



# The American Revolution

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Sons of the American Revolution

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## Article 1

### Ethan Allen, The Green Mountain Boys, and Fort Ticonderoga:

*“By the rude bridge that arched the flood, Their flag to April’s breeze unfurled,  
Here once the embattled farmers stood, And fired the shot heard round the World.”*

[Concord Hymn, Ralph Waldo Emerson] Lexington and Concord had started



the fire in April, to be followed in June by thunder and burning lightening at Bunker and Breed’s Hills. In the sentence between April and June sits a remarkable comma called the month of May, 1775, and Ethan Allen, his Green Mountain Boys, and Fort

Ticonderoga. So, readers come gather around, and I will tell you an astonishing tale about bravery, enterprise and the mechanics of warfare, American frontier style. Our story opens with a native Connecticut farmer and businessman named Ethan Allen, who also speculated in land deals. The colony of New Hampshire had issued land grants to settlers for territory west of the Connecticut River, but east of Lake Champlain, a region, which became known as the *New Hampshire Grants*. Ethan held title to some of this grant land. Now all is not exactly that simple in life, because the colony of New York considered that very territory as their own, and did not acknowledge these *New Hampshire Grants* as valid instruments of the law.

Things rapidly became nasty between the New York Colony and the frontiersmen living in the *New Hampshire Grants*. Ethan Allen, being self-educated and an articulate spokes-leader, began organizing his own militia. It quickly became a formidable fighting force known as “The Green Mountain Boys.” This militia group was considered by the New York authorities as a lawless vigilante group, and warrants for their arrest were issued by New York. New York lacked the police or militia force to enter the *New Hampshire Grants* and enforce their will, but irresponsibly continued to issue its own grants to interested settlers. Such settlers were preyed upon by the “Green Mountain Boys” and sometimes violently extracted from the territory.

“The Green Mountain Boys” were the effective authority, power, and justice for the area west of New Hampshire, which was soon to become Vermont. Under Ethan Allen’s leadership the “Green Mountain Boys” and the *New Hampshire Grants* began ambitiously to plan war with the New York Colony [ additionally at stake here was control of the Hudson River Valley and access to marine waters]. Many of these planning sessions were conducted in the Catamount Tavern of Bennington in what is

today the state of Vermont. Your author has sat at a table in that very tavern, just as our ancestors must have sat there in their day.

Lexington and Concord traumatized all of New England. The nation was in shock and we were at war. Ethan Allen was not in shock and he was thinking clearly, when he gathered his Green Mountain Army together and joined up with Benedict Arnold's force coming over from Connecticut. Together they set march for the fortress, Fort Ticonderoga, on Lake Champlain, which was inadequately manned by only 80 British soldiers.

Fort Ticonderoga was formerly Fort Carillon and built by the French during the French and Indian War. It was strategically situated at the South end of Lake Champlain and the mouth of the La Chute River. The 3.5 mile stretch of La Chute River below Fort Ticonderoga was a rapid plagued section of river that necessitated portage of all vessels. This fort controlled all of this mountainous river valley between the British held Hudson River Valley and the French held Lake Champlain.

"Ticonderoga" comes from the Iroquois word *tekontaró*, meaning "it is at the junction of two waterways." In the coming months of the American Revolution this garrison, held by the American Patriots, would play a multifaceted and strategic role in the struggle. It, and its contents, now lay firmly in the hands of the American Patriots.