



2 | The Park

“When will our countrymen believe that not in books alone are the records of a nation to be kept? If our ‘Saratoga Monument Association,’ or the government owned this great battle field it would tell its own story to the school children and to the indifferent grown people and lead them to value the national life that was at stake on this ground.”

— Ellen Hardin Walworth, in a letter to William Stone, 1894



“I have always thought Hudson River’s the most proper part of the whole continent for opening vigorous operations. Because the course of the river, so beneficial for conveying all the bulky necessaries of an army, is precisely the route that an army ought to take for the great purposes of cutting the communications between the Southern and Northern Provinces, giving confidence to the Indians, and securing a junction with the Canadian forces.”

— British Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, 1775

The Park | Contents

Historical Overview	9
The British Northern Campaign of 1777	9
The Battles	13
Preserving the Battlefield	20
Overview of Park Resources	23
Regional Context	23
Natural Resources	24
Cultural Resources	32
Related Plans and Programs	37
American Battlefield Protection Program: Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Study	37
American Heritage River	37
Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Project	37
Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor	37
Heritage New York Program	37
Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area	37
Lakes to Locks Passage (formerly the Champlain Canal and Champlain Trail Byways)	38
Lighting Freedom’s Flame: 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution	38
Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor	38
New York Independence Trail	39
New York State Canal Recreationway Plan	39
Old Saratoga on the Hudson	39
Saratoga P.L.A.N. (Preserving Land and Nature)	39



The river, ridges, streams, farmsteads, and woodlots helped determine the movements of the armies, the military tactics, and the outcome of the battles of Saratoga.

Historical Overview

by Larry Lowenthal

The British Northern Campaign of 1777

Today's visitor to Saratoga National Historical Park sees a serene, largely rural landscape. It is difficult to imagine that these picturesque surroundings were once the scene of desperate combat, when the infant United States of America fought for survival and won a victory whose consequences were of global importance.

In 1777, the first year of America's declared independence, King George III still hoped to stifle the rebellion and return the erring Colonies to royal control. This created an opportunity for John Burgoyne, an ambitious, articulate general who had served in North America since June 1775. Back in England at the close of the 1776 campaign, Burgoyne used his personal charm to advance his position. He composed an essay on strategy entitled "Thoughts for Conducting the War from the Side of Canada." Less a plan than a series of alternatives, it garnered attention in the absence of other inspiration.

The one consistent element in "Thoughts" was that a British army would move down the traditional Champlain warpath from Canada to the Hudson. Burgoyne's skill at political maneuvering was rewarded, and when he returned to Canada in May 1777 it was as commander of the invasion force. He had been elevated over a senior officer, General Sir Guy Carleton, who remained in command in Canada.

Burgoyne assembled a resplendent army at St. John, Québec, on June 13. More than 4,000 British and 3,000 German regulars formed its core, with Canadians, American Loyalists, and Indian allies bringing the total fighting force to well over 8,000. As it set off down Lake Champlain on June 30, 1777, Burgoyne's army made a magnificent, seemingly invincible, display.

The first major obstacle in Burgoyne's path was New York's Fort Ticonderoga, captured by an audacious American force led by Ethan Allen and Benedict Arnold in 1775. A year later the Americans built up a formidable garrison at Ticonderoga and nearby Mount Independence, which deterred Carleton from attacking late in the season.



John Burgoyne, an ambitious, articulate British general who had served in North America since June 1775, was chosen to lead the Northern Campaign of 1777.

In the popular imagination, Fort Ticonderoga was the “Gibraltar of the North” — impregnable — but the nickname was valid only when it was properly garrisoned. In 1777, under Major General Arthur St. Clair, it was woefully under-strength. When Burgoyne appeared on July 2, St. Clair hoped to fight a successful delaying action. Two days later the British stunned him by hauling cannons up Mount Defiance, overlooking the American escape route. On July 5 St. Clair evacuated the fort in a hurried and humiliating night retreat. A grim portent: one day after the first anniversary of America’s declaration of independence, the strong bastion of the north had been taken with embarrassing ease. When the King learned the news, he exulted, “I have beat them. I have beat all the Americans!”

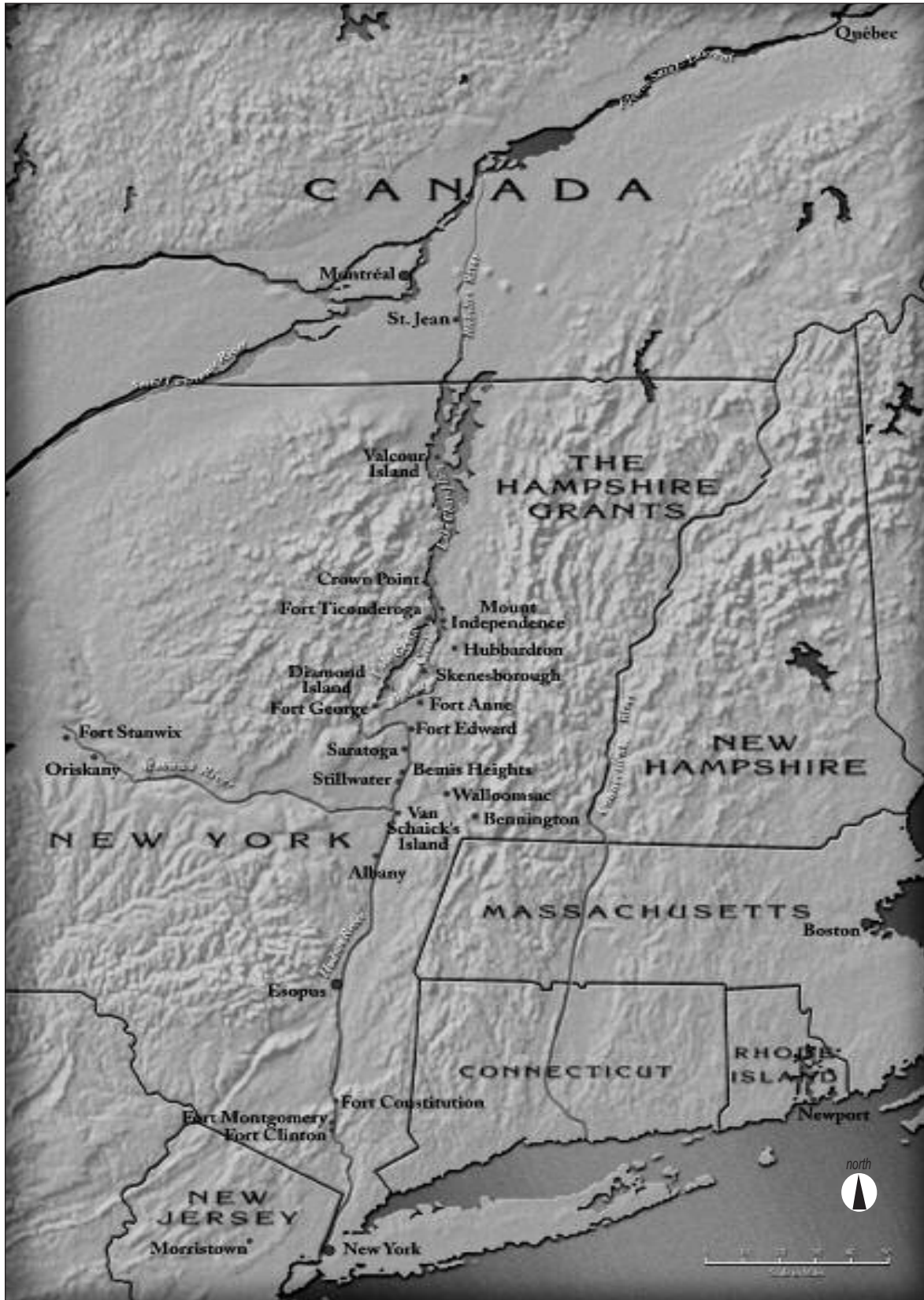
Now began one of the darkest months of American history. Although American troops fought creditably at Hubbardton and Fort Anne, Burgoyne’s superior forces pushed them back relentlessly. Major General Philip Schuyler delayed the British as best he could by obstructing their path, but the value of these methods was not fully appreciated at the time. Burgoyne’s progress seemed to have the ponderous inevitability of the glaciers that had once covered these regions. Deepening despair weighed on the northern states.

Delaying tactics became effective because Burgoyne was dependent on his long supply line — the reason he put so much effort into pushing a road through the wilderness. Schuyler’s unobtrusive, unavoidable strategy of trading time for space began to pay off in early August. Burgoyne, having finally reached the Hudson, pounced on a report that the area around Bennington contained valuable supplies, especially horses, and organized a raid. The composition of this detachment, consisting largely of dismounted German heavy cavalry, was questionable in view of its purpose. In a stunning surprise, militiamen under Brigadier General John Stark of New Hampshire crushed the intruders on August 16 at what is called the battle of Bennington. From that day forward Burgoyne’s confidence began to deflate, and as the long days of northern summer ran out, he was filled with increasing foreboding.

Although Schuyler had contributed to the outcome of Bennington, the impetuous John Stark had fought independently. Schuyler’s continued retreat subjected him to mounting criticism in Congress. New Englanders, who formed a growing portion of the northern army, disliked his aristocratic Dutch ways. Behind the scenes an intense political struggle took place, and when it ended Schuyler had been replaced by an old rival, Major General Horatio Gates.



General Philip Schuyler, a patriot statesman and military leader, was commander of the northern theater of operations prior to the battles of Saratoga. His strategy of delaying the British as best he could by obstructing their path helped pave the way for the American victory.



| 11

The Northern Campaign



Saratoga National Historical Park
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

General Management Plan 2004

Before Schuyler departed, he made another insufficiently recognized contribution to the final outcome. As part of Burgoyne's plan, a column commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Barry St. Leger was supposed to march down the Mohawk Valley and join him at Albany. In some respects this operation, though conducted as a diversion, made more sense than the main invasion, as the valley contained many Loyalists and abundant supplies.

To guard this strategic region, the Americans had rebuilt and garrisoned Fort Stanwix at the Oneida Carrying Place (present Rome, New York), beyond the limit of European settlement. Moving by way of the St. Lawrence and Lake Ontario, St. Leger appeared before Fort Stanwix in early August. When the fort refused to surrender, he began a siege. A relief expedition by Mohawk Valley militia was mauled at Oriskany on August 6, largely by Iroquois, who formed a majority of St. Leger's force.

Although the garrison stood firm at Fort Stanwix, Schuyler knew it could not hold indefinitely. In an astonishingly bold risk, he detached part of his already inadequate army to relieve the fort. Later he placed Major General Benedict Arnold in command of the relief expedition. Arnold never had to fight a battle. Instead, he gave St. Leger's Iroquois allies, who had become disillusioned with the campaign, an excuse to depart. Without them, St. Leger had to make a hasty flight back to Canada, leaving Burgoyne more isolated than before.

Burgoyne was under the overall command of General Sir William Howe. The two were expected to cooperate, but the government in London had never established how this was to be done. Howe, apparently sure Burgoyne could manage on his own, determined to attack the American capital of Philadelphia. Unwilling to chance a march overland, he put his entire army on ships. For more than a month, from late July to late August, Howe's army was at sea, out of touch. During this pivotal month, things began to turn sour for Burgoyne. When Howe advanced on Philadelphia from the south, General Washington was inevitably drawn off to oppose him. Washington had sent important units to assist in the north; otherwise the two campaigns remained separate.



Major General Horatio Gates took command of the Northern Army in September 1777, just prior to the battles of Saratoga.



225th Anniversary reenactment.

Burgoyne spent early September on the east side of the Hudson near the mouth of the Battenkill, slowly accumulating supplies. By then he had absorbed the two defeats on his flanks (Bennington and Fort Stanwix) and knew that Howe could offer no immediate help. He could have turned back to Ticonderoga, but retreat was not in his character. In order to march on Albany, he had to cross the Hudson River. Once he did so, he cut his supply line and committed himself to fighting through to Albany.



By 1777, the landscape of Saratoga had changed dramatically due to the efforts of the English, Dutch, Congregationalists, and Quakers. They succeeded in changing the landscape from a wilderness to a rural settlement.

When Gates took command of the northern army, he found it reduced in numbers and morale due to attrition on its long retreat. The army was camped on the north side of the Mohawk River, in poor country for withstanding an attack. He decided to shift his defensive line to the north, and on the advice of a gifted Polish engineer, Colonel Thaddeus Kosciuszko, dug in at Bemis Heights, north of Stillwater. Here the hills crowded close to the Hudson, leaving Burgoyne no choice but to batter his way past Gates if he was going to capture Albany. The pieces were in place for the battles of Saratoga.

The Battles

After crossing the Hudson on September 13, Burgoyne moved his army southward in his usual methodical way. On the 19th, with the American army only about three miles ahead, Burgoyne faced another decision. Forcing his way past the American batteries along the river seemed a nearly hopeless proposition. His best chance lay in swinging cross-country to dislodge Gates from his fortified positions.

The upland countryside between the opposing armies was no longer wilderness, but was recently settled, with farm clearings interspersed among dense forest. Steep ravines leading down to the river created obstacles to military maneuver. In general the terrain was poorly suited to the kind of set-piece, open-field formations favored by European armies. By then Gates's army outnumbered the British, but some of his troops were militia, often unreliable in formal combat and not armed as fully or as uniformly as Burgoyne's disciplined regulars.

On September 19 Burgoyne divided his army into three columns, hoping to outflank the American defenses. Early in the afternoon Colonel Daniel Morgan's frontier riflemen, one of the units Washington had detached from his army, engaged the center column around the Freeman Farm. Fighting surged back and forth in this limited area for several hours as each side committed more troops. The Americans seemed to be getting the better of it until Burgoyne urgently ordered some of his German troops to come to the rescue. Late in the day these units pushed back the Americans, who withdrew into their prepared positions.

The German Baroness von Riedesel

The German Baroness von Riedesel traveled with her husband, a general in Burgoyne's army. She kept a diary that includes vivid descriptions of General Burgoyne and the British army's march from Canada to the surrender at Saratoga.



Burgoyne had gained a narrow technical victory in the sense that his troops occupied the battlefield, but if anything his position was worse than before. His losses were significant and could not be replaced, while American strength was augmented by militia each day. Neither side was in condition to renew the fighting immediately after Freeman's Farm, as the battle was called. Soon Burgoyne began to dig into defensive positions — startling but revealing behavior on the part of an invincible army that was supposed to be determining the course of action.

It was clear that Burgoyne's once unlimited confidence had nearly evaporated. Trying to share responsibility (or blame), he resorted increasingly to military councils, making decisions by committee. His actions show that he recognized he could no longer break through to Albany on his own. Increasingly he pinned his diminishing hopes on the frail possibility of aid from St. Leger, who after his rout had retraced Burgoyne's path to Ticonderoga, or from Lieutenant General Sir Henry Clinton to the south.

With Howe occupied around Philadelphia, Clinton was left in charge of New York City. A competent but naturally cautious man, he tried to help Burgoyne without endangering his own position. After receiving reinforcements from Europe, Clinton sailed up the Hudson with 3,000 men on October 3. In a well-executed drive, the British captured the American forts in the Hudson Highlands, removing the major obstacle between themselves and Gates's army.

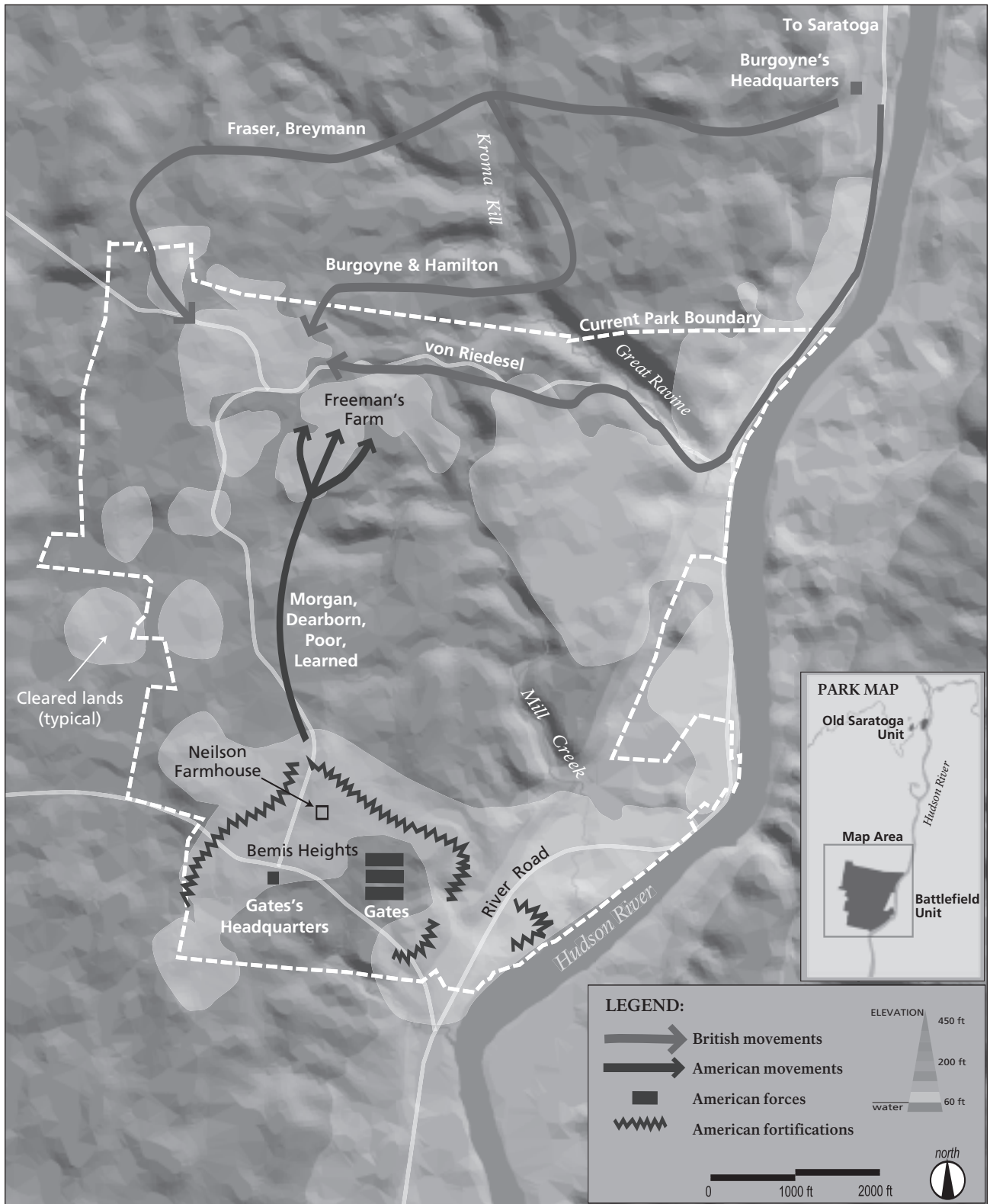
Due to uncertain communications, Burgoyne had limited knowledge of Clinton's movements. He was acutely aware that his own position was deteriorating. Having proclaimed at the start of his march that "This Army must not retreat," he was not yet ready to consider that option. In England he had been, like many of his class, an avid gambler, and he was ready to risk all on another throw of the dice. Though his senior officers talked him out of an assault with most of his army, he won their approval for what he called a "reconnaissance in force."

About 1,700 men moved out of their camp on October 7 and took up positions at Barber's Wheat Field, another agricultural clearing, while their officers considered the next move. This force was too small to do much good, but was large enough to attract an overwhelming American response, as soon occurred. Attacked on three sides, Burgoyne's troops fought valiantly but within an hour were driven back in disorder, taking refuge in one of their prepared defenses, the Balcarres Redoubt. Brigadier General Simon Fraser, a respected officer, was mortally wounded as he tried to control this withdrawal.



"...Toward three o'clock in the afternoon, instead of my dinner guests arriving as expected, poor General Fraser, who was to have been one of them, was brought to me on a stretcher, mortally wounded. The table, which had already been set for dinner, was removed and a bed for the General was put in its place. I sat in a corner of the room, shivering and trembling."

— Baroness von Riedesel



| 15

First Battle of Saratoga September 19, 1777



Saratoga National Historical Park
 United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

General Management Plan 2004



"In the Victory woods, south of the monument, there are hundreds of feet of the British breastworks in an excellent state of preservation. The ground never having been permanently cleared nor plowed, these earthworks remain as the British left them, except that the logs, which may have entered into their construction, are rotted away."

— John Henry Brandow, *The Story of Old Saratoga*, 1906

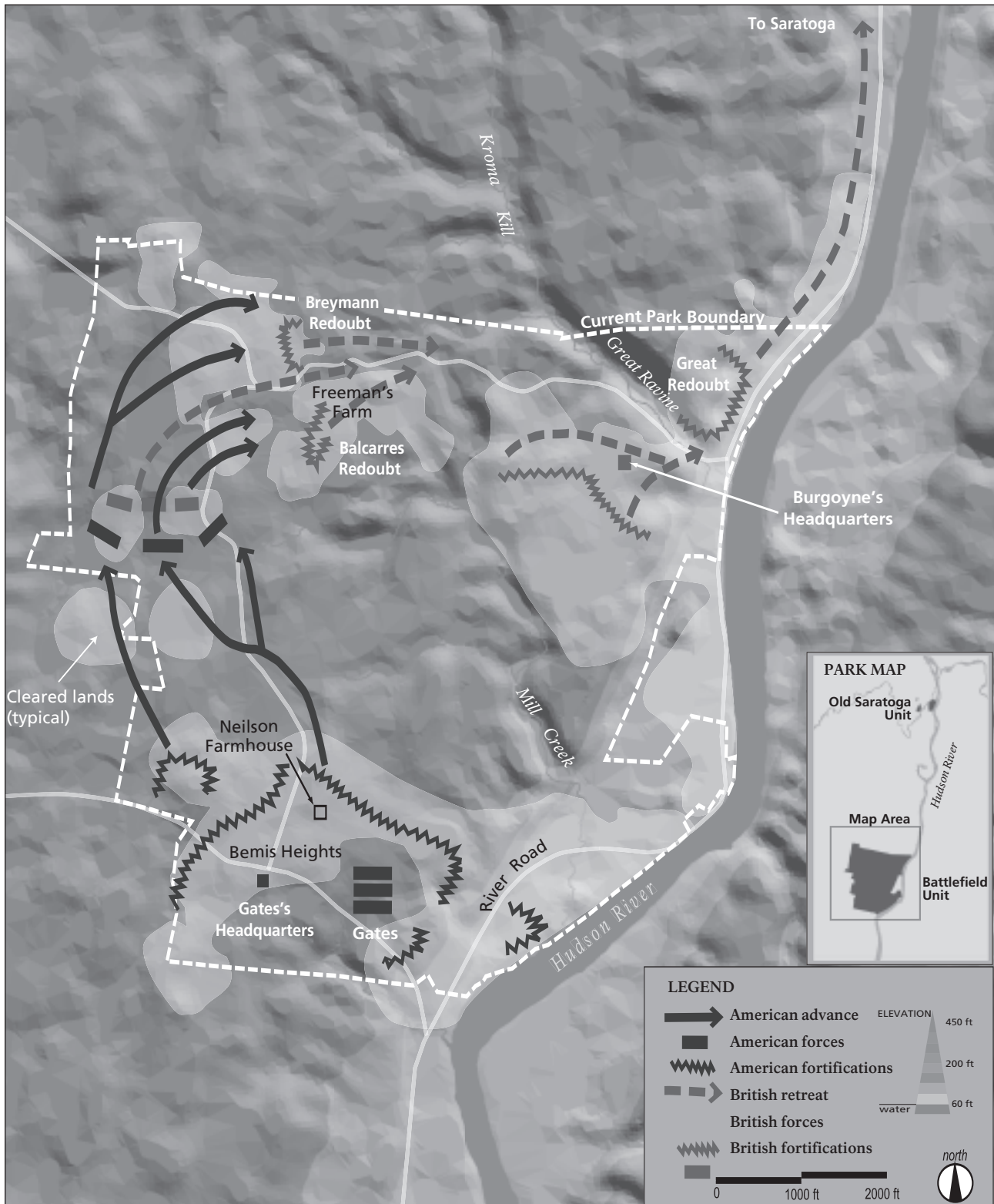
The battle might have ended at this point but for one man — Benedict Arnold. Several days earlier Arnold, with his exaggerated sensitivity and distended regard for his honor, had quarreled violently with Gates. Stripped of active command by Gates, Arnold remained in camp, but when he heard the sounds of battle on October 7, could not hold back. He charged onto the field and, in violation of all military protocol, seized command of the first troops he encountered. At their head, he completed the rout of the German elements of the "reconnaissance." Ranging over some of the same ground as the first battle, he turned his attention to Balcarres Redoubt, but the British put up a strong defense and repulsed the American attack. Furiously, Arnold turned away and joined the assault on Breymann Redoubt, held

by German troops. The defenders were swept away, but on entering the redoubt Arnold was shot in the leg and pinned beneath his horse. If he had remained uninjured, there is no telling how long the battle would have continued, but with darkness coming on, the day's fighting drew to a close.

Burgoyne saw that his position was hopeless, and the mirage of Albany finally faded. That night he pulled his troops behind their strongest defenses near the Great Redoubt. On October 8, after burying General Fraser in solemn ceremony, the royal army began its grim retreat northward. A chill autumn rain turned the road muddy and made the march even more of an ordeal for the dispirited troops and camp followers. Gates, probably believing he could gain his objectives without another costly battle, did not contest the retreat.

On October 10 Burgoyne dug in on the heights north of Fish Creek in present Schuylerville and Victory. It was a relatively strong position, but more so for the British than the Germans, who were camped on lower ground and exposed to fire from both front and rear. Burgoyne has been criticized both then and later for not pressing northward when there might have been a chance to escape, but he may have clung to a wan hope that he would be rescued. Indeed, Henry Clinton sent a detachment up the Hudson, where it burned Kingston, seat of the New York State government, and proceeded even farther north. In the end this maneuver, though it terrified the residents of Albany, proved the impossibility of saving Burgoyne.

The Americans held Burgoyne's army in what amounted to a siege, without some of the formality. Pinned behind its earthworks, the royal army lacked reliable supplies of food and water and was subjected to constant firing. Although his troops, who called him "Gentleman Johnny" because he treated them humanely by the standards of the time, remained devoted, Burgoyne finally faced the inevitable and on October 13 requested negotiations. Three days of sometimes bizarre conferences ensued, punctuated by councils between Burgoyne and his senior officers. Gates, presumably worried about British operations on the lower Hudson, granted most of the British requests, allowing the final document to be called a "convention," rather than surrender or capitulation.



Second Battle of Saratoga October 7 and 8, 1777



Saratoga National Historical Park
 United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

General Management Plan 2004



A French engraving portrays Burgoyne surrendering his sword to Gates on October 17, 1777.

On October 17, 1777 Burgoyne's soldiers marched out of their entrenchments and laid (or threw) down their weapons in a clearing north of Fish Creek whose popular name, the "Field of Grounded Arms," suggests the vaguely medieval nature of the proceedings. Seldom had history witnessed such a startling turnaround in the 15 weeks since the ragged Americans had slunk out of Ticonderoga. Then, in regular columns, the defeated forces forded the creek and came to the point where Gates and his staff were waiting.

It is somewhat unusual to name a campaign after the defeated commander, but this had been John Burgoyne's campaign from the outset. He had conceived it, maneuvered to gain the command, made the crucial decisions along the way. Now the British general, who at the outset of his march had issued a pompous proclamation threatening "devastation, famine and every concomitant horror" to his foes, handed his sword to the plebian Gates in the ancient gesture of surrender.

The Convention called for the captured army to be returned to Europe. Since that would have freed other troops to fight in North America, the Continental Congress never carried out this provision, and the soldiers remained captive for the duration of the war. Burgoyne himself returned to England and, in addition to writing plays, occupied himself defending his conduct of the expedition.

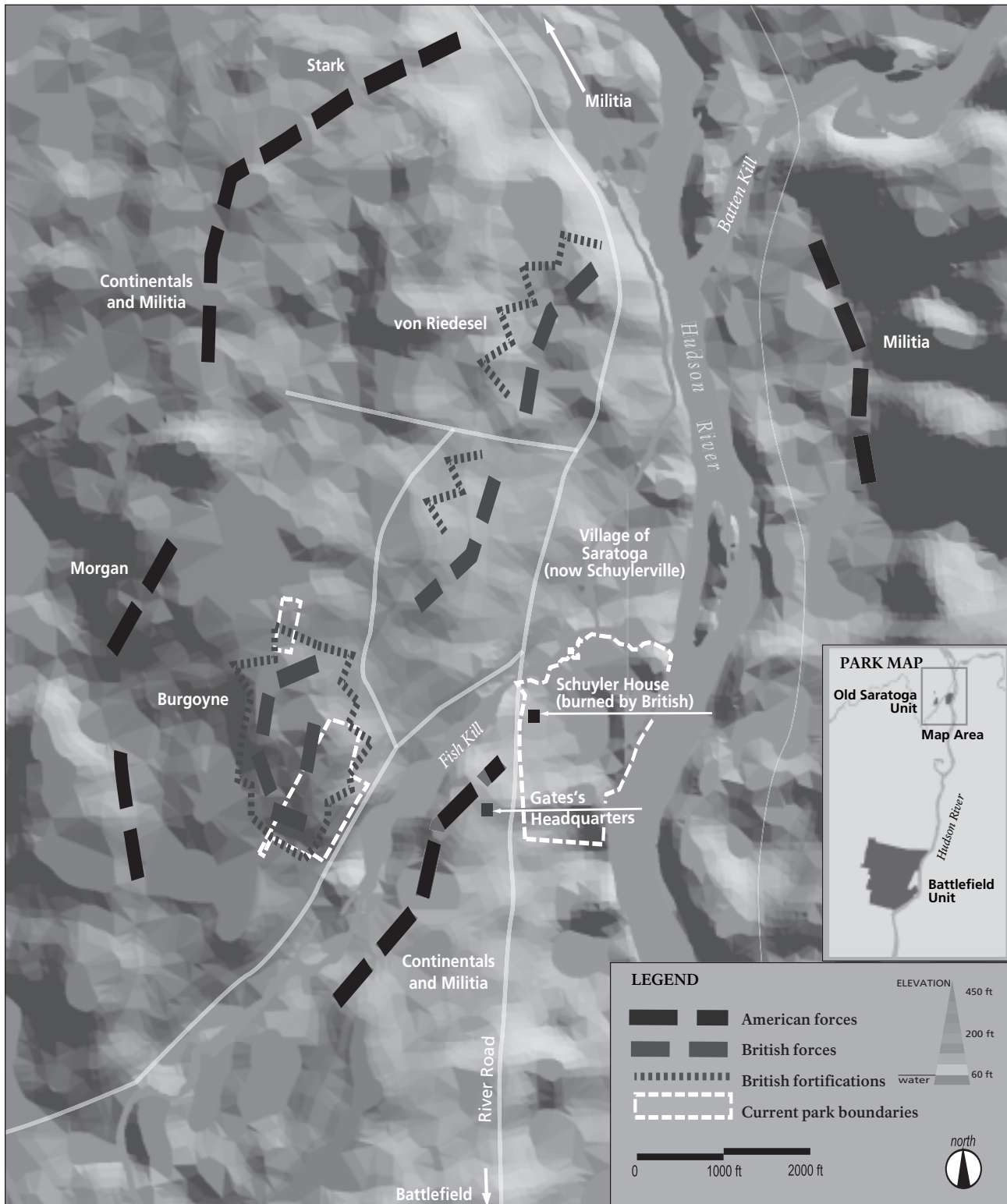
The most far-reaching consequences took place on the Continent, where the spectacle of a British army surrendering in the wilderness astonished the courts of Europe.

Howe had again outgeneraled Washington and entered Philadelphia between the two battles of Saratoga, but Washington's army remained intact and went into winter quarters at Valley Forge. Howe's apparent success was of less consequence than Washington's spirited opposition and — of greater importance — the Burgoyne disaster, for these events convinced France to sign an alliance with the United States. This renewed the conflict between France and Britain that had been waged intermittently since 1689 and vastly widened the scope of America's War for Independence. In subsequent years, French money, materiel, and manpower sustained the American cause on the many occasions when the United States seemed nearly exhausted. The seeds sown at Saratoga were harvested almost exactly four years later in a similar ceremony at Yorktown.

[The army arrived at Old Saratoga]

"in such a state of fatigue that the men for the most part had not strength or inclination to cut wood and make fires, but rather sought sleep in their wet cloaths upon the wet ground under the continuing rain."

— Burgoyne, *State of the Expedition*



Burgoyne's Army Trapped at Saratoga October 10-17, 1777



Saratoga National Historical Park
 United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

General Management Plan 2004



The Schuyler House is the third to be built on what was the Schuyler family property. Here in 1856, a group met and took the first formal action toward recognizing and preserving the battlefield.

Preserving the Battlefield

Burgoyne's surrender by no means brought a return to normal for the region through which he had marched. In later years smaller British forces came down the Champlain route, Indian raids were frequent, and only the formal declaration of peace in 1783 brought a feeling of security to American settlers. General Schuyler's house at Saratoga, burned by Burgoyne in the closing days of the campaign, had been rebuilt with the help of soldiers soon after and, as the general intended, became the center of a growing mill and agricultural community.

General farming resumed after the war and expanded until the entire area of the battlefield had been divided into family farms, commonly comprising 100–200 acres. Completion of the Champlain Canal in 1823 provided links both north and south and created new opportunities, but the economy of the area remained predominantly agricultural. By 1870 approximately 90% of battlefield land had been cleared; only the ravines and other places too steep to be farmed retained anything of their original condition.

Early in the 19th century the practice arose among cultured individuals, many of them foreign, of visiting the battlefield. These people clearly regarded the site as hallowed ground, and for many the journey had aspects of a pilgrimage. They thrilled at seeing earthworks, foundations, and other evidence of the battles and lamented the agricultural practices that were steadily erasing these landmarks. Farmers

routinely plowed up wartime artifacts, including human remains, but veneration for the patriot heroes did not yet extend to preserving the land on which they had struggled.

The first formal action toward recognizing the battlefield came in 1856, when a group met at the Schuyler House to discuss creating a victory memorial. Three years later they formed the Saratoga Monument Association, but the emphasis was still on memorialization, rather than preservation. After delays due to the Civil War and other factors, the cornerstone of the monument was laid on the 100th anniversary of the battle of Freeman's Farm in 1877. The accompanying celebration marked the true beginning of public awareness and activism toward the preservation of Saratoga battlefield, although the monument was located in Victory.

Ellen Hardin Walworth, whose sustained efforts were largely responsible for turning attention to preservation of the battlefield, made a plea in 1880 for marking the battleground with plaques or monuments. This was the first formal extension of memorial efforts to the battlefield. The placing of tablets began almost immediately and continued for many years. On Walworth's initiative, the Saratoga Chapter of the Daughters of the American



Ellen Hardin Walworth

Ellen Hardin Walworth, a remarkable local citizen — life-long battlefield enthusiast, founding member of the Daughters of the American Revolution, supporter of the American Historical Association — was instrumental in the preservation of the battlefield.

Revolution (DAR) also erected nine granite markers on the carriage route from Saratoga Springs to the battlefield between 1906 and 1909.

The drive to preserve battlefield land gained momentum in the 1920s, led by George O. Slingerland of Mechanicville, with editorial and financial support of *New York Times* owner Adolph Ochs. The Saratoga Battlefield Association was formed in 1923 and began to acquire key parcels. As patriotic fervor grew with the approach of the 150th anniversary of the events, a law was passed in 1926 authorizing New York State to own and preserve historic sites. During a huge celebration in October 1927 the state park was officially dedicated and placed under the administration of the Conservation Department. At this time the state owned four farms totaling 644 acres, about one-quarter of the estimated area of the historic battlefield.

During its administration the state made progress in land acquisition, development, and interpretation, setting precedents and creating infrastructure that endured into the 1960s. Under Slingerland's direction the state also erected several "replica" structures, partly to perform visitor service functions that could not otherwise be accommodated.

Slingerland continued as superintendent of the battlefield park until his death in 1932. He had intensified the interest of New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt in preserving the battlefield, and this interest continued after Roosevelt was elected president in 1932. Although they differed as to details, both men believed the site should be given national recognition and ownership.

During the latter part of the state management period, action was hindered by the shortage of funds due to the Great Depression and the expectation of imminent federal takeover. During this slack time the DAR dedicated a monument to unknown soldiers in 1931, accompanied by a memorial grove of 27 trees. (The grove is no longer extant.) In the 1930s the removal of farms, planting of sod, and introduction of grazing sheep created an open park-like landscape that was representative neither of battle conditions nor of the traditional agriculture that succeeded the battles.

Establishment of a national park to commemorate the Saratoga battles, authorized by Congress in 1938, came about largely due to the direction provided by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The National Park Service accepted 1,430 acres from New York State, although the area remained under state administration. A Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camp was established at the park in 1939. Although the program by then was past its peak and was terminated in 1942 due to U.S. participation in World War II, the CCC performed the first methodical historical and archeological investigation of the battlefield.



Slingerland's Memorial Grove of elm trees was dedicated on the same day as the Saratoga Battlefield Memorial, October 10, 1931.

During the ten-year period until establishment of the national park was finalized in 1948, the National Park Service engaged in planning for its eventual administration of the battlefield, while New York State continued to manage it. Almost immediately two critical issues emerged: management of vegetation and the development of tour roads. Initially, Park Service historians favored keeping the land open to

provide sweeping views of the historic terrain. In any case, lack of detailed knowledge of vegetative conditions would have made accurate reforestation difficult. The National Park Service followed a cautious policy while it devoted major effort to developing an accurate historical base map.

Several locations for the new administration/museum building had been suggested. On a visit coinciding with the anniversary of the second battle in 1940, President Roosevelt chose Frasers Hill as the site of this facility, due to the expansive views it provided. This command decision by the chief executive brought an abrupt end to the debate. Selection of a site for the main visitor facility guided layout of the tour roads, although the actual course of roads and the location of the park entrance were continually being revised, even during the war years.



President Franklin Delano Roosevelt chose Frasers Hill as the site for the visitor center due to its expansive views.

A study by historian Charles Snell in 1951 brought a reversal of previous policy in order to favor extensive reforestation in an effort to re-create the field-forest configuration at the time of the battles. Further studies have revised details of Snell's base map, but the policy established at that time has remained generally in effect, and the base map has remained a cornerstone of subsequent planning. Lack of regular maintenance, which led to unplanned reforestation during and after the war, inadvertently supported the new policy.

The 1959 general development plan finally settled on a tour road alignment. The road, finally completed in 1967, connected interpretive stops in the shortest way, without much regard to historical sequence. Earlier designs that offered alternatives to the full-length tour were dropped. In 1962 the visitor center was constructed on Frasers Hill as part of the nationwide "Mission 66" initiative to rebuild the neglected infrastructure of the national park system.

Acquisition of historically important lands continued under National Park Service administration. While the battlefield remained paramount, National Park Service involvement expanded to embrace several related sites. A 26-acre portion of the Schuyler Estate was acquired in 1950, as authorized by 1948 legislation. Under a cooperative agreement, the Old Saratoga Historical Association provided interpretive services for the site. Many of the objects on display at the house are still owned by the Association. Looking ahead to the bicentennial, a tract in the village of Victory was acquired by donation in 1974. This land, believed to contain remains of British earthworks from the "siege" period, had apparently remained free of disturbance due to its rugged location and long-standing ownership by an adjacent factory. New York State, which had administered the Saratoga Monument, ceased operation of it after 1970 due to a state fiscal crisis. The site was deeded to the National Park Service in 1980.

The 1969 master plan, the last major park-wide planning initiative before the present, was inspired by the approaching national bicentennial, with its expected surge in popular interest and visitation. Otherwise, it largely continued on the course set by previous plans. The policy of removing features not authentic to 1777 remained in effect, though most of the commemorative monuments were retained in place. Additional research, including archeology, had refined the understanding of battlefield conditions, so that the 1969 plan seemed confident in striving for a more literal depiction. Thus the policy of trying to reestablish the 1777 landscape configuration was reinforced and has continued to guide park managers ever since.



The cultural landscapes are among the park's most vital resources. These landscapes, when combined with historic structures, archeological resources, and museum objects and archives of the park, are essential in relating the history of the Burgoyne Campaign. In the relative absence of historic structures on the battlefield, the landscapes assume a greater burden in conveying this story.

Overview of Park Resources

The park embraces a rich blend of cultural and natural resources. This mosaic necessitates the integration of the preservation and maintenance of historic structures and objects with that of natural systems, landscapes, and viewsheds. The following overview suggests the diversity of the park's resources.

Regional Context

Saratoga National Historical Park is located in the upper Hudson River Valley in eastern New York State. The battlefield lies about 16 miles north of the junction between the Hudson and Mohawk rivers. The nearest city is Saratoga Springs, approximately 9 miles west of the park. All park sites are located in Saratoga County and extend between 26 and 33 miles from the state capitol at Albany. The Vermont boundary lies only about 17 miles east of Schuylerville.

The Hudson River in the vicinity of the park forms part of a historic transportation corridor extending to the St. Lawrence Valley. Artificial waterways have improved travel through the area since 1823, but for centuries before that the corridor provided a route for trade and invasion. Saratoga became a battlefield because of its strategic location on this waterway

system. Lake Champlain, the southern extremity of which, near Whitehall, is less than 35 miles from Schuylerville, forms the core of the traditional transportation route.

West of the Champlain Valley rise the Adirondack Mountains, a barrier to travel until recent times. Part of Saratoga County is situated within the 6,000,000-acre Adirondack State Park. This immense protected area features over 40 mountains rising above 4,000 feet and over 200 large lakes, with numerous opportunities for camping, hiking, and fishing.

Saratoga County is part of the Capital District of New York. The county is growing rapidly in population, facilitated by Interstate 87 (the Northway). The population growth, along with a decline in agriculture, is fueling the conversion of once-productive farmland to residential use. To date, Saratoga Lake, situated between the park and I-87, has shielded the battlefield locale from the most intense development pressures. For the most part, lands in the vicinity of the park remain privately owned and of rural/agricultural character. As population increases, however, the open space surrounding the park may become increasingly threatened.

Natural Resources

The lands of Saratoga National Historical Park function as a “biological reservoir” providing value to the broader ecosystem through natural processes. Such processes include nutrient cycling, provision of pollinators for the reproduction of plant species, provision of habitat for resident species, and as a migration corridor and stopover point for migrants. As urbanization advances in the upper Hudson River Valley, the protected lands of the park play an increasingly important role in providing these “services” for the regional ecosystem.

Topography and Soils

The varied landscape of gorges, bluffs, floodplain, and ridges in this portion of the upper Hudson River Valley directly influenced the battles that occurred here. As a result, topography is a major topic in park interpretation. The battlefield is a four-square-mile sample of the typical Hudson River floodplain and bluff landscape. Its topography contributes to a diversity of landscape types: uplands (both wet and dry), floodplain, ravines, and steep slopes extending down to the floodplain.

The land along the Hudson River is rich in mineral content, which contributed to the strong agricultural tradition of the region. Soils are alluvial clays and loams, which produce site-specific variations in park vegetation. This soil type is subject to slumping (which poses constraints to visitor access and facility development). Over 1,000 acres of prime agricultural soils are distributed in the low-lying areas of the park.

Topography was the single most critical feature weighing upon siting, strategy, and outcome of the individual battle events, and is still of primary importance in understanding and interpreting the battles.

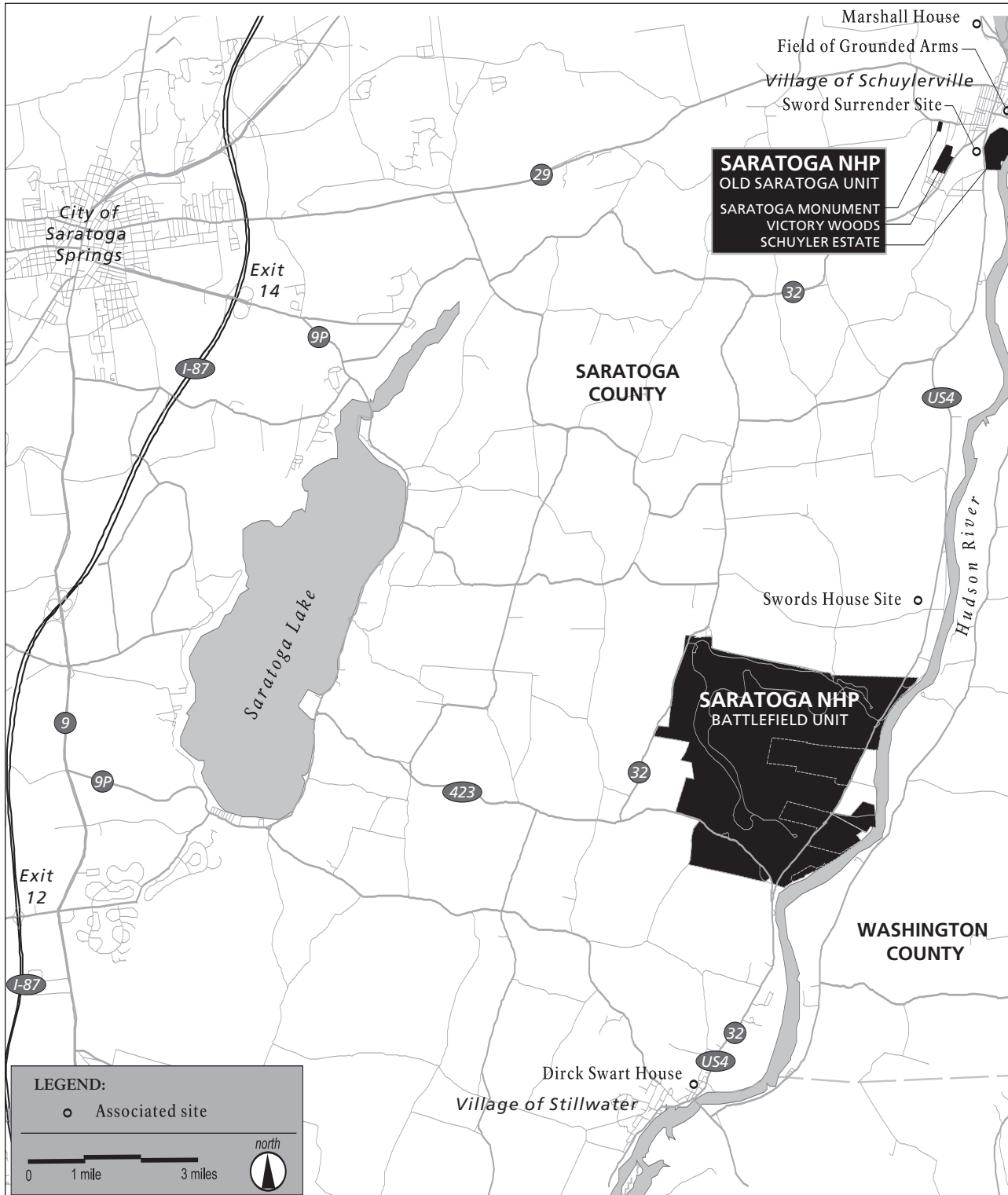
Water Resources

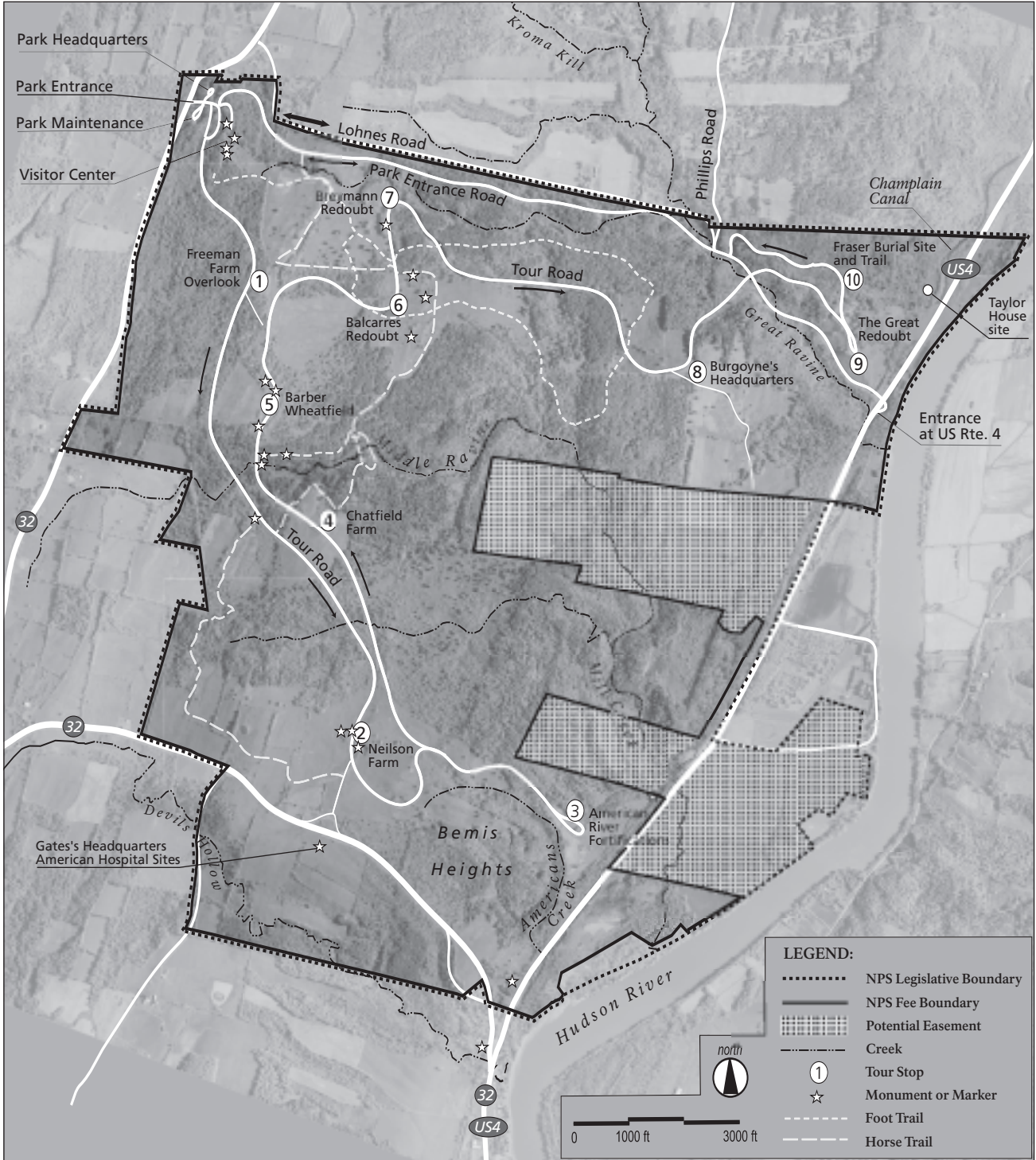
Small tributaries of the Hudson River — Kroma Kill, Mill Creek, Americans Creek, and Devils Hollow — drain the park. Two small farm ponds remain on the battlefield. Two springs at the southern end of the battlefield are potentially historic, as they may have provided water to soldiers in the American encampment. An aquifer recharge area exists in sand deposits in the battlefield.

A total of 49 wetlands, representing about 6% of the total park area, have been inventoried. All of these wetlands are characterized by persistent vegetation, with forested wetlands the predominant type. The remaining wetlands are marshes and wet meadows, mixed stands of forested and scrub-shrub wetlands, ponds, mixed emergent/shrub wetlands, and a small farmed wetland.

The Hudson River floodplain exists on the park’s lower elevations. The 100-year floodplain ranges from 0.2 to 0.5 mile in width west of the Hudson River. Of the total parklands, 11.6% are in floodplain.





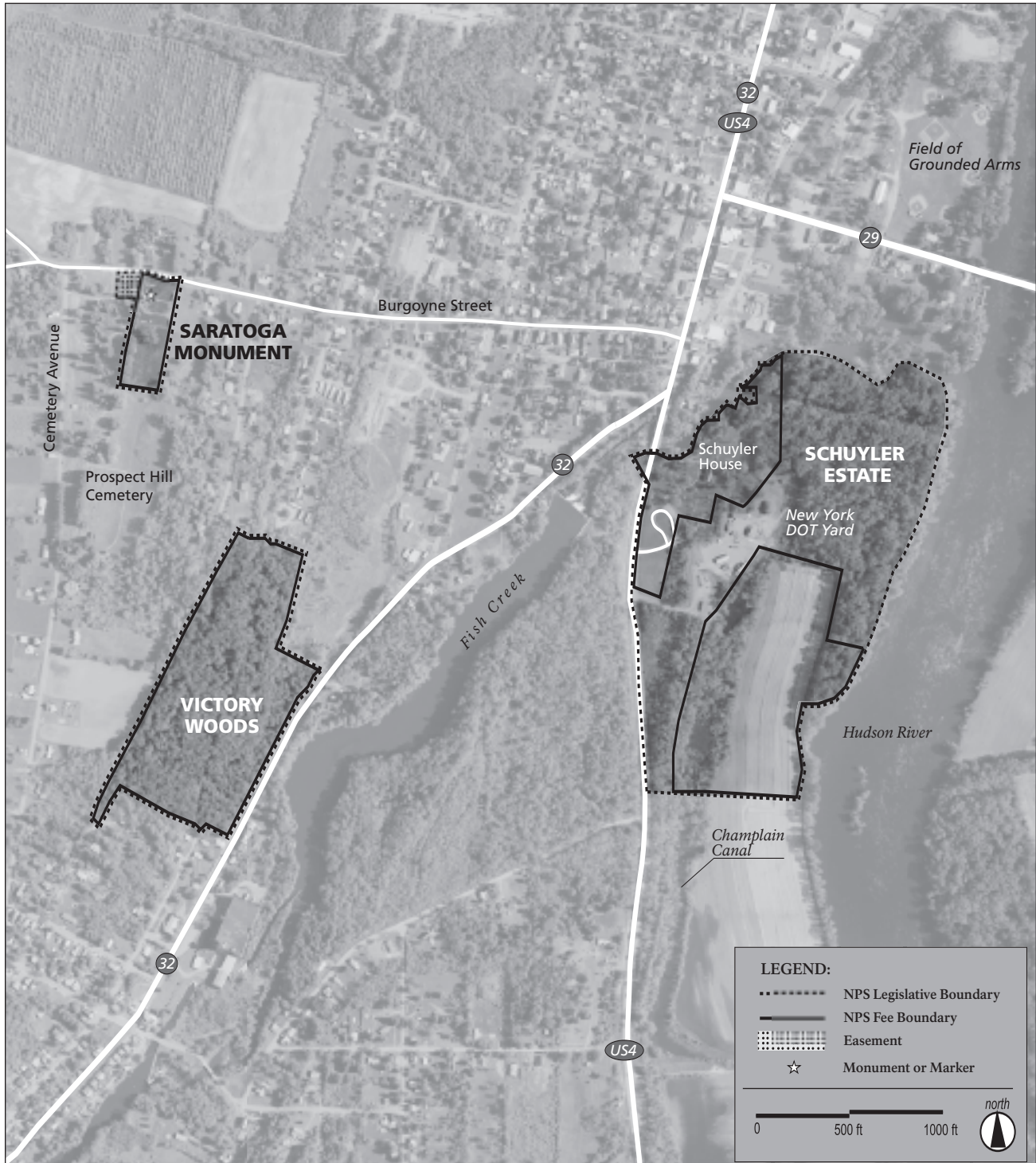


BATTLEFIELD UNIT

Park Map



Saratoga National Historical Park
 United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service



OLD SARATOGA UNIT

Park Map

General Management Plan 2004



Vegetation and topography together define the spatial characteristics of the Saratoga battlefield.

Vegetation and Wildlife

The historic configuration of the fields and forests was important in the battles of 1777, and vegetation plays a prominent role in park interpretation. The sequence of the park's land acquisition and land use history has produced a mosaic of old field, shrub land, and forest communities.

The pattern of vegetation has changed significantly since the time of the battles. Farmers settled the land decades prior to 1777 and hollowed out clearings in the virgin forest. At the time of the park's creation in 1938, nearly all of the forest vegetation had been removed.

The park is situated within the transition zone between the Appalachian oak region and the hemlock–white pine–northern hardwoods region of the Eastern deciduous forest. Deciduous trees comprise most of the mature forests of the region.

Hemlock is common in the steepest ravines on the north-facing slopes, whereas a mixture of hardwood species dominates upland and south-facing slopes. Saratoga National Historical Park has 823 species of plants representing 116 different families.

Grasslands comprise nearly a third of the park and contain the park's largest number of species (approximately 40). The largest area of grassland, roughly 100 acres, is located in the southern portion of the battlefield.

One hundred and eighty species of birds are listed for the park, 39 species of mammals, 16 amphibian species, 14 fish species, and 10 reptile species. Animal species are typical for the region and include the white-tailed deer, Eastern coyote, and Eastern wild turkey. An increase in the observations of wild turkey, Eastern coyote, and beaver may indicate growth of local populations. Of the wildlife species known to occupy the park, 16 bird species and 4 amphibian species are on the state list as being of special concern, rare, threatened, or endangered.

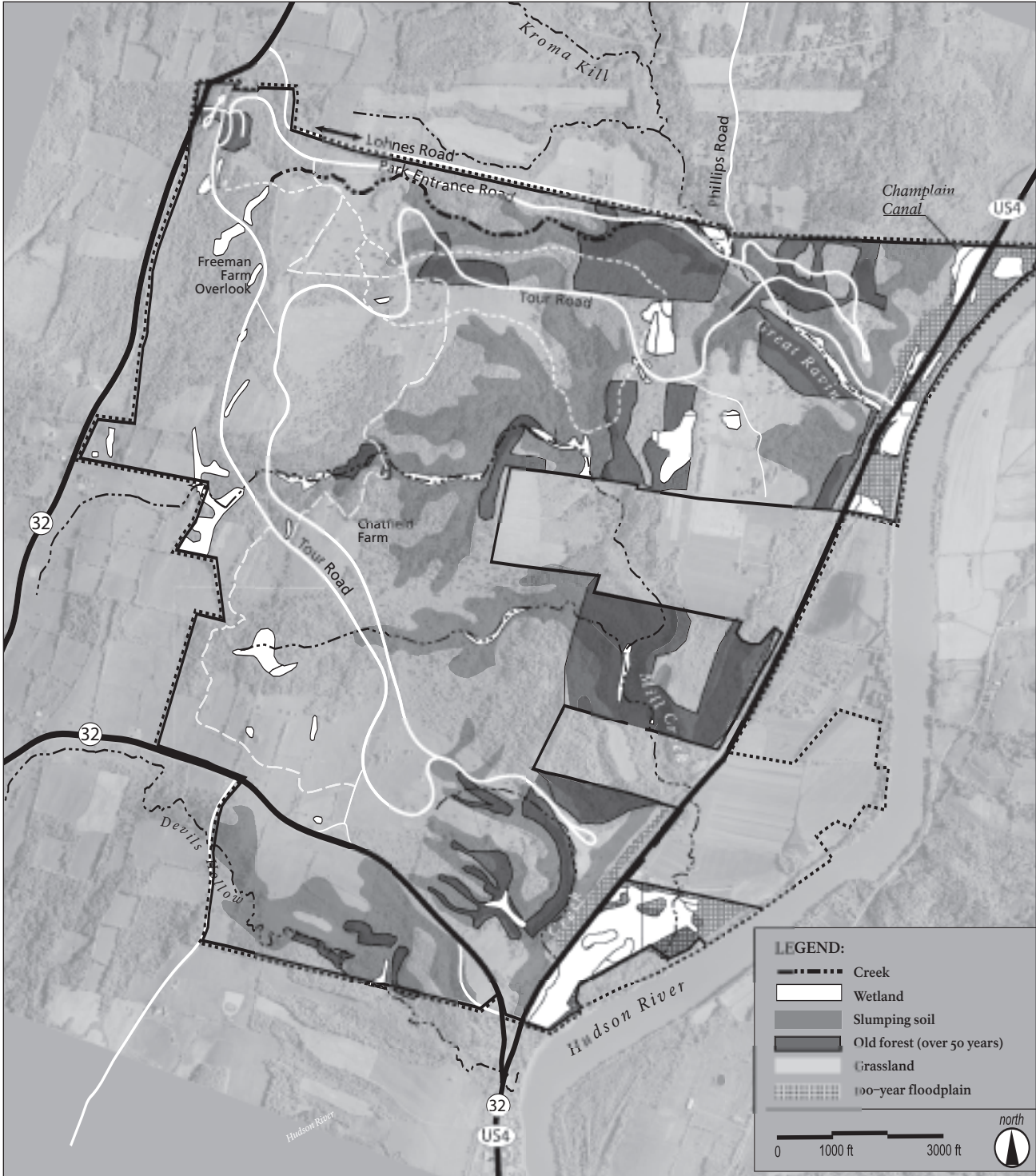


Prime Agricultural Soils



Saratoga National Historical Park
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

General Management Plan 2004

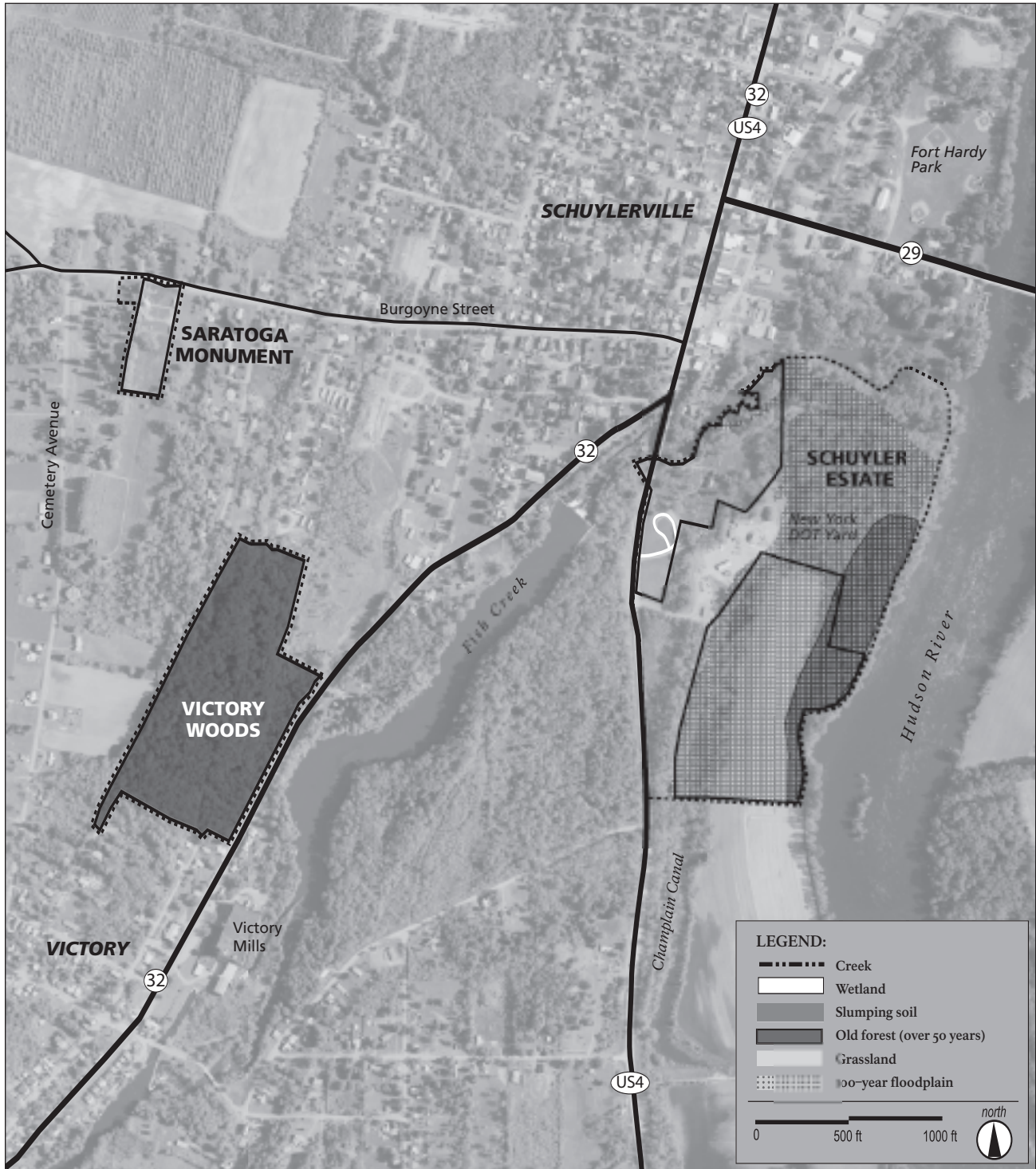


BATTLEFIELD UNIT

Sensitive Natural Resource Areas



Saratoga National Historical Park
United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service



OLD SARATOGA UNIT

Sensitive Natural Resource Areas

General Management Plan 2004

Cultural Resources

Historic and Designed Landscapes

The historic and designed landscapes at Saratoga National Historical Park are among the park's most vital resources. Indeed, in the relative absence of historic structures on the 2,800-acre battlefield, the landscapes assume a greater burden in conveying the story. The river, hills, ridges, streams, roads, farmsteads, and woodlots were the settings and contributing factors that helped determine the movements of the armies and the outcome of the battles. Natural and human processes have altered many of these features. For example, areas that were thickets during the battle are mature woodlands today; unused farm fields have become wooded; and the size and configuration of farm fields have changed.

The Schuyler Estate is an historic landscape that is a remnant of General Philip Schuyler's original 3,000-acre estate. The National Park Service owns 30.38 of the Schuyler Estate's legislated 62.15 acres. The Schuyler Estate includes the Schuyler House and immediate grounds. It is essentially the "house-lot" of the original Schuyler landholdings.

Victory Woods, previously known as the Garber Tract, embraces a 22-acre portion of the fortified camp occupied by the British during the final phase of the campaign. Many aspects of this landscape appear to have changed little since 1777, and it potentially contains archeological resources of value.

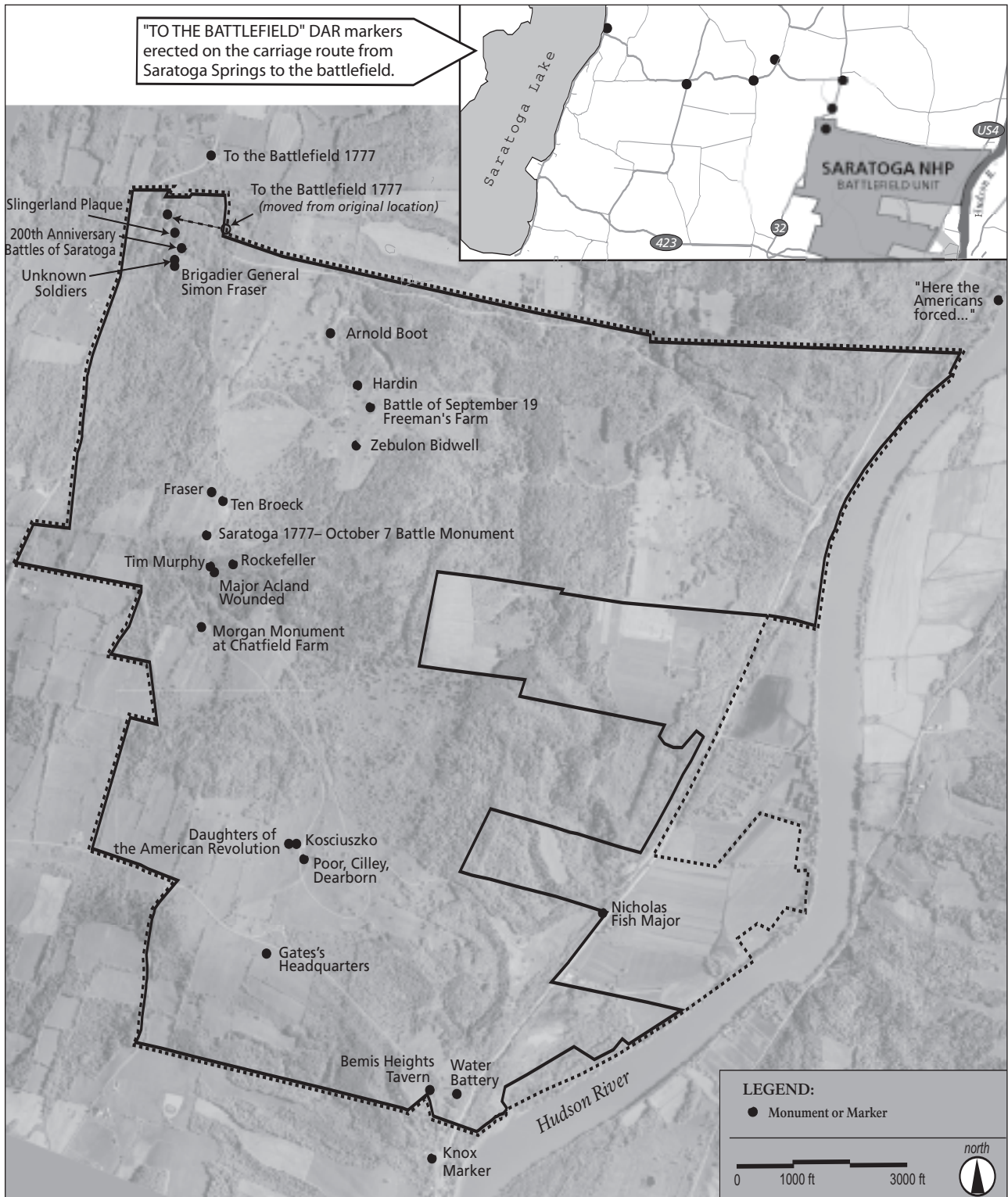
The landscape of the Battlefield Unit contains a number of markers and monuments that were placed during the last two decades of the 19th century and, to a lesser extent, into the following century. Originally superimposed on a predominantly agricultural landscape, these features collectively form a commemorative layer that expands the story of the Burgoyne Campaign to include its perception by later generations of Americans. The Saratoga Monument, occupying a detached site in the Old Saratoga Unit, retains some elements of a designed landscape that accompanied the original plan.

Historic Buildings and Structures

According to the List of Classified Structures, the park contains three historic buildings, three landscape features, three site structures, and 22 historic monuments and markers, which contribute to its



General Philip Schuyler's original 3,000-acre estate included portions of what is today the Battlefield Unit. The NPS owns essentially the "house-lot" of the original landholdings.

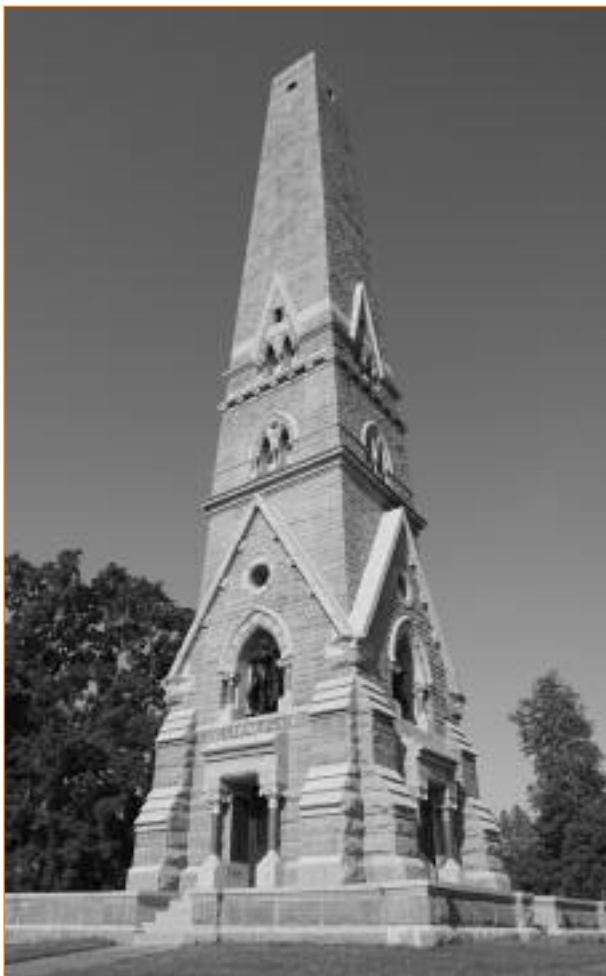


Battlefield Monuments and Markers



Saratoga National Historical Park
 United States Department of the Interior
 National Park Service

General Management Plan 2004



"The Battles of Bemis Heights and Saratoga, and the surrender of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne, on the 17th of October, 1777, formed a niche in the Temple of Liberty, which patriotism will one day fill with an appropriate monument."

— Minutes from the October 17, 1856, meeting at the Schuyler House, which was the genesis of the Saratoga Monument Association

national significance. Structures and features include monuments and markers, stone benches, a wellhead, a hitching post, and other man-made elements. Associated with these features are historic road traces.

The only historic structure standing on the battlefield is the Neilson House, which is located on what was John Neilson's farm before and after the battles of Saratoga. The house, now restored, was used by American officers for quarters in September and October 1777.

The present Schuyler House is the third to be built on the Schuyler family property in Saratoga. A two-story wood frame structure, the house sits on a 30.38-acre parcel owned by the National Park Service that was the core of a 3,000-acre tract intended to function as a largely self-contained productive unit. General Schuyler and his family lived at this estate periodically both before and after the 1777 campaign. The present house was built following the surrender, as General Burgoyne had the house and outbuildings burned as he retreated. A privy stands behind the house. The National Park Service has restored both the house exterior and interior. The completed exterior appearance reflects a circa 1804 period (the year Schuyler died). Interior restoration work seeks to reflect conditions circa 1777–87 (the General turned the house over to his son, John Bradstreet Schuyler, in 1787).

The Saratoga Monument is by far the most significant and conspicuous within the park. A 155-foot obelisk erected to memorialize the campaign that culminated in British capitulation, the monument is located on a detached 2.8-acre parcel in Victory that was chosen largely because of its commanding view. The cornerstone was laid on October 17, 1877, and the monument is a characteristic expression of late-19th-century esthetics and patriotic attitudes. The interior of the monument was closed in 1987 for safety reasons and was reopened in 2002, after rehabilitation.

An important group of monuments on the battlefield was erected during the 1880s due to the efforts of Ellen Hardin Walworth. Most of the monuments were erected under the auspices of the Saratoga Monument Association. The monuments are significant as marking the first formal expression of



The Neilson House stands on what was John Neilson's farm before and after the battles of Saratoga. Neilson joined the American troops opposing Burgoyne's advance.

memorial efforts on the battlefield and the beginning of serious preservation efforts there. Much of this activity was inspired by the national centennial celebration of 1876 and represents the expansive movement known as Colonial Revival. Another group of monuments was erected during a resurgence of patriotic and commemorative fervor associated with the national sesquicentennial (1927), and the bicentennial of George Washington's birth (1932), and was facilitated and inspired in part by New York State's acquisition of the battlefield.

Another structure is the historic Champlain Canal, which was completed in 1823 and remained in service until replaced by the Barge Canal in 1918. Segments of the old canal pass through two discontinuous portions of the park, while the barge canal occupies

the river channel. The most visible canal feature is the channel (prism) itself, with the accompanying towpath. Other features associated with the canal may remain and need further investigation. While the canal does not relate to the military events of 1777, there is an indirect link through the interest of Philip Schuyler and his family in canal transportation.

Archeological Sites and Resources

Archeological resources, the physical evidence of past human activity, form an important element of the park's resource base. Attempts to locate battlefield remains with archeological methods have had mixed results. Some portions of the British and American positions and some house sites have been confirmed, while others have remained elusive.

Remains that have been studied in more detail include two large battlefields, the American headquarters, British and American lines, including encampment sites, fortifications, and British redoubts. In addition, hearths and burials (but no large cemeteries) have been found.

At the Schuyler Estate, most structural remains and archeological features appear to postdate the Revolutionary War. The parcel contains a sizable American Indian site. Both the battlefield and Schuyler Estate have the potential to provide information on 19th-century domestic life, but this aspect has not been investigated specifically, as it lies outside the park mission. Documentary sources make it appear likely that the Victory Woods tract contains archeological resources relating to the “siege period” before the British capitulation, but the area has yet to be fully investigated by professional archeologists.

Collections and Archives

Saratoga National Historical Park’s collection numbers over 125,000 objects, and includes processed and unprocessed archeological, historic, archival, and natural history items. Among the most significant historical materials are nine original artillery pieces, an original surrender document, and camp furniture associated with General Burgoyne. The largest portion of the park’s collections is the estimated 43,000 archeological objects excavated on parkland. Many of the metal objects are musket and cannon balls, shoe buckles, nails, parts of firearms, or tools.

A collection of furnishings is on display in the Schuyler House. Many of the furnishings currently located in the Schuyler House are on long-term loan to the National Park Service by the following entities: the Old Saratoga Historical Association, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, and the Museum of the City of New York.

The archival collection includes administrative records of National Park Service predecessors, some historical documents, archeological files, photos, and architectural drawings. It is estimated that the collection comprises 196.8 linear feet, or



The park houses a considerable archival collection, diverse as to type, source, and content.

314,880 items. Among the more noteworthy and discrete collections are the George O. Slingerland Papers; a major group of administrative records generated by New York State, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the National Park Service, 1933–1969; and the George Strover Family Papers.

Associated Sites Outside of the Park Boundaries

The Field of Grounded Arms, the Sword Surrender site, the Marshall House, the Swords House site, and the Dirck Swart House are all associated with the battles, siege, and surrender. None of these sites are within the park boundary or in federal ownership, and National Park Service staff does not provide any interpretation on-site. The Field of Grounded Arms is currently part of Fort Hardy Park, a local municipal park owned by the Village of Schuylerville and used for recreational purposes.

Related Plans and Programs

American Battlefield Protection Program: Revolutionary War and War of 1812 Study

Congress authorized this National Park Service study because many relevant sites are at risk from rapid urban or suburban development. The goals of the study are (1) to gather current information about the significance, current condition, and threats to the sites, and (2) to present preservation and interpretation alternatives for them. Through research and public comment, the National Park Service has identified 2,742 sites of battle actions and historic places associated with both wars. The list includes Saratoga National Historical Park and several nearby sites. Field surveys will help the National Park Service evaluate the level of preservation at these sites and make recommendations for further protection and interpretation.

American Heritage River

In 1998 the Hudson River was named an American Heritage River, one of only 14 rivers nationwide to be so honored. The Hudson's place in American history and culture, its role in the birth of the modern environmental movement, and the marked improvements in its ecological health over recent decades all contributed to this designation. As an American Heritage River, the Hudson benefits from the services of a River Navigator, a person specially chosen to facilitate the application of existing federal programs and resources.

Champlain Valley Heritage Corridor Project

In 1999, the National Park Service published a report of a Special Resource Study that evaluated the suitability and feasibility of establishing a national heritage corridor in the Champlain Valley. The study found that the resources of the Champlain Valley merit designation as a national (or even international) heritage corridor. The study identified three main interpretive themes and presented several options for the advancement of heritage preservation and interpretation in the region. Saratoga National Historical Park is located

within the study area evaluated by the National Park Service team and is a primary resource related to the "Making of Nations" theme.

Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

In December 2000, Congress established the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor as the nation's 23rd national heritage corridor. It encompasses 524 miles of the New York State Canal System, which includes the Erie, Cayuga and Seneca, Oswego and Champlain canals, the historic alignments of the canals, plus the cities of Albany and Buffalo. Saratoga National Historical Park is located within the boundary of the Erie Canalway and contains two segments of the Champlain Canal within the park boundary. A preservation and management plan for the Erie Canalway commenced in 2003.

Heritage New York Program

Governor Pataki recently established the Heritage New York Program, with a primary purpose to organize a series of thematic heritage trails. One of these trails, the American Revolutionary War Heritage Trail, will help to preserve, protect, interpret, link, and promote significant historic sites associated with New York's role in the American Revolution. The Heritage New York Program will also administer a \$1 million matching capital grant program to help municipalities and nonprofit organizations preserve and interpret important Revolutionary War sites.

Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area

Congress designated the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area in 1996 to recognize the national importance of the valley's history and resources. The cities, towns, and rural landscapes of the region display exceptional surviving physical resources spanning four centuries. Although Saratoga National Historical Park is not within its boundary, it is thematically related to the national heritage area. The heritage area is managed by the Greenway Conservancy for the Hudson River Valley and the Hudson River Valley Greenway Communities Council.



Early 1900s photo taken from the bluffs of Saratoga Battlefield looking down on Wilbur's Basin, shows the Champlain Canal and Hudson River in the background. Many of the related plans and programs initiated in the region illuminate themes associated with the Champlain Canal and the Revolutionary War.

Lakes to Locks Passage (formerly the Champlain Canal and Champlain Trail Byways)

New York State's Scenic Byways Program is a 2,000-mile statewide network of scenic byways that draws upon the resources of state agencies and the Federal Highway Administration, as well as the private sector. The State Byway Program has been in existence since 1992. Saratoga National Historical Park is located on the Lakes to Locks Passage, formerly known as the Champlain Canal Byway corridor that runs along NYS Route 4 from Whitehall to Waterford.

In May 2000, Corridor Management Plans for the Champlain Canal Byway and the Champlain Trail Byway (NYS Routes 22 and 9 from Whitehall to Rouses Point) were adopted by the New York State Scenic Byways Advisory Board. Because the Byways share many natural, historical, and cultural themes, the Byway Steering Committees merged to form a management organization for a single Byway entitled "Lakes to Locks Passage, the Great Northeast Journey."

In June 2002, the Federal Highway Administration designated the 234-mile byway as an "All American Road" — one of only 20 in the nation that meet criteria of national significance and consideration as a "destination unto itself." Additionally, cooperation

with Canada has led to the byway's extension to Québec, making it an international scenic byway. Saratoga National Historical Park is an active partner, working with local communities and byway staff in developing interpretive initiatives and bi-national marketing plans.

Lighting Freedom's Flame: 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution

Beginning in 2000 and extending to 2008, the National Park Service is developing educational materials and special events that celebrate the American Revolution, principally at National Park Service sites such as Saratoga National Historical Park. No permanent facilities or other programs will be developed at the park, although increases in visitation occur at special events.

Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor

This corridor was established by the State of New York in 1994 to protect the region's natural, historic, and recreational resources and promote its economic revitalization. Saratoga is one of the counties included within the corridor. The Mohawk Valley Heritage Corridor Commission is a public-benefit corporation and is part of a statewide network of heritage areas.



“The canal transformed the small hamlets along its route into thriving centers of trade and industry....

Mills, warehouses and all kinds of canal related structures sprang into being after the opening of this cheap transportation route.”

— Champlain Canal National Register nomination form, 1976



New York Independence Trail

The New York Independence Trail is a nonprofit organization that is funded in part by New York State. The organization provides a self-guided tour of important sites of the French and Indian and Revolutionary Wars found along the Champlain-Hudson corridor from New York City to Montreal.

New York State Canal Recreationway Plan

In 1991, the people of New York State ratified an amendment to the state constitution allowing long-term leasing of the New York State Barge Canal System lands. In 1992, legislation known as “Thruway 2000” was enacted transferring responsibility for the New York State Canal System from the New York State Department of Transportation to the New York State Thruway Authority. The legislation established the New York State Canal Corporation as a subsidiary of the Authority, and created the Canal Recreationway Commission, a 24-member body to advise the Authority on its canal-related activities. The Canal Corporation Board adopted a comprehensive plan for the development of the canal system in September 1995. A \$32 million, five-year Canal Revitalization Program was developed in 1996 to guide canal system development. The overall goals of the revitalization program are to preserve and rehabilitate canal infrastructure so that it is safe, accessible, and available for future use; to enhance

recreational opportunities for water-based and landside users; and to promote and foster economic development throughout the canal corridor.

Old Saratoga on the Hudson

Old Saratoga on the Hudson, an unincorporated civic group, is spearheading the development of a three-and-one-half-mile linear park along the Hudson River in and around the Villages of Schuylerville and Victory. One of the group’s goals is to work in partnership with others to create a seamless experience for visitors who are interested in learning not only about the Old Saratoga area’s role in the Revolutionary War, but about the history of the region from the French and Indian Wars to the development of the Champlain Canal and beyond.

Saratoga P.L.A.N. (Preserving Land and Nature)

Saratoga P.L.A.N. is a private, nonprofit organization committed to the protection and conservation of lands with natural, scenic, agricultural, recreational, historic, and open-space value. The land trust has identified critical areas in need of protection within Saratoga County and is working in cooperation with developers, property owners, municipalities, farmers, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and others to preserve and protect these critical areas.



3 | Foundation for Planning

“Ah, yes! The field of Saratoga is rich with the blood of heroes. What are the few names we have recorded compared with the unnumbered hosts who lie under the placid hills of the Hudson — or who performed upon this field unnoticed deeds of valor, and passed through life unregarded and unnamed!”

— Ellen Hardin Walworth, 1891



“...We continued to press on, keeping our lines as well as the ground would permit; loading and firing rapidly as possible as we advanced. Our steps were lively, but we did not run. I saw no fighting with bayonets. At one time I saw just before me a British officer sitting and supporting himself by a tree. I drew up and was about to shoot him, when I thought the man is wounded and I let him live....”

— Sergeant Ambrose Collins, Cook’s Regiment of Connecticut Militia

Foundation for Planning | Contents

Purpose and Significance of Saratoga National Historical Park	41
Park Purpose	41
Park Significance	41
Interpretive Themes	42
Place: Grand Strategy and Victory for the New Nation	42
People: At Saratoga — by Choice or by Chance.....	43
Memory: Creating a Shared American Identity	43
Goals	44
Resource Management.....	44
Visitor Use and Interpretation	44
Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships.....	44
Need for the Plan	44
Resource Management.....	44
Visitor Use and Interpretation	46
Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships.....	48



Saratoga NHP preserves and protects sites associated with the battles, siege, and surrender of British forces at Saratoga.

Purpose and Significance of Saratoga National Historical Park

The foundation for the general management plan rests on the park's purpose and significance. The purpose and significance statements are based on the park's authorizing legislation and its legislative history. Purpose states why the park was established as a unit of the national park system. Significance defines the park's place within its national context.

Park Purpose

Saratoga National Historical Park preserves and protects sites associated with the battles, siege, and surrender of British forces at Saratoga — decisive events in winning American independence. The park staff interprets these and other sites, events, and people associated with the 1777 military campaign in the Champlain-Hudson and Mohawk valleys (the Burgoyne Campaign).

Park Significance

Saratoga National Historical Park:

- ⊕ Honors the participants and preserves the battlegrounds where a major British military offensive in 1777 ended in a surrender that heartened the patriot cause and brought about the international recognition and aid essential to securing our nation's freedom.
- ⊕ Contains the Saratoga estate of General Philip Schuyler, an outstanding figure during the revolutionary period and commander of the northern theater of operations between June 1775 and August 1777.
- ⊕ Presents a richly monumented landscape reflecting a commemorative movement, which culminated in the establishment of the national historical park in 1938.



Spectators at the Freeman farm during the Sesquicentennial of October 8, 1927. The event attracted over 160,000 people.

42 |

Interpretive Themes

Interpretive themes are ways of organizing information and ideas to help understand the park's importance. They express the key concepts that illuminate park resources. Themes are concepts, rather than a simple listing of important topics or a chronology of events.

Place: Grand Strategy and Victory for the New Nation

In 1777 — the second year of America's War for Independence — the British sought to quell the rebellion with a single decisive military campaign. Their plan depended on using an invading army to divide the Colonies along a natural corridor of rivers and lakes stretching from Canada to New York City. The American commitment to halt this invasion proved critical to the future of an emerging nation.

- ⌘ The Americans' determined resistance at Saratoga, coupled with British strategic blunders, resulted in a stunning defeat and surrender of a British army. This timely victory reversed American

military fortunes, boosted patriot morale, and gained them international recognition and support, including vital military assistance.

- ⌘ The defensive position south of Saratoga at Bemis Heights was chosen because the terrain there afforded the Americans tactical advantages. Their skillful use of the high ground overlooking a narrow river passageway, and wooded ravines fortified with entrenchments and batteries, forced the British army to fight on terms favorable to the Americans.
- ⌘ Since pre-Colonial times, the waterways of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers and Lakes Champlain and George had been prized natural routes of communication, trade, and warfare — coveted by those seeking control of this vast area's rich natural resources and arable land.



People from many different walks of life — men and women, soldiers and civilians, free and enslaved — found themselves caught up in the battles of Saratoga, by choice or by chance.

People: At Saratoga — by Choice or by Chance

Today, the winning of American independence seems to have been inevitable. But it was actually the result of many individual decisions and sacrifices made by people from all walks of life. Their determination in surmounting enormous obstacles was an early example of what is recognized now as the American spirit — the will and ability to shape a better future.

- ⌘ Participants on both sides of the conflict — men and women, soldiers and civilians, free and enslaved, and those of many nations — were motivated by hopes and aspirations, including personal or monetary gain, continuance of established ways of life, desire for a better future, or belief in a moral cause.
- ⌘ General Philip Schuyler, a patriot statesman and military leader, risked his life and livelihood and lost his Saratoga home for his belief in the promise of a new and independent United States of America, affording political and economic liberties for its citizens. After his death, his family continued his policies of promoting canal transportation and fostering commercial enterprise in the community that became known as Schuylerville in his honor.

Memory: Creating a Shared American Identity

Monuments and memorials added to Saratoga’s “sacred ground” represent early national efforts to honor those who served their country and the causes

for which they made their sacrifices. The park and its monuments and historic markers contribute to a shared American identity and an evolving sense of patriotism.

- ⌘ The Saratoga Monument stands prominently within the British camp where the decision to surrender was made in October 1777. The site symbolizes the decisive turn in the American struggle for independence and serves as an eternal reminder of the human cost of both the American victory and the British defeat.
- ⌘ Ellen Hardin Walworth’s efforts to commemorate the Saratoga battles marked the beginning of her lifelong commitment to preserving the icons of our national identity and the creation of local, state, and national organizations to achieve those goals.



John H. Starin, President of the Saratoga Monument Association, 1895.

Goals

Goals articulate the ideal conditions that park managers strive to attain in perpetuity. These goals assert the ideals that Saratoga National Historical Park is protected, that park visitors are informed and satisfied, and that the park works with others to foster stewardship.

The following goals (not listed in priority order) guide Saratoga National Historical Park:

Resource Management

- ⌘ The landscapes, buildings, structures, archeological sites, artifacts, and archives that are significant to the 1777 Saratoga campaign are protected, preserved, and maintained in good condition.
- ⌘ The monuments and historic markers that are significant to the commemoration of the 1777 Saratoga campaign are protected, preserved, and maintained in good condition.
- ⌘ Contributions are made to the accumulation of knowledge and understanding of cultural and natural resources related to the site's historical significance and to its ecological importance in the upper Hudson River Valley.
- ⌘ The park's natural resources are managed in the context of a cultural park to foster healthy ecosystems.

Visitor Use and Interpretation

- ⌘ The public is helped to understand and appreciate the sacred and commemorative nature of the park's landscape and the significance of the military events that took place here on the outcome of the American Revolution and the consequent impact on world political developments.
- ⌘ Quality programs are provided that make available to a wide range of audiences the park's stories and resources, and foster opportunities for visitors to make emotional and intellectual connections with the meaning inherent in those stories and resources.
- ⌘ A variety of safe recreational experiences are provided in locations and at levels that ensure the long-term protection of the park's natural and cultural resources.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

- ⌘ Partnerships are established to develop educational programs and to foster stewardship of park resources, landscapes, and values both within and beyond park boundaries.

Need for the Plan

General management plans are intended to remain in effect for 15–20 years. In principle, the effective period could extend longer if few major changes occurred in the park and its surroundings. This, however, is decidedly not the case at Saratoga National Historical Park. Since the completion of the 1969 master plan, a number of significant changes in park resources, visitor use patterns, and regional initiatives have occurred. These are deep-seated changes, affecting the park at all levels, with the result that the master plan is no longer adequate to address policy and operational concerns. Consultation among the public, the planning team, and park staff identified the following list of substantial planning issues, which are addressed in the general management plan.

Resource Management

- ⌘ The battlefield's landscape management has been based on a circa-1950 historic base map. More recent research, which incorporates new historical insights, highlights the need for additional reforestation and clearing to approximate the 1777 field-forest configuration. Approximating this configuration would make interpretation of the battles more accurate.
- ⌘ A number of management issues have yet to be satisfactorily addressed for the Schuyler Estate, including preservation treatment, interpretation, and visitor use. Research related to the historic development of the property has recently been completed.
- ⌘ Since the 1969 master plan, lands have been added to the park that embrace important historic resources related to the Burgoyne Campaign. Such sites include Gates's Headquarters and the American Hospital at the battlefield and the 22-acre Victory Woods tract in the Old Saratoga Unit. Victory Woods was donated in the 1970s and has never been



Left: Construction of Interstate 87 changed traffic patterns and shifted the primary gateway of the park from Route 4 to its “rear entrance” off of Route 32 via the maintenance facilities.

Right: The largely rural park setting could be diminished by advancing urbanization.

available to visitors. At the outset of this planning process, the historical significance of Victory Woods was unclear and the future of the property was in question. Preliminary research conducted in support of this planning effort indicates that Victory Woods contains remnants of the final British fortified camp.

- ⊕ The historic Champlain Canal runs through two segments of the park, one on the east perimeter of the battlefield and the other through the grounds of the Schuyler Estate. Because the canal is not its primary mission, the park has not developed a management and interpretation plan for canal resources. However, these remains are historically significant and possess considerable interest for many visitors. The historic Champlain Canal is part of the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor, for which a preservation and management plan commenced in 2003.
- ⊕ Saratoga National Historical Park has collected entry fees to the battlefield tour road from May to October since 1987. No fees are collected at the Schuyler Estate or the Saratoga Monument. Due to the location of the visitor center (where the fee is collected) and visitor use patterns, fee collection is inefficient and the park actually loses revenues on fee collection.
- ⊕ Park managers strive to conduct a program of maintenance and preservation to safeguard the physical integrity of park resources and to provide a safe and sanitary environment for park visitors and employees. This effort at Saratoga National Historical Park is complicated

by the lack of nearby facilities to maintain the Old Saratoga Unit. Major maintenance activities for the Schuyler Estate are supported by the maintenance facility located eight miles to the south at the Battlefield Unit, which creates inefficiencies in terms of fuel consumption, wear on vehicles, and time spent traveling instead of conducting maintenance activities.

- ⊕ Many species of invasive exotic plants have become established at the park and threaten native species. These aggressive plants can greatly expand their populations, alter forest and wildlife habitats, and change scenery by smothering and displacing native species. These effects, which are already occurring in some areas of the park, will worsen substantially if left untreated.
- ⊕ Grasslands comprise nearly one-third of the park, and are recognized as an important ecosystem worldwide. The majority of grasslands in the Northeast were created for agriculture. Cropland in the Northeast has been declining since the 1930s, returning once-open lands to woods. In addition, modern agricultural practices are becoming increasingly incompatible with nesting success of grassland birds. As a result of these changes, grassland bird populations are suffering the most precipitous population declines of any habitat-specific group in the eastern United States. Large tracts of land, set aside for other purposes but still compatible with the needs of grassland birds, may be the last refuge for these highly vulnerable species.

⌘ Water, which supports natural systems and provides for park and visitor use, is a significant resource at Saratoga National Historical Park. While it appears that good water quality exists within the streams flowing through the park, non-point source pollutants associated with increasing residential and urban sources could impact water quality. Both the battlefield and the Schuyler Estate border on the Hudson River. Although the Hudson River has benefited from decades of cleanup efforts, it still bears a legacy of past pollution, most notably contamination by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has listed 200 miles of the Hudson as a federal Superfund site, which includes the portions of the river that border the park.

Visitor Use and Interpretation

⌘ Saratoga National Historical Park is composed of four non-contiguous sites. (The Battlefield Unit is located in Stillwater and the Old Saratoga Unit, in the villages of Schuylerville and Victory, contains the Schuyler Estate, the Saratoga Monument, and Victory Woods.) When the master plan was approved in 1969, neither the Saratoga Monument nor Victory Woods were part of the park. As a result of these additions and the distance between the two units, the park does not function as a cohesive entity. The four sites have not been well integrated or linked.

⌘ An unplanned consequence of construction of the Northway (I-87) was a change in traffic patterns that shifted the primary gateway of the park from the Route 4 entrance to the Route 32 “rear entrance” via the park’s maintenance facilities. As a result, the formal sense of arrival characteristic of a national park has been severely compromised.

⌘ Over 33% of park visitors approach Saratoga National Historical Park from the north. Highway signs, installed for the new Gerald B. H. Solomon Saratoga National Cemetery, serve both the cemetery and the national park. Although they indicate the distance to the battlefield, these signs direct park visitors traveling southbound on I-87 to the Schuyler Estate in

the Old Saratoga Unit rather than to the park visitor center in the Battlefield Unit. As a result, the first park experience for many southbound visitors may be an historic house museum tour focused on General Schuyler at the Schuyler House (open only at limited times), not an overview of park themes and general orientation. Thus, many southbound visitors do not understand the main purpose of the park or how best to tour the park until late in their visit.

⌘ The battlefield tour road is the primary visitor experience, yet the current sequencing and location of interpretive stops makes understanding the relationship of events difficult. In its current configuration, visitors on the tour road cannot trace the battlefield action in any logical or chronological order. Moreover, few visual cues exist in the landscape to help visitors understand troop movements.

⌘ Visitors and local residents like to use the park for many different types of recreational activities. These uses — for example, bird-watching, photography, hiking, or cross-country skiing — are compatible with resource protection and do not require extensive commitments of staff time or funding. Park managers cannot anticipate what type of recreational uses will be in vogue in the future, and certain types of traffic have the potential to cause resource damage in the park. For example, soil erosion has occurred along the equestrian trail and sections of the Wilkinson Trail.

⌘ According to a 2001 visitor survey, 95.9% of visitors to Saratoga National Historical Park arrive by private auto; 67.3% tour the park by private auto. The National Park Service developed the park’s transportation system primarily for the private auto. The character of the tour road plays a fundamental role in setting an unhurried pace for the visitor. Within the life of this plan (15–20 years) it is possible that traffic congestion could increase sufficiently to cause delays, noise, and air pollution that could detract from the visitor’s experience and overall resource protection.



Visitor Experience at Saratoga NHP

In contrast with the conditions of over 225 years ago when two armies met and clashed at this site, the park today is a place of scenic beauty and natural sounds, where visitors can walk, bike, and watch wildlife in a rural setting with glaciated ridges, meadows, and forests.



Numerous historic sites along the Champlain corridor figure prominently into the story of the Burgoyne Campaign, including Fort Ticonderoga (shown above), Mount Independence, and Hubbardton battlefield.

Cooperative Efforts and Partnerships

⌘ The British surrender at Saratoga was the culmination of a four-month campaign that extended the length of the Champlain corridor from Canada to the Hudson. Numerous historic sites along this corridor, such as Fort Ticonderoga, Mount Independence, and Hubbardton battlefield, figure prominently into the broader story of the Burgoyne Campaign and were significant to its outcome. In addition, a number of nearby historic properties related to the Burgoyne Campaign remain outside the park boundary, including the Field of Grounded Arms, the Sword Surrender site, the Marshall House, the Swords House site, and the Dirck Swart House. Familiarity with the other thematically related sites along the corridor and within the vicinity of the park would enable visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the events at Saratoga.

- ⌘ Numerous federal, state, and local government entities and nonprofits are working on heritage preservation initiatives in the Champlain-Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. Many of these initiatives converge in Saratoga County, specifically in Old Saratoga, and offer opportunities for National Park Service participation. Representatives of several of these initiatives have identified a need for a multipurpose orientation facility in Old Saratoga that provides information about the various initiatives and clarifies the many offerings available to visitors.
- ⌘ The park's setting, scenic views, air and water quality, soundscape, and condition of its soil are affected by activities conducted outside the park boundaries. For example, the park's "viewsheds" (such as those east to the ridgeline in Easton, New York, south and west across Route 32, and west across Route 4 from the Schuyler Estate) are important components of the visitor's experience. Yet, park managers have no control over how the lands within the viewsheds are developed. The largely rural, agricultural setting of the park, which is an important part of the park's appeal to visitors, could be diminished by the advancing urbanization of the Hudson River Valley.