



Road to the Battle of Bennington: Lt. Col. Friedrich Baum's Expedition of 1777



LAKES TO LOCKS
P A S S A G E



National Geographic Geotourism Partner



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In August of 1777, Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum found himself a long way from his home in Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, what is now a part of Lower Saxony in Germany. The Duke, Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand, provided Baum and nearly 4000 of his fellow servicemen, to his brother-in-law, King George III of Great Britain, in order to put down the Rebellion in America. They were led by British General John Burgoyne, but when Burgoyne found his military campaign in serious need of provisions, draft animals, and a military diversion, Baum was sent to lead a raid on a supply depot in Bennington, VT. Speaking only his native German, and having little field experience in commanding a multinational force of nearly 800 German, British, Canadian, American and Native troops, Baum and his force departed from the British encampment on the Hudson River. They marched along a rugged route their enemy, the rebel Americans, had cut just the year before, to what they believed was a scantily guarded depot. This story is the anatomy of a disastrous event ... explore Lt. Col. Friedrich Baum's ill-fated journey to the Battle of Bennington, and experience some of the most stunning landscape to be found along New York's Lakes to Locks Passage.

Battle of Bennington by F.C. Yohn provided courtesy of the Chapman Historical Museum, Glens Falls, NY

STOP 1: PRELUDE

The starting point for the *Road to the Battle of Bennington* is on US Route 4 at the Ft. Miller parking area about 3.1 miles north of the bridge over the Hudson River. On the east side of the road, a kiosk marks the location of Site 1. Each site correlates to the audio CD track with the same number. Play each track after completing the driving directions. Please do not attempt to drive and read the directions at the same time.

SITE 2: AN ALTERED LANDSCAPE

Turn right out of the parking area and make your first left on N. River Road, crossing a single-span bridge over the canal - about 0.6 mi

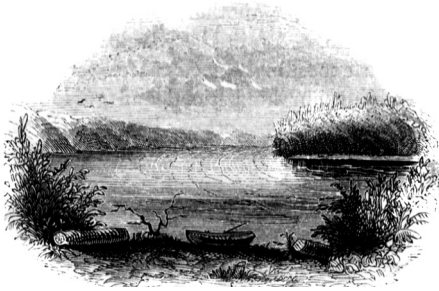
The landscape surrounding the hamlet of Fort Miller has changed dramatically since the Revolutionary War era. The old Champlain Canal cut through the landscape on the east side of Route 4, and the Barge Canal was constructed on the west side, creating a man-made island. The island is accessible by several bridges that cross the Champlain Canal.

STOP 3: THE LITTLE CARRYING PLACE

Bear left around the bend to the Fort Miller/Little Carrying Place Historic Marker. - about 0.9 mi

The hamlet of Fort Miller is named for the fort built on the west side of the Hudson River by the British during the French and Indian War. Known as the "Little Carrying Place," Fort Miller was not much more than a protected storehouse

strategically located between Saratoga and Fort Edward. Here a waterfall impeded river traffic, forcing travelers to carry their boat and supplies around the falls by land.



SITE 4: A CANAL COMMUNITY

Head southeast on N River Rd toward Fort Miller Rd. Turn Right on Fort Miller Rd. - about 0.2 mi

Today, the hamlet of Fort Miller is little more than a few riverfront residences, but during the canal-era it was an active community at Washington County's southernmost gateway to the Champlain Canal.

STOP 5: CLARK'S MILL BRIDGE

Head south on Fort Miller Road, cross the canal at the Lock 6 bridge and continue to US RT 4. Turn right onto US4 heading south. Turn left onto Co RT 113. Turn right onto River Rd. Destination on the right, a historic marker for Crossing the Battenkill and the Hollingsworth and Vose Recreation Area. - about 4.3 mi

Baum's force hit their first minor setback as they reached Clark's Mill, which straddled the Batten Kill, a tributary of the Hudson River. Note that "Kill" is the Dutch word for a moving body of water, such as a river, stream or creek. Therefore, it is redundant to call it the Batten Kill River.



SITE 6: SARATOGA ENCAMPMENT

Continue south on Co RT 113/River Road, cross RT 29. Pull to the right at the Baum Encampment historic marker, with a clear view of the Saratoga Monument - about 1.6 mi

On the evening of August 11th, Baum's force rested for the night at a place "opposite Saratoga." They have covered 6-miles in the first day.



SITE 7: SETTING OFF ON AUGUST 12TH

Head south on River Rd. Take the 1st left onto General Fellows Rd. - about 1.6 mi

In the early morning of August 12, Baum marches "up a mountain ... and into the woods."

SITE 8: BATTEN KILL ENCAMPMENT

Continue on General Fellows Rd. Turn left onto Wilber Ave. Take the First right onto Bulson Rd. Stop at corner of Hegeman Bridge Rd. The Batten Kill is on the left. - about 4.1 mi

An hour after Baum advanced eastward along his route, he received a report that the enemy is in the area. He halted and retraced his steps to a location Wasmus describes as being "one mile [east of] the place where [they] camped last night." Baum later finds out that he had received a false report.



SITE 9: ON THE CONTINENTAL ROAD

Head southeast on Hegeman Bridge Rd. Turn left onto Louse Hill Rd. Play audio in clearing overlooking hills. - about 0.7 mi

Baum and his troops proceeded along the Continental Road on the morning of August 13th. In 1777, the frontier 100 miles north of Albany was only crossed in five places by wagon roads, which limited Baum's

choice of route. The Continental Road had been built the previous year by the American Rebels, and was probably typical eighteenth century road construction. They avoided the wet lowlands as well as steep slopes and cut the trees, but probably left many stumps and large rocks -- similar to what we would consider today as a wide hiking trail. The condition of the road was always rutted and variable, in inclement weather the roads nearly impassable.

SITE 10: STILL ON THE CONTINENTAL ROAD

Continue on Stafford Hill Rd. Turn right onto Co Rd 74/Eddy St. Take the second left onto Colonel Baume Rd. - about 1.9 mi

Baum is on his long trek through enemy territory. The British troops marched to the beat of a drum while the Brunswickers marched to Lutheran hymns. This was not a stealth operation.

Top left: View of Fort Miller from Benson J. Lossing's Pictorial Field Book to the American Revolution. Bottom left: Clark's Mill Bridge.

Top right: Cabin in the Woods by FOC Darley, courtesy of the Library of Congress. Bottom right: Map of Burgoyne's 1777 campaign, courtesy of the Library of Congress.

SITE 11: OLD CONTINENTAL ROAD

Proceed to the end of the road. A marker will be on the corner of Col. Baume Rd. and NY 372. - about 0.7 mi

Baum and his men continued heading east and then southeast into the Town of Cambridge. They traveled along a road that Wasmus described as “a rough road, which only last year had been cleared by the Rebels.”



SITE 12: INTRODUCING DR. ASA FITCH

Starting from Col. Baume Road, turn right onto NY 372 E. Make your first left onto Tabor Rd. - about 0.4 mi

Beginning in the 1840s and continuing until his death, Dr. Asa Fitch (1809-1878) of Salem, NY, interviewed elderly neighbors, questioning them about the time of first European settlement, the Revolutionary War, and the first decades of the 19th century.

SITE 13: AND STILL ON THE CONTINENTAL ROAD

Continue onto Old Cambridge Rd. Turn right onto Cambridge-Battenville Rd. Continue across NY 372 on Co Rd 60. - about 1.8 mi

Baum and his troops continued to trek through enemy territory – remember, it was a hot and muggy day. The Dragoons wore wool coats and carried broadswords weighing 10-12 pounds. Although they were wearing marching boots, they were encumbered by heavy gear – and they were elite mounted soldiers, not foot soldiers!

SITE 14: UNDERSTANDING THE LANDSCAPE

Turn left onto Edie Rd. Turn right to stay on Edie Rd. Turn right onto Stevenson Rd. [Note: If you turn around, you will see the power lines run through a field. Local historians think the original road would have cut through that same valley]. Turn left to continue onto Stevenson Rd. Co Rd 60 - about 1.8 mi

The mountainous terrain made east/west travel difficult, which is why Baum's route zig-zags through the landscape

SITE 15: AND EVEN STILL ON THE CONTINENTAL ROAD

Turn left onto Co Rd 60. Take the first left onto Cobble Rd. Turn left onto Co Rd 59. Take the first right onto Greene Rd. - about 2.9 mi

Imagine Baum and his men still marching on this rough road, over hill and dale, carrying a heavy load, through enemy territory. It was an exhausting expedition in the heat of summer.

SITE 16: JOHN WEIR HOUSE

Continue to the end of Greene Rd. The Weir House is directly ahead. - about 0.9 mi

According to local lore, John Weir took a midnight ride to Bennington to warn General John Stark about the advance of Baum's troops. The story earned him the legendary title "The Paul Revere of Bennington." The Weir Home is privately owned and not open for visitation.



colonists in Cambridge demonstrate that this was a civil war, and the people of Cambridge were suddenly pitched on the front-lines of the conflict.

SITE 17: CONTINENTAL ROAD MARKER

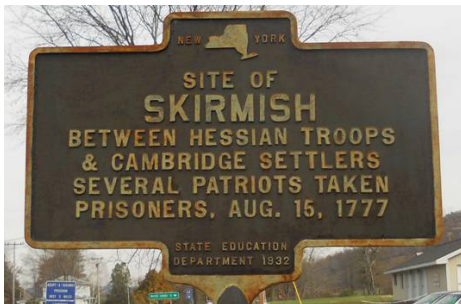
Starting from Greene Rd., turn left onto King Rd. Turn right onto Co Rd. 59. Continue onto West Main St. Turn right onto Academy St. to the historic marker. - about 3.0 mi

Cambridge was first settled in 1756, located along the Indian's "Ticonderoga Trail." Many of the Revolutionary War stories from the

STOP 18: THE CHECKERED HOUSE

Starting from Academy St, continue onto S Union St and Turnpike Rd. Destination will be on the right, just before Owl Kill Rd. - about 2.0 mi

Baum arrived at the Checkered House after having covered nearly 16 miles in one day. The house served as a shelter for Baum and his officers. Note that the marker indicates that the Rebel militia used the Checkered House as a hospital two days after the Battle of Bennington.



SITE 19: SKIRMISH WITH THE CAMBRIDGE MILITA

Starting from Turnpike Rd, turn slightly left onto Owl Kill Rd. Turn right onto NY-22 S. Destination will be on the left. - about 1.8 mi

On the afternoon of August 13th, Baum's advance troops skirmished with the Cambridge Militia south of the Village.



SITE 20: WHITE CREEK ENCAMPMENT

Starting from NY-22 S continue 0.8 mi. Destination on right. - about 0.8 mi

The greater portion of Baum's forces rested just south skirmish site the evening of the 13th. The Germans and Canadians were on the west side, and the Indians on the east side of the present road.

SITE 21: SANCOICK MILL SKIRMISH

Starting from NY 22 S continue south on NY 22 S/NY 67 E. Destination will be on the right. - about 2.4 mi

On the morning of August 14, Baum's troops encountered a Rebel scouting party under the Command of Colonel William Gregg, posted at a mill in Sancoick on the Little White Creek.



SITE 22: PRELUDE TO THE BATTLE

Continue east on NY - 67. Turn right onto Caretaker's Rd. - about 2.8 mi

Leaving a small guard at the Sancoick Mill, Baum's army moved eastward on the dirt road along the Walloomsac River, and arrived at a hill overlooking a small bridge – possibly the same location of the single-span bridge across the Walloomsac that now stands at the base of Caretaker Road.



STOP 23: BENNINGTON BATTLEFIELD STATE HISTORIC SITE

Turn left onto Cottrell Rd. Turn left onto NY-67 W. Turn right into the Bennington Battlefield State Historic Site.- about 2.3 mi

On the night of August 14th, Baum established his defensive position while he waited for reinforcements. He knew that he was outnumbered, and morale was beginning to deteriorate. Rain on August 15th delayed the conflict and afforded Baum additional time to reinforce his position. When the weather cleared the following day, the stage was set for battle.



SITE 24: BAUM'S DEMISE

Starting from the Battlefield, head east on NY-67. Turn right onto Caretaker's Rd. - about 0.6 mi

After a stubborn defense of the hilltop defenses, Baum's troops ran out of ammunition and the position was overrun. Squeezed from the east and west, the remainder of the forces fled down the hill and gathered in a field near the bend in the Walloomsac. Baum gathered his men for a final stand, and led a saber charge. During the charge, Baum and Pfister were mortally wounded. They were carried to the Matthews House, and later buried along the Walloomsac. Baum's gravesite is unknown, most likely it has been washed away by the meandering river, but a Vermont historic marker indicates the location of the Matthews House, just east of the Vermont border on Route 67.

SITE 25: THE SECOND ENGAGEMENT

Turn right onto Cottrell Rd. Destination on left, just before entering NY 67. - about 2.0 mi

A stone monument with bronze plaque, located west of the Battlefield on Route 67, marks where Stark and Warner encountered Breyman in what is considered the second engagement of the Battle of Bennington. Breyman arrived too late to reinforce Baum, and found himself and his contingent of 500 men faced with over 3,000 Rebel militiamen. He was quickly routed back the way he came.



Top right: Battle of Bennington, courtesy of N.Y. Public Library/
Back Cover: Bennington Battlefield from Benson J. Lossing's
Pictorial Field Book to the American Revolution.

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