

CHAPTER XX.

Schoharie county, which is situated mostly within the forty-second degree of north latitude, was organized by a Legislative Act of April 7th, 1795, from portions of Albany and Otsego counties. It is centrally distant north from New York city 150 miles, and west from the capitol 40 miles; and presents a very uneven surface—from river flats to mountain elevations. The county originally consisted of six towns, which, except Schoharie, were not incorporated until March 17th, 1797.

In 1801, New York contained thirty counties; and by a Legislative Act dated April seventh of that year, they were properly divided into towns. The Session Laws printed in 1802, provide, that—

“The county of Schoharie shall contain all that part of the State bounded easterly by the county of Albany, northerly by part of the south bounds of the county of Montgomery, as hereafter described, westesly by a line beginning at the south-west corner of a tract of land formerly granted to Jyhn Lyne, and running thence the following courses and distances as marked by order of the Surveyor General: south twenty-one degrees and forty-eight minutes west, two hundred and nineteen chains, to the place where Joshua Tucker formerly resided; thence south seven degrees and forty-eight minutes west, one hundred and ninety-three chains, to the easternmost line of a tract of land known by the name of Belvidere patent; thence south nine degrees east six hundred and ninety-five chains to a ceertain hill known by the name of Grosvenor's hill; thence with a direct line from the north-west cornes of Stroughburgh patent; thence with a direct line to the most northerly corner of Harpersfield on the Charlotte or Ade-gataugie branch of the Susquehanna river; thence south-easterly along the north bounds of Harpersfield to Lake Utsayantho, and southerly by a line formerly run from the head of Kaater's creek, where the same issues out of the southerly side or end of a certain

lake or pond lying in the blue mountains to the said Lake Utyas-antho, and by part of the north bounds of the county of Greene.

“ And all that part of the said county of Schoharie beginning at a point in the west bounds of the county of Albany, two miles southerly of the place where Foxes creek intersects said west bounds, thence westerly to the place where Weaver's stony creek originally emptied itself into the Schoharie creek, and thence westerly to the place where the Cobelskill road crosses the Punchkill, thence with a straight line to a point in the south bounds of the county of Montgomery five miles westerly of Schoharie creek, thence easterly along the county of Montgomery to Duanesburg, thence along the westerly and southerly bounds of Duanesburg and the west bounds of the county of Albany to the place of beginning, shall be and continue a town by the name of **SCHOHARIE**.

“ And all that part of the said county of Schoharie beginning at the place where the Cobelskill road crosses the Punchkill, thence with a straight line to the north-west corner of a patent granted to Michael Byrns and others, thence with a straight line to the west corner of the house now or late of Jacob Best near the head of the north branch of the Westkill, thence continuing the same line to a tract of land called Blenheim, thence easterly along the northerly bounds of Blenheim until it strikes Schoharie creek, thence easterly with a straight line to the north-east corner of the dwelling house now or late of Moses Winter, thence with the same line continued to the west bounds of the county of Albany, thence northerly along the same to the south-east corner of the town of Schoharie, thence along the southerly bounds thereof to the place of beginning, shall be and continue a town by the name of **MIDDLEBURG**. [The citizens now write it Middleburgh.]

“ And all that part of the said county of Schoharie beginning in the middle of Schoharie creek where the same is intersected by the southerly bound of the town of Middleburg, thence along the northern bounds of a tract of land called Blenheim to the north-west corner thereof, thence continuing the same line to the county of Otsego, thence along the easterly bounds of Otsego to the county of Delaware, thence along the northern bounds thereof to the middle of Schoharie creek, thence northerly through the middle of said creek to the place of beginning, shall be and continue a town by the name of **BLENHHEIM**.

“ And all that part of the said county of Schoharie beginning at the north-east corner of the town of Blenheim, thence southerly along the eastern line of said town to where the said creek is intersected by the south bounds of the county of Schoharie, thence easterly along the said south bounds to the county of Albany, thence westerly along the same to the south-west corner of the town of Middleburg, thence westerly along the south bounds of the same to the place of beginning, shall be and continue a town by the name of **BRISTOL**.

“ And all that part of the said county of Schoharie, beginning at a point in the northern boundary line of the same, six miles and a half easterly of the north-east corner of the town of Schoharie, in the said county, thence southerly in a direct line to the west corner of the dwelling house now or late of John Redington, thence in a direct line to the westerly corner of the dwelling house now or late of Peter Bogardus, and thence in a straight line to the northerly corner of the dwelling house now or late of Joseph Webb, thence in a direct line to the westerly corner of the dwelling house now or late of Nicholas Smith, thence south-westerly to the nearest point in the division line between the counties of Schoharie and Otsego, thence southerly along the bounds of the county of Otsego to the north-west corner of the town of Blenheim, thence easterly along the north bounds thereof to the south-west corner of the town of Middleburg, thence northerly along the westerly bounds of the town of Middleburg and Schoharie to the north bounds of the county, and then along the same west to the place of beginning, shall be and continued a town by the name of COBELSKILL.

“ And all the residue or remaining part of the said county of Schoharie, shall be and continue a town by the name of SHARON.”

After Schoharie county was organized, a new era began in its history. The frequent assembling at court of men distinguished for oratory and legal acumen—especially where science and letters have been neglected, cannot fail rapidly to improve the state of society and manners of the people. The first attorneys who located in Schoharie, were George Tiffany and Jacob Gebhard.

I had occasion, in the fore part of this book, to speak of the cleanliness of the pioneer settlers, and now advert to that of their descendants—and in justice must observe, that few, if any districts can show a greater proportionate number of very tidy housekeepers, than may now be seen in the Schoharie valley.

Twice in a year, at least, Dr. Franklin's description of a house cleaning is realized, not only in the primitive Schoharie, but in the Mohawk river settlements. Every article of furniture, from the garret to the cellar, is then removed, that the place it occupied may be scrubbed. Lime is profusely used on such occasions, especially in the Spring, and it would be difficult to detect the track of a fly on a window, wall, or floor, after the operation. The description given by Brooks, in his travels in Europe, of the neatness of the people in some of the Dutch and German countries through which he traveled, is applicable, in many instances, to

the people of Schoharie : for as he says—"It is scrub, scrub, scrub from morning till night—from pillar to post—where there is dirt, and where there is none." The Schoharie women usually cleanse their floors daily, sometime semi-daily, by a process they call *filig*, which is done with a piece of sacking retained in the hands instead of being secured to a mop-stick.

"Time," says Irving, "which changes all things, is but slow in its operations upon a Dutchman's dwelling." The Germans and Dutch do not generally display as much taste in the selection of a site for, and the erection of their dwellings, as do the English. Frequently a Dutchman's house fronts its owner's barn, instead of fronting a public highway. A small kitchen and an oven are often separately erected—both detached from the dwelling. Houses recently built in Schoharie discover far more taste and beauty than those constructed in former times.

If the Dutch manifest a want of taste in erecting their dwellings, some of the Yankees do quite as much in locating their out-buildings; for it is but a few years since there might have been seen opposite many good farm-houses in some parts of New England, a corn-crib or waggon-house, the front of which was literally covered with sheep, racoon, or skunk-skins.

Schoharie county contains 621 square miles. Its average length is 30 miles from north to south; and width 22 miles from east to west. Its population, in 1825, was 25,926; in 1840, 32,358: of which latter number, 16,002 were white males; 15,863 white females; 253 black males; and 240 black females. The valuation of assessed property is usually about \$2,000,000. The county contained in 1840, 199 common schools, with 9,244 scholars: and no distillery, where were six in 1824.

About the year 1810, a *federal* newspaper was established in Schoharie by Thomas Tillman, called *The True American*; soon after which *The American Herald*, a *republican* journal, was issued by Derick Van Vechten. In 1818, Mr. Van Vechten published a paper called *The Budget*; and the same year Solomon Baker commenced a paper entitled *The Schoharie Observer*, which he published nearly five years. In 1819, *The*

Schoharie Republican, a weekly sheet, as were its predecessors, was established, and is at present conducted by William H. Gallup. For several years previous to 1830, *The Lutheran Magazine*, a monthly periodical, was issued at the *Republican* office. A *whig* journal, entitled *The Schoharie Patriot*, was begun in 1837, by Peter Mix, and continued until 1844.

The Loonenberg, now Athens Turnpike, leading from Athens to Cherry-Valley, passes through the county from northeast to southwest; and the Western Turnpike crosses the north part of the county. The route of the Canajoharie and Catskill Railroad is also laid through the county from north to south.

This county presents almost every variety of soil and surface, from river flats to mountain elevations, and yields good crops of such grain as is usually produced in the same climate. It is also well timbered: along the water-courses chiefly with oak, hickory and pine, and on the uplands with maple, beech, birch, basswood and hemlock.

The interval lands along the Schoharie, so justly celebrated for their beauty and fertility, are a rich alluvial deposit, formed by the transporting agency of the river, and its numerous tributaries, of such portions of earth, abraded and disintegrated rocks, and vegetable and animal matter as came under its influence. The most southern flats are least calcareous, being principally formed from the contiguous sand rock; consequently the soil is not as productive without more artificial enriching.

The county is well watered, and affords numerous hydraulic privileges, some of which are improved, and others not. It is principally watered by the Schoharie, the largest tributary of the Mohawk, and its numerous inlets. The Schoharie heads in the town of Hunter, Greene county, the principal branch rising in a small swamp, about eight miles from the Hudson, at Saugerties. The country is there very mountainous, ridges of the Catskill mountains separating the water-courses. Among the most important tributaries near its source, are Eastkill and Westkill, which rise in Hunter and run into it in Lexington; and Batavia creek, which enters it at Prattsville.—*W. W. Edward.*

Entering the county, the Schoharie courses northerly through the towns of Summit, Blenheim, Fulton, Middleburgh, and Schoharie, until it arrives near the north end of the latter, when it takes an easterly course, and unites with the Mohawk five miles east of Fultonville,—its whole length being about seventy miles. From the mountainous nature of the country through which it flows, this river often rises suddenly, doing at times no little damage to the numerous mills its rapid course has invited to its banks.

The first bench of common plea judges in Schoharie county, consisted of William Beekman, Adam P. Vrooman, John M. Brown, David Sternberg, and Jonathan Danforth; the former was first judge about forty years. The courts, for a time, held their sessions in a small building still standing in the rear of John Ingold's dwelling.

Schoharie sends two members to the State legislature; with Otsego forms the twenty-first congressional district: and with Albany, Schenectada, Delaware, Greene, Columbia, and Rensselaer counties, makes the third senatorial district.

The north part of the county is mostly underlaid with limestone, which supplies an abundance of good building materials; and as it contains numerous *fossils*, some of which are very rare,—there being among them, the *lily encrinite* and several varieties of *trilobite*,—it affords the *practical geologist* a good opportunity to investigate his useful science. There are, also, in the limestone region, several *caverns* of notoriety, the novelty and sparry formations of which invite to their dark chambers the admirer of nature's wonder workings.

There have been but two executions in this county for a *capital offence* since it was formed. The first was that of Abraham Casler for the murder of his wife, which he effected by administering, alternately, *opium* and *arsenic*. Casler was not a resident of the county, but committed the deed at an obscure tavern, while traveling through it. As was generally believed, from testimony adduced on the trial, he desired to marry another woman, and poisoned his wife to prevent her proving an obstacle in the way

of gratifying his unholy desires. Mrs. Best, the inn-keeper's wife, an intelligent woman, was the principal witness. He was tried before Judge Yates, Sept. 12th, 1817, and publicly executed on the hill east of the court-house in May following.

The other case I notice more minutely, not with a view to increase its notoriety (for I am conscious that the relatives of this criminal are highly respectable), but to show how an inscrutable Providence follows crime with detection and punishment.

John Vanalstyne was indicted Nov. 18th, 1818, for the murder of Wm. Huddleston, and tried for the offence at a special court of *oyer and terminer* at the Schoharie court-house, in Feb., 1819. The trial commenced on the morning of Feb. 17th, before Chief Justice Ambrose Spencer, and lasted nineteen hours. The criminal testimony was entirely *circumstantial*. Eighty-three witnesses were subpoenaed, seventy-five of whom were present at the trial.

On Friday afternoon, Oct. 19th, Huddleston, then a deputy sheriff of the county, went on horse-back to the house of Van Alstyne to collect several executions, amounting to about \$1450. The former was seen just at night with the latter, soon after which, as subsequently appeared, he must have killed him at or near his barn. The mysterious disappearance of Huddleston aroused public inquiry as to his fate, and when Van Alstyne was questioned about his last interview with him, he stated that he had paid up the executions the former had against him, saw them *endorsed satisfied, and supposed the d——d rascal had run away with the money*. He was also heard to say that no sheriff held any execution against him. When interrogated after the murder, his statements, as to the amount of the several executions against him and the moneys paid to the sheriff, were contradictory. After the murder he took several bank-notes to a neighbor to be changed, which appeared to have been purposely torn, and on one blood was found. He also stated in a conversation that the sheriff had on spectacles when he settled with him.

Fearing detection, Van Alstine clandestinely left home on the evening of the 16th, and on the 17th, a great number of men having assembled from different parts of the county, his pre-

mises were strictly searched, which resulted in discovering traces of blood in the barn, and on several fences leading towards a plowed field, 400 yards from the house; and, finally, in finding the body of Huddleston in that field, where the accused had been harrowing on the day after the murder, although he had sown no grain. A further search in the barn brought to light the papers of the sheriff concealed in the hay, among which were the executions against Van Alstyne, *not endorsed*; and under a sill a heavy oak stake was found bloody, and with hair upon it; the spectacles of the sheriff were also found on the premises. In a swamp, some distance from the barn, a place was observed where a horse had been fastened some days, and under a log near was found part of a sheep skin used by Mr. Huddleston upon his saddle, while the saddle was found beneath a small bridge by children pursuing a squirrel.

No doubt was entertained but what Van Alstyne was the murderer, and had fled with Huddleston's horse. Accordingly, a reward of \$250 was offered by Governor De Witt Clinton, and \$100 more by Sheriff Keyser, for his apprehension. The Governor increased the whole reward to \$500. It was shown on the trial that the prisoner was seen at Trenton and Lowville, *in possession of Huddleston's horse*, making his way towards Canada. Arriving at Buffalo, he took passage on Saturday, the 14th of Nov., on board of the Com. Perry, Capt. Johnson, a vessel bound for Detroit, assuming the name of John Allen, and accompanied by a suspicious person calling himself Isaac Page.

On board the Com. Perry Elias W. Slocum, who was removing with his family from Jefferson county to some part of Ohio, had also taken passage, to be landed at Sandusky. On Monday morning the vessel was at anchor at Long Point, where, in consequence of a strong gale having arisen, she parted her cable, and was obliged to put back to the harbor at Black Rock, from whence she had sailed. While on the lake, Slocum had some conversation with Van Alstyne, who betrayed, as he thought, evidence of criminality; and having a newspaper which contained the promised reward for the apprehension of Huddleston's supposed mur-

derer, with a description of his person, he at once suspected his fellow passenger, whose personal appearance and clothing answered the description, and, on arriving at Black Rock, he apprehended and lodged him in Buffalo jail. When arrested, he denied that his name was Van Alstyne, or that he had ever known a man named Wm. Huddleston, but was soon after identified by several persons who knew him, and he was removed to Schoharie.

The conduct of Page, after Van Alstyne was arrested, in connection with the fact that he had an over-coat of the prisoner in his possession, increased the suspicion of Slocum as to his true character, and it was only by the threat of his arrest as an accomplice that he could get rid of him, he evidently being intent on aiding the prisoner in an escape. What became of the horse rode off by Van Alstyne was never known at Schoharie. The trial was conducted by Henry Hamilton Esq., the District Attorney, assisted by M. J. Cantine Esq. ; and the prisoner was defended by Jacob Gebhard and T. J. Oakley Esquires. Nine jurors were set aside as having pre-judged the case. The cause was ably managed, and resulted in finding the prisoner guilty of the crime for which he was indicted. In pronouncing his sentence, Judge Spencer depicted in glowing colors the enormity of the prisoner's offence,—warning the numerous assemblage against the indulgence of crime. Van Alstyne was publicly executed on the hill, where Casler had previously suffered a similar death, March 19th, 1819; and there would seem to have been a most signal interposition of *Providence* in bringing him to punishment. Circumstances, over which human action could have no control, urged on the car of Justice and sealed his untimely fate. On board of a vessel bound to a distant port, he felt comparatively safe from pursuit; but instead of gentle breezes wafting the vessel to her place of destination, a furious gale broke her fastenings, and compelled a return to the starting point to deliver up the offender. The result of this man's trial, for a crime witnessed by no human eye, should deter all persons from the perpetration of any offence against law, committed in the hope that, because unseen by *man*, they will escape detection, for *it is not in man that walketh to di-*

rect his steps. The love of money, or free indulgence of passion, may cause man to violate wholesome laws; but *vengeance is mine, and I will repay the guilty, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

The Lutheran and Dutch Reformed Churches were organized in the Schoharie settlements at an early period. The following brief history of the Lutheran Church was mostly taken from a sketch of its establishment and progress which appeared in the Lutheran Magazine in 1827, prepared by Rev. Dr. G. A. Lintner.

Soon after the Germans located at Schoharie, they formed a church, and had preaching occasionally as before stated. On the 7th of September, 1742, the congregation gave a call to the Rev. Peter Nicholas Sommer, a native of Hamburg, Germany, who was ordained in that city as pastor of this church on the 21st of the same month. He arrived in the field of his labors May 25th, 1743, and on the 30th preached his introductory sermon. The first officers were Abraham Berg, and Michael Freymaurer, elders; Henry Schaeffer and Peter Loewensteen, deacons. The first *vestry* meeting was held on the 8th of June, 1743, at which it was resolved to commence erecting a parsonage house for the minister, which dwelling was to serve the present purposes of a church. On the 3d of July following his arrival, Mr. Sommer first publicly administered the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Schoharie, when the communicants participated. On the 12th of September, the same year, public worship was held in the new parsonage, and continued to be for several years. Early in 1750, preparations were commenced for erecting a church; on the 10th of May the corner stone of the foundation was formally laid by the pastor; and the edifice, which was built of stone from an adjoining field, having been completed, it was solemnly *dedicated* on Whitsuntide, May 6th, 1751.

Mr. Sommer, who appears to have been much esteemed by his people, was a faithful laborer, and for many years not only preached in his own church, but at stated periods in the German settlements of Stone Arabia, Little Falls, in and near the Mohawk valley; Rhinebeck, East and West Camp, Claverack, and Loonenburgh, on the Hudson; Hoosick Road, in Rensselaer county; and

Albany, Helleberg, and Beaver-dam, in Albany county. The congregations in the three first-mentioned places, the nearest of which was twenty-four miles from Schoharie, were for a time included in his pastoral charge ; but the Rev. Johan Frederick Ries became their minister in December, 1751.

In December, 1758, Mr. Sommer preached for the first time in Cobelskill, and there administered the sacrament ; after which period his services were mostly confined to the Schoharie settlements. In 1768 he became suddenly blind, and was led to church by Andrew Loucks, for many years its clerk and chorister, continuing to discharge most of the official duties with the infirmity.* Old age obliged him to retire from the ministry early in 1789. From Schoharie he went to reside with relatives in Sharon, where he died about the year 1795 ; and his bones now repose on the farm of Judge Robert Eldredge, the grave being identified by a fragment of coarse sandstone placed at its head, on which are rudely engraved the initials of his name in the following order, N. S. P., the last letter being now hardly intelligible. If the Lutheran churches he was instrumental in organizing in Schoharie county, would remove the bones of this faithful old laborer in their service to the Schoharie burying ground, which is located on the site of the church in which he ministered, and erect a suitable monument over them, they would do a laudable act, and discharge a duty they owe to his memory.

In 1791, the Rev. Anthony Theodore Braun took charge of the Lutheran church in Schoharie, and continued its pastor until 1794. He was succeeded by the Rev. Frederick H. Quitman in 1795. In 1796 the congregation erected the brick edifice it now

* After having been totally blind nearly twenty years, he awoke one Sabbath morning, to his great surprise, with his vision restored. His wife had previously risen, and calling her into his room, he exclaimed, "*I can see as well as ever I could*" She was at first terrified, supposing him deranged ; but he continued, "*Be not alarmed—my sight is restored!*" "What can you see ?" his wife, still trembling, interrogated. "*I see you—see every object in the room—see yonder trees!*" said he, pointing to several large trees visible from a window. He left his bed with feelings few can realize, put on his clothes, and from that time to the hour of his death, his perception of objects was restored to its former condition.

occupies. Mr. Quitman left his station in 1798. In 1799 Mr. Braun was recalled to the pastoral duties of this church, but again relinquished them in 1801. The church was without a pastor until 1805, when the Rev. Augustus Wackerhagen entered upon those duties. In 1815, he accepted a call from Columbia county.

The four pastors named were men of good classic attainments,—were fine German scholars,—usually preached in the German language,—and were very much respected. In 1816, the Rev. John Molther became pastor of the congregation; but on account of his *dissipation* he was removed by the Lutheran Synod in 1818.

In 1819, the Rev. George A. Lintner was called to preside over this congregation, and the church has prospered ever since, he still being its pastor. This institution, which had to contend with many trials in its early existence, known only in *border settlements*, was evidently of Divine origin. It struggled through scenes of difficulty and danger in the early history of the settlement, shedding the light of Christian benevolence around the footsteps of the pioneer. It was threatened by the perils of the French and Indian wars: and Domine Sommer preached a proper discourse and administered the sacrament to a company of volunteers, who marched from Schoharie in 1746, to join an expedition against Canada. In the American Revolution, religious service was mostly discontinued in border settlements—and this congregation knew from experience the horrors of a civil war—a condition of things much at variance with the doctrines of Christianity.

During our last war with Great Britain, many individuals and associations sent out small notes, usually denominated shin-plasters, and this church issued them. The following is a blank copy of one:

“THE CONSISTORY OF *St. Paul's Church*, IN SCHOHARIE, PROMISE
TO PAY THE BEAREE, ON DEMAND, TWO CENTS.
Nov. 16, 1814. _____ Secretary.”

At what period the Reformed Dutch Church was established in Schoharie, I am unable to show; it is believed, however, to have been nearly as early as was the Lutheran Church. The church records were consumed in the parsonage some years since, which

misfortune deprives me of data necessary to show its organization and early history. I, however, gleaned from one of its oldest male members, that the first house of worship stood several rods northeast of the old stone church; was constructed of wood; was built after the model of the Dutch Church in Albany, with a steeple over the centre; that it was provided with a small bell, the rope of which came down in the middle of the building; and that it was razed at the time the stone edifice was erected in 1772. The clergyman who preached in Schoharie at an early day, officiated in the German language in Schoharie, and in low Dutch, at Weiser's dorf, where a Dutch church was erected nearly as early as was the one in Schoharie. The Dutch Church had similar difficulties to surmount in its early history to those which usually attend the planting of churches in a new country.

Judge Brown, as he assured the writer, was clerk and chorister of the Schoharie Church, or fore-singer, as then called, before the Revolution, and used often to go from his residence in Carlisle, on Sabbath mornings, to church *on foot, a distance of fourteen miles*, and be there in time for the service; returning home after it in the same manner. Is there a man in the county now, would go that distance to church every Sabbath, *if he could be driven there in an easy chair?* If there is, let him declare it, "*for him have I offended.*"

The Rev. Mr. Schuyler, long a pastor of this church, died during the Revolution, and I am not able to show who have been his successors in regular order. I have in my possession a blank call for a minister to take charge of the Dutch churches in Schoharie, written in German, from which I learn that he was to receive, for every person baptised, a fee of *one shilling*; for every couple married, a fee of *eight shillings*; that his salary was to be paid half in *cash* and half in *wheat*; that his fire-wood was to be furnished scot-free; and that he was to have four Sabbaths in a year to himself.

Until about the year 1820, not only the Schoharie churches, but those in other parts of New York and New England, were nearly all destitute of stoves, or any convenience for warming them in the

winter; and the families in attendance usually carried small foot-stoves to church on the Sabbath, supplying them with a few coals, buried in hot embers, at the dwellings nearest the sanctuary. Although the health of numbers was endangered by attending divine service before the introduction of the box-stove, still the churches were in general well filled with attentive hearers. Between the morning and afternoon service, that part of the congregation living remote from country churches, at the period under consideration, usually depended on the hospitality of the good people living near, at whose dwellings they not only received the benefit of a warm fire, but frequently were served with a luncheon of fried cakes, cheese, and apples, and a glass of good cider. The intermission, which was seldom over an hour, was often spent in discussing some religious topic, to the edification of numbers present.

In former times, the churches of New England and New York were provided with *tiding-men*—persons appointed to keep order in the galleries, having authority to change the position, or even impose corporeal punishment, on such as in any manner disturbed the congregation. Cornelius Van Schaack, who was for a long time sexton of the old Dutch Church in Albany, and during the Revolution, was much of the time its tiding-man. ¶ Often might this efficient officer have been seen during the service to enter the gallery with a hickory-gad, and lay it over the backs of mischievous children, or noisy half-grown boys, if they did not see him coming and escape punishment by creeping under the benches, which was not unfrequently the case.—(*James Lansing.*) Tiding-men were continued in many of the New England churches to as late a period as the year 1825.

Before the Revolution, constables in Albany were required, as a part of their duty, if they saw children at play on the Sabbath, to correct them—and those guardians of order were often seen to enter the door-yard of a rich man, and flog his peace-disturbing boys, regardless of what parents or guardians might say or do.—*J. Lansing.*

BLenheim,* a town in the south-westerly part of Schoharie county, is centrally distant 44 miles south-west from Albany; 20 west of south from the county seat; and 35 north of west from Catskill. It is bounded north by Fulton, east by Broome and Conesville, south by Delaware county, and west by Jefferson. Population 2,726.

Most of the early settlers in the south part of this town were from New England, and their descendants are engaged in the dairy business. A large tract of land, embraced in Scott's Patent, is located in Conesville, Broome, and southerly part of this town. Much of the tract is now owned by the Livingston family, and leased to tenantry. The prevailing strata of rock is graywacke and red-sand, the latter affording, in several quarries, a good building material. In it are also found some fossils. This town contains 2 *post-offices*—*Blenheim* and *North Blenheim*—and 4 *churches*—2 *Methodist*, 1 *Baptist*, and 1 *Reformed Dutch*.

BROOME (name changed from Bristol, April 6, 1818,) is about 35 miles south-west of Albany, 15 south of the county seat, and 30 from Catskill. It is bounded north by Middleburgh, east by the county of Albany, south by Conesville, and west by Blenheim—somewhat resembling a boot in its shape. Population 2,404. Its early settlers were mostly from New England. It has 3 *post-offices*—*Livingston*, *Smithton*, and *Gilboa*—and 6 *churches*—2 each *Presbyterian* and *Baptist*, and 1 each *Methodist* and *Christian*.

Chancellor Lansing once owned a valuable tract of land in this town. In 1818, Jacob Sutherland Esq., who had married a daughter of the chancellor, went to reside at a romantic place in North Blenheim, to look to his own and the possessions of his father-in-law; about which time he was appointed District Attorney for the U. S. District Court. While a resident of the county, he was appointed one of its judges; and when the convention met in 1821 to alter the constitution, he was sent, with Olney Briggs and Asa Starkweather, to represent Schoharie county in the convention, and proved an efficient member. Soon after the adoption of the new constitution, Mr. Sutherland was elected a state senator, but a seat being offered him on the bench of the Supreme Court, he declined the former, accepted the judgeship, and removed to Albany. Some years since, he resigned the office of judge, received that of clerk of the same court, and removed to Geneva. He died at Albany May, 18, 1845, aged about 68 years.

One of the first settlers in the interior of this town was David Elerson, who located in 1793. Previous to the Revolution he was engaged in the Indian wars of Virginia, in which he received a bullet through his left shoulder. Several Indians having secreted themselves behind a fallen tree, were doing fearful execution in the ranks of the colonial troops, and Elerson determined, at the peril of his life, to punish them. While crawling towards a covert for that purpose, he received the ball as described, but soon had the satisfaction, by one or two effective shots, of driving the enemy from their position.

He was in the Monmouth battle, under Col. Morgan, and escaped unhurt. Col. Morgan hung upon the rear of the British army some distance in their retreat. Arriving near Middletown, Elerson, Murphy, Wilbur, and Tufts (all of whom were afterwards on duty in Schoharie,) obtained permission to leave the ranks, with the caution of extreme vigilance from their commander, and pursue the enemy towards Raritan Bay. Having separated from his companions, Elerson found himself in sight of his foes. The army had embarked at Gravelly Point, and effected a landing on Staten Island by the boats of the enemy's fleet, then in the bay to cover their retreat. Nothing remained on the Middletown shore except 40 or 50 horses, several baggage-wagons and a phaeton, supposed to belong to Sir Henry Clinton. This property he perceived was guarded by only two sentinels, one of whom stood on the beach near the water. Arriving unperceived within a few yards of the two soldiers, one of whom was a mounted trooper, he leveled his rifle and shouted to them to *surrender themselves prisoners*. The man on foot was so surprised that he let his gun fall into the water, wetting its powder. The dragoon rode into the water, with the intention of swimming his horse to the island, but the tide compelled him to return. In the mean time, Elerson ordered the other man to harness a span of good horses before the carriage, and compelled, with leveled rifle, his immediate compliance. Returning to the beach, the trooper was evidently intent on getting a pistol shot at Elerson, when the latter ordered him to leave his presence or surrender himself a

prisoner. Elerson did not wish to fire, as the British army and fleet were in sight, and would doubtless turn their artillery upon him; but the sentinel, drawing a pistol, did not heed his threats, and he sent a ball through his heart. The rifle's report had hardly ceased its echoes, when a cannon shot plowed up the sand near his feet; and just as the second ball lodged in the loose soil near him, having reloaded his piece and observed that his carriage was ready, he bounded into it, and, with his prisoner for driver, soon left the Middletown hills, and rode in safety to the American camp. This daring hero, as he assured the author, sold his carriage and horses for \$187.50, and sent the money to his poor father in Virginia. As was the case with many other brave spirits of the Revolution, Elerson could neither read or write. He died in 1838 or '39.

David Williams, one of the captors of Major Andre, removed from South Salem, Westchester county, 1805, to this town, and settled on the farm of the late Gen. Shay,* near Livingstonville,† where he resided to the time of his death. For a sketch of his life, the capture and execution of Andre, &c. see the succeeding chapter.

CARLISLE, formed in 1807, from parts of Cobelskill and Sharon, is about 8 miles long from east to west, and nearly 7 wide: situ-

* This Gen. Shay was the man who headed an insurrection against the government of Massachusetts in 1786: the malcontents were dispersed in 1787, by State troops under Generals Shephard and Lincoln. This transaction has since been called *Shays' Rebellion*. Not long after becoming thus celebrated he removed to Schoharie county, from whence after a residence of some 15 years, he went to reside at Cayuga, N. Y., where he died in 1821. He drew a pension of \$240 a year; a captain's pay for services in the Revolution. Shays was a man of noble and commanding figure, fine martial appearance, and pleased with the title of General, with which he was usually saluted.—*W. W. Murphy*.

† A war path in the Revolution led from Kingston to Schoharie. Following up the Catskill through the towns of Durham and Rensselaerville, it proceeded onward through Broome to Middleburgh. At Livingstonville in Broome, directly on this path, lived Derick Van Dyck, who settled there before the war; and often did Timothy Murphy partake of the hospitality of this pioneer when on his secret expeditions into that neighborhood, and regale himself with a good draught of buttermilk; a beverage of which it is possible the Italian also partook in the absence of his destroyer.—*Judge Murphy*.

ated 10 miles northwest of the county seat, and 40 from Albany. It is bounded north by Montgomery county, east by Schoharie, south by Cobelskill, and west by Sharon. Population 1,850. It has 1 *post-office*, called after the town; and 3 *churches*, 1 *Presbyterian*, 1 *Methodist*, and 1 *Union church*, the latter built by several denominations. The two first named churches are at *Carlisle*, the principal village in the town, which is situated on the Western Turnpike; the other is at *Grosvenor's Corners*, a small hamlet in the south part of the town. Near the latter place is an interesting locality to geologists, of *fibrous sulphate of barytes*; the fibres being from half an inch to two inches in width. Near the barytes is a layer of *fibrous carbonate of lime*, or *arragonite*.

A part of this town was embraced in the local settlement denominated New Rhinebeck, its pioneers having removed there about the year 1760, from Rhinebeck, on Hudson River. The four families which first located were those of Andrew Loucks, Conradt Engle, Philip Kerker, and Peter Young. The late Judge Brown settled near them soon after.

Its substratum is limestone, which is filled with indubitable evidence of former conditions of this region, since which *changes* has passed over it, and drawn her petrifying finger in calcareous lines around its mundane existence. In the rock are numerous *caverns*, a few only of which have been visited. *Young's* and *Selleck's* caves are the most extensive of any as yet explored, and they have only been but partially so. The latter, first visited in 1841, by George Shibley and J. C. Selleck after whom it is called, is said to be roomy, affording the visitor fine specimens of spar.

In the woods, about a mile northwest of Carlisle village, is a small cavern, in which it is believed the Indians often found rest when visiting the neighboring settlements in the Revolution, as it afforded them ample security. Near it issues a fine spring. The bones of animals, fire brands, and some fifty sticks, set in the ground, apparently, for the purpose of drying meat, gave evidence of repeated visitants, to those who discovered the place after the war.

In this town is one of the most lofty elevations in the county, known by the aboriginal name of *O-waere-souere*. It is of a co-

nical form, and may be seen from Fulton county, fifty miles north of it.

COBELSKILL, centrally distant from the Court House, 10 miles, and from Albany 40, is bounded north by Carlisle, east by Schoharie and Fulton, south by Summit and Otsego county, and west by Seward and Sharon. Population 3,583. This township is of an oblong shape. The Cobelskill, a fine mill stream, rises on the Tallmadge farm, in Worcester, Otsego county, near the source of Schenevas creek, and running northeast sixteen miles, falls into the Schoharie near Central Bridge. West creek, its greatest tributary, rises on the borders of Cherry Valley, and affording numerous good mill seats in Seward, through which it courses easterly, unites with the Cobelskill near Cobelskill Centre.

The first settlement in this town was made on the flats, a strip of rich alluvion, extending several miles along the Cobelskill, in 1750, by Shafers, Boucks, Warners, Lawyers, Frimires, Borsts, and Browns, from Schoharie, and George Fester, from Pennsylvania, all of whom were of German origin.

In this town there are 6 churches, and 6 villages, each with a post office, viz: *Cobelskill, Richmondville, Lawyerville, Barnerville, Cobelskill Centre, and Punchkill*. The first two villages are the most important; the former having 2 churches, *Lutheran* and *Dutch Reformed*,—several stores workshops, &c., and probably the best *district school house* in the county, a neat edifice, recently erected. The other villages have 3 churches, 1 each,—*Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist*, a tannery, several workshops, stores, &c. The rock in the south part of the town is principally sandstone and graywacke—the grit of the former in some quarries being suitable for grindstones. The north part of the town abounds in limestone, in which are numerous unexplored caverns.

Among the early settlers at Lawyerville, were Capt. James Dana, a native of Ashford, Connecticut, and John Redington; the former having served his country as a captain of the Connecticut line of Continental troops, and the latter a soldier of that gallant band. Dana was at the battle of Bunker Hill, and in

command of a company of men was stationed, with Capt. Knowlton and his company, by the orders of Gen. Putnam, to prevent the enemy from gaining Col. Prescott's rear, and thus cut off the retreat of the Americans to the main-land. From this position, Capt. D., with Lieut. Thomas Grosvenor and Sergeant Fuller, at a given signal, fired on Maj. Pitcairn, a British officer, marching with a body of men toward the fence, and he fell mortally wounded. During the battle a cannon shot struck the fence, and forced a rail against Dana's breast with such violence as to prostrate him; but he regained his feet, and kept his ground until the troops left the hill, when he drew off his men and aided in covering the retreat of the army in good order. While retreating a bullet lodged in his canteen.

After the battle of Bunker Hill, a colonel's commission was offered Captains Knowlton and Dana, which the former accepted and the latter, from his native diffidence, declined: he, however, left the army at the close of the war, with the rank of brevet-major. On arriving at the American camp, near Boston, and becoming apprized of the bravery of the two captains mentioned, and their deeds in the late battle, Gen. Washington immortalized their names in *his first general order*, announcing as the secret countersign, *Knowlton!* and *parole, Dana!*

Thomas Grosvenor, who was a lieutenant, and third in command of the troops stationed at the fence on Bunker Hill, and who was promoted to colonel,—in a letter to Col. Daniel Putnam, who was compelled to vindicate the character of his father, Gen. Israel Putnam, from an ignoble charge of cowardice made by Gen. Dearborn, which letter is dated April 30th, 1818, in speaking of the officers at that station, makes no mention of Capt. Dana, who was second in that command, and why he does not seems mysterious, for Dana was the man who first communicated the evident intention of the enemy to out-flank the Americans. Lieut. Grosvenor was wounded, and retired early from the field. That Dana was a modest, uneducated man, affords no good reason why laurels fairly won by him should be claimed by others. The truth is

Capt. Dana merited a position in Col. Trumbull's picture of that battle, which is given to another.*

On an occasion when Gen. Washington was reconnoitering the American lines, Capt. Dana was on duty in the neighborhood, and observing the former riding in a direction where the enemy were just before posting sentinels, he said to him—“*Perhaps your Excellency may be in danger of a surprise if you proceed further that way; the enemy in force are just over that knoll before you.*” The Commander thankfully received the caution, and bowing respectfully, galloped back to his quarters. But for the prudence of Capt. Dana, it is possible Gen. Washington would have been a prisoner to Sir Henry Clinton. Capt. Dana stood high in the confidence of the Commander-in-chief.

When he located at Lawyerville, he erected a good log dwelling, in which he ever after resided. His virtues were held in high estimation in the community. On the organization of a brigade of New York infantry, Capt. Dana received from Gov. Lewis, as a partial reward for services rendered his country, a general's commission. He was the first man who ever held that office in Schoharie county, and discharged its duties with becoming dignity.

The following anecdote of Gen. Lee was related to his friends by Gen. Dana: While the latter was reconnoitering on some occasion in the vicinity of the enemy's works, they were firing shells towards the American camp. Observing a shell to strike near him, he stepped behind a large tree near by. At the moment it fell, and while the fuse was burning off, Gen. Lee arrived upon the spot with a favorite dog. He did not even seek the covert of a tree,—and the dog, imitating his master's example of unconcern, with curiosity to know the cause of its buzzing, ran up to smell of it at the instant it exploded. The dog

* Gen. William Eaton, who was the first American to unfurl the banner of freedom on the sands of Africa, (in 1803,) and win for his country the respect of the haughty Bashaw of Tripoli, by planting the American flag on the subdued fortifications of the city of Derne, the second city of importance in his dominions, commenced studying the art of war at an early age, as a private soldier, under Capt. Dana.

was sent several rods, though not killed. Seeing his canine friend thus precipitated, he addressed him, unconscious of being overheard—" *You d—d fool! have you been so long in the service, and don't yet know what a bomb is?*"

John Redington was a private in Capt. Dana's company of Connecticut troops, and was taken prisoner at Horseneck by DeLancey's cavalry. In the retreat of the Americans he concealed himself under a bridge, and being discovered by the enemy he was brought out, divested of his hat, shoes, &c., and thus driven on foot by the unfeeling corps, with which he was compelled to keep up, all the way to New York, where he was incarcerated in that charnel, the *Sugar House*—enduring such sufferings as an iron frame only could endure—to the end of the war. On the return of peace he removed from Connecticut to Cobelskill, and settled in the neighborhood of his respected captain. In consequence of his patriotism and sufferings, he was given the command of the second company of cavalry ever organized in Schoharie county. He was a very enterprising man, and the Reformed Dutch Church, near his residence, was erected about the year 1800, through his influence.

The commissions for Gen. Dana and Capt. Redington, were obtained for them through the influence of a gentleman of great literary attainments, then residing in their neighborhood, who communicated the incidents in their lives, here given, to the author.

The following inscriptions are copied from monuments in the grave-yard at Lawyerville:

"In memory of General James Dana, who died October 16th, A. D. 1817, aged 85 years."

"Erected A. L.* 5817, by Morality Lodge, No. 217, of Free and Accepted Masons, in memory of William Huddleston, Esq., who was assassinated on the 9th of October, 1818, while in the discharge of his official duty, aged 60 years, 3 months, and 26 days."

"In memory of Captain John Redington, who died April 12th, 1830, aged 73 years, 6 months, and 14 days. A Revolutionary veteran, an enterprising settler of the county, of distinguished public spirit—an honest man."

*Anno Lucis—Year of Light.

"Doct. Jesse Shepard, late a Judge of Schoharie county, died April 19th 1832, aged 57 years, 10 months, and 18 days."

CONESVILLE, southeast town in the county, was formed March 3d, 1836, from Broome and Durham in Greene county, and is bounded in the act of incorporation as follows :

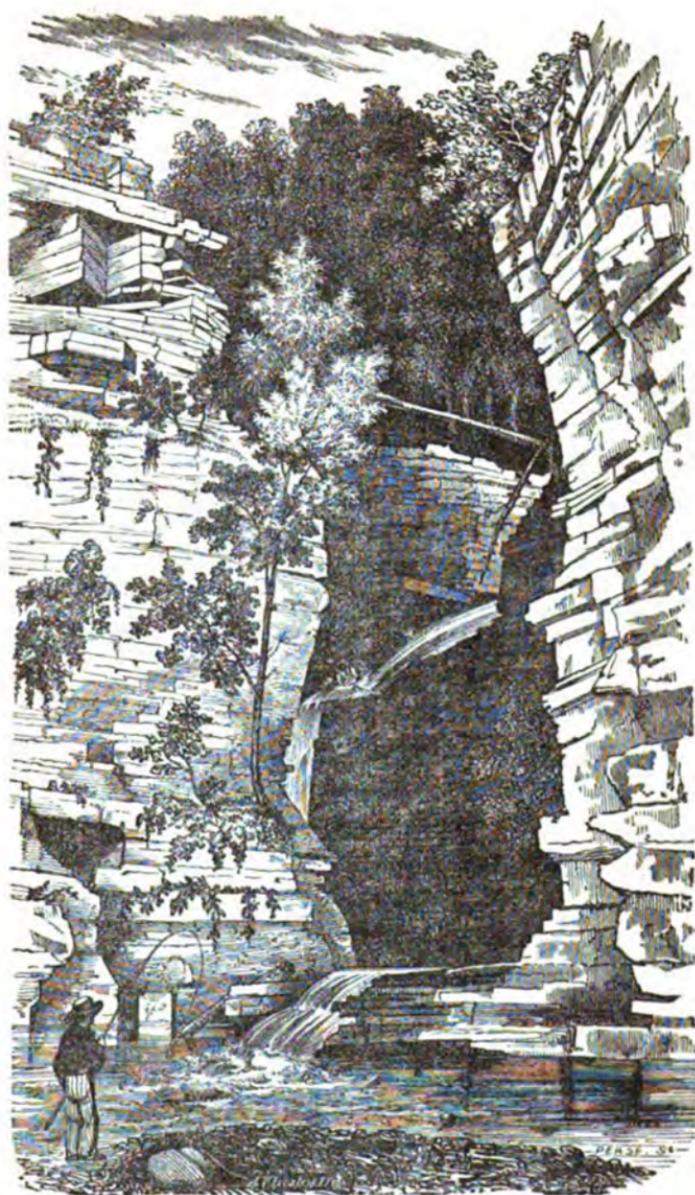
"Beginning at the centre of the Schoharie creek in the county of Schoharie, where the Manor creek empties into the same ; thence north 46 degrees east 176 chains, to the northwest corner of a lot in Scott's patent known as the *Leming lot* ; thence east along the lines of lots in the said patent 320 chains, to the east line of the said patent 21 chains, to the north line of Stringer's patent ; thence east along the north line of the said last mentioned patent, 176 chains to the east line of the county of Greene ; thence eastwardly along the north line of the said county of Greene, 34 chains ; thence south two degrees east, 166 chains to the dividing line between the towns of Durham and Windham ; thence westwardly and northwardly along the said dividing line and the dividing line between Durham and Prattsville, until it intersects the north line of the county of Greene ; thence westwardly along the said county line, to the centre of the Schoharie creek, and thence northwardly down the centre of the said creek to the place of beginning."

This town is centrally distant from Albany 40 miles ; from the county seat 26 ; and from Catskill 30. Population 1,621. It is watered by Diesman's creek, which runs into the Schoharie near Gilboa : on this creek near its mouth is a beautiful cascade, of some 60 feet descent. It has 1 *post-office*, bearing its name ; and 3 *churches*, 1 *Dutch Reformed*, and 2 *Methodist*. The pioneer settlers of this town were Peter Richtmyer, Judge John Reynolds, Thomas Fitch, John Walker, and Elisha Bates ; the four last being New England men : the settlement was made about the year 1795. The inhabitants are mostly engaged in the *dairy business*.—*A. Richtmyer and W. W. Murphy.*

FULTON, incorporated in 1828 from part of Middleburgh, is centrally distant from Albany 45 miles, and from the county seat 12. Population 2,146. On the flats in this town were some of the earliest settlements made in the county by the Dutch at Vrooman's Land, and the Germans at Brakabeen. It has 3 *post-offices* *Fultonham, Brakabeen, and Byrnville* ; and 4 *churches*, 1 *Reformed Dutch*, 1 *Baptist*, 1 *Union*, and 1 *Lutheran*.

Bouck's Falls, situated on Panther creek, a mill stream which rises in Jefferson, and runs into the Schoharie just above Panther mountain in this town, are among the most interesting natural curiosities in the State. At my first visit to this waterfall (in Oct. 1837), I named it after Col. J. W. Bouck, who accompanied me to it. The stream dashes down a precipice in a little distance at least one hundred feet, into a deep pool its action has worn at the base. The bold cliffs tower upwards on either side about 200 feet, while the trees—standing upon the summit like sentinels on the walls of a castle—present a picture romantic and enchanting indeed. In its descent, the water is concealed by projecting rocks except in two places, the one near the bottom, and the other 50 or 60 feet above, at which latter place it dashes down with thundering, deafening roar. The opening cut in a mountain gorge by this cataract, is from 200 to 300 feet across at the bottom and much less at the summit, so that could the hill tops unite, a *cavern* would thus be formed several hundred feet in depth, with a vaulted ceiling nearly a hundred feet high. The rock is *sandstone*, similar to the prevailing formation of Otsego and Madison counties, characterised at this point by the *inoceramus* and several other varieties of fossil shells, and farther upward by the *trilobite De Kayii*.

As if to add interest to the scene at the time of the visit named, there stood *Dick Bouck*, then a gray-headed old negro, who, as before stated, was the little captive slave taken with William Bouck and part of his family in 1780. Dick had been fishing for trout until they would no longer bite, and was then *hooking* them up. He recounted the story of his captivity—but could not resist the temptation, as a good sized fish came within reach, to attempt its capture, thus often losing the thread of his tale, to the great amusement of his auditors, who were constantly reproving him for his inattention. He several times raised his hooks from the water for the purpose of finishing his narrative, but the line would as often sink unconsciously into it, to capture a good sized trout. Poor Dick, he sleeps with his fathers, and has for several years; but long will the author remember the story of his captivity, and the novel manner in which he related it.



BOUCK'S FALLS.

Ex-Governor William C. Bouck, is a native of this town, and was born January 7th, 1786. His farm is situated upon an island on the east side of the river, and his dwelling is pleasantly located near the bank of the river, fronting the road, the river, and on its opposite shore a romantic mountain called Ottegus-berg—Panther mountain.

His early education was good considering the former condition of our common schools, at which he received a considerable share of it. His was however a mind of that inquisitive sort, susceptible of improvement from general reading and close observation.—Numerous have been the instances in our country, in which men have—imitating the commendable example of a Washington and a Franklin, by untiring application after they have done going to school, *where in fact an education is but just begun*,—stored their minds with a fund of useful knowledge which has been the means in after life, of elevating them to stations of distinction and honor.

In 1807, then 21 years of age, he was elected clerk of his native town, and the following year its supervisor. In 1812, he was appointed sheriff of Schoharie county, by Governor Tompkins, and the year following was chosen to represent that county in the assembly, to which body he was returned in the years 1814—'15, and '17. While there, he was active in sustaining the course of Gov. T., who seconded the measures of the general government in prosecuting the war with England to a glorious termination. In 1819 he was elected a state senator, about which time he was appointed colonel of the 18th regiment of New-York infantry; the duties of which latter office he is said to have discharged with becoming dignity and skill. Still in the senate in 1821, where he was respected for his personal knowledge, he was chosen from that station by nearly the unanimous vote of both houses of the legislature, *irrespective of party considerations*, a member of the canal board, and was appointed to superintend an important portion of the Erie Canal then constructing. He was retained as canal commissioner for *nineteen years*, during which period most of our canals—public works of which our State may very justly be proud—were prosecuted to completion.

In 1840, Mr. Bouck was the democratic candidate for the office of Governor, and in 1842, having been again nominated, he was elected by a large majority.*

Col. Joseph Bouck, brother of the late governor, has once been a member of Congress.

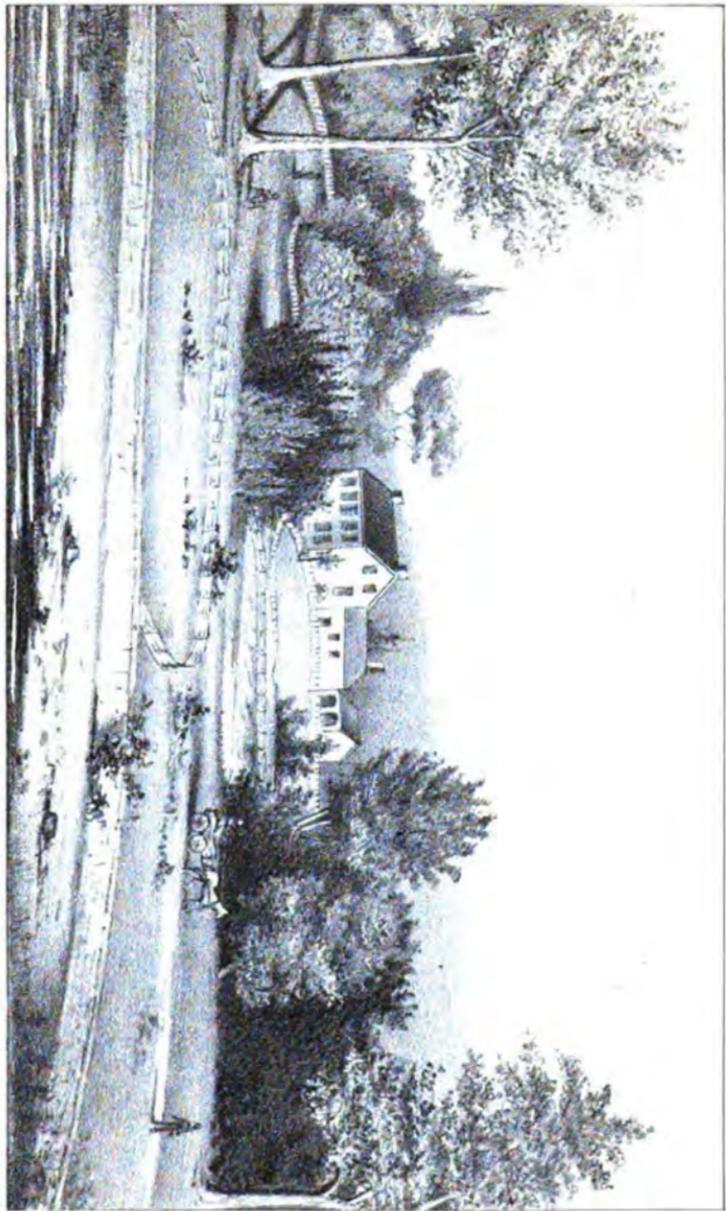
Mr. Abraham Keyser, formerly sheriff of Schoharie county, and for many years treasurer of the state,—the duties of which office he discharged most satisfactorily—was also a native of this town, his ancestors being among the earliest German settlers.

JEFFERSON, erected from Blenheim in 1803, is 20 miles southwest of the county seat, and 53 from Albany. Population 2,033. Its inhabitants—who are mostly descended from New England parentage—are extensively engaged in the dairy business. It has 2 *post-offices*, *Jefferson* and *Mossville*, and 5 *churches*, 3 *Methodist*, 1 *Baptist*, and 1 *Presbyterian*. The Delaware river rises in this town. *Jefferson Academy*, incorporated at an extra legislative session in 1834, is pleasantly located in the village of Jefferson.*

MIDDLEBURGH is centrally distant from the court-house 5 miles, and from Albany 38. It is bounded north by Schoharie, east by Albany county, south by Broome and Blenheim, and west by Fulton and Cobelskill. Population 3,841. In this town there are 3 *post-offices*,—*Middleburgh*, *Franklinton*, and *Hunters Land*,—and 6 *churches*,—1 *Lutheran*, 1 *Presbyterian*, 2 *Methodist*, 1 *Quaker*, and 1 *Independent Presbyterian* or *Bellingerite*.

There is in the south part of Middleburgh a place called the *Vlaie*—a German word, signifying a marsh or swamp. The place was known as a black-ash swamp, nearly a mile in length and covering many acres, when it obtained the name. It is on

* Many a word spoken in jest becomes prophetic. About the year 1820, an honest farmer living on Fox creek, held a conversation with a friend of ours, in which Mr. Bouck was mentioned. Of the latter gentleman the former thus remarked: "Depend upon it that man will yet be governor of this state; for instead of going round a hill as other men do to see what is on the opposite side, he looks right through it." This casual remark was made at a time, when his excellency's intimate friends did not anticipate for him a seat in the gubernatorial chair of state.



The view from a foot-path along the Pincher Mountain on the west side of the River.

the summit level of the Canajoharie and Catskill rail-road route, though by no means on the summit of the grounds in that neighborhood; for the mountain towers above it on both sides. The Vlaie is situated in a gorge of the mountain, where the sun, at some seasons of the year, sets to the traveler before noon. From the Vlaie issue two streams of water, and what is very remarkable, the one from the north end runs northerly, and, forming the Little Schoharie kill, runs into the Schoharie at the lower end of *claver-woy*; while the one from the south end runs southerly, making the head waters of the Catskill. Dams have been erected at both these outlets, and good mill privileges thus obtained. A considerable share of the Vlaie was thus covered with water, and fish having been put into it by the owners, it affords at the present day fine sport for the angler, especially if he is an adept in the art of trolling for pickerel. The name Vlaie now attaches to the pond, which is fed by innumerable never failing springs. This is in truth a remarkable spot. An artificial dam of sufficient strength thrown across each end of the gap, would raise a lake of an hundred or more feet in depth. The county buildings for the accommodation of *paupers*, are pleasantly situated on the west side of the river in this town.

SCHOHARIE, now the largest and wealthiest township in the county, was incorporated March 7th, 1788, as part of Albany county, and is bounded north by Montgomery county, east by Schenectada and Albany counties, south by Middleburgh, and west by Carlisle and Cobelskill. The public buildings, which are constructed of stone, are situated at a village* on the river flats, bearing the name of the town, in its south-west part; distant from Albany 33 miles; from Schenectada 22; and from Catskill

*For a view of Schoharie village see frontispice.

Description of plate. In the right hand of the picture is seen the Academy, erected and incorporated in 1835. At the foot of the street in the foreground is the new *Methodist church*. Farther to the left is seen the *Lutheran church* and steeple of the *Dutch church*, between which is the court-house. The public buildings, except the court-house and clerk's office, are of brick; the two latter of stone. The front of the court-house was fitted up with a piazza and columns in 1844.

48. This town, like Middleburgh, contains mountainous elevations and broad, fertile interval lands, and was first settled by Germans in 1711. Population 5,532. It has 6 villages, each with a *post-office*, viz—*Schoharie Court House, Esperance, Sloansville, Gallupville, Central Bridge* and *Waldensville*. The ancient stone church, fortified in the Revolution, is still standing, one mile north of the court-house.

Esperance, the only incorporated village in the county, is situated in the north-east corner of the town; 8 miles distant from the court-house, and 25 from Albany. It is pleasantly situated on the north side of the river, and has a *Presbyterian* and *Methodist church*, the former of which is a stone edifice, constructed of red sand-stone, from its vicinity, and a classic school. A bridge across the river separates this place from the town of Duaneburg, called formerly *The State Bridge*. This was the second covered bridge erected in the state, the first being built over the Hudson, at Waterford.

SLOANSVILLE, 4 miles west of Esperance (also on the turnpike), and 7 north of the court-house, contains 2 *Baptist churches*. An Indian foot-path, leading from Schoharie to Fort Hunter, passed near Sloansville, a large mound of stones, which had been reared by the Indians long before the whites settled this part of the state. A title to the adjoining lands was called the *Stone Heap Patent*. Tradition says that two Mohawk hunters were passing this place—a quarrel arose between them—one murdered the other—and his fellows, to commemorate the event, erected a pile of stones upon the spot. A custom of their nation required every warrior traveling that path, to appease the departed spirit by adding a stone to the heap, and thus it grew to one of enormous dimensions. Not many years ago the land on which it stood was owned by an individual who cared little for the sacred altars of the red man, and the long accumulating record of homicide was converted by him into stone wall, to the unfeigned regret of *pious antiquarians*. The route pursued by Sir John Johnson and his army, from Schoharie to the Mohawk, in October, 1780, led directly past this *monumental pile*.

GALLUPVILLE, a hamlet romantically situated on Foxes creek, 5 miles from the court-house, has a *Reformed Dutch church* and *classic school*. This place is located on the stage road leading from Schoharie to Albany.

CENTRAL BRIDGE, 5 miles northwest from the court-house, is a small hamlet of recent growth, with a *Lutheran church*, erected in 1844. At this place a bridge crosses the river, called Central Bridge, from its being nearly equidistant from the Esperance and Schoharie bridges.

Waldensville, on Foxes creek in the northeast part of the town, is an unimportant hamlet, with an axe factory, several workshops, &c.

A small *church* owned by the *Methodist* persuasion at Punch Kill, stands within the limits of this town.

Gebhard's Cavern, (called formerly Ball's Cave,) ranks conspicuously among the natural curiosities of the county. I have chosen to call it after John Gebhard, jun. Esq., its present proprietor; a gentleman who has done much to advance the science of geology—particularly that branch now denominated palæontology. This cavern is situated upon an elevation called Barton hill, its entrance being in a piece of woods nearly four miles east of the court-house. It was first partially explored in September, 1831. On the 21st of October of the same year, Doctor Joel Foster, Mr. John S. Bonny, John Gebhard, Esq., and several other citizens of Schoharie, having prepared a boat, again visited this cavern, and being let down by ropes with their skiff, they pretty thoroughly explored it. Its entrance, which is funnel shaped, is some 12 feet across, and when first visited was literally covered with fallen timber, a part of which had been cast into the aperture to prevent domestic animals from falling in.

This cavern is situated in the midst of a forest, and ingress to its dark chambers is down a natural chimney of 70 feet depth, through massive lime rock, with nearly perpendicular sides. The chimney is now supplied with a substantial ladder, the foot of which rests upon timber and earth, which have accumulated in the lapse of time to several feet in depth. From the foot of the

ladder, the principal direction of the cavern is southwest ; and the visiter after descending some 30 feet more by a craggy footing and a second ladder, arrives at a passage some 10 feet wide, and for a little distance not over three feet high.

On the right of this passage, which is nearly 30 feet long with an arch of nature's masonry, a stream of pure water issues from an opening three feet wide and fifteen inches high. A small boat having been constructed for the purpose and called after its projector the *Bonny Boat*, Mr. Bonny in one of his early visits explored this part of the cavern. In a recumbent posture he was pushed off in his tiny craft with torch in hand into the dark hole, which soon enlarged to respectable dimensions, so that he could stand up and propel it : this he did by taking hold of projections of the rock. He discovered nothing very peculiar in this passage, which led in a northerly course, except that its limpid water was obstructed by fourteen natural dams, in themselves a curiosity of no little interest. They were located where the passage was 8 or 10 feet wide and about as high, with a depth of water between them ranging from 10 to 30 feet ; and consisted of tufaceous formations resembling sections of a circle, the curve in each dam being towards the outlet of the lake, or sluggish stream. Those dams, which rose several inches above the level of the water below them, and over which the stream gently rippled, were about four inches in thickness on the top, upon which the fearless navigator had to stand astride his boat, and push it into the lake upon its opposite side.

This part of the cavern, which has been denominated *passage of the dams*, terminates in a large room nearly fifty feet square, the walls of which are graywacke, and hang in threatening confusion on every side. As the characteristic rock of the mountain is here changed, it affords the visitor no geological specimens of interest ; and as this passage is explored with much hazard, few will ever see it. The last time Mr. Bonny visited the *dams*, (in 1835,) the writer launched his craft and awaited with anxiety, at the entrance, his return. Mr. B. then gave this part of the cavern a satisfactory examination, and observed that many frag-

ments of rock had fallen in the square room since his first visit; and supposed that tons more might be dislodged by the discharge of a musket. He came near losing his balance while standing upon a dam and pushing over the then water-soaked boat, and on making his egress, expressed his gratitude for having, as he believed, barely escaped a watery grave; for had he lost his light, and with it his boat, he could hardly have found his way, by swimming in such cold water nearly *one quarter of a mile* to the place of entrance.

On the south side of the main passage leading from the entrance, at a little distance from the outlet of the lake, obstructed by dams, is an opening scarcely large enough to admit a grown person, which leads into a room some ten feet in diameter, called the *Fox room*; its early visitors having found within it animal bones, supposed to have been those of a fox. The sound of hammer strokes upon the wall or floor of this room give evidence of a cavity beyond, into which a passage could easily be opened with proper implements.

Following the rippling stream in the main passage, it leads to the shore of a lake nearly 400 feet in length. This sheet of transparent water, buried about 100 feet beneath the earth's surface, and on which the zephyr breeze has never cast a ripple, is, with two or three exceptions, not over 8 or 10 feet wide, averaging in depth from 6 to 30 feet. In some places, the arched lime-rock rises above the head of the young mariner 20 or 30 feet, while in others he is compelled to adopt Franklin's maxim, and *stoop to avoid a thump*.

The lake terminates at its southwest end in an enlargement of the passage, and climbing up a steep ascent of 10 or 12 feet, a small aperture leads into a spacious room called from its circular form, the *rotunda*. This room is 315 feet in circumference, with a vaulted roof and concave floor, separated in the centre by a space of some 40 feet. A single candle reflects but a sickly light in this dungeon of nature, but the writer once visited it when some thirty other individuals were there on the same errand, and the light of thirty torches discovered the magnificence of the

apartment. The only living inhabitants of this cavern are *bats*, which hang suspended to each other from the walls, by bringing into requisition the little hooks on their wings, and resemble bees at rest in a hive. Trout would, no doubt, live in the cold, clear waters of this everlasting dungeon.

From the rotunda is a low narrow passage running in a south-east direction several hundred feet, in no part of which can the visitant stand upright. On the north side of the rotunda, an opening leads into a small room denominated, from musical sounds sometimes heard in it, the *Music Saloon*. A few years ago this cavern was purchased by John Gebhard, jr. and Mr. Bonny, who opened a passage in the clay and sand which constitute the floors, from the music room into several other small apartments in that vicinity; and it is highly probable that similar excavations would disclose other hidden recesses. In fact, a few hours' labor would doubtless open a passage through the floor in one part of the rotunda, beneath which the outlet of the lake can be heard descending to a lower level, and thus disclose to the visitor new attractions—new wonders.

Tons of rare minerals have been removed from the several rooms of this cavern, to adorn the cabinets of practical geologists. Stalactites and stalagmites, of semi-transparent *alabaster*, white as Alpine snow, and of every seeming variety of shape, have been taken from this *laboratory*. Minerals depending from the ceilings, or attached to the walls and floors, were removed by the early visitors, but many of the richest specimens have been discovered at a later period, by digging in the earthy floors. Some of the slabs of alabaster, which have been formed in the lapse of ages by the percolation of water through the fissures of lime-rock, and its escape by gaseous exhalation, thus leaving its imbibed sedimentary deposit of carbonate of lime on the floors of this cavern, are found to contain geodes filled with beautiful *floresferi*, or thread-like crystals. The *satin spar* is only rivalled by that of Derbyshire, England, while the *brown calcareous spars* and *arragonite* are rarely equalled in beauty by those of any other cavern.

A specimen weighing several hundred pounds now adorns the valuable cabinet of John Gebhard, Esq., which was removed by immense labor from the music saloon, and drawn to the surface by a windlass. It is a mass of pure white alabaster, which has incorporated in its formation several stalagmites, and projecting from a part of which are forty-one distinct stalactites of various sizes, pointing, like so many magnets, to the centre of all gravity. Another specimen which was excavated in this part of the cavern, deserves especial notice. It is a female bust, or rather breast, of purest alabaster; the contour is French, and approximates surprisingly to nature, on which account it is one of the most valuable of all stalagmitic formations—for it is a form which may be admired without the fear of its imbibing *false pride*, or blushing at the exposure of its own *charming proportions*.

Gebhard's cavern has a merited celebrity on account of its secluded locality, its limpid lakes, its rotunda, its salubrious atmosphere, and the immense quantity of beautiful minerals it has afforded the admirer of Nature's handiwork; not a few of which, for their snowy whiteness, are scarcely equalled by those of any other cavern in this country: and it will continue to have numerous visitors, although other caves, *dark and deep*, may become justly celebrated in its neighborhood. For as a previous writer observes—"The novelty of navigating a crystal lake by torch light, beneath an arch of massive rock, at the distance of some hundred feet from the surface of the earth—the breathless excitement resulting from the real and imaginary dangers of the enterprise, &c., are themselves sufficient to render this cavern a place of frequent and interesting resort."

Several females have explored it, the first of whom was Miss Wayland, a spirited and intelligent young lady from New York city. The interior of all caverns is ever damp—ever dirty; and those who would visit this or any other, and explore its or their extent, must go provided with a suit of once rejected apparel: in other words, they must increase the novelty of their visit by gazing on curious objects in the most ludicrous figure they can possibly present—which is that of disguising their persons in the cast-

off clothing of somebody's grand-parents. Col. Stone, speaking of Miss Wayland's preparation to enter this cavern, said "*she had prepared herself at the village with a garb which would have appeared well in the beggar's opera.*"

A clever romance of the Mohawk, written a few years since by Hoffman, and given the name of *Greycelaer*, (a name which sounds too much like that of certain tory leaders, mentioned in this volume, to please the writer,) locates some scenes of it in this cavern, to which he applies the very pretty Indian name of *Wane-onda*. It is not probable, however, that any Indian ever entered, noticed, or named it. The charming Alida de Roos, its heroine, the reader may almost fancy personified in the person of Miss Wayland, who is doubtless quite as pretty.

OTSGARAGEE CAVERN, known in its vicinity as Howe's cave, and called by G. F. Yates, Esq., (an antiquarian and naturalist, who was one of its earliest visitors, and first to describe it), *The Great Gallery Cave*, is situated on the farm of Henry Wetsel, in the extreme northwest corner of this town, about three and a half miles from Central Bridge, and five from the Court House. It was first explored by Lester Howe, its present proprietor, in the month of May, 1842. The entrance is in the side of a mountain ridge of limestone, on the west side of the Cobelskill, not far distant from, but elevated some fifty feet above that stream. From the entrance, which is very easy of access, its principal direction is nearly west, leading off under the town of Cobelskill.

A visit to several spacious rooms in this cave, is made with comparative ease, and little or no danger; one of which, situated some distance from the entrance, is very properly called the *Chapel*, in a published notice of it. This apartment, which crosses the principal direction of the passage, somewhat resembles in shape the hull of a ship bottom upwards, in an inclined position, the floor at one end being elevated above the other, and is some sixty or seventy feet in length by about twenty in breadth, with a vaulted roof separated from the floor by a space of twenty or thirty feet. Near the upper end of this room is a *stalactite* which will weigh several hundred pounds, and beneath it a *stalagmite* of corres-

ponding dimensions. They are ash-colored, of interesting form, and far more valuable where they are, than they would be in any other place, as they may, in fancy, be considered the *desk* of the Chapel.

From the room just described, the visitor, whose curiosity leads him farther, is obliged to pass through a place called the tunnel, nearly two hundred feet in length, so contracted as to compel him either to creep on *all fours*, or prostrate, and worm himself along upon a plank placed for his convenience, where the cavities of the floor are filled with water, which plank are of course constantly wet. Threading this passage, in some parts of which he cannot turn round if he would, the visitor will feel awe-stricken, and, if he never has before, will realize to some extent the consciousness of his own weakness and ability of

That *Spirit-power* the earth we tread now quakes,
And closing old, new mountain-caverns makes;
Which bids the clouds send down their timely rain,
And whistling winds go drink it up again.

This narrow passage conducts into a room in which a boat is required to cross a small sheet of limpid water, which is thirty feet long, twenty wide, and ten deep, over which Charon ferries his friends.

From *the lake* the main passage of the cavern extends a great distance, much of the way following the meanderings of a brook, the passage being sufficiently large to permit visitors to proceed with no other inconvenience than their exposure to wet feet. Several extensive rooms are met with in the back part of the cavern, which contain formations of a novel character; and in one of its secret passages is heard the thundering of a cataract, where a stream of water dashes down unobserved into caverns far below. The passages of this cavern, large and small, extend several miles from its entrance, and disclose to the visitor many interesting peculiarities; and that persons may not travel great distances to visit it and go home disappointed, as several have, who expected to explore "*The rival of the Mammoth Cave in Kentucky,*" I am constrained to observe that several accounts have

exaggerated its true picture. To say nothing of a lake within it, in which subsist fish *that have no visible organs of sight*, "The Mammoth Cave in Kentucky," says James K. Paulding, "is the largest cavern in the known world, having either *thirty or thirty-two* avenues radiating from the area within the entrance, each one extending to the distance of *ten miles* under the earth. A man, therefore, in going and returning through these avenues, would cover a distance of *upwards of six hundred miles*." There are acres of ground in single rooms in this great cavern, while much of the Schoharie cave under consideration, consists in narrow passages, not to be explored without some difficulty, and the hazard of receiving a sponged coat and muddy boots.

Far inland, this cave abounds in mineral deposits, peculiar to caverns in limestone, such as calcareous spar, arragonite of various colors, and alabaster in stalactical and other forms; few of which as yet taken out will compare, however, in pearly and snowy whiteness, with similar formations found in Gebhard's Cave. Some of the dangerous looking *holes* in Cobelskill and Carlisle, may possibly be found to communicate with Howe's Cavern. The proprietor is making praiseworthy efforts to open a passage round the *tunnel* to the *lake*, which, if successful, will obviate the greatest difficulty now met with in satisfactorily exploring this cave, and it will then be visited by numerous guests.

Nethaway's Cave, situated on the farm of Peter Nethaway, two miles south-west of the court-house, was explored in 1836 by John Gebhard Esq., and Mr. Bonny. It afforded nothing worth removing, save a few choice cabinet specimens of colored rhombohedral spar, which resembles the most inviting maple sugar.

In addition to the rich minerals found in its caverns, this town affords several others of beauty and interest. *Sulphate of strontian*, an exceedingly rare mineral, is found in two localities: one in a vein between layers of rock at the Karighondontee mountain, about three miles northwest, and another one-fourth of a mile southeast of the court-house. This mineral receives a fine polish, and resembles marble in its appearance, but is easily de-

terminated by its specific gravity, which is much heavier than that of marble. *Carbonate of strontian*, almost as rare a mineral, is also found at the last mentioned locality.

A mine of *iron pyrites*, to appearance exhaustless, is situated on the west bank of the river, one mile southwest of the court-house. Some of its crystalizations are very beautiful; but the mineral is of no great value. A German chemist, named John Casper Staudt, is said to have made small quantities of copperas at this place during the Revolution. In fact, he acquired the reputation of making *contraband coppers* also, which are said to have passed more currently than continental paper.

On the south bank of Foxes creek, one mile east of the court-house, is a locality of *clay-stones*. They are small, regular formations of indurated clay, and present the appearance of having been turned in a lathe. They are washed out at every freshet from a steep bank, at a depth of at least ten feet below the surface. They are valueless, but in themselves a matter of no little curiosity.

Fluate of lime or *fluor spar*, is found in small quantities in seams of the lime-rock, half a mile southeast of the court-house. In its vicinity also occurs a strata of *water limestone*, which Professor Beck analyzed with the following result :

Carbonate of Lime,.....	56.25
Carbonate of Magnesia,.....	30.75
Silica and Alumina,.....	11.50
Oxide of Iron,.....	1.50
	<hr/>
	100.000

Calcarious tufa is found in several localities along the west side of the river. In it are beautiful specimens of *fossil moss*; the incrustations of limy matter being so delicate as to preserve every fibre of the once living moss; while other portions, finding the former bed a fertilizer, grow upon its top, presenting the phenomena of white and green in the same cluster. A specimen analyzed by Professor Beck, gave the following result :

Carbonate of Lime,.....	97.25
Organic matter,.....	1.95
Silica,.....	80
	<hr/>
	100.000

On the walls of the old stone church, are cut the names of most of the individuals who aided in its erection. In the graveyard near it is the following monumental inscription :

“ In memory of Col. Peter Vrooman, who departed this life December 29th, 1793, aged fifty-seven years, nine months, and nine days.”

SEWARD, erected from Sharon February 11th, 1840, is distant from the Court House 15 miles, and from Albany 48. It is bounded north by Sharon, east by Cobelskill, south and west by Otsego county ; and was named after His Excellency, William H. Seward, then Governor of the State. This town has 4 churches—1 *Methodist*, 2 *Lutheran*, and 1 *Baptist* ; and 2 *post offices*, called *Hyndsville*, and *Gardnersville*.

The local settlement called New Dorlach, after a town in Germany from whence its citizens came, was made in this town in 1754, by Sebastian France, Michael Merckley, Henry Hynds, and Ernest Fretz, who landed at New York in the fall of 1753, proceeded to Albany in the winter, and the following spring began their pioneer residence. These settlers had part of their early milling done at Schenectada.

The north part of Seward has a supply of limestone. A spur of the Catsbergs runs along the south side of West creek. On the north side of that stream, situated between Hyndsville and Lawyerville, is a hill, called on the early maps by the Indian name of *Gogng-ta-nee*. The following inscription may be seen in the burying ground of the Methodist Church, near Hyndsville :

“ In memory of Horace Handy, who died Sept. 11, 1834, in the 22d year of his age. H. H. was a graduate of Union College, a member and benefactor of the Adelphi Society, by whose order this was erected.”

SHARON, centrally distant northwest from the Court House 18 miles, and from Albany 45, is bounded north by Montgomery county, east by Carlisle, south by Seward, and west by Otsego county. This town was so called after Sharon in Connecticut. Being underlaid with limestone, it has numerous caverns, few, if any of which, have yet been explored. The rock contains

numerous *fossils*, among which I have procured good specimens of *branch coral*. Sharon has 4 *post offices*—*Sharon, Leesville, Argusville*, and *Sharon Centre* (the last mentioned being nearest the *Sharon Springs*); and 4 *churches*—1 *Reformed Dutch*, 1 *Methodist*, 1 *Baptist*, and 1 owned by the *Lutherans and Baptists*.

In a ravine nearly a mile north of the turnpike, two miles from the Sharon Centre post office, and about the same distance from Leesville, are the *Sharon Sulphur Springs*—mineral waters—said to be similar in properties to the celebrated springs of Virginia. The principal spring boils up from the bed of a small brook, discharging a column of water which must ever supply an abundance for medicinal purposes.

An analysis, made by Dr. Chilton, of New York, of water from this spring, gives the following result :

	Grains.
Sulphate of Magnesia,	42.40
do Lime,	111.62
Chloride of Sodium,	2.24
do Magnesium,	2.40
Hydro-sulphuret of Sodium, }	
do Calcium, }	2.28
	160.94
Total number of grains,	
Sulphuretted Hydrogen Gas, 16 cubic inches.	

Besides this, there are several smaller springs of like efficacy near, and, as stated by Dr. Beck, a *chalybeate* spring in the same neighborhood. The waters of the first mentioned spring are highly impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen—indeed, to such a degree as to tarnish silver, even in the pocket of the visiter. There is a pretty *cascade*, about a quarter of a mile distant from the shower house, to lure the lover of romance, while around the springs *fossil leaves and moss* are easily obtained in great perfection by geologists.

Anhydrous sulphate of lime, an exceedingly rare mineral, is found in a little *cave* near the principal spring at this place. It is a remarkable fact, that while crystals are decomposing on one side of a mass of this mineral, they are often forming on the opposite side.

The waters of the Sharon Springs have obtained great celebrity for the last twenty years, for their beneficial effects on rheumatic, cutaneous, and other diseases ; and a public house was long since erected near the principal spring. The PAVILION, a magnificent hotel, reared by a company of gentlemen from New York, in 1836, on an adjoining eminence, for the better accommodation of visitors, is now fitted up in elegant style, and under the direction of its present proprietors, Messrs. Gardner & Landon, is well



SHARON SPRINGS PAVILION.

patronized by invalids, who would know the efficacy of the mineral waters, and fashionable tourists, who would seek a summer residence where novel and picturesque scenery, and a most salubrious atmosphere cannot fail to invite them.

The Pavilion is situated on the borders of Schoharie, Montgomery, and Otsego counties, about 45 miles west from Albany, 20 northwest from Schoharie Court House, and 8 east from

Cherry Valley. Visitors who would approach the Springs from the valley of the Mohawk, will find carriages running daily, in the summer season, from Canajoharie, nine miles distant, for their accommodation.

SUMMIT,* erected April 13, 1819, from Cobelskill and Jefferson, is distant southwest from the Court House 20 miles, from Albany 50, and from Catskill 55. It is bounded north by Cobelskill, east by Fulton, south by Jefferson and Delaware county, and west by Otsego county. It began to be settled about ten years after the close of the Revolution, by men from New England, whose descendants are engaged in the dairy business. Population 2,009. The prevailing rock is slate. Summit has 7 churches—3 *Methodist*, 2 *Baptist*, 1 *Lutheran*, and 1 *Christian*; and 2 *post offices*—*Summit 4 Corners* and *Charlotteville*. Summit Pond, a small, placid sheet of water, near the corners in this town, covers some sixty acres of land.—*J. W. Baird*.

*On the borders of this town is a small lake, bearing the soft Indian name *Ut-say-an-tho*. It is known in the neighborhood as Jack's lake, so called after the late John A. Hudson, who owned lands around it—Jack being our national vulgarity for John. This sheet of water, which affords one of the sources of the Susquehanna, owes its poetic name, as tradition says, to the following circumstance: *Utsayantho*, a beautiful Indian maiden, gave birth to an illegitimate child on its romantic shore, and a council of chiefs having been called to deliberate on its fate, they decided to drown it in the lake, and did so; since which it has been known by the name of the unhappy mother.—*E. B. Bigelow, Jr.*