



Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

Newsletter



Gen. Burgoyne October 17, 1777

Fall Winter 2025



Saratoga Surrender Site August 2020

Volume 33 Issue 2

President's Message : Thanks to donors

The Saratoga Battlefield is more than a battle site. It is a cornerstone of American history and a sanctuary of natural beauty. By contributing to the Friends of Saratoga Battlefield, you have invested in the preservation of a national treasure. You have supported continued education and enjoyment for countless visitors. Together, we intend to safeguard the heritage of Saratoga and ensure that its stories and landscapes endure.

The Friends endeavor to stimulate interest in the history of the Park; to be an advocate on behalf of the Park; to generate appreciation of its history and heritage, and to provide common meeting spaces for those interested in it.

Your generosity has helped to protect and celebrate this remarkable place.

In 2025 we hosted a number of cultural events throughout the year including musical performances across several genres. Informational presentations have shown colonial crafts and arts. Live displays of natural phenomena also delighted visitors of every generation.

In supporting Citizenship Day on the 4th of July your Friends group brought home to new citizens the importance of participating, and sometimes sacrificing for our great country.

The Battlefield itself with the terrain and region spanned by the events of 1777 are the star attractions. The Friends are here to support the legacy, the lessons and the future.

Our aim is to foster a deeper understanding of the meaning of the Battlefield. In 2025 we have reminded elected officials of this inheritance and duty to future generations.

Anniversaries and honors

In working with allies on the approach the 250th anniversary of the battles at Saratoga (2027) we are contributing to local commemorations, some initiated by the Friends over the years.

The Friends are looking at new ways to enhance knowledge of the Surrender Site in the Town of Saratoga. Enhancements to the site were finished in 2019 and followed immediately by Covid. It is already a must-see location for tour groups following the landscapes of the Battles of Saratoga.

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A friend and ally **Roy McDonald** was honored 25 October as **Veteran of the Year** by the New York State Military Museum. Roy was a State Senator who gathered support to acquire the Surrender Site as well as the lands which are now the Saratoga / Solomon Veterans Cemetery in the town of Saratoga. He also initiated the Gateway Visitor Center in Schuylerville ('Old Saratoga'), a project the Friends cooperated in developing.

Heartfelt congratulations go to Sen. McDonald on this well-earned honor.

And thanks to you generous donors for keeping alive the spirit of the Battlefield.

Sincerely

Tim Holmes

President

Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

Superintendent's Message

There is no Superintendents Message due to the government shutdown at the time of publication. Please see the SNHP website for details.



WHATEVER HAPPENED TO THE GERMAN FORCES AFTER BURGOYNE'S SURRENDER ON OCTOBER 17, 1777 ?

By: Andrew Kozak with Carol A. Felson Friends Members

When the British & German forces commanded by Gen. Burgoyne surrendered to the American forces commanded by Gen. Gates, the terms of surrender were contained in a document titled "The Convention of Saratoga". During the negotiations Gen. Burgoyne strongly objected to the use of the word "surrender" in any form. Gen. Gates was very interested in quickly obtaining the British approval of the terms and agreed not to use this word. Burgoyne had other demands for terms that were finally accepted by Gates, the document was finalized by both parties. The terms offered to Burgoyne were very generous and the surrender occurred on the 17th of October.

The main part of the terms was the disposition and destination of the enemy troops. Gates told them that all forces would be marched to Boston where they would be taken aboard ships that would return them to England. When the Continental Congress found out about this provision, they vigorously objected on the basis that nothing would prevent these troops to be returned to North America to fight again. Something else had to be negotiated to replace this provision. Burgoyne's forces grounded their arms and became the group now called the "Convention Army". The Convention Army was then marched to Albany and then ultimately ended up in Cambridge just outside Boston.

Over this and the next Newsletter four individuals of the Convention Army will be presented. The focus of this article is on Surgeon J. F. Wasmus and Private Daniel Engelcke. The following article will focus on Baron F. and Broness von Riedesel

J. F. WASMUS

Julius Friedrich Wasmus was born in the town of Lichtenberg in northern Bavaria on October 11, 1739 to Carl Andreas Wasmus and Elisabeth Eleonora Stolzen. His father was a surveyor and a bailiff at the ducal court of Lichtenberg; his mother was a doctor's daughter from Klein Lafferde. At age thirteen he was confirmed in the Lutheran church and entered the Hochschule in Wolfenbüttel

in 1752, and was later apprenticed to the City surgeon. He passed the Physicians exam and went to work for the City surgeon. He was appointed as a surgeon in the Lieb regiment of Braunschweig in 1758. In December he was involved in a street fracas and later arrested and jailed. He accepted a plea bargain to enlist in the army and was sent back to the Lieb regiment. He then passed a local medical college exam and was formally appointed as Company surgeon in 1759.

His regiment was involved in the Seven Years War. In 1763 his service ended and he returned home. In 1764 he was married and continued to serve as surgeon in the Wolfenbüttele garrison.

In 1776 King George III signed a treaty with Duke Karl of Braunschweig to provide auxiliary troops for service in the rebelling American colonies. In February 1776 Wasmus's regiment left Wolfenbüttele and sailed to Canada. He spent the winter in Trois Rivieres. After the American attack in June 1776, the Braunschweig regiments were part of the British forces commanded by Sir Guy Carleton that invaded New York in 1776. After the battle of Valcour Island the British force got as far south as Crown Point by October, called off the invasion and returned to Canada.

In February 1777 Gen Burgoyne's proposal for a second invasion of New York was approved by Parliament and he returned to Canada in the spring. The Braunschweig and Hessian troops under the command of Gen von Riedesel joined with the British forces that left Canada in June 1777. In August Gen Burgoyne planned a raid on Bennington to capture badly needed supplies and livestock. The German forces under Lt. Col Baum were picked to lead the raid with Canadians, Tories, and Native Americans in support. On August 6 this combined German force was attacked by American troops commanded by John Stark and Seth Warner and routed. Dr. Wasmus was one of a handful of soldiers captured by the Americans and marched to Brimfield, Massachusetts. They were interned there and boarded with local families, and he continued to treat the Braunschweigers and local inhabitants.

In 1778 Wasmus was sent to Westminister, MA at the request of Gen von Riedesel to provide medical services for the German troops there. He stayed in this area until the end of 1780. At the end of 1780, the German officers in his regiment were exchanged and Dr. Wasmus was not on the list. He protested, and his appeal was denied by the American Commissary of Prisoners. Finally in 1781 he was approved for an exchange and traveled to Halifax, NS in September. He spent the next two years in Quebec as a surgeon to the troops there and a general practitioner to the local inhabitants. Finally in the fall of 1783 he sailed back to Europe with Gen von Riedesel, returning to Wolfenbüttele in October.

PRIVATE DANIEL ANGLE (AKA ENGELCKE) BY CAROL A. FELSEN

"Two of my Revolutionary ancestors have a particularly unique combined history.

My 4th great grandfather, on my mother's side, Daniel Angle (originally Daniel Engelcke from Hildesheim, Germany) arrived in Quebec on June 3, 1776 as a private in the Braunschweig musketeer Regiment Specht, part of General Burgoyne's British forces. After a year in various places in Canada, he sailed across Lake

Champlain in June 1777 as part of the British offensive. On July 6, 1777 his regiment captured Fort Ticonderoga, having been recently evacuated by my 5th Lemuel Harken. By August first he was 23 miles south at the Hudson River and on October 17, 1777 he was part of the Convention Army surrendering at Saratoga where he was marched past the American troops.

Grandpa Daniel spends the next four years under house arrest in Cambridge and Rutland, occasionally deserting, until 1781 when he opts to enlist in the Continental Army for 3 years rather than being either force-marched to “western “ Virginia or paying his own way back to Germany. He served in Col. Tupper’s 10th Regiment in the Massachusetts line where sustained a foot injury from a musket ball during a skirmish. From December 1783 to June 1784 he was with Col. Henry Jackson’s Continental Regiment, becoming the only remaining regiment remaining stationed at West Point.

He then becomes one of the early settlers of Lexington NY where he received a land grant. He had seven children and died on December 2, 1840.”

In the next newsletter, the conclusion to this article describing the story of Baron and Baroness von Riedesel will be presented.

Works Consulted

Carol A. Felsen DAR verification documents.

An Eyewitness account of the American Revolution and New England Life: the Journal of J.F. Wasmus, German company surgeon 1776-1783 Greenwood Press NY 1990



Volunteering at Neilson House (Stop 2)

Diane Kozak. Board Member and Park Volunteer

During the past 8+ seasons as an Interpretive volunteer at Neilson House, I have learned a great deal, enjoyed the view, talked with hundreds of visitors, and shared multiple facets of the Neilson House story. There is the story of a young colonial family and its legacy. There is the military headquarters story including the story of the generals who occupied the house and farm in the fall of 1777. Lastly there is the story of a myth dispelled.

The Family before the Battles of Saratoga

John Neilson built the 18 foot by 18 foot house in 1775. Knowing the Continental forces were preparing to stop the British invasion at Stillwater, John evacuated his wife, Lydia, a daughter age 3 years, and an infant son a distance south and joined his Militia Unit in Albany in late summer of 1777. The house was left empty

The Military Headquarters

Brigadier General Enoch Poor arrived in the first week of September 1777 after fleeing Ticonderoga. He began building fortifications following the plan of Tadeusz. Kosciuszko. The hilltop surrounding Neilson House was referred to as *The Summit* . It became the divisional headquarters on the left of the Continental line. The fortifications included a 6-8 foot wooden barrier that extended from the west of the Summit, circled to the north and continued east to Bemus Heights. This barrier protected the artillery on Bemus Heights from an attack from the rear.

During the following week and a half Continental troops and Militia from Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, and New York began to arrive as did Major General Benedict Arnold. By September 19th 8,300+ troops were bivouacked from the Summit to Bemus Heights. Neilson House was occupied by Benedict Arnold, Enoch Poor and 2 Aides de Camp.

The Family After the Battles

The family returned to their farm in November of 1777. It is not known where Lydia and the children stayed while evacuated. John Neilson served in the Albany County Militia during the time of the Battles of Saratoga but did not fight in the battles. He worked as a carter transporting military baggage to Stillwater and Bemus Heights. On their return they found not only the damage left by hundreds of troops camping in their fields, using their fence posts for firewood, and eating the vegetables in the fields. The wooden barriers erected by the army were left in place. According to family lore John was able to sell some of the wood for lumber.

John and Lydia continued to farm this area. Eventually they had 8 children. As the family grew, they added a 2 story house adjacent to the original farmhouse. The original house became the kitchen. Over time additional barns and farm buildings were added. The larger house underwent additional renovations in following decades. John and Lydia's descendants continued to own the farm until 1926.

In 1926, 150 acres of farm were sold to New York State to become part of a State Historic Site. New York State removed all structures but the original farmhouse which was moved south next to the monument to New Hampshire troops. In 1938, New York State transferred the site to the National Park Service. Eventually the National Park Service archaeologists located the original foundation and in 1959 the house was returned to its original location.

The Myth Dispelled

The Neilson Farmyard is the location described in the Bacheller Letter which came up for auction in 2016. Nathaniel Bacheller on October 9, 1777, detailed the events he witnessed 2 days earlier. He describes General Benedict Arnold reporting into General Horatio Gates during the Second Battle of Saratoga. He quotes General Arnold saying, "It is late in the day but let me have men & we will have some fun with them before sunset" This dispels the myth of General Arnold inserting himself into the second battle of Saratoga after being relieved of command. Personally, this not only dispels the myth but also describes Benedict Arnold following the Chain of Command and two adversaries working together for a common goal.

The multiple facets of the Neilson House Story contribute to the ability to reach visitors' individual interests. Meeting them where they are. Whether it's amazement at the size of the house with 8 children, the story of a 150 year family legacy, the specifics of the battles, a myth dispelled, or simply the beautiful view Stop 2 has something for everyone.

Works Consulted:

Eric Schnitzer, Park Ranger/Historian Lecture presented December 2024, SNHP Visitor's Center

2025 Neilson House Interpretive Guide (2025) National Park Service

Transcript of Letter written by Adjutant Nathaniel Bacheller (Colonel Abraham Drake's Battalion, New Hampshire Militia) to his wife Susanna. October 9, 1777

Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield Membership Postcard Photo Contest

These photos were submitted by members to be considered for the 2025 Membership Card.

Now it's time for Members to vote! Vote online or by mail.

To vote online scan the QR code or enter the link on the next page.

To vote by mail complete the ballot on the next page and mail as directed on the ballot.

A. Dawn at Stop 3



B. Foggy Morning



C. Bright of Day



PHOTO CONTEST BALLOT

The photo receiving the most votes will be used for the 2026 Membership Postcard. The winner and the photo will be featured in the Spring Summer Newsletter. The winner will receive a *Battlefield Club Membership* for 2026.

Voting closes December 31, 2025.

To Vote by Mail

Please select one (1) of the following by checking the box following the name of the photo. Cut along the dotted line and mail to:

The Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield
648 Route 32
Stillwater NY 12170

- Dawn at Stop 5.....
- Foggy Morning.....
- Bright of Day.....

To Vote ONLINE



Scan this code

Or

Go to

<https://friendsofthesaratogabattlefield.org/2025-photo-contest/>

<p style="text-align: center;">Become a Friend of Saratoga Battlefield</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____</p> <p>State _____ Zip _____</p> <p>E-mail _____</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FRIENDS OF SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION INCORPORATED UNDER THE N.Y.S EDUCATION LAW.</p>	<p>Choose your membership level:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Enlisted Personnel <input type="checkbox"/> \$30 Noncommissioned Officer (Noncom) <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 Commissioned Officer <input type="checkbox"/> \$100: Field Grade Officer "Battlefield Club" <input type="checkbox"/> Other (>\$100 also Battlefield Club) <p>Make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD and mail to:</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Friends of Saratoga Battlefield 648 Route 32 Stillwater, NY 12170</p>
<p>Reminder: No individual membership renewal notices are sent.</p> <p><u>Your renewal date is listed on the mailing address page of this Newsletter</u></p> <p><u>and on your Annual Membership Card.</u></p> <p>If you are unsure of your membership date email friendsofsaratoga@gmail.com and your last renewal date will be emailed to you.</p>	



**Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield 2024 Membership Postcard Photo
Contest Winner
Who will Win for 2025?
Submission and Ballot Inside**

**Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield
648 Route 32
Stillwater NY 12170**