



The long-term effects of the Saratoga campaign as the turning point in the American Revolution were not immediately known; they would, however, become clearer in the new year. In late October 1777, what was known was that General John Vaughan and his expeditionary force had turned around near Saugerties and returned to the fort renamed for him - the old Fort Clinton. On October 26, Sir Henry Clinton recalled the force to New York City and would not return to the mid-Hudson until the spring of 1779. The 5,000 men of General John Burgoyne's Convention Army (as it was called after its surrender) would go into captivity for the remainder of the war, moved first from Boston through New England, New York, and the other mid-Atlantic states to Charlottesville, Virginia.

With the approach of winter, New Yorkers surveyed the losses of men, houses, barns, mills, and sailing vessels. Kingston lay in ruins with over 300 houses and accompanying barns destroyed by Vaughan's fires. When the legislature escaped from the state capital before the British arrived, the reins of government had passed into the hands of Governor George Clinton and the Council of Safety until the legislative body re-convened in Poughkeepsie on January 15, 1778. While the Loyalists would reap the consequences of their allegiance to King George III as they lost the protection of the British armies, the Patriots in New York could at least sleep better knowing that the menace had for the time being retreated. And

there was hope despite the loss of Philadelphia.

Along the Hudson River and beyond, the United States as we know it was becoming a reality. On November 1, Henry Laurens, president of the Continental Congress, announced that Thursday, December 18, would be observed as a "General Thanksgiving to Almighty God" because "the arms of the United States of America [have] been bless'd in the present Campaign [in New York] with remarkable success." In York, Pennsylvania, the Continental Congress adopted the Articles of Confederation on November 15, 1777, to bring some regulation to the loosely ordered 13 states. On June 14, it had even enacted legislation adopting the Stars and Stripes as the national colors. The subsequent actions of its wartime leaders would prove that they still recognized how vital the Hudson River remained to the future fortunes of the American cause.

A special exhibit at two Hudson Valley locations highlights George Washington's role in the major events of the American Revolution. *The Great Experiment: George Washington and the American Republic* will be on view at the Newburgh Free Library, at 124 Grand Street (845-563-3600; www.newburghlibrary.org/calendar.htm), through Nov. 20, and at the White Plains Public Library, 100 Martine Avenue (914-422-1400; www.wpppl.lib.ny.us/), from Dec. 8 through Jan. 23, 2003. - JIM JOHNSON

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