

## Saving Boston

In the summer of 1775, the British Army was holding the colonial city of Boston, Massachusetts under siege. Most Bostonians who were able to fight fled the city and left it defenseless. Outside the city, a meager force led by General George Washington conspired to drive the British out of Boston. The colonists were not sufficiently equipped to fight the professional British Army and the odds were against them. However, one man, Henry Knox, had an arduous idea that could save Boston from the grips of the British (Kravitz, 2015).

The Continental Army, being inferior to the British, had one small advantage. The hills surrounding Boston belonged to General Washington. Henry Knox, who had helped start the Boston Grenadier Corps, saw this as an opportunity to have the upper hand against the British. Knox constructed a precarious plan that, if successful, would mean the difference between Boston being saved or being destroyed. Knox proposed to Washington that they obtain the cannons, mortars, and other weapons that had been seized by the rebels at Fort Ticonderoga (Kelly, 2014). The artillery could help the Continental Army drive the British Army and Navy out of the city. Obtaining the weapons would be no easy task. The journey would be more than 700 miles round-trip over harsh terrain, across rivers, lakes, mountains, and valleys. Knox was committed to the idea and insisted he make the trip himself to retrieve the artillery (Kravitz, 2015).

Knox's plan was a logistically challenging mission. He would have to rely on perseverance and luck. Washington's inner circle openly believed it was an impossible task, but Knox was convinced that arming his men with the weapons from Fort Ticonderoga was the only way to defeat the British in Boston. He was certain that they could be successful, even with the

formidable obstacles in their way. Washington, with nothing to lose, gave Knox permission to arrange his mission (Kravitz, 2015).

On November 16, 1775, with only \$1,000 in hand, Knox embarked on what would be a 14-day journey. Once at Fort Ticonderoga, Knox selected 59 weapons weighing a total of approximately 60 tons (Unger, 2011). With the help of hired men and soldiers stationed at Fort Ticonderoga, Knox began moving the weapons over rough terrain during a harsh winter. The artillery was first sailed down Lake Champlain, up the LaChute River and across a freezing Lake George. They were then put on carts and pulled by oxen through the snow-covered Berkshire Mountains and across the frozen Hudson River (Kelly, 2014). Finally, on January 25, 1776, after a grueling 70 days, every piece of artillery arrived in Framingham, twenty miles outside of Boston (Kravitz, 2015).

Washington mandated the weapons be set up in the hills surrounding Boston without alerting the British, a task that took nearly two weeks. At night, Knox and his men worked tirelessly to set up the artillery around Dorchester, overlooking Boston (Unger, 2011). They built fortifications to defend against counterattack and even painted logs to give the appearance of additional weapons. On the morning of March 5, the British woke up to guns staring down upon them. This swiftly turned the tide in the Americans' favor. On March 8, 1776, General Washington received a letter from British General William Howe offering his surrender. The siege of Boston had ended. The determination of one man, Henry Knox, saved one of America's most important cities from being destroyed during their fight for independence (Kravitz, 2015).

## Works Cited

Kelly, J. (2014). *Band of Giants*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Kravitz, D. (2015). *The Untold Story of Henry Knox*. North Mankato: Compass Point Books.

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