Dispatches from the Colonel

Here are two excerpts from the book, “The Battle for New York” by Barnet Schecter. One story illustrates the British or Loyalist soldier’s sense humour, and the other story tells the rather sad tale of what happens when principles are forgotten for the sake of self-interest and aggrandizement.

Colonel Reg James

FLYING THE FLAG
At the conclusion of the American Revolution there remained the business of the British Forces and Loyalists evacuating New York City on a precise date. General Guy Carleton wrote to George Washington and Governor George Clinton of New York stating that he planned to evacuate northern Manhattan and eastern Long Island on November 21st, to leave Paulus Hook on the 22nd, and finally to evacuate the city and Brooklyn at noon on November 25th, if wind and weather were favourable.

Despite fears that the town would be pillaged amid widespread violence, incidents were relatively minor. Some rebels in anticipation of Washington’s arrival flew the stars and stripes much to the annoyance of some bitter Loyalists. The Union flag however should have been taken down by the last British soldiers in New York prior to departing, but was left flying high at Fort George on the southern tip of Manhattan. One or more cheeky British or Loyalist soldiers, before relinquishing that last patch of United States soil, had sabotaged and greased the flagpole. The official American procession into the city was delayed while someone ran to an ironmonger workshop in Hanover Square to fetch a saw, a board, a hammer, and nails. With these a young sailor fashioned cleats, which he nailed into the flagpole as he climbed to the top and set the rope back in the pulley. Only then did the American flag finally wave above the fort for the first time since it had been torn down on September 15, 1776.

THE SONS OF LIBERTY?
“In short the Mob now reigns as fully and uncontrolled as in the beginning of our troubles” a frightened Loyalist wrote to a friend after the British evacuation of New York in 1783. Isaac Sears had returned to the liberated city and, with second fortune he made as a privateer in Boston, installed himself in a mansion facing Bowling Green; with Marinus Willett and John Lamb he revived the Sons of Liberty and the tactics they used during the Stamp Act crisis. At the end of March 1784, they rallied an enormous crowd on the Common to demand the expulsion of any remaining Tories from the state by May 1 and to call for harsher penalties against those who might choose to stay. The Sons tapped the fury of residents whose jobs, houses, and farms had been taken over by Tory
neighbours or refugees for the past seven years. The demonstrations grew out of several months of mass meetings and increased violence against loyalists: tarring and feathering, beatings, and other forms of physical abuse and intimidation.

In the post-war city however, the radicals encouraged these methods not from outside the legal framework of government, but from official positions of power. Governor George Clinton’s inflammatory denunciations of the Tories in January seemed to trigger and condone the new wave of reprisals, and the Sons of Liberty had won enough seats in the state legislature during the December elections to pass a raft of hostile, punitive laws. Loyalist could not hold public office, and anyone accused of Toryism by a single witness could be deprived of the vote. Ignoring the Treaty of Paris, the radicals called for the Loyalist property to be confiscated and immediately sold at auction, and imposed an exorbitant tax on residents of the state’s southern counties, who had remained and collaborated with the British army. In the heat of political vengeance, the irony that the war had been fought to free Americans from so-called tyrannical legislature seemed lost on the radical lawmakers.

By the spring of 1784 in the war-ravaged city however, the Sons of Liberty had helped set the stage for their own defeat by committing a major blunder. Sears, Lamb, Willett, John Morin Scott, and others were exposed for buying up soldiers pay certificates and state securities from their cash poor owners at depressed prices and using them to speculate in forfeited Tory property. Since the state laws were designed to help impoverished soldiers get back on their feet, the public regarded this kind of speculation as the height of venality and cynicism.

This soldier became aware of the Yorkers while already in uniform, albeit a modern one. He was recruited on a rainy weekend, while watching from the sidelines: as we slept on the cold, cold ground; listened to the then Sergeant Major barking orders, trying to educate the rank & file, so that at some point we might attain the honour of receiving the Major James Gray Trophy. Within a year, this new recruit was fully kitted out: a new musket, shiny and well kept; new clothes, haversack, canteen, period shoes. Putting to shame his under dressed nco’s, he was the model krr soldier, as described and hoped for by the Colonel. The only thing saving his nco’s from the shame of having a ranker looking better than they, was our proverbial correction of “the other left”.

However, over the course of the past few years, this soldier has learned the manual of arms exceedingly well, being one of the faithful attendees of the fading drill nights. He has attended all the extracurricular drill days, even in the dead of winter, as well as most of the events when his other uniform didn’t prevent it. His quiet deportment and attentiveness have made him well liked in the regiment. He is even starting to learn the social graces of an up and coming 18th century soldier, by helping his nco get slaughtered at Whist this past Father’s Day. Oh yes, not to mention the coup de grace for any soldier re-enactor… he has the blessing of his better half. But wait, he did one better. After introducing the hobby to her, he married her at Black Creek and brought her fully into the fold of the Regiment.

After nearly a 10-year drought for Gray Cup recipients in the Grenadier Coy (2003 - Chris Stephenson), a sign that the Officers & nco’s of the Grenadier Coy are doing better now, the Grenadier Coy and the King’s Royal Regiment of NY are proud to present Grenadier Ken MacNeil with the Major James Gray Trophy.

The Gray Cup was presented by the Colonel at Gelston Castle, in front of the Regiment, under the threat of rain, just before the crown forces went on to defeat the rebels in the unscripted Sunday Morning Tactical. With the cup full of the golden nectar (many thanks to Cpl Forrest for his help in filling it), it was passed around so that the Regiment’s thirst was sated. Ken upheld his Scottish heritage by not wasting a drop, and downed the rest in one go.

Well done Ken. Let’s all Fall back on the Tavern.

Yhos

2Lt Scott Turrall on behalf of Capt Alex Lawrence.
Are Hammerstalls a Modern Invention?

SOME would argue that many of the things we do as reenactors are modern contrivances, introduced because of our sensitivity to matters of safety. And so it is claimed that hammerstalls never would have been used by 18th century soldiers. Once again, Gregory Urwin, the distributor of “Redcoat Images” comes to the rescue. His recent publication of the David Morier image showing three Grenadiers from the 1st, 2nd (Coldstream) and 3rd Regiments of Guard, 1751 puts the matter to rest. Close examination of the centre Grenadier’s musket clearly shows a brown hammerstall in place. Once the image was sent out by Urwin, further evidence was provided supporting the conclusion that hammerstalls were in common use.

Army Memorandum 22 January 1778
(Order to the whole force in America):

"The regiments to provide themselves immediately with Hammerstalls & Stoppers."

Note: This order is listed with other memoranda at the back of the Orderly Book, not in the section with the orders.

Regimental Order, London 22 August 1784
Orders for Somerset Barracks:
At roll calling “The Flints and Slings properly fixed and the Hammerstalls secured. The pouches and Gitters to be particularly attended to . . . ."

DWP

THE FACE OF BATTLE

LADY BUTLER had a particular talent for painting the expressions of soldiers’ faces, so that you knew exactly what they were feeling and thinking. It appears that Ens. John Moore has the same talent with the camera. During the Battle of Oriskany scenario at Gelston Castle, Duncan’s Coy was positioned on the road at the end of the Ravine. Their assignment was to stop a column of 700+ rebels, so that the ambush could be tripped. The expressions on the faces of these intrepid troops say it all!

Sjt Robert Stewart – “I wonder if the officers who put us here can be sued for malpractice?”
Cpl Keith Lindsey – “Ho-ly Sh…”
Shaun Wallace – “To my wife and children I bequeath my…”
Eric Fernberg – “In the Civil War I think the term they used was Scadaddle.”
Colin Schlachta – “I hope this doesn’t stain my trousers.”
Peter Johnson – “Is it too late to fall in with the Music?”
John MacFarlane – “I wonder what Mardi’s making for lunch?”
Phil Rock – “Maybe if I take my cap off they’ll think I’m already a casualty.”

SAFETY IN HOT WEATHER

At the Gelston Castle event, which by the way was a great event for those of you who missed it, a number of participants on both sides collapsed from the heat. So here are a few general reminders for all of us in this age of global warming.

1. Drink lots of water before you go out. Always carry a full canteen or a water bottle in your haversack. Keep hydrated.
2. Make sure you are eating during the weekend. Hot weather often impedes appetites, but you’ll need the energy.
3. If you get separated from your unit, do not wander back to the camp on your own. Doing so may put your nco’s/Officers and ems staff in the position of needlessly looking for you after the battle. Always inform your nco and/or Officer if you are leaving, so they know you are safe.

Safety is everyone’s responsibility.

Major Moore
DUNCAN’S COMPANY had a strong showing with two strong sections at Gelston Castle. The three battles of the weekend, all fought against tremendous odds and in roasting heat, were a fair fight. The Company deployed on the Saturday morning in a narrow valley blocking the advance of over 700 rebels. The Grenadiers deployed on our right flank and the Light Company deployed on the rim of the valley on our right. The King’s Rangers were on our left. An intense firefight ensued with lots of powder and movement in the finest style of the Regiment. We managed to hold them in place.

The afternoon battle had the Provincial Brigade ambushing the rebel column attempting to raise the siege of Ft. Stanwix. The Lights, Grenadiers and #1 Section Duncan’s held their front while #2 Duncan’s and the Natives surrounded the rebels. The rebels were shot down like fish in a barrel.

The Sunday battle, held early in the day due to the heat and on coming rain, had a rebel column attempting to reach the rebel garrison at Stanwix. The Regulars attacked the fort while the Loyalists under Brigadier James held off the vast rebel column. Duncan’s Company was detached and attacked the flank and rear of the rebels. A handful of Duncan’s men managed to out shoot and out manoeuver over 50 rebels. Sgt Stewart put his rifle to good use. Bob Alegetto, well known dragoon and nemesis, was commanding a dismounted unit that tried in vain to wheel and fire into Sjt Mjr Putnam, Baker and Sova as they sniped at them from the flanks. Chuck Baker single-handedly, ran forward and assassinated the rebel commander on horseback at point blank range!! It was in the finest traditions of the Victoria Cross. That he did it from a “grassy hollow” (rather than a “grassy knoll”) only added to the irony. What a glorious final act to the battle. When Mitch Lee came forward to parley with Brigadier Reg James, a Native warrior fondled Mitch’s hair as he stood talking. It was priceless.

Mjr David Moore
Photo Gallery from Gelston Castle – by John Moore
THE CRACK of muskets, the roar of cannons, and the shouts of men were silent as the Stars and Stripes were raised over the Fort at Massachusetts Plantation #4, on the banks of the Connecticut River in Charlestown, New Hampshire. The Fife and Drums of the Crown Forces, playing of God Save the King, receded into their memory as the new host took over the fort. So it was at the end of the day, October 2, during last year’s campaign.

Undaunted by this setback, the planning for the Fort’s recapture began in earnest in early January of this year. Capt Dressler, commanding the Kings Ranger’s, was given leave to muster British and Loyal troops to repatriate the Fort and made September 14th of this year the date to assemble on the field of battle.

The Kings Royal Regiment of New York, stationed in the Province of Quebec, rose to the call, but was doubly engaged. Men from all companies of the First Battalion, under the command of Col James and Mjr Moore, were surveying the Indian trail; the Toronto Passage [Yonge St.], north from Lake Ontario to Lake Taronto (renamed Lake Simcoe in 1793), leaving a small raiding party to make their way south into the heart of the rebellion.

Cpl. Keith Lindsey and Pt. Shaun Wallace jointly crossed the mighty St Lawrence River and were followed shortly thereafter by Pt. Phil Rock. They made their way, provisioning as they travelled, without incident. First East across Northern New York, over the top of Lake Champlain, then passing South East through the Green Mountains of the Republic of Vermont and finally South down the Connecticut River to Fort at # 4. They arrived around 6:00 pm, to find a well laid out and nearly full British Camp. The camp itself was set upon a plateau about 50’ above the Fort and some 500 yds from its palisade. A copse of trees blocked our immediate view of the Fort and as it turned out, this provided an excellent place to station pickets. Cpl. Wm. Scott Turrall, with Mistress Debra and Master Thomas, having waited for Cpl. Nick Wesson, followed the same route, again provisioning along the way, and arrived after dark.

Our tents were erected with the King’s Rangers, and the Yorkers became their defacto 4th Coy.

The wooden Fort, which turned out to be a palisade quadrangle of homes and out buildings in-filled with barracks and trade shops, was fully occupied by the rebel forces and surrounded by several more companies outside the palisades. In addition, many sutlers had set up their stores against the walls of the Fort.

Friday night came to a close, the stars being veiled by clouds moving in from the west, and stragglers arriving all night.

We were up at 6:00 am. Saturday morning dawned crisp but clear, heavy dew coated everything. The ground was still wet from the brief rain we received at 4:00 am, and we all immediately set about erecting our dining fly, and digging the fire pit. The Royal Engineer had seen fit to give us the last location in the kitchen area, at the top of the crest, in full view of the rebel camp and unsheltered from the winds that carried down from the mountains. Fortunately for us though, it was directly beside the water source. While Mistress Turrall broke out the provisins, the men of the Yorkers, including Master Thomas, raided the Rebel Fort for wood, which was becoming short in supply.

By 8:30 our hunger and need for coffee was sated. We were ordered to kit up. As senior corporal, Cpl Lindsey took charge of the Coy. and we fell in on Parade, sharply at 9:00. It was at this moment that the size of our forces became apparent. The King’s Rangers had three Coys. plus ourselves, totaling 20 men. The Royal Artillery was represented by two full gun crews and two cannons; a 3-pound long barrel and a 3-lb Howitzer. The British Regulars, with the 10th Regiment of Foot being the largest unit, fielded 50-60 men and officers. In typical, army fashion we were inspected, and the days orders were given out. Luckily for us Loyalists, the Regulars took up picket and patrol duty, leaving us to reconnoitre the site. In small clothes and having given our parole, we were allowed to wander through the more than a dozen sutlers and the fort at our leisure. It became apparent that the Rebel force outnumbered us by 1 ½ times, including 2 Coys. of French and five pieces of artillery. Our old nemesis, Warner’s Coy. was occupying the barracks.

The nooning over, with a fine lunch had by all, and with the local populace gathering, our first attempt to recapture the fort was ordered. The Crown Forces formed at
13:00, and immediately split into two divisions. The Rangers and one gun were to march out, proceed under the cover of the forest, along the river, and enter the battle as a reserve force, trying to flank the rebels. The regulars, with the other gun made a frontal assault.

At 13:30, the report of our cannon echoed off the mountain sides, to be answered by the bark of the rebel artillery. Somewhere out of sight, the regulars had engaged the enemy forces.

The Rangers held to the forest, awaiting their orders, which were finally announced by three sharp whistle blasts from the British Command. The rebels had committed an almost equal number of men to repel the initial British advance. Our Regulars, with their cannon, were trading volleys with the ragged but improved fire from the Rebel Militia. The French drill must have been rubbing off on them. Capt. Dressler, at the quick march, led the Rangers from the forest in a sweeping arc to form the extended right flank of the British assault. The Yorkers were positioned to the immediate left of their gun, and immediately right of the other gun. Our small unit was well supported by the two cannons, both firing grape at 50 yds. The other three Ranger Coys. extended to the right of our gun and the rebel line was caught, receiving fire into their front and left flank. In quick order they began to retire as the air filled with smoke choking the view. Our cannons were firing once every 40 seconds or so, almost as fast as we musket men were.

Volley after volley, advance after advance, and we almost had the fort. However, through the din of the exchange we heard ‘vive le roi’ and saw the flash of steel as the two companies of French moved onto the field, supported by three full Coys. of Rebel Militia and 4 pieces of artillery.

It was over in 10 minutes. The weight of their cannon fire, and nearly 30 fresh muskets turned the tide. Our casualties were mounting as they advanced, bayonets fixed. VIVE LE ROI, VIVE LE ROI, was the last thing heard by our wounded as the French advanced, bayoneting any wounded that showed signs of resistance. The entire Crown Forces retired firing, taking up positions of cover to prevent the capture of the guns. In one such case, a full section of French was ordered to rush around a large densely packed clump of bushes, whereby they were volleyed into by the Rangers stationed there, thus killing them all. This afforded our full escape without the loss of the guns or more men.

The Crown Forces reformed. We licked our wounds and marched back to camp, and the command vowed we would take the Fort on the morrow.

Once dismissed, the Yorker men set about cleaning their muskets, with ale in hand, and recounted the day’s battle. With much regret, Cpl Turrall found out that the heat of battle had taken its toll on his musket. The tumbler in the lock had shattered.

Meanwhile, at the fly Mistress Turrall was cooking the provisions for dinner. Through earlier correspondence, with the menu set, it was agreed that each of us would contribute rations to the dinner, rather than money. This turned out to be very successful. We all ate exceedingly well, each of us having contributed to its creation, very similar to a true mess. The beef barley stew was described by Cpl. Wesson as one of, if not the best, dinners in his career. By 5:30 pm, dinner done and the dishes cleaned by Thomas, we all sat back to enjoy the evening while the rest of the companies in the camp, who had more complex dinners, didn’t finish until well past dark.

As darkness fell over the valley, the air cooling rapidly, a small band of Loyalists attacked the Fort from the river, attempting to raid its stores. The quick actions of the rebel artillery crews made short work of the bold raid. The rest of the evening saw the Crown Forces enjoying each other’s company, with the 10th hosting the tavern. Many a song was sung (including Oh Canada) and drink was had before we retired to our tents.

The morning came, a cold still air, with dense fog over the entire valley. The visibility was reduced to no more than 10’. Pt. Wallace and Cpl. Wesson relit the fire to ward off the cold. As Sunday was the day to either succeed or fail in our task, we decided to use up all the remaining stores and have one last feast. Mistress Turrall prepared for our sustenance scrambled eggs, bacon, and bread pudding filled with apple, almonds, currants and raisins, topped with maple syrup. By the end of breakfast, the sun had burned through the fog, returning warmth to the air. Sunday worship was held at 11:00 and we made ready for the battle, which was to commence at 13:00.

Cpl. Turrall, not having a working musket, took command of the section, and we once again formed the fourth coy. of the Rangers. The Rangers marched out of the camp as the sound of the Royal Artillery’s opening volley reverberated through the
valley. Capt. Horst moved all the sections to the right of the artillery in extended order, just as the rebels saluted forth from the fort with three pieces of artillery and most of the compliment of militia. Though out gunned, our superior volleys, with both artillery and muskets, once again proved to be a decisive advantage. We pressed forward firing and advancing in 10 yd. They were forced to retreat. It became apparent to the rebel command that our extended line, with the support of the faster firing artillery, was overwhelming their line. The shrill notes of their fife could be heard, and the rest of the militia and French poured out of the fort with one more field piece. They began to push, but we were re-enforced on our left by the British Light Infantry, was overwhelming their line. The withering volley after volley should have spelled certain doom for the rebels and French, but unknown to the Crown command, Warner’s Coy. had slipped out with the last rebel gun and came up behind the Rangers and Royal Artillery. Just as the rebel militia was getting ready to surrender, a close range (50 yd) volley & artillery with grape shot, as well as a well-timed artillery volley from the militia, decimated the Light Infantry, half of the Rangers, and one of our artillery crews. A hole was effectively punched through our line. The final British bayonet charge sent the rebels through this gap into the arms of their relief column. Seeing as the day was ours, having been bloodied enough, the rebel army quit the field, their fifes playing Yankee Doodle.

We retrieved our wounded and were lead victorious into the Fort. The King’s Colours were raised to the sound of God Save the King, thus restoring Fort at #4 in Charlestown, New Hampshire to its rightful protector.

Having completed our task, we broke camp at 15:00, and retraced our way back into the province of Quebec, arriving at our respective barracks in the wee hours of the morning the following day.

It has been suggested that should the Royal Yorkers attend to the Fort’s defence next year we will have the honour of billeting in the Fort Barracks, with all the amenities that affords us. I know for one, Mistress Turrall is looking forward to cooking over the hearth in repeat of our winter encampment at Fort Niagara.

God Save The King,

I remain ymhos,

Cpl. Wm. Scott. Turrall, Grenadier Co. KRRNY.

---

**THINGS TO TELL THE PUBLIC**

**About Women’s Attire**

Nancy Watt is a recognized expert on all things 18th century, with many publications and Distaff Bulletins to her credit. The following excerpt is taken from a booklet she wrote for “The King’s Royal Yorkers’ Baggage and Loyal Refugees being a Compendium of Useful Knowledge, Advice and Information for Your Discreet Dissemination to Those Interested Parties Who May Gain Thereby”. *This is information that every Yorker should read and be familiar with.*

YOU SHOULD be pretty familiar with the clothing of this period, so I will confine my comments on this subject to the facts I tell the average tourist about what I wear.

For the most part, we represent the average farmer’s (musketman) wife and the servant class. The people of the Mohawk Valley (with the possible exception of the newly emigrated Scots) were well enough off to buy, as well as make, their own fabric. We know that someone from any given area would head in to town to shop about once a week, and we know they bought fabric in Albany. We also know that Albany had access to nearly anything you could get in New York City as it was on a direct trading route (the Hudson River). By extrapolation only, we therefore know that they did not manufacture all their own material.

We can also extrapolate from what we know of other areas, that the manufacture of cloth was rarely started and finished in one house. The most common scenario being that, the women of the house would prepare linen or wool as far as the spinning stage and then have it woven, either by a
travelling weaver or someone in the area who had set up as a weaver. We also know that many areas, including the Mohawk Valley, had various types of textile mills. Usually there was a dyer in the area and often after the weaving process, cloth would be sent to a professional dyer or bleacher to have its colour changed. This doesn't mean that nobody made their own cloth completely, but it was rarer than we are generally led to believe.

Things people find very interesting about what we wear:

- **We don’t use buttons.** I don’t think there was any particular reason for this, but women’s clothing only rarely had buttons (and it was even rarer that it ever had functional buttons, most of the ones I’ve seen have been solely for decoration). Nearly everything is tied on you and the occasional garment is pinned. This means that nearly everything you wear is very adjustable, in fact so much so that a pregnant woman could wear exactly the same clothes as a non-pregnant woman (although commonly a pregnant woman would modify stays or a shortgown if she had the fabric to do it).

- **Stays** (and Jumps) are endlessly fascinating to the average tourist. Unlike the corsets of the nineteenth century, the purpose of stays were not as much to make the wearer thin, as they were to discipline her shape. There are many aspects of stays that are interesting. Stays aren’t as uncomfortable as they look. Stays make you walk, stand and hold your arms and hands differently. Stays are laced with only one lace (for two reasons: (1) uses less stay lacing; (2) in an emergency the stays can be cut open very easily.). A woman was considered undressed if she wasn’t wearing them. Although stays are technically underwear, they were often worn without a jacket to make it easier to work. There was no stigma attached to the low neckline of stays, in fact women were expected to have that much décolletage. (It was considered improper to show one’s shoulders, elbows or one’s legs above the calf.)

- **Mob caps** were to protect your hair when you were working. Women never wore their hair down, although they may have gone capless on occasion, their hair would have been styled in some manner. In the lower classes, women sometimes greased their buns (underneath their mob cap to help keep their hair up and insects out. Everyone wore hats, the most common being the flat-crowned straw hat. One of the purposes of these hats was to keep the sun off your face. Tans were considered the mark of the labourer and people would endeavour, as much as possible, to avoid getting tanned.

- **Aprons** were tied at the front so that you could carry stuff in them without straining the bow of the strings so that it untied.

- **The less-fancy shoes** were made on straight lasts (in other words there was no right or left foot). This is so they could be exchanged between feet and worn evenly, thus lasting longer. Durability was not the only problem with shoes. Because they were usually made outside the home, they were not an easily replaceable item and many people of our class were lucky to have one pair. Clogs were worn by all European peasants. They are durable, warm and dry. They had different shapes, many of them much more shoe-like than the clogs we wear. Quite often they had leather uppers and wooden lowers.

- **The desirable eighteenth century shape** was a firm almost barrel-shape from the waist up, a small waist and wide hips. No one minded if their hoop created a stomach at the front.

- **People smelled bad** in the eighteenth century. Towards the end of the eighteenth century, people were just losing the popular perception that bathing was dangerous to your health and in our class, and particularly in the case of the average musketman, people often didn’t have enough clothes to do laundry. Clothes would actually rot, (especially delicate fabrics) mostly under the arms. Linen clothes that had been reduced to rags could be sold to make paper. (This is what newspapers are often called ‘rags.’) Also tooth-brushing being quite uncommon, breath was apt to be rather overpowering. There are many novels that list ‘sweet breath’ as an outstandingly attractive characteristic of the hero or heroine.

- **Shifts** were the only underwear [in our sense of the word] that was worn by women. In the eighteenth century, stays and an under petticoat were also sometimes referred to as underwear. No upper class
woman would be seen in her stays outside her house. However it was perfectly acceptable for the working woman to take off her jacket, shortgown or bedgown to work.

- People are usually interested in seeing just how many layers of clothing we are wearing. When you are properly dressed (Shift, 2 petticoats, stays, hips, jacket, pockets and apron) you have 8 garments around your waist. The other thing that is interesting is that because they are made of natural fibres, this combination is not as hot as it sounds.

- People also can’t understand just how valuable a commodity clothes were. The second hand clothing trade (fueled largely by stolen goods) was a booming business. Newspapers nearly always had advertisements offering rewards for the return of stolen clothes. People willed their clothes (right down to the neckerchiefs, pockets etc.) to their heirs. The other effect of the value of clothes in the 18th century was that clothing was constantly remade. If it had been made of good heavy material, you might remake great-grandmother’s gown (that had been remade constantly by the women of your family for 100 years.)

- Only the most upper class women were at the vanguard of fashion (mistresses of the King etc.). These were the only women who would attempt to set fashions by being different. Everyone else, although they had a strong desire to look better than their peer group, had no desire to look different from their peer group. This is why, when you look at paintings of the period, everybody is wearing a slightly different version of the same hat, mob cap, hair style, earrings and garments. Differences are a reflection of individual colour tastes and individual creators. They are not a reflection of a desire to be different.

- It is interesting to trace the evolution of styles from lower class to upper class and back to lower. This happens in our own time (for example, blue jeans) as well. The prime example of this is the polonaise style (Polonaise is from the French for ‘Polish’ [feminine], for some unknown reason). Working women often looped up their over petticoats to keep them clean. When the pastoral fad hit the French nobility, women would dress in imitation of shepherdesses (pearl, flower and ribbon-covered shepherdesses) and loop their gowns or petticoats up in a stylized imitation of the working woman. Then working women, instead of tying up their petticoats started carefully pulling them up and puffing them at the back (like we do) in imitation of the upper class polonaise style.

Nancy Watt

---

**John Enys & His Birch Bark Canoe**

On April 22, 1775 John Enys’ father purchased his son an Ensign’s commission in the 29th Regiment of Foot. On March 21, 1776 the 18 year old lad set sail for North America as part of the relief force for the besieged city of Quebec. When John stepped ashore on May 29 with the 1st Lieutenant and Pilot of the Surprize, he confessed that “what led me on Shore was my curiosity to see a Savage which I expected to See leaping from Hill to Hill in the Manner Goats do in England.” And so began a great adventure that exposed him to combat, travel, people and sport, much of which is recorded in his “American Journals of Lt. John Enys”. He served in North American during the Revolution, until he returned home on leave in July, 1782. He rejoined his regiment as a Captain in the Fall of 1783. Although the 29th Regt of Foot returned to England in October, 1787, Capt Enys did not sail with them. Instead, he set out on an American tour which led him to New York City, via Lake Champlain and the Hudson, and on to Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

During the war his assignments brought him in contact with the Royal Yorkers on several occasions and took him to many sites that we are quite familiar with as reenactors.

On June 17, 1776 he had his first encounter with Sir John Johnson. On hearing that the rebels had abandoned Montreal his unit was ordered to reoccupy the town. He wrote, “Next Morning about Nine O’Clock we Marched into it to the great joy of some of the Inhabitants. A few hours after our Arrival Sir John Johnson Arrived with about 200 Men which had been Most of them tenants of his on his Estate on the Mohak River and near as many Indians who brought with them a Six pounder which the latter had taken at the
Cedars a short time before. I confess I was a little alarmed being at Breakfast when they arrived and knowing our Regt to be scattered all over the town. When the Indians began firing their Salute according to custom I thought the Rebels had returned but was soon convinced of the Contrary.

Lt Enys seemed to have a high regard for the woodcraft skills of the Indians. On one of Major Christopher Carleton's raids, Enys recalled a training exercise in the woods. “During our Stay here our party went into the Woods a little way to practice treeng as they Call it, that is to Say the Manner of hiding ourselves behind Trees, Stumps etc. and at our return the Major was pleased to say the Men had exceeded his expectations tho I could See very plainly our Aukwardness diverted the Indians and Royalists [Loyalists] who are by far better hands at this Work being bred in the Woods from their Infancy, and Accustomed to this Manner of hiding themselves in order to Shoot Deer, and other Wild Beasts.”

In 1780 Lt Enys participated in the 3-pronged raid into New York and Vermont. While Sir John Johnson attacked Schenectady and the Mohawk Valley, Enys joined Major Christopher Carleton's expedition which set out from Isle aux Noix with troops from the 29th, 34th, 53rd, 84th, Royal Yorkers, Rangers, Royalists and Natives. Enys recalled, “In the Evening of the 6th [of October]...we got into West bay behind Crown point, about 2 O'Clock in the Morning. Soon after day light Capt. Munro's detachmen [Capt Munro and 180 Royal Yorkers, Rangers and Natives] left us and crossing the Bay hid his boats in the same place Sr. John Johnson had done the preceeding Spring, and which for distinction Sake I shall call Sr. Johns Landing – after which he set off on foot for the place of his destination then totally unknown to us.” Munro of course was leading the raid on Ballstown, with hopes of joining Sir John at Schenectady.

Major Carleton's force continued south toward Ticonderoga. Enys' journal provides wonderful details about the campaign, with an interesting account illustrating the joys of night travel in boats. He wrote, “Capt. Munro having left us, the remainder of the day was employed in Making up our packs and preparing everything for our March, taking twelve day provisions with us, and in the Evening everything being ready we proceeded towards Ticonderoga, Our Boats all in a line each boat following his leader. In this Situation my boat got upon one of the Piers of the Bridge at ticonderoga which had been burnt down to the Water Edge when our people left that place, and whilst I was fast upon it, the boats which were before me got out of Sight. I endeavoured to overtake them as much as lay in my power, Supposing they had been before me, but after having Rowed for a Considerable time to no purpose, and not knowing where the Major meant to Sleep, who was with the headmost boats, I stopped and told the Officer Commanding my Situation that I was totally lost as I had never been above Crown point before.” Enys then backtracked and the next morning reconnected with Major Carleton. “I now found out how I was lost the Night before as the Bridge on which I run was but a Short distance from the Mouth of this Creek [leading to Lake George] and whilst I was fast on the Bridge they had entered it which I not knowing had pursued them up South bay supposing them to have gone Strait forward.”

Although Enys returned to England for several years in 1782–3, in 1784 he came back to Canada where he was assigned to a number of pleasant and not-so-pleasant outposts. His observations are delightful.

While travelling up the St Lawrence River towards Cataraqui [Kingston] he stopped a Johnstown [Cornwall], “the capital of the new settlement. Tho I have no doubt there may be good reasons for placing this town in the situation where it stands I confess I can by no means discover the shadow of one. It is an old French settlement indeed, if we are obliged to follow them in all there follies, but appears to me to be the worst place for the town in the whole River being low swampy ground, must of course have bad Water and be subject to those disorders which are inseparable from such a situation.”

A little further west things began to look up. “Having passed this we got up to a place called Rapid Au Minerale tho in the Map no such place is to be found it being called Isle aux deux tettes. Here is a beautifull Point and on it one of the best Farms on the River. It belongs to a Mr. [Jeremiah] French. Here was Industry and Cleanliness as conspicuous as we had before seen at Lake St. Francois Dirt & Idleness. We were here very cively rec'd and passed a very comfortable Night.” Jeremiah French of
course was the Yorker officer from whom we have the only surviving Yorker uniform. Capt Enys had a knack for making his own fun, as he demonstrated during his stay at Cataraqui [Kingston]. “Our winter in this place was almost as dull as our Summer. We however continue to make up a Dance once a fortnight of from 10 to 16 Couples and lived in very tolerable Society with such few persons as are in this place. The winter here we found much milder than at Montral as we had only three or four days near the Queens birth day that could be called intensely cold.”

From Cataraqui Enys was ordered to take command at Carleton Island. Again, when Enys was given lemons he made lemonade. “The society of this place is again less than that of Cataraqui but there is two or three families who made it tolerable and having the transport at that post we never wanted for Company. Indeed I had frequently more than I could well manage to get meat for. I had here also plenty of amusement. Being told I should remain here the winter I set to work in earnest at a Garden and Indian Corn field in one of which I spent all the time I had to spare from the duties of my Office or hospitality, which was no small part of my time.”

From Carleton Island he was sent to Fort Ontario. “The next day I received the Command from Capt Forbes and on the 22d he left me to myself in the most lonely some place I was ever quarterd in. This place is better known by the Name of Oswego than Fort Ontario but is by no means the same place, the old fort of Oswego being on the Opposite Side of the River Onandoago which here empties itself into the Lake.”

Capt Enys took a sightseeing trip to Fort Niagara, which included an excursion to Niagara Falls. After describing the Fort’s defenses and the “most remarkable building by far which they call the Large house”, he went on to talk about the origin of Niagara’s fruit growing. “As the Fort contains a good deal of ground there are a great many other buildings within it many of which have very comfortable gardens belonging to them which make good Quarters for the Officers. The Gardens within the Fort are not only sufficient to supply the garrison with Cherries, Peaches etc, but also to send a good many to Cataraqui & Carleton Island. Indeed I have known Peaches sent from thence to Quebec.”

And then across the river was present day Niagara-On-The-Lake. “The Settlements offered to come in, and a good many have come at the hazard of being sent back again. Many of these people have left good farms in the States and come here to a very precarious settlement as from what I can find they go on their Lands without any Title from Government and are liable to be turned off again if it may be hereafter proved they have born Armes or acted against us during the late War.”

John Enys was an avid fisherman and seemed to carry his fly fishing gear with him wherever he went. At one point he remarked that the “Inhabitants came to us on our landing wishing to know why we had come thither. On being told we came to fish for Salmon they laughed at us saying they never had seen any but there was plenty of other fish. Whilst most of us were employed fixing our Camp, Major Campbell took his Rod and very soon caught a fish. This was the first Salmon the people of the Settlement had seen here and they were equally astonished to find those fish in the River and to see them caught with so Slender a Rod. They wished very much to see our Baits and it was not without some difficulty we made them believe that we caught them with the flies we shewed them…. We had not very good success on the first day but it improved afterwards, so that we had as many Salmon as we could wish for ourselves, gave some to the Inhabitants and brought away twenty in Pickle [pickerel].”

John Enys’ journal is full of interesting anecdotes and insights about the Revolution and early days in Canada following the war. In addition to his journal however, it has been discovered that he left one more item for our enjoyment and education. When he returned home to England in the 1780’s he took with him a birch bark canoe, which he stored in a barn on the Enys family estate. This canoe was recently discovered and taken to the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth, England for investigation. Henri Vaillancourt, an American expert on birch bark canoes, has studied and built birch bark canoes for over 40 years and is co-founder of the Trust for Native American Cultures and Crafts. He was extremely excited by this rare find. Vaillancourt commented that, “The canoe is readily identifiable as being of a type made by the Malecite and Abnaki tribes of Southern Quebec and, judging from illustrations from the 1700s, could well have been made by the Mohawk or Huron tribes or even the French, as all of these groups were heavily involved in the production of canoes at this time. The canoe also has a rounded gunnel structure, a common feature in early period canoes, but one which became increasingly rare. The wood used to construct the canoe is unusually knotty. The likelihood that this canoe was built in the late 1700’s may account for the use of this grade of material. This time period coincided with the peak of the fur trade in the St Lawrence River Valley, where the demand for canoes would have been great. It is historically documented that shortages of materials frequently occurred where canoe production was high. All of this evidence is consistent with the journals of John Enys, so it seems likely that the canoe was indeed brought to the UK by him in the 1780’s. If this is the case, then it represents the oldest known full sized [6 metres long] birch bark canoe in existence.”

John Enys’ birch bark canoe has been returned to Canada on a Canadian military aircraft, and now resides at the Canadian Canoe Museum in Peterborough.
The following article by Brenda Dougall Merriman was recently published in issue 2012-37 of the Loyalist Trails UELAC Newsletter:

It’s likely well known in Loyalist circles that in 1822 Sir John [Johnson] donated a bell to St. Stephen’s Anglican Church in Chambly, Quebec. Although once stolen, the bell was recovered and can be seen at the historic church. It was made in England in 1812 by Isaac Tod.

Perhaps not as widely known is the bell Sir John donated to St. Andrews Presbyterian Church in St. Andrews East (now officially Saint-André d’Argenteuil), Quebec. Having purchased the Seigniory of Argenteuil in 1808, Sir John had built a home there — later destroyed by fire. He donated land for the Scottish church which was completed in 1821. I quote from W. Harold Reid, The Presbyterian Church, St. Andrews and Lachute, Quebec, 1818-1932 (Hamilton, ON: Eagle Press, 1979):

“Sir John Johnson had brought up from his former home in the Mohawk Valley this bell which at first was used at his new Manor House, but later he presented it to Mr. Henderson [incumbent 1818-1877]. It was used for some time as a church bell, then was taken down, and for many years has stood on a table in the vestibule of the church. The inscription on the bell reads: me fecit pieter seest amstelodami ad 1764” (p. 11)

Since Sir John died in 1830, clearly the gift was presented in the 1820’s. A little research showed that master founder Pieter Seest was the foreman of Amsterdam’s bell and cannon factory, eventually becoming a director of the firm in 1770. The date on St. Andrew’s bell makes it a year older than the famed “U.S.S. Constitution bell” being displayed in a Rhode Island museum’s War of 1812 exhibit in September: http://www.hearthsidehouse.org/news/2012.constitution.html.

The American ship U.S.S. Constitution, nicknamed Old Ironsides, won an 1812 sea battle with the British H.M.S. Guerriere and took the bell as a war trophy. Apparently other bell and cannon artifacts have been occasionally located with Pieter Seest’s foundry signature.

With only superficial research, I wonder if many are older than 1764. My burning question is: Does St. Andrews Presbyterian Church still have and display its historic bell?

Brenda Dougall Merriman, CG
brendadougallmerriman@gmail.com

Fort Johnson Update

Following Gelston Castle I drove to Fort Johnson. I, among others, have been concerned with the site and interested in its progress with restoration work following the flash floods of August and September last year. I was disappointed that they were not open and there was no one to speak with, but pleased to read that this Saturday, August 11, will be their grand re-opening, or as they call it, “Reopen House at Old Fort Johnson”. http://www.oldfortjohnson.org/ The web site has a link to a pdf with photos before and after the flooding: http://www.oldfortjohnson.org/Resources/Beforeafter.pdf

From photos I took, you can see the water line still evident on the building. It might be easier to see if one looks at the before/after photos from the web site.

Cpl Keith Lindsey
It’s hard to surpass Frederick the Great for military wisdom and a catchy turn of phrase:

“THE COMMANDERS of armies are more to be pitied than one would think. Without listening to them, all the world denounces them, the newspapers ridicule them, and yet, of the thousands who condemn them, there is not one that could command even the smallest unit.
– Frederick the Great (1712–1786)

“GENTLEMEN, the enemy stands behind his entrenchments, armed to the teeth. We must attack him and win, or else perish. Nobody must think of getting through any other way. If you don’t like this, you may resign and go home.
– Frederick the Great, Dec 5, 1757 – Battle of Leuthen

“BY PUSH OF BAYONETS, no firing till you see the whites of their eyes.
– Frederick the Great, May 6, 1757 – Battle of Prague

“If you wish to be loved by your soldiers, husband their blood and do not lead them to slaughter.
– Frederick the Great, 1747, Instructions to His Generals,

“There is an ancient rule of war that cannot be repeated often enough: hold your forces together, make no detachments, and, when you are ready to fight the enemy, assemble all your forces and seize every advantage to make sure of success.
– Frederick the Great, 1747, Instructions to His Generals,

“This rule is so certain that most of the generals who have neglected it have been punished promptly.
– Frederick the Great, 1747, Instructions to His Generals,

“It is an invariable axiom of war to secure your own flanks and rear and endeavor to turn those of your enemy.
– Frederick the Great, 1747, Instructions to His Generals,

“All that can be done with the soldier is to give him esprit de corps – a higher opinion of his own regiment than all the other troops in the country.
– Frederick the Great, Military Testament, 1768

“Battles are won by superiority of fire.
– Frederick the Great, Military Testament, 1768

“It sometimes happens that the officers must lead them [soldiers] into considerable danger, and since ambition can exert no influence on the men, they must be made to fear their officers more than the perils to which they are exposed, otherwise nobody would be able to make them attack into a storm of missiles thundering from three hundred cannon.
– Frederick the Great, Testament Politique, 1768

“You will have seen by what I have had occasion to delineate concerning war that promptness contributes a great deal to success in marches and even more in battles. That is why our army is drilled in such a fashion that it acts faster than others. Drill is the basis of these manoeuvres which enable us to form in the twinkling of an eye…
– Frederick the Great, Instructions to His Generals, 1747