

# Edward Wall, a Loyalist in Conflict

by Peter C. Betz

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## Introduction

If you visit the City of Johnstown, New York and happen to inquire what Colonial era buildings besides Johnson Hall still remain, sooner or later someone will point out a tidy, shake-roofed yellow cottage located at the corner of North William and West Green Streets. You will be informed that this building, long known as the Drumm House, was occupied before the Revolutionary War by Sir William Johnson's first Johnstown teacher, Master Edward Wall.

But if you ask for more specific information, such as where Mr. Wall came from, how long he taught in Johnstown, or what became of him when the Rebellion broke out, your guide will look at you somewhat perplexed, as if to say such questions do not really matter: Edward Wall was Sir William's first schoolmaster; he was allowed to lodge in this quaint but comfortable little cottage while he taught here, and that is that. Your local informant, if in a gregarious mood, may embellish the 'facts' further by relating that "Master Wall" was a stern old man and a crop-wielding disciplinarian. Most of this historical 'information' is non-

re: it is an amalgamation of unrealis-

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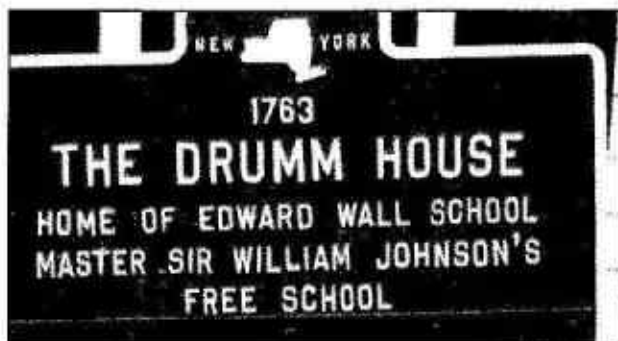
*The author also wishes to acknowledge the influence of the late Col. Charles B. Briggs, past Superintendent of Johnson Hall State Historic Site, who in the 1960's and early 70's was the first area historian to acknowledge, research and lecture on the lives, hardships and sacrifices of the Loyalists.*

tic assertions dating back no further than the writings of factually-liberal nineteenth century American historians such as Jephtha R. Simms, who in his 1882 opus, *Frontiersmen of New York* describes Wall as the first man to "use the birch", and tells us that, "Wall was a severe disciplinarian, but the Baronet's children were an exception to his clemency."<sup>1</sup> This silly statement, if you reflect on its convoluted grammatical construction, makes no sense to begin with. Simms' description of Wall as a severe disciplinarian is a stereotype extracted from the once-popular 19th century American view of the country-schoolmas-

ter-as-tyrant, a characterization, no doubt sometimes correct in Simms' own era. But on what primary documentation Simms claims any authority for applying this later stereotype to Edward Wall he does not say, simply because there is none. In fairness to Simms, he may have taken as his colonial example Master John Cottgrave, Wall's immediate successor to the Johnstown schoolmastership and an interesting character in his own right, who wrote in November, 1771 that, "I give close attendance to my School - I have already purged many of my Children that they behave much to my satisfaction."<sup>2</sup>



The colonial cottage known in Johnstown as the 'Drumm House' (after a later owner) is reputed to be one of several houses constructed by Sir William Johnson to house needed artisans and important civil assistants. Believed to have been moved to its present location next to the Colonial Cemetery during the 19th century, it would have been considered a large and commodious structure on the colonial frontier.



Local belief that Edward Wall was given the entire Drumm House was so strong that earlier local historians convinced the State of New York to inscribe the marker accordingly.

At best, Wall and other single male associates of Sir William might have been assigned to the building.

It should be noted that the average, educated Johnstown citizen is very aware of the city's colonial past, but being able to relate to visitors that Edward Wall was the first Schoolmaster of Johnstown and that he supposedly lived in the Drumm House has simply been all anyone desired to know about Wall until now. Local historians have always focused their research efforts on more important people and more significant issues occurring in and around Tryon County during those last, tumultuous months which extended from the death of Sir William in July of 1774 until the sudden exit of Sir John from Johnson Hall in May of 1776. For it was within this narrow time slot of slightly less than two years that the once great agrarian, political and multi-cultural Camelot of Tryon County, Sir William Johnson's life work, agonizingly crumbled and slowly rendered itself asunder.

Yet there has always existed from those very years, sequestered within various documents such as the Papers of Sir William Johnson, the Minutes of the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies, the Minutes of the Tryon County Committee of Safety, and other published and unpublished primary sources, many bits and pieces of biographical information about the so-called 'little people', the cogs in Johnson's great Tryon County wheel, so to speak, those many loyal, intelligent and ambitious retainers and subordinates such as Edward Wall, Gilbert Tice, the Freys, Conynes, Butlers and many others, all grateful for the opportunity to hitch their own wagons to Sir William's rising star. All these men and their families were destined to have their own individual experiences of uprooting and sacrifice during those long

years of revolution when the complacent, well-crafted little world of Tryon County was, as well as the world beyond them, turned upside down.

Edward Wall was a Whig-turned-Loyalist, if indeed he ever was a true Whig, just one man among many who, in those early months of the conflict, were torn between the lost altruism, the political hypocrisy and unrealistic idealism that swirled in a

great, confusing mix all around them, and which forced every man, sooner or later, to answer the not-so-simple question, "Which side am I on?" Yet there are some curious, presently-unanswerable little mysteries surrounding Wall that may make him a more interesting challenge to historical researchers than some of his contemporaries.

### **Part One: Arrival and Progress**

The first mystery that surrounds Edward Wall is the question of how, as a relatively late entrant on the prewar Johnstown scene, did he succeed so well in penetrating the Johnson Dynasty inner circle, gradually assuming a much more involved role in the local social, political and mercantile activities than one would ever expect of a village schoolmaster. Whatever combination of education and personality he possessed, Wall must also have inspired confidence. Otherwise, he would never have been so rapidly accepted within that comfortable network of select and privileged 'Johnson men' who, each in his own way, earned a place of responsibility and standing within that smooth-running political machine which will be hereafter referred to as the 'Johnson Dynasty'. Exactly how Wall made the status transition from outside hireling to Johnson confidant during the last several swift-flying years of Sir William Johnson's life continues to defy explanation. Much of the first half of this article will be taken up with showing how Wall successfully advanced, but there is no clear explanation as to why.

It is assumed (although not proven) that Wall emigrated from Ireland. Nothing specific is known regarding his birth place, the precise extent or source of his

higher education, or even his age. He must be presumed to have been reasonably young, if his ability to survive the arduous activities of his post-Johnstown years are taken into account, and he probably was a Protestant, in as much as he was married in a Protestant church at Caughnawaga. He may also have been English or Scottish. Certainly Sir William, particularly in his last years, encouraged nearly as many men who were not Irish or Protestant as those who were. But the name is essentially Irish and can be found dispersed in various parts of Ireland today. That Wall possessed to a high degree a naive form of honesty of a type which seemed to overflow with unrealistic idealism and good intentions (a dubious combination of assets for anyone desiring to prosper on the colonial frontier), is evident from his known actions, from the contents of his few extant letters to Sir William and from what others wrote to Sir William about him. That Sir William took an interest in Wall and purposely helped advance his career (as he did the careers of many other men, and most always to his own advantage) is very evident. Wall would certainly never have been accepted into St. Patrick's Lodge without the Baronet's approval, nor would he very likely have become connected with Jelles Fonda in mercantile activities without a Johnson recommendation.

At the same time, the reasons behind Wall's early, active and energetic participation as a Whig member of the Tryon County Committee of Safety, and his unexplained, sudden return to Loyalism and the permanent spurning of the Whig cause are also matters of mystery. Even the details of how he served his King in wartime are scattered and obscure. That he arrived in the Mohawk Valley sometime during 1768 or '69, became well-enough trusted to be included in several of Johnson's larger land-grants, admitted into the exclusive company of St. Patrick's Masonic Lodge, studied to become a trader under Sir William's close associate Jelles Fonda's watchful eye, and finally, that he should come to marry into a branch of the Butler clan, the second most powerful family in the eastern end of the valley, are all accomplishments that combine to personify Wall as a man whose presence deserves more scrutiny than does that of a simple colonial schoolmaster.

Admittedly, even after this thorough study there will remain more questions than answers. While Wall obviously spent the pre-Revolutionary War years building a position of trust within the Johnson Dynasty, any circumspect biographer must also strive to explain his appearance in those early months of the Revolution as the trusted and very active member of the Tryon County Committee of Safety. Was he, perhaps, a spy for the Johnson-Butler interests all along, never discovered, yet treated with growing suspicion due to his Butler wife, until it became necessary for him to withdraw or be discovered? While the possibility is interesting, it is the business of honest biographers to present facts 'unmuddled' by unprovable theories.

The earliest notice of Edward Wall in America comes to us as it came to Sir William via a letter from John Wetherhead, his factor in Albany, dated November 17th 1768, in which he informs Johnson that, "The bearer of this (letter) Mr. Wall has applyd to me for an Introduction to you - it seems he is very anxious to be employed by you in the capacity of a school master; As I am an entire stranger to him, you will know best what to say to him, as you will very easily find out his qualifications if he has any."<sup>3</sup> Any Johnson scholar familiar with the Johnson Papers is aware of several letters prior to Wall's arrival written by Johnson to various people expressing his frustration over failing to obtain schoolmasters, not only at Johnstown but also at Fort Hunter and 'the Mohawks' (Canajoharie). Yet for whatever reason, Johnson apparently did not offer Wall immediate employment at any of these important locations after meeting him in November of '68.

We know this because of the content of the next known reference to Wall's local presence. This reference appears in a most valuable unpublished primary source document, Robert Adem's Merchant's Store Ledger. Through the many pages of this intriguing mercantile ledger, again and again appear upon the stage of pre-revolutionary Tryon County the names of virtually all Sir William's close associates: his own Molly (usually listed as Mary Brant), her brother Joseph, Brian Lafferty, the Butlers, Gilbert Tice, various McDonnals and MacDonalds, the Services, Chews and Freys...one day purchasing shrouds, the next maybe cloth to

make 'pantaloons' or whatever else they had need of. Today Robert Adem's ledger, his unintended chronicle of daily life in colonial Johnstown, resides in the possession of an old local family. Jephtha Simons, helpful for once, informs us that an early member of this family married a daughter of Robert Adems, which may explain the family's present possession of it.<sup>4</sup>

So it happens that the second confirmation of Edward Wall's presence somewhere in the vicinity of Johnstown occurs through his conducting a typical, everyday commercial transaction at Robert Adem's store on March 2nd, 1769, on which date Adems or one of his assistants dutifully recorded what to them was just another daily entry: "To John Butler...one yard of cambric for Mr. Wall."<sup>5</sup> It is therefore very probable, since Wall is being permitted to charge goods for himself under the name of Colonel Butler, that he is most likely somehow in the Colonel's employ. If so, how was he employed? One possible explanation arises from the known fact that Colonel Butler provided a school of his own, separate from any sponsored by Sir William, at Butlersbury for the children of his nearby tenants and perhaps his own younger children as well. While no documentation exists to prove his school was in operation as early as 1769, it is certainly not impossible that it might have been, and if it was, the Colonel might well have employed Wall as a teacher, perhaps even at Johnson's behest, prior to Wall's service with Sir William. It is generally believed that the 'Butlersbury' of the 1760s and early 70s was a much more significant entity than the lonely-looking old house of today. Rather, it was a thriving community of Butler's primary tenants and retainers. It is a certainty that Colonel Butler was supporting a school and schoolmaster separate from Johnson's and had been doing so for some time before April of 1775, when he and his oldest son Walter suddenly

left the Mohawk Valley. Evidence for this assertion comes from the known interrogation by the Tryon Committee of Safety of his schoolmaster, George Crawford of Butlersbury.<sup>6</sup>

The suggestion that Wall may have been teaching for Butler in early 1769 is, of course, conjecture, and fact would be preferred. There seems to have been almost an undeclared conspiracy to obscure any really accurate information about Wall. Whenever any communicant writes about Edward Wall, it is always in the most general terms, and one is reduced to tracing his chronological trail with a minimum amount of data and a maximum amount of luck to keep from losing it altogether. We can know for certain only that by early 1769, Edward Wall was residing in Tryon County and was performing some form of professional service for Colonel John Butler that would entitle him to charge various necessities such as cambric to the Colonel's general account.

But Robert Adem's ledger book also reveals that by the early fall of 1769, Edward Wall was permitted to charge personal necessities under his own name and account. The first such listing found is on September 30th, 1769, in which entry he is carefully and respectfully recorded as "Edward Wall, Schoolmaster."<sup>7</sup> Thus we can determine with certainty that Edward Wall had begun teaching for Sir William Johnson at the newly-established Johnstown Free School at least by September of 1769. Finally Sir William had his free school in operation. Long had he been grouching over the lack of finding a credible schoolmaster for it in



Butlersbury, built in 1742, home of Col. John Butler, who may have been Edward Wall's first employer after he arrived in the Mohawk Valley late in 1768.

his correspondence with the Rev. Samuel Auchmuty and others. This project was clearly important to him and had caused considerable frustration. Indeed he would never find it easy to obtain enough teachers for his schools or ministers for his little churches. As far back as November of 1767 the Reverend Auchmuty wrote Johnson from New York that such a teacher "ought to have a decent living, enough to encourage him to persevere in his duty; and he may also be useful in reading of prayers, etc., in the absence of the Minister".<sup>8</sup> And Johnson would probably not have disagreed as far as the offer of a 'decent living' went, for both men knew the task required special people, not only teachers professionally trained (so as to be acceptable to the governing body of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Foreign Parts whose charity ultimately paid half their wages) but such teachers also had to be humanistically motivated to accept as personal and spiritual challenges the hardship, danger, sickness and many other frustrations of frontier life. Most of all, surely most paramount of all, Johnson's schoolmasters would have to possess and sincerely demonstrate a compassionate, patient and respectful attitude toward the children of Johnson's greatest allies and friends, his Mohawks.

Now, in a matter of just a few months, Johnson had managed to secure two competent teachers to nurture and develop basic free education programs, one at Johnstown and the other at "the Mohocks" (Canajoharie). And as there is no mention in the Johnson Papers or Adem's ledger of any other teacher serving at Johnstown prior to Wall's employment, we may reliably assign this Fall, 1769 term as the advent of organized public education at Johnstown. As further testimony, we have Sir William's own letter to Daniel Burton written December 6th, 1769, in which Johnson states,

*"I have fixed a worthy honest man as a schoolmaster at the Mohawks who tho' there only since March has already 30 Indian children under his tuition who improve very fast and their number will be shortly augmented. I have likewise established a fit person who received a liberal education in Europe at Johnstown near this place, who has at present near 45 children whites and Indians and his school daily increases.*

*The name of the first mentioned School Master is Colin McLelland, of the last is Edward Wall. I have already advanced them half a year's salary and propose that they shall soon draw for the amount on Mr. Symonds, agreeable to the advice of Dr. Auchmuty."*<sup>9</sup>

"...who received a liberal education in Europe..." Would that for history's sake Sir William had been a little more specific in revealing the details of Wall's education to Burton, but that brief, almost teasing bit of generality is all one may discover about Wall's formal education from the Johnson Papers. Once again, where only one or two additional lines of more specific information about Wall's education might so easily have been recorded for posterity, only hints and inferences are left us.

There is a confirmation of the salaries in the Johnson Papers, a list dated August 18th, 1770 of sums to be rendered various persons, among whom both Colin McLelland and Edward Wall are included.<sup>10</sup> Each are to be rendered 17 pounds/10, drawn on one William Symondson, said sums most likely representing the balance of that 'half a year's salary' Sir William spoke of in his earlier letter to Daniel Burton.

It is no doubt this December, 1769 Burton letter which has caused local Johnstownians to correctly identify Wall as their first schoolmaster, although at the same time accepting him historically in this capacity for simplicity's sake without studying him further. It is more difficult, however, to fathom the origin of a related local notion, the popular assertion that Edward Wall as schoolmaster was allowed to live in such a large and commodious cottage as the preserved colonial residence now known as the Drumm House. Housing was in very short supply. We know that, in the late 1760s, Sir William erected a number (various sources claim anywhere from seven to twelve units) of small but adequate little houses for his most important artisans and retainers as an inducement to draw them to his new town, and the Drumm house by local tradition has long been identified as being one of these buildings. But even these residences were scarcely enough to provide adequate housing for the growing village. With Johnstown expanding daily, the notion that a house large enough to house an entire family should have been turned over for the sole

occupancy of an unmarried schoolmaster simply bears no logical credibility. To support this assertion, we need but contrast this old local legend with the known lodging difficulties of Edward Wall's immediate successor, Schoolmaster John Cottgrave, who in November of 1771 wrote to Thomas Flood, Johnson's old friend and Construction Overseer, to complain that "It is impossible for me to describe the dislike I have to the continuing at a tavern for board and lodging."<sup>11</sup> The very next day, Cottgrave again wrote Flood on the issue of housing to inform him that "My wife seems so pressing about coming up that I will be much oblig'd to you if you will inquire of Coll. Johnson if that he expects Capt'n. Chew up this winter, if not I wou'd willingly rent his house near the Bridge...."<sup>12</sup> Given this primary evidence that Schoolmaster Cottgrave was not 'allowed' a house gratis from Johnson's largess but was paying his own room and board and getting nothing better than a small room above a noisy tavern, it is hardly likely, as local tradition has long fancied, that Edward Wall was accorded the comfort of being sole occupant of the Drumm House or any other local residence. And finally, we have Sir William Johnson's own words, written on December 18th, 1767 to Dr. Auchmuty, to the effect that "any other person who comes must be greatly distressed thro' the want of any proper house or lodging, there being no place in the neighbourhood fit for the purpose and any place that could be procured will be held at a dear rate."<sup>13</sup> Thus, with the village constantly growing, it is extremely unlikely that, even with the construction of Johnson's little houses, an entire house could have been assigned, as local tradition persists, to the village schoolmaster. It is certainly possible, however, that Wall and a number of other Johnson employees who were yet bachelors might have been quartered together at one of these residences, thus honouring the persistence of this local tradition in a more realistic manner.

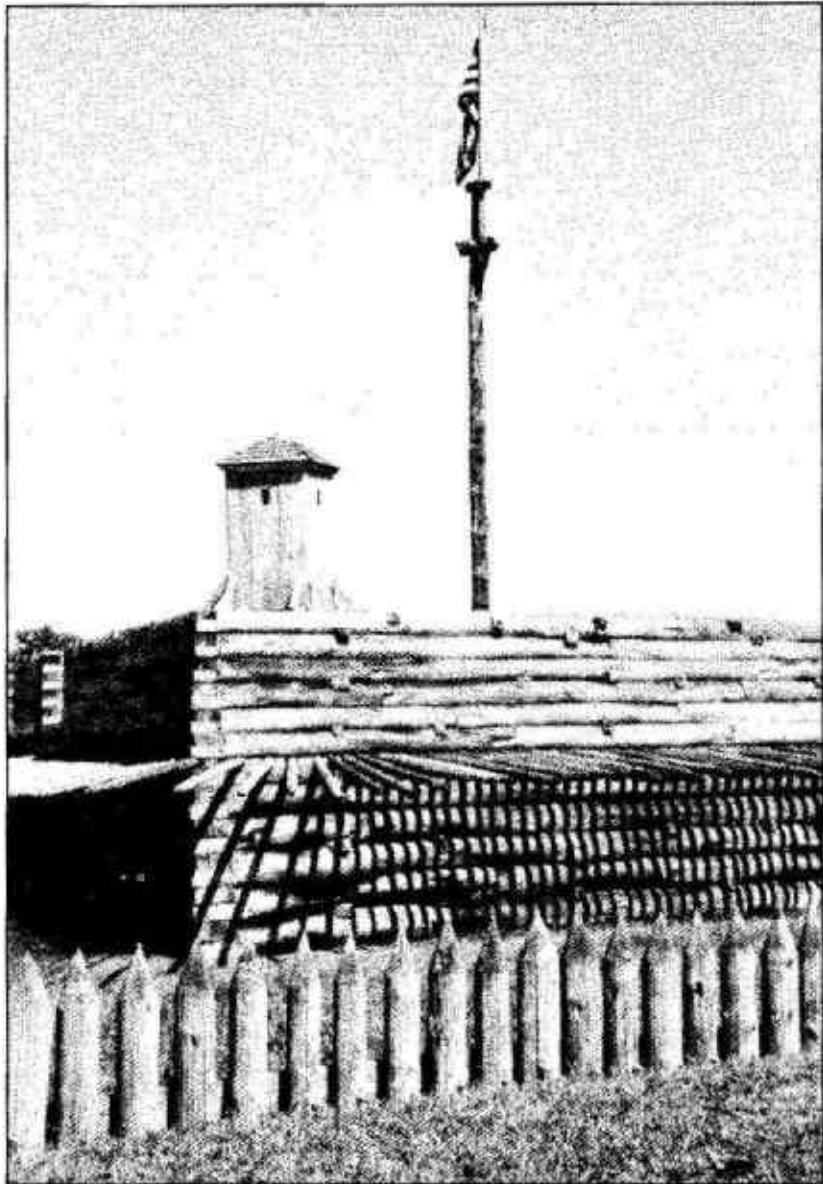
Daniel Burton replied to Sir William's December 1769 letter, writing on May 11th, 1770 to inform him that, "The Society have, in pursuance of your recommendation, appointed Mr. Colin McLelland and Mr. Edward Wall their schoolmasters, the former at the Mohawks and the latter at Johnstown, and will allow them such a salary as you have according to the

discretionary power given you last year been pleased to allot them."<sup>14</sup>

It has not been possible to determine whether Edward Wall continued as Johnstown's schoolmaster beyond the Fall 1769 - Spring 1770 academic term. He could have taught for another year, covering the Fall-Winter 1770 term, but there are no accounts extant in the Johnson Papers that show him receiving any payment for that period. As will be related further, he was at Fort Stanwix by May of '71, and so must have turned the school over to John Cottgrave at some earlier time. Cottgrave, who from his own declaration was so unhappily housed somewhere in the garret of Tice's Tavern, was an eccentric opportunist with an empire-building complex not unlike many pioneers. He was certainly, judging from his inexcusably impolite, overly-assertive letters to Sir William and others, not a man of Wall's more politic temperament, but his letters prove he had taken over the school at least by September, 1771, and probably earlier, unless Wall taught a very abbreviated Spring term before removing to Stanwix to begin his next adventure.

Even during 1770, Wall's first full year of local residence, his star began to rise slowly within the Johnson Dynasty. One is hard-put to explain this: a colonial schoolmaster was usually a colonial schoolmaster and remained one. The only judgements we may take liberty to make about Wall's character as a positive factor in his advancement come from but two letters written by him, both to Sir William. But the content of these letters speak volumes to help us assess Wall's general character: they leave us with a reflection of Wall mirrored as a conscientious, reliable, rather idealistic man, the sort to put concentrated energy and determination into whatever project he engaged in. Yet there is also an unspoken naivety in his communications. He seems the type of person whose judgement is sometimes adversely affected by a tendency to believe the best of those around him, so as not to be able to successfully identify potential enemies until too late.

Yet several practical reasons exist to explain Edward Wall's advance up the Dynasty's slippery ladder. First of all, he was educated, a man who could teach school, could read, write, and perform mathematical, business-related calculations and many other tasks requiring both



The Fort Stanwix experienced by Edward Wall in 1771 was no doubt inferior to the substantially refortified structure faced by St. Ledger in 1777 and now open as a state historic site.

intelligence and the ability to think critically and to make decisions. In short, he was a potentially useful man to have around. Certainly Wall's early and continued connection with Sir William's old and trusted associate, Colonel John Butler, whatever that connection was, did him no harm, nor could his success in establishing the Johnstown Free School, an accomplishment long on Sir William's local priority list, have earned him anything less than Sir William's gratitude and respect. There is also that singularly strong tone of sincerity arising from his letters which at least suggests another reason for men like Col. John Butler and Sir William Johnson to consider him an asset. If we accept Edward Wall as both Butler and Johnson apparently did, that is, as a man of dependability and integrity and one who could therefore be trusted, we must not forget that the colonial fron-

tier, like all frontiers, was crawling with opportunistic dreamers and schemers ranging all the way from the reasonably scrupulous down to those totally bereft of any human characteristic beyond intense greed, all of them seeking to emulate this or that "great man" and, like the bond thief in Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, to "make a connection" any way possible. The frontier abounded with human leeches and parasites anxious to attach themselves to the fawning retinue of any important, established person like a John Butler or a William Johnson, always in hope of personal advancement.

When we think of such men, we do not need to look any farther than Edward Wall's own replacement, the aforementioned John Cottgrave, who, on November 22nd, 1771, confided in Thomas Flood that,

*"I have wrote Collins by Buck to*

*put my name for 2000 acres of the Socandago (Savandaga) that I may settle some particular families of my own liking thereon - that when done I may establish a store in that quarter and to have an influence at their town meetings.*"<sup>15</sup>

But as Cottgrave sputtered about his grandiose plan, Wall quietly advanced. As early as April 27th, 1770, we find his name included on a list among forty prominent associates of Sir William designated as "those who are to be inserted in the Patent for the Northern Tract of 80,000 acres in the rear of Kingsborough, alias Stuart's Purchase."<sup>16</sup> The names on this application read like a 'who's who' of Tryon County. Some of them had been born in the valley before Sir William first saw it, while others, like Wall, were relative newcomers, legitimate Johnson retainers riding forward on the coat tails of the great Baronet. Among the older signers of this grant were many who had soldiered with the then Colonel Johnson in the old French war. They had prospered and matured beside Johnson in the decade after, and all of them had discovered and eventually mastered many subtle lessons required to coexist to advantage with the seemingly-unstoppable Johnson Dynasty. They had learned these lessons long before Edward Wall entered their valley and prospered accordingly. Yet it is Wall's signature and not that of the ambitious, conspiring John Cottgrave, which appears on the land grant application. Wall's name was also offered up by Sir William as an alternate for a much smaller land grant application dated September 1, 1770, to be inserted if the grant proved large enough to require extra names.<sup>17</sup> Although Wall's name was later removed from this application because the grant when surveyed was found to be even smaller than anticipated, one may well ponder on the question of what more significant company in all the valley this relatively quiet young man could have been privileged to find both himself and his signature accepted after such a short time in residence? Such evidence of his rapid personal acceptance by the top members of the dynasty fuels the recurring mystery about Edward Wall and about why this apparently amiable, pliant, mannered, intelligent but otherwise uninfluential man could be so successful in ingratiating himself so quickly and thoroughly among those "great men"

from whose collective power, with Sir William at their head, all important decisions in prewar Tryon County flowed.

At almost the same date, an even more significant and telling event occurred in Wall's rise. On the 6th of September, 1770, Edward Wall was raised into St. Patrick's Lodge, Order of Freemasons, along with two other men, Capt. Norman McLeod and one Robert Picken, a surveyor very actively employed by Johnson.

The signatures of all the prewar inductees are recorded in the original St. Patrick's Lodge Book, which historic document fortunately survived the anarchy of revolution and is carefully preserved by today's St. Patrick's Lodge members.<sup>18</sup> Being raised into a Masonic Lodge was a matter of as much social significance in those times as it is today. The pre-revolutionary lodge roll of St. Patrick's reads, as did the land grant application just mentioned, very much like a who-was-who of Johnson's close associates in Tryon County. One whose signature resided on the Lodge Roll of St. Patrick's could truly claim to have attained a high level of confidence and standing among those whose opinion mattered. And Edward Wall, through whatever combination of circumstance and ability, had, with less than two years on the Johnstown scene, somehow arrived at this high social plateau.

As we seek to understand the mystery of this social success, two clues we have to work with are Wall's extant letters, each of which in different ways reinforces the already-mentioned theory that he was imbued with a tendency to mix duty and good intentions with more than a little naivety. But before quoting the letters in proper context, it is necessary to refocus chronologically on Wall's activities.

As mentioned above, by the spring of '71 at the latest, Edward Wall left both Johnstown and its school house behind him: it had all served a purpose, and perhaps as a result of his careful handling of both himself and the school, other opportunities were now extended to him. In an example of what our modern age might call 'apprentice training', Wall now became attached to one of the more successful local business relationships, that ever-active William Johnson/Jelles Fonda trading pipeline. Probably he was invited by one or more of his Lodge brothers. Jelles Fonda himself became a member

Wall considerably embellished his signature on the 'Oath of Allegiance, Abjuration and Test' in December of 1772.

not long after Wall. Though William Johnson was by now the Baronet and one of the greatest of those "great men" of the British colonies, one of his most important character traits, and the one which so successfully helped him retain the allegiance of Tryon County's leading men until his dying day, was that he did not, as he rose in importance, forget or ignore old companions and valley men like Jelles Fonda. They had lain in cold, rain-soaked camps together, traded ball for ball with the French at Lake George, marched west to capture the great prize of Fort Niagara and home again, always planning new trading expeditions while conniving in uncounted land purchase schemes and other personal adventures along the way. Jelles' father Douw was the established merchant-trader at Caughnawaga (now Fonda) before the young William Johnson ever stooped to scrape a clod of Mohawk Valley soil from his boots. No doubt the Fondas, father and son, were among Johnson's earliest acquaintances and commercial associates, and they must have served as positive influences on his development in many ways. And now, while Sir William Johnson, Baronet and Sole Superintendent of His Majesty's Indian allies in the Northern Department, bent his will and his waning body strength to the ever more complicated and impossible obligations of Indian Affairs and empire preservation, he still remained actively involved in all important and lucrative trading activities through partnerships with old and trusted associates such as the Fondas, George Groghan, William Printup and others.

Down this new mercantile pathway Edward Wall somehow strayed. Although frontier trading was certainly a more arduous and dangerous vocation than that of colonial schoolmaster, Wall no doubt recognized the opportunity he was being offered via a direct association

with Fonda to gain much first-hand experience among the Mohawks and other Iroquois, and by which means he would also increase his value to Sir William as well as to himself. The establishment of reliable trade networks and the pursuit of land were the two greatest objectives of the age. Nor should it be forgotten that both William Johnson and Jelles Fonda were now Wall's fellow Masonic Lodge brothers, pledged by the most serious oaths of the time to advance and protect him. Yet while the advantages of such protection and influence would seem an asset, Edward Wall could not have anticipated the extent of the deep-seated, hostile resentment which the advantage of his patronage by Sir William would create against him among the rough, seasoned traders of Fort Stanwix, to which place Johnson and Fonda apparently assigned him.

Fort Stanwix of 1770 was a semi-lawless, rough and tumble trading post attached to a broken-down fort left over from the old French War, manned by a small, listless garrison commanded by an ailing, veteran officer for whom each day was a physical struggle. True, it had experienced considerable physical repairs during the months in 1768 while Sir William and all his Indian Department assistants laboured mightily to hammer out the Stanwix Treaty. But it was going down hill again swiftly, and the only legal authority in camp was the aged and semi-infirm commander of the little garrison, Lt. John Galland. When he was having a bad day, there was really no authority at all. Poor Galland had been commander there since June of 1767 courtesy of General Gage.<sup>19</sup> By 1770, he had probably come to regard the whole, discouraging situation not as a favoured posting awarded him by an old comrade in arms as it was meant to be, but more as the life sentence into which it had slowly degenerated.

For all practical purposes, the real 'boss man' of Fort Stanwix was a weathered, antagonistic boss-trader who made Fort Stanwix, prior to the siege of 1777, his home base and private patrimony. John Ruf, with the help of some hard-case pals, completely dominated trading activities in and around Stanwix, as Wall was soon to discover.

On May 16th, 1771, Edward Wall sat down at his desk at the Johnson-Fonda trading compound, somewhere on the



"Poor Galland had been commander there since June of 1767 courtesy of General Gage." [shown here]

grounds of Fort Stanwix, with quill in hand to acquaint the then-greatest man in colonial America with his progress, informing Sir William that

*"Lt. Galland upon your Honour's letter assured me that he would do everything that he could for me or any person you would recommend, but there is very little in the poor old gentleman's power, as he is quite debilitated and for those few days past entirely confin'd to his bed, which I imagine is the reason he is so much despised by the set who live here.*

*Three of the Chiefs of the Oneidas came here shortly after Stephanus had returned from Johnson Hall, and gave me a name, Awhawhoana or the Great Road, they were very ceremonious upon the occasion, and promis'd they would be friendly and assisting to me, for that they understood that I had been recommended by your Honour, and therefore expected I would be just and kind to them, and indeed I intend to be so, and hope your Honour will be pleased to speak favourably of me to them.*

*The people here who would naturally be willing to discourage any persons in my way, are now spirited to oppose me in everything by Mr. Phyn and Ellice's orders for transportation of their own goods and those of Commodore Grant being directed to the waggoners of old*

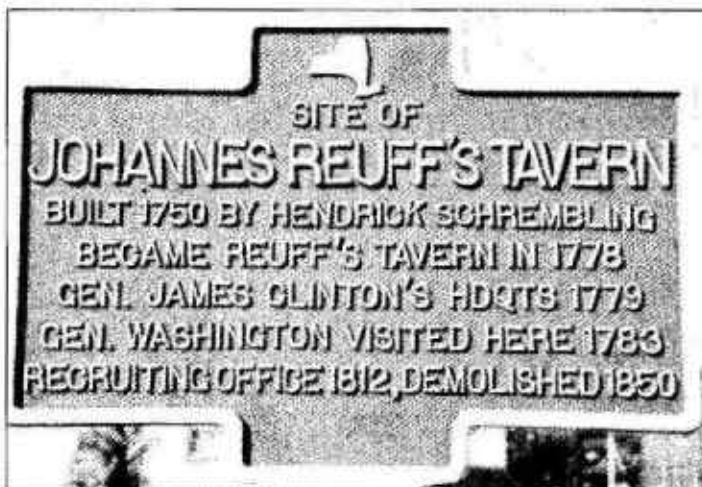
*standing at Fort Stanwix, which excludes me from my share I might otherwise have in carrying them over, but nevertheless shall have my portion of what is to me made by riding."*<sup>20</sup>

This last statement probably means he would haul the goods himself if he had to.

Wall closes with the request that Sir William give his regards to 'Peter and the children', hardly the act of a stern ex-schoolmaster prone to frequent uses of the birch rod, as Simms of the nineteenth century would have us believe. But trouble was brewing for 'The Great Road', courtesy of John Ruf, who no doubt desired to see Sir William's new trader take 'the great road' swiftly out of town. Less than a month later, Wall's persistent efforts not to be cheated out of his 'portion' of trading activities brought him to considerable trouble as well as bodily harm.

On the eighth of June, Lt. Galland must have forced himself up from his sick bed, not only to come to rescue Edward Wall, but also to write Sir William an immediate and full account of his own conduct, no doubt to protect his continuance in Sir William's favour. The letter is quoted in full.

*"I think it my duty to let you know the late fate of Mr. Wall. Mr. Governor John Ruf being jealous of me in regard to him must needs banish him of (off) the ground he ordered one of his emissaries to breed a cowl (quarrel) with Quine at his own house and another of them he employed to knock down Wall which when he saw he got upon him and dragged tore and beat him most unmercifully he got him by the heir of his*



John Ruf's trading post was burned down during the siege of Fort Stanwix in 1777.

He relocated in present-day Canajoharie the following year.

head as he lay on his back and dragged him from Quine's door to his own house where he got a board and bound him fast and then kept him in confinement which when I hard of sent my Corporal to demand the prisoner he sent me word that I was not capable of taking care of a murderer and that I had no business with him upon which I ordered a file of men to go and brake open every door on his house and bring the prissioner to me. I intend to represent this case to head quarter where I hope his Excellency General Gage will give me immadiant orders to tourn Ruff and all his gang off this ground I assure you Sir his insolence is not to be boren he even tourns off the ground any man he does not like and brings in whom he likes and gives them the best land belonging to the King without my liberty."<sup>21</sup>

Our view of the sickly, perturbed Galland goaded into action by Ruff's deeds, and immediately afterward scribbling-out the above-quoted missive to Sir William to protect his own backside, has its humour. Probably Galland had experienced a long, thankless and debilitating career typically endured by the middle rank professional soldier of the time. General Thomas Gage was responsible for Galland's appointment to Stanwix and remained his guardian angel thereafter. Hugh Wallace made this political fact of life quite clear to Sir William when, on June 15th, 1767, he penned Johnson the following letter.

*"The Bearer Lieut. Galland is a Man Genl. Gage has much at Heart to serve, as he was long in the same Corp with him & has appointed him to reside at & take care of Fort Stanwix. As it may be in your power to do him some service & advise him how to make something of the Lands & Houses there I beg you'll be so good as to help him. He is a very honest worthy Man, but has been unfortunate."*<sup>22</sup>

And when, not three months into Galland's residency at Stanwix, he apparently managed to provoke a serious quarrel with the local Indians, Gage again wrote a tempering letter to Johnson, proclaiming from the safe distance of New York on September 7th, 1767, that

*"If the people who dwell upon the Carrying Place of Fort Stanwix, do not behave properly, or give jealousy to the Indians by an impudent conduct, they must be drove away. Lt. Galland is now*

*of an age in which people's temper generally become cool, I am surprised he is so warm with the Indians."*<sup>23</sup>

John Ruff should have known better as well. The Fort Stanwix historian John Scott, drawing from Pomroy Jones' earlier work, *Annals of Oneida County*, wrote in 1927 that "John Roof had been one of three or four settlers at the Carrying Place known to have been there as far back as 1760. He had been an innkeeper and Indian trader and had assisted in the transportation of bateaux between the two streams."<sup>24</sup> Ruf (or Ruff, as some sources spell it), already had experienced a long trading relationship with Sir William Johnson, frequently supplying both Johnson and his Indian allies, and he shows up regularly in Johnson's account renderings.

But Wall's beating at the instigation of John Ruff was apparently not severe enough to convince him to leave Stanwix. Jelles Fonda, happily announcing that it is "Sunday morning 10 o'clock at Fort Stanwix," but forgetting to include the letter's date, writes to Sir William somewhere near the end of September, 1771, announcing the preliminary results of a trip into the wilderness to scout for good land. Apparently Edward Wall went with him, as Fonda tells Johnson,

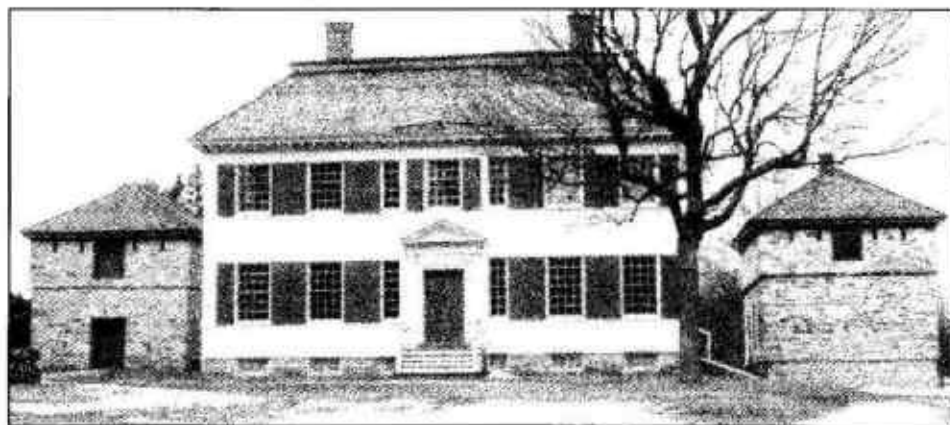
*"I just now arrive here after being four days in the wouds, reconnoitering the lands and found them very good....Mr. Wall who is not returned yet has our Jurnel and soune as he comes here I will send it to you by Express...the Indians as I send this letter by met me with the Barls as you wrote for to Mr. Wall..."*<sup>25</sup>

There was always much business afoot between these two longtime friends,

the powerful Baronet and the dependable, half-literate Fonda....always more land to patent, more troubled Indians to placate and feed. Certainly other letters, now long forgotten, pertaining to more important matters than the needed 'barls' Wall was to procure for Sir William, must have travelled back and forth between Fonda, Johnson, and Wall all that summer. Wall's May 16th letter to Sir William is endorsed in the Baronet's own hand as being "received on the 20th by an Indian"<sup>26</sup> and no doubt reliable Indian runners travelled back and forth rapidly on those hot, breathless summer days, anxious to deliver the latest communication between their new brother Awhawhoana at Fort Stanwix and their much more significant older brother Warraghiyagey at his great Hall, where a good meal and perhaps a new blanket or some extra gun powder would be their reward for faithful service.

It is at this point, however, that Edward Wall does the first of several annoying disappearing acts which make accurate chronicling of his life so frustrating. Silence envelops Wall from this late September 1771 letter of Fonda's until he reappears in January, 1772 at Caughnawaga.

It was on January 10th, 1772 that Ebenezer Jessup penned a short letter to Sir William from Albany discussing a land transaction and apologizing for being unable to procure for Sir William any decent barrels of 'cyder'. The letter has nothing to do with Edward Wall but for the way it is addressed, "to the Honourable Sir William Johnson Bart. at Johnson Hall, to the care of Majr. Fonda at Caughnawaga."<sup>27</sup> The letter was not delivered to Fonda's headquarters at



Johnson Hall, in the winter of 1998. It may not look that different than on the long-past November day in 1768 when Edward Wall, carrying John Weitherhead's letter from Schenectady to Sir William Johnson, first saw it.

Caughnawaga until January 15th. Perhaps it was the temporary victim of a winter storm: five days was a long time for a letter to traverse such a short distance even in those times. The relevance of this letter is that it was received at Fonda's and forwarded to Sir William by "Sir, your most Obedt. Hum'l Servt., Edwd. Wall."<sup>28</sup>

This insignificant bit of postal forwarding is nevertheless helpful in once again establishing Wall's whereabouts, for it is obvious he is no longer at Fort Stanwix but has transferred back to Fonda's 'main office,' as it were, in Caughnawaga, just a hill climb south from Butlersbury. Being able to document this relocation contributes somewhat toward understanding when and how Wall found the opportunity to court and win the hand of Deborah Butler, to whom he was married on July 6th, 1772.<sup>29</sup>

It is possible that Edward Wall and Deborah Butler first met during the period of Wall's earlier association with Col. Butler back in '69. As already suggested, the Colonel may have employed Wall to instruct the younger Butler children. Perhaps he even instructed Debbie while at the same time conveniently and subtly establishing his first important social-political connection in the valley with the senior Butler, as it was certainly not for nothing that he was allowed to charge sundries in the Colonel's name at Robert Adem's store.

Earlier researchers have assumed that Deborah Butler Wall was the same Deborah who was a daughter of John Butler himself. There are, however, two extant primary sources documents, either of which would suffice to declare this assumption an error, plus there is the mathematical fact that Deborah, daughter of Col. John Butler and Catalyntje Bradt Butler, was baptized May 12th, 1764 and would therefore have been not much older than eight or nine years by 1772.<sup>30</sup> It is much more likely that Deborah Butler Wall was the Deborah Butler born some years earlier to John's older brother Walter. The two primary source documents which clearly demonstrate that Deborah Butler, daughter of Walter, and Deborah Butler, daughter of Colonel John, were two different people are as follows.

Firstly, we need only refer to that important wartime letter written by Walter

Butler in February, 1779 which includes a list of those immediate family members he hopes to have exchanged for prisoners held by Butler's Rangers.<sup>31</sup> Those of his own family he lists, and they are: his mother, Mrs. Butler; his divorced sister, Ann (or Nancy) Sheehan; Ann's son, Walter Butler Sheehan; his younger brothers Thomas, Andrew and William Butler; Deborah Butler, his unmarried sister and Mrs. Wall — his cousin, Deborah Butler Wall.

It is obvious from this list, Walter Butler's own enumeration of those intimate family members whom both he and his father spent half the war attempting to release from captivity, that Deborah his sister and Deborah, the wife of Edward Wall, were two separate people, for he lists them one after the other.

Secondly, we have that phonetically-amusing letter written in great haste and anxiety by Colonel William Harper of Harpersfield as an express to New York's Governor Clinton in December, 1779, high on the heels of the successful Butler-Brant Raid on Cherry Valley, in which Harper reports, "I was informed by several of the prisoners that Butler sate he would keep Mrs. Campbell and Mrs. Moore and thare childring till Mrs. Butler, Mrs. Wall her nese, and his other friends were exchanged for them."<sup>32</sup> It is obvious that, as the daughter of Mrs. Butler's husband's brother Walter, Deborah Butler Wall would indeed, (as Colonel Harper so originally spelled it), have been Mrs. Butler's 'nese'.

Thus, through the unintentional testimony of two prominent contemporary participants in the great conflict, we can not only establish proof of Edward Wall's marriage into the second most significant family in the pre-revolutionary Mohawk Valley, but we can also offer conclusive primary source evidence to define Deborah Butler Wall's genealogical place within the greater Butler family unit. Walter Butler clearly considered Edward Wall's wife Deborah a relative as worthy of exchange as his closer family members and said so each and every time he wrote on the subject of an exchange.

But the war had not yet begun in the summer of 1772 when Edward and Deborah made their vows, and the story of Edward Wall must confine itself to the correct chronology of events.

We must presently address attention to two related questions: what gainful

employment was Edward Wall now engaged in to support himself and his new wife, and where was he accomplishing it? These questions are readily answered thanks to a second extant letter written by Wall to Sir William that has survived in the Johnson Papers. Dated November 3rd, 1772, the letter is written to Johnson from Burnettsfield and shows Wall to be engaged there in trading, putting what he had learned at Stanwix and with Fonda at Caughnawaga to work on his own. But now he was operating from the safety of a settled village in which the rude likes of a John Ruff did not need to be circumvented. He informs Johnson of his wish to employ "two men with some dry goods to trade amongst the Indians this Fall and Winter, which hope you'll not deny us, as there are two New England men, encouraged by Mr. Kirkland, who are trying to monopolize the trade both here and above."<sup>33</sup>

He then bends to the true purpose of his letter.

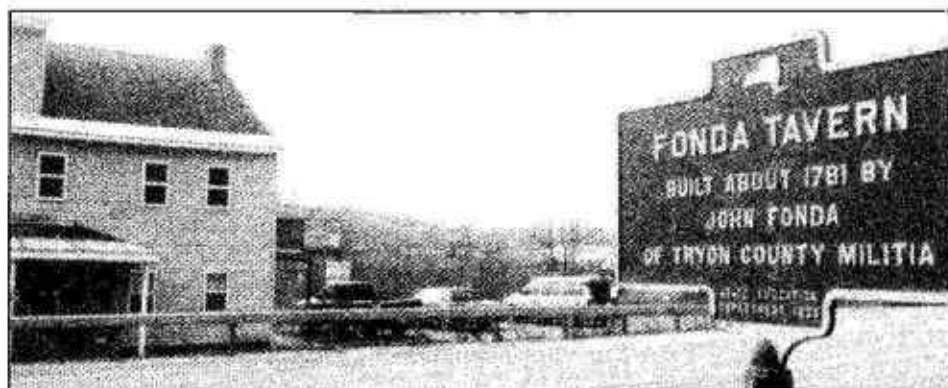
*"I learned from Mr. Cunningham that you had wrote him respecting building a house on your rights near this place, therefore will be glad to serve you with what nails will be wanted and that at 1/lb. which I believe is the price in your neighbourhood, and farther I hope you will let me serve you with any orders which you'll have occasion to draw on this part of the country & you may depend on my assiduity in completing them and on the best terms. I shoud have waited on your Honour in person but find I cannot without great prejudice to my business here...I have the pleasure to inform your Honour that this place thus far answers my expectations..."<sup>34</sup>*

There is in this last known letter to Johnson an air of confidence and contentment. We may with some accuracy picture Mr. and Mrs. Edward Wall now living with peace of mind and a growing business in a relatively safe and settled location, still on the frontier but not so remote from civilization that they could not, with the eventuality of hiring an assistant or two, occasionally escape back down the valley to visit their friends and her family. And of course when such happy occasions eventually arose, they would pay that respectful call of courtesy upon Sir William Johnson before all other things. Wall's letter hints at his newfound contentment in the role of a young

merchant-trader, free to develop his own commercial business and, as this letter to Sir William suggests, he has also become more astute and aggressive in his business solicitations. And there, but for the gathering storm of revolutionary ferment, might both Edward and Deborah Wall have lived out their quiet and progressively successful lives.

## Part Two: The Conflict

In an early effort to dampen growing political dissent throughout the valley, the Johnson Dynasty in early December, 1772 circulated to freeholders of Tryon county for their signatures a lengthy document entitled, "Oath of Allegiance, Abjuration and Test".<sup>35</sup> Its signers swore their allegiance, among other things agreeing to "bear faith and true allegiance to his Majesty King George". Of the 68 signers, many were names destined to return to the stage of revolutionary conflict on one side or the other over the course of the bloody years to come. Dygerts, Merckells and Petri signatures appear, as do those of the Fondas, Freys, Eisenlords and Klocks, the Nelleses, Waggoners and even Nicholas Herkimer. Some of the signers were sincere and would remain loyal to the king, forfeiting their lives and land for him, while others, no doubt already discontented, idealistic, or merely covetous of their Loyalist neighbours' better land, but at the same time wise enough to realize their time to force the issue was not yet come, bowed to pressure from the dynasty and signed anyway, perhaps muttering under their breath the already popular phrase about suffering no taxation without representation, and reminding those who had forgotten that, as long before as May of '69, the Virginia House of Burgesses had proclaimed that the sole right to levy taxes on their citizens lay in their own legislature. Even John Brown, a recent émigré from Massachusetts, making his brief, halfhearted, prewar attempt at a law practice at Caughnawaga and destined to die on his 36th birthday, October 19th, 1780, while defending Stone Arabia against the small but effective travelling army of Sir John Johnson, was caught up in the fervour of the thing and signed it. John Frey, named an executor of Sir William's will and later the first postwar Sheriff of the new Montgomery County, dipped his pen and signed. Christopher P. Yates, the



The prewar trading establishment of Jells Fonda where Wall worked during 1772, lay along the King's Highway (now New York Route 5) and stood behind and west of the John Fonda 1781 Tavern pictured here. The road from Butlersbury, down a steep winding hill, meets Route 5 directly in front of this building.

surveyor and political activist who would later be sent back to Tryon County by the Albany Committee to help organize the Tryon County Committee of Safety, obligingly signed, as did Col. Frederick Visscher, who would become commander of Tryon's Third Regiment of Militia, losing his scalp and almost his life one foggy May morning in 1780 to members of Sir John's spring raiding army.

There is an old local legend to the effect that, when General Washington toured the Mohawk Valley at the conclusion of the war, he was given a formal dinner by local Whig leaders in the stone house of Peter Wormouth, which sat across the river from Fort Plain (Rensselaer): that he specifically requested Col. Visscher to be seated on his right side in honour of his injuries and that his host, Wormouth, be seated at his left, in recognition of the loss of Wormouth's only son, Lt. Matthew, killed in an ambush while riding dispatches from Fort Plain to Cherry Valley. The old tale is without documentation, yet it persists, having been published in various older local histories, and Rufus Grider, a late nineteenth century valley artist made a water colour of the old building based on the memories of elderly locals. Very likely the story is true, for the dinner at Wormouth's did take place and it is not out of character for Washington to have requested such politic seating arrangements.

Of course all the leading Johnson backers, men such as Gilbert Tice, John and Guy Johnson, John Butler and Daniel Claus, Peter Ten Broek, Joseph Chew, Peter Conyne and Brian Lafferty signed. The so-called 'common men', freeholders such as the Veeders, Hansens,

Docksteaders, Youngs, Bellingers and Dillenbachs were represented, all either quiet dissenters or vocal true believers, ironically lumped together on this hypocritical document as families and neighbours for the very last time before the great conflict openly erupted. Some of these men were no doubt dedicated Loyalists who believed they knew exactly what they were doing and why they were doing it. Others were quiet skeptics, already watching the deteriorating situation in Massachusetts and whispering early, furtive anti-government sentiments in smoky Palatine kitchens and in the dark corners and private rooms of taverns late at night, still not sure who to trust or confide in, gradually gaining belief in the growing notion that nothing further was to be gained by supporting a foreign monarchy. Such discontented men may, as early as '71 or '72, have already begun holding their clandestine little gatherings within the bowels of certain local taverns whose owners were known to be secretly in favour of their cause, and while the rum was passed around and did its work, perhaps they debated whether or not Sir William, their great and good old friend, was, in his new burst of empire building, along with his newly-imported Catholic Highlanders and his ever-increasing gang of Irish sycophants, now moving farther and farther away from them and their commonality of earlier days. And what about those 700 odd, uncommunicative Catholic Highlanders and their priest, Father McKenna, all of whom Sir William was settling right in their midst, offering these 'foreigners' generous inducements to settle in the very Tryon county, their Tryon County, which they had fought for beside Colonel William Johnson and died

to protect and preserve for themselves in the old French War?

Still others who signed the Oath must not have known just what to think, and may well have prayed that all the conflicts and hostilities in Massachusetts would simply fade away and not vex them further.

I can find no record of Edward Wall's activities from his signing of this document in December of '72 until the first remaining minutes of the Tryon County Committee of Safety were recorded two and a half years later. Probably he and Debbie continued living quietly in Burnettsfield while he expanded his business and slowly developed a reputation as a man whose opinions were worth considering.

Then suddenly it was May of 1775, with Sir William dead almost a year and his son, Sir John, already losing necessary support around the county by displaying a growing tendency for keeping to the company of himself, his few close friends and relations, his well-armed Catholic Highlanders, his menacing Mohawks, as well as drifting away from the company of many of his father's most influential old friends, all of whom were, admittedly, at least a generation older than himself.

Lists were now being made openly. There is, attached to the extant collection of early Tryon County Committee documents, various census collections of the inhabitants and freeholders of each district. For valid geographic reasons, the list of the Kingsland and German Flatts Districts, which included Burnettsfield, were combined. The list is dated May 22nd, 1775 and Edward Wall's name appears in his usual, confident hand near the beginning.<sup>36</sup>

But there were more important activities brewing than the collecting of lists. Many records of the meetings of the Tryon County Committee of Safety still exist, yet it is not known exactly when the committee, guided by Chris Yates, Ebenezer Cox, Nicholas Herkimer and others, actually began functioning as an effective, united, county-wide political organization. Probably the grand momentums stimulating its formal organization and propelling it into power were the concurrent military events unfolding in Massachusetts during the epochal months of April and May, coupled with the removal from the valley of sev-

eral of the most prominent Loyalist 'authority figures' such as Colonel John Butler and his son, Walter, Joseph Brant and Guy Johnson. Guy had made his exit publicly during June, declaring for an Indian council supposedly to the west at Thompson's (Magin's) and decamping amidst a retinue of supply-laden bateaux, while the Butlers, father and eldest son, left under unknown circumstances some time after May 17th, and it is not impossible but that they might have stopped to refresh themselves and change horses at the Burnettsfield home of their in-law Wall, if indeed they travelled in that direction.

The first flurry of these large Committee of Safety meetings of-the-whole that we presently have records of occurred near the end of May, 1775. On May 24th, two days after the gathering of the dated Kingsland/German Flatts Census List, the first known meeting of the "United Committees of Palatine, Conajohary, King'sland and Germanflatts Districts" met at the hopefully-commodious house of William Seeber, somewhere in the Canajoharie District.<sup>37</sup>

Edward Wall was the first person listed as an official delegate from German Flatts, his companion representatives being Duncan McDougal, Jacob Weaver and the brothers William, Marcus and John Petry. Those thirty rebel 'delegates' gathered together at Seeber's must have been a very mixed crowd: experienced veterans of the old French war, all landed gentry such as Nicholas Herkimer, men possessed with at least some notion of the seriousness of their actions, mixed together with young, untried political idealists like Chris Yates, all afire with youthful, revolutionary zeal and swept up in the romance of the business. No doubt each person in attendance thought he knew at least something of what should be done. Perhaps the only certainty these thirty Whigs really shared completely was the unexpressed, uncomfortable realization that, if they should for some reason fail in the scary, uncertain business of attempting to assume revolutionary governmental power, there was unlikely to be any alternative open to them other than the gallows.

And there in the darkening, candlelit room, Christopher P. Yates, Isaac Paris and others urge them all forward with news of what other, more progressive committees have already done to assume

power and to begin dragging hypocritical oaths of loyalty to the new order from the mouths of reluctant, frightened Loyalists. At least until Chris Yates bangs his gavel and gains control, consternation and uncertainty must have reigned, and one wonders if the harried Seeber, his slaves or indentured servants dashing around distributing various courage-inducing intoxicants among the multitude of anxious freeholders, did not eventually run short of those strong, home-made varieties of rum, flip and dark beer, standard stimulants of those times, and one of the few pleasures that would remain generally available amidst all the loss and tragedy of the dark years to come.

For Edward Wall, it must have been a month of trial and confusion. The Battle of Lexington took place on April 19th and the news, travelling like lightning in all directions, no doubt spread across the valley general in various inflammatory versions within several days of the event. It would perhaps pray on Wall's mind that, some time during the previous week, his own powerful kin had abruptly and with no warning escaped the valley, intent, it was generally believed, on reappearing swiftly out of the morning mist with a vengeful army to put down the insurrection, much as they had already done once in miniature when successfully breaking up the symbolic raising of a Liberty Pole at Caughnawaga back in '74. These were those same, dramatic weeks of rumour and confusion which Guy Johnson and even Mr. Cuyler, then Loyalist Mayor of Albany, used to advantage to head west out of the valley, until they could regroup at Oswego and seek council with their Indian allies from a safe distance.

But in spite of his marital association with the Butlers and his previously close connection with the Johnsons, at the May 24th Committee of Safety Meeting, Edward Wall was much more than a passive observer. The minutes inform us that "Mr. Wall laid before the body the proceedings of the Germanflatts and King'sland Districts unitedly, together with speech delivered to the Oneida Indians with their reply."<sup>38</sup> An even more telling indication of Wall's prominent role as a committee man was the following item.

*"Resolved unanimously, that four members of this body be sent down to commune with the Committees of*

*Albany and Schenectady upon the present situation of America in general and this county in particular, to obtain all the intelligence possible, and to buy such a quantity of powder and flints and lead as they judge necessary, for the payment of which this body will indemnify them, which powder is to be sold under the inspection of this body and by such persons as this Committee shall appoint out of this brethren. Ordered therefore that Daniel McDougall for Palatine, David Cox for Canajohary, Edward Wall and Duncan McDougall for the Districts of the Germanflatts and Kings'land united, be sent down accordingly...*<sup>39</sup>

This contingent of Tryon County Whigs wasted no time undertaking this order, for the Minutes of the Albany Committee inform us that on the very next day.

*"Edward Wall, Daniel McDougall, David Cox and Duncan McDougall a committee appointed from the joint Committee of Canajohary German Flatts and Kingsland Districts to commune with the Committees of Albany and Schenectady requested to be admitted and be present at the debates of this Board, and debates arising, the question being put whether, or no they should be admitted...resolved in the affirmative."*<sup>40</sup>

Unless one considers it possible that he could have been acting in the very dangerous capacity of spy for the Loyalist elements, which, together with Sir John, remained reasonably strong but quiet for the time being, Edward Wall appears at this time to give every outward sign of being a confirmed Whig and indeed, as already demonstrated, was trusted to the very point of being selected as one of the receivers and guardians of the committee's most precious commodity, the powder supply. Yet could he, all this time, through unspoken loyalties to his wife and her family, have been playing the spy? The suggestion is mere conjecture, and seems very unlikely; he simply does not appear to possess the duplicity of personality required of a successful double agent. And we must remember that those who trusted Wall and admitted him into their complete confidence, packed together there beside him in those late spring meetings at Seeber's, Van Alstyne's and other places, were such prosperous and influential Mohawk Val-



Sir William Johnson

ley 'rebels' as John Frey, Isaac Paris, Colonel Cox, Dr. William Petry, Colonel Peter Waggoner (whose house still stands just west of the Palatine Church), Jacob Klock, Nicholas Herkimer, Chris Yates and many more. It is also very important to remember that some of these very men were Edward Wall's Masonic Lodge brothers, men who, though respectful and obedient followers of Sir William during his lifetime, had otherwise always been capable leaders and successful acquirers in their own right. Most of them were astute men who would have been hard to fool, and besides, one did not easily or comfortably betray the interests of fellow Masons, then or now. Moreover, if any of these important leaders felt any doubt of Wall's sincerity as a Whig due to his well-known familial connection with the Butlers or his good relations with the late Sir William Johnson, there is no indication of such doubt from the Minutes. On the contrary, we have already seen that he was not only one of four representatives appointed to officially confer behind closed doors with leaders of the Schenectady and Albany Committees, but was also well-enough trusted to bear responsibility for the munitions supply, the very life blood of the local revolutionary organization. Nor did Wall ever inform the Committee, as he had once informed Sir William Johnson back in his letter of November of '72, that he could not wait upon them without prejudice to his own business. Indeed the extent of his involvement in the early activities of the Tryon Committee of Safety strongly suggests he had placed his own business and personal interests on the back burner. He and most of the other men appointed

'District Representatives' must have spent the majority of their waking hours conducting all manner of hurried meetings with the other committee members from their districts, holding other informational meetings for the general populace residing within their districts, answering or sending dispatches, listening to complaints, suspicions, or denunciations of neighbour against neighbour, tracing or squashing rumours and more than likely, attempting to ascertain, through personal observation and the often-prejudiced testimony of others, just whose names were to be recorded as being a true friend or a real enemy of the cause. Debbie and whatever assistants they employed must have been hard put to run the business in his absence.

But this was not the whole of it. The June 2nd United Committee Meeting saw the introduction and approval of a powerful ultimatum written in the guise of a respectful letter of inquiry, probably drafted by Chris Yates, Herkimer and others of the inner circle, which was to be sent immediately to Guy Johnson. This was the oft-quoted, lengthy epistle protesting the searching of travellers on the highway, demanding to know his immediate intentions, listing various general grievances, and attempting to make it clear that governmental authority within Tryon County now belonged to the Committee. Of most immediate concern were the questions of how Guy, as Superintendent of Indian Affairs, intended to handle his Mohawks and whether or not he might be persuaded to forsake the Loyalist cause and peaceably accept the authority of the Committee. Would he, as many feared, call out the Indians to defend Sir John, Daniel Claus and himself, urging them to take the tomahawk to those in revolt? Or would he perhaps actually accept the new order and deal with it for the sake of his own future in the valley?

Once read and approved, the letter had to be delivered, and a Subcommittee was immediately appointed to the task.

*"It is ordered that Edward Wall, Peter Wagoner, Nicholas Herkimer, Adam Fonda and Frederick Fox be a Committee to wait upon Guy Johnson Esq. to deliver the same letter, and request his answer, and ask him, when to wait on him for his answer, and request his approbation to appoint a Sub-Committee to attend him at the Congress with the Indians."*<sup>41</sup>

Later on at this meeting, an appropriation of twelve pounds to reimburse the four members who attended the recent confab with the Albany Committee was passed and the money apparently distributed.

The little group which constituted this Subcommittee wasted no time delivering the letter to Guy Johnson. The valley remained in a continual state of hyperactive ferment: rumours of the Butler's impending return with some kind of mythical army, of Guy Johnson clandestinely inciting the Mohawks to mayhem and massacre, these rumours and others continued to fly hither and yon, with the Committee meeting every other day or so in a continual state of crisis. On Sunday, June 4th, "Mr. Nicholas Herkheimer reported that Mr. Wall and him had waited upon Col. Johnson with the letter of yesterday, who answered, that he would be ready to deliver his answer on Monday next."<sup>42</sup> That day the committee also took a step that launched them a further distance down the road toward permanent disaffection from King George, voting to "embody themselves into Companies and appoint proper officers...with the greatest expedition."<sup>43</sup> It was time, they decided, to form and command their own militia ranks and to make ready to put their muskets where until now only their mouths had been. Only such an action, Herkimer and the other war veterans among them must have argued, would calm the populace, and besides, it was also the most efficient way to throw cold water on Sir John's militia colonelcy and to discover who was and was not a true Whig.

The next known Committee meeting took place several days later on June 11th, but between the last meeting of June 4th and the eighth of June, another segment of the mystery of Edward Wall began to unfold.

There is in the Johnson Papers an abstract of a pertinent letter, lost, as were many others, in the disastrous New York State Library fire of 1911. The abstract teasingly describes the contents of this missing letter written by "Edward Wall, German Flats, June 8, to Christopher P. Yates, declaring he can no longer act on the Committee unless its resolutions are to be respected by all the members of the association."<sup>44</sup> Whatever the whole body of this letter might have revealed to help explain the reasons for Wall's growing discontent, whether it bore on various

Committee members using their new authority to take private, injurious vengeance on Tory neighbours or perhaps bore on growing murmurs of personal mistrust arising from his known Butler connection, or on hypocritical ill-treatment of Sir Guy, we can only guess at the letter's full content and the reasons behind the writing of it are lost to us and will remain so. The abstract of this lost letter seems vaguely to suggest Wall was offended by some untoward, hypocritical actions taken by one or more of his fellow committee men, "throwing their weight around" as we would say today, perhaps spurring the idealistic Wall to develop suspicions as to the true motives of his Whig associates. He is still listed as being in attendance at the meeting of June 11th, but the minutes of that meeting are silent on what if anything he had to say. Perhaps sometime between the 8th and the 11th, he and Chris Yates found time to fill a few glasses of rum and talk things over. Perhaps Yates thought he had Wall all calmed down and everything smoothed away. But if so, he was wrong.

On June 17th, the Minutes inform us tersely that "Mr. Edward Wall, a member of the Germanflatts Committee, begged to be excused from serving any longer in that office and for sufficient reason it was ordered that he shall be discharged."<sup>45</sup>

For what 'sufficient reason'? Would, for history's sake, that the Secretary of the Committee could have been a little more specific! Yet it is also possible that this very refusal to be more specific may in itself offer some clue to explain this mystery, if only we could fathom that clue and understand or interpret it for what it is. Certainly the situation is unique: in all the extent minutes of all the many Committee meetings, there is no other such vague explanation offered or found, no other committee man politely and quietly discharged from his ongoing obligation to the committee. Read if you will through all those fascinating old Committee of Safety Meeting Minutes. You will find again and again examples where people are brought up on charges before the Committee. You will read that they are fined, punished, or banished, but always it is for a stated offence. Nowhere in all the Minutes can you find the statement that some luckless Loyalist is ordered sent away to the dreaded Connecticut mine-prisons simply "for sufficient reason".

Whatever the logic behind our theories, the truth may simply revert back to the image projected by Wall himself in his few known communications: he is a centred, purposeful person, a bit boring perhaps, but dependable, at relative ease when engaged in well-defined (for him at least) courses of action, while around him, not a few of his Whig neighbours, for years secretly envying the Johnsons and their allies, suddenly arise with the help of the Committee influence to exercise their 'freedom' to accuse old neighbours of various Loyalist activities, at least in a few instances for the probable purpose of acquiring their goods and chattels.

Probably Wall left the meeting while it was still in progress, returning home to Debbie and his store at Burnettsfield, leaving his Whig idealism in the dust kicked up by his horse. And what then? Nothing more about him is recorded until another Committee of Safety meeting when, two years later, on August 25th, 1777, a battered and disorganized committee, some of its leading decision-makers like General Herkimer and Colonel Cox and Isaac Paris either killed or captured at Oriskany, now fought to reorganize and regain control. One of the first resolutions passed was that the wives and families of certain prominent Tories "be immediately confined in Johnstown at Toice's [Tice's] House, and kept under guard, till further orders from this Board."<sup>46</sup> And among those rounded up were Mrs. Butler, her children, Mrs. Nancy (Butler) Sheehan and son, and Mrs. Edward Wall.

Given the continual anti-loyalist watchfulness and paranoia on the part of the leaders of the Committee of Safety, the fact that Deborah Butler Wall and the other Loyalist women were taken up during that particular moment of post-Oriskany political trauma is less surprising than is the fact that none of these women and children had been taken up much earlier, such as when, in early June of 1776, Lady Johnson and family were removed from Johnson Hall. From the very day their husbands had gathered their muskets and essentials to slip away and join the Loyalist forces, these women had no doubt undergone constant disrespect and harassment from former neighbours and friends. And now both the Committee of Safety leadership and Herkimer's Tryon County Militia had

been greatly demoralized by the horrendous losses incurred in the Oriskany ravine. No participant or contemporary considered this battle a victory for the American cause: that idea sprung from the minds of 19th century apologist American historians. No doubt the only 'victory' in the minds of the surviving farmer-soldiers of Tryon County was that they had managed to fight their opponents to a respectable draw and retain the field: if successfully executing the predetermined military objective, in this case relieving St. Leger's siege of Fort Stanwix, defines victory, then the results of Herkimer's forced march to Stanwix had been both a political and a military disaster. That some immediate action was instigated, such as this gathering-up of the families of prominent Loyalists, to show the general populace and the still-numerous Loyalist sympathizers that the Committee of Safety was still in control, is not at all surprising. This line of thinking of course included the less than noble intent of taking random revenge against whomever revenge could be achieved. With the exception of Walter Butler, taken at Shoemaker's Tavern a short time after the battle, the Loyalist women, all without resources, counsel or defence, were suddenly the only convenient prey available to mitigate the burning hostility felt by the surviving Committee members toward their husbands and other relations already under Loyalist arms.

While it has been easy to use the Committee's own minutes to determine exactly when Edward Wall severed his connection from the Tryon County Committee of Safety, no information has been uncovered to indicate exactly what pro-Loyalist activities he had become engaged in after the date of his voluntary removal from Committee participation in June of '75, and until the taking-up of the Loyalist wives in post-Oriskany August of '77. But that he must indeed have become seriously involved in Loyalist endeavours is undeniable, for otherwise the Committee would have had no reason to label him a Loyalist enemy of the cause or seize his wife. Perhaps initially he did nothing at all but go home to Burnettsfield and attempt to continue at his business, but it is more likely that his general disillusionment with the Committee, or with specific Committee actions he considered to be an abuse of power, did indeed cause

him to become more active in the King's interest. As a frontier trader, there were things he might do for the King's cause other than immediately leaving for Canada. He might have begun actively supplying information on Whig activities to Sir John or Colonel Butler, perhaps through Molly Brant's nearby Indian runners. Supplies for loyal Indian scouting parties or emergency bundles, put up quickly for men heading north in the dead of night to join the Loyalist regiments then forming, might have been provided quickly and quietly from his trader's storehouse. These and other pro-Loyalist activities could have been undertaken surreptitiously by any trader in Wall's situation, at least for a time, but it is also clear from studying the minutes that almost everyone was suspiciously watching someone else for signs of disaffection, and he would have been unable to escape suspicion and accusations in the long run. Certainly Edward Wall, as an ex-committee member with Loyalist relations, would hardly be allowed to function unobserved. Eventually, when conditions became untenable or exposure eminent, Wall, like many other men who had quietly committed themselves to the King, but who had continued to remain at home waiting for the right opportunity to leave, would feel the inevitable necessity of shouldering musket, pack and powder horn, kissing Debbie and their life in Burnettsfield goodbye, and stealing away to join in active service to the Crown.

Nor would he necessarily go alone. Wall could have joined one of the many little packs of men who began drifting away from the valley as early as mid April of 1777, guided toward Niagara or Oswego by loyal Indians. It was apparently no secret to those quiet Loyalists who still resided covertly up and down the Mohawk and Schoharie valleys in the Spring of 1777, that an army was forming in the north, and that a great sweep down the valley from Stanwix was contemplated. One John Casselman of Stone Arabia, troubled in conscience, came before Committee man Isaac Paris on April 29th, 1777 to swear

*"that on Monday the 21st. day of April in the evening after supper, Richard and his brother looked for his gun, powder, horn, tomhawk and cloaths, asking for a pillar case to put them in, and then laid ready to take them away; when the Deponent asked him if he was*

*going away [and] on what condition, or where, and said tell me, perhaps I will go with you, or give you a good advice, you know I always were for your best, then said Richard said, they do not trust you, and owned they were to go to the enemy.....the Deponent asked where they were to meet, to which he was answered; at Oswego, we are to meet twenty thousand men; the Deponent then asked where they were to attack, to which Richard replied, we are to attack on this river, some of the British forces at Tye and the rest up the north river, then the Deponent asked him how he could be so, saying my son must go to Fort Scuyler; and if you come I must go likewise, as soon as we see each other we will fire, then I may kill you or you me, to which said Richard replied he could not help it, the Lord had put it so into his mind; and the Deponent said to him he should stay, but he would not; the deponent then asked him the said Richard who were to give them notice and be their pilate, to which said Richard replied an Indian, who brought powder and lead to the people at Dorlag (New Dorlach) all last winter, and who had brought Philip Fry (Frey) through the woods; which Indian they expected every minute..."<sup>47</sup>.*

So it was to be with Edward Wall as it was with Richard Casselman, the valuing of loyalty, honour and sacrifice over comfort, convenience and the self-serving 'law' of John Casselman's Committee.

### **Part Three: Loyalist Service**

Just when Edward Wall found it necessary to leave Burnettsfield and whether or not he fell in with such a party as Richard Casselman's for safe conduct along the way is, of course, unknown. But some things are common sense. He would have made whatever arrangements he could for his business and for Debbie's care, and in their tearful, parting moments, she no doubt told him how glad she was he had finally made the commitment to follow the politics of her uncle John and cousin Walter. Handing him his hat, coat and a sack of foodstuffs carefully chosen to last as long as possible, she would have watched him turn away, shouldering his musket and heading out into the darkening night. She would have watched him until he either disappeared into a nearby woods or became a

mere speck on the far hillside. She would have been bravely resigned to her own situation through the knowledge that, whatever unknown hardships they would both endure before meeting again, at least he would now keep faith with his King. Probably both Edward and Debbie believed, as did many valley Loyalists, even as late as July of 1777, that it would all be settled that summer; that stalwart, experienced soldiers like John Butler and young firebrands like Joseph Brant, sufficiently backed up by a British army or two, would come riding back down the valley in triumph to put down the insurrection and restore order in the King's name. Word may already have arrived through the Loyalist underground that Colonel Butler intended eventually to finance a corps of his own to be known as Butler's Rangers, that he was presently gathering a company of Indian Department Rangers, that Sir John Johnson would soon organize a regiment, and that every able-bodied Tryon County loyalist who could escape the valley and survive the trip to Canada would be welcomed into the ranks of one or another official corps. Outfitting his new regiment would eventually cost Colonel Butler most of what he had amassed in his lifetime, but of course it would be worth all the effort and expense; he and his oldest son Walter would no doubt be paid back and honoured by a grateful king. How could it be otherwise? With the enemy defeated, they would all return to their homes and greet their liberated families in triumph, and senior men like Butler, already one of the high judges of Tryon County, would establish special courts to punish the rebels with the King's justice and set things right again. He could not ever have imagined that in the end, he would accomplish nothing but the exhaustion of his body, his credit, and the death of his most favoured son. Sir John Johnson, not to be outdone, was also calling on his vast, inherited credit to secretly muster a corps called the King's Royal Regiment of New York.

Edward Wall, however, did not wait until the spring of 1777. Rather, he was commissioned on February 23rd, 1777, in Sir John's King's Royal Regiment of New York, as an ensign in Major James Gray's company of the First Battalion.<sup>48</sup> Mr. Gavin Watt, noted Canadian military historian, forwarded the additional information from the Orderly Book of Sir John

Johnson that Wall was transferred to Captain Richard Duncan's Company on June 15th, 1777. He was promoted to lieutenant on the 23rd of September but resigned on October 13th. But there is yet another unexplained movement in Wall's odyssey, for a note attached to this record indicates that he was "apparently transferred to the Indian Department"<sup>49</sup>. There is, as usual, no indication of when he was transferred, to where, or under whom he was to serve. It was, however, a logical transfer, for doubtless his experience with Indians as a trader at Stanwix, as a merchant in Burnettsfield and as Awhawhoana, 'the great road', a man with his own Indian name, known by the King's Indian allies to have been a respected associate of their late Sir William, all gave Wall useful experience with both commissary duties and the ways of the Indians. But beyond the knowledge that Edward Wall had become a member of the Indian Department by the end of 1776, his whereabouts and activities during the explosive year of 1777 and early 1778 are entirely unknown.

Our main reference to Wall's 1778 activities, mysterious and inconclusive as usual, would not have existed at all but for the character and courage of Debbie Butler Wall, and it may also shed some indirect light on Edward's activity in the Indian Department, at least during part of the year 1778. For on August 31st, 1778, Deborah Wall, then in protective custody in Albany along with the other Butler women and children, made bold to appear in person before the Commissioners for Detecting and Defeating Conspiracies. We may surmise how she must have stood there, for certainly the commissioners did not offer comfortable chairs to the wives of Loyalists, facing that all-powerful committee of frowning Whigs. She would have been hot and uncomfortable in the late August heat, but, true to her purpose, she would also have been unfazed by the obvious hostility directed toward her, knowing these men would see her first as a mere woman, secondly as the abandoned relict of a Loyalist and thirdly, perhaps worst of all, as a possessor of the hated Butler bloodline that linked her inexorably in their eyes to everything they secretly feared and openly detested. She would look into their faces and know before she spoke that it was an exercise in futility. But Debbie Butler Wall nevertheless addressed them, boldly requesting they not only release her from

captivity but also issue her a pass to go to join her husband at Unadilla.<sup>50</sup>

From this brave act it may be inferred that Edward Wall, as a member of the Indian Department, was serving the King's cause in some capacity at Unadilla in August of '78. One is drawn to remember a letter written June 5th of that same year by Colonel Jacob Klock of the Tryon County Militia to Governor Clinton on the subject of Unadilla, advising that a military force be sent there and telling the Governor that, "unless a body of troops is marched directly to Unadilla in order to drive the enemy from hence and destroy the place, the enemy will constantly make such depredations upon the settlements."<sup>51</sup> The American Colonel William Butler would eventually be sent there to effect this purpose, but not until early October.

On the British side, it was the summer of the destruction of Wyoming, of Andrustown and German Flats, and Cherry Valley was in the offing. Unadilla comes into the picture over and over as the various Indian and Loyalist contingents, executing their planned movements in pursuit of their military objectives, march back and forth across the map of New York's southern tier. One may only conjecture what Edward Wall's specific duties were while at Unadilla, but as he was now a member of the Indian Department, and with his background experience in trading and prior Indian associations, he may well have been involved in supplying and reprovisioning the Indians and their Loyalist allies as their fast-moving raiding armies swiftly and effectively tore up the back country settlements all that summer and into the fall. It is to be hoped that diligent Canadian researchers who possess access to Indian Department primary source material may eventually uncover factual information regarding Wall's Indian Department activity.

But Deborah Butler Wall, brave as she must have been to face the hostile committee, had yet to wait many months before rushing into the tender embrace of her husband Edward. The Albany Committee's reply to her request for release and safe passage into Indian country was both immediate and terse. "Ordered that she be informed that no permit or indulgence can be given by the Board to any part of a family whereof the Husband or Master has so far deviated from humane

with Barbarians and assisting in imbruing his hands in the blood of women and children and peaceable inhabitants."<sup>52</sup> No doubt the Committee was particularly incensed at the successes which Butler, Brant, Caldwell and others had been experiencing all that summer, and as if to top it all off, there was also Butler's demoralizing achievement at Wyoming on the 3rd of July. All of these reverses must have stung far too painfully for the Albany Committee to allow even the smallest of Loyalist fishes to swim back upstream.

Certainly Unadilla as well as Oquaga had been important stations of Loyalist aid and comfort that summer. As late as September 21st, Captain William Caldwell, fresh from the destruction of German Flatts, addressed John Butler from there. "We returned to this place (Unadilla) yesterday morning after destroying all the buildings and grain at the German Flatts....Mr. Wall enquired particularly about your family but could learn nothing but that Mrs. Butler had been seen about three months ago at Schenectady."<sup>53</sup> The latter part of this statement has led to the generally-accepted view that Wall was a member of this raiding expedition.

The American Colonel William Butler's destruction of Unadilla would occur during mid October, not more than twenty days after Caldwell's letter to Butler. Yet almost until the last moment, effective Loyalist frontier leaders such as Caldwell would continue to use Unadilla as a place for respite, resupply, and communication. Caldwell was no doubt anxious to provide John Butler with any accurate news of his wife and family and their general condition during their continued captivity, but certainly no more so than was Edward Wall, whose own wife Debbie remained among them. The exact time and circumstances of the release of Debbie Wall and the other Butler women and children is unknown. The early twentieth century Butler historian Howard Swiggett informs us that, "The date of their arrival in Canada is not definitely known, but was probably with the flag out of Skenesborough, November 15th the previous year (1780)."<sup>54</sup>

From establishing his presence at Unadilla in August and September of '78, no references to Edward Wall's location or activities are presently known for the next two years. His activities during the

entire year of 1779 are a particularly annoying historic blank. Where was he, for example, when Joseph Brant attacked Minisink on July 22nd, or in late August when his own in-law, Colonel John Butler, bravely faced 4,000 of Clinton's troops at Chemung with fewer than 300 assorted Rangers and Indians, and yet managed somehow to skillfully withdraw with his miniature army intact? If Wall remained with the Indian Department through '79, he could have served and supported his *native brothers* in many places and capacities. But Wall does not turn up again until, inexplicably as usual, he appears in the First Battalion, 84th Foot, Royal Highland Emigrants as a private in Major John A. Harris's Company. The Muster Roll is dated at Sorel, 16 April, 1781, but it supposedly covers a period from June 1780 through December, 1781.<sup>55</sup> Why or how Edward Wall found his way out of Indian Department Service and into this regiment, when he joined it, where and how he served it, is all presently unknown: it simply creates one more series of unanswered questions. There is no doubt, however, but that he survived the war, for his name appears on Muster Roll 21, "Settlers at Carlisle, Bay of Chaleur (New Carlisle, Quebec), 1785."<sup>56</sup>

Wall's survival, of course, simply raises more presently unanswerable questions. For example, was Debbie also still living, and if so, were there children, now that the war was finished and at last the opportunity to raise a family and make a new life finally presented itself? When and where did they die? Where are they buried? Perhaps most interesting is the question of whether they are represented today in the blood lines of the more than 120 people named Wall presently, according to Internet telephone listings, living in Quebec Province, a cluster of whom reside in the immediate vicinity of New Carlisle? Or did Edward and Debbie once again remove themselves from the Chaleur area and move back west into Ontario at some later date? In support of this possibility, Crowder informs us in his "Notes on the Sources" that "I have reproduced the document in its entirety, including the Quebec locations, as some of those who settled initially in Quebec later came to Ontario"<sup>57</sup>, where incidentally, there are even more Walls listed in the phone directories!

Crowder's observation regarding

some Quebec Loyalists removing to Ontario leads us to the last reference to Edward Wall, for he does indeed turn up in the Upper Canada (Ontario) District Loyalist Rolls, 1796-1803.<sup>58</sup> In all three lists on which his name appears, and which were compiled during 1796 on order of Governor Simcoe, Wall is listed as being deceased. But of course there is no indication as to the date of his death. Due to the fact that these lists are "of persons who have satisfied the Justices of the Peace for the Home District, in Sessions assembled, that they joined the Royal Standard in America before the year 1783"<sup>59</sup>, one is left to assume Wall could have died any time from 1783 to the making of the lists in 1796.

Thus it is that, for now at least, the facts regarding Edward Wall's resettlement and postwar activities remain unclear, and without them this article is admittedly incomplete. Did Edward and Debbie Wall remove themselves from New Carlisle, Quebec and, turning westward, eventually establish a permanent home somewhere within Upper Canada's Home District? The presence of his name on the Home District lists would seem to indicate as much. We are told that "This large district included Lincoln, York, Northumberland and Durham counties and part of Oxford and Norfolk counties. The original district town was Niagara and it was replaced by York in 1801."<sup>60</sup>

There may yet lie, sequestered within some early Canadian historical sources such as land, tax or burial records, information which would bring true biographical closure to the lives of Edward and Deborah Butler Wall. It is hoped this present study will stimulate experienced Canadian researchers who reside in closer physical proximity to Canadian primary source materials to unearth the answers.

## Conclusion

This study was not undertaken to suggest that Edward Wall was either a unique or an important Loyalist. It is perhaps the rather ironic truth that he was neither particularly important nor unique, and certain aspects of his story have a commonality shared by many other Loyalists. Although he may have been imbued with more intelligence, conscience and integrity than many, his story is just one of thousands in which the necessity