

On Sunday, July 27, 1777, Jane McCrea stepped from a small log home in Fort Edward, NY. She went to fetch water from a spring, beneath a lone pine tree. It was to be her wedding day.

At the well, a small band of Indians murdered and scalped her. Then they carried her magnificent head of hair four miles to the British General John Burgoyne, who paid them for it in silver. Standing beside him, horrified, was his first lieutenant, David Jones, to whom Jane was betrothed.

Word of "Gentleman Johnny's" atrocity brought thousands of volunteers into the colonial ranks, caused dissension among Burgoyne's supporters, and enraged the populace, here and in England.

Several weeks later, the chant with which Burgoyne's troops were defeated at Saratoga was "Jane McCrea! Jane McCrea!" This was the turning point of the Revolution. This was the death that saved the American cause. Two month's after Jane's scalping, Burgoyne surrendered.

Her massacre was recorded in hundreds of poems, newspapers, books, songs, and paintings. Now, 216 years after this tragic act of violence against an innocent woman, it is recorded on fabric.



and that I was a woman who had been
and that I was a woman who had been
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John Burgoyne
1777



HISTORY OF "BURGOYNE SURROUNDED" QUILT BLOCK

John Burgoyne (1722-1792) was a British general of the Revolutionary War in America, and a writer of plays. In 1777, he submitted a plan to the British government for invading New York state from Canada. The campaign involved the operations of two armies moving from opposite and distant points, meeting other British troops in the state. He was then given command of an army of 7000 men. Starting from Quebec he mustered his forces for a march down to Stillwater and Saratoga New York, where he hoped to combine with British troops from New York to isolate New England from the colonies below. He gained possession of Ticonderoga (for which he was made a Lt. General), and Fort Edward; but pushing on, was detached from his communications with Canada and was hemmed in by a superior force at Saratoga. On October 9th Burgoyne retreated, followed closely and harassed constantly, partly by the Green Mountain boys of Vermont, until the 16th when he was nearly surrounded. After a battle, Burgoyne surrendered with about 6,000 men, to General Horatio Gates at Saratoga on October 17, 1777.

This battle helped bring France into the war as an ally of the United States, and has been called one of the 15 decisive battles of history. It proved to be the turning point in the war. The indignation in England against him was great, but perhaps unjust. He returned at once, with the leave of the American General, to defend his conduct, and demanded, but never obtained, a trial. He was deprived of his regiment and a governorship which he held. In 1782 his political friends restored his rank, he was given a colonelcy, and made Commander-in-Chief in Ireland and a privy councillor.

John Burgoyne's wife had died in 1776 while he was in Canada but he had several natural children born between 1782 and 1788 by Susan Caulfield, an opera singer. He was known as a dramatist and a General in England. His first play, *The Maid of the Oaks* was produced in 1775.

Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga
Oil Painting by John Trumbull; Yale University Art Gallery

