

Orders of George Washington to General John Sullivan, at Head-Quarters May 31, 1779

The Expedition you are appointed to command is to be directed against the hostile tribes of the Six Nations of Indians, with their associates and adherents. The immediate objects are the total destruction and devastation of their settlements, and the capture of as many prisoners of every age and sex as possible. It will be essential to ruin their crops now in the ground and prevent their planting more.

I would recommend, that some post in the center of the Indian Country, should be occupied with all expedition, with a sufficient quantity of provisions whence parties should be detached to lay waste all the settlements around, with instructions to do it in the most effectual manner, that the country may not be merely overrun, but destroyed.

But you will not by any means listen to any overture of peace before the total ruinment of their settlements is effected. Our future security will be in their inability to injure us and in the terror with which the severity of the chastisement they receive will inspire them.^[4]

The 1779 Sullivan Campaign

A Little-Known Offensive Strategic To The War Breaks The Indian Nations' Power

by Stanley J. Adamiak

The 1779 Sullivan Campaign emerged as one of the larger of the Continental Army's offensives during the American Revolution, yet remains relatively unknown.¹ It was an act of reprisal to break the Iroquois Confederation, a Native American political and military alliance that included the Seneca, Cayuga, Mohawk, Onondaga, Oneida, and Tuscarora tribes. The Iroquois, with the exception of the Oneida and Tuscarora, openly sided with Great Britain to protect their homelands. Together with Loyalists forces, they had ravaged the Pennsylvania and New York frontiers. The bloodiest of these attacks occurred in 1778 in the northeastern Pennsylvania's Wyoming Valley and the Cherry Valley of New York.

Through early 1779, General George Washington developed a strategic plan at his Middlebrook, New Jersey headquarters, for the coming campaign season. Although much of the military activity had shifted to the southern colonies, Washington's army sat in a virtual stalemate with a British army entrenched within New York City. Washington gambled that a quick strike into the Iroquois' central New York homelands could eliminate a key British ally without significantly weakening his forces outside New York.² In fact, this expedition would be the only major campaign of 1779 in the North. He also sought an experienced officer to lead the venture. After several officers declined, the command fell to New Hampshire's John Sullivan.³

General Sullivan agreed with his commander's goals, seeing his mission to convince the Iroquois "that we have it in our power to carry war into their country." If his forces destroyed the Iroquois food supplies, it would force the British to support them through the following winter, creating an additional burden.

Despite his initial confidence, Sullivan faced a major logistical undertaking. His force would operate for several weeks beyond traditional supply lines, meaning it would have to be self-sufficient. Washington promised complete support, allowing Sullivan to choose his troops and attempt to honor his large supply requisitions.⁴

When complete, Sullivan's command would include four brigades, totaling about 4500 men. Specifically, he was given Enoch Poor's Brigade consisting of three New Hampshire and one Massachusetts's regiment, who Sullivan boasted "are all marksmen

& accustomed to the Indian mode of fighting;"⁵ General William Maxwell's New Jersey Brigade; Edward Hand's Brigade of mostly Pennsylvania troops; and James Clinton's Brigade of four New York regiments. In addition, Sullivan received a company of Virginia riflemen, and two independent artillery units. Pennsylvania also promised a sizable militia force.

The plan was simple. Sullivan would gather his forces near Easton, Pennsylvania and advance up the Susquehanna River Valley. Simultaneously, Clinton's Brigade would sweep westward from the Mohawk River Valley and down the upper Susquehanna to link up with the main force at Tioga. From there, the combined force would travel into the Iroquois country and destroy everything in its path. Washington also hoped that another column could be organized to invade Iroquois country from the western Pennsylvania' Allegheny River.⁶ (Fig. 1)

Obtaining supplies proved difficult. Food quality was poor, particularly the salt meat. Often supplies were available, but a wagon shortage prevented their arrival. Sullivan asked Joseph Reed, the President of Pennsylvania, that a law prohibiting the impressment of wagons be lifted. Unknowingly, Sullivan started a war of words revolving around the definition of the word "impress." Pennsylvania refused, feeling that Sullivan was abusing his power. Even Congress was "as much perplexed to obtain wagons as I am."

Washington, concerned about growing delays, pressed Sullivan to act. Speed was essential, lest the enemy organize to thwart their plans. Sullivan defended his actions. "I know of no Steps Left untried," Sullivan wrote, and assured his commander that "none shall be left unattempted."⁷ Washington encouraged Sullivan not to wait for his supplies, for they could be forwarded. The entire Continental Army suffered from similar shortages and he urged Sullivan to be realistic, and above all advance.⁸ Sullivan reached Easton in early May and encountered many setbacks. Every day the troops sat idle, they devoured more of the precious stockpiled supplies. Even worse, a trail linking Easton with Wyoming, an advanced supply center up river, was impassable, forcing the cutting of a road through woodlands "so thick that a man cannot get through them but on his hands and Knees."⁹

Washington had assumed that Sullivan would be on the march by early June and outlined the mission objectives for the "total destruction and devastation" of the Iroquois villages so "that the country may not merely be overrun but destroyed." The villages would be burned, the crops destroyed, and as many prisoners as possible to be taken as hostages to guarantee any settlement.

Washington warned Sullivan not to accept any offer of peace before "the total ruin of their of their settlements was effected." He feared that the Iroquois would "amuse" them with insincere peace proposals to spare their homelands. "Our future security," Washington wrote, would rest on the "Terror" inflicted upon them. He urged Sullivan to act aggressively and employ his men "in a loose and dispersed a way ... It should be

impressed upon the upon the minds of the men where ever they have the opportunity to rush on with the war whoop and fixed bayonet, " to "discourage and terrify" their foes. The instructions also suggested that small parties be sent out to destroy villages out of the main line of march, to avoid diverting the main force.¹⁰ Sullivan acted on Washington's advice, and conducted tactical exercises for fighting in the wilderness against an elusive enemy who defied traditional tactics.¹¹

Once the Wyoming road opened June 12, the regiments left Easton for Wyoming, where the bulk of the supplies had been gathered. The expedition was already far behind schedule. Sullivan grew increasingly irritated at the continuous delays and unfulfilled promises of improvement.¹²

While Sullivan faced many logistical difficulties, so did his foes. Colonel John Butler, the main Loyalist leader, realized the potential danger Sullivan's command represented, but had but three hundred rangers in his command and found his Iroquois allies were unprepared to oppose the Continentals. Butler urgently requested provisions from Fort Niagara, the closest British base. His forces could neither stand nor retreat without provisions. By early July Butler knew "beyond a Doubt" that a "Rebel" army was moving up the Susquehanna. He also knew he was in no position to challenge them.¹³ In the meantime, Wyoming was bristling with over 2,000 Continentals. Supply boats arrived almost daily along with hundreds of pack horses and beef cattle for the expedition. Wyoming had been devastated the year before. The soldiers were amazed at the destruction of the town and the others around it. Some New Jersey troops visited the site of the "Wyoming Massacre," where Colonel Zebulon Butler, a survivor, recounted the attack where over two hundred militia men had been killed.¹⁴ It was a brutal lesson in the harsh realities of frontier warfare.

By the end of July, Sullivan still had not left his Wyoming base. He complained endlessly to Washington and the Board of War about the lack of supplies. The Board apologized "exceedingly the delay of an expedition whose success greatly depended on Secrecy and Dispatch." His complaints, they agreed, had "undoubtedly but too much foundation."¹⁵

In an effort to absolve himself of any blame for any potential failure, Sullivan complained to Congress about a lack of support. His cynicism increased as Pennsylvania reneged on a promise for hundreds of volunteer militia, especially since his efforts would aid that state.¹⁶

As Tory and Iroquois raiding parties plundered surrounding settlements, Sullivan refused to be distracted. Small patrols scoured the surrounding forest to detect marauding Indians and protect the army, but he had no men to spare for the surrounding countryside.¹⁷ Every local request for assistance was denied. "For your present Safety," Sullivan wrote one local leader, "I must refer you to the Council of your state for Assistance. Certainly it will be granted without much inconvenience as the State has

neglected to furnish the Troops promis'd for this expedition." Other requests met similar, sarcastic denials.[18](#)

By late July, Washington had reached the limits of his patience for Sullivan's reluctance to begin the campaign. He had envisioned a rapid strike into the Iroquois territory, not a slow methodical campaign. "I cannot but repeat my intreaties that you would hasten your operations with all possible dispatch," he wrote. Washington urged Sullivan to consider that by its very nature, the expedition would have to travel light. Washington feared that if Sullivan carried too large a baggage train, his force would be over encumbered and risk being overwhelmed, or worse, be unable to travel deep into Indian territory.

Sullivan's delays had allowed for an alteration in the plan. Colonel Daniel Broadhead had organized a small force of troops and friendly Indians that would strike northwards from Fort Pitt along the Allegheny River and possibly link up with Sullivan. At the very least, it would serve as a diversion.[19](#)

By the time Washington's message arrived, the army was already on the move towards Tioga, a village located at the junction of the Cayuga and Susquehanna Rivers. The majority of the supplies had arrived and were being packed into 120 boats. The main army would march along one shore of the Cayuga River in a formation that surrounded the near twelve hundred pack horses, and seven hundred beef cattle. Most of the supplies would go by boat. General Hand's Brigade would serve as light infantry companies and screen the main force from ambushes. Two regiments patrolled the opposite shore to protect the flotilla.[20](#)

The army was well-guarded as it began its travel up the Susquehanna. At any one time the force would be stretched out for about six miles along the river. All along the march, the troops were anxious about being attacked, especially when the trail narrowed as it passed through an extremely mountainous stretch. The soldiers knew they were being watched. They expected an attack at any moment, and were surprised to pass unmolested despite "the many advantageous posts they might have occupied in annoying us."[21](#) The army reached Tioga on August 11.

As his troops arrived, Sullivan took a more active approach. He sent a scouting party to the village of Chemung above Tioga. The scouts reported between two and three hundred Iroquois there, but "could not tell whether they mean to evacuate it or defend it." The army marched through the night to surprise the town. The march overland through the darkness did not go smoothly. Units became lost and blundered through the forest.[22](#) They stormed the town, only to find it deserted. The soldiers looted and burned close to forty houses and burned the surrounding fields.

Hand's Brigade followed the Indian's trail and briefly skirmished with a small group of warriors. The fight ended quickly, but the shooting aggravated tensions. Firing broke out in one of the fields. Several soldiers were hit, but one officer noted he was "uncertain

whether by the enemy or our own men." The army completed its job and returned to Tioga, completing a forty-mile march in just under twenty four hours. The total cost of the day had been seven Americans killed and thirteen wounded. Sullivan was uncertain of enemy losses, but claimed they had come across "some Hats which had been shot through, a pack and a bloody shirt" near the site.[23](#)

Sullivan waited at Tioga to link up with Clinton's Brigade. Clinton, whose force had marched several weeks earlier, had been waiting for nearly a month in Iroquois territory near the base of Lake Otsego. Sullivan sent Hand's Brigade, some nine hundred men to link up with Clinton's Column. The two columns moved towards each other burning villages between them. They met August 19. Clinton's fifteen hundred men would a boost to Sullivan's army to a total force to its full strength of nearly forty-five hundred men.[24](#)

While awaiting Clinton, solitary Iroquois appeared around the camp's perimeter, sniping at the men. Sullivan's men cleared the brush back one hundred yards from the camp and increased patrols. Despite their efforts, a Iroquois war party attacked the cattle, killing and scalping an attendant, before being driven off.[25](#)

As his men prepared for the march inland, Sullivan appointed Colonel William Shreve commander of the forward base at Tioga. He and a garrison of 250 men built a series of blockhouses for defense and stockpiling food and forage. Troops shifted supplies from barrels, which were fine for the boats, to sacks that would be better suited to the pack horses. A critical shortage of these sacks forced many regiments to sacrifice their tents to make more.[26](#)

The army finally left Tioga August 26, at least two months behind schedule. Hand's light troops were out front, guided by a company of Virginia riflemen. Clinton took the rear and the other two brigades either flank, guarding the baggage train in a box like formation. Flanking parties were sent out. Their efficiency impressed even the British. John Butler wrote Fort Niagara informing them that they were "misinformed" about the composition of the force. It was not untrained militia, but "the best of the Continental Troops commanded by the most active of the Rebel Generals."[27](#) Significantly outnumbered, Butler planned to ambush Sullivan's force and demoralize them before they got too deep into Iroquois territory.

All was not well in Sullivan's army. The columns lumbering pace put them behind schedule. The artillery often bogged down, frequently overturning, creating a major headache for the troops.[28](#)

By August 28, the column had reached the charred remains of Chemung. The troops were sent out to finish the job, burning some remaining fields. One of the benefits of launching the campaign so late in the season was that the harvest was ready. The soldiers feasted on the abundance of beans, squash, and pumpkins, a welcome addition to their dull rations.[29](#)

While the army feasted, the British and Iroquois made their move. Butler and Mohawk Chief Joseph Brant chose an ambush site near the village of Newtown along the line of march and gathered about seven hundred men, including Butler's three hundred rangers. Below the actual town, the trail crossed a bend in a river and flanked by two large hills. They constructed a breastwork across one ridge and camouflaged it with brush. It was hoped that a diversion would draw Sullivan across their front and the confusion generated from sudden firing from one flank, quickly followed by fire from the other would rout the army. Butler dug in and waited.

On the morning of August 29, American riflemen approached the hidden entrenchments. Scouts had reported a large encampment the night before and the riflemen were wary. When a small group of Indians appeared ahead, the riflemen's commander suspected an ambush and sent one of his men up a tree to scout out the ground ahead. Spying the enemy works, he alerted the rest of the army.³⁰ Hand's light troops rushed forward and joined the riflemen in skirmishing with the Indians, while they waited for the rest of the army. By 11:00 a.m., Sullivan arrived on the scene. Sullivan ordered Poor's and Clinton's Brigades to outflank the Indian left and wide circle and come upon their rear. Hand would remain in front, and Maxwell's Brigade would be in reserve. Sullivan kept his artillery out of sight, but would rush it forward to fire on the entrenchments once Poor and Clinton were in position. Butler still did not realize their trap had been discovered.

The bombardment began at 3:00 p.m., but unfortunately Poor's troops had blundered into a swamp and had not reached their position. Poor and Clinton heard the sound of the artillery and quickened their march. Although the barrage had routed part of the British force, the Continentals encountered stiff opposition on the back side of the hill. While the skirmishers exchanged shots, the regiments formed up for a bayonet charge. New Hampshire troops "advanced rappedly with fix'd bayonet without firing a shot altho they kept a steady fire on us," Lieutenant Colonel Henry Dearborn wrote. As the Continental's reached the enemy line, they unleashed a full volley, ripping holes in their foe's lines. Those units with clear fronts, wheeled to support other units. Fierce fighting, some hand to hand, engulfed the ridgeline.³¹ Then almost at once, the whole Tories and Iroquois broke, leaving the Americans in possession of the battlefield. (Fig. 2) The day at Newtown had not been costly. Sullivan reported three killed and thirty-nine wounded, but was once again unsure of enemy casualties. Morale soared as the victorious army entered and plundered Newtown. Detachments burned about 150 acres of what one soldier noted, was "the best corn Ever I saw."³²

Even Sullivan, who had feared that the operation would be a disaster, boasted of his victory, reporting that he and Clinton had already destroyed fourteen Indian towns. Even as he wrote, his men were "industriously employed in destroying" Newtown, a job that would take an entire day.³³

Sullivan made several key decisions after Newtown. First, he decided that the artillery slowed his forces too much and sent his heavier guns back, leaving him with three small cannon, the largest being a three pounder. Next, given the abundance of food in the towns, he reduced rations and required his men to forage off enemy stores.³⁴ A small expedition was sent to destroy another village a few miles up the river, while the riflemen and a company of light infantry pursued the fleeing Iroquois. Believing the Indians fled to Catherine's Town, just to the north, Sullivan sought to catch them by surprise and ordered another night march August 31.

This march was a nightmare across rough terrain crisscrossed with swamps and gullies. One officer wrote that the "march [was] as disagreeable as I have experienced; sometimes up to our Knees in mire and mud and so dark as not to be able to keep the path by any means than being close to our front man." The large numbers of men and pack horses traversing the same paths only increased the muddy mess, bogging down the army. "Had the savages availed themselves to this opportunity," one officer realized, "it might have proved very fatal to us."³⁵

The advance party arrived near dawn to find the town abandoned. Colonel Walter Butler and three hundred men set out in an unsuccessful attempt to overtake a group of women and children, supposedly nearby. While the men set about burning the houses, the mud splattered remnants of the army plodded into the town throughout the day.³⁶

Sullivan met with a group of Oneida Indians, an openly pro-American group within the Iroquois Confederation. The Indians requested that Sullivan spare their brethren the Cayugas, for they wished friendship with the United States. Sullivan replied, in compliance to his orders, that the Cayugas had participated in frontier attacks, and while he appreciated their pledge of friendship, it was too late. They would not be spared. Sullivan chastised the Oneida's, pointing out that they had promised assistance, but sent none except a few guides, who were "totally unacquainted" with the country. The Oneidas apologized, promising more future support.³⁷ After taking a day to recuperate, the army was once again on the move, marching along the shore of Seneca Lake towards the town of Kendaia. Along the way, they destroyed several small houses. In one small village, the soldiers stormed the town to find that the Indians left "had Just left and left their kettles on the fire boiling of Corn and Beans which we got."³⁸

The soldiers took Kendaia without a fight September 5. In the town they found a white captive who told them of a force of nearly a thousand warriors at Canadasaga, at the head of Seneca Lake. This talk of a large force alarmed the soldiers, but they continued burning houses and destroying crops and orchards.³⁹

"Nature could not have formed a better place for an ambushade," is how one officer described the outlet of Seneca Lake. Crossing a twenty yard wide rapid river would place the army in jeopardy on its way to Canadasaga, only a mile distant. The army

halted "and reconnoitered the ground very well" before crossing the waist deep water. Covering parties formed up for an attack that never came.[40](#) The army quickly surrounded the town, but the town was empty. Canadasaga was the largest town yet, with over sixty houses and large peach and apple orchards.[41](#) While his men destroyed the town, Sullivan dispatched several large parties to burn some outlying villages.

Sullivan met with his officers to assess their situation. They were making great progress, averaging about ten miles a day. . Supplies were adequate, but there was some question as whether to continue, and if so, how far. The officers decided that their ultimate goal would be to destroy the Indians' largest town, at Genesee Castle. That would guarantee them enough food to return to Tioga. To quicken their pace, the sick and wounded were sent back to Tioga.

On September 10, the troops entered Canandaigua, at the northern end of Canandaigua Lake. "It was the best town we have seen yet," one Soldier wrote." Many of the houses were closed up with signs on the doors proclaiming "he who destroys this house his offspring shall suffer for it," prompting one soldier to note that he felt it was "A poor satisfaction for the Dastardly villains." The soldiers quickly destroyed the village in what had become a routine. The town's thirty houses and fifty acres of fields were in ruins as the army continued onward.[42](#)

Arriving at the small village of Honeaye September 11, the Riflemen surprised a small group of Indians that "Just made their escape," leaving behind their "Packs & Blankets & Potatoes Roasting in the fire."[43](#) Sullivan decided to leave the bulk of his supplies there under guard, so his forces could move faster and surprise the Indians at Genesee. He sent a scouting party, commanded by Lieutenant Thomas Boyd, ahead towards Genesee. Sullivan felt Boyd needed no more than three or four men, but Boyd insisted on taking twenty-six.[44](#)

Boyd's men traveled quickly, but became lost. They attacked a village above Genesee killing and scalping two Indians, before finally reaching Genesee. Boyd informed Sullivan that he would wait for the army, but apparently changed his mind and moved towards the main force. On September 13, Boyd's men discovered an Indian ambush along the army's path, surprising up to four hundred warriors. The fighting was brisk as Boyd's men made a desperate stand in a grove of trees.

Sullivan's force heard the firing while waiting for a small bridge across a creek to be completed. With the sounds of battle, the light infantry forded the stream and drove the attackers away. Boyd's command had been nearly completely wiped out, but had detected an ambush. Several bodies, including Boyd's were missing.[45](#) Boyd's blundering may have saved the army from a costly ambush.

Sullivan's men marched quickly towards Genesee. The afternoon of the 14th, they crossed the Genesee river and traveled through a grassland so tall that the men on horse back "could see nothing but the men's guns above the grass."[46](#) They found Genesee deserted, but in the town's center, they found the mutilated bodies of Boyd and one of his men.

"It appeared that they had whiped them in a most cruel manner, pulled out Mr. Boid's nails, cut off his nose, plucked out one of his eyes, cut out his tongue, stabbed him with spears in sundry places, & inflicted other tortures which decency will not permit me to mention; lastly cut off his head & left his body on the ground."[47](#) The barbarity outraged the men, who set about destroying the town "with great cheerfulness."[48](#) Genesee was a huge town and required nearly two days to raze. Crops were gathered into the huts before they were set on fire. Stores that could not be burned were hurriedly dumped into the river.[49](#)

Sullivan looked over the situation. According to a white captive, the Indians were completely demoralized and heading for Fort Niagara, fearing Sullivan would follow.[50](#) But Sullivan had completed his task, growing shortages mandated his return. His men reached Honeaye September 17, with a cheerful greeting from the small garrison left there. They had been only fifty men and a number of sick, under the command of Captain John Cummings. The men had constructed "Fort Cummings", a large hut "round which the garrison had laid kegs of flour, boxes of ammunition and bags of flour, so as to make a very considerable fort."[51](#)

The army retraced its steps to the outlet of Seneca Lake, burning any fields or dwellings they had missed. There was still the land of the Cayugas to the east of Sullivan's entry into the Iroquois nations. Once again, a group of Oneida Indians approached Sullivan in an attempt to persuade him of the Cayugas' peaceful intentions. Sullivan rejected their overtures and repeated that he could not take such an offer seriously.[52](#) With the Iroquois threat largely removed, Sullivan divided his force cover more territory. Colonel Peter Ganesvoort and about one hundred men would continue marching eastward to the Mohawk Valley, destroying villages along their path to Albany. Colonel Henry Dearborn and seven hundred men marched down the western shore of Cayuga Lake, while simultaneously, Colonel Walter Butler and five hundred men traveled down its eastern shore. The two forces would link up with Sullivan above Tioga. A fourth force under Colonel William Smith swept along the western shore of Seneca Lake, while Sullivan, and the remainder of the army, covered its eastern side. [\(Fig. 3\)](#)

Sullivan retraced route through the desolated countryside along Seneca Lake. Supplies were running low, but he ordered the garrison at Tioga to forward some. The western army marched into that advanced post, christened "Fort Reed," September 24. News had arrived that Spain had declared war on Britain and celebrated amidst a major feast.[53](#)

The detached columns arrived back safely, Dearborn arrived September 26, and Butler two days later. The entire army was once again on the move, reaching Wyoming on September 30, their mission completed. Casualties had been light and they had not been "detained by storms or any other Accident."[54](#) Several days of celebrating followed, as Washington's orders for the reassignment of the Brigades arrived and the regiments headed off for duty elsewhere.

Sullivan considered his expedition an outstanding success. He boasted to Congress that "every creek and River has been traced, & the whole Country explored in search of Indian settlements." He bragged that there was "not a single town left in the Country of the five nations." The army had wiped out at least forty villages and Sullivan made a "moderate computation" that they had destroyed at least 160,000 bushels of corn.[55](#) Colonel Daniel Broadhead, the leader of a smaller expedition up the Allegheny, congratulated Sullivan on his success noting, "the wolves of the forest will have sufficient cause to howl as they will be quite destitute of food."[56](#)

Washington was pleased for the western army had completed its goals. Unaware of Sullivan's progress, Washington had repeated the "the necessity of pushing the Indians to the greatest practible distance from their own settlements, and our own settlements, and our own frontiers," to throw "them wholly on the British enemy."[57](#) By the time Washington penned these orders, the army had already completed its mission. Sullivan had met Washington's objectives completely, accomplishing the effectual destruction of the Iroquois nations.

The operation's success resulted from a combination of careful planning and luck. The weather cooperated. Sullivan was aided by seasoned officers, who led a well-trained, disciplined army. They adapted their tactics to operating a large force in the wilderness. It was an unusual campaign, in that it was waging total war against an entire people, not just an enemy army.

The major difficulties the army confronted resulted mainly from its own supply problems. Supplies had to be transported, and often times, many of the foodstuffs that arrived were spoiled, or ruined by improper packaging. The inability to gather the supplies quickly delayed the army for some time, allowing the British an possible opportunity to thwart the mission's start. However, these delays also pushed the campaign into the harvest season, allowing to supplement its meager rations and stretch the campaign's duration.

The mere size and organization of this force made it extremely difficult for the ill-supplied and demoralized Loyalist and Iroquois to fight back. There were several points where Sullivan's expedition could have been delayed, yet they passed virtually unmolested through Indian territory.

Although the expedition devastated the Iroquois crops and towns and left them on the mercy of the British for the winter, one officer noted "The nests are destroyed, but the

birds are still on the wing."[58](#) The Iroquois continued their devastating raids throughout the war, but the war broke the Iroquois Confederacy's power. Following the war, much of the Iroquois lands would be absorbed by the United States.

As for Sullivan, this was his most successful campaign and his last. Deteriorating health and a wish to be with his family, prompted his resignation. Congress, which had long put up with his chronic complaints, eagerly accepted it, ending Sullivan's military career.

ENDNOTES

1. This paper is based on a longer graduate research paper completed at Penn State. The author was unable to take advantage of a recent work, Joseph R. Fischer, *A Well-Executed Failure: The Sullivan Campaign against the Iroquois, July-September 1779* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1997).
2. Charles Whittenmore, *A General of the Revolution: John Sullivan of NewHampshire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), 117-8.
3. Whittenmore, 119-120.
4. John Sullivan to George Washington, 15 April 1779, in Otis G. Hammond (ed.), *The Letters and Papers of Major General John Sullivan, Continental Army 3 vols.* (Concord: New Hampshire Historical Society, 1939), 3:1-5. Hereafter JSP.
5. John Sullivan to George Washington, 16 April 1779, *ibid.*, 5-9.
6. Whittenmore, 121.
7. Lt. Col. Adam Hubley to Sullivan, 2 July 1779, JSP, 3:69-70; Sullivan to Joseph Reed, 11 May, 21 May 1779, *ibid.*, 19, 28; Sullivan to Washington, 23 May 1779, *ibid.*, 3:33-4.
8. Washington to Sullivan, 28 May 1779, *ibid.*, 3:44-5.
9. Sullivan to Washington, 31 May 1779, *ibid.*, 3:47.
10. Washington to Sullivan, 31 May 1779, *ibid.*, 3:50
11. "Journal of Captain Daniel Livermore," 10 June 1779, in Frederick Cook (ed.) *Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan ...* (Freeport, NY: Books for Library Press, 1972 reprint of 1887 edition), 180. Hereafter Journals.
12. Whittenmore, 125.
13. Walter Butler to John Haldimand, 20 May 1779, in Alexander Flick (ed.) "New Sources on the Sullivan-Clinton Campaign, *Quarterly Journal of the New York Historical Association* 10(3) (1929), 218; Butler to Col. Mason Bolton, 18 June 1779, *ibid.*, 265; Butler to Bolton, 3 July 1779, *ibid.*, 266.
14. "The Journal of James Norris," 2 July 1779, Journals, 225.
15. Board of War to Sullivan, 21 July 1779, JSP, 3:78-9.
16. Sullivan to Jay, 21, 26 July 1779, *ibid.*, 3:84,86.
17. "Order Book of Lt. Col. Francis Barber, 3rd New Jersey, 8 July 1779, in Louise Murray, (ed.) *Notes from the Craft Collection in the Tioga Point Museum ...* (Athens, PA: Tioga Point Museum, 1929), 28.
18. Sullivan to John Cook, 30 July 1779, JSP 3:88-9 John Sullivan to Col. Sam Hunter, 30 July 1779, *ibid.* 3:89
19. Washington to Sullivan, 29 July 1779, *ibid.*, 3:88.
20. Order of March, 24 May 1779, *ibid.*, 3:36-8.
21. "The Journal of Rev. William Rogers, D.D.," 5 Aug. 1779, Journals, 256-60.
22. Sullivan to Jay, 15 Aug. 1779, JSP, 3:95; Almion Lauder (ed.), *Orderly Books of the Fourth New York Regiment, 1778-1780 ...* (Albany: State University, 1932), 78; "The Journal of Lt. William Barton", 12 Aug 1779, Journals, 6.

23. "The Journal of Major Jeremiah Fogg," 13 Aug. 1779, *ibid.*, 92; Sullivan to Jay, 15 Aug. 1779, JSP 3:95-8.
24. Sullivan to James Clinton, 6 Aug. 1779, *ibid.*, 90.
25. Fogg, 15 Aug. 1779, Journals, 92.
26. Sullivan to Colonel William Shreve, 24 Aug. 1779, JSP 3:101-3; Fogg, 24 Aug. 1779, Journals, 92.
27. John Butler to Mason Bolton, 26 Aug. 1779, in Flick, 281.
28. "The Journal of Sgt. Moses Fellows," 27 Aug. 1779, Journals, 87.
29. Fogg, 27 August 1779, *ibid.*, 94.
30. Hubley, 29 Aug. 1779, *ibid.*, 155; The generalities of the battle appear in Sullivan's report, 30 Aug. 1779, JSP 3:107-112. For a British perspective, see John Butler to Mason Bolton, 30 Aug. 1779, in Flick.
31. "The Journal of Lt. Col. Henry Dearborn," 29 Aug. 1779, Journals, 72.
32. "The Journal of Lt. Erkuries Beatty," 30 Aug. 1779, Journals, 27; Fogg, 30 Aug. 1779, *ibid.*, 95.33 Sullivan to Washington, 30 Aug. 1779, JSP 3:113.
33. Sullivan's Address to Soldiers, 30 Aug. 1779, *ibid.*, 113.
34. Barton, 1 Sept. 1779, Journals, 8-9.
35. Fogg, 1 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 89.
36. John Sullivan to the Oneida Indians, 1 Sept. 1779, JSP 3:114.
37. Beatty, 3 Sept. 1779, Journals, 28.
38. Dearborn, 5 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 74; Barton, 5 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 11.
39. Fogg, 7 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 97.
40. Fogg, 7 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 97.
41. "The Journal of Major John Burrowes," 9-10 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 45-7.
42. Beatty, 11 Sept. 1779, Journals, 31.
43. Sullivan to John Jay, 30 Sept. 1779, JSP 3:129-30.
44. *Ibid.*
45. Dearborn, 14 Sept. 1779, Journals, 75.
46. Sullivan to Jay, 30 Sept. 1779, JSP 3:130-31.
47. "The Journal of Sgt. Major George Grant," 15 Sept. 1779, Journals, 112.
48. Fellows, 15 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 91.
49. Sullivan to Jay, 30 Sept. 1779, JSP 3:132.
50. Barton, 17 Sept. 1779, Journals, 12.
51. Sullivan to Oneida Indians, 18 Sept. 1779, JSP 3:118.
52. Beatty, 24 Sept. 1779, Journals, 33.
53. "The Journal of Lt. William McKendry, 30 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 209.
54. Sullivan to Jay, 30 Sept. 1779, JSP 3:134.
55. Daniel Broadhead to Sullivan, 10 Oct. 1779, *ibid.*, 148.
56. Washington to Sullivan, 15 Sept. 1779, *ibid.*, 121.
57. Fogg, 30 Sept. 1779, Journals, 101.
58. Whittenmore, 150.