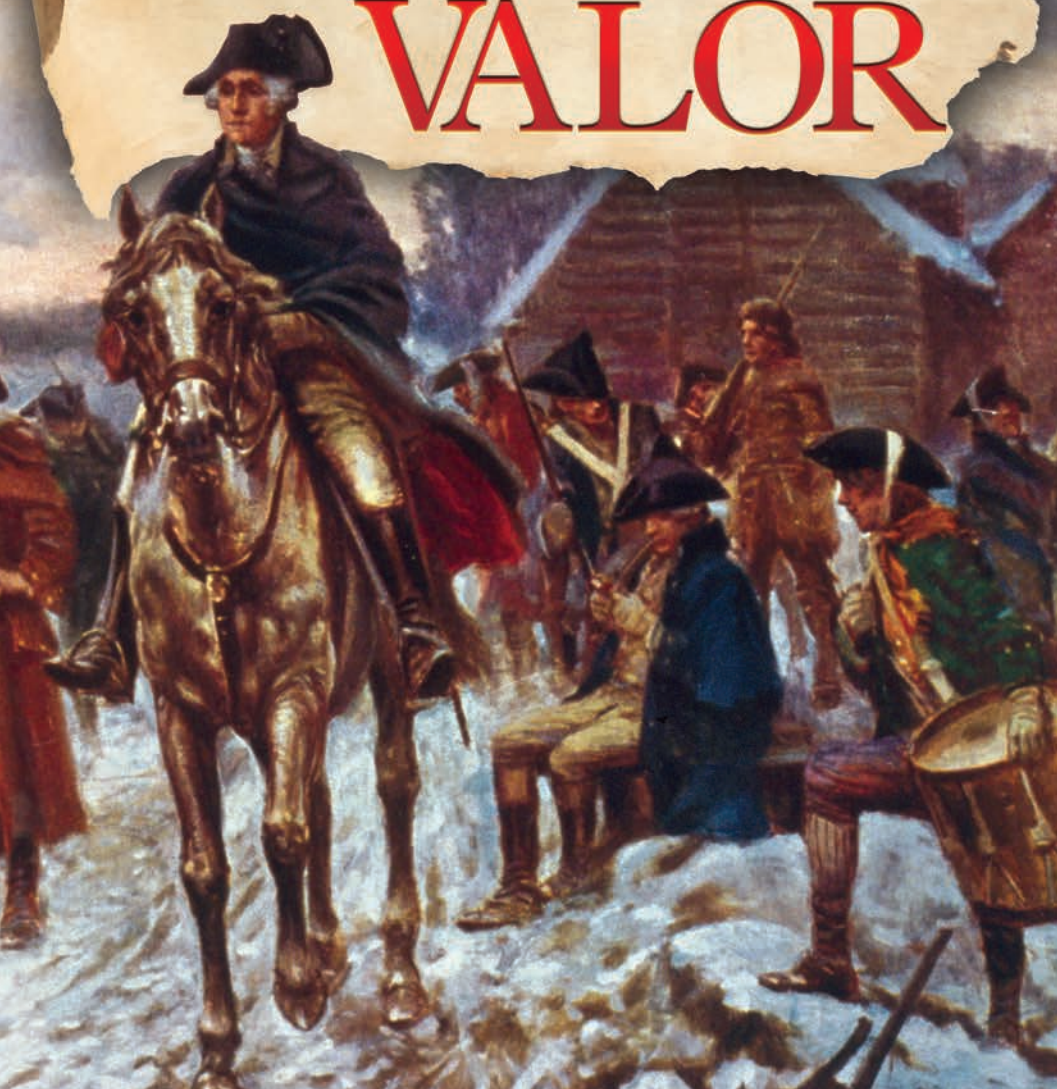


PROFILES *OF* VALOR



December 1775 – December 1777

Marilyn Boyer & Grace Tumas Ehrman

PROFILES *OF* VALOR

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*Character Studies
from the
War of Independence*

Marilyn Boyer &
Grace Tumas Ehrman

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from the
War of Independence*



December 1775 - December 1777



Credits

Thanks to the following people for their investment in helping to preserve these inspiring stories from America's past. It is my prayer that their efforts will reap a bountiful harvest as these stories will serve to be an inspiration to those in whose hands America's future lies!

I wish to thank David Barton, who has been such an inspiration to me, personally, to become excited about learning about our godly heritage. God has gifted him for such a time as this in our country. He is the master of primary source documents! Tuesday night has traditionally been "Barton night" in our home as we gather to watch his DVDs and invite friends in to learn with us! It is only as we get truth back into the public square that we can hope to preserve the heritage of freedom handed down to us.

Thanks to Grace Tumas Ehrman, for her role in crafting these stories in such a way that they are a delight to read! It's great when even the editors have to read the stories first to see what happens and then go back and edit!

Thanks to my dear friend Mary Ann Edman who is the world's most efficient multi-tasker, committed to producing quality that will be a tribute to our

Lord and Savior. Her creativity has been indispensable in producing the layout and graphic design for this book as well as editing the mistakes the rest of us overlooked!

Thanks to Judy Saunders, my long-time friend and prayer warrior, for her faithful work in the tedious editing process. God has gifted her with a precise eye for detail. She sees things I just don't notice. Thanks, my friend!

Thanks to my son, Rick, who, despite his incredibly busy life, has read these stories to his children at night, while editing each for accuracy of content to assure we are portraying these men and women in an worthy manner, giving honor where honor is due.



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Introduction

Why did the Founding Fathers feel compelled to risk their lives to enter the conflict known as the War of Independence? Was it purely because of taxation without representation as we would be led to believe today? Absolutely not. That's the 17th reason in a list of 29 usurpations listed in the Declaration of Independence. Something very sacred and dear—their liberty—was at stake, not their pocketbook. They believed they had a duty to protect it.

Separation from Great Britain was not decided upon hastily. The colonists had been militarily attacked for more than two years before they finally announced a separation; and for eleven years preceding that announcement (from 1765 to 1776), they had diligently pursued reconciliation. Another appeal was sent in 1775. The Olive Branch Petition, a detailed appeal was sent in May 1776. Their appeals were submitted in a respectful manner, desiring for reconciliation to be made and affirming their allegiance to King George III.

The Rev. Peter Powers, in a sermon he preached in front of the Vermont Legislature in 1778, specifically noted that America had “taken up arms in its own defense”—that she had not initiated the conflict

but was only defending herself after being attacked.¹

The Continental Congress also issued a manifesto reflecting a similar tone of submission to God:

*We, therefore, the Congress of the United States of America, do solemnly declare and proclaim that . . . [we] appeal to the God Who searcheth the hearts of men for the rectitude of our intentions; and in His holy presence declare that, as we are not moved by any light or hasty suggestions of anger or revenge, so through every possible change of fortune we will adhere to this our determination.*²

The Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon (also a signer of the Declaration) likewise affirmed:

*On the part of America, there was not the most distant thought of subverting the government or of hurting the interest of the people of Great Britain, but of defending their own privileges from unjust encroachment; there was not the least desire of withdrawing their allegiance from the common sovereign [King George III] till it became absolutely necessary—and indeed, it was his own choice.*³

Consider, as Dr. Witherspoon correctly noted:

. . . [I]t was Great Britain who broke the entreaties. America's peaceful appeals were responded to with armed military force. King George III dispatched 25,000 British troops to invade his own Colonies,

enter the homes of his own citizens to take their private possessions and goods, and imprison them without trials—all in violation of his own British Common Law, English Bill of Rights, and Magna Carta [centuries old documents that formed the basis of the covenant between British rulers and citizens]. Only when those governmental covenants had been broken by their rulers and America had been directly attacked did the Americans respond in self-defense.⁴

This book is full of true stories of people who answered the call to defend freedom, and many paid an incredible price to obtain the liberties we enjoy today, but it is more than that. These patriots serve as examples to us of courage, boldness, and valor, and many more character qualities that we would do well to try to incorporate into our lives. As you read their profiles it is my hope that you will be inspired to make the sacrifices necessary to see that these patriots did not sacrifice in vain.

Marilyn Boyer



Perseverance

DEFINITION

Steadfastness despite unexpected
obstacles



MEMORY VERSE

Therefore, my beloved brethren,
be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always
abounding in the work of the Lord,
forasmuch as ye know that your labour
is not in vain in the Lord.

I Corinthians 15:58



The Noble Train

Gen. Henry Knox

Fort Ticonderoga & Boston,

Massachusetts

December, 1775

The young artillery officer trudged through the snow towards the headquarters of the Continental Army. Several miles away, the city of Boston, guarded by Lord William Howe's British Navy, crouched immobile, locked in ice. General Washington, holding the city under siege, had no large guns to occupy Dorchester Heights above Boston and shell the British. Twenty-five-year-old Colonel Henry Knox, who had previously worked as a Boston bookseller and an artillery expert, had hatched a daring plan to force the Redcoats

out of Massachusetts' "city on a hill." Facing his Commander-in-Chief, Knox announced that he knew where to locate enough guns to try to take Boston. Seven months ago, in May 1775, Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys surprised the British at Fort Ticonderoga on Lake Champlain and forced them to surrender. Since then, the fifty-nine pieces of artillery captured with the fort had lain unused three hundred miles to the north. Knox suggested that he organize an operation to travel to Ticonderoga, load up the cannons and carry them back to score a much-needed victory against the British.

Washington's advisors shook their heads. The plan would never work, they argued. Knox would have to dismount the guns, drag them onto barges, and then ferry them down Lake George before the great, thirty-mile-long lake froze over. Even if Knox managed to do that, he would still be faced with the daunting task of hauling the cannons by oxen and sledge over three hundred miles of rough, possibly snowless trails. It would be almost impossible to have an unbelievable combination of the right weather that would both keep the lake from freezing and provide snow for the sleds. Despite his advisors' misgivings, Washington agreed to Knox's plan. The operation would take a large military corps to assemble a flotilla of flat-bottomed gundalows to transport the cannons by water. In addition to this, Knox needed forty large sleds, each weighing 5,400

pounds, and eighty teams of oxen to pull them. If Knox could pull the operation off, it would give the American army a tremendous advantage over the British, stubbornly holed up in Boston, and protected by their navy in Boston Harbor.



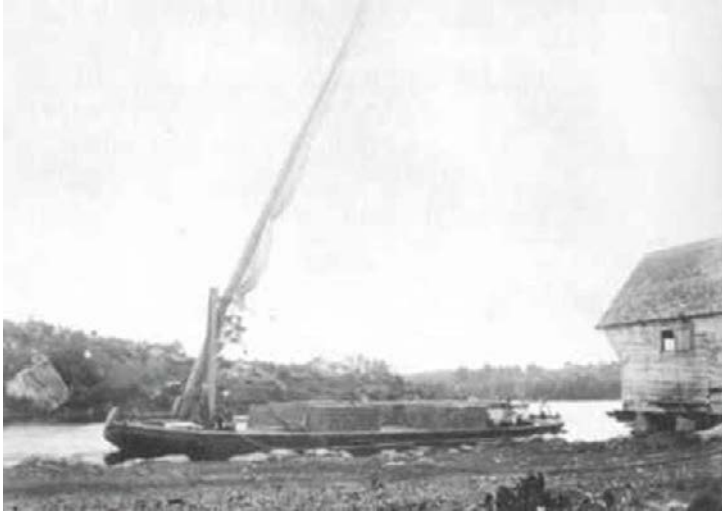
Colonel Henry Knox

Knox immediately set off on horseback, accompanied by his nineteen-year-old brother William and a servant named Miller, and arrived at Fort Ticonderoga on the evening of December 5, 1775. At dawn on December 6, Knox began to move the guns, assisted by the garrison at Ticonderoga. As they began looking over the cannons, Knox and his men found that the ancient carriages, dating from the French and Indian War, were weak and rotten from exposure to the weather during the past year. Knox ordered the guns dismounted from their rotten carriages and moved from the fort for reassembly at the *Place d'Arms*. When they finished, they had forty-three heavy brass and iron guns, eight mortars, two howitzers, and six cohorns, or portable mortars.



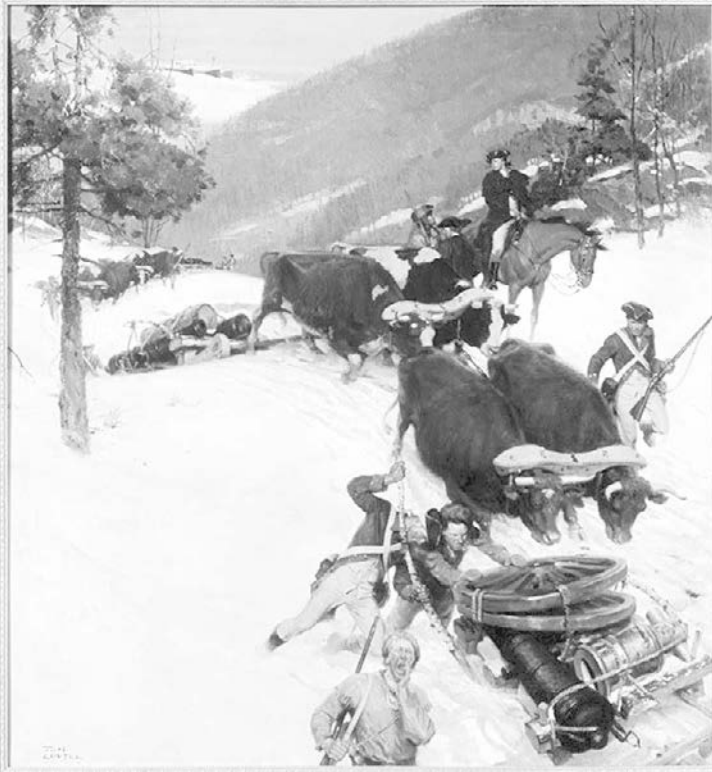
24-pounder bronze siege cannon

Knox moved the heaviest cannons first, hauling them by oxcart to a gundalow tied up at the



Flat-bottomed gundalow used to transport cannons

King's dock just below the fort. After he finished loading them, Knox sent the gundalow around the Fort Ticonderoga peninsula and into the LaChute River. From there, the crew would navigate down the Portage Road from Lake Champlain to Fort George and drop off their load, then sail back for more cannons. Knox supervised the guns' overland route while the gundalow ferried steadily back and forth to the mouth of Lake George, carrying the smaller cohorns first and then the mortars. At the Lake George Landing, a small flotilla organized to guide the cannons, transported on a flat-bottomed, barge-like scow, down the lake around 3 p.m. Meanwhile, the other bateau boats pushed on the



The ox train starts out from Fort George

next day, the men rowing hard for about four hours in a raging wind. Knox, ordering his servant to seize his baggage, clambered into a boat. They headed into a “fair wind,” Knox noted. But the scow, sailing along behind, faced into a dying wind and ran aground. After four treacherous hours, the crew reached Sabbath Day Point at 9 p.m. on the evening of December 10th. The men scrambled ashore,

blowing on their frozen hands, stamping their feet, and huddling around a warm fire in a hut. Although the Native Americans had gone to bed, they rose and roasted some venison over the coals for their guests. The men stretched out on the hut floor and spent the night with their backs to the fire.

They had failed to reach the southern end of the lake. If they did not cross the lake soon, the boats could not make the passage before the surface froze over like a sheet of glass. That night, Knox discovered that his scow had run aground on a submerged rock, but could be rescued if they had new strong ropes to pull her off the rocks. Since all their ropes had broken during the rescue operation, they had to send up to the fort for more ropes so that they could try to rescue the scow again in the morning. Half an hour after dawn, they rose again, and going out into the bitter wind, succeeded, after pushing hard for six long hours into the wind, in reaching the southern end of Lake George. Knox had hoped for the miracle of the comparatively mild weather to continue so that they could cross the lake. Now he needed the snow to come so that they could make the overland passage by sled. The ice must freeze solid by the time they reached the Hudson River, thick enough to support the 1800-pound weight of his biggest gun, the twenty-four pounder.

At Fort George, Knox began planning the movement of his guns by land. Sending a message to a

neighboring squire, Knox asked for a number of sleds and oxen in order to drag the cannon when the first snow fell. He wanted to leave as soon as the first sleds appeared and the first white flakes began spiraling from the darkening winter sky. Confident that the sleds would arrive on time, Knox hurried back to the lake. Three days had passed since the scow encountered trouble on the rocks, and yet none of the vessels had arrived from Ticonderoga by December 13th. He had received no message. Unease prickled his spine. Anxiously, Knox sent out an express boat early that afternoon, only to learn that the scow had gotten off the treacherous rocks and struggled on to the Point, only to be sunk by a high wind and a raging sea on the night of the 10th. Despite this setback, all the rest of the guns arrived safely at Fort George between December 15 and 16, ten days after he first arrived at Ticonderoga. The lake had already begun to freeze. But no snow fell.

For the next two days of enforced waiting, Knox busied himself with transporting the guns into Fort George and firing off dispatches to Washington, detailing his progress. Staring out at the frozen lake, Knox admitted that he still did not know the best route to take the expedition out of New York. The sleds, however, would arrive on Tuesday or Wednesday. With these, Knox believed that they could glide along the frozen ground as far as Saratoga. After that, they would be forced to sit and

wait for snow. Meanwhile, he had to send to Albany to obtain the rope with which to tether the cannons to the sleds.

Writing to Washington, Knox confidently stated: “We shall have a fine fall of snow . . . If that should be the case I hope . . . to be able to present your Excellency a noble train of artillery.”



The noble train moves toward Boston

For the next six days, Knox apparently did not find the time to write in his diary. Instead, he must have awaited the arrival of the sleds, searched for teams, and waited for the anticipated snow that could smooth the roads and provide an overland passage. At some point, the colonel set off on foot for Fort Miller in order to check up on the arrival of the

sleds and to negotiate with General Philip Schuyler about transporting the sleds through Albany. He then crossed the river by ferry to the west side, arriving at Saratoga in time for dinner. Crossing the ferry, the colonel felt the first snowflakes sting his face. Looking out during dinner, Knox saw to his joy that it was still snowing hard and fast. As they set off miles beyond Saratoga, the deepening snow on the roads almost prevented the horses from getting through.

Christmas Day dawned. Knox woke to find two feet of new white snow blanketing the ground. He was alone on Christmas Day. Realizing that the snowfall would make the journey by sled possible, Knox sent for a sleigh to continue south along unbroken roads. They had only gone two miles when the horses began to slow down, exhausted by plowing through the deep snow. Resignedly, Knox climbed out of the sleigh and trudged into the woods. He struggled along through the silver wilderness for four miles until he reached Squire Fisher's estate. Shivering and worn-out, he sat down to breakfast. Then he borrowed a horse, and rode in the bitter cold until he obtained a sleigh to take him to Albany. At Albany, Knox hurried to meet Schuyler. Between December 27–29, Knox and Schuyler hunted for two more teams and cannons to send north over the snow-covered roads. Schuyler, making use of his authority, sent men out into the countryside with



Colonel Knox brings the artillery into camp

orders to collect every sledge and horse they could find. These sleds and teams began arriving at Fort George and continued coming until January 1, 1776.

Unfortunately, the snow that allowed them to travel as far as Lansing's Ferry did not last, making it impossible to travel further south. Nevertheless, Knox had forty-two strong wooden sleds and eighty yoke of oxen set out down the road from Fort George. Desperate to keep the "noble train" moving

in order to reach Washington in time, Knox even ordered his men to pour buckets of water from the river over the surface of the roads to freeze. Finally, on January 4th, the first guns, a brass twenty-four pounder and a small mortar, crossed the river at Lansing's Ferry and rolled into Albany. In spite of the thaw, they had transported four more cannons by the next day, and Knox hoped that the lingering ice would allow them to get as far as Springfield.

That afternoon, one of the heaviest cannons broke through the thin ice and plunged into the river at Half Moon Ferry. Alarmed, Knox sent the rest of the sleds around to a safer crossing at Sloss's Ferry on the Hudson. On January 7th, a second cannon crashed through the ice, but the men recovered it the next day. Moving cautiously now, barely breathing as the ice creaked beneath the sleds, the men, assisted by local townspeople, managed to get twenty sleds across in one day. On the morning of January 9th, with the train of sledges moving east, Knox rode on ahead. He had ceased to write much in his diary, making his daily movements difficult to ascertain.

Two days after leaving Claverack, Knox's train entered the Berkshires. The steep mountains, bare and brown without a covering of snow, discouraged the men in the front teams so that they refused to go further. Ahead, the precipice plunged sharply towards the Connecticut River valley. Undaunted,

Knox hired a new team of oxen, coaxing the grumbling crew to push on. As they kept pressing east, the news of their coming ran ahead of them like wildfire. As they passed through small colonial towns, the people ran out into the streets to watch them pass. In order to please a cheering crowd at Westfield, Knox loaded one of his large cannons with powder and fired it off. Knox and his “noble train” moved through on the Post Road, passing through the village of Claverack, and then proceeding east into Massachusetts.

Battling cold and exhaustion, Knox’s artillery train glided from Great Barrington through the Massachusetts towns of Springfield, Wilbraham, Palmer, and Warren. Then they turned onto a route passing through the endless little towns of Brookfield, Spencer, Leicester, and Worcester. Diving back onto their original route, Knox’s sledges trudged their way through Shrewsbury, Northborough, Marlborough, and Southborough before passing Framingham, Wayland, Weston, Waltham, and Watertown. The weather improved as they marched through Massachusetts, and the road became more passable. Finally, on January 24th, the tired but triumphant Continentals entered Cambridge.

When they arrived at Springfield, Knox hired new teamsters from Massachusetts since his New York crew needed to go home. Jubilantly, John

Adams watched as the noble artillery train rumbled through Framingham on January 25th. At last, on January 27, Colonel Knox entered Cambridge and went straight to Washington's headquarters with the news that the train had arrived! Knox had spent £521 on a journey he had believed would take two weeks and had instead spread out over ten rigorous weeks. In less than two months, Knox and his men maneuvered sixty tons of artillery across three hundred miles of rivers and lakes, over the Berkshire Mountains, and through ice and snow to plant on Dorchester Heights above Boston.

On the second week of March 1776, Washington had sufficient strength to bombard Boston from Dorchester Heights above the city, using the guns that Knox had painstakingly dragged all the way from Lake Champlain. The bombardment damaged the British sufficiently to force them to evacuate Boston and the American shores, and sail for Halifax, Nova Scotia. On March 18th, Washington's tattered Continental Army marched victoriously into the city. Knox, the enterprising young bookseller-turned-colonel, later became the Chief Artillery Officer in the Continental Army and later the first United States Secretary of War.

Henry Knox demonstrated incredible perseverance by devising and carrying out a heroic expedition which culminated in the evacuation of British forces from Boston and boosted morale during a low period of the American Revolution.



Questions

1. What plan did Knox present to Washington to supply him with cannons?
2. Why did Washington's advisors doubt it would work?
3. How many sleds and teams of oxen would be necessary to make the plan succeed?
4. How many guns were they able to salvage upon arriving at the fort?
5. Did the scow running aground discourage Knox? How did he rescue it?
6. How could they hope to carry the guns across the Hudson?
7. How did Knox demonstrate perseverance even after encountering difficulty, as reflected in the words he wrote to General Washington?
8. When did the snow begin to fall?
9. What plan did Knox determine to make work when the snow became too deep for his horses?
10. What did Knox order his men to do to keep moving when the snow stopped?
11. How did they get over the Berkshires?



Questions

12. How long did it take for Knox to complete his mission?
13. What was Washington able to accomplish upon receiving the cannons?
14. Tell of some of the obstacles Knox and his men faced and met with perseverance.
15. Think of a person in Scripture or history who demonstrated perseverance.



*Perseverance accomplished
what at first seemed
impossible.*

—Colonel Henry Knox

