

## THE TOWN OF FLORIDA.

This town, the most south-easterly of Montgomery county, is bounded northerly and easterly by the Mohawk river, southerly by the line of Schenectady county, and westerly by the Schoharie creek. It contains about 29,436 acres of land, and but few of these are unillable. It is the second town of the county in point of area—Root only being larger. It has a variety of soils, and possesses some of the richest lands of the county. It contains the highest table lands—Bean Hill—in the county; the same range is also called Shellstone. The town, while pleasantly undulating, has no savage bluffs nor barren ledges to mar its surface. The Mohawk river, with its varying band of rich flats, forms its entire northern bound; while its western is the famed Schoharie creek, a stream of quite respectable volume, affording numerous water privileges, several of which are fairly utilized and others waiting to be occupied. The stream takes its rise among the spurs of the Catskill range in Greene county; it traverses the whole length of Schoharie and southern part of Montgomery counties, till it debouches into the Mohawk river at Fort Hunter. It is a passionate giant, often, at spring-flood or sudden freshets, sweeping down a mighty volume, fiercely scorning its ordinary channel. It is crossed at Fort Hunter by a fine aqueduct of fourteen stone arches, bearing a wooden trunk for the channel of the Erie canal. A slight dam of the creek at this point makes it also, by means of a portion of the old canal, a valuable feeder for the present Erie canal. The town is also traversed by the Chuctenunda, a small but pretty stream that flows from a body of water called Maria's Pond; itself connected with a more secluded lakelet known as Featherstonehaugh's Lake, which is popularly supposed in places to be fathomless. Maria's Pond is about one by three miles in area, and furnishes a valuable water power, never yet fully employed. The Chuctenunda, after a course of about fifteen miles, empties into the Mohawk river at Port Jackson. A smaller and inconstant stream also falls into the river nearly opposite Cranesville. A quiet little mirror, known as Young's Lake, nestles in a dell on the margin of the Schoharie creek.

The town is mainly agricultural, and is well adapted to a varied range of products, well able to keep pace with varying markets. Wheat was formerly its staple and largely remunerative crop. Then barley became the monopolist, to be succeeded by oats and other cereals. A good deal of fine fruit is also yearly produced for market, and home consumption. Apples, pears and plums find a congenial home, while smaller fruits are not neglected. Most of the alluvial flats of the river and Schoharie creek are devoted to broom corn; a considerable amount of cheese is annually produced by several factories, which stands well in market, and which constitutes no mean item in the town's exchequer.

### THE LOWER MOHAWK CASTLE.

Within the borders of this town, at the confluence of the Schoharie with the Mohawk, was located the lower Mohawk castle, a centre for the tribal gatherings, discussions and decisions, and later attaining eminence as historic ground. The Mohocs, or Mohawks as the name is now written, are commonly regarded by historians as among the most powerful and intelligent of our savage aborigines; of good stature, and athletic frames, naturally warlike and brave, they possessed in large measure all the qualities making up the savage's highest type of a man. The tribe held extensive hunting grounds, which they jealously guarded, and were not over particular in the matter of encroachment upon the territory of weaker neighbors. This lower castle, called by them Tiononderoga, written also Dyiondarogon, became early an important centre, radiating its influence for

peace or war upon savage and civilized life over a wide extent. We worth Greenhalgh, describing the Mohawk villages in 1677, says of the one: "Tionondogue is double stockadoed around; has four ports, 60 foot wide apiece; contains abt 30 houses; is situated on a hill a bow shot from y<sup>e</sup> River." This Indian village was destroyed by the French in 1666 and again 1693; the inhabitants in each case escaping and returning to the spot.

### MISSIONS AMONG THE MOHAWKS.

As early as 1642, certain French Jesuits undertook missionary work among the Mohawks, but their efforts did not result in their obtaining a permanent foothold among the swarthy natives. The Rev. Isaac Jogue the first intrepid missionary of this society, fell a martyr to his zeal and devotion, as has been elsewhere related. Not daunted by his fate, through the following years there were found courageous men to take their lives in their hands for their Master's sake—Francois Joseph Bressaue, in 1644; Simon Le Moyne, 1655-7; Jacques Fremin, 1667-72; Jean Pierron 1667-8; Francois Boniface, 1668-73; Francois Valliant De Gueslis, 1674 and Jacques De Lamberville, 1675-8.

Doubtless the prominence of this village as an Indian stronghold and centre of influence had weight in directing thither, also, English missionary zeal, and the pious anxiety of her Majesty Queen Anne to exert her divine prerogative as defender and propagator of the faith. An Episcopal society in England was incorporated by royal charter from King William III., June 16, 1701, known as the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts." It had as one of its objects the conversion of the Indians, and attracted the careful attention of "Good Queen Anne" from the first of her reign. In 1702, or 1703, the Rev. Mr. Talbot came as a missionary to the Mohawks. He was the first clergyman of the English Church in these parts. His stay was short, and he was succeeded by the Rev. Thoroughgood Moore, who arrived in New York in 1704, and proceeded thence to Albany to act as a missionary to the Indians. Owing to the influence of the fur traders, or some others, he was unsuccessful and returned to New York.

Rev. Thomas Barclay was chaplain to the fort at Albany in 1708, and acted also as missionary to the Mohawks until November, 1712, when the Rev. William Andrews was sent out by the society as a successor to Mr. Moore. By order of the Queen, a fort was built for his security in the discharge of his duty, and as a protection for the Mohawks against the French. It was called Fort Hunter after the governor of the colony, and had a garrison of twenty men. The liberality of the Queen also caused the erection and endowment of a chapel and manse. The manse is still standing in sturdy strength. It is a two-story stone building, about 25 by 35 feet, and is, perhaps, the oldest structure in the Mohawk valley, west of Schenectady. A glebe of 300 acres was also attached to it. There are yet many undimmed eyes that might have seen the chapel destroyed in 1820. Mr. David Cady, of Amsterdam, speaks of having heard with interest his grandmother, long a dweller near it, describe her attending Christmas services in that church; its quaint arrangement and appointments; and the wondrous dignity of an old colored man, in a sort of livery of scarlet coat, etc., who was the chief official, pew-opener and organ-blower. It is matter of great regret that this church, so vivid a memento of the past, was not spared, as it might well have been by a slight and unimportant divergence of the line of the Erie Canal, which was cut directly through its site. It had a bell, which now does service daily in the academy at

Johnstown village. The entrance to the chapel was on the north side. The pulpit stood at the west end, and was provided with a sounding board. Directly opposite were two pews with elevated floors; one of which, with a wooden canopy, in later times was Sir William Johnson's; the other was for the minister's family. The rest of the congregation had movable benches for seats.

This chapel contained a veritable organ, the very Christopher Columbus of its kind; in all probability the first instrument of music of such dignity in all the wilderness west of Albany. It was over fifty years earlier than the erection of the Episcopal Church at Johnstown, which had an organ brought from England, of very respectable size and great sweetness of tone, which continued in use up to the destruction of the church by fire in 1836.

Queen Anne in 1712 sent as furniture for the chapel a communion table cloth, two damask napkins, a "carpet for the communion table," an altar cloth, a pulpit cloth, a large tasseled cushion for the pulpit, and a small one for the desk; a Holland surplice, a large Bible, two Common Prayer Books, one of them for the clerk; a Book of Homilies, a large silver salver, two large silver flaggons, a "Silver dish," a silver chalice, four paintings of her Majesty's arms on canvas, one for the chapel and three for the different Mohawk castles; twelve large octavo Bibles, very finely bound, for the use of the chapels among the Mohawks and Onondagas, with two painted tables containing the Lord's Prayer, Creed and Ten Commandments, "at more than 20 guineas expense." To which the society having charge of the mission added a table of their seal finely painted in proper colors, to be fixed likewise in the chapel of the Mohawks; all of which safely arrived with Mr. Andrews in the fall. On the 15th of Nov., 1712, Rev. Wm. Andrews was officially received at Albany by the Commissioners of Indian affairs and the Mohawk sachems. The commissioners promised to procure "men, sleds, and horses for conveying the goods of the Rev. Wm. Andrews to the Mohawks country." Mr. Andrews was no more successful than his predecessors, and in 1719 abandoned his mission.

The Reformed Dutch Church at Albany had sent its ministers occasionally to instruct the Indians in the Christian faith, the Rev. Godefridus Dellius being the first, who was succeeded by the Rev. Johannis Lydius. A petition to "his Excellency, Edward Lord Viscount Cornbury, her Majesty's Cap'n Gen'l and Gov'r in Chief, &c.," dated Albany, Dec. 30, 1703, signed Johannis Lydius, asks for an order on the Collector or Receiver General for £60, "one year's salary in ye service as aforesaid, which is expired November 1st, 1703." Mr. Lydius continued his missionary labors until his death, March 1, 1710. His successor, representing the same church, was the Rev. Petrus Van Driessen, who was still with the mission in 1722.

The most cordial relations existed between the ministers of the Reformed Dutch and Episcopal churches in their Indian mission work. After the Rev. Wm. Andrews had abandoned his mission, the Church of England had no resident missionary among the Mohawks until the Rev. Henry Barclay came in 1735, being appointed catechist to the Indians at Fort Hunter. His stay with them was made very uncomfortable by the French war and the attitude of his neighbors. He had no interpreter, and but a poor support, and his life was frequently in danger. In 1745 he was obliged to leave Fort Hunter, and in 1746 was appointed rector of Trinity Church, New York, where he died.

Lieutenant Governor Clarke, in 1736, directed the attention of the Assembly to the dilapidated condition of the military works at Fort Hunter, and suggested that a new fort be built at the carrying place between the Mohawk river and Wood creek, afterwards the site of Fort Stanwix, and the garrison transferred from Fort Hunter to this new position. The carrying out of this project was not acceptable to the Mohawks, for in 1739 they demanded that the defences of Fort Hunter be rebuilt and a garrison continued there, under a threat that they would leave their own country and remove to Canada. The post had become an important one to them. The historian Colden says: "An officer of the regular troops told me that while he was commandant of Fort Hunter, the Mohawks on one of these occasions [a war dance] told him that they expected the usual military honors as they passed the garrison. The men presented their pieces as the Indians passed, and the drum beat a march; and with less respect the officer said they would have been dissatisfied. The Indians passed in single row, one after the other, with great gravity and profound silence, and every one of them, as he passed the officer, took his gun from his shoulder, and fired into the ground near the officer's foot. They marched in this

manner three or four miles from their castle. The women, on these occasions, follow them with their old clothes, and they send back by them their finery in which they marched from the castle."

Sir Wm. Johnson, writing to Lieutenant-Governor De Lancey, under date of "Mount Johnson, 6 June, 1755," speaks as follows:

"I returned last night from the Conogohery Indian Castle, having first been at the Mohock Castle. At both Settlements I have fixt on Places to build them Forts. At the hither Castle I propose it to be nearly on a Line with Fort Hunter, to take in the Church as a Bastion & to have a communication Pallisado between the two Forts, which will be a small expence & in case of an Attack may be of great Service by mutually assisting each other, and if drove to the necessity of quitting the One they may still maintain the other."

Eleven days later Johnson writes De Lancey:

"I have last Night with much Difficulty agreed with three Men, to build the two Forts at the Mohawk Castles; As wood fitt for that Purpose is very scarce thereabouts, I could hardly get them to undertake the work for yt. Sum."

Rev. John Ogilvie was Dr. Barclay's successor in this mission. He commenced his work in March, 1749, and succeeded Dr. Barclay also at Trinity Church, New York, after the latter's death in 1764. An effort was next made to introduce converted Indians as missionaries and school teachers, to reclaim the natives from their savage life. In August, 1769, there was an Indian school in operation at Fort Hunter, and a list of the scholars may be found in the Documentary History of New York.

Sir Wm. Johnson, writing to Lord Hillsborough from Johnson Hall, August 14, 1770, says: "The Mohocks have had Missionaries of the Church of England amongst them from the Reign of Queen Anne till within these few years, they are now without any, & from the scarcity of Clergymen or some other cause, the Society cannot procure them on the Sallary which their small funds have limited them to, whilst at the same time the Ind<sup>s</sup>. find that their Brothers in Canada &c., who were our Enemies, are regularly supplied, & one lately appointed in Nova Scotia at the Expence of Government as tis said, I therefore cannot help at the Intreaty of the Ind<sup>s</sup>. humbly recommend<sup>d</sup> to his Majestys consideration the afford<sup>d</sup> some allowances for the Mohock Mission which has always been under the immediate protection of the Crown, declaring it as my belief that if any farther provision could be made to employ others in so good a work it would increase their reverence for the Crown, and their attachment to the British Interest."

Pursuant to this appeal, the last missionary to the Mohawks was appointed, namely, the Rev. John Stuart, who arrived at Fort Hunter Dec. 2, 1770. He prepared, with the assistance of the celebrated Joseph Brant, a Mohawk translation of the Gospel of St. Mark. At the breaking out of the Revolution he made himself obnoxious to the yeomanry of the Mohawk valley by his relations to the Johnson family and the Indians, and his uncompromising loyalty to the crown. It is said his house was attacked and plundered, his church turned into a tavern, and, in ridicule and contempt, a barrel of rum placed on the reading desk. Mr. Stuart was thus necessitated to remove, and in June, 1778, was reported to be in Schenectady.

At the opening of the Revolution Fort Hunter was in a state of delapidation. The remains of its walls were then pulled down and a palisade thrown about the chapel, which was also defended by block houses mounting cannon. A garrison was stationed here toward the close of the war.

#### OTHER EARLY CHURCHES.

Next to Queen Anne's Chapel, so historic, the first house of worship in Warrensburgh appears to have been a log church standing near what is known as Snook's Corners. All trace of it is now gone. Faithful itinerant ministers occasionally held services in barns and dwellings. At one such service a lad of eight or ten years was to receive the ordinance of baptism, but when the time for the rite arrived the frightened and truant candidate had to be pursued among the rafters of the barn, where he had sought refuge. In the log church Rev. James Dempster officiated some time; no record of his ministry can now be found. He left a character for sterling piety, coupled with activity and no little eccentricity.

In 1769 a German named Lawrence Shuler, originally from Wurtemberg, but for some years a resident of Catskill, located upon a fertile farm of three hundred acres, now one mile east of Minaville. He reared

a family of sixteen children. "A man distinguished for good sense, tempered by a spirit of piety and benevolence, and diffusing an influence of goodness and liberality through his family circle as well as in the neighborhood. The first Reformed Dutch church in the town was erected upon his lands, as was also the neighborhood school-house, he contributing liberally towards the erection and support of both." To this church the Rev. Thomas Romeyn, of Caughnawaga, was called to minister in 1784, and he served it acceptably some years. This church continued in use until 1808, when another was erected at the "street," one mile west, and only occasionally was service held in the old church thereafter, until the frame was sold and removed from its site. The burial ground around had become populous, and it now contains many ancient head-stones, with quaint inscriptions.

#### ORIGINAL OWNERSHIP OF THE SOIL.

Maps illustrating this topic will be found on the page with the outline map of Montgomery and Fulton counties. In 1703 the land about Fort Hunter and extending across the Schoharie creek was granted to John Peterson Maibee. This was the first grant in Tryon county.

October 16th, 1753, Walter Butler purchased from the Indians a tract of 86,000 acres, which began on the south side of the Mohawk river, "at the land in possession of one David Cavill, and running thence along said river to the flats or lowlands of Tienonderogo; thence around said flats to Tienonderogo creek; thence along said creek to Schoharie; thence along said Schoharie as they run southerly and easterly; thence to the bounds of Schenectady, and around other patented lands to beginning." This was divided into six tracts, one of which was transferred to Charles Williams and others, August 29th, 1735, and comprised the principal portion of what is now the town of Florida. It began at a certain marked tree standing "on the east side of Schoharie river, opposite the dwelling house of Wm. Bowne, and running thence north, 40° 30' east, 277 chains, to Mohawk's river; then down the stream, as it runs, to a certain place on the south bank of said river, which is 461 chains, measured on a straight line, distant from the end of the line running north, 40° 30' east; then south, 62° 30' west, 612 chains, to Schoharie river; then down said river, as it runs, to the place where said 14,000 acres began; excepting out of said tract the lands formerly granted to Henry Huff and the lands called the village lands." All trees 24 inches in diameter and upwards, at 12 inches from the ground, were to be reserved for masts for the Royal Navy. The parties taking possession of this tract were to pay the yearly rent of 2 shillings, 6 pence for each 100 acres at the Custom House in New York, and agreed to settle and cultivate at least 3 acres out of every 50 within the next three years.

This was the tract afterward owned by Sir Peter Warren, and known as Warrensbush, probably purchased by him in 1737; as a petition to be allowed to purchase 6,000 acres of land is filed by him in the Secretary of State's office, dated May 5th, 1737. This land remained in the Warren family for nearly sixty years. Peter Warren was born in Ireland in 1704, and was trained to the nautical profession. In 1727 he was appointed to the command of the "Grafton," and, after a brilliant career, was made admiral in 1747. During part of this time he lived in New York, where he built the house No. 1 Broadway, afterwards known as the Washington Hotel, and married Susannah, eldest sister of Hon. James Delancey.

After the death of Sir Peter Warren, Warrensbush, as he had named it, was divided into three parts: one part was conveyed to Charles Fitzroy, otherwise called Lord Southampton, a grandson of Gov. Cosby, and Ann, his wife; one part to the Earl of Abingdon, and the third to Henry Gage and Susannah, his wife. Fitzroy conveyed his part to Col. MacGregor, a merchant of the city of New York, May 29, 1795, (who had a survey made July 6, 1795 by Lawrence Vrooman,) and he to Leonard Gansevoort of Albany, April 8, 1796. The Earl of Abingdon and Henry and Susannah Gage conveyed their two shares to John Watts, of New York, who was formerly their attorney, and was also a brother-in-law to Sir Peter Warren, they having married sisters, daughters of James Delancey. David Cady was agent for John Watts in Warrensbush.

The same year (1735) that Charles Williams received his grant of 14,000 acres, patents were given to Edward and Phillas Harrison, Anne Wilmot, Maynard and Elizabeth Guerin, Henry Cosby and Wm. Cosby, jr., which comprised, with those before mentioned, all the land of the town of Florida.

In the spring of 1738, Wm. Johnson, then a young man 23 years of age, was sent by his uncle, Sir Peter Warren, to take charge of and form settlements upon the tract he (Warren) had lately purchased. He first located on the south bank of the Mohawk, on what is now known as the Blood farm, about a mile below the village of Port Jackson. Here he opened a little country store, his uncle furnishing the money to the amount of £200. Goods were purchased in New York, and included everything that would sell well on the frontier, not forgetting rum. Johnson's customers were both whites and Indians, and the trade in furs was considerable. Sir Peter attended to the shipping of them to England. The means of both at this time were limited, and Sir Peter saw the advantage to be gained by settling his lands as rapidly as possible. In a letter to young Johnson, from Boston, dated Nov. 20, 1738, commencing, "Dear Billy," he recommends planting a large orchard in the following spring, and girdling trees for clearing. "In doing which," he says, "I would be regular and do it in square fields, leaving hedge rows at each side, which will keep the land warm, be very beautiful, and subject you to no more expense than doing it in a slovenly, irregular manner." In 1742 Johnson began to make preparations to move to the north side of the river, which coming to his uncle's knowledge, quite displeased him, as he supposed his own lands would be neglected. However, the young trader did move, and in 1744 built the stone house in the town of Amsterdam known as Fort Johnson.

The first settlements in the town of Florida are supposed to have been made by Germans from Schoharie, in the reign of Queen Anne.

#### RECORDS OF OLD MOHAWK.

The clerk's office of the town of Florida has an ancient looking, parchment-bound volume of somewhat coarsish paper, upon each leaf of which is a large watermark representing in a circle a sitting figure holding in the left hand a lance and in the right a plant, the circle surmounted by the regal crown. The first record in this book is of a town meeting, held in and for the town of Mohawk, on the first Tuesday in April, 1788, about a month after the town was formed. The entries are quaint and the verbiage and spelling often quite original. "Opened the poll," says the record, "and adjourned to the church. After reading the laws, proceeded to choose town officers." At this election were chosen a supervisor, two collectors, five assessors, five constables, three overseers of the poor, eight fence-viewers, four pound-keepers and eleven path-masters. The next election was "ordered at the house of John Visscher, town clerk, Fort Hunter." Thirty-one path-masters were this year elected. It was "concluded by majority of votes in the town of Mohawk, that hogs shall be confined in pastures." Then follow the oaths of officials.

That of the supervisors might well be commended for use in these later days: "I do solemnly and sincerely promise and swear, that I will in all things, to the best of my knowledge and ability, faithfully and impartially execute and perform the trust reposed in me as Supervisor of the Town of Mohawk; that I will not pass any account or any article thereof where-with I shall think the said county is not chargeable, nor will I disallow any account or article thereof wherewith I think the said county is justly chargeable." The town clerk and overseer of the poor took similar oaths. Minute descriptions of marks upon horses, cattle, sheep and hogs, are numerous in the records, as "horses branded on the left thigh, letters C. D. The mark of cattle, sheep and hogs, a square crop of left ear, and a slit in the right;" "a crop of the left air, and a squar hoel in the wright."

We find here the undertaking of a certain person by way of public auction "to maintain one of the poor of Mohawk town, for the term of one year," the consideration being in this case "the sum of eight pounds nineteen shilling;" and in another, "eleven pounds fourteen shilling." This last named party was the next year undertaken for the sum of "nine pounds, seven shillings and sixpence."

Notice is given for holding an "Election for the Mohawk Town, 27th April, 1790, of one Representative to the Congress of the United States from the counties of Montgomery and Ontario, and that part of the county of Albany which lies at the west side of Hudson river; three senators for the western district of the State of New York, and six members to represent the county of Montgomery in the House of Assembly."

September 19, 1790, the commissioners of highways ordered the sum of ten pounds to be raised by tax for the expense of three-inch plank "for the use of the bridges on public highways in said town, to wit, the Tugh-

tenando bridge, and the high bridge at the upper side of Mr. Elliot's." The varied spelling of the names of the "twin sisters" creeks, running through the towns of Amsterdam and Florida—"Ouctenunda," "Tintenunda," "Tughtenando," "Chuctenunda"—will have been noticed, and is easily traced to the difficulty of fixing the guttural Indian tones in our less flexible orthography.

In the year 1791, we find a list of licenses and permits given, thirty-three in number, amounting to £64 10s. The entry quite innocently omits to say for what such permits were given. Perhaps tradition may help us to conjecture. In 1787, we find entered, *in extenso*: "Received June 4th, 1787, of Mr. Paschal N. Smith, thirty-three pounds in full for the commutation of quit rent on two thousand acres of land in a patent granted the 12th of November, 1737, to James De Lancy, Paschal Nelson, Jacob Glen, and others, the aforesaid two thousand acres being the original patentee right of Paschal Nelson, and lays on Aurieskill near the Mohawk river, formerly Albany county, now Montgomery county." Signed, Peter Curtenius, R. Q. R.

Other entries of similar character testify to the early anxiety to get rid of the vexatious ground rents. But the lease system was well entrenched, and the owners knew well their value; only slowly and gradually was the right to the soil obtained. A lease, dated "20th Feb., 1789," represents the lessee as obtaining from "the Right Honorable the Earl of Abingdon, of the Kingdom of Great Britain, for the consideration of five shillings, lot sixty-five in a map of Warrensburgh, made by John R. Bleeker, 1766, containing one hundred acres, yielding and paying the yearly rent of one pepper corn if demanded." It bears the signature of Willoughby, Earl of Abingdon, and is sealed with wax, with the impress apparently of an *intaglio ring*. The paper has the regal water mark.

Here also may be cited a quit-claim of certain leaseholds of which we have spoken: "Whereas, John Watts of the city of New York, and Jane, his wife, did purchase from the Earl of Abingdon, of Great Britain, and from Henry Gage and Susanna, his wife, and others their trustees, two tracts or parcels of land situated at a place called Warrensburgh, in the town of Mohawk, county of Montgomery, State of New York, formerly part of the estate of Sir Peter Warren, and being two-thirds which, on a partition thereof, fell to and were severally conveyed to the said Earl of Abingdon, and to said Henry and Susanna Gage; and whereas, since such purchase, said John Watts hath sold and conveyed sundry lots thereof to David Cady, Nathan Stanton, Ezra Murray, Phillip and Peter Frederick, William and Peter Youngs, George and Jacob Staleys, John Van Derveer, Peter and Jacob Houck, Elisha Cady, George, Christian and Peter Service, Rooleiffe Covenhoven, Asa Waterman, John Quackenboss, Ephraim Brockway, Lewis Phillip, Phillip Doty, and sundry others, with covenants on the part of said John Watts to convey the same in full to them on payment of certain sums in the said demises mentioned. And, whereas, it was intended, and it is just and reasonable, that the said several persons and their heirs and assigns, to whom such conveyances have been already made, should hold the same free, clear and discharged of dower, or claim of dower of said Jane Watts in the same: Now, in consideration of the premises, and to carry the same into effect, and also for and in consideration of the sum of ten shillings, with which the said Jane doth acknowledge herself satisfied and paid, she the said Jane, by and with the consent of her said husband, signified by his being a party hereto, hath remised, released, and forever quit-claimed unto the said David Cady, and the several others above named, the said lands and premises, free and clear of all dower and claim of dower of her, said Jane Watts, of and in the same."

"Signed and sealed this thirteenth day of November, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three." Both signatures have wax seals, showing very clearly the Watts crest, with its motto: "*Forti non deficit telum*." It would seem probable this quitclaim may cover a large part of the two-thirds of the original estate of Sir Peter Warren, the estate which brought his nephew, afterwards Sir William Johnson, to become a resident here. A daughter of this John Watts became the wife of Sir John Johnson, the Baronet's only son.

In 1792, as the poll list shows, path-masters had increased to the number of fifty-four, and as we might expect, the office of commissioner of highways becomes a most important one, and many entries and pages attest the action of such commissioners in the laying out new and establishing existing highways. Advancing civilization demanded better routes of transit than Indian trail, or narrow bridle path. It would be utterly impossible now to trace any of these highway by the land marks given. What

was then clear, is now vague and indefinite; thus, under date of May 7, 1788:

"Be it remembered that we, the Commissioners of the Mohawk district and county of Montgomery, have laid out a common road from two rods below the block house, now in possession of Barent Hansen, along down the banks of Schoharie creek, down along the Mohawk River, until it comes to the convenient place to ford the river to John Putman's, and allow three swing gates in that distance." Oct. 15, 1787, the commissioners, having viewed and found it necessary, laid out a road; "beginning at Richard Van Veghten's fence at a small birch tree marked; from thence by marked trees to the lane between William Vintons on to Nicholas Spore, and thence along said lane to a large hemlock tree marked; from thence by marked trees to John Van Wormer's pasture, and along the creek to the outside of the pasture; from thence by marked trees to the old road marked out; thence along said road to the road come by Martin Bovee," and so ordered it to be recorded. Very quaint, very simple are many of these descriptions, often "as near the creek, or the side of the hill, as the make of the land will admit of." Generally four rods, but sometimes three and even two rods are permitted as the width of roads, to enable the settler "to get out to mill and to market." We quote but one more of these records, that of a "Public road four rods wide, beginning on Albert Frank's land on the now public road, from thence on the south side of a Red Oak Saplin, marked with a cross and S S, thence near a westerly course on the north side of the Baptist Meeting, with a straight course forward on the north side of Albert Frank's house to black cherry Saplin marked H, on the south side of said tree from thence a westerly course to hickory Saplin, on south side of said Saplin marked H, from thence forward a westerly to a beach Saplin on the north side marked H, thence forward until it strikes the division line of Andrew Franks and Peter Hycks, thence on said division line to a hemlock tree marked H, on the south side of said tree on Andrew Frank's land over the height of ground, until it intersects the public road."

#### THE EARLIEST FLORIDA RECORDS.

Florida was formed from Mohawk, March 12, 1793. The first annual town meeting was held at the house of Ezra Murray, on the first Tuesday in April, 1794, when the following officers were elected for the year: David Cady, supervisor; Stephen Reynolds, town clerk; George Servoss, William Phillips and David Beverly, assessors; Lawrence Shuler and Bernard Marten, overseers of the poor; David Cady, John T. Visscher and Benjamin Van Vleck, commissioners of highways; Christian Servoss, Collector; John Cady, and Caleb P. Brown, constables.

The orderly condition that had become the routine of Mohawk was so well understood, that little change was necessitated in the management of town affairs. Among other regulations enacted at the first town meeting, was the provision, "that if any person, between the 15th of May and the 15th of June in any year, shall kill any crow or blackbird, within the limits of the Town, and shall produce the heads thereof to the supervisor, he shall be entitled to receive from the supervisor the sum of one shilling for each crow, and four pence for every blackbird, to be proved, if disputed, by the oath of the person applying for the same."

At the same meeting it was "enacted that the supervisor of this Town pay unto Ezra Murray the sum of one pound five shillings, as a reward for the use of his house this day." The next meeting was voted to be held at the dwelling of Eben Chase. Next year the crow and blackbird bounty was repealed. Four pounds were ordered erected, and localities assigned; each was to be forty feet square, with "five posts on a side, three feet in the ground." The next place of meeting was voted on, and oftentimes they seem to have been private dwellings, in various localities. In 1799 is entered, "Amount of school money allotted for the Town of Florida is 326 dollars, 28 cents."

Following a very solemn oath, signed by the commissioners of excise, "that we will not on any account, or pretence whatsoever, grant any license to any person within said town, for the purpose of keeping an Inn or Tavern, but only in such cases as appear to us to be absolutely necessary for the benefit of travellers," we have the names of three persons certified as "of good moral character, and of sufficient ability to keep an Inn or Tavern," to whom such licenses were issued.

In our venerable record we find, April 2, 1811, the enactment, "that no cattle, horses, or sheep be allowed to haunt taverns, grist mills or other

public places to the damage of any owner of any wagon or sleigh that may stand waiting at such place, after the first day of Nov., until the first day of April following; and such cattle, horses or sheep intruding on such place to the detriment or damage of any customer or person at such place in waiting, shall be liable to be impounded, and the owner of such cattle or creature to pay the owner or occupant of such public stand the sum of twenty cents, and the further sum of eighty cents to the pound keeper." In 1812, "hogs, shotes or pigs, are forbidden to run at large under penalty of fifty cents;" a still later ordinance forbids, under penalty of ten dollars, any owner or occupant of land "to suffer or permit any stalk or plant of the Canada thistle to grow and blossom upon their lands," and it further directs overseers of the highways "to cause any plant of the Canada thistle growing in the highway to be cut down at least once in the months of June, July and August, under a like penalty." From this time the brief records of the town become yearly more terse and definite. The grooves that custom forms become worn, and are easier kept. On through the pages appear names of those whose lives honored themselves, and were a blessing to their day.

In turning these yellow and olden leaves, in scanning the records of hands so long folded, in conning these lists of names, one goes out into a new, though so old a world. Other times are lived, other scenes are passing; the long past is the real, the present has for the moment vanished. Names here so oft recurring are known no more in all the region. Large families have dwindled and wasted, and no representative of name or race can now be found. Pages could be easily filled with worthy names of those who here had homes, those whose brawny arms helped to level forests, and bring into productiveness and beauty the primitive wilderness. The Shulers, Overbaughs, Servisses, Ruffs, Pettengills, Cadys, Jacksons, Staleys, Schuylers, Reynoldses, Hills, Bents, Smiths, Stantons, Vanderveers, Hales, Voorheeses, De La Maters, Johnsons, Greens, Ellises, Herricks, De Graffs, Choletts, Murrays, Covenhovens, Earls, Claytons, Quackenbosses, Snooks, Gordons, Mudges, Youngs—many of these lived brave, noble lives, and left spotless names as an inheritance for their children.

#### OLD TIMES IN FLORIDA.

With the opening of the nineteenth century, we seem to come a long step toward the present. It seems a great mile-stone in history, dividing a fading past from the fresher present. The long, doubtful struggle with England had resulted in a dearly bought, dearly prized peace, with its beautiful victories. Local tradition has not yet lost the memory of the suffering that followed the infamous raid of Brant and Butler through this neighborhood in 1680; and still treasures tales of hair-breadth escapes, of families that found darksome homes in the cellars of their burned dwellings, of the fearful hushing of children lest their voices should betray the places of concealment, of the hiding of plate and valuables, tea kettles freighted with spoons being hid in such haste as to defy future unearthing. Such hallowing as the carnival of Indian warfare could give has Florida to boast. But at last "the land had rest." The red man, once sovereign lord, had disappeared; the powerful Johnson family was exiled, its homes sequestered, and in other hands. Sturdy toil and earnest labor won their due return, and thrift and competency were everywhere attested by hospitable homes and well stored barns. Albany was the main market for the products of the town; wheat forming the most considerable item. School houses and churches now dotted the landscape, and busy grist and saw mills perched on many streams. The Dutch language was much spoken, but many Connecticut and New England settlers never acquired it, and theirs became the most common tongue.

Not alone have the "blazed," or marked, trees and saplings, which indicated the lines of roads or farm boundaries, long since decayed, but "block house" and log cabin have also disappeared, and it may be doubted if five specimens of these early homes can now be found within the bounds of Florida. Yet still there live who can remember the old-fashioned houses. Says Mr. David Cady to whom, with Mr. J. Cady Brown, we are indebted for the larger part of our history of Florida: "We have seen the type, and warmed ourselves at the great hospitable fire-place, with crane, pot-hooks and trammels, occupying nearly the side of the room; while outer doors were so opposed that a horse might draw in the huge log by one entrance, leaving by the other. Strange, too, to our childish eyes were the curious chimnies of tree limbs encrusted with mor-

tar. Then the wide fire-place was universal; the huge brick oven indispensable. Stoves were not, though an occasional Franklin was possessed. The turkey was oft cooked suspended before the crackling fire; the corn cake baked in the low, coal-covered bake kettle; the potatoes roasted beneath the ashes, and apples upon a ledge of bricks; nuts and cider were in store in every house. As refinement progressed, and wealth advanced, from the fireside wall extended a square cornice, perhaps six feet deep by ten feet wide, from which depended a brave valance of gay printed chintz, or snowy linen, perchance decked with mazy net-work and tasseled fringe, wrought by the cunning hand of the mistress or her daughter. These, too, have we seen. Possibly the household thrift of the last century was not greater than that of the present time, but its field of exertion was vastly different. The hum of the great and the buzz of the little spinning wheel were heard in every home. By the great wheels the fleecy rolls of wool, often hand-carded, were turned into the firm yarns that by the motions of deft fingers grew into warm stockings and mittens, or by the stout and clumsy loom became gay coverlet of scarlet, or blue and white, or the graver "press cloth" for garb of women and children, or the butter-nut or brown or black home-spun of men's wear. The little wheel mainly drew from twirling distaff the thread that should make the "fine twined linen," the glory and pride of mistress or maid, who could show her handiwork in piles of sheets, table-cloths and garments. Upon these, too, was often lavished garniture of curious needlework, hemstitch and herring-bone and lace-stitch. Plaid linseys and linen wear were, too, fields for taste to sport in, while the patient and careful toil must not go unchronicled that from the wrecks of old and worn out clothes, produced wondrous resurrection in the "hit-or-miss," or striped rag carpet, an accessory of so much comfort, so great endurance, and often so great beauty. Horseback was the most common style of traveling. The well-sweep or bubbling spring supplied the clear cold water. Such was the *then*, we know the *now*. In modes of life, in dress and equipage, in social and political habits, in locomotion, in comforts, in commerce, one needs not to draw the contrast; more wide and striking it scarce could be."

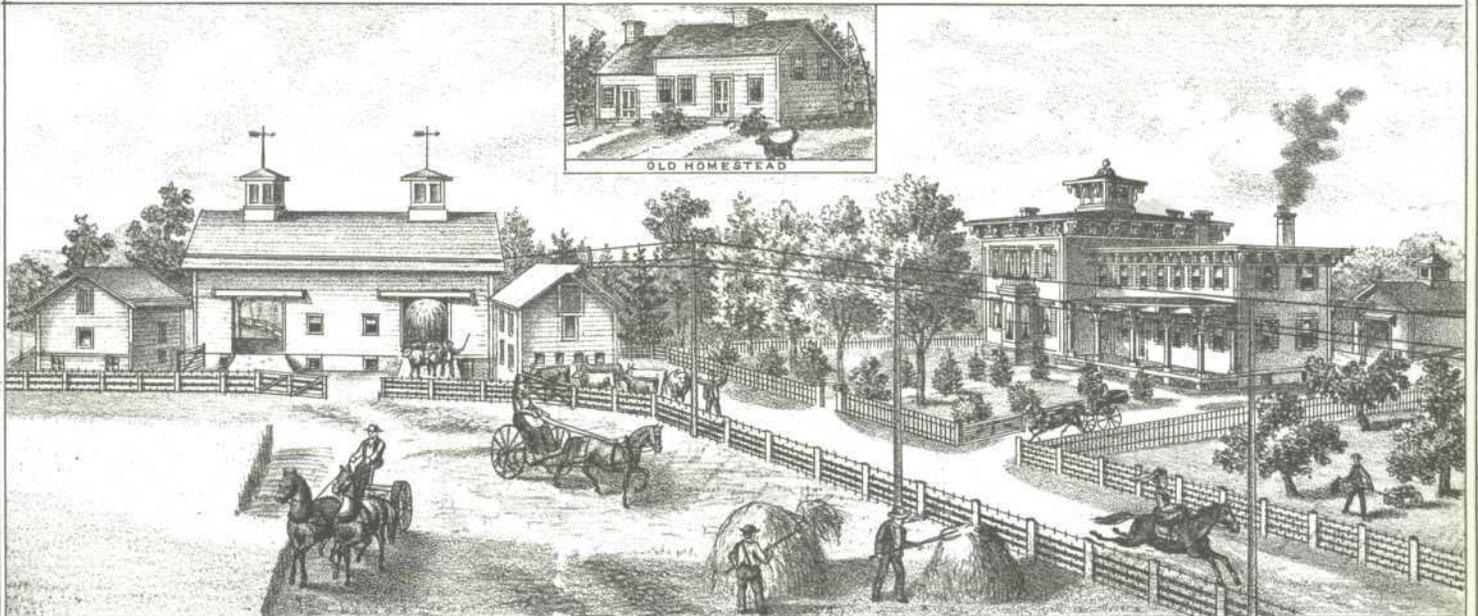
#### APPRENTICESHIP AND SLAVERY.

While, as we have seen, in its earliest days the town recognized and cared for those whom we "have alway with us," the poor, by "undertaking" them at public auction, it was not unmindful of the orphaned or helpless waif. We think deserving of place this "Indenture maid this 25th day of Oct., 1791, between Albert Covenhoven and Jacob Enders, overseers of the town of Mohawk, and Amos Clark, of the town and county aforesaid," which, "witnesseth that the said overseers of the poor, by and with the consent and allowance of William Harper and John J. Visscher, Esq., two of the justices of the peace for the town aforesaid, have put, placed, and bound, Peter Hart, aged one year and eight months, apprentice to the said Amos Clark, for the term of nineteen years and four months, to commence on this date, which time expires in the year 1811 of these presents, during of all week time and term the said Peter Hart his said master and mistress well and faithfully shall serve, in all such lawful business as the said apprentice shall be put into, according to the best of his powers, wit and ability; his secrets shall keep; his command lawfully and honestly everywhere he gladly shall do; he shall do no hurt or damage to his said master nor mistress nor consent to be done by others, but to the best of his power shall hinder the same, or faithfully give notis to his master thereof; he shall not waist the goods of his said master or lend them to any person without his consent. He shall not frequent ale houses or play houses, or to play at cards or other unlawful games. Fornication he shall not commit, matrimony he shall not contract, neither shall he absent himself day nor night from his master's service, but in all things as a faithful servant and apprentice, shall demean himself towards his said master and all his during the term aforesaid.

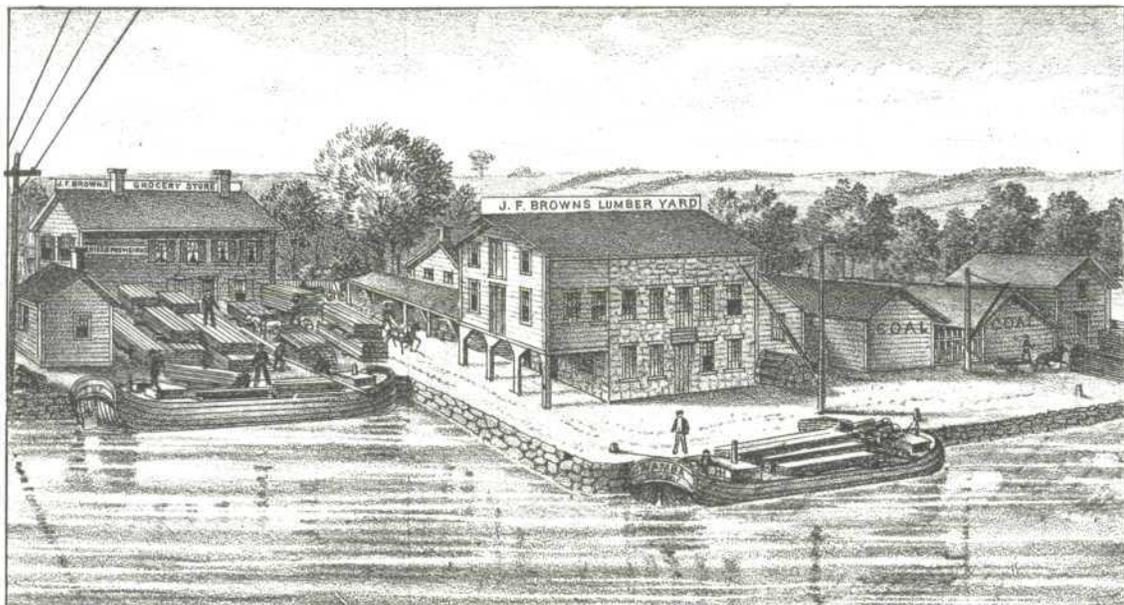
"And said Amos Clark, for his part, covenanteth, promisseth and agreeth that he, the said Amos Clark, the said apprentice will teach or cause him to be taught, the art, skill and traid of husbandry which he now asait, in the best manner he may or can teach or cause to be taught, and informed as much as thereto belongeth, and he said Amos Clark knoweth, and shall teach and instruct or cause to be instructed the said apprentice, well and sufficiently to read and write, and also shall find for the apprentice sufficient apparel, meat, drink, washing and lodging, and other things necessary for



RES. OF JOHN H. SWOBE, WEST PERTH, FULTON CO., N. Y.



FARM RESIDENCE OF MESSRS NELSON & HIRAM REESE, FLORIDA., N. Y.



LUMBER & COAL YARD OF MR. J. F. BROWN, PORT JACKSON, FLORIDA, N. Y.

such an apprentice during the term aforesaid, and at the expiration of said term, shall give unto the said apprentice one good new sute of waring apparel, both linen and wollen compleat, over and above his now waring apparel. In witness whereof, the parties aforesaid to these present indentures their hands and seals interchangeably have set, the day and year first above written."

A quite similar indenture "doth put, place and bind, Hanna Fedel, aged four years and eight months, an apprentice to William Harper and Margaret his wife, to dwell with them or the survivors of them for the term of thirteen years and four months from the date of these presents."

Perhaps no more appropriate place can offer than this connection for insertion of a copy of an instrument happily now no more to be written, a covenant for the sale of so much human sinew and bone, so much of the sweat and toil, so much of the immortal soul as human bonds could convey. No picture of the period would be complete that should be unshaded by this blot, or fail to notice the horrible inconsistency of such a love of freedom as had lately imperilled all, and consecrated life and goods, to win and maintain a liberty free from petty encroachment, while yet a race was held in domestic thrall, and life-long servitude.

"Know all men by these presents, that I, Samuel De Reimer, of the town of Mohawk, county of Montgomery, State of New York, for and in consideration of the sum of fifty pounds, current money of the State aforesaid, to me in hand paid at or before the ensembling and delivery of these presents, by David Cady, Esq., the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge, have bargained and sold, and by these presents do bargain and sell unto the said David Cady, a certain negro wench called Cate, being of the age of twenty-four years (or thereabouts), now being in the possession of said David, to have and to hold the said negro wench hereby bargained and sold to him the said David, his executors and administrators and assigns, against me the said Samuel, my executors, administrators and assigns, and against all and every other person and persons whatsoever, shall and will warrant and defend by these presents, and I do further say, that the said negro wench is (to the best of my knowledge, honest and sober. In witness whereof, I hereunto put my hand and seal, this twenty-third day of August, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one.

SAMUEL DE REIMER."

"JOHN WATTS, } Witnesses."  
JOHN SCHUYLER, }

No doubt that then, as in later times, it was said, "They can't take care of themselves. They are happier with their masters." Yet when in 1824 the act of emancipation took effect, they gladly went from under the yoke, to establish homes of their own, and none but the hopelessly infirm or aged sought to remain with their late owners.

#### SETTLERS ALONG THE SCHOHARIE.

Among the pioneer settlers on the east bank of Schoharie creek were Martinus Cline and Francis Saltz, who, about the middle of the last century, leased two farms in Warren's Patent, now the Henry C. Pettingill and William Voorhees places, opposite Mill Point. It is said that when they arrived on the ground they flipped a penny for the choice of places, and Saltz, winning the toss, took the southernmost or Voorhees farm. His oldest daughter married Philip Frederick, and they settled on the creek at the place since called Buchanan's Mills, where Frederick cleared a farm and built a house and mill. Here in a few years quite a settlement sprung up.

Another of the pioneers who settled on the creek within the present town of Florida was Peter Young. He came from New Jersey, and camped near Garret Van Derveer's place. Learning from some Indians, while hunting one day, that a white family who had made a clearing over by the creek had become discouraged and abandoned it, he took possession of the farm, the next above Frederick's mill. The place was in Sir Peter Warren's domain, and Young paid 5s. 10d. rent for ten years, and afterward £3. The estate has remained in possession of the Young family from that day to this, the present owner being Miss Anna Young. Peter Young had three sons, the oldest of whom, George, married a daughter of Saltz and moved across the creek; William married a Gardinier and settled in Florida. Peter, jr., married Margaret Serviss, and kept the homestead.

During the Revolutionary war this was the retreat of the non-combatants in the neighborhood when threatened by the savage enemy. They formed a camp back of the lake on the farm, sheltered by a semi-circle of high, steep

hills. Mrs. Young, whose relatives were tories, and who was in no fear of them or the Indians, cooked and carried food to the refugees. Another hiding place was on the high point of land on the bank of the creek. At one time there was a large company of women and children encamped here, as Indians had been seen up the stream. It was in the autumn and quite cold, and they had risked building a fire. One morning the watchman spied a company of men approaching over the hills to the east of the camp. They were supposed to be the enemy, and a panic was created. Some fled to the lakeside camp; others tried to put out the fire, which would betray their position, but they had no water, and the more they raked it, the more it smoked. They were soon delightfully relieved by the arrival of the party, who proved to be their soldier friends, home on a furlough.

After the war, Mrs. Young's tory brothers, John and Suffe Serviss, came from Canada to pay her a visit. Mr. Young was at the barn threshing, and happening to come to the house was met at the door by his wife, who told him of the arrival of her brothers. He stepped in, took down his old musket, and turning to John Serviss, said, "I am going to the barn to thresh; in an hour I shall come back, and if I find you here I will shoot you down." The tory naturally bade a prompt farewell to his sister and set out for Canada. The suffering and loss of life and treasure among the frontier patriots at the hands of their tory neighbors could not be forgotten.

Mrs. Young was a great nurse, and returning one night from a visit across the creek in that capacity, saw the only ghost she ever met. Having paddled her canoe to the homeward side of the stream, she was making her way through a cornfield to the house, when an apparition tall and pale loomed up before her. After staring at it in alarm for a moment, she resolved to pass around it through the corn, but as she attempted to do so, the old white horse put himself also in motion and she recovered from her fright.

There is a grave-yard on the Young homestead, which is the resting place of several generations of the family, and probably the oldest burial ground in the town. There is a maple tree on the estate from which five generations have made sugar.

About a mile south of the Young farm settled Abraham Van Horne. He was sheriff at the beginning of the Revolution. His wife, whose maiden name was Hannah Hoff, was always generous and helpful to the neighbors when in need or trouble, and was, of course, a favorite among them. A plot was once formed by the tories to kill the sheriff, who was a leading patriot. The assassins gathered round his house by night, proposing to shoot him through a window as he lay asleep; but fearing they could not do so without killing his wife, they postponed the deed. The plot was revealed; a block house was built in the neighborhood to protect the patriots. Sheriff Van Horne after the war removed to Herkimer county. His oldest son, Cornelius, kept the place. He married Elizabeth, daughter of Peter Young, and their children still own the property.

Still further south there were a few settlers, who were troubled by losing their cattle. At length a hunter found them all herded in a clearing across the creek, belonging to a widow, who had stolen not only the cows, but other property of her neighbors. The latter were so enraged by the discovery that they went over and shot the woman, and recovered their property. Sheriff Van Horne and his next-door neighbor, Jacob Bunn, on hearing of the affair, saddled their horses, and fording the creek, buried the victim of lynch-law, flooring the grave and covering the body with bark before shoveling in the earth. In crossing the creek on the return, Bunn, who was "a gross fat man," slipped from his horse in the deep water, and was only rescued by seizing the tail of the animal, which drew him ashore. He was reserved for a still more dangerous adventure. He one time, on a tour of inspection, mounted to the upper scaffold used by workmen who were building a barn for him and had it nearly done. The staging was not built for men of his figure and gave way, the bulky proprietor gaining a momentum which carried him through two scaffolds below it and landed him in the mud, not much hurt.

This farm was afterward bought by Daniel Van Horne, who lives on it with his grand-children. A place below this, at the falls, was purchased shortly after the Revolution by David Pruyn. He soon traded with Peter Young for a farm in Charleston, now the Peter Van Horne place, and Young sold his new acquisition to William Gordon, who built a grist mill at the falls. It was kept up for many years, but was abandoned in consequence of the destruction of the bridge at that point, which diverted business elsewhere.

This was a great fishing place for the Indians, who reserved it in their negotiations with the whites. In the spring, when the suckers came up the stream to deposit their eggs, great quantities were caught here by the fishermen, who were on hand day and night. The current was so swift that the fish could pass up only near the shore. A sort of pound was built out from the bank, enclosed, except for a space at the lower end, into which the fish flocked and were taken out with a net. Hooks and lines were also used. The construction of the dam at Fort Hunter prevented the fish from ascending the stream, and spoiled the fishing ground.

The Frederick mills were leased, with eight acres of land, to Thomas Tallman and James Persons, who built a grist mill, a carding machine, an oil mill, and a blacksmith shop, with a trip hammer. They did a thriving business, until they were entirely burned out in 1806. They rebuilt, but soon sold out to Wareham Scott, he to Lyndes Jones, he to Samuel Jackson, and the last to John J. Wells, an active, enterprising man, who built a saw mill in 1828, and afterward a plaster mill, a distillery, and several houses. The dams which he built for the use of his mills were repeatedly swept away by freshets, and finally the distillery, plaster mill and a large barn were destroyed by the same agency. Mr. Wells was nearly bankrupted by his loss, and a store owned by him was sold out to his creditors at high prices: in the stock were two beaver fur caps, and the men who got them used to boast of wearing forty dollar caps. Wells sold the rest of his property here in 1861 to Charles Fieldhauer, who beside running the mills, manufactured brooms. The whole establishment was burned out in 1863, and the ground sold to a Mr. Veeder, who built grist and saw-mills, which he sold to Mr. H. Buchanan, the present owner.

Very early in this century, Henry, son of Peter Voorhees, built a store at the Florida end of the bridge then spanning the Schoharie at Mill Point. In 1816 the building was taken down and removed to Minaville.

#### PIONEER SCHOOL HOUSES.

The first frame school house in the northern part of Florida was built in 1806, at Belding's Corners, on the site of the present school house of District No. 3. The Methodists of the neighborhood contributed toward its erection, in order that they might use it also as a meeting-house. John Van Derveer, Daniel Herrick and Squire John Green, were the building committee. Bartholomew Belding, in whose barn religious meetings had been held, took an active part in behalf of the church in the construction of the new edifice. The only survivors among the first pupils who studied in this building are Garret Van Derveer, of Florida, and John Herrick, who now lives in Otsego county. Two of their school mates have recently died—Isaac De Graff and his sister, Mrs. Jennie Barkhoff.

The first school-house in the southwestern part of the town was a log one, built about 1785, on what is now George Serviss' farm. The first teacher was a man named Wright.

The first frame school house in this region was built on the site of the present No. 9.

#### LEADING MEN IN FLORIDA'S HISTORY.

We ought not to forbear mention of the worthies whose good deeds and upright lives have come down to us as examples of the good and true, for

—When a good man dies,  
For years beyond our ken,  
The light he leaves behind him lies  
Upon the paths of men."

David Cady, a young surveyor from Stonington, Conn. (probably about 1780,) found his way to this part of Mohawk district, as already stated. He became agent for Watts, who subsequently purchased the Earl of Abingdon's lands, and relations of intimacy and confidence subsisted between the two until death interrupted them. David Cady married Ann, daughter of Lawrence Shuler, in 1784. Thenceforward he resided in Florida, until his death in 1818. He became a leading man in the town as merchant and farmer, honorably secured a large property, filled for a long time the offices of district justice, supervisor, and county judge, was a member of the Legislature, and held a commission as captain of militia under Gov. George Clinton, 1792. The house built by Judge Cady was regarded as quite a wonder. The carpenter's wife came to see it when done, and when the mistress remarked that their furniture had not yet

arrived from Albany, exclaimed, "O dear, if I had such a house I would not care if I had'n't any furniture!"

The famous jurist, Daniel Cady, was in his youth for some time an inmate of this house. To that same house came also a young Englishman, who had been a commercial traveler in his early home, and here embarked, in a small way at first, in the line he knew the best, winning by industry and intelligence daily a larger sphere. Samuel Jackson, for this was his name, became a successful merchant, a wealthy capitalist and a large land owner, and won a respected place for the qualities he evinced, and that led him to so large success. He filled acceptably various town offices and was member of the Legislature, and Presidential elector. He maintained an elegant home in the town of his adoption through a very long life, and his ashes now repose in the Minaville cemetery. Mr. Jackson and Mr. Cady became partners in mercantile affairs, bought and shipped wheat to New York, receiving generous returns for their ventures. Mr. Jackson married and settled in the near vicinity, and built a fine residence, that yet wears bravely its years. He brought the first piano into the town, for the use of his family. Mrs. Jackson, a woman of energy, tact and judgment, "looked well to the ways of her household." She had a great fondness for flowers, and rare plants, and was most successful in their culture. For years her garden was a thing of beauty, and she transferred to it many a neglected wild flower that developed in new and greater beauty under her care. Her husband gratified this passion by seeds and plants from distant localities. A package of nameless seeds thus sent, she planted in boxes in her house, and cared for the tender seedlings all winter, and from those seeds came the first locusts in the town, and doubtless the stock of all the later progeny. Her wilderness of roses, and gay beds of gorgeous colors, attracted passers by to stop and admire. She survived her husband several years, and now lies beside him.

Doctor John De La Mater, born and reared in this town, became a physician of eminence. For many years he was an able professor in his calling, at Fairfield, and at Cleveland, Ohio. He died there, a "beloved physician" for his amiable disposition, gentle manners and goodness of heart.

George Smith occupied a prominent place in the social and political annals of the town. He filled usefully and ably several town offices, and was a courteous and successful merchant. He gave the name of Minaville to the little hamlet of his residence. He married two daughters of Judge Cady, and built a residence, at the time of its erection regarded the finest in the county—a dwelling whose carvings and enrichments constitute it a good evidence of his fine taste and generous views. Mr. Smith was a man of natural polish, always the gentleman as well as an intelligent business man. He subsequently purchased and improved Fort Johnson, and dwelt there until his death.

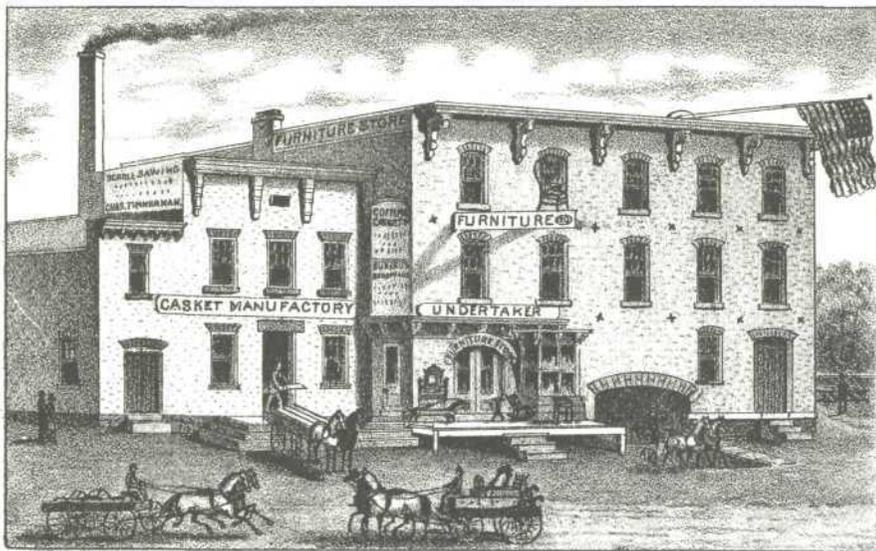
Doctor Stephen Reynolds resided at Minaville, and was a man of general information, an ardent agriculturist, even publishing some small works upon the subject, and by his thrift and acumen amassed a handsome property. He was the father of Mr. Marcus T. Reynolds, the distinguished lawyer, who reached a foremost rank in his profession, and obtained a large practice at Amsterdam, and at Albany, where he died, ripe in years.

Born and reared in this town, Samuel Voorhees and John Watts Cady were school-mates together at the old stone manse at Fort Hunter, were fitted for college, entered and graduated at Union. Doctor Voorhees studied medicine with Doctor Reynolds, married his daughter and settled early at Amsterdam, where he resided until his death, full of years. He was always happy to tell his boyhood pranks and live over again his earliest years. John Watts Cady, after his graduation, entered the office of Daniel Cady, at Johnstown, and was afterwards his partner for some years, always his esteemed friend and associate through life. He received honorable evidence of popular favor, being elected supervisor, justice, member of the Legislature, and representative in Congress. He resided always at Johnstown until his death, scarcely past his prime, in 1854, a genial, generous man, always regarded of strictest integrity, of liberal views, and unblemished honor.

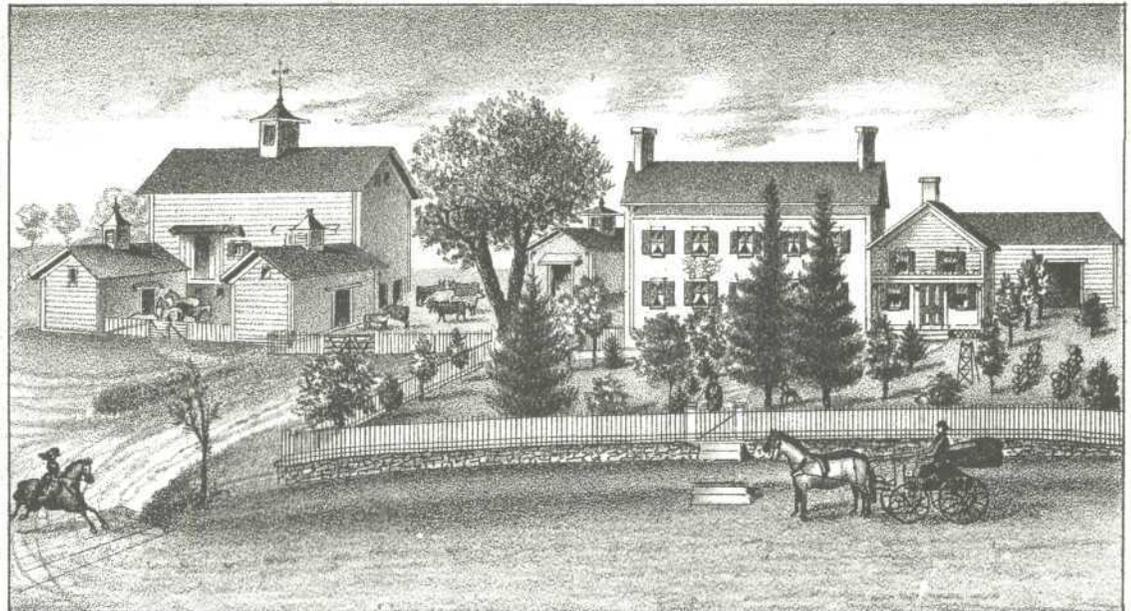
To this namesake Mr. John Watts presented a large Bible, London, 1753. Upon the cover are the Watts coat of arms, and the inscriptions: "New York, 20th July, 1790. Presented to the congregation in Warrensburgh, of which Rev. Mr. James Dempster is now minister." "1814. Presented to John Watts Cady, of Johnstown, by his friend John Watts, New York." It is in excellent preservation, and an interesting relic of past years. Mr. Watts, besides the Bible, presented to Mr. Dempster's congre-



*RESIDENCE & GROUNDS OF MR. ALBERT C. PHILLIPS, FLORIDA, N. Y.*



*FURNITURE & GASKET FACTORY of M<sup>r</sup>. CHAS. TIMMERMAN.  
AMSTERDAM, N. Y.*



*RESIDENCE OF MR. JACOB HOUCK, FLORIDA, N. Y.*

gation a piece of land, which is still known as the Dempster lot.

The Hon. Platt Potter, now Judge of the Supreme Court, passed his first professional years in Florida, and was the boon companion of a kindred circle. He removed to Schenectady, where he still resides. Henry P. Voorhees, Tunis Hubbard, Cornelius Phillips and John Barlow were men worthy of note; and Col. Peter Young, an intelligent and upright man, spent a well-lived life in this town. His home was a secluded one, in a dell near the Schoharie creek and a small sheet of water bearing the name of "Young's Lake." The farm is still in possession of members of the family, and boasts of a monster maple tree, that has been tapped yearly over a century, and still yields generously its sweets. Col. Young was esteemed in the community for his probity and christian character. He held various town offices, and also represented his district as member of Assembly. He raised a large family, and died in the home he so long occupied.

Rev. Nicholas Hill, originally from Schenectady, was long a resident of the town, and made a lasting impress upon his time. At the early age of ten years he became a drummer in the army, and so served until the close of the Revolutionary war, when he took up his life's work. A man of vigorous mind, of executive force and determined zeal, he became a Methodist preacher of wide note. He preached in dwellings and barns, and reared churches, and beat the *reville* that aroused many a hardened sinner. He owned a fine farm, and reared a large family upon it; but he never forgot his higher calling, and for a half century or more never feared to declare "the whole counsel of God," and to invite the thirsting to the "river of the waters of life." He was the father of Mr. Nicholas Hill, jr., who reached eminence as a lawyer, residing in Albany, and well known by his voluminous and able law reports.

This town was the native place of one of the most eminent ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Rev. John Dempster, D. D. He was born about 1793, entered the ministry at the age of twenty-two, and was appointed presiding elder at thirty-five. He won a great name and exerted a powerful influence by the stirring eloquence with which he preached among the pioneer posts of Methodism in Central New York and elsewhere. At the age of forty-two he went as a missionary to Buenos Ayres. His father, Rev. James Dempster, the Scotch Presbyterian clergyman elsewhere mentioned, was educated at Edinburgh University, but his son's education was neglected until after his conversion, in his eighteenth year. From that time forward he studied with extreme diligence in all the opportunities he could snatch from his arduous ministerial labors. He thus overcame his early disadvantages, and his rank is with the scholarly men of the church. Returning from South America, he spent the last twenty years of his life in founding and in professorships at several theological institutions of his church, including one at Concord, N. H., and was acting as president of Garret Biblical Institute, at Evanston, Ill., when he died, in 1863.

Entering the store of his brother-in-law, George Smith, at twelve, Jay Cady early gave evidence of more than ordinary capabilities. Absent for a time from the town, he returned in 1826, and for many years held a leading place in its affairs. A merchant of sagacity, a wise counsellor, public spirited and far seeing, he exerted his influence always for good. He removed to Schenectady, as president of the Schenectady Bank, holding the position until his death in 1874. He accumulated a large fortune, which he used generously. The needy never appealed to him in vain.

#### VILLAGES OF THE TOWN.

Four post offices supply the mail facilities of the town. PORT JACKSON, the largest of the villages, lies upon the canal and river opposite Amsterdam, and affords pleasant homes for many persons doing business at that place, besides other inhabitants, numbering in all about 500.

It has one church, Reformed, built in 1850, in good repair, and well attended. A commodious public school-house, coal yards, grocery stores, and mechanics' shops, supply well the wants of its people and vicinity. A spacious dry dock affords good facilities for repairs of canal boats, and the freighting interests of the canal form no inconsiderable item in the business of the place, large quantities of coal, iron, flax-seed, linseed oil cake, machinery, grains, and heavy merchandise, being received here in transit.

Prominent among the enterprising residents of the business portion of

the town of Florida, are the members of the firm of Van Buren & Putman, who located in Port Jackson, in 1861, succeeding Van Antwerp and Van Buren in the flour, feed and grain business. They now do an annual business of \$125,000.

J. A. Eldrett has an extensive manufactory of carriages and sleighs at the same place, and J. W. Perkins a superior foundry and machine shop. Lewis Phillips is engaged in the grocery business, as well as attending to his farm on the river.

W. H. Moore, through his well kept hostelry, attends to the wants of the traveling public.

Chauncey Munsell is an educator of the tastes of the people, in the erection of model dwelling houses for their comfort and convenience.

Port Jackson stands on land which, at the time of the construction of the Erie Canal along here, was owned by Ephraim Brockway and Lewis Phillips. There were then only three houses at this point, which was spoken of by the people of the neighborhood as "down to the ferry," the ferry being then in operation. Soon after the canal was opened, John Stilwell erected a brick store building (now occupied by Van Buren & Putman as a feed store,) in which he for several years carried on a large trade. He also did an extensive business in lumber. A few years later George Warwick started an opposition store. The only stores in this region in the first years of this century, were one carried on by a man named De Forest, just below the Blood farm; another on Yankee Hill, kept by one Hall, on the place now owned by John Dean, and a third on the property now owned by N. J. Becker. Ephraim Brockway, above-named, kept a tavern on the place belonging to J. J. Gray, at Port Jackson. There were others on Lewis Phillips' farm and at Yankee Hill, the last kept by Hallet Greenman, and standing on the farm now owned by J. Walrath.

SCOTCHBUSH POST-OFFICE, perhaps better known as Powder Spring, is a small hamlet of private dwellings, with a school-house and some shops, on the eastern border of the town, near a powder spring of considerable local notoriety and resort. Its waters have been analyzed, and are deemed efficacious in rheumatism and cutaneous diseases. The spring is nicely curbed and pavilioned. The flow, though not copious, is constant, and cattle seek the milky stream with avidity. A hotel and bath-houses have been projected here, but not constructed.

MINAVILLE, nearest the geographical centre of the town, received its name in 1818, replacing the not very distinctive title "The Street," or its less elegant form of "Yankee Street," by which it was long known. It was early and for many years quite a centre of country trade. It is prettily situated in a wide, verdant bowl, whose southern rim is the Shellstone and Bean Hill ranges, and its northern horizon a lower line of ridges, forming a woody fringe. Through it flows the winding Chuctenunda. The quiet air of thrift and comfort that rests upon the place is not unattractive, and one could find here a pleasant home if seeking seclusion, "the world forgetting, by the world forgot." Two churches, stores, a hotel, school-house, a cheese-factory and several shops are comprised in the village. The Reformed church was built in 1808. The residence now occupied by Gen. E. A. Brown was erected in 1811, and was then famous as the finest private residence in the county of Montgomery.

Dr. Z. H. Barney, of Minaville, is a native of Vermont. He graduated at Castleton College in that State, and began the practice of medicine in Saratoga county, N. Y., whence he removed to Port Jackson in 1826, and two years later to Minaville, where he has since followed his profession. He is seventy-eight years of age, and probably the oldest practicing physician in the county.

The Methodist Episcopal church of Minaville was organized about 1835, and the present building erected. The men chiefly instrumental in founding this church were Rev. Nicholas Hill, Samuel R. Griffith, Henry Pettin-gill, Benjamin Herrick, William Thayer and Marcus P. Rowland. Among the preachers here have been Revs. Henry Stead, Henry L. Starks, Stebins, Joseph Connor, Ripley, Warner, J. W. Devendorf, Clark, Joseph Cope, Witherell, Jarvis, Duvall, Townsend and J. Hull, the latter now in charge.

Soon after the organization of the society a great revival occurred, under the labors of the Rev. Mr. Starks, which added largely to the originally small membership of the church. It was again reduced, however, by the formation of the Methodist societies at Fort Hunter and elsewhere, and there are now only about fifty members. Jacob Earnest, one of the stewards, has held the position some forty years. A parsonage was built about

the year 1840, and the total value of the church property is estimated at from \$3,500 to \$4,000.

At a place formerly called MUDGE HOLLOW, on Chuctenunda creek, about a mile and a half from its mouth, there were, about the beginning of this century, two grist-mills and a tannery, the mills owned by one Rowland and Mudge & McDonald, and the tannery by Bethuel Dean. These buildings, together with a saw-mill at the same place, have passed away. On the site of the latter, which was owned by Andrew Frank, now stands the Serviss saw-mill. Haslett & Curtis were hatters in the Hollow in the time of its prosperity.

#### PRESENT CHURCHES.

##### UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF FLORIDA.

This is popularly known as the Scotch Church. Its founders were Scotch people who settled here toward the close of the Revolutionary war. The church is known to have been in existence in 1798, and was probably organized at least ten years earlier, though the year is not positively known. The following were the first members: John Adair, John Milmine, John McKerlie, John McKie, Alexander Murray, John Lyle, Wm. Lander, Daniel Munson, John McGloch, John Smeallie, Alexander Keachie, Andrew Crawford, James Murray and Daniel Morrison.

The first house of worship was built in 1800, on a plot of ground which belonged to the farm of Mr. Derrick Van Vechten, in the eastern corner of the town. The present house was erected on the same site in 1846. The first interment in the burying ground attached, was made in 1802. The church lot was given by Mr. Van Vechten in consideration of five shillings and a pew in perpetuity.

Probably one of the first preachers to this society was Rev. James Dempster, elsewhere spoken of. Dr. John Banks was pastor for 1802 till 1816; the Rev. Mr. Donaldson from 1817 to 1820; Rev. Peter Campbell from 1823 to 1843; Rev. George M. Hall from 1849 to 1862; Rev. R. D. Williamson from 1862 to 1870. The present pastor, Rev. R. Rogers, took charge in 1871.

The present membership is about 150. The Sunday school was organized in 1850. The scholars at present number about 90.

##### THE FORT HUNTER METHODIST CHURCH.

The Methodist Episcopal society of Fort Hunter was organized by the Rev. Mr. Parks in 1856. Meetings were at first held in the school house south of the present church. Mr. Parks was followed by Rev. Messrs. A. G. Devendorf, Elliott, Craig, Rose, Bell, Clark, Cope, Witherell, Duvall, Townsend, Wood and Hall.

The present church was built in 1860, and dedicated in January, 1861, during the pastorate of the Rev. Mr. Craig. The trustees at that time were: John L. Voorhees, Cornelius Wemple, John W. Briggs, Spencer Voorhees, Giles Ohlen, Nicholas Neukirk, John McGraw, Nelson Reese, and H. A. Devendorf. The church is a wooden building, 30 by 40 feet, and cost \$1,450. The lot of half an acre cost \$50.

##### FLORIDA FARMS AND FARMERS.

WILLIAM McCLUMPHA in 1857 located on, and has since owned, one hundred and ten acres of land, known as the Belding farm.

L. PHILLIPS owns a farm of some three hundred acres, which Lewis Phillips settled on about 1770. It was afterward owned by Philip, John and David Phillips.

The farm of A. C. PHILLIPS was in the possession of three generations of the family before him. It was originally settled and owned by Cornelius Phillips, who was killed at Oriskany. His son, William, was the next proprietor, and handed down the estate to his son, Cornelius, on whose death, in 1865, it fell to his son, the present owner.

The farm now owned by HIRAM HUBBS was first occupied by Jacob Vanderveer after the Revolution, and next by his son, Asher. Cornelius and John Hubbs then owned the place until the present proprietor came into possession. A family burial ground on the farm contains the remains of the former generations of the family.

R. M. HARTLEY'S farm was something of a business centre about a century ago, there being a grist mill, potash works, a small store, etc., at this point, no traces of which remain.

L. CONOVER is the third of the name who have owned the farm on which he now lives. The first was Ruloff Conover, from New Jersey, who purchased it, about 1790, from one Phillips, and occupied it until his death in 1823. It then passed into the hands of his son, Cornelius, who died in 1865, leaving the property to the present owner.

RICHARD DAVIS is the proprietor of a farm owned by one Kline during the Revolution, afterward by Benjamin Pettingill, and then by C. Bent, until it came into the possession of Clark Davis about 1835. From him it passed, in 1865, to his son, who has since owned and occupied it.

J. Q. JOHNSON owns a farm, part of which was the old Johnson homestead, the buildings on which stood south of the present ones, and on the opposite side of the creek. Andrew Johnson located here about 1790, and remained until his death in 1806. William and Daniel Schuyler bought out his heirs and kept the place until 1828, when Jacob, a son of Andrew Johnson, purchased it. He lived in the old house until 1832, when he bought the adjoining property, on which he lived until his death in 1874. The estate then fell to the present owner. His house was built by Dr. Stephen Reynolds in 1804, and is thus one of the oldest in the town. The ground for the Chuctenunda Cemetery was bought off this farm in 1860.

DANIEL SCHUYLER'S farm was owned by William Schuyler about the time of the Revolution. It fell to Jacob Schuyler in 1789, and on his death in 1806, to his son, Daniel, from whom it descended to the present owner in 1862.

A. SERVISS is the great-grandson of the original owner of his farm, which was also the property of his grandfather, Christopher, and his father, Lawrence Serviss. The present owner inherited the property in 1848, and has since occupied it.

J. H. STALEY'S farm was taken up by one Bunn. It was afterward owned by John Staley until 1862, when it came into the hands of the present proprietor.

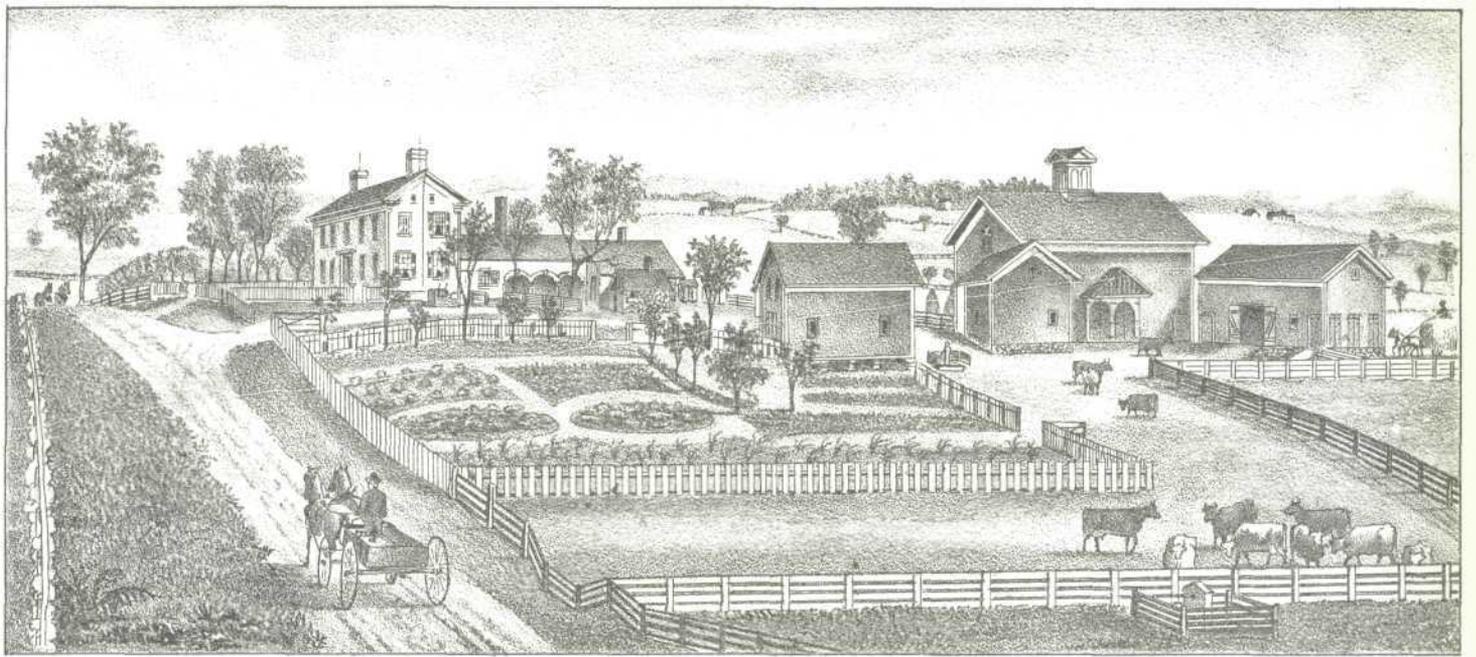
The place owned by JAMES CASEY was settled soon after the Revolution by Robert Casey, and remained in his hands until his death in 1841, when it fell to the present owner, who has made it his home from that time.

The farm of W. A. MILMINE was bought from Anne Wilmot's patent by Gerrit Van Sente, jr., of Albany. He deeded it to John Strate, who first settled on the place, which he occupied until 1802. He then sold it to John Milmine, whose descendants have since held the property. John Milmine's son Alexander inherited the farm in 1828, and owned it until 1834, when the present owner came into possession.

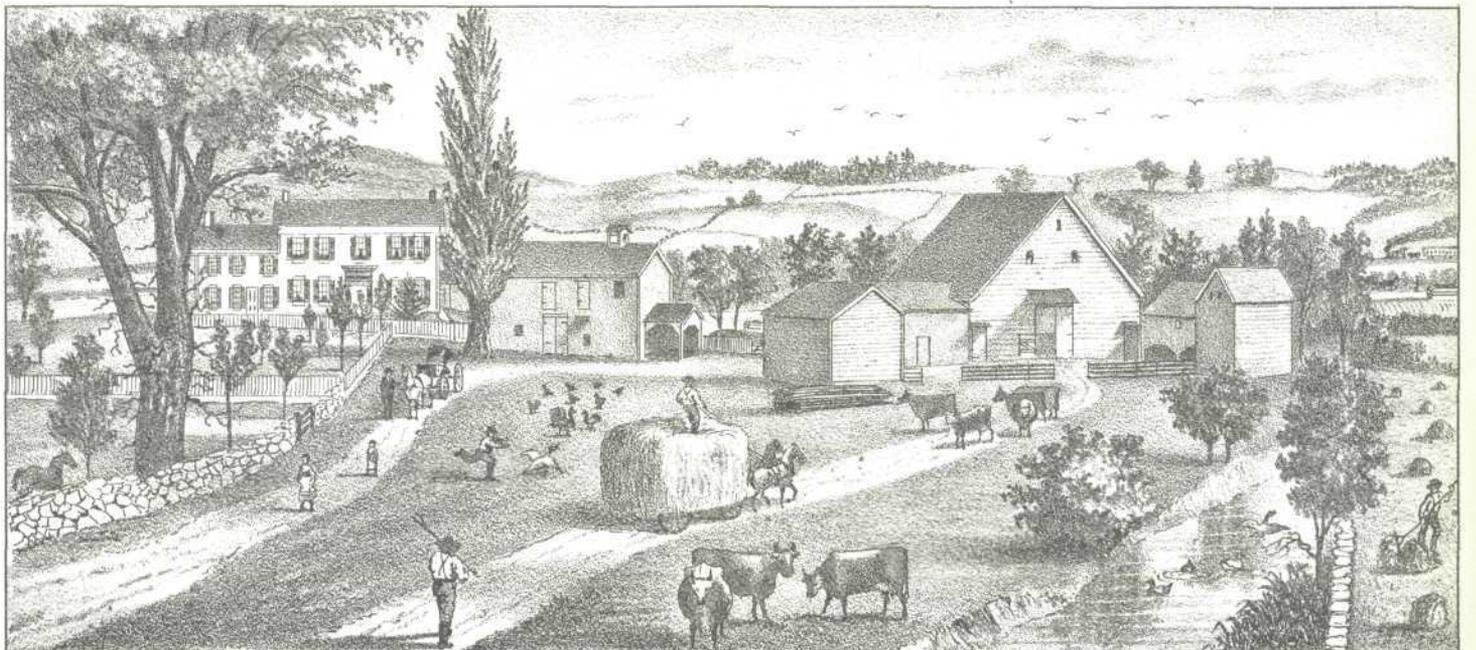
An instance of long tenure of an estate in the same family, not very rare in this old county, is seen in the case of the farm now owned by J. H. VAN VECHTEN. It was cleared by his great grandfather, Hubartas Van Vechten, who took possession of the land about 1770. His son Derrick was his successor in the ownership of the place, and handed it down to his son David. From him the present owner bought part of the estate about 1846, and inherited the remainder in 1872. In the family cemetery on the farm the remains of the original owner and his wife have lain about a hundred years.

A similar case is that of the KEACHIE farm, which was first occupied by Andrew Keachie, before the Revolution, and on his death in 1825 fell to his son John, who, after cultivating it for thirty-eight years, left it to his three sons, two of whom, F. and A. Keachie, still occupy it.

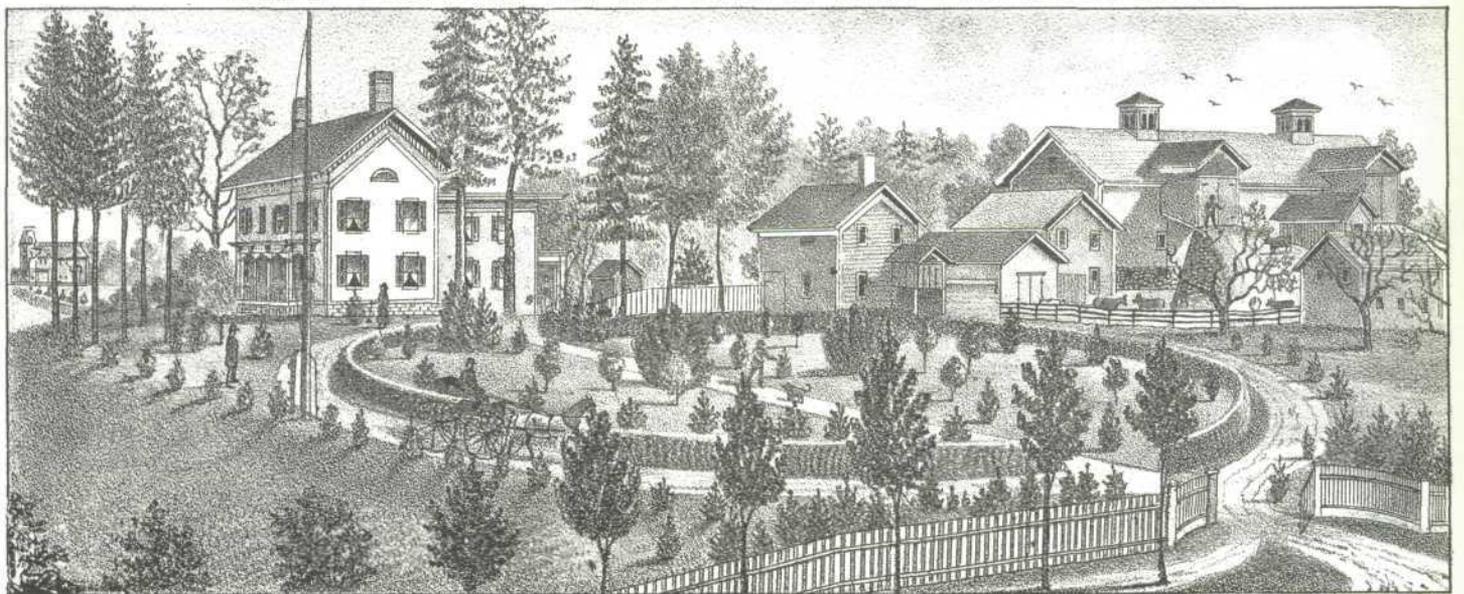
J. KELLEY'S place is another that has been cultivated from before the Revolution, when it was owned by William Stewart. After the war it was the property successively of Wm. Bigham, his son John, and John Kelly, before it came into the hands of the present owner in 1840.



RES. OF JOHN D. SCHUYLER. TOWN OF GLEN, MONTGOMERY CO. N. Y.



RES. OF FLETCHER VAN WIE TOWN OF ROOT MONTGOMERY CO. N. Y.



RES. OF LEWIS VAN EPPS. FULTONVILLE, MONTGOMERY CO. N. Y.