

Bringing the Cannons Back

Brian F. Mumford, President

On October 17, 1777, British General John Burgoyne surrendered his army at Saratoga (present-day Schuylerville), New York, at the location of the Saratoga Surrender Site. Burgoyne surrendered his army and their "arms" which included their artillery.

Earlier in June 1777, when Burgoyne had set off from Canada on his Saratoga Campaign, his army included an arsenal of 138 artillery pieces. However, after taking Fort Ticonderoga, he sent many heavy siege pieces back to Canada. Burgoyne proceeded with 48 cannons of all types on his advance toward Albany. Four of these cannons were captured during the American victory at the August 16 Battle of Bennington.

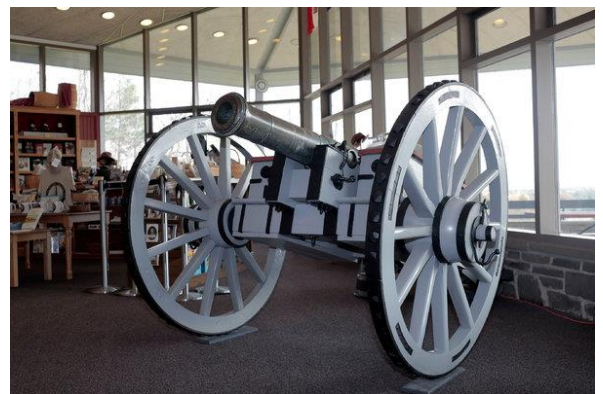
During the September and October Battles of Saratoga, Burgoyne lost ten more of his remaining pieces of artillery. At that point, Burgoyne saved what he could and began a retreat back to Canada. He was only able to make it seven miles north of where the battles had been fought before being surrounded and forced to come to terms.

On October 17, 1777, Burgoyne's army, along with its remaining artillery of approximately 30 pieces, was surrendered to the American Northern Department commanded by General Horatio Gates. According to the terms of the Articles of Convention, "*Article 1st. The troops to march out of their camp ... to the verge of the [Hudson] river where the old fort stood where the arms and artillery are to be left*" This boon constituted the greatest assortment of field artillery captured during the War by the Americans until the British surrendered 244 artillery pieces at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781.

The surrendered artillery did not remain with the Northern Department, but rather was dispatched to support General Washington in his campaign in New Jersey. Half of the surrendered artillery consisted of British 6-pounder field cannons. (Cannons were referred to by the weight of the shot it fired, e.g. 6-pounds.)

Through years of intense research and investigation, under the leadership of Park Curator Christine Valosin, in 2013 one of the surrendered British cannons was located in a museum in Alabama and was returned to Saratoga where it remains on display in the Visitor Center. *(photo at right)*

During the Bicentennial in the 1970's the Saratoga NHP commissioned the casting of replicas of the surrendered British cannon barrels. More recently, as part of the dedication of the Saratoga Surrender Site on October 17, 2019, the anniversary of the Surrender, **Friends of Saratoga Battlefield**, with the support of FOSB Members and community donors, commissioned *TR Ordnance Co.*, a Tennessee carriage-maker to produce field carriages for two of the replica British barrels.



Several months ago, FOSB president Brian Mumford and vice-president Bob Stokes, together with Park Facility Manager Jason Huart, met with the *TR Ordnance* staff who traveled to Saratoga to view the Surrender Site and to examine the park's inventory of replica British canon barrels (also referred to as "tubes.") Two 6-pounder barrels were selected and sent to Tennessee for the carriage production project. Production is near complete.

FOSB is bringing back two "British" 6-pounders, mounted on field carriages, to be emplaced on the field of Saratoga Surrender Site.