

Founding Father Henry Knox

Fort Knox, Kentucky, and Knoxville, Tennessee, share part of the same name; a name derived from a man who played a crucial role in the defeat of the British during the Revolutionary War. This man was none other than Henry Knox, a Founding Father and Major General of the Continental Army.

Knox came from humble beginnings, born to a working class family in Boston as the seventh of ten children. After his father passed, he took up work at just 9 years old as a bookbinder's apprentice, where he cultivated his love of reading. Some of his favorite subjects were military strategy, artillery, and cannons. Knox *loved* cannons. At just twenty-one, he came to own his own bookstore, which became popular with both the British and Bostonians due to his charming and personable demeanor. His large and inviting personality was matched by his physical size of six feet tall and nearly 300 pounds. It was in his bookstore, where he met his wife, Lucy Flucker who shared his patriotism, personality and nearly his own size! Despite the fact that Lucy's family were Loyalists and opposed to the marriage, Henry and Lucy shared a long life together.

In 1770, Henry witnessed the Boston Massacre. As a Bostonian, Knox was appalled at the British behavior. When the Battles of Lexington and Concord occurred, Henry and his wife fled Boston and settled in Worcester, Massachusetts, where he began supervising the construction of fortifications outside the city. During an inspection of the fortifications, General Washington took notice of Knox's impressive work and recruited him to work for the Continental Army.

Henry Knox's first significant achievement occurred soon after. Knox believed the heavy artillery located in Fort Ticonderoga could drive the British out of Boston, it just needed to be retrieved. Due to the treacherous terrain between New York, where the fort was located, and Boston, it was thought to be impossible and yet to be attempted, but Knox believed he could do it. He devised a clever plan of using the frozen rivers and solid ground to slide the cannons on sleds.

Knox carefully selected 59 pieces of artillery, totaling 60 tons, to move across 300 miles of snowy and frozen landscapes. Using dozens of oxen and horses to pull the sleds, Henry Knox and his brother William Knox led the "artillery train" all the way back to Boston despite taking three times longer than he anticipated. Washington, and the rest of the militia, welcomed Knox's arrival and great success. The cannons were set up overnight overlooking the harbor and, as anticipated, served its purpose of scaring the British out of Boston.

Knox went on to have a very successful military career, proving himself to be useful to Washington. He fought with General Washington in Valley Forge, Trenton, Princeton, and Yorktown. He even directed the famous Delaware River crossing and invasion of the British

encampment on Christmas Day. Henry Knox became the first Secretary of War and a true patriot.

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