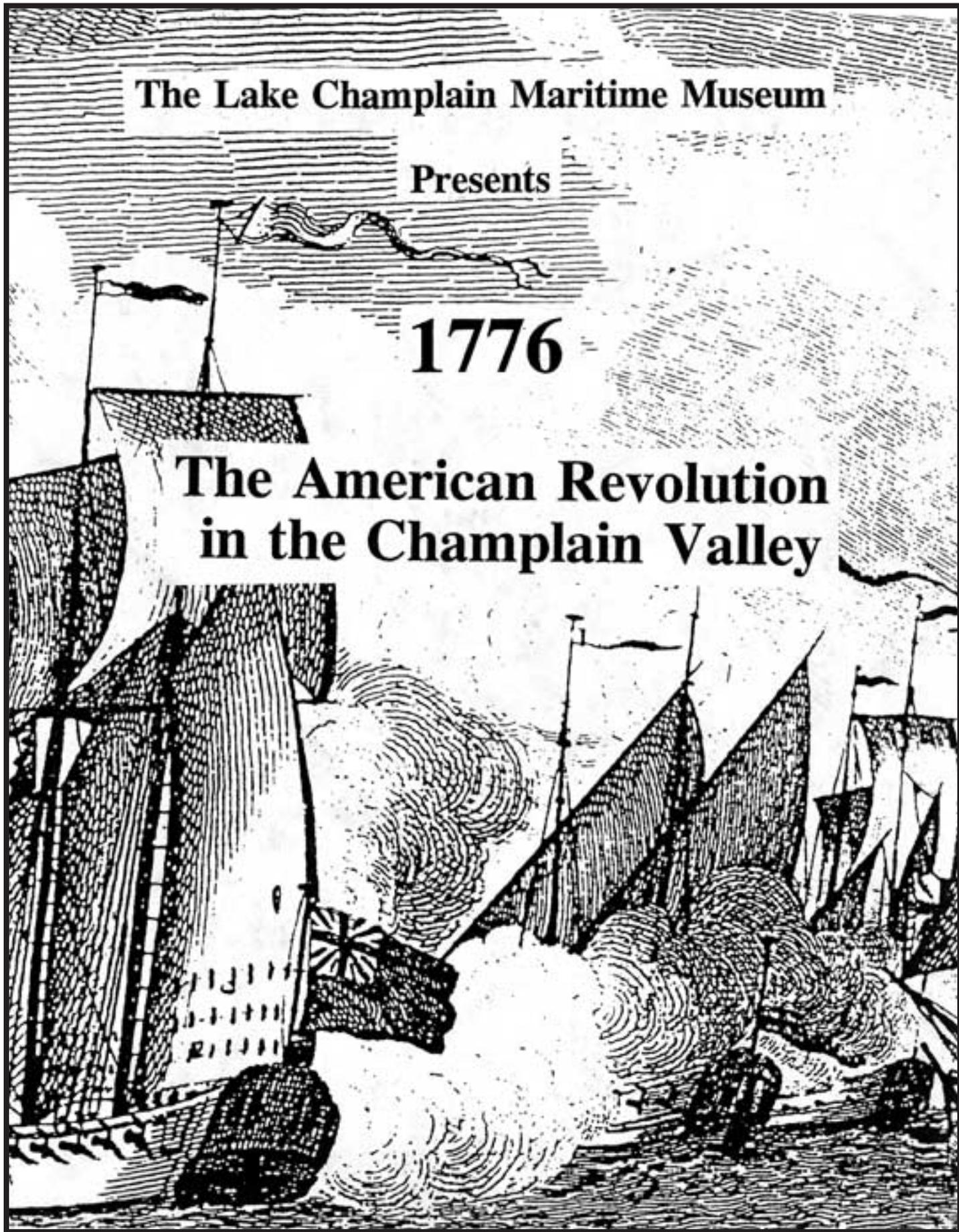


**The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum**

**Presents**

**1776**

**The American Revolution  
in the Champlain Valley**



# The Northern Theater of War

## Rationale

Lake Champlain and the Champlain Valley's maritime heritage played a vital role in shaping our nation.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Read an introduction to Lake Champlain as a Strategic Waterway and the Northern Theater of War
- Discuss why control of Lake Champlain was an important part of the American Revolution.
- Complete a time line of events of the Revolutionary War
- Identify the original 13 colonies and the water route on map

## Vermont Standards Addressed

Vital Results

- 1.1 Reading Strategies
- 1.3 Reading Comprehension
- 1.15 (a) Expression, speaking, sharing information
- 1.20 Communication of Data

Fields of Knowledge

- 6.4 Historical Connections
- 6.7 Geographical Knowledge

## Materials

- Student copies of "1776: The American Revolution in the Champlain Valley"
- Student copies of the "Time Line of the American Revolution"
- Student copies or overhead transparency of the map of "The 13 Original Colonies"
- Photo of Lake Champlain

## Procedure

Teacher Preparation—

Read the background information and determine if you will read and summarize the information for your students or have them read on their own.

### A. Introduction

Show the students a picture of Lake Champlain (or have them picture it in their minds), and ask them to imagine this beautiful setting as the Northern Theater of War. Ask the students to identify the wars that were fought, in part, on Lake Champlain. (French & Indian War, Rev. War, and War of 1812). Explain to students that the battle for the independence of our nation was fought in our own backyard, on Lake Champlain, as well as throughout the 13 colonies.

### B. Lesson Development

1. Distribute copies "1776: The American Revolution in the Champlain Valley". Before reading, ask: What is a strategic waterway and why was Lake Champlain considered

a strategic waterway?

2. Read out loud as a group.

3. After reading, ask: Why would controlling a body of water be important for military purposes? Why was control of Lake Champlain important during the American Revolution?

4. Explain that the events in the Champlain Valley were only one part of the action during the Revolution—called the Northern Theater of the war. The bigger picture of the American fight for Independence includes activities throughout the colonies.

5. Distribute copies of the map of the 13 colonies. Ask students to label the 13 colonies, the strategic waterway, and the Northern Theater of War.

6. Distribute copies of the time line marked with events from the Revolutionary War that occurred in other areas. Ask students to work in pairs to complete the time line with events from the Northern Theater. (use the reading to help fill in the events)

### C. Conclusion

Tell students that our local history is special because it is also part of the history of our country. Have students predict what would have happened if the Americans had not built a fleet in 1776.

# 1776 : The American Revolution in the Champlain Valley

## The Strategic Waterway

Lake Champlain is perhaps the most historic body of water in North America. We have a rich history of military conflict, commercial and recreational activity. The Champlain Valley was a huge unexplored wilderness when the first European Settlers arrived. Travel was difficult because roads and highways did not exist, but in the middle of this wilderness was Lake Champlain—a natural highway linking the St. Lawrence River in the north with the Hudson River Valley to the south.

France and Britain both colonized North America. The French moved into what is now Canada along the St. Lawrence River Valley, and the British claimed New England, the Hudson River Valley, and the eastern seaboard. Each European power expanded territorial control by building fortifications along vital waterways. Conflict arose as their boundaries expanded and collided. One hot zone of conflict was the Champlain corridor, which both powers claimed but neither controlled.

The lake and its rivers and tributaries made an exceptional highway to move heavily laden armies. In summer, canoes and “bateaux” could move invading forces on Lake Champlain, bypassing mountains, forests and swamps. In winter, the ice on the lake provided a wide, level surface for traveling armies.

After 150 years of colonial wars, the British secured peace for their people in North America. The period from 1760–1775 saw the first real movement of settlers into the Champlain Valley. Many settlers, like Philip Skene of Skenesboro, were former British soldiers who had fought in the valley during the French and Indian War. The potential of its natural resources, such as rivers to power mills, ore to make iron, and timber to sell to European shipbuilders, made the valley an attractive place to settle.

## The Northern Theater of War

**1775**—When the tensions between Great Britain and the American colonies exploded into armed conflict, Ethan Allen and the Green Mountain Boys found themselves right in the thick of things in the Champlain Valley. Three weeks after Lexington and Concord Three weeks after Concord and Lexington a fledgling force of “rebels” on Lake Champlain took the British fortresses of Ticonderoga, Crown Point and attacked the fort at St. Johns. The assault was led by Ethan Allen and shared with a Connecticut officer named Benedict Arnold. The taking of Fort Ticonderoga was the first American offensive action against the British in the Revolution. The rebel forces gained control of the strategic invasion route with the capture of the two large vessels on Lake Champlain—a Schooner which belonged to Philip Skene, renamed Liberty and the “Kings Sloop from St. Johns, renamed the Enterprise. These two vessels captured in May of 1775 might be considered the first vessels in the American navy.

With the lake secure, Congress located in Philadelphia, was persuaded to utilize it for an invasion of Canada. A two pronged assault on Quebec City was planned with one army under the command of Benedict Arnold driving through the Maine and Canadian wilderness while another under Richard Montgomery invaded north on Lake Champlain.

Montgomery’s army captured St. Johns, Chambly and Montreal while Arnold’s force emerged from the wilderness having suffered great hardships during their march. The two armies joined in front of the strong walls of Quebec in late fall. The season was turning cold and the troop’s enlistments were about to run out. A bold plan was developed to attack the fortress on New Year’s Eve. This

strategy ended in disaster.

**1776**—In the nighttime attack, covered by a blinding snowstorm, Montgomery and many of his officers were killed. Arnold was wounded, and the attack was a complete failure. The remainder of the winter the army suffered greatly from lack of supplies and an uncertain mission. Worse yet, they became sick with small pox. In the spring, an army the British sent over the ocean arrived at Quebec, and the American's were forced into a hasty retreat. Hundreds of sick men died as the Americans fell all the way back to Lake Champlain and set up a defensive line at Fort Ticonderoga and a Vermont hill they proclaimed as Mt. Independence. When the advancing British army reached St. Johns, they were forced to halt; the American's controlled the waterway.

The campaign season of 1776 was all about control of Lake Champlain and both sides became engaged in a shipbuilding race. The Americans brought in ship carpenters from the East Coast and set up operations in Skenesboro. A now healed Benedict Arnold became "Commodore" of the fleet. The British established a shipyard at St. Johns and also disassembled some of their existing vessels. Each party built impressive fleets. On October 11, the two squadrons met at Valcour Island.

The Battle of Valcour Island actually spanned three days. On the first day the Americans fought the larger British fleet for five hours and lost the schooner *Royal Savage*, the gunboat *Philadelphia*, and over 10% of their men. Darkness brought an end to the fighting. In a bold plan under the cover of night, Arnold rowed his remaining vessels, single file, past the British blockade set up at the southern end of the island. The next morning, the British awoke mortified to find the American's had escaped and immediately gave chase. The British caught the fleeing American squadron on the 13th below Split Rock where the combatants fought a 2 ½ hour running gun battle which took them past Basin Harbor. Arnold, on board the galley *Congress*, realized his battered vessels could not sustain the engagement, and he directed his five rear-most vessels into Ferris's Bay and intentionally destroyed them so they would not fall into British hands. Arnold escaped overland to the American lines at Ticonderoga with his men and the Ferris family, but as the naval engagement ended, control of the lake had shifted into British hands.

American forces worked to fortify their defensive positions at Ticonderoga and Mt. Independence, calling in the militia and waiting for the expected British assault. Instead, the British, concerned about the approaching winter and the fifteen thousand American troops prepared to meet them, returned to the warm forts of Canada. The threat of northern invasion ended for 1776, but the next season's campaign did not begin well for the Americans.

**1777**—During the winter of 1776/1777 the American reduced their troops in Lake Champlain forts to a minimum. Despite the harsh conditions, Chief Engineer Jeduthan Baldwin started work in February on the great floating bridge connecting Fort Ticonderoga and Mount Independence. The "Great Bridge" was considered an engineering marvel for its time. Twenty footings for the bridge were built on the ice. These were basically huge log boxes, like log cabins without roofs, weighted down with stone and lowered through the ice to act as anchors for a floating log road.

In June of 1777, an army under the command of General John Burgoyne and made up of 8,000 British and Hessian (German) soldiers advanced up the lake towards Ticonderoga and Mt. Independence. On July 5, 1777, with the threat of a much larger British force, the American's abandoned these lake fortifications and began an organized retreat. Burgoyne's forces steadily pressed forward but met stubborn resistance at Hubbardton and a surprising defeat at Bennington. As the invading army moved into the Hudson Valley, American forces were massing to stop them. The ultimate contest centered at Saratoga with Horatio Gates in command of the American force

and Benedict Arnold as one of his generals. In a major land battle, the British were defeated and forced to surrender. This was the turning point of the Revolution and directly effected the outcome of the war. Historians have pointed to the previous season's naval contest on Lake Champlain as the crucial event which delayed the British a season and sowed the seeds of victory at Saratoga the following year.

The next years saw the front of the war shift south, while in the Champlain Valley, small British-Indian raiding parties continued to harass residents. Some, like Peter Ferris and his son Squire, were captured and taken back to Canada as prisoners. Most valley residents were ultimately forced to abandon their homes and withdraw to safer territories. It was not until after the final American successes and the winding down of the war in 1783 that residents and new settlers began to return.

## Find and Label the 13 Original Colonies

(Hint: the borders between colonies may have been different from the state borders shown here.)



# Time Line of the American Revolution

Complete the time line by filling in the events that took place in the Champlain Valley.

Date	Historical Event
<b>1775</b>	
April 18-19	Midnight ride—Paul Revere, William Dawes, and Dr. Samuel Prescott alert patriots of British march to capture colonial supplies at Concord, MA.
April 19	Lexington and Concord—first military action of the American Revolution - Minutemen engage British enroute to Concord and returning to Boston.
May 9-10	
June 14-15	U.S. Army—Congress authorizes a Continental Army and appoints George Washington commander-in-chief.
June 17	Battle of Bunker Hill—British overrun American positions on Breed's Hill and Bunker Hill near Boston.
August 28	
December 31	
<b>1776</b>	
January 10	<i>Common Sense</i> —Thomas Paine's pamphlet extolling independence is published in Philadelphia.
February 27	Battle of Moore's Creek Bridge—North Carolina militia defeat loyalists in the battle known as the "Lexington and Concord of the South."
July 4	Declaration of Independence approved by Congress.
August 27	Battle of Long Island—The Americans are defeated by British on Long Island, NY.
October 11-13	
October 28	Battle of White Plains—British defeat retreating Americans north of New York City.
December 25-26	Raid on Trenton—Americans capture Hessian garrison in New Jersey.
<b>1777</b>	
January 3	Battle of Princeton—British support troops defeated by Americans near Trenton, NJ.

July 5	
August 6	Battle of Oriskany—American militia ambushed by loyalists and Indians in upstate NY.
August 16	Battle of Bennington—New Hampshire militia defeat British and Hessians in New York (now Vermont).
September 11	Battle of Brandywine—British defeat Americans near Philadelphia
Sept.19-Oct.7	Battle of Saratoga—Americans defeat British; turning point of the American Revolution.
October 4	Battle of Germantown—attacking Americans repulsed by British north of Philadelphia.
October 17	Surrender of Saratoga—Gen. Burgoyne surrenders army; this victory assures French aid for the Americans.
December 19	Valley Forge—Continental Army's winter quarters in Pennsylvania.
<b>1778</b>	
June 28	Battle of Monmouth—Inconclusive battle between Continental Army and British in New Jersey.
<b>1779</b>	
May 10-July	Arnold's Treason—Benedict Arnold begins negotiations with the British.
<b>1780</b>	
Feb 11- May 12	Siege of Charleston—British capture Charleston, South Carolina.
August 16	Battle of Camden—Americans defeated by British in South Carolina.
October 7	Battle of King's Mountain—American frontiersmen defeat Loyalists, South Carolina.
<b>1781</b>	
January 17	Battle of Cowpens—British forces soundly defeated by Americans in South Carolina.
March 15	Battle of Guilford Courthouse—British defeat Americans in North Carolina.
Sept. 5-9	Battle of Chesapeake Bay—French fleet defeats British fleet off the Virginia Capes.
Sept 28-Oct 19	Seige of Yorktown—British garrison surrenders to American and French forces.

**1782**

April 12

Peace talks begin in Paris.

November 30

Provisional Peace Treaty—signed in Paris by the United States and Great Britain.

**1783**

September 3

Treaties of Paris and of Versailles—Peace treaties signed by Great Britain and United States (in Paris) and by Great Britain, France, and Spain (in Versailles).

November 2

Washington's "Farewell Address to the Army."

# The Race for Fleet

## Rationale

The summer of 1776 saw an arms race in the Champlain Valley. The British and Americans engaged in a shipbuilding race to gain control of Lake Champlain. The fleet that could carry more guns could win control of this strategic waterway.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Read excerpt from *Rabble In Arms* about the reasons why the British waited for us to build a fleet in 1776.
- Discuss the term “Arms Race” and compare the Race for Fleet in 1776 with the nuclear arms race.
- Compare the size and number of vessels in the American and British fleets on Lake Champlain during the Revolutionary war Battle of Valcour.
- Construct mobiles, or other visual representations to compare the American and British fleets.

## Vermont Standards Addressed

Vital Results

- 1.1
- 1.3
- 1.17

Fields of Knowledge

- 6.4 Historical Connections
- 6.18 Nature of Conflict
- 7.6 Arithmetic, Number, and Operation Concept

## Materials

- Overhead transparency of the Map of the Northern Army
- Student copies of the *1776 Arms Race* fleet information
- Drawing Paper (graph paper may be helpful to keep the scale)
- Drawing utensils (pens, pencils, colored pencils)

## Procedure

Teacher Preparation

Using your knowledge of the class and the time available, determine the visual representation project that your students will create (diorama, mobile, etc).

### A. Introduction

Using the transparency of the map of the Northern Army, ask students to identify the following areas: Skenesboro, St. Johns, Quebec, the Richelieu, Chambly, Lake St. Peter, Ticonderoga. Highlight these areas with color to easily refer back to them during or after the reading.

### B. Lesson Development

1. Set the scene for the reading by reminding students about the events of the spring/summer of 1776. The British are in St. Johns, Quebec building a fleet of ships, while the

Americans are also building a fleet in Skenesboro, New York.

2. Read aloud the excerpt from *Rabble In Arms*.

3. Ask students to summarize the reasons presented for why the British stopped at St. Johns to build a fleet of ships.

4. Discuss the term "Arms Race." Ask students to compare the race for fleet in 1776 with the nuclear arms race.

5. Distribute the copies of *1776 Arms Race*. Have students work in small groups to create a visual representation of the fleet. Using the same scale for each (example 1'=1/8"), create a mobile of the American fleet and one of the British fleet.

### C. Conclusion

Display the finished products in your classroom and in other areas of the school. Ask the students to imagine being a sailor in one of the fleets, and what their thoughts might have been when they saw the enemy for the first time.

### Extension

Tell students to imagine that they are an American boat builder at Skenesboro in 1776. They are ordered to design a military vessel that will hold three large cannons, several small swivel guns, and a complement of 45 men. The vessel will be made of wood and have the ability to be powered by sail or by oar so as to accommodate the fickle winds of Lake Champlain. Be sure to think about the areas needed for storage of armament and supplies, as well as areas for sleeping, eating, and working the sails and cannons.

Students should bring their designs with them to the Maritime Museum in order to compare their work with models of the vessels from the 1776 fleet.

A MAP of the Country which was the scene of operations of the NORTHERN ARMY; including the WILDERNESS through which General Arnold marched to attack QUEBEC.



## The Race for Fleet

An excerpt from the novel *Rabble In Arms* by Kenneth Roberts.

“I’m often asked why the British should have waited for us to build a fleet: why they didn’t row after us in small boats, if they were so determined to pursue us; or why they didn’t march immediately along the shore of the lake and scatter our sick and frightened army like a flock of pigeons. Or why, for that matter they didn’t bring down upon us the splendid fleet we had seen through the haze of Lake St. Peter while we lay on the sandbanks of Sorel. It’s for the sake of those fortunate souls who know nothing of war that I tell here the things which seemed to us so clear and simple.

“In the first place, most of the British vessels we had seen at Sorel drew too much water to enter the Richelieu. Those small enough to sail up the river were obliged to stop when they reached the Chambly rapids; for ships cannot climb rocky hills. They could not even be dragged around the rapids on wheels or sledges; for the British tried and failed. Therefore if the British wished vessels on Lake Champlain they were obliged to build them, or to carry them over the road in sections, as we had carried the ship timbers from St. John’s—a task as arduous, almost, as building them. But the Americans already had three vessels on the lake: the schooner Liberty, taken by Arnold’s men in May a year ago: the sloop Enterprise, captured by Arnold in his dash to St. John’s the same month; and the stout schooner Royal Savage, with her twelve brass cannon, captured by Montgomery at St. John’s when he took it from the British in the preceding November. They were in bad condition, but they were vessels, and could quickly be made seaworthy by capable ship carpenters. Their guns, moreover, were in place. If the British had tried to send an unprotected army down the lake in canoes and bateaux, we could have sailed alongside them in these three vessels of ours and blown them to pieces. And use the lake the British must—not only use it, but gain complete control of it before they could send their army south to join Howe and cut the colonies in two.

“There were no roads along the lake; they would have been obliged to build a hundred and fifty miles of road, from St. John’s to Ticonderoga, across swamps and rivers, and through trackless forests. They would have been three years at it, and been eaten by mosquitoes a dozen times.

“Consequently there was no way out of it; the British had to use the lake for the transportation of their men and supplies, but they couldn’t use it until they controlled it. The only way they could do this was by setting to work at St. John’s building more ships than we could build, and doing it in a hurry.”

## 1776 Arms Race

### British Fleet

#	Name	Length	Type of Vessel	# of Cannon
1	Inflexible	80'	Ship	18
1	Maria	66'	Schooner	14
1	Carleton	59'	Schooner	12
1	Thunderer	91'	Radeau	12
1	Loyal Convert	62'	Gondola	7
28	Unnamed	37'	Gunboats	1 each
4	Unnamed	20-40'	Longboats	1 each
400	Unnamed	25-30'	Bateau	None

### American Fleet

Name	Length	Type of Vessel	# of Cannon
Enterprise		Sloop	12
Royal Savage		Schooner	12
Revenge		Schooner	8
Liberty	41'	Schooner	Not at Battle
Philadelphia	54'	Gondola	3
New Haven	54'	Gondola	3
Providence	54'	Gondola	3
Boston	54'	Gondola	3
Spitfire	54'	Gondola	3
New Jersey	54'	Gondola	3
Connecticut	54'	Gondola	3
New York	54'	Gondola	3
Lee	43'9"	Cutter	6
Congress	80'	Row Galley	6
Washington	72'	Row Galley	8
Trumbull	78'	Row Galley	8

# Life on Board the Gunboat Philadelphia

## Rationale

During their visit to the Maritime Museum, students had the opportunity to climb aboard the replica gunboat *Philadelphia* and experience what life might have been like as a Revolutionary War Sailor.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Reflect on their experience at the Maritime Museum
- Imagine the life of a Revolutionary War soldier
- Write journal entries or letters home from a member of the *Philadelphia* crew.

## Vermont Standards Addressed

Vital Results

1.9 Narrative Writing

Fields of Knowledge

6.4 Historical Connections

## Procedure

### A. Introduction

Ask students recall their visit to the Maritime Museum, including boarding the gunboat Philadelphia, and watching the video Battle of Valcour Island. Ask: What do you remember the most about the gunboat? Did anything surprise you? What do you think it would be like to be one of the 44 crewmembers on board for 6 weeks with no opportunity to go ashore? What types of things did Bayze Wells include in his journal? What things were you interested in knowing, but Mr. Wells did not take the time to record?

### B. Lesson Development

1. Have students imagine that they are a member of the crew on the gunboat Philadelphia in 1776, and write journal entries or letters home.
2. Have students write a minimum of four entries, or letters from the gunboat using the following suggestions:
  - The first day or week on board.
  - Upon arrival at Valcour Island
  - The morning before the Battle
  - From the vessel *Washington* the day after the battle (after the *Philadelphia* sank, the crew boarded the *Washington*).
3. Ask students to imagine and describe:
  - How you are feeling.
  - What you see and hear.
  - What you are doing during the days and nights on board.
  - What you have to eat.
  - The other people around you.

### C. Conclusion:

Have students to choose their favorite entry to share with the class.

**Extensions**

Students at higher reading levels will enjoy reading an exciting account of the Battle of Valcour Island in the historic novel *Rabble in Arms* by Kenneth Roberts. The Lake Champlain Maritime Museum has created an abridged version of *Rabble In Arms*, for a 5<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level, which is available for purchase through the Museum Store.

# Tory or Rebel?

## Rationale

The Revolutionary War holds many stories of human struggles. A community's past and present history is filled with contributors of varied backgrounds, who have influenced their community through their actions.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Summarize the positions of tories and patriots
- Listen to the story of one Vermont family and community who were divided on the issue of loyalty to king or Congress.
- Work in group to research reasons (political, economic, familial, personal) why colonists would have chosen to fight with the Patriots, or support the Loyalists.
- Debate the issues using supportive dialogue, posters, recruitment speeches, or political cartoons.

## Vermont Standards Addressed

Vital Results

- 1.1 Listening, Clarification and Restatement
- 1.15 Expression, Speaking
- 2.7 Application, Information
- 3.10 Teamwork

Fields of Knowledge

- 5.8 Types of Literature
- 6.1 Causes and Effects in Human Societies

## Materials

- *Brothers in Arms*, by Lee Pennock Huntington
- Available research materials for the Revolutionary War (access to the library)

## Procedure

Teacher Preparation

Preview the book *Brothers in Arms*, by Lee Pennock Huntington. This short, 64 page novel based on a true story of the Pennock family from Strafford, Vermont, tells how conflicting loyalties divided family and community in the Revolutionary War. Determine the time available for this lesson, and decide if you wish to introduce the book and read aloud to page 16 prior to beginning this lesson.

### A. Introduction

Write the words "Loyalist, Patriot, Tory, and Rebel" on the board. Ask students to offer definitions of each.

### B. Lesson Development

1. Explain that some American colonists wanted total independence from England. These people were known as Rebels or Patriots. Others wanted only the right to make their own laws and to decide what taxes to pay but still remain citizens of England. They were called Tories or Loyalists. Families and neighbors were often torn apart when they were forced to make the painful choice of loyalty to king or Congress. In fact, that is what

is about to happen to the Pennock family.

2. Continue reading aloud from the short novel *Brothers in Arms*. Complete Chapter 5 before assigning the project, then complete the story over the week as time allows.

3. Have students work in small groups to research reasons (political, economic, familial, personal) why colonists would have chosen to fight with the Patriots, or support the Loyalists.

4. Groups will prepare and present both a written, and visual representation of one side (loyalist or patriot). Examples include: supportive dialogue to debate the issues, posters, recruitment speeches, and political cartoons.

### C. Conclusion

Ask students to comment on the following statement: "Our War for Independence in its beginning was a civil war."

### **Extensions**

*Brothers in Arms* presents many other issues involved in the fight for Independence. Identify other topics for discussion, or allow students to choose topics to study further.

# Rations

## Rationale

The life of a soldier or sailor aboard the fleet on Lake Champlain during the American Revolution was one of many personal struggles, including hunger and sickness.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Read excerpt from *Rabble In Arms* about food available to soldiers on Lake Champlain.
- Compare their own diet to rations of the Revolutionary War.
- Prepare hardtack.

## Vermont Standards Addressed

Vital Results

- 1.1 Reading Strategies
- 1.3 Reading Comprehension
- 1.13 Listening, Clarification and Restatement

Fields of Knowledge

- 6.6 Historical Connections

## Materials

- Transparency of the Map of the Northern Army
- Student copies of the Rations List
- Ingredients for Hardtack:
  - 1 tsp. salt
  - Water
  - Spoons
  - Mixing Bowl
  - Rolling Pin
  - Nail or carving fork
  - 1 lb. whole-wheat flour

## Procedure

Teacher Preparation

If students have not completed pre-visit lesson, “The Northern Theater of War,” it will be helpful for you to complete that lesson first, or summarize the information for your class.

### A. Introduction

Ask students to identify Isle aux Noix (pronounced ill-on-wah) on the Map of the Northern Army. Remind the students that the thousands of American soldiers used this island on the Richelieu River as a hospital camp during the retreat from Canada in the Spring of 1776. Explain that these soldiers arrived in boats and stayed on the island for approximately eight days

### B. Lesson Development

1. Have each student list three or four items that he or she thinks the soldiers on Isle aux Noix had to eat. Ask students to share items with you and record them on the board.
2. Tell the students that you are going to read a description from one soldier as written in the historical novel, *Rabble in Arms*. Read the selection aloud:

“To tell about Isle aux Noix is not easy. There was no food except a small amount of flour and salt pork. The pork was sour and bad, hard to eat unless a man held his nose; and even this carrion could not be properly cooked because firewood was scarce on the island. There was only brush, not nearly enough to make fires for eight thousand men three times a day, even if it had been burnable, which it was not, being green. Consequently we made the flour into paste with the brown water from the river, and spread the paste on stones, which we put in the sun. When the paste was dry, we peeled it off and ate it.”

3. Explain that the conditions on Isle aux Noix were extreme, availability, storage space, and primitive food preservation often effected the normal rations of food for soldiers during the American Revolution. Food on a sailing vessel had to be easy to prepare, easy to store without refrigeration, and relatively nutritious. Distribute the copies of rations, and ask students to imagine that this is all they are going to be allowed to eat for the next week. What foods do they see on the list that are not part of their own diet?

4. Ask students to work in small groups to develop a plan for meals for the week. They should determine how they would prepare the food, remembering that refrigeration was not available, and wood burning fires acted as the stove (remember the fireplace on the *Philadelphia II*)

5. Ask: What else will you do with your rations? Students may decide eventually that it would make sense to give most of their rations to a cook who could prepare food for many of them at the same time.

6. If you have access to an oven at school, have students make hardtack. Ask students what kind of bread would be best to have aboard a ship. Maybe some of them have heard of hardtack. Give them the directions below:

Mix salt with whole-wheat flour and enough water to make very stiff dough (approximately 3 1/2 c. flour to 1 1/2 c. water).

Roll the dough to a thickness of  $\frac{3}{4}$ –1 in. Cut the dough into 3 inch square sections and punch them liberally with holes using a medium size nail or a carving fork. Bake in a flat pan at 250°F for two or three hours. (A faster method, but less historically accurate—camp fires rarely burned at 400°F—is to bake at 400°F for 20–25 minutes.)

### C. Conclusion

Ask: Can you live on hardtack? (only for a very limited period of time. A sailor eating only hardtack and water would eventually contract scurvy, a vitamin C deficiency that is fatal if not treated).

### Extensions

1. The soldiers on Isle Aux Noix retreated in Bateaux when the British made their way to St. John. These sick and weak men rowed to Crown Point. Determine the miles rowed and calculate how long it might have taken them to travel that distance in their condition.

2. Students can research and report on diseases related to diet and nutrition.

# Rations Lists for American Soldiers of the Revolutionary War

## Weekly

3 pts. of peas or beans or other vegetables (in scarce supply in the Champlain Valley during the summer of 1776)

1 lb. beef

1 lb. pork

1 lb. saltfish

1 lb. bread or flour

1 pt. milk

1 pt. rice or 1 pt. of Indian meal

## Daily

1 qt. spruce beer or cider

Rum (when available)

## Luxuries

Sugar

Coffee

Chocolate

Molasses

# Smallpox

## Rationale

The American forces were greatly affected by sickness, especially smallpox.

## Objectives

Students will:

- Read about smallpox
- Locate Isle Aux Noix on the Map of the Northern Army
- Discuss the absence of a grave marker for the thousands that died
- Design a marker and appropriate text for the site

## Vermont Standards Addressed

Vital Results

- 1.1 Reading Strategies
- 1.3 Reading Comprehension

Fields of Knowledge

- 6.4 Historical Connections
- 6.7 Geographical Knowledge

## Materials

- Transparency of the Map of the Northern Army
- Student copies of *Rabble In Arms* excerpt

## Procedure

A. Introduction

Ask students for a definition of smallpox. After accepting students ideas, read the description of smallpox written by John W. Krueger, a historian from UVM.

“Smallpox, the plague of the Northern Army in 1776, was characterized by fevers, headaches, and backpains. These discomforts were followed by dark red eruptions, which first appeared on the forehead and gradually spread over the entire body. The eruptions developed into pimples, which eventually burst and produced an ‘extrem fire and itching’ that was ‘very Tedious to bair.’ The eruptions or ‘pox’ left the distinct scars from which the disease derived its name. Those fortunate enough to survive the pox passed through a very unpleasant recovery phase. As one soldier vividly described his condition, ‘my stomach very fowl, breath bad & my whole fraim soar.’ A high mortality rate combined with the possibility of disfigurement for life made smallpox a terrifying disease.”

B. Lesson Development

1. Ask students to locate Isle aux Noix on a map of Lake Champlain. Remind students that the island was used as a hospital for troops during their retreat from Canada in the Spring of 1776.
2. Distribute student copies of the selection from *Rabble in Arms*. Tell students that this historical novel describes what it was like on the island with the thousands of sick soldiers. Read aloud.
3. Allow students to reflect on the description above and ask: Should these men be

considered soldiers who died for their country even though they didn't die in battle? Is Isle Aux Noix a historic site?

4. Explain that until recently there was no grave marker or historical monument marking the site on Isle Aux Noix, where thousands of Revolutionary War soldiers are buried. A small group of historians worked with the Canadian Government to recognize this final resting-place for these American soldiers.

5. Have students work in small groups to design a monument to honor the American soldiers who died on Isle aux Noix. They should also compose the appropriate text to accompany the monument.

### C. Conclusion

Display the monument designs and text in the classroom, and have students vote on the best design and the best text. Submit the winners to the Maritime Museum.

### Extensions

1. Discuss other points in American History when smallpox or other epidemic diseases created havoc.
2. Research the name of the island "Isle aux Noix", and its meaning, "Nut Island".
3. Write journal entries of the soldiers suffering from smallpox.

## Devil's Island

An excerpt from the novel *Rabble in Arms* by Kenneth Roberts.

“Isle aux noix is a flat pancake of an island, a mile long and a quarter mile wide. Near the middle of it were a house and a barn and a few outhouses grouped around a heap of manure. Plowed fields surrounded the house; but the rest of the island was lowland and brush.

“On this marsh were eight thousand men—eight thousand American soldiers, or men who had once been soldiers. Two thousand of them had smallpox. The six thousand who were not sick when they arrived were weary beyond all telling; for no weariness compares with the exhaustion that follows failure. The truth is that men who were called “sick” on Isle aux Noix were all but dead, whereas those who were said to be “well” were only well in that they were able to drag themselves around without assistance.

“During our first night on this devil's island we expected that with the dawn, the moaning of the sick would become less terrible; but instead of that, it increased. The reason it increased was because many had died during the night, and those still alive wished the dead removed. They feared, too, that vermin would leave the dead for the living, who were already infested beyond all belief.

“Also they wanted water, and dressings for their sores, and medicine, and human companionship, and some sort of surcease from the anguish of homesickness that intensified their burning and itching.

“As soon as it was possible to see we went to work helping these sufferers. In the case of a dead man, we drew him out on his torn and horrid blanket, knotting the lower corners across this feet, so there would be no slipping. Then two of us laid hold of the upper corners and dragged him to the dead pits, which were at the lower end of the island; the end near St. John's. The dead pits were trenches, shallow and a scant six feet in width. Because of the great number of sick, and the frequency with which they died, the pits were always open, until they were full.”