



COLONEL TITUS GEER SIMONS.

Titus Simons, Quarter Master,
Peters' Corps of "Queen's Loyal Rangers," Burgoyne's
Campaign.

1777 - - - - 1812

BY H. H. ROBERTSON, BARRISTER, HAMILTON, ONTARIO.

When Lieutenant-General Burgoyne set out on his expedition, "from the side of Canada" in June, 1777, for the purpose of effecting a junction with Sir William Howe at Albany, and thus cutting the rebellion in twain, he was sensible of the importance of enlisting in his service, as he proceeded down the country, those Loyalist inhabitants whom he anticipated would join the Royal Standard. "The King has many faithful subjects dispersed in the provinces," said he, in addressing the Indians on the 21st of June. Accordingly, there accompanied him, as well as the French Canadians under De Boucherville, the nucleus, or rather the nuclei, of two regiments of Provincials, of which John Peters, of Hebron, Connecticut, and Ebenezer Jessup, of Stamford, were respectively in command. Jessup's Corps had been stationed at Lachine with the "Royal Yorkers," and joined the army at St. Johns. The uniform of Jessup's Corps was "red, turned up with green." (C. A. B., 158-9.)

Peters had been seized and ill-treated the year previous at Hartford and Springfield, and having arrived in Canada in company with the rebel Colonel Bedell, was arrested on suspicion, by Sullivan, at Sorel, but escaping by canoe to St. Johns, he there met General Simon Fraser, who sent him to Sir Guy Carleton at Montreal, by whom he was commissioned to raise a regiment. On the 14th of June,—Burgoyne having arrived at Quebec on the 4th of May, from England,—Peters was ordered to join his army with what force he had raised, to be known as the Queen's Loyal Rangers. (C. A. B., 167-206.)

The Jessups, Ebenezer, Edward and Joseph, were natives of Stamford, Connecticut, and large land holders in the Province of New York. ("E. Jessup's Descendants," p. 234.) Governor Tryon, of New York, had encouraged them to raise a corps before they went to Canada, in the Fall of 1776. They did not accompany Sir John Johnson's party, but waited upon Sir Guy Carleton, and

expressed their determination to risk all in assisting, as much as would be in their power, to quote the words of Eben Jessup, "to conquer our enemies and re-establish civil government for the honour of the Crown and the true interest of the Colonies."

Colonel Philip Skene, whose colonization plans at the head of Lake Champlain had been interrupted by the rebellion, accompanied the army, as one peculiarly qualified to furnish intelligence as to the disposition of the inhabitants.

Burgoyne's idea towards the Provincial Corps is expressed to Lord Germain, to whom he wrote on the 11th of July, while upon the full tide of victory, when the enemy were retreating panic-stricken before his victorious arms from Ticonderoga, Huberton and Skenesborough. "Mr. Peters and Mr. Jessup," he wrote, "who came over to Canada last Autumn, and proposed to raise battalions,—one from the neighborhood of Albany, the other from Charlotte County,—are confident of success as the army advances. Their battalions are now in embryo, but very promising; they have fought, and with spirit. Sir Guy Carleton has given blank commissions for the officers, to fill up occasionally, and the agreement with them is, that the commissions are not to be effective till two-thirds of the battalions are raised. Some hundreds of men—a third part of them with arms—have joined me since I have penetrated this place, professing themselves Loyalists and wishing to serve, some to the end of the war, some for the campaign. Though I am without instructions upon this subject, I have not hesitated to receive them, and as fast as companies can be formed, I shall post the officers till a decision can be made upon the measure by my superiors. I mean to employ them particularly upon detachments, for keeping the country in awe, and procuring cattle; their real use, I expect, will be great in the preservation of the national troops; but the impression which will be caused upon public opinion, should Provincials be seen acting vigorously in the cause of the King, will be yet more advantageous, and I trust fully justify the expense."

On the 12th of July, at Skenesborough, Colonel Skeene was appointed "to act as commissary to administer the Oath of Allegiance, and to grant certificates of protection to such inhabitants as sue properly for the same, and to regulate all other matters relative to the supplies and assistances that shall be required from the country or voluntarily brought in." Subse-

quently Mr. Daniel Jones, and others, were appointed to assist Colonel Skene in this duty.

David Jones, a younger brother of Daniel Jones, was the lover of the unfortunate Jane Macrea, whose death has been falsely attributed to the Indians in the British service, but now conceded to be due to the fire of the rebel garrison at Fort Edward, upon her escort. Jane Macrea, whose people, with the Jones family, had come from New Jersey, was staying in the neighborhood called Pine Plains, with her aunt, Mrs. Campbell. It was probably mutually understood that she should come to the house of Daniel Jones, who had married before the war, and resided there with his family, and it was arranged that a company of Indians from the British camp should take a horse to her, and escort her back with them, by day, three or four miles, transferring her to the house of Daniel Jones. A part of twenty men, part of the rebel garrison at Fort Edward, met the party returning with Miss Macrea and fired upon them. The Indians threw themselves upon the ground to escape the volley, but the unfortunate girl, on horseback, was thus accidentally and fatally wounded. Her death afforded pretext for charges against the British, and by some American writers is still attributed to the British Indians. Burgoyne himself, strangely enough, seems to have been of the opinion that Jane Macrea met her death from the Indians. General Fraser, however, was of a different opinion, and American writers now concede that her death was caused not by the Indians, but by the company of Captain Palmer, of Fort Edward.*

The Provincials who formed part of the advance corps, were first mustered at Skenesborough, the order for their organization emanating, immediately, from the ill-fated General Fraser, destined to fall on Behmus Heights before Morgan's riflemen, detailed to pick him off.

Peters at this time mustered 262 officers and men, and Jessup's 172. Jessup's Corps was styled the King's Loyal Americans.

The officers of Peters' Corps were:—*Captains*, Justus Sherwood, Jeremiah French, David McFall and Francis Hogel; *Lieutenants*, Gershom French, John Dulmage, James Parrott and Ruben Hawley, who was succeeded by Philo Hurlburt; *Ensigns*, John Peters, Jr., and Elijah Grout. Gershom French was Adjutant. Elijah Grout acted as Quarter-Master until the 13th of Septem-

* W. L. Stone's "Burgoyne's Campaign," 21.—*Scottish Canadian* for July, 1902, 223.

ber, when he was succeeded by Titus Simons. Captain Sherwood is referred to by Burgoyne, as "a man of culture, and forward in every service of danger." He subsequently played an important part in negotiations with Vermont. His son was Mr. Justice Levis Peters Sherwood of the Court of King's Bench, Upper Canada. The Frenches had come from Manchester in the New Hampshire Grants, where Jeremiah had been acting Sheriff. After the war, Gershom French explored the lands of the Rideau River, from the mouth to its source. Jeremiah French was one of the members of the first Parliament of Upper Canada, representing the Second District from the East (Stormont).

John Dulmage was present at the "Johnstown social" in the time of Governor Simcoe. (Read's Life of Simcoe, 135.)

Contemporaneously with the muster of the Provincials in the middle of July, General Reidesel was directed to make a diversion eastward towards the Connecticut River, "and by that feint to draw the attention of the Americans to almost every quarter." This contemplated diversion, however, did not take place, but the so-called secret expedition to Bennington—a village about twenty miles east of Albany—was now for the first time projected. The objects of the expedition were defined by Burgoyne, to complete Peters Corps, and to mount the Hessian Dragoons, who under the treaties with the German Princes, were to be provided with horses at the expense of His Britannic Majesty. The unavoidable delay at Skenesborough, from the 7th to the 24th of July—and at Fort Edward until the 13th of August, necessitated in bringing forward supplies to Fort George, and building a road therefrom—enabled the enemy to become fully apprised of the projected expedition. John Stark wrote the council of New Hampshire, warning them of the intended movement on the ~~13th~~ ^{10th} 30th of July.

Finally on the 13th of August the expedition, consisting of 291 men of Peters Corps, two hundred unmounted German Dragoons, Fraser's marksmen with some Indians, all under Colonel Baume, crossed the Batten Kill for Bennington. The force to be supported by Colonel Breymann's force of six hundred men.

Colonel Baume, having no knowledge of the English language, was accompanied by Colonel Skène, who had received written instructions from Burgoyne:—"Lieutenant-Colonel Baume is directed to communicate and to consult with you upon all matters of intelligence, negotiation with the inhabitants, roads, and other

means depending upon a knowledge of the country, for carrying his instructions into execution . . . The objects of his orders are to try the affections of the country ; to disconcert the councils of the enemy, mount the regiment of Reidesel's Dragoons ; to complete Lieutenant-Colonel Peters Corps, etc."

On the first day, the thirteenth, Colonel Baume came up with the enemy, a part of Peters Corps engaged them, a party of fifteen men, who delivered their fire and took to the woods. A private of Captain Sherwood's company was wounded, five rebels were taken prisoners, and a full report sent from Cambridge, on the morning of the fourteenth, to Burgoyne. The following day, Baume continued his march, took possession of a mill filled with supplies, learned that the force at Bennington was eighteen hundred men, and reported, "The people are flocking in hourly, but want to be armed." The profligacy of these men, who took the Oath of Allegiance, proved fatal to the British in the first day's battle. Coming up with the enemy, Colonel Skene readily fell into a trap devised for him by John Stark, in command of the rebels, who dispatched, first, a force under Colonel Nichols, consisting of two hundred men to the left, with three hundred more, under Colonel Herrick to the right. These men professed themselves Loyalists, and were suffered to come within the British lines. Nichols finding the scheme a success, sent back for three hundred more men to join him. When the attack began, to the amazement of the British, their newly-found allies turned their fire upon the British. Peters says, "The action commenced at nine a.m. and lasted until four p.m., when we retired in much confusion. A little before the Loyalists gave way, the rebels pushed with a strong party on the front of the Loyalists which I commanded. As they were coming up, I observed a man fire at me, which I returned. He loaded again as he came up, and discharged again at me, crying out, 'Peters, you d— Tory, I have got you.' He rushed on me with his bayonet, which entered just below my left breast, but was turned by my bones. By this time I was loaded and saw it was a rebel captain, Jeremiah Post by name, an old schoolmate and play-fellow, and a cousin of my wife. Though his bayonet was in my body I felt regret at being obliged to destroy him. We retreated from Bennington to the reinforcement which was coming up, which was attacked and obliged to retreat to the bridge of the mills in Cambridge, which I broke up after the troops had re-

"treated across it. The same evening we retreated towards the camp, which we reached next day."

The reinforcement under Breyman had proceeded, over a heavy country with heavy equipment at the rate of one mile an hour. And to this delay Burgoyne attributes the failure of the expedition. Breyman, nevertheless, defeated the enemy, driving them before him, but, his ammunition being expended, retired. Peters lost half his men in the engagement. David McFall, a sergeant in the 26th Regiment, had been given a commission in Peters Corps at Fort Edward. He was taken prisoner. Addressing Colonel Peters three years later he says:—"I thought myself happy to be under your command, but alas, then began all my misfortunes. I and many other brave Loyalists marched under your command to Bennington, but few of them ever returned. I was made prisoner at the expense of the lives of many a rebel. I was stripped of everything that I was long acquiring, even to the coat off my back, from hence I was marched to Boston, I and other officers without a stitch of shoes to our feet, put aboard the Kingston guard ship where we endured both hunger and cold."

Colonel Skene escaped capture by cutting the traces of an artillery horse and mounting it. Eben Jessup attributes the failure of the expedition "most of all, because Colonel Skene who so long managed the intelligence part and giving protection, etc., that the enemy by his credulity acquired a considerable knowledge of our strength and motions, upon which the Bennington expedition failed, the loss of which, in my opinion, was the principal cause of all our misfortunes, and so I failed to fill my battalion and wanted sixty-three men to entitle us to commissions," etc.

The biographer of John Stark tells how the prisoners taken at Bennington were treated. The regular soldiers were received as prisoners of war, "but the Tories, to the number of 152, were tied in pairs, to each pair a horse was attached by traces with, in some cases, a negro for his rider. They were led away amid the jeers and scoffs of the victors." Burgoyne complained to General Gates of the treatment of the Bennington prisoners, but was met by a counter charge against the Indians in the British service, wrongfully charged with the murder of Jane Macrea. The failure at Bennington was the first misfortune of the campaign. Upon it great stress was laid by Lord Germain in impeachment of Burgoyne. It is apparent now, however, that this reverse

would not have affected the great object of the expedition, the junction with Sir William Howe at Albany, had Lord Germain not been guilty of gross neglect in failing to transmit a dispatch to Howe, in command at New York, to ascend the Hudson with an offensive force. Burgoyne's orders were imperative, to force his way to Albany, the dispatch containing the explicit orders for Howe to ascend the Hudson was duly drafted, and with many other papers, awaited the Minister's signature. A memo of Lord Selborne lately brought to light by Lord Fitzmaurice solves the mystery of Burgoyne's delayed co-operation, upon the transmission of which depended Burgoyne's devoted army. (Fiske, *Am. Rev.*, 277.)

It is apparent, nevertheless, that Burgoyne under-estimated his adversary at Bennington, although his plans and movements were subsequently declared without fault by the most enlightened judges who were on service with him. After the battle of Freeman's farm, when the command of the Northern army had been transferred from Schuyler to Gates, under whom the panic-stricken regiments had retraced their flight from Vanshicks Island, and had received accessions until his army numbered five to one of his adversary,—the remnant of the Provincial corps was further reduced, each of the six British regiments receiving twenty men therefrom. During the battle in the woods, on the seventh of October, part of Peters corps were as usual, in the advance party, another part in the redoubt where Breyden was killed, and Arnold wounded.

When the last battle had been fought on the 7th of October, and negotiations decided upon on the 13th, the officers of the Provincials, having failed to complete their quota, had not received their commissions. Their position, therefore, was equivocal. Colonel Peters could do no more, and on the 14th, at the instance of the general officers, at great risk, conducted his party by devious paths, through the enemy's lines northward to Diamond Island in Lake George, and thence to Canada. "Desert you we did not," says Ebenezer Jessup to Burgoyne in 1778, "and you were pleased to tell me after all the others had gone, that it was the determination of all the generals and officers, to fall a sacrifice themselves before you would yield up the few Provincials that stuck by you, to the will of the enemy. Major General Philipps and Lord Balcarras being present, said the same."

Jessup attributes the failure of the Bennington expedition to the credulity of Colonel Skene. Colonel Skene's humility is ex-

pressed upon his signing the parole after the surrender, in the addition of the words, "A poor follower of the British Army," after his signature.

In the following year Burgoyne Provincials petitioned to be formed into a second battalion of the King's Royal Regiment of New York, Sir John Johnson's regiment, which had accompanied St. Leger, and Colonel Peters conducted a successful expedition against the rebel posts on Onion River. The command of the Loyalists was given to Captain Daniel McAlpine on the 1st of June, 1778, an ex-officer of the Royal Americans, the 60th. McAlpine died in July, 1780. On the 5th of December, 1780:—"All Loyalists quartered at Verchere are placed under the command of Major John Naire, Mr. Neill Robertson to act as Adjutant and Titus Simons as Quarter Master." And on August 23rd, 1781, from the same place, "It is Major Naire's orders that the officers commanding the several corps of Loyalists in the Parish, are to send in to Mr. Titus Simons, acting Quarter Master, an exact provision return, weekly, etc."

In 1781 the Provincials were re-organized, Major Edward Jessup being appointed to the command of the whole, to be known as the Loyal Rangers. Peters corps became merged in this, and a second battalion of Sir John Johnson's regiment. To the chagrin of Colonel Peters, he received a captaincy only, under Jessup, under whom the officers who had served in Burgoyne's campaign in the corps of Eben Jessup, Peters, McAlpine and McKay, received commissions. In 1783 the soldiers were disbanded, and the story of their settlement in the Eastern District is recorded.

Titus Simons had lived at Hartford, and belonged to the parish of the Reverend Dr. Samuel Peters. He had a considerable family. His wife was Jerusha Kingsley, and their children were, first, Titus Geer, a mere lad who was given a musket in the ranks of his father's corps. His seven daughters were married as follows: one to John Detlor, son of John Valentine Detlor, of Fredericksburg; one to Simon McNab, of Belleville; one to Dr. Seth Meacham, one to John Carpenter, upon whose death she married Dr. William Brown, another to John Thompson, and two others to John Lawrason and John Cummings. Two other sons, John Kingsley and William Walter, also survived their brother Titus Geer.

After the peace, the family settled first at Kingston, then at

Niagara, later at York and finally at Flamboro in the County of Wentworth.

In 1804 the elder Simons was Adjutant of the 1st Regiment of the West Lincoln Militia. The officers of the Corps were as follows:—*Colonel*, Peter Hare; *Lieut.-Colonel*, Andrew Bradt; *Major*, Richard Hatt; *Captains*, John Ryekman, Augustus Jones, Daniel Young, John Lottridge, Ebenezer Jones, Samuel Hatt, Peter Bowman, William Lottridge, John Smith; *Lieutenants*, Elijah Chambers, John Jones, John Aikman, Charles Devine, Lewis Horning, Michael Chewin, Robert Land, Jr., Israel Dodely, William Davis; *Ensigns*, Conrad Johnson, Benjamin Lockwood, John Springer, David Stewart, Peter Hess, Gershom Carpenter, Ephraim Land, George Smith, Daniel Young, Jr.; *Adjutant*, Titus Simons; *Quarter-Master*, James Willson.*

Titus Simons died at Flamboro in 1824, having attained the length of days proverbially "long in the land" to U. E. Loyalists, over ninety years.

In 1796, the younger Simons published the *Official Gazette* at York, the first paper published in York. In 1806 he organized the Burlington Agricultural Society, probably in emulation of Governor Simcoe at Niagara, the original manuscript constitution being still preserved. Titus Geer Simons had a distinguished career during the war of 1812, though his name seems strangely omitted, by historians, in view of the important services he rendered. He had held a commission in the 2nd Lincoln Militia in 1804, and in the 2nd York in 1812 when war was declared. Within three weeks thereafter, he was on the frontier at Niagara with sixty men taken from the district, afterwards known as the Gore district. The orderly book of the First Lincoln Militia, under date Niagara, 6th July, 1812, contains the following entry: "Capt. Simons of 2nd York Regiment has arrived this day with sixty men and will march to Queenstown in the cool of the evening to join the flank companies of the same regiment now quartered there." In March, 1813, he received orders to recruit for a Majority in the Incorporated Militia, and having completed his quota of men, served with that battalion until June, 1814, when he rejoined his former regiment, the 2nd York. He aided in the capture of the American Fort Niagara in 1813, and was consulted in reference to the expedition, before the division under Lieutenant Colonel Murray left Burlington on that

* Upper Canada Almanac, 1804. Toronto Public Library.

enterprise. He commanded all the volunteer armed militia in the successful attack upon Black Rock and Buffalo under Generals Drummond and Riall, on the 29th of December, 1813, in retaliation for the burning of Newark, and on the first of January, 1814, left Black Rock with 279 prisoners for York. (Can. Arch., Series Q., Vol. 341, p. 199).

At Lundy's Lane Major Simons commanded the whole of the 2nd York Militia, present at that action, until severely wounded, his men forming part of Colonel Scott's force. "The advance guard was already within three miles of the field of battle, when they were met by an orderly bearing a second dispatch from General Riall, announcing that he was about to retire on Queens-town, and directing them to retreat at once and join him at that place. They had retraced their steps for nearly four miles, when the roar of cannon burst upon their ears and they were overtaken by a second messenger, summoning them to the scene of conflict. It was accordingly nine o'clock (at night) before the head of the column, weary and footsore with a march of more than twenty miles almost without a halt, came in view on the extreme right." (Cruikshank, Battle of L. L., p. 35).

Three grape shot lodged in Major Simons' sword arm in the conflict. Thus ended his career of action in the war. Adjutant-General Coffin testified that during the campaign, "for bravery, intelligence, zeal and activity his conduct was most exemplary, and his services were, I believe, considered by the general officers commanding as of great value during the whole of the late war with the United States of America."

On the 3rd of June, 1813, a day or so before the battle of Stoney Creek, Colonel Harvey wrote Major Simons from Beasley's [Burlington Heights]:

My Dear Sir,—

"General Vincent desires me to say, that you must come to Head-Quarters.

"Your local knowledge and other qualities not necessary to enumerate, render you particularly valuable to him at the present moment. Some other officer must take charge of the militia going to Stoney Creek and you must give us the benefit of your advice and assistance here."

Sir Peregrin Maitland wrote Lord Bathurst, that Major Simons "served with active zeal and intelligence from the commencement of the war with the United States, his general character

and conduct in the command of a Regiment of Militia highly respectable, and his loyalty and attachment to his Majesty's Government undoubted."

When the Gore district was set apart in 1816, Major Simons was appointed Sheriff. The Gore Militia, the 2nd Regiment of which he was Colonel, comprised six, and subsequently thirteen, battalions. Colonel Simons died at West Flamboro, in August, 1829.

In recalling the migration of the Loyalists to Canada, Professor Tyler, Cornell University, says:—"Its members were imbued with many qualities calculated to ^{lay} deep and firm the foundations of stable institutions, of moral and conservative habits, at a most critical stage of the nation's growth. If Canada has been able for a century, to resist the growth of republican ideas, and to adhere to England, credit is largely due to the principles which the Loyalists have handed down to generations after them."

As Champlain was the father of French Canada, they were the fathers of British Canada. Where are their monuments? To adopt the simile of Horace, they stand, "more durable than brass," for their names are graven deep into the foundations of their country. They founded the Province of Upper Canada, redeemed it from its primeval state, held it against the invader of 1812, and their descendants are realizing to-day the value of the principle for which their ancestors, more than a century since, had staked and lost their all. A united Empire, whose flag has ever been the symbol of justice and equal rights

And though no column lifts its head,
—Speaks to the living of the dead,—
Each day, we bless them in our prayers,
The fruits are ours, the toil was theirs.

Narrative of Francis Hogel, Can. Arc., B. 215, p. 265.

" " Gershom French, Can. Arc., B. 160, p. 1.

" " John Peters, Onion River Expedition, Can. Arc., B. 216-6.