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# CAPTAIN JOHN WALDEN MEYERS, LOYALIST PIONEER

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John Walden Meyers was born somewhere in the county of Albany in the Province of New York on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January, 1745. His father was an industrious farmer, probably born in Germany, and the surname indicates that his ancestors had been employed in the management of forest lands in that country. At the age of twenty he married Mary Cruger, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, also of German origin. Soon after he began farming on his own account but little record has been found of his early life.

When the advance of General Burgoyne's army from Canada became known to him in the midsummer of 1777, he resolved to join it by making a long and perilous journey through the woods to the neighbourhood of Ticonderoga. The motives that influenced him to abandon a well stocked farm and leave his wife with a family of seven children, the eldest of whom was a boy of twelve and the youngest newly born, must have been very powerful, but they are not stated. Tradition relates, perhaps truly, that he was accompanied by the brother of his wife and a large house dog. After several days march, the dog became completely tired out and refused to go further. Meyers picked him up and carried him on his shoulders for a long distance, remarking that he would not leave him behind to perish and "we may have to eat him yet." They succeeded in arriving at the British camp, where they found that many other Loyalists from New York and Vermont were already assembling and were being formed into a provisional battalion under the command of Ebenezer Jessup. They were at once enrolled in that battalion and remained with it until Meyers, probably at his own request, was granted authority to go into the country to obtain recruits.

Finding after an absence of some weeks that Burgoyne's army was entirely surrounded and all communication with it cut off, Meyers decided to join Sir Henry Clinton's army in the city of New York instead, which he succeeded in doing some time in the autumn of that year. He then obtained a "beating warrant," to recruit men for Colonel Ludlow's regiment of loyalists. For more than a year he seems to have been employed in this way, probably with intervals of rest in military quarters in the city of New York.

The Commissioners for "detecting and defeating conspiracies," established by the revolutionary government in the "State" of New York, had taken drastic action by the imprisonment or detention of the wives and families of refugee loyalists to intimidate them from taking an active part in the contest. The minutes of the Board of these Commissioners for Albany county record that on the first day of October, 1778, Mrs. Waltermier and Mrs. Fairchild, "(whose husbands have gone to New York) appeared before the Board and requested permission to go to New York." An order was made that their request should be considered.

Meyers' activity as a recruiting agent and scout seems to have become well known and on the 21<sup>st</sup> April, 1779, Peter Sager, who had been confined for complicity in robbery and had escaped, came before the Commissioners and informed them that

“Hans Waltermeyer is lately come from New York as an express with despatches for Butler and Brandt, and that he will, provided the Board will give him his liberty, undertake to apprehend the said Waltermeyer with his despatches.” His proposal was readily accepted, and “having great reason to suppose the above intelligence to be true, the Commissioners resolved that the said Peter Sager have permission to at large for the purpose of executing the above.”

Sager’s information was in fact substantially correct and must have been obtained in the advance of the departure of Meyers from the city of New York. Sir Henry Clinton had actually selected him as the most suitable messenger to convey letters of great importance overland to General Haldimand at Quebec through a hostile country. This was a task requiring much endurance and great adroitness. Among these letters was one dated on April 21, addressed to Colonel John Butler at Niagara as well as to Haldimand, and was probably written in duplicate. It read:

“Sir,

I have reason to imagine that the Rebels mean to make an Attack upon Detroit this Spring, and I am informed, they intend to make a feint on the Susquehannah, in order to draw the attention of Colonel Butler and the Indians from the other quarter.”

Meyers left New York immediately on this perilous mission, which occupied him for many days. His robust, thickset figure was most noticeable and detection meant certain death as a spy. His safe arrival at Fort St. John in the province of Quebec was reported by General Watson Powell, its commandant, in a letter to Haldimand dated on May 6.

“Caleb Closson and Samuel McFarran, whom I sent out a month ago upon a scout, returned here last night & brought with them Mr. Myers, who was coming with Dispatches for Your Excellency, Joseph Bott, who lived near Albany, & John Ufnel, an Inhabitant of Fort Edward.

“The latter they had sent to Albany for intelligence, from which place he returned the 30<sup>th</sup> ulto., and informs me he counted seventy bateaux at Saratoga, which the Corkers were at work upon, great part of them were for six and eight oars, the rest for three. That there were a few Batteaux at Albany and some had been sent from thence to Esopus, and that there were Batteaux at Fort Stanwix for five hundred men.

“That the Rebels had sent five hundred men upon an Expedition against the Indians, and had destroyed Onandaga Castle, and that two hundred of the rebels who had been brought on that Expedition return’d to Albany whilst he was there and brought with them thirty five Indians, viz. one Chief, three men, the rest Women and Children – That they were raising a thousand men in the State of New York; part of them for Skenesborough, the rest for Fort Stanwix.

“That there were Two and twenty Inhabitants left the Scots Patent under the direction of one of the Conventioneers<sup>1</sup> with an intention to come into this Province but they were all Prisoners the first night after they left their homes.

“That Mr. Myers and Joseph Bott had been directed to call at his house, that he went to conduct them to a place of safety, & during his absence the Rebels got intimation of Mr.

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<sup>1</sup> A soldier of Burgoyne’s army surrendered under the Convention of Saratoga

Myers being there and took possession of his house which obliged him to come off and leave all his things behind him.

“The Letter which Mr. Myers has brought for your Excellency is addressed to Mrs. Holland,<sup>2</sup> and has been opened, which he informs me was done by General Tryon’s<sup>3</sup> order to show some Gentlemen the contents.

“I have advanced him Six Pounds Halifax to bear his expenses to Quebec.

“Ufnel I have sent to his Father who is sutler to the Germans at St. Charles, and Bott I have allowed to enlist in Sir John Johnston’s Corps, And I beg to receive Your Excellency’s instructions, whether in future I am to permit all the Deserters and Loyalists who come in to join that Corps, if they chuse it, or whether I am to send them Prisoners to Fort Chambly.

“When Closson and McFarran were sent out upon a Scout before I gave them five Guineas each, and as they were now taken from an Advantageous Contract, I propose giving them the same if you approve of it.

“The other Scouts I have sent out Mr. Johns<sup>4</sup> excepted are gone by their own desire, and there will be no occasion to give them anything.”

Haldimand formed a favourable opinion of Meyers when he delivered his letters and made a verbal report and instructed him to return to St. John and await further orders there before returning to New York.

“The bearer Mr. Mires,” Haldimand wrote to Powell on June 12, “is to wait at St John’s until he shall receive my further directions. I intend that Mr. Jones, Mr. Fraser, and Mr. Defeau<sup>5</sup> shall go with him. You will please therefore to have them in readiness for that purpose, but I would not have their going talked of.”

Powel had in fact in fact made a very different proposal for obtaining intelligence, which was not approved by Halidmand, who wrote again to him on July 1.

“I have received you letter of the 27<sup>th</sup> past, proposing that two Loyalists should accompany Mr. Devau to the Kenebec, As Deveau is so well acquainted at and with the Route to York I wish to have him employed with Myers, who I only wait the arrival of the Fleet to dispatch – My intention is that he should take three men with him from St. Johns (Mr. Fraser, Mr. Devau & Mr. Johns) with whom he will determine upon some hollow tree or particular spot in the most convenient situation in the neighbourhood of Albany or Schenectady wherein to leave their Dispatches – this done Myers with take forward to New York one of the three, (whoever will answer best), the other two to return immediately to St. Johns

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<sup>2</sup> The wife of Major Samuel Holland, surveyor general of Quebec.

<sup>3</sup> The last British governor of the province of New York.

<sup>4</sup> Lieut. Solomon Johns of the Loyal Rangers.

<sup>5</sup> Evidently Lieuts. Solomon Johns and Thomas Fraser of the Loyal Rangers and John Defoe of the King’s Rangers. Defoe had already been employed in carrying letters between Canada and New York and Johns and Fraser in scouting in the direction of Albany and were well acquainted with the intervening country in which they had lived before the war began. A petition for lands from John, Abraham, and Daniel Defoe in 1797 stated “that their Father the late John Defoe served as a captain in the Corps of Rangers commanded by Col. Robert rogers & that after the peace he left New York with his Family with an intention of settling in this Province and was taken ill at St. Johns in Lower Canada where he died in the year 1784.”

to wait for further dispatches or to go for those which Mr. Myers or the other will bring from York and deposit in the place appointed, where they will in like manner leave their dispatches for furtherance to York by Mr. Myers.

“By this means intelligence will be conveyed with more expedition & safety than by sending the same two men quite through to New York. My reason for employing two together is in case of accidents or sickness to either, the other can proceed with the charge. It would be better still to fix upon two places contiguous to each other, least there shall be reasons for abandoning one of them – They should be well provided with Bladders or some thing of the kind to preserve their papers from wet and they should afterwards be well wrapped in Bark.”

By that time Meyers had become impatient at this unexpected delay and wrote from Montreal to Captain Robert Mathews, General Haldimand’s military secretary.

“By the approbation of Brig. General Powell I came here yesterday where I am to remain until I receive further orders to go to New York and my detention being very much longer than I expected the money I received is all expended, must therefore request His Excellency would order me some. I want not more than is sufficient to support me whilst here & on my Journey.”

Mathews replied to this letter from Quebec on July 8.

“I have received and laid before His Excellency General Haldimand your letter of the 1<sup>st</sup> Instant. His Excellency, unwilling that you should experience any difficulties while you are waiting for his orders has given Mr. Maurer orders to supply you with Ten Guineas – five if you should have immediate occasion for them and five more when you are setting out for New York – His Excellency fears you have been a bad Economist of the money you have already received, and for your own sake recommends it to you not to throw away your money at Montreal, which place, except you have an opportunity of living at a French House, you will find infinitely more than at St. Johns.”

Meyers seems to have disregarded this hint as on August 7 he wrote again to Mathews from Montreal, stating that he had expended the five guineas he had received and asking for another advance. “I wish much to be ordered off,” he wrote.

Haldimand was anxiously awaiting the arrival of the annual fleet of transports from England upon which the troops stationed in the province were almost entirely dependent for provisions and clothing. This had been expected from day to day since the opening of navigation on the St. Lawrence, yet the summer passed without its appearance. The treaty concluded between France and the rebellious English provinces and the arrival of a powerful French fleet on the coast had caused a marked change in the conduct of many of the inhabitants of the province of Quebec among whom seditious letters and proclamations had been circulated.

Although the “victuallers,” as the ships transporting supplies of food were called, arrived on August 19, orders for Meyers were still delayed.

“Mr. Myers begs I would represent to you, Powell wrote to Haldimand from St. John on October 6, “that if he did not set out time enough to get to his destination before snow falls he should run great risk of being taken prisoner.”

Instructions and letters to be delivered at New York were then sent for Meyers but the date of his departure was not recorded. Letters written by Haldimand to Sir Henry Clinton about this time, which may have been entrusted to Meyers, stated that the arrival of the ships with supplies had relieved his “painful anxiety” on that account but remarked gloomily that he expected a general attack from a French fleet in the next summer.

“Should only a very few ships succeed in making their way into the River,” he said, “Circumstanced as this Province is, there can be little doubt of their success. The Canadians would Revolt, there are some perhaps who would not appear in Arms but in every other Respect would assist the Enemy.”

Meyers made the journey in safety, his letters were delivered, and he did not return until a year later. Whether the arrangement proposed by Haldimand for the transmission of correspondence was made is not stated but evidence exists in that in the interval he had made more than one journey to the vicinity of Albany.

At a meeting of the Board of Commissioners at Albany on the 10<sup>th</sup> November, 1780, after the examination of a witness, an order was made on these terms:

“The Board after receiving information that John Waltimyer, who frequently passes through the country as an express from the enemy crosses the Hudson River at Hendrick Claws, who lives on the Kinderhook Landing and that said Claws harbors Waltimyer. It is therefore resolved that a letter be wrote to Col. Abraham Van Aylstine requesting him to apprehend the said Hendrick Claws and have him brought before us.”

A few days later Hendrick Claws was examined and bound over in a bond of one hundred pounds. Very soon afterwards information was received which caused the Commissioners to take further action.

“It being suggested to the Board that Simeon Garrett, who lives upon the farm formerly occupied by John Waltimyer, has had frequent intercourse with him and harbors him when he passes through the country, Resolved in consequence of the said information that the said Simeon Garrett be cited to appear before us forthwith.”

Garrett was brought in and examined. He was then required to give a bond for one hundred pounds for good conduct and was ordered to report visits of Meyers to Cocksakie in future.

Meyers was then on his way through New York to Canada and evaded all efforts to intercept him. His arrival at St. John was reported on November 25, 1780 by Colonel Barry St. Leger, who had succeeded General Powell in command of that place.

“Capt. Myres of Roger’s with one McCarty and five recruits arrived here last night,” he wrote. “Myres left New York the 11<sup>th</sup> of October, brings no dispatches nor any thing of consequence.”

McCarty had come from Connecticut, and reported that he had been informed that a British force had occupied Rhode Island. According to his own account he had suffered much for his loyalty. He “was a whole year in prison at Poughkeepsie & in the month of June 78 was lodged in the City hall of Albany twenty five days in Irons on the flat of his back by the Direction of General John Stark And at West point he was in fetters of Iron weighing thirty two pounds for the Space of two Months, then he was tried for his life and condemned to die; he was brought to the place of

execution, the Grave & Coffin prepared and a Rope fixed round his neck twice, then in the Month of August 80 he was twice Whipped & several times confined at Fishkill & Peekskill.”<sup>6</sup>

Meyers himself announced his return in an undated letter to Mathews from St. John, received by him on December 13.

“I beg leave to acquaint His Excellency of my arrival here the 24<sup>th</sup> November in thirty-eight days from New York with five recruits in order to join Major Rogers,<sup>7</sup> having obtained a warrant from Colo. Rogers<sup>8</sup> by the advice of many Gentlemen, and thinking I will be of greater service to Government here than in New York and more to my own satisfaction, I resigned my Warrant in Colo. Ludlow’s Regiment and came through here well persuaded His Excellency would approve of my Conduct and allow me a Support till I could raise my Complement of men.

“I have engaged the greatest part of a Company in the Colonies and expect to bring them in next Spring as early as the season will admit being so late when I came and the Country so Alarmed I could not attempt to bring them with me.

“As there was a vessel left New York a few days before I left that place with dispatches for Canada which I understood was to return immediately I took no dispatches, having occasion to make some stay in the Country to recruit men for the King’s Rangers.

“Beg you will lay this before His Excellency General Haldimand.”

His movements still received some attention from the Commissioners at Albany. An entry in their minutes on the 16<sup>th</sup> January, 1781 records the request of three men

“to be discharged from that part of their recognizance requiring their appearance at the next Supreme Court and that they would engage to make known to the Board whenever John Waltimyer shall again come into that part of the country in which they reside, and this request being taken into consideration, resolved that they be discharged accordingly.”

The fall of snow in the winter of 1780-1781 in the neighbourhood of St. John and Champlain was exceptionally heavy and blocked the roads and forest paths leading into New York and Vermont so effectively as to diminish, if not entirely remove, the danger of an invasion by a French force based on Albany, for which extensive preparations had been reported. It also made scouting very difficult and checked recruiting. Haldimand urged very strongly that these services should be resumed at the earliest possible date. Mathews wrote on this subject to St. Leger on April 12.

“The Commander in Chief wishes me to acquaint you that as the earlier attempts are made to compleat the Provincial Corps they will be more likely too succeed. He wishes you to permit as many as shall make application to depart without loss of Time, first satisfying you that the persons so employed are unexceptional and as the present season presents so many difficulties to their marching, the Genl. Desires you will afford them any little assistance in your power by bateaux or otherwise that they may really stand in need of, taking proper precautions for the Security of the Bateaux.”

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<sup>6</sup> Petition to Lord Dorchester, 10<sup>th</sup> August, 1789.

<sup>7</sup> Major James Rogers, who commanded the battalion of King’s Rangers being organized at St. John.

<sup>8</sup> Lieut. Colonel Robert Rogers, who had been authorized to recruit a regiment of two battalions of rangers at the city of New York.

Before this letter was received Meyers had taken his departure under special instructions from Haldimand, the exact terms of which are not known, with the intention of renewing his quest for recruits in the vicinity of his former residence. He was accompanied for some distance by Richard Ferguson, a loyalist from Fort Edward, acting as his guide on an unfamiliar route. Major Christopher Careleton, commanding at Isle aux Noix, announced this in a letter to Mathews on April 24.

“Mr. Ferguson arrived at this post last night. He reports that he conducted Mr. Myers to Ballstown, where he, Mr. Ferguson, remained 17 days after Capt. Myers sett off in which time it is certain he must have got safe in, as had he been taken it would have been known all over the Country.”

Meyers was believed to be on his way to the city of New York. Ferguson brought in thirteen recruits.

Meyers evidently found that the mission on which he was employed was more difficult and dangerous than he expected as he did not return for nearly three months. He seems to have concealed himself from observation until the end of May. On June 2 William Dewitt appeared before the Commissioners at Albany and informed them

“that being on the way from Philadelphia to Kinderhook Road, about 8 miles from the City he was taken prisoner by Hans Waltimyer, who, after detaining him some time and asking him a number of questions gave him his liberty.”

This statement was considered to be of so much importance that a resolution was passed that “the above information be immediately communicated to Gen. Clinton, and Gen. Gansevoort, in order that some plan may be followed to apprehend the said Hans Waltimyer.”

Next day the Commissioners resolved that “Ensign Herwig with his party of men go to Captain Woodwards on Kinderhook Road and there remain until joined by William Dewitt, who will direct them to the place where he was made a prisoner by Waltimyer, whom they will endeavour to apprehend.”

One June 4, Colonel Kilian Van Renssalar came before the Commissioners and informed them that he “had received undoubted information that Waltimyer is yet on the east side of the river, and that he thinks he may apprehend him in case proper plans are made for that purpose.” He was advised to “order the militia out at Schodack to keep a guard along the shore to prevent Waltimyer from crossing the river.” But on the same day, Simeon Garrett, the occupant of the farm leased by Meyers, appeared and stated that he had that morning been “taken prisoner by Hans Waltimyer, who, after detaining him some time in the woods, discharged him.” Generals Schuyler and Gansevoort were then called in for consultation “how it was best to try and capture” this troublesome fellow. The record on the following day states that

“it appearing to this Board from the examination of Simeon Garrett that Waltimyer has slept some nights in the barn of John VerPlanck of Coeymans Patent and there being reason to suppose that the said information is true from the character of his disaffection, and the said John Ver Planck being at present in the place Jacob Kidney is ordered to bring him before the Board.”

When Verplanck appeared he denied any knowledge of Meyers having slept in his barn and his statement was considered satisfactory. Two weeks later a man was arrested for harbouring Meyers, who had then left the vicinity of Albany.

Marching northward by the same route on which he had come with his band of recruits Meyers raided Ballstown, paroled a dozen of the inhabitants, among them several loyalists, exacting from them an oath that they would not serve or aid the enemy during the war, and carried off a captain and three other officers of the militia as prisoners.

His arrival at St. John was reported by Colonel St. Leger in a letter to Mathews on June 22.

“Mr. Myers of Rogers’ Corps is returned with Fifteen Recruits: as he informed me that His Excellency had entrusted him with Business of another nature & wishing to be the Bearer and expositor of it himself, I have given him leave to go down. I refer His Excellency to him likewise for his reason for bringing Four Militia officers Prisoners on the recommendation of & at the insistence of the Loyal Inhabitants of the neighbourhood where he took them. It seems these People had been very active in oppressing & persecuting the Friends of Government, & their removal was a thing they very much wished; at the same time he made Prisoners of Sixteen others, part Friends & part Rebels, but dismissed them when he had brought them to a distance they cou’d do him no harm.”

His recruits were an odd lot of men picked up here and there in his wanderings. One of them came from Albany, three were from New City, three were from Niskayuna, two joined him at Ballstown, two were deserters from the French Regiment of Deux Ponts, one was a soldier of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Regiment, who had been taken prisoner and escaped.

His conduct received the full approval of the governor after an interview at Quebec, as Mathews wrote to Colonel St. Leger on June 28.

“His Excellency the Commander in Chief having thought fit to give the Bearer hereof, Mr. Myers, leave to enlist any number of men he shall be able to procure to serve in this Province & upon the Frontiers thereof, either as an Independent or hereafter to be attached to whatever Corps His Excellency shall direct I am commanded to signify to you the General’s desire that the men he last brought in, be considered as belonging to him. Orders will be sent to the Quarter Master for the Cloathing of them, & they are to [do] duty in common with other Loyalists. Mr. Myers will transmit to Major Nairne a Quarterly Sub[sisten]ce Account for the Payment of his men & has Permission to appoint a Serjeant & Corporal for the better management of them.”

A month earlier Philip Lansing, late sherriff of Charlotte County in New York, but then an officer in Sir John Johnston’s regiment had suggested the capture of General Philip Schuyler at his house in a suburb of Albany. Meyers was consulted and readily undertook this hazardous task. After conferring with Dr. George Smyth, one of his principal agents for secret service, who had lived in that town for several years in intimate relations with Schuyler, Haldimand gave careful instructions to St. Leger.

“In consequence of information given to me by Mr. Smyth, the Bearer,” he wrote on July 5, “I have thought it expedient to send into the neighbourhood of Albany at the same time several scouts to procure Intelligence and if it can be effected to carry off some of the most inveterate and active Leaders in Rebellion, by whose means it is chiefly supposed in that Quarter that the facility of conveying Intelligence to this province is much impeded – I have desired that he would consult with Capt. Sherwood, and that they will maturely consider every circumstance attending this attempt which their mutual knowledge of the Country and People render them very capable of doing, they will make choice of such

Persons in whose fidelity & courage they can depend, distributing them in the several Parties according to their knowledge of the different Routes. About 36 men will be wanted for this Service, and as well because I think it would be difficult to procure that number every way fit amongst the Corps of Loyalists at St. Johns as that active good marchers from the Regular troops will better answer the purpose – you will please to furnish whatever number shall be thought necessary, who must put themselves entirely under the direction of their Leaders, two of which will of course be appointed to each Party, or perhaps more; this you will entirely accommodate to the wants which will be represented to you by Captain Sherwood, the soldiers must not be in uniforms, & you will please to furnish the parties with written instructions as usual. I need not observe to you that the success of this undertaking will depend chiefly upon Secrecy which must be recommended in the most pressing Terms to those who from necessity, it must be communicated o, & they must be strictly forbidden (which I hope Scouts at all times are) to carry Private Letters upon any Consideration whatever, or attempt Recruiting while on this service.”

Mathews wrote on the same subject to Captain Justus Sherwood.

“Mr. Smyth, who will deliver this letter to you, having laid before His Excellency the Commander in Chief the names of several persons, the most obnoxious to the friends of Government in the neighbourhood of Albany, and the most zealous supporters of Rebellion, whom he thinks it is probable by small parties to carry off – His Excellency persuaded of the good effects this stroke would have, is Desirous it should be immediately undertaken, and has sent Mr. Smyth to consult with you upon the means most eligible to effect it. Its success will depend entirely upon a prudent choice of the men to be employed and profound Secrecy –

“The former is left entirely to you and Mr. Smyth, His Excellency being satisfied of your zeal for the King’s service, & your ability in executing it –

“Lieut. Colonel St. Leger will furnish you with as many active good Marchers from the Troops as you shall require if you should think them proper for this Service, they will have orders implicitly to follow the Directions they shall Receive from the Persons appointed to Conduct the Parties, you will probably think two or three Loyalists necessary with each in proportion to the strength of the Parties.

“The General wishes this to be carried into execution with all possible Dispatch, as the capture of Man, now that their Councils and Committees are in agitation may be of infinite Consequence.”

St. Leger delegated the execution of the project entirely to Captain Sherwood in a letter on July 22, probably after a personal consultation.

“From the strongest Conviction of your zeal for the Service and Abilities to form schemes for the furtherance of it, I leave to your discretion the sending out Parties as you shall think expedient, without the tedious necessity of a previous communication with me, having often seen the best imagin’d plans failed by being too long delayed.

“I likewise enclose the copy of an order I have sent to Captain Wood at Point au Fer to furnish such men as you may think most peculiarly suitable from local knowledge, or other talents, for the execution of the different Services you are intrusted with. My arms enclos’d in your requisition will be Captain Wood’s Warrant.”

Eight small parties were sent out by different routes, each having a special task allotted to it. The leaders of these parties agreed that “no attack should be made before the 31<sup>st</sup> July, which was supposed to be about the time the most distant ones would be at their destinations, and as by this means the alarm being so general and extensive the Enemy would be so distracted that their measures must necessarily be confused and very ill directed.

The party commanded by Meyers had the most important task to execute but was discovered and an alarm spread as soon as it arrived in the neighbourhood of Albany.

On July 30, Jellis Legrange was brought before the Commissioners under arrest and informed them that “Hans Waltmyer is lately come from Canada and that he has brought despatches for some persons in this city and that yesterday he was in town with them.” A resolution was passed instructing Legrange to “make what further discover he can and that this board will in that case use its influence with the Supreme Court to pressure his release from further confinement.” Next day Legrange reported that “Joe Bettis and young Fagler were joining Meyers.”

The alarm spread with great rapidity and finding that the inhabitants in general were much excited, several of the parties retired hastily taking with them some prisoners but not the men they had been instructed to capture. On August 11, St. Leger reported that three of the parties sent had returned to St. John and transmitted their accounts of their journeys.

Six days later he reported the return of Meyers, who had resolutely remained in concealment until he found a more favourable opportunity of taking General Schuyler.

“Meyers arriv’d this morning with his Party, which was too small to effect his purpose., Schuyler’s House being too large to be invested by a few men, by which means he escaped by a back window. The attack and defence of the House was bloody and obstinate on both sides. When the doors were forced the Servants fought till they were all wounded or disarm’d, the uproar of Mrs. Schuyler and the cries of the children obliged them to retire with their two prisoners, being the only persons that cou’d be moved on account of their wounds; two men of the 34<sup>th</sup> were slightly wounded. His Excellency shall have by Saturday’s Post Myers own account.”

Meyers wrote his report next day.

“I arrived in the neighbourhood of Albany the 29<sup>th</sup> of July, where I remained till the 7<sup>th</sup> of August between 7 and 9 o’clock at night when I attempted to Capture my object but having two Doors to Brake through before I could enter the apartment he was in, and not having a sufficient number of men to surround the house he made his escape out a window, the Centry I had planted at the Door said he heard two pistols fired after he made his escape towards the town which I was supposed to be to alarm the town. After I entered the house I met with opposition of seven men in which a Carnage insued which lasted near a Quarter of an Hour, in which I and my party killed one and wounded two, and took two prisoners and the other two made their escape. After which I consulted my retreat which I immediately pursued and arrived at St. Johns the 16<sup>th</sup> August with my party and two prisoners.

“The reason of my lying from the 29<sup>th</sup> July to the 7<sup>th</sup> of August was on account of Mr. Batys being discovered and the rebels being in search of him, I thought proper to ly by till the rout was over before I made my attempt.”

Joseph Bettis, who accompanied him was an active loyalist scout, who was captured soon afterwards and hanged by the enemy as a spy. Family tradition stated that in this expedition Meyers for some time was concealed in a cave.

Sergeant Wilson, who commanded another party instructed to intercept mail-carriers, remained out several days later and reported that he “heard that Genl Schuyler had been attacked by a British party on which he sent an inhabitant to Albany to know of the truth by which he learnt that Capt. Myers had broke into Schuyler’s with a few men, that Schuyler up Chamber fir’d two pistols out of a window and call’d out for his Guards to surround the house and take the Rascals while they were all in, on which C. Myers & Party took some silver Plate, two or three of Schuyler’s servants and left the house.”

General Schuyler’s own account of the attempt to capture him is given in a letter to Governor George Clinton, dated at Albany on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August, 1781.

“The British in Canada are not ashamed to employ their adherents to steal away individuals out of the Country, and even to offer rewards for some particular persons. On the 29<sup>th</sup> ult. I was informed for the first time that parties were lurking about the place to carry me off, and in the course of the last week this was confirmed by the Commissioners for detecting conspiracies, by information given to General Clinton by a person escaped from Canada, by Colo. McKinstry from Saratoga, by others whose names it would be dangerous to them to name should this letter miscarry, some of which assured me that two hundred guineas had been promised for delivering me to Canada.

“This repeated information induced me to take measures to prevent a surprise. May Gates and outward doors in the rear of my house were closed and secured at sunset, and four white men and two blacks were armed. But for this precaution and the bravery of the men I would have been carried off in the evening of 7<sup>th</sup> instant, when a certain Captain Myer, formerly of this county, now of Tryon rangers at the head of eighteen or twenty men, came to the gate of my close back yard, and being refused admittance, immediately began to force it, which they accomplished, entered the kitchen, and proceeded into the back hall before they were met by the men who had gone for their arms, and who made a gallant opposition, which afforded me time to get out of my front hall and to gain my bed room where my arms were deposited, by which time they had taken two of the men, wounded the third, and obliged the fourth to seek shelter together with the negroes in the cellar. Some of the party then attempted to surround the house, whilst others entered it. Those in the quarter exposed to my fire, retired on the first discharge, altho I repeated my fire frequently to alarm the town.

“In the mean time Myers with some of the party had got upstairs into the saloon leading to the bedroom, but retired with precipitation on hearing me call to the citizens to hasten up and surround the house. But tho the citizens made all possible dispatch to come to my relief and that their approach was one means of my safety, yet they came too late, the party had carried off the two prisoners and some of my plate, and tho pursued were not overtaken. General Clinton immediately ordered a party of troops to my aid, but as they were more remote than the citizens they could not consequently come up in time to find the enemy. He has left such a guard for me that if these kidnapping Gentry should venture on a second attack they will not be able to retire with impunity.

“The party that carried off John Bleecker, Esqr. Was secured by some people in the Grants who went in pursuit of them. It was commanded by one Howard<sup>9</sup> who had his orders in writing from Colo. St. Leger, commanding at St. John’s I believe the Vermonters have [hanged] or will hang Howard.”

The Commissioners were stimulated to unusual activity by this bold inroad upon the suburb of the capital of the State. An entry in their minutes on August 8 stated that “an attempt having been made last night by one Hans Waltimyer and a party of men to carry off General Schuyler and it appearing probable that he will endeavour to escape by way of the Niskayuna Road, It is therefore resolved that a letter be wrote to Col. Philip Schuyler requesting him to detach Capt. Levinus Lansingh’s Company to the Wothonyet road and there remain until tomorrow morning and that he dispose of the remainder of his men in such a way as he may judge best to intercept the said Waltimyer and his party.

“Resolved that a letter be wrote to Col. J.H. Beekman at Schodack to order out a party of his regiment to guard the shore from Kinderhook Dock to Schodack in case Waltimyer may attempt to cross the river.”

James Dunneway was examined and stated that he had been taken to the woods by three men and sworn to secrecy. Jellis Legrange, who was still in prison informed the commissioners that William Empie and Terence Smyth, a son of Dr. George Smyth, also imprisoned with him, had said that Waltimyer had delivered letters in town. Empie and Smyth were then questioned but refused to answer and were sent back to prison.

When the Commissioners met next day their investigations were continued and noted in their minutes in the following terms.

“It appears to this board from sundry circumstances that Major Reed ..... was privy to that attempt to carry off Gen. Schulyer by Hans Waltimyer and as it is suspected that Major Reed carries on a correspondence with several people in Canada, Be it therefore resolved that application be made to Gen. Clinton for a party of men to go and apprehend him, and that Mr. D. Fonda, one of the members of this Board go with them for the purpose of searching his home for treasonous papers.

“The Board having great reason to think that Hans Waltimyer, who a few days ago was in town with letters from Canada, has been at the house of Ivy Chambers in this city and it being the opinion of the Board that by searching the house of Ivy Chambers, papers might be found, therefore resolved that Mr. Stringer and Mr. Doan go to the house of Ive Chambers and make search for the same.

“It appears to this board that two young men living on the Nistaguene Road have joined Waltimyer’s party and assisted in the attempt to take Gen. Schulyer, therefore resolved a warrant be made out against them.”

Thomas Reed appeared and was allowed to go free on giving surities, to appear again. The Commissioners were evidently groping vaguely for information.

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<sup>9</sup> Lieut. Mathew Howard of the Loyal Rangers. He was imprisoned in the common gaol at Bennington, from which he was taken out to be hanged, a rope was placed around his neck and he was drawn up three times and nearly strangled. He was then taken back to the gaol, from which he eventually made his escape.

Haldimand was considerably disappointed by the failure of these raids to accomplish their purpose, as Mathews confessed in a letter to St. Leger.

“The General,” he wrote, “is apprehensive that the alarm occasioned in the country by the late unsuccessful attempt will be productive of many Inconveniences to our scouts & messengers & prevent a communication with our Friends in that Quarter, as well as increase their Persecution.”

Meyers was on the contrary undismayed by this apparent danger and offered almost immediately in a letter received by Mathews on August 22 to make another attempt in a more remote part of the enemy’s country.

“Whereas all His Majesties subjects that have been Suspected, that Dwelt on the north side of the Mohauque River, have been Disinherreted by the Rebels, & put to the Greatest Distress, I shall, if His Excellency shall think proper to grant me a party of men, exert myself to the best of My Experience to bring of those Ringleading incendiaries, Who are the Cause of such Inhuman Acts.”

Immediately after his return from Quebec in the beginning of July he had written from St John’s to Mathews respecting the quarters for the recruits he had enlisted.

“I arrived here the 30<sup>th</sup> ultimo and waited on Colonel St. Leger next morning with your Letter. Yesterday [July 7] Colonel St. Leger put in orders that my men should be separate from Col. Robert Rogers Corps.

“His Excellency desired me to have Hutts for the men. I mentioned it to Col. St. Leger, he told me there was room enough in the Barracks. As it was His Excellency’s desire that Huts should be built for the men I should be glad there was a Letter sent to Col. St. Leger about it. Mr. Miller, a volunteer in Major Rogers Corps is arrived here from Balls Town. He tells me all the inhabitants there are ordered to the S side of the Mohawk River, Captn. White still keeps the guard there.

“He likewise tells me that 200 of the Rebels were in pursuit of me and followed me as far as Saconoga River. They were only 7 hours later than me.”

Then on August 21 Meyers laid an angry complaint against an officer of Butler’s Rangers, who was in fact a nephew of Colonel Butler, for the alleged ill treatment of his recruiting sergeant, asserting that an effort had been made to compel men enlisted by him to join that regiment, which throws unpleasant light upon the quarrels between competing loyalist recruiting agents.

“I would beg leave to Represent to His Excellency the abusive treatment Serjeant Smith of my Company met with from John Stonor and Stots [Staats] Springsteen Pilots belonging to Colonel Butler and Lieutenant Bradt of the same Corps, the aforementioned Serjeant Smith having raised a number of Recruits for me, but being intercepted by the Rebel Scouts that obstructed his way to Lake Champlain, falling in with these men, travelling with them three days, in which time they marched but about thirty miles, by Reason of the Badness of the weather, when Serjeant Smith and his men thought fit to shift there course again to so as to try for Lake Champlain, which he proceeded to do but was immediately pursued by the aforementioned Pilots and made a Prisoner by them, by which they all marched on with those to the Shemung River when Stott Springsteen left them and went to Niagara to get provisions and meet them on their way, and upon his return met them at the Genessee, an officer, Lieutenant Bradt commanding the battoo,

this officer demanded of the Pilots if these men of Serjeant Smith voluntarily gave in their names to draw provisions under Colonel Butler, the Pilots said they did, upon which Serjeant Smith who enlisted the men, said they did not, but that their names were given up without his or their orders, upon which Lieutenant Bradt took upon himself to abuse Serjeant Smith with words and blows, also mis-calling Captain Meyers, saying he was a Damned Rascal, and had sold men at New York, which he said he could prove and that Captain Meyers dared not shew his face there again, also threatening Captain Meyers that he would kiack and abuse him in the same manner if he was there, saying that he would fight him with Sword and Pistol, likewise threatening to leave the men belonging to Serjeant Smith to Perish in the woods if they would not Enlist with them, he not daring to fulfil his malicious words against Serjeant Smith, next day asked the men if they had enlisted with Serjeant Smith, they told them they had, upon which Lieutenant Bradt said they might come out, but did not let them have their equal share of provisions with their men, confining them to scant allowance while they of their own took as they pleased, and finally delivered to Serjeant Smith a Rebel Prisoner at Niagara.”

Staats Springsteen was an expert guide and woodsman, served for six years and seven months in Butler’s Rangers and, according to his own account, conducted at various times nearly one hundred men to Niagara to join that regiment. John Stoner, his companion, was almost equally noted for his activity in recruiting.

The governor’s secretary answered both letters from Meyers on August 23.

“I am favored with your letters of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> instant and have laid them before His Excellency the Commander in Chief, who has directed me to acquaint you that he is satisfied you did your utmost to succeed in your late attempt.

“Colonel Butler will be written to upon the subject of the men carried to Niagara, who were engaged by your serjeant, and if it can be made to appear that they were really engaged by you they will be reclaimed. The General desires that I would acquaint you that the Excursion you proposed towards the Mohawk River at present be undertaken.”

Haldimand himself wrote on the subject of his complain to General Watson Powell, then in command at Niagara.

“Enclosed is a representation of a Captain Meyers, a most active and zealous partisan, who on a former occasion had a number of Recruits taken away by the same gentleman of whose treatment he complains, and who was lately promoted to a Company in Lieut. Col. Butler’s Rangers.

“Please to issue such orders as will prevent anything of the kind in future and let Col. Butler represent to Mr. Brat the impropriety of his Conduct.”

This promptly elicited a temperate explanation from Captain Andrew Bradt, which seems to have ended the controversy, as the men in dispute had been sent down to join Meyers.

“I am not a little surprised,” he wrote, “at reading Capt. Meyers’ Letter to Captain Mathews on an information given him by Serjeant Smith, who came in with a Recruiting Party of the Rangers.

“The whole of his information is an untruth.

“I was sent by Lieut. Colonel Butler’s orders with a party of men in bateau in Genesee River to Bring in a Party and a number of Recruits for the Rangers, prior to my leaving this, I had heard there was a difference between one Smith and the Recruiting Party of the Rangers, and that Smith was made a Prisoner for attempting to desert from the Party with the men he had consented should enlist with Springsteen and Stoner, which I well knew was not to be determined by me. On my arrival I gave to all the Party and recruits whatever Provisions were sent by me for that purpose equally and when they were out, I borrowed from the men who came with me from Niagara what Provisions they could spare and what I took from my own.

“I likewise gave them so far from telling any of them that they should not have Provisions unless they joined the Rangers – that I assured them, as one or two mentioning it, that it was by no means the case.

“I did ask one of the recruits, merely for information, whether they had really agreed with the recruiting party of the Rangers to join the Corps, they told me that they had agreed to do so, and that Smith had consented thereto, and that Springsteen and Stoner would not permit Smith and the eight recruits to go with them on any other footing.

“Immediately to my great surprise this Smith steps up between me and the recruit, and clasps his hands on each side of him, and in a very impertinent manner told me, to let those men alone, that they were his – I then asked him if he knew who he was speaking to, and desired him to behave better and hold his tongue or I should be under the necessity of making him – he returned for answer he knew well who he spoke to, and would not hold his tongue, and put me in defiance, on this I could not refrain [from] striking him, he was on this quiet and I had no further to say to him.

“As for Smith charging me with speaking of Captain Myers is the most extraordinary charge I ever heard – I never knew or heard of such a man living as Captain Myers til then, therefore could not and in truth did not make use of any of the language which Smith so falsely mentions –

“Stoner and Springsteen’s affidavit before Colonel Johnson will shew that Smith had consented to those men joining the Rangers – I am told the reason General Powell sent them down was that Smith after he had engaged them for Major Rodgers could not give them up – After my arrival at Genesee River I found that Smith was considered as a Prisoner, and brought him in and mentioned the same to General Powell who directed me to send him to the guard house.

“I therefore expect that Smith will be punished for so falsely exhibiting charges against me in order to prevent others from presuming to do the same again.”

A letter from Major John Nairne of the 84<sup>th</sup> regiment, who had been instructed to muster the newly recruited loyalists, written at Vercheres on September 6, showed that Meyers had made but moderate progress in recruiting his company.

“I have yesterday received from Mr. John W. Meyers returns of men he has enlisted for an Independent Company to be under his Command. He returned himself at thirty pounds army pay pr. Muster beginning the 25<sup>th</sup> April last, between that and 24<sup>th</sup> June he returns for pay one corporal and eleven private men, and for the last muster for one serjeant, one corporal, one drummer, and twenty private men.

“He likewise charges bounty money for twenty men at five Dollars for each man. I have advanced him forty pounds Curr’y to Acc’t till the subsistence for himself and men can be included in the next General Acc’t for the Royalists and beg to be informed what subsistence Mr. Meyers us to be allowed for himself pr. Muster and for what period, likewise if the Charge for his men’s Levee money is to be allowed, and if His Excellency has any further instructions to give me relative to that Gentleman.”

About the same time Captain Moses Harris, a prisoner of war, who had been permitted to return to Albany on parole, informed Governor Clinton that “all the people in Hicks Hollow [in Dutchess County] except 4 families had inlisted with Jno. Walter Myer and sworn in the British service.”

Meyers had then become solicitous to continue his quest for recruits, which could only be conducted in the country of the enemy at considerable risk and expense.

“I am sorry to trouble you so often,” he said in a letter to Mathews from St John’s on September 8, “but the service for Government and the completion of my company obliges me to do it.

“I had but one opportunity to go into the Colonies to recruit, which was early this Spring and the only opportunity to do anything for myself. I therefore beg His Excellency will be pleased to grant me the liberty of going myself or sending my serj’t and three men into the Colonies to recruit for my Company.

“I beg His Excellency will be pleased to inform me how to act respecting the three men sent for to Quebec, as I have been to some Expencc in the Colonies for provisions and for necessaries since they came in here.

“I have seen Major Jessup this morning concerning a Ostrander and six men which he represented to His Excellency that I had clandestinely persuaded to join my company by promising them two shillings and six pence pr day, and [he] now says he was induced by wrong information to represent it to His Excellency.

“With sorrow and surprise I wonder that any Gentleman would trouble His Excellency with such frivolous and groundless complaints.”

A week later Colonel St. Leger reported with some sarcasm that Jessup’s complaint against Meyers had been withdrawn.

“Agreeable to His Excellency’s Commands I call’d upon Mr. Edward Jessup to support his charge against Mr. Myers for the seduction of some of his Recruits by means of one Ostrander, when he confess’d that the affair was taken up too hastily, and [he] was led into an error by misinformation. Your Gothick appeals to cold iron, in in any manner justifiable, it wou’d be among some provincial officers of a certain stamp, if it did not make them honester, it would be a means at least of making them better bred to one another. Mr. Jessup has made l’amende honorable and the business is done away.”

After some days consideration Haldimand consented to approve the application made by Meyers with some reserve, thinking perhaps that the risk of recruiting in person would be too great.

“In answer to your letter of the 8<sup>th</sup> Instant,” Mathews wrote on September 17, “I am commanded to acquaint you, that you have His Excellency the Commander in Chief’s permission to send your serjeant to the Colonies to Recruit, but you are not to go yourself

until you shall receive further orders – you will of course make application to Lieut. Colonel St. Leger, as all under his command do, before you send out your party, that he may be satisfied in Regard to the Propriety of the Route, Loyalty, &c., for which you will be answerable.

“The three men you sent down are not to be entertained upon your List. Whatever Expence you have been at for them will be repaid to you.”

Meyers had reported the theft of silverware from Schuyler’s house by some of the soldiers in his party and apparently proposed its recovery and restitution. Haldimand was much vexed and certainly embarrassed by this crime, as he desired to conceal the fact that he had authorized that attack.

“Inclosed is a letter from Mr. Meyers,” Mathews wrote on August 30 to Dr. Smyth. “The General approves much of the Plate being returned by the above mentioned opportunity and with it a letter from Myers, which it will be necessary that you or Captain Sherwood should Dictate, & by which it should not appear that the General knew of or directed that attempt, but that on being a Scout, it was undertaken by himself with a view to rid the Country of Persecution and delusion by taking him Prisoner – that his Life had often been in his Power, but that he scorned to take it, and still more to plunder his Effects which had been done without his knowledge, &c.”

Late in September very important secret papers from Haldimand, addressed to Sir Henry Clinton at New York, dealing with the negotiations then in progress with envoys from Vermont, were sent to St. Leger with instructions to have them forwarded by a trusty messenger overland. Meyers was chosen by him as the person best qualified to perform this service and they were actually taken by him as far as Point au Fer, the most advanced British outpost on Lake Champlain, where he was disabled from going further by an attack of malaria.

“His Excellency’s express by Lt. Hamilton was immediately dispatched by Captain Myers, who finding himself feverish on his arrival at Point au Fer judged it hazardous to proceed,” St. Leger wrote to Mathews on September 29.

“De Veaux has been sent in his stead, a man perfectly acquainted with the Country, and whose address upon such business has been tried.”

The task of recovering Schuyler’s stolen silver was found to be difficult.

“I write by His Excellency’s order to Mr. Meyers,” Mathew said in a letter to Smyth on October 4, “to make every possible Inquiry for the Recovery of Mr. Schuyler’s Plate, in the mean time he is by Capt. Brunson to return the Spoons.”

“I delivered your letter to Captain Myers,” Smyth replied on October 11. “I communicated to him that part of mine respecting Mr. Schuyler’s Plate. He says it is impossible to collect more of the Plate than what he has already done, as the Soldiers has sold it in different parts of the Province. The spoons he proposes to send by the New York Flag with such a letter to Mr. Schuyler as you formerly advised, a copy of which I shall do myself the pleasure to inclose in my next.”

Soon after General Schuyler himself began a correspondence with Colonel St. Leger requesting the liberation of two prisoners taken in his house.

“When Capt. Waltermyer made his attempt on my House in August last,” he wrote, “he carried into captivity John Tubbs, a Citizen, who resided with me in quality of an overseer and Coakley a Private in Van Schaick’s Continental regiment. I am persuaded it will not prejudice them in your mind to declare that I deem myself indebted to their exertions for my preservation; under this obligation I shou’d be inexcusable if I neglected to solicit their release, & shall deem it a personal favor conferred on me if by your intervention they shall be liberated and sent hither as soon as may be. Major General Lord Sterling, who now commands this department, has been so obliging as to authorise me to promise that two British Prisoners will be sent in return.”

His letter was transmitted to Haldimand, who answered it most politely with his own hand.

“I had particularly directed that your Servants should be of the number sent over Lake Champlain but by mistake of the Commissary they have been shipped on board a vessel for Salem.”

Some time in October a much belated flag of truce had come to Crown Point from Albany, having under its escort the Reverend John Stuart and about fifty other persons, mosly women and children belonging to the families of refugee loyalists then in Canada, who had been long held in confinement for the intimidation of their relatives. An equal number of similar prisoners from the State of New York had been released in exchange. Meyers had recovered from his illness and his next letter to Mathews was written at St. John’s on November 21.

“When the New York Flag was over at the Carleton,” he said, “I thought proper to send a letter to General Schuyler, a copy of which I inclose you. Before the Boat which carried my letter to the Flag reached the Carleton the Flag was discharg’d and my letter fell into the hands of Colonel St. Leger. A few days after another Flag arrived from New York State. But the Col. Did not think proper to send what I wrote. I am sorry this has happen’d Contrary to my wishes, as I would be happy in complying with any commands His Excellency would be pleased to lay on me, and which would be sooner Comply’d with did not a search after more of the plate delay it. I fear it will be impossible to collect more than what I have in my hands of the Plate.

“I am always obedient and willing to execute any Commands Committed to my charge with punctuality and a hope of success, and I wish His Excellency’s Continuance and request that I may not be inactive, as it is my Ambition to be serviceable.”

The copy of his letter to Schuyler, which probably made some apology for the misconduct of his followers, has not been found.

During the winter of 1781-1782, Meyers endeavoured to perfect the organization of his company which was still much below its authorised strength.

“I most humbly beg leave to request of His Excellency the liberty of having an Ensign allowed me to my Company which I conceive for the good of His Majesty’s Service, for as the time is approaching nigh that Business may be done, if His Excellency allows me to recruit, which I have no doubt of, it will certainly be assisting to the Service, and will forward me much in Completing my Company, as I labour under many Difficulties for the want of some assistance,” he wrote to Mathews from St. John’s on the 5<sup>th</sup> February, 1782.

“Therefore I beg leave to recommend to His Excellency Mr. Richard Ferguson a very proper person for Ensign to my Company, and is well known to be as good a Subject as is in His Majesty’s service, tho’ he is not attached to any Corps at present, But is inclined to join my Company if His Excellency will be pleas’d to allow him to be Ensign or appoint him as such and allow him some small Subsistence as His Excellency will be pleas’d to think proper until he may raise a sufficient number of men.

“He being a very smart and active young man and a tolerable Education, which would be very assistant to me.

“I humbly beg His Excellency will be pleased to Congratulate me and appoint him accordingly who waits on His Excellency’s answer.”

Meyer’s desire to be employed actively was unexpectedly gratified soon after. Disconcerting information had been received of the surrender of Lord Cornwallis’s army at Yorktown, and that a considerable force was being assembled at Albany either to coerce Vermont or to invade Canada. Negotiations for reunion were abruptly broken off by the delegates from Vermont. Urgent orders were given to send out scouts to obtain reliable intelligence of the plans of the enemy. On February 9 Dr. Smyth reported his arrangements for this.

“Have sent Captain Myers with two men to one of the more confident[ial] friends at Albany to procure every authentic intelligence we want. The Capt. Has full instructions to collect every necessary occurrence we desire and if he meets with no misfortune I’m sure of obtaining true and particular accounts of Lord Cornwallis. Washington’s army, the intentions of the Rebels and their present operations, and I have not the least doubt but Myers will exert himself and make a quick return.”

But Smyth had omitted to inform Captain Sherwood, his superior in control of the secret service, with the result of causing several days delay. Four days later Sherwood wrote to Mathews from his advanced post at the Loyal Blockhouse on Lake Champlain:

“If I did not consider it my indispensable duty, I should be sorry to inform you that I hear by common report from the passengers, woodcutters, &c., that Capt. Myers is at Pt. au Fer waiting an opportunity to exchange a sick man for a well one & then proceed to Albany on S[ecret] Service. I thought it my duty to dispatch a Letter to him acquainting him that I had by *publick* report learnt his business, and letting him know His Excellency’s command respecting all partys taking their departure from this (on secret service) and returning here again.”

When this became known to Smyth he made a more detailed explanation of the mission entrusted to Meyers in a letter to Mathews on February 15.

“Captain Myers with two men was (in consequence of your last advise to me) dispatched to my particular friend, near Albany. He has rec’d my letter to my friend; Col St. Leger, who was no stranger to the purport of your letter, gave him every necessary equipment and usual instruction for the part he was to act, and as your letter imported that I should immediately send for intelligence into the vicinity of Albany, I thro’ the advice of Col. St. Leger dispatch’d Captain Myers, (as a proper person, and being well acquainted with *my little man* in Albany) to procure the every wish of His Excellency the Commander in Chief. But how am I disappointed? Captain Sherwood has wrote to mr. Myers at Point au Fer that he (Mr. Myers) should not proceed to Albany unless he’d take his Departure

from the Loyal Blockhouse, &c. This retards the knowledge of our wishes, renders abortive the Colonel's and my Plans for Intelligence, and slackens the Career of Business, at this [time] so essential. Be it so, if so ordain'd. I shall always be happy in endeavouring to procure every intelligent matter for the good of government, and shall willingly comply with Captain Sherwood's requisitions in favor thereof, as they may be consequential. I'm sure the greatest Harmony has, since our Acquaintance (in a public Light) been observed; and I wish, for the good of the Service, it may not be contrived otherwise, as I believe *him* to be faithfull and I am willing to give him every assistance in my power to collect whatever may be advantageous to the Crown. I neither complain nor am dissatisfied; but am sorry, if he had particular instructions I was not made acquainted with them."

Although Meyers's departure had been delayed he was allowed to proceed and appears to have performed his perilous mission in a capable manner. He was absent for nearly a month as his written report was dated at St. John's on March 26.

"Ct. Myers is persuaded he can procure intelligence from Oswego (85 miles below Albany) by means of Hanes Sheer, an able farmer, well attached to Government and one Crauberger near new City (about 12 miles above Albany) who has a daughter married to a son of Sheer's, the young couple live in N. York and communicate upon all occasions with their parents. Ct. Meyers could go himself to Crauberger's and establish the Correspondence.

"Ct. Myers left the neighbourhood of Albany the 10<sup>th</sup> March. The intelligence he brought written in German was sent to him by Parson Schwerdfeger<sup>10</sup> (an approved Loyalist nine miles from Albany) by Mathew Freligh<sup>11</sup>, an intimate of Ct. Myers, employed by him to procure Intelligence. This Freligh communicates with one Ralph<sup>12</sup> in the town of Albany, who has promised to collect newspapers and every intelligence in his power, in readiness for Ct. Myers or any Messenger that shall bring a token from him.

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<sup>10</sup> The Reverend Samuel Schwerdfeger, afterwards the first Lutheran minister in the Eastern District of Upper Canada. His petition for land, dated at Williamsburg in the District of Luneburg, 2<sup>nd</sup> August, 1790, states that "he has allways been a true Loyalist, and has for his Loyalty deprived of his Liberty and Property which can be attested by several Gentlemen and Ladies now living in those Parts with whom he formerly had the Honor to be acquainted."

<sup>11</sup> A memorial from Martin Frellick addressed to Lord Dorchester, dated at Kingston, 16<sup>th</sup> August 1739, states: "That your Lordship's Memorialist in the late unhappy dissensions in America has given Signal proof of his friendly disposition & firm attachment in the British Government & Constitution in manner following in the year 1781 & 1782 By receiving private letters from Dr. Smith from St. Johns & Captain John W. Meyers & carefully conveying them to Captain John Roof in Albany & By receiving letters from Captain Roof & conveying them to New York to your Lordship and by which your Memorialist performed at his private expence at the risque of his life & fortune. Your Memorialist was confined in Albany Gaol for three months for his loyalty, he was likewise robbed to the Amount of one hundred & fifty pounds in Cattle, household furniture, &c. Your Memorialist never rec'd any retaliation nor never claimed any indulgence from Government before, humbly prays that your Lordship will assign him one Thousand Acres of land in any place not already located in the District of Mecklenburgh."

He was recommended for a grant of 700 acres, 13<sup>th</sup> January, 1790, having already received 200 acres in the township of Sydney.

<sup>12</sup> John Roff, who wrote some time later to Dr. Smyth asking that money be sent him "for carrying on the service." The Minutes of the Commissioners at Albany show that he became a surety for Captain Peter Drummond of Maj. Edward Jessup's regiment and that he was accused of depressing the value of the continental paper money and compelled to give sureties in \$5,000 to cease such practice.

“From every information that Ct. Myers could collect he could not discover that any Magazines were forming or other Preparations making that indicate an invasion of Canada. That from the Arms and clothing brought to Claverack being unexpectedly sent off towards Philadelphia, the People expressed great surprise and could not divine a cause for it.

“He says that the country is so covered with scouts that it is very difficult for a Messenger to make his way in or out of the Colonies. The Ranges of the Rebel Scouts are as follows – one of 11 men constantly from Saratoga up the N[orth] River to Jessup’s Patent – one of the same strength from Do. up the Road to Fort George – another of the same strength from Do. through Kingsborough to Fort Ann. – Ct. Myers thinks that three Scouts of 20 men each might march undiscovered to watch these several Roads and secure the Enemy’s Scouts. The country from Ballstown up what is called Sacondaga Road to the River of that name – From B. town through Palmerstown to the N[orth] River, and on cross tracks in that neighbourhood. This is so far in the country that it requires great knowledge of the woods and activity to attempt the Rebel Scouts with safety, but when the snow is off the ground it may be done with safety.”

He added that the Oneida Indians engaged in the service of the enemy had been removed from their villages to the vicinity of Saratoga, where they were quartered in huts and sent out from time to time to scout along the roads leading toward Canada.

Deserters and recently captured prisoners still gave most disquieting accounts of preparations for an invastio of Canada under the command of French officers. Meyers was consequently soon sent off again in search of intelligence, as he must have known, at the risk of his life. Thomas Loveless, a noted loyalist scout, had lately been captured and savagely put to death as a spy and Joseph Bettis was soon to meet the same fate.

Smyth wrote to Mathews from St. John’s on April 24:

“Captain Meyers sets off to-morrow with the Inclosed Queries for Z.L.<sup>13</sup> at Schenactedy. He will also have proper directions to seize Edgar, if Meyers can effect it, Jno. Platt<sup>14</sup> who is in that country will effect it.”

Exactly a month later Smyth reported that Meyers had returned, having found a British ship cruising on Lake Champlain near Crown Point, awaiting him.

“Captain Myers arrived last night with the inclosed from Mr. E., who I think is explicit enough in his intelligence, and I’m persuaded he writes as he thinks.<sup>15</sup> As Capt. Myers is going to Montreal, I have not ask’d him any questions so refer you to him for particulars.”

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<sup>13</sup> Probably signifying “Zealous Loyalist.”

<sup>14</sup> A lieutenant in the King’s Rangers.

<sup>15</sup> The unsigned memorandum of intelligence from E, stated that Washington was still inactive, and that New York was his only objective, no preparations were being made for a northern expedition. Affairs were quiet in Vermont. A change of administration had occurred in England and Sir Guy Carleton had assumed command of the British troops in North America. The French fleet had been totally defeated in the West Indies. He did not believe that peace was probable soon. Haldimand Papers, B-133, p. 595.

Five days later on May 29 he wrote to Mathews that he had made arrangements with Meyers to obtain information at regular intervals from various parts of the State of New York.

“Captain Myers has communicated to me his plan for procuring intelligence, &c. I approve of it much and am certain that through Roff, John McDonald, George Kinnear, Mr. E., & Mr. Frealy<sup>16</sup> everything we wish for can be obtained from Albany, the Mohawk River, Claverack, Fish Kill, West Point, East and West Jersies, and New York; and I’m in opinion with His Excellency that the Scouting Business for Intelligence ought to be confin’d to a few who may be depended upon. For this purpose I have chosen six faithful persons; they will be divided into two parties and go out alternately to the above mentioned Friends. This is a Plan I have long had in view as well as for the safety of our Friends as it would be for the good of the service.”

A letter from Meyers to Mathews, dated at St. John’s on June 5, while in a general way confirming Smyth’s report, showed he was considerably displeased by his later arrangements.

“According to your orders I proceeded to St. John’s, delivered the letter to Dr. Smyth, he read the letter to me and was seemingly very well pleas’d – made this Expression – this is what I long wisht for, you and I can collect all the News from that Quarter better than any men in Canada. Let Captain Sherwood carry on Correspondence with Vermont, where he belongs. Who are your Correspondents? I told him John Roff at Albany, Martin Frolick near the new City<sup>17</sup> – George Tibets Son at Quaker town and Neal Glasspa<sup>18</sup> at the Scotch Patent. John Roff is to carry on Correspondence to New York, Martin Frolick is to go to John Roff, George Tibets Son is to go to New England, Neal Glasspa is to go to Martin Frolick – He said he knew John Roff very well, there is not one in all Albany that can do it better. Neal Glasspa I know, he is a very good man, he went to Albany for Mr. Platt – he further said who shall we send first? I told him I had agreed with those Gentlemen to send Serjt. Smith for the first time, he asked me when I thought Best to send. I told him any time when he thought proper, he said the 2d June to which I agreed. Without any Regard to the agreement between us, he has since sent men which is not acquainted with my Correspondents – what Reason he has for such Proceedings I know not unless he is affronted with me for taking away a negro man which I have inlisted into my Company, not long after I inlisted him, Dr. Smyth asked me to do him the favor to let the Negro stay with him awhile as a Servant, which favor I granted, the negro often complained to me that the Drs family did not use him well and [he] would rather do his duty as a Soldier than to stay with the Dr. any longer – while I was on Secret Service this last time Dr. Smyth and Mr. James Brackenridge order’d the negro to be Tied up and order’d the Drummers to Flog him, which they did, without the Benefit of a Court Martial.

“Since my return from Montreal I have given the Negro Liberty to leave Dr. Smyth and do his duty as a Soldier, the Dr. since that Time has scarcely answer’d me when I spoke to him, there is a Gentleman in the Colonies which has engaged a number of men into His Majesty’s Service and is willing to come to this Province, provided he could have a pilot and the Benefit of the men he brings in with him – As Serjt. Smith is not going on secret

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<sup>16</sup> Probably Martin Frelick.

<sup>17</sup> Sometimes called Half Moon.

<sup>18</sup> Probably Gillespie.

service my Request is it agreeable to His Excellency to Serjt. Smith and another man to pilot him in.”

Having received official information that negotiations for peace were making progress Haldimand had decided to discontinue recruiting for loyalist regiments and had issued orders with that object. Dr. Smyth had visited Quebec, where he had a conference with the governor and probably excused his conduct. Mathews informed Meyers of this in a letter on June 10.

“I have received your letter of the 5<sup>th</sup> Instant and communicated the Contents to His Excellency the Commander in Chief, who has directed me to acquaint you that he does not, just at present, think fit to permit any more recruiting parties to go into the Colonies, you will therefore defer sending Serjt. Smith upon that Service until you shall receive His Excellency’s further permission.

“I cannot enter into Dr. Smyth’s reasons for not sending Serjt. Smith, but as he has the direction of that business, I should suppose He must have had sufficient ones; he has upon his arrival here communicated with R.<sup>19</sup> and the others you mentioned to him and it is not reasonable to suppose that on their Account, he would risk sending improper Messengers to them.”

Before he went on his last mission Meyers had come to a friendly understanding with Major Edward Jessup, who was endeavouring to augment his battalion of Loyal Rangers to the authorised strength of a regiment of ten companies. Jessup made a proposal in consequence to Mathews on this subject, writing from Vercheres on May 12.

“I beg you will please acquaint the Commander in Chief that I am daily pressed to inform His Excellency that have now forty seven men more than to complete the seven companies and Mr. Waltermire has 12 so that including them we have 66 men more than Compleat. I therefore request permission to form another company.

“If His Excellency should please to form another company it would be for the good of the Service and give general satisfaction to have Mr. John Waltermire appointed Capt., Mr. John Ruiter Lieut., and Mr. Hermanus Best Ensign unless His Excellency should otherwise determine.”

This recommendation was approved and the following commission was promptly issued.

“To John Walter Myers Esq.

“By virtue of the power and authority in me vested I do hereby constitute and appoint you to be captain in the corps of Loyal Rangers, whereof Edward Jessup, Esq. is Major-Commandant. You are therefore carefully and diligently to discharge the duty of captain by exercising and well disciplining both the inferior officers and soldiers of the corps, and I hereby command them to obey you as their captain, and you are to observe and follow such orders and directions as you shall from time to time receive from me, your Major-Commandant, or any other of your superior officers, according to the rules and discipline of war, in pursuance of the trust hereby reposed in you.

“Given under my Hand and Seal at Arms, at the Castle of St. Lewis at Quebec, this thirtieth day of May, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-two and in the twenty-

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<sup>19</sup> Roff.

second year of the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, George the Third, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, &c.

“Fred Haldimand.

“By His Excellency’s Command,

“R. Mathews.”

Shortly before this Mathews had informed Captain Chambers, who commanded the naval force on Lake Champlain that in consequence of the master of the *Carleton* having demanded from a scout from the Colonies the letters in their care and having read them, orders were to be given by him that in future all scouts were to be landed at the Loyal Blockhouse and no questions were to be asked them while on board.

Chambers made an inquiry and reported the result in a letter written at St. John’s on the first day of June.

“In consequence of your letter of the 21<sup>st</sup> May I sent up your Letters to the Officers, and made a strict Inquiry into that matter, and I this day obtained their answers declaring it a falsehood. I heard by Accident that a Mr. Myers was the Person that gave His Excellency the Information. I this Instant have been with him, and he declares that he never made any complaint of the kind, when he came off to the Trumbull near Crown Point, Lieutenant Thomson Commanded her and agreeable to his orders, asked Mr. Myers for all his papers, &ca., &ca., which Mr. Myers says he gave him and Mr. Thomson immediately returned them to him to bring down. Mr. Myers had three newspapers which he gave into the hands of Mr. Smyth and he thinks the Gentleman might have read a small part of them, as they were only a few minutes out of his hands, and Mr. Myers declares that no one on Board of any Vessel ever pressed him on the subject or behaved the least uncivil to him.

“I asked Mr. Myers if he had told any Person that the Newspapers had been read on Board the Vessels, he told me, a Person did ask him if any had seen the Papers, he said they had; but he never meant to make any Complaint as he had no occasion; whoever the Person was that gave His Excellency the Information, I think it would have been but Civil if it had been mentioned to me before it was sent to His Excellency. I hope we shall have no more cause for any Complaints in future.”

The arrangements for forming a company for Meyers seem to have suited him very well as he was relieved of the trouble of further recruiting to qualify him for the rank of captain, but caused some dissatisfaction among the men already enlisted by him, who were deprived of some special privileges they had enjoyed when embodied as an independent company. This discontent Jessup endeavoured to remove by a personal explanation.

“I have the pleasure to inform you,” he wrote to Mathews on July 15, “that Captain Miers men seem much more satisfied since I have seen and spoke to them myself.”

As his two subalterns, Ruiter and Best, were of Dutch descent, it is probable that many of the soldiers were of the same origin.

All active military operations had been discontinued with the exception of obtaining intelligence, which could only be accomplished by sending small scouting parties or individual messengers

into New York or Vermont. An application from Meyers for employment in this way was rejected.

“Captain Meyers is undoubtedly a good man to procure intelligence,” Captain Justus Sherwood wrote to Mathews on 13<sup>th</sup> March, 1783, apparently in reply to a letter recommending him, “but I really cannot see the necessity of employing any more than we have in that service, what with our own partys & the continual succession of people coming from the Colonies, I believe we collect all the intelligence that is moving the New England or New York provinces.”

The winter passed quietly in the performance of garrison duty at St. John’s. A letter written from that post by Meyers to Mathews, probably acknowledging the receipt of his commission on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, 1783, seems to indicate that he had been joined by some of his family.

“I am here,” he wrote. “Beg to Return his Excellency my most hearty thanks for the favour he has Graciously been Pleased to Bestow on me. Let his Excellency be assured that the Welfare of Majesties service shall always be the Main object of

“Sir

“your most Ob’t and

“Most Humble servant

“John W. Meyers

“N.B. my son now about eighteen years of age has a desire to obtain his Excellency’s Leave to recruit men for an Ensigncy as he has obtained Major Jessups leave already.

“J.W.M.:

Orders had then been received for a general cessation of hostilities and recruiting was consequently terminated.

When definite news was received that a treaty of peace had been concluded recognising the independence of the revolting provinces, Meyers, like many other loyalists, who had taken an active part in the war, abandoned all hope of returning to his former home, and proposed to undertake the cultivation of a portion of the vacant lands of the Crown near the boundary of the province of Quebec bordering on Lake Champlain. He associated himself in this scheme with Thomas Sherwood, also an officer in the Loyal Rangers in presenting a petition to the governor, which has not been found.

“On or about the 30<sup>th</sup> August last,” Meyers and Sherwood wrote to Mathews from St. John’s on the 26<sup>th</sup> of October, 1783, “We Petitioned his Excellency the Commander in Chief for a Grant of Lands on the Line of this Province Lat. 45° to the Eastward of Mississque bay There being Now Upwards of Two Hundred of the Loyal Rangers which has Associated, the names of whom we here enclose. Those Men are very Desirous to know His Excellency the Commander in Chief’s Pleasure. They are indeed very Anxious & are in full hopes & Great Expectation that his Excellency’s Answer will be favourable They having Great Fears that They would be Compelled to go to some distant Country. We therefore Pray that should this meet His Excellency’s Approbation That we would be much Oblidged to you for a few Lines to signify His Excellency’s Pleasure & should there not be a sufficient Quality of Lands within bounds or limits of said Petition We Pray to extend them to the North or East – as far as to make up the Complement that is or will be allowed us.”

The list enclosed contained the names of one captain, five lieutenants, five ensigns, two surgeons, and nearly two hundred others. A second list, headed by John W. Meyers, bore the names of 301 persons, giving besides the number of their dependents.

Haldimand had already sent Captain Sherwood and other officers, accompanied by a party of surveyors to explore lands on the Ottawa, upper St. Lawrence, and bay of Quinté, which must have been known to these petitioners. Fearing frontier disputes he was resolutely opposed to a settlement of loyalists near the international boundary. As no definite reply had been received to their petitions, Meyers wrote again to Mathews on the 5<sup>th</sup> of January, 1784. The Loyal rangers had been disbanded on December 24, preceding and the officers recommended for half pay on reduction.

“Our extreme anxiety to know His Excellency the Commander in chief’s Pleasure respecting a Grant of Land we have Petitioned for on the East side of Mississque Bay we hope will excuse the freedom we take in requesting of you the favour to remind His Excellency of our earnest desire to know His Gracious pleasure thereon as soon as it may suit His Excellency’s convenience which favour will be gratefully acknowledged by the rest of the Petitioners as well as by John W. Meyers.”

On February 2, Sir John Johnson wrote Mathews from Montreal in considerable perturbation that

“Some evil Designing persons are endeavouring to dissuade the disbanded Men and other Loyalists from taking the Lands offered them by Government, telling them if they accept them they will be as much Soldiers as ever, and liable to be called upon at pleasure; and that the terms are not so favourable as those of the Neighbouring States, where they are not prohibited from erecting Mills – and that it will be better for them to take up Lands from the Signiors in the heart of the Province, and many more such Idle Stories, and no doubt it will influence many, If timely steps are not taken to prevent it.”

Writing from St. John’s on March 1, Captain Sherwood reported:

“The people at this place seem well inclin’d for Cataraqui except a number who are dictated by Captains Myers & Pritchard, Lt. Ruyter, Lt. Wehr and Ens’n Coonrod Best, these have begun a settlement at Mississque bay and (I shudder to inform you) declare that nothing but Superior force shall drive them off that land. My informer is Dr. Smyth, who I suppose will write to you on the subject.”

In fact about two weeks later Smyth wrote to Mathews stating that some of the persons who had petitioned for a grant of lands at Mississquoi bay were actually taking possession of them.

“If there is not a stop put to them,” he said, “I believe they are still determined to settle on those lands, as some of them were stop’d yesterday when on their way with their furniture, baggage, Provisions, &c., and I am informed that Lt. Ruitter, who is absent for some time, is now on the Land building. The pretended Proprietors are Captains Pritchard, Meyers, and Ruitter, Lieuts. Wehr, Ruitter, and Best, Ensign Best, Messrs. Martin & Taylor with two others, whose names I have not learn’d.”

Mathews in replying to Sherwood’s letter remarked that,

“as Government cannot have any other view in the settlement of Loyalists than their own happiness, it will give His Excellency much satisfaction to find that they obtain these

Doucens from private Seigneuries which he has not the power to grant them – but he is very doubtful of the fact...

“The difficulty of coming to market so much swelt upon by the Advocates of Mississqui Bay, is by no means equal to what they would experience there, in so much that some Loyalists, who are well acquainted with both, Affirm that three trips for one, can be made from Cataraqui, and with more ease and certainty – but prejudices are more easily acquired than removed and things must take their course.”

A circular letter was enclosed inviting all loyalists who wished to obtain concessions of land from Point au Baudet on the St. Lawrence to Cataraqui to assemble at Lachine by April 2, and that the issue of rations to others would cease on April 10.

This letter was circulated by Sherwood and he confirmed his former report respecting the settlement at Mississquoi bay.

“I can only inform you at present that Capt. W. Myers, Capt. Henry Ruyter, Lieuts. Wehr, Ruyter & Best with a number of men I believe mostly from Rogers Core are at work & have Erected some houses about 3 miles south of the mouth of pike river and on that part of rock River which runs in this province. Capt. Ruyter has taken up a yoke of oxen of his own And Capt. W. Myers told Ens’n Sherwood that he had already got a sufficient quantity of land cleared to raise 1000 bushels of Corn – I am surpriz’d that Doctor Smyth has not wrote to you on the subject, he was the man who inform’d me that those people were determined not to move off from that land for the generals order or any other nor to be drove off Except by a superior force, for by Ld Norths declaration they had a right to settle on any of the Kings land they should Choose in this province.”

He sent two reliable non-commissioned officers to make further inquiries and forwarded their written report adding, “they inform me further that the officers who are there swear they will have these lands and settle there whatever may be the consequences.”

Orders were then sent to the officer commanding at St. John’s to

“send an Officer with some Person properly Qualified to view the settlement making by Capt. Myers & the others mentioned in your Letter, with order that if they are within the Line of this province to signify to the persons concerned His Excellency’s command that they immediately desist, and if they should prove to be within the American Line, to acquaint them that they are not to expect any more provisions or other Indulgences that will be experienced by the disbanded Troops & His Majesty’s Loyal Subjects who settle in this Province. The principals concerned in this settlement, if within our Line are ordered immediately to Head Quarters.”

Myers was considerably dismayed by this order and appealed to Mathews to exert his influence in his favour.

“I was in hopes the Contractors for the Indian Lease at Mississque Bay which was sent by Lieut. Christian Wehr would excuse the Rest to go to Quebec. Major Campbell insists on our going except an order to the Reverse, wherefore I beg His Excellency will be graciously pleased to not put me to that Expence [of] going to Quebec – I am very sorry that I am so Returned that if I get more leave by not receiving more than half a Ration of Provision for my wife and seven Children each I must be under the necessity of putting my Children out at Service.

“I therefore beg that His Excellency will be pleased to order or give me some Relief. Please lay my case before His Excellency the Commander in Chief.”

A letter from Major Jessup received about the same time made it clear that Meyers was heavily in debt to him.

“Some time before the Corps was disbanded I had paid Capt. Miers nearly the Subsistence for himself and Company up to the 24<sup>th</sup> of December, 1783, in order to enable him to settle with his men up to that date but as he had not done it at the time this Corps was ordered to be Discharged I was under the necessity of advancing him one hundred and forty five pounds more and our accounts still remain unsettled and so I am necessitated for all that is my due. I went to St. Johns (on my return from Quebec) principally to see him but he was at Mississque Bay and I wrote to him to come to Quarters to settle his accounts which I fear will be a hard task and if he cannot Discharge any other way, I believe he would gladly Exchange his Expectations of half Pay with some of the Lieuts. Of the Corps to raise a little money.

“As I would not like to have Capt. Miers Distressed but cannot bear the loss of so much money Please to acquaint the Commander in Chief that I beg he will please to permit such Exchange to take place should Capt. Miers apply for it which will greatly oblige.”

On May 13 Haldimand issued positive orders that all loyalists should proceed without loss of time to the settlements allotted for them. Meyers was greatly embarrassed by this but he seems to have obeyed by going to Lachine, the place named for embarkation for the “upper country.” From there a month afterwards in conjunction with Paul Gruber he made another appeal to Mathews, which appears to have been successful.

“We thought that it would be too late before the Lands allotted for the Loyalists to be settled that they would not be able to Raise and Produce this summer. We therefore thought proper to take a Canadian Farm till Sept. next on which we have sowed and planted, which farm we cannot leave till after harvest without losing all our Labor – after which time we will go to the Lands if agreeable to His Excellency – the same time we have empower’d Ensign Sherwood in the Loyal Rangers to act for us.

“Now being in distress for want of provisions it is our Request that His Excellency will be graciously pleased to order us provision for ourselves & families.

“Please lay our Case before His Excellency and you will oblige.”

The name of Capt. Meyers next appears in a list of “Settlers and others who have drawn town Lots at Cataraqui, 1785.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Under date of 6<sup>th</sup> September, 1787, an order was made by Hon. John Collins, the Deputy Surveyor General in the following terms:

“Captain Jno. W. Meyers, wife and five children being entitled to 1000 acres, has lots 8 and 9 in first and second concessions Sidney and 200 acres in second township in full of said proportion in Seigneurie No. 8, and having taken the oath and made the signed declaration according to instructions he is hereby authorized to settle and improve said lots without delay and being settled thereon, he shall receive a patent grant Deed of these concessions at the expiry of 12 months from date hereof, to enable him to hold the same as Inheritable and Assignable estate.”

A note stated that “These lots measure up nearly 200 acres more than the computed amount and the excess may be reckoned against the amount of Captain Meyers’ Military lands.”

On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of October, 1787, he appeared before Commissioner Pemberton at Montreal and presented his claim for compensation for his losses as a loyalist, which was filed as a new claim, No. 966. Notes of his evidence were taken, which read as follows, when the abbreviations are expanded.

“The Claim of John W. Meyers, late of Albany County.

“The Claimant says that he resided chiefly at St John’s, Isle aux Noix, and Duchene in 1783. When on service he resided chiefly at St. John’s during the winter. He is a native of America. He lived in Albany county when the Rebellion broke out but joined the British in 1777. He joined Major Jessup’s Corps. He staid with Burgoyne some time but had to leave to go after some Recruits. He got to New York, afterwards came to Canada with Dispatches, returned to New York, & in the year 1780 returned again to Canada where he raised a Company & was joined to Major Jessup’s Corps and served to the end of the war as a Captain and was retired to half Pay. He resides at the Bay of Quinty.

“He had 200 acres in Cohenning’s Patent<sup>21</sup>, in Albany County, and was to have had a Lease of it forever, paying a tenth part of the Produce. He had the Promise, but there were infants concerned and he could not get the Lease. He went upon it in 1777. He cleared 100 acres, built a house and barn, and planted an orchard.

“He produced an application from one Ba[ren]t Roseboom to the Commissioners [of forfeited estates] requiring an appraisement of the claimant’s farm as being forfeited among others, offering to deposit one third of its value, in order as it seems, to purchase under an Act of the State.

“He valued the improvements at £400 New York currency.

“He lost seven horses, four cows, five young cattle, thirty hogs, seventeen sheep, utensils, furniture, 140 bushels of wheat. These things were taken after he joined General Burgoyne, mostly in 1777 and 1778.”

His confiscated property was valued at £337.8s sterling and he was awarded £247.

A few months later he submitted a petition for an eligible site for a mill near his residence in the township of Sydney, then still known by its number, addressed to Lord Dorchester, which has survived.

“The humble Petition & Memorial of Capt. John Walden Meyers of the Regt. of foot Call’d the Loyal Rangers Lately Commanded by Major Edward Jessup, and now an Inhabitant of the eight[h] Township of Catarauque settlement.

“That your Memorialist begs leave to solicit your Lordship’s approbation that he may have leave to build Saw & Grist mills on that Stream called by the Indian Sogadywioshevon<sup>22</sup> That your Lordship’s Memorialist desires as an Encouragement to him that ten or fifteen Acres of Land at the first convenient place on the East side of the sd stream may be allowed to him for the above purpose and your Petitioner flatters himself that his Request will meet with Every wish of his desire as it will be a great means of Increasing the settlement round about therefore your Lordship’s humble

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<sup>21</sup> Probably Coeyman’s Patent

<sup>22</sup> Probably the river Trent.

petitioner do humbly pray that his Case may be early taken into your Lordship's serious Consideration.

"Bay of Cantai Jany 23 1788.

"John Walden Meyers."

In the general commission for the appointment of magistrates on the organization of new districts, Meyers was included as a justice of the peace for the District of Mecklenburg, as one of its most respectable residents, but was erroneously described as Joseph W. Meyers of the township of Sydney. A list of grants of land recommended by the newly constituted land board shows that on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 1788, he had located lot No. 11 in the third concession of Sydney, probably in completion of the amount of land to which he was entitled by his rank under the original royal instruction's, but having learned that this had been increased, he addressed a second petition to Lord Dorchester, which is undated.

"The Memorial of John Walden Meyers late a Captain in the Provincial Corps of Loyal rangers humbly sheweth

"That your Memorialist being intitled to six hundred acres of land as his family's land, which together with his Lordship's Bounty is three Thousand and Eight hundred acres of which he has drawn One thousand three hundred acres only Requests that the Compliment of two thousand five hundred Acres may be assigned him in Sidney beginning at Lot No. 1 in the 3d concession and running on that Line easterly as far as half of Lot No. 13."

His first petition was not read until a meeting of the Legislative Council for the Province of Quebec was held in the council chamber in the Bishop's Palace in the city of Quebec on Monday, the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, 1788, at which Lord Dorchester himself presided. The chief justice and ten other members were present. Lord Dorchester then announced that in consequence of complaints that had been made to him during his recent visit to the western districts "of delay and expense being occasioned to many loyalists desirous of forming settlements in the upper country, from the want of authority on the spot for allotting lands for them," he had appointed a land board in each district.

When the petition from Meyers for a mill-seat was read, Hon. John Collins, the Deputy Surveyor General, who was also a member of the Council, stated that the petitioner had already received the lands he was entitled to as a captain in the Loyal Rangers, and that "the 15 acres prayed for are on the King's domaine, and may fall to the lot of some loyalist yet unprovided with land, if His Majesty does not choose to hold the banalite<sup>23</sup> in the new settlement, yet it lies with Your Excellency to extend your favour to Captain Meyers, if it shall so please Your Lordship."

No decision was recorded but Meyers seems to have received permission to build mills although he was obliged to purchase a site in the adjacent township of Thurlow. Yet he still continued to live in Sydney for some time. The register kept by Reverend John Langhorn records the marriage of John Blacker of the eighth township to Catherine Walden Meyers of the same township on the 7<sup>th</sup> October 1788, and on the fifth of May, 1789, the marriage of his eldest son, George Walden

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<sup>23</sup> The feudal right of building and operating mills.

Meyers of the eighth township of Aleday Van Alstine of the fourth township, a daughter of Major Peter Van Alstine.<sup>24</sup>

The minutes of the proceedings of the Land Board for the District of Mecklenburgh contain a list of petitions from reduced officers examined between the 17<sup>th</sup> of June and the 9<sup>th</sup> September, 1789. It was found that Captain John Walden Meyers was intitled to 200 acres as family lands which he had not received and he was given a certificate to that effect. The same record shows that he had not forgotten his old comerade, Martin Freleigh, who had become a settler in the same township and prayed for a grant of a thousand acres of land.

“It appears,” the entry states, “by Affidavit of Capt. Myers & a Certificate of Dr. Smyth formwery delivered to N. McLean Esq’re that Mr. Freleigh was employed in the dangerous Line of Secret Service & therefore seem to merit more than Persons of a more negative Loyalty. In the mean time the board grant him a Certificate for 200 Acres.”

It is stated, apparently on good authority,<sup>25</sup> that Meyers removed in 1790 to Lot No. 5 in the township of Thurlow and began to build mills on the stream, which soon became known as Meyers Creek, now the River Moira. Compensation for his losses and his half pay had supplied him with the needful capital.

Some time in 1792 he presented a petition to the Land Board praying for a grant of the adjacent Lot No. 4 and land for his younger sons. This petition was referred to the Deputy Surveyor, who made an unfavourable report.

“Report of the Deputy Surveyor for the Midland District on Capt. J. W. Meyer’s Petition for Lot No. 4 in the Township of Thurlow viz.

“1st. Lot No. 4 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Concessn of the Township of Thurlow was Reserved in the year 1787 by the Deputy Surveyor Genl. For lower Canada for the use of the Indians and any other purpose that it might be wanted for by Government.

“2ndly. That Lot No. 4 is a valuable Reserve for the Crown.

“3rdly. That the Deputy Surveyor is of opinion that neither of the Petitioners Sons are yet of age to entitle them to the Bounty allowed to Sons of Loyalists – And that the Petitioner may have a Road thro Lot No. 5 on which he has built a mill –

“4thly. That Lot No. 5 on which the Mill is built was granted in 1787 to the late Capt. Geo. Singleton of Sir John Johnson’s Corps and sold by him to --- Taylor from whom Capt. Meyers got the Mill Seat.

“Alexr. Aitken D.P. Sur.

“for the Midland District.

“Kingston 7<sup>th</sup> Novr. 1792.”

He then allowed the subject to drop until the 20<sup>th</sup> of June, 1796, when he addressed a petition to Lieutenant Governor Simcoe and the Executive Council of the province, stating that he was

“desirous to obtain Lot No. 4 in the 1<sup>st</sup> Concession of the Township of Thurlow adjoin to your Petitioner’s Dwelling House & Mill – the lot your Petitioner understands is reserved for the Indians with who your Petitioner has agreed for a lease of the sd Lot for 999 years

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<sup>24</sup> Papers and Records, Ontario Historical Society, Vol I. pp. 15, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Papers and Records, Lennox and Addington Historical Society, IV. P. 27.

– paying annually one Gallon of Rum and Fifty weight of Flour. Yr. Petitioner prays that Yr Excellency will please to confirm the Lease or that he may have a grant of said Lot & if yr Excellency think it proper yr Petitioner has no objection to have Inserted in the Lease or Patent – the Indian right to encamp or make any other use they have ever done on the sd Lot.”

This application was read at a meeting of the land committee of the Council who refused to recommend it on July 14.

On the same day another petition from him was presented on behalf of two sons, Tobias Walden Meyers, and Leonard Walden Meyers, and Margaret Akerman, who had become the wife of the latter, stating that they had received certificates from the land board of the Midland District for two hundred acres each, and praying for their confirmation. This was referred for action to the surveyor of the Midland District.

Then on the 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1797 he addressed a petition to Hon. Peter Russell, the administrator of the government, stating that he had a wife and seven children in the province before the year 1789 for whom he had never drawn any family lands, and praying for the usual grant of fifty acres for each person. This was supported by a certificate from his friend, Major Peter Van Alstine, a justice of the peace, stating that Meters had a family consisting of the persons named in his petition at that time. These papers were read at a meeting of the Executive Council on November 15 and he was recommended for a grant of four hundred acres.

He had not abandoned hopes of obtaining the coveted lot adjoining his mill, a part of which he had already occupied and on the 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1798, presented another petition on the subject, in which he stated:

“That your Petitioner having made a considerable improvement which unfortunately for him a great part of which falls outside his bounds – such as part of his dam & pond, part of his orchard &c., which is included in Lot No. 4, 1<sup>st</sup> Concession of Thurlow – as this is much to the injury of your Petitioner and threatens the loss of the most valuable part of his improvements should the above mentioned lot be granted to any other person, He therefore Prays your Honor would be please to take his situation into consideration and would order the said Lot No. 4 be granted to him or that he might have a Lease for a length of time so that his labour should be secured to him, should it appear meet in your Honor’s wisdom.

“Your petitioner further prays that if he cannot obtain a Lease at this time he begs the promise of it and that it may be entered in the Council Records as such.”

His application was subsequently supported by a petition from forty-five residents of the neighbourhood, among them being David McGregor Rogers, the member of the Legislative Assembly, Elisha Beman, Owen P. Roblin, Asa Weller, and Robert Young, who were men of considerable respectability.

It stated “that your Honours petitioners being customers to Captn John W. Myers which are erected on Lot number five in the first concession of Thurlow and the said Captain W. Meyers having been at a considerable expence of improving and fencing a pasture on Lot number four near the Landing for the purpose of keeping a team (for our conveniency) to transport our Grain and flour to and from his Mills, and as said Lot number 4 is a Reserve we pray it may be

confirmed (for our benefit) to the said Captain Myers either by Grant or Lease as your Honour in your Judgment may think fit.”

But the Council, having ascertained that the lot had been designated by the Surveyor General for the province of Quebec as an Indian reserve, dismissed the petition as being inadmissible.

A petition from Jacob Walden Meyers, stating that he was a son of Captain John Walden Meyers and praying for a grant of two hundred acres of land as a settler in the township of Sydney or the neighbouring township of Rawdon, was read at a meeting of the committee of the Executive Council on lands, held on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August, 1797. The committee recommended him for a grant of six hundred acres as the son of a captain.

On the 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 1798, a petition from his eldest son, George Walden Meyers, received consideration by the committee. It stated that he was

“a son of Captain Meyers of the Midland District (one of the first Loyalists who manifested attachment to Government during the late American War), and is married to a daughter of Major Van Alstine, a Gentleman of the same Description.

“That he is desirous of erecting Grist Mills in the Township of Murray, which will be to the benefit of all the other settlers therein as well as your Petitioner, and finds lot number three in the second Concession of that Township an eligible Spot for erecting such Mills but that lot being one of those under reserve prays your honor may remove the reserve and grant him the said lot upon such conditions as may seem meet and will give the most ample Security for erecting Mills thereon immediately and he will at the same time give in lieu thereof on such terms and conditions as appear beneficial to the Crown and the Subject.”

This was presented by his attorney, Angus Macdonell, then practicing law in York. The committee made the ruling that “Reserves are not to be removed. They are to be rented and petitioned for under Regulations which shall be established.”

As a soldier, John Walden Meyers had been active, daring and resourceful. As a pioneer settler he was industrious, enterprising, and persevering. He found plenty of work to do. He succeeded in paying his debts without forfeiting his half pay. By that means he had an assured unearned income of £91.10/ or £92 per annum for the remainder of his life. He cleared land and manufactured potash and pearl ashes from the felled timber. He grew grain and roots, and bred horses, cattle, and pigs. He planted an orchard and made cider. He built a saw mill and manufactured boards, planks, scantling, and shingles for himself and his neighbours. He built a grist mill, ground grain and manufactured flour on the mill system. He set up a still-house and made whiskey. He built bateaux, durham boats, and a small schooner. In these he exported flour, grain, firewood, lumber, potash, pearl ashes, whiskey, and sometimes furs to Kingston and to Montreal, taking in exchange, when money could not be obtained, dry goods, hardware, and rum, with which he established a store or trading post, with branches for dealing with the Mississauga Indians at Rice and Stoco lakes. He managed an inn or guest-house for the entertainment of travellers. He established a brick-yard and built the first brick house in that part of the province. In the early years he was no doubt greatly assisted by his large family of well-grown children. One of them, Tobias, when a young man, was accidentally shot and killed while hunting by his eldest brother. The others married young and married well. They set up homes of their own. All his sons, sons-in-law, and daughters-in-law received grants of land as children of loyalists. Two

of his sons and a son-in-law were appointed justices of the peace and, as the custom was, had their grants of land increased to twelve hundred acres to add to their “respectability.”

Meyers’ creek had become a settlement of some importance, when, by the governor’s command and a trifling alteration of the name of the stream was dignified by the title of Moira river in compliment to Simcoe’s former comrade in arms and warm personal friend, but political opponent, Francis Hastings, Lord Rawdon, who had lately become Earl of Moira by the death of his father. He had previously been honoured in naming the county of Hastings and township of Rawdon.

Although he was reappointed for the Midland District in 1792 and continued to be a justice of the peace until his death, Meyers does not seem to have been an active magistrate. By a proclamation on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, 1800, he was appointed a commissioner for administering the oaths of allegiance to new settlers in the Midland District, in conjunction with four other magistrates.

When the militia of the county was organized about 1798, he was, as a matter of course, appointed captain of the local company and seem to have held that command until the beginning of the war in 1812 as his name appears in an official list of officers and soldiers in service. He was then succeeded by his son, George Walden Meyers, who was promoted to be major. His brother, Jacob Walden Meyers, was captain of the flank company formed for active duty, and his son, Peter Walden Meyers, was a lieutenant. Leonard Walden Meyers commanded another company. Their service was limited to assistance in the movement of supplies and troops to the seat of war, although on 12<sup>th</sup> November, 1812, five companies of the Hastings militia were assembled at the mouth of the River Moira, each man provided with arms, ammunition, a blanket and three days’ provisions. Then on 1<sup>st</sup> October, 1813, an order was issued to ballot for seventy-five men, unless volunteers were obtained, for immediate service at Kingston, where an attack by the enemy was “daily expected.” These men were to be relieved every two months. At a general court-martial held at Kingston in April, 1814, Captain Jacob Walden Meyers was tried for disobedience of orders in not furnishing two men for actual service at Kingston when required to do so by his commanding officer. He was found guilty and sentenced to pay a fine of three pounds with costs.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1802, John Walden Meyers was chosen as the first master of the local lodge of Free Masons, which was then organized.

Like the Reverend John Stuart, Colonel John Butler, Major Peter Van Altine, and other leading loyalists, he had one or more negro servants or slaves in his employment, who may have accompanied his family from New York. On 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1796, the Reverend John Langhorn, recorded the baptism of “Betty surnamed Levi, a negro girl living with Johannes Walden Meyers.”

After his wife’s death, being then in his seventy-second year, Meyers married Sophia, widow of John Davy, a woman of mature years. With the assistance of two grandsons and three step-sons, he continued to conduct his business affairs until his death on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1821. A certified inventory of the “realty, personal goods, chattels, lands and tenements,” possessed by him showed that he owned

3,181¾ acres of land valued at.....	£6,565.	0.	0
Notes of hand, 170 .....	£5,402.	2.	0
Cash.....	£39.	16.	0½

Personal effects .....	£552.	8.	7
Total valuation. ....	£12,559.	6.	7½

Although not by any means illiterate, he spoke English with a marked German accent, that being his native language. A few of his letters have been preserved among the papers of the civil secretary to the lieutenant governor. Having been required to furnish a list of half pay officers and persons drawing military allowances in Upper Canada the secretary published a notice asking each of them to report his rank and corps, age, district in which he resided, and date from which he was in receipt of half pay.

Meyers wrote:

“Thurlow 14 October, 1806

“Sir

“In consequence of seeing your notice dated the 20 September I herewith comply with your request of stating to you my name together with the name of the District I reside in which is as follows

“Viz

“I reside in the Midland District, in the County of Hastings and town of Thurlow and a served as Captain in his Majesty’s late Regiment of Loyal Rangers commanded by Major Edward Jessup and my age is Sixty one years.

“I have the Honor

“to be

“Sir

“your most obed’t Ser’t

“John W. Meyers.

“To

“Wm Halton Esqre.”

Fearing this letter had miscarried he wrote again to the same effect on November 1, and on December 15, acknowledging a letter from Mr. Halton, asking further information, stated that his half pay had commenced on the 25<sup>th</sup> December, 1783. All these letters were written wholly by him in a firm, easily legible hand.

His will is considered sufficiently singular to deserve quotation in full.

“In the name of God Amen; I John W. Meyers, of the Township of Thurlow in the County of Hastings in the Midland District & Province of Upper Canada: Considering the uncertainty of this life and being of Sound and Perfect Mind and Memory, Blessed be Almighty God for the same, do make and publish this my last will and testament in a manner and form following, that is to say:-

“(1) First I will that all such of my just debts as shall be by me owing at my death shall be paid in the first place out of my personal estate.

“(2) Then my will is that my beloved wife Sophia Meyers, shall have the one half of the dwelling house which I now live in, namely the south west end. The half of the hall, the half of the cellar and also the half of the kitchen but in case that my heirs or any of them will build or cause to be built a good convenient kitchen, Eighteen feet by sixteen feet adjoining the south west end of said house then and in such case the said Sophia Meyers is to relinquish all claims to the kitchen below, first above mentioned and to have the sole right and title to the one last mentioned. All of which premises she is to occupy as a part of her dowery so long as she remains my widow.

“(3) I will and bequeath to my oldest son George W. Meyers the sum of Five pounds currency.

“(4) I will that my grandson George Bleecker be paid from the 7<sup>th</sup> day of January 1820 until the day of my death, the sum of £35 per year. Nevertheless all the time that he is not in my employ and all wearing apparel purchased by me to be deducted out of this amount.

“(5) I will that my grandson Tobias Bleecker shall be paid the sum of £35 per year for his services from the 8<sup>th</sup> day of January one thousand eight hundred and twenty (in the year of our Lord) up to the time he was married; after which time he and his wife to receive the sum of Forty five pounds currency per year until the day of my death. Nevertheless all the time that they are not in my employ is to be deducted out of this amount.

“(6) I will that my son Jacob W. Meyers shall pay £100 for the use of lots number Eight and Nine, situated in the First concession of Sidney, in the County of Hastings and in the Midland District and Province of Upper Canada: but if he should not be willing to pay the said sum of £100, then this amount to be deducted out of his childrens Legacy hereinafter mentioned.

“(7) I will and bequeath to my wifes son Benjamin Davey Two hundred acres being lot No. 18 in fourth concession of Rawdon, County of Hastings, Midland District and Province of Upper Canada, if he continues or remains on the premises until 21. Likewise a good saddle and bridle and \$40 in money. Likewise to Benjamin Davey two good suits of clothes.

“(8) I will and bequeath to George Davey and William H. Wetzel, sons of my wife Sophia, 100 acres each, being parts of lot number 18 in the fourth concession of Rawdon and also two good suits of clothes each and a horse, saddle and bridle and \$40 in money.

“(9) I will all the remainder of my property and estate both real and personal, goods, chattels, and Tenements to my grandchildren, males and females share and share alike.

“(10) I make and ordain George W. Meyers of the Township of Sidney, County of Hastings, in the Midland District, Province of Upper Canada and Leonard W. Meyers of the same place, Executors of this my last will and Testament; hereby revoking all former wills by me made.

“In witness hereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 8<sup>th</sup> day of October, in the year of our Lord, One Thousand Eight Hundred and twenty One.

John W. Meyers (Seal)

“Signed sealed and declared by the above named John W. Meyers to be his last will and testament, in the presence of us who have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses in the presence of the testator.

“Jno. Reynolds  
 “Rufus Huntley  
 “Mary Reynolds.”

The inventory of his personal property and effects contained an interesting variety of articles, with their valuation.

	£.	s.	d.
One upper Still. ....	25.	0.	0.
Five mashing tubes. ....	13.	12.	9.
One worm.....	7.	10.	0
One Thermometer. ....	1.	5.	0
Platforms and Aqueducts. ....	1.	0.	0
One clock. ....	10.	0.	0
One double stove.....	10.	0.	0
One desk.....	3.	10.	0
Four volumes, Burns’s Justice. <sup>26</sup> .....	4.	0.	0
One Theological Dictionary.....		10.	0
One Morse’s Universal Geography. ....		10.	0
One Bible and Arithmetic. ....		7.	6.
One cherry table.....	1.	5.	0
Two tables.....		10.	0
One light stand. ....		7.	6
One writing desk. ....		7.	6
Ten Windsor chairs. ....	2.	10.	0
Four looking glasses. ....	8.	0.	0
Nine Silver table spoons. ....	6.	15.	0
Eight tea spoons. ....	1.	10.	0
One soup spoon.....	2.	0.	0
One set china.....	1.	15.	0
Four pairs India calico window curtains. ....	3.	0.	0
Two bedsteads, cords and straw ticks. ....	1.	0.	0
Six plates.			
Six wine glasses.....		5.	0
Two pair tongs, one shovel, one pair bellows.....		15.	0
Four woolen sheets, one blanket, two pillows, one set curtains, one bedspread. ....	3.	0.	0
One bedstead, set cords, and curtains. ....	1.	5.	0
One boulder, two pillows, two Indian blankets, two woolen sheets, one coverlid. ...	3.	0.	0

<sup>26</sup> An English manual for the use of justices of the peace and parish officers.

One counterpane, one coverlet, one boulder, four blankets, two sheets, two pillows, one boulder, one calico quilt.....	8.	10.	0
One bedstead, cord, one feather bed, tick, two flannel sheets, one blanket, one boulder, one pillow, one calico quilt.....	5.	10.	0
One feather bed, two pillows, one boulder, two calico quilts.....	7.	15.	0
One straw bed tick, two flannel sheets, one three point blanket, two quilts, one set bed curtains, one bedstead and cord.....	10.	15.	0
One straw bed, tick, one feather bed, two pillows, two blankets, two flannel sheets, three quilts.....	9.	10.	0
One calico quilt.....	1.	5.	0
Two cotton sheets.....		15.	0
One flannel sheet.....		5.	0
One three point blanket.....		17.	6.
One coverlet.....		12.	6
One linen sheet, one three point blanket.....		10.	0
One 2½ point blanket.....		7.	6
Seven flannel sheets.....	4.	10.	0
One rose blanket.....		15.	0
One three point blanket.....		10.	0
Two window curtains.....		5.	0
Two cotton sheets.....		10.	0
Four woolen, four Indian blankets, four pillows, one coverlet, one mattress, two bedsteads, two bed cords.....	3.	0.	0
One pair silver sugar tongs, six silver teaspoons.....	2.	0.	0
One box of iron and bells.....	2.	0.	0
One stove.....	3.	0.	0
Two table covers.....		12.	6
Cash.....	17.	6.	0½
One pair scales.....		5.	0
One survey compass, one water compass, one surveyor's chain.....	5.	0.	0
One server, two canisters, one bottle of spirits of turpentine.....		15.	0
One five pail kettle, two pots, two tea kettles, one bake kettle, one spider, one griddle, one brass Kettle, one pair steelyards.....	5.	0.	0
Ten plates.....		2.	6
Two bear skins, one buffalo skin.....	2.	0.	0
One pair tongs, one pair andirons, one fire shovel, one crane, two gimbals.....	1.	15.	0
Six puncheons of cider.....	11.	0.	0
One cabbage box.....		5.	0
One barrel of cider.....		15.	0
Nine tin pans, one sausage stuffer.....	1.	9.	0
Six barrels of cider.....	4.	0.	0
One set of harness, one string of bells.....	3.	10.	0
One set of harness, one string of bells.....	10.	0.	0
Five scythes, two snaiths and cradles.....	1.	0.	0
One fitend plow.....	3.	10.	0
One one horse waggon.....	5.	0.	0

One cutter.....	1.	10.	0
One plow.....	1.	5.	0
One drag.....	1.	10.	0
One pleasure sleigh.....	3.	10.	0
Two fanning mills.....	4.	0.	0
One hoe, one shovel, one stibbling how.....		15.	0
One black mare.....	7.	10.	0
One three year old black mare.....	10.	0.	0
One three year old gelding.....	16.	5.	0
One bay gelding.....	13.	10.	0
One sucking colt.....	5.	0.	0
One seed horse.....	20.	0.	0
Two calves.....	2.	0.	0
Twenty-three swine.....	14.	7.	6
One brindle cow.....	3.	0.	0
One three year old speckled heifer.....	3.	5.	0
One lined black heifer.....	3.	5.	0
One bull.....	3.	10.	0
One three year old red heifer.....	3.	5.	0
One black heifer.....	3.	0.	0
One black cow.....	3.	0.	0
One span black geldings.....	22.	10.	0
Twenty-eight sheep.....	17.	10.	0
One yoke of oxen at Peter Travers.....	15	0.	0
One yoke of oxen.....	16.	5.	0
One black gelding.....	15.	0.	0
One cow at Mr. Travers.....	3.	0.	0
Two cows at Mr Hainans.....	6.	0.	0
One waggon, one plow, one yoke and chain, dray.....	7.	0.	0
One two horse waggon and harness.....	17.	10.	0
One ten pail kettle at Mr. Travers.....	2.	0.	0
One potash kettle at John Clarke's.....	5.	0.	0
One old waggon.....	2.	10.	0
Three yearlings.....	5.	10.	0
One stove.....	3.	0.	0
One keg gunpowder.....	5.	0.	0
Eight yards Moulton.....	1.	4.	0
Three yards wool vesting.....		9.	0
One yard cotton.....		3.	0
Two and one half yards striped cotton.....		3.	9
Twenty-six yards curtain calico.....	1.	6.	0
Nineteen yards cotton sheeting.....		19.	0
Sixteen yards Russian sheeting.....	1.	8.	0
Seven yards white dimity.....		8.	0
Seven yards Indian calico.....		7.	0
Nine yards cotton shrouds at 2/6.....	1.	2.	6

One and one half yards ticking. ....	2.	3
Twenty-eight yards cotton cloth. ....	1.	8. 0
Five yards of scarlet cloth. ....	1.	0. 0
Twenty-three yards cotton sheeting. ....	1.	3. 0
One bag of shot. ....		12. 6
Four yards red bombazette. ....		8. 0
Five and one half yards gray cloth. ....		16. 6
Eight yards calico. ....		10. 0
Eighteen yards checked Indian calico. ....		18. 0
Seventeen yards English long cloth. ....	1.	6. 6
Seven and one half yards striped cotton. ....		8. 9
Two and one half yards striped calico. ....	1.	1. 6
Two red silk handkerchiefs. ....		7. 6
Five checked silk handkerchiefs. ....		5. 5
Eight black silk handkerchiefs. ....	1.	4. 0
Seven checked cotton. ....		4. 8
Four yards brown linen. ....		5. 0
Thirteen dozen Indian buttons. ....		1. 1
Ten dozen oval buttons. ....		5. 0
Eleven yards blue cloth. ....	5.	10. 0
Sixteen yards red ribbon. ....		16. 0
Eleven yards blue ribbon. ....		11. 0
Twenty-eight yards green ribbon. ....	1.	8. 0
Eight yards India ribbon. ....		4. 0
One stove. ....	5.	0. 0
Fifteen yards flannel. ....	2.	5. 0.
Cash. ....	22	10. 0

This certifies a true copy of Inventory.

Amos Broughton, clerk.

Leonard W. Meyers, Executor.

Appraisers,

Ezekiel Lawrence.

Rulof Purdy.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Copies of the will of Captain Meyers, the inventory, and other useful papers have been supplied by Frederick Bleecker Meyers of Toronto, his great grandson, to whom my best thanks are due.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ernest Alexander "E. A." Cruikshank, FRSC (29 June 1853 – 23 June 1939), was a Canadian Brigadier General, a prolific historian who specialized in military history and the first Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.<sup>28</sup>

## THIS PAPER

Cruikshank, E.A. "Captain John Walden Meyers, Loyalist Pioneer," *Ontario Historical Society, Papers and Records*, Vol. 31 (1936) pp. 11-55. An original paper copy may be found in the holdings of the Toronto Reference Library. Copyright expired 50 years after the death of the author.<sup>29</sup>

## SOURCES

Cruikshank's paper draws heavily on the following three sources:

Library and Archives Canada, Haldimand Papers, [MG 21](#), [Microfilm Reel C-1475](#). The papers of [Sir Frederick Haldimand](#), Governor of the Province of Quebec 1778-1786. Use [a guide](#) to search the fond for individuals by name.

Paltsits, Victor Hugo, editor. *Minutes of the Commissioners for detecting and defeating Conspiracies in the State of New York: Albany County Sessions, 1778–1781. Volume I. 1778–1779; Volume II. 1780–1781*. Albany, N. Y.: Published by the State, 1909. Available and searchable on archive.org: Volume I 1778-1779, Volume II 1780-1781

The Will of John Walden Meyers. Archives of Ontario, Court of Probate estate files, AO RG 22-155, MS 638, reel 59

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Research conducted since this paper was published has established additional facts and context.

For more on Meyers birth and ancestry, see the work of Mildred Sussell:

Sussell, Mildred Elizabeth. *The Family of John Walden Meyers and Mary/Polly Gruber/Kruger*. Jackson, Michigan: self-published, 1988.  
<https://sites.rootsweb.com/~saylormowbray/meyerssussell.html>

The raids ordered by Haldimand in July 1781, including the Schuyler Raid, were inspired by the success of a raid by Captain Azariah Pritchard of the King's Rangers, who on 8 March 1781 successfully captured the Patriot Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Johnson in Peacham, Vermont and took him as a prisoner to St. John's (Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu). For an American perspective on the Schuyler Raid, see:

McBurney, Christian M. "The Plot to Kidnap Schuyler." *Journal of the American Revolution*, 16 Jan 2014. <http://allthingsliberty.com/2014/01/plot-kidnap-schuyler/>

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<sup>28</sup> Wikipedia contributors, "Ernest Alexander Cruikshank," Wikipedia, The Free Encyclopedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ernest\\_Alexander\\_Cruikshank&oldid=869355266](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Ernest_Alexander_Cruikshank&oldid=869355266) (accessed July 31, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> "Generally, copyright lasts for the life of the author, the remainder of the calendar year in which the author dies, and for 50 years following the end of that calendar year. Therefore, protection will expire on December 31 of the 50th year after the author dies." [https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h\\_wr02281.html](https://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/h_wr02281.html)