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SARATOGA BATTLEFIELD

NEW YORK



The Visitor Center for the Saratoga Battlefield National Park is about two miles from the entrance on US Route 4.

The road around the battlefield is a one-way toll road and you need to go to the visitor's center for the \$5 pass to use the road. Also in the Visitor Center is a museum, a gift shop and a theatre. The theatre plays a film that introduces visitors to the Battles of Saratoga.

With the toll road pass, you will receive a pamphlet that can be used in conjunction with the maps and exhibits in the Visitor Center and the interpretive markers on the battlefield itself to help you understand the Battles of Saratoga. The complete tour, which begins at the south end of the parking area, covers over 9 miles and contains 10 tour stops. Although the tour is set up primarily for automobiles, bicycles are also very popular. In addition, there are walking paths and trails for horses.

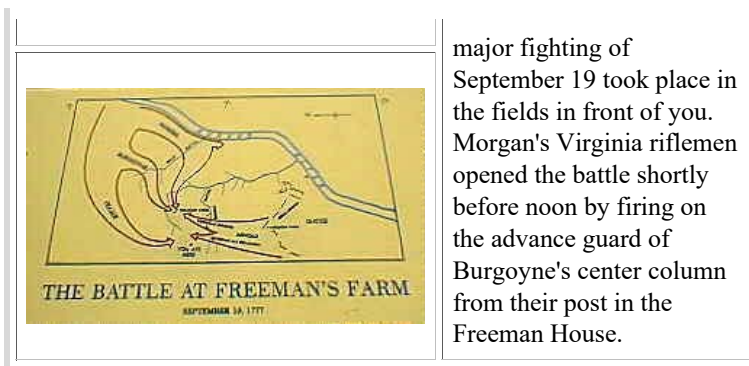
In the back of the Visitor Center is a directional sign marker and a 200th Anniversary marker.

The First Battle of Saratoga – On the 19th of September 1777, British Forces under the command of General Burgoyne advanced south in three separate columns upon the American Forces who had set up defenses here. Two of the columns moved through the forests covering the region just west of the Hudson River. The third, composed of German troops, marched down the old military road along the river.

American scouts first detected Burgoyne's forces and notified General Gates, who ordered Colonel Daniel Morgan's Virginia riflemen to track the British advance. Shortly after 12 PM, some of Morgan's men made contact with the advance guard of the center column. The contact took place in a clearing known as the Freeman Farm, which is Tour Stop 1.



	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Freeman Farm Overlook</p> <p>In 1777 this land was owned and farmed by John Freeman, a loyalist who went north and joined the British invasion force. The</p>
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major fighting of September 19 took place in the fields in front of you. Morgan's Virginia riflemen opened the battle shortly before noon by firing on the advance guard of Burgoyne's center column from their post in the Freeman House.






Tour Stop 1 – Freeman Farm. The battle that followed swayed back and forth over the farm for more than three hours. However, in the face of deadly fire from the numerically superior Americans, the British lines began to waver. But then German reinforcements arrived from the military road and attacked the American right, Burgoyne was able to steady the British lines and gradually force the Americans to withdraw back to the American camp near Neilson Farm, which is Tour Stop 2.

Just before the stop is a monument placed in memory of Thaddeus Kosciuszko. Thousands of commuters are very familiar with another tribute to this great war hero – The Thaddeus Kosciuszko Bridge across the Mohawk River on the Northway (Interstate 87).

Across from the Kosciuszko monument is an area set aside for the unknown soldiers of Saratoga. A memorial is located near several unmarked graves.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Thaddeus Kosciuszko</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1746-1817</p> <p>In memory of the noble son of Poland, Brigadier General Thaddeus Kosciuszko, military engineer, soldier of the War of Independence, who under the command of General Gates selected and fortified these fields for the great battle of Saratoga which the invader was vanquished and American freedom assured.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Erected by his compatriots, AD 1936</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Unknown Soldiers of the Battles of Saratoga</p> <p>The unknown American soldiers who perished in the battles of Saratoga, September 19 and October 7, 1777 and were here buried in unmarked graves helped to assure the triumph of the war of independence to create the Republic of the United States of America and to establish liberty throughout the world. In honor of these patriots and in recognition of the bicentennial of the birth of George Washington, this memorial is erected by the Daughters of the American Revolution in New York State, 1931.</p>	

Tour Stop 2 – Neilson Farm. American staff officers used Neilson Farm for quarters. Near the farm is a line of white polls that mark American positions. Down the hill there is a line of blue polls that mark British positions.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Neilson Farm (Bemis Heights)</p> <p>Both before and after the battles, these heights were farmed by John Neilson, who joined the American troops opposing Burgoyne's advance. Today, his restored home looks much as it did when American staff officers used it for quarters in September 1777. The heights are named for Jotham Bemis, who kept a tavern at the foot of the hill. Posts outline the fortified American line. The sites of General Gates' headquarters and the American field hospital are about 1/4 mile to the south.</p>
	
	

On the 19th of September 1777, the timely arrival of the German troops and the near exhaustion of the American's ammunition allowed Burgoyne to reach these positions. The British commander ordered his troops to entrench in the vicinity of the Freeman Farm and await support from British Forces under the command of General Clinton, who was supposedly preparing to move north toward Albany from New York City. For nearly three weeks he waited, but Clinton did not arrive.

Though he held the immediate field of battle, Burgoyne had been stopped north of the American line that stretched from Bemis Heights to the powerful river fortifications near the Hudson River, which is Tour Stop 3.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 3</p> <p style="text-align: center;">American River Fortifications</p> <p>This powerful position was established under the direction of Col. Thaddeus Kosciuszko, a Polish military engineer and volunteer in the patriot cause, and it proved to be the key to American strategy against Burgoyne in 1777. Patriot infantry and cannon posted here, supported by batteries along the near riverbank, closed off the Hudson Valley route to Albany and forced the British to attack the main American line on Bemis Heights on September 19.</p>
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Tour Stop 3 – River Fortifications. At this position, you can hear the traffic going by on US Route 4 below. You cannot see the road, but in 1777 the trees would have been cleared.

The Second Battle of Saratoga – By the 7th of October 1777, Burgoyne's situation was critical. Faced by a growing American army and no help from Clinton from the south, and supplies rapidly



diminishing, the British army was becoming weaker with each passing day. Burgoyne had to choose between advancing or retreating. He ordered a reconnaissance-in-force to test the American left flank. Aply led and supported by eight cannon, a force of 1,500 men moved out of the British camp. An American outpost on a ridge near Chatfield Farm, which is Tour Stop 4, spotted the British movement.



	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Chatfield Farm</p> <p>An American outpost on this ridge, the site of Asa Chatfield's farm in 1777, spotted the British movement toward the Barber Farm on October 7. Beyond the ridge before you is Middle Ravine, across which American and British pickets exchanged musket shots between the first and second battles.</p>
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Tour Stop 4 – Chatfield Farm. After marching southwesterly about three quarters of a mile, the troops deployed in a clearing on the Barber Farm, which is Tour Stop 5. Most of the British were positioned in an open field, but both flanks rested in woods.

Tour Stop 5 – Barber Farm. The Americans knew that Burgoyne's army was again on the move and at about 3 PM attacked in three columns under Colonel Morgan, General Ebenezer Learned, and General Enoch Poor. Repeatedly, the British line was broken, then rallied. Both flanks were severely punished and driven back. General Simon Fraser, who commanded the British right, was mortally wounded as he rode among his men encouraging them to stand and cover the developing withdrawal.

<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Barber Wheatfield</p> <p>Here and in the field farther west (beyond the first row of trees) the Americans on October 7 intercepted the 1,500 British and German soldiers advancing southwest in an attempt to outflank the American left. After an hour of fierce fighting, Burgoyne's troops were forced to withdraw to fortifications on the Freeman Farm. British Gen. Simon Fraser was mortally wounded northwest of here while trying to rally his men.</p>

Before the enemy's flanks could be rallied, General Benedict Arnold, who had been relieved of command after a quarrel with Gates, rode onto the field and led Learned's brigade against the German troops holding the British center. Under tremendous pressure from all sides, the Germans joined a general withdrawal into the fortifications on the Freeman Farm. Within an hour after the opening clash, Burgoyne lost eight cannon and more than 400 officers and men.



Flushed with success, the Americans believed that victory was near. Arnold led one column in a series of savage attacks on the Balcarres Redoubt, which is Tour Stop 6. The redoubt was a powerful British fieldwork on the Freeman Farm.



	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Balcarres Redoubt</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Freeman Farm)</p> <p>Balcarres Redoubt was a log-and-earthen work about 500 yards long and 12 to 14 feet high. Named for Lord Balcarres, who commanded the British light infantry, it formed the strongest part of the fortified line constructed between the Hudson River and the Breymann Redoubt by Burgoyne's troops after the battle of September 19. On October 7 the British flanking column withdrew here after being driven from the Barber Farm. The redoubt is outlined by posts.</p>
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Tour Stop 6 – Balcarres Redoubt. After repeated American failures to carry Balcarres Redoubt, General Benedict Arnold wheeled his horse and dashed through the crossfire of both armies to the Breymann Redoubt, which is Tour Stop 7. Arnold arrived just as American troops began their assault on British fortifications. He joined in the final surge that overwhelmed the German soldiers defending the work. Upon entering the redoubt, he was wounded in the leg. Had he died during this assault, there is no doubt that posterity would have known few names more heroic than that of General Benedict Arnold.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Breymann Redoubt</p> <p>Breymann Redoubt, also outlined by posts, was a single line of breastworks about 200 yards long and 7 to 8 feet high. It guarded the British right flank and the road to Quaker Springs. It was named for Lt. Col. Heinrich Breymann, whose German troops were stationed here.</p>
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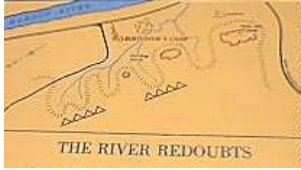

Tour Stop 7 – Breymann Redoubt. Darkness ended the day's fighting and saved Burgoyne's army from immediate defeat. That night the British commander left his campfires burning, abandoned British Headquarters, which is Tour Stop 8, and began pulling his forces back to the North.

Throughout the park are [speaker-buttons](#) that bring the reality of the battle to the visitor.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Burgoyne's Headquarters</p> <p>The path here leads to the site of Burgoyne's headquarters, which at the time of the battles consisted of a large marquee or tent. It was established after the action of September 19 and was the center of British command and camp life between the two battles. Burgoyne chose the location because of a nearby spring.</p>
	

Tour Stop 8 – British Headquarters. Burgoyne withdrew his troops behind the Great Redoubt that protected the high ground and river flats at the northeast corner of the battlefield.

After you leave Tour Stop 8, you will cross a high bridge over a stream and the entrance road that, at this point, parallels the stream. The high ground that you are traveling to is the Great Redoubt and includes Tour Stops 9 and 10.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Tour Stop 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Great Redoubt</p>
	<p>The Great Redoubt was a system of fortifications built by the British on this hill and two others to the north. It was designed to guard their hospital, artillery park, and supplies on the river flat, and the boat bridge across the Hudson. Burgoyne withdrew his army to this vicinity during the night of October 7.</p>




Tour Stop 9 – Great Redoubt. From the top of the redoubt, there is a view of the entrance to the park on US Route 4 and the Hudson River in the distance. Picnic tables make it a great spot for an afternoon picnic or just a place to sit and contemplate the events of 1777.

On the night of the 8th of October 1777, the British buried General Fraser and began a hasty retreat northward. They had suffered about 1,000 casualties in the fighting of the past three weeks; American losses numbered less than 500. Saratoga was one of the most decisive victories in American and world history. It helped to convince the French to join the American cause, making it the turning point of the American Revolution.




	<p style="text-align: center;">WARNING</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Steep Grade</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8/10ths of a Mile in Length</p> <p style="text-align: center;">No Wheelchairs</p>
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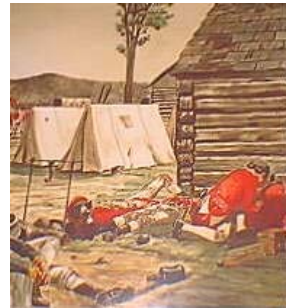
Tour Stop 10 – Walking Trail. This tour stop commemorates the burial place of General Fraser and the British retreat. The tour stop is actually a walking trail that begins with a warning marker.

	<p>The British general, Simon Fraser, mortally wounded during the battle of October 7, 1777 was buried near this site the following day.</p>
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Beyond the gravesite, the trail goes to another site on the Great Redoubt.

	<p>The capture of the Breymann Redoubt forced Burgoyne to withdraw his army to a position centered on three fortifications. This is the second of these three fortifications that were referred to by the British as the Great Redoubt. They were built sometime between September 19th and October 7th, 1777.</p>
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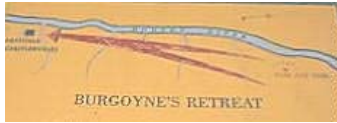

It continues down a steep hill between two fortifications and at the base of the hill, you reach an intersection at the base of the Great Redoubt. There is no indicator which direction to go, but if you take the trail to right, you will reach a marker for the British Hospital.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Main Crown Forces Hospital</p> <p>Burgoyne's retreating army was forced to leave its sick and wounded to the care of the Americans. The main British medical facilities were located on the flat below to your right.</p>
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Reversing direction, you will pass several markers, including a marker for the artillery park


	<p style="text-align: center;">Crown Forces Artillery Park</p> <p>When Burgoyne ordered his army into retreat, the British force's artillery park located on the flat area below and to your right became a scene of frantic activity. The artillery equipment assembled here, larger field guns, spare carriages, carts for ammunition and tools, supply wagons, and even carriages for pontoon used to build floating bridges, all had to be hitched to oxen or horse and brought into line.</p>
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and another for the extensive baggage carried by the British forces.

	<p style="text-align: center;">Crown Forces Baggage Park</p> <p>When the order came to retreat, the civilian teamsters contracted by the British, many from Canada, began harnessing teams of horses and yoking pairs of oxen in the baggage park on the flat directly below you. Wagons and two wheeled carts, not already loaded, were hurriedly piled with officer's bedding, trunks and beds, pots and pans, barrels, and sacks of foodstuffs.</p>
	

Further down the trail is another intersection. Bearing to the right, you will cross a bridge that is near a surviving portion of the Old Champlain Canal built in the 1820's. Out, in a swampy field, one can see four posts which mark the corners of Taylor Cabin, where Simon Fraser died.



	<p style="text-align: center;">Site of the Taylor Cabin</p> <p>A grievously wounded Simon Fraser was carried here to the Taylor Cabin, which had been taken over as a residence by Baroness Riedsel, the wife of the German commander. The bleeding General was brought into the room where a cheerful dinner party to which he had been invited was being</p>
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held. Simon Fraser died at 8:00 on the morning of October 8, 1777.

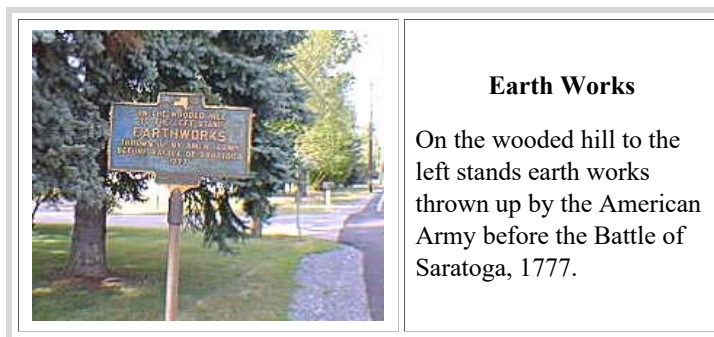
At this point, you may become aware of how deeply you have traveled into the marshy woods. Don't be surprised if you hear the sounds of creatures lurking about.



Reversing direction once again and bearing right at the intersection, you will return back to the parking lot, but not after a healthy climb up a steep hill. There are benches on the way where you can rest during the climb.

Enroute to Stillwater

Earth Works Marker.



Earth Works

On the wooded hill to the left stands earth works thrown up by the American Army before the Battle of Saratoga, 1777.

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