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# Daniel Morgan

**Daniel Morgan** (July 6, 1736 – July 6, 1802) was an American pioneer, soldier, and politician from [Virginia](#). One of the most gifted battlefield tacticians of the [American Revolutionary War](#) (1775–1783), he later commanded troops during the suppression of the [Whiskey Rebellion](#) (1791–1794).

Born in [New Jersey](#) to [Welsh](#) immigrants, Morgan settled in [Winchester, Virginia](#). He became an officer of the Virginia militia and recruited a company of soldiers at the start of the Revolutionary War. Early in the war, Morgan served in [Benedict Arnold's expedition to Quebec](#) and in the [Saratoga campaign](#). He also served in the [Philadelphia campaign](#) but resigned from the army in 1779.

Morgan returned to the army after the [Battle of Camden](#), and led the [Continental Army](#) to victory in the [Battle of Cowpens](#). After the war, Morgan retired from the army again and developed a large estate. He was recalled to duty in 1794 to help suppress the Whiskey Rebellion, and commanded a portion of the army that remained in [Western Pennsylvania](#) after the rebellion. A member of the [Federalist Party](#), Morgan twice ran for the [United States House of Representatives](#), winning election to the House in 1796. He retired from Congress in 1799 and died in 1802.

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### Daniel Morgan



**Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from Virginia's 1st district**

#### In office

March 4, 1797 – March 3, 1799

**Preceded by** Robert Rutherford

**Succeeded by** Robert Page

#### Personal details

**Born** July 6, 1736

Hunterdon County

New Jersey

**Died** July 6, 1802

(aged 66)

Winchester,

Virginia

**Resting place** Mount Hebron Cemetery,

Winchester,

Virginia

**Political party** Federalist

**Spouse(s)** Abigail Curry<sup>[1]</sup>

**Relatives** Daniel Boone

(cousin)

## Early years

Daniel Morgan is believed to have been born in the village of New Hampton, New Jersey<sup>[2]</sup> in Lebanon Township.<sup>[3]</sup> All four of his grandparents were Welsh immigrants who lived in Pennsylvania.<sup>[4]</sup> Morgan was the fifth of seven children of James Morgan (1702–1782) and Eleanor Lloyd (1706–1748). When Morgan was 17, he left home following a fight with his father. After working at odd jobs in Pennsylvania, he moved to the Shenandoah Valley. He finally settled on the Virginia frontier, near what is now Winchester, Virginia.

He worked clearing land, in a sawmill, and as a teamster. In just a year, he saved enough to buy his own team. Morgan had served as a civilian teamster during the French and Indian War, with his cousin Daniel Boone.<sup>[5]</sup> After returning from the advance on Fort Duquesne (Pittsburgh) by General Braddock's command, he was punished with 499 lashes (a usually fatal sentence) for striking his superior officer.<sup>[6]</sup> Morgan thus acquired a hatred for the British Army. He then met Abigail Curry; they married and had two daughters, Nancy and Betsy.

Morgan later served as a rifleman in the provincial forces assigned to protect the western settlements from French-backed Indian raids. Some time after the war, he purchased a farm between Winchester and Battletown. By 1774, he was so prosperous that he owned ten slaves.<sup>[7]</sup> That year, he served in Dunmore's War, taking part in raids on Shawnee villages in the Ohio Country.

## American Revolution

After the American Revolutionary War began at the Battles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775, the Continental Congress created the Continental Army on June 14, 1775. They called for the formation of 10 rifle companies from the middle colonies to support the Siege of Boston, and late in June 1775 Virginia agreed to send two. The Virginia House of Burgesses chose Daniel Morgan to form one of these companies and become its commander. He had already been an officer in the Virginia militia since the French and Indian War.

Morgan recruited 96 men in just 10 days and assembled them at Winchester on July 14. His company of marksmen was nicknamed "Morgan's Riflemen." Another company was raised from Shepherdstown by his rival, Hugh Stephenson. Stephenson's company initially planned to meet Morgan's company in Winchester, but found them gone. Morgan marched his men 600 miles (970 km) to Boston, Massachusetts in 21 days, arriving on Aug. 6, 1775.<sup>[8][9]</sup> Locals called it the "Bee-Line March", noting that Stephenson somehow marched his men 600 miles from their meeting point at Morgan's Spring, in 24 days, so they arrived at Cambridge on Friday August 11, 1775.<sup>[10]</sup> Morgan's company had a significant advantage over other units. Instead of the smooth-bore weapons used of most British and most American companies, his men carried rifles. They were lighter, easier to fire, and much more accurate, but slower to re-load. Morgan's company used guerrilla tactics, first shooting the Indian guides who led the British forces through the rugged terrain. They then targeted the officers. The British Army considered these guerrilla tactics to be

	Squire Boone (cousin)
<b>Occupation</b>	Soldier
<b>Military service</b>	
<b>Allegiance</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> United States
<b>Branch/service</b>	<span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span> Continental Army <p><span><span><span></span></span><span> </span></span>United States Army</p>
<b>Years of service</b>	1775–1783; 1794
<b>Rank</b>	Brigadier General
<b>Battles/wars</b>	American Revolutionary War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span></span> Invasion of Canada</li> <li><span></span> Battle of Saratoga</li> <li><span></span> Battle of Freeman's Farm</li> <li><span></span> Battle of Bemis Heights</li> <li><span></span> Battle of Cowpens</li> <li><span></span> Whiskey Rebellion</li></ul>

dishonorable; however, they created chaos within the British ranks.

## Invasion of Canada

Later that year, the Continental Congress authorized an invasion of Canada. Colonel Benedict Arnold convinced General Washington to start an eastern offensive in support of Montgomery's invasion. Washington agreed to dispatch three companies from his forces at Boston, provided they agreed. Every company at Boston volunteered, and a lottery was used to choose who should go. Morgan's company was one of them. Benedict Arnold selected Captain Morgan to lead the three companies as a battalion. Arnold's expedition set out from Fort Western on September 25, with Morgan leading the advance party.<sup>[11]</sup>

The Arnold Expedition<sup>[12]</sup> started about 1,000 men; by the time they reached Quebec on November 9, that had been reduced to 600. When Montgomery's men arrived, they launched a joint assault. The Battle of Quebec began on the morning of December 31. The Patriots attacked in two pincers, commanded by Montgomery and Arnold.

Arnold attacked against the lower city from the north, but he suffered a leg wound early in the battle. Morgan took command of the force, and he successfully overcame the first rampart and entered the city. Montgomery's force initiated their attack as the blizzard became severe, and Montgomery and many of his troops, except for Aaron Burr, were killed or wounded in the first British volley. With Montgomery down, his attack faltered. British General Carleton consequently was able to lead hundreds of the Quebec militia in the encirclement of the second attack. Carleton was also able to move his cannons and men to the first barricade, behind Morgan's force. Divided and subject to fire from all sides, Morgan's troops gradually surrendered. Morgan handed his sword to a French-Canadian priest, refusing to give it to Carleton in a formal surrender. Morgan thus became one of the 372 men captured, and he remained a prisoner of war until he was exchanged in January 1777.

## 11th Virginia Regiment

When he rejoined Washington early in 1777, Morgan was surprised to learn he had been promoted to colonel for his bravery at Quebec. He was ordered to raise and command a new infantry regiment, the 11th Virginia Regiment of the Continental Line.

On June 13, 1777, Morgan was given command of the Provisional Rifle Corps, a light infantry force of 500 riflemen chosen from Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia regiments of the Continental Army. Many were from his own 11th Regiment. Washington sent them to harass General William Howe's rear guard, and Morgan did so during their entire withdrawal across New Jersey.

## Saratoga

A detachment of Morgan's regiment, commanded by Morgan, was reassigned to the army's Northern Department and on Aug. 30 he joined General Horatio Gates to aid in resisting Burgoyne's offensive. He is prominently depicted in the painting of the Surrender of General Burgoyne at Saratoga by John Trumbull.<sup>[13]</sup>

## Freeman's Farm

Morgan led his regiment, with the added support of Henry Dearborn's 300-man New Hampshire infantry, as the advance to the main forces. At Freeman's Farm, they ran into the advance of General Simon Fraser's wing of

Burgoyne's force. Every officer in the British advance party died in the first exchange, and the advance guard retreated.

Morgan's men charged without orders, but the charge fell apart when they ran into the main column led by General Hamilton. Benedict Arnold arrived, and he and Morgan managed to reform the unit. As the British began to form on the fields at Freeman's farm, Morgan's men continued to break these formations with accurate rifle fire from the woods on the far side of the field. They were joined by another seven regiments from Bemis Heights.

For the rest of the afternoon, American fire held the British in check, but repeated American charges were repelled by British bayonets.



*Surrender of General Burgoyne*

Col. Morgan is shown in white, right of center

### Bemis Heights

Burgoyne's next offensive resulted in the Battle of Bemis Heights on Oct. 7. Morgan was assigned command of the left (or western) flank of the American position. The British plan was to turn that flank, using an advance by 1,500 men. This brought Morgan's brigade once again up against General Fraser's forces.

Passing through the Canadian loyalists, Morgan's Virginia sharpshooters got the British light infantry trapped in a crossfire between themselves and Dearborn's regiment. Although the light infantry broke, General Fraser was trying to rally them, encouraging his men to hold their positions when Benedict Arnold arrived. Arnold spotted him and called to Morgan: "That man on the grey horse is a host unto himself and must be disposed of — direct the attention of some of the sharpshooters amongst your riflemen to him!" Morgan reluctantly ordered Fraser shot by a sniper, and Timothy Murphy obliged him.

With Fraser mortally wounded, the British light infantry fell back into and through the redoubts occupied by Burgoyne's main force. Morgan was one of those who then followed Arnold's lead to turn a counter-attack from the British middle. Burgoyne retired to his starting positions, but about 500 men poorer for the effort. That night, he withdrew to the village of Saratoga, New York (renamed Schuylerville in honor of Philip Schuyler) about eight miles to the northwest.

During the next week, as Burgoyne dug in, Morgan and his men moved to his north. Their ability to cut up any patrols sent in their direction convinced the British that retreat was not possible.

### New Jersey and retirement

After Saratoga, Morgan's unit rejoined Washington's main army, near Philadelphia. Throughout 1778 he hit British columns and supply lines in New Jersey, but was not involved in any major battles. He was not involved in the Battle of Monmouth but actively pursued the withdrawing British forces and captured many prisoners and supplies. When the Virginia Line was reorganized on September 14, 1778, Morgan became the colonel of the 7th Virginia Regiment.

Throughout this period, Morgan became increasingly dissatisfied with the army and the Congress. He had never been politically active or cultivated a relationship with the Congress. As a result, he was repeatedly passed over for promotion to brigadier, favor going to men with less combat experience but better political connections. While still a colonel with Washington, he had temporarily commanded Weedon's brigade, and felt himself ready for the position.

Besides this frustration, his legs and back aggravated him from the abuse taken during the Quebec Expedition. He was finally allowed to resign on June 30, 1779, and returned home to Winchester.

In June 1780, he was urged to re-enter the service by General Gates, but declined. Gates was taking command in the Southern Department, and Morgan felt that being outranked by so many militia officers would limit his usefulness. After Gates' disaster at the Battle of Camden, Morgan thrust all other considerations aside, and went to join the Southern command at Hillsborough, North Carolina.

## Southern Campaign

He met Gates at Hillsborough, and was given command of the light infantry corps on Oct. 2. At last, on Oct. 13, 1780, Morgan received his promotion to brigadier general.

Morgan met his new Department Commander, Nathanael Greene, on Dec. 3, 1780 at Charlotte, North Carolina. Greene did not change his command assignment, but did give him new orders. Greene had decided to split his army and annoy the enemy in order to buy time to rebuild his force. He gave Morgan's command of about 600 men the job of foraging and enemy harassment in the backcountry of South Carolina, while avoiding direct battle.<sup>[14]</sup>

When this strategy became apparent, the British General Cornwallis sent Colonel Banastre Tarleton's British Legion to track him down. Morgan talked with many of the militia who had fought Tarleton before, and decided to disobey his orders, by setting up a direct confrontation.



"Lieutenant-Colonel Banastre Tarleton" by Sir Joshua Reynolds

### Battle of Cowpens



Medal voted for Morgan by Congress

Morgan chose to make his stand at Cowpens, South Carolina. On the morning of Jan. 17, 1781, they met Tarleton in the Battle of Cowpens. Morgan had been joined by militia forces under Andrew Pickens and William Washington's dragoons. Tarleton's legion was supplemented with the light infantry from several regiments of regulars.

Morgan's plan took advantage of Tarleton's tendency for quick action and his disdain for the militia,<sup>[15]</sup> as well as the longer range and accuracy of his Virginia riflemen. The marksmen were positioned to the front, followed by the militia, with the regulars at the hilltop. The first two units were to withdraw as soon as they were seriously threatened, but after inflicting damage. This would invite a premature charge from the British.

The tactic resulted in a double envelopment. As the British forces approached, the Americans, with their backs turned to the British, reloaded their muskets. When the British got too close, they turned and fired at point-blank range in their faces. In less than an hour, Tarleton's 1,076 men suffered 110 killed and 830 captured. The captives included 200 wounded. Although Tarleton escaped, the Americans captured all his supplies and equipment, including the officers' slaves. Morgan's cunning plan at Cowpens is widely considered to be *the* tactical masterpiece of the war and one of the most successfully executed double envelopments of all of modern military history.<sup>[16]</sup>



Cornwallis had lost not only Tarleton's legion, but also his light infantry, which limited his speed of reaction for the rest of the campaign. For his actions, Virginia gave Morgan land and an estate that had been abandoned by a Tory. The damp and chill of the campaign had aggravated his sciatica to the point where he was in constant pain; on February 10, he returned to his Virginia farm.<sup>[15]</sup> In July 1781, Morgan briefly joined Lafayette to pursue Banastre Tarleton once more, this time in Virginia, but they were unsuccessful.<sup>[17]</sup>

## After the Revolution

After resigning his commission at age 46, Morgan returned home to Charles Town, having served 6½ years. He turned his attention to investing in land, rather than clearing it, and eventually built an estate of more than 250,000 acres (1,000 km<sup>2</sup>). As part of his settling down in 1782, he joined the Presbyterian Church and, using Hessian prisoners of war, built a new house near Winchester, Virginia. He named the home Saratoga after his victory in New York. The Congress awarded him a gold medal in 1790 to commemorate his victory at Cowpens.<sup>[18]</sup>

In 1794 he was briefly recalled to national service to help suppress the Whiskey Rebellion, and it was at this time (1794) that Morgan was promoted to Major General. Serving under General "Light-Horse Harry" Lee, Morgan led one wing of the militia army into Western Pennsylvania.<sup>[19]</sup> The massive show of force brought an end to the protests without a shot being fired. After the uprising had been suppressed, Morgan commanded the remnant of the army that remained until 1795 in Pennsylvania, some 1,200 militiamen, one of whom was Meriwether Lewis.<sup>[20]</sup>

Morgan ran for election to the United States House of Representatives twice as a Federalist. He lost in 1794, but won the election of 1796 with 70% of the vote, defeating Democratic-Republican Robert Rutherford. Morgan served a single term lasting from 1797 to 1799. He died in 1802 at his daughter's home in Winchester on his 66th birthday. Daniel Morgan was buried in Old Stone Presbyterian Church graveyard. The body was moved to the Mt. Hebron Cemetery in Winchester, Virginia, after the American Civil War. His wife, Abigail, died in 1816 and was buried in Logan County, Kentucky.

## Legacy

Daniel Morgan's great-great-grandfather was also the uncle of the Welsh privateer and pirate Henry Morgan.<sup>[21]</sup> Confederate General John Hunt Morgan claimed to be one of his descendants.<sup>[22][23]</sup>

In 1821 Virginia named a new county—Morgan County—in his honor. (It is now in West Virginia.) The states of Alabama, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, Ohio, and Tennessee followed their example. The North Carolina city of Morganton is also named after Morgan, as well as the Kentucky city of Morganfield (originally Morgan's Field) which was founded in 1811 on land which was part of a Revolutionary War land grant to Daniel Morgan. Morgan actually never saw the land, but his daughter's cousin-in-law,<sup>[24][25]</sup> Presley O'Bannon, the "Hero of Derna" in the Barbary War, acquired the land, drew up a plan for the town and donated the land for the streets and



Daniel Morgan House in Winchester where he died in 1802



The grave of Daniel Morgan in Winchester, Virginia

public square.

In 1881 (on the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the Battle of Cowpens), a statue of Morgan was placed in the central town square of Spartanburg, South Carolina. It is located in Morgan Square and remains in place today.

In late 1951, an attempt was made to reinter Morgan's body in Cowpens, SC, but the Frederick-Winchester Historical Society blocked the move by securing an injunction in circuit court. The event was pictured by a staged photo that appeared in *Life magazine*.<sup>[26]</sup>

In 1973, the home Saratoga was declared a National Historic Landmark.

Morgan and his actions served as one of the key sources for the fictional character of Benjamin Martin in *The Patriot*, a motion picture released in 2000.

There is a street named after him in Lebanon Township, Hunterdon County, New Jersey.

A statue of Morgan was erected at the McConnelville library, in Morgan County, Ohio in 2017.<sup>[27]</sup>

In Winchester, Virginia, a middle school is named in his honor.<sup>[28]</sup>

The Daniel Morgan Graduate School of National Security in Washington, D.C. is named after Morgan because of his brilliant use of strategy and intelligence during the American Revolution. The school was established in 2014 to educate the next generation of national security practitioners.<sup>[29]</sup>

The Daniel Morgan House at Winchester was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2013.<sup>[30]</sup>

In the early 1780s, Morgan joined efforts with Col. Nathaniel Burwell to build a water-powered mill in Millwood, Virginia. The Burwell-Morgan Mill is open as a museum and is one of the oldest, most original operational grist mills in the country.

A statue of Morgan is on the west face of the Saratoga Monument in Schuylerville NY.<sup>[31]</sup>

## Footnotes

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Statue of General Morgan erected in 1881 in Spartanburg, South Carolina



Morgan Square in Spartanburg



North Daniel Morgan Avenue sign in Spartanburg

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3. <http://www.hmdb.org/marker.asp?marker=17920>
4. Edward Morgan Log House ([http://www.morganloghouse.org/genealogy/morgan\\_family\\_chart.pdf](http://www.morganloghouse.org/genealogy/morgan_family_chart.pdf)) Archived ([http://web.archive.org/web/20110727094643/http://www.morganloghouse.org/genealogy/morgan\\_family\\_chart.pdf](http://web.archive.org/web/20110727094643/http://www.morganloghouse.org/genealogy/morgan_family_chart.pdf)) 2011-07-27 at the [Wayback Machine](http://www.webcitation.org/588888888), Genealogy, accessed November 12, 2011.
5. Daniel Boone in Pennsylvania ([https://books.google.com/books?id=hiXwK-\\_8DRkC&pg=PA17&lpg=PA17&dq=%22daniel+morgan%22+cousin+%22daniel+boone%22&source=bl&ots=3MDhBjpaOq&sig=2-YHvXhaBTdS7RuFqbsBK8lovaU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=WiltVJCELM-pyATlqoDoDg&ved=0CCsQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22daniel%20morgan%22%20cousin%20%22daniel%20boone%22&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=hiXwK-_8DRkC&pg=PA17&lpg=PA17&dq=%22daniel+morgan%22+cousin+%22daniel+boone%22&source=bl&ots=3MDhBjpaOq&sig=2-YHvXhaBTdS7RuFqbsBK8lovaU&hl=en&sa=X&ei=WiltVJCELM-pyATlqoDoDg&ved=0CCsQ6AEwAQ#v=onepage&q=%22daniel%20morgan%22%20cousin%20%22daniel%20boone%22&f=false))
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15. Golway, p. 248
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17. Peckham, p. 167
18. Len Barcoucky (March 22, 2009). "Eyewitness 1818: No jail could hold this Pittsburgh thief" (<http://www.post-gazette.com/pg/09081/957151-426.stm>). *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. Retrieved August 25, 2011.
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22. [<http://www.u-s-history.com/pages/h407.html>] United States History: Morgan's Raiders  
His father claimed to be a descendant of the Revolutionary War hero, Daniel Morgan.
23. GENi: Brig. General John Hunt Morgan (CSA) (<http://www.geni.com/people/Brig-Gen-John-Hunt-Morgan-CSA/60000011154199199>)  
It is said that he was a lineal descendant of Daniel Morgan, of Revolutionary fame.
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## External links

- 
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- Nomination form for Saratoga to the National Historic Register ([https://web.archive.org/web/20120926215726/http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Clarke/021-0070\\_Saratoga\\_1970\\_Final\\_Nomination\\_NHL.pdf](https://web.archive.org/web/20120926215726/http://www.dhr.virginia.gov/registers/Counties/Clarke/021-0070_Saratoga_1970_Final_Nomination_NHL.pdf))
- Daniel Morgan (<https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/2755>) at Find a Grave
- Burwell-Morgan Mill Web site (<http://www.burwellmorganmill.org/>)
- Daniel Morgan Graduate School (<https://dmgs.org/>)

<b><u>U.S. House of Representatives</u></b>		
Preceded by <b><u>Robert Rutherford</u></b>	<b>Member of the U.S. House of Representatives</b> from <b><u>Virginia's 1st congressional district</u></b> 1797–1799	Succeeded by <b><u>Robert Page</u></b>

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