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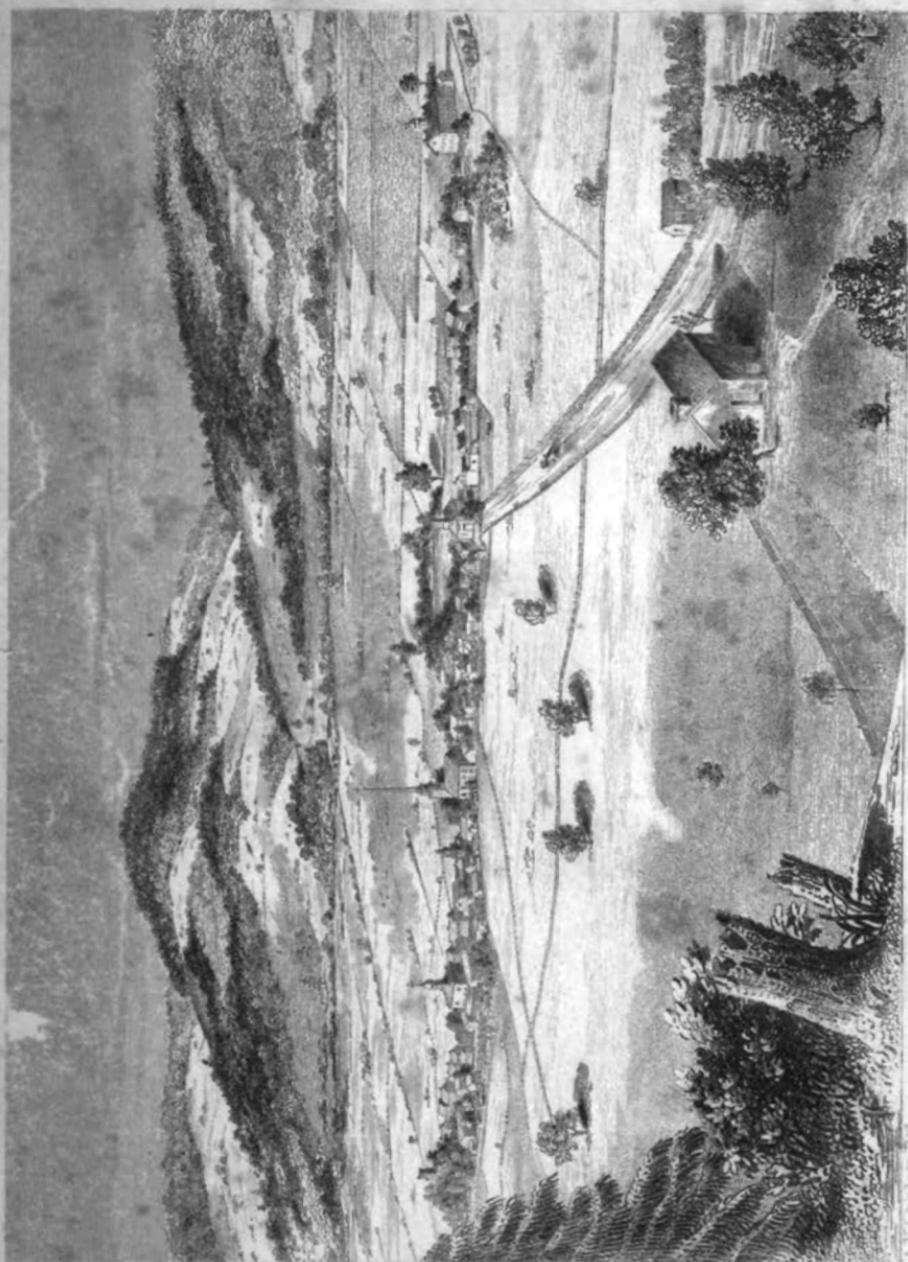
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HISTORY  
OF  
SCHOHARIE COUNTY,  
AND  
BORDER WARS OF NEW YORK;

CONTAINING ALSO

A SKETCH OF THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION;

AND

INTERESTING MEMORANDA OF THE MOHAWK VALLEY;

TOGETHER WITH

MUCH OTHER HISTORICAL AND MISCELLANEOUS MATTER,  
NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

ILLUSTRATED WITH MORE THAN THIRTY ENGRAVINGS.

BY JEPHTHA R. SIMMS.

Sleep soldiers of merit, sleep gallants of yore,  
The hatchet is fallen, the struggle is o'er,—  
While the fir tree is green and the wind rolls a wave,  
The tear drop shall brighten the turf of the brave.—*Upham.*

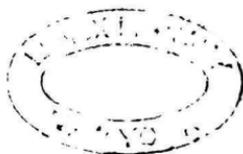
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MUNSELL & TANNER, PRINTERS.  
1845.

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TO THE YOUNG MEN OF THE  
SCHOHARIE AND MOHAWK VALLEYS,

*Classic Grounds for the Antiquarian,*

This volume is respectfully dedicated. And should the young be interested in its perusal, and its scenes of blood tend to increase their *love of country* and *hatred of tyranny* inspiring them with gratitude towards the heroes of the Revolution,—a spirit to emulate their daring deeds, and a desire to become familiar, not only with the stirring events which have been enacted near their own domestic altars, but a perfect history of their whole country—her institutions and the manner of preserving them; then will his desired reward be attained.

THE AUTHOR.



## P R E F A C E .

---

Comparatively few persons ever read the *preface* of a book, although every one should who would peruse the contents of the latter understandingly: for as a door serves us to enter the dwelling of our neighbor, so a preface is given by the writer of a volume as *its* entrance. That individual who does not read what an author says of his own book, can never fully appreciate its merits or demerits. Says Phillips in his *Million of Facts*: "Let us garner up our notices of past ages, and preserve them in the archives of the country: we shall please and instruct ourselves by so doing, and make posterity lastingly indebted to us for the deed. To transmit the honors of one age to another is our duty; to neglect the merits of our fathers is a disgrace." Actuated by corresponding motives, I commenced collecting historic matter in 1837, with the view of making it public.

From the lips of many hoary-headed persons of intelligence then living, whom I visited at their dwellings at no little sacrifice of time, the matter presented in the following pages was taken down; which individuals could say of numerous important transactions—

I was an actor in, or I witnessed them.

The collection of materials for this volume began just before it was publicly announced, that Col. Stone's forthcoming *Life*

*of Brant* would serve up many border transactions, but rightly conjecturing that not a few would escape that writer's notice, particularly of a personal character, which might prove highly interesting to the general reader, I continued my gleanings; with what success the following pages will show. This volume does not profess to contain a detailed narrative of all the tragic scenes enacted on the frontiers of New York; for the reader is aware that several large books filled with such matter have already been published. I have aimed, therefore, to present incidents which have escaped the knowledge of previous writers, or transactions to which I could add new facts, generally noticing in their place, however, the most important events published by other authors.

When writers are obliged to rely principally on *oral* testimony for what they publish, they are liable, from the treachery of memory in some, and the fondness for the marvelous in others, to imposition, to be practised in turn upon their readers. Aware of this, in matters of importance I have principally confined my inquiries to individuals sustaining a character of conscientious regard for the truth. More than this, I have had the same stories related by as many different persons as possible, often strangers to each other; and then, on carefully examining their testimony, have been enabled to arrive, as I believe, very satisfactorily at the truth. These antiquarian researches should have been made at an earlier day, but the stale maxim, "better late than never," will surely hold good in this instance if any.

When I commenced collecting materials for this work, I had not designed to make it so extended, but incidents of real interest coming to my knowledge, which transpired in sections remote from the Schoharie settlements, where those researches began; I resolved to enlarge it so as to garner up as many

unpublished events as possible, particularly of the Revolution; in pursuance of which plan I visited not a few aged persons in the Mohawk valley. To render the book generally useful, believing it would fall into the hands of some who might never read an elaborate history of the American Revolution, I concluded to incorporate from the most authentic sources, a brief sketch of the principal *causes* which brought about that Revolution, adding to it the *Declaration* of our Independence, a document, which, though now in the possession of comparatively few, should be in the hands of every American citizen.

Since the subject matter of the volume has taken a wider range than was at first anticipated—in truth, not a few novel and important facts have come to hand since a prospectus was issued for it, the author has thought seriously of changing the title because too local; but as often has the question of the poet arisen — “What’s in a name?” and not fastening on any one more satisfactory, it has been retained. That portions of the volume may be found obnoxious to criticism, I do not doubt, as it has mostly been written in the midst of the family circle and domestic cares. Indeed, had it been penned under more favorable auspices, I am not quite certain it would have been pronounced a very classic production; for, having been bred behind a counter, much of my early life was devoted to merchandising instead of letters. A friend who has often seen me in my *studio*, surrounded by my family, has wittily suggested the propriety, not inaptly I must confess, of *dating* this volume in the *kitchen*, and *dedicating* it to my *better-half*.

The reader may expect to discover some little repetition, and a want of smoothness and harmony in its parts, since portions of this work have been added as new light has been cast upon them, long after others were written: besides, some of it has

undergone a hasty abridgement to bring it within the volume, which now by far exceeds its intended limits. Care has been taken to correct several errors into which previous writers have fallen, from their not sufficiently authenticating what they published; and it is very possible with all my pains-taking, that I have fallen into some. If an essential one should become apparent to any reader, he will confer a favor on the author by pointing it out; as also he will by transmitting ancient writings, or interesting unpublished facts to his address. A true history of the Revolution cannot be written until the epitaphs of all the actors in that great struggle for civil liberty shall have become moss-bound; for as the several parts of a body serve to make up its whole, I conceive it necessary to bring together those scattered parts before it can be pronounced complete. Frequently do historic facts spring into life on the death of a scarred veteran, when, perhaps, for the first time his old papers fall under the observation of individuals who can appreciate their worth.

Although apprised by some of my pioneers in book-making that *local histories seldom quit cost*, and urged by timid friends long since to abandon the whole enterprise, still I have persevered in presenting the volume, such as it is, to the public, feeling conscious, whether deceiving myself or not, that I was discharging a duty I owed my country; and if I have brought into the general store-house any new materials for the future historian, then has my labor not been in vain. That portions of matter in the following pages may be thought by some readers of too little importance to merit a place; or that other passages are too minutely detailed — too prolix to suit fastidious tastes, I do not doubt. What pleases one will not always please another, and that which some readers would be most desirous to retain, would possibly be the first rejected by others. The mi-

nuteness with which our countrymen Stephens, Brooks, Clark and other gifted writers have described what they saw and felt, is the charm which renders their writings peculiarly acceptable to most readers. As seasoning in food renders it more agreeable to the palate, so small incidents, trivial in themselves, if not tedious, may give zest to a published event.

I would here acknowledge my indebtedness to all such persons as have in any manner aided me, by communicating information either by letter or otherwise; and while I do so, take pleasure in expressing my especial obligations to my friends, Mr. Allen V. Lesley, a young gentlemen of much promise, who sketched with accuracy the principal views with which the volume is embellished; to my engravers, particularly to Messrs. V. Balch and E. Forbes, who have done most of the engraving, for the skillful manner in which they have executed their trust, and to the Rev. John M. Van Buren for taking some pains unsolicited, to bring the work into favorable notice. So much imposition has of late been practised in the sale of books by subscription, that I should not forget to signify my gratitude to those who have conditionally agreed to purchase this book, as they have secured to me the means of its publication.

Persons of little reading are incredulous when told that interesting facts of by-gone days remain unpublished, but my investigations have been sufficient to satisfy me, that thrilling incidents of an unique character may yet be brought to light, and I cannot refrain from indulging a hope, that other writers will enter the field to glean where yet they may. And now, in closing my introduction and offering this humble effort to the public, to seek its share of popular favor, I cannot refrain from observing, that I am induced to do it, more from a desire to become useful than conspicuous.

J. R. SIMMS.

*Fultonville, N. Y.*



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#### ERRATA.

On page 117, under cut, instead of *North* read *South* view. It is the view of Guy Park as seen from the Erie canal.

On page 182, for *the remotest parts*, read *their remotest part*.

On page 194, for fighting a just cause, read fighting in a just cause. On the same page, for messenger of death, read messengers of death.

On page 195, fourth line from top, for *Bunker*, read *Yankee*.

On page 374, first line, after neighbor insert a comma.

On page 615, under post offices in Broome, for *Livingston*, read *Livingstonville*.