

Dramatis Personae

John Adams (1735-1826) was born in Braintree (now Quincy) Massachusetts, graduated from Harvard in 1755, and was admitted to the Boston bar three years later. He was highly intelligent, vain, argumentative, and incorruptibly honest. During the period covered in this study, Adams was the leader of the New England delegates and of the New England-Virginia bloc critical of General Philip Schuyler and advocates of his replacement by General Gates. Later a member—with Benjamin Franklin and John Jay—of the commission to negotiate the peace treaty with Great Britain, his postwar career included the vice-presidency and presidency. David McCullough has ably chronicled this remarkable life in *John Adams*.

Born in Norwich, Connecticut, **Benedict Arnold** (1741-1801) was the great-grandson of a Rhode Island governor and the beneficiary of a common school education. Apprenticed to an apothecary at fourteen, he ran away at fifteen, enlisted in 1758 in a New York company, and deserted. Arnold enlisted again in 1760, deserted, returned home, and completed his apprenticeship. After moving to New Haven he opened a shop to sell drugs and books. His success earned him enough to buy his own ships and engage in the West Indian and Canadian trade, which he augmented by smuggling. Elected captain of a militia company, he reached Cambridge, Massachusetts, ten days after the Concord-Lexington fight in 1775. Arnold received a Massachusetts colonel's commission and participated in Ethan Allen's dramatic capture of Fort Ticonderoga. With a flair for the dramatic, Arnold engaged in a series of spectacular adventures including the remarkable Valcour Island naval engagement on Lake Champlain (October 11-13, 1776), which aborted Sir Guy Carleton's 1776 invasion from Canada. Driven by ambition, avarice, and vainglory, Arnold eventually betrayed the Revolution, his new country, and his comrades, and became a British general. He returned under the Union Jack to burn New London, Connecticut.



John Burgoyne (1722-1792) was a scion of an old Lancashire family, educated at Westminster School. He began his military career in the dragoons, but made his professional reputation as a commander of light cavalry. After serving with some distinction in Portugal, he entered Parliament during 1761. As a moderate Tory, he proved an effective politician. Burgoyne was made colonel of the 16th Light Dragoons in 1763, and while retaining that rank became a major general nine years later. He also launched a literary career in 1774 with the performance of "Maid of the Oaks." His sinecures included the post of governor of Fort William in Scotland. Burgoyne's first American service was in Boston under General Thomas Gage, and later served in Sir Guy Carleton's failed 1776 invasion of New York. After his 1777 campaign came to grief at Saratoga, Burgoyne spent much time and effort defending himself before a parliamentary inquiry, and published his defense entitled *State of the Expedition*. He was a brave, competent, humane soldier whose misfortune was to command an expedition doomed by badly coordinated planning by Whitehall and a reorganized and well-led American Northern Department.



Sir Guy Carleton (1724-1808), a member of an Anglo-Irish family, was a capable and dedicated professional soldier, governor of Canada, veteran of lengthy service in North America, and the leader of the first invasion from Canada (1776). His solid service in Canada did much to defeat American efforts to add a fourteenth province to the rebellion. One of the obstacles to his military advancement was the enmity of Lord George Germain.



George Clinton (1739-1812) was New York's first elected governor. An attorney with brief military experience before the war, he also served as a member of the Continental Congress, and later received a brigadier general's commission in March of 1777. Although he was elected governor on April 20, 1777, Clinton also commanded the unsuccessful American defenses against Sir Henry Clinton's Expedition into the Hudson Highlands. One of Alexander Hamilton's rivals, Clinton served as vice-president under both Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. He died in office in 1812.



Sir Henry Clinton (1738?-1795) was the only son of Admiral George Clinton, one time governor of New found land (1732-1741) and New York (1741-1751), and the cousin of the Earl of Newcastle. He grew up in New York and seemed to have a genuine interest in the colonies. His military career began as captain-lieutenant in the New York Militia. Returning to England with his father, he began a lifetime career in the Coldstream Guards in November 1751. Clinton served with distinction at Bunker Hill and became a “local” lieutenant general and second in command to General Sir William Howe in September 1775, succeeding to the senior British command in America in March 1778. He served in that capacity until after Yorktown. Clinton is the subject of an outstanding biography by William B. Wilcox entitled *Portrait of a General: Sir Henry Clinton in the War of Independence* (New York, 1964).

A Scottish-born professional soldier, **Simon Fraser** (1729-1777) was a veteran of the War of Austrian Succession and Seven Years’ War, and lieutenant colonel of the 24th Regiment of Foot. He commanded a brigade comprised of his regiment and the grenadiers and light infantry of Sir Guy Carleton’s army in 1776. He commanded General Burgoyne’s Advanced Corps during the Saratoga Campaign and was fatally wounded during the fighting on October 7, 1777. Nineteenth century writers, upon no contemporary evidence, attributed his death to rifleman Timothy Murphy, a man who, on the basis of his widow’s pension application, was not even present at Saratoga.

Peter Gansevoort (1749-1812) was a member of a long-established and prominent Albany family, though little is known about his life before he served with General Montgomery’s troops in the invasion of Canada as a major in the 2nd New York Regiment. Gansevoort became colonel of the 3rd New York Regiment on November 21, 1776, and in that capacity commanded the defense of Fort Stanwix.

Horatio Gates (1728-1806) was the English-born successor of General Philip Schuyler to command of the Continental Army’s Northern Department. He spent most of his adult life in the British Army, serving in North America. He was present at Braddock’s Defeat (1755), was a brigade major at Forts Pitt and Stanwix, and became the first adjutant general of the Continental Army. In that capacity, Gates performed yeoman service in helping General George Washington organize the American forces. After the successful conclusion of the Saratoga Campaign, he served during 1778 in Boston as commander of the Eastern Department. Unfortunately, Gates suffered a humiliating defeat in South Carolina at Camden in 1780. That, along with an ill-conceived move by some to have him succeed Washington made him, along with Charles Lee, one of the most maligned general officers of the Revolution. More competent than nineteenth century writers acknowledge, Gates’ substantial talents were dimmed by ethical ambivalence. He was, however, well-suited for the role he filled at Saratoga. Contrary to some writers, he and Burgoyne never served in the same regiment. (Burgoyne entered the army in 1742 and served, except for brief duty during 1758 with the 2nd Regiment of Foot, all of his service with mounted troops in Europe before arriving at Boston in 1775. Gates entered the army in 1749 and served in infantry regiments in North America.) The architect of the Saratoga victory died in 1810. He was buried in the Trinity Church graveyard on Wall Street in an unmarked grave.



Lord George Germain (1716-1785) George Sackville (known as Lord George Sackville from 1720 until 1770, and Lord Germain until he became Viscount Sackville in 1782) was born in 1716. The son of the First Duke of Dorset, he entered the army and served on the Continent during the 1740s and 50s, while taking part in parliamentary affairs, becoming Secretary of State for Colonies, technically Secretary of State for the Southern Department, a post he held until February 1782. In that position, Lord Germain was responsible for the conduct of the war. His papers in the University of Michigan's William L. Clements Library are among the most important sources for any study of the American Revolution. He was more competent than his political opponents and many American writers have portrayed him. He had the misfortune to be one of Sir John Fortesque's favorite targets, but Sir John usually found civilian leaders lesser men than their military contemporaries.

A German-American leader and military commander of the Tryon County, New York, patriots, **Nicholas Herkimer** (1728-1777) led his men in relief of Fort Stanwix. He was mortally wounded when the British ambushed his column at Oriskany on August 6, 1777.

A competent combat general, Scotsman **James Inglis Hamilton** (? - 1803) led the 21st Regiment of Foot (Scots Fusiliers) during the American rebellion. At Freeman's Farm (September 19, 1777) Hamilton commanded General Burgoyne's Center Column. He served as a major general in the 1790s campaigns in the West Indies at the head of the 15th Regiment of Foot. His only son, whom he adopted while a prisoner following Saratoga, was a colonel with General Wellington's army, and was killed at the Battle of Waterloo.

Richard Howe (1726-1799) was the brother of General Sir William Howe and Commander in Chief of the Royal Navy's American Station from 1776-1778.

The British commander-in-chief in North America from 1775 to 1778, **William Howe** (1729-1814) first gained attention as a commander of a light infantry battalion that led General Wolfe's force onto the Heights of Abraham on September 13, 1759. A Whig member of Commons from Nottingham, Howe disapproved of Parliament's coercive colonial policies. His role in developing Britain's plans for 1777 is examined in detail in this study. Contemporaries and students have condemned his indolence while commanding in the colonies. Troyer Anderson, in his provocative masterpiece *The Command of the Howe Brothers During the American Revolution* (New York, 1936) wrote: "It is my belief that the failure of the Howes is a mystery only because the conventional division between military and political history had diverted attention away from the points that serve best to explain the conduct of British operations in America," and did not "adjust their methods to the support that the government was willing to provide." Sir William and his brother, Admiral Richard Howe, were grandsons of one of George I's mistresses, making them illegitimate uncles of George III.



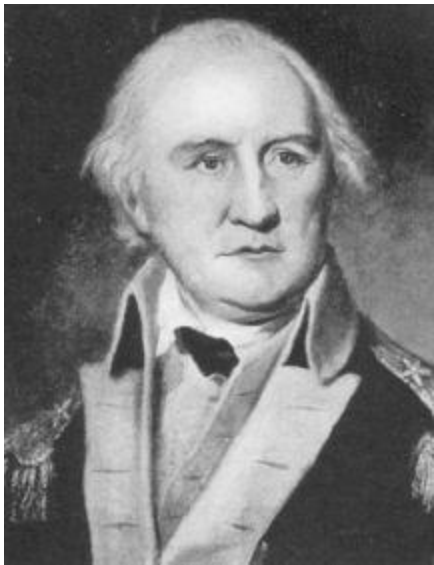
Brilliant, eccentric, and unstable, **Charles Lee** (1731-1782) served in the British Army in America during the Seven Years' War and then in the Polish Army, attaining the rank of major general. Wounded while fighting the Turks, Lee migrated to America in 1773. Identifying with the Continental cause, he bought land in Berkeley County, Virginia. A half-pay [retired] British lieutenant colonel with impressive military experience and above-average intelligence, he impressed the Revolution's leaders, who appointed him major general on June 17, 1775, subordinate only to George Washington. Real accomplishments and controversy, however, accompanied his checkered career. The Continental Congress named him General Schuyler's successor to the northern command in January 1776, but countermanded the order by assigning him to lead the Southern Department. Contemptuous of political generals (i.e., most Americans), Lee ran afoul of Washington's explosive temper at the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, 1778, and was court-martialed. Lee is the subject of two outstanding examples of historical scholarship: John R. Alden's *Charles Lee, Traitor or Patriot* (Baton Rouge, 1951) and John W. Shy's essay in George Allen Billias, editor, *George Washington's Generals* (New York, 1964). Both do much to revise the traditional image of this strange but capable and much maligned character.

Henry Brockholst Livingston (1757-1823), a member of the powerful Livingston clan, graduated from Princeton in 1774, entered the Continental Army the following year, and served on the staffs of both Generals Philip Schuyler and Benedict Arnold. As his surviving letters plainly indicate, Livingston played an active and insidious role in promoting the unfortunate rupture between Arnold and Horatio Gates that followed the fighting at Freeman's Farm on September 19, 1777. After the war, Livingston became a successful attorney and an anti-Federalist politician. In 1807, President Thomas Jefferson appointed Livingston to the U. S. Supreme Court.



After vigorous service with the Massachusetts militia, **Benjamin Lincoln** (1733-1810) became a Continental major general on February 17, 1777. Dispatched northward to assist General Philip Schuyler with directing militia in the Northern Department, Lincoln was responsible for much of Horatio Gates' successful use of militia on the eastern side of the Hudson River, as well as with the intelligence utilization of the difficult, but important John Stark. It was Lincoln's misfortune to have to surrender the important post of Charleston, South Carolina, on May 12, 1780. However, that disgrace was tempered in 1781 when he formally accepted the British surrender at Yorktown. Like so many officers who served during the American Revolution, Lincoln still awaits a good biography.

Born in either Bucks County, Pennsylvania or Hunterdon County, New Jersey, **Daniel Morgan** (1736-1802) left home at seventeen and settled in the Shenandoah Valley. After serving in the Seven Years' War and Dunmore War, he received a captain's commission and the command of two Virginia rifle companies, which he marched 600 miles to Boston without losing a man. He participated in the disastrous Quebec assault of December 31, 1775, and took over for the wounded Benedict Arnold, with fateful result. Paroled and later exchanged, Morgan received a colonel's commission as commander of the 11th Virginia Regiment. He raised a body of sharpshooters drawn from various Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania units. These men formed the famous corps he marched to the Northern Department, where he and his men distinguished themselves. After a checkered service that included resignation, he was promoted to brigadier general and commanded the American army at the important Battle of Cowpens on January 17, 1781. His unusual choice of tactics that day changed the course of the war in the South. Don Higginbotham's *Daniel Morgan: Revolutionary Rifleman* (Chapel Hill, 1961) is an admirable study of a remarkable man.





Enoch Poor (1736-1780) was a native of Massachusetts, a shipbuilder, and a merchant. He became colonel of the 2nd New Hampshire Regiment, and brigadier general in February 1777. Poor served well in several campaigns, including the Saratoga operations, where his cool handling of his troops during the fighting on October 7, 1777, repelled a veteran British bayonet assault. When Poor died in 1780 (probably from typhus), George Washington lamented his passing by writing, "He was an officer of distinguished merit, one who as a citizen and soldier had every claim to the esteem and regard of his country."

Freiherr (Baron) Friedrich Adolph von Riedesel (1738-1800) attended the University of Marburg's law school and served in England and on the Continent during the Seven Years' War. After the Duke of Braunschweig (Brunswick) contracted with Britain to provide 3,936 infantrymen and 336 dismounted dragoons for service in America, von Riedesel served with General Burgoyne in his offensive from Canada into New York. His contemporary writings reveal a distinct unease about his service in America under British command. A thorough professional, he left a valuable body of papers that were widely used in preparation for this study.



A fellow of St. Peter's College, Cambridge, and native of Ireland, **Barry St. Leger** (1737-1789) joined the British Army in April 1756 and served in America during the Seven Years' War, participating in the siege of Louisbourg and the capture of Montreal. As lieutenant colonel of the 95th Foot, with the "local" rank of brigadier, St. Leger commanded the expedition down the Mohawk River that ended with the failed siege of Fort Stanwix.

Richard Varick (1753-1831) served as military secretary to both General Schuyler and Benedict Arnold and as deputy Mustermaster General of the Northern Department from April 1777 to June 1780. Along with his friend, Robert Livingston, Varick actively promoted the damaging Arnold-Gates quarrel that broke out during the Saratoga operations.

James Wilkinson (1757-1825) was a native of Benedict, Maryland, and a medical student who enlisted in Thompson's Battalion in September 1775. He served capably in Canada and became deputy adjutant general of the Northern Department. Though a thoroughgoing scoundrel involved in avaricious and treasonable acts, Wilkinson prepared a solid two-volume memoir that stands up reasonably well when checked against other, more respectable, sources.