

CHAPTER V

PONTIAC'S WAR AND SIR WILLIAM'S ESTATE 1761-1770

AFTER the treaty—or treaties—of Detroit in 1761 the Indians, both in the older English colonies and the newly acquired domain of Canada, remained quiescent for two years. In view of the vastly increased scope of his duties, both as to the number of Indians and as to the extent of territory to be dealt with, Sir William found it necessary to operate in all ordinary or routine affairs through deputies. He already had one deputy superintendent, who had held the position for several years, with headquarters, after 1758, at Fort Pitt, and having charge of the Indians in the Ohio Valley. He now appointed two more deputy superintendents. One was his son-in-law, Colonel Daniel Claus, husband of his daughter Nancy; and the other his nephew, Colonel Guy Johnson, who was soon to be married to his daughter Mary—both by his white wife. Croghan remained in charge of

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the Ohio Indians, with headquarters as before, at Fort Pitt. Colonel Claus was placed in charge of the Canadian Indians west of the Ottawa River, with headquarters at Detroit. Colonel Guy Johnson took charge of the Iroquois and the Canadian Indians east of the Ottawa, with headquarters at Oswego. This arrangement relieved the baronet of all minor details of Indian administration, leaving him free to devote his time to questions of general policy and to the adjustment of differences among the Indians themselves. It was not easy to make such hereditary enemies as the Iroquois and Algonquins comprehend the idea of living in peace under control of the same superintendent. Affairs, however, progressed without much jarring until 1763.

We have remarked that Sir William acquired in 1751 or 1752 a large tract of land, patented to himself "and others" in 1753 as the "Kingsboro Patent," and located a little distance north from the Mohawk River, in the region round about the present city of Johnstown, N. Y. Among the "others" mentioned as parties in this tract was Arent Stevens, a widely celebrated Indian trader and interpreter. Sir William gradually bought out his associates, one by one, until the entire tract came into his possession. It

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embraced about 26,000 acres.¹ From time to time he made substantial improvements on this tract, clearing considerable areas, building sawmills and a grist-mill, and settling upon it a considerable colony of tenants, mostly Scotch-Irish and Highland emigrants.

About 1760 or 1761 it had become more valuable and important than his smaller estate at Mount Johnson, and he decided to remove to it. During the years 1761-62 he built a manor-house on this estate, to which he gave the name of "Johnson Hall." It is still standing, near the present city of Johnstown—which he, at the same time, founded.

In the early spring of 1763 the new manor-house was completed, and Sir William moved into it, leaving Mount Johnson and the estate connected with it in possession of his eldest son and heir—afterward Sir John Johnson—then just arrived at the age of twenty-one. Johnson Hall was—and is—a large, commodious mansion, and at that time the most imposing edifice west of the Hudson River. It consisted of a main building of wood, weather-

¹ The total area was much more than 26,000 acres. But many settlers were already within its boundaries, having built houses and cleared farms. They had no valid titles, but Sir William gave them deeds for nominal consideration and did not disturb any of them.

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boarded in a fashion to resemble blocks of hewn stone—much like Washington's residence at Mount Vernon. It had two wing-buildings in the same style of architecture, though smaller and built of stone.

Sir William had by this time accumulated a large family. It consisted of his two daughters by Katharine Weisenburg—Nancy and Mary—then about twenty-two and twenty years old, respectively, the former recently wedded to Colonel Daniel Claus, and the latter soon to be married to his nephew, Colonel Guy Johnson. Besides these—his children born in wedlock—there were Charlotte and Caroline Johnson, his half-breed daughters by Caroline Hendrick, these about fourteen and eleven years of age, respectively, and the five little half-breeds that Molly Brant had borne to him in the nine years of their life together. The sixth of Molly Brant's children, a girl named Mary, was born at Johnson Hall, not long after its occupation by the family. Sir William's half-breed son by Caroline Hendrick, young William Johnson, did not make his home at the mansion, but lived at Canajoharie, part of the time with his grandfather, the sachem Abraham, and part of the time with his uncle, "Little Abe." However, at this particular time, young Will-

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iam Johnson was attending Dr. Wheelock's Academy at Lebanon, Conn., along with his cousin, Joseph Brant, who graduated in the spring of that year.¹

It was at his new residence of Johnson Hall that Sir William received the first intimations of Pontiac's conspiracy in the summer of 1763. He was not apprised of it until just before the storm burst. This was the first time in his twenty years' experience in dealing with the Indians that the baronet had been taken off his guard. The secrecy with which Pontiac's plot had been hatched, considering its vast extent and thorough organization, was marvelous. For more than a year its arrangements had been in progress, car-

¹ Joseph Brant used to relate with much relish an anecdote of his high-spirited young half-breed cousin, who was seven or eight years his junior. Young Ralph Wheelock, the reverend doctor's son, had a saddle pony, and one day, thinking to make young William Johnson "fag" for him, ordered the half-breed boy to go and saddle up the pony and bring it around to the door. "I won't do it," said young Johnson. "A gentleman's son, as I am, does not perform menial service for the sons of common people!"

"What is a gentleman?" inquired young Wheelock rather superciliously.

"A gentleman," quickly responded the young half-breed, "is a man who lives in a big mansion, has a great lot of land, keeps race horses, and drinks Madeira wine at his dinner—and your father doesn't do a single one of those things!"

Young Wheelock saddled the pony himself.

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ried out among many tribes, and covering a vast territory; yet, with all Sir William's elaborate system of information through his scouts, traders, and runners, the first outbreak took him completely by surprise. This outbreak was the attack on Detroit, the best fortified post west of Niagara.

It was garrisoned by two companies of British regulars, having 128 men and 8 officers, of Gage's light infantry. The first effort of Pontiac was to take it by stratagem, which was frustrated by the vigilance of Major Gladwyn, the commandant. The major had a pretty Chippewa half-breed girl as housekeeper and companion, and she, overhearing the conversations of the Indians in their own tongue, discovered their intentions and informed her protector just in the nick of time. Gladwyn at once took precautions, refused to admit the Indians inside the stockade, and on the 7th of May, when they tried to force their way in, killed two of their chiefs with his own pistols right in front of the main gate.

Pontiac, observing that his plot was detected, then settled down to a close siege, which was maintained, with many vicissitudes, until November 15, when the Indians, worn out, dejected, and discouraged, not only

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abandoned the siege, but sued for peace. Pontiac, deserted by his warriors, sullenly returned almost alone to his village, declaring his intention to try it again.

Almost simultaneously with the attack on Detroit a large force of Ohio Indians—Shawnees, Wyandots, Miamis, Delawares, and Mingoes—invested Fort Pitt. The garrison at this post was four companies of the Royal Americans, and the real commandant was Major George Croghan, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs. As soon as tidings of the attack reached the settlements of Pennsylvania, east of the mountains, General Amherst sent Colonel Bouquet, with 500 regulars, mostly Highlanders, to raise the siege. During his march Bouquet was joined by 280 or 300 Pennsylvania and Virginia frontiersmen. Among these was a company of about fifty, from the upper Potomac and Shenandoah valleys, who came up the Cumberland Valley and joined the expedition at Carlisle—or where that town is now. There was nothing particularly remarkable about these fifty Virginia backwoodsmen, except that their captain was a man of the name of Daniel Morgan!

They were nearly all hunters and trappers; men from whom the Indians themselves

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could learn lessons in woodcraft and the art of bush-fighting.

The 5th of August, 1763, when Bouquet's force was within a few miles of the fort, the savages laid an ambuscade for him at a place called Bushy Run, on a plan much similar to the ambush into which Braddock had marched eight years before. But Bouquet was not Braddock. Apprised of this ambuscade by some of his Pennsylvania backwoodsmen, whom he kept in advance as scouts, he was not taken by surprise. The scout who first discovered and reported the presence of the Indians in force was Lewis Wetzel, then a youth hardly twenty years old, but who subsequently became one of the most bloodthirsty and successful "Indian-killers" known to American history. A most desperate battle ensued, resulting in the total rout of the savages, who lost over 300 out of about 700. The loss of Bouquet's force was 8 officers and 115 enlisted men killed or wounded, nearly one-third of the latter mortally. Bouquet then marched without further opposition to the fort, the besieging Indians fleeing down the river in their canoes.

Several attempts against Fort Niagara were made by a force mainly composed of renegade Senecas, with some Ottawas and

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Ohio Indians. They surprised and massacred two or three small parties in the neighborhood of the fort, but did not attempt to besiege it. While these events were in progress the Indians attacked, with more success, the smaller and slenderly garrisoned posts of Leboeuf, Venango, Presque Isle, St. Joseph, Maumee, Mackinaw, Sandusky, and St. Mary's, butchering their unfortunate garrisons almost to a man.

However, before the end of 1763 the main force of Pontiac's rebellion was crushed, and though spasmodic outbreaks occurred for a year afterward, it never again assumed formidable proportions. General Amherst was disposed to deal in a conciliatory spirit with the Canadian Indians. But he was bitterly incensed at the conduct of the Senecas, and informed Sir William, in the winter of 1763-64, that it was his intention in the early spring to take a force of regulars and Provincials—which he proposed to command in person—and, as he expressed it, “wipe forever from the face of the earth that faithless, cruel tribe, who have already too long debauched the good name of the Iroquois Confederacy by pretending to belong to it!”

In a memoir of Lord Amherst, published

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anonymously in London in 1798, about a year after his death, appears the following:

. . . General Amherst objected to any further negotiation with the Senecas. They were, he said, destitute of honor, faithless, treacherous, and a race of natural-born criminals and murderers. They cumbered the ground. He could make no use of them but exterminate them as a warning example to all other Indians. He at once formulated a general order for concentration of all the British forces in North America against the Seneca nation. He called for 10,000 militia to be furnished by Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia in appropriate quotas. Of the 11,000 British regulars then in the colonial garrisons he ordered 6,500 to take the field. He also directed that the services of friendly Indians, if proffered, should be declined, as this was to be purely a white man's war! He proposed to move against the Senecas in four columns. General Bouquet with the Pennsylvania and Virginia militia and the 700 regulars in the Ohio District—altogether about 3,500 strong—was to move from Fort Pitt up the Allegheny River and French Creek to attack from the southwest. General Haldimand was to assemble at Fort Niagara a force of 3,000 regulars drawn from the Canadian garrisons and assail the Western Senecas. Sir William Johnson, with the New York and Connecticut militia and 500 regulars—altogether about 3,500 strong—was to

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move down the Susquehanna and up the Chemung against the southeastern towns. While General Amherst in person, with the Massachusetts and New Hampshire militia and 2,500 regulars, forming a force of about 6,000, was to invade the Seneca country from the east by way of the Mohawk Valley and Onondaga. "No male Seneca capable of bearing arms will be spared," he said. "The women and children will be taken prisoners and afterward distributed among the other tribes. The Seneca nation as an organized tribe must disappear! Every habitation in the Seneca country will be razed to the ground. Their crops will be destroyed and their live stock killed or driven off. It is my intention to destroy the tribe and completely desolate their country. After that is done their lands will escheat to the Crown and will at once be opened to white settlement."

That General Amherst was able to accomplish his purpose is beyond question. The force he proposed to mobilize was about 16,000. The total population of the Seneca nation was not more than 10,000 or 11,000, and they could not, even by levy *en masse*, muster over 1,500 fighting men. In fact, any two of his proposed four columns of invasion could have crushed the tribe. That the Senecas merited condign punishment for their perfidy and cruelty is quite clear. But that they deserved the dire fate General Amherst threatened to visit upon them is not so apparent.

There is, however, circumstantial evidence that

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the commander-in-chief did not intend to be as savage as his word. No militia was actually embodied except the Mohawk regiment under Colonel Claus and three independent companies of Schoharie and the Susquehanna. The only movement of regulars was a transfer of the second battalion, Sixtieth Royal American Foot, about 800 strong, from the garrison of Quebec to Oswego. Moreover, the tenor of General Amherst's orders was, by some mysterious agency, made known in the Seneca villages almost as soon as at the colonial capitals. . . . If, as seems plausible, it was a threat on a grand scale, the effect was all that could have been desired, because the Senecas abjectly sued for mercy and peace and never again made any trouble.

Sir William vigorously opposed this policy. He declared that what the Senecas had done was not their act as a tribe, but the independent, unauthorized, and much-regretted action of their bad or misguided young men. The Senecas, on their part, hearing of General Amherst's project, sued in the most abject manner for peace, and promised to deliver up the prime instigators of the defection among them. Upon this, Amherst relented. They gave up to him nineteen of the "instigators," and after hanging two of the worst of them at Onondaga Castle, by way of an "object-lesson," the general aban-

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doned his declared intention of "exterminating the tribe"!

"In all my long and happy acquaintance with him," says Sir William in his journal, "this was the first time I ever saw General Amherst display real anger. But on this occasion he was thoroughly roused, and all his usual placidity of temper seemed to have vanished. In truth, it was with difficulty at first I could induce him to listen to my expostulations."

The hanging of the two sub-chiefs of the Senecas by General Amherst at Onondaga Castle was the first exhibition the Indians had seen of the Anglo-Saxon mode of punishing murderers. In order to make the spectacle more impressive, the general ordered the bodies of the culprits to be sunk in Onondaga Lake with stones tied about their necks, as food for the fishes. And he forbade any mourning or other funereal rites for them in the tribe, threatening to hang any one who should attempt to offer any rites to their memory. The fact is that, but for Sir William's intercession, Amherst would have hanged the whole nineteen renegades who were delivered up to him. As it was, he took the other seventeen to New York and kept them in jail there until every vestige of Pon-

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tiac's conspiracy had disappeared. They were not released until Pontiac himself formally surrendered in 1766. During their two years of imprisonment eight out of the seventeen died. The fates of these renegades cowed the Senecas for all time.

It was, perhaps, fortunate for the restoration of tranquillity between the white people and the Senecas, that General Amherst was appointed Governor of Virginia at the end of 1763, and left the New York frontier in the spring of 1764 to take up his new duties shortly after the events just noted. His departure left Sir William Johnson in complete control of the situation, and he soon succeeded in bringing the Senecas to a status of perfect obedience and amity. However, the unwonted spectacle of publicly hanging two of their chiefs on the same gallows was a lesson that sank deep into their memories. To them it was an infinitely severer punishment than even burning at the stake. "That way of killing a warrior with a rope," they said, "chokes him so he can not sing his death-song. He can sing his death-song at the stake, but not when he is being choked to death by a rope!"

As we have remarked, Pontiac himself did not surrender until 1766, nearly three years after the outbreak of his plot, and two years

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after its complete suppression. Finally, after much negotiation and correspondence, Pontiac agreed to meet Sir William at Oswego to smoke the great calumet of peace and pledge his fealty to the King of England. On the 23d of July, 1766, the great chief and Sir William met face to face at Oswego. Stone gives a striking description of their meeting:

As it was now the warmest of summer weather, the council was held in the open air, protected from the rays of the sun by an awning of ever-greens. . . . At one end of the leafy canopy the manly form of the Superintendent, wrapped in his scarlet blanket bordered with gold lace, and surrounded by the glittering uniforms of British officers, was seen with hand extended in welcome to the great Ottawa, who, standing erect in conscious power, his rich plumes waving over the circle of his warriors, accepted the proffered hand with an air in which defiance and respect were singularly blended. Around, stretched at length upon the grass, lay the proud chiefs of the Six Nations, gazing with curious eyes upon the man who had come hundreds of miles to smoke the calumet with their beloved Superintendent.

From Oswego Sir William went to Niagara, where he held a grand council with delegates from all the western and Ohio tribes that had been implicated in Pontiac's con-

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spiracy. He was detained at Niagara for some time by delay in arrival of delegates from the tribes farthest west, and he says that he "took advantage of this waiting-spell to indulge in his favorite sport of gunning for wild fowl which, at this time of the year, swarm upon the waters of the river, bay, and lake."

Finally, in September, Sir William returned to his home at Johnson Hall.

The events just related practically ended his direct personal attention to Indian affairs. The treaties he made at Oswego and Niagara included every Indian tribe hitherto under French dominion or influence, together with the Ohio tribes—Shawnees, Wyandots, Miamis, Mingoes, Delawares, and the remnant of the Piquas or Piankeshaws. Most of the southern Indians were also represented at the Niagara council; Cherokees from western North Carolina and northern Georgia; Chickasaws from what is now middle and northern Alabama; Yemassees from the uplands of South Carolina; Catawbas from northwestern North Carolina and the southern part of what is now West Virginia. No delegates were present from the Creeks of southern and middle Alabama and Georgia, or from the Choc-taws and the Natches of what is now Mississippi. Some of these latter tribes, notably

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the Creeks and Choctaws, were still under the Spanish and French influence, yet dominant in Florida and Louisiana. But, on the whole, the era beginning with the surrender of Pontiac was one of peace between the two races that lasted until the outbreak of the Revolution.

The deputy-superintendent system worked well. To the three deputies already in office—Croghan, Claus and Guy Johnson—Sir William now added a fourth in the person of Colonel Thomas Polk, of Mecklenburg, N. C., who assumed charge of the southern tribes, with headquarters where the city of Augusta, Ga., now stands.

From this time on the baronet retained under personal supervision only his faithful Mohawks, Oneidas, Oghwagas, and Tuscaroras. But these had almost ceased to be Indians. Most of them could speak English, and many of them could read and write. The Mohawks, now thoroughly intermingled with the white population of the valley that bears their name, had farms which they cultivated as thriftily as their white neighbors. In somewhat less degree the same was true of the Oneidas. The Oghwagas and Tuscaroras in the Susquehanna Valley, from the Unadilla to Chenango Point, and in the Great Bend, had

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many fertile clearings, orchards, and comfortable log-cabins. In these tribes the system of landholding was similar to that of the white people. Each Indian farmer owned and cultivated his separate farm. The western Iroquois—Onondagas, Cayugas, and Senecas—had a good deal of land cleared and under cultivation, with numerous orchards, and for the most part lived in cabins made of logs, or wattles plastered with clay and roofed with bark. But these tribes still adhered to the ancient usage and cultivated their lands in common. All were tranquil and apparently contented. Sir William had little to do in the official way but keep in touch with his deputies and watch the fruition of the work to which he had so long given his energies, and which he had conducted with such marvelous skill, patience, and courage. He now had under his control, or within the scope of his official authority, nearly two hundred thousand Indians.

The state of civilized comfort which the Iroquois had reached in the eighteenth century, though often described, is hardly realized by modern readers. In 1765, after the suppression of Pontiac, the British Government determined to make a road practicable for artillery and all kinds of wagon or sleigh

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traffic from the upper Mohawk to Fort Niagara. Sir William Johnson, being directed to make this road, organized a surveying party to lay out its route. The party consisted of Simon Metcalf, Philip Burlingame, Ezra Buell, James Ogden, and Sir William's half-breed son, William Johnson, who, having "graduated" at Dr. Wheelock's Lebanon Academy, had decided to learn the art of surveying. In his Narrative, Ezra Buell describes several of the towns through which they passed. We select his description of the "Old Castle Town," at the foot of Seneca Lake, near the present site of Geneva, N. Y.;

Here, he says, is a clearing about two miles long and more than a mile wide, bounded on the southeast by the lake shore. In the midst of it, about 60 rods from the lake, is the Old Castle, a strong log building, with a parapet around the roof well loopholed for musketry and the whole surrounded by a substantial log stockade. There is a spring inside the stockade and the whole structure will shelter a garrison of at least 300 to 350 men. From the Old Castle in both directions, east and west, is a broad street, I would say a hundred and fifty feet wide. On both sides of this thoroughfare are built, at distances of one or two hundred feet from each other, one-story log houses, having fire-places with chimneys made mostly of wattles filled in with clay, though some are of stonework. In

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many of the fireplaces I noticed swinging cranes to hang kettles on, the same as in white people's houses. They have plenty of cooking utensils—kettles, spiders, skillets, Dutch ovens, and roasting-spits. In some houses the floors are of hard-beaten clay; in others of puncheons (split logs), neatly fitted and smoothed off, and deer and elk skins, tanned with the hair on, are made to serve as carpets. The houses are built one room wide and in lengths according to the needs of the family. Some of them are four rooms in length, the rooms being generally from 12 to 14 feet square. The fireplace is usually in the middle room.

The cleared land is tilled in common, each family getting its share of the whole product. The crops are corn, pumpkins, melons, apples, pears, peaches, beans, and lately they raise some potatoes and turnips. They have a good many horses and a few cattle. But cattle need too much care and feeding in winter to suit the Indians. Besides, they have plenty of wild meat, and as they do not wish for milk, they have little need of cattle. In the village are 72 inhabited houses besides six log huts, roofed over, used as storehouses for corn and other provisions for winter. The total number of inhabitants is 427, of whom about 50 are half-breeds.

An important article of food with them is fish, with which the lake and Seneca River actually swarm—trout of several varieties, whitefish, pike, pickerel, and many other species. The Indians

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catch them mostly by spearing in the night, with a light at the bow of their canoes, which attracts the fish to the surface. They use a three-pronged spear and are very expert with it. These fish they salt down or smoke—such as they do not eat fresh. They get salt from the springs at Onondaga, where they go two or three times a year to make it by boiling the water in kettles or leaving it to evaporate under the hot sun in shallow troughs. Much of the timber about here is hard maple, from which they make quantities of molasses and some sugar of an inferior kind. They make cider by mashing apples in a large mortar and then letting the pulp or pumice ferment in large troughs hollowed out of logs. When the pulp gets soft they squeeze out the juice. It seems to agree with them, but our party suffered diarrhea from drinking it. . . . Altogether, the Senecas at Old Castle live as well as most of the white settlers in a new country. But I could see that they have no ambition for improvement beyond a certain point, as white settlers have. As soon as certain creature wants are satisfied they are done. Here, at Old Castle Town, they appear to have reached the end of their ambition and are content. The great war-chief, Cornplanter, lives here. He is the half-breed son of an old Indian trader by name of Abiel and a Seneca woman. Cornplanter's wife is a white woman, young and neat. He does not allow her to work, but keeps two or three squaws to be servants for her. He is a fine, stalwart fellow, very sensible, keeps open house for his friends,

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and is true to the King as steel. Here also resides the famous Council Chief, Kay-ag-sho-ta. He is reputed the best orator and wisest counselor in the Seneca nation. He always represents them in councils and conferences with the Government people. He made some mistakes at the beginning of Pontiac's war, but his glib tongue has got him safely out of them!

Three families of white people live here. They are the agent for the Eastern Senecas, Captain McMaster, his wife and two children; the licensed trader, Mr. Forman, his wife and three children; and the gunsmith, a Switzer, by name Drepard. The gunsmith is the most important personage here. The Indians often bring their broken guns a hundred miles to have him repair them. They have plenty of firearms. Every Indian able to carry a gun has one and some have two or three, taken from the enemy in the last war. A few of them have creased rifles, which they obtain in trading expeditions down the Susquehanna, whither they often go as far as Lancaster in Pennsylvania. This gunsmith was put here by Sir William Johnson through agreement with the Indians in 1759. His wife is a handsome young half-breed woman and they have one small child. . . .

Most of the Indians here dress after the fashion of white people. The men wear blue or green hunting-shirts, braided and fringed, and cloth or deer-skin leggings and moccasins. They are fond of the uniform coats of British or Provincial sol-

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diers. They do not wear the blanket as a garment, as wild Indians do, except in very cold weather.

The women wear gaudy-colored jackets, profusely braided and beaded, and flannel petticoats reaching a little below the knee, with leggings of fawn-skin and moccasins. . . .

The Post is half a mile east of the village on the lake shore. It has four good-sized log houses of two stories—the agent's house, the trader's house, the trader's store, which also contains the gunsmith's shop, and the gunsmith's house—all surrounded by a strong palisade of logs set deep in the ground. It is a busy place, many Indians from distant towns being always here to trade, or to see the agent, or get their guns mended.

It is worthy of note that the trader's two clerks are both young Indians educated at Canajoharie, one a half-breed, the other a full-blood.

About the time under consideration Sir William made a report to the Colonial Office in London, giving an enumeration of all the Indian tribes within his sphere of control or influence. This was in detail of the several tribes, and stated only the number of able-bodied men in each. But he explained that the grand total of all ages and sexes could be ascertained by considering the number of able-bodied men or warriors as one to every ten.¹

¹ Not all of the able-bodied men in any Indian tribe were rated as warriors. A considerable number were always pro-

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The Six Nations and eastern Canadian Indians he estimated at 3,960 warriors, indicating a population of about 40,000. The Ottawa Confederacy at 3,800 warriors, or 38,000 total. The various branches of the Chippewa Nation at 4,000 warriors, or 40,000 in all. The southern Indians—Cherokees, Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, etc., at 6,000 warriors, or 60,000 all told. All other remnants of tribes, about 1,000 able-bodied men, or 10,000 total population. No Indians living west of the Mississippi were included. In a note appended to this estimate Sir William said:

West of the Mississippi and north of the Missouri rivers are many large tribes subject to His Majesty's government by the territorial terms of the Treaty of Paris properly construed. But I must say it is quite evident to me that the framers of that treaty were in sore need of a scholar in geography. As for the numbers of these far-western tribes, I can get no accurate information. They have been visited only by the Jesuit Brothers and the French and half-breed *voyageurs* and *coureurs des bois*, none of whom pays much attention to statistical matters. All I can get from them is that many tribes inhabit that country, and some of them

fessional hunters, and these never took the war-path in distant expeditions; in fact, were not expected to fight unless in defense of their villages. On an average the professional hunters were about one-fifth of the able-bodied males.

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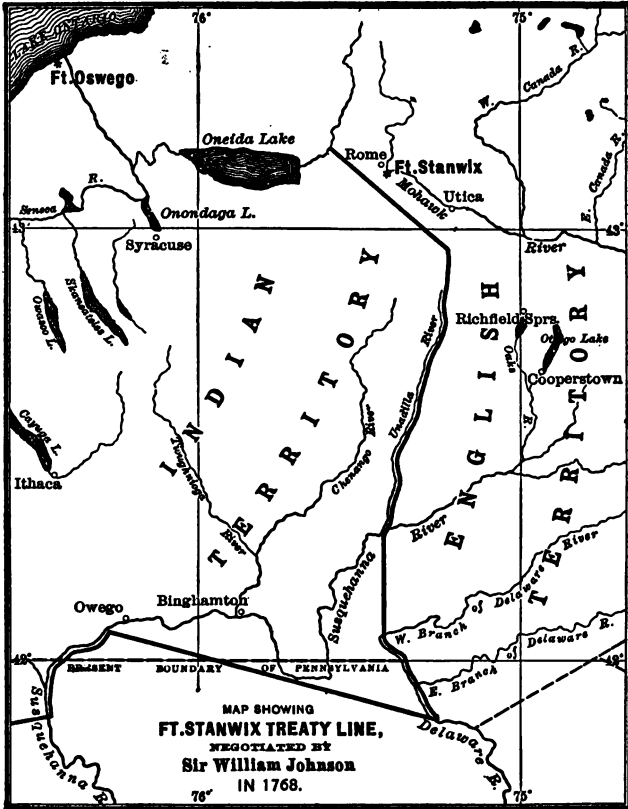
are very numerous. The Jesuit Father, St. Martin, and his attendant, Jacques la Bute, whom I met at Detroit in 1761 and who interpreted for me there with the Hurons, Ojibways, and other north-western nations, had been as far to the northward and westward as the Mandan country a few years before. They believed there were more Indians west of the Mississippi than east of it; but said they were exceedingly primitive, had no fire-arms, and were not settled in more or less permanent villages like the Indians who live in the forest country to the eastward, but roamed in a nomadic fashion over all the great treeless plains in that region. They declared their belief that these far-western Indians must be 250,000 in number.

These estimates are probably the source of Professor Donaldson's calculation, that in the third quarter of the eighteenth century there were half a million Indians in North America, north of the Rio Grande and Gila rivers.

After 1766, Sir William's life was, in the main, reposeful. His four deputies transacted the business of their respective districts with signal ability and success. In 1768 Colonel Polk accomplished the hitherto impossible task of making a treaty with the Creeks; a transaction with which Sir William had nothing to do, except approve the action of his subordinate and secure the royal signature.

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The last great public work of the baronet's lifetime was completed also during the year 1768. That was the ratification of a definite boundary between the territory of the Six Nations and the colony of New York, with an actual survey and delimitation—known to history as the "Fort Stanwix Treaty Line." This line began at Wood Creek, near Fort Stanwix, ran thence southeast to the Forks of the Unadilla River; then followed that river to its confluence with the Susquehanna; then ran due south to the present site of Deposit, N. Y.; thence southeast to the Pennsylvania line—which was the Delaware River; thence west-northwest to the Susquehanna at Owego; thence down the latter river to the mouth of Towanda Creek; and from that point it was projected in an air line on the point of compass required to strike the confluence of the Allegheny and Monongahela at Fort Pitt or Pittsburg. This is the line traced on the map compiled with great care and accuracy by the author of *The Old New York Frontier*, Francis Whiting Halsey. It corresponds with the field-notes of Ezra Buell, who was assistant to the chief surveyor, Simon Metcalf. But Ezra says in his narrative that "the easterly jog in the line was never observed by the whites or insisted on by the Indians." As to purchase



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of lands, and actual settlement, he says the Susquehanna River formed the real boundary, from the mouth of the Unadilla¹ to the mouth of Towanda Creek. "The purpose of the easterly jog in the line," Buell says, "was to include the Oghwaga and Tuscarora villages on the Susquehanna, between Cuna-hunta (now Oneonta) and Chugunut (now Choconut), within the Indian domain. But many whites were already there, a good part of them married to or living with Indian women, and the Oghwagas and Tuscaroras freely sold their lands to these whites. By 1774 there were almost as many whites and half-breeds in this valley as full-blood Indians."

With the Fort Stanwix treaty and the running of the boundary-line consequent upon it, the active public career of Sir William Johnson in the broad sense practically ended. The rest of his life was devoted to study, correspondence, the education of his children, and the general management of his personal

¹ Ezra Buell spells what we now call "Unadilla" "Tian-anderha," which was really the nearest equivalent in English letter sounds to the pronunciation of the name of the river in the Oneida dialect of the Iroquois tongue. Other forms of the word in early papers are Teyonadelhough, Cheunadilla, and Tunadilla, the latter being the spelling Joseph Brant employed.

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estate. Occasionally he settled disputed questions between his deputies and the Indians within their jurisdiction; but such disputes seldom occurred.

At the period now under consideration (1769) he received under charter from the king a tract of land known as the "Royal Grant." This land had previously been conveyed to him (in 1760) by the Council of Mohawk Sachems for the consideration of £3,000 in money and about as much more in merchandise. But the grant was not approved by the king until 1769. It embraced all the land on the north bank of the Mohawk River between the mouths of Cayadutta (now East Canada) and Canada (now West Canada) creeks. Its total area was something over 100,000 acres, but between 1760 and 1769 a good many settlers had cleared and improved farms within its borders. Sir William at once gave quit-claims to all these, at the rate of threepence to a shilling per acre, according to the value of their holdings by reason of location.

When all these deductions were made, the "Kingsland Grant" ¹ embraced about 90,000

¹ Most historians of this epoch adopt the legend that Sir William obtained this grant by what might be described as a "game of competitive dreaming" between him and old Hendrick. The legend was that Hendrick, visiting him one day

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acres. The next year (1770) Sir William acquired by purchase from the original patentees under Governor Clinton, whose patents had been confirmed by the king in 1761, a tract embracing the valley of the Susquehanna from the mouth of Charlotte River to that of the Unadilla. This tract was twenty-three miles long by four miles wide—two miles back from the river on each side—and embraced about 92 square miles or, say, 58,000 acres. It was his intention to settle on this tract a numerous colony of Scotch-Irish emigrants from the counties Down, Armagh, and Antrim. But he did not live to accomplish his purpose. The acquisition of this tract made him the largest landholder in America and perhaps in the world; his total possessions

when he had on the uniform of a British major-general, informed him that he (Hendrick) had dreamed the night before that he himself was clad in a uniform exactly like it. Sir William, the legend says, gave Hendrick a major-general's uniform. Then, visiting Hendrick a day or two afterward, he told the chief he had dreamed that the Mohawks gave him a tract of 100,000 acres of land. The legend further recites that Hendrick gave him the land, but said, "Don't let's dream any more!" This is not a bad story; but the fact is that the tract was not offered to Sir William by the Mohawk Council until 1760. Hendrick was killed at Lake George in 1755. The alleged "competitive dreaming" on his side therefore must have been done by his ghost! The real fact is that the legend was a pure invention from beginning to end.

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amounted to about 200,000 acres, after buying up all the smaller patents embraced within the limits of the Royal Grant.

Of this vast area all except the Susquehanna tract was more or less improved, and the Mount Johnson and Johnstown tracts were, for those days at least, thickly settled. By 1770 the village of Johnstown, which he founded about 1760—or when he began building Johnson Hall—had grown to be a smart little town of over a hundred dwellings and about 500 people, with several stores, blacksmith's, gunsmith's, and carpenter's shops, a good-sized flour-mill, two sawmills and a wagon-shop. It also had a flourishing manor-school, and an Episcopal chapel, both built wholly by the baronet. Two years later (1772), when Tryon County was formed from the western part of Albany County, Johnstown was made the shire town, or county-seat.

In 1770 Mary Brant bore to Sir William her last child. It was the ninth in seventeen years—1754–1770 inclusive. Eight of these lived, and one died quite young. The baronet was now fifty-five, and Mary Brant thirty-six years of age. Mary, though in her girlhood as trim-built and supple as a young deer, grew stout and matronly in her later years, but lost none of her charms of manner or vivacity of

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spirit. General Schuyler was a guest at Johnson Hall frequently between 1768 and 1774, and in his papers he says :

Mary Brant was a most accomplished mistress of such an establishment, and her numerous flock of little half-breed Johnsons forms as interesting a family as one can see anywhere. They attend the Manor school at Johnstown, and I am told they are among the smartest of the pupils. Sir William is exceedingly proud of them, and loses no opportunity of exhibiting their graces and acquirements to his guests. He intends to send his two half-breed boys to the new King's College in New York [now Columbia University], and the girls he will educate as they grow up in Mrs. Pardee's school for young ladies at Albany.

Among the last public enterprises of Sir William, and one in the success of which he found much satisfaction, was the introduction of the manufacture of rifles in New York. Prior to 1768 Lancaster, Pa., had practically monopolized the making of rifles in this country. The few that found their way into the hands of the New York settlers or Indians cost exorbitant prices. Sir William's experience had taught him that the rifle, either for hunting or for war, was much superior to the light smoothbore gun he himself had designed for the Indian and frontier trade twenty-five

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years before. He therefore determined to domesticate rifle-making in the Mohawk Valley. But none of the gunsmiths there understood the art of rifling, and they were unwilling to undertake it. Not to be balked, Sir William induced several skilled rifle-makers to leave Lancaster and set up shops in New York. Among them were the Palm brothers, Jacob and Frederick, who established their shop at Old Esopus, Ulster County, and made excellent rifles there for many years; Henry Hawkins, who selected Schenectady for his place of business, and John Folleck, whose shop was at Johnstown. Hawkins was not only a great rifle-maker himself, but his sons and grandsons succeeded him in later years, establishing shops at Rochester, Louisville, Detroit, and St. Louis, until, during the last quarter of the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century, the "Hawkins rifle" was as famous all through the West as the Winchester is now.

Originally Sir William induced these pioneers of rifle-making to locate in New York by advancing money for the building of their shops and purchase of tools and then agreeing to take at a fixed price all their product that did not promptly find market elsewhere. This began in 1769. The market soon became

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brisk and other rifle-makers came in. By 1775 most of the settlers on the New York frontier and many of the Indians had discarded their old smoothbores for the new rifles, and though the industry was only about six years old, New York was second only to Pennsylvania in the manufacture of what we commonly term "the national American weapon." The author of this work has a Palm rifle, made in 1773, in perfect preservation, flint lock, and as effective now as it was when it left the shop. It is 40 inches long in the barrel—which is octagonal—55 inches over all, full-stocked with curly-birch root, carries 45 spherical balls to the pound of lead, and weighs 10½ pounds. It saw service in Morgan's Riflemen and was in the battle of Oriskany.

Sir William's success in starting the manufacture of rifles in New York was as complete as in his other undertakings, and was due to the same causes: the energy which he always brought to bear on any project and the unstinted freedom with which he was willing to spend his money to accomplish his object; and in this respect it was immaterial to him whether the object was the public welfare or personal profit.