

A Coincidence at Saratoga

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The date was October 7th, 1977; it was the 200th Anniversary Celebration of the Revolutionary War Battle of Saratoga. The Saratoga Battlefield is a National Historical Park located in Saratoga County, New York. I lived about 20 miles from the Battlefield, frequented it often, and decided to partake in the celebration of that special day. Not only was it the anniversary of this decisive battle, but it was the anniversary of my birth (however, not the 200th!). A special commemorative stamp and canceling/posting from the site, reenactments, and prominent speakers were features of the event. It was a midweek event and not too crowded. This



boded well for me because I had broken my foot playing tennis and was on crutches. By this time I was very adept at maneuvering and covering considerable ground on crutches! Tom Brokaw, a young newscaster from NBC, gave one of the key speeches celebrating the event. I purchased several of the commemorative stamps, postcards, and other mementos of the celebration. It was a vacation day away from work very well spent and educational. I came away with a deep appreciation for our ancestors efforts to secure our freedom, and especially the significance of the Battle of Saratoga.

The Battle of Saratoga is considered by many historians to have been "the turning point of the American Revolutionary War". About 10,000 British troops under General John Burgoyne were advancing south from Canada with the intention of taking Albany, NY, and cutting New England off from the rest of the colonies by seizing control of the Hudson River Valley. Burgoyne's advance was slowed, and he was eventually defeated at Saratoga by colonial regular soldiers and militia under the command of General Horatio Gates. This occurred in a series of battles and engagements between September 19th and October 7th, 1777, with the formal surrender taking place October 17th, 1777. The news that an entire British Army had been not only defeated, but captured with all its weapons, gave the American revolutionists great credibility. France, in particular, threw its support behind the Revolution, and years later, the French navy and military played an important role in the surrender of the British at the Battle of Yorktown, and the end of the war.

Twenty-five years after this 200th Anniversary Celebration, and being a retired research scientist, I needed something to research, so I began researching my "roots". This started my active interest in genealogy. I first researched my "McHugh roots" which took me quickly to Ireland, County Galway, Dunmore and the Ardclon Townland; my grandfather McHugh emigrated in 1878 to the USA/California from Ireland. After gathering considerable information, I dropped the McHugh research in favor of answering the question of: "how deep are my roots in America?". Obviously, I had to pursue other direct blood ancestors to answer this question. I found that my "Ingalls" ancestors descended from Edmund Ingalls who migrated from England in 1629 and was one of the founders of what is now Lynn, Massachusetts. I also discovered that I had a patriot ancestor, Solomon Ingalls. He served in the Revolutionary War and is my great-great-great-grandfather. Solomon Ingalls (Henry⁵, Henry⁴, Henry³, Henry², Edmund¹) was born June 16, 1750 in Andover, Massachusetts. He served in the Massachusetts Militia, married 1st, married 2nd, and after the war migrated to Packersfield (now Nelson), New Hampshire where my great-great-grandfather James Ingalls was born April 4, 1791. Solomon spent about 30 years in this area of New Hampshire before moving to the Town of Rodman, Jefferson County, New York, joining some of his sons who were already there.

My research showed that Solomon received a pension for his Revolutionary War service based on the published pension rolls; however, I did not know the details of his service at this point of my research. The next step was to look for his pension records. I found this to be easy because Heritage Quest has online images of pension records for Revolutionary War Veterans. A portion of Solomon's pension

record image is provided here; it includes the material dealing with Saratoga and his signature on the pension application. After reading his testimony, transcribed by the Jefferson County, Town of Rodman Clerk in 1832, I discovered that Solomon was at Saratoga in October 1777, as was I in

October 1977 (200 years later). Solomon marched from Andover, MA to Saratoga, arriving in time to witness the surrender of Burgoyne. I just discovered this fact in March of 2005.

*again enlisted about the first Oct 1777 at Andover under
Capt John Adams St. Mauds. Co. British Regt. for one
month as a private, was immediately made a corporal
and served a day or two, then he was made capt.
Major marched to Bennington, from there to Sar-
atoga, when he arrived just in time to witness the
surrender of Burgoyne, from there he went as a
guard to the British Hoops (Prison) to Casseville Massachusetts
where he was discharged.*

Solomon Ingalls

Solomon Ingalls played a role in the events surrounding that significant military action at Saratoga. He died September 22, 1840, age 90 years. The 7th day of October 1977 now has much more significance to me than just the celebration of the 200th anniversary, or the anniversary of my birthday. Only had I known then, what I know now! What a coincidence!

For a little "flavor" of the 1777 era, one should sample "The Battle of Saratoga" which is a song with lyrics by Lesley Nelson; this song appeared shortly after Burgoyne surrendered to General Gates at Saratoga. Go to the Saratoga Chapter of the DAR web site.

DAR Web site: <<http://www.rootsweb.com/~nyscdar/saratogaw.htm>>

References/Credits

Richard H. Ketchum, "Saratoga: Turning Point of the America's Revolutionary War", Henry Holt & Co. (1997).

Picture: Jim McHugh at Lake Placid, NY, July 2005 (taken for this Article).

Heritage Quest Online, Revolutionary War Pension File Images, Solomon Ingalls, File S23724, Series M805, Roll 461, Images 453-459.