



In this, the 225th anniversary of the American Revolution, October is the turning point month in New York. History changed irrevocably because of what happened on the Hudson and Mohawk Rivers in October 1777. But for the victories there, the war might have taken a much different turn, as General George Washington had suffered major setbacks in Pennsylvania. After General William Howe's forces marched into Philadelphia on September 26, the drama switched to New York. There the focus would shift to the Hudson after General Benedict Arnold ended General Barry St. Leger's threat on the Mohawk River when he relieved Fort Stanwix on August 23.

After the Battle of Freeman's Farm on September 19, General Burgoyne had retained the battlefield and used the intervening weeks to build the Light Infantry (Balcarres) and Breymann's Redoubts. On October 7, he launched what proved to be his final attack as he once again probed General Horatio Gates' left flank. The forces of Colonel Daniel Morgan and Generals Enoch Poor and Ebenezer Learned would turn back Burgoyne's attack. Arnold would leave his tent without orders to join the American counterattack. He would emerge as the hero when he was wounded in the leg after storming Breymann's works. A monument to his valor today stands nearby: it depicts the boot of his left leg, which had earlier sustained a wound in the abortive attack on Quebec. For details of the reenactment of the Battle of Bemis Heights, which will draw several thousand "soldiers" of both sides, see [www.saratoga225th.org](http://www.saratoga225th.org).

In the Hudson Highlands, Continentals of the 5th New York and Lamb's Artillery

would join with militiamen from Orange County to disrupt General Sir Henry Clinton's diversionary operation to relieve the pressure on Burgoyne's army. In battles fought on the day before the last Battle of Saratoga, these soldiers would resist until dark against three-to-one odds and until forced from Forts Montgomery and Clinton at the points of Crown bayonets. American casualties there were nearly triple those the following day at Saratoga: about 350 killed, wounded, and captured.

You will be able to understand more about those key days during Patriots' Weekend, with a conference sponsored by the Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College on October 4, a Grand Encampment of the Brigade of the American Revolution at West Point on October 5 (to commemorate its bicentennial and its critical contribution to the war), and the dedication of the Fort Montgomery State Historic Site on October 6. For the complete schedule of events, visit [www.hudsonrivervalley.net](http://www.hudsonrivervalley.net).

General John Vaughan's burning of Kingston, New York's capital, will be reenacted on October 19-20 ([www.bvma.org/events/Kingston225.html](http://www.bvma.org/events/Kingston225.html)), and his soldiers' torching of two Livingston family homes across the river - Robert R. Livingston Jr.'s Belvedere and Margaret Beekman Livingston's Clermont - will be remembered with a special exhibit, *Calamities of War*, which will run through December at the Clermont State Historic Site ([www.friendsofclermont.org/events/](http://www.friendsofclermont.org/events/)).

- JIM JOHNSON

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