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Author(s): Phyllis Vibbard Parsons and Phyllis Vibbards Parsons

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COLONEL DANIEL CLAUS

*From a miniature in the Public Archives of Canada.  
Portrait courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada*

## THE EARLY LIFE OF DANIEL CLAUS

BY PHYLLIS VIBBARD PARSONS\*

**D**URING the great immigration of Palatines to these American shores, there arrived, in 1749, a nearly penniless young man who was destined to play an important supporting role in the life of the Middle Colonies. This was not just another farmer, but an educated man from an old and honorable German family. He became a close friend of Conrad Weiser and numbered among his associates and correspondents such Pennsylvanians as Governor James Hamilton, Richard Peters, Michael Hillegas and George Croghan.

Daniel Claus, born Christian Daniel Claus on September 13, 1727, in Bönningheim, Württemberg, was the sixth and last child of Adam Friedrich and Anna Dorothea Claus.<sup>1</sup> At his baptism the following day in the Lutheran Church at Bönningheim, among the sponsors were numbered two Lutheran ministers and the wife of the burgermeister.<sup>2</sup>

According to Daniel's own story, the Claus family was an ancient one from Transylvania and dated from the fourteenth century. According to tradition, the Clauses founded Clausenburg (Klausenberg), the principal city in that area. Persecution of the Lutherans and forays by the Turks necessitated a move to friendlier and quieter surroundings, even though it meant "quit[ting] their real Estates which were considerable and soon after confiscated by the House of Austria and [taking] refuge in Ulm,"<sup>3</sup> where religious toleration was practised. The descendants of the émigrés were held in high regard at the imperial court in Vienna, as proven by the renewal of the imperial diploma granting them the con-

\* Mrs. Parsons, who has taught in the Montgomery County schools, is preparing a full-length biography of Daniel Claus. She is the wife of William T. Parsons, assistant professor of history at Ursinus College.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from *Familienregister, Evangelische Kirchengemeinde Bönningheim*, dated June 3, 1960.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Claus Papers, Public Archives, Ottawa, Canada, XXIII, Misc. Papers, 3.

<sup>3</sup> Claus Papers, XXIII, Memo Book, 1.

tinued use of a coat of arms distinguished by the imperial insignia of the lion and eagle's wing together with the black (sable) and gold (or) colors of the imperial uniforms. The men of the family were employed in high "civil and military station." Adam Friedrich Claus continued the family position in civil government by serving Bönningheim as *Gemeinschaftliches Amtmann* for twenty years until his death in 1738, at about fifty years of age.<sup>4</sup> His duties could be compared with those of a present day chief magistrate of a German district.

At this time Anna Dorothea Claus was left with four living children, Christian Daniel, 11, Johanna, 17, Friederica, 19, and Elisabetha, 22, who was married the preceding year to Ulrich Kraft Kreuser. The Kreusers were living in Schwaigern, where Ulrich was a clerk for the Hochgraf von Neupperg. Within the next four years Frau Claus and her three unmarried children journeyed to Schwaigern, where they remained under the protection of the son-in-law.<sup>5</sup>

Young Daniel was educated in the manner befitting his station in life. He could read Latin, handle himself in French (although his pronunciation had a strong German accent),<sup>6</sup> and he had more than a passing interest in the classics. His companions were the sons and daughters of the aristocracy of the town.

In his twenty-first year, Daniel made the acquaintance of a "clergyman's son" who had just returned to Württemberg from America. The newcomer claimed to be a businessman connected with a respectable firm in Virginia who wished to set up a business upon the Rhine and also in Holland for the manufacture of silk and tobacco products. The raw materials would come from America, and because of the alleged cheapness of labor in the two European areas, a profitable industry would be established. The glib young man talked a "wealthy young nobleman" into financing the erection of necessary buildings for the enterprise and also engaged him as manager of the work in Germany. He offered Daniel Claus a share in the whole proposition, suggesting that he could be the American factor for the company, since he was "of

<sup>4</sup> Extract from *Familienregister*.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Memo Book, 86.

proper age to acquire the English language and get acquainted with that trade.”<sup>7</sup>

Accordingly, young Claus invested his money, said his farewells to family and friends, many of whom wrote in an autograph book prepared for the occasion, and bought his passage to America. Arriving in Philadelphia in the autumn of 1749, he discovered that his erstwhile partner was not to be found, or even heard of, which bore out the increasingly uneasy feeling he had developed about the whole project on board ship. He was able to borrow just enough money for a return passage, but finding there were no ships for England in the spring of 1750, he made arrangements to return home the following fall.

The outlook was bleak, and as Daniel settled down for the wait of nearly a year, he met, quite by accident, a fellow countryman, John Conrad Weiser, who was the Indian agent for the provinces of Pennsylvania and Virginia. After hearing Claus’s tale of woe, Weiser, who had been instructed to meet with the chiefs of the Six Nations at Onondaga (New York), suggested that Claus accompany him to see “the natives of America and the curiosities of this Country.”<sup>8</sup> It was Conrad Weiser’s responsibility to convince the heads of the Six Nations to adhere to the British, protecting the western boundaries of Pennsylvania and Virginia from attack by the French and their Indian allies. The young man accepted the invitation with little or no hesitation.

It was not until the fifteenth of August, 1750, that the two Württembergers started out from Weiser’s home in Berks County<sup>9</sup> on the long awaited trip to New York. Claus was to become acquainted with some very interesting people on this trip. In Bethlehem, two days later, they were joined by Henry Melchior Muhlenberg,<sup>10</sup> who was to accompany them as far as Rhinebeck, New York. They crossed the Blue Mountains of Pennsylvania and journeyed northward, stopping only for meals or lodging with friends until they reached Esopus (Kingston), having covered about two hundred miles in five days. After a day’s rest enforced by bad weather, they crossed the Hudson River and proceeded to

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>9</sup> Weiser’s home is located near present day Womelsdorf, Berks County.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787), Lutheran pastor and son-in-law of Conrad Weiser.

Livingston Manor, where they heard reports that the French had won over the loyalties of most of the Six Nation Indians. Weiser and Claus pressed on to Albany, where the former spent Sunday talking with some Mohawk friends, including Hendrick and Nickus.<sup>11</sup> On Monday afternoon they proceeded "to Schohairee where Mr. Weiser first lived & learned the 6 Nation language."<sup>12</sup> After spending time visiting with old friends and acquaintances, Weiser led Claus to Fort Hunter, where he saw the first large Indian settlement, with a population of about 250 or 300 Mohawks, and then to Colonel William Johnson's new stone house, Mount Johnson, on the Mohawk River a few miles north of the Indian town. Johnson welcomed them, entertained them hospitably, and while the two agents discussed Indian affairs, young Claus watched with interest the comings and goings of people, both red and white, who had business at this outpost of civilization.

Leaving comfort behind, Claus and Weiser spent a miserable five days on the trail, where their horses went lame and they became lost on a blind trail, riding eleven hours in the rain before finally reaching the Indian village of Oneida.<sup>13</sup> They had hired a man and horse to carry food supplies for them. But "Weiser according to Indian hospitality . . . always shared with the people he put up with, whenever he took a meal,"<sup>14</sup> so lack of food became a problem. Canaghsadego, the chief of the Onondagas, had been poisoned a few days before by some French traders living at Onondaga Lake. It was believed they were trying to buy the support of these Indians, for the French interests were being repulsed by the pro-English chief. With the whole village in mourning, there could be no talks until a rather lengthy ceremony of condolence had taken place, in which the Indians' tears were wiped from their eyes. It was five days until deputies from nearby tribes arrived and the Great Council assembled to begin the ceremony. Sharing their food with their hosts at each meal during this time depleted the stores which Weiser had brought along, so that

before the Buss was half over . . . they were obliged to depend upon Indian Diet of Indn Corn, Squashes, En-

<sup>11</sup> Paul A. W. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1945), 305-307.

<sup>12</sup> Memo Book, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 308-309.

<sup>14</sup> Memo Book, 13-14.

trails of Dear &ca which altho no hardship for Mr Weiser who experienced the like before, was a great one to Mr. Claus who never saw such eatables made use of before by man kind & was pretty well pinched with hunger before he could persuade himself to taste them during their stay at Onondaga.<sup>15</sup>

When the Council was over, Weiser and Claus headed back for Pennsylvania, skirting Albany and following "a small Indian Path much a nearer way," arriving October 1, 1750. By the time Daniel arrived in Philadelphia, he found the ships for Europe had already sailed, so he was unable to go home that fall.

Weiser was getting older, his health was not of the best, and he was not sure he wanted to send his son, Sammy, to live with the Indians to learn the language in order to take over his position for the province. On the trip through the Mohawk country, Claus compiled a vocabulary list of Indian words he had heard, so Weiser introduced Daniel to the governor of Pennsylvania, James Hamilton. During the winter of 1750 the young man was a frequent dinner guest at the governor's home, and in the spring was prevailed upon to return to the Mohawk country around Fort Hunter, to make a thorough study of the language and customs of the Six Nations at the expense of the province. This arrangement seemed to suit everyone involved in the government, because it had been decided previously that Andrew Montour, interpreter for the Province of Pennsylvania, although trusted by the Indians was unmanageable and extravagant. According to Richard Peters, provincial secretary, George Croghan, who was looked on by Weiser as his successor, was of questionable honesty, loyalty and intelligence.<sup>16</sup> Claus, it seemed, would make a very good interpreter; furthermore he was quiet, modest and willing to follow instructions.

Weiser was finally persuaded to send his son Sammy to live among the Mohawks with Daniel Claus, and the latter would act as tutor to the younger man. Weiser took them along in his party in June, 1751, to a conference at Albany called by New York's Governor George Clinton for the purpose of agreeing on common

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 17-18.

<sup>16</sup> Peters's outlook may have been colored by the fact he fancied himself able to take charge of Indian affairs. Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 322.

measures for the conduct of Indian affairs among the English colonies. Here arrangements were made for the young men to live with Brand,<sup>17</sup> a Mohawk chief, whose wife belonged to the family which had adopted Conrad Weiser nearly forty years earlier. Despite the promise of Brand to treat the young men as his own sons, Sammy ran away without notifying anyone and returned to Philadelphia. Upset over the turn of events and feeling responsible for the boy, Claus interrupted his studies and returned to Philadelphia to await further instructions. During the winter, Claus again visited the governor and was a dinner guest of the provincial secretary. Peters felt Sammy's stay with the Indians would "lay the Foundation of a hardy strong habit of Body & his mind will be the better for comparing the inconveniences of an Indian Cabbin with the Elegancies & Plenty of a full Plantation."<sup>18</sup> Young Weiser was reluctant to return to the Mohawk Valley despite the fact his father had promised his future services to Pennsylvania.

After many official and parental proddings, Sammy and Claus returned to the Mohawks in July, 1752, for further study. Richard Peters, on behalf of the province, gave them £30 in cash and "very good advice" as they left on their journey north.<sup>19</sup> A letter from Claus to Weiser tells of their safe arrival and of an improvement in the Indian relations. Brand was happy to see them; in fact he met them with a wagon at Schenectady to transport them to the village. The ginseng<sup>20</sup> harvest was at its peak, and "a child can earn 10/ a Day" digging the roots. William Johnson collected the harvest from the Indians and received good prices on the London market. As an afterthought, Claus mentioned that they would live with Brand's son Thomas.<sup>21</sup>

However, all was not going well at Fort Hunter, and the two young men had to write for more money. Sammy was ordered home by his anxious father; Claus, the elder Weiser said, "may chuse for himself, either to stay or come." He chose to remain,

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 326. He was also called Hanakaradon.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser, December 25, 1751, January 3, 1752, Peters MSS, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, III, 51, 53.

<sup>19</sup> Richard Peters to Conrad Weiser, July 28, 1752, Peters MSS, III, 60.

<sup>20</sup> A root in great demand among the Chinese as a tonic or aphrodisiac.

<sup>21</sup> Daniel Claus to Conrad Weiser, August 23, 1753, Peters MSS, III, 61. An English translation of the German is found in Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 338.



since a position in William Johnson's household became available. A new storekeeper for the colonel, not familiar either with the Indians or their language, was unable to continue in his job, so Claus was approached to take over the keys to the store. He was to continue in his Indian studies at Mount Johnson while making himself useful. This appealed to the young man, and he tackled the new situation with enthusiasm. He wrote Governor Hamilton explaining the reason he had moved to Mount Johnson as "my Indn Landlord ruined himself by marriage & was forced to leave his place and move 20 miles higher."<sup>22</sup> An answer from Pennsylvania was sent immediately instructing Claus to go to Hendrick<sup>23</sup> at Canajoharie, which he did. The chief was very proud of his guest and not only helped him with the language, but taught him the traditions of his ancestors, the history of their tribal wars, speeches used in councils, and customs and ceremonies connected with special events, such as the Ceremony of Condolence, on which the student made notes, improving his ability to write the Indian language.

Time passed quickly for the student, and in 1754 he was called upon by Pennsylvania to guide Hendrick to Philadelphia. For the previous two years, fraudulent deeds to Pennsylvania lands around the Susquehanna River were being obtained by Connecticut inhabitants. These lands had originally been promised by the Six Nations to Brother Onas should they decide to sell, and the governor wanted to discuss the problem with the chief of the Upper Mohawk Castle. The invitation included not only Hendrick but his counsellors. After much deliberation, it was decided to go to Philadelphia by way of the Schoharie-Catskill trail, avoiding Albany, since Claus knew the trail through having been over it with Weiser in 1750.<sup>24</sup>

As they entered Bethlehem "some men of the Anabaptist with long beards made their appearance to have a view of the Indn at which they [the Indians] were so terrified having never seen a long bearded man before . . . fled like frightened children."<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Claus to Governor Hamilton, January 10, 1754, *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, II, 116.

<sup>23</sup> Claus refers to him as King Henery.

<sup>24</sup> Daniel Claus to Governor Hamilton, September ?, 1754, *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, II, 175.

<sup>25</sup> Memo Book, 32-33.

However, Claus calmed them with explanations of the curiosity of the inhabitants about the Six Nations since they had not come through that part of the country before. Settlers gathered along the trail to see them, and as they neared Philadelphia a group of officials met them with the request that they slow their pace so the city could finish its welcoming preparations. As they entered the town, on January 7, 1755, the "town Militia" was drawn up on both sides of the street, and the visitors were followed by many of the people shouting and cheering. Hendrick and his party were received by the Governor in the State House.

Both Daniel Claus and Conrad Weiser acted as interpreters on this occasion. The chief assured the officials of the province that the deeds held by the interlopers were obtained fraudulently by unscrupulous men who, after getting some Indians drunk, had obtained their signatures on the deeds. He went on to explain that no deed was valid unless signed in full council by the chiefs, and that the Indians who made the sale had neither claim to the lands nor consent of the Six Nations. When he returned home he would call a council and they would make the purchase "null and void by a public Decree of the Whole Body & . . . publish the just claim & Property of those Lands to the proprietaries of Penna."<sup>26</sup> The Mohawks stayed in Philadelphia about two weeks, and when they left a spirit of mutual friendship and trust existed. They had been treated as they felt their station demanded and had received presents, not only for themselves but for the ones who remained at Canajoharie.<sup>27</sup> Daniel Claus guided them back to the Upper Castle and remained there continuing his studies.

In April, William Johnson was commissioned major general in the provincial army and was appointed sole Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the northern colonies. With this appointment, the individual provinces had no further need for separate Indian agents. This royal order "discharged Mr. Claus from his intended Services for the province of Penna."<sup>28</sup> Claus was commissioned a lieutenant in the Indian service, serving in Butler's Company, and was also employed as a deputy secretary under Captain Peter Wraxall. In this capacity he was approached by William Alex-

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>27</sup> Penn MSS, HSP, II, Accounts, 17.

<sup>28</sup> Memo Book, 39.

ander, Lord Sterling, with an offer of a king's commission as lieutenant under General William Shirley, which he refused on the grounds of prior commitment.<sup>29</sup> Shortly thereafter he took part in the battle at Lake George and at its conclusion joined Lieutenant Robert Rogers on a ten-day scouting expedition at Diontaroga [*sic*] and Crown Point.<sup>30</sup>

The spring of 1756 saw Daniel Claus again escorting a group of Indians to Philadelphia. Included were Scaroyady, Andrew Montour and two of Conrad Weiser's adopted brothers, Moses the Song and Jonathan. Tragedy struck as Moses became ill and in twenty-four hours died. "He was burried honourably in the English Churchyard."<sup>31</sup> The conference was not a complete success. The Indian delegates and the pacifist Quakers discussed the Delawares, and the conference ended with Scaroyady taking the "peaceful thoughts" back to the Six Nations.<sup>32</sup> He was extremely irritated when he realized he had left a scalp at Weiser's, and Claus had to send a letter requesting it and his own "greatcoat" to be sent to Burlington, New Jersey, where the tavern keeper would then forward it.<sup>33</sup>

The irritation was not only on the part of the Indians. While the conference was taking place, Governor Robert Hunter Morris was attempting to win Daniel Claus away from New York and Sir William Johnson, by offering a "Captains Commission to the Provincials under Colo Clapham a N:E: Man to go to the Frontiers and build Forts at Shamokin &ca." Claus declined because, among other reasons, he felt Pennsylvania Indian affairs offered him no future "as there will be no Indians."<sup>34</sup> Governor Morris's pique because of Claus's refusal was such that he "would not after this admit him to his sight."<sup>35</sup>

Claus returned to New York and his Indian affairs. He accepted a commission of lieutenant in the 62nd Royal American

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 41-42.

<sup>30</sup> E. B. O'Callaghan, ed., *Documentary History of New York* (Albany, 1849), IV, 281-283.

<sup>31</sup> James Sullivan *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Sir William Johnson*, 13 vols. to date (Albany, 1921-1962), II, 440; hereafter cited as *Johnson Papers*.

<sup>32</sup> Minutes of Indian Conference, Etting Papers, Misc. MSS, HSP, 84-86.

<sup>33</sup> Daniel Claus to Richard Peters, April 25, 1756, *Pennsylvania Archives*, First Series, II, 645.

<sup>34</sup> *Johnson Papers*, II, 439.

<sup>35</sup> Wallace, *Conrad Weiser*, 436.



MRS. DANIEL CLAUS (ANNE JOHNSON)  
*From a miniature in the Public Archives of Canada.  
Portrait courtesy of the Public Archives of Canada*

Regiment which had been offered by the Earl of Loudoun. Continuing to act as interpreter, he attended most of the Indian conferences held at Fort Johnson and surrounding areas. He was nearly indispensable, as he was the only one on Johnson's staff who could both read and write the Indian language,<sup>36</sup> and as the battle progressed in Canada, it was his job to translate the letters written in French that reached the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. The ability to understand and speak this language was probably one of the main reasons why Johnson made Claus a deputy agent in the Indian department in charge of the Canadian Indians in Montreal after the fall of Canada.

Once more Pennsylvania reached out for Claus's services. Richard Peters wrote to Johnson requesting him to send Claus "cloathed with the Authority of a Deputy, and Interpreter likewise; for poor Mr. Weiser is no more, he dyed suddenly in the Summer, His Son Samuel has almost forgot what little he learned."<sup>37</sup> Johnson's refusal was so curt it bordered on the impolite. His staff had been reduced so drastically by General Jeffrey Amherst that he had no one to send to Pennsylvania, and to remove Claus from Canada was unthinkable.

As a reward not only for his work, but for personal services rendered, Johnson had advised Daniel Claus "to ask of him anything what so ever he had in his power to give."<sup>38</sup> After due deliberation and with much humility, Claus addressed himself to Johnson's older daughter Anne (Nancy). Although she had no personal objection to the proposal, she thought it best to wait until the war was concluded. Satisfied with her answer, he did not say anything, at that time, to her father. At a later date, returning from an Indian visit, Johnson suggested, as a means of discharging his debt, that he advance the money so that Claus could purchase a company. Negotiations were undertaken with this end in view, and shortly before his commission was granted, Claus wrote to Johnson expressing his feeling toward Nancy and requesting her father's permission and blessing.<sup>39</sup> Johnson was shocked and hurt that they would discuss marriage without telling him. Claus

<sup>36</sup> *Johnson Papers*, IX, 509.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 214.

<sup>38</sup> *Memo Book*, 117.

<sup>39</sup> *Johnson Papers*, III, 371.

wrote again explaining the situation, and the matter was settled satisfactorily with this statement from Johnson: "I would not have you make any advances that way until your arrival here whenever it may be. The General is not for Your Stirring from thence as You will find by my last letter."<sup>40</sup> It was nearly a year until Daniel could get back to Fort Johnson, and before another month had passed, he and Nancy were married. The ceremony took place on April 13, 1762, at Fort Johnson, and the bridegroom returned to Montreal the latter part of May. He resigned his company and headed home in September.

The Clauses acquired and renovated the old one-and-a-half-story stone house which Sir William Johnson had built as his first home on the north side of the Mohawk River, and renamed it Williamsburgh. They moved in with a daughter, Catherine, born on January 22, 1763, and a son William, born September 8, 1765. Two other daughters, Anna and Dorothea, died in infancy.<sup>41</sup>

Daniel continued in the Indian Service in spite of his resignation from the army. He commuted from Williamsburgh to Montreal, straightening out the real and imagined problems of the Seven Canadian Indian Nations who came under British rule at the end of the Seven Years War, and carrying the larger problems back to his father-in-law to be settled. For example, the British soldiers stationed in the colonies were unable to accustom themselves to their Indian scouts. This led to many petty quarrels and some serious altercations in the various forts.

I was this week at Caghnawagey where I heard nothing but Complaints agst the 44th Regt. officers as well as soldiers, however more so of the Latter. I presented them to Genl Gage in wrting, and he was surprised to hear it, telling me he had given repeated orders to Majr Beckwith to keep up a good Understanding between the Indns and the Regimt but I find the Majr dont countenance the Indians in the least by several proofs I have myself.<sup>42</sup>

To each minor grievance Daniel had to listen and tactfully smooth the ruffled feelings of both red and white men. Justice had to be dispensed in land squabbles between the Catholic church on

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, X, 281.

<sup>41</sup> Claus Papers, XXIII, Autograph Book, 3.

<sup>42</sup> *Johnson Papers*, III, 383.

one hand and the Indians on the other, since the church had settled the Indians in villages on land granted to the church by the French king. Overshadowing every undertaking was the lack of money to spend for the necessities of the service. Both Sir William Johnson and Daniel Claus from time to time put themselves deeply in debt to buy the items necessary to placate the Indians and to conduct the meetings with all the pomp and ceremony required by Indian custom. When Claus was in Montreal, his lodgings were constantly filled with Indians who needed help in forms of redress, food, clothing, a place to spend the night or ammunition for a gun. In the spring of 1764 Claus requested permission to resign,<sup>43</sup> and by October was able to return to his home and family, but by July of 1765, he was back to work again in Montreal and caught unwillingly in the middle of a political tug of war induced by the new governor of Quebec, James Murray. Politics did not interest Claus except as it affected his Indians, so he weathered not only this friction, but other personality clashes until the Revolutionary War.

Daniel and Nancy enjoyed their home along the Mohawk and their family. When little Catherine was nine, she and her cousin Polly Johnson were sent to a school in New York City. During their second year there, Cathy was taken ill with a sore throat and fever and died in a short time.<sup>44</sup> This left only one child, the son William, who was then eight years old. Without assistants in Montreal, Claus needed to spend half the year there, while the other half was spent overseeing his farm. He was liked and respected by his Mohawk Valley neighbors, so when the Johnson families felt it necessary to leave at the outset of the Revolution, Claus had to make a difficult decision.

The Johnsons had to flee for their personal safety. Daniel and Nancy were not under any duress,<sup>45</sup> since he had not mixed in politics. His whole life in America had been devoted to the king's service, and to the Indians, and in the rebellious colonies such service would no longer be possible. He felt a strong responsibility toward his Indians, so regretfully he and his family packed to

<sup>43</sup> Richard E. Day, ed., *Calendar of the Sir William Johnson Manuscripts* (Albany, 1909), 220; Daniel Claus to William Johnson, April 30, 1764.

<sup>44</sup> *Johnson Papers*, VIII, 909.

<sup>45</sup> Daniel Claus to H. T. Cramahé, March 30, 1778, Claus Papers, II, 8.

accompany the Johnsons on the difficult journey to Canada. Polly (Mary), Nancy's younger sister who had married Guy Johnson, was taken ill on the trip and at Oswego had a still born child and died the next day,<sup>46</sup> on the first anniversary of the death of Sir William Johnson. They were accompanied by a large number of Mohawk Indians.

As they progressed northward the Indians, upset over the rebellion and by the governor's message warning not to join with the rebels lest they lose their land, asked Claus for an account of what was transpiring. Claus reminded them of the goodness of the king and of how the colonists were taking Indian hunting ground and suggested they declare their sentiments to the governor at a public congress in Montreal. In the early part of August, 1775, 1,600 Indians including 600-700 warriors met at Montreal and apprised Sir Guy Carleton of their resolution to go against the New England borders. Carleton thanked them but refused their offer, suggesting instead that a lookout was needed at St. Jeans. The Indians, although discouraged by the task, took it on, and discovered a plot by the rebels for an assault on the area. It was repulsed as a result of their information, and the rebel commander General Richard Montgomery sent to Caughnawagey, the closest Indian town to his army, a message that he would destroy the town and their families if deputies were not dispatched to a congress immediately. These deputies were held as hostages to keep the Caughnawaga Indians neutral. Despite this, the Canadian Indians helped hold Montreal when Ethan Allen tried to capture it in the middle of October, 1775.<sup>47</sup>

Daniel having been superseded as deputy superintendent by Major Campbell, son-in-law of the Duc de la Corne, the Clauses went to England that fall. Claus requested a new appointment, and in the spring of 1777 he was sent back to Canada in charge of the Indians for the expedition under Brigadier Barry St. Leger. While in Dublin, he received a letter from his brother-in-law Guy Johnson telling of the fate of his home, Guy Park, which was "demolished, all but the walls"; but Williamsburgh "they say is not hurt."<sup>48</sup> Sir John Johnson wrote telling that he had moved

<sup>46</sup> Autograph Book, 52. There were three children surviving, Polly, 11, Julia, 4, and Ann, 2½.

<sup>47</sup> Claus Papers, I, 208-211.

<sup>48</sup> Guy Johnson to Daniel Claus, August 9, 1776, *ibid.*, I, 217.



some of the more valuable of Claus's belongings to Johnson Hall and that everything not hidden was looted when the hall was turned into a rebel barracks.<sup>49</sup>

After arriving in Canada, Claus found a constant source of irritation in the person of Governor General Sir Guy Carleton but a good friend in General Frederick Haldimand. The latter recognized Claus' ability and looked to him in most things concerning the Indians. Even though Guy Johnson was the Sole Superintendent of the Six Nations since Sir William's death, it was Daniel to whom Molly Brant wrote for help, because Colonel Johnson was in a temper and the Indians were disturbed by it.<sup>50</sup> Claus led the Indians in fighting battles in New York State against the rebellious colonists, sharing in the defeat at Fort Stanwix. For the most part the Indians gathered intelligence, which was then routed through Claus to General Haldimand.

In order to help the Mohawks in their temporary Canadian villages, Claus "composed a school primer to facilitate their learning to read,"<sup>51</sup> plus making corrections on the *Book of Common Prayer in Mohawk*, which was published in 1787.

The end of the war found the Clauses and some of the Johnson children again in England, where Daniel was pressing the family claims as Loyalists for reimbursement for their various properties confiscated in 1780 by an act of the New York legislature. His discouragement was apparent when in June, 1786, Parliament voted a temporary payment of only £180,000 for Loyalist claims. His own losses included a house and lot on Market Street in Albany along with his beloved Williamsburgh and other properties amounting to 28,000 acres, which brought at public sale only £31, 982-1.<sup>52</sup> His brother-in-law Sir John Johnson counselled him to come back to Canada accepting what payment was given by the Parliament, while Sir John would find for him a nice piece of land in Canada on which to live. Claus never got there. He died in Cardiff, Wales, on November 7, 1787, probably of complications caused by his recurring gout, and was buried under the altar of the Cardiff Cathedral.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Sir John to Daniel Claus, January 20, 1777, *ibid.*, I, 230.

<sup>50</sup> Molly Brant to Daniel Claus, October 5, 1779, *ibid.*, II, 135.

<sup>51</sup> *A Primer for the use of Mohawk Children . . .* (Montreal, 1781).

<sup>52</sup> Revolutionary MSS, vol. 471, New York State Library.

<sup>53</sup> Autograph Book, 55. William Claus called it "gout in the stomach."

Daniel Claus, small in physical stature, epitomized the British Crown to thousands of Indians in Quebec. They had heard of Sir William Johnson, but very few ever met him and, after all, it was to Daniel Claus they brought their problems, and it was he who explained the position of the British government in each case. He spoke their language, understood their customs and ceremonies, and had been adopted as a Mohawk by Hendrick in 1754. He was honest and sincere. In fact, from 1763, after the death of the commissary, John Lottridge, he took on the added burden of that office, because the government never got around to appointing a replacement. He received no pay for the extra responsibility, but for good relations between the British and the Canadian Indians the job had to be done, so he did it.

Claus was scrupulously honest in his dealings with the Indians. He kept itemized accounts of his Indian expenses, and unlike some of his contemporaries, he did not list fraudulent charges. He did not amass a fortune at the expense of the Indians and the Crown; having only his salary, he died penniless.<sup>54</sup>

In the years between the fall of Montreal and the start of the American Revolution, Claus almost singlehandedly converted the Seven Canadian Indian Nations from the French loyalties they had held for so long to acceptance of the British as their allies. This was done in spite of the many French sympathizers among the clergy and Canadians. The results of this labor were evident as the Revolution broke out. After their initial surprise that the colonists wished to break away from the king, the Indians tossed in their lot with the British Crown. There were individuals in the Nations who smuggled intelligence and letters from sympathizers in Canada to the rebels, but even the French joining the American cause did not sway the majority from their allegiance to England. One can only conjecture as to Canada's future had the Seven Indian Nations continued as enemies of the British government.

<sup>54</sup> Claus Papers, XIV, 363, petition of widow Anne Claus for pension.