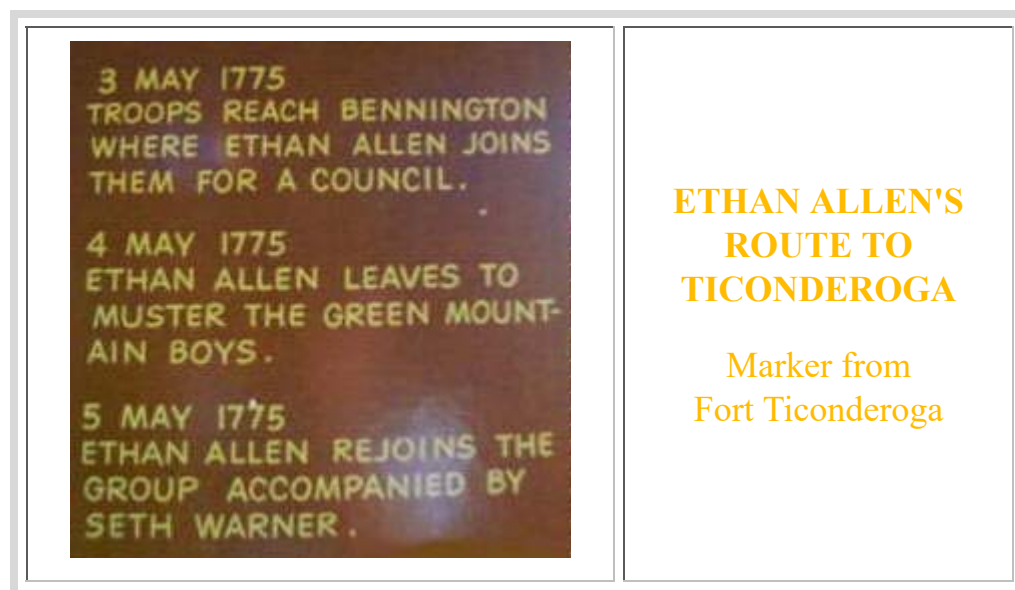


<a href="#">Books</a>	<a href="#">US4</a>	<a href="#">NY5</a>	<a href="#">US7</a>	<a href="#">US9</a>	<a href="#">US9W</a>	<a href="#">US20</a>	<a href="#">US60</a>	<a href="#">US202</a>	<a href="#">US221</a>	<a href="#">Canal</a>
-----------------------	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------	---------------------	----------------------	----------------------	----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------	-----------------------

---

# OLD BENNINGTON

## VERMONT



**Old Bennington Commons** — Much of the early history of Vermont took place in Old Bennington. In front of the Old First Church, on the commons, is a large marker in stone on the ground.

The church was first organized in 1762. As indicated by the markers in the area, it played a prominent role in Vermont's early history.

The graveyard behind the church contains the graves of about 75 revolutionary war patriots as well as British and Hessian Soldiers killed in the Battle of Bennington. The grave of American Poet, Robert Frost, is also in the cemetery.

## Old First Church Vermont's Colonial Shrine



The Old First Church was gathered in 1762, the first Protestant church in Vermont. Much of the early history of Bennington and of Vermont took place in and around the original meeting house built in 1763 and the present church dedicated in 1806. As a result, the Vermont legislature in 1935 designated the church as Vermont's Colonial Shrine. Standing today, much as it did during its dedication in 1806, the church is one of the first beautiful examples of early colonial architecture. The cemetery adjacent to the church contains the graves of so many of the citizens who contributed to so much to the founding of Bennington and Vermont. It also contains the graves of Robert Frost and approximately 75 revolutionary war patriots as well as British and Hessian Soldiers killed in the Battle of Bennington. The site of Ethan Allen's home is on the border of the cemetery.



Behind the cemetery is the Bennington Museum. The museum contains many artifacts from the revolutionary war period including the Bennington Battle flag, which is thought to be oldest stars and stripes in existence. There are also uniforms, firearms and early tools. The museum entrance is just off Route 9 East.

At the southeast corner of the intersection of Route 9 and Monument Avenue near the graveyard that surrounds Old First Church is a stone marker indicating the place where Ethan Allen's home

once stood. Inside the cemetery, there is a memorial stone for those who fought at the Battle of Bennington.



Across the street from the church is the Walloomsac Inn. The former inn was the oldest in the state, built in 1764. You might find a not-so-welcoming sign on the door: "This is a private home, it is no longer an inn. Please stay off the porch and property."



**Catamount Tavern** — About halfway up Monument Avenue from the church on the right is a marker for the Catamount Tavern, where the patriots would meet. At the time of their meeting, the patriot forces consisted of:

- Edward Mott and about 16 volunteers from Connecticut
- James Easton, John Brown and about 40 men recruited from the Berkshires

They met on May 3rd with Ethan Allen at the Catamount Tavern. Edward Mott discussed their plan to seize badly needed cannon and munitions from the British for the defense of Boston. Ethan Allen, who was already considering a similar plan against the British, had garnered inside information about the fort and its contents. Over the next two days, he mustered two hundred Green Mountain Boys and took command of the operation. On May 5th, the group left for Castleton where Benedict Arnold would join their group and final plans would be made.

**Bennington Battle Monument** — At the top of Monument Avenue is the Bennington Battle Monument. This 306-foot shaft, dedicated in 1891, commemorates the Battle of Bennington. An elevator takes you up to the center of the monument where there is a 360-degree view of the Bennington area. To the south is Old Bennington. To the west, in the distance, is the Bennington Battlefield, although you can't actually see it from the monument.



**On this site stood the Continental storehouse, object of the British attack that was repulsed by the Colonial forces at the Battle of Bennington, August 16, 1777.**

The expedition led by Lt. Col. Baum sent to seize military stores here was defeated by volunteer American Militia Forces from New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Vermont commanded by General John Stark aided by Colonels Warner and Herrick of Vermont, Simonds of Massachusetts, and Nichols of New Hampshire.

#### NEW HAMPSHIRE AT THE BATTLE OF BENNINGTON

Erected in honor of Brigadier General John Stark and the 1400 New Hampshire men who came to the defense of Vermont in August 17, 1777. Assembling at Fort No. 4 in Charleston, New Hampshire, Stark and his troops crossed the Green Mountains to aid in the defense of the newly established State of Vermont. As the commander and chief of all the American Forces from New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts and New York, General Stark had approximately 2,000 men in all. In the first phase of the battle, General Stark's army defeated and captured a British detachment led by Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum. Shortly after this triumph with the timely assistance of Colonel Seth Warner and his Green Mountain Boys, a relief column under Colonel Heindrick Von Breymann was repulsed. By thus denying the enemy sorely needed supplies, these twin





**General Burgoyne's camp cooking kettle captured at Saratoga by the Americans, Oct 23, 1777. The kettle can be seen inside the Bennington Monument.**

victories near Bennington on August 16, 1777 contributed notably to the total British surrender at Saratoga two months later and to the subsequent military alliance with France, the turning point in the War for American Independence.

On the north side of the monument is a statue of General John Stark. On the south side is a statue of Colonel Seth Warner.

The Bennington Monument is on the site of the Continental storehouses that were the objective of the British attack on August 16, 1777.

## Enroute to the Bennington Battlefield

### Birthplace of Vermont.



#### Birthplace of Vermont

Near this site stood the homestead of Lieutenant James Breakenridge. After years of peaceable possession, his farm was claimed by New York land speculators. A sheriff and over 300 men came from Albany to evict him from his home. Aided by men from Bennington, a brave defense was made without bloodshed proving to be a declaration of the independence of the state of Vermont, July 19, 1771.

The home of four generations was destroyed by fire in 1889.

This marker tells us that the people of Vermont were fighting for independence from not only Britain, but also from New York. The fight for independence from New York actually began in Albany, New York in June of 1770 when Ethan Allen was thrown out of court for not having "admissible evidence" from which to make a case. New York would not recognize the legality of deeds to land currently owned in the New Hampshire Grants (as Vermont was called at the time).

Vermont made many attempts to get recognition as an independent colony in Congress - all blocked by a very powerful New York, but supported by New Hampshire and the other New

England colonies. In 1777, Vermont boldly declared itself an independent republic. For fourteen years, Vermont had its own national capital, its own money and its [own militia](#). Congress finally admitted Vermont as the 14th state in 1791.

Although most of the sparring with New York produced little bloodshed, the exception was the "Westminster Massacre." On March 13, 1775, a provoked New York Sheriff and his posse fired into a courthouse filled with unarmed protesting Vermonters. Many were wounded and two Vermonters were killed as a result of the incident. They were [Daniel Houghton](#) and William French (to whom this web site is dedicated). There is a monument in Westminster that honors these Vermonters who gave their lives for Vermont independence.

The Westminster Massacre polarized Vermonters and helped to fill the ranks of the Green Mountain Boys for the defense of Vermont. Two months after the massacre, they would agree that the British posed a bigger threat and marched to Fort Ticonderoga for the defense of Boston.

**Henry House Inn B&B and Henry Covered Bridge.** Above the door of the Inn is the year, 1769.

Across the street from the B&B is one of the famous Vermont Covered Bridges.



### The Henry Covered Bridge Across the Walloomsac River

This quiet spot was once a major river crossing. Traffic between south-western Vermont and New York state crossed here until a railroad was built in 1852.

Troops marched from Manchester, Vermont to the Battle of Bennington in 1777 and teams and stages transported freight and passengers.

The original Henry Covered Bridge was built in 1840. In the 1860's and 1870's, heavy wagon-loads of iron-ore were hauled over the bridge from the Burden Iron Company Mine on Orebed Road to its washing works on Paran Creek in North Bennington.

A succession of water-powered mills was located next to the bridge on the south side. The last was a grist mill operated into the 1920's by Burtine T. Henry, one of this areas many descendants of the Irish Born, William Henry, 1734-1811.

This bridge is supported by town lattice trusses. The design patented in 1820 by Connecticut architect Ithiel Town represented a great technological leap forward from the earlier heavy timber, king post and queen post, and burr truss styles. Carpenters with saws and drills could assemble a lighter, stronger, web-like truss from mill sawn planks secured with wooden pegs. Bridges were covered to protect the structural skeleton from moisture, helping to protect the bridge.

This bridge, built in 1989 by the State of Vermont Agency of Transportation, is a replica replacing the deteriorating original bridge built in 1840. Two other covered bridges, the Paper Mill Village covered bridge and the Silk Road covered bridge cross the Walloomsac River within two miles upstream.

---

**TAKE "A REVOLUTIONARY DAY" ON YOUR ROAD TRIP**

Detailed Directions, More Markers, More Photos -- Order the Book Today!



[\*\*Onto the Bennington Battlefield\*\*](#)

[\*\*Back to a Revolutionary Day\*\*](#)