

Chronological View of the Life of HENDRICK WINDECKER (1737 – c.1820)

The aim of the present work is not to provide a comprehensive study of the life of Hendrick (Henry) Windecker, but to offer a chronology which can serve as a framework for research that has a more specific focus – a skeleton that can be fleshed out in any of a number of ways.

Although no baptismal record has survived, available evidence indicates that Henry (Henrick, Hendrick) Windecker was born in 1737, in the Canajoharie District of Tryon County (now Montgomery County) of the Mohawk Valley New York, to Johann Georg Windecker (1715 – 1761), and Anna Elizabeth Walrath (1716 – 1793).

While most of what follows is based on primary source documentation, some (such as the specific parentage of Henry) is based on a balance of probabilities. Considering the time period of interest, and certain historical facts (e.g., that the American Revolution led to a destruction of many valuable record sources), if a “fact” appears to be clear and convincing by virtue of the weight of evidence, it will be accepted. Since the present researcher has been working on this family for 40 or so years, it is likely that most of what is “out there” has already been located, and all we can do is to use the available data to draw conclusions consistent with the weight of evidence.

Henry Windecker, Genealogy and DNA: At this point it is necessary to list the names of the known or probable children of George and Anna Elizabeth. There is a large amount of circumstantial evidence to suggest that the eldest child, born **1737**, was Hendrick Windecker, the subject of the present study. Genealogical evidence is important in and of itself, but it also can be used in conjunction with DNA evidence to support or confirm a probable hypothesis.

a) **Genealogical Evidence:** What follows reflects the highest probability scenario based on available church records, account books, land deeds and similar records:

1. **Johann Georg WINDECKER** was born on 15 Oct 1715 in Neu-Ansberg (Schmidsdorf), New York, USA. He died in Feb 1761 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. He married **Anna Elizabeth WALRATH**, daughter of **Heinrich Conrad WALRATH** and **Anna Christina MATTHEUS**, on 17 Mar 1736. She was born on 15 Jul 1716 in Hartmansdorf, Schoharie, New York, USA. She died on 01 Sep 1793 in Ft. Plain, Montgomery County, New York, USA.

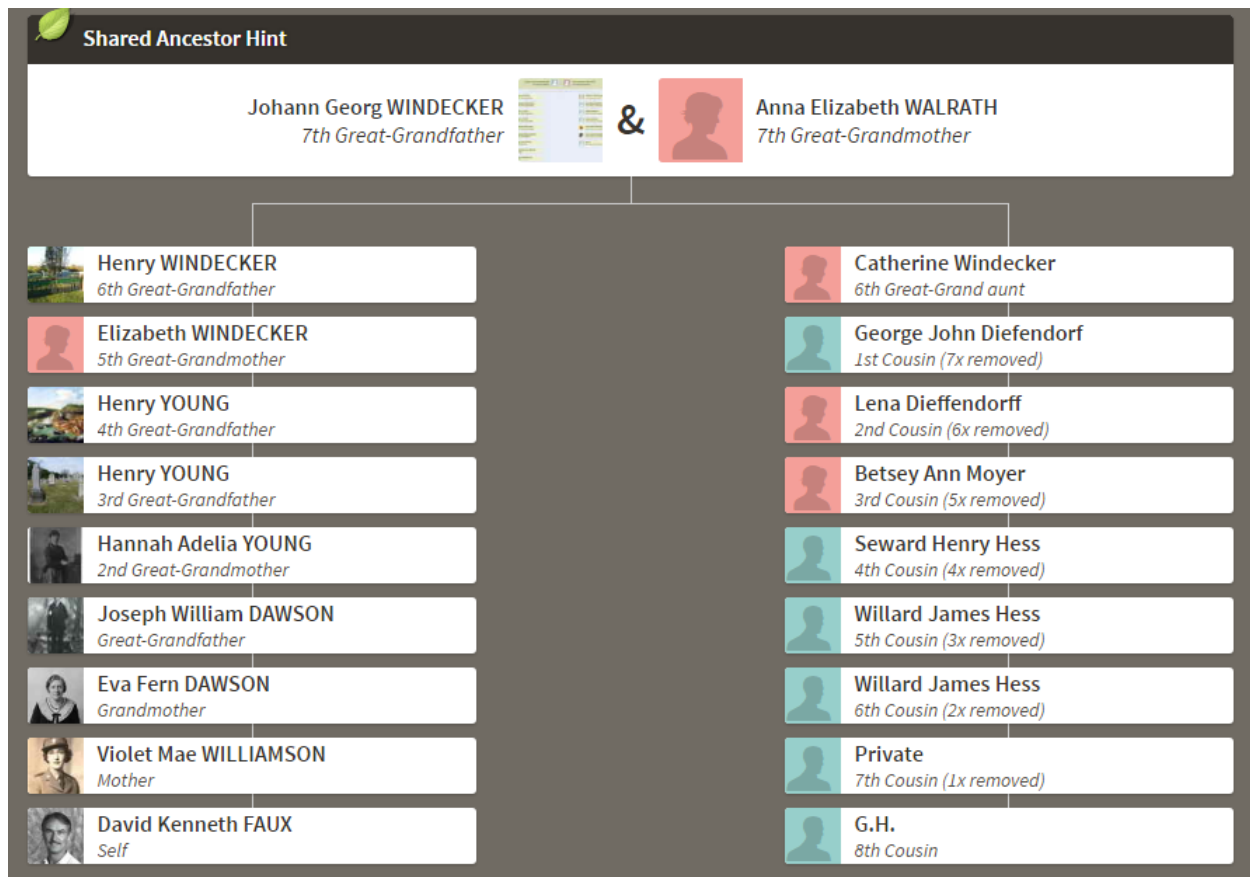
Johann Georg WINDECKER and **Anna Elizabeth WALRATH** had the following children:

2.
 - i. **Henry WINDECKER** was born about 1737 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. He died after 1814 in pr North Cayuga Township, Haldimand County, Ontario. He married **Dorothy PICKARD (PICKERT)**. She was born about 1743 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died in Ontario, Canada.
 - ii. **Anna Elizabeth WINDECKER** was born in 1740 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She married **Conrad HAHN**. He was born in 1740. He died on 06 Aug 1777 in Oriskany, Oneida, New York, USA.
 - iii. **Johannes WINDECKER** was born about 1742 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. He died before 10 Nov 1794. He married **Catharine DIEFENDORF** on 29 Oct 1765. She was born on 20 Jul 1744. She died on 18 May 1810.

Notes for Johannes WINDECKER: No children.

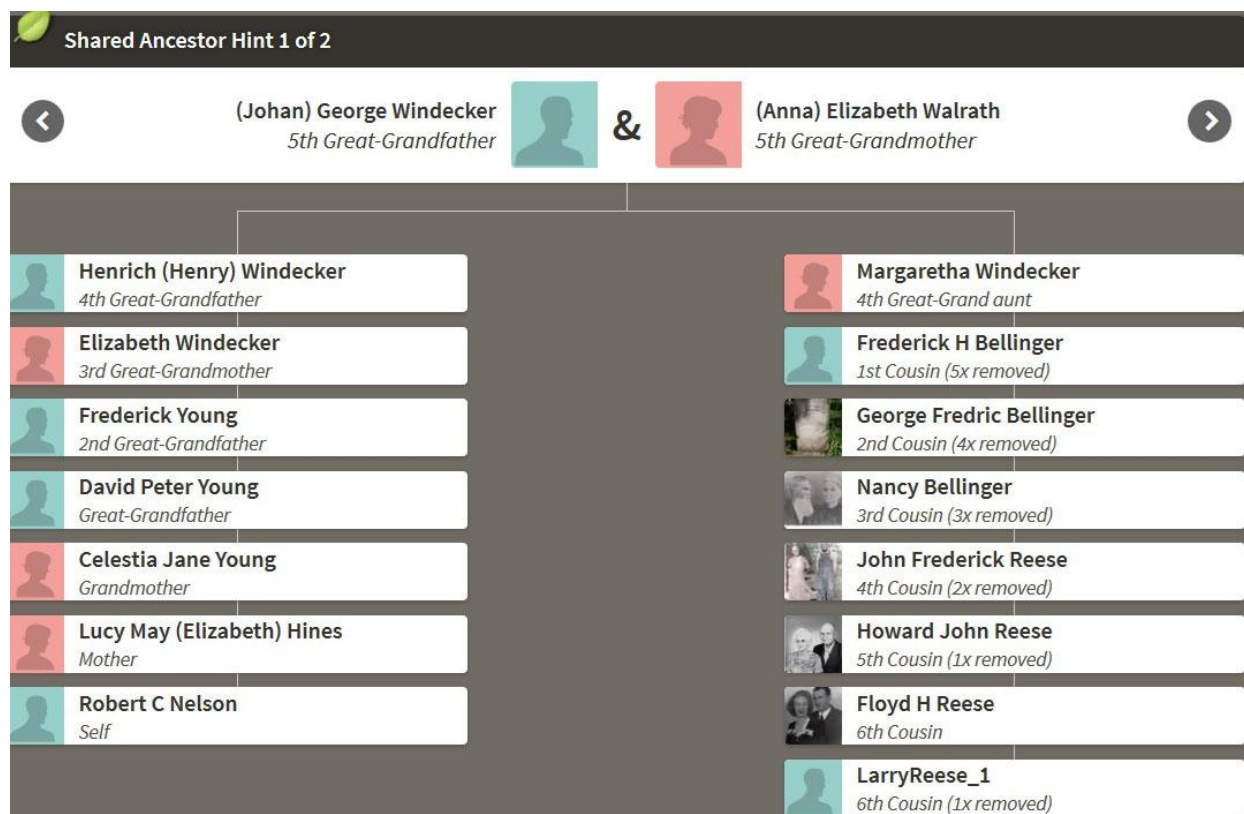
- iv. **Christina WINDECKER** was born on 16 Apr 1745 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died on 22 Apr 1812 in Freysbush, Montgomery County, New York, USA. She married **Jacob DIEFENDORF**. He was born on 01 May 1740. He died on 17 Nov 1818 in Freysbush, Montgomery County, New York, USA.
- v. **Anna Barbara WINDECKER** was born on 18 Mar 1751 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died on 25 Feb 1807 in Herkimer, New York, USA. She married **Johannes Jost PETRY** on 24 Oct 1769.
- vi. **Margaretha WINDECKER** was born in 1752 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died on 05 Jul 1836 in Jamesville, Onondaga, New York, USA. She married **John Henry BELLINGER** on 22 Jan 1771 in Stone Arabia, Montgomery, New York, USA. He was born about 1750. He died in 1800 in Schylerville, Oneida, New York, USA.
- vii. **Katherine WINDECKER** was born on 15 Apr 1755 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died on 13 Jan 1836 in Freysbush, Montgomery County, New York, USA. She married **John Jacob DIEFENDORF**. He was born on 12 May 1747. He died on 27 Mar 1839 in Freysbush, Montgomery County, New York, USA.

b) **DNA Evidence:** The evidence (primary and circumstantial) is given a sharp boost by the fact that the present author, and many of his near and distant cousins, have robust autosomal DNA matches leading to George Windecker's known children and known siblings, as seen in the following Ancestry DNA chart where an 8th cousin "leaf match" shares 14.4 cM with the author:



The author has another “leaf match” of 7.0 cM match to a descendant of Rev. William Diefendorf, another son of the above Catherine Windecker.

It is always adds weight when members of a known family member shares a segment with a second sibling of, in this case, Henry Windecker. The author’s grandmother’s half second cousin, Robert C. Nelson, has the following match to a descendant of Margaretha Windecker (Henry’s sister) who married Henry Bellinger.

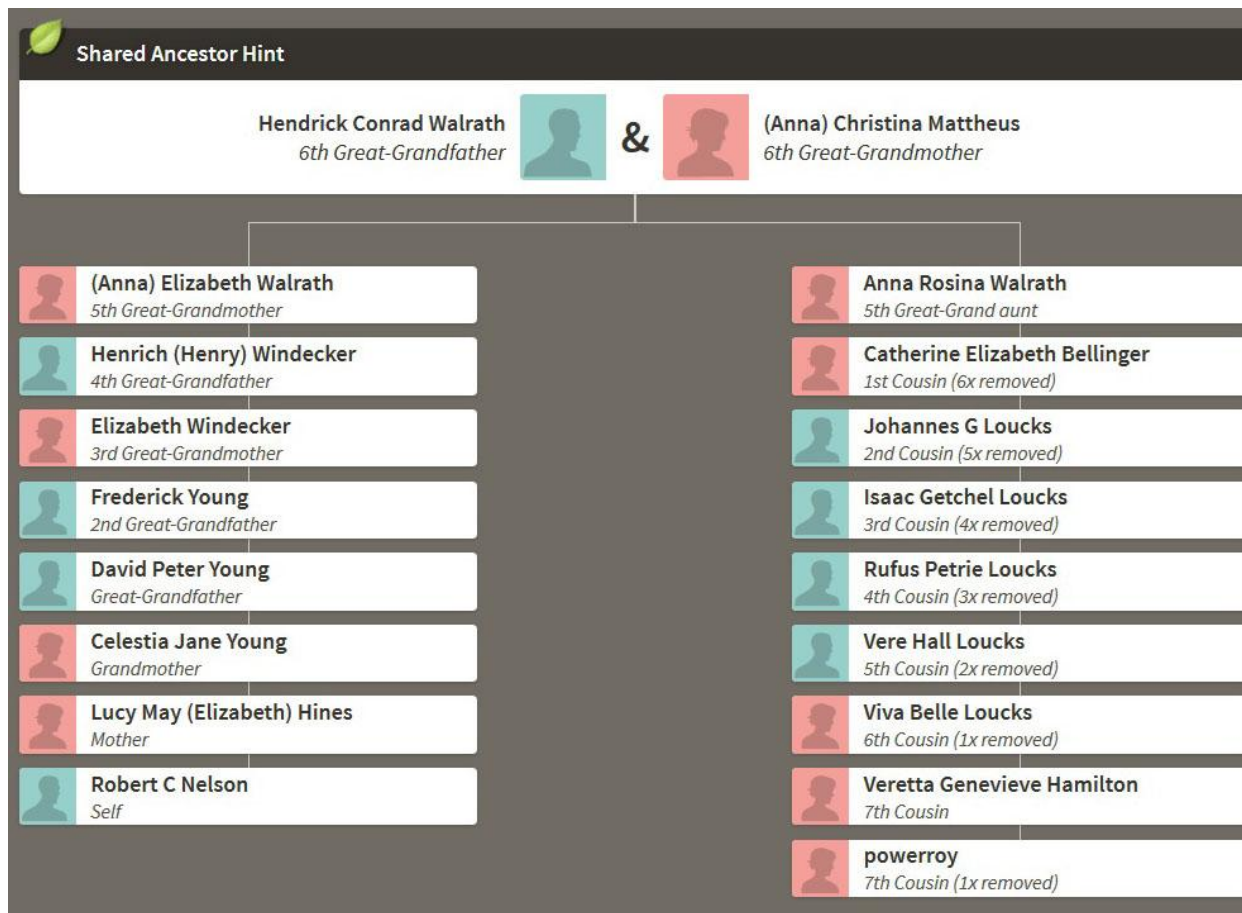


It is also noteworthy when doing a search for any DNA match with a Windecker ancestor, that of the 3 sons of Hartman Windecker who survived childhood and had children (George, Conrad, and Frederick) only descendants of George are evident among DNA matches, with the exception of his youngest sister Gertrude Windecker – but she married Jacobus Pickard, and Henry Windecker married Dorothy, the sister of Jacob – and so the match is likely to have come from that quarter. Even if the match was via Gertrude, it could mean a segment descending directly via Hartman Windecker or Barbara Elizabeth (Bellinger) Windecker.

There are DNA matches as well to the father in law of George Windecker, namely Hendrick Conrad Walrath, via a number of his known (listed in his will of 1846) children. The author has a 17.5 cM match to a descendant of Anna Elizabeth Walrath’s brother Johann Adolph Walrath.

Considering Robert C. Nelson, he has “leaf matches”, below is one of three such matches to different children of Hendrick Conrad Walrath and Christina Mattheus, including Anna Elizabeth

Walrath’s siblings, Jacob Walrath, and Hendrick Conrad Walrath Jr., and in the case below, to Anna Rosina Walrath:



Additionally, considering once again the genealogical evidence, since Hendrick Windecker named his first and only son George, this, if needed, will serve to “seal the deal”.

Mohawk Valley to Pennsylvania – an Overview: It is almost certain that the expeditions of George Senior down the Susquehanna River to sell rum to the Indians led to his familiarity with the potential of that area. It was a likely reason why after George’s death and the re-marriage of Henry’s mother, in 1770 the latter picked up stakes and left to set up a permanent home in the Upper Susquehanna area. A few years later Hendrick enticed two of his brothers in law to settle there too – all 3 families leaving the Windecker Tract in the Canajoharie District where they were residing through most of the 1760s. All three brothers in law and former neighbours in the Mohawk Valley were residing along the Susquehanna when the American Revolution broke out.

The Mohawk Valley: The family fortunes took a large step forward in 1730 and 1731 when Hartmann Windecker, with partners Casper Lieb and Conrad Countryman (spellings differ) applied for a patent of Indian land south of the Mohawk River, which was ultimately successful

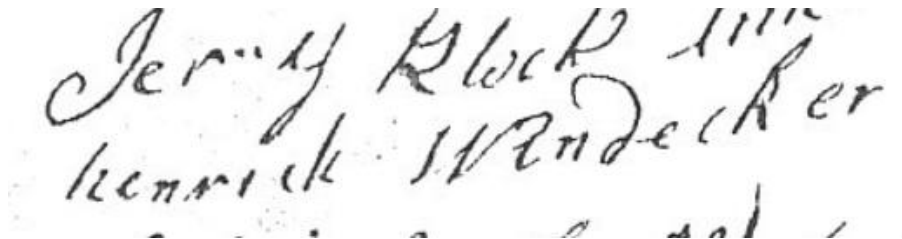
and resulted in what is known as the “Windecker Patent” (or Tract) along Dutchtown Road, in what is today Minden Township west of what is today Fort Plain.

What follows is a chronological exploration of the highlights (as recorded) of the life of Hendrick Windecker.

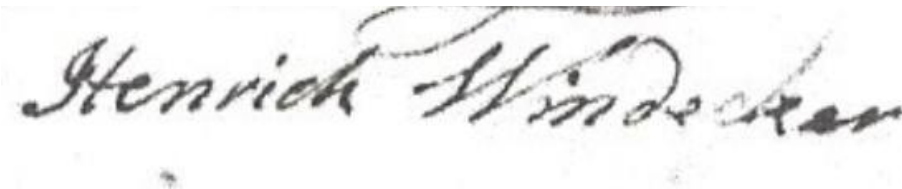
6 April 1754 Hendrick Windecker (HW) emerges from the shadows for the first time. He appears on this date in the Sanders Brothers Account Books with a purchase on credit.

SL49:152 Mr. Henderick Windecker
6 Apr 1754 - 25 July 1770 7/3 0/0
last DR 6 Feb 1764
DR 9 Aug 1758 To cash pd. Jno. B: V: Eps 8/
DR 26 Sep 1759 To Jacobs. Maby 1/
CR 2 Aug 1758 Cash recd. of Messrs. V: Sleyk & V Eps *11.8.0
SD65:158 CR 25 July 1770 By acceptg. Koenrt. Haans Note for balce.
*5.14.7

25 April 1755 HW was among the large number of individuals who petitioned for Indian land on the north side of the Mohawk River, some 50,000 acres between East and West Canada Creeks (the latter near Burnetsfield). Included among the signors are Gerg Windecker and Henrick Windecker. In order to demonstrate that this HW in 1755 is the HW who came to Ontario in 1783, a comparison of signatures from these dates would be in order:

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henrick Windecker". The name is written in a fluid, connected style with some flourishes.

Above – Petition **22 April 1755**

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Henrick Windecker". This signature is very similar to the one above, showing a consistent style of writing.

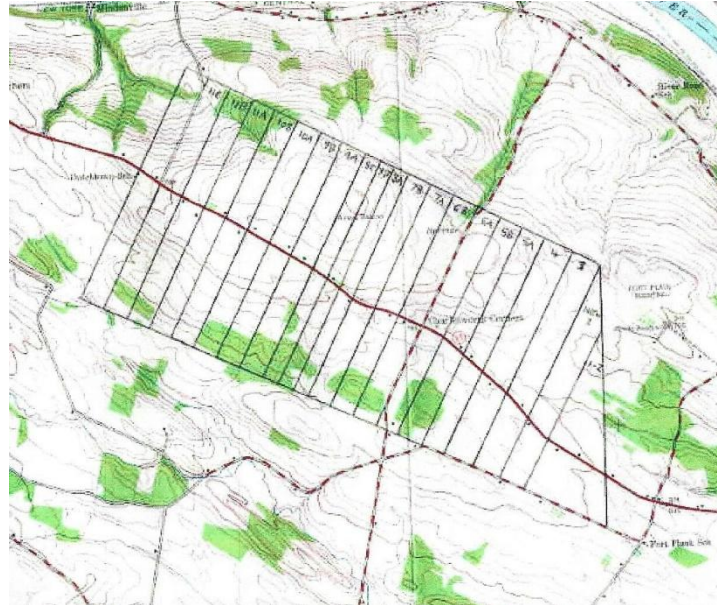
Above – Petition **11 August 1786**

The two signatures are remarkably similar – virtually identical “Windecker” (some problems due to the quality of the copy). The first name is the unusual “Henrick” (seldom seen) – although a capital “H” was used in 1786.

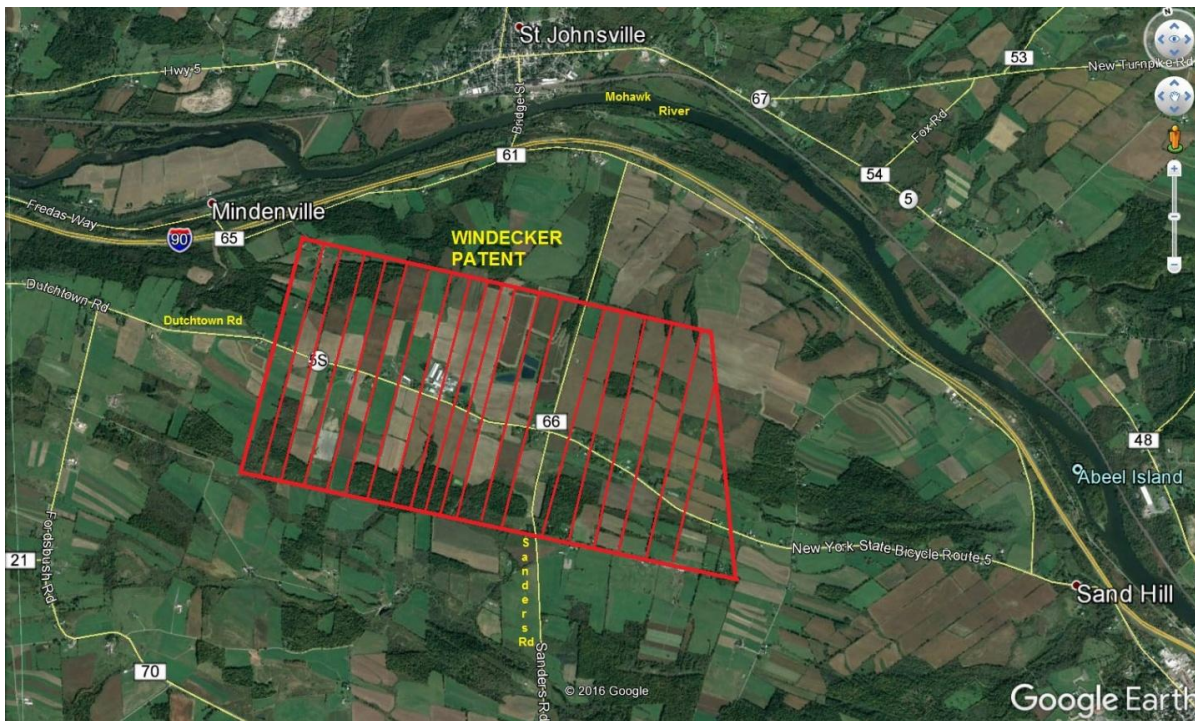
6 November 1762 HW mortgaged property, likely in the Van Horne Patent, to Abraham Yates.

28 July 1763 residents of Windecker Patent and others in Canajoharie were in Captain Jacob Klock's Company of Militia to meet the alarm at German Flats, including in sequence Frederick Countrieman, Henry Windecker, Jacobus Pickerd Frederick Schmid and William Pickerd (the latter two were brothers in law of Henry).

1764 HW's residence was on Lot 7A Windecker Patent, Canajoharie District.



Windecker Patent with Lots labelled



Google Map of area surrounding Windecker Tract – Lot 7A is second lot west of County Road 66 (thanks to Thomas M. Nelson)

1766 HW was on tax list which enumerates the residents on the Windecker Patent in sequence with Fredk Cunterman, Hendk Windecker, Jacobus Pickert

30 January 1767 HW of Canajoharie mortgaged Lot 4 in the 3rd Allotment of the Van Horne Patent to Mary Wendell. This money may have helped fund his move to Pennsylvania.

1768 HW sold 80 acres of Lot 7A Windecker Patent to Conrad Hahn, his brother in law. This was just prior to Henry's leaving the Mohawk Valley, making a permanent (until the American Revolution broke out) move to the Susquehanna River in what was then the frontier of Pennsylvania.

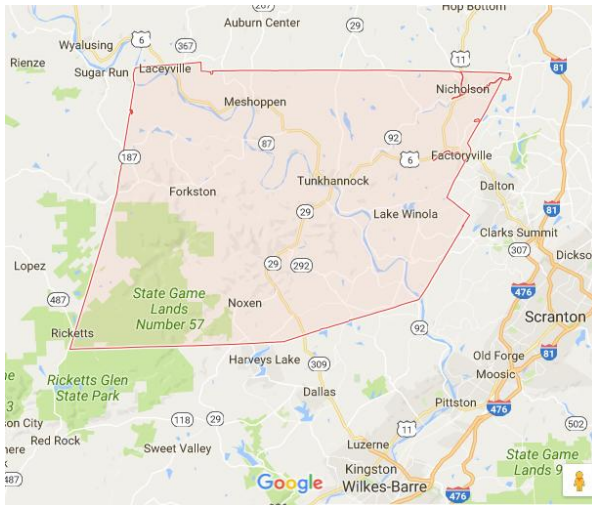
Pennsylvania and the Upper Susquehanna:

10 April 1770: *Forty Settlers.*—Preparations for a recommencement of the settlement of the Connecticut people on the Susquehanna, after the massacre and expulsion of 1763, were commenced at Hartford by a meeting of the Susquehanna company in 1768, where it was resolved that five townships, to wit: Wilkes-Barre, Hanover, Kingston, Plymouth and Pittston, each five miles square, should be surveyed and granted each to forty settlers, on condition that they remain upon the ground and maintain their rights against the intrusion of rival claimants. Forty were to set forth without delay, and others to the amount of 200 (for the five townships) were to follow the succeeding spring. To these 200 must be added all those other settlers who had immigrated on settlers' rights. These were mostly sturdy farmers who came to the five townships, and of them were soldiers who had served their country bravely and well in the then late Franco-Indian war. The additional 160 settlers to complete the possession of the five townships arrived the next spring, 1770. Added to these were others that had come, some of them from Pennsylvania south of this place. Assembled at what is now Wilkes-Barre, April 10, 1770, were 270 or 280 able-bodied men (Bradsby, History of Luzerne County Pennsylvania, 1893).

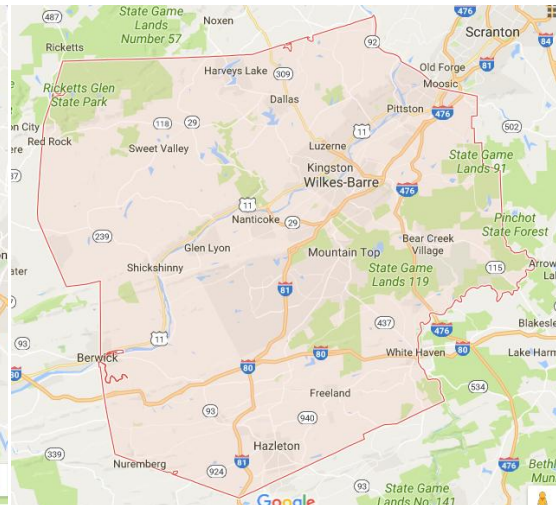
For a clear representation of the five original townships see map of Battle of Wyoming below.

17 June 1770 among the list of 283 inhabitants of 5 townships near Wilkes Barre, PA is Henry Windecker. Across the River is the Kingston District, with Forty Fort at Wyoming. As time progressed, he would move further up river.

It is not known at this time where HW was residing, but collected [Susquehanna Company Papers](#) divide the settlers into Wyoming and Luzerne in Company papers selected for publication in 1845. HW was listed as a "Wyoming settler". Wyoming County was created from Luzerne County on 4 April 1842.



Wyoming County – is north of Pittston



Luzerne County – includes Pittston and Wilkes-Barre

Thus, it would appear that HW was residing north of Pittston, but Fort Wyoming was named after the Wyoming Valley – the whole area in the 1770s likely known simply as Wyoming. It is noteworthy that for example, Philip Wintermote and Nicholas Phillips were also noted as “Wyoming settler”. All of the Susquehanna settlers were slotted into one or the other County.

15 August 1771 HW was among 22 in the “Yankee force” (Connecticut party vs. Pennamites) that arrived to take the block house in Wyoming.

3 October 1772 HW was among the members of the Connecticut party who wrote a petition sent to New Haven, Connecticut asking to formally incorporate their lands into one of the existing Colonies (things were becoming chaotic).

10 June 1773 at a Court of Common Pleas in Tryon County (NY) among the cases heard was “Hendrick Windecker vs. Koenrad Hahn”; “Hendrick Windecker vs. Conrad Hahn”. The nature of these court cases is unknown. Conrad Hahn was the brother in law of Hendrick, to whom he had sold his residential property in the Windecker Tract. Most of the early settlers of the Connecticut Patent returned in 1772 and 1773 to bring their families to the new farms they carved out of the wilderness in PA, so HW may have attended these proceedings during his temporary return.

1774/5 HW was located at North District in the 5,000 square miles claimed by Connecticut and named Westmoreland Town, attached to the County of Litchfield.

19 June 1774 Barbara a daughter of HW born and in that year was baptized at Salem Lutheran Church, Penn Township, Snyder County – 2 miles west of Selingsgrove, PA.

August 1776 a tax list was prepared listing the 488 heads of family in the 8 Districts of Westmoreland. In the North District (Exeter and Providence) is found William Pickard (Assessed 19 Pounds), and a number of Wintermutes. Exeter is immediately north of Wilkes –

Barre. Next are enumerated those of the North District (“Up the River”), north of Exeter, where we find Frederick Smith (Assessed 25 Pounds), and Henry Windecker (Assessed 37 Pounds – about average) – as well as Sebastian Strope who will figure in the story later – and families including Anker (Anger), Bowman, Buck, Depew, and Secord – all well known Loyalists. William Pickard was only seen on the 1776 tax list, but Frederick Smith, as Windecker, is recorded as being one of the settlers of the 5 townships in 17 June 1770 (Munger, Connecticut’s Pennsylvania “Colony”, Vol. 2, 2007). It should be noted that all of these Loyalists in their petitions and claims after the War, gave their residence location as Northumberland County (which it was known from about 1783 after the Connecticut title was extinguished, and in 1786 became Luzerne County – which used to be part of the absorbed Westmoreland County but was severed off Northumberland – very confusing).

Sebastian Strope, on the “Up the River” list, was known to be residing at Wysocton (now Wysox) Township from 1773. This information is from Jane (Strope) Whittaker, a daughter of Sebastian, and at age 8 captured by the Seneca at the time of the Battle of Wyoming (Rootsweb, including clipping from The Bradford Star, 6 Nov. 1902, p. 4). This means that Henry could have been living as far north as Towanda in what is today Bradford County (organized 1810 from Luzerne County, in turn formed in 1786 from Northumberland County). Among the “Up the River” group, J. Kelsey Jones in “[Loyalist Plantations on the Susquehanna River](#)”, lists the individuals from the above 1776 tax list, which in the published version is in alphabetical order. However here the author lists them in the actual order in which they appear from the closest to the Exeter area, upriver in sequence to above Wysox Township. This listing is likely similar to the tax list of the Canajoharie District in 1766 (see above) where the enumerator followed the road taking names from either side in sequence. In this case, it seems that the enumerator did the same, by the River or Indian path. The data is from the individual descriptions in Loyalist land petitions, and other sources. The following is the part of the list showing all the people from Wyalusing. It is fairly safe to conclude that HW was from Wyalusing in 1776.

There are individuals starting with Elisha Wilcox residing at Thorn Bottom (20 miles from Pittston), then to **Tunkhannoc**, **Mehoopany Creek** below **Terrytown**, then heading upstream:

Gasper Hopper (Caspar Hover) -Loyalist -Terrytown on west side of Susquehanna River

Hendrick Winter - Loyalist - Wyalusing

John Stephens - Loyalist – [Wyalusing]

Frederick Smith – Loyalist – [Wyalusing]

Huldrick Shout (Johan Hendrick Short) – Loyalist – [Wyalusing]

Frederick Frank – Loyalist – [Wyalusing]

Henry Simmons - Loyalist – [Wyalusing]

Henry Windecker – Loyalist – [Wyalusing]

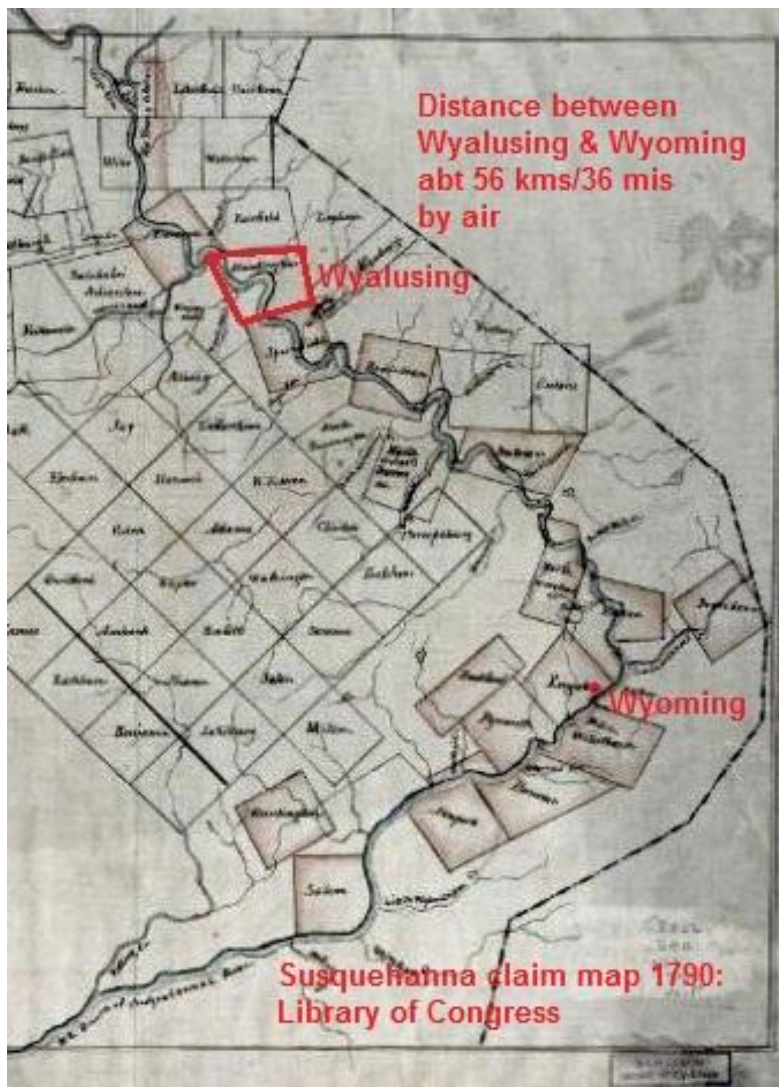
Ben & Will Pawling - Loyalists - Wyalusing

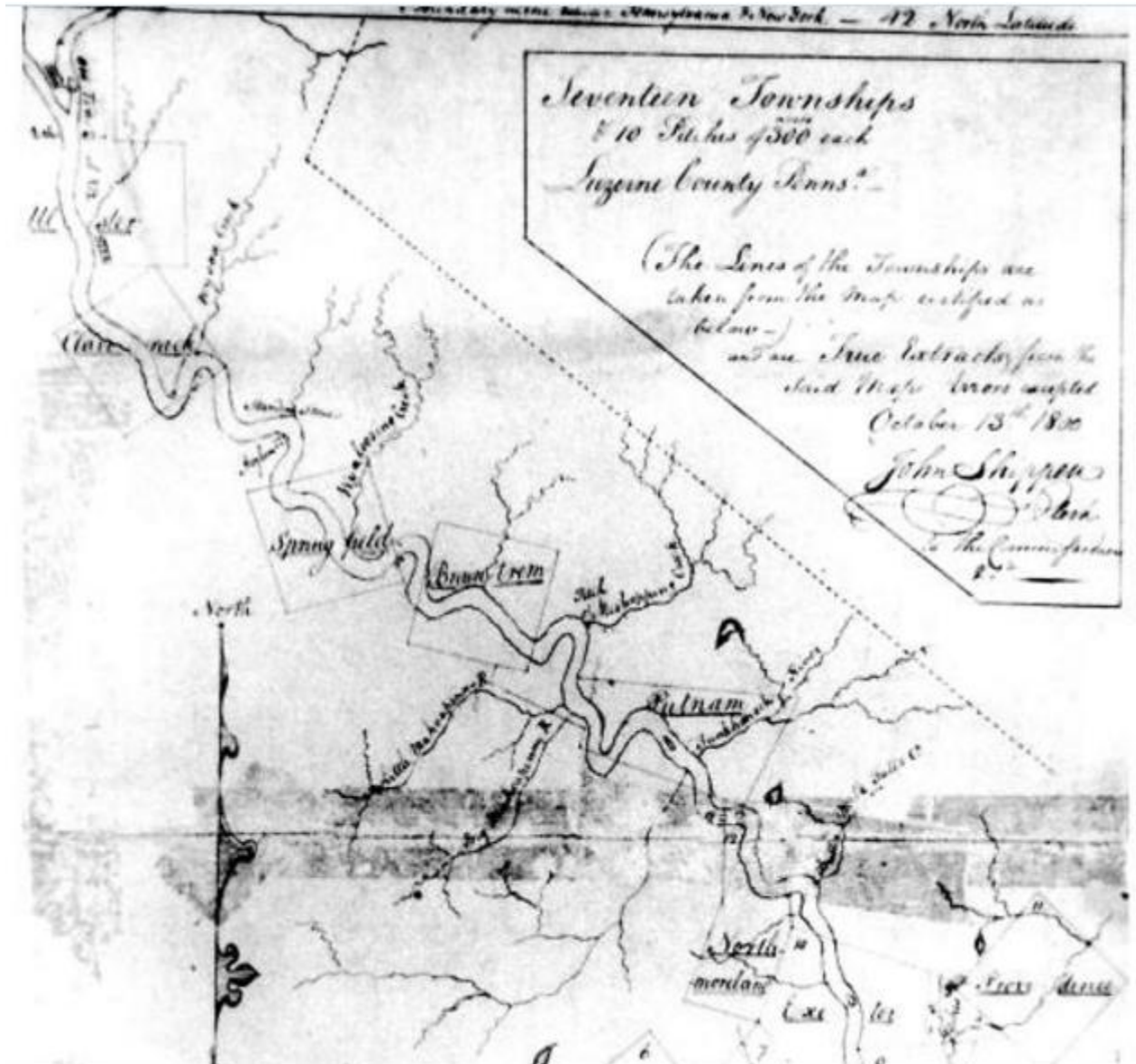
Nicholas Phillips - Loyalist - north of Wyalusing

George Kentner - Loyalist - Sugar Run Creek

This area was a “nest” of Loyalists. The next individuals with known locations are upstream to the north at **Towanda**; **Asylum** – Frederick Anger – Loyalist; then **Wysox**.

Note that Frederick Smith (Windecker’s brother in law) appears to also be from Wyalusing in 1776; as is Nicholas Phillips whose wife Elizabeth along with Dorothy (Pickard) Windecker while at Machiche, Quebec in 1781 petitioned to be allowed to return to their husbands then serving with Butler’s Rangers. Bradsby reported that the first white settlements of Wyalusing were “*about 1776*” (History of Bradford County, Pennsylvania, 1891). It is noteworthy that in his claim for losses, Nicholas Phillips stated, *Your Memorialist many years before the Rebellion had been settled at Tunkhannock abt 40 miles from Womoning on the Susquehannock River* (Audit Office 12 – MG - 14, Vol. 27, Pg. 401 Reel B - 1161). Philip Buck testified that Phillips had settled on his land on the Susquehanna in 1772 (Audit Office 12 - MG-14, Vol. 66. pg. 50, Reel B-1169). However in 1776 he had a residence north of Wyalusing. The details here are somewhat confusing – except in that we can pinpoint Phillips, Windecker and others to the region between 20 miles above Pittston (Wyoming County) and Wysox (Bradford County).





Townships "Up the River" from Exeter to the New York border. Springfield is also known as Wyalusing

No doubt that the following did not go down too well with the Loyalist inhabitants of Wyalusing:

6 January 1776: *At an adjourned town meeting of the inhabitants of Westmoreland held at Wilkes Barre January 6, 1776, among the several resolutions adopted was the following relating to the families settled some thirty or forty miles above Wilkes Barre: "Voted that Solomon Strong and Robert Carr and Nathan Kingsley be a committee to proceed up the river and let the people known that the inhabitants of Westmoreland are not about to kill and destroy them and take any of their effects as reported, but they may keep their effects and continue in peace on reasonable terms provided they conform to the laws of the Colony of Connecticut and the Resolves of the Continental Congress, and confirm their intentions by signing the subscription paper for that purpose that said committee will produce."*

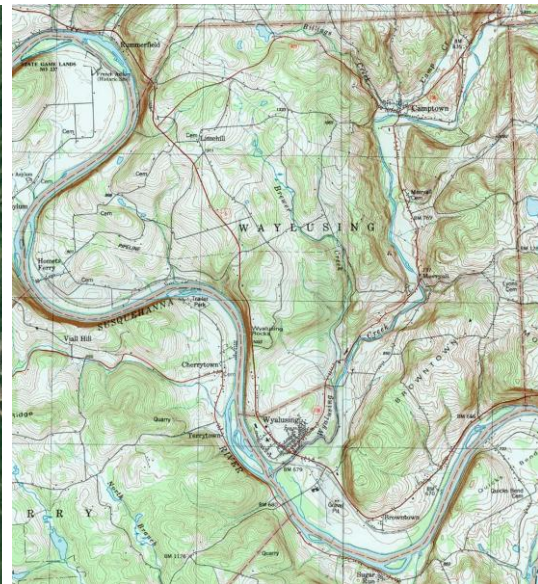
Clearly there was a sharp division making its appearance at this time. There were many who supported the Continental Congress, perhaps due to their Connecticut connections. However, many of those who came from the Mohawk and Schoharie Valleys were very much inclined to support the legitimate government. Nicholas Phillips memorial in his claim for losses above gives an excellent example of what the Loyalists were facing when he reported: *That he has ever been a loyal subject to the King of Eng. and will live and die with that forever. In the beginning of the Troubles in America in 1774 your memorialist opposed the rebellion and was seized and thrown in goal by the Rebels for his Loyalty he was moved from goal to goal for about 18 months then sent to Hartford Goal in Connecticut it being the fifth, and your Memorialist expected it to be his last prison before his death, but he had the good fortune to escape Hartford Goal in 1777 and joined Col. Butlers Rangers a private soldier & has since served in that Corps against the Rebels.*



Wyalusing



Wilkes – Barre, Tunkhannock, Wyalusing, Wysox (red “circle”)



Wyalusing

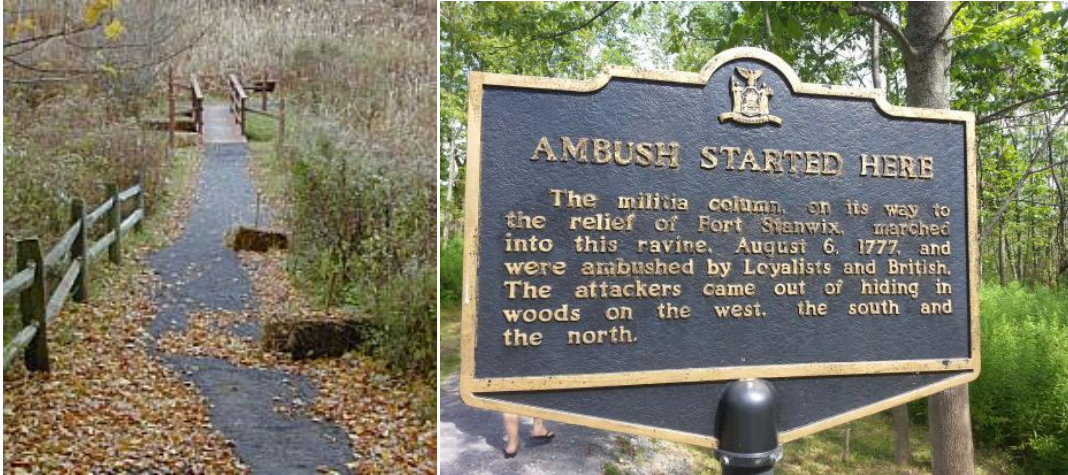
1777 tax list of Westmoreland does not include Henry Windecker as a rate payer in any of the Districts.

American Revolution, the Indian Department and Butler’s Rangers: In 1777, HW left his home in Northumberland County, PA and signed up with the Indian Department at Niagara. All of his petitions and claims stated that at the time of his departure he was living in this jurisdiction.

31 March 1777 From Niagara Col. John Butler reported to Governor Sir Guy Carleton that he hopes to form a Provincial unit based on the daily arrival of men from the Mohawk Valley and, *having received letters from seventy of the inhabitants of the Susquehanna by one Depue, expressing a desire of entering into His Majesty's service as Rangers. I have, by consent of Captain Lernoult, wrote them to come on and do expect them here in the space of twenty days; their use as scouts with Indians to an army would be presumptuous in me to point out.*

8 April 1777 In a follow up letter to Careleton, Butler wrote that, *several people have arrived from the Susquehanna, who inform me of more being on their way and more to follow them in a few days.*

15 June 1777 HW was one of 68 **rangers**, being paid 4 shillings a day. Note Daniel Young was on the ranger list; and his uncle Frederick Yonge and elder brother John Yonge on an attached list of Indian Department officers.



Military road and ravine where ambush happened



Site of Oriskany battlefield



Monument to Oriskany battle

6 August 1777, a large part of the Tryon County Militia from the Mohawk Valley was killed or wounded this day by a carefully laid ambush at Oriskany by Captain Joseph Brant and Indian Department officers. A particularly sad day in that most of the men on each side knew each other, and many had relatives on the other side (e.g., HW's brother in law Conrad Hahn who was

killed at Oriskany). It is unknown what specific part Henry Windecker played in the **Battle of Oriskany** or the siege of **Fort Stanwix**, but if his actions were anything like those at Wyoming, PA the next year, chances are he was in the thick of things as a ranger under the command of Col. John Butler. After Oriskany, the “Beating Orders” to form the 6 regiment Butler’s Rangers were issued on 15 September 1777 by Governor Carleton.

Late fall 1777 after the siege of Fort Stanwix lifted HW and neighbours obtained permission from Colonel John Butler to return to the Susquehanna to get their families and cattle and return to Niagara. It has been specifically reported that Windecker returned, *to Westmoreland in the succeeding Autumn and took the Freeman’s oath. “He [Windecker] then applied to Elijah Shoemaker for help, and was told that he [Shoemaker] would let him [Windecker] have grain for his family if Windecker would help to defend his country. Windecker answered in the affirmative and had his Winter’s provisions from his friend Shoemaker”* (statement of Elisha Harding, 1837). The 1776 tax list shows Elijah Shoemaker residing in the Kingston District of the Wyoming Valley (across from where Wilkes – Barre is situated today).

25 December 1777 to 24 October 1778 HW was a Private in Captain Walter Butler’s Company of **Butler’s Rangers**, paid 4 shillings a day, as recorded in the only surviving muster roll for Butler’s Rangers. Privates in two of the 6 companies were paid 4 shillings a day (the rest paid 2 shillings a day) based on their ability to speak an Indian language, and being “acquainted with their Customs and Manner of making War”. An inspection of the names in the Walter Butler’s company shows that most were from the Susquehanna River, and include a mixture of British and German surnames, with two of the officers or non Commissioned Officers being Dutch:

Butler's Rangers Walter Butler's Coy.

[Extract]

We the undermentioned Commissioned & non Commissioned Officers & Privates of Captain Walter BUTLER’s Company of Rangers do acknowledge to have received from John BUTLER Esqr. Major Commandant of the Corps of Rangers the full amount of our Pay from 24th December 1777 to 24th October 1778 inclusive-

	commencing	Ending
Captain Walter BUTLER	25 Decr. 1777	24 Octr. 1778
1st Lieutenant Andrew THOMPSON	do	do
2d Lieutenant Philip FREY	do	21 May 1778
Sgt Moses MOUNTAIN	do	24 Octr. 1778
Sgt Randle McDANNEL	do	do
Sgt Lewis MABEE	do	do

Cpl Henry PUTNAM	do	do
Cpl Thomas McCORMICK	25 June 1778	do
Cpl Jacob FREDERICK	25 Decr. 1777	do
Peter MILLER	do	do
Harmanus HOUSE	do	do
John SMYTH	do	do
Michael MORIN	do	do
John LORD	do	do
Hugh JONES	do	do
George HOUSE	do	do
John HOUSE	do	do
John DAVIS	do	do
Joseph SIRN	do	24 June 1778
Joseph PAGE	do	24 Octr. 1778
Derck BELL	do	do
Thomas YOLE	do	do
George STEWART	do	do
Emanuel HUMFRIES	do	do
Frederick WINTER	do	do
Henry WINTER	do	do
John RICHART	do	do
Nicholas PHILIPS, Senr.	do	do
John YARNS	do	do
Adam BOWMAN, Junr.	do	do
Jacob BRUNNER	do	do
Redman BERRY	do	do
Charles ANGER	do	do
Henry WINDECKER	do	do
John YOUNGS	do	do
Thomas SILK	do	do
Jacob TAKE	do	do
John SEACORD, Senr.	do	do
John SEACORD, Junr.	do	do
Solomon SEACORD	25 Decr. 1777	24 June 1778
Stephen SEACORD	do	24 Octr. 1778
David SEACORD	do	do
Silas SEACORD	do	24 June 1778
Peter SEACORD	do	24 Octr. 1778
Jacob BOWMAN	do	do
Peter SIMMON	do	do
John PHILIPS	do	do
Jacob ENGUSH	do	do
Robert FARRINGTON	do	do
Henry SMITH	do	do
Adin SEABIE	do	do
Nicholas PHILIPS, Senr.	do	do
Conrad SILL	do	do
Joshua BEABIE	do	do

Abraham WARTMAN	do	do
Augustus ANGER	do	do
Edward HICKS, Senr.	do	do
Charles DEPUE	do	do
Thomas GRIFFIS	do	do

(Great Britain, British Library, Additional Manuscripts, No. 21765, folios 44-45).



Butler's Rangers – Uniform

4 July 1778 HW was at the **Battle or “Massacre” of Forty Fort (Wyoming)**. It is difficult to deny that in the midst of the Battle, Henry Windecker “notoriously” used his tomahawk to dispatch Lt. Elijah Shoemaker, of the Second (or Kingston) Company of the Connecticut 24th Regiment, near Monocanock Island. The incident was observed by at least 3 people in hiding nearby. Here follows some eyewitness accounts:

1) Meiner Strobe, the grandson of Sebastian Strobe (noted above) reported on 19 June 1853 that his grandfather had said that he was in the Battle but unable to reach the safety of the Fort but enroute he found, an *old stockyard grown up with briars, thistles, and nettles – into which he secreted himself* *His position was such that he saw much of the bloody tragedy. He saw and heard the Tory Windaker when he called to Lieut Shoemaker to stop and he would give him quarters and when Shoemaker gave himself up he saw the villain deliberately murder him* (Draper Mss., Series F, Vol. 17, p. 49 & a).

2) Anning Owen and his brother in law Benjamin Carpenter were new to the area, having arrived “with a company of adventurers” after the War broke out, and, *were concealed under a tree-top which lay out in the river*, reporting that during the Battle, *Windecker called to Shoemaker in a friendly manner, assuring him of protection if he would return to the shore. “I am afraid you will give me up to the Indians” said Shoemaker. “No”, replied Windecker, “I will save you; they shan’t hurt you”. Confiding in the promise of a supposed friend, Lieutenant*

Shoemaker waded shoreward; but no sooner had he come within reach of Windecker than the latter reached down and took hold of him with his left hand, while with his right hand he dashed a tomahawk into the head of the confiding and defenseless man, who fell back into the river. His mangled corpse floated down to Forty Fort, where it was discovered, taken from the water, and buried the next day (Harvey, A History of Wilkes – Barre, Vol. II, 1909, pp. 1020-1021). In a slightly different version of events, it was said of Owen that he, stood the fire of the enemy, and answered it, shot after shot, in such quick succession that the barrel of his gun became burning hot. 'My gun is so hot that I cannot hold it!' exclaimed the brave patriot soldier. 'Do the best you can, then,' was the reply of his friend. A shot or two more and the day was lost. Owen and Carpenter fled to the river, and secreted themselves under cover of a large grapevine which hung from the branches of a tree and lay in the water. Roger Searl, a lad, followed them, and the three lay in safety until the darkness of the night enabled them to gain the fort. They were a portion of the small number who escaped with their lives from the bloody encounter without swimming the river. The place of their concealment was near the mouth of Shoemaker's Creek. While there fearful sights of barbarous cruelty in the river above pained their eyes and stung their souls to agony. They saw through the leaves Windecker, the Tory, tomahawk Shoemaker and set his body afloat, and the mangled corpse of their friend and neighbor passed quietly by them, carried slowly down into the eddy by the current (Chaffee, History of Wyoming Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1904).

One author, in repeating the story stated, *What may have been the fate of the Tory, Windecker, cannot here be recorded, but the fratricide met the doom becoming such a wretch, - that of being consumed and eaten piece-meal, to his heart strings by a pack of hungry wolves away in a dense forest in Canada.* The author would not stop there, seeming overcome with “righteous indignation”, saying that he wished that the end of Windecker came via, *a lean wolf whose eyes were bulging with ferocious appetite, satisfactorily lapping every jet which the exposed heart forced through the valves* (Clark, The Wyoming Valley, 1875, p. 33). So 100 years later the infamy of that day remained clear in the minds of residents. To the best of the author’s knowledge, Henry Windecker lived a very long life and did not end up between the jaws of a wolf – although there is no proof as to the specifics of his last days.



Butler's Rangers - Badges

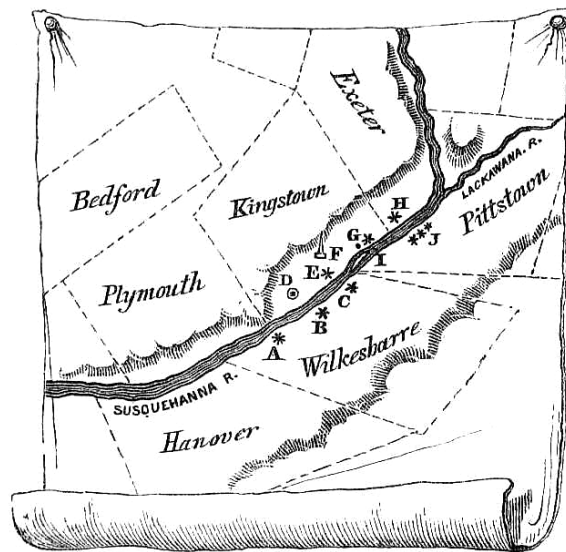
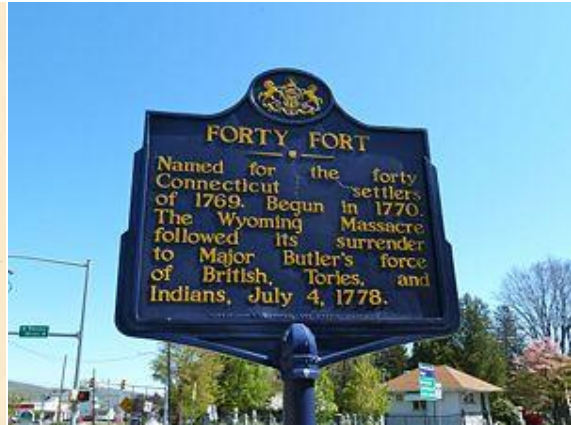
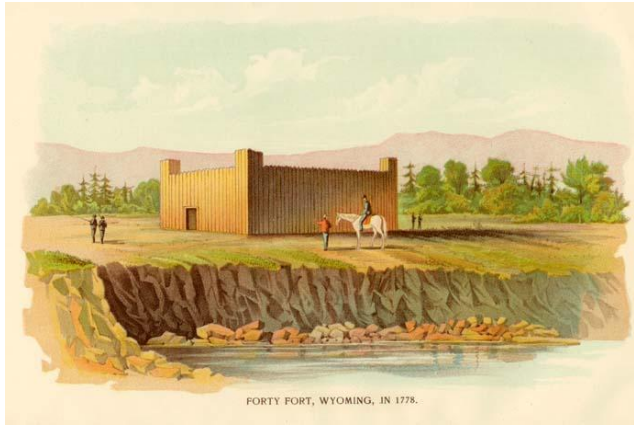


Alonzo Chappell painting of Wyoming Massacre (Chicago History Museum)

Henry Windecker is presumably the Ranger on the right in the process of delivering a tomahawk blow to the hapless Lt. Shoemaker rising from the River.



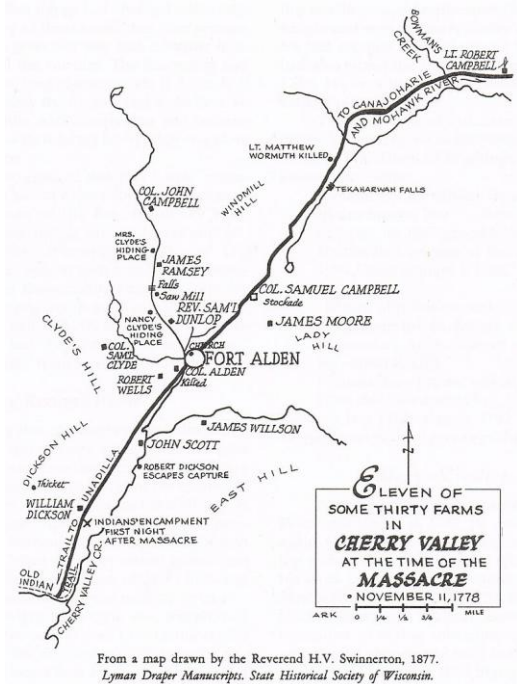
Monument to the Battle of Forty Fort, Wyoming, New York



Map from Lossing showing the five original townships and the position of Forty Fort (E) and battlefield site (F) with monument

If in fact things did go down the way they have been described, then the matter of motivation surfaces. Was it revenge over some perceived slight, a debt owed to Shoemaker that Windecker would rather not repay, or was Windecker consciously saving an old friend from the reality of being tortured by the Indians – or was it War, and all is fair in love and war. We will never know.

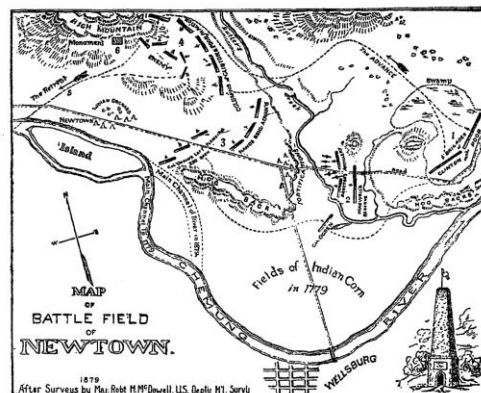
11 November 1778 the “Massacre at Cherry Valley” took place under the command of Capt. Walter Butler of Butler’s Rangers. Since Henry Windecker was a Private in Walter Butler’s Company in the fall of 1778, it is reasonable to assume that he was also present at this event – so was a participant in all of the most notorious of “battles” or “massacres” on the Northern frontier during the Revolution. This event does meet the criteria for being a massacre – the murdering of innocent civilians, adults and children. In a nutshell, Butler was unable to restrain the Seneca warriors who ran amok that day.



Monument to those who perished at Cherry Valley

In this instance there were no observers to provide information on the part played by individual Rangers, but there is no reason to suspect that Windecker harmed any non – combatants. None the less he was involved in one of the most notorious events of the Revolutionary War. An American officer, *identified the fatalities of the massacre as Colonel Alden, thirteen other soldiers, and thirty civilian inhabitants. Most of the slain soldiers had been at the Wells house.*

1779 to 1782 there are unfortunately no muster rolls for Butler’s Rangers for this interval. Doubtless HW was a participant in the guerilla action to harass the army of General Sullivan as the latter marched through Six Nations country in 1779, including the **Battle of Newtown** (along the Chemung River outside what is today Elmira, New York) on **29 August 1779**, where the combined Six Nations and Rangers were lucky to have escaped with their lives. The 250 Rangers (apparently the entire force) were led by Col. John Butler, and Capt. Walter Butler.



An excellent YouTube overview is found here: <https://youtu.be/gi2Tr5lSDKk>

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2 July 1781 Dorothy Windecker and Elizabeth Phillips at Machiche, Quebec petitioned to be allowed to return to their husbands serving with Butler's Rangers at Niagara:

Ranger Women Petition for Support 1781

Machiche 2 July 1781

The Humble Petition of Elizth. Phillips and Dorothy Windecker Wives of Nicholas Phillips and Heny. Windecker Raingers in Col. Butlers Raingers Laying Before your Exelency the unhapey Situation we Labour under in Being Abstent from Our Husbands thay laying at Niagara and we at this Place with Our Famalies; as for the Provisions we Can have no Complaint of as there is no More Alowd. but the Water and Fire Wood is the Onley Reason we have to Complain on and at this Place there is nothing to be Ernt the Whole year throw therefore Humbly Prays that your Exelency Would take it into Consideration that we might be alowd. to go to Niagara to Our Husbands and be alowd. Sum Seport and that the Said Elizth. Phillips haveing a Boy in [Sir John Johnsons Regt.](#) and if your Exelency Pleases Should be glad to have him Back as all the Other Sons and my Husband is in the Raingers Boreing one Son that Still Lays in Prison and her Husband Laid in Prison near 4 years and Came in a long with Benjamin Davis from New York that is her Son in Law to Nicholas Phillips and if your Exelency Pleases to Grant ous the Favour to Draw Provisions at Niagara Shall for Ever be Bound to Pray We being his Majestys Moost Dutifull and Loyal Humble Sert.

*Elizth. Phillips
Dorothy Windecker*

(Great Britain, British Library, Additional Manuscripts, No. 21874, folio 21).

25 August to 24 September 1781 "Mrs. Windecker" was receiving rations as follows, 1 woman, 1 male above 6 years of age, 3 females under 6 years of age. Dorothy does not appear in ration lists after this date.

1 August 1781 among those to be struck off the provisions list at Machiche from this date were Elizabeth Wandecker age 18 and Cathrine Wandecker age 20.

It is likely that HW remained with the Company of Captain Walter Butler, who led 150 Rangers into battle at the **Battle of Johnstown** of **25 October 1781** along with the troops of Major John Ross of the King's Royal Regiment of New York. On 30 October 1781, during the retreat across West Canada Creek enroute to Niagara, Captain Butler was killed.



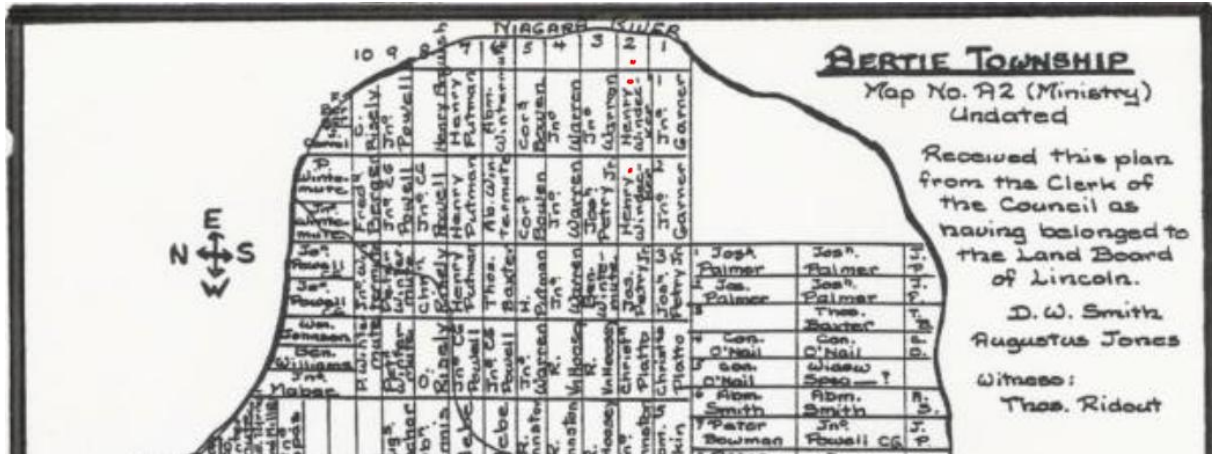
This was the last major campaign on the frontier as Lord Cornwallis capitulated at the Battle of Yorktown in the same year; and peace was formally declared in 1783.

30 November 1783 HW was a private in Captain Andrew Bradt's Company of Butler's Rangers, as well as in the Census of Niagara at this date (Henry was age 46 on that date).

Upper Canada and Bertie Township: **20 July 1784** Butler's Rangers were disbanded.

11 August 1786 Claim for Losses of Henrick Windecker (see signature above) totaled 490 pounds. His two brothers in law, William Pickerd and Friedrick Schmid attested to the validity of Windecker's claim.

31 August 1787 A further claim was submitted. HW "is now settled at Fort Erie", according to the statement of his wife Dorothy, who further attested that Henry left for the Colonies 10 weeks ago to visit relatives at the Mohawk River. She also stated that they had been settled at the Susquehanna for 17 years (therefore left Mohawk Valley about 1770). There is no further record of Dorothy after this date. Thus it is unknown when and where she died, and where she is buried. Considering Henry's perambulatory life after he inexplicably gave up his lease to the Black Rock Ferry and sold his land in Ft. Erie in 1796, it is likely that Dorothy died in Ft. Erie before this date.



Above – lands granted to Henry Windecker Lot 2 Broken Front, Concessions 1 and 2 (see red dots)

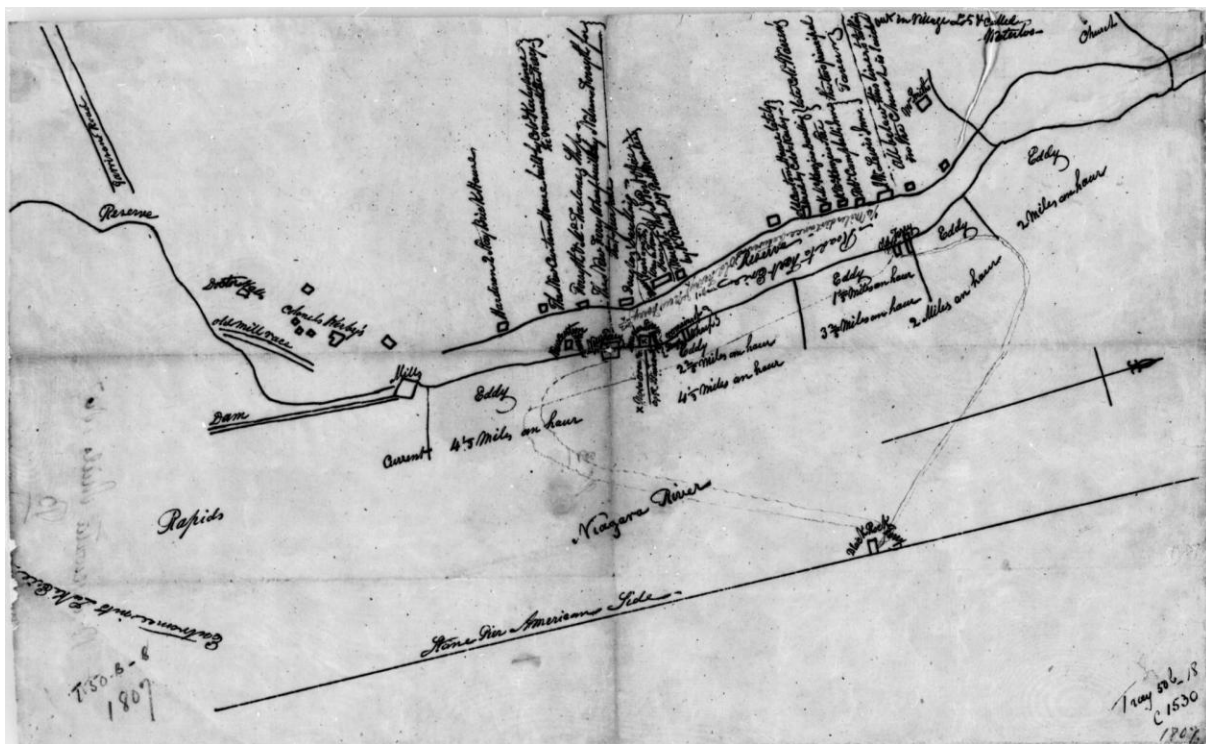


Google map of above area - #3 is Garrison Road – Bertie St marks the northern boundary of the Windecker land (thanks to cousin Tom Nelson for this map)

31 August & 31 September 1793 Joseph Moore was a Quaker who travelled from Detroit, visiting Quakers such as the author’s ancestor Ezekiel Dennis at Point Abino on Lake Erie, crossing the Niagara River on the above dates noting “Windecker’s the ferryman” on the first date above, and saying that, “We crossed the River at Windecker’s ferry” on the second date above. It is not clear when Henry began and ended this ferry service from Fort Erie to Black Rock north of Buffalo. The site is marked with a local plaque:



Bertie Street Ferry Landing c. 1796 - 1950 (Freedom Park, Fort Erie, ON)



Black Rock Ferry – “Old Ferry” location from 1807 map, with area to north including the Church called “Waterloo”

17 August 1796 “Henry Windecker late of Fort Erie yeoman” sold land deeded to him 24 June 1796, Lot 2, Concessions 1 and 2, 250 acres to David Cowan. It may be that Dorothy (Pickard) Windecker had died by this time, and may have been buried in the Church cemetery seen above.

3 Feb 1797 “Henrey Windecker” is seen in an entry of 1 February 1797 in an account book - he was a customer at Canby Mills in Canfield on the road from Niagara to the Grand River and is noted in the accounts as “late of Fort Erie”.

Perambulation – Lack of Settled Life: **17 May 1802** HW received Lot 11, Concession 8, 200 acres in King Township, York County.

1 March 1811, in the U.E. application of one of the children of Henry he is noted as being of Barton Township, so likely residing with daughter Elizabeth (Windecker) Young.

17 September 1811 son George Windecker was put on trial for the theft of a heifer. He was found guilty and sentenced to be hanged. The sentence was commuted to banishment from the “King’s Dominions”. George did not leave Upper Canada, but bounced to various locations from Elgin County to Humberstone Township along Lake Erie. It is also possible that he escaped to Indian land. This is what his nephew George Young did in 1827 when he was banished for the theft of butter – and simply went to live on Indian lands his father in law owned.

14 November 1811 Henry Windecker of Barton, County of Lincoln yeoman, sold the above lands in York County to Daniel Young of Barton Township, Lincoln County, Esquire.

30 April to 24 May 1813 HW was recorded as a private in the 3rd Lincoln Militia. Considering that he would have been 76 years old his motivation is not at all evident (no one beyond age 60 was required to perform militia duties).

25 July to 9 August 1814 HW was a private in Captain Powell’s Company of the 3rd Lincoln Militia. Based on names such as Anger on this roster, it seems likely that this unit’s catchment area was Bertie Township – perhaps he was residing with his daughter Mary Magdalen, wife of Frederick Anger Jr. of Bertie.

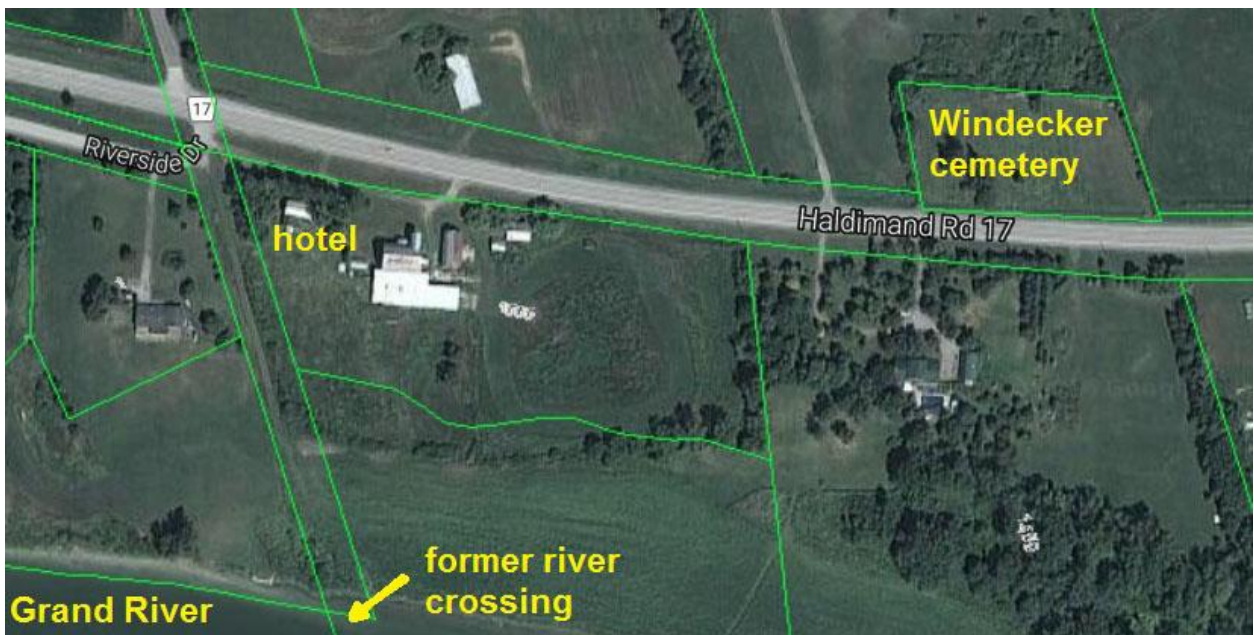
The Grand River: In **1814** Peter Culver noted in his diary that HW spread chaff on the ice of the Grand River so that he and his oxen could pass over to Giffords and from there on to his home in Walpole Township on Sandusk Creek. The date is more likely 1815 since family records indicate that, disgusted with the new Republic, he emigrated from the United States in that year.

At some point the family moved to Indian lands, namely William Frederick (named after his two uncles who came to Canada?) who was the son of George Windecker. He became the first recorded owner of the property in North Cayuga Township, South part of the South part of Lot 18, Concession 3, 125 acres. The land was patented 13 September 1835. The present author has

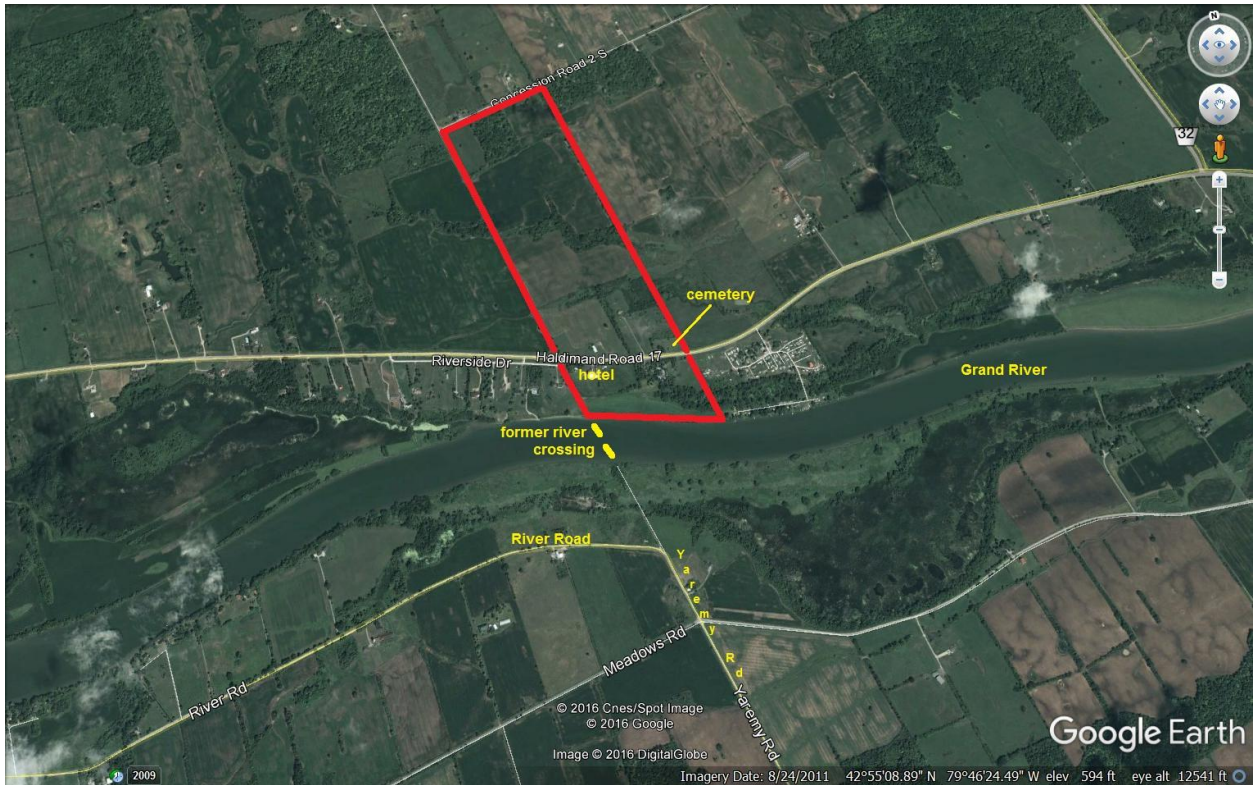
searched all of the RG10 Indian Affairs Papers and other collections in the Library and National Archives of Canada. It is odd that nothing at all was found pertaining to this parcel of land that would show when the Windecker's became residents here. A hotel was built directly opposite Gifford's Ferry, supposedly in 1795 – although I would like to see explicit evidence of this date. Furthermore, no early deeds concerning Perry Gifford, who operated the ferry directly opposite the Windecker property, have surfaced.



Windecker lands in North Cayuga Township from 1878 Haldimand County Map



Windecker property North Cayuga Township (thanks to Thomas M. Nelson)



Panning back from above to show entire property, and road to Giffords Ferry on south bank of River (thanks to Thomas M. Nelson)



Google map of Windecker Hotel (now private home) with location of Gifford Ferry shown at telephone pole across River

Haldimand Past Times

OGS Haldimand County Branch Newsletter

Volume 15 Issue 4

December 2004



WINDECKER'S HOTEL
Now a private residence.

An old cemetery now known as “Windecker Cemetery” was established some time before 1808 when the earliest date of death (of an Armstrong) is recorded on a tombstone – so it can be said with confidence that there was some sort of settlement in that area before the War of 1812. It is likely that Henry Windecker is buried there – but there is no direct evidence.



Windecker Cemetery North Cayuga Township

From the date **11 January 1820** the notation “the late Henry Windecker of the Niagara District” appears in the Orders in Council from the Upper Canada Land Papers relating to land petitions of his children – so the closest we can come to assigning a date of death for Henry Windecker would be between 1814 and 1820.

Children: The following chart provides an overview of the children of Henry Windecker and Dorothy (Pickard) Windecker. It will be amended as new information becomes available.

Descendants of Henry WINDECKER

Generation 1

1. **HENRY¹ WINDECKER** was born about 1737 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. He died between 1814-11 Jan 1820 in pr North Cayuga Township, Haldimand County, Ontario. He married **DOROTHY PICKARD (PICKERT)**. She was born about 1743 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died after 31 Aug 1787 in Prob. Bertie Township, Welland County, Ontario, Canada.

Henry WINDECKER and Dorothy PICKARD (PICKERT) had the following children:

- i. **CATHARINE² WINDECKER** was born on 20 Apr 1760 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She married Peter BOWER, son of Gasper BOWER and Catharine Elizabeth, before 1782 in Niagara on the Lake, Ontario, Canada. He was born on 13 Apr 1760 in Stone Arabia, Montgomery, New York, United States.
- ii. **ELIZABETH WINDECKER** was born about 1763 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. She died on 08 Mar 1829 in Barton Township, Wentworth County, Ontario, Canada. She married **DANIEL YOUNG**. He was born in 1755 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. He died on 09 May 1836 in Barton Township, Wentworth County, Ontario, Canada.
- iii. **GEORGE WINDECKER** was born in 1769 in Canajoharie District, Tryon County, New York, USA. He died about 1845 in pr North Cayuga Township, Haldimand, Ontario, Canada. He married Sarah SIPES, daughter of Johann Joseph Sypes and Hannah Margarethe Schauer, on 22 Jul 1797 in Welland County, Ontario, Canada. She was born about 1775 in Deerpark, Sussex, New Jersey, United States. She died in 1845 in Camden, Kent, Ontario, Canada.
- iv. **MARY MAGDALEN WINDECKER** was born in 1771 in Wyoming, Luzerne, Pennsylvania, USA. She died on 05 Nov 1837 in Bertie Township, Welland County, Ontario, Canada. She married Frederick ANGER Jr., son of George Frederick ANGER and Maria YOUNG, about 1792 in Bertie Township, Welland, Canada West (Ontario), Canada. He was born in 1766 in Wyoming Valley, Pennsylvania, USA. He died after 1851 in Bertie Township, Welland County, Ontario, Canada.
- v. **BARBARA WINDECKER** was born on 19 Jul 1774 in Wyalusing, Bradford, Pennsylvania, USA. She died on 07 Sep 1862 in West Elgin, Elgin County, Ontario. She married James FLEMING in 1793. He was born in 1760 in Londonderry, Northern Ireland. He died on 08 Sep 1838 in West Elgin, Elgin County, Ontario.

Notes for Barbara WINDECKER:

Two other possible children are Anne who married a Shaw; and Barbara.

- vi. **MARGARET WINDECKER** was born in 1776 in Wyalusing, Bradford, Pennsylvania, USA. She died on 10 Mar 1837 in Montgomery, Hamilton, Ohio, USA. She married John KITSON (KITZER) on 07 Jan 1792 in Ontario, Canada. He was born on 26 Apr 1766 in Hanover, Germany. He died on 23 Jan 1825 in Montgomery County, Ohio, USA.

Dr. David K. Faux
Cypress, California; Caledonia, Ontario

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