



EMPIRE PATRIOT

Empire State Society, Sons of the American Revolution

Preserving the Past, Forming the Future

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Winter-Spring Issue



Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, President

Message from the President

Brother Compatriots,

ESS-SAR Entrant Wins NSSAR Knight Essay Contest

We are proud to announce that the First New York Continental Chapter submission by Mr. Jiayang Jin has won 1st Place in the NSSAR National Knight Essay contest. You can read the winning essay in this issue of the Empire Patriot.

Beside Jin the ESS-SAR first place winner, Ms. Riley Meckley finished 2nd in the New York State stage of the Knight Essay. Our third place finalist was Ms. McKenna VanCamp.

Congratulations to all of our winners.

And thank you to all the Chapters who participated by sponsoring Essay entrants.

Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, President
Empire State Society, NSSAR



Upcoming Event

September 10, 2022

ESS-SAR Bord of Managers Meeting
Pegasus Restaurant
Coxsackie, NY

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Wins 1st place in NSSAR
Knight Essay

Get Your ESS-SAR Patriot
Certificate

History Corner –
Schoharie Hessians, part 1

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ESS-SAR Entrant Jin Wins Knight Essay Contest



NSSAR 2022 Knight Essay Contest National Winner – Mr. Jiayang Jin (r.) wearing his NSSAR medal shows off his 1st place certificate, flanked by ESS-SAR president Joseph Fitzpatrick.

Jiayang Jin, a New York City 11th grade student, is the 2022 national winner of NSSAR's The George S. & Stella M. Knight Essay Contest. His essay was submitted by the First New York Continental Chapter.

Essays are based on an event, person, philosophy or ideal associated with the American Revolution, Declaration of Independence, or the framing of the United States Constitution. Each student's essay is judged based upon its historical accuracy, clarity, organization, grammar and spelling, and documentation.

The introduction below is based upon an excerpt from Mr. Jin's application to the Knight Essay contest, followed by a reprint of his winning essay.

The essay is based on the framing of the U.S. Constitution, and emergence of the Democratic-Republicans

and Federalists shortly after the U.S. was founded. According to Jin the advent of these antagonistic factions was perhaps an issue that the Constitution didn't address, and led to lasting divisions in the country that continue to be immensely impactful, even 250 years later.

Political Partisanship in the Fledgling Republic – by Jiayang Jin

After finally emerging victorious from the Revolutionary War, the newly-independent America was faced with another problem: political partisanship. The Democratic-Republicans, led by Thomas Jefferson, championed state power and individual liberty, and the Federalists, led by Alexander Hamilton, advocated for a strong, centralized federal government. They had distinctly different visions for America: Hamilton wanted America's economy to revolve around manufacturing and urbanization, while Jefferson favored a farm-based society.

The Constitution was written as a compromise between the two sides; however, their contrasting beliefs would breed further problems. As time went on, the difference in ideology between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans polarized society into two distinct factions, which damaged the legitimacy of the Washington, Adams, and Jefferson presidencies in the eyes of the opposing political party.

George Washington, America's first president, tried to occupy the middle ground between the fledgling parties; however, he still leaned towards the Federalists, and there was little he could do about the parties' divergent reactions to the foreign relations crises during the 1790s.

One of these crises was Jay's Treaty, which was written by Hamilton and aimed to diffuse tensions and establish trade relations with Britain. The treaty came under public scrutiny; in a letter to fellow Democratic-Republican James Monroe written on September 6, 1795, Thomas Jefferson commented, "So general a burst of dissatisfaction never before appeared against any transaction ... [Jay's Treaty brings on] an embarrassing and critical state in our government."

Jefferson's stance, common among Democratic-Republicans, claimed that its articles conceded too much to the British, weakening American trade rights. He also accused the "embarrassing" government of being disloyal to the people because the treaty supported the British economy, a symbol of monarchy. Jay's Treaty was one of many incidents that started to exacerbate the differences in ideology of the nascent nation. Before leaving office, Washington recognized the dangers of the two-party system that his successor would encounter. In his farewell address in 1796, he warned against the potential pitfalls of a party system: "I have already intimated to you the danger of parties in the state ... The alternate domination of one faction over another ... is itself a frightful despotism."

Washington feared for the nation's welfare, saying that a party system would divide America and result in misrepresentation of the citizens. Above all, Washington was afraid that people would disregard public good to support their own faction, rather than making decisions based on their own moral beliefs. The crises of the 1790s signaled the beginning of a deeper political divide in America, and Washington's fears were realized with the Adams and Jefferson presidencies.

Federalist John Adams had little success with his foreign policies, which provoked animosity between the Democratic-Republicans and the Federalists. Because Jay's Treaty favored Britain ahead of France, tensions rose between the U.S. and France, bringing about the fear of French spies living in America. To combat this, Adams produced the Alien and Sedition Acts in 1798. The Alien Act stated that "whenever there shall be a declared war between the United States and any foreign nation ... all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of the hostile nation ... who shall be within the United States ... shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured and removed, as alien enemies."³ This act meant that during times of war, the

government could deport citizens of the enemy nation who they thought were suspicious of plotting against the U.S. This policy was disliked, especially by foreigners living in America, because it limited their activities; innocent immigrants could also be unfairly deported.

The Sedition Act aroused even more controversy than the Alien Act: it allowed the government to fine or imprison anyone who defamed or slandered the government. The act declared “That if any person shall write, print, utter or publish ... any false, scandalous and malicious writing ... with intent to defame the said [American] government ... then such person ... shall be punished by a fine ... and by imprisonment ...” This act sparked widespread public outrage as it clearly violated the First Amendment. Furthermore, whether or not something was deemed “false”, “scandalous”, or “malicious” was subjective, leading to a number of questionable prosecutions. Madison and Jefferson, both Democratic-Republicans, were especially alarmed by this, and wrote resolutions that denounced the Sedition Act. Both the Alien Act and the Sedition Act came under intense public scrutiny, causing Adams to lose popularity.

After winning the highly-contentious presidential election of 1800, which was the first transition of power between two different political parties, Democratic-Republican Thomas Jefferson inherited a nation troubled by foreign affairs. In his first term, Jefferson went about creating his vision of an agrarian America, acquiring the huge Louisiana Territory from France for just \$15 million. However, the Constitution does not give the government any power to add foreign territory into the U.S., bringing into question the legality of Jefferson’s purchase.

On March 4, 1803, Timothy Pickering wrote a letter to fellow Federalist Rufus King criticizing Jefferson for the Louisiana Purchase, exclaiming, “I am disgusted with the men who now rule, and with their measures. The cowardly wretch at their head [Jefferson] ... would feel an infernal pleasure in the utter destruction of his opponents.” Pickering says that Jefferson, the “cowardly wretch” at the head of the Democratic-Republicans, would revel in the downfall of the Federalists. He continues by accusing those in power of substituting integrity for corruption. Pickering deems the Louisiana Purchase to be unconstitutional and illegitimate, echoing the sentiments of all Federalists in feeling betrayed by the government.

Jefferson’s second term is largely remembered for the Embargo Act, which Congress enacted to combat Britain’s impressment of American ships. The act closed American ports to all foreign trade, in the hopes of ending impressment while also hurting the British economy. In reality, Britain’s economy was barely affected; on the contrary, it was the American citizens that suffered. Due to the closing down of ports, New England, which relied on manufacturing and shipbuilding, was hurt the most; that New England was a Federalist stronghold made matters worse. In a British political cartoon about the Embargo Act by Isaac Cruikshank in 1808, Jefferson, albeit claiming to be “the common man’s leader,” babbles on about his doctrinaire philosophy, ignoring his disgruntled American citizens.⁶ The common people voice their complaints about practical matters, including “My family is Starving” and “My goods are Spoiling”, which highlights Jefferson’s lack of care for his citizens. The Embargo Act was considered by the public to be the biggest failure of Jefferson’s presidency, and it proved to be a major detriment to the American economy.

Far from being a haven of liberty and opportunity, the newly-independent United States had a range of issues, ranging from internal rebellions to foreign relations; political partisanship between the Federalists and the Democratic-Republicans exacerbated these problems. The two factions’ contrasting viewpoints increasingly threatened the stability of the new nation and can be tracked through the reign of the first three presidents. Although the original Federalist vs. Democratic-Republican divide waned after Jefferson’s presidency, partisanship would return to cause more polarization twenty years later when the Jacksonian Democrats split off from the original Democratic-Republican Party.

More ESS-SAR Winners in the 2022 Knight Essay Contest

Congratulations to Ms. Riley Meckley who finished 2nd in the New York State stage of the Knight Essay contest. Her essay was submitted by the Long Island Chapter. Third place finisher was Ms. McKenna VanCamp. Her essay was submitted by the Rochester Chapter. First place went to Mr. Jin who went on to win the national award.



Riley Meckley holds her NYS 2nd place prizes.



McKenna VanCamp receives her NYS 3rd place certificate while ESS-SAR president Joe Fitzpatrick looks on.

March ESS-SAR Board of Managers Meeting

The first Board of Managers Meeting of 2022 was held on March 26, 2022, in Victor NY, hosted by the Rochester Chapter, SAR.

Several things of particular interest were discussed. The Executive Committee and some past presidents met on February via Zoom about amending ARTICLE IX LOCAL CHAPTERS of the ESSSAR Constitution.

Annual Meeting

The ESS-SAR Annual Meeting, sponsored by the Thousand Island Chapter, was held on May 14th, 2022 at Alexandria Bay. The following amendment to the constitution was promulgated.

AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE IX LOCAL CHAPTERS

Article IX of the Constitution of the Empire State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution is hereby amended by adding the following Sections:

5. Each Chapter shall have a minimum of three members who are officers, including a President, a Vice-President and a Treasurer. In addition, each Chapter shall have at all times, two members of the Chapter who have signed bank authorizations allowing each of them to access all bank accounts or other financial accounts owned by the Chapter. It is recommended that each Chapter meet at least once a year. However, each Chapter shall meet at least once every two years in order to elect officers.

6. Failure to comply with Section 5 of this Article may be cause for revocation of the Charter of the local Chapter by the Board of Managers, after a thorough review of the facts, but only by a two-thirds vote by those present at a regular or special meeting. The provisions of Section 5 of this Article shall not take effect until May 1, 2024.

Next Board of Mangers Meeting is Scheduled for September

The Walloomsac Battle Chapter will be hosting our BOM meeting on Saturday, September 10, 2022 at the Pegasus Restaurant in Cossackie, NY. Coffee and danish will be available at 10 AM during sign-in. The business meeting will begin at 11 AM followed by a buffet lunch The registration form follows below.

Pegasus Restaurant
10885 Route 9W - Cossackie, NY 12051
Phone 518-731-6720

(From the South: NYS Thruway to Catskill Exit 21, take Rt. 23 east to Rt. 9W, go north 8 miles, on left)
(From the North: NYS Thruway to Exit 21B, take Rt. 9W south for 5 miles, on right))

Motels available in Cossackie, NY order online for better rates

Holiday Express - one tenth of a mile north off Exit 21B on 9W- Phone 518-719-1999

Best Western – two tenths of a mile south off Exit 21B on 9W- Phone 518-731-8100

ESSAR BOM MEETING SATURDAY- September 10, 2022

Hosted by
Walloomsac Battle Chapter, SAR

COST OF BUFFET IS \$30.00

10:00 AM SIGN IN
COFFEE & DANISH until 11:00 AM
GENERAL MEETING 11:00 AM

Buffet Menu

Chicken Marsala

Roast Beef with Mashed Potatoes and Gravy

Mixed Veggies, Tossed Green Salad, rolls & butter.

Dessert- Apple Pie al a mode

Includes Coffee, Tea, Milk, Tax and Gratuity

Any wine, beer or alcohol drinks or extras, pay cash to the Server.

\$5.00 EXTRA CHARGE AT DOOR FOR UNSCHEDULED ARRIVALS

FOR NON-EATING ATTENDEES - \$5.00 CHARGE FOR USE OF FACILITY

Name _____ Chapter _____

Name _____ Chapter _____

Buffet \$30.00 _____ Using Facility only \$5.00 _____

Detach, fill in names / chapter, make check payable to “Walloomsac Battle Chapter, SAR”.

Mail to: Duane Booth – PO Box 836, New Lebanon, NY 12125-0836 - Please, no later than Sept. 07, 2022.

The ESS-SAR in Action

by Joseph Fitzpatrick

I had attended the Syracuse Chapter's 118th Annual Heritage Luncheon in Commemoration of the 290th Birthday of George Washington on April 2, 2022.

April I attended the Schoharie Leather Stocking Chapter meeting held in Schoharie NY.

I had the honor of attending the C.A.R. State Conference held in Latham New York. I was presented the C.A.R. NY State Pin by the outgoing State President Alexandra Oxall

The ESS-SAR has donated \$500 to VALOR a Western New York Veterans Food Assistance Pantry program. The program was formed by Mr. Rudnicki and Mr. Will. Both men served in Vietnam during the war. The program is to assist Veterans and their families in need. If you would like to donate, the VALOR office is located at 395 Reserve Rd, West Seneca, NY 14223. The Society has received a thank you letter from the VALOR Board for our donation.

The Society has also donated \$500 to the Hendrick Hudson Chapter NSDAR for the Robert Jenkins House Campaign Fund.

Knight Chairman Hon. Richard Smith and his committee reviewed the applications received. The three winners were: Jiayanni Jin submitted by the 1st Continental Chapter by Chapter President Westly M. Oler. 2nd place winner was Riley Meckley submitted by the Long Island Chapter President Joseph Vermeolen, 3rd place was McKenna VanCamp submitted by the Rochester Chapter Chairman Leon Harris.

I want to express my appreciation to the Chairman Richard Smith and committee members, Schoharie Leather Stocking President Joseph Sicluna, Capital Region Vice President Timothy Middlebrook and Compatriot Mark Stolzenburg for serving on the committee.

Board Member Compatriot Wayne Thurston presented the ROTC Cadets and Midshipmen, Certificates and Medal in Recognition of Outstanding Leadership Qualities, Military Bearing, and Educational Excellence. The awards were: SAR Silver Certificate and Medal awarded to: Air Force: CDT Max Weiss; Navy: MIDN Andrew Ding; CDT Jack Kralik.

At the May meeting held by the Thousand Island Chapter of the ESS-SAR VP David Powell was nominated to replace Past President Peter Goebel as C.A.R. Chairman. Motion was made, seconded, and passed.

Congratulations to Compatriot Jeffery Cundell of the Mid-Hudson and Syracuse chapters of the ESS-SAR, he was just appointed National Registrar for the C.A.R.

The C.A.R. current Senior State President Brook Hanna attended our meeting with the new C.A.R. State President David Strang. He gave a presentation on his C.A.R. project. The Society donated a check to him for his project.

ESS-SAR Logo: The Society members made a motion to form a committee to check into the procedure for filling for a Trademark for our Logo. VP Powell will head the committee.

The second reading to Amending the Constitution Article IX Local Chapters. Motion was made and 2nd. The motion was passed. By Law will take effect May of 2024.

Compatriots Kevin Leeson of the Thousand Island Chapter and Richard Smith of the Schoharie Leather Stocking Chapter were nominated to fill two vacancies on the Board of Managers.

Due to unforeseen circumstances the Valcour Chapter will be unable to sponsor our next meeting. Our next meeting will be September 10, sponsored by the Wolloomsac Chapter at Coxsackie, New York.

Some photos from ESS-SAR presentations



Westchester -Putnam Chapter Election – (L.-R) Pres. Fitzpatrick, 2 Erick Krueger (ESSAR B of M) 3 John Ludlum (Treasurer), 4 Kenneth Stevens (President-Treasurer)) 5 Walt Ludlum (Vice President), 6 David Schmidt (ESSAR B of M)



Saratoga Battle Chapter Membership in ESS-SAR Awards. – (L.-R) Companion, Mabee, Duane Booth, Dunn, Pres. Fitzpatrick, Peter Goebel



New C.A.R. State President – (L-R) ESS-SAR Pres. Joseph FitzPatrick stands with David Strang, new Children of the American Revolution NY State president.

Commemoration of the Battle of Brooklyn

There will be a commemoration ceremony of the Battle of Brooklyn on August 27th, 2022 at the Old Stone House. The ceremony will be from 11 am - 2 pm. There will be SAR Color Guard and Reenactors from Maryland, New Jersey, New York, and Ohio. There will be about 100 members. The location of the Old Stone House is 336 - 3rd Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215. For additional information go to (theoldstonehouse.org)

Get Your ESS-SAR Patriot Certificate

This certificate is personalized with your name, your ancestors name, with your state and national member numbers. The certificate is custom printed using the highest quality professional equipment available. This is an heirloom-quality document suitable for framing.

The price for this valuable family record document is very modest at \$20. When you purchase a certificate, five dollars of the purchase price is donated to your chapter. This beautiful heirloom certificate was designed by compatriot Joseph B. Fitzpatrick, President of the Leather Stocking Chapter, Vice President of the Capital Region, ESSAR., and current Empire State Society President.



Above is a sample of the Patriot Certificate, which will be printed on premium quality heavy paper. To order your Certificate/s, please print and complete the form below.

Empire State Society SAR
Patriot Certificate

ORDER FORM

Please Print

Name_____

Address_____

City_____State_____Zip_____

National Number_____

State Number_____

Patriot Name_____

Chapter Name_____

Cost \$20.00 make check out to ESSSAR

Send to : Schoharie L-S Chapter SAR
C/O Joseph B. Fitzpatrick
PO Box 193
Esperance, NY 12066

In Memoriam

The Passing of Joyce Armstrong

It is with sadness that we announce the death of Joyce Armstrong. Joyce was the longtime companion of SAR Duane Booth, ESS-SAR Past President.

Joyce was born in Hudson, NY on August 9, 1940, and passed away at Albany Medical Center Hospital on June 23, 2022. Joyce was raised in Pittsfield, MA graduating from Pittsfield High in 1958. Joyce was active in high school and served as class secretary for four years. To no one's surprise Joyce was voted friendliest in her class. Joyce was a caring, dedicated LPN for more than twenty years, retiring in 1996.



Ms. Joyce Armstrong

Joyce was a member of the NSDAR, joining through the Peter Gansevoort Chapter in 2020. Her patriot was Cato Freedom, born in Africa, who served as a private from Connecticut. Cato's grave, in Burlington, Otsego County, NY was marked by her DAR Chapter on July 24, 2021. Joyce appreciated the ceremony and the effort the DAR, and the SAR, put into the ceremony.

Joyce enjoyed SAR meetings, well not so much the meeting part, but the coffee & pastries, lunch, and post meeting parts. She entertained us with her stories and listened to ours. She will be remembered for her spirit, her care & concern for the well-being of us all, and of course, her unique laugh. She will be missed at our meetings and events.

Chapter News

Capital Region Chapters

- **Saratoga Battle Chapter** – On May 7th 2022 the Saratoga Battle Chapter Color Guard participated in a ceremony to honor Revolutionary War veteran John Nicholas Bleecker Captain 6th CO 1st Regiment, Albany CO Militia at his graveside in the Albany Rural Cemetery in Menands,



- **Valcour Chapter** - Valcour Chapter presented the award-winning author Jack Kelly's book *Valcour: the 1776 Campaign that Saved the Cause of Liberty* to the Plattsburg Public Library, February 22, 2022,



Central Region

- **Binghamton Chapter** – Join us at 11:30 on Saturday, July 30 for our Annual Lunch Meeting, a joint gathering of the Binghamton Chapter, ESSAR and Tuscarora Chapter, NSDAR, at the Valleyview Alliance Church Pavilion, 11 Foster Road, Vestal.
- **Syracuse Chapter** – 2022 Mar 25 – Dave Powell presented the Silver ROTC awards to Army Cadet Siobhan Grabski and Air Force Cadet Jack Dwyer at the Chancellor's Review at the Carrier Dome.

2022 Apr 29 – Our chapter received word that compatriot Geoffrey Cundall was elected National Registrar of the NSC.A.R. at the annual National C.A.R. Conference.

Metropolitan Region

- **First New York Continental Chapter** – We sponsored the NSSAR Knight Essay National winning essay.
- **Long Island Chapter** – The Chapter sponsored the NY State 2nd Place essay in the NSSAR Knight Essay contest.

Western Region

- **Rochester Chapter** – The 3rd place winning essay in the NY State level of the NSDAR National Knight Essay contest was sponsored by our Chapter.

History Corner

The following is a lengthy article written by Mark Stolzenburg. Accordingly it will be presented in parts.

Mark Stolzenburg is a farmer and a member of the Schoharie County Historical Society and the Leatherstocking Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution. He lives with his wife, Nan, on historic Zimmer Hill in the Town of Wright, Schoharie County. As part of the research for this article he has compiled a database of over 550 names of potential Hessian soldiers with ties to our area. If you are interested in Hessian immigration he would like to hear from you at: markstolz1014@gmail.com.

Burgoyne's Hessian Troops and the Hessian Heritage of the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys by Mark Stolzenburg

This paper explores how some Hessian soldiers, both prisoners of war and deserters, who had fought for the British under John Burgoyne during the 1777 Saratoga campaign came to reside in the Schoharie Valley (then Albany County) and the Mohawk Valley (Tryon County). It has been adapted for the Empire Patriot from an article by Mr. Stolzenburg first published in the Schoharie County Historical Review, Fall-Winter 2021, Vol. 85, No. 2.

Burgoyne's Brunswickers

My exploration of Hessian immigration to the Schoharie area began with curiosity about one individual from a much-recounted local Town of Wright story of the American Revolution, that being the tale of the July 26th, 1781 raid by the Tory, Adam Crysler, at Fox's Creek, sometimes referred to as the Battle of the Becker Stone House. I will dispense with another telling here, but an incident recounted at the beginning of the story has always sparked my interest. Historical accounts tell us that Crysler and his band of Tories and Indians descended on that day first upon the farm of Schoharie Committeeman Jacob Zimmer near the present hamlet of Gallupville. They set fire to Zimmer's house and barn and killed and scalped his son Jacob. The raiders also murdered and scalped a Hessian worker at the Zimmer farm, a man who in most accounts of the raid goes unnamed, with but one exception that I know of. Roscoe, in his first account of the attack refers to the Hessian as "one Hoefer" almost in passing.

I have wondered who Hoefer was. If indeed he was a Hessian soldier and thus had fought for the British, how and why did he end up working for a Patriot in the Schoharie Valley on the New York frontier and dying at the hands of his former allies? What brought him to the Schoharie Valley? This paper will explore my research into the question of how some Hessian soldiers

came to reside in the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys.

Who were the Hessians?

The term “Hessian” became commonplace even during the Revolution to represent the nearly 30,000 German soldiers who fought for the British in the War of American Independence. Germany in the 1770’s was not one unified country, but a group of independent states. Only about 65% of these soldiers were truly “Hessian” and hailed from the German states of Hesse-Kassel and Hesse-Hanau. Others, however, were from other German duchies and principalities, especially, as we will see in the case of Schoharie and Mohawk Valley immigrants, the Duchy of Braunschweig. The name Braunschweig was anglicized to “Brunswick”. Over the course of the Revolutionary War 5,723 Brunswickers served with the British in America.

Hessians in the Saratoga Campaign of 1777

Hessian troops fought alongside the British in 1777 as the war of the American Revolution was brought to the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys by a three-pronged British campaign in the State of New York. Their plan was for British General Barry St. Leger to take the Mohawk Valley by invading from Lake Ontario, Sir Henry Clinton was to come up the Hudson River from New York City and John Burgoyne was to use the Lake Champlain corridor to descend southward from Canada on Albany. There the three would meet, effectively dividing New York State and severing ties between New England and the rest of the thirteen states. Fierce resistance by Patriots, from the Battle of the Flockey, to Oriskany, and to Fort Schuyler drove St. Leger back to Canada, cutting off one of the three avenues of attack. Clinton stalled after taking Fort Montgomery on October 6 along the Hudson highlands in present-day Orange County.

This left Burgoyne on his own with an impossibly long supply line spread over rugged Adirondack terrain and with unreliable communication with St. Leger and Clinton. By the conclusion of the second battle of Saratoga on October 7, known as the Battle of Bemis Heights, it was clear that Burgoyne’s situation was dire. He was seriously outnumbered by the American Northern Army and militias under Major General Horatio Gates. Burgoyne could not advance; he could not retreat. Provisions for the British and Hessian troops were critically low. Gates’ forces stood between Burgoyne and Albany and blocked his possibility of return to Canada.

The principal engagements of the Saratoga campaign commenced with the British taking of Fort Ticonderoga on July 2nd and terminated with the two battles of Saratoga, the Battle of Freeman’s Farm on September 19 and the Battle of Bemis Heights on October 7. The British and Hessian forces under Burgoyne surrendered to Gates on October 17. In June 1777 at the start of his march from Canada, Burgoyne’s Brunswick regiments numbered 3291 men and the Hesse-Hanau artillery under his command was about 600 strong.

Hessian Desertion from Burgoyne’s Army

From the early days of the war, the Continental Congress had decided to welcome deserters of the “foreign” troops, another name given to the Hessian troops who fought for the British:

Journal of Congress, August 14, 1776: Resolved, Therefore that these states will receive all such foreigners who shall leave the armies of his Britannic majesty in America, and shall choose to become members of any of these states; and that they shall be protected in the free exercise of their respective religions, and be invested with the rights, privileges and immunities of natives as established by the laws of these states.

By October of the 1777 Saratoga campaign, Hessian deserters walked from Burgoyne’s British lines in increasing numbers daily. The intractable strategic position that Burgoyne found himself in and the shortage of food certainly contributed to low morale and high rates of desertion. This situation was amply identified by American General Gates, who from camp at Saratoga, October 12, 1777, wrote to John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress:

I am happy to acquaint your Excellency that desertion has taken a deep root in the Royal Army, particularly amongst the Germans, who come to us in shoals.

Continued in next issue.

Note from the Editor: If your chapter would like to have your stories, events and photos published in the *Empire Patriot* send your material to Editor Karl Danneil at kdanneil@att.net