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**America's Revolution (121) – Disastrous
Invasion of Canada – I**

Lead: In the 1700s the United States broke from England. No colony in history had done that before. This series examines America's Revolution.

Intro: *A Moment in Time with Dan Roberts*

Content: An association with Canada seemed to many Americans to be a logical alliance and in early June 1775 Congress addressed a letter to the "oppressed inhabitants of Canada" seeking amicable

relations and mutual resistance to continued British control. Its martial spirit aroused, within the month Congress authorized northern department commander General Phillip Schuyler to invade Canada and secure it.

From his headquarters surrounding Boston, George Washington took note of Congress' desires and mounted an expedition to capture Canada. While Schuyler began preparations for an assault up the Hudson Valley, Washington commissioned Benedict Arnold to take a force cross country from Massachusetts through Maine to capture the city of Quebec. What followed was one of the most heroic, but ultimately disastrous expeditions of the Revolution.

Arnold, with just short of 1100 men, including future Vice-president Aaron Burr, made his way up the coast to the Kennebec

River and along the way, picked up 220 bateaux (small, flat-bottomed, shallow draft boats) in which he proposed to conquer the cross-country trek. Each bateaux weighed 400 pounds which proved to be important since in their journey on several occasions the boats had to be carried between navigable sections of the Kennebec, Dead, and Claudière Rivers before reaching the St. Lawrence and the final assault on Quebec. The journey was a slog, a long, terrible test of spirit and determination. For much of the trip the men were soaking wet fighting the frigid elements and the challenges of the wilderness. Arnold had estimated the journey would be only 180 miles. By the time they reached journeys end, they had hammered their way through 350 miles of unforgiving wasteland in 45 days. Some of the men had died and over three hundred of their number had turned back so Arnold could count on only 675 men for the attack

on the city. Many of them were sick and had no shoes. Only the inspirational leadership and drive of Benedict Arnold had kept them alive and delivered them to the gates of the city. Next time: Montgomery to the rescue.

At the University of Richmond's School of Professional and Continuing Studies, I'm Dan Roberts.

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