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A Lydius Land Map
Restoration at Fort Ticonderoga
Jeremiah Day's Tour

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A LAND MAP OF JOHN HENRY LYDIUS

By W. H. HILL

The manuscript map, of which a reduced photostatic facsimile is printed with this article, was recently purchased by the Vermont Historical Society. We are very fortunate in having an article on the map by Mr. W. H. Hill of Fort Edward, New York, who, by reason of his many historical researches, is the leading authority on Lydius.

The original map is drawn on a large piece of very tough paper. The course of Otter Creek was perhaps taken from another map or a survey, and is marked by a series of pin pricks, connected by a double line. It conforms very closely to the course shown on present maps. The territory contained in this patent conforms roughly to the present outlines of the counties of Addison and Rutland. Otter Pond is evidently a fanciful enlargement of Emerald Lake, in the north east part of the present township of Dorset. A waterfall near the outlet of this lake is probably the uppermost falls of Otter Creek mentioned in Mr. Hill's description. The stormy township of Durham, which corresponds to the present township of Clarendon, was the only Lydius settlement which retained its name for any appreciable time. So far as we are able to discover, this is the only map of this patent which gives the names of the townships. In this connection it is interesting to notice that fifteen of these names were given to other towns in Vermont, although none of them are located in the places here indicated.

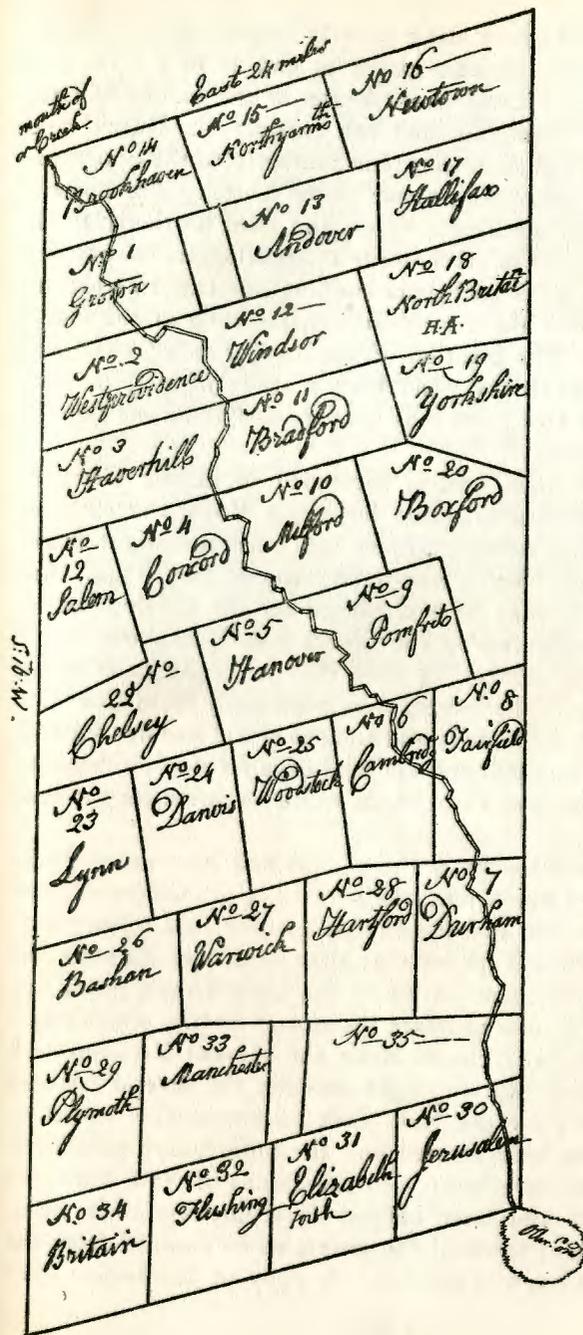
At the north west corner of the map, part of the word Otter Creek is missing. Below the map, in the original, is the brief description of the patent. Further data as to the Lydius patent is given on page 83 of the second issue of this year's Proceedings, and the map on page 88 of the same issue.

THE land map recently acquired by the Vermont Historical Society may be termed, in the words of the rare book dealer, "Excessively Rare." This map was undoubtedly prepared about 1760 by John Henry Lydius for the sale of lands in his Otter Creek grant and while it is possible that several duplicates were issued at the time, and others still exist in private or public

manuscript collections, the fact must still be brought to light. The writer was engaged for five years in the preparation of a local history since published under the title of "Old Fort Edward" and during that time every important book dealer in the United States and Great Britain was asked to report on Lydius material. The result was a letter written in Dutch by Lydius while a resident of Canada in 1730. Another letter in the John A. Manning sale went to a collector with a larger pocketbook than mine though my bid was twice the amount I paid about the same time for a nice ALS of Sir William Johnson. The Tuttle Company of Rutland sold two fine deeds signed by Lydius at \$200.00 each, part of the price being due of course to the early Vermont interest. These facts are related simply to show the difficulty of obtaining manuscript material relating to this interesting character. The principal reason for this condition is that when Lydius went to England about 1765 he took all his papers with him, and, as related in his obituary, they were lost by the person with whom he left them for safe keeping while Lydius was traveling on the continent.

John Henry Lydius was the most picturesque of the northern New York land speculators. Historians have frequently stated that he based at least a part of his land claims upon those of the Rev. Godfredius Dellius, a Dutch minister in Albany as early as 1696, which in turn were transferred to Johannes Lydius, father of John Henry Lydius when Dellius returned to England. Such facts have never been satisfactorily proven and even if so it is apparent that Lydius soon gave up any idea of maintaining such a title for he later relied upon the deeds which he claimed to have received from the Mohawk Indians covering this land.

Lydius came to the present site of Fort Edward about 1731, and established his trading post which remained a well known resort until it was destroyed in 1745 by Marin, the French ranger. On February 1st, 1732, he claimed to have obtained from the above mentioned tribe a deed for two tracts of land, one on Wood Creek, the other on Otter Creek. The basis of this claim was that his father, Johannes Lydius, had long labored among the Mohawks and in return for his ministerial labors they sought to repay the debt by a gift of land to his son who, while not a minister, had continued the good offices of his father among them.



A Plan
of a Large Tract of Land Situate on Otter Creek which Empties itself into Lake Champlain in North America Easterly from and near to Crown Point: Purchased by Col: John Henry Lydius of the Mohawk Indians by Deed Dated February first: 1732 and Patented and Confirmed: by his Excellency William Shirley Governor of the Province of the Massachusetts Bay August 31 1744. Divided into Townships and Disposed of by the said Col: Lydius to upwards of two Thousand British Subjects Chiefly Belonging to the Colony of Connecticut New York and Rhode Island and now ready for to make settlements.

In the handwriting of Dr. Thomas Young see Proc., XI, 214

The Wood Creek grant was a queerly shaped affair, a map of which will be found between pages 40 and 41 of my *Old Fort Edward*. The Otter Creek grant began at the mouth of Otter Creek on Lake Champlain and ran easterly six Dutch miles (or twenty-four English miles); then southerly to the uppermost falls on Otter Creek, being about fifteen Dutch miles more or less; then westerly six Dutch miles; and then northerly to the place of beginning; or in other words a parallelogram twenty-four by sixty English miles with lines running due east to west and north to south with the northwest corner resting at the mouth of Otter Creek. The location of the "upper falls" has never been exactly clear in my mind from a study of modern maps though no doubt this point may be very simple to one familiar with local topography.

To insure his claim Lydius succeeded in having Governor Shirley of Massachusetts secure for him a Royal charter upon the basis that his representations had been investigated and found valid. This charter was issued August 31st, 1744. Any plans that Lydius may have cherished for the development of his land were frustrated by the French and Indian war and it was not until the summer of 1760 that he began to offer the property for sale. The buyers were principally from Connecticut, New York and Rhode Island and the rental was five shillings Sterling per one hundred acres of land capable of improvements. The first payment was to be made twenty years after the date of the lease.

Within two or three years these lands had been taken up by settlers to quite some extent and here Lt. Gov. Colden of New York stepped in and forbade anyone to take title to any land under Lydius, New York at that time of course claiming the present part of Vermont on which the Otter Creek grant lay. It is not practical here to relate the stormy battles which raged over the various land claims along the present Vermont-New York state border, but we might mention the several trials of Lydius at Albany by the New York government of which no final decision has been located and the unfortunante purchasers of his lands who were beset with the claims of New York and New Hampshire and later obliged to repurchase their titles.

Lydius no doubt received the grants as he claimed from the Mohawks and Governor Shirley. A copy of his Indian deed

is incorporated in a deed dated December 20th, 1763, for one eighty-seventh part of the township of Boxford. One of the deeds sold by The Tuttle Company mentioned above covered Township No. 4 or Concord. An idea of the extent to which his lands were sold may be gathered from a petition drawn in 1772, by one hundred and twenty persons who had purchased two townships of Lydius, asking relief and a survey of the land by the province of New York.

Benton's Vermont Settlers and the New York Land Speculators (P. 102) says, "Those purchasers (some Rhode Island people) had made some settlements in Clarendon and perhaps one or two within the present town of Rutland. They very soon found that their Lydius titles were worthless, and further, that there was serious conflict between the New York and the New Hampshire titles. Relying probably on the decision of the court of Albany, they deemed it best to take a New York title, and so they united with Mr. Duane in taking the patent of the tract called Durham. The Vermonters could not permit New York titles to be held in their midst, and they forced these settlers to buy again from New Hampshire. (See also Mass. Land Grants in Vermont by H. W. Denio—Vol. XXIV of the Colonial Society of Mass.).