



The American Revolution

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Sons of the American Revolution

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Article 2

The Siege of Boston:

Back in the colonies, events moved on with their own momentum. Wisely, the Continental Congress, by unanimous vote, selected George Washington as Commander-in-Chief of America's Continental Army. In June, 1775, he joined the disorganized masses of militia units surrounding Boston in the Massachusetts Colony. His immediate task was to organize this rabble into an Army, and make of them, an effective fighting force. His not so long term objective was none other than devising and executing a plan to remove the British forces from Boston.

Another personality enters the scene at this time, none other than Henry Knox. Yes, this is the same bookstore fellow that was embroiled in the events of the "Boston Massacre." Henry and his wife, Lucy, had slipped out of Boston and joined the Patriot forces during the Battles of Bunker and Breed's Hills. In fact, this former bookstore owner directed Patriot artillery fire against the British and directed the construction and

fortification of Patriot trenches. His engineering and leadership skills became evident to all.

Upon General Washington's arrival in July, 1775 at Boston, he went on an inspection tour of the battleground. His first order was to find and bring to him the man responsible for the trench network and cannon emplacements. When the two men met, it was immediate friendship and professional companionship, which would last for a lifetime. Henry Knox confided in General Washington what he knew about Ethan Allen's accomplishments in the *New Hampshire Grants*, and the strategic value of the cannons and ammunitions at Fort Ticonderoga. Knox suggested that he was the very man to lead an expedition to Fort Ticonderoga, and to retrieve those greatly needed war assets. Washington made Knox a Colonel in the Continental Army, and assigned him to that very task.

On 5 December 1775 Knox and his men commenced their return journey from Fort Ticonderoga in what was to become known as the "Nobel Train of Artillery." They hauled, by ox-drawn wooden sleds, some 60 tons of cannon and armaments across 300 miles of ice-covered rivers and snow-draped Berkshire Mountains to the Boston siege encampments of General Washington. This unbelievable feat could not have been performed at any other time of year, as wagons would have been swallowed by spring and summer mud.

This "Nobel Train of Artillery" arrived on General Washington's doorstep 27 January 1776, and this logistic feat of Knox was regarded as one of the most stupendous of the entire war. As a tourist, you may travel in the states of New York and Massachusetts down the plaque decorated highway, which marks the Henry Knox Trail and see the countryside for yourself. As for General Washington, the solution to his big,

not so long range objective of how to remove the British army and navy from Boston had just been laid neatly in his lap.