The Niagara Loyalist

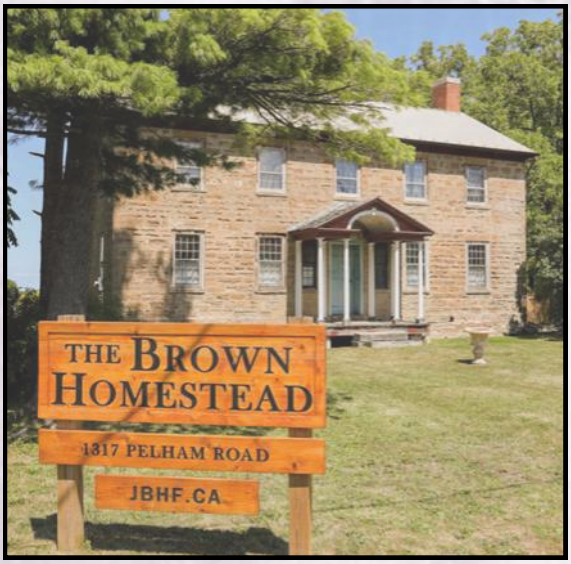
Colonel John Butler (Niagara) Branch

United Empire Loyalists' Association Of Canada

January 2026

THE BROWN HOMESTEAD

John Brown's Loyalist Beginnings



New to the Branch Executive Co-Genealogists

Lois Johnson UE
Eric Frazer UE

Share your history and ideas for topics you would like to read about!

Next Edition will be September, 2026

President's Pen

Happy New Year Loyalists

Now that we have said Good-Bye to 2025 we look forward to greeting 2026. This being the 250th Anniversary of our Loyalist Ancestors leaving behind their homes, farms, businesses, possessions and sometimes members of their families to start life anew without the comforts they once enjoyed here on lands that the British Monarchy offered for their loyalty.

Many times since we have fought for our Sovereignty. We will always be proud of the loyalty our ancestors instilled in us through the generations.

Our membership continues to grow especially now that members can enjoy our hybrid meetings. We remain the second largest branch in Canada.

Janet has some great speakers already lined up for our General Meetings. Our Executive welcomed 2 new members that will share the Genealogy position - Eric Frazer and Lois Johnson. Wendy Broda has agreed to stay on the Membership position until a new person can be found to take over this task. David Fowler has done a great job ensuring our finances stay strong.

Once again we plan to be involved in our outreach initiatives like the June flag raising ceremony at NOTL for Loyalist week, laying a wreath at Drummond Hill in July, the Marshville Labour Day weekend in Wainfleet and more events yet to be determined as we work hard to inform as many folks as possible to join our Branch. We look forward to enjoying as many members as possible to join us for our 8 General meetings to be held at Betty's this year.

Loyally,

Bruce Wallace U.E. - President

2025 ~ CJB Executive and Chairs

Position	Name	Email
President	Bruce Wallace UE	bwpw5148@gmail.com
Vice President	Dave Servos UE	david_servos@hotmail.com
Past President	Fred Gregory UE	fredgregory79@gmail.com
Treasurer	David Fowler	davidf@vaxxine.com
Secretary	Liz Kerr	lizannkerr@gmail.com
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Director	Sherry Bell UE	sbell2012@gmail.com
Director	Bev Craig UE	rcraig@becon.org
Director/Newsletter	Paul Preece UE	ppreece1@gmail.com
Flag Bearer	David Ellsworth UE	david.ellsworth@yahoo.ca

Upcoming General Meetings - Speaker's Corner

February 7, 2026 ~ Annie Halliday

The Doan Gang: Outlaws of the Revolution

The Mercer Museum in Doylestown, Pennsylvania is currently presenting a major exhibition, The Doan Gang: Outlaws of the Revolution, which explores the history and intrigue of a group of Revolutionary-era Loyalists whose legend lives on today. This exhibition is a journey through the world of espionage, legendary robberies, and mythical lost treasure in the heart of Revolutionary Bucks County. It shows how these local outlaws plotted, schemed, and plundered their way through a divided world in the earliest days of a budding American nation, and why their deep loyalty to British rule in the colonies made them enemies of the Founding Fathers.

Annie Halliday, who along with **Clint Flack** curated the exhibit, will join us virtually. The Zoom presentation will showcase images of the exhibition and highlight artifacts currently on display. The presentation explores more about the people, places, and artifacts that make up the history of the Doan Gang.

Note. This is an in-person meeting with a ZOOM speaker.

March 7, 2026 ~ Steve Tors

The Battle of Queenston Heights

The presentation gives a comprehensive overview of the flow of the famous battle, complete with animated maps. It also relates what happened to what can be seen on the ground data.

It is based on Steve Tors' recently published book, "My Bones Are Not Bleaching on the Awful Heights": The Battle of Queenston Heights in the War of 1812.

April 4, 2026 ~ David Moore

A Question of Loyalty

Why did our Loyalist ancestors decide to remain loyal to the King rather than join the rebellion 250 years ago?

This is the question David Moore will examine. He will consider 9 key factors that influenced the decision to remain loyal.

David Moore, a lecturer on Canadian history, commands the King's Royal Yorkers, a re-enactment group dedicated to the history of the King's Royal Regiment of New York.

Speaker's Corner continued …

May 2, 2026 ~ Karen Richardson, UE

Only in Canada, Eh!

This presentation is about all things Canadian from inventions, medical breakthroughs, foods, famous people and more.

Karen is a descendant of Adam Young, one of the original Loyalist settlers in the Niagara region.

Upcoming Events

THE BROWN HOMESTEAD

Niagara In Focus: Community Photo Project

What does "home" mean to you here in Niagara? We want to see it through your eyes!

https//thebrownhomestead.ca/niagara-in-focus

Feb. 16, 2026

GEO Niagara Geopark

Culture Crawl

12,000 Years of Culture, Community & Countless Stories

Event Details

Date: Sunday, March 8, 2026
Time: 10:00 AM – 4:30 PM
Location: Meridian Community Centre (Town of Pelham)

https://www.niagarageopark.com/culturecrawl

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John Brown

Loyalist or Radical Abolitionist

The Many Faces of John Brown

The Abolitionist

The history books are filled with collections of stories from the name John Brown. The most famous one is associated with the radical abolitionist who led the raid on Harper's Ferry in 1859. He was accused of massacring pro-slavery settlers in Kansas in 1856. After his capture, he stood trial for various state laws, including treason and was hanged in1859.

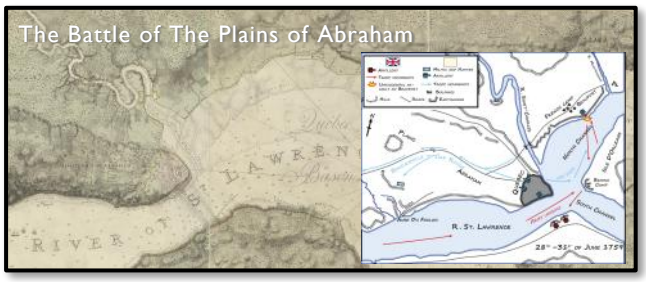
His actions and raid touched off a reaction by the Southern slave owners that, some historians believe, set the wheels in motion toward the start of the American Civil War in 1861.[1]

The Loyalist(s)

Many historians and genealogists speculated that "the Abolitionist" was the grandson of Captain John Brown, who served and died during the American Revolution. Others thought he was the grandson of John Brown, "The Loyalist".

Which John Brown loyalist would they be referring to? The John Brown who fought along side General Wolfe during the battle of the Plains of Abraham (the Seven Year's War) or the one who was part of the Butler's Rangers.

Both John Brown's (Loyalists) ended up being granted land in roughly the same area of Upper Canada. The John Brown (1739 - 1795) who fought along side General Wolfe came to settle in the Pelham and Thorold area, along the Welland River.[2]



Meanwhile, the other John Brown (Braun) (1740 - 1804) was granted about 900 acres in the St. Catharines and Pelham area. Today, The Brown Homestead is his legacy.[3]

My Connection to John Brown

While growing up in the Niagara Region, I always knew my family had settled in Canada for quite a while. However, I never really knew the extent of my heritage until I became involved with the Colonel John Butler (Niagara) Branch of the United Empire Loyalists' Association of Canada.

I can remember, as a child, playing at the Morningstar Mill at DeCew Falls. My mother would take us there as she visited with her aunt and uncle. I didn't really know the connection to us until later in life.

The same can be said about Rice Road in Pelham. My father's mother, Susie Melrose/Garner, would always mention her family ties to the Pelham and Welland area. She would explain that her mother was a Garner and her Great Grandmother was a Spencer (Elizabeth Spencer). Elizabeth's mother was Sarah Rice, the daughter of Thomas Rice who was granted land back in the late 1700's. The Garner name was also prevalent during this time in the Welland and Niagara Areas.

However, one family name that was always present in our household was Brown. My sister, Melissa, would always go to visit with our great Aunt, Betty Brown (Lutz). I never knew why until I was told that she was our grandfather's (Frank Lutz UE) sister. Then, we started to have a few family reunions at the Brown's Farm on top of the hill overlooking Niagara-On-The-Lake and the surrounding area. Unfortunately, after she passed away, the farm and all of the land was sold to Walker Brothers Quary, located across the road (corner of Taylor Road and Mountain Road in Niagara Falls).

This Brown connection would not lead me to the John Brown UEL associated with the Brown Homestead in St. Catharines. This Brown (Betty

Brown) line may be a direct descendant of John Brown UEL (from the Brown Homestead) but he could not be traced directly to me as it would only be through marriage on my mother's side.

Well, after more research, it appeared that I actually do descend from a John Brown UEL on my father's side. Again, the Garner name comes up in the search and would help me trace my lineage back to an Alexander Brown. Alexander was the son of a John and Agnes Brown.

This John Brown UEL settled in the Thorold and Pelham area and would be known from the site of Brown's Bridge in Pelham. The Bridge is no longer there; however, physical reminders still remain with the existence of old pilings that protrude from the Welland River near the end of Pelham Road and Colbeck Road west of present day Welland.

Brown's Bridge was built in the late 1790's by John Brown and his son, Alexander. The Bridge would become a vital crossing point into the early 1800's. During the War of 1812, it was one of the last bridges in the region not to be destroyed. It has also been speculated that the bridge was used by William Lyon MacKenzie during his rebellion.

The Pelham Historical Society created three articles to reflect the contributions made by the Brown family during this time.[4]

After developing the land in this area, John Brown petitioned Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe for a patent on the 350 acres he was granted by Phil R. Frey in 1789 as well as an additional 300 acres for his six children.[5]

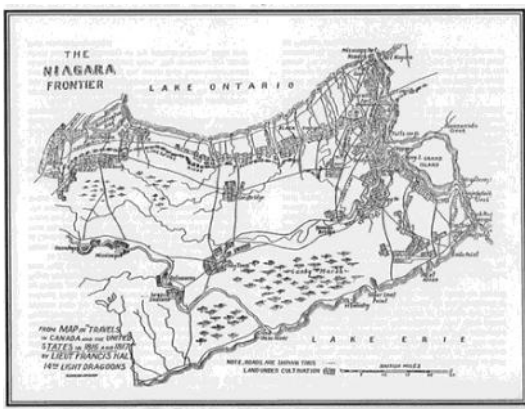
Unfortunately, John passed away in 1795 and did not live "to see the increase in his estate". He was buried by Crane's Creek on the north-west corner of the Brown property.[5]

Agnes Brown (his wife) would have to petition the Governor again for the original 350 acres. The land was granted to her, as well as another 200 more acres for each of her sons, Alexander and James.

Alexander petitioned for his own land grant in 1797 and would end up passing this down to his son, James. This was in addition to the 200 acres he received from his father's original request. He would become quite involved in Community service and would go on to become the Town Accessor. In 1842, Alexander would be elected as the Town Warden for the Pelham Township.[6]

In 1809, Alexander was commissioned an ensign in the 2nd Lincoln Regiment and would serve during the War of 1812. He resigned from his duties in 1821.

From 1816 to around 1825, Alexander, along with his family and friends, constructed a log school house and a public library on his property, lot 260. After his passing in 1843, Alexander's will stated that "I give and devise 1/8A, for the sole use of the Public School and Meeting House where it now stands."[7]



John Brown's legacy lived on through his son, Alexander and all of the generations that followed. I mentioned earlier of another John Brown who was part of the Butler's Rangers. Who would have thought that another John Brown (not related?) would have settled in the same area back in the late 1700s. Each would be granted a large amount of land to cultivate for their families.

On the following pages, John Brown (1740 - 1804) of the Butler's Rangers will be looked at through "The Brown Homestead"

By Paul Preece UE

1. https://www.history.com/articles/john-brown
2. John Brown of Brown's Bridge - https://vitacollections.ca/pelhamlocalhistory/2428382/data?n=1
3. https://thebrownhomestead.ca/history
4. https://www.pelhamhistoricalsociety.ca/
5. Agnes Brown - https://vitacollections.ca/pelhamlocalhistory/2428057/data?n=5
6. Alexander Brown - https://vitacollections.ca/pelhamlocalhistory/2428329/data?n=2
7. Ibid

THE BROWN HOMESTEAD

John Brown's Loyalist Beginnings

The Butler's Rangers' Loyalist

John Brown (Braun) was born Johannes Braun on October 17, 1740 in Schoharie, New York. His family came to upstate New York as part of the Palatine German migration of 1710 along with many other families.

He would go on to marry Magdalena Zeh on May 5, 1770. With the coming of the American Revolutionary War in 1775, John and his family would have to choose sides. He would end up supporting the British and joined the Loyalist campaign against the Americans.

John and his brothers joined the Corps of Butler's Rangers. He served as a private in Captain Lewis Genevay's Company from 1781 until 1783.[1]

By 1783, he was living in the Niagara area where he eventually settled on 900 acres of petitioned land located where Thorold, Pelham and Louth Townships come together. This tract of land included the property that is now The Brown Homestead and the Short Hills Provincial Park.

Before his passing in 1804, John had started the creation of the "Homestead" in 1796. This was to comply with the requirements of the Land Grant Petition, in which all petitioners had to "clear at least five acres of land and build a dwelling no smaller than 20 x 16 feet". John would build the main structure of the home 20 x 18 feet. This structure would be the start of John Brown's legacy and The Brown Homestead.[2]

The Brown Homestead

The Brown Homestead is the oldest home in St. Catharines and lies on a picturesque lot at 1317 Pelham Road. The homestead began as a 1 1/2 story structure built in1796. In 1802, it was added onto, making it a two-story stone house.[3]

Today, the home occupies part of the some 4.3 acres of land that is directly across from the Short Hills National Park (as stated earlier). The home was designed in the Georgian style and built using limestone. During the 1802 addition, Reynales Rockway Dolomite limestone was used.[4]

After several additions and transformations, along with various owners, the home was finally designated as a heritage site.

> *"The John Brown House is currently designated under Part IV of the Ontario Heritage Act by the City of St. Catharines By-law No. 2019-317."* [5]

In 2015, The Brown Homestead was acquired by the "John Brown Heritage Foundation". The Foundation recognized the historical importance of the property and the need to preserve its heritage.[6]

Through years of dedication and an emphasis on preservation and education, the Brown Homestead has become a model for all communities to help develop and implement strategies for their own heritage sites.

The Foundation has created a welcoming environment with the assistance of many volunteers and workers to help manage all of the complexities of a true heritage site.

With these individuals, The Brown Homestead is able to offer various outreach programs within the community. These include Land Registry Workshops, Tastes of the Tavern, Heritage Photography Workshops and even Candlelit Christmas Tours. All of these events are there to grow the understanding of heritage and culture.

An Outing to the Brown Homestead

By Janet Hodgkins UE

On December 11, 2025, about eighteen members and guests of the Colonel John Butler (Niagara) Branch visited The Brown Homestead for a Candlelit Tour (one of many outreach programs).

The Brown Homestead has been home to four different families. The tour focused on these four families and how they might have celebrated the Christmas season during the last two centuries.

The photo below was taken in the oldest part of the house, which was completed by 1797. Standing in front of the fireplace in the photo are David Fowler, Janet Hodgkins UE, and John Reyneart UE. Janet and John are descendants of John Brown, UEL.

In order to access all of the amazing things happening at The Brown Homestead, one needs to go to their website.

https://thebrownhomestead.ca/

On the site, you will be able to see all of the amazing activities and programs available. You will also get a glimpse into the past and see what the future holds for The Homestead.

Upcoming Activities

1. Mapping The Brown Homestead
   An interactive exhibit that will guide you on a journey through the past …
2. Niagara In Focus Community Photo Project
   What does home mean to you in Niagara?
3. Places That Speak Photography Workshop
   Learn and explore the art of visual storytelling …
4. Tastes of the Tavern 2026
   Sip your way through Niagara's whisky history on one day only.
5. The Niagara Exercise of 1914
   Explore the intriguing story of a weeklong military training exercise ...
6. Book a Guided Tour
   Discover close to 240 years of rural Niagara history ...
7. Reconciliation Action Plan
   With the guidance of the TRC's findings and 94 Calls to Action ...

Contact The Brown Homestead to get involved or to book an activity!

1. The Brown Family - The Brown Homestead/History par 2
2. https://thebrownhomestead.ca/History, par 3
3. https://thebrownhomestead.ca/History - Statement of Significance par 1
4. https://thebrownhomestead.ca/History - Statement of Significance par 1
5. https://thebrownhomestead.ca/History - Statement of Significance par 2
6. https://www.niagarahomes.com/blog/the-oldest-home-in-st-catharines-a-journey-through-the-brown-homesteads-history/

Reclaiming the Cushetunk Settlement:
My Journey to the Edge of the Frontier

By Eric S. Frazer UE

It is a rare and surreal experience to walk into a living history museum and realize the story being told is your own. As a direct descendant of **Joseph Skinner**, the proprietor of the Delaware Company, and the **United Empire Loyalist Benjamin Skinner**, I traveled to Narrowsburg, New York, with a specific purpose. I went to Fort Delaware seeking a connection with the pioneers who carved civilization out of the Upper Delaware River Valley wilderness.

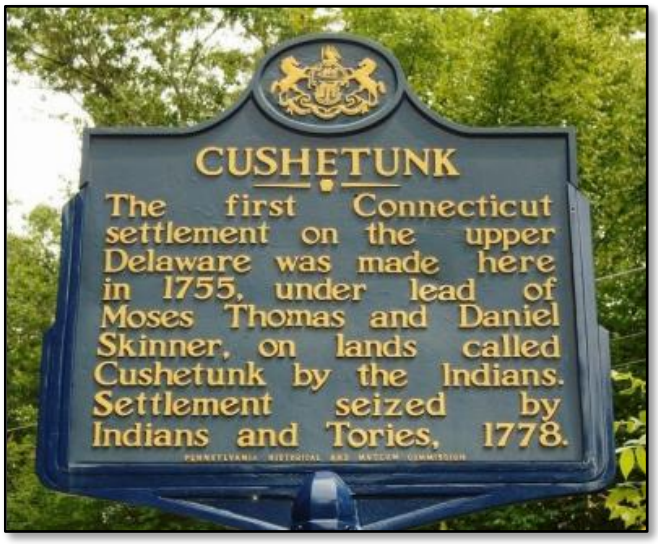
My journey took an unexpected turn while speaking with the fort's reenactors. There, I met a blacksmith who shared not only his craft but also a deep knowledge of local history. He pointed me away from the reconstructed walls of the fort and toward the site of the actual, original Cushetunk Settlement.

The drive along the rugged border of Pennsylvania and New York was nothing short of breathtaking. Following a narrow, winding road that likely traced an ancient Indigenous path, I moved through a landscape defined by steep mountainsides and the rushing Delaware River. Then, the terrain broke. Below the road lay a vast, vibrant green flat, a fertile expanse of land that stood out against the wild slope.

I pulled over, eager to stand on the soil my ancestors once tilled and to "breathe in" the history of the frontier. But the sense of awe was short-lived. Standing there, amidst the beauty of the valley, I encountered a historical marker that felt less like a tribute and more like a slap in the face.

The "Whitewashed" Frontier: Correcting the Record

The plaque claims the settlement was founded by **Daniel Skinner** and was later "seized by Tories." This is a sanitized, onesided history a narrative written by the victors that ignores the grit of the men who built and maintained this place as a Loyalist stronghold.



Through my research, I've uncovered a far more complex and heroic story: one of a frontier bastion held by a network of **"Friends of Government"**[1] who stood on the very edge of the wilderness, loyal to the King, aiding the men of Butler's Rangers and Brant's Volunteers.

The True Foundation: Joseph Skinner's 1754 Pioneer Party

The plaque's first error is the founder. While Daniel Skinner became famous for his timber rafting, it was his father, Joseph Skinner, who led the first party into this wilderness in 1754.[2] Joseph and his associates from the Connecticut Delaware Company established a strategic foothold. By 1755, under the looming threat of the French and Indian War, these pioneers built defensive blockhouses. These became the "Watchtowers of the Delaware,"[3] designed to protect the settlers and expand the King's influence into the interior long before the rebellion began.

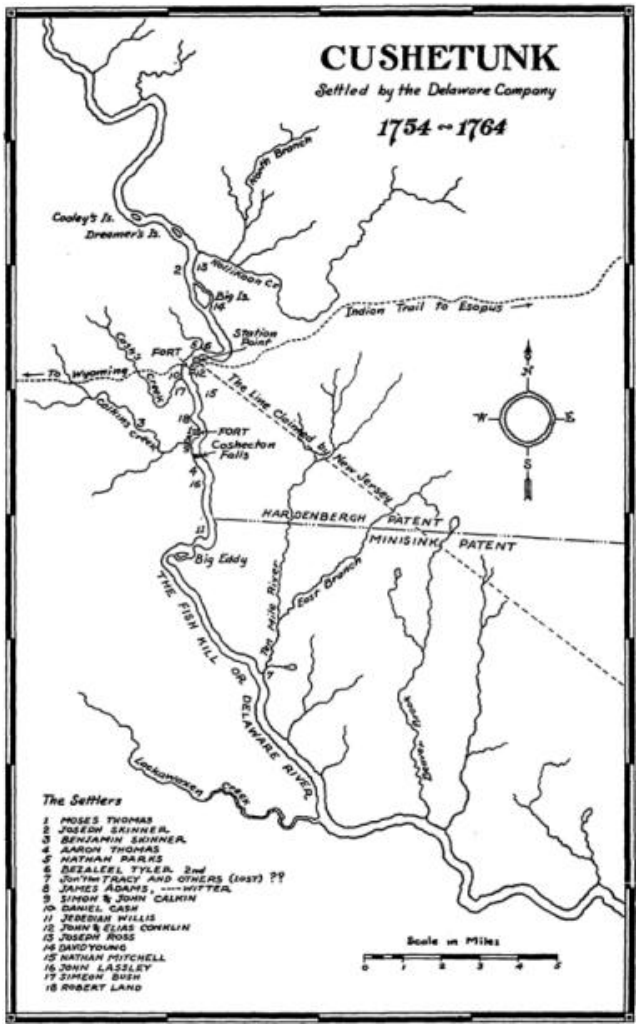
Benjamin Skinner: From Refugee to Ranger

The most compelling evidence of my ancestor's commitment to the King lies in primary records preserved in Loyalist petitions, specifically a

sworn statement by **Allan McDonald**, a Sergeant in **Butler's Rangers**. Through McDonald's firsthand account, we move beyond family lore and into the operational realities of the war.

Benjamin Skinner was known to be a Loyal Subject from the outset of hostilities in 1775.[4] However, his service escalated dramatically in the critical summer of 1778. We know that by **early June 1778**, Benjamin had made his way to **Onaquaga**, the strategic base of operations for the legendary Mohawk leader Joseph Brant. His presence there places him at the "Grand Central Station" of the frontier war during the planning of the massive offensive against the Pennsylvania border.

By **July 1778**, Benjamin's role shifted from refugee to active logistical support. Sergeant McDonald reports that Skinner was attached to **Butler's Rangers** on "foraging parties."[5] In the



context of July 1778, this was no simple farm work. Following the Battle of Wyoming, Butler's Rangers had captured over a thousand head of cattle to feed the Crown's forces. Benjamin, leveraging his intimate knowledge of the rugged terrain, likely assisted in the massive, high-stakes cattle drives required to move these resources north to Niagara an operation essential to the survival of the Loyalist army.

Cushetunk the Southern Citadel: The Wyoming Massacre

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of Benjamin's service is who he was living beside before he left. The Skinner homestead at Cushetunk was situated directly next to **Robert Land**[6] and near **Joseph Ross**. These families were not random neighbors; they were the operatives in the King's frontier network and the backbone of a Southern Frontier Citadel.

The Public Papers of Governor George Clinton, number 1299, titled The Wyoming Massacre; details how the residents of Cushetunk were involved in the planning of the raid going back as far as February 1778. The evidence depicts how the King's Men namely the Land's, Ross's, Michel's Cain's (Kane), Allan's, Wood's and Skinner's were to be spared. The witnesses speak about how frequently and freely the Indians moved among their neighbors while hatching the "Diabolical Plot".[7]

Robert Land arrived in Cushetunk in 1763 and served as Justice of the Peace[8] long before he became a courier and spy for British General Sir Henry Clinton, while Joseph Ross was a personal friend and guide to **Joseph Brant**[9] . They were joined in this dangerous allegiance by other prominent families, most notably **Bryant Kane** and his brother **Jonathan Kane**. Like the Skinners and Lands, the Kanes were steadfast in their loyalty to the Crown, a devotion that would ultimately cost them everything. While Robert Land and Benjamin Skinner managed to escape to British lines, the Kane family was brutally massacred in their home a stark reminder of the violence that targeted this specific circle of "Friends of Government."

While history claims the settlement was "seized," it ignores the reality that these men **were** the settlement. These men utilized their strategic posi-

tion to support the Crown until it became impossible to stay. Living in such proximity these Loyalists did not merely live in a "Tory stronghold"; the King's Men at Cushetunk created and operated a Southern Citadel for the forces of the Brant and Butler. This was not a settlement that was captured; it was a forward operating base that was eventually evacuated.

Conclusion: Reclaiming the Flat

Standing on that fertile green flat, I realized that my ancestors were not the villains of a "seizure" as described on a cold metal plaque. They were the builders, the defenders, and the survivors of a frontier that demanded everything from them.

Helen Merrill UE articulated, in her address to the Royal Society of Canada in 1914, the responsibility of the society is to rescue from oblivion the history and traditions of loyalist families before it is too late.[10] As Descendents of Loyalists, we have a responsibility to reclaim these sites, not just for our family trees, but for the integrity of history itself. The "Watchtowers of the Delaware" may be gone, but the spirit of the Friends of Government remains rooted in the soils of the Cushetunk. It is time to tell their story with the honor they earned.

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knows, least such attrocious offenders should escape, and the public Stores fall a sacrifice to their Villany. I am as before, Your most Obt.

H. H.

His Excellency Governor Clinton Poughkeepsie.

[No. 1299.]

THE WYOMING MASSACRE.

Evidence to Show it was Planned as far Back as February, 1778—Tory and Indian Plots.

The Deposition of the following Persons made before the Committee of Mamacotten Precinct April the 17th 1778: Josiah Parks being Duly sworn, Deposeth and saith: That about the midle of Feb'y Last past Cap't John so Called—a Tuskarora Indian was coming thro the woods to go to one Robt. Lands at Cashithtown and being overtaken with fear, turn'd about from Said Lands to Shohauken and imploy'd one John Harris to go to said Lands with an Express of Letters for said Land to go to York with, and soon after said Land went off and is not yet appear'd Home or been seen here since, and that the Tories says the said Land is gone to New York and they are afraid he is taken. The said deponent farther saith that by the best Information he can get of one Dav'd Vaneveran of Shohaukan is, That the Indians and Tories mean to strike first on Sisqueannah about Wyomah [Wyoming] and take that place first; with the Number of four thousand men, and then come through to the North River. The same Deponent farther saith that Francis Elswert told him not to tell the Damn'd Rebels at Cashithtown about the plot for fear they would move off. Said Elswert sells provision to the Indians and takes Orders on the Kings Quarter-master for pay. The said

[1] The term **"Friends of Government"** was a self-identification used by Loyalists at the Cushetunk settlement who remained steadfast in their allegiance to the British Crown during the American Revolution. From The Nathan Skinner Manuscript.

[2] Cushetunk The First White Settlement in the Upper Delaware River Valley by James Burbank 1952 pg 6

[3] The term "Watchtowers of the Delaware" is a modern historical designation used by historians and reenactors of Fort Delaware, adapted from the description written in The Nathan Skinner Manuscript

[4] C-2805 pg 465

[5] C-2805 pg 466

[6] Cushetunk The First White Settlement in the Upper Delaware River Valley by James Burbank 1952 pg 2

[7] Public papers of George Clinton : first Governor of New York, 1777-1795, 1801-1804 Clinton Vol III No 1299.

[8] Cushetunk The First White Settlement in the Upper Delaware River Valley by James Burbank 1952 pg 12

[9] "A Settlement Divided" – Fort Delaware Interactive Exhibit and Youtube.

[10] Journal of the Royal Society of Canada, Series 111 , 1914.

PUBLIC PAPERS OF GEORGE CLINTON. 193

eponent farther saith that Francis Elswert; Nathan Parks; arton De Witt; and Hank Bush, are gone to the Indians.

The Evidence of Joseph Gordens is as follows. He says he eard Francis Elswert and Joseph Gooding—Both of Shohawken –Say that they would Come about five Weeks hence with the ndians and Tories to take all the Wigs at Cashithtown,—Name- y—Bezaleel Tyler; John Lashly; in short all the Wigs. And the persons which would not be hurt that were Kings men. Viz. Joseph Ross, Nath'l Michel, Brian Cain, one Allan, Robt. Land, Dan'l Skinner, Jonas Wood, Haggai Skinner. The said Deponent farther saith that the said Elswert and Said Gooding are going Back and forwards to the Indians Greatest part of the time: And the Indians are among them Great part of the time and that he has seen the Indians among them—they seem to be of one mind and opininon and agree very well.

May it please your Excellency, We of the Mamacotten Precinct nd part of Goshen Precinct that took the Deposition of the foresaid Deponents took it under Character of Committee 'tho re are not certain wether the power and use of Committee be ot expired now the Magistracy has taken place. Nevertheless re thought it our Duty to the State, as well as Safety to our elves to take from under Oath the Deposition of persons filled ith the Greatest Anxiety and fear of their Persons and Familes lling a Prey to their worse than Savage Neighbours. And we eg Leave to Lay before your Excellency this their and our Situaon from this Diabolical Plot which we have Reason to beleive or it is the opininon of most of the Inhabitants both of this and range County about the Minnisink that our Enemy is more

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formidable and our danger Greater than from last Years Design. One of the Deponents Declared on Oath that 300 Men would not be sufficient to take them, so great their Numbers and Beg'd it to be kept Secret for Should it Transpire before help they would be on them and us before we could Remove. We Beg you Excelleneys acceptance Judgment and Consideration of the Premises.

And beg Leave to assure your Excellency we are Devoted to your Commands.

In behalf of the Inhabitants Mention'd

J. R. D'Witt.
Philip Swartwood.
Benjamin Depuy.

Peenpeck Mamacotten precinct 19th April 1778.
To His Excellency George Clinton Esqr., Governor.

[No. 1300.]

General Mellougall Not Disposed to Concede All Governor Clinton's Demands.

Fish Kills 19th April 1778.

Sir, I am honored with your Favor of yestarday. The Letters I received from the Commander in chief, preceding the one on which your Opinion was asked informed me of Vanschaick's, Hazen's & Livingston's Regiment being ordered to this Post. When Graton's & Alden's were ordered to repair here, 'tis probdirected Livingston's from Johnstown, was forit Order from the Board of war was founded on on's importunity to have them all down, with estion stated to us. If I should be mistaken in , & any misfortune should happen to this Post,

UELAC SCHOLARS WANTED!

The UELAC Loyalist Scholarship is available to Masters and PhD students undertaking a program in research that will further Canada's understanding of the Loyalists and our appreciation of their immediate descendants' influence on Canada.

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The deadline for applications is 28 February 2026.

Walter Butler: *The Struggles of the Frontier*

By Bruce Wallace UE

Walter Butler, 1752 – 1781, was the eldest son of Colonel John Butler a Captain in the Butler's Rangers. Colonel John Butler was the founder and commander of Butler's Rangers a Loyalist in the provincial corps that operated out of Fort Niagara during the American Revolution. The Butler family was well known in the Mohawk Valley due to their long standing ties to the British Indian Department and relationships with the Six Nations, especially the Mohawk. Walter's mother Catherine Butler was the great granddaughter of two sisters that were of the Mohawk Turtle Clan – Ots-Toch married Cornelise Antonissen Van Slyke in 1635 and Kenutje married Arent Bradt. Their mother was A'no'wara.

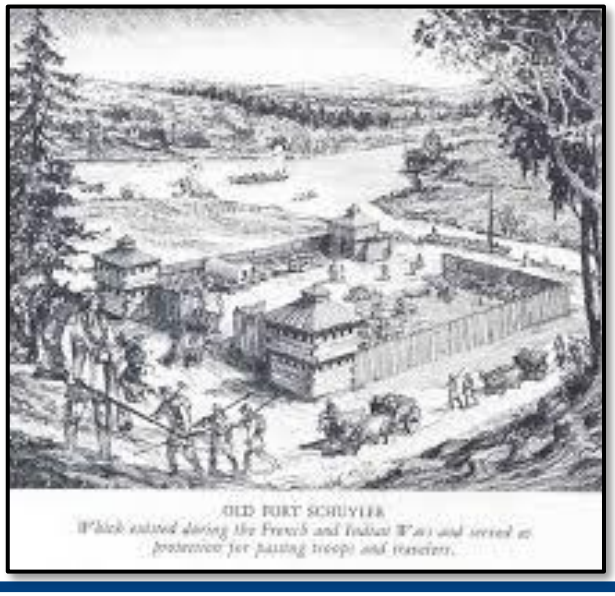
Walter Butler was born in the Mohawk Valley near Caughnawaga/Fonda or the Johnson settlements. He was raised in a prominent frontier family closely tied to the British Indian Department. His father, Colonel John Butler, was one of Sir William Johnson's most trusted officers and the most powerful Loyalist in the region after Johnson's death. As a result young Walter grew up amid diplomacy with Mohawk and Six Nations leaders, military life, and an elite society of the valley.

Walter has been described as slender and athletic, accustomed to frontier travel. He was said to have been of medium height 5'7" to 5'9" typical for the era. He was of fair complexion, sharp features, dark piercing eyes with dark hair tied back in the Loyalist style.

He received a refined education for a frontier officer's son and studied law under the Johnson family's patronage. He had begun establishing himself in the profession before the Revolution disrupted his career. This legal background explains why early American authorities initially thought he would be valuable as an educated prisoner prior to his escape.

Walter was very close to the Johnson's, one of the wealthiest and most influential families in colonial New York. His father served as deputy to Sir William Johnson, Superintendent of Indian Affairs. Walter and his siblings (including his brother Thomas, my 3x's great grandfather) were raised in the Johnson social circle and were friends, allies and political partners of the Johnson children – particularly Sir John Johnson and Colonel Guy Johnson. These families shared business, land, military service and Loyalist political alignment. During the Revolution, Walter fought alongside the Johnson family Loyalist units. Walter was essentially part of the Johnsons' extended political and social network.

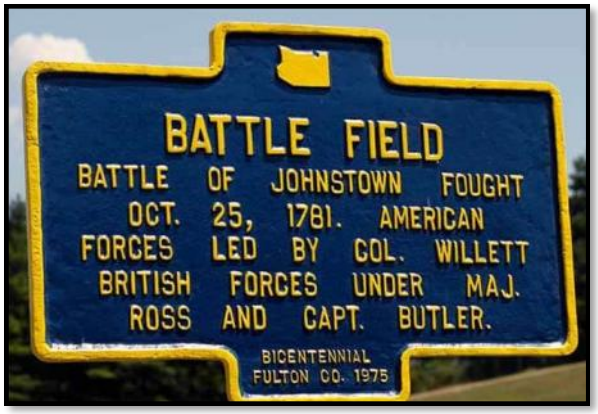
When the American Revolution began 1775-1776, the Butler family fled to British held territory. Walter joined his father on the Loyalist side and became an officer in the newly formed Butler's Rangers. Walter rose to Captain within Butler's Rangers and quickly gained a reputation for being bold, fierce and at times ruthless in frontier warfare.



During the 1777 campaign, Walter Butler was sent on a mission near Fort Stanwix (Fort Schuyler). He was captured by Continental forces. Initially sentenced as a spy, his execution was prevented due to British threats of retaliation. Instead he was jailed, but he escaped and returned to Fort Niagara, where he resumed command under his father. This escape added to his legend and, from the Patriot point of view, to his notoriety.

The Cherry Valley Massacre 1778 was the event for which Walter Butler became most infamous. In November 1778, Walter and the Mohawk war leader Joseph Brant led a mixed force of Rangers and Haudenosaunee warriors against the settlement at Cherry Valley, New York. The attack resulted in the deaths of many settlers, including women and children. Although historical accounts differ, American sources blamed Walter Butler personally for excessive brutality. His reputation among Patriots led to him being one of the most hated Loyalists of the war. However some evidence suggests that control broke down among all fighters, and he probably didn't order civilian killings. Even British officials debated his responsibility.

Walter continued serving as a Ranger officer in raids throughout upstate New York. Between 1779 and 1781 campaigns included Mohawk Valley raids, frontier outposts, the defense of Fort Niagara and nearby settlements. He remained a key field commander under his father.



Walter Butler was killed on October 25, 1781 at the Battle of Johnstown in the Mohawk Valley. He was shot while attempting to retreat across the West Canada Creek. After being wounded, he reportedly pleaded for mercy, but an Oneida warrior loyal to the Americans killed him saying "Sherry Valley" - a reference to Cherry Valley. Whether this quote is literal or legendary is debated, but it became part of the folklore surrounding his death.

Walter Butler's legacy remains one of the most polarizing of the Loyalists. To the Loyalists he was a brave and daring officer, a key leader in frontier warfare and loyal to the Crown until his death. To the American Patriots he was remembered as a brutal figure associated with Cherry Valley. His name was linked with fear throughout the frontier.

Walter dying young and without surviving children, left no direct line, but his place in early Canadian Loyalist history is significant.

"An old homestead in Mohawk Valley." Library of Congress.

Walter was one of the most polarizing men on the frontier. Loyalist and British described him as intelligent and well educated, loyal to the Crown and family, determined, disciplined, brave, resourceful in wilderness warfare and charismatic with Indigenous allies. On the other hand the American Patriots described him as cruel, vengeful, hot tempered and fanatical in his Loyalist loyalty.

His reputation among Loyalists he was a brave, loyal and a wronged officer. A symbol of the frontier struggle. A soldier who died honourably in battle. His death was considered tragic and unjust. His reputation among the Patriots was he was demonized as a villain and brutal. Rebels used propaganda to stir up anger among the Patriots. His evil reputation among Americans was largely political.

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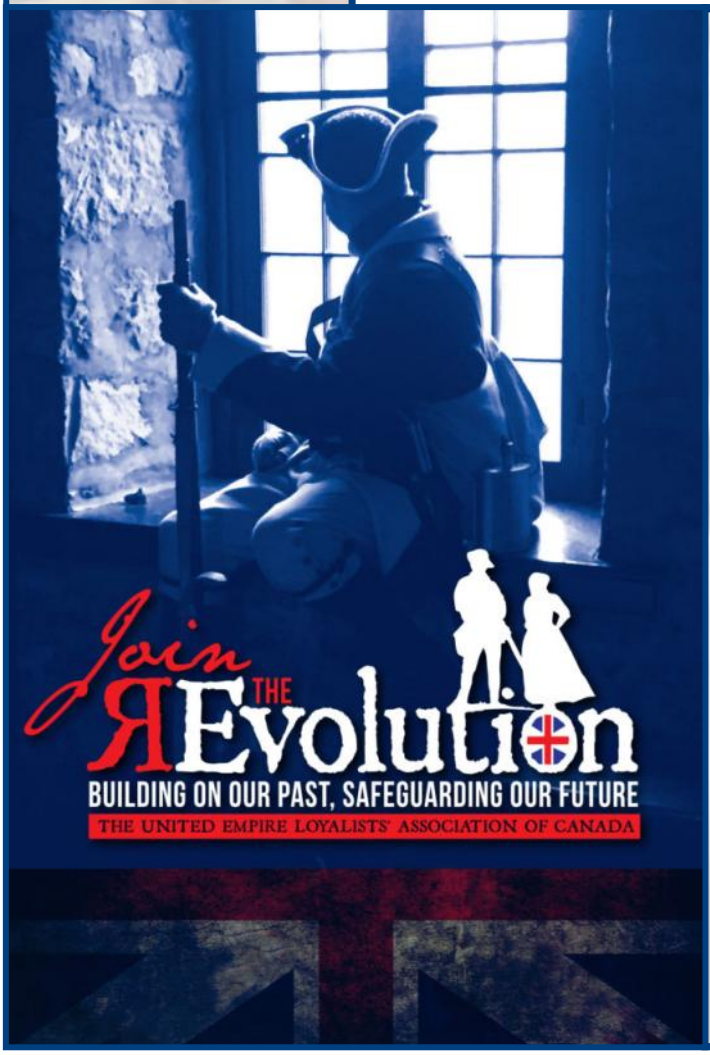

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