

CHAPTER XXI.

HISTORY OF THE TOWN OF WRIGHT.

TOWN FORMED—FIRST SETTLEMENT—BECKER FAMILY—ITS HISTORY—PEDIGREE—BECKER LAND GRANT—FIRST SAW MILL—HONYOST BECKER—HIS INTENDED MARRIAGE—JOHN DOMINICK AND FAMILY—DR. MULTER WHIPS DOMINICK—HESSIAN SETTLERS—EVENTS OF 1782—BURNING OF ZIMMER'S BUILDINGS—BECKER MURDERED—BOYS SECRETED—ADVANCE UPON MAJOR BECKER'S HOUSE—JACOB AND WILLIAM FLEE TO THE MOUNTAIN—JOHN HUTT—GEORGE SCHELL—FIRING UPON THE INDIANS—SNYDER AND MANN CAPTURED—TRADITIONARY TALE OF SETHS HENRY'S DEATH—TREATMENT OF PRISONERS—MAJOR BECKER'S DEATH—STONE STORE AT SHUTTER'S CORNERS—HENRY BECKER—FOUNDING OF SCHOOL.—RESOLUTIONS—HUNTING FAMILY—GALLUPVILLE—TANNERY—CHURCHES—REFORMED CHURCH—METHODIST—LUTHERAN—TEMPERANCE—SCHOOL—NEW VILLAGE—WAGON MAKING—DUTCH SETTLEMENT—WEIDMAN'S—HIRAM WALDEN OFFICIALS—SUPERVISORS—VALUATION—MERCHANTS AND PHYSICIANS—BOUNDARIES.

THIS town was formed from Schoharie on the 4th of April, 1846, through the legislative labors of the late Judge John C. Wright, then Senator of the Third District, and named in honor of the acting Governor, Silas Wright.

It is peculiarly adapted to both agriculture and manufacture, although but little of the latter is practiced, yet by the aid of capital, Fox's creek and the numberless small streams that issue from the hillsides might be utilized for such purposes, and be as profitable as like privileges warrant throughout the Eastern States.

Agriculture has arrived at an as advanced state in this town as any other of the County in the production of cereals and grasses to which the land is adapted, especially winter grains.

The first settlement made in the town was near the present village of Gallupville, at an early date, probably about the year 1735.

We are of the opinion based upon circumstances and documents, that the Becker family were the pioneer settlers, and in view of the fact that they form a goodly representation in the population of the township at the present time, beside being connected with events of historic interest during the Revolutionary war, we will refer to their early history and be more particular in regard to the individual members of the family as occasion will require a knowledge of their connection.

During the voyage from Germany the father and husband died, leaving the mother and two sons, Johannes and Jacob, as the only representatives of the German or High Dutch Beckers in America. They settled upon the Hudson river, below the Camps, and must have remained there several years, as the mother married, and the sons there grew to manhood and married before they came to the promised land of Schoharie. The tradition of the family as given us by Gideon Becker, a great-grandson of Johannes, who has spared neither pains nor expense in tracing the history and lineage of his ancestors, is to the effect that the two brothers started alone with guns and knapsacks from their homes upon the Hudson, and followed that stream up to the Mohawk, and from thence to the Schoharie creek and located here, it being the suburbs of the Schoharie settlement.

The mother and step-father followed, and a rude but comfortable house was built near the present site of Austin Becker's farm house, now occupied by Spateholts. There they quietly labored and laid the foundation of the wealth and influence the family possessed and enjoyed for many long years, even down to the present time, yet not forgetful of the customs of the "Fater land," which proved disastrous to the existence of the step-father. His name was Bashsha, and he had served many years as a soldier in his native land. Observing the old German customs of making New Year's day merry by songs, dances, drinking and athletic sports, his near neighbors, the Indians, were invit-

ed to partake of his hospitality, and perhaps contributed to the sports. At the close of the day, target shooting was indulged in, and an old squaw, wishing to exhibit her science in gunning, begged the privilege of trying her skill, but being under the influence of "firewater," she carelessly shot Bashsha, instead of the target. He died soon after, regretting that, after passing through several wars, he at last fell by the hand of a drunken squaw.

Jacob, not liking the country, again shouldered his gun and knapsack, and traveled down the Susquehanna, and joined the German colony at Tunkhannock, in Pennsylvania, where his descendants still reside.

It will be seen that Johannes, or John, and the widowed mother, were the only ones left of the family. The former became a large landholder, and the progenitor of the present High Dutch Becker family of Schoharie County, whose numbers are almost legion. His children were Johannes, Jr., Jacob, HonYost, (Joseph,) George, William, and Maria, (Mrs. John Werth, of Schoharie.)

Johannes, Jr., was father of young Peter Becker, of Carlisle, and Jacob was grandfather of Austin and Gideon Becker, of Gallupville. Joseph (Major) had two sons, Henry and John. The former was father to Mrs. Rix Warner, of Cobleskill, and Mrs. Coats, and the latter the father of Martinus, and HonYost, or Joseph, of Carlisle, David, Peter and Mrs. William Posson. George's sons were Peter Becker, (Old Peter) of Carlisle, William, of Gallupville, and Jacob, of Peoria. William died childless. He occupied the homestead.

The children settled upon lands the father purchased in 1743, and became prosperous farmers and true patriots. Near the time the Beckers came, Johannes Schaeffer and his son Johannes settled where William Schermerhorn now resides, and in company with Johannes Becker, purchased several thousand acres of land of Johannes Lawyer and John Deppeyter, in 1743, upon which they located their children. Becker and Schaeffer made a division of the same, on the 1st of December, 1763. These two men became interested in several large tracts of land in different sections, especially the one lying in

Carlisle and Cobleskill, east of Borst's, or "Dorlach patent," and designated as Becker's Patent, also of one thousand, two hundred and forty-six acres, lying partly upon and to the west of Barton Hill, purchased February 5, 1772.

About the year 1740, there settled upon the farm now occupied by Christian Hiltz, one Jacob Zimmer, who became connected with Johannes Lawyer, the second, in the purchase of large tracts of land, and was, at one time, a landed autocrat, being the possessor of at least ten thousand acres.

He became addicted to intemperate habits, and careless in business transactions, of which his partners took advantage, and obtained an assignment of all excepting a tract lying upon and around the present Zimmer hill. His shrewdness, only, saved it, which he divided among his heirs, with whom he lived during the latter part of his life. His sons were Adam, Peter, George and William, whose great-grandchildren occupy the land which he purchased at six-pence per acre, nearly one century and one-half ago.

Having now referred to the three families that first settled within the limits of the town, we will cast a glance toward the advancement made by them as pioneers in the year 1770. We find the three had united and built a saw-mill upon Alexander Zimmer's present farm and tradition tells us the water-wheel was eight feet in diameter and the crank of the pitman was made of wood and it required two men to manufacture them to keep the mill running as there being a great deal of strain upon it, and the wood being green, they would soon twist off. If the stick from which it was hewn was tough, it might possibly last one day, but usually one half of that time.

HonYost Becker caught the spirit of improvement, undoubtedly, energetic,—and built another near his house about the year 1765 and he obtained an iron crank from Holland, which was the first one used upon the stream. Soon after he built a grist-mill in which he placed a "sopus" stone, that proved to be the death of his matrimonial calculations. He was to marry one of the buxom girls of Schoharie as soon as he returned from purchasing a mill-stone and transacting other business down the Hudson

river. Having been delayed a few days beyond the time, upon his arrival at home, he found his intended bride had become the wife of another. Without doubt Becker found his sopus millstone far more profitable and staple than the fickle minded bride. He built a large stone house in after years, which still stands and is now owned and occupied by Anthony Delong, and which was occupied by the patriots of the neighborhood as a fortress during their struggle for liberty. Upon the door-lock is enstamped 1775, which without doubt is the date of the erection of the building. Becker was commissioned Major of the Fifteenth Regiment and was in command of the Lower or Stone Fort upon the invasion of Johnson and Brant in 1780.

Sometime before the Revolution commenced, John Dominick came from New York City and settled in the eastern part of the town upon the farm now occupied by Isaac I. Barber, and caused no little commotion among his neighbors and the community after a few years by his peculiar religious tenets. He was, without doubt, the first Methodist in these parts, and owing to his deep interest in the Christian cause, and the excitable nature of the spirit that moved him, his neighbors and acquaintances concluded he was bewitched, and treated him accordingly—though not with that severity to which the Puritans subjected the unfortunate of their day. Dominick was taken to Dr. Multer, of Schoharie, whose skill was in the extermination of witches, in short, a witch doctor. The Methodistical Dominick insisted that he was not sick, nor possessed of witches or devils, and would not take the medicine the doctor prescribed. Multer was a large man, and when a patient refused to take his medicine, through the want of faith, or a knowledge of the inconsistency of the case, he threw the patient and poured his drugs down, contending that the witches were to be overcome by force. Dominick was thus served, and upon his closing his teeth and throwing the medicine from his mouth, the wise doctor concluded that the witches refused his mode of treatment, and a sound whipping was the only alternative. Poor Dominick, though a stout man, was but a child in the hands of Multer, and was forced to receive a sound thrashing with hickory gads, that the

evil spirits might be frightened away long enough for the doctor to get some of the medicine down the patient. Dominick, upon being released, concluded to leave the evil spirit found with the doctor, and when the latter's watchful eye was turned, he took to his heels and wandered down to Breakabeen, where he concealed himself for a while, and sent word to his sons to take him home. Regardless of distasteful medicine, whippings, and the jeers of the uncharitable, Dominick was still a Methodist, and continued so to be until his death. He was the leader of the first Methodist service in the County, and for many years attended the old Knox church, from which a pastor was sent to preach in the school-house, in the present district, Number One, long before the present Methodist organization was formed.

His children were:—

John,
Francis,
George,
Peter,
Maria, (Mrs. Peter Schell,)

the children of whom love to relate the bewitching life of the Christian grandfather, whose shouts of Hallelujah and Glory awoke distrust of lunacy among the simple settlers, and brought persecution upon him, to which his happy spirit responded a fervent Amen!

Upon the surrender of Burgoyne quite a colony of Hessians came to this town and located south of the creek upon the hills and became thrifty and industrious farmers, whose descendants are still in possession of the lands. Among them were the Nasholts, Derringers, Bellers, Hiltzley, Spateholts, (originally Betholts,) Shofelt and Keinholts. The latter, after settled in Guilderland.

Having referred to the earliest settlers, we will now consider the events of the Revolutionary war as they occurred within the limits of the town, not forgetful of the fact that the settlers were in independent circumstances through their industrious and economical habits.

Nothing of a warlike nature occurred here until the morning of July 26, 1782, the particulars of which we draw from "Schoharie County

and Border wars," whose author was conversant with the patriots who were in the strife upon that day. We are also indebted to Gideon Becker a grandson of one of the actors, for location of events and the free use of ancient documents to substantiate dates and traditions.

On that eventful morning a band of Indians and Tories under the command of Adam Crysler, numbering twenty-five sallied out from Johannes Schaeffer's residence, where they had lodged a few days, to that of Jacob Zimmer, nearly two miles distant and somewhat obscured from the main settlement, without being detected by the neighbors.

Zimmer and his son Peter were not at home, but the savage band found others to practice their cruelty upon in the person of Jacob Jr., and a Hessian that worked for the family. The former was tomahawked and scalped in the presence of his wife and mother, and the latter was killed a few rods from the buildings in a brutish manner by crushing the skull with a stone. Perhaps he was the first one attacked and that method was adopted not to apprise the family of their approach.

After setting fire to the house and barn they turned their course back to the Becker neighborhood. The barn was entirely consumed, but the house being built of stone, the two Mrs. Zimmers succeeded in extinguishing the fire. Peter, another son, went to the Beckers upon an errand that morning and upon his return was met by the party who took him prisoner. Upon his asking the leader if they saw his brother Jacob, they replied they had left him home with the women, but ere they had marched to the Becker house, he recognized his brother's bleeding scalp dangling from an Indian's musket.

Upon nearing the Becker mansion which stood where the old house now stands, the party heard some one chopping, to the northeast of the house and they slyly approached, and found John, the next oldest of the Becker sons, busily engaged in clearing a spot for a wheat stack. It being understood by the settlers that the enemy was bent on destroying their harvest, which assisted in the army supply, and to avoid it being burned they usually built stacks in thickets outside of the regular paths, and John was that

morning engaged in preparing a spot for such purposes.

They came upon him unawares and struck him with a tomahawk upon the back of the head driving the weapon to the brain, which from appearances, instantly killed him. His scalp was taken and they passed on towards the house, near which were Jacob and William hoeing corn. The latter saw the party approaching in the thicket and cried "Indians!" upon which both dropped their hoes and ran towards the house. The Indians could have shot them both but not wishing to alarm the neighborhood, especially Major Becker of the present Delong residence, they tried to catch them by cutting off their retreat, but they both ran directly for the bank of the creek, east of the house and instead of running down the stream as one would naturally expect, to gain the stone house of Major Becker, they ran up along the steep bank and hid. The Indians were close upon them, but they eluded their search, owing, perhaps to the thick underbrush that grew along the bank, beneath the roots of which the water ran, and under which they hid. At one time Jacob could touch his pursuer's leg, but did not feel disposed to gain his attention by so doing. His heart throbs seemed to be loud enough to be heard at quite a distance, but the savage passed on over to an island that has long since disappeared, and searched for them. Not finding them he bent his course towards Major Becker's as did the whole force, without molesting the women who had hid near the cabbage patch they were hoeing when the party made their appearance, or setting fire to the buildings. No doubt but the invasion was made for the purpose of either taking Major Becker prisoner or obtaining his scalp, and the greatest caution was used in not apprising him of their presence.

The party were guided by a Tory neighbor, whose intimacy with the Beckers and Zimmers had been very close, both in a social and business point of view and without any aggravating interruption. It was but another example of the treachery the human heart is capable of practicing, when imaginary gain is to be enjoyed, and we find that at no period in the history of our country, was the art practiced so much as in the Revolutionary war.

Joseph and William remained concealed until the savages passed on, when they went upon the hill to the south of the house, and in an open spot pulled their clothes off to dry them in the sun, as they had lain partly in the water when concealed.

They heard the firing at Major Becker's, and moved on to the west to gain a ledge of rocks, north of Shutter's corners, from which they could look down upon the valley and witness the result of the attack. Before gaining the rocks, they heard the party approaching, and William, thinking it to be the neighboring women seeking safety by flight, came very near calling to them, and would have done so, had not the more discreet Jacob cautioned him. Soon the whole force passed up the brook near them, wending their way in the direction of the Cobleskill, not wishing to pass down Fox's creek to the Schoharie, and then down, as they might be met with a force from the Lower Fort. The young men again started, after the party passed, and from the rocks, saw the house still standing, and a few men close by. They drew near cautiously, for fear there might be a few still lurking near, but upon close inspection, the brawny form of Schell and Hutt, were recognized, when they boldly joined them. The old house is still standing, as before stated, although its general appearance has been changed according to the fancy or convenience of later occupants. J. R. Simms says of its former design:—

"It had, at that period, a gambrel roof. A hall passed through it from north to south, with a door at each end. The house contained five front and five rear windows, and at that time, two chamber windows in the east gable end, since altered.

"The upper part of the house was unfurnished, and all in one room, and the windows were barricaded nearly to the top, with oak plank, the front door was closed up with plank, and the back door, then the only entrance to the house, strengthened by a false door, also of oak, to arrest the bullets of the enemy.

"Just before Crysler," continued the historian, "and his murderers arrived at Major Becker's, Henry, his son, then nine years of age, Jacob Zimmer, Jr.,—nephew of the one mur-

dered—and several other boys about the same age, had been a little distance southeast of the house to drive hogs to a pasture.

"On their return, and when within ten or fifteen rods of the house, one of the boys said to the rest: 'See the riflemen over there; they are painted like the Indians!' The Schoharie rangers, when on a scout, were clad much like Indians, but young Becker instantly recognized the party to be a band of savages. A few rods above the house was a small island containing perhaps an acre of ground, separated from the bank southeast of the dwelling, by a deep pool of stagnant water, over which had been felled a tree. The enemy being upon the island, had either to make a circuit, or cross the log, which could only be done in single file. This gave the boys a little start, and they ran to the house shouting "Indians! Indians!"

"They could easily have been shot, as they were but a few rods distant from the enemy, but the latter still hoped to surprise a militia Major, which would doubtless have been done, had not the boys thus opportunely discovered their approach.

"Major Becker, who chanced to be engaged back of the house, caught the alarm, and running in seized his gun, entered the southwest room, thrust it through a loop-hole above one of the windows, and fired upon the invaders, breaking an Indian's arm.

"As the boys ran into the hall door, they encountered several children within, and all tumbled in a heap.

"Major Becker's wife, who was a woman of the times, sprang to the plank door, which fastened with a ring and bolt, drew it to, and held it ajar with the bolt in her hand.

"John Hutt, as the enemy approached, was at the western end of the house making a whiffletree. Mrs. Becker continued to hold the door open for Hutt, who took alarm from the furious barking of three dogs belonging to the inmates of the house, which had met and were giving battle to the invaders, who halted to shoot them. As Hutt neared the door, a large Indian sprang to seize him; but the former raised the missile which he had retained in his hand, in a threatening manner, the

latter recoiled, and he sprang into the door, which was quickly bolted by Mrs. Becker. Had not Mrs. Becker possessed great presence of mind, and the dogs met the enemy, Hutt must have either been slain or captured by them.

"The shot of the Major may also have damped the ardor of the assailants. George Schell, another Schoharie soldier, was fortunately in the house at the time, and assisted in its defense.

"The inmates of the house consisting of the three men named, Mrs. Becker, Mrs. Adam Zimmer, possibly one or two other women, and some eight or ten children, went upstairs. The Major took his station at the southwest corner window, which commanded the enemy's approach to his barn, assigned to Hutt the eastern gable windows, and to Schell, the northwest window opposite his own, which commanded their approach to the mill, which stood a few rods from the house upon the ground now occupied by the raceway of the present mill. The lower sash of the upper windows was also secured by plank.

"The enemy immediately ran around the eastern end of the house, and there gained temporary shelter, some under the creek bank, some behind a fence, and others behind a small log building standing a little distance southeast of the house, used as a sort of store-room. The enemy fired numerous balls at the windows, twenty-eight entering the window at which Hutt was stationed. He was a bold, vigilant fellow, and often incurred the censure of Major Becker for exposing his person so much about the window, telling him that the force of the enemy was unknown, but their own was *three men*, the loss of one being one-third of their strength. Hutt however, could not be restrained by the prudent counsels of the Major, and kept constantly returning the shot of the enemy.

"Discovering through a crevice of the log building the hat of one of his foes, Hutt sent a bullet through the brim of it close to the crown. This hat, it was afterwards ascertained, was on the head of Captain Crysler.

"The balls of the enemy cut the air several times around the head of Hutt like the fall of hail in a hurricane, but fortunately without injury.

"After continuing the attack for some time, the enemy attempted to fire the building. They placed a wheel-barrow under the water conductor leading from the gutter at the northeast corner of the house to within three or four feet of the ground; and piling on combustibles set them on fire which quickly communicated with the wooden spout, and threatened the destruction of the building.

"It was impossible for the inmates of the house to fire on their foes while applying the incendiary torch without exposing themselves to almost instant death, as some of the Indians were constantly on the lookout for such an exposure.

"As the flames began to ascend the gutter towards the roof, Major Becker, who had no inclination to be burned alive, set about forcing off the corner of it with a piece of scantling, which fortune placed in the chamber, while his wife went into the cellar to procure water. On entering the cellar she found an outside cellar door upon the north side of the building standing wide open, where the enemy might have entered had they gone to the other end of the building, which they could have done without danger.

"Fastening the door, and procuring a pail of water, she returned to the chamber. For a time the roof, which was nailed on with heavy wrought nails as was the ancient custom, baffled all the Major's efforts, but at length yielded and he sank down almost exhausted.

"As the shingles fell to the ground the Indians gathered them up, exclaiming "Yok-wah" *Thank you!* and added in the dialect, "*we can kindle it now.*" A hole being made, water was thrown down and the fire extinguished. The enemy soon had it blazing again with additional combustibles but it was again put out and again rekindled and put out, until the spout had burned off above their reach, when they abandoned further attempts to set the house on fire. Supposing their firing would be heard at the Lower Fort, some three miles distant, the assailants took French leave of the premises about nine o'clock. A. M., and buried themselves in the forest, having been about the Becker house several hours."

Others living in the neighborhood fled to the Lower Fort upon the beginning of the attack of the stone house, and according to Simms, Captain Brown, then in command, detailed Lieutenant Snyder with a party to give the Beckers relief, but they arrived after the enemy had left. Simms farther says:—

“After the enemy retired from Beckers, the supposed Indian whom Schell had shot, was found to have fallen partly in the water and was not dead. He was taken into the house and Doctor Werth called to examine his wound, who pronounced it mortal, the ball having passed diagonally through the body at the shoulders. The man was now discovered to be a painted Tory instead of an Indian; and was shortly after recognized to be Erkert, a Scotch cooper, who had made flour barrels for Major Becker before the war. The Major, on making the recognition, accused the Tory of ingratitude. Said he, ‘when you came to me for work, I employed you, and always paid you well; and now you come with a band of savages to murder me and my family, plunder and burn my buildings.’

“The man appeared penitent as certain death was before him, expressing his sorrow for the course he had taken, and said he did not care which succeeded, King or Congress.

“He was scalped by a friendly Indian named Yan (a son of David who was killed by the Cavalry under Colonel Harper in 1777,) and on the following morning he was summoned to the bar of his Maker, to render an account for the deeds done in the body.”

John Snyder, known as Schoharie John, and Peter Mann, of Fox’s Creek were captured in the morning by Crysler and party, as the former were returning from Beaver Dam. Mann was liberated at Kneiskern’s dorf. The party passed on to the Warner neighborhood in Cobleskill, where they took George Warner, Jr., prisoner as stated in Chapter XVIII.

Zimmer and Snyder were taken to Niagara, the former returned on parole while the latter enlisted in the British service to afford an opportunity to desert and return home as stated by Author Simms.

We will here state, although it is contrary to

published history that this Schoharie John Snyder claimed the honor of killing the notorious Seths Henry, after the war closed. While it is firmly believed to be a fact by the family, we cannot vouch for its truthfulness, yet will here insert the tradition, as after the war closed many boasts were made of doing this and that, which had but little truth attached. It is said that during the march from Fox’s Creek to Canada, after the attack upon the Becker house and capture of Snyder, Seths Henry incurred the displeasure of Snyder by loading him with plunder and abuse. After the war closed, Snyder and several other men that became too lazy to labor, were lounging around Zimmer’s inn, when an Indian and squaw were seen to approach from the Beaver Dam road. Snyder recognized in him the dreaded Seths Henry, yet upon questioning him, he pretended to be another man, but after a few drinks, offered in a friendly manner, the squaw became indignant towards her lord and master for trying to disown his name, and after a short time he acknowledged himself to be the hated savage. Snyder and his fellows freely treated him until he became sleepy drunk, and while nodding in his chair in front of the house, Snyder obtained a rope and making a noose at one end, slipped it over the Indian’s head and around his neck, and he with his helpers ran towards the creek dragging the unfortunate warrior roughly over the ground. After beating him with clubs they threw him in Fox’s creek, and the water being high, he was carried along by the current the length of the rope, which was fastened to a log that spanned the stream. He was thus held until death relieved him of the pains of vengeance, when the rope was unloosened from the neck and the body allowed to float down the stream. Some distance below, a tree had fallen across the creek against which brush and logs had floated and formed a miniature dam, or rather seine, through which only the water freely passed.

The body floated to it and sank, where it was found after the water subsided. Murphy through his biography, as has been seen, claimed the pleasure of relieving the villain of a hated existence by his unerring rifle, but we doubt very much as to the wily savage being disposed of in this manner.

To show the treatment of the captives of that eventful day of which we have narrated, together with George Warner, Jr., while on the march to Niagara, we will still farther copy from Simms' history as related to him by Warner himself:—

“The second day after leaving Cobleskill the whole party was obliged to subsist on horse-flesh without bread or seasoning of any kind. Warner, who communicated the facts to the author, said he ate on the way to Niagara of a deer, a wolf, a rattlesnake and a hen-hawk, but without bread or salt. The two captives, Warner and Zimmer, were lightly bound and generally fared alike while on their journey.

“They had for some days contemplated making an escape and complaining that they could not travel on account of their cords, and they were a little loosened, which favored their plan. They concluded they ought, in justice, to communicate their intention to their fellow-prisoner, although he was not bound, and give him a chance to escape with them if he chose to embrace it. But a short time after their intention was communicated to a third person, the conspirators for liberty were more firmly bound than ever, and were afterwards continually watched until they arrived at Niagara. Nights they were pinioned so tight that they could not get their hands together, and were secured by a rope tied to a tree or pole, upon which rope an Indian always laid down.

“The prisoners also passed on their way another party of Indians, who were killing a prisoner in a singular manner. His captors had tied his wrists together and drawn them over his knees, after which a stick was passed under the knees and over the wrists and a rope tied to it between them and thrown over the limb of a tree. His tormentors then drew him up a distance and let him fall by slacking the rope, continuing their hellish sport until the concussion extinguished the vital spark.”

Major Becker lived within the stone house until his death, which occurred in 1806 at the age of sixty-eight, leaving two sons, Henry and John, who engaged in the mercantile and distilling business. In 1799 they purchased the ground upon which the old stone walls now

stand at Shutter's Corners, and the year following built the store. Upon it we find engraved several names, among which is that of Ryer Schermerhorn, the mason that built the walls. It is to be regretted that the fire a few years ago nearly destroyed the ancient walls.

Henry became one of the Assistant Judges of the Court of Common Pleas of the County, and was an upright business man. He rebuilt the grist mill which still stands, about the year 1810. While there are many of the Becker family living in the town, there are none of the old class left, they have passed away, yet they left a worthy record of fidelity to country that is proudly referred to by their grandchildren. The widow of one of Jacob's sons, Mrs. John Peter Becker, still survives, at the age of eighty-five, with children around her with locks whitened by the weight of years, and is still in the vigor of her mental faculties, though somewhat crippled physically. She was a daughter of Hon-Yost Warner, of Warner Hill, and connected by marriage with many of the old stock patriotic families of the Schoharie settlements.

About the year 1800 Jacob Becker, Jr., built a fulling mill upon the north side of the creek, opposite the Delong residence, which was afterward purchased by Silas Brewster, and still later by his son, Silas, Jr., who in turn sold to his brother Allen, who removed it up the valley and which is now owned and occupied by him. This little hamlet was for many years the business center of this part of the town of Schoharie and drew a large trade from the Schoharie valley and the hills surrounding. The Becker Brothers' store was no common affair for those days, added to which was the distillery and asbery, beside the fulling and flouring mills, making a lively center.

The next settlement east, as we have already mentioned, was in the present Barber neighborhood, but no efforts were made to make a business center. The settlers returned after the war, and were farmers, but of no mean class, as we find they were aware of the importance of education, and encouraged the facilities to instruct their children. As the founders of Yale College assembled in 1700, and upon laying a few books down, said: “I give these books for founding

a college in Connecticut," so the early settlers of that neighborhood assembled and drew up the following preamble and resolutions, on November 2, 1812:—

"To promote literature and place the means of knowledge, information, and the benefits arising from well regulated society within the reach of all, we, whose names are hereunto annexed, do hereby form ourselves into a school society, in order that we may adopt some rule to govern ourselves by, for the continuance of a school, and to secure the benefits flowing from such an institution, we do hereby declare the following articles permanently binding on all the company:—

Article 1st. There shall forever hereafter, be two Trustees annually chosen on the first of October, in each year, for the purpose of engaging preceptors, and see that they have their pay, and likewise to call school meetings whenever they deem it necessary.

Article 2d. There shall be two Censors annually chosen, for the purpose of enquiring into the abilities of any Teacher that may present himself as such, and report their opinion respecting his qualifications, to the Society at their meeting. It shall likewise be the duty of the Censors to visit the school at least once in a month, and enquire into the progress made by the Scholars in learning.

Article 3d. Nine members shall constitute a quorum to enact any by-laws for the better regulation of the society, not repugnant to this constitution.

Article 4th. Whenever a school meeting is called and amended, they shall proceed regularly to choose one chairman, and one secretary—the chairman to have no vote on any question, unless the house is equally divided. The business of the secretary shall be to keep a record of the proceedings in that meeting, to enter them in a book kept for the purpose, and to transmit them together with the book to his successor in office; likewise to read, if required, all, or any part of the antecedent proceedings of the Society.

Article 5th. Whenever two or more members shall feel themselves aggrieved, either by the teacher or the officers of the society, they shall

apply to the Trustees, who shall call a school meeting, in order to adjust the difficulty. And if this constitution shall appear on trial to operate harder on some than others, two-thirds of the signers shall have power to amend it, or add a new clause, and three-fourths of the members shall have power to abolish it.

Signed by

Joseph Dennis,
John Wess, (by mark.)
Jehiel Babcock,
Henry Slood,
William W. Zimmer,
Isaac Barber,
Robert Hurst, Jr.,
Isaac Lounsbury,
Joseph Hunting,
David Seabury,
Enoch Potter,
John Dominick, Jr.,
O. Scranton,
Henry Little."

A lease of the school-house lot, bearing date the 1st day of November, 1812, is with the records, and stating the consideration to be five peppercorns yearly, for the rent of the lot. At a meeting held in the school-house on the second day of November, the same year, pursuant to notice previously given, Isaac Lounsbury was chairman, and Isaac Barber, secretary. John Dominick, Jr., and Joseph Hunting, were chosen trustees, and William W. Zimmer, and Isaac Barber, censors. The secretary was ordered, by a resolution, to purchase a book for records, and receive his pay.

On April 1, 1837, a meeting was held and a resolution was passed to build a new school-house, twenty by twenty-five feet, "the wall to be two feet and one-half underground, and one foot above ground on the lowest corner of the wall, to be quarry-stone of Schoolcraft's quarry;" also

"Resolved it to be built in a workmanlike manner, and there be two hundred dollars raised for purpose of building a school-house."

It is needless to remark here, that the character of that neighborhood is easily understood, and that those men were, among the settlers of

that day, exceptions to the common class. While other schools were formed, yet none with the care and weight of interest as shown in the foregoing articles. It was more like the founding of a college than a simple common school.

In the foregoing list of signers to the school proceedings, we find Joseph Hunting, who was the progenitor of the present Hunting family of the town. He settled here upon the farm now occupied by his grandson, Ambrose Hunting, about the year 1785, and reared four sons, John, Ira, Joseph, and Asa, who have been identified with the interests of the town for many years. Upon the list of supervisors we find John Hunting in 1853, 1854, 1855, and Ambrose R., in 1864, 1866, 1881, 1882, beside, in the official list of the County the important position of school commissioner was conferred upon the latter two terms, whose successful administration was undoubtedly an outgrowth of the "school society" in which the grandfather took such a deep interest.

GALLUPVILLE.

This village was named after the Gallup family, that purchased the land upon which it stands, about the year 1817. The Gallup family were among the first settlers of Massachusetts, in fact, of the "Pilgrim band," and according to "Trumbull's History," were prominent members of the Old Colony, (especially during King Philip's war,) in a military point of view. As the cry of "Westward ho!" began, after the Revolutionary struggle, two families settled in this part of the country—Nathan at Beaver Dam, Albany county, (the father of William H. Gallup, formerly editor of the *Schoharie Republican*, and Almerin, ex-County clerk,) and Ezra Gallup, Sr., at a later date, upon the farm now owned by Benjamin Gallup. Ezra, Jr., a son, purchased the village land and built a grist-mill about the year 1819, where the present one stands. He was a merchant and an energetic man, and at once invited tradesmen to settle upon his land, and gave them rare chances to become successful. He would not allow two of the same occupation to settle here, unless it became strictly necessary. Not, at least, to cause opposition, or a conflict in prices.

In 1825 the postoffice was established and he received the appointment as Deputy, and was that year elected Justice of the Peace, which office he held to the year 1849. Owing to his extended business, John Wheeler became a partner in the mill, and it has been a valuable property since its erection.

It has four run of stone which are driven by a powerful wheel of seventy-five horse power, and under the management of Alfred Zeh, the present owner, is not excelled by a like enterprise in the County.

The first and only inn in the village was kept by Paul Suttle. The present one was built in 1872 by Weidman Dominick, and rented yearly up to the present season, when it was purchased by Peter Cullings.

Tannery.—The energy of Squire Gallup soon brought Samuel Curren, a tanner and currier, who established the present tannery about the year 1825. He was succeeded by several in turn among whom were Whipple & Morgan, G. Conklin, Gordon & Lawrence, and in 1850 by Mathew Lampson. While the property belonged to Conklin in 1840, the old building was burned and the present one or a part of it was built by him the season following. Mr. Lampson carried on the business with the greatest success of any of the proprietors that preceded him. He was a very careful, substantial business man and amassed a fortune with which he did a vast amount of good, and endeared himself to all with whom he transacted business, by his honest and unselfish demeanor. The enterprise has added much to the business of the village, and consequently to its growth, especially the latter, under the management of Charles Gorden, who built nearly all of the houses upon Mill street, beside several others, and caused the street to be laid out in place of the old one, that ran near the creek.

Churches and Schools.—Business being established upon a firm basis and a village assured, efforts were made for the erection of a house of worship. There being several denominations represented in the place, it was first proposed to erect a Union church, but the proposition did not meet with favor.

The Reformed Church was organized on the 5th of August, 1844, with the following officers:—

Elders:—John W. Zimmer, Robert Forsyth, Abraham Martin and John G. Zimmer.

Deacons:—Robert Coats, Jacob I. Devoe, Adam Z. Settle and Henry Mattice.

The edifice was constructed of brick the year following, with a stone basement, which part was intended for an Academy.

The records of this organization are not complete, a portion being lost which debars us from giving a more extended account of the Society.

The pastors of this Society were:—

Paul Weidman,
E. S. Hammond,
N. Bogardus,
—— Lane,
J. M. Compton,
E. Vedder,
J. H. Kershaw,
William H. Carr.

At the present time it has no settled pastor.

The Methodist Society held meetings in school houses for many years previous to the building of the church edifice at the village, but at what time the organization was effected we are unable to learn. It is an early outgrowth of the Knox church, and a monument of the religious zeal of John Dominick, the bewitched victim. It was removed to the village in June, 1844, under the pastorate of E. Osborn. All of the Methodist churches were supplied by circuit preachers at that time, the circuit embracing nearly the whole of the County—or at least as much territory—running many times into other counties, which made it laborious for the pastors, and the meetings irregular. The pastors that have officiated here are as follows:—

E. Osborn,
Ezra Strong,
Hiram Chase,
Manley Witherel,
C. E. Giddings,
J. W. Belknap,
A. McGilton,
G. C. Simmons,

W. Little,
W. R. Brown,
A. W. Garvin,
S. S. Ford,
W. H. L. Starks,
M. D. Mead,
D. T. Elliott,
H. Blanchard,
William H. L. Starks,
R. T. Wade,
H. Wright,
E. E. Taylor,
D. Brough,
S. W. Clemons,
J. Goodins,
T. D. Walker.

Evangelical Lutheran Church.—The records of this society are in better condition than those of others in the town, and we find the organization was effected by Rev. G. A. Lintner, May 6, 1854, although a preliminary organization was made nearly two years previous, and their house of worship erected in 1853. At a meeting of the Brothers, held on the 6th of May, 1854, when John Shafer was chairman, and Ezra Brownell, secretary, it was

Resolved, That the society shall be known as the "Evangelical Church of Gallupville."

The following were elected officers:—

Trustees:—Peter Schoolcraft, Ira Zeh, and Ezra Brownell.

Elders:—John Shafer, John Miller, P. J. Livingston.

Deacons:—P. J. Zeh, J. F. Schoolcraft, John J. Shafer.

Treasurer:—Peter J. Zeh.

Clerk:—Egbert M. Gaige.

It was also

Resolved, That we call Rev. L. Swackhamer, of Berne, as pastor.

The first Communion was celebrated on the 12th of August, 1854, with Rev. L. Swackhamer, officiating.

The following pastors have officiated:—

Rev. L. Swackhamer, 1854.
Rev. A. P. Ludding, 1855–1867.
Rev. Henry Keller, 1868–1872.

Rev. William P. Davis, 1872-1877.

Rev. J. R. Sikes, 1877, and present.

On the 29th of September, 1867, the connection with the Berne society was annulled, and since, it has been self-sustaining.

Temperance Society.—We find upon the Methodist book of records, the preamble and resolutions of a temperance society organized at this place February 27, 1830, which is the only old society that has left its records, that have been accessible to us, and we find the strictures to which the members were bound, did not argue total abstinence, as now, as will be seen in the following resolution, which is a fair specimen of the by-laws:—

Resolved, That those members of this society who use wine, cider, or beer to *excess*, shall be dealt with in the same manner as if they were ardent spirits.

A long litigation existed between this society and the Reformed Church in regard to the use of the church basement, which aroused a bitter spirit among the members of each, that years have not yet erased.

School.—As we have already mentioned, the basement of the Reformed church was used as an academy for several years, yet it was an academy only in name, and not by incorporation. It was more of a select school, than now—for a few years the enterprise was dormant but through the energy of Dr. Houghtaling, Weidman Dominick and others it was again revived and has been under the tutorage of C. E. Markman, of the town of Fulton for the past two years, and is one of the first schools of the County.

Upon the building of the Albany and Schoharie plank road, it not passing through the old village, a new one was started upon its line, which has become connected with the old by the building of residences, making a fine addition and improvement in the place. The Wright House was erected by Austin Becker for the accommodation of the traveling community and during the gala days of the road did a lucrative business.

Peter Feek the veteran wagon and carriage maker carried on a large business here for many

years in the manufacture of those articles, and was succeeded by John J. Dominick, who, in turn was followed by the present occupant John Spateholts. This shop has the reputation of making the best of work and has, since it was established, manufactured a very large number of carriages and sleighs yearly that find ready sale.

The south line of this town runs through a neighborhood that has been for a long term of years known as the "Dutch settlement," not particularly because the settlers were Dutch more than Germans but as they were both, the people for the last fifty years have been—not rightly—styled "Dutch." While "Dutch" are Hollanders, the Germans are "*High Dutch*," and the latter were referred to in that way by the old settlers merely through the language they used. Chief among the ancient families of this place were the Hallenbecks who removed from the "Camps" at a later date than the first settlers of Schoharie. There were three sets of Hallenbecks—one upon the Mohawk, one at Weiser's dorf and the third here which extended partly into Albany county. Undoubtedly the three progenitors were related—perhaps brothers.

We will here remark that several of the old families of Middleburgh, Schoharie and Wright were connected by marriage with the Weidmans a very old and substantial family, from a place called Berneswitzer in Germany and who settled in Berne, Albany county and gave the name of their paternal home to their settlement. Many of the families of this town, removed from Beaver Dam, once a very prominent settlement of that town.

Hiram Walden.—We cannot pass without referring to Hiram Walden, one of the most prominent men of the town for many years, although a quiet and unpretending man.

In 1836 he represented the County in the Assembly with Alvin Wilkins, of Gilboa; and the Twenty-first Congressional District, which comprised Otsego and Schoharie, in Congress in 1849 and 1851, also the town upon the board of Supervisors four terms, being the first elected in the town of Wright. But few men were better qualified than Mr. Walden for official

business or gained the confidence of his constituents to a greater degree. He was many years connected with the State militia and received the appointment of Major-General of the Sixteenth Division in May 1839, and proved a very efficient officer. "Right" was his watchword in all transactions and whatever was entrusted to him was acted upon faithfully without leaving a reproach. After a useful life he died in June, 1880, at the age of eighty-one.

SUPERVISORS.

- 1846—Hiram Walden.
- 1847—Hiram Walden.
- 1848—Hiram Walden.
- 1849—Henry D. Rosekrans.
- 1850—Henry D. Rosekrans.
- 1851—Simeon Morgan.
- 1852—Simeon Morgan.
- 1853—John Hunting.
- 1854—John Hunting.
- 1855—John Hunting.
- 1856—Peter Dominick.
- 1857—Weidman Dominick.
- 1858—Weidman Dominick.
- 1859—Weidman Dominick.
- 1860—Weidman Dominick.
- 1861—James Plank.
- 1862—Austin Becker.
- 1863—Austin Becker.
- 1864—Ambrose R. Hunting.
- 1865—John J. Dominick.
- 1866—A. R. Hunting.
- 1867—Peter Weidman.
- 1868—Hiram Walden.
- 1869—Henry D. Rosekrans.
- 1870—Henry D. Rosekrans.
- 1871—Ira Zeh, resigned and John J. Dominick appointed to fill vacancy.
- 1872—John J. Dominick.
- 1873—John J. Dominick.
- 1874—John J. Dominick.
- 1875—Peter Weidman.
- 1876—Peter Weidman.
- 1877—Chester Posson.
- 1878—Samuel Davidson.
- 1879—Samuel Davidson.
- 1880—John J. Dominick.
- 1881—Ambrose R. Hunting.
- 1882—Ambrose R. Hunting.

Statement of the aggregate valuation of the town and amount of taxes levied and assessed in 1880.

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Assessed value of real estate.. | \$368,619.00 |
| Assessed value of personal property..... | 69,500.00 |
| Corrected value of real and personal..... | 488,475.00 |
| Amount of town tax..... | 1,165.85 |
| County tax on town..... | 2,665.83 |
| State tax for schools..... | 903.67 |
| Amount State tax.. | 921.15 |
| Aggregate taxation..... | 5,655.63 |
| The tax rate in the town was | .0125 |

The area of the town is 17,211 acres and the number of names on the tax list three hundred and fifteen.

Merchants.—Upon the retirement of Ezra Gallup from the mercantile business, George Dominick succeeded him, whose contemporary for a while was a Mr. Lawrence; John Schoolcraft followed, and for several years did a lucrative business, but at last removed to Schoharie, C. H., and engaged in a hotel where he died at an advanced age, and was known far and near as "Uncle Johnny." From time to time others located here, among whom were David Zimmer, Sanford Marsellas, David Hilts, Peter Becker & Son, and Wright & Giddings, although they may not have followed in the order given. The present merchants are, Jacob Kelsh and O. F. Plank, the latter the present postmaster, and the former acting justice of the peace.

Physicians.—Upon the founding of the village, Dr. Slade located here but removed and left a vacancy which was filled by Doctors VanDyke and Foster of Schoharie, the two leading professionals of this part of the County at that day.

Dr. Darius Coy came about the year 1832 and was followed in a few years by Ira Zeh, who formed a copartnership with his student the present practicing, John Houghtaling, who upon the dissolution of the connection, remained as the only professional of the town, until two years ago, when Dr. O. A. Snyder located, and still remains.