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Nicolas Soto

DECIMATION, REJUVENATION, MOTIVATION: HOW DISEASE AND MURDER SET THE STAGE AT SARATOGA

Imagine your worst fear. Now imagine being killed and scalped in your wedding attire on the way to meet your fiancé. Your fear does not probably seem so bad now, right? Adding on to it, imagine that you were sick with smallpox while on your journey. You would be walking around with a terrible disease which eats away at the body and eventually kills you. These are not fears which we can imagine as vividly as the colonists in the 1770s could. Smallpox and being scalped were legitimate worries of the time for American colonists. Murder and disease ran rampant throughout the colonies. Not to mention the fact that they were embroiled in a revolution with the British Empire to pile on the misery. And to be blunt, prior to the end of 1777, the Americans were not doing so great in their fight for independence. A variety of obstacles stood in their way. And if any colony represented the worries of colonists more in the 1770s, it was New York. New York was right in the middle of the conflict of 1777 and played a huge role in deciding the outcome of the war. This is where two crucial factors would play themselves out and swing the Revolutionary War in the Patriots favor.

Support was one of the biggest concerns for the Americans during the early stages of the war. They were struggling to recruit soldiers for the Continental army. In addition to that, General Washington was faced with a huge problem almost every month. Many soldiers and militia units were on three-month contracts. After the three months were up, Washington was forced to plead with these men to sign up for additional service. With the way the Americans were performing in the beginning of the revolution, there was not a strong case for enlistment or re-enlistment. Another concern colonists

had was of a different variety. The American Army was being ravaged by an enemy which was not the British army.

The Variola virus, which causes smallpox, was infecting almost everyone in the colonies during the Revolutionary War. Elizabeth Fenn's, *Pox Americana*, is the defining work on this terrible epidemic which inflicted more losses on the Americans than any enemy of the revolting colonists. The Canadian Expedition, which lasted from June, 1775, to October, 1776, was severely affected by the emergence of smallpox. Most of the American army was sick with the disease and, by the time the army had marched to meet the British forces, it was a shell of what it had been when they began the march. In his July 3, 1776, letter to his wife, John Adams wrote, "This fatal Pestilence completed our Destruction..."¹ Adams understood the circumstances of the disease and the toll it could take on the Continental Army if they did not do something to protect themselves.

And yet, despite these challenges, on October 17, 1777, General John Burgoyne, commander of the British army in Saratoga surrendered his entire force to General Horatio Gates, commander of the American army, during the Battles of Saratoga, which were fought between September 19, 1777, and October 7, 1777. This event is widely considered by most historians to be the turning point of the American Revolution. However, the turning point of the Revolution was not just these significant battles at Saratoga. Instead, it was a series of conscious decisions and unpredictable events which culminated at Saratoga.

The consensus is that Saratoga is the definitive turning point of the revolution. The arguments for this reasoning are well-documented and present an intriguing case for the claim. In Richard M. Ketchum's, *Saratoga*, he starts off with, "At Saratoga, the British campaign that was supposed to crush

¹ John Adams to Abigail Adams, July 3, 1776, letter sent from Philadelphia. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence*, Volume 2: June 1776-March, 1778, (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) pp. 29-31.

the America's rebellion ended instead in a surrender that changed the history of the world."² Ketchum, a noted historian of the American Revolution, goes on to explain that the victory at Saratoga encouraged the French to enter the war against the British and this alliance would swing the odds, decidedly, in the Americans favor. Edmund Morgan, a Sterling Professor of History at Yale University, stated that the surrender at Saratoga, "was a great turning point of the war, because it won for Americans the foreign assistance which was the last element needed for victory."³ The foreign aid is the main reason for historians agreeing on Saratoga as the turning point of the Revolution.

However, was the turning point of the war just the Battles of Saratoga or was it, in fact, some other crucial event or battle? Several historians have already tackled this exact question and produced a variety of different conclusions. One historian, Helen D. Chandler, views the Battle of King's Mountain on October 7, 1780, as the turning point battle of the revolution.⁴ This battle took place after the victory at Saratoga and after the Americans had already won the assistance of the French. One historian, Bruce Chadwick, considers the battles of Trenton and Princeton, which occur even before the battles of Saratoga as the point in which the Americans turned the tide against the British in the Revolution.⁵ All of these historians make interesting claims backed up by a significant number of primary sources.

Based on the sources discovered, the turning point can be attributed to two separate events that helped form Saratoga into the landmark battle that it was. These events include the mandate of smallpox inoculations in February of 1777, by General Washington and the murder of Jane McCrea. These events decidedly shifted the tide in favor of the Americans. The inoculations successfully

² Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga: Turning Point of America's Revolution*, (New York, Henry Holt and Company, Inc., 1997) p. xi.

³ Edmund Morgan, *The Birth of the Republic: 1763-1789*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012) pp. 82-3.

⁴ Helen D. Chandler, *A brief description of the Battle of Kings Mountain: The turning point of the American Revolution, fought in York County, S.C., October 7, 1780* (Charlotte, Publicity Committee of the Sesqui-Centennial Committee, 1930)

⁵ Bruce Chadwick, *The First American Army: The Untold Story of George Washington and the Men Behind America's First Fight for Freedom* (Naperville, Sourcebooks, Inc., 2005)

improved the health of the entire continental army through the spring of 1777, leading up to Saratoga. Jane McCrea's brutal murder at the hands of General Burgoyne's Iroquois Indians raised support for the American cause and, it can be argued, that it led to an increase in troop numbers in the American army. Both of these events, as a whole, can be viewed as decisive events towards the turning point of the American Revolution. These crucial moments culminated in the Battles of Saratoga in the fall of 1777, which is considered by many as the actual turning point of the war.

The public opinion of the American people also played a major role in the events that occurred at Saratoga. It was not even so much that the support swung in the favor of the Americans as much as the British lost any support that they had left in the region. Jane McCrea's murder showed the Americans that the British could no longer be trusted. The power of public opinion during the Saratoga Campaign cannot be understated. It can be argued that the shift of the public's opinion and support set up the outcome at Saratoga and changed the course of history forever.

Troops win wars. This has obviously been the case throughout history. However, only the right kinds of troops win these wars. Health and motivation are driving forces behind successful armies. History will show us plenty of examples when great armies have fallen due to a diminishing health as well as armies flourishing due to a proactive approach by their commanders to keep the troops healthy. And on the opposite hand, we can see how a motivated army is a dangerous force to be reckoned with.

This would not be the only war that the Americans would be faced with these similar issues and factors. One of the most prominent examples of these factors being utilized was during World War II. Although it is a bit of a leap to World War II, it is the best American example of disease and motivation affecting the outcome of a war. Looking back, this war included some of the worst conditions that any army has ever had to fight through. During the invasion of the Philippines, the American and Filipino defenders battled malaria as much as they battled the Japanese. Almost a third of their troops were sick

with the disease when the invasion began. However, quick thinking and a proactive response by the Allied forces allowed for the Americans to effectively suppress the disease. In contrast to this, the Japanese forces were equally affected by the Malaria disease. However, their superiors did nothing to suppress the disease and allowed their men to fester in the thick jungles with the harsh disease. At some points, estimates show the Japanese forces to have been 90 percent inactive due to sickness. The Allies approach to Malaria directly impacted their success in the Pacific Theater of World War II.⁶

Surprise events spiking recruitment numbers are also not unusual for the Americans. Usually, it takes a significant event to drive Americans into a war in which they would rather stay out of. World War II can be used as another example of this motivation factor for troops, which was so crucially needed. The bombing of Pearl Harbor occurred on December 7, 1941. On December 8, 1941, hundreds of thousands of young Americans crowded the streets looking to take their revenge on the Japanese. Recruiting offices were jammed with the men who wanted to preserve the American freedom. As Thomas W. Zeiler puts it in his book, *Annihilation*, “The United States and Japan exhibited an uncontrollable rage and hatred toward each other. Pearl Harbor ignited those feelings, and they never ceased until a war without mercy concluded nearly four years later.”⁷ Once again, as will be shown in the case of the McCrea murder, an unpredictable event motivated the Americans to band together to bring down the perpetrators of a heinous crime.

In the American Revolution, both of these factors play themselves out right around the time of the turning point of the war. By examining the papers of the likes of John Adams, George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and also the diaries of the common soldier, we can get a feel of how the Battles of Saratoga were affected by these two factors. Smallpox had run rampant in the American army prior to

⁶ Army Heritage Center Writers, “Malaria in World War II” *Army Heritage Center Foundation: Education Materials Index* (Web).

⁷ Thomas W. Zeiler, *Annihilation: A Global Military History of World War II* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011) p. 164.

1777 causing depleted units for Washington. However, his action allowed for a healthier army as well as more flexibility in where he could move his troops. Also, a gruesome murder in upstate New York sparked the Americans to join together right before the Battles of Saratoga. This work helps to show how these two separate events come together at Saratoga to help swing the Revolution in the Americans favors.

Saratoga still holds the honor of being called the turning point of the American Revolution. However, there was more to this decisive shift in the war than just this one battle. The victory at Saratoga won the French over and allowed the Americans to change the tide. But the battle have been a bit overplayed throughout the years and have taken away from some of the other key factors that helped Saratoga garner all of this importance. The decisions and events that led up to this battle; Smallpox inoculations and Jane McCrea's grisly murder both played a crucial role in the formation of Saratoga. Along with the shift in public opinion and perfectly timed increase in healthy and motivated troops, Saratoga was born and the Americans collected the victory they so badly needed to gain the support of an even more important group; the French. In other words, these events allowed for Saratoga to become this landmark battle that allowed a rebellion to become a revolution.

DECIMATION AND A MANDATE: How Washington Saved the Army from Disaster

Increasing the health of the troops in 1777 was, perhaps, the most important goal for the American army. Quality health among soldiers is critical in any war. Such was the case with smallpox in 1777. The virus played a role in the early campaigns, prompting action from men such as General Washington. He knew, firsthand, what smallpox could do to a man and the trouble it cost his campaigns. Washington wanted to eradicate smallpox from within the American army at all costs. Doing this would allow the Americans to finally be a healthy army which is what they would need to compete with the well-trained British regulars. Also, Washington needed to prove to the colonists that

he would be able to care for his troops. Recruiting had been stagnant for the Americans up to this point with a concern being the smallpox which significantly affected the American foot soldiers. Washington's inoculation mandate on January 6, 1777, was a controversial decision. Inoculation was a feared procedure among the colonists. Many people, including notable generals, like Horatio Gates, were against the idea of inoculating troops because of the dangers it posed.

Even with all of this pressure, Washington gambled with his mandate and, while at first, it would prove to be a disastrous move, it eventually led to the Americans being healthy enough to compete with the British. Moreover, it helped encourage the recruitment of new soldiers who were no longer afraid of joining the army because of the possibility of getting smallpox. The newfound health of the army and the ability to send full units to Saratoga to strengthen Gates' already large force played an important role in the turning point victory that occurred there. Inoculations disrupted and ended the campaign in which the British were supposed to finally suppress and crush the rebellious Americans.⁸

To understand the impact smallpox had on the army, the first step is to reveal what smallpox is and the harm it does to a person. Today, smallpox is seen as a harmless disease in the eyes of the world since it has been effectively eradicated from the Earth. However, the eradication of smallpox did not occur until well into the twentieth century. Before that, smallpox was busy ravaging different regions of the world. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), "Smallpox is a serious, contagious, and sometimes fatal infectious disease. There is no specific treatment for smallpox disease, and the only prevention is vaccination."⁹ Along with this, smallpox historically has a fatality rate of about 30%. The initial symptoms include fever, malaise, head and body aches and sometimes vomiting, which usually occur 2 to 4 days after contracting the virus.¹⁰ The next few days are the most crucial

⁸ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga: Turning Point of America's Revolutionary War* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) p. 1.

⁹ CDC Staff, "Smallpox Disease Overview" *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, December 30, 2004, Web.

¹⁰ Ibid.

because this is when the major rashes and bumps begin to appear on the skin of a person. Unlike Chickenpox, smallpox rashes spread equally and far more frequently throughout the body and also have a unique depression in the center of the bumps. It is not until about 3 days later when all of the rashes will turn to scabs and eventually fall off, leaving only the scars as a reminder of the hardship the person faced. However, for about 3 out of every 10 people, the disease reached such a critical point that they were not able to survive the torment the disease caused. Luckily, no one has to go through such excruciating pain since smallpox was wiped out through the efforts of various organizations. Only an intentional act would lead to a person being infected with smallpox.¹¹ This type of Biological warfare is not unusual and was actually used by the British during the revolution. This is another reason that finding a solution to the disease was so crucial.

Along with that, what was this procedure that terrified the Americans so much? Smallpox inoculations were relatively known throughout the colonies, but still people seemed to fear the process. Elizabeth Fenn details the history of inoculations clearly in *Pox Americana*. Fenn explains that, at this point in time, only two methods were known when it came to dealing with smallpox: isolation or inoculation.¹² Isolation consisted of quarantining someone who was affected and from there, providing them with medical assistance. In some cases, entire towns could be quarantined. However, isolation had its faults, most important of which was a runaway, quarantined colonist. "The greatest was that by fleeing, fugitives from the pestilence would in fact spread it."¹³ Since you were not healing the person in a controlled environment, the disease would still be present in the victim's body and being a fugitive would allow the disease to jump to a wide number of other colonists. Another huge issue with isolation was that it did not address the issue of smallpox as a whole. Sure, that one victim would become

¹¹ CDC Staff, "What You Should Know About a Smallpox Outbreak" *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, December 29, 2004, Web.

¹² Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2001) p. 29.

¹³ *Ibid.* p. 31.

immune, but the rest of the community was still at risk. As Fenn states, “Those who successfully dodged one outbreak remained vulnerable when the next one struck... Continued susceptibility to smallpox meant living a life of incessant dread.”¹⁴ In an army with a lot of troops, isolation did not offer a practical solution to the smallpox problem. The constant troop movements, the moving in and out of troops between regiments and the relative lack of available resources made isolation the worse of the two evils. However, the other option of wide-scale inoculation also had its risks.

The process of inoculation was still a tiresome procedure which would test its patients. Fenn writes, “It began with a dietary regimen that many practitioners imposed on patients before the operation took place.”¹⁵ The patients would be put on a very strict diet which would essentially drain them and make them a better “victim” for the virus. The diet for most colonists undertaking the procedure was a mix of half milk and half water.¹⁶ Obviously, a strict diet like this would turn some of the patients away from going through with the procedure. However, the malnutrition helped make the colonists more susceptible to the virus. After a week of this, the inoculation would begin by the doctor giving the patient a shot which contained a small amount of the *Variola* virus which they had collected from a previous victim.¹⁷ Following this was the incubation period, in which the patients would wait for the disease to present itself and run its course. Finally, the disease would emerge and the patients would, mostly, be immobilized for the time being. However, their pains were mild in comparison to the victims who caught smallpox naturally. This was an early version of the inoculations and by the time the war broke out, inoculations would be improved from the time that John Adams underwent his procedure.¹⁸ The dieting would be shown to have no real effect on how the procedure went and was

¹⁴ Ibid. p. 31

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 33

¹⁶ Ibid. p. 34

¹⁷ Ibid. p. 34

¹⁸ Ibid. p. 35

reduced. Patients did not have to starve themselves like the men in Adams' group did when he went through the procedure. This process would render the patient immune to the disease and allow for them to never fear the horrors that came with having the disease the natural way.

Inoculation was also not a new method of curing diseases when the American Revolution began. Fenn states that it had been utilized for hundreds of years in Asia and Africa before the Europeans even knew about the process.¹⁹ By the early 1700s, the process was wide-spread throughout the known world but was still approached very carefully. One of the first examples of an inoculation in North America was in 1716 by a Puritan minister, Cotton Mather. Mather wrote about his experiment, in which he was able to inoculate his African slave, Onesimus and forever cure him of the virus.²⁰ However, since this was not as safe as a vaccination (which would not be first available until 1796) colonists had many objections to consciously transporting the *Variola* virus around and considered it extremely dangerous.

Smallpox had been running through the army like an unstoppable force. Every day, more and more soldiers were succumbing to the virus. The entire campaign into Canada had been ruined by smallpox. When discussing the campaign with his wife in 1776, John Adams stated, "I mean the Prevalence of the smallpox among our troops... This fatal Pestilence completed [sic] our Destruction."²¹ This is the same letter that Adams speaks to his wife about the recent completion of the Declaration of Independence. He feels that the presence of smallpox in the country is important enough to interrupt his letter about the most groundbreaking document in American history. Adams understood that without, first and foremost, taking a stand against this disease, the Declaration of Independence would be a useless document. Smallpox, on its own, did more damage to the Americans than any enemy

¹⁹ Ibid. p. 31

²⁰ Ibid. p. 32

²¹ Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, July 3, 1776, sent from Philadelphia. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence*, Volume 2: June 1776-March 1778 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) pp. 29-30.

battalion. A few weeks earlier, Adams had gone so far to describe smallpox as, “worse than the sword!”²² He later considered it 10 times as bad as the British or their allies and specifically blamed smallpox for the retreat from Quebec.²³ However it is viewed, smallpox played an important and negative role in the early campaigns of the war for the Americans and there was no indication that the virus would slow down.

Several medical historians have commented on the brutal nature of smallpox over time, particularly during the revolutionary period. When describing smallpox, medical historian Donald R. Hopkins states, “the suddenness and unpredictability of its attack, the grotesque torture of its victims, the brutality of its lethal or disfiguring outcome, and the terror that it inspired, smallpox was unique among human diseases.”²⁴ According to another medical historian, Patricia Watson, smallpox was as dangerous to American colonists as the Bubonic Plague was to Europeans.²⁵ The dangers of smallpox to the American army during this time cannot be understated. American soldiers were ripe for the picking when it came to the smallpox virus because of the long and strenuous marches they were required to take along with the fact that their living conditions were not always the most sanitary.

Seeing what this disease does to its victims, it is clear to see how a late eighteenth century army might be negatively affected by its presence. One other problem that existed for the Americans was the fact that the British were immune to the smallpox disease. They did not have nearly as much trouble with the disease that the Americans did. As Fenn explains, smallpox was present in North America as much as it was in Europe in prior centuries. However, the location of the epidemics played a huge role

²² Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, June 16, 1776. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence*, Volume 2 (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) pp. 12-3.

²³ Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, June 26, 1776. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) pp. 23-4.

²⁴ Donald R. Hopkins, *Princes and Peasants: Smallpox in History* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1983) p. 3.

²⁵ Patricia A. Watson, *The Angelic Conjunction: Preacher-Physicians of Colonial New England*, (Knoxville, University of Tennessee Press, 1991) p. 15.

in what groups would become immune. “By the time musket fire marked the historic turn of events at Lexington and Concord, *Variola* had been present in North America for more than two and a half centuries.”²⁶ Although smallpox had been prevalent in North America for hundreds of years, the population and transportation were not advanced enough to sustain the smallpox long enough for it to become an epidemic. This was not the case in Europe. As Fenn writes, “These victims became available thanks to closely packed cities, immigration, natural increase, and rapid communication between regions.”²⁷ Eighteenth century Europeans were more exposed to the virus and thus were able to overcome it at an early age. By the time the revolution rolled around, Europeans in the colonies were immune to the disease and had a serious upper-hand on the American patriots.

One of the first campaigns that witnessed the impact that smallpox could have on the Americans was the Quebec Campaign. In 1775, the Americans began their invasion into Canada. By July, 1776, the Americans were on their last legs in the region. Even with a surplus of new troops arriving to Canada at this point in the war, the Americans were still at a disadvantage. The new troops arriving would just become sick as soon as they reached the American camp. The soldiers were extremely contagious and spreading the disease to any recruit that came in. Approximately 800 of the 2500 men in General Benedict Arnold’s unit were sick or unfit for duty due to smallpox.²⁸ The biggest issue with smallpox during the Quebec campaign was the action taken by the generals to combat the *Variola* virus. Even saying “action” is a stretch as it seemed as if they really did nothing to prevent the spread of smallpox throughout the army.

At this point in time, inoculations were controversial among the leaders of the Patriot army. “The procedure was off-limits, however; from the early days of the siege at Quebec, military officials had

²⁶ Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana: The Great Smallpox Epidemic of 1775-1782* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2001) p. 28.

²⁷ Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2001) p. 28.

²⁸ *Ibid.* p. 67.

prohibited variolation out of fear that it would spread the insidious pestilence.”²⁹ They would even go as far as to punish any soldier who would secretly receive inoculations. Without the inoculations, the Americans were “sitting ducks,” to this terrible disease. For over a year in Canada, it feasted on the naïve Americans who suffered because of the orders of commanding officer, Major General John Thomas. Thomas had banned the use of inoculation during the Quebec campaign, which would prove disastrous for everyone involved, including himself. “For Thomas himself, however, it was too late. Inoculation or no inoculation, *Variola* already circulated in his bloodstream.”³⁰ Thomas died from smallpox because of his staunch stance against the very thing that could have possibly saved his life. By the end of the campaign, the Americans were faced with a difficult question. John Adams’ letter to his wife in June 1776, perfectly sums up the worries that the American people had. “The small Pox! The small Pox! What shall We do with it? I could almost wish that an innoculating [sic] Hospital was opened, in every Town in New England.”³¹ The Quebec Campaign showed the Patriots that they could no longer avoid the practical solution of inoculation. Without it, the army would be turned to nothing.

Smallpox caused the American army to struggle in recruiting men for their fight against the British. The Quebec Campaign almost single-handedly ruined the war for the Americans. They appeared weak and incapable of protecting their own troops from smallpox. Cotton Tufts, a Massachusetts physician and cousin of John Adams, in his letter to Adams on July 25, 1776, declared, “The Small Pox prevailing in our Armies and Country has much retarded the raising Recruits.”³² The next six months proved to be very tough for the Americans. Almost every day, the American army was losing troops. Many of the troops had fulfilled their three-month service and did not choose to take up an

²⁹ Ibid. p. 70.

³⁰ Ibid. p. 71.

³¹ Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, June 26, 1776. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) pp. 23-4.

³² Letter from Cotton Tufts to John Adams, July 25, 1776. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) pp.61-3.

additional three-month service. In Washington's January 7, 1777, letter to John Hancock, he addresses these very issues about the current state of the army. "The Severity of the Season has made our Troops, especially the Militia, extremely impatient, and has reduced the number very considerably.... Their complaints and the great fatigues they had undergone, induced me to come to this place..."³³ By January, smallpox had almost completely ruined the army. Washington witnessed, first-hand, as his men left one by one largely due to the fact that he could not properly care for them. And he knew exactly what needed to be done, considering he had an extremely personal past with the smallpox virus.

As was stated before, smallpox had been around in North America for centuries. In the early half of the eighteenth century, smallpox struck a nineteen year old Virginian on his way to Barbados with his brother. That young man was George Washington. Washington had set sail with his brother, Lawrence, to help him overcome his sickness with a change of weather. As Fenn writes, however, "Although the purpose of the journey was to ease Lawrence's consumption, it was soon George who lay seriously ill-not from tuberculosis, but from smallpox."³⁴ Washington contracted smallpox at some point in November of 1751, and would not recover until mid-December. He did not escape the endeavor unscathed, however. While minor, smallpox left Washington with light scars on his nose. The damage it did to him did not matter, though. All that mattered was that having smallpox incapacitated Washington for almost a month and he came out the other side of the disease in better shape than most. Being out for a month is what worried Washington. During this war, he could not afford to have his men fighting the disease for an entire month. And to add on to that, many of them would not even be able to beat the disease. Washington needed a way to make his men immune to smallpox like he was, without having them suffer the same fate as him.

³³ Letter from George Washington to John Hancock, January 7, 1777. Sent from Morristown. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr., *The Papers of George Washington*, Revolutionary War Series, Volume 8: January-March 1777 (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1998) pp. 9-10.

³⁴ Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2001) p. 13.

The only solution that Washington could see was inoculation. By January of 1777, he was already developing strategies to prevent the spread of smallpox by reflecting on the tragedies in the north. In a letter to Lieutenant Colonel Robert Harrison, Washington urges Harrison to take all possible actions to stop the progress of the smallpox. He references the northern campaign by alluding to the consequences the army may face if they do not act. "When I recall to mind the unhappy situation of our Northern Army last year I shudder at the consequences of this disorder if some vigorous steps are not taken to stop the spreading of it."³⁵ Since Washington knew that he could not lose all of his troops to inoculations, he made the decision to only inoculate new recruits.

In early February, Washington sent out a series of letters highlighting his plan for defusing the smallpox threat. On February 10, 1777, Washington sent a letter to the governor of Connecticut, Jonathan Trumbull, stating, ""The impossibility of keeping the Small Pox from spreading thro' the Army in the natural way, has determined us, upon the most mature deliberation, to inoculate all the New Troops, that have not had this disorder."³⁶ Washington's plan was to kill the disease off by making sure any new troops would be immune to the disease. As highlighted in his letter to Nicholas Cooke, the governor of Rhode Island, Washington believes they need to, "introduce inoculation immediately as the only means of preventing this Calamity, amongst the greatest that can befall an Army,"³⁷ The seriousness of his tone can be justified by the fact that he even went out of his way to have an announcement made about smallpox during his General Orders. "As the commander in chief is extremely desirous that the Smallpox should not spread among the Soldiery, it is hoped no persons will

³⁵ Washington letter to Lieutenant Colonel Robert Hanson Harrison, January 20, 1777, from Morristown. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr., *The Papers of George Washington*, (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1998) pp. 116-17.

³⁶ Washington letter to Governor Jonathan Trumbull, February 10, 1777, from Morristown. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources 1745-1799*, Volume 7: January 13, 1777-April 30, 1777 (Washington, United States Government Printing Office, 1932) p. 130-31.

³⁷ Washington letter to Governor Nicholas Cooke, February 10, 1777, from Morristown. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr., *The Papers of George Washington*, Vol. 8, pp. 296-97.

presume, on any account, whatever to inoculate without first obtaining leave.”³⁸ Washington did not want to leave any stone unturned when it came to dealing with this issue. He would place Dr. William Shippen Jr. in charge of eradicating the virus from the Patriot camps. Washington knew the health of his troops would determine the fate of the American cause.

Throughout the next few months, the inoculations began to improve the health of the troops. On April 13, 1777, John Adams reflected to his wife what smallpox had done to the soldiers. “The Sexton told me, that upwards of two Thousand soldiers had been buried there, and by the Appearance, of the Graves, and Trenches, it is most probable to me, he speaks within Bounds.”³⁹ However, by April 22, the mood in Adams tone had drastically changed about the outlook of the army. “We are crowding [sic] along soldiers to the General, as fast as they get well of inoculation [sic].”⁴⁰ This can be looked at as the army being able to produce more soldiers to the generals. The inoculations were successful and they were allowing the army to be able to fill up the regiments which were crucial to the war effort. The success of the inoculations were highlighted even further in Abigail Adams’ May 28 letter to her husband. “Dr. W[ale]s has had great Success. Since March 200 have had the distemper under his care, and not one died.”⁴¹ This showed how successful the inoculations were going. Doctors were doing very well with the procedures and allowing the army to put the healthiest possible soldiers on the field. Only a couple months ago, the army was almost in complete ruin. Now, the Americans were on solid footing and approaching an army that could compete with the highly-experienced British.

³⁸ General Washington General Orders, February 15, 1777, from Morristown. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr., *The Papers of George Washington*, Vol. 8, p. 341.

³⁹ Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, April 13, 1777. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) p. 209-10.

⁴⁰ Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, April 22, 1777. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) p. 219.

⁴¹ Letter from Abigail Adams to John Adams, May 28, 1777. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963) p. 248-9.

The new and improved health of the troops played an important role in the increased recruiting of the army. Benjamin Franklin's papers offer an interesting insight on the recruitment process in May, 1777. On May 2, 1777, the Committee for Foreign Affairs sent a letter to the American Commissioners to discuss the current state of affairs for the revolution. The committee, which consisted of Benjamin Franklin, Benjamin Harrison V, John Witherspoon, Robert Morris, Thomas Hayward, Jr. and James Lovell stated the improvements that they had viewed within the recruiting process as well as the inoculation process. "The Principal Object now is the Recruiting Service which has been greatly promoted by some late Resolves of Congress. Our Troops have been under inoculation for the Small Pox with great Success."⁴² Also, the committee discussed the way in which they were preventing the British from infecting the army any further. "...however, it will frustrate one Cannibal Scheme of our Enemies who have constantly fought us with that disease by introducing it among our Troops."⁴³ Also in the letter, the committee spoke about the condition the army was in prior to the inoculations and how far they had come since the procedure was implemented. "When we look back to the Beginning of last December and see our Army reduced to between two and three thousand Men... we feel ourselves exceedingly happy in Contemplating the Agreeable Condition and Prospect our Affairs are now in."⁴⁴ This committee's letter, which had previously been known as the Committee of Secret Correspondence, helps to highlight the importance of improving the health of the troops for upcoming campaigns. The new and improved health of the army put these men in a very hopeful state that their troops could finally match up with the British.

⁴² Letter from the Committee for Foreign Affairs to the American Commissioners, May 2, 1777. William B. Willcox, *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*, Volume 24: May 1 through September 30, 1777 (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1984) pp. 13-6.

⁴³ *Ibid.* p. 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* p. 15.

The importance the health of the troops played can be emphasized by the actions that Washington took later on in 1777, before the decisive battles of Saratoga. Throughout September, 1777, Washington was sending troops all across the colonies to help in reinforcing the commanders he felt needed the most back-up. Prior to the inoculations success, Washington was barely able to get any regiments to support any position he felt needed reinforcement. In early March, he attempted to reinforce Peekskill, the command center of the Hudson Highlands. Washington felt that Peekskill was a strategic location for his army and constantly tried to move troops to this location. On March 6, 1777, he ordered Brigadier General Samuel Holden Parsons to, "send two thousand Militia immediately to peekskill, and I beg you will use your Influence to obtain this Reinforcement."⁴⁵ The Commander-in-Chief had to resort to pleas to get his key positions properly fortified. Even then, he was unable to get his officers to send the men in sufficient time and it led to raids all along the Hudson River. In 1777, alone, the British successfully raided Peekskill, Blind Brook and Danbury while the Americans struggled to find soldiers.

Healthy soldiers are not usually the first thing that someone thinks about when imagining a powerful army. However, some of the most powerful armies in history have failed thanks to their commanders "turning a blind eye," to the importance of health. Napoleon successfully led major campaigns throughout Europe until he ran into the cold and disease on his way to Russia. Japan had one of the most intimidating armies in recent memory until malaria and other diseases picked off the fearless Japanese soldiers one by one. The Americans were faced with a similar situation. However, instead of ignoring the problem, General Washington tackled the issue head-on and prevented smallpox from completely wiping out his army. Whether it be a brilliant strategy or just miraculous luck, the timing was perfect for the decisive battle that Saratoga would become. And even though all of the

⁴⁵ Letter from George Washington to Samuel Holden Parsons, March 6, 1777. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1998) pp. 526-27.

troops sent to Saratoga may not have been inoculated, the inoculations allowed Washington to have flexibility among the troops he moved around. Smallpox inoculations permitted Washington to send as many troops as he saw appropriate to General Gates in Saratoga. The amount of soldiers sent to Gates proved to be more than enough as the Americans were able to overwhelmingly outnumber General Burgoyne and his British soldiers. What Burgoyne did not know was that, along with the inoculations, another, arguably, more important event would occur and further hinder his plans to end the American rebellion in 1777.

FROM MILITARY DOCTOR TO MILITARY STRATEGIST: How Inoculations Allowed Washington to Command his Army

Smallpox inoculations did not only improve the health of the troops, it also had an equally important effect on Washington's battle schemes. The inoculations allowed Washington to have greater flexibility among his troops. With the increasing numbers of troops, Washington was able to move his regiments freely between Pennsylvania and upper New York. Prior to the inoculations, Washington was at a huge disadvantage from the British because he had no way of sending troops to the areas that he needed to be reinforced. Even after the inoculations were mandated, Washington was still not able to send the troops to these required areas because of the limited number of troops he had. In key locations like Peekskill, Danbury and others, the British were successfully able to defeat the weakened Americans and take supplies. However, as the weeks passed, the Americans became healthier and the commander-in-chief was finally able to start competing with the British generals on the battle field. By a stroke of luck, the timing for the Americans was perfect for the most important campaign season of the revolution. The army was at a comfortable size, the men were healthy and motivated, making them a formidable threat during the turning point battle of the Revolution.

This section analyzes the complications that Washington and the American army experienced prior to the 1777 campaign season. It will look at the inoculation process and the method to the inoculations. Following the inoculations, this section will show how the Americans struggled in the early parts of 1777 with the British raiding river towns along the Hudson River. These raids proved important to the idea of Washington needing a flexible army. Inoculations, however, progressed slowly, and thus, flexibility of the troops. Once achieved, Washington was able to place his troops wherever he saw fit prior to the Battles of Saratoga, including to General Gates in Saratoga. Inoculations allowed for the mobility of the American troops at a crucial juncture in the war and helped the Americans to outnumber the British at Saratoga. Troops win wars and when they can be moved around with ease like the Americans in the fall of 1777, good things are bound to happen for that particular army.

Following the inoculation mandate put forth by General Washington in February of 1777, much of his decision was met with criticism because of the fear of inoculations. Washington's Aides-de-Camp, Alexander Hamilton sent out a series of letters in early March, ordering certain regiments to begin inoculation of their troops. However, there were clear-cut objections to the inoculation process. Colonel Ward, of a Connecticut state regiment, was one particular officer who had a staunch stance on inoculating his men. In a letter to Ward's superior, Major General Adam Stephen, Hamilton gives Stephen clear instructions in relation to the actions of Colonel Ward. "His Excellency desires that this objection, with respect to Colonel Ward's regiment, should cease; and they may immediately be admitted to the benefit of inoculation [sic], in the usual proportion."⁴⁶ Some officers would even attempt to trick Washington into believing that they had been inoculated in order to avoid putting their men through the procedure. Major General Horatio Gates, the man who would lead the charge at Saratoga, was one such man accused of sending fraudulent reports. About two weeks prior to the

⁴⁶ Letter from Alexander Hamilton to Major General Adam Stephen, March 13, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Volume I: 1768-1778 (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 204.

Colonel Ward letter, Washington had sent a letter to Gates about the accusation. In it, he orders an investigation into the reports while also requesting the inoculation of two Virginia regiments.⁴⁷ There were a lot of people who were not completely on board with Washington's mandate due to the procedure itself.

Not everyone was opposed to the inoculation mandate that Washington put forth. Along with John Adams, Brigadier General Samuel Parsons was also on board with the inoculations. He was more than helpful with the process and tried to stay on top of the disease with Washington. "...I find Directions have been sent to me to Superintend the Innoculation [sic] of the Troops in this State....But on Advice of the Govr & Council of Safety have establishd [sic] Hospitals in different Parts of this State for that Purpose where some of the Soldiers are now under the Operation."⁴⁸ Parsons understood the importance of the inoculations and tried working with Washington, rather than against him, in securing the health of the troops. Eventually, most of the officers in the Patriot army would see the benefits of the inoculations and follow suit with Washington's orders.

With so many objections, the Americans efforts to suppress the situation moved along at a snail-like pace. Because of this, Washington still had no flexibility among his troops and suffered huge losses all throughout March and April while limited in troops. On March 23, 1777, 500 British soldiers landed at Peekskill unopposed. Peekskill is a small river town along the Hudson River, which served as the command center for the Hudson Highlands Theater during the war. From there, the British used light artillery to level the small town which was an area which housed many supplies that the Continental Army used. Being extremely outnumbered, the commanding officer, General Alexander McDougall,

⁴⁷ Letter from George Washington to Major General Horatio Gates, March 1, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p.196.

⁴⁸ Letter from Brigadier General Samuel Holden Parsons to George Washington, February 23, 1777, sent from Lyme, Connecticut. Frank E. Grizzard, Jr., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville, University Press of Virginia, 1998) p. 430-1.

ordered a retreat of his 250 men away from Peekskill. During their raid, the British burned most of the town to the ground. It was not until the following day when the Americans were able to repel the British advance and force them back down the Hudson River.⁴⁹

Washington's inability to comfortably move troops was no more apparent than during the raid on Peekskill. Even before the raid, Washington ordered several different commanders to quickly march towards Peekskill. In a March 13th letter to Major General William Heath, one of Washington's most trusted officers, Washington urged Heath to redirect eight of his fifteen regiments to Peekskill as quickly as possible. Washington wanted a force there soon to, "embarrass the Enemy," and, "oblige them to return part of the troops, which they have lately withdrawn from New York to Jersey, and thereby create that diversion which I have all along wanted to keep up."⁵⁰ Ten days later, on the day of the raid, Washington again wrote to Heath, urging him to quickly arrive at Peekskill. As Washington rightfully feared, "the Enemy will be enabled to take the field before we can collect a force any ways adequate to making a proper opposition."⁵¹ Washington had a vision for the protection of Peekskill, but his lack of troops proved to be costly for him early on in '77.

Following the attack, Washington still tried to move his troops around to get a larger force to defend the village. In addition to again writing General Heath, whose troops had still not reached Peekskill up to this point, Washington also wrote Brigadier General Samuel Holden Parsons on the 29th. In this letter, Washington urges Parsons to, "hasten the Troops of your state (those Inlisted [sic] for the Continent I mean) to Peeks Kill, or head Quarters, without one moments loss of time."⁵² Washington

⁴⁹ Emma L. Patterson, *Peekskill in the American Revolution* (Peekskill, The Friendly Town Association, Inc., 1944)

⁵⁰ Washington letter to Major General William Heath, March 13, 1777, from Morristown. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*. Vol. 7. pp. 282-83.

⁵¹ Letter from Washington to Heath, March 23, 1777, from Morristown. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*. Vol. 7. pp. 314-15.

⁵² Letter from Washington to Brigadier General Samuel Holden Parsons, March 29, 1777, from Morristown. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*. Vol. 7. p. 331.

also pleaded with Governor Jonathan Trumbull to send two thousand militiamen.⁵³ However, the strain that moving that many men placed on these commanders forced them to delay the commander-in-chief's orders. Most of the men that Washington ordered to Peekskill would not arrive until mid-April, almost 3 weeks after the raid had occurred. This kind of troop movement made it nearly impossible for the Americans to compete with the well-oiled machine that was the British army.

April also presented problems for the Americans in terms of British raids. The inability of the Patriots to properly secure their supply depots allowed for the British to continue sailing up the river unopposed. On April 13, the British decided to make Bound Brook their next depot target. The Americans could do nothing about the raid and lost the village, 30 men and 3 artillery pieces. All of the losses and worry of future raids were highlighted in Alexander Hamilton's April 14 letter to the NY Committee of Correspondence.⁵⁴

Early May presented opportunities for the Americans that they had not yet had the luxury of during the 1777 campaign season. Nathanael Greene, one of the most trusted generals that Washington had during the revolution, was stationed in Pennsylvania when he began observing the hardships that the army had taken because of smallpox. In an early May letter from John Adams to Greene, Adams makes a statement about the poor recruiting numbers and smallpox. "The Indifference of the People about recruiting the Army is a Circumstance which ought to make us consider what are the Causes of it. It is not merely the Melancholly [sic] rising from the unfortunate Events of the last Campaign, but the unhappy [blurred] Small Pox."⁵⁵ By this point, the Americans were still reeling from their miserable defeat during the Quebec Campaign and men were discouraged from joining the ranks.

⁵³ Letter from Washington to Governor Jonathan Trumbull, March 29, 1777, from Morristown. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*. Vol. 7. pp. 332-34.

⁵⁴ Letter from Hamilton to the NY Committee of Correspondence, April 14, 1777, Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 231.

⁵⁵ Letter from John Adams to Nathanael Greene, May 1, 1777. Richard K. Showman, *The Papers of Nathanael Greene*, Volume II: 1 Jan. 1777-16 Oct. 1778 (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980) p. 74.

However, the inoculations caught up with the army relatively quickly during early May. On May 7, Greene's brother, Jacob, wrote to him from Rhode Island about the success the inoculations were enjoying. "Ours Are About Half Full And Are All Inoculated With Great Success."⁵⁶ The inoculations were providing the regiments with troops that the army had not previously had. Prior to inoculations, regiments were never at full strength because so many men had been sick with smallpox or had been injured on the battlefield. One such example were the 120 continental soldiers under Major Henry Sherburne who, while relieving regiments during the Quebec Campaign, suffered the same fate as the troops they were relieving.⁵⁷ On their march to Quebec, Sherburne's regiment was riddled with smallpox and was no help in reinforcing the troops who were already infected. By mid-May, the Americans position was improving, although they were still far behind their British counter-parts.

It would not be until August, two months prior to the battles of Saratoga, when the American forces would see a significant impact in their troop numbers and mobility. Richard Henry Lee, the Virginia statesmen whose famous resolution prompted the Declaration of Independence, wrote to Thomas Jefferson, the writer of the Declaration, about how far the American army had come since the Quebec Campaign. "Since the loss of Ticonderoga... and General Burgoyne's speedy march to Fort Edward, our affairs in that quarter begin to wear a favorable appearance."⁵⁸ Lee was beginning to have a hopeful outlook of the Saratoga Campaign which at first, appeared as if it would be the final blow to the American rebellion. The inoculations were allowing the Americans to finally match-up in size with the British army. In some cases, the Americans even outnumbered the British during skirmishes in 1777. In that same letter to Jefferson, Lee goes on to state, "General Stark with 2000 Militia attacked Colo.

⁵⁶ Letter from Jacob Greene to Nathanael Greene, May 7, 1777, Richard K. Showman, *The Papers of Nathanael Greene* (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1980) p. 73

⁵⁷ Elizabeth A. Fenn, *Pox Americana* (New York, Hill and Wang, 2001) p. 74.

⁵⁸ Letter from Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson, August 25, 1777. Julian P. Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Volume 2: 1777 to 18 June, 1779, including the Revisal of the Laws, 1776-1786 (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1950) p. 29.

Baum and 1500 Regular Troops...⁵⁹ Just months earlier, during the raid on Peekskill, the Americans were only able to muster up 250 troops to defend a strategic supply depot against a British force which was double in size. Now, the Americans were outnumbering the British and beginning to turn the tide of campaign. Lee also writes, "This was an important victory... and will probably occasion Mr. Burgoyne to retire very quickly. If he does not, I can venture to *Augur* his destruction."⁶⁰ The tone of this message is extremely uplifting and shows the Americans to be in a great position against the British and more importantly, smallpox.

Following the inoculation mandate, the Americans saw an enormous increase in their troop numbers from the beginning of 1777. Following the winter of 1776-1777, the Americans only had about 2 or 3000 men who were healthy enough to fight. In his January 19 letter to the President of Congress, Washington states, "We have about Eight hundred of the Eastern Continental Troops remaining... Thus, you have a Sketch of our present Army, with which we are obliged to keep up Appearances, before an Enemy already double to us in Numbers... make another attempt."⁶¹ This whole time, the Americans were at a disadvantage. Smallpox inoculations are obviously not the only reason the army grew, as this paper also examines the recruiting boost following the Jane McCrea scalping. However, the inoculations played a major role in expanding the army and improving the health. By August, the tables had turned in the revolution and the Americans were the ones with the larger force. "Putnam with 5000 men commands on the heights of Hudsons river above N. York, in which place Gen. Clinton is left with about 3000 men."⁶² Troop numbers in the Hudson Highlands alone had reached 8000; four times the total amount of soldiers the Americans had in early '77.

⁵⁹ Ibid. p. 29

⁶⁰ Ibid. p. 29

⁶¹ Letter from George Washington to the President of Congress, January 19, 1777. John C. Fitzpatrick, *The Writings of George Washington*, p. 29.

⁶² Letter from Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson, August 25, 1777. Julian P. Boyd, *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1950) p. 29-30.

The British foresaw the rise in the American soldiers and were intimidated by the large force that was being gathered. Just as the Americans were forced to exaggerate their numbers in early 1777, the British were doing the same thing with their numbers to continue to scare the Patriots. Even when John Adams knew that the Americans were still too weak to meet a large British force, he also understood the British were also weak. Adams wrote to his wife about the state of Howe's army and the fact that he had been inflating numbers to appear stronger than he actually was.⁶³ The same could be said for General Burgoyne prior to the start of the Battles of Saratoga in September. According to Sir Henry Clinton, the Major General responsible for taking out the Highlands forts, Burgoyne exaggerated the number of troops under his command to make their force appear larger than the Americans.⁶⁴ But the Americans would have 10,000 troops compared to the British troops continually dropping numbers.

The inoculations allowed for Washington to freely move his troops wherever he saw necessary with relatively little trouble. By September 14, 1777, the army was large enough for Washington to order Major General William Heath to "send all Continental troops in Massachusetts to join the main Army."⁶⁵ Alexander Hamilton's papers present an astonishing insight on Washington's ability to send troops wherever he felt necessary during the most crucial time of the revolution: the lead up to the battles of Saratoga. Hamilton, Washington's Aides-de-camp, sent dozens of letters to officers on Washington's behalf for soldiers to both his camp in Germantown and General Gates' camp in Saratoga. A letter addressed to Robert Livingston, the Chancellor of New York, proves the flexibility Washington now possessed with his healthy army. "Before this reaches you, you will be informed, that two regiments have gone from Peek's Kill to reinforce the Northern army, and that Morgan's corps of

⁶³ Letter from John Adams to Abigail Adams, April 22, 1777. L.H. Butterfield, *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1963)

⁶⁴ Sir Henry Clinton, *The American Rebellion: Sir Henry Clinton's Narrative of his Campaigns, 1775-1782, with an Appendix of Original Documents* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 1954)

⁶⁵ Letter from George Washington to Major General William Heath, September 14, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, Volume 1: 1768-1778 (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 325.

riflemen, are on their march for the same purpose.”⁶⁶ Washington no longer needed to beg the important figures of the revolution for soldiers and was able to move his troops around with relative ease. What is even more important about this letter is that he was able to send Morgan’s corps, which would be the sharpshooters that shot down several high-ranking officers during the Battles of Saratoga.

Finally, the Americans were able to match up against the British thanks, in part, to the smallpox inoculations. Now, Washington could successfully move troops all the way from Pennsylvania to Saratoga without a moment of hesitation that he would be limiting his army in any way. Alexander Hamilton’s papers display the amount of requests Washington made for troops prior to and during the Saratoga campaign. On September 28, he asked the Board of War to order the militia, “from the southward” to join the main army.⁶⁷ A couple days later, Washington requested that General Heath forward three regiments from Massachusetts.⁶⁸ Washington would even be able to send units on specialized missions. Prior to having all of these troops, Washington could only send troops to specific positions that were in dire need of defensive replacements. On October 8, however, he ordered Brigadier General James Potter on a specific mission. Potter, along with his six hundred men were tasked with intercepting British communications between Philadelphia and Chester.⁶⁹ This may have been the most important of the outcomes of smallpox inoculations. An army that could barely defend its supply depots was now conducting their own offensive campaigns.

The concept that troops win wars has been around for ages. However, the quality of troop is what really separates the winners from the losers. The American Revolution was no different. Smallpox

⁶⁶ Letter from Alexander Hamilton to Robert R. Livingston, August 18, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) pp. 314-6.

⁶⁷ Letter from George Washington to the Board of War, September 28, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 335.

⁶⁸ Letter from George Washington to Major General William Heath, September 30, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 335.

⁶⁹ Letter from George Washington to Major General John Armstrong, October 8, 1777. Harold C. Syrett, *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, Columbia University Press, 1961) p. 338.

decimated the American forces during the 1776-1777 years. The devastation was so bad that at one point, the army consisted of no more than 2500 men. In less than a year, the American army outnumbered that of their British enemies and encompassed a force that surpassed 10,000 in Saratoga alone. The health of the soldiers was crucial as stated in the previous section. But the flexibility that the inoculations provided was just as crucial to the success of the Americans during their campaign season. And while health and flexibility were beginning to take shape for the Americans smoothly, two more factors were slowly emerging as important factors that would help Saratoga become a landmark turning point. An increase in recruitment and public opinion were about to sweep through the colonies and help catapult the Americans over the hump of the rough 1777 season.

Motivation by Murder:

The murder of Jane McCrea was a significant moment in the summer of 1777, leading up to the Saratoga campaign. Her tragic end served as a somewhat of a rallying symbol for the Americans in their fight against the British. This brutal act, on the part of the Iroquois Indians employed by General Burgoyne, had a lasting effect on both the British army and the American army. The effect the murder had on Patriot propaganda was unprecedented. The murder drove men into the Patriot camps as they looked to protect their families. As one soldier, Captain Rufus Lincoln, roughly puts it, "And indeed the Ravages they commtted aded much to the number of the American Army as the Inhabitance Rather Chused to turn out and oppose them than to be Cruely Murdered With their famelys and all that was dear to them."⁷⁰ And if you can make it through the shaky language, what Lincoln is hinting at is that McCrea's murder struck at the hearts of the colonists. They no longer felt that their families were protected and they allied themselves with the Patriots since the "savages," who committed this

⁷⁰ James Minor Lincoln, *The Papers of Captain Rufus Lincoln of Wareham, Mass. Compiled from the Original Records* (Cambridge, The Riverside Press, 1904) p. 15.

atrocious act were actually employed by General Burgoyne. The Jane McCrea murder also equally affected the British cause in the Revolution. British Parliament, in 1779, acknowledged McCrea's death as a vital factor in the defeat of General Burgoyne at Saratoga.⁷¹ The way in which General Burgoyne handled this situation and also how he handled the Iroquois, themselves, led to this lasting effect.

Jane McCrea, a loyalist, was one of seven children born in New Jersey. McCrea was believed to be uncommonly beautiful, which has been exaggerated through the years.⁷² A loyalist at heart, McCrea was engaged to a British Provincial officer, David Jones, a lieutenant who happened to be under the command of General Burgoyne.⁷³ The fear of Indian raids was always strong but McCrea, eager to be with her fiancé, set out on the trip regardless. As Grace Tomkinson states in her article, "Jane McCrea: A Martyr of the Revolutionary War", "Jane's journey had been carefully arranged by Lieutenant Jones."⁷⁴ General Burgoyne recruited Iroquois Indians, under the leadership of Chief Le Loup. Burgoyne offered bounties for rebel scalps and, according to Tomkinson, the Indians had been getting a bit over zealous at the idea of earning rewards for presenting enemy scalps.⁷⁵ On July 17, 1777, Jane and the company she was with were attacked by Le Loup's Indians. She was traveling with an elderly woman, Mrs. McNeil when she was first attacked by the Indians. McNeil was a cousin of British Brigadier General Simon Fraser.⁷⁶ McCrea was initially able to escape but was soon after discovered by the raiding Indians. In *Saratoga*, Richard M. Ketchum stated that two Indians began arguing over whose prisoner Jane actually was. "One brave, in a fit of rage, shot and scalped her, stripped off her clothes, and mutilated her body; then her corpse and that of the lieutenant were rolled down an embankment and covered with

⁷¹ Grace Tomkinson, "Jane McCrea: A Martyr of the Revolutionary War", *The Dalhousie Review*, Volume 49, (Halifax, Dalhousie University Press, 1969) p. 402.

⁷² Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) pp. 274-5.

⁷³ Theodore Corbett, *No Turning Point: The Saratoga Campaign in Perspective*, (Norman, Oklahoma, University of Oklahoma Press, 2012) p. 177.

⁷⁴ Grace Tomkinson, "Jane McCrea", *The Dalhousie Review*, Volume 49, (Halifax, Dalhousie University Press, 1969) p. 401.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 402.

⁷⁶ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) p. 275.

leaves.”⁷⁷ The Indians then took the scalps and returned to camp for their rewards. This event would shake the foundation of the colonies and impact the turning point of the revolution in more ways than most people could imagine.

Jane McCrea’s murder served as excellent fodder for war propagandists. After the murder, word spread like wild-fire throughout the colonies. At first, the news spread through the soldiers. Their journals and letters made it clear that McCrea’s murder was the hot topic of the time.⁷⁸ In New England and New York, the story especially hit home since the reality of an Indian attack was so plausible. These impassioned responses made their way into the newspapers in a short span of time. By August 11, the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury* had published an article telling the story of this beautiful woman’s demise at the hands of Burgoyne’s Indians. A day later, the story leaked out of New York and New England into the *Pennsylvania Evening Post*. Even Virginians were able to learn of the tragic event in upstate New York by the 22nd of August.⁷⁹ In one short month, most of the colony was aware of the vicious attack on Jane and the fact that these “savages” had been employed by General Burgoyne and the British. As Fred J. Cook puts it in his book, *Dawn over Saratoga*, “And so they came swarming from their farms and homesteads, guns in hand, an angry, buzzing swarm intent on giving Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne his comeuppance.”⁸⁰ The American public used Jane’s death as a rallying cry for the Patriot cause. Generals, too, used this atrocity as a way to shift support in their favor. The effects of Jane McCrea’s murder were slowly beginning to be felt and would eventually come full circle in Saratoga during the fall.

⁷⁷ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga*, (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) p. 275.

⁷⁸ Ibid. p. 276.

⁷⁹ Ibid, p. 277.

⁸⁰ Fred J. Cook, *Dawn over Saratoga: the Turning Point of the Revolutionary War*, (Garden City, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973) p. 74.

A beautiful woman being murdered and scalped by savage Indians did not only affect the Americans. Initially, news of Jane McCrea's murder floated around the American and British camps. On July 24, 1777, the Indians who had scalped McCrea returned to Fort Edward, where General Burgoyne was holed up. One soldier, William Digby, wrote about the Indians arrival to the camp. "In the evening, our Indians brought in two scalps.... Indeed, the cruelties committed by them, were too shocking to relate, particularly the melancholy catastrophe of the unfortunate Miss McCrea, which affected the general and the whole army with the sincerest regret and concern for her untimely fate."⁸¹ The tragic death of McCrea affected the British soldiers as much as the Americans. Both sides were hesitant in allying with the Indians because they realized the brutality of their methods. Recruiting Indians had been ordered by Lord George Germaine. Germaine felt that the Canadians and Indians were integral to British success. Burgoyne went along with the order because he saw the alliance with the Indians as a necessary evil.⁸² His "sincere regret," as Digby describes it, is actually quite surprising. On June 23, 1777, less than a month before McCrea's murder, Burgoyne sent out an ultimatum to the rebels. In this proclamation, Burgoyne states that he will destroy any enemy in his path, no matter the species, with assistance from the Indians. He even goes as far to state the strength of the Indians and the fact that he will not be responsible for the actions they undertake. "I have but to give Stretch to the Indian Forces under my Direction, and they amount to Thousands, to overtake the hardened Enemies of Great-Britain;"⁸³ Here, Burgoyne does not seem to be showing any remorse to the colonists and is defending any actions the Indians may take against the people. He may be regretful following the McCrea murder

⁸¹ James Phinney Baxter, A.M., *The British Invasion from the North: The Campaigns of Generals Carleton and Burgoyne, from Canada, 1776-1777, with the journal of Lieut. William Digby, of the 53d, or Shropshire regiment of foot*, (Albany, Joel Munsell's Sons, 1887) pp. 235-36.

⁸² John Rhodehamel, *The American Revolution: Writings from the War of Independence*, (New York, Penguin Putnam, Inc., 2001) p. 307.

⁸³ *Ibid.* p. 304.

because she was set to marry one of his officers and, by all accounts, was loyal to the crown. However, his next steps in dealing with the matter would not make him seem like a regretful man one bit.

At first, General Burgoyne seemed as if he would hold Le Loup and his Indians responsible for the murder. He even went as far as to visit Le Loup and demand the men responsible for the attack. However, Le Loup refused and even threatened to desert Burgoyne at Fort Edward. Burgoyne knew that he still needed the Indians to defeat the Americans. He eventually relented and came to a compromise with Le Loup. The punishment would be at the power of the Chiefs, which meant no punishment. The leaders of the Iroquois did not see anything wrong with what had occurred since they had been acting under the orders of Burgoyne.⁸⁴ They were to receive a reward based upon the scalp they delivered and that is exactly what they had done. Burgoyne did convince Le Loup that every future expedition by the Indians would be supervised by a British officer, however. Many of the Indians were not satisfied with this compromise and decided that they would desert regardless. Of the 500 Indians that Burgoyne had under his direction, 450 left the camp.⁸⁵ Burgoyne was already losing a grip on his control over the region. Without the Indians, he would not be able to intimidate the Americans, who were furious with the murder regardless. Piece by piece, the Saratoga Campaign was beginning to fall apart for the General.

Burgoyne's actions, or failure to act, would prompt General Gates to respond in a way in which would knock "Gentleman Johnny" down a peg. Gates saw the murder as an opportunity to discourage support for the British while also gaining more support for his cause. On September 2, 1777, he wrote a letter to Burgoyne, which he wanted "in every Gazette," to "convince mankind of the truth of the horrid

⁸⁴ Fred J. Cook, *Dawn Over Saratoga* (Garden City, Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1973) p.71.

⁸⁵Ibid. p. 71.

fate.”⁸⁶ In his letter, Gates sarcastically talks up the General as a “fine Gentleman,” merged with a “Soldier and the Scholar.”⁸⁷ Burgoyne had prided himself in his background. He joined the army at fifteen and quickly rose through the ranks of the British army. Also, he was an avid theater fan and even wrote of few successful plays himself. Burgoyne married Lady Charlotte, the daughter of an English Earl and enjoyed a lavish lifestyle. He was a gentleman first and a military thinker second in his mind.⁸⁸

Gates sought to talk up Burgoyne and then immediately bring his reputation crashing down. He proceeded to display the horrid acts authorized by Burgoyne, including the scalping of Jane McCrea. “Miss McCrea, a young lady lovely to the sight... carried into the woods, and there scalped and mangled in a most shocking manner.”⁸⁹ Gates was attempting to hit at the emotion of all of the colonists by describing McCrea as innocent as he could. “The miserable fate of Miss McCrea was particularly aggravated by her being dressed to receive her promised husband, but met her murderer employed by you.”⁹⁰ She was a vulnerable victim of the savagery that Burgoyne chose to ally with.

Gates even decided to send letters of British prisoners to Burgoyne. He asserted that Burgoyne would be “informed of the generosity of their conquerors.”⁹¹ Here, Gates attempted to destroy any last shard of legitimacy Burgoyne had for his reputation as a gentleman. Burgoyne’s prisoners were known for being poorly treated, as was the case for most of the prisoners of the British. Gates wanted to show that even while the Americans were fighting a war, they still clung to their humanity. To add salt to the wound, Gates even made remarks about a servant who refused to return to Burgoyne. “The late

⁸⁶ Horatio Gates to John Burgoyne, September 2, 1777, letter sent from U.S. Headquarters. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six: The Story of the American Revolution as told by Participants*, Volume I (New York, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958) p. 560.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p. 560.

⁸⁸ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) pp. 73-4.

⁸⁹ Gates to Burgoyne. Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six* (New York, Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958) p. 560.

⁹⁰ Ibid, p. 560.

⁹¹ Ibid, p. 560.

Colonel Baulm's servant is at Bennington and would have come to Your Excellency's camp, but when I offered him a flagg, he was affraid to run the risque of being scalped."⁹² Gates was using the murder to advance his agenda and further build up support for the American cause, while simultaneously attempting to destroy any support the British had in the area.

McCrea's death led to an increase in recruitment right in time for the Saratoga campaign. At the most crucial point in the war, the Americans received a huge boost thanks to the death of a Loyalist woman murdered by Indians. Following the murder, Rufus Lincoln commented on the increasing number of soldiers. "The American army was daly increasing by the Militia, Who generaly turnd out on aCount of the outrages of the Indinens."⁹³ While smallpox inoculations were improving the health of the soldiers already in the army, the McCrea murder was pushing the "on the fence," colonists onto the side of the Americans. For the couple months leading up to the Battle of Saratoga, the Americans were gaining the support of the people at one of the most important intervals in history. Unfortunately, it only took the murder of a woman to give the Americans a head of steam entering September, 1777. There had been other murders but this particular one was exactly the type that Gates could hammer into the minds of the colonists. Her murder and subsequent response by both Generals Burgoyne and Gates shifted the support to the American cause while also destroying the public's opinion of the British throughout the colonies, particularly in the local area of upstate New York.

Public opinion was one of the most important goals for General Burgoyne during his Saratoga Campaign. Winning in the north was not just about beating the American army into submission on the battlefield. Burgoyne wanted to stay, in all intents and purposes, a gentleman in the eyes of the colonists. He felt that if he could win the support of the people, he would have a much easier time

⁹² Ibid, p. 560.

⁹³ James Minor Lincoln, *The Papers of Captain Rufus Lincoln* (Cambridge, The Riverside Press, 1904) p. 16.

controlling the region. Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy's book, *The Men Who Lost America*, is the leading work in the subject of the British defeat in the Revolutionary War. Before he could even begin to win the support of the locals, Burgoyne was struck down with the McCrea murder. "Upon approaching Fort Edward, Burgoyne suffered a major setback in attempting to win support among the local population with the killing of Jane McCrea."⁹⁴ Burgoyne lost before he even had a chance to make any headway in the region. The local colonists could no longer trust the British. As O'Shaughnessy states, "The fact that Jane McCrea was engaged to a loyalist made the episode more poignant because it suggested that Burgoyne was unable to control his Indian allies and that they were capable of indiscriminate murder of Americans."⁹⁵ The opinion of the people was very obviously in favor of the Americans at this time. However, Burgoyne failed to realize this. In his papers, he believed that people were supporting the British at a rate of "five to one."⁹⁶ This was a grossly over-exaggerated number and it led to Burgoyne's blindness to the campaign falling apart around him.

Loyalist support dramatically decreased in the upstate New York region during the Saratoga campaign. While it is not clear if the loyalists stopped supporting the British entirely, it is apparent that they just did not show up to help the British in the region. General Burgoyne was deeply disappointed in the British support in the region and attributed it to the reason that his campaign was a failure. "Why did they not rise round Albany and below it, at the time they found Mr. Gates's army increasing?... A critical insurrection from any one point of the compass within distance to create a diversion, would probably have secured the success of the campaign."⁹⁷ This lack of support helps to highlight the idea of public opinion being shifted. The colonists "on the fence," so to speak, and even the loyalists began to

⁹⁴ Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost the War: British Leadership, the American Revolution, and the Fate of the Empire* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013) p. 150.

⁹⁵ Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *The Men Who Lost the War* (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2013) p. 151.

⁹⁶ John Burgoyne, *A State of the Expedition from Canada as Laid Before the House of Commons by Lieutenant-General John Burgoyne*, 2d ed. (London, J. Almon, 1780) p. 19.

⁹⁷ Henry Steele Commager and Richard B. Morris, *The Spirit of 'Seventy-Six*, Volume I (New York, The Bobs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1958) p. 599.

doubt the British. Jane McCrea's murder can be viewed as a reason for this. Before her murder, colonists were still being murdered by Indians. However, the reason McCrea's murder had such a lasting impact was because of her loyalty to the crown. Loyalists in the region no longer felt protected by the British and people "on the fence," took up arms to defend their families as seen in Captain Lincoln's elegant journal entry.

To put Jane McCrea's murder into perspective, it is essential to pull out of upstate New York and view the rest of the battlegrounds. In areas not affected by the murder, there really is no change in the British domination over the American troops. Only in the Saratoga region, where McCrea was murdered, do we see the Americans making any significant progress against the British. In the Philadelphia area, Washington was preparing for an imminent attack from Howe. Washington was severely outnumbered due to continued lack of recruitment in the area. In the Hudson Highlands, Sir Henry Clinton was having his way with Generals George Clinton and Israel Putnam. At about the same time as the Saratoga Campaign, Clinton was routing the Americans at forts Clinton and Montgomery. In Clinton's explanation to the Council of New York on October 7, 1777, Clinton writes, "Our people behaved with spirit and must have made great slaughter of the enemy. I strengthened the party in the furnace road to upwards of 100 but they were obliged to give way to so superior a force as the enemy brought against them."⁹⁸ Clinton was unable to defend the forts, considered a crucial position by General Washington, because of the lack of troops the Americans had at their disposal in this vital position. This reasserts the importance of McCrea's death to Gates' campaign. The other regions did not have that "spark," like the Saratoga region did following McCrea's death. It opens up the possibility that Gates' campaign could have produced similar results to Putnam's had he not experienced this surge in recruitment.

⁹⁸ Ibid, p. 587.

Jane McCrea's murder was also not the only recent atrocity in the upstate New York region in the summer of 1777. However, it is the one that was effectively used to promote the American cause while also attacking the British cause. Le Loup's Iroquois Indians were out in force in the summer of 1777, raiding multiple areas of the region on behalf of General Burgoyne. Le Loup's force attacked three separate times between July 17 and July 27, including Jane McCrea's party. Prior to McCrea, Le Loup led his raiders into the farm of John Allen. As Ketchum described it, the Indians, "...smeared with paint, sweating, shouting, waving hatchets and knives, suddenly burst through the door, and as the terrified whites and blacks screamed and begged for mercy, shot Allen, knifed and tomahawked the others, scalped them all, and looted the house."⁹⁹ The Indians would not be done however. A few days later, a scouting party led by Lieutenant Tobias Van Vechten, was ambushed by Le Loup. Van Vechten's unit was out looking for the Allen's after they had received word that they had been attacked. Caught completely by surprise, the unit was butchered by the Indians. Ketchum discovered a letter written by one of the soldiers in which he described the massacre. "We have just had a brush with the Enemy at Fort Edward in which Lt. Van Vechten was most inhumanly butcher'd and Scalped, two Serjeants and two privates were likewise killed and Scalped-one of the latter had both his hands cut off."¹⁰⁰ The Indians would not be done either as they would soon run into Jane McCrea. Unlike the other two raids, however, this one would leave an everlasting impact in the minds of the colonists.

It seems strange to view a murder as a reason for the Americans victory at Saratoga. It does not seem to hold enough weight. Granted, a single murder, nor smallpox inoculations, could have been the turning point of a war. However, Jane McCrea's murder holds an important position in the Saratoga Campaign. She helped to shift the public opinion of the war in favor of the Americans. More importantly, her murder caused a rift between General Burgoyne and his Native American allies. At the

⁹⁹ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) pp. 273-4.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.* p. 274.

most important interval in Burgoyne's campaign, the Iroquois abandoned him and left him out to dry against the furious rebels. Most importantly, however, McCrea's death boosted the recruitment throughout the American ranks at one of the most crucial points in history. Soldiers from all around the region came to protect their families. The propaganda Gates provided in his very open letter to General Burgoyne only added to the recruitment of his northern army. Along with the newspapers, the word was out on the British. They were horrible men led by an even worse General who did not care about the colonists for which they were "protecting," from dangerous rebels. Jane McCrea, in terms of the revolution, was in the right place at the right time. Unfortunately, her death was the spark needed to give the Americans a landmark victory. While the Americans were desperately trying to win the support of the French for the early part of the war, what finally put them in good standing with the French was a battle won through increasing the support among the local population.

TURNING THE TIDE: What it all Means

The campaign that was supposed to end the American rebellion in the fall of 1777 ended up setting the American patriots up for the eventual victory they would enjoy in 1783. The Americans, led by General Gates would completely surround General "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne's force in the Battle of Bemis Heights. Gates would end up with over fifteen thousand troops at the time of the British surrender on October 17th. The Americans heavily outnumbered the British, who laid down their arms to the Americans in disbelief of what had just occurred. As Ketchum puts it, "In fact, 5,895, British and Germans lay down their arms on October 17. That was two-thirds of the force that had approached Fort

Ticonderoga on July 1, since which time 1,728 others had been killed or captured in various actions.”¹⁰¹
The British were smacked with a force that included soldiers who were brought to the army thanks to newfound health and motivation.

On July 1, an army of even 5,895 would have been enough to defeat the American army at that same time. However, huge improvements in troop numbers allowed for the Americans to comfortably surpass the British troop numbers by the time of the Saratoga battles. Looking back to the beginning of the year, the Americans were an uncertain band of soldiers, maybe two or three thousand, who Washington had little confidence in. His decision to inoculate the soldiers effectively saved the American army and, thus, the American cause itself. With the army inoculated, Washington now had no reason to worry about the killer disease which had plagued his army for the entire duration of the war up to that point. Two thousand soldiers in January were increased significantly thanks to the new advancements the army enjoyed in the fight against smallpox. Right there, the importance of having a healthy army is stressed. The smallpox inoculations helped the Americans to get their troops healthy enough to the point where they would be able to make a contribution to the rebellion other than being on the “disabled list”.

The second improvement the Americans enjoyed thanks to the smallpox inoculations was the flexibility that Washington gained thanks to the increased number of troops. His ability to move troops freely allowed for the Americans to defend and attack wherever they saw fit. Compared to the early portion of the war when the Americans could not even defend a river village. Washington begged his officers to send troops which in return they told him they were not large enough to do so. A large reason for this was that many regiments were dealing with the smallpox disease. After the inoculations, however, Washington could move regiment upon regiment to Saratoga to reinforce Gates. This proved

¹⁰¹ Richard M. Ketchum, *Saratoga* (New York, Henry Holt and Company, 1997) p. 437

invaluable and significantly increased Gates' stranglehold. The outcome would be the surrender of a measly British force in October.

The final factor was actually an unpredictable event which helped increase the number of troops. Jane McCrea's murder prior to the hostilities in Saratoga proved to push the revolution over the top. The fear that a Native American employed by the British can come and scalp a loved one convinced many of the men in the region to join up with the American cause. That, coupled with General Gates' masterful propaganda, helped shift the public opinion of the revolution squarely in favor of the Americans. The troops that they gained from this event were the extra reinforcements that Gates enjoyed at Saratoga. Without these troops, they may not have been able to completely surround the British like they were.

This paper revolved around troops. Troops are the foundation of any army. Whether or not a nation has the most impressive commander; in the end the only thing that actually matters is troops. They lead the attacks that a commander puts forth and their bravery and fortitude contribute to the end result of their conflict. It may not be so obvious to the average person but the troops who lead the best attacks are often the ones who have something to fight for and the ones who have been properly maintained by their commanders. Looking through various successful armies, they have either been motivated by an outside factor or healthy enough to avoid being affected by disease. In some cases, both of these factors affect an army, which leads to an incredible combination. This was the case for the American army in the Revolution. This combination revealed itself around the time of the Saratoga campaign, which fate would have it, would be the turning point of the war. Troops win wars and for the Americans, they won, arguably, the most important war in this country's history.

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