

APPENDIX H. PRIMARY SOURCES - CIVILIAN SOURCES

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian “A youngerly Man”

Baume, it appears § 211,212, moved from Deridders at 5 o'clock in the morning of August 12th 1777, and on reaching Galesville, halted the remainder of the day. He laid, it is probable, on the limestone ridge where the road from Schuylerville comes into the road from Troy or at the W. base of this ridge. A breastwork used to be very plain here, not many years ago, commencing at the W. base of the limestone ridge, just N. of where the small house stands, near the N. end of the garden N. of said house, & running thence N.W. straight across the road [NYSR 40], and towards the kill, reaching to the middle of the large field at the obtuse (=the smaller angle. It is more than 90° and less than 180°) angle of the road. All vestiges of this are now obliterated by the plow &c. It was called, in the neighborhood, the American's breastwork; but doubtless was the work erected by Baume.

The next morning he moved on towards Cambridge, his route being on the S. side of the kill. On the road they stopped to feed their horses, turning them into a fine field of wheat. So says tradition. A youngerly man at the house above indicated gives me this information, Oct. 27. 1848.

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 2, # 277, Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

The “road from Schuylerville” is NYSR 29, the “road from Troy” is NYSR 40, which places the encampment between the Battenkill and the railroad line on the edge of the Battenkill Country Club.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Anonymous "Last man killed in Bennington battle"

When they were making the excavation for the Railroad, (which passes through a deep cut, east of North Hoosic, & beyond Webster's tavern) they disinterred the skeleton of a man, which, it was supposed was the last man slain in the battle. It was near the east end of the R.R. excavation that this skeleton was come upon. The bones were taken to Webster's hotel, where they were exposed to view, & thrown about for some months, & finally disappeared. There was a tradition in the neighborhood, respecting the last man killed in the battle – a Hessian – whose corpse was found, towards the base of the hill, where the road then ran, north of where it now runs – and some 25 rods east of the West line of Reubin Clarks farm – being about on the old line (apparently) between the Walloomsac & Hoosic Patents. Where this man was buried was not known – but when these bones were found in making the R.R. it was concluded that they were his. [But this is only conjecture – and why would they have carried the corpse so far from the road, off into the fields towards the Walloomsac River?] The folks know of no other corpse that could have been buried here. [...]

The opening of the Railroad was celebrated at North Hoosic, on the anniversary of the battle, A.D.1851

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 4 # 1007. Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Anonymous

BATTLE OF BENNINGTON.

The story of an old soldier who was in the action.
"This was a proud day," said he, "for the poor Green-mountain-boys, who were yet sore with the wounds they had so lately received

in the retreat from Tyconderoga. They could not so soon forget the slaughter of their brethren of Col. Warner's regiment, who were almost all cut off at Hubbardstown." The word came "the enemy's coming," the alarm flew like wild fire—every man left his plough or axe, some even standing in the field, and "determined to fight a spell," some with officers and some without—none was anxious who should be commanded or command—the main object was to find a good position, take sure aim, fire and load again.

Here he proceeded to describe the order of battle, &c. but the most striking part was concerning a Colonel, who was ordered by Gen. Stark, to reinforce with his regiment a part of one of the wings that had sustained a considerable part of the action, and suffered much.—The Colonel marched at the instant, but with a certain step peculiar to himself, slow, firm and steady. The whole parish was in his regiment, and they had brought with them their much loved parson, without whose blessing they could scarcely think themselves in a way to prosper. The officer commanding the corps to be relieved, fearing every instant that his men, from fatigue and loss, would give way, sent to hasten the Colonel. "Tell 'em, said he, we're coming;" and kept pace steadily on. This gentleman was at home a deacon—wore an old fashioned long waisted coat with large pocket flaps and herring bone cuffs, and a three cocked hat, the forepart something resembling the handle of a pipkin, except that the extreme point of it might have endangered the eye of a musquetto, had he run unguardedly against it. A second express arrived, "Colonel for

God's sake hurry. my men are beginning to fall back," "that will make room for us—tell 'em we're coming," keeping his still unaltered pace, and phiz quite placid and unconcerned. A third message was treated just as coolly.—When they emerged from behind a copice in full view of the enemy, and several balls passed over them—halt said the Colonel, "form column and let us attend prayers." The chaplain was called and ordered with all due formality to attend to his duty, but during the solemnity an unlucky shot wounded one of the men. The Colonel now, for the first time, began to show some impatience, for no sooner had the parson pronounced *Amen*, than the men were ordered to march. But still the Colonel kept his steady measured pace, until he had taken the ground, in front of the poor fellows who were almost ready to leave the field, and but for the love of liberty, could not have kept it half so long—"Give it to 'em (said the Colonel) give it to 'em boys," as he stepped along the rank with the same unaltered pace and phiz, chewing his quid, which he now and then replaced, obliging those who stood next him with his box. "The Hessians are in front," said he, "our wives and children in the rear. Liberty's the prize—we fight for liberty."—This was enough—the most verbose eloquence of a Roman general himself could have done no more.

The enemy pressed, but pressed on only to their own destruction. We fought, we bled, we conquered—and the narrator said he did not doubt but the cool determined bravery of those few raw militia, had a principal share in deciding the fate of the day.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian
Mr. Barber

Mr. Barber, father of David Barber senior of Cambridge, was on the ground, the morning after the fight, & used to relate, that the action was in a clearing, where the stumps were still standing - and every stump had on it the head of a Hessian soldier - & on some stumps were 2 & 3 heads - cut off by the Green Mountain boys - such was the animosity felt towards these mercenaries. Co. Post Feb. 7. 1873. - This is doubtless greatly exaggerated.

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 4, # 1540, Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian
Nathaniel Barnett

My father Nathaniel Barnet (says Esq. Barnet) was on this ground the third day after the battle was fought - there being hundreds of visitors here from all the surrounding country. Father resided in Plainfield, Windham co. CT and when the militia was called out to repel Burgoyne's invasion he was mustered with the company of light horse to which he belonged, commanded by Capt. Eaton & Lieut. Stewart. They came to Bennington, and from here one half of the company under the captain went on north (to join Lincoln at Pawlet) whilst the other half in which father was included staid at Bennington under the Lieut. to ride on expresses [...]

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 3, # 763, Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

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Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian

U. Barnett "Bennington battle-ground described"

The preceding sketch is made Aug. 23rd 1850 after having been over the ground Aug 22nd with U. Barnet Esq. Member of the legislature A.D. 1829 who resides in a brick house where the road crossed the Wallomsac (by a covered Bridge 110 feet long) and who owns the ground on which the battle was fought.

South-east of Esq. Barnet's house across the river a hill arises (clay of hard pan soil) which was cleared at the time of the battle and had a crop of flax pulled and standing in stocks upon the ground. A breast-work was here formed by the enemy by rails from the adjacent fences laid up in two tiers parallel with each other and the interstice between filled with this flax. This was the position occupied by the tories at the time of the battle.

On the crest of the hill, downwards somewhat in front of the breast-work a woodchuck made his hole several years ago & throwed out some small bones with the gravel he dug - & the plowman in plowing the field, after this was observed, struck his plow as deep as possible into the hole of this woodchuck when he came to it & turned up what seemed to be a pile of human bones. Esq. Barnet inquired of Austin Wells if any of the killed had been buried on this side of the river & Wells told him there had previous to the battle been a log hut near the tory's breastwork, and a small out door cellar formed of slabs covered with earth. The house was the gone, and the slabs had rotted and let the dirt tumble down into the cellar hole. Into this cellar hole those who were killed of the tories, at this breast work were thrown in a promiscuous heap, & dirt thrown over them. Seventeen bodies were thus thrown in here this being the number of tories left dead upon the hill on the day of the battle.

There was a bridge across the Wallomsac, at the period of the battle and the road there ran on the same track it does now. This bridge at last rotted down and for many years the river was forded here till the present covered bridge was built.

North of the road, on the west side of the river is an abrupt rise of slate rock nearly a precipice - and a height of some 60 feet or a 100 rise above the river is a flattish level of small extent, above the steep rise. Here two cannon of Baum stood at the time of the battle. Baum supposed Stark would come down along the highway from Bennington and attack the tories breast-work first and the cannon were placed here to give him a raking fire as he came. The position overlooking the flat above. But Stack kept on the north side of the

stream wholly out of sight and reach of the cannon as Esq. B has always understood, & followed up the hollow in which the brook runs till he saw directly upon the ~~breast~~ Hessian breast-work, with his whole force. And the party that attacked the tory breast work came around from the east into its rear so that the cannon could not play upon them without killing the tories whose position was between the cannon and the assailants as they advanced. Thus the cannon did the enemy little if any service, upon the day of the battle.

Between Esq. Barnet's brick house & the bank of the river nearer to the river than the house were the remains of two potato holes, at the time of the battle. The dead bodies to the number of thirty, according to Austin Wells statement were drawed together from this part of the ground and were thrown into these potato holes & covered, whilst a tory also found here was interred half way between the two holes. In digging post holes for a fence in front of our old house (says Esq. B.) which stood on the site of the present brick one, I about 38 years ago [my comment: i.e. in 1812] threw out 3 skulls from a single hole. [Eldridge the clock cleaner see § 1834 has told me old Mr. Barret was away from home at this time but was expected back every hour his boys sat the post & jammed these skulls in side it and covered them up speedily – saying if they were in sight when the old man came he would make hem put the bones in a box & go & dig a hole somewhere else to bury them – which was more trouble than they felt it worth while to take with them.] About 20 years afterwards [my comment: i.e. in 1832] Dr. Sherwood Richards & one or two others came here & dug the & found the skeletons still so perfect that they could take out the whole bones of each individual body – only the softer parts of some of the bones being decayed. They thus took bones with them some of these skeletons nearly perfect. They found them lying across & on top of each other flung in at random. See §1540.

Fort on the hill where the main battle was fought

The hill north of the road and north of U. Barrets house, rises with a gentle ascent – being ledge in many places & with but a slight covering of soil over the rock which is slate. It has many hummocks & irregularities, adapting it well for defense especially where covered with forest trees. It rises to a height of some 500 feet above the river and its summit is about 140 rods or ½ mile from the bridge - less than ½ mile from S. line of Wash. County, and over a mile from Vermont state line.* Here is a small level spot on its summit, some 12 rods long and a third wide, where the Hessians made their strong hold. The hill was covered with the forest at that time. Here upon the summit the trees were cut away, and thrown into a timber breast-work – there not being soil enough to admit of making a ditch or embankment – and not the faintest vestige of the breast-work is now visible. They enclosed themselves on all sides, it is believed, their work being a fort rather than a breast-work. A single oak tree was left standing within the enclosure, perhaps to suspend their colors from, it being nearly impossible to dig a hole here to plant a flag-staff. This tree has

long been dead, the stump only remaining, uprooted & far decayed. (A fragment of it I take for the State Antiquarian collection.) The level top of the hill runs in a N.W. & S.E. direction, & descends on all sides – but to the N.W. the descent is but slight, and the ridge continuing on 3/4ths of a mile, shoots up into a still higher point, named cobble hill, across which the county boundary line runs.

* Walloomsack at this period appears to have been a precinct of the town of Cambridge [...]

The hill was entirely cleared up after the war, & is now covered with a grove of second growth trees, which have now been growing 28 years. The flats along the river were all cleared, at the time of the battle, & in places the clearing reached up onto the hills. A house stood some rods S.W. of where the brick house now stands – and there were several log huts in the neighborhood – the land then being mostly held under leases of 21 years duration no good houses had been built.

About 40 rods north of the Hessian fort Esq. Barnet in plowing ten years ago picked up a lead bullet, in the direction of which Stark advanced. This he presented me for the State Antiquarian Collection. Balls & other relicts of the battle used to be often found, but they are all scattered & lost, & nothing of the kind id met with any more, the land has been so much plowed.

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 3, # 762, Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

The text in *cursive* is not in Michael P. Gabriel, *The Battle of Bennington. Soldiers & Civilians* (Charleston, SC: 2012), pp. 43-46.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian
Levi Beardsley

A considerable part of the contest was on my grandfather's farm, and in sight of his house; in fact the enemy commenced their breast work at his house, which being of logs was intended to be filled with men as a strong point of defence. Those who commenced building this breast work, were finally called away to man the works on the hill, and thus the house was left to the family.

My grandfather, then about fifty years old, was a non-combatant; he always regarded the life of a soldier with disrelish, full of hardship and danger, and during the French war declined entering into military service. He was an Episcopalian in sentiment, and like many others of that denomination, was reluctant to bear arms against the King, though he cheerfully paid his taxes to promote the common cause; and used to remark that "it was as necessary to have some at home to raise bread and meat for the armies as to engage in active warfare."

[...]

My father was about fourteen years of age, and with a younger brother, was made prisoner by some lurking Indians, sent in advance of the Hessians, and were part of the force sent on that expedition.

The boys, when surprised and taken, were going to the pasture after cows; the Indians would not permit them to escape, though they treated them with kindness and whenever they attempted to turn out of the path, the Indians would press them in, by putting their guns by their side, telling them "not to strive." They were finally released by the interference of the Hessian officers, a short time before the battle, and with the rest of the family were shut up in the house. After the main force had been called away from the house, to man the works on the hill, a soldier came in and commenced pulling out the "chinking" between the logs, to enable him to fire out.

My grandfather remonstrated, and on the soldier persisting the old man seized his musket, and being a strong man wrenched it out of his hands and tossed it up into the chamber: then seizing him by the shoulders put him out by main force and fastened the door against him. The battle was sharply contested, but the result is known; the Hessians

were defeated and taken, and a large body of them, when they surrendered, came running down the hill near the house with as little order as so many sheep, and surrendered in plain sight, several being shot, after they had ceased firing. The Indians ran away early in the battle, when they were about to be surrounded; they were painted and were nearly naked, and when they left the hill, they ran through a field covered with briars, paying little regard to briars or thorns, naked as they were.

I have often heard that race of the naked Indians, described as a masterly effort of Indian retreat; and not altogether without its annoyances to them, as well as amusement to those who saw them scamper off through the briars.

There had been occasional skirmishing before the final contest commenced; which was on the 16th of August, 1777. The previous day, an Indian chief had been shot by a party of militia men, concealed in a field of grain, as he with several of his warriors were riding along the road on horses that had been plundered from the inhabitants. A few days after the battle, an attempt was made to exhume his body, under an impression that possibly treasures might have been buried with him. When they came to the remains, one of the volunteers who had been engaged in the conflict, stood over the grave with an uplifted tomahawk, and exclaimed with stentorian voice, " arise, you old devil, arise."

But the Indian gave no heed to the summons, nothing short of the trump of the archangel" would ever wake that sleeper; and the treasure seeking whigs finding no inducement to further disturb the remains of the ghastly warrior, were glad to rebury and leave him till the "just and the unjust shall stand together."

Levi Beardsley, *Reminiscences; personal and other incidents; early settlement of Otsego County; notices and anecdotes of public men, judicial, legal and legislative matters, field sports, dissertations and discussions* (New York: Charles Vinten, 1852), pp. 4-8.

An appendix to the book provides more detail on the battle:

My grand-parents on my mother's side, resided in Cambridge, on the route that the enemy Would take, and as they advanced, the country was filled with alarm and consternation. The cattle and live stock of all descriptions were driven, off into Vermont, the iron ware and kitchen furniture buried and hid in the garden, while the wagon was placed before the door, where the horses were standing with their harness on, ready to start at a moment's warning. On the 13th or 14th of August, 1777, a man on horseback riding rapidly from the rear, came to warn the family to flee; telling them to be off at once, as the Indians were approaching, and were within a mile of the dwelling. Beds and bedding

were hastily thrown into the wagon, and the family on top of them drove off towards Bennington.

As they went forward, they found the inhabitants flying like themselves; and soon after met a detachment of Americans under Col. Gregg, who had been sent forward by Gen. Stark, to the number of two hundred, to oppose and harass the Hessians and Indians. My mother, then about twelve years old, has often described the alarm that pervaded all classes. In the ranks of those who were advancing to check the enemy, were many so young that they appeared like boys, several of whom were crying.

Baum pressed on, and Gregg and his detachment fell back, when on arriving at the Wallomsack Creek, where the battle was subsequently fought, the Hessian commander alarmed at the numbers in his front, halted and intrenched himself on the heights, and sent back for reinforcements. This was the 14th of August, during which day there was much skirmishing, so that he lost thirty men killed and wounded, two being distinguished Indian chiefs; one of whom was shot from the field of grain, as related in the first chapter. Stark with his regiment lay in front of the Hessians, and he was aided by several small regiments.

Col. Warner was still at Manchester, but had been requested to march forward to cooperate with Stark. It rained nearly the whole day on the 15th, which rendered the roads almost impassable, so that Warner did not arrive in time for the principal action, as it was a long march and he had to halt to rest and refresh his men, to clean and prepare their arms, and to furnish them with fresh ammunition, their cartridges having become wet and unfit for use. The same rain equally retarded the advance of Breyman, who did not reach the scene of conflict until Baum had been attacked and defeated.

He had skilfully selected his ground where he had intrenched his party, consisting of upwards of five hundred well armed and disciplined Hessians, with more than one hundred Indians; and he was aided by a strong force of tones, who constructed and posted themselves behind a breastwork.

He had also two pieces of field artillery judiciously stationed to defend his intrenchment.

His object was to maintain his position till the re-inforcement should arrive, while the object of the Americans was to overwhelm him before that arrival. Though Warner's regiment was not present, Stark determined to attack the enemy, and preparatory thereto Col. Nichols with two hundred men was sent to the rear of the left of the Hessians, and Col. Herrick with three hundred to the rear of the right, with orders to unite by a flank movement as they advanced to the attack, and thus enclose the Hessians and Indians, and cut off their retreat.

Cols. Hubbard and Stickney, with about two hundred, were still farther to the right, and were to attack from that quarter; while about one hundred were to advance and attack in front. Gen. Stark commanded the whole, and led one of the latter columns into action. The object in attacking the enemy from the rear was to drive him still farther from his expected re-inforcements, in case he could be forced from his intrenchments.

The Americans were undisciplined, nearly all direct from their farms; poorly armed, the most of them without bayonets, and many of them with fowling pieces only. But they were stern, resolute, reflecting men, who not only believed their cause just, but that it was a religious duty to fight stoutly in defence of their families and their homes, as well as to maintain their political rights.

In addition to these considerations they were incensed in the highest degree against the Hessians, who were regarded as mercenaries; while the barbarities of the Indians were such, that it needed no incentive to stimulate a desire to exterminate them, as well as the tories.

To induce his men to act more vigorously however, Stark promised them the plunder and spoils of the enemy. The action commenced about three o'clock in the afternoon, by a vigorous charge on all sides of the enemy's works. The firing was incessant, not in volleys or platoons by the Americans, but indiscriminately; each man loading and firing as fast as he could, and taking as deliberate aim as possible.

My father, who was very near the scene of action, and could hear every gun, used to compare the incessant reports with the constant snapping of hemlock brush when exposed to fire.

In the midst of all the din of small arms, the field pieces were admirably served, and kept booming away at the advancing Americans. They pushed forward cautiously towards the breastworks and intrenchments, sheltering themselves wherever a shelter intervened; but to render their attack successful it was necessary to advance and come to close work as soon as possible, for the Hessians and tories were mainly protected.

The Indians finding themselves likely to be enclosed by the divisions of Nichols and Herrick, which were closing up, broke through between them, and scampered off at the early part of the action, running through the briar field as formerly mentioned. A battle probably excites and brings out the human passions with an intensity beyond any other incident in life. It is a struggle where human existence is at stake, besides other minor considerations that excite and stimulate to action.

Near the intrenchments was a field of standing flax, which having grown high and luxuriant afforded a covering, and slight protection to a party of Americans, who crept through it; when on emerging from it, they were within a few rods of the enemy. The commandant of the party immediately sprung on an adjoining stump, and swinging his hat round his head in a frantic manner, cried out with stentorian voice, "there they are boys, put it into them, put it into them," accompanied with the most horrid oaths and imprecations.

Being so near the enemy, and exposed to his fire, it was necessary to advance upon him at once or to retreat; and the former course was adopted; for the brown muskets soon crossed the rampart and raked the intrenchments. The action lasted nearly three hours, and when the Hessians had exhausted their ammunition, they resolutely charged with their dragoon swords.

Their efforts however were vain, as they were driven from their works and retreated in disorder, followed by the Americans; who intent on the promised plunder had become broken and in confusion. At this critical moment, and not far from sundown, Breyman approached with a strong force, bringing with him two other field pieces.

It fortunately happened that about the same time Col. Warner arrived with his regiment, which being led against Breyman, the action was resumed, and the Americans who had broken in pursuit of Baum's party rallied, and were again brought into action. Breyman defended himself with bravery, but was forced to fall back with the loss of his artillery, and many of his men who were killed, wounded, or taken. The defeat was complete, and nothing saved his whole corps from absolute destruction but the darkness of the night.

Baum had been mortally wounded, and the result of the battle was to the Americans most auspicious. They took four brass field pieces, twelve brass drums, four ammunition wagons, two hundred and fifty dragoon swords, more than one thousand muskets, and seven hundred prisoners. The Americans lost in killed and wounded about one hundred. The Hessians, Tories and their Indian allies, between two and three hundred; of whom a large proportion of those killed at the breastwork and in the intrenchments were shot through the head. About three hundred of both parties were left on the field.

In this contest whole families were engaged. The father of the late Joshua Hathaway, of Rome, Oneida county, was there, with five or six of his sons; all of whom I believe escaped unhurt. A clergyman, with a large proportion of his congregation, from a western town in Massachusetts, was also in the hottest of the fight.

At Bunker Hill, a little more than one thousand raw troops had defended their intrenchments against more than three thousand regulars, till their ammunition was expended; while here, in the words of an English historian, " about eight hundred undisciplined militia without bayonets, attacked and routed five hundred regular troops, advantageously posted behind intrenchments, furnished with the best arras, and defended by two pieces of artillery." And he ought to have added, assisted by Indians and a large body of Tories.

This was the first check that Burgoyne had met with, and in its consequences was most fatal; for his force was weakened by more than one thousand men; his operations crippled and restricted to the immediate vicinity of his head quarters; while the influence on the Americans was electrical. It gave them confidence; they rallied as one man, and forming a network around, so entangled him in their meshes, that after two desperate and hard fought battles, he was compelled to surrender in less than two months after the affair at Bennington.

Ibid, pp. 570-577.

On p. 24 he writes:

My mother, with probably as much courage as most women, and with more fortitude than many of them, was timid in regard to Indians. She and her sisters had narrowly escaped those that passed through Cambridge on their way to Bennington. Her cousin, John Younglove, an ardent whig, had been shot in his own house by Indians, or Tories disguised in Indian dresses.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian
Isaac Brownell

In July 1853 [...] Isaac Brownell, who lives up White creek, on the last farm upon this road in Rensselaer County, accompanied me over the grounds - & told me what incidents he knew.

The road through North Hoosic village ran in 1777 where it runs now. Van Rensselaer's mills were on the same spot where the grist mill & saw mill of Elisha Brownell now stand - on White Creek, some 50 rods above its mouth or entrance into Walloomsac river. The following is a plan of the roads & streams here, according to my recollection.



White Creek runs through a deep rock-bound chasm, across which chasm the bridge here is thrown. As Baume advanced from Cambridge, the scouts and stragglers fled before him, towards Bennington. William Gilmore of Cambridge and two other men ventured to

linger at Van Rensselaers mill, long enough to strip the plank from the bridge – all the other men had fled – and they had only time to reach the summit of the ridge, or knoll, some rods south of the creek. (The land gradually rises, after crossing the bridge, and then descends to the hotel & store at the fork of the road – the summit being some 10 or 16 rods from the bridge). Gilmore & his comrades paused upon the top of the knoll, and in a few moments, Baume's force came in sight of them, a turn in the road, bringing the advanced platoons to view. Gilmore & his comrades discharged their pieces at them & fled from their view, over the knoll.

Mr. Brownell says, Baume's party halted and took a reconnaissance of the spot. They went down the stream some 25 rods below the bridge, and there found a spot where they could conveniently ford the stream. The whole party therefore passed over, with their two pieces of cannon – being detained in their march some two or three hours by Gilman's taking the plank from the Bridge. [But the plank could soon be brought back & replaced upon the bridge; which undoubtedly was done. It probably was only a small party that forded the stream below the bridge, and then came back up the opposite side of the stream, to help in repairing the bridge. The work of gathering and replacing the plank would be so slight, that this would be done, rather than put the whole army to the inconvenience of taking this circuit, down the hill, over the stream, & up the hill on its opposite side again. At least so it appears to me.]

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 4 # 1006. Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian
Reuben Clark

Reuben Clark says, as he has always been told, the second engagement was about as follows.

When Baum was defeated on the hill north of Barnets, the fugitives that escaped from being captured fled back and were pursued by the Americans, in an irregular manner, & without any order. They passed through the Wallomsac settlement, where my house stands, which is one and a half miles from Barnet's house. about on the west line of the Wallomsac patent, some 20 rods west of my house, a ledge of rock crosses the valley – extending from the hill which bounds this valley on the north, down towards the Wallomsac river, forming a ridge some 10 feet above the level plain west of it, & having some brooks & slight ravines on its east side. The flying Hessians, as they gained this ridge (pursued by the Americans) to their great relief saw Breyman advancing upon the flat beyond them. The road then ran north of where it does now, on the north side of the flat, near the base of the hill. The Hessians ran on & joined their friends, and the pursuing Americans, on gaining the summit of the ridge & seeing this imposing force in front of them, there paused, and fired upon it, till Breyman had arranged his men for advancing – his two cannon, charged with grape shot, were fired sending such showers of balls that the Americans forsook the ridge, & took to the ravines & bushes in its rear. This was only an irregular force of Americans, without order in their ranks or a general officer to direct their movements – most of the American force being scattered about various parts of the battle field, securing horses or any other plunder they could find.

Breyman's force advanced, passed over the ridge, the scattered Americans retiring before them, a desultory firing only was kept up. Breyman thus proceeded about a mile, our men withdrawing before him. But when he reached the place where the road leaving the river flats, ascends a hill, about half way from my house to Esq. Barnet's, he was met by Warner with a body of fresh troops, who captured some of his advanced parties, and opposed his further advance with such spirit, that he was eventually compelled to retire. He only reached the base of the hill alluded to – about a mile from the place where he first formed his men for fighting and where the firing first commenced.

It used to be the current report that Col. Samuel Robinson of Bennington, was most active upon that day and did more of the fighting than any other individual.

Old Joshua Munro lived on the south side of the Wallomsack in sight of where Breyman first formed his men, & saw the whole of their motions – their brass kettle-drums glittering in the sunshine being the most striking feature of the scene [...]

William Gilmore of Cambridge & a few others, stripped the plank off from the bridge at San Coick (North Hoosic) as Baum approached it – but Baum was too near upon them to enable them to cut the string-pieces and let them down into the water. (This appears to have been the first decidedly hostile step that Baume met with on his march) And whilst the Hessians were repairing the bridge, one man & another was firing upon them, from bushes & other coverts around. (vide § 1006)

§ 1006 is an account by Isaac Brownell of “Baume’s march thro’ Sancoick”

The interview with Reuben Clark took place on 22 August 1850. In # 765 immediately preceding this account he states that he is 62 years old and that “my house – a large brick house, with the word ‘Walloomsack’ over the door, cut in marble.” Fitch added that “Reuben Clark, my informant, died in the summer of 1852.”

Asa Fitch, *Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y.* 7 vols., vol. 3 # 766. Call No. Mss Col NYGB 18065. New York Public Library, New York, NY.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian

Thomas Dickison

Thomas Dickison of Cambridge remembered long after the events in 1848:

Father leased from the Wells family a farm in Cambridge, about a mile from the west line of the town, and on this farm we were living in Burgoyne's year. As he approached we fled to my uncle's, Jehiel Badgley, who lived on the north bank of the Walloomscoick River, a half a mile below David Matthew's house.

A day or two before Bennington Battle, [my father and my uncle [Jehiel Badgley] went out to see if Baum was coming anywhere near the house – that they might hasten to remove their families before his arrival. They unexpectedly encountered a Hessian scouting party, which took them prisoners and sent them to Burgoyne's camp – at Fort Edward, I think. Here they slept upon a scaffold in a barn by night and were made to aid in building a breast-work by day. After some time they told the officer who had charge of them that they must go to wash their clothes . . . they were permitted to go alone and took the opportunity to escape and return to their families.

The Bennington Battle was close by the house. It was a log house. All the houses along there were built of logs at that time. I was too young to remember anything of consequence about the battle. I remember of climbing with another boy onto the hogpen to see the men fighting. My aunt was sick and confined to her bed at the time. Between the two battles, she was moved from the house to another nearer Bennington, for they did not know but in the battle they might get defeated and wanted her where they could take her with them in their flight, to keep her from molestation by the Hessian soldiers.

The Asa Fitch Papers are housed at the New York Public Library under the title "Notes for a history of Washington County, N.Y." call number MssCol NYGB 18065, 0.4 linear foot (8 v. in 1 box). They have also been microfilmed.

Dickison is recorded as Note 248, 22 August 1848, and quoted from
<http://www.lakeistolocks.org/content/thomas-dickison-of-cambridge-at-bennington-1777/ltl5876BCF70155B3FD6>

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian

Examples of Newspaper reporting

Pennsylvania Evening Post (Philadelphia), vol. III, issue No. 395, p. 439, of 23 August 1777

Letter by Benjamin Lincoln to Philip Schuyler with a copy of Burgoyne's order sent to John Hancock from "Van Schaick's Island" on 19 August 1777

PHILADELPHIA, August 22, 1777.

BY an express arrived last evening from gen. Schuyler to Congress, we have the following important intelligence.

Van Schaick's island, in the mouth of the Mohawk river, August 19th, 1777.

IHAVE the honor to congratulate Congress on a signal victory obtained by gen. Stark. An account whereof is contained in the following letter from gen. Lincoln, which I have this moment had the happiness to receive, together with gen. Burgoyne's instructions to lieut. col. Bern, copy whereof is inclosed.

"Dear general, Bennington, August 18th, 1777.

"The late signal success of a body of about two thousand troops, mostly militia, under the command of brigadier gen. Stark, in this part of the country, on the sixteenth inst, over a party of about fifteen hundred of the enemy, who came out with a manifest design to possess themselves of this town, as will appear by the inclosed, is an event happy and important. Our troops behaved in a very brave and heroic manner; they pushed the enemy from one work to another, thrown up on advantageous ground and from different posts, with spirit and fortitude until they gained a complete victory over them.

"The following is the best list I have been able to obtain of the prisoners, their killed and wounded; viz: One lieut. col. one major, five captains, twelve lieutenants, four ensigns, two cornets, one judge advocate, one baron, two Canadian officers, and three surgeons, thirty-seven British soldiers, 598 Hessians, thirty-eight Canadians, and one hundred and fifty-one Tories taken. The number of wounded fallen into our hands, exclusive of the above, are about eighty. The number of their slain has not yet been ascertained, as they fought on the retreat for several miles in a

"The desirable circumstance at present for your corps is to possess Bennington, but should you find the enemy too strongly posted, and maintaining such a countenance as would make a coup-de-main too hazardous, I wish you to take such a post as you can maintain till you hear farther from me, and upon your report, and other circumstances, I will either support you in force, or withdraw you.

"Will you please to send to my camp, as soon as you can, waggons and draft cattle, and likewise such other cattle as are not necessary for your subsistence; let the waggons and carts bring off what flour and wheat they can, that you do not retain for the same purpose. I will write to you in full tomorrow, in regard to purchasing horses out of the hands of the savages; in the mean time let them be assured that whatever you select from them fit to mount the dragoons, shall be paid for at a proper price. I have the honor to be, with great esteem, yours, &c.

Lieut. col. Bern, J. BURGoyNE, lieut. general."

I am in hopes that Congress will very soon have the satisfaction to learn that gen. Arnold has raised the siege of fort Schuyler. If that takes place, I believe it will be possible to engage two or three hundred Indians to join this army, and Congress may rest assured that my best endeavors shall not be wanting to accomplish it.

I am informed that gen. Gates arrived at Albany yesterday.

Major Livingston, one of my aids, will have the honor to deliver you this despatch. I am, sir, with every sentiment of respect, your most obedient humble servant,

PHILIP SCHUYLER,

The honorable John Hancock, esq;.

Published by order of Congress,

JOHN HANCOCK, president.

The letter was reprinted in other newspapers along the East Coast such as Dunlap's *Maryland Gazette* in Baltimore on 26 August 1777 with the lead-in line "On Thursday Evening last [i.e. 21 August] arrived an Express to Congress at Philadelphia, from General Schuyler ...

A German translation of Lincoln's letter was printed in *Der Wöchentliche Pennsylvanische Staatsbote* (Philadelphia) on 27 August 1777. The article included a copy of Burgoyne's instructions to Baum.



Bennington, den 18 August, 1777.

Werther Herr General,

Das letztere große Glück eines corpo von etwan 2000 mann truppen, meistens von der Miliz, unter befehl des General-Brigadiers Stark, in dieser gegend des landes, am 16ten dieses, über eine parthey von etwan 1500 feinden, die mit dem gewissen vorsatz herkamen sich meister von

The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal (Boston) printed this letter by Jonas Fay in its 25 August 1777 issue

State of } In Council of Safety, Bennington,
VERMONT. } 16th August 1777.

GENTLEMEN,

Brigadier general Starks from the state of New-Hampshire, with his brigade, together with the militia and companies of rangers raised by this state, with part of col. Symond's regiment of militia, are now in action with a number of the enemy's troops assembled near this place, which has been for some time very severe. We have now in possession (taken from them this day) four brass field pieces, ordnance stores, &c. and this moment 4 or 500 prisoners have arrived. We have taken the ground, although fortified with intrenchments, &c. but after being drove about one mile and the enemy being reinforced made a second stand, and still continue the action; the loss is doubtless considerable, but the numbers cannot ascertain. You are therefore in the most pressing terms requested by General Starks and this Council to forward the whole of the militia under your several commands to this place, without one minute's loss of time; they will proceed on horseback with all the ammunition that can be provided conveniently. On our present exertions depends the fate of thousands. I am gentlemen,

Your most obedient humble servant,

JONAS FAY, Vice Presi.

To the gentlemen nearest commanding regiments in militia in the several United States.

The same issue of *The Boston-Gazette, and Country Journal* (Boston) printed the latter by Benjamin Lincoln to the Massachusetts Legislature.

Since the foregoing, Capt. BARNES arrived here Express on Friday last with the following Letter from the Hon. Major-General LINCOLN, to the honorable COUNCIL.

Brunnington, August 18, 1777.

GENTLEMEN,

I Must sincerely congratulate you and my country on the late very signal success gained over the enemy near this place, by a few Continental troops, the rangers from the Grants, some of the militia from the State of Massachusetts, the militia from New-Hampshire and the Grants, under the command of Brigadier-General STARKS; officers and men stimulated by the most laudable motives, behaved with the greatest spirit and bravery, entered the enemies several intrenchments with fortitude and alacrity, amidst the incessant fire from their field pieces and musquetry; our loss killed supposed to be between 20 and 30, wounded in common proportion; the enemy were totally defeated; the number of their slain has not yet been ascertained, as they fought on a retreat several miles in a wood, but supposed to be about 200—a large number of their wounded have fallen into our hands. We have taken a Lieut. Colonel mortally wounded,

The Independent Chronicle and the Universal Advertiser (Boston) in its issue of 18 September 1777 printed Burgoyne's letter to General Horatio Gates of 30 August 1777 and Gates' response of 2 September with the famous reference to Jane McCrea.

Head-Quarters of the King's army upon Hudson's River, Aug. 30, 1777.
S I R,
MAJOR General Raidel has requested me to transmit the inclosed to Lieut. Col. Baum, whom the fortune of war put into the hands of your troops at Bennington.
Having never failed in my attention towards prisoners, I cannot entertain a doubt of your taking this opportunity to shew me a return of civility ; and that you will permit the baggage and servants of such officers, your prisoners, as desire it, to pass to them unmolested.
It is with great concern I find myself obliged to add to this application, a complaint of the bad treatment the provincial soldiers in the King's service received after the affair at Bennington. I have reports upon oath, that some were refused quarters after having asked it. I am willing to believe this was against the order and inclination of your officers ; but it is my part to require an explanation, and to warn you of the horrors of retaliation if such a practice is not in the strongest terms discountenanced and reprehended.
Duty and principle, Sir, make me a public enemy to the Americans, who have taken up arms ; but I seek to be a generous one ; nor have I the shadow of resentment against any individual, who does not induce it by acts derogatory to those maxims, upon which all men of honor think alike.
Persuaded that a gentleman of the station to which this letter is addressed, will not be comprised in the exception I have made.
I am, personally, Sir, your most humble Servant,
J. B U R G O Y N E, Lieut. General.

Gates' response of 2 Sept 1777:

That the savages of America shou'd, in their warfies, mangle and scalp the unhappy prisoners who fall into their hands, is neither new nor extraordinary ; but that the famous Lieutenant General Burgoyne, in whom the fine gentleman is united with the soldier and the scholar, should hire the savages of America to scalp Europeans, and the descendants of Europeans ; nay more, that he should pay a price for each scalp so barbarously taken, is more than will be believed in Europe, until authenticated facts shall in every Gazette confirm the truth of the horrid tale.

Miss M^{rs} Kea, a young lady lovely to the sight of virtuous character, and amiable disposition, engaged to be married to an officer in your army was, with other women and children, taken out of a house near Fort Edward, carried into the woods, and there scalped and mangled in a most shocking manner. Two parents, with their six children, were all treated with the same inhumanity, while quietly residing in their once happy

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian
Stephen Fay

A good old gentleman who had five sons in the field at the celebrated action of Bennington, August 16, 1777, whose furrowed cheeks and silvered locks added venerableness to his hoary brows, being told that he was unfortunate in one of his sons, replied, 'What, has he misbehaved? did he desert his post? or run from the charge?' 'No, sir,' said the informant; 'worse than that, he is among the slain; he fell contending mightily in the cause.' 'Then I am satisfied,' replied the venerable sire; "bring him in and lay him before me, that at leisure I may behold and survey the darling of my soul ;' upon which the corpse was brought and laid before him, all besmeared with dirt and gore. He then called for a bowl of water and a napkin, and with his own hands washed the gore from his son's corpse, and wiped his gaping wounds with a complacency, as he himself expressed it, which before he had never felt or experienced." Another account preserved by tradition gives the following additional expression: "I thank God I had a son who was willing to give his life for his country." He had ten children: John, Jonas, Stephen, Mary, Sarah, Elijah, Beulah, Benjamin, Joseph, David.

Jennings, Isaac *Memorials of a century. Embracing a record of Individuals and Events chiefly in the early History of Bennington, VT. and its First Church* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1869), p. 254.

The "Connecticut newspaper of Nov., 1777" where this account was reputedly published has not been identified.

Primary Sources Battle of Bennington

Civilian

Eleazer Hawks

Eleazer Hawks united with this church January 29, 1786. He came here in 1774, from Dcerfield, Mass., when a young man, drawn hither by the circumstance that John Kinsley had settled here, between whose daughter Rhoda and himself there was a tender attachment. He settled on land next to the Kinsley farm. Some particulars of his connection with the Bennington battle assist to more vivid impressions of the event. He felt it his duty to remain near home as long as possible, on account of the illness of his wife; and was pursuing his work in the field, when the noise of the firing, as the battle commenced, burst upon him over Whip-Stock Hill. He went for his musket, and proceeded with speed to join his neighbors and countrymen in the terrible encounter. He was not a member of either of the companies of militia. He was one of the volunteers, as were many others. One of his duties was to assist in conveying wounded from the battle-field into town, which he did on his father-in-law's ox-cart. Some died of their wounds on the way. The old meeting-house became packed full of prisoners, so full that fears were entertained lest it should break down. Some were let out in consequence, and some escaped. When Mr. Hawks returned to his home (a log hut without chimneys and with but one room), it was empty. His wife, an invalid, had been conveyed, on a bed upon an oxsled, by her father, for refuge, in case the result of the battle had been adverse to Pownal, to the town next south, whither many of the feeble and helpless had been conveyed for safety. Mrs. Hawks survived the fatigue and exposure of her flight but a short time.

Isaac Jennings, *Memorials of a century. Embracing a record of Individuals and Events chiefly in the early History of Bennington, VT. and its First Church* (Boston: Gould & Lincoln, 1869), p. 287.