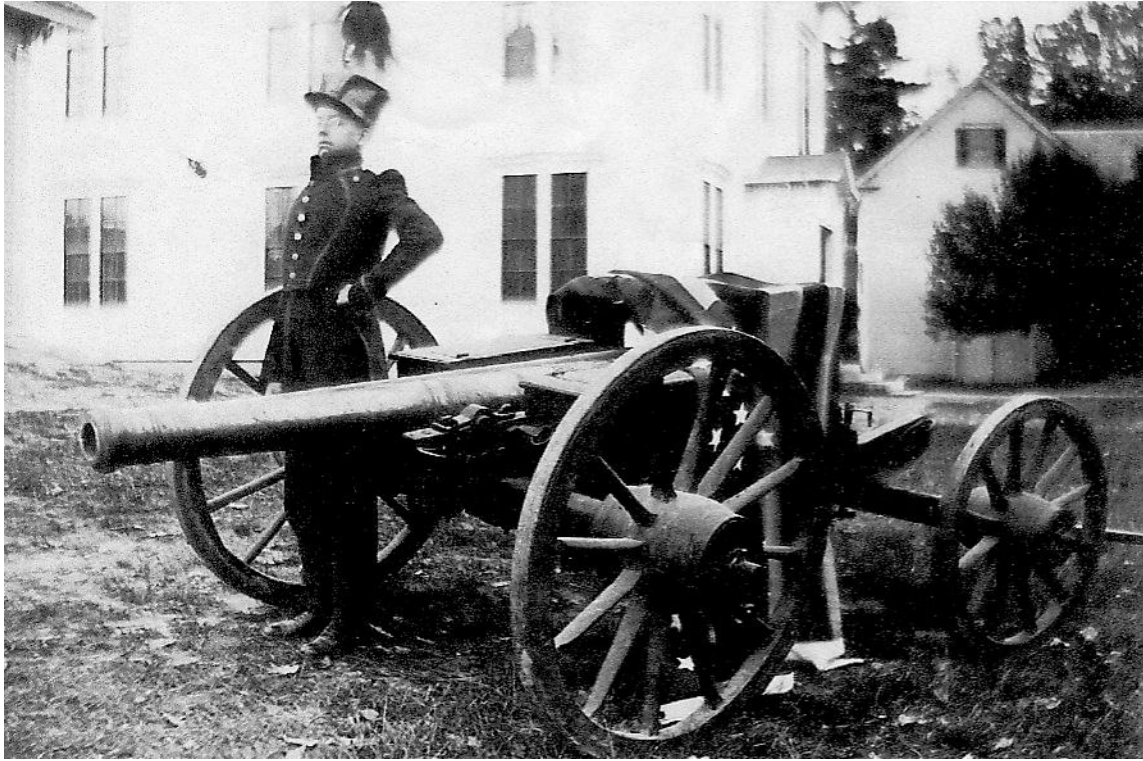


From Paris to New Boston – the Tale of a Cannon

*by Dan Rothman
for the New Boston Historical Society
updated June 2011*

How did an 18th-Century cannon made in France before the time of Marie Antoinette end up in New Boston, New Hampshire?



Note: This document is a work in progress.

It will be updated as more information about the Molly Stark Cannon becomes available.

Outline of this document:

- Timeline – Major events in the history of the cannon
- A Brief History – Tracing the route of the cannon from France to Quebec to Vermont to New Hampshire
- About the Cannon – Details about the bronze four-pounder
- Molly's Twin – The other half of a matched set is in London
- Firing the Cannon – Information about the gun crew and firing procedure
- The Mostly True History of a Cannon – More detail about battles in which Molly may have participated

TIMELINE

- 1743 - The cannon is cast in Paris, France and shipped to New France (Canada). 🇫🇷 ← French property
- 1759 - **French & Indian War:** British and colonial soldiers led by General Wolfe defeat French and Canadian defenders in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec City. The cannon is captured by the British. 🇬🇧
- 1777 - **Revolutionary War:** General John Stark's New Hampshire Militia defeat Hessian soldiers at the Battle of Bennington and capture four cannon. 🇺🇸
- 1812 - **War of 1812:** American soldiers use the cannon to defend Fort Detroit (Michigan) but the British capture the town and the cannon. 🇬🇧
- 1813 - Americans recapture the cannon from the British at the Battle of Fort George (Ontario). 🇺🇸

- 1820 - Sometime after the War of 1812 and before his death in 1822, General Stark gives the cannon to the New Hampshire Militia. It ends up in New Boston.
- 1861 - **Civil War:** When the U.S. Government requisitions all old guns to be melted down to cast new weapons, the cannon cannot be found.
- 1938 - The New Boston Artillery Company is reorganized to be the official custodian of the Molly Stark cannon.
- 1993 - The 250-year-old cannon receives its new gun carriage, built in New Boston as an exact replica of its 1812 carriage.



The Molly Stark Cannon on parade in Manchester, NH. – date unknown

A BRIEF HISTORY

FROM FRANCE TO CANADA

The gun that is now called the Molly Stark Cannon was originally cast in Paris in 1743 and shipped across the Atlantic to protect Quebec. In 1759 during the **French and Indian War**, the British army defeated the French defenders in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham outside Quebec City. In this fifteen minute battle which changed the history of Canada, both the British General Wolfe and the French General Montcalm were mortally wounded. The Molly Stark was among the cannon captured by the British.

FROM CANADA TO VERMONT

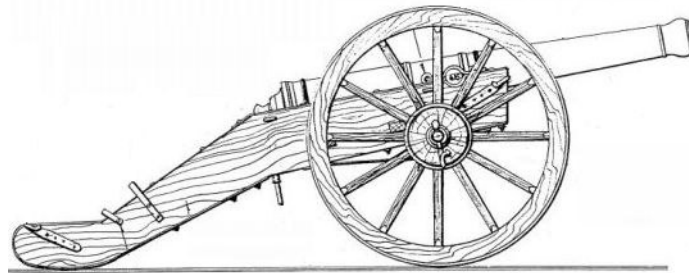
During the **Revolutionary War**, British General John Burgoyne led an army south from Quebec in attempt to separate New England from the other American colonies. In August of 1777, Burgoyne sent Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum with 800 Hessian troops towards Bennington, Vermont to requisition provisions for his army. Baum was opposed by General John Stark, who led a New Hampshire Militia of 1,500 men.

When he encountered the Hessians, Stark told his militia men "There are your enemies, the Red Coats and the Tories. They are ours, or this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow!" (Read more later about the General's wife, Molly Stark.) At the Battle of Bennington – actually two fierce battles fought ten miles west of Bennington in New York state – the victorious Americans captured four cannon from the Hessians.

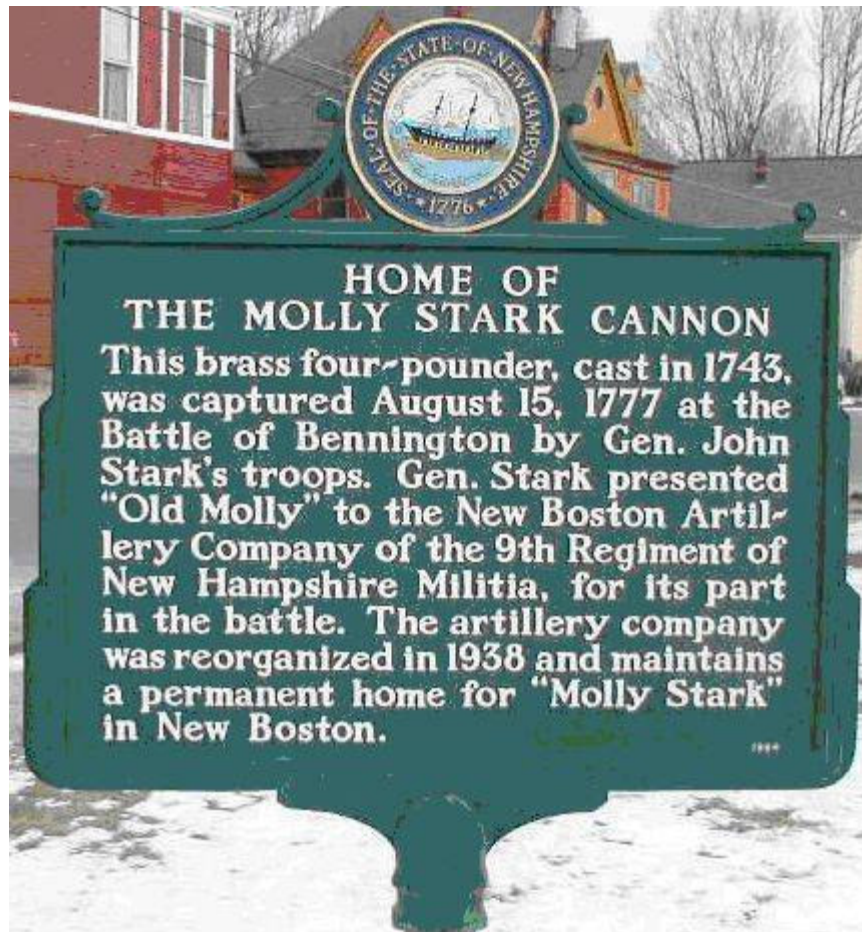
FROM VERMONT TO NEW HAMPSHIRE

After the Battle of Bennington, the American troops named one of the captured guns “Old Molly” after the General's wife. One story is that Captain Benjamin Dodge was put in charge of “Old Molly” and brought it home to New Boston in case he needed it to fight the British.

Returned to service in the **War of 1812**, “Old Molly” was captured by the British after the siege of Detroit, Michigan and later recaptured by the Americans at Fort George north of Niagara Falls. After this war, the 70-year-old gun was retired from active duty. An aging General Stark is supposed to have awarded the Molly Stark cannon to the New Boston Artillery Company in recognition of their performance at the 1777 Battle of Bennington. Another account states that the cannon might be used by whichever town's artillery company boasted the largest membership, and New Boston claimed ownership of the gun on that basis.¹ Anyway, General Stark died in 1822, eight years after his wife Molly Stark's death.



¹ From the New Boston Argus, December 4, 1890: “It was taken from the British at the battle of Bennington with several other pieces by Gen. John Stark, Aug. 16, 1777, and presented by him to the Ninth New Hampshire regiment militia, the largest company of course claiming the honor of having it. It remained in Bedford many years, because the company at that place was the largest, but sixty-five years ago [i.e. 1825] last May, that being the annual “training” day, New Boston had the largest company of artillery, Robert B. Cochran captain, then in the prime of his life. They went to Bedford and claimed the gun and brought it home with them, and for many years took good care to keep the ranks of their company full, so as to keep the gun, and it is still here, though the company has not done duty for many years.”



ABOUT THE CANNON

The historical marker in the center of New Boston reads:

HOME OF THE MOLLY STARK CANNON

This brass four-pounder, cast in 1743, was captured August 15, 1777 at the Battle of Bennington by Gen. John Stark's troops. Gen. Stark presented "Old Molly" to the New Boston Artillery Company of the 9th Regiment of New Hampshire Militia, for its part in the battle. The artillery company was reorganized in 1938 and maintains a permanent home for "Molly Stark" in New Boston.

The Molly Stark cannon weighs about 800 pounds but it is described as a "four-pounder". This refers to the weight of the cast iron cannon balls it fires. Its effective range is five- to seven-hundred yards.

The cannon is more correctly described as made of bronze than brass. It is made of an alloy sometimes called "gun metal" that is mostly copper mixed with tin, with possibly a little zinc mixed in. Although bronze is about 20% denser than cast iron, the other metal used for making cannon prior to the 19th century, less bronze than iron is needed to make a cannon of a specific caliber. Bronze cannon were more expensive but were lighter which was important to General Burgoyne of the British Army as he transported his guns down Lake Champlain towards Bennington, Vermont during the Revolutionary War.

Bronze cannon are safer for the gun crew. If a bronze gun fails in battle it would likely crack or split, while a cast iron gun might shatter and kill its crew with flying shards of iron. For safety reasons, when the Molly Stark is fired nowadays the New Boston Artillery Company does not use a full charge of gunpowder – or a cannonball! The Artillery Company history records that some Goffstown men once believed that the Molly Stark should not be fired at all so they "spiked" the gun's firing vent with a three-cornered file. Fortunately,

Newt Butterfield of New Boston was able to repair the cannon. In the 1983 the Company had a radiologist x-ray the cannon to ensure that it was still safe to fire. Geiger counters were set up to monitor the level of radiation in the Town Offices. X-ray film was taped around the outside of the cannon and a small pellet of radioactive iridium was inserted in the barrel by remote control for a 40-second exposure. No internal cracks were discovered – Old Molly passed her exam.



BEFORE THE X-RAY — New Boston Rep. Roland Sallata, Manny Venegas, David Michaud of Hitchiner Manufacturing Co. and David Powers, radiologist for Venegas Industrial Testing Laboratories together measure the historic, 240-year-old cannon which is fired each July 4. (Photo by Virginia Wegener)

Another advantage of bronze over iron is that it is less susceptible to water damage, which proved useful whenever the New Boston men hid the Molly Stark at the bottom of a mill pond or in the river. At other times from the 1800s until quite recently the cannon was hidden in a grain mill or a barn to keep it from men of Dunbarton and Goffstown who thought that General Stark should have given it to them.

Bronze guns are also easier to recycle than cast iron guns. During the Civil War, the Federal government issued an order for the Molly Stark cannon to be delivered for recasting into a new gun, but of course Old Molly could not be found.



The Cannon "Molly Stark" captured from the British by Gen. Stark at Bennington, Vt.

MOLLY'S TWIN

In the 1960s, Dr. Robert Chaffee of Lyme, New Hampshire, visited the Royal Artillery Museum at Woolwich near London, England. There he discovered a cannon with this description:

A brass gun, with date 1743. On the base ring, "Fait, a Paris, 1743."—Made at Paris, 1743. On the 1st reinforce a coat of arms surmounted by a crown, and supported by two Indian chiefs armed with bows and arrows. The coat of arms contains in the upper part fleurs-de-lis ; in the lower the figure of a man reclining on the ground, supporting in his hand a crucible of fire. The vent is at one end of a narrow pan, which extends about 6 in. down the reinforce. Length 4 ft. 11 in. ; calibre 2.75 in.

This cannon exactly matches the Molly Stark and is likely its long-lost mate. The Molly Stark was one of a matched pair when General Stark's militia captured the guns from Colonel von Breymann. The pair were recaptured by the British during the war of 1812, but only one gun (Old Molly) was recovered by the Americans at the Battle of Fort George. The other gun was thought to be lost at sea until it was discovered in Woolwich by Dr. Chaffee.



Although the Royal Artillery Museum plaque identifies its cannon as “4 pdr SBML Cal 2.75 in (French)” where “SBML” means “Smooth Bore Muzzle Loading”, the New Boston Artillery Company's documents describe the Molly Stark as 85.8mm caliber (3.38 inches), “equivalent to 4.5 pounds (which did not conform to French regulations of the period.)” William Meuse, curator of the Springfield Armory National Historic Site, wrote in 1982 that he believes the Molly Stark cannon was cast as a “long 3 Pdr” and is now “about a 4 Pdr.” which he attributes to the engraving in the left trunnion of the gun, which reads “Rebored May 22, 1891 by D. N. Butterfield”. (In his letter to New Hampshire historian Leon Anderson, Meuse is adamant that “original records of the British, German and American forces made it quite clear that the German artillery units [at the Battle of Bennington] were using British cannon” – not a French-made gun.)

A four pound iron cannon ball has a diameter of 3.05” (2.84” for a 3-pound ball) but a cannon would be bored out so that its caliber would be about 5% bigger to allow for “windage”, the rough casting and rusting of the cannonball. The French inch of the mid 18th century was 6-7% longer than the English inch, and the French pound used prior to the metric system was 8% heavier than an English pound. The Woolwich cannon has a 2.93” bore and the Molly Stark now measures 3.3”.

FIRING THE CANNON

From “New Boston Artillery Company – 50 Years”:

It takes a crew of five men. An **officer** and a **powder monkey** place the powder bag in the muzzle. The powder is then rammed in tightly by the **rammer**. It is the **wormer**'s job to pack the barrel with wet paper and grass while the rammer continues to ram, making it air-tight. To prevent accidental discharge, the **thumber** must keep the firing vent closed during the loading by placing his thumb over the vent and keeping it there until the officer in charge gives the orders to fire.

A later document defines a six man gun crew, with a Gun Captain, Powder Monkey, Rammer, Bombardier, and Vent Tender. The sixth man is the Lintstock Tender or Fire Monkey, who holds the long-handled lintstock with its lighted “slow match” to ignite the primer in the vent on the Gun Captain's command to fire.

Using a lintstock and match is more historically correct than firing the cannon with an electric detonator and a plunger, or inserting a red hot iron in the firing vent, as was done not too long ago. George Peirce, the late historian of the New Boston Artillery Company, once said: “Molly has quite a kick to her. She jumps back about 20 to 25 feet when she goes off. You can't stay too close when Old Molly is fired. Some professor from Dartmouth came by a few years back. He said Old Molly was the only Revolutionary War cannon around still firing. He said she was priceless, and that we'd wreck her if we kept shoving three pounds of gunpowder down her barrel every time we fired her. So we cut down to one pound of gunpowder. She still makes a hell of a noise when she goes off.”

The Artillery Company later experimented with varying quantities of gunpowder to determine the smallest amount and mixture that would produce a satisfying bang and smoke. They have settled on ½ lb. of black powder for the past decade and a half. It is a mix of 50% FF and 50% FFF black powder. FFF (pronounced “triple F”) is finest, like sugar, and fast burning. FF is coarser and slower-burning. Brent Armstrong weighs out a quarter-pound of each on a kitchen scale he borrows from his wife and mixes them in a plastic sandwich bag. He wraps the bag of powder in aluminum foil in a cylindrical shape that will fit in the barrel of the cannon.

While some artillery companies now use a plastic straw filled with black powder as a primer, for the Molly Stark a “quick match” fuse used for fireworks is obtained from Telstar Display Fireworks in Jaffrey. It's a cotton string soaked in black powder then dried. The string is encased in waxed paper rolled up and taped then put through the vent.

The Historical Society also has some friction primers of the sort that may have been used in the early 1800s. Each primer is a thin copper tube filled with black powder and a friction composition of antimony sulphide and potassium chlorate that ignited when the roughened end of a wire on a lanyard was pulled through it.



The commands to fire the cannon safely are:

Fall in – gun crew faces the Gun Commander with their backs to the powder box

Dress piece – gun crew takes their positions at the cannon and comes to attention

Search piece – the Vent Tender cleans the vent and the Bombardier searches barrel with worm
Sponge barrel – Vent Tender places thumb over vent, Rammer sponges barrel, and Bombardier receives the charge from the Powder monkey
Charge powder – Bombardier brings powder charge to mouth of barrel and slides it in the tube
Ram powder – Rammer rams home the charge
Charge wadding – Bombardier brings wadding to mouth of barrel and slides it in the tube
Ram wadding – Rammer rams home the charge
Charge ball – Bombardier brings ball to mouth of barrel and rolls it in the tube
Ram ball – Rammer rams home the ball
Prime piece – Vent tender punctures the powder charge, inserts the priming quill into the vent and places his gloved hand over the primer and vent
Make ready – gun crew moves to their positions outside the wheel hubs
Fire – the Lintstock Tender moves to his firing position and touches the lintstock to the firing quill
Search piece – the Bombardier searches barrel with worm
Sponge barrel – Rammer sponges barrel
Dress piece – gun crew takes their positions at the cannon and comes to attention
Dismissed – the gun crew retires to the rear and is dismissed
Note: These command descriptions have been abbreviated – please do not try this at home.

The caretakers of the Old Molly are the reorganized New Boston Artillery Company, incorporated in 1938 “to have custody of and responsibility for the cannon ‘Molly Stark’.” The Company takes its stewardship very seriously. For many years the Company has maintained the Molly Stark cannon, its gun carriages, its history and the traditions of an artillery company.



A four-pound cannon ball was found in a field at the Four-Way Farm on Greenfield Road in New Boston. Its age is unknown but it fits the Molly Stark cannon. In 2011 it weighs 3 lbs 14 oz and has a diameter of 3-1/16”.

The Mostly True History of a Cannon

The Molly Stark Cannon saw action in three wars: the French and Indian War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. The history below will focus on four battles in which the Molly Stark is believed to have fought: the Battles of Quebec (1759), Bennington (1777), Fort Detroit (1812) and Fort George (1813).

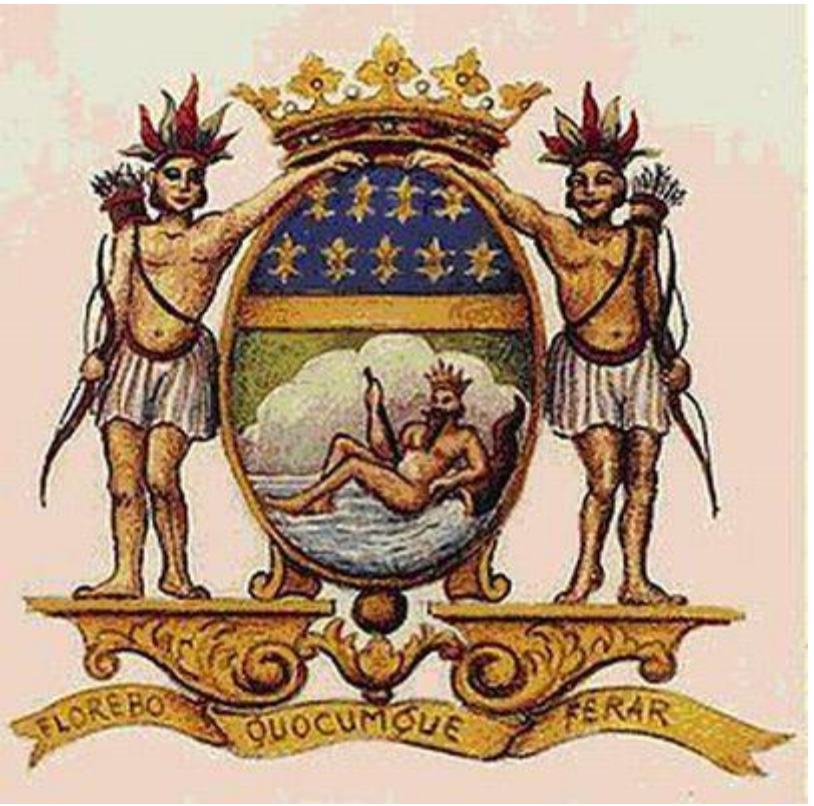
Note: This might be “A Completely True History” if the New Boston Historical Society could obtain written evidence of the cannon’s whereabouts between 1743 and the early 1800s. References to the cannon’s participation in the Battle of Quebec and the Battle of Bennington appear in records from the Manchester Historic Association from 1899, for example, but it is not known how this was documented.

1743 - A Cannon is Cast

The cannon was cast in Paris, France in 1743 for a trading company called the Compagnie des Indes. In the 17th and 18th centuries it was common for private companies to be established in Europe to trade with the East Indies (which include India), China, and the Americas. An early example is the East India Company which was chartered in London in 1600. A French competitor, formed in the early 1700s, was the Compagnie des Indes, which means the "Company of the Indies". The Compagnie traded in Canadian beaver furs, tobacco and other goods.

The cannon, which was not yet named the Molly Stark, has the words "Fait A Paris 1743" (Made in Paris 1743) cast into its base. It also bears the coat of arms of the Compagnie des Indes:





The coat of arms is that of the “Compagnie Des Indes”, or “India Company”, a French trading company organized in 1642 for trade in the Americas. It depicts a reclining King Neptune flanked by two Indians armed with bows and arrows. The Company’s motto was FLOREBO QUO FERAR (I flower where I am planted).

It is believed that the cannon was shipped to Quebec to protect the city from its adversaries.

The French and Indian War

1759 - Our cannon is captured by the British from the French in the Battle of Quebec.



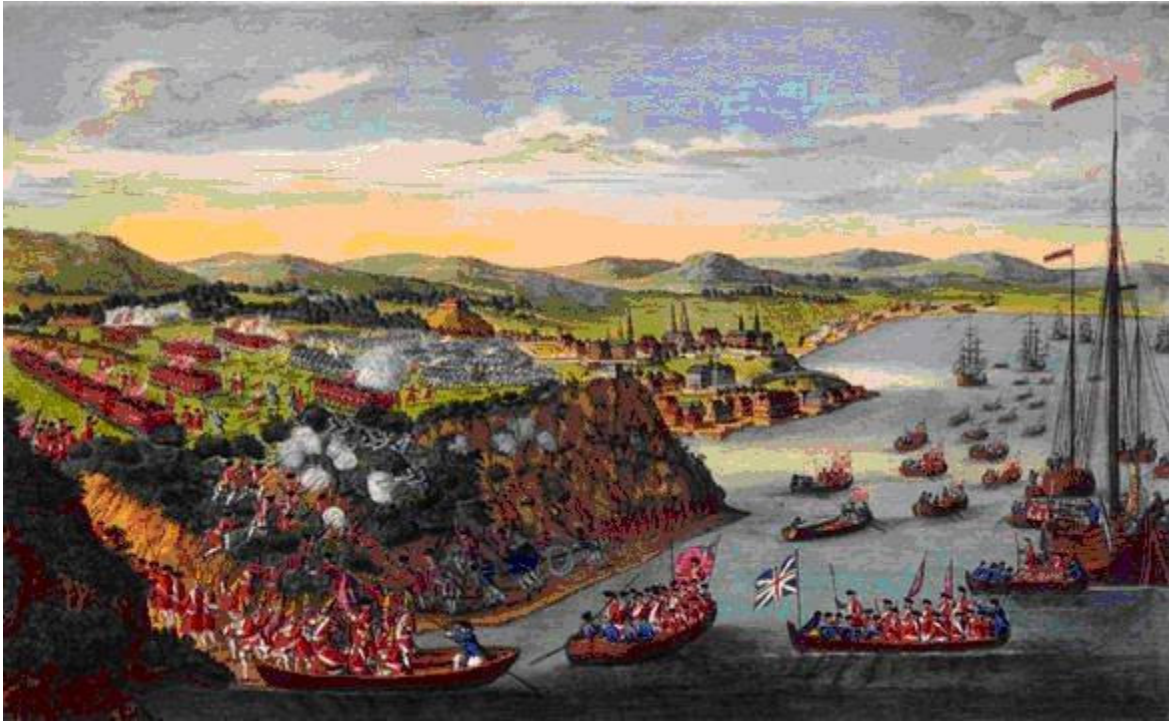
Map of North America c.1750

The map shows a large blue area claimed by France and a smaller pink area claimed by Great Britain. However, in the mid-18th century the thirteen British colonies (pink) were densely populated by 1,000,000 English, Scots and Irish settlers while there were only 50,000 people of French descent in New France (blue).

What about Native Americans? In 1750 there were about 250,000 North American Indians living east of the Mississippi. The native tribes were dominated by the Iroquois, a league of six nations who formed and dissolved alliances with the British or French with expediency.

The French and Indian War was fought between Great Britain and France between 1754 and 1763. The first few years saw military success for the French and their Indian allies. British defeats in North America and the Seven Years' War being fought in Europe at the same time led to a change of government in London. The new Prime Minister, William Pitt, strengthened the British Army and Navy in both continents which led to a series of British victories.

By the summer of 1759, British General James Wolfe was laying siege to Quebec City, defended by the French Marquis de Montcalm. After three months of siege, the British army was weakened by illness and low morale, so in September a frustrated Wolfe gambled on a daring surprise attack. He sent 5,000 men upriver on a moonlit night to climb up steep slopes onto the Plains of Abraham outside the walls of Quebec City.



Battle of Quebec on the Plains of Abraham 1759

The next morning Montcalm led his troops onto the Plains and two armies met. After fifteen minutes of pitched battle in which both Wolfe and Montcalm were mortally wounded, the French retreated to the city, which they later surrendered along with "250 Pieces of Cannon, a Number of mortars, from 9 to fifteen Inches, Field-Pieces, Hawitzers, &c." (from a report by a British Grenadier). It is believed that the Molly Stark and its mate were captured from the French at this time.

Results of French & Indian War:

- * France loses most of its North American territory.
- * The Americans fighting alongside the British learn that the British army is not invincible.
- * The British government incurs so much debt fighting the war that it decides to increase taxes on its American colonies. Will this lead to a Tea Party?

The Revolutionary War (American War of Independence)

1777 - Our cannon is captured by General John Stark from the British in the Battle of Bennington.



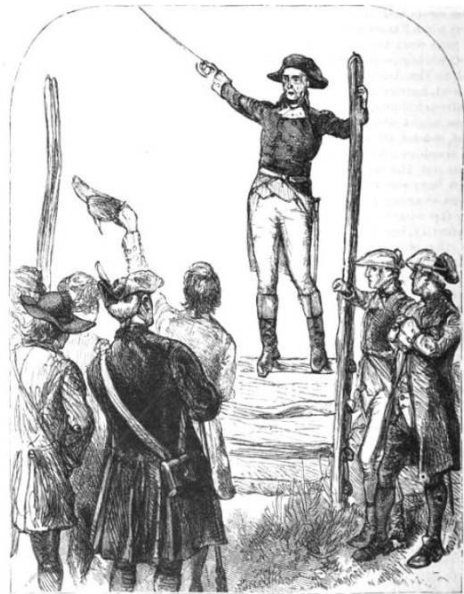
British and American routes to Bennington

By 1777 the American soldiers who had fought alongside the British against the French in Quebec were now fighting for independence from Great Britain. British General John Burgoyne led an army south from Quebec in attempt to separate New England from the other American colonies. In August, Burgoyne sent a detachment of about 800 Hessian (German) troops under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich Baum towards Bennington, Vermont to steal some horses and cattle. Baum was opposed by General John Stark, who led a New Hampshire Militia of 1,500 men. Stark had been ordered to march to Saratoga, New York, but was ignoring these orders.

When he encountered the Hessians, Stark reputedly told his militia men "There are your enemies, the Red Coats and the Tories. They are ours, or this night Molly Stark sleeps a widow!" (Note: the General's wife, Molly Page Stark, grew up in the Dunbarton, New Hampshire house which still stands on Route 13 by Page's Corner.)

Colonel Baum was inexperienced, hampered by his inability to speak English, and outnumbered. He requested reinforcements, and Burgoyne sent another 600 Hessian troops led by Colonel Heinrich von Breymann. However, von Breymann disliked Baum so he marched his men as slowly as possible and arrived after Baum and his troops had surrendered. After more fighting, von Breymann retreated, leaving behind all of his artillery pieces.

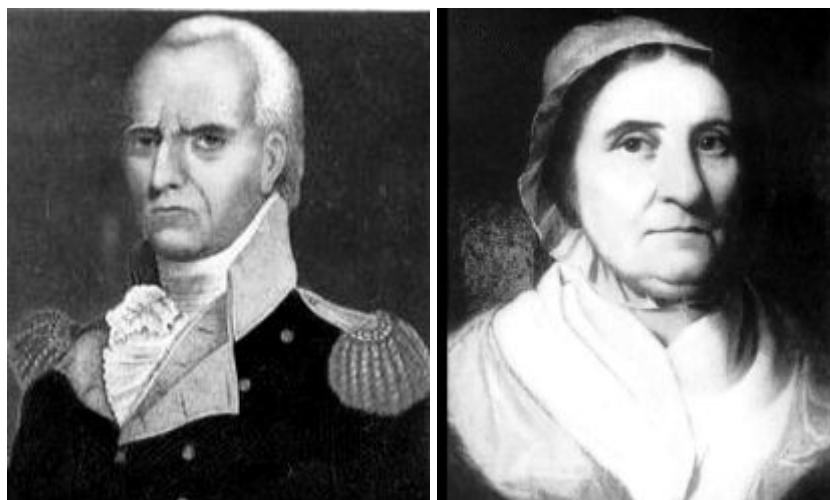
American casualties were 30 killed and 40 wounded. British losses were 200 killed and 700 captured. It was a great American victory.



“General Stark Haranguing His Men” from Harper’s Magazine, 1877, and a print showing Hessian prisoners being led from the battlefield.

After the battle, General Stark returned to where he had tethered his horse only to find that someone had stolen it.

The British army's defeat at the Battle of Bennington was a turning point in the War of Independence, as it led to the American victory in Saratoga and the end of Burgoyne's campaign. However we cannot be certain that the Molly Stark cannon actually was present at this pivotal battle. Some historians believe that the Hessians brought two 3-pounder and two 6-pounder cannon to the battle, and the Molly Stark is a 4-pounder.² Nevertheless the inscription still clearly visible on the top of the gun barrel reads: "Molly Stark - Taken at the Battle of Bennington, August 16th 1777. Presented to the New Boston Artillery Company 9th Regt N.H. Militia by Gen. John Stark".



General John Stark and his wife Molly Stark, after 1800

² New Boston author Clifton La Bree, in his 2007 biography of General John Stark, says that his research indicates that the two larger field guns captured from Colonel von Breyman in the Battle of Bennington were six-pounders. He writes of the gun now in New Boston: “Molly is not, and could never have been, one of the cannons General Stark captured at Bennington.” However, National Park Service historian William Meuse thinks that the Molly Stark cannon was a three-pounder in 1777 prior to being rebored in 1891.

The War of 1812

1812 - Our cannon is captured by the British from the Americans in the Battle of Fort Detroit.

1813 - Our cannon is recaptured by the Americans in the Battle of Fort George.



Map of Upper Canada ("up river" from Lower Canada) 1812

Battle of Fort Detroit (1812)

Early in the War of 1812, 700 British soldiers and 600 of their native allies laid siege to Fort Detroit, which was defended by Colonel William Hull and 2,200 American soldiers and militiamen.

British General Isaac Brock and the Shawnee leader Tecumseh tricked the Americans into believing that they were a much larger army. For example, the Americans watched as the distant British troops lined up for dinner. Each British soldier received his plateful of beans, carried it out of sight to dump the beans into a hidden pot, then rejoined the line of men waiting to be fed.

The American general became convinced that he was opposed by thousands of British regulars. Listening to the Indian war cries, he feared for the safety of the women and children in the fort, including his daughter and grandchild. Against the advice of his subordinates, Hull surrendered Fort Detroit to the British. Military stores captured by the British included 30 cannon, 300 rifles and 2,500 muskets.

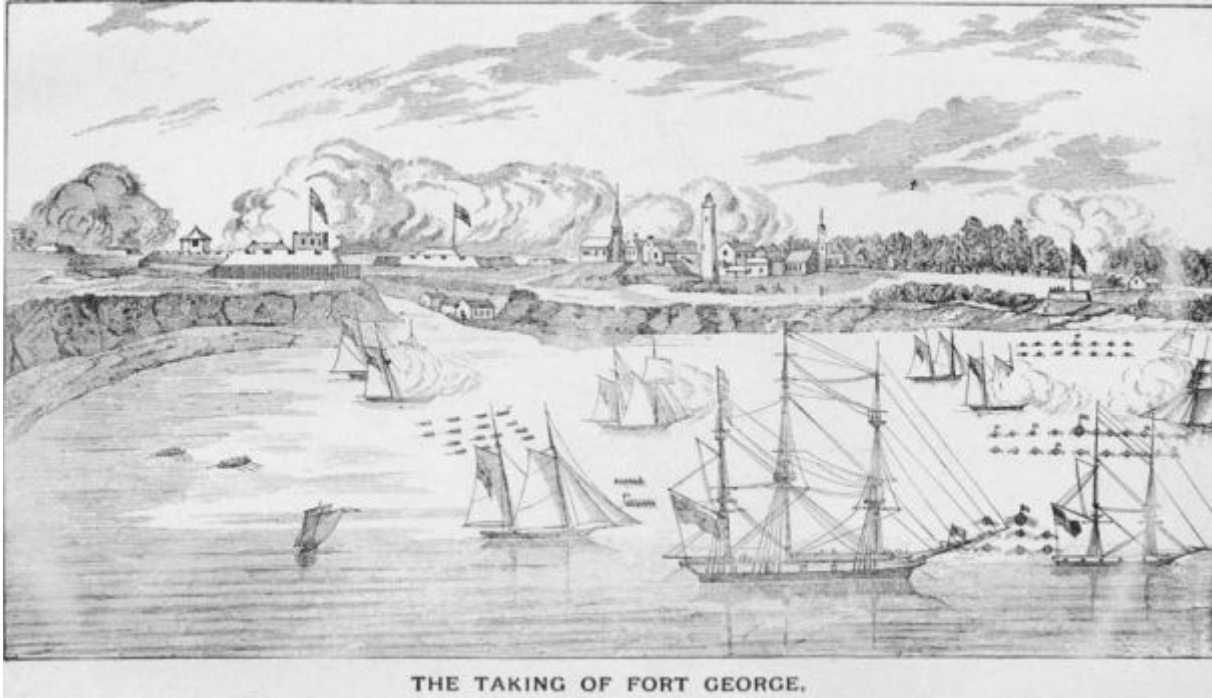


General Hull surrenders Fort Detroit to the British

Battle of Fort George (1813)

The Battle of Fort George is notable for two facts:

1. The Americans launched an amphibious assault requiring cooperation between the U.S. Army and the U.S. Navy, which provided a corvette and a brig (small warships) and twelve gunboats.
2. The much smaller British defense included a black militia company of free negroes and indentured negro servants. Captain Runchey's Company of Coloured Men defended Upper Canada for fear that if the American invasion was successful, free blacks and escaped slaves would be sent into slavery in America.



After a brief battle, British General John Vincent ordered his troops to retreat. He also ordered his five field guns to be spiked and powder magazines to be blown up. His men had to retreat too hastily to perform these tasks successfully. This was fortunate for the British women and children Vincent left behind, who would have been blown up with the fort.

It is interesting to note that the American General Hull, who was concerned for the welfare of women and children in his charge, was court-martialed for surrendering Detroit. The less chivalrous British General Vincent had a long, successful military career after the Battle of Fort George, and died in 1848, never having married.

When the War of 1812 ended in 1815, the Molly Stark cannon was over seventy years old and finally was retired from active duty. At some point during the war, the Molly had become separated from its mate. There was another 4-pounder cast in 1743 for the Compagnie des Indes, and for many years it was thought to have been lost at sea. Then in the 1960s, Dr. Robert Chaffee visited the Royal Artillery Museum near London, England. There he discovered a cannon which exactly matches the Molly Stark. (See "Molly's Twin" above.)

By this time the Molly Stark had been given by the retired General Stark to the New Hampshire militia, and for the past 70-80 years the New Boston Artillery Company has been the caretaker of this historic cannon.



Molly Stark cannon in the 4th of July parade

IS THE “MOLLY STARK” THE OLDEST CANNON STILL IN USE?

Whether or not the Molly Stark Cannon actually participated in the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, the Battle of Bennington in 1777 and the War of 1812, it is still a remarkable gun – possibly the oldest cannon still in regular use. The Newport Artillery Company in Rhode Island believes its 1750 gun is the oldest working cannon still in use, but the Molly Stark was cast seven years earlier in 1743.

The librarian at the Royal Artillery Museum in London replied to an inquiry: “It’s certainly one of the oldest; we don’t fire anything pre Second World War any more. The only people who do are the Royal Armouries but I think their Napoleonic gun is a little younger than 1743.”

In 1983, the New Hampshire Sunday News columnist George Woodbury wrote: “After 1812, cannons were the normal way of celebrating the Fourth of July. Nearly every town of any pretense in New Hampshire had its own cannon. If it didn’t it often stole its neighbor’s. There was no better way of making noise in those pre-firecracker days. But one by one, town cannon after town cannon was overcharged and burst, killing and mangling the patriotic until now, it is believed, ‘Molly Stark’ is one of the last in service.”

There are thousands of old cannons, including Old Molly’s twin, gathering dust in museums or collecting rainwater in public parks. How many are inspected and polished and wheeled out for special occasions to be fired by a skilled, dedicated gun crew?



*Howard Leonard of the New Boston Artillery Company
inspects the Molly Stark cannon on the 4th of July*

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Letter dated May 7, 1982 from Eugene R. Kosche, Senior Curator of the Bennington Museum to Leon W. Anderson, NH Legislative Historian, enclosing a 1957 typewritten document titled “Bennington Cannon by E. N. Rich.” Kosche knew nothing about the credentials of Edwin Newell Rich of Wellfleet, MA. Rich’s 2-page study theorizes that there were as many as six cannon captured at Bennington, possibly including a French three-pounder.

Letter dated June 9, 1982 from William E. Meuse, Curator of the Springfield Armory Historic Site and former chief historian of the Saratoga Battlefield to Leon W. Anderson, NH Legislative Historian.

...and interviews with Brent Armstrong, Howard Leonard, Dick Moody and Mark Wilson, 2011.