

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

Saratoga

National Historical Park



“Dear Diary...”

—Journal entries from the Battles of Saratoga—

The following are journal entries of soldiers and officers from both the American and British sides in the Battles of Saratoga. Read the accounts, and answer the questions about each passage.

PASSAGE #1

The morning after the action [of 19 September], I visited the wounded [British] prisoners who had not been dressed [bandaged], and discovered a charming youth not more than 16 years old, lying among themI found he was an Ensign Phillips [ensign --lowest rank of officer]; he told me he had fallen by a wound in his leg or thigh, and as he lay on the ground was shot through the body by an army follower the moans of this hapless youth affected me to tears, I raised him from the straw on which he lay, took him in my arms and removed him to a tent, where every comfort was provided and every attention paid to him, but his wounds were mortal [he would soon die], and he expired on the 21st; when his name was first mentioned to General Gates, he exclaimed “just Heaven! he may be the nephew of my wife," but the fact was otherwise.

-American Lieutenant Colonel James Wilkinson,
Deputy Adjutant General
Northern Department of the Continental Army

1. The term “officer” doesn’t refer to a police officer, but to someone who is in charge over a group of soldiers. The higher an officer’s rank, the more men he commanded. About how old was this wounded officer? _____
2. What happened to this officer; how was he wounded?

3. Lieutenant Colonel Wilkinson says that the young wounded British officer might be related to an American general. Who was that general? _____
4. How might that general have felt when he learned that the young man was mortally wounded? _____
5. Does Wilkinson sound like a kind, caring man or an unkind, uncaring one? What evidence does he give for it? _____

PASSAGE #2

19th [September] hereing this morning that the Enimy ware advancing, the Rifle & Light Infantry Corps turnd out to meet the Enimy & about 2 miles from our Camp we fell in with their advanced Guard & attacted them about 12 O Clock, after fighting about half an hour Being over Powerd with Numbers we ware obliged to Retire to A height, about 50 rods & there weare Reinforc'd With Col^o. Cilley's [1st New Hampshire] Regiment, who attacted a Body of the Enimy with a great Deal of Spirit, I Ran to his assistance with the Light Infantry, But he was Obliged to Retreet Before I Came up....

...The Enimy Brought almost their whole force against us, together with 8 Pieces of Artillery. But we who had Something more at Stake than fighting for six Pence P^r Day kept our ground til Night, Closed the scene, & then Both Parties Retire'd.

**Journal of Major Henry Dearborn,
3^d New Hampshire Regiment**

1. According to this journal entry, on what date did the fighting begin? _____
2. At what time did fighting begin? _____
3. How far away from the American camp did Major Dearborn say the fighting took place? _____
4. This passage contains many spelling errors. This was typical for much writing from the 18th century, even for very intelligent and well-educated people. Why do you think people's spelling was so bad? _____

5. Dearborn says, "We who had something more at stake than six pence per day kept our ground until night". What do you think he meant? _____

PASSAGE #3

Friday Sep'r 19th—Between 9 & 10 o'clock in the forenoon the Army advanced in three Columns agreeable to former Orders.

About a mile from our last ground (the center column) *we* came to a deep Ravine with a run of water sufficient to work a Saw-mill in the middle; here the enemy having neglected to destroy a small Bridge we passed the Ravine and creek without opposition.

The whole of this column and Baggage having gained the opposing height, the army halted at 12 o'clock for near an hour, during which time several shots were fired & returned by our advanced Sentries.

Nearly a quarter of an hour before we resumed our march the Picquets of the British line (100 Rank & File) advanced under Major Forbes (9th Regt.) and were repulsed with loss by a corps of Rifle-men commanded by the Rebel Colonel Morgan.

**Journal of 2ND Lieutenant James Murray Hadden,
3RD Battalion Royal Regiment of Artillery,
serving with Captain Jones' Royal Artillery detachment,
British center column**

1. What date does Lieutenant Hadden give as the start of fighting? _____
2. What time does he say fighting began? _____
3. Does his account agree with Major Dearborn's account in Passage #2? _____
4. Does Hadden perceive Morgan to be good or bad? _____ What word does he use to describe Morgan that tells you so? _____

PASSAGE #4

[Oct. 7] I noticed a great deal of commotion among the soldiers. My husband told me that they were to go out on a reconnaissance, of which I thought nothing, as this often happened. On my way back the house I met a number of savages [Native Americans] in war dress, carrying guns. When I asked them whither they were bound, they replied, “War! War!”—which meant that they were going into battle. I was completely overwhelmed and had hardly returned to the house, when I heard firing which grew heavier and heavier until the noise was frightful. It was a terrible bombardment, and I was more dead than alive! ...Toward three o’clock in the afternoon, instead of my dinner guests arriving as expected, poor General Fraser, who was to have been one of them, was brought to me on a stretcher, mortally wounded.

**Memoir of Baroness Frederika Charlotte Louise von Riedesel,
wife of Baron Friedrich Adolph von Riedesel,
commander of all German forces with the British Army**

1. Did the Baroness think at first that there was a problem when she learned that the soldiers were going on a reconnaissance (scouting) mission? _____
2. Why did she think so? _____

3. Who indicated to her what was actually happening? _____
4. How do you think the Baroness felt during the bombardment (attack using cannons and mortars)? _____
5. What words or phrases does she use to say that? _____

