

ADAM YOUNG (1717 – 1790) and CATHARINE ELIZABETH SCHREMLING (1720 – 1798)

In the introduction to a recent study of Loyalist Ontario, Bruce Wilson suggests that Adam Young was one of the first "un-American Americans", a quintessential Loyalist who suffered greatly for his loyalty to the King. Wilson writes that Adam became a "royalist guerilla fighter" during the Revolutionary War, and further that, "Reviled as a traitor by one nation, Young was a founding father of another".

Adam Young was born 17 May 1717, apparently at Schoharie N.Y., the son of Theobald Jung and Maria Catharina (--). As noted in the biography of Theobald Jung Sr., his wife's (Anglicized) name was, according to Catharine Ehle, Catharine Snyder (i.e., Schneider). He married Catharine Elizabeth Schremling (Catterina Lis Schrimling), daughter of Henrich and Maria Elisabetha (-- Schremling (Schremele).

Adam Young was baptized as Johann Adam Jung at Schoharie 6 June 1717 by the Lutheran minister Joshua Kocherthal, the sponsors being Johann Jost Laux, Johann Adam Kopp, and Catharina Frey. In 1716/17 his Palatine-German parents were residing at Neu=Heesburg (Fuchsendorf - Foxtown) on the Schoharie River. Sometime prior to 1733 Theobald Jung moved from the Schoharie Valley to the site of the present-day St. Johnsville N.Y., in the Mohawk Valley (Lots 15 and 18, Harrison Patent, Canajoharie District, now Montgomery Co.), purchasing the land from John Haskoll 18 Apr. 1732.

On 14 July 1752 Theobald and his sons Adam, Frederick, and Andries obtained a patent to 14,000 acres of land on the south side of the Mohawk River; having petitioned for permission to purchase the land 31 May 1751, and having bought the land from the Mohawk Indians 21 May 1752. While Theobald sold his land in the Harrison Patent 10 July 1754, he and his sons did not move to Young's Patent at this time, but instead appear to have moved almost directly across the River to Lot 6 in the Third Allotment of the Van Horne Patent. This land is located on the south side of the Mohawk River, fronting along the River for about three quarters of a mile. It is less than two miles from Ft. Hendrick where the Mohawk Indians had their Castle. Adam's name appears on the map of this Patent as of 10 October 1764. Since Adam was the first born son, it is possible that by then he had inherited this property from his father Theobald.

The tax list of 1766, however, lists Adam Young near his brothers, and among others residing on or near the north end of the Bleecker Patent near the Geissenburg Settlement. Therefore about this time Adam probably settled near present-day Ft. Plain on the south side of the Mohawk River. Adam probably moved to land (Lot 4, Bleecker Patent) adjoining that of his brother Frederick near the Canajoharie (Sand Hill) Reformed Church, which he (Adam) helped found.

Brief glimpses of Adam's activities during his tenure in the Mohawk Valley are provided by scattered documentary references. For example, he was allegedly "present as Capt of a

company at the capture of Fort Niagara from the French" (i.e., 1759). This statement is found in a petition written by Young's grandson William Young, given as an example of the longstanding loyalty of the family to the Crown. Further evidence supporting this claim has not been located.

The name of Adam Young of "Canajohary" appears occasionally in the account books of Daniel Campbell of Schenectady between 1758 and 1761; and was listed next to his brother Frederick on a list of freeholders of "Canajoharrie". Reference to the tax list of January 1766 notes that Adam was assessed at the rate of 12 pounds. Of the 65 men on the list owning property, two others equalled this tax rate, and four surpassed it. Therefore, the evidence suggests that Adam was among the wealthiest residents in the area (plus he had vast holdings elsewhere). See the biography of son John for a detailed description of this property.

On 29 Oct. 1765 the deed of partition to Young's Patent was composed, and soon thereafter Adam moved to Lot 19 on the south side of Young's Lake (Youngsfield, now Warren, Herkimer Co.). It is fortunate that a description of Adam's house survives. In a letter from Garret Abeel to his wife Mary, dated 27 May 1772, he describes a trip he took from the Mohawk River to Youngs Lake. Apparently after traversing miles of deserted wilderness, on the 23rd of May, "when through the Woods I saw as by appearance the Ocion, I knew ye journey wo'd soon be to an end but Judge my agreeable surprise when soon After at the side of a large Lake before me appeared a very good board house with a Peaza round it, and several buildings about it and found one Adam Young with his family the possessor thereof".

Adam became a lieutenant in the German Flats (Burnetsfield) militia in the mid 1760s, and a land speculator. He also farmed, and owned a potash works, a sawmill, and an Indian trading post. Some documents have survived which help to "flesh out" aspects of his business interests, and in addition help to reveal facets of his character. For example, Jelles Fonda kept an itemized listing of the goods he sold to Adam Young (payment by the latter in animal skins and ginseng root) between 1769 and 1771. The large quantities of beads and "sculpting knives" suggest that they were for retail sale at Young's Indian trading post. In a letter dated Youngsfield 28 July 1774, Young offers to sell Jelles Fonda five "Parrels of Bodash". This and other expressions such as "plece to lad me now" suggest the possibility that Young spoke English with a German accent. It is further known that some of his other activities brought him into contact with the courts. Although precise details are lacking, he apparently initiated a lawsuit over a debt owed him, was charged with assault and battery, and was involved in a variety of unspecified cases.

It appears that Adam was one of the principal figures in the Mohawk Valley. Among the facts which support this statement, in addition to what has been noted above, is his appearance in an entry in the accounts of Jelles Fonda. On 6 July 1769, English blankets were sold to Sir William Johnson and shrouds (used for Indian burials) sold to Adam Young and credited to the account of Colonel George Croghan. To be mentioned in the same breath as these two members of the colonial aristocracy appears to reflect Adam's influence at the time. Furthermore, in the court records of Major John Frey, one of the

Justices of Tryon County, Adam sued John Weaver for "selling liquor to his servants without his licence." Whether these are white servants or black slaves is not stated.

With the approach of the Revolution, Adam Young remained loyal to the Crown, becoming increasingly concerned with the way events were taking shape in the Mohawk Valley. He was particularly perplexed by the "association" that residents were expected to sign to show their support of the actions of the Continental Congress. He refused to sign the document. Neither Adam Young nor his brother Frederick (a Justice of the Peace for Tryon Co.) could see the necessity of using force to redress grievances against the Government. Adam wrote a petition to the Committee of Safety to reflect these concerns, which he circulated among the residents of Stone Arabia. Andreas Young attempted to put the actions of his brothers in the most favourable light in his testimony before the Committee 17 Feb. 1776, who, however, saw the actions of Adam as being detrimental to their cause. When Adam Young refused to appear before the Committee to answer their charges, Capt. Henry Eckler was ordered 18 July 1777 to collect a fine of 10 pounds from him. On 11 Aug. 1777 Lawrence Gros and a "posse" went to Adam Young's where it was suspected that a party of Loyalist soldiers were in hiding. While Gros wanted to arrest Young, "Capt. Eckler & the good People prayed with Tears in their Eyes, that we would desist from doing that, for their own Safety." Apparently there was a fear of the repercussions if they attempted to capture Young. The group eventually satisfied themselves with temporarily forcing Adam and "Cattle" (i.e., Cattie) from their home.

On 6 Sept. 1777 Adam Young was examined by the Committee of Safety and found guilty of supplying "a party of absconding vagabonds who joined our Enemies at Fort Shyler". His attitudes toward the American cause at this time is reflected in the fact that he was known as a "rank enemy" to the "Damned rebels" (as he termed them). He was therefore taken into custody and sent to various jails in Connecticut, including "Norwich Gaol". Soon after he returned home from 11 months imprisonment, his buildings were burned and effects taken by the Patriot supporters. The Rebels had for some time known that Adam was an unrepentant supporter of the Loyalists. For example, in his Revolutionary War Pension Application, Peter Fox reported that in 1778 he was "ordered out to march out to Young's Lake where the enemy generally would have recourse to harbour at the home of Adam Young, but not discovering nor mett any Tories or Indians from Canada....." Adam's buildings were destroyed on the order of Rev. Daniel Gros in retaliation for the burning of Andrustown by Capt. Joseph Brant. He escaped "with scarce sufficient Clothes to cover him"; he and his two youngest sons (Henry and David – the latter died during the War) trekking to Oswego to join Butler's Rangers. Young was enrolled in the 6th Company of this unit as of 1 Aug. 1778. It is apparent that Adam returned to the Mohawk Valley at least once during the Revolution to avenge the destruction of his property. On 17 September 1778, at 6 o'clock in the morning, Captains Joseph Brant and Gilbert Tice, and William Caldwell, with 300 Rangers and 152 Indians swooped down on the German Flatts settlement. The populace had, however, been warned of the approach of Loyalist forces and had taken refuge in Forts Herkimer and Dayton. The Loyalists, who had emerged at the property of R. Shoemaker, then began the task of burning everything in their path. They were unable to take Fort Dayton but destroyed virtually all the houses (63), barns (57), grist mills (3), saw mill (1), and grain on both sides

of the Mohawk River. Only the church and the fort remained standing from Adam Starings to Wydecks beyond Canada Creek on the north side; while in a six mile stretch from Ft. Herkimer up the River to William Tygerts there were but 2 or 3 houses unscathed. All the cattle and horses (235) and sheep (269) in the vicinity were rounded up and driven away. The action was finished by noon. Among them, according to the American Colonel Peter Bellinger, was "Adam Young & his sons".

Toward the end of the Revolution Young was given permission to clear a farm at Niagara (on-the-Lake), becoming one of the first settlers in the Niagara Peninsula, where he remained until about 1784, when he joined his three sons on the Six Nations Indian Reserve along the Grand River - this property being confirmed to them by the Six Nations 26 Feb. 1787. In Sept. of the same year Adam Young appeared before the Commissioners for Resolving Loyalist Claims at Niagara where he detailed his former extensive holdings in New York. A marginal note in the Library of Congress copy of these records indicates that the interviewers considered him to be a "very good man". Adam left the Mohawk Valley in haste, and left various debts behind. One was to Jelles Fonda who, in November 1784 included Adam on a list of persons indebted to him who "are gone off to the Enemy in the late Warr".

The property of Adam Young in Herkimer County and elsewhere had been confiscated by the State of New York, probably impelling him to deed his lands at Youngsfield to his son-in-law Joseph House (a Patriot supporter) in order to salvage some financial remuneration from their sale. It is apparent from the wording of a clause in the will of Adam's son Daniel, that there was still hope in 1836 of obtaining some compensation for the confiscated lands. Specifically, Daniel gave instructions about selling "my real Estate in the State of New York situate in the County of Herkimer or otherwise...granted to my Father Adam Young late deceased...which I became heir thereof by Will". In 1837 there was an attempt to recover these lands when John Woodworth, a lawyer from Albany, filed a claim on behalf of the descendants of Adam Young. In the 1840's Peter Young and subsequently James Young (sons of Daniel Young) were empowered by the family to take legal steps to obtain title or payment for the New York property. In 1892 the hope was still alive as Adam's grandson William Young noted in his will, "property as I claim through my father the late Henry Young and being in the State of New York". The final effort of record was by a "lawyer who was married to a Young". It was his intention to collect a complete list of descendants of Adam Young (visiting Philip Young (1855-1937) in Canada for this purpose), and to lay claim to an estate that supposedly amounted to thirty-five million dollars. Apparently the lawyer died before he could complete his work. The outcome of these proceedings is unknown.

On 22 January 1790 Adam Young "of the Grand River Settlement" signed his will, being then "weak in body yet of Sound & perfect understanding and Memory..." He mentions his wife Elisabeth; Elisabeth Young, daughter of John Young his son; and sons Daniel Young and Henry Young. He appointed his "trusty Friends" Major Henry Wm Nelles, Lieut Robert Nelles, and Jacob Christian Brenneman as his executors. The witnesses were John Young and J. Christn Brenneman. Evidence that Elizabeth House was a daughter is found in the proceedings of the Commissioners for Extinguishing Claims, Sept. 1808, where

Joseph House and Elizabeth his wife applied to the Board. Affidavits were provided by Philip F. Frey and John Hiss of Montgomery Co. stating that Adam left "issue three sons named John, Daniel, and Henry and one daughter Elizabeth now the wife of the said Joseph House and one of the applicants for compensation".

Adam died at Grand River (Young Tract, Seneca Township.) Ontario after 22 January 1790, when he signed his above will, and the time that the survey of Augustus Jones was completed in January / March 1791. In the map relating to the survey and in the surveyor's notes record the owner of the home at the upper end of the Young Tract was Henry, not his father Adam. Adam was likely the first person to be buried in the Young Tract Burying Ground on a knoll (that had become a cornfield which, in 2004, after 25 years effort to stop this injustice, was registered as a Cemetery in the Province of Ontario) on the river flats at the lower end of the Young Tract.

The tradition that Adam Young had an Indian or French mistress, Polly Crain, by whom he had a son Jacob A. Young (b. 6 Apr. 1755), is not supported by documentary evidence. Published data extracted from primary source records indicates that this Jacob Young was the son of Jacob Young Sr. (a cousin of Adam Young). What is curious about this tradition is that Adam's son John's mother - in - law was Molly Hill, who may also have gone by her mother's surname Crine (Anglicized to Green).

***** Each of the above noted facts is supported with one or more documentary sources. The author has removed these coded notations from the body of the text to enhance readability. The same procedure is used with the biographies of Adam and Catharine's four surviving children. At some point all of these references will be made available to interested family members. DKF.**