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HISTORY
OF
Scholarie County,
NEW YORK,
WITH
Illustrations and Biographical Sketches
OF
SOME OF ITS PROMINENT MEN AND PIONEERS.

By WILLIAM E. ROSCOE.

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INTRODUCTION.

In compiling the facts chronicled in the following pages, the Author has not been led by an idea of financial gain or literary glory, but by a sense of the worthiness of Schoharie's history being published by itself, and not in connection with that of other localities. In this County he has a pride. It is the "land of his birth!" He glories in her beauty and grandeur.

Whether it be among her fossiliferous rocks, within her winding caverns, or upon the romantic surface, he feels that it is home; full of instruction, pleasing associations and wonders, such as few sections can boast.

Prompted by such motives, and the solicitations of those earnest in interest, the Author was induced, many years ago, to garner the harvest of events connected with the County, which he here presents for the instruction and pleasure of the youth of Schoharie, with the hope that a presentation of the struggles of their forefathers and mothers, in establishing peaceful homes, and their triumphs through sacrifice of life, fortunes and personal pleasures, in obtaining the rich blessings of freedom, may animate them to a just appreciation of the priceless inheritance bequeathed to them.

Others with more pleasing pens, have traced our early history previously in connection with other border settlements, and brought to light many facts that would have been lost, or marred by ruthless tradition but for these labors at the time; yet the inveterate animosity created by antagonistical interest through the settlement of the Palatines, and later through the Revolutionary war, has not died away, and much that was chronicled has been proved through more recent discoveries of documents, to have been exaggerations, dictated by those "bitterest of feelings."

The settlement of the Germans, and incidents connected with their pioneer life, was based entirely upon tradition, leaving important facts in doubt, and dates open to conjecture. The only work upon that event was by the late Judge John M. Brown, in his "Brief Sketch of the First Settlement of Schoharie," published in 1823, when he had arrived at the advanced age of seventy-eight. The work was founded upon
INTRODUCTION.

tradition, with the exception of such events as came under his personal observation, and proves to be incorrect, yet it is an interesting and amusing work, with too few pages to satisfy the reader, upon such an interesting subject. Campbell, in his "Annals of Tryon County," and Jeptha R. Simms, in his "Border Wars," have traced the same line of events through tradition, and brought their conclusions before the reader in nearly parallel lines. They were better acquainted with the incidents connected with the Revolution, through many of the actors in that strife, with whom they were intimate, and to them we are indebted for many authentic facts that make up the general history of that eventful period. Revolutionary facts thus handed down, coupled with those collected in the forepart of the century by the Author's parent, who was conversant with many of the old patriots, together with rusty documents of late brought to light and never before published or consulted, assure the authenticity of this work, from the first settlement of the County to the close of the war, which part of our history has hitherto proved unsatisfactory.

In collecting facts relating to the time intervening between the last event and the present day, the writer has spared neither time nor expense, and has traveled thousands of miles, repeatedly visiting each neighborhood to consult persons, records, and public archives, and feels that his labors have been in the main, fruitful in interest and accuracy.

The latter has been a pleasing portion of the task, as it has brought him in close acquaintance with the people of the County, from whom he has received the kindest hospitality, assistance and encouragement in the work, and given birth to many associations that will be treasured with pleasing remembrances and jealous care.

Among the many visited, were aged ones—the silver rays of Schoharie's heroic days—who have cleared the portals of seventy, eighty, and even ninety-five, with robust forms and active minds, and to them the writer has many times been indebted for explanations and the information necessary to a correct filling out of records carelessly kept.

Those who have aided and encouraged in the work, have been almost "Legion," and to all such the writer extends his grateful thanks, and hopes his efforts to present a truthful history, will not prove fruitless, but that it may be a mile-stone of events reared upon our County's century course, and read by our youth and posterity with profit, and by their true patriotism, industry and frugality, be enabled to add as worthy a record of their day and generation, as the fathers of the County have here transcribed through the author

WILLIAM E. ROSCOE.