

COL. JACOB KLOCK PATRIOT

Being a Series of Articles on Col. Klock, Successor to General Herkimer and Signer of Palatine Declaration of Independence at Palatine Church. Interesting Facts Covering the Early Period of the Mohawk Valley.

(By Milo Nellis, Direct Descendant)

The best brief review of the Sullivan expedition and its results is given in Stone's Life of Brant vol. II (pages 18 to 58). Since that work is out of print and not within the reach of most readers it seems desirable to give the following extracts therefrom:

"General Clinton with his division having been joined at Oghkwaga by a detachment of Col. Bellinger's levies from Warwasing arrived at Tioga and formed a junction with Sullivan on the 22d of August. The entire command amounted to five thousand." "So long had the expedition been in progress that it was well understood the Indians and Tories were not unprepared to receive them."

The Indians, determined to risk a general action in defense of the country, had selected their ground with judgment, about a mile in advance of Newtown (Elmira). "Their force was estimated by General Sullivan at fifteen hundred. The enemy had constructed a breast work of half a mile in length so covered by a bend in the river as to expose only the front and one of the flanks to attack; and even that flank was rendered difficult of approach by resting upon a steep ridge."

The enemy's position was discovered in the morning of the 29th of August. "In the front the enemy stood a hot canonade for more than two hours." "The Indians yielded ground only inch by inch." "Having ascended the steep and gained his object without faltering, the enemy's flank was turned by Poor and the fortunes of the day decided." "Perceiving such to be the fact the enemy savages and white, precipitately abandoned their works, crossed the river and fled with the utmost precipitation." "The loss of the Americans was small almost to a miracle. Only five or six were killed and between forty and fifty wounded."

"The army moved forward on the 31st in the direction of Catharines Town, situated near the head of Seneca Lake. On their way thither, Sullivan destroyed a small settlement of eight houses and a town of about twenty."

"General Clinton rejoined the main army on the 2d of Sept. and the whole encamped at Catharine's Town which was entirely destroyed on the following day, together with the corn fields and orchards. The houses thirty in number were burnt. The work of destruction, marking that extraordinary campaign was now begun in earnest.

"The Indians" said Sullivan, "shall see that there is malice enough in our hearts to destroy everything that contributes to their support" and well did he fulfill the threat.

"It is apprehended that but few of the present generation are thoroughly aware of the advances which the Indians in the wide and beautiful country of the Cayugas and Senecas had made in the march of civilization. They had several towns and many large villages, laid out with a considerable degree of regularity. They had framed houses, some of them well finished having chimneys and painted. They had broad

Instead of a howling wilderness Sullivan and his troops found the Genesee flats and many other districts, resembling much more the orchards and farms and gardens of civilized life. But all was now doomed to speedy devastation. The Genesee castle was destroyed. The troops scoured the whole region round about and burnt and destroyed every thing that came in their way." "The town of Genesee contained one hundred and twenty eight houses, mostly large and elegant. It was beautifully situated, almost encircled with a clear flat extending a number of miles; over which extensive fields of corn were waving, together with every kind of vegetable that could be conceived. But the entire army was immediately engaged in destroying it and the axe and the torch soon transformed the whole of that beautiful region from the character of a garden to a scene of drear and sickening desolation. Forty Indian towns the largest containing one hundred and twenty eight houses were destroyed. Corn gathered and ungathered to the amount of one hundred and sixty thousand bushels, shared the same fate; their fruit trees were cut down and the Indians were hunted like wild beasts, till neither house nor fruit tree, nor field of corn nor inhabitant remained in the whole country. The gardens were enriched with great quantities of useful vegetables of different kinds. The size of the corn fields as well as the high degree of cultivation in which they were kept, excited wonder; and the ears of corn were so remarkably large that many of them measured twenty two inches in length. So numerous were the fruit trees that in one orchard they cut down fifteen hundred."

"Having completed the objects contemplated by the expedition to the point at which he had arrived, General Sullivan recrossed the Genesee with his army on the 16th of September and set out on his return. Why he did not follow up his success and strike at the enemy's citadel at Niagara which at that time was in no situation for formidable resistance is a question difficult of solution. Unquestionably in the organization of the expedition the conquest of Niagara, the headquarters of the foe of all descriptions and the seat of British influence and power among the Indians, was one of the principal objects in view. But perhaps the forces of the American General had become too much weakened by sickness and fatigue (they had not lost a hundred men in battle) to allow a further advance. Certain it is that the most important feature of the enterprise was not undertaken, and it will be seen in the sequel, that but small ultimate advantage resulted from the campaign. Simulated by a yet keener thirst for revenge clouds of savages were afterwards again and again seen to sweep through the valley of the Mohawk with the scalping knife and the torch. The excuse offered by Sullivan himself was the want of provisions; but the deficiency might have been most abundantly supplied from the ample stores of the town.

tion of Tryon County freeholders dated August 1).

From Colonel Ganesvoort's official report of his proceedings under this order we have: "I proceeded down the river on the 29th, effectually surprised the lower Mohawk Castle, making prisoners of every Indian inhabitant. They then occupied but four houses. I was preparing, agreeable to my orders, to destroy them, but was interrupted by the inhabitants of the frontiers who have been lately driven from their settlements by the savages, praying that they might have liberty to enter into the Mohawk's houses until they could procure other habitations and well knowing those persons to have lately lost their all, humanity tempted me in this particular to act in some degree contrary to orders, although I could not be confident of your approbation; especially when you are informed that this castle is in the heart of our settlements and abounding with every necessary; so that it is remarked that these Indians live much better than most of the Mohawk river farmers." (page 38).

Their houses were very well furnished with all necessary household utensils, great plenty of grain, several horses, cows and wagons of all which I have an inventory leaving them in the care of Major Newkirk of that place who distributed the refugees in the several houses. Such being the situation I did not allow the party to plunder at all.

The devastation of their country by General Sullivan—the destruction of their homes as well as their means of subsistence—had driven the Indians back upon Niagara for the winter of 1779-80—the usual winter quarters of Brant, Guy Johnson and the Butlers—father and son. As had been anticipated by the American commander in chief the Indians suffered greatly by destitution and consequent sickness during the winter, which was one of unexpected rigor in North America. (So severe that the horror of New York was so thoroughly frozen that cannon were wheeled over to the city on the ice from Staten Island.)

To be continued

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"The valley of the Genesee for its beauty and fertility was beheld by the army of Sullivan with astonishment and delight. Though an Indian country and peopled only by the wild men of the woods, its rich intervals presented the appearance of long cultivation and were then smiling with the harvests of ripening corn."

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"The return of the army was along the same track by which it had advanced."

"On the 30th of September the army reached its original point of concentration at Tioga." (It) arrived at Easter on the 15th.

There was however an episode to this campaign which appears like a strange movement on the part of General Sullivan. "When the great body of the Mohawks retired to Canada with the Johnsons, preparatory to taking up the hatchet against the Americans, the clan at the lower castle declined accompanying them. Thus far, moreover, during the whole progress of the war, they had preserved a strict neutrality. They had neither molested their white neighbors, nor been molested themselves; but were living quietly, cultivating their grounds in the midst of the best settled portion of Tryon county, or following - the chase at their pleasure and on terms of perfect amity and good will with their white neighbors. By some means or other General Sullivan had imbibed a distrust of these people and on the 20th of September while at the foot of Seneca Lake he detached Colonel Ganesvoort with a corps of 100 men to Fort Schuyler. From thence his orders were peremptory that he should proceed forthwith down the Mohawk to the said lower Indian Castle, make all the Indian captives if possible, destroy their castle and then proceed immediately with the said prisoners to headquarters." (The reader will readily perceive that this movement was a sequel to the pei-