

## CHAPTER XIII.

## HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF FULTON.

FIRST PURCHASE OF LAND BY ADAM VROMAN—  
 ADAM VROMAN AND FAMILY—INDIAN DEEDS  
 —CAPTAIN VROMAN—INDIAN CASTLE—COL-  
 ONEL PETER VROMAN—SWART FAMILY—PETER  
 SWART — HIS MANUSCRIPT—DEATH—CRYS-  
 LER FAMILY—MRS. JOHN BOUCK —HENRY HA-  
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 ING OF CRYSLER'S MILL—SAD DAY OF 1780—  
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THAT portion of the town known as Vro-  
 mansland was the first settled, and is  
 the best land in the County. Adam Vroman,  
 as before stated, purchased it of the Indians in

1711, for one hundred gallons of rum and a few  
 blankets, and estimated the tract to contain  
 four hundred acres. In 1715 Vroman came to  
 the valley to settle his son, Peter, but by  
 threatenings to kill him and the bold demolition  
 of his house by the Germans of Weisersdorf,  
 he was frightened away, and the settlement  
 was delayed till the season following. Adam  
 Vroman descended from a prominent family of  
 Holland, and was a son of Hendrick Meese  
 Vroman, who was killed in the Schenectady  
 massacre of 1690. He was born in Holland  
 in 1649. Rev. R. Randall Hoes, of New  
 Rochelle, N. Y., a descendant, says:—

"He was naturalized in the province of New  
 York in 1715."

His will is dated September 12, 1729, and  
 was proved June 13, 1730. He died on his  
 farm in Schoharie, (Vromansland,) February  
 25, 1730, and was buried in Schenectady, and it  
 was thought upon at least *fair* authority, that  
 his first wife was Engeltie Bloom, probably of  
 Long Island. His second wife was Gristje  
 Ryckman, widow of Jacques Cornelise Van  
 Slyck, in 1691. His third wife was Grietje  
 Takelse Heemstreet, married January 13, 1697,  
 in Albany. His children numbered thirteen.

They were as follows, from the manuscript of  
 of R. R. Hoes:—

Barent baptized in 1679; married daughter  
 of Takelse Heemstraat, 1699.

Wouter, born in 1680; married daughter of  
 Isaac C. Hallenbeck, of Albany, 1707.

Pieter, born May, 1684; married Griesje Van  
 Alstine, of Albany, February, 1706.

Christina, baptized October 18, 1685; mar-  
 ried Tennis Swart, October, 1710.

Hendrick, born in 1687; married first —,  
 second, Maria Wemp; was high constable in  
 Albany in 1705.

Johannes, baptized May 30, 1697, in Al-  
 bany.

Maria, born September 1, 1699; married  
 Douw Foda.

Bartholomew, born blind; married Catharina  
 Slingerland, widow of Hendrick Van Slyck.

Timotheus, born November 8, 1702.

Seth, married first, Geertney Van Patten;  
 second, Eva De Graff.

Jacob Meese, married Sara Meyndertsen, October 30, 1742, daughter of the Patroon.

Eta, married Joachim Ketelhuyn, January 25, 1730.

Janetje, married Harmon Van Slyck, and we think after, Johannes Lawyer.

Rev. Hoes also gives us Adam's third son's children. As from Peter came the different families bearing the name in the valley at the present time, we give them as follows:—

Adam, Barent, Cornelius, Engeltie, (Mrs. David Zielie,) Abraham, Jannetic, Pieter, Meesc, Isaac, Geerting, (Mrs. Josias Swart,) Lidia.

Adam Vroman had a deal of trouble with the Germans, who, he complained to the Governor of the province several times, "set the Indians up against him." The Germans apprised the Indians of the fact that Vroman had cheated them in the number of acres, and he again bought the tract in 1714, (April 30,) and called it eleven hundred acres, and in the following August obtained a royal grant for the whole. There is no doubt that Weiser and his followers had an eye to the land, and committed all manner of depredations, and influenced the Indians against him, at least the Indians were not yet satisfied, and the matter was not settled until the 30th of March, 1726, when he repurchased the whole tract, and to make a sure transaction the conveyance was given "in behalf of all the Mohaugs Indians," and after giving the boundaries, it said "let there be as much as there will, more or less, for we are no surveyors." All deeds given by the Indians of the valley were executed by the three tribes of the Mohawk, whose ensigns were a turtle, wolf, and bear, the former sometimes holding a tomahawk in its claws. The Germans learned by experience that Vroman could not be frustrated in his designs, and after the exit of Weiser to Pennsylvania they began to cultivate a friendly feeling towards each other. How many of Adam's children settled upon the land we are unable to learn, but we know at least of three, Peter, Wouter and Christina. Wouter or Walter, seemed to be the favorite son, as he received more than the others.

Where David Vroman now resides, Adam

intended to reside, and upon the west of him Wouter was located, his land running from the mountain to and across the "Dovegatt."\* All the land east of Wouter's was called the Bowery, and was conveyed to him on the 12th of February, 1731.

Each of these had sons, and perhaps other brothers' sons came, as in a few years quite a number of the family were here. Author Simms refers to four sons of Peter,—Cornelius, Samuel, Peter and Isaac,—that were noted for their strength. Having a saw-mill, he states two of them could easily carry a good sized log on the carriage. Cornelius being the strongest, upon a wager of strength, drew twelve heavy men in a sleigh upon bare ground, one and one-half feet, and drew by the end of the tongue. It will be seen that Peter did not have a son named Samuel, and as Isaac was born in November, 1722, if such did show their strength, they were children of another Vroman,—perhaps Adam's brother. As will be seen, Christina, a daughter of Adam, married Teunis Swart, and his son, Jacob, the father of Judge Swart, followed him, in the possession of the farm given to him by Adam, as did the Judge, who afterwards removed to Schoharie. The Swarts settled a few years after the Vromans, and were connected with them in all enterprises for many years. During the French wars those families took an active part, especially the Vromans, and held prominent positions in the militia ranks. Peter, the son of Adam, was commissioned Ensign in 1731, and was promoted to Captain between that date and 1739. The original commission is now in the possession of A. G. Richmond, of Canajoharie. His grandson, Peter, (son of Barent) was commissioned Captain sometime in 1754 or 1755, and was highly recommended by Sir William Johnson to Governor Colden, to be promoted to Major in Colonel Jacob Sternburgh's regiment, as before stated. The latter officer to distinguish himself from other Peter Vromans of that day, usually wrote his name Peter B., conveying the idea of, son of

\* The Dovegatt is the Dutch name given to a miniature bay that runs from the main stream into the interval in the shape of the Roman letter L.

Barent. When the Revolution commenced he was commissioned as "Colonel Peter Vroman." The grandfather, Peter, (Ensign and Captain) having died in 1771, Colonel Peter dropped the "B." Perhaps he did so to shield himself from being recognized by the British Government as the former commissioned Captain. In case of his being taken prisoner under his former full name, he would have been treated as a deserter.

A nephew of Adam made himself prominent as a Surveyor, and purchaser of large tracts of land. His name was Isaac, and he surveyed the "Dorlach grant" in Seward and Sharon in 1730, and drew a very concise map of the same which is now in the hands of Tiffany Lawyer.

During the anticipated trouble with the French a castle was built in Vromansland by the orders of Sir William Johnson, and called a "fort." It was built in 1753,\* and stood upon lands now occupied by David Vroman, east of the stem of the Dovegatt, and in the conveyance of lands from the Indians to Vroman and from him to his son Walter, the site was reserved as also was a narrow strip along the backwater, opposite the fort. The latter was for a burial ground.

There were three castles or forts in the valley, but this was the largest and most impregnable, owing, undoubtedly, to the fact that the greatest number of Indians and whites were located in this vicinity. At the time these forts were built, there were also others constructed for the Onondaga, Oneida and Seneca tribes, and upon the back of the statement, made, of the fact of their being built, by Sir William Johnson, to the Board of Trade, there was a memorandum of dimensions which was, without doubt, that of the forts, (unquestionably they were all built alike,) which we will here copy verbatim:—

"100 ft. square the stockad<sup>s</sup>. P [pine] or O K [oak] 15 ft. long 3 of w<sup>ch</sup> at least to be sunk in the ground well pounded and rammed & y<sup>e</sup> 2 touching sides square so as to lay close. Loop holes to be made 4 ft. dis<sup>e</sup> 2 Bl. H<sup>ses</sup> 20 ft. sq. below & above to project 1½ foot over y<sup>e</sup> Beams well roofed & shingled & a good Sentry Box

on the top of each, a good Gate of 3 In<sup>e</sup> oak Pl. & Iron hinges & a small Gate of Oak Plank of same thick<sup>s</sup>.

"Endorsed, Fort Johnson, May 28th, 1756."

Judge Brown in his "Brief sketch, &c., of Schoharie," of this Fort and Indians says:—

"Here they (the Indians) all settled together the whole Karigh Ondonte tribe. Their chiefs that remained in my time (1757 he came to Schoharie) were Seth Hauzerry, Joseph Hanelir and Aggy Awcer, together with their squaws of the direct line of Karigh Ondonte, namely—Lisquet, Wawly and Caroline, who always pretended to have exclusive title to the soil and King George, I suppose, caused a Piquet Fort and some Barracks to be built thereon, which was done by one young Johannes Becker for the sum of eight pound. Here they gave names to three particular hills—namely Onisto Graw, Conegena and Mohegan, by which they continue to be named this day."

From this fort, Captain Peter B. Vroman proceeded with a body of militia to Oswego in 1759, and was employed in building a road to the Three Rivers. Vromansland being the birthplace of Colonel Vroman and that historic ground lying within this town, perhaps it would be well to here give a few of the many prominent points of his life, beginning with the commencement of the Revolution.

We find he represented the Schoharie district at the "Provincial Convention," to elect delegates to the Continental Congress in April, 1775, although the "New York Civil list" does not make mention of the fact. He was sent as a delegate to the Council of Safety many times, and was Member of Assembly during the four sessions of 1777 and 1779, also in 1786 and 1787. His prompt action under the most adverse circumstances during the war as an officer, and the courage displayed upon the 17th of October, 1780, at the middle fort were characteristic of the man, and were worthy marks of a true patriot and unflinching soldier. The Colonel had but one heir, Angelica, who married a Peter Vroman, that held a commission as Major in the beginning of the century. He removed from Vromansland in the year 1777 to the middle

\* Doc. Hist. Vol. 2, of 4 Vols. page 422.

fort, and after the invasion of 1780 he purchased the Eckerson mill near the lower fort and lived at that place until his death, which occurred on the 29th of December, 1793, at the early age of fifty-seven.

The Swart family were descendants of a prominent family in Holland in an official and monetary point of view. The first that came to this country were two brothers, Frederick Cornelius, and Teunis Cornelius, some time prior to the year 1660. They were business men and held public positions in Albany and Schenectady for many years. The Judge was the most prominent member of the family in this County, and in order to give a correct idea of his public life we will copy from a manuscript left by him, now in the possession of our friend Rev. R. Randall Hoes:—

“I was enrolled in the militia at sixteen years of age, (this was the lawful age for enrolling at that period) served as a private six months; then I was appointed a corporal, served in that capacity about one year, then I was appointed sergeant in Capt Hager’s company; 1778 I was appointed Ensign in said company, in the room of John L. Lawyer; 1786 I was promoted to first Major of the regiment, in 1798 I was promoted to Lieut.-Colonel Com’t. In 1784 I was appointed Justice of the Peace, without my knowledge. In 1796 I was appointed one of the Judges of the county, which office I have resigned in 1818: In 1798 I was elected member of Assembly, the next election I was solicited to stand again as a candidate which I utterly refused; 1806 I was elected a member of Congress.

“I was afterwards again requested to stand as a candidate for Congress, which I refused, when John Gebhard, Judge Shepherd and Boyd (Thomas) were candidates. Gebhard and Shepherd met with their friends at the court house for one of them to give way; no arrangement could be made: They both signed a written declaration to give way in case I would accept a nomination, which I also refused. 1816 I was elected a Senator. At the expiration of my time I was again requested to stand a candidate for the Senate, which I also refused. I never craved or requested an office.

“I was one of the first that signed the compact and association. 1776 I turned out to Stone Arabia to check the progress of the enemy and Tories. In the fall of the same year I turned out to Albany, from thence to Fort Edward, from thence to Johnstown, to check the enemy. 1777, in the spring, I turned out to Harpersfield, from thence to the Delaware, to take up disaffected, from there home. Three days home, I went down the Helleburgh to take Tories. After we had together about twenty-five of them, went to Albany and delivered them in jail. A few days after, went to Harpersfield, from thence to Charlotte river to take McDonald, and send him to jail. In August, 1777, was one of the thirty-two that made a stand to oppose McDonald and his party. I was one of the two that risked our lives to crowd through the ‘Tories’ guns to go to Albany for assistance; was taken prisoner by the Indians and Tories, and the same evening made my escape. I was one of the six councillors that went from the stone house across Schoharie Creek into the wood in a *cave*, to consult what measures to adopt—secrecy at that time was the best policy. Did not McDonald and his party come down as far as my house, and there encamp till next day, and destroy everything? I had left home. The same day McDonald and his party were defeated and fled into the woods, and went off to Canada, and about twenty-six from Breakabeen went with him. What would have been the result if our small party had made no resistance, and had tamely submitted? McDonald would have marched through Schoharie, and in all probability reached Albany. What was the consequence as far as he came down? Was not the farm of Adam Crysler confiscated? Also the farm of Adam Bouck and brothers? Also the farm of Frederick Bouck? Of Bastian Becker, John Brown, Hendrick Mattice, Nicholas Mattice and a number of others that were indicted? And a number more that had joined McDonald and fired upon our men.”

Judge Swart was born January 13, 1752. He married Cornelia Becker (Low Dutch), by whom he had several sons and daughters, as follows:—Jacob, John, Peter, Martin, Maria, Mrs. Peter I. Hoes, Ann, Mrs. Jacob H. Hager,

afterwards Mrs. Nicholas Russell, of Cobleskill, and Nancy, Mrs. David Swart, of Orleans county, N. Y. He passed his last days upon the "Beller farm," near Schoharie village, and there died on the 3d of November, 1829.

At some period before 1750, the Crysler family settled upon the farm now owned by Mrs. John S. Lawyer. The name has been differently spelled, as Kriesler, Krisler, Chryslir and Crysler. We will adopt the modern or latter method. We are of the opinion that the head of the family was Geronimus, and at the beginning of the Revolution, he was dead and left four sons and at least one daughter, Mrs. John Bouck, of Schoharie village, also Adam Baltus, Philip, John, and William. Adam retained the old homestead and was the owner of a gristmill built several years before the Revolution. Geronimus became interested in a portion of the "Dorlach" grant and removed with Philip, John and William upon it, and the three latter were residents of it in 1777.

The family at one time owned a large tract of land in this town, of which the Boucks became the owners. As the law passed by the Continental Congress, was to the effect that those who remained loyal to the Crown, and left the property during hostilities to give aid to the colonists' enemies, should forfeit their lands, this property was seized and passed into other hands upon the close of the war. While Adam and brothers were demons in human form, through that struggle, yet the former was not a downright Tory more than any other British officer, who had sworn allegiance to the government and enrolled himself in the army as a soldier, before the war commenced. Having thus done, his government was the crown, while a civilian must consider himself to be of that government that has absolute power over the State or province of which he is a member, and in opposing by force or giving aid to the enemy, gains the title or epithet of "Tory."

It was otherwise with Crysler. He was a British officer, having received a commission in 1768. We have already in Chapter III, given the movements of Captain Crysler and his brothers during the war, and it is therefore needless to repeat them here, as they are a stain

upon our history that will overbalance anything that has been brought forward against other white savages of that memorable epoch. While they were participants and instigators of atrocious acts, the sister, Mrs. John Bouck, was one of those women whose Christian graces adorn society and win the love and admiration of their fellows. She lived to a good old age, and died about the year 1810, leaving a large circle of friends, whose children still refer to her Christian life.

Beside the families already mentioned as being the first settlers of the town were the Feeks, Baxster, Youngs, Mattice, Larroways, Keyzers, Beckers, Browns, Hagadorns, Vanloan, Henry Hager, and Boucks, although the latter at a much later date than the former. At the time the invasion was made by McDonald and Crysler, Henry Hager, then an aged man, was the only patriot left in the upper part of the settlement to communicate the fact of their presence to the people below.

In starting out near sundown, to carry the news he walked within the enemy's lines, and upon finding out his situation, pretended to the sentinel to be in quest of the blacksmith. After giving an order for some piece of mechanism he was again allowed to pass the pickets on his pretended return home, but in reaching a bend in the road that hid him from the belligerents, he made a circuitous route and reached the house of John Becker, where were assembled his son and Captain Jacob Hager with a small company of militia. The Captain had marched to the relief of Schuyler, and had been ordered back for supplies, which seemed Providential at that time as the valley was defenseless, with none but the aged and women, of the patriots' side, to resist a foe. The two messengers first sent for assistance, were of this town, Peter Swart and Ephraim Vroman, who, ere the war closed, keenly felt the vengeance of the foe. Hager, with the very few patriots surrounding him, urged the citizens to turn out for defense but they showed their true colors, and refused to heed his orders, and finding it was useless to coax and still less to compel, other messengers were sent to the committee at Albany, until their call was answered as before stated. After the skirmish in Crysler's neighborhood with such favorable success, the ire of Captain Hager was

aroused, and the weak-kneed were forced to a realizing sense of what they had to do, and were kept under strict surveillance as long as the war lasted.

Many followed Crysler to Canada, outside of his force in action that day, while others returned after a few days march, pretended penitence, but were, as others, forced to do much against their wishes. Captain Hager was early in the field upon duty and remained in active service until the close of the war.

Upon the retreat of McDonald, Capt. Hager returned to Saratoga with his force and was at the battle of Bemis Heights, and from thence, marched with a detachment of militia to the Delaware and Charlotte to arrest the disaffected, that had been more bold upon the prospect of the success of British force, than before. At no time during the struggle were there as many arrested and confined or forced to give bail for their "good behavior towards the patriots," as immediately after the surrender of Burgoyne and retreat of St. Leger. The militia drove matters to a crisis with the timid, as well as the evil disposed, and during the Captain's whole military career we fail to find an instance where his passions gained control of his judgment, and led him to commit rash deeds, that were to his discredit as a soldier and a Christian gentleman. His bravery and military skill were conceded by Johnson, Brant, McDonald and Crysler to be undaunting, as upon several occasions a conflict was evaded when it became known that the Captain was in command. The second company which he commanded was the most active of any, and consisted of fifty-five all told, with Martinus VanSlyck as First Lieutenant, Johannes W. Bouck, Second Lieutenant and Peter Swart, Ensign, and during the war, arrested, tradition says, two hundred and fifty Tories, and delivered them to the Colonial authorities.

*Upper Fort.*—As hostilities had actually commenced in the valley and invasions were daily expected, the upper fort was built in the fall of 1777, as were the middle and lower, by the labors of citizens and soldiers. The summer of 1778 found them finished, and this one the most impregnable of the three, stood near the village of Fultonham, upon the present farm of

Mrs. Lawyer Bouck, then owned by John Feek. Of its construction, Simms says: "One side of the inclosure was picketed in, while on its other sides a breast-work was thrown up of timbers and earth, some eight or ten feet high, and sufficiently thick to admit of drawing a wagon upon its top, with short pickets set in the outside timbers of the breast-work. A ditch surrounded the parts thus constructed. Military barracks and small log huts were erected in the inclosure to accommodate the soldiers and citizens. Block-houses and sentry boxes were built in the northwest and southeast corners, each containing a small cannon to guard its sides. From its construction, this fortress probably better merited the name of *fort* than either of the others, although some have stated that a moat partially surrounded the middle fort." The same author says, "In June of 1777 Congress resolved to establish a corps of invalids, consisting of eight companies, each to have one captain, two lieutenants, two ensigns, five sergeants, two drummers, two fifers and one hundred men, to be employed in garrison duty." A company of this kind was formed in Schoharie in the fall of 1777, or early in 1778, of which Teunis Vroman, who had served in the French war, was Captain, Peter Snyder and Martinus Vroman, Lieutenants, and John L. Lawyer its Ensign. This company, which was mostly in the vicinity of the upper fort was called *Associate Exempts*. The most direful invasion of the whole of the Schoharie settlements up to the year 1780, was made in Vromansland on the 9th of August of that year, by a party of Indians, supposed to be seventy-three and six Tories, led by the infamous Crysler, as will be seen by consulting his official report found in Chapter III. Of that affair Simms says, that Captain Hager sent a scout consisting of Coonradt Winne, Leek and Hoever to reconnoiter in the western part of this town with instructions not to fire upon the enemy if seen, but return immediately to the Fort. But when in the vicinity of "Sap bush," a white man, painted as a savage, was seen and being a tempting mark for Leek, he leveled his rifle and shot him, which brought the whole force in view and caused a precipitate flight of the scouts. They became divided, and only Leek reached the

fort, the others being chased to the south. Not arriving in time to give the alarm to the citizens, the savages pounced upon the Vroman settlement about ten o'clock in the morning, in three divisions. Captain Hager had gone to his farm (which lay in the present town of Blenheim as has been seen) to draw in some hay, leaving Captain Teunis Vroman of the 'Exempts' in command. The latter unfortunately also had returned to his house to draw in wheat accompanied by his family to do their housework.

The command then devolved upon Lieutenant Ephraim Vroman who also, with his wife, four children and two slaves, went to his farm and left the garrison under Lieutenant William Harper, with less than a dozen men.

All of these Vromans lived in the one neighborhood and were without doubt the most independent of any in the whole valley. It was when all were busily engaged in their excellent harvest or general house-work that the demons, like vultures, pounced upon them. Captain Vroman was unloading wheat at the time they made their appearance, and immediately descended from the load and was met by an Indian who cleft his skull with a tomahawk and "stood upon his shoulders while tearing off his scalp." Mrs. Vroman was washing in a narrow passage between the house and workhouse when she was surprised and stricken down, after two blows had been inflicted. Her scalp was rudely torn off and the torch applied to the house, barns, barracks and everything that fire could consume. The Captain and wife both had presentiments that morning, that something dreadful was about to occur, and ere noon-day they lay mutilated victims of a *civilized* government's hired emissaries.

The author was informed by Andrew Loucks, then in the fort, that Mrs. Vroman remarked when leaving the fort in the morning, "This is the last time I intend to go to my house to work." Peter, one of the sons, fled upon the first alarm and hid in the bushes, but one of the blacks betrayed him and he was taken prisoner. He was taken a short distance, and while crying to return, the notorious Beacraft caught him "and placing his legs between his own, bent him back

and cut his throat, after which he scalped and hung him across the fence." This affair, the reader will remember, Captain Patchin refers to in his narrative, of which the Tory boasted. The division that entered the settlement at Colonel Vroman's residence was led by Brant himself, "who hoped to surprise the *rebel* Colonel." That officer had removed to the middle fort in the early part of July together with his family and, there being no one upon the premises, the invaders applied the torch and passed on to Lieutenant Vroman's. His family (says the author) "consisted of himself and wife, his sons Bartholomew, Josias E., and daughters Janet—four years old, an infant—Christina, two Germans, Creshiboom and Hoffman, and several slaves. The latter, however, were at work near the river and escaped." Lieutenant Vroman ran to the house, caught up the infant and ran to the cornfield at the foot of the Ouistagrawa, followed by his wife leading the daughter. "He seated himself against a tree and his wife concealed herself a few rods from him in the thrifty corn." "His family would, without doubt, have remained undiscovered, had Mrs. Vroman continued silent; but not knowing where her husband was and becoming alarmed, she rose up and called to him in Low Dutch, 'Ephraim, Ephraim, where are you, have you got the child?' True to the love of a mother, her own safety was not thought of, but the deep, yearning solicitude for the child's safety triumphed, and gave the direction to the unerring "bullet from Seths Henry's rifle to pierce her body." "He then tomahawked and scalped her while the Tory, Beacraft, crushed the skull of the four year-old daughter with a stone and drew off her scalp." The historian says that as Seths Henry approached Mrs. Vroman to take her scalp, he said, "Now say—what these Indian's dogs do here?" repeating her own words, spoken after her marriage nuptials were performed, as Henry and other Indians crowded into the kitchen and at which the wily warrior took offence. "While Mrs. Vroman was being scalped, another Indian approached the Lieutenant and thrust a spear at his body, which he parried, and the infant in his arms smiled, another thrust was made and parried which again caused the child to smile. At

the third blow, which was also warded off, the little innocent, then only five months old, laughed aloud at the supposed sport, which awakened the sympathy of the savage, and he made Vroman a prisoner."

The sons and German laborers were also captured and taken to Canada. John Vroman was also captured with his wife and children. The house was set on fire, but extinguished. Adam A. Vroman fled to the upper fort, three-fourths of a mile distant, after being twice fired upon by the enemy. He had a pistol, and when the Indians gained upon him, he presented it, and they fell back, but renewed the chase when he set forward. He was pursued until protected by the fort. On his arrival he was asked how he had escaped. His answer was, "I pulled foot." From that day to his death, he was called "Pull Foot" Vroman. His wife was made a prisoner.

Simon Vroman who resided above, was taken prisoner, as were his wife and son Jacob, a boy three years old. John Daly, aged over sixty, Thomas Mereness and James Turner, (young men), Albey Eliza Stowits, a girl of seventeen, the wife of Philip Hoever, the widow of Cornelius Vroman, and several slaves not mentioned, were also captured in Vromansland, making the number of prisoners in all, about thirty. The five persons mentioned were all that were killed at the time. Abraham Vroman, who happened to be in Vromansland with his wagon, on which was a hay-rack, when the alarm was given, drove through the valley and picked up several of the citizens. On arriving at the residence of the Swarts, who lived in the lower end of the valley, he reined up and called to Mrs. Swart, who was standing at an oven a little distance from the house: "Cornelia, jump into my wagon, the Indians are upon us!" She ran into the house, snatched up her infant child (now Mrs. David Swart,) from the cradle, returned, and with her husband bounded into the wagon which started just before the enemy, tomahawk in hand, reached their dwelling. Vroman had a powerful team, and did not stop to open the gates that then obstructed the highway at each line fence but drove against them and forced them open. He drove to the middle fort which also was fully garrisoned.

"The destructives burnt at this place *nine dwellings* and the furniture they contained, with the barns and barracks, which were mostly filled with an abundant harvest. Ninety good horses were also driven with their owners into captivity. Large slices of meat were cut from the carcasses of the cattle and hogs and strewn along the valley, or hung across the backs of some of the horses, to serve as provisions for the party on their way to Canada."

Before Seths Henry left the settlement, he placed his *war club*, which he believed was known to some of the citizens, in a conspicuous place, and purposely left it. Notched upon it were evidences, as traced by the Indians on similar weapons, of *thirty-five scalps* and *forty prisoners*. We have thus been particular to copy author Simm's narrative of the massacre, as tradition has taken from the events of the day much of deepest interest, and intimated that many of the sufferers of that day were tinctured with Toryism. The author's authority was the best, it being from many of the captives at the time, and those whose patriotism could not be doubted, such as Teunis, son of Captain Teunis Vroman, Josias E. and Bartholomew E. Vroman, sons of Ephraim Vroman; Maria, daughter of John Vroman, and afterwards wife of Frederick Mattice; Henry Hager, Mrs. Susannah VanSlyck, daughter of Samuel Vroman; Lawrence Bouck, Lawrence Mattice and Angelica, daughter of Colonel Peter Vroman, the wife of Major Peter Vroman.

We will continue the author's account of the day's events:—

"On the arrival of Leek at the upper fort, after being so hotly pursued, John Hager, (son of Henry and brother of Capt. H—,) then at work on his father's place, hearing the alarm gun of the fort, mounted a horse and up and informed Captain Hager that the buildings were on fire in the valley below. The hay on his wagon, which was unloading in the barn, was quickly thrown off, and a few of the inhabitants of that vicinity that were taken into it were driven into the woods and concealed near Keyser's Kill.

"The enemy on leaving Vromansland, proceeded with their booty and prisoners directly up the river. A grist-mill, owned by Adam

Crysler, and standing on the Lower Breakabeen creek, as called in old conveyances, which runs into the Schoharie, was sacked of the little flour it chanced to contain, and then set on fire, the Tories, with the enemy, declaring that the Whigs of Vromansland should not be longer benefited by said mill. The Indians on their arrival in that part of Breakabeen burned everything in their path within the present limits of the town.

"Henry Mattice and Adam Brown, both Tories, accompanied the enemy from Breakabeen of their own accord.

"The 10th day of August, 1780, was one of sadness and mourning for the citizens of Vromansland, some of whom had lost near relatives among the slain, and all among the captives, either relatives or valued friends; while the destruction of property to individuals was a loss, especially at that season of the year when too late to grow sustenance for their families, to be most keenly felt and deplored.

"The burial of the dead took place the day after their massacre, on the farm of John Feek, near the fort, where their ashes now lie in neglected graves. The bodies of Captain Vroman, wife and son, were deposited in one grave, and that of Mrs. Ephraim Vroman and her daughter, in another. The remains of the former body presented a most horrid appearance. Left by her murderers between the burning buildings, her flesh was partly consumed, exposing her entrails.

"When the dead body of Mrs. Ephraim Vroman was first discovered in the cornfield, it was evident that she had partially recovered, and had vainly endeavored to staunch the flowing blood from the wound in her breast, first with her cap or some portion of her dress, and afterwards with earth, having dug quite a hole in the ground.

"The destroyers of Vromansland proceeded on the afternoon of the same day about fifteen miles, and encamped for the night. The scalps of the slain were stretched upon hoops and dried in the presence of the relative prisoners, the oldest of whom were bound nights. As the party proceeded along the east bank of the Schoharie, in the afternoon of the first day,

after journeying some six miles, Brant permitted the wife of John Vroman with her one infant, and that taken with Ephraim Vroman, to return back to the settlement. On the morning after the massacre the line of march was again resumed, and when about half way from the Patchin place to Harpersfield, Brant yielded to the repeated importunities of several of his female captives, and perhaps to the seasonable interference of several Tory friends living near, and permitted all of them, except Mrs. Simon Vroman with several male children—nearly one half of the whole number of prisoners, to return to Schoharie. Brant led the liberated captives aside nearly half a mile to a place of concealment, where he required them to remain until night. The female prisoners, when captured, were plundered of their bonnets, neckerchiefs, beads, earrings, etc., which articles, of course, they did not recover. Word having been sent to Schoharie that those prisoners had been liberated, Major Thomas Eckerson, Lieutenant Harper, and Schoharie John, a friendly Indian, who lived at Middleburgh during the war, met them not far from where Mrs. Vroman had been left the preceding afternoon, with several horses, and placing three persons on a horse, they conveyed them to the upper fort where they arrived just at dusk." \* \* \* \*

The greater part of the Schoharie prisoners were taken to Niagara, where they remained until November, when they proceeded in a vessel down Lake Ontario.

"The prisoners were conveyed down the St. Lawrence in bateaux, and some of them suffered much for the want of suitable clothing, being barefooted, although the ground was covered with snow where they encamped on shore over night. They arrived at Montreal about the first of December, from which place, after a few weeks stay, they were removed nine miles farther, to an old French post, called South Rakela, where they were confined until the summer following, and then exchanged for other prisoners. While confined at the latter place, their provisions consisted, for the most part, of salt beef and oatmeal, the latter being boiled into puddings and eaten with molasses. When an exchange was effected, most of the Scho-

harie prisoners, with others, were sent on board a vessel at the head of Lake Champlain, where they were landed, and from which place they returned home on foot *via* Saratoga. They arrived at Schoharie on the 30th of August, after an absence of a little more than a year. Mrs. Hager was gone about eighteen months."

While the date of the foregoing massacre does not agree, as given by Simms, with that of Crysler, yet it must have been the same. Both agree upon the number of scalps taken (as expressed by Crysler,) but not in number of prisoners. We learn through the family of Ephraim Vroman, that the party, instead of going from Harpersfield, direct to the Susquehanna, proceeded from the former place to Cherry Valley, and while there, Vroman asked the privilege of the officer, by whom he was held, to write a letter to his friends in Schoharie, about some business of importance. The officer refused, and Brant being at the place, and hearing his desire, obtained permission for the captive to do so, and when finished, sent a runner back to Vromansland with it, for which act of kindness, Lieutenant Vroman always entertained a marked respect for the chieftain, much to the displeasure of his neighbors, who, in their unreasonable conclusions, marked him as a Tory. While we will not deny but that Brant was of the invading party, yet since Crysler has claimed the honor of being one also, we will give him the credit, and also be suspicious of his being the leader, and, in Indian disguise palming himself off for the warrior, Brant. At one other time, in the year following, an invasion of the same ground was made by Adam Crysler, but supposed by the inhabitants to be accompanied by Brant. In his report of the affair, he says: "It was on the 10th of November 1781, and he at the head of twenty-eight 'Aughquagas' killed one man near the fort and drove off fifty head of cattle, a number of horses and burnt two houses, and in their retreat the Rebels turned out to the number of thirty and overtook them about four miles from the fort. Being fired upon they returned the compliment and killed one man, when the Rebels retreated and pursued them the following morning with 150 men, and overtook them about twenty-three miles from the fort, when a

skirmish occurred in which the 'Rebels' lost 'four men and seven wounded.'"

Author Simms disagrees with the Captain's report in the date and also in the number of men brought in action, which is not of great moment. Exaggerations were often made, and much that occurred upon each side was not told, as is the case in all warlike conflicts, as also in less serious moral, political and religious skirmishes. The savages had been harbored near for several days, watching an opportunity to make a successful strike, and to find the fort left in a defenseless condition. Early in the morning, just at day, of either the 1st or 10th of November 1781, they suddenly appeared and killed Isaac Vroman and after taking plunder from his son Peter's house—with whom Isaac was staying—they retreated up the valley. Peter escaped to the fort and apprised its inmates, numbering only a few, of the invasion, and after a few hours delay, a squad of militia followed on after the savages, and when near Governor Bouck's late residence, were fired upon by them as they lay in ambush, mortally wounding one man as stated by Crysler and Simms. After returning the compliment, the militia retreated, carrying their dying comrade—Richard Haggidorn—off the field, and to the upper fort. The same day, Colonel Vroman was made acquainted with the affair, and he dispatched from the middle fort, under Captain Hale, a company of sixty regulars that were there stationed for the winter, and ordered Captain Hager of the upper fort to join Hale, with the force under him and proceed in pursuit of the Indians. Captain Hager, who was in command, marched up the stream and encamped for the night in the present town of Blenheim, and early the following morning overtook the enemy near the lake in Jefferson, where a skirmish occurred.

At the time Johnson and Brant invaded the Schoharie valley in October, 1780, but little injury was done within the limits of the town for two reasons. They had slyly gained the valley opposite the "upper fort" early in the morning and intended to approach the "middle" one, unobserved, and pass down without molesting property. But their coming was known by

the patriots, and vigilant watch kept up, and they no sooner passed the fort than one of the Feek family discovered their presence, while after his cows near the creek. They had gained nearly a mile north of the fortress, by the time Feek reported his discovery to Captain Hager. No sooner did he learn the fact, than the small ten-pounders blazed forth from their sulphurous mouths the approach of devastation, crime and death, to the dwellers of the valley, who dared breathe a declaration of inalienable right" to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

The other reason was that the invaders of the 10th of August of the preceding year, had left but little for them to destroy. The harvest of 1780 had been mostly secreted in the woods upon the hillsides, and much escaped the torch. No sooner did the little cannons echo the doleful news, than the middle fort responded, "We are ready," and the pent-up hatred that filled the bosoms of the enemy, burst forth with flaming torches, and satanic whoops over the charred and bloody trail of a neighbor-kinsman and professed Christian, Adam Crysler, and finished the work of desolation, directly along the stream, with exultation, and poured down upon the quiet hamlet of Middleburgh, where they were received by as brave and determined a band of patriots as ever a nation boasted. With what excitement the force in the upper fort must have listened to the roar of musketry, from the conflict below! But they were undaunted and prepared to defend their castle, to death or victory! Here, where now no mark is left to guide the visitor to the hallowed spot upon which the fortress stood, was, upon that eventful day, displayed valor, not excelled in American history. Although we have referred to the act in Chapter III of this work, let us not forget, through displeasure of repetition, the example of *American* female bravery in the bold stand of Mary Haggidorn, at the gate of the pickets, with spear in hand, to repel an attack. The garrison at that time did not contain many over one hundred, but they were a brave and unflinching band, and under Hager, would have given the enemy a warmer reception than they received at the middle fort, we think, as the Captain was a

plucky man and had the faculty of pushing business that was entrusted to him. The fort he commanded was also better adapted to such occasions than the middle one. The enemy, in small numbers, stealthily appeared in the neighborhood after the murder of Isaac Vroman, but little was to be gained, as the few remaining inhabitants either stayed at the fort or removed to more populous sections until the war closed. No portion of Schoharie suffered during the war as did Vromansland, and no doubt the Tory settlers above looked upon those fine farms with a jealous eye, and expected their reward for their treachery in becoming the possessors of them. But fortune's fickle goddess turned the scales and the poor deluded villains lost their own by confiscation, and were obliged to seek homes in a strange land, under the protection of the Crown for which they had forsaken manhood and principle.

The descendants of those sufferers, that linger upon the grounds made historical by their patriotic deeds, can but faintly appreciate the social and political blessings they enjoy and the

"Peace that smiles on all around."

bequeathed to them by such noble fathers. May they consider each spot hallowed, and the priceless trusts confided to them, sacred.

*The Bouck Family.*—The Bouck family came to this town at a very early date, William Bouck having been the first settler bearing the name.

Christian, a Palatine immigrant of 1710, was no doubt the progenitor of the family, and he may have settled with the Palatines in the valley in 1713, but it is doubtful. We believe one of his sons, William, to have been the first one of the family in Schoharie, the father going from the camps to Albany, where he settled. William was the progenitor of the family under notice. He, in company with Nicholas York and Jacob Fred Lawyer, purchased 2,945 acres of land, including the Island, in 1755. The lands were partitioned June 5, 1759, the island becoming the property of Bouck, who in course of time settled his three sons upon it. Christian received that part now occupied by Hon. Charles Bouck, John north of it, while William, Jr., settled upon



HON. CHARLES BOUCK.

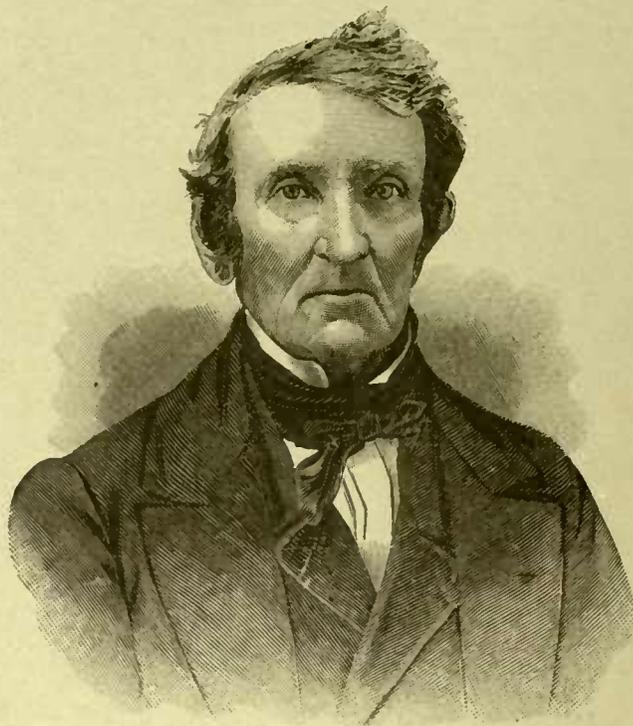
Charles Bouck son of the late ex-Governor Bouck, was born upon Bouck's island September 7, 1829. In his youth he attended the district school, in which his distinguished parent was so punctual in attendance, and the Albany City academy where he passed an academic course of studies. Not aspiring to high life—but inheriting the natural characteristics of the family, he chose agricultural pursuits. He married a daughter of Benjamin Best and settled upon the old homestead and extensively engaged in such productions as are peculiar to the soil and climate.

Mr. Bouck's choice of life was well made, as a more productive soil and romantic spot than the Bouck farm and its surroundings, is hard to find—particularly in the latter feature. Upon the west stands the bold Panther mountain in all its primeval grandeur and appearance, with the Schoharie river running at its base—whose waters after tumbling and tossing over craggy cascades and disturbing rapids—idly flow, as if reluctant to break the reverie in which nature seems to be enwrapped—and do honor to the



GOV. WM. C. BOUCK.

associations that here cluster, so full of modesty and unassuming dignity. Around the island clings a halo of pleasing remembrances of a people's just and active chief magistrate—whose honesty and simplicity of greatness that won reverence and renown were here infused from the heart of a humble and exemplary father and the yearning soul of a christian mother. Quiet and unostentation reign as they did in the active life of the Governor, while the genial hospitality of Mr. Bouck and family is truly refreshing to the many that yearly visit the Island House. Being thus content to pass his life, Mr. Bouck has but few times felt constrained to accept public positions. In 1859 and 1865, he was elected by his townsmen to the board of Supervisors by almost an unanimous vote. In 1878 he was sent to the Legislature and served upon several important committees. In each public position the performance of the duties attending them were characterized by faithful and earnest regard for the people's interest, and free from scheming speculations for farther official promotions.



BENJAMIN BEST.

Mr. Benjamin Best was for many years one of the leading business men of the County. He was born in Columbia county, N. Y., on the 16th of February, 1785, and was a son of Jacob Best, who, together with two brothers, emigrated from Germany. One of the brothers remained in Columbia county; another settled in western New York, while Jacob located in Schoharie.

The subject of this sketch early decided upon an education, and embraced every opportunity to improve himself, and prepare for a useful and active business life. When but a young man he formed an acquaintance with many of the leading public men of the day, among whom was Governor Morgan Lewis, who appointed him his sole agent in the superintendence of his landed property in the County, which position he held forty years. He was also receiving agent of the Alexander property, the same term of years, which covered the exciting Anti-Rent days.

As proof of his sagacity as a business man, and honor as a gentleman, he engineered the business relating to the estates through without trouble or incurring the enmity of the landlords or tenants. He was a person of strict integrity, great precision of character, and commanded universal respect. At the age of forty he married Katy, daughter of Timothy Murphy, and settled upon the farm now occupied by Abram Spickerman, where he resided until the time of his decease.

Mr. Best was a staunch Democrat, and held the office of Justice of the Peace, fifteen successive years, and rejected other positions of public trust proffered him. Among the many political friends and workers in the interest of Governor Bouck and his promotion, none were more firm and enthusiastic than Mr. Best.

He died at the homestead, February 13, 1868, leaving a wife and four daughters: Mrs. Charles Bouck, Mrs. James Ferguson, Mrs. Abel S. Hall, and Mrs. Edwin Hoyt.

the south. The lands were held by the family intact until 1795 or 1796, when John disposed of his part and removed to Schoharie Village, and became Assistant Judge of the County. William, Jr., familiarly called Wilhelmus, reared a family as follows: William W., Frederick, Tobias, Mrs. Simon Hager, Maria and Mrs. Jeremy Berner. Christian remained upon his portion of the estate until 1836, when he died at the age of eighty-three, having lived an eventful life and reared a son who was to preside as the Chief Magistrate over his native State and perpetuate the family name by a long political career free from ostentation and corruption. William, the progenitor, was an aged yet robust man during the Revolution and was taken prisoner by a party of Indians under the command of Seths Henry in July, 1780. After the fact became known at the upper fort, Captain Hager sent a squad in pursuit and overtook the party in the present town of Jefferson, the following day. The Indians, finding the patriots were greater in numbers than their own, fled precipitately, leaving their prisoners together with their booty in the hands of their pursuers. Those taken with Mr. Bouck were negro servants who had accompanied him from the fort to the farm. The old gentleman was then a widower, his wife having died in 1770. Upon the hill near William Mitchell's residence stands an ancient tombstone, marking her resting place, and from it we learn she was born in Amsterdam, but the date, being so crumbled we were unable to decipher it.

Judge Brown says, "Johannes Earhart, Wilhelmus Bouck and Elizabeth Lawyer were the first white children born in Schoharie." It may be possible, but we would have more faith in the assertion if he had said "the first German children born at the Camps," as we are yet to find proof of either the Lawyer or Bouck families coming to Schoharie before the year 1720 and 1730. To harbor the idea that the Germans lived here from 1713 to either of those dates, without issue, is acknowledging insanity or ignorance of their customs. From the first, the family has been a very prominent one of the County, especially in a political sense.

William C. Bouck was born in the old family

mansion, upon the Island, on the 7th of January, 1786, and was baptized by the good old Dominie Wackenbager in August of the same year. He early labored upon the old homestead, but was not negligent of his studies. The first English school in the town was commenced in the neighborhood in 1795, which the coming Governor, at the age of nine years attended. We here copy the register of the school bearing date November 23, 1795, kindly furnished by our friend John Gebhard, Jun. The teacher was Isaac Bushnell, a New England "school master," whose wages were "£10 this quarter:"

Elizabeth Bouck.....	17 days.
Caty Bouck.....	36 do
Benj. Best.....	53½ do
Isaac Best.....	50 do
William W. Bouck.....	39 do
Fred Bouck.....	37 do
William C. Bouck.....	59 do
Joseph C. Bouck.....	40 do
Cornelius Acker.....	55 do
Polly Barnard ..	37 do
Caty Whitney.....	48 do
Betsy Vroman .....	55 do

It will be seen that the future politician attended the greatest number of days. His first public position was clerk of the town, and next as supervisor of Schoharie, and after filling several such local offices he received the appointment of sheriff of the County in 1812, holding the same one year only, as the following season he was elected to the State assembly and re-elected in 1815 and 1817. In 1821 and 1822, he was State Senator, where he became connected with the Clintonians in the interests of public improvements, especially the Erie Canal enterprise and received the appointment by the Governor and Legislature as Canal Commissioner, March 29, 1821, which office he held until 1840, when political influences led the Whig legislature to remove him and place one of that political sentiment in his stead. In the latter year he was the Democratic candidate for Governor, but was defeated by Wm. H. Seward, but upon being again nominated in 1842, he was elected, and made one of the most economical and watchful Governors the people have been fortunate to elect. A vast amount of humor was

indulged in during both campaigns, but nothing to disturb the confidence all parties reposed in his administration. Being brought up under the economical customs of the early settlers of the County he infused the principles in every department over which he had control. His manner was plain and unpretending, yet dignified and graceful and won the confidence of every one he met.

As we have referred to his economical habits, the message which may be found in Chapter IV, plainly shows that they were carried in his official life to the interest of the State. One of the chief characteristics of the man, was fear of setting a bad example, or one that would encourage wastefulness, extravagance, and dishonesty. The *New York Daily News* relates an incident in the life of Wm. C. Bouck, while discharging the duties of Governor of the State. Another periodical that copied the article, referring to it says—"A perusal thereof cannot fail to impart a high degree of satisfaction to those who, residing in the same county prior and subsequent to his administration, know how genuinely characteristic they are of the 'good old man, now gone to his rest.'"

Would that all men in office would be as careful not to set a bad example as was Governor William C. Bouck.

The *New York News* says: The late Governor Bouck, than whom a truer, better man never lived, said to a friend of ours, after he had discharged the duties of the Chief Magistracy of the State about one year: "When I first entered upon the office, I was so engaged in trying to reconcile conflicting opinions, produce harmony in the party, and please everybody, that I paid no attention to my household expenses. At the end of the first three months, my quarter's salary was paid and my bills due were presented. To my utter dismay, the latter exceeded the former. During my entire life I had made it a point never to spend more in a quarter than I had received from my earnings. I believed that to be a good rule, and that, as Governor of the State, I should not transgress it and set a bad example, which might be the means of ruining thousands. I began to cast

about, to see where I could cut down my expenses. The State officers had hired the house I occupied without consulting me, and the State paid the rent. I had nothing to say or do in that particular. The State officers who, because I was a country farmer, took particular pains to instruct me, told me I must bring my best span of horses and carriage from my farm in Schoharie, and ride in it, or I would degrade the high office to which the people had elected me. They also said I must have a colored waiter to attend the door of my residence, and a head-cook and three or four assistants in the kitchen, and two or three chambermaids, besides a coachman to drive my carriage. I remembered that during the entire quarter I had not found time to ride in the carriage with my family, except to church on Sundays, and then the coachman could not go to church, having to take care of the team. This I did not believe was doing exactly right, or setting a good example. I thought that myself and family could walk to church, as the distance was not great. We thereby would appear not to feel above others who walked, and, as the Governor's family, would be setting a better example than by riding. My wife also proposed to dismiss the chief cook and all the assistants but one, and she would superintend the cooking as she always had done on the farm; and my daughters proposed to dismiss the chambermaids, and they would do the chamberwork. No sooner was this agreed on than accomplished. The large bays and carriage went back to the farm in Schoharie, and the extra help were all dismissed. Everything worked like a charm. The colored door-man whom I retained assisted in waiting on the table. The State officers and my city friends did not observe but that all was as first arranged when they called. We walked to church, and greeted kindly all we met there, and enjoyed the services without thinking that the coachman could not attend them. We reduced our expenses to within my salary. I felt better immediately. I feel better now. I can discharge my duties better; and when my term of office expires and I return to private life, I shall feel that when I was Governor of the State I did not set an example of extravagance in any respect which might be the means of ruining any one."

In 1846 he was elected a delegate to the Constitutional Convention, and the same year entered the Assistant Treasurer's office of New York City and held the position until the year 1849, when he retired to private life upon the Island. He married Catharine Lawyer, by whom he had eight children—Mrs. Lyman Sandford, Mrs. Erskine Danforth, and Mrs. George Danforth, of Middleburgh, Hon. Gabriel Bouck, of Wisconsin, long a member of Congress from that State, and Hon. Charles Bouck, of this town, who retains the paternal homestead with all its pleasant surroundings, James of Schenectady, Joseph of New York, and Christian of Brooklyn.

We cannot close without copying the tribute paid by the late Lyman Tremain, to the character of Gov. Bouck, in an oration delivered by him at the dedication of the monument erected at Binghamton, in honor of the late Daniel S. Dickinson. He said:—

“In 1842 he was elected Lieutenant-Governor upon the same ticket with Mr. Bouck, who was elected Governor. William C. Bouck—Daniel S. Dickinson! How fragrant are the memories of these two men! The misconceptions arising from political animosities have passed away. Differences of opinions are now forgotten, and we can do full justice to their great worth and spotless integrity! Who would dare to think of speculation, dishonesty or corruption in connection with these honored names? Their reputation is the property of the State, and every true son of New York is entitled to share in the honor and lustre which such men reflect upon its good name. In the severity of their morals, the justice of their conduct and the unsullied purity of their private and public characters, they may be justly regarded as the Cato and the Aristides of the State.”

The Governor died at his residence in April, 1859, at the age of seventy-three.

*Inhabitants in 1788.*—It may be of interest to the reader to know who were the inhabitants of the town after the war closed, and prosperity again began to bloom.

We here present a road warrant dated in 1788,

which refers to the road leading from the Middleburgh bridge to Bouck's Island, along which were settled nearly all of the inhabitants at that day.

John Bouck,  
Christopher Bouck,  
John Crysler,  
Peter Feek,  
Michael Brown,  
Martinus I. Vroman,  
Peter A. Vroman,  
Jacob Sucraft,  
Jacob Feek,  
Johannes Feek,  
Martinus Van Slyke,  
Peter Swart,  
John Vroman, Jr.,  
Ephraim Vroman,  
Bartholomew Hagadorn,  
Johannes Rickart,  
Jonas Vroman,  
Harmanus VanValkenburgh,  
Ganeson Becker,  
Nathan Becker.

“Sirs—You are hereby ordered to warn and set to work the persons rated on the within list on the road or highway in your ward or beat whenever it wants Repairing. Given under our hand this 24th Day of May, 1788.”

PETER ZIELIE, } Com'rs  
JOHN MYRES, } of  
JOHN M. DIETZ. } High'ys.

To JOHANNES BOUCK,  
Overseer Highways.

*Timothy Murphy.*—Of this man much has been told and written that has had a tendency to give a false idea of his true character. Among the old families of Schoharie, with whom he was familiar, are the most erroneous stories of his exploits that can be imagined, which are repeated with the greatest confidence of their truthfulness.

While they regard him with veneration as a hero, yet the tales they tell make him nothing less than a cool, intrepid murderer, who escaped the censure of the people under the plea of necessity in behalf of freedom. We have taken a deal of pains to learn his true character and exploits, and find that such was not the case,

but that he was a kind-hearted man, and true patriot, and instead of being a "loud-mouthed Irishman" as insinuated by many, that he was reticent of his services, yet prompt in their execution. From his children, three of whom are yet living in the full enjoyment of mental faculties, and others who were well acquainted with the hero, many long since dead, we obtained the facts of his life, which we will give without repeating many small incidents that have been the ground-work of "thrilling tales" as told and published many times by his admirers and which are of no consequence in a rational view of his life.

The mother of Murphy was an Englishwoman and married a Simms. He soon after died and the widow, then living in Ireland, in course of time married the father of our hero, and emigrated to America. They settled in New Jersey, where Timothy was born, and when he was four years of age they removed to Wyoming, Pa.

Murphy lived with a family until he was sixteen years of age, when he enlisted in the Colonial cause for five years and joined General Morgan's corps of riflemen. He was in all the engagements in which the corps participated, including that of Brandywine, after which he was ordered to the north to assist General Gates in the repulsion of Burgoyne, at Bemis Heights. It was upon that hotly contested ground that Murphy was called upon by Gen. Morgan to perform an act that the over moralists condemn, as a breach of chivalry, and uncalled for murder. To the mind of Morgan the defeat of the British depended upon the capture or death of Gen. Fraser, against whose corps his own was contending. To capture him, being impossible, he commanded Murphy and a few other riflemen to slay him, at the same time expressing his admiration of the man, and regret of the necessity of such an act. Murphy and another man climbed into a tree and took a careful aim. Fraser fell as Murphy's rifle was fired and no doubt his bullet did the fatal work.

His command, seeing their gallant leader fall, soon broke in confusion and made a hasty retreat, which gave to the patriots a glorious victory. Morgan, as stated, was censured for the act, but since the death of one man, although

he be clothed with epaulettes, saved the lives of hundreds and perhaps thousands, besides breaking one of the strong links in the chain of political servitude, that was binding many thousand, we cannot see the enormity of the offence, more than in the shooting of a common private in battle. After the surrender of Burgoyne, Murphy followed Morgan to the south and was engaged in the battle of Monmouth. Repeated appeals of the patriots of Tryon county and Schoharie valley, for assistance in repelling expected invasions, to the general government through the committee of safety, caused a detachment of Morgan's riflemen and a small regiment of Pennsylvania troops to be sent to Albany under the command of Col. Wm. Butler, and be assigned to different points, as most needed. In the fall of that year (1778) Butler was sent to Schoharie, for winter quarters, and with him came Timothy Murphy, who at once found plenty of work to do, and for which he was peculiarly adapted. He at once became a scout and with other brave patriots traversed the hills and valleys of the border, to arrest the disaffected and intercept communications and forage for supplies.

He was a superior marksman, fleet on foot, and cautious, yet courageous. He became intimate with the leading militiamen of the valley, who understood Indian strategy and warfare, and with them proved a terror to the dusky warriors. The situation of affairs throughout the border required promptness on the part of the patriots. But few were unshrinking and faithful in the cause of freedom compared with the many that wavered, and necessity required the few to be strict, firm and active. The time of coaxing and arguments had passed, and stern force had to be employed. Murphy was used to strict military discipline and saw the necessity of it, or at least its rigid enforcement among the Tory element, which they construed as "bullying" brutal, and when brought in collision with the Indians, he studied their mode of warfare, and met them with their own cunning. Having a two-barrelled rifle, a thing unknown to them, they superstitiously thought he was a devil, capable of shooting as many times as he wished without loading.

He accompanied Butler in 1779 to join Sullivan at Tioga, to devastate the Indian country,

and without doubt performed the greatest feat of his life in escaping from the grasp of the maddened savages. When the main army was nearing the present village of Geneseo, then an Indian settlement, Thomas Boyd, a Lieutenant of the Pennsylvania regulars, sent to Schoharie the year before, was sent with a party of twenty-seven, in advance to reconnoitre, and upon their return to camp were intercepted by a force of one thousand British and Indians, within a few miles of Sullivan's advanced guard. The party was surrounded, and true to their valor, made an attempt to break through the enemy's lines. After repeated attempts, which laid many of the savages lifeless, and also seventeen of their own number, Murphy broke through, and with the fleetness of a deer bounded from his pursuers. Boyd and others made an attempt to follow, but were unable to run as fast as Murphy, and were taken captives. The greatest acts of cruelty were practiced upon them by the infuriated savages and demoniac Tories. But seven of Boyd's command returned to the camp. Murphy dodged his pursuers for a considerable distance, when he became tired and secreted himself in the tall brakes that covered a low piece of ground he was to cross. While there he spied several Indians looking for him, but without success, and after becoming rested he again started for the camp but was surprised by an Indian when within a short distance of the American lines.

They both took to trees, and after making several ineffectual attempts to get a shot at each other, Murphy placed his hat upon the end of his gun and held it one side of the tree, as if to get a glimpse of his antagonist, when the Indian fired and ran up to take Murphy's scalp, but the man was there himself unhurt, ready to receive him, and soon had his scalp in his pocket and was making tracks for the camp.

Upon his return to Schoharie, he was again employed as a scout, and soon became acquainted with one of the valley girls, whose charms conquered his stubborn heart and laid the foundation of a romance that was as interesting as his tragedian life, and changed the garrisons' and residents' fear of savages to pleasure for a season. John Feek lived upon the farm now owned in part by Mrs. Lawyer

Bouck, and was a well-to-do farmer, possessing but one child—a daughter—of whom the parents were proud, and doted upon as their protector and staff in their declining years. But Margaret, meeting with the notable Timothy, whose fame as a sagacious warrior was upon every one's lips, and whose general appearance was attractive, became favorably impressed, and allowed her warm heart to accede to her lover's appeals, much against the parents wishes. Murphy was denied the freedom of visiting her, which was known to the Middle garrison and residents, who became interested in the case and did everything to help their comrade and protector along in his new role of adventurer. The couple met clandestinely and agreed upon an elopement. Murphy was to meet Margaret upon a certain evening, on the opposite side of the river, and "take her captive" to the fort, from whence they were to proceed to some point to be married.

Margaret upon the evening appointed, with cheery heart milked the cows, leaving one untouched, and after carrying the milk to the house returned again to the yard to milk the stray one. But seeing the coast was clear, as desired, she passed down the lane to the river and crossed over where the "Murphy mill" was afterward built. Timothy was rather dilatory for the first time, she thought, and was not there, but soon appeared and crossing the river the couple crossed the mountain and gained the "Clauver" road and proceeded on foot to the middle fort, where the garrison was in waiting to receive them, ere the parents were aware of their daughter's absence. As the hearts of the occupants of the fort were jubilant in behalf of the couple's success, the protracted stay of Margaret excited the parents fears and cast a gloom over their hearthstone. The father and mother anxiously called for their daughter, but received no answer. Upon finding the milk-pail hanging upon the fence, they surmised the truth and hastily sent a messenger to the fort to learn of her safety, and if not there to obtain assistance in finding her. But naughty Margaret was there and refused to quit her "captor" to return, but anxiously awaited the marriage ceremony. The couple, in company with several others went to Schenectady and were married, and re-

turned to the fort where a general jubilation was enjoyed in honor of the event. When the parents found their daughter was married and her husband's intention of removing to Pennsylvania, they concluded to forget, forgive, and receive Murphy as their son-in-law. Murphy had no idea of leaving the valley, but he knew it was one way of softening the parents' hearts and bringing about an amicable settlement. After the war closed they settled upon the Feek farm, where Margaret died in 1807, at the early age of forty-four. She had nine children, three of whom are now living, in the full enjoyment of their mental faculties, at advanced ages. Catharine (Mrs. Benjamin Best) is now eighty-two, and is a type of the early settlers of the valley in muscular vigor, mental tenacity and patriotic sentiment. She has been a widow several years and finds a home that makes her declining years full of pleasure, with her daughter, Mrs. Charles Bouck, at the homestead of her father's early friend, the late Gov. Bouck. Elizabeth, an elder sister, widow of the late Benjamin Foster, resides with a son, Mr. Thomas Foster, at Gloversville, and is now seventy-nine years of age, full of the vigor of younger years. Mr. Peter Murphy, now of this town, is the only remaining son of the patriot, and like his sisters, exhibits a remarkable tenacity of faculties. They retain a vivid recollection of the father's explanation of events, and deeply regret the erroneous statements made of the patriot's exploits. The remainder of the nine children were: John, Polly, (Mrs. Wm. Banks,) Thomas, Cornelius, Jacob and Jenny, (Mrs. Eben Foster,) who have "laid their armor down" and joined the father and mother, after lives crowned with usefulness and respectability.

On the 27th of June, 1818, the patriot passed away at the age of sixty-seven, and was buried upon the "Murphy farm." In 1873 they were removed to the Middleburgh cemetery, and an effort is now being made to erect a monument over them, expressive of his worth, and the veneration of a grateful people.

From a communication published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, we think, about the time of the corner-stone ceremonies at Bemis Heights, we extract the following in regard to the shooting of General Fraser:—"Brigadier-General

Fraser, who up to this time had been stationed on the right, noticed the critical situation of the centre, and hurried to its succor with the Twenty-fourth Regiment. Conspicuously mounted on an iron-gray horse, he was all activity and vigilance, riding from one part of the division to another, and animating the troops by his example. Perceiving that the fate of the day rested upon that officer, Morgan, who with his riflemen was immediately opposed to Fraser's corps, took a few of his sharpshooters aside, among whom was the celebrated marksman Tim Murphy—men on whose precision of aim he could rely—and said to them 'That gallant officer there is General Fraser. I admire and respect him, but it is necessary for our good that he should die. Take your station in that cluster of bushes and do your duty.' Within a few moments a rifle-ball cut the crupper of Fraser's horse, and another passed through his horse's mane. Calling his attention to this, Fraser's aid said, 'It is evident that you are marked out for particular aim; would it not be prudent for you to retire from this place?' Fraser replied, 'My duty forbids me to fly from danger.' The next moment he fell mortally wounded by a ball from the rifle of Murphy, and was carried off the field by two grenadiers.

"Upon the fall of Fraser, dismay seized the British, while a corresponding elation took possession of the Americans, who, being re-enforced at this juncture by General TenBroeck, with three thousand New York militia, pressed forward with still greater vehemence. Up to this time Burgoyne had been in the thickest of the fight, and now, finding himself in danger of being surrounded, he abandoned his artillery and ordered a retreat to the 'Great Redoubt.' This retreat took place exactly fifty-two minutes after the first shot was fired, the enemy leaving all the cannon on the field, except the two howitzers, with a loss of more than four hundred men, and among them the flower of his officers, viz., Fraser, Ackland, Williams, Sir Francis Clarke, and many others."

The patriotism displayed in 1780, was renewed in 1812 by the children of those heroes, and a goodly number entered the service upon the Canadian border. Among the few of such

now remaining, is Harvey Efner, living at Fultonham at the age of eighty-eight, in the full possession of his physical and mental powers. Although sixty-nine years have come and gone, working the great changes that our country so fully presents, and pleasing to us of to-day, yet the incidents and scenes of those distant years as recalled by the veteran, re-ignite the sparkle of the eye and animate the spirit to exclaim. "Those were the days and times." Mr. Efner vividly recalls his comrades who went forth with him, and relates many pleasing incidents connected with their soldier life. He was in Captain Philip Bartholomew's company of which Noah Dibble was Orderly Sergeant and Isaac Barber was Ensign, The fellow privates were Peter Saquendorf, David Schofer, Henry Herron and Cornelius Vroman. Valentine Efner was Major. The Efner family came over about the year 1760. They consisted of the father and four sons, three of whom, William, Joseph and Henry, settled in Schoharie, and John in Saratoga county. They were worthy men and their children like them were true patriots and have been useful in society as intelligent and honored citizens.

#### PETERSBURGH.

The lofty hills of Fulton were once covered with giant timbers of all kinds, peculiar to the county, but particularly with hemlock, that grew solid and straight-grained. After the giant pines had been extravagantly wasted, and become scarce, hemlock took its stead in the manufacture of lumber and shingles, and that which was found upon the hills, was sought for the latter purpose from far and near. Petersburg hill, was for a long time the center of the shingle trade, as they were manufactured there, and to such an extent that but little else was done by the settlers. They being the only product were called, "*Petersburgh Currency.*" The bark was sold to the tannery at Middleburgh and the hill, and those near were soon stripped of their surplus timber and gave room for berry bushes to grow luxuriantly, to which for several years the people of adjoining towns resorted, in their season for their winter store. But industry made a bold strike and the

grounds were soon cleared, and to-day present farms, that for productiveness, will cope with any other. Among them, are those of the Kings, Warren Cornell, Miles and Lansing Nobles, Caleb Hess, Jacob Scott, Lansing Sitterly and others near.

#### BREAKABEEN.

The correct name of this locality is Brakabeen, given by the Germans, owing to the broad flats being covered with brakes—a species of fern. The word has been somewhat changed, but not materially. The name was given in early times to a long stretch of the valley from Vromansland to the south and not confined to one locality as now. Without doubt the first settlement of Germans was made to the south of Vromansland and very soon after Adam Vroman removed his son Peter upon his land. The Germans were jealous of his possession and he of theirs and without doubt the lands Vroman complained to Governor Hunter, that the Germans were buying of the Indians, were those to the south of his tract, at and near Crysler's Hook, and the upper hamlet of Fultonham. But we will refer more particularly to that settlement after we dispose of the present locality known as Breakabeen. One of its early settlers was the Keyser family, the oldest representative now living being Barent Keyser of Blenheim.

In the commencement of the Revolution but three houses were to be found at this place, and the Keyser residence was one which stood near that now owned by Charles Mann. There were three sons living at home, Abram, Barent and John, and owing to the treachery of the Indians living near, the family removed to the upper fort. Barent was taken prisoner while on a scout and was taken to Canada where he died in captivity. John, then but fourteen years of age, was sent from the fort to get the cows and was taken captive by a party of Indians and hurried off to Canada from whence he returned at the close of the war. Abram was at that time still younger. He located in after years at Schoharie village and was the father of Abraham Keyser, once sheriff of the County, and State Treasurer from 1826 to 1838. There had been more than the three residents at this

place, but when Sir William Johnson examined the titles of the settlers in 1759, and declared those null that were obtained from the Indians, without a purchase from the Government, a few living here also quit their lands and removed elsewhere, not wishing to pass through another season of "land trouble."

The most prominent family that settled at this place soon after the close of the Revolution was Benjamin Waldrons. He came from Bethlehem, Albany county, as a mill-wright, and was first employed upon the building of the Peter Borst gristmill, now known as the "Davis Mill" of Middleburgh. He soon after married a sister of Peter Borst, "Tauty," and settled here in 1795 or 1796, and immediately built a gristmill where the Bergh mill now stands. The next settlers were Philip and Abram Bergh, of Kneiskern's doof, Joseph Zeh and Michael Borst, of Middleburgh, who were full of enterprise for those days, and founded the village. Philip Bergh purchased a half interest in the mill of Waldron, and in 1838 the whole, and rebuilt what is the present structure. In 1808, Waldron opened his house as a tavern which was the first in the place. A few years after, George Hilts engaged in the same business where the present Hilts family resides, farther up the creek. David Mattice also commenced to "entertain man and beast" about the year 1830, and was succeeded in a few years by Peter Burget, whose widow remains in the old stand.

To close the hotels of the village we will refer to the present "Loucks House" that was first opened by Henry Parslow, about the year 1850. It has been occupied by several proprietors since that date, the last being George Loucks, who took possession in the spring of 1882.

After a useful life as a miller and mechanic Benjamin Waldron passed away leaving the following children who have also died and in their turn left prominent families who are now the actors in the business arena and remain to perpetuate the genius of the pioneer mechanic; Henry, Mrs. Abram Bergh, John B., and David.

Michael Borst, long an "inn" keeper at Middleburgh came here about the year 1815, and built a tannery near the present bridge which

was removed by John B. Waldron in 1850, who built a foundry in its stead, which is still in operation and owned by his son Charles.

This part of the valley being as thickly populated as now, and the hamlet being a mechanical center, it was necessary for the convenience of the people to have a store, at which the common necessities of the household could be supplied. The stores of that period were of small proportions as well as variety of goods, as the people's wants were few beyond what their labor could supply.

Among the considered "real" necessities were rum and whiskey, which were kept at all stores up to within the last thirty years, and from which as much "profit and loss" was derived as any other commercial commodity. The "loss" was usually attributed to that portion the proprietor individually used, the extent and amount of which was rated according to the bodily proportions attained and flush of countenance. Undoubtedly a consolation was found in the truth of the adage that "there is no loss in which there is no gain."

One Breffle came about the year 1800, and opened a small store, and was followed by Pasco Noxin, and in connection with his tavern, Michael Borst succeeded the latter. Borst was followed by John Myers, and later by Peter W. Becker, who kept a larger stock and greater variety of goods. They in turn were succeeded by the following, who may not have been in business as here placed, but were located as merchants:—

Peter Snyder and ——— Brown,  
Becker & Mattice,  
Luther Empie,  
Sidney Bergh,  
William Jones,  
Stephen Nelson and John Mahan, the  
latter two being in business at the  
present time.

We find Nicholas York was granted a tract of land in 1723, lying to the south of Vromansland, taking in "Crysler's Hook," and running down the stream to the south bounds of Vroman's Patent. There seem to have been others connected with him in the transaction, but men-

tion was not made of them in the grant, we have been informed from good authority. Perhaps those living upon it at the time, were silent partners for some reason known only to themselves, and were the Feeks, Mattices, Hagadorns Crysler and others.

The Crysler family possessed a fine property at this point, which was confiscated and passed into the hands of the Boucks. The Revolutionary mill stood near the present site of the steam saw-mill, and was, without doubt, the first one built above Middleburgh, and did the grinding for Vromansland and other settlements near. Crysler burned the mill himself, that the rebels might not enjoy its use. After the war closed, another was erected upon the bank opposite of the "lockey,"\* and was fed by a race-way from the small stream above, but for some reason it was used but a short time, and John Bouck built the present structure in front of Mrs. Lawyer's house, as early at least, as 1795. By consulting Chapter III, it will be seen in his report to the government, that Crysler provided eatables for the Indians, and perhaps a few Tories, while waiting for the coming of Brant or some other assistance. His house stood at the foot of the mountain, west of the present buildings, and he could have kept the savages in the woods back of it, and not have been detected for a long time, particularly at that time when Crysler was not suspected and the people were busily employed between their military duties and individual avocations.

#### FULTONHAM.

The locality referred to is now known as Fultonham, and is one of the historical spots of the valley, owing to the "Upper Fort" being located here, and undoubtedly was the site of a German settlement or "dorf" made between the year 1714 and 1718, by additional settlers or some of the families that came with Weiser. Their purchase was from the Indians and it was the one of which Vroman complained to the Governor, as before stated. The settlement was more upon the intervale than now and the occasional pieces of pottery, kettles and other

\* Lockey is a name given by the Germans to a small swamp or pond fed by springs.

equally as enduring articles of household use, that have been plowed up from time to time in various places are the relics of the old dorf. The fact is obvious that there were seven dorfs in the valley in 1718 as stated by John Frederick Hager and referred to in Chapter II. One of those dorfs was here located and in giving the number of the inhabitants, for the census of 1718, he counted in the Low Dutch Vroman family, with this settlement and called them all Germans.

Here were the Hagadorn, Feek, Jonas, Laraway, Crysler, (at that time spelled Kriesler), Van Loon, Hiltzinger, (Hilsinger,) and Mattice families with perhaps others. The descendants of these families with whom the writer has conversed, trace their ancestors back to Breakabeen, at a very early date. By referring to the Chapter upon Middleburgh, the reader will find three other dorfs located, which, with this one in the writer's opinion, were the first "dorfs" in the valley, and formed in the year 1713 and 1714. At a later date—1730—there was quite a collection of families, and it was known as Breakabeen, and as early as 1750 and 1754, the settlers of Cobleskill, Sharon and Seward, obtained apple-trees, at this place, and transplanted them upon their lands. By the language of Rev. Gideon Hawley, we are led to believe the Low Dutch of Vromansland held religious meetings at this place, or near. He says in his narrative of 1753:

"We went and had a meeting at the Mohawk village, where I preached, &c. In the afternoon I went to the Dutch meeting in that vicinity." The Mohawk village was at that time at the Dovegatt, and "that vicinity" was Vromansland.

We would not be surprised to learn it to be a fact, that they had a rude meeting house, in which missionaries of the "Low Dutch Reformed Faith" preached, years before the Schoharie or Middleburgh churches were organized. Hawley says:—"I have been at their meetings when the boys, through the service, and even at the celebration of the Lord's Supper, have been playing bat and ball the whole term, around the *house of God.*"

Fultonham is pleasantly situated in the center of a very rich farming community, and has been quite a business center.

*Charles Watson* was a merchant at this place for many years, and the leading business man of the town. He was the first supervisor of the town of Fulton, and held the same position again in 1841. In 1830 he was in the State Assembly with Abraham L. Lawyer, of Cobleskill, and was elected justice of the peace soon after, which position he held many long years, and was the stepping stone to the judicial bench of the Common Pleas Court, which he attained in 1838, and held till the Constitution of 1846 took effect. Other prominent positions he often held, but one, the perfect confidence of his townsmen, outweighed them all. After his death, which occurred January 29, 1872, the *Canajoharie Radian* said:—"Where is another man in any county, who has measured calico, weighed tea, and counted eggs for more than a half century, that has paid one hundred cents on a dollar, and never lost a customer?"

Charles Watson was a son of Charles Watson who came from Albany county in the beginning of the century, and engaged in the mercantile business in a small way, and kept an inn. His residence here and business gave to the immediate neighborhood the name of Watsonville. The father died when Charles was but a lad attending school, and Mrs. Watson engaged her brother-in-law, Harvey Watson, to superintend the business until young Charles attained age and education. Vroman Watson, a son, is the only one of the family living, and removed from the town and engaged in business elsewhere.

Upon the death of Charles Watson, Alonzo and Charles Best, as "Best Brothers," succeeded in the business, and were followed by Albert Rosecrans, the present proprietor. Henry Best, cousin of the "Best Brothers," was engaged in the upper or Fultonham store, for several years, and was followed by "Chamberland Brothers," Thomas Foster, Hiram Safford, Charles Best, and the present occupant, Charles Borst.

#### WEST FULTON.

This settlement was for many years called Byrneville, after a heavy purchaser of lands lying here, but more familiarly known as Sap-bush Hollow, and generally represented to be

one of the worst places within the range of many miles. Very fine maples originally were standing along the stream, to which many of the early residents of the surrounding country resorted in the season, to make sugar, hence the name of Sap-bush was given to the hollow, which it retained until the postoffice was established, when "West Fulton" was ordered to be engraved upon the stamp.

In looking over the surrounding country with its lofty hills, deep ravines and rocky surface but little could have been seen in early days to have encouraged a settlement. But the superior timber drew the poor but industrious pioneer to eke a living by making shingles, lumber and staves as well as burning coal, and betimes clearing small patches of land for necessary grains and grasses. Many that thus commenced became discouraged, perhaps, and removed to more "genial climes." Others came in their stead, enlarged the clearings and soon owned large farms, principally through the manufacture and sale of shingles. To-day, after the lapse of eighty years from the first settlement, the valley presents a pleasing change, upon which the hillsides, seem to smile with their fields of waving grains and luxuriant grasses in their season. Peter Smith, the man always hungry for more land, purchased a portion of the Michael Byrne tract, and encouraged settlements. In the course of time, being a "lover of the Lord," as well as land, he built a church for the people, in which he displayed that oddity for which he was noted. The edifice was constructed in the hollow in 1831, and the steeple upon the hill. The road at that time ran between the two, and from the steeple projected a board over the road upon which he caused to be written in large letters. "Time and Eternity, consider." Desiring none, but "orthodox" to enjoy the privilege of worshipping within his church, he caused a board to be placed against the wall, in front of the audience, with the following, printed in plain letters upon it. "Reputable ministers of the Gospel of all denominations of Christians are invited to officiate in this house, dedicated to the service of Almighty God, until the exclusive use shall be given over to a Dutch Reformed Presbyterian or Congregational congregation."

Mr. Edgar Akeley, at present a merchant of the place, gave to us the above "permit" from memory, and thinks it correct, at least in substance. The Methodists formed a class here a few years previous to the erection of the church, and for many years held their meetings within it, as did other denominations. The church needing repairs and the donor being dead, the residents called upon his son, the late Gerritt Smith, to donate for that purpose. He responded, by ordering the bell to be sold, (it being cracked,) and turning the proceeds towards it. The Baptists purchased the edifice, moved it to the present site, repaired it to their taste, and it compares favorably with other village churches.

The stream called by the Indians Ke-ha-na-gwa-ra, upon which are Bouck's falls, forms the valley, and is here met by the "Hoose" a large stream, which should have been taken as the main, instead of a tributary. During high water these streams, flowing over the descent of ground, are rapid and angry, and present one of the finest sights at the falls, as they rush down the gorge, that can be imagined. The height of descent is about one hundred and twenty feet and by striking the shelving rocks, the water becomes a perfect milk-white foam, as if maddened by the obstructions mother nature has so majestically placed in its way. The stream is often called by the settlers, "Panther Creek," after the mountain opposite of Bouck's Island, and below its junction with the Schoharie.

#### POLLY HOLLOW.

This locality, which for long years was considered of but little importance, excepting in "berry time," became the subject of much talk during the late Rebellion. Many of the residents early enlisted in the Union army, among whom were two that became weary of a soldier's life, and by obtaining furloughs, reached their homes and refused to return. They were declared deserters, and officers were dispatched for their arrest. Instead of sending those that were made brave by actual field service, two marshals, whose valor, for political effect,

offended patriotism in guarding home under special pay, like thousands of other chosen ones, were equipped at "Scott's," in Albany, with guns, revolvers, and other warlike implements, and hastened to Schoharie to obey orders. Upon their arrival at that village, they were joined by a number of braves, and set out in a sleigh to the *deserters cottage*. Arriving after dark, Polly Hollow was wrapped in slumber, but awoke to the martial tread of livery horses and jingling of sleigh bells. The house of a lonely widow was approached and admittance gained, ere its aged and only occupant could rise from her bed. Boisterously the house was searched, especially preserve and pickle jars, feather beds, and pottery, without finding the object of their search. The *patriots* having well considered the necessity of stimulants in their hazardous undertaking, drank freely, and left the widow, with "her mite" strewn promiscuously upon the floor—pickles and preserves not excepted.

Another house was ordered to be searched, but ere the regulars and volunteer force could be brought in line to make a charge, the Polly Hollow militia horns were blown to awaken the mountain God of war, and resist the United States forces' invasion. The volunteers faced about and charged upon the sleigh, while the regulars, borne down with pickles and Schoharie "fluid"—in a zigzag march—gained the rear of the sleigh, and tumbled in, as the volunteers made a charge for home. They had scarcely passed the widow's pickets before Polly Hollow cavalry were upon them to the number of two, and dexterously gave the valiant regulars a charge of pigeon shot and curses, which drove them beneath the covert of their robes. On they dashed towards headquarters with Polly Hollow lancers and cavalry in their rear, amid the thunderings of their muskets and lashing of steeds. The "Hollow" horses being fed upon shingle shavings, were unable to endure the labor imposed upon them, which forced the militia to withdraw from action, and allow their enemies to escape, which they did, and reached the "Lower Fort" without a halt, even to "hook" a tug that became unfastened. Thus the isolated locality became famous in history as "Polly Hollow against the world."

## CHURCHES OF BREAKABEEN.

The early settlers of the vicinity were divided in religious views, as Reformed, Presbyterians and Lutherans, and being too poor to build a house of worship for each, they joined together and built a Union Church, about the year 1815. It stood for several years without being plastered, and the pulpit was supplied chiefly by Rev. Paige, of Gilboa, after the year 1820.

Through that earnest worker the edifice was completed and dedicated as the "Reformed Church of Breakabeen." A few years after it came under the charge of Rev. Lintner, who labored for, and successfully established a resident pastor. Rev. Eggleston officiated as such, but how long, we were unable to learn.

The records of this church do not extend further back than 1830, when it was in connection with the Middleburgh Reformed, and remained so until the organization of the Reformed Church of North Blenheim in 1852, when they became connected in pastoral care with the following pastors:—

- 1852—J. H. Van Woert.
- 1853 to 1859—W. G. E. See.
- 1859 to 1867—L. L. Sharpe.
- 1867 to 1870—A. Vanderwater.
- 1871—W. L. James.
- 1872—E. Miller.

Following the above organization was the *Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. Matthew*.—The first election of officers was held at the lecture room of Mr. Abraham Bergh, under the Hartwick Synod. The following were elected to serve as trustees:—

- Philip Bergh,
- John B. Waldron,
- Peter W. Becker,
- Samuel Mitchell.

The certificate of organization was given January 30, 1844, by Jonas Krum, Judge of Schoharie County.

On the 27th of December, 1845, the members of the church met pursuant to adjournment to take measures in regard to the purchase of a parsonage at Middleburgh, as both

societies were in connection. William C. Bouck presided as chairman. A few days after, the second election of officers was held, and William C. Bouck, Samuel Mitchell and Henry C. Shafer, were elected elders, and Nicholas L. Mattice, John Keyser, and Philip Shafer, deacons. John B. Waldron was the first secretary.

The following have officiated as pastors:—

- James Lefler,
- Adam Crouse,
- Levi Sternbergh,
- Nathan H. Cornell,
- John D. English,
- Henry Keller,
- A. L. Bridgman,
- R. S. Porter.

The latter closed his charge on the 1st of April, 1881, since which the pulpit has been filled by supply. The disconnection between this and the Middleburgh church was made under Rev. Henry Keller, in 1860.

## CHURCH OF FULTONHAM.

The Union church edifice of Fultonham, is occupied by the Reformed, Lutheran, Methodist and Baptist. The pulpit is supplied by the churches of Middleburgh, and the Baptist of West Fulton, of which each society is a branch.

## PHYSICIANS.

Moses Lawyer, son of Jacob Lawyer, [Little Jacob] of Schoharie village, was the first resident physician in the town, of whom we have any direct knowledge. He was a graduate of the New York College of Medicine, after receiving a collegiate education at Schenectady. He settled in Watsonville in 1821, and the year following married Elizabeth, daughter of Cornelius Vroman. Mr. Lawyer was of the Allopathic school of physicians, and gained an extensive practice, through his skill and attention to business, which continued till his death, in 1855. His place being vacant, his son, Valentine Lawyer, studied in his office and attended lectures at the New York City Medical College, and after but a few years vacancy, the old practice was resumed and continues with that success which care, ability and fondness of profession are

sure to gain. The Doctors Lawyer were the only practitioners of the northeast part of the town, until the spring of 1882, when William W. Barget, a student of Doctor Layman, of Schoharie, settled at Fultonham.

At Breakabeen many have settled, but none have remained for a long period of time. Chief among them was Doctor Baxster, who was followed by Dr. Schaeffer, who removed after a short term of practice, and placed Doctor Fosburgh in his stead. Doctor Schaeffer returned, and continued two years, when his place was taken by Doctor Mathews, whose health failed him, and gave the position to Doctor Squires, who was followed by the present Doctor Weckell.

At West Fulton, or Sapsbush, Doctor Havens settled in 1838, but removed to Summit a short time after. Previous to that date Doctor James settled upon Rossman Hill, and after a year's practice, removed to his native neighborhood, in Albany county. Upon the removal of Doctor Havens, Doctor James settled in his place and successfully practiced for a number of years.

Others came for awhile, and removed during the old Doctor's stay. After his exit, he was followed by the late Dr. John D. Wheeler, whose students, Dr. Allen, now of Lawyersville, and Dr. Rossman, followed in turns. Doctors Akeley and John Wilber succeeded who were followed by Dr. H. S. Gale, a Philadelphia student in 1874, and who in the spring of 1880, removed to Warnerville, leaving Doctor J. S. Akeley, of the Eclectic school, the present successful practitioner.

## SUPERVISORS.

- 1829—Charles Watson.
- 1830—John F. Mattice.
- 1831—Jonas Krum.
- 1832—Eben G. Foster.
- 1833—Homer Whitely.
- 1834—Philip Bergh, Jun.,
- 1835—Harmon Vroman.
- 1836—Robert W. Lamont.
- 1837—Philip Bergh, Jun.,
- 1838—Moses Lawyer.
- 1839—John Spickerman.
- 1840—Joseph Becker.
- 1841—Charles Watson.

- 1842—John Spickerman.
- 1843—Gideon D. Hilts.
- 1844—Ephraim Vroman.
- 1845—Alston F. Mattice.
- 1846—Philip Bergh, Jun.,
- 1847—Peter A. Borst.
- 1848—David Gorse.
- 1849—Washington Bergh.
- 1850—Peter Murphy.
- 1851—John Spickerman.
- 1852—Joseph Becker.
- 1853—William Best.
- 1854—John Spickerman.
- 1855—Jonas Krum.
- 1856—Roswell Driggs.
- 1857—David Gorse.
- 1858—Gideon D. Hilts.
- 1859—Charles Bouck.
- 1860—Riley Adams.
- 1861—Washington Bergh.
- 1862—David J. Vroman.
- 1863—John D. Wheeler.
- 1864—Wm. H. Freemire.
- 1865—Charles Bouck.
- 1866—John Spickerman.
- 1867—Wm. H. Freemire.
- 1868—Abram Haines, Jun.,
- 1869—George Spickerman.
- 1870—Washington Bergh.
- 1871—David J. Vroman,
- 1872—Orson Spickerman.
- 1873—Washington Bergh.
- 1874—Washington Bergh.
- 1875—Washington Bergh.
- 1876—John H. Mann.
- 1877—John H. Mann.
- 1878—Orson Spickerman.
- 1879—Orson Spickerman.
- 1880—Orson Spickerman.
- 1881—Marcus Zeh.
- 1882—Marcus Zeh.

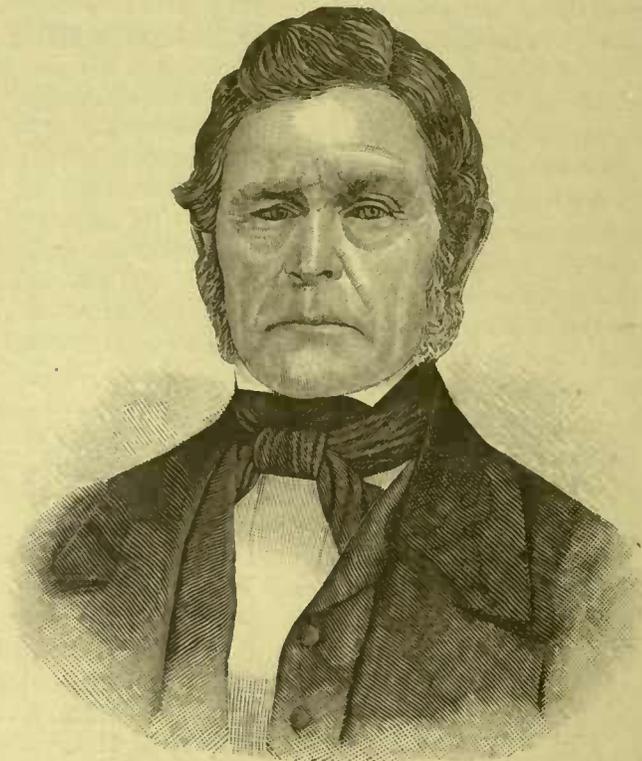
## BOUNDARIES.

The boundaries of the town as surveyed, are not to be found among the town records, or in the Secretary of State's office. The formation act was passed by the first session of the legislature of 1828, and not published, therefore we have been unable to obtain the boundaries for publication but will take measures, as

we have in similar cases in the loss of writings, to procure and deposit them in the town clerk's

and other offices, as the law directs, where they may be consulted.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.



PHILIP BERGH.

Philip Bergh was a grandson of Philip Bergh, one of the first settlers of "Kneiskerndorf." The old gentleman left but two sons, Abram and Philip, to perpetuate the family name. The latter dying childless, the Berghs of to-day are the descendants of Abram Bergh.

Philip, Jr., as he was familiarly known, was born upon the old homestead in October, 1794. His early days were passed as was the custom of that time, in laboring upon the farm. He

was possessed of a good, common English education.

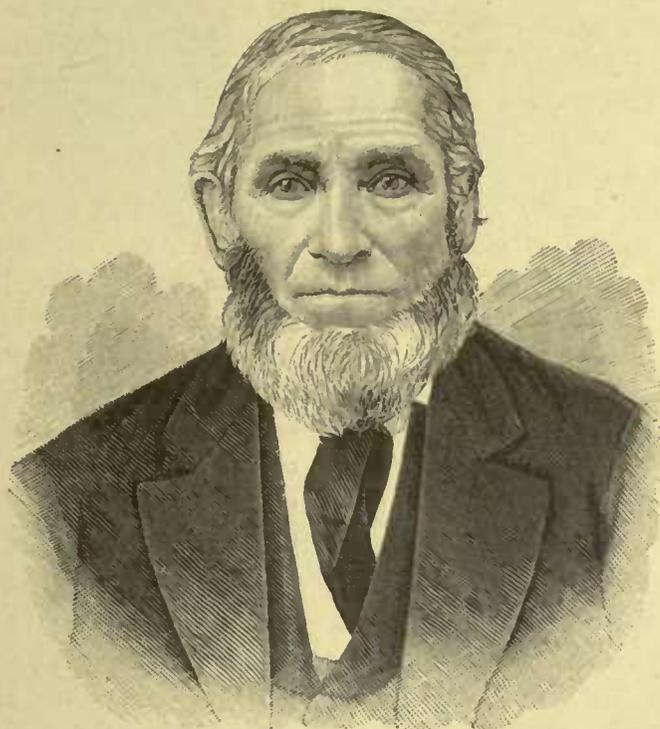
In 1815 he was married to Catharine E. Sidney, of the same "dorf," who is still living at the age of eighty-nine, in the full possession of her mental faculties, and is, as her husband's portrait shows him to have been, a true type of the old stock. The year following their marriage they removed to Breakabeen, upon the farm still owned in part by the family. A few

years afterward, he purchased a half interest in the grist-mill there, and in 1838, the entire property. That year he built the present structure now owned by his son, Washington Bergh.

Mr. Bergh was a member of the Lutheran church, and for many years an elder, and was one of those sturdy, quiet, yet earnest Christians, in whom confidence might be placed without fear. In politics he was a Democrat, and was honored by his townsmen with an election to the office of supervisor for three terms, and various other offices. As a business man he

was just, prompt, and accommodating, as many will testify, who found aid and comfort when in distress, through the generosity of Mr. Bergh. He was successful in his business and accumulated a large property. He died July 22, 1874, at the age of eighty years, leaving a community in which he was highly appreciated, and an honored family to mourn his death.

His children were as follows:—Washington, David P., Mrs. David Zeh, Mrs. Henry W. Becker, Mrs. Stephen Nelson, Mrs. Jacob W. Zeh, Mrs. Washington Mackey, Mrs. Peter M. Becker, and Mrs. John J. Zeh.



PETER MURPHY.

But few of the near children of the heroic fathers of our County, left an imprint of their faces and forms, that we may have an idea of the physique of men brought up under the labors and frugal mode of living that were peculiar to their lives. Under the modern habits

of living, great changes are wrought in the general physical appearance of families from one generation to another. They are to such an extent that the children of to-day are as much unlike their ancestors of one hundred years ago, as if they were of another nationality. The

pioneers of the County were a hardy, muscular people, and it was characteristic of their children, down to within fifty years, when their accumulations of wealth and their lightened labors, permitted a more easy and extravagant mode of living, which grew upon them as the country made its advancement.

We are pleased to present a truetype of "the fathers" in the likeness of Peter Murphy. It is far more agreeable from the fact that he is a son of Timothy Murphy, the gallant hero of the border settlements, in the trying days of the Revolution, in which the patriots and enemies of our country, alike, surmised that Providence or the Evil One, had instilled a magical spirit peculiar to the fabled heroes. We are told by those who were intimately acquainted with the father and the son, that the latter is a counterpart of the former in general appearance. The father died at the age of sixty-seven, and when Mr. Murphy had arrived at that age, the very close resemblance was noted by the aged people, and they looked upon him with nearly that degree of honor they did his father while he was among them.

The subject of this sketch was born upon the old Feek farm, in 1794, and is still active yet bearing the marks of age. The outlines of a ruddy countenance, hardy form, and a bold, determined spirit, are easily traced, regardless of time's work with his "defacing fingers." Mr. Murphy inherits many other of his father's characteristics, not the least of which are frankness and honesty. He has followed agricultural pursuits, from his youth, working hard, early and late, and unlike many who aspire to positions, never urged official favors upon the strength of his parent's services and reputation. On the contrary he has always manifested a reluctance in accepting proffered positions, yet has been the recipient of many town honors, among which was that of Supervisor in 1850.

He adheres zealously, as did his father to Democratic principles and party without exceptions, never having cast a vote against a candidate for nomination, and has ever been present at the polls, regardless of obstacles.

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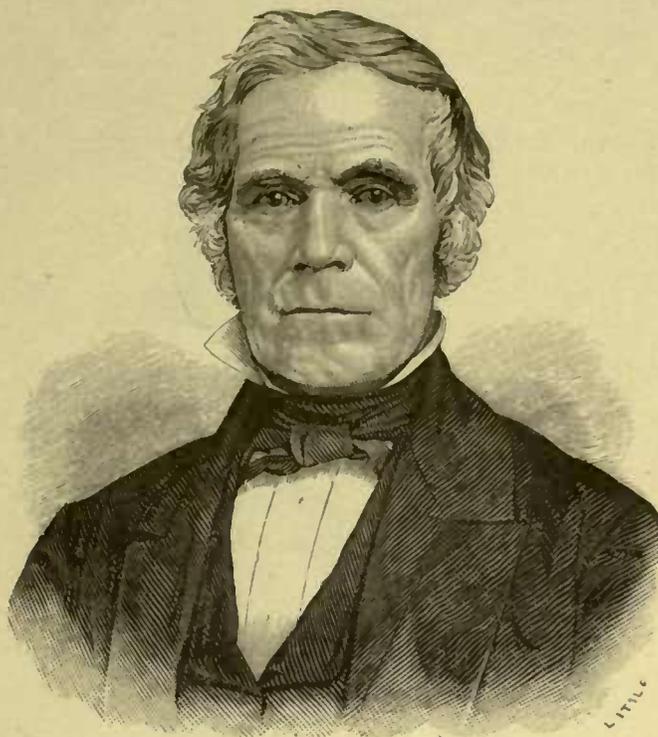
#### JOHN FREEMIRE, JR.

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The father of the subject of this sketch was John, or as he was commonly called, Johannes Freemire, one of the first settlers of Cobleskill. He was the only one of the family that survived the conflict of 1778, particularly described in the Chapter relating to the town of Cobleskill, excepting a brother who fled to Canada with the unscrupulous Zea.

At the close of the war, John removed to Breakabeen, and was married to a sister of Christian Bouck. John, Jr., was there born January 20, 1785, and was reared under the prevailing rules of those days, in industry and frugality, with but little if any educational advantages, beyond those afforded by daily intercourse and dealings with neighbors in the interchange of produce, etc.

Mr. Freemire was united in marriage with Catherine Bartholomew in the year 1809 and lived upon the homestead farm, which he cleared of timber and which is now inherited and occupied by his son, William H., and there resided until his death, which occurred August 22, 1876. He was an earnest Democrat of the old school and a firm friend of his neighbor and townsman, William C. Bouck. The Governor's confidence in his honesty and strict adherence to systematic rules of performing duty, led to the appointment of Mr. Freemire as Guard at the Sub-Treasury in New York City. He held that



JOHN FREEMIRE, Jr.

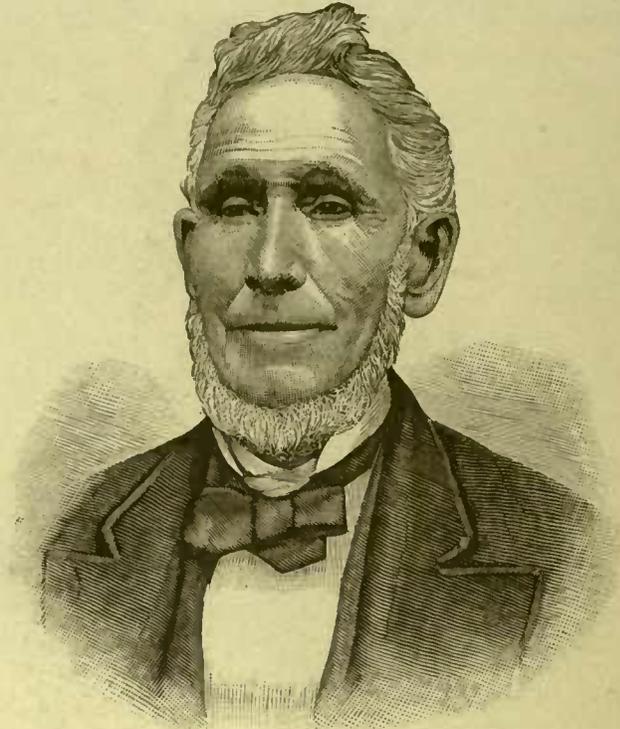
position of trust three years and returned to his home.

Not aspiring to official positions, he was but once elected to office and then as Justice of the Peace, although repeatedly urged to accept that and other honors. His characteristic spirit of retirement led him to refuse a compliance with the earnest and oft repeated appeals of his townsmen.

His married life was blessed in rearing a large family of children who have proven themselves useful and energetic citizens, such as reflect credit upon the wise counsels and examples of

honest parents. They are Mrs. John B. Waldron, of Breakabeen; John Freemyer, of Cassopolis, Mich.; Mrs. Wm. Woolford, of Brooklyn, N. Y.; William H., of Breakabeen; and Abram, of Middleburgh. Mrs. Ephraim Patterson also was a daughter but died several years ago, as did her patriotic husband who received injuries that proved fatal while in the late Rebellion.

The family name was originally spelled *Frimire*, but of late has been changed to *Freemyer* with the common consent of all branches of the family.



ADAM L. MATTICE.

Adam L. Mattice is a worthy representative of the early settlers of the valley, and of one in particular, Nicholas Mattice who first located within the neighborhood of the "upper fort." At what time he immigrated is not known, but he there reared a large family, in which were three sons—Adam, Frederick, and Conradt. Adam early espoused the cause of the Crown and fled to Canada as a Mohawk, in 1777, and there his descendants still reside.

Mrs. Burget, of Breakabeen, is the last of the direct heirs of Frederick, which fact leaves Conradt the progenitor of those bearing the family name in the County. He resided upon the farm now occupied by Joseph Mattice, where he reared six children as follows:—Lawrence, David, John, Henry, Mrs. John Brown, of Sharon, and Mrs. Garrett Hallenbeck, of Fulton.

Adam L. is one of five children of Lawrence Mattice, and was born in Fulton, September 15, 1803. He has always lived upon a farm and has accumulated a property that bespeaks a steady judgment and practical business qualifications. He has served the town in the capacity of road commissioner, assessor and other minor offices for many years, and is looked upon by his townsmen as an upright man in whom they have confidence to act with honor and precision.

Although he has arrived at the advanced age of seventy-eight, yet the sturdy form is erect, the muscles strong and steady, and the mind clear and active, as are those of most of the children of pioneers of the County. He was united in marriage with Dinah, daughter of David Mattice, and to them have been born five children,

James H., Lawrence A., Garret W., Dinah and Elizabeth. James H. died January 16, 1874.

The business is at present being carried on by Garret W., and Lawrence A. Mattice.



### EPHRAIM B. VROMAN.

Lieutenant Ephraim Vroman, of Revolutionary fame, was the grandfather of the subject of this sketch. That patriot had four children that survived the Revolution: Bartholomew E., Josias E., Maria, (Mrs. Peter P. Zielie) and Harmonus, a child by his second wife. Bartholomew and Josias married sisters, they being daughters of Colonel Peter Ditz, whose patriotism made the name historic and his memory live as long as literature exists. Josias E. has but two sons at present living, Harmon and Ephraim, who have arrived at advanced ages. Our subject is the only living heir of Bartholomew and was born upon the old farm in Vromansland on the 18th of August, 1806. He was

reared as a farmer and strictly adhered to that occupation till within a short time, when he retired.

Mr. Vroman received but a meagre common school education, yet inheriting the natural characteristics of the two families from which he sprang, but few men possess equal business tact or a better practical judgment, as shown in his individual affairs and those of the public in which he has from time to time been urged to transact.

We are assured by those of greater age, who were personally acquainted with several of the old stock Vromans, that he is a true type of that sturdy race in form, features and general

appearance. He has five children as follows: Mrs. Alonzo Best, Mrs. Harmon Vroman, Mrs. Addison Cornell, George A., and Charles W., the latter two occupying the old farm that has been in the Vroman family since 1711.

Although Mr. Vroman is naturally reserved, yet he is firm in his convictions, and free in his expressions of right, and in the community in which he resides, as in his family, is looked up to as a wise counsellor, generous neighbor and an unflinching patriot. It was Mr. Vroman's grandmother and youthful aunt that were murdered at the foot of the Onistagrawa by the Indian Seths Henry and his accomplice, Beacraft, the demoniac Tory. His father also was made to feel the vengeance of the unmerciful foe, in being their prisoner and forced to endure insults and hardships, which planted a hatred of Indians and Tories in the family breast that has been transmitted, and will be undoubtedly for several generations, and gave birth to a staunch patriotism that truly is undying.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF MIDDLEBURGH.

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BEAUTY OF SCENERY—THE MOUNTAINS—WEISER'S DORF—CONRAD WEISER—HIS DAUGHTER—JOHN PETER G. MUHLBERG—HIS PATRIOTISM—CONRAD WEISER, JR.—INTERPRETER—SETTLERS OF THE DORF—RELICS OF THE PAST—REFORMED CHURCH—ITS EARLY HISTORY—EDIFICE REBUILT IN 1785—PETITION TO ASSEMBLY—OTHER PAPERS—PASTORS' REFORMED CHURCH—LUTHERAN CHURCH—METHODIST—EPISCOPAL—THE TRUE REFORMED CHURCH—MIDDLE FORT—DESCRIPTION—FIRING UPON THE FLAG—

ZIELIE FAMILY—FIRST ZIELIES IN THE VALLEY—FAMILY RELIC—COLONEL ZIELIE—HIS CHILDREN—PETER SWART—OLD CLOCK—LOW DUTCH BECKERS—BORST FAMILY—GRIST MILLS—LOUCK'S FAMILY—ECKERSON'S—FIRST MERCHANT—GRIST MILL—BELLINGER FAMILY—HARTMAN'S DORF—RICHTMYER FAMILY—REBUILDING OF THE VILLAGE—ALEXANDER BOYD—J. M. SCRIBNER—JOHN HINMAN—NATHAN HINMAN—BUILDING THE BRIDGE—JONATHAN DANFORTH—ATCHINSON HOUSE—FREEMIRE HOUSE—MERCHANTS—FREEMAN STANTON—JOHN P. BELLINGER—D. D. DODGE—TANNING—DANFORTH FAMILIES—GENERAL DANFORTH—PHYSICIANS—LEGAL FRATERNITY—HON. LYMAN SANFORD—NATIONAL BANK—MASONIC LODGE—I. O. G. TEMPLARS—G. A. R. POST—CORNET BAND—INCORPORATION—HUNTER'S LAND—SUPERVISORS—BOUNDARIES.

IN approaching Middleburgh village from Schoharie by the valley road, one is not so much impressed with the beauty of the scenery as when passing over the hill from the Cobleskill valley, by the way of the poorhouse, there is presented one of those placid landscapes, for which Schoharie County is noted. The broad well kept flats that stretch from the giant evergreen hills upon the west, to the sloping ones and the cliff on the east, are dotted here and there with spacious residences and out-buildings that bespeak the wealth and prosperity of the occupants, and present a winning picture of plenty and contentment. Old Mohegontee\* stands out boldly as a terminus of a chain of picturesque hills, while Ocongona and Onistagrawa, in romantic contrast, look down upon the quiet scene below and give to the whole, grandeur and sublimity such as mountains only can give to rural sceneries. Upon their lofty summits and along their sides, the Aborigines of the country wandered for the deer, fox and

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\* Judge Brown, in his pamphlet history, gives the following names to the three mountains: Mohegan, Conegena and Onisto Graw.