

over the Schoharie district were chosen from Albany, and the supervisor was to be chosen from the corporation. The people had no redress except by petitions which were frequently indited to the Governor, for his influence in their behalf. Who was the scribe we are unable to say. Each writing denotes a fair scholar, and nearly all seems to have been written by the same person.

The Lawyer family were business men, but there was a resemblance in their hand-writing, which was unlike the documents to which we refer. The omission of words by wear and fading of ink, renders all, with but one exception, useless to copy. After the year above mentioned, the Supervisor and Justices were chosen from Schoharie. Marcus Bellinger was Supervisor for several years but who, if any, officiated beside, we have been unable to learn.

CHAPTER III.

LOYALTY OF GERMANS TO BRITAIN—SACREDNESS OF OATH—MOHAWKS AND TOMAHAWKS—INDECISION OF MANY—ROUSED TO ACTION—SECRET MEETING AND RESOLUTION—FIRST COMMITTEE OF SAFETY—MILITARY DISTRICT AND OFFICERS—EVENTS OF 1777—DIVISION OF SCHOHARIE—MCDONALD'S INVASION—THE HARPERS—ADAM CRYSLER—SKIRMISH AT ORISKANY—BEMIS HEIGHTS—BUILDING OF FORTS—BATTLE AT COBLESKILL—MORGAN'S CORPS—CRYSLER AT TURLOCH AND AT VROMANSLAND—JOHNSON AND BRANT'S INVASION AT MIDDLE FORT—LOWER FORT—INCIDENTS—BRAVE WOMEN—COL. VROMAN'S MARCH TO MOHAWK—SETH HENRY AT "TURLOCH"—DOCKSTADER AT CURRYTOWN AND SHARON—WILLET—SETH HENRY AT FOX'S CREEK—CRYSLER AT VROMANSLAND IN 1781—CAPT. HAGER'S FIGHT AT THE LAKE—CAMPBELL'S AND SIMMS' LABORS—RETURNED TORIES AND INDIANS—MUSTER ROLL OF 1777—

SCHOHARIE SUPPLIES—DIVISION OF ALBANY COUNTY—INUNDATION OF SCHOHARIE RIVER—FALSE STORIES, ETC.

THE settlements of Schoharie, which included those along the Schoharie Creek and its tributaries and the sparse ones of Seward and Sharon, (old Dorlach) up to the commencement of the Revolutionary struggle had been quiet and progressive.

Occasional fears were aroused by the British officers as to the imagined invasion of the French and French Indians during hostilities between the English and French Governments. During all the wars from the time the Germans came across the ocean up to the Revolution, they and their descendants proved true to the English Government.

Quite a number from this isolated section, as before stated, took an active part in the contests at Fort George, Oswego and Niagara, where they did signal service. All of the companies were equipped with guns and the necessary accoutrements and drilled in a rude way, which proved to be a schooling for them in the use of arms when they needed such discipline in their struggle for liberty.

It must be borne in mind that both classes of Dutch, high and low, found in these settlements, were very conscientious as a mass, in their duty to God and to each other. One characteristic was more prominently displayed perhaps than any other; that of the sacredness of their word, especially an oath, and we find many who held military positions and had taken the oath of allegiance as is required by all governments, at the commencement of the war for Independence, refused to desert the Crown and make a stand against it on conscientious scruples, deeming that the oath was life-long and not to be forfeited. When friends and neighbors expostulated and when the excitement became great and led to threatenings, some removed to Canada and were quiet but others returned as invaders, while a few remained here until they were compelled to leave.

The descendants of those who remained loyal and sought safety upon Canadian soil may still be found living to the west of Niagara and near

Toronto. Those going from the Mohawk and Schoharie settlements and not taking an active part were called "Mohawks," while those who did return to murder and plunder were called "Tomahawks."

As we find families divided upon political questions to-day, so also many were divided upon the great issue at stake at that day.

But very few families existed but that some member or branch adhered to the Crown and much to the detriment of the character of the belligerents, the most heinous crimes were committed by such, especially upon their kinsmen. We do not like to chronicle upon the whitened page bloody deeds of more than demons, of fathers and mothers falling beneath the tomahawk of disguised sons, and brothers bathing their hands in fraternal blood. Oh no, we wish to pass them by, their stain is hard to erase, but such as chill the blood without creating a spirit of devotion to country and pride of brotherhood, should be cast out of the emerald pages which the American Revolution caused to be written.

It should be enough for us to know of the dangers, hardships and privations our noble forefathers experienced in the attainment of our liberties, to animate us to a just appreciation of them, and enough to give birth in us to a just pride in those patriots and homage to their spirit and principle by observing their unyielding devotion to country and unflinching patriotic endurance, under the most withering circumstances.

Many upon the extreme frontier, conceiving their numbers so few, and those of England and her Indian allies so great, thought it a foolish and ignorant step to undertake to cope with them. They were placed far from help, surrounded by Indians and enthusiastic loyalists, whom they believed would exterminate them if they chose the Colonial cause, and consequently were led to countenance British rule and aggression, when within their hearts a burning hatred existed. When the tide of events began to roll the almost wrecked ship of Independence nearer and nearer to the harbor of success, they began to feel a thrill of patriotic joy, and ere peace was proclaimed proved themselves active and staunch adherents to the new order of things.

Each one as now had a right to a choice, and we cannot condemn those whose sympathies were with the mother country, only in the manner in which the majority of them espoused the cause and mode of warfare. We cannot but give homage to one that stands up manfully and defends oppression, dictated by a true sense of its being just and right, as well as to him who does the same in what we consider a more just cause. But the one that clothes himself in the garb of deceit and sneakingly defends his cause and employs the most cowardly means to attain the end, and ruthlessly destroys the innocent and helpless, should be, and is condemned by all.

There were many such during the war, and their acts were heartless crimes that would make demons blush and we wish we might be privileged to pass them by.

While actual hostilities were going on in other sections of the country, the enemy to political rights did not pollute Schoharie soil with martial tread until the year 1777. But the people were not inactive. When the messenger traversed the winding road from Lexington to Concord, making the old granite hills of Massachusetts echo to the clarion notes of the bugle, "To arms!" and the noble few that faced the British regulars upon Lexington commons, poured their hearts-blood upon the altar of Liberty and Independence these yeoman were not spectators to the scene. But as the notes of the bugle and groans of the dying patriots sent their echo from hill to hill, through valley and over plain, it aroused the sturdy ones to active and more determined purposes. Though weak in numbers and distant from the field of action, a deep anxiety pervaded every heart and each weighed the matter well. Citizens gathered here and there to discuss affairs and it cannot be supposed it was long before each knew of the others decision. It was at this auspicious moment that the patriots of Schoharie chose two delegates to attend a meeting to be held in Albany, to determine upon the actions of the future.

The meeting was secret and held at the house of Richard Cartwright, "inn holder," on the 24th of January, 1775, with Abraham Yates in the chair, and Daniel Budd and Peter Becker

as delegates from Schoharie. They drew up the following resolution:—

“Persuaded that the Salvation of the rights and liberties of America depends under God on the firm union of its Inhabitants, in a vigorous prosecution of the measures necessary for its safety, & convinced of the necessity of Preventing the anarchy and confusion which attend a dissolution of the Powers of Government, We the Freemen, Freeholders & Inhabitants of the city and county of Albany being greatly alarmed at the avowed design of the Ministry to raise a revenue in America & shocked by the bloody scene now acting in the Massachusetts Bay, *Do* in the most solemn manner Resolve *never* to become slaves & do associate under all the ties of Religion, Honor & Love to our country, to adopt & endeavor to carry into execution whatever measures may be recommended by the Continental Congress, or Resolved upon by our Provincial Convention for the purpose of Preserving our constitution & opposing the Execution of the several arbitrary and oppressive acts of the British Parliament until a reconciliation between Great Britain & America on Constitutional Principles [which we most ardently desire] can be obtained & that we will in all things follow the advise of our General Committee respecting the purposes aforesaid, the Preservation of Peace & Good Order & the safety of Individuals and Private property.”

The foregoing was drawn by a committee and signed by sixty-eight, among whom were the delegates from Schoharie. The afternoon meeting of that day was attended by Adam Vroman, in addition as delegate of Schoharie.

Frequent meetings of committees and delegates were held at the same place and called the “Committee of Correspondence.” They communicated with each other on the state of feeling with the provincial assembly, and Continental Congress, and on the 21st of March following, ordered donations of wheat, corn, etc., for the distressed citizens of Boston. A messenger was dispatched on horseback to that city to inform the patriots of Albany county’s Resolves, and encourage them to remain staunch in opposition to British aggression.

On the 29th of April a “Committee of Safety” was appointed in each district who reported in person on the 10th of May, which was the first Committee of Safety in the county, and gave to the association formed on the 24th of January. the name of “Committee of Correspondence and Committee of Safety of Albany City and County.” The same extended their powers and duties and were called in addition “Committee of Protection.” Those first appointed in Schoharie were, Peter Vroman, Jacob Zimmer, Daniel Budd, Peter W. Zeilie, Thomas Eckerson and Johannes Ball. The latter was chosen chairman and filled the position to the close of the war. The second board was appointed on the 7th of November, 1775, and consisted of William Dietz, Lawrence Schoolcraft, Jost Borst, Peter W. Zeilie, Peter Becker, Peter Vroman and Johannes Ball. Associated with them from time to time, to the close of hostilities, were Samuel Vroman, Joseph Becker, Joseph Zimmer, Nicholas Sternbergh, George Warner and Peter Swart.

Deputations from Committees also from Congress and the Crown, besieged the Mohawk and Oneida camps to take decisive steps, and when it became known that the greater share of the Indian tribes, to whom the wilds of Schoharie were familiar haunts, espoused the royal cause, many hearts quailed, but there *were* men and *women* whose patriotism fainted not and who at once took decisive steps.

The duty of the Board was to gather all the information they could of the movements of the enemy, to prepare for the defense of the settlements and obtain supplies. Their meetings were held in secret and it is unfortunate that their proceedings were not kept. The counties of the province were divided into districts from which a regiment or more was expected, but the population of the frontier districts being very small and many clinging to the Crown, some of the regiments comprised but a few companies. Schoharie was attached to Duanesburgh to form a military district and by the records in the Adjutant-General’s office at Albany, we find that the fifteenth regiment of militia was formed by order of General Schuyler, and consisted, upon the date of the commissions, of only three companies. The commissions bear date of October

20, 1775, and were given to the following persons:—

Peter Vroman, Colonel.
 Peter W. Zeilie, Lieutenant-Colonel.
 Thomas Eckerson, Jun., 1st Major.
 Jacob Becker, 2d Major.
 Lawrence Schoolcraft, Adjutant.
 Peter Ball, Quarter-Master.

Co. 1. Geo. Mann, Captain; Christian Strubach, 1st Lieutenant; John Dominick, 2d Lieutenant; Jacob Snyder, Ensign.

Co. 2. Jacob Hager, Captain; Martinus Van Slyck, 1st Lieutenant; Johannes W. Bouck, 2d Lieutenant; Johannes Lawyer, Ensign.

Co. 3. Geo. Richtmeyer, Captain; Johannes I. Lawyer, 1st Lieutenant; Martinus W. Zeilie, 2d Lieutenant; Johannes Lawyer Bellenger, Ensign.

The first company was organized at the lower part of the valley, at and near the present village of Schoharie. The Captain, George Mann, proved disloyal by aiding in organizing a loyal company. He was captured and incarcerated as a prisoner of war until the close of the contest, when he was released and not proving a very bitter adversary, his property was not confiscated. His command was filled by Lieutenant Strubach, who was promoted to a Major at the close of the war.

The second company was from the upper part of Vromansland, and the third, at and near Middleburgh. Another company was afterwards formed in Vromansland, at whose head was Tunis Vroman. After Vroman's massacre, Peter Snyder, living near the lower fort received the command.

At Cobleskill, also, a company was formed in 1777, with Christian Brown as captain, and Jacob Borst of the same place as lieutenant. The northwestern part of the County was in Tryon county until the year 1784, and a company was formed in 1778, at Rhinebeck, as "Tryon County Militia," of which John Matthias Brown, afterwards Judge of the county, was captain. But their number being few and surrounded by Tories, the company was disbanded and its members acted as scouts from the middle and lower forts, watching the movements of the enemy and taking disaffected ones to secure places.

Captain Brown, late judge, was lame in one knee, and was employed at the forts in doing general business for which his qualifications were well fitted.

During the years 1775 and '76, and the forepart of '77, these companies were employed at Fort Edward, Johnstown, and along the Mohawk, but did not leave the Schoharie valley without protection, as invasions were expected.

In the fall of 1776, an invasion was expected upon the Mohawk, from Oswego, and measures were at once taken to oppose it by the Committee of Safety. On the 9th of October of that year, the colonial committee convened at Fishkill, and appointed a committee "to co-operate with General Schuyler on devising and carrying into execution all such measures as they shall deem most effectual for repelling the invasion of the enemy's army on the northern and western frontier." The committee met at Albany on the 27th of the same month, "and had information of an invasion, and resolved to detach troops for the defense of the western frontier."* Captain Jacob Hager was at Albany with a detachment of fifty-five Schoharie militia, and on the 29th, the committee resolved that they "should return to Schoharie and hold themselves in readiness at a moment's warning, to march to the defense of the western frontier, whenever they shall receive orders from Col. Van Schaick, that they may contribute with the rest of their fellow subjects, who are now in arms, to the utmost of their power, in defense of the Rights and Liberty's of their Country." The company was called to Fort Stanwix, but not being employed, returned to Schoharie, where we are led to believe they remained during the winter, excepting at such times as they were acting as scouts and arresting disaffected ones, or those imbued with Tory sentiments.

During 1776, the British were encouraged by the success of their arms upon Long Island—New York City—Fort Washington, and Lee, and to break the chain of defense upon the northern frontier, would embarrass the colonists, and have a tendency to stop hostilities. A grand movement, therefore, was conceived and to be made in August of 1777, from various points. Gen. Burgoyne was to march at the head of the best

* Records Committee of Safety.

drilled and equipped army upon the continent, down Lake Champlain, while St. Leger was to devastate the Mohawk, from Oswego, at the head of a motley crew of Indians and Tories, whose knives and tomahawks were whetted for the most atrocious crimes, and whose ambition was fired by the royalty upon scalps that the British officers promised.

The movement was well calculated to discourage the stoutest hearts, and unless the greatest wisdom and prudence, besides patriotism had engineered the northern department, it would have proved a success. With these prospects before them, the Schoharie militia were divided. Some were to be sent to Gate's relief, others were expected to join Gansevoort or Herkimer.

The valley had been in a measure put under a state of defense and watch, by dividing it into sections and appointing men to oversee the arrangements. An order to that effect was made by the Committee of Safety as follows:—

“Schoharie July 7th, 1777, in committee chamber first resolved that all the persons between the ages of sixteen and fifty years, from the dwelling house of Christian Shaffer to northward in Schoharie are to bring their arms and accoutrements when they come to the meeting at either of the two churches in Fountain town to Fox's town on Sunday or any other day when kept, and if any of them shall neglect in bringing their arms and accoutrements to either of the churches, shall forfeit and pay the sum of *three shillings* New York currency into the hands of Johannes Ball, for the use of paying the cost for the district of Schoharie, or if any person shall not pay the said sum aforesaid, it shall be lawful for Mr. Johannes Ball to give a warrant directed to a sergeant or corporal, and levy the same on the offender's goods and chattels, and also the cost thereof.

“And all the persons inhabiting from the dwelling of Baltus Krysler to the said Christian Shaffer are to bring their arms etc., to the church at Weiser's town, as they are ordered to in Fox's town and if neglected to pay the same to Johannes Becker and be put in execution by him as ordered by Mr. Ball aforesaid.

“And any person southward from Baltus Krysler's are to be armed when they come to any

meeting that may be kept in Breakabeen and if neglected, to pay the fines to Mr. Wm. Zimmer, and to be put by him in execution as before mentioned, and for the use as aforesaid.

“N. B. Their resolve in Fountain Town Church is to be paid to Mr. Johannes Lawyer, and to be put by him in execution as within mentioned, and for the use as aforesaid, and George Warner is appointed to see that the inhabitants of Cobleskill bring their arms when they come to meeting there, and put their resolve in execution as within mentioned, and for the use aforesaid.

“Secondly Resolved that four watchers are to be kept in Schoharie every night from this time constant, the first to be kept at the dwelling house of Capt. George Mann, and under his command, and in his absence the next in command, the inhabitants from Christian Shaffer's dwelling house, and to northward are to be under Capt. Mann's command for the watch to consist of *eight men*. The second is to be kept at the dwelling house of Mr. Hendrick P. Becker, and under the command of Capt. George Richtmeyer, and in his absence the next officer in command. The inhabitants from Hendrick Jansen's house and so northward to Christian Schaffer's are under the command of this second watch, and to consist of *six men*. The third is to be kept at the dwelling house of Mr. Johannes Feak, and under the command of Lieutenant Martymus VanSlyck, and in his absence the next officer in command. The inhabitants from Baltus Krysler's dwelling house and so northward to Hendrick Jansen's are under the command of this third watch and to consist of *six men*. And the fourth is to be kept by the inhabitants from Baltus Krysler's and so southward to the dwelling house of Hendrick Hager, under the command of Capt. Jacob Hager, in his absence the next officer in command at this watch is to consist of *six men*. Every person or persons neglecting to serve on such or either of such watches aforementioned, shall for every neglect pay and forfeit the sum of twelve shillings for the use of the district of Schoharie.”

All arrangements were known and understood on the part of the colonists, and a few had left to join Gates, when the valley was aroused by the knowledge of an army of invaders, but a

few miles up the valley, bent on sweeping down with fire and blade to meet with Burgoyne, St. Leger and Clinton, at the Whig city of Albany, to bask in the sunshine of success at the grand union of human vultures.

The invasion was a surprise, and in the great excitement the enemy's numbers were greatly exaggerated.

The Schoharie militia could not be recalled, and efforts were made to procure aid from Albany. Colonel Peter Vroman, says Simms, dispatched two messengers on foot on the 11th, and fearing they would be captured, Captain Hager and Henry Becker were sent the next morning on the same mission. Colonel John Harper* arrived the same day in the valley, and being fearful of the messenger's ability to procure assistance, at once set out on horse, but proceeded only to the present village of Schoharie, and

* The following is extracted from Campbell's "Annals of Tryon County:"—

"In 1768, William, John, Alexander and Joseph Harper, with eighteen other individuals, obtained a patent for twenty-two thousand acres of land lying in the now county of Delaware. The Harpers removed from Cherry valley soon after, and made a settlement there which was called Harpersfield. This settlement began to flourish at the commencement of the war. Col. John Harper had the command of the forts at Schoharie, in 1777 and '78. The following account of a successful enterprise of Col. John Harper, was furnished by the Rev. Mr. Fenn, who received the information from him:—

"He informed me that in the year 1777, he had the command of the fort in Schoharie, and of all the frontier stations in this region. He left the fort in Schoharie, and came out through the woods to Harpersfield, in the time of sugar making, and from thence laid his course to Cherry Valley, to investigate the state of things there, and as he was pursuing a blind kind of Indian trail, and was ascending what are now called Decatur Hills, he cast his eye forward and saw a company of men coming directly towards him, who had the appearance of Indians. He knew that if he attempted to flee from them, they would shoot him down; he resolved to advance right up to them, and make the best shift for himself that he could. As soon as he came near enough to discern the white of their eyes, he knew the head man and several others; the head man's name was Peter, an Indian with whom Colonel Harper had often traded at Oquago, before the Revolution began. The Colonel had his great coat on, so that his regimentals were concealed, and he was not recognized; the first word of address of Col. Harper's was, 'How do you do, brothers?' The reply was, 'Well—how do you do, brother? Which way are you bound, brother?' 'On a secret expedition,' said Harper. 'Which way are you bound, brothers?' 'Down the Susquehannah to cut off the Johnston settlement,' they answered. (Parson Johnston and a number of Scotch families had settled down the Susquehannah, at what is now called Sidney Plains, and these were the people whom they were about to destroy). Says the Colonel, 'Where do you lodge to-night?' 'At the mouth of Schenevus creek,' was the reply. Then shaking hands with them, he bid them good speed, and proceeded on his journey.

remained over night. The Tories in the neighborhood, especially at and around Fox's creek, were jubilant over the prospect of affairs, and made an attempt to arrest the Colonel at his lodgings. Being a brave and resolute man, their cowardly spirits quailed before his stern address, and retired. As day dawned, he continued his journey, but was followed for several miles by two Indians, whose courage proved too weak for an attack upon him. He arrived at Albany in safety, and procured a company of cavalry, under the command of Major Wynkoop, and arrived in Schoharie on the next day (14th).

Stopping at Captain Mann's residence, they demanded his presence, but being on the alert, he was not to be found. Taking with them an Indian as prisoner from Mann's, who in attempting to escape was killed, the company proceeded

"He had gone but a little way from them, before he took a circuit through the woods, a distance of eight or ten miles, on to the head of Charlotte river, where were a number of men making sugar; ordered them to take their arms, two day's provisions, a canteen of rum, and a rope, and meet him down the Charlotte at a small clearing called Evan's place, at a certain hour that afternoon; then rode with all speed through the woods to Harpersfield, collected all the men who were there, and being armed and victualled, each man with his rope laid his course for Charlotte; when he arrived at Evan's place, he found the Charlotte men there in good spirits, and when he mustered his men, there were fifteen, including himself, exactly the number as there were of the enemy. Then the Colonel made his men acquainted with his enterprise. They marched down the river a little distance, and then bent their course across the hill to the mouth of Schenevus creek. When they arrived at the brow of the hill where they could look over the valley, they cast their eyes down upon the flat, and discovered the fire around which the enemy lay encamped. 'There they are,' said Colonel Harper. They descended with great stillness, forded the creek, which was breast high to a man. After advancing a few hundred yards, they took some refreshments, and then prepared for the contest—daylight was just appearing in the East. When they came to the enemy, they lay in a circle with their feet towards the fire, in a deep sleep. Their arms and all their implements of death, were all stacked up according to the Indian custom when they lay themselves down for the night. These the Colonel secured by carrying them off a distance, and laying them down, then each man taking a rope in his hand, placed himself by his fellow. The Colonel rapped his man softly and said, 'Come it is time for men of business to be on their way,' and then each one sprang on his man, and after a most severe struggle, they secured the whole of the enemy. After they were all safely bound and the morning had so far advanced that they could discover objects distinctly, says the Indian Peter, 'Ha! Colonel Harper, now I know thee; why did I not know thee yesterday?' 'Some policy in war, Peter.' 'A me find em so now.' The Colonel marched the men to Albany, delivered them up to the commanding officer, and by his bold and well executed feat of valor, he saved the whole Scotch settlement from a wanton destruction."

up the valley and met the Schoharie militia at the stone dwelling of John Becker, which they had barricaded with rails and timber, for a fortress. Here we will leave the first troops that visited the valley, expecting them to be admired by the uncouth yeomanry, as well as to be regaled by a few social mugs of "reviving spirits," such as the hospitality of every household, in those days presented, while we will reconnoitre the enemy's position, aim and strength. At the upper part of Vroman's land lived one, Adam Crysler, upon the farm now occupied by Mrs. John S. Lawyer. He was a farmer who owned a large tract of land, and was a shrewd business man. He was commissioned Ensign on the 14th day of October, 1768, in a company of militia of which Isaac Vroman was captain.

In the year 1781 he made an official report to the British Government, which has lain in obscurity among his descendants in Canada, until quite recently, which we here copy in part as far as regards the invasion upon which we are dwelling. The report says:—

"I thought it my duty to get as many men and Indians for government as laid in my power, which will be seen as follows, and my proceedings.

"In March [1777] I had to maintain all the Indians which were at Schoharie in number 25, until the 10th of August. In the meanwhile I recruited all the men for Government that laid in my power being in number 70. In June I received a letter from Brant who desired me to remain at Schoharie in readiness until he came to me. On the 9th of August, Captain McDonald joined us with 28 men from Charlotte creek & I found them all in Provision for one day and night & from thence we went down the river about 4 miles to the lower end of Vroman's land where we remained one day & night & where we were informed the rebels had got a reinforcement and we thought it proper to retreat, until we saw a convenient place to make a stand, which was at my house; from whence I detached 35 men to intercept the Rebels at Breakabeen if they should take that route. In the meanwhile the Rebels advanced until they came to the place where we laid in ambush waiting for them, when we gave them a

volley, killed and wounded three men and nine of their light horse. At the same time we were informed they were 400 strong and we retreated back in the woods which was on the 14th of August, where we held a consultation and concluded, that with the small number of men we had, it would be needless to attack their increasing numbers which was already four to one, but collect all together and proceed to Oswego to the army, for which purpose Mr. David Brass (now Lieutenant in Corps of Rangers) went in search of the 35 men which were detached to Breakabeen, on his return he informed me they were all dispersed."

It will be seen by Crysler's report that his and McDonald's force numbered but one hundred and twenty-eight if he had the whole force of recruits and Indians, but the patriots according to tradition estimated it to be between four and five hundred. The cavalry and militia having rested and having become acquainted with each other and the manner of attack, proceeded to give battle to the invaders. Not having any authentic account of the skirmish except the one already copied, we cannot give any plainer facts. As the Colonists over-estimated the strength of the invaders, so also did the invaders over-estimate that of the Colonists, as it could not have been in numbers to exceed one hundred. The stand made by Crysler was upon the rise of ground near the house, and lasted but a few moments. After the volley was given by Crysler's party the cavalry made a grand rush upon them and scattered their forces, which were not collected to renew an attack.

According to Simms, whose informants were in the fight, the patriots' loss was "David Wirt, a lieutenant of cavalry, and two privates wounded,—one Rose, mortally,—who died three days after." Farther on, the excellent author says truly "David Wirt was the first man that fell in Schoharie defending the principles of free government." The small and weary force returned to the rude fortress having the key of the gate to the valley safely in their grasp. The Tories that were so jubilant in the morning were silent, and those who through trembling, nervous fear, were led to join McDonald's and Crysler's clan, repented of their choice

as the patriots placed an iron heel upon them, and forced them to do duty. Col. Vroman proceeded in the track of the invaders a few days after and found many that were returning to their homes, stating they were forced to follow them. While the Schoharie settlements were in the greatest consternation upon the Mohawk, St. Leger had found his progress impeded by as brave patriots as the world has ever known.

Brave Gansevoort held Fort Schuyler, while determined Herkimer at Oriskany, with gallant Willet's timely aid, and Arnold's cunning message, put to flight the barbarous clan.

Many of the "bravest of the brave" fell upon that historical day. They

"Fought eye to eye and hand to hand,
Alas! 'twas but to die;
In vain the rifle's deadly flash
Scorched eagle plume and wampum sash,
The hatchet hiss'd on high,
And down they fell in crimson heaps
Like the ripe corn the sickle reaps."

The Mohawk valley was saved and another army less to exult at the anticipated junction. Burgoyne laid down his arms upon the 17th and joy reigned supreme in the American camp.

The gloom that pervaded every patriotic heart but a few days before, was now dispelled, and all felt gratitude to the God of battles. All honor to the brave Herkimer, Gansevoort, and Willet. All glory to Arnold and Schuyler, whose laurels were plucked by Gates, and all reverence to the sturdy ones that stood before the exultant, well-fed foe—like the oak before the blast—unyielding, unflinching.

"O few and weak their numbers were
A handful of brave men,
But to their God they gave their prayers,
And rushed to battle then.
They left the plowshare in the mold,
Their flocks and herds without the fold,
The sickle in the unshorn grain,
The corn half garnered on the plain.
And muster'd in their simple dress,
For wrongs, to seek a stern redress.
To right those wrongs, come weal, come woe,
To perish or o'ercome the foe."

The reverses with which the British arms met at Oriskany, Breakabeen, Bemis Heights and down the Hudson, at once satisfied the most

intelligent and far-seeing of the loyalists, that it was useless to continue the struggle by force of arms to conquer the patriots in the Northern Department, and that it could only be done, if done at all, by cutting off supplies from the already poorly clad and fed army, and carry hostilities upon Southern fields. Therefore it was conceived by those in command to make invasions and devastate those sections from which large supplies were procured.

The fact was known by all the Tories, and boasts were made by them that nothing should be allowed to grow or be gathered, and their vigilant eyes were turned to the productive vales of the Mohawk, Schoharie, Susquehanna and even to the Wyoming. The patriots knowing their intentions, kept on the alert at every avenue leading to those sections.

The Schoharie valley being open, without any place but the forest for the people to flee for protection, Colonel Samuel Campbell of Cherry Valley, personally appeared before General La Fayette while at Johnstown attending an Indian Council, and petitioned for the building of three forts in the valley, each to be manned with a company of regular soldiers and a field piece. Accordingly engineers were sent out to locate and superintend their structure in the month of November, 1777.

The stone house already barricaded was surrounded by a moat and enclosed by pickets, and was called the "middle fort." About four miles above at the upper end of "Vroman's land," upon the west side of the river, another house was barricaded and a block-house erected, which was called the "upper fort." The stone church near Schoharie village was enclosed, two block-houses built, at diagonal corners, the same as the upper and middle forts. These three were nearly an equal distance apart and were well arranged for the people of the surrounding settlements to remove their valuables for safety and to find protection from the prowling enemies. Each was furnished with two small cannon and with such facilities as to warrant safety and comfort, yet would prove very inadequate at the present day to withstand the projectiles that would be brought to bear upon them by our well-disciplined and equipped soldiers. Within the pickets of each

fort the citizens built rude huts to which they resorted for safety each night from many miles around, deeming it hazardous to risk their lives upon their own hearthstones, as the prowling demons were at all times upon the watch to capture or kill the patriots after the battle of Breakabeen down to the close of the struggle.

Nothing more of importance (aside from the building of the forts) of a warlike nature occurred in the valley during the year 1777. It is well known by every one that the winter of 1777 was indeed a trying time to the provincial army. Washington lay at Valley Forge with his nearly starved and frozen army and the army of Gates at Bemis Heights, with meagre supplies.

The citizens of Schoharie furnished them with grains from their well filled granaries and assisted in transporting cannon, powder, and all other army necessaries for the campaign of 1778. In the latter part of May of that year, when the earth began to teem with luxuriant grains and grasses such as are peculiar to the Schoharie valleys, the enemy was found lurking in the vicinity of Cobleskill. Captain Christian Brown knowing his force was too weak to cope with any considerable numbers, dispatched a messenger to the lower fort for assistance. Captain Patrick, with a company of forty regulars responded, and upon the first day of June he marched them together with the Cobleskill militia, only seventeen in number, about two miles and one half to the west of the present village of Cobleskill, to the "George Warner house." While tarrying for a few moments and enjoying the hospitality of that "committeeman," a few Indians made their appearance a short distance to the west. The small force pressed forward and was drawn into an ambush planned by the sagacious Brant.

The battle raged furiously for but a few moments as it was discerned that the Indians were surrounding them with untold numbers. Captain Brown ordered a retreat as it was found that Patrick had fallen, mortally wounded. In their flight, they passed the Warner house—in which a few noble ones sought shelter to retard the advance of the blood-thirsty foe.

After burning the house and inmates the invaders passed down the valley, leaving houses, barns, and stacks of hay in ashes, and such stock

as they found they either killed or drove along. Women and children sought safety in the forest and wandered to the Schoharie or lower fort. The patriots' loss was twenty-two killed and two made prisoners from their force of fifty-seven. The enemy's strength according to official accounts was about two hundred. Their loss is not known. This invasion cast a deep gloom over the Cobleskill settlement and caused the inhabitants to seek and remain at the Lower fort. The men cautiously returned each morning to do their work some time after, and walked the distance of ten miles back in the evening. During the year rumors were afloat many times, of the Indians' appearance to devastate, and the military officers at Albany were repeatedly called upon to send a force to Schoharie. We have the pay roll of a company under Captain Marselus of Colonel Lansing's regiment of militia that was sent in August, and was at the lower fort from the 15th to the 31st. They numbered, officers and men, forty-four. Others were here from time to time, beside the home guards and militia belonging to the district, which gave the inhabitants an assurance of protection, and which undoubtedly restrained the Tories and Indians from making another unholy visit. It was in July of that year the terrible massacre was made at Wyoming which chills the heart blood and which presented scenes that devils incarnate should be ashamed to own. It may be interesting to know the fiend in human form whose report we copied in relation to the invasion of McDonald, was present upon that occasion. We did not intend to diverge from the County's history, but being fortunate to obtain a copy of so valuable a document as the report of Adam Crysler, which has loomed up as a guilty conscience—to acknowledge deeds that had been placed against others and not being before published, we will repeat for history's sake what he acknowledges in regard to the affair:—

"In May, 1778, I received [Crysler was at Unadilla] orders from Colonel Butler to come to Canatasago, accordingly I did and brought nineteen men with me (who are with Colonel Butler's rangers now) at which time he made me a Lieutenant—and from there I went under the command of Colonel Butler to Wayomen where

we had an engagement and killed about 460 of the enemy and from there we went to Aughquagy." Also we find he was at the destruction of Cherry Valley, and says:—

"In November I went under the command of Captain Butler (Walter Butler) to Cherry Valley and destroyed that whole settlement and returned to Niagara in December."

Hearing of such invasions and massacres it is not to be wondered that the people of Schoharie felt fearful and insisted upon the presence of soldiers.

Through the year 1779, also, the three forts were well supplied with soldiers, while the militia belonging to the settlements were busy scouting and foraging for the subsistence of the garrisons. During that season several despicable Tories were captured or killed by them, among whom was one Service, living upon the Charlotte who was in the engagement at Cobleskill and who furnished the invaders with provision. [See Summit.] It was in August of that year that Lieutenant-Colonel William Butler of a Pennsylvania regiment and a company of *riflemen* from Morgan's corps came to the valley and took command of the middle fort. Among the riflemen were the brave Tim Murphy and David Elerson whose strategy and courage won the admiration of the people, and who permanently settled in the County. Other equally as brave men came with them but did not either have an opportunity of displaying that characteristic, or had not the tact to impress it upon the mind of the people as forcibly. They were Thomas Boyd (who was ruthlessly butchered while on the Invasion of the Indian country under Sullivan in 1779, and whose ashes lie in Mt. Hope Cemetery, Rochester, as one of "liberty's martyrs,") William Leek, Wm. Lloyd, John Wilber, Frederick Ullman, (who afterwards joined Willet's force at Fort Plain,) Elijah Hendricks, Philip Hoever, Richard Tufts, Derrick Hagadorn, Joseph Evans and others whose names have been lost. It is supposed all of the regulars that were stationed in the valley in 1778 and '79 joined Clinton's force to form a junction with Sullivan at Tioga for the destruction of the Indian towns to the west and north-west of that place. The Indians hung upon the rear of the army and among them were Captain Mc-

Donald and Lieutenant Crysler. The report of the latter says:—

"Went to Shemung where we faced the whole army of the Rebels and was forced to retreat to Oyenyanke (now Elmira,) where we attacked them again and from whence we retreated again to Niagara."

At the close of the campaign, Colonel Wm. Butler, with his followers, returned to Schoharie, where they remained during the winter, and which no doubt they appreciated as they were in a section, in which plenty and hospitality abounded.

Winter passed away with all its pleasures and hostile quietude, and the spring of 1780 came.

The farmers planted and sowed bountifully as their countrymen in arms were to be fed and clothed, and were looking to their spacious fields for a share of their subsistence. Already had large amounts been furnished by the unselfish patriots for such uses, without recompense, except the worthless currency that the distressed government had in good faith issued, and the slow but sure success of the cause of Independence. Liberty was the object, and their products, labors, privations and endurances the beaconage.

Burning under the chastisement Sullivan gave to them the summer previous, and acting under the command to devastate all points that gave the Colonial armies supplies, the Indians and Tories under their inhuman commanders, made several advances. The first upon Schoharie, was in July, under Adam Crysler, who appeared in Turloch (New Dorlach, now Seward,) and took nine prisoners, [see Seward,] besides horses and household goods. Crysler's report says:—

"On the 25th of May, 1780, I received Colonel Johnson's instructions to proceed to the Indian country, and collect all the Indians that laid in my power, and to join Captain McDonald, with a party of Rangers, to go to Schoharie. We proceeded as far as Oneida, where we had a consultation with the Oneidas, and brought of the Oneidas as far as Canasatego (Canajoharie,) where I turned back with seven Indians, and proceeded to Turlough, where I took nine prisoners, and returned to Niagara."

What caused the force to divide and not come in full, we are unable to tell. Crysler had a brother living near the scene of the "Turloch" transaction, who was a true "congenial spirit" in the unholy cause, and near him lived a staunch patriot, Sebastian France, whose capture was designed, but not being at home, they took the Hynds family instead. Had France been at home, undoubtedly what few colonists there were in the neighborhood would have been taken or killed, and their property destroyed. But they left this time, without doing so, to return in the future.

In August, of the same year, when the people of Schoharie Valley were busy upon their lands, and but few men were in the forts, there appeared a band of Indians, supposed to have been led by Brant, in the central part of Vroman's land, and fell upon the Vroman neighborhood, without notice, and killed five men, women and children, among whom were Capt. Tunis Vroman and wife.

We do not think Brant was in this invasion, as Crysler would have so mentioned, had he been. We find, when a superior officer was in company with him, Crysler invariably makes mention of it. He says, in his report referring to this massacre:—

"June 7, 1780, Rec'd. Colonel Johnson's instructions to proceed with a party of Aughquagas, &c., to Schoharie, where I had a skirmish with the Rebels, took five scalps, two prisoners, and burnt some houses and barns, lost one man and one wounded, from thence returned to Niagara."

Instead of only two prisoners being taken Simms says the number was about thirty. The old report of Crysler's was in a very bad state, dim and much torn, and a mistake might have been made in copying. It would be supposed that Crysler would make out as many as consistent that he might receive the pat of his superiors and the encouraging words "well done thou good and faithful servant." For further information in regard to this invasion the reader is referred to Fulton.

Scarcely had the embers ceased to glow where stood the prosperous Vroman settlement and the abundant harvest been safely secured from inclement weather in barns, barracks and stacks,

than the shadow of destruction was drawn over the valley and happy hearthstones destroyed. Colonel John Johnson and Brant, the much vaunted Mohawk chief, entered the valley in the early part of October following the invasion referred to, at the head of nearly one thousand British Regulars, Tories and Indians, bent on the despoilation of the valley.

It was very fortunate for the patriots' cause in the Schoharie valley that this invasion was not made at the beginning of the struggle, when so many were undecided which cause to advocate. Nearly all really were in favor of free government, yet they truly believed it was an impossibility to establish one owing to the superior strength of the mother government, and in rebelling they would forfeit their property and citizenship. The victory over Burgoyne, St. Leger and McDonald was the most fortunate affair of the whole war. It encouraged the firm, strengthened the weak and determined the majority of the undecided. It is a fact not to be denied that then, as ever before and since, and for all time to come, the majority of the people have, and will have, an especial eye to the security of their personal effects, above their political privileges, unless they are bound down to excessive bondage. There are exceptions it is true and especially during the Revolution. That of Hancock of Boston who urged the burning of the city and his entire property, if it would advantage the cause of Independence. Also of Mrs. Rebecca Motte of South Carolina, of Adams, Franklin, Washington, and others of less note. But we are speaking of the majority elsewhere as well as here in the valley, where dwelt a few whose patriotism could not be excelled. The enemy encamped above the upper fort and appeared opposite of it after daylight on the 17th of October. The garrison was commanded by Captain Jacob Hager, whose bravery upon all occasions was truly meritorious. The fort contained only about one hundred citizen soldiers, militia and regulars. Had Johnson known that it was so feebly defended he would undoubtedly have besieged it, but supposing it to be well strengthened and knowing its stubborn commander, besides it being the most impregnable against an armed force of either fort in the valley, they passed on to the middle fort, as they supposed,

without being noticed. Their rear was discovered and an alarm given from the fort by firing the cannon, which was heard at the middle fort and its occupants began to make ready to receive them. The middle fort's construction was the weakest of the three and Johnson therefore made an attack upon it, thinking that if either could be taken his chances were better on that, besides Colonel Vroman, the superior officer was within it, and if he surrendered the other two would be easily compelled to. It is very doubtful whether either Captain Hager or Major Becker would have done so if such had been the case, as they were men of pluck and energy, with the same characters to assist them.

The supply of powder at the middle fort was very limited, and perhaps the enemy was apprised of the fact through some pretended friends of the patriots. The garrison to which Johnson bent his steps consisted of two hundred Continental troops and about one hundred and fifty militia. The fortress was commanded by a Continental Major by the name of Woolsey, but he was either a coward or traitor, as he insisted upon giving admittance to the flag of truce, upon which Col. Vroman took command and made a bold and determined defense.

As soon as the signal was heard from the gun at the upper fort, that of the middle responded, and soon the echo of the ever-ready "grass-hopper," as Johnson called it, came from the lower fort as if to answer "aye!" to the roll-call. Those sounds, too, were the signals for destruction to the yeoman's well-filled barns, stacks and hearth-stones. As soon as they knew they were discovered they applied the torch, and the flames soon began to lap the precious fruits of faithful labor, as if jubilant to assist in the devastation. A scout was sent from the middle fort to learn the cause of alarm and met the foe near the present village of Middleburgh. A few shots were exchanged by the daring party and they returned to the fort with quick step to receive their visitor "outside the gate." The force passed the fort to the east and made a stand upon an eminence to the northeast. The Indians carried on the work of burning and plundering along the flats while Johnson's regulars made preparation for a bombardment. In relation to the siege, we will

copy from "Simms' Border Wars," as that author was fortunate in being personally acquainted with several of the actors in the conflict:—

"Col. Johnson had with him a small mortar and a field piece—the latter a brass six-pounder. The carriage for the cannon was carried in parts and required screwing together. They were made ready to fire at the stand he had chosen at Becker's Orchard, and a cannonading and bombardment commenced, while a constant firing was kept up with small arms, but generally at too great a distance for the latter to take effect. Three shells were well thrown from this position by the enemy at the fort, and many cannon-shot were fired but with less precision, the most of them passing entirely over the destined object. The first shell fired, sung in the air like a pigeon, and exploded directly over the house, and as its fragments fell upon the roof, Mrs. Richtmyer, an old lady, then in an upper room, who had been an invalid and unable to rise alone from her bed for a long time, was so frightened that she sprang from it and went below, surviving the effect but a short time. The second shell fell within the pickets near the well, and while the fuse was burning off and the ball dancing in a mud hole, every person exposed to its explosion had ample time to gain a respectful distance, and it scattered its fragments without injuring anyone. The third shell fell through the roof of the main building, and lodging on a pile of feather beds in the chamber, which were deposited upon several chests of bedding. It exploded tearing the beds in pieces, doing little other mischief, except that of frightening Christian Rickard, an old bachelor, who chanced to be in the room, almost to death. The explosion completely filled the room with feathers, and groping his way down stairs, Rickard made his appearance below, where many of the women and children were, covered with feathers, and spitting down from his mouth, which sudden fear had caused him to open too widely for such an atmosphere. When asked what had happened, he replied in Low Dutch: 'I think the Devil is in the chamber, for the feathers fly around so I cannot see.' The beds were set on fire but were easily extinguished, as water had been provided for such an emergency.

"After the firing had been continued for some time by the enemy and several shells thrown, it suddenly ceased, and a white flag was seen to leave the British ranks and advance toward the fort. The flag-bearer was accompanied on his right by an officer in green uniform, and on his left by a fifer playing Yankee Doodle. When the flag was discovered approaching, Major Woolsey gave orders to have it admitted, but not another officer in the fort, to their credit be it said, was in favor of its admission; and Murphy and Elerson, who conjectured *what their fate might be* should the enemy learn the actual strength of the garrison and succeed in its capture, determined, so the latter informed the author, that before the flag should enter the fort one or the other of them would shoot Woolsey himself. * * * *

"When Murphy fired on the flag Major Woolsey was not present, having visited his quarters to prepare himself to enforce submission to his commands, for soon after he returned pistol in hand and demanded who had dared to disobey his orders? 'I fired on the flag,' said Murphy. Major Woolsey then threatened the brave soldier with instant death if he repeated the act; and the latter, who believed the willingness of the commandant to admit the flag proceeded from cowardice alone, retorted with warmth: 'Sooner than see that flag enter the fort will I send a bullet through your heart.' Seeing an evident disposition in all the officers present to sustain Murphy, for they rallied round him to a man, the Major walked towards the house. In this time the flag attended as before, had again advanced, and Major Woolsey had not proceeded two rods when Murphy again fired, and its bearer faced about and retired.

"During this parley the firing on both sides had ceased with the exception stated, and was not resumed until after Colonel Johnson from his great desire to get a flag into the fort, dispatched it by the same party a third time. It is possible that from his position he had, with a spy-glass, observed the movement of Major Woolsey. They had proceeded as far as at first however, when a third bullet from Murphy's rifle passed over their heads, saying in effect, 'thus far, but no farther,' and they returned to the ranks. The firing was then renewed."

While death stared the little band of patriots in the face and would have been a certainty to every one of them if the British force had been commanded by a brave and ingenious officer, that heroism was displayed by men and women that has been the admiration of the world for ages. Our own national orators and poets fondly, too fondly look back beyond our borders and far beyond our time to find commendable patriots. The history of Sparta and Athens is scoured to find examples to please the fastidious and radical minds, while among the common yeomanry of our country may be found examples that have not been excelled by any countryman, and which would have long since been enshrined upon public memorials if superior positions had been their lot. During the siege at the middle fort was displayed unflinching patriotism and bravery by the weaker sex that deserved mention and which add lustre to that memorable day. Angelica and Susannah Vroman's names may well be classed among the pure heroines of our country, whose chastity linked with their fidelity and activity in the cause of freedom, were as diamonds placed with sapphires in the crown of their characters.

During the siege they moulded the bullets that kept at bay the blood-thirsty enemy, and bravely stood by the side of their patriotic brothers, to repel an attack, and by voice and example encouraged them in their firmness. Another one, on that day, at the upper fort, when preparations were being made to repel the invaders if they returned from the middle fort, stood boldly before the captain who commanded the women to seek safety in the cellar, and declared, "*I shall not go into that cellar! Should the enemy come, I will take a spear, which I can use as well as any man, and help defend the fort!*" Mary Hagadorn took a spear and stood at the pickets until it was known that the enemy had marched on to the lower fort, and danger had passed.

When Woolsey was so boldly overruled by the riflemen, he sought freedom from the jeers of the women, as the same author says elsewhere:—

"The cellar under the kitchen part of the dwelling, was occupied as a magazine, and Colonel Vroman, to conceal the deficiency of powder, brought it himself, when wanted. As

powder was needed, the Colonel laid down his gun and sword, and went to get it. Near the cellar door he encountered Major Woolsey, who had just left the presence of the women, as may be supposed, in not very good humor. 'Major Woolsey, is this your place, who are placed here to defend the fort?' interrogated the brave Colonel. He replied, half dead through fear: 'Colonel Vroman, the men will not obey me, and I give up the command to you.'

The bombardment continued only for a short time, and the little garrison answered only at intervals, as their stock of powder was very limited.

About three o'clock the enemy resumed their march down the valley to attack the lower fort, burning everything along the route, excepting two houses and the church and parsonage at Fountaintown, of which a more definite account may be seen in the chapter upon "Schoharie."

During the presence of the enemy in the orchard, several scouts went out from the fort, to defend buildings and other property, but were only successful in returning. The patriots were very fortunate through the day, as but two were mortally, and one slightly wounded.

Those that were known to be at the middle fort, were Major Woolsey, Colonel Peter Vroman, Mattice Ball, Peter Becker, Timothy Murphy, David Elerson, Christian Rickard, Samuel Reynolds, of New Jersey, (mortally wounded,) Jeremiah Loucks, (slightly wounded,) Doctor John King, (surgeon,) Nicholas Loughter, Lieutenant Martinus Zeilie, John Wilbur, Jacob Winne, (commissary), Samuel VanVechten, Douw Fonda, Captain Miller, of a company of Clave-rack militia, Major Ecker, Sergeant Lloyd, Richard Hanson, Peter VanSlyck, Martin Zeilie, Joachim Folluck, Adam Shell, Philip Hoever, Tufts and Leek. A short time previous to the appearance of the enemy before the middle fort, Major Becker's messenger from the lower fort arrived with a bag of powder, which was opportune, and perhaps enabled the besieged to impress the ability to cope with upon the invaders. With the force that Colonel Johnson had under his command, he could have surrounded the garrison and forced a capitulation, or an entrance within the pickets, and why he did not is another one of the unexplained mili-

tary acts of that feather example of royal pomposity.

The main force kept near the river through Fountaintown, while small parties of Indians and Tories applied the torch to the dwellings, until they reached the present Schoharie Railroad station, when they divided to pass to the east and west of the stone fort, undoubtedly to burn the few dwellings that stood near. Upon their arrival opposite that fortress, they were received with that warmth which such braves as Major Becker are capable of exhibiting when required. Having only two small cannon, they were brought into service, especially the one upon the northwest block house. Trusty riflemen were placed in the belfry, and work began in earnest. The day before, this garrison received a supply of powder from Albany, from which a bag-full was sent to the middle fort. A few shots with small arms were exchanged, when Johnson's Regulars drew in view an object which the yeomen thought was a "peeled log," as a feint, but which, when arranged, proved to be a brass cannon. Shot after shot was made, but with what effect upon the enemy is not known, but upon the patriots the most pleasing. "The peeled log" lodged one ball partly in the plate, and partly in a rafter that rested upon the plate of the building. The hole may yet be seen, and is the only mark left commemorative of the invasion.

Major Joseph Becker, Captain Peter Snyder, Captain Christian Strubach, Ensign Jacob Lawyer, Jacob VanDyck, John Ingold, Senior and Junior, Jacob H. Shafer, Hendricus Schaeffer, Wilhelmus Entis, Anthony Broutner, Barney Cadugney, George Snyder, John Hutt, Jacob Becker, John VanWart, Jacob Enders, John Kneiskern, John Rickard, George Merenes, Christopher France, John Merckley and Wm. Kniskern, were in the lower fort upon that day, besides a company of Normanskill militia and Valley Associate Exempts, making a force of about one hundred and seventy men.

There were several women from the neighborhood, who sought safety in the fort, and whose courage was undaunted,—here as at the other, two,—among whom was the wife of Captain Snyder, whose assistance and encouragement were worthy to receive homage from the de-

scendants of that noble band that none can reflect upon but with patriotic admiration.

Although the invasion we have noticed was terrible in the extreme in destruction of property, laying the labors of years in ashes, yet the loss of life was small. Owing to the numbers engaged, a more modern military observer would think but little of the transaction, but when we consider the position in which the patriots were placed and the circumstances attending their position, their discouraging supplies, weakness in force, future prospects, etc., we cannot but think that, on their part, a stability of purpose, undaunted endurance, and determined patriotism, was exhibited that made the day memorable, their names immortal, and the occasion important.

The enemy encamped near Sloansville for the night, having laid over three hundred buildings in ashes, besides an innumerable number of stacks of both hay and grain. The Indians were guided by the famous Brant, and regardless of the eloquent defense of his character by his historian, the people of Schoharie, for this and other heartless crimes, hold his name in contempt. The very people that had extended to him brotherly hospitality, he robbed of their homes, and silently consented to deprive of their scalps. Blood, torture, devastation and ruin marked his course, if not at Wyoming, truly in the vale of the Mohawk, Schoharie and Cobleskill. At the latter place, especially, knowing that the aroused passions of his followers could be calmed by his orders, as a venerated chief, when such cruelties as those practiced upon the body of the gallant patriot, whose bowels were opened, and entrails wound around a tree, had he possessed a heart less hardened than a demon, he would have ignored such an act and forbidden it.

The following day Colonel Vroman collected all the troops that dared to be spared from the forts, and followed the enemy to the Mohawk. Upon arriving there they were united with the force of Robert VanRensselaer, whose disloyalty or cowardice restrained his army from gaining complete victory over the invaders near Stone Arabia, where the brave Colonel Brown fell. VanRensselaer's conduct upon that mission was, and should have been a subject of censure,

as by his dilatory maneuvers, the murderous clan was privileged to pass off to their rendezvous to gloat over their deeds and enjoy their spoils, and be encouraged to again invade the happy and prosperous homes of struggling patriots.

On the day following the invasion of the Schoharie valley—while the soldiers were skirmishing with the rear of Johnson's force, a party of Indians and Tories led by Seth's Henry, a Schoharie Indian, and Philip Crysler, a brother of Adam, appeared along the West-kill, in the present town of Seward, and after bathing their hands in the blood of Michael Merckley, his niece Catharine, besides two boys, they burned several buildings and led in captivity several inoffensive persons and passed off to follow the Charlotte trail to Niagara. A more minute account of this act may be seen in the events chronicled in the chapter upon the town of Seward, and which was but another lesson of the perfidy of the unprincipled demons that continually lurked around the patriots' homes through the days that truly "tried men's souls."

While we have poorly delineated the cause of the distress and anguish experienced, we cannot but feel our blood boil for revenge, and willingly excuse the hatred felt by the old veterans towards their tormentors. These trials whisper to our better judgments to prize more highly our political privileges, as well as our domestic safety and happiness.

The personal anguish cannot be told. The hearts that were pierced by those tragical acts only could tell in their painful beatings. Yet they are transcribed upon the "book of life" by the finger of the true God, which the pen of man cannot erase or excuse, and for which, trembling souls of tyrants must answer before the bar of the knowing Judge.

Not content, another demon in human form emerged from the Mohawk valley, like a vulture, with a horde of nearly five hundred Indians and Tories and pounced upon the settlement of Currytown, in Montgomery County on the 10th of July, 1781, under Captain John Dockstader. After their usual depredations of murdering, burning and plundering, they resumed their march and encamped for the night near Sharon

Centre. The gallant Willet of Oriskany fame becoming apprised by scouts of the enemy's presence at once set out with a much smaller force and gained a position at their front, without their knowledge.

Arousing the Indian camp early in the morning of the 11th, by sending a scout to intimidate them, they were led into an ingenious trap and from all sides received a volley that told upon their numbers. The superior military skill of Willet over Dockstader, and the unequalled bravery of his men, after a fight of two hours, put the enemy to flight.

Willet and his men, thoroughly aroused, followed them a distance of three miles with continued firing and caused many of them to make sudden departures to the spirit land. His own loss was but five killed, that of the enemy over sixty. Unfortunate would it have been for Johnson and Brant the year before, if Willet had VanRensselaer's command.

Beside the invasions already alluded to, small bands of Indians usually led by Tories, from time to time appeared here and there, and took many prisoners. George Warner Jun., son of the "committee man," of Cobleskill, was taken in July, 1782, by Crysler, and his father and brother Nicholas, in December following by Seth's Henry and several Indians. Also the day before the capture of George Warner, Jun., the same band appeared upon Fox's creek, in the present town of Wright, and burned the residence and other buildings of Jacob Zimmer, killed his son Jacob, and one Hoever, beside taking John Snyder, and Henry Becker prisoners.

Early in the year 1781, the inhabitants of Schoharie and Cobleskill that were living some distance from either of the three forts—for their better protection erected three block-houses, where they might resort each night for safety, without traveling several miles and being exposed to murder or capture. The first was built a short distance east of Cobleskill, the second at Kneiskern's dorf, and the third at Hartman's, equal distances from the middle and lower forts. Each was enclosed by pickets, within which huts were built by private families, as at the main forts. The one at Cobleskill was built under the instruction of Colonel Deboise, a regular,

in command at the lower fort, and was named after him.

In November, 1781, a party came to the valley of Schoharie by the Southern route, and was supposed to be led by Brant, for the purpose of assisting the family of Adam Crysler to remove to Canada. But we are satisfied that it was not the intention of the invaders and that they were not commanded by Brant. Crysler made his report in December, 1781, and this invasion is the last one of which he speaks. It says:—

"Sep. 28 received Col. Johnson's instructions to proceed with a party of Aughquagas &c consisting of 28 men to Schohaire on the 10th of November when we came to Schohary we killed one man near the fort and drove off 50 head horned cattle a number of horses and burnt two houses. On our retreat the Rebels turned out with a party consisting of 30 men in pursuit of us. They overtook us about four miles from the fort and began to fire on us, upon which we returned the fire and killed one of their men on which they retreated and I went on with the cattle. The next morning the Rebels turned out the second time with 150 men and overtook us about twenty-three miles from the fort, upon which we had another skirmish and killed four of their men and some wounded, they retreated at the same time. We lost all the cattle, upon which I had a consultation with the Indians and they concluded not to pursue the Rebels since we were all safe and they too strong for us but make the best of our way to Niagara where we arrived on the 11th December and have since that time done the duties ordered me with satisfaction and spirit."

The object of the invasion, by the foregoing would seem to be for supplies to subsist the army upon. At all other invasions, the cattle were not driven away, but a few killed and a portion of their meat taken. The report agrees with the author Simms' account of the invasion as far as regards the skirmishes. The man that was killed near the fort was Isaac Vroman, father of Peter.

Seth's Henry was also in this party, and as Simms says, "dispatched his victim with a war-club, cut his throat, and with the bloody knife added another notch on the club, to the

record of the many scalps he had taken in the war, after which he laid it on the body of the murdered man and left him." "This Schoharie chief" continues the same author, "left a war club in the same neighborhood some time before, which recorded a most startling account of his prowess and cruelty."

The first skirmish was upon Bouck's Island and Richard Haggidorn was mortally wounded, and one of the Tories also was found near a few days after, supposed to have been killed at that time. The pursuing party returned to the fort and "Col. Vroman dispatched Cap. Hager" says Simms, "with fifteen or twenty Schoharie rangers, and a company of eastern troops, numbering about Sixty men under Capt. Hale. The command of the Americans was given to Capt. Hager, who, taking two or three days provisions moved up the river. The enemy as was afterwards ascertained, numbered between Sixty and Seventy, Indians and Tories, under the command of Brant and Crysler."

The enemy was pursued to and found at or near the lake in the town of Jefferson, and as the same author says "on arriving at the lake, the road which was little more than an Indian footpath, ran along its margin. A ridge of land extended nearly to the lake where the Americans were approaching, and as they were rising the eminence, the enemy who were concealed near its summit, discharged upon them a volley of balls. The instant they fired, Capt. Hager commanded Hale who was marching in the rear to '*Flank to the right and march on.*' Hager intended to bring the enemy between his command and the lake, but Hale instead of obeying the order, faced to the right about, and followed by his men with but one noble exception retreated in double quick time.

"Brant and his destructives seeing the cowardly retreat of Hale and his men advanced to meet Hager, who was left with less than twenty men to resist a force more than triple his own. The little band had taken to trees and were beginning to return the enemy's fire at the time Hale retreated, but seeing that they must soon be entirely surrounded if they attempted to maintain their position, their brave leader ordered a retreat. On leaving the ground they were necessarily exposed to the fire of the ene-

my and Sacket, a Bostonian (the exception to Hale's men) sealed his bravery with his blood, as did Joachim VanValkenburgh, one of Capt. Hager's followers. Joseph, a brother of Cap. Hager was also wounded severely in the right shoulder, but the ball was extracted and he subsequently recovered.

"Capt. Hager with Murphy still at his side then ran to overtake the cowardly Hale, and after a chase of about five hundred yards overtook him; as both of them gained his front they placed the muzzles of their rifles at his breast and the Captain in a voice of thunder exclaimed '*Attempt to run another step and you are a dead man.*' * * * * *

"Having restored order and infused a share of his own fearless spirit in his ranks Capt. Hager was about to renew the pursuit as Col. Vroman arrived upon the ground with forty men drawn from the lower fort. After a short consultation the chase was continued, but still in ignorance as to the enemy's numbers. After proceeding about two miles and losing all trace of their footsteps, they having left the usual path for some unknown route, the pursuit was abandoned and the troops returned to Schoharie."

Various scouts were sent out from time to time and other small invasions made, but to speak of them here would but draw the interest from individual town history. The main incursions affecting the greatest numbers, casting a gloom over the greatest extent of territory we have drawn from Crysler's report and our local historian—Simms' "Border Wars." It was that author's fortune to communicate with many of the actors of the Revolution, themselves and the country's fortune that he embraced those opportunities of learning facts relating to that struggle that would have been lost forever.

One regret we harbor however, that the author was not equally a master of the pencil as well as of the pen, to sketch the portraits of those sturdy ones ere they passed away and crumbled to dust.

They would have been precious mementoes to hand down to future generations, as well as to embellish their history's pages. But we will not complain. Their patriotism we have recorded, for which all futurity is indebted to that author's

foresight. With a few individual encounters within the County, hostilities closed and peace was proclaimed in 1783.

Many of the Tories and Indians returned to their former homes, but the patriots' ire was aroused at the sight of them, and many mysteriously disappeared, especially Indians. Seth's Henry, the most venomous of the race, whose tomahawk and knife had done greater service in their unholy work, than any other, it was thought, felt the stinging power of an unerring bullet, while others were quietly wafted away by more unexplained accidental causes. Many of the Tories, whose bloody trail could be discerned, were victims of abuses in the form of whippings and other *feeling rebuffs*.

The property of that class was confiscated, which comprised whole neighborhoods in a few instances. Many sought Canada again, while a few remained to receive the jeerings of the people, and lived to be shunned by all.

We were fortunate to find in the possession of Henry Cady, (a descendant of Colonel Peter Vroman,) the well preserved muster-roll, bearing the date of 1782, which we here copy.

Many of those whose names are upon it, were active loyalists through the war, and why they were retained upon the list, we are unable to tell. It includes all that were liable to military duty in the whole Schoharie settlement, and will give an idea of the sparse population of the territory.

It will be observed that the name of Becker is spelled differently in the roll, as *Becker* and *Baeker*. The former were of High, and the latter of Low Dutch ancestry, although we believe a mistake was made in giving more *Baekers* than there were in the valley. Quite probably the writer was Low Dutch, and spelled the name as he pronounced it. In regard to the Low Dutch branch, the reader is referred more particularly to the chapter upon events of "Middleburgh," as they located in that town, while the High Dutch settled in the present town of Wright.

No. 1.—Mathice Schults, Lieutenant, Jacob Schultes, William Schultes, Mathice Schultes, Jun., Stophel Warner, Stophel Warner, Jun., Mathice Warner, Jun., Jost Scheffer, Rudolph Cassman, Richard Schelmedien, Christian Bucken, Jury Pestshals, Peter Engel, Jacob Engel, Jacob Post, Phillip Steinbergh.

No. 2.—William Zimmer, Peter Witeman, William Witeman, Jacob Witeman, Jun., Adem Witeman, Isaac Larrawey, Jacob Larrawey, Hendrick Dalle, Peter Zimmer, William Ball, William Snyder, Hendrick Ball, Jury Schribner, Christian Sant, Johannis Delrig, John Low.

No. 3.—Jacobus Deitz, Adem Deitz, Adem Deitz, Jun., Hendryck Deitz, Jury Ball, Hendrick Crosspile, Counrate Swarts, William Becraft, Jun., Francis Becraft, Johannis Eker, Nicolas Eker, Johannis Cher, Jun., Peter Snyder, John Tomson, Charles Heflig, Jacob Heflig.

No. 4.—Jacob Heger, Captain, Hendrick Heger, Jun., Johannis Heger, Peter Heger, Dredrick Becker, William Bouck, Christian W. Bouck, William W. Bouck, Hendrick Bouck, Michel Brown, Pieter J. Vroman, Adem J. Vroman, Harmanus Barnhart, Phillip Barnhart, Johannis I. Bouck.

No. 5.—Cornelius Feak, Lieutenant, Jacob Feak, Nicolas Feak, Johannes Feak, Peter Feek, Timothe Murphy, Hendrick Hagedorn, Barthelmeus Hagedorn, Johannis Hagedorn, Samuel Hagedorn, Adem Hagedorn, Abraham J. Becker, Adem Brown, Jacob I. Becraft, Counrate Mathice, Hendrick Mathice.

No. 6.—Peter Swart, Ensign, Martines Van Slyck, Lawrance Swart, John Whiliber, William Bouck, Jr., Nicelas Bouck, Lawrance Bouck, Frederick Mathice, Nicelas I. Mattice, George Mathice, Johannis Lawyer, Johannis Mathice, Adem Mathice, Peter A. Vroman, Johannis Tingmier.

No. 7.—Christian Stubrach, Captain, John Grenadier, Johannis Richter, Jacob Merkel, Nickelos Merkel, Jost Falk, Jost Sidney, Hendrick Sidney, Peter Sidney, Harmanus Sidney, Hendrick Stubrach, Barent Stubrach, Jacob Hillsinger, Jacob Granedier.

No. 8.—Johannis Dietz, Lieutenant, William Dietz, John Jost Dietz, Nicelas Sternbergh, Lambert Sternbergh, Jun., Davit Sternbergh, Abraham Sternbergh, Jacob Sternbergh, Lodewick Breemer, George Phillip Snyder, William Ecker, Thomas J. Eckerson, John Kniskern, Jacob Kniskern, John Russway.

No. 9.—Peter Ball, Quarter-master, Johannis Ball, Mathice Ball, Harek Braymen, Hendrick Houck, Jun., Hendrick Houck, George Bienhart, Hendrick Merkel, Johannis Merkel, Jacob

Enders, Peter Enders, Johannis Enders, Hendrick Werth, Jacob Van Dyck, John Hess.

No. 10.—John Enders, Ensign, Jacob Enders, William Enders, Jun., Major Jost Becker, Johannis Hott, George Schelman, Johannis Becker, Jacob Becker, William Becker, Jacob Zimmer, Jacob Schoolcraft, George Becker, Adem Zimmer, Hendrick Hitsman, Johannis Hitsman.

No. 11.—Peter Snyder, Jun., Lieutenant, Lambert Sternbergh, Jury Snyder, Michel Hilsinger, Johannis Hilsinger, Michel Hilsinger, Jun., William Enders, Peter Enders, Johannis Finck, Peter Finck, William Finck, Peter Hilsinger, Peter Mann, William Mann, John Dominick.

No. 12.—Jacob Snyder, Lieutenant, Phillip Bergh, Abraham Bergh, Phillip Bergh, Jun., Adem Vroman, Peter Vroman, Jun., Johannis Eckessen, Cornelius J. Eckerson, Joseph VanIngen, Jury Ecker, Jost Kniskern, Phillip Schkyler, John Schyler, Simeon Schuyler, Colonel Peter Vroman.

No. 13.—Laurance Schoolcraft, A. D., Peter Schoolcraft, Teunis Swart, Jacob Money, Phillip Van Alen, John Jacob Werth, Johannes Worth, Peter Snyder, Johannis Snyder, Hendrick Scheneman, George Hills, Stophel Hills, Johannis Rickerd, Marcus Rickerd.

No. 14.—Johannis J. Lawyer, Lieutenant, Johannis Lawyer, Jacob Lawyer, Jun., Abraham Lawyer, Peter Lawyer, Lambert Lawyer, Casper Storet, Johannes Lawyer, Jun., Jacob F. Lawyer, Jacob Lawyer, Nicholas Lawyer, Davit Lawyer, Hendrick Hanes, Jacob Hanes, Hendrick Hanes, Jr.

No. 15.—George Richtmier, Captain, Counrate Brown, Stophel Redich, Davit Lee, Stophel Warner, Johannis Enpolt, Teunis Scheffer, Johannes T. Scheffer, Marcus Scheffer, Philip Borst, Nicholas Rickerd, Jury Rickerd, Thomas Booth, Jost Schell, Christian Schell, Henry Counrate, Jun., Hendricus Scheffer.

No. 16.—Johannis L. Belleger, Ensign, Jost Lee, Antony Brentner, Jacob Jacobse, Johannis Borst, Martines Borst, William Loucks, Jurimy Loucks, Andries Loucks, Johannes Bouck, Thomas Bouck, Davit Bouck, Nicelas Bouck, Cornelius Bouck, Jost Ecker, Counrate Counrate.

No. 17.—Martines N. Zielle, Lieutenant, Thomas Eckessen, Cornelius Eckessen, Major Thomas Eckesson, Jr., Teunis Eckessen, Jr., John Eckessen, Jun, Teunis Eckessen, John T. Eckessen, Joseph Barner, William Lake, Col. Peter N. Zielle, Peter VanSlyke, Barrent Vroman, Johannis Janekson, Hendrich Janekson.

No. 18.—Albertus Becker, Jun., Johannis S. Becker, Harmanus Becker, Abraham Becker, Johannis A. Becker, Storm Becker, Jun., Cornelius Van Dyck, John Van Dyck, Johannis Borst, Jun., Martines Pick, Peter U. Zielle, Jun., Peter U. P. Zielle, Peter Becker, Johannis D. Becker, Hendrick Courate.

No. 19.—Martines Vroman, Lieutenant, Albertus Becker, Johannes Alb Becker, Johannis Becker, Johannis J. Becker, Davit Becker, Jr., Jacob Borst, Jun., Marcus Belleger, Johannis M. Belinger, Lawrance Lawyer, Abraham Lawyer, Conrate Ingmier, Hendrick Borst, Johannis Bellinger, Marcus Bellinger, Jun.

No. 20.—Nicelas Warner, Ensign, Christian Brown, Captain, Peter Scheffer, Lendert Chursigh, Jacob Scheffer, William Brown, Johannis Bouck, Jr., Jacob Bouck, Peter Bouck, Jost Scheffer, Davatt Scheffer, Adem Scheffer, Hendrick Scheffer, Jun., Michel Huningh. Stophel Huningh, Johannis Huningh.

No. 21.—Hendrick Borst, Lieutenant, Baltus Borst, Jost Borst, Johannis Borst, Hendrick Scheffer, Lawrance Lawyer, Jr., Peter Scheffer, Jr., Lambert Scheffer, Johannis Scheffer, Michel Borst, Jacob Foster, Adem Scheffer, William Snyder, Michel Frymier, Davet Frymier, Phillip Lergher.

No. 22.—John Myers, Lieutenant, Daniel McColme, John Couch, Ellexander McColme, Michel Richter, Nicelas Richter, Hendryck Richter, Lodenick Snyder, Phillip Snyder, Hendryck Snyder, Davit Carsson, John Humphry, Benjamin Humphrey, Peter Kniskern, Barent Kniskern, Alexander McDayle, Relph Wertley.

No. 23.—John Casade, Sergeant, George Hattel, Johannis Baeker, Abraham Brewer, Peter Brewer, James Morran, James Humphrey, Peter Young, Andrew Young, Phillip Sneyder, Jr., William McCatrick, Michel Hittser, Charles Werhley, Daniel Vanathwerp, John Vanantwerp, Andrew Young, Jr., Peter Vanantwerp, William Ricket.

As we have made mention, large quantities of grain, chiefly wheat, were sent from the Schoharie settlements to the army for its subsistence. The Committee of Safety superintended its transportation, which was accomplished with wagons and sleighs.

Several teams would be sent to Albany at a time and if other means were not at hand to send the produce on to different points where needed, the same teams were employed to carry it on, and it was not uncommon for them to draw produce to Fort George, Fort Edward, Fishkill and Newburgh. Washington once wrote after Johnson's invasion, "The settlements of Schoharie which alone was able to furnish Eighty thousand bushels of grain for public use," which seems incredible considering the small part of the territory that was under cultivation.

The fact became well known throughout the army and the Eastern States, of the adaptability of the soil to wheat growing and led many of the veterans and others to settle within the territory immediately after peace was proclaimed. The greatest influx was from 1781 to 1800, principally from Connecticut, Massachusetts and New Jersey, who turned their labors and ingenuity to establish homes for themselves.

When the dark, pall-like cloud that had hung over the country so long was removed, the exultation of the people in these frontier settlements must have been great. No longer were they compelled to guard each step with the expectation that the coming hour or moment would find them mangled corpses or tortured prisoners, or fearful of witnessing their homes fall by the torch of the maddened enemy. Peace must have been a sweet angel to them as she spread her pinions over the land. Prosperity followed in her train, making the very hills and valleys resound with her exultant shouts. Forests once more began to fall before the sturdy and determined strokes of the pioneers. Order and contentment reigned where confusion and fear had damped the progress of every thing.

The present territory of Schoharie County from 1772 to 1791 was included in Albany and Tryon or Montgomery counties, but upon the formation of Otsego in the latter year that portion which belonged to Montgomery was

added to it. Those counties being large it became necessary to subdivide them and the Eighteenth Legislature while sitting in the city of New York formed the present Schoharie County.

Many blood-curdling tales have been told and written of incidents that occurred during the Revolution, that we are led to believe were fabrications. That acts were committed by the blood-thirsty Tories too heinous to be charged to human beings we have ample proof, but many such were highly overdrawn by different chroniclers, and even by the Tories themselves, after the war closed. The majority of that class were intemperate, and in their drunken sprees often boasted of infernal acts, but not without public castigations from the victorious patriots whose anger and hatred were instantly aroused at their recital. One story was often repeated by various ones, intimating that they themselves were the actors in the fiendish drama.

A party of Indians and one Tory entered a house and murdered the husband and father, and an Indian approached the cradle in which lay an infant, for the purpose of killing it, but the babe saw the glistening tomahawk and smiled, which so softened the Indian's heart that he relented and left it unhurt. The Tory saw the Indian's timidity and stepped up to the cradle, and with his bayonet picked it up as if the little body were an inanimate mass. With an exulting laugh he held the little form—struggling in its death throes—before its mother's eyes, and exclaimed to his companions, as she cried out in anguish, "See the old cow bellow for its calf!" This story was often repeated by William Monk and by the Caselman family of the Mohawk valley, and various other ones, each claiming the honor(?) of being the fiend. We have traced each family's story and find they are fabrications. The story is an old one, repeated during and after the old French war. Several years ago we found an old print, nearly ruined, in which was a picture representing the cruel deed of the Tory, with a long, harrowing article following, which began by stating it occurred "during the French war." Various other tales of like character have been sent afloat as Revolutionary reminiscences without

any more foundation than the one noticed, and we can but love to think they are untrue, and would that none such stained our history with innocent blood drawn by incarnate fiends, much less that such acts stand against our race.

When the upper fort was being built and made secure to hold prisoners, Martines Vroman and Lawrence Mattice, both boys, asked the privilege of Captain Hager, to bring one of the Crysler's as the first prisoner to the fort. Hager was fearful they would prove too weak to be successful and proffered aid, but they declined and reached the Crysler house about an hour before day. Creeping slyly within a few rods of the door they waited patiently for some member of the family to make their appearance. Soon Mrs. Crysler walked out and looked around as if to prophesy the weather, and was about to close the kitchen door, when the scouts rushed in with muskets cocked and demanded Baltus Crysler to surrender or they would shoot him. Seeing they were determined, he complied and was taken to the upper fort as the first prisoner incarcerated there. He was afterwards taken to Albany with several of his neighbors who gave "aid and comfort to the enemy."—[*A. L. M.*]

When Bartholomew Vroman and brother Josias were taken prisoners from Vromansland, the former was but twelve years of age and the latter six. When they arrived upon the Delaware, the prisoners and Tories who left the valley, numbered about sixty and until there had marched together, without order, but mixed up promiscuously. They were then separated, by requiring the Tories to sit upon a fallen tree together, and the patriots to stand opposite. Bartholomew whispered to his brother and told him they had better go and sit upon the log as Tories, and perhaps they would be passed over, as such, and escape ill treatment. They did so and undoubtedly began to feel secure, when one of their neighbors in whom the patriots had reposed confidence as a brother in the cause, came behind them and pushed them off exclaiming, "What are you doing here you damned Rebels?" They were rudely handled and sent into the patriots' row.—[*Ephraim B. Vroman.*]

The secret doings of the committee of safety and protection alluded to in the fore part of

this chapter were occasionally whispered to the enemy, a strict watch was kept by the true patriots to find the source from which it came, but they failed in so doing. Each member was then sworn (1777) and required to enforce every resident of their district to swear allegiance to the Continental Congress or quit the territory. In case either order was not obeyed, they were arrested as "enemies to their country" and incarcerated as prisoners of war. What eatables they had were also taken for their and the patriots support.* In the Schoharie valley the order was enforced immediately after McDonald's retreat. The iron heel was placed upon the faltering ones and they were forced to submit to Colonial orders through the stern address of Captain Hager. One of his near neighbors, with whom he had lived many years in friendship, showed the "white feather" in some trivial affair, and the fact being made known to the Captain, he sent an order for him to appear at the fort. Instead of so doing he secreted himself upon the opposite side of the creek. Hager kept a close watch upon the family movements and found that the Tory returned to his residence early in the morning, and upon a given signal he was admitted by the family. Hager was passing from his house to the fort one morning before day, and concluded to give his neighbor an opportunity to redeem his character. He approached the door yard cautiously and gave a whistle with the thumb and forefinger, imitating the Tory. The wife immediately came out and Hager asked where her husband was. She replied he was not at home and would not be for a long time. The Captain then said he knew of his whereabouts and would give him six hours to appear at the fort. "If he did do so, a hair of his head should not be harmed, but if he did not, they would proclaim him a Tory, hunt him down and hang him to the first tree." The Tory appeared and was kept under watch at the fort and *made* to perform the duty of a patriot.—[*D. W. Hager.*]

After the flight of McDonald and his force, Captain Hager with a few of the militia that chanced to be at home, immediately joined Gates' army and was in the battle of Bemis Heights. John Merckley was a private under

* Committee's Proceedings.

the Captain, and when Arnold was ordered to relieve Gansevoort, he was drawn to serve under him. When passing over the Oriskany battle-ground the dead in their mangled condition presented a sickening sight, and so appalled the soldiers that not a word was spoken by them, but they marched carefully over them, each deep in solemn thought.—[*F. M.*]

CHAPTER IV.

FORMATION OF COUNTY—THE NAME OF SCHOHARIE — POPULATION — BOUNDARIES — SURFACE—THE SCHOHARIE AND TRIBUTARIES—INUNDATIONS — LAKES — FORMATION OF TOWNS—FIRST COUNTY OFFICERS—FIRST COURT HOUSE—POORHOUSE—PAUPERS—COUNTY'S PROGRESS—WAR OF 1812—DELEGATES TO STATE CONVENTION—POLITICAL—SCHOHARIE DEMOCRATIC—GOV. BOUCK'S MESSAGE — SOURKROUT MESSAGE — ANTI-RENT WAR — RAILROADS—PLANK ROADS—SEMINARY MANIA — SUSQUEHANNA RAILROAD—SCHOHARIE VALLEY—SHARON AND CHERRY VALLEY — HOWE'S CAVE ENTERPRISES — MINERAL SPRINGS — EDUCATION—RELIGION—TEMPERANCE—SABBATH SCHOOL SOCIETIES—BIBLE SOCIETY—MASONIC LODGES — AGRICULTURAL AND MEDICAL SOCIETIES—TELEPHONE LINES—NEWSPAPERS—CRIMINAL LIST—SUMMARY OF FACTS—POPULATION BY CENSUS OF 1880.

SCHOHARIE County was formed on the 6th of April 1795 from Albany and Otsego counties, and named Schoharie after the principal stream that runs through the territory of which it is comprised. Schoharie is an Indian name, and signifies, *Flood Wood*, according to the late Judge John M. Brown, who was the author of "A brief sketch of the first Settlement of Schoharie County," and to whom we are indebted for transmitting to us much that would otherwise have been lost.

We find the word Schoharie, written in various ways, viz: Skochalie, Schorie, Shore, (probably pronounced Sho-ree,) Schohare, Schoharry, Scorie and Schohary, and called by the Dutch, Shuck-ha-ry.

The Act of the Legislature in forming the County, gave to it the present orthoepy—Schohar-ie, which we must adopt as the name of the County, a town and village—whose associations are historical from the first tread of the white man upon the virgin soil, down to the present time, and with which are mingled the most glorious examples of patriotic devotion and endurance that adorn the annals of any history.

By an act passed April 3, 1801, to divide the State into counties, the boundaries of Schoharie were thus defined:—

"The county of Schoharie to contain all that part of the State bounded easterly by the county of Albany, northerly by part of the south bounds of the county of Montgomery, as hereafter described, westerly by a line beginning at the southwest corner of a tract of land formerly granted to John Lyne, and running thence the following courses and distances as marked by order of the Surveyor General, south twenty-one degrees and forty-eight minutes west, two hundred and nineteen chains to the place where Joshua Tucker formerly resided, thence south seven degrees and forty-eight minutes west one hundred and ninety-three chains to the eastermost line of a tract of land known by the name of Belvidere Patent, thence south nine degrees east, six hundred and ninety-five chains to a certain hill, known by the name of Grover's hill, thence with a direct line from the most northwesterly corner of Stroughburgh Patent, thence with a direct line to the most northerly corner of Harpersfield, on the Charlotte or Adeगतangie branch of the Susquehanna river, thence southeastly along the north bounds of Harpersfield to the said lake Utsayantho and southerly by a line formerly run from the head of Kaater's creek, where the same issues out of the southerly side or end of a certain lake or pond lying in the Blue Mountains to the said lake Utsayantho, and by part of the north bounds of the county of Greene."

In 1836 a portion of Greene county was an-