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**MOLLY BRANT -  
Famous Mohawk  
Woman who fought  
for Loyalists and her  
people**

It is believed that Molly Brant and her younger brother Joseph, or Tyendinaga, were born while their parents were in their hunting village someplace in the Ohio Valley in around 1750. Her Mohawk name was Degonwadonti meaning "Several Against One". Her Christian name was Mary but somehow it changed to Molly along the way.

Often the spouses of young hunters joined the men as they occupied small, temporary villages far from home where the game was plentiful. Then, the salted meat would be shipped back to the main villages in New York to support the occupants. Some men would be away for the season while others for several years at a time.

It was on one of these trips that the father of Molly and Joseph died and their mother returned home to Canandaigua on the Mohawk River a short time later. She then remarried a man named Brant Canagaraduncka, and the siblings soon assumed their stepfather's name.

Down river towards Albany a Scottish gentleman, who had first come to America to manage his uncle's estate and later gained fame with the British forces, was to fall in love with the Mohawk girl. He

had already had a German wife who died and then a Mohawk wife who also died. So when Sir William Johnson went to ask permission to marry another Mohawk woman, he was denied.

At that time, there were many white men marrying Mohawk women and the Chiefs were against the union for several reasons. Other references said they were married in a Mohawk ceremony but never married in an English ceremony, but in his writings, Sir William referred to Molly as his "housekeeper" and not his wife. However, his two deceased wives were never mentioned at all so it appears as though Molly was more his soul-mate than any other woman in his life.

It was written that Molly had suffered a mild facial disfigurement from small-pox; a common disease in those days. It is not known exactly when the disease struck so it is not known if she were beautiful when Sir William first knew her or if he fell in love with her personality regardless of her looks. He had been a good friend of Molly's stepfather for many years he probably knew her when she was just a child.

Shortly after she went to live with Sir William which may have been when she was only 16, he built a fine mansion at the new Johnstown, upriver from Fort Johnson near Fort Hunter; the home of the Lower Mohawks. The home had two floors with two bedrooms downstairs and four up. The

home was soon filled with seven children along with the dozens of visitors and guests who were always there on Indian Affairs business.

Outside the lawns were full of Natives who came to Sir William with all their personal problems and with townfolk who were his tenants and lived on his lavish estate. Molly was the perfect hostess making sure everyone was fed and comfortable. She oversaw gardens full of food, farm animals and all the meal preparation to feed the guests.

On July 11, 1774, Sir William passed away a few hours after speaking at an Indian Council being held on his front lawn. His son by his first wife took his place as Superintendent of Indian Affairs which helped keep Molly in the inner circle of the British military - an association that would put her in the position of being able to help the Mohawks for years to come.

During the Revolution she primarily lived upriver her mother's home in Canajohari until the Americans captured the town and it became too dangerous for her. She acted as a spy transferring information

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