



CANNONEER



Newsletter of the *Fernando de Leyba Chapter*

Sons of the American Revolution

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October 2013

Meets 2nd Monday of every month (except July and August) at
Culpepper Restaurant in St. Charles, MO

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On November 11, 1778

Cherry Valley massacre

The *Cherry Valley massacre* was an attack by British and Iroquois forces on a fort and the village of Cherry Valley in eastern New York on November 11, 1778, during the American Revolutionary War. It has been described as one of the most horrific frontier massacres of the war. A mixed force of Loyalists, British soldiers, Seneca and Mohawks descended on Cherry Valley, whose defenders, despite warnings, were unprepared for the attack. During the raid, the Seneca in particular targeted non-combatants, and reports state that 30 such individuals were slain, in addition to a number of armed defenders.

The raiders were under the overall command of Walter Butler, who exercised little authority over the Indians on the expedition. Historian Barbara Graymont describes Butler's command of the expedition as "criminally incompetent". The Seneca were angered by accusations that they had committed atrocities at the Battle of Wyoming, and the colonists' recent destruction of their forward bases of operation at Unadilla, Onaquaga, and Tioga. Butler's authority with the Indians was undermined by his poor treatment of Joseph Brant, the leader of the Mohawks. Butler repeatedly maintained that he was powerless to restrain the Seneca against accusations that he permitted the atrocities to take place.

During the campaigns of 1778, Brant achieved an undeserved reputation for brutality. He was not present at Wyoming, although many thought he was, and actively sought to minimize the atrocities that took place at Cherry Valley. The massacre contributed to calls for reprisals, leading to the 1779 Sullivan Expedition which drove the Iroquois out of western New York.

With the failure of British General John Burgoyne's campaign to the Hudson after the Battles of Saratoga in October 1777, the American Revolutionary War in upstate New York became a frontier war. The Mohawk Valley was especially targeted for its fertile soil and large supply of crops farmers were supplying Patriot troops. British leaders in the Province of Quebec supported Loyalist and Native American partisan fighters with supplies and armaments. During the winter of 1777–78, Joseph Brant and other British-allied Indians developed plans to attack frontier settlements in New York and Pennsylvania. In February 1778 Brant established a base of operations at Onaquaga (present-day Windsor, New York). He recruited a mix of Iroquois and Loyalists estimated

to number between two and three hundred by the time he began his campaign in May. One of his objectives was to acquire provisions for his forces and those of John Butler, who was planning operations in the Susquehanna River valley.

Brant began his campaign in late May with a raid on Cobleskill, and raided other frontier communities throughout the summer. The local militia and Continental Army units defending the area were ineffective against the raiders, who typically escaped from the scene of a raid before defenders arrived in force. After Brant and some of Butler's Rangers attacked German Flatts in September, the Americans organized a punitive expedition that destroyed the villages of Unadilla and Onaquaga in early October.

While Brant was active in the Mohawk valley, Butler descended with a large mixed force and raided the Wyoming Valley of northern Pennsylvania in early July. This action complicated affairs, for the Senecas in Butler's force were accused of massacring noncombatants, and a number of Patriot militia violated their parole not long afterward, participating in a reprisal expedition against Tioga. The lurid propaganda associated with the accusations against the Seneca in particular angered them, as did the destruction of Unadilla, Onaquaga, and Tioga. The Wyoming Valley attack, even though Brant was not present, fueled among his opponents the view of him as a particularly brutal opponent.

Brant then joined forces with Captain Walter Butler (the son of John Butler), leading two companies of Butler's Rangers commanded by Captains John McDonell and William Caldwell for an attack on the major Schoharie Creek settlement of Cherry Valley. Butler's forces also included 300 Senecas, probably led by either Cornplanter or Sayenqueraghta, and 50

British Army soldiers from the 8th Regiment of Foot. As the force moved toward Cherry Valley, Butler and Brant quarreled over Brant's recruitment of Loyalists. Butler was unhappy at Brant's successes in this sphere, and threatened to withhold provisions from Brant's Loyalist volunteers. Ninety of them ended up leaving the expedition, and Brant himself was on the verge of doing so when his Indian supporters convinced him to stay. The dispute did not sit well with the Indian forces, and may have undermined Butler's tenuous authority over them.

Massacre

Cherry Valley had a palisaded fort (constructed after Brant's raid on Cobleskill) that surrounded the village meeting house. It was garrisoned by 300 soldiers of the 7th Massachusetts Regiment of the Continental Army commanded by Colonel Ichabod Alden. Alden and his command staff were alerted by November 8 through Oneida spies that the Butler–Brant force was moving against Cherry Valley. However, he failed to take elementary precautions, continuing to occupy a headquarters (the house of a settler named Wells) some 400 yards (370 m) from the fort.

Butler's force arrived near Cherry Valley late on November 10, and established a cold camp to avoid detection. Reconnaissance of the town identified the weaknesses of Alden's arrangements, and the raiders decided to send one force against Alden's headquarters and another against the fort. Butler extracted promises from the Indians in the party that they would not harm noncombatants in a council held that night.

The attack began early on the morning of November 11. Some overeager Indians spoiled the surprise by firing on settlers cutting wood nearby. One of them escaped, raising the alarm. Little Beard led some of the Senecas to surround the Wells house, while the main body surrounded the fort. The attackers killed at least sixteen officers and troops of the quarters guards, including Alden, who was cut down while he was running from the Wells house to the fort. Most accounts say Alden was within reach of the gates, only to stop and try to shoot his pursuer, who may have been Joseph Brant. His wet pistol repeatedly misfired and he was killed by a thrown tomahawk hitting him in the forehead. Lt. Col. William Stacy, second in command, also quartered at the Wells house, was taken prisoner. Stacy's son Benjamin and cousin Rufus Stacy ran through a hail of bullets to reach the fort from the house; Stacy's brother-in-law Gideon Day was killed. Those attacking the Wells house eventually gained entry, leading to hand-to-hand combat inside. After killing most of the soldiers stationed there, the Senecas slaughtered the entire Wells household, twelve in all.

The raiders' attack on the fort was unsuccessful—lacking heavy weapons, they were unable to make any significant impressions on its stockade walls. The fort was then guarded by the Loyalists while the Indians rampaged through the rest of the settlement. Not a single house was left standing, and the Senecas, seeking revenge, were reported to slaughter anyone they encountered. Butler and Brant attempted to restrain their actions but were unsuccessful. Brant in particular was dismayed to learn that a number of families who were well known to him and that he had counted as friends had borne the brunt of the Seneca rampage, including the Wells, Campbell, Dunlop, and Clyde families.

Lt. William McKendry, a quartermaster in Colonel Alden's regiment, described the attack in his journal:

Immediately came on 442 Indians from the Five Nations, 200 Tories under the command of one Col. Butler and Capt. Brant; attacked headquarters; killed Col. Alden; took Col. Stacy prisoner; attacked Fort Alden; after three hours retreated without success of taking the fort.

McKendry identified the fatalities of the massacre as Colonel Alden, thirteen other soldiers, and thirty civilian inhabitants. Most of the slain soldiers had been at the Wells house.

Accounts surrounding the capture of Lt. Col. Stacy report that he was about to be killed, but Brant intervened. "[Brant] saved the life of Lieut. Col Stacy, who [...] was made prisoner when Col. Alden was killed. It is said Stacy was a freemason, and as such made an appeal to Brant, and was spared."

Aftermath

The next morning Butler sent Brant and some rangers went back into the village to complete its destruction. The raiders took 70 captives, many of them women and children. About 40 of these Butler managed to have released, but the rest were distributed among their captors' villages until they were exchanged. Lt. Col. Stacy was taken to Fort Niagara as a prisoner of the British.

A Mohawk chief, in justifying the action at Cherry Valley, wrote to an American officer that "you Burned our Houses, which makes us and our Brothers, the Seneca Indians angry, so that we destroyed, men, women and Children at Chervalle." The Seneca "declared they would no more be falsely accused, or fight the Enemy twice" (the latter being an indication that they would refuse quarter in the future). Butler reported that "notwithstanding my utmost Precaution and Endeavours to save the Women and Children, I could not prevent some of them falling unhappy Victims to the Fury of the Savages," but also that he spent most of his time guarding the fort during the raid. Quebec's Governor Frederick Haldimand was so upset at Butler's inability to control his forces that he refused to see him, writing "such indiscriminate vengeance taken even upon the treacherous and cruel enemy they are engaged against is useless and disreputable to themselves, as it is contrary to the dispositions and maxims of the King whose cause they are fighting." Butler continued to insist in later writings that he was not at fault for the events of the day.

The violent frontier war of 1778 brought calls for the Continental Army to take action. Cherry Valley, along with the accusations of murder of non-combatants at Wyoming, helped pave the way for the launch of the 1779 Sullivan Expedition, commissioned by commander-in-chief Major General George Washington and led by Major General John Sullivan. The expedition destroyed over 40 Iroquois villages in their homelands of central and western New York and drove the women and children into refugee camps at Fort Niagara. It failed, however, to stop the frontier war, which continued with renewed severity in 1780.

Next meeting will be on Nov. 11, 2013 and we will meet at Culpeppers 6:30 PM.

Treasurer's report as of Sept 2013:

Beginning Balance = \$1,964.48– Ending Balance = \$2,068.48

As a reminder to all members Due's (\$59.00) for 2014 will be collected during the Sept., Oct., Nov., Meeting for Josiah Fog award points.

21 members paid dues in September

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Genealogist report as of October 2013:

New Members: Adam Schnelting, Michael Snyder, Jim Bunch, Marvin Koechig, Adam Bell, J.D. Kirtlink

"FDL 46 members strong"

4 Pending New Memberships for November:

- David Hoffman
- Tom Buskin
- Richard Denning
- Ron Hauser

- Keith Morris (1 supplements)
- David Cox (2 supplements)
- Jim Bergman (2 supplements)
- Michael Snyder (1 supplement)
- Marvin Keochig (2 supplements)
- Adam Schnelting (1 supplement)

At the October 14, 2013 meeting:

Meeting Opens 6:59 pm

Introductions: Tom Buskin, Richard Denning.

Veterans report: David Christian

2013 Annual Veterans Day Commemoration will be held at the Missouri Athletic Club Ballroom on Thursday, November 7, 2013 starting at 11:00 am. David requested that the Color Guard be made available for the Veterans Day Parade on Nov. 9, 2013. Navy JR ROTC program is starting up at Washington Mo. High School – Awards Day in the spring.

Color Guard: Bill Grote

Ash Grove Missouri Grave marking, Massing of Colors Nov 9, Jefferson Barracks Dec 10.

1. Dennis Hahn: Nathan Butrell Dec 10 @ Jefferson Barracks Wreath Laying. There are now 6 FDL members resting at Jefferson Barracks.
2. Jeff Sullivan: Motion to contribute \$50.00 to Nathan Butrell CAR every December – Motion PASSED.
3. Jim Borgman: Motion to donate to the Veterans Home – Motion Passed.
4. Dennis Hahn: The Battle of Fort San Carlos is now a National Event. Collated by Dennis Hahn and Presented by Charles Lilly.
5. Dennis Hahn: Fundraising at the Family Arena will resume in Nov / Dec – Look for Emails and respond to volunteer.
6. Charles Lilly: Motion to set a Prize Structure for Night Essay, Eagle Scout and Teacher of the Year. Motion PASSED.

7. James Osbourne: There will be 9 DAR ladies from Fence visiting our city Oct 23 2013.
8. Dale Wiseman: Missouri in the Civil War – Museum just opened at Jefferson Barracks.

Old Business: New Chapter trying to start up in western St. Charles and Lincoln County.

New Business: Martin White nominated as Vice Pres for the remainder of 2013. Passed by majority vote.

Meeting Closed at 8:20 P.M.

October 14 Program: Joan Koechig – “Victims Rights”.

November 11 Program: Bill Grote

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20 Members and Guest in Attendance:

John Rush, Milan Paddock, James Bunch, Evelyn Bunch, Dale Wiseman, Carol Wiseman, Jim Borgman, Diane Borgeman, J.D. Kirtlink, Patricia Kirtlink, Bill Grote, Sylvia Grote, David Christian, Charles Lilly, Jeff Sullivan, Bob Raines, Verna Raines, Marvin Koechig, Joan Koechig, Paul Smith

Announcements:

Pat Jefferson recently had Quadruple Bypass Surgery and is recuperating. Our prayers go out to Pat and we look forward to seeing him at the Chapter meeting with newfound Vim and Vigor.



Revolutionary War Quotes

"To be prepared for war is one of the most effective means of preserving peace."

George Washington,

Yesterday is History. Tomorrow is Mystery?? Today is a Blessing!!!

Looking forward to seeing everyone on Monday...

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Chapter*

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