

The Revolution in August

1775

South Carolina

On August 2nd William Drayton and William Tennet leave Charleston to secure the loyalty of settlers in the interior parts of the province to the patriot cause. Three days later a resident of Charleston writes to London: "Be assured peace will never be firmly established between Great Britain and America, until the latter receives an ample recognition of her rights, and a full satisfaction for the blood that has or may be shed." On August 15th Royal Governor Campbell appeals to the House of Assembly for aid, admitting "the powers of Government are wrested out of my hands. I can neither protect, nor punish; therefore with the Advice of His Majesty's Council I apply to You & desire that in this dreadful emergency You will aid me with all the assistance in Your power, in enforcing the Laws, & protecting His Majesty's Servants" On August 28th a patriot observes that "Every thing here is suspended but warlike preparations. The country is unanimous."

GUNPOWDER

On August 3rd Washington requests Governor Cooke of Rhode Island to send a vessel to remove the Provincial supply of powder from the magazine in Bermuda. Five days later Captain Daniel Morgan and his Virginia riflemen arrive in Cambridge. This arrival sets-off a chain reaction as Massachusetts residents, never having seen rifles before, constantly request demonstrations of its accuracy. On August 12th, to conserve gunpowder, the Massachusetts House of Representatives instructs inhabitants of the colony "not to fire a gun at beast, bird, or mark, without real necessity therefore." On August 14th Americans raid storage magazines in Bermuda, carrying off at least 100 barrels of gunpowder. On August 23rd The colonial governments of Virginia and Massachusetts discuss the manufacture of saltpeter and are actively encouraged to increase the production of gunpowder. On August 30th Washington writes to the President of the New York Provincial Congress attacking ship owners who secretly deliver provisions to Boston. He also emphasizes his need for gunpowder, noting that although his troops had seized a hill advancing them towards the enemy, their "poverty prevents our availing ourselves of the Advantage of [the] Situation." The following day the New York Provincial Congress enters into a contract with Joseph Hallett for importing 15 tons of gunpowder and 1,400 muskets.



British recruitment

On August 4th King George congratulates himself on securing a German corps "much Cheaper than if raised at home, and when no further wanted Saves the expense of half pay." On August 13th Lord Sandwich announces that the British Navy has engaged the 6,000 tons of shipping needed to transport regiments from Ireland to America. On August 17th British military officials in Cork, Ireland, begin recruiting men for military service in America. On August 25th however British Prime Minister Lord North advises the King that "The cause of Great Britain is not yet sufficiently popular," predicting difficulty in reaching military enlistment goals.

Prisoners of War

On August 11th Washington, outside of Boston warns British General Gage about the treatment of prisoners within the city: “. . . I shall regulate all my conduct towards those gentlemen who are or may be in our possession, exactly by the rule you shall observe towards those of ours now in your custody: if severity and hardship mark the line of your conduct, painful as it may be to me, your prisoners will feel its effects.” A little over a week later, on August 22nd, King George III issues a proclamation declaring the Americans to be in a state of open rebellion. This officially denied them prisoner of war status, meaning any prisoner could be hanged. To express this the British in Boston publicly hung by the neck the corpse of an American rifleman within sight of the American trenches.

A United States Navy

On August 9th British Captain John Linzee of the HMS Falcon spots two schooners leaving Salem for Gloucester Harbor. After taking one ship he pursues the other into Gloucester where the entire community comes out against the British. After a series of fights Linzee is forced to retreat from Massachusetts, releasing both schooners. On August 26th The Rhode Island Assembly resolves to have their delegates to the next Continental Congress ask if they may build a fleet of ships at Continental expense "for the protection of these colonies." The following day in Philadelphia Benjamin Franklin writes to Silas Deane agreeing with his earlier letter that the colonies need a Navy: "I hope the next Winter will be employed in forming one. When we are no longer fascinated with the Idea of a speedy Reconciliation, we shall exert ourselves to some purpose. Till then Things will be done by Halves."

Europe

On August 7th King Louis XVI agrees to send Julien Achard de Bonvouloir to America on a fact-finding mission. Bonvouloir is also instructed to assure the Americans that France has no aspirations for the reconquest of Canada.

1776

New York Harbor

August 1st, On Staten Island, the bulk of General Henry Clinton's troops and Peter Parker's warships arrived from their ill-fated expedition against Charleston, S.C. Two days later American row galleys tried but failed to capture, or destroy, the two British warships that had ascended the Hudson River to Tappan Zee.



On August 4th Colonel Joseph Reed, an astute member of Washington's staff, observed to a friend that although Admiral Howe spoke convincingly of "peace and accommodation," his written communications fail to disclose any "serious intention of relinquishing one jot of their despotic claim over this country." He also revealed that Washington had considered an attack on Staten Island where the British troops were garrisoned but a lack of men and boats forced him to abandon the idea.

On August 5th, on Long Island, General Nathanael Greene proposed to Washington that he withdraw the army from New York and burn the city; thus depriving the British of an

excellent base, barracks, and a general market which would attract American trade in direct violation of the "law of their country." Washington understood Greene's concern but would not take such a drastic step.

On August 7th King's College (now Columbia) agrees to turn its telescope over to Washington for his use, "in discovering the arrangements and operations of the enemy." Upon viewing the growing strength of the British forces under the Howe Brothers, Joseph Reed, Washington's aide, felt that the "whole world seems leagued against us. Enemies on every side, and no new friends arise. But our cause is just, and there is a Providence which directs and governs all things."

On August 8th, alarmed by the rapid of expansion of British forces, Washington requests additional militia units from neighboring states. "The New Levies are so incomplete, the Old Regiments deficient in the compliment, and so much sickness, that we must have an immediate supply of Men." Washington writes.

On August 10th The New York Convention in Harlem resolved that all males between 16 and 50, residing in any county more than 14 days, should be enrolled in the militia of that county. This was designed to prevent people from moving from place to place in order to avoid military duty. The next day orders are issued prohibiting furloughs or discharges to officers and soldiers without the knowledge and consent of General Washington.

As Washington fought to hold his army together, on August 12th 3,000 British and 8,000 Hessian troops arrived on Staten Island: British forces now numbered over 30,000. Washington wrote to General Lee that his situation had deteriorated what with small pox and desertion. He now feared that the superior British navy might blockade New York thus isolating the city from communications with all the adjacent states. The following day Washington packed all his important papers and ordered them to be forwarded to Philadelphia for safekeeping. Then on August 15th Washington learned General Greene was bed ridden with a raging fever.



His best General is bed ridden and his troops with Smallpox, Washington is then informed by Lord Drummond that Admiral Howe had sent a letter proposing "Peace" to Benjamin Franklin and others. By August 18th Washington has to send out a General order stating reconciliation was not pending and for the men to remain on guard. On August 20th he then appoints General John Sullivan to succeed the ailing General Greene. The next day the British begin embarking troops: On August 22nd British Corporal Thomas Sullivan related in his journal the arrival of the British on Long Island between Gravesend and New

Utrecht, "The whole Army were ready together in Flat-boats; the sight of which was very beautiful and delightful to any English Solider or Subject, to see near twenty four thousand men ready to land in a moment."

On August 23rd Washington informs Congress that British forces had begun landing on Long island. Yet he still believes it's a faint and will not commit the bulk of his forces: he only sends six additional Battalions. The next day he requests Governor Trumbull to send 1,000 Connecticut militiamen to the eastern part of Long Island. By August 25th Washington no longer had any doubts and was himself on Long Island, though he now placed Israel Putnam in charge of the Brooklyn Heights. General Sullivan

was in command on the Guan Heights, which guarded the main road to Brooklyn. Washington believed he had everything covered.

On the night of August 26th the British began moving. Loyalists had told General Clinton of the unguarded Jamaica pass through the heights. After a night march through the Jamaica pass, Clinton took the Americans by surprise, rolling up the unprotected American left flank and capturing General Sullivan. On the right, General Grant was surrounded on three sides leaving him no option but to retreat to the Brooklyn Heights. By August 28th the Americans were pinned on the heights with Howe beginning the digging of trenches. On the 29th Washington holds a council of war and it's decided that the troops would be withdrawn across the East River. This was accomplished in one evening, with Washington in his New York Headquarters on August 30th. Here he would receive a letter from General Howe proposing a meeting with Congress to discuss reconciliation. General Howe released General Sullivan to deliver this letter.



Hessians

Given their manner of service, and the percentage of Royal troops they represented, Congress got the idea that they could buy off the foreign troops of General Howe. On August 14th they resolved to offer all foreign deserters from the British army a secure refuge, including religious liberty, the investment of the rights, privileges and immunities of natives, "as established by the laws of the states;" and 5 1/4 acres of unappropriated lands. On August 26th as fighting was under way on Long Island Washington wrote that this information had reached the hands of the Hessian troops. The following day Congress resolved to sweeten the bribe, offering colonels 1,000 acres of land, reducing to 100 acres to non-commissioned officers.

Native Attacks

August 1st, In Ninety-Six, South Carolina, James Cresswell reported that Indian raids had converted the community into a frontier settlement. "Plantations lie desolate-and hopeful crops are going to ruin. In short, dear Sir, unless we get some relief, famine will overspread our beautiful country." On August 4th Colonel Andrew Williamson reports to President Rutledge in Charleston that his state militia had fought its way out of an Indian ambush and then crossed the Kenowee River to destroy four Indian towns. On August 19th The Congress revised its policy on Indian Affairs. The prime objective was to secure strict neutrality rather than armed support from the tribes. The various agents were directed to urge the principal chiefs and sachems to visit Congress for consultations; particularly the headman of the Creeks, whom the Cherokees were pressuring to join in the war raging on the southern frontier.



Congress

August 1st, The Congress continued consideration of two troublesome issues relative to the Articles of Confederation; namely, how much money individual states would contribute to the central government and the number of votes allocated to each. The next day Members of Congress affixed their signature to the engrossed copy of the Declaration of Independence. John Dickinson, Pennsylvania; James

Duane, New York; John Jay, New York; and Robert Livingston, New York refused to sign. Carter Braxton, Virginia; Robert Morris, Pennsylvania; George Reed, Delaware; and Edward Rutledge, South Carolina; opposed the document but signed in compliance with their instructions. Five delegates were absent; Generals Washington, Sullivan, Clinton and Gasden and Governor Patrick Henry of Virginia.

Lake Champlain

On August 3rd General Horatio Gates felt reassured that the energetic Benedict Arnold would be responsible for building and commanding the fleet in order to oppose the inevitable invasion from Canada. General Arnold was already operating the largest warship on the lake, captured when Arnold raided Crown Point. Three days later Congress directed General Phillip Schuyler to contact British General John Burgoyne for the purpose of entering a prisoner of war exchange agreement.

1777

The Road to Saratoga

On August 4th Congress replaces General Schuyler with Horatio Gates as commander of the Northern Army. He immediately sets off for Albany, arriving on August 19th. There he learns of the American victory at Bennington on August 16th. Bennington was Burgoyne's attempt to end shortages in meat stores and draft animals caused by his extended supply line from Canada. The patriot victory not only damaged Burgoyne's reputation with his Indian scouts (who he soon lost) and cost him nearly 1,000 Hessian troops, it rallied the patriots swelling Gates forces to over 6,000 troops. This included Daniel Morgan's rifle corps, sent by direct order of Washington to assist.

Native Tribes

On August 2nd forces under the command of Barry St. Leger and Chief Joseph Brant begin a siege of Ft Stanwix New York. The plan was for this combined Loyalist and Indian force to take the fort and then travel down the Mohawk River to Albany where they would join the forces of General Burgoyne. But the Americans would not leave the fort, which is what the native warriors wanted.



St. Leger tried to bring up his artillery, but the Americans had blocked the road with fallen trees before withdrawing into their fort. On the 6th Brant's warriors ambushed a relief force of 800 men from Oriskany (depicted), but this only allowed the fort's defenders to raid the unprotected Indian camp. Four days later General Benedict Arnold offers to lead an expedition of 900 men from Stillwater to Fort Stanwix. It took ten days for Arnold to reach Fort Dayton where he learned that St. Leger's trenches were approaching the fort's wall. So Arnold used deception to convince St. Leger that he was approaching with twice as

many men as he had. The trick worked and St. Leger withdrew on August 22nd.

Howe Threatens Philadelphia

After embarking the majority of his forces on to ships the previous month, General Howe's fleet was spotted entering the Chesapeake Bay in Mid-August. This information did not reach Washington however until August 21st, by which time General Sullivan was launching a raid on Staten Island without Washington's approval. This failed raid slowed Washington's response to the location of Howe's fleet, delaying his movement to Wilmington Delaware until August 25th. By this time Howe was already disembarking his troops only 55 miles from Philadelphia.

1778

July 29 - August 31

After sailing to bottle up the British Fleet in the Delaware River, on arrival at Philadelphia admiral d'Estaing found that the British had withdrawn to New York. He further noted that an attack on New York would be a waste of his men and ships. So in late July he sailed for Newport Rhode Island, which had been under British occupation since late 1776.

There d'Estaing found the city well defended while the British fleet was at sea. Not wishing to be caught between the city defenses and the British fleet he put to sea again with all his troops. There he was caught in a storm for two days causing severe damage to several ships including his flagship. By August 22nd the British fleet had withdrawn to New York while the French had sailed for Boston. This withdraw sent a shockwave through the Patriot ranks causing them to shrink by half within a week. As news came of a British relief force from New York, the situation in the American camp deteriorated further and on August 26th the decision to end the siege was made. But the British, aware of the withdrawal plans, launched an attack on August 29th before the relief force arrived.

The resulting battle is notable for the 1st Rhode Island regiment which had both African, Native American and white colonist in the same unit. During the battle the regiment repelled three assaults by Hessian forces. The actions of this unit allowed General Sullivan to successfully withdraw.

1779

New York

Following General Clinton's attacks in May and June Washington is now launching his own attacks. After the success of Anthony Wayne at Stony Point, on August 5 a raid is performed on Morrisania New York. Then, on **August 19, Light Horse Henry Lee** leads 400 men against Paulus Hook New Jersey. Lee captures the position and the British losses are 50 killed and 158 taken prisoner. American morale receives a major boost because of this action.

The Six Nations



With Clinton implementing his southern Policy, Washington felt free to finally deal with the six nations. On August 11th Colonel Daniel Brodhead launches an ambitious assault against the Seneca through the Allegheny River Valley. Brodhead leaves Pittsburgh at the head of 600 men and destroys 10 Seneca Indian villages before returning to Pittsburgh with much booty.

As Brodhead was burning villages in Western Pennsylvania, Continental forces led by Generals John Sullivan and James Clinton moved out to Chemung New York. On August 13th Sullivan arrived to find the town abandoned. After leaving a garrison there, Sullivan headed for Newtown where on August 29th his troops were ambushed by Loyalists led by Captain Walter Butler and Iroquois led by Chief Joseph Brant. The Continentals managed to use their artillery to drive off the Indians; However, Sullivan is later criticized for not pursuing the fleeing Indians and gaining a major victory. Many villages were subsequently destroyed however, depriving the Natives of the supplies they needed to raids against frontier

settlements. Many Iroquois had to withdraw to Canada to survive the winter of 1779-1780.

1780

The Carolina's

On August 1st Thomas Sumter leads a force of 600 men against Rocky Mount South Carolina. There, 150 British loyalist under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George Trumbull occupied 3 log cabins, one of many small garrisons set-up by the British after the fall of Charleston. Sumter believed the position could be easily taken, which would add to the patriot morale boost that came from Huck's defeat in July. Unfortunately, the log cabins were too well built to be damaged by musket fire and when the Americans set fire to the buildings a sudden deluge occurred dowsing the flames. Though he failed at Rocky Mount, on August 6th Sumter attacked a large British force at Hanging Rock. There, though out-numbered nearly two to one, Sumter's forces kept the British pinned down until a lack of ammunition, and the Carolina heat, caused the British commander to surrender.



As Sumter was fighting in North West South Carolina, in Central South Carolina, General Francis Marion, the "Swamp Fox," was doing the same. On August 15th, at Port's Ferry, Marion and his irregular cavalry force of 250, rout a party of Loyalists commanded by Major Micajah Gainey. That night however Horatio Gates Army collides with the forward elements of Cornwallis' army. The next morning Gates is defeated by Cornwallis in one of the worst patriot defeats of the war. Over 900 Americans die and another 1,000 are captured to British losses of only 68 killed and another 245 wounded. Additionally, 22 wagonloads of equipment, along with 2,000 muskets and a large amount of ammunition, fall into British hands.

With Gates soldiers defeated and dispersed Banastre Tarleton and his 350 man legion is released to track down any remaining American military forces in South Carolina. About 40 miles from Camden, Tarleton catches General Thomas Sumter sleeping at Fishing Creek on August 18th. Tarelton kills 150, captures 300, frees 100 British prisoners and causes Sumter to flee to North Carolina. On this same day Patriot Colonels Elijah Clarke and Isaac Shelby make a stand at Musgrove's Mill on the Enoree River. There, their 200 men repel an attack by 500 loyalists killing 63 and wounding 90, while capturing another 70. It was a major morale boost after the disaster of Camden.

Native attacks

August 1-2, Canajoharie Settlements

Still recovering from Sullivan's expedition of the previous year Located Mohawk Indian Chief Joseph Brant launches an attack on settlements in the Mohawk Valley. Mimicking the slash and burn techniques of the 1779 Sullivan's expedition Brant and his Indians kill 16 settlers, burn a large number of homes and other buildings, while killing or driving off over 300 head of cattle. He avoids forts and other fortified positions, concentrating on the destruction of the countryside. Unlike the Cherry Valley Massacre of 1778, there were no massacres of settlers, which many be attributed to Brant being in sole command and no Loyalists accompanied him.

As Brant was burning farms in New York, further west British Captain Henry Bird was returning to Fort Detroit after leading a force of 1,000 warriors against settlements in Kentucky. They had destroyed numerous homes, killed 22 and captured over 400 civilians. Following Bird north was George Rogers Clark and a force of 950 over-mountain men. Clark's forces reached the capital village of the Shawnee (Piqua) on August 8th. A Bloody battle then occurred that the Americans won, but the casualties were so high Clark had to withdraw back to the Ohio River.



1781

Yorktown

After moving his troops to Virginia, and then chasing Lafayette for over a month, on August 1st Cornwallis stopped at Yorktown. He had been ordered by General Clinton to set-up a fortified port that would be used as winter quarters by the British fleet presently at New York. He had hoped to use Norfolk, but after review had decided Yorktown was easier to fortify. By August 6th Lafayette had learned what Cornwallis was doing and forwarded the intelligence to Washington. Little did Lafayette know, Washington was already heading south.

In the West

In August George Rogers Clark launches an action against Fort Detroit. His troops are in two columns, the smaller under the command of Archibald Lochry. Joseph Brant learns of this and on August 24th ambushes the smaller force when it comes ashore on the Ohio River near present day Aurora Indiana. None of the Americans escape: the defeat forces Clark to abandon his attack on Detroit.

Carolina's

With American General Greene resting his troops just North-west of Monck's Corner, and Cornwallis far away in Virginia, the British commander in Charleston decides to show he is still in control in the Carolina's. Patriot militia officer Isaac Hayne, captured at Charleston and paroled, was now ordered to join the Loyalist militia or face imprisonment. On hearing this Hayne determined his parole now invalidated and immediately returned to the Continental Army. Soon after this he was again captured by the British, who now decided to make an example of him. On August 4th he was court martial and hung in Charleston.

The hanging only hardened Patriot resolve to take back Charleston. On August 23rd Greene Breaks camp and marches North to Camden where he can move his troops across the flooded Waterlee River. From there he then crosses the Congaree River, now placing him on the main roadway to Charleston.

As Greene marched to Fort Motte, further East Francis Marion was harassing Tory forces. For over a month loyalists had been pouring into Charleston. As they arrived British Colonel Stewart was organizing the men into 400-500 man strong units and having them forage the area south of the city for supplies. The goal to leave nothing for the patriots and making a second siege of the city as difficult as possible.

In late August Marion learned a fairly large British force under Lt. Col. Ernst Leopold von Borck had been sent to seize rice from plantations along the Combahee River. The Patriot militia commander in that area (Col. William Harden) called for help and Marion responded. After leaving his unmounted troops at the village of Round "O", on August 22nd Marion set-off to Godfrey's Savannah with 200 handpicked men and the cavalry under the command of Lt Col Peter Horry. After riding 100 miles he joined Col Harden at the Horse Shoe where additional Patriot militia arrived swelling his forces to 445 men: Von Borck is believed to have had over 600. The ambush is set for August 27th, but the Patriot militia cannot get into position as planned, forcing Marion to abort the effort. Col Borck then withdraws to the late Isaac Haynes Plantation.

Now Marion plans an ambush as the British withdraw through Parker's Ferry. On August 30th the patriot force took position in the thick woods of a swamp about forty yards from the road, and within a mile of Parker's Ferry, and waited. Unexpectedly a Tory militia unit marched into the causeway in the afternoon of August 31st and spotted Marion's men. The fire-fight that erupted was seen by von Borck at the Hayne's Plantation, who immediately detached his dragoons commanded by Major Fraser to rescue the militia. The irony is, its what Marion wanted.

Fraser's 80 dragoons roared down the narrow causeway, not realizing that Marion's and Harden's men were all around them and outnumbered them by four to one. At the far end they succeeded in rescuing the Tory militia who now fled as the patriots turned against the Dragoons. Now Fraser had to run the gauntlet back to Col Von Borck, losing 20 Dragoons, their horses and his own horse in the escape.

Marion's men did not follow, but occupied the causeway until the lead unit of von Borck's infantry appeared with a cannon. The battle then continued until a lack of ammunition forced the Patriots to withdraw. Officially the British held the field, but they suffered 25 killed and 80 wounded, plus the loss of numerous (irreplaceable) horses. Marion and Harden lost only four men, withdrawing safely into the swamp.