

Mr. Paul Loether
Chief, National Register of Historic Places and
National Historic Landmarks Program
1849 C Street, NW (Org. 2280)
Washington DC 20240

August 13, 2013

Dear Mr. Loether:

I am writing to suggest that Hubbardton Battlefield, be designated a National Historic Landmark. The Town of Hubbardton, Vermont will be celebrating its 250th anniversary in 2014, and this would be an appropriate, but well deserved, birthday present.

Hubbardton Battlefield was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1971. The Monument , an obelisk, and over 600 surrounding acres are owned by the State of Vermont. There is a lovely Visitors Center that is owned and operated by Vermont's Division For Historic Preservation. Although I am attaching a brochure, let me describe this property and its historical significance in the Revolutionary War. Much of the following is from a book I wrote in 2005 titled "History of Hubbardton Vermont".

Military roads were the earliest long distance routes of land travel in what was to become Vermont. The first was the Crown Point Military Road constructed by British General Amherst in 1759-60 to connect Fort No 4 on the Connecticut River to Fort Crown Point on Lake Champlain. The second was the Mount Independence Military Road constructed by American Major General Horatio Gates in 1776 to connect Fort No 4 to Mount Independence and its sister Fort Ticonderoga on opposite sides of Lake Champlain. This military road happened to pass through Hubbardton. Gates was in charge of the troops at both locations which commanded a better strategic position than Fort Crown Point.

Mount Independence and Fort Ticonderoga had a series of commanders , but on June 12, 1777 Major General Arthur St Clair took charge. By July 6, 1777 it was decided to abandon Fort Ti and Mount Independence and move St Clair's army south over the Mount Independence Military Road. The British with 1200 men under Brigadier General Simon Fraser pursued the American army. They caught up with the rear guard on the morning of July 7, 1777 in Hubbardton. By 18th century standards it was a British victory, but it was a successful rear guard action, as Fraser stopped his pursuit of the American army.

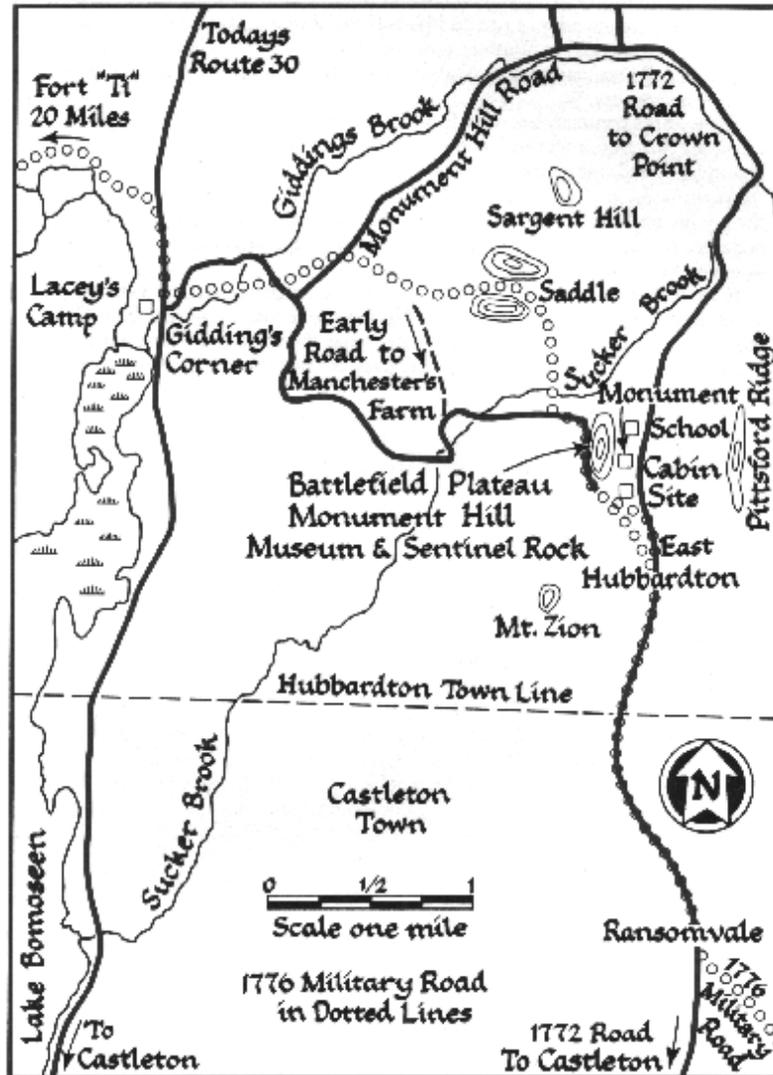
The Battle of Hubbardton was the only battle of the American Revolution fought entirely on Vermont soil. This military action saved the American's Northern Army for their eventual victory over General John Burgoyne at the Battle of Saratoga, and is known as one of the most successful rear guard actions in the annals of American military history. About 20 years ago I was talking with General Colin Powell and asked him if he ever heard of the Battle of Hubbardton. He described it at length along with its military importance.

The 21 foot high Hubbardton Battle Monument, of Vermont marble, was erected July 7, 1859.

In 1970 a new Visitors Center was constructed. Its museum includes an interpretive exhibit with period artifacts placing the battle in its Revolutionary War context. A three-dimensional fiber optic map details the phases of the Battle. A diorama of the Battle in the visitor's center, constructed by Vermont artist Paul V. Winters, brings life to the landscape. This fine creative work shows the Battle of Hubbardton.

The landscape is beautiful. Pittsford Ridge can be seen to the east. There is a spectacular view of the Taconic mountains in Vermont to the south, with Timmouth Mountain the highest peak. Black Mountain, by Lake George in New York, can be seen to the west. A path across the field leads west to the ridge above the valley where the military road came through.

BATTLE OF HUBBARDTON



American Major General Arthur St. Clair was retreating from Fort Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. He left 1,000 to 1,200 men to form a rear guard, camped in Hubbardton. By this maneuver, St. Clair hoped to escape southeasterly with his weary and tattered main army.

The small force remaining at Hubbardton was comprised of Vermont's Colonel Seth Warner with a detachment of his Green Mountain Boys, a detail of Massachusetts militia under Colonel Ebenezer Francis, and Colonel Nathan Hale commanding the 2nd New Hampshire Continental Regiment.

The pursuing British units of Lieutenant General John Burgoyne's Army were seasoned Regulars, far superior to the Americans in equipment and supplies. Some 850 men were led by Brigadier General Simon Fraser, one of Burgoyne's best line officers. Fraser was ably supported by a detachment of 200 or so Brunswick troops under Major General Baron von Riedesel, a thoroughly competent field officer.

About dawn, on the morning of the Battle, the stage was set for the events that followed. The main body of General St. Clair's troops were halted two miles down the road towards Castleton. Warner's rear guard troops were encamped in the vicinity of what is now called Monument Hill, with the mission to hold their ground until the main body could move on.

As expected, the British pursued the retreating Colonials along the military road from Mount Independence to Hubbardton. The course of the road is still clearly visible on the hillside across the valley from Monument Hill.

As the British column reached Sucker Brook, the Americans attacked. Thus began the Battle of Hubbardton, which was to give the British a startling exposure to the Americans' courage in battle and the tactical skill which would eventually lead to their defeat.

Immediately following the first encounter, the Americans retired to positions atop Monument Hill, an excellent location for a defensive action. The British deployed and attacked the Hill but were immediately repulsed and even pursued in their retreat to their former position.

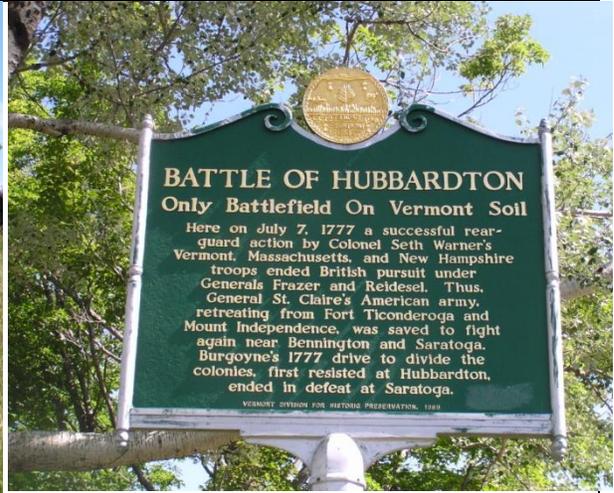
The Americans returned to the hilltop and again the British attacked and were repulsed. Thus the Battle continued for over an hour as the British attempted to encircle the Americans and they in turn consolidated their positions to the fence line east of the Military Road.

At this point the Brunswick troops under von Riedesel reached the scene and immediately attacked on the American right. Colonel Francis received a mortal wound during the Brunswick attack. By this time, General St. Clair's troops had advanced toward Castleton, and the rear guard had accomplished its purpose of delaying the British so that the American troops could move on. One of the most difficult phases of a rear guard action is to disengage from the enemy and move out without being exposed to pursuit and additional casualties. This was accomplished with the same competence that the Americans had exhibited throughout the Battle.

So heavy were the losses inflicted upon General Fraser's command, that he gave up the pursuit of St. Clair's Army and returned to Mount Independence and Fort Ticonderoga. Thus Burgoyne's plan to separate New England from the other Colonies was foiled in its first stage. The Battle of Hubbardton involved approximately 2,130 troops and resulted in a total of about 580 casualties, or roughly 27 percent of all participating troops. It marked the beginning of the end for General "Gentleman Johnny" Burgoyne, who surrendered three months later at Saratoga, with his entire Army of some 8,000 men.



Visitor Center



Sign



View South



View Southwest

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me at 802-273-2251, or by email at don@shoreham.net.

I am looking forward to working with you on this process. There are only 17 National Historic Landmarks in Vermont. Hubbardton Battlefield deserves this recognition.

Most sincerely,

Donald R. Sondergeld
469 Birch Road in Hubbardton,
Brandon, VT 05733