

- 1843—Chauncy Grovenor.  
 1844—John Simmons.  
 1845—D. D. L. McCulloch.  
 1846—John W. Brown.  
 1847—D. D. L. McCulloch.  
 1848—Charles G. Kenyon.  
 1849—Barziliar McNeill.  
 1850—Barziliar McNeill.  
 1851—A. A. Kniskern.  
 1852—D. Angle.  
 1853—Samuel Pettengall.  
 1854—Chauncy Grovenor.  
 1855—Chauncy Grovenor.  
 1856—Henry I. Moak.  
 1857—Abram A. Kniskern.  
 1858—Abram A. Kniskern.  
 1859—Abram A. Kniskern.  
 1860—Abram A. Kniskern.  
 1861—Henry C. Lyker.  
 1862—Adam Hillsinger.  
 1863—Henry C. Lyker.  
 1864—Adam Hillsinger.  
 1865—Henry C. Lyker.  
 1866—R. J. Roscoe.  
 1867—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1868—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1869—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1870—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1871—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1872—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1873—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1874—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1875—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1876—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1877—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1878—J. M. Roscoe.  
 1879—George Burhans.  
 1880—George Burhans.

#### BOUNDARIES.

And all that part of the said County of Schoharie bounded by a line beginning in the northerly bounds of the County at the northwest corner of the town of Schoharie, and running thence southerly along the west line of the said town of Schoharie until it comes opposite the house lately occupied by Aaron Cole, Jr., thence westerly to the south side of the house now or late of George Loucks, thence westerly to the north side of the house

now or late of John Angle, thence on the same course until it intersects a straight line running southerly from the northwest corner of the house now or late of Wm. Ferris, thence northerly along the line so intersected to the northwest corner of the dwelling house last mentioned, thence northerly to a straight line to a spring at the west end of the house now or late of John Reddington, on the farm lately occupied by him, thence northerly in a straight line along the east side of the house now or late of John Malick, to the north bounds of the County, and thence easterly along the said north bounds to the place of beginning, shall be and continue a town by the name of Carlisle.

## CHAPTER XX.

### HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF ESPERANCE.

LOCATION OF ESPERANCE VILLAGE—PURCHASE OF THE LANDS BY TEN EVCK—BY GENERAL NORTH—A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE—TURNPIKE—BRIDGE—ACCIDENT—DANIEL HARE—HIS INN—OTHER INNS—CALVIN WRIGHT—J. C. WRIGHT—ISAAC H. TIFFANY—OTHER LAWYERS—PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH—METHODIST CHURCH—PHYSICIANS—STORRS MESSENGER—JUDGE BRIGGS—MERCHANTS—VILLAGE CORPORATION—POSTOFFICE—STAGE HOUSE AND ROUTE—ACADEMY—CHAIR MANUFACTURE—FEATHERS HOUSE—GITTY LAWYER—JUDGE FLETCHER—PECK'S INN—FIRST GATE KEEPER—PROCEEDS OF ROAD—SLOANSVILLE—VAN VALKENBURGH SETTLEMENT—BROWN BROTHERS' SETTLEMENT—TOLL GATE—SLOAN FAMILY—OTHER SETTLERS—STORES—ROBERT MCMASTER—POST STATION—DAVID PHELPS—STONE HEAP—REV. HAWLEY'S NARRATIVE—FOSTER MILL—KNEISKERN'S DORF—ITS SETTLERS—THEIR CHILDREN—THEIR GRAVES—KNEISKERN FAMILY—ENDERS FAMILY—FIRST GRIST-MILL—JOHNSON'S INVASION—ENCAMPMENT—

TOWN FORMED—FIRST OFFICERS—GENERAL BROWN—ANTI-RENT TROUBLES—ASSEMBLY-MEN—SUPERVISORS—AID TO THE RAILROAD—BAPTISTS—PROMINENT MEN—FIRST NEWSPAPER—QUOTATIONS FROM IT—LAND PATENTS.

THE territory which embraces the town of Esperance, previous to 1846, belonged to Schoharie. The quiet and neat little village from which the town derived its name, is pleasantly situated upon the north bank of the Schoharie creek, and is the oldest incorporated village in the County. In 1803 Harmonus Ten Eyck, heir of Jacob and Hendrick Ten Eyck, who received the land grant in 1739, owning the land upon which the village stands, laid out between sixty and seventy acres in building lots. The same was sold to General North, of Revolutionary fame, February 26, 1806, who gave to it its present name, it being a French word, signifying "Hope."

General North owned a large estate in the town of Duaneburgh, near the Duane mansion, (a member of which family he married,) where he lived for many years. In 1798 he received from Governor Jay an appointment to the United States Senate, to succeed John T. Hobart. He represented the Albany district in the State Assembly in 1792, 1794 and 1795, Albany and Schoharie in 1796, and Schenectady in 1810. In 1795, 1796 and also in 1801 he was Speaker of the same. During the Revolution he was an aid to Baron Steuben. The latter part of his life was spent in New London, Conn. On the 4th day of January, 1836, he died in the city of New York, and his remains were brought to Duaneburgh and placed within the Duane family vault. Nearly all of the Esperance lots were sold or leased by him, those of the latter for a perpetual term.

As the turnpike enters the County at this place, we will now refer particularly to that thoroughfare.

An act was passed by the Legislature on the 10th of April, 1792, for the "construction and improving a road from Isaac Truax, Jr., in the city of Albany, to Cherry Valley, and a bridge

across the Schoharie creek, between the north bounds of the farm occupied by Oliver Hills, and the north bounds of the farm occupied by ——— Degroot, in the town of Duaneburgh." General William North, Silas Talbot and Theodorus V. W. Graham were appointed a board of commissioners to lay the road and see to the construction of the same, and the bridge.

During that season the road was laid out, and the bridge built so that teams could cross, but was not finished until the season following—1793. The road then laid out, passed near the stone church and a little north of the present path, to the west, until near Sloansville, where it was run as now. Emigration to the western counties began to be quite brisk and the road not having received any improvement except the cutting of trees, a petition was made for the construction of a substantial road-bed, but the Legislature did not exert itself to that end until the bridge at this place was swept away by the unparalleled freshet of 1798. On the 15th of March, 1799, an act was passed to establish a "turnpike corporation for improving the State road from the house of John Weaver in Watervliet to Cherry Valley." The act says:—

*Whereas* the bridge over the Schoharie Kill on the State road, was by reason of the force of water and ice, last spring (1798) destroyed and

*Whereas* the road on which the aforesaid bridge was erected is of public utility and is one of the public routes of communication between the city of Albany and the western settlements of this state Therefore

*Resolved* that William North, John Taylor, Abraham Ten Eyck, Charles R. Webster, Calvin Cheeseman, Zenas Pinneo, Ephraim Hudson, Joseph White, Elihu Phinney and Thomas Machin (Sr.) and all such persons as shall associate for the purpose of making a good road from the house where John Weaver now lives in the town of Watervliet in the county of Albany following the State road westward to the house where John Walton now lives in the town of Cherry Valley in the county of Otsego, shall and are hereby created and made a corporation and body politic.

A bridge was built at this place in 1792 and was swept away in 1798.

A temporary bridge was constructed a little to the west of the present one in 1799, and the present one was not built till several years after. In 1809, one Burr, took the contract to build a new bridge and built the abutments a few feet high when he was called to some other place to construct a bridge, and did not return till the year 1811. The structure was finished and the first team driven over by Judge Olney Briggs on the first day of January, 1812. Sixty-nine years have rolled around and thousands after thousands of people and teams have passed over, and devastating floods beneath, yet it stands firm and is an example of honest and perfect work. Nearly forty years ago it was condemned by hungry contractors and timbers were drawn upon the spot to rebuild, but the work was deferred and they have long since decayed and a healthy contract lost, while the bridge stands to laugh at human calculations and expectations. While the temporary bridge was in use a few planks had been removed to let stone through to the abutments, and carelessly replaced.

A family by the name of Morrow living north of the stone church were returning from meeting in Duanesburgh and upon driving over these planks they gave way and precipitated the family and team to the bed of the creek a distance of thirty feet. The hind wheels of the wagon were too large to pass through the space and consequently remained suspended. Mrs. Morrow was fatally injured while the rest of the family escaped with slight bruises. Doctor Roscoe of Carlisle was the nearest physician and surgeon and was in attendance. Judge Briggs purchased the privilege of being the first to drive over the present bridge by the payment of twenty dollars.

Having thus referred at length to the bridge, we will return to the village, its first settlement, and the prominent gentlemen that located here. Upon the building of the bridge and road, there were but three small and rude houses erected, but by whom we are not able to learn. In 1793 Daniel Hare, from Columbia county, after a short residence below Quaker street, passed over the bridge and settled opposite Erastus

Williams' present residence, west of the village. He built a small house intending to settle as a farmer, but when the workmen were constructing the road, he boarded them and concluded to adopt the Inn business. He built an addition to his house, and when the road was finished to Cherry Valley and the immensity of travel began to pour over the road, he opened a public house, and for many years it was known as the "Red Tavern." But time has decayed the building with all its surroundings, and long since the whole was cleared away, leaving nothing of its "once having been" but the well, over which, for many long years the creaking groaning "sweep" carried the "oaken bucket" up and down its moss covered sides. There did not seem to be a very good prospect of the village lots being taken until the year 1805. Emigration to the western counties and Ohio, from the Eastern States and Hudson river counties, together with the produce of Otsego and northwestern Schoharie, finding a market at Albany, began to take this route, and men of ability and means became satisfied that Esperance would become a business center. About the year 1806 an inn was built near the bridge by John Burt, which in after years was known as the Phoenix. It was for many years kept by — Tillman, and at a later date by John Hare, who was interested in the stage business. There was also a like house built upon the ground now occupied by the Methodist church, but who its first occupant was we are unable to tell.

About the year 1808 Calvin Wright became the "host" and after a few years the building was burned and not rebuilt. Mr. Wright was the father of John C. Wright, who figured so conspicuously in political affairs in after years. Mr. Wright studied law in the office of John Cummings. After being admitted and gaining a lucrative practice, he received the appointment of First Judge of the County in 1833, succeeding Judge Beekman, and held the position until the year 1848, when he was succeeded by Charles Goodyear. Mr. Wright was elected State Senator in 1843, 1844, 1845 and 1846, and represented the third district, which comprised the counties of Albany, Columbia, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Delaware and

Schoharie. He removed to Schenectady and was elected Comptroller of the State, in 1851, the duties of which important office he performed faithfully and satisfactorily to the people. At the expiration of his term he settled again at Schenectady, where he died on the 4th of January, 1862, at the age of sixty-one.

Isaac Hall Tiffany, whom we will notice in Cobleskill, settled here about the year 1809 or 1810, and was the first lawyer. It was here he became interested in the breeding of fine wool sheep, in which he met with heavy losses. Mr. Tiffany was shortly followed by John Cummings, a lawyer of fine ability, who removed in after years to Canajoharie. Alexander and David Cruikshanks succeeded Cummings; the former represented the County in the Assembly in 1832. John C. Wright succeeded these gentlemen, and was associated with Sherburne Frost, who upon Wright's removal, remained in the office.

About the year 1848, John E. Mann, of Schoharie, a student of Henry Hamilton, also held a law office at this place, but removed to Wisconsin, and now occupies the judicial bench of Milwaukee county, having been of late elected to that position for the third term.

Joshua M. Donaldson, a student of Jedediah Miller, settled here in 1857 or 1858, and represented the town upon the Board of Supervisors in 1860 and 1861. Donaldson removed to Minnesota, where he died in 1877. Donaldson was succeeded by J. F. Hazleton, who was for several years United States Internal Revenue Assessor, and received the appointment of Consul to the Court of Rome by President Hayes, and is now acting upon that mission.

A grist-mill was built upon the opposite side of the stream at an early date by Thomas Thornton, and was afterwards owned by Henry W. Starin, uncle of the present Congressman, John H. Starin, of Fultonville. The last owner of the mill was Henry Brown. It was burned and rebuilt by him, but fire once more laid it in ashes, and Haines & Isham built one upon the Esperance side, which still stands. A paper-mill formerly occupied the site, but by whom it was built we are unable to learn. Henry Mandle and Alfred Isham owned the property

for many years. The iron foundry of Woolson & Keyes, was established in 1856, by Roswell Woolson, who removed from Carlisle, and was the inventor of the well-known "Carlisle No. 1" plow.

The first school-house stood a little to the west of Daniel Hare's old tavern upon the opposite side of the street, and was built in 1805. William, a brother of Daniel Hare, settled here upon the hill south of the creek a short time after 1793, while Jonathan, another brother, located upon the farm now owned by Silas Hare, a son of William, in the town of Duaneburgh.

In 1810 the village had become quite large and was the aristocratic settlement of the County. The old school-house was abandoned and a new one built that year, and used for holding religious meetings as well as school purposes, until the year 1824. The building was considered the finest of the kind in the County. General North and lawyer Tiffany donated a bell, which was placed in the belfry for church purposes. It was purchased in Albany, but by whom it had been previously owned we cannot say. It bears the date of 1738, and the inscription upon it reads :

"POURS LE BENINUM SIC NOMEN DOMINI  
BENEDICTUM 1738, FAITH PAR MOI."

*Presbyterian Church.*—We find upon the well-kept records the following :—

"ESPERANCE, August 8, 1823.

"Church session met for the first time at the Rev. Mr. Lyons' study; present, Rev. L. Lyons, Mr. Joel Messenger, Mr. Joseph Green, Mr. Robert W. Naton. It was resolved that the following narrative be recorded:—

"Previous to the year 1817 the inhabitants of this village were not favored with regular preaching of the Gospel by any denomination. The Rev. James N. Austin, who now rests from his labors, was employed one-fourth of his time to preach at this place. He commenced July, 1817. His labors among this people were blessed, and on February 22, 1818, the following persons were formed into a church, viz :—

Joel Messenger,  
George Leet,  
Erastus Gaylord,  
Sally Gaylord,  
David Casson,  
Andrew Caswell,  
Mary Cumperton,  
Sarah Wright,  
Lucretia Leet,  
Sally Meuny,  
Elizabeth Cumperton,  
Alida Cumperton,  
Julia Isham.

"During that year there was an addition of twenty-six members in all. Mr. Austin left in 1819, after which they were supplied by Rev. Roswell Messenger, October 20, 1821, Rev. Mr. McFarlane, and Rev. Luke Lyon in 1822.

"November 12, 1822, a meeting was called to elect trustees and take measures to build a house of worship."

The first Sabbath-school was organized January 19, 1823, and on the 9th of February following, the Lord's Supper was celebrated for the first time. On the 4th of May, 1823, a church was formed, composed of those already mentioned, and in addition:—

Richard Hemstreet,  
Ebenezer Brown,  
Mrs. Clarissa Sheldon,  
Mrs. Elizabeth Dickenson,  
Mrs. C. Van Schoonhoven,  
Mrs. Lydia Simpson,  
Mrs. Elizabeth Beach,  
Mrs. Martha McCarty,  
Mrs. M. Tapping,  
Mrs. Mary Vene,  
Widow Martha Hemstreet,  
Mrs. Maria Young,  
Mr. W. L. Candee.

The first elders were:—

Joel Messenger,  
Joseph Green,  
Robert W. Nolton.

The new church was dedicated July 4, 1824, Rev. Dr. Yates, of Schenectady, and Rev. L. Lyon, officiated.

Rev. L. Lyon was installed August 18, 1824.

The pastors have been as follows:—

Rev. L. Lyon, 1824-1827.  
Rev. Jared Dewing, 1832.  
Rev. William E. Dixon, 1833.  
Rev. C. D. W. Tappen, 1834.  
Rev. William E. Dixon, 1849-1851.  
Rev. A. Craig, 1855-1859.  
Rev. A. H. Seeley, 1859-1872.  
Rev. J. D. Counterminc, 1876-1880.  
Rev. W. J. Blain, 1881.

*The Methodist Episcopal Church.*—The Methodists worshipped in a small church for many years that stood upon the south side of the turnpike opposite the school-house, in the town of Duanesburgh. In 1828 a society was organized here and in 1836 they erected a large house of worship with a brick basement upon the corner of Main and Steuben streets, where Hon. Joseph Buckbee's fine residence now stands. The first Quarterly Conference was held in the building July 16th of that year. S. Stebbins and A. Champlin were the preachers and S. Miner the presiding elder. It was voted that Palatine Bridge and Spraker's Basin be annexed to this circuit. In 1868 the building was removed to its present site and remodeled. There were but five members at the organization and Reverend Joseph Ames was the first pastor.

*Physicians.*—Dr. Beach was the first physician and came about the year 1808 and was followed in 1812 by Dr. Prentiss Leonard a student of Joseph White of Cherry Valley. His son Lorenzo I. Leonard now holds the practice, gained by the father when the country was new and very uninviting to professionals. Dr. Henry Green soon followed Leonard. Dr. Green removed to Albany. Dr. Dunbar of Westerlo, Albany county, afterwards settled and was followed by Dr. John Kelly, after a long practice in Carlisle. He located here about the year 1856 and died in 1863.

Dr. Norwood located here a short time previous to Kelly's death and is at present the regular practicing physician. About the year 1840 Dr. Rowland located at Sloansville and enjoyed an extensive practice throughout the

town for many years, when he removed to Cherry Valley. He was a very skillful practitioner and business man. During his last year's residence in that village Dr. Teeple located there and continued until the year 1870. Dr. J. M. Emerson was also at that place during the 60's and removed to the West.

Daniel Beach a brother of Dr. Beach was the first jeweler and removed to Sloansville about the year 1818 and was familiarly known as "Tinker Beach." He was succeeded by Storrs Messenger who came to the place from Connecticut in 1817. Mr. Messenger has since that date, been identified with the business enterprises of the place. As old age has crept upon him he has laid his blow-pipe and glass aside, having only the business cares of the post-office upon his mind, to which he has attended for many years. His trade is carried on by one of his journeymen, Avery Brazee and is still the only one in the place. Mrs. Messenger was a daughter of Nicholas Delavergne, who it is said was the first hatter in the County. He came from Columbia county and settled at "Garlock's dorf" near Schoharie in 1785 and removed to this village in 1808. John Delavergne his son, is at present the owner of the village lots and leases, having purchased the same from the North heirs in 1878.

*Judge Briggs.*—At the time John Cummings settled here, his brother-in-law Olney Briggs also came as a saddle and harness maker. Mr. Briggs was born in Berkshire county Massachusetts in 1775 and with his parents removed to Otsego county soon after the Revolution. After learning his trade he came to this village and became one of its foremost men as well as a prominent one in the County. He was appointed to the bench in 1816 and filled the position as Assistant Judge sixteen years. He was a delegate with Asa Starkweather, from the County to the Constitutional Convention of 1821, to frame that which is distinguished as the Second Constitution of New York.

Mr. Briggs in the Constitutional Convention of 1820 upon the rights of negro suffrage said :—

"We have come to universal suffrage, and I want we should fix it in the face of the instru-

ment. Gentlemen wish to get away from it, they endeavor to evade it. Sir! This distinction (negro suffrage) will help to weaken the breach. When we get to have such a population as the gentleman has described, our constitution will be good for nothing. We must carry the strong arm of the law to the cradle, sir, and let the rising generation know we have established the principle of universal suffrage, that they may prepare themselves accordingly, and qualify themselves to live under it."

Upon exemption of taxation, he said :—

"I am opposed to exclusive privileges, whether to manufacturers or clergy. If the latter are exempted, why should not deacons be exempted too? They are good men. And why not exempt the carpenter also, who builds the church, and the printer, who prints the bibles and psalm books?"

"Where should the line be drawn? I wish to shackle the Legislature, and prevent them from enacting such laws."

Mr. Briggs advocated annual elections for Governor, and in his remarks upon the motion said :—

"So it is with the people, they do not need any great advice, the imagination is to be thus worked up about elections. Some great dark project is afoot; the great circle for the election of Governor has come round, the other side are hard at work, and we must beware that they do not out-general us. Hand bills are afloat; demagogues are busy; but make the election annual, and all these squabbles and scuffles would have an end, there would not be thousands of dollars spent to secure a mere annual election. They would not excite the public mind.

"Sir! Who ought we to elect for Governor and officers, ambitious politicians? No! The modest man—who keeps retired—who says to himself, if my country wants any services let them come and ask me for them. He would disdain this bribery and corruption, he would only serve when his country wanted his services."

*Merchants.*—A miniature Borough, as the founders intended Esperance to become, could

not well do without a merchant. In those times a public house was the first thing to be established, the same as a "store" is at present in new hamlets. General North's companion-in-arms, Egbert Cumbleton, who held a commission of Major, under General Steuben, began the first store in 1805. Whether others embarked in the business at that time, tradition does not tell.

Major Cumbleton was an adept in military tactics and a brave soldier, but in a business point of view he was too liberal to succeed. Who followed him cannot be ascertained, but one Louis Candy, familiarly known as "Dr. Candy" and Charles Starin were here at an early date, about 1815, and remained a number of years.

James Turnbull, A. Billings, Alfred Isham and Henry Mandle, as Isham & Mandle, John Dewell and Robert L. Topping, were in business from one time to another, but perhaps not in the order in which they are here placed. The largest dealer that located here, and perhaps in the County, was Benjamin F. Wood, son of Dr. Wood, of Duaneburgh. Mr. Wood commenced some time before the Southern Rebellion and was during that period the largest produce dealer in Central New York, particularly in butter. Tons of that article were shipped almost daily, at prices that probably will be incredible, many years hence. At the commencement of that struggle the prices ranged from ten to twelve cents per pound, but ere it closed, fifty and fifty-five cents were often refused. All goods were proportionately high, and speculation was rife among all classes, in every department, which left a demoralizing chill upon business branches that years of pinching intrenchment only can drive away.

Since Mr. Wood closed his business, John O. Root, McIntosh & Turnbull, —Brumly, William Folensbee, Benjamin W. Clark and Martin Watson have engaged in trade, and George Briggs as the first and only druggist.

The village was incorporated in the year 1819 and not in the year 1832 as published in other works. April 21st of the latter year the charter for a fire company was obtained and the village charter was revised to meet the re-

quirements of the corporation upon certain proceedings. It was the only incorporated village in the County up to the year 1868. The post-office was established in 1805. The mail was carried, when the route was established in 1800, on horse, and the approach of the carrier was made known by his blowing a horn. How long the mail was thus carried we cannot say, but upon the advent of wagon and sleigh coaches the Phoenix Hotel was the central station between Albany and Cherry Valley. As the stage-coach epoch has long since passed away, leaving happy reminiscences to many who marked with delight the progression of the age, from foot and horseback mail carriers to golden striped rocking wagon "palaces," we will here copy an article published in the *Cobleskill Index* as a correction to a statement made in regard to the stage lines, by an unknown writer:—

"The first line of stages between Albany and Cherry Valley through Esperance, was run about 1826 and had three proprietors: Thorpe & Sprague owned the line from Albany here, twenty-six miles, and William Story of Cherry Valley the line from here to that place—known in the driver and passenger parlance of those days as "the Valley"—a like distance. Thorpe & Sprague had the mail contract from Albany to "the Valley" at one hundred dollars a mile, and as the distance was a shaving (not certain how thick) over fifty-two miles (the same generosity characterized our Uncle Samuel then as now) paid them five thousand three hundred dollars a year, for carrying the mail on their "four horse coaches" and they "pooled" the price with Story for carrying it over the west half of the route. Unfortunately for Mr. Story his agent in Albany discounted "futures"—just as the Fall River treasurers and secretaries do now, (by which it appears that human nature has not changed much in fifty years) and Mr. Story sold out his end of the line to John Wilkins of Cherry Valley and sometime (not very long) thereafter Sprague died and Thorpe sold out the Albany end, and the mail contract to William Platner of Cherry Valley, who run the line with Wilkins about two years, and then sold out to a Mr. Baker and a partner, whose name is already lost by the writer. Those men,

Baker & Co., sold out their interest in this Albany and Cherry Valley line, and other lines running east and north from Albany, to the "Reeds" of Rensselaer county—Stephentown I think—with the stock, running as well as rolling for thirty thousand dollars. This occurred somewhere about 1836, am not certain of the date, and for a number of years the Albany and "Valley" line,—but of course under reduced mail contract,—was run by Reed & Wilkins among whose drivers were "Elder" Williams and "Jumpy" Sprong, as well known to boy and man along their respective routes, and the traveling public, as the oldest conductor on the Central or Susquehanna today. Reed & Wilkins continued to own and run the line to 1841, by which time opposition to the Mohawk & Hudson (Albany & Schenectady) railroad, by the Reeds' stage-coach line to Schenectady had been abandoned. The Schenectady & Utica railroad was in operation and drawing passengers from the Cherry Valley and Albany stage route to Canajoharie; the Boston & Albany railroad (then known as the Western railroad) approached its western terminus (Albany) and the Reeds collapsed and John Hare bought their interest, the Albany end of the line, and ran it awhile with Wilkins. The latter was in a bad way financially and I think, but am not certain, handed the concern over to Ed. Wheeler; but finally sold out to John Vanetten of Cherry Valley who with Hare, ran the stage from here to Cherry Valley for two or three years. There was but one mail contract after the Vanetten and Hare."

*Esperance Academy.*—The old stone building upon the north side of Main street is an old land mark, around which cluster many pleasant memories. It was built for an exchange stable by John D. Dickinson, a noted horse jockey, and afterwards remodeled for an Academy about the year 1835, and used as such for several years.

Joshua M. Donaldson, soon after graduating at Union College, entered the school as Principal, and under his management it became one of the head schools of the country. McClelland followed, but not proving a financial success the

project dropped, and Peter D. Shinville occupied the building for a long term of years in the manufacture of fanning-mills, which met with ready demand, and were considered the best then in use. Of late the rustic appearing landmark has been used as a tenant house. About the year 1815 William Simpson established a cabinet shop, that for many years was one of the leading enterprises of the village. He was succeeded by Alexander Dean, who in turn gave place to Frederick Happe, the present business proprietor, and in whom is found one of those examples that the German people give to young Americans, by rising from a wandering immigrant, without means, or the language of the country at command, to an independence and prominence within a few years.

About 1820 to 1835 Esperance was quite a manufacturing point. There were two extensive chair factories in operation, that supplied the surrounding country with their wares. Henry Mandle, James Vilbert and James E. Downing, part of the time separately, at others as partners, were the leaders in the enterprise and did a large and successful business. During that time the paper-mill was run to its utmost capacity, by Dr. Leonard, which made the place present a lively appearance.

*Feathers House.*—The building was occupied by Larkin Feathers, and was built for a store about the year 1820, and occupied for several years as such. It was subsequently changed to an "Inn" and one of the first proprietors was Gitty Lawyer, of Schoharie, a woman skilled in money getting. A young law student, coming from the Eastern States, being unable to bear the expense of "board" and other necessaries, became enamored with the proprietress, or her money, and in due time they were married. Then having the means he acquitted himself in the armour of the law, and sought a home in the wilds of Michigan, then the point to which immigration was pouring, to be followed, perhaps, by his loving spouse, when he decided upon a location.

After waiting a number of years without a word from him to cheer her, the wife and landlady equipped herself with horse and wagon to seek her accomplished lord, not unmindful of

the convenience of a stove in the family, which she took with her, and an abundance of clothing.

She traveled alone and upon her arrival at Detroit, instead of meeting the husband, who was apprised of her coming, she met a friend of his who told her that her husband was deeply in debt, and if she remained her funds would be seized to liquidate them.

Appreciating the hard earned dollars, she turned her face homeward, leaving her lover to worry his creditors as best he could. That same man, William A. Fletcher, became the first judge upon the present Ninth Judicial Circuit of Michigan, which position is now held by another Schoharie County boy, Hon. Josiah L. Hawes, a native of Carlisle, and student of Joseph H. Ramsey.

Jeremiah Peck erected an "Inn" upon the northwest corner of Main and Church streets, about the year 1818, and kept it as such until his death, and was followed by Mrs. Peck and children. The chief business was done at the bar, while other houses' profits came from lodgers, meals and stabling.

There was another inn built at the west end of Main street, upon the brow of the hill, by Levitt Mansfield, about the year 1826, and during its last days was kept by George Smith, but its portals have long since been closed, and only the Feathers House furnishes accommodation for the public at the present time. In passing along to the west, one mile and one half, snugly nestled in a hollow was another tavern, whose accommodations were equally as extended as those of the village.

General John S. Brown followed his father in its management, and made a specialty in furnishing feed for the droves of live-stock that crowded the thoroughfare.

In the last days of its usefulness as a public house, other landlords loved to tell the traveler of the hideous "spooks" and unearthly noises that were seen and heard nightly within its walls. Judson and Ager, each followed General Brown, and under the latter, the old building was torn down to give room for the present spacious frame house. Near to the west, a toll-

gate was built in 1810, through which each teamster and drover was obliged to deposit in the company's treasury, pay for the privilege of traveling upon the road. Who was the first gate-keeper we are unable to learn, but one Cleveland was receiver for many years, and in fact was in office when this part of the turnpike was annuled by the company.

The first gate-keeper at the bridge was Bartholomew Keene, and the present one is Mrs. Obediah Sprong, who has stood at her post day and night for twenty-nine years, performing her duty faithfully. Her husband died many years since, and was a coach driver during the palmy days of this thoroughfare, and familiarly called "Jumpy." None knew how to draw the "ribbons," or "clip the ears" of the leaders with the coach whip, better than "Jumpy." While referring to the "drivers" we cannot but mention Walter Wood, ——— Williams, known as "Elder," George Chilson and John Bradt, who were the "regulars" for many long years. Thousands of passengers and an immensity of valuables were entrusted to their care, and we fail to find an instance that a death, injury or loss occurred. One driver made the trip from this place to Cherry Valley, but changed horses at Sharon Hollow or Hill. The "Elder" was the principal driver at this end of the route, and drove a four-horse team daily from here to Sharon during eighteen years.

To give an idea of the amount of business the stage line did before the Central Railroad was in operation, we are authorized by an old driver to say, that from forty to one hundred and fifty passengers were daily booked at Cherry Valley, for Albany and intermediate points.

The travel upon the road, otherwise than by coach, was also immense. An extoll collector informs us that the monthly returns of the Esperance bridge gate were usually one thousand dollars; and that seven hundred teams had been counted that passed through in a day. Thus we can plainly see the cause of such numbers of taverns built along the line, and not think it an erroneous statement when the aged ones tell us, they "failed to meet the requirements of the traveling public."

## SLOANSVILLE.

While we have been contemplating Esperance village when it was a pine forest, down to the present time, musing over the changes that progress has made from time to time, we must not harbor the idea that when the first tree was felled at that village no other white man had settled in this "remote region," as in passing up the turnpike, near the present residence of John Schuyler, upon the hill to the east of his house, John Joseph Van Valkenburgh, a German Palatine, settled as early as 1756 or 1760, and made quite a clearing. When Johnson and Brant invaded the valley he saw the smoke arising over the hills, and divined the cause. With his wife and children he started for the "middle fort," passing the lower one upon the hills to the east, and gained the fortress near dark. He quit his pioneer farm and joined the patriots as a scout, and proved one of the most brave and trusty ones. At the close of the war he settled in Sharon, as stated in Chapter XV. Nor must we think that Sloansville was among the things that were to be, as here we find a path—as old perhaps, as the aborigines of the country, leading from the Mohawk to the Schoharie valley, treading which, the Germans of each valley were enabled to visit and barter with each other, nearly seventy-five years before a settlement was here made. By the side of this path we find three brothers settled as early as 1785 or 1786. John, James and George Brown purchased a portion of the "stone heap" patent, and built a log house upon the ground where Mrs. Spenser Foster's house now stands. They cleared up the land south of the house, and in after years built another one upon the Baptist church site. It being upon the Indian path and the Germans traveling that route quite often, induced the brothers to commence the tavern business for their accommodation when thirsty and weary.

Soon after, the brother, John, desirous of having a separate home, built a log house upon the McIntosh place, and when the turnpike was constructed he built another at a very short distance to the south of the first, to be enabled to accommodate the workmen. The following years, 1805 and 1806, the road was finished

through to Carlisle, and the company was permitted to erect a toll-gate at this place, and Brown received the appointment of gate-keeper. He built a gate or swinging-pole from one house to the other, and received toll until the road was completed to Cherry Valley according to contract, when the gate was abandoned and the one near Esperance established. The company was obliged to finish a certain number of miles of road before a gate was allowed, and it was not finished acceptably to the Valley until 1810. While liberal inducements were offered to construct the road, yet the company were under restraints, and were obliged to keep it in repair, which was an expensive task owing to the vast amount of travel, and if the road became bad, complaints were made to the County turnpike inspectors, by notice, who could compel the gate-keeper to allow all teams to pass through without toll, until the road was repaired and accepted by him.

James Brown kept the inn where the church stands, and he sold the property to Captain William and John R. Sloan upon their coming here about the year 1800. Brown settled in Carlisle.

The Sloans were active men, and were engaged in after years, in connection with the hotel, in the manufacture of chip goods, but upon the burning of the building, about 1825, the enterprise was abandoned. Quite a number of settlers came from New Jersey and Rhode Island in 1788 and settled principally north of the village upon the hill, among whom were John Teeple, Stephen Crocker (now in Carlisle) and Abram Montaney—whose descendants still occupy the pioneer homes and are prominent citizens.

John and Gideon Larkin also came from Rhode Island about 1803 and settled here for awhile. John was a Revolutionary soldier, and removed to Carlisle, while Gideon located upon the hill southwest of the village and was followed in the possession of the farm by his sons Gideon, Jr. and Israel whose honesty and integrity none dared assail. The children of John were Daniel, Jehiel and Phineas, who have been prominent men of the County as business men and agriculturists,

About the year 1795, the father of the Brown brothers also came with his son Henry and settled with James upon what was after owned by, and known as the "Grum" farm. Henry built an inn upon the turnpike as has already been stated, John sold his interest in the present McIntosh place and purchased farther down the turnpike and built the "Inn" to which we referred and the brick house in which his son General Brown resided.

The store now occupied by J. H. Crandal was built by the Brown Brothers and occupied by them for a while but passed into other hands and in the year 1838 Jehiel Larkin, became the owner and occupant and for a number of years carried on the mercantile business. He was followed by his nephew Alexander Larkin, whose early death placed the present occupant in his stead. The Sloans built the store, long occupied by Stephen Teeple, about the year 1820.

Who the builder and first occupant of Daniel Gallup's store was, we are unable to learn.

*Robert McMaster* came from Rhode Island about the year 1800 and after learning the tanner's trade in the town of Florida, Montgomery county, he settled here in 1805. He married the daughter of James Brown and was one of those quiet, unassuming men who command the confidence and respect of those with whom they come in contact. He became independent by his careful and economical mode of doing business and died in 1877 at the advanced age of eighty-eight years. He was followed in his business by his son James B. McMaster who has held the office of Justice of the Peace nearly twenty years and represented the town upon the Board of Supervisors in 1858 and 1859.

As we have made mention of the fact that the mail was first carried over the road on horse, we will here state that this place was made a post-station, where the riders changed horses. Three changes were made between Albany and Cherry Valley, the first being at Cheesbro's, the second here and the third at Wales or Moak's Hollow, and afterwards at "Hiller's" or Sharon Centre. It was a lonely route, but thinly settled and a very uneven road.

The post-office was not established here we believe until 1817 through the influence of General Thomas Lawyer then in Congress.

*David Phelps*, of Connecticut, came here as a wagon maker, about the year 1806 or 1807, and was followed by his brothers Gaius and Sylvester. The former was a hatter and carried on the business largely and successfully for more than a quarter of a century. He closed the business with a competency in 1850, and died at the age of eighty, beloved by all who knew him.

Sylvester worked with his brother David, and after a few years became a driving business man. The present "Dopp Hotel" was partly built by David K. Larkin, who was something of a speculator, and in his trafficking received from Sylvester, wagons for the property. Phelps finished the house and became a "landlord" in 1836. He afterwards traded wagons for a farm and in connection with his trade managed the hotel and farm. As money was a scarce article, every means was employed, to substitute something for it. The wagons were traded off for horses among the farmers, and the horses taken to the Eastern States to be sold for cash, thus making a lively traffic among the speculators, tradesmen and farmers. When Sylvester Phelps was in his prime in years, he made this little hamlet as busy a place as could be found for many miles around.

*Taverns.*—There were formerly four "Taverns" in the place, each doing a good business. The one, of late years known as the "Widow Moore's place," was for a long time the drovers home, as Mrs. Moore's first husband, Gilchrist, was a drover and intimate with all of the clan that frequented the turnpike. Besides, accommodations were always to be had, as a large farm was connected with the hotel. Upon the death of Gilchrist she married one Moore, with whom she did not entrust her business affairs, much to his disgust, and he left her "alone in her glory." She became very avaricious, and during her last years in business, the indifferent manner of keeping the hotel, drove the old-time customers away, consequently the profits of hotel keeping became

small. A few rods below, where John Hoag now resides, was a spacious inn kept for many years, by Walter Sloan, but it was long since closed, and the old house presents a picture of rural prosperity and contentment under the care of its present owner, such as the general outlook of public houses never guaranteed.

*The First Baptist Church* in the County was organized here in 1810, and an edifice built the year following. It stood upon the hill east of the village, and the "Cornish residue."

The society was organized by the veteran, E. Herrick, and was divided through some doctrinal point, that created the "New School" about the year 1841. The seceders erected the present edifice in 1842. The old church society dwindled to a name only, and the church was sold to the Methodists in 1868, who removed it to its present location.

There was, until within the period of twenty years, a few rods north of the village, upon the lands of Hiram Brand and once occupied by Sylvester Phelps, an immense stone heap.

From that pile, the tract of land granted to John Bowen and others in 1770 was named the "Stone heap patent." The stones had been accumulated for a long series of years, by the accession of single stones thrown upon the pile by each passing Indian. Its dimensions were, four rods long, nearly two wide and about ten feet in height, in its original form, consisting of small flat stones, which must have been many thousands in number. This pile beside giving the name to "Bowen's patent," also marked an angle in the original division line between Albany and old Tryon county. Rev. Gideon Hawley, a missionary among the Mohawks, Oneidas and Aquagos, traveled the path that lead by the heap, in 1753, in company with another missionary, Mr. Woodbridge and an Indian guide. They started from General William Johnson's residence on the Mohawk, to visit Schoharie, and in an account of the journey he says:—

"We came to a resting place and breathed our horses, and slaked thirst at the stream, when we perceived our Indian looking for a stone, which having found, he cast to a heap,

which for ages has been accumulating by passengers like him, who was our guide. We enquired why he observed that rite. His answer was that his father practiced it and enjoined it on him."

The gentleman also mentions in the same narrative:—

"I have observed in every part of the country and among every tribe of Indians, and among those where I now am, in a particular manner, such heaps of stones or sticks collected on the like occasion as the above. The largest heap I ever observed is that large collection of small stones on the mountain between Stockbridge and Great Barrington. We have a sacrifice rock, as it is termed, between Plymouth and Sandwich, to which stones and sticks are always cast by Indians who pass it. This custom or rite is an acknowledgement of an invisible being; we may style him the Unknown God, whom this people worship.

"This heap is their altar; the stone that is collected is the oblation of the traveler, which if offered with good mind may be as acceptable as a consecrated animal."

It has been conjectured that this stone heap marked the grave of a warrior, but we think otherwise, from the fact that the Indians who frequented this section had particular burial grounds, and when a chief or warrior died, or was slain, they carried the remains to those grounds, unless it was a great distance from them. It was not an uncommon occurrence for the Mohawks and Oneidas to carry their dead from Schoharie to their homes. An aged person of veracity related to us an instance that was told to him by his father, who was a witness to the occurrence, and which undoubtedly was but one of many hundred. An Oneida died at Schoharie in one of the fall months, and his body was wrapped in blankets and placed in a tall hemlock tree, beyond the reach of wild animals. When winter came and a crust was formed upon the snow, the body was taken down and bound upon a sled, and drawn to Oneida. We are of the opinion that if an Indian was slain at this spot and was so highly honored by his race as to receive such marks of honor and remembrance as this pile exhibited,

they would certainly take the pains to carry and place him by the side of the "ashes of his fathers."

We are led to concur in the missionary's idea as he states farther on. "These stone heaps are erected to a local deity." His long intercourse with the race, learning their customs and habits so well gives weight to his opinion.

The "stone heap" patent was surveyed and divided into lots in 1792, and embraced a portion of Esperance, Carlisle and Charleston, Montgomery county.

Passing down the old Indian path, which is now a well beaten road, we come to the old grist-mill that has rumbled for over fifty years. In its early days it was the only mill in the town. Spencer Foster, an Englishman by birth, built a steam mill a few rods below and carried on a large custom business for many years, but not proving a very profitable investment it was taken down and we see a spacious barn stands in its stead.

Passing on, we soon come to the Schoharie stream, and if we had stood here the day the first tree was felled by the Brown boys in 1786, and looked over the flats to the south, we might have seen large farms divided into meadow, plow, and pasture fields—spacious barns and houses reared over the ashes of former ones that had fallen by the torch of a savage foe, in a fierce war against a nation that plead for liberty and independence.

There stood a settlement made in 1729, and known as *Kneiskern's Dorf*. The whole of the original settlement is not in the town of Esperance, but the greater part was, and we will refer to the whole here. By the second chapter of this work we find that

John Peter Kneiskern,  
Godfrit Kneiskern,  
Lambert Sternberg,  
Philip Berg,  
Hendrick Houck,  
Hendrick Strubach,  
Johannes Merkle,

were the first settlers. John Peter Kneiskern was the head man of the colony as at the Camps, and was the business man. He settled

upon the farm now owned by William Shout, who is a descendant of the family, and the only one left in the neighborhood. The ancient papers relating to the settlement are in his possession in perfect order, beside the family Bible and old clock, to which Mr. Shout clings with pride and as sacred relics of his grandsires. The old clock reaching nearly to the ceiling, still keeps time for this, the fifth generation, as it did for the first, and is still

"Ticking the moments as they swiftly fly,  
And whispering to all—Eternity."

During the war it was secreted beneath limbs and leaves in the woods east of the house, and remained unmolested. Mr. Shout's mother was a grand-daughter of Kneiskern, and Mrs. Shout is a descendant of the original Houck family that settled by the side of Kneiskern, where Jacob Houck now resides. Thus we see that the old families are united by stronger ties than those of neighbors. We find that a firm, brotherly feeling existed between the first settlers, that is without a parallel at the present time. They all purchased together, as one, and not until several years passed did they make a division of their property and lands, and when they did, we find they drew an article of agreement, that "If any one should lose any part of their lands by law or otherwise, the rest should make it up to him or her." Such acts of true Christian charity towards the unfortunate can only be found in the honest simplicity of our German fathers and mothers.

Johannes Merkle settled farther down the valley upon the farm now owned, in part, by Henry Dunberg. There are but few of this family left bearing the name in this immediate vicinity, but farther down the creek distant relatives reside, whose ancestors settled there several years after the settlement was here made.

Henry Strubach settled upon the farm long owned by the late Adam P. Vrooman. The old house stood east of Vrooman's barn but has long since vanished. Christian his son, resided here through the Revolution and held a commission as Captain. He was a daring soldier and the Indians and Tories employed various means to capture him, but his sagacity foiled their plans. He was at the "lower

fort" when Johnson and Brant made the attack and in company with the Schoharie militia the day following, in harrassing the rear. When the first company of the Fifteenth Regiment was formed, Strubach was chosen First Lieutenant and George Mann Captain, but upon Mann's proving to be infected with disloyalty, Strubach was promoted to Captain. Several brothers lived near each other upon the lands their father purchased but all have gone to their long homes without leaving a single heir to perpetuate the name. They lived to extreme ages and died suddenly without sickness, as did their children. Henry Strubach built a grist-mill, the frame of which still stands (or a part of it) and is distinguished as the "old mill" now owned by Abram Becker.

Philip Berg settled lower down the creek upon the west side, where Alexander Larkin's house now stands and reared two sons, Philip and Abram. The latter remained upon the old place and became a very wealthy man for his day, and was succeeded in the possession of it by his son David Berg, who disposed of the property to Herman Gardner in 1842, after it had been in the possession of the family for the period of one hundred and thirteen years. It was the best property in the valley but it has been cut up in various ways and nothing is left of its primitive appearance.

About the year 1760, Abram Berg purchased of a small band of Indians that had an encampment upon the "Cripple bush," a tract of land lying upon the side hill, between that stream and the Cobleskill, in part occupied by Peter VanZant, John Brayman and the heirs of the late Peter I. Enders. The consideration was one barrel of cider and a fat two year old steer and the privilege of drinking and eating the same and holding a "pow wow" beneath a white oak tree, still standing not far from the Berg mansion. After the "pow wow" they left the country and never returned, and Abram ever after held peaceful possession of the purchase. The old family together with the original Strubach's lie here upon the farm, in a neglected spot covered with briars and brambles, as also the remains of the brave Captain Strubach.

Philip Berg son of Philip settled upon the farm now owned by William Hallenbeck and was familiarly called "Lipps Barrack" it being the German of Philip Berg. His old house stood to the west of the Hallenbeck barn, some distance in the field and had an entry or "stoop," (as formerly called,) in front. Nearly all of the first settlers' dwellings had a lintel attached in front, that resembled the piazza of the present day enclosed. A double door invariably was used, the upper of which was seldom closed, but the lower always, except upon the ingress and egress of the family. This Berg building was erected immediately after the Revolution. Mrs. Berg with other women and two or three babies, during the war were upon the flat north of the present Central Bridge pulling flax, when a band of Indians came along the bank of the stream without observing them. They hid in the bushes and being fearful lest their babies would make a noise and betray them, they put their handkerchiefs in their mouths and nearly strangled them before the Indians passed. It was afterwards ascertained that they were watching an opportunity of capturing Captain Strubach while on his way to and from the fort, and that they had a fruitless watch of two weeks.

The Captain's eyes were also open and while they could not see him, he daily saw their movements. Thus it was, in those times, danger was lurking near when they least expected it, and wherever they were, they were compelled to be upon the watch each moment, and as they lay upon their beds at night to rest, they knew not but the morning might find them tortured prisoners or mangled corpses.

Godfrit Kneiskern settled upon the late Peter I. Ender's farm. What relation he was to John Peter cannot be told, nor what became of his descendants. Perhaps a son settled at Beaver Dam, as we find a family there after 1754, from whom came the Kneiskerns of Carlisle, and those along the Cobleskill west of this place. They were related to John Peter, but in what degree we cannot learn.

John Peter's family were true patriots during the Revolution, while those already mentioned were well tinctured with disloyalty, with the ex-

ception of two members, William and Jacob, the former being the one taken prisoner at Moak's Hollow, and afterwards settled near Seward Valley.

Lambert Sternbergh settled the farthest south of the seven families, upon the farm now owned in part by William Landrum. He became one of the fifteen purchasers of "Dorlach Patent" and upon the division of the lots those lands now occupied by his descendants in the town of Seward became his. In 1768 we find Lambert dead and his son Jacob acting in his stead. Hendrick Houck, as we stated, settled by the side of Kneiskern, and the property still is held by the family. The family has always been a prominent one of the town in an official, agricultural and business point of view.

Bartram Entis came to this settlement in 1731 or 1732, and purchased lands of Hendrick Houck, that lay outside of the "Dorf purchase." At the same time Harmonus Sidrick also came and purchased one thousand acres down the creek.

Where those two men came from we cannot learn, but conjecture they came directly from Germany in the third Palatine immigration that settled mostly east of Canada creek, upon the Mohawk. As the descendants of Entis are quite numerous, we will here state that the name was changed in after years to Entres, and subsequently to Enders, as written at the present time. Bartram had two sons, Peter and John, from whom sprang the present families in this valley. We are not positive, but think there were other sons, who settled upon the Mohawk. Peter was a soldier in the Revolution and lost his building by the torch of Johnson, in 1780. His grandsons Jacob P., and Peter I., were large agriculturists and wealthy men, and the fathers of the present families that bear the name in and around the old "Dorf."

Jacob P. occupied the old homestead and met an untimely death in crossing the stream. The current being strong, he was carried by it to a watery grave, and was followed in the possession of the property by his son John, who was a true type of a just and exemplary man. He was instantly killed in the spring of 1880, by a runaway team. Peter I., lived to a ripe

old age and died after a lingering illness in the same year. The Sidrick family name has also been changed and is now written Sidney.

John Peter Kneiskern built the first grist-mill at this place and in the town. It was a small affair, however, to merely crack the grain, and stood upon the little rivulet that runs from the high ground south of Mr. Shout's residence. The mill stood until the year 1780. Jacob Kobell, a resident of Weiser's dorf has the honor of building the first mill upon the Cobleskill Creek, at this place, which we doubt belongs to him. Judge Brown wrote his "Brief Sketch of the First Settlement of Schoharie" in 1817, which was published in 1823, while he was in the full possession of his mental faculties, and of the affair he says, "so called after the name of a certain man who cleared a spot at the outlet, under pretence of building a mill thereon, but *was never brought to pass.*" Author Simms visited the Judge in 1837, when he had arrived at the age of ninety-two, and upon his questioning him in regard to the mill he "thought he had been to mill there." The mill which Brown had visited, unquestionably was the Kneiskern mill to which we have alluded.

There is no doubt but Kobell or some one else, intended to build a mill here, as a small "runner" was found upon the bank of the creek many years ago by the late Samuel Smith, and which is now to be seen beneath a post in Charles Rich's cow-shed, but no other evidence is shown that a mill was here. The Kneiskern mill was burned by Johnson and Brant in 1780, as were all other buildings of the dorf, and upon the close of the war the Strubach (more recently pronounced Strubrack) family built one nearly upon the ground of the present old mill, and at a later date the Houcks built one upon the Schoharie creek nearly opposite of the family mansion, but owing to the caving of the banks, it was taken down. In regard to the name of the Cobleskill mill we will refer the reader to that chapter.

The stone or "runner" found upon the bank was perhaps brought from some of the mills at Schoharie or Weiser's, that had been discarded for larger ones. It is a common sand-stone, and does not show much use. During the Revolution

the settlers of this "dorf" were loyal to the Colonial cause and met with severe losses by the torch. When the invasion of Johnson occurred, a few of the families were at the Lower Fort, but the most of them fled to the hills upon each side of the creek. The Enders, Sidney and the Merkle built a small hut upon the rise of ground to the east, which was out of the regular path of the foe, and to it they resorted, when danger was near and too short notice given to reach the fort. For the protection and better convenience of these settlers, a small block-house was built in the year 1782, near the residence of George Taylor, to which they removed as long as the war lasted. Being destitute of houses at that time and not being able to rebuild, or run the chances of losing again, they all made the block-house their home. The most valuable of their effects were secreted in the woods, and when Johnson came down the valley, the people were better prepared than those above, having a timely warning of his approach.

After Johnson had laid the valley in ashes, he crossed the creek with his force at the upper end of the island below the old ferry and encamped for the night between the "valley cemetery" and the creek to the west. The day's laurels must have weighed heavily upon the "Christian faith's defender's" agent, and the enlightened chieftain Brant. Their proceedings throughout the day failed to show, either military skill or commendable bravery, but on the contrary, inability and cowardice, and proved them to be a sneaking band of cutthroats and fit companions of incarnate fiends. The next day they followed the Indian path to the Mohawk to seek other fields for plunder and murder, with the awakened militia of the Schoharie valley at their rear, to punish them for their cowardly acts.

The town at present is without manufactures except local milling and has but three hotels, where at one time could be counted ten within the distance of six miles.

The town is beautifully located, as from nearly every point the whole can be seen and presents a very even and well cultivated appearance.

It was formed through the efforts of Judge Wright, then State senator from Schoharie, in February, 1846, and on the 19th of May following, the first town meeting was held, and the following officers elected:—

*Supervisor*—John S. Brown.

*Justices*—George Taylor and Wm. B. Abell.

*Clerk*—Stephen Teeple.

*Collector*—George Crocker.

*Superintendent of Schools*—Lorenzo I. Leonard, M. D.

*Assessors*—George A. Smith, David Berg.

*Constables*—Nathaniel Eggleston and Henry Merkle.

John S. Brown now resides in Duaneburgh, and is a son of the first settler of Sloansville, John Brown. He was elected sheriff of the County in 1842, at the time the "Anti-rent" war created so much excitement in several counties of the State.

While blood was drawn in other localities we are pleased to state the vigilance of General Brown in procuring a well-armed force saved the County the disgrace of a rebellion, as will be seen by consulting Chapter IV. The Anti's weapon, tar and feathers, was but very sparingly used in this county, although sheriff Brown and deputy Tobias Bouck, barely escaped a luxuriant coat.

This town has been represented in the Assembly four times since its organization.

Hon. Lewis Rockwell in 1851.

Hon. John Lovett in 1856.

Hon. Joseph Buckbee in 1861.

Hon. William S. Clark in 1867-1868.

Mr. Rockwell was a native of the town. Mr. Lovett was born in Vermont, and was for many years a tin and hardware dealer at Esperance. He was a man of sterling worth; but in the bloom of manhood he fell a victim to the slow, but sure disease, consumption, lamented by all who knew him. Mr. Buckbee, familiarly known as Uncle Joe, has been a resident of the place for many years, as well as the active citizen, ever looking to the comfort of others, and especially the welfare of the place. Mr. Clark was born in Carlisle, and early fitted himself for the bar, and settled at Sloansville, as the

first one of the profession, and what is very singular, the only one in the town at the present time, that but a few years since contained several.

When the Southern Rebellion shook our country to its center, this town proved itself loyal, by furnishing both men and money. The records of the town are, as we find in most sister towns, unable to give accurate statistics of the number and amount.

#### SUPERVISORS.

The supervisors of the town have been:—

- 1846—John S. Brown.
- 1847—Charles Knox.
- 1848—Lewis Rockwell.
- 1849—Lewis Rockwell.
- 1850—Spencer Foster.
- 1851—John E. Mann.
- 1852—John E. Mann.
- 1853—Horace D. Phelps.
- 1854—Horace D. Phelps.
- 1855—John Lovett.
- 1856—Storrs Messenger.
- 1857—Storrs Messenger.
- 1858—James B. McMaster.
- 1859—James B. McMaster.
- 1860—J. M. Donaldson.
- 1861—J. M. Donaldson.
- 1862—Jehiel Larkin.
- 1863—Jehiel Larkin.
- 1864—Jesse A. Tubbs.
- 1865—Cornelius O. Dorn.
- 1866—Alexander Larkin.
- 1867—Alexander Larkin.
- 1868—James Van Vechten.
- 1869—James Van Vechten.
- 1870—James H. Crandall.
- 1871—James H. Crandall.
- 1872—James Van Vechten.
- 1873—James Van Vechten.
- 1874—Jehiel Larkin.
- 1875—James Van Vechten.
- 1876—James Van Vechten.
- 1877—James Van Vechten.
- 1878—James Van Vechten.
- 1879—James Van Vechten.
- 1880—M. W. Stevens.
- 1881—M. W. Stevens.
- 1882—M. W. Stevens.

#### STATISTICS.

When the Albany & Susquehanna Railroad was built, the town gave bonds to the amount of thirty thousand dollars, to aid in its construction. By the report of the supervisor upon the first day of November, 1878, there was yet remaining unpaid,

Principal.....	\$18,000
Interest on the same.....	1,288

Total yet due.....	\$19,288
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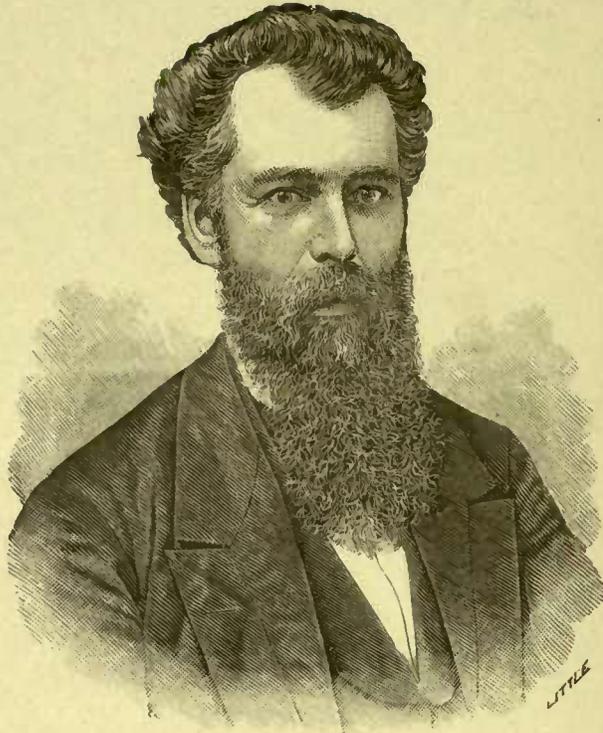
The town consists of 11,360 acres of land. The assessed valuation of real estate is \$502,670; and of personal property, \$157,424; number of names on the tax list, 422.

The first Baptist church in the County was built in Sloansville, in 1811. The organization was effected some time previous, by Rev. E. Herrick. The building stood upon the turnpike, east of the residence of Mr. Harvey Cornish, and was purchased by the Methodists and removed to its present site in 1852. The present Baptist church was erected in 1842, it being of the "New School" order, while the original one was of the "Old."

The most prominent men of the town besides those already mentioned, were, and are,

Charles Hemstead,  
William Wood,  
Henry Mandl,  
William Simpson,  
A. Billings,  
Alfred Isham,  
John Duell,  
Dr. Rowland,  
James McMaster,  
H. Shurburn,  
J. O. Root,  
M. W. Stevens,  
Jerome Dwelly,  
S. Teeple,  
David Enders,  
Daniel Gallup,  
Jesse Tubbs,  
Erastus Williams.

In 1832 the *Schoharie Free Press* was removed from Schoharie to Esperance village,



*Wm. S. Clark*

and the name changed to *Esperance Sentinel and Schoharie and Montgomery County Reporter*.

It was edited by Duncan McDonald, whose wife was a daughter of Horatio Gates Spafford, the author of "Spafford's Gazetteer." Mrs. McDonald was a fluent writer, and added much talent to the columns of the paper. The *Sentinel* was "Anti-Masonic," and the copy before us of October, 1832, has the following nominations made by that party, at the head of its columns:—

*For President*—William West.

*For Vice-President*—Amos Ellmaker.

*For Governor*—Francis Granger.

*For Elector*—John Gebhard.

The editorial says:—

"We entertain strong hopes that Schoharie is about to shake off the yoke of the regency and Masonic coalition and take the place she

formerly occupied among the old Democratic counties of the State, free, independent, disenthralled."

The sheet was discontinued in 1836.

The town comprises parts of the grants of Jacob and Hendrick Van Dyke's names which was granted in 1720 and 1721.

Levin Spaulding's "Coeysmans" grant of 1726, being an extension of that already in the town, also a portion of the Schoharie patent, purchased in 1724, by Jacobus Schuyler and others, and surveyed in 1729, running north and south on the west of Ten Broeck's grant. Lawyer & Zimmer's second allotment of 1723 also takes in a portion of the town upon the west and north of Morris & Coeymans', while the "Stone heap patent" of 1720 lies to the north and west of it and extends into the country of Montgomery.

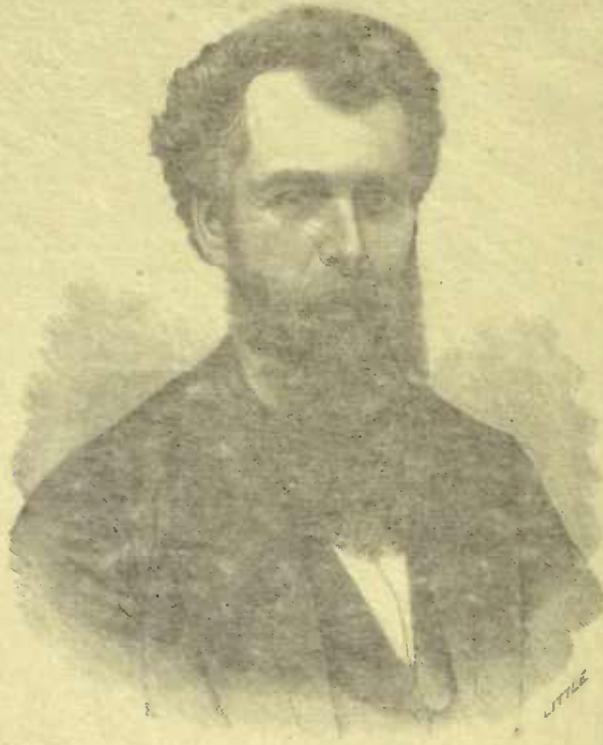
## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

### HON. WILLIAM S. CLARK.

Mr. Clark's grandparents, who were born in Dutchess county, settled in Coeymans, Albany county, during the year 1773. His paternal grandfather being unable to endure the privations of pioneer life, died at the age of thirty-two. His maternal grandfather, Reuben Stanton, was among those who by their vigor and hardihood, contributed much to clear up the wilderness in Coeymans, in the days when homes were never safe in consequence of the depredations of marauders, from the army in the war preceding the Revolution. He was for some years a licentiate in the Baptist church and was regularly ordained by that denomination in 1793, continuing to preach until he was disqualified by age. Mr. Clark's

parents settled on a farm in Carlisle, in 1813, where he was born, and where his father died in 1849.

Mr. Clark was favored with good educational opportunities, having attended some of the academies of Schoharie and Madison counties. He was a teacher during several winters, and then chose law as a profession; he graduated from the Albany law school in the spring of 1848, and returned to Sandusville, where he now resides. Since then, however, he has gratified his desire for travel, to a great extent, and has also been identified with all movements of public interest to his locality, yet devoting himself to the practice of his profession, in which his interest and status is shown by his partici-



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The editorial says:—

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formerly occupied among the old Democratic counties of the State, redeemed, regenerated, disenthralled."

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The town comprises nearly the whole of Jacob and Hendrick Ten Eyck's patent which was granted in 1739 and surveyed in 1761.

Lewis Morris' and A. Coeymans' grant of 1726, lying at Kneiskern's dorf is mostly in the town, also a portion of the Schoharie patent, purchased in 1714, by Myndert Schuyler and others, and surveyed in 1726, running north and south on the west of Ten Eyck's grant. Lawyer & Zimmer's second allotment of 1768 also takes in a portion of the town upon the west and north of Morris & Coeymans', while the "Stone heap patent" of 1770 lies to the north and west of it and extends into the county of Montgomery.

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parents settled on a farm in Carlisle, in 1813, where he was born, and where his father died in 1849.

Mr. Clark was favored with good educational opportunities, having attended some of the academies of Schoharie and Madison counties. He was a teacher during several winters, and then chose law as a profession; he graduated from the Albany law school in the spring of 1858, and returned to Sloansville, where he now resides. Since then, however, he has gratified his desire for travel, to a great extent, and has also been identified with all movements of public interest in his locality, yet devoting himself to the practice of his profession, in which his interest and status is shown by his partici-

pation in the organization of the New York State Bar Association, and present membership in that body.

In the year 1850, Mr. Clark was elected town superintendent of common schools in Carlisle, and was commissioner of excise during the years 1862, 1863 and 1864. He was nominated by acclamation by the Democrats, and elected without opposition to the Assembly of 1867, and was renominated and returned the following year by a majority of one thousand, seven hundred and seventy-eight, leading his ticket just one hundred.

During the war, his talents and influence were exerted to sustain the government, by addressing war and bounty meetings, and encouraging volunteering, both in his own and the surrounding counties. He has always been a Democrat, and various political articles from his pen, which have appeared through the public press, among them his discussion of the proposed constitutional convention in 1858, and of the constitutional modifications suggested in the convention of 1867—display a repletness of ideas and a vigor of analysis above the ordinary cast of mind. The position taken by Mr. Clark in the Legislature of 1867, was recognized by his appointment by Speaker Pitts, as a member of the joint committee to investigate the management of the canals.

His ability and legislative experience made him quite a prominent candidate for Speaker of the House in 1868, for which position he received favorable commendations from the press, but in deference to the unanimity of the New York delegation and in recognition of the claim of the New York Democracy, Mr. Clark withdrew from the canvass prior to the caucus.

Following our natural expectations from such antecedents, Mr. Clark's conception of Legislative duties is not confined to mere local interests but embraces within its scope, legislation of a general character; and the comprehensive-

ness both of his views and his familiarity with the requirements of the people, is indicated by the bills introduced by him in relation to the registry, assessment and highway laws of the State. He also rendered efficient aid to the Albany & Susquehanna railroad passing in the Assembly the bill which gave \$250,000 State aid to that project, by a vote of seventy-six, thus assuring the early success of that enterprise whose value is now so well known.

Mr. Clark, having been a member of the select committee on canals in 1867, and the Legislature of 1868 preferring articles of impeachment against R. C. Dorn, then ex-canal commissioner, he was appointed by Speaker Hitchman as one of the managers on the part of the Assembly, in the prosecution of the impeachment, and took an active part in the conduct of the trial. The versatility of Mr. Clark's attainments and his standing in the Assembly are further shown by his appointment as one of a select committee to examine, during the recess, the historic relics in the collection of S. G. Eddy, of Stillwater, N. Y., and J. R. Simms of Fort Plain. His report on the subject was full and explicit, having the concurrence of his colleagues, resulting in the securing to the State the more valuable of the collections. In debate he was ready, forcible, logical and at all times eloquent, always having the attention of the Assembly; and by his suavity of manner and geniality of nature, secured not only the good will, but the personal regard of all his associates in the House. In his position as Chairman of the Committee on Internal Affairs of Towns and Counties, he was indefatigable in his labors to facilitate the progress of the measures submitted to the scrutiny of the committee. He served also on the Committee on Charitable and Religious Societies, and on Local General Orders.

Mr. Clark is still in the full vigor of life, enjoys a good joke or a keen sarcasm with the same zest that an epicure relishes his salads,

and we doubt not that his versatile intelligence and recognized ability will secure for him higher positions and larger trusts; and however high the position the future may assign him, he will discharge its duties with fidelity unquestioned and honor untarnished.

Our subject also has a finely cultivated literary taste and exhibits in his composition a certain vim and dash which excite and insure one's admiration. His "Memoir of Charles Howard Phelps" which was written for the trustees of Dudley observatory, and subsequently published by them, is a chaste and beautiful tribute to the memory of one whose whole soul was inspired with the grandeur of astronomy and whose life trembled at the impressions of those master thoughts which seem to transfigure the whole being.

Mr. Clark's address delivered at the centennial anniversary of the Seward Massacre in 1780, held at Seward, October 18, 1880, in the presence of a large gathering of people from the surrounding country, possesses so much that is grand and eloquent that we here published it in full:—

"Mr. President and fellow citizens, mine the pleasing, though somewhat laborious and difficult task, to gather up the raveled threads of the events which these scenes recall, and in memory of which we are assembled, and weave them the best I may, into chapters of this day's proceedings, to make the volume of their history which shall cheer, encourage and inspire your descendants through coming generations and all the future. The same sky is over us; we inhale air of the same balminess and invigorating power; the same beauty of landscape with its undulating plain, gentle sloping hillside and towering mountain, environs this spot as it did a hundred years ago.

"But how different the other surroundings and accessories of this and that afternoon! The danger which lurked in the shadow of every rock and tree as the stillness of the night set-

tled upon the earth, and ambushed in every road-side, bush or thicket in the bright sunlight of mid-day, is forever dispelled; prosperity abounds on every side; peace serenely and securely sits everywhere in these fruitful valleys and among those beautiful hills; safety abides under every roof-tree, and security, joy, and happiness dwell with you in all your homes. And all this contrast because the settlers of New Dorlach were patriots!

"'Twas in the cause of liberty and freedom that John France fell, and Catharine, fairest of the fair, was sacrificed. To commemorate their lives and keep green the memory of this ruthless sacrifice, by every means in your power, is the noblest work in the lives of their descendants, and can but inspire in the hearts of you all, emotions of gratitude that the patriot fathers and mothers throughout the length and breadth of Tryon county as well as those of New Dorlach, endured the trials, bore the burden of privation, suffering and sorrow, with a fortitude and heroism beside which, in the world's history, occurs neither its equal nor parallel, and must beget in you all a deeper devotion to the land of your birth—to your homes and firesides, where spring earth's brightest hopes and nestle its sweetest, most heavenly joys; and induce that love and veneration for your country and its glorious flag, which alone will secure the perpetuation and transmission of the blessings we all enjoy.

"Here are the descendants of the Merckleys and Bastian France, whose names have been alluded to as those around which clusters the interest of this grand occasion. With these people you are acquainted and of them, therefore, I need not speak, except Gilbert G. France, your president of the day, whose father was the captured Henry, which may surprise some of you. But there are here, to-day, besides Gilbert G. France and his nephews, William G. and Albert France, whom you all

know, two other sons of the captured Henry France—David and Jacob—venerable men, upon whose heads are the snows of nearly four-score years, and who have journeyed from their distant homes, that they might be here on this hundredth anniversary of the event, which for the hour, so darkened the heart of their ancestors; to drop a tear to the memory of Catharine Merckley and John France, upon the soil consecrated to liberty by their blood—‘the deep damnation of whose taking off’ can now never be forgotten; to drink again from the fountain of patriotism, and catch thence an inspiration, which with an unflinching faith and trust in the promises of Christianity, shall cheer and sustain them as they totter down life’s steep decline. Jacob France, of Cold Brook, Herkimer county, and David France, of South Canisteo, Steuben county, evince by their presence, though burdened by the weight of years, their love of home and native land. More than this, Jacob France is both precept and example to the young men and youth here to-day, and wherever else the story of this day’s exercises shall come.

“Coming into possession of the German Bible of his grandfather, Bastian France, late in life, with which language he was wholly unacquainted, he resolved when seventy-two years old that he would learn to read the word of his and his grandfather’s God in the language in which it was written, and in eighteen months had so mastered it that he was able to read the Scriptures in the German, and has since read that Bible, aged a hundred and thirty-five years, twice through in course.

“Young men of Seward, of the adjoining towns and of the County, there is encouragement, cheer and inspiration to duty, in this to you, and to perseverance in whatever you may properly undertake, which insures success. David France, by his devoted labors as a minister of the gospel during fifty-two years of his

life, attests at once his belief and trust in the God of his fathers, and therefore his worth and merit as a citizen and patriot.

“Among the wonderful achievements of invention and science since, in answer to patriot invocations, war’s dread alarms were hushed and peace smiled over the land, I would mention those of Albert France to whom allusion has been made in the manufacture of guns and projectiles, who by his breech-loading cannon with steel-pointed ball, second to none in the world for war’s dread conflict, has made the iron-clads of the world’s navies but as the valueless wooden walls of ancient naval armaments.

“The clustering memories of noble deeds of patriot sires, incited and nerved by the bloody sacrifices we commemorate, the emotions of gratitude they awaken and the grand lessons they inculcate, are all too numerous for the swift flying hours, and I leave them all to say, that realizing the difference between the peace of to-day and the terrors of a hundred years ago, when the slumbers of innocence were broken by the fiendish war-whoops of the painted savage, and making sleepers affrighted by gleaming tomahawks or glittering scalping-knife, faithful to the teachings of the hour and the glistening memories of the past, your descendants shall here assemble in October, 1980, under the same bright stars and stripes, to re-memorize the tragedies of a hundred years ago, and by the act, will, as you do now, with prayer and song, dedicate themselves and their lives to God and their native land.

“Descendants of Bastian France, to you remains, and upon you devolves a holy duty, made sacred by this day’s pageant of banner and music, oratory and song. It is, that you erect to the memory of the murdered John France, a suitable monumental stone. I appeal to you and adjure you by the ‘green graves of your sires,’ let not another October’s sun arise ere the work of love is done.”