

## BIOGRAPHY OF LT. JOHN YOUNG (JOHANNES JUNG)

By

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John Young was born in 1742, likely on the Harrison Patent, the site of the present-day St. Johnsville N.Y., and was baptized (no date given) as Johanes Jung, with Fridrich Jung and Thoreda Hesen as sponsors (SAR, p. 1). John moved to the south shore of the Mohawk River in 1754 close to the Upper (Canajoharie) Mohawk Village (see biography of his father and grandfather). It is likely this proximity that brought him into close contact with the Mohawk people, with the result that he learned to speak their language, and met his future wife among them. He probably married Catharine Hill Brant in 1765, and lived on the property near the Mohawk Village owned by his father Adam until 1771, when Adam deeded land near Ft. Plain (the "Geissenburg Settlement" by Otsquago Creek) to his eldest son (see later).

On 25 Apr. 1771 Adam (1) deeded a 105 parcel of land at Canajoharie (Lot 4, Bleeker Patent) on the Mohawk River (near Ft. Plain) to his son John (AJD), adjoining the 250 acre farm of the former's brother Frederick Young (CJY). It is apparent that John was still residing on the property near the Upper Mohawk Village immediately prior to the time the deed was issued. In one of the account books of Jelles Fonda is an entry dated 5 November 1770 for "Hannes Young now Near Ct. Seibers his son John" (NYSHA, Jelles Fonda Ledger 10, 1772-1791, p. 21). The Canajoharie Tax List for 1766 (located by Marilyn J. Cramer, and provided to the author by Ken Johnson of Kansas) shows Hannes Seeber located among a group of individuals residing on the Van Horne Patent around Adam Young's parcel shown in the map (noted previously) of 1764. John's name does not appear here since he was only occupying the property, his father Adam was the owner. At some point in the early 1770s however, John moved to the property in Bleecker Patent. Adam who then sold the land in the Van Horne Patent such that "at the Commencement of the late war" one Thomas Young, son of Johan Christian Young (no relation to Adam Young) was in possession of the property (NYSL, Garrit Y. Lansing Papers, Acc. No. KT13324, Remissions on Patent to Abraham Van Horne). An entry in the court records may relate to some aspect of the sale. On 2 March 1776 John Young sued Thomas Young for 3 pounds, 15 shillings (NYSL, Frey Papers, Justice Docket of Major John Frey, Acc. No. 9829, p. 425).

A specific description of this property occupied by John Young at the time of the Revolution may be of interest. Reference to the Loyalist Claims data indicates that the farm was 105 acres in extent, and that Adam was "offered 1000 pounds New York Currency by Peter Ramsay in New York sometime before 1771." (CJY) In terms of the exact location of John's residence, the original deed to John from his father states that it is on Lot 4 of the Highland Patent deeded to the Bleeckers. A map composed about 1772 shows Adam on what was then (the lots were renamed and renumbered) 210 acres of the "Wood Lotts" Lot 2 at the northern section of the Bleecker Patent, opposite a large island in the Mohawk River (NYSL, Acc. No. 10816 Misc. Papers and Maps Relating to Rutger

Bleecker's Holdings in Otsquago Patent 1725-1773, Items 4,5,6a,11). Apparently the lots were severed in two (105 acres each) and Adam had the portion which was the west section (furthest from the river). This was a remote location, above the Dutchtown Road. Plotting the dimensions of this lot on modern maps, it is apparent that Adam / John's residence was at the location where, in 1853 A. Ornt was residing (Atlas of Montgomery County, 1853, Montgomery County archives, Fonda, N.Y.); and where in 1905, A. Arndt was living (New Century Atlas of Montgomery and Fulton Counties New York, Century Map Co., Philadelphia, 1905). These individuals were descendants of Abraham Arndt (Washington Frotheringham (Ed.), "History of Montgomery County", D. Mason & Co., Syracuse, N.Y., 1892, pp. 1-2) who, on 26 January 1786, bought this property (Lot 2, Rutger Blecker Patent, 105 acres) from the Loan Officers of the City and County of Albany. Arndt paid 112 pounds for the land (the buildings had been destroyed during the Revolution 10 years earlier) in a programme where monies were raised by the sale of confiscated lands to help the State pay its debts (Montgomery County Dept. of history and Archives, Tryon County Deeds, Book 1, 1772-1778, pp. 287-8). Interestingly, a publication of 1878 provides a detailed engraving of the "Res. of Alfred Arndt Town of Minden", which shows a large two story Georgian style house with a complex of barns and out buildings, and the well pump just to the right of the raised laneway, near the apparent drive shed, with a house situated in the distance ("History of Montgomery and Fulton Counties, N.Y., F.W. Beers & Co., New York, 1878: reprinted 1981, Heart of the Lakes Publishing, Interlaken, N.Y.). The map compiled by the Army Map Service Geological Survey in 1943 (Ft. Plain) shows no buildings on the site, but a prominent tongue shaped eminence, the tip of which is where is all likelihood the farm complex was located. A narrow ridge shown was probably the area along which the laneway ran. In June 1990, Ken Johnson of Nebraska (now Kansas) and the author visited the site and walked along a narrow tree lined ridge to a wooded copse of about half an acre. In a site to the left (south) of the laneway ridge, a deep stone lined well was located in an area of scrub brush - with the pump leaning inside the well shaft. Further down the tongue of land, where it dipped sharply, was found an area of about 50 feet square where there was a heavy scatter of brick, stone, cinders, and household artifacts (e.g., tea cups, a decanter stopper), some of which are dateable to the late 1700s (e.g., pearlware, queensware). This spot is situated in proper relationship to the laneway and pump shown in the above noted engraving.

In March 1777 John Young escaped from the hands of the Rebels (Patriots), leaving his family and his farm in order to join the British (CJY; PAC, AO 13/79, Claim of John Young, Nov. 1783, p. 777). A likely reason for the precipitous departure was a pending arrest warrant being issued for his suspected role in the burning of the grist mill of Philip W. Fox near the Palatine Church and the farm of Henry William Nelles (his future neighbour on the Grand River). At a meeting of the Tryon County Committee of Safety, 1 April 1777, an inquiry was held concerning the origin of the fire. Apparently Cunrad Matthes, who was the nearest neighbour of John Young (see 1772 map of Blecker Patent), stated that Henry W. Nelles sent his "Negro" to fetch a horse belonging to Nelles - said horse having been "stolen" the same night that Fox's mill had been burned. It seems that one Rudolph Yucker became suspicious after hearing this from Matthes, and interrogated Nelles's "Negro", in particular about how a horse and bridle could be stolen

from a locked barn. The Black servant said that both he and Nellis were not at home that night so could not explain the matter. Another individual, Isaac Ellwood, also questioned Nelles's servant, who tried to explain Nelles's strange awareness of the whereabouts of his stolen horse, said that since Nelles had bought the horse from Young and thought it may have wandered back to its former master. The servant further said that when he and Nelles's son came to Young's house and inquired about the horse, they were told that the horse had been found fully bridled in front of the house, so was placed in the stable. Since it was established that the bridle was always kept in the Nellis house, the whole matter became even more suspicious. The Black servant further said that he believed that, considering his master's Tory convictions, it must have been another "strong Tory" who took the horse. Since John Young lived directly across the River from Nelles, it is difficult to imagine how it could have found its way across the ford below Sand Hill, and up the road to the Geissenburg. It is also more than a bit odd that Nellis should immediately conclude that his horse would be abandoned by the supposed thief, then be able to discover the route to his former stable. It therefore appears that John Young and Henry W. Nelles, who were good enough friends that they chose to settle side by side on Indian land after the War, conspired to commit an act of sabotage. In the likely scenario, John Young burned the mill and had a "get away" horse arranged to help him make a rapid exit from the scene of the "crime". Since the evidence clearly pointed to John Yung being the "perpetrator", it is likely that this is what prompted the Rebel's attempt to capture him. The timing of March 1777 coincides perfectly with the known date Young left his farm to avoid capture (Maryly B. Penrose, "Mohawk Valley in the Revolution", Liberty Bell Press, Franklin Park, N.J., 1978, pp. 105-107).

Young's farm was then rented from 7 June 1777 to a neighbour (noted above) Jno. Seber (Rent Role of Farms left by Persons gone to the Enemy, New York in the Revolution, Vol. 2, Supplement, Albany: State of New York, 1904, pp. 246-247). His family was "drove off the premises" at this time (CJY), and likely were sheltered at the Upper (Canajoharie) Mohawk Castle (MV, p. 126). On 25 Aug. 1777 the Tryon Co. Committee of Safety ordered the apprehension of "John Young's wife" and her confinement at the Tice house in Johnstown (MV, p. 127). She, her 4 children, and mother-in-law Catharine Elizabeth Young were in the "Hands of the Congress" (1778) (HP, Add. Mss. 21765, Reel 46 p. 72; Maryly B. Penrose, Baumann/Bowman Family, Franklin Park N.J.: Liberty Bell Assoc., 1977, p. 275). They were probably exchanged (sent to Canada) in the winter of 1779/80 (HP, Add. Mss., 21765, Reel 46, letters 17 Oct. 1779, 3 May 1780). Earlier, soon after John Young departed for Canada, The Commissioners of Sequestration sold some of the effects of John Young. In December 1777 they sold "sundries" of John Young for 59 pounds (NYSL, Gerrit Y. Lansing Papers, Acc. No. KT13324, General Accounts 1777-1796, Box 2, Folder 18).

In June of 1777 John Young was in the employ of the Indian Department (NAC, CO 42, Vol. 32, A List of persons Employed in the Indian Department, As of Use, 15 June 1777, p. 312), being commissioned as a lieutenant prior to 25 Dec. 1777 (HP, Add. Mss. 21765, Reel 46, Paylist, Indian Department, p. 48). In the spring of 1778 John Young was performing a dual role near the Pennsylvania - New York border. He had been sent to Unadilla with about 40 rangers and 2 Indians to scour the countryside to seek provisions

for the army of Col. John Butler which was advancing in that direction. He also acted as a recruiting officer behind enemy lines in that area, reading a proclamation to the people of the Butternuts settlement instructing all "friends to Government" to come and join Butler, who would welcome them. John Young had been particularly successful at Oquaga where he obtained 70 head of cattle and 60 to 70 recruits (Testimony of Barnabas Kelly, 26 June 1778, Public Papers of George Clinton, Vol. 3, Albany: Lyon, 1901, pp. 504-506). This report is corroborated by the returns of Col. Mason Bolton at Niagara who wrote that "Mr. John Young detach'd from Auqhuaga with 30 Rangers and Indians constantly scouting towards the German Flatts and Cherry Valley" (HP, Add. Mss. 21765, Reel 46, Return of the disposition of the Rangers now employed in the frontiers of the Indian Country, no date, p. 409).

John Young's duties as an Indian Department officer were diverse, as evidenced by the above and following recorded information. In 1780 he was selected by the Naticoke Indians to represent them (PAC, RG 10, Vol. 11, Minutes of Indian Affairs, 3 Feb. 1780, p. 139), which probably required that he lead them in battle, and live among them. In the same year John Young was assigned to escort a group of Six Nations Indian deputies in a boat from Ft. Schlosser to Ft. Erie, "there to see them well provided with necessaries for their journey" in order that they could embark on a trip to the west to encourage the Indians there to take up arms against the Rebels (PAC, RG 10, Vol. 11, Minutes of Indian Affairs, 11 Apr. 1780, p. 259). He was also frequently in attendance at the Indian councils at Niagara between 1780 and 1782 (HP, Add. Mss. 21779, Reel 54, p. 73, 83, 86, 91, 109).

It would appear that June 1782 was a particularly busy month. He and Lieut. William Johnston were sent as "runners" with correspondence for Detroit (HP, Add. Mss. 21769, Reel 48, Officer's Accounts, June 1782, p. 115), and in the same month he was assigned to Oswego where he tabulated a census return of the number of Six Nations Indian and Brant's Volunteers present there on 21 June 1782 (HP, Add. Mss. 21765, Reel 46, p. 283). Four days later he submitted an account of his expences incurred at Tosioha on Buffalo Creek (a Delaware and Naticoke settlement) (HP, Add. Mss. 21769, Reel 48, 25 June 1782, p. 115). Some insight into the performance of John Young in these various roles is found in a letter from Capt. John Johnston to Col. John Butler, where he requests another officer to assist him at Canadasaga, suggesting "Mr Young who I look upon being very active" (HP, Add. Mss. 21765, Reel 46, 21 Apr. 1779, p. 119).

After seven years of service, John Young went on half-pay 24 March 1784 (NAC, Haldimand Transcripts, MG 21, Vol. B 167, Pt. 2, Return of Officers of the Indian Department Recommended for Half Pay, pp. 352-353) and settled among the Indians on the Grand River. John Young's property was confiscated by "the people of the State of New York" 21 Jan. 1783 (NYSL, Revolutionary Records, Rev. Mss. 16, Folder 6, No. 1), meaning that he could not seriously contemplate a return to his former home.

In late Sept. 1784 Young, then residing on the Grand River, was called upon by two Missisauga Indians to visit a site on the shores of Lake Erie where three White men had been killed. He went with Capt. Cackbush and three other Delaware Indians, and

described the scene of the carnage in a letter to the commandant at Ft. Niagara. Within a day, when it became apparent that the perpetrators were Delawares, the leading men of this tribe told Young that they would do their best to find the guilty parties. Subsequent testimony by an individual who escaped during the incident provided more specific details, supporting Young's observations and inferences about what had happened (HP, Add. Mss. 21763, Reel 44, letter and enclosures from Arent S. DePeyster, 30 Sept. 1784, pp. 355-362).

The name of John Young appears in various account books relating to the Niagara Peninsula. For example, he paid a debt owed in the 1790's by his wife's cousin "Aaron Hill Capt David Son" to merchant William Nelles (MTL, S111, William Nelles, Accounts and Militia Papers, Account Book 1792-1837). He also participated in Six Nations Indian councils (e.g., PAC, MG 11, Q Series, Vol. 283, Power of Attorney - Six Nations Indians to Joseph Brant, 2 Nov. 1796, pp. 44-49); entertained various travellers at his home (e.g., Charles M. Johnston, *The Valley of the Six Nations: A Collection of Documents on the Indian Lands of the Grand River*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1964, p. 65, 123, 125); and was a founding member of the Barton Masonic Lodge (George E. Mason, *Historical Sketch of the Barton Lodge*, Hamilton, 1895, p. 61, 183).

Evidence that John Young was the first settler on the Grand River is found in a letter from Robert Hoyes to Frederick Haldimand 2 Nov. 1783 stating that, "A party of Rangers with an Indian as their guide march by land to the Grand Riviere. They carry a letter, from Col. Butler to a Mr. Young, who resides amongst the Indians settled on that river,..." (HP, Add. Mss. 21763, Reel 44, p. 285). He was the first to purchase land from the Mississauga owners, the deed to his farm (one mile square) in the Young Tract being dated 20 Jan. 1784 (JOS). John Young, however, had an additional place of residence at the Mohawk Village, at least in the 1780's (CJY). It is apparent that John Young lived in relative comfort, having four slaves (Dean, Laya, a man named Jack, a boy named Jack) to attend to many of the chores (Will of John Young, RSC, Lincoln Co. (Niagara North), 17 July 1812) at his two residences.

Some insight into the personality of John Young is available through an examination of the diaries of those who visited him. For example, Patrick Campbell reported playing "whist, cribbage, and other games" with Young, adding that it was the first time he had ever played cards with a "squaw". This statement indicates that in the Young home, women participated with the men in some forms of leisure recreation. Whether this behaviour was typical of pioneer society at this time, or, for example, reflects Young's egalitarian attitude toward women, or mirrors the fact that Catharine was "strong willed" (assertive), is unknown. It is not possible to read motives from this isolated excerpt in a diary. Young also gave Campbell a tour of the area in his sleigh, pointing out the local sites of interest, and in general showed him "marked attention and hospitality" (Campbell, *Travels*, p. 180). Another facet, however, is seen in the testimony of a neighbour Charles Anderson, relative to the treatment of Charles Brown, a man who was apparently an indentured servant of Young. Anderson reported that Young "locked him <Brown> up in a room, and threatened to beat him" if Brown didn't sign a note for £50. When Brown escaped through a window, Young sent two Indians who were staying at

the house to retrieve him. The jury which heard the case decided in favour of Brown (MTL, Upper Canada Court of Common Pleas, Nassau District, Minutes, 14 Oct. 1788-10 Apr. 1794, Co. of Lincoln, 9 Apr. 1793) - the incident revealing a possible dark side to the character of John Young.

Detailed data on the wives of John Young is found in the document see by clicking [here](#).

Precise locations of the house sites on the Grand River occupied by John and his brothers are found in the survey notes recorded by Augustus Jones (AJ). A collection of archaeological artifacts, obtained under licence from the Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, from the site of John Young's house is presently held in trust by the writer.

John wrote his will 15th April 1805 "considering the uncertainty of this mortal life", giving various effects to his wife Priscilla including "the Negro woman Dean sufficient maintenance as long as she remains my widow and conducts herself with Propriety". He also gave her, during her life, "the Negro man Jack and the Negro woman Laya, and after her death the Negro man Jack to be given to my son Abraham and the Negro woman Laya to go to my daughter Elizabeth". It was also his will that "my wife will live in the house with my son Joseph and to have together all the household furniture". He even made provisions as to how the house should be divided into rooms assigned to each party. Joseph was to have the farm where his father resided, various effects, and "the negro boy Jack". The one mile tract fronting the River was basically divided in four. John Jr. was to have the section furthest down river, Joseph the next portion, then the section reserved for Elizabeth, and finally the uppermost segment to Abraham. The island was to be owned primarily by Joseph, with a smaller portion to Abraham. All farms were about 20 chains along the River, and three miles back. John Jr. and John A. Young (son of Abraham) were to equally share (100 acres each) in John Sr.'s military lands in Walpole Township (one half of Lot 19, Concession 10). On the 10th May 1811 John (with a very shaky hand) signed a codocil to the above will. Herein he stated that he wished that the land reserved for his daughter Elizabeth, wife of Warner Nelles, instead go to his son Joseph Young. He died between 20 May 1811 when he signed the codicil to his will, and 17 July 1812 when his will was proved (RSC, Lincoln Co. (Niagara North), 17 July 1812), and is likely buried in the Young Tract Burying Ground near the site of his home.

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