

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM**

(Type all entries - complete applicable sections)

STATE: <b>New York</b>	
COUNTY: <b>Chemung</b>	
FOR NPS USE ONLY	
ENTRY NUMBER	DATE

**1. NAME**

COMMON:  
**Newtown Battlefield Reservation**

AND/OR HISTORIC:  
**Newtown Battlefield**

**2. LOCATION**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**on State Route 17 six miles southeast of Elmira**

CITY OR TOWN:  
**Elmira**

STATE: **New York**      CODE:      COUNTY: **Chemung**      CODE:

**3. CLASSIFICATION**

CATEGORY (Check One)	OWNERSHIP	STATUS	ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC
<input type="checkbox"/> District <input type="checkbox"/> Building <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Site <input type="checkbox"/> Structure <input type="checkbox"/> Object	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Private <input type="checkbox"/> Both	Public Acquisition: <input type="checkbox"/> In Process <input type="checkbox"/> Being Considered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupied <input type="checkbox"/> Unoccupied <input type="checkbox"/> Preservation work in progress
PRESENT USE (Check One or More as Appropriate)			
<input type="checkbox"/> Agricultural <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Educational <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> Government <input type="checkbox"/> Industrial <input type="checkbox"/> Military <input type="checkbox"/> Museum	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Park <input type="checkbox"/> Private Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Religious <input type="checkbox"/> Scientific	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Comments _____ _____ _____

**4. OWNER OF PROPERTY**

OWNER'S NAME:  
**State of New York; administered by Finger Lakes State Parks Commission**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**Box U RD3, Trumansburg 14886**

CITY OR TOWN: **Albany**      STATE: **New York**      CODE:

**5. LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**

COURTHOUSE, REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.:  
**Courthouse**

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN: **14901**      STATE: **New York**      CODE:

**6. REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE OF SURVEY:

DATE OF SURVEY:       Federal     State     County     Local

DEPOSITORY FOR SURVEY RECORDS:

STREET AND NUMBER:

CITY OR TOWN:      STATE:      CODE:

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7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION

(Check One)

Excellent     Good     Fair     Deteriorated     Ruins     Unexposed

(Check One)

Altered     Unaltered

(Check One)

Moved     Original Site

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (if known) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

On August 30, 1779, General Sullivan described the Newtown Battlefield as follows: "...the enemy had, about a mile in front of the town (Newtown), a very extensive breastwork erected on a rising ground which commanded the road, in which we were to pass with our artillery, and which would enable them to fire upon our flank and front at the same time. This breastwork they had endeavored to mark in a very artful manner, and had conceal themselves behind it in large numbers... I found that the work was in a bend of the river, which, by turning northward, formed a semicircle. There was a deep brook (Baldwin Creek) in front of this work, over which the road passed, and then turned off to the right, parallel to the course of the rising ground (Sullivan Hill), upon which their works were constructed. This would have enable them to flank the line of march of one column of our troops, had it advanced without discovering the work. They had also posted on a hill about 150 rods in their rear, and considerably on their left, a strong party, in order, as I suppose, to fall on our right flank, when we were engaged with the works in front, and to cover the retreat of the troops which occupied the works, in case they should be carried, and to take advantage of any disorder which might appear among our troops in the pursuit. This hill was very advantageously formed for their purpose, as it terminated in a bold bluff about a mile in the rear of their works, and about 200 yards from the river, leaving a hollow way between the hill and the river of about 150 yards and ending on the north in a very narrow defile. This hollow way was clear of trees and bushes, and was occupied by them as a place of encampment. ....The growth on upon the hill being pine, interspersed with a very low shrub oaks, they had cutoff shrubs and stuck them in the ground in front of their works...." The plain area to the southeast of Baldwin Creek was in forest.

On September 30, 1779, Sullivan gave further details:

"I examined their breastworks, and found the extent more than half a mile. Several bastions ran out in its front to flank the lines in every part. A small blockhouse, formerly a dwelling, was also manned in the front. The breastwork appeared to have been fully manned, though I supposed with only one rank. Some parts of their works being low, they were obliged to dig holes in the ground to cover themselves in part. This circumstance enabled men to judge the distance between their men in the works. A very thin scattering line, designed, as I suppose, for communicating signals, was continued from those works to that part of the mountain (Sullivan Hill) which General Poor ascended, where they had a very large body, which was designed, I imagined to fall on our flank. The distance from the breastwork to this was at least one-mile-and-a-half. From thence to the hill in the rear of our right, was another scattering line of about one mile, and on the hill a breastwork with a strong party, destined, as it is supposed to

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**6. SIGNIFICANCE**

PERIOD (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |  |                                       |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-Columbian | <input type="checkbox"/> 16th Century | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 18th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 20th Century |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 15th Century  | <input type="checkbox"/> 17th Century | <input type="checkbox"/> 19th Century            |                                       |

SPECIFIC DATE(S) (If Applicable and Known) **August 29, 1779**

AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE (Check One or More as Appropriate)

- |   |   |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aboriginal     | <input type="checkbox"/> Education              | <input type="checkbox"/> Political           | <input type="checkbox"/> Urban Planning        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Prehistoric    | <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering            | <input type="checkbox"/> Religion/Philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Historic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Industry               | <input type="checkbox"/> Science             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Agriculture    | <input type="checkbox"/> Invention              | <input type="checkbox"/> Sculpture           | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture   | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape Architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Humanitarian | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art            | <input type="checkbox"/> Literature             | <input type="checkbox"/> Theater             | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Commerce       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Military    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation      | _____  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communications | <input type="checkbox"/> Music                  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation   |   |  |  |

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

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The Newtown Battlefield, where the sharply-fought skirmish known as the battle of Newtown took place on August 29, 1779, is highly significant in commemorating the Sullivan Expedition because it is the one site during that long and important campaign where all of the contending forces and leaders are known to have been present at the same place and time.

The Sullivan Expedition against the Iroquois Nations, involving an army of more than 3,800 Continental troops, was the major American military effort of 1779. In this campaign intended to cow the Six Nations, Washington escalated physical destruction to levels previously unknown on the Western frontier. In a brilliantly executed campaign General John Sullivan dealt the Iroquois civilization a stragging blow but as one soldier noted, "the nests (towns) are destroyed, but the birds (warriors) are still on the wing." In 1780-81, operating from Fort Niagara and Canada, the Iroquois warriors devastated the American settlements of the Mohawk Valley and western Pennsylvania with a destructive fury and efficiency that surpassed even the American effort of 1779.

History

In the spring of 1779 Washington planned a powerful counteroffense against the Six Nations, who, in 1778, had raided settlements in the Mohawk Valley of New York and in western Pennsylvania. When General Horatio Gates refused the command, Washington, on March 6, gave the command to Major General John Sullivan. Washington's plan called for a two pronged invasion of the Iroquois Country. One column, 2,400 men and 8 cannons under Sullivan, was to march from Easton, Pennsylvania, overland to Wyoming on the Susquehanna River, then up that river to Tioga (now Athens), Pennsylvania, near the New York border. A second column in New York, 1,400 Continentals and 2 cannons under the command of Brigadier General James Clinton, was to move westward along the Mohawk River, then south down Otsego Lake and the Susquehanna River to join Sullivan at Tioga. Washington's orders to Sullivan directed: "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

**9. MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES**

New York, A Guide to the Empire State (American Guide Series) (New York, 1956), 388.  
 Christopher Ward, The War of the Revolution (2 vols., New York, 1952), II, 638-645.  
 Frederick Cook, Journals of the Military Expedition of Major General John Sullivan Against the Six Nations of Indians in 1779 with Records of Centennial Celebrations (Auburn, N.Y. 1887).  
 Charles P. Whittemore, "John Sullivan, Luckless Irishman," in George A. Billias, ed.  
George Washington's Generals (New York, 1964), 137-162.

**10. GEOGRAPHICAL DATA**

LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING A RECTANGLE LOCATING THE PROPERTY			O R	LATITUDE AND LONGITUDE COORDINATES DEFINING THE CENTER POINT OF A PROPERTY OF LESS THAN TEN ACRES		
CORNER	LATITUDE	LONGITUDE		LATITUDE	LONGITUDE	
	Degrees Minutes Seconds	Degrees Minutes Seconds		Degrees	Minutes	Seconds
NW	42° 03 ' 00"	76° 45 ' 37"		0	'	"
NE	42° 03 ' 50"	76° 42 ' 57"		0	'	"
SE	42° 01 ' 20"	76° 41 ' 44"				
SW	42° 00 ' 47"	76° 43 ' 49"				

APPROXIMATE ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY: **Total 2100 acres (in Park-330 acres)**

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE:	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE
STATE:	CODE	COUNTY:	CODE

**11. FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME AND TITLE:  
**Charles W. Snell, Survey Historian**

ORGANIZATION **Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service** DATE **5/19/72**

STREET AND NUMBER:  
**801 19th Street, N.W.**

CITY OR TOWN: **Washington** STATE **D.C.** CODE

**12. STATE LIAISON OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

As the designated State Liaison Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service. The recommended level of significance of this nomination is:

National  State  Local

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Title \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**NATIONAL REGISTER VERIFICATION**

I hereby certify that this property is included in the National Register.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Chief, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation

Date \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Keeper of The National Register

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Description (Continued)

fall on our rear..."

The Newtown Battlefield embraces about 2,100 acres of land. Of this total 330 acres, located on the top of Sullivan Hill, is owned by the State of New York and is known as the Newtown Battlefield State Park. The remaining land is in various private ownership. Sullivan Hill and its neighboring mountain to the east are largely in forest and the remaining lower level land is farm land. Except for greater areas of cleared land, the overall battlefield is otherwise little-altered or impaired.

A large monument erected in 1912 in the State Park on top of Sullivan Hill commemorates the battle. There is, however, no interpretation of the battle at the State Park.

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8. Significance (Continued)

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." Not until this had been done should any "disposition for peace" on the part of the Indians be encouraged. Terror was to be utilized as a weapon to cow the Iroquois; the destruction of crops was to be Washington's contribution to frontier war- the "savages" have never yet thought or practiced this method of warfare.

Sullivan reached Easton, the starting point of his expedition on May 7, 1779, and, after a land march of 65 miles, arrived out Wyoming on the Susquehanna on June 23. The country ahead was unmapped wilderness, mountaineous, heavily forested, and easily defended- there were no roads or American settlements for supplies or to retreat to in the event of disaster. The cautious Sullivan refused to advance until completely equipped. On July 31 he left Wyoming, utilizing 120 boats to transport his artillery and supplies up the river and marching 700 beef cattle along the newly cut road to provide meat for the soldiers. Devastating Indian villages and crops along his route, Sullivan reached Tioga, 85 miles from Wyoming, on August 11. On August 9 Clinton left Otsego Lake in New York where he had been waiting seven weeks for Sullivan's approach. Clinton had dammed the lake and now breaking the dam, his division rode the tide down the Susquehanna River in 208 boats for 124-miles and joined Sullivan at Tioga on August 22. Leaving the heavy baggage there and 250 men to defend the post, Sullivan and Clinton left Tioga on August 26, moving westward up the Chemung River further into Iroquois Country.

Numbering about 12,000 people, the Iroquois could put about 2,000 warriors into the field. Small parties of braves now scouted in front of the advancing American army, while their main body removed their women, children, and aged from the towns. The Indians sacrificed their houses and crops in order to remove their people from capture and they refused to risk a pitched battle. On August 29, however, the angry Iroquois made a stand on the east bank of the Chemung River about six miles southwest of present-day Elmira and one mile east of the Indian town of Newtown. Here on a 1,400-foot mountain (Sullivan Hill) covered with pine and a dense growth of shrub oak, that stood parallel to and only 1,000 feet distant from the river, the Indians and their British allies erected a half-mile long line of log breastworks, also dug rifle pits, and several log buildings were used as redoubts. These works they cleverly concealed by planting green bushes in front of the lines. Between these fortifications and the river was the main trail running through a hollow way that Sullivan must follow. In the

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8. Significance (Continued)

intended ambush, it was expected that the surprise fire upon the flank of the marching American column would throw it into confusion and that following attacks on its front and rear would cause a panic among the American army. The breastworks were defended by 500 Indians led by the noted Mohawk chief Joseph Brant and there were also about 250 British and Tory soldiers under the command of Colonel John Butler and his son Captain Waller Butler.

The American advance was led by Major James Parr with three companies of Morgan's riflemen. Iroquois efforts to lure these men into the ambush by showing themselves and fleeing failed. Discovering the breastworks about 10 a.m. the riflemen halted and waited for the rest of the army to come up. Sullivan called a council of war and a plan of attack was agreed upon. The artillery was stationed on a slight rise of ground about 300 yards southeast of the Indians' fortifications and in such a position as to enfilade their lines and command the western slope of the mountain behind them. General Edward Hand with his Pennsylvania brigade was to cover the artillery, from the center, and endeavor to engage the Indians' attention while flanking movements were being attempted. General William Maxwell's New Jersey brigade was to form a reserve and also attempt to push several regiments west along the river bank against the Indians' right. General Enoch Poor's New Hampshire brigade, supported by Clinton's New York brigade, was to make a flanking march to the north gain the enemy's left.

About 1 p.m. the American artillery opened a heavy fire on the Indian lines and continued this cannonade for about two hours. At about 3 p.m., at a point about one mile to the east of where the main trail crossed Baldwin Creek in front of the Indian position, Poor and Clinton swung away to their right (north). After proceeding a short distance they found themselves floundering in a swamp which was so thickly grown up with alders and bushes that the soldiers could only advance with the greatest difficulty. Meanwhile the Indians behind the breastworks, discovering that the Americans did not intend to storm their lines and being rather uncomfortable under artillery fire, secretly abandoned most of their lines and proceeded to join the remaining half of their force which was posted on top of Sullivan Hill. On finally reaching Baldwin Creek along the eastern slope of Sullivan Hill, Poor formed his line of battle, with the 2nd New Hampshire Regiment on his left and Clinton's brigade to his right. Poor and Clinton then advanced up the eastern slope of Sullivan Hill as rapidly as the nature of this very steep and forested ground and the intense heat of the day would admit. Immediately on beginning the ascent the Indians, protected by the trees, opened a brisk fire and raised the war whoop.

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8. Significance (Continued)

Morgan's riflemen returned the fire while the other Continentals advanced rapidly with fixed bayonets without firing a shot, and steadily drove the warriors before them, who retreated by darting from tree to tree. About two-thirds of the way up the mountain a party of Indians led by Brant in person fell upon the 2nd New Hampshire, checking its advance and nearly cutting it off. At this critical junction Colonel Henry Dearborn reversed the front of his 3rd New Hampshire regiment and came to their rescue.

Brant observing the movements of the other American brigades, now sounded the retreat, and his warriors left rapidly, leaving behind their packs and blankets but carrying off all their wounded. The battle ended about 6 p.m. Eleven warriors and one sqaw were found dead on the field. Two Tory rangers, a Negro and a White man, were taken prisoner, four other rangers were killed and seven wounded. Sullivan had three men killed and 40 wounded, -all but four of these were in Poor's brigade. American soldiers now rushed forward, scalped the 12 Indians, and two Indians were also skinned from the waist down to provide boots for two American officers.

Sullivan's army left Newtown on August 31 and moved westward and then northward into western New York State in the vicinity of Rochester. On September 14 they reached the great Seneca town of Genesee, comprised of 128 large and well built log houses, located near present-day Cuylerville, New York, and about 283 miles from Easton, Pennsylvania, the starting point of the expedition. On September 15, after burning Genesee, the army began its return march, sending out powerful detachments to burn Indian towns missed during the advance. The army reached Easton on October 15, 1779.

In this 600-mile march through Iroquois Country Sullivan had destroyed 41 Indian villages containing a total of some 650 log houses; he also destroyed 160,000 bushels of corn together with a vast quantity of other kinds of vegetables. Thousands upon thousands of fruit trees planted in orchards were killed by griddling them. This unknown country had also been mapped. Only two Indians, however, had been taken prisoner (fortunately too, for the troops, acting contrary to orders, proceeded to burn the captives, an old woman and a crippled boy to death). All this Sullivan had accomplished at a cost of only 41 American lives. In his final report on this expedition, the general wrote: "I flatter myself that the orders with which I was entrusted are fully executed, as we have not left a single settlement (except one) or field of corn in the country of the Five Nations, nor is there even the appearance of an Indian on this side of Niagara." He was congratulated by Washington

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8. Significance (Continued)

on the success of his expedition, and the Congress voted its thanks to Sullivan. Washington was henceforth known among the Iroquois by the name of "Town Destroyer."

With the benefit of hindsight, it appears that the Sullivan Expedition of 1779, if intended to protect American frontier settlements from further attacks by the Six Nations, was a complete failure. The raids were halted during the actual period of campaigning, August-October 1779, but were resumed with escalated fury and levels of destruction in 1780 and 1781. The Sullivan Expedition infuriated rather than cowed the Iroquois; by destroying their homes and driving them from their homeland, there was nothing left to give the Americans any hold over these people. If the Sullivan Expedition was intended as an act of vengeance for the Iroquois raids of 1778, then the campaign was, except for the taking of prisoners, a complete success.

Notes on two other New York State-owned Sullivan Campaign Memorials

On September 13, 1779, a scouting party of 17 of Morgan's riflemen, led by Lieutenant Thomas Boyd and Sergeant Michael Parker, were trapped by the Iroquois. Fifteen riflemen were killed and their two leaders were taken to a nearby Indian town, tortured, and then executed. Two-state-owned memorials in western New York commemorate this incident:

1. The Sullivan Monument, located in Livingston County near the south end of Conesus, stands on the common grave of the 15 riflemen. The marble shaft bears the names of the scouts; the monument marks and commemorates the ambush of September 13, 1779.
2. Boyd-Park Memorial, a four acre tract on the Genesee River flats just east of Cuylerville and three miles west of Genesee. Here, at the site of the great Seneca town of Genesee, Lieutenant Boyd and Sergeant Parker were tortured and then burned to death by the Iroquois on September 14, 1779.

Note: On February 27, 1779, the Continental Congress passed a resolution authorizing General Washington to take the most effectual measures for protecting the inhabitants of the States and chastising the Indians. Washington executed the last half of these instructions with the greatest vigor.

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Boundaries for Newtown Battlefield Historic Site:

Approximately 2,100 acres of land, including the site of the Battle of Newtown, August 29, 1779, and the Newtown Battlefield State Reservation, beginning at a point on the north bank of the Chemung River at latitude 42° 03' 00" - longitude 76° 45' 07", then going northeast about 2,400 feet to a point at latitude 42° 03' 10" - longitude 76° 44' 38", then continuing northwest about 1,250 feet to a point at latitude 42° 03' 22" - longitude 76° 44' 44", then proceeding northeast about 1,200 feet to a point at latitude 42° 03' 26" longitude 76° 44' 29", then going southeast about 1,250 feet to a point at latitude 42° 03' 14" - longitude 76° 44' 22", then going northeast about 4,650 feet to a point at latitude 42° 03' 30" - longitude 76° 43' 26", hence running about 5,700 feet southeast to a point at latitude 42° 02' 39" - longitude 76° 42' 56", then going southeast about 3,000 feet to a point at latitude 42° 02' 31" - longitude 76° 42' 18", hence continuing southeast about 6,500 feet to a point on the north bank of the Chemung River at latitude 42° 01' 30" - longitude 76° 41' 52", then going west and then north along the northern edge of Chemung River to the point of beginning at latitude 42° 03' 00" - longitude 76° 45' 07".

Precise boundaries, as described above, are on record on a copy of U.S. Geological Survey Maps: Wellsburg and Elmira Quadrangles, New York-Pennsylvania, 1954 and 1953, 7.5 Minute Series, on file with the Historic Sites Survey, Division of History, Office of Archeology and Historic Preservation, National Park Service.