

Name _____



Battles of Saratoga

By Jane Runyon

Historians can usually point to a turning point in any war. The turning point is the action or battle that gives one side a better chance of winning than the other. In the Revolutionary War, many scholars point to the Battles of Saratoga as an important turning point.

In the beginning of this revolution, no one gave the ragtag colonial army much of a chance against the well-trained forces from England. Any victory for the rebel forces from America would be a surprise to everyone involved.



Saratoga is a city in northern New York. The British believed that if they could take Saratoga and the surrounding area, they would be able to control the colonial army in all of New England. In 1777, Major General John Burgoyne was put in charge of 7,000 British soldiers. His job was to lead these soldiers from Canada on a mission to capture the northern New England area. In June of 1777, they were able to recapture Crown Point. In July, they captured Fort Ticonderoga. Burgoyne had divided his troops into three columns which would march from three different directions and meet in Albany, New York. So far, his plan was working.

Things started going bad when the British lost a battle at Bennington. The Americans saw a crack in the British offensive and decided to take advantage of it. A force commanded by Major General Benedict Arnold moved west to try and slow down the British army. He was able to stop the British move to the east and then return to Saratoga to help the Americans already there. The first battle to take place was at Freeman's Farm. After the smoke cleared, no one was really sure who had won the battle. The head of the American forces, General Horatio Gates, and Benedict Arnold did not agree on what to do next. As a matter of fact, their

arguments became so fierce, General Gates took General Arnold's command away from him.

A second battle took place at Bemis Heights. This battle took place on Oct. 7. The British troops led by General Burgoyne were tired and embarrassed that they had not defeated the colonial army already. General Gates' troops were able to resist the British attack. General Arnold realized that the British army was very vulnerable at this time. He took the opportunity to attack the British and defeat General Burgoyne. The British forces were wounded so badly that General Burgoyne surrendered to the colonists in Saratoga a few days later.

This was an outstanding victory for the colonists. Not only did it raise their **morale**, it proved to the rest of the world that the Americans had created a force able to defeat the greatest army in the world, the British. It also made other countries in the world take notice of the new force in the world. Enemies of England, like France, now became interested in providing assistance to the rebellion.

Battles of Saratoga

Questions

1. Who was the commander of the British forces at Saratoga?
 - A. General Gates
 - B. General Freeman
 - C. General Burgoyne
 - D. General Arnold
2. Why do you think the British troops came from Canada to take over the northern colonies?
