



THE BATTLEMENTS

Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

Spring/Summer 2020

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Gen. Burgoyne October 17, 1777



Saratoga Surrender Site Oct. 17, 2019

To FOSB Members

Newsletter: It has been 3 years since FOSB circulated an issue of *Battlements*. Recently a FOSB Member commented that he preferred receiving a newsletter that he “could hold” rather than having to turn to his computer screen. His comment deserved a response, and I am sharing it with all Members since there very well may be other like-minded Members.

Thank you for your recent inquiry/comments regarding the FOSB newsletter. And thank you for your past donations in support of FOSB and your recent membership renewal.

More recently FOSB’s failure to circulate a newsletter was the result of the overwhelming three-year effort our relatively small Board of Directors devoted to managing the tasks of developing the Saratoga Surrender Site. While engaged with architectural site planning, government approvals, contracting, and construction of the Site, the Board also raised upwards of \$775,000 to fund the construction. In addition, publication was hampered by the retirement of two Board Members who had been in charge of publishing the FOSB newsletter.

FOSB has now nearly completed the SSS project and has presented the developed Site to Saratoga NHP. Going forward it is the Board’s intention to return its focus to its mission and goals of promoting the Park and engaging the Members in those goals. Included in the plans will be printing and mailing to the Members a bi-annual issue of the FOSB newsletter, Battlements, beginning with a mailing in June.

I hope you enjoy receiving the newsletter and find it interesting. Please send any comments or suggestions for future issues.

FOSB Board Positions: FOSB is actively seeking to speak with interested candidates to fill vacant board positions. If you are interested in hearing more, I welcome the opportunity to speak with you. My contact information is below.

FOSB Member Involvement: FOSB Members who might have an interest in becoming involved in the projects that FOSB supports are invited to contact board member Diane Kozak at dmck@nycap.rr.com.

Best regards,


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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.

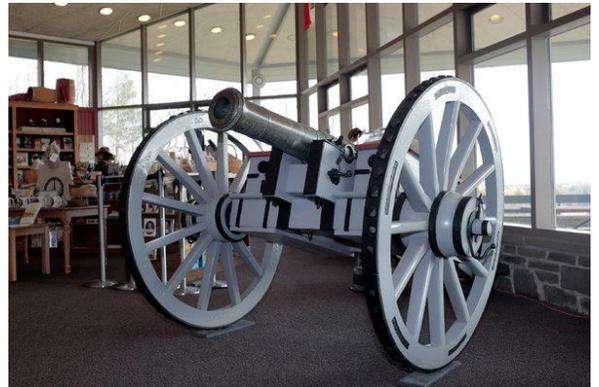
During the September and October Battles of Saratoga, Burgoyne lost ten more of his remaining pieces of artillery. At that point, Burgoyne saved what he could and began a retreat back to Canada. He was only able to make it seven miles north of where the battles had been fought before being surrounded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

New York State Historic Preserve 1927 National Historical Park 1938 Saratoga Surrender Site 2019

Tim Holmes, Past President

Brian Mumford, President

During the 1920's Adolf Ochs, after his acquiring The New York Times, became interested in the history of the Battles of Saratoga and the current status of the farms upon which the battles had been fought. Using the influence of his publication, he began a campaign to raise funds to acquire title to the farms with the intent to donate the land to New York State.

For a period of several years local community leaders, backed by Ochs' fundraising, canvassed the various families to engage in sustained conversations and negotiations seeking to acquire lot-by-lot the title to what had been the fields of action.

The Saratoga NHP archives hold volumes of correspondence between Ochs and locals including Mayor George Slingerland of Mechanicville. The letters discuss familiar farm names and the status of deals made, for example:

- 1) Neilson farm205 acres option price \$20,500 noted in the letter: "down from \$25,000"
- 2) Freeman & Searles farms option price \$23,000
- 3) Gannon farm ... 107 acres option price \$12,000 noted in the letter: "down from \$18,000"

In 1927 with the support of Governor Franklin Roosevelt, the State of New York approved the purchase of four farms and created a State Historic Preserve which became known as the Saratoga Battlefield. Slingerland was appointed the first superintendent. In 1938 with President Roosevelt's support, the battlefield became part of the National Park System when Saratoga National Historical Park was authorized by the United States Congress.

The location of General Burgoyne's surrender, seven miles north of the battlefields, was not available to be purchased for Ochs' plan. The property remained in private ownership until 2006 when the land conservation organization Open Space Institute acquired 19 acres, which included the location of Burgoyne's surrender. In 2017 FOSB negotiated a license to develop 1.5 acres of the property as the Saratoga Surrender Site with the commitment that the developed site would be donated to Saratoga NHP.

For three years, FOSB worked to raise upwards of \$775,000 and developed the site. All Members of FOSB are to share in this amazing accomplishment. Currently the legal process to enable OSI to transfer title of the site to Saratoga NHP is underway. In the meantime, FOSB will be present on the site engaged in supplemental development projects including the removal and replacement of a number of trees, and we anticipate installing the soon to arrive cannon carriages.



Saratoga Surrender Site

Archeology in the Park

Amy Bracewell, Superintendent

In May of 2019, Saratoga National Historical Park worked with a variety of partners to conduct an innovative archeological research project at the Barber Wheatfield. The location of some of the most heated fighting on October 7, 1777, this site witnessed the American forces overcoming the tired British soldiers which ultimately resulted in a resounding victory for the United States. Much is known about this battle through archival documents, maps, and other accounts, but on-the-ground details are still needing research. Where were the lines of fire? Where were battery placed? Are our current forest-field configurations correct? Prior to this survey, the site had never been properly archeologically investigated at this scale.

Staff at the battlefield worked with National Park Service archeologists to develop a new study of the Barber Wheatfield. Utilizing the newest technology available, the park collected data from aerial LiDAR (Light Detecting And Ranging), ground penetrating radar, multispectral imaging, archeological metal detecting, and lab analysis of artifacts. Only once all of this data are compiled and layered together does anyone lift a shovel, ensuring minimal disturbance of these historic landscapes. Details about each excavated item are carefully logged, ultimately creating the most robust view of the battlefield possible.

Along with National Park Service archeologists, the park partnered with the American Battlefield Trust and the American Veterans Archeological Recovery (AVAR) program to recruit combat veterans for this archeological project. 33 combat veterans worked throughout the four weeks learning about archeology methodology, appropriate skills for artifact recovery, GPS recording of artifacts, and cataloging of artifacts. Instructors from the Advanced Metal Detecting for the Archeologist (AMDA) volunteered their time and travel to train and work side-by-side with AVAR volunteers in the scientific methodology of utilizing metal detectors with archeology.

One of the most meaningful aspects of the project was the opportunity for the park to work with AVAR and the talented combat veterans. AVAR, is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the well-being of disabled veterans transitioning to civilian life through field archeology. The veterans who worked at Saratoga span experiences in a variety of military conflicts in Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan. AVAR utilizes battlefield archeology to help veterans re-connect with a team atmosphere, find support with fellow veterans, and help transfer their military skills to the private sector.

On a historic battlefield, a combat veteran has a vastly different experience than a civilian. Not only do they instinctively connect with that landscape in terms of military science, they can imprint their own field experience onto soldiers of the past. Finding a musket ball on the battlefield, many of the AVAR participants felt their direct connect to the Revolutionary War soldier who fired it, or who was killed by the fire. These powerful connections made the project much more meaningful and emphasized the hallowed landscape we help preserve.

Not only did the veterans connect with the battlefield, but they also made extraordinary connections with the community. As a nonprofit, AVAR raised awareness and support through community organizations adopting them for a meal. For the entire month of the project, community organizations, scouts, churches, police unions, and companies kept the veterans fed for both lunch and dinner. This enormous generosity is a reflection of not only the deserving veterans in the program, but also the pull people have to support a program that seeks to rehabilitate and uplift our country's veterans.

The project was so successful in 2019 that the National Park Service has committed to continuing the research in 2020. Beginning in September, 2020, the park will again host combat veterans from AVAR to continue the field work and analysis of the fields related to the Second Battle of Saratoga. The park and AVAR are looking forward to continuing this great relationship and important work.

Superintendent's Message: Reopening the Park

Park grounds are still fully accessible to cyclists, walkers, runners, and hikers, from sunrise to sunset. The park asks visitors to #RecreateResponsibly by following CDC guidelines on social distancing, staying at home when sick, and taking all safety precautions when going out in public.

The park is following the state's four phase approach. Re-opening the tour road to vehicles and limited visitor services will take place when the Capital Region enters into Phase 4.

The health and safety of park visitors, employees, volunteers, and partners continues to be paramount. The leadership team at Saratoga National Historical Park is working with federal, state, and local public health authorities to closely monitor the COVID-19 pandemic and using a phased approach to increase access slowly.



Stop 2 Neilson House

Amy Bracewell
Superintendent | Saratoga National Historical Park

Become a Friend of Saratoga Battlefield

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

E-mail _____

FRIENDS OF SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD IS A NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION INCORPORATED UNDER THE N.Y.S EDUCATION LAW. YOUR DONATIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE TO THE EXTENT ALLOWABLE BY LAW.

Choose your membership level:

- \$15 Enlisted Personal
- \$30 Noncommissioned Officer (Noncom)
- \$50 Commissioned Officer
- \$100: Field Grade Officer "Battlefield Club"
- Other (>\$100 also Battlefield Club)

Make checks payable to: FRIENDS OF SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD and mail this form to:

Friends of Saratoga Battlefield

648 Route 32

Stillwater, NY 12701

Public Access to Saratoga Surrender Site

Friends of Saratoga Battlefield, pursuant to a license, has developed Saratoga Surrender Site on land owned by the land conservation organization Open Space Institute, with the commitment that the developed site be donated to Saratoga NHP. The procedures required to transfer the title are underway. In the meantime, FOSB will be present on the site engaged in supplemental development projects. The site remains open to the public pursuant to the National Park Service CORVID-19 guidelines. SSS currently is open to the public daily from sunrise to sunset.



Saratoga Surrender Site

Please enjoy Saratoga Surrender Site.

**Friends of the Saratoga Battlefield
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