



Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

Newsletter



Gen. Burgoyne October 17, 1777

Fall Winter 2023



Saratoga Surrender Site August 2020

Volume 31 Issue 2

President's Message: THANKS TO MEMBER DONORS WHO SUPPORT THE BATTLEFIELD

You make all the difference.

Thanks to you our membership, 2023 has been a year of great success – Saratoga National Historical Park is back at service levels of pre-Covid times. With music performances, new Citizens ceremonies and providing a foundation for other organizations' commemorations, the Friends have amplified support to our National Park.

Members and contributors to the Friends of Saratoga Battlefield have always made the difference in bringing to our National Park key features that tell the Saratoga story.

Friends' contributions to site development, interpretation and commemorations

The Wilkinson Trail (1997), was dedicated after 10 years of planning and preparation. Donations and 'sweat equity' came from members all over the USA and overseas.

The **orientation film at the Park's Visitor Center**, which is viewed daily, was largely funded by years of fundraising and professional development sustained by the Friends.

The **Victory Woods** (2010) was added to Battlefield assets. This encompasses Burgoyne's last position with his surrender imminent in October 1777. Friends contributed support in planning and materiel.

The **Sword Surrender Site** project, commenced in 2011, was completed in 2019. This is a highly significant action of preservation and commemoration. Thousands contributed to the funding.

In 2002 the **225th Anniversary** of the Burgoyne campaign and the **Battles of Saratoga** was a year-long celebration that generated hundreds of events. We now begin to plan for the 250th Anniversary (2027).

It is a pleasure to salute the National Park Service leadership now bringing vision and energy to the Battlefield: Superintendent Leslie Morlock and Garrett Cloer, Program Manager for Interpretation and Visitor Experience. It is an honor to serve with such leaders. Friends Board members give selflessly of their time and talent in this high level of service. The telling of the story of Saratoga must continue and the future can be greeted with confidence. Your support is gratefully acknowledged and encouraged.

Sincerely,

Tim Holmes

President, Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

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Superintendent's Message

As the weather is cooling down and the leaves beginning to change, I've been looking back at the park's year and have been amazed at how much was accomplished. We are excited that the Great American Outdoors Act funded project to improve the Battlefield experience is nearly complete. The construction is completed on the updated pathways and pads for the waysides at all 10 Tour Stops. These upgrades have greatly improved the accessibility throughout the Tour Road. The waysides are scheduled to be installed this fall and we can't wait to unveil them. The Neilson House exhibits have been completely overhauled and now represent officers' quarters. These updates include a replica of a folding camp bed from the park collections which was made by three artisans (woodworker, ironworker, and seamstress). This bed was made possible through generous donations from the Stokes family and friends in honor of Bob's 80th birthday and the Friends of Saratoga Battlefield. The park offered a full range of events, encampments, musical concerts and interpretive programming and education, many supported through donations from the Friends. We have been partnering with the Saratoga County 250th Commission on several projects including the Pathways through History weekend in October which has grown to include living history demonstrations at the Schuyler House and military encampments at the Battlefield. Check the park website for the most up-to-date information on the fall lecture series coming in November and changing schedules for reduced winter operations.

Leslie Morlock
Superintendent, Saratoga National Historical Park



Neilson House exhibit July 2023

Our Special Thanks

Long-time volunteer at the Battlefield Bob Stokes was a friendly face at the desk greeting visitors in the Parks Visitor Center. Bob was instrumental in management of the complex Surrender Site project from 2015 to its completion in 2019. Bob served on the Board of Friends of Saratoga Battlefield. His retirement from the Board was marked with a Resolution, passed unanimously by the Board and signed July 4th, 2023 at the Battlefield:

Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

The Friends of Saratoga Battlefield honor

Bob Stokes

for his enduring belief in the spirit of Saratoga, which led to his many long-term contributions to the greater Saratoga community.

Always learning more deeply of history and its applications, Bob taught others about the Saratoga battles and their meaning for patriotism.

With attentive voluntarism and professional care, he has honored and preserved the artifacts of history.

For any interest in which he has been involved, Bob has been a dedicated champion, contributing significant hard work and leadership talent to make plans real, as illustrated by his contributions to the Saratoga Battlefield, its sites and history.

We celebrate Bob's generosity and community spirit!

His work serves the national memory and will continue to deliver impact for generations to come.

Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

July 4, 2023

Timothy Holmes *President*

Breaking the Law of War

by Brian Mumford, Prior President

Vengeance and retribution require a long time; it is the rule.... Charles Dickens

The “law of war” is a set of guidelines which evolved over the centuries intended to regulate warring parties to maintain humanity in matters including conducting surrenders and treatment of prisoners of war. General George Washington was an ardent follower of the European law of war. Upon taking command of the Continental Army in June 1775, he issued rules of conduct for the troops attacking Canada, including “Rule 4: Do Not Abuse Prisoners” (Raphael). He wrote to Major General Benedict Arnold that if a soldier violated this rule, he was to be punished.

Washington expected the British to abide by the law of war during the Revolutionary War; however, he was mistaken. In August 1775, King George III declared the American revolutionary military to be traitors who were to be treated as criminals and not military. Parliament ruled the revolution force was not to be treated according to the law of war (Jones, Introduction).

Ethan Allen: On May 10, 1775, Ethan Allen with the Green Mountain Boys achieved the first American victory in the Revolutionary War by capturing Fort Ticonderoga together with its vast trove of artillery. Allen sent the captured British garrison to Connecticut where they were treated according to the law of war.

In September, while attacking Montreal, Allen was captured by the British. He was brought before British General Richard Prescott who, rather than treating him according to the law of war, declared him a traitor to be hanged. Prescott sent Allen to Tyburn, the principal location of public executions in London.

Aboard ship for forty days, bound by hand irons and thirty-pound leg irons, Allen and his troops endured appalling treatment in filthy, disease-ridden conditions with inadequate water and food. Ashore in England, Allen remained a prisoner receiving harsh treatment while awaiting the decision of Lord George Germain, King George’s minister, as to whether he was to be hanged (Randall, 26-35).

In December 1775, Thomas Jefferson wrote “A Declaration on the British Treatment of Ethan Allen” detailing how the British treatment of Allen was a violation of the law of war (Jefferson). Washington, in an effort to alleviate Allen’s suffering, wrote General William Howe, Commander of British forces in the Colonies, that Gen. Prescott had been taken prisoner by American forces at Montreal. He threatened “that whatever Treatment Colonel Allen receives—whatever fate he undergoes—such exactly shall be the treatment & Fate of Brigadier Prescott [sic], now in our hands.” (Jones, Ch 2, “The Novelty”).

Washington’s threat to match the British’s unlawful prisoner treatment was permissible under the law of war. Acts of proportional retaliation in order to compel an enemy to observe the law of war were sanctioned. Such proportional retaliation was permissible only if done for a valid military purpose and was equivalent in nature to the enemy’s violation. However, retaliation of excessive force committed for vengeance was a violation. Washington referred to this as the “law of retaliation.”

Germain aware that Washington’s threat of retaliation put in jeopardy his plan to hang Allen, as well as the safety of the British prisoners being held by Washington, ordered Allen returned to America after having been imprisoned by the British for more than two years.

Boston: In January 1776 during the Siege of Boston, Washington accused Howe of violating the law of war by his harsh treatment of prisoners captured at Bunker Hill. Washington threatened to retaliate with proportional treatment of British prisoners. Howe in his condescending response ignored Washington’s reference to “the law of war” and responded that under “the laws of the land” Washington and his army should be hanged as traitors.

Three months later, using the artillery which Allen had captured at Ticonderoga, Washington forced Howe and his 11,000 troops to abandon Boston and sail from Boston Harbor, ending the siege. This was the first victory of the newly formed Continental Army.

New York Campaign: In July 1776, Howe with 400 warships and 32,000 troops arrived in New York Harbor with plans to capture New York City. In August, he defeated the Americans at Long Island and by November his troops had taken a number of forts as they marched to northern Manhattan to capture Fort Mifflin and drive Washington's army entirely from New York into New Jersey.

The British treatment of prisoners during the New York Campaign demonstrate the extent to which they had abandoned the law of war. At Fort Mifflin, when the American troops laid down their arms in surrender, the British unmercifully beat them with the butt-end of muskets, stripped them of their personal belongings, and marched them in freezing weather to prisons in New York City. By contrast, during the same month, when Washington was victorious at Trenton, he ordered his troops not to harm or plunder the 900 British prisoners as they were marched to prisons in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, to be humanely treated.

During the New York Campaign, the British crammed thousands of American prisoners into disease-infested prisons set up in abandoned churches, sugar houses, and ships. The conditions were deplorable with insufficient food, water, and sanitary provisions. Prisoners died of typhus, dysentery, small pox, or scurvy. Of the 100 men from Danbury captured at Ft Mifflin, only two survived prison in New York. Half of the 1,000 prisoners captured at Long Island and two-thirds of the 2,800 captured at Fort Mifflin died of disease and starvation within months (Burrows, 64).

During the winter of 1776-77, to reduce the over-crowding of the New York prisons, the British released more than 1,800 sick and dying men, most of whom died from prison starvation and ill-treatment as they made their way home. Those few who survived became carriers and spread diseases in their communities.

Public Opinion: The revolutionary press, which played a crucial role in shaping public opinion, provided a continual barrage of articles detailing British abuses of American prisoners. As the accounts and details of the atrocities mounted, so too did the demands of the press for Congress to seek vengeance. Reading these reports, the revolutionary citizens became enraged and also were calling on Congress for revenge.

Committees of Correspondence, established throughout the states, provided public updates describing the British mistreatment of American prisoners. During January 1777, they reported to Congress that upwards of 11,000 American captives had already perished in New York prisons for lack of food and sanitary care. The Committees called upon Congress to engage in revengeful action against the British.

Congress passed a resolution charging the British with appalling "barbarity" and compared it with "American humanity." However, Congress continued to comply with the law of war with British prisoners and refused to retaliate with acts of excessive force committed for vengeance.

Surrender: On October 17, 1777, General John Burgoyne ended his Campaign to reach Albany by surrendering nearly 6,000 troops to General Horatio Gates at Saratoga (now Schuylerville). Before the terms of surrender had been agreed upon, Gates prematurely announced to the Albany Committee of Correspondence that the British had surrendered. Rumor of the surrender spread and left Washington and the members of Congress elated. In the only known letter in which Washington mentioned "Heaven" during the war, he called this "the happy moment which Heaven has pointed out for the firm establishment of American Liberty" (Fine Books. Washington letter). However, two weeks later when the written agreement reached Washington and Congress in Pennsylvania, their elation turned to consternation.

Under the terms of the agreement, the British were not prisoners of war but rather were parolees. They were to be marched to Boston where they were to board transports to bring them back to England, pledging not to return to fight in the current war. The officers were to maintain their swords and the troops were to keep their private belongings which were not to be searched. Gates also agreed to call the agreement a "convention agreement" rather than a "surrender agreement." This was a significant concession since in contemporary European warfare a convention was a negotiated agreement for merely a cessation of hostilities and not a formal surrender.

Although disappointed with the terms of the Convention, Washington realized that under the law of war a negotiated and signed treaty was inviolate and must be ratified by America. Gates also argued that under the law of war the Convention must be ratified since there had been no breach of the agreement by the British. However, neither Washington nor Gates

had jurisdiction over the ratification of treaties. The members of Congress, who were elected by the people, were solely responsible for decisions regarding ratification.

The revolutionary public was enraged that the British army was to be released. The newspapers wrote that having a large British army in custody for the first time presented the long-awaited opportunity for vengeance. The New York Council of Safety criticized the Convention and wrote it was time for brave people to revolt with retaliation. The Council also petitioned the Congress to keep Burgoyne's army as "Hostages for the future good Behavior of the Enemy." (Jones, Ch 4, "Unwelcome").

Members of Congress were aware of the law of war, but they were also aware of the public's critical reaction to the terms of the Convention. Under America's new republican form of government, the elected delegates to Congress could ill afford to ignore the will of the voting public who were seeking revenge.

Congress: During November, Congress met to consider ratification of the Convention. The first issue was whether under the law of war the history of the British mistreatment of prisoners was grounds to refuse ratification. After discussion, the delegates agreed that the mistreatment was not sufficient grounds since there was no history of Burgoyne's having mistreated prisoners.

A committee was then appointed to investigate the conduct of Burgoyne and his troops to search for any possible violation of the Convention agreement. At a subsequent meeting, the Committee reported that they had not found any breach of the Convention which would warrant Congress' reciprocal breach by refusing ratification. Congress adjourned without reaching a decision on ratification.

Congress continued to search for reasons to justify refusing ratification. They reviewed a letter from Burgoyne accusing Congress of breaching the Convention by failing "to provide adequate quarters [for the troops]." He added that "by this breach the public faith [in America] is broke" (Jones, Ch4, "Unwelcome"). Since Congress could not dispute that they had failed to provide adequate quarters, some delegates focused only on the "public trust" comment and declared Burgoyne's language presented sufficient grounds to refuse ratification.

The delegates argued that since Burgoyne stated he no longer had faith in America because of its breach, he probably intended to repudiate the Convention once it was ratified, which would free all the troops. Other delegates argued that it would be a gross violation of the law of war to refuse ratification based solely upon a supposition of what Burgoyne might intend to do. No decision regarding ratification was reached.

During a later meeting, the delegates discussed putting aside the law of war and basing their decision merely upon their judgment of Burgoyne's character. Some delegates reasoned that since Burgoyne was "showy, vain, impetuous, rash, and was not to be trusted," he probably would repudiate the Convention if it were ratified. The nature of this speculative discussion showed how far Congress had drifted from the dictates of the law of war while in search of a way to answer the public's call for vengeance.

After several more days discussing ways to impede Burgoyne's presumed intent to repudiate the Convention, a proposal was made to require the King's ministers to ratify the Convention which would supersede any attempt to repudiate by Burgoyne. To provide the time necessary to implement the plan, Congress turned to Article II of the Convention.

II. A free passage be granted to the army to Great Britain, ... and the port of Boston is assigned for the entry of transports to receive the troops, whenever General Howe shall so order (Yale Law).

On January 8, 1778, without any evidence of wrongdoing by Burgoyne or the pretense of proportional retaliation, Congress (by a vote of 14 to 6) agreed to suspend the embarkation of any troops on any ship under Article II until Congress received "a distinct and explicit ratification of the convention ... by the court of Great Britain" (Jones, Ch 4, "Congressional...")

Congress' requiring the King's ratification of the Convention agreement clearly was a disingenuous pretext. Congress certainly was aware that the King would not ratify the Convention since to do so the King would be recognizing the United States as a sovereign country.

In essence, without a valid legal reason, Congress nullified the Convention by indefinitely staying performance. This was not proportional retaliation under the law of war. This was Congress defying the law of war by openly committing an act of excessive retribution as revenge for the past treatment of American prisoners of war. Congress now had announced that the law of war would no longer prevail in Congress' management of the war.

Vengeance: As Congress anticipated, King George never ratified the Convention. Congress' act of vengeance had nullified the Convention and converted 5,900 parolees into prisoners of war who would be confined for five and a half years until the end of the war. During this entire time, Congress refused to consider any exchange or pardon for the Convention prisoners. The only way out for them was death or escape.

During winter of 1779, a year after refusing to ratify the Convention, Congress ordered the prisoners at Cambridge to embark on a 700-mile forced march to Charlottesville, Virginia. Existing on starvation rations and exposed to the extreme winter weather, many died on the march. During the following years Congress ordered the prisoners on forced marches to Maryland and then to Pennsylvania. At all locations the troops dealt with miserable living conditions. By the end of the war in 1783 the Convention army had lost eighty-five percent of their number to disease, starvation, exhaustion, and escape.

Turning Point: At times, government's punitive acts of retaliation for vengeance may have satisfied the public's desire to see wrongdoers punished; however, they rarely achieved significant political or military goals. Yet, Congress' refusal to ratify the Convention in response to the public call for revenge achieved both political and military goals.

France, learning of the victory at Saratoga and Congress' refusal to ratify the Convention, became convinced of the American's full commitment to independence. Having secretly supported the colonies since 1776, France opened political negotiations for a formal alliance with the United States. The resulting Treaty of Alliance (1778) committed France's military and financial support which assured the military victory of the American Revolutionary War.

After the War: George Washington, as President of the new nation, insisted that America's first treaty with a foreign nation, as well as subsequent treaties, included detailed humanitarian provisions consistent with the law of war, including prohibiting the use of prison ships and restraining irons, as well as guaranteeing swift exchange of prisoners. His goal was that the United States never again abuse its POW's.

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Benjamin Lincoln – Part Two

By: Robert T. Farley and Vincent Asaro, Friends' Members

History can tell us a great deal about a person. We tend to learn about these people through their accomplishments, through their personal and professional relationships, and through their writings and perspectives. History is not as strong in translating, through the ages, the personal attributes of a historic figure. We can learn a lot about people through their warmth, their sense of humor their smile and their personal resolve. The elements of a person's character can be as important as what they accomplished in their lifetime and what they believed, and they are without question, an element of greatness. At times it can be difficult to capture these attributes, and they are sometimes lost to history. General Benjamin Lincoln of Hingham, Massachusetts is really a case in point in this regard.

Although he was one of our greatest founders and one of the greatest generals to serve the American cause during the Revolution, he has largely been relegated to a lesser role in history, because the essential qualities that made him such a great man, his personal attributes, are seldom explored.

Benjamin Lincoln was highly trusted by George Washington, and by most of the high command of the Continental Army, who held him in the highest regard. He was known as a soldier's soldier, and as a man who would always move heaven and earth to get whatever task he was given completed, with great focus and without complaint. Lincoln was nearly universally viewed by all who knew him as a person who could always be counted on, for wise, quiet counsel, common sense logic, friendship, humility and integrity.

There is a reason why Benjamin Lincoln, both before and after the Revolutionary War, was soundly elected to several public offices. People at the time recognized that he was very honest and trustworthy, and that he held a religious based commitment to the service of others. As a dedicated husband to his wife Mary, and as a father to his eleven children, seven of whom lived until adulthood. It is especially interesting to read his letters home, which are filled with tenderness, kindness and love for his family. But of special significance, are the many lessons he tries to give his children, frequently imparting upon them the importance of service to others, and how everyone should always strive every day to be both humble and selfless. These are qualities that he devoted his life to, and which were recognized by others as a reason why he was so respected by his colleagues.

The American Revolution was such a trying and difficult time in American History. During that time, Benjamin Lincoln became a person that so many people were drawn to, because of his cheerfulness, optimism and dogged persistence. Optimists like George Washington, as well as pessimists like Philip Schuyler adored and respected him. Persons like Horatio Gates and Benedict Arnold, who were known for the many conflicts they had between themselves and with others, valued him as a trusted friend and advisor. Even John Stark, the New Hampshire General known for his sometimes difficult personality, saw Benjamin Lincoln as a man whom he could trust and would be willing to work with. It was General Lincoln's friendly, cheerful and personal demeanor that endeared him to so many of his contemporaries.

From before the war, through the battles of Lexington and Concord, he was repeatedly elected as a respected member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress, serving as an instrumental member of its committee on public safety, its executive council, and the committees overseeing militia organization and supply, being able to procure everything from blankets to gunpowder for the new American Army which was in need of almost everything.

In January of 1776, despite his lack of military experience, Lincoln was commissioned as a major general of the Massachusetts Militia. In that role, he oversaw efforts to build coastal fortifications, as well as marshal Naval support which helped to drive the Royal Navy from Boston Harbor.

Recognized by the Continental Congress as "a man of abilities", Benjamin Lincoln, was granted a commission as a Brigadier General and in September of 1776 and he was ordered to report to General Washington to join the New York campaign.

Lincoln soon would soon become one of Washington's most trusted commanders, helping to manage forces in the Battle of White Plains, and helping to secure the recruitment of troops and their provisioning as a quartermaster. After a recommendation from General Washington as "a gentleman well worthy of notice in the Military Line", on February 4, 1777, Congress promoted Benjamin Lincoln to the rank of Major General.

In April of 1777, Lincoln was in command in New Jersey, when his force was attacked by a much larger British Army under the command of General Charles Cornwallis. Although viewed as a defeat, Lincoln's calm and thoughtful retreat allowed him to save his forces and evade capture.

After the fall of Fort Ticonderoga, and upon desperate calls for assistance by the Commander of the Northern Department, Major General Philip Schuyler, General George Washington sent some of his most trusted officers, which included, Colonel Daniel Morgan, the leader of a corps of sharpshooter riflemen, General Benedict Arnold, a veteran of the Canadian Campaign and the hero of Valcour Island, General John Glover, the famous ferry master who transported Washington away from disaster during the Battle of Long Island and into the victorious Battle of Trenton, and lastly but definitely not least, his trusted friend General Benjamin Lincoln.

These men were dispatched to assist Schuyler in his defense of upstate New York against the 1777 summer invasion of British General John Burgoyne. As Schuyler faced Burgoyne's onslaught of over 10,000 troops marching down from Canada, and after losses at Crown Point, Ticonderoga and Hubbardton, this detachment of intellectual leadership and military talent provided welcome relief. These four leaders would prove themselves to be of enormous benefit in the upcoming days and weeks ahead in the fall of 1777, and most especially, Benjamin Lincoln.

On August 4, 1777, just after Lincoln's arrival, General Philip Schuyler was relieved of command by Congress of the Northern Department. The transfer of power was not without controversy, as several of Schuyler's troops were loyal to their commander, while many in New England refused to join Schuyler's Army due to a long standing territorial dispute between New York and Vermont. In this climate of serious unrest in the Army, General Lincoln's demeanor and personality, helped calm the waters of martial disquiet.

Under Lincoln's leadership and tireless efforts, New Englanders began to start to pour into Gates' Army, which by the beginning of September had nearly doubled its force strength to nearly 10,000 men. Although mostly Militia, these forces soon began to now stand a fighting chance against Burgoyne's invasionary Army.

In the summer of 1777, Lincoln had to negotiate with General John Stark of New Hampshire, to secure his cooperation in the Saratoga Campaign. Stark was a fighting commander who had led troops to great acclaim at the battle of Bunker Hill. As an experienced veteran of the French and Indian War, Stark felt slighted when he was overlooked by Congress for a General's Commission in the Continental Army. As a result, feeling angry and shunned, John Stark returned home to New Hampshire, where he was appointed by their General Court, as a General of the New Hampshire Militia. Now in command in New Hampshire, he refused numerous requests from Congress, Washington, Gates and others to bring his forces to assist in their efforts against the Burgoyne invasion. That was, of course until Benjamin Lincoln got involved. Lincoln, with his calm, friendly, deferential demeanor, visited Stark and begged him for his assistance. A masterful negotiator, he crafted a solution where Stark would remain in command of his own forces, merely working with Lincoln in the Continental Army. Due almost exclusively to Lincoln's efforts, General John Stark led his forces to directly confront Burgoyne's German Force incursion into far eastern New York and Vermont at Bennington. With a brilliant command strategy, and great personal leadership, Stark's forces soundly defeated the British at Bennington, with 207 German soldiers dead, and 700 captured, the Battle of Bennington was the beginning of the American victories against Burgoyne. that turned the tide against Burgoyne leading to his final surrender at Saratoga. Lincoln's efforts to gain Stark's cooperation must certainly be recognized in making the victory at Bennington possible.

By early September of 1777, General Lincoln recruited the 2000 men under his command. With the permission of Gates and Congress, he soon began a campaign to launch several detachments to attack British supply lines, and harass British encampments. On September 22, 1777, three days after the first Battle of Saratoga at Freeman's Farm, Gates elevated Lincoln to a wing commander, being responsible for holding the Army's line along the Hudson River.

As General Arnold and General Gates were reportedly arguing about Arnold not receiving sufficient credit in Gate's dispatches to Congress about the Freeman's Farm Battle, Lincoln once again took on a role as intermediary. Respected by all, Lincoln sought to buoy his troops, encourage enthusiasm and comity throughout the army, and maintain good relations with both Arnold and Gates.

Although because of his physical position on the Hudson River side of the Battlefield on October 7, 1777, Benjamin Lincoln did not have a major combat role during the "reconnaissance in force conducted by Burgoyne in the Second Saratoga Battle which has become known today as "Bemis Heights". That is not to say that his wise counsel and encouragement to the

other generals, and the troops, and his involvement in planning, supply and recruitment (the real job of a general), did not have a real impact. Lincoln was highly respected wherever he was, and the second Battle of Saratoga was no exception.

Moreover, the Battle of Bemis Heights, whose combat operations were led largely by Benedict Arnold and Enoch Poor, was not the end of the Saratoga Campaign. Burgoyne and his troops were still around until the actual surrender, which did not take place until ten days later, after a long negotiation, on October 17, 1777, and during those ten days, General Lincoln, and his Army, were conducting significant combat operations against the British. indeed, fearing that Burgoyne would try to have his army escape back north into Canada, the very night of the October 7th Battle, Lincoln was ordered to take a detachment of 1500 troops North to fortify Fort Edward, in an effort to cut off and confront a possible British retreat. Lincoln was able to bravely capture and occupy the former British lines, and then proceed north. to box in the British and to ensure the complete surrender of the British Army. A British company attacked Lincoln's forces, and a significant firefight developed and Lincoln bravely leading his men to deny the British escape, although he was successful in leading his force to victory, he was shot in the right ankle, a musket ball shattering several of his bones.

Lincoln was transported to Albany for treatment, and during his stay, medical staff reportedly made several comments as to how Lincoln was such a nice and respectful patient, a sharp contrast to what that same medical staff had to say about General Arnold, who suffered nearly an identical wound on October 7, 1777, while attacking a German Force Redoubt.

After the total surrender of the British at Saratoga on October 17, 1777, General Lincoln, with the help of one of his sons, was then transported back to his home at Hingham, Massachusetts, upon a sled, to recover. For the rest of his life, the General's right leg would be two inches shorter than his left. Not one to complain or focus on himself, within weeks, General Lincoln was back in the saddle, and ready to resume command of continental forces. After joining General George Washington's Army outside New York, the commander in chief sent three of his most trusted commanders, Lincoln, Lafayette and Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee to the spot where they were most needed, the Southern Department, where they would oppose the British army under Clinton and Cornwallis.

In that role, Congress ordered Lincoln, to hold at all quarters, an untenable position, with nearly no troops, the City of Charleston, South Carolina. Despite valiant efforts, and being vastly outnumbered, and being betrayed by a South Carolina Legislature that was informing and negotiating with the British, Lincoln and his men stood their ground until May 12, 1780. Denied the Honors of War, in an attempt to humiliate Lincoln and his army, the general was forced to surrender his entire 5000 man continental force, to the vastly larger British Army.

After being exchanged for the British Major General William Phillips in November 1780, General Benjamin Lincoln returned to General George Washington's main army to resume a continental campaign. A court of inquiry examined General Lincoln's decision to surrender at Charleston, and found that he acted with sound judgment and honor, merely following the orders of Congress while in an untenable and undefendable position. Knowing what an asset he had in Lincoln; General Washington was absolutely thrilled to have him back under his command. A valuable part of the successful Yorktown campaign, Washington sent Lincoln to represent the United States at the British Surrender, on October 19, 1781, and to be the officer to whom the sword of the British Commander was offered. In the famous painting of the British Surrender, by John Trumbull, it is Benjamin Lincoln who is at the center, being presented the sword of American victory. Later in 1781, recognizing his trustworthiness, and the respect he commanded from all his colleagues, the Congress appointed Benjamin Lincoln Secretary of War of the United States.

In 1783, along with General George Washington, General Lincoln was elected as an original member of the Society of the Cincinnati, an honorary organization of distinguished military veterans of the American Revolution. That same year he was also elected president of the Massachusetts chapter of that organization.

In early 1787, General Lincoln was the commanding general that confronted and put an end to Shay's rebellion. On February 6, 1788, as an elected delegate to the Massachusetts Convention to determine ratification of the new proposed federal constitution, Benjamin Lincoln led the charge for its approval, by a vote of 187 to 168.

A devoted patriot and federalist, Benjamin Lincoln was incredibly loyal to George Washington, and was highly supportive of the new constitution and Washington's presidency. He remained active in public service until the time of his death, at age 77, including service as Massachusetts Lieutenant Governor, and as Collector (Customs Officer) of the Port of Boston.

The victories in the American Revolution, especially the essential battles at Bennington, Saratoga and Yorktown, simply would not have happened, except for his leadership. Moreover, the new nation may not have even survived after the Revolution, except for his bravery to put down Shay's rebellion, and to stand up for the new constitution in the Massachusetts ratifying convention.

One can learn more about Benjamin Lincoln's remarkable life by visiting his homestead, and the Hingham Historical Society Museum, at 34 Main St, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043. Their magnificent, knowledgeable and gracious executive director, Deirdre Anderson, and her fascinating, informative and friendly education manager, Max Nosbisch, make the life of General Lincoln simply come alive. They are justifiably proud of Hingham's favorite son, as they well should be. A trip there is well worth the time, for both the experience and the people.

Bob Farley and Vinnie Asaro are the hosts and creators of the 1777 Freedom's Gateway Podcast, a multi-part story on how the Empire State Built America and Delivered on the Promise of Liberty. Come check us out at www.1777freedomsgateway.com

Works Consulted

Mattern, David B. *Benjamin Lincoln and the American revolution* (2023) University of South Carolina Press

Hingham Historical Society Museum, at 34 Main St, Hingham, Massachusetts 02043

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