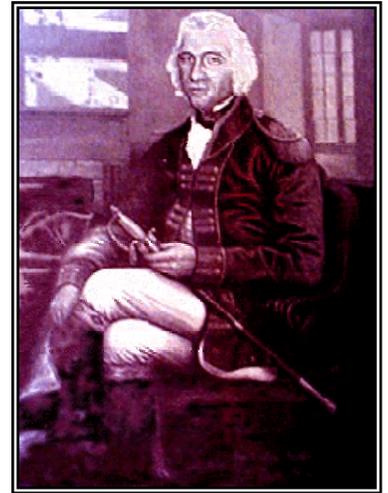


Colonel John Butler ~ 1728 – 1796

John Butler was born in New London, Connecticut, the son of Lieutenant Walter Butler and Deborah Dennis. His father was an officer in the British Army who had come to North America to participate in the expedition against Quebec in 1711. At the end of the campaign Walter was placed on Half-Pay, and settled in New London, Connecticut. His mother's ancestors had been in Connecticut for at least three generations.



In 1728, shortly after John Butler's birth, Walter Butler was posted to Fort Hunter on the Mohawk River. In the next few years he acquired land across the river from the fort, and moved his family from New London. John, his youngest son, was then fourteen years of age.

These were the years of the French and Indian Wars, and John followed his older brothers into the Indian Department of Sir William Johnson. He was in action at Ticonderoga, Lake George, and the captures of Fort Frontenac, Niagara and Montreal. In 1752, he married Catherine Bradt of a prominent Dutch family on the Mohawk. They raised a family of five children (two others had died in infancy).

During the peace following the conquest of Canada, John Butler took up the management of his estate, some 26,600 acres, of which 3,400 acres had been inherited from his father. The balance he had accumulated by purchase or grant. He valued his holdings at over £ 13,000.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, he moved to Montreal with the Indian Department, and was dispatched to Niagara in November of 1775 to manage the department there. His eldest son, Walter, accompanied him, but his wife and the remaining children were held prisoners by the rebels until 1780.

John Butler led a strong detachment of Indians from Niagara at the Battle of Oriskany in August of 1777. His success during the battle led to the authorization to raise a Corps of Rangers to serve with the Indians on the frontiers. This corps informally came to be known as Butler's Corps, or Butler's Rangers. It grew to ten companies and fought in every major engagement on the northern frontier. Headquartered at Fort Niagara, its men fought actions in New York, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio and Kentucky.



During the six years of the existence of the Corps, over 900 men served in the Rangers. The last company of the Corps was disbanded at Niagara in July 1784.

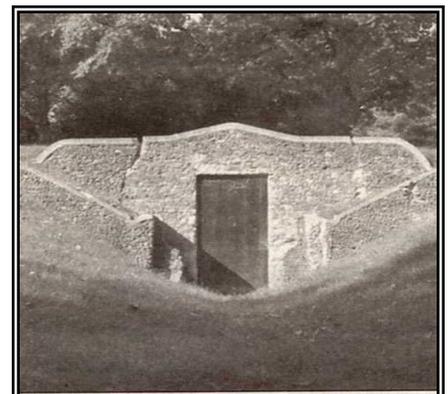
A majority of the men who had served in the Rangers settled the Niagara Peninsula, while some established themselves in the Windsor area. A few settled in eastern Ontario, and one even in Prince Edward Island. Their presence in Niagara established the Loyalist tradition which helped defend the province during the War of 1812.

At the end of the Revolution, Butler once again turned to farming, and became the "de facto" leader of the settlement of the Niagara Peninsula. He served as the Deputy Superintendent of the Indian Department at Niagara, a Justice of the Peace, a member of the Land Board of Niagara, Lieutenant of the County of Lincoln, Commanding Officer of the Nassau and Lincoln militias, leader in the Church of England in the community, and a prominent member of the Masonic Order

Butler died at Niagara on 12 May 1796, after a long illness. His wife had died three years earlier He left a family of one daughter and three sons.

The words of Sir Arthur Wellsley, later the Duke of Wellington, could well have served as Butler's personal motto, "I have ate of the King's salt, and therefore, I conceive it to be my duty to serve with unhesitating zeal and cheerfulness, when and where the King or his government may think proper to employ me."

John Butler can be truly described as one of the Founding Fathers of Upper Canada.



The Stone Crypt of Lieutenant Colonel John Butler [located at the end of the street that bears his name in NOTL]