

Skirmish at St. Croix

It was the third year of the American Revolution, and the British army was well into a campaign designed to divide the colonies in half with a massive three-pronged attack. The plan was for General Burgoyne with the main force of over 8,000 men to drive south through the Champlain Valley and into the upper Hudson Valley. General Howe was to advance from New York City through the lower Hudson Valley. Colonel Leger was to advance from Lake Ontario eastward through the Mohawk Valley. The three forces were to meet in Albany before the winter of 1777 ended the campaign season. By early August, Burgoyne's army was slowed and weakened due to lack of provisions. Burgoyne assigned Lieut. Col. Friedrich Baum to lead an expeditionary force of about 500 men to capture military supplies held at Bennington and to collect cattle and horses along the road from Saratoga to Bennington for shipment back to the main army.

Baum halted his march at sundown on August 13th west of the Hamlet of San Coick, now known as North Hoosick.

General John Stark was assembling a force of American Militia in Bennington to oppose Burgoyne's advance. Stark assigned Col. William Gregg to lead a scouting party of 216 men westward from Bennington along the road to Saratoga to make discoveries about the British forces.

Gregg halted his march at sundown on August 13th and posted his troops at the Mill in San Coick.

Very early on the morning of the 14th, Baum moved forward to San Coick, where he encountered Gregg and a brief skirmish ensued. This accidental meeting was the first skirmish of the battle that would follow.

Following the skirmish at the Mill, Col. Gregg retreated toward Bennington to meet General John Stark and the whole brigade along the road east of San Coick. Stark set his position in the hills that flanked the road above the flood plain of the Walloomsac River and waited for engagement. British Col. Baum left a small guard at the Mill and continued on the road to Bennington where he met resistance from Stark's troops. Baum's scouts perceived a large American force posted on a ridge 1,000 yards before them. Baum set his position on some high ground and sent for reinforcements from Burgoyne's main force. A tactical standoff on the 14th and rainy weather on the 15th held the forces at bay. On August 16th, 1777, a 48-hour battle began with the outcome a defeat for the British which was a considerable factor leading to the defeat of General Burgoyne's army a few weeks later in Stillwater, near Saratoga. The Battle of Walloomsac became known as The Battle of Bennington and is believed to have been the turning point for the American Revolution.