive theater of operations then became the high seas. The British navy was now forced into defensive tactics, leading ultimately to their final surrender at Yorktown.

The standard British weapon was the "Brown Bess" musket. This was a smooth-bore muzzle-loading flintlock weighing over eleven pounds. It fired a ball of .75" caliber about 75 yards. It was not aimed but rather pointed. The average soldier could fire about three rounds per minute. In dampness the priming in the flintlock could misfire, so the bayonet served a very important function.

The Americans were armed with a wide variety of weapons from the Brown Bess to hunting pieces. Most of them were painstakingly hand manufactured by colonial gunsmiths. Few were equipped for bayonets until provided by the French. Since the colonists were more experienced in using muskets to provide food and defense, their first shot was well aimed. They also provided themselves extra firepower in close fighting by loading with "buck and ball"--two buckshot rammed in with the ball. A much more accurate weapon was the legendary American rifle. It was a development of the European fowling rifles of Bavaria and Switzerland. An expert rifleman could kill with regularity at the extraordinary range of 200 yards or more. It was limited by a very slow rate of fire though due to the difficult loading procedure and could not be fitted with a bayonet.

Field artillery was classed in four main sizes--12, 8, 6, and 4 pounders. They could fire grapeshot, cannister, or solid shot to a maximum range of about one mile for the heavier sizes. All were smooth-bore muzzle loaders. Heavy siege artillery fired 18 and 24 pounds or larger and were used primarily for permanent defenses in forts and shore defenses.

The European tactical system was known as the linear system. Its purpose was to maximize the fire effect forward which was accomplished by lining up infantrymen in long lines, three ranks deep. This worked well in the relatively flat

European terrain, but required adjustments when applied in North America. The colonists, after years of Indian fighting and frontier life, readily adjusted to the Indian style of non-linear fighting.

A popular myth for American victory in the war assumes that the British were very stupid and the Americans were very clever. Supposedly the British marched and fought in bright red rows thus leaving themselves easy targets for the sly colonials who hid behind rocks and trees picking them off. Actually the only time this happened was in the British march back from Lexington in 1775. American marksmanship was so terrible in that battle that probably only one American bullet out of 300 found its mark and only one man out of 15 hit anybody.

The Americans could have remained in the backwoods and swamps and probably defeated any British force sent to oppose them, but in so doing would have abandoned their coast and cities to the enemy. Instead, the British trained its men in irregular warfare to meet the Americans in open country, and the Americans trained its irregular fighters in linear fire discipline!

The American battle line now consisted of long thin lines of two ranks with swarms of skirmishers in front and on the flanks of the main line, with little or no centrally located reserve. Yet, with more accurate fire, they inflicted considerable losses on a British Army battle line. The British fought in deep, compact formations which depended on superior discipline to advance under murderous fire to move close enough to break the enemy with bayonet. By the end of the war, the tactical differences were not as great as at the beginning; a whole new type of tactical warfare evolved which would show its influence in the Napoleonic Era twenty years later.

The King now became concerned about the outcome of the war and opened channels of communication through the great American diplomat, Benjamin Franklin, to explore possible terms of disengagement. The king's priorities now became the defense of England, Ireland and Gibraltar. Meanwhile, the fledgling American navy was now also becoming a factor. Navy Capt Paul Jones, with his ship *Ranger*, the first to display the American flag, began distressing the enemy by sea. He sailed from Brest, France on April 10 for the Irish Sea. En route, he sank a brigantine and captured a ship laden with merchandise.

In Paris, he and Franklin had agreed that one way to distress the British was by raiding unsuspecting coastal towns. Having been born in Scotland, he knew those waters and harbors, so his first audacious foray was at Whitehaven on the dawn of April 28. He and thirty-one of the crew landed from two boats at the pier and entered one of the small forts through the embrasures. They locked up the sleeping sentinels, then spiked the guns and proceeded in the same manner to the rest of the forts and set one ship on fire.

Two days later he encountered the British *Drake* and raked her deck from stem to stern. After an hour and four minutes, she became a wreck and surrendered. Jones had two killed and six wounded while the British suffered forty-two casualties, including the captain and first lieutenant.

Jones won his first sea fight in clear view of hundreds of spectators. This threw the citizens into a panic and they appealed for protection from the insolent

Yankee pirates. Jones had brought the war to Great Britain's door and fractured the myth of British naval superiority.

France no longer thought that King George could smash the American Rebellion so, in February 1778, signed a treaty with the Continental Congress. Officially France and England were not yet at war but sea warfare had already begun in earnest. There was a running fight during mid-June which involved British cruisers engaging two French frigates. By July 1778, France and Great Britain were officially at war and this was the beginning of continuing battles for the duration of the war.

(Joel) The Continental Army celebrated the news of the treaty with mirth and jollity. Maypoles were erected in every regimental area. The men adorned their hats with white blossoms and paraded around the camp to fifes and drums, Huzzaing as they passed the poles.

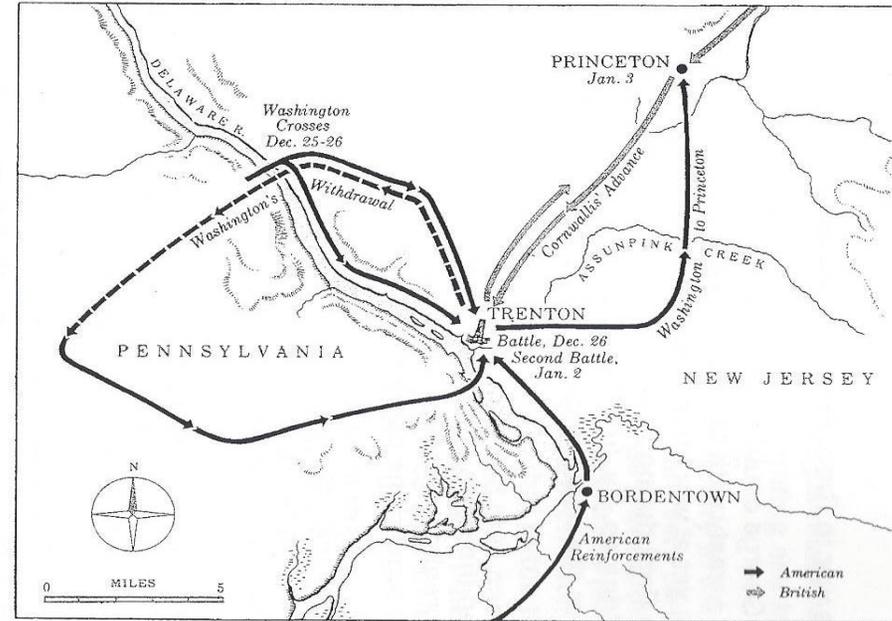
Then the celebration got into full swing with all troops in formation. There were discourses by brigade chaplains, then a thirteen-gun salute, then a *feu de joie* fired by the entire army. Then, upon signal, the whole army gave a Huzza, long live the King of France.

After a second such salute to the friendly European Powers, there was a discharge of thirteen pieces of artillery followed by a Huzza to the American States. Afterward rum was served and festivities continued until dark.

(Dean) A great advantage of the French alliance was the first class French Navy. The American fleet was small and, although capable of brave, dashing feats, was no match for the British fleet. Two months after the treaty signing, a French squadron of twelve war ships commanded by Count D'Estaing sailed for America and arrived at the entrance of the Delaware River eighty-seven days later.

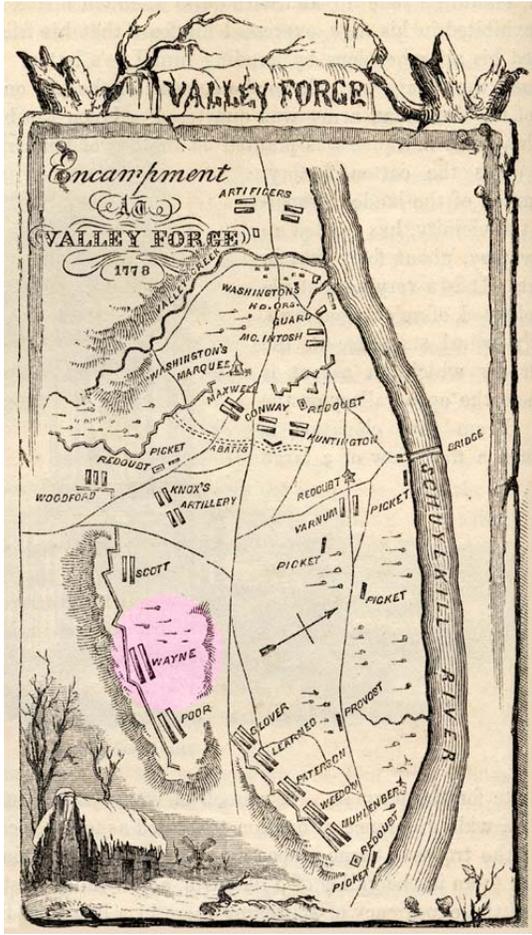
The British had already anticipated the consequences of the French blocking the Delaware and the Americans besieging Philadelphia so they evacuated the city. Washington's objective now became clear--to obstruct the British withdrawal. This culminated in the Battle of Monmouth, involving five American divisions.

# NEW JERSEY-PENNSYLVANIA THEATER



## NEW JERSEY TRIUMPHS: WINTER, 1776-1777

To regain the initiative, Washington left his Pennsylvania winter quarters on Christmas Day, 1776, crossed the icy Delaware and overwhelmed the Hessians at Trenton. Then he returned to Pennsylvania (dotted line). But Americans, arriving by way of Bordentown too late to fight, were endangered near Trenton. Washington recrossed the Delaware to relieve them and was pinned against the river by Cornwallis, who had come rushing down from New York (brown line). Washington slipped boldly past Cornwallis and crushed the British rear guard at Princeton.



**VALLEY FORGE AND WELCOME ENCOURAGEMENT**



Baron von Steuben, once an aide to Frederick the Great, drilled a rabble into an army and more. He shared in the hardships of Valley Forge, helped halt the retreat at Monmouth, and commanded the trenches at Yorktown. Congress rewarded his service, but not with the lump sum that Steuben wished.



The Marquis de Lafayette was 19 when he arrived in America. At first the British mocked him as the "stripling Frenchman." But he soon proved a skillful and valiant officer; and when a group of mutinous generals conspired to replace Washington, Lafayette supported the man who treated him as a son.



King Louis XVI



Captain John Paul Jones



*Lafayette and Washington inspect huddled American troops during the terrible winter at Valley Forge*

## CHAPTER 7

### BATTLE OF MONMOUTH

(Dean) While the Americans were cold and hungry at Valley Forge, the British enjoyed a snug winter in Philadelphia. In early May 1778, Commander-in-chief Gen Howe, asked to be relieved because he no longer saw any chance of ending the rebellion. He returned to England and was replaced on May 24 by Sir Henry Clinton, a "fussy but competent officer."

On June 17 his 10,000 troops began to withdraw to New York City. At first the Americans were confused about Clinton's plans but, as soon as Washington understood what the British were doing, he decided to attack. He now had 12,000 well-drilled men to head-off the British columns and inflict humiliating damage.

Washington ordered Gen Benedict Arnold, whose leg had been broken at Saratoga eight months earlier, to move into Philadelphia and place the city under martial law. Arnold exercised dictatorial powers as Washington directed, including boarding-up stores and ordering merchants to prepare detailed inventories of their stock for possible use by the American army.

Gen Charles Lee had recently been traded for a British general in an exchange of prisoners and Washington had requested him to join his command at Valley Forge. This shortly turned out to be a mistake. Three weeks later, Lee returned from a visit to Congress where he had talked against Washington as being unfit for his command. Neither Washington nor Congress realized that Lee believed the Americans couldn't fight and were bound to lose the war. In fact, while prisoner, Lee had written a plan for the American defeat and given it to British Gen Howe.

(Joel) On June 17, Clinton's main body crossed the Delaware but Washington wasn't logistically prepared to intervene. Instead, he moved his army, less 3,000 ill who remained at Valley Forge, to a position on the Hudson that would pose a threat to the British at New York City.

He directed Gen Lee's First division to cross the Hudson to Jersey by ferry. Gen Lafayette's Third division, which I was in, and the Fifth division were to follow. After the crossing, he directed Gen. Maxwell's men to observe Clinton's march and harass them. Then, when it was needless to pursue any further, they were to file off and gain the Hudson River as quickly as possible.

Clinton had a four-day head start but he was slowed by a cumbersome train almost fifteen miles long. It included field artillery, fifteen hundred wagons and several thousand horses, burdened with officer's personal belongings and women and children.

The weather was stifling with weather in the mid-90s. The Hessians (Germans) were overloaded with individual equipment and plunder. Their throats were parched and their woolen uniforms were soaked with sweat. Some were dropping by the wayside and others were deserting. The Tories, among them, were being

shepherded to the safety of New York with wagon loads of household belongings causing a great encumbrance. The Americans were also thirsty but were lightly clad and carried little equipment.

(Dean) Washington further harassed the withdrawing British by directing Lafayette's division to proceed south and east. If a proper opening developed, he could commit his entire force of 6,000. The American Army was now in an advantageous position and Clinton was in an extremely vulnerable one.

Washington could initiate the action or he could terminate it. He was playing for high stakes. He sensed that if he could destroy Clinton's army, or even wound it deeply, the war would probably wind down and American independence would be assured. Should he suffer a decisive defeat, the cause might be ruined.

(Joel) Washington's orders to Lafayette, however, irritated Lee. Although Lee had earlier declined taking command of the attack force, he changed his mind and now complained that the assignment of such a large command to a young volunteering general was not appropriate. He would be disgraced! Washington acquiesced with a tactful letter to Lafayette informing him that, because of General Lee's distress of mind, he had instead decided to give the command to Lee. This shortly proved to be a serious blunder.

Torrential rains on June 26 broke the heat wave and mired the roads, making it difficult to move supplies. Clinton had similar problems, so directed his supply train on to Sandy Hook while General Cornwallis fought a rear guard action with 800 light infantry. He rested his army at Monmouth Courthouse, New Jersey on June 27.

Washington decided to force a general engagement by attacking Clinton's rear guard division as soon as the British broke camp the following morning. Lee was now at Englishtown, five miles from the British and awaiting specific orders.

(Dean) The next morning, Washington ordered Lee to lead the attack by taking the advanced corps and luring as many British as possible into a fight unless there were powerful reasons to the contrary. Then Washington would come forward with the main body to deliver the crushing blow.

(Joel) The morning had dawned with a cloudless sky. It was described as the "most sultry day of the year...not a zephyr moved the leaves... nature smiled in her beautiful garments of flowers and foliage and the birds caroled with delight... man alone was a discord in a the universal melody."

The British had broken camp before dawn and started marching shortly after sun-up. Lee failed to keep close touch with the enemy though and had limited information on their dispositions and terrain features. Also, as he had not yet become acquainted with his senior officers, his instructions to them were confusing. Consequently, his attack was slow-paced and not properly coordinated.

He caught up with the British near Monmouth Court House on the morning of June 28. This was twelve miles southwest of Sandy Hook, N.J. which would mean

safety for Clinton, where his troops could board ships for New York City.

The British sensed Lee's half-hearted advance and turned on him, forming a battle line to meet the attack. Instead of holding his ground and calling for reinforcements, Lee ordered a retreat without informing Washington. His 5,000 men then trudged back the way they had come.

Washington, still confident that Lee was doing well, continued moving forward with the main body of troops. As he approached the battlefield, he was surprised to see American soldiers retreating who said they were following Lee's orders. Washington at first couldn't believe it. He even ordered one soldier arrested for spreading false rumors. Finally, Washington faced the shocking truth when he met Lee in person.

In a fury, he ordered Lee in disgrace to a reserve holding position. I was nearby and watched Lee leave the field, angry at his chastisement. Lee's military career eventually came to an end, with a courts martial finding him guilty of misbehavior before the enemy and disrespect to the commander-in-chief.

Washington redirected his troops; with Generals Greene, Lafayette and Wayne leading the Americans into a line, to stop the British pursuit. Previous to the battle, I had watched my division commander, Gen. Lafayette, riding his horse along the line of troops talking easily and gaily. As Lafayette came near, I heard him remark, "Hold up your heads my lads, we will go and pick up the fine clothes by and by."

(Dean) The British quickly took advantage of Lee's rout. The Americans soon proved how much they had learned under Gen von Steuben's firm tutelage at Valley Forge. After retreating nearly two miles, they reformed on high ground where they were supported by twelve cannon.

(Joel) The British advanced rapidly with their cannon, and formed into a line of battle about 350 yards from the American front. Both sides then engaged in a furious preparatory artillery exchange. I watched as Washington calmly gave orders during the mayhem.

My division commander, Lafayette, later reminisced, "Never was General Washington greater in war than in this action. His presence stopped the retreat; his dispositions fired the victory; his fine appearance on horseback, his calm courage, roused to animation by the vexations of the morning, gave him the air best calculated to excite enthusiasm. He rode along the lines, amidst the cheers of the soldiers, cheering them by his voice and example and restoring to our standard the fortunes of the fight. I thought then as now that never had I beheld so superb a man."

After their cannonade, the British infantry started advancing. Four times the British hurled themselves against the Americans and were beaten back. The British attempted to turn the left flank of the Americans but were repulsed by a brisk 2 1/2 hours American cannonade. Washington rode nearby and ordered an immediate counterattack. Three hundred of Gen Wayne's troops, led by Col Cilley, aggressively pursued the enemy.

The British then halted and reformed to block the attacking Americans, now

200 yards away. The Americans maneuvered into a battalion formation and continued to advance but were slowed down by rail fences. At the last fence, 60 yards from the enemy, they encountered heavy fire. The British decided that the Americans were determined to close with them so finally disengaged and filed-off to the American's right to reform on the edge of a swamp.

The Americans reacted by "wheeling" to the right and resumed their advance in that direction. The British again opened fire with heavy musket and cannon grape shot as the Americans advanced across an open field. The determined Americans showed their newly learned discipline, though, and held their fire until they arrived at a close range of about 25 yards. Then their entire battalion fired en-mass.

The British retreated again, this time toward their main body which was also giving away. Another British attack to the American's right had likewise been stopped by Gen Greene's artillery.

The Americans now swept over the field of battle, where the British left their dead and wounded. The British nevertheless still managed to reform again across a marsh. Washington attempted to follow-up this momentum; with Gen Poor moving around the British right and Gen Woodford moving around their left. Darkness fell before the Americans could complete the envelopment and the Americans had become too fatigued to continue anyway. The opportunity was now gone but the achievement of Washington's army had been great. Thrown back in disorder, it had put up a disciplined resistance. Thanks to von Steuben, it was no longer a rabble in arms..

Fifty-nine British soldiers had died of heat prostration and 299 others were killed, wounded or missing. American casualties were roughly the same. Washington's superb white horse even collapsed and died from heat prostration. In spite of the many casualties, I saw anger among the troops because they could not continue the advance. I remarked to one irritated captain, "Washington was on the field a little while ago and if we obey his orders I guess we shall do well enough."

I proudly carried our regimental colors while in Lafayette's formation on a small hill back of Washington's command position. It was an excellent vantage point to watch the complex battle action play out. But it was a prime target of enemy artillery and one cannon ball shattered my colors but I miraculously came through unscathed. In later years I often remarked that I never fully recovered from the effects of that very hot day!

The British slipped away during the night toward the ship departure point of Sandy Hook and by July 5, Clinton's army was safe in New York City to Washington's intense disappointment.

The Battle of Monmouth produced the best known lady gunner in history-- "Molly Pitcher," whose real name was Mary Hayes. Her husband, who had once been an artilleryman, fought here as an infantryman. Molly started the day carrying pitchers of water to wounded men suffering from the intense heat and finally to cool the cannons so the gunpowder wouldn't explode when poured into the barrel. Then her husband, noticing a gunner had been shot, put down his musket to help fire the cannon. He in turn was wounded and Molly took his place,

firing the cannon until relieved. Her gallantry was rewarded with a sergeant's warrant.

Americans celebrated Monmouth as a victory while Clinton considered that he had accomplished his mission by bringing his army and belongings safely to New York City. The British, in reality though, had not only lost this battle but they had lost a political struggle as well.

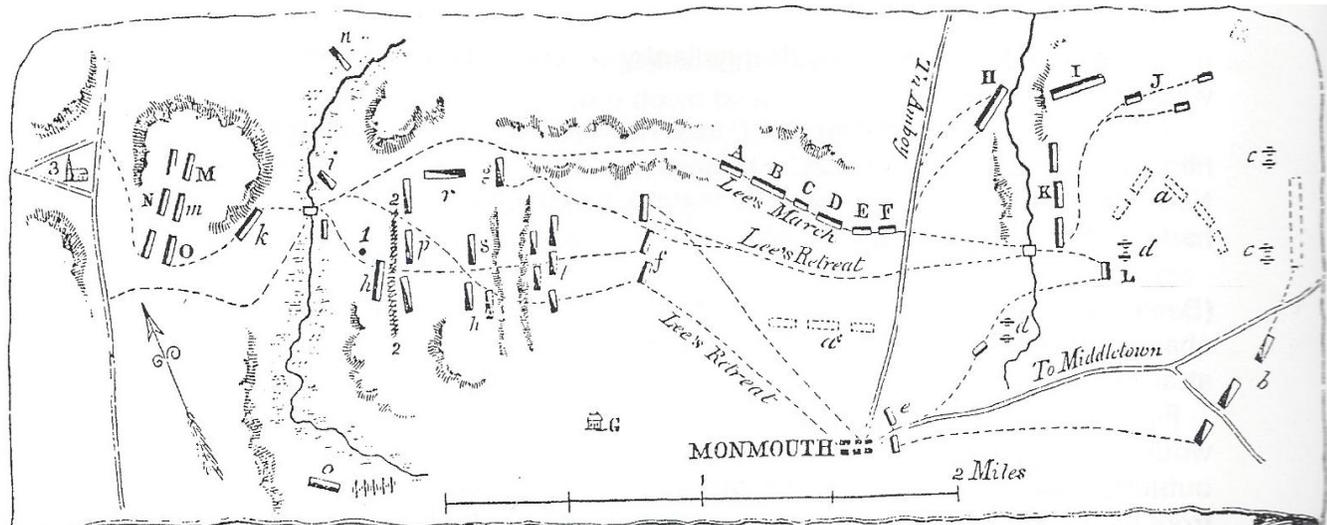
(Dean) Monmouth was the last major battle in the north because the British changed their grand strategy. They decided to instead hold New York City and attack toward the south to conquer Virginia and the Carolinas.

For the next two years, the actions would mostly involved detachments and would be largely indecisive--fluid campaigns. The Americans were usually outnumbered and therefore in the familiar role of drawing the enemy ever further from its bases of supply. Gen. Greene summed it up, "We fight, get beat, rise and fight again." The Americans would not stay down.

That kind of perseverance wore the British down and they began making mistakes. The biggest mistake of all was a compounded one--an accumulation of misjudgments, human errors, and the handiwork of God, which wound up with Cornwallis and 6,000 British troops bottled up in Yorktown to end the war.

(Joel) After the battle of Monmouth, my brigade, under the command of Gen Glover, marched to Rhode Island which had been occupied by the British since December 1776. The French, under Count D'Estainey, were expected to attack one side and the Americans, under Gen Sullivan on the other. However, the French fleet sailed off without assaulting the island and the operation had to be abandoned.

The Americans then entered Providence on September 17, 1778 to be quartered in private homes for the winter. I was promoted to Lieutenant on March 1, 1779 and was in the 15th Regiment until the new organization of the Army in 1781.



Plan of the Battle of Monmouth

Explanation of the plan.—a a, position occupied by the British army the night before the battle. b, British detachment moving toward Monmouth. c c, British batteries. d d, Colonel Oswald's American batteries. e, American troops formed near the court-house. f, first position taken by General Lee in his retreat. g, attack of a party of the British in the woods. h h, positions taken by General Lee. i, a British detachment. k, last position of the retreating troops on the west side of the marsh. m, army formed by General Washington after he met Lee retreating. n, British detachment. o, American battery. p, place of the principal action near the parsonage. r, first position of the British after the action. s, second position. t, place where the British passed the night after the battle. 1, the spot where Washington met Lee retreating. 2, a hedgerow. 3, the Freehold meeting-house, yet standing. A, Maxwell's brigade; B, Wayne's; C, Varnum's; D, Scott's. E and F, Jackson's and Grayson's regiments. G, Carr's house. H, I, and J, the brigades of Maxwell and Scott, with the regiments of Grayson and Jackson, marching to the attack. K and L, Greene and Varnum. M, Lord Stirling. N, La Fayette; and O, Greene, with Washington.



MONMOUTH  
FINAL MAJOR BATTLE IN THE NORTH

# **CHAPTER 8**

## **HIGHLANDS CAMPAIGN**

(Dean) Although the war continued far to the south where the British thought they could still control the southern colonists, Washington was concerned that the British might still try to get behind him to the north. That was where your unit went.

(Joel) That's correct. My brigade left winter quarters in late Spring 1779 and deployed on the highlands along the Hudson River to block British access to Canada. Inhabitants were still worried about destructive British raids. With their superior marine force and command of the coastal waters and rivers, the British could still embark on ships at New York and land at will to overwhelm Washington's thinly spread troops.

So Washington had his army posted there, a tactically safe distance from British headquarters in New York, and on both sides of the river. We patrolled constantly in front of the British lines and kept a constant watch for possible troopship excursions. I remained in this area until the close of the war, participating in several minor engagements.

In early August 1779 I was second in command of about 50 infantry. We, along with about fifty cavalry, were ordered to capture a leading refugee named Barrymore who lived about fifty miles away near Westchester.

We traveled by night but, upon arriving at our destination, couldn't find the man. Instead, we captured a guard detachment of about 20 British with their horses. Upon our return, we were pursued by a larger British cavalry force, which overtook our infantry.

The infantry, at my suggestion, left the road and waded across the swampy area. My captain decided to ride back to camp and leave me in command. Most of our gun powder was wet, so the remaining dry powder was divided up. I told my men that we would burn up our powder and then surrender but not before

Another cavalry lieutenant, before leaving the scene, shouted loudly as though to a large unit of cavalry, "Prime and load, my boys, for use." This caused the British to hesitate and enabled my men to get back onto the road about five miles closer to camp.

We were hit again, forcing us to return to the swamp where we remained until dark. We then managed to return to camp, under darkness, without losing a man. General Howe, a division commander, asked me how I managed to escape capture and then remarked, "That was good generalship."

We remained in this area until winter, maintaining contact with the British, before retiring into winter quarters across the Hudson River from West Point at a place named Soldier's Fortune.

There were many desertions during that winter, especially from the Pennsylvania and New Jersey units. Nearly 100 deserted from our regiment in

January, 1780. They mistakenly contended that their three year enlistment was completed on January 1 rather than later in June when their actual service had begun. I was ordered to find them and bring them back. I located them near Danbury, Connecticut, detained by a violent snowstorm. I persuaded them to return and serve the remainder of their enlistments.

My 22 men occupied a position a few miles forward of the camp for two weeks in February. This position was called the North Redoubt. Afterward, we returned to camp for the remainder of the winter. The campaign in this area remained inactive for the rest of 1780.

(Dean) Benedict Arnold became a traitor near here and switched allegiance to the British. Before this, Washington had appointed him governor of Philadelphia, a post which he felt his dashing field officer could manage in spite of his wounded leg,

(Joel) In a short time Arnold and the civilian authorities were at each other's throats. True to form, he was arrogant and unwilling to compromise. The Philadelphians were suspicious of military men, and thought that Arnold was too lenient with Tories and profiteers.

They also disapproved of his courting a girl 20 years his junior who had danced with British officers during the winter that Washington's army had spent at Valley Forge. The Pennsylvanians complained to the Continental Congress who ordered Arnold to face a courts martial.

While awaiting trial, confident that he would be cleared, Arnold married the girl. Then he took the first step toward treason. Young Mrs. Arnold knew a handsome young British officer, named Maj. John Andre on Clinton's staff. The Arnolds wrote secretly to Andre, offering to desert the American cause and fight for the British.

(Dean) January 1780, the military court determined that Arnold had not committed any crimes but that he had been imprudent. The court ordered Washington to give Arnold an official reprimand. Arnold was furious! Washington, who respected the man's great fighting ability, made the reprimand as mild as possible. He was probably the most courageous and intrepid American commander, which makes the well-known tale so tragic.

(Joel) Because he had not been completely cleared, Arnold decided to close his bargain with the British and do more than just change sides. He also offered to betray the fort at West Point with at least 3,000 American soldiers for 20,000 pounds and receive a rank of general in the British Army.

Then he asked Washington to give him the command at West Point, which Washington did. Eventually Arnold's treachery was discovered when, by coincidence, Washington was inspecting West Point and arrived at Arnold's house September 25 and found him missing. Washington still suspected nothing until that afternoon when a rider delivered a message with telltale evidence of treason by Arnold. By this time Arnold had reached New York City and the safety

of the British camp. Arnold subsequently served as a British general against the Americans but lost respect from the British as well.

(Dean) Andre was tried by a courts martial and hanged as a spy. He wished to die like a soldier and therefore wrote a letter to Washington requesting death with military dignity. He was marched to the place of execution, passing a crowd of curious spectators. They saw a well dressed youth in the bloom of life, walking with firmness and dignity between two officers of his guard with his arm locked in theirs.

(Joel) He asked, "Must I die in this manner?" He was told that it was unavoidable and he replied, "I am reconciled to my fate but not to the mode, but it will be but a momentary pain." When he was asked if he had anything more to say, he answered, "You will witness to the world that I died like a brave man." The execution became the subject of severe censures. If it could have been determined that there were no more Arnolds in America, perhaps Andre's life could have been spared.

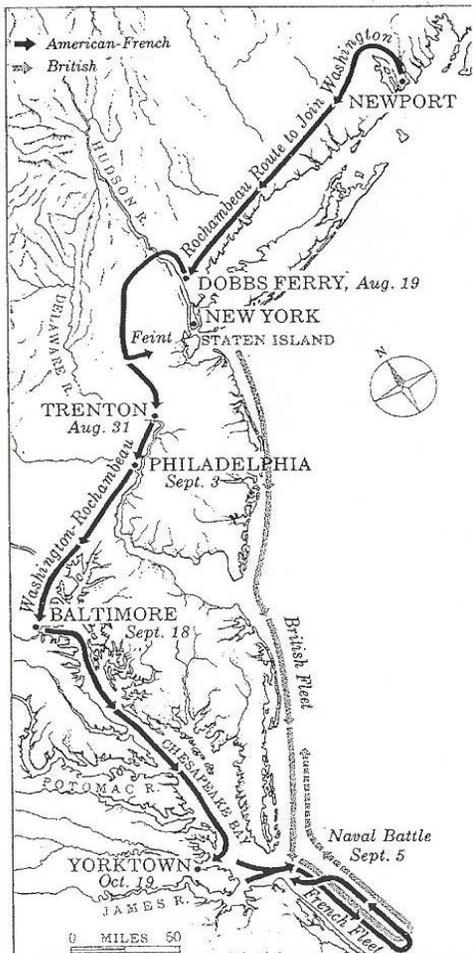
(Dean) Washington's wife, Martha, had never seen her husband so harassed and discouraged as during that period. Clinton had sailed from New York with a large British fleet to presumably join other forces at Savanna, Georgia, and move north toward Charleston, South Carolina. More raids into New Jersey had also caused severe American losses.

Then sudden hope came in May. Lafayette had returned from France with the welcome news that six French ships and 6,000 well-trained troops would arrive the next month. They were to participate in joint operations for the capture of New York. A few weeks later, though, Washington again became worried when the Americans lost Charleston to Clinton and Cornwallis.



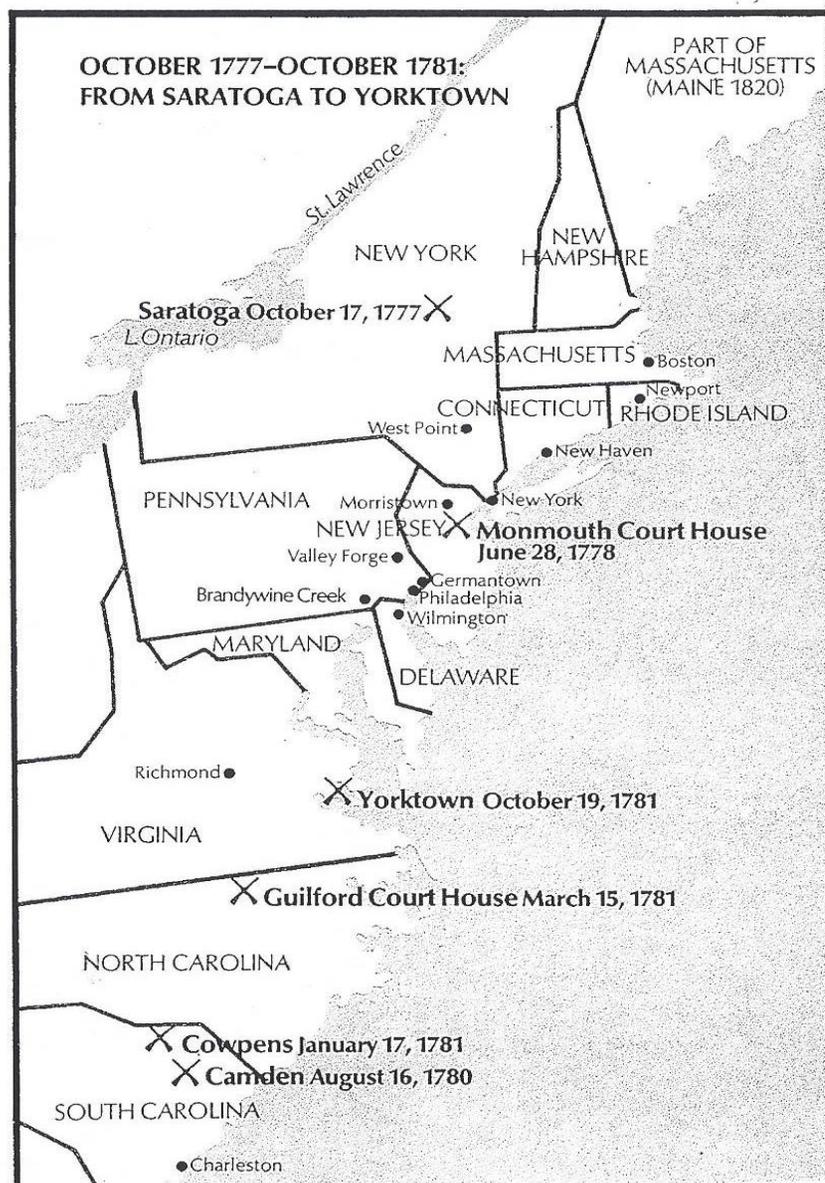


AN INFAMOUS HULK, the British prison ship *Jersey* lies at anchor off Brooklyn. This floating concentration camp was the most notorious of a group of these noisome vessels. Once a proud ship of the line, she was filled with agony and disease, a ship that meant death for some 11,000 American prisoners.

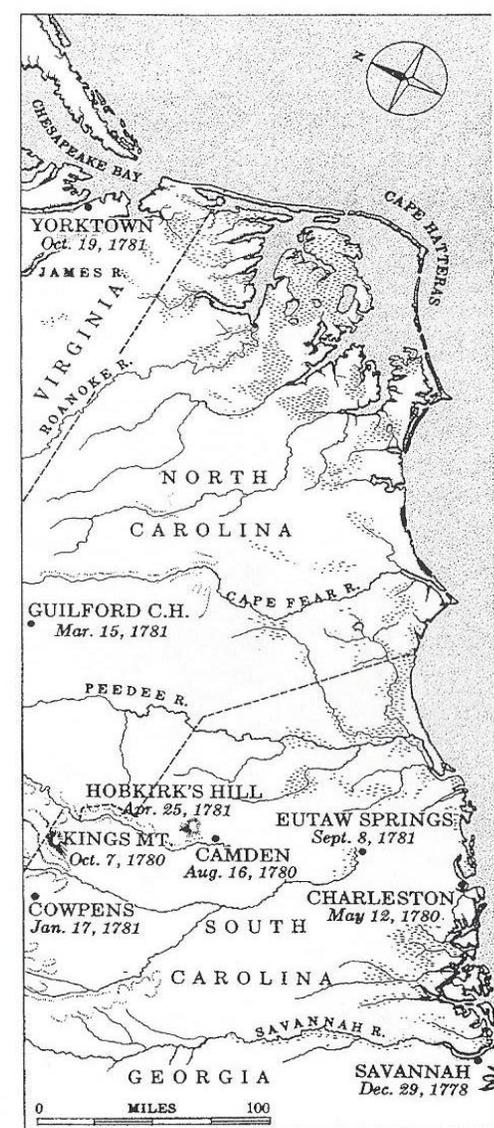


### THE TRAP AT YORKTOWN; AUTUMN, 1781

Seizing a splendid opportunity, Washington determined to march from New York to Yorktown (black line) and trap the British. Joined at Dobbs Ferry by Rochambeau's French troops, he crossed the Hudson to Stony Point, feinted at General Clinton, then sped south. The British, suddenly aware of his bold plan, rushed their own fleet south (brown line), but they were forced to withdraw after a battle with the French off Virginia. DeGrasse then sailed up the Chesapeake to Baltimore and ferried the Allied armies to begin the siege that ended the Revolution.

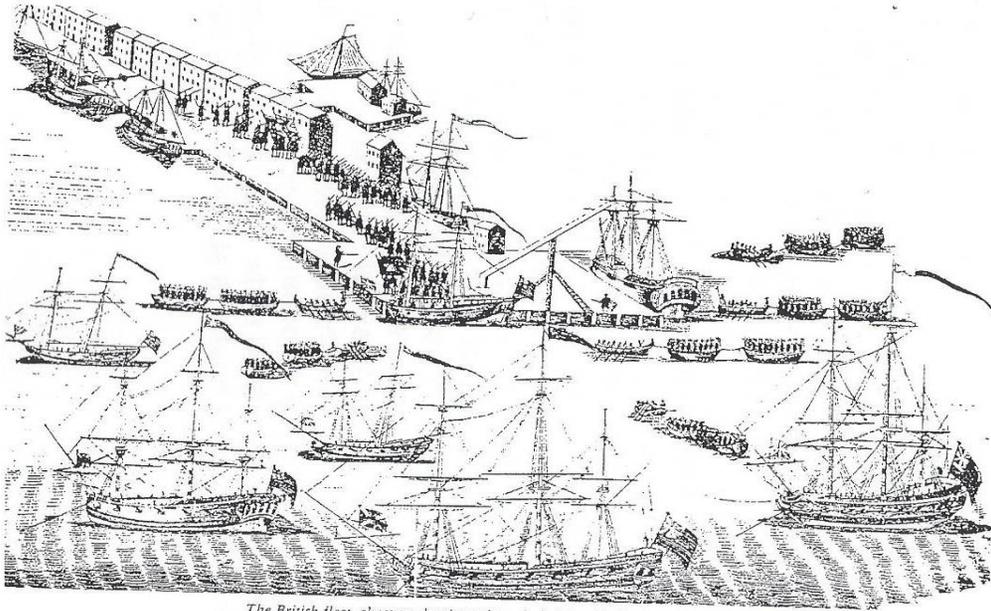


Map showing the pattern of fighting after Saratoga. Washington's forces moved down to Valley Forge and New Jersey. In 1780, other Continentals began moving up from the South.



### SOUTHERN CAMPAIGNS 1778-1781

Most of the battles during the last three years of the Revolution were fought in the South, over the vast territory from Georgia to Virginia. The campaigning started with the first British victory at Savannah, and in the months that followed, the principal American triumphs were on King's Mountain at Coupens. There were patriot defeats at Charleston, Camden and Guilford Court House. The British were the technical victors at Hobkirk's Hill and Eutaw Springs. But in the end, the Americans did so much damage that the redcoats at last withdrew to fortify Yorktown.



The British fleet, always a dominant force in helping England control its colonies, failed to arrive at Yorktown in time to influence the outcome of the battle.

FACSIMILE OF THE SURRENDER OF LORD CORNWALLIS AT YORKTOWN

Articles of Capitulation settled between his Excellency General Washington Commander in Chief of the combined Forces of America & France — His Excellency The Count de Rochambeau Lieutenant General of the Armies of the King of France — Great Cross of the Royal & Military Order of St Louis — Commanding the Army

Troops of his most Christian Majesty in America — and his Excellency the Count de Grasse Lieutenant General of the Naval Armies of his most Christian Majesty, Commander of the Order of St Louis, command in Chief the Naval Army of France in the Chesapeake — on the one part — and His Excellency The Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> Earl Cornwallis Lieut General of His Britannick Majesty's Forces, commanding the Garrison of York & Gloucester and Thomas Symonds Esq<sup>r</sup> Commanding His Britannick Majesty's Naval forces in York River in Virginia on the other part.

Article 1<sup>st</sup>

The Garrison of York & Gloucester including the officers & Crews of his Britannick Majesty's Ships as well as other Marines, to surrender themselves Prisoners of War to the combined Forces of America & France. — The Land Troops to

Article 1<sup>st</sup>

Granted

## CHAPTER 9

### WINTER QUARTERS, 1780-1781 TO FORMAL PEACE IN 1783

(Dean) You went into winter quarters and had the honor of being commander of the security guard at Washington's headquarters.

(Joel) During the following winter of 1780-1781, while the war raged in South Carolina, New England troops under General Heath continued to occupy the highland area of the north, monitoring British Lt.Gen. Kniphausen's troop movements. Then a major new problem developed among Washington's troops over grievances of pay and the Spartan living conditions. Martha's agreeable face was especially welcome to her tortured husband when she again joined him in December at his winter headquarters..

I indeed had the extreme honor of commanding the security guard at General Washington's New Windsor headquarters, located near the army's winter encampment at Morristown, New Jersey. This was only twenty miles west from the British army encampment at New York. We again moved into log huts like those first introduced at Valley Forge and were used for the second winter here.

I was detached for this service on three occasions of two weeks durations each. During this duty I was accepted as a member of Washington's staff--even eating at the table with George and Martha Washington. It was quite an accomplishment for a young man such as me who had grown up with no family life and no formal schooling. I learned some interesting things about George and Martha during those times.

During my extraordinarily fortunate exposure to Washington I found him to be a pious man, his opinions being in favor of religion and his habits all of that character and description.

A soldier arrived one morning about daybreak with dispatches from a division. As soon as his business was known, he was directed to me as captain of the guard and gave me the dispatch papers. On my way to Washington's room, after reaching his house, I had to go along a dark narrow hall. As I approached his door, I heard the general's voice engaged in prayer. He apparently had not heard my footsteps or if he had I figured had he didn't want to be interrupted so I left for awhile and returned later to deliver the dispatch.

I later heard about a boy, Cornelius Doremus, who waited on Washington when Washington quartered part of a winter at his father's house. The boy's bedroom was directly over Washington's and he often heard the sound of that deep and earnest voice in private prayer.

Washington was noted for devoting a part of every day to private prayer and devotion. At times, when Washington wasn't able to attend divine service in camp, he would ride to attend some neighboring church, frequently riding ten or

twelve miles. He wrote to his friend, William Goirdon during this time, "We have, as you very justly observe, abundant reasons to thank Providence for its many favorable interpositions in our behalf. It has, at times, been my only dependence after all other resources seem to have failed us."

(Dean) General Washington left the greater portion of the northern army under the command of General Heath in the blocking action campaign of 1781. You were part of this weren't you? This freed him to brilliantly orchestrate American and French land and naval forces in an assault on the strong British position at Yorktown, Virginia. This collimated in the crucial British surrender by General Cornwallis, ending the war on October 19, 1781. Only very minor skirmishing occurred from then until formal peace was declared September 23, 1783.

Now Washington could finally do what he had always wanted--live the life of a gentleman farmer at his Mount Vernon home. At the close of his emotional commission resignation ceremony, he said, "I consider it an indispensable duty to close this last solemn act of my official life by commending the interests of our dearest country to the protection of Almighty God, and of those who have superintendence of them to His holy keeping...Having now finished the work assigned me, I retire from the great theatre of action, and bidding farewell to this august body under whose orders I have so long acted, I offer my commission and take my leave of all the employments of public life." Little did he realize that God still had more plans for him--to become the first President of the new country forged out of the crucible of a difficult period.

(Joel) Yes, that was the action I previously told about. After that I was honorably discharged by Washington at Newberg, Massachusetts in June 1783, when I was thirty one, and returned to the home of Abraham Wood Sept. 3, 1783. I had served my country since the fall of 1774 for nine years. I married my first wife, Charlotte Ball, two years later December 23, 1785 and we lived happily together for 44 years until she died November, 10, 1829. I remarried 6 years later to widow, Phoebe Wilbur.

(Dean) Charlotte is my ancestor. Your second son with her, John, was my ancestor who had a son named Silas. He listened to you telling lively tales about your experiences in the war.

I have also recently done some genealogical research into Charlotte's Ball ancestry and discovered that her Ball line very possibly extends back to a common ancestor with George Washington, since his mother was also a Ball.

That could be Capt William Ball (1573-1649) who was born in England and died in New haven, Ct. If so; I figure that common ancestor could be about Washington's 2<sup>nd</sup> great grandfather, Charlotte's 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> great grandfather, and my 9<sup>th</sup> great grandfather. Future genealogy-minded descendants may follow-up on this trivia.

(To the reader) Joel Pratt remained healthy during his life to the age of 92, passing away November 10, 1844 when his grandson, Silas, was 12. Joel often

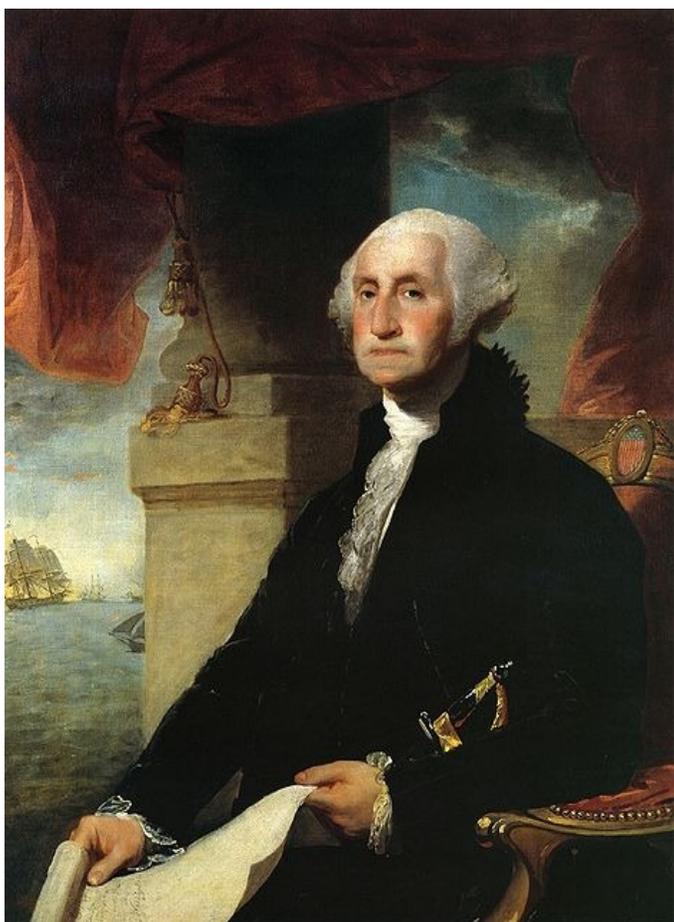
commented about his health being so much better after leaving the army.

He kept a strong spirit of the Revolution. He was a charter member of the *Society of the Cincinnati*, organized by Maj Gen Henry Knox, Washington's heavy-set artillery general, in 1783 for officers of the Revolutionary Army to perpetuate friendship and to raise funds for the relief of widows and orphans of the fallen. The officers of this society have remained hereditary, ever since, to the oldest male member of the original member of the society.

After the war, Joel was a very active man and a capable farmer, ingenuously making many of his own agricultural tools. He was an excellent vocalist and loved to lead singing groups and to compose music. He led the singing at a procession in honor of General Washington's birthday, the first year after his death.

He was a fine example of a self-made man and lived a long, active and useful life after enduring the extreme hardships of his youth in the service of his country. He accepted disappointments and suffering with no complaining, he was good natured and loved children. Modesty was one of his most striking characteristics.

These highlights of his life were difficult to get from him. In the words of remembrance spoken at his funeral, "He was a brave soldier, a good father and husband, and an exemplary citizen and neighbor. His character was of an enlarged nature. He condemned no man and thought the worst of no one for their religious opinion." Silas passed on this legend of his grandfather to his children, one of whom was my grandmother "Nell."



George Washington: "The Atlas of America and the God of the Army"



Washington's headquarters at Tappan



Martha Washington



The triumphant return of General Washington to New York in 1783

## GEORGE WASHINGTON TRIUMPHS IN PEACE

## Eulogy at Joel Pratt's funeral Nov. 17, 1844 By Rev. Forsdick in Sterling, Mass.

On the occasion of the death of Lieut. Joel Pratt, nearly 93 years of age--text Psalms 44:1 "We have heard with our ears, O Lord, our fathers have told us what work thou didst in their days in the times of old"...

(He then referred to the doctrine of divine providence, leading our new country through the perils of the Revolutionary War and he then continued at length about the importance of being a believer in God before he talked about Joel Pratt.)

Joel Pratt was born in Oxford, Mass., Feb. 2, 1762. The name of his father was David and his occupation that of farming. His mother's maiden name was Brewer. The father died before the son was old enough to know him. When he was one and a half years old his mother placed him under the care of his grandmother Brewer at Framingham.

At that age, he was removed to Shrewsbury, a part of which is now Boylston (to Noah Harris), where he stayed 8 or 9 months--then to Worcester where he stayed about a year and then, when about 10 years of age, to Capt. Jesse Bingham in Northborough, with whom he lived until he became 21, being bound to him by indenture from the age of 14 to his majority.

His guardian was Henry Bassett. The terms of contract with Capt. Brigham provided for considerable advantage in schooling but, during the whole period of the contract, he was allowed to attend school only one month. His situation in other respects was also one of hardships and ill usage.

At the age of 21, he hired himself out for 6 months in succession to a widow Brigham of Marlboro as a laborer on her farm. During the last 6 months, she married Judge Joseph Wilder of Lancaster and Pratt remained a third 6 months on her farm. Then he moved to Northborough to work in the clothier trade with Mr. Adam Wood, a man of some note as a musician, and they had a long friendship.

In the fall of 1774, before the Revolutionary War broke out, Pratt joined a company of fifty minute-men in Northborough under Capt. Samuel Wood. On April 10<sup>th</sup>, 1775, the town voted to pay the men one shilling for each half day of military training. On April 19, after they had paraded in front of the town meeting house and were waiting for an address by their minister, Mr. Whitney at about 10 p.m., was when they heard about the fighting at Lexington.

They were ordered to immediately go home and prepare to march to the scene of hostilities and return back to the home of Capt. Wood within 2 hours. When their ranks were formed again in the yard of Capt. Wood, Pastor Whitney gave a short prayer for the blessing of God (I have stood at this exact place) and they immediately marched on through Concord to Lexington. Upon their arrival at Lexington, the British had retreated to Boston.

The company was marched to Cambridge, headquarters of Gen. Ward their commander in chief of the American forces. They remained there until the battle of Breed's Hill, commonly called Bunker Hill. Capt. Wood's company and the other companies were divided into two parts--half marching to Breed's Hill on

the evening of June 16 and the other half remaining at Cambridge.

Mr. Pratt took a severe cold from exposure to such hardships as lying on a bed of straw in a tent and other deprivations of comfort which he experienced. He became very sick and obtained a certificate to that effect from Dr Flint of Shrewsbury, surgeon of the regiment. He was carried the latter part of the way and had gone as far as Marlboro, when he was obliged to stop in the home of Capt. William Brigham. He had a violent fever and it was several weeks before he could be moved. He was then carried to the home of Mr. Abraham Wood.

After 2 or 3 months absence, he returned again to camp. During his sickness, the quarters of his company had been changed from Cambridge to Dorchester. He remained this time but about a month in camp.

Mr. Wood was desirous to have his service in the fulling mill and hire another man to take his place. The father of Silas Bailey, a stone cutter in Worcester, took his place as a soldier. Mr. Pratt was in the service this year about 6 months, including the period of his sickness. He spent the winter with Mr. Wood.

In 1776, a requisition was made for more men to go to New York. He was enlisted for 5 months as sergeant in a company of newly formed enrollees from Northborough and neighboring towns under the command of Capt. Jonathan Houghton of Belton.

He left Northborough in June with his company and went by way of Springfield to New York. He remained there until the evacuation of New York by the American army September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1776. Mr. Pratt had been sick for about a fortnight with dysentery and was very weak. He and two other men, James Johnson and Abner Bruce, hired a Dutchman to carry them a little way and then walked on as well as they could.

They were out several nights, ate nothing of consequence, and one night or oftener slept in a barn. They had been ordered to quarter in a family by the name of Meigs, at a place called Horse Neck, in Connecticut. The old lady asked Mr. Pratt if he would like some milk porridge. He replied, "Yes, if I can have some bread. Besides the porridge, he ate roast apples, milk and other fruit--he believed it was the fruit which cured him.

Of the three men he was the sickest, but was the first to get well. He was at Horse Neck about a fortnight. The places for the sick soldiers in that vicinity were provided by a Capt. Reed, belonging, as he believed to Boston. In this way, nearly all the sick soldiers in that vicinity were distributed around the country.

When he got considerably better, his Capt. came to see him and told him to take his gun, his accouterments, and pack and rejoin the army. He replied that he was not strong enough to carry his pack. "Well then" said the Capt., "it must be left." Pratt replied, "I will not leave it--if my pack can be carried, I will carry my gun and accouterments." His pack was carried and Mr. Pratt rejoined the army just before the battle of White Plains, Oct. 28, 1776.

Soon after his period of enlistment had expired, he returned home to Northborough, where he remained during the winter at work with Mr. Hood. He thought, on his return, he would never volunteer again for the war--but in June, 1776, there was a new demand for troops to serve for three years or duration of the war. There were 13 or 14 men to be raised in Northborough for this term of

the service. There was some reluctance manifested respecting enlistment. A few, from previous service, called themselves old soldiers. At length Mr. Pratt, seeing the hesitation, exclaimed, "What signifies, let us serve our country"—the rejoinder was that if you will turn out, we will. So, to use Mr. Pratt's own words, he was, "Shiftless enough to turn out first and the rest of them soon followed".

The representative of Northborough in the general court was Col. Winslow Brigham. He told Mr. Pratt he should be recommended for a commission. Said Mr. Pratt, "I shall not thank you for it". It would have been thought, in a pecuniary respect, far better for him to have gone as a private soldier and received town and state bounties which were very considerable and which he had already lost by his commission as an ensign. But, in this supposition, he must have calculated on receiving a commission after commencing service--since he would have been far worse off had he continued as a private. His pay as sergeant was \$8.00 a month compared to an ensign's \$20.00.

His company was commanded by Capt. Daniel Barnes of Marlboro, and belonged to the 15<sup>th</sup> Massachusetts Regiment of which Timothy Bigelow of Worcester was Col. The 1st Lieut. of the company was a man named Davidson of Grafton, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieut. was Moses Roberts of Marlboro. The company marched through Springfield to Albany, and thence to Bemis Heights.

They didn't arrive in time to participate in the battle of Bemis Height on the 19<sup>th</sup> of Sept. but Mr. Pratt was in the following battle of Saratoga. Mr. Pratt saw the formalities of Burgoyne's surrender--the British marched out to stack their arms and Burgoyne march up to meet Gen. Gates.

On that same evening, the Brigade to which Mr. Pratt belonged, marched all night to Albany. Many were so fatigued that they could not keep on, but dropped down by the way. It had been thought that Gen. Clinton was coming up the Hudson from New York to Albany to form a junction with Burgoyne; but he did not come to Albany.

The tents of the American forces were pitched, at their arrival, on a plain above Albany. A violent storm prostrated their tents, so the main part of the troops went into the city but Mr. Pratt stayed out on the plain. After some days, the brigade moved to where it remained but a short time. The brigade was commanded by Gen. Glover and consisted of the following Mass. regiments: the first under Col. Vose, the 9<sup>th</sup> under Col. Shepherd, the 13<sup>th</sup> under Col. Wigglesworth and the 16<sup>th</sup> to which Mr. Pratt belonged, was under Col. Bigelow.

In November, the brigade marched on toward Philadelphia. This march was one of great hardships, especially after reaching Pennsylvania. Their store of provisions was scanty--fresh beef was furnished in small quantities and the army was obliged to bake their own provisions in ashes. Their clothing became more and more poor and ragged during the winter. They had no tents and lay out 20 nights in December in the open field. They were encamped under the command of Washington at White Marsh while the British were out from Philadelphia and a battle was expected.

The soldiers made fires of the neighboring fences, rolled their blankets around them and as Mr. Pratt said "We lay like cattle in the open air, the smoke from the fires at times almost suffocated us." No one froze and there was but little snow in

that region during that winter.

The British stayed out from Philadelphia until the end of December. Some skirmishing occurred but there was no general action. The British then went back into Philadelphia to winter. The Americans marched to Valley Forge back of Philadelphia for the same purpose. On the march from to White Marsh, Mr. Pratt had a smart attack of rheumatism in his right hip which at one time he thought would make it necessary for him to be left behind, but he kept on and as he said, "tire it out" and at Valley Forge the army occupied what was called a hut camp.

Log huts were constructed from trees which they felled themselves. The roofs were made of logs, interwoven with branches which were then covered with earth. Some were a good deal troubled by the rain and mud which penetrated these huts. The army, in general, was inoculated with the small pox that winter and Mr. Pratt was made quite sickly by it.

Other diseases ravaged the camp. After suffering from several other disorders, he took a fever in March from which he did not seem to recover for several weeks. When he was first taken sick, he was urged to go to the hospital but as he said, he felt they were dying off too fast there and refused to go. He was then told he must go out of the camp into the neighboring country, if he would not go to the hospital.

He went out four or five miles from camp and came to a noble stone farmhouse occupied by an Irish family. At the head of the family was a widow lady of advanced age. He begged entrance and with some difficulty obtained it. The people in the neighborhood were not generally glad to see soldiers. The next day he was so sick that he could not leave. He told his hostess she might turn him out doors if she pleased, but he could not go alone. She kept him during his sickness though. An army surgeon visited him every day for awhile, until at length the old lady told him if he would give up medicine, she would try what she could do for his recovery. For three nights in succession she used means to throw him into a copious perspiration. He at last recovered and in the month of May rejoined the army at Valley Forge. Soon after, the line of march was taken up for the northward.

The year 1778, the news of the French alliance encouraged the hearts of the Americans and rendered Philadelphia a dangerous post for the British. Sir Henry Clinton consequently set about evaluating Philadelphia and removing to New York.

Washington did not know at first whether he would go by land or water. When he found he intended to march by land through New Jersey, he sent forces onward in advance (and among them was Mr. Pratt), to break bridges, fell trees and in every possible way to obstruct the progress of the British. Nothing serious occurred until they reached Monmouth.

The battle of Monmouth occurred June 28, 1778. In that battle, there were five divisions of the American army under Gen. Lee: LaFayette, Greene, Wayne, Stewart, and Scott. Mr. Pratt was in Gen Lafayette's division. He has often said that when the line of battle was formed, Lafayette, then a young and gallant looking officer, came riding along the line talking easily and gaily as he rode-- he heard him say as he came opposite to where he stood, "Hold up your heads my

lads, we will go and pick up the fine clothes by and by". He saw Washington on the field calmly giving orders, after the balls began to pass both ways. In this battle, Mr. Pratt again carried the colors of the regiment.

After a sharp contest, the British fell back. The Americans then received orders to fall back likewise and a cessation of hostilities took place. Capt. Joshua Brown of Bolton stood next to Mr. Pratt, when the order to fall back was given, and evinced some anger that the forces were not ordered to advance. Mr. Pratt made a reply which illustrates the unbounded confidence of the army in Washington. Said he to the irritated captain, "Washington was on the field a little while ago and if we obey orders, I guess we shall do well enough".

Many were killed in this battle on both sides. The day was excessively hot and many deaths were caused, especially among the British merely from heat and thirst. The Americans were clad in their light fatigues while the British were clad in their burdensome uniforms. Mr. Pratt supposed that he never fully recovered from the heat of that day.

At evening, the American army moved forward to the battleground and spent the night there. In the morning, the British army had decamped. Mr. Pratt escaped being wounded in battle. He saw the heads of Capt. Monroe and a private of the same name, who were only the second platoon distant from him, struck off by a cannon ball and another cannon ball shattered Mr. Pratt's colors over his head. Before this mischance, he used to say they were as handsome colors as any in the army.

From 8 or 9 o'clock on the morning of the battle until the evening of the next day, over a period of 36 hours, they had no food. On the morning of the battle, they left their baggage a few miles before they came up with the enemy and they did not leave the battle ground to return to their baggage until afternoon of the next day.

On the second day after the battle, Capt. Roberts of Marlboro, then the only lieut. (though doing adjutant's duty) and Mr. Pratt went into the woods after water the distance of a mile from camp. They found some cows in the open pasture and milked one of them into their horn cups, each standing sentry in turn.

After the Battle of Monmouth, the brigade, under the command of Gen. Glover, took their march for Rhode Island. The British had been in possession of the island from Dec. 1776. It was expected that the French, under Count D'Estaing, would attack it upon one side and the Americans, under Gen. Sullivan, on the other. The French fleet, however, sailed away to Boston without an assault on the island. The Americans consequently were compelled to leave their positions as quickly as possible. In the month of September, the American troops entered Providence, where they were quartered in private houses during the following winter.

The date of Mr. Pratt's commission as Lieut.--I do not know but it was probably conferred soon after the Battle of Monmouth, at least some time between that and the opening of the next campaign. He was, as we have seen, an ensign in that battle and he had a lieutenant's command the following season. (He was actually promoted on April 2, 1779 when he was in the 15th Mass. Regiment)

In the latter part of the spring of 1779, Mr. Pratt was ordered to the State of New

York. The highlands, on the Hudson, were points of great importance in the view of Gen. Washington—partly, if not chiefly, because he wished to keep the British at New York from gaining access to Canada. Somewhere among these highlands Mr. Pratt was probably stationed there until the close of the war. He was engaged in several slight expeditions during this period, one of which was very much to his personal credit.

In the early part of August 1779, while he was stationed at Pound Ridge, an expedition was undertaken for the capture of a leading refugee named Barrymore, who lived 18 or 20 miles off from East Chester in New York. The party, who set out to seize him, constituted about 50 infantry under the command of a captain (to whom Pratt was 2<sup>nd</sup> under command) and a corps of cavalry, about 80 in number--all under the command of Lt. Col. White.

They set off at sundown and reached the place of their destination about daylight. They failed in their object, perhaps through false information, but they carried off instead a guard, consisting of a Lieut., sergeant, corporal and 20 men with 20 or 30 horses.

The American party of cavalry reached West Chester first. They mounted the horses of the enemy and drove their own horses before them, taking the prisoners on behind them. They were pursued by a much larger number of British horses and the American infantry of course were overtaken. They were attacked 5 or 6 miles on their return. By this time, the sun had been up sometime. At the suggestion of Lieut. Pratt, the infantry turned off from the road into a swamp, fording a pond on the way. Before reaching the pond, a pistol shot fired by one of the pursuing horsemen, passed through Lieut. Pratt's stock and killed a man from Marlboro by his side. The pond was 15 or 20 rods across and in one spot the water was up to his arm pits.

Capt. Pope took a horse as soon as they had crossed the pond and made the rest of his way to camp, leaving Lieut. Pratt to command his party. Much of their ammunition had become wet in wading through the water. Lieut. Pratt divided among them what was left dry and told them, "We'll burn up our powder and then surrender-- not before". Lieut. Gill of the cavalry party, stayed with them a good while and did what he could to help them. He called out with a strenuous voice from the edge of the wood on the other side of the pond, as he thought they were addressing a large party of cavalry in the wood. "Prime and load my boys for use", and thus deterred the British from advancing. At least, he told the infantry he could do no more for them and set off himself for camp.

After passing through a swamp, the party of infantry at length came out upon the road again and got 4 or 5 miles further on. Again they were assailed by the British horse on the road. Again they betook themselves to the swamp. Before long, Mr. Pratt sent a spy to reconnoiter.

The British were discovered watching on the side of the swamp, opposite to that at which they entered. They remained in the swamp all day and at night cautiously stole back by the road to camp. In this whole affair but one man was lost. Gen. Robert Howe was commander of this division and when Lieut. Pratt's party came into quarters in the night, he asked how he had managed to come off as well. Mr. Pratt replied that he had hid his men in a swamp. "That was good

generalship", said his commander. After this, Mr. Pratt was on the lines until winter, watching the enemy.

During this winter, there were some serious desertions from the American army, especially from the Pennsylvania and Jersey lines. In January, 1780, between 80 and 100 men deserted from the regiment and set forward on their way home. They did so under a mistake, having enlisted for 3 years and supposing their time was out, the order of enlistment being dated Jan. 1, 1777, but their actual time of service began in June.

Lieut. Pratt was ordered to go for them and march them back to camp. He went as far as Danbury, Conn., where they were detained some time by a violent snow storm and persuaded them it was best for them to serve out their enlistment of a full 3 years, and they quietly returned with him to camp.

In Feb. of this year, he was sent away for a fortnight, 3 or 4 miles from camp with a sergeant, corporal and 20 men to command what was called the North Redoubt. He returned to camp for the winter.

The campaign of 1780 was an inactive one in the north. During this season, Arnold made his attempt of treachery concerning West Point, near where Mr. Pratt was stationed. During the winter season of 1780 and 1781, the highlands on both sides of the river were occupied by troops from New England under Gen. Heath. There they waited patiently the movements of the British. During this winter quarter, he was thrice detached for a fortnight each time as commander of Washington's guard at his quarters on the Hudson, a few miles above West Point. As Commander of the Guard, he was a member of Washington's family--eating at his table with Mrs. Washington, who was at her husband's quarters during the winter.

In the campaign of 1781, Gen Washington left the greater portion of the Northern Army under the command of Gen. Heath and he himself took command of an army of French and Americans, designated to make headway against the British in Virginia. The surrender of Cornwallis at Yorktown took place Oct. 19, 1781. This closed the war, with no general action occurring afterward throughout the country, except for a little skirmishing. Peace was declared Sept. 23, 1783.

At the close of the war, Mr. Pratt returned home, being then about 31 or 32 years old. He went into the service of his country when the first blood was shed in 1775 and in succeeding campaigns until the contest was fully ended. He then returned to the home of his friend, Mrs. Abraham Wood, to work at his farmer's trade.

When he was not far from 32 years old, he married Miss Charlotte Ball of Northborough. He removed to Sterling April 6, 1786--so he had lived in Sterling nearly 60 years, a period sufficient to establish a long life in itself. He and his wife united with this church Oct. 18, 1795. His first wife died Nov. 10, 1829 and he was married again to Mrs. Phoebe Wilburn May 2, 1835.

Until a few years ago, he was remarkably free from all infirmities in his old age. His health, he used to say, was much better after he left the army or before he had entered it. About 6 years ago, he broke his left hip by a fall and since that time had been far more infirm than before. But still to the last, he was courageous and persevering in exerting his bodily powers as much as possible.

He seemed reluctant to yield to the domination of old age, without resolute contest. There was something of the spirit of the Revolution in his determination to keep active as long as it was in his power to do so. He was an original member of the Cincinnati Society--formed in 1783 by the officers of the Revolutionary War to perpetuate their mutual friendship and to raise funds for the relief of the widows and orphans of those officers who had fallen during the war. The name Cincinnati was adopted as emblematic of the character of the American Army. The honors of the society were made hereditary in the oldest male line of the original member of the society who was present and was honored accordingly.

He was at a meeting in his house and attended the communion service Sunday before last. On Sunday last Nov. 10, he died at the very advanced age of 92 years 9 months and 8 days.....(Continues--reflecting back to those very few lingering war veterans, quoting a poem and praying for our country. Then he resumes with more, comparing Pratt's civilian life as follows):

When Mr. Pratt left the army, he resumed his former habits of industry. Very many of the officers and soldiers of the Revolution became indolent and almost useless members of society on their return to peaceful scenes. The influence of a camp was such as to breakup the tenure of their career. He, who has been long a soldier in actual service, finds it hard to pursue regular toil. But Mr. Pratt did not yield, like too many others, to the tyranny of inaction. As we have seen, he worked at his old trade with his old friend, Mr. Abraham Wood until his departure from Northborough to Sterling when he became a farmer, resuming the occupation of his earlier youth.

As a farmer, his ability was at a level equal to the average ability of his neighbors. He was a hard working man. He could reap and perform some other farming duties as an equal with the best. He made his own agricultural tools to a considerable extent and evinced not a little agricultural ingenuity.

Mr. Pratt was, in the earlier period of his life, like his friend, Mr. Wood, distinguished for skill in vocal voice. He, at times, held the lead in our church singing and kept a singing school in this town and others in Worcester County, including Worcester itself. He even composed some tunes. He led the singing, as many of you will remember very well, at the procession in honor of Gen. Washington's birthday on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of Feb., 1800. The next birthday of Washington, he was one of the Board of Selectmen in this town. In matters of pecuniary nature, Mr. Pratt was a very careful man, but not even in his old age, penurious.

He always struggled with embarrassments as to property, until he received his pension and arrearages, which sufficed to give him competence. Like other Revolutionary soldiers, he suffered as to his army pay from the depreciation of the Continental money. He sold what he had for 10 shillings in the pound, just before it had risen in value to 20 shillings and the interest.

He was a man evidently of good judgment. Even in advanced age, though childlike in many respects, he was not like a child in understanding. He expressed wonder how he got along through such hardships and deprivation of privileges in his childhood and early manhood, and certainly his career, all things considered, is one fitted to excite wonder in any mind.

Had he enjoyed early opportunities like that which had been granted to most of his fellow officers, I make no question he would have risen to uncommon eminence. He came up, as it were, from nothing and was in the most thorough sense a self-made man.

In his temperament he was uncommonly childlike. I never knew an old man so free from the besetting faults of old age--those which we commonly look for at that period of life, as he was. He was not accustomed to complain of reverses or disappointments--sufferings of a physical nature he bore with fortitude, when pangs assailed him with unusual severity.

His well known resource was to sing, that he might divert his attention from them. He did not, in the usual spirit of old age, look questionably upon the condition of the community--so changed since his early years. He was not apt to say with so many, "Oh things were better when I was a boy." He looked hopefully and cheerfully and joyously around him. He obeyed the injunction of the wise man, so seldom obeyed by the aged--"Say not what is the reason the former days were better than these."

He was habitually good natured. He loved a pleasant story or a joke, and sometimes manifested sparkles of dry wit. He was a peculiarly affectionate and amiable old man. The hearts of all who conversed with or saw him, it would seem, could not but warm towards him. He loved children, may should he meet--how could he help it?

There was a course a strong sympathy between the guiltlessness and light headedness of the venerable old man and the character of childhood. He delighted, even in his extremist age, to hold infancy in his lap and his benignant looks won even infancy itself from its accustomed timidity. I count it high honor for my children that they have sat upon his knee. Would it were possible that something of that old virtue which he possessed could have gone out of him and entered their young spirits? He loved the young and they in return loved and revered him. Long will he be remembered by the children of this community. He used to say, that he was never treated by childhood with the insults so often wickedly heaped upon age and infirmity. There was in truth nothing in his character or demeanor which could excite even the most wanton, to insult.

Modesty was one of his most striking characteristics. Old age, especially the old age of military men, is usually garrulous and beautiful to a disagreeable extent. Not so with Mr. Pratt. It was often with difficulty that those facts in his life could be elicited which tendered most to his personal credit, whether they occurred out of the war or in it.

I might relate many proofs of his modesty, but I forbear. His character was essentially influenced by religion. I have often conversed with him on religious topics, and have always found him, especially within the last year or two, ready to express firm faith in Christianity, dependence on its promises, and trust in his God and his Savior, within the last two or three months.

I am told, he was often sitting in unwanted depth and continuance of reflection, and when asked of what he was thinking, he would say he was looking over his past life, that he might form a correct judgment of his life and be prepared to go home in peace.