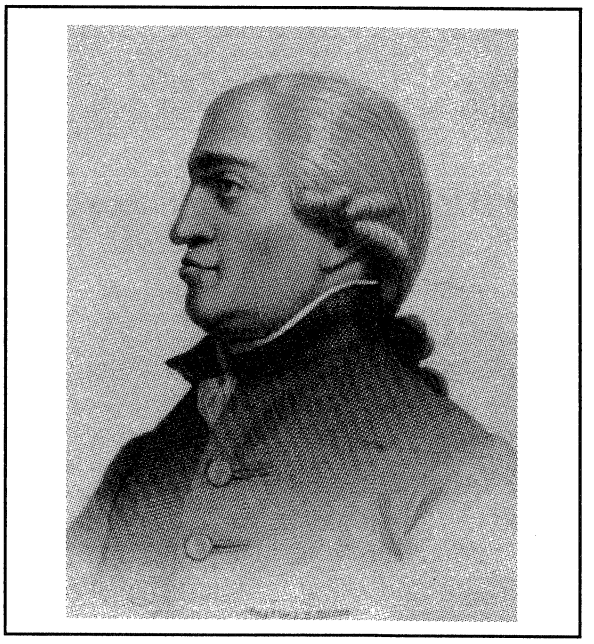
# SARATOGA: LITTLE PEOPLE MESS UP GRAND PLANS



**General John Burgoyne**

In charge of British grand strategy during the war was George Germain, the Colonial Secretary. A former general, he had turned to politics and was a backer of Prime Minister Lord North. There were many problems in getting anything done: (1) It took months for orders to reach America; by the time they came, the situation had changed. Officers did not have to obey orders that did not fit the current situation. (2) Supplies were slowed down by storms or calms at sea. (3) Morale was low in the English army. Many of the best British generals refused to go and fight the Americans. (4) Washington and his patriot troops were stubborn; no other army marched without shoes or food. (5) Battles might be lost because of odd occurrences.

In 1777, Germain sent instructions for a campaign that would cut New England off from the Middle Colonies and split New York. General William Howe would start up the Hudson Valley from New York; General Barry St. Leger would invade western New York, and move down the Mohawk Valley to the Hudson river. General John Burgoyne would come down Lake Champlain and the Hudson Valley, and join the other forces at Albany. But decisions were made that made a shamble of the plans.

General Howe's girlfriend thought New York was dull; the best parties were in Philadelphia. She convinced Howe that since Philadelphia was the rebel capital, he should move his army there. Instead of going north, he moved to Philadelphia, which offered no support for the other two armies.

St. Leger was a capable young officer whose troops landed at Oswego, New York, and moved toward Ft. Stanwix, which he surrounded with a force of English and Indians. A messenger escaped, and told American General Benedict Arnold. He formed a small army and started toward Ft. Stanwix. On the way, he met a boy named Hon Yost, whose brother was held as a British spy, and was about to be shot. Arnold and Yost made a deal, Yost could save his brother's life by running into the Indian camp and telling them about the huge American army that was coming. Some holes were shot in Yost's coat to make the story look good. He did such a good job of describing the American approach that the Indians left. So did St.Leger.

Meanwhile, Burgoyne was making a leisurely trip out of his march. His slow march gave time for the story of Jenny McCrae to spread. Jenny, whose fiance was a young British officer, decided to travel north to meet him. She was killed and scalped by two Indian scouts of Burgoyne's army. When Jenny's fiance saw her long red hair hanging from the scouts' scalplocks, he demanded that the scouts be punished. But Burgoyne feared that if he punished these Indians, the others would desert, so he did nothing. The story of Jenny McCrae was told many times, and many men joined General Horatio Gates' patriot army. Surrounded by this larger force, Burgoyne surrendered his 5,000 men to the Americans.

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**Name:** _____

**Class:** _____

**RESULTS:** Many things happened because of Saratoga. Morale in England dropped, and many wanted to end the war. The French decided that the Americans could win and made an alliance.

**Activities:**

1. Discuss how individuals can alter the affairs of a town or country, for the better or for the worse.
2. Discuss the influence of an event (like the murder of Jenny McCrae) in causing people who have done little to suddenly react.

**Essay:**

1. In this reading, Germain's grand plan fell apart. What are the advantages and disadvantages of grand plans?
2. Germain got his job through political ties with the prime minister. What advice might you give an official who was choosing a friend for a high position after learning about Germain.
3. A turning point is one that causes one side to lose the ability or the will to win. Why could that term be used to describe Saratoga?

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2. _____

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3. _____

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