

SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCE

Journals of the military expedition of Major General John Sullivan against the Six Nations of Indians in 1779

Document Text

FIRST ENCOUNTER**Lieutenant William Barton, September 2, 1779, Catharine**

About sunrise a squaw was discovered, to appearance upwards of one hundred years of age, who lay in the woods. She had been left by the Indians the day before, and was so decrepit as not to be able to walk. She was, after examination by order of the General, put on horseback, and told to follow her companions, with a letter, but could not ride. She informed us that they had gone only a little way into the woods, and as they expected us, not to tarry any time here might return again: in consequence of which I was ordered out with a party of two hundred, to search the woods adjacent, at 11 o'clock am, as the army was to lay here for the refreshment of the troops, and collecting the horses and baggage. . . . Returned to camp, after marching ten or eleven miles, without making any discovery, more than where they had driven off a number of horses and cattle, several of which were taken this day.

Catharine is the most important Seneca town we have met with since entering their nation. It derived its name from French Catharine, who in her infancy was taken from Canada by the savages, and became accustomed to their manners, marrying an Indian chief, who was said to be half French himself, from which marriage she claimed this part of the country. Here she raised a great number of horses for sale. Its situation a rich flat on the side of a creek. The corn and beans raised here afforded us one day's subsistence. . . .

This squaw likewise said they had a long debate whether they should stay and deliver themselves up to our army or not, but at length it was determined not, the warriors saying they would scalp them if they did. Here was made up a small hut for the old squaw on the side of the creek, having destroyed all the huts belonging to the place at our departure, leaving her plenty to subsist on. She appeared very thankful when she found we did not kill or misuse her.

Lieutenant Erkuries Beatty, September 2, 1799

This morning a very aged squaw was found in a cornfield who was not able to get off with age she was brought in and she told us that the warriors had stayed in the town till near night before they went away likewise told us that a great many squaws and children was over a hill somewhere near Seneca lake 4 or 5 mile off in consequence of which Col. Butler with a detachment of three or four hundred men and the cohorn went off about 12 o'clock in pursuit of them and returned in the evening without being anything of them there was another squaw found in the woods who pretended she was lame and the soldier came home to

get some others to help fetch her in and when they returned the Squaw had hid away and they could not find her. The old squaw after she was examined at headquarters they was going to send her to the Indians but she was so old she could not ride, from her looks and what we could learn she must be over 120 years old. Our Indians built a house for her and we gave her provision and left her.

Major John Burrows, September 2, 1779, French Catharines

One of the soldiers found at this place this morning an old squaw in a bunch of bushes, she not being able to go off with them, was hid there to be safe. She is the greatest picture of old age I ever saw. The General sent for her, she was carried to his marque. The poor old creature was just ready to die with fear, thinking she was to be killed. She informed the general that there was a great debate between the warriors, their squaws, and children. The squaws had a mind to stay at home with their children. It was carried to such a length that the warriors were obliged to threaten to scalp the women if they did not go. They sent them off in the middle of the afternoon. The warriors themselves stayed till after sunset the evening we got in. This place gets its name from a French woman that married an Indian and settled the place. She also fled with her children. She has two very handsome daughters.

This town is on a large creek that emits into Seneca Lake, and about four miles from the lake. The land exceeds any I ever saw. There is a number of peach, apple, and plum trees at this place, and the only Indian town that had that we had been to. The soldiers find plunder at every town of different kinds. They got six or seven Indian horses today and two cows.

Dr. Jabez Campfield, September 1, 1779

In the morning the men found in the wood an old Indian woman, who informed that Butler here met, two days before, a number of Indians coming to join him, with a view of opposing our progress: but they could not prevail on him to turn about again, and face this army, he immediately went off and they remained, consulting what was best to be done. The Old Squaw, thought to be above 80 years old, expected to be killed. The women were urgent to remain at home, but the men urged that if they should fall into our hands we would make use of them to urge harder terms, so the women and children left the town, sun about an hour high; and the men remained till our troops arrived, when they scampered off without firing a gun.

Lieutenant Colonel Henry Dearborn, September 2, 1779

The Army lay still today to recruit and to destroy the Town, corn, etc. A very old Squaw was found in the bushes who was not able to go off with the rest who informs us that Butler with the Tories went from this place with all the boats the day before yesterday. The Indian warriors moved off their families and effects yesterday morning and then returned here and stayed till sunset. She says the Squaws and young Indians were very loath to quit the town but were for giving themselves up but the warriors would not agree to it.

Major Jeremiah Fogg, September 2, 1779

Early this morning we found in a bark hut an awful object and upon examination it appeared to be Madam Sacho, one of the Tusawora tribe, whose silver locks, wrinkled face, dim eyes, and curvitude of body denoted her to be a full blooded antediluvian hag! Her language was very little understood by our interpreters.

However, one of our Oneidas could understand her and communicated to them in his own language. She gave the following account: that she was left by necessity, and expected to be killed and seemed thankful, that the good spirit had influenced our great chief to save her; that Butler and his whites had gone off two days before; that a reinforcement of Indians had met him at this place, prepared for war; but those who had been defeated told him that we were too numerous, the woods were full of men, etc., that the squaws and the little ones were anxious for peace, but that Butler had told them that all would be put to death.

Ensign Daniel Gookin, September 2, 1779

One Indian squaw left on this ground, she was so old they could not carry her off—General Sullivan gave her a pardon—she gives an account that the warriors went out from here as our advanced guard entered—they had a council of war in which the squaws were for throwing themselves on our mercy but the sannops would not consent.

Sergeant Major George Grant, September 2, 1799

Was found also an ancient Squaw of the Caiuga Nation, who gave an account of the precipitate flight of the enemy.

Lieutenant Colonel Adam Hubley, September 2, 1799

We this morning found an old squaw who we suppose, by reason of her advanced age, could not be carried off, and therefore was left to our mercy. On examining her, she informed us that the Indians, on our approach last evening, went off very precipitately; that the women and children had gone off in the morning to take shelter in some mountains, until the army had passed them; that Colonel Butler promised he would send back some warriors, who should conduct them by bye-ways to some place of safety. She further adds, that, previous to the squaws going off, there was great contention with them and the warriors about their going off; the former had determined on staying and submitting to our generosity; the latter opposed it, and informed them that, by such a step, the Americans would be able to bring them to any terms they pleased; whereas, did they go off, they would have it in their power to come to more favorable terms, should a treaty of any kind be offered. . . .

Previous to our leaving this place, the squaw which was taken here, was left, and a hut erected, of which she took possession. A quantity of wood was also gathered and carried to the hut for her use; she was also provided with a quantity of provisions. All these favors had such an effect on her that it drew tears from her savage eyes.

Lieutenant John Jenkins, September 2, 1799

This morning some of our soldiers found an old squaw, that had not been able to travel, so as to make her escape. She said that Butler and the Indians held a great council of war, and the old Indian chiefs had a mind to make peace, but Butler told them that the rebels would kill them all, and they had better run off in the woods. Upon the whole they concluded to leave the town before we could reach it.

Captain Daniel Livermore, September 1, 1779

At 12 o'clock we arrived at an Indian town called French Catherines, deriving its name from a French lady debauched by an Indian chief; afterwards marrying him and made queen of the place. It is a small town, consisting of thirty houses and large field of corn—the inhabitants leaving the town at our approach, in the greatest confusion. We take two squaws at this place, who inform us that the Indians are in the greatest confusion, not knowing what to do; that the old Indians and squaws are for making peace on any terms, but that Butler and Brandt would not let them, telling them that they would all be scalped if they attempted anything of that nature.

Lieutenant William McKendry, September 2, 1799

Our troops found an old Indian squaw at this place that the Indians had left by reason of her being so old that she could not travel with them.

Lieutenant Charles Nukerck, September 3, 1779

Removed the old squaw out of town and destroyed it together with the corn, beans, etc.

Major James Norris, September 2, 1779

The Army laying still today to recruit and destroy the town, corn, etc. a very old Squaw was found in the bushes today who was not able to go off with the rest, who informs us that Butler with the Tories went from this place with all the boats the day before yesterday, the Indian warriors moved off their families and effects, yesterday morning, and then returned and stayed till the sun set. She says the squaws and young Indians were very loath to leave the town, but were for giving themselves up, but the warriors would not agree to it.

Sergeant Thomas Roberts, September 2, 1779

This morning we found one squaw that was so old she could not go with them. . . . this Squaw gave an account that the Indians was not willing to go but Butler prevailed with them told them that they would be all killed so they went.

SECOND ENCOUNTER

Lieutenant Erkuries Beatty, September 23, 1799

Very cold last night but a fine clear day, marched about 7 o'clock arrived at Catharines town where we stopped about one hour to refresh, then proceeded on three miles up the Narrows where we encamped about sunset. . . . While we stayed in the town we buried the lame squaw which I mentioned on our going, it is supposed she was shot by some of our men likewise the Old Squaw that we left here had built or got built a neat little bark hut where she lived. The General ordered to be left her almost a keg of flour and some meat which was done and I supposed she will live in splendor.

Lieutenant William Barton, September 23, 1799

Proceeded to Catherine town, at which place we arrived at twelve o'clock, finding the old squaw here which was left as we went up, with a paper that had many lines of Indian wrote underneath a protection that was given her by the General, the contents of which I did not hear. We likewise found the corpse of a squaw who appeared to have been shot three or four days, which lay in a mud hole; supposed to have come there since our departure to take care of the old brute. Who killed her, I cannot ascertain, but it is generally believed to be three men of ours who were sent up from Tioga express a few days before.

At our departure from here the General ordered there should be left a keg of pork and some biscuit, etc. for the old creature to subsist on, although it was so scare an article that no officer under the rank of a field officer had tasted any since leaving Tioga, and a very scant allowance of a half a pound of poor beef and a like quantity of flour.

Major John Burrowes, September 23, 1779, Camp three miles from Catharine

The army marched this morning at eight o'clock and about one arrived at the town of Catharines, halt two hours. We find the old squaw that we left when going, gave her a quantity of flour and meat, a blanket and a knife. The young squaw that had come to take care of the old one after we passed through, we found shot and thrown into a mud hole, supposed to be done by some of the soldiers.

Major Jeremiah Fogg, September 23, 1779

Dined at Catherinestown, where we found the old squaw just as we left her, twenty days before in her bark hut, with a quart of corn by her. It appears there had been a young squaw with her, whom we found dead forty rods distant; supposed to have been shot by some of our expresses, a few days before. The old one, from her appearance, must have been ninety years old. Such is the enmity of our soldiery against the savages that they would readily have murdered this helpless impotent wretch. But the common dictates of humanity, a veneration for old age and a regard for the female world of any age or denomination induced our General to spare her, giving her the choice of going with the army, or remaining in her wigwam, with a month's provisions; and she preferred the latter.

Lieutenant Colonel Adam Hubley, September 23, 1779

About 8 o'clock this morning the army marched, and arrived at Catharines town about 2 o'clock, P.M. where we made a small halt. We found at this place the old Indian squaw who was left here on our march up the country. General Sullivan gave her a considerable supply of flour and meat, for which, with tears in her savage eyes, she expressed a great deal of thanks. During our absence from this place a young squaw came and attended on the old one; but some inhuman villain who passed through killed her. What made this crime still more heinous was, because a manifesto was left with the old squaw positively forbidding any violence or injury should be committed on the women or children of the savages, by virtue of which it appears this young squaw came to this place, which absolutely comes under the virtue of a breach of faith, and the offender ought to be severely punished.

Lieutenant John Jenkins, September 23, 1779

The army marched at 8 in the morning and came to Shequaga (Catharines town) at two in the afternoon, where we found a squaw dead, and the old squaw that we left on our way up alive in her hut.

Lieutenant William McKendry, September 23, 1779

This morning the Army moved on at 7 o'clock Arrived at the Queens Castle 12 o'clock A.M. where the army made a halt found the same old Indian squaw that was left at this place when the army went up.

Lieutenant Samuel M. Shute, September 23, 1779

Marched at 7 AM nine miles to Catharines town. We found the old Squaw in the place we had left her—her provision and wood was exhausted and she in tears and was not able to get more but was much rejoiced at the sight of the army—"her friends" as she called us. We found likewise a younger squaw at some distance shot and thrown into a ditch and half covered with mud. The old squaw said she did not know of the other one. The General left her about 100 lbs. of flour and 50 lbs. of beef.

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