

## IN DEFENSE OF THE FACTS AN ONGOING SEARCH FOR FORT PLANK

Since the initial publication of the "The Bloodied Mohawk" a plethora of new data has been collected. All reviews of the tome, with the exception of two - by the same critic, the first dated November of 2001 and the second written in August of 2010, have been positive. However, his criticisms have led the author to carefully reexamine his own work, and after much consideration the author has found a need to arise "In Defense of the Facts" in "An Ongoing Search For Fort Plank".

Over the succeeding 225+ years since its construction in 1778, Revolutionary War historians have stated multiple locations for Fort Plank [see Figure 1]. William W. Campbell (1806-1881) is the first known non-contemporary to have stated a location for Fort Plank:<sup>1</sup>

*Sir John Johnson settled at Fox's Mills. about eight miles above Fort Plank, (or as it now called Fort Plain), and two miles below the upper Mohawk castle.*

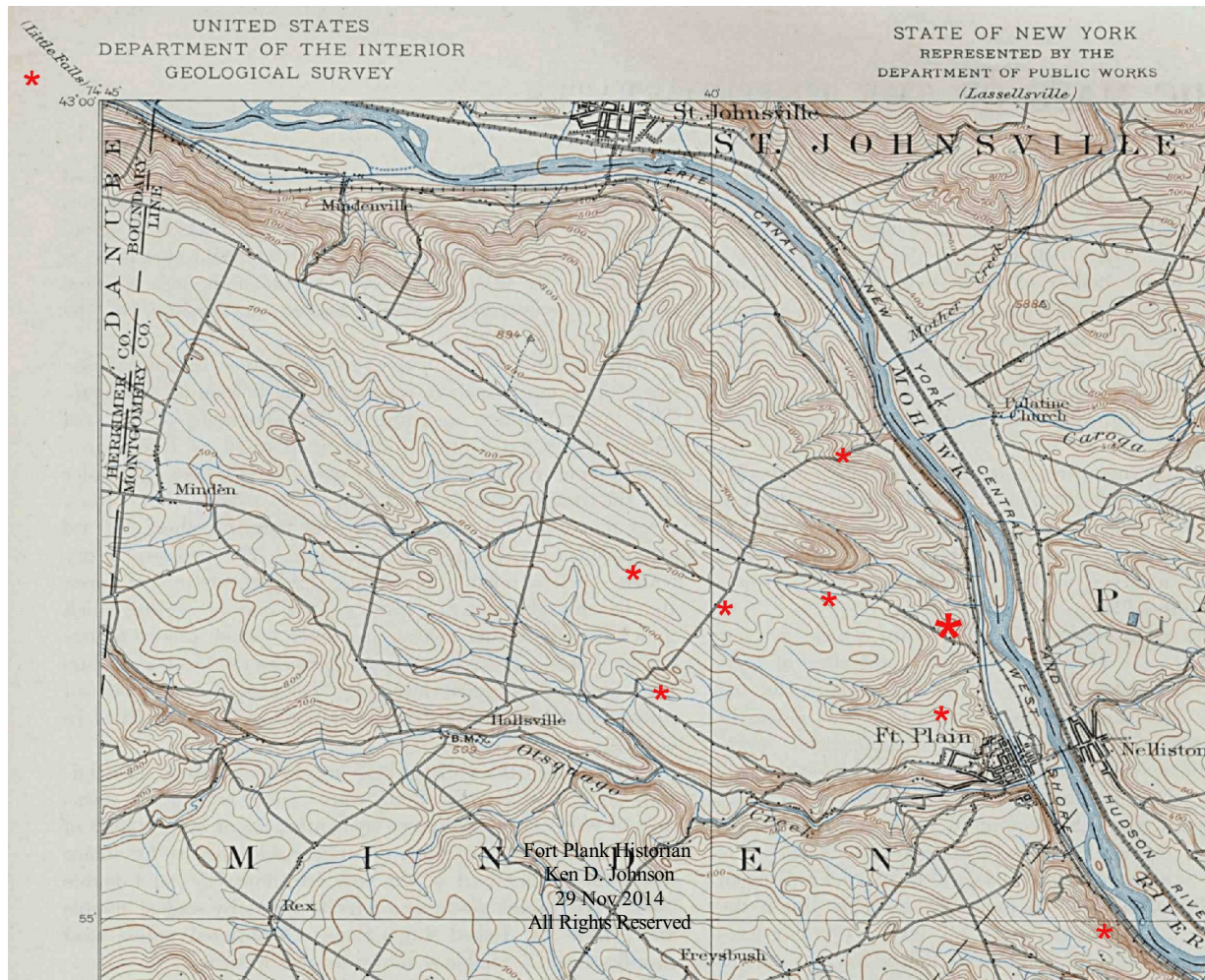


Figure 1: Fort Plank's many stated locations.

Campbell was later quoted by Colonel William L. Stone (1792-1844); who, when writing his Life of Brant, employed Thomas Sammons,<sup>2</sup> a Tryon County militiaman who had taken part in the defense of Fort Plank on August 2, 1780 to review the truth and veracity of William W. Campbell's, The Annals of Tryon County.<sup>3</sup> And thus the controversy began.

It seems quite remarkable that Stone not only copied Campbell's statement concerning the location of Fort Plank, but universally accepted it as true, despite his independent review of the facts. One must note, with curiosity, that these great authors wrote and published their histories during a period when many of the veterans who had served within Forts Plank and Plain, were yet alive, and remarkably knowledgeable about the topography and posts in question.

Historians whose personal work followed Campbell's and Stone's, have since offered up a host of locations for Forts Plank, Plain, and Rensselaer.

The first to openly criticize the writings of Campbell [1831] and Stone [1838] seems to have been Benson J. Lossing, writing in his 1851, Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution:<sup>4</sup>

*There is considerable confusion in the accounts concerning Fort Plain, for which there is no necessity. There was a stockade about two miles southwest of Fort Plain, called Fort Clyde, in honor of Colonel Clyde, an officer in the Tryon County Militia; and another about the same distance northwest, called Fort Plank, or Blank, from the circumstances that it stood upon land owned by Frederic Blank. The latter and Fort Plain have been confounded. Mr. Stone erroneously considered them as one, and says, in his Life of Brant (ii., 95), "The principal work of defense, then called Fort Plank, and subsequently Fort Plain, was situated upon an elevated plain overlooking the valley, near the site of the village still retaining the name of the fortress." Other writers have regarded the block-house as the fort, when, in fact, it was only a part of the fortifications. The drawing here given is from one published in Stone's Life of Brant, with a description from the Fort Plain Journal of December 26th, 1837. Mr. Lipe considered it a correct view, except the lower story, which, it was his impression, was square instead of octagonal, and had four port-holes for heavy ordnance.*<sup>5</sup>

The foregoing passage by Lossing served to fuel a controversy over the locations of these forts which continues unabated today.

After much public criticism and censorship, Campbell defended the accuracy of his work in a letter to the Honorable William W. Kent on January 1, 1849:<sup>6</sup>

*My Dear Sir:—Eighteen years ago the following - "Annals of Tryon County" were dedicated to your illustrious father. . . . To you, his son, my early professional instructor and my friend, I now present this new edition of a work,*

*which, though it has but little intrinsic merit, either in its style and arrangement, possesses, perhaps, some interest, from the fact that it was the pioneer history of the border wars of our native State. For me it has a melancholy interest, because all the actors in the Revolutionary drama who were living at the time of its first appearance, in 1831, and from whose lips the personal narratives were gathered, have gone the way of all the living, and are now numbered with the dead. Of the then aged men and women scattered along the valley of the Mohawk and the head-waters of the Susquehanna, with whom it was my good fortune to sit down and listen to the stories of their trials and their triumphs, not one survives.*

*The materials were, at the time, collected . . . from the correspondence of the principal actors, and from the oral statements of those who survived to my day . . . and were in all essential particulars correct. When first published, the whole history of the border wars of New York scarcely made up a page in any then existing historical work. As this book was the first, and was prepared from materials in a great degree new, succeeding writers on the same subject drew largely upon it, and, in some instances, made extensive extracts without credit or reference. My first intention was, in presenting a new edition, to revise and alter, but upon reflection I determined to leave the work substantially in its original form. Since its first publication I have at various times examined many additional documents, and prepared articles which throw some new light upon portions of the work, and which tend to confirm its positions and statements. The original text will be left as it was, and these articles, even at the expense of some repetition, will be inserted in the Appendix . . . [of his, Campbell's, work]*

In 1882, Jephtha R. Simms, in his The Frontiersman of New York, Volume One, pages 573-4, noted:

*Fort Plank.—This post established in 1776, was situated two miles and a half westward of Fort Plain, and one and a quarter miles in a direct line southerly from the Mohawk. Here, then, dwelt Frederick Plank, a whig, whose house was palisaded in a square inclosure with block-house corners. From its contiguity to the settlements of Dutchtown and Geissenburg, it served a safe retreat for a score or two of families. Capt. Joseph House, a militia officer who was living with Plank, usually commanded this post in the absence of field-officers.<sup>7</sup> Col. Stone copying from Campbell's Annals, supposed Fort Plank and Fort Plain were synonymous names for the same fort. More or less troops were kept at this station through the war; and it is believed that for the first few years, it was regarded as of greater importance than Fort Plain, while the latter from 1780, became the head quarters of the commanding officer, for several military posts in its vicinity,*

*Fort Plank included. Facts from Lawrence Gros and Abram House, the last named residing, in 1846, on the old Plank farm, now owned by Adam Failing.*

In describing Fort Plain, Simms wrote:<sup>8</sup>

*Fort Plain was also established in 1776, but whether Col. Dayton or any continental officer was consulted in relation to it, is now unknown. Eye witnesses have assured me that the structure was found too limited for the public need. It was situated on the next eminence westward of the cemetery hill,<sup>9</sup> and directly above a living spring; and was made by inclosing less than half an acre of ground with palisades, with bastions or block-houses in two diagonal corners, each constructed to as with cannon to command two sides of the inclosure . . . This church seen on the right, was one-third of a mile distant from the fort . . .<sup>10</sup>*

*Fort Plain Block-House.—This was erected in the fall of 1780 and spring of 1781, and was constructed of pine timber 8 X 14 inches square, dovetailed at the ends, and Thomas Morrel, of Schenectada, father of the late Judge Abram Morrel, of Johnstown, superintended its erection. It was octagonal in form, three stories in height, the second projecting five feet over the first, and the third five feet over the second, with port holes for cannon on the first floor, and for musketry on all its surfaces; with holes in the projecting floor for small arms, so as to fire down upon a closely approaching foe. The first story is said to have been 30 feet in diameter, the second 40 and the third 50, making it look top heavy for a gale of wind. It mounted several cannon for signal guns and defense—one of which was a twelve pounder—on the first floor; where was also an immense oven. . . . It stood upon a gentle elevation of several feet—which at the of an hundred years, the plow and the cultivator have nearly obliterated—and about 20 rods from the palisaded inclosure, which was constructed mainly by the farmers. The block-house was not palisaded, but a ditch or dry moat several feet deep and ten feet wide, extended around it, requiring a draw bridge to gain its entrance.*

*The land upon on which the defenses at Fort Plain were erected, was owned by Johannes Lipe in the Revolution, and afterward by his son David. The ownership is now in Seeber Lipe, a son of David. . . .*

The final word on Fort Plain by Mister Simms reads:<sup>11</sup>

*The land on which the defenses at Fort Plain were erected, was owned by Johannes Lipe in the Revolution, and afterward by his son David. The ownership is now in Seeber Lipe, a son of David. With his approbation and that of his brother William, who owns part of the ground which the Fort proper inclosed, August 30, 1882, Homer N. Lockwood, Esq., and myself, placed small marble*

*monuments upon the sites of those structures, designating the Fort as erected in 1776; and the block-house in 1781. The stones were firmly set by the united labor of Mr. Seeber Lipe, Mr. Lockwood, Mr. Harvey Wick and the writer; Hon. P. J. Wagner, in his 88th year, being present in a carriage, he having seen the block-house in his boyhood. Mr. Lipe has agreed to protect those monuments for the benefit of posterity. Mr. Lockwood generously defrayed the expense of them.*

For years the exact placement of this stone was unknown as shortly after it was placed it was moved despite reassurances by the Lipe Family. To clear up this controversy Mister Rufus Grider was noted, by Samuel Ludlow Frey, to have inscribed upon a painting of the Fort Plain marker the following notation:

*The present substantial marker or monument, **west of the old cemetery** [emphasis added by the author],<sup>12</sup> which marks the site of the old Fort Plain blockhouse or fort, the gift of Hon. Homer N. Lockwood, and, with Jephtha R. Simms, he placed the stones in position not long before the death of Mr. Simms.<sup>13</sup>*

F. W. Beers & Company made their contribution to the controversy in 1878, stating in their History of Montgomery County and Fulton Counties, N.Y.<sup>14</sup>

*The fortification called Fort Plank was situated on elevated ground, nearly four miles south-west from Fort Plain, and consisted of a small palisaded enclosure embracing a dwelling, which has for years been known as the late Chauncey House place, and is now owned by Reuben Failing, and occupied by his son Joseph. When fortified it was owned by a family named Plank, on which account it was thus named. . . . This fort is supposed to have been established in 1777, and well did it answer its purpose.*

Washington Frothingham, in his History of Montgomery County, added his own twist to the location controversy in 1892:

*In common with other towns in the Mohawk Valley, the settlements in Minden were ravaged by Brant and Johnson in 1770. At the time of Brant's incursion the men mostly absent, the women were shut up in the forts for safety. There were several of these forts located near Fort Plain. The fort which gives the place its name was erected on the summit of a hill half a mile northwest of village. It was probably built under the direction of Colonel Willett and was considered one of the strongest fortifications in the valley. It has been erroneously stated that this fort was built during the French war, by a French engineer. . . . At the time of its erection, Lawrence Gross was a boy living near*

by. He states the fort received its name “because, from the eminence upon which it stood, there was such a plain or prospective view.” Mr. Gross also said that the workmen who had its erection in charge were permitted to name the fort. It was elevated more than fifty feet above the Mohawk and its palisade enclosed about one-third of an acre, with an entrance upon the southeasterly side. In the diagonally opposite corners of this enclosure were erected two small block-houses each containing cannon and projecting far enough to command two sides of the fort. Within a distance of two or three rods, on the side of the hill was a living spring which was of great boon to the garrison. It is not known who was first in command, but Colonel Willett was certainly there during the summer of 1780 and 1781, and then occupied the most eastern of three or four little huts built on the side of the hill below the pickets, and within a short distance of the spring. Their erection was required by the limited amount of room within the palisades . . .

One writer has confounded this fort with another called “Fort Plank,” assuming that they were one and the same. This, however, was not the case, for the latter was a distinct fortification, situated nearly four miles southwest of Fort Plain. . . .

Fort Plank, which was another historic place of defence, occupied, as has been stated, a commanding position on elevated ground four miles southwest of Fort Plain and was originally the residence of a respectable German family whose name it bore. . . . The fort comprised a block-house and also a palisade, which surrounded a dwelling known for many years after as the Chauncey House place, and in later years owned by Reuben Failing, and occupied by his son Joseph.<sup>15</sup> The fortification of the place is said to have been made in 1777, one year after the erection of Forts Plain, Herkimer, and Dayton . . .

In 1903, Francis B. Heitman published the Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, from its Organization, September 29, 1789, to March 2, 1903.<sup>16</sup> In Volume Two he dedicated a portion of his work to *Forts, etc., and locations*. In the right hand column of each page he dealt with where the posts were situated and stated the location of Fort Plank was: *On [the] Mohawk River, about 10 miles northwest of Fort Plain.*

On a 1905 Map of the Village of Fort Plain, the site of Fort Plain, and thus Fort Plank, appears on the “Old David W. Lipe Farm” which was then owned by Charles McCarthy.<sup>17</sup> Interestingly enough, is the fact that sometime between 1868,<sup>18</sup> and 1905, the “site” of the Old Fort Plain Church is noted to have been identified. However, that the Church not only appears to the west of the fort versus easterly of the fort as in earlier sketches, but the site is shown to be well over one half of mile south of the site of the Bleecker Patent Church Lot.

Nelson Greene, in 1947, made his contribution to the debate, writing that *Fort Planck* was located . . . *near present Route 5S about three miles west of Fort Plain.*<sup>19</sup>

Even more confusing is Henry Allen’s 1957 typescript, “Historic Forts of N.Y. State: a

brief study.”

*. . . Canajoharie is beyond, Palatine Bridge opposite. The former was burned in the first raid. Here was a stone house at first named Fort Plain or the Rensselaer; this is now the home of the club of the same name. Beyond the present village or Fort Plain was a fort of the same name. An old print of this survives. This was substantial work, square, with a palisade and towers. It may have been strengthened with a mound and it had a blockhouse in the center. To this fort came Washington in 1783, where he was received with military honors by Colonel Clyde. Much of this still remains. Beyond on the south side were Fort Plank and Fort Willett, these [were] probably fortified houses.*

Colonel Charles B. Briggs, Curator of Johnson Hall State Historical Site in Johnstown, New York, in March of 1970, published his opinion of the location and description of Fort Plank: *. . . 1 mile west of Fort Plain, NY. . . . And was a . . . Fortified wooden farm house. No longer standing. Owned then by Plank Family.*

In the early 1970's, several men began an attempt to archeologically discover “Fort Plain” which resulted in an *Amsterdam Recorder* Newspaper series reporting that Mr. Wayne Lenig, an instructor at the Fulton-Montgomery County College, had identified the site of Fort Plain well over a half a mile due south of the fort location identified by J. R. Simms, W. L. Stone, and Benson J. Lossing;<sup>20</sup> and upon Home Lot Two of the Otsquago Patent which was owned during the American Revolution by Johannes Lipe despite the fact that a sketch of the enlarged Erie Canal refuted to have been prepared in 1834 showed the *Site of Old Fort Plain* upon Home Lot Three of the Otsquago Patent which was possessed during the Revolution by Captain Adam Lipe.<sup>21</sup>

*Don Tuttle, director of the Fort Plain Museum, and Wayne Lenig, an archeologist and instructor at Fulton-Montgomery County Community College, have in the past year made significant advances in their search for the truth about historic Fort Plain.*

*With monies from state grants [and] matching money from FMCC the men launched a renewed search for the actual fort site. Through the utilization of infra red aerial photography, archeological excavations, piecing together at best sketchy Revolutionary written accounts, and educated guesses formed from existing information about other revolutionary fort sites, the two men are now in a position to dispell some of the most prevalent myths which for years have grown up around Fort Plain.*

*The exact location, configuration, and rough dimensions of Fort Plain have been determined. It was previously believed that the fort covered the entire hilltop because of the discovery of a blockhouse site on the far northeastern*

*corner of the hill; it was assumed that the blockhouse was contained inside the fortification, and subsequent excavations were centered on the gently rolling, grassy hilltop near the blockhouse. Nothing was uncovered except an Indian burial site. . . .*

*The men knew the fort site was not adjacent to the blockhouse; several secondary reference materials such as letters made hazy references to that particular site, and a few artifacts<sup>22</sup> had been recovered from the area.*

*The work went slowly during the short summer months, with only the discovery of Indian refuse pits and artifacts as a reward. Then with time growing short, the men contracted to have a bulldozer come onto the site and make wide, panning six inch deep swaths about the site, in a “last ditch effort” to find some part of the elusive fort site.*

*The attempt was successful. Right away, before trenching, two barrack sites, part of the fort wall, four bastions, trench works, several fire place pits, a wealth of Indian pits, and an extremely subtle, vague hint of what may eventually prove to be the near mythical octagonal blockhouse were discovered . . . .*

*It is believed, on the basis of military strategy that the gates of the fort were located facing the southwest . . . .<sup>23</sup>*

*The blockhouse plans have been found in the archives of the Massachusetts Antiquarian Society; the design calling for a square blockhouse, and they have been validated by archeological excavations in the early 1960's, according to Fort Plain Museum Director Don Tuttle, who laments that the plans for the fort have never been recovered . . . .<sup>24</sup>*

The search for Fort Plank's Site has also been further complicated by historical documentation, such as the following from the Journals of the New York State Senate:<sup>25</sup>

*Monday Morning, February 23, 1780.*

*. . . Petition of Joseph House praying some Recompense for the Use of his House and other Buildings, occupied by the Troops as a fortified Place, commonly called Fort Plank, . . . read and referred to Mr. Fonda and Mr. Klock. . . .*

This aforesaid historical document led Lenig, to state in 2001, that without the slightest doubt, Fort Plank was located on the now [2000] Lynden Failing Farm on Paris Road in Minden Township of Montgomery County. To prove his theory correct, he cited Mister Herbert Schrader's 1999, typescript entitled, “18<sup>th</sup> Century Land Patents in the Town of Minden”:

*We also know where Joseph House lived. Through the diligent efforts of Mr. Herbert Schrader of Utica, New York, we have an excellent picture of the location of many of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century residents in the Town of Minden, drawn from early*

*land records. In the course of his research Mr. Schrader discovered that Lot #2 in a patent granted to Conrad Weiser, John Weiser, John Lawyer, and Johan Peter Wagner (1725) was sold by Johan Peter Wagner, Sr. To Johan Jost House and his wife Oletea on 04/01/1750. Johan Jost House subsequently died, and his widow remarried Frederick Plank. By 1778, title to the home and home lot, had passed to Johan Jost's House's son, Captain Joseph House, but the fortified home became known as Fort Plank, rather than Fort House, because Joseph's mother, Oletea and step-father, Frederick Plank continued to live there. This also explains the subsequent confusion over whether the property was owned by a family named Plank or House.<sup>26</sup>*

Unfortunately, Mister Schrader apparently failed to reveal to Lenig the source of his data on the sale of Lot 2 of the Weiser/Wagner Patent to Johan Jost House in 1750.<sup>27</sup> If one were to check with Mister Schrader and Marilyn J. Cramer of Silver Spring, Maryland, it would be quickly learned that the locator of the aforesaid document was this author. In his letter describing the document to Mister Schrader, Johnson made note that in 1803, Otillia Blank, widow of Frederick, deeded to her sons, Johan Jost House and Jacob Wright, Lot 2 of the Wagner Patent which she and her first husband, Jost House [Senior], had purchased from her father, Peter Wagner, in 1750.<sup>28</sup>

And though it is not known for certain, it appears that Mister House may have been compensated by the State Legislature for the usage of his properties in 1780. In the Papers of Commissary General of Issues Colonel Charles Stewart is a request is an April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1780 request by Doctor James Gray for reimbursement of 70 Pounds Stirling he paid unto Joseph House, who had served as Fort Plank's Commissary of Issues from July 2, 1778 through October 31, 1778 per a claim found in the Papers of Colonel Charles Stewart, for House's "own contingencies".

A document in the Continental Congress Papers also proves that Frederick Blank was alive and quite capable of traveling long distances as late as May 19, 1775, when he and several other residents of the Theobald Young and Hartman Windecker Patents, testified that while transporting wheat to Albany when waylaid by Indians east of Guy Johnson's home.<sup>29</sup> Legal documents also demonstrate that Blank was living as late as January 18<sup>th</sup>, 1778, when he signed two receipts for payments made to his step-daughter, Margaret Witmosure, the former widow of Theobald Young. From this one could conclude that neither Joseph House or his half-brother, Jacob Wright, held any right or title to the said Lot 2 during the American Revolution and thus would not be legally entitled to make claims against the State for usage of the same.<sup>30</sup>

During the American Revolution, Frederick and Delia Blank also occupied the southernmost 25 acres of Lot Two of the Hartman Windecker Patent. An 1808 lawsuit brought by Jacob Wright in the Albany Circuit of the New York State Court for the Trial and Impeachments and Correction of Errors, notes that Lot Two of the Hartman Windecker Patent was conveyed by Hartman Windecker to his daughter, Gertrude on March 28, 1754, and that she and her husband, Jacobus Pickerd, in turn, conveyed their acreage to Frederick Blank in 1765 and

that the ownership remained in Blank [through his widow, Otilia] until May of 1803. In this same case Joseph House and Isaac Wright admitted to the court that a portion of the premises purchased by Frederick Blank actually laid in Lot Three of the Windecker Patent<sup>31</sup> This fact is also borne out in Montgomery County Deeds 13:174, 13:400, 45:260, & 90:97 (Isaac & Catharine Wright in conjunction with Jacob & Christina Wright to Jacob H. Myer; & Delia Blank to Joseph House and Jacob Wright; Joseph House to Abraham House; & Abraham & Catharine M. House of Minden Township, Montgomery County, New York to Reuben Failing consecutively), & Montgomery County Will 8:376 (Abraham House, deceased). These prove that Lot Two and Lot Three of the Hartman Windecker Patent shared a common border with Lot Two of the Peter Waggoner/Conradt Weiser Patent. Interestingly, the partial owner of Lot Three of the Windecker Patent was the same Henry Walrath who was appointed an ensign in Captain Joseph House's Company of the Canajoharie District Regiment of Tryon County Militia in 1780. Thus, Delia Blank and Henry Walrath were "next door neighbors." The juxta-positioning of the homes of Delia Blank and Henry Walrath, whose home was fortified and an known as Fort Walrath, would seem to suggest that Fort Plank and Fort Walrath should have only been separated by at most a few hundred yards versus the nearly two miles stated by Revolutionary War Pensioners.

With Lenig's identification of Lot 2 Wagoner's Patent as the "true" site of Fort Plank, it comes as a complete surprise that Catherine Gansevoort states that the majority of the women and children made it into Fort Plank for safety on August 2, 1780. It is surprising that Thomas Sammons would state that a woman in Fort Plank raised the alarm, and that Colonel Abraham Wemple would note that Fort Plank was filled with women and children. It is surprising that of the 52 women and children taken prisoner on that fateful day, all but one, were from a family headed by a member of Captain Joseph House's Company. It is also surprising that of the known locations of these families, the bulk of them were living at or near the Geisenburgh Settlement, stated to have been three to four miles from Fort Plank. And, it is shocking that the inhabitants of Fort Walrath on that fateful day would have been "driven out from their fort" and would have had to have traveled one and a half to two miles distance if indeed Fort Plank did stand upon the property adjoining Henry Walrath's.

Also unaddressed in writing is the identity the wife of Captain Joseph House. Joseph's wife was none other than Elizabeth Young, sole surviving daughter of Johan Adam Young. Who was, by virtue of her father's Loyalty to the British Crown, heir to large tracts of land in the Theobald Young Patent, the Philip Livingston Patent, the Frederick Young Patent, and, the Rutger Bleecker Patent.<sup>32</sup> This same said Johann Adam Young is said to have donated the land for the German Reformed Church at Canajoharie in concert with Messrs. Bleecker & William Seeber in 1761.<sup>33</sup> These facts make it highly probable that Fort Plank was located on lands held by or possessed by either Frederick Blank, Johan Adam Young, or Frederick Young at the outset of the American Revolution. Thus, Fort Plank could have been located anywhere on the Bleecker Patent, the Theobald Young Patent, the Frederick Young Patent, the Philip Livingston Patent, the John McNiele Patent or any other patent to which one the aforesaid parties held title.

Thus, Identifying the true site of Fort Plank is comparable to identifying the whereabouts of the Scarlet Pimpernel.<sup>34</sup>

*They seek him here. They seek him there. Those Frenchies seek him everywhere. Is he in heaven? Or, is he in hell? That damned elusive Pimpernel.*

In the movie “*Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*”, Professor Henry “Indiana” Jones, Junior relates to his class of archeology students the following axiom:<sup>35</sup>

*Archeology is the search for FACT — not truth . . . seventy percent of all archeology is done in the library — research — reading — we cannot afford to take mythology at face value — we cannot afford to take mythology at face value . . .*

Early Mohawk Valley maps,<sup>36</sup> contemporary documents, and an early sketch by William L. Stone [see Figure 2],<sup>37</sup> suggest that Fort Plank was built upon or very near the Bleecker’s Patent Church Lot on three acres of land excepted by Surveyor Jeremiah Van Rensselaer for public usage [see Figure 3].<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, John Yordan, stated that when Joseph Brant attacked the Upper Canajoharie Settlements he destroyed the church<sup>39</sup> which was within gunshot of Fort Plank,<sup>40</sup> on the south-side of what we now know as the “Dutchtown Road.”<sup>41</sup> And, indeed Governor DeWitt Clinton’s Erie Canal Journal,<sup>42</sup> supports the idea that Fort Plain, or as it will be shown later in this article, was earlier known as Fort Plank, was near the Church in his 1810 Erie Canal Journal.

## DESCRIPTION OF FORT PLAIN.

THE following is said to be a correct drawing of Fort Plank, or Fort Plain as it was subsequently called. Whence the unmeaning name of Fort Plank, the author has not been informed:—

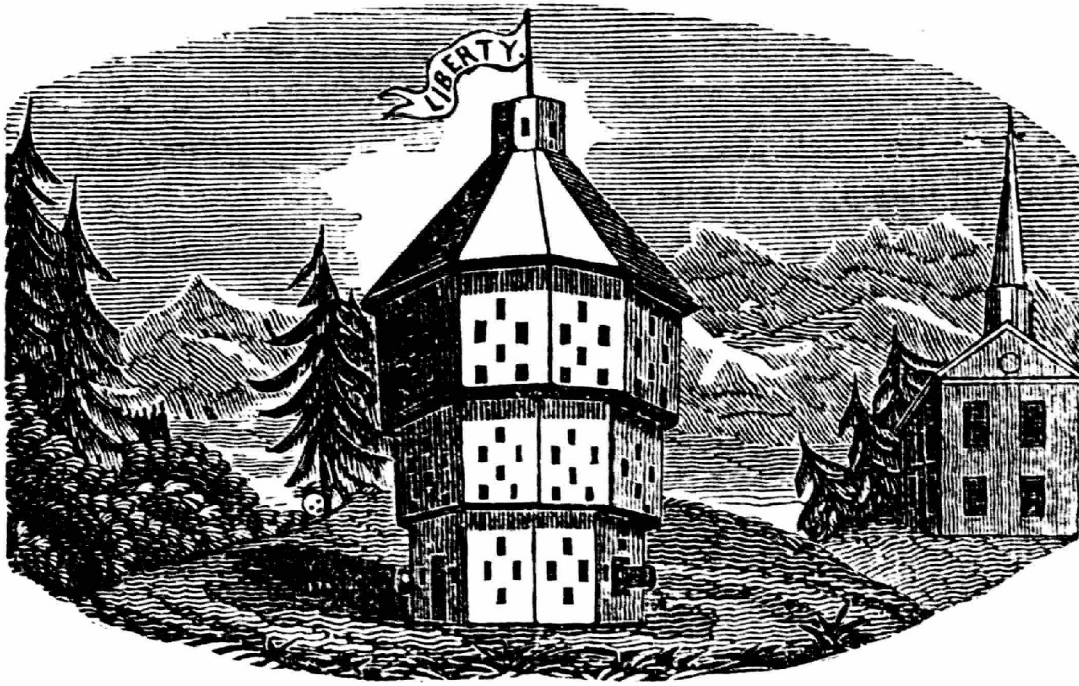


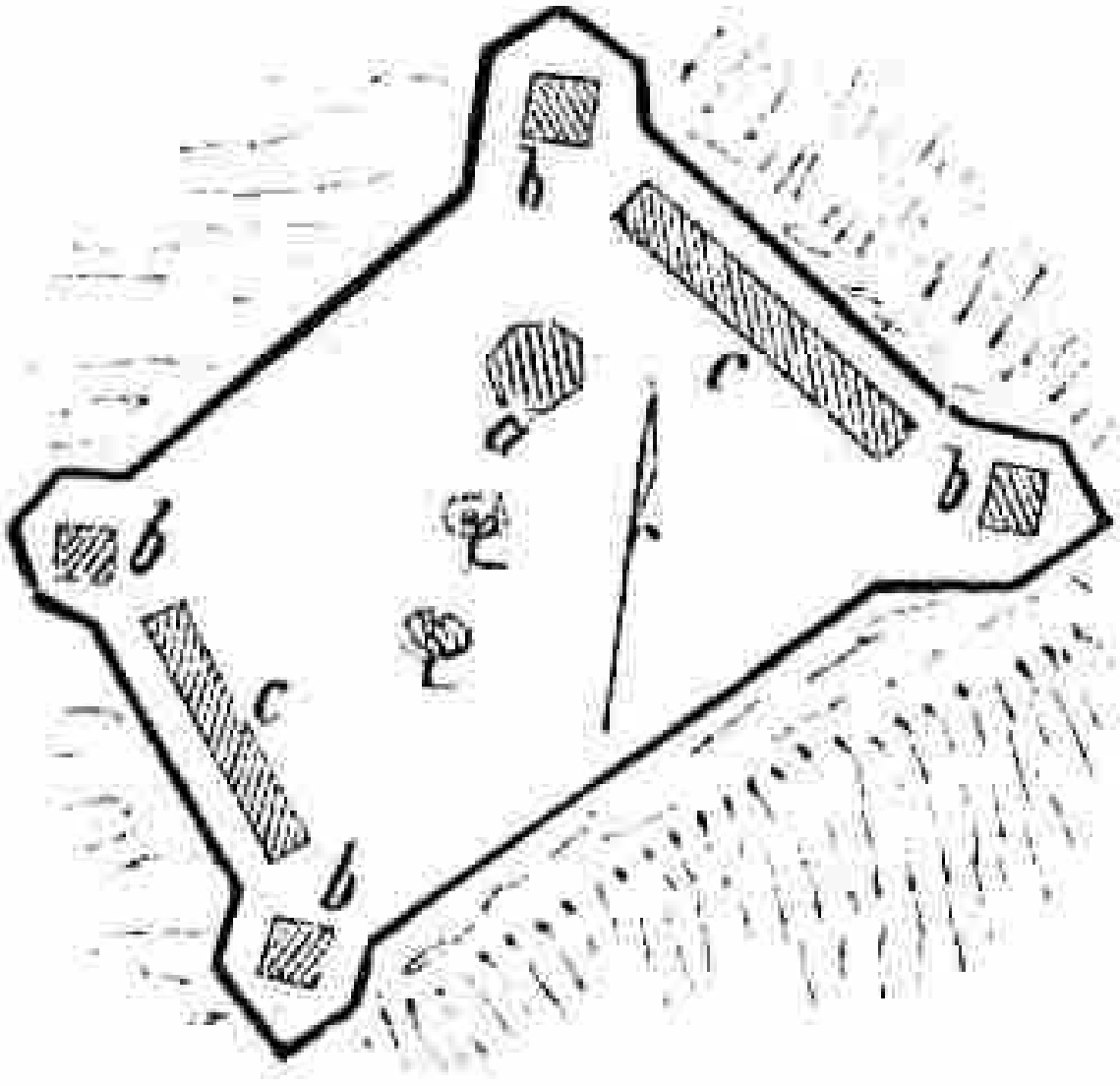
Figure 2: Stone's 1838 Sketch of Fort Plank

[July 7, 1810] . . . passed Fort Plain on the south side and in Minden. It derives its name from a block-house which was formerly erected here. There was a church near it, and it is marked erroneously in Wright's map Canajoharie (sic)''



**Figure 3:** Expense Lot “A” of the Rutger Bleecker/Otsquaugo Patent.

Indeed, even the great Revolutionary War Historian Benson J. Lossing’s description of Fort Plain fits only a site on the Church Lot or Expense Lot “A” of the Bleecker Patent.<sup>43</sup> [see Figure 4]



**Figure 4:** Lossing's Fort Plain Plan.

*. . . Its form was an irregular quadrangle, with earth and log bastions, embrasures, at each corner, and barracks and a strong block-house within. The plain on which it stood is of peninsular form, and across the neck, or isthmus, a breast-work was thrown up. The fort extended along the brow of a hill northwest of the village, and the block-house was a few rods from the northern declivity . . .*

*Some time after the completion of the work, doubts were expressed of its being cannon-ball proof. A trial was made with a six pounder placed at a proper distance. Its ball passed entirely through the block-house, crossed a broad ravine, and lodged in the hill on which the old parsonage stands, an eighth of a mile distant . . .<sup>44</sup>*

*This place was included in the Canajoharie settlement, and in 1780 felt severely the vengeance of the Tories and Indians. . . . The approach of the dreaded Thayendanegea . . . was announced to the people, . . . by a woman who fired a cannon at the fort. . . . In their approach the enemy burned every dwelling and barn, destroyed the crops, and carried off every thing of value. Regardless of the strength of the fort, they marched boldly up within cannon-shot of the intrenchments, burned the church, the parsonage, and many other buildings, and carried off several women and children prisoners.*

Sadly, however, the diary of *Paolo Andreani* edited and transcribed from the original Italian to English by Cesare Marino and Karim M. Tiro<sup>45</sup>, throws into serious doubt Lossing's 1848 description of "Fort Plain" for it reads:

*Six miles to the west from the place where we crossed the river, one arrives at the village called Fort plain, which is composed of but a few homes and a Church, and inhabited by Germans, similarly of such extraction are almost all the households encountered from here on-ward for about forty miles. The Fort which gave name to the site is entirely destroyed, and there is also difficulty to-day to discover its plan. It was built with earth, and its situation was advantageous to command the navigation of the river.*

It seems remarkable that David Lipe, aged approximately 74 years in 1848, would remember the exact dimensions of a fortress that he last conceivably saw standing in 1789, which description no one other than Lossing reports in writing. One must seriously doubt either the word of Lipe or the word of Andreani and in such matters of veracity, the gentleman speaking closest to the event carries the greatest weight of accuracy.

Sworn depositions by Revolutionary War soldiers and other contemporary documents clearly suggest that Fort Plank was in use as a military depot as early as June of 1777, when members of the companies of Captains Henry Diefendorf and Robert Crouse garrisoned the site . . . where Fort Plank was later built.<sup>46</sup> The site was also used by Captain Samuel Pettingell's Company in early August of 1777 to rendezvous with the Mohawk District Regiment of Tryon County Militia during their westward trek to Fort Schuyler and the Battle of Oriskany.<sup>47</sup>

Perhaps a more suitable explanation for the early usage of this site resides in the fact that the road from Otsego Lake to the river terminated near Fort Plank.<sup>48</sup>

. . . on the 20th, they made excursion upon another settlement, called the Coile, (lying on the road from Fort Plank to Lake Otsego . . . [see Figure 5].



Figure 5: Pownall's 1768 Canajoharie.

A review of contemporary maps of the era, show that only one led road from the Mohawk River to Lake Otsego and that it wasn't until after Clinton's Expedition of 1779,<sup>49</sup> that one could reach Lake Otsego from any road other than the one originating from near the mouth of the Otsquage Creek [see Figure 5].<sup>50</sup>

Another critically important road ran from near Fort Plank to the Oneida's Castle at Kananwalohare<sup>51</sup> in modern Lenox Township, Oneida County, New York [see Figure 6] .<sup>52</sup> Thus, the Fort could be easily used as a layover for both military and civilian goods being transported to and from distant settlements such as the Kyle, Springfield, Cooperstown<sup>53</sup>, and Stone Arabia. And, as center for the gathering of information on the movements of the enemy in the west.<sup>54</sup>

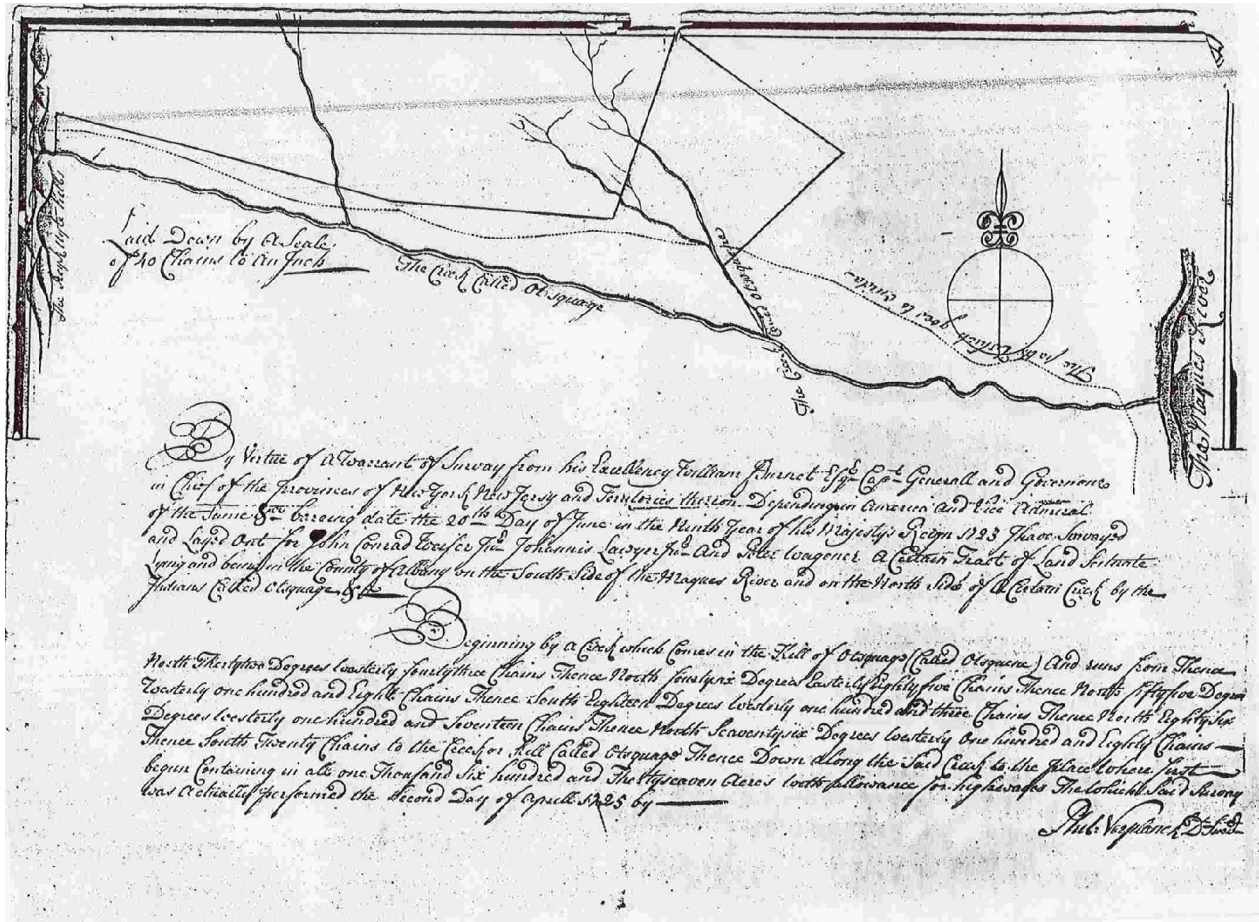


Figure 6: The Path to Oneida.

Another clue as to the fort's site resides in the locating of Johannes Walrath's Ferry [see Figure 7].<sup>55</sup>

*We the Supervisors of Tryon County do hereby certify that the Place of John Walrad is very convenient to be an establish'd Ferry, and at this Time highly necessary to preserve a Communication between Forts Plank and Paris, and do hereby recommend the said John Walrad to his Excellency Governor Clinton, for a License for a Ferry across the Mohock River. Given under our Hands the 6<sup>th</sup> Day of April 1780.*

*Jelles Fonda, Chris'r P. Yates, John Pickerd, Augustinus Hess, Henrick Staring.*

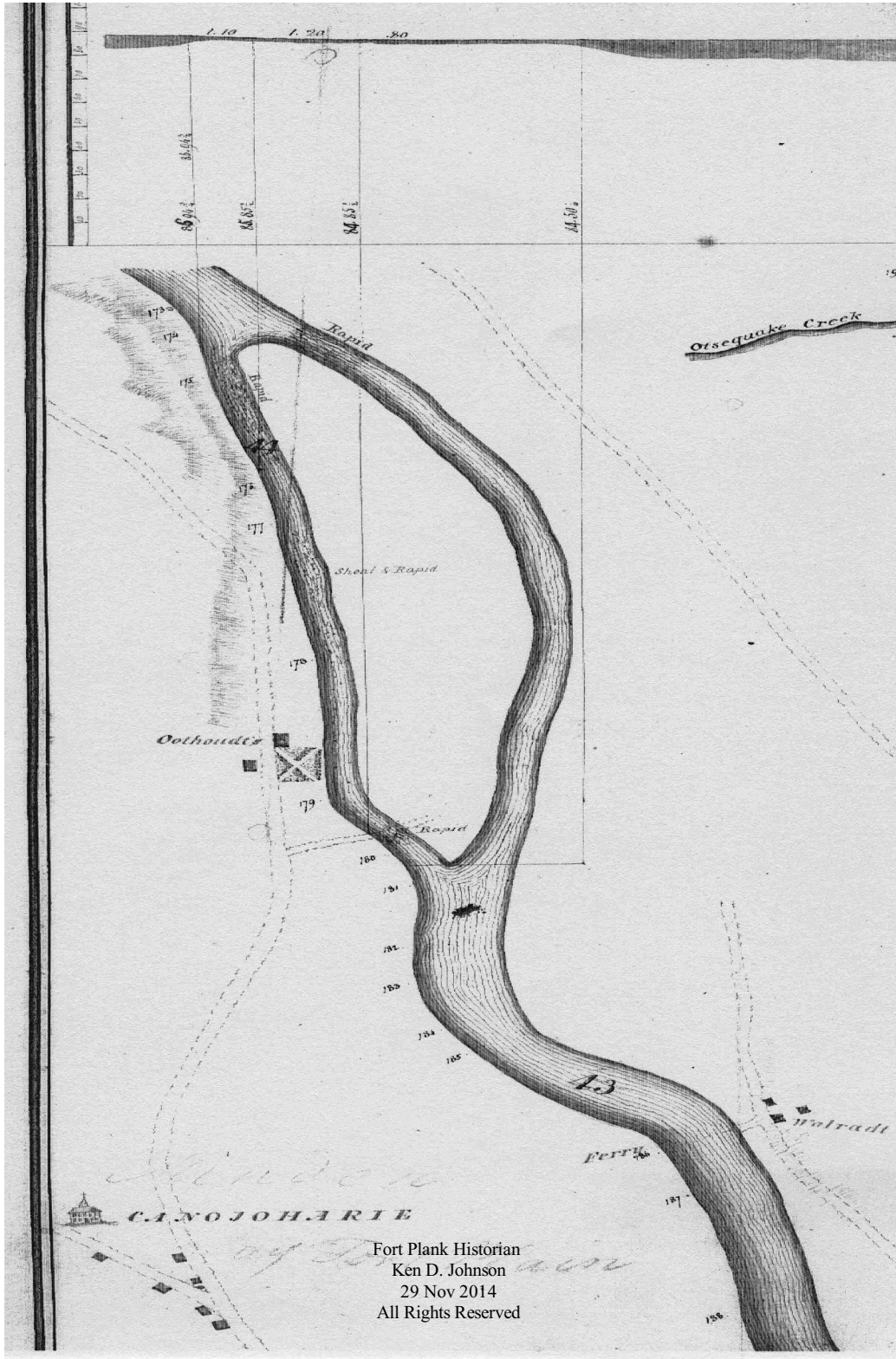


Figure 7: Benjamin Wright's 1803 Survey of the Mohawk River.

John M. Dake, stated in 1832, that Walrad's Ferry was located nearly opposite the fort. Thus, it becomes imperative to positively identify the site of this ferry.<sup>56</sup> Fortunately, Wright's 1803 Survey of the Mohawk River shows that the ferry was located very near the southern tip of Abeel's Island and thus nearly opposite the foot of Sand Hill, on Lot 4 of the Francis Harrison Patent. The Survey also represents the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie to be nearly dead west of the ferry site. These facts further support the idea that Fort Plank was located upon Expense Lot "A" of the Rutger Bleecker Patent.

An article published on December 26, 1837 notes that the Fort Plain Blockhouse [built at Fort Plank in 1779] was used as a storehouse for military supplies for several years after the Revolutionary War.<sup>57</sup> Further evidence of the site's usage in later years as a military depot is found in a land deed between Jacob Abeel, Jr. and the People of New York which transfers 375 square feet of land on the south-side of the Dutchtown Road, approximately one mile westward of the Village of Fort Plain, for use as a *Gun House* site.<sup>58</sup> Further confirming the Church Lot as the site of this gun house is Montgomery County Deeds 42:515, in which Peter Harder of Morristown Township, Saint Lawrence County, New York of the first part and the Trustees of Fort Plain Village in the County of Montgomery, New York of the second part for £10.00 transfers:

*. . . All that certain piece or parcell of Land situate in Minden and County last aforesaid about one mile northwesterly of the Village aforesaid and is known as the Fort Plain Burial Ground in Former Times is situated at or near and was connected with the old Fort Plain Church for many years before it was pulled down, the parcel now conveyed containing about three or four acres, also a Road or communication to and from it from at or near the site of said old church which said Road and parcel of Land were reserved in deeds of this grantor to Jacob Abeel Ju' and John J. Lipe and this grant is made Explicity to said Corporation and their assigns as a cemetery or burial ground . . .*

A letter written by Garret Abeel, a cousin of John Abeel, also gives us a clue as to Fort Plank being upon Expense Lot "A" of the Bleecker Patent. In his letter to his wife, Mary, Abeel states that his *Cos'* Abeel's house is located, but a single stone's throw from the tavern of William Seeber.<sup>59</sup> It thus comes as no surprise that the officers who were to sit as witnesses and Judges against Captain Daniel Lane at his Fort Plank Court Martial should be summoned to Seeber's Tavern to rendezvous .<sup>60</sup>

*After orders January 26. 1779*

*Cap' Daives*

*Cap' Titus*

*Lieut Dunscomb*

*Lieut Gray*

*Lieut Hunt*

*Lieut Barret*

*Lieut V.Hovanburgh*

*To be to Morrow morning at Eleven oClock at Seabers Tavarn to a Gen<sup>l</sup> Court martial If there is any Brimston wonting in the Regiment they may apply to the Docter*

*The Court which is warned to Set to Morrow Morning at Eleven OClock in the Fort and the officers are Desired to attend*

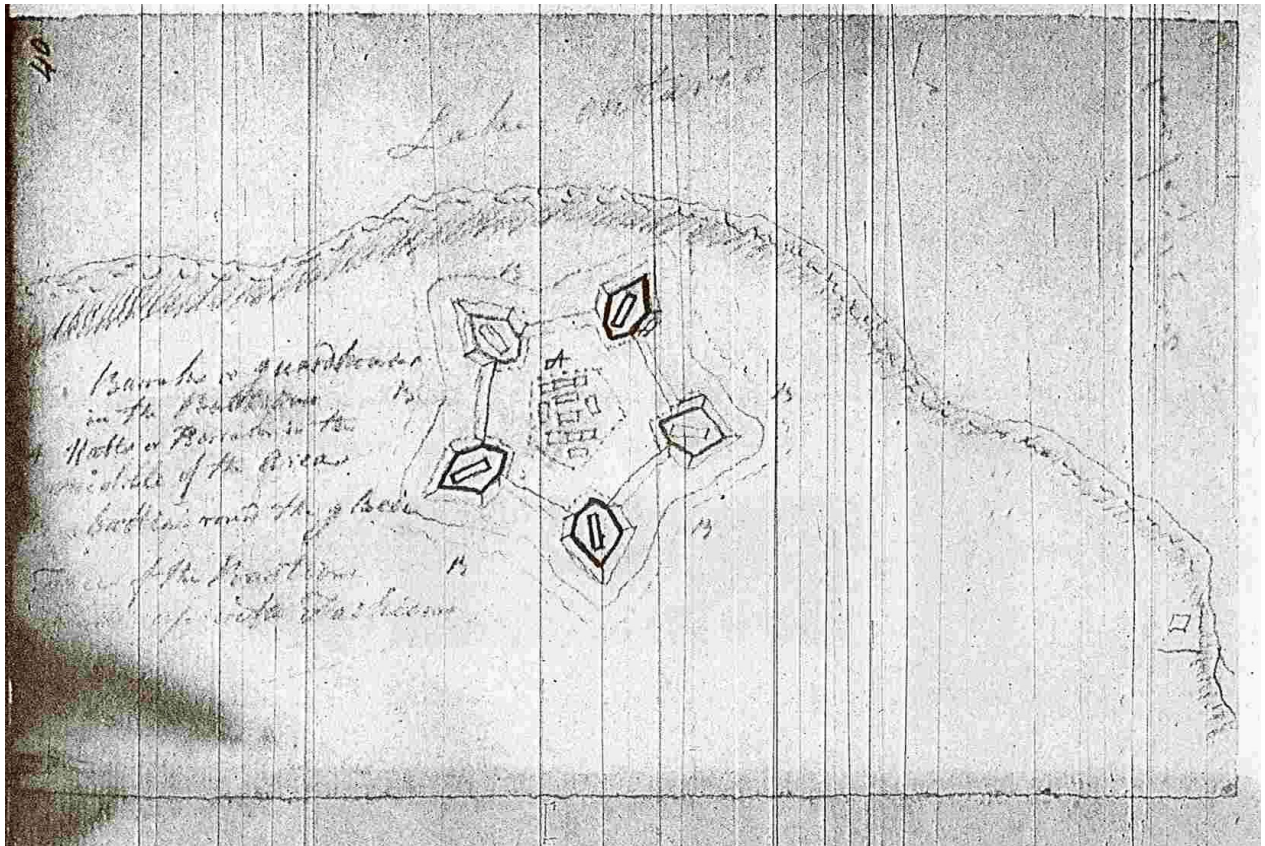
Additionally suggestive of the Fort Plank and Fort Plain being one and the same is Jeremiah Van Rensselaer's drawing of Expense Lot "A" of the Bleecker Patent.<sup>61</sup> Which demonstrates a possible redoubt site designated as a diamond [see Figure 8].



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29 Nov 2014  
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**Figure 8:** Expense Lot "A".

By itself, the diamond marking shown on Van Rensselaer's sketch seems innocuous enough. However a letter from Major [Powell] of the British Army bemoans the difficulty of protecting a fort he is currently fortifying. Accompanying his letter is a sketch of the works of which he speaks and shown in it is a nearly identical diamond lying with an "L" shape possibly designating the location of a military work which is surrounded on two sides by an earthwork [see Figure 9].<sup>62</sup> One should not that this portion of Expense Lot "A" abuts the farm owned by Johannes Lipe from as early as March 25, 1760 and was still in his possession on September 25, 1793.<sup>63</sup>



**Figure 9:** The Works at Oswego.

On June 7, 1832, the United States Government passed into law an act authorizing lifetime pensions to any individual who could prove a total of at least six months of military service during war.<sup>64</sup> Due to the loss of many crucial Revolutionary War Records in the War of 1812, and the attrition of other critical papers which were considered the sole property of the individual officers who produced them, it became necessary for each and every person applying for benefits to carefully review his memory and attest to the facts of his service under oath in an open court. Witnesses were also required to verify the facts presented by the deponents in their sworn

accounts. This alone created a vast, but often untapped, bank of raw data from which it is possible to reconstruct the day-to-day events of the Revolutionary War. Well over two hundred and fifty soldiers who had served at Forts Plank and/or Plain applied for benefits under this program. Of these men, six specifically state in the course of their sworn depositions that what they knew to be Fort Plank was now known as Fort Plain.<sup>65</sup> In addition to these statements, William Berry swore that while engaged in the company of Captain Garret Putman they were marched in mid July 1780 to Fort Plank (then so called) and performed duties there until sometime in September of 1780.<sup>66</sup> William Snook stated that in early August of 1777 his company, while marching en route to the Battle of Oriskany, rendezvoused at Fort Plank, a little above the place now called Fort Plain.<sup>67</sup> Henry J. Diefendorf, states that he was generally stationed in the years 1776 and 1777 at Fort Plank, but when the new fort, Fort Plain, was built in 1778 he then served in Fort Plain and was from there marched to the assistance of the survivors of the Cherry Valley Massacre under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Samuel Clyde.<sup>68</sup> And, last, Jacob J. Failing states in his sworn deposition of March 12, 1833 that on May 2, 1781 he began service *at Fort-Plain then called commonly Fort Plain.*<sup>69</sup>

Assuming that Fort Plank was renamed Fort Plain, one would also expect to find a similar change in the surname “Plank” to “Plain”. And indeed there is evidence of such a change in Revolutionary War Muster Rolls. Amongst the receipt of payments to the men of Captain Joseph House’s Company of the Canajoharie District Regiment of Tryon County Militia in 1784, are two made out to Private John *Plane* who was paid £4-10-4 & £4-14-2 (National Archive’s Series M246, Reel 72, Jacket 89). A John *Plank* appears as a private under Captain Joseph House on Page 447 of Volume 15 of Documents Relating To The Colonial History Of The State of New York. And a John *Plantz* is noted to have served within Captain Joseph House’s Company for 12 days as a private between July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1780, and May 28<sup>th</sup>, 1780, per Captain House’s original Payroll on display in the Fort Rensselaer Club of Canajoharie, New York, and whom was said by J. R. Simms to have married Catherine Countryman, a daughter of Lieutenant George Countryman.

Positive proof of another fort in the area of modern day Fort Plain Village is found in the following statement.<sup>70</sup>

*That about the last of June [1777] following I was again Called into Service by my Said officer and marched to Sharon in the County of Schoharie for the purpose of detecting and Securing a number of tories that we took & brought over to the Mohawk River about thirty of them, Confined them in a Stone house near where Fort Plain was afterwards built . . .*<sup>71</sup>

*. . . Ordered Out with his Arms And Accuterments by Gen<sup>l</sup> Orders, Claiment well recolects that during the whole Season from Spring Until late in the fall, he saw those Commandants [Cap<sup>l</sup> Lype ~~Gen<sup>l</sup> Van Rensselaer~~ Co<sup>l</sup> Debois Co<sup>l</sup> Brown Co<sup>l</sup> Clyde] Within that time [1780 . . . latter part in Spring or forepart in summer . . .] at Fort Plain but who it was that had the Commen<sup>d</sup> at the time opposite Claiment doth not know but Claiment believes that there was an Egences planning and Constructing Fort Plain during the Course [cut off in the microfilm]ent was*

*Constraint in Aiding and assisting in Erecting said Fort, . . .*<sup>72</sup>

The pension file of Joseph Degolyer gives a name to the newly constructed fort: “Fort Plain.”<sup>73</sup> Thus it is clear that for the soldiers of Fort Plank to have assisted in the building of a ‘new’ fort, “Fort Plain”, it could not have been then or now, the place called by Campbell and Stone, Fort Plain.

In Jephtha R. Simms’ *The Frontiersman of New York*, it is stated that Fort Plain was renamed *Fort Rensselaer*<sup>74</sup> by General Robert Van Rensselaer who desired to memorialize himself.<sup>75</sup> Yet, Simms in his own personal copy of “*The Annals of Tryon County*”, hand wrote in a margin in reference to Fort Rensselaer: *Where was this fort located?*<sup>76</sup>

Recently discovered Revolutionary War Pension Applications reveals interesting details on the naming of Fort Rensselaer, Fort Plain, and Fort McKean. I close reading of the following quotes raises the question: Are pre-August 1780 references to Fort Plain a reference to an actual fortress named Fort Plain or are they to an area served by a ‘new’ post office near the mouth of the Otsquago Creek called Fort Plain? The first of these applications was that of Asa Ripley, who stated on September 5, 1832:<sup>77</sup>

*. . . That in the year 1781 in the month of August he enlisted in the New York State Troops called the New Levies under Captain Thomas Skinner and served in a Regiment and Served in a Regiment commanded by Colonel Marinus Willett in which Aaron Rowley was Major – marched to Albany from there to Schoharie thence to Turlough or Tilow where they had a battle with the Tories and Indians – from thence to Fort Plain and assisted in building Fort Plain thence to Fort Herkimer where about the 17th of October 1781, our troops had a battle with the tories and Indians commanded by Major Butler a tory – that said Major Butler, about two days after the battle, was killed by one of our Indians at West Canada Creek – . . .*

Due to the rejection of his initial application, Ripley went on to swear out two more supplementary affidavits. The first dated September 4, 1833 and the second dated June 24, 1835:

*. . . That in the year 1781, in the month of August, he thinks, he volunteered under Capt. ~~Samuel~~ Thomas Skinner – went to Albany – thence to Schoharrie thence to Turlough or Tilow where they had a battle with the tories and indians, called Turlough battle – was then under said Capt. Skinner, & Col. Willett who was present at the battle – thence marched to Fort Plain & built Fort Plain – thence to Fort Herkimer, then back to Fort, ~~after the fort was completed~~ Plain, & thence to Johnstown . . .*

*. . . that he was once more out as a volunteer he thinks in the year 1781 or 1782 he Joined an embodied Corps of Columbia County Militia of the State of New York under Capt Thomas Skinner of said County and was ordered on a march from thence to Albany and from thence right up the Mohawk River to a Station where Fort Plain was afterwards built and from thence to Fort Herkimer on said River where he joined formed a junction with a body of American Troops under the Command of Col Marinus Willet and from Fort Herkimer he was marched back with a Detachment of troops to where Fort Plain was to be erected where he and his fellow Soldiers were ordered to Commence building the Said Fort called Fort Plain . . .*

In light of Mister Ripley's statements we find evidence that the fortress that Ripley referred to building at Fort Plain was originally christened *Fort McKean*. In his Revolutionary War Pension Application affidavit, Orderly Sergeant Immanuel Deake testified in references to his services in the Mohawk Valley:<sup>78</sup>

*. . . that last work we did there was to build a Block house — After it was completed we dug up the body of Capt McKean who had been killed by the Indians & buried his body at the step of the door & the called the building fort McKean. The timber which composed this building was got out & drawn principally under the direction of Declarent Veeder & Smith were contractors to supply our regiment with provisions & there partner one Skinner acted as commissary. . . .*

The aforesaid testimony of Mister Ripley is substantiated by Edward Evans' letter dated *Vernon Trumbull County Ohio May 8<sup>th</sup> 1835*:<sup>79</sup>

*. . . That among the Documents removed from Albany is a power of attorney of Edward Evans (who subscribed it with a cross mark) and in favour of Capt Jonathan Pearsee for his pay from May 1st 1782 to January 1st 1783 dated Fort Ranselaer ~~dated~~ April 1st 1783 I have no distinction of the transaction but have an impression of something of the kind taking place that he was going to Phillidelphia & was disposd to make an effort for our Relief as we then had been in service about one year & had Received no pay but I think it must have passed in the negative as I received no pay But I distinctly Reollect that he went out to the south about that time & was absent from the Regiment I should Judge between two & three months As it Respects the execution by a cross mark I can only say that at its date & prior I had never written & of course it would have been the only way which I could execute that or any other instrument in writing*

*As to the Name of the place where it was alone the history is the following Late in autumn 1782 the Major part of the Regiment commanded b[y] Col Willet*

*with one or two companies of Artillerymen were stationed at a place call Fort Plain & it appeared that there had some time previous been slain by the enemy a Capt McKeen whose remains were taken from the place where they had been deposited & removed to the burying ground near the Fort & Reintared with Military Hounors & the firing of cannon & in general orders Read at the head of the by order of the commandant that the fort should from hence forth be known & call'd by the name of Fort M<sup>c</sup>Keen & of course for a time all official writs were dated & Recorded don at Fort McKeen but how long the order remaind in force I do not recolect but subsequently another order probibaly from higher authority but without any publick exhibition at least upon the Ground it was deemed that it should be known & calld by the name Fort Renslear & I believe as long as the Regiment remained the place all official proceedings were dated at Fort Renslear but the original name it appears is most formilliar & signifficant & I believe as universally known & calld by the Name of Fort Plain which is also the name of the Post office in the place I have written to my son at Brock port to forward my original Declaration & sent to your office . . .*

Absolute proof of the veracity of Ripley and Evans musings is found in a 1781-3 Memorandum Book kept in the handwriting of Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett in the New-York Historical Society in New York, New York, which records the following letter written to one of Willett's superior officers, probably William Alexander, Lord Sterling:

*Fort McKean 13<sup>th</sup> Octob<sup>r</sup> 82*

*My Lord*

*I have been favored with your Lordships letter of the 7<sup>th</sup> Instant - We have Scouts out on all the passes through which we have the least reason to conceive the Advance of an enemy from the Westward I have been very particular in giving Directions for these Scouts & flatter myself that no enemy of Importance will be able to evade their Vigilance so [compare this lower case "s" with a lower case "t"] as to break in upon us without timely notice Your Lordship may Depend on having the most exact advice should we make any discoveries in this Quarter —*

*This place has long laboured under the Disagreeable Situation of having two names (Viz) Fort Plain & Fort Renssela It was called Fort Rensselaer after Gen<sup>l</sup> Rensselaer in the summer of 80: The Copricious<sup>80</sup> Inhabitants afterwards took a Disgust at Gen<sup>l</sup> Rensselaer and Called the place Fort Plain - - This has produced a Contention about the name of this place - This Morning We have hoisted our flagg on the New Block house erected at this place In which place the troops have taken post & I have Ordered it called Fort McKeen After Captain Robert*

*I am Sir Liut*

Lieutenant Colonel Willett's October 13<sup>th</sup>, 1782 letter explains entirely the following order found in the Orderly Book of William Scott:<sup>81</sup>

*Garrison Saratoga Oct' 26<sup>th</sup> 1782*  
*Parole -Via- [unreadable] Viominel C Sign Burdow*  
*Nantes*

*Extract from Lord Sterlings orders dated Head Quarters Albany Oct' 22<sup>d</sup> 1782*  
*Some confusion and inconveniencies have arrisen from Some of our posts*  
*being called by a veriety of Names particular<sup>y</sup> at Canajohary where the fort and*  
*works originaly called Fort Ranselair and has by Some Since ben called Fort*  
*Plain - in order such inconvenience ~~in~~ for the future that post with its appendages*  
*is by all persons belonging to the army within this department and all those*  
*operating with it either in the Military or civil Branches in all their Reports*  
*Returns and letters on business to be called Fort Ranselair and no other \_\_\_\_\_*

But, equally confusing is a September 9<sup>th</sup>, 1780, accounting of the Fort Plank Massacre taken from Almon's *Remembrancer* which proves that the area surrounding Fort Plank at Canajoharie was renamed, Fort Rensselaer, shortly after the August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1780 Raid:

*The following account may be depended upon - At the fort now called fort*  
*Ransalaer Sir John Johnson and Captain Brant have burnt 51 houses 42 barns*  
*killed 17 [and have taken] 52 prisoners*

We know from the letters of Catherine (Van Schaick) Gansevoort to Colonel Peter Gansevoort,<sup>82</sup> Colonel Abraham Wemple to General Abraham Ten Broeck,<sup>83</sup> Colonel Samuel Clyde to Governor George Clinton,<sup>84</sup> and Guy Johnson to General Frederick Haldimand,<sup>85</sup> that it was **Fort Plank** and its surrounding settlements, **not** Fort Rensselaer, which were attacked on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1780.

The Papers of Colonel William Malcom, who was ordered to secure operations in the Mohawk Valley by General Washington, show that Fort Rensselaer was, at the time of his arrival there, incapable of housing troops or supplies through a winter.

*Dear Governor* *Fort Ranselaer Sep' 25 1780*  
*. . . am adding something to the expense of this little fort — it the only thing that*  
*Keeps the inhabitants dry & there must be something to cover a few troops in*  
*Winter and to hold their provisions — a few boards /which we impress/ & nails is*  
*all the charge — . . .*

This brings one to the conclusion that Fort Plank and Fort Rensselaer were not one and the same. This seems to make the true identity and location of Fort Rensselaer a mystery also.<sup>86</sup>

While Fort Plank was thought to have stood on or near the Bleecker Patent Church Lot; another fort, which would later be known by Revolutionary War Pensioners as Fort Plain, was built near . . . *where the Otsquago Creek empties into the Mohawk River.*<sup>87</sup> This leads one to question: Where did the Otsquago Creek empty into the Mohawk River? Nelson Greene, the author of several area histories, states that prior to the construction of the Erie Canal, the course of the Otsquago Creek made a gross deviation in course and flowed northerly for more than a mile to empty into the river at the base of what is now known as Cemetery Hill and just to the east of the Fort Plain Museum.<sup>88</sup> Douglas Ayres, a local historian and retired teacher, when confronted with the idea that the creek's course had not been grossly altered, stated:<sup>89</sup>

*The creek flowed northeast across the following streets: South, Division, Mohawk, Washington, Centre, Home, Prospect and Orchard then towards Herkimer St., who's west end was near the canal, entering the river near Lock 15. Course was roughly NE from the junction of Highway's 80 & 163 to Lock 15. The creek was straightened and moved so that a dam would allow the canal boats to cross. About 1841, an aqueduct was built. The creek was moved so that only one bridge would be needed across the creek.*

However, a close and careful examination of contemporary maps and deeds indicates the location of the creek's mouth was not grossly altered by the building of the canal, as previously believed, but remains at or near its pre-Revolutionary War site [see Figure 10].<sup>90</sup> Thus, the fort referred to as Fort Plain in many pension applications cannot be the same blockhouse shown in William L. Stone's sketch of Fort Plank or referred to in Lossing's Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution, as Fort Plain.

A possible name for this other fortification, which does not make its debut in Revolutionary War documents until September 4, 1780, is Fort Rensselaer.<sup>91</sup> The flood of refugees into Fort Plank after Brant's 1780 raid made it quite likely that General Van Rensselaer desired another, less crowded, location for his Mohawk Valley Headquarters.

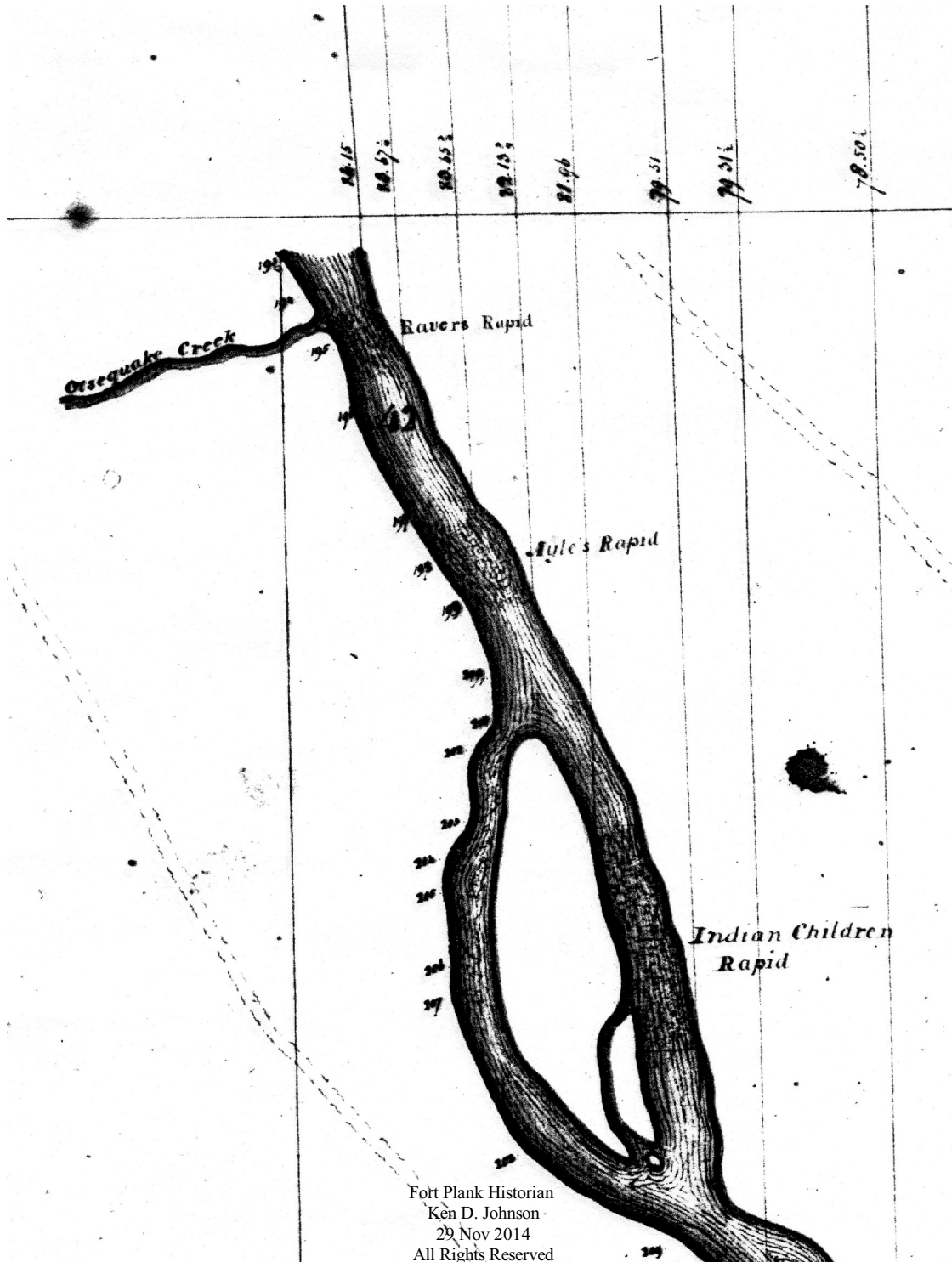


Figure 10: Benjamin Wright's Survey of the Mohawk River 1803 Chart 10.

Simms, in his Frontiersman of New York, provides only a cursory clue to the location of this second fort.<sup>92</sup>

*An Interesting Paper Disclosing a Secret.—Since the above was written, the following document preserved among the papers of the late William H. Seeber, has come to my observation:*

*“By virtue of the appointment of his Excellency, George Clinton, Esq., Governor of the State of the New York, etc., etc.*

*“We do hereby in pursuance of an act entitled an act to amend an act, entitled an act to accommodate the inhabitants of the frontiers with habitations and other purposes therein mentioned, passed the 22d day of March, 1781 — Grant unto William Seeber, Peter Adame, George Garlock and Henry Smith, license and liberty to cut and remove wood or timber from the lands of John Laib (or Lail), George Kraus, John Fatterle, John Plaikert, Wellem (William) Fenck, George Ekcar, John Walrath, and Henry Walrath, lying contiguous to Fort Plain, being a place of defense, for fuel, fencing and timber for the use of the first above mentioned persons.*

*Given under our hands at Canajoharie this 8th day of November, 1782.*

*Christian Nellis,*

*M. Willett, Commissioners*

*This instrument was drawn up in the hand-writing of Esq. Nellis, and taken to Col. Willett to sign. In the hand-writing of the latter and with the ink of his signature, he crossed off the word Plain and interlined the name Rensselaer. It seems surprising that Col. Willett, who so disapproved of changing the name of Fort Stanwix, should have connived at changing the name of Fort Plain; and it can only be accounted for by presuming that he was thereby courting the influence of wealth and position.<sup>93</sup>*

Of the persons in the document quoted above: [see Figures 11 & 12] William Seeber lived upon Lot 6 of the Arent Bradt-Philip Livingston Patent;<sup>94</sup> George Garlock lived upon Lot 3 of the Arent Bradt-Philip Livingston Patent;<sup>95</sup> [Hans] Henry Smith owned Homestead Lot 10 of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, Lowland Lot 10 of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, the Plumb Plain Lot of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent<sup>96</sup>, a portion of Lot 9 of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent, & Lot 19 of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent;<sup>97</sup> John [Johannes] Lipe, Sr. possessed Homestead Lot 2 of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, Lowland Lot 2 of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, 21 acres in Expense Lot B of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent, & Lot 15 of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent [all of which was left to him in his father Casper Lype's Will]<sup>98</sup>, but lived upon Upper Woodland Lot 5 of the Bleecker Patent;<sup>99</sup> George Kraus owned Homestead Lot 5 of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker

Patent, Lowland Lot 5 of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, Lot 9 of the 1772 Division of Bleecker's Patent, & Lot 14 of the 1772 Division of Bleecker's Patent;<sup>100</sup> John Walrath owned part of Lot 20 of the 1742 Division of Bleecker's Patent;<sup>101</sup> Henry Walrath owned Lot 2 of the 1742 Division of the Bleecker Patent;<sup>102</sup> John R. Bleecker owned Lot 18 of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent;<sup>103</sup> and, John Bleecker [Plaikert in the above instrument] owned Lots 4, 7, 12, & 17 of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent.<sup>104</sup> A careful review of the land holdings of the aforementioned individuals clearly points to a site east of the Plumb Plain Lot and somewhere in the neighborhood of Homestead Lot 8 which was owned by Adam Countryman,<sup>105</sup> a son-in-law of Caspar Lipe.<sup>106</sup> Collectively, this would seem to suggest that Fort Rensselaer was situated in the southern segment of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent [see Figure 11].

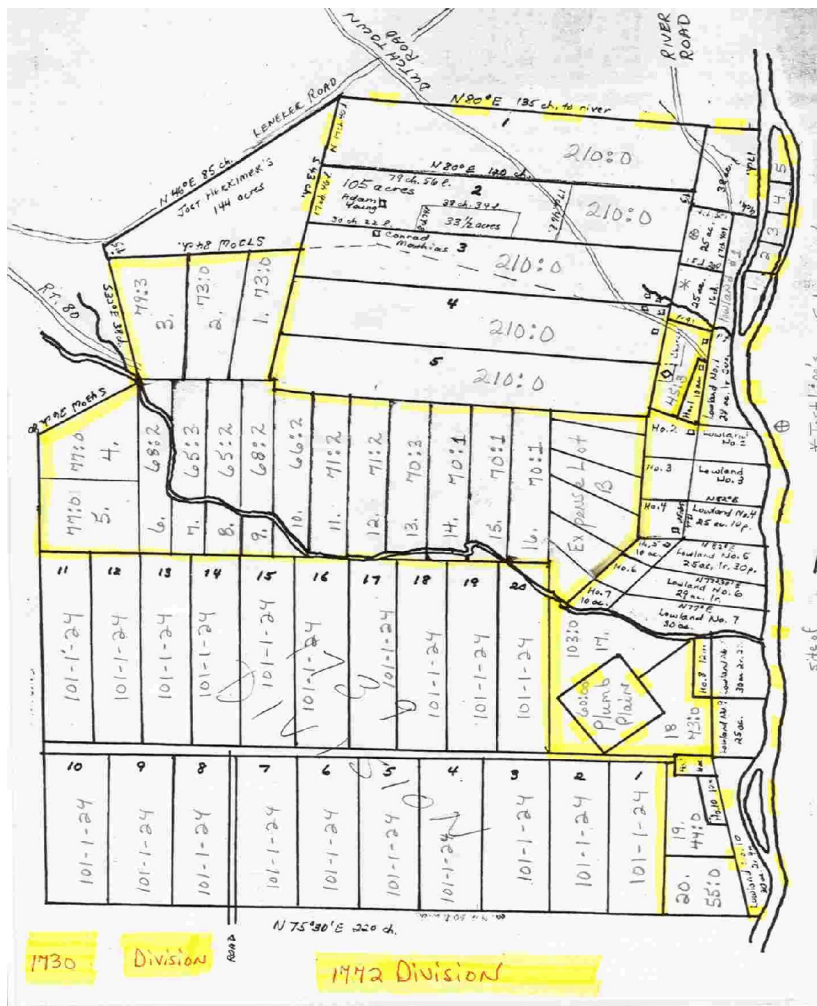


Figure 11: The Divisions of the Bleecker Patents by MJC.

A second document apparently written from within Fort Rensselaer, but undated, and graciously transcribed and supplied to this author by Mr. Wayne Lenig of the Fort Plain Museum Staff, gives us yet a better clue as to the possible location of the said Fort Rensselaer:<sup>107</sup>

*Excele[piece missing] Clinton Esquire Governor of the [burnt]tate of New York  
General and Commander in Chief of the Militia and Admiral of the Navy of the  
same —*

*The humble Petition of the Subscriber sheweth, that since the  
Commencement of this War Numbers of People are driven from their respective  
Houses and Homes by Incursions of the Enemy and are rendered destitute of all  
Substance, by which Means they were obliged to put up some in one Place and  
others in another for Safety and Refuge to escape the further Cruelty of the Enemy  
and to prevent falling a Victim to their Cruelty — And whereas the Constituents of  
Fort Renselaer had for their own mutual Benefit, and for the Encouragement of  
Assistancts agreed and consented that all Manner of Persons, Refugees and others  
who would come and dwell with them in maintaining and keeping said Fort, should  
during the War, have an equal Priviledge and Advantage with them, who were the  
Proprietors of the Ground, which also has been sufficiently proved since, which  
Agreement prevailed upon several Refugees to report thither and have discharged  
all Manner of Military Duty faithfully which was required of them [compare this  
lowercase “t” to an uppercase “S”], and some of them have for the most part of the  
Time been in public Service for the Protection of the Frontiers, and now the  
Inhabitants and Owners of the Ground refuse them the Liberty of cutting Firewood  
for their Use, and have already sued for the same, and the Agreement being proved  
and left to the Verdict of a Jury was found in Favor of the Defendants that they had  
a Right to cut Wood for their own private Use, but notwithstanding all this they  
sued a second Time, and the Justice pleading the Cause of the Plaintiff like an  
Attorney without saying the least Word in Behalf of the Defendants by which the  
Suit was determined in Favor of the Plaintiff, and the Defendants under a Necessity  
at present to pay an exorbitant Price for their Firewood, if no Remedy can be found  
to prevent it — And as we have been informed that there is an Act [burnt]ssed in  
favour of such distressed Persons as we are, And as we [burnt] have no other  
Application to or any Hopes of Relief but to Your Excellency, we therefore  
[missing] entreat [burnt] Grievances into consideration and grant us the Ben  
[burnt] Act, and if there should be no such Act, then to provide [burnt] other speedy  
Remedy for us, so as your in your Wisdom [burnt] meet, therefore as Wellwishers to  
the Great Cause of [burnt] imploring Divine Providence to protect you, We your  
Est[burnt]*

*Fort Renselaer  
March 16<sup>th</sup> 1782*

*Petitioners in Duty  
Shall ever pray*

*John Wohlgemuth, Jr*  
*Conrad Seeber*  
*Peter Adamy*  
*Jacob Meier X his marck*  
*Jacob Dretr<sup>ck</sup>*  
*Dewald his X mark Ditrick*  
*John Seeber*  
*Friederich Bellin*  
*Peter Westerman*  
*William Se[eber?]*  
*Lawrence Gr[oss?]*  
*Henry W. Seeb[er?]*  
*Hendrich Schn[ ? ]*  
*Peter Lampford*  
*William Hardy*  
*Christian Ehl*  
*Adam Cunde[rman?]*

Yet another important clue to the location of Fort Rensselaer are the words of Major Christopher P. Yates of the Canajoharie District:<sup>108</sup>

*Fort Rensselaer Oct<sup>r</sup> 21 1780*

*Dear Sir*

*I imbrace this first Moment of Leisure to acquaint you that we are all safe  
and have escaped the Burning — . . .*

*The Night when the enemy laid at the Nose ~~Her~~ at 12 OClock I got my wife  
&ca. in a Waggon and bro<sup>t</sup> them here this Morning I sent her back —*

Fortunately we know where Major Yates lived during the war thanks to a Quit Rent Remission Certificate, which states that he lived upon lands in Lots 28 & 29 of the Arent Bradt-Livingston Patent (a.k.a. “The Freysbush Patent”).<sup>109</sup> To thus have traveled to the currently accepted site of Fort Rensselaer or Plain, Yates would have to have moved his family in the darkness nearly three miles and would have also had to have crossed the Otsquago Creek. It seems highly unlikely that the Major would have risked such an adventure with the enemy known to be lurking about the area [see Figure 12].

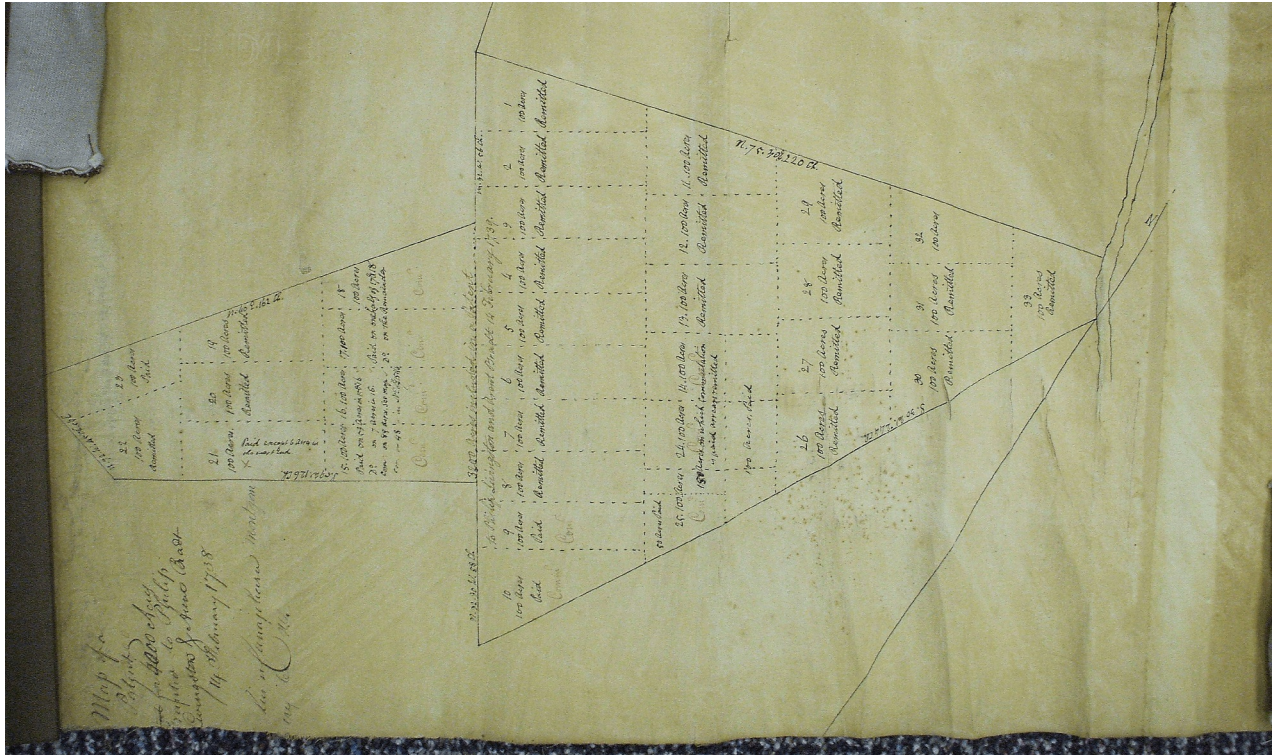


Figure 12: The Freysbush Patent.

In his critique of the first printing of the Bloodied Mohawk, Wayne Lenig states:

*... we know for certain that Fort Rensselaer was located on the Johannes Lipe Farm, currently owned by the Fort Plain Cemetery Association and the Fort Plain Museum. We know this because, once again, we have a copy of the property owner's bill to the state for damages incurred during the period that his property was confiscated for use.*<sup>110</sup>

Mister Lenig then goes on to quote a document taken from the writings of Rufus Grider as proof of his contention that the fort site was owned by Lipe Family descendants:<sup>111</sup>

*Fort Rensselaer Augst 22, 1786.*

*State of New York ..... Dr. To John Lipe Senior  
For Timber Building the Blockhouse, for fire Wood, Fencing and possession of the  
place by the Troops of the United States under the Command of Colonel Willett,  
One hundred & fifty Pounds, being the amount of my damages.*

*his  
John X Lipe*

*Mark  
Witness Present  
B. Hudson*

Lenig also states that this proves that Fort Rensselaer was located “at the foot of Sand Hill,” the site of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie. However an examination of the surveyor’s maps in the Rutger Bleecker Papers reveals that Mister Lipe’s Farm could not have been located any where near the base of Sand Hill for several reasons:

1. John Lipe Senior's Claim for damages was rejected by both the State of New York and the United States House of Representatives.

2. The line separating Lowland Lot 1 and Homestead Lot 1 of the Rutger Bleecker Patent two lots is formed by none other than the easternmost escarpment of Sand Hill. These two lots are well known to have been in the possession of Johannes Abeel throughout the length of the American Revolution..

3. All of the "Homestead Lots" of the Rutger Bleecker Patent were laid out upon lands above the Mohawk River escarpment. These lots included those of Johannes Abeel, Casper Lipe, and Adam Lipe.

4. The Garret Y. Lansing Papers in the New York State Library at Albany, demonstrates that two Johannes Lipes were alive during the American Revolution. The first possessed 40 acres of land in Lowland Lot 2 [and Home Lot 2] of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, 70 acres of land in Lot 15 of the 1772 Division of the Bleecker Patent, 21 acres of land in Expense Lot B of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, and 20 acres in Lot 10 of the 1772 Division all of which had once belonged during the war to his father, Casper Lipe. But, during the American Revolution Johannes Lipe [Senior to distinguish himself from his nephew, John A Lipe] is proven by a quit rent receipt to have possesses the south-easternmost half of [Upper Woodland] Lot 5 of the Rutger Bleecker Patent. The southern bounds of these 100 acres in Lot 5 abut the northernmost bounds of Expense Lot "B", which were owned by one Johannes Wolgemuth. The south-westernmost corner of Expense Lot "A" abuts the north-westernmost corner of Lot B, and the north-easternmost corner of Upper Woodland Lot 5 abuts, the southwestern portion of Expense Lot A and thus the Church Lot’s south-westernmost corner. The other surviving Johannes Lipe was John A. Lipe, a son of Adam Lipe, who possessed 100 acres of land in Lot 5 of the 1739 Division of the Bleecker Patent [the southernmost tier of the patents Woodland Lots], as well as 21 acres of Expense Lot B of the Bleecker Patent which the Rutger Bleecker Papers show had previously belonged to [Captain] Adam Lipe who co-owned the forty acres of land comprising the Lowland Lot Three and Home Lot Three of the said Bleecker Patent.

5. The 10+ acre Church Lot (Sand Hill) of Expense Lot “A” of the Rutger Bleecker Patent comprised the north-westernmost portion of Expense Lot “A” of the Rutger Bleecker Patent and was located approximately 16 chains westerly of the southern bank of

the Mohawk River.

6. An analysis of the distances shown upon Colonial Surveyor's Maps of the Rutger Bleecker and Otsquago Patents, dated 1772, reveal that the distance from the southernmost bounds of the Church Lot of Expense Lot "A" to the southernmost bounds of Casper Lipe's portion of Expense Lot "B" is approximately 33.095 chains. And, the distance from the southernmost bounds of the Church Lot of Expense Lot "A" to the southernmost bounds of Adam Lipe's portion of Expense Lot "B" is approximately 42.73 chains as shown on the 1772 maps of Expense Lot "A" and Expense Lot "B". Yet the distance from the Fort Plain Site listed in the Register of National Historical Sites to the known site of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie is approximately 38.712 chains, placing the site of Fort Plain Museum well in the center of the lands of [Captain] Adam Lipe versus those of Johannes Lipe.

7. The probated will of Johannes Lipe, Montgomery County Wills 2:419, leaves to his son, David Lipe, the Homestead upon which he, Johannes now lives (Homestead Lot 2, Lowland 2, and the northernmost 21 acres [Sublot Two] of Expense Lot "B"), suggesting that he, Johannes, had previously lived elsewhere. The probated will of (Captain) Adam Lipe, Montgomery County Will 1:330, leaves to his son, Daniel Lipe, the Homestead Farm upon which he, Adam, resides. Daniel Lipe later on April 21, 1830, sold his interest in his father's Homestead (Homestead Lot 3, Lowland 3, and the southernmost 21 acres of Sublot Three of Expense Lot "B") to David Lipe, son of Johannes (Montgomery County Deed 27:452). This explains how David W. and Seeber Lipe, sons of David, came into possession of the lands of Captain Adam Lipe and how one could, in turn, assume that the fort site was upon the lands that they owned and which had once belonged to their grandfather, Casper Lipe.

8. The Johannes Lipe living nearest Sand Hill possessed Upper Woodland Lot Five which adjoined the western bounds of Expense Lot "A" (S. L. Frey Papers, Box 5 Folder 94) [see Figure 13]. This location coincides with the placement of Johannes Lipe in the 1766 Tax List of Canajoharie which places him as follows: James Moore 5 [of Cherry Valley]; Johannes Leib 16; Johannes Fedderly 18; Martin Bettinger 2; Jacob Kraus 23; George Kraus 1; Jacob Young 24; Hendrick Fedderly 16; Johannes Deby 2; Martin Shaffner 2; Casper Leib 16; Adam Leib 15; John Abeel 20 [the numbers following being the tax due in shillings].<sup>112</sup> Long after the end of the American Revolution, Margaret (Lipe) Charlesworth stated that she witnessed the burning of the German Reformed Church at Canajoharie and the home of the Reverend Johan Daniel Gross from the home of her father, Johannes Lipe.<sup>113</sup> Due to the topography of the lands in discussion, it would seem nearly impossible for Misses Charlesworth to have witnessed the burning of these structures if her father had indeed live upon the lands of Casper Lipe. Yet, if her father had been the Johannes whom had possessed the eastern half of Upper Woodland Lot 5 of the Rutger Bleecker Patent as early as 1760, her home would have been near the site of Fort Plank, which was located across a ravine to the west of and within "gun-shot" of the German Reformed Church at

Canajoharie.<sup>114</sup>

Patent granted Ruyter Bleeker Jr. for 4500 Acres Land in  
 Albany County 22 Sept 1729 & 2/6 of 100 Acres of Annuum  
 100 Acres in Lot N<sup>o</sup> 5 the  
 South<sup>west</sup> ~~east~~ part the } From 25<sup>th</sup> March 1760  
 Property Johannes Lipe } to 25 Sept 1793 in 33. 6. 0

Dues . . . . .  $\frac{3}{25.6.0 \text{ at } 2/6} = \underline{\underline{3. 3. 9}}$

14 years commutation 2/6  $\frac{1. 15.}{4. 18. 9}$

Auditors Office Sept<sup>r</sup> 12. 1793 Received Johannes Lipe the sum  
 of Four pounds Eighteen Shillings 9/9 in full of the sum of  
 Peter & Philip Curtiniers in Stock created under the Authority of  
 the United States which is in full for Dues Rent and Com-  
 mutation for one hundred <sup>boxes</sup> described as above —

$\underline{\underline{L 4. 18. 9}}$

Peter S. Curtiniers State Aud<sup>r</sup>

LB. 12. Cash

Figure 13: Johannis Lipe's Quit Rent Remission Certificate.

Shortly after the Fort Plank raid of August 2, 1780, a plan was devised to resupply Fort Schuyler. In this manuscript is a list of posts and stages along various routes in Upstate New York:<sup>115</sup>

*From New York to Albany 165, to Saratoga 36, to Fort Edward 14, to Lake George 14, to Ticonderago 40, to Crown Point 15, to S' Johns 110, to Montreal 26, to Three Rivers 90, to Quebec 90 In all 600 Miles*

*A Route from Schenectady to Fort Schuyler with the Posts on the Communication & a few Stages*

*From Schenectady to Whemp's 8 miles. Van Olindas 3. Fort Hunter 11, Fort Rensselaer 21. Fort Plank 3. & something out of the public way, Little Falls 12 a carrying Place of a Mile. Fort Herkimer 6 D<sup>o</sup> German Town 7. no body there. Old Fort Schuyler 9. New Fort Schuyler 18. The above Posts are on the South side of the River. There is a small Post about 3 Miles from Fort Rensselaer called Fort Clayd same side the River — Fort Johnstown 28 Miles from Schenectady 5 Miles from Major Fondas. From Johnstown to Fort Paris 14 Miles through the upper Road. Fort House 10, Fort Dayton 13*

*The above Posts are on the westside of the Mohawk River. . . .*

This accounting of distances coincides with the account of mileages in the *Historical Collections of New York* which shows the corresponding intervals as follows: Albany to Schenectady 15½ miles; Albany to Canajoharie 55 miles. Albany to Fort Plain Village 60 miles; Albany to Little Falls 74 miles.<sup>116</sup>

According to the three accounts above, it should be approximately 58½ miles from Albany to Fort Rensselaer; 15 miles from Fort Rensselaer to the Little Falls (a permanent landmark); and, about 61½ miles from Fort Plank to Albany. The distances shown in the Historical Collections of New York thus suggest that Fort Rensselaer was located approximately 1½ miles east of the corporate limits of present-day Fort Plain Village, and that Fort Plank was three miles up river on or near the Bleecker Patent Church Lot, about 1½ miles above modern Fort Plain Village.

Indeed it is of interest to note that in his, Struggles Through Life, Exemplified In the Various Travels and Adventures in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America of Lieut. John Harriot, in 1793, Harriot states that while: “**proceeding fifteen miles from the falls** [emphasis added by KDJ], *we were brought to Fort Plain, where [there] are two log-forts*”.<sup>117</sup> It is interesting to note his mileages as the “Manuscript Plan to Resupply Fort Schuyler” found within the New-York Historical Society clearly indicates that it was, traveling westward, three miles to Fort Plank from Fort Rensselaer and from Fort Plank to the Little Falls of the Mohawk River it was another 12 miles. This suggests that there was in 1793, two log forts still standing at the place known in 1780 as Fort Rensselaer. This description also conflicts directly with the writings of Paolo Andreani who stated in 1790 that the fortress known as Fort Plain had been entirely destroyed and that because it was built of earth, its plan could not be ascertained.

The above being noted, it would seem that Fort Rensselaer was south [or east as the river flows] of the mouth the Otsquago Creek, a fact which is suggested by Revolutionary War Pensioner Jacob Gaudinier, RWPA #S15583 of the Town of Charlestown in Montgomery County stated, in his November 7, 1832 deposition, that while serving in Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett's Corps

he was stationed . . . *At Fort Plain which is now in Canajoharie in said state . . .*

The list of posts above combined with the Writ of Sequestration, Harriot's narrative, and the voice of Mister Gaudinier would seem to focus the search for Fort Rensselaer on the southern portion of the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent.

Item Number Seven of the Rutger Bleecker Papers clearly demonstrates the presence of two pre-Revolutionary War structures of significance on the highlands directly above the Mohawk River escarpment, and nearly in line with a group of islands in the Mohawk River at that juncture in its course. A close examination of Item Number Four of the same series suggests the two structures were built near Lot 19 of the 1742 Division of the Bleecker Patent.<sup>118</sup> Could one of these structures be the "Stone House" spoken of by Nicholas Dunkle?

At the same time that the British write of Fort Plain being opposite Stone Arabia, American accounts speak of Fort Rensselaer being opposite Stone Arabia. On September 17, 1780, Henry Glen wrote Colonel William Malcom:<sup>119</sup>

*From H Glen For Colonel W<sup>m</sup> Malcom Commanding ND*

*17 Sept' 1780*

*. . . — Princeble people Names whose in fluce & Inclination Cane be Depene<sup>d</sup>  
upon — Major Fonda — Agent Col. Jacob Clock in F paris Major Nucker Col.  
Peter Waggoner upside F Rennseleir<sup>120</sup> Z Betchell Esq<sup>r</sup> Supervisor Col. Voukert  
Vadder Conauagh — John Fonda Esq<sup>r</sup> Col. Cloy<sup>d</sup> in F Plank — Captain Gardeneer  
Major Fry Major Yates Supervisor Col. Peter Pellingier F. Dayton — Peter Tygert  
Esq<sup>r</sup> Supervisor The Rev<sup>d</sup> Daniel Gross in F Rensselir a Good Men to Society & of  
Great Service in Tryon County Anthony V Vyhten Esq<sup>r</sup> Agent Captain Vadder  
Symon Vadder Samuel Gardenier Captain John Bradpeck Two McMaster<sup>s</sup> in  
Warensbush — Hans Pellingier — A. Van Horn Esq<sup>r</sup> — do Peter Warmut — B.  
Schuyler Esq<sup>r</sup> — do Christiyon Nellis — G. V Alstyn Esq<sup>r</sup> — Conajohary  
Christopher Fox Johanes Lyp — W<sup>m</sup> Fox — Adam Lyp — Lips Fox — Jacob Mattis  
— Peter Wagoner Jun<sup>r</sup> Esq<sup>r</sup> Cap<sup>t</sup> Ab<sup>r</sup> Copman — . . .*

Equally important in ascertaining the locations of Forts Rensselaer and Plank is the location of the Klaisburg. This settlement had for years been used as a rendezvous for military parties and was a site of great importance to the Mohawk Nation. By July 15, 1780 the British high command had targeted the site for destruction.<sup>121</sup> Despite its importance, no map shows its location and once again multiple clues are needed to pinpoint its site.

On August 2, 1780 Joseph Brant reached the Klaisburg and carried into effect a plan to raze the settlements there and destroy any military units found:<sup>122</sup>

*Niagara Sept' 18<sup>th</sup> 1780.*

*Sir,*

*Yesterday afternoon I was honor'd with your Excellencys Secret &*

*Confidential Dispatch of the 31<sup>st</sup> ult<sup>o</sup> and you may rely on my best efforts to assist the proposed Expedition . . . I have the pleasure of informing your Excellency that one Object of it has been already achieved. The Oneida Village, with the Fort, Church &ca, and also the Tuscarora Town near it having been burnt, the beginning of last Month, also Two Stocaded Forts below Fort Stanwix, and Soon after the party's that were with Capt Brant destroyed the Kleysbergh &ca containing a Church, 100 Houses and as many Barns besides Mills, and 500 Cattle and Horses, and on the 2<sup>d</sup> inst Capt Nelles marched with 100 Indians to Conajohary, who has probably struck a blow ere now, and shall be advised to Joyn Sir John, — . . .*

The first helpful clue in searching for the Klaisburg<sup>123</sup> seems to be the statement of Ensign Derick Van Vechten:<sup>124</sup>

*. . . in the Year 1780 he with his own & several other Companies were ordered out upon an Alarm created by a party of Indians to Johnstown from Johnstown they proceeded to Canajoharie some depredations were committed & from thence to a place farther west called Claysberg, or Clay Hill, where they remained a short time & returned home . . .*

Obviously if left alone, Van Vechten's word is of little help other than to establish a site some miles west of modern Canajoharie Village. However, concerning his service in November of 1778, William Feeter states:<sup>125</sup>

*. . . the militia was ordered to go from Fort Herkimer to Glaisburgh in the (now) Town of Minden in the County of Montgomery about two miles west of Fort Plain, the Militia at that place were under the Command of Col. Jacob Klock. they lay at the latter place till the massacre & destruction of Cherry Valley in the Now County of Otsego that Joins Montgomery County on the southwest the first of November the news Spread through the County & the militia at Glaisburgh went in pursuit of the enemy — . . .*

Another more substantial hint is found in Daybold Moyer's sworn testimony:<sup>126</sup>

*In the year 1778 or 9 in the month of October at the time Cherry Valey was burned our whole regiment was ordered out & he deponent marched under Col. Klock & Capt House for that place — we were called out four or five days before that place was burned because an attack was expected but whether on the Mohawk or more south we did not know — we were a little south of fort Plank & near fort Plain that we might march either way — the first news of the out break was that Cherry Valley was burned That he was then Marched towards that place . . .*

From the latter two statements it is established that Klock's Regiment was garrisoning the Klaisburg on the day(s) proceeding the Cherry Valley Massacre. With this in mind, one must turn to the word of Colonel Jacob Klock for his opinion of his location on that fateful day.<sup>127</sup>

*Hartman Dorff November 11<sup>th</sup> 3 O'clock P. M.*

*Sir*

*This moment one M<sup>r</sup> Thompson arriv'd here who informs me that he with several other Gentlemen ~~was~~ were on their way to Cherry Valley when they heard the report of about 30 Canon but they still proceeded as far as John Moors place being about 4 Miles this Side Cherry Valley they then hear a smart firing of small arms.*

*I am in great haste Sir  
Your humble Servent.  
Jacob Klock*

Obviously the settlement called The Klaisburg was also known as Hartman's Dorf. However, tradition holds that the only place known as Hartman's Dorf was located deep in the Schoharie Valley, dozens of miles south-east of Forts Plank and Rensselaer. Fortunately a March 1, 1796, land deed places Hartman's Dorf on the river flats south of the Otsquago Creek in the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent.<sup>128</sup>

*. . . All that certain Lot of Land situate lying and being in the County of Montgomery on the South side of the Mohawk river at Canajohary and within the limits and Boundaries of a patent known by the name of Otsquago patent, heretofor granted to Rutger Bleecker, Nicholas Bleecker and others, to wit Lot number nine Low land on Hartman's Flatts, beginning on the bank of the river in the division Line of Lots number eight and nine, and runs thence down the river as the same winds and turns to the division line between the Lots number nine and ten, and thence South Eighty degrees and thirty minutes west to the foot of the Hill then up along the foot of the hill as the same winds and turns to the division line of Lot number eight, thence North Eighty degrees east to the river and contains twenty five acres, be the same more or less, together with the Homestead there to belonging . . .*

However, in keeping with a tradition of two witnesses being necessary to establish a truth; the probated will and contemporary land deeds of Adam Countryman also place his war-time home upon the river flats of Hartman's Dorf.<sup>129</sup>

These items together establish the location of Hartman's Dorf or the Klaisburg to be in the 1730 Division of the Bleecker Patent, south of the mouth of the Otsquago Creek. This places Fort Plank on the northerly side of the Otsquago Creek, and places Fort Plain (or Rensselaer) nearby on the southerly side of the creek.

The occurrence of a place name such as the Klaisburg also suggests that a settlement or

geographical landmark was located nearby which was well known by both the Indians and the British. And indeed Caldawaller Colden's 1726 Map of the Mohawk River Settlements shows there to be a substantial Indian Village, the Canajoharie Castle, located in the north-eastern corner of a triangle formed by the junctions of the Mohawk River and the southern bank of the Otsquago Creek.<sup>130</sup> Evidence of this supposed village is found in the National Archives of Canada in a set of documents which suggests that an Indian Settlement was located near the mouth of the Otsquago Creek: The first, dated October 28th, 1731, is an order for a government representative to visit with the Canajoharie Indians and to investigate the loss of livestock owned by Hartman Windecker, Coenradt Countryman, and Hendrick Schremling<sup>131</sup>. And the second a document dated November 5th, 1731, noting that the Palatines: Johan<sup>s</sup> Keyser; Hend Frey; Joh<sup>s</sup> Kreemer; Peter Teygaert; William Wormwood; Jacob Bouman; Hend<sup>k</sup> Walraet; Jacob Goltman; Karell Eerhart; and Peter Wagenaer had also lost livestock to the Indians of the Tarajoharies.<sup>132</sup> An early map of the DePeyster-Van Slyck Patent in the Town of Palatine show that shows that the Indian Village of *Tarigioris* was located at or near the place known as the Klaisburgh or Hartmansdorf.<sup>133</sup>

On February 24, 1783, Major Alexander Thompson wrote his brother a letter from Fort Rensselaer which also is supportive of a southerly 1730 Division site for Fort Rensselaer.<sup>134</sup>

*. . . This fort is situated on a height about half a mile from the river, which affords a beautiful prospect of the country around, and shows you at one view, as far as the eye will carry, fine fields like those of Bottle Hill . . .*

Thompson's description of the view is hardly possible from the site stated by Lossing and Simms to have been the hallowed ground of Fort Plain. Standing on the site assumed to be that of Fort Plain, directly above the escarpment from the Fort Plain Museum, the author noted:

*. . . the northerly view reached the bend of the Mohawk River as it turns back westerly; the easterly view extended only to the highest hills of Stone Arabia; northerly, the low hill located just to the south of the site of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie, totally obscures the tall pine trees surrounding the cemetery; to the south the line of sight is obscured by a hill less than a half mile distant, and finally, the view westerly extending itself only to the plains of the Windecker Patent.*

The view, as described by Thompson, is even less likely to have been from the known site of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie, as the line of sight is severely restricted to the north, and is totally impeded by a low hill to the south. However, the river is still visible to a degree today, as are the hills of Stone Arabia. The author has noted from his many trips to the sites of Fort Plank and to the Fort Plain Museum that it was highly unlikely that there could be a house located immediately above the fort, as suggested in Marinus Willett's Orders Book:<sup>135</sup>

*. . . Kilborn says he was on Centinel at ~~my~~ Marque from 11 till 1 oClock during*

*the whole of which time ~~he heard~~ their was a Noise in the house back of the Marque by a number of men who appeared to playing of Cards, and that when the Colonel sent ~~the Corporal some person~~ a man to speak to em he heard em say they would be damned if they were to out Which words he heard repeated several times*

*John Kilborn*

*Daniel Holes says he commanded the Quarter Guard last night. That he heard a Noise in a house just back of the Colonels Marque from early in the morning untill two OClock in the Morning that about 12 OClock he was Ordered by the Colonel to go see what the Noise was and have a stop put to it . . . that Some of them told him that was their Quarters and said that they would be as still as they could — And upon his repeating his message They asked him if the Colonel did not live down the hill under a Stack of hay . . .*

*F Renselaer*

*5<sup>th</sup> Sepr 81*

*Daniel Olds*

One should also note that very few military documents mention Fort Plank after the great raid of August 2, 1780. Yet Fort Rensselaer is mentioned numerous times up through the early 1790s.<sup>136</sup> It is also interesting to note that Fort Plain does not make its appearance in British Military document(s) until October 27, 1780, when it is noted that 400 troops were encamped at Fort Plain opposite Stone Arabia.<sup>137</sup> Yet the first American Military mention of Fort Plain does not occur until March 12, 1781, in the minutes of the Court Martial of Brigadier General Robert Van Rensselaer.<sup>138</sup>

Of the first three documents dated Fort Plain, aside from the Haldimand Papers and the Court Martial of Robert Van Rensselaer, all were written after the date(s) that Revolutionary War Pensioners swear that Fort Plank had been renamed Fort Plain; and two of these four can be attributed to letters written by Colonel Marinus Willett who was, according to his own letter-book, at Fort Rensselaer.<sup>139</sup>

*Fort Plain Sept. 7, 1781.*

*By information from Fort Herkimer the enemy are down in force. I am collecting the Militia and shall pursue them as soon as possible. You will inform Genl. Stark of this as soon as possible . . .*

Willett's Letter Book contains a similar letter written to an unknown correspondent with the same date.<sup>140</sup>

*Fort Rensselaer 7<sup>th</sup> Sept 81*

*Sir*

*By accounts this moment received the enemy appear to be in Considerable force at the German flats I wish you to March your regiment this way with as much*

*expedition as possible & as much Provision as they can furnis themselves with -  
without being detained  
I am &c*

The next two references to Fort Plain have the same similarity. Both are dated by Willett, Fort Rensselaer, and both are quoted by their recipients to have been originated from Fort Plain.

Another hint at the reluctance of soldiers to call Fort Plain - Fort Rensselaer,<sup>141</sup> is found in the journal of Ensign John Barr, who had been promoted from sergeant to ensign while stationed at Fort Plank in 1779. In his journal, Barr, notes that the Fourth New York Regiment arrived at Fort Plank on January 6, 1781 and the following day, he *dined at Fort Plains with Captain Wright at the Reverend Mister Gross*;<sup>142</sup> suggesting the Reverend Mister Gross was living at Fort Rensselaer as in the above quoted letter by Mr. Glen.<sup>143</sup>

Revolutionary War Pensioners who claim to have served at both Forts Plank and Plain universally agree that one could not reach Fort Plank from the east without having first marched to or past Fort Plain. Yet, of the many dozen soldiers who claim to have served at Fort Plain under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett, only four: Conrad Edick, Jacob Esselstyne; John Hermance and Eliphalet Kellogg mention having served at Fort Rensselaer. Of the aforesaid four men; Edick, Esselstyne, and Kellogg state that they had served at both Fort Rensselaer and Fort Plain.<sup>144</sup>

Contemporary evidence [circa 1782-4] supports the theory that Fort Rensselaer and Fort Plain were not one and the same. Moses Dusten, a captain in the Second New Hampshire Regiment which was stationed in the Mohawk Valley to support Willett, notes in his personal orderly book, activities at both Forts Rensselaer and Plain in 1782.<sup>145</sup> Lieutenant Lawrence Tremper also notes having been stationed at both Forts Rensselaer and Plain while serving under Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett in 1783-4.<sup>146</sup>

Thus ongoing research continues to suggest that Fort Plank was built either on or very near the Church Lot of Expense Lot "A of the Rutger Bleecker Patent"<sup>147</sup> in Minden Township, Montgomery County, New York. If this is so, other documentation should be supportive.

On August 2, 1780, Captain Joseph Brant with 350 troops swept through the area settlements from the river south to Kley's Barrick to the southern escarpment of the Otsquago Creek on eastward to modern Fort Plain Village. While thus engaged, Brant's raiders destroyed the house of one Henry Walrath, called Fort Walrath,<sup>148</sup> sending the inhabitants fleeing about two miles eastward to Fort Plank for safety.<sup>149</sup>

Unfortunately, no contemporary map(s) exist which show the location of Fort Walrath or confirm its distance from Fort Plank. However on March 1, 1802 Henry Walrath sold a portion of his interest in Lot Three of Windecker's Patent, approximately two miles west of the Church Lot, to Jacob H. Diefendorf.<sup>150</sup> As this deed alone cannot prove that this lot was the site of Fort Walrath, other clues must be considered.

In Joseph Clement's letter of August 14, 1780 to Sir Guy Johnson,<sup>151</sup> Brant is noted to have destroyed two mills. However on August 3, 1780 Jellis Fonda wrote Henry Glen of Schenectady

with news that only Lansen's Mill had been destroyed in Brant's raid.<sup>152</sup> This apparent discrepancy is addressed in a letter from Colonel Jacob Klock to Governor George Clinton on April 18, 1781 in which he notes only two mills remain on the Tryon County frontiers; these being at Forts Walrath and Nellis.<sup>153</sup> The presence of a mill near the house of Henry Walrath would suggest a house site on or very near a creek. After carefully reviewing all land deeds dealing with land(s) owned by Henry Walrath(s) it becomes obvious, using patent maps contemporary to the period, that only a lot on the eastern end of Windecker's Patent would qualify as the site of such a mill, and thus as the home of Henry Walrath. The sale of two tracts of land in Lot Three of the Windecker Patent by a Henry Walrath contemporary to the period,<sup>154</sup> leads to a Fort Walrath, Lot Three Theory.

Support for this Fort Walrath, Lot Three Theory, exists in a Tryon County deed, dated May 27, 1773, laying out a new road to run from Fall Hill to the King's Highway to the eastern border of the Canajoharie District.<sup>155</sup>



*The Commissioners have altered and laid out the following roads in the District 1) Public highway beginning in the division line between the Districts of Canajoharie and the German flats near the house of Warner Deychert running thence to the foot of the Fall Hill then with an alteration northward [sic: southwards?] in a straight line to join the former road where one Peter Hunt formerly lived thence along to or near the Canajoharie or Indian Church, thence with an alteration southward to where it joins a former Kings Road at the house of Hendrick Walrath thence to **the division line of Joost Lipe and John Abeel** [emphasis added by KDJ] thence to and past the house of John Abeel where it joins the former Kings Road called the River Road, thence to the division line of Mohawk District and Canajoharie District, except a small alteration between the house of Johannis Smith and the lower part of his farm . . . [see Figure 14 above].<sup>156,157</sup>*

A careful review of the 1766 Tax List of the Canajoharie District precisely identifies the area residents living along the above road in the following order, along with the tax owed by each:<sup>158</sup>

*. . . Andrew Dussler 1 Marcus Cunterman 8 Hendk. Wallrad junr. 12 Hendk. Ekler 2 Hendk. Ekler junr. 1 Jacob Haber 1 Martin Sparbeck 1 Adolph Wallrad 13 Christian Young 3 Hendk. Mayer 18 Peter Miller 8 Peter Gerlagh 8 Jacob Dieffendorff 18 Hendk. Dieffendorff 2 Thomas Deby 2 Francis Ute 2 Andrew Keller 12 . . .*

The location of various people on this list can be easily identified by using Certificates of



**Figure 15: The 1764 Division of the Canajoharie or Abraham Van Horne Patent**

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Ken D. Johnson  
29 Nov 2014  
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Quit Rent Remission from the period circa 1786-1792, Quit Rent Receipts, early Patent Maps, and Montgomery County Land Deeds. These documents clearly show the residence of Henry Moyer to have been on Lot Seven of the First Allotment of Van Horne's Patent,<sup>159</sup> Peter Miller on Lot Two of Windecker's Patent,<sup>160</sup> Hendrick Diefendorf on Lots Four and Five of Windecker's Patent,<sup>161</sup> and Andrew Keller on Lot One of the First Allotment of Van Horne's Patent.<sup>162</sup> Of the above mentioned lots; Windecker's Lot Two, Van Horne's First Allotment Lot Seven, and Windecker's Lot Three all share a common border [see Figure 15 above].

The location of the Geisenburg Settlement at the intersections of Lot Three Waggoner's Patent and Lot Five Lansings Patent<sup>163</sup> negates any assertions that Fort Plank was built at or near the Geisenburg. The statements of those who reportedly marched from Fort Plank three to four miles west-southwesterly to perform guard duty at the Geisenburg,<sup>164</sup> and the accounts of Abraham Wemple and his troops,<sup>165</sup> clearly contradict any Fort Plank/Geisenburgh Theories.

In 1781, Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett took command of the troops guarding the western frontiers and established his command at Fort Rensselaer on the Mohawk River. While in command there he states he twice visited the home of George Herkimer near the Little Falls in Herkimer County, New York. On both occasions, Willett notes that he passed by Fort Willett, on Lot Six of Windecker's Patent,<sup>166</sup> and Fort Plank; both going to and returning from his host's abode.<sup>167</sup> This scenario is supportive of the Church Lot Theory in the sense it appears that the colonel was traveling upon the Dutchtown Road which traverses the Windecker's Patent from east to west.<sup>168</sup> Thus, it would seem clear that Fort Plank was located above the River Road on an alternate route to Herkimer's at the Little Falls.

The location of Fort Plank on the Dutchtown Road would account for the statement by Robert H. Wendell, who in speaking of the August 2, 1780 raid stated . . . *A number of houses were then burning, among them John Abeel's. From thence we proceeded to Fort Plank a short distance further.*<sup>169</sup>

This description of Fort Plank's location also coincides with the description of forts and stages on the road from Schenectady to *New Fort Schuyler*:<sup>170</sup>

*. . . Fort Hunter 11, Fort Rensselaer 21. Fort Plank 3. & something out of the public way, Little Falls 12 a carrying Place of a Mile. Fort Herkimer 6 D° . . .*

In June of 1990 the author, armed with these clues as to the location of Fort Plank, traveled to the Mohawk Valley of New York in hopes of being able to walk upon the site of Fort Plank. Prepared with the knowledge that the Church Lot's north-east corner was located six chains from the mouth of the *Kahowegheron* Creek on the Mohawk River,<sup>171</sup> the author set out to find this creek and retrace a path up its banks to the Church Lot. Upon his arrival at Old Canajoharie, he found his task complicated by the alterations of the topography of the land caused by the construction of the Erie Canal, the West Shore Railroad, the New York State Turnpike, and the resulting re-situating of many roads from their former courses. Unable to find anyone locally who knew the location of the Kahowegheron Creek, the author resorted to wading down the local

creeks until he found one whose mouth was located at the southern-most end of a large island in the Mohawk.

On a cool Saturday morning, the author left his vehicle on what is now known as the River Road, and waded down the Kahowegheron Creek. Upon exiting from the waters of the Mohawk, the author marched resolutely westward looking for the site of his prey. While thus engaged, he noted an open field with several older pine trees growing in an open square arrangement similar to that described by Nelson Greene in 1913. Spotting a small white residence south of the trees, the author met with Mr. Raymond Luft, a kindly gentleman of many years residence along the Mohawk. Luft stated he believed he owned the graveyard I sought and pointed out the only remaining gravestone.

It would seem odd that only one stone would remain in a graveyard as large as the records of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie indicate, however, in a letter addressed to the author by Lora M. (Flint) Bowman, the following was revealed:<sup>172</sup>

*There was a big Cemetery behind the church on Sand Hill (1750) — burned 1780 — they kept interring there until about 1840.— I spent several hours in this cem. looking for headstones.— I found about 12 — Douglas Ayres — maybe about 86 years old? — when he was about 18 years old?— he saw a farmer take all the stones in a big wagon and dumped them in his barnyard. I had a hard time believing him but I really do now. The people that died in what they called Minden Section were buried there & Fort Plain. We have a very large village cemetery, chartered 1850 but I see a few burials before that — then they didn't use the old Sand Hill Cem. anymore.*

On June 4, 1991, the author returned to the Luft Property and with the express permission hope of proving it belonged to a person known to have been buried in the graveyard of the German Reformed Church at Canajoharie. This stone was found to be that of Robert McFarlan's, and this confirms the identity of this graveyard to be as theorized.<sup>173</sup> In 2005, it came to the author's attention that the Church's Cemetery (three acres with a thirteen foot wide lane leading into it from NYS Route 5-S) has been possessed by the Trustees of the Village of Fort Plain since February 12<sup>th</sup>, 1838.<sup>174</sup> As of May 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005, the Real Property Division of the Montgomery County Assessors Office was redesigning its tax records and maps to reflect the Village's responsibility for its care [see Figure 16]. of Mr. Luft,<sup>175</sup> went down to the site of the old cemetery to photograph this one remaining grave stone which is described as follows in Washington Frothingham's, History of Montgomery County, page 226; and Beers History of Montgomery County, page 131:

*. . . his name commemorate on a slab in the old burying-ground of the Sand Hill church, which bears these words: "In memory of Robert McFarlan, Esq., who*

*departed this life July 14, 1813 in the forty-ninth year of his age . . .*



**Figure 16:** Robert McFarlan’s Grave.

Loo king  
directly westward from Mr. McFarlan’s grave, one can see a peninsula of land similar to the one spoken of by Mr. Lossing. The site matches the topography demonstrated by Stone in his Life of Brant; the sole difference after 211 years, being the loss of several feet of subsoil from the eastern half of the site.

The site spoken of is now believed to be in the possession of Mr. George W. Collins of New York City, New York. Collins purchased his 22 acre farm from Richard and Ruth Welch in 1976. Mrs. Welch was born Ruth Klock, a daughter of Irvin Klock. Ruth states her father only owned the 22 acres on the north side of Route 5S, the remainder of his farm being on the south-side of the road.

It would seem that an ongoing search for Fort Plank, both documentary and archeological, should now be directed upon the “Expense Lot “A” site, to either prove or disprove the Church Lot

Theory. Further research on a site in the southeastern corner of the Bleecker's Otsquago Patent for Fort Plank's sister fort, Fort Rensselaer, should also be undertaken. Until such investigations indicate differently, no other option seems plausible than to stand in defense of the facts.

### CONCLUSIONS THUS DRAWN BY THE AUTHOR

1. Fort Plank/Plain was either on or very near Expense Lot A of the Rutger Bleecker Patent.
2. That Fort Plank became known as Fort Plain shortly after the August 2, 1780 Raid.
3. Prior to August of 1780, there was Fort Plank and **only Fort Plank**. In other words, **there was no fort plain** prior to August of 1780.
4. That in the summer of 1779 Fort Plank's large blockhouse, which housed the cannon which surprised Joseph Brant on August 2, 1780, was built.
5. That Fort Rensselaer was built by the troops of Fort Plank in the spring and early summer of 1780. Three miles to the southeast of Fort Plank on or very near Lot 20 Woodland of the 1742 Division of the Bleecker's Otsquago Patent, and **near the mouth of the Katzeburg Kill** which forms the south-easternmost corner of the said Bleecker's Patent.
6. After September of 1780, there were only two Continental Fortresses in the Canajoharie District: **Fort Plank [by then called Fort Plain]** and **Fort Rensselaer**.
7. On September 17, 1780, Fort Rensselaer **was not yet completed** and was incapable of housing more than a few troops.
8. That Fort Rensselaer was primarily known in contemporary Revolutionary War documents known as Fort Rensselaer, with two exceptions:
  - a. Two letters in the George Clinton Papers written by an officer in Albany, copying two letters addressed Fort Rensselaer by Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett, were changed to suggest that the Colonel had were written them at Fort Plain.
  - b. In 1782, upon the removal of the remains of Major Robert McKeen from the "burial ground and re-interment in the works of the new blockhouse at Fort Rensselaer, the fortress' name was changed to Fort McKeen by Lieutenant Colonel Willett, which order was shortly thereafter remanded by Lord Sterling.

9. There are only five men who mention Fort Rensselaer by name in the well over 2500 Revolutionary War Pension Applications reviewed. Of these five men, three mention serving within both Fort Plain and Fort Rensselaer, and one states that Fort Rensselaer it was renamed Fort McKeen.

10. That events stated by pensioners, some fifty years after the War, to have occurred at or in Fort Plain prior to August of 1780 occurred at or within Fort Plank unless otherwise proven false.

11. That there was two and only two forts which shared the name Fort Plain during or after the American Revolution. Fort Plank from August of 1780 until 1832; and, Fort Rensselaer from 1832 till modern times.

12. That Johannes Lipe's Farm was located upon Upper Woodland Lot Five of the Rutger Bleecker Patent which adjoined the "Church Lot" of the Bleecker Patent throughout the length of the Revolutionary War as proven by his 1793 Quit-Rents Payment Receipt and thus could have easily been incorporated into the Fort's works [See Figures 17 & 18].

The National Map 2 km NE of Fort Plain, New York, United States 4/10/1998

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**Figure 17:** 1998 Aerial Photo of the Bleecker Patent “Diamond”.



**Figure 18** 1998 Aerial Photograph of the Bleecker Diamond and adjoining property.

## ENDNOTES

1. Annals of Tryon County, page 175. Note well: In "A Manuscript Plan to Resupply Fort Schuyler", found within the New-York Historical Society's Collections, a mention of the mill(s) of Philip W. Fox on the "south-side" of the Mohawk River. And, it is noted in the Garret Y. Lansing Papers in the New York State Library (Box 9, Folder 4), that a Philip W. Fox possessed 115 acres in Lots Number 4 of the First and Second Allotments of Van Horne's Patent during the American Revolution. Thus, Campbell may very well been referring to the mill(s) of Philip W. Fox versus the mills of Christopher W. Fox on the north-side of the Mohawk River.
2. William L. Stone, xxi.
3. The Mohawk Valley Democrat, July 13, 1913:8; Thomas Sammons, RWPA #W19000.
4. Benson J. Lossing, 1:262, Footnote 1.
5. Lossing goes on to note in his footnote #2 that . . . *An aged resident of Fort Plain, Mr. David Lipe, whose house is near the canal, below the old fortification, went over the ground with me, and I made a survey of the outlines of the fort according to his directions. He aided in pulling down the block-house when it was demolished after the war, and his memory seemed to be very accurate. I am indebted to him for much of the information here recorded concerning Fort Plain.* [David Lipe was born circa 1774 and no older than 15 when a Italian Physicist, Count Paolo Andreani of Milan, Italy visited the then Village of Fort Plain and recorded the following passage into his personal diary:  
  
*Six miles to the west from the place where we crossed the river, one arrives at the village called Fort plain, which is composed of but a few homes and a Church, and inhabited by Germans, similarly of such extraction are almost all the households encountered from here on-ward for about forty miles. The Fort which gave name to the site is entirely destroyed, and there is also difficulty to-day to discover its plan. It was built with earth, and its situation was advantageous to command the navigation of the river].*  
  
Thus, it is difficult to give great credibility to the David Lipe's 1848 recollections of the outline of Fort Plank or as it was originally known: Fort Plank.
6. Annals of Tryon County, 1851 Edition: pages, 4-6.
7. Joseph House served as an Deputy Assistant Commissary General of Issues, non-military Continental Government position by appointment, from at least July 2, 1778 through November 21, 1778 (Colonel Charles Stewart Papers, New York Historical Association Library, Cooperstown, New York). Thus, House would have been required to have been present within the fort a majority of the time to receive, dispense, and oversee the handling of all the necessities necessary for troops to subsist from day to day. He was replaced by James Moore.
8. The Frontiersman of New York, 1:573.
9. Ibid: 128.
10. There was a Lipe Family Graveyard located in the far northeastern corner of the current Fort Plain Cemetery that on the 1905 Atlas of the Village of Fort Plain was designated the site of the German Reformed Church. The site of "Fort Plain" was also moved to the east of the Cemetery in an attempt to justify the belief that the fortress stood on the lands which they thought belonged to Johannes Lipe during the Revolution. As already revealed, the lands on which this small cemetery rests were owned during the American Revolution by Captain Adam Lipe.
11. Simms. Frontiersman of New York. Volume One: 570.
12. This "old cemetery" is the burial ground of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie. The source of this knowledge is the August 21, 1851 & October 2, 1851, Minutes of Meetings of the Trustees of the Village of Fort Plain housed in the Fort Plain Village Offices, respectively:  
  
*Resolved that Urilus Birge Superintend & have the Old Burying ground lot of the Village of Fort Plain Surveyed & Staked, out, which was conveyed to said Village by Peter Harder on the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 1838 the Same being that portion of*

*ground connected with the old Fort Plain Church containing about 3 or 4 acres & a right of Way Unto the same having been deeded for burial ground purposes.*

*Resolved that Nathan Davis furnish & set stones of Nine feet in length at the angles of the old burial ground on Sand Hill, And that the same be set 2 feet in the ground.*

13. The Rufus Grider Collection, New York State Library, Manuscript Collection #VC22932, Box 1, Item #39.
14. Ibid: 221.
15. This farm is now owned by Lynden Failing.
16. The Frontiersman of New York 2:534.
17. The "New Century Atlas of Montgomery and Fulton Counties New York. 1905.
18. Atlas of Montgomery and Fulton Counties New York. 1868.
19. Greene, Nelson. Fort Plain - Nelliston History, 1580 -1947, page 40.
20. "Old Fort Plain: What Is Fact, and What Is Fancy?" Monday, November 17, 1975. *The Amsterdam Recorder* of Amsterdam, New York. Repeated requests by the author to see the field notes generated by either Mr. Tuttle or Mr. Lenig have been denied by the staff of the Fort Plain Museum. Similar requests to view the infrared photography prints have also been denied.
21. <http://iarchives.nysed.gov/PubImageWeb/viewImageData.jsp?id=147154>.
22. The artifacts displayed in an accompanying newspaper photograph included; a straight razor, three two-tined cooking forks with their wooden handles nearly intact, a butcher knife with its wooden handle nearly intact and a few fragments of a pottery plate.
23. Lossing's 1848 Concept of Fort Plain Valid Based on Recent Research". Tuesday, November 18, 1975. *The Amsterdam Recorder* of Amsterdam, New York.
24. Evidence shows Fort Plain Blockhouse Rectangular, Not Octagonal. Wednesday, November 19, 1975. *The Amsterdam Recorder* of Amsterdam, New York.
25. Votes and Proceedings of the Senate of the State of New-York; At Their Third Session, Held at Kingston, In Ulster County, Commencing, August 24, 1779 (Fish-Kill: Printed by Samuel Loudon, MDCCLXXIX), 87.
26. Wayne Lenig. "Fort Plain, Fort Plank, Fort Rensselaer, and Canajoharie". 17 Nov 2001. Page 26-7.
27. See Montgomery County Deed 13:400: Delia Blank to Joseph House and Jacob Wright.
28. Though it is not known for certain, it appears that Mister House may have been compensated by the State Legislature for the usage of his properties in 1780. In the Papers of Commissary General of Issues Colonel Charles Stewart is a request is an April 19<sup>th</sup>, 1780 request by Doctor James Gray for reimbursement of 70 Pounds Stirling paid to Joseph House for House's "own contingencies".
29. The Papers of the Continental Congress, Reel 66, Item 53, Page 17.
30. Will of Delia Blank, Montgomery County Wills, 1:283; Montgomery County Land Deeds, 13:400. The interaction between Jost House [Sr.] and Henry Walrath in the Sanders Brother's Account Books in the New-York Historical Society, and between Captain Jost House and Henry Walrath in commanding a company of the Canajoharie District Regiment of Militia, appears to suggest Henry Walrath and Jost House were near neighbors. The said Sanders Family's Papers in the New-York Historical Society, also suggest that as directed in the Last Will and Testament of Hendrick Walrath, father of both Audolph and

Hendrick Walrath, Henrick Walrtath [Junior] had paid unto either his brother Audolph, or his heirs on October 17, 1770, the sum of £20 to obtain sole possession of the senior Walrath's lot in the eastern portion of the Windecker Patent.

*In the name of God Amen the first day of October in the Twentyeth year of the Reign of Our Sovereign Lord George the Second by the Grace of God of Great Brittain Franco & Ireland King Defender of the faith, etc and in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred & forty six I Hendrick Wolrad of Conajoharry in the county of Albany & Province of New York yeoman being of good & perfect mind & memory . . . declare this to be my Last Will and Testament . . . Imprimis I give and Make unto my Eldest son named Hendrick Wolrad the sum of twenty shillings in right of his primogeniture & that he shall be satisfied with what I hereinafter shall make devise & bequeath unto him I will & desire that all my just debts shall be paid and satisfied by my said son Hendrick Wolrad I do give bequeath & devise unto my said son Hendrick Wolrad his heirs & assigns for ever one hundred acres of land situate lying and being at Conajoharry aforesaid being part of the lands which I purchased from Philip Livingston & Co being the easternmost or lower half part of the Lott of land I now dwell upon and manure he helping his brother Johan Adolf Wolrad to build a house & barn on the lands hereinafter devised unto him as good as the house and barn which the said Hendrick inherits on the lands hereby before devised unto him . . . I do give & bequeath unto my said sons Hendrick & Johan Adolf & their heirs one & Hundred and twenty five acres of land lying at the east end of the Patent which my said land is specified in to be equally occupied & manured betwixt them during the time of twenty years after my decease if the said Hendrick or his heirs pay unto the said Johan Adolf or his heirs the full sum of twenty pounds in consideration of which the said Hendrick Wolrad shall possess & enjoy all & singular the said one hundred & twenty five acres of land & his heirs and assigns for ever . . . [emphasis added] (Montgomery County, New York Probate files).*

31. Jackson ex dem. Wright and others, against Diefendorf and Zoller. The Supreme Court of Judicature and in the Court for the Trial of Impeachments and the Correction of Errors, in the State of New York, Volume 3:269.
32. Frederick Young, brother of Johan Adam Young, passed away in the King's Garrison at Niagara in December of 1777. As he died without issue, Frederick's siblings fell heirs to estate. Thus, Elizabeth (Young) House became entitled to at least one-fourth of her father's share of the Frederick Young Estate.
33. Vosburg, Royden. Records of the German Reformed Church of Canajoharie. Page v. New York Genealogical and Biographical Record, 1916. New York, New York: By the society. ts.
34. Harold Young, dir.
35. This quotation is found within the 14<sup>th</sup> minute of the film.
36. Jeremiah Van Rensselaer's Map of the 1772 Division of the Rutger Bleecker Patent, found within the Albany County Clerk's Office and matching a map of the said 1772 Division found within the Rutger Bleecker Papers (NYSL MSS #SC10816-5), represents a potential fort site on the western edge of Expense Lot "A" with a small black diamond within three acres which Van Rensselaer had stated was set aside for a public road (Field Book of the 1772 Division of the Rutger Bleecker Patent within the New York State Archives). This potential site is located very near the southwest corner of the "Church Lot" and the northeastern corner of Upper Woodland Lot 5 of the Rutger Bleecker Patent
37. Stone's, Life of Joseph Brant, Volume One. **Author's note:** The depiction of mountains being in the background in Stone's sketch of Fort Plank and copies of the sketch reproduced both Lossing and Simms seem to suggest that the view of the fortress and the church is in a south to north direction. From the church yard of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie, mountains are only visible in the back ground when looking from south to north and when looking from west to east. The theory of a south to north view is also supported by Jephtha R. Simms' statement that the fortress was located on the next eminence westward of "the Cemetery Hill" ( The Frontiersman of New York, 1:573).
38. Surveyor's Field Book of the 1772 Division of the Otsquago Patent: Field Book Number 16, Subdivision A, formerly in the Office of the Secretary of State, but now in the New York State Archives,
39. This refers to the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie whose surviving records are housed within the Utica, New York Public Library.
40. John Yordan, RWP A #S26982.
41. Wintersmith's Map.

42. William Campbell, editor. Dewitt Clinton's Private Canal Journal. Joel Munsell: Albany. 1849. Page 40. This quotation was taken from Mister Lenig's critique of "The Bloodied Mohawk".
43. Benson J. Lossing's Pictorial Field Book of the American Revolution, 1:261-3. N. B. Lossing includes in his work a copy of the Fort Plank Sketch found in Stone's 1838, Life of Brant, Volume 2: Appendix A.
44. The author has not been able to find any evidence that this test actually occurred. Thus, this statement is included only to place the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie in a geographical relationship with the fortress.
45. Marino, Ceasare and Tiro, Karim M. Along the Hudson and Mohawk: The 1790 Journey of Count Paolo Andreani.
46. John Jacob Moyer, RWPA #S13960; Johannes Dufendorf, RWPA #W24061; and Nicholas Dunkle, RWPA #S21164.
47. Henry Snook, RWPA #S11435.
48. Pennsylvania Packett of January 7, 1779, page 4; Wintersmith's Map.
49. Interestingly, Isaac Vrooman's "Map of the County of Albany, Tryon, and part of Charlotte made at the request of his Excellency George Washington" in 1779, shows only Fort Plank as being the only Continental Fortress in the Canajoharie District. This raises the question of why, if it existed and it was the headquarters fort, does Fort Rensselaer [or Fort Plain] not appear on the map. One should also note that Vrooman's explanation of his map states that the settlements are shown in exploded view. Finally, it also of interest to note that Vrooman, using his scale one will note that the steeple of the Reformed German Church at Canajoharie is represented to be well over three eights of a mile or 1980 feet tall. The label upon the map denoting the site of Fort Plank is, however, in a hand other than that of the Cartographer Isaac Vrooman, which throws into question the validity of it.
50. Thomas Pownall's 1767 Map (Library of Congress Maps Collection); Carl Wintersmith's Map of Upstate New York.
51. This village was located near modern day Canastota, New York.
52. Vosburgh's Records of the Lutheran St. Paul's Church in the Town of Minden.
53. Henry Glen Letterbook, NYSL.
54. Lane's Journal.
55. The Public Papers of George Clinton, Volume 5:593.
56. John M. Dake, RWPA #S19272.
57. Barber & Howe: 279-80.
58. Montgomery County Deeds, 40:355.
59. Garrett Abeel, NYSL Mss. #13936.
60. Samuel Tallmadge's Orderly Book; Captain Daniel Lane's Journal.
61. Rutger Bleecker Papers Item #5.
62. Haldimand Papers Add Mss. #21759:40 [document #2, the sketch of the works]; Haldimand Papers Add Mss. #21760:208-9 [document #3].
63. Samuel Ludlow Frey Papers Box 5 Folder 94.

64. Index of Revolutionary War Pension Applications in the National Archives.
65. Gerardus Clute, RWPA #S23160; Peter Conrad, RWPA #W16543; Peter Walradt, RWPA #S11684; Jesse Stewart, RWPA #S23014; Moses Stewart, RWPA #S11461; and, William Van Slyke, RWPA #W2461.
66. William Berry, RWPA #S10366.
67. William Snook, RWPA #S11435.
68. Henry J. Diefendorf, RWPA #S12772.
69. Jacob J. Failing, RWPA #W21092.
70. Nicholas Dunkle, RWPA #S21164. The same pensioner also states . . . *that in July [of 1779] following he was again Called to Fort Plank by his said Capt, their kept on duty & at building a block house in which to place a Canon and that during this tour of Service he served fourteen days . . .*
71. There are several stone houses known to have been in existent prior to 1800, amongst these was the stone house of Nicholas Van Slyke which is described in Montgomery County, New York Deed at this point in time. Of these, one seems to have been associated with the Failing Family. In an indenture between Daniel Wood of the County of Onondago of the first part to James and Archibald Kane of Mohawk Township, Montgomery County, New York of the second part on June 19, 1798, a . . . *certain House and Lot ground situate lying and being in the town of Canajohary and County of Montgomery lately in the occupation of Samuel Inglis Junior by Johannis Fetterly, and is comprehended within the bounds of a patent granted to Rutger Bleecker and others, which said piece of ground hereby granted begins at a point from which the South west corner of Nicholas Van Slykes Stone House bears North sixty seven degrees fifty minutes east, the mouth of the ditch between him and Peter Ehe north forty seven degrees fifteen minutes East, the South Edge of Andreas Failings barn South forty five degrees east, and forty feet distant on a north course sixty degrees east from a Hickory tree standing within the bounds of the said piece of Land, and runs thence North forty one degrees fifteen minutes ~~East West~~ twelve rods and then at right angles to the last course seven rods to the place of beginning, the said distances to be taken horizontally and the courses as the needle pointed in 1793 excepting and reserving to John Loucks his heirs and assigns forever the liberty and privilege of taking up and carrying away water for drinking and cooking out of and from a spring in the said piece of ground nearest the road . . .* See also Montgomery County Deeds 6:284.
72. Henry Murphy, RWPA #W18543. It should be noted that Captains Coapman and Diefendorf had overseen the construction of Fort Plank in the spring of 1778 (Frederick Bronner, RWPA #W477; Christopher Eckler, RWPA #R3239; Peter Eckler, RWPA #R3217; and Jacob Garlock, RWPA #S13119).
73. Henry Murphy, RWPA #W18543; and George Ransier, RWPA #S28849.
74. This post appears to have been a picket fort as evidenced by the following:  
*Fort Renselaer 5<sup>th</sup> Sep<sup>r</sup> 81  
Garrison Orders  
Captain Livingston Captain Whelp and Lieutenant Bloodgood of the York levies and Capt Lieut Waldron of the Artillery are to consider them selves in arrest . . . they are to ~~be confine~~ Confine themselves to Quarters within the Picquets of the fort . . .* (NYSL, Mss #SC15705).
75. The Frontiersman of New York, 2:455.
76. Samuel Ludlow Frey Papers, 2:111.
77. Asa Ripley, RWPA #W22077/BLWt #27654-160-55.
78. Immanuel Deake, RWPA #S16105. N. B. Philip Austin, RWPA #S16035, states that he was stationed within Fort. And, Budd Stuart, RWPA #W1662, states concerning the Battle of Turlough and the death of Captain Robert McKean that . . . *Deponet assisted Corporal Scott & two others to carry Captain McKean from the field of Battle and was afterwards present at his*

*burial at Fort Rensselaer . . .*

79. Edward Evans, RWPA #S3487.
80. "Governed or characterized by caprice : impulsive, unpredictable" (The Free Merriman Dictionary).
81. Brigade Major William Scott, Orderly Book of the New Hampshire Brigade, Mss. #Am 6344, The Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
82. Colonel Peter Gansevoort's Private Correspondence in the New York Public Library.
83. The Public Papers of George Clinton.
84. Ibid.
85. Sir Frederick Haldimand Papers.
86. From the above it would seem that any bill submitted to the State of New York for damages incurred to property used by the Army of the United States would be dated Fort Rensselaer.
87. Lieutenant Abraham D. Quackenboss, RWPA #W16688.
88. Fort Plain-Nelliston History: 1850-1947, page 2.
89. Douglas Ayres, Telephone Interview with the author on May 20, 1989.
90. Albany County, New York Clerk's Office, New Map Number 160, Old Map Number 58, Benjamin Wright's 1803 Survey of the Mohawk River (Chart 10).
91. The Public Papers of George Clinton, 6:169.
92. The Frontiersman of New York, 2:455. The above mentioned event is quite understandable, if one assumes that Colonel Willett was indeed aware of the location of Fort Rensselaer in relation to the premises he was ordering to be seized and used for government purposes. If not, one must question the motivation of the writer in inscribing Lieutenant Colonel Willett's express orders with the name of another fort. One must also assume that Simms, who had an established record of changing the names of places and events to substantiate his version of the facts, did not change Fort Rensselaer to Fort Plain when transcribing this document.
93. The above mentioned event is understandable, if one assumes that Colonel Willett was indeed aware of the location of Fort Rensselaer in relationship to the premises he was ordering to be seized for government usage. If not, one must question the motivation of the writer in inscribing Lieutenant Colonel Marinus Willett's express orders with the name of another fortress. One must also assume that Simms, who has a well pattern of changing the names of places and the dates of events to substantiate his own personal opinion of the facts, did not change Fort Rensselaer to Fort Plain when transcribing this document.
94. Montgomery County Deeds, 3:162; Montgomery County Deeds, 5:520.
95. Montgomery County Deeds, 3:162.
96. Tryon County Deeds, 23.
97. Montgomery County Deeds, 46:320.
98. New York City Surrogates Wills 33:420

99. Samuel Ludlow Frey Papers, Box 5 Folder 94.
100. Rutger Bleecker Papers, Item 5.
101. Rutger Bleecker Papers, Item 13.
102. Montgomery County Deeds, 6:1.
103. Rutger Bleecker Papers, Item 14.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid; Albany County Mortgages, 2:336.
106. New York City Surrogates Wills 33:420
107. Unpublished Governor George Clinton Manuscripts in the New York State Archives, Box 53, Item 75.
108. Henry Glen Papers, NYSHA.
109. Montgomery County Deeds, 3:162.
110. Wayne Lenig. "Fort Plain, Fort Plank, Fort Rensselaer, and Canajoharie". 17 Nov 2001. Page 27.
111. Ditto, page 28. He sites as his reference: "Rufus Grider, Historical Scrapbooks, microfilm, Manuscripts and Special Collections, New York State Library." N.B. 1786 is also the year which Henry Eckler Junior (RWPA # S10605) states that his father, Captain Henry Eckler's family left their home in Fort Plank for their pre-war abode in the Kuyl Settlement. Eckler also notes that his father's family was the last to leave Fort Plank.
112. Philip Schuyler Papers [1766 Tax Assessment Rolls of Albany County].
113. George Waggoner, RWPA #S23989.
114. John Yordan, RWPA #S26982.
115. "Plan for the Relief and Provisioning of Fort Schuyler [1780]", NYHS.
116. Barber & Howe, Historical Collections of New York, pp. 195, 274, 279, 509.
117. Volume Two, page 141.
118. Rutger Bleecker Papers.
119. Henry Glen Papers, NYSHA. At first glance this would suggest Fort Rensselaer was located as far north and westward as Lot 6 of the Harrison Patent; however a deed dated April 29, 1802 states that at least a portion of Lot 3 of Harrison's Patent belonged to Colonel Peter Waggoner (Montgomery County Deeds (Montgomery County Deeds 8:364). Apparently, Peter allowed his son George to occupy the land during the American Revolution (Certificates of Quit Rent Remissions, Mss #A1211, Box 7816(D)). Burr's *Atlas of New York* also clearly suggests that Lot 3 was, in its entirety, located south of the mouth of the Otsquago Creek.
120. Colonel Peter Waggoner resided upon Lots 5 & 6 of the Harrison Patent (Certificates of Quit Rent Remissions, NYSL Mss #7816(D); however, Montgomery County Deeds 8:364, specifically shows a tract of 150 acres in Lot 3 of the Harrison Patent to have been owned by Peter Waggoner and occupied by his son George Waggoner during the war (Certificates of Quit Rent Remissions, NYSL Mss #7816(D)).

121. Haldimand Papers, Add Mss #21760:318.
122. Haldimand Papers, Add Mss #21767:129.
123. In writing about the August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1780, attack on Fort Plank, WL adds his own interpretation of the place name: Cleysburgh, Kleysbergh, or Klaisbergh, by employing the "high Dutch" [sic: German] word "Clawburgh" to make the case that this place was also known as "Clay Hill". However, if one consults a German Dictionary they will find that there is a distinct difference between the words berg and burg. The Berg spelling refers to a fortress or castle while the word Burg other refers to a mountain; a significant difference in meaning depending on the spelling. Could the name Kleysburgh instead refer to Kley's Castle or settlement?! We will probably never know.
124. Ensign Derick Van Vechten, RWPA #S23047.
125. William Feeter, RWPA #S13013.
126. Daybold Moyer, RWPA #W15789.
127. Draper Papers, 20F:12.
128. Montgomery County, NY Deed #5:360.
129. Albany County Mortgage, 2:336; Montgomery County Wills, 1:311; Montgomery County Deeds, 15:101 & 15:103; The Public Papers of George Clinton, 6:694, 6:698, 6:699.
130. Henry E. Huntington Library, Mss Map #15440.
131. Public Archives of Canada Record Group Ten: Volume One: Page 349).
132. Public Archives of Canada Record Group Ten: Volume One: Page 250a)
133. The Commissioners of Forfeitures Maps from the New York State Library, Albany, New York.
134. Letter signed by Alexander Thompson, and addressed to his brother on February 24, 1783, housed in Washington's Headquarters, Newburgh, New York. Transcript taken from the S. L. Frey Papers in the New York State Library.
135. Willett Letterbook, NYSL Mss #SC15705. A marquee: is a large tent often used by senior officers (Webster's Dictionary, et al).
136. Fort Plank is mentioned five times, between November 14, 1778 and August 1, 1782: Fort Plain, once, on December 19, 1784; and Fort Rensselaer nine times, between November 2, 1781 and 1785. All of these references are located in the Papers of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789. Interestingly, Fort Plank is mentioned on the same date, August 1, 1782 thus proving they were not one and the same.
137. Haldimand Papers, Add Mss #21787:184.
138. The Public Papers of George Clinton, 6:692.
139. The Public Papers of George Clinton, 7:327.
140. Willett Letterbook, NYSL Mss #SC15705.
141. One must note that after the Battle of Klock's and Failing's Field on October 19, 1780 the name of Robert Van Rensselaer was greatly loathed by the inhabitants of the Mohawk Valley (Simms) and is still so even today [2000]. Thus, it hardly seems likely that many persons, if any, would voluntarily conform to calling Fort Plain, or the Village, Fort Rensselaer in honor of a man so despised.

142. John Barr's Journal.
143. During the American Revolution the Reverend's brother, Lawrence Gross, resided upon 100 acres & 3 roods of land in Lot 14 of the 1739 Division of the Bleecker Patent and on 48½ acres in Lot 15 of the [1739] Division of the Bleecker Patent (Garret Y. Lansing Papers, Box 8:10).
144. Conrad Edick, RWPA #W2084; John Hermance, RWPA #S13376 ;and, Eliphalet Kellogg, RWPA #S2692.
145. Orderly Book of Captain Moses Dusten of the Second New Hampshire Regiment, NYSL Mss #11391.
146. Lawrence Tremper's Journal in the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
147. For an overview of the locations of the various lots here mentioned, see "Bleecker Patent Expense Lots A & B" on the "Mohawk Valley Maps and Sketches" page of [www.fort-plank.com](http://www.fort-plank.com).
148. Haldimand Papers, Add Mss #21767:109.
149. Nicholas Countryman, RWPA #R2367; Johannes Duesler, RWPA #W16244; Cornelius Van Camp, RWPA #W19569; the Personal Papers of Peter Gansevoort, NYPL.
150. Montgomery County Deeds, 8:470.
151. Haldimand Papers, Add Mss #21767:109.
152. Henry Glen Papers, NYSHA. Lansen's Mills was located upon six acres of land adjoining the Otsquago Creek in the Conrad Counderman Patent. A January 15,1772 mortgage notes that this mill was owned by Gerret A. Lansingh, Johannes Conterman, and Abraham Oothout, each holding a one-third share in the property (Montgomery County, Mortgages Book A: 1).
153. The Public Papers of George Clinton, 6:789-90.
154. Montgomery County Deeds, 8:470; Montgomery County Deeds, 19:289; and Montgomery County Mortgage, 3:12-7
155. Tryon County Deeds: 53.
156. John Abeel's house is believed to have been located upon Homestead Lot One of the 1730 Division Bleecker Patent. Figure 14 is a portion of a map of the north-eastern of the Bleecker Patent taken from the Otsquago Patent Papers, New York State Library Manuscript Collection #10816 Item 11.
157. On the evening of the 2nd, Colonel Wemple wrote:

*Fort Plank Aug't 2d 1780. 7 O'Clock.*

*... Our first Halt was at a Fort erected near Mr. Abeals House. The Inhabitants happy to see us. Directly after we had refreshed the men a few minutes, a Number of Volunteers who were least fateigued joined me with the Field officers of both Regiments to see the Fate of this Fort, which we found as full of sorrowfull weomen & Children for their Husbands & Friends which were missing. They had, however, not made any Attempt to attack this Place. . . .*

Throughout the Mohawk Valley during the years of the American Revolution structures home which were built have stone have been referred to as "fort." Prime examples being the three Klock houses, John Hess' House, Cornelius Van Alstine's House, Herkimer Church, Johannes Keyser's House, the two Ehle Houses, the Frey House, the Johnson Houses, etc., etc. Well bring on the three story stone Store House of John Abeel built on the highland just above Johannes Walrath's Ferry western terminal and described by his cousin Garret Abeel in 1772.

Writing of his Cousin John Abeel, Garret Abeel wrote his wife Mary on May 27, 1772:

*"... I cou'd not stand it but was obliged to return to Cebers to try and find something to divert my thoughts, Not many years ago he was a man in full health and very flourishing Circumstances so much so that Intending only to make one trip more for trading with the Indians and then to settle himself he purchased this very fine farm*

*and left orders with his Merchant Mr Van Schaack to have him a goods house built by the time he returned, Mr Van Schaack built him a stone house Two or rather three stories high with sash windows in the front four rooms on a floor, very convient and in a pleasant situation but alas . . .”*

Alas the “fort” mentioned as being near Abeel’s was John Abeel’s three story STONE “goods house,” not a budding new Fort Rensselaer.

158. Philip Schuyler Papers [1766 Tax Assessment Rolls of Albany County].
159. 1764 Van Horne Patent Map, & Garret Y. Lansing Papers Box 9:4.
160. Tryon County Deeds: 23.
161. Montgomery Deeds, 16:411.
162. 1764 Van Horne Patent Map.
163. Vosburg’s Church Records; The Frontiersmen of New York, 2:362.
164. Jacob Garlock, RWPA #S13119; Cornelius Van Camp, RWPA #W19569; Peter Eckler, RWPA #R3239; Peter Young, RWPA #S11922; and Robert H. Wendell, RWPA #R11321.
165. The Public Papers of George Clinton, 6:77; John Etting, RWPA #W19231; and Robert H. Wendell, RWPA #R11321.
166. Countryman Genealogy, 115.
167. Willett’s Letterbook, NYSL Mss #SC15705.
168. Tryon County Deeds: 53.
169. Robert H. Wendell, RWPA #R11321.
170. [Robert Van Rensselaer], Manuscript plan to resupply Fort Schuyler.
171. Assuming the darkened diamond on the Bleecker Patent Map Number 4 designates a fort site.
172. On November 4, 1991 the author received a letter from Mrs. Lora M. Bowman of Franksville, Wisconsin, in which she stated she was born and raised in the Mohawk Valley. In late June of 2005, David Manclow, Minden Township, Montgomery County, New York Historian, informed the author that Douglas Ayres, had informed him that it was the "Lipe Family" which had removed the Sand Hill Gravestones. This however only confirms the removal of the stones, not the identity of the remover(s).
173. Beer’s History of Montgomery And Fulton Counties, N.Y., demonstrates that this is indeed the grave of Robert McFarlan, assuming that the stone was not molested prior to 1878, for on page 131, it is stated: “On a marble slab in the old graveyard attached to the Sand Hill may yet still be seen although it is half down the following inscription: “In memory of Robert McFarlan, Esq., who departed this life July 14, 1813, in the 49<sup>th</sup> year of his life.”
174. Montgomery County Deed 42:515.

175. In one of his many visits with the author, Mr. Luft stated the gravestones were removed by Mr. Irvin Klock and transported to his dairy farm across Route 5S to fill in a small ravine. To date no attempt has been made to excavate any of the stones from the barnyard.

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